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FEMALE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

Abstract: In this paper, I discuss an important knowledge gap observed in Greek philosophical research and historiography, which reflects some well-established social circumstances and beliefs: the absence of systematic and extensive research on the theories of ancient Greek female philosophers and their exclusion to some extent from the historical frameworks. This issue shows that nowadays in Greece history is still being misread. It also highlights the need for a new start for research into the contributions of ancient female philosophers, for the historical framework of human intellectual activity of antiquity to be reformed, and for a revision of our cultural and intellectual habitudes. This paper provides a list of ancient Greek women thinkers as a starting point for more in-depth research. I have compiled an extensive list presenting fifty-four women philosophers from classical antiquity, including information about the period and the city they lived in; their field; the philosophical school, community, or academy to which they belong; and other relevant information such as whether their texts have survived.

Keywords: Greece, female philosophers, classical antiquity, historical framework, list.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, issues concerning the role and the contribution of women in science are widely discussed in intellectual circles and researched at several universities worldwide, and there is an increasing number of research articles and books discussing women's contributions to science and philosophy in different historical contexts, (e.g., *Ancient Women Philosophers* and the *Handbook of Women and Philosophy*).¹ Based on this, in twenty-first-century Greece, incomplete knowledge of the contribution of ancient Greek female philosophers is an issue that triggers several inquiries concerning the main reasons that led to this significant knowledge gap; yet it also reveals new directions for research.

¹ O' Reilly, Pellò 2023; Brill, McKeen 2024.

In this paper, the discussion of the reasons for and methods capable of bridging this knowledge gap focuses on Greece for two main reasons. First, female philosophers from the classical era constitute an integral part of the Greek philosophical tradition and the history of Greek philosophy. Fragmented research, limited literature available in Modern Greek, and the absence of systematic teaching about ancient women philosophers has resulted in insufficient knowledge about them. As a result, this has led to an incomplete understanding in Greece of the history of ancient philosophy and science and, more broadly, a significant portion of the history of the Greek world. The second reason this paper focuses on Greece stems from the contrast observed between the systematic study of ancient Greek female philosophers at many prominent universities, such as Harvard, Cambridge, and Paderborn, and the sporadic and fragmented examination of them in their country of origin. This unexpected observation prompted the questions explored in this study. This contrast makes the contemporary Greek research community a highly interesting case study.

The contrast between the research on this issue in other countries and its almost complete absence in modern Greek historical and philosophical research raises several important questions. Two of them are (i.) Why have female philosophers been excluded from the historical context of classical antiquity and (ii.) why are their philosophical treatises, scientific discoveries, and contributions to the development of scientific thought not extensively and systematically researched in present-day Greece? Several possible reasons could justify the lack of extensive historical and philosophical research in contemporary Greece on the contribution of women philosophers of Greek antiquity. These include the general acceptance of the traditional role of women in classical antiquity, a patriarchal mindset coupled with a historical narrative predominantly shaped from a male perspective, the absence or unreliability of ancient sources and especially primary texts, the absence of university departments dedicated to this subject, the extremely limited bibliography available in Modern Greek on this topic, and the meager funds available for research in the humanities in conjunction with much competition. A highly important issue is that most research articles and books on women philosophers, such as *Ancient Women Philosophers* and the *Handbook of Women and Philosophy*, among others, have been published in English.² In contrast, Greek academia does not currently engage extensively with this topic. As a result, the scholarly literature on this subject available in Modern Greek is limited, which primarily complicates the teaching of ancient women philosophers in Greek schools and universities where textbooks in Modern Greek are used.

Another crucial issue approached in this study is whether the texts of women philosophers fit seamlessly into the conventionalized patriarchal historiography or if we need to revolutionize our cultural intellectual habitudes. Moreover, a core question driving this study is what could be the first step for the Greek research community to begin reforming the historical framework of human intellectual activity in antiquity, including the contribution of women philosophers, natural philosophers, and scientists of the ancient Greek world?

Philosophers and scientists should be evaluated by the scientific value of their theories and their contribution to the development of scientific thought rather than by

² O' Reilly, Pellò 2023; Brill, McKeen 2024.

criteria such as their gender, role in society during a specific period, origin, political ideology, or even sexual orientation. In this sense, this paper aims not only to highlight the need for further research on these issues in Greece, but also to begin challenging ourselves to close the existing knowledge gaps by providing an extended list that presents important women philosophers from classical antiquity and includes important information such as the period and the city in which they lived; the field and philosophical school, community or academia to which they belong; and whether their texts have survived. I am thus not only expressing my belief in the need to reform the historical framework of human intellectual thought in classical antiquity, including significant theories formed by women. I am also seeking the first step through this list, which aims to compile, classify, and present what is known about these women. Last, I will also provide specific conditions and measures that could reinforce research on this issue in the Greek research community.

Although this approach cannot fully address the existing gaps regarding the contributions of ancient female philosophers, it can serve as a first step in organizing, categorizing, and comprehensively presenting the existing historical knowledge about them by providing a summary table. This table could serve as a foundation, map, or starting point for further, more extensive research on ancient women philosophers, natural philosophers, and mathematicians. Translating the proposed table into Greek (and into other languages) could reinforce existing knowledge about ancient Greek female philosophers and be used as instructional material in Greek schools and universities.

2. Greece Gave Birth to Them and Then Forgot Them: A Contemporary Knowledge Gap in Modern Greek Historiography and its Aspects in Greek Research and the Greek Educational System

The roots of modern science can be traced to classical antiquity, a period when terms such as *episteme* and *natural philosophy* were explored by several ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato, who delved into the concept of *episteme* and contrasted it with *doxa*, and Aristotle, who used the term *physiologia*, or natural philosophy. In his dialogues, Plato described *episteme* (understanding or knowledge) as a more valuable condition that is harder to achieve and, unlike *doxa* (opinion), is never false. In his dialogue *Theaetetus*, Plato defined *episteme* as true *doxa* accompanied by *logos* (reason). Aristotle described *episteme* as a deductively valid system based on necessary truths about natures or essences and distinguished it from *techne*, a kind of practical knowledge akin to what we today call technology.³ The Aristotelean term *physiologia* was commonly used until the nineteenth century to refer to the study of the natural sciences. This broad term encompassed disciplines such as botany, zoology, anthropology, chemistry, and what we now call physics. One core purpose of intellectual activity in classical antiquity was to understand, describe, and explain the natural world.⁴

In addition to the evolution of natural philosophy, classical antiquity was also a crucial stage in the evolution of philosophical and scientific thought when the foundations

³ Grigoriadou et al. 2021: 106–107; Grigoriadou 2023: 578; Moss 2019: 1–6

⁴ *Ibid.*

were laid for the development of several fields, including mathematics, moral philosophy, political philosophy, aesthetics, ontology, epistemology, and medicine, among others. In this historical context, various philosophical schools, academies, and communities emerged, such as the Pythagorean philosophers, Plato's Academy, Aristotele's Lyceum, the Sophists, the Cynical philosophers, the Epicureans, and other groups of intellectuals.⁵ This historical context seems to be extensively studied in several Greek universities' departments of philosophy and courses relevant to it can be found in the curricula, numerous articles discussing its philosophical and historical aspects have been published in distinguished scholarly journals, and a philosophy course is taught in the second year in Greek high schools. Female philosophers, however, have been excluded from this historical context.

Moreover, it is worth noting that even those few famous women intellectuals from classical antiquity are known in Greece but not for the right reasons. For instance, Aspasia of Miletus is known as a famous hetaera and partner of Pericles but not as an intellectual, orator, or philosopher.⁶ Accordingly, Hypatia of Alexandria is well-known in Greece mainly for her cruel death rather than for being a philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, and author of three fourth-century treatises.⁷ These examples illustrate that there is a need not only to reform the historical framework of human intellectual activity in classical antiquity but also to revolutionize cultural and intellectual habitudes to achieve a kind of knowledge beyond these boundaries, particularly within the modern Greek research community.

Moreover, the research and writings of women philosophers should not be added to the current historiography simply because the theories of women philosophers and scientists are something "extra" or complementary, nor should they be treated as such. The theories of ancient Greek women philosophers must be assessed according to their innovation, scholarly value, and the small or large intellectual revolution they may have caused by exploring a system, a phenomenon, or a conception of an idea. New historical frameworks should be formed on the basis of these criteria to include the greatest minds regardless of their gender. This kind of new beginning is necessary, specifically in Greece, not only to recognize women's contributions to ancient scientific activity but also to further the development of knowledge, particularly in the field of the history and philosophy of science. Therefore, expanding our understanding of ancient female Greek philosophers beyond traditional boundaries is essential for the contemporary Greek intellectual community.

Nowadays in Greece, we misread history and are taught an inaccurate perspective of history. As was mentioned previously, one reason for this is that most works on women philosophers have been published in English, while literature available in Modern Greek is limited. Moreover, there is an almost complete absence of women in the textbooks that have been used in Greek high schools for the last twenty years.⁸ How What is the justification for this? Were female philosophers, natural philosophers, and mathematicians not also part of the golden age of philosophical thought? An extensive search of the literature available in print and online leads to the conclusion that not only did they exist

⁵ Pelegrinis 2001: 12–36, 74–93; Pelegrinis 1998: 11–134.

⁶ Waithe 1987: 75–82.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 169–196.

⁸ Virvidakis *et al.* 2016; Pelegrinis, 2001.

but there were many of them, and they were active, especially considering the conditions and the role of women in that era. However, high school or university students in Greece are not given the motivation or the opportunity to read and learn about ancient female philosophers because the curricula and the textbooks do not include them⁹ and there is little written about them in Modern Greek.

These facts might prompt a certain degree of skepticism about the prospect of studying the female thinkers of premodern times. If we know so little about the ideas of even the most prominent female philosophers, is this a promising line of inquiry at all? I firmly believe that it is. Here, two reasonable questions arise: (i.) Why have female philosophers been excluded from the historical context of classical antiquity? and (ii.) why have their philosophical treatises, scientific discoveries, and their contribution to the development of scientific thought not been extensively and systematically investigated in Greece until now?

One plausible reason that could justify the absence in Greece of extensive historical and philosophical research on these women's contributions is a general acceptance of the role of women in this era. The existing Greek historiography regarding women in classical antiquity focuses on the limitations of these women's lives rather than on the theories, investigations, and contributions of the female philosophers of this period to the development of scientific thought.¹⁰ According to the historiography, women in ancient Athens did not have increased rights. The role of the Athenian woman in antiquity was limited to caring for the family and the household and participating in religious ceremonies. Athenian women did not have social or political rights, and most women were not given an education.¹¹ Thus, during that era, women had limited opportunities to participate in educational, cultural, or political life. This may have been the rule, but it does not mean there were no exceptions. Specifically, Greek girls received a limited education in their homes in reading, writing, arithmetic, spinning, weaving, embroidery, singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments. Moreover, Spartan girls received the same education as boys because Sparta granted women more rights and freedoms. Spartan women could own and inherit property, were educated, and had a role in public life.¹²

Furthermore, it must be noted that in the classical era, most women did not study at famous philosophical schools or join philosophical communities, but neither did most men. In antiquity, the study of philosophy was a prerogative of the affluent who could afford the tuition at the great philosophical schools of this period. As history has shown—specifically through several works by ancient Greek historians such as those of Xenophon and doxographers such as Diogenes Laertius, along with several works by poets and philosophers—not only did the wives and daughters of wealthy or educated ancient Greeks receive a rigorous education similar to those of the best philosophers, some of them also devoted their entire lives to philosophy and research, and others became teachers at these academies.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Azelis 2005: 59–72; Cohen 1989: 3–15; Mosse 1983: 19–96; Thuc. II 45. 4.

¹¹ Azelis 2005: 59–72; Cohen 1989: 3–15; Mosse 1983: 19–96.

¹² Osen 1975: 10.

An important question that arises here is what exactly is meant when referring to women philosophers. In her dissertation “Women in Early Pythagoreanism,” Caterina Pellò includes Ménage’s approach, according to which a woman is considered a philosopher when she is (i) credited with philosophical writings, such as Hypatia of Alexandria, (ii) engaged in philosophical activity, such as Diotima of Mantinea, and (iii) related to a male philosopher, such as Pythagoras’ wife Theano and daughter Myia.¹³ Moreover, in the introduction to *Ancient Women Philosophers*, Katerina O’Reilly and Caterina Pellò present four criteria to determine which ancient female intellectuals should be considered philosophers. According to them, women are designated as philosophers based on the following criteria: (i) when sources explicitly refer to them as philosophers, (ii) when they author philosophical texts, (iii) when they reside with and study under male philosophers, and (iv) when they develop philosophical ideas.¹⁴ Thus, if one accepts these criteria, there were women philosophers in classical antiquity. However, these approaches can be reinforced by examining the etymology of the terms *philosophy* and *philosopher*. These terms were introduced by Pythagoras. Specifically, the ancient Greek word for philosophy derives from the union of the words φιλό (philo-), which means *I love*, and the word σοφία (-sophia), which means *wisdom*. Based on this, a philosopher is a lover of wisdom.¹⁵ In other words, a philosopher is a person, man or woman, who has devoted his or her life to studying fundamental questions about existence, reason, knowledge, values, mind, and language. Moreover, natural philosophers were thinkers who devoted their lives to the challenge of understanding, describing, and explaining the natural world.¹⁶ Extensive research reveals that at least fifty-four women in classical antiquity were active in these fields (Table 1). Consequently, the presence of female philosophers and natural philosophers during this period is undeniable.

It is worth noting that in the classical era, it was a common belief that women’s nature was different from that of men but not of lesser value.¹⁷ At this point, it is also worth considering an interesting argument presented by several researchers such as Caterina Pellò in her dissertation and Dorothea Dutsch in her book *Pythagorean Women Philosophers: Between Belief and Suspicion*.¹⁸ Pellò suggests that the belief in the transmigration of souls is related to the prominence of women in early Pythagoreanism.¹⁹ As she points out, according to Pythagorean metempsychosis, both men and women participate in the cycle of rebirth alongside other beings. Souls can transmigrate into both human and non-human forms, including animals and, according to Empedocles, certain species of plants. Although the extent to which Pythagoreanism connected the notion of universal kinship with transmigration remains unclear, a belief in the reincarnation of

¹³ Pellò 2018: 2

¹⁴ O’Reilly, Pellò 2023: 3

¹⁵ Britannica 2022: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/philosophy>; online etymology dictionary: <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=philosophy>

¹⁶ Moss 2019: 1–6.

¹⁷ Huffman 2019: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/pythagoreanism/>>; Pellò 2018: 110–112.

¹⁸ Dutsch 2020: 19–26.

¹⁹ Pellò 2018: 5–12, 137–143.

human and animal souls implies an inherent connection between them in this process.²⁰ Moreover, according to Dicaearchus and Clearchus, Pythagoras's soul had inhabited various forms, including that of a beautiful hetaera named Alco, before reincarnating into Pythagoras.²¹ While the claim that Pythagoras lived as a hetaera may be an exaggeration, it does not rule out the possibility that he believed he had lived as a woman in a previous life. Pythagoras's past incarnations included a range of social roles, including warrior, fisherman, and hetaera, which demonstrates a theory of reincarnation that allows souls to transition between different social statuses and genders.²² This diverse experience enabled him to speak from multiple perspectives while addressing men, women, and all social strata within his community.²³

According to Pellò, the epistemological implications and non-retributive nature of metempsychosis shed light on the role of women in this doctrine. As previously mentioned, these aspects offer reasons to value women's lives. Pythagoras's past life as a woman contributed to his knowledge. His life as the courtesan Alco influenced the teachings he imparted to his disciples.²⁴ The belief that female souls also undergo transmigration likely facilitated the inclusion of women among Pythagoras' disciples and their esteemed status. Consequently, since men and women were believed to possess the same souls, they were treated equally and received the same education. These Pythagorean views concerning metempsychosis, extensively discussed by Pellò and Dutsch, can explain to some extent the participation of women in Pythagorean communities and justify characterizing Pythagoras as a feminist philosopher.

Numerous women joined the Pythagorean community on equal terms with men.²⁵ For instance, Theano, the wife of Pythagoras, became the director of the school after his death. Their three daughters, Arignote, Myia, and Damo, also joined the Pythagorean philosophical communities where they were educated and contributed to continuing its teachings. Theano of Thourii was a mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher who taught in the Pythagorean community and formulated the theories of the golden ratio and the harmony of the spheres.²⁶ Damo and Myia were both philosophers and mathematicians.²⁷ Other examples of female intellectuals of this era were Pythagoras's teacher, Themistokleia or Plato's mother, Periktione.²⁸ These are only a few examples of female Greek philosophers from classical antiquity.

Although Pythagoras has been characterized as a feminist or women-friendly philosopher, he was not the only Greek male philosopher who recognized that women could participate in science and philosophy. In the fifth book of the Republic, through Socrates, Plato supported the inclusion of women among the guardians of the city, the

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Dutsch 2020: 19–26.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Pellò 2018: 5–12, 137–143.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Osen, 1975: 153–170; Pellò 2018: 110–112.

²⁷ Diog. Laert. 8.1; Iambl. *VP* IX 30, XI 36, XXVI 89; Pellò 2018: 1–10; Waithe 1987: 11–19.

²⁸ Diog. Laert. III; Pellò 2018: 6; Waithe 1987: 11–19, 20–40.

abolition of the private family and communism of spouses and children, and the possibility of having philosopher rulers.²⁹ More specifically, Socrates suggested that the distinction between male and female is as relevant as the distinction between having long hair or short hair when deciding who should be active guardians. Men and women, just as those with long or short hair, are by nature the same when being assigned to an education or a job.³⁰ Therefore, Plato in his Republic conduced to the principle of gender equality and argued that each citizen should devote his or herself to the task for which he or she is fitted by nature.³¹

Therefore, the participation of women in the Pythagorean communities, Plato's Academia, and other philosophical schools in classical antiquity verifies that the role of women in this era was not limited to housekeeping (Table 1). In other words, maybe most women in classical antiquity were indeed mothers and housekeepers, but this does not negate the existence of significant philosophers or scientists during this period; it also does not justify their exclusion from the historical context of the intellectual community in this era.

A second reason that can explain the absence in modern Greece of systematic and meticulous historical and philosophical research on the contribution of ancient Greek women philosophers is a persistent patriarchal mentality and, to some extent, sexist prejudices combined with an interpretive tradition predominantly articulated from a male perspective. It is noteworthy that women's suffrage in Greece was only established in 1952.³² Since 1960, the percentages of women attending universities or engaging in research have been low. For instance, from 1963 to 1964, only 3 percent of the tenured professors at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens were women. This percentage increased to 5 percent between 1973 and 1974, 29.5 percent between 1983 and 1984, 27 percent between 1993 and 1994, and reached its highest at 35 percent between 2003 and 2004.³³ Although nowadays these percentages have changed, with equal numbers of men and women studying and teaching at Greek universities, the traditional patriarchal historiography persists. This tradition is fueled by various prejudices, such as the perception of women's roles in antiquity being confined to the home and excluded from philosophical communities. This perpetuates the issue by fostering indifference toward the contributions of women philosophers from that era and subsequent periods. It also leads to questioning their significance while maintaining a focus on the study of philosophers within the generally accepted patriarchal frameworks of historiography, thereby reinforcing these traditional foundations. Since the very early twenty-first century, most researchers have been male, and for many years they will probably continue the work of their precursors by focusing on a study of philosophers that falls into the generally acceptable patriarchal contexts of historiography, and this will continue to strengthen its foundations. If one considers the issue more holistically, one could describe it as a vicious circle, as represented below:

²⁹ Pellò 2018: 150

³⁰ Plato, trans Gripari 1911: 62–66.

³¹ Pellò 2018: 150

³² Efthyvoulou et al. 2020: 1

³³ Vosniadou, Vaiou, 2006: http://www.eriande.elemedu.upatras.gr/eriande/synedria/synedrio4/praktika1/Baiou_bosniadou.htm

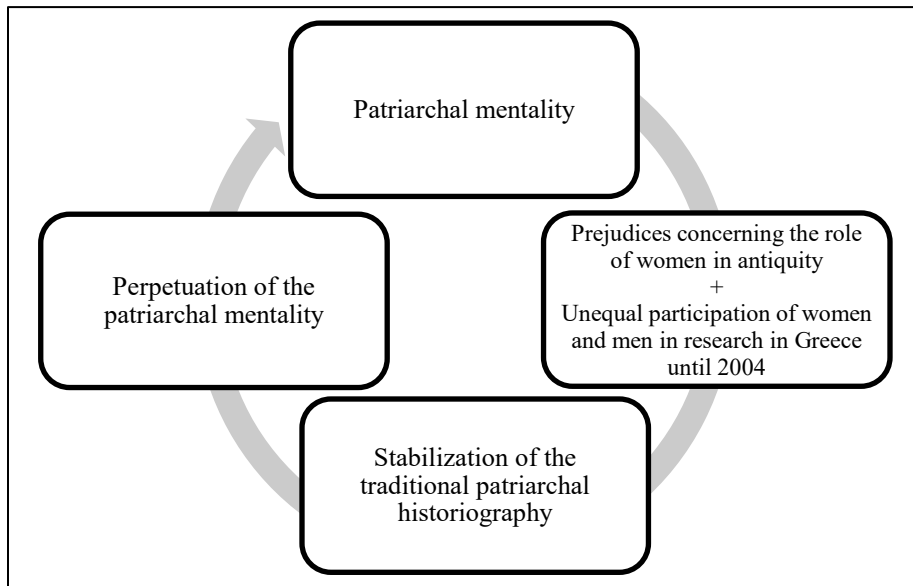


Figure 1: The vicious circle of traditional historiography in Greece.

What has notably changed in the last twenty years is a significant increase in the participation of women in the Greek research community. This development fosters optimism and opens new prospects for investigating issues like the one examined in here.

Another core issue is the absence or unreliability of ancient sources, which results in skepticism regarding the existence or contribution of women in ancient Greek philosophy and a reluctance among researchers to undertake extensive and systematic investigations of the subject. This issue is not exclusive to the Greek research community. As highlighted in Sara Protasi's article "Teaching Ancient Women Philosophers: A Case Study," this is one of the primary challenges faced by researchers of ancient philosophy (2020).³⁴ These scholars often must approach philosophical theories from the classical era by relying on surviving fragments and secondary sources whose reliability is frequently questioned. Therefore, the absence or unreliability of ancient sources alone cannot fully explain the limited investigation of ancient Greek women philosophers. However, when considering the entrenched beliefs about the role of women during that time, combined with the tradition of patriarchal historiography, this limited investigation becomes more understandable.

One other reason that explains the absence of systematic and meticulous historical and philosophical research on the contributions of ancient Greek women philosophers is the absence of university departments engaging with this subject, such as university departments specializing in women's studies, the philosophy of gender, history, the philosophy of women in science, or even the history and philosophy of feminism. In other words, there is no university department that specializes in studying the most important theories of women philosophers or

³⁴ Protasi 2020: 7–13

scientists and their contributions to the evolution of intellectual thought. Thus, there are no suitable conditions or favorable environments in Greece capable of reinforcing a scholarly dialogue about these issues. Consequently, another gap emerges as an extension of the absence of intensive scholarly research in Greece on women philosophers from antiquity, which is reflected in the particularly limited Greek scholarly literature on women philosophers. This gap impacts not only the research and teaching of ancient philosophy in Greek universities but also the teaching in Greek high schools. The lack of sufficient Greek sources is not conducive to the creation of adequate textbooks. As a result, the textbooks cannot provide Greek students with a comprehensive and well-founded understanding of ancient Greek philosophical and scientific thought. Thus, the absence of ancient female philosophers in the Greek educational system, research, and scholarly literature represents a significant knowledge gap that explains the fragmented understanding of philosophical and scientific thought in classical antiquity.

One controversy that could arise is that there are many philosophy departments in Greek universities. Could this subject not be researched through these departments? The answer here is twofold. First, many Greek scholars of philosophy focus on examining issues that are more likely to get funded, such as those related to moral philosophy—for example, topics related to artificial intelligence, which have been at the forefront of interest in recent years, issues of bioethics, such as ethical dilemmas concerning vaccination for the COVID-19 pandemic, and others. Second, issues such as the absence or unreliability of ancient sources concerning women philosophers, combined with a patriarchal mentality and tradition predominantly articulated from a male perspective, as analyzed above, create an environment that is not conducive to the development of systematic research on this issue within the existing university departments. These reasons, in conjunction with the meager funds for research in the humanities and a high level of competition, especially among Greek universities specializing in philosophy, the philosophy of science, and the history of science constitute a deterrent to systematic engagement with research topics falling into these fields. Under these conditions, just a few research studies in Greece focused on ancient Greek women philosophers have come from professors and PhD candidates or researchers who work at these departments. Therefore, the establishment of a department specializing in the philosophy of gender, the history and philosophy of women in science, or even the history and philosophy of feminism could provide a place for developing substantial discussion and systematic research on these significant topics.

These important reasons, which could explain the absence of ancient Greek women philosophers in Greek historiography, philosophy textbooks, and philosophical and historical research in Greece, are interconnected. The absence of sources, combined with prejudices regarding the role of women in antiquity and the predominance of traditional patriarchal historiography, which partly stems from women's limited participation in research until a few decades ago, has kept interest in Greece in researching women philosophers from the classical era low. This has resulted in limited investigations of the issue and a poor selection of scholarly literature in the Greek language. Consequently, there is insufficient material to support the inclusion of relevant courses in academic curricula, which leads to Greek students lacking the opportunity or motivation to learn about women philosophers in the ancient Greek world. As a result, they are condemned to ignorance of an important segment of the history of Greek philosophy that is also an integral part of Greece's intellectual history. Thus, Greece gave birth to the women philosophers in classical antiquity and then forgot them. This fact

reveals an important knowledge gap in modern Greek historiography and highlights the necessity of further research on this issue throughout the Greek intellectual community.

3. A First Step in Reforming the Existing Historical Context: A List of Female Ancient Greek Philosophers

It is clear from the previous section that a new beginning in Greek historiography concerning scientists and philosophers is necessary. But how could this new start come about? What could be the first step toward reforming the historical framework of human intellectual activity in classical antiquity, including the important contribution of the female philosophers, natural philosophers, and scientists of the ancient Greek world?

In every scientific field, the first stage of the research process is often that of collecting, organizing, and categorizing the existing knowledge about the phenomenon under study and composing a framework into which the phenomenon falls in light of a specific hypothesis. Therefore, the initial step in the endeavor to reform the historical framework of human intellectual activity in classical antiquity, including female philosophers and scientists, is the systematic collection and categorization of existing knowledge of them. Throughout meticulous bibliographical research, fifty-four female philosophers and scientists of classical antiquity were traced. It should be noted that this study focused on female intellectuals whose work pertained to the fields of philosophy, natural philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy, but it did not extend to other areas such as medicine. An important issue to address was to determine the most appropriate criteria for classifying these ancient female thinkers, and then to organize this unsystematic and chaotic volume of scattered information about them. These criteria should be significant, fundamental, and clear. Therefore, an extended list has been provided to effectively classify important women philosophers by their period, their place of residence or origin, the field and philosophical school to which they belong, and whether their texts have survived. Specifically, these criteria appear in the columns in Table 1:

1. **Period:** This criterion records the historical timeframe during which the philosopher lived and notes the century.
2. **City:** Place of residence or origin: This criterion indicates the geographic location where the philosopher resided or from which she originated.
3. **Field:** This criterion identifies the philosopher's primary area of philosophical inquiry or specialization.
4. **Academia:** Philosophical school or community: This criterion classifies the philosopher according to the philosophical tradition, school of thought, or community with which she is associated.
5. **Texts/References:** Survival of Texts: This criterion notes whether the philosopher's texts have survived and are available to contemporary scholars and readers. If their texts have not survived, this section provides information about historians, doxographers, and biographers who have mentioned these women philosophers in their works.

Additionally, there is a column in Table 1 containing the source from which the

information for each corresponding line was obtained and indicates important sources for further research. These criteria collectively offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the contributions and contexts of women philosophers throughout history. These factors are crucial as they lay the groundwork for reforming the historical framework of human intellectual activity in classical antiquity. Simultaneously, they provide essential information about these female philosophers and natural philosophers. Thus, the result of this research is an extensive list (Table 1) that includes fifty-four women philosophers, natural philosophers, and scientists. By including philosophers based on the scientific value of their work and their contribution to the development of scientific thought, the list is a good start for forming a new historical framework that would describe the philosophical and scientific activity of women in classical antiquity.

However, it should be noted that in some cases, valuable information about these women has not yet been found. Consequently, the corresponding cells in the table remain incomplete and thereby indicate prospects for future research.

NAME	PERIOD	CITY	FIELD	ACADEMIA	TEXTS / REFERENCES	REFERENCES
Theano ³⁵	6 th century BCE	Sicily or Crete	Mathematician, Astronomer, Professor at Pythagorean Academia	Pythagorean Philosophers	Texts ³⁶ attributed to Theano are <i>The golden ratio theory, the theory of the harmony of the spheres, Pythagorean Quotes, Advice to Women, Philosophical Comments, Letters, Pythagorean Life, Theory of Numbers, Structure of the Universe</i>	Osen 1975: 153–170; Pomeroy 2013: 6; Waithe 1987: 11–19; Dutsch 2020: 50; Porphyry 1920 ³⁷
My(i)a, daughter of Pythagoras	6th–5th century BCE	Croton	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Iamblichus, trans. Taylor 1818: 30, 36; Waithe 1987: 11–19; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 138–139

³⁵ Some scholars argue that the historical evidence related to Theano might pertain to more than one individual, sometimes referred to as Theano I and Theano II. Discrepancies also exist regarding her origin and her relationship to Pythagoras and Brontinus. She has been described as a student, daughter, or wife of Pythagoras, while others suggest that she was the daughter or wife of Brontinus (Huffman, 2024). Concerning her origin, it has been suggested that she may have come from Crete or Sicily (Croton or Thourii).

³⁶ A few fragments and letters attributed to her have survived; however, their authorship remains uncertain.

³⁷ Available at: https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/porphyry_life_of_pythagoras_02_text.htm

Arignote of Samos, student, or daughter of Pythagoras	6th–5th century BCE	Samos	Philosopher	Pythagorean Philosophers	Texts ³⁸ attributed to Arignote are <i>Bacchica</i> , <i>The Mysteries of Demetra</i> , <i>A Sacred Discourse</i> , <i>Mysteries of Dionysus</i>	Pellò's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Waithe 1987: 11–19; Smith 1873 ³⁹
Themistoclea, teacher of Pythagoras	6th–5th century BCE	Delphi	Priestess at Delphi (ethics, geometry, arithmetic)	Professor at the Temple of Apollo	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius.	Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: book X, Ch. 1; Waithe 1987: 11–19
Okkelo of Lucania	6th–5th century BCE	Lucania	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Pellò's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Laks 2016: 92–93
Ekkelo of Lucania	6th–5th century BCE	Lucania	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Pellò's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Laks 2016: 92–93
Lastheneia, the Arcadian ⁴⁰	6th–5th century BCE	Arcadia, Mantinea	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women. She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius.	Pellò's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Nowlan 2017: 123; Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: book III, Ch.1; Iamblichus trans. Taylor, 1818: 138–139
Ch(e)ilonis of Sparta, the daughter of Chilon the Lacedaemonian	6th–5th century BCE	Sparta	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Pellò's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Laks 2016: 92–93; Nowlan 2017: 123; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 138
Cratesicle(i)a, wife of Cleanor	6th–5th century BCE	Sparta	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Pellò's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Laks 2016: 92–93; Nowlan 2017:

³⁸ A few fragments and letters attributed to her have survived; however, their authorship remains uncertain.

³⁹ Available at: <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0104%3AAalphabetic+letter%3DA%3Aentry+group%3D39%3Aentry%3DArignote-bio-1>

⁴⁰ Lastheneia of Arcadia is mentioned by Iamblichus as a Pythagorean philosopher, while Athenaeus identifies her as a student of Plato. Given the uncertainty over whether these references pertain to the same individual or different persons, she is listed twice in the Table to account for both possibilities.

						123; Iamblichus trans. Taylor, 1818: 138.
Cleachma, Sister of Autocharidas of Sparta	6 th –5 th century BCE	Sparta	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Pello's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Nowlan 2017: 123; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 139.
Ryndako, sister of Byndacis	6 th –5 th century BCE	Lucania	Philosopher Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 138.
Vavelyca (or Babelyca or Babelyma) the Argive	6 th –5 th century BCE	Argos	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	Iamblichus mentioned her.	Pello's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Laks 2016: 92–93; Iamblichus 1818: 139.
Boio (or Boeo or Bryo) the Argive	6 th –5 th century BCE	Argos	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Laks 2016: 92–93; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 139.
Nisleadusa, the Lacedaemonian	6 th –5 th century BCE	Sparta	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 139.
Melissa, a student of Pythagoras	6 th –5 th century BCE		Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean philosophers	Lovon from Argos mentioned her.	Nowlan 2017: 123; Dutsch 2020: 173–212
Eloris of Samos, a student of Pythagoras	6 th –5 th century BCE	Samos	Geometer	Pythagorean philosophers		Bobota 2021: https://greekwomeninstem.com/women-scientists-in-ancient-greece/
Tyrsenis, the Sybarit	6 th –5 th century BCE	Sybaris	Philosopher	Pythagorean philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Pello's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Pomeroy 2013: 7; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 139
P(e)isirrhonde the Tarentine	6 th –5 th century BCE	Tarentum	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Dutsch 2020: 47; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 139
Theadousa the Spartan	6 th –5 th century BCE	Sparta	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean philosophers	Iamblichus mentioned her.	Dutsch 2020: 47; Curnow 2006: 261

Echecratia the Phliasian	6th–5th century BCE	Phlius	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Laks 2016: 92–93; Pelló & Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 139
Phlilyts or Philtis, the daughter of Theophrisus the Crotonian	6th–5th century BCE	Croton	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus's list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Fideler 1987: ch.36; Pelló's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 138
Deino of Croton	6th–5th century BCE	Croton	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean philosophers	Iamblichus mentioned her.	Curnow 2006: 92
Theodora of Emesa, daughter of Kyrina and Diogenes	6th–5th century BCE	Alexandria	Philosopher and mathematician versed in geometry and higher arithmetic.	Neoplatonist philosopher, at Athenian Neoplatonic school. She also studied poetics, grammar, and mathematics.	Photius mentioned her in Bibliotheca: Codex 181.	Photius: Codex 181
Cleobulina of Rhodes, daughter of Cleobulus, mother or friend of Thales of Miletus	6th century BCE	Rhodes	Rhetorician, Poet, Philosopher		She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus.	Plant 2004: 29–32; Waithe 1987: 206–207; Bonelli 2021: 31–33
Polygnote, a student of Thales of Miletus	6th century BCE	Miletus	Philosopher, Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	Lovon from Argos mentioned her.	Rousioui, Siozos-Rousoulis: 1
Damo of Crotona, daughter of Pythagoras	6th–5th century BCE	Croton	Philosopher, Mathematician, Professor at Pythagorean Academia	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius and Iamblichus.	Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: Ch 8.1; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor 1818: 89; Waithe 1987: 11–19; Brooklyn Museum, <i>Damo</i> : https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/easefa/dinner_party/heritage_floor/damo
Diotima the Mandinea	5th–4th century BCE (469–399 BCE)	Mandinea, Arcadia	Priestess at Mandinea, Philosopher, Mathematician, Geometer	Pythagorean philosophers	Xenophon, Proklos, and Plato mentioned her.	Waithe 1987: Ch. 6

Arete of Cyrene, daughter of Aristippus	5 th –4 th century BCE	Cyrene	Philosopher	Cyrenaic (Hedonist) School	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius and in Socratic Epistles	Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: Ch 8; Waithe 1987:198; Dutsch 2020: 68–69
Aspasia of Miletus	5 th century BCE (470–400 BCE)	Miletus, Athens	Philosopher, Orator		She was mentioned by Plato, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Antisthenes, Plutarch, Kikeron, etc.	Waithe 1987: 75–82
Vitale, daughter of Damo, granddaughter of Pythagoras	5 th century BCE	Croton	Mathematician	Pythagorean Philosophers	Iamblichus mentioned her.	Pellò's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor 1818: Ch. 146, Nowlan 2017: 123
Abrotelia, Daughter of Abroteles the Tarentine	5 th century BCE	Tarentum	Philosopher (metaphysics, logic, aesthetics)	Pythagorean Philosophers	She was included in Iamblichus' list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Huizenga 2013: 9; Taylor 2006: 178; Laks 2016: 92–93; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor 1818: 139
Tymicha, wife of Myllias of Crotona	5 th century BCE	Sparta	Philosopher	Pythagorean Philosophers	According to Iamblichus one of her works refers to "amicable" numbers. She was included in Iamblichus' list of 17 Pythagorean women.	Pellò's review of Pomeroy 2016: 385–388; Curmow 2006: 273; Iamblichus, trans. Taylor, 1818: 138
Perictione, the mother of Plato or a disciple of Pythagoras ⁴¹	5 th century BCE	Athens	Philosopher		Texts attributed to Perictione are: On the Harmony of Women, On Wisdom	Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: iii. 4; Waithe 1987: 19–40
Aglaoniki of Thessalia	5 th century BCE	Thessalia	Astronomer, Taumaturgy		Plutarch and Apollonios of Rhodes mentioned her.	Bicknell 1983: 160–163

⁴¹ There appears to be some confusion about this woman philosopher. Some scholars hold that she was the mother of Plato while others support that there is no such connection, and the author of *On the Harmony of Women* (circa 425–300 BC) was a disciple of Pythagoras who had the same name.

Asclepigenia of Athens, daughter of Plutarch, teacher of Proclus	5 th century BCE	Athens	Philosophy, mysticism, teacher at her father's school after his death	Neoplatonic school of Athens		Curnow 2006: 52; Waithe 1987: 201–203
Aedesia of Alexandria	5 th century BCE	Alexandria	Philosopher	Neoplatonic school of Alexandria		Smith 1867: 23
Lasthenia of Mantinia	4 th –3 rd century BCE	Mantinia	Philosopher	Plato's Academia	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius as a student of Plato.	Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: iii. 46
Ptolemais of Cyrene	3 rd century BCE	Cyrene, Libya	Music theorist (the only known female music theorist of antiquity)	⁴² Neo-Pythagoreanism	Author of texts for the Theory of music: <i>Pythagorean Elements of Music</i> . Only a few fragments-quoted by Porphyry of Tyre in his <i>Commentary on the Harmonics of Ptolemy</i> -survive.	Plant 2004: 87, 248
Leontion, a student of Epicurus	4 th –3 rd century BCE	Athens	Philosopher	Epicurean Philosopher	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius and Kikero.	Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: x3; Athenaeus 1927: 558, 593
Aesara of Lucania	4 th or 3 rd century BCE	Lucania	Neopythagorean Philosopher	Pythagorean Philosophers	Text attributed to Aesara: On Human Nature. A fragment is preserved by Stobaeus.	Curnow 2006, 10; Pomeroy 2013: 118; Waithe 1987: 19–40
Sosipatra of Efesus	4 th century BCE,	Efesos, Pergamon	Philosopher and mystic	Neoplatonic Philosopher	She was mentioned by Eunapius's <i>Lives of the Sophists</i> .	Salisbury 2001: 329

⁴² There is a controversy regarding the dating and authenticity of the (Neo)Pythagorean women and their works. Issues such as their chronological discrepancies (with many texts attributed to authors who lived centuries earlier than the period in which they were written), the use of pseudonyms, the dialects in which they were written not corresponding to the supposed period of their composition, and the lack of sufficient evidence to confirm the existence of these authors, all raise questions and generate doubts about the authorship of specific texts. Although many of the texts are dismissed as pseudepigrapha and the authors 'Pseudo-Pythagoreans,' their study provides significant insights into the presence and role of women in ancient philosophy (Huffman 2019: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2024/entries/pythagoreanism/>).

Axiothea of Phius, a student of Plato and Speusippus	4 th century BCE	Phllesia	Philosopher	Plato's Academy	She was mentioned in Diogenes Laertius's-*9 Lives of the Eminent Philosophers.	Bailey 1986: 204–206; Waithe 1987: 205, 206; Dutsch 2020: 51–52
Nikarete of Megara	4 th century BCE	Megara	Philosopher	Megarian school	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius.	Athenaeus 1927: xiii. 596e; Diogenes Laerties, trans. Hicks, 1989: ii. 114.
Hypatia of Alexandria, daughter of the mathematician and philosopher Theon	4 th century BCE	Alexandria, Egypt, Eastern Roman Empire	Philosopher, Astronomer, Mathematician	Neoplatonic school of Alexandria	Texts attributed to Hypatia are Commentary on Diophantus of Alexandria's Arithmeticon, Commentary on the Conic Sections of Apollonius Pergaeus, Commentary on Ptolemy's Syntaxis Mathematica	Waithe 1987: 169–197
Pandrosion of Alexandria	4 th century BCE	Alexandria	Mathematician		She was mentioned in the Mathematical Collection of Pappus of Alexandria.	Pappus 1876: book 3.1; Knorr 1989: 63–76; Bernard 2003: 93–150; Watts 2017: 94–97
Hipparchia the Cynic, wife of Crates of Thebes	4 th –3 rd century BCE	Maroneia, Thrace	Philosopher	Cynicism	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius.	Pomeroy 2013: 49–53; Diogenes Laerties, trans. Hicks, 1989: vi, ch.7
Phintys, daughter of Callicrates	3 rd century BCE	Sparta	Philosopher	Pythagorean Philosophers	She wrote a work on the correct behavior of women, two extracts of which are preserved by Stobaeus (Stobaeus, iv 23.11).	Plant 2004: 84–86; Waithe 1987: 19–40
Themista of Lampsacus	3 rd century BCE	Lampsacus	Philosopher	Epicurus' school/ Epicureanism	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius.	Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: 10. 5, 25, 26
Batis/es of Lampsacus, student of Epicurus	3 rd century BCE	Lampsacus	Philosopher	Epicurus' school/ Epicureanism	She was mentioned by Diogenes Laertius.	Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks, 1989: book X. Ch. 23

Menexene daughter of Diodorus Cronus	3 rd century BCE	Iasos in the eastern Aegean	Philosopher, logician, dialectician	Megarian School		Protasi 2020: 4; Duncombe 2025; Wider 2020: 21– 63
Argeia daughter of Diodorus Cronus	3 rd century BCE	Iasos in the eastern Aegean	Philosopher, logician, dialectician	Megarian School		Protasi 2020: 4; Duncombe 2025; Wider 2020: 21– 63
Theognis daughter of Diodorus Cronus	3 rd century BCE	Iasos in the eastern Aegean	Philosopher, logician, dialectician	Megarian School		Protasi 2020: 4; Duncombe 2025; Wider 2020: 21– 63
Artemisia daughter of Diodorus Cronus	3 rd century BCE	Iasos in the eastern Aegean	Philosopher, logician, dialectician	Megarian School		Protasi 2020: 4; Duncombe 2025; Wider 2020: 21– 63
Pantaclea daughter of Diodorus Cronus	3 rd century BCE	Iasos in the eastern Aegean	Philosopher, logician, dialectician	Megarian School		Protasi 2020: 4; Duncombe 2025; Wider 2020: 21– 63

Table 1: The classification of ancient female philosophers.

Some important conclusions can be drawn from this table. First, thirty-six of these fifty-four ancient intellectuals lived and worked between the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. Therefore, it is evident that during this period, women were neither prohibited from studying or teaching in philosophical schools nor from contributing to the philosophical and scientific thought of the era. This view is further strengthened by the identification of texts and essays that some of them wrote, demonstrating that they did not merely study but, in some cases, dedicated their lives to philosophical or scientific research. Moreover, twenty-nine of these fifty-four significant women studied or taught in Pythagorean communities, with seventeen of them included in Iamblichus’s list of Pythagorean women (Table 1). As seen in Table 1, the seventeen Pythagorean women included in the Iamblichus catalog were Timycha, Philtys, the sisters Okkelo and Ekkelo, Cheilonis, Cratesicleia, Theano, Myia, Lasthenia, Abroteleia, Echecrateia, Tyrsenis, P(e)isirrhone, Nisleadusa, Boio, Vabelyca, and Kleaechma. Therefore, the Pythagorean communities were inclusive of women who sought to study, teach, and contribute to the preservation of Pythagorean knowledge and continue the Pythagorean tradition. This strengthens the argument that Pythagoras was a feminist philosopher or, to phrase it differently, a women-friendly philosopher.

Furthermore, as indicated in Table 1, several women philosophers chose to join the Megarian School⁴³ and Platonic or Neoplatonic philosophy. At the same time, fewer seemed to have turned to Epicureanism, Cynicism, and the Cyrenaic (Hedonist) School. In contrast, there is no information about the attendance of some of them at a particular school of philosophy. Furthermore, most women philosophers and scientists included in Table 1 studied philosophy, mathematics, geometry, or astronomy. This is no surprise considering that most of them were included in the Pythagorean communities.

⁴³ Wider 1986: 21–62; Duncombe 2025: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2024/entries/diodorus-cronus/>>.

In addition, Table 1 highlights the importance of the contributions of several historians, philosophers, doxographers, and compilers of a valuable series of extracts from Greek authors and writers who, through their texts, preserved and conveyed to us knowledge of these women and their studies. Based on this, Table 1 can also be used as a guide to specific sources that can be studied more extensively to uncover further information about the female philosophers in classical antiquity. As indicated by Table 1, the contributions of ancient intellectuals such as Diogenes Laertius, Athenaeus, Stobaeus, Pappus of Alexandria, Eunapius, Cicero, Apollonius of Rhodes, Plato, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Antisthenes, Photius, Proclus, Plutarch, and Iamblichus are noteworthy for their references to female philosophers. Consequently, their texts are essential sources for a more systematic and comprehensive investigation into the role and contributions of female philosophers in classical antiquity. The importance of these sources is indisputable, especially considering that texts from most women philosophers and scientists of this period have not survived. Thus, the texts of these historians and philosophers constitute the sole extant sources of knowledge regarding their contributions.

A well-known source is Iamblichus's list of seventeen Pythagorean women philosophers. However, it is important to note here that while Iamblichus's list includes many names of female Pythagorean philosophers, its reliability has been questioned for specific reasons.⁴⁴ The chronological distance between Iamblichus and Pythagoras is a major issue. Iamblichus lived approximately 800 years after Pythagoras. This substantial temporal gap raises concerns about the accuracy and integrity of the information, as the potential for distortions or additions increases over such an extended period. Moreover, Iamblichus does not provide specific references for the sources he used for his list. The absence of source documentation complicates the verification process and casts doubt on the authenticity and accuracy of the names and details he presents. Without clear references, it is challenging to assess the credibility of his claims. Given that this list is likely based on the work of Aristoxenus, it probably reflects what Aristoxenus learned from the fourth-century Pythagoreans. However, it is uncertain whether some names were added after Aristoxenus's time.⁴⁵ In addition, some names and details in Iamblichus's list are not corroborated by other ancient sources. This discrepancy suggests potential interpolations or alterations over time, further undermining the credibility of his account. These are some of the reasons why scholars are cautious about accepting his list at face value due to these inconsistencies.⁴⁶

Regardless of the various opinions expressed and the arguments questioning the validity of the Iamblichus list, it remains a noteworthy surviving source for the issue examined here. It is an initial attempt to gather and categorize knowledge about women philosophers in the ancient Greek world. Under these terms, the interesting information it provides cannot be excluded from this approach.

Another interesting observation is that, in the context of this study, I was unable to include women philosophers in the Atomist school, Eleatic school, Pluralism, Sophists, Eretrian school, Peripatetic school, in Pyrrhonism and Stoicism in Table 1. This observation

⁴⁴ Huffman 2019: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2024/entries/pythagoreanism/>>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Burkert 1972: 105; Zhmud 2012: 235–244.

⁴⁶ Huffman 2019: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2024/entries/pythagoreanism/>>.

is quite important, because if the identification of knowledge regarding a phenomenon under study is an important process that reinforces the development of scientific knowledge and science in general, then the identification of specific knowledge gaps is the starting point and a core motivation during the knowledge acquisition process as it leads to the formulation of new research hypotheses and questions, thus triggering the research process. From this some important questions arise: Did women study or teach in these ancient Greek schools of philosophy? How can modern historians and philosophers research this issue? What sorts of sources should they compile and study? Can references to other female philosophers be found within the existing international literature about ancient Greek philosophers, or is more extensive research of ancient Greek texts and treatises needed? These questions highlight new directions for future historical and philosophical research concerning the contributions of female philosophers and scientists to the evolution of scientific thought, while also showing how Table 1 could be used as a starting point for further research.

Finally, an important possibility for future research is a meticulous study not only of the international literature focusing on the history of philosophy in classical antiquity but also primarily on important ancient Greek sources such as philosophical and historical texts from Greek antiquity or even ancient Greek literature, the aim of which should be recognizing and identifying information about women philosophers included in these schools of philosophy.

4. Suggestions for Integrating Ancient Greek Female Philosophers into Modern Greek Academia and the Educational System

To address the existing lack of knowledge about ancient Greek female philosophers, it is essential to implement a multi-faceted approach that would require the Greek philosophical community to actively engage with both primary and secondary sources. First, it is important to encourage the Greek philosophical community to thoroughly investigate ancient sources and contemporary works that elucidate the social positions and ambiguities of life that shaped their historical period and intellectual contributions, thereby rectifying biases in the historical canon of antiquity. This effort could uncover and highlight relevant information that has been obscured or omitted, thus achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the social context around inquiry and knowledge production in Greek antiquity. With this in mind, Table 1 can also support this effort, which serves as a roadmap and a starting point for further research by providing a catalog of fifty-four women philosophers and proposing sources that researchers can meticulously study to collect more details about each one of them. The table itself is an initial effort to categorize these philosophers based on the period in which they lived, their place of residence, the field and the philosophical school to which they belong, and whether their texts have survived. However, this does not preclude future expansion or modification based on additional criteria that is yet to be introduced, newly identified philosophers, or further sources that may be studied. In this context, Table 1 can be translated into Greek and employed in two primary ways by researchers of Greek philosophy: It can serve as a guide that directs research efforts by providing relevant sources for further study; and it can be a source of

motivation for more extensive and systematic exploration of the topic. The objective would be to expand the table, complete the empty cells, and thereby enhance the existing body of knowledge on the subject under investigation.

Translating significant English works such as *Ancient Women Philosophers* and the *Handbook of Women and Philosophy* into Greek and using them as textbooks in schools or universities, either in their entirety or as specific chapters could motivate Greek high school and university students to learn about women philosophers in classical antiquity. In the same context, Table 1 can be used in high schools or departments of philosophy as part of an introductory course on women philosophers in classical antiquity, allowing students to initially recognize the existence of women philosophers and subsequently understand that they joined various philosophical communities and scientific fields.

Moreover, embracing interdisciplinary pluralism can be an effective strategy in the Greek scholarship of women in the ancient Greek world.⁴⁷ A method to familiarize students with this specific subject could be the integration of comprehensive studies on ancient Greek female philosophers into the educational curricula in Greek high schools and departments of philosophy and the philosophy and history of science. This step could involve developing dedicated courses or modules within broader philosophy and history programs, thus ensuring that students are exposed to the contributions of these women from early on in their education. Furthermore, fostering international collaboration between scholars and institutions is crucial for building a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. By sharing resources, research findings, and methodologies, scholars can work together to close the knowledge gap and achieve a more inclusive and accurate historical record of ancient Greek female philosophers. Encouraging interdisciplinary research that connects philosophy with other fields such as gender studies, history, and classical studies can provide a more holistic understanding of the contributions of ancient Greek female philosophers. Such an approach can reveal the broader social and cultural contexts in which these women lived and worked, and offer a richer and more nuanced perspective on their intellectual contributions. Organizing public lectures, seminars, and discussions to raise awareness about the contributions of these philosophers can help popularize this knowledge.

Finally, establishing a university department specializing in the history and philosophy of women in science that focuses on the contribution of these female intellectuals could be vital step for beginning a systematic and organized investigation of this issue within the Greek scientific community for several reasons. First, research on this specific issue would intensify and lead to a substantial discussion within the Greek research community. Additionally, the number publications on the topic would increase. Moreover, since most Greek universities require students to attend and pass exams in courses from other departments to accumulate the required number of credits to obtain a degree, even students in other programs at the same university would also have a chance to attend courses at this department. Therefore, the establishment of a department specializing in the history and philosophy of women in science, for instance, at the School of Philosophy at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, would entail mandatory and elective courses for students enrolled in other departments (e.g., the Departments of Philology or

⁴⁷ Protasi 2020: 7–13.

History and Archaeology). Under these conditions, there would be a distinct specialized department reinforcing research on these subjects, while the rest of students at the School of Philosophy would also have the opportunity and obligation to attend the corresponding courses. Thus, they would be given an opportunity and the motivation to learn about these important topics.

Finally, if there were a department specializing in women philosophers, it would be easier to collaborate with universities abroad, research centers, and organizations serving the same subject. Consequently, finding grants and scholarships and fostering collaboration between universities and research institutions could be facilitated. These efforts would provide the necessary support and resources for scholars to delve deeper into this area of study.

5. Conclusions

Insufficient research and a fragmentary understanding of the contribution of women in antiquity to philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics reveal two necessities for modern Greek historiography and philosophical research. Greek philosophers and historians of science must research this issue more extensively while also revolutionizing their cultural and intellectual habitudes. Moreover, they need to proceed with reforming the historical framework of human intellectual activity in classical antiquity regarding significant philosophers and scientists based on the scientific value of their theories and their contributions to the development of scientific thought rather than on other criteria such as their gender or their role in their society or even in modern society. In other words, Greek philosophers and historians of science should revise the interpretation of history based on ancient texts and sources and contemporary scholarly literature, which at the same time must also be taught at Greek schools and universities.

Throughout this paper, I have argued that the first step in the challenge of overcoming this important knowledge gap in Greek historiography and philosophical research is to collect, categorize, and present existing knowledge about female philosophers of this era. To this end, I have compiled and provided an extensive list of important women philosophers from classical antiquity that also includes the period in which they lived, the field and the philosophical school to which they belong, and other information about them such as whether their texts have survived. With this, I seek the first step through this list that presents an important part of the existing knowledge about them.

However, as the women intellectuals included in the proposed table fall into only some of the basic academies of philosophy in Greek antiquity, questions arise concerning the possibility of women philosophers within other schools of philosophy, and specifically the Atomist school, Eleatic school, Pluralism, Sophists, Eritrean school, Peripatetic school, Pyrrhonism, and Stoicism. A meticulous study of ancient Greek historical, philosophical, and even literary texts can bring to light essential information regarding women's participation in these philosophical schools, and it can also contribute to reorganizing existing knowledge and reconstructing the historical framework of ancient Greek philosophical thought.

In this context, the information and conclusions that have so far emerged from the proposed list prove that compiling, categorizing, and meticulously studying existing

knowledge of female Greek philosophers in antiquity is a crucial step toward reforming the historical framework of human intellectual activity in classical antiquity. However, more extended research is needed to overcome the significant knowledge gap identified within the Greek scientific community. In this respect, the philosophy textbooks used in Greek high schools should be reviewed and revised to include female philosophers. Moreover, the curricula used in Greek high schools and departments of philosophy and history and philosophy of science can be enhanced by integrating translated volumes that offer detailed and in-depth analyses of this issue, along with the use of the proposed Table 1. From this, high school students will be given the opportunity and motivation to read and learn about ancient Greek female philosophers' theories. Accordingly, relevant courses can be provided throughout the curricula of departments of philosophy in several Greek universities. Last, the establishment of a university department specializing in the history and philosophy of women in science that focuses on the contributions of these female intellectuals could be a significant step in beginning the systematic and organized investigation of this issue within the Greek scientific community.

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ВИРГИНИЈА ГРИГОРИАДУ

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ГРЧКЕ ФИЛОЗОФКИЊЕ КЛАСИЧНЕ СТАРИНЕ

Резиме

У раду се дискутује значајна празнина у знању која је примећена у проучавањима грчке филозофије и историографије, а која одражава устаљене друштвене околности и уверења. Реч је о одсуству систематског и опсежног истраживања теорија грчких филозофкиња, као и о одређеној мери њиховог искључивања из историографских оквира. Проблем открива да у данашњој Грчкој и даље погрешно ишчитавамо историју, а такође наглашава потребу новог почетка у проучавању античких грчких филозофкиња. Такође, овим се подвлачи потреба реформисања историјског оквира интелектуалних активности у античком периоду, као и ревизија наших културних хабитуалних ставова („habitudes“). Рад има за циљ да пружи списак античких грчких жена мислитељки као почетак много дубљег истраживања. Овде је начињена широка листа од 54 филозофкиња класичне старине, укључујући и податке о периоду и граду у којем је свака живела, пољу деловања, филозофској школи, заједници, или академији којој је припадала, као и о томе да ли је њено дело сачувано.

Кључне речи: Грчка, филозофкиње, класична старина, историјски оквир, листа.

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