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Accra Bespoke Multidisciplinary Innovations Conference (ABMIC)

Female Pacesetters in Classical Greece

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ABSTRACT

Ancient authors and modern scholars have devoted volumes of literature to the lives of women in the Classical Age. Modern scholarship on women have discussed the roles and status of women in antiquity. While some scholars have argued that the thoughts, actions, physiology and psychology of women have been presented by men downing the voice of the woman in antiquity, others have discussed the informal education of girls and its dissimilarities with that of boys, with little attention paid to notable women whose actions caused a change in society. This study therefore, attempted to examine remarkable women in the Classical Era, with a view to understanding how effective their roles were irrespective of their status in their societies and the parts they played, even in providing security for their states. The historical methodology is adopted in analyzing the question. Abraham Maslow's Theory of Motivation serves as framework for the study. Studies that may examine famous women in the Roman Imperial Era are recommended.

Keywords: Women in antiquity, female leaders, Greek women

Proceedings Citation Format

Anenih, M.O. (2022): Female Pacesetters in Classical Greece. Proceedings of the 31st Accra Bespoke Multidisciplinary Innovations Conference. University of Ghana/Academic City University College, Accra, Ghana. 1st – 3rd June, 2022. Pp 61-72
www.isteams.net/ghanabespoke2022.
dx.doi.org/10.22624/AIMS/ABMIC2022P8

1. INTRODUCTION

Ancient authors such as Hesiod, Aristotle, Thucydides and Homer among others have narrated the lives of women in Classical Greece. Modern scholars understand the history of women through the lens of male authors, with the exception of Sappho, Anyte of Tegea and a few other

female poets. Life was not as free for women as it was for men. The society was dominated by men, and women lacked the status of legal personhood. Women were merely a part of the household of a man as she was always under the guardianship of either her father, brother or husband. Men received formal education but women did not enjoy the privilege. Marrou (1956, p. 35) informs us that Athenian girls did not receive any formal education like the boys until the Hellenistic Era. Hemingway (2004), discusses how women were socialized in Classical Greece. Women faced several restrictions in the society. Donaldson (1907, p. 52) notes that a woman was meant to remain indoors and be obedient to her father or husband as the case may be. However, women were permitted to participate with men in specific religious festivals such as the Panathenaia in honour of the goddess Athena; the Eleusinian Mysteries in honour of the goddesses Demeter and Persephone; and the Anthesteria in honour of the god Dionysos.

Some other festivals that were of exclusive admittance to women included the Thesmophoria, the Haloa, and the Skira. These festivals “emphasized the correlation of a woman’s generative capabilities with the renewal of vegetation and, thus, the survival of society.” Richter (1971, p. 2), discusses the several consenting voices and a sole dissenting voice on the state of women in Classical Greece. Gomme (1925), who is the sole dissenting voice as noted by Richter, proposes that the views of the consenting voices were inconsistent with the evidence of dignified feminism as represented in Attic Art and drama in Classical Greece. This feminism that is seen in the Arts as noted by Gomme is not represented in many real life situations. For Gomme’s thought is not consistent with themes presented by several ancient writers. Women were barred from several activities and state functions. They took the backseat, or were deprived of any seat due to the fact that women were not combatants and were excluded from such, and the male gender was the custodian of the culture. Yet, some women broke the restrictions placed on them by society and achieved feats.

The debate on women in antiquity continues to receive attention as many modern scholars have discussed and analyzed the effectiveness of women in antiquity as they transcended their limitations, with little attention paid to a few remarkable women and their roles in building and securing their societies. This study therefore, focuses on some famous women in the Classical era, with a view to understanding the manner at which they broke boundaries, even as they also secured their lives and their states. The historical methodology is adopted, while Abraham Maslow’s theory of motivation serves as framework.

1.1. Abraham Maslow’s Theory Of Motivation

Abraham Maslow’s theory of needs is utilized to study and understand how human beings essentially participate in behavioral motivation. Maslow describes the stages or patterns of motivation humans go through, beginning from the bottom to the top. They are the psychological, safety, belonging and love, social esteem, and self-actualization needs. Maslow states that when one is satisfied or has met the needs of a particular stage, then he is motivated to meet the needs at the next stage. In other words, people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving to achieve other needs. These basic needs are psychological needs such as air, water, food, sexual intercourse, sleep, clothes and shelter. In presenting his theory of motivation, Deckers (2018) notes that Maslow created a system of classification that reflected the universal needs at the base and more complex needs at the peak. The hierarchy of needs is divided between deficiency needs and growth need. While the theory is represented in a pyramid-like structure, Bridgman (2019) notes that Maslow did not create the pyramid.

Poston (2009) argues that the hierarchy needs is a psychological idea and a valuable tool that is utilized in several fields such as education, social work and health care, among others. The theory pictures needs that a person must have met before he attains self-actualization. The five stages on Maslow's theory of motivation and their components include: Psychological needs which includes air, water, food, sexual intercourse, sleep, clothes and shelter. Maslow (1943) argues that when this psychological need is met, then one is motivated to satisfy the next need which is the safety need. The safety need includes, health, personal security, emotional security and financial security. As soon as this need is met, the need on the next stage which is belonging and love, take precedence and dominate the behavior of the individual. The component of the belonging and love stage are: family, friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance and giving and receiving affection. The next stage is the social esteem need. Its components are; status, recognition, fame, prestige and attention. The last stage which is at the peak of the hierarchy of needs is the self-actualization need. Its components are; partner acquisition, parenting, utilizing and developing talents and abilities and pursuing goals.

It is arguable that women who broke boundaries in the Classical Era were motivated by the needs even as presented by Maslow. Having met the basest of needs, they were motivated to break limitations and achieve the unexpected and placing their societies on the map of innovations, with their ideas, inventions, skills and expertise. They performed excellently well that history and their custodians remember them in spite of their place and status in society.

2. ROLE OF WOMEN IN ANTIQUITY

Women could not vote, become landowner or inherit. They had no political rights and they were dominated and controlled by men. Their primary aim was to bear and rear children and to care for the home. They carried out duties such as agricultural work which included harvesting of olives and gathering of fruits and vegetables. They managed the day-to-day running of the homes. They also handled other skills such as spinning, weaving and sewing attires for the family. They dominated the home spaces because men were usually absent from the homes. They spent their time in the courtyard in their homes as portrayed in vase art. Women were restricted from outdoors. They were only permitted to visit nearby neighbours. Some women were allowed to participate in some religious functions. As girls, they were educated and taught dancing, gymnastics (for Spartan girls), and musical accomplishments. The girl-child did not receive an education that would stimulate her intellectual development. The role of a woman was to be married and care for the home. Society situated women in this sphere. Women were socialized to remain there. However, some women were motivated to meet the need of self-actualization and so broke their boundaries, escaping from this space and achieving several feats that could not be ignored by ancient writers.

2.1 Notable Women in Antiquity

Some women in antiquity performed impressive acts and arts. Many of these women rose above the restrictions placed on them by the society and went ahead to achieve much more for themselves and societies. Although ancient writers did not dwell on the histories of women, some of these women could not be ignored. The lives of women such as Hydna of Scione, Telesilla of Argos, Agnodice of Athens, Thargelia of Miletus, Phryne of Thespinae, Arete of Cyrene, Timycha of Sparta, Philaenis of Samos, Sappho, Aspasia, Gorgo of Sparta, Olympias of Macedon and Lysimache of Athens and their contributions to their states will be discussed in this study.

Hydna of Scione

Pausanias in his **Description of Greece**, 10.19.1 tells us the story of Hydna of Scione. She was the daughter of Scyllis of Scione. Her father was a diving expert and instructor. This he did for a living. He taught his daughter Hydna swimming and she became adept at the sport. She possessed the ability to dive into deep parts and swim long distances. This her skill came into use when Greece was under attack from the Persians in 480 BC. Having sacked Athens, the Persians also defeated the Greeks on the mainland at Thermopylae. Thereafter, the Persians decided to destroy the naval Greek force at the naval battle of Salamis. Pausanias further narrated that Hydna and her father swam ten miles into the sea, diving beneath the ships of the Persians to cut the anchors and other security the ships had. Consequently, some of the ships drifted away, some ran aground and others were damaged. Hydna and her father assisted in giving victory to the Greeks for if the Persians had succeeded, Greece would have been lost. Smith (2007 p.792) states that the Amphictyons dedicated statues to Hydna and her father at Delphi for their acts of heroism. Lightman (2008 p. 158) mentions that Emperor Nero plundered her statue and took it to Rome. Hydna was certainly motivated to meet the need for survival. If Greece, was conquered by the Persians, there would be no Greece, and she and her father would be taken captives, and eventually slaves living a life devoid of the freedom and independence Greece was known for.

Telesilla of Argos

She lived in the 5th century. She was a poet and a warrior. Antipater mentions her as one of earthly muses. She was also known for defending and securing her city of Argos against the Spartans under the command of Cleomenes I, when they attacked in 494/493 BC. Pausanias in his *Description of Greece* narrates her role in warring against Cleomenes. Cleomenes I had annihilated the Argive forces at Sepeia and at the Sanctuary of Argus, he decided to take down Argos. Telesilla raided the armory for weapons, collected ornamental arms from the temples, organized the city for defense, equipped a force of women with arms and ammunition and marched against the Spartans and inflicted heavy losses on the Spartans. Cleomenes had to tactically retreat, because he recognized that he faced a difficult situation: if he defeated her, he would have no honour in killing women, and if he was defeated it would go down in history that Sparta was defeated by a group of girls. This was how one woman was motivated by the need to safeguard her city and she in turn motivated other women to securing her city against the enemy. She was a warrior at heart and of course, proved it when it became necessary. She achieved this feat in spite of the restrictions society had placed on her.

Agnodice of Athens

The life of Agnodice was an interesting one. She broke boundaries and emerged a successful female medical doctor. She was a challenge to a male-dominated profession in antiquity. During the period she lived, women were only allowed to serve as midwives until it was assumed that they procured abortions for women, they were then prohibited from these services and any woman who was caught practicing medicine of this sort was put to death. Agnodice who was interested in medicine, cut her hair, disguised as a man and travelled to Egypt to study medicine. In Egypt, women were allowed to practice medicine. She returned to Athens and continued to practice medicine still disguised as a man. She became popular among female patients especially those who were ashamed or refused to see male doctors (King, 2013, p 252). These female patients knew she was a woman. However, she was accused by some men of seducing female patients. The accusers thought she was a man. On trial at the Areopagus, she revealed that she was a woman. Next, the men threatened to execute her for disobeying the law, but she was defended by Athenian women of note in the society.

King (1986, p. 53-54) notes that the laws were changed and women were allowed to practice medicine. Agnodice was motivated to meet the need for self-actualization, having met other needs. Agnodice could not be held down by the boundaries set by the society. She took the gauntlet and allowed herself to utilize what strategy that was necessary to become a medical doctor. She went beyond the limitations of the society, establishing the entrance into the medical profession for women interested in the field.

Thargelia

She was a beautiful, clever and charming woman, although she was a courtesan. She lived in Thessaly. Plutarch in his *Parallel Lives* tells us that she was a pro-Persian Greek and she convinced many influential men to consider the Persian cause when Persia intended to conquer Greece in 480 BC. She was concerned about the Persian cause and often collected information from men she seduced and handed the information to Persia. Plutarch notes that she was so seductive that no man could resist her charms. She spread the Persian cause and was considered an enemy of Greece, although one can say she was also indirectly working towards a stable Greece. Greece was at the time troubled on all sides by internecine strife. She was a friend of Persia. She attached all her consorts to the king of Persia. To the Greeks, she was the antithesis of Hydna of Scione, but to the Persians, she was an advocate of the Persian cause.

She could succeed in her venture due to the fact that some Greeks preferred Persian rule because it was more stable than the squabbling and fighting that had become common between the Greeks. Thargelia was motivated to become a spy for a so called enemy nation such as Persia. This is because she believed her safety was in Persia that had a stable system of government. Some Greeks even preferred the Persian cause to that of the Greeks. Having succeeded in destroying Persia's hold on Greece, Greece fought the Peloponnesian War, and Sparta who vanquished her Athenian opponents, had to secure the aid of that same Persia to defeat Athens. If the Greeks had an intuition of what Thargelia tried to achieve, the Peloponnesian War may not have occurred and Greece would have continued to hold her space secure.

Phryne of Thespieae

A famous courtesan who lived between 370 and 316 BC in Athens (Kapparis, 2018), was from Thespieae in Boeotia as noted by Eidinow (2016). She is famous for the court case she won by exposing her breasts. Plutarch in his *Moralia* and Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophistae* 13.60, tells us that her actual name was Mnesarete meaning "commemorating virtue". However, she was addressed as Phryne meaning "Toad" this is due to her yellow complexion of her skin. McClure (2014) mentions that she was also called Saperdion. Kapparis (2018) claims that she may have dedicated a statue of Eros to Thespieae. She was very beautiful as she became the model for several artists and sculptors as she posed as Aphrodite. It is believed that the statute of Aphrodite of Krudos was modelled on her. She was charged to court on the count of impiety which was concerned with her acts on the Elusinian Mysteries. It is conjectured that she took the sacred *Kykeon* (a potentially psychoactive drink) for a private party with her friends. Therefore she was charged to court. Her Solicitor Hypereides, who was also her lover tried vehemently to defend her, but the judges were determined to condemn her. Therefore, Hypereides then disrobed Phryne, the judges were so astonished by her beauty that she was acquitted. Thereafter, she continued with her life of luxury. She became so wealthy, she lived as she desired and offered to rebuild the walls of Thebes that was destroyed by Alexander the Great (Davidson, 1997) with the following inscribed on the wall; "*Destroyed by Alexander, Restored by Phryne the Courtesan.*" The Thebans rejected the offer.

Arete of Cyrene

She lived in the 4th century BC. She was the daughter of the Aristippus of Cyrene (Oglive, 1986) who was a hedonist philosopher. Having been influenced by her father as she grew up, she became a philosopher of the Cyrenaic School. She took over the Cyrenaic school after the death of her father. Her maxim or philosophy of “I possess, I am not possessed” indicated that although one could acquire several material wealth, one is not to be controlled or ruled by one’s possessions, as those possessions would belong to another at one’s demise. Therefore, one’s interest should be to pursue pleasure, enjoy the things of this world and not allow one’s possession to control one. Arete wrote over 40 books, but none of them are extant. She was a single mother and Diogenes in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, ii. 72, 83, 86 tells us that she raised Aristippus the Younger who took over the operation of the Cyrenaic School at the demise of Arete. Nathan (2014, p.99-100) mentions Theodorus the Atheist and Anniceris, a Cyrenaic philosopher as some of her pupils. Arete broke several boundaries. She was a philosopher, managed the Cyrenaic School and singlehandedly raised her child.

Timycha of Sparta

Timycha lived in the early 4th century BC. She was an adherent of the Pythagorean philosophy. She travelled often with her husband, Myllias of Croton, and a band of Pythagoreans (Curnow 2006, p.273). She was truly courageous, especially in adversity with regard to persecution of adherents of the Pythagorean philosophy. This philosophy accentuated the immortality of the soul and the sacredness of life. Pythagoreans were vegetarians and desisted from consuming beans. They believed that the shape of beans especially the fava bean, was an outlet for souls returning to earth. They also believed in reincarnation or the transmigration of souls. Souls returned to earth from the underworld through bean fields. This information was only reserved for members who had been initiated into the mysteries. At a point in time, Timycha who was six months pregnant and her fellow Pythagorean philosophers had a squabble with the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius the Elder.

He invited them to discuss tenets of their philosophy. Having believed that his intentions were insincere, they turned down his request. Dionysius felt offended and decided to forcefully bring them to his court. The soldiers came to arrest the philosophers. However, they resisted the soldiers and they were killed with the exception of Timycha and Myllias. The fact of the matter is that the philosophers could have escaped through a bean field nearby, but refused to do so due to their belief about the transmigration of souls through the bean seed. When the two were brought before Dionysius, he was intrigued to discover that they refused to escape and he questioned Timycha repeatedly about the matter. She refused to respond to his questions. He ordered that she be tortured. She was and when she was brought back to him, she, in defiance of the king, bit off her tongue and threw it at his feet. The aftermath of her actions were not referenced. Later Pythagoreans referred to Timycha as a hero, a martyr and a model of courage for the cause.

Philaenis of Samos

She was a courtesan and a writer. She lived in the 4th century BC. Her father was Ocymenes and her mother was Gyllina (Plant, 2004 p. 45-47). She authored an ancient sex manual containing the proper etiquette for courting a member of the same or opposite sex, perfumes, cosmetics, means of inducing abortions, the art of kissing, the art of seduction and methods on successful passes. Her work is no longer extant. However, Boehringer (2014) and Vessey (1976), indicate that she was cited by later authors in antiquity. She was also popular with her style of writing her *History of Sex*. It was in the style of Herodotus’ *Histories*.

Her book was famous, however, it was condemned by the public. Christian Apologists such as Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria disapproved of the work of Philaenis, because they viewed it as depraved and immoral. The modern authors, Thomas Heywood and John Donne also viewed her as a sexual deviant. Furthermore, modern scholars such as Plant (2004) and Boehringer (2014) disagree on the veracity of her being the author. They assume that she was a fictional character used as a persona by several erotic writers in antiquity. Montserrat (2011) assumed that her persona as used by these ancient writers was one of a courtesan. If indeed she authored the manual, it then suggests that, she broke several boundaries to achieve her feats. As a woman, she shouldn't have been a writer, much less a writer of the history of such subject-matter. She was motivated to meeting this need of self-actualization having met other needs. Her work of arts demonstrated her innate skill of writing which she displayed, in spite of the restrictions the society placed on her.

Sappho

Sappho was the first female poet in Classical Greece (630-570BC). Her legacy continues to this day. She was from the island of Lesbos. Her family was a wealthy merchant one. Information about her are from her writings. She was born at the end of the 7th century BC. She was obviously highly educated. Her poetry gives credence to that. According to some scholars, she taught girls the art of poetry, music and dancing. Sappho was the pioneer of lyric poetry and her poems are centered on love and experiences of feelings. She was very creative for her poems were rich in imagery and sensuality. Her work was indeed admired in antiquity due to its complexity and subtlety. She wrote about 10,000 lines of poetry, but only about 650 survive, suggesting that she was a prolific writer. Plato referred to her as the tenth Muse.

Catullus was inspired by her works. Some people believed that her literary work was a proof that she was a homosexual, because some of her love poems are addressed to women. The words lesbian and Sapphic derive from Sappho. Sappho's work provide a rare insight into the lives of women in Classical Greece. Rayor and Liardinois (2014) state that she was well known as a symbol of love and desire between women. Sappho inspired later Hellenistic poems, as well as the iambic and the elegiac (Liardinois 2014 p. 8). Campbell (1982) mentions that ancient authors claim that Sappho wrote only love poems. However, Bierl and Lardinois (2016 p.3) affirm that a series of papyri that was published in 2014 contains fragments of 10 poems of Sappho and of these, two are love poems, while three are poems about the family. Sappho lived in an era where women were only seen and not heard. Sappho was motivated to become such an author having met the other needs.

Aspasia

She was one of the most powerful and influential women of the Classical Age. She lived in the 5th century BC. She was born in Miletus, a Greek city on the western coast of Asia Minor (Bricknell, 1982). Her father's name was Axiochus (Azoulay, 2014 p. 104). Henry (1995, p.3) notes that she was an important figure in the 5th century. Henry (*ibid* p. 29) further mentions that she was referenced in these ancient sources; the Athenian Comedy and the Socratic Dialogues. She was a member of the household of Pericles, the famous General and politician of Athens. Pericles divorced his wife and she became his mistress in about 445 BC. She was also known to have demonstrated a level of independence that was not known or experienced by Greek women. She was the intellectual and political adviser of Pericles. She went out in public and also received and entertained members of the Athenian elite. In the *Suda*, an ancient encyclopedia, she is referenced as a teacher of rhetoric. Plutarch informs us that she engaged Socrates in philosophical discussions.

It was believed that she had great influence over Pericles, consequently, his political rivals and playwrights used that as a leverage against him as they criticized him. Aristophanes, in his *The Archarnians*, places the blame of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war on her. The fact remains that the Peloponnesian war was caused by the two super powers of Athens and Athens and their supporters when they both refused to stand down and opt for amicable resolutions. Aspasia's wit and intelligence aided her rise to an unparalleled position in the Classical age. Although some men referred to her as a *hetaera* (prostitute). It seemed to be a word used on women who had considerable influence in the society even over some men. It seemed the ancients thought that a courtesan or a prostitute could exhibit or demonstrate the kind of freedom these successful women displayed without incurring the wrath of society due to that status of hetaera placed on such kind of women. She went beyond the limits society placed on women and became who she eventually was.

Gorgo of Sparta

Gorgo was the daughter of king Cleomenes I of Sparta. He reigned from 520-490 BC. Herodotus in his *Histories Book 5 Chapter 49* mentions her in his histories when Aristagoras came to king Cleomenes I seeking allies to invade the Persian Empire after the revolt of the Ionians. King Cleomenes I refused to help, but Aristagoras returned with bribes, it was then that Gorgo, who was only 9 years old, advised the king to leave Aristagoras lest he became corrupted by him. The King heeded her advice and left Aristagoras. The later left and was never heard of again. Queen Gorgo of Sparta was also exceptional, even right from her childhood as Spartan women from an early age were treated the same way as boys in care and upbringing. The idea was to keep the women healthy so that they could give birth to healthy offspring, who in turn would become brave and successful warriors. This system may have encouraged and boosted the courage, resilience, assertiveness and confidence of Gorgo. Herodotus informs us that at age 9, Gorgos advised her father the king to avoid participating in the Persian war. She is the perfect figurehead for the archetypal woman of Sparta. Plutarch presents us with the view of Spartan women by an Athenian woman as seen in this conversation between an Athenian woman and Gorgo.

"Athenian woman: "Why are you Spartan women the only ones who rule over their husbands?"
Gorgo: "Because only we are the mothers of men". (Plutarch, Sayings of Spartan Women).

In 490 BC, Gorgos was married to Leonidas I, the king of Sparta who was courageous to go against the Persians in spite of the advice of the oracles and several other prominent men in Greece. He was able to demystify the Persians, although he died at the battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC. Gorgos on her own also helped during the war. When a strategic message was sent to the elders of Sparta who could not decipher what to make of the blank tablet, Herodotus in his *Histories Book 7, Chapter 239* tells us that Gorgo suggested that the wax be carefully scraped so that the message could be revealed. The advice was heeded and her suggestion was indeed helpful. Kahn (1996, p.82) mentions that she was the first recorded female cryptanalyst. She must have been a dutiful wife and mother. One who was concerned about the needs of the home and the Spartan State. As Leonidas went to battle against the Persians and knowing that he might die in battle, she asked Leonidas what she could do, Leonidas told her to marry a good man who would treat her well, and bear children (Roberts, 2008, P. 83). The Spartan system of education was a motivating factor for Gorgo who was trained by the system to be assertive and confident. This was evident in her even from age 9, and as the daughter of the king, she was likely to be effectively and doubly trained in the many exercises and skills that girls were subjected to. As an adult, it is not surprising that she demonstrated the intelligence and confidence that she has come to be known for.

Olympias

The wife of King Philip II and queen of Macedon. She was born in about circa 375 BC and died in 316 BC. She was the eldest daughter of Neoptolemus I king of Epirus. She was originally named Myrtae, but she was later called Olympias due to the victory of King Phillip II at the Olympic Games of 356 BC. She had two children for King Philip II. Philip later divorced her in 337 BC and married the high-born Macedonian lady, Cleopatra. Consequently, she withdrew to Epirus. Olympias was the mother of Alexander the Great and a great influence during the conquering years of Alexander (Carney 2006, p. 23). When King Philip was murdered in 336 BC, she returned to Macedon and killed Cleopatra and her daughter. This action paved way for Alexander to solely claim the throne of his late father. Alexander died in 323 at the age of 32. Olympias then struggled with Polyperchon and Cassander for the throne of Macedon. Polyperchon entered an alliance with Olympias to defeat Cassander. But Cassander defeated them and Olympias was compelled to surrender. The Macedon Assembly got her convicted, but Cassander's armies refused to execute her. Cassander then handed her over to the relatives of those she had killed and they eventually avenged the death of their relatives. Ancient authors viewed her as a woman of great passions and an imperious nature. She is said to be devoted to the cult of Dionysus. This cult is famous for its rituals that were wild and ecstatic in nature. Olympias was a powerful woman. She was motivated to fulfil this need of self-actualization. She wanted to wield control and power over the throne of Macedon, therefore, she stood toe-to-toe with very powerful men of her time.

Lysimache

Lysimache was the daughter of Drakontides, She was the high priestess of one of the three prominent cults of Athens. The other two were the high priest of Poseidon-Erechtheus and the priestess of Athena Nike. She was the high Priestess of Athena, the patron goddess of Athens. She lived for 88 years. She held this position for 64 years and saw four generations of children. Below is an inscription describing her service to Athena.

[Λυσιμάχη? γραῖ? ἡδ]ε Δρακο[ντί]δ[ος] ἦν [τὸ γέ]ν[ος] μὲν, [ὀγδώκοντ' ὀκτ]ῶ[ν] δ' ἔξεπεράσ[εν] ἔτη· [. . .]ιν [ἐξή]κ[ο]ντα δ' ἔτη καὶ τέσσαρα Ἀθάναι [λάτρευσ' ἡδὲ γένη] τέσσαρ' ἐπεῖδε τέκνων. [Λυσιμάχη - -]έος Φλυέως μήτηρ. [Δημήτριος ἐ]π[ό]θησεν.

[This old woman? Lysimache?] was daughter of Drakontides with respect to her descent, / and she lived 88 years; / having served Athena 64 years / she saw four generations of children. [Lysimache], mother of [- -]es Phlyeus. [Demetrios] made it. (IG II2 3453) (Keesling, 2012).

Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*. *Liber XXXIV*: 76 confirms the veracity of the sculpture of Lysimache made by Demetrios the sculptor. He informs us that the city of Athens erected a statue by the sculptor Demetrios in her honour. This honour was exceptional especially that it was given to a woman. Lysimache was a rare example of a woman who held a prestigious position in the Athenian society.

3. CONCLUSION

Women's roles in the Classical Age were those associated with the family and home. Women were under the guardianship or control of men. Society placed women in a sphere that the women themselves could not and were not meant to interrogate and challenge. They were socialized to remain in that sphere. Women were indeed the weaker sex. Attempting to rebel against this status was an attempt to bring oneself to ridicule and be expunged from the society in the eyes and minds of the people. Many women did or could not disobey the rules. However, history has proven that one, irrespective of how powerful he is, cannot stop the mind from seeking answers to questions that overwhelm him or her. Some women in antiquity in seeking to explore and engage their innate abilities which, they developed through some form of education, or where society named or placed them (*hetaerae*), were motivated to break limitations placed on them by society as they achieved what women were not expected to achieve. Their actions, in some cases resulted in saving their states; and in other instances, promoted or invented ideas and methods that were and continue to be beneficial to mankind.

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