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Those women who bore a name. Social and political agency in Greek Antiquity (Eurykleia Project)

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V. Sebillotte, *Those women who bore a name. Social and political agency in Greek Antiquity (Eurykleia Project)*

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First I would thank Prof Ariadne Tatti and the University of Ioanina, for this opportunity to present our Research Center. It is, thanks to the lengthy friendship between the members of Louis Gernet Center and those of Ioanina University that we can go ahead and improve our research by exchanges, discussions, shared projects.

I am delighted to catch this opportunity to present Eurykleia Project in front of you. Eurykleia Project, a on-going Project, brings together several colleagues from Europe and Brazil in order to make room for women in the historiography of Antiquity.

To briefly summarize it, the aim of the Project is to offer to everybody a database of information about women in Antiquity. The database does not include mythical figures and, at that point, not even anonymous women. The chronological and geographical scope is broad enough to include both Greek and Roman worlds (from 8th c BCE to the 5th c. CE). The main goal is to propose to everyone (even for people who are not classicists) another way to considering those who acted in ancient societies, by giving them access to various documents naming women and describing their acts.

The database is a database of documents. The documents we select are those naming women by their name, not the name of their father, brother or whatever masculine member of their family. To be honest, those women must have been considered, at the moment of their quotation in the document, as real persons, I mean historical persons. We won't deal with goddesses' acts or names. The goal of the Project is to underline the variety of way of considering these acts and these women. That means that we have to be very precise in defining the document quoting the woman, the focalization of the act depicted, the comments engaged in this depiction, etc.

Before going on, I would like to attract your attention on the fact that our work is deeply engaged in the big trend of digital studies that allow quantitative approach of antiquity. It is also clearly depending on the substantial prosopographic enterprises that have been developed from the second half of the 20th century. Our Project is completely different, and as our approach is a very new one, we don't know such an equivalent today, either in France or in the world, I need to take stock of the situation.

You may know that **Johannes Kirchner** did the first prosopographia, and indeed, created this fake "Greek word", at the very beginning of the 20th with its *Prosopographia Attica*, published in 2 bands in 1901 and 1903. This major enterprise was a Dictionary of Athenians with more than fifteen thousand (15 588) entries. From the 1930, thanks to the American School of Classical Studies excavations of the Athenian Agora, **Benjamin D. Meritt** accumulated many inscriptions and the number of known Athenians increased from fifteen thousand to more than one hundred thousand. Thanks to the computer revolution and the financial support of the Packard Humanities Institute (Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies) John Traill, in Toronto, succeeded, at the beginning of the seventies, in bringing to the fore the *Athenian Project*: <http://atheniansproject.com/>. In those years, J.K. Davies published its monumental *Athenian Propertied Families 600-300 B.C.*, Oxford (APF= **Davies, J.K.** 1971). At this time, as you can notice, the focalization was in Attica, a place where most of the documents

were found. The new point, in Traill's project, was to go further down in the chronology (Kirchner stopped in 30 BCA and Traill ended at the end of the Byzantine period) and to record every Athenian resident known, not only the "attested citizens". Kirchner did not consider slaves, strangers and women living in Athens.

So, the Athenian Project records all the men and women we know in Athens from the beginning of alphabetic writing to the end of byzantine period. The work should have been printed in twenty volumes. As far as I know, only one came out: "*Persons of Ancient Athens*" (*Persons of Ancient Athens*, Volume 1, A- to Alexandros. Toronto: 1994). The digital edition is described as quite complicated in the conception and terribly expensive. I do not use this work and don't know any scholar using it. The very positive point of the Project was, nevertheless, to point out the amazing increasing of the documentation. At the time of Kirchner, 2810 names beginning with alpha were recorded. 23 000 names beginning in alpha are presently known.

(Amusant : le nom de Paiderastes qui est celui d'un homme qui avait la charge de « protecteur des Jeunes ». Il y a aussi un dénommé Archon qui était un archonte et un éphèbe qui s'appelle Ephèbe. Dixit Traill dans « ATHENIANS » 2000).

Approximately during the same period (beginning of the seventies) another project was emerging, the project of the *Lexicon (LGPN)*, hosted in Oxford and supported by the British Academy (the aim is also to collect all the personal names known from the eighth century to the end of the roman period. The difference is that the project is for the whole Greek world, not only Athens). The first volume was printed out in 1987: **Peter Fraser**, *Lexicon of Personal Names*, vol 1. *The Aegean Islands Cyprus Cyrenaica*, 1987 and the others came out in the following years: M.J. Osborne and S.G. Byrne, *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names, Volume II, Attica*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994 (new edition in 2007) ; vol IIIA *Peloponnese, Western Greece, Sicily et Magna Grecia* ; IIIB *Central Greece, From the Megarid to Thessaly* ; IV : *Macedonia, Thrace, Northern Shores of the Black Sea* ; VA : *Coastal Asia Minor, Pontos to Ionia* ; VB *Coastal Asia Minor, Caria to Cilicia*. Forthcoming VC : *Inland Asia Minor* and VI : *Unassignable Individuals*. Another volume has been published to consider the *Foreign Residents of Athens*. This is a very global work that is associated with an online database, so very easy to consult even when you don't get the books in your library. <http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/>

Despite the title of *Lexicon*, this is what we call a prosopographia : the main goal is not to give a list of all the given names in a specific place but to take an inventory of all the **persons/individuals** attested in this place. For example, in a list of name (lexicon type) you should have only one entry for the name Demetrios and not, as it is the case for the volume Attica, 782. The LGPN distinguishes individuals known by their names, not names: this is the definition of the prosopographia. This work, the LGPN, is a very important scientific tool as the main corpora of Greek inscriptions (IG II² or I³) do not have indices (even if it is true that now, thanks to the packhum epigraphy database we can find persons by their names easily: <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/>). The LGPN is not only based on epigraphical attestations but also literary ones. So, it is rather exhaustive.

In Eurykleia project **we do use** those prosopographical catalogues. But, our goal **is not** to do the same for women. It is already done : it is easy to make an extraction or to use,

now it is possible online, the gender indices. Eurykleia Project is not even an onomastic study as our colleagues are doing it in a linguistic perspective: *LGPN-Ling* (Linguistic Analysis of Greek Personal Names). <http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/names/LGPN-Ling.html>

Let me bring what we are actually engaged in to light.

- 1/ The scientific context: a new assessment.
- 2/ Scientific goal and methodology: the modeling of data
- 3/ Problems and first results

1/ The scientific context: a new assessment

1. For most people, whether scientists or not, women were not named in the documents, I mean not with their idionyme (personal name) because it is not honorable (**Thucydides II, 45.2**). Women should be named by their husband's name, their patronym or the name of their *kurios* (tutor), always a masculine member of their family. The assessment is that women are like children, in a minor status, subordinated to a masculine member of their family, whether the spouse or the family from birth.
2. In 1977, David Schaps (David Schaps, « The Woman least mentioned : etiquette and women's names » CQ 27, 1977, p. 323-330) assumed that the silence around women should not be taken as granted but illustrated a kind of « etiquette », the one prevalent among the citizens. His demonstration relies on the production of the Attic orators of the 4th bce. When women are named, Schaps assumes they are « less honourable » women: whores, women belonging to the adversaries' family or, deceased women. It seems most historians are agreed on this statement. See recently, Maurice Sartre: « Pour Démosthène, les femmes honnêtes sont celles dont on ne sait pas le nom. Il est assez remarquable que dans l'ensemble du corpus de Démosthène (ou qui lui sont attribués) apparaissent les noms de plus de 500 hommes contre seulement 27 femmes; or, sur ce nombre, 14 sont des prostituées ».
3. But, a few studies (usually engaged in women history, and trying to giving more visibility to the one half of the humanity still in the dark), demonstrated that the reasons explaining the silence around women were more complex. To sum it up, the concealment of women's acts seems to be related to the way narration of the past has been established. It is not a question of hazard neither a kind of "ancient" morality. It is clear that women's acts were not seen as important for the narration of the past as men's acts (and not all men). Narration of the past is selective and the more documented activities are the ones related to rhetoric, political assemblies, wars, in other words social areas where women were less present than men. Women's history has to find other social areas and to challenge the dominant narrative of the past.
4. As a result, women history of the 1990 's brought to the fore many women, named by their personal names in the ancient documents. The most impressive results have been produced, first of all, by epigraphists. In inscriptions, very honorable women are named, even in Athens and even in the very end of the 5th century. Our colleague, Stella Georgoudi wrote a beautiful paper about Lysimache, priestess of Athena Polias. Lysimache is named by her personal name on the basis of a statue probably erected by a member of her family on the Acropolis. (Stella Georgoudi, « Lysimaché la prêtresse » dans *La Grèce au féminin*, N. Loraux, dir., (1993), Paris 2003 , p. 167-214). On the marble basis one can see the traces of the foot of the bronze statue. Even if the inscription is fragmentary it is easy to connect it with the relation Plinius gave of Lysimache, priestess of Athena during 64 years and who was, upon to Plinius, honoured by a statue carved by Demetrios. *Hist.naturelle* 34, 76:



Fig. 5.9
Marble base for statue of Lysimache, Athens, Acropolis IG IP 3453. Photo courtesy Acropolis Museum.



Fig. 5.10
Marble base for statue of Lysimache, Athens, Acropolis, IG IP 3453. Photo courtesy Acropolis Museum.

[πατρός Λυσιμάχη] Δρακο[ντίδ]ο ἦν [τὸ γέν]ος μὲν,
[ὀγδώκοντ' ὀκτώ δ' ἐ]ξεπέρα[σ]εν ἔτη
[σὺμπανθ' ἐξήκον]τα δ' ἔτη [καὶ τέσσαρ[α] ᾿ Αθηναῖ
[λατρεύσασα γένη τ]έσσαρ' ἐπειδε τέκνων.
[Λυσιμάχη--]έος Φλυέως μήτηρ.
[Δημήτριος ἐπό]ησεν.

[Lysimache] daughter of Drakontides and lived for [eighty-eight] years.
[In all for six]ty-four years [she served] Athena and saw four generations
of children.
[Lysimache,] mother of [- -]es of Phlya.
[Demetrios] made [the sculpture].⁶³

5. **Nowadays historians have to deal with the richness of women's acts:** Uta Kron, « Priesthoods, dedications and euergetism. What part did religion play in the political and social status of greek women? », in Pontus Hellström and Brita Alroth ed., *Religion and power in the ancient greek world*, (Uppsala Symposium, 1993), Uppsala, 1996, p.139-182 ; Riet van Bremen, *The Limits of Participation. Women and Civic Life in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Amsterdam, J.C. Gieben ; Anne Bielman, *Femmes en public dans le monde hellénistique*. SEDES, Paris, Paris, 2002. All these books (among others) demonstrated, despite Thukydidés and others modern historians, that the documentation about women in antiquity do exist. But the documents are scattered across various geographic or thematic corpora. For example, to do an inquiry about women acting in the field of economy and financial transactions, one will have to look for maybe 5 or 10 documents among one hundred in : Pernin, Isabelle. 2014 *Les baux ruraux en Grèce ancienne. Corpus épigraphique et étude*. Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la

Méditerranée or in: **Game, Jean.** 2008. *Actes de vente dans le monde grec. Témoignages épigraphiques des ventes immobilières.* Lyon: Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen. Women are mentioned but it is very difficult to have a broad idea of their activities because of the documents' dispersal.

These results affect mostly hellenistic and imperial periods when epigraphic's habits increased. Those epigraphic documents are heterogeneous, each one having its own singularity, but the accumulative method helps to picture a new society (mixed one), in Athens and outside Athens. In this new picture, one will find more and more women, respectable or not. In the inventories of textile offerings found in the Acropolis of Athens (4th c) and in the inventory of the Beotian temple of Demeter and Core (Tanagra, 3th c.), and apart from the officials, there are mostly women's names, all donors. The list of sales' acts found in Tenos (Cyclad, 4/3 c.) records 47 contracts passed during one year and half. Thirty out of those 47 agreements were contracted by women. Five out of the eight more expensive transactions were contracted by women.

6. To give the name or to keep the name quiet is a choice that seem to depend on the social practice that leads to the realization of the document. I mean, an oratory discourse do not give the name of a honorable woman, as Thukydidés underlined, but a honorary distinction gives the personal name, whether the recipient is a man or a woman. An epitaph, a dedication, a selling agreement give the name. It is unusual to take account of that point – a methodological point underlining the practice or the status of the document. Usually, historians do as if all the documents were transparent, soiless (hors-sol) and were not link to a social practice with its own codes and necessities. Prosopographic enterprises don't get this information. In our Project this information about the social practice of the document is decisive.

To resume: 1, we are engaged in women's history (new documents, old documents revisited). We need a new corpus, a digital corpus gathering the scattered documents. 2. We are driven by a new question about society as a whole: what make people acting as they do? What are the social conditions, for an individual, allowing the quotation of one's name? On this point, our project is a project on social history from a gender perspective.

2/ Scientific goal and methodology: the modeling of data

7. It is easier to identify someone when you have his name than if you don't. That is why for most of our collaborators, the name is the first entry in the database. That means that we do not, at this point of our work, include women quoted in the documents as « Mantitheos' wife » or « Demetrios' daughter ». We are, at first, motivated by giving visibility to women because they were less visible in the dominant narration of the past.
8. After that first step, we link the name to an historical person. As we all know, a single name is given to many individuals. There a many Artemisie or Lysimache. To identify a name with a person we use the LGPN login (identifier) one can find out

on the website: <http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/> Identifier search: <http://clas-lgpn2.classics.ox.ac.uk/> *Tape LYSIMAXH et voit plein de notices*. Our Lysimache si identified with that login: [V2-42825](#). We check the list of documents to be sure the one we are reading the name on our document is that one: Plinius, Plutarch on the attic inscription of the statue's basis.

9. As we are fully aware that social practices, and documentary practices give clues to understand why and how a woman is presented and perceived, we decide to link each name/person with the document that inform us. Each notice must give this three indications: name + person + document (it can be a short extract). On that point you clearly understand that we are not doing a new prosopography: the same person can have several notices if several documents quote her. The goal of the database is to understand how one single document (or extract) elaborates a special vision, perception, interpretation of the person. That is the absolute innovation of our Project.
10. In those characterisations, it is not only the medium (text transmitted by tradition, stone inscribed, graffiti on vase, bronze table, coin..) that is significant but also the discursive genre. (For example, an inscription on stone that copy an honorific decree, uses a specific formula: the name is quoted after that verb and the act is very briefly presented; another inscription on stone might be a literary praise using a poetic formulation using other codes and expected words. *Ici montrer le formulaire*. Souligner que a *couleur jaune (triade), orange (technique pour informaticiens), bleu (type de document: support et genre discursif « type de document » et Vert « Texte » « nature du genre discursif »*).
11. Another very important point in our data modeling is to point out the way the name is quoted. We call it "modalisation". At this point we are in search for the tonality of the point of view (pink). For example: a public decree recording a sale of land as not the same value – in terms of social recognition – as a private agreement. In the first case public institutions recognize the function and responsibility of the persons engaged in the sale's contract. (**see: Tenos**). Another example: some documents, usually historical texts or narrative documents, name women in various passages and cite various points of view about those quoted women. Herodotus, for example, named Artemisia, queen of Halicarnassus in 480 and gave to his listeners/readers his own point of view (Artemisia is a wonderful and blessed woman), those of the Great King (Artemisia is smart and faithful), those of the Persian nobles (for some of them Artemisia is a worthy peer, for the others a dangerous one), those of Athenians (seemingly the *politeuomenoi*: Artemisia is like an Amazon, she must not fight against them). To explain it we usually need to treat Artemisia of Halicarnassus with several notices. **See Herodotus Artemisia**: for the greek: (urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0016)

Hérodote VII 99 : l. 1-15: « Des autres officiers je ne fais pas mention, ne m'y sentant pas obligé, mais **je fais une exception pour Artémise, que j'admire fort d'avoir pris part à l'expédition** »

Hérodote VIII 68-69: Mardonios questionna à la ronde, en commençant par le Sidonien; et, tandis que les autres opinaien tous dans le même sens, engageant à combattre sur mer, Artémise déclara: (...) Quand on eût rapporté à Xerxès les

opinions exprimées, **il goûta fort celle d'Artémise; et lui, qui la considérait déjà auparavant comme une femme de mérite, conçut pour elle bien plus d'estime.** »

Hérodote VIII 93: l.1-11: « ... **les Athéniens étaient indignés qu'une femme vint faire la guerre à Athènes** »

12. Then we have the descriptive part of the notice. In this part we recall of the factual information given in the passage, or document, of the notice. We don't use external information (as it is done in prosopographia) : what are the words used to name the woman ? How does she act? Is she alone? How old is she ? Does she act with her spouse, father, brother? This section should help to understand the institutional, geographical and chronological specificities.

3/ Problems and first results

13. **Identify a name as a woman's name.** *Olivier Masson, « Remarques sur les noms de femmes en grec » Mus. Helv. 47, 1990, p. 129-138, repris dans O. Masson, Onomastica Graeca Selecta, tome III, Genève 2000, p. 93-102.* The commun rule is to say that women's names are gendered men's names. Theodoros gives Theodora. Eurykleia comes from Eurykles... For men and women we have the same stems (anax, aner.. witnesses of a war society). These names (more often complex than simple names) are commun for all social classes except hupocoristics used for slaves (ex: Aphrodikia). There is nearly as feminine suffix as masculine ones : φιλ-α, -ια, αινα, ιννα, ιστα
Some names are (gendered) neutral, as for masculine names Euripidion, Socratinion «the little Socrates». The value of neutral name is whether affective whether pejorative. It has been commonly admitted, since the 19th c. that those nicknames, when used for women, revealed sexual activities. This thesis has been contradicted by epigraphic analysis.
Presently, 1/3 of the Greek known names are women's names (but many perishable materials bore names : textile, for example, with names of women -C. Brons).
The question of the names' gender is still open and maybe the inquiry directed by Sophie Minon will help us to understand a bit more this question.
14. **The boundaries between fictitious and historical women is still a big problem for us.** In *Lexicon II Attica* (1987) the board committee decided to include fictitious persons (« fict. »). It is helpful to reconstruct the representations and thoughts of the society. And, digital research is useful as you can isolate them. But, as you can observe, sometimes the categorization is doubtful (« fict. ? »). It raised the question of who decide someone is fictitious. As far as we know, Greek people in the classical period believe in the historicity of Agamemnon, Achilleus, Helena, and so on. Contemporary social historians are doubtful: is Antigona of Sophocles a historical woman? Is Lysistrate in Aristophanes a real person? Lysistrate can be fictional and historical (allusion to the priestess). Our idea is to include the question when discussing the document: poetry, theater, etc.
15. Positive result: The file helps to consider all documents on the same level. All are discursive historical productions, inscribed in a social context. All are results of

more or less elaborated representations. The last question is whether the depiction we have describes attested possibilities for ancient women or fantasies? Let think of Artemisia in Herodotus: Artemisia is a historical queen but the way Herodotus treats her is an artistic way, she became an Amazon (as in Aristophanes). Nevertheless, if you do the search about women at war (we have not yet done the indexation of the notices) you will find Artemisia II (spouse and widow of Mausolus, mid 4th c) or Ada I then Ada II described by inscriptions and by Strabo, Arrian. So, you can attest possible female livings, even at war (Sebillotte 2015).

I hope the digital file will gather many attestations of possible livings thanks to documentation more diverse than usual and thanks to the capacity of digital use to make relations between notices. This should help to give a correct evaluation of the fictional *mises en scènes*, between unrealistic fantasies and historical possibilities.

The scientific gain is to throw light on the various way of being a woman in ancient Greek and Roman societies. To throw light on the complexity of social organizations.