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Re-Membering Ancient Women: Hypatia of Alexandria and her Communities

Cara Minardi
Georgia State University

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RE-MEMBERING ANCIENT WOMEN: HYPATIA OF ALEXANDRIA AND HER
COMMUNITIES

by

Cara A. Minardi

Under the Direction of Lynée Lewis Gaillet

ABSTRACT

Re-Membering Ancient Women: Hypatia of Alexandria and Her Communities is a recovery of Hypatia of Alexandria (355-415 ACE) as a skilled rhetorician and instructor of note who taught in Alexandria, Egypt. This work addresses Hypatia as a missing female figure from the history of rhetoric and follows the work of feminist historiographers in the field of Rhetoric and Composition including Andrea Lunsford, Jan Swearingen, Susan Jarratt, and Cheryl Glenn (among others) who note the exclusion of women from ancient schools of rhetoric, yet assert their participation in rhetorical activities. In its recovery of Hypatia, the work recreates the historical milieu of Roman Alexandria including Alexandria's ethnically and religiously diverse population. As a woman of Greco-Egyptian decent, Hypatia's public work was supported by Egyptian, Greek, and Roman legal and social customs that enabled her to lecture in public and private, administer her own school, and advise high-level political leaders. Using feminist and post-modern theories as a lens and fusing disciplines such as Rhetoric and Composition, Classics, History, Philosophy, Communication Studies, Critical Theory, and Women's Studies, this project demonstrates that although primary texts authored by women are scarce, historians

may still recover women and their activities for expanded historical traditions of rhetoric by examining secondary texts. The concept of community is used as a heuristic in order to discover communities in which Hypatia engaged and led to the discovery of women Neoplatonists of the fourth century ACE and Neopythagoreans from the sixth through second centuries BCE. The Neoplatonists and Neopythagoreans usually married only those who shared their belief system; hence, women were commonly educated and participated in their communities to secure the survival of their respective group. Included is a sustained critique of historiographical methods that may allow feminist historiographers to return to the ancient period to conduct much needed further research.

INDEX KEYWORDS: Rhetoric, History of rhetoric, Women, Ancient rhetoric, Alexandria, Feminist historiography, Classical history

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COMMUNITIES

by

Cara A. Minardi

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by

Cara A. Minardi

Committee Chair: Lynée Lewis Gaillet

Committee: Beth Burmester
George Pullman

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Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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DEDICATION

This text is dedicated to my graduate student family; my partner, Peter Fontaine, and my community of sisters; Jennifer Forsthoefel, Oriana Gatta, Juliette Kitchens, and Melanie McDougald, for their unconditional love and support.

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PREFACE

Historians such Andrea Lunsford, Jan Swearingen, Susan Jarratt, and Cheryl Glenn (among others) note the exclusion of women from ancient schools of rhetoric, yet assert the participation of women in rhetorical activities. “Re-Membering Ancient Women: Hypatia of Alexandria and Her Communities” recovers Hypatia of Alexandria (355-415 ACE) as a skilled rhetorician and instructor of note who taught in Alexandria, Egypt. I posit that Hypatia learned rhetorical strategies in order to lecture in public and private, administer her own school, and advise high-level political leaders. My recovery of Hypatia recreates the historical milieu of Roman Alexandria including Alexandria’s ethnically and religiously diverse population that served to empower her activities.

My concern for discovering communities in which Hypatia engaged led me to explore pagan and Christian communities that believed the soul was without sex, and in which women were expected to be educated and participate as writers and teachers in their communities. My work breaks new ground because it identifies ancient women trained in rhetoric during Hypatia’s life time as well those who were educated centuries before her; many of these women wrote and taught in their communities and Hypatia may have been familiar with their work through her access to the Library of Alexandria.

I also offer a sustained critique of historiographical methods that may allow feminist historiographers to return to the ancient period to conduct much needed further research. Using feminist and post-modern theories as a lens and fusing disciplines such as Rhetoric and Composition, Classics, History, Philosophy, Communication Studies, Critical Theory, and Women’s Studies, this project demonstrates that although primary texts authored by women are scarce, historians may still recover women and their activities for expanded historical traditions

of rhetoric, particularly for the ancient through early medieval periods, by considering a broader range of texts for evaluation.

Chapter one explores the problems of received history and ways in which feminist historiographies may simultaneously disrupt the structure of history and recover women missing from histories of rhetoric. Feminist historiographers can re-member women by examining a broader range to include secondary texts, myth, legend, and archaeological evidence as legitimate basis of recovery work. I also argue that feminist historiographers trying to recover women are often overly dependent, for example, on works by Aristotle to identify Greek ideology from which to extrapolate the lived reality of women. Over dependence on canonical authors who express misogynist ideologies represent only one set of ideology about women; there are others that scholars may select to situate and empower historical women. Non-canonical ancient authors who wrote in support of women may equip feminist historiographers to identify alternate ideologies and extrapolate realities of ancient women that more accurately represent their lives, activities, and accomplishments.

Chapter two considers Hypatia of Alexandria's context by recreating her historical milieu including aspects of the social, intellectual, and political situation in Roman Egypt. Roman Egypt in the fourth century was a syncretic mix of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman law and customs. The deep history of liberal Egyptian customs regarding women lay as a foundation under Greek, and later Roman ideals. In particular, women of Greco-Egyptian ancestry could follow either Egyptian or Greek law or custom and it was common for women to exploit both ethnic identities at different times for their best advantage. Unlike women living in other parts of the Mediterranean, many women living in Alexandria owned businesses and property. Alexandrian women were also more educated than their Mediterranean peers were. The Library of

Alexandria, with its vast holdings and ability to attract visiting or permanent scholars, belies the city's value of education. Although not officially admitted to schools of rhetoric, many more women were literate and well educated in a variety of areas than previous scholars have surmised.

Chapter three recovers Hypatia of Alexandria as a teacher, philosopher, and influential person in Alexandria. No work by Hypatia exists today and I depend instead on secondary texts for her recovery.¹ Letters written by Synesius of Cyrene, Hypatia's most famous student, also document her excellence as a teacher of mathematics and Neoplatonist philosophy. The nature of Hypatia's empowerment is a complex tangle of familial birth in conjunction with mixed ancestry and historical timing. Her father Theon was the last librarian for the city's famous library; he was also Hypatia's teacher. Theon also provided her with a livelihood when he left Hypatia his school in Alexandria, probably because she was his best student. Through her teaching and later administration of her school, Hypatia came in contact with important political leaders and developed her reputation as a reliable advisor. This chapter also considers why Hypatia was murdered and who the likely perpetrators were of her murder.

Chapter four is a recovery of other women teaching in the ancient Mediterranean within the context of Hypatia's lifetime. Hypatia's contemporaries form a sort of community around her and further explain and situate Hypatia's activities. In my attempt to understand who Hypatia would have known or known of, my research led to me to consider the practices of Pythagorean and Neopythagorean communities (6th BCE-1 ACE), which in turn led to an exploration of Platonic and Neoplatonic communities (through 5ACE). I discovered that Pythagoras believed

¹ Evidence of her life, works, and murder are documented in ancient sources including *The Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius: As Epitomized by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (3-4 ACE), the *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 439 CE) by Socrates Scholasticus, and *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (4-5 ACE). There are also entries in the *Chronicle* by John, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu and Damascius' *Life of Isidore*, both from the sixth century. The *Suda Lexicon* (9 ACE) also includes an entry about Hypatia.

the soul had no sex. While he was cautious to share his knowledge with only those who proved themselves worthy after years of discipline and training, he shared it with both men and women. His stance created the first community of Pythagoreans and began a tradition of endogamy that required the education of women. Later Platonists and Neoplatonists, similar in their understanding that the soul had no sex, adopted endogamy as well to strengthen and maintain their community and their belief system; they too educated women regularly. Early Christian communities followed women's educational traditions begun by pagans until the fourth century.

Chapter five argues that history of rhetoric classes should include metahistory in order to reframe the discourse and include activities of women in rhetorical history. In an effort to understand what our histories do, we would be best served to understand history as continually changing rather than as fact. The use of metahistory to frame classes in rhetorical history, in particular, allows students to understand the rhetorical nature of history and to understand the difference between lived reality and historical documentation. I also offer three sample reading lists for courses in Greek rhetoric, Roman Rhetoric, and Feminist theory.

In Appendix A, I include lists of secondary texts about the women named in chapter four for scholars interested in research and teachers who want to include material in their courses. Appendix B is a timeline of women that includes the woman's name, place of birth or residence, and a brief description of a woman's activity. I also reference specific sources, listed in the works cited, for each woman. In light of scholarly attention to women after the twelfth century, my focus is on women who lived between 3000 BCE and 1200 ACE. I include the timeline of women as another resource for scholars and teachers and also to demonstrate the variety of activities in which historical women engaged.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the extended version of *The Fellowship of the Ring* Galadriel explains

Much that once was is lost. For none now live who remember it . . . And some things that should not have been forgotten were lost. History became legend, legend became myth, and for two and a half thousand years the Ring passed out of all knowledge. Until, when chance came it ensnared a new bearer. (Jackson 2002)

I first discovered Hypatia of Alexandria as a college freshman while enrolled in the research component of Freshman Composition in 1996. In the library one day doing research, I was perusing academic journals and the *Hypatia* came up on one of my searches. It was a word I had never heard, and I wanted to know what it meant and where it came from. Before long, I discovered Hypatia was not a word, but a name and I pulled an edition of the feminist journal named for her. The inside cover of the journal explained that Hypatia had been a teacher, philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer in Alexandria between 355-415 ACE. According to the note on the journal, Hypatia was murdered in 415 by a mob of Christian monks. I was hooked and had to know more because I had no idea that a single woman participated in public life during the ancient period. In fact, my education first in Literature and later in Rhetoric and Composition indicated just the opposite because of the absence of ancient women. However, over the years, I read whatever came my way about women, especially in the ancient through early medieval periods. There were many hints along the way about the myriad of ways women participated in society in literature, in history, in philosophy, really, everywhere. For example, women depicted in *Lysistrata* are willing to stand against their men to stop the Peloponnesian war. Clearly, the idea of women speaking out in public was not an entirely foreign idea for the

ancient Greeks, even if such women were the depictions of fiction and myth. The more I read, the more I wanted to learn, and the more I began to ask questions similar to those so many other women writers and scholars have asked: where is Plato's sister, mother, aunt, wife, or daughter? Did she exist? Where would or could I find evidence of ancient women who participated meaningfully in philosophy, rhetoric, or pedagogy?

Some of the answers I needed appeared in *The Present State of Scholarship in Historical Rhetoric*, edited by Lynée Lewis Gaillet and Winifred Bryan Horner, which echoes Galadriel's narration in that, like Sauron's ring of power and knowledge of its importance, much of women's history has been lost. Thanks to scholars Cheryl Glenn, Susan Jarratt, Rory Ong, and C. Jan Swearingen we have important scholarship about Aspasia and Diotima from the fifth century BCE. Ritchie and Ronald include Hortensia in addition to Aspasia and Diotima in *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetorics*. Molly Meijer Wertheimer's *Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women* includes an article about Egyptian women's rhetoric by Barbara S. Lesko and another about Roman women's rhetoric by Robert W. Cape, Jr. However, Aspasia, Diotima, Hortensia, and Cornelia Gracchi are the only female figures recovered from the ancient world for the history of rhetoric. To date, historians of rhetoric have not recovered another historical woman of note until Anna Comnena,² who lived in the 12th century (1083-1148). However, in the words of Lois Agnew, "[t]he exploration of the rhetorical practices of ancient women and non-Western cultures has just begun" (Agnew "Classical Rhetoric" 43). I do not mean to suggest that women's history has followed a linear process in which history turns into legend then into myth. I do mean to suggest that women's activities more often appear in fiction, myth, and anecdotal history than in traditional historical accounts and as such, Galadriel's observations may be helpful for feminist historiographers to

² See Quandah & Jarratt

recover women who are, based on current method and methodological standards of historical scholarship, inaccessible to us.

Osiris Myth

The myth of Isis and Osiris tells the story of how the couple came to Earth to bestow gifts to humanity. Once completed, the couple rules over humankind. However, Seth, brother of Osiris becomes jealous, murders his brother, dismembers, and scatters the fourteen pieces of Osiris' body. Patiently and methodically, Isis reassembles the body of Osiris, re-membering him. The Earth is restored to balance and soon after, the couple has a child, Horus.

The myth, while generally understood as an explanation of the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth functions as a metaphor for this text about Hypatia of Alexandria. Hypatia, like Osiris, was murdered; a mob stripped her, rendered her flesh from her bones, disarticulated her body, and burned her remains. In my use, the myth of Isis and Osiris functions to recognize the dismembering of Hypatia's physical body during her murder lest we forget it. The myth also metaphorically describes the method of my research. Unlike Isis, I am unable to collect the scattered parts of her body, however, I can re-member her story, to find and re-join the pieces of it, scattered as they are. I accomplish this by re-collecting information about Hypatia and her historical context.

Of course the risk is that my re-membering may be inaccurate, in the words of Cheryl Glenn, "[h]istoriography, reading it crooked and telling it slant, could help me shape—re-member—a female rhetorical presence" (Glenn "Remapping" 292). Re-membering, even in light of the missing pieces that cannot be re-collected means that Hypatia may be identified for the history of rhetoric. Re-membering in this sense is an act of reflection, a way to recall and respect the memory of her life. Re-membering, then, functions as an avenue that allows recognition and praise of her achievements.

The importance of memory as one of the five elements of the rhetorical canon should not be lost. In “Sappho’s Memory” Susan Jarratt reads Sappho’s poetry for references to memory and claims that when memory is exposed to broader issues of knowledge, like history, we teach ourselves to remember. She claims “[h]istory and memory have an intricate relation to one another, particularly when we speak of those left along the side of the grand road of historical progress” (37). By including Sappho we gain “. . . the rhetorical means to mourn—a way of remembering that returns us again and again to the loss of countless others who have come and gone, and urges us to seek persistently their traces” (37). The implications allow us to understand and appreciate how “. . . a traditional canon of rhetoric may change dramatically as a result of feminist historiographical research” (11). Jarratt’s understanding of memory as a way to remember and to mourn rhetorically so that our work is transformational for ourselves as researchers, for our readers, for the changes it can make to the historical canon of rhetoric and for the definition of rhetoric itself.

The story of Isis and Osiris, with its theme of re-membering dovetails with Jarratt’s relationship between memory and history while suggesting a method by which feminist historiographers may recover women’s history, particularly of the ancient period. The records of women’s rhetoric and rhetorical activities are scattered. Although no archive and few primary texts authored by women exist, historical women have left remains, small pieces of themselves, everywhere. Hints of women exist in secondary texts, in archeological artifacts, and in literature. Like Isis, feminist historiographers must collect the pieces of women’s history, to re-member it by re-collecting and re-joining the scattered bits of history in order to support a more accurate and gender-balanced account of history. Re-membering is a generative act of creation much like the conception of Horus; both promise continuation into the future. As Glenn reminds us, “. . .

feminist historiography . . . embodies a promise of connecting women and history . . .” in the future (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 11).

My study was inspired by previous feminist historiographies, which often made me hopeful when it seemed, again and again, that women were nowhere to be found in rhetorical history. I am grateful for scholarship that influenced me including Andrea Lunsford’s *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition* containing C. Jan Swearingen’s “A Lover’s Discourse: Diotima, Logos, and Desire,” and Susan Jarratt’s and Rory Ong’s “Aspasia: Rhetoric, Gender, and Colonial Ideology” and Cheryl Glenn’s *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, in particular, for their discussions of ancient women and the approaches they identified for the recovery of them. Mary Ellen Waithe’s *A History of Women Philosophers: Ancient Women Philosophers 600 BCE- ACE 500*, and Kathleen Wider’s article, “Women Philosophers in Ancient Greece: Donning the Mantle” were also important sources of inspiration. While these texts are the ones that primarily influenced me to believe women were active in the ancient world and that their activities, if not their works, could be recovered for the history of rhetoric, they are not the only texts that influenced me. I have also been influenced by research completed by scholars in different historical periods including Karlyn Cohrs Campbell’s *Man Cannot Speak for Her: A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric* and the works of Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy*, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, and *Why History Matters: Life and Thought*. I am also grateful for scholarship by Jacqueline Jones Royster, Lindal Buchanan, Nan Johnson, Barbara Biesecker, Patricia Bizzell, Susan Jarratt, and Madeline Henry, to name but a few.

My goal is to add to scholarship by introducing Hypatia of Alexandria and other women intellectuals who lived and worked in the ancient Mediterranean. In so doing, I recognize that the history I re-member below is partial and incomplete. Ideally, the women named below would be placed in conversation with the men and women of their communities, but the constraint of space forces me to limit my scope to the women alone. I recognize that the study is flawed in many ways. In order to accommodate for the paucity of primary texts and in order to read and see women in secondary texts written by men, it has been necessary to overread “. . . underread texts” (Jarratt *Rereading the Sophists* 77). I accommodate the absence of primary texts with historical details from which I can make reasonable assumptions about Hypatia, but recognize some readers will believe I am distorting history. This is the risk of re-visionary history because “[h]istorians are . . . under perpetual temptation to conform to expectation by portraying the people they write about as they wish to be. A mingling of truth and falsehood, blending history with ideology. . .” (McNeil 5). My methods and methodologies imply I have distorted history for my own purposes. However, I question the notion of objective history and suggest that even traditional histories are more difficult to discern from myth than we might suppose; chapter one is a discussion of the notion of objective history.

The trajectory of my study unveiled an important theoretical and practical concern, that is, that women have been homogenized into the category Woman, as feminist theorists note and discuss. During the American feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, for example, Black, Hispanic, lesbian, and working class women began to question the white, middle-class priorities of the movement for its unwillingness to recognize and address their particular concerns. The difficulty of apprehending the diversity of women and their needs during the second wave is a practical problem the feminist movement has made strides to correct and continues to address. In

historical scholarship, for example, the homogenizing category of Woman has served to obscure, in particular, the activities of ancient women.

One way to uncover how the category of Woman functions to obscure historical figures is to address the specific socio-historical context that existed in Hypatia's Roman Alexandria (30 BCE-415 ACE), which I do in chapter two. Hypatia of Alexandria was of Greco-Egyptian descent, which means that in syncretic ethnic Alexandria women had access to education and, in some cases, to the public sphere. Hypatia's place and time may complicate what we think we know about the material and social conditions of ancient women while dismantling patriarchal tendencies to homogenize them. Some women in the ancient period were empowered by difference and our research needs to begin with the assumption of women's differences in the ancient world so that we may discover women we may have overlooked thus far. Part of my project, then, is to particularize Hypatia of Alexandria, which I do in chapter three. Hypatia was a Greco-Egyptian woman educated in the custom of Greeks. In Alexandria, home of the Great Library and Museum, she and other women scholars of various disciplines studied and worked; some women administered their own schools. While Alexandria may be unusual in its expectations of women, my work posits the possibility that women may have engaged in intellectual work in other cities of learning, Antioch, Athens, Alexandria, Rome, and Pergamum among them. Part of my argument, then, is that in order to recover women I name in the timeline in Appendix B, we must particularize them by studying their context.

In addition to understanding a greater variety of women and their varying material conditions, I have asked myself how the conditions of women were different from those of men. The evidence seems to suggest that in some communities, women were often viewed as similar enough to men to justify their education, teaching, and writing activities. While no extant

primary sources detail in the voices of women what their activities included, contextual research suggests that their educational, teaching, and writing activities included rhetorical activity. My research in chapter four indicates that in some cases, as in the Neopythagorean communities between 6th BCE and 1 ACE, the rhetorical activities of women were confined to their communities, just as men were restricted. Women in Neoplatonist communities after 1 ACE, by contrast, were less restricted. Differing stances about sharing and circulating Pythagorean and Platonic ideals as well as notions about gender constrained and empowered women in these communities in similar ways men were empowered.

Chapter five deals with the problem of marginalizing women's historical contributions to rhetoric in our Greek and Roman history classrooms. I suggest we rethink how and what we teach in Greek and Roman foundations classes to include women and their rhetorical activities. The continued exclusion of women from our classes serves to perpetuate a homogenized absence of women. Appendix A includes a list of secondary sources about the women discussed in chapter four. Appendix B, a work-in-progress, includes a timeline of women as well as some of the sources used to identify them. Both are meant to function as resource guides for those interested in adding women to their courses or for those interested in conducting further research about the women.

My hope for this work is to demonstrate ways in which women in the ancient period may have been empowered by educations that allowed them to participate in the sometimes public intellectual activities of teaching and writing. It is a beginning, but there is much work I leave undone. I hope the combination of scholarship and resource guides inspire other scholars to conduct similar research.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEMS OF HISTORY

In this chapter I introduce the problem of women's history, dependant as it is on biased historical texts. Using the work of Michel Foucault, I trace the ideological problems that may contribute to an inappropriately contextualized history of women. Considering the Greek and Roman value of myth, legend, and anecdote in their own histories, I suggest we look to metahistory to reframe historical narratives and for guidance to discover women not yet recovered in the history of rhetoric.

Numerous scholars since the 1970s document the lack of women's history, including Patricia Bizzell, Barbara Biesecker, Sue Blundell, Karen Kohrs Campbell, Cheryl Glenn, Carolyn Heilbrun, Susan Jarratt, Nan Johnson, Gerda Lerner, Andrea Lunsford, Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant, Sarah Pomeroy, Adrienne Rich, Kate Ronald and Joy Ritchie, and Jacqueline Jones Royster. While these are just a few scholars engaged in historical recovery, they represent disciplines such as rhetoric and composition, communication studies, philosophy and theory, women's studies, and classical studies. Many of these and other scholars have noted that historians in all times and places have been guided by ideology when choosing what to document and what to leave out of the historical record. In general, even though they do come from a variety of disciplines, these women scholars concur that male historians often documented only men's deeds while women's activities were ignored. In *The Creation of Patriarchy* (1986), Lerner addresses the specifically misogynist biases of history. She names the bias the androcentric fallacy and explains that it

is built into all the mental constructs of Western civilization, [and] cannot be rectified by simply 'adding women.' What it demands for rectification is a radical restructuring of thought and analysis which once and for all accepts the fact that

humanity consists in equal parts of men and women and that the experiences, thoughts, and insights of both sexes must be represented in every generalization that is made about human beings. (Lerner *Patriarchy* 220)

A recent CCC article by Kirsch and Royster entitled “Feminist Rhetorical Practices: In Search of Excellence” details similar patterns that appear in histories of rhetoric. They identify four areas of focus in the history of rhetoric: “. . . a focus on men as rhetorical subjects, on the Europeanized and Western world, on power elites by class, race, and gender and a focus on the public domain where men have dominated” (641). Hence, the pattern of rhetorical history is parallel with other forms of history in its exclusion of women. Kirsch and Royster further argue that traditional approaches to history writing have been valorized, and as such, are difficult to displace (641).

The focus on Western, elite men and their public activities has led to the misinterpretation of archeological and textual evidence about women’s lives. Male biases exist in the ancient text as well as in modern scholarship, as McManus indicates in *Classics and Feminism* (1997). In scholarship prior to the 1970s McManus claims that classical studies used “. . . ancient women as a category to think with, to consider and debate issues of modern ideology” (7). Scholarship about ancient women was never about ancient women; instead, it reflected gendered ideological issues and functioned to re-empower patriarchy through the creation of women as the category Woman. The rhetorical move makes it clear that feminist historiographers must be careful about the historical texts we use in our own research. Feminist historiographers must question how dependence on traditional texts may inadvertently make us complicit in perpetuating the concept of Woman as a category.

In many ways, the work of Robert Connors exemplifies the problems Kirsch and Royster and other feminist scholars identify. Connors' chapter in *A Rhetoric of Doing: Essays in Written Discourse in Honor of James L. Kinneavy* entitled "The Exclusion of Women from Classical Rhetoric" summarizes the position against which many feminist scholars have argued. Connors claims that "... the search for a women's tradition in the discipline has been a failure. . . [because]. . . women were definitively excluded from all that rhetoric implied in its disciplinary form" (65). He defines rhetoric as civic and public discourse that was "... quintessentially antagonistic . . . a contest between men to establish one's status and engage in self-display" (73, 77). In acknowledgement of work by Jarratt, Glenn, and Swearingen, Connors mentions that an expansion of the term rhetoric may be necessary if women will ever be included in the historical record. However, he reiterates that none of the women recovered to that point called themselves rhetoricians. It is unfortunate that Connors chose to relegate his recognition that the term rhetoric needed to be redefined to a footnote.

Scholars interested in including women in the history of rhetoric responded to Connors, and continue to respond, by expanding the notion of rhetoric as a discipline to include persuasion generally understood: a reinterpretation of Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as the available means of persuasion and by considering alternate sites of rhetorical activity. While feminist scholars have applied Aristotle's definition to a variety of places and historical periods, scholarship about ancient women and rhetoric is particularly pertinent for the purposes of this essay. For example, Andrea Lunsford's 1995 *Reclaiming Rhetoric: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition* includes work by Susan Jarratt and Rory Ong about Aspasia and C. Jan Swearingen's discussion of Diotima. Molly Meijer Wertheimer's *Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women* (1997) includes an article about Egyptian women's rhetoric by

Barbara S. Lesko and another about Roman women's rhetoric by Robert W. Cape, Jr. Cheryl Glenn's *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (1997) includes a chapter of ancient women's rhetoric. Joy Ritchie's and Kate Ronald's 2001 *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetorics* includes secondary texts about Aspasia, Diotima, and Hortensia. Jane Donawerth's 2002 *Rhetorical Theory by Women before 1900*, in addition to texts concerning Aspasia, includes texts written by Pan Chao and Sei Shonagon. Carol S. Lipson's and Roberta Binkley's *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics* (2009) includes Roberta Binkley's article about women's prophecy in the ancient Near East and Carol S. Lipson's study of Egyptian tomb autobiographies. These significant studies recognize rhetorical activities of women and provide a better understanding of ancient rhetorical practices.³ Feminist scholars have identified the difficulties of conducting research on women, and have displaced many common assumptions about how to approach and manage such work. In addition to an expansion of the term rhetoric, feminist work has also expanded methods and methodologies to address the particular difficulties of recovering women including the paucity of primary texts as well as dependence on biased sources. In many ways, these publications demonstrate that research in the area of ancient women's rhetorics is just beginning.

SCARCE PRIMARY MATERIALS

Primary texts from the ancient Mediterranean are scarce; many have been lost, others have degraded over time. After all, publishing and distributing texts in the ancient world was a private and expensive endeavor few could afford. As Breton Connley observes “. . . Greek texts come down to us, not only through the accident of survival, but also through a selection process made by later scribes and librarians at Alexandria and elsewhere” (275). Documenting women's lives is more difficult than documenting the lives of men because historical documents by

³ Aspasia (470-410 BCE), Diotima (5 BCE), Cornelia Gracchi (175-143 BCE), Pan Chao (c. 1 ACE), Sei Shonagon (965 ACE), Anna Comnena (1083-1148)

women are rarer than those authored by men. For example, letters written by men were often saved whereas those by women were not (G. Clark 134). What exists often consists of copied passages of women's writing or speaking in ancient historical texts—secondary texts. Most of what we know about women is derived from scattered anecdotes, sometimes filled with errors, and, all too frequently, tainted by misogyny. Almost nothing exists of women's original writing in the form of primary texts, that is, texts authored by women by their own hands. Dependence on secondary texts combined with male bias has led to misreading and the misidentification of authorship. Such are the cases of Pandrosion, misidentified as male for many years and of Hypatia, whose work was erroneously credited to her father. Simply, documentation of women is “different” than extant historical texts considering or authored by men. The paucity of texts combined with practices of historical scholarship constrain the feminist historian interested in studying ancient women.

HISTORY AS A DISCOURSE THAT DISCIPLINES AND PUNISHES

Foucault helps to explain how standard practices of writing history constrain historians. His work centers on analysis of how public discourses reorganize old ideologies while making them look new. When discourse looks new, it is difficult for people to challenge because they are often distracted by novelty and miss how a given discourse may function similarly. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that discourses facilitate the collection of power by determining standards that each of us internalizes. Hence, a Foucaultian reading of feminist historiography for the ancient world would suggest that our dependence on primary texts to conduct historical scholarship functions to discipline and punish scholars today. Since few primary texts exist for ancient women, simply, recovery cannot be done. Ancient, often misogynist texts discipline scholars by convincing them that women actually were excluded and the result of this assumption is a distraction of researchers about historical women. Simply, we cannot find

documentation of ancient women or do not bother to look because we have been told that ancient women did not participate in their societies. When we find evidence that does not meet the demands of 'rigorous' scholarship, we focus on what is not there, what we cannot prove and determine that since 'rigorous' scholarship is not possible, it should not be undertaken. Since no one has published a significant new work in our field about ancient women since Cheryl Glenn's influential *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (1997), we have been well-disciplined by internalizing traditional standards of scholarship.

While I recognize that maintaining traditional standards has been very important to legitimize our discipline and our work in Rhetoric and Composition, I also find it unsatisfactory because of what we cannot do. What can a feminist historiographer do when there is no archive? How can feminist historiographers recover historical women's activities despite the paucity and biases of extant texts and subvert traditional, patriarchal standards at the same time? How might we balance rigor with texts available to us about or by women in such a way as to recover important rhetorical and pedagogical participation by women in order to create histories of rhetoric that expand our history? Can we redefine scholarly rigor in order to make visible the accomplishments of ancient women, to tell our own ancestral stories? These are some of the questions I hope to answer by considering the importance and purposes of history in the context of what resources exist for scholars to study.

THE HUMAN NEED OF HISTORY

To be unacquainted with what has passed in the world, before we came into it ourselves, is to be always children. For what is the age of a single mortal, unless it is connected, by the aid of History, with the times of our ancestors? Besides, the relation of past occurrences, and the producing pertinent and striking examples, is

not only very entertaining, but adds a great deal of dignity and weight to what we say. (Cicero *The Brutus*)

Taken together, the essays in *Reclaiming Rhetorica* suggest that the realm of rhetoric has been almost exclusively male not because women were not practicing rhetoric—the arts of language are after all at the source of human communication—but because the tradition has never recognized the forms, strategies, and goals used by many women as “rhetorical.” (Lunsford 6)

It is significant that all the important [positive examples of women] . . . were expressed in myth and fable: amazons, dragon-slayers, women with magic powers. But in real life, women had no history—so they were told and so they believed. And because they had no history they had no future alternatives. (Lerner *Patriarchy* 222)

Cicero is clear, not knowing one’s history means to be forever a child. What then, does it mean when one has no history?

Glenn writes that history serves our needs at a particular time and Lerner’s *Why History Matters* provides some insight about what histories do. Lerner states that history serves a variety of human needs including the maintenance of memory. Historical memory becomes a source of identity by providing heroes and role models for us to emulate. It provides a kind of collective immortality because it creates an intellectual structure that is longer than the life span of a single human. History provides a cultural tradition with its shared ideas, values, and experiences with the potential to unite diverse groups of people and to “. . . legitimate those holding power by

rooting its source in a distant past” (*Patriarchy* 116-117). It can also be a source of healing and can provide explanations of philosophical frameworks so that the past becomes “. . . evidence, model, contrast to the present, or challenge” (Lerner *Patriarchy* 117). History, then, provides for a variety of human needs; social, political, and ideological. In sum, Lerner, as Cicero also suggests, argues that history humanizes people. Because women have not appeared in historical texts, Lerner claims that women are not considered quite human, a point Adrienne Rich makes in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978*. A lack of humanity causes a two-fold problem. First, women suffer from patriarchal oppression and second, women internalize the attitude in their own thinking, which often allows them to cooperate in their own oppression. Women, without a history on which to rely, remain children dependent upon the histories of others for their social, political, and ideological needs. The absence of women in history also invisibly supports the underlying construct of Woman because, in this circular way of thinking, women all did the same thing to contribute to Western culture—nothing of note.

Even if scholars expand their list of legitimate sources to include secondary and tertiary texts to include women in the history of rhetoric and following the work of Glenn, Swearingen, Jarratt and Ong and others, we still will not have enough texts to recover rhetorical and pedagogical activities of women for the 1500-year absence of women’s history between 5 BCE and 1200 ACE. I understand why feminist historical scholars are dependent on primary texts; we are readers and scholars of texts, after all. However, I am concerned about how dependence upon primary texts constrains us in this particular historical period; women in the ancient and early medieval periods cannot be reclaimed because we submit to the standard practice of using primary, or contentiously, secondary texts.

In light of the complexities of feminist recovery of ancient women, of the debates of scholarly rigor, and theoretical arguments that assert women should not be recovered because it (re)instantiates patriarchy (for example, in works by Ballif and Grosz), the risks of not recovering historical women are high. If women scholars do not recover more of women's history and integrate it, historical accounts will continue to be unbalanced and support the circular thinking about the value of women, as I discussed above. Furthermore, not recovering ancient women essentially makes feminist scholars complicit in silencing historical women, and, in some ways, condoning the continued silence of women, an ethical and material outcome we certainly neither intend nor desire. In addition, as Breton Connelly notes, understanding the realities of ancient women is important because it “. . . has a profound effect on the ways in which we understand what followed” (279). What counts as rhetorical history and our understanding of it, then, will need to shift for later historical periods. I do not claim this reconstruction to be a more accurate depiction of Hypatia of Alexandria and some of her Mediterranean contemporaries than histories written before this one. My goal is not only to interrogate traditional history that excludes women, but, to discover if feminist scholars may discover new methods and methodologies appropriate for the recovery of women who continue to be erased by patriarchal discourses of history. As such, my work is intentionally political to redress erroneous ideas about ancient women and to provide an alternative to linear, connected, and masculinized histories of rhetoric.

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

. . . our research methods are so firmly inscribed and practiced that we try to re-shape the object of our study into our methodological framework . . . We know that women did have a presence in our rhetorical tradition but have woefully

inadequate ways of representing and accounting for their activities. (R. Enos “The Untold History” 299)

As Richard Leo Enos indicates, our methodologies thus far constrain scholars from conducting research about ancient women and we need new ways to approach the period. We might begin by asking new questions. For example, rather than understand textual resources as limited and confining it may be better for us to ask ourselves, what constitutes women’s texts? The simple answer is not much between the fifth century BCE and the twelfth century ACE exists in women-authored primary materials. From ancient Greece, we have some fragments of longer works written by Neopythagorean women⁴ recorded by historians. However, many classicists dismiss that women actually wrote these texts. Some of the texts we have by women authors in the ancient and late ancient world were copied into other texts for example, as in *The Life of Pythagoras*, *The Suda*,⁵ *The Lives of the Sophists*,⁶ to name a few. Ancient historians habitually made mention of women who were exceptional, or those who provided examples of the ‘good’ or ‘bad’ woman, and are therefore, often rhetorical and didactic. According to standards of historical scholarship, none of these women can or should be recovered because even if we have secondary texts, authorship is uncertain and texts are biased. Because such texts are clearly not primary, they do not adhere to the standard of authorship. Instead, historical accounts about women often depend on hearsay, or are rhetorical in nature and the discipline of history classifies what constitutes our materials about women in the ancient world and early medieval world as anecdotal. Because of the questionable credibility of woman-authored texts, historians turned instead to male-authored texts. Use of male-authored texts has served to

⁴ Perictione I, Theano I, Arignote, Myia, Damo, Phytis, Melissa; Perictione II, Theano II, Aesara

⁵ A variety of women are mentioned including Myro, Rhodesian philosopher, Pamphila a historian of philosophy and biographer, Hypatia of Alexandria, and Eudoxia

⁶ Sosipatra

confirm, rather than question the passivity of ancient women, as Katz observed in her 1995 article “Ideology and ‘the Status of Women’ in Ancient Greece.”

However, there are ways to reassemble and re-member women’s history. We may approach our task by being gynocentric, crossing disciplines, conducting research from the ‘bottom up’ including archaeological as well as textual evidence, recognizing actual or loose communities of women, understanding the generative potential of myth and legend, and understanding history as always changing—as becoming.

GYNOCENTRISM: WOMAN CENTERDNESS

We can begin by being deliberately woman centered, by assuming that women not only participated in a variety of ways, but they were, in some way, central to ancient rhetorical education and performance. Being woman centered “. . . means ignoring all evidence of women’s marginality, because, even where women appear to be marginal, this is the result of patriarchal invention” (Lerner *Patriarchy* 228). We can take our cues from Royster’s experience of suffering from the “. . . deep disbelief. . .” of traditionally told histories and the biased webs they weave (Royster 254). It is up to us to engage similarly in deep disbelief that initially constrained, then empowered Royster in her research about African-American women. Instead of deeply disbelieving women’s participation in ancient rhetoric, we need to apply, purposefully, deep disbelief to the exclusionary history of rhetoric as it stands and assume women were active *and* important participants. Disbelief combined with a gynocentric view means scholars assume women participated and that ancient texts reveal useful evidence to document ancient women’s activities and influence.

Likewise, Bizzell in “Opportunities for Feminist Research in the History of Rhetoric,” suggests that researchers become resisting readers, meaning that readers must not believe patriarchal narratives of history and must read between the lines and against the grain in order to

discover obscured historical women and their works. Bizzell suggests that feminist historiographers look for “. . . what is not there, not preserved, and [ask] why it is not” (Bizzell, “Editing” 112). We can fuel our resistance by choosing an intellectual stance of sustained deep disbelief. As Mary Daly states, we must “. . . reverse the reversals [so we can] learn to see with our own eyes” (Daly 46-47). Choosing a stance of deep disbelief is one way to reverse the reversals in order to discover women that scholars have missed or misinterpreted. In order to re-collect, re-member women’s history, we must “. . . see beyond the familiar, to the unfamiliar, to the unseen” (Glenn “Remapping” 291). The assumption that women were able and did contribute to the ancient world is an essential shift in our focus that may allow scholars not only to discover ancient women to research, but also to identify how they were able to do so in a historical period in which material conditions may have been very different from those of contemporary women.

Glenn writes similarly about deep disbelief and seeing anew; “[h]istoriography, reading it crookedly and telling it slant, could help me shape—re-member—a female rhetorical presence” (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 8). One way to see crookedly is to interrogate much of the previous scholarship about ancient women’s lives and the application of historical scholarship. A hazard of scholarship about the ancient world, directly related to the paucity of texts, has to do with the tendency to generalize women’s conditions based on an oversimplified model of women’s lives in Classical Athens. This model asserts that women lived in seclusion, that they did not have access to education or literacy, and that they had no control over their own thinking or actions. In *Women in Hellenistic Egypt: From Alexander to Cleopatra* Pomeroy explains how the paucity of texts encouraged scholars to generalize the conditions of women in Classical Athens to the entire ancient world. Hence, what scholars assume was true in Classical Athens has been misapplied to the rest of the Greco-Roman world across a period of several centuries. She explains the

oversimplification by noting that we have more extant texts from Classical Athens than from any other place in the ancient world (Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic Egypt* xv). Nonetheless, the model of Classical Athens is problematic for two reasons. First, the assumption that Classical Greek women's lives were homogenous is inaccurate and second, application of the model to all women in the ancient world does not accurately take the variety of contexts into consideration. Without specific contexts by which to understand the meaning of women's rhetoric and rhetorical acts, historical women remain invisible to us. In part, it is probably because feminist scholars have not sufficiently interrogated the "fact" of women's confinement, for example, to the domestic sphere that there has been no single recovery of an additional woman from the ancient world for the rhetorical canon since Glenn's significant 1997 work. Furthermore, the homogenization of women is a patriarchal construct that feminist scholars need to resist. When we ". . . articulate gender in terms of specific socio-historical configurations," feminists dismantle one structure of misogynist histories (D. Miller 373-374).

The question of the seclusion of Athenian women, for example, is yet unsettled. Susan Jarratt notes that it is because we do not have much physical evidence of women's lives in ancient Greece that we have depended on ideology to 'fill in' what we didn't know. Instead of understanding Greek women as secluded, she understands ". . . the 'private' house of the nuclear family was not the private of a purely feminized domestic space. Nor is the house itself clearly divided into male-and female-inhabited spaces" (Jarratt "Sappho's Memory" 16). Swearingen argues ". . . even within Athens. . . the conventions governing women in public and private spaces, and the divisions between those spaces, were far from uniform" (Swearingen qtd. in Lunsford 26-27). Many other scholars, male and female, question the authority and validity of such claims about ancient women. Sealy argues "[E]ven among the [wealthy] Athenians only a

minority could afford the status symbol of a wife who did not go out of the house to work” (154). In “Rhetoric, Possibility, and Women’s Status in Ancient Athens: Gorgias’ and Isocrates’ Encomiums of Helen,” Biesecker argues that historians Cantarella and Pomeroy read “. . . texts of philosophy, history, oratory, and literature as reflections of social relations in ancient Greece,” which may occlude subtleties that could have had profound impact on our understanding of Athenian women (Biesecker “Rhetoric, Possibility” 101). Biesecker continues to argue that Pericles’ citizenship law of 451/450 BCE requiring women as well as men to be Athenian-born implicitly made women citizens. The law “. . . acknowledged citizenship of women, created space for resistance or to challenge their exclusion from the public sphere” (Biesecker “Rhetoric, Possibility” 105). In her consideration of Gorgias’s *Encomium*, Biesecker argues that Gorgias’s consideration of several reasons for Helen’s actions created competing voices that “. . . spell socio-political upheaval . . . [and] . . . alternative versions of the status of women in society” (Biesecker “Rhetoric, Possibility” 105). Katz traces the assertion Athenian women were secluded to the eighteenth century, stating that it “. . . formed part of the intellectual currency of the eighteenth century, and played an important role in the general debate over the form and nature of civil society” (Katz 35). New research supports the claims of Jarratt, Sealy, Biesecker in its reconsideration of our knowledge of ancient women’s lives; those interested in recovering ancient women have more resources available than ever before to embark on it.

Furthermore, if women were confined to the *oikos* (home), is it possible that confinement to the home of a philosopher, for example, allowed aristocratic unmarried women access to education conducted by their fathers? What about aristocratic women married to philosophers? While even aristocratic women would have been responsible for household management, may they have had time to write? It is likely that women’s household duties would have changed

during the course of their lifetimes; is it possible that women had time to write after they were married and before they bore children? What about women past the age of child-bearing?

Appendixes A and B and the works cited of this text list scholarship that counters the homogenization of ancient women that has resulted in oversimplifications and inaccurate assumptions about the lives, conditions, and activities of ancient women.

Hypatia is an excellent example of how the assumptions of women's lives in Classical Athens do not apply to other places and times of antiquity, for example, in Roman Alexandria. Hypatia was not secluded, did not marry, or bear children. She was educated and became a teacher of men who was responsible for the administration of her own school in Alexandria. She appeared in public without a chaperone and evidence suggests she did not have a legal guardian. Hypatia's ethnicity, Greco-Egyptian, was mixed, so she lived her life following the Greek intellectual tradition while also following Egyptian customs and laws concerning women. Within the context of Roman Alexandria, Hypatia's activities were not only allowed, they were empowered. Furthermore, I identify other women with varying social and material conditions in Alexandria and in the greater Mediterranean who also do not meet the paradigm of Classical Athens so often misapplied. The information appears in Appendix B. The model of Classical Athens cannot account for Hypatia of Alexandria's life, and my study of her demands reconsideration of other women who may have lived enabled lives.

ADMONITIONS AS COUNTER-DISOURSE

In order to fill in the lack of primary texts, historians frequently indicate misogynist pagan and Christian thinkers as the source of constraints placed upon women. Part of the problem stems not from historical evidence, but from ideology gleaned from such texts. What scholars do not often discuss, and what we need to discuss more is how the work of feminist historians and historiographers is inhibited by our acceptance and reproduction of the singular,

dominant, and misogynist Greco-Roman ideology itself. We believe historical women did not participate in life outside the home because ideology indicates they were constrained from doing so. The ideology is the one that tells us, assures us, requires us to believe that ancient women did not participate in philosophical or rhetorical tasks, except in rare and exceptional circumstances. For example, Aristotle tells us, “. . . silence is a woman’s glory”⁷ (Aristotle qtd. in Lefkowitz and Fant 39). St. Paul asserts “. . . women should keep silent . . . they have no permission to talk, but should keep their place as the law directs” (1 Corinthians 33-34 qtd. in Lefkowitz and Fant). St. Paul also did not “. . . permit women to teach or dictate to the men”⁸ (1 Timothy 2:12 qtd. in Lefkowitz and Fant). In the second century ACE, Tertullian admonishes women “And do you not know you are Eve? God’s sentence hangs still over all your sex and His punishment weighs down upon you. You are the devil’s gateway” (Greenspan 52). Our frequent dependence on only well-known and canonical texts does nothing to help make the activities of ancient women visible. In fact, while these texts provide evidence of misogyny, dependence only on such texts suggests, even unintentionally, that misogynist ideals were the only ideals in the ancient world when, in fact, they were not.

My concern with overdependence on canonical texts to determine ideology that may have constrained women’s activities is twofold. For one, given the sometime random survival of ancient texts, dependant not only on preservation, but also on archaeological finds and historical and contemporary processes of selection, we cannot be sure that texts written by women or from the viewpoints of women, do not exist.⁹ Indeed, this is the argument Joseph P. Ghougassian

⁷ Lefkowitz, Mary R and Maureen B. Fant. *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome: A Source book in Translation* 2nd edition. p 39.

⁸ There is a debate among biblical scholars about whether Paul actually wrote against women speaking and teaching. It is possible that he did not and that the early Church shaped the passages as part of the seven Ecumenical Conferences whose goal was, in part, to make Church dogma consistent in order to assure its power into the future.

⁹ In fact, Pomeroy identifies texts from Hellenistic Alexandria that include alternate and positive depictions of women in *Women in Hellenistic Egypt: From Alexander to Cleopatra*.

makes in his 1977 text *Toward Women: The Study of the Origins of Western Attitudes Through Greco-Roman Philosophy*. Ghougassian notes Greek and Roman philosophers argued that the capacities of men and women were similar. Ghougassian lists Greek writers, namely Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristophanes, Euripides, Sophocles, Thucydides and the Pre-Socratics, in this category. Ghougassian identifies the grammarian Sextus Empiricus, for example, who argued against the generic term ‘man’ because of its vagueness; “. . . if by man we mean the male then any logical definition that makes use of that word—excludes the female; if by man we mean the human race, then the male is lost” (Ghougassian *Toward Women* 122). Among the Romans, Ghougassian identifies Lucian, Seneca, Musonius Rufus, and Plutarch of Chaeronea. Familiarity with the works of such authors is vital for any understanding of the complex, and sometimes conflicting ideologies concerning women that existed in the Greek and Roman worlds. Conflicting ideologies suggest that women may have had more opportunities than previously imagined.

Sister Prudence Allen’s *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 BCE-1250 AD* makes a similar argument. Allen’s text traces the concept of Woman in philosophical discourse from the Pre-Socratics through the early thirteenth century. In her claim that philosophers *always* considered women, she names four repeating ideologies or theories about women: sex complementarity, sex unity, sex neutrality, and sex polarity and traces them through philosophy from 750 BCE. (Allen 3). She also argues that Plato’s and Aristotle’s perspectives about women were conflated in the middle ages by scholars working from incomplete texts, or by those who did not understand Greek to translate it well. The conflation of the two philosophers’ theories eventually became institutionalized at the University of Paris where Plato and Aristotle became required reading about the year 1255. The model of the University of Paris

was recreated in other institutions, and in the thirteenth century, the conflation of Plato and Aristotle spread across Europe. Many Medieval philosophers were dependant on the institutionalized and simplified philosophies of Plato and Aristotle and built their own work on misconstrued ideas. The result has been an oversimplification of what is, in fact, a range of philosophical ideas about women and the edification of Plato and Aristotle to canonical status concerning philosophical questions about gender.

The resulting concept of Woman persists into the present day. Few scholars can discuss the ancient Greek history of rhetoric or philosophy without mention of Plato and Aristotle. While their work directly addresses rhetoric in particular, my second concern is about the perpetuation of Woman as a category, particularly in Aristotle's work. I am not interested in arguing that Plato and Aristotle should be ignored, devalued, or stricken from our historical canon because it is an unreasonable argument. Rather, the point I am making is that there are other authors and texts with which feminist historiographers may choose to engage, texts that represent a broad variety of ideologies from the ancient world and that support women's value, thinking, capacities, and abilities. Choosing to engage with texts presenting positive theories about women may allow us to define more clearly a classical tradition of rhetoric inclusive of women. Such texts may also provide a wider variety of practices, models, and examples that can help to shift our assumptions about ancient women, and aid feminist scholars to ask better, more complex questions.

Indeed, feminist scholars of rhetoric are perhaps best suited to identify the rhetorical nature of misogynistic texts like those of Aristotle, St. Paul, and Tertullian. These texts do not represent the reality of women's lives accurately; they merely identify *some* ideological assumptions. Misogynist ideology may very well have been dominant in the ancient world, but it was not the only ideology. Furthermore, the insistence of it in the ancient world suggests that

patriarchy was frequently threatened. Women were not universally silent in the ancient world, and we should not allow misogynist ideology to inhibit our ability to recover women and their work. Yes, the works containing proscriptions for women written by Aristotle, St. Paul, Tertullian, and many others were meant to prevent women from participating in society. If women were not active, why bother speaking and writing against them at all? Reading from a position of resistance and deep disbelief makes visible how proscriptions were necessary because women already *were* active or wanted to be active when these authors were writing. Rather than understand admonitions as the creation and maintenance of actual constraint upon historical women to engage in rhetorical practices of all kinds, we need to reverse the reversal and assume that such texts functioned as counter-discourses to women's *actual* activities. Locating times in which admonitions were unusually common may be a way of pinpointing historical periods of women's activity, of re-membering them. Understanding Classical Athens in this way suggests numerous rhetorical activities by women rather than complete exclusion. Identifying particular patterns of concerns among male leaders may help us narrow our searches to other places and times in which women were very active. Is it possible that scholars have confused the ideology of these great men with the material reality of women's lives? The philosophers, rhetoricians, and teachers included throughout this text and in the appendices are examples that confusion between ideology and material reality of women's lives may be so. By understanding canonical and misogynist texts as counter-discourse to inhibit women's activities we may be better able to re-member ancient women.

New scholarship since the 1990s by classicists, archaeologists, and art historians revisits the lives of ancient women and provides new interpretations. An example of contemporary scholarship, which addresses the issue of archaeological evidence as offering new ways of

understanding the reality of Greek women that is not recorded in literary texts, is Joan Breton Connelly's *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*. Connelly's study of archaeological, literary, and artistic evidence suggests that the material realities of Greek women were indeed, very different from misogynist ancient texts. Dependence on evidence that unveils practices that contradict ideological texts for ancient women is one way to realign ourselves as gynocentric and may allow feminist scholars to identify important historical periods and venues where we may begin searching for foremothers in order to fill the 1500-year absence of women's history with women's voices.

CROSS DISCIPLINARY BORDERS

Another way feminist historiographers may expand knowledge of ancient women's participation in rhetoric and pedagogy is to cross disciplinary borders more readily for the plethora of resources that already exist about women in a variety of fields. As Jarratt reminds us

the rhetorician has from the beginning been a generalist. The goal for the historian in an age of vast and highly specialized knowledge should become neither mastery of a limited body of texts nor the impossible task of knowing everything and ordering it, but rather an agility in moving between disciplines standing back from them with the critical perspective characteristic of both history and rhetoric for the purpose of illustrating meaningful connections, disjunctions, overlaps, or exclusions. (Jarratt *Rereading the Sophists* 14-15)

For example, in my research about Hypatia of Alexandria, I have read texts by scholars in a variety of disciplines and I will name but a few here. The bibliography in this book includes texts by scholars of archaeology (Breton Connelly), communication studies (Biesecker, Campbell), classical studies (Bagnall, Cribore, Kennedy, Vivante), women's studies (Dzielska, Lerner), history (Ménage, Mclean, Pollard and Reed, White), Afro-centric history (Lumpkin, Royster),

mathematics (Deakin), and philosophy (Allen, Foucault, Rich, Waithe, Wider), among others. I have been dependant on timetables (Greenspan), bibliographies (Goldwater), and anthologies (Elder and Bryant, Lunsford, Plant, Ronald and Ritchie) to discover the names of important historical women who engaged in rhetoric and philosophy in the ancient world. By reading in several disciplines, I discovered women engaging in intellectual work around the time of Hypatia's life, in many disciplines, sometimes teaching men, sometimes lecturing in public, some respected, some not. My research has also led me to discover, quite by accident, extant fragments (translated) of Greek women philosophers from 6 BCE (in Waithe, Wider, Vivante). When I presented my discoveries at the 2009 Feminist(s) Rhetoric(s) conference in Michigan, my work met surprise. Why have these women not been recovered for the history of rhetoric? With our field's dependence on classical texts, how can we afford not to re-member and include these women's fragments and other documentation of their activities? Study, for example, of Greek women demonstrate that women's position and her available means have varied widely in places and historical periods, contradicting and complicating scholarship about conditions of ancient women's lives, ancient rhetorics, educational practices, and ancient discourse communities. The work I have completed demonstrates that women engaged with men and with each other in a variety of communities and in a variety of ways; recovery of ancient women has a particular weight in our field and could further destabilize the linear narrative male history of rhetoric in other historical times.

RE-MEMBER COMMUNITIES

No one lives in isolation and we know that the social nature of human beings means that, despite ideology and stereotypes of the lone intellectual who discovers answers to problems, the creation of knowledge is more often an act of community. Adrienne Rich notes, "[a]bove all women's relationships with women have been denied or neglected as a force of history," because

they are subversive or dangerous (204). Re-membering communities in which women lived and worked not only creates important context, but asserts the importance of women's relationships with other women. In fact, the notion of community may be used as a heuristic for the discovery of groups of women rather than singular figures.

As Biesecker suggested in "Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric" by looking for the communities where important women may have been a part, we simultaneously dismantle the concept of the universal Woman and reestablish a non-hierarchical framework that is more inclusive and varied. The result is we create a more accurate and less distorted view of rhetorical history. In other words, once we understand the available means of persuasion as varied and contextual we may be able to recognize more women who participated in rhetorical history. Once we understand the context in which these women worked, we may be able to reintegrate the now sex-segregated rhetorical tradition and stop the ghettoization of women's rhetorics, rhetorical activities, and historical importance.

HISTORY FROM THE "BOTTOM-UP"

Berlin's "Revisionary Histories of Rhetoric: Politics, Power, and Plurality" frames another way that we might identify and locate women's historical texts.

Lyotard argues for a plurality of particular narratives, limited and localized explanations that attempt to address features of experience that grand narratives exclude. This requires (as I have underscored in this essay) looking for what has been left out in ordinary accounts, searching for the events at the unspoken margins of culture. This moves attention to such categories as class, race, gender, and ethnicity in the unfolding of historical events. This is often history from the bottom up, telling the stories of the people and events normally excluded from totalizing discourses. (Berlin "Revisionary Histories" 123)

Berlin is correct, it is time that we write “. . . history from the bottom up” by assessing research materials at our disposal. What’s more, “bottom up” research is more in keeping with methods of feminist theoretical concerns, as Royster puts it, “. . . history [and] theory begin with a story” (Royster 90, 255). We need to start with the stories we know, have heard, and that we read in order to re-member a tradition of women’s rhetorical history, and thereby change our notions of rhetoric and rhetorical history. We need to search for extant primary texts and, following Glenn, Swearingen, and Ong we must be more willing to use secondary and tertiary texts, which will open opportunities for research on women to address the gap of women’s rhetorical history and subvert the patriarchal mandate that history depend upon primary texts to assert a singular Truth. In this study of Hypatia of Alexandria, for example, secondary texts like Socrates Scholasticus *Ecclesiastical History* document Hypatia’s life, murder, and texts such as Dzielska’s *Hypatia of Alexandria* expands on Scholasticus’ work.

We can continue to expand our base of materials, discovered from the bottom-up, if we consider anecdotes, lore, myth, and legend as generative sites for the invention of women’s history. Lerner tells us that “. . . all the important [positive examples of women] . . . were expressed in myth and fable: amazons, dragon-slayers, women with magic powers” (*Patriarchy* 222). If myth and fable are what we have, this is what we should use to re-member women’s history. Anecdote, lore, myth, and legend, seen in this light, can be generative. These stories provide us with names and other important details about women’s lives, when, once identified can become research subjects. Subjects can be carefully situated, both in time and place as well as in historical scholarship in order to create a fuller context. While we will probably never recover all of women’s (or men’s) lost work, the approach should allow greater flexibility, and encourage the development of new methods and methodologies. Beginning with stories, myth,

legends, and anecdotes may allow us to improve our understanding of ancient women to better balance the historical narrative of rhetoric.

INCLUDE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

In his 1999 article "Recovering the Lost Art of Researching the History of Rhetoric" Richard Leo Enos argues that because limited primary texts authored by women are extant, we “. . . must expand our domain beyond the established canon of literary texts of rhetoric, for texts—including theoretical treatises—are only one form of material evidence” (R. Enos “Recovering” 13). One of the forms of evidence Enos suggests historians of ancient rhetoric consider is archaeological. While Lefkowitz and Fant, Cantarella, and Vivante do consider archaeological evidence a new text by Breton Connelly considers not only archaeological evidence and literary depictions of women, it also questions inaccurate assumptions of older scholarship. In *Portrait of A Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*, Breton Connelly argues that archeological evidence provides a different story about women’s activities and importance than does extant textual evidence. She concludes her study of Greek priestesses between 8 BCE until 2 ACE by explaining that

[v]ivid images show priestesses at work, fixing their seals on official documents, interacting with legislative bodies, negotiating for amendments to sacred laws, appointing sacred officials, and, in short, functioning as legitimate politicians within the *polis* bureaucracy. They are even portrayed as valued colleagues and confidants to male philosophers. Sacred authority, embedded in secular authority, was very real. (220)

Breton Connelly’s work is an example of Enos’ notion of rhetorical sequencing. Enos’ process of rhetorical sequencing includes four steps; discovery, reconstruction, analysis, and display (R. Enos “Archeology of Women” 75). Discovery and reconstruction have to do with the

identification and recreation of the rhetorical situation (context) to illuminate social and cultural conditions. In the last two steps of recovery, he recommends discourse analysis of the evidence and publications that assist readers to apprehend the importance of the recreated context in order to understand women's participation in or activities of rhetoric.

The consideration of archaeological evidence, which suggests a differing reality of women's lives than does textual evidence, allows historians one way to understand the importance of context in shaping a historical woman's activities and importance. Breton Connelly's work demonstrates that as early as 8 BCE in Athens, women were a vital part of their communities and that one of their primary obligations was to maintain cohesion of a community by teaching cultic practices and rites to their communities at large as well as to initiates. She also claims that priestesses travelled to spread cultic practice from their hometown to Greek provinces, acting as cultural and cultic diplomats (195). Priestesses negotiated laws, amendments, and penalties for transgressions against their cults, they dealt directly with the city's Council, they argued cases before the Assembly because "[i]t was the duty of priests and priestesses to uphold these ancestral principals; indeed, they were legally bound to enforce sacred regulations" (Breton Connelly 214). The numerous women Breton Connelly names were clearly not secluded in homes; the responsibilities of priestesses Breton Connelly discovers unveil women's active use of rhetoric and suggest some kind of training. Newly discovered and interpreted archaeological evidence should be included in our histories of rhetoric, particularly in historical periods such as the ancient world in which texts are rare and provide incomplete, or biased evidence. Our deliberate inclusion of new material evidence and new interpretations of it allow scholars opportunities to complement the paucity of texts with a more fully recreated

context that is rigorous and to include the important activities of ancient historical women in histories of rhetoric.

GENERATIVE POTENTIAL OF LEGEND

The Greeks

Anecdote, myth, and legend, the elements of women's lore, can be generative and help scholars fill 1500 years of missing women's history, as I have already mentioned. The approach I suggest here is not without scholarly precedent. M. I. Finley noted in his 1965 article "Myth, Memory, and History" that the Greeks created their own history using myth. When Herodotus began writing *The Histories*, Greek history had been maintained by noble families who rose and fell over time, much was lost. What existed for Herodotus (484-425 BCE) was a ". . . random scatter [of information] . . . a jumble of fact and fiction . . ." (Finley 288). The same was true for his student Thucydides (460-395 BCE) whose *History of the Peloponnesian War* depended upon the poets, including Homer, ". . . tradition, contemporary evidence, and a very powerful and disciplined mind" (Finley 288). Thucydides' developed a theory of Greek power that was not derived from the study of history according to Finley, but instead from ". . . prolonged meditation about his world" (288).

The Romans

The Romans, too, depended upon myth to develop their own history. In the "Postscript" to his translation of *The Aeneid*, Robert Fitzgerald explains that the Romans ". . . grew fond, no one knows why, of tracing their origin to the emigration of surviving Trojans under Aeneas" and that ". . . the Roman clan of the Julii went so far as to claim as ancestors Aeneas and his divine mother" (405). Cicero discusses the writing of history at length in *Brutus*, and demonstrates Fitzgerald's observation. He claims epideictic discourse can and should be used to praise our heroes ". . . since the privilege is conceded to rhetoricians to distort history in order to give more point to their narrative" (47). Lerner would explain the ancient Greek and Roman uses of myth

as a basis of history in terms of human need for identity and for legitimization. Human need to understand an intellectual ancestry, establish cultural traditions, legitimate power, and provide a philosophical framework are as vital for us now as it was for the Greeks and Romans.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP

In our own time, scholars recognize that history is an ideological construct. Hayden White's work demonstrated that history is a narrative with ideological aims. Extant history is imbued with ideology, not historical Truth. History, then, is no different from the fictional stories we tell; there is no Truth of History. In 1994 Peter Heehs writes “. . . *logos* and *mythos* interpenetrate, and apparently cannot be easily extracted from one another” (16). In *Why History Matters*, Lerner asserts that “. . . history-making. . . is a creative enterprise, by means of which we fashion out of fragments of human memory and selected evidence of the past a mental construct of a coherent past world that makes sense to the present” (117). In 1998 E. A. Clark published “The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the ‘Linguistic Turn’” and asserts that histories “. . . are little different from novels” (E. A. Clark 21).

In our own field, the influential work of Susan Jarratt about the sophists is important for an understanding of the slippage between history and myth. In “Toward a Sophistic Historiography” Jarratt details examples of how Greek sophists used rhetorical history, a mix of *mythos* and *logos* for a variety of purposes. She recommends that contemporary scholars rethink history “. . . not . . . completely to renounce the ‘logical’ or ‘factual,’ but to stop relying on their supremacy over their supposed opposites, to investigate a range of alternatives between those illusory poles” for a variety of human needs (277). Women's history, like that of the ancient Greeks, is a similar random scatter of materials; conflated, modified, and invented, it needs to be similarly re-collected and re-membered. Therefore, materials available for contemporary scholars of women's history are similar to those of our ancient ancestors. Furthermore,

investigating a range of alternatives to binarial approaches is in keeping with feminist scholarly and political aims. C. Jan Swearingen suggests feminist historiographers extend the range of questions to include those about “. . . social roles, identity, and status; the boundaries of dividing public from private roles” in order to recover more women (“Plato’s Women” qtd. in Johnson 11). Like the Greeks and Romans, feminist historiographers can use myth and anecdote alongside Thucydides’ habit of prolonged meditation in order to produce scholarship about important ancient women. What “counts” as prolonged meditation is any of a variety of rigorous scholarly methods, for example, historical ethnography (Royster 11) that recreates a social, political, and intellectual milieu and from which we can make some reasonable assertions. This is Berlin’s “bottom-up” approach.

Cheryl Glenn’s 1997 text, *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance* remains influential because it was among the first to depend on secondary texts in order to reconstruct historical woman. Critics of Glenn’s work, however, claim that she was not writing history at all, that she was merely telling “semifictional” stories. The criticism is evidenced by the debate between the Glenn, Jarratt, and Gale in the January 2000 issue of *College English*. In their debate, questions of truth and bias, uses of secondary texts, and of method and methodology arise. Gale claims “[w]hen a historian intends for a semifictional work to be read as less distorted history that reflects a truer historical reality, he or she undermines the validity of the argument” (368). However, history already is a compilation of stories, a hybrid of fact and fiction that cannot reach historical reality—history already includes both myth and fact, much as we might like to believe otherwise. As Finely notes, “. . . one can really know only one’s own time. . . The past can yield nothing more than paradigmic support for the conclusions one has drawn from the present. . . ” (301). What scholars of history must

recognize is that some histories have been legitimized and others have not, and what counts as ancient rhetorical history in particular, is already distorted by the mythical absence of women. As William McNeil notes, “. . . the same words that constitute truth for some are, and always will be, myth for others. . . .” and as such, feminist histories may frequently earn Gale’s critique as a reaction to feminist subversion of patriarchal power structure manifest in history-writing (8). However, overtly including myth in this context, is actually a more transparent and ethical undertaking. Since it is impossible to differentiate myth from history, we might benefit from approaching them dialectically, by putting what we think of as myth and history in conversation so that they may inform one another (Heehs 16). The impact of doing so will make mythic qualities of “objective” histories visible.

Jarratt, following White, also asserts that history is, and should be conscientiously and overtly sophistic:

. . . a view of history as merely uncovering lost “facts” doesn’t take fully enough into account the inevitable literary or mythic quality of any historical reconstruction and its relevance to the present. The use of these sophistic historical arguments as analogues for a contemporary historical practice is intended to encourage an increased self-consciousness about the process of reconstruction as it functions to open for investigation fruitful questions about belief, purpose, and self-definition rather than answer questions of “fact.”
 (“Toward a Sophistic” 268)

She continues her assertion about sophistic discourse in *Rereading the Sophists*, where she argues that there are benefits for rethinking sophistic discourse for contemporary use.

According to Jarratt, the sophists allow us to understand an alternative to Platonic-Aristotelian

Truth, and she demonstrates an alternative in her consideration of the similarities between sophism and feminism and thereby broadening our understanding of both. She chooses to compare sophistic with feminist discourse “. . . not. . . [to] completely renounce the ‘logical’ or ‘factual,’ but to stop relying on their supremacy over their supposed opposites, to investigate a range of alternatives between those illusory poles” (29). Jarratt concludes, “. . . the sophists offer discursive strategies that can be employed to identify and negotiate differences among social groups,” and as such align nicely with feminist theory, values, and practice (92). Her analysis of sophism and feminism, disparate as the topics may seem, demonstrates how combining *mythos* and *logos* can provide insight into rhetorical strategies, in this case, of feminists. Jarratt’s approach, then, makes visible “objective” methods and historical “facts” embedded with bias that are used to discipline and punish marginalized communities for the benefit of maintaining power in dominant communities and ideologies.

In addition to the sophistic approach of ‘making the weaker case strong,’ there are distinct benefits to writing sophistic histories. Epideictic sophistic histories grant historical women long overdue recognition and praise, as Cicero claimed. Because sophistic histories are dependent upon and reveal their sources, they have the potential to expose what counts as objectivity in traditionally written histories and reveal the dependence of traditional history on myth or fiction. Sophistic histories may allow new ways of thinking as a result. Following Jarratt, sophistic histories support “. . . the validity of narrative as a vehicle for the serious tasks of knowledge creation, storage, and use on a more self-conscious level . . .” (“Toward a Sophistic” 276-7). The application is clearly useful for writing women’s history, especially of those who lived in the ancient world. An epistemic approach to history writing (and reading) lends itself to pedagogical practice as well, which I discuss in chapter five.

HISTORY AS BECOMING

Perhaps historians should shift ideas about history from the notion that it is static and unchanging “fact” to one that is changing and multivalent by including women’s lore. History itself is an always-changing endeavor at meaning-making as White, Jarratt, Glenn and so many other scholars of history indicate because it addresses a variety of changing human needs over time. The changing nature of our historical narratives to meet human need suggests that history is always in the process of becoming. By creating a newly interpreted past based on texts we legitimize, we can create the conditions for a future of possibilities. Sophistic history, then, allows us to rethink ways of writing history while we become conscious about history writing to provide questions that disrupt the status quo and have the potential to create new futures. We can disrupt the patriarchal status quo by finding women silenced by history for the recovery of the history of rhetoric with the paradigm of sophistic history. Given the problems of documenting historical women’s lives, the ideological and theoretical debates, and the expansion of evidence in the ancient period, there exists an opportunity to ask new questions in order to reframe history and the construction of it.

Women’s history should not have been lost, but sadly, it has been. Rather than abandon the recovery of ancient and early medieval women, scholars can recreate it when we depend upon myth, legend, and anecdote as sources from which to generate and recover women of importance. History is not about knowing what happened in the past, instead, as James Murphy noted, “History is. . . a gesture towards the future” (Murphy qtd. in Lunsford *Reclaiming Rhetorica* x). It is time that our history, our metaphorical Ring of Power, is carried by woman-centered scholars interested in breaking the spine of oppressive patriarchy. What new questions can we ask? What new insights can we gain to create new conditions upon which to build the future?

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In this chapter, I recreate Hypatia's historical milieu as a cultural site (Johnson 2002) by investigating the governmental and social organization of Alexandria during the Roman occupation. I begin with a general description of Alexandria before discussing its government and social organization followed by discussion of the uniquely syncretic culture of Alexandria during the Roman period. Since the city included a large population of Romans, Greek, and Egyptians, I explain the influences of the Romans during their occupation (30 BCE-642 ACE), the Greeks during their tenure (323 BC-30 BC) and that of Egyptian custom before that, particularly as customs related to women's material conditions. My focus then shifts to the changing power structure before I discuss how specific values arose to empower women's rhetorical activities. I have arranged information so that the discussion begins with general topics e.g. population, government organization, law etc., before moving to my discussion about how institutions and practices were different for women (e.g. law and women). The purpose of my arrangement is to provide background upon which Hypatia may come into fuller view in the next chapter.

In *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910*, Nan Johnson explains the understanding of rhetorical theories and practices as a cultural site allows for inquiry into what cultural circumstances would have given license for the blatant erasure of women's rhetorical lives. Understanding cultural sites in this way allow scholars to ask what those circumstances tell us about how exclusionary maps of rhetorical histories are drawn and why. In *Rereading the Sophists*, Jarratt describes the practice of overreading as a way to disrupt patriarchal histories. Overreading “. . . seeks to recover a fuller narrative, to identify the social conditions of its production” and break through received histories (77). While understanding the social conditions

under which history is produced is valuable in explaining how women were excluded from the history of rhetoric, it also allows a way to identify the possibility of women's rhetorical production or activities. Biesecker, asks the important question ". . . what play of forces made it possible for a particular speaking subject to emerge?" (Biesecker "Coming" 148). Similarly, in *Traces of a Stream*, Royster notes her study of African-American women required her to closely consider the rhetorical, historical, and ideological context of the women she researched in order to better understand their activities. Likewise, by recreating the historical background of Hypatia's lifetime in Alexandria, I hope to glean better understanding of her rhetorical activities, teaching practices, and importance for histories of rhetoric.

Beginning with the historical milieu in which Hypatia lived provides an understanding of her time and place and grants insight into her rhetorical activities to explain the play of forces that made her rhetorical activities possible. In so doing, I demonstrate why using a model of Classical Athens serves to obscure the feminist historiographer's ability to identify important women for the history of rhetoric. The traditional model of the lives of Athenian women as confined, even if it were accurate, cannot clearly explain Hypatia's activities. How was it possible for her to teach men, lecture in public, administer a school, and advise local and visiting dignitaries to Alexandria? Her murder and the possible motives for it probably led to the deliberate destruction of her work, thereby erasing her from (nearly) all historical records, including those for the history of rhetoric. Understanding Hypatia's life in this way allows me to reveal her work and her importance to the history of rhetoric. My practice of re-membering fuses anecdotal accounts of her with the re-collection of her historical context. Re-membering the ideological context of Roman Alexandria offers ways to consider otherwise missing information about Hypatia's activities that bring into relief the ways in which she was empowered and

constrained. Her historical context, then, functions as some of the scattered pieces of knowledge that contribute to re-membering her.

Conducting research about ancient Alexandria is difficult because there are few available documents. Given the wet conditions of the Nile Delta, few ancient documents have survived. In addition, much lies in the harbor or underneath the modern city and is perhaps unrecoverable (Bagnall *Sources*, Rowlandson). The lack of documentation about Alexandria makes it seem more passive than it actually was (Bagnall *Egypt in Late Antiquity* 107). Complicating matters further, Alexandria was the location of the now lost Roman archives, making an understanding of the late ancient Mediterranean generally more difficult because we lack information about the Romans and the Romans in Egypt as well (Bagnall *Egypt in Late Antiquity*; Rowlandson 13). Most of the documents that do exist between 332 BCE and 641 ACE are primarily those from rural areas outside of Alexandria in the Oxyrhynchite nome (Rowlandson 1). Although rural Egypt is not Alexandria and recreating the milieu of Hypatia of Alexandria's lifetime in Alexandria is trickier because the city had its own distinct customs separate from the rest of Egypt, the documents do allow some reasonable assertions about life in Alexandria that shed light on Hypatia's importance. What the extant papyri and ensuing scholarship suggest is that Roman Alexandria is best characterized by its syncretism of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman values manifest in customs and practices that served to empower Hypatia and other women during her lifetime.

Cultural syncretism was reflected in the appearance of Alexandria. Largely Egyptian in appearance even under Roman rule, Parsons asserts, "Alexandria was marble from birth" (58). The city was divided into ethnic regions and by a grid of parallel streets. The Rhakotis was the native Egyptian section and location of the Serapeum; The Brucheion or Royal Greek-

Macedonian area housed government offices, markets, the Soma (Alexander's Tomb), the Museum, and the royal palaces; and the Jewish quarter almost a city in itself with its own government and laws. Ethnic regions were further divided into districts. The city was filled with remarkable buildings including the famous lighthouse, the Serapeum, the Soma, and the Museum, which contained the great library of Alexandria (Bagnall *Sources* 5). According to Parsons, the lighthouse was “. . . five hundred and ninety feet high” (60). It was one of the wonders of the ancient world and “. . . a trendy place to dine during the Roman period” (Watts *City and School* 144). The temple of Serapis (the Serapeum) was a “huge complex of buildings [that] included a library, lecture halls, and subsidiary shrines to Isis and Anubis” (Haas 146). The Soma was fashioned as an Ionic temple with golden columns, a golden roof, and embellished with precious stones. There was a gymnasium, a stadium, and hippodrome. Other entertainment included theaters, parks filled with wild animals, and gardens filled with tropical plants. Haas estimates there were 2,478 pagan temples in Alexandria in the fourth century and “. . . no less than 1,561 baths and 845 taverns” (141, 68). The city of Alexandria was a sophisticated one that inspired awe in visitors; in some ways, it was a typical Roman city, however, its physical appearance reflected syncretic cultural influences.

The history of Egypt is a long one, going back in time four millennium. Egypt was ruled by African kings, queens, and pharaohs until 323 BCE when the Greek general, Ptolemy Soter, came to rule after the death of Alexander the Great. The Ptolemies ruled Egypt until 30 BCE, when the Romans annexed it after the suicide of Cleopatra VII. The Romans, like the Greek Ptolemies and Egyptians before them, understood Alexandria's riches. Egypt was ripe with natural resources and West documents that the city of Alexandria collected raw materials from the rest of Egypt for manufacture and export (47-48). In addition to completed manufactured

goods, Egypt also exported raw materials such as grain and metal (West 45). Alexandria's two harbors, the Harbor of Eunostus (west) and Cibotus made it a perfect location as a trading center, and it “. . . was the chief intermediary between the Mediterranean world and the distant spice and silk lands of India,” (West 45). Alexandria in the fourth and fifth century under Roman rule was beautiful, wealthy, and cosmopolitan.

Population

It is difficult to say with certainty what the population numbered when Egypt became a Roman territory because it is unclear if the numbers include only men, or if they included all citizens and whether or not they included the substantial number of foreigners living in Alexandria and the rest of Egypt. However, “. . . Josephus [37-100 ACE] relates that the total population of Egypt was seven and a half million excluding the population of Alexandria” (Delia 282). According to Delia the only reliable source to estimate the population of Roman Alexandria is Diodorus Siculus who lived in Alexandria around 60 ACE and claimed the population numbered more than three hundred thousand (283). While population estimates are uncertain, what is clear is that the population of Alexandria was ethnically diverse, which contributed to the perceived isolation of Alexandria and supported the development of a uniquely syncretic culture in Alexandria that was unlike the rest of Egypt, the Mediterranean, and the Roman Empire. Cultural syncretism infiltrated every aspect of Alexandrian life and created conditions in which women were more empowered there than in other places in the Mediterranean.

Government and Law

The Roman government of Alexandria consisted of three parts: the emperor through his relationships with select citizens, the military, and the civil administration. The *dux Aegypti* was the principle military officer charged with maintaining order and enforcing imperial orders. He

worked with the civil administrator, the *praefectus Augustalis* (the Roman prefect), the ranking imperial officer. Haas explains “[t]he duties of the prefect were mainly taken up with presiding over the vast administrative bureaucracy centered in Alexandria, which governed nearly every aspect of life throughout the late Roman province of Egypt” (72). The prefect’s duties included the oversight of civil matters such as taxes, running the mint, collecting and transporting grain to Rome, military deployment, managing grain stores, and feeding the poor (Haas 72).

In terms of law, Roman tradition was to allow local customs and law to continue after annexing territory to their empire. As such, much of the old Egyptian law lay as a baseline to undergird both Roman and Greek cultural and legal practices. After 212 ACE when Caracalla granted Egyptians citizenship, “Roman law officially became applicable to all. In practice, however, the Roman forms operated in part as an overlay on existing habits and only gradually and incompletely supplanted these” (Rowlandson 155). Tim Whitmarsh explains, “. . . in this respect, Greek local and Roman provincial government could almost be perceived as complementary rather than in tension” (11). Recognition of syncretic values manifested in law is vital to an understanding of women’s empowerment in Roman Alexandria.

Syncretic Culture

As Haas explains “Alexandria’s relatively isolated geographical position earned it the epithet ‘*Alexandria ad Aegyptum*,’ that is, Alexandria ‘next to’ or ‘toward Egypt’” (33). Because of its difference, the city of Alexandria developed a unique culture within Egypt and within context of the ancient Mediterranean. Alexandria

. . . was a multi-cultural society. Even before Alexander the Great ‘liberated’ Egypt from Persian rule (332 BC), there were pockets of Aramaic, Greek, and Carian speakers in the Nile valley and Delta, as well as Nubian and other African influences, especially in the south. And the military and civilian immigrants

welcomed by the early Ptolemaic rulers over the following century included a diverse range of settlers not only from the cities of Old Greece, but also from the Ptolemaic overseas power such as Cyrnaica, Thrace and Syria-Phoenicia, including Judea. (Rowlandson 151)

By the Roman period, the culture in Alexandria was a syncretic mix of Egyptian, Greek, Roman and other cultures. Ethnic, religious, and intellectual diversity contributed to conditions for women in Alexandria that were more liberal than for women elsewhere in the ancient world.

Egyptian Greeks

Liberal attitudes about women already existed in Egypt when Ptolemy Soter established himself in Alexandria after Alexander's death in 323 BCE, beginning the more than three hundred year influence of Greek culture in Egypt. Eager to bring Greek immigrants to Egypt, Ptolemy provided his soldiers with *kleroi*, allotments of land to settle there, which they did; Rowlandson reports about 100,000 Greek males immigrated to Egypt (5). Lacking social pressure of Greek society combined with a shortage of marriageable Greek women, due in part to the continued Greek practice of infanticide of unwanted female children, Greek immigrants unavoidably married Egyptian women, further complicating clear identification of ethnicity and cultural tradition (Rowlandson 151). Official business continued to break down ethnic identification; “. . . as Egyptians learned Greek and found means of getting access to money and power through the royal system . . .” (Bagnall and Cribiore 9). Greeks became so thoroughly settled into Egyptian communities that they often lost links to their Greek roots; the middle class “. . . formed a mixed Graeco-Egyptian race . . . more Egyptian than Greek” (Milne 229). Rowlandson points out that “[b]y the late third century . . . until the end of the Ptolemaic period, it becomes increasingly difficult for the historian to establish an individual's ethnicity” (8). Bell notes, “Alexandria seems from the first to have embodied its founder's great idea of a fusion of

racess and cultures” (1). Bell’s view is romanticized, indeed, given that Greeks, Jews, Egyptians, enclaves of immigrants from Lycia, Phrygia, and other parts of the Mediterranean lived in distinctly different parts of Alexandria where, in some cases they maintained traditional or religious practices. As many scholars do, Bell misses the fact that the city was crowded, and the changing power structure could not control the population’s propensity for violence.

Unlike the Greeks, the Romans did not encourage immigration into Egypt, but the number of Roman citizens progressively increased through individual land grants to prominent families (Rowlandson 11). Given diversity and difficulty of distinguishing ethnicity, in 212 ACE the Emperor Caracalla made all inhabitants of the Roman Empire citizens, classifying them all as *Aegyptioi*, Egyptians (Rowlandson 11). Rather than recognize ethnic diversity and its significance, the Romans encouraged the development of a “. . . Hellenized elite among the *Aegyptioi* of the *metropoleis*, who, alone, enjoyed hereditary membership of the gymnasium, the focal point of Greek cultural identity, and who were privileged by paying a reduced rate of poll-tax (from which Romans and Alexandrians were wholly exempt)” (Rowlandson 153).

Institutions of education initiated students into Hellenistic values.

Alexandria was one of the centers of ancient intellectual life because of its Greek institutions, and students frequently came from other places in the Mediterranean for an education. In the fourth century BCE, Ptolemy set out to create an educational environment to rival that of Athens. He succeeded by creating the Museum, “. . . intended to introduce, produce, and perpetuate a high level of culture in Alexandria. In so doing, [Ptolemy] ensured that Alexandria remained at the forefront of Hellenistic intellectual life” (Watts *City and School* 147). Intellectual life did indeed rival that of Athens and “[i]n the third century B.C.E., the center of scholarship gravitated from Athens to Alexandria” (Henry 61). According to Pollard and Reid,

Alexandria was the greatest mental crucible the world has ever known, the place where ideas originating in obscure antiquity were forged into intellectual constructs that far outlasted the city itself. If the Renaissance was the “rebirth” of learning that led to our modern world, then Alexandria was its original birthplace.

(xix)

Haas maintains that Alexandria remained the destination for education throughout late antiquity. Given the ethnic diversity, the maintenance of cultural unity depended on one’s class, by the *collegia* or through *paideia*. Similar in purpose to the medieval guild, the *collegia* was comprised of associations of individuals who worked a common craft and it served to unite the uneducated population (Watts *City and School* 152). The *collegia* “. . . developed a hierarchy that spread out beneath the collegial elders and their stewards” (Watts *City and School* 152). For those of the upper classes, *paideia*, based on Greek values and models and dispersed through the schools, was the hegemonic ideology.

Education

Education in Alexandria centered around two buildings, the Museum and the Serapeum. The Museum was part of the royal palaces and included “. . . statuary-halls, picture-galleries, lecture-rooms. . . [a cafeteria] for resident and itinerant scholars. . . sleeping apartments, cloisters. . . seats for contemplation. . . theaters for lectures. . . botanical and animal gardens . . .” and a place for worshipping the Muses (Parsons 70). From the time of the Ptolemies, the government offered endowments to attract scholars. Resident and visiting scholars “. . . produced original work in letters and made lasting contributions to science . . . they collated the manuscripts, critically studied the texts . . . and issued recensions of Greek literature” (Parsons

70).¹⁰ The great Library of Alexandria was housed in the Museum. The Library (or “mother” library) contained ten great halls, each of which was assigned a separate department including Epic and non-Dramatic poetry, Drama, Laws, Philosophy, History, Oratory, Medicine, Mathematical Science, Natural Science, Miscellanea. Parsons estimates that in 235 BCE the inner main library contained 490,000 scrolls, many of which contained more than one work (204).

The Serapeum¹¹ was the center of the cult of Serapis and was housed in the Egyptian quarter. The single most magnificent building in Alexandria, it was made of white stone and there were 100 steps from the base of the entrance to the interior. Parsons estimates it measured 500 cubits long by 250 wide.¹² The interior reportedly included 400 red granite columns, rooves of copper, porticoes for various uses, altars for sacrifice, a colossal statue of Serapis made of marble, ivory, and gold; it was “. . . perhaps the most impressive sacred compound in the entire eastern Mediterranean” (Watts *City and School* 144). It also included a large collection of art and in the Hellenistic period, it contained the “daughter” library used to store duplicates of books housed in the Museum. Watts estimates the Serapeum collection numbered nearly 43,000 papyrus rolls and that it probably grew larger in the Roman period (*City and School* 150). Parsons estimates that by 1 BCE the daughter library contained 700,000 papyrus rolls (274).

The centers of education in the ancient Mediterranean were Antioch, Athens, Alexandria, Rome, and Pergamum. Because of their large populations and variety of economic and social classes, cities offered a two-tiered system of schools differentiated by social or economic class (Kaster 341, 323). Rural areas, while offering fewer choices of schools, had as much variety

¹⁰ Pomeroy notes “Although some male scholars were granted financial support by the Ptolemies, female scholars were not similarly favored” (*Women in Hellenistic Egypt* 72).

¹¹ The Serapeum was the temple of Serapis, a god created by a group of intellectuals in Alexandria at the request of Ptolemy Soter to fuse Greek and Egyptian mythologies.

¹² Using the conversion of 1 cubit to 18,” the building measured 750 x 375 feet or 281,000 sf.

from region to region as the great cities. Generally, there existed primary or grammar schools and those of rhetoric and philosophy. Children began primary school around the age of six to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic at the beginner's level. Once sufficiently advanced, the student learned literature with a focus on poetry. When a student had mastered these subject areas, the student enrolled in a school of philosophy or rhetoric; "[t]he course of study pursued under teachers of rhetoric and philosophy was long, detailed, and expensive" hence, only the wealthy classes could afford it for their children, employees, or slaves (Watts *City and School* 5). By the time the student completed an advanced education, he was expected to understand the philosophical system and the place of canonical texts within it.

Watts explains that schools of rhetoric and philosophy trained their students in morality and *paideia*. While the subjects included advanced writing, rhetoric, and philosophy, *paideia* involved teaching students a cultured way of life. After being educated in *paideia*, a graduate was expected to behave in a certain way by maintaining composure, and by recognizing and treating those similarly educated with respect appropriate to his achievements. Students were also taught to understand their roles in society and how to approach the divine. The value of *paideia* was such that it was commonly believed that only the souls of the educated progressed because ". . . education and excellence went together. . . derived from the understanding that the educated man had learned a code of proper behavior. Thus, classical learning also defined one as a gentleman" (Watts *City and School* 6). Those educated in *paideia* developed and maintained personal relationships creating a cultural and educated network of men who were often in power. Christian or pagan men educated by *paideia* recognized one another and formed a circle of elites in the Mediterranean at large. Once students returned home upon completion of their education, they corresponded by letter, often asking favors of one another. Relationships with professors

functioned similarly; such relationships were meant last a lifetime and did. These relationships, then, functioned as a stabilizing social and political force in the ancient Mediterranean.

In Roman Alexandria, the stabilizing impact of *paideia* was spread among Christians and pagans who shared geographic space, a collection of educational institutions, and a common intellectual culture (Watts *City and School* 168). Alexandrian schools had long integrated pagan and Christian students without incident and throughout the beginning of the third century students of the Alexandrian Christian community maintained close ties to pagan teachers. For the cultivated Alexandrians, pagan philosophy and Christianity were “. . . perfectly compatible . . .” because the combination created the building blocks of philosophical study (Watts *City and School* 154, 164). Brown explains that

. . . *paideia* united potentially conflicting segments of the governing class. It joined imperial administrators and provincial notables in a shared sense of common excellence. A late Roman education produced remarkable cultural homogeneity . . . Ever since the early empire, a common culture had provided a language that enabled members of the educated classes from far apart as Arles and Arabia to meet as equal devotees of Greek rhetoric. The very standardization of this rhetoric, which is so tedious to a modern reader, explains its attraction in the first and second centuries ACE (*Power and Persuasion* 39-40)

In the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the power of Rome weakened as the Catholic Church rose, strengthened, and challenged the Roman government. In light of clashing ideologies and a changing power structure, bonds of *paideia* also weakened.

Changing power structure

Within a year of ascending the throne to the Roman Empire in 312 ACE, Constantine recognized Christianity. In 391, Emperor Theodosius forbade the practice of paganism and

encouraged the destruction of pagan temples beginning a tide of violence against pagans all over the empire. After the 391 destruction of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria “. . . pagan rhetors and grammarians were forced to flee the city or give up teaching” (Haas 163). In 395 Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, paganism was outlawed, and all pagan temples were closed. Later the same year, Theodosius I, the last Roman Emperor before the empire split into east and west, died. The Roman Empire was officially and permanently divided between east and west; Arcadius became emperor of the east from Constantinople, and Honorius became emperor of the west, first in Mediolanum then from Ravenna. In 407, Emperor Arcadius granted bishops legal authority to demolish all remaining pagan temples. In 408, after the death of Arcadius, Theodosius II became emperor of the eastern empire at the age of seven and his sister Pulcheria became de facto regent.

By the fourth century, the bonds of *paideia* splintered between pagans and Christians as their differing ideologies facilitated power struggles between civil Roman and church authorities. In an uncertain political climate, Roman officials could not be assured of their authority, they were often isolated and lived in fear of those they governed as well as those who appointed them; “. . . the stigma of indecorous behavior might at any moment be translated into loss of office and eventual exposure to revenge” (Brown *Power and Persuasion* 55). New prefects reportedly entered cities “. . . in fear and trembling” (Brown *Power and Persuasion* 23, 81). Brown observes “[a]s in any large administration . . . survival counted for more than efficiency” (*Power and Persuasion* 24). In Alexandria in particular, the social situation was changing. The growth of Christianity combined with the fracture of Neoplatonism into two distinct groups threatened social unity accomplished by *paideia*.

I do not mean to suggest that Christianity was a stable or homogeneous entity in late antiquity; it was not. In fact, the lack of unity within early Christianity complicated the political and social landscape and the Church made deliberate efforts to solidify Christian ideology by holding seven Ecumenical Councils between 325-787 ACE for that purpose. Contributing to social instability at the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, the ties of *paideia* between Christian and pagan began to weaken as Christians wrote texts that questioned the usefulness of pagan philosophy. Pagans responded with anti-Christian texts and solidified Christian concerns over the value of an education in *paideia*. In response to anti-Christian polemics, for example, Bishop Athanasius¹³ wrote *Life of Anthony* (c. 356). The text depicts Anthony of Egypt, an illiterate ascetic who learns the word of God in church, circumventing the need for literacy and a pagan education in philosophy. Demonstrating the irrelevance of pagan philosophy to Christianity, the text singlehandedly made asceticism the defining characteristic of a Christian teacher and led to the rise of monasticism (Watts *City and School* 177). With the rise of monasticism and the growing absence of Christians from schools, the flow of information between pagan and Christian stopped, ending the mutual influence of one on the other and damaging the social cohesion created by *paideia* (Watts *City and School* 186).

The rise of monasticism was evidence of the changing mentality that reshaped power structures in the Roman Empire (Rowlandson 17). Christian leaders educated in *paideia* became involved in politics, and confrontations ensued (Brown *Power and Persuasion* 34). In addition, Milne claims the rise of monasticism was fueled by Egyptian desire to be free of the Roman Empire and was so great that in 373 the emperor tried to control it via edicts as monasteries began to control large districts with their influence (232). As the old cultural bond of *paideia* fractured, the power struggle between pagan and Christian, previously united under *paideia*, led

¹³ Bishop of Alexandria 328-373

to infighting, danger, and violence between groups. Brown details a letter to Cyrus (390-391 ACE) from Libianius as just one example of increased violence. Libianias' letter reports the public flogging of town councilors in Berroea and Syria; such incidents were becoming common in the eastern empire (*Power and Persuasion* 53). Men of *paideia* moved into Church hierarchy and began to claim or seize power, which they continued to accumulate (Brown *Power and Persuasion* 76). By the fourth century, the Church hierarchy represented not poor Christians, but those of the educated elite class; “[d]espite rumblings of anti-classical thinking in some Christian authors, the upper class, which became largely Christian during the fourth century, had no intentions of giving up its classical inheritance” (Bagnall *Egypt in Late Antiquity* 104). Ties of *paideia* facilitated Christian relationships with other Christians but ties of *paideia* between Christians and pagans became more difficult to maintain.

One of the most powerful Church positions in the cities was that of the patriarch, held by a bishop for the duration of his life. By the fifth century, a patriarch had access to vast wealth, political, and military power,

[t]he monks of Nitria¹⁴ could on occasion come down to Alexandria and provide the bishop with a fighting force; in the city he had the corps of the *parabolani*, whose proper functions were to care for the sick and bury the dead, but who could use their strong arms to defend their chief or attack his supposed enemies as well. (Hardy 90)

In Egypt, “[t]he Christian bishop and his clergy claimed an ever-increasing share in the exercise of authority in the city” (Brown *Power and Persuasion* 77). Bishops began to meddle in issues previously handled by Roman prefects, shifting power in the city from one based on secular philosophy to one based on Christian ideals and managed by an increasingly Christian hierarchy.

¹⁴ About 65 miles from Alexandria

Although it may be easy to claim that the ideology between pagan and Christian is what tore the empire apart, Brown explains the conflict between the two was only one element of the changing situation. He claims that the changes in power had at least as much to do with “. . . a new style or urban leadership” and that the reason many today think it was a purely ideological conflict is because the Church represented changes in government as the Christian victory over pagan gods, erasing other conflicts (*Power and Persuasion* 77). By contrast, Rowlandson claims that the change of mentality had to do not only with specific ideology, but with “. . . an intellectual transformation which introduced personal belief alongside ritual activity as the defining features of religious adherence” for Christians and pagans alike (17). Nonetheless, social changes were based, at least in part, on new ideologies and their resulting practices.

Alexandria as a “violent” city

Watts blames conflict on the social fragmentation of *paideia* for increased violence in Alexandria, but many scholars claim that Alexandria was already a notoriously violent city (Brown, Haas, Rowlandson, Whitfield). One example of the violence in Alexandria is in its tradition of mob executions. The earliest documented execution included humiliating, dragging, and dismembering the victims and happened during a coup by Agathokles after Ptolemy IV died and his queen Arsinoe III was assassinated in 200 BCE:

They took Danae . . . out of the temple of Demeter, dragged her unveiled through the middle of the city . . . Agathoklria (was brought), naked together with her sisters, and after them all their relatives . . . all alike were handed over to the mob. Some [of the mob] bit them, some stabbed them, others cut out their eyes.

Whenever one of them fell, they ripped their limbs apart, until they had in this way mutilated them all. (Rowlandson 34)

A similar episode occurred in 249-250 ACE. A letter from Dionysios about martyrs of the Decian persecution of Christians in Alexandria explains

First, they seized an old man named Metras, and ordered him to blaspheme. When he refused they beat his body with sticks, stabbed his face and eyes with sharp reeds, led him to the suburb, and stoned him to death. Then they led a woman believer called Quinta to the temple of the idol (probably the Serapeum, possibly the Caesareum), and they forced her to do obeisance. When she turned away and showed disgust, they bound her by the feet and dragged her through the whole city over the paved stone surfaces, so that she was smashed against the granite stones, while they also whipped her. They brought her to the same place and stoned her to death. . . Furthermore, they seized that marvelous and aged virgin Apollonia and knocked out all her teeth by hitting her jaw. They piled up a pyre in front of the city and threatened to burn her alive if she refused to say along with them the instructed impieties. She begged a brief respite and, granted this, she eagerly jumped into the fire and was burnt up. (Rowlandson 74)

In 361, the anti-pagans Arian Bishop George and two others were “. . . torn limb from limb . . . [their] remains were burned, and [their] . . . ashes thrown into the sea” by a mob after the Christian Emperor Julian, took the throne (Athanassiadi 13). Haas explains that the bodies of George and his accomplices were burned “. . . to prevent any possibility of a later martyr cult” (87). Complete destruction of a body was an Egyptian insult given the ancient Egyptian practices of mummification meant to preserve the body for the afterlife (Haas 87). Violence in Alexandria increased in the third and fourth centuries due, in part, to a multi-cultural population with greater differences living in an overcrowded city complicated by weakening bonds of *paideia* that meant

there were fewer connections between groups and fewer avenues from which to negotiate differences. That there were changes in Neoplatonism contributed to the fracture of societal bonds in Alexandria.

Plotinian and Iamblichean Neoplatonism

Beginning in 200 ACE, Neoplatonism became the dominant philosophy in the Mediterranean (Kennedy 216). In the third and fourth centuries, Neoplatonism developed two distinct forms; the Neoplatonism Plotinus and Porphyry developed in Alexandria and that of Iamblichus in Athens and later Alexandria. The first Neoplatonist was Ammonius Saccas (?-265) who was born in Alexandria and baptized a Christian, which he denounced later. Saccus left no texts; however, his student Plotinus (205-270) continued and published his work. Plotinus synthesized the Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic schools and asserted that the human mind strives for perfection while on earth.

Plotinus taught that the One is infinite and eternal, without thinking or motion; it is potential. The One emanates *nous* as a consequence of its existence. *Nous* is the immaterial element that organizes the world into perceivability; it is pure intellect. The world soul is immaterial and holds an intermediate position between the *nous* and the world, and it contains innumerable souls. The soul descends into the world to allow for the unfolding of God, but those who had descended were already ensnared in the sensuality of the human body. The descended soul must return to the One through the practice of asceticism, contemplation, and ecstatic union with *nous*. Although the One is beyond language, truth is translatable into language, and experience only takes on its full meaning when expressed verbally, hence, human souls could reach salvation through philosophical inquiry. Plotinus taught that the perfect human life is one in which man commands reason and contemplation and he denounced that the stars could influence one's future. Iamblichus (245-325), by contrast, added divinities between the One and

humans. These divinities knew the future and were accessible through prayer and offerings. In Iamblichean Neoplatonism, the soul could return to the One through theurgy, rites and ritual, as opposed to the Plotinian privileging of language and the dialectic. The philosophical transformation created a split in the large Neoplatonist community of Alexandria that inadvertently assisted the rise of Christian power, continuing and contributing to the fracturing of *paideia* and the elite in Alexandria.

Egyptian cultural influences concerning women

The historical context of Roman Egypt including cultural syncretism and changing social and political power systems created conditions for women that seem to have been unparalleled elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean during the same period. Before considering how the historical context affected Hypatia of Alexandria's life and death, I will first detail the general conditions for women in order to explain how and why women were unusually empowered in Alexandria.

Part of the reason Roman Alexandria was unique in its treatment of women has to do with its influential Egyptian heritage. Egyptian value of women began in childhood, and Pomeroy reports that one of the major differences in cultural practices among the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans is that the Egyptians did not practice female infanticide (*Goddesses* xii). In addition, unlike most of the world's ancient cultures, Egypt is one of the few to have extensively documented contributions of women in history.¹⁵ These two examples suggest differing values and customs associated with Egyptian women. During a visit to Egypt, Greek historian Herodotus (484-425 BCE), for example, observed “[i]n their manners and customs the Egyptians seem to have reversed the ordinary practices of mankind. For instance, women go to market and engage in trade, while men stay home and do the weaving” (Lissarrague 194). Differing cultural

¹⁵ See Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt* for a list of women documented in Egyptian history and a comparison to the same women's depiction in Greek and Roman histories.

practices involving women exemplify that “Egypt . . . was a land in which women . . . enjoyed high status” (Pomeroy *Goddesses* 225). Indeed, contemporary scholar Bella Vivante claims “. . . ancient Egyptian women interacted with men, did not wear veils, wore clothing suitable for the climate, and, within the hierarchical, patriarchal parameters of the society’s institutions, were apparently able to make decisions about their own lives” (Vivante *Daughters* 60). Laws, including those governing guardianship, marriage, divorce, property, and inheritance rights combined with cultural practices of women’s education, literacy, and travel created a context in which women had more opportunities available to them in Alexandria than in other parts of the ancient Mediterranean. As I argued in chapter one, it is essential that research about ancient cultures not be based on the Classical model of Athens because it cannot account for different practices among ancient peoples and cultural and social values expressed in law and custom varied greatly from place to place in the ancient Mediterranean. The syncretic culture and laws that existed in Alexandria made the material condition of women in Alexandria very different from those of their Greek and Roman counterparts.

Law and women

According to Pomeroy, while there existed a variety of Hellenistic traditions among women, “. . . in all cases the [Greek] colonial setting had witnessed the opening up of a range of possibilities for the legal activity for women impossible to imagine in the classical Greek city” (*Goddesses* xii). There was no single law or tradition for women in Alexandria. Instead, there were “. . . laws governing Greek women living in Egypt, and laws for native Egyptians, which, [. . .] appear less stringent” (Pomeroy *Goddesses* 126-127). Vivante complicates Pomeroy’s version, adding that cultural “. . . influence moved in both directions, and elite Egyptian women began emulating the customs of the Greek and Roman colonists, even asking to be assigned a male guardian when they had never required one before” because the practice was perceived as a

sign of privilege (*Daughters* 60). Conditions for women were diverse, changing, and dependant on their ethnicity, their position in the social hierarchy, and the ideology of the family into which they were born.

Egyptian law that generally functioned under Ptolemaic rule continued to function under Roman rule in spite of Roman discrimination of Egyptians (Rowlandson 155; Lumpkin 156). McHardy and Marshall note, “[w]omen could go to court, manage property, and sometimes they performed their own business transactions through their knowledge of reading and writing . . . it is not possible to pigeon-hole women, saying that they belong exclusively to an Egyptian/private category. Instead . . . women united with men to create a unique, shared culture” (5).

In the complicated cultural and ethnic mix of Ptolemaic Alexandria,

the population of Ptolemaic Egypt could . . . choose between the application of Egyptian or Greek law, exploiting the significant differences between the two systems, particularly with respect to the position of women [. . .] and we find examples of Egyptian women acting as parties to Greek contracts without using a guardian as Greek law required, because guardianship of women was not a feature of Egyptian law. (Rowlandson 152-3)

Women living in Ptolemaic Egypt were far more legally empowered than their Greek counterparts. Unlike Greek society, based on the *oikos*, “in Ptolemaic Egypt . . . there was no political concept of the *oikos* [because it was a monarchy, often with queens in charge]. A shared life, rather than reproduction, was the purpose of marriage. In Alexandria, some unmarried women had the same mores [and practices] as men” (Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic Egypt* xviii).

Guardianship, Marriage, and Divorce

Roman law made women legally dependant on their *potestas* (guardian). After the fourth century, guardianship became the duty of the husband once a woman was married; only in rare circumstances could Roman women act on their own accord (Drijvers 253). Guardians were responsible for handling marriage contracts¹⁶ and managing financial transactions that affected family property (G. Clark 15). If a woman's guardian died before she was 25, a woman could apply to manage her own affairs, however, and “. . . according to a law of 371, a widow under 25 who wished to remarry needed the consent of father, or, if he had died, must negotiate with her kin” (G. Clark 15). Roman women had no rightful heirs before the second century ACE “. . . if she died intestate it was not her children, but her father or her kin, who would inherit” (G. Clark 19).

By contrast, law and customs regarding Roman Egypt did not require guardians for women. Rowlandson explains that as early as the sixth century BCE

. . . the woman's consent to marriage, even one arranged by her family, was required . . . married women retained full rights to their own property and could engage in business transactions like money-lending without the need of the husband's approval . . . There is considerable evidence in Egyptian literature to suggest that the Egyptians took a much more relaxed attitude toward the sexual activity of unmarried women than the Greeks, but very much disapproved of adultery with married women. (156)

¹⁶ “Constantine the Great made it legally possible for widows, whether childless or not, to maintain their widowhood. In 320, he abolished the old marriage laws of Augustus . . . After the abolition of the Augustan law it was no longer possible for the *patres* to compel women to marry against their will. By giving women the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they wanted to marry or not, the new legislation seriously undermined the authority of the head of the family” (Drijvers 253).

Bagnall agrees that some Egyptian women may have chosen their own husbands (*Egypt in Late Antiquity* 190). Once married, Egyptian women were not referred to as someone's wife. Instead, according to Lumpkin, a married woman's name "... was preceded either by 'citizen' [*aste*], 'Lady of the house,' or by her professional or religious title if she had one" (160). Pomeroy explains that some women in Ptolemaic Alexandria did bear the designation of citizen (*aste*), and although the designation provided some civic status, they did not enjoy the political rights of contemporary women (*Women in Hellenistic Egypt* 46). Egyptian wives were not secluded from public life, instead they accompanied their husbands everywhere "... sharing life's trials and delights as respected and equal citizens in their secular and religious communities, enjoying equality under the law as well (Lesko qtd. in Lumpkin 160). Among the propertied classes couples expected "... affectionate companionship ... as part of marriage" (Bagnall *Egypt in Late Antiquity* 191).

Similar differences between the cultures existed in divorce practices, as well. In Roman Egypt, "... judicial rulings stating that the wishes of the woman were the determining factor. If she wished to remain married, she could do so" (Pomeroy *Goddesses* 129). Men and women could choose to initiate divorce in Roman Alexandria, and there was no mandate to specify grounds for it (Rowlandson 156). In Athenian and Roman law, by contrast, a father could choose to dissolve his daughter's marriage without her consent (Rowlandson 156).

Property

Division of labor in Alexandria was perceived as traditional in that women's duties were confined to the domestic sphere and men's to the public sphere. However, "[i]n practice, the traditional task of 'looking after the household goods' included all kinds of money-making activities, from small trade (especially in fabric) to property deals" (G. Clark 94). There is evidence that women owned or managed property and handled their own business transactions

during the Greek and Roman occupations of Egypt. Bagnall and Cribore estimate that “[i]n Roman Egypt, women may have been a fifth of the landowners, perhaps as many as a third in some localities” (80). Bagnall details the complex nature of women’s real estate transactions; “[j]ust as they inherited, bought, and sold rural agricultural property, women inherited, bought, mortgaged, sold urban houses or shares of houses . . . women owned houses as investments and leased them, or parts of them, to tenants. None of this is remarkable” (*Egypt in Late Antiquity* 97-98). What is more unexpected, however, is Bagnall’s discovery of papyri that name women as lessees who rented houses or parts of houses for themselves, suggesting “. . . a significant population of urban women without husbands operating independent households, whether as a result of death, divorce, or other causes. (*Egypt in Late Antiquity* 97-98).

Women also engaged in a variety of businesses for variety of reasons. While some women were slaves forced to work and others worked to assure their own survival, some women worked by choice (Rowlandson 218). Women owned farmland, perhaps due to a tax exemption granted by Roman administration or to a practice of inheritance meant to keep property in a single family¹⁷ (Rowlandson 219; Bagnall *Egypt in Late Antiquity* 95-96). Some women farmed their own land and became wealthy from their agricultural activities. Women produced cloth for sale, engaged in trading other commodities (G. Clark),¹⁸ were moneylenders (Bagnall *Egypt in Late Antiquity* 96), or worked as scribes (Lefkowitz and Fant 220). It is clear that some women were trained in their work specialty. Van Minnen’s examination of papyri contracts from Roman Egypt (circa 271 ACE) allow him to conclude, “[a]ncient women did sometimes learn a trade outside the home, but not as often as their male counterparts . . . because they tended to learn one

¹⁷ From Rowlandson’s study of the city of Fayum in *Women and Society*

¹⁸ “A group of Egyptian Christian women, Didyme and ‘the sisters’ seem to have had an all-female network buying and selling wine, grapes, sandals, cakes, even purple-wrapped ostrich eggs” (G. Clark 94).

at home from their relatives” (203). In instances where their work was part of their domestic duties, Roman Egypt offered more “. . . diverse opportunities and greater visibility in society beyond the confines of the household” than women had access to in other cultures and in historical periods (Rowlandson 354). In fact, “[t]he aggressive woman from Egyptian and Greek milieu was not simply a figure of literary imagination” (Rowlandson 281). In Alexandria, unlike other parts of the ancient Mediterranean, women enjoyed greater agency for their own lives.

The education and literacy of women

There is some evidence suggesting that women were unusually literate in ancient Egypt. Considering Mesopotamian and Egyptian records Vivante claims women were paid as professional scribes (Vivante *Daughters* 109; Rowlandson 158). Lerner estimates that 60% of men and 40% of women were literate in Ptolemaic Alexandria (Lerner *Feminist* 38); Rowlandson mentions literacy among girls in the Egyptian language (300). In Ptolemaic Alexandria, girls were commonly educated through tutors, fee-based grammar schools, or relatives, depending on their socioeconomic class and the occupations of their relatives. (Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic Egypt*). Girls belonging to aristocratic or royal families commonly had their own tutors or joined in tutoring sessions alongside their brothers. There is archaeological evidence depicting the education of girls. Pomeroy discusses terracotta figurines discovered in Alexandria that date to the Ptolemaic period and that depict young girls wearing cloaks staring at diptychs on their laps (“Women in Roman Egypt” 311). The inclusion of cloaks suggests that girls were educated outside their home, possibly in public schools. Pomeroy further notes that terracotta figurines were mass-produced and inexpensive, suggesting that the girls and young women depicted were probably of the middle rather than the aristocratic class (*Women in Hellenistic Egypt* 60). Rowlandson likewise argues that girls shared the same curriculum as boys under Roman rule (305).

Bagnall and Cribiore “. . . argue that there was more education of upper-class women than has sometimes been thought (2). Educated alongside boys through grammar school, girls are thought to have been excluded from schools of rhetoric and philosophy, with few exceptions (Bagnall and Cribiore 61; G. Clark 135-136). While girls were not generally welcomed into schools of rhetoric and philosophy, there is some evidence that a few allowed, and even welcomed them. Some girls and young women probably learned rhetoric and philosophy by listening to conversations of men by direct instructions or by male relatives who were teachers of rhetoric and philosophy, likely more common in cities known for excellent education opportunities like Alexandria. As Waithe notes, girls and women experienced a wide variety of educational models and access in Alexandria (“On Not” 134-5).

Scholars disagree about the particulars of women’s literacy in late antique Alexandria, in no small part because of the small number of extant papyri and contradictory evidence they sometimes provide. As is the case with all written documents, the smallest collection of extant papyri containing contracts, official documents, and personal correspondence are those from Alexandrian women (Bagnall and Cribiore 22). Most of the papyri that exist represent women of the upper classes, and it is difficult to know how accurate a picture they present. Documentation may serve to distort our understanding of literacy in Roman Alexandria as there exists some evidence that education and literacy was not isolated to those of the upper classes, unfortunately there is no way to know for which socioeconomic class literacy was more typical, as studies by Pomeroy¹⁹ and Bagnall and Cribiore make clear. What recent analyses of the documentation does suggest, however, is that women were literate and participated in intellectual life in ways scholars have not previously considered.

¹⁹ “Women in Roman Egypt”

It is likely that ancient Alexandrian women may have been more highly educated than other women living in the ancient Mediterranean, which should not surprise us given that city's reputation for education and the fact that some of the international scholars who worked in the Museum were women (Rowlandson 303-304). Although women seem to have produced fewer texts than their male counterparts, probably because the Ptolemies funded women scholars less often than those of their male peers, and much scholarship written by women has been lost, Pomeroy names two women from the Ptolemaic period, Diophila (late fourth, early third century BCE) and Hestiaea (c. 250 BCE). Diophila was a poetess who wrote a poem about astronomy and which may have later been consulted by Callimachus for his text, *Atina* (Pomeroy "Women in Roman Egypt" 311). Hestiaea was a grammarian who wrote a treatise concerning the location of the Trojan War, a subject that became popular debate for later scholars (Pomeroy "Women in Roman Egypt" 311). These women scholars were highly visible and served as role models for other women all over the Mediterranean. There seems little doubt that there were many more unnamed female scholars who worked at the Museum and that girls living in Ptolemaic Egypt would have had plenty of literate and educated women as and role models. Indeed, there may have been so many educated women that these role models set the standard.

Although there were three languages in use in Roman Alexandria (Latin, Greek, and Egyptian), literacy is often denoted by knowledge of Greek alone (Bagnall *Egypt in Late Antiquity* 231). Few women seem to have been literate in Latin, as it was used primarily for official government documents. As yet, no one has done a systematic study of literacy practices in the period that includes Egyptian, Greek, and Latin. Complicating our picture of literacy practices, language use and literacy varied greatly, depending on a person's residence, one's socioeconomic status, gender, and other factors:

. . . society contained a considerable spectrum of individual positions in the use of language, ranging from Greek settlers whose Egyptian was limited to a few words for talking to servants or tradesmen, to numerous Egyptian peasants who encountered Greek almost exclusively in the person of bureaucrats and even there used intermediaries as far as possible. (Bagnall and Cribiore 58)

Current research suggests, however, that literacy in one or more languages was generally rare, and not exclusively limited to the upper classes (Bagnall and Cribiore 59).

Despite the small number of extant papyri, we can glean a sense of attitudes and practices about women's literacy from them. Rowlandson argues women's literacy was not compulsory, however, it was understood as necessary for a woman to act on her own behalf in business and in her dealings with government officials (158). According to Sheridan, for example, a literate woman named Aurelia Charite lived in Hermopolis and was active between 332-350 C.E. She was a landowner who acted on her own behalf in legal and financial matters (191). Sheridan, like Rowlandson, concludes that literacy was an important element on a woman's path to empowerment in ancient Alexandria.

Study of women's literacy based on business documents is enhanced by extant letters, which are rarer than those written by men. According to Hemelrijk, the loss of so many women's letters from ancient Rome is connected to the gender of the writers. An inappropriate amount or a certain type of respect for women meant their letters were either deemed unimportant or that men had a heightened sense of propriety about the private nature of women's letters and meant that they would neither be collected nor published (206). Hemelrijk notes that among the collections of letters of Cicero²⁰ and Fronto,²¹ many were addressed to women but there are few

²⁰ 106-43 BCE

²¹ 100-170 BCE

extant letters written by women to men (203). Drijvers notes, “. . . letters written by [Saint Marcella²² and her] . . . women to Jerome²³ are lost, but Jerome’s letters have been preserved” (248). Out of respect, disrespect, or convention, men seem to have kept copies of letters they wrote but did not keep copies of letters from women (G. Clark 134).

The largest single study of ancient women’s letters is Roger Bagnall’s and Raffaella Cribiore’s, *300 BC-AD 800*. Bagnall and Cribiore studied more than 300 women’s letters written on papyrus and *ostraca* (pieces of pottery or limestone) between 300 BCE and 800 ACE. Some of the letters were signed, and therefore, the author is clear. However, among unsigned letters the authors discovered that it was very difficult to distinguish between men’s and women’s handwriting or to distinguish between letters written by women or their secretaries, and, therefore, it is difficult to make any generalizations about women’s literacy from them (Bagnall and Cribiore 42).

There exist a smaller number of women’s letters from the Hellenistic period than in the first centuries of Roman rule, evidence of my claim that women were more empowered in the Roman than in the Greek period. Because women were empowered by social and legal circumstances, they had more opportunity to write letters. After the fourth century, the number of extant letters in Greek diminishes because women began to write in Coptic, and by the fifth century very few women’s letters were written in Greek (Bagnall and Cribiore 19, 21). Those most likely to write letters remained women of the upper class, which is complicated by the fact that upper class women were the ones most likely to afford the services of a scribe or to have a secretary employed on the household staff (Bagnall and Cribiore 6). Nonetheless, some findings are worth discussing here for some sense of women’s writing practices.

²² 325-410 ACE

²³ 347-420 ACE

Most of the extant letters

. . . written in Greek belong to the Roman period. Most Roman letters are centered around minor business and work matters, family relationships, and solicitation of favors, gifts, and supplies. Women seem to have become more at ease with the epistolary meaning and to have been willing to use it, both to break their isolation by establishing contact with loved ones and to improve the quality of their own life. (Bagnall and Cribiore 16)

Women's letters ". . . often contain requests for items, convey important information, or reassured the recipient of the writer's health and well-being" (Bagnall and Cribiore 15). Bagnall and Cribiore identify regular correspondence including that of a woman named Isidore and another between a slave named Aphrodite and her mistress, Arsinoe (40). Sheridan notes that there are so many letters and letter fragments from the town of Hermopolis that ". . . it is possible that some of these women knew each other and in some way communicated to each other, and to the generations of women following them, that achieving literacy was in their own interest" (201).

Letters written by free or enslaved domestics suggest that literacy was complicated by socio-economic class as well as gender and was highly dependent on particular situations. Rowlandson discusses letters among the family of Apollonis, governor of the Apollonopolite Heptakomia²⁴ (160). Twenty-five of the extant letters were written by women who used sophisticated language; "Apollonios' mother Eudaimonis and his wife Aline were well-educated in Greek . . . Female servants, as well as family friends, also joined in the correspondence, sometimes in their own hands" (Rowlandson 160). Of particular note is that the letters discuss the governor's daughter, Heraidous, and express concerns about her education (Rowlandson

²⁴ Circa second century ACE

160). In light of new interpretations of extant evidence, it is likely that women were more literate during Alexandria's Roman rather than its Greek occupation.

Women's Travel

Women travelled more in ancient cultures than scholars have previously supposed.

Bagnall and Criore identified forty letters that reference women's travel. Only half of the letters mention why women were travelling. Among the half who include their reasons name ". . . travel involving childbirth, travel involving estates, and family visits" (81). This pattern leads the authors to conclude ". . . women of the social strata responsible for most of the letter writing had far more freedom of movement and action than modern scholars have generally been willing to ascribe to ancient women" (Bagnall and Criore 21).

While it is impossible to generalize about women's literacy practices, Bagnall and Criore conclude that Hellenistic and Roman women were far more diverse and acted with a higher level of agency than previously thought (11). A woman's literacy was key to her empowerment, because when she was literate, she could manage her own affairs with or without a guardian, no matter her ethnicity (200). The customs concerning education and literacy, combined with the context of Alexandria, dominated by educational institutions like the Museum and the Serapeum allowed women to engage in intellectual pursuits to a level not seen elsewhere in the Mediterranean during late antiquity.

The historical evidence I have presented thus far provides necessary background to understand the empowered life and brutal murder of Hypatia of Alexandria. Roman Alexandria was clearly a place that, because of syncretic cultural values and practices, created conditions in which women could be educated and empowered to become part of intellectual life. Netz explains that late antique Alexandria was ". . . a place and a time where many old barriers were brought down, [and] in general ancient women did not live strictly according to the expectation

of either classical society or modern scholarship, and they were not always ‘silent’ . . .” (197).

Background information serves to situate and stabilize secondary, often anecdotal histories written about Hypatia; the context is a vital part of her re-membering. Secondary histories sometimes obscure as much as they reveal and the historical context allows greater transparency and understanding of her material conditions. I now turn to a discussion of Hypatia of Alexandria and demonstrate how the historical context may have served to empower her activities in particular.

CHAPTER THREE: HYPATIA OF ALEXANDRIA

In this chapter, I focus on Hypatia's ethnicity, as well as her birth to a scholar in the context of late antique Alexandria in order to render her more fully. It is likely that her father, Theon, became her teacher and provided her access to the Library in Alexandria. He also provided her a profession when he bequeathed his school to her upon his death. The specific elements of her life combined with her historical context explain her influence as a teacher and an important person of note in the city. I conclude the chapter with the theories of her murder before detailing the impact of it on the city.

Hypatia of Alexandria has endured in the minds and imaginations of a variety of writers since 1720 with the publication of John Toland's essay, *Hypatia or, the History of the Most Beautiful, Most Virtuous, Most Learned and in Every Way Accomplished Lady; Who Was Torn to Pieces by the Clergy of Alexandria, to Gratify the Pride, Emulation, and Cruelty of the Archbishop, Commonly but Underservedly Titled St. Cyril* and continues today. As Dzielska notes, Hypatia appears in essays by Thomas Lewis (1721), and Gérard de Nerval (1854). She is the subject of historical fiction by Henry Fielding (1743), Charles Kingsley (1853), Jean Marcel (1989), Arnulf Zitelmann (1989), Luciano Canfora (1990), William Kelly (1999), Kahn Amore (2001), Adriano Petta and Antonino Colavito (2004), Charlotte Kramer (2006), D. R. Khashaba (2006), Marty Sweet (2007), Ky Longfellow (2009), and Jose Calvo Poyato (2009). She is also the subject of poetry by Contessa Diodata Roero di Saluzzo (1827). Playwrights have written about her including those by Elizabeth Bowers (1859), Arnold Beer (1878), Mario Luzi (1978), Mark Milo (1994), and Bill Shankle (2002). Hypatia is also the subject of operas including those by Rofreddi Caetani (1871), and of children's literature by D. Anne Love (2006) and by Sandy

Donovan²⁵ (2008). *Agora* (2009), directed by Alejandro Amenábar is the first motion picture about Hypatia. One text, entitled *The Way of Life* (1945) was allegedly authored by Hypatia through the help of a medium. Hypatia appears in dictionaries, encyclopedias, and sourcebooks in the disciplines of mathematics, physics, astronomy, philosophy, religion, and engineering, among others. Historians and artists are fascinated by her, in part, because she was an outstanding woman, but probably also because there is so much about her life that went undocumented.

Early texts usually involve one perspective about Hypatia's life to greater or lesser degrees. Most authors claim that when the beautiful, erudite, and virginal Hypatia was murdered Hellenistic learning in the west died with her.²⁶ Authors using this line of argument often claim Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, ordered her murder, and vilify Christianity. Some of the most disturbing depictions about Hypatia, however, are those of her sadistic and eroticized murder. The painting entitled "Hypatia" by Pre-Raphaelite artist Charles William Mitchell (1854-1903) is an excellent example of the way authors and artists have sexualized her.²⁷ As with depictions of so many historical women, Mitchell imagines Hypatia as a beautiful, fair skinned and young woman with classically Arian features. She stands at the altar of a church, probably intended to be the Caesareum; the only evidence of a struggle is the upturned candleholder near her left foot. She is naked with her long, loose hair partially covering her taught body as she raises her left hand. The expression on her face suggests that she begs some person or group, not included in the frame, to spare her life. Mitchell's work illustrates two problems: the depiction of Hypatia as

²⁵ See Maria Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria* for a complete discussion of many texts published before 1995 and the website, "Books on Hypatia of Alexandria a Bibliography" by Howard A Landman:
<http://www.polyamory.org/~howard/Hypatia/books.html>

²⁶ See Gibbon's *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* for an example of this line of argument.

²⁷ See Khan Amore's website discussing Hypatia's divine proportion of mathematics. His explanation is dependant on an "illustration" of Hypatia's nude body.

<http://www.psychic.com/psychic/gallery/Divine_Proportions_of_Hypatia.html>

a “white” woman and the common problem of sexualization of women in artistic portrayals, historic accounts, and in literature. Given the demographics of Roman Alexandria combined with Theon’s claim of Egyptian and Greek ancestry, it is highly unlikely that Hypatia was fair skinned and she should not be depicted as a white woman. In addition, she was born between 350 and 370, which would have made her between forty-five and sixty-five at the time of her death; Mitchell no doubt depicted her as young so that she would be physically desirable. The tendency of artists (and historians) to focus on a woman’s sexuality is an objectification that serves to obscure historical women from the record.²⁸ Furthermore, the exclusion of her murderers from the painting obscures the context, essentially rendering the identity of her murderers unimportant.

Despite numerous artistic accounts that speculate about her, there is little we know about Hypatia of Alexandria because none of her works are available to us. Hypatia’s importance is documented anecdotally in secondary texts and because they are extant, I rely on them as opposed to literary depictions of her. Evidence of her life, works, and murder²⁹ are documented in ancient sources including the fifth century *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 439 CE) by Socrates Scholasticus (in Deakin *Hypatia* 143-148; Dzielska 6, 17-18; Fiedler 59; Ménage 26, 27; Waithe *History* 172; Wider 53, 58); *The Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius: As Epitomized by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* from the late fourth early fifth century (in Deakin *Hypatia* 158; Ménage 26); and *The Chronicle of John Malalas* from the late fifth early sixth century (in Deakin *Hypatia* 159). There are also entries in the *Chronicle* by John, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu³⁰

²⁸ See Madeline Henry’s *Prisoner of History: Aspasia of Miletus and Her Biographical Tradition*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1995 for another example.

²⁹ It seems the only reason ancient historians documented Hypatia’s life at all has to do with the nature and manner of her death. Had it not been for her gruesome murder, we may have no documentation of her at all.

³⁰ John of Nikiu’s history “. . . it was the product of a bishop of the Coptic Church and thus was regarded as a heretical document” (Deakin 46).

(in Deakin *Hypatia* 148-149; Fiedler 61) and Damascius' *Life of Isidore*, both from the sixth century (in Deakin *Hypatia* 140-143; Dzielska 18, 56; Wider 53). The tenth century encyclopedia *Suda Lexicon* also includes an entry about Hypatia (in Deakin *Hypatia* 137-139; Dzielska 18; Fiedler 57).³¹

It is important to note here that none of the entries about Hypatia were written during her lifetime. Socrates Scholasticus' *Ecclesiastical History* was written circa 439 ACE, twenty-four years after Hypatia's murder. *The Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius* was written probably after 450, more than thirty years after her murder. *The Chronicle of John Malalas* contains a single sentence documenting her murder and was written by Malalas sometime before 532. The *Chronicle* by John, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu and Damascius' *Life of Isidore* were written in the sixth century, nearly a hundred years after her murder. Based largely on the account of Damascius, the *Suda Lexicon* was written in the tenth century, more than five hundred years after her death (Whitfield 14-15). There exists no definitive eye-witness account of her murder.

As classics scholars have noted, ancient histories are filled with mistakes and lack any notion of what contemporary scholars would call methodology, as such, they are unapologetically imbued with ideology and errors. For example, *The Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius: As Epitomized by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* is a summary of Philostorgius' *Ecclesiastical History* completed by Photius in 855; the original by Philostorgius no longer exists. Philostorgius, an Arian, wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* between 425-433, some ten to eighteen years after the murder of Hypatia. Photius' summary of Philostorgius' entry about Hypatia, claims that she was murdered by Homoousians (Nicens) and functions as an insult by Philostorgius' of those whose beliefs contradicted his own and many historians deem his history biased because of his Arian loyalties.

³¹ Also see Whitehead, David

The *Ecclesiastical History* by Scholasticus was written twenty-four years after Hypatia's murder. Although Scholasticus' history is flawed, I tend to give it the most credibility since Scholasticus was a student of Troilius, one of Hypatia's students (Wider 56). Given the level of contact between students and their teachers, my assumption is that the documentation of Hypatia's life by Scholasticus is the most accurate because his teacher studied with her. We know little of Troilius or his whereabouts when Hypatia was murdered. We cannot, however, rule out the possibility that he was enrolled in her school or living in Alexandria during the time of her murder, possibly making him the closest person to Hypatia during her murder. Although he does not name the witness, Watts mentions that Scholasticus' account may have been based on contemporary or eyewitness accounts, it is likely that the witness was Troilius (Watts "Murder of Hypatia" 337).

According to the introduction of the Jeffreys et al. translation of Malalas' *Chronicle*, Malalas' account of Hypatia was based on faulty oral accounts (Jeffreys et al. xxiii). Damascus was an Iamblichean Neoplatonist born around 460, as such, he is able to define Hypatia's Neoplatonism as Plotinian rather than Iamblichean (Watts *City and School* 192). As a man who lived through the pagan prosecutions of his era, Damascus ". . . leads the reader to believe that the attack was unprovoked, unnecessarily vicious, and disgraceful," anxious to exploit the scandal of her murder for his own political purposes (Watts "Murder of Hypatia" 337). He was, however, also eager to critique Hypatia's Plotinian rather than Iamblichean Neoplatonism.

The Chronicle by John, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu is the only text that presents Hypatia in a negative light. As a Christian, he was biased toward the political goals of the Church to eradicate paganism in the empire and probably would have felt it necessary to address accusations against Saint Cyril in defense of Christianity itself.

While it is clear that the above historians were situated in particular ideologies that influenced their documentation of Hypatia, they do state that Hypatia was a teacher of mathematics and philosophy, a writer, and an important person of note in Alexandria who moved in male political circles as a woman of respect. The collected letters of Synesius of Cyrene, Hypatia's most famous student, provide support of these sources of Hypatia's reputation as well as evidence of her intellectual work.

Much of the academic scholarship, mostly articles and book chapters rather than book-length treatments, is repeated without seriously considering Hypatia's historical milieu or including the diversity of Alexandria. To date, there are two scholarly books about her, Maria Dzielska's 1995 *Hypatia of Alexandria* and Michael Deakin's 2007 *Hypatia: Mathematician and Martyr*. In her treatment of Hypatia, Dzielska reviews literary and artistic treatments about Hypatia, which span 1,600 years, before making her assertions about who Hypatia's students, friends, and colleagues were, and what her influence was in Alexandria. Dzielska concludes by theorizing about Hypatia's murder. Deakin's 2007 book is not as scholarly as Dzielska's text and it glosses mathematical information Deakin claims is too difficult for a lay reader. Although Deakin's appendices reproduce important scholarship that illuminate Hypatia's mathematics, his overall argument is highly dependent on Dzielska's. Like Dzielska, Deakin does not consider the syncretic nature of Alexandria and naively remarks that ". . . the native Egyptians are almost (and somewhat puzzlingly) entirely absent from our story" (*Hypatia* 68). Dzielska and Deakin claim that Hypatia was Greek and because they overlook her Greco-Egyptian ethnicity, they are unable to fully depict appreciate, or explain her life or her activities.

The nature of Hypatia's empowerment is a complex tangle of familial birth in conjunction with mixed ancestry and timing. She was born or adopted by Theon, a scholar who

was willing to educate her and provided access to the Museum. Although most scholars have portrayed Hypatia as a Greek woman, it is unlikely that Hypatia was of “pure” Greek ancestry, if such a person existed at all (Pollard and Reid *The Rise and Fall* 261). Theon identified as both Egyptian and Greek, and his claim is in keeping with the Greco-Egyptian population common in Alexandria at the time, as I discussed in chapter two (Dzielska 69). Underlying her own personal talents and education in a variety of areas, Hypatia’s ethnicity in the context of Roman Alexandria allowed her more freedom than she may have had in other Mediterranean cities. For example, Hypatia did not appear in public with a guardian, which was a common African custom (Rist 220). The public nature of Hypatia’s career is also consistent with the African, “. . . tradition of equal rights” between men and women (Lumpkin 155-156). While it is true that Hypatia was part of the culturally Greek intellectual elite, it is important to highlight that Alexandria under Roman rule was an unusually liberated place for women. A woman of mixed ethnicity such as Hypatia could depend on law and custom for greater empowerment in Alexandria than elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean. As detailed in the previous chapter, by the Roman occupation of Alexandria, the population of that city was syncretic and the laws and customs of Alexandria reflected a mix of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman values.³² Biracial women such as Hypatia could choose which set of laws to follow at will and their choices could change based on whichever laws worked in their favor for any situation. This means that Hypatia could choose from a variety of laws that suited and empowered her best for her specific needs. Because she was literate, it is likely that Hypatia owned property and, even though she never married, she probably did not have or legally need a guardian.

³² The March 16, 2009 BBC article details Hilke Thuer’s study of the remains of Arsinoe, Cleopatra’s sister. Their’s analysis claims Cleopatra’s mother was African. Thuer’s conclusion is one of the first pieces of archeological evidence to support the ethnic syncretism of which I write, which was very common during and after the Ptolemaic period. Thuer is of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/also_in_the_news/7945333.stm>

Despite missing the importance of her mixed ethnicity, Deakin reclaims Hypatia as a teacher of mathematics and asserts that Hypatia continued her father's intellectual work after his death. Deakin's major argument is that within the context of the late Roman Empire where "... there was little mathematical activity . . . [Hypatia was] . . . very likely the leading mathematician in the world" (*Hypatia* 110-111). It is unfortunate that Deakin only focuses on Hypatia's mathematical work. Because it misses both the historical context for her life as well as her range of activities, Deakin, like Dzielska, has oversimplified Hypatia's life and accomplishments. Given that Deakin includes Frost's piece naming Pandrosion as the first female mathematician, Deakin's purpose seems to be to negate Hypatia's importance as much as elevate her.

Hypatia's education and work

None of the texts that document Hypatia's life mentions the date of her birth although most scholars date it between 355-375 ACE in Roman Alexandria (Waithe *History*). Scholarship before 1995 generally dates her birth around the year 370 ACE, and Dzielska estimates her birth in the year 355 (68). Deakin believes she was probably born closer to the year 350 based on his consideration of Synesius' age, the year of his elevation to bishop, and his deference to Hypatia in his letters to her (52). The name of Hypatia's mother is not known nor is it known if Hypatia had siblings. Nonetheless, Nietupski notes that her father "Theon must have had lofty hopes for his daughter because he gave her the name Hypatia, which means 'the highest'" (46).

The *Suda Lexicon* relays that Theon was the last known teacher and member of the famed museum of Alexandria (qtd. in Nietupski 45; Pollard and Reid 266; Watts *City and School* 191). Theon reportedly taught mathematics and astronomy, and he appears in the historical record in

about 364 (Pollard and Reid *The Rise and Fall* 261). Deakin speculates that Theon could have been a contemporary of the mathematician Pappus, a man forty years Theon's senior (50).³³

Theon was a teacher of mathematics credited with editing editions of mathematical texts: Euclid's *Elements*, *Data*, and *Optics* as well as commentaries on Ptolemy's *Almagest* and *Handy Table* (Pollard and Reid *The Rise and Fall* 262). He produced at least eight commentaries on the works of Euclid and Ptolemy and may have written and published other books (Deakin *Hypatia* 501). Theon seems to have written about astronomy as well. One text was entitled *On Signs and the Examination of Birds and the Croaking of Ravens*, titles of other texts are lost. However, Pollard and Reid claim the lost texts were “. . . treatises on the function of the star Sirius and the influence of the planetary spheres on the Nile River” (262).

Theon also wrote poetry (Dzielska, Pollard and Reid). One poem survives “. . . in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a collection of texts of ‘secret wisdom’ compiled during the Renaissance from various classical materials” (Pollard and Reid 262). Dzielska claims there are two additional poems by Theon in the *Greek Anthology* (75). Theon's poetry “. . . speaks of the seven sparkling spheres of heaven and how their interaction determines the lives of everyone on earth. To him destiny lay in the stars, in the crystal spheres whose mathematical precision reflected universal laws laid down by the supreme God behind all things. . . .” (Pollard and Reid 262). Hence, Theon's interests may have also included an interest in Pythagorean or Platonic philosophy. Watts agrees and asserts that by the age of thirty (in about 355) Theon was established as a teacher of mathematics and philosophy in Alexandria (*City and School* 187).

It is hard to say if Theon was interested in theurgy or divination as Pollard and Reid suggest. Given the importance of both mathematics and astronomy in Neoplatonism, it is

³³ Deakin is probably referencing the translation of the *Suda Lexicon* by David Whitehead published on stoa.org and which claims Theon was a contemporary of Pappus.

possible that Theon's poetry was not related to divination or theurgy, perhaps they were parts of a longer work, now lost. Pollard's and Reid's support takes its cue from the *Chronicle of Malalas* which claims Theon wrote ". . . commentaries on the legendary father of alchemy, Hermes Trismegistus, and the mystical *Orphic Oracles* (262). It is important to note here that while all the ancient sources documenting Hypatia's life mention her father Theon, Malalas is the only one to claim Theon's wrote a commentary of a text concerning alchemy. In addition, the intellectual boundaries between astronomy and astrology were not clearly distinguished disciplinary boundaries in the ancient period, making them easily confused. Watts contradicts Pollard and Reid and claims that neither Theon nor Hypatia ever participated in theurgic rites (*City and School* 191-192). I tend to agree because it does not fit the mathematical and scientific inclination of either Theon's or Hypatia's work. The sections of the *Chronicle* in which Hypatia and Theon are mentioned were written sometime close to 532, well after their deaths. Dependant on questionable evidence, Malalas's assessment could be based on remnants of either rumors or misunderstandings of Hypatia's and Theon's mathematical and astronomical studies.

It is clear that Theon was an intellectual and important to note that women related or married to mathematicians or philosophers often became their students (McHardy and Marshall 2). Haas adds occupations ". . . tended to run in families for several generations in other cities of late antique Egypt" and it is likely that the same is true of Alexandria; a father educating his child intending for the child to continue his work would have been typical (58). We can presume that according to educational standards and customs of the time that Theon educated Hypatia in *paideia*, which included training in the arts, literature, science, philosophy, and rhetoric. Bily argues that Theon developed a rigorous system of physical exercises for Hypatia in addition to her education in public speaking, rhetoric, and mathematics (Bily). It is likely that Theon

conducted his daughter's training in the Museum itself where she would have come in contact with Roman, Greek, and Jewish scholars from Alexandria and the rest of the Mediterranean. The *Suda Lexicon* additionally suggests Hypatia spent time studying in Athens, but most scholars believe this to be a misinterpretation of the text that I also find unsupported by the other ancient documents.

The *Suda Lexicon* also claims that Hypatia: “. . . had greater genius than her father . . . [and] was not satisfied with his instruction in mathematical subjects. . .” (Fideler 57). While Theon certainly educated Hypatia in the standards of *paideia*, it is unclear who taught her the philosophy of Neoplatonism. Most scholars interpret the *Suda Lexicon* passage to mean that Hypatia learned Neoplatonism from a teacher other than her father, although no one has clearly identified another teacher (Dzielska, Deakin). That Theon became her teacher could mean that he was a Neoplatonist himself since Neoplatonists believed “. . . all children had to embark on a philosophical career . . .” no matter their gender, an argument Athanassiadi makes about Neoplatonists in Athens during the same historical period (6). Since Theon probably conducted Hypatia's education in the Museum, Hypatia would have been exposed to a wide variety of scholars, among them, Neoplatonists, Christians, and Gnostics. Her access to the Museum also means she could have taught herself philosophy by reading the scrolls stored there (Wider 55).

Further complicating clear identification of Hypatia's teacher is the Neoplatonist practice of using familial terms to describe teacher student relationships. Most assume that daughters of philosophers tended to be educated in philosophy most often, but Athanassiadi explains that Neoplatonists often referred to their teachers by using family terms and confusing biological relationships; these terms should not be taken literally. Whether Theon was Hypatia's biological, adopted, or ideological child, he probably educated Hypatia, at least in part.

Pollard and Reid claim Hypatia as her father's collaborator “. . . from early childhood . . .” (266). To my knowledge, nothing documents the possibility that Hypatia began working with her father in childhood, although the recent fictional children's book, *Of Numbers and Stars: The Story of Hypatia* by D. Anne Love continues to forward this vein of thought. Pollard and Reid base their assertion on Theon's dedication in the *Almagest*, in which Theon states the text was “. . . revised by my daughter Hypatia the philosopher,”” which suggests the two were collaborators, but when she was grown and educated, not when she was a child (266). Although some scholars doubt that Hypatia was Theon's collaborator, Waithe argues that

Hypatia realized that her father's comments on Book III [Theon's work on Ptolemy's *Syntaxis Mathematica (Almageste)*] raised numerous conceptual, methodological, and mathematical issues, which neither Theon nor Ptolemy had addressed. In working out her analysis of those issues, Hypatia recomputed the mathematical values of the celestial events described by the ancient astronomers including Ptolemy. The *Astronomical Tables* is the work product of that exercise. . . In developing that analysis, the *Commentary* became truly her own. Hence, Theon's attribution of it to her and its inclusion with his own *Commentary*.
(*History* 185)

Given the custom that the best student became heir to a teacher's work and that Theon was Hypatia's biological or adopted father, it is likely that they collaborated.

While none of Hypatia's work is readily available, according to the *Suda Lexicon* she wrote “. . . a commentary on Diophantus [*Arithmetica* . . .] a work called *The Astronomical Canon* [. . .] and a commentary on *The Conics* of Apollonius,” none of which are extant (Fiedler 57). However, Waithe believes that Hypatia's commentary on Diophantus and *The Conics* of

Apollonius survive but that Hypatia's work has been so fully integrated that it is unidentifiable as hers (*History* 175). Waithe indicates the work in the edited edition of her father's text, *Almagest*, is more recognizable as Hypatia's and claims Hypatia's mathematical contribution can be extracted by identifying her idiosyncratic formulas in pieces edited in Alexandria during her lifetime.³⁴ The *Almagest* is not yet available in English. Nevertheless, Pollard and Reid credit Hypatia for preserving mathematical knowledge, ". . . indeed, it has been doubted whether, without [Hypatia's] clear, patient explanations of the works of this famously opaque mathematician [Diophantus], his work, crucial in the development of modern mathematics, would even have survived" (267). Waithe and Whitfield further argue that twelve centuries passed before anyone considered her commentaries or explored the connections she made (Waithe *History* 192, Whitfield 19).

Hypatia's Plotinian Neoplatonism

The *Suda Lexicon*, Scholasticus, and Damascus name Hypatia as a follower of Plotinian Neoplatonist philosophy (Ménage 25). Neoplatonism offers some opportunities to understand Hypatia's value system and way of life. Plotinian Neoplatonism included the belief that all humans were divine and needed to achieve consciousness of their divinity. The highest human goal was to achieve mystical union with the *nous* (the part of God thought to be pure intellect) by purging the soul of its attachment to sensual materiality. Mystical union could be reached through contemplation, virtue, and asceticism and was probably only available to those of the upper classes educated in *paideia*. Because the perfect human life consisted of one in which a human commanded reason, Neoplatonists focused on developing the intellectual faculties. Neoplatonist believed in reincarnation and, following Plato, that the soul was without gender, women and those of the lower socioeconomic classes were considered equally capable of

³⁴ See Waithe *History of Women*, which includes a description of Hypatia's academic signature that involves the use of an Egyptian method of calculation (183).

intellectual engagement and asceticism that could lead to mystical union with God (Waithe *History* 141).

The early Neoplatonists considered life on earth inferior to a life free from the body and its surroundings in the material world . . . In Neoplatonism, moral virtue and ascetic life are considered to be a necessary task of the human soul's efforts to free itself from the boundaries of embodied life, and hence no virtuous life is possible without at least a certain degree of asceticism, An ascetic life is necessary in order to reach the world of Ideas, which Neoplatonists identified with the diving Mind (*nous*) and which they also regarded as the true example of virtue. (Waithe *History* 141)

What Neoplatonism meant, often, was a life dedicated to control of the appetites, to contemplation, and to study; Neoplatonists often choose to live ascetic lives. Plotinus believed pure love of beauty was itself nongenerative and “. . . the desire to generate indicated a lack of self-sufficiency . . .” (E. Jane Cooper 87). He “. . . led a rigorously ascetic life: he remained unmarried, ate as little as possible, and seemed ashamed to have a body” (Drijvers 242). For Plotinus' student Proclus “. . . virginity was a paramount ideal . . . and the only excuse for forfeiting it was the requirements of procreation. . .” (Athanassiadi 10). Plotinus and Proclus lived lives as *sophrosenes* (ascetics).

The *Suda Lexicon* relates a story about an incident between Hypatia and one of her students that provides what Dzielska claims is a demonstration of Hypatia's Neoplatonic attitude toward her body;

. . . one of her students fell in love with her and was unable to control himself and openly showed her a sign of his infatuation . . . Actually, she gathered rags that

had been stained during her period and showed them to him as a sign of her unclean descent and said, “This is what you love, young man, and it isn’t beautiful!” He was so affected by shame and amazement at the ugly sight that he experienced a change of heart and went away a better man. (Fiedler 57-58)

Dzielska believes Hypatia’s reported actions were Neoplatonic in that they demonstrate “Hypatia’s repugnance toward the human body and sensuality . . . to make [the student] see that beauty cannot be identified with a concrete object (in this case, Hypatia’s body)” (51). Hypatia seems to have wanted her students to love and seek wisdom that was useful to their own development and as a basis for their own actions in the world, and in their interactions with others, all of which is consistent with Plotinian Neoplatonism (E. Jane Cooper 76-77). Pollard and Reid state that Hypatia would have required virginity of her students in order to access wisdom (270). However, this seems unlikely as the Neoplatonism of Plotinus and Proclus was tolerant and did not impose strict asceticism on others (Athanassiadi 10). In addition, Hypatia’s student Synesius was married before he became a Christian bishop, and therefore did not hold a strict ideal of asceticism either. If asceticism in Hypatia’s practice of Neoplatonism were compulsory, it is likely that Synesius’ marriage would have meant the end of their friendship; it was not.

As a late antique Neoplatonist educated in *paideia*, Hypatia would have studied mathematics, astronomy, geometry, physics, ethics, politics, dialectic, ontology, rhetoric, and philosophy. Waithe explains that “[p]hilosophy provided [Hypatia] with the theoretical underpinnings she used to evaluate the most powerful algebraic, geometric, and astronomical theories of her era” (Waithe *History* 193). Hypatia’s birth to or adoption by Theon of Alexandria

provided her access to *paideia*. Her education and Neoplatonism further enabled her to become a renowned teacher in the Mediterranean.

Hypatia as teacher and school administrator

Certainly Hypatia had a reputation as a fine teacher, and Socrates Scholasticus agrees since “. . . many of [her students] came from a distance to receive her instructions” (Fideler 59). Given the expense of an education, the fact that wealthy and sometimes powerful families sent their sons to Hypatia’s school speaks to her renown as a teacher. In “Hypatia and Her Mathematics,” Deakin states that “. . . Hypatia . . . clearly outshine[s] Theon . . . in her reputation as a teacher” (*Hypatia* 241-242). Apparently Hypatia was well loved by her students because they referred to themselves as the “. . . fortunate chorus that delights in her diversely sweet voice” and called her “divine spirit” and “blessed lady” (Pollard and Reid 270). Providing additional support for Hypatia’s teaching excellence is a poem by Palladas who edified and memorialized Hypatia’s skill as a teacher in the *Greek Anthology*:

Revered Hypatia, ornament of learning, stainless star of wise teaching, when I see thee and thy discourse I worship thee, looking on the starry house of Virgo; for thy business is in heaven. (Palladas qtd. in Pollard and Reid 266)

Hypatia’s most famous student was Synesius of Cyrene, an important figure in Eastern Christianity. Synesius’ letters provide the names of some of Hypatia’s students and confirm her reputation and activities. Synesius himself arrived in Alexandria in about 393 from Pentapolis to study with Hypatia (Waithe *History* 173). Deakin notes Synesius “. . . mentions no other teacher” (*Hypatia* 78). Bregman, Henry, Waithe, and Watts credit his study under Hypatia for his defense and integration of Neoplatonism into Christianity. His text, *Dion*, for example is “. . . straightforwardly a work of Neoplatonist philosophy” (Deakin *Hypatia* 79). Like the educated

populace of his age, Synesius was well connected through *paideia* to other important and influential people in the Mediterranean. Through family ties or through his study in Alexandria, one of Synesius' close friends was the bishop of Alexandria, Theophilus. As bishop, Theophilus converted Synesius to Christianity, supported his nomination for bishop in Cyrene, and consecrated Synesius in that office (Deakin *Hypatia* 82). Deakin argues that Synesius functioned as a protective intermediary between Theophilus and Hypatia. As long as Synesius was alive, Theophilus would not risk his important friendship with Synesius by moving against his beloved teacher Hypatia.

Although he only remained in Alexandria until about 395,³⁵ he and Hypatia corresponded until his death in 412. Many of his letters still exist, though none of her replies does, as is typical of collections of men's letters during the ancient period, as noted earlier. What is clear from his letters to Hypatia is that he held her in great esteem, he “. . . spoke of her as ‘the genuine leader of the rites of philosophy’” (Bregman 20). Among her students were Synesius, his younger brother, Euoptius and their uncle, Alexander. Synesius' closest friend Herculianus, and his younger brother Olympius studied with Hypatia. Hessychius, Athanasius, Theodosius, Ision, Syrus, Petrus, Theotecnus, Gaus, Heliodorus, Troillius, and Auxentius also studied with Hypatia.³⁶

While it is difficult to identify many of Hypatia's students clearly, they were probably “. . . the sons of some of the most influential and wealthy men in the empire” (Pollard and Reid 267-8). Synesius of Cyrene became Bishop of Constantinople and his brother, Euoptius, replaced Synesius after his death. Olympius was “. . . a wealthy landowner from Selucia in Syrian Pieria [who] was well connected in Alexandria,” and Dzielska assumes the same is true of his brother,

³⁵ Dzielska reports that Synesius of Cyrene studied with Hypatia from 397-400

³⁶ Dzielska 31-38; Pollard and Reid 267-267; Wider 55-56.

Herculianus (32-3). According to Pollard and Reid, Herculianus, also known as Herculian, became prefect in Constantinople (268). Hesychius was probably “. . . governor of Upper Libya . . . [and] Athanasius . . . is probably the well-known Alexandrian sophist, the author of commentaries and rhetorical works; Theodosius is the Alexandrian ‘grammarians of the first order,’ the author of discourses on verbs and nouns” (Dzielska 35-37). Heliodorus, who visited his former teacher for advice, became a rhetorician and lawyer at the court of the Egyptian augustal prefect. Ision, Syrus, Petrus, Theotecnus, Gaus, and Auxentius are names of other students mentioned by Synesius, but nothing is known of them. Waithe claims that Hypatia was clearly “. . . considered by [her] contemporaries to be [a] philosopher” and given the range of occupations her students held, it seems likely. In addition, the occupations of the students who we do know something about confirm the range and content of Hypatia’s instruction and social status of her students (Waithe “On Not” 132).

Dzielska explicitly states that none of Hypatia’s students were women, and indeed, no one documented the names of Hypatia’s female students. However, Dzielska’s assertion seems unlikely in the context of the value of education in Alexandria, the relatively easy access to the Museum, the liberal laws and customs concerning women at the time, and Neoplatonic practices of educating male and female students to improve the soul. In addition, there existed a number of well-known female scholars affiliated with the Museum and who served as role models and probably as teachers for girls; it is likely many female scholars and teachers were trained in Alexandria. In light of the educational practices at the Museum, it seems likely Hypatia would have served in the capacity. Furthermore, there are extant texts that name women as students of other teachers, particularly of Neoplatonists. For example, the philosopher Isidore taught Theodore and her sisters (G. Clark 132). Rowlandson also mentions female students; a young

slave girl named Peina and the women in the family of Apollonios, governor of the Apollonopolite Heptakomia were educated as well (157).

Among educated girls, in particular there is a large number of Neoplatonists. Athanassiadi explains that Neoplatonists expected their children to be philosophers, no matter their gender; women were, therefore, likely educated often. In the third century ACE, Alexandrian philosopher Origenes Adamantius (Origen), student of Ammonius Saccas (founder of Neoplatonism and teacher of Plotinus), had many female students (Pollard and Reid 252). Plotinus (205-270), whose Neoplatonism Hypatia followed, believed that philosophical inquiry was essential for women as well as men, and he demonstrated it by teaching female students (E. Jane Cooper 85). Ménage mentions Arria and Germinae as disciples of Plotinus (25). Plotinus had a female student named Amphikleia, who married the philosopher Iamblichus (G. Clark 132). Plotinus would have served as an important precedent for Hypatia as his follower; it is unlikely she would have modeled her practices differently. Particularly in light of Kennedy's claim that Neoplatonism was the dominant philosophy after 200 ACE, it seems possible that more women were educated than contemporary scholars have believed.

The Neoplatonists also tended to be an endogamous community, and as such, women were not only students and teachers of Neoplatonists, but often married other Neoplatonists. A similar education would have provided cultural and ideological bonds for married couples. For example, Porphyry married Marcella expressly to become her partner in philosophy (Allen 209). Athanassiadi concludes, "[a]s a result of this marital policy, women moved between the continents just as easily as men, a circumstance which enhanced conformity and cohesion," which was obviously important for Neoplatonists in Alexandria as well as Athens (6). Is it possible that few women's names were documented because women were a common sight in

ancient lecture halls and classrooms? It seems we have barely considered this possibility. Given the circumstances of endogamy along with Neoplatonic value of women's education, it seems highly unlikely that Hypatia would have confined herself to teaching all male students either by custom or by ideology.

By the 380s Theon stopped teaching although he was probably still active as a scholar (Watts *City and School* 193; Pollard and Reid 267-268). Watts bases this assertion on the fact that none of Synesius's letters mentions Theon, suggesting that he retired from teaching or had died, and indicating that Hypatia probably had taken over the school by this point in time. Watts explains that Hypatia was Theon's best student and teaching assistant, and Waithe adds that it was custom for the best student to fill the master's position when it became vacant (Watts *City and School* 193; Waithe *History* 170-171). Apparently, the familial and ideological links between Hypatia and Theon made her the obvious person to succeed him. Indeed, Watts claims ". . . it seems that she was selected for this honor long before his death" (*City and School* 193).

Some scholars interpret the ancient sources detailing Hypatia's habit of lecturing in public to mean that Hypatia's position as school administrator was a paid position. Whether Hypatia's position was funded by the government or not is subject to a rigorous debate that is beyond the scope of this work, that she was a school administrator, is, however, important. As head of the school, Hypatia ". . . was expected to develop contacts with influential people and use these relationships to protect the interests of the school . . . Once she had firmly established herself as Theon's successor, it seems her school became a regular stopping point for imperial officials stationed in Alexandria" (Watts *City and School* 196). Whether her chair was publicly funded or not, her position as school administrator made her visible enough to become an influential person in Alexandria.

Hypatia's influence and rhetorical activity

Haas claims Hypatia's "... network of patronage can be observed in three related areas: her role as patroness within the circle of her aristocratic students, her active involvement in the public life of the city, and her relationship with the highest civil authority in Alexandria, the prefect" (309). Socrates Scholasticus explains,

... on account of the self-possession and ease of manner, which she had acquired in consequence of the cultivation of her mind, she not infrequently appeared in public in the presence of the magistrates. Neither did she feel abashed in going to an assembly of men. For all men on account of her extraordinary dignity and virtue admired her more. (qtd. in Fideler 59)

Because she was so well regarded for her intellect, "... high officials ... paid early calls on Hypatia as one of the foremost people in the city" (Dzielska 38). Rist concurs, "Hypatia had considerable influence" in Alexandria (223). The amount of influence she wielded no doubt came from her reputation as an excellent teacher and visibility in her position as the school's administrator.

Dignitaries and politicians visited her and sought her advice to draw on her influence or in respect to her role as a philosopher. Late antique philosophers often acted as trusted advisors to the powerful and visiting or gaining advice from philosophers was customary practice in Athens (Brown *Power and Persuasion* 4; Waithe *History* 170). One of the officials Hypatia knew well was the Roman prefect in Alexandria, Orestes. They "... met frequently ... and he consulted with her on municipal and political issues" (Dzielska 38). Dzielska also names Simplicius, commander in chief in the east, and civil servants Pentadius and Heliodorus as those who visited Hypatia for advice, surely nameless others visited as well (38-40). By letter Synesius asks for Hypatia's intervention on behalf of two young men going to Alexandria he knew were in

need of help, adding further evidence that Hypatia maintained ties of *paideia* and that she could use her influence in Alexandria (Dzielska 61). Synesius would not have asked for Hypatia's intervention if she had no influence. Adding further evidence is Wider's translation of Scholasticus: "Neither was she abashed to come into the open face of the assembly. All men did both reverence and had in her admiration for the singular modesty of her mind," suggesting that Hypatia's role may have included advising the political assembly in Alexandria, reinforcing her political importance and that she was a recognized philosopher among her contemporaries (54). While much of Hypatia's life and death are subject to scholarly debate, what is certain is that Hypatia was part of the public and intellectual fabric of Alexandria.

Dzielska contradicts the *Suda Lexicon's* claim that Hypatia was well known and loved within her own city. Instead, she believes that "Hypatia was neither popular nor celebrated among the Alexandrian population at large [because] she did not direct her teachings to the masses and had no influence . . . among them" (90). However, contrary to Dzielska's claim, evidence suggests that Neoplatonists regularly taught and wrote for educated and general audiences. In her discussion of Plotinus' pedagogical practices, E. Jane Cooper cites eyewitness accounts that Plotinus welcomed any student who wished to come into his classes, and it appears that Hypatia acted similarly (75). Iamblichean Neoplatonist Damascus denigrates Hypatia for teaching publicly ". . . to large classes rather than to a small and exclusive circle of initiates" (Cameron and Long 41). Scholasticus adds that Hypatia lectured in the streets of Alexandria and it is possible that his observation was neither hyperbolic nor atypical of Neoplatonists, in which case it seems likely that the inhabitants of Alexandria may have known Hypatia well.

Athanassiadi notes the Neoplatonist practice of writing for a general audience; "[b]eginning with Porphyry, the Neoplatonists wrote consciously and copiously for an educated and general public

alike . . .” (8); it seems likely that Hypatia would have followed these models (Vassilopoulou qtd. in E. Jane Cooper 75). Hypatia’s presence, influence, and reputation as an outstanding teacher was well known in Alexandria and in places as far away as Constantinople, Syria, and Cyrene (Dzielska 89).

Although a renowned teacher, Hypatia probably would not have identified herself as a rhetorician, as Synesius did not. For example, in *Dion*, Synesius defends philosophy against rhetoricians who called themselves philosophers and it is likely that his opinion may have stemmed, in part, from his education with Hypatia (Waithe *History* 174). However, she need not have identified as a rhetorician in order for us to identify her rhetorical activities: private and public teaching, overseeing the administration and maintenance of her school by establishing and maintaining ties with important individuals, and by advising government officials.³⁷ She simply could not have undertaken these tasks without the help of rhetoric or rhetorical training. Since her education must have been in the tradition of *paideia*, it is very likely that her formal training included rhetoric. The *Suda Lexicon* offers additional proof of Hypatia’s practiced rhetorical abilities in the statement that she was “. . . articulate and eloquent in speaking . . .” (qtd. in Fiedler 57-58). While nothing documents the details of Hypatia’s education, or her public speeches, it is clear that she was trained in rhetoric, perhaps by her father Theon, perhaps by someone else, to perform the public duties her father left to her and in order to insure the success of their school.

Hypatia’s Murder

³⁷ My assertion is based on the fact that Synesius’ *Dion* includes criticism of rhetoricians.

While scholars disagree about the evidence of Hypatia's fame, her importance, and her activities in the ancient world, one fact of Hypatia's life that scholars do not debate is that of her murder during Lent in March 415. Dzielska's translation of Socrates Scholasticus reports:

Envy arose against this woman. She happened to spend a great deal of time with Orestes [the Roman prefect], and that stirred up slander against her among the Church, as if she were the one who prevented Orestes from entering into friendship with the Bishop. Indeed, a number of men who heatedly reached the same conclusion, whom a certain Peter (who was employed as a reader) led, kept watch for the woman as she was returning from somewhere. They drew her out of her carriage and dragged her to the church of Cesarion. They stripped off her clothes and then killed her with broken bits of pottery. When they had torn her body limb from limb, they took it to a place called Cinaron and burned it. (18)

The *Suda Lexicon* documents her murder similarly, “. . . when Hypatia emerged from her house, in her accustomed manner, a throng of merciless and ferocious men who feared neither divine punishment nor human revenge attacked and cut her down,” suggesting that the mob was supported by some person or persons of power (qtd. in Fideler 58). The *Chronicle* by John, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu provides details of her murder; however, he is the only historian to use Christian justification for it;

And in those days there appeared in Alexandria a famous philosopher, a pagan named Hypatia, and she was devoted at all times to magic, astrolabes and instruments of music, and she beguiled many people through (her) Satanic wiles. And the governor of the city honored her exceedingly; for she had beguiled him through her magic. And he ceased attending church as had been his custom. But he went once under circumstances of

danger. And he not only did this, but he drew many believers to her, and he himself received the unbelievers at his house. (qtd. in Fiedler 61-63)

The ancient texts documenting Hypatia's murder provide several motives for it, political and religious power, Hypatia's popularity, the population's confusion between astronomy and astrology they believed was actually the practice of witchcraft, and/or her gender. Unfortunately, extant texts do not name Hypatia's murderers.

One way scholars have interpreted the textual evidence documenting Hypatia's murder is as a part of a deliberate Christian-Roman eradication of paganism, which began under Constantine in 312 and arrived in Alexandria in 391 with Theophilus' destruction of the temple of Serapis.³⁸ Blame tends to fall specifically on the shoulders of the patriarch at the time of her murder, Bishop (now Saint) Cyril of Alexandria, successor to Bishop Theophilus. Although accused of inciting rumors against Hypatia, of jealousy at her popularity, or of blaming her as the actual or imagined person dividing Cyril's alliance with the Roman prefect Orestes, there is no evidence that Cyril was involved with Hypatia's murder. Alexandria was filled with religious strife amongst the Jews, Christians, and pagans and instances of violence in the city increased in number during and after Cyril's edification to office. When Theophilus died in 412, Timothy and Cyril were nominated to fill Theophilus' place. According to some sources, Pulcheria, influential sister to Emperor Theodosius II, advised her brother to return to orthodoxy, which she felt Cyril better represented. After “. . . three days of street fighting [. . .] on October 17, 412, a triumphant Cyril was installed as patriarch” (Pollard and Reid 272). Quoting Socrates Scholasticus, Pollard and Reid assert, “Cyril came into possession of the episcopate, with greater power than Theophilus had ever exercised. From that time the bishopric of Alexandria went beyond the limits of its sacerdotal functions, and assumed the administration of secular matters” (qtd. in

³⁸ The general assessment of Athanassiadi, Brown, Gibbon, Richeson, Dzielska, Pollard and Reid, and Milne.

Pollard and Reid 272). During his tenure, Cyril continued to solidify the power of his office.³⁹ If John's *Chronicle* is accurate, it is certainly possible that Hypatia's murder was part of what Christians deemed was the necessary cleansing of pagans in Alexandria. It is also possible that Cyril wanted Hypatia out of the way personally or that his motive was to frighten away or to force the Roman governor Orestes into forfeiting his political power to the Church and to Cyril as its representative.

Milne claims that monks formed the mob intent on flouting the Emperor's power in the name of Egyptian nationalism and relinquishes Cyril from blame (232). However, most scholars claim that Cyril ordered or encouraged a loyal and low-placed member of his clergy named Peter to assassinate Hypatia. The mob that ripped her apart may have been the *parabolani* (Christians employed by the bishop to help those in need in Alexandria) or Nitirian monks who resided in the desert outside of Alexandria. While it is interesting to note that Cyril did indeed spend several years among the Nitirians before his elevation to bishop, it is impossible to know if Cyril's ties with the Nitirians and Hypatia's eventual murder are meaningful or coincidental (Haas 260). Similarly, Deakin and Haas blame Hypatia's murder on the power struggle between Orestes and Cyril that caused riots in Alexandria in which Hypatia was unfortunately caught (*Hypatia* 22). Haas blames Orestes who he claims used his relationship with Hypatia to forge a party opposed to the patriarch and ". . .made it quite clear that, for the Christians of the city, access to his justice and patronage was to be mediated not through the patriarch, but via the philosopher Hypatia . . .consequently the attack on Hypatia was but one prong of a broader attack on his new coalition" (313).

³⁹ For more information about the patriarch's power, see Hardy, Jr. E.R. "The Patriarchate of Alexander: A Study in National Christianity."

However, the city of Alexandria has a history of brutal violence. Although Watts blames the fragmentation of *paideia* for violence in the city, Alexandria was notorious for its tradition of mob executions.⁴⁰ The earliest documented execution included humiliating, dragging, and dismembering instigators of an attempted coup by Agathokles after Ptolemy IV died and his queen Arsinoë III was assassinated in 200 BCE. Female perpetrators Danae, Agathokloria, their sisters, and family were stripped naked, dragged through the city, and handed to the angry mob that ripped them apart (Rowlandson 34). Similar practices were used during the Decian persecution of Christians in Alexandria (249-250 ACE). A letter written by Dionysios details the beating, stabbing and eventual stoning of a man named Metras, the whipping, dragging and stoning of a woman named Quinta, and the beating and burning of an aged woman named Apollonia (Rowlandson 74). In 361, the anti-pagan Arian Bishop George and two others were “. . . torn limb from limb . . . [their] remains were burned, and [their] . . . ashes thrown into the sea” by a mob after the Christian Emperor, Julian, took the throne (Athanasiasi 13). Haas explains that the bodies of George and his accomplices were burned “. . . to prevent any possibility of a later martyr cult,” the complete destruction of a body was an Egyptian insult given the ancient Egyptian practices of mummification meant to preserve the body for the afterlife (87). In light of Alexandria’s violent history, it is possible that Hypatia was seen as a threat to the city and that a random mob murdered her.

Rist and Bregman claim that it was Hypatia’s popularity that incited a mob to her murder. Rist asserts “. . . that it was to [her] public activity and to her public position rather than to her purely philosophical or even astronomical interests that she owed her death” (224). Hypatia’s “. . . martyrdom probably had more to do with her charisma, popularity, influence, and reputation for piety and purity than with any anti-Christian activity on her part: she could have been considered

⁴⁰ Brown *Power and Persuasion* 51-55; Haas 9-13, 169; Rowlandson 34, 74; Whitfield 15.

dangerous by some in spite of her intentions” (Bregman 22-23). Athanassiadi also claims that the city acted against Hypatia for her “. . . incessant show of power, preaching the doctrines of [pagan] philosophy . . . in the streets of Alexandria,” which Athanassiadi interprets as a deliberately public and anti-Christian act that instigated the mob against Hypatia (16). Her habit of lecturing in public would certainly have made Hypatia an easy target.

Nietupski states that Hypatia was murdered because Alexandrians commonly confused the work of astronomers with that of astrologers and fortune-tellers, the practice of which was a serious offence in Alexandria (51). Hypatia is often credited with the invention of the planisphere and with making improvements to the astrolabe, both instruments used for astronomy, and which the uneducated could easily have confused as instruments used in astrology. Dzielska claims that Cyril spread rumors that Hypatia was an astrologer to encourage the Alexandrine mob to act against Hypatia, suggesting that again, the assassination was orchestrated, even indirectly, by Cyril.

We must also consider Hypatia’s gender as cause for her murder. In the *Creation of a Feminist Consciousness*, Lerner observes a historical pattern of abuse of women; “[w]omen who lived without parental or male protection were always vulnerable to accusations of heresy,” and gender may have been at least a motive (Lerner *Feminist* 79). If Hypatia was an old woman in 415, it is likely that her father Theon was already dead,⁴¹ and given that there is no documentation of other family members and that Hypatia remained unmarried, it is likely that she would not have had the protection of a male relative. As a literate woman, she would not have needed a guardian under Greek or Egyptian law, and it is doubtful she would have felt the need for one. Without a guardian or male relative to protect her and frequently appearing in public alone, Hypatia may have been murdered as a message for women to keep their place.

⁴¹ Cameron and Long date Theon’s death between 377-390.

Molinaro's fictional recreation of Hypatia's murder asserts that it served as a ". . . warning [to] future centuries of reformers and healers that they must hush their knowledge if they wished to avoid burning as heretics, or witches" (6).

Several scholars account for Hypatia's murder by citing her gender as well.⁴² De Medici claims an anti-female tendency and that Hypatia's use of a soiled menstrual napkin to make a point to one of her students involved breaching a taboo that could not be ignored and that incited the mob to murder her (16). Unfortunately, we have no idea of when or if the menstrual napkin incident occurred or whether the incident became well known and can only infer the possibility. Christian asceticism changed attitudes about women in Alexandria, leaving Hypatia at greater risk. It could be that the standardization of Christianity is in part to blame because it included the systematic exclusion of women from official positions in response to pagan accusations of sexual impropriety (Cameron and Long 61-62). It could be that Hypatia was murdered for teaching men as much as for her paganism.⁴³ It is possible that her attack was an attack on *paideia* as a system of patronage. Deakin claims that the mob was motivated by sheer lust. Watts alone claims that Hypatia was an ". . . innocent pagan civilian" (*City and School* 199). We simply cannot know the motive for Hypatia's murder. Conflicting analyses and incomplete historical documentation of motives for Hypatia's murder inhibit accusations against any single person or group. While it is impossible to say with any certainty who was responsible for her murder, one thing is clear—the complex and changing social and political situation in Alexandria that enabled Hypatia's empowerment, sadly, also created the conditions for her murder.

⁴² See De Medici 16.

⁴³ Bellan-Boyer claims that St. Thecla was accused of witchcraft and adultery because she preached in public. Like Hypatia after her, Thecla was stripped in public and ritually shamed. During another mission, she was sexually assaulted. After ridiculing the perpetrator publicly, Thecla was fed to the lions.

After Hypatia's murder the Roman prefect Orestes disappears from the historical record either because he fled or was recalled to Rome and ". . . Cyril carefully portrayed the death of Hypatia as a fight between Christians and pagans, distancing himself in the process from the real cause of the tension, his attempt to seize power from a Christian prefect" (Pollard and Reid 278). Whether involved in Hypatia's murder or not, Cyril benefited by collecting the responsibilities and benefits of the prefect Orestes' office, including the prefect's power. According to *The Chronicle of John*, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu, Cyril's murderous act created cohesion among Christians in Alexandria, ". . . all the people surrounded the patriarch Cyril and named him 'the new Theophilus'; for he had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city" (qtd. Fiedler 61-63). In the modern period, Gibbon picked up the idea and explained Hypatia's murder not only as the last step in the Christian fight against paganism, but also the death of Hellenistic wisdom in the West. The assertion has served to obscure Hypatia from the view of historians.⁴⁴

While those responsible for Hypatia's murder could and cannot be identified, the killers had offended people in Alexandria. The city sent an embassy to Constantinople that resulted in a law placing the *parabolani* under control of the prefect rather than the bishop, suggesting the court of Theodosius II believed Cyril had some part in Hypatia's murder. However, the law lasted only two years before Cyril's governance of the *parabolani* was restored. Dzielska and Deakin claim that the murder was essentially covered-up with a bribe to a member of the imperial court in Constantinople named Anthemius. Deakin claims that his grandson, Anthemius the Younger was executed later in retribution for his grandfather's part in the cover-up (*Hypatia* 74). Holum, perhaps under the influence of Gibbon, claims that Pulcheria, de facto empress of the eastern empire, would not have acted on Hypatia's behalf. Breaking with the tradition of compassion, tolerance, and protection of Hellenistic pagans by the Eastern regent, Pulcheria's

⁴⁴ As Whitfield astutely observes.

goal was to advance Christianity through the Eastern Empire, even if it meant increased violence against pagans (99-100). Dzielska claims that Hypatia's murder and cover-up paved the way for Pulcheria's actions against pagans and Jews alike (94). In the same year, pagans were excluded from service in the military and in government administration, so it is possible that Pulcheria saw Hypatia's murder as a way to use violence for her own ends. De Medici, following Pascal and Molinaro, explain that Hypatia's murder served as a warning to women that they keep their place; the style of Hypatia's murder would become one punishment of choice for the Church to use against women deemed heretics and witches.

In Alexandria, the murder of Hypatia seriously affected the intellectual culture. The philosopher Isidore found that fear still hung over the city during the sixth century, more than one hundred years after Hypatia's murder (Brown *Power and Persuasion* 117). Watts adds that Plotinian philosophy died out in Alexandria and made room for the militant Iamblichean version, fond of theurgy. As a result, teachers of Iamblichean philosophy became some of the ". . . most prestigious professors in the city" (*City and School* 201). While the practice of Plotinian Neoplatonism continued elsewhere or fused with Christianity, it lost its influence in Alexandria with Hypatia's death.

There is much that cannot be determined about Hypatia's life and death. If her life was documented only because of her ghastly murder, as seems to be the case, we need to ask: how many other women may also have taught and led public lives? How many were not documented in the historical record because they lived and died quietly?⁴⁵ Hypatia's case in conjunction with

⁴⁵ There is an interesting parallel between the lack of documented women in our historical narratives and the practices of rhetoric and composition as a field. Much of the work in our field relates to freshman composition, which often passes unnoticed. Only a handful of rhetoric and composition scholars are well known. If scholars in five hundred years decide to study the artifacts of our field, what would they find? It is reasonable to suggest published texts would be preserved while the work of most rhetoric and composition scholars would be lost, which does not mean that the work of freshman composition was not done. Given that ours is a field dominated by women, it is likely that the work of women would likewise be lost.

new archaeological evidence and interpretation about women's lives allows us to rethink the position of women in the ancient world. Hypatia may very well represent at least one place and time in the ancient Mediterranean world in which women led independent, scholarly, active, and public lives. This fact alone could provide those involved in revisionary history a new way of interpreting the ancient world in spite of the paucity of primary materials.

My research suggests that there have been places and times in which a diverse range of women had access to education and opportunities to engage in intellectual work. Constraints on women have not been a stable, cohesively defined set of restrictions imposed on all women at all times, as the concept of Woman may lead us to believe. Identification of race, class, gender must be considered in their historical contexts because they have had different meanings in different times. My goal here is to resist the feminist notion that interlocking identities concerning race, class, and gender always function as oppressive. In the case of Hypatia of Alexandria, while her murder may have been the result of her gender and ideology, it seems that interlocking identities also functioned for her empowerment during her life.

CHAPTER FOUR: WOMEN IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

In this chapter, I name women, frequently living outside of Alexandria, who were engaged in intellectual or pedagogical pursuits during Hypatia's lifetime in order to provide a kind of community for Hypatia, further re-collecting and re-membering her historical context. Recovering groups of women engaged in similar activities during a historical period subverts traditional, hierarchical history that tends to focus on a single individual. In addition, recognizing communities demonstrates the importance of others in cognitive and rhetorical activities. Rather than assert knowledge is generated by the stereotypically isolated and brilliant scholar, my assumption is that knowledge is socially constructed. C. Jan Swearingen observes that educated ancient women often knew or knew of one another and the following chapter names women Hypatia may have known personally, by reputation, or through their written work and explains ways in which their activities were supported.

Barbara Biesecker reminds us in "Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric" that recovery of single women creates a "female tokenism" that valorizes the individual and maintains "... the mechanics of exclusion that fences out a vast array of collective rhetorical practices" ("Coming" 144). Royster contextualizes the processes by which female tokenism happens in *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change among African American Women*. Royster notes that, racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, political and economic oppression become barriers that filter women in such a way as to make their achievements invisible; that is, women become invisible to one another. When women do come into view, we think they are "... exceptional rather than as part and parcel of a pattern," which functions to maintain individualism and exclusion, keeps scholars from identifying important women, and keeps women from one another (Royster 4). Rhetorically, such a move solidifies the

construct of Woman and of patriarchal hierarchies, both of which serve patriarchal interests. Female tokenism, according to Biesecker, continues to create hierarchy based on the ideology of individualism that “. . . reinscribes patriarchal alignments” and serves to “. . . monumentalize some acts and trivialize others” (“Coming” 146-147). In other words, recovery of solitary female figures, albeit important to the history of rhetoric, continues the exclusionary practices typical of patriarchal histories that many feminist historiographers have identified and have worked so hard to overturn.

Biesecker’s solution is to shift the question we ask when we recover women from “. . . who is speaking” to “. . . what play of forces made it possible for a particular speaking subject to emerge?” opening the way for feminist historiographers to redefine what counts as rhetorical while simultaneously recovering women’s rhetorical history and its context (“Coming” 148). Biesecker argues that the question may allow feminist historiographers to understand how “. . . different women, due to their various positions in the social structure, have available to them different rhetorical possibilities, and, similarly, are constrained by different rhetorical limits” (“Coming” 157). As an alternative, she suggests feminist historiographers “. . . relativiz[e] rather than universaliz[e] what Aristotle identified as ‘the available means of persuasion’” (“Coming” 157). Following Biesecker’s suggestion, by looking for the communities that important women may have been a part, we simultaneously dismantle the concept of the universal Woman and establish a less hierarchical framework that is more inclusive and varied, and hence, create a more accurate and less distorted view of rhetorical history. In other words, once we understand the available means of persuasion as varied and contextual we may be able to recover more women who participated in rhetorical history. If we are able to identify specific times and places where a particular woman was empowered, a single discovery could lead to the discovery of her

community and others who exploited similar social, legal, or intellectual contexts to suit their needs. The notion of community, in this context, then, functions as a heuristic for both discovery and context. Once we understand the context in which these women worked, we may be able to reintegrate the now sex-segregated rhetorical tradition and stop the ghettoization of women's rhetorics, rhetorical activities, and importance. Once I began my research about Hypatia of Alexandria and began to read interdisciplinarily, it was not long before I discovered women engaging in similar activities. Admittedly, I was pleased at the possibility of recognizing the work of many women rather than just one because I felt I could avoid replicating the structure of patriarchal and exclusive histories or that tokenize women with their inclusion.

Although we tend to think of the legal status of women as universally oppressive in the ancient world, laws and customs did not exist universally. As I demonstrated in the previous chapters, some historical places and periods had laws and customs that empowered women, allowing them to enter into intellectual pursuits and participate in public. Hemelrijk notes, for example, that Perpetua's diary⁴⁶ ". . . warns us against assuming too readily that the general silence of our sources reflects an actual lack of women's writing at the time"; it does not (208).

Alexandria was a center for education in the late antique period, men and women had access to an enormous amount of information through the Library. In fact, Sheridan claims that enough written work by women existed in the collection at the Museum that female authors and their works served as models, and Rowlandson corroborates that some of the international scholars who worked at the Museum were women (Sheridan 190; Rowlandson 303). What is clear from the evidence is that even when their activities were not documented, women became educated, served as teachers, educational administrators, rhetoricians, and philosophers.

⁴⁶ For a translation of Acts of the Christian Martyrs about Perpetua's martyrdom, see Lefkowitz, Mary R. and Maureen B. Fant. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source book in Translation* 2nd edition.

Although women were not admitted officially to schools of rhetoric, they often garnered education in rhetoric outside official schools. While documentation of many educated women has been lost, they may have existed in such abundance in some communities that historians and biographers thought them too common to document.

C. Jan Swearingen notes “. . . stretching back to antiquity, all women in ‘the tradition’ know one another’s names, but the official record kept bumping them out of the canon, or announcing they were ‘fictions,’” to obscure women’s efforts and support patriarchal dominance (qtd. in Lunsford 327). Following Biesecker’s, Royster’s, and Swearingen’s lead, I ask with whose work or reputation may Hypatia have been familiar? Who may she have known personally? Could Hypatia have been following a different intellectual tradition, one unknown to us that included women teachers, speakers, philosophers, and rhetoricians? This chapter considers what, if any, alternate tradition she saw practiced or that she read about in the Library at Alexandria.

Female Teachers

When women were literate, they often began educating their children at home; hence, mothers were often primary teachers important in shaping their children (Rowlandson 300).⁴⁷ Although most of the women teachers we know taught at the elementary level, some did teach advanced students (Rowlandson 301). For instance, letters between Apollonous and his family dating from c. 99 ACE inquire about the welfare of his children and their education under a female teacher (Bagnall and Cribiore 79). Aline and her husband (circa 2-3 ACE) correspond about the education of their children under a female teacher in their letters as well (Bagnall and Cribiore 77). Funerary inscriptions of slave and free women in Italy between 1 BCE and 2 ACE

⁴⁷ See Quintilian’s *On the Teaching and Speaking of Writing* (circa 95 ACE), James J Murphy, ed, which argues that mothers should be educated so they can be good role models for their children.

describe occupations as teachers (Lefkowitz and Fant 223).⁴⁸ At primary or advanced stages, women taught in a variety of disciplines including medicine, philosophy, religion, and mathematics, among other subjects. Women learning the art of medicine, for example, could learn from textbooks, practice, or through apprenticeships to experienced female or male practitioners (G. Clark 68; Vivante *Daughters* 155). G. Clark notes that the physician Soranus wrote explicitly for women and Vivante adds that the physicians Doranus and Galen depended on the works of female physicians as sources from which to write their medical texts (G. Clark 68, Vivante *Daughters* 155). In some places and times, it is clear that women had access to a variety of methods of education including self-study and apprenticeship. One of the elements determining access, as often as not, seems to be the ideology held by a woman's community.

PAGAN WOMEN: Pythagoreans/Neopythagoreans and the Platonists/Neoplatonists

Among pagans, two groups are important to note for their doctrines about and inclusion of women, the Pythagoreans/Neopythagoreans and the Platonists/Neoplatonists. Scholarship details that the teacher of Pythagoras was a woman named Themistoclea, the priestess of Apollo at Delphi, establishing the importance of women in Pythagoras' philosophy and community (Waithe *History* 141; Vivante *Daughters* 157). Ménage, quoting Diogenes Laertius and the *Suda Lexicon*, notes Themistoclea was not just his teacher, but also his sister; Thesleff claims it a misinterpretation, however, it is clear Pythagoras would have gained more credibility from claiming he derived his philosophy from the Oracle rather than from his sister (Ménage 47). What is interesting here is the familial relationship, or the recreation of it, was an important element for Pythagorean, and later, Neoplatonist women. For instance, Waithe claims Perictione I was an early Pythagorean who may have been Plato's mother. If this is the case and she conducted his primary education, as was the custom in Classical Athens, it should not surprise us

⁴⁸ Lefkowitz and Fant note that occupations were more common on inscriptions for slaves than of freedwomen (222-223).

that Pythagoreanism, Platonism, and the later versions, Neopythagoreanism and Neoplatonism share similar ideals. Allen, among others, claims that Neopythagoreanism and Platonism were influential in the development of Neoplatonism as well (159).

While I am not connecting the two schools of philosophy to support a linear narrative, they hold some important ideals and practices in common that need mention because of their similar ideologies about and approaches to women. For one, based on their belief that souls were without gender, both groups understood the intellectual capacities of women as the same, or similar to those of men. Their belief led to the expectation that women would be educated, and become teachers, writers, philosophers, or some combination thereof. The Pythagoreans and Platonists had a tendency to be endogamous because they followed codes that strictly defined diet, dress, and sexual practice, which supported the longevity of practices (Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic* 65). Some pagan attitudes and customs about women were adopted by early Christian communities. In order to explain conditions of women living around the period of Hypatia's lifetime, I begin by detailing Platonic and Neoplatonic ideology and custom, followed by a description of their similarities to Pythagorean and Neopythagorean ideology and custom. Next, I explain the practices borrowed by early Christian communities. Once a fuller picture emerges, I turn to Greek women living between 6th BCE and 1 ACE in order to identify an earlier Greek influence on Hypatia.

Plato/Neoplatonism

In *The Symposium*, Plato's Aristophanes explains that there were originally three sexes, male, female, and hermaphrodites. Each original human being had four arms and legs, and because they were formidable and attacked the gods, Zeus ". . . cut the members of the human race in half, just like fruit which is to be dried and preserved, or like eggs which are cut with a hair" (Plato 602). Once the pairs (male/male, female/female or female/male) were split, they

would not do anything apart, and when one died the other soon followed, suggesting the interdependence of the sexes for human survival. Allen notes that the Platonists and later Neoplatonists shared the ideal that the soul was without sex, and since the goal of Platonists and Neoplatonists was to discipline the body to assist ascension of the soul, the body mattered little, if at all; gender then, mattered very little in terms of one's capacity for education, intellect, and virtue.

In the *Republic*, Plato describes his ideal community in which philosopher-kings rule. While recognizing the decreased physical strength of women compared to men, he indicates their intellectual and spiritual similarities. Plato's ideal community includes equal education and opportunity for men and women deemed capable of training as guardians. Those guardians who demonstrated the best morality and judgment were eligible to become rulers. The guardians would not hold private property; instead, all would be held in common including children. Hence, Plato recognized the need for men and women to participate in public life because of their complementary abilities.

In terms of educational practices, women students may have been more common than women teachers in Plato's Academy. Unfortunately, anecdotal evidence provides us the name of only two female students, Lasthenia and Axiothea. We do not have any evidence that women taught in Plato's academy. However, textual evidence from *The Symposium* and *Menexenos* suggest that Plato believed women were able to teach. In *The Symposium*, Plato's Socrates claims that he was a student of Diotima. In *Menexenos*, he claims he and Pericles shared their teacher of rhetoric, Aspasia. In addition, Socrates claims that some men brought their wives to hear Aspasia speak, indicating his value of her teaching skills and the subsequent value of education for the wives mentioned (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 40). In "Women: The Unrecognized

Teachers of the Platonic Socrates” Elena Duvergès Blair argues that, in fact, “. . . women seem to be, according to Plato, the only teachers from whom Socrates ever learned” (334). It is difficult to say if Plato’s depiction of Socrates’ education accurately portrays practice. However, the evidence confirms belief in the capabilities of women to become teachers of others.

It is interesting to note Pomeroy’s claim that Plato’s ideas about women “. . . derived from an idealized view of Spartan women,” when, if Perictione I was Plato’s mother, he may have based his model on her Pythagorean practices (Pomeroy *Goddesses* 117). Waithe ⁴⁹ argues “. . . similarities between Plato’s *Republic* and Perictione I’s *On the Harmony of Women* may not be the result of Perictione I reading Plato, but the opposite—the son learning philosophy from his mother,” which again, is in keeping with the customs of early education among the Greeks during the Classical period (*History* 71). While the Spartan view of women may have influenced Plato in his attitudes about women, as Pomeroy argues, it seems more likely that the ideology of his mother and that of his teacher, Socrates, may have been the inspiration for Plato’s depictions of women as teachers in his dialogues.

Whether Plato derived his ideas based on personal experience or on his philosophy of the soul, Plato’s work, much like the doctrines of Pythagoras, reflects enlightened attitudes about women. Like Pythagoras, Plato encourages strict discipline of the mind and the body so that a person may become virtuous. Pollard and Reid explain that Platonism

was in the unending search for wisdom, which might allow them to see beyond the sordid, material world to Plato’s. Coupled with this was a personal code by which their bodies and minds might be in suitable condition to search out such truths. This path was by no means easy, requiring moderation and temperance, a

⁴⁹ Waithe follows Thesleff who suggested Perictione should probably be identified as Plato’s mother.

willingness to shun the obvious temptations of the physical world and to strive to find divinity in ideas alone. (209)

For Platonists, the only difference between men and women was a physical one. The understanding of women as physically weaker meant “. . . women needed to struggle harder to attain wisdom than men . . . [which required] 30 years of education for men and 40 years for women” (Allen 68).

While there are differences between the doctrines of Platonism and Neoplatonism, both in Athens and in Alexandria, Neoplatonism maintained the equality of the female soul. Women, as well as men were expected to become educated, and in some cases, to practice moderation as *sophrosyne* or chastity as ascetics in order to reach mystical union with the One. Following this doctrine, women were important members of Plotinus’s school (O’Meara 83). Germainae and her daughter, with whom Plotinus lived platonically, are sometimes named as disciples of Plotinus (Ménage 73) and at other times called philosophers (Kersey 5). In the fourth century ACE, the wife of the Neoplatonist Ariston, Ampliclea, was a philosopher (Kersey 5). Ménage, citing a text entitled *Theriaca*, identifies Arria (c. 3 ACE) as learned in Neoplatonic philosophy, and names Amphilla (c. 4 ACE), Iamblichus’ daughter-in-law, as a Neoplatonist as well (Ménage 25). It is likely that many female Platonists and Neoplatonists remain unknown because their names were undocumented, texts were degraded, or were lost.

Like the Pythagoreans and Neopythagoreans, evidence suggests the Neoplatonists were endogamous. Their endogamy was probably the result of the ideology that awareness of one’s divinity was thought to be determined by heredity (Athanassiadi 5). The practice also extended to the responsibilities of teachers and was based on a similar belief that there was an “. . . unbroken succession of divinely inspired teachers who both taught and practiced the Platonic

mysteries” (Athassiadi 4). The succession of teachers followed one of two paths; women were related by blood or marriage to philosophers, or alternately, a woman who distinguished herself in her knowledge of philosophy could become heir to her teacher’s knowledge and trusted with the administration of it. The practice of endogamy must have seemed vital to guarantee community cohesion, especially in late antiquity, in light of threats to paganism by Christianity.

While those in the Neoplatonist community in Alexandria probably personally knew or knew of one another by reputation, we have little documentation of their practices. This may be explained by the fact that while there existed a chair of Neoplatonic philosophy in Alexandria, “. . . the certificate of orthodoxy could be conferred only by Athens” (Athassiadi 5). Those in Athens may have carefully documented their practices for use by other communities thereby providing us with a better sense of their practices; other communities likely found it unnecessary to do so. Alternately, it is possible that documents of Neoplatonic communities in Alexandria were destroyed by natural deterioration or by the Iamblichean Neoplatonists, the dominant sect of Neoplatonism after the fifth century. Evidence from Neoplatonic communities in Athens during the same period suggests “. . . members of the ‘sacred race’ married cultured women actively committed to the pagan cause, preferably relations of their masters and fellow-students,” like the Pythagoreans and Neopythagoreans, the Neoplatonists probably preferred endogamy in response to pagan persecution between the fourth and sixth centuries (Athassiadi 6). What is clear, and as Athassiadi’s chart of the sacred race of Neoplatonists illustrates, is that by marriage or familial relationship, women were essential to the community’s ability to maintain and continue, by way of teaching, Neoplatonic philosophy and they were treated with due respect.

Christian Women

Early Christians adopted old and familiar pagan customs, that is, they expected women to be present and participate in mixed-sex study groups where their questions were seriously addressed (Brown *The Body* 151). Like Christian men, many early Christian women travelled on a variety of holy missions. While men preached and converted men in public, women often converted women. Bellan-Boyer notes that women were often successful evangelists because they could move in private homes among women and in public arenas among men (50). Ironically, the working relationship between St. Paul and St. Thecla⁵⁰ demonstrates the practice. In Alexandria, Didymus the Blind (313-398), a student of Origen, allowed women to prophesize as long as they did not write anything down because that would be against the prescriptions of St. Paul⁵¹ (Waithe *History* 151). The contradictory practice of Didymus may explain why so few texts document the rhetorical activities of early Christian women.

Pagan notions of asceticism influenced the monastic movement and ascetic Christian women were essential to the support of the early Church. Through their wealth, they established churches and convents and supported important Christian men in their work (Brown *The Body* 152). Women's convents allowed women to study, teach and learn, and influence others, in some cases through copying and disseminating important texts themselves (Brown *The Body* 369). Brown explains that books could often only be borrowed from upper-class women with libraries, as few others had the time, money, or inclination to build a library collection (*The Body* 370). Indeed, the presence and influence of women in early Christianity was so necessary and common that the Church hierarchy took them entirely for granted (Brown *The Body* 152).

⁵⁰ For a translation of the Acts of Paul and Thecla, see Lefkowitz, Mary R and Maureen B. Fant. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source book in Translation* and Bellan-Boyer's "Conspicuous in their Absence: Women in Early Christianity."

⁵¹ Biblical historians debate whether St. Paul actually stated that women should not teach. It is difficult to believe St. Paul actually prohibited women from teaching given his practice of travelling on holy missions with women for the express purpose of conversion. In light of the Church's efforts to unify Christian theology through the Seven Ecumenical Councils, it is possible that St Paul's letters were modified to fit what was contemporary ideology at the time. Consider, for example, the case of Mary Magdalene as case in point.

In the fourth century, sexually integrated practices began to change. In response to pagan accusations that Christians engaged in bizarre sexual practices, Emperor Licinus enacted a law for the eastern provinces that demanded men “. . . not appear in the company with women to attend the sacred schools of virtue or to receive instruction from the bishops” (Brown *The Body* 141). No doubt, the later tradition of segregation carried into the modern era has led us to believe sex-segregation was often practiced in early Christian communities when it was not.

Among the most well documented Christian women are those who chose to remain virgins or those who chose ascetic celibacy after being widowed. Christianity allowed some women to expand their opportunities to include education, travel, and greater engagement with the world (Alexandre 415). In particular, Christian virgins gained exceptional status that enabled them to make more choices for themselves and they sometimes found themselves able to live public lives in which they were able to influence others (Brown *The Body* 266, 279).

I name these women and their accomplishments in this chapter, and include a resource guide to their works in chapter five. While I am not suggesting that the women named below were the only ones or that they worked in the same community, I am arguing that women participated in a variety of communities and in a variety of capacities, places, and historical periods and that Hypatia may have known, or known of, their work. Although the women named below generally lived in the Mediterranean, they are not homogenous; they lived in different places, and the material conditions of their lives varied; they are pagan and Christian, traditional teachers or nontraditional teachers, widows, wives, and avowed virgins. Because history only tends to document the lives of upper class women, those included are usually from the upper classes. Their social and material conditions, access, and constraints are as varied as their interests were, and my focus is on the myriad of ways their participation in public life was

empowered by their contexts. I have provided as many details of each woman's life as possible, however, more research is needed to more fully understand the lives of each woman named.

I chose the women based on a simple set of criteria, the women are teachers or heads of schools, "philosophers,"⁵² public speakers, or women who made important intellectual contributions, sometimes in writing; many women are missing. I have organized women in two sections: women engaged in intellectual or rhetorical activities during Hypatia's lifetime and earlier Greek women because their written works may have been among the texts available in the library of Alexandria for Hypatia to study. Together these two groups of women form a kind of community for Hypatia. I have chosen this organization in order to name Hypatia's contemporaries, to suggest that these women could have known of each other's work or reputations, and to demonstrate the variety of women's intellectual and public activities within the framework of Hypatia's lifetime. My reverse chronological order centers Hypatia first. I include Greek women who may have served as her role models second. My goal here is two-fold; to recognize the diversity of women who participated in intellectual life and to deliberately remain gynocentric, in part by ". . . ignoring all evidence of women's marginality, because, even where women appear to be marginal, this is the result of patriarchal invention" (Lerner *Patriarchy* 228). My hope is to unveil the names of women engaged in rhetoric and rhetorical activities in the ancient world from 6 BCE until Hypatia's death in the fifth century ACE. Information about women living during her lifetime and about those whose work she may have studied re-collects a more complete setting by which to understand Hypatia. As another facet of possible influences on Hypatia is re-collected, more of Hypatia is re-membered.

Pandrosion (Unknown affiliation, Alexandria, c. 290-350 ACE)

⁵² "In antiquity the term 'philosopher' described professors of general knowledge, both of how life was and ought to be" the term did not, necessarily, denote particularly specialized knowledge (Lefkowitz and Fant 38).

The city of Alexandria, because of its library and the number of scholars studying there, provided opportunities for women to study, write, and teach. One such Alexandrian woman was named Pandrosion (c. 290-350 ACE). We know about her because Pappus, the Alexandrian mathematician, makes a derisive comment about her teaching in Book III of his work entitled *Collection*. He states “. . . [c]ertain people . . . who claim to have learned mathematics from you, set out on the enunciation of the problems in what seemed to us an ignorant manner’ . . .” (qtd. in Frost 128). Pappus’ comment should in no way lead historians to assume that Pandrosion was a poor teacher, as Netz observes, Pappus was critical of most mathematicians and we cannot know his motive for the insult. Is it possible that Pappus insults Pandrosion because she was more popular or because some of his students left his instruction for hers? Given that teachers often competed for students, such a possibility exists. Was it because Pandrosion was female? We cannot know. All we can know for sure is that she was female and that she taught mathematics in Alexandria before Hypatia of Alexandria matured to adulthood.

Pandrosion does, however, illustrate a problem in traditional history. While McLaughlin was one of the first to suggest that Pandrosion was a woman, most scholars claimed that Pandrosion was male until Deakin published his 2007 book, *Hypatia: Mathematician and Martyr*, in which he reprinted Winifred Frost’s article discussing the problems of identifying Pandrosion’s gender. According to Deakin’s head note of Frost’s reprinted article,

. . . Pandrosion was supposed to be a man and was referred to as ‘Pandrosio.’ The change in viewpoint is the result of careful detective work by various scholars who discovered that the published text of Pappus’ *Collection* contained a number of major errors. Among these was the alteration of Pandrosion’s name and sex

from the primary manuscript to the printed version. It is now abundantly clear that she was a woman. (127)

In her essay, Frost justifies Pandrosion's gender based on a close reading of Pappus' *Collection*, and reconsideration, in particular of the note that accompanies Book III. Frost considers additional manuscripts in which the name Pandrosos appears and discovers ". . . all the [extant] manuscripts have the feminine vocative form of the adjective translated as 'most excellent' . . . [in addition] Pandrosos was the name of one of three sister-goddesses, daughters of Cecrops and Aglauros in Greek myth. It means 'all dewy,' not a likely male epithet" (Frost 128).

Frost continues to relate that Pandrosion was probably a younger contemporary of Pappus and that Pappus was older than Hypatia's father, Theon, which means that Pandrosion and Hypatia would have been born one or two generations apart (Frost 132). Discovery of Pandrosion as a teacher of mathematics, in addition to our knowledge of Hypatia's life and work, certainly seems to suggest that Alexandria was one place where women may have had more access to learning and teaching than in other parts of the Mediterranean world. See Pappus, *Collection*, book III (Frost in Deakin *Hypatia* 127-133). For discussions about Pandrosion, see McLaughlin (16-17) and Netz (197).

Macrina the Younger (Christian, Neocaesarea, c. 270-340 ACE)

Macrina the younger was born in Neocaesarea to an aristocratic family. During labor, Macrina's mother had a vision of St. Thecla, which the family understood as a prophecy about the child's destiny (Brown *The Body* 278). In addition, because Macrina's grandmother, Macrina the Elder, was a student of Gregory Thaumaturgos who taught Greek philosophy and Christian doctrine, the family custom suggests women were commonly well-educated (Waithe *History* 140). Macrina the Younger was a Christian woman who took a vow of celibacy after she was

widowed. We know about Macrina because her brother, Gregory of Nyssa, wrote two books that document her model Christian life, *De anima et resurrection* and *Vita Macrinae*. Gregory describes “Macrina [as] a Socratic figure and [who] is several times explicitly called ‘teacher’ by Gregory” (Beagon 170).

She is credited for being the only teacher to the youngest member of the family, Peter (Brown *The Body*). An extant letter written by Basil of Caesarea claims that Macrina the Younger, like her grandmother, preserved the teachings of Gregory Thaumaturgos by oral tradition and used her knowledge to educate a community of celibate women (Alexandre 443; Lefkowitz and Fant 330). In *De anima et resurrection* Macrina demonstrates her knowledge of Greek philosophy, namely that of Plato and Aristotle, through discussions with Gregory. Clearly, Macrina “. . . belongs among those women in the ancient world who actually occupied themselves with philosophy” (Waithe *History* 163). Basil’s letter confirms that Macrina “. . . was widely renowned [and] had done battle [while] several times preaching [about] Christ,” indicating that she may have used her classical education, probably including training in rhetoric, in her efforts to spread Christianity (Alexandre 443). See Gregory of Nyssa’s *De anima et resurrection* (in Waithe *History* 139-168) and *Vita Macrinae* (in Lefkowitz & Fant 327-330) and Basil’s letter (in Alexandre 443; Lefkowitz and Fant 330). For discussions about her life, see Brown (*The Body* 270-278) and Beagon (170-172).

Marcella (Christian, Rome, 325-412 ACE)

Marcella was a Roman widow who turned her home into a salon for women before making it into a convent; her home was also a popular venue for eastern clergymen to meet. She was well educated in Greek and owned a large Greek library, and apparently used her intellectual and physical resources to teach women (Brown *The Body* 369). In a letter to Principia about Marcella, St. Jerome claimed that Marcella delighted in divine scripture, was teacher to Paula

and Eustochium, and that she could quote Plato (Schaff 515, 517). When St. Jerome visited Rome and spent time with Marcella, she asked him questions about scripture and disputed his answers, according to Marcella, so she could learn how to answer objections (Schaff 517). Their sessions imply her familiarity with the Socratic method, which she employed as a student, a teacher, and evangelist. In reference to her teaching, St. Jerome noted that “. . . even when [Marcella’s] answers to questions were her own, she said they came not from her but from me or someone else, admitting herself to be a pupil even when she was teaching” (Drijvers 268). Was her claim a common rhetorical strategy among women teachers in early Christianity trying to evade proscriptions against women teaching? If so, it may explain the absence of women teachers documented in the historical record. St. Jerome also credits Marcella with the public identification and condemnation of heretics (Schaff 519). On at least one occasion, heretics stopped disseminating their views in response to her criticism. Her activism against them suggests her knowledge of rhetoric. She was beaten when the Goths sacked Rome and died from her injuries a short time thereafter (G. Clark 102). See Jerome's letter *To Principia* (in Schaff 513-522). For details and discussion about her life, see Brown (*The Body* 259-284, 366-386), G. Clark (28-29), and Drijvers (246-248).

Melania the Elder (Christian, Spain, 342-411 ACE)

Melania was an heiress and widow who was born in Spain and later moved to Rome. She was a learned woman familiar with the Church Fathers including Origen, Gregory, Stephen, Pierius, and Basil, among others. In 374, she moved to Nitria to join the large ascetic community in the outskirts of Alexandria. Later that year, she went on pilgrimage to Palestine with them. When the group reached Palestine, they were arrested. After speaking with her, the judge let the travelers go free, indicating Melania’s effective use of persuasion (Brown *Body* 279). In letters, St. Jerome claims that Melania convinced her son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter to give up

their property to join ascetic communities, and her practice extended outside her own family. In fact, St. Jerome claims “. . . she fought with beasts in the shape of all the senators and their wives who tried to prevent her . . .” from converting people to Christianity and to the ascetic life (Palladius). All extant examples detail her rhetorical activities.

St. Jerome also credits her for teaching. In 377, she moved to Jerusalem where she established a convent that included fifty women. Sadly, we know very little of her now because Jerome expunged her name from his *Chronicle* after he decided that Christian men and women should be segregated. Her absence from his history demonstrates one of the ways women’s activities have been expunged from historical records. All extant examples detail her private and public rhetorical activities. See Palladius’s *The Lausiatic History* (Palladius). For discussions about Melania, see Brown (*The Body* 259-284, 366-386) and G. Clark (53-54).

Her granddaughter, Melania the Younger, married by the age of thirteen, also became an ascetic; she convinced her husband to join a monastery that included thirty men, and she joined a convent that included sixty or more women. Melania the Younger’s success also indicates her effective use of rhetoric, and adds further evidence of women’s education by family tradition in rhetoric (Palladius).

St. Paula (Christian, Rome, 347-404 ACE)

Paula was part of Jerome’s and Marcella’s circle. She was a widowed Christian woman who took vows of celibacy when her husband died. Paula was an educated woman who could read Greek and Hebrew and she supported Jerome financially in order for him to translate the Bible from Greek into Latin. Her daughter, Eustochia, assisted him in the work of translation and eventually followed Jerome to Jerusalem (Greenspan 63). Paula and Eustochia are yet another example of the familial value and practice of education of women. See letters between St. Paula

and St. Jerome (Schaff 127, 130, 136). For discussions about Paula's life and activities, see Brown (*The Body* 259-284, 366-386) and G. Clark (53-54).

Eustochia/Eustochium (Christian, Rome, 368-420 ACE)

Another woman who engaged in scholarly work was Eustochia. She was a Roman woman who, supported by her mother St. Paula, chose to remain a virgin. She is credited with translating the Bible from Greek to Latin alongside St. Jerome; their text would eventually be known as the Latin Vulgate (Anderson and Zinsser 75). See letters between Jerome and Eustochia (in Schaff 85, 128, 405). For a discussion about Eustochia, see Anderson and Zinsser (74-75) and G. Clark (53-54).

Olympia/Olympias (Christian, Constantinople, 368-408 ACE)

Olympia was the daughter of a high placed politician at the imperial court in Constantinople. After her husband died, rather than marry a relative of the emperor as her second husband, as her relatives demanded, she devoted herself to Bishop John Chrysostom (G. Clark 53-54). She donated much of her wealth to Chrysostom and built a convent adjacent to his Episcopal palace, which housed 250 women. Palladius documents that “. . . [s]he engaged in no mean combats for truth's sake, instructed many women, addressed priests reverently, and honored bishops; she was accounted worthy to be confessor for truth's sake” (Palladius). In 391, the bishop of Constantinople ordained her deaconess (Brown *The Body* 265). Her position and wealth empowered her to good works, like teaching, and in leadership of others where rhetorical training or activity were necessary. See Palladius' *The Laustic History* (Palladius). For discussions about Olympia, see Brown (*The Body* 259-284, 366-386), G. Clark (53-54), and Holum (71-72, 143-144).

Pulcheria (Christian, Constantinople, 399-453 ACE)

Pulcheria was the daughter of the emperor Arcadius and the older sister of Emperor Theodosius II. She was educated in Greek, in Latin, and probably in rhetoric alongside her

brother (Holum 81). Arcadius died in 408, elevating Theodosius II to the throne at the age of seven. In 412 Pulcheria took charge of the royal household, directing even her brother's education, and at this point, “. . . she became known in society at large as the emperor's [Theodosius II's] ‘guardian;’” she also became his regent (Holum 91). In 413, she and her sisters, Flaccilla and Marina, took vows of virginity, in part to avoid marriage. Holum, following Sozomen, reports that Pulcheria's motive was probably “. . . to avoid bringing another male into the palace and to remove any opportunity for the plots of ambitious men” (Holum 93). On July 4, 414, Theodosius bestowed the honorific title of *Augusta* on her, probably in recognition of her power and service to the empire. Although a politician rather than a teacher, I include her here because of her engagement with rhetoric in three areas. First, because of her documented habit of challenging her brother using argument, second, as his regent required to manage affairs of state, and third, as the leader and teacher of an ascetic Christian community at Hebdomon palace (Holum 196). See Holum's book for a lengthy discussion about Pulcheria that considers textual and archeological sources (79-112, 130-147).

Eudocia/Athenais (Converted Christian, Athens and Constantinople, 401-460 ACE)

Named Athenias when she was born, Eudocia may have been born in Athens. Her father, probably the rhetorician Leontius, however, may have moved to Athens after his daughter's birth, so her ethnicity is uncertain. Holum claims that her birth name, Athenias, meant to signify Leontius' dedication to Greek culture rather than her place of birth (117). Leontius taught Eudocia Greek and Latin literature, philosophy, rhetoric and logic, astronomy, and geometry. Much of her work has erroneously been credited to her father (Plant 198).

The Chronicle of Malalas relates the story that Eudocia moved in with her aunt, who lived in Constantinople, after her father died and left her out of his will. Her brothers inherited

everything and would not amend Leontius' will to care for her. Once in Constantinople, Eudocia and her aunt sought out the emperor Theodosius II's sister, Pulcheria, to mediate the dispute. Pulcheria was allegedly so impressed with Eudocia that she suggested her brother marry her, which he did on June 7, 421, after she converted to Christianity. According to Holum, it is likely that Malalas' story follows the tradition of folk tales rather than historical events; he argues instead that pagans devoted to Hellenic culture probably arranged for her marriage to Theodosius II because they wanted her to foster Hellenism in the empire (121).

Eudocia is “. . . one of the best attested woman writers from antiquity,” probably because of her synthesis of classical and Christian styles and themes, which insured its safekeeping (Plant 3).⁵³ Her poetry includes centos and she wrote an epic about Constantianus' war against Magnentius (Plant 3). Clark claims

she could produce elegant verse [. . .] When she delivered an address to the people of Antioch, she composed praises of their city in hexameters; and she was capable of amending ‘Homerocentones,’ rearrangements of Homer, in line with properly Homeric forms. This was not just a demonstration of technical skill: she was using her scholarship [. . .] to integrate Christian and classical culture. She also wrote paraphrases of books of the Bible and hexameters on the deaths of martyrs. (G. Clark 137)

More of her work is extant than any other woman's from antiquity. Plant credits her synthesized themes for ensuring “. . . that her work would be popular, widely read, and preserved in many different manuscripts” (Plant 3).

Plant, Clark, and Holum highlight Eudocia's rhetorical skill. Plant writes that the encomium she wrote in praise of Antioch and delivered in 438/9 on her way from

⁵³ Her synthesis of pagan and Christian styles echoes those of St. Augustine.

Constantinople to the Holy Lands earned her “. . . great acclaim” (Plant 198). While Plant and Ménage claim that her encomium was delivered to the public, Holum argues she delivered it to the senate while sitting on a throne encrusted with jewels (187). In either case, Eudocia used her rhetorical training to speak to a public assemblage. Eudocia reportedly closed her speech with, “I am pleased and happy that I have been born of your blood,” which Ménage interprets as a reference to the Greek founding of Antioch, as many scholars do (14). However, the reference may have been more literal and she may have meant that she was born in Antioch, and like the Antiochenes, was devoted to Hellenic culture (Holum 118). The people were so pleased with her encomium they reportedly erected two statues of her, one of gold placed in the senate and one of bronze placed in the sanctuary of the Muses (Holum 187). Holum claims that Eudocia used her rhetorical skill to persuade her husband Theodosius on public matters and that he listened to her with great care (121). On Jan 2, 423, Theodosius II declared Eudocia *Augusta*, an honorific title with official, albeit limited, public power, indicating that he took her advice seriously (Holum 123).

Some historians credit Eudocia with the establishment of the University of Constantinople. However, Holum claims although she “. . . took an interest in stabilizing academic life in the dynastic city and in honoring successful teachers,” she did not establish it (126). In a political move for power, her enemies charged Eudocia with adultery in 443; Theodosius II believed the charges, and she left for Jerusalem never to return to Constantinople (Holum 194). Her educational and writing efforts continued in Jerusalem where she “. . . attended the lectures of Orion, professor of literature” and wrote until her death in 460 (Holum 220). See Socrates Scholasticus *The Ecclesiastical History* (in Ménage 16); Evagrius (in Ménage 16); Nicephorus (in Ménage 17); *The Chronicle of Malalas* (in Holum 114). For translations of

fragments of Eudocia's poems, "The Martyrdom of St. Cyprian," "Homeric Cento," and "The Baths," see Plant (198-209). For discussion about her life and work, see Brown (*The Body* 48-79, 112-130), G. Clark (124-171), and Holum (48-79, 112-130).

Sosipatra (Neoplatonist, Pergamum, 4th century ACE)

Eunapis' *Lives of The Sophists* documents the life of another teacher, Sosipatra, who according to Pack, was born in the early part of the fourth century and was of noble birth (198). According to Lefkowitz's and Fant's translation of Eunapis, Sosipatra was an exceptional child. She was educated as a result of a chance encounter with some wise men who, so impressed with the child, asked for and received her father's permission to educate her. Eunapis continues to explain that her exceptional intellect continued after her youth,

[w]hen she had reached maturity, although she had no other teachers, she had the works of the poets and philosophers on her lips, and she could discourse with ease about matters which it was possible to know with difficulty and dimly after long labour and struggling. (Eunapis qtd. in Lefkowitz and Fant 334)

She became the wife of Eustathius a philosopher who was the governor of Cappadocia and whom she made seem simple, so great were her philosophical and rhetorical skills (Ménage 12; Lefkowitz and Fant 333). Like Hypatia after her, Sosipatra ". . . became a full-fledged Neoplatonist" (Pack 203). According to G. Clark,

Sosipatra did actually teach philosophy. As a widow she returned to [her home in] Pergamum, where her friend the philosopher Aedesius educated her sons, and she was his rival in philosophy: she 'set up her chair' in her own house, and students would come to her after they had heard Aededius' lecture. We find her delivering an inspired discourse on the soul, in a state of exaltation: but she has first

demolished various arguments, so it is clear she is not merely possessed, the ignorant vehicle of some greater force. (G. Clark 133)

Eunapis' account credits Sosipatra for teaching philosophy and, since she was able to "demolish various arguments" it is clear that she had some training in rhetoric as well.

Sosipatra had visions and could prophecy the future, which suggests that her Neoplatonism was Iamblichean. Sosipatra taught her sons, and her lectures were well attended because she inspired students (Pack 204; Lefkowitz and Fant 334). Her son, Antonius (c. 320-390) moved to the city of Canopus, twelve miles east of Alexandria sometime between 363/5. Cameron and Long claim Antonius taught Hypatia Neoplatonism (50-51). However, Antonius was, like his mother, committed to the Iamblichean version of Neoplatonism and a teaching relationship with Hypatia seems unlikely.

Sosipatra and scholarship of her illustrates another claim against women's participation in intellectual activities. In his translation of Eunapis and analysis of Sosipatra's life, Pack argues that Sosipatra was probably not an actual philosopher, rhetorician, or dialectician. Instead, he concludes that Sosipatra's

. . . talent, then, was professionally valuable for its heroine. It may have developed as a family legend, beginning with hints let fall by the lady herself, either privately or in her well-attended lectures at Pergamum, and elaborated by exemplary Antoninus or conceivably even by certain other members of the family who are said to have made a cult of Sosipatra and Eustathius even though their own pretensions to philosophy[were] entirely fraudulent. (Eunapis qtd. in Pack 204)

Pack claims that Sosipatra's philosophical and rhetorical skill were mere fantasy, as many other historians have claimed about other women. See Eunapis' *Lives of the Sophists* (in Lefkowitz and Fant 333-334; Pack 204). For discussions about Sosipatra's life see G. Clark (130-134), Ménage (12), and Pack (198-204).

Asclepigeneia/Asklepigenia (Neoplatonist, Athens, c. 400-500 ACE)

Asclepigeneia was the daughter of Plutarch of Athens who became a teacher of Neoplatonism; her most famous student was the influential Neoplatonist Proclus. Waithe claims Asclepigeneia taught Proclus theurgical aspects of Aristotelian and Platonism (*History* 203). Asclepigeneia either became the director of the school of Neoplatonism in Athens when her father died⁵⁴ in 430 ACE or the co-director of the school with her brother Hierius and their colleague Syrianus (Vivante *Daughters* 172-173; Waithe *History* 201).

The Neoplatonism she taught and practiced in Athens

. . . differed greatly from the scientific school of Hypatia at Alexandria. [Her father's] philosophy was syncretic, it attempted to unify the principles of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies with seemingly opposing principles of pagan theurgy and magic. Aesclepigenia was part of this new syncretism. (Waithe *History* 201)

Athanassiadi, who charts the succession of the Neoplatonists, argues that familial terms were commonly used among Neoplatonists even when biological connections did not exist. She argues that Asclepigeneia was, therefore, not Plutarch's daughter, but his heir, a position she probably earned as a result of her academic excellence. Teachers often left their schools to their best student. In addition, Athanassiadi's chart names a second Asclepigeneia, who was related to Proclus-perhaps his sister. Both may have been related to Aedesia. For a translation of pertinent

⁵⁴ Kennedy asserts the person who replaced Plutarch of Alexandria as head of the school of Neoplatonism was Syrianus in 431 without mention of Asclepigeneia (Kennedy 220).

passages of Marinus' *Life of Proclus* see Elder & Bryant (257) and Waithe (*History* 203). For a discussion of Asclepigeneia, see Vivante (*Daughters* 172-173), Waithe (*History* 201-203).

Aedesia (Neoplatonist, Alexandria, fifth century ACE)

Aedesia married the Neoplatonist Hermeias (Athanaasiadi 6). She may have been the sister or niece of Syrianus and was also related to Proclus and the younger Asclepigeneia. The *Suda Lexicon* documents that “[b]oth [her sons] studied philosophy under Proclus, with their mother acting as pedagogue when they came to him” demonstrating her knowledge of philosophy and ability to teach it (Whitehead). Damascius (b. 460 ACE), in his *Life of Isidore*, states that after her husband’s death, Aedesia ensured the chair of Neoplatonic philosophy in Alexandria for her sons (Damascius qtd. in Athanaasiadi 5). Damascius also claims he recited a laudation in verse at Aedesia’s funeral when he was very young. It is clear that Aedesia was familiar with Neoplatonism, taught her sons, and earned the respect of her community. See Athanaasiadi’s discussion about Damascius *Life of Isidore* and “Aedesia” in *The Suda Lexicon* (Whitehead).

Greek women: An older woman’s tradition

Although feminist scholars identify Greek intellectual activity as one of the foundations for the western tradition of misogyny, the assumption that women never participated in Greek intellectual activity has come under fire in recent years. Of note in the field of Rhetoric and Composition is the work of Cheryl Glenn, Jan Swearingen, and Susan Jarratt and Rory Ong recovering Aspasia and Diotima as teachers and philosophers. The question that arises as a result of Glenn’s and Swearingen’s work is, were there other women in Greece who were part of the Greek intellectual tradition? Is it possible that women participated more frequently than we believe? Waithe, Wider, and Vivante argue there is a women’s intellectual tradition that existed in Greece that has been excluded from our intellectual history. While the interpretations of all

three authors vary, they discuss a similar group of women, and generally agree, “. . . there is an unbroken history of women philosophers from ancient times to present day” (Waithe “On Not” 133). While I find the linearity of Waithe’s assertion problematic, she is correct in her assertion that women were important members of their intellectual communities more frequently than scholars have acknowledged.

The earliest group feminist scholars have identified is the Pythagoreans dating to as early as the sixth century BCE. Pythagorean doctrine and practice indicate the belief that men and women had the same intellectual and spiritual capacity. Pythagoras was interested in spreading his doctrine on virtue, the characteristic of which he reportedly believed men and women equally capable. However, Pythagoras was strict about with whom he shared his philosophy: “[a]ddmittance to the community [of Pythagoreans] was after strict examination and under the condition of years of silence. The requirements for initiation into Pythagorean philosophy . . . were common to both men and women without exception” (Lambropoulou 122). Evidence of their strict codes of silence with outsiders is documented by the story of Timycha (4 BCE) in Iamblichus’ *Life of Pythagoras*, in St. Ambrose’s *De virginibus*, and Tertullian’s *Sermon, to the Martyrs* (in *Ménage* 54-56). In it, Timycha and her husband, Myllias, are arrested and questioned by corrupt government officials about Pythagoreansism. The couple is separated and the pregnant Timycha threatened with torture if she does not divulge the secrets of her sect. Rather than betray her order, Timycha bites off her own tongue and spits it out at the official.

Pythagorean doctrine upheld that the way to human happiness was through strict codes of dress, diet, exercise, and behavior for the maintenance of harmony and union with god, standards maintained for men and women (Lambropoulou 133). While most people living in Classical Greece held that adultery committed by a man was acceptable, for example, this did not hold in

the Pythagorean community, rather “. . . they regarded the husband’s unfaithfulness to the wife as equally unjust . . .” (Lambropoulou 126). Relying on the fourth or fifth century text, *The Speeches of Pythagoras*, Pomeroy notes that Pythagoreans (and later Neopythagoreans) lived in close-knit or endogamous communities at least in part due to their strict codes of behavior applicable to women and men (Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic* 65).

Ménage claims that there were so many famous Pythagorean women that Philochorus wrote a book entitled *Collection of Heroic Women*, now lost (47). The Pythagoreans were famous for their inclusion of women into their intellectual communities and schools, although Wider and Allen claim that Pythagorean schools were segregated by sex (Wider 26; Allen 211). However, it is likely that men and women taught a variety of mixed and sex segregated student groups. The acceptance of women as equal partners began with Pythagoras whose wife, Theano, taught by his side, as did their daughters, Myia, Damo, and Arignote.⁵⁵ While I have named many Pythagorean and Neopythagorean women below, there is little information about some of these women, so I will list their names here. Ménage names several, among them are Ocello (Eccelo) from Lucania, mentioned by Syrianus in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Physic* as the author of a book about the nature of the universe (58). Ménage also mentions the philosopher Rhodope and Ptolemais, the latter of whom was from Cyrene and wrote musical theory (62).

There are many Pythagorean and Neopythagorean texts extant and most of them have been translated into English. However, there has been a great deal of debate about the authenticity of the early Pythagorean women’s texts, known as the Neopythagorean pseudepigrapha. Some scholars claim that the texts are forgeries,⁵⁶ others that they were written pseudonymously. Claims that the texts were not written by women is part of the long tradition of

⁵⁵ See arguments by Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic*, Waithe *History*, and Wider)

⁵⁶ See Thesleff who suggests that the claim is based on prejudice of some ancient writers that was carried through scholarship until the early twentieth century.

male-centered scholarship as I have argued thus far, including in chapter one in which I detail the problems of misapplication of misogynist scholarship. The debate over the Neopythagorean pseudepigrapha concerns issues of dialect (Ionic for Perictione I, Doric for the texts of Aesara, Phintys, and Perictione II) and claims that the content of the Pythagorean texts reflect Neo-Pythagorean rather than Pythagorean thought (Wider 37). Complicating clear dating is the custom of naming children after famous Pythagoreans, which further complicates clear identification of authorship. In extant letters, in particular, there seems to be a mimicry of earlier texts that suggests a later date rather than original thought. Waithe offers three possible explanations for the inconsistencies: that the texts were written by the women who are cited as authors; that they were written by the later Neopythagoreans in the 1st and 2nd centuries ACE; or that the works were actually pseudonymously written for inclusion in textbooks. Although Waithe does not name the audience for the textbooks, given the social practices in Pythagorean and Neopythagorean communities, it is likely they were written for male and female students meant for use in Neopythagorean schools. After Waithe completes her analysis of the arguments (most notably that of the philologist Holger Thesleff), she concludes that the most reasonable explanation is that the women named are, indeed, the authors. Her analysis concludes that works of Perictione I date from the sixth century BCE, Perictione II and Phintys to the fourth century BCE and Aesara to the third BCE. Pomeroy explains the differences in dialect, particularly in regard to letters authored by Melissa and Theano II, by explaining that the texts had been paraphrased by someone other than the author in the papyrus (Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic* 64). Pomeroy's claim is substantiated by Thesleff who blames copyist error. Pomeroy concludes that "... there is no reason to believe the education of women would have not rendered them adequate to the task of writing the [Neopythagorean] pseudepigrapha" (Pomeroy *Women in*

Hellenistic Egypt 67). Expert analysis by Thesleff, Waithe, and Wider validating the authenticity of female authorship notes additional evidence of sexist bias in scholarship, particularly of scholarship completed before 1965.

Pythagoras' school in Croton was “. . . immortalized because it received both male and female pupils,” for example (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 30). Textual evidence provides indications about the content studied in the school of Pythagoras. Men and women studied mathematics, theology, and morality together (Vivante *Daughters* 157). After reading the Pythagorean pseudepigrapha, Lambropoulou adds that the women authors studied Xenophon and Aristotle because of the similarities between texts (Lambropoulou 130).

The idea of a female ruler was not out of the question (Lambropoulou 125). Discussion of women rulers is included in Perictione I's work, hence, Pythagoreans either had familiarity with Plato's work, or, as Waithe and others suggest, Perictione I influenced her son's ideal model (*History* 71). The texts themselves demonstrate that Pythagorean women “. . . participated on equal terms with men” (Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic* 65).

Although they applied philosophy to the domestic rather than the public sphere, women “. . . understood and accepted their measure of domestic power and acted on their responsibility for creating the conditions under which harmony, order, law, and justice could exist in the state and in the home” (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 1, 32). Women were the foundation of the *oikos*, however, gendered lines between public and private were not clearly delineated as they are today. While Pythagoreans and later Neopythagoreans believed the soul had no gender, they did believe men and women had their own, gender-specific responsibilities. Vivante and Wider argue that while work of female Pythagoreans was often concerned with the domestic sphere and

women's work, their work is not less philosophical. Following Meunier's 1932 work, Wider reveals

the Pythagoreans saw the family as well as the city as a microcosm of the universe and the order and harmony of the universe was to be reflected in the city and family. Women were given an important place in Pythagorean thought and society because they were an important part of the family and were a necessary component in achieving order and harmony within it. (Wider 27-28)

Vivante argues that the work of female Pythagoreans focuses on two interrelated areas, abstract theoretical questions as well as appropriate behavior steeped in ethics. According to Vivante “. . . the first group of writings articulates the philosophical principals that underlie the functioning both of the cosmos and of the human society reflect the cosmological. The second group illustrates how women's ideal ethical conduct is a key factor in maintaining the theoretical principals of order within the human realm and ultimately in the universal order” (*Daughters* 159). What is clear from the scholarship about these women is that they wrote about philosophy and, as often, wrote about the proper application of philosophy in their spheres of influence. In addition, the texts indicate that they were in contact with other women, often in the role of teacher or mentor.

Theano I (Pythagorean, Croton, 6th -5th BCE)

According to ancient sources, Theano I, daughter of Brontinus of Croton, was Pythagoras' (c. 570-509 BCE) wife (Ménage 48). Theano wrote *On Piety* (in Plant 70; Waithe *History* 12-13), *Pythagorean Apophthegms* (in Allen 145; Plant 70; Waithe *History* 12; Wider 31), *Philosophical Commentaries*, sometimes collected as *Female Advice* or *Letters* (Plant 70; Wider 32-33). Ghougassian titles Theano's letter to Nicostrate “The Indulgent Woman” (18-21). Theano also wrote *On Virtue* and *On Pythagoras*, lost texts.

On Piety is concerned with the application of harmony (law and justice) to the domestic sphere and “. . . alludes to the metaphysical concepts of imitation and participation,” all of which applied to women as well as men (Waithe *History* 12). Theano I also argues that the Pythagoreans “. . . believed everything has been formed conforming to Number since in Number resides the essential order,” a primary tenet of Pythagorean philosophy (Wider 31).

Plant claims that the *Pythagorean Apophthegms* consists of sayings attributed to, but not written by her. The text comments on Pythagorean philosophy and its application to the domestic sphere and includes discussion of “. . . three key concerns of a wife: the way she should bring up her children, how she should treat the servants, and how she should behave virtuously toward her husband” (Plant 69). *On Virtue* and *On Pythagoras* consist of moral dictums (Wider 32). These texts are consistent with Pythagorean philosophy that held that the Greek *polis* was based on the family unit; *harmonia* and virtue were generally thought to move from the *oikos* to the *polis*. Valuing *harmonia* in the home reflects the value of women understanding philosophy for the Pythagorean community.⁵⁷

While Plant acknowledges the existence of Theano I’s texts, following Thesleff, he also discredits them as her work. Instead, he claims that there were too many women named Theano (meaning ‘of God’), a common name in the ancient world, to be sure that Theano I, the wife of Pythagoras, wrote the extant texts. Based on the changes in language conventions, Plant claims some of the extant texts seem to be from as late as the 3rd century BCE. Following Thesleff’s dating of the text, Plant explains that Theano I was an attractive pseudonym for authors because she was perhaps an idealized example of the application of Pythagoreanism in a woman’s life

⁵⁷ There are striking similarities between Pythagorean and Neopythagorean texts and the Victorian notion of the “angel in the house,” identifying an important theoretical ancestor for feminist theory. Ghougassian observes similar thematic connections.

(Plant 68). If Plant's hypothesis is accurate, works credited to her may have carried more weight, in particular, for a predominantly female audience.

Wider claims Theano I may have headed the Pythagorean School, perhaps with her sons, after Pythagoras' death. Most sources indicate that Theano I and Pythagoras had five children, three of whom were daughters, Arignote, Damo, and Myia; all teachers and writers in Pythagoras' school who lived in the latter part of the sixth century BCE and into the first half of the fifth (Ménage 48). For context and information about Theano's life and analysis of her works see Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 29-33), Waithe (*History* 12-15), Wider (26-40), and Vivante (*Daughters* 158-159).

Arignote (Pythagorean, Croton, 6th -5th BCE)

Arignote was a writer who also edited texts and co-wrote with her mother (Vivante *Daughters* 159; Wider 29). She was the author of *Rites of Dionysos* and either wrote or edited a book on the mysteries of Demeter entitled *The Sacred Discourse* (in Waithe *History* 12 and Wider 29).

Damo (Pythagorean Croton, 6th -5th BCE)

None of Damo's works are extant. Meunier states however, that she "...wrote a commentary on Homer" (Meunier qtd. in Wider 29). Reading Diogenes Laertius, Wider claims Pythagoras left his commentaries to his daughter for safekeeping in order to guide Pythagorean practice after his death. Pythagoras' actions suggest Damo "...was most likely an active and important member of that philosophic school" (Wider 29).

Myia (Pythagorean Croton, 6th -5th BCE)

Myia was known to epitomize Pythagorean virtue (Wider 29). One letter written by Myia is extant. For translated fragments of Myia's letter to Phyllis see Allen (152-153), Plant (79-80), and Waithe (*History* 15-16).

Themistoclea/Themkistoclea (pagan Delphi, 6th or 5th century BCE)

Themistoclea was a Greek priestess at Delphi, perhaps the Oracle, credited with teaching Pythagoras concepts that led to his philosophy (Ménage 47). Some scholars claim she was the sister of Pythagoras. Ménage argues that it would have been more credible to claim inspiration from the Delphic Oracle than from a sister, it is likely that she was both. See Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* (in Ménage 47) and *Suda Lexicon* (in Ménage 47). Also see Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 31), Waithe (*History* 11), and Wider (*History* 27).

Perictione I (Pythagorean, Athens, circa 6th century BCE)

Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 32), Ménage (61), Pomeroy (*Goddesses* 134, *Women in Hellenistic* 68-70), Thesleff (111), and Waithe (*History* 32) claim that Perictione I was a Pythagorean philosopher who may have been Plato's (428-427 BCE) mother. Waithe notes similarities between Plato's *Republic* and Perictione's *On the Harmony of Women*, and concludes that either Perictione I was influenced by Plato, or that Perictione I was Plato's teacher (Waithe *History* 71). Some scholars have claimed that the work by Perictione is a forgery because of the shifts in dialect. However, Thesleff argues the evidence indicates that were two women who wrote philosophy named Perictione, now referred to as Perictione I and II. Perictione I (6th century) wrote *On the Harmony of Women* Perictione II (4th or 3rd century) is credited with authorship of *On Wisdom*.

One of the basic tenets of Pythagorean philosophy was the idea of moderation in the service of *arete* and *harmonia*. Generally, Perictione I, like Theano I, employs these concepts in relation to a traditional woman's role, as an attentive mother, obedient daughter, and wife. In her

approach she demonstrates that there are “. . . advantages to a woman being a philosopher” and that furthermore, “. . .there is a special need for women to be philosophers” when their lives are so constrained (Waithe *History* 55). For translations of *On the Harmony of Women* by Perictione I see Allen (143-145), Elder & Bryant (179), Ghougassian (22-25), and Guthrie (239-242). Lambropoulou includes the Greek text (124-126). See Ménage (61), Plant (76-78), and Pomeroy who entitles the work “advice to the young ladies” (*Goddesses* 134, *Women in Hellenistic* 68-70, “Women in Roman Egypt 134-136). See Vivante (*Daughters* 161, 163), Waithe (*History* 32-39), and Wider (35-36) for discussion and analysis of texts.

Aspasia of Miletus (Sophist, Athens circa 470-410 BCE)

Ménage claims Aspasia was the daughter of Milesian Axiochus (Ménage 6). We do not know when she went to Athens or who educated her. However, if the pattern of women’s education is accurate, it is likely that Aspasia was related to a philosopher or rhetorician, perhaps she was even educated by Axiochus himself. Unfortunately, nothing is known about him or the conditions under which Aspasia moved to Athens. Glenn reports that once she was in Athens it was commonly known Aspasia attended the lectures of Anaxagoras (Courtney qtd. in Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 39).

In Athens, she became the mistress of the statesman Pericles. Even after divorcing his wife, Pericles could not marry Aspasia because she was a foreigner. However, it is clear that he was both very fond of her and that he trusted her advice. They were affectionate with one another in public and Wider claims their love story “. . . is unique . . . because it appears to have been based on a shared intellectual as well as sexual life . . .” (41).

Aspasia held a salon that was attended by intellectuals, artist, and politicians (Wider 41). In *Menexenus*, Plato’s Socrates claims Aspasia was his teacher of rhetoric. Socrates continues to explain that Aspasia also taught the art of rhetoric to Pericles and wrote his famous *Funeral*

Oration with him. Socrates claims he visited Aspasia with his disciples and their wives “. . . to hear [Aspasia’s] discourse . . . as a teacher of rhetoric” (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 40; Wider 42). While traditional scholars read Aspasia as a fictional character in Plato rather than a historical person, Glenn notes that every historical account of Aspasia details her successful rhetorical accomplishments and her participation in public life (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 38). Waithe claims that Aspasia was an integral leader in Pericles’ circle in Athens and continues to argue that Aspasia was essential to the development of the Sophistic movement, calling her the “. . . handmaid. . .” of Sophism (Bloedow qtd. in Waithe *History* 78).

Aspasia was also a threat to the established order both politically and intellectually. Like Socrates, she was charged with impiety. Although acquitted, Waithe interprets the charges as demonstrative of the threat others perceived her to be (*History* 80). Because of her tendency to attract younger women as well as men to her salon “. . . she was accused of procuring . . . women as prostitutes” probably as a way to curb her influence (Wider 41). Depictions of Aspasia demonstrate the tendency of historians to focus on “. . . the sexuality of women thought to be intellectually formidable” (Henry 66). Unfortunately, her “. . . contributions have been directed through a powerful gendered lens to both refract toward and reflect Socrates and Pericles” rather than as demonstration of her own abilities (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 39).

The sexism and sexualization of historical women makes it difficult to understand, with any accuracy, the myriad of ways women must have participated in public and intellectual life. As Wider observes, “. . . it is this kind of loose and sexist scholarship which makes it difficult to separate the facts of these women’s lives from the fancy of scholars” (Wider 42). See Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 36-44), Madeline Henry’s *Prisoner of History*, Aristophanes *The Acharnians* and Plutarch’s *Life of Pericles* (in *Ménage* 6-8), Plato’s *Menexenus*, Waithe (*History* 75-83),

Wider (42), Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and *Oeconomicus* (in Lefkowitz and Fant 170), and Plutarch's *Life of Pericles* (in Lefkowitz and Fant 178-179).

Diotima of Mantinea (Priestess, Mantinea and Athens circa 5th century BCE)

The priestess Diotima appears in Plato's *Symposium* as a teacher of Socrates, and as with treatment of Aspasia, many scholars claim she was a fictional character. Waithe notes, however, the first time she appears as fictitious does not occur until the fifteenth century in the work of Marsilio Ficino (Waithe "On Not" 136). Diotima demonstrates ". . . the public presence of women as teachers, religious celebrants, and orators in classical antiquity" (Swearingen qtd. in Lunsford 25). Swearingen continues to explain the continued claim of historical women as fictional ". . . serves to perpetuate the misogynist belief system that, particularly in Greek antiquity, led to the suppression of women's public presence and of records that represented it as anything but "merely literary" or as jokes" (Swearingen qtd. in Lunsford 25). Swearingen then, claims that classifying a historical woman as fictional functions to maintain misogyny, and by extension, patriarchy.

Diotima's philosophy on love was a clear influence on Socrates and Plato. Her discussion in *The Symposium* concerns the beautiful and love. As Waithe observes, Diotima's immortality is ". . . metaphorical, not metaphysical" because it is through love that humans can generate offspring of the soul, rendering them immortal (Waithe *History* 89, 87). See Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 44-49), Lucian's *Images* (in *Ménage* 9), Plato's *Symposium*, Swearingen in Lunsford (25-48), and Waithe (*History* 83-117, "On Not" 136).

Arete of Cyrene (Socratic, Cyrene, 5-4 BCE)

Arete taught philosophy to her son, and his name, Metrodidaktos, means mother-taught (Wider 49). Arete was Aristippus' successor as head of the Cyreniac School, known for its adherence to Socratic ideals and approaches Wider (49). Arete

. . . is said to have publicly taught natural and moral philosophy in the schools and academies of Attica for thirty-five years, to have written forty books, and to have counted among her pupils one hundred and ten philosophers. She was so highly esteemed by her countrymen that they inscribed on her tomb an epitaph which declared that she was the splendor of Greece and possessed the beauty of Helen, the virtue of Thirma, the pen of Aristippus, the soul of Socrates and the tongue of Homer. (Waithe *History* 198)

Ménage claims that she founded the school (35).

Arete was probably a contemporary of Plato. Her father, Aristippus “. . . was a student and friend of Socrates” present at Socrates’ death (Waithe *History* 198). Wider notes that Aristippus’ Socratic school emphasized knowledge of values over speculative knowledge; although logic and physics were taught there, they did not have any value without knowledge of ethics (49). See *Stromata* by Clement of Alexandria (Ménage 35, Waithe *History* 198), Boccaccio’s *De Laudibus Mulierum* (in Waithe *History* 198), *On the Pythagorean Life* by Iamblichus (in G. Clark 132).

Perictione II (Neopythagorean, Greece or Italy, circa 4th-3rd BCE)

On Wisdom, credited to Perictione II, is a theoretical text in consideration of wisdom as the principle that gives harmony to what exists. Perictione II, like Aesara, Theano II, Perictione I, and Phintys argues that women should be educated as philosophers. According to Waithe, the similarities between these women’s works demonstrate that “. . . a woman who understands and can appreciate the ways in which her actions satisfy the principle of [Pythagorean *harmonia*] is better able to act virtuously” (55). The consistency of concern over a woman’s education suggests that it was a Pythagorean and Neopythagorean value intended for wide application. See

Photius *Bibliotheca* (in Ménage 61). Translations of *On Wisdom* are printed in Allen (151), Ménage (61), Plant (76-78), Vivante (*Daughters* 160), and Waithe (*History* 55-57).

Aesara/Asara/Aisara of Lucania (Neopythagorean Lucania, 3rd-4th century BCE)

According to Waithe, Aesara was a Neopythagorean who lived in Italy who wrote *Book on Human Nature* (19). Waithe's reading of *Book On Human Nature* reveals that Aesara believed analysis of one's soul is essential to an understanding of ". . . law and justice at the individual, familial, and social levels," Aesara, then, was an advocate of women learning philosophy (Waithe *History* 19). In content, Plant asserts, "Aesara's treatise is neither directed to nor exclusively about women" (Plant 81). Following Thesleff, Plant believes that Aesara of Lucania, a man, is the one who wrote the text; Waithe identifies her as part of a later Neopythagorean movement. Fragments of Aesara's *Book on Human Nature* are printed in Plant (81-82) and Waithe (*History* 20-21). For details about Aesara see Allen (151-152), Vivante (*Daughters* 159-160), and Waithe (*History* 19-26).

There is only anecdotal information about the daughters of Diodorus Cronus. Cronus (315-284 BCE), originally from Iasus in Caria, lived in Athens and Alexandria during his lifetime. He was part of the Megarian school, which included Euclid, Eubulides, Apollonius Cronus, Diodorus Cronus and Philo (Wider 51). In Alexandria, he was part of Ptolemy Soter's (367-283) court. All five of his daughters, Menexene, Argeia, Theognis, Artemisia, and Pantacleia became dialecticians/logicians and are featured in Philo's *Menexenus* (Wider 51-52). The differences between dialectic, logical argument, and rhetoric have been much debated as there are as many similarities between them as there are differences. After all, dialecticians and logicians must be persuasive in order for their arguments to have merit; hence, although the daughters of Diodorus may not have been trained in rhetoric as a discipline, they certainly depended upon it. More research is needed in this area to discover other women who may have

been similarly trained and who would have employed rhetoric to communicate their ideas effectively.

Theano II (Neopythagorean, Italy, 4th-3rd century BCE)

There is very little information about Theano II. After considering the dialect and the philosophy included in Theano II's letters, Thesleff concludes she was part of the Neopythagorean community in Italy (97). Several of her extant letters deal with the importance of moderation while raising children, dealing with a husband's infidelity, and in one's treatment of slaves. The letters demonstrate the importance of women in disseminating Neopythagorean philosophy and provide insight about the dependence of the Pythagorean and later Neopythagorean communities on women as leaders of their communities and mentors of young women. Letters can be found in Allen (153-159), Plant (68-75),⁵⁸ Vivante (*Daughters* 164), and Waithe (*History* 41-55).

Hipparchia, (Cynic, Thrace, 3rd BCE)

Hipparchia was the wife of the Cynic philosopher, Crates (Ménage 39; Waithe *History* 207). Hipparchia threatened to commit suicide if her parents did not allow her to marry Crates. Because he respected her parents, Crates also tried to persuade her not to marry him. Defeated by Hipparchia's rhetorical skill, Crates agreed to the marriage on the condition that she follow him in his studies and habits; she agreed (Waithe *History* 207). During an incident in which Theodorus criticized Hipparchia for not being domestic enough, Laertius claims that Hipparchia attacked Theodorus with a piece of "sophistry" (qtd, in Waithe *History* 208). Wider includes a translation of the incident (Diogenes Laertius qtd. in Wider 49-50). Both incidents indicate Hipparchia's training, knowledge, and effective use of rhetoric. Hipparchia is also credited with authoring two texts, *Philosophical Hypotheses* and *Questions to Theodorus*, fragments of which

⁵⁸ Plant does not distinguish between Theano I and II.

remain (*Suda Lexicon* qtd. in Ménage 39). Vivante states that women in addition to Hipparchia were welcomed in the Cynic school, although no other names are documented. Hipparchia's life and activities are documented in the *Greek Anthology* (in Ménage 369), Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* (in Ménage 39), Diogenes Laertius *The Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (in Ménage 39; Lefkowitz & Fant 167-168; Waithe *History* 208), and the *Suda Lexicon* (in Ménage 39). For discussion about Hipparchia, see Allen (130-131), Pomeroy (*Goddesses* 136-137), Vivante (*Daughters* 171), and Wider (50).

Phintys of Sparta (Neopythagorean, Italy, c. 4-2 BCE)

Phintys' father was the admiral Kallikratidas, who died at sea during the battle of Arginusae in 406.⁵⁹ Knowing the year of her father's death allows scholars to date her lifetime; she was probably part of a Neopythagorean community that lived in Italy, although she was born in Sparta (Plant 84). Waithe claims that Phintys lived in the fourth or third century and that she was an older contemporary of Plato (*History* 26). Phintys wrote *On the Moderation of Women* in which she argues, ". . . some virtues are common to both men and women, while some are unique to either gender," typical of Neopythagorean ideology of the time, which asserted the similar faculties of men and women (qtd. in Waithe *History* 28). Phintys did not think philosophy was a subject reserved for men; instead, she believed that both men and women should engage in it (Wider 36). Phintys is one of the ancient women who argue for the education of women, particularly in philosophy. For translation of Phintys' *On the Moderation of Women*, alternately titled *Temperance of Women* and sometimes *On Women's Prudence* see Stobaeus *Stromata* (in Ménage 61), Guthrie (263-265), and Lambropoulou, which includes the Greek text (128-131). Also see Meunier (in Allen 147-150), Plant (84-86), Vivante (*Daughters* 162), and Waithe (*History* 26-31).

⁵⁹ Phintys is the only woman without a documented biological relationship to a rhetorician or philosopher.

Histiaea/ Histiaia/Hestiaea (Unknown affiliation, Alexandria, c. 200 BCE)

Histiaea was a scholar of history, topography, and grammar. She wrote a treatise considering the location of the city of Troy by using the *Illiad*. See Pomeroy “Women in Roman Egypt” (311).

Pamphile (Peripetetic, Athens, c. 1 ACE)

Wider claims Pamphile was a disciple of Theophrastus who succeeded Aristotle to head the Lyceum (22). Plant reports that she wrote thirty-three books; eleven fragments from Pamphile’s *Historical Commentaries* were paraphrased in a variety of ancient sources including in those by Anulus Gellius and Photius (Plant 127; Ménage 9). Diogenes Laertius probably depended on Pamphile as a main source as well (Ménage 9). Plant claims she wrote “. . . a collection of apophthegms, lectures, debates, and discussions of poetry” (Plant127). Citing the *Suda Lexicon*, Lefkowitz and Fant report that she wrote “. . . historical memoirs . . . [including] an epitome of Ctesias’ history in three books, many epitomes of histories and other books, about controversies, sex, and many other things” (qtd. in Lefkowitz and Fant 168). What is interesting about Pamphile’s work is that she claims to weave together many genres in her histories in order to make the reading of history more pleasurable,⁶⁰ indicating an attention to audience and suggesting familiarity with rhetoric (Plant 127). Like other women I have discussed here, her work has been attributed to Socratides or Soterides, her father or husband, which Plant claims was a misreading of her prologue (Plant 127). For a translation of Pamphile’s *Historical Commentaries*, see Plant (127-129). Also see Photius *Bibliotheca* (Ménage 9), *Suda* “Pamphile” in Lefkowitz and Fant (168).

Cornelia Gracchi (Unknown affiliation, Rome, 175-143 ACE)

⁶⁰ As Cicero does in *Brutus* much later

Cornelia Gracchi was the mother of the Gracchi brothers; she is credited as their teacher. Cicero and Quintilian praise her rhetorical skill (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 66, 60). Some of her letters to her sons have been preserved in Cape (119), Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 66), Lefkowitz and Fant (21-22) and Plant (101-103).

Vibia Perpetua (Christian, Rome, 183-203 ACE)

Perpetua was a Roman woman martyred for her Christianity. Much of her autobiography detailing her experience in prison is extant. For translations of *The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas* see Lefkowitz and Fant (313-318), Plant (164-168).

In closing this section, I would like to add an observation from Vivante. Citing Perictione I's work, *On the Harmony of Women* and Perictione II's work, *On Wisdom*, Vivante asserts that,

. . . the emphasis the female philosophers placed upon women using their intellectual faculties shows that, in spite of the legal and political stress on women's lack of subjectivity and voice, women did not just mutely fulfill male social projections. Women thought about their position in society, and they were aware of differences in women's roles in different cultures. (*Daughters* 161)

The fact that women thought about their role means they could; they were educated and had enough time to write texts, teach, and work alongside men in their lives.

Women's Letters

In addition to writing philosophical tracts, many women wrote to one another. The content of these extant letters vary, however, they generally take the form of advice from older, wiser, more experienced philosopher-women to their younger contemporaries. Often the content relates to how women could better perform as virtuous wives and mothers in order to reach the Pythagorean ideal, *harmonia*. Hence, the philosophy of the Pythagoreans is applied to the daily

lives of women. Of the four extant letters from Theano II⁶¹ one is to Euboule that provides advice about how to raise children in moderation. A letter to Nikostrate discusses the obligation Nikostrate has to tolerate her husband's affair and to behave virtuously as his role model in order to restore *harmonia* to their home. A letter to Callisto discusses the ethical treatment of slaves. The last extant letter of Theano II is addressed to the philosopher Rhodope in which "Theano II explains that she has not sent Rhodope her copy of Plato's book, *Ideas on Parmenides*, because she wants to gain a better understanding first about another philosopher named Kleon" (Vivante *Daughters* 161). Women's letters considering the application of Pythagorean ideals to daily life present evidence that women were engaged with philosophy and each other in discussions about philosophy on a regular basis.

Melissa is the name of another Neopythagorean philosopher. The only text we have of hers is a treatise in the form of a letter to a woman named Cleareta, although Pomeroy claims she also wrote an untitled text about women's duties, now lost (*Goddesses* 134). Melissa's text discusses the proper virtue and moderation of the position of wife. Plant states that it was probably written pseudonymously by a ". . . man intent on providing an example of female behavior in a woman's voice," which seems unlikely given the content and in light of new scholarship (Plant 83). Although scholars cannot verify Melissa's authorship, it indicates women were thought to be capable of writing. If the letter were not authored by Melissa, it might suggest that women had more credibility when writing about certain subjects, in this case, of marriage, the subject of Melissa's letter to Cleareta.

⁶¹ Translations of the letters from Theano II to Eubule, Nicostrate, Eurydice, and Callisto can be found in Sister Prudence Allen's impressive study, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 B.C.-A.D. 1250*.

Extant is one letter to Myia, daughter of Pythagoras and Theano I and reprinted in Wider and Waithe.⁶² According to Waithe, Myia was married to an athlete named Milo who was from Crotona (*History* 15). Her letter contains advice to Phyllis about the best way to care for her infant. Plant believes the letter is from the later Neopythagorean period (3 BCE), but Waithe thinks this seems unlikely given the dialect. While Plant suggests it may have been written by a man, he concedes, “. . . while men did write on breastfeeding and childcare, the subject matter makes a female author likely; in any event, for the advice to be taken seriously as coming from a woman, it had to be believable that a woman could have written it” (Plant 78).

Waithe emphasizes Myia, Theano II, Perictione I, and Phintys in particular because these women saw themselves as responsible for teaching other women Pythagoreanism or Neopythagoreanism as it related to the domestic sphere, which supported the *polis* and public life. As men taught men philosophy, women did the same with women, and perhaps with men or boys in their communities. Moving a step further, Vivante indicates “. . . the tone of the words of Theano II’s comments reveal a coterie of intellectuals, male and female, who met regularly to discuss philosophical issues” (*Daughters* 161). It seems likely that at least in some communities, women were equal in their creation of intellectual, philosophical, and rhetorical discourses and activities.

I do not mean to suggest that all of these men and women knew of one another’s work. What I am saying is that the discussion about whether or not women had souls, and could or should lead and teach others was not a singular discourse by men about women, as much older scholarship about conditions for women in the ancient world argues. Theano I discussed immortality, the transmigration of souls and punishment and reward in afterlife. Aesara

⁶² For a translation of Myia’s letter to Phyllis see Waithe’s. *A History of Women Philosophers*, volume 1 and Wider, “Donning the Mantle.”

discussed a tripartite soul; Phintys discussed how the natures of men and women have their differences but always assumed both men and women had souls. Perictione I and II discussed the nature of the soul. Lastly, Aesara and Perictione II discussed the benefits of women trained as philosophers for themselves, their families, and by extension, to the *polis*. An overwhelming amount of evidence suggests that women did work with other women and with men to maintain and strengthen their communities.

The information demonstrates that women were not categorically excluded from discussions of subjects intellectual, and that, in fact, they contributed to the development, dissemination, and use of philosophy in the domestic sphere. Although we lack primary documentation and have often incorrectly identified the activities and importance of these women for the field of Rhetoric and Composition, it is likely that many unnamed women were equally involved in a variety of communities. If we ask who may have known women philosophers in the ancient world, we may discover new names, new communities, new pieces of women's stories to re-member and form the basis for further work and research.

In the next chapter, I argue that metahistory should be used to frame classes in the history of rhetoric. I also make suggestions for how teachers can use the materials I have included in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE: PEDAGOGY

Although the modern student is often struck by the existence of such an erudite ancient woman [Hypatia], this was not an uncommon phenomenon in late antiquity. Female children of intellectuals were often given quite thorough educations. (Watts *City and School* 188)

In this chapter, I argue for the inclusion of metahistory to frame classes in the history of rhetoric in order to open and disrupt our historical canon. Reframing rhetorical history will provide distinct benefits for students, and the professorate; it also offers an opportunity to instigate societal change that early Rhetoric and Composition scholars claimed would come about by reintegrating rhetorical approaches in undergraduate composition courses.

Reification of Rhetorical history

Octalogs I and II were influential CCCC sessions that set the tone for research and pedagogy in the late 1980s and 1990s. Octalog I called for multiple historical narratives that reexamine our knowledge and definition of rhetoric. Octalog II addressed material conditions of the scholar and the often limiting force of the academy including constraints of disciplinary conventions, lack of training, the rush to publish, and the seduction of creating master narratives, among other concerns. Octalog III took place at the 2010 CCCC in Louisville, Kentucky. The panelists of Octalog III included Lois Agnew (chair), Vicki Tolar Burton, Ralph Cintron, Jay Dolmage, Jessica Enoch, Ronald L. Jackson, LuMing Mao, Malea Powell, Arthur Walzer, and Victor Vitanza (respondent). These prominent scholars asked for deliberate engagement with theory that may open a way to higher ethical standards in our research methods, in our epistemic assumptions, and in our pedagogies to reclaim those missing from the tradition (Agnew et. al.). Furthermore, such rhetorical practices could complicate, inform, and transform the tradition of

rhetoric. What the Octalogs have in common, although the emphases differ, is their similar concern for the ossification of rhetorical history. In *Octalog I*, Sharon Crowley explains

I am afraid that the things I write may get reified. For instance, Professor Murphy has taught us that there are three major traditions in medieval rhetoric: the art of letter writing, the art of sermon making, the art of poetry making. It strikes me that it's very easy to turn that into an exam question: What are the three major traditions of medieval rhetoric? I'm sure Professor Murphy doesn't intend to have that happen to his work; we certainly wouldn't want that to happen to any of our work. But it does. (Brooks 14)

Crowley's concerns shape the cause of Watts' frustration. While Watts is right in his observation that students are “. . . struck by the existence” of erudite women, he fails to address why this is so. Instead of discussing the erasure of ancient women's intellectual work and community participation from our historical record, his passage reads as if students were responsible for their surprise; students should know better, after all. While scholars and teachers may have known for many years that Hypatia and other women were similarly educated and publicly engaged, new historical knowledge often does not reach our classrooms because our courses in the history of rhetoric continue to exclude work by women.

That is not to say that there are few works about women and their pedagogical and rhetorical activities and contributions, in fact, scholarship about women for almost all historical periods has exploded since the 1990s. We now have anthologies that integrate women with men in the historical tradition of rhetoric (Bizzell and Herzberg 2001, and the forthcoming *Norton Anthology of Rhetoric and Writing*) and anthologies of women's only rhetorics (Lunsford 1995; Wertheimer 1997; Sutherland and Sutcliffe 1999; Ronald and Ritchie 2001; and Donawerth

2002). Scholarship about women's groups (Royster 2000; Logan 1995; Johnson 1991, 2001; and Hogg 2006) and singular figures exists (Henry 1995; Bordelon 2007), for example. The work of these scholars has been vital in our understanding of women's activities and has shaped the field of Rhetoric and Composition. Scholarship about women in the history of rhetoric, their rhetorical strategies, and activities will no doubt continue to flourish.

New scholarship, important to shaping our understanding of history and how we define rhetoric is not enough, however, because it does not question the structure upon which canonical texts are selected. As Glenn notes, ". . . rhetorical history has replicated the power politics of gender, with men in the highest cultural role and social rank," which cannot change when we exclude women's work from classes in historical rhetoric (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 2). In 1992, Donawerth was among the first to note that rhetoric is a Western, upper-class male institution (Donawerth "Transforming" 35). She also noted that understanding rhetoric in this way maintains power and privilege for a small group of people dependant on exclusion, which ". . . creates a troubling contradiction at the core of our discipline;" a discipline dependant and insistent upon respect of difference (Donawerth "Transforming" 38). It is time we asked again, what is the position of ancient rhetorical theory and history in our field? What do they do? What do they tell us about rhetoric, writing, or teaching? Biesecker explains that in order to change our understanding of rhetorical history ". . . the underlying logic of canon formation and the uses to which it has been put" must also be questioned so we can discover how our received history of rhetoric evolved and how it was used to empower some and marginalize others (Biesecker "Coming" 144). Marginalization of women's rhetoric serves to obscure similarities and differences in rhetorical strategies between men and women, rendering our current knowledge of rhetoric an oversimplification.

My point is simple here, while women's participation in the ancient world was common new research is often not included in courses about historical rhetorics. Exclusion of women continues to perpetuate the unstated myth that no women participated, or participated in any meaningful way; it is a distortion of history. While courses in women's rhetorics are offered, they are frequently separated from the tradition and marginalized. Separation from the tradition, for whatever reason, suggests that women's rhetoric is only appropriate for those with a special interest in women and makes it difficult to understand the make-up and practices of ancient discourse communities. Furthermore, the practices serves to identify women as "Other" by stating that women's rhetorical and teaching activities somehow do not fit the definitions of *real* rhetoric or serve as *good* examples of teaching.

History is rhetorical

Edward Schiappa reminds us that ". . . the writing of history is a thoroughly rhetorical enterprise" (Octalog II 36). Works of Finley, Fitzgerald, White, Heehs, and Jarratt, among many others, discuss the relationship between myth and history. They determine that history is a construct, in other words, it is rhetorical, as Cicero noted in *Brutus*. Imbued with ideology, as traditional histories are in preserving male biases, for example, preserves the construct of male intellectual dominance. Waithe notes, "[b]oth the omission of women and the inclusion of a few [women] perpetuates untruths about women and about philosophy" because it suggests that few women did participate and that those who did were oddities, which is problematic for a diverse student body ("On Not" 133). Historians of rhetoric explain that women were not admitted into ancient schools of rhetoric to justify the absence of texts. However, my discussion of historical contexts of ancient women's rhetorics suggests alternate ways in which women were trained in rhetoric. Women also attended most, if not all, of the schools of ancient Greek philosophy where they would have been exposed to rhetorical practices. While we have no primary evidence of

their rhetorical production, we do have evidence of their rhetorical activities recorded in secondary texts. Secondary texts can be useful in creating a clearer sense of rhetorical education and production in the ancient world.

Understanding history and philosophy as rhetorical acts creates a better context for the meaning and position of canonical texts read in classes of historical rhetoric. Such transparency helps explain how and why some texts are canonical while others are not. If we redefine and rearrange what counts as rhetorical history to include secondary accounts of women, as Jarratt suggests, we may “. . . expose an increasing complexity of evidence or data, to resist simplification which covers over subtleties, to exploit complexity toward the goal of greater explanatory power,” to the benefit of students and their future research (Jarratt *Rereading the Sophists*, 18-19). Current trends in the teaching of rhetoric demonstrate oversimplification rather than an understanding of our historical tradition.

One of the ways to expand possibilities for complicating our understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical practices is for “. . . the history of rhetoric . . . to address more the rhetoric of history” (Schilb 239). Schilb made his call for the historian of rhetoric to engage with of theoretical trends in 1993, nearly thirty years after Hayden White’s “The Burden of History” appeared in *History and Theory* in 1966, and twenty years after his influential *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* was published in 1973. In her 1992 article, Biesecker expresses concern about “. . . veiled cultural supremacy. . .,” and argues for the “. . . radical contextualization of rhetorical acts” (Biesecker “Coming” 147). Her solution is that we reframe history courses with theories of history in order to empower radical recontextualization. Following Schilb and Biesecker, I argue for the inclusion of metahistory to frame courses in ancient rhetoric. Inclusion of metahistory unveils the rhetorical nature of history and functions as

a starting point from which we may ask how historical knowledge is made. Metahistory also facilitates a shift in our understanding of history so that it may be read as rhetorical with a focus on the available means of persuasion. The goal is to disrupt the linear narrative of ancient rhetorical history in order to lead students to discover their own ways of rejecting, avoiding, or accepting the creation of master narratives. The approach is epistemic because focus shifts from linear and homogenous narratives to one concerned with available means and purpose. Students should leave courses in historical rhetorics with the understanding that there are multiple rhetorics and multiple histories of rhetoric, and that the story we have thus far documented is partial and biased.

As I argued in chapter one, rhetorical historiography has enjoyed a long practice, one that began, in part, with Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. In order to recognize our own historical practices of writing history, as some teachers have already done, we may consider renaming historical courses to include historiography, signaling a change in focus, for example “Greek Foundations of Rhetoric: History and Historiography” or “The History and Historiography of Greek Rhetorical Theory.” Framing courses in the history of rhetoric with the work of Hayden White, Patricia Bizzell, Cheryl Glenn, among others, provides flexibility in course content that is more resistant to the reification of ideological history the participants of Octalogs I-III feared. The goal here is to shift the meaning and uses of history in our classrooms from one that can be memorized and repeated to one that is epistemic; engagement with histories of rhetoric, after all, should answer questions *and* pose new ones. Referring to N.O. Brown, White explains that

history is not only a substantive burden imposed upon the present by the past in the form of outmoded institutions, ideas, and values, also *the way of looking at the world* which gives to these outmoded forms their specious authority . . . it is

only by disenthraling human intelligence from the sense of history that men will be able to confront creatively the problems of the present. (123)

White states that stable, unchanging history is a way of looking at the world that constrains thinking. My argument in chapter one is that feminist historians and historiographers who conduct research in the ancient world have indeed been constrained by the requirements of historical discourse conventions, and perhaps this is, in part, the function of our pedagogical approaches. Because the conventions of historical discourse require selection and interpretation of evidence into a narrow narrative, the discourse of history disciplines and punishes. Courses in historical rhetoric are further narrowed because of the semester-long time constraint. The resulting narrative tends to oversimplify history into something that can be easily reified and posed as a simple question, as Sharon Crowley observed. Instead, White calls for historical narratives that are more complicated, for those that “. . . will educate us to discontinuity more than ever before; for discontinuity, disruption, chaos is our lot” (134). Teaching the history of rhetorical practices as those that respond to discontinuity empowers students to do the same while reinforcing the situatedness of rhetorical demands, including those of the history of rhetoric.

Metahistory re-situates women

Metahistory, alongside feminist concerns, encourages us to ask new questions about history including who is speaking? what are the available means of persuasion? who is silent? what counts as evidence? what are the biases of historians? what purpose does the particular history serve? what is included,? and what is missing? When we consider such questions, we must consider the traditional preference for primary materials and their hegemony over knowledge and knowledge-making in order to understand how they function to constrain what “counts” as rhetorical knowledge or practice. These questions allow us to more readily include

secondary texts about women because they break down notions of objectivity and the binary construction of myth and history. Such questions make the creation of a linear master narrative more difficult. For example, how do Perictione I's discourse conventions and concerns differ from Plato's? How might reading the work of Perictione I complicate or contextualize the works of Plato? Perictione I's, *On the Harmony of Women* may indeed go a long way to provide context to Plato's *Gorgias*, for example. While *Gorgias* is often included in Greek Foundations classes for its discussion of teaching, the last chapter can leave students confused. Plato's discussion of beauty and love moves into a metaphysical discussion of the soul; Perictione I's work explains the nature of the soul and, therefore, offers important context. Including women alongside authors traditionally deemed as canonical demonstrates how ancient contemporaries “. . . benefitted from a mutual exchange of ideas” and how the available means of persuasion varied not just through the identity of the person speaking or writing, but how conventions and concerns changed through time (Waithe “On Not” 134).

Framing historical rhetoric classes in metahistory may allow students a better understanding of the relationship between language and power, perhaps to their own empowerment, a point James Berlin makes in “Revisionary Histories of Rhetoric: Power, Politics, and Plurality.” Unveiling the politics of rhetoric can result in recognition of rhetorical strategies that kept women and others out of the historical tradition. For example, women have been misidentified as male (Pandrosion, Aesara), and women's work has been credited to men (Hypatia's and Eudocia's). Women have been sexualized to negate their rhetorical savvy (Aspasia, Hypatia) and intentionally expunged from historical records (Melania the Elder). If we include, for example, a discussion about the politics of rhetoric, as Donawerth suggests, we can better understand the power and politics of excluding women in schools of rhetoric, and

hopefully recognize other locations of women's education and their uses of rhetoric (Donawerth "Transforming" 36). The shift allows a new definition of what counts as rhetorical theory and we can, therefore, include treatises arguing for women's education (Donawerth "Transforming" 36). Including traditional histories like Kennedy's *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* that makes almost no reference to women, alongside Perictione I's *On the Harmony of Women*, Perictione II's *On Wisdom*, Aesara's *On Human Nature*, and/or Phintys' *On the Moderation of Women* may be one way to complicate history. Since these women's texts contain arguments for the education of women, they are clearly rhetorical works. Such texts also demonstrate the wide variety of arguments, ideologies, and practices that existed in Greece between the sixth and second centuries BCE, overturning the often homogenized, biased, and oversimplified understanding of it.

While there are no extant texts by ancient women about pedagogical approaches, we do know of women who were teachers. Among them are the Alexandrians Pandrosion and Hypatia, the Roman Macrina, the Neocaesarean Marcella, and Olympia, who lived in Constantinople. Sosipatra taught in Pergamum and Asclepegonia, Aedesia, Aspasia, and Diotima taught in Athens. Theano I, Arignote, Damo, and Myia taught in Italy. If we include the collection of letters written by Theano II alongside treatises that discuss good educational practices, we see an alternate pedagogical tradition documented for women; for example Theano II's letters demonstrate a teaching practice that is personal. Theano II's letters to Euboule, Nikostrate, and Callisto deal with specific problems these women were having in maintaining the concept of *harmonia* in their households. Theano II addresses each woman's concern carefully to help provide a framework of ethics that each woman could depend upon. Melissa used a similarly personal approach in her letters to Cleareta and Phyllis. Identifying the teaching approaches of

Theano II and Melissa fills in gaps of knowledge about historically valid pedagogical approaches.

We may also include examples of rhetorical acts in historical foundations classes. In this area we can include Hipparchia, who persuaded the reluctant Crates to marry her and who made a sophistic attack on Theodorus. Melania the Elder persuaded a judge to release she and her party when they were arrested. Among Christian women it was not unusual to persuade one's family to donate wealth and live a Christian or even a Christian ascetic life as it seems Melania the Elder and Melania the Younger did. In fact, the rise of asceticism in Christianity meant that many men were unable to marry due to the lack of marriageable women, which suggests that women probably used persuasion regularly in their interactions with one another and with their larger communities. In public and official roles, we may include Pulcheria and her sister-in-law, Eudocia. As regent for her brother, Theodosius II, Pulcheria dealt with a variety of officials with whom she communicated and persuaded in her goal to advance Christianity in the Eastern Roman Empire. Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II is known to have debated issues with her husband. She also provides an example of the synthesis of Hellenic and Christian ideology in her "Encomium of Antioch" and "The Martyrdom of St. Cyprian;" these texts could be read alongside St. Augustine as an additional example of the fusion of Hellenic and Christian forms of persuasion.

Framing the history of rhetoric as uncertain, changing, and dependant on social values at the time of writing, allows us to remain open to possibilities we cannot yet recognize or have not yet discovered. We can continue to develop new ways of reading that could illuminate women's writing about rhetoric in particular. Using metahistorical theory forces us not to foreclose on the idea that many different kinds of people created, documented, or otherwise engaged in rhetorical

practice and probably wrote rhetorical theory. When we do not have texts detailing rhetorical principals, we can conduct analysis and define patterns of good communication strategies contained within the piece of writing. In short, the inclusion of metahistory forces us to recognize that what exists of historical rhetorical theory is incomplete, that our definitions of rhetoric are too narrow, and that objective history simply does not exist.

Benefits

Lerner argues that history serves social, political, and ideological needs of humans. History helps establish collective immortality and cultural tradition, it forms identity and legitimates power, it provides a philosophical framework, and it can promote healing (*Why History* 116-117). The benefits of a historical approach that recognizes the rhetoricity of history are varied for students and professionals working in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. Before I explain the benefits to the discipline, I want first to consider the demographics of our field in order to contextualize the importance of including women in our history classes. Brown et al. "Portrait of the Profession: The 2007 Survey of Doctoral Programs in Rhetoric and Composition" concludes that the majority of faculty and Ph.D. students in the field of Rhetoric and Composition are female. Survey results number female faculty at 300 while male faculty numbers 246 while female graduate students significantly outnumber male graduate students, 742 and 349 respectively (Brown et al. 335). Given that the profession is becoming more female dominated, it is likely that the demand for the inclusion of women in our historical narratives will increase.

Many scholars including Lauer (2003), T. Enos (2003), S. Miller (2003), and Flynn (2003), among others, have noted the position and number of women in our field. Several have called attention to the inequities created for rhetoric and composition because of it. Theresa Enos explains "[b]ecause women comprise the majority in rhetoric and composition, the field is often

called a ‘feminized field.’ Disciplines where women excel—and are acknowledged—are devalued . . . Thus, males, as well as females in a feminized field suffer from salary compression and horizontal rather than upward ‘promotions’” (T. Enos). According to S. Miller, women attain lower ranks, are paid less, and more often hold part-time appointments than do men (S. Miller 523). Calling women in such situations “paraprofessionals” Miller explains women tend to “. . . occupy the lowest hierarchical status by virtue of their association with composition teaching itself, typically characterized as elementary teaching that is a service tied to pedagogy rather than theory” (S. Miller 523). Will the growing number of women in our field erode, rather than strengthen it?

There are advantages for students, the professorate, and perhaps even society at large when we include women into historical narratives. As Lerner reminds us that history serves to provide role models for the purposes of identity formation, Royster similarly argues that people need to understand their intellectual ancestry, power, and how they are affected by power (Royster 265-266). Hence, including women in ancient histories of rhetoric can be helpful because the women I discuss serve as a variety of role models, provide an intellectual ancestry, and an intellectual community for contemporary women scholars. Including them in our history while making transparent the ideological basis upon which they were excluded can only serve to empower students entering the profession by providing them with essential historical background. In addition, Theresa Enos notes that the women who have made it to the “top” of the field are those whose scholarship engages in history and in theories of rhetoric, an added and empowering benefit to our current student body (T. Enos 564). While scholarship about women in the history of rhetoric increases exponentially every year, there is still much to be done; graduate students should be made aware of needs in scholarship. A broadened definition of

rhetoric to include rhetoric's use for persuasion and for power can provide a philosophical framework that may allow scholars to consider new or neglected areas of research.

In light of our female-dominated population and the marginalization of rhetoric and composition as a course of study in English departments and universities, including women in historical rhetorics classes may serve in the fight against prejudice. Lerner explains that when we forget or neglect to record the participation of particular groups, we fuel racism, classism, and sexism with the half-truths they need in order to continue. We, therefore, reinforce misogyny in men and the internalization of it for women, disempowering both when we exclude women from the history of rhetoric. Including women and others in our historical narratives disrupts patriarchal distortions of history and has the potential to create social change. I include a sample reading list below for a course in Greek Rhetoric, in Roman Rhetoric, and in Feminist theory that reintegrate or recontextualises the now gendered rhetorical tradition.

History and Historiography of Greek Rhetoric: An Outline of Readings Texts

Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2001. Print.

Kennedy, George, ed. *Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1991. Print.

Lefkowitz, Mary R. and Maureen B. Fant. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook in Translation* 2nd edition. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. Print.

Plant, I. M. *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome: An Anthology*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. Print.

Articles

Biesecker, Susan. "Rhetoric, Possibility, and Women's Status in Ancient Athens: Gorgias' and Isocrates' Encomiums of Helen." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 22.1 (Winter, 1992): 99-108. *JStor*. Web. 5 September 2010.

Blair, Elena Duvergès. "Women: The Unrecognized Teachers of Platonic Socrates." *Ancient Philosophy*. 16 (1996): 333-350. Print.

Glenn, Cheryl. "Remapping Rhetorical Territory." *Rhetoric Review*. 13.2 (Spring 1995): 287-303. *JStor*. Web. 28 February 2006.

Jarrett, Susan. "Sappho's Memory," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32.1 (Winter 2002): 11-43. Ebsco. Web. 20 September 2008.

Kennedy, Kristen. "Hipparchia the Cynic: Feminist Rhetoric and the Ethics of Embodiment." *Hypatia*. 1.2 (Spring 1999): 48-71. *JStor*. Web. 9 March 2010.

Sprague, Rosamond Kent. "Dissoi Logoi or Dialexeis." *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*. 77.306 (April 1968): 155-167. *JStor*. Web. 2 June 2010.

Waithe, Mary Ellen. *A History of Women Philosophers, i. Ancient Women Philosophers 600 BC-AD 500*. Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1987. Print.

----- "On Not Teaching the History of Philosophy." *Hypatia* 4.1 (Spring 1989): 132-138. *Ebsco*.
Web. 6 February 2007.

White, Hayden. "The Burden of History." *History and Theory*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1966): 111-34.
JStor. Web. 16 January 2010.

Wider, Kathleen. "Women Philosophers in the Ancient Greek World: Donning the Mantle."
Hypatia 1.1 (Spring 1986): 21-62. *Ebsco*. Web. 2 May 2008.

Syllabus/Readings: Greek Focus

Week 1: Course Introduction

Week 2: History as Rhetoric

White, Hayden "The Burden of History."

Waithe, Mary Ellen. "On Not Teaching the History of Philosophy."

Wider, Kathleen. "Women Philosophers in the Ancient Greek World: Donning the Mantle."

Connors, Robert "The Exclusion of Women from Classical Rhetoric" (handout)

Glenn, Cheryl. "Remapping Rhetorical Territory."

Week 3: The Classical World

Lefkowitz and Fant Athens and Sparta 58-73, 84-88; Early Greek Philosophy, by John Burnet
<<http://classicpersuasion.org/>>; "General Introduction" in Bizzell and Herzberg 1-17; Plato's
Republic <<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>>

Week 4: 7th -6th Century

Sappho fragments Lefkowitz and Fant 2-4, Plant 10-28; Jarratt "Sappho's Memory," Blair
"Women: The Unrecognized Teachers of Platonic Socrates," Perictione I and II Plant 76-78;
Waithe (handout) (Early Pythagoreans: Themistoclea, Theano I, Arignote, Myia, and Damo 11-
19, Late Pythagoreans: Aesara of Lucania, Phintys of Sparta, Perictione I 19-41, Late
Pythagoreans: Theano II, Perictione II 41-59, Arete 197-201) and Lambropoulou (handout)
"Some Pythagorean Female Virtues."

Week 5: Plato's *Gorgias*

Plato biography <<http://www.philosophypages.com/ph/plat.htm>>, "Plato: True and False
Rhetoric" in Bizzell and Herzberg 28-30, *Gorgias* in Bizzell and Herzberg 87-138; and letters of
Theano II in Plant 69-75 (Eubule, Eucleides, Eurydice, Callisto, Nicostrate, Rhodope, Nicostrate,
Timereta)

Week 6 Plato's *Phaedrus*

Plato *Phaedrus* in Bizzell and Herzberg 138-169; Aesara of Lucania *On Human Nature* in Plant 81-82

Week 7: The Sophists

“The Sophistic Movement” in Bizzell and Herzberg 22-25, Gorgias biography
<<http://www.iep.utm.edu/gorgias/> *Encomium to Helen* in Bizzell and Herzberg 44-47>, Gorgias’ *Encomium* in Kennedy 283-288; Isocrates biography
<<http://www.classicpersuasion.org/pw/plu10or/pluisoc.htm>>; Isocrates “Encomium,” in Bizzell and Herzberg “Isocrates and Education in Rhetoric” 25-27, Susan Biesecker. “Rhetoric, Possibility, and Women’s Status in Ancient Athens: Gorgias’ and Isocrates’ Encomiums of Helen”

Week 8: Plato

The Apology (handout)

Week 9:

Isocrates “Against the Sophists” 72-75, “Antidosis” 75-80 in Bizzell and Herzberg; Waithe *History* (handout) Diotima of Manitinea 83-117, and Rosamond Kent Sprague, “Dissoi Logoi,” Bizzell and Herzberg “Aspasia and Opportunities for Women” 27-28, and “Aspasia” 56-67,

Week 10: Aristotle

“Aristotle: Systematic Rhetoric” in Bizzell and Herzberg 30-32; *On Rhetoric* “Prooemion,” “Introduction,” and “Book I” logical argument

Week 11 Aristotle

On Rhetoric Book II, character of speaker and role of emotion

Week 12: Aristotle

On Rhetoric Book III, style and arrangement

Week 13: 3rd Century

Hipparchia Waithe *History* (handout) 207-209, Lefkowitz and Fant 167-168, Kennedy, Kristen. “Hipparchia the Cynic: Feminist Rhetoric and the Ethics of Embodiment;” Phintys of Sparta *Temperance of Women* in Plant 54-86, Lefkowitz and Fant 163, Pamphile of Athens *Historical Commentaries* in Plant “Pamphila” 127-130, Lefkowitz and Fant 168

Week 14: Approaches to Teaching Greek Rhetoric

Week 15: What is Rhetoric?

Recap, discuss unfinished questions

Week 16: Final Exam

History and Historiography of Roman Rhetoric: An Outline of Readings

Texts

Aristotle: Poetics; Longinus: On the Sublime; Demetrius, On Style. Loeb Classical Library No.

199. Print.

Caesar, Julius. *Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic War and the Civil War.* W. A. MacDevitt, trans. El Paso, TX: El Paso Norte Press, 2005. Print.

Cicero. *Brutus* (online) <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/9776>

Cicero. *On the Ideal Orator.* James M. May and Jakob Weiss, trans. NY: Oxford University Press, 2001. Print.

Cicero. *Rhetorica ad Herennium.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004. Print.

Cicero. *On the Good Life.* Michael Grant, trans. NY: Penguin Books, 1971. Print.

Plant, I. M. *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome: An Anthology.* Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. Print.

Murphy, James J., ed. *Quintillian: On the Teaching of Speaking and Writing.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987. Print.

St. Augustine of Hippo *Confessions.* R. S. Pine-Coffin, trans. NY: Penguin Books, 1961. Print.

Virgil *Aeneid,* Robert Fitzgerald, trans. NY: Vintage Classics Edition, 1990. Print.

Articles

Glenn, Cheryl. "Remapping Rhetorical Territory." *Rhetoric Review.* 13.2 (Spring 1995): 287-303. *JStor.* Web. 28 February 2006.

White, Hayden. "The Burden of History." *History and Theory,* Vol. 5, No. 2 (1966), pp. 111-34. *JStor.* Web. 16 January 2010.

Syllabus/Readings: Roman Focus Week 1 Course Introduction

Week 2

White, Hayden "The Burden of History."

Glenn, Cheryl. "Remapping Rhetorical Territory."

Roman Identity: Virgil's *Aeneid*

Roman Women: Following the Clues:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/roman_women_01.shtml>

Week 3

Aristotle: Poetics; Longinus: On the Sublime

Women's poetry read Plant excerpts about Melinno, Sulpicia I, Hortensia, Sulpicia II, Julia Balbilla, Perpetua, Faltonia Betita Proba, and Egeria

Week 4

Demetrius, *On Style*

Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*

Week 5

Cicero, *On the Good Life*

Week 6:

Cicero, *The Brutus*

<<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/9776>>

Week 7:

Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, Book I

Week 8:

Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, Book II

Week 9:

Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, Book III

Week 10:

Caesar's Commentaries

Quintillian *Institutes of Oratory* Preface, Introduction, Note, p 3-10

Cornelia Gracchi: <<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/cornelia.shtml>>; Plant

Week 11

Quintillian *Institutes of Oratory* Books 1, 2, 10

Week 12

The Gospel according to Mary Magdelene:

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/mary.html>>

The Acts of Paul and Thecla:

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/thecla.html>>

St. Augustine of Hippo *Confessions*

Week 13

St. Augustine of Hippo *Confessions* and Plant Eudocia

Week 14: Approaches to teaching Roman Rhetoric

Week 15: What is Rhetoric?

Recap, discuss unfinished questions

Week 16 Final Exam

I am including a third course plan that focuses on feminist theory. Pythagorean and Neopythagorean texts include thematic similarities to Victorian women's rhetorics and can help to reorient our dating of the early stages of feminist thinking.

**Survey of Feminist Theory: An Outline of Readings
Texts (selections)**

Adams, Carol J. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006. Print.

Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg. "Maria Stewart." *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2001. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. NY: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Cade, Toni. *The Black Woman: An Anthology*. NY: Washington Square Press, 1970. Print.

Cooper, Anna Julia. *A Voice from the South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Print.

De Beauvoir Simone. *The Second Sex*. NY: Bantam Books, 1961. Print.

Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. NY: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1910. Print.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. NY: Dell Publishing, Inc., 1963. Print.

Frye, Marilyn. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. New South Wales: The Crossing Press, 1983. Print.

Heywood, Leslie and Jennifer Drake, eds. *The Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis University Press, 1997. Print.

Mies, Maria and Vandana Shiva *Ecofeminism: Reconnecting a Divided World*. London: Zed Books, 1983. Print.

Millett, Kate *Sexual Politics*. NY: Simon and Schuster, 1990. Print.

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Syllabus/Reading: Survey of Feminist Theory

Week 1 Course Introduction

Week 2: Education

Mary Ellen Waithe selections including Theano, Phytis, Perictione I, Arete, Perictione II, Aesara of Lucania

Mary Wollstonecraft *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*

Maria Stewart *Essays and Speeches*

Week 3

Anna Julia Cooper *A Voice from the South*

Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*

Week 4

Virginia Woolf *A Room of One's Own*

Simone De Beauvoir *The Second Sex*

Week 5

Betty Friedan *The Feminine Mystique*

Week 6

Kate Millett *Sexual Politics*

Toni Cade *The Black Woman*

Week 7

Robin Morgan *Sisterhood is Powerful*

Week 8

Luce Irigaray *The Sex Which Is Not One*

Week 9

Michele Wallace *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*

Marilyn Frye *The Politics of Reality*

Week 10

Suzanne Pharr *Homophobia A Weapon of Sexism*

Week 11

Judith Butler *Gender Trouble*

Week 12

Trinh T. Min-ha *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*

Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*.

Week 13

Carol J. Adams *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*

Saskia Wieringa *Subversive Women: Women's Movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean*.

Week 14

Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake *The Third Wave Agenda*

Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva *Ecofeminism*

Week 15

Review/wrap-up

Week 16 Final Exam

CONCLUSION

The canon of Greek authors alone has some 3,200 entries, but we have the names of only about one hundred Greek and Roman women writers . . . We find works of history, philosophy, musical theory, grammar, literary criticism, astronomy, travel, medicine, sex, mathematics, drama, prophecy, and alchemy attributed to women. (Plant 1)

This is not really a conclusion. Instead, I hope it is a beginning, a place for teachers to find resources for use in their classrooms, and for scholars to begin research that re-members ancient women, their activities, and their importance. This text argues for a change in perspective to revitalize research in three different ways. First, we need to particularize women in their historical contexts to undo the notion of the universal Woman, especially problematic in the ancient period because of its dependence on outdated notions and inappropriate applications of the Athenian model. Particularizing women creates the conditions in which we may establish rhetorical histories that are more inclusive and varied, resulting in fuller, more complicated historical narratives. Second, once we understand the available means of persuasion as varied and contextual we may be able to recover more women who participated in rhetorical history (Biesecker “Coming”). For example, once I identified Hypatia of Alexandria as a woman engaged in a variety of rhetorical activities, I asked if other women exploited similar social, legal, or intellectual contexts to suit their needs during Hypatia’s lifetime. Answering this question generated a list of women working in other parts of the ancient Mediterranean during Hypatia’s lifetime, which became the timeline in Appendix B. When I rephrased the question, asking if there were other women’s works that Hypatia may have had access to at the Library of Alexandria, I discovered Pythagorean and Neopythagorean women who wrote texts and taught others between 6 BCE and 1 ACE. These women form a sort of intellectual community for Hypatia’s activities. The notion of community then can be used as a heuristic to discover and to

contextualize women, their works, and their activities. Third, as Royster notes, race, class, gender, and orientation, categories of difference, act as barriers that serve to obscure women from themselves and from each other (Royster 3-4). Royster discusses difference as a barrier between living women, but we may also comprehend her observation to mean that our understanding of the analytical categories of race, class, gender, and orientation as interlocking oppressions may constrain our own work. My study of Hypatia of Alexandria identifies that her mixed Greek and Egyptian ethnicity combined with her class and the historical context of Roman Alexandria served to empower her public and rhetorical activities. Perhaps it is time for feminist scholars to consider how interlocking identities may enable and empower women, today and in history.

This text also makes the argument that because the discourse of history demands the use of primary texts, it disciplines and punishes would-be feminist historiographers from using secondary texts so essential to women's history. Feminist scholars must resist the notion that the only texts worthy of consideration are primary texts. Lack of primary texts does not preclude scholars from work about Socrates nor does it eliminate Aristotle's *Rhetoric* or Gorgias' *On Being* from study, although our sources are secondary ones. If feminist scholars ever hope to remember the lives, activities, and importance of ancient women, as often as not, the only texts available for analysis are secondary ones; we do, after all have a 1500 year silence in women's history.

I also argue that the discourse of history is not based on unchanging "fact." In my consideration of how the Greeks and Romans constructed history, I identify the importance of myth as a resource in their historical work. Our use of myth, legend, and secondary texts that comprise the lore that is women's history, then, has historical precedent. The integration of

metahistory into our historical accounts allows us to understand history as responsive to the dynamic and changing needs of humans while undermining and unveiling positivist approaches to history. As feminist historiography challenges notions of canonicity, truth, and “fact” by expanding what counts as rhetorical or by expanding the very definition of rhetoric, metahistory is a tool we can use to further that goal and be more transparent in our research as well. Finally, if Plant’s estimate is correct and there are a hundred Greek and Roman women writers documented in a variety of texts, there is much work left to do.

APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

Our pedagogical needs for women's ancient rhetorical history indicate that we need a collection of women's texts from the ancient world. In spite of an as-yet unwritten collection, I am including resources about the women I have discussed below. They are meant for two purposes; to provide the scholar some initial research with which they may begin their own and to provide teachers of historical rhetoric the locations for texts that they can compile for historical rhetoric classes. The entries follow the same pattern as the previous chapter for consistency and ease of reference.

Hypatia (Neoplatonist Alexandria, 355-415 ACE)

See *The Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius: As Epitomized by Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (in Deakin *Hypatia* 158, Ménage 26), *Ecclesiastical History* by Socrates Scholasticus (in Deakin *Hypatia* 143-148, Dzielska 6, 17-18, Fiedler 59, Ménage 26, 27, Waithe *History* 172, Wider 53, 58); *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (in Deakin *Hypatia* 159); *Chronicle* by John, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu (in Deakin *Hypatia* 148-149, Fiedler 61); *Damascius' Life of Isidore* (in Deakin *Hypatia* 140-143, Dzielska 18, 56, Wider 53); and *Suda Lexicon* (in Deakin *Hypatia* 137-139, Dzielska 18, Fiedler 57). For significant discussions about Hypatia see Deakin, Dzielska, Ménage, Waithe *History*, and Wider.

Pandrosion (Unknown affiliation, Alexandria, c. 290-350 ACE)

See Pappus, *Collection*, book III (Frost in Deakin *Hypatia* 127-133). For discussions about Pandrosion, see McLaughlin (16-17), Netz (197).

Macrina the Younger (Christian, Neocaesarea, c. 270-340 ACE)

See Gregory of Nyssa's *De anima et resurrectione* (in Waithe *History* 139-168) and *Vita Macrinae* (in Lefkowitz & Fant 327-330); Gregory's letters (in Alexandre 443, Lefkowitz and Fant 330). For discussions about her life, see Brown (*The Body* 270-278) and Beagon (170-172).

Marcella (Christian, Rome, 325-412 ACE)

See Jerome's letter *To Principia* (in Schaff 513-522) For details and discussion about her life, see Brown (*The Body* 259-284, 366-386), G. Clark (28-29), and Drijvers (246-248).

Melania the Elder (Christian, Spain, 342-411 ACE)

See Palladius' *The Lausiatic History* (Palladius). For discussions about Melania see Brown (*The Body* 259-284, 366-386) and G. Clark (53-54).

St. Paula (347-404) Rome

See letters between Paula and Jerome (Schaff 127, 130, 136). For discussions about Paula's life and activities, see Brown (*The Body* 259-284, 366-386) and G. Clark (53-54).

Eustochium/Eustochia (Christian, Rome, 368-420 ACE)

See letters between Jerome and Eustochia (in Schaff 85, 128, 405). For a discussion about Eustochia, see Anderson and Zinsser (74-75) and G. Clark (53-54).

Olympia/Olympias (Christian, Constantinople, 368-408 ACE)

See Palladius' *The Lausiatic History* (Palladius). For discussions about Olympia, see Brown (*The Body* 259-284, 366-386), G. Clark (53-54), and Holum (71-72, 143-144).

Pulcheria (Christian, Constantinople, 399-453 ACE)

See Holum for an excellent and lengthy discussion about Pulcheria that considers textual and archeological sources (79-112, 130-147).

Eudocia/Athenäis (Converted Christian, Athens and Constantinople, 401-460 ACE)

See Socrates Scholasticus *The Ecclesiastical History* (in Ménage 16), Evagrius (in Ménage 16), Nicephorus (in Ménage 17), *The Chronicle of Malalas* (in Holum 114). For translations of Eudocia's poems "The Martyrdom of St. Cyprian," "Homeric Cento," and "The Baths" see Plant (198-209). For discussion about her life and work, see Brown (*The Body* 48-79, 112-130), G. Clark (124-171), and Holum (48-79, 112-130).

Sosipatra (Neoplatonist, Pergamum, 4th century ACE)

See Eunapis' *Lives of the Sophists* (in Lefkowitz and Fant 333-334). For discussions about Sosipatra's life see G. Clark (130-134), Ménage (12), and Pack (198-204). O'Meara provides a detailed explanation of Sosipatra's Iamblichean Neoplatonism (20).

Asclepigeneia/Asklepigenia (Neoplatonist, Athens, c. 400-500 ACE)

For a translation of pertinent passages of Marinus' *Life of Proclus* see Elder & Bryant (257) and Waithe (*History* 203). For a discussion of Asclepigeneia, see Vivante (*Daughters* 172-173) and Waithe (*History* 201-203).

Aedesia (Neoplatonist, Alexandria, fifth century ACE)

See Atnaassiadi's discussion about Damascus *Life of Isidore* and "Aedesia" in the *Suda Lexicon* (Whitehead).

Theano I (Pythagorean, Croton, 6th -5th BCE)

Theano wrote *On Piety* (in Plant 70, Waithe *History* 12-13), *Pythagorean Apophthegms* (in Allen 145, Plant 70, Waithe *History* 12, Wider 31), *Philosophical Commentaries*, sometimes collected as *Female Advice* or *Letters* (Plant 70, Wider 32-33). Ghougassian titles Theano's letter to Nicostrate "The Indulgent Woman" (18-21). Theano is also credited with writing *On Virtue* and *On Pythagoras*, lost texts. For context and information about Theano's life and analysis of her works see Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 29-33), Waithe (*History* 12-15), Wider (26-40), and Vivante (*Daughters* 158-159).

Arignote (Pythagorean Croton, 6th -5th BCE)

Arignote was a writer who also edited texts and co-wrote with her mother (Vivante *Daughters* 159; Wider 29). She was the author of *Rites of Dionysos* and either wrote or edited a book on the mysteries of Demeter entitled *The Sacred Discourse* (Waithe *History* 12; Wider 29).

Damo (Pythagorean Croton, 6th -5th BCE)

None of Damo's works are extant. Meunier states however, that she "...wrote a commentary on Homer" (qtd. in Wider 29). Reading Diogenes Laertius, Wider claims Pythagoras left his commentaries to his daughter for safekeeping in order to guide Pythagorean

practice after his death. Pythagoras' actions suggest Damo "...was most likely an active and important member of that philosophic school" (Wider 29).

Myia (Pythagorean Croton, 6th -5th BCE)

Myia was known to epitomize Pythagorean virtue (Wider 29). One letter written by Myia is extant. For translated fragments of Myia's letter to Phyllis see Allen (152-153), Plant (79-80), and Waithe (*History* 15-16).

Perictione I (Pythagorean, Athens, circa 6th century BCE)

For translations of *On the Harmony of Women* by Perictione I see Allen (143-145), Elder & Bryant (179), Ghougassian (22-25), Guthrie (239-242). Lambropoulou includes the Greek text (124-126), Ménage (61), Plant (76-78), Pomeroy entitles the work "advice to the young ladies" (*Goddesses* 134-136), Vivante (*Daughters* 161, 163), Waithe (*History* 32-39), and Wider (35-36).

Aspasia of Miletus (Sophist, Miletus and Athens circa. 470-410 BC)

See Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 36-44), Madeline Henry's *Prisoner of History*, Aristophanes *The Acharnians* and Plutarch's *Life of Pericles* (in Ménage 6-8), Plato's *Menexenus*, Waithe (*History* 75-83), Wider (42), Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and *Oeconomicus* (in Lefkowitz and Fant 170), and Plutarch's *Life of Pericles* (in Lefkowitz and Fant 178-179).

Diotima of Mantinea (Priestess, Mantinea and Athens, circa 5th century BCE)

See Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 44-49), Lucian's *Images* (in Ménage 9), Plato's *Symposium*, Swearingen in Lunsford (25-48), and Waithe (*History* 83-117, "On Not" 136).

Themistoclea/Themkistoclea (Priestess, Delphi, 6th or 5th century BCE)

Themistoclea was a Greek priestess at Delphi, perhaps the Oracle, credited with teaching Pythagoras concepts that led to his philosophy (Ménage 47). Some scholars claim she was the sister of Pythagoras. Ménage clarifies that it would have been more credible to claim inspiration from the Delphic Oracle than from a sister. See Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Eminent*

Philosophers (in Ménage 47) and *Suda Lexicon* (in Ménage 47). Also see Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 31), Waithe (*History* 11), Wider (27).

Perictione II (Neopythagorean, Greece or Italy, circa 4th-3rd BCE)

See Photius *Bibliotheca* (Ménage 61). Translations of *On Wisdom* are printed in Allen (151), Ménage (61), Plant (76-78), Vivante (*Daughters* 160), and Waithe (*History* 55-57).

Arete of Cyrene (Socratic, Cyrene, 5-4 BCE)

See *Stromata* by Clement of Alexandria (Ménage 35; Waithe *History* 198), Boccaccio's *De Laudibus Mulierum* (in Waithe *History* 198), *On the Pythagorean Life* by Iamblichus (in G. Clark 132).

Aesara/Asara/Aisara of Lucania (Neopythagorean Lucania, 3rd-4th century BCE)

Fragments of Aesara's *Book on Human Nature* are printed in Plant (81-82) and Waithe (*History* 20-21). For details about Aesara see Allen (151-152), Vivante (*Daughters* 159-160), and Waithe (*History* 19-26).

Theano II (Neopythagorean, Italy, 4th-3rd century BCE)

Translations of Theano II's letters can be found in Allen (153-159), Plant (68-75),⁶³ Vivante (*Daughters* 164), Waithe (*History* 41-55).

Hipparchia, (Cynic, Thrace, 3rd BCE)

Her life and activities are documented in the *Greek Anthology* (in Ménage 369), Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* (in Ménage 39), Diogenes Laertius *The Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (in Ménage 39; Lefkowitz & Fant 167-168; Waithe *History* 208), the *Suda Lexicon* (in Ménage 39). For discussions about Hipparchia, see Allen (130-131), Pomeroy (*Goddesses* 136-137), Vivante (*Daughters* 171), and Wider (50).

Phintys of Sparta (Neopythagorean, Italy, c. 4-2 BCE)

For translation of Phintys' *On the Moderation of Women*, alternately titled *Temperance of Women* and sometimes *On Women's Prudence* see Stoebaeus *Stromata* (in Ménage 61), Guthrie

⁶³ Plant does not distinguish between Theano I and II.

(263-265), Lambropoulou, which includes the Greek text (128-131), Meunier (in Allen 147-150), Plant (84-86), Vivante (*Daughters* 162), and Waithe (*History* 26-31).

Histiaea/ Histiaia/Hestiaea (Unknown affiliation, Alexandria, c. 200 BCE)

Histiaea was a scholar of history, topography, and grammar. She wrote a treatise considering the location of the city of Troy by using the *Illiad*. See Pomeroy “Women in Roman Egypt” (311).

Pamphile (Peripetetic, Athens, c. 1 ACE)

See Photius *Bibliotheca* (Ménage 9); *Suda* “Pamphile” in Lefkowitz and Fant (168). For a translation of Pamphile’s *Historical Commentaries*, see Plant (127-129).

Cornelia Gracchi (Unknown affiliation, Rome, 175-143 ACE)

Cornelia Gracchi was the mother of the Gracchi brothers; she is credited as their teacher. Cicero and Quintilian praise her rhetorical skill (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 66, 60). Some of her letters to her sons have been preserved in Cape (119), Glenn (*Rhetoric Retold* 66), Lefkowitz and Fant (21-22), Plant (101-103).

Vibia Perpetua (Christian, Rome, 183-203 ACE)

Much of Perpetua’s autobiography detailing her experience in prison is extant. For translations of *The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas* see Lefkowitz and Fant (313-318) and Plant (164-168).

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE OF WOMEN

The below timeline is part of my ongoing effort to collect the names of women and their activities lost to traditional history; it is a work-in-progress. The reader will find a variety of women teachers in a variety of capacities, writers specializing in a variety of genres (including poetry, fiction, theology, philosophy, and history) as well as women politicians, philosophers, religious leaders, military leaders, medical doctors, and historians, to name a few professions. The entries depend on a variety of evidence including archaeological and textual sources. The earliest entry is a woman whose life dates to c. 3008 BCE, the last woman included lived in the twelfth century. I chose this period specifically to address the absence of women from the historical record.

One of the problems with women in the ancient world is securing dates for their lifetimes or their work and scholars depend upon a variety of textual interpretations to derive approximate dates. In cases where the dates of a particular woman's life are debated I have included both. Names are also spelled in more than one way and I have included both spellings in the hope that it will clarify, rather than confuse.

Before the Common Era (B.C.E.)

- 3008 Meryt-Neith/Merneith, Egypt possible pharaoh, gained the burial rites typical of pharaohs (Greenspan, *Vivante Daughters*)
- 2800 Fu His Chinese philosopher who identified yin yang (See Greenspan)
- 2700/2150 Rahonen, Egypt Queen/priestess (See Greenspan)
- 2700 Merit-Ptah, Egyptian doctor (See Greenspan)
- 2500 Baranamtarra, co-ruled Lagash in Sumer w/husband; philanthropist (See Greenspan)
- 2500 “King” Ku-Bau, 1st Dynasty of Ur (Sumer) (See Greenspan, *Vivante Daughters*)
- 2420 Hashop, Egypt Queen, credited for architecture (See Greenspan)
- 2300 Mentuhetop, Egypt (Thebes) Queen and medical doctor (See Greenspan)
- 2285-2250 Enheduanna, Babylon daughter of Sagon I, ruler of Babylon; High Priestess of Nanna; poetess-48 poems translated (See Elder & Bryant, *Vivante Daughters*)
- 2300 Sanib-Dulum, Luban (Antioch) priestess
- 2184-2183 Nitokerty, Egyptian pharaoh (See Greenspan)
- 1900 Nofret, Egypt queen who ruled with her husband Sesostri II and credited for favorable laws toward women (See Greenspan)
- 1950 Khuwyt, Egypt musician (See Greenspan)
- 1806-1802 Sobek-neferu/Sobeknofru Egyptian Pharaoh (See Elder & Bryant, Greenspan, *Vivante Daughters*)
- 1775 Queen Shibtu of Mari (modern day city of Aleppo in Syria) managed affairs of state while her husband was on military campaign (See *Vivante Women's*)
- 1750 Amat-Mamu, Babylonian scribe (See Greenspan)
- 1700 Shibtu, Babylon Queen of the Kingdom of Mari; ruled in king's

- absence (See Greenspan)
- 1760 Eurpyle, Near East military leader (See Greenspan)
- 1685 Iltani, Babylon priestess (See Greenspan)
- 1650 Tetisheri, Egypt queen (See Greenspan)
- 1549-1526? Ahhotep, Egyptian warrior queen, regent/pharaoh
1570-1546 ruler; united Egypt (See Greenspan)
- 1525-1526 Ahmose-Nefertari, Egyptian warrior queen, regent/pharaoh
1580-1557 (See Greenspan)
- 1512-1482 Hatshepsut, Egypt pharaoh and longest female ruler,
She is credited with many improvements during her tenure. She
ruled from 1490-1469 (See Busby, J. H. G. Clark, Elder & Bryant,
Greenspan, Lesko in Wertheimer, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 1400 Tiye, Egypt wife of Amenhotep III, mother of Akenhaten I (See
Elder & Bryant, Greenspan, Simon)
- 1370-1330 Nefertiti, Egypt, Co-ruler with Akenhaten (See Elder & Bryant
Greenspan, Sanchez)
- 12th Hippo, (unknown) teacher, prophestess (See Ménage)
- 1280-1250 Puduchepa, Hittite queen and priestess married to Hattusilis III
(See Greenspan)
- 1200 Phautasia, Egypt daughter of Nicanchus of Memphis who wrote
poems on the Trojan war and Ulysses, which Homer refered to
for *Illiad* and *Odyssey* (See Greenspan)
- 1200 Myrine, Libya led women in battle (See Greenspan)
- 1191-1190 Twosret Wife of Seti II, buried in the Valley of the Kings probably
ruled as pharaoh (See Elder & Bryant, Greenspan, Vivante
Daughters)
- 1100 Mama Oclo, Peru one of 2 founders of Inca Dynasty
(See Greenspan)
- 1100 Phantasia, Egypt musician, poet (See Greenspan)
- 1184 Hiera, Asia Minor, General of Mysian women's force

- (See Greenspan)
- 1100 Egee, Libya military general (See Greenspan)
- 1020-955 Makeda/Balkis/Belkis/the Queen of Sheeba Queen of Ethiopia
(See Busby, Elder & Bryant, Greenspan, J. H. G. Clark, Williams
& Finch, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 1000 Judith Queen of Ethiopia who conquered the Abyssinians and
Axumites; enemy of Christianity who killed many Christians and
destroyed Christian churches (See Williams and Finch, Vivante
Daughters)
- 980 Nicaula, Ethiopia scholar and ruler (See Greenspan)
- 850 Dido, N. Africa founded and ruled Carthage (See Greenspan)
- 800 Semiramis, Assyria built and ruled Babylon from 811-807 (See
Greenspan)
- 800 BCE-5ACE Greek Priestesses preside over cults all over Greece. Their duties
include leading rituals and festivals, signing and affixing their seals
to documents, arguing cases of sanctuary law before the Council
and Assembly, appointing sacred officials, giving advice, and
enforcing sanctuary law. They were community teachers and
teachers of cult initiates. They also established cultic practices and
temples outside their own cities, paid for the construction of
temples and statuary (See Connelly, Dillon)
- 750 Queen Samsia rules southern Arabia (See Greenspan)
- 714-700 Amenirdas I, Queen of Thebes priestess-sovereign (See Williams
and Finch)
- c. 760-656 Shepenoupet, Queen of Thebes priestess-sovereign 25th dynasty
(See Williams & Finch)
- 700 Queen Naqui, regent of Assyria (See Greenspan)
- 7th/6th Charixena, Greek poetess (See Goodwater)
- 650-625 Queen Larthia, Etruria (See Elder and Bryant)
- 630-570 Sappho, Greek poet and teacher (See Cantarella,
Elder & Bryant, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Plant, Vivante *Daughters*)

- 624 Pheretima rules Cyrene (See Greenspan)
- 570/600 Cleobulina/Cleobulus, Greek (Rhodes) poetess/philosopher (See Ménage, Plant, Pomeroy *Goddesses*, Vivante *Daughters*, Waithe *History*)
- 600 *The Therigatha* or *The Verses of the Elder Nuns* is composed in India by a group of Buddhist women (See Vivante *Women's*)
- 600/500 BC Themistoclea, Greek priestess at Delphi, Pythagoras (c.500BC) may have derived his ideas from her (See Elder & Bryant, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Ménage, Vivante *Daughters*, Waithe *History*)
- b. 546 Theano I, Greek philosopher wife of Pythagoras who wrote *On Piety*, *Pythagorean Apophthegms*, *Philosophical Commentaries and Letters* (also known as *Female Advice*), *On Virtue*, and *On Pythagoras* (See Allen, Greenspan, Elder & Bryant, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Goldwater, Ménage, Plant, Thesleff, Waithe *History*, Wider, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 6th Damo, Croton and Athens wrote a commentary on Homer and taught at Pythagoras's school (See Elder & Bryant, Lambropoulou, Ménage, Waithe *History*, Wider)
- 6th Sara, Pythagorean writer who contributed to *Life of Pythagoras* (See Ménage)
- 6th Arignote, Greek philosopher and daughter of Pythagoras and Theano I. She wrote, co-wrote or edited *The Sacred Discourse* and wrote *Rites of Dionysos* and other works (See Elder & Bryant, Ménage, Thesleff, Waithe *History*, Wider, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 6th/5th Myia, Greek philosopher daughter of Pythagoras and Theano (See Allen, Elder & Bryant, Ménage, Plant, Thesleff, Waithe *History*, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 6th/5th Telesilla, Greek (Argo) poetess who organized the women of Argos to fight against King Cleomenes of Sparta (See Cantarella, Elder & Bryant, Goodwater, Plant)
- 500 Nitocris, Assyrian queen who constructed pyramid at Giza (See Greenspan)
- 500 Sibyl of Cumae, Rome or Naples priestess thought to have written the 9 sibylline books (See Greenspan))

- 5th/3rd Phintys, Greek (Sparta and Italy) Neopythagorean philosopher who wrote *On the Moderation of Women* (See Allen, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Lambropoulou, Ménage, Plant, Thesleff, Waithe *History*, Wider, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 5th/3rd Melissa, Greek (Samos) Neopythagorean philosopher (See Goodwater, Lambropoulou, Ménage, Plant, Thesleff)
- 5th Myrtis, Boeotian poetess (Anthedon) said to be the teacher of the poets Corinna and Pindar (See Cantarella, Goodwater, Plant, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 5th/3rd Corinna, Greek (Tanagra in Boeotia) poetess and contemporary of Pindar (See Cantarella, Goodwater, McIntosh Snyder, Plant)
- 5th Perictione I, Greek Pythagorean philosopher who wrote *On the Harmony of Women*, possibly Plato's mother and influence (See Allen, Elder & Bryant, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Lambropoulou, Ménage, Plant, Thesleff, Vivante *Daughters*, Waithe *History*)
- 5th Diotima, Greek priestess and teacher of Socrates (See Allen, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Ménage, Ritchie and Ronald, Swearingen in Lunsford, Vivante *Daughters*, Waithe *History*)
- 5th/4th Arete, Attic philosopher (Cyrene) head of school of Hedonism. Reportedly wrote 40 books and educated 110 philosophers (See Ménage, Waithe *History*, Wider, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 570 Tanaquil/Gaia Cyrilla, Roman (Etruria) queen (See Cantarella, & Bryant, Greenspan)
- 540 Bel-Shalti-Narrar, Babylonia priestess (See Greenspan)
- 540-510 Theano II, Greek Neopythagorean philosopher and teacher (See Allen, Elder & Bryant Ménage, Thesleff, Waithe *History*, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 520 Tomyris queen of the Massagetae defeats Cyrus the Great (southwest Asia) (See Greenspan, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 500-200 Egyptian caste of scribe-priestesses, served the goddess of the alphabet (See Greenspan)
- 480 Artemisia I Queen of Halicarnassus; battle against Greeks

valuable advisor to the Persian ruler Xerxes (See Greenspan, *Vivante Daughters*)

469-399**Socrates lifetime, Athens**

469-406

Aspasia of Miletus Greek (Miletus) rhetorician, teacher (See Allen, Cantarella, Courtney, Elder & Bryant, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Henry, Jarratt and Ong, Ménage, Plant, Ritchie & Ronald, Waithe *History*, Wider, *Vivante Daughters*)

451

Praxilla, Greek (Sicyon) poetess (See Cantarella, Goodwater, Plant)

427-347**Plato's lifetime, Athens**4th/1st

Perictione II, Greek Neopythagorean philosopher; wrote *On Wisdom* (See Elder & Bryant, Ménage, Thesleff, *Vivante Daughters*, Waithe *History*, Wider)

4th

Timycha, Croton Pythagorean married to Myllias. They were capture and tortured by Dionysius the tyrant for the secret doctrine of the Pythagoreans. Timycha was pregnant and revealed nothing (See Lambropoulou, Ménage, Wider).

4th

Leontion/Leontin/Leontinum, Greek philosopher who wrote a rebuttal to Theophrastus claim that women were inferior to men, text is lost (See Allen, Ménage, Pomeroy *Goddesses*, *Vivante Daughters*).

4th

Lasthenia of Maniteia and Axiothea of Philesia Plato's 2 women students who dressed as males (See Allen, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Ménage, Waithe *History*, *Vivante Daughters*)

4th

Philaenis Greek poetess (Samos) (See Goodwater) pornographer (See Plant)

425-1 ACE

Aesara of Lucania, Italy (Lucania) Pythagorean philosopher who wrote *On Human Nature* (See Allen Plant, Thesleff, *Vivante Daughters*, Waithe *History*)

410-

Eurydice, Greek (Macedonia) literate grandmother of Alexander the Great (See Plant)

4th/3rd

Erinna Greek (Telos, Teos, or Rhodes) poetess (See Lefkowitz and Fant, Pomeroy *Goddesses*, Plant, *Vivante Daughters*, and www.stoa.org)

- 4th/3rd Theophila, Greek (Athens) Epicurean philosopher (See Ménage)
- d. 390 Eurydice Mother of Phillip II of Macedon grandmother of Alexander the great (See Anderson and Zinsser)
- 384-322 Aristotle's lifetime, Athens and Macedonia**
- 375-316 Olympias, Greek mother of Alexander the Great who acted as his regent when he was on military campaign (See Cantarella, Elder & Bryant)
- 350 Artemesia II Queen of Caria assumes rule, botanist and medical researcher (See Greenspan)
- 350 Moschine Greek Poetess, mother of Hedyle (See Plant)
- 346 Hipparchia/Hipparkhia of Maroneia (Thrace) Cynic philosopher and wife of Crates. She wrote *Philosophical Hypotheses* and *Epichiremas* and *Questions to Theodorus* (See Allen, Elder & Bryant, Lefkowitz & Fant, Ménage, Pomeroy *Goddesses*, Wimbush, Vivante *Daughters*, Waithe *History*)
- 340-279/274 Berenice I, wife of Ptolemy I (See Vivante *Women's*)
- 322 Pamphile, Greek (Athens) writer of 35 books including *Historical Commentaries* and; disciple of Theophrastus who headed the Lyceum after Aristotle (See Wider).
- 316-271 Arsinoë II, co-ruler with Ptolemy II from 276-271 (See Cantarella, Elder & Bryant, Greenspan)
- 315-284 Diodorus Cronus's 5 (Stoic) logician daughters: Menexene, Argeia, Theognis, Artemisia, and Pantacleia in (See Ménage)
- 315-308 Cratesipolis, Greek queen who commanded an army of mercenaries (See Goodwater)
- 310 Hedyle, Greek poetess daughter of the poetess Moschine, mother of the poetess Hedylus (See Goodwater, Plant)
- 310/290 Anyte, Greek poetess (Tegea) (See Cantarella, Elder & Bryant, Goodwater, Plant, Vivante *Daughters*, and translated fragments at www.stoa.org)
- 300 Moero/Myro, Greek poetess (See Ménage, Plant)

- 300 Nicarete, philosopher of Megarian school (See Ménage)
- 3rd Nikoboule/ Nicobule, Alexandria who wrote the *History of Alexander the Great* (See Plant)
- 3rd Nossis, Greek poetess (Locri) (See Cantarella, Elder & Bryant, Lefkowitz and Fant, Plant, Vivante *Daughters*, and www.stoa.org for translated fragments)
- 3rd Boeo Greek (Delphi) hymnographer, poetess (See Plant)
- 200 Histiaea/ Histiaia/Hestiaea Alexandria scholar/writer of history, and topography, looked for Troy using *Illiad* (See Greenspan, Plant)
- 284-277 Bartare queen of Meroë in Nubia (See Greenspan)
- 260s 240s Hedyle Greek poetess, daughter of poetess Moschine (See Goodwater)
- 250/1st AD Ptolemaïs musical theorist (Cyrene and Alexandria) (See Ménage, Plant)
- 218 Aristodama, Greek (Smyrna) poetess granted citizenship (See Cantarella)
- 200-180 Lu Hou, empress of China, regent (See Greenspan)
- 200-150 Melinno (Roman/Alexandria) poetess (See Goodwater, Plant)
- 2nd Agallis of Corcyra, pupil of the grammarian Aristophanes of Byzantium (circa 257-180 BCE), scholar of Homer (See Rowlandson)
- 177-155 Queen Shanakdakhete rules Meroë (See Greenspan, Williams & Finch)
- 139-67 Salome Alexandra/Alexandra of Jerusalem Queen of Israel (See Elder & Bryant⁶⁴)
- 100 Iaia of Cyzicus, Rome (worked as an artist and never married) (See Anderson & Zinsser and Lefkowitz and Fant)

⁶⁴ According to Elder and Bryant, although much is forthcoming, little scholarship has been completed about ancient Jewish women.

- 1st Philinna, (Thessaly) poetess, healer (See Plant)
- 1st Syra, Syrian healer (See Plant)
- 99-84 Queen Amanerinas rules Meroë and forces the Romans out of her realm (See Greenspan, Williams and Finch)
- 90 Vegoia, Etruscan prophetess (See Goldwater, Elder & Bryant, Heurgon)
- 80 Liu Hsiang, China wrote *Biographies of Famous Women* (See Greenspan)
- 69-30 Cleopatra Vii, Egypt pharaoh and writer (See Elder & Bryant, Plant, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 50 Sulpicia I, Roman poetess (See Goodwater, Plant, Pomeroy *Goddesses*, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 50 Aretaphila, Cyrene freed her city from a tyrant (See Cantarella)
- 48 BC-13 AD Cheng-Chuan, empress of China (See Greenspan)
- 47-42 Queen Anula, rules Sri Lanka (See Greenspan)
- 42 BC Hortensia Roman, spoke to Roman Senate (See Cape in Wertheimer, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Ritchie and Ronald, Plant)
- 41-12 Queen Amanishakete, ruler of Meroë (Egypt) battles with Romans and negotiates treaty (See Greenspan, Goodwater, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 12 BC-12 AD Queen Amanitere, joint rule of Meroë with king Natakamani (See Greenspan)

After the Common Era (A.C.E.)

- 1st Mary Magdalene Jewish wrote the Gospel of Mary Magdelene (See Bellan-Boyer, Elder & Bryant)
- 1st Peina (educated/literate slave in Egypt)
- 1st Prisca/Priscilla, Roman Jewess converted to Christianity. She was a teacher. She and her husband Aquila were followers of St. Paul (Elder & Bryant)

- 1st Pamphila, Greek or Egyptian writer (See Plant, Ménage)
- 1st Maria, Jewess (Alexandria) alchemist (See Plant)
- 1st Terentia, Roman poetess (See Plant)
- 1st Thecla, Turkey (Iconium) associate/disciple of St. Paul who taught and preached in public (See Bellan-Boyer, Elder & Bryant, Greenspan)
- 1st Elephantis, Egyptian wrote erotica, about cosmetics, and medical cures (See Plant)
- 1st Lais, Sicily and Corinth prostitute/philosopher/sophist (See Plant)
- 28-79 Julia Berenice, Queen of Chalcis (See Goodwater)
- 30-42 Sisters Trung Nhi and Trung Trac, Viet Nam incite revolution and rule together (See Greenspan)
- 46-125 Eumetis named by Plutarch as a philosopher and person of political influence (See Allen)
- 50-112 Pan Chao/Ban Zhao historian to court of Emperor Ho, teacher, wrote *Lessons for Women* (See Donawerth *Rhetorical Theory*, Greenspan, Vivante *Women's*)
- 50 Greek writer Athenaeus records 3000 women hetaerae working as musicians in Athens**
- 50 Philo Judeus describes a women's aesthetic community living outside of Alexandria. Today they are known as the Desert Mothers (See Elder & Bryant, Greenspan)**
- d. 57 Cartimandua, British Queen of the Brigantes who cooperated with the Romans (See Goodwater)
- 60 Parthenis, Greek poetess (See Goodwater)
- 62 Boudica, Queen of the Iceni (Celts) attacked the Romans (See Greenspan, Goodwater, Vivante *Daughters*)
- 66-42 Arria, Rome and Fannia also a Stoic, Fannia died in 108 (See Ménage)
- 70 Pliny the Elder mentions several women painters Timarete, Eirene,

	Kalypso, Aristarete, Iaia, Olympias (See Greenspan 48)
Before 79	Olympias, Thebes midwife who published about herbal medicine (See Plant)
Before 79	Sotira, Greek midwife (See Plant)
Before 79	Timaris, Greek poetess (See Plant)
c. 79	Salpe, Greek (Lesbos) midwife (See Plant)
80	Sulpicia II, Roman poetess (See Goodwater, Plant, Vivante <i>Daughters</i>)
88-97	Rule of Empress Tou Hsien in China (See Greenspan)
1-3 ACE	Cleopatra, Alexandria alchemist (See Plant)
2 nd	Mellino, Roman poetess (See Lefkowitz and Fant)
2 nd	Beruriah, philosopher in Jerusalem (See Anderson & Zinsser)
130	Julia Balbilla, Roman poetess (See Rowlandson, Plant, Vivante <i>Daughters</i>)
144-150	Empress Liang rules China for a succession of child emperors (See Greenspan)
160	Gladatrices in Rome (See Greenspan)
175-143	Cornelia Gracchi, Roman published letters; praised by Cicero (See Cantarella, Cape in Wertheimer, Glenn <i>Rhetoric Retold</i> , Goodwater, Hemelrijk, Plant, Vivante <i>Women's</i>)
169-269	Empress Jingo-kogo rules Japan for 69 years, invades Korea (See Greenspan)
170-217	Julia Domna, Roman educated and interested in Neoplatonism, mathematics, philosophy, sophism (See Hemelrijk, Ménage, Vivante <i>Daughters</i> , Waithe <i>History</i>)
?-190	Pimiku, Japan rules until her death, never married but had a daughter in 234 (See Greenspan)
183-203 (executed)	Vibia Perpetua, Roman Christian writer (See Elder & Bryant, Greenspan, Lefkowitz and Fant, Plant, Vivante <i>Daughters</i>)

204-270**Life of Plotinus**

- 3rd Germainae, Roman-Egyptian philosopher and wife of Plotinus
- 207-6 AD Theosebeia, Constantinople? poetess (See Plant)
- before 210 Fabulla, Roman doctor (See Plant)
- before 210 Maia, (place unknown) midwife and healer (See Plant)
- 2nd Soemais Roman, founded the *senaculum* (214-218 'mini senate') on Quirinal Hill to prevent senatorial class women from losing their privileges if they married non-senatorial class men (See Cantarella)
- 220 Gemina, student of Proclus (See Allen)
- 220 Amphiclea, student of Proclus (See Allen)
- 222-248 Trieu Thi Tinh, Vietnamese resistance leader fights the Chinese, loses and commits suicide (See Greenspan)
- 233-305**
- Life of Porphyry**
- 233-305 Marcella, wife and philosophical partner of Porphyry (See Allen)
- d. 272 Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra rules, breaks with Rome, captured and executed by Romans in 272 (See Greenspan, Goodwater)
- 272-350 Wei Shuo writes a textbook of calligraphy, *Diagram of the Battle Array of the Brush* (See Greenspan)
- 3rd Syncletica, retreats to the desert Scete (See Greenspan)
- 3rd Abbess Sara, retreats to desert Scete for 40 years (See Greenspan)
- 250-329 Helena, literate mother of Constantine (See Elder & Bryant)
- 270-340 Macrina the Elder, Rome, widow, teacher (See Elder & Bryant, Waithe *History*)
- c.290-350 Pandrosion/Pandrosian, Alexandria mathematics teacher (See Deakin *Hypatia*)

- Early 300s Sospittra, Ephesu and Pergamum philosopher and teacher (See G. Clark *Women in Late Antiquity*, Lefkowitz & Fant, Ménage, Pack)
- d. 305-310 St. Catherine of Alexandria educated and engaged in philosophical/religious debates with men (See Allen, Greenspan, Ménage, Vivante *Daughters*, Waithe *History*, Wider)
- 320-370 Faltonia Betita Proba, Roman poetess (See Plant)
- 324-380 Macrina the Younger 327-379 Turkey, studied medicine, founded women's community where she taught (See Brown *The Body*, Alexandre, Waithe *History*)
- 325 First Council of Nicaea**
- 325-412 Marcella, Roman widow who was the first Roman woman known to live as an ascetic in the dessert, she also founded a convent and taught women Christianity (See Drijvers, Greenspan).
- 331-387 Monica, mother of St. Augustine whom he claims was a philosopher (See Allen)
- 342-411 Melania the Elder, Spain established a convent, teacher of Christianity and documented as using persuasion in support of Christianity (See Holum)
- 347-404 St. Paula, Rome widow Christian, founded circle of women who studied the Bible, mother of Eustochium; followed Jerome to Jerusalem (See Greenspan)
- d. 350 Amma Syncletica, Egypt desert mother and teacher of Christianity
- 350/370-415 Hypatia of Alexandria, Greek Egyptian (Alexandria) philosopher, mathematician, inventor, advisor, teacher (See Allen, Deakin *Hypatia*, Dzielska, Fiedler, Elder & Bryant, Lumpkin, Ménage, Wider, Waithe *History*)
- 368-408 Olympia, Byzantium widow who established a community of women at Hagia Sophia, devoted to Bishop John Chrysostom, ordained deaconess (See Holum)
- 380 Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman empire**
- 380 Queen Mavia of the Bedouin Saracens defeat Rome, negotiates peace (See Greenspan)

- 380-420 Eustochium/Eustochia, Roman Paula's virgin daughter who edited Jerome's translation of the Bible which would become the future Vulgate (See Anderson & Zinsser, Holum)
- 381** **The First Council at Constantinople**
- 383-439 Melania the Younger, Roman, granddaughter of Melania the Elder (Spain) (See E. A. Clark, *The Life of Melania the Younger*)
- 384-5th Lands Egeria, Spain? abbess who documented her journey to the Holy (See Elder & Bryant, Plant, Wilkinson)
- 390 Queen Prabhāvātī Gupta becomes regent over the Deccan region of India until 410 (See Greenspan)
- 393 Anicia Faltonia Proba, Roman poetess (See Goodwater)
- 395** **Roman empire divided into East and West**
- 399-453 Pulcheria, Constantinople Theodosius II sister virgin, established a convent to teach women, regent 414- 440 who co-ruled with brother who named her Augusta in 414 (See Greenspan, Holum)
- 5th Aedesia, Greek Egyptian (Alexandria) Neoplatonist philosopher (See Athanassiadi)
- 408-431** **Palladius mentions almost 3000 women living as hermits in the Egyptian desert**
- 400 St. Athanasia disguises herself to live in the desert as a hermit (See Greenspan)
- 400 Mary the Egyptian, a prostitute becomes a penitent and hermit in the Jordanian Desert (See Greenspan)
- 400 Amma Sarah, Egypt desert mother and teacher (See Elder & Bryant)
- 401-460 Eudocia Augusta, Greek poetess, orator, and empress with Theodosius II (See Wendy Mayer in Drake, Holum, Plant)
- 430-485 Asclepigeneia/Asklepigenia, Greece (Athens) daughter of Plutarch, director of Neoplatonic academy in Athens, teacher of Proclus (See Athanassiadi, Elder & Bryant, Vivante *Daughters*, Waithe *History*)

- 431** **The First Council at Ephesus**
- 451** **Council of Chalcedon**
- 476** **Fall of the Western Roman Empire**
- 498-535 Amalswinthe, daughter of King Theodoric the Great of the Ostrogoths becomes regent (See Greenspan)
- 500 St. Kenya, daughter of King Brychan Brycheiniog becomes a hermit, establishes oratories in England and Wales (See Greenspan)
- 500 Chu Ching-Chien, a calligrapher, one of the teachers of great influence per *Biographies of Famous Chinese Nuns* (See Greenspan)
- 5th/6th Eucheria, Roman in France poetess (See Plant)
- 500-548 Empress Theodora, Constantinople actress then Justinian's wife Peripatetic philosopher, she reportedly participated in Justinians government and improved conditions for women (See Ménage).
- 530-587 Queen Radegund France, poetess who established an abbey in which she required all the inhabitants to read and write (See Blank, Elder & Bryant, Lerner *Feminist*)
- 550-613 Brunhilde, queen of the Frankish kingdom of Austrasia (See Greenspan)
- 553** **Second Council of Costantinople**
- 568-628 Bavarian Queen Theolinde, verbally defends the Christian faith against Arian heretics (See Greenspan)
- 583 Kanal-ikal, Mayan ruler of Palenque (See Vivante *Women's*)
- 593-628 Empress Suiko, begins her 36-year reign in Japan (See Greenspan, Vivante *Women's*)
- 600-675 Al-Khansā & her daughter Amr, write elegiac verse in Arabic (See Greenspan)
- 610 Wu Zitian rules all of China (See Greenspan)
- 611-678 Ayesha Bint abu-Bakr, Arab spiritual leader and authority of

- Muslim tradition (See Greenspan)
- 612 Zak K'uk', Mayan ruler of Palenque (See Vivante *Daughters*)
- 614-680 Hilda of Whitby, British founds a co-educational monastery, teaches men, including Caedmon to write, participates in the Synod of Whitby (See Allen, Greenspan, Lerner *Feminist*)
- 625-705 Empress Wo Chao rules China for 50 years (See Greenspan)
- 632-647 Rule of Queen Sonduk of Korea (See Greenspan)
- 642-645 and 655-661 Empress Kogyoku and Empress Saimai rule Japan; according to Vivante this is the same woman and she used two different royal names (See Vivante *Women's*)
- 645-701 Empress Jito-rules Japan 690-697 (See Greenspan, Vivante *Women's*)
- 672-674 Sexburga, rules as Queen of Wessex (See Greenspan)
- 680 Third Council of Constantinople**
- 681-742 Lady Xok, wife of the Mayan (Yaxchilán) ruler Shield Jaguar, visionary who may have ruled after her husband's death (See Vivante *Women's*)
- 692 Quinisext Council (Council in Trullo)**
- 700 Princess Abbassa wanders Arabia, reciting poetry, preserved by Ben Abon Haydah (See Greenspan)
- 8th St Ita/Ida, Ireland visionary (See Blank)
- d. 705 Queen Dahia al-Kahina, West Africa leads battle against the Arabs (See Vivante *Women's*)
- 707--715 Empress Gemmyo rules Japan (See Greenspan, Vivante *Women's*)
- 715-724 Empress Gensho rules Japan (See Vivante *Women's*)
- 718-770 Empress Koken rules Japan (See Vivante *Women's*)
- 748- Lioba, British (Thanet) abbess, poetess, classicist (Lerner *Feminist*)
- 752-803 Irene, empress of the Byzantine empire (See Greenspan)

- 756- Komyo rules Japan as regent for her daughters (See Greenspan 80)
- d. 762 Hugeburc, Saxon nun who wrote biographies of Bishops Wynnebald and Willibald (See Lerner *Feminist*)
- 764-770 Empress Shotoku (aka Koken), rules Japan (See Greenspan)
- 787** **Second Council of Nicaea**
- 810 Casia/Icasia/Kassia Byzantine (Constantinople) poetess, abbess, hymnographer, many of her hymns are still used in the Eastern Orthodox Church today (See Cantarella)
- 840 Dhouda, countess of Septimania, composes a Latin treatise for the education of her son (See Greenspan)
- 860 Athanasia, founder of monasteries, serves as advisor to empress in Constantinople (See Greenspan)
- 10th Abbess Mathilda, of Quedlinburg daughter of Saxon emperor Henry 1, regent, powerful (See Blank)
- d. 1000 Machig Lapdion, Tibetan mystic dies (See Greenspan)
- 910 Ethelfleda rules the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia with her husband and then on her own (See Greenspan)
- 930-1002 Roswitha Hrotsvitha von Gandersheim, Saxony canoness, poet, dramatist, historian (See Allen, Elder & Bryant, Greenspan, Lerner *Feminist*)
- 945 Olga succeeds Igor of Russia, raises an army and puts down a revolt by the Drevlians over taxes (See Greenspan)
- 960- Queen Gormfhlaith of Ireland writes many elegies and laments for her husband 11 survive (See Greenspan)
- 965-? Sei Shōnagon writes the *Pillow Book* (See Donawerth *Rhetorical Theory*, Greenspan)
- 978-1026 Lady Murasaki Shikibu composes the *Tale of Genji* (Greenspan)

- 983-991 Theophano regent of Byzantine, Adelaide succeeds her (Greenspan)
- 10-11 Hausa states in Nigeria are ruled by the Habe queens Kufuru, Gino, Yakumo, Yakunya, Walzana, Daura, Gamata, Shata, Batatume, Sandamata, Yanbamu, Gizirgizir, Innagari, Jamata, Hamata, Zama, Shawata (See Greenspan)
- 1008-1060 Lady Sarashima/Takasue-no-Musume writes *Sarashima Nikki* (See Greenspan)
- d. 1015 St. Adelaide of Bellich, Germany (Bonn) founds a convent and insists her nuns learn Latin (See Greenspan)
- 1040 Aelgifu, Saxon is appointed regent of Norway by Canute (See Greenspan)
- 1040-1105 Shlomo Yitzhaki/Rashi, a French Hebrew scholar had three daughters who wrote commentary on Talmudic law (Lerner *Feminist*)
- 1042-1066 Eadgifu the Fair, Anglo Saxon landowner during the reign of King Edward the Confessor owned 27,000 acres across England (See Greenspan)
- 1081-1141 Li Ch'ing-chao Chinese poet writes *tz'u*, meant to be set to music (See Greenspan)
- 1083-1148 Anna Comnena, Constantinople wrote the *Alexiad*, a history of her father Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (See Greenspan, Quandah & Jarratt)
- d.1087 Wallādah bint al-Mustakfi, Hispano-Arabic poet verse correspondence with her lover the poet Ibn Zaydūn (See Greenspan)
- 1097 Trotula, Italy (Sienna) gynecologist, possible author of “The Trotula Texts” entitled *Morbis Mulierium et Eorum Cura* and *De Compositione Medicamentorum* (See Allen,⁶⁵ Blank)
- 1098-1179 Hildegard of Bingen, Germany abbess, visionary, preacher, hymnographer who wrote 7 books: *Scivias/Know the Ways*, *The Book of Life's Merits*, *Activity of God*, *Symphonia Harmonia Celestium Revelationum/Symphony of the Harmony of*

⁶⁵ Allen claims that women were regularly admitted to the medical schools in Salerno, Bologna, Padua, Pavia, Rome and Naples.

Heavenly Revelations, 2-part *Liber Subtilitatum Diversarum Naturarum Creaturum, Liber Simplicis Medicinae/Physica* and *Liber Compositae Medicinae/Causa et Curae* (See Blank, Dietrich in Wertheimer, Elder & Bryant, Flanagan, Lerner *Feminist*, Newman)

- 1100 Chana Bat Yoheved daughter of the scholar Rashi/Rabbi Schlomo ben Isaac teaches women Jewish Law (See Greenspan)
- 1100 Chu Shu-chen chinese poet, writes mournful *tz'u* (See Greenspan)
- 1112-1204 Eleanor of Aquitaine owns 1/3 of France, participates in Crusades, governs as a royal regent, marries kings of England and France (See Greenspan)
- 1101-1162 Heloise French, abbess and philosopher (See Allen, Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*, Greenspan, Lerner *Feminist*)
- 1126-1164 Elisabeth of Schönau, visionary (See Greenspan, Lerner *Feminist*)
- 1127 Frau Ava/ the “Austrian nun at Melk” German composed religious poetry (See Greenspan)
- 1140-1175 Countess Beatriz de Dia, France poetess and troubadour
- 1140- Azalais de Porcairages, France troubadour, who wrote 2 biographical sketches and a poem, *ar m al fregs temps vengut* (See Greenspan)
- 1177-1213 Marie d’Oignies, visionary, biography by Jacques de Vitry (See Greenspan)

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