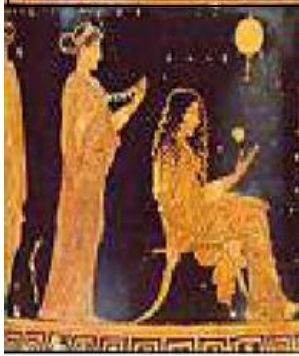


Aglaonike (5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC): first female Greek astronomer



DIVERSITY

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# Round table

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Monday 25 January 2010

Department of Materials Science and Engineering

Conference room (P1), University of Ioannina

## *Lets discuss on DIVERSITY : Better Leadership...*

- *Life and/or career ?*
  - *Good practice ?*
  - *Personal experience ?*
- *Women join leadership position ?*
  - *How to improve ?*
- *Advices to young women scientist...*

**Opening remarks:** Prof. Th. Karakostas, Head of the Electron Microscopy and structural characterization of materials Lab., Physics Department, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

**Brief introduction / round table goals:** Assist. Prof. Ch. E.Lekka

**Invited Academic Decision makers:**

-Prof. T. Bakas, Head of the Physics Department, University of Ioannina (UOI)

-Prof. Th. Karakostas, Head of the Electron Microscopy and structural characterization of materials Lab., Physics Department, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)

-Prof. Ph. Komninou, Member of the Greek Association of Science and Community, Physics Department, AUTH

-Assoc. Prof. G.Evangelakis, Director of Solid State Division, Physics Department, UOI

## Round table report

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January the diversity better leadership round table took place in Ioannina. The participants were Prof.Karakostas, Prof. Komninou, Prof. Bakas, Assoc. Prof. G. A. Evangelakis, Assist. Prof. D. Papageorgiou and Assist. Prof. Ch.E. Lekka.

Prof. Karakostas in his introduction made a historical overview of women being in Science from Ancient Greece. Although the Greek culture is very strict to women, since taking care their families is what they should do, the last decays the situation has gradually changed and more women are working and achieve high level positions. There are a lot of Greek women that have succeeded their career in Greece or abroad and stand as good practice examples. He mentioned that it is very difficult for a woman to survive in a men's world and usually men do not wish to deal with women. In the Greek Universities and especially in Materials Science, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics they used to be only a few women in high level academic positions and especially Professors. In addition, he was sure that there are women willing to have decision maker positions or even join leadership positions but it is not easy to achieve this target.

After the opening remarks, a brief introduction about DIVERSITY, the University of Ioannina and the goals of this round table were presented by Assist. Prof. Ch. E. Lekka. DIVERSITY is a support action - type project funded by the European Commission within the FP7th for research and technological development and addresses to the Capacities program, part 5 Science in Society, activity 5.2.1. Gender and Research, thematic area 5.2.1.1. Strengthening the role of women in scientific research. The project has started on the 1st of January 2009 and will last 36 months.

In Greece, the Gender Equality Principle was introduced in the Greek Constitution in 1975 and established in Eighties with the introduction of several important laws and institutional changes that ensure the equality between men and women.

This project aims in promoting the idea that increasing the number of women in decision-making positions would ensure the quality and efficiency of research itself. Women leaders would address the needs of female scientists, would build a positive public attitude towards the researcher's profession avoiding stereotypes that exist in countries like Greece and would attract - retain young women in scientific professions. In this way a more stimulating research environment in the spirit of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment will be achieved.

Greece has a history concerning women scientists with a characteristic example **Aglaonike** (5<sup>th</sup> century BC), who is cited as the first female astronomer in ancient Greece. She was regarded as a sorceress for her ability to make the moon disappear from the sky, which has been taken to mean she could predict the time and general area where a lunar eclipse would occur.

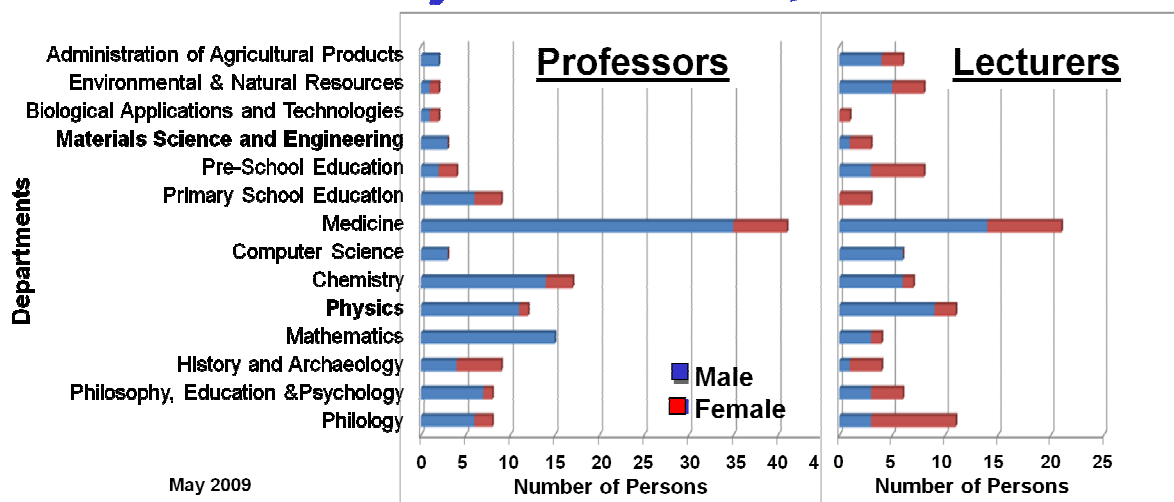


**Fig.1.** Aglaonike 5<sup>th</sup> century BC

Nowadays, males dominate in higher levels in Greece although the number of graduated women scientists is almost equal with men. From the scarce data on women in research decision-making it is concluded (19 universities) that in 2003-2004 there

were 14% women among professors, 26% among associate professors, 32% among assistant professors and 39% among lecturers . The audience’s interest was focused on the percentage of women and men in each department in the Universities - Institutes. While one would expect the number of males to be dominant in high level academic positions of departments like Materials science, Physics and Chemistry, interestingly they also occupy the high level positions in departments like History & Archaeology, Philosophy, Education & Psychology as well as Philology. In particular in the University of Ioannina, Fig.2, we observe that male occupy (blue colored bars) the majority of first class Professor positions except History and Archaeology (male: female)=(4:5) while in the Lecturer positions female (red colored bars) only dominate Philology, History and Archaeology and Pre-School Education. In Material Science and Engineering, there are not female Professors while female occupy the lowest level Assistant Prof. and Lecturer positions. As far as the Physics Department is concerned the distribution of women in academic level is wider but the number of female compared to male is extremely small (6 women over 50 men).

## **University of Ioannina, Greece**



**Fig.2.** Number of male (blue bars) and female (red bars) occupying the Professor (first level) and the Lecturer (fourth level) academic positions in the University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece. Data were taken on May 2009.

After the introduction and the analysis of Greek women scientists’ situation especially in the University of Ioannina, the round table discussion started. Along with the invited speakers, a lot of Phd and graduate students participated. Prof. Karakostas continued with his personal experience concerning his successful collaboration with women from the student’s level up to full Professor positions. Prof. Komninou, the first women Professor in the Solid State Division at the Physics Department in Thessaloniki (the second oldest Physics Department in Greece, after the University of Athens) is married and mother of two children and indeed she is a good practice example. She discussed about the difficulty of trying to succeed in life and career but she insisted that if you love science you can and you will do it, you just need to try harder. She had to work many times twice compared to her male colleagues while when she applied for the Professor position her CV was extremely competitive.

Among other issues, a very important point that she addressed was her comment concerning the situation in the University of Ioannina where even in the Philology Department the men occupy the full Professor positions and women dominate the Lecturer's position. This situation may give hope for the future regarding that these female Lecturers may be promoted to Assistant Prof., Associate Prof. and finally to full Professor positions which means that after 10-20 years the map in Fig.2 could be upside down. In addition, it was pointed out that women are generally more organized than men and may sustain a lot of pressure due to their nature. Therefore, they could successfully occupy high leadership positions and wherever this took place it led to positive results (e.g. organizing International Conferences, president of department's economic management). Furthermore, Prof. Evangelakis pointed out that he would have no objection to hire a female and he had successfully collaborated with women from Phd up to Professor positions. Moreover, women Phd from the audience were happy to hear that the Women in Nano project somehow continues and there is interest from the European Commission to support the disciplinary and encourage young women scientists to proceed in the scientific career especially in the field of Material Science and Engineering. On the other hand the Phd men were really skeptical and suddenly felt inequity compared to the ladies recommending that for them it will be more difficult to get a job if women receive special treatment. Concluding, the goal of introduction and information about the situation of Women in Material Research institutes (focusing in Ioannina) and the collection of different opinions about DIVERSITY better leadership was successful.