

# **Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences**

Volume 13

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As the historical records prove, women have long been creating original contributions to philosophy. We have valuable writings from female philosophers from Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and a continuous tradition from the Renaissance to today. The history of women philosophers thus stretches back as far as the history of philosophy itself. The presence as well as the absence of women philosophers throughout the course of history parallels the history of philosophy as a whole.

Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt and Simone de Beauvoir, the most famous representatives of this tradition in the twentieth century, did not appear from nowhere. They stand, so to speak, on the shoulders of the female titans who came before them.

The series *Women Philosophers and Scientists* published by Springer is of interest not only to the international philosophy community, but also for scholars in history of science and mathematics, the history of ideas, and in women's studies.

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Christine Lopes · Katarina Ribeiro Peixoto ·  
Pedro Pricladnitzky  
Editors

# Latin American Perspectives on Women Philosophers in Modern History

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ISSN 2523-8760

ISSN 2523-8779 (electronic)

Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences

ISBN 978-3-031-00287-8

ISBN 978-3-031-00288-5 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-00288-5>

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# Foreword

## **Beyond the Centuries, Culture, and other Boundaries: Why we study the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists**

In 2018, for the occasion of the four hundredth birthday celebration of Elisabeth of Bohemia, a young Brazilian researcher, Dr. Katarina Ribeiro Peixoto joined the Celebratory Conference organized by the Center for the History of Women Philosophers in Paderborn, Germany. Her visit was the first step to linking international communities and their research into reconstructing the cultural heritage of women philosophers. Three years later, an intensive cooperation is in process, new perspectives have opened, and this important volume has been accomplished: *Latin American Perspectives on Women Philosophers in Modern History*.

The mood for this new beginning was enthusiastic, though one important question demanded our attention: Should the reading of women philosophers in the European tradition—though long excluded—become an important topic in the rewriting of the history of philosophy, or should scholars confine themselves to the discovery and reawakening of the thoughts of women philosophers in their own particular cultural context? Should the texts of these European women philosophers be read and re-reflected, or had this to be seen as a re-colonialization act of Western thought, yet only in disguise? How is it possible to advance mutual cooperation in order to retrieve our common women philosophers' tradition, including the European and Latin American one, yet not confined to these?

Is reading and learning from women philosophers with their Western background intertwined with the suppressive history of suprematism? Yes, and no. Of course, women who participated in that policy were part of it, at least in the sense of being part of the underlying structures. Women philosophers are as responsible as anyone else, they have to be investigated, in their own right, as to which side they were on, what philosophy they provided to describe their world, the kind of norms they drafted and which ideas they discovered to establish philosophy and scientific thinking.

Should these women who are not part of one's own cultural tradition become excluded? Is it an alternative to confine one's own ideas and to root intellectual power in a nationalist and/or group world?

If we did so, we would delimit our world of ideas that we are able otherwise to share with people from all over the world (and which is the only means that allows us to cross borders and go beyond boundaries) and sacrifice this idea in favour of the place where we ourselves happen to be born. We are all citizens of the world, at least united in spirit, and therein lies the opportunity to create unity across borders and break chains. Great ideas do not belong to any country. We share spiritual insights that never become less in sharing; on the contrary, spirits have the secret of multiplying by division.

We all need to relearn and appreciate the fruitfulness of spiritual sharing. This book is an example of doing so. In sharing and bringing together what is known and unknown, it crosses borders, cultures, and centuries, it brings together the old and known with the newly discovered. We find here a collection of particular perceptions that captivates us beyond the borders and boundaries because of its spiritual significance. We find stories of oppression and standing firm, of great ideas that transcend times and continents, celebrating the power of thinking that breaks down boundaries and gives rise to a community educated by the thoughts and ideas from women philosophers, worldwide and in un-restricted fashion.

October 2021

Ruth E. Hagengruber  
Center for the History of Women  
Philosophers  
Paderborn, Germany

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