



WHAT SHOULD WOMEN DO? THE STOICS ON GENDER-ROLE DIVISION

O QUE DEVEM AS MULHERES FAZER? OS ESTOICOS SOBRE A DIVISÃO DE PAPÉIS BASEADA NO GÊNERO

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The aim of this paper is to enquire if the Stoics consider certain social activities appropriate only for men or women, a much-debated question in the scholarship. Here it is argued that the Stoics are not committed to gendered divisions of tasks. This claim is pled through an analysis of the various testimonies and of the Stoic notion of appropriate activity (*καθήκον*). This result leads to reconsider the Stoics' stand within their cultural environment and will hopefully contribute to the debate on their thinking on womanhood. This study is thus structured: firstly, the notion of *καθήκον* is presented; next, the evidence of the Stoic use of gender as a parameter in determining *καθήκοντα* is discussed; then, a reconstruction of the social role the early Stoics assigned to women in their planned constitutions is attempted; finally, the reflection of later Stoics on the role of women in actual societies is addressed.

Keywords: appropriate activity; division of labor; gender; Stoics; womanhood; *καθήκον*.

O objetivo deste trabalho é determinar se os Estóicos consideram certas atividades sociais apropriadas apenas para homens ou mulheres, uma questão muito debatida entre os estudiosos. Argumenta-se neste texto que os Estóicos não reivindicam uma divisão de tarefas baseadas no gênero. Esta alegação é defendida por meio de uma análise de vários testemunhos e da noção estóica de atividade apropriada (*καθήκον*). Isto leva a reconsiderar a posição dos Estóicos dentro do seu ambiente cultural e esperamos que contribua para o debate sobre o pensamento estóico acerca da feminilidade. Este estudo está estruturado da seguinte forma: primeiro, apresentamos a noção de *καθήκον*; em seguida, discutimos a evidência do uso estóico do gênero como parâmetro de determinação das *καθήκοντα*; depois, visamos a reconstrução do papel social que os Estóicos antigos atribuíam às mulheres nas suas constituições; finalmente, abordamos a reflexão dos Estóicos tardios sobre o papel das mulheres nas sociedades contemporâneas.

Palavras-chave: atividades apropriadas; divisão do trabalho; gênero; Estoicos; feminilidade; *καθήκον*.

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Introduction

In this paper the following question is addressed: did the Stoics think that certain activities, especially among those belonging to the social sphere, are fit only for men while others are peculiar to women only? Answering to it is fundamental to understand the Stoics' cultural stand on womanhood and their application of the notion of appropriate activity (*καθῆκον*) to practical ethics.

A clear-cut answer to this question is absent from the ancient sources, making it a topic of scholarly controversy. Most critics have contributed to the debate by focusing on specific aspects of the subject: whether the Stoics thought that men and women have different capacities to become virtuous (Favez, 1933; Mauch, 1997; Tuomela, 2014), whether they regarded women as fit as men to be taught philosophy (Engel, 2000; Nussbaum, 2002; Wöhrle, 2002), or if they endorsed equal social rights for men and women (Scharrer, 2002). The standing discussion in the scholarship must be accounted, partially, to this particularistic approach. What could shed light on the topic under consideration is an analysis of the relevant sources of the Stoics' reflections on the social roles of women that takes its leave from an assessment of the notion underpinning their discussion of this subject, *i.e.* the notion of *καθῆκον*.

The aim of this contribution is to examine this problem in the aforementioned perspective. This methodology allows to conclude that, while the opinion of the early Stoics remains obscure, some later ones shared a common view: as long as the State prospers and all its citizens are virtuous, the second clause likely being a requirement for the first, it is not truly relevant whether men and women engage in the same activities.

The outcome of the present enquiry entails a rethinking of the Stoics' placement in their cultural context, with reference to the social construction of gender, and it will hopefully contribute to the ongoing discussion on the Stoic conception of womanhood.

The present study is organized in four parts: in the first place, the Stoic notion of *καθῆκον* is presented; the following section is devoted to a scrutiny of the testimonies of the Stoic thematization of gender as a parameter in determining if an activity is fit for an agent; then, a reconstruction of the role the early Stoics assigned to women in their planned political constitutions is attempted; lastly, the reflection of some later Stoics on the role of women in historical societies is addressed.

1. The Notion of Appropriate Activity

It is necessary to start by sketching the Stoic notion of appropriate activity, one of the translations proposed for the Greek καθήκον and its Latin analogous, *officium*. In this section, its definition is considered, followed by an outline of the Stoics' methods for finding out which activity is appropriate in particular situations. One method receives special attention, the one liable to involve gender as a parameter in the 'discovery of the appropriate activity'.

An overview of the various testimonies (in the first place Cic., *Fin.* III 17.58-18.61, A. D., *apud Stob.*, II.7 8-8a.85-86, D. L., VII.107-110) reveals that the καθήκον is something that is fit for a living being. When the term is applied to animals or humans, it means a kind of activity (ένέργημα, ένεργούμενον, *actio*, *actum*) which the agent performs after having experienced the impulse (όρμή, *appetitio* or *appetitus animi*) to do so: in Stoic psychology, an impulse is a soul that sets to accomplish an activity.

With specific reference to humans, the καθήκον is defined by three elements: (1) it is an activity that, once accomplished, is liable to be justified in a reasonable or probable way; (2) reason chooses to perform it, demands it to be performed or, more simply, performs it by itself; (3) it is an activity consistent in the agents' life and with their nature or, more properly, it is appropriate to their constitution as long as this accords to nature.

(1) is arguably the most problematic element of the definition, because the claim that the καθήκον has a defence (άπολογία) or an account (άπολογισμός, *ratio*) εύλογος or *probabilis* is ambiguous: there is evidence the Stoics used εύλογος either to mean that something is in agreement with the right reason (D. L., VII.88, A. D., *apud Stob.*, II.7 5b2.60-61, 5h-i.72),¹ *i.e.* it's true or virtuous, depending whether the adjective is referred to a statement or a behavior, or to signify that a cognitive impression or a statement are likely to be right (D. L., VII.76, 177, Athen., VIII.50),² that is, they are or seem to be more probably true than false. The Latin translation does not remove the ambiguity.³

(2) suggests that the 'rationalistic' interpretation of εύλογος fits better here. Since the accordance with nature, a reference to the Stoic view of the human end in life, appears in (3),

¹ Among the scholars advocating for this interpretation there are Hirzel (1877–1883, vol. 2. pp. 341–346 n. 1), Barney (2003), Brennan (2014).

² Among the scholars defending the probabilistic interpretation one must mention Bonhöffer (1894, pp. 193–233); Nebel (1935); Sedley (1999).

³ On Cicero's use of *probabilis* in his philosophical writings cf. Glucker (1995, pp. 129–133).

(2) can be thus explained: the accomplishment of a καθήκον puts the agent in accordance with reason, *qua* the governing principle of the cosmos and, as such, the standard for the virtuous behavior, according to Zeno’s formulation of the human end (A. D., *apud* Stob., II.7 6a.75, D. L., VII.87). Nonetheless, the ‘probabilistic’ interpretation of εὐλογος cannot be ruled out, because elsewhere the καθήκον is said to envelop an element of incertitude (Sen., *Ben.* IV 33.2, Epict., *Diss.* II 6.9-10, 10.4-6). Therefore, it is possible that in this context at least some Stoics saw the adjective εὐλογος as having both meanings (Gourinat, 2014).

(3), an element concerning all animals, cannot be understood without reference to the physical notions of nature (φύσις), appropriateness (οἰκείον) and constitution (κατασκευή).⁴ The evidence on these leads to interpret (3) in a teleologic perspective: by performing a καθήκον, an agent acts in accordance with the principle presiding over their preservation and flourishing as a psychosomatic whole that lives ‘in tune’ with their principle of preservation and flourishing. To put it in a plainer way, the καθήκον is an activity fit to make the agents live and develop as they are naturally supposed to live and develop, *e.g.* octopusses as octopusses, horses as horses, humans as humans.⁵

What the *concrete* contribution of καθήκοντα to the agent’s life is is not stated clearly in the ancient testimonies, whence the scholarly debate.⁶ However, the examples of animal and human καθήκοντα reported in the sources hint that the καθήκοντα are activities that allow the agent to preserve themselves in a condition of psycho-physical well-being and, at least in the case of humans, to strengthen their social net. In other terms, καθήκοντα are activities enabling an animal or a human to live well as an individual and enabling a human to live well also as a member of a community.

Animals are constantly inclined to perform certain activities, in the sense that they regard some activities as appropriate for them to perform. Nonetheless, overlooking the case of other animal species, the Stoics admit the possibility for humans to be wrong in their judgments, either because they are uneducated or because they fail to perceive their environment correctly. In order to cope with these problems, the Stoics developed several methods for what they called

⁴ Cf., for example, Hierocles, *Elem.* I 1a.10 ff., VI 1b.15 ff. and D. L., VII.148–149 on nature, *SVF* III.178–189, and Long & Sedley (1987, p. 57) (from now on *LS*) on appropriateness, Epict., *Diss.* I.6, II 10.4, III 6.10, *LS* 53t, 63j on constitution.

⁵ On the relation between the καθήκον and human development cf. Rieth (1934), Kidd (1955), Inwood (1986).

⁶ Engberg-Pedersen (1986) and Gourinat (2014) think the καθήκον contributes to the life of man because it is an accomplishment of a prescription of reason, accordance with the latter (ὁμολογία) being the end of human life. Nebel (1935) and Wiersma (1937) argue that the καθήκον contributes to the life of men, inasmuch, by performing it, they become like the sage. Pohlenz (1967, vol. 1 pp. 263–265) interprets the καθήκον as an activity useful for the agent’s survival. Brennan (2014) and Klein (2015) claim that human καθήκοντα are actions by which the agents try to follow the course of nature.

“the discovery of the καθήκον” (εὑρεσις τοῦ καθήκοντος, *inventio officii*), a strategy aimed at determining if an activity is *truly* appropriate for an agent.

For the purpose of the present study, one method in particular is relevant. This can be named ‘person-model’,⁷ because it takes into consideration the personality of the agent, understood as an umbrella-concept covering a multitude of aspects of their life: the species they belong to, their temperament, family history, working career, age, juridical status, the historical period during which they happen to live and so on. All these aspects, when combined, make up who an individual is. This model is mainly attested by Cicero in the *De officiis*, by Epictetus and, in a lesser degree, by Seneca. They illustrate it in analogy with the concept of seemliness (πρέπον, *decorum*) applied to dramatic personas (πρόσωπα, *personae*): like a certain way of speaking or acting is recognized as fit for a stage character, so a certain behavior is καθήκον for an agent if it ‘matches’ them somehow. After this heuristic method, the καθήκον is described as an activity expressing who an agent is, with reference either to a specific aspect of their personality, such as their mood, religious beliefs or ancestry, or to their personality as a whole; in the latter case the καθήκον results from an overall consideration of the various components of the agent’s identity. In other words, a καθήκον is any activity by which people remain consistent with who they are.

To make a few examples, taken from ancient sources, of how this method works, it can be said that it is καθήκον for a citizen to value the well-being of their political community over their own, for a son or daughter to honour their parents and respect their authority, for an athlete to observe a certain diet and stay in good shape, and so on.

Summing up what has been said, the notion of καθήκον, when applied to humans, denotes a spontaneous activity rationally or plausibly accountable as compliant with the agent’s survival and development as a (social) animal. One of the methods the Stoics conceived to determine which activity is καθήκον for an agent relies on the agent’s personality: from this point of view, a καθήκον is an activity fitting one or more of the agent’s individual features.

2. Gender as a Parameter for the Discovery of Appropriate Activities

⁷ The main sources on this model include Cic., *Off.* I 30.107-22.121, Sen., *Ben.* II 18.1-2, III 28.1-6, VI 37.3, VII 14.3, *Ep.* XCIV-XCV, Epict., *Diss.* I 16.9-14, II 14.8 ff., III 1.27-31, IV 7.13-20, *Ench.* 17, 30, 33.7, 43, M. Aurel., I.12, VIII.27, XI 18.1. On this subject cf. De Lacy (1977), Gill (1988), Johnson (2014, p. 30 ff.).

A few descriptions of the person-model refer to the gender as an aspect of the personality of an agent. It follows that, at least for some Stoics, there are activities appropriate for women *qua* women. In this section the two main examples of this link, between a presentation of καθήκον and the claim that gender works as a parameter for the discovery of καθήκοντα, are taken under consideration, in order to prove that the said link does not necessarily imply a gendered division of social tasks. However, a survey of a third testimony shows that such a division can be endorsed in the perspective of Stoic ethics.

Cicero in the *De officiis*, probably paraphrasing the Stoic Panaetius, and Epictetus,⁸ two of the main witnesses of the person-model, apply the category of gender to the domain of body-care and self-presentation as a parameter for the discovery of καθήκοντα. Cicero argues that, since man's beauty (*pulchritudo*) differs from woman's, man and woman ought to dress, move and clean themselves differently (*Off.* I 36.130). Epictetus focuses on the fact that men tend to be hairier than women, and so the facial and body hair or their absence are visible marks (*σύμβολα*, *Diss.* I 16.11-14) of one's gender. These signs help people to recognize the others' gender and, by doing so, they speed up the mating of males and females and their reproduction, both actions that are regarded as social καθήκοντα by the Stoics.⁹ Therefore, according to Epictetus, it is καθήκον for the man to keep his beard and not to remove his body hair, and for the woman to be hairless, otherwise “she is a prodigy (*τέρας*), and is exhibited at Rome among the prodigies” (*Diss.* III 1.27).¹⁰

Both Cicero and Epictetus explain this need for differentiation between men and women by referring it to their sexual difference, and Epictetus links this need with the goal of the self-preservation of the species. But neither of them infers from this the urgency of a distinction among social tasks between men and women: the natural difference between them is not said to entail a gender-role division, differentiating their participation in the life of their community. Rather, the different activities the two writers assign to men and women, especially in Epictetus' case, seem to aim at allowing them to overcome their natural differences in order to share a common social life.

⁸ Cf. also M. Ruf., *D.* XXI. Epictetus' opinions about women are debated by scholars: Hill (2001) and Wöhrle (2002) hold that Epictetus, though granting to women and men an equal capability of virtue, because they are equal in λόγος, does not infer from it a change in the social role of women; contrariwise, Tuomela (2014, pp. 27–28) emphasizes the moral and psychological equality Epictetus appears to assert in some passages.

⁹ Cf. also Epict., *Diss.* II 23.38-39, A. D., *apud* Stob., II.7 11m.110, Hierocl., *apud* Stob., IV.67 22.502–503, IV.75 14.603–605.

¹⁰ Epictetus is plausibly aware that his scolding of ‘effeminate’ men echoes Diogenes of Sinope's (cf. D. L., VI.46, 65, Athen., XIII.565c.).

One might conclude that the Stoics, while acknowledging the gender as a parameter for the discovery of appropriate activities, did not feel compelled to take in a gender-role differentiation akin to the traditional one existing in ancient Greece as in Rome. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that at least one representative of the Stoa accepted such a differentiation.

This representative is Seneca, another source of the person-model. He explicitly links gender to a social-role division between men and women: a paraphrase of his lost writing *De matrimonio* by Saint Jerome (fr. 50 Vottero = Ieron., *Iovian.* I.49) reads an endorsement of the confinement of the woman inside the house, where she ought to live as a modest (*pudica*) wife and mother, while her husband serves the State as consul, orator or soldier. Seneca hints at a gender-role distinction also in some scattered passages of his writings.¹¹ Yet, his last word on this subject is unclear, because in other contexts of his oeuvre, which does not contain any fully fledged reflection on womanhood, he claims that men and women ought to be educated in the same way and must not be treated according to a gender-determined double standard.¹² Consequently, Seneca's stand on this topic is debatable, but, if Jerome's testimony is taken as a reliable account of what Seneca himself writes elsewhere more vaguely, this means that he accepted a standard gendered division of social *officia*, to some extent.

Summarizing these reflections, on the one hand, Panaetius, probably paraphrased by Cicero, and Epictetus consider the gender as a parameter for the discovery of *καθήκοντα*, but do not infer from this any distinction in the social and political life of men and women. On the other hand, Seneca, in some *loci* of his works, explicitly distinguishes the social roles of men and women according to the traditional standard of his historical milieu. For this reason, the question whether the Stoics systematically referred to gender in order to determine the social tasks of men and women remains unanswered and demands further analysis.

3. Women in the Ideal City: Equal to Men?

Considering that the main sources of the person-model do not provide a definite answer to the question whether the Stoics thought that gender determines different *καθήκοντα* pertaining to the social sphere, the position of the early Stoics ought to be examined, as they

¹¹ Cf., for example, *Marc.* 7.3, *Helv.* 16.3-5, *Const.* I.1, *Ira* III 24.3, *Ep.* 95.21.

¹² Cf., for example, *Marc.* 16.1, *Helv.* 17.3-5, *Ben.* II 18.1, V 22.4, *Ep.* 94.26.

deal with the subject of gender in political writings. These writings are reviewed in this section, in which it is proved that the evidence on the early Stoics is too poor and scattered to allow for a perspicuous understanding of their opinions on the social role of women, even if it seems that they did not completely advocate an abolishment of a traditional gendered division of labor.

There are two main testimonies of the opinion of the early Stoics on the subject under consideration. The first is a fragment of *On Stoics* (*Περὶ Στοικῶν*) by the Epicurean Philodemus (*PHerc.* 339, coll. XVIII-XIX).¹³ Despite some lacunas in the papyrus, it seems that Philodemus is still describing Diogenes of Sinope and Stoics such as Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus and Antipater,¹⁴ mentioned in the text, when criticizing “those all-hallowed [men] who are pleased” by the ideas that women may “assault men, try to seduce them and deploy any stratagem in order for men to have an intercourse with them”, and that married women may “flee with the men they prefer, deserting their husband, and wear the same robe as men (τὴν αὐτὴν στολὴν ἀμπέχεσθαι τοῖς ἀνδράσιν), take part in the same activities”, and that there may be “not a single difference between them ([πά]ντως δ[ὲ] μὴδ’]ἄπαξ ἀπ[η]λλοιωσ[θαι]), (...) and that women [may] exercise alongside men”. Some of these *tenets*, which are said to be excerpted from writings describing an ideal political constitution such as Diogenes’ and Zeno’s *Republic* (*Πολιτεία*) and Chrysippus’ *On the city* (*Περὶ πόλεως*), are patently gender-egalitarian, as Philodemus himself declares in the end of the quotation.

However, this conclusion is not confirmed by Diogenes Laërtius’ doxography of Cynic and Stoic ethics, the second piece of evidence of the early Stoics’ opinions on women. Laërtius says that Zeno and Chrysippus, respectively in the *Republic* and in *On the republic* (*Περὶ πολιτείας*), plausibly the same work Philodemus is referring to under the title *On the city*, presented the project of a constitution in which everyone shall wear the same clothing (VII.33) and “women shall be common among the wise men, so that any man running into a woman may have an intercourse with her” (VII.131).¹⁵ To some degree, this political utopia is inspired by the political thought of the Cynics, as Philodemus, Laërtius (VII.4) and others attest:¹⁶

¹³ The translation presented here relies on the edition of the text established by Dorandi (1982).

¹⁴ It is unknown whether Philodemus means Antipater of Tarsus or Antipater of Tyre, but the former seems a better candidate (cf. Guérard, 1989).

¹⁵ D. L., VII.121 (echoed in A. D., *apud* Stob., II.7 11b.94) seems to contradict what is written in §§ 33, 131, since it reads that, in his *Republic*, Zeno wrote that the sage will marry and engender children (τὸν σοφόν (...) γαμήσειν, ὡς ὁ Ζήνων φησὶν ἐν *Πολιτεία*, καὶ παιδοποιήσεσθαι). Various solutions have been proposed to make these passages consistent, either by differentiating the political context described in them (cf. Baldry, 1959; Dawson, 1992, pp. 190–193), or by giving different meanings to the occurrences of γάμεω appearing in the three passages (cf. Erskine, 1990, pp. 25–27; Asmis, 1996) or by arguing that § 121 backdates to Zeno an appeal formulated by later Stoics (cf. Schofield, 1991, pp. 119–127).

¹⁶ Cf. also Plut., *Lyc.* 31.

Laërtius' account of Diogenes the Cynic's *Republic* reads that women shall be held in common, and that marriage shall be replaced by the act of a man persuading a woman to live together with him (VI.72).

As scholars recognize,¹⁷ the Cynic and Stoic political agendas ground on some famous *tenets* held by Socrates in Plato's *Republic* regarding the class of the guardians, rulers of the planned city of Kallipolis. In *Resp.* V (451d ff.) Socrates claims that in Kallipolis women, alongside men, shall be judged by their capacities, receive the same education as their male peers (451e–452a, 456b) and, if considered fit to rule, share the administration (455b–456d) and the defence (457a) of the State with men. Within the class of the guardians, Socrates also suggests that the citizens shall have no private properties (III.416d–417b, V.464b–d) nor traditional families (V.457d–459d), the women and offspring being held in common, so that the same affection relates all the rulers, with no special bonds between some of them engendering political partitions.

The comparison between Philodemus' and Diogenes' testimonies suggests that the sources do not allow to reconstruct a consistent Stoic theory of the status of women in the ideal constitution. On the one hand, Philodemus writes that in the Cynic and the Stoic planned States women have the same sexual freedom as men and the same right to take the initiative in sexual bonding; this is exemplified by the story of the Cynic Hipparchia, recounted by Diogenes Laërtius (VI.96–98). Philodemus adds that women take part in the same activities as men, and that there is “not a single difference” between men and women. Even though the idea that men and women shall dress after the same fashion could mean that women shall take on men's clothing, rather than that the two shall reach a compromise on a unisex wardrobe,¹⁸ the implication of this point would still be egalitarian,¹⁹ as male clothing in Classical and Hellenistic Antiquity²⁰ was decided to fit for an outdoor life. Therefore, the idea that women should replace their garments with men's ones, as Hipparchia did with her husband Crates, aims at making them able to perform the same activities as men, thus freeing women from the limits of an indoor existence. On the other hand, according to Laërtius' testimony, the early Stoics keep women subject to men in their planned city, to some respects: he does not write that in the Stoic ideal cities people mate on mutual consent, nor that anyone, regardless of their gender, is

¹⁷ See *infra* p. 10 n. 22.

¹⁸ On the Cynic typical wardrobe cf. Giannantoni (1983–1985, pp. III.449–455).

¹⁹ Professor Dorota Dutsch needs to be thanked for this remark.

²⁰ On dressing in Ancient Greece and Rome cf. Alden (2003), Edmondson & Keith (2008), Croom (2010).

‘common’ among all the other citizens; rather, women are at men’s disposal, while men choose women as partners, confining them to a passive role. In this picture, women and men do have different social tasks. This small yet unambiguous evidence implies that the social inequality between men and women was further developed by the early Stoics, contrary to what the lacunous Epicurean source leads to assume.

In conclusion, the testimonies of how the early Stoics dealt with the question whether gender ought to work as a parameter in the discovery of *καθήκοντα* is too problematic to let the reader ultimately conclude that they rejected or approved a strict gender-role division.²¹

4. Women in the Existing Political Communities: Wives, Philosophers, Household Managers

The widest discussions of womanhood and the social status of women by Stoic thinkers are attested for Antipater from Tarsus (III–II century BC), the chief of the Stoic school in Athens, Musonius Rufus (I century AD), an Etruscan philosopher teaching in Rome, and Hierocles (probably II century AD), of whom no biographical information survives. An investigation of their position on this topic is hereafter conducted, whose result is that these philosophers, discussing the role of women in actual rather than ideal societies, accept yet are not fully committed to a gendered division of labour, because their goal is either that all humans are given equal chance to become virtuous or that all citizens contribute to the well-being of the State, two goals arguably related.

4.1. Antipater

Antipater, whose interest in the *καθήκον* and notably in the question of its discovery is well attested,²² is the author of two writings, titled *On living with a woman* (*Περὶ γυναικὸς*

²¹ Among the contributions on Zeno’s and Chrysippus’ planned State one must mention at least Chroust (1965), Müller (1984). On the relationship between the Cynic and Early-Stoic political thought cf. Dudley (1937, pp. 98–99), Vander Waerd (1994), Navia (1996, pp. 112–113), Goulet-Cazé (2003, pp. 41–44, 47–51), Husson (2011, pp. 109–111), Brunt (2013, pp. 30–32, 96–106).

²² Cf., for example, Stob., II.7 6a.76, 7f.83, Clem. Al., *Strom.* II 21.497, Plut., *CN XVII.1072f*, Gal., *PHP V* 6.10–14. Some of these testimonies refer to Antipater without specifying his birthplace. But, since some others do, and the doctrines they present are consistent with one another, it is plausible they refer to the same philosopher.

συμβιώσεως) and *On marriage* (*Περὶ γάμου*), of which only a few excerpts survive.²³ In these texts, though the word *καθηκόν* is almost absent, its notion is clearly implemented in the description of how husband and wife should behave one towards the other and how they ought to manage their household (*οἶκος* or *οἰκία*).²⁴

As has been previously reported, Antipater is listed by Philodemus among the Stoics advocating for a gender-equal society. Since two of other Stoics named, *i.e.* Zeno and Chrysippus, are said by Philodemus and Diogenes Laërtius to have stated this claim in their works on ideal constitutions, it is likely that Antipater held this stand in such a work, while settling on a different opinion in the writings to be discussed now.

In the excerpt from *On living with a woman* (*apud Stob.*, IV.22 103.539–540 = *SVF* III p. 254 t. 62), Antipater advises a bachelor on how to choose his spouse, a traditional practice called *μνηστεία*: he must assess her parents' morality and the education she has received, rather than—as was common at the time—being concerned about her nobility, beauty or the amount of her dowry. Antipater promotes a change in this practice, while not aiming at reshaping the social environment in which it takes place: this is the reason why his reform of *μνηστεία* does not affect its conventional background, *e.g.* the fact that it is on the man to go to the girl's house and that he must firstly speak with her father. On the other hand, by spurring the man to judge a girl by her education, especially her moral education, Antipater might be setting the basis for an egalitarian interaction between husband and wife.

Antipater's attempt to balance a change in traditional practices and the respect for tradition is confirmed in an excerpt from *On marriage* (*apud Stob.*, IV.22 25.507–512 = *SVF* III p. 254 t. 63).

This text is ambiguous, at a first reading. On the one side, Antipater hints at the subordination of the wife to her husband, by describing the *οἶκος* of the unmarried man as incomplete, and the coupling of a man with a woman as the implant of a missing limb or eye in a maimed or one-eyed body. The completeness that the wife brings to the *οἶκος* is thus illustrated: she takes care of her husband, when he is sick or ill-disposed, and manages the

²³ There is no decisive argument for attributing these texts to Antipater of Tarsus rather than to Antipater of Tyre. The reason why so far no one appears to have attributed them to the second could be that the evidence of Antipater of Tarsus' ethical interests and opinions works well as a background to what the extant excerpts from the two mentioned works read.

²⁴ The secondary literature on these excerpts amounts, for the most part, to synthetic commentaries or to comparisons between him and Musonius' opinions on women, married life and household management (cf. Barberá, 1985 Laurand, 2014, pp. 215–228, 266–272, 295–340) or Hierocles' stands on these topics (cf. Isnardi Parente, 1989 Tuomela, 2014, pp. 67–81, 94–102, 113–122).

household on his behalf, when he is studying rhetoric or philosophy or engaging in politics.²⁵ Moreover, she is said to be a burden to her husband, because he has to teach her everything, as if she had never been educated at all. Thus, Antipater depicts the woman as an appendix to man, charged with the task of pleasing him and physically constrained inside his house.

On the other side, Antipater establishes a simile between the union of the spouses and what the Stoics call a total blending (δι' ὅλων κρᾶσις), that is, a mutual intermingling of two bodies both preserving their proper qualities, like wine poured into water.²⁶ This image is used to convey the appropriateness for the spouses to share (κοινωνέω) everything, their goods, offspring, bodies and souls. The goal of their union is so formulated: they shall “willingly grant the highest benevolence (εὐνοία), the wife to the husband and *vice versa*, surrendering one to the other as parents” (*apud* Stob., IV.22 25.509). They ought to engender children—within a functionalistic conception of the οἶκος, aimed at providing the State with material resources and new citizens—and live together in mutual goodwill. For the Stoics, εὐνοία is a characteristic of the relationship between true friends, *i.e.* a relationship between equals.²⁷ Antipater confirms the closeness between spouses and friends first by comparing the γάμος with “the other kinds of friendship and affection” (αἱ (...) ἄλλαι φιλίαι ἢ φιλοστοργίαι), then by calling the wife an *alter-ego* (ἑαυτὸν ἕτερον) to the husband, the famous Aristotelian definition of a friend (*EN* IX.1166a, 1170b).²⁸

It is noteworthy that here Antipater hints at an Aristotelian vocabulary, as Aristotle himself expresses a functionalistic view of the οἶκος in the first book of his *Politics* and, in the *Nicomachean ethics*, describes the marital relation as a kind of friendship (VIII.1158b),²⁹ in which the spouses “share their properties” (εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τιθέντες τὰ ἴδια, VIII.1162a) in the household management; more specifically, Aristotle classes the husband-wife relationship as a

²⁵ Antipater calls the time men devote to this activity ‘leisure’ (σχολή), a term that seems to have been seldom used by the Stoics with this meaning and that rather echoes what Aristotle writes about the time male citizens reserve for education and philosophical speculation (*Pol.* VII.3 1325b, VIII.3 1337b–1338a). On the topic cf. Solmsen (1964), Demont (1993), Destrée (2013). Another hint at the vocabulary of Aristotle is the Stoic calling the married couple a ‘composed whole’ (σύνολον).

²⁶ Cf. the texts collected in *SVF* II.463–481, *LS* 48. On this topic cf. *LS* (vol. 1, pp. 292–294); Sambursky (1959, pp. 11–17); Nolan (2006). On the blending as an image of the good marriage cf. Torre (2000, pp. 22–28), Laurand (2014, pp. 294–340).

²⁷ Cf., for example, A. D., *apud* Stob., II.7 51.73, 11m.108, D. L., VII.116. On the Stoic conception of friendship cf. Banateanu (2001) and the studies mentioned *supra* p. 11 n. 25, especially those bearing on the conceptual and lexical links between Antipater and Musonius.

²⁸ With respect to the good husband-wife relationship the same expression is used in Epict., *Diss.* III 22.76.

²⁹ Already Plato in the *Laws* (VI.776a) has the Stranger advocate for a bond of “friendship and longing” (φιλία καὶ πόθος) between the spouses. According to the extant evidence (Xen., *Oec.* III.14 (= *SSR* VI A71), Cic., *Invent.* I 31.51–53, Quint., V 11.27–29), this idea probably had a key role in the now lost dialogue *Aspasia*, written by a Socratic disciple named Aeschines. It is possible, though uncertain due to the scarceness of sources, that Antisthenes’ lost *Aspasia* contained similar statements. On Aeschines’ *Aspasia* cf. Tafuri (2014, pp. 55–65), Pentassuglio (2017); on Antisthenes’ *Aspasia* cf. Susemihl (1900), Declève Caizzi (ed.) (1966, pp. 98–99), Meijer (2017, pp. 119–124).

friendship between unequal partners, because he regards the husband as superior in virtue to his wife.

These similarities between Aristotle and Antipater suggests that the general idea of the Stoic on marriage has an Aristotelian framework. Keeping this in mind while considering the possibly egalitarian implications of Antipater's discourse, one has to recognize that the philosopher does not state that, when the husband is home, he establishes a gendered division of labor between him and his wife: contrariwise, Antipater focuses on the cooperation between the spouses in the household management.³⁰ However, Antipater's Aristotelian background prompts not to rely too much on this argument *e silentio*, as Aristotle states clearly that husband and wife have different tasks in the household management (*Pol.* II 4.1277b). Similarly, though Antipater does not specify the kind of friendship relating husband and wife, his proximity to Aristotle may indicate that the Stoic sees it as asymmetrical.

These ambiguities in Antipater's discourse can be explained by focusing on the fact that its object is the οἶκος, not the social environment at large, *i.e.* the State. Antipater's aim is leading people who live in a historical community to run their οἶκος in such a way that the whole community may prosper. He cannot advocate, nor does he show any interest in advocating the emancipation of women from their actual condition in society. This is why the only domain in which Antipater spurs the husband to treat his wife as his equal is their emotional attachment: as a domain untouched by strict conventions, this is liable to being moulded by the philosopher in order to improve the household management. But, for the same reasons, Antipater does not care in the first place how the spouses distribute among themselves the tasks related to the household management: as long as they run their οἶκος well, while working together, it is not primarily relevant if they use gender-related parameters for this distribution. In other words, Antipater employs a gendered division of labour, without committing to it, because he discusses about actual societies: he is only concerned with an efficient household management. Nonetheless, it is worth remembering that Aristotle, a key reference for Antipater here, recognizes women's 'natural' inferiority to men, both biological and psychological,³¹ and he infers from this that marriage is the unbalanced relationship of the husband ruling over

³⁰ This is a consequence of the Stoic conception of the sage as someone who succeeds in everything he does: therefore, among other titles, he is awarded with that of οἰκονομικός in A. D., *apud* Stob., II.7 11g.99.

³¹ Cf., for example, *GA* I 728a16–19, 737a5–27, *Pol.* I 12.1259a–13.1260a. Smith (1983) is right in remarking that Aristotle does not mention the biological difference between men and women in discussing their social difference. However, both the biological and psychological arguments concur in recognizing women as inferior to men, and the biological argument fits well as a counterpoint to the political one, as Yates (2015) convincingly claims.

(ἄρχω) his wife in virtue of the fact that he is “better” than her.³² It is possible that Antipater shares this view with Aristotle.

From what has been said, it is clear that there is a stark difference in approach between Antipater on the one side and the early Stoics on the other—including himself, according to Philodemus’ testimony, obviously in a different work than *On living with a woman* and *On marriage*—: the latter thinkers, by proposing a ‘community of women’ for their ideal State, contemplate an abolition of the traditional οἶκος, just like Socrates in Plato’s *Republic* and probably Diogenes’ in his *Republic*. Contrariwise Antipater, dealing with real societies in his discourses, cannot but value the οἶκος as the fundamental ‘cell’ of society.

4.2. Musonius

In his teaching on marriage (*D.* XIII-XIV),³³ Musonius focuses on the emotional relationship between the spouses, spurring them to the same reciprocity and equality Antipater regards as fit for any good couple.

His most relevant contributions to the debate on the social status of women are two discourses in which he supports the idea that they should engage in philosophy (*D.* III) and should receive the same³⁴ philosophical education as men (*D.* IV), the two themes being plainly related to one another.³⁵ In these discourses, though he never uses the word καθήκον, Musonius resorts several times to the verb προσήκω, which in other sources appears to have been used as a non-technical synonym of καθήκω by the Stoics.³⁶

In both speeches, he primarily vindicates the urgency for a philosophical education regardless of gender by stating that there is a single human nature, and so a single set of virtues

³² Cf., for example, *EN* VIII 7.1158b, 10.1160–11.1161a, *Pol.* I 12.1260a.

³³ The relationship between Musonius’ claims and Octavian’s legislation concerning marriage and adultery will not be discussed here. On the topic cf. Laurand (2014, pp. 201–215, 347–366).

³⁴ The title reads παραπλησίως, “closely similar”. Over the course of the speech, Musonius’ lexical choices on this point are imprecise (this could be the writer’s fault, not Musonius, whose oral speeches are thought to have been transcribed by one Lucius): he either says that women ought to receive an education identical to that of men (16.2, 19.4) or only similar (16.3, 17.22) or equal (16.14), or that between male and female education there ought to be no difference (13.10, 15, 18.45). Engel (2000) rightly links this ambiguity to what the philosopher states at the end of the excerpt, *i.e.* that women and men, generally differing in physical strength, in most cases ought to engage in different occupations and, in order to do so, ought to receive a different technical education.

³⁵ These texts, as well as those concerning the γάμος, bear close resemblance to two excerpts preserved by Stobaeus under the title “Of the Pythagorean Phintys, daughter of Callicrates, from her work *On the temperance of the woman*” (IV.23 61–61a.588–593) and with the extant fragments and testimonies of Bryson Arabus’ *Οἰκονομικὸς λόγος*, for a recent edition of which cf. Swain (2013).

³⁶ Cf., for example, *D. L.*, VII.161, *A. D.*, *apud* Stob., II.7 10c.91, *Epict.*, *Diss.* I 1.32, *M. Aurel.*, IV.32, *Hieroc.*, *apud* Stob., III.39 35.731–733, *Simpl.*, *In Ench.* XXXVII.2-3.

for males and females. This is a standard Stoic doctrine,³⁷ derived from Socrates³⁸ likely via its reception by Plato and Antisthenes.³⁹ At least in the second discourse, Musonius' literary reference is Plato's *Republic*, as he makes clear by justifying his claim for a unisex education with a zoological analogy (*D.* IV 13.10–15) similar to the one used by Socrates in the Platonic dialogue (V.451d) to persuade his interlocutors of the same point.

In the first speech, Musonius mainly proves his claim by listing activities commonly attached to women and showing that they could be performed better if women were self-restrained, just and brave, that is, educated in philosophy alongside men (*D.* III 10.10–12.5). What Musonius does not make clear, for it is not the purpose of his speech, is whether he approves the conventional attachment to women of such activities as taking care of her husband and children, serving her husband or loving her children more than her own life, to quote some of the activities he lists. Nonetheless, he subsumes wool-spinning, a typical female occupation, to the household management, and describes the ability to manage one's own household as a virtue (p. 9.17–10.9, 12.19–13.1), therefore something to be taught to both men and women as part of their philosophical education: he does not state that men, when educated in 'economics', will not learn to spin wool, *i.e.* that inside the οἶκος husband and wife have different προσήκοντα.

In the following excerpt, at first Musonius remains obscure on this topic. On the one hand, when discussing whether daughters ought to be educated like sons, he states again that the virtues of men and women coincide, but adds that men show to be just by being good citizens, women by successfully managing their οἶκος (*D.* IV 14.8–11). Yet soon after (p. 15.15–19), proving his point with yet another Platonic reference, this time from the *Laws* (VII.804d–e, 806b), Musonius mentions the Amazons to argue that women are not naturally incapable to express their bravery by taking part in wars: what women lack is a proper training. All in all, he is not clear whether he regards the same activities as appropriate to both males and females.

At this point, Musonius is shown facing an objection: ought boys to learn wool-spinning and girls to practice gymnastics, thus inverting their standard gender roles? He replies (*D.* 16.19–17.20) that he does not think so because, "since in the human genre the nature of males is stronger, while the females' one is weaker, it is necessary to assign the most suitable tasks

³⁷ Cf., for example, *D. L.*, VII.175, Lactan., *Inst. div.* III.25 = *SVF* III.253, Clem. Alex., *Strom.* IV 8.590, 592 = *SVF* III.254a–b.

³⁸ Cf., for example, Xen., *Symp.* II.19, Plat., *Meno* 71e–74b. This *tenet* could date back to the Pythagoreans, known for claiming that men and women share the same reason (cf. *D. L.*, VIII.30).

³⁹ Cf. in the first place *D. L.*, VI.12.

(τῶν ἔργων (...) τὰ προσφορώτατα) to each nature: the heavier must be given to the stronger, the lighter to the weaker”. Men generally have more physical strength than women, and so a tiring activity like gymnastics is fitter for most men and only for few ‘masculine’ women.

Here Musonius seems to still have Plato’s *Republic* in mind, but not to fully commit to some of the opinions Socrates expresses here. At *Resp.* V.451e the latter admits that women are usually weaker than men; however, from this he does not infer, as does Musonius, that in most cases men and women will perform different activities: instead, Socrates states (452e–457a) that this average physical difference only entails that women belonging to the class of the guardians need to be assigned lighter tasks than men, though the same ones or pertaining to the same sphere, even the military one. The difference in strength between men and women appears to have even less importance in Plato’s *Laws*—another literary reference for Musonius—, in which the Stranger admits that most women are weaker than most men (VI.781b), but he still advocates a common legislation regarding both sexes (VII.805c–d) and a likely education in every field, even the military one (VII.794c–814c), because both women and men ought to take part in the administration and the defence of the State.⁴⁰ In this regard, Musonius is much closer to what the character of the Athenian citizen Ischomachus says in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* (VII): under Socrates’ approval, on the basis of the difference in physical strength between man and woman, Ischomachus justifies the traditional social-role distinction based on gender.⁴¹

Everything considered, Musonius thinks that all activities are common to all humans, because only physical weakness keeps an individual from performing some tasks. The Amazon’s case leads to think that women tend to be weaker because they are excluded from the training men are admitted to. Therefore, by advocating a unisex education, Musonius implicitly supports the idea that the strength gap between the two genders shall reduce. Nonetheless, he avoids inferring it, because what he demands is that men and women be given the same *philosophical* education, in order for them to have the same opportunity to be virtuous, not to practice the same occupations (*D.* IV 18.19–19.4).⁴² Moreover, since most of the virtuous

⁴⁰ This is a much-debated point in the scholarship, because the Stranger assigns some administrative functions to women, but never states if they can vote for the highest political offices and run for them. However, it must be pointed out that, if the military service is a major requirement for voting and running for offices, as the Stranger underlines several times (VI.753a, 755c–756a), and women are to take part in the defense of the State, the fact that gender is not mentioned as a parameter of discrimination might mean that it is not regarded as such. On this topic cf. Stalley (1983, p. 106), Cohen (1987), Folch (2015, p. 225 ff.).

⁴¹ On Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* cf. Murnaghan (1988), Dean-Jones (1991), Strauss (1998, pp. 131–139).

⁴² This exegesis of Musonius’ speeches on women is one among those that have been proposed by critics, who diverge significantly: a few regard Musonius as a straight feminist (Favez, 1933; Tuomela, 2014, pp. 40–52, 60–93, 113–122, 132–139), while most label him an ambiguous thinker, trying to reach a compromise between an egalitarian *tenet* of Stoic ethics, *i.e.* the identity of men’ and women’s virtues, and the preservation of the actual condition of women in the Roman society (Houser, 1997, pp. 158–162, 186–196; Nussbaum, 2002; Scharrer, 2002, pp. 126–130).

activities Musonius discusses in the two chapters just examined belong to the social sphere and envelop the person's disposition to act on behalf of their city, it can be claimed that, like Antipater, Musonius is primarily concerned with the virtuousness of people because he regards it as a requirement for the well-being of the State.

4.3. Hierocles

Turning to Hierocles, he deals with the question of the gendered distinction of *καθήκοντα* in two works, surviving only through excerpts: *On marriage* (*Περὶ γάμου*) and *Household management* (*Οἰκονομικός*).⁴³

An excerpt from the first work reads that an *οἰκία* not hosting a married couple is incomplete, “since neither can what governs (*τὸ ἄρχον*) be conceived without that which is governed (*τὸ ἀρχόμενον*) nor what is governed without that which governs” (*apud Stob.*, IV.22 23.503). The author does not explain what he means, but intuitively one may think he is referring to the wife's subordination to her husband, since, as has been shown, this is exactly Aristotle's *tenet*, and his doctrine is a key reference for Antipater's reflection on *γάμος*, which bears many resemblances to Hierocles', as will be shown, but appears already from the quoted statement about the incompleteness of an *οἰκία* not hosting a family.

Despite the plausible allusion to Aristotle, this reading is not confirmed by a second extract from the same work (*apud Stob.*, IV.67 24.503–507). Here Hierocles defends the usefulness of marriage by indulging over the many ways, practical and psychological, in which a wife helps her husband. Since Hierocles assumes the male perspective, it cannot be inferred that he would defend differently the advantages for a woman to get married. Besides, the passage closes on the description of the beauty of a marriage in which perfect reciprocity, equality and community regulate the relationship between the spouses and their common management of their *οἶκος*. Hence, these excerpts do not make clear what kind of relationship Hierocles envisages for husband and wife.

⁴³ The literature concerning Hierocles' ideas on these topics is wide. Hierocles' excerpts were recognized as the work of a Stoic philosopher by Prächter (1901, pp. 64–90); a major evidence used by the scholar to prove his hypothesis is the doctrinal and lexical proximity between these excerpts and the texts produced by other Stoic philosophers, notably Antipater and Musonius. Most subsequent studies concerning these excerpts address this proximity: Philippson (1933), Reydams-Schils (2005, pp. 147–159), Ramelli (2016). Contrariwise, Baloglu (1992) focuses on the difference between these authors.

This topic is addressed more diffusely in the extant fragment of *Household management* (apud *Stob.*, IV.85 21.696–699), where it is considered from the point of view of the household management, as the title reads.

Hierocles starts by differentiating the tasks related to the household management according to what is most pertinent (κατὰ τὸ πλεῖστον)⁴⁴ to each spouse: to the husband “the tasks (ἔργα) concerning fields, marketplaces and city business, to the wife (...) those relating to wool-spinning, bread-making, and domestic tasks in general”. The philosopher may be adhering to social conventions here, but the syntagma ‘according to what is most pertinent’ suggests a certain flexibility in gender-role division.

This flexibility is immediately stated: Hierocles argues that each spouse ought to “taste” the other’s καθήκοντα, because a ‘role exchange’ can strengthen the bond between them. But the woman shall not share her husband καθήκοντα concerning marketplaces and city business: Hierocles thus shows not to be interested in abolishing the gender-role division, but in improving the relationship between the spouses, because the better this is, the better they manage their οἶκος. For this purpose, it is only necessary that each spouse gets to ‘taste’ the other’s occupations, not that they engage in all of them. Hierocles can thus avoid making a stand that could not be put into practice without a social reform, *i.e.* without allowing women to the public sphere in a similar way to men.

The role-exchange proposal applies also to the activities the spouses personally attend to (αὐτουργέω): as long as the husband “exhibit[s] complete confidence in [his] own masculinity”, a clause meaning that the gender difference must be preserved,⁴⁵ he shall also practice activities conventionally assigned to women, such as weaving, kneading flour, splitting wood, drawing water or shaking out bedding. Hierocles tries to make this point persuasive by recognizing that some of the mentioned activities are tough, and thus appropriate (προσήκοντα) for the husband because of his physical strength (ῥώμη).

Applying this argument to the wife, Hierocles discloses that, unlike Musonius, he has mentioned strength not to introduce a parameter alternative to gender, but to endorse his project of the role exchange within the household management. The male occupations, as Hierocles

⁴⁴ The Greek syntagma literally means “according to what is most”, meaningless in itself. Afterwards Hierocles asks if most domestic activities are “suitable to husbands rather than to wives” (ἀνδράσι προσήκειν (...) ἢ περ γυναιξίν) for men or women. It seems logical to read the expression at the beginning of the excerpt as conveying a similar meaning.

⁴⁵ This clause can be read as expressing the same idea found in Epictetus: see *supra* pp. 6–7.

labels them, exemplifying those that the wife can perform “on behalf of her husband”, are activities that, though tough and *in this sense* fitter for men, the woman is traditionally assigned, such as bread-making, drawing water, lighting the fire or making beds. These examples almost match the conventionally womanly καθήκοντα Hierocles just mentioned, and here he calls them manly only because they are burdensome. To these, he adds working in the fields as a male occupation the wife may practice, that is, again, a task that does not free her from the perimeter of her husband’s estate. Consequently, in no public nor private environment does the gender cease to work as a parameter for the determination of the appropriate activities in Hierocles’ reflection: he refuses to advocate not only a total role exchange between men and women, but even a perfectly mutual one within the οἰκία.

Hence, the gendered distinction of καθήκοντα is not surpassed at all: Hierocles does not want to support an emancipation of the woman from her inferiority to man, but to advise people on how to manage their household well, because the well-being of the State relies on the well-being of the οἰκία that make it up, as he implies elsewhere (*apud* Stob., IV.22a 21.502). It is only because the οἰκονομία can benefit from the spouses sharing some occupations, that the philosopher claims, within the bounds of their οἰκία and without neglecting their gender identity, that husband and wife ought to perform *some* of the same ἔργα.

In this section it has been argued that the Stoics more extensively dealing with the social status of women do not take a clear-cut stand between a full approval and a stark rejection of the traditional gendered division of labor, because women are not the core concern of their writings, and because they set their discourse in actual societies, where such a division exists. What these philosophers care about, in their reflections on marriage and on household management, is that husband and wife cooperate in the administration of their οἶκος, as its well-being is a requirement for the well-being of the State and, in their reflections on education, that men and women are given equal opportunity to become virtuous, arguably because they have the well-being of the State in mind, since many of the virtuous activities they mention are an expression of patriotism.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the enquiry conducted in this paper on the Stoics' thinking on the topic of the gender-role division has led to two results.

On the one hand, it appears that in the ideal community designed by the early Stoics the social differences between men and women are not cancelled, though they are mitigated with respect to the conventional ones.

Conversely, some later Stoics take the existing communities as their social background. Thus, they could not overlook the existing juridical and traditional norms.⁴⁶ Both in the Hellenistic Athens and in the Roman Republican and first-Imperial era, women were excluded from political activities. They went wed as they reached sexual maturity, this preventing them from following their male peers' *curriculum studii*. Therefore, they were praised for their marital fidelity, modesty and domestic proficiency. Antipater, Musonius and Hierocles, the Stoics for which the widest discussions on the social role of women survive, produce their moral teachings in such environments, which they want to improve rather than restructure. For this reason, it would make no sense for them to claim for a complete blending of all male and female καθήκοντα. However, reflecting on the gender-role division in relation to the household management, they mostly care for a teaming-up of the spouses, and, when focusing on a division of tasks, Musonius and Hierocles appeal to physical strength as a criterion. Moreover, Musonius advocates for a unisex education, stating that one's upbringing determines their strength. But, since gender issues do not concern these philosophers, they are not passionate about whether women's social role ought to be distinguished from men's ones.

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⁴⁶ A list of the contributions on women in Antiquity would be endless. The main essays published in the last decades include Dover (1973), Cantarella (2005), devoted to the conventions and laws regarding sexuality in Ancient Greece, Loraux (1990), focusing on the question of gender in Classical Athens, and Kapparis (2018, pp. 116–181), that contains a discussion of the institutions of οἶκος and γάμος and the practice of adultery (μοιχεία) in Classical Athens. Gardner (1986) is a monograph on women in Roman law and society. Keener (2007), Foxhall (2013) are two contributions to the study of women's education and the question of gender in Antiquity. Pomeroy (1975) deals with most of the said topics in pre-Classical, Classical and Hellenistic Greece and in the Republican and Imperial Rome. Wider (1986), Snyder (1989), and Hawley (1994) concern women thinkers, writers and philosophers in Ancient Greece.

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