

Fantastic Physicists and Where to Find Them


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Aglaonice (3rd century B.C.E.)

- Considered to be the first female astronomer in ancient Greece
- Her ability to predict lunar eclipses gained her the reputation of a sorceress, as it was thought she could make the moon disappear
- A group of female astrologers, known as the witches of Thessaly, was associated to Aglaonice
- She is featured in “The Dinner Party”, an installation at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art (Brooklyn Museum)
- A crater on Venus is named after her



Sophie Brahe (1556–1643)


- Child prodigy, her brother Tycho Brahe decided to care personally for her education
 - By the age of 14 she was an assistant to her brother
 - It is thought that she played an important role in the definition of the Tychonic model
 - It seems she was more well-versed than Tycho in the mathematical aspects of their model
 - She was also a horticulturalist, said to have created exceptional gardens
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Wang Zhenyi (1768–1797)

- Born in China, self-taught scholar
- Revised and re-wrote math and science works to make them more accessible to laypeople
- Wrote “The Explanation of a Lunar Eclipse” and set up a demonstration to show how lunar eclipses occur
- Wrote subversive poetry advocating for gender equality
- A crater on Venus is named after her



Sameera Moussa (1917–1952)

- First woman to hold a post at the University of Cairo
 - First female Egyptian nuclear scientist
 - Earned PhD in atomic radiation and sought to make nuclear treatment in medicine available to all
 - Promoted the peaceful use of nuclear technology and organized the Atomic Energy for Peace Conference
 - First noncitizen to visit US atomic facilities
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Gladys West (1931 -)

- Majored in mathematics at Virginia State University
- Second African American woman hired at the Dahlgren Naval base
- Collected satellite data and worked on computer software surface elevations, eventually led to the development of GPS
- Currently working towards a PhD at Virginia Tech
- When travelling, she prefers to use maps and do her own calculations



Where to find them (in no particular order)

- Google
- Twitter - women in STEM accounts, hashtags, pay attention to women of colour
- Physics associations/societies
- STEM magazines often have articles featuring women
- Handout!



Questions?

