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## **From fertile centers to seeding the periphery. Ellen Gleditsch: Pioneer woman from Norway**

DURING THE FIRST DECADES OF the 20<sup>th</sup> century many women travelled to the centers of radioactivity in Europe; Paris, Vienna or Manchester. Among them was Ellen Gleditsch (1879–1968), a young and ambitious pharmacist from Norway. After five years at the Curie laboratory in Paris she travelled to the U.S.A. to work at another center of radioactivity, the Sloane physics laboratory at Yale University. She returned to Norway as university fellow and later associate professor, eventually she became the country's second female full professor (1929).

Despite internationally acknowledged, extensive personal and scientific network, Gleditsch was never fully appreciated in the Norwegian scientific milieu. This culminated in 1929 during the controversy around her professor appointment. Some of her opponents became her colleagues after the appointment, her supporters in the Norwegian scientific community being either dead or retired. In these surroundings Gleditsch was to create a research and teaching laboratory of radiochemistry. For reasons that will be discussed in this paper, a research group in radiochemistry did not start to bud until Gleditsch's student, Alexis Pappas, was appointed professor a decade after her retirement.

There are various ways of portraying a female scientist such as Ellen Gleditsch. In this paper we tell the story of a scientist who had been “nourished” in the famous contemporary centers of her subject, and who, upon her return to Norway, faced the realities of the periphery.

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