

## The City of Women – Women and the City in Medieval and Early Modern Times



British Library, Harley MS 4431, fol. 290 r

We invite you to submit proposals for a conference entitled ‘A City of Women – Women and the City in Medieval and Early Modern Times’, organized by the Institute of Roman Studies at the University of Warsaw and the Institute of Polish Literature at the University of Warsaw. The conference will take place on September 2-3, 2022, at the Institute of Roman Studies of the University of Warsaw, Dobra 55 Street.

The conference is associated with the project ‘Cité des dames, créatrices dans la cité’ conducted by the Université Gustave Eiffel (France) under the supervision of Prof. Caroline Trotot and Prof. Philippe Gambette. More information about the project can be found at <https://citedesdames.hypotheses.org>.

We invite scholars of medieval and early modern literature to join us in a reflection on the role of women in the co-creation of urban culture and identity and the place of the city in the work of women from the Middle Ages to the Romantic period. Our goal is to show the active, creative aspect of women’s presence in ancient cities and their co-creation of the richness of urban life.

Urban centers differ and have evolved differently in each country over the centuries, so confronting the many representations of urban space and the diverse roles of women will provide a broader perspective on the issue. Urban representations have not yet been thoroughly researched and described, and many female figures, due to their contribution to the history and functioning of cities, deserve to be brought out of the darkness of history.

It is significant that although women co-created the richness and dynamism of life in medieval and early modern cities, it is extremely difficult to find iconographic material that illustrates this. Therefore, an illustration that perfectly fits the theme of the conference had to be sought in the allegorical work, *City of Women (Cité des Dames)*, by Christine de Pisan from 1405. One also looks in vain for women among the authors of the most famous literary urban myths. Mercier's and Balzac's Paris, Dostoyevsky's St. Petersburg, and Joyce's Dublin are well-known, and it is possible in the history of any city to come across unforgettable profiles of those who marked its history, identity, memory, and grew into its legend. It is true that cities themselves preserve and transmit the memory of those who inhabited and co-created them, choosing them as patronesses, naming streets and squares after them, but this mostly concerns women who lived over the last hundred and fifty years. Therefore, we encourage researchers to look at earlier periods to discover or recall the characters and works of those women who have been forgotten. It is also worth taking an urban perspective on the work of better-known women authors, diarists, educators, and letter-writers – a perspective that will perhaps allow us to find previously unseen or little-known aspects of their work.

We invite you to develop a multidimensional relationship between women and the city in past centuries, in particular showing the city from the perspective of women's activity and creativity. Let us look together at the place and role of women in interaction with urban space, understood not only as a physical space but also as a collective and community. This is crucial to understand the dynamics inherent in the urban environment and culture and how these dynamics influence the creative process. This requires a transdisciplinary approach that uses both older and more recent historical, cultural, and literary research tools to show the issues of interest against a social, institutional, political, ideological, economic, and cultural background.

These issues may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the city as a space for the expression of women's creativity,
- the city as an object of description and reflection of women authors,
- the role of the urban environment for (and in) women's creative activity,
- the values inherent in the urban world and their echoes in the works of women, also in relation to the values of the landed world,
- difficulties researchers face today when dealing with the role of the city in the work of women of ancient times or the role of women in urban space,
- similarities and differences depending on the place studied, as well as the moral, ideological, and social evolutions that significantly influenced questions of place and the role of women as active participants in urban life.

### **Practical information**

The conference is planned in a stationary format, the organisers do not guarantee the possibility of participation by videoconference. The first language of the conference will be French; submissions in English will also be accepted. Participants will be asked to contribute to the costs of organisation of the conference in the amount of 300 PLN of the conference fee. Travel and accommodation shall remain the responsibility of the participants, and the fee covers the costs of food and publication of texts. Payment information will be sent after the acceptance of the submitted papers.

Please send the title together with a short abstract (in French or English, maximum 500 characters) and the bio-bibliographical information of the submitter. This should include affiliation, email address, and brief information about previous research.

Please send your application by 10 June 2022 to: [citedesdames@wn.uw.edu.pl](mailto:citedesdames@wn.uw.edu.pl)

The conference will result in a publication, details of which will be communicated to participants in June-July 2022. At that time, guidelines for authors on typography and the form of bibliography and footnotes will also be sent. Articles should be submitted in full, along with all required supplementary materials, by November 30, 2022.

We encourage submissions and extend our best regards,

### **Organising Committee**

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