



Connecting Women Writers with Digital Tools

Women Writers in History DARIAH Working Group

[Universidade NOVA de Lisboa](#), at [Avenida de Berna](#) campus

Lisbon, June 21, 14.00 – 18.30

14.00: Presentation of the webinars series

Amelia Sanz (Complutense University of Madrid), amsanz@ucm.es

14.05 – 14.20 Virtual Saints. Presenting the Online Wiki Catalogue of Living Saints

Ana Rita G. Soares (Complutense University of Madrid), anaritag@ucm.es

This presentation will introduce the "Catalogue of Living Saints", a wiki catalogue that collects a corpus of lives of Castilian charismatic women who acquired reputations for holiness and were influential in religious life as well as in the politics of their time (1400-1550). The collected lives appeared in a diversity of sources: manuscripts of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, including conventual books and compendia containing lives of saints (such as *flos sanctorum*), handwritten and printed chronicles of religious orders in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Castile, among other works. Thus, the Catalogue recovers several texts that have never been printed and makes them available to academic researchers as well as non-specialized public. This digital catalogue helps us to understand different hagiographical models and their performative shape and spatial distribution of power. This webinar aims to discuss how gathering, editing, and reading the lives of these women via open-access virtual tools creates a new hermeneutical framework regarding the materiality of the original codices and printed volumes. The idea of creating this Catalogue resulted from a series of projects funded by the Spanish government, *The Construction of Female Sanctity and Visionary Discourse (15th-17th Centuries): Analysis and Recovery of Conventual Literature* (2013–2015), *The Emergence of Female Spiritual Authority in Castile* (2016-2019), and the *Catalogue of Living Saints (1400-1550): Towards a Complete Corpus of a Female Hagiographic Model* (2020-2024).

14.20 – 14.35 “The vast ocean of infinity & eternity”: Creating the (In)finite Archive of The Elizabeth Montagu’s Correspondence Online (EMCO) (online)

Nicole Pohl (Oxford Brookes University, Oxford), npohl@brookes.ac.uk

This presentation explores the complexities of creating an archive – in our case, a digital archive of eighteenth-century manuscript letters, The Elizabeth Montagu Correspondence Online (EMCO). Elizabeth Montagu was one of the most prominent and well-connected women in eighteenth-century polite society. EMCO faces a variety of challenges. Firstly, the project aims to trace all extant letters in different libraries and public/private collections; secondly, it seeks to amalgamate the extant correspondence into one digital repository and a comprehensive inventory; thirdly, it mobilises a team of scholars to transcribe, annotate and develop a critical apparatus; fourthly, EMCO seeks to develop digital tools that foster novel methods of scholarly research and debate. Taking recent scholarship on board, this article concludes by reflecting on the complexities of marrying a data-rich digital edition with literary methodologies that allow both close reading and analysis of the scope and materiality of the archive and its objects.

14.35 – 14.50 Studying Belle de Zuylen – Isabelle de Charrière : Between Database and Digital Edition

Suzan van Dijk (Huygens – IND, Amsterdam), suzan.van.dijk@huygens.knaw.nl

In view of researching early women authors’ reception and their reception of each other’s work, as the NEWW database does, some women are especially interesting. One of these is Belle van Zuylen – Isabelle de Charrière, an 18th-century Dutch-Swiss author who wrote in French, and published novels, essays, and plays. These were commented upon in the periodical press, and are still interesting to us today. Of particular interest regarding this author is the large number of letters she sent, received and – in many cases – kept, so that about 2600 of them have survived. Apart from becoming familiar with the *persona* of the author, the reader of these letters is provided with a “metadiscourse” about her writings, illustrating also her role as a reader, as she was often influenced (in a positive or negative sense) by other women authors. Her case provides inspiration for a gendered approach to this process, for which SATOR’s work on narrative topoi can be helpful when used within the NEWW (or SHEWROTE) database, which would be connected to the online edition of the letters. Van Zuylen – Charrière’s letters (published 40 years ago in her *Oeuvres complètes*, vols. 1-6) have now been digitized, so they are all the more ready to be used in the digital-based research we are carrying out – and can be used as an example for how to integrate women’s correspondences more broadly in reception studies.

14.50 – 15.05 Madrid's Cultural Heritage Unveiled: A Polyphonic Exploration Through the Travel Narratives of Matto, Echeverría, and Camarillo

Alba Comino (Institute of Contemporary History, Lisbon), alba.comino2@gmail.com

The representation of cultural heritage in travel literature often reflects a curated selection influenced by various factors, from authorised discourses shaped by prior readings or guided

tours, to the personal interests of the authors. By conducting a comparative analysis of the insights provided by Matto, Carrasquilla, and Echeverría, regarding Madrid's cultural heritage at the turn of the 20th century, we unveil a dynamic historical narrative. This exploration serves as a witness to the multitude of sensibilities surrounding European cultural heritage, as well as the discordances therein. Listening to the voice of these non-European women, committed to feminism and socio-cultural diversity, offers a counterbalance to the dominant Eurocentric discourse on cultural heritage. Their storytelling, at times, intertwined with European traditions yet often underscored by a distinct sense of otherness, provides fertile ground for constructing decolonial, inclusive, and plural historical narratives.

15.05 – 15.20 Rebuilding Female Diaspora in German-Language Literature: ExFemLiOn

Dolors Sabaté Planes (University of Santiago de Compostela), dolors.sabate.planes@usc.es

This presentation revolves around [ExFemLiOn](#), an open-access repository showcasing the life stories, migratory data, and literary contributions of women writers whose lives intersected with the era of National Socialism and subsequent exile. [ExFemLiOn](#) emerges from a collaborative research initiative involving universities including Oviedo, País Vasco, Alcalá de Henares, Islas Baleares, and Santiago de Compostela. Additionally, it benefits from the expertise of scholars from esteemed international institutions such as the universities of Porto, Madeira, Krakow, and the Free University of Berlin. Over the span of more than a decade, our interdisciplinary research team has delved into the rich tapestry of texts penned by women, adopting a transversal approach that incorporates a gender perspective into our analyses. Our exploration has been multifaceted, with particular emphasis on two interconnected themes: the exploration of the Jewish identity among these women authors and the profound portrayal of displacement within their literary works. These thematic threads serve as the guiding principles, infusing depth and coherence into the diverse array of content housed within the platform. Throughout my presentation, I will refer to the background of the project, illustrate the functionality of this tool, and emphasize its scope of application. With [ExFemLiOn](#), my aim is to highlight the utility of DH, specifically the Omeka standard, in the realm of European cultural heritage recovery studies, particularly concerning the contributions of women.

15.20 – 15.45 Discussion

15.45 – 16.00 Coffee break

16.00 – 18.30 Hands-on session : Discovering the SHEWROTE database

Alicia C. Montoya (Radboud University, The Netherlands), alicia.montoya@ru.nl

After a short presentation of the data model, we will work together in the new SHEWROTE database environment, exploring, cleaning and enriching the data, troubleshooting and testing the tool. If you intend to join us for all or part of this session, please bring along your own laptop. Additionally, we recommend you bring along some data or a specific dataset relating to your own research that you would like to 'try out' in the tool.

19.30 Informal dinner (at participants' own cost), venue to be confirmed