

Call for Papers: Virtual Conference

HIDDEN HISTORIES: WOMEN AND SCIENCE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Organizers:

Dr Amelia Bonea (University of Heidelberg) & Dr Irina Nastasă-Matei (University of Bucharest)

7-8 May 2021

Submission deadline: 15 January 2021

The twentieth century has often been hailed as a period when women became important in science, but their participation in scientific inquiry and practice often remains buried, quite literally, in the footnotes of specialist publications and studies of the history of science. Even today, national statistics about women in science are not always easily available. The data that does exist suggests there is significant regional and cultural variation in how women engage with science globally. Recent UNESCO surveys, for example, point to a contrast between the former Soviet republics of Central Asia, where almost half of the researchers employed in science are female, and East, South and West Asia, where that proportion drops significantly to 23 percent or less. Similarly, in Eastern European countries female researchers tend to be better represented in science fields than their Western European counterparts. Perhaps ironically, that relationship is reversed when we turn our attention to studies of the history of science in the twentieth century: the scientific pursuits of women in Western contexts have consistently enjoyed more visibility than those in regions like Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe. The *Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science* (2000) is emblematic of these trends, listing as it does a mere 17 scientists from India, China and Japan, as opposed to more than 500 from Great Britain, and featuring entries up to the 1950s, a period that roughly overlaps with decolonization in Asia.

This two-day virtual conference, accompanied by a roundtable discussion, brings together scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds to address two main, interrelated questions:

- How did women contribute to the making and communication of scientific knowledge in the twentieth century?
- How do we study the history of women in science during this period?

We begin from the premise that encounters with science happened in a multitude of settings and that statistical data, while essential, provides only a superficial insight into the myriad experiences of women in science and, indeed, what science itself meant in different regional and cultural contexts. Our aim is to move beyond the popular ‘heroine’ model to investigate the many hidden figures who worked not only as professional scientists, but also at the periphery and even outside of scientific communities as lab technicians, amateur scientists, school teachers, librarians, journalists or science writers. In so doing, we hope to raise new questions and formulate new methods for writing the history of women in science. What, for example, do textbooks, forgotten footnotes in scientific papers, conversations about female colleagues in male scientists’ correspondence or photographs of Indian women toiling at archaeological sites teach us about the history of women in science?

Possible topics include:

- Gender and the historiography of science: theories, methods and archives
- Pedagogy of science: government policies around science and education, women in tertiary education, science clubs, science in the home, science education in religious institutions
- Cultures of scientific practice: laboratories, fieldwork, secondary school teaching, scientific instruments, relationship between professional and amateur science
- Scientific communication: scientific periodicals, mass media and science journalism, museum work, popular science writing, photography, the arts

- Representations of women and gender in science
- Women and scientific networks: personal and professional networks, associational culture

Keynote speakers: Prof Mariko Ogawa (Mie University) & Prof Andrea Pető (CEU)

We welcome contributions from both experienced and early career scholars. We encourage especially scholars working in/on countries and regions that are less represented to apply, in order to promote a global dialogue on this matter. Please send your proposals for 20-minute papers (abstracts of max. 300 words), along with a brief biographical note, to womeninscience2021@gmail.com by the deadline of **15 January 2021**. Successful applicants will be notified by 15 February 2021. The conference will be held virtually via Zoom or heiCONF and participants will have the option of presenting their papers live or in pre-recorded format. For queries please do not hesitate to contact the organizers at the above email address.