

Title: Women Writers, Textual Genres and Scientific Knowledge in the Long Eighteenth Century.

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This special issue of *RiCognizioni* seeks to examine the use of textual genres by women writers who contributed to scientific knowledge in the long eighteenth century (approx. 1660–1800).

Research on the contributions of women writers in the long eighteenth century has been robust in the past decades, especially thanks to wide-ranging studies on the impact of women on the rise of modern science (Phillips 1990; Schiebinger 1993; Hunter and Hutton 1997) and the question of women education (Findlen and Messbarger, 2005). A number of important studies devoted to specific women writers have also investigated famous thinkers such as Émilie du Châtelet (Bour and Zinsser 2009) and Maria Gaetana Agnesi (Mazzotti 2007) alongside lesser-known figures like Mariangela Ardinghelli (Bertucci 2013) and Geneviève Thiroux d'Arconville (Candler Hayes 2016).

This special issue builds on the idea that this valuable research activity should be now followed up with a reflection on the way textuality practices shaped interventions on scientific knowledge. With the establishment of scientific academies – from the London Royal Society to the Paris Académie des sciences in the 1660s onwards – access to institutionalised scientific debate became more and more difficult for women. On top of being barred from access to academies, women were often unable to publish in the periodicals of learned societies, where the textual genre of the scientific article was beginning to develop. Indirect strategies were thus needed. Several studies (Dietz 2016; Fransen, Hodson and Enenkel 2017) have shown how translation was crucial to the dissemination of scientific ideas in the long eighteenth century. At a time of well-rooted stereotypes on the inferiority of women in terms of ability to reason, translation proved a powerful tool for women writers as it allowed them to intervene in scientific debates without making their public personas too conspicuous, and thus subject to attacks (Pieretti 2002). Translation, however, was but one manner of textual intervention on scientific debates. Literary genres such as the comedy and the novel, philosophical genres like the letters and the dialogue, and ambiguous genres such as the autobiography and the illustrated treatise could all be used by women writers to contribute to scientific debates.

In this special issue of *RiCognizioni*, contributors are invited to reflect on the intersections between textual genres and scientific knowledge. These two terms are here used in a broad sense. The concept of “textual genre” is meant as a group of texts characterised by certain readerly expectations (Devitt 2008). “Scientific knowledge” is also intended here in an ample sense, including not just disciplines pertaining to experimental and natural philosophy, but also those related to technology and, crucially, all of those fields in which a scientific methodology was being sought (as, for instance, economics or linguistics). So as to offer as encompassing a picture as possible, no geographical constraints are in place for contributions, and comparisons across cultures and languages are encouraged where possible.

By way of example, contributions can focus on:

- Critical readings of the textual genres of scientific works by women writers.
- General theories of textual genres and scientific knowledge and how they applied to women writers.

- Discussions on how a given textual genre allowed, or did not allow, women writers to contribute to scientific debates.
- Use of classical genres by women writers to contribute to scientific debates (e.g., epic poetry).
- Use of paratextual materials such as prefaces, marginalia and dedicatory letters to frame the scientific interventions of women writers within a certain textual genre.
- Translation of scientific works by women writers and how textual genres could change in their passage from source culture to target culture.
- Use of textual genres by women writers to target specific audiences, and the question of the different modes of circulation (e.g., manuscript circulation versus print circulation).

Please submit a **250-word abstract** and a **50-word bio** to alessio.mattana@unito.it by **30 March 2024**. Contributors will be notified of the outcome by **15 April 2024**.

Articles will be expected to be approx. **8,000 words** and may be written in **English** or **Italian**. The deadline for submitting the articles is **30 November 2024**.

Publication of the special issue is planned for **June 2025**.

Works cited:

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