

Information on main speakers

Pernille Arenfeldt

Pernille Arenfeldt (PhD, European University Institute, Florence, Italy; MA, BA, Copenhagen University, Denmark) is an Assistant Professor of History at the American University of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). Her teaching and research interests are centered on women and gender in early modern Europe and in the modern Middle East. Her work is interdisciplinary and draws extensively on anthropological and sociological methodologies. She has published several articles on gender and politics in early modern Europe. Together with Regina Schulte, et al., she co-edited the essay collection *The Body of the Queen. Gender and Rule in the Courtly World, 1500-2000* (Berghahn Books, 2006; German edition by Campus Verlag, 2002). More recently, she co-edited (with Nawar al-Hassan Golley) the volume *Mapping Arab Women's Movements. A Century of Transformations from Within* (American University of Cairo Press, forthcoming 2011). Arenfeldt has also taught at the University of East Anglia and held various research fellowships in Denmark, Germany, and Italy. She is currently at the Ruhr University in Bochum as Marie Jahoda Chair in International Gender Studies. See also http://www.sowi.rub.de/jahoda/profs/2011_arenfeldt.html

Title of input 1: Gendering Politics in Early Modern “Germany”

Abstract: In spite of several sophisticated theoretical studies on the concept of politics, many historians continue to employ a “mo-

dern” definition of politics in which power is equivalent to decision making as exercised by the men holding various public offices. If projected onto the early modern reality, this view of politics obscures the political dimension of the activities performed by high-ranking women. Employing gender as a category of analysis, the aim of this paper is two-fold: (i) to demonstrate that early modern elite women were important political actors and were recognized as such across the principalities in the Holy Roman Empire; and (ii) to discuss ways in which a gender-inclusive – and therefore more accurate – definition of early modern politics can be developed.

Title of input 2: Arab Women’s Movements

Abstract: Drawing upon the work on the volume *Mapping Arab Women’s Movements* (co-edited with Nawar al-Hassan Golley), this brief presentation will address the historical and continuing efforts to achieve greater gender justice across the Arab region. The paper will touch upon the origins of different Arab women’s movements and their development during the past century, highlighting both achievements and setbacks.

Patricia Plummer

After having read English Literature, Egyptology and Classical Archaeology at Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Patricia Plummer graduated with an M.A. degree. Her Ph.D. dissertation on style in the novels of Charles Dickens was completed in the year 2000 and Victorian culture has since been one of her areas of special interest. Her postdoctoral project focusses on Orientalism in eighteenth-century English literature and culture. She is chair of Postcolonial Studies in the Department of Anglophone Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE). Before joining UDE in April 2011, Patricia Plummer was assistant professor in the Department of English and Linguistics at Mainz University, chairperson of Mainz University’s Interdisciplinary Working Group on Women’s and Gender Studies (Interdisziplinärer Arbeitskreis Frauen- und Genderforschung) as well as visiting professor in international and interdisciplinary gender studies at the University of Koblenz-Landau. Among Patricia Plummer’s publications are *Perspektiven der Frauenforschung [Perspectives of Women’s Studies]* (1998; ed. with Renate v. Bardeleben) and *Frauen auf der Spur: Kriminalautorinnen aus Deutschland, Großbritannien und den USA [Female Sleuths: Women Crime Writers from Germany, Great Britain*

and the USA] (2001; ed. with Carmen Birkle and Sabina Matter-Seibel). She has also published widely on Orientalism, gender issues, Romanticism, popular culture and travel writing. See also http://www.uni-due.de/genderportal/forschung_ude_geistwiss.shtml

Title of input: "Güzel Sultanum: Women and Power in Early Eighteenth-Century Orientalism"

Abstract:

After having travelled to Constantinople from 1716-18, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) fashioned herself as 'Sultana', i.e. in the imaginary role of Ottoman empress. Her travelogue is rife with references to the role of women in various national and cultural contexts. In contrast to Western masculinist discourse that has traditionally represented Muslim women as victims, Montagu redefines the role of women. She focusses on aspects of female leadership, be it at the Austrian court or in the Ottoman harem, in order to critique the position of women in English society.