H-WRBI · 25 YEARS

VOICES AND SILENCES IN THE LIVES AND HISTORIES OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland | 25 YEARS

KADOC/KU Leuven (Belgium), 17–18 June 2027

CALL FOR PAPERS

Since H-WRBI was established 25 years ago, the study of women religious has developed into a vibrant and increasingly global field of scholarship. Marking 25 years of H-WRBI, this conference invites reflection on the evolution of the field and its future directions through the prism of one central concern: understanding whose voices are heard in historical sources and scholarship and how marginalised or absent voices might be recovered. H-WRBI invites submissions from a range of historical, geographical and disciplinary perspectives that reflect on how to do this, addressing questions such as:

- How can dominant voices in historical sources and scholarship be contextualised and critically reassessed?
- What 'subaltern' or absent voices might be included in the analysis (such as those of lay sisters or former patients and pupils/students), and what methodologies can help to recover them?
- Who has written the histories of women religious, whose voices shape these histories today, and whose perspectives might inform future scholarship?

The conference also invites reflections on silence, both as a consequence of marginalisation or exclusion and as a purposeful religious or communal practice.

- How can silences in historical sources be thematised and meaningfully integrated into historical analysis?
- What silences persist in the historiography of women religious?
- Which silences should researchers seek to dispel, and which should they respect?

The conference welcomes 20-minute papers on these and related questions from historians, archivists and others working on women religious, in all time periods and geographical areas.

Please send abstracts (max. 250 words) and a short bio to hwrbi.conference@gmail.com by Friday, 29 January 2027

A conference fee will apply, and travel, accommodation and the conference dinner will be at attendees' own expense.
Limited bursaries will be available for speakers with little or no institutional funding – please indicate in your abstract/bio if you wish to be considered for this.

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