Litigating Women

This edited collection, written by both established and new researchers, reveals the experiences of litigating women across premodern Europe and captures the current state of research in this ever-growing field.

Individually, the chapters offer an insight into the motivations and strategies of women who engaged in legal action in a wide range of courts, from local rural and urban courts, to ecclesiastical courts and the highest jurisdictions of crown and parliament. Collectively, the focus on individual women litigants – rather than how women were defined by legal systems – highlights continuities in their experiences of justice, while also demonstrating the unique and intersecting factors that influenced each woman’s negotiation of the courts. Spanning a broad chronology and a wide range of contexts, these studies also offer a valuable insight into the practices and priorities of the many courts under discussion that goes beyond our focus on women litigants.

Drawing on archival research from England, Scotland, Ireland, France, the Low Countries, Central and Eastern Europe, and Scandinavia, Litigating Women is the perfect resource for students and scholars interested in legal studies and gender in medieval and early modern Europe.

Teresa Phipps is a social historian of late medieval England and Wales, interested in women, law, and urban society. Publications include a monograph on women and justice in late medieval English towns (2020), a volume on medieval town courts (2019), and articles on coverture, trespass, and credit.

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Litigating Women

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