

10 singular Malaysian women - from the 15th to the 19th century

1. Tun Kudu (15th century)

(Tun Kudu binti Tun Perpatih Sedang) Divorced by Sultan Muzaffar Shah to be married to the Bendahara (Prime Minister), who then agreed to resign. Tun Kudu's brother, Tun Perak became Prime Minister in his place. Tun Kudu's son, Tun Mutahir, would later also become Prime Minister. Tun Kudu's silence allowed her family to consolidate its power.

(Melaka region)

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

Infos + https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muzaffar_Shah_of_Malacca

La femme dans les 'Annales Malaises', ou 'Chronologie des Sultans de Melaka' entre 1446 et 1513 / région : Melaka

2. Tun Fatimah (16th century)

After having her father and husband killed, Sultan Mahmud Shah made her his 5th wife, against her will. She refused to smile, preferring to have three abortions before being promised that her next son would become Sultan (he would be the future first Sultan of Johor: Alauddin Riayat Shah). Role as Queen Consort of Malacca: ensured that those who slandered her father and her family were executed. She went on to become the first Malay woman to rule her people as a sovereign queen. It is said that the Portuguese were more afraid of the Queen than of her sultan husband. In the early 16th century, the Malays lost the war to the Portuguese army. (Melaka region)

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

Infos + https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tun_Fatimah

La femme dans les 'Annales Malaises', ou 'Chronologie des Sultans de Melaka' entre 1446 et 1513 / région : Melaka

3. Tok Temong (16th century)

(Puteri Badariah binti Alang Mohamad) Sovereign woman, head of the Temong district on the left bank of the Perak River. She offered one of the "regalias", called Mastika Embun (amulet, a magic stone used on the coronation day of Perak Sultans) to the first Sultan of Perak, Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1528-1549), against the promise that her descendants would continue to rule on the left bank of the river. (Perak region)

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

Infos + https://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tok_Temong

4. Cik Siti Wan Kembang (17th century)

Siti Wan Kembang (Che Siti), the legendary queen of the Kelantan region.

Known as the Queen-Amazon, she was known as a warrior queen and fought on horseback with a sword, accompanied by an army of horsewomen. Kijang coins are generally associated with Cik Siti ("Bank Negara Malaysia Money Museum & Art Centre" Archived from the original on July 22, 2011/ Myth of Kijang coins). Reigned from 1610 to 1667, never married, then abdicated in favor of her adopted daughter Puteri Saadong.

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

Infos + https://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cik_Siti_Wan_Kembang

5. Puteri Saadong (17th century)

Daughter of Cik Siti Wan Kembang, she reigned for four years, from 1667-1671, before being kidnapped by the Siamese and becoming the king's concubine.

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

Infos + https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puteri_Saadong

6. Tengku Tengah (18th century)

Born in 1723, daughter of the dethroned Sultan Abdul Jalil. In her desire for revenge, she married the Bugis Opu Daeng Parani. She is responsible for the Bugis influence in Johor and Malaysia. (Johor region) *Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)*

7. Mahsuri, binti Pandak Mayah (19th century)

Wrongly accused of adultery and executed, before her death she cursed the island of Langkawi for seven generations. (Kedah region)

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

Infos + <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahsuri>

8. Wan Fatimah binti Datuk Kayang (19th century)

She obtained from the King of Siam that her son Syed Hussein Jamalullail became the first Raja of Perlis in 1843, giving birth to a new sovereign state (Perlis region).

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

9. Datu Menteri Babu (19th century)

While Limpai alias Datu Menteri Babu replaced her husband as community leader on his death in 1884, she played an important role in the tribal wars and in relations with the Sultan of Brunei. According to British archives: Minister Babu was in fact called 'Si Limpai'. Her husband had died and she was a wealthy person who owned a large rice field and the most beautiful house. It is said that she settled in Terawi. Governor M. Wheatley, after obtaining the Sungai tulin Putatan in 1884, had granted the position of Chiefess to "Si Limpai" on May 9, 1884, and appointed her native chief with a salary of 5 dollars a month (Sabah Region).

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

<https://borneohistory57.blogspot.com/2018/01/sejarah-putatan-di-zaman-datu-menteri.html>

10. Che Mida (19th century)

Malay, energetic entrepreneur from Perak in the 1870s. Sister of Sri Maharaja Lela, head of the Sayong territory, she owned tin mines in Salak, and probably also in Gopeng (Kinta) and Larut.

Original source: École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Daniel Perret

11 remarkable Malaysian women - 20th century

1. Soo Kim Lan (Dr.) (1894)

Born in Taiping, Perak. First woman doctor in the territory that would become Malaysia.

Original source: École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Daniel Perret

2. Lim Beng Hong (1898)

B.H Oon was the first Malaysian woman to be called to the English Bar, the first female representative in the Federal Legislative Council and the co-founder of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA). The Federal Legislative Council was in charge of making Federation of Malaya an independent nation (Federation of Malaya was a country under British protectorates from 1948 to 1963). She returned to Penang in 1927 to get married. However, marriage did not stop her from applying to join the Bar of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States. At that time in British Malaya, women were prohibited from joining the Bar, so the law was changed in 1927 for Oon to be admitted. Hence, she became

the first woman to be admitted to the Malayan Bar. However, the legality of this amendment was not confirmed until 1935 by the Chief Justice of the Kuala Lumpur Supreme Court.

Original source: Thanks to Heidi Shamsuddin

<https://gempak.com/rojakdaily/lifestyle/kickass-malaysian-women-history-we-should-all-remember-and-look-66048>.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lim_Beng_Hong

3. Sybil Kathigasu (1899)

She was the Florence Nightingale from Malaysia. Born in Medan, Indonesia. Her family moved to Tanah Melayu, where she grew up. She then went to Singapore to study for nursing and midwifery, before returning home. She married Dr Abdon Clement Kathigasu and both of them ran a clinic in Ipoh (Perak) until 1941 when the Japanese occupation occurred. The couple, together with their children, fled to Papan, a small town close to Ipoh where they continued to treat patients and help the underground movement MPAJA (Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army). Besides providing medical assistance to rebels, Sybil also owned several radios over three years to listen to BBC and provide information to them. In 1943, Sybil was caught and imprisoned at the Batu Gajah prison where she was tortured for information, which she never gave away, even when the army threatened to kill her child. Sybil was saved when the Japanese were defeated in 1945. She was flown to Britain for treatment but died in 1948. She was initially buried in Scotland but her body was later brought to Ipoh for a burial.

The war hero is the only known Malaysian to have received the George Medal for Gallantry, a medal given to civilians who perform acts of bravery in, or meriting recognition by, the United Kingdom.

Original source: Thanks to Heidi Shamsuddin

<https://gempak.com/rojakdaily/lifestyle/kickass-malaysian-women-history-we-should-all-remember-and-look-66048>.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sybil_Kathigasu

4. Barbara Mendu Bay (1900)

She developed the self-confidence to become involved in politics when she was handpicked by the Japanese to lead the Iban section of the newly formed Kaum Ibu (Women's Association). In 1957, the Sarakup Indu Dayak Sarawak (SIDS), the women's section of the Sarawak Dayak National Union (SDNU), was officially established with Mendu as its president. As a leader, her message often emphasized the importance of education. She also contributed to the welfare of the local community, prisoners of war, and European officers during the Japanese occupation. (Région de Sarawak)

Original source: Sarawak library / Salina Hj Zawawi

(Source: Nadrawina Isnin, Dr. (2012). Sarawak Women in Politics: the pioneers. (Mamora, Toman). Women and family Department of Sarawak).

5. Aishah Ghani (Tan Sri Datin Paduka Seri Dr.) (1923)

Born in Kg Sungai Serai, Selangor. She became involved in politics in 1945 and took part in the independence movement. She became a member of the UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) party in 1949. From 1959, she worked as a journalist for the "Berita Harian" and "New Strait Times" dailies. She ceased her professional activities when she became a member of the UMNO Supreme Council and vice-president of the women's branch (Wanita UMNO). She became Malaysia's first female senator (~1962). From 1967 to 1972, she represented Malaysia at the United Nations Conference on the Status of Women. In 1972/73, she became Minister of Social Welfare. President of the women's wing of the UMNO party (Wanita UMNO) (1986-2013).

Original source: École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Daniel Perret

6. Azah Aziz (1928)

Born in Singapore. One of the pioneers of women's rights in Malaysia. Journalist, publisher, committed poet. Also known as "Malaysian cultural figure". Founder and president of the Malaysian Women's Journalists Association (1971-1978) and the University Women's Association. She was also one of the founders of the Pertubuhan Tindakan Wanita Islam Malaysia / Islamic Women's Action Organization (PERTIWI), addressing the welfare and needs of women and children in Malaysia. She contributed to several magazines from the 50s to the 70s, including editor of the daily "Utusan Malaysia". (1973-78). Board member of several foundations and organizations (Tun Abdul Razak Foundation, FINAS, National Cultural Council, etc.).

Original source: École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Daniel Perret

7. Bibi McPherson, Hajah (1930)

(Scottish – Chinese) She joined the native alliance political party, Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA), which fought for the anti-cession movement to reclaim Sarawak from the British Crown. She headed the party's Women's Wing in Panglima Seman Lama. She was involved in the State Election held between April and July 1963. After the election, BARJASA became one of the political parties that formed the State Government. She was also involved in non-political organizations such as the Sarawak Federation of Women's Institutes (SFWI), the Muslim Welfare Association Malaysia (PERKIM), and the Malaysia Drug Prevention Association (PEMADAM). (Région de Sarawak)

Original source: Sarawak library / Salina Hj Zawawi

(Source: Nadrawina Isnin, Dr. (2012). Sarawak Women in Politics: the pioneers. (Mamora, Toman). Women and family Department of Sarawak).

8. Fatimah Hamid Don (Puan Sri Professor Emeritus Dr.) (1933)

Born in Perak. First Malay woman appointed professor. Dean of the Faculty of Education at Malaya University, Kuala Lumpur. She has participated in the development of the National Policy for Women, the Women's Development Action Plan, the UN Women's Conference report and reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Source originale : École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Daniel Perret

9. Zakiah Hanum (1937)

Born in Kedah. Datuk Zakiah Hanum became Director General of the National Archives Department in 1977, the first woman to hold this position, and more generally to head a federal government department in Malaysia. As president of the NGO 'PERTIWI', dedicated to 'Didik Wanita, Terdidiklah Bangsa' (Educate Women, Educate the Nation), for three decades, she organized numerous relief programs for destitute women and children.

Original source: École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Daniel Perret

10. Asung Lenjau (~ 1940)

A midwife from Long Jeeh, she was one of the few Kenyah girls from Baram, Sarawak, who were handpicked by the British Governor, Sir Anthony Abell, in the mid-1950s to study in Kuching and become ulu midwives. She was only 16 when she began her two-year midwifery course. After the formation of Malaysia, as a rural midwife, she was neither given proper pay nor placed on the government payroll. Nevertheless, she was well-known throughout Baram for smooth deliveries and her expertise in child and maternal healthcare. (Région de

Sarawak)

Original source: Sarawak library / Salina Hj Zawawi

(Source: Chang Yi. (2014, December 7). The forgotten midwife of Long Jeeh. Borneo Post. <https://www.theborneopost.com/2014/12/07/the-forgotten-midwife-of-long-jeeh/>).

11. Nirmala Dutt Shanmughalingam (1941)

Born in Penang, died in 2016 in Kuala Lumpur. Visual artist, her “artistic talent was recognised when she was under the tutelage of Hoessein Enas, the founder of Angkatan Pelukis Semenanjung (APS). In 1966, she enrolled part-time at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., and then the Fogg Museum School of Art in Boston (USA). She began studying full-time in late 1975, gaining her Bachelor of Science from Oxford Polytechnic (UK), specialising in mass communication, graphic art and psychology, then she completed her M.Phil. at Goldsmiths, University of London (UK). After returning from the United States, she attempted to paint various aspects of the Malaysian landscape. This attempt led her to appreciate the deterioration of the country’s landscape due to the vast urbanisation under way in the 1970s. This inspired her Statement series in which she began to use photography and the montage technique as a means of artistic expression.

The repeated use of Xeroxed images from mass media also appears in her Anak Asia series (1983).

Certainly one of Southeast Asia’s most important women artists, she remained committed to using art to awaken a social conscience. Her works have graced international exhibitions, including prominent venues like the National Gallery of Thailand, Japan’s Fukuoka Art Museum, London’s Barbican Centre and the Singapore Art Museum. Even since her death, her work has been selected for the exhibition *Awakenings: Art in Society in Asia 1960s–1990s* (2019), an exhibition highlighting 150 important artists from the Asian region.

Original source: <https://awarewomenartists.com/artiste/nirmala-dutt-shanmughalingam/>

10 elusive

Legendary Malaysians and around

1. Hang Li Po (15th century)

Chinese princess sent by the Ming dynasty, as a gift, to marry the Malay sultan Mansur Shah (r. 1456-1477), according to the Malay Annals. However, whether Hang Li Po was a real person is debated, as there are no references to her in Ming dynasty documents (Melaka region).

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

Infos + https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hang_Li_Po

La femme dans les ‘Annales Malaises’, ou ‘Chronologie des Sultans de Melaka’ entre 1446 et 1513 / région : Melaka

2. Puteri Gunung Ledang (15th century)

Puteri means "princess" and Gunung Ledang is the Malay name for Mount Ophir. The legend dates back to the 15th century, at the height of power and prosperity of the Kingdom of Melaka, being an important port of call for trading vessels plying the profitable marine trade route between India and China. In recognition of the power and importance of the kingdom, Sultan Mansur Shah received from China a princess bride and he had another princess bride too from a nearby Kingdom in what is now the island of Java. Yet this did not satisfy the

growing ego of the Sultan and his desire for recognition, he wanted a queen that no other ordinary king or sultan could possess, like Gunung Ledang. This Princess lived on the top of the tallest mountain (Mount Ophir) in the south of the Malay Peninsula. It is said that her court consisted only of women that could appear and disappear with the mists on the mountain top and that could become pregnant by the power of the wind that blows there. It is also said that she was protected by tigers which were actually jungle peoples with the power of transformation.

Mansur Shah sent a delegation and his most trusted warrior, Hang Tuah. The Princess really does not want to marry Sultan Mansur but in recognition of his power decided not to embarrass him by saying no. Instead, she tells Hang Tuah and his men to tell the Sultan that he must first provide a suitable dowry. She requested the following; a bridge of gold and silver from the foothills of Melaka to the top of Mount Ophir, seven trays full of the hearts of mosquitoes, seven trays full of the hearts of mites, a bowl of water wrung from dried areca nuts, a bowl of tears from virgins, a cup of the Sultan's blood and a bowl of the blood of the Sultan's baby son. The legend tells how this mad endeavour had bankrupted the Kingdom. In this manner, the mighty Kingdom of Melaka was fatally weakened and finally fell when Hang Tuah was not there to defend it when the Portuguese fleet attacked in 1511! (Melaka region)

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

<https://lonegreysquirrel.blogspot.com/2008/06/princess-of-gunung-ledang.html>

3. Malahayati and the Inong Balee Armada (16th century)

During the reign of Sultan Alaidin Ali Riayat Syah IV Saidil Mukammil, who ruled the Kingdom of Aceh from 997 to 1011 (1589-1604), a fleet was formed. Some of its soldiers were widows called the Inong Balee Armada. The fleet was formed at the request of Admiral Malahayati and was led directly by her. Admiral Malahayati, accompanied by 2,000 brave and agile female soldiers, was repeatedly involved in battles, not only in the Straits of Malacca, but also on the east coast of Sumatra and Malaysia. In addition to a fort, Armada Inong Balee also has a military base at Teluk Lamreh Krueng Raya (Indonesia).

Source: https://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_2014_num_87_1_4465

4. Sultanah Taj al-'Alam (17th century)

Women Combatants in the Sultanate: Between Myth and Reality. In the region of Aceh, female rulers are relatively common. The sultanate was ruled for half a century by four sultanas (1641-1699) and before that, in the 13th and 14th centuries, three Muslim women, namely Al-Malika Wabisa, Malika Asya, and paduka Sit al-'alam, reigned as regents in Pasai, a kingdom in the north of Sumatra later absorbed by the sultanate of Aceh. Although their political power cannot be denied, no military operations were mentioned; apparently, these queens were never on the battlefield: female leaders did not mean female combatants. It was even the opposite.

The reign of female leaders indeed inaugurated a period of calm in military activities, replaced by intense diplomatic negotiations, as evidenced by several Dutch documents. After the death of Sultan Iskandar Thani, his widow Taj al-'Alam succeeded him and was the first female leader to use the full title of Sultanah Taj al-'Alam Safiyyat al-Din Syah (r. 1641-1675), having inherited from her father, the great Sultan Iskandar Muda (r. 1607-1636). Instead of military campaigns and expansion, she preferred diplomacy to ensure regular trade and the security of the sultanate; a change in policy that could be explained by the desire to abandon previous policies with enormous taxes necessary to finance expeditions and maintain the hegemony of the sultanate over neighboring kingdoms. The glory of Aceh was secured by military conquest, but the population became poorer. With the new policy of the sultanah,

the kingdom of Aceh lost its hegemony over the Malay Peninsula and western Sumatra, but the prosperity of the port was never reduced and the stability of the economy preserved. The blockade of the Perak port, on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, then under Aceh supremacy in the 1650s, is a good example to illustrate this change in policy. (Indonesia)

Source: https://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_2014_num_87_1_4465

5. Tengku Aminah (19th century)

At the end of the 19th century, she marched at midnight on the house of Tengku Indut with 300 armed women to free the 4 dancers he had kidnapped. (Pahang region)

Original source: Serge Jardin (historian)

Untraceable Malaysian Women (The Nameless)

- 6. Merchants:** From the 15th century to the present day, the streets of Melaka have dominated the street stalls and markets of Kota Bahru, Johor Bahru, and Kota Kinabalu.
- 7. Pirates:** From the Straits of Malacca to the coasts of Borneo, maritime piracy was not a male monopoly.
- 8. Weavers:** From Songket (weaving silk and gold or silver thread) in Melaka to Kelantan, but also from pua (cotton and plant dyes) in Sarawak. Textiles, the preserve of women, are one of the most beautiful forms of traditional craftsmanship.
- 9. Shamans:** From mother to daughter, among the Kadazans and Dusuns of Sabah.
- 10. Pillow dictionaries:** names given to local women whom the colonist used to learn the language pleasantly and quickly, but whom he did not marry. Let us quote Dayang Mastiah binti Abang Aing: mother of Isaac Brooke (born 1867), eldest son of Charles Brooke, second White Rajah.

A selection of 10 women from the Artist's lists

1. Enheduanna (-2300 av JC) *The First writer*

Probably the most ancient literary author. Daughter of Sargon of Akkad, her father conquers Ur and names Enheduanna priestess of the prosperous Sumerian capital in Mesopotamia (today's Iraq). An uprising drives her out and inspires the writing of "Temple Hymns". This is an exceptional text: the oldest text whose author is known, and it's a woman!

2. Louise Dupin (1706) *A visionary*

I discovered Louise Dupin's research and manuscripts through a podcast featuring Frédéric Marty as a guest. An educated and wealthy woman, she brought fortune to her husband. Her own writings remained unpublished as publishing was a risky act for a prominent woman at the time. However, in 1748, immediately after the publication of "The Spirit of the Laws," she published, along with her husband and two collaborators, a collective refutation to denounce the misogyny in Montesquieu's words. Around 1740, she initiated a comprehensive work in four parts on the female condition: "physical, historical, political, and legal." It's this encyclopedic approach, aimed at providing a panoramic view (across all

latitudes and periods), that makes her work unique, as well as its rigor. She hired Rousseau as her secretary for eight years on this subject. George Sand (born Aurore Dupin), her great-granddaughter by marriage, reportedly read Louise's manuscripts, which were preserved by the heirs at the Château de Chenonceau for two centuries. Notable work: her manuscript "Des femmes," with some eloquent chapter titles from the legal section: Article 26: "Of the rights which women have naturally enjoyed, of the undertakings which have been made against these same rights; of those which have been restored to them, which have been taken over by modern usurpations"; Article 30: "Of the power of the husband, of the favour which the laws grant to married women and of those which they could grant to them"; Article 37: "Of rape".

Sources: "About Women," Éditions Payot et Rivage, 2022. Podcast "La Compagnie des œuvres," August 18, 2023, guest Frédéric Marty. "Why has philosopher Louise Dupin remained in the shadow of the Enlightenment?" Link: podcasts.apple.com/fr/podcast/la-compagnie-des-oeuvres/id1082325156?i=1000624891600

3. Émilie du Chatelet (1706-1749) A scientist

The harsh reality of a woman torn between body and mind moved me when learning about the life of this mathematician and physicist. Pregnant with her fourth child, she worked urgently on her translation of Newton's work. She completed the "Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy," gave birth, and then died. As French was the universal language during the Age of Enlightenment, her work became a cornerstone in the spread of the scientific revolution in Europe and still holds authority today. She also experimentally proved that kinetic energy is proportional to mass of an object and to the square of its velocity. Better known as Voltaire's mistress.

4. Laskarina Bouboulina (1771-1825) A pirate

Owner of a shipping company and Naval Commander, she raises the Greek flag (created herself) up the mast of her war ship, the Agamemnon. She plays a crucial role in Greece's independence war against the Ottomans.

5. Virginia Woolf (1882) A Writer

"A Room of One's Own," a classic, had been familiar to me since adolescence. Yet, its full significance didn't resonate with me until later. It was the first book I revisited at the start of my project on eclipsed women. At 24, already fragile and orphaned, Virginia Woolf's brother died suddenly. He had been her gateway to the wider world and introduced her to her future husband (and her sister's) among the intellectual group "Bloomsbury," whose initial core was formed at Cambridge and of which she became a pivotal member. A series of lectures at Cambridge for young women led to the creation of "A Room of One's Own," published in 1929. Throughout her life, the closeness of her friends and family was both a source of support and exchange, despite her chronic depression. A notable quote: "Suppose, for instance, that men were only represented in literature as the lovers of women, and were never the friends of men, soldiers, thinkers, dreamers."

(Source: « Virginia Woolf, romans, essais » Gallimard Editions, Quatro Collection ©2014.)

6. Lavinia Fontana (1552) An Artist

While researching Sofonisba Anguissola, I came across Lavinia, an exceptionally free female painter, and I immediately ordered the catalog of a recent exhibition featuring her work in Ireland. Her father, a painter, secured the family's financial future thanks to his daughter's talent. Exceptional event, a marriage contract established in 1577 stipulated that Lavinia

would continue her painting practice rather than take on domestic roles. She did not bring a dowry to her in-laws; her talent was guarantee enough. Despite having 11 children and no workshop of her own, today over 130 paintings have been attributed to her, including large-format public commissions. She skillfully managed to combine the representation of social status with extreme tenderness, especially in her portraits of children. Notable work: "Venus and Mars," 1595 (Oil on canvas, 110 x 109 cm). When exhibited at the Prado in 2019, the commentary was "the most audacious known secular painting." Mars places his hand on Venus's buttock, while she turns towards the viewer with a confident gaze, an unmade bed in the background suggesting intercourse.

(Source: Catalog of the National Gallery of Ireland "Lavinia Fontana, Trailblazer, Rule Breaker," 2023)

7. Maddalena Casulana (1544-1590) *A composer*

Italian composer, lutenist, and singer of the late Renaissance. In 1568, she publishes in Venice her first book of madrigals for four voices: « Il primo libro di madrigali ». She is the first female composer to have had a whole book of her music printed and published in the history of western music. In 1570, 1583 and 1586, she will publish other books of madrigals, all in Venice.

Listen here : <https://www.musicme.com/#/Maddalena-Casulana/>

8. Ida Laura Pfeiffer (1797-1858) *An Adventurer*

Discovered by chance, in the window of a bookstore, one title caught my eye: « Voyage d'une femme autour du monde ». ("Travels of a woman around the world"). She began her voyage around 50 years old, widowed, with grown children, alone and without financial means. She completes 5 voyages in 16 years, of which two trips around the world. The story of her travels will be published. Her writing is simple, her point of view almost naïve, yet uncompromising on colonies.

9. Hubertine Auclert (1848-1914) *An activist*

Two of her actions represent her convictions and great common sense. In 1880, she attempts to register on electoral lists at the town hall of the 10th district of Paris. In the official newspaper, she advocates for all "persons" omitted from the list to demand their registration ("person" being a term including both men and women). Next, tax boycott: she refuses to pay taxes, as the expression "all French people" excludes her when it comes to voting. Additionally, she will ask for the "feminization" of words such as "témoin". (witness), "avocat" (lawyer), "électeur" (elector), "député" (member of parliament), all roles forbidden for women.

10. Madeleine Brès *First French female doctor*

DECLARATION In 150 years, we've gone from 0% to 50% female doctors in France/
VOCATION Daughter of a wheelwright, Madeleine Brès learns while her father repairs the hospital carts/
OBSTACLE Married at 15, conformity of the times/
DESIRE Enroll in the École de médecine, no women (1866)/
DOOR OPENED Wurtz, dean in favor but embarrassed/
SUPPORTS Empress Eugénie pleads in cabinet and Victor Dury has just opened public secondary school for girls/
ARGHH Legal barrier : must pass baccalaureate, recently granted to women (1861)/
HUMM Necessity of husband's consent, simple omnibus driver/
ENTRE DEUX Wurtz opens access to Englishwoman Garrett and Russian woman Gontcharoff/
WAOUH First Frenchwoman enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine (1868)/
OBSTACLE Boarding school refused to women, i.e. hospital practice/
PUGNACITY Widow, 3 dependent children/

NOTHING STOPS HER she'll do a thesis/ **TRIUMPH** First French woman to obtain a doctorate in medicine (1875)/ **OBSTACLE** Waiting for authorization to practice/ **PRESS** "the woman doctor is a dubious being, hermaphroditic or sexless... a monster"/ **ENFINISHMENT** a monster"/ **FINALLY** Widowed, opened her own practice, though restricted to women and children/ **INEPTIA** Treating men deemed too immodest, not the other way around! **HONORS** Officer of Public Instruction (1885).

Credits

- *In collaboration with the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.*
- *Acknowledgments to the Sarawak State Library.*