

2011

Lyceum Club Femenino

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Gonzalez-Allende, Iker, "Lyceum Club Femenino" (2011). *Spanish Language and Literature*. 87.
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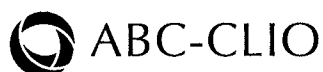
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World Literature in Spanish

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA

Volume 2: G–Q

Maureen Ihrle and Salvador A. Oropesa, Editors



Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado • Oxford, England

Lyceum Club Femenino

This Spanish cultural association, created in 1926 by women in Madrid, followed the model of other European and American women's groups at that time. It functioned as a meeting place for women to share experiences and as a cultural center that offered workshops, lectures, and exhibitions by notable national and international intellectuals.

The Lyceum's activities embraced six different areas: music, literature, science, visual arts, social advocacy for women,

and international affairs. María de Maeztu was president, Isabel Oyarzábal and Victoria Kent served as vice presidents, and Zenobia Camprubí was secretary. Other active participants included Pilar de Zubiaurre, Ernestina de *Champourcin, Concha Méndez, María Teresa León, and Carmen Baroja. All these women belonged to the bourgeoisie or aristocracy, were well educated, and shared liberal political views. Within that profile, two different types of women emerged: those who were young, independent and single; and those who were older and more traditional, and usually married to famous intellectuals. The former group was inclined to dress and behave in more modern ways and to adopt feminist concerns.

The Lyceum allowed Spanish women to make their writings known and to collaborate in the nation's cultural life. Consequently, conservative and religious sectors of Spain criticized the organization continuously, calling it the “club de las *maridas*” (a derogatory neologism, created as a feminine version of *marido* [husband]), and characterizing it as an enemy of family values. Even some male intellectuals opposed the Lyceum; for instance, Jacinto *Benavente declined to give a lecture there. The Lyceum disappeared after the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939): women's progress during the Second Republic was substituted by the traditional domestic ideology that the Feminine Section of the fascist Falange imposed during Francoist Spain. Nonetheless, the Lyceum represents a necessary antecedent to Spanish feminist movements of the 1970s.

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See also Feminism in Spain: 1700 to Present.

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