



Melusine's secret discovered, from *Le Roman de Mélusine* by Jean d'Arras, ca 1450-1500. Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Mermaids

ECL: Literature and the Environment

Fall 2025. Professor Pressman

Day 9: The Medieval Melusine

ADMIN

- More extra credit! Podcasting workshops
- Blogs: explicate, don't speculate or generalize.
- & ADD categories!

ADMIN

- First writing assignment — THESIS and close reading
- For example of a strong blog with thesis and close reading, see ALYSSA R, MELISSA, and ASHLEY from this week!
 - — - possibility of expanding blog post for midterm close reading instead of a discovery.

Discovery: Thesis and Explication

2 Short Discoveries: 15% each (30%)

This short creative-analytical assignment prompts you to practice thesis and close reading by engaging in “discovery” beyond our syllabus. There are 2 parts to this assignment:

1) **make or find** a “mermaid” text not on our syllabus (short story, film, meme, poem, artwork, etc.) or a work of scholarship (scholarly article, book, etc.) that expands our classroom learning. Post this item (or a link to it) into your blog and **describe the object.**

2) **explain and analyze** *how* this discovery matters and extends our learning about literature and the environment in a short (2 page, single-spaced) essay with **a thesis** that focuses on 1 aspect of the object and articulates the importance of your discovery. **Analyze and close read the object** or scholarly text to explain its relevance and relation to the class.

****YOU CAN REVISE these short assignments for a better grade, and you are encouraged to do so. Revision is due before next discovery is due****

Melusine

- Original romance dates 1393 or 1401
- **First rendered into written form in a text by Jean d'Arras in 1393**, the legend of the Faery Melusine is well established in France, where **she is credited with having founded the family, town and castle of Lusignan.**
- The myth explains medieval port town of La Rochelle, its legendary founder, and its fraught political history



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Discussion

- What does this story add to our learning?
- Where do you want to start discussion?

Melusine



Melusine

Roman de Mélusine, en vers français, attribué à Couldrette.

Source: gallica.bnf.fr

Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits. Français 24383, fol. 30r.



Folklore as Environmental Literature in *Melusine*

“They lived close to nature in those days” (11)

“The forest stretched beyond, menacing and dangerous, full of the unknown, concealing the surprising and the supernatural”: (11)

- “In those days men identified with things that could lead them further into the unknown; they sought in all directions extension of their physical and spiritual power.... And things, animals or people, trees or weapons, were more themselves” (12)

Take aways?