

Victoria Addona
Harvard University

Figures of Every Proportion: Depicting Bodies on Early Modern Buildings

This paper explores the long history of depicting the human body on public Florentine surfaces: excommunicated criminals, painted allegories, sculpted busts of illustrious men. From the thirteenth century on, Florence's city walls, prisons, governmental offices, and palaces were populated by a virtual cast of citizens, providing iconographical examples both of good and bad civic behaviors, and forwarding a colorful and enlivened ornamental alternative to the city's characteristic monumental stone facades. In particular, I will examine the genre's sparse image archive alongside stories told about bodies on buildings in encomia, satiric poetry, and memory treatises, to consider how the active public judgment of architectural aesthetics implicated early modern civic ethics. Few of these decorative surfaces remain extant, prompting further attention to the historiographical and narrative limitations of the study of ephemeral art.

Renee Baernstein
Miami University

Making Convent Stories: The Chronicle of San Paolo Converso and Church History in Borromeo's Milan, 1584

Learned ladies wrote plenty of history in the Renaissance. As the recent explosion of scholarship on female authors has shown (Cox, Ray, et al.) women participated fully in the scholarly and creative exchanges of the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, both in secular and religious contexts. This paper turns to the genre of the nun-authored convent chronicle. It argues that this genre, traditionally interpreted as a semi-domestic work of meaning-making for internal audiences, was actually pitched to a broader public and engaged with published historical writings and debates of the time. Its main example is from Milan, the manuscript *Istoria dell'Angelica Paola Antonia Sfondrati circa l'Angeliche del monastero di S. Paolo di Milano* (1584-85). The paper places its composition in the context of the turbulent ecclesiastical politics of Milan after the death of Archbishop Carlo Borromeo (1584) and traces the chronicle's reception history thereafter.

Emese Balint
Independent Scholar

Writing, telling and visualizing the faith. Hutterite ceramics after the Reformation

Decoration on the Hutterite ceramics can be viewed as internal history, as the functional equivalent of the Anabaptist annalistic record. A significant part of the large Hutterite archive survived in the so-called chronicles (240 are known today) that functioned as history books and have been transmitted to every new generation. As a result of the aggressive Habsburg policy against religious minorities, the Hutterite communal organization in Hungary was dissolved in 1685. A sudden decrease in written record followed. Around this date, after a sudden change in style, the Anabaptist ceramics feature painted ornaments that become narratives alongside the written chronicles. Ceramics helped to keep the collective memory and Hutterite identity alive. Both the texts and the ceramics were part of the same successful strategy of identity preservation; this rich heritage has held together the Anabaptist communes from the sixteenth century to the present.

Sara Beam
University of Victoria

A 17th Century Infanticide Trial

This paper explores questions that are on my mind as I prepare a critical edition and translation of a seventeenth-century infanticide trial. In 1686, noblewoman Jeanne Catherine Thomasset was prosecuted in Geneva for having poisoned her own illegitimate daughter and the son of the rural midwife. The trial raises themes resonant in the works of both Tom and Libby: familial betrayal and loyalty, female networks of childbirth and childcare, vengeance, illicit sexuality, the interplay of class tensions in the courtroom among others. Finally, I will explore whether it is possible to create a microhistory without writing a narrative; I consider this critical edition, which presents students with all of the evidence in the trial as well as additional, annotated, sources, to be a kind of microhistory.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Steven Bednarski
University of Waterloo

Reconstruction: The Life and Times of Sir Herbert Paul Latham, bt.

In England of the interwar years, few men were as glamorous, sought-after, or successful as Sir Herbert Paul Latham, 2nd baronet. His father had left him a fortune and a new title; his gorgeous young wife was the daughter of a wealthy Anglo-Irish Earl; Latham himself had his seat in the newly reconstructed Herstmonceux Castle, a grand country estate. When, in 1941, the English military prosecuted Latham for indecency, this glittering public life came crashing down, and history promptly forgot him. He and his tale remained, in fact, largely unknown until 2016 when I petitioned the National Archives for access to his court martial record. The chilling denial I received resulted in a lengthy legal battle that drew me and my students first into a complex system of lawyers and archivists, then into the House of Lords. The microhistory I tell is of a man whose sexuality resulted in enormous suffering, but also, importantly, of a modern historian and his students who tested the boundaries of access in an attempt to right an historical injustice and restore a reputation. Latham 's tale is one inscribed in LGBT history but also one that points to the utility of the past to the present. It casts the right to privacy against the greater social good. It also, tellingly, reminds that sometimes the institutions set up to protect the past can move in surprisingly contrary directions.

Cristian Berco
Bishops University

Narrative and Judicial Performance in the Spanish Inquisition

The heretic under trial fit a well-trod narrative of confession, repentance, and reconciliation with the Christian polity. From the presumption of guilt and the way it shaped the inquisitorial process to the promotion of this narrative through the auto de fe, the tale of the condemned heretic has been well studied. This paper examines the other central characters in this narrative: inquisitors. An analysis of seventeenth-century inquisitorial trials and correspondence reveals the manner in which this overarching narrative anchored by the legal presumption of guilt shaped inquisitorial assumptions and behavior, often in an unconscious manner. Just as the jurisprudence and bureaucracy of trials were suffused with narrative assumptions about heretics, so did these discourses affect inquisitorial work. Narratives of heretical guilt effectively shaped, through daily and bureaucratized iteration, specific inquisitorial mental ticks, practices, and performances. Ultimately, long-standing and unexamined narratives not only produced heretics but also inquisitors themselves.

J. F. Bernard
Champlain College

Shakespeare and the Early Modern Campfire: Contagion, Cognition, and Theatrical Story-Making

My paper undertakes a theoretical consideration of the cognitive and contagious aspects of theatrical storytelling (what makes a story stick in an audience 's mind, and why are Shakespeare 's stories so sticky?) as the focal point for a larger inquiry of early modern theater merging storytelling, contagion, and cognition. It suggests that theatre 's successful communication of its stories to audiences that can, in turn, disseminate them beyond its walls relies on the inherent contagiousness of stories fusing past memories of narratives with new dramatic iterations. This rhetoric of mutability allows us to further envision the networks of stories that Shakespeare 's theatre creates and the cognitive implications of an understanding of theater as a performative space for stories to be transmitted and shared, one that proves heavily reliant on their subsequent dissemination in the larger community, and on an eventual return to the site of infection.

Elena Brizio
Georgetown University - Fiesole

The Tale of the Cinquecento Woman who accompanied her family in the future

Eustochia Bichi (1461-1543) was the daughter of the wealthy Sienese Antonio Bichi, member of the Monte dei Nove and a close friend of Pandolfo Petrucci. Following the trend of the upper class to which she belonged, Eustochia married at the age of fifteen. She became widow at twenty-one, and as she had no children, she spent her remaining life taking care of her surviving relatives. Eustochia was named co-heir with her brother Firmano at their father 's death. The long legal battle that she engaged with Firmano, and how she managed to save the disgraced family through the political turmoil of mid-Cinquecento Siena, will be examined here in light of new archival documentation. Firmano 's attitude and Eustochia 's reaction, offer an interesting insight on the legal, economic and social context that constituted the breeding grounds for contemporary ideas on family and honor.

Bernard D. Cooperman
University of Maryland

Shylock 's Daughter-In-Law. Telling Jewish Stories about Adultery in Early Modern Rome

One of the most intriguing rabbinic responsa to have survived from 16th-century Rome is the manuscript account of an adulterous affair between a young married woman and the clerk her father-in-law had hired to run the family 's loan bank. Unusual in its detail about daily life, about family relationships, and about the emotions of the various actors, the account and the halakhic response by Rabbi Isaac de Lattes open up before us the complicated social norms, family structures, and legal theory through which personal motivations and aspirations were expressed on the Jewish street. Because this autograph text includes much of the detail normally edited out of published rabbinic writing, it allows us to track the narrator 's conscious effort to achieve specific legal goals through a piece of fiction in the [Jewish] archive.

Boyd Cothran, York University
Adrian Schubert, York University

Vessel of Globalization: The Many Worlds of the Edwin Fox, 1853-1905

The merchant vessel *Edwin Fox* was exceptional for being unexceptional. It was old fashioned even before its keel was laid down in Thomas Reeves's shipyards near Calcutta in 1853. It was neither large nor fast, and had none of the prestige of the great tea and opium clippers that captured the public imagination in the mid-nineteenth century. The *Edwin Fox* was a small, ugly slowpoke in the heyday of the age of sail and a lonesome survivor in the age of steam, and from a mariner's perspective it sat at the bottom of the hierarchy of opportunities. Yet the life and career of this undistinguished ship coincides with a pivotal era in globalization: the years between 1860 and 1890 that Jurgen Osterhammel calls the "inner focal point" of the 19th century. And the *Edwin Fox* participated in many of the developments that made these years so crucial: the rapid expansion and intensification of trade around the globe; the spread of industrialization to many regions; the great thrust of Western imperialism; the unprecedentedly large migrations of people, both free and forced; the large-scale and systematic dispossession of indigenous peoples and their replacement with settler populations; the integration of settler colonies into imperial markets; and environmental change on a massive scale. Emphasizing stories of integration, interactions, and entanglements, this paper describes the ways in which the unique perspective of this single ship can provide to a more intimate understanding of the human agencies and the human costs involved in the most important period of globalization to occur prior to the one we have been experiencing since the 1990s.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Jane Couchman
Glendon College, York University

Creating a usable story: The French abbess who climbed over the convent wall, married William of Orange, and persuaded her Catholic father to support the marriage.

Charlotte de Bourbon-Montpensier (1546/7-1582) became Abbess of the convent of Jouarre in 1565, announced her acceptance of the Reformed faith and escaped from the convent in 1571, and married William of Orange in 1575. Charlotte gave birth to 6 daughters, supported her husband in his fight against the Spanish, and convinced her ultra-Catholic father to accept the marriage and to offer financial support to her and her family. She did this by skillfully creating a usable version of her story to counter her father's vehement opposition and widespread public censure. This included having documents prepared to demonstrate that her profession as a nun was against her will, having the Elector of the Palatinate act in loco parentis to approve her marriage on her father's behalf, and initiating a correspondence with him in which she presented herself as a dutiful daughter. This version of her story allowed her father to reinstate her without compromising his own honour.

Marlee Couling
York University

Strength in Numbers: women, crime, and the courts in 17th century England

Well aware of the dangers they faced economically and physically, non-elite women in 17th century England often relied on safety in numbers to ensure their security and success. Using judicial records, this paper illustrates how women used their female networks for support in two very different ways – as protection from crime and as part of their own criminal activities. By working together, walking home together, and sharing stories about dangerous persons and places, women protected each other from assault. And by joining forces women gained the strength in numbers which allowed them to commit crimes, including violent ones and attacks on male targets. By acting together women helped mitigate the chances of personal harm and heightened chances of criminal success. As part of this overall quest for success, I will also consider how women created stories for the courts which best served their own interests.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Lucia Dacome
University of Toronto

Healing Slaves: Reappraising Early Modern Stories of Science and Medicine

This paper explores stories related to the entanglements of slavery, medicine and natural inquiry in early modern Italy. It focuses on the medical and healing practices that developed alongside the creation of a Bagno of Livorno, the purpose built edifice that for some 150 years housed a large community of hundreds and at times thousands of Ottoman slaves. On the one hand, it considers how medical practitioners were involved in maintaining and supporting the institution of slavery and relied on enslaved bodies to construct knowledge, authority, and reputation. On the other hand, it examines how Ottoman captives acted themselves as agents of healing and knowledge. By interrogating the healing and knowledge practices associated with the Bagno of Livorno, this paper will shed light on how drawing attention to the role of slavery in our early modern histories of science and medicine is bound to shift our perspective on the way we tell their stories.

Claire Judde de Larivière
Université de Toulouse

Speech and Action in Renaissance Venice: stories from the Avogaria di Comun

In their book *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome: Trials before the Papal Magistrates* (Toronto, 1993), Thomas and Elizabeth Cohen made many stimulating propositions about the way scholars can read, analyse, use, translate and narrate legal sources of the Renaissance, especially court records and trials. My paper intend to discuss how their propositions still resonate today with new ways of studying social history, especially within French historiography. I will focus on the question of the ordinary people, as these documents constitute one of the most important source to access the life, the political intention, the social representation of people who lived at a time in which their ability to produce documents was limited. Focusing on trials organised in sixteenth-century Venice by the magistrates of the Avogaria di Comun, I will consider how historians can continue using these legal sources to make them tell new stories, and help us understand how worked the Venetian society when considered from the point of view of the ordinary people themselves

Filippo de Vivo
Birkbeck, University of London

Archival stories in early modern Italy

Scholars of microhistory have taught us how to trace stories in the archives of early modern Italy, how to reconstruct the narratives of defendants in trials, how to piece together tales from investigative records, and in this way, how to find agency in the words of ordinary people. In this paper, I would like to take a different tack for this paper and reconstruct some of the stories that clerks and notaries in charge of archives told – to themselves and to others – about their own archives. Some archives were said to have been established on the ruins of earlier troves, others to have been created by particularly organised officers or wise princes. The archives in Rome – both those of the Holy See and those of the Governatore – were thought as having a very special past, to do with the city's dual nature as the all too human capital of Christianity's ecumenical mission. To unearth these stories gives us an opportunity to understand the point of view of often forgotten clerks responsible for the maintenance of archives, to reflect about the uses and value of documents at the time they were created, collected and classified, and so to offer some methodological reflections on the archival turn in historiography.

Jennifer Mara DeSilva
Ball State University

Entering the Office of Ceremonies: Telling Stories about Advancement and Patronage

For centuries the papal Office of Ceremonies bore a reputation for tedious bureaucratic repetition stemming from responsibilities aligning with annual and periodic ritual cycles, a concern for privileging historical precedent, and the production of detailed-oriented diaries. However, the basic sameness of the annual liturgical experience retreats when the Office is examined as a sample of men serving over centuries. In their diaries these men framed themselves and their work within personal visions of the larger Curia. Several diaries begin with an account of how the ceremonialist acquired his office, recounting the actions and individuals who facilitated his office-holding. These accounts allow the historian to identify and compare the narratives of advancement, patronage, gratitude, and networking that began at the Curia and were acted out across the larger city of Rome. Similarities and diversities reveal how papal ceremonialists conceived of their careers as integrated within broader social, institutional, and communal identities and narrated these identities within their diaries.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Michele Di Sivo
Archivio di Stato di Roma

Bellezza Orsini. The construction of a witch (1528)

In 1528 Bellezza Orsini, natural daughter of Pietro Angelo and in the end of 15th century servant of the Orsini lords of Monterotondo, was accused of witchcraft as a result of her public reputation for wrongdoing (malefici). Put on trial and tortured in the Rocca di Fiano Romano, she offered a spirited defense of her behavior before yielding to the accusations in a confession written in her own hand. In the notebook containing her confession she constructs an image of herself as a witch that closely parallels that of contemporary witchcraft manuals, especially the *Malleus maleficarum*. In her notebook she also answers the judge's question on the meaning of witchcraft, understood as the desire for knowledge.

Eric Dursteler
Brigham Young University

Worse Than a Public Brothel : Sex and Diplomacy in Early Modern Istanbul

In 1613 Paolo Antonio Bon, dragoman of the Dutch legation in Istanbul, wrote a letter to the States General in which he recounted a tawdry tale of immoral behavior within the embassy involving the ambassador, Cornelius Haga, himself. Several years prior, the English merchant, John Sanderson, had made similar accusations against Ambassador Edward Barton. These unusual reports provide a rare window into the intimate life of early modern diplomats, but even more revealingly, into the ways in which sex and female honor informed diplomacy in the Ottoman capital in the early modern era.

Konrad Eisenbichler
University of Toronto

"A Good Story Gets Even Better (With a Bit of Imagination)"

In highlighting women's agency in previous centuries, we sometime get carried away and imagine, and then affirm, what we think happened. However, when our assumptions manipulate the historical record to our own ends they can become a problem, especially when they lead to a vicious spiral of "creative" scholarship not from ourselves, but from subsequent scholars who believe as fact what we simply suggested as probable. My presentation traces the development of one such creative spiral: the "myth" that during the Siege of Siena (1554-55), the women of that city gathered into "squadrons" to defend their hometown against the besieging Florentine army. To do so, I highlight how contemporary sixteenth-century literary records and second-hand accounts have been used over time to create a narrative that is as attractive as it is questionable. The presentation thus raises questions about how we use archival and contemporary records, and about how much we can trust previous scholars or, for that matter, certain literary genres.

David Gentilcore
University of Leicester

The Sociability of Water in Early Modern Italy

For Jean-Jacques Rousseau access to sources of drinking water and the resulting socialisation was nothing less than the starting point of language and communication. The well as a site of socialisation, in all its polyvalence, is symbolised in the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob 's well (John 4:1-40), represented numerous times in Italian art during the period. Wells, fountains and riverbeds were the sites of encounters, conversation, gossip and dispute. How can we return to the source, recapturing the sociability of water in the past? To answer this question, my paper will bring together a range of historical perspectives, from the prescriptive and judicial (such as the regulation of water-related trades, like washerwomen and water-carriers, or legislation to keep water sources untainted) to forms of cultural production (such as madrigals, novelle, folktales and proverbs).

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Bonnie Gordon
University of Virginia

The Castrati and the Cannibal

In accounts of his four voyages Christopher Columbus wrote that the Carib Indians took young male prisoners, castrated them, made them servants, fattened them up and then ate them. Castration produced ideal slaves and then food; the ultimate atrocity. The practice of castration along with sodomy and cannibalism marked the Caribs as different from the peaceful Arowaks. This small moment in the story of European encounters reverberates with crucial questions about who got captured, who had a soul, who got to be a citizen, and most importantly who counted as human. By the beginning of the next century the Italians would at least tacitly endorse a practice of pre-pubescent bodily alteration as means to produce singers whose voice was more perfect for song. This paper juxtaposes stories of colonial cannibalism and musical fantasies of the voices of Italian castrati to suggest that the story of early modern music making is wrapped up in the story of making slaves out of people.

Ken Gouwens
University of Connecticut

The Meanings of Monkeys in Renaissance Emblems

The genre of the emblem book, invented in 1522 by Andrea Alciato, enjoyed tremendous popularity in Europe for over a century. Typically, emblems consisted of three parts—a motto, a visual image, and a poem—that together communicated a complex concept or clever conceit that someone sufficiently learned could appreciate. Over time these books were increasingly aimed at a wider readership and came to serve less for amusement than for moral instruction or as devices to facilitate religious contemplation. A focus on emblems featuring monkeys will help us to see this dynamic of change and to consider its historical significance.

Allison Graham
University of Toronto

Exemplary Lives: Colonial Hagiography in early modern Manila

Scholars of the early modern Spanish world have examined how pious women and men became, in Kathleen Myers' words, a symbol for their city. With their eyes predominantly on the American colonies, historians have paid significantly less attention to Manila's vowed women and men, and how the specific, local context of the faraway colonial city informed representations of piety. In this paper, I examine hagiographical texts, the stories of exceptionally saintly women and men written by Spanish friars based in Manila, to explore how Hispanic-Christian constructions of sanctity intersected with discourses of Hispanicization in the Philippines. I pay particular attention to how vowed people of indigenous Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese descent were portrayed in comparison to those of Spanish descent, and I explore how race and ethnicity informed constructions of piety in colonial hagiographical writing.

Alexandra Guerson
University of Toronto

Dana Wessell Lightfoot
University of Northern British Columbia

Collaboration and archival research: Uncovering stories of gender and conversion through notarial records

In 1993, Elizabeth and Thomas Cohen published their first co-authored monograph, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome*. Twenty-six years later co-authored works in history are still unusual despite the success and praise of the work the Cohens have written together over the years. In this paper, we aim to highlight the importance of collaborative work in the use of premodern notarial records. This type of documentation is often described as intransigent, presenting challenges to the historian who wants to reconstruct the individual stories of those that lived in the past. Despite these difficulties, our collaborative work has allowed us to use notarial records to write more nuanced and complete stories of the conversion of Jews in Girona in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. This paper will explore our collaborative methodology, focusing on how it allows us to deepen our analysis of notarial records to uncover the impact of conversion on family life in the late medieval period.

Julia L. Hairston
University of California, Rome

Tullia d 'Aragona and the Courts

On 17 January 1519 Girolamo Orlandini bequeathed a dowry of 600 florins to Tullia d 'Aragona, daughter of Giulia Pendaglia, who two months earlier had married Girolamo 's illegitimate brother Africano. Although it took over twenty-six years, Tullia successfully sued the heirs of Girolamo Orlandini to receive this inheritance, which was finally adjudicated in her favor in April 1545. This paper follows the trial through various Sienese civil and canonical courts as it analyzes the strategies d 'Aragona adopted to gain possession of that which was rightfully hers.

Jessica Hanser
University of British Columbia

Searching for Slave Stories in the South China Sea

After decades of research on Atlantic world slavery, historians have turned eastward. Because the history of slavery in the Indian Ocean world is uncharted waters, recent scholarship on the topic tends to focus on the quantitative realities (i.e. head counting) and the macro-level (i.e. networks of slave trafficking). We have much to learn about the cultural dimensions of and lived experiences of slavery and slave trafficking in the Indian Ocean, including issues of race, gender, language, and the intimate master-slave relationships that figure so prominently in the scholarship on Atlantic slavery. My current project aims to explore the lives of enslaved people and their employers, and will tell a history of Indian Ocean slavery, in part, through narrative. In this paper, I explore the possibility of doing so through one type of source: the wills of East India Company employees – mariners, surgeons, and supercargoes— who worked on ships and in the port cities of Canton and Macao between 1700 and 1850.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Aliza Holstein,

End it With a Bang: Tom and Libby 's Lessons in Life and Writing

For the happy occasion of this conference, I would like to relate a few stories about my experiences studying and teaching with Tom. Tom joined my dissertation committee just as I was beginning my research, and his influence on me extends from the meta-level of how I approach history, to the micro-level of how I write a sentence. We also co-taught a course together, he at York and I at Boston College, before I defected from academic history and made a long, lurching traverse to writing stories, both fiction and non-fiction. In my tribute to Tom and Libby, I wish to reflect on the stories that they opened up for me, and on the ways they changed my perceptions of history, of storytelling, and of the ways we engage with the people around us.

John Hunt
Utah Valley University

The Conspiracy of the Ensorcelled Host: Magic and Gambling among Patricians and Popolani in Seventeenth-Century Venice

In 1643, the Venetian Inquisition uncovered a conspiracy to sway the election of the Great Council. Several patricians had colluded with the shipwright, Santo Martengan, his wife, Margherita, and a friar named Bernardo da Muggia to place an ensorcelled Eucharist wafer in the robes of a member of the Querini family to ensure his election to the council. The conspirators enacted their plan in order to place winning bets on the election 's outcome, a practice called the *piria*. This paper will tell the story of magic, gambling, and mutual sociability among members of disparate backgrounds in seventeenth-century Venice. It will highlight the ephemeral alliances between patricians and popolani (as well as men and women) and demonstrate their shared interests in sorcery and play, thus questioning current arguments depicting the widening gulf between elite and popular culture in the early modern world.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Daniel Jamison
University of Toronto

Nicholas Terpstra
University of Toronto

Microhistory Online: Re-creating Guides to the Early Modern City

Digital humanities offer new creative opportunities to present microhistorical recreations of renaissance social history. Can they compete with *Assassin's Creed*, *The Borgias*, *The Medici: Masters of Florence*? The *Hidden Florence* smartphone app now offers 6 tours of Renaissance Florence, all of them based around semi-fictionized characters who guide users through urban spaces, social networks, and historical events. Three of these tours were developed by a team from the on-line research tool DECIMA (Digitally Encoded Census Information & Mapping Archive), using characters drawn from DECIMA's mapping of a 1561 census. We explore the complexities and choices involved in creating characters and scripting stories that engage users in current research while steering them between popular culture, academic accuracy, various parked cars, and street furniture.

Evelyn Lincoln
Brown University

Peopling the Books

The Cohens are adept at peopling early modern Rome. But I work in book history: a dispiriting sounding subject that staggers under the Calvino-esque weight of tomes owned and unread, read and forgotten, or imagined and unwritten.

Sixteenth-century books are genre-bending packages, and publishing conventions that took shape in the second century of European printing provided platforms for reflection on what publication offered. Woodcutters, amanuenses and publishers tucked their names into descriptions of their craft, or insinuated excuses into the address to the reader. In the proemio and colophon, in an opinion scrawled by a binder on the back of an illustration, a comment artfully inserted into a dialogue, a name dropped into a botanical illustration, books reveal circumstances of their production that allow us a glimpse into the stresses of early modern publishing, and the rivalries, disappointments, and aspirations of those who brought them through the Roman presses.

Kathleen Loysen
Montclair State University

Prises de parole, prises d 'autorité: Women, Storytelling, and Auctoritas in Early Modern France

My paper is drawn from my current book project, devoted to the ways in which women claim authorship in varying types of discursive and literary material. Specifically, I show how women authors came to see themselves as inhabiting auctoritas in the early modern period in France – essentially, the question of women 's prises de parole, or assuming the power of speaking and writing authoritatively. Such moments can be found not only in collections of short stories, but also in collections of exempla, humanist dialogues, full-length novels, printed collections of caquets (or women 's gossip), etc. I will link the representation of women as storytellers to the idea of authority and authorship: how women were presented as authors and authorities, and as originators of multiple modes of discourse (both oral and written), and the role of the represented conversational and dialogical process within such developments.

Sigurdur Gylfi Magnusson
University of Iceland

Freaks and Race in Faraway Places: Global Perspective on Far-reaching Microhistory

I explore the hand-written work of the farmer Jon Bjarnason, who wrote a nine-volume encyclopaedia about the creation of the world and the development of the species in the middle of the 19th century. Among other things, he covers 'freaks' – people he considered 'odd' looking – and explores the concept of race in his writing. The plan is to use his world view to shed light on how far-away places influenced local communities. This material provides an opportunity to work with the analytical tool that I call far-reaching microhistory by adapting it to far-away places when Icelandic farmers discuss both 'freaks' and 'races' in their 17th to 19th century writing. All these characters can be labeled barefoot historians, a concept what will be explained and used for the analyses in the paper. I argue that if historians look for alternative historical sources and use the methods of microhistory to study them, they might come across processes and patterns that have not been high on the academic agenda for the last 150 years – a field of study which might be labeled in-between spaces.

Nelson Marques
University of Miami

Bureaucracy as Story-Telling Space: The Case of Antonio Dias Marques

In 1634 the soldier Antonio Dias Marques submitted a petition to the Overseas Council in Lisbon requesting induction into one of Portugal 's three military orders, along with other awards for his niece and nephew. His petition summarized his military career by retelling key incidents important for his story but also for the story of Portugal 's military success in South America. To prove his worth he collected written testimonies from over a dozen former comrades, each one a short account of Antonio 's military career as they witnessed it. This paper explores the way soldier 's petitions functioned as a collective story-telling endeavor, combining oral traditions with administrative style to create an anthology of vignettes for each soldier. It argues that the bureaucratic process of petitioning lent itself to storytelling, rewarding stories that managed to incorporate the heroic soldier into narratives of royal service.

Vanessa McCarthy
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies

Masculinity and Prostitution at the Tribunal of the Ufficio delle Bollette

How did early modern labouring men talk about the prostitutes with whom they consorted? How did they manage concepts of masculine honour when admitting to civic officials they had sexual relationships with women who they knew had sex with other men? To answer these questions this paper uses testimonies drawn from the tribunal of the Ufficio delle Bollette, Bologna 's early seventeenth-century civic registry office for prostitutes. Although testimonies given by men about the women they had sexual relationships with were hostile to varying degrees, the language men used and the denials and admissions they made in their testimonies nevertheless can be usefully mined to gain an understanding of the ways in which men talked about and conceived of their relationships with prostitutes – or, at least – the way they wanted to appear to conceive of them to the Bollette 's officials.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Lawrence T. McDonnell
Iowa State University

In Vino Pericula: Toasting, Honor, and Politics in Anglo-American Culture, 1588-1861

Toasting—the sharing of spirits and the exchange of manly sentiment—was one of the key rituals undergirding honor culture in Anglo-American society. Yet historians have paid little attention to the social and political dynamics of these public performances. This essay employs the methods of microhistory, compounded by class analysis, to analyze four social dramas that spun out from the ritual of toasting from the Elizabethan Age to the eve of the American Civil War. As honor culture frayed across these centuries, elites and non-elites discovered that in wine there was peril—and quite often truth in too much abundance. An often careless ritual of elite male bonding turned into a test of political and class allegiances, exposing dangerous divisions and provoking deadly conflict.

Celeste McNamara
SUNY Cortland

Telling Tales of Seduction in Early Modern Venice

Although originally created to control blasphemy and other impious acts in Venice, in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries the Esecutori contro la bestemmia gained jurisdiction over a wide variety of sins and social ills, including seduction and defloration. Young women who were seduced, often impregnated, and abandoned could take their cases before this secular court and attempt to prove that they had been betrothed and seduced under pretext of marriage. If they had evidence and framed their stories carefully, the judges were often sympathetic, ordering their seducers to marry them, pay financial restitution, or suffer imprisonment and corporal punishment. This paper will examine the ways in which young Venetian men and women described their broken love affairs in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and argue that the complainants, witnesses, and judges collaborated to restore social order whenever possible, by holding men accountable for their deceptions or dishonorable behavior.

Emily Michelson
University of St Andrews

Who Is the Hero of a Religious Conversion? Stories that Seek Credit

This paper examines two conversion stories from the Papal States, carefully narrated so as to cast glory on their authors. Each relates a dramatic conversion that clearly required a group effort, retold with emphasis on the contribution of the narrator, sometimes out of all proportion. The first story describes the conversion of a rabbi in Ancona, told by the infamous polemical preacher Paolo Sebastiano Medici, seeking personal credit under fire. The second story, the conversion of two young siblings in Rome, became a famous precedent for later cases of contested baptism. Together they demonstrate the significance that Catholics gave to religious conversion – specifically from Judaism – in early modern Italy, the honor promised to convert-makers, and the uses of conversion narratives. Finally, although both cases are cited frequently, one is far scarcer than it appears, and the other more widespread. These unexpected afterlives have shaped the place of these stories in modern scholarship.

Aaron Miedema
York University

Variations on a Severed Finger: Legal ambiguity as evidence.

In the summer of 1561, a scuffle between Quintio Marcellino and Count Antonio Carrafa left Quintio wounded in the face and missing a pinky, and, Carrafa (and several others) fleeing Rome to dodge papal investigators. Even the wounded Quintio kept silent for fear of his life. The tale that was spun by the two bystanders was of a chance encounter that led to a squabble over money and swords being drawn. However, there are several inconsistencies that left even the investigating notaries to suspect all was not what it seemed. Yet, without the testimony of the participants the notaries had no definitive evidence that it was actually a pre-arranged encounter, and ambiguously classified the incident as a wounding. This ambiguity offers an opportunity to read the event in several different veins, permitting the exploration of the porous boundaries between dispute, mediation, and the duel in Sixteenth Century Rome.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Edward Muir
Northwestern University

The Distrusted: Outsiders Within

The Ottoman conquests across the Mediterranean during the fifteenth century had an ironic effect in Italy. Rather than heralding a new age of Christian intolerance, the threat led to greater understanding and direct knowledge of Islam. The difference in the Italy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from these earlier experiences with persecution, was that the institutions of control and oppression, both in the civic-minded city states and the reinvigorated papacy were much more sophisticated and efficient than before. At the same time, the Italian authorities did not eliminate or exterminate as had happened elsewhere. They governed. Sometimes they governed harshly, but they attempted to regulate, restrict, censor, and otherwise control the religious others. With Muslims they traded more often than fought. Jews found refuge in many towns of northern and central Italy, even as they became subject to strict control through segregated housing in ghettos.

Katrina Olds
University of San Francisco

Irreverent Reverence: Laughing at the Sacred in Early Modern Spain

The picaresque literature of late medieval and early modern Spain often made ribald allusions to saints, Christ, and the Virgin Mary in the mode of parodic hagiography. This paper suggests that jocular irreverence toward the sacred (or what Ryan Giles calls *The Laughter of the Saints*) was not only a literary construct, but also informed the stories and practices of everyday life. I draw on Inquisition trials regarding blasphemy, scandalous propositions, and disrespect towards images, to identify humor about the sacred. The Inquisition's focus on the lower classes as well as recent converts from Judaism has led many scholars to conclude that irreverence was limited to picaros and conversos who, it is suggested, evinced a fundamental skepticism about Christianity. I posit instead that anticlerical, scatological, and obscene humor was intimately familiar to members of the literate elite as well, even as standards of 'decency' began to shift in the early modern period.

Leslie Peirce
New York University

Tales of sultans and saints in sixteenth-century Anatolia

In 1516-1517, Sultan Selim seized Greater Syria and Egypt from the Mamluk sultans and brought the ancient cities of Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo into the Ottoman empire. The philanthropic donations he made to the region are well known, but the work of imperial largesse in provincial capitals is less familiar. My presentation focuses on one province, conquered early in Selim 's campaign, and the endowments he made to saints and their shrines. In addition to archival records, the talk draws on the work of local historians and folklorists of the mid-20th century. Particular emphasis is placed on their collections of legends that recount interactions between the sultan and local sheikhs and babas. These include bizarre encounters, miracles, battles won, and sometimes the meeting of seemingly incompatible minds. This body of literature gives some insight into the anxieties and hopes of provincial communities as they transition from one overlord to another.

Allyson M. Poska
University of Mary Washington

Gendering Public Health: Maria Bustamente, a Prize, and the Transmission of Smallpox Vaccination to Cuba

In 1803 the Spanish King Charles IV sent an expedition headed by Francisco Balmis y Berenguer to bring smallpox vaccination to the Spanish Empire. However, at the same time on the other side of the Atlantic, Dr. Tomás Romay y Chacón was working to bring vaccination to Cuba. Unsuccessful in his attempt to use lymph that had been carried from Philadelphia, he convinced the Real Sociedad y Junta Económica del Real Consulado to offer a prize to the first person to bring vaccine-filled pustules to the island. In January 1804, they put an announcement in the *Papel Periódico de la Habana* and within a month, the prize had the desired effect. Doña María Bustamante had her son, age 10, and two young mulata slaves, ages six and eight, vaccinated in Aguadilla in Puerto Rico on 1 February. She then sailed to Havana where a friend took her to Romay who, on 12 February, used the live virus to vaccinate his five children and 37 others. Doña María earned the prize, which had been increased from 200 to 300 pesos. By the time Balmis and the expedition arrived, more than four thousand people had already been vaccinated, most of whom were slaves. Romay has always been credited with bringing the vaccine to Cuba, but this paper will examine not just Maria Bustamente 's role in that achievement, but also how she exemplifies the myriad ways that mothers of all races were key to the successful extension of the vaccine.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Margaret Reeves
UBC Okanagan

Gendering the Puritan Child in Early Modern Literature

This paper identifies patterns of gendering the child in early modern Puritan writing. Unlike prescriptive literature in circulation during this period, some Puritan works aimed at youthful readers aspire to gender neutrality and inclusiveness, either by invoking the generic term *child*, or by including poems or narratives referencing both boys' and girls' experiences. The title of John Bunyan's well known *A Book for Boys and Girls, or, Country Rhimes for Children* (1686) illustrates his aims of inclusion and neutrality. Similarly, James Janeway's *A Token for Children* (1676) narrates the lives, spiritual conversions, and joyful deaths of both boys and girls. Yet the implied child reader is, I argue, distinctively gendered in these works. I compare the politics of gender in representations of childhood in these texts to others by Puritan women such as Anne Bradstreet, Elizabeth Jocelin, and Mary Rowlandson.

Virginia Reinburg
Boston College

Pilgrims Tell Tales

A reputation for miracles drew suffering and hopeful people to early modern French pilgrim shrines. Such reputations were built through print and word of mouth. My paper explores both modes of communication, asking we can know about what pilgrims said about shrines by reading chaplains' accounts of a shrine's miracles. Chaplains published histories of their shrines to spread the word about the wonders that God, the Virgin Mary, and the saints wrought in those special places. Their books are the single richest source we have about a shrine's miracles and wonders. But can we trust priests to tell us the truth about the stories and lore that pilgrims themselves shared with the world? After recounting some exemplary tales of cures, lucky escapes, and prayers answered that the chaplains reported, I will conclude with a methodological reflection about using sources shaped by hagiography and theological controversy to capture the speech and storytelling of early modern women and men.

Susane Roberts
Independent Scholar

Finding stories in the Spinelli family archive, 1550- 1650.

A family archive is by its nature a story, an unexpurgated tale of the fortunes of several interconnected family. A product of Florentine society's obsession with documenting and recording domestic, business and legal affairs, the archive of the Spinelli family offers an extensive and multi-faceted view of the lives of. over time a "middling" patrician family from the thirteenth into the early 20th century. My work has focused on the generation born in the 1560s and 1570s, not the most prosperous era for the Spinelli.

The 18th century cataloguer organized documents into categories such as family and business correspondence, marital arrangements, legal matters, economic papers and registers, family histories, political honors and positions held.

The variety and depth of this documentation yields two major types of stories. First the historian finds in the extensive correspondence "stories that tell themselves," tales that family members tell siblings and associates about their experiences and attitudes. These are highly personal and often humorous.

The historian can also "excavate" and reconstruct larger stories that that left traces in many categories, such as financial registers, judicial procedures, histories, and honors received. These reveal more about the family's fortunes in this era

Julia Rombough
Cape Breton University

Youths, Sex Workers, and Women's Institutions in Early Modern Florence

Early Modern Florence (1550-1650) housed an unprecedented number of institutionalized girls and women. Diverse groups from across the socio-economic spectrum lived in a range of strictly enclosed institutions (convents, charity homes, and reform houses). Thousands were physically separated from the larger city behind institutional walls, gates, and strict rules of enclosure. However, sonic interactions of both sides of the institutional wall brought enclosed girls and women into regular contact with the Florentines who lived, lingered, and passed near their institutions. Using unpublished archival records this paper examines how institutional soundscapes were contested and dynamic spaces that were enmeshed within the larger socio-sonic city. A continual concert of shouts, chatter, singing, laughter, and racket often defined these spaces, revealing the complex relationships that linked institutionalized girls and women to a diverse set of local characters and to the Florentine streetscape.

Colin Rose
Brock University,

The quality of certain French laces: affront, honour and violence in seventeenth century
Bologna

A drunken argument between textile merchants one night in a tavern leads to a fistfight, a chase through the rainy streets of early modern Bologna, and, finally, a knife in the back. A close read of the resulting trial reveals much about the interaction of masculinity, honour, nationality and affront in the seemingly ludicrous violence that often plagued North Italy's cities in the early modern period. This paper focuses on a single document to create a microhistorical view of these problems with an eye to understanding the broader socioeconomic, gender, and political contexts of early modern Italian honour-based killings.

David Rosenthal
University of Edinburgh

Love story? When Microhistory met Public History (in Early Modern Italy)

Most scholarly prose does its best to kill the past. By contrast, microhistory aims to bring the past to life by means of the storyteller's art. Yet storytelling raises its own issues: the boundary between reconstruction and invention, the problematic area of psychological interiority, the risk of effacing the past's alterity. This paper joins the debate around microhistorical narrative, but specifically through the lens of public history. It surveys recent instances of how the early modern past has been curated for a general public, including the 'Hidden Florence' app, which now features a range of both real and invented characters. Now armed with such digital applications, the expanding domain of public history is very well placed to exploit microhistorical fictive techniques, but at the same time it puts old issues into fresh relief as it engages in the creation of a public past.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

E. Natalie Rothman
University of Toronto

Orientalizing dragomans: Enlightenment genealogy and stories of repatriation

A thriving cadre of dragomans (diplomatic interpreter-translators) was a fixture of early modern Istanbul's diplomatic scene. Diverse in their provenance, dragomans established deep local roots by repeatedly intermarrying into the Ottoman capital's Catholic and Orthodox elites, by cultivating urbanite consumption and sociability patterns, and by forging intense patronage networks with the court itself. By the eighteenth century, however, dragomans' descendants – variously dispersed across the Italian Peninsula and the Ottoman-Habsburg borderlands – sought to reclaim (or repatriate) their dragoman ancestors into the fold of a self-consciously European aristocracy. My presentation will consider various modalities of such reclamations, from the production of narrative and visual genealogies, to serial portraiture, to manuscript and print publishing of quasi-hagiographical memoirs and testimonials. It will especially attend to these media's multiple erasures and narrative strategies. It will conclude by considering what stories about dragomans' lives in Istanbul might tell us about the Enlightenment's reorientation in its relationship to Ottoman-centric lifeworlds of only a century earlier.

Luka Špoljarić
University of Zagreb

The Fancies of a Second-Generation Immigrant in Renaissance Italy: Francesco Negri on his Family History

The Venetian humanist priest Francesco Negri (1452–after 1523) is today mostly known in scholarship for his works in praise of Venetian aristocracy, as well as various grammatical and rhetorical works written during his peripatetic career as a teacher. Yet, Negri was a second-generation immigrant born to a father who moved to Venice from the Croatian town of Senj. Towards the end of life Negri wrote the *Nigri Genetliacon*, his autobiography, which he started by presenting his circumstances surrounding his father's arrival in Venice and ancient family history. Giovanni Mercati who first drew attention to this work largely accepted the account as presented by Negri at face value, which as a result found its way in the modern biographies of the humanist. In this paper I will show how Negri drew on little fact and much fancy in composing this account, and I will discuss what can this tell us about the perceptions of the other side of the Adriatic in Renaissance Italy.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Goran Stanivukovic
Saint Mary 's University

Making Plots out of Wonder Stories in Early Modern England

My paper explores the making of plots and dramatic narratives in early modern England out of the wonder stories from the compilation of saints ' lives The Golden Legend by the medieval writer Jacobus de Voragine as the origin of that artistry. Compiled in the 1260s and translated from French into English in 1483, The Golden Legend was reprinted often. I argue that the dramatists of the 1590s knew this collection in written form rather than the oral retelling. I will illustrate this point by analyzing Shakespeare 's early comedy, The Comedy of Errors (1594), in relation to the legend of St. Clement from The Golden Legend. This legend shaped Shakespeare's imagination when he transformed a wonder story into the narrative and plot of a new comedy. The story of St. Clement, a story of a family shipwreck, eastern Mediterranean wandering, separation of brothers from parents, miraculous reunions in the East---connects the Catholic past of the St. Clement legend with the Protestant Reformation. I will tell two stories: one is the relationship between wonder stories and romance. The other is the transformative role wonder stories played in the invention of Shakespeare early dramatic career.

Hana Suckstorff
University of Toronto

I never reneged in my heart : Apostates and Inquisitors in Early Modern Italy

Over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, hundreds of penitent renegades, or Catholic converts to Islam, presented themselves before tribunals of the Roman Inquisition in the Italian peninsula for reconciliation with the Church. Their depositions recount tales of captivity, enslavement, forced conversion, and enduring Catholic faithfulness. This paper explores the stories renegades told about their conversions. It analyzes the strategies they utilized in the tribunal setting to mitigate the severity of their apostasy, such as minimizing their adherence to Islam, emphasizing persistent suffering, and highlighting their resistance to conversion to Islam. It argues that the success of those strategies depended on the collaboration of inquisitors themselves. The stories not told in the tribunal, as much as the stories recorded in the documents, reveal inquisitors ' goal of facilitating quick reconciliations rather than enforcing doctrinal rigor.

Scott K Taylor
University of Kentucky

Women 's Social Networks and the 18th Century Gin Craze

Studies of the gin craze in 18th century London have focused on the disorder they saw among the urban poor who had access for the first time in history to cheap and potent distilled spirits, and one particular concern was women 's drinking. But why? This paper will explore how moralists were alarmed by women 's sociability: the way in which female networks that spanned households and neighborhoods helped foster gin drinking, and how in turn gin helped foster new networks among those women. It was this sense of a new, unpoliced space where women could operate that made the moral panic surrounding gin so urgent, and also makes gin-shops analogous to the more celebrated sites of new urban sociability in the 18 century: coffeehouses. The connection between gin and sociability also points to broader themes in the history of women, drugs, and alcohol in early modern Europe more generally.

Barry Torch
York University

Giving humanists their humanity: Social friendships and intellectual culture in Renaissance Rome

Vat.Lat.3350, catalogued as a Plutarch manuscript, is a small document. Compiled and translated by Theodore Gaza in the early 1470s, the ten-page volume is half Plutarch 's political philosophy, and half dedicatory letter to his friend and colleague, Giovanni Andrea Bussi. In the rapidly-changing environment of fifteenth-century Rome, Gaza and Bussi had a close collegial and working relationship, as evidenced in the dedication. In this presentation, I analyze the dedicatory letter to argue for the essentially social nature of the two humanists ' interactions. Looking at Gaza and Bussi 's long friendship, Gaza 's advice on networking and employment, and the importance of a book dedication in the Renaissance, I stress the communal nature of humanism in Renaissance Rome, and the social norms evoked in order to create friendships in the Renaissance.

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Ryan Whibbs
Assiniboine Community College

Jeanne de Bourbon Through her Kitchen: The *Compte de Bouche* of September, 1508

In September of 1508, Jeanne de Bourbon was entering the twilight of her life. Having married three times to illustrious nobles, she was settling into a comfortable retirement at a luxurious Chateau in Puy-de-Dôme. As the grandmother to Catherine de' Medici, Jeanne's life has always existed on the periphery of royal histories. This paper centres Jeanne as a fascinating and important figure in her own right. Based on new archival findings, I will offer a detailed glimpse into one full month - September 1508 - of Jeanne's life through documents generated by her household kitchen operations. Although we might imagine that Jeanne inhabited a world of luxury and entertainment, the *compte* show that she maintained a modest household for a woman of her status. Challenging her historical representations, the kitchen records present a different understanding of the daily life of an early modern French elite.

Barbara Wisch
SUNY Cortland

The Archconfraternity of SS. Trinita dei Pellegrini: Why was their oratory different from all other Roman oratories?

The imposing oratory of the Roman Archconfraternity of SS. Trinita dei Pellegrini e Convalescenti was built *ex novo* in 1570–1571 and highly praised by contemporaries. Although large, elaborately decorated oratories were fundamental expressions of confraternal identity, this oratory—gutted by the French in 1798, restored in 1823, and razed in 1940—has been overlooked. Now, unpublished documents reveal new information about the edifice and its decoration that presented the archconfraternity's public face a half-century before its dilapidated principal church was fully renovated. Of utmost significance and unique to confraternal experience, this oratory became a centerpiece for new papal policies of Jewish ghettoization and conversion—the seat of Rome's first compulsory, conversionary preaching in 1576. This paper considers the oratory as an impressive setting for the diverse experiences of the multiple audiences—confratelli, pilgrims, foreign visitors, and Jews—who gathered within its walls.

Noa Yaari
York Univeristy

Making Stories in the Working Memory: There 's No 'History ' Without a Brain

Historians of the early modern era, or of any era for that matter, do not only make stories about the past in the form of texts, images, films, etc., but also in their audience 's brain. My paper will introduce the model of the working memory that psychologists Alan Baddeley and Graham Hitch offered in 1974 and its revision by Baddeley in 2000. This model explains how information from our environment, including prose, is processed in the brain and becomes long-term memories and knowledge. Psychologists do not use historiography to demonstrate how memories are constructed by historians. Historians do not turn to brain studies to improve their methods of creating memories. My paper will conclude by raising questions about the theoretical and practical possibility that the two professional communities will learn from one another how to make stories effectively.

Natalie Zemon Davis
University of Toronto

Prosecuting Sex in 18th-century Suriname

Early in the foundation of the Dutch colony of Suriname, the governor issued an ordinance prohibiting any form of fornication or adultery. Ignored in the many instances of sex imposed by white male proprietors on their indigenous and black female slaves and in the occasional heterosexual encounters among unmarried white people, the ordinance was called upon when the intimacy involved a white woman and a slave and when it involved sexual relations among men. This talk describes two such cases prosecuted in 1730, one concerning a young Jewish woman and an indigenous slave; the other concerning a circle of white men, some of them married, who practiced “sodomy” among themselves. I will consider why such cases were viewed so seriously by white prosecutors and punished with the death penalty. What kinds of stories were told by contemporaries about such relations? Why does the “romance” between the white man and the “mulatto” slave woman become a favored story?

Abstracts (listed alphabetically by last name of speaker)

Angela Zhang
York University

Hidden in Plain Sight: Reconstructing Slave Stories Through Ricordanze, Letters and Notaries

Social historians contend with the question of how to reconstruct the lives of those who did not leave behind records or were ignored as an unobtrusive part of daily life. In Florence, the sheer quantity of archival resources provides an insight into the lives of slaves through ancillary sources. This paper explores the ways these stories can be created through inconspicuous entries in larger archival collections. I will give examples of the stories of slaves – predominantly women – in Florence extrapolated through legal and commercial documents as well as the processes of reconstruction. Similarly, these disparate records of slaves provide an understanding into Florentine values regarding unfree labour and the commodification of the female body. Forming the basis for a larger inquiry into slavery and womanhood, I will explore how Florentine choices in their recording of slavery indicate its function as a part of the wider social structures of Florence.