

Organizers:

Déborah Blocker, University of California Berkeley

Carlotta Paltrinieri, The Medici Archive Project

Panel Title: Putting academic ideas, discourses and practices into perspective : contextual approaches to the intellectual history of early modern academies (1550-1800) (I)

Panel Chair: Déborah Blocker, University of California Berkeley

Paper 1

Presenter: Federica Favino, Stanford University/Sapienza University of Rome

Paper title: *Credo* or social network? Giovanni Alfonso Borelli and late 17th Century Academies in Rome.

Paper abstract:

Like his master Galileo, Giovanni Alfonso Borelli (1608-79) had a strong 'ideological' attitude, both to natural philosophy and to the 'public sphere'. Once in Rome (from 1672), he did not attend the Phisico-Mathematics Academy of Giustino Ciampini, but rather was a mainstay of Christine of Sweden's Royal Academy. What was driving Borelli's choice: a stance against the kind of experimentalism performed at Ciampini's Academy, or rather his own social micropolitical networks? Using data emerging from my Mapping the Republic of Letters - Borelli Galaxy project, I will be reflecting methodologically on how a computerized relational analysis of datasets profiling the social, intellectual and even political logics of Borelli's Roman connections can help us reconstruct the late 17th century scientific Academic life in the Urbs. I will also be discussing how the digital analysis of large datasets, combined with a qualitative approach, allows us to question some established historiographical categories.

Paper 2

Presenter: Nuno Castel-Branco, Johns Hopkins University

Paper title: Friendships and the intellectual life: the early correspondence of Nicolaus Steno in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Italy

Paper abstract: In 1666, Nicolaus Steno (1638-1686), a prestigious Danish anatomist, arrived in Italy for the first time. Three years later, his publications were sponsored by the Medici family, he had become a Roman Catholic and was part of several Italian academies. This fast integration in Italian circles demonstrates Steno's ability to create a wide network of friendships. But what role did Steno's scientific research play in this achievement? A valuable source to answer this question is the early correspondence between Steno, Leopoldo de

Medici and other members of the Medici court. As Steno entered Tuscan society, his social and intellectual concerns appear tightly intertwined in these letters. A close reading of this correspondence provides a clear picture of Steno's incorporation in the social context of Italian academies, while also shedding light on how his social concerns sometimes shaped his intellectual pursuits.

### Paper 3

Presenter: Francesca Fantappiè, Villa I Tatti The Harvard University Center for Renaissance Studies

Paper title: Documents for the study of Florentine academies: the theaters of Corso Tintori and the Casino Mediceo (1670-1710).

Paper abstract: In the history of Florentine theatre, the academic tradition is pervasive. The study of this phenomenon has recently attracted scholars' attention, despite the difficulties in research due to the dispersion of documents, particularly those of short-lived groups. This paper will compare the theaters of Corso Tintori and the Casino Mediceo, both run by academies. The analysis will be linked to the documentation that survived. In the first case, it is indirect: the names of the academies that managed the theatre are disclosed in the records of the Ospedale degli Innocenti, which owned the premise; the only documents we have for this group are the ones produced for the *Cadenti* academy. In the second, statutes, diaries and accounting books of the noble *Conversazione del Casino di San Marco* reveal the relationships with the protector and motivations in the choice of the theatrical and musical repertoire.

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Panel Title : Putting academic ideas, discourses and practices into perspective : contextual approaches to the intellectual history of early modern academies (1550-1800) (II)

Chair: Carlotta Paltrinieri, The Medici Archive Project

Paper 1

Presenter: Robert Brennan, University of Sydney

Paper title: The *Accademia delle arti del disegno* between the court and the public in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Florence

Paper abstract: Scholars have long recognized the *Accademia del Disegno*, founded in 1563, as the first official art academy in Europe. While this historical priority has attracted extensive research on the academy's institutional structure, such studies tend to remain separate from art historical accounts of the academicians themselves and their work. Bridging this gap, the paper focuses on the institution's role in planning, advising, and arbitrating the execution of specific artworks. Drawing upon statutes, archival evidence, and surviving works, and situating them in light of broader generational transitions, the aim is to show how the academy designed certain institutional arrangements to address a set of widely recognized problems, centering above all on the formation of young artists, that had characterized earlier models of Florentine court patronage. The academy's political significance can thus be viewed in terms of the broader relationship it configured between the patron, the work, and the public at large.

Paper 2

Presenter: Déborah Blocker, University of California Berkeley

Paper title: Poetics, Civil Offices & Guilds : Practicing and Theorizing the Art of Poetry among the Alterati of Florence (1569 — ca. 1630)

This paper examines how social and political representations framed the practice of poetry within the *Accademia degli Alterati*. Most Alterati stemmed from patrician families which had fought to uphold Florence's oligarchy prior to 1530, prompting the Principato to keep them at bay. In Medici Florence, the Alterati's preoccupation with the poetry was a way to affirm their distinction, as they worked towards social reintegration. But their focus on contradictory debates, parity, and pleasure when critiquing their own poetic productions, also rehearsed the discursive practices of the late Republic and functioned as a way to reenact the city's lost civic freedoms. The Alterati's processes for collectively evaluating and revising their poems are also reminiscent of the practices of artisans working in guilds and of their understanding of craftsmanship. Florentine guilds were closely intertwined with the city's oligarchical institutions and the Alterati, as merchants and bankers, still had many ties to them.

Panels respondent: Massimiliano Rossi, University of Salento