



## PAPER IN MOTION: INFORMATION AND THE ECONOMY OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE EARLY MODERN MEDITERRANEAN

Prato, 27 – 28 January 2022

The event will be held in hybrid format, meaning that it will combine an in-person event with online components

January 27th:

<https://unifirenze.webex.com/unifirenze/j.php?MTID=m34293ba465a864fc89365d9c6a894da2>

January 28th:

<https://comunediprato.webex.com/comunediprato/j.php?MTID=mec00deedc7c2b5531c3f8004305d356e>



*Image: Receipt of books in Hebrew. Archivio di Stato di Prato: Datini, Cod. 1497: Busta 1174. Reproduced with permission.*

This two-day seminar will mark the inauguration of an on-site exhibition hosted and made possible by the [Archivio di Stato and the Datini Archive](#) in Prato, and of a virtual counterpart which will be displayed online ([Information and the Economy of Knowledge in the Early Modern Mediterranean](#)). Both events are organized by the [Paper in Motion](#) Work Group, led by Prof. José María Pérez Fernández (U. of Granada) which in its turn is part of the [PIMo COST Action](#), led by Prof. Giovanni Tarantino (U. of Florence). They have been curated in close collaboration with Chiara Marcheschi ([Archivio di Stato](#), Prato) and Matteo Calcagni (European University Institute, Florence), and a large group of international archives, scholars, and archivists detailed in the online exhibition and its catalogue.

The exhibitions sample relevant cases of paper-based information and data in the fields of trade and finance. They put together documents which circulated throughout vast networks connecting strategic locations between the North of Europe and the Mediterranean, and eventually acquired a global dimension by reaching outposts in the Americas and the Pacific. They aim to display a representative corpus of primary documents that can be used as empirical case studies for a transnational history and a critical approach to the nature, function and evolution of such documents. We are particularly interested in the formats, genres, and strategies employed for the circulation of such documents across linguistic, cultural, political, ethnic and religious communities, and what this entailed for their formal features, their semiotic nature and their performative functions. The seminar intends to provide a ground-breaking approach to all these different documents, their nature and functions, which will include not just financial and economic history, but also cultural and literary history, translation and media studies, and the history of communication.

## **27 Jan – BIBLIOTECA RONCIONIANA, PRATO**

### **Welcome and opening remarks 15:00 – 15:30**

José María Pérez Fernández (University of Granada, PIMo Wg3 Leader)  
Simone Mangani (Municipality of Prato, Councillor for Culture)  
Diana Toccafondi (Italian National Council for Cultural Heritage)  
Leonardo Meoni (Datini Archive, Director)  
Giovanni Tarantino (University of Florence, PIMo Action Chair)

### **1<sup>st</sup> session 15.30 – 17:00**

Nelly Hanna (American University in Cairo) – ‘People and Paper: Family archives in Medieval Egypt’

Francisco Apellániz (University of Naples, ‘L’Orientale’) – ‘The Archival Divide: Muslim and Latin Christian Documentary Systems in the Medieval Mediterranean’

Gaetano Sabatini (CNR) – ‘Between Italy and Spain: Neapolitan Public Banks and the Introduction of Paper for Financial Intermediation’

### **Inaugural Public Talk & Exhibition Opening 17:30 – 18:30**

Renzo Sabbatini (University of Siena) ‘*Mille all’uomo arrearar comodi suole*’ I viaggi della carta in età medievale e moderna’

**UNESCO Memory of the World Project Presentation 18:30 – 19:00**

Leonardo Meoni (Datini Archive) & Antonio Sánchez del Barrio (Simón Ruiz Archive)

**28 Jan – SALA CONSILIARE DEL COMUNE DI PRATO**

**2<sup>nd</sup> session 10:00 – 11:00**

Pietro Delcorno (University of Bologna) – ‘Mobilizing objects and money: Inventories of donations at the origin of the Monte di Pietà’

Matteo Calcagni (European University Institute) – ‘The forgotten papers. Tuscan capitalists and factors in the seventeenth-century Mediterranean.’

**COFFEE BREAK 11:00 – 11:30**

**3<sup>rd</sup> session 11:30 – 13:00**

Erik Aerts (University of Leuven) – ‘Conservative or Progressive Financial Documents? Public and Private Accounts in the Southern Low Countries (1300–1600)’

Tessa de Boer and Ramona Negrón (University of Leiden) – ‘The Future of the Past: Unlocking the Mediterranean in the Amsterdam Notarial Archive’

Cátia Antunes (University of Leiden) – ‘A Window into the World of Merchants: An Analytical Grid to Interpret Notarial Contracts’

**LUNCH BREAK – 13:00 – 14:00**

**4<sup>th</sup> session 14:00 – 15:30**

José María Pérez Fernández (Granada) – ‘*The Spirit of Trafficke*: Paper, Finance and Theology’

Elvira Vilches (Duke) – ‘The Value of Paper: Debits, Credits, Affect [Emotion], and Materiality’

Natalie Roxburgh (University of Hamburg) – ‘The Northwestern Migration of Finance: Comparing Paper Credit in Shakespeare and Defoe’

**Concluding remarks 15:30 – 16:00**

## LIST OF PRESENTERS AND ABSTRACTS

(in alphabetical order)

### **Erick Aerts**

University of Leuven – [erik.aerts@kuleuven.be](mailto:erik.aerts@kuleuven.be)

#### **Title:**

*Conservative or Progressive Financial Documents? Public and Private Accounts in the Southern Low Countries (1300–1600)*

#### **Abstract:**

Public accounts had the reputation to be more conservative than their private counterparts since the main reason for their existence – personal justification of an officer to a controlling agent or institution – did not change that much over the centuries. Private accounts, on the contrary, were the written residual of a company's performance in a highly competitive environment and therefore had to adapt to new techniques and better instruments on a permanent basis. This paper intends to discuss the nature of public and private accounts for the Southern Low Countries, focusing on two aspects, the bookkeeping in use and the spread of Hindu-Arabic numerals. It shall be argued that private accounts introduced double-entry bookkeeping and Hindu-Arabic numerals in the course of the 16th century. Public accounts were not unfamiliar with these novelties but would only welcome the new numerals in the 17th and 18th centuries and double-entry bookkeeping even much later. Italian influence proved to be of great importance for the dissemination of the latter.

#### **Bio:**

Erik Aerts is Emeritus Professor of Medieval and Early Modern Economic and Social History at the University of Leuven. His research areas include economic development, consumption, currency, banking, finance, financial institutions, but also witchcraft, medicine and religious values and norms, all topics on which he published extensively in a dozen languages. Since 2016 he is president of the Scientific Committee of the International Datini Institute.

### **Cátia Antunes**

Leiden University – [C.A.P.Antunes@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:C.A.P.Antunes@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

#### **Title:**

*A Window into the World of Merchants: An Analytical Grid to Interpret Notarial Contracts*

#### **Abstract:**

Notarial contracts and deeds worldwide provide historians with a unique window to observe the social and economic interactions of a broad range of social groups, with particular emphasis on merchant groups. However, notarial contracts and deeds pose often methodological problems that require specific heuristic training. Notwithstanding the potential of such sources, most historians remain caught in the content of these contracts, rather than think of notarial protocols as means for systemic analysis of contemporary and past societies. This presentation offers an analysis of the historiographical potential offered by notarial contracts, deeds and protocols in the study of pre-modern societies, with a particular focus on the advantages this type of sources offer for the study of merchants, their communities and networks. In the end, I offer a proposal on how to potentialize these documents in a way where comparative studies across countries, regions and continents may offer more than only a depiction of someone's material life. Instead, notarial contracts may become a new avenue for the study of systemic and global societal changes in the world before the Industrial Revolution.

**Bio:**

Cátia Antunes is professor of Global Economic Networks: Merchants, Entrepreneurs and Empires at Leiden University, The Netherlands. She has published extensively about merchant communities, comparative history of empires and global entrepreneurship.

**Francisco Apellániz**

Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale' – [fapellaniz@unior.it](mailto:fapellaniz@unior.it)

**Title:**

*The Archival divide: Muslim and Latin Christian documentary systems in the Medieval Mediterranean*

**Abstract:**

The aim of the present contribution is to describe the two documentary systems that coexisted in the late Medieval Mediterranean. Since the time of the first Islamic conquests, Arab conquerors placed much stress in that transactions needed to be supported by the oral performance of Muslim witnesses. This and other similar conceptions made that Islamic documents, rather than performing a legal action by themselves, had the function of serving the interests of memory. Late medieval Latin Europe, by contrast, witnessed the triumph of documents and clerks –such as the *notaries public*- endowed with public faith. In Mediterranean cities of commerce, the difference between Islamic and Latin notarial systems puzzled contemporary observers. In my presentation I will be discussing the origins and major changes endured by some artifacts, actors and places characteristic of these two documentary systems, such as the transformations of rolls into ledgers, the earliest tools adopted for archival purposes and the contrasting ways Muslim and Christian notaries kept their own files.

**Bio:**

A Ph.D. by the European University Institute (2006), I have taught Islamic and Ottoman History at the Université Aix-Marseille and currently at the *Orientale* in Naples. My last monograph, entitled 'Breaching the Bronze Wall: Franks at Mamluk and Ottoman Courts and Markets' (<https://brill.com/view/title/39184>) considers legal attitudes towards the Franks adopted by late medieval Islamic societies and the emergence of new ones under the Ottomans. My previous work considered the intricacies of cultural and commercial exchanges between Mediterranean Europe and the Middle East through a series of topics derived from his interest on identity manipulation, mixed networks and legal relations. I am the author of *Pouvoir et finance en Méditerranée pré-moderne: le deuxième Etat mamelouk et le commerce des épices* (1389–1517) (Barcelona 2009).

**Tessa de Boer & Ramona Negrón**

Leiden University – [t.w.m.de.boer@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:t.w.m.de.boer@hum.leidenuniv.nl) - [r.negron@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:r.negron@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

**Title:**

*The Future of the Past: Unlocking the Mediterranean in the Amsterdam Notarial Archive*

**Abstract:**

On 25 February 1668, the Armenian merchant Wartabiet appeared in front of Amsterdam notary Anthony van de Ven. Wartabiet declared to have received two hundred reams of paper from the Dutch merchants Lucas van Coppenol and Fredrick Schulerus for the sum of 872 guilders, to be paid within four weeks. While the deed was written in Dutch, Wartabiet signed in Armenian. The deed ends with a few lines written in Armenian by Reverend Voskan, who confirmed to have received the paper and declared that he would pay the sum of 872 guilders within three

months. If the paper would be of bad quality, it would be replaced. Wartabiet was not the only Armenian merchant in early modern Amsterdam. Throughout the early modern period people, resources and capital from all over the world entered or passed through the city. The Amsterdam Notarial Archive (1578-1915) attests to this presence and these processes and contains an estimated five million of deeds that are highly multilingual, transnational, and cross-cultural. The Mediterranean is one of the major subregions of the world to be represented in this archive. As the center of European banking and finance moved from the Mediterranean (esp. Italy) to Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century, Amsterdam became thoroughly incorporated in Mediterranean circuits through finance, trade, shipping, mobility and diaspora. The origins, development and eventual maturity of these connections are reflected in the notarial archive, especially when combined with other Amsterdam-based collections, such as consular correspondence or firm records. From heartbroken mothers testifying about their teenage sons in captivity as Barbary slaves, to large-scale capital flows between the Amsterdam and Italian banking houses, a rich diversity of perspectives on the relationship between Amsterdam and the Mediterranean is waiting to be uncovered. But how to unlock the Mediterranean in the Amsterdam Notarial Archive, wherein every detail is suffocated through sheer numbers and size? The answer lies in digitization - scanning, and subsequently building tools to increase accessibility to these scans. In 2014, the Amsterdam City Archives (SAA) launched the 'Alle Amsterdamse Akten' project, in which these millions of deeds are being digitized and provided with an index, with the help of over a thousand volunteers. The indexed notarial deeds are added to the SAA's search engine, making it possible to search through them by name, geographical location, and keywords. Aside from providing a crucial access point to millions of these buried names, places and keywords, the inclusion of indexes to other (early modern) archival collections in the same search engine - think of, for example, parish registers or ship insurance records - makes it possible to match and combine data from several large collections in a few clicks. At the moment of writing, three million names found in notarial deeds are already searchable, and it is a statistical hypothesis that every single denizen of early modern Amsterdam will surface and be represented at some point. This index, together with the increasingly large-scale employment of Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) to autogenerate transcriptions of unindexed sets of notarial deeds, and the soon to be implemented Records in Context (RiC) wherein unique entities (people, ships etc.) are given an ID which can link them across the collections of several archive/museums, puts Amsterdam among the frontrunners when it comes to the digital accessibility of archives. It is our belief that digitization will fundamentally change the nature historical and archival research: the future of the past is in reach.

### **Bio - Tessa de Boer**

I am a first-year PhD student under the supervision of Prof. Cátia Antunes, writing a PhD thesis on early modern Dutch firms seeking to exploit French colonial resources, probably focusing on those with connections to the city of Bordeaux. Before my PhD, I worked (and still continue to work) for the Amsterdam City Archives on their project 'Alle Amsterdamse Akten', which aims to increase the accessibility of the huge notarial archives of Amsterdam. We do this through a) increased scanning of the books and making them available online, b) indexing, so extracting names and places, and c) training HTR models which will eventually automatically transcribe the text of the scanned deeds. The ultimate goal is having all of the approx. 5 million deeds (save for those lost through fire or water) be searchable word-for-word through a search engine. I myself mostly work on the indexing part, so I processed about 40k deeds and have grown very familiar with its contents: they provide exceptional insight into both the mundane daily realities of the early modern world as well as its more famous/extraordinary episodes and personalities; information on mobility in the Mediterranean basin (in the broadest sense) abounds. Besides the notarial archives, I have also done a lot of work on diplomatic (correspondence) archives, and am very passionate about new (technological) developments in increasing archival accessibility. As a historian, I am mostly interested in general early modern European history, the history of Amsterdam, business history and the history of diplomacy. I know that the Amsterdam City Archives, and especially the team working on the notarial collection, are always very keen on

opportunities to cooperate with research projects. As the way historical/archival research is conducted will change drastically in the years to come (especially with the advent of HTR employment), they/we are excited to share what is or will soon be possible when it comes to early modern paper.

### **Bio - Ramona Negrón**

I am a first-year PhD student in Prof. Cátia Antunes' project 'Exploiting the Empires of Others: Dutch Investment in Foreign Colonial Resources, 1570-1800'. I will be researching the seventeenth-century Amsterdam family Coymans and their involvement in the Spanish empire. One of the Coymans members, Balthasar Coymans (1652-1686) moved in 1673 to Cádiz and Seville, and in 1685 obtained the Spanish Asiento de Negros. I am hoping to visit the Spanish archives the coming year. Before this, I did both my BA and MA in History at Leiden University. I specialized in the colonial history, history of slavery, and maritime history. During my studies, I worked at the Amsterdam City Archives in the projects 'Alle Amsterdamse Akten' (AAA), 'Crowd Leert Computer Lezen' (CLCL) and 'Notarissen Netwerk' (NN) (roughly translated as: 'All Amsterdam Deeds', 'Crowd Learns Computer to Read', and 'Notaries Networks'). As Tessa already explained, these projects aim to increase the accessibility of the Amsterdam notarial archive (16th-20th century, 731 notaries, approx. 5 million deeds). Indexed deeds are exported to the archive's search engine, where you can also search for all parish registers and other archival material that has been indexed: <https://archieff.amsterdam/indexen/persons> At this moment, there are over 24 million names in the index. Whereas the AAA project is mostly concerned with indexing the notarial archive, the CLCL project uses HTR technology to train the computer to automatically make transcriptions, making it possible to search for every word in the archive. The archive has already developed a 18th-century model, which works really well, and is training the computer to read 17th-century handwriting. In the near future, the archive will publish another search engine for this project.

### **Matteo Calcagni**

European University Institute – [matteo.calcagni@eui.eu](mailto:matteo.calcagni@eui.eu)

#### **Title:**

*The forgotten papers. Tuscan capitalists and factors in the seventeenth-century Mediterranean*

#### **Abstract:**

Very little has been written on the Tuscan economy of the seventeenth century, generally dismissed as a period of crisis between the governments of the Grand Dukes Ferdinando II (1621–1670) and Cosimo III (1670–1723). Even less light has been thrown on the financial and commercial operators who traded between Florence and Livorno and then expanded throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. My presentation will use previously unpublished Italian and Ottoman documentary material scattered between Prato and Florence to look into the economic activities of a number of two different Tuscan businessmen and their companies. They include Ugolino Del Vernaccia (1612–1702), a noble Florentine capitalist who in the 1640s founded an important trading company in Florence with representatives all over Europe, and his nephew Raffaello, who instead preferred to establish his firm in Livorno to conduct his business in close contact with the cosmopolitan merchant community of the Medicean port. The vast quantity and variety of economic documentation, such as accounts, ledgers and memoirs, kept in the Caccini Del Vernaccia archive in the Biblioteca Roncioniana in Prato will allow for the reconstruction of the business networks of the Del Vernaccia company, one of the most important of its time. Whereas the Del Vernaccias' interests were primarily in continental Europe and the Western Mediterranean, the other case study considered in my presentation revolves around the unknown mercantile activities of Francesco Adami (1654–1702) and his younger brother Domenico

(1655–1715) in the Levant, whose documents are kept in the Adami-Lami archive in Florence. Written in several European languages, in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic these documents constitute unique cases in the history of Early Modern Mediterranean Trade for so far there was no information on Tuscan merchants in Ottoman Syria at the end of the seventeenth century. This remarkable collection of economic documentation testifies to the transversal contacts that Tuscan merchants, without consular representation in the Ottoman Empire, had with local traders and other European merchant communities in the Levant.

**Bio:**

I am a PhD Researcher in the Department of History and Civilisation at the European University Institute in Fiesole. The research project I am carrying out at the European University Institute, entitled ‘Hard Times in the Levant’, is dedicated to the mobility of Tuscan merchants in the Eastern Mediterranean between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. My latest publication is ‘I limiti della neutralità: commercio, pirateria e tensioni diplomatiche tra Granducato di Toscana, Francia e Inghilterra (1696–1707)’ in *Archivio Storico Italiano* (no. 3–2021). I have also made some significant discoveries of historical archives scattered throughout Tuscany, including the Adami-Lami archive (Florence), the Bargagli archive and the Seratti archive (Montefollonico, Siena), the Montini archive (Sarna, Arezzo), and the recuperation of the Bargagli Bardi Bandini archive (Castellina in Chianti, Siena) after a temporary dispersion lasted 30 years.

**Pietro Delcorno**

University of Bologna – [pietro.delcorno3@unibo.it](mailto:pietro.delcorno3@unibo.it)

**Title:**

*Mobilizing objects and money: Inventories of donations at the origin of the Monte di Pietà*

**Abstract:**

Starting from the 1460s, Monti di Pietà were founded as public banks that aimed to provide citizens with solidaristic credit. In this new institution, the interplay between the objects pawned and the money received in exchange was central and mediated by a well-organized system of account books that served as written record and guarantee. However, other paper inventories also played a crucial role, namely the lists of donations (of both objects and money) made by different social actors to gather the initial capital of the Monte or to recapitalize it later on. Based on the case of Padua, this contribution will reflect on three aspects of this type of inventory: 1) how it traced the active involvement of several actors in the city; 2) how it recorded objects in transition from social to financial value; 3) how itself changed function, from being a practical tool of bookkeeping to memorializing the institution’s ‘glorious’ history.

**Bio:**

Pietro Delcorno (PhD 2016) is senior assistant professor at the University of Bologna and visiting researcher at Radboud University, Nijmegen. He is leading the project ‘Lenten Sermon Bestsellers: Shaping Society through Religious Communication in Late Medieval Europe (1470–1520)’, funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO). His main research interests include medieval and early modern preaching, religious theatre, and late medieval social history. Among his academic publications in the field, are the two monographs: *Lazzaro e il ricco epulone: Metamorfosi di una parabola fra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Il Mulino, 2014); *In the Mirror of the Prodigal Son: The Pastoral Uses of a Biblical Narrative (1200-1550)* (Brill, 2018). He has received several research grants, including the NWO Rubicon Grant (2015–2017), Junior Core Fellowship of the Institute for Advanced Study of the Central European University (2018) and a Gerda Henkel Stiftung grant (2019).

## **Nelly Hanna**

American University in Cairo – [nhanna@aucegypt.edu](mailto:nhanna@aucegypt.edu)

### **Title:**

*People and Paper: Family archives in Medieval Egypt*

### **Abstract:**

This paper will neither consider paper trade nor paper production, both of which are subjects of major importance. Instead, it will try to shed light on a different matter, namely what was the role of paper in people's life, with a focus on medieval Egypt. In the course of the formation of major bureaucracies in the Islamic world, for instance in the Abbasid Empire, the Fatimid Empire (etc) we know that there was extensive use of paper/ papyrus. And as of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, with the spread of *madrasas* (educational institutions) the production of books, treatises, etc. expanded. In this paper, the focus will be more on some of the social economic aspects. Other than these institutions, who used paper and why. The focus will be on family archives of traders or merchants in medieval Egypt, with a focus on 3-4 of these from the 9-11<sup>th</sup> centuries. It will argue that bureaucratic and religious concerns were not the only factors that pushed people to use paper, but economic interests played an important role in its spread.

### **Bio:**

Nelly Hanna is Distinguished University Professor and Chair of the Department of Arab and Islamic Civilizations at the American University in Cairo. She has been visiting professor/ guest lecturer at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris (1998); Harvard University (2001); Waseda University, Tokyo (2008–2009). Her scholarly interests have been on Ottoman Egypt (1500–1800). Her work focused to a large extent on the social groups outside the establishment, such as artisans, traders and merchants, with a special emphasis on the economy and its impact on culture and on society. She has published in English, French and Arabic. Her recent publications include: *Ottoman Egypt and the Emergence of the Modern World* (American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, 2014); *Artisan Entrepreneurs in Cairo (1600–1800) and Early Modern Capitalism* (Syracuse University Press, 2011); *In Praise of Books, a Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class 16–18<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Syracuse U.P., 2003); *Making Big Money in 1600: The Life and Times of Isma`il Abu Taqiyya, Egyptian Merchant* (Syracuse U.P., 1998); *Habiter au Caire: La Maison Moyenne et ses habitants aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Cairo, IFAO, 1991); *An Urban History of Bulaq in the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods* (Cairo, IFAO, 1983).

## **José María Pérez Fernández**

University of Granada – [jmperez@ugr.es](mailto:jmperez@ugr.es)

### **Title:**

*'The Spirit of Trafficke': Paper, Finance and Theology*

### **Abstract:**

My presentation will examine the early modern dematerialization of economic exchanges through an approach to Gerard Malynes' *Lex Mercatoria* (1622). A comprehensive treatise on international maritime law, trade practices, accounting methods and above all an essay on financial instruments, Malynes' work constitutes an excellent case study for the way in which these relatively new phenomena were accounted for in the early seventeenth century, when many of the methods and practices that were originally conceived and developed many years before in the Italian Peninsula had already become global. My talk will focus on how Malynes turned to concepts from other disciplines and practices to make sense of paper-based semiotic artefacts like the bill of exchange, whose power to convey a significant amount of value on 'small peece of paper of some two fingers broad' he described as 'the Spirit or Facultie of the

Soule of Trafficke and Commerce'. As he struggled to provide an epistemic foundation for their nature and function, Malynes resorted to the vocabularies and the discursive patterns of disciplines like theology, philosophy or rhetoric to account for these financial semiotic artefacts and their performative power.

**Bio:**

José María Pérez Fernández is Professor of English Literature at the University of Granada in Spain, where his research on translation and comparative literature started with a doctoral dissertation on Henry Howard's English rendering of books II and IV of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Recent publications and current work in progress have embraced a more interdisciplinary approach to translation and early modern cultural studies, with a focus on different aspects of translation and communication—such as the joint impact of paper and print, the development of an international news market, the generation and transmission of knowledge throughout transnational networks, and how financial and mercantile processes mirrored the ways in which information exchange took place within Europe and beyond its borders. He has published essays in journals like *Comparative Literature*, *The Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* and *Translation and Literature*, and several books which include a critical edition of James Mabbe's *The Spanish Bawd* (MHRA, 2013), a collection of essays on *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2014, co-edited with E. Wilson-Lee), and a monograph on Hernando Colón's library and catalogues (*Hernando Colón's New World of Books: Towards a Cartography of Knowledge*, Yale University Press, 2021, co-authored with E. Wilson-Lee). He is one of the editors of a six-volume edition of Hernando Colón's *Libro de los Epítomes* (forthcoming with Oxford University Press in 2025) and is currently working on a monograph on Thucydides in translation between Valla and Hobbes (under contract with Oxford University Press, to be published in 2024). In 2019 he joined the PIMo COST Action, where he leads the Paper in Motion Work Group.

## **Natalie Roxburgh**

University of Hamburg – [Natalie.Roxburgh@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:Natalie.Roxburgh@uni-hamburg.de)

**Title:**

*The Northwestern Migration of Finance: Comparing Paper Credit in Shakespeare and Defoe*

**Abstract:**

William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, first performed in 1605, features a nobleman who defaults on a loan offered by a Jewish merchant. The play famously contrasts different attitudes towards credit and usury and reveals that Southern developments in banking and finance were highly distrusted by early modern English people. Just over a century later, Daniel Defoe would publish multiple texts, both fictional and non-fictional, on how to manage credit, works which take for granted the practices seen as a problem a century earlier. What happened in the century spanning Shakespeare and Defoe? There is an ideological sea change between them. This paper will compare these two British authors insofar as their *oeuvres* reveal how doctrines, practices, and know-how about finance and accounting gradually moved from the Italian Peninsula to the north of Europe. It will take into account current scholarship on the British 'financial revolution' in addition to introducing relevant literary criticism that examines a transformation in attitudes toward banking and credit.

**Bio:**

Dr. Natalie Roxburgh is Lecturer for English in the Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Hamburg. She has published widely on a variety of topics from the seventeenth century to the present, including a monograph titled *Representing Public Credit: Credible Commitment, Fiction, and the Rise of the Financial Subject* (Routledge, 2016). Her essays can be read in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, *Mosaic*, and in many other journals and

edited collections. She is an active member of several research networks, including Money, Power and Print (which she helps coordinate), Critical Finance Studies, Fiction Meets Science, Critical Engagements with Economic Thought, and the DFG-funded Economic Criticism Network.

## **Gaetano Sabatini**

CNR & Roma Tre University – [gaetano.sabatini@isem.cnr.it](mailto:gaetano.sabatini@isem.cnr.it)

### **Title:**

*Between Italy and Spain: the Neapolitan Public Banks and the introduction of the paper for the financial intermediation*

### **Abstract:**

This essay aims to investigate some aspects of the activity of the ancient public banks of Naples: a systematic analysis of original documents nowadays conserved in the Archivio Storico del Banco di Napoli, permits to reconstruct not only the main commercial and financial activities of Capital city of the Kingdom of Naples under the Spanish rule between 1550 and 1700, but also to investigate the network of relationships created by the banks within the local and central political elites of the Monarchy. The introduction of the paper for the financial intermediation in Naples became in facts a model that the Spanish Government tried to introduce in other territories of Monarchy by mean of deep administrative reforms.

### **Bio:**

Gaetano Sabatini is the Director of the Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea (Cagliari - Milan - Rome, Italy) of the CNR - National Research Council of Italy, Professor of Economic History at the Roma Tre University (Rome, Italy) and Associate Researcher of the CHAM - Center for the Humanities at the Nova University of Lisbon (Portugal). His research focuses on the economic history of Early Modern Italy, the mobility of agents and capitals inside the Spanish Monarchy and the financial networks between Spain, Portugal and Italy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. He is the editor of *The Journal of European Economic History* and his recent publications include: P. Cardim, A. Feros, G. Sabatini, 'The Political Constitution of the Iberian Monarchies', in F. Bouza, P. Cardim, A. Feros (eds.), *The Iberian World, 1400–1800* (Abingdon-on-Thames, Routledge, 2019, pp. 34–61); T. Astarita, G. Sabatini (eds.), *The Treatise on Abundance (1638) and Early Modern Views of Poverty and Famine* (London, Anthem Press, 2019); J.J. Ruiz Ibáñez, G. Sabatini (eds.), *La Inmaculada Concepción y la Monarquía Hispánica* (Madrid/México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2019), J.J. Ruiz Ibáñez & G. Sabatini 'Alliés, voisins et ennemis du roi d'Espagne. La puissante faiblesse de la Monarchie Hispanique (1580-1620)' in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, LXXV, 2020/1, pp. 39-72.

## **Renzo Sabbatini**

University of Siena – [renzo.sabbatini@unisi.it](mailto:renzo.sabbatini@unisi.it)

### **Title (keynote):**

*'Mille all'uomo arrear comodi suole'. I viaggi della carta in età medievale e moderna*

### **Abstract:**

What would our history have been without paper, without its travels both as a raw material and, above all, as a vehicle for information and culture among societies and peoples? This lecture offers a general overview of the multiple roles played by paper in the history of Europe and the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages and throughout the Modern Age. It starts from the particularities of its manufacture, the raw material (rags, old clothes), the environmental impact,

the relationship between centralisation of manufacturing and specialisation of the workforce, the gender composition of the workforce and the involvement of the family, the paths and methods of diffusion of know-how and technologies. It then examines its three main uses. Firstly, as a support for handwriting in all its dimensions: state, notary, commercial, financial, scholastic, cultural and artistic, private for mercantile accounting, family memories, personal correspondence and as a medium for textual self-fashioning. It will then trace its history after Gutenberg as the main medium for movable type printing, which expanded from books to more flexible communication tools such as pamphlets, gazettes, newspapers and posters. Lastly, but with greater importance than has been recognised so far, there is wrapping paper, used for packaging goods such as colonial coffee and sugar, but also as cardboard for making cloth or as perforated cardboard for raising silkworms.

**Bio:**

Renzo Sabbatini is professor of Modern History at the University of Siena. His research interests include the history of diplomacy, republicanism and republics in early modern Europe, and the history of paper. He is a member of the editorial boards of several journals in these fields. He is also a member of the scientific committees of the *Fedrigoni Fabriano Foundation (European Institute for the History and Culture of Paper)*, and the *Francesco Datini International Foundation for Economic History*. Other than the monograph *Di bianco lin candida prole: la manifattura della carta in età moderna e il caso toscano* (FrancoAngeli, Milano 1990), he has published numerous essays on the history of paper. Other recent publications include: *Sulla diplomazia in età moderna. Politica, economia, religione* (a cura di R. Sabbatini, P. Volpini, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2011); *Le Mura e l'Europa. Aspetti della politica estera della Repubblica di Lucca: 1500-1799* (FrancoAngeli, Milano 2012); *Arezzo in Età moderna* (a cura di I. Fosi, R. Sabbatini, G. Firpo, Bretschneider, Roma 2018); *La sollevazione degli Straccioni. Lucca 1531. Politica e mercato* (Salerno editrice, Roma 2020).

**Elvira Vilches**

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**Title:**

*The Value of Paper: Debits, Credits, Affect [Emotion], and Materiality*

**Abstract:**

The extended use of double-entry bookkeeping in early modern Spain dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. In printed form this accounting method was explained in specialized chapters in business manuals published in Castile and Aragon, until 1591 when the Castilian merchant Salvador de Bartolomé Solórzano published his *libro de caja y manual*. For the author this form of business documentation conveyed the international language of trade that came into perfection through to the accumulated experience of numberless merchants. This analogy of accounting as language poses the invitation to explore further the ways in which this method for accruing financial value constituted a formal poetics of exchange and property, whose commercial framework and legal probationary capacity crossed over to prose and literary forms. My argument explores how key concepts of *libro de caja y manual* such as debit, credit, and balance, as well as its paper formats, codified the meanings of obligation, reciprocity, debt, and deceit. This familiarity with doing things with paper and ledgers speaks to the commercial scaffolding of cultural life, as well as the cultural forms and economic behaviors that were shaped by the increasing value of paper.

**Bio:**

Elvira Vilches is Associate Professor of Romance Studies at Duke University. Her research examines the interface of money, political economy, and culture in early modern Iberian thinkers, authors, and practitioners. She is the author of *New World Gold: Monetary Disorders*

*and Cultural Anxiety in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago University Press, 2010; winner *Choice List of Outstanding Books* 2011). Her most recent publications explore the numerous aspects of cultural history of Iberian capitalism. Topics include the intersections linking economic writing, business manuals, and literary genres; cultural forms shaping economic behaviors; the character and cultures of credit; the experiences of financial crisis past and present; the ubiquitous presence of arithmetic on the stage; the intersections linking economic writing and literature; and the cultural influences shaping business tools. She has received various fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies and the John Carter Brown Library, as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities.