

«Renaissance Properties» - 52nd Basler Renaissancekolloquium

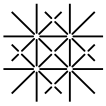
Outline

Commonly associated with transformative shifts in social and ethical norms, creative processes, and political cultures, the European Renaissance also invites historiographical considerations of new modalities of agency and ownership. The gradual development of early privilege systems into codified sets of rights, for example, has emerged as a well-supported narrative of economic and legal history. By the same token, the rising significance of author- and originatorship as (quasi-)statutory parameters is seen as a defining feature of Renaissance intellectual and creative environments.

Yet, there remains a need to illuminate the wider social dynamics (and consequences) of a specific Renaissance *culture of recognition* beyond formal institutional frameworks. The 52nd Basler Renaissance Colloquium sets out to approach this historical nexus of possession, achievement, and competition by inquiring into the general characteristics of contemporary practices of attribution and (self-)valorisation: how did individuals and groups perceive and claim their contributions to craftsmanship, scientific and scholarly endeavours, and/or artistic production? How did social privileges and barriers induce or impede the acknowledgement of individual merit? To what extent were technical innovations in manufacturing, printing, and the arts driven by personal incentives, or rather by unilateral or mutual dependencies? How did changing notions of (material and immaterial) property alter and shape economic and social realities?

Renaissance properties... proposes to frame the evolution of intellectual proprietorship as a history of social assertion, thus invoking broader contexts of individual and collective action, social networks, shifting balances of economic and political power, and systems of institutional interdependence. The meeting is intended as an interdisciplinary forum open to (and seeking to combine) perspectives from e.g. cultural, social, political, and art history, and/or the history of science and technology. We are particularly interested in thematic contributions relating to the spread of ideas and creative techniques, the development of art and book markets, the (social, political, cultural) ramifications of technological change, and/or the emergence of social spheres and identities, among others.

The colloquium will allow for individual presentations of about 30 minutes in length, followed by questions and a final roundtable discussion.



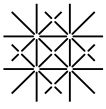
Abstracts

Shira N. Brisman (University of Pennsylvania): The Grotesque Law of Property

In the sixteenth century, the word “groteschi” clung fast to its etymology: grotesque images were “from a grotto,” claiming an origin in a chthonic underneath. When applied to forms circulating in printed compilations in the sixteenth century, “groteschi” referred to fantastical combinations evocative of antique subterranean decorations. In his *Neu Grotteßken Buch*, a group of sixty etchings published in 1610, the Nuremberg goldsmith Christoph Jamnitzer presents hybridized creatures as unexpected amalgams of the Five Elements that are shown to be in constant rearrangement. In a page of textual frontmatter to this book, Jamnitzer cites the Imperial Privilege—legitimate for a period of up to five years—that advertises the fee and confiscation that any potential copyists will face if they duplicate his book for profit. This restriction on imitation requires the contriving of scarcity: such a legal designation treats the booklet as a limited edition so that its inventor may earn reward without threat from rivalrous examples. The language of such a deed operates on an analogy that likens the book to the legal category of land from which its laborer may prosper. But this statutory classification is only temporary; after five years’ time, the book will return to a state of being more like fire, water, ether, or air, which are all non-proprietary. These four other elements do not diminish when extended to others and therefore may—or, rather, must—be shared. Using Jamnitzer’s *Neu Grotteßken Buch* for both the textual material and the images it provides, this talk proposes to study early modern property claims in printed images by focusing not on assertions of authorship but rather on the multiple analogies made in the legal discourse between the protected object and the availabilities of various natural resources.

Luca Molà (University of Warwick): Patented Inventions of the Italian Renaissance: A New Market for Innovations

The talk will provide a general analysis of the phenomenon of patents for inventions in Renaissance Italy, discussing machinery, crafts, and consumer goods. It will focus on the processes followed for the official recognition and appropriation of intellectual property rights on inventions, and the new marketing strategies devised for advertising and selling them, looking also at consumer demand and behaviour. This analysis will then be integrated with a look at the wider European context.



Paolo Sachet (Université de Genève): Appropriating Trent: Authorship, Authority, and 'Copyright' in the Papal Communication Strategy about the Tridentine Council (1545-1564)

In assessing which group or institution could rightly present themselves as true heirs to the pristine Apostolic church, the early modern religious debate often revolved around notions of authority and legitimacy. Hardly any contemporary international event triggered as wide a debate as the council held in Trent between 1545 and 1563. At the climax of the European Renaissance and in the wake of the Reformation, the Tridentine assembly prompted a flood of printed material discussing its validity, methodology, and output, with the papacy as the other institution in the eye of the storm. But how did Rome try to stop the tide of harmful propaganda, regain control over the Tridentine legacy, and frame it as the new founding myth of a confessional, anti-Protestant church?

Tackling this question from an unconventional angle, this paper focuses on the *editio princeps* of the whole corpus of the Tridentine decrees. Issued in Rome in 1564 by the first official papal press, the edition marked the definitive appropriation of the conciliar heritage by Pius IV and his successors. Not only was the curia able to monitor the entire editorial process, but also succeeded in replacing the partial and often partisan editions which had appeared in the previous two decades with a definitive text established in Rome. To achieve this, the Catholic hierarchy ingeniously adapted the legal tools of printing privileges to ensure textual conformity, and exploited the system of local bishops and envoys to distribute the publication throughout Europe.