



## CONFERENCE

### **GLOBAL EMPIRES, GLOBAL COURTS?**

### **EXPLORATIONS IN POLITICS AND RELIGION**

13-14 September 2018, European University Institute

Sala del Consiglio – Villa Salviati, Via Bolognese 156, Firenze

### **AHRC Global Microhistory Network: Conference 2**



#### ■ **ABSTRACT**

The second conference of the AHRC Global Microhistory Network continues to investigate the relationship between the local and the global, but takes a different tack. In order to explore the potential of global microhistory, we will focus on imperial formations—mostly, but not exclusively, European ones—and debate the correlation between global empires and global courts (and capital cities) in the early modern era. Beijing, Delhi, London, Amsterdam, Lisbon, Madrid, Istanbul, and Venice, but also the Iberian overseas viceregal cities or, say, the capitals of the Malay sultanates, will be at the heart of a collective reflection anchored in two main fields of inquiry: politics and religion.

Were European empires felt in their respective capital cities? The answer is affirmative for the case of Lisbon (Kate Lowe 2015) and London (Robert Batchelor 2014), while Madrid reveals a strange “absence of empire” (James Amelang 2008). How can one gauge the global character of a given court and city? By the “cosmopolitan” character of its inhabitants, social practices, urban culture, visibility and material culture? Were courts and metropolises favoured sites to conceive global politics and foster global imperial dreams across cultures? And were these imperial centers necessarily the most fertile spaces with regard to transcultural diplomacy, rituality and gift-giving?

Parallel and equally intriguing questions can be posed concerning religion. Global religions like Islam and Christianity were adopted, adapted, rejected, practiced, translated and debated in several early modern courts and capital cities. Simultaneously, imperial centers of power were often confronted with rather complex human landscapes, dominated by religious diversity and multi-ethnicity. How did minorities, foreigners and the “empires’ offspring” live in global cities of global empires? How was it to have *conversos*, *moriscos*, “global indios” (Nancy van Deusen 2015) and *chinos* in the same city and under the same “imperial roof”?

Twenty scholars from the United Kingdom, Continental Europe, the United States and Israel will address these and other related themes during a two-day conference—13-14 September 2018—at the European University Institute, Florence.

## ■ PROGRAMME

### Thursday, 13 September

**9:30**                    **Welcome and introductory remarks:**

Jorge Flores (European University Institute)

Maxine Berg (University of Warwick)

John-Paul Ghobrial (University of Oxford)

**Session 1:**            **Courts and Empires**

Chair: Maxine Berg (University of Warwick)

**10:00**                    Zoltán Biedermann, (University College London): *Are All Courts Global? The Macro and the Micro in Early Modern Portugal, Sri Lanka and Spain*

**10:30**                    Romain Bertrand (Sciences Po, Paris): *The Malay Margins of Global Empires: The Strategic Importation of Court Rituals in Early and Late Modern Southeast Asia*

**11:00**                    **Coffee Break (Sala dei Levrieri)**

Chair: James Amelang (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

**11.30**                    Guido van Meersbergen (University of Warwick): *Global Courts, Local Diplomacy: The East India Companies in the Mughal Imperial Framework*

**12.00**                    Discussion, introduced by Giuseppe Marocchi (University of Oxford)

**13.00**                    **Lunch (Grotte)**

**Session 2:**            **Transcultural Diplomacy**

Chair: Giulia Calvi (New Europe College, Bucharest & Università di Siena)

**14.30**                    Luca Molà (University of Warwick): *The Land of New Luxuries: Ottoman Desires and Venetian Gifts in the 16th Century*

**15.00** Birgit M. Tremml-Werner (University of Zurich): *Meeting Tokugawa Ieyasu in Sunpu: On the Reception of Foreign Embassies in Early Seventeenth Century-Japan*

**15.30** **Coffee Break (Sala dei Levrieri)**

Chair: Amanda Wunder (City University of New York)

**16.00** Giorgio Riello (University of Warwick): *The Franco-Siamese Embassies of 1685-88: 'Reciprocal Connections' and the Micro-history of Diplomatic Failure*

**16.30-17.30** Discussion, introduced by John-Paul Ghobrial (University of Oxford)

**20.00** **Dinner**

## **Friday, 14 September**

**Session 3: Global Catholicism**

Chair: Jorge Flores (European University Institute)

**10.00** Simon Ditchfield (University of York): *'The Papal Pastor': Rome as Capital of a World Religion*

**10.30** Eugenio Menegon (Boston University): *Invisible City: European Missionaries and Catholic Community in Qing Beijing*

**11.00** **Coffee Break (Cortile)**

Chair: John-Paul Ghobrial (University of Oxford)

**11.30** Giada Pizzoni (University of Warwick): *British Catholic Merchants in Cadiz during the commercial age (1670-1714)*

**12.00** Discussion, introduced by James Amelang (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

**13.00** **Lunch (Cortile)**

**Session 4: Material Courts**

Chair: Eugenio Menegon (Boston University)

**14.15** Amanda Wunder (City University of New York): *Fashion and Empire: The Spanish Style in Madrid and Beyond*

**14.45** Dror Wahrman (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): *Fantasies of Absolutism in Gold and Jewels: A Global History Object Lesson from the Saxon and Mogul Courts*

**15.15** Discussion, introduced by Anne Gerritsen (University of Warwick)

**16.00 Coffee Break (Cortile)**

**Session 5: Networked Knowledge**

Chair: Anne Gerritsen (University of Warwick)

**16.30** Federico Palomo (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): *Polycentric printings: Goa, the edition of an Ethiopian book and the circulation of texts in the Early Modern Portuguese Empire.*

**17.00** Giulia Calvi (New Europe College, Bucharest & Università di Siena): *Healing, Translating, Informing, Collecting: A Network of Scientists between Florence and the Ottoman Empire (17<sup>th</sup> Century)*

**17.30** Discussion, introduced by Giancarlo Casale (European University Institute)

**18.15 Break**

**18.30-19.00 Concluding Reflections:**

Jorge Flores (European University Institute)

Maxine Berg (University of Warwick)

John-Paul Ghobrial (University of Oxford)

**19.30 Dinner**

## ■ ABSTRACTS

**13 SEPTEMBER**

**Session 1: Courts and Empires**

Zoltán Biedermann, (University College London): *Are All Courts Global? The Macro and the Micro in Early Modern Portugal, Sri Lanka and Spain*

Can we identify grades of globality in early modern courts, and to what extent may the categories of ‘micro’ versus ‘macro’ help us in such an endeavour? As the connected history method thrives and keeps producing ever more surprising links across the continents before 1800, it is easy to fall under the impression that all courts appearing in our sources are global. Even in a tiny, remote town in the sparsely populated woodlands of southeastern Sri Lanka, Portuguese adventurers would be intercepted in the sixteenth century by local warlords and requested to set up letters to be sent to Lisbon – whilst desires might also be expressed for this or that particular gift that would be well received on the ground, for example a pair of Portuguese hunting dogs. This being said, it still does seem problematic to assume that such sporadic connections should place a minor Lankan seat of local power fully in the same category as, say, the court of John III of Portugal, or Phillip II of Spain. Could it be that it is not so much the sheer existence of ‘macro’ connections that distinguishes the latter from the former, but rather the way the global inhabits the ‘micro’ structures of each court, or indeed the way the global is digested locally?

Guido van Meersbergen (University of Warwick): *Global Courts, Local Diplomacy: The East India Companies in the Mughal Imperial Framework*

The Mughal court formed a central node in trans-regional networks of diplomatic exchange, its cosmopolitan character reflected in the syncretism of its art and intellectual culture. Yet in the context of diplomatic interactions with European powers, Agra or Delhi were often the scene of global exchanges taking place on strikingly local terms, conforming closely to the norms of Mughal imperial culture. This paper explores the nature of the diplomatic relationship between the Mughal Empire and the Dutch and English East India Companies (VOC and EIC) by examining a selection of seventeenth-century letters, decrees, and petitions. It shows that while a small portion of these documents, namely royal letters, manifested a global vision based on notions of mutuality and affinity between princes, most of these materials reflect a more localised and hierarchical relationship. As this paper suggests, the latter is best understood when taking into account how diplomatic contacts at the Mughal court were embedded in relations between VOC and EIC representatives and Mughal power holders at the port town level. Here, one sees clearly how the Companies operated as political actors within the Mughal imperial framework – relying on patrons in the imperial administration and taking recourse to Mughal legal structures to lobby with the emperor for protection and redress of grievances.

## **Session 2: Transcultural Diplomacy**

Birgit M. Tremml-Werner (University of Zurich): *Meeting Tokugawa Ieyasu in Sunpu: On the Reception of Foreign Embassies in Early Seventeenth Century-Japan*

Between 1603 and 1616, the nominal «retired shogun», Tokugawa Ieyasu resided in a newly built castle in Sunpu in present day Shizuoka, Japan. There he regularly received court officials and political advisors, ship captains and envoys, missionaries and monks from near and far. Using audiences and courtly encounters at Sunpu, I will explore hierarchical political communication with a special emphasis on performative aspects, the role of symbols (Stollberg-Rilinger), bodily practices (Hevia) and spatial and architectural elements (Sand). Placing findings from Japanese sources such as the Sunpu-ki into a close reading of diplomatic records (written correspondence, oral negotiations, translation and the interpretative work of linguist intermediaries) will contribute to a better understanding of connectedness and disconnections in cross-cultural Eurasian diplomacy, as well as of the complex interface of domestic and foreign policies in early modern inter polity relations.

Giorgio Riello (University of Warwick): *The Franco-Siamese Embassies of 1685-88: ‘Reciprocal Connections’ and the Micro-history of Diplomatic Failure*

This paper considers a series of four diplomatic exchanges between France and Siam in 1685-88. The so-called Franco-Siamese embassies have been well studied because of the size of the diplomatic missions, the elaborate receptions given in both France and in Siam, and the gifts exchanged between the two courts. However they raise for us at least three methodological issues. First, microhistory has long discussed Grendi’s “exceptional normal” but in a global context how can one define what is exceptional and what is normal? The paper asks how global history can deal with the “exceptional” and what specific cases are representative of when addressing a global narrative. This opens a second problem for us: how do we deal with issues of “asymmetries” between the different actors involved in diplomatic exchange? Whilst we have substantial documentary and visual sources produced in France, the same cannot be said for Siam. How can one produce what I would call a “reciprocal connection”? Finally, the paper addresses the relationship between the micro dynamics of the embassies (the embassy on the ground) and the macro story of global diplomacy. Here the case of the Franco-Siamese embassies is revealing as it shows that these two narratives are divergent. The ultimate failure of this diplomatic exchange at producing long-lasting connections was not dependent on factors often invoked in global explanations (geo-politics; intercontinental trade; European imperial ambitions, etc.) but on the action of actors (ambassadors, co-adjutants etc.) that were part of the embassy itself.

**14 SEPTEMBER**

**Session 3: Global Catholicism**

Simon Ditchfield (University of York): *'The Papal Pastor': Rome as Capital of a World Religion*

During the period c.1564-c.1712 Rome was reinvented as the capital of a religion with global reach. Central to this was the reassertion of the pope's role not only as papal prince but also as papal pastor: as saint maker, liturgy shaper and relic gifter. Roman Catholicism's coming of age as a truly universal faith was reflected in the unprecedented fact that all the revised liturgical texts, regarded as being of universal application in the daily worship of the post-Reformation Catholic Church, shared the suffix Romanum, beginning with the Breviarium romanum of 1568. This was not merely textual symbolism, for also exported to the far-flung corners of the new Roman Catholic world were not only the cults of newly canonised saints such as Francis Xavier and Teresa of Avila, but also physical relics of its early Christian martyrs dug up from the newly discovered Roman catacombs. In addition, copies of key icons, such as the Salus Populi Romani of S. Maria Maggiore, which the Jesuits adopted as their global logo, were appropriated and remade by indigenous artists from Mexico to Manila, Ming China to Mughal India. Such material vectors of influence were also validated by indulgences, whereby venerating a copy anywhere in the world was as legitimate as praying before the Roman original. This 'miracle' of portable Catholicism universalized the particular, Roman reality to create a remarkably resilient spiritual/devotional 'alloy' that still commands the loyalty of over one billion of this planet's inhabitants.

Eugenio Menegon (Boston University): *Invisible City: European Missionaries and Catholic Community in Qing Beijing*

European Catholic missionaries in Qing Beijing played both political and religious roles between 1601 and 1838. They worked as scientists, technicians and artists at the service of the imperial court, aiding in various state building projects. They acted for the Qing as intermediaries and translators with European powers. Most important from their viewpoint, through their efforts in the imperial service they sustained the Christian enterprise in the empire. Their religious activities continued even after 1724, when the government officially forbade Christianity in the provinces. In fact, Beijing, the seat of the emperor and his central government and army, paradoxically became in the eighteenth century the only city in China where Christianity was openly tolerated. Three Jesuit and one Propaganda Fide churches, named after the four directions, emerged as the cores of a submerged urban and suburban network, nested within the walls of the Tartar City and connected to the whole empire and the rest of the world. These centers, comprising churches, residences, libraries, scientific laboratories, pharmacies and a variety of commercial properties, were nodes of exchange with the surrounding capital. They have been studied in recent years mainly from art historical and scientific perspectives, but their role as communitarian focuses of religious and social life still needs exploration. A web of daily interactions with the local Christian community and the members of the imperial court enveloped, connected, and separated the churches, the adjoining residences and facilities, the women's chapels, and the small oratory and hostels near the Yuanmingyuan suburban



imperial palace, in a hierarchy of varied importance and influence, not devoid of internal tensions. Using missionary correspondence and Chinese sources, this presentation offers a picture of the complex grid of relations surrounding the churches, and their ambiguous relationship with Qing imperial power and European colonialism. Such relations created physical and social spaces in Beijing and its hinterland in what amounted to an “invisible city” within the capital itself, both locally grounded and globally connected.

Giada Pizzoni (University of Warwick): *British Catholic Merchants in Cadiz during the commercial age (1670-1714)*

This paper contributes to the history of early modern British Catholicism, trade and British national identity. It examines the ways in which Catholics moved beyond religious divisions and across national borders in order to sustain British trade. I argue that Catholics played an important part in the early modern commercial expansion. Although Catholicism in the British Isles implied marginalisation, it was instrumental in fostering trade networks, securing successful economic strategies with Protestant partners, and in keeping ‘the wheels of [British] commerce spinning’. By surveying British Catholics’ involvement in Atlantic and Mediterranean trade, this paper will establish which role they played in sustaining British trade. I argue that they secured social integration through economic inclusion thereby defying the stereotype of a prosecuted community. Furthermore, I will challenge the widely accepted notion in modern historiography of a Protestant national identity constructed against a Catholic ‘other’. I argue that Catholics fostered networks of inter-faith trade within an emerging Protestant empire, fundamentally sustaining British commercial expansion.

#### **Session 4: Material Courts**

Amanda Wunder (City University of New York): *Fashion and Empire: The Spanish Style in Madrid and Beyond*

This paper examines the relationship between fashion and empire during the reign of Philip IV of Spain (1621-1665). Although it is a subject that has been sidelined in the historiography of imperial Spain, fashion was a critically important political and diplomatic tool that Philip IV, his ministers, and his critics used with great purposefulness during his tumultuous reign. In the early years of Philip IV’s rule, a distinctive Spanish style of dress for men and women was cultivated at the court. The new Spanish style was characterized by stiff restrictive garments— most notably the starched plain white collar set on a neckband (*golilla*) for men and a hip-extending farthingale (*guardainfante*) for women—that have been immortalized in Diego Velázquez’s iconic court portraits. The first half of this paper explores the impact that Spain’s global empire had (or did not have) on shaping fashion developments at the court by scrutinizing the account records of the artisans who dressed the court in Madrid. The second half of the paper examines the dissemination of Madrid’s courtly fashions to cities and courts around the globe and considers the role that fashion played in defining Spanishness as the Spanish Empire was falling apart.

Dror Wahrman (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): *Fantasies of Absolutism in Gold and Jewels: A Global History Object Lesson from the Saxon and Mogul Courts*

My talk emanates from a project that is a historiographical experiment, focusing a book-length study on the interpretation of a single object, unpacking it layer by layer for a deep analysis of its multiple meanings. The object, the centerpiece of the *Schatzkammer* of the August the Strong's Saxon court at Dresden, was one of the most extraordinary works of art in early modern Europe and a poster-object for "global microhistory". This object is an elaborate multi-piece miniature model, made of gold, silver, enamel and thousands of precious gemstones, which represented the court of the Indian Mogul Aurangzeb at a particularly festive and loaded moment. My paper will explore the fantasies and realities of the Indian court as parallels, models and counterparts to August's court in Dresden, and try to explain what was it about August and his Saxon court that can explain his deep investment in this elaborate representation of the court of a foreign, distant ruler who was one of the greatest contemporary potentates in his time.

### **Session 5: Networked Knowledge**

Federico Palomo (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): *Polycentric printings: Goa, the edition of an Ethiopian book and the circulation of texts in the Early Modern Portuguese Empire.*

This presentation discusses different aspects concerning the circulation of texts throughout the early-modern Portuguese Empire and the role played by some imperial (peripheral) centres, such as Goa, in the gathering, (re)elaboration and circulation of missionary knowledge during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In this regard, the presentation intends to put in context the printed edition of the Ethiopian controversial theological book entitled *Magsef Assetat*, written by the Jesuit António Fernandes and published in Goa, in Gə'əz types, in 1642. The book, which had previously circulated in manuscript form, was in some extent the result of (unexpected) links connecting Ethiopia, Rome and Goa. Indeed, the analysis of the *Magsef Assetat*'s edition, published nine years after the end of the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia (1633), let to point out the strategies launched by the Jesuits in Goa (acting under the Portuguese *Padroado*), in a context of increasing Roman intervention in the Indian ocean. Likewise, it highlights the particular conditions which allowed this unique volume to be printed in Goa, involving some Ethiopian men at the service of the Jesuits, and using Gə'əz printing types made in Rome and sent by the Pope to the Patriarch of Ethiopia, Afonso Mendes.

Giulia Calvi (New Europe College, Bucharest & Università di Siena): *Healing, Translating, Informing, Collecting: A Network of Scientists between Florence and the Ottoman Empire (17<sup>th</sup> Century)*

The enduring circulation of physicians mostly trained at the University of Padua between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, as well as the transfer of knowledge, drugs and technology they promoted shaped the making of a professional élite that reinforced the long-lasting connections between Italy and the Ottoman Empire. Based in the Venetian ambassador's residence in

Constantinople, Alexandria and Damascus, this polyglot European professional élite settled in the Ottoman Empire, married into families of dragomans, physicians, and the local élite, moving across ethnic, religious and linguistic borders and often building successful careers. Introduced into the inner circles of diplomacy and politics, these men sent crucial political information to Venice and other European capitals, and, via local missionaries, corresponded with Propaganda Fide in Rome. They were highly respected mediators connecting many worlds, in strategic moments of the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Christian powers.

A broader set of cultural exchanges highlights the multiple connections between Italy and the Ottomans in the second half of the seventeenth century. Back from his diplomatic appointment in Constantinople, the Venetian Bailo Giovan Battista Donà published in 1688 *Della Letteratura de Turchi*, the first pioneering History of Turkish Literature translating into Italian important texts from Arabic and Turkish with the help of the dragoman Carli. The Medici court was keen to collect Oriental manuscripts and books. In the 1670's the great French orientalist Herbelot de Molainville spent a few years in Florence examining, selecting and buying manuscripts for the medicean library.

In Constantinople, the residence of the Venetian Bailo did not only host subjects of the Republic but acted as an important meeting point for those who travelled to the Levant from other European and Italian states having no consul in the city.

This was the case for physicians and scientists travelling from the Granduchy of Tuscany. A fascinating correspondence took place between a young physician, doctor Michelangelo Tilli, the secretary of Granduke Cosimo III de' Medici in Florence Apollonio Bassetti, and doctor Francesco Redi head physician at the Medici Court and one of Europe's leading scientists. Michelangelo Tilli (1655-1750) a twenty-seven-year-old physician graduated from the university of Pisa, between 1683 and 1685 travelled to the Ottoman Empire with the official charge of treating Mustafa pasha "Mussaip", son in law of Sultan Mehmed IV, having married his daughter Hatice Sultan in 1675. It was a relevant diplomatic and political move to send a promising young physician to treat the Pasha during the crucial military campaign of the Turks in Central Europe against the Holy League while Christian armies were confronting the last Ottoman attack to Vienna and Eastern Europe. The formal request had come from Constantinople via the Venetian bailo Giovan Battista Donà who wrote to the Florentine court. In turn, Granduke Cosimo III, consulting with the court's head physician Francesco Redi, decided to appoint Michelangelo Tilli, the Granduke's personal physician, to travel to the Ottoman Empire with the charge of treating Mustafa pasha Mussaip's painful condition.

When Tilli arrived in Istanbul, the Ottomans were at war with the Hapsburg Empire and the catastrophic consequences of the siege of Vienna in September 1683 resonate in his letters and reports, to date unpublished among the abundant literature on these events. Indeed, the doctor's letters intersect political and diplomatic information with medical therapy, botanical observation and the search for antiquities and show the plurality of functions performed by early modern medical practitioners. This exceptional set of events produced an intense epistolary exchange as Tilli traveled from Constantinople to reach the Pasha's court in Belgrade, and then, once the news of the military defeat in Vienna reached the Ottomans, back across the Balkans following the Pasha and his retinue from Belgrade to Adrianople (today Edirne), Filippopolis (today Plovdiv), and Constantinople. Reports on health and medical therapies followed by the regular attempts at sending medicaments directly from Florence, overlap highly emotional descriptions of the collapse of the Ottoman armies in Vienna and around Buda in Hungary.

The story of Michelangelo Tilli is shaped by a short time scale (1683-85), a macro spatial scale and an exceptional political and military context shedding light on the enduring connections between Italian states and the Sublime Porte. Gift giving and the circulation of medicines, information and knowledge shaped Tilli's medical practice in the Ottoman Empire. His charge of curing Pasha Mussaip was also embedded in a more general court culture in which doctors, artists, and scientists circulated among members of ruling dynasties. The professional "value" of Tilli, as the Granduke stated in a letter, was granted by the proximity of the physician to his own body ("he has cured me successfully"). In turn, the Tuscan ruler expected antiquities, horses, a Circassian slave, and manuscript books. The 300

*reales* the physician and surgeon received from the Pasha for what seemed to be a satisfactory therapy were more of a gift, than a salary, and so were the medicines, travelling incessantly and hopelessly from Florence to Venice to Split or Ragusa. The coffer from the Medici foundry was a gift sent to rulers and missionaries in distant parts of the world, from Transylvania to Mexico. In this perspective, European doctors were important agents in transnational networks of information, and in the circulation of scientific practice and knowledge. They were also members of the République des Lettres (Tilli became a member of the Royal Society) embedded in court societies where drugs, naturalia and antiquities shaped exchanges between the East and the West, enhancing status and prestige.