

ARCHIVES: The Comparative History of Archives in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy

The materiality of the record



A workshop on sources/Un seminario sulle fonti

2 June 2014, Birkbeck, University of London, 2-6.30pm
Dreyfus Room, 26 Russell Square

This interdisciplinary workshop is part of a series organized by the ARCHIVES project based at Birkbeck and funded by the European Research Council, devoted to the history of documentary production and archival preservation in late medieval and early modern Italy.

The workshop will consider different genres of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century documents from the point of view of their material form, combining textual, linguistic, diplomatic and palaeographic analysis. How were texts arranged on the page? In which language and in what kind of script were they written? What was the relationship between textual and non-textual symbols? In other words, how does the shape of a document help us understand its meaning and the uses to which it was put? Historians, linguists, diplomatists and palaeographers will give short presentations accompanied by a discussion of documentary examples. Reproductions will be circulated to all participants, and a basic reading ability of Italian manuscripts is expected, but transcripts will be supplied too. The discussion will be held in both English and Italian, and a basic glossary of Italian technical terms will be circulated. The workshop is addressed primarily, but not exclusively, to MPhil and PhD students and Post-Docs working in medieval and early modern Italian history, literature, language and art history.

Places are limited; to participate, please write to italianarchives@bbk.ac.uk. **A limited amount of bursaries to cover at least some of the travel expenses is available and will be allocated on the basis of merit by 30 April. If you wish to apply, please do so as soon as possible**, describing your research and the reasons of your interest (no more than 300 words).

2 Filippo de Vivo (Birkbeck) *Introduction*

Chiara de Caprio and Francesco Senatore (University of Naples, Federico II) *Scritture mediane (registri municipali e cronache): processi di verbalizzazione, modalità di costruzione dei testi e tecniche narrative (Regno di Napoli, secc. XV-XVI)*

3.30 Coffee break

4 Isabella Lazzarini (University of Molise) *Appointing to an office: political choice, documentary practices and archival uses in late medieval Italy. The case of 15th-c. Mantua*

Marc Smith (Ecole Nationale des Chartes/Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes) *Palaeographical aspects of documentary practices*

David Rundle (University of Essex) *The victory of italic in international diplomatic correspondence: the case of England*

6.15 Conclusion



Isabella Lazzarini, *Appointing to an office: political choice, documentary practices and archival uses in late medieval Italy: the case of Mantua (15th century)*. The appointment to central and territorial offices became a crucial moment in the political life of the different Italian states during the ‘long’ *Quattrocento*, when fewer, and more powerful, territorial polities increasingly monopolised the political scene. The process adhered to different procedures and took different forms in the different regimes, which all resulted in new series of public records. On the one hand, among the broad group of the *litterae patentes* emerged the distinctive genre of the *litterae officiorum*, whose formal structure was quite standardised, and which were sent to the elected officials. On the other, the chanceries kept records of the nominations in separate registers, the *libri officiorum*, whose nature and forms were quite different at the beginning of the fifteenth century only to become increasingly similar towards the end of the century. The *libri* largely survived, while the original letters are nowadays mostly lost. The seminar will briefly analyse the many registers of letters of appointments produced and preserved in the Italian republics and principalities (from Venice and Florence to Milan, Mantua and Ferrara), and will then focus on the case of the marquisate of Mantua by investigating a collection of records selected among the three volumes of the *libri officiorum* written during the fifteenth century (1407-1519).

Chiara de Caprio-Francesco Senatore, *Scritture mediane (registri municipali e cronache) nel Regno di Napoli nei secc. XV-XVI: processi di verbalizzazione, modalità di costruzione dei testi e tecniche narrative*. L’intervento analizza alcuni esempi di verbalizzazioni tratti dai registri dei sindaci di Capua, ufficiali annuali del governo cittadino incaricati di rappresentare la comunità, di registrare le decisioni degli organi deliberativi e esecutivi, di curare la corrispondenza, di conservare gli atti amministrativi. Nel ‘400 il sindaco, generalmente un notaio, non segue un modello fisso di verbalizzazione, ma riunisce in un unico quaderno tutte le registrazioni legate al suo incarico. Ne risulta una gran varietà di soluzioni, in volgare e latino, il cui confronto consente una serie di considerazioni interessanti per la storia della documentazione, della lingua, della cultura scritta. Particolarmente interessanti sono i rinvii sintetici alle questioni in campo, i rapporti con gli ipotesti scritti e orali (lettere ricevute, colloqui), le modalità di sintesi del dibattito nei consigli, le note marginali volte a favorire la classificazione e il ritrovamento delle informazioni. La prassi di Capua nel ‘400 è molto distante da quella che si riscontra nei registri, assai più formalizzati, di altri organi collegiali coevi e dei secoli precedenti, come i registri di collegi ecclesiastici, delle magistrature pubbliche centrali del regno, degli organi delle città centro-settentrionali e della stessa Capua nel ‘500, quando la verbalizzazione era curata da un tecnico, il cancelliere, assunto dall’università per più anni. Le verbalizzazioni saranno confrontate con i repertori approntati nella seconda metà del ‘500 da un cancelliere capuano che indicizzò tutti i registri e gran parte delle delibere e degli statuti della città. È possibile seguire un’informazione dalla sua forma testuale quattrocentesca, indicizzata con un titolo al margine, al regesto composto per il suo repertorio, con interessanti aggiornamenti lessicali e interpretazioni, infine alla sua ricezione nelle storie di Capua del ‘700. Tale filiera testuale testimonia concretamente un processo di costruzione della memoria archivistica e politica della città nel corso di tre secoli. Infine, i registri capuani saranno confrontati, sia dal punto di vista codicologico sia dal punto di vista linguistico, con le cronache redatte a Napoli e in Terra di Lavoro da notai-cronisti e funzionari-cronisti negli anni del passaggio dal Regno aragonese al Vicereame spagnolo (1494-1525). S’intende così mettere a fuoco un caso poco noto della secolare relazione fra scrittura documentaria e scrittura storica e mostrare come fra i due ambiti esistesse spesso una sostanziale omogeneità delle tecniche narrative e argomentative, e dei meccanismi di costruzione e “gestione” del testo.

Marc Smith, *Palaeographical aspects of documentary practices*. Professor Marc Smith will offer a commentary on many of the documentary examples presented during the day from the point of view of palaeography.

David Rundle, *The Victory of Italic in International Diplomatic Correspondence: the case of England*. The scripts of archival documents and of manuscript books are usually studied separately, but work in various fields in recent years has shown that this is a false dichotomy. The personnel involved in textual production are often the same, and there is also a dialogue between chancery scripts and bookhands. The work of Thomas Frenz has shown how the scripts of humanism made in-roads into the papal curia in the fifteenth century. In international terms, however, it was one particular script, that we know of as italic, that became a symbol of cultural prestige in diplomatic documents at the end of the fifteenth and in the early sixteenth century. This short discussion will concentrate on the process of adoption in England from the reign of Edward IV to that of Henry VIII.