

Rethinking Early Modern Collegialities



**A conference in celebration
of the 50th anniversary
of the founding of
The Toronto Renaissance and
Reformation Colloquium
1964–2014**

**Saturday 8 November 2014
Old Victoria College Building**

A Message from the Chair

We thank you for joining us as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium!

Founded by Natalie Zemon Davis and James K. McConica in 1964, the TRRC is an independent, interdisciplinary forum that brings together scholars and students with interests in the cultures of early modernity across Europe, and even beyond. For the past fifty years it has been an integral part of Toronto's vibrant Renaissance and Reformation enterprise. The Colloquium gives a diverse local community space to talk, develop new ideas, and learn from one another and from visitors from outside southern Ontario. While, over the decades, the TRRC has sponsored and co-sponsored many workshops and conferences, the core of its activities has been an annual series of lectures on a rich array of topics and themes.

The TRRC operates on good will, a spirit of collaboration, and very modest funding through memberships. Anyone who would like to help sustain the Colloquium's activities is invited to join by visiting our website, www.itergateway.org/trrc and downloading the membership form.

Thank you again.

Elizabeth Cohen
Chair, 2014-15

Upcoming events for Winter 2015

Mon., 2 February: Mary Watt (U of Florida), "Shipwrecks, Islands, Magic and Marvel: Renaissance Responses to the New World Project."

Mon. 23 February: "Women in Early Modern Medical Science: Professional Practice and Social Boundaries." A workshop with presentations by Professors Sharon Strocchia (Emory U), Tamar Herzig (Tel Aviv U) and John Christopoulos (York U).

Thurs., 12 March: Alison Mackay (Tafelmusik), "Paris Confidential: Presenting Early Music for Private Homes in a Digital Age."

PROGRAM

9:00 **Registration and morning coffee**
Foyer, Old Victoria College Building (91 Charles St. W.)

9:30 **Opening Ceremonies**
(Alumni Hall)
Welcome – Germaine Warkentin (Past Chair, TRRC)

Plenary

Introduction – Elizabeth Cohen (Chair, TRRC)
Paula Findlen (Stanford U) “Galileo's Friends: Crisis and
Community in Seventeenth-Century Italy”

10:30 **Coffee break**

10:45 **Session 1 “Community and Politics”**
(Alumni Hall)
Chair: Vanessa McCarthy (U of Toronto)
1) Daniel Jütte (Harvard U) “Community-Building at the Door:
New Light on Luther’s Posting of the Theses”
2) Rosalind Kerr (U of Alberta) “Collegiality and the Formation
of the Commedia dell’Arte Troupes”
3) John McClelland (U of Toronto) “Calcio as Florentine
Collegiality”

Session 2 “Gendering Collaboration”

(Vic 115)
Chair: Konrad Eisenbichler (U of Toronto)
1) Ashlee Bligh (York U) “Gender, Locality, and Healthcare:
The Letters of Margaret Paston, c. 1440-1480”
2) Elena Brizio (Medici Archive Project, Florence) “Sienese
Women and *Sociabilità*. Can We Talk About Culture,
Independence, and Politics?”
3) Thomas Cohen (York U) “The Talking Mirror and its
Impromptu Coven”

12:15 **Lunch (Foyer, Victoria College)**

1:30 **Round-Table “Building Communities for Renaissance
Studies: Models and Strategies Using New Technologies.”**
(Alumni Hall)
Chair: William R. Bowen (U of Toronto Scarborough)
Panelists: Jason Boyd (Ryerson U), Laura Estill (Texas A&M
U), Dylan Reid (CRRS), Ray Siemens (U of Victoria),
Nicholas Terpstra (U of Toronto).

2:30 **Session 3 “Competition as Collaboration”**
(Alumni Hall)
Chair: Rosalind Kerr (U of Alberta)
1) Trevor Cook (York U) “Bad Romance: Shakespeare and
George Wilkins”
2) Christine Zappella (U of Chicago) “Bronzino vs. Vasari:
A Mid-Century Fight for Florentine Hegemony”

Session 4 “Networks into Texts”

(Vic 115)
Chair: Jane Couchman (York U)
1) Barry Torch (York U) “A Bull and its Herd: Pope Pius II
and the Cooperative Authorship of *Execrabilis*”
2) David B. Goldstein (York U) “Hugh Plat and the Community
of Cooks”

4:00 **Coffee break**

4:15 **Round-table “From Renaissance to Early Modern to ?:
Fifty Years Past, and Future”**
(Alumni Hall)
Chair: Elizabeth Cohen (York U)
Participants: Natalie Zemon Davis (U of Toronto), Mark
Jurdjevic (York U), Evonne Levy (U of Toronto
Mississauga), Germaine Warkentin (U of Toronto).

Organizing Committee

Elizabeth Cohen, Konrad Eisenbichler, Germaine Warkentin

Assistants

Anna Maria Grossi, Natalie Oeltjen,
Jennifer Strtak, Angela Zhang

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The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, York University
The Department of Arts, Culture and Media, University of Toronto
Scarborough
The Department of Art, University of Toronto
The Bata Shoe Museum

Abstracts

Ashlee Bligh "Gender, Locality, and Healthcare: The Letters of Margaret Paston, c. 1440-1480"

In 1464 Margaret Paston wrote to her ill husband warning him to avoid the "fysissyans of London." It's possible her warning stemmed from a belief that female healers like herself were better suited for the job than were physicians. Or perhaps it was resentment towards their efforts to discredit and prohibit female practice. Nonetheless, the picture of healthcare that emerges in Margaret's correspondence complicates this gendered rivalry. More important than gender in her assessment of a healer was their geographic proximity to the family's residences in Norfolk. Locality, not gender, was key to earning Margaret's approval as she worked to establish a network of trusted associates in Norfolk. Thus, her warning to her husband does not reflect a desire to compete with physicians but, rather, a desire to oversee and manage the healthcare of her family members by collaborating with other practitioners—both male and female—in her local community.

Elena Brizio "Sienese Women and *Sociabilità*. Can We Talk About Culture, Independence, and Politics?"

During the final years of Sienese independence (ca. 1550-1559), as well as in the decades before, Sienese women belonging to the upper social classes were actively involved in high *sociabilità* that included both cultural, religious, and personal writing experiences in many academies and *veglie* (evening gatherings), duly reported by contemporary authors. While it is almost certain that the city had a small number of inhabitants, and that many families were linked by way of marriage, god parenting, and business relations, it is also known that many groups did support different political sides on the Italian and European

scene of the time. My paper will shed light on the political aspects of these social gatherings. It is still not clear if women belonging to different *monti* -- local political factions-- and pro-Empire or pro-France sides could (or would) use *veglie* as a political arena, either following their families' or husbands' political side or offering their own personal view. Through the analysis of family social and political sides, I will offer a new insight on the *veglie* that, until today, have been analyzed mainly from a cultural perspective.

Thomas V. Cohen "The Talking Mirror and its Impromptu Coven"

A group of Roman women gather to consult a talking mirror named *l'Angelo Bianco*. It houses a vatic spirit, Giovanni Paolo, good for prognosticating the sex of unborn babies. They fetch the purest virgin among their daughters to hold the mirror and conscript a priest to say the charm. The cleric, no adept at women's charms, cannot learn the verses, so the women recite them slowly while he, the idiot, writes them down. The whole coven sets to work, conjuring their spirit when, *oimè*, in come the cops, catching the hapless priest with script in hand. For this conference, I will study not the charms, but the impromptu coalition that it took to have the verses said.

Trevor Cook "Bad Romance: Shakespeare and George Wilkins"

As many as a dozen plays traditionally attributed to Shakespeare are now thought to have been collaboratively written, although in the case of *Pericles* there is considerable reluctance to accept that the sweet Swan of Avon would have associated with the likes of his presumed co-author, the woman-kicking low-life George Wilkins. However, whereas many scholars assume collaborative authorship to imply friendship and agreement, such arrangements remind us that it was possible for dramatists to collaborate with writers of differing opinions, values, and talents. Jonson claimed to have physically "beat" the dramatist John Marston, whom he publically accused of "plagiary," and "took his pistol from him," for example, but the two also worked together on plays, wrote prefatory poems for each other's works, and were celebrated together by their peers. The example of Shakespeare and Wilkins invites us to consider new models for thinking about collaborative authorship in the English Renaissance.

Paula Findlen "Galileo's Friends: Crisis and Community in Seventeenth-Century Italy"

The plenary will examine the network of friends and colleagues the Italian scientist Galileo Galilei developed and was able to call upon in his life and, more importantly, in his "moment of need" when under pressure from the Church and the Inquisition.

David Goldstein "Hugh Plat and the Community of Cooks"

The genre of the English manuscript recipe collection is a study in networks of obligation, reciprocity, and community-building. The English printed cookbook, however, is often described as a market-driven, consumerist phenomenon. I argue that the early seventeenth-century printed recipe books of Hugh Plat –

whose influence upon the genre's development was enormous – both articulate the culinary social networks of his time, and negotiate between those networks and a capitalistic, atomized approach to food-making. In turning to Plat's recipe books, we find a writer who also sets the stage for the idea of recipe attribution as a kind of textual commensality, and in so doing produces a new sense of what it means to consume and share not just a recipe collection, but any printed book. Instead of consuming food to incarnate the community of the Holy Book, Plat's readers consume a book to incarnate the community of consumers.

Daniel Jütte “Community-Building at the Door: New Light on Luther's Posting of the Theses”

It is commonly claimed that the Protestant movement was born on 31 October 1517, the day on which Martin Luther is said to have posted his Ninety-Five Theses to the main door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg. Yet, if we take a closer look at the historical evidence, it is not entirely clear that the posting of the Theses actually happened. This talk offers no conclusive answer as to whether Luther actually nailed the Theses to the door, but it does present new circumstantial evidence. It also broadens out to investigate the significance of doors as sites for building community and circulating knowledge and information in early modern Europe.

Rosalind Kerr “Collegiality and the Formation of the Commedia dell'Arte Troupes”

This presentation will argue that the emergence of professional theatre in early modern Italy owes its existence to the contracts drawn up by the troupe members of the commedia dell'arte. The companies that were formed imitating the learned Academic societies, allowed the 10 or so professional players to join together as equal members who shared in making the artistic decisions about the company's repertoire, and in receiving compensation and social benefits for the contracted period. It will offer a summary from the documentary evidence describing the terms of the contracts; highlight the information related to the most famous companies; comment on the leadership status accorded to outstanding female performers. It will argue that the companies fostered the rise of a new class of professional actors and actresses and established theatre as a new state institution.

John McClelland “Calcio as Florentine Collegiality”

The game known as *calcio* was played in Florence from at least the middle of the fifteenth century. It initially pitted teams against each other from different neighbourhoods, but by the sixteenth century under the Medici it had become a sport that expressed a republican aura. During the 1530 siege of the city, young men organized a *calcio* match at Santa Croce in defiance of the artillery placed on the surrounding hills. Later, Michelangelo Tenagli describes in his unpublished *Ricordi* how two groups of Florentines spontaneously organized *calcio* matches in 1558 in order to demonstrate Florentine spirit to Alfonso II d'Este, Cosimo I's new son-in-law. And in his 1580 *Discorso* on *calcio*, Giovanni Bardi

said that the game exhibited the solidarity of young Florentines in support of the Grand Duke. Although the rivalry between the teams was intense, animosities dissolved into patriotism. Finally, in the early seventeenth century the Venetian publicist, Traiano Boccalini, repeats the notion that *calcio* brings Florentines together—rather than separating them into factions—and encapsulates the ethos of the city-state.

Barry Torch “A Bull and its Herd: Pope Pius II and the Cooperative Authorship of *Execrabilis*”

During his pontificate of 1458-1464, Pius II operated both as pope and humanist, justifying his papacy and his imperial actions by alluding to the ancient Roman emperors in his literature. His autobiography, the *Commentaries*, is filled with both his religious work as well as his allusions to ancient literature. However, he did not work alone; the papal curia during the Renaissance was the most centralized government structure, and the papal court employed dozens of humanists working closely with the Pope. My presentation looks at the circulation of knowledge within the court of Pius II, focusing on the construction of his papal bull *Execrabilis* promoting papal supremacy in the church. Arguing for a more collective idea of Renaissance court culture than previously understood, I aim to show how the writing of *Execrabilis* displays a larger circulation of knowledge and action among Pius and the humanists at the papal court.

Christine Zappella “Bronzino vs. Vasari: A Mid-Century Fight for Florentine Hegemony”

Despite Giorgio Vasari's panegyric *vita* of Agnolo Bronzino, the two were hardly intimates. But because the court structure of Cosimo I de' Medici necessitated mutual toleration, and perhaps even set up a system of interdependence, their personal distaste for each other was never vented in public; instead, it must be adduced from the veiled jabs and criticisms in each man's writings. In this paper I intend to show how competition—not only for artistic hegemony of Florence but also for the attention of Michelangelo in Rome and for Florentine literary distinction—characterized the relationship between Bronzino and Vasari. I furthermore will argue that this feud culminated at a pregnant moment in the city's history: 1564, the year of Michelangelo's death and state funeral. However, rather than reaching its explosive pinnacle in a direct confrontation between the two artists, this rivalry was instead duked out in public by members of their workshops, all of whom had been putatively united under one flag with the recent birth of the Accademia del Disegno.