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Atlantic Italties

**Economic Entanglements between
the Americas, Africa and the Mediterranean
(15th-19th Centuries)**

Final Meeting of the Atlantic Italties Network

1-3 September 2022
Universität Zürich

Venue

Universität Zürich
Rämistrasse 71
8006 Zürich

1-2 September: room KOL-E-18
3 September: room KO2-F-152

Convenors

Silvia Marzagalli (Université Côte d'Azur, Nice)
Roberto Zaugg (Universität Zürich)

Organisation & Contact

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Atlantic Italies
Economic and Cultural Entanglements



Final meeting of the Atlantic Italies Network

Early modern Italian states did not possess colonies in the Atlantic world. Due to this absence, the grand-narrative of national history has often reduced the Italian involvement in this macro-region either to the 'heroic' deeds of navigators such as Columbus or Vespucci, or to the well-studied mass migrations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Recent scholarship, however, is unearthing an impressive variety of hitherto little known entanglements linking social actors, states and markets of Italian-speaking territories to the Americas and Sub-Saharan Africa. Challenging the established view of Italian history, the Atlantic Italies Network joins these attempts to re-read the history of the peninsula in its global dimensions. By exploring trans-imperial approaches to the Atlantic world, it aims to connect two fields of scholarship that have largely evolved alongside separate lines: Atlantic history and Mediterranean history. In order to do so, it focusses on economic dynamics and related cultural phenomena, examining the circulation of goods and knowledge as well as specific brokers involved in Italian-Atlantic connections.

Thursday 1 September

- 13:00 Reception
- 13.20 Roberto Zaugg (Universität Zürich) – Silvia Marzagalli (Université Côte d'Azur, Nice)
Introduction

Session 1

Chair: Riccardo E. Rossi (Universität Zürich)

- 13:40 Andrea Guerrero Mosquera (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México)
"Spies" and missionaries: the first Capuchins in Central Africa
- 14:10 Thiago Sapede (Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador)
The political and economic role of Italian Capuchins in the global stakes of power involving Kongo and Portugal (18th-19th centuries)
- 14:40 Discussion
- 15:30 Coffee break

Session 2

Chair: Carlo Taviani (Universität Zürich)

- 16:00 Giulia Bonazza (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia / Columbia University New York)
Slavery and the Black presence in Italian cities from the Atlantic colonies in the second half of the 18th century
- 16:30 Alessandro Tuccillo (Università di Torino)
Suspicious ships: the Kingdom of Sardinia and the campaign for the suppression of the Atlantic slave trade
- 17:00 Discussion
- 17:50 End of day one

Friday 2 September

Session 3

Chair: Eva Brugger (Universität Zürich)

- 10:20 Francesco Guidi Bruscoli (Università di Firenze)
Breaking boundaries: Florentine merchants and the Atlantic (15th-16th Centuries)
- 10:50 Pierre Niccolò Sofia (Université Côte d'Azur, Nice)
Venice and its connection with the Atlantic trade in the 18th century: a matter of glass beads and sugar
- 11:20 Discussion
- 12:10 Lunch

Session 4

Chair: Ingrid Greenfield (I Tatti, Harvard University Centre for Italian Renaissance Studies)

- 14:00 Fabiano Bracht (Universidade do Porto)
Follow the money: the emergence of a knowledge economy from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean (15th to 16th centuries)
- 14:30 Gisele Cristina da Conceição (Universitdad do Porto)
Domenico Vandelli between knowledge and power: production and circulation of natural philosophical knowledge in the 18th century
- 15:00 Discussion
- 15:50 Coffee break

Session 5

Chair: Ingrid Greenfield (I Tatti, Harvard University Centre for Italian Renaissance Studies)

- 16:20 Samir Boumediene (Université de Lyon)
American Gifts: the economies of New World naturalia in early modern Italy
- 16:50 Riccardo E. Rossi (Universität Zürich)
(Inter-)connected 'hinterlands'? Trade, retail and consumption of Atlantic goods in the Alpine valleys of the Three Leagues, 1630s to 1790s
- 17:20 Discussion
- 18:10 End of day two

Saturday 3 September

Session 6

Chair: Silvia Marzagalli (Université Côte d'Azur, Nice)

- 09:00 Nicholas Baker (Macquarie University, Sidney)
Dipping a toe in the Atlantic: The Botti of Florence
- 09:30 Maarten Draper (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
Italian merchants in Amsterdam and their role in Dutch colonial trade, 1650-1700
- 10:00 Discussion
- 10:50 Coffee break

Session 7

Chair: Giulio Talini (Scuola Superiore Meridionale, Napoli)

- 11:20 Carlo Taviani (Universität Zürich)
Crossing the Sahara or the ocean? The Genoese Marihoni and Cattaneo families and their business, ca. 1450-1530
- 11:50 Steven Teasdale (University of Toronto)
The Lomellini family in the Canary Islands: Genoese economic and cultural networks in the early sixteenth century Atlantic
- 12:20 Discussion
- 13:10 Lunch

Session 8

Chair: Giulio Talini (Scuola Superiore Meridionale, Napoli)

- 15:00 Antonio Iodice (Università di Genova / University of Exeter)
Atlantic goods, Mediterranean waters: Genoa's entrepôt through maritime averages procedures, 1590-1700
- 15:30 Catia Brilli (Università degli Studi dell'Insubria, Varese)
The scope and the limits of the Genoese persistence in the Atlantic economy (18th century)
- 16:00 Discussion
- 16:50 End of conference

Abstracts

Guerrero-Mosquera Andrea - Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CIALC), National Autonomous University of Mexico

"Spies" and missionaries: the first Capuchins in Central Africa

In 1646, the Jesuit Irmão João sent a letter denouncing the potential danger of the Capuchins in Angola. According to him, the Capuchin friars were spies. The above, because Angola was considered an important territory that should be cared for by the Portuguese, since it was a substantial source of enslaved labor, for that reason the father wrote: "without Angola there is no Brazil".

Sapede Thiago – Universidade Federal da Bahia

The political and economic role of Italian Capuchins in the global stakes of power involving Kongo and Portugal (18th-19th centuries)

This presentation intends to analyse the political and economic role of Italian Capuchins in the Kingdom of Kongo and their complex role in the Atlantic stakes of power involving Kongo and Portugal in the late 18th and 19th century.

First, we will look at this issue from the Kongo perspective, analysing how its Catholic aristocracy mobilized the Propaganda Fide and more specifically the Italian Capuchins to face Portuguese expansionist intentions. We will see how Italian Capuchins allowed Kongo elites to establish a direct connection to Rome and to have a catholic clergy in their country who were not (necessarily) aligned to Portuguese commercial and religious expansionist projects.

In a second moment, we will show how the Portuguese, in turn, sought to instrumentalize the Italian Capuchins for their own purposes, controlling and manipulating those priests through its Diocese in Luanda to act in favour of their economic interests in Kongo.

Finally, we will try to understand the same phenomenon through the prism of the Propaganda Fide, revealing its autonomation plans to establish their own project of an independent durable mission in Kongo and its challenges and its implications.

Bonazza Giulia – Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellow (Università Ca'Foscari Venezia, Columbia University New York)

Slavery and the Black presence in Italian cities from the Atlantic colonies in the second half of the 18th century

The paper focuses on the presence of African slaves in the cities of Venice, Genoa and Borgo San Donnino (Parma) who come from the Atlantic colonial world in the second half of the 18th century. This presence shows the importance of the circulation of slaves also in the Italian peninsula, despite the absence of a colonial formal empire in the Early Modern Period, thanks to intermediaries such as catholic missionaries and merchants. Often Italian enslavers or intermediaries are rooted locally (they are of the same city or of the same family) even while working globally. At the same time this presence reveals the strong connection between coercion, conversion to the catholic religion, and the enslaved social and labour treatment, that improves only after the conversion. From the point of view of taxonomy and practices, I propose a reflection on the consideration of black slaves in the Italian space and some new attitudes towards them at the end of the 18th century.

Tuccillo Alessandro - Università degli studi di Torino

Suspicious Ships. The Kingdom of Sardinia and the Campaign for the Suppression of the Atlantic Slave Trade

This paper aims to outline the history of the Kingdom of Sardinia's involvement in the international campaign for the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in the 19th century. In recent years, historiography has shown that the history of slavery and abolitionism cannot be limited to imperial and colonial political contexts. The case of the Kingdom of Sardinia is, in this sense, of particular interest. It is a non-colonial state on which the United Kingdom and France exerted diplomatic pressure to force accession to the Anglo-French treaties of 1831 and 1833 for the repression of the Atlantic slave trade.

This involvement of the Kingdom of Sardinia is intelligible in the context of the unequal relations between empires and states on the margins of the international geopolitical scenario. However, the political and diplomatic dimension does not exhaust this issue. There were episodes of actual participation of subjects of the Kingdom of Sardinia in the illegal slave trade from Africa to America (in particular, Brazil). Some ships flying Sardinian flags were suspected of hiding slaves in the hold and arrested by British and French cruisers. There were also trials, which were followed with interest by British diplomacy. This history unfolds from the 1830s to Italian national unification in the 1860s and sheds new light on the dynamics of abolitionism in the 19th century and the Atlantic implications of the Italian states.

Guidi-Bruscoli Francesco – University of Florence

Breaking boundaries. Florentine merchants and the Atlantic (15th-16th centuries)

Traditionally we tend to represent the European ‘expansion’ as the sum of great ‘national’ enterprises. Newer or older national states – albeit also attempting to undermine their rivals’ monopolies – chose a destination of preference, where they were trying to hold control. The Italian peninsula (and the territorial entities that formed it) were seemingly left out of this game. However Italian merchants – and in particular Genoese and Florentines – did participate, with financial, technical and human capital. Therefore, despite it would be misleading to talk of a Genoese or a Florentine ‘expansion’ (let alone an Italian ‘expansion’), there is no doubt that these businessmen played a relevant role.

This paper will mainly focus on Florentine merchant-bankers. In the increasingly globalised world of the early modern period, it would be wrong to define Florence as a global city or to talk of global Tuscany. However, there is no doubt that there were many ‘global Florentines’ who crossed boundaries, moving from one ‘empire’ to the other and shifting capitals that they were able to raise from different sources, also involving investors not belonging to the mercantile world.

Sofia Pierre Niccolò - Université Côte d’Azur

Venice and its connection with the Atlantic trade in the 18th century: a matter of glass beads and sugar

In the 18th century, Venice was a major Mediterranean city, a manufacturing hub, and an active port. Despite the central role of the Mediterranean in its economy, the horizons of the economic activity of Venice were not limited by the Pillars of Hercule. In fact, through its shipping and its maritime trade, Venice remained interconnected with the main international trade flows. In this context, the Atlantic played the role of a prominent trade partner.

Through the study of primary sources (both quantitative and qualitative), and scientific literature, this paper examines the relationship between the city of Saint Marc and the Atlantic space in the Early Modern period through the lens of the Venetian trade with the Atlantic in the 18th century. This study aims to show that, during this period, Venice had a deep and profitable commercial connection with Atlantic economies, based on the exchange between manufactured products – like glass beads – and colonial goods – especially sugar. Through this connection, Venice was able to keep its role of regional hub (in the Northern Italy and in the Adriatic) for the redistribution of Atlantic goods and to find new markets and opportunities for its industries.

Through the case of Venetian trade with the Atlantic, this analysis aims to offer a useful contribution to the scientific debate on the active role of the Italian peninsula in the making

of an Atlantic space, and on the relationship between the Inner Sea and the Atlantic Ocean at the end the Early Modern period.

Bracht Fabiano – University of Porto

Follow the money: the emergence of a knowledge economy from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean (15th to 16th centuries)

From the late 15th century onwards, the Iberian nations conquered vast territories from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They consolidated their dominance through trade, naval power, missionary activity, and bureaucracy. By expanding their commercial networks, both experienced considerable economic growth through trade and the production of diverse tradable commodities. From Guinea gold to Asian spices, from Peruvian silver to brazilwood, to say nothing about sugar production and the slave trade, the Iberian empires benefited from diverse economic cycles without ultimately depending on them. However, there was one commodity on which these two complex imperial systems depended entirely. More than gold, silver, spices or enslaved people, knowledge was their main driving force. Cities such as Lisbon, Seville, Barcelona or Madrid buzzed with the activities of diverse communities of foreign merchants, for whom it was vital to participate in the networks of circulation of knowledge. In this context, a fundamental role was played by the Italian communities and their networks, connecting the Iberian Peninsula to the Mediterranean markets. Besides merchants and bankers, these communities were composed of individuals who specialised in the most varied trades. From cartographers to apothecaries and from cosmographers to pilots, these were crucial agents for innovation in different fields of knowledge, from natural philosophy to cartography. This paper is a part of ongoing research that aims to explore this process, characterising these communities and the relationship between and the emergence of a knowledge economy connecting the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.

da Conceição Gisele Cristina - University of Porto

Domenico Vandelli between knowledge and power: production and circulation of natural philosophical knowledge in the 18th century

Which was the nature of scientific research on the natural world in the second half of the 18th century in the Portuguese Atlantic Empire? Is it possible to observe connections between Italy, Portugal and the Portuguese overseas colonies? Did the overseas colonies play a relevant role in the production and circulation of knowledge in this period? Part of the answers to these questions can be answered by analysing the work of Domenico Vandelli (1735-1816), an Italian physician and natural philosopher who was selected by the Portuguese state to become a Professor of Natural History at the University of Coimbra in 1764. Vandelli was the leading designer of a series of voyages throughout the Portuguese overseas possessions. Those scientific expeditions linked the scientific character to

economic and political intentions, such as analysing natural resources that could be exploited for commercial purposes. Vandelli's instructions were clear: catalogue and classify from the tiniest moss to the brightest and most precious metal. For Vandelli, the research he coordinated had a scientific, economic, political and patriotic character, and scientific knowledge could mean economic and political power. In this sense, agricultural exploitation was central to the Portuguese state. The Philosophical Voyages to the colonies were planned along these lines and linked with the Enlightenment thought. The Brazilian, African and Indian territories were studied. Much of the knowledge produced on these frameworks fostered the production of scientific knowledge but mainly fostered the economy and agricultural exploitation within the colonial spaces. It is on these aspects that the present paper will focus, seeking to understand how the production and circulation of knowledge about Portuguese colonial nature linked to scientific practices that were developed in Italian institutions.

Boumediene Samir - Université de Lyon

American Gifts. The economies of New World Naturalia in Early modern Italy

As can be seen not only in the printed production in Italy in the modern period, but also in several collections then constituted in Rome, Florence, Bologna or Venice, the Italian peninsula was an important place for the reception and diffusion of American artefacts and naturalia between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Among the logics that explain this convergence towards Italy, gift-giving has a decisive importance in terms of politics, knowledge and economy. In this study, I propose to explore, through several examples involving missionaries in particular, the reasons why so many gifts from America were offered to Italian patricians, aristocrats, dignitaries and prelates in the modern period. Such gifts could be offered in the context of simple friendly relations, they could support political projects related to the evangelisation and colonisation of America, they could also serve as patronage strategies and, in some cases, prepare the commodification of new products. However, these different logics were often combined with each other, which makes it possible to understand, from a qualitative point of view, the complexity of the forms taken by the “Ancien Régime” economies.

Rossi Riccardo - Universität Zürich

(Inter-)connected 'hinterlands'? Trade, retail and consumption of Atlantic goods in the Alpine valleys of the Three Leagues, 1630s-1790s

In February 1769, Giovanni Gaudenzio Redolfi wrote to his father in the Alpine village of Coltura about his struggles as a cadet in Maastricht. Besides asking for money, he particularly inquired about the recipe for the sealing wax that his brother used to make back in the mountains. In his reply, Gaudenzio's brother Agostino gave a detailed account of the ingredients, their quantities and for how much he bought them in Venice. He must have

assumed that Gaudenzio, just as himself, could easily get his hands on the likes of gum arabic, turpentine, benzoin, storax or colophony. Half a year later, Agostino wrote to his brother again about his extensive travels through northern Italy – the lion he saw in Milan, the great library in Padova, and the odd experience of buying musk in Venice – before he ended with telling about having planted once more tobacco in his garden. Overall, Gaudenzio's brother appears to have been well acquainted with goods from around the globe of which he sought to know more about by asking Gaudenzio to buy him some more maps for completing his atlas.

Mobility, perceptions of geographical space and objects as well as materials of intercontinental trajectories made all part of the daily lives of actors from the Alpine valleys of the Three Leagues as the example of the Redolfi brothers shows: they oscillated between the Mediterranean, Central Europe and the Atlantic coast and, thereby, played a vital role in transporting information and goods across as well as into the Alps. Economic practices and social life in the mountains were, in turn, closely connected to questions of accessing intercontinental flows of funds, goods and knowledge.

In this paper, I explore the impact of global entanglements on the economic and social lives of Alpine actors by looking at practices of retail and consumption. By asking about the role of gender roles, status and work migration, I examine how social and geographical distances played into an actors contact with global goods and how this affected the society. Moreover, I look at the transalpine transportation of goods and local merchants in order to understand more about the interconnections between the Three Leagues and other 'hinterlands' of the Atlantic. In this way, I aim to deepen our understanding of how 'periphery' was produced and how the Alps were positioned within systems of intercontinental exchange.

Baker Nicholas - Macquarie University

Dipping a Toe in the Atlantic: The Botti of Florence

What did the potential of the Atlantic world look like from land-locked Florence in the early sixteenth century? Recent historiography has highlighted the extent to which the Medici family participated, largely at a distance, in the looting of wealth and collecting of American flora, fauna, and objects. A few other well-connected individuals established themselves within the framework of the Iberian empires. But what about from a more typical perspective? This paper presents work in progress on a microhistorical study of the Botti family in sixteenth-century Florence and Andalucía. The Botti clearly recognized the economic potential of Andalucía following the developing Iberian conquests: Iacopo Botti moved to Cádiz in 1519 and remained there for the rest of his life. The family, however, remained oriented to the Old World rather than the New, using the wealth from trans-Atlantic (and intra-European) commerce to establish themselves in the society and cultural circles of mid-century Florence, pursuing status at the Medici court and building an impressive art collection and library. In the short term the family succeeded, but in the

longer term their commercial, social, and cultural aspirations failed. In this paper, I focus particularly on the earliest records of the Botti's foray into Andalucía and their ambivalence and anticipation toward the Atlantic in the 1520s.

Draper Maarten – University of Groningen

'Italian merchants in Amsterdam and their role in Dutch colonial trade, 1650-1700'

After Antwerp lost its primacy due to the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648), Amsterdam became the center of European trade for a period of time. Amsterdam's population boomed due to expanding trade, shipping, and industry. Amsterdam was a gateway to the vast Dutch trading system and offered opportunities to a wide range of immigrants from across Europe. A small, diverse group of merchants from Italy, or of Italian descent, was also attracted to Amsterdam. The group consisted of Genoese, Florentines, Lucchese, and others, who came to Amsterdam directly from Italy, or via other northern trade centers.

The opening-up of new and more efficient trade routes in the seventeenth century therefore also offered possibilities for Italian merchants. Principally, Italian merchants in Amsterdam connected the Dutch market to the Italian market. The Dutch trade network also connected them to the Americas and East Asia. These trades however were restricted by a state monopoly and unlike in the Iberian monarchies there was no or very limited opportunity to participate in these trades. Italian participation in Dutch colonial trade was therefore largely limited to the re-export of colonial products from Amsterdam. In this paper I will argue that Italian merchants were largely excluded from Dutch colonial trade except for the Calvinist Italians and merchants that had due to their diplomatic status, political connections, and commercial networks, they were so valuable to the WIC that they were able to play important roles in the Dutch colonial system. I will first briefly discuss the Italian merchants community of Amsterdam and then move on to highlight how and why the Tuscan merchant Francesco Feroni and the Florentine-born, Sephardi merchant Jeronimo Nunes da Costa could become important players in this trade. Finally, I will also briefly discuss the role Calvinist Lucchese merchants in the VOC.

Taviani Carlo - Universität Zürich

Crossing the Sahara or the Ocean? The Genoese Marihoni and Cattaneo Families and Their Business, ca. 1450-1530

During the middle of the fifteenth century several Genoese families were trading with North Africa, bringing luxury goods, such as gold, precious horses, ostrich feathers, civet cats, corami, perfumes, and corals to the Italian Peninsula, in Genoa, and from there to several Italian centers, such as the Gonzaga court of Mantua. The Genoese Marihoni—whose activities have not yet been studied—were rooted in the kingdom of Tlemcen and had ties with Jewish traders in Sijilmassa (Morocco) where the caravans crossing the Sahara arrived.

They financed the voyage of Antonio Malfante (1410 – 1450) who went southwards in the Sahara and collected information on Timbuktu. This paper focuses on the Marihoni's activities and their business partners, the Cattaneo, who at the beginning of the sixteenth century moved from the Maghreb to the Atlantic, being based between Seville and Cape Verde (Fogo island). The Cattaneo not only traded in luxury goods; they were also involved in the slave trade between West Africa and Santo Domingo as early as 1513. Through the history of the Marihoni and the Cattaneo this paper seeks to focus on interconnected processes of exchanges between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

Teasdale Steven – University of Toronto

The Lomellini family in the Canary Islands: Genoese economic and cultural networks in the early sixteenth century Atlantic

The Genoese Lomellini family was a major commercial and financial presence across the Mediterranean basin during the fifteenth century. My paper will examine the presence of this family in the early sixteenth century Atlantic islands—in particular the Canary Islands—and their importance in the implementation of colonial structures in this region. I will consider the role the Lomellini family played in the development and finance of the sugar industry, the establishment of religious institutions, the commerce in enslaved men and women, and the political administration of the region. This analysis will demonstrate how the Lomellini and other Genoese merchants applied the earlier colonial practices of the Black Sea region into the emerging Atlantic world and defined the character of early sixteenth century colonization.

Iodice Antonio – University of Genoa, University of Exeter

Atlantic goods, Mediterranean waters: Genoa's entrepôt through maritime averages procedures, 1590-1700

My paper is based on the analysis of the arrival of goods from overseas in the Mediterranean Sea during the early modern period. I choose a specific point of observation and type of source: respectively, the port of Genoa and the General Average (GA) procedures. The Genoese republic's alliance with Spain was almost always accompanied by neutrality policies that allowed the Genoese port to act as a hub for the redistribution of goods from the Mediterranean and European worlds. This function grew during the seventeenth century, making Genoa in the eighteenth century an entrepôt connected to the main international maritime routes. The entrepôt model, according to some scholars, was one of the factors that enabled the integration of Italian ports with the Atlantic market.

GA procedures in Genoa were extremely common: in some periods as many as 60% of the large vessels arriving declared a maritime Average. By examining and processing more than one thousand procedures that I digitised and uploaded into the AveTransRisk online database, I will investigate the evolution in the arrivals of specific products from across the

Atlantic (tobacco, sugar, salted fish, leather, Brazil wood, dyes, etc.). These procedures will also shed light on the network of Mediterranean ports connected to Genoa (Marseille, Livorno, Civitavecchia, Messina, Venice, etc.), the redistribution flows of these products, the ships and merchants involved, and so on. The chronological time span chosen is that between 1590 and 1700.

Brilli Catia – Università degli Studi dell'Insubria

The Scope and the Limits of The Genoese Persistence In The Atlantic Economy (18th Century)

The paper illuminates the strategies used by some affluent Genoese investors in both the republic and the expatriate communities in the Hispanic Monarchy to keep a share of the resources generated by the Atlantic economy in a period in which the business of transoceanic shipping became more and more competitive. Particular attention will be devoted to the financial instruments used to allocate capital in the Spanish trade with the Indies, the way in which profits were reinvested in different European financial and commercial hubs, and the barriers that limited the Genoese penetration into the Atlantic economy before the Napoleonic wars drastically reconfigured their participation in long-distance trade.