

Conference venues

Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut Rome
Via Omero, 10/12
I-00197 Roma
www.knir.it

Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom
Istituto Storico Germanico di Roma
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This workshop aims to bring together scholars working on two related, but different sets of issues: first, those whose research can offer new perspective and information on the origins and the transformation of European corporations (joint stock companies); and second, those whose work seeks to revise the very concept of the corporation itself – especially in dialogue with the assumptions of previous prevailing historical schools of thought, most notably late 19th century German legal historians.

In particular, many scholars, including German legal historians of late 19th century, found in the models of the English and Dutch East India Companies (EIC and VOC) prime examples of the origins of the modern corporation, but their findings and interpretations have proven both anachronistic and excessively formalized – approaches which have been challenged by recent work on the European East India Companies, which will be featured in this workshop. Yet, while their conclusions can be interrogated, the questions raised by the German scholars of the late 19th century remain as valid today as they were a century and some ago: how did corporate institutions evolve as they traveled from place to place, and over time? Did new institutions of the Early Modern Age – such as the English and Dutch East India Companies – co-opt elements of medieval and Renaissance institutions, or innovate upon them? Moreover, by thinking about the way corporations have been treated by previous generations of scholars, we can investigate more thoroughly the degree to which newer trends and techniques in history and the social sciences – such as the New Institutional History – have changed or solidified our perception of the origin of medieval and early modern corporate power.

Each conference section contains new researches on the influences and papers that revise the concept of corporation.



The Genealogy of Corporations

Revising Concepts and Tracing Origins of Financial Institutions (12th–18th centuries)



Fig. left: Coin of the Casa di San Giorgio, 1666 (Enrico Janin, *La Sterlina come la Lira di Genova*, from "A Compagna", anno XXV, n. 2, Marzo/Aprile 1993, Art. n. 1); right: Coin of the Dutch East India Company (Wikimedia Commons)

International Workshop
Rome, 15–16 June 2016

Wednesday, 15 June, 16.30–19.00
Knir (Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut Rome)

- 16.30 Arthur Weststeijn | Roma, Martin Baumeister | Roma
Welcome
- 16.40 Carlo Taviani | Roma
Introduction

Introductory Section – Early Historiography

- 17.00 Albrecht Cordes | Frankfurt
The German Discussion about Past and Present
of Company Law before 1900

I - Early Institutions

- 17.30 Marco di Branco | Roma, Davide Gambino | Genoa
Revising the "Medieval Mahona"
- 18.00 Daniele Tinterri | Paris
From Traders' Networks to Institutions: Genoese and
Venetian Cases
- Discussant: Avram Udovitch | Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.
- 19.20 Dinner at Knir (only for participants)

Thursday, 16 June, 9.30–17.00
Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom

- 9.30 Carlo Taviani | Roma
The Casa di San Giorgio of Genoa, Machiavelli and
the Origins of Corporations
- 10.00 Stefan Knost | Halle-Wittenberg
The Neighborhood Endowment (*Waqf al-mahalla*)
as Financial Institution: the Case of Ottoman Aleppo
- 10.30 Discussion
- 11.00 Coffee Break

II - The Dutch and English East India Companies

- 11.30 Joost Jonker, Oscar Gelderblom | Utrecht
Permanent Capital and Risk Management.
The VOC Insurance Contract of 1613
- 12.00 Philip Stern | Durham, North Carolina, U.S.
The East India Company and the Making of Modern
Empire: Ideas and Institutions
- 12.30 Discussion
- 13.15 Lunch
- 14.15 Andrew Van Horn Ruoss | Durham, North Carolina, U.S.
A Discordant Relationship: The English and Dutch
East India Companies 1600–1650
- 15.15 Arthur Weststeijn | Roma
Antiquarianism and Colonial Trading Companies
- 15.45 Discussion
- 16.15 Conclusion