

S053 (09:00 - 10:30, Room: T3-17: Mandeville Building)

Migrant Merchant Cultures and the Transition to Modernity: Financial and Memorial Practices of Trade Communities From the 18th to the Early 19th Century

Organizer / Chair: Maria A. Stassinopoulou

Ressel, Magnus: *Charitable Foundations Of Lutheran Merchants In 18th Century Venice*

The “German Nation” (Nazione Alemanna) in 18th century Venice was a privileged association of merchants and their families that dominated most of the trade routes between northeastern Italy and Upper Germany. Being intensely linked to the imperial cities and towns of southwestern Germany and secretly upholding an officially prohibited Lutheran church community were the main features of this peculiar group that in many aspects resembles a closed cartel. It is interesting to note that many of these rather rich merchants did chose at the end of their lives to bequeath substantial fortunes to charitable foundations of their hometowns, several of which still exist nowadays. In the paper some spectacular cases shall be highlighted and a plausible hypothesis will be formulated as to why giving substantial donations to the “home-towns” was of special importance to Lutherans, who had lived for most of their lives on catholic soil.

Ransmayr, Anna: *“Speculation And Usury”: Financial Crisis And Profiteering*

The high expenses for the Napoleonic Wars caused a debt crisis in the Austrian state that resulted in the state bankruptcy of 1811 and a similar event in 1816. On the market of Vienna we can observe an explosion of the number of wholesalers until the year 1816, when the foundation of the Austrian national bank finally led to a consolidation of the situation. In the years before 1816 speculation with money as well as with real estate reached an extremely high level. While the majority of the population suffered deeply from the crisis, some merchants managed to increase their wealth and promote advancement in society based on the profits of these few years. The paper aims to examine how the financial crisis affected the businesses, commercial behaviour and public perception of Viennese wholesalers that belonged to a high degree to religious minorities (Protestant, Jewish, Greek-Orthodox) with a special focus on Vienna’s Greek-Orthodox merchants.

Saracino, Stefano / Soursos, Nathalie: *Private Vs. Public Crises And The Foundations And Endowments Of The Greek-Orthodox In Vienna (18th/19th Century)*

It is a stereotype that due to the transition to modern society, religious motivations lying behind beneficiary practices were eclipsed by socioeconomic or political ones. The paper proposes an analysis of the question, if an eclipse of religious motivations and a disentanglement of the economical-political sphere from the religious are notable also in the field of foundation- and endowment-practices. It aims for this to explore micro-historically and typologically single foundations and endowments, which are contained in the archives of the communities of St. George and of the Holy Trinity in Vienna. The focus lies on the impact of the experience of crisis on beneficiary behavior as well as on the differences or similarities existing between the beneficiary practices of the Greek-Orthodox and those of other confessional/religious groups in Vienna. The research questions addressed are: What were the effects of public economical or political crises on the beneficiary practices? What was the impact of various experiences of private crises by individuals or families? How was the relationship between economical strategies and religious-confessional duties?