



**WPM2 – Heuristics in an interdisciplinary perspective**

***MATERIAL RESOURCES FOR EARLY MODERN COURT HISTORY  
ART, TEXT AND SPACE***

**Notarial Archives and Inventories**

Reference number: **3308**

**0 Basic data**

Convenors: Prof. Dr. Krista De Jonge (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) and Dr. Sabina de Cavi (former Flemish Academic Centre for Science and the Arts Fellow – Independent Scholar, Rome)

Supported by: ESF-RNP PALATIUM, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, the Flemish Academic Centre for Science and the Arts, Brussels (VLAC)

Venue: Palace of the Academies, Hertogstraat / rue Ducale 1, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Date: Monday 11 October, 2010, 2-7 p.m.

**1. Abstract of the meeting (excerpted from the application)**

This working seminar aims to review a number of *textual resources valuable for European court history*, and discuss how they contribute to the history of the courts of the Ancient Régime. The Fall 2010 meeting will discuss *notarial* documents of all kinds, such as deeds, contracts, testaments and inventories as they relate to court life and courtly arts. The seminar is *methodological* in nature.

**2. Scientific results**

**2.1. General context and set-up (see original call)**

Over the past two decades exchanges between the scholars of court history, material culture and courtly spaces have generated a rich literature that has reached a wider public through a number of successful exhibitions on the early modern European courts. It is generally understood that hierarchy (or structure) and functioning of the court system can be studied and verified on *textual, visual and architectural material evidence*. Conversely, courts were generally represented in various branches of the arts, as well as embodied in material architecture and public spaces.

Past meetings held in Brussels during the Spring of 2010 under the sponsorship of the Flemish Academic Centre for Science and the Arts (VLAC) and the Erasmus Program at the Katholieke Universiteit of Leuven have laid the first groundwork for a new interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach of the source material. Note: they were co-directed by Prof. Luc Duerloo (Antwerp University, Society for Court Studies) and Prof. René Vermeir (Ghent University). *The Brussels ESF-sponsored science meeting on Notarial Archives and Inventories concluded a first phase of enquiry. It fits in*

*with the activities of WPM2 Heuristics in an Interdisciplinary Perspective*, the second Working Party on Method of the PALATIUM Programme (see <http://www.courtresidences.eu/index.php/presentation/topics-and-working-parties/>).

Together these working seminars aimed to search, class, and review a number of *textual resources valuable for European court history*, and discussed how they contribute to the history of the courts of the Ancient Régime (intended in the broadest sense), with a special attention for dating, and reconstructing lost architecture or artistic cycles. While some types of sources discussed in this seminar are not new, we believe that research on them has not been exhaustive (i.e. inventories, testaments, notarial deeds, letters, diaries, ceremonial books, accounts). Other sources, such as passports, descriptions of royal visits, and military documents are, instead, new and/or their *resourcefulness* for art historical studies has not yet been recognized and exploited by scholars.

The seminars were *methodological* in nature and aimed to meet the challenges posed by each type of source, offering a number of significant typological case studies which will be published as a *text book* and instrument for archival research. The seminars specifically aimed to assess the way visual historians (art, architectural historians and archaeologists) misuse or not textual sources, and the way images, stones, and plans can be misleading for historians unprepared to read visual and material evidence.

Rather than establishing one single tight theoretical model (or framework) within which participants should all perform and conform, the convenors have encouraged open debate on the practical matters and casualties of interpreting material evidence for reconstructing history. We have done so by examining typologies of sources as “resources”, and discuss what the problems are, essentially linked with each typology and for the single (or multiple) sampling we select to discuss.

## **2.2. Presentation of the Brussels science meeting**

The format of the Brussels science meeting, as before, was that of a workshop or seminar with limited number of participants (15-20 persons), to make intensive discussion possible. Except for the keynote, speakers were asked to focus strictly on the heuristics and methodology.

The meeting took place in the Stevin room, one of the rooms in the Palace of the Academies which – very appropriately to a PALATIUM meeting – still has its original parquet floor, wall hangings and doors. The palace was built from 1823 for the so-called “Victor” of the Battle of Waterloo, the Prince of Orange, in the period of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, by architect Charles Vanderstraeten. This room was kindly made available to us by the Flemish Academic Centre for Science and the Arts (whose director, Prof. Dr. Marc De Mey, also supported the preparatory meetings).

PALATIUM having officially started just before the summer break (after the first Steering Committee meeting in Strasbourg, 3-4 June 2010), there was not very much time available for the call (published after the proper applications were made, on the same day approval was received, i.e. 20 July 2010). This timing not unnaturally led several scholars on the initial list to decline, as their agenda had been filled in the meantime. Note: PALATIUM was only listed on the ESF webpage at that point in time ([www.esf.org/palatium](http://www.esf.org/palatium)); the own PALATIUM website ([www.courtresidences.eu](http://www.courtresidences.eu)) came online per 1 October, as agreed. Researchers who contact us are henceforth asked to enrol.

Although the group of participants was limited in number, several European countries were represented (taking the institutions: Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Russian Federation, UK). The disciplines represented ranged from theatre history to architectural history of the Early Modern period, including court history, art history and military history. Thanks to the valuable participation of noted experts (such as Hans Cools, Professor and specialist in history of the Burgundian-Habsburg nobility, Early Modern period at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; Ronnie Mulryne, Professor emeritus, and Dr

Margaret Shewring, Department of Theatre Studies, Warwick University, who are specialists in the history of Early Modern Festivals), a lively and interdisciplinary discussion (in several languages) took place with the convenors, more experienced speakers and younger debutante researchers (such as Ekaterina Nosova, starting her PhD at St Petersburg State University, Leen Kelchtermans, junior research fellow of the Research Foundation Flanders and Oliver Kik, starting his PhD at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven). Note: Taking into account the financial situation of young Russian researchers, the convenors decided to fund her more generously. The “middle level” of young researchers was represented by postdoctoral fellows Veerle De Laet (Erasmus University Rotterdam) and Pieter Martens (Research Foundation Flanders). We stress that while participants might have known one or two others before, taken as a whole, this group had not met nor worked together or exchanged views in this way before.

The Speakers presented cutting-edge research, for the most part unpublished, inviting open discussion on their approach. After presenting the PALATIUM network Convenor K. De Jonge, in her introduction, addressed the difficulties connected with the use of inventories for architectural history, specifically referring to her experiences with the Croÿ/Arenberg and Mansfeld inventories (c. 1600). The latter subject was analysed in a detailed manner by P. Martens, who presented his original work on the Mansfeld collections, devoting special attention to the method used by his interdisciplinary team (in collaboration with the Musée national d'histoire et d'art, Luxembourg) in tracking down the actual objects listed in the documents. While the documents were published in facsimile in 2007, they have indeed not been mined in-depth yet. Several cases for comparison came up in the discussion, amongst others the recent, monumental source publication on the Spanish Habsburg inventories coordinated by Prof. Dr. Fernando Checa Cremades (U. Complutense, Madrid).

Dr Veerle De Laet, on the other hand, discussed the usefulness of inventories in urban archives (such as the Brussels notarial archives, Rijksarchief te Anderlecht) for the history of the material culture of the court, with special attention to the living conditions of lower-level courtiers as they appear in – or can be deduced from – notarial documents. After discussing the problems inherent to the source, she presented some telling statistics. This research constitutes the cornerstone of her as-yet-unpublished PhD thesis (Antwerp U.). Notarial sources also provided the starting point of Dr Margherita Fratarcangeli's (keynote) presentation on the cultural network of the Roman cardinals; she is research fellow at the Villa I Tatti, Florence (Harvard University) from 1 January 2011 after working at the Bibliotheca Hertziana (Max-Planck-Institut), Rome.

Finally, Ms Ekaterina Nosova, who is working on her PhD (*The Burgundian court in the XVth century: organization and social structure*) under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Andrey J. Prokopiev, introduced the participants to an unknown and very important source on the Burgundian court conserved in the Russian National Library; this came as news to the “Burgundian” scholars present (H. Cools, K. De Jonge), too. Ms Nosova was also questioned on the general source material of her research, the Burgundian court ordinances; the discussion thus established a link with the first preparatory meeting (February 2010). For Ms Nosova, the meeting constituted the first intensive contact with Western European scholars working on the Burgundian courts.

### **2.3. Results of the Brussels seminar**

The Brussels meeting, as conclusion of the first phase of enquiries, helped to establish a firm basis for the *manual* on resources for the history of the court residence that is the ultimate objective. In her conclusions, Convenor Dr Sabina de Cavi essayed a first state of the art on “material resources for early modern court history” on the methodological plane. Convenors de Cavi and De Jonge will elaborate this into an introductory essay to the manual.

Both the contributors to the October meeting and the contributors to the preparatory meetings will be asked to provide pre-print texts that will be put online on the PALATIUM website (<http://www.courtresidences.eu/index.php/publications/>), accessible for enrolled

PALATIUM users). In this way, they will generate discussion and invite feedback, enlarging the effect of the Brussels seminar much beyond its original “workshop” scope. The PALATIUM website will thus also be tested as **exchange forum**, in accordance with the aims defined by the Steering Committee.

Note: Speakers at the preparatory meetings included, apart from the convenors De Jonge and De' Cavi: Monique Chatenet (Centre André Chastel, INHA Paris) and Bernardo J. García García (Fundación Carlos de Amberes, Universidad Complutense, Madrid), both Steering Committee members of PALATIUM; Fernando Quiles García (Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Sevilla), Macarena Moralejo Ortega (Universidad Autónoma, Madrid), Isabella Salvagni (Accademia di San Luca, Rome), Daniela Del Pesco (Università degli Studi dell'Aquila), Hans Cools (K.U. Leuven), Mireille Peytavin (Université de Toulouse); Piero Ventura (Università Federico II, Naples); Maria Clelia Galassi (Università degli studi di Genova) and Maximiliaan J. Martens (Ghent University, resident scholars at VLAC, Brussels, at the time.

Dr de Cavi's conclusions also clearly established a platform for further meetings on source categories which have not been discussed yet in this context. One of these will be applied for to ESF-RNP PALATIUM in 2011. Note: Approved in principle by the PALATIUM Steering Committee in Madrid, 30 November 2011, subject to a proper application with the required documents.

#### **2.4. Spin-off benefits for PALATIUM**

Valuable contacts were established with Ronnie Mulryne, Professor emeritus, and Dr Margaret Shewring, Department of Theatre Studies, Warwick University, as representatives of the Society for European Festivals research (which has received, amongst others, ESF funding for an exploratory meeting, Venice 2010). Note: Dr Monique Chatenet, representative of France in the PALATIUM Steering Committee, is also a member of this network. As a consequence, the PALATIUM network might expand by adding a British partner. To this end, the Chair of PALATIUM, Convenor Krista De Jonge, will travel to Warwick University in mid-March 2011. Dr Pieter Martens, Coordinator of PALATIUM will attend the next meeting of the Society in London.

### **3. Programme (as published online)**

Chair: Sabina de Cavi

#### **2 p.m. Welcome and Introduction**

Krista De Jonge (K.U.Leuven): *Pitfalls and traps for the unwary. Inventories as a tool for architectural history*

#### **2.15 p.m.**

Margarita Fratarcangeli (Harvard U. at I Tatti), *I notai, fonti della Roma di età moderna. Cardinali, famiglie, artisti e Nazioni / Notaries, Roman sources of the Early Modern Period. Cardinals, families, artists and the foreign nations*

#### **3.00 p.m. Discussion**

#### **3.30 p.m. Coffee break**

#### **3.45 p.m.**

Veerle De Laet (Rotterdam U.), *Probate inventories: vivid entrances to private lives from a distant past or frozen and selective images?*

#### **4.15 p.m. Discussion**

**4.30 p.m.**

Ekaterina Nosova (Saint-Petersburg State U.), *Marriage contract as the aegis (by the example of the agreement between Louis de Luxembourg count of Saint-Pol, Constable of France and Mary of Savoy from Russian national Library, OP PHБ,СГД № 103, 104)*

**5.00 p.m. Discussion****5.15 p.m.**

Pieter Martens (K.U. Leuven), *The Mansfeld Donation to Philip III of Spain: the paper trail*

**5.45 p.m. Discussion**

**6.00 p.m. Conclusions** (presented by Sabina de Cavi)

**4. List of Speakers and Participants (other contact information in ESF database)****4.1. Speakers**

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Veerle De Laet  
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Margherita Fratarcangeli (Keynote)  
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Pieter Martens  
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Ekaterina Nosova  
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**4.2. Participants**

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