



Fondazione
1563

**Life indeed.
Bequests, donations and wills
in Turin during the Ancien régime**

CALL FOR ESSAYS

Deadline for submission: **31st August 2021 (midday Italian time/CET)**

Fondazione 1563 per l'Arte e la Cultura is an operating body of Compagnia di San Paolo and pursues among its statutory objectives the promotion of research and advanced education in humanities. The Foundation is in charge of the conservation, management and cultural promotion of the Compagnia di San Paolo's Historical Archives.

In this framework the Foundation promotes a research project on bequests, donations and wills drawn up in Turin during the Ancient régime.

LIFE INDEED

BEQUESTS, DONATIONS AND WILLS IN TURIN DURING THE ANCIEN RÉGIME

Just as at the Last Judgment the dead shall be called forth one by one ... so too, in the last will, things are summoned by name and have their personalities, worn away by use, restored to them: "The Bokhara rug with the cigar burn, in my study..." is the sort of thing one reads in such final dispositions, or "The umbrella with the rhinoceros-horn handle that I bought at Sunshine & Winters in May 1887..." Even the bundles of securities are named and invoked individually by number. Nor is it chance that, as each object lights up again for the last time, the longing should arise to attach to it a moral, an admonition, a blessing, a principle, to cast one last spell on so many unreckoned things that rise up once more as one feels oneself sinking. And so, together with the poetry of testament-making time, philosophy too awakens.

R. Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*

Giving sense to material things and to the value they had during people's life and even after their death, gains great meaning, either if it is referred to the past or to the post-pandemic present days, that are characterized by economic and social fragility, collective and individual issues.

The historical sources to do so are dense and anything else but static.



As is known to scholars and experts of Sabaudian history, in 1610 Charles Emmanuel I Duke of Savoy instructed to register and notify to the Senate all the notarial acts performed within his State's borders.

That is how the *Ufficio dell'Insinuazione* – Public Record Office – was born.

Today, in the Italian language, the term *Insinuazione* is in use with a completely different meaning but back then, within that context, it used to state the mandatory procedure of recording acts and deeds in the ducal registers.

The *Ufficio dell'Insinuazione* in the Duchy of Savoy was not a unique, akin forms of recording deeds concerning asset transfers had been rolled out in Italy as well as in Europe in those same years.

This kind of documents, teeming with life and ambitions, needs to be delved into from a prospective that should be broad, multi-disciplinary, open to comparisons with other countries, especially Northern Italy and transalpine.

The Foundation's aim is to identify continuities in the ways inheritances have been transferred, from those compelled by family bonds to class' solidarity, to contemporary philanthropy.

The call for essays intends to value the *Insinuazione* fonds, held by the Archivio di Stato di Torino, Sezioni Riunite (State Archives of Turin), beginning from the bequests received by the Compagnia di San Paolo. These deeds have been already inventoried and can be queried through a database set by the Fondazione 1563.

The Archivio di Stato di Torino collaborates to the project and supports researchers on site.

Therefore, these documents should be investigated from both the point of view of those who drawn them up and those who requested them, paying a great deal of attention to peculiar aspects such as what type of bequests were more frequent? To whom did women and men vow themselves in their prayers? What intentions did they express? Who benefitted from those intentions? Were those people native or also from abroad? Were there any notaries specialized in this sort of acts? Which elite does seem to predominate in the wills?

The call's historical timeframe embraces the whole of the Ancien régime, from 1610 to 1801 when the Royal *Insinuazione* was abolished and the Napoleonic notarial series was established. In the 17th and 18th centuries the above documents are in great numbers, not just referring to the Compagnia.



Please see the attachment for research tools and sources.

Research proposals on the below themes will be accepted and reviewed:

- Studies on manners of asset transfers
- Studies on notarial office
- Analysis of women's dowry deeds
- Analysis of post-mortem inventories
- Family networks
- Professional networks
- Testators and testatrixes' intentions
- Dispositions by will of work of arts
- Urban Form and Structure

The themes may be addressed in a comparative perspective.

The proposals will be selected on the basis of the originality, coherence and pre-existing knowledge of notarial sources and also on the basis of a well-balanced combination of the different contributions. In fact, the idea is to create a volume that does not exhaust the research themes itself but ideally could be continued in another in-depth study focused on 19th and 20th centuries.

The outcome of the research will be a volume published in the "Quaderni dell'Archivio Storico" series by Leo S. Olschki Publisher.

Proposals will need to include: research title and abstract (4,000 keystrokes at maximum), curriculum vitae and author's short bio-bibliographical profile.

Proposals can be submitted exclusively through the form available on the [website of Fondazione 1563](#). Proposals submitted by other means will not be considered.

Deadline for submission: **31st August 2021 (midday Italian time/CET)**.

Selected proposals will be announced no later than **30th September 2021**.

The authors of the selected proposals will be required to write an essay (50,000 keystrokes, including spaces and notes) according to the series' editorial guidelines.



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Each author will receive a flat fee of € 2,500 (gross and refund for any expenses included) per essay for transfer of copyright.

The essays will be submitted no later than six months after the selection.

The essays may be written in Italian or English.

For additional information or clarifications, contact Fondazione 1563 by phone at +39 011.4401401, or email at info@fondazione1563.it.