**Summaries**

*Anna Esposito*, Slaves in Rome between the Fifteenth and the Sixteenth Centuries: Preliminary Investigations in the Notaries’ Registers

The object of this paper is to present a handful of documents in the Notaries’ Registers of Rome related to the presence of slaves (domestic or not) in urban society between the end of the Fifteenth and the first decades of the Sixteenth Centuries – up to now a topic almost entirely neglected for the Eternal City.

Really it is impossible to trace a well-rounded outline of the phenomenon because of the paucity of the Roman documentation, which consists mostly in purchase agreements, but also includes an emancipation, a contract for loan of service on the part of a freed woman, a *pax* after the murder of a slave, and a compensation proposal for the rape of a slave woman and of a *famula*. Therefore, after a brief general description of the origin, age and price of the slaves and of the social identity of their owners, the author concentrates particularly on female domestic slavery, that best documented in the dossier of documents. Some of the more relevant documents are published in the Appendix.

*Keywords*: Rome; Domestic Slaves; Fifteenth Century; Sixteenth Century.

*Serena Di Nepi*, The *Restitutio ad libertatem* of Slaves in Early Modern Rome: Annotations on Unheeded Phenomenon (1516-1645)

The emancipation of the baptized slaves was a major issue in the political and religious debate of the Early Modern Age. Despite a centuries-old tradition had been establishing that baptism entailed the liberation of the spirit and not the freedom for the body, Roman customs went on a different path. Since 1566, a *motu proprio* by Pope Paul v (*Dignum et Rationi*) circumvented the problem by giving the Conservatori of Rome (i.e. the local authority) the power to grant freedom to the baptized slaves that were able to reach the Campidoglio. The statement of Pope Paul v invested an ancient Capitoline custom, dating back to the Caracalla’s law on Roman citizenship. By examining data stored in the documentation kept in the Archivio Storico Capitolino in Rome — from 1516 (even before the intervention of Pope Ghislieri) to 1797 — it’s possible to deeply
investigate the role played by this unique privilege in the management of the continuous relationship between Rome (and the Catholic Church) and the rest of the world (from the Ottoman Empire to the far Eastern areas).

**Keywords**: Christian-Islamic Relationships; Mediterranean History; History of Slavery.

*Roberto Benedetti*, Muslims Unavailable and Slaves Visible. An Analysis of Legal Sources between the Sixteenth and the Eighteenth Century

The issue of slavery within the borders of the Papal States in the modern era has been the subject of numerous studies. These studies have revealed the presence of a minority of Muslim slaves who, while maintaining their religious identity of origin, are perfectly integrated into the complex social and economic reality. It is well known that Muslims were exploited as a labor force within the papal galleys or even as domestic slaves at some prelate or noble class families. The study of institutional phenomenon, however, is missing. There are many questions that can be drawn about: how was it regulated the lives of Muslims within the borders of the Papal States? Which courts had jurisdiction over them and in what way the exercising? This paper aims to relate the first results of a research on the sources of law produced by the various central and local authorities of the Papal States, regarding the regulation of a small part of the population, however extremely significant in symbolic and theological level.

**Keywords**: History of Slavery; Muslims; Papal States.

*Marina Caffiero*, Meeting in Rome. Slavery, Conversions and Apostasy of Muslims between the Inquisition and the House of the Catechumens in the Early Modern Age

The House of the Catechumens in Rome (1543) represents a microcosm in which Jews and Muslims willing to be baptized came from Italy, Europe and the Levant throughout the Modern Age. Therefore it provides an important perspective in order to examine economic, cultural, physical and symbolic transfers and exchanges. Often, however, the actors in this multi-ethnic and multi-religious scenario were very ambiguous: thus they pose more general and broader problems to historians. The Muslims who pretended to have already received the baptism for being freed from slavery aroused the suspicion of reiteration of the sacrament and especially of apostasy, in the event that they had abandoned, even for a while, the new religion gained from the previous baptism. The Roman Inquisition dealt with and discussed these aspects, their doctrinal repercussions and
the multiplication of crimes that they involved, often in collaboration with the House of the Catechumens, as demonstrated by the cases inquired. The most important things that emerges, from a general historical point of view, is the papal policy towards religious minorities and the role of Rome as a space for communication and exchange, in which the solution for the problem of religious otherness seems totally opposite to the Spanish policy of expulsions.

*Keywords:* Muslims; Conversions; Slavery.


Freening the Christian prisoners who had unfortunately fallen into the wrong hands was always the priority of the religious authorities. A mixture of charity, publicity and private interests was needed to bring the prisoners out. The solution to most cases was passed through a tight network of contacts, in which religious differences counted for little or nothing. The important thing was the safety of the Christian prisoner slaves who had ended up in Muslim hands. In this mission the Christian or Jewish merchants often took advantage of the situation to strengthen business relationships; or on the contrary – and this was more interesting for us –, thanks to their prestige, notoriety and their communication of points and of informative networks, they revealed many resources for the cause, and used them in this way. The consequences were also positive results in the form of internal and external recognition in the Jewish world. In this essay the activity of the mediators was taken into consideration which was completed by a few Jewish people from Ragusa (but moved to Ancona) for the liberation of some Christians made into slaves on the Adriatic coast.

*Keywords:* Italian Jewry; Mediterranean Slavery; Adriatic.

Stefano Condorelli, *The 1693 Sicily Earthquake and Europe: News Propagation and Impact*

So far historiography had not paid attention to the international impact of the great Sicilian earthquake in January 1693. Yet the disaster raised considerable interest (mixed with anxiety) across Europe, in the scholarly community as well as the public opinion. The paper shows that the news of the event travelled along multiple relays (officials, merchants, seafarers, scholars, etc.) and with surprising speed. They resonated throughout the continent via a profusion of letters, publications, sermons (that presented the catastrophe as a terrible example of the wrath of God). The earthquake
had also an effect on the ongoing Nine Years’ war (Sicily belonging to Spain, one of the powers of the Grand Alliance fighting against France). Last but not least, the disaster gave a strong new impulse to seismological studies across Europe. The broader implication of this telling example of connected history is the following: Europe’s curiosity for large earthquakes started earlier than what is usually believed (i.e. the 1755 Lisbon earthquake).

**Keywords:** Earthquake; Connected History; History of Disasters; Information propagation.

*Diego Carnevale, The Benefits of a Catastrophe. The Funerals’ Incomes of the Neapolitan Clergy during the Epidemic in 1764*

Great calamities are a distinguished topic in the historical literature. Usually scholars tend to emphasize the dramatic traits of the event, or the social gaps left by the disaster within the communities. Rarely, however, disasters are studied as an opportunity in the course of their occurrence. In the specific case of epidemics, an ironic cliché argues that they bring some benefits only for funeral operators. Although it is true that the undertakers obtained, at their own risk, major gains during plague period; but they were not the only ones to take advantage of the tragic situation. In fact, even ecclesiastical people could greatly increase their revenues thanks to the exceptional number of funeral ceremonies caused by epidemics. This article aims to show an example of this increase by studying the revenues of some secular clergies during the devastating gastrointestinal fever that struck the city of Naples – and its Kingdom – in 1764. The purpose is to connect these profits to the broader policy of social penetration built by the Neapolitan Church, who had in death and its rituals one of her main pillars.

**Keywords:** Naples; Funerals; Catastrophe; Ecclesiastical Incomes.

*Domenico Cecere, Preliminary Notes towards a Study of the Urban Reconstruction and the Social Unrest after the Calabrian Earthquakes of 1783*

The article presents the first results of an on-going study into the social and urban consequences of the Calabrian earthquakes in the year 1783. It aims to investigate the strong and widespread unrest that racked Southern Calabria on the threshold of the Age of Revolutions, by connecting it to some governmental measures for recovery of the region after the cataclysm. The natural disaster, which destroyed approximately 200 towns, undermined social and political order in Southern Calabria; but at the same time, it gave the Government the opportunity to impose its own order on the region.
The strategy for recovery involved a profound reorganisation of urban plans, ecclesiastical hierarchies and devotional habits, which could easily clash with the religious and social needs of local populations. But this somewhat simplistic scheme – the article argues – cannot adequately account for the widespread disturbances that peppered the country during the last years of the Eighteenth Century. Relying on judicial records of the *Cassa Sacra*, the article focuses on some cities and villages (in particular Cortale, Serra, Sant’Agata di Reggio, Cutro) where public and religious life was notably affected both by the disaster and by the governmental measures. It intends to show that many clashes were the result of contrasting interests and strategies for social climbing of local players. In fact, while coping with emergency, individuals and groups tried to adjust to the new situation and to take advantage of measures implemented by the Neapolitan Government. In some places, the reorganisation of urban settlements led to splits of the community, tangibly represented by the physical secession of groups of residents.

*Keywords*: Catastrophe; Reconstruction of Cities; Social Conflict.

**Pasquale Palmieri, The Earthquake of 1796 in Tuscany and the Eruptions of Vesuvius: Religious Interpretations of Natural Disasters in the Age of French Revolution**

In this essay, the Author proposes an analysis of the texts of the Tuscan bishop Agostino Albergotti, who described the earthquake of 1796 in Arezzo and the miracles of the so called “Madonna del Conforto”, and of the work of the Neapolitan hagiographer Pietro Degli Onofri, who portrayed the eruptions of Vesuvius occurred in the same years. Both the writers considered natural disasters as punishments from God, angry with humans who had chosen to reject his love, supporting the French Revolution and denying the salvific value of Christian teaching and worship.

However, the two authors also undertook to refute the thesis of many philosophers and naturalists, who tried to explain natural calamities with rational methods. Albergotti and Degli Onofri were enjoined to defend the faith through “rational” arguments. To achieve their goals, they also used scientific reasoning, but only in an instrumental way, postulating the primacy of the religious sphere and finally rejecting the power of reason.

*Keywords*: Disasters; Religion; Vesuvius; Catholic Apologetics; Hagiography; French Revolution.
Enrico Caterino Davila, Alessandro Campiglia, Girolamo Frachetta, Omero Tortora were only a few of the Italian historians who, between the Sixteenth and the Seventeenth Centuries, devoted themselves to narrating the French civil wars. Written with a polemical intent or, conversely, as apologies, these texts discuss the fate of the only country in a position to challenge Spanish power on the continent. They express judgments in the light of the political dynamics and the cultural and religious life of Italy offering explanations for the so-called “quiete d’Italia” which appeared to some observers as the guarantor of a dual oppression over the peninsula, that of Spain and of the Church of Rome.

Combining an analysis of texts with an examination of events from the biographies of the authors and of the some protagonists in the affairs narrated (the head of the League, Charles de Lorraine duke of Mayenne; Filippo Sega, pontifical legate in Paris) it clearly emerges how the debate that arose in Italy over the French wars of religion helped to reinforce arguments in favour of confessional unity and political pacification.

*Keywords*: Historiography; Religion Wars; Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.