

**Beiheft i.V.: Inventing the Good Life: How Italy Shaped Early Modern Moral Culture. An Exploration of the *Ethica* Section in Wolfenbüttel**  
**Inventing the Good Life: How Italy Shaped Early Modern Moral Culture**

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**An Exploration of the *Ethica* Section in Wolfenbüttel**

eds. Matthias Roick, Franziska Meier, Enrica Zanin, and Claudia Rossignoli

Conference proceedings (forecoming),  
Romanische Studien: Beihefte (München: Akademische Verlagsgemeinschaft, 2019)

**Conference announcement**

The conference is organized by [Matthias Roick](#) (Göttingen/Wolfenbüttel), together with [Franziska Meier](#) (Göttingen), [Enrica Zanin](#) (Strasbourg), and [Claudia Rossignoli](#) (St. Andrews)

Italy had an immense influence on the social and cultural life of early modern Europe. There is little acknowledgement, however, of the strong moral imprint of this influence. Quips on superficiality, frivolity and moral corruption of the ‘South’, common both to the early modern period and to contemporary discourse, have overshadowed the impact the evolving “forms of life” (Quondam) on the Italian peninsula had on early modernity. From the thirteenth century onward, new social classes in the burgeoning cities and towns in Italy developed new social and cultural values. A new “urban life-style” (Ruggiero) redefined the notions of what it means to live a good life, with an emphasis on the right use of wealth, refined manners and grace, and on the importance of learning. Based on ancient ethical models, the concept of virtue became a mainstay of early modern culture and the most important ingredient for the good life, both in terms of rational self-control and creative power. Not confined to the urban centres of Northern and Central Italy, the new ideas on the good life had a huge impact on the aristocratic and courtly societies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and spread throughout Europe.

The conference will look at the influence of Italian models on early modern moral culture through a special lens: the *Ethica* section in Wolfenbüttel.

Part of the book collection of Duke August the Younger (1579-1666), preserved at today’s Herzog August Bibliothek, the *Ethica* section offers us a ‘window’ onto the varied landscape of early modern ethics and the wealth of literature on ethics. Not only does it contain philosophical treatises and disputations, but also novels, novellas, theatrical texts, collections of proverbs, emblem books, and conduct books. The section allows us to chart the trajectories of European literature towards the middle of the seventeenth century and to measure the influence Italian literature had on it. In fact, many of the works in the section are written in or translated from the Italian language, stem from Italian authors, or were printed in Italy, bearing witness to the significance of Italy as a force of cultural and moral innovation.

The conference would like to discuss the section’s wealth of literature on ethics and its Italian influence along three lines of argument.

**Contributions**

[Program](#)

- Francois Lecerle (Paris), *Cento Giochi* di Innocenzo Ringhieri, A: 9 Eth.
- John Butcher (Sansepolcro), Fifteenth-century Italian Humanist Ethics in the Herzog August Bibliothek Miscellany A: 12 Eth. – Valla’s *De voluptate ac vero bono*, Pontano’s *De prudentia*

- Danilo Facca (Warsaw), La semiotica degli affetti latenti di Scipione Chiaramonti nell'interpretazione di Hermann Conring
- Francesco Giusti (Berlin), Quale etica per la lirica? Presenze e assenze della poesia lirica nella biblioteca del Duca Augusto il Giovane
- Patrizia Piredda (Roma), La funzione etica e retorica della metafora nel *Cannocchiale Aristotelico* di Tesaurio
- Franziska Meier (Göttingen), „Petrarch's *Triumph* as an Ethica Section? Remarks on A German Translation Published in 1643 „
- Bettina Full (Bochum), „*era veder insieme comedia e tragedia*': Zeitkritik, ethische Verwandlung und spekulativer Weltentwurf in Giordano Brunos *Candelaio*
- Bryan Brazeau (Warwick), "Sperare di poter filosofando aprir la prigione": Representations of Heroic Virtue in Late Sixteenth-Century Italy
- Sara Ferrilli (Zürich), Il Medioevo italiano della HAB tra etica, letteratura ed enciclopedismo
- Matteo Residori (Paris), L'ingratitudine nel Rinascimento italiano: riflessioni su un dibattito etico dimenticato
- Enrica Zanin (Strasbourg), *La Fleur de toutes les nouvelles* (1547) e le raccolte di novelle conservate nella sezione ETHICA
- Maiko Favaro (Fribourg), Trasmettere la virtù da una generazione all'altra: la Lettera di Erasmo di Valvasone al nipote Cesare
- Valentina Lepri (Warsaw), Contemplando la varietà umana: le Hore di ricreazione di Lodovico Guicciardini nel contesto della cultura morale nella prima età moderna
- Claudia Rossignoli (St. Andrews), Translating Ethics: The Italian *Sendebare*
- Gijs Versteegen (Madrid), Antonio de Guevara as preacher and entertainer: contemptus mundi and wit in his *Relox de Príncipes*
- Diana Campóo (Madrid), Dance and the virtue of *eutrapelia* in Seventeenth century Spain: Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's *Noches de placer* and its Italian sources
- Jason Rosenholtz-Witt (Evenston/Chicago), Music Partbooks and Emblems: Traces of Italian Print Culture in Seventeenth-Century German Manuscripts
- Jacomien Prins (Warwick), Music and Love in Early Modern Conceptions of the Good Life
- Gianni Paganini (Vercelli), Shifts in the Renaissance Ethics of Conversation: Castiglione, Guazzo, Bodin and the Dialogues on Religions
- Amedeo Quondam (Roma), Conclusive Remarks

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