

RACHEL C. MIDURA

Assistant Professor of History at Virginia Tech
rmidura@vt.edu

POSITION

Assistant Professor of Digital and Early Modern European History, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 2020 - Present

- History Department Undergraduate Committee (2020-2021)
- History Department Research Committee (2021-2022)
- History Department Executive Committee (2023-2024)
- History Department Public History Committee (2023-2024)

Postal Intelligence: The Tassis Family and Communications Revolution in Early Modern Europe (Cornell University Press, est. publication 2025)

Second Book Project: *The Age of Conspiracy: Treason, Assassination, and the Hunt for Angelo Badoer (1600-1630)* (In progress)

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Early Modern European History, Stanford University, Stanford, CA June 2020

- Mabelle McLeod Lewis Memorial Fund Fellow (2019-2020)
- G. J. Piggot Scholar Fellow (2018-2019)

M.A., Early Modern European History, Stanford University, Stanford, CA March 2016

B.A., Distinguished Major in History and Italian Studies with Highest Honors, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA May 2013

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed

The British Arrival in Italy and Lesson Plans in *The Grand Tour: A World Made by Travel* (Online) (Stanford University Press, 2025). Forthcoming

“Shadow Networks: Detecting Intercept Letters in the British State Papers.” Co-authored with Ruth Ahnert (Queen Mary University London) and Sebastian Ahnert (Cambridge University; Alan Turing Institute). Invited contribution to special issue of *Huntington Library Quarterly*. June 2025

“They Hide from Me, Like the Devil from the Cross”: **Counter-Espionage and Transalpine Postal Routes, 1600-1660”** in *History*, 108/381 (2023), 303-327. July 2023

“Italian Messengers and Couriers” in Kristen Poole, ed., *The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Renaissance World* (Routledge: 2023) (Online). June 2023

“Itinerating Europe: Early Modern Spatial Networks in Printed Itineraries, 1545-1700” in *the Journal of Social History*, 54/4 (2021), 1023-1063. July 2021

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“Policing in Print: Social Control in Spanish & Borromean Milan, 1535-1584” in Nina Lamal, Helmer Helmers, ed.s, *Print and Power in Early Modern Europe* (Brill: 2021), 21-46. 2021

Publications Cont.

The Appeal of Early Modern Mobility: Review of Luca Scholz, *Borders and Freedom of Movement in the Holy Roman Empire* in *Quaderni Storici* (2024) Forthcoming

Review of Online Catasto of 1427 Database in *Renaissance and Reformation*, 45(4). Autumn 2023

Review of Paul Dover, *The Information Revolution in Early Modern Europe* in *Information & Culture*, 57(3). Summer 2022

Review of Francesca Trivellato, *The Promise and the Peril of Credit* in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 52(4). Summer 2021

“Publishing the Baroque Post” in *Renaissance of Letters*, Paula Findlen and Suzanne Sutherland, eds., (Routledge Press: 2019) 2019

“Conceptualizing Knowledge Networks: Agents and Patterns of ‘Flow’” in Paula Findlen, ed., *Empires of Knowledge* (Routledge Press: 2018) 2018

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & PANELS

Co-Organizer & Presenter

Expertise in Early Modern Italy, American Historical Association 2023, Philadelphia, PA January 2023

- Organizing with sponsorship of the Society for Italian Historical Studies
- Presenting “Pricing the Posts”

Early Modern Mobilities: Knowledge, Community, Communication, and Infrastructure, 1500-1800, Stanford Humanities Center, Stanford, CA May 2021

- Organizing two-day workshop of international speakers sponsored by Early Modern Mobility Group including panels on infrastructure, mobility politics, and global exchange
- Presenting “Professionalizing the Post” as part of panel “Making Mobility Infrastructure”

October 2019

Cultures of Bureaucracy Panel Series, *Renaissance Society of America 2019 Annual Conference*, Toronto, CA

- Organizing four panels sponsored by the Warburg Institute, University of London
- Presenting “The Postmistress and the Spy” as part of panel “Information and Communication”

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Presenter

- Merchants, Tourists, and Couriers: Early Modern Digital Itineraries and the Physical Travel of News**, Renaissance Society of America 2024, Chicago, IL March 2024
- Manhunt: The Search for Angelo Badoer**, 2023 Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies Conference Worlds of Conflict: Violence in the Early Modern Period, Toronto, Canada Sept. 2023
- “The Lists of the Condemned,”** Death and Violence in Early Modern Europe: Approaches and Considerations Panel, Renaissance Society of America 2023, San Juan, Puerto Rico March 2023
- History and the Spatial Turn: Pedagogical Approaches**, American Historical Association 2023, Philadelphia, PA January 2023
- The Arrest of Giovanni Antonio Tassis: Espionage, Extraterritoriality, and Information Sovereignty in Rome**, 2nd International Congress of Postal History: Multidisciplinary and Diachronic Perspectives, Prato, Italy June 2022
- “Conduatrix & Administratrix: Tassis Postmistresship across the German and Swiss Alpine Passes,”** *Infrastructures of Mobility in Transalpine Europe (1450-1750)*, Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Trento, Italy (Online) Sept. 2021
- “Early Modern Digital Itineraries (EmDigIt): Networks of European Space, 1545-1761,”** Lunch Seminar Series, Historical Network Research Group, Luxembourg (Online) May 2021
- “Shooting the Messenger: Assaults on Couriers and Extraterritoriality,”** *Virtual Renaissance Sociation of America Annual Conference 2021* (Online) March 2021
- “For Your Eyes Only: Intercept Letters in the British State Papers,”** *Networking Archives Colloquium*, Oxford University, U.K. (Online) Sept. 2020
- “Early Modern Digital Itineraries: Modeling European Place and Space, 1545-1747,”** *Virtual Digital Humanities Conference 2020* (Online) July 2020
- “A Tale of Three Roads: Networking Across Europe’s Wars of Religion,”** Virginia Tech & College of Charleston History Departments (February 2020) Feb. 2020
- Other Talks and Outreach
- Spies in the Post Office**, Brown Bag Lunch Series, Society for Intelligence History (Online) July 2023
- Interview**, “Interview with Virginia Tech Professor at work on Postal History,” (trans. from Italian), *Il Monitore della Toscana, the Journal of the Association for the Study of Tuscan Postal History* May 2021

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- “Sealed Secrets: Renaissance Spies and Europe’s Postal Services,”** Invited Talk, Smithsonian National Postal Museum Spring 2021
- Expert consult,** “A Letter Sealed for Centuries Has Been Read- Without Even Opening It,” Sarah Castellanos, *The Wall Street Journal* (2 March 2021) Winter 2021
- Panelist,** “Perspectives on Publishing Argument-Driven Digital History,” American Historical Association Conference 2020 (Canceled due to COVID-19) Winter 2021

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DIGITAL HISTORY

Early Modern Digital Itineraries, Virginia Tech & Stanford University 2018-Present

- Awarded Level I Digital Humanities Advancement Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: \$73,000 to organize workshops for a data-driven approach to premodern travel in autumn 2023- autumn 2024.
- Awarded Virginia Tech Library Collaboration Grant in the Digital Humanities (Summer 2022): \$4000 for wireframing of web platform
- Ongoing collaboration with undergraduate research assistants in the Virginia Tech Computational & Data Analytics Capstone Seminar and graduate research assistants in the History M.A. program

Networking Archives, Oxford & Cambridge Universities 2019-2021

- Participating in three digital humanities training schools relating to early modern correspondence collections
- Collaborating with Oxford *Cultures of Knowledge* and QMUL *Networking Archives* groups to produce articles for special issue of *Huntington Library Quarterly*

Early Modern Mobility: Knowledge, Communication and Transportation, 1500-1800, Stanford University 2018-2021

- Receiving \$100,000 Stanford-UPS Endowment Grant for two-year multi-university research group and workshop development on early modern travel and exchange
- Organizing three-day *Early Modern Mobilities* conference with 50+ virtual participants and attendees

Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis, Stanford University 2016-2020

- Completing digital humanities certificate and graduate research fellowship
- Hired to further develop and improve graduate fellowship program as senior graduate research fellow
- Regularly attending and leading digital humanities research seminars and workshops

Recent Training

Data Carpentry: Geospatial Data in R, Virginia Tech Libraries 2021

Text Analysis Pedagogy (TAP) Institute, JSTOR Labs 2021

GIS Mapping for Historians, Renaissance Society of America Digital Humanities Workshop 2021

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Course Design & Instructor of Record

Digital History, Virginia Tech Spring 2022

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History of Espionage and Surveillance , Virginia Tech (Online & In-Person)	Spring 2021, 2022
The Era of the Reformation , Virginia Tech	Autumn 2021
Critical Reading/Analysis in History: Global Empires , Virginia Tech	Autumn 2021
The Renaissance , Virginia Tech (Online)	Autumn 2020
Mapping the Grand Tour: Digital Tools for Historical Data , Stanford University	Winter 2019
Censorship & Propaganda , Stanford University	Winter 2017

RESEARCH AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

Renaissance Society of America	2023-Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Paul Oskar Kristeller Fellowship: \$2,000 to support travel to Spanish archive for second book project, <i>The Age of Conspiracy</i>	
Virginia Tech College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences	2020-Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment Conference Grant: \$1000 to support August 2024 Early Modern Digital Itineraries WorkshopNiles Grant: \$5000 each for 1 course release in Spring 2021 & Spring 2023Center for European Union, Transatlantic, and Trans-European Space Studies: \$4000 to support attendance of conference in Italy in summer 2022Library Collaboration Grant in the Digital Humanities: \$4000 for work on Early Modern Digital Itineraries in summer 2022Global Partnership Project Grant: \$3175 for purchase of 1 year subscription to Gale-Cengage British State PapersMentoring Program for New Faculty: \$1,500 to work with Dr. Margaret Meserve (Notre Dame University)	
Mabelle McLeod Lewis Memorial Fund Fellowship	2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Full scholarship grant and stipend for dissertation completion	
Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation Research Grant	2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Travel grant to support research in archives in Venice and former empire	