

1672 and spent the remaining 40 years of her life separated from her husband, wandering across Europe.

Even before her daring flight, the Conestabilessa cut an unusual figure amongst the Roman nobility. Soon after her return to the papal city, she shocked the conservative local families with her adoption of liberated French fashions in dress and behaviour. Investigating her role as salon hostess and patroness of theatre and music, historians have shown that several cultural trends inaugurated by Maria eventually became an attractive feature of the Roman social scene, where the gatherings at Palazzo Colonna provided a meeting space for the progressive fringes of the aristocracy and foreign visitors.

Like her love of musical and theatrical entertainments, Maria's passion for riding and hunting challenged contemporary conventions and played an important part in the fashioning of her striking public persona. While this fact has been noted by her biographers, its cultural significance and impact have remained unquestioned. To explore Maria's equestrian activities and how they were perceived by her contemporaries, I embarked on a systematic study of the *avvisi di Roma*, seventeenth-century anonymous manuscript periodicals that reported on the daily lives and fashionable recreations of Roman high society alongside local and international political news. The Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana holds the largest surviving collection of *avvisi*, of which I examined fifteen volumes encompassing the period between 1661 and 1672.

The thorough perusal of these documents not only provided precious information about Maria's equestrian exploits but also about various outdoor pursuits such as swimming in the Tiber and trekking across the Roman countryside. I found that, while most accounts betray the puzzled reaction of local observers, others instead testify to the enthusiastic response from some young noblewomen who were eager to embrace a more liberated athletic lifestyle, going so far as joining hunting parties, organizing female-only chariot races or even taking fencing lessons.

Focusing initially on Maria Mancini's riding habits, my investigations ended by considering how physical exercise played an important role in the performance of a new, emancipated and distinctly French model of elegant femininity. Traditionally regarded as the marker of a bizarre character, her corporeal freedom inspired other Roman elite women to challenge contemporary gender conventions.

VALERIO ZANETTI

(Oriol College and Faculty of History, University of Oxford)

[valerio.zanetti@oriol.ox.ac.uk](mailto:valerio.zanetti@oriol.ox.ac.uk)

**RALEGH RADFORD ROME AWARDS**

doi: 10.1017/S0068246223000296

### *Protesting celebrity: mass culture and the 1968 Venice Biennale protests*

My research at the BSR investigated the role of celebrities and the media in communicating ideas about social change in Italy's 1968, with a focus on the Venice Biennale. Why go to Rome to study protests in Venice? The student protests in Rome and the Battle of Valle Giulia on 1 March 1968 became a symbol of the national protests. And, as I learned

when I started my residency, the ‘battle’ occurred next door at Rome Sapienza’s Department of Architecture and spilled over to the front steps of the BSR. The BSR’s archive collection holds photographs of this day, captured by residents on the roof of the building, which provide important documentation of student, police and media activity.

Then as now, Venice and its festivals attracted media from around the world, with syndicated news services ready to distribute images of celebrities posing in the photogenic city, or transmit the columns written by journalists assessing the art, film and gossip. In 1968, these were replaced by images and stories of bloodied protesters, charging police with batons, and festival boycotts or sit-ins by the artists and film-makers that the Biennale sought to celebrate. The media created and distributed powerful images and words about the Venice *sessantotto* to national and international audiences. Images of Giuseppe Ungaretti greeting student protesters in Piazza San Marco, famous artists covering their work in the Italian pavilion or Pier Paolo Pasolini and Gillo Pontecorvo marching with raised fists outside the Lido’s cinema reveal a different kind of 1968 protest to those occurring in Rome, Turin and Milan. My archival work investigated the role of celebrities in magazine and newspaper coverage of the 1968 protests at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma and television coverage at the RAI’s Biblioteca centrale Paolo Giuntella and the Teulada Studio Biblioteca di Comunicazioni di massa.

The Rome-based national film-maker association (Associazione Nazionale Autori Cinematografici — ANAC) led the demonstrations at the Venice Film Festival. ANAC had supported other protests earlier in the year, issuing press releases against the violence towards students in Rome, and applauding the film-maker protests in Cannes and Pesaro. The ANAC archives show that the group planned their Venice film festival protest months in advance, and strategically used the media as part of their protest. Unlike many student-led or spontaneous protests, the ANAC film-makers were lobbying the Christian Democrat Party, the Socialist Party and the Italian Communist Party for legislative changes to the selection and judging procedures of the Venice Film Festival. Access to the ANAC archive during the COVID-19 Omicron wave of early 2022 was very limited, so I returned in July to continue my work on this important collection. After two years away from Italy, it was an extraordinary three months.

EMMA BARRON

*(Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne)*

[emma.barron@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:emma.barron@unimelb.edu.au)

doi: 10.1017/S0068246223000302

*Wine culture in the Iranian Plateau: undoing the classical narrative of Dionysus in the East*

Our understanding of viticulture in the Iranian Plateau, which extends from the Zagros Mountains to the Indo-Gangetic Plain, is mired in hellenocentric perspectives originally put forward by classical archaeologists before the twentieth century. Classical and Silk Road scholarship alike have been subject to an unsubstantiated view derived from a