

Evaluation by Grant Committee: *This proposal captures the reader's imagination in the opening paragraph and then deftly explains the methodology, historiography, and sources to be studied while on the grant. The author has completed much of the necessary work already, including publications in several elite journals, and this proposed monograph is headed for publication with Ashgate. This proposal takes a fresh look at a familiar place; the consciously interdisciplinary approach also offers a boon to Renaissance Studies by integrating different disciplines under one theme. The structure of the proposal, and the language, are very clear indeed.*

**Water and the Medici:  
An Interdisciplinary Study of Art, Festivals and Daily Life in Florence**

(Junior Scholar, 2013)

A visitor to the Florence of the Medici Grandukes would have marveled at the wonders of art, nature and engineering. If this visitor had the clout to be among the courtly entourage of the Medici, there would be an array of elaborate waterworks and shell-encrusted grottoes to enjoy in private villas. If this visitor came during one of the great ceremonial entries or weddings, he or she could delight in the chariots of ancient gods adorned with bounties of the sea or feast on rare sturgeon or bear witness to an astounding sight, a battle of Christians against the Turks using full-scale ships on an expanse of water *inside* a palace courtyard. This visitor would never know that the Medici were constantly vexed by problems with water.

My project entails the final stages of research for the first comprehensive book exploring the theme of water in the age of the Medici Grandukes of Florence. Unlike coastal cities such as Genoa and Venice, Florence had no strong tradition of water-related imagery and maritime prowess. This book tells the dynamic story of one dynasty's struggle with water, to control its flow and manage its representation. Titled *From Neptune Fountain to Naumachia: Cosimo I de' Medici and the Politics of Water in Art and Court Festivals*, the book pivots on two well-known water-related Medici creations, Bartolomeo Ammannati's Neptune Fountain (1560-1574), the first public fountain in Florence since antiquity, and the Naumachia, or naval battle, staged by Ferdinando I in the courtyard of the Palazzo Pitti for his wedding to Christine of Lorraine in 1589. This study analyzes how the Medici progressed from its first water-related initiatives under Cosimo I to its full realization with Ferdinando I, tasks that required unprecedented resources as well as an imaginative leap on the part of the Grandukes and their artists and engineers. Chapters explore the artistic, political and cultural circumstances of water-related subjects: the emergence of Neptune in Florence; the impact of fountains and aqueducts; the proliferation of river gods and geographic personifications; the circulation of bounties of sea like coral, pearls and fishes; and representations of ports, naval battles and Turks. Water was tied to politics, whether in the form of water management policies or in the alliances with the Habsburgs and Papacy against a Turkish threat. Underpinning the importance of this process is the success if not survival of Medici Florence in the larger, unstable political arena of Europe.

The theoretical and methodological framework behind this book lies in its boldly interdisciplinary approach, using the theme of water to bring together different fields of research, including Art History, Politics, Festival Studies, Urban Studies, Engineering, Geography, Natural

History, Gastronomy and the study of Islam and the Mediterranean. This book builds on a wealth of studies on the Medici, such as the work of Annamaria Testaverde, Emanuela Ferretti, James Saslow, Katherine Poole, Francesca Fiorani and Henk Th. van Veen as well as various contributions in anthologies on European court festivals, Medici-related exhibition catalogs, doctoral dissertations and studies of maritime culture and the Ottoman East. While scholars have noted the importance of water to particular projects, there has not been a monograph dedicated to the subject in its full range and complexity, whether in the aestheticized culture of the court or in the more banal needs of the broader citizenry, subject to urban legislation, flood damage and quarrels with fishermen. The methodology and approach are inspired by scholars such as Richard Goldthwaite and William E. Wallace, who employ social history to address familiar topics in new ways. This project resonates with issues important to the Renaissance and Humanities—the nature of art and political power; the necessities of geographic knowledge and engineering in an expanding world and the tenuous relationship of water and civilization.

I have been working on issues relating to water and the Medici court for several years, publishing articles on Ammannati's *Neptune Fountain*, the influence of water and cartography, river god iconography and the circulation of fish at the Medici court and its relation to the natural sciences, diplomacy and court feasts. In 2012, the Society for European Festivals Research put forward my book proposal to serve as the first monograph in a series of publications on European Festival Studies: 1450–1700, and a contract has been issued with Ashgate Press as part of its Art and Visual Studies list with a manuscript due in September of 2014, to be written during my sabbatical leave in 2013-2014.

The Renaissance Society of America Grant would provide vital funding for a final research trip to Florence during the summer of 2013. This research will focus on unpublished documents on the impact of water and Florentine daily life in the State Archives of Florence, particularly from *fondi* not available at the online Medici Archive Project database. These include regulations for the selling and consumption of fish by the *Ufficiali poi Magistrato della Grascia*; river management reports of the *Capitani di Parte Guelfa*; documentation on wells and fountains in the *Scrittoio delle fortezze e fabbriche, Fabbriche medicee*; and correspondences of court ministers in the Mediceo del Principato, particularly exchanges with Bernardo Baroncelli, the *provveditore* of Livorno, Cosimo I's outlet to the sea. These sources would provide vital material that will inform several chapters of the book. We have abundant primary and secondary sources that speak to the idealized vision of the Medici court and its prowess in art and spectacle. The archives are where we can balance that view, showing the problems faced in this struggle to control water and its assets. It is here where we find conflicts, unrealized projects, costly damages and punitive actions that make for a more accurate historical picture. The Grant will also allow me to work from other manuscripts in Florence relevant to Medici festivals and maritime development, such as the papers of Vincenzo Borghini at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale and unpublished *Ricordi* in the Biblioteca Riccardiana.