

RESEARCH CLINIC

General information

Supervisor:	Jacqueline Hylkema
Title of clinic:	Forgery & Manuscripts: Faking Pasts and Histories in Early Modern Europe
Number of students:	2- 5
Major (<i>if applicable and approved by the Major Convener</i>):	HD
(Pre)requisites (<i>if applicable</i>):	Reading knowledge of at least one other European language and an interest in political/cultural history. Reading knowledge of Latin and/or having followed 'AW Forging the Enlightenment: The Power and Politics of Fakery (1700 – 1800)' is useful but not a requirement.

Research context

'If a book printed obtrudes a falsehood, if a Man tells a Lye in Print, he abuses Mankind and imposes upon the whole World', wrote Daniel Defoe in 1704, referring to the impact of print on the practice of forgery. Print provided early modern forgers with a new and effective medium to present and spread their work and as a result, the world found itself imposed on by a wave of fabrications, ranging from forged travel accounts to deliberate – and often dangerous – misattributions. However, this did not mean that manuscript forgery had become obsolete. In 1634, for instance, Curzio Inghirami, then nineteen years old, forged dozens of allegedly Etruscan notes, to create a national past for Tuscany that could hold its own against that of Rome.

Curzio Inghirami's Etruscan fragments are by no means the only early modern manuscript forgery but very little research has been done into them as a group. I am currently engaged in a small research project for 'Manuscripts in Conflict Zones' (a new research network involving Trinity College Dublin and the University of Bergen), which aims to map European manuscript forgeries, particularly those related to national narrative and identity, produced in the period between 1500 and 1800 and to create a first taxonomy in terms of their relationship with political conflict. What type of manuscript was forged, and to what purpose? Can we see patterns in these forgeries and in their relationship with specific types of conflicts? And what impact did these forgeries have?

Please specify the tasks and activities, timeline, the learning aims and how they are assessed, i.e. what the deliverables will be.

In this research clinic, students will mainly assist in mapping and analyzing manuscript forgeries in Europe in the period between 1550 and 1800. The first part of the clinic will focus on identifying as many of these forgeries, ranging from forged letters to fabricated fragments of poetry, as we can. The second part will be devoted to the analysis of these cases and establishing a taxonomy for them, with particular respect to their creation, intended audience and purpose as well as their effect and their relation with a specific political conflict or conflict discourse.

We will meet seven times in blocks 3 and 4, starting with a special seminar at the Special Collections at Leiden University Library where we will examine several manuscript forgeries and discuss the key concepts and the methodology of the study.