



CALL FOR PAPERS

**The Author – Wanted, Dead or Alive**  
**New perspectives on the concept of authorship, 1700-1900**

European University Institute (Florence, Italy) • 5-6 June 2017

*Supported by the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing (SHARP)*

The idea of the author as a singular, semi-mythical figure has come under fire in the scholarship of the last fifty years. Famously pronounced dead by Roland Barthes in 1967, the figure of the author has since been the subject of much debate and revision. Although the initial impulse may have come from scholars of cultural theory and literary criticism, the challenge has since been taken up by book historians like Roger Chartier, historians of literature like Gisèle Sapiro and intellectual historians like Quentin Skinner, who have rethought the category of authorship in relation to various different historical and spatial contexts. The author's acclaimed demise has thus produced important new perspectives on the printed text and the people and structures surrounding it. As a result, in both form and content, and indeed in the relationship between these two, texts are now widely understood as the result of a multi-actor process, wherein different interests, techniques, social spheres, and geographical spaces interact. Building on this critical insight, the aim of this workshop is to give the author a post-mortem of sorts by bringing together fresh and critical historiographical perspectives on the concept of authorship, and challenging participants to think in comparative and transnational frameworks. Ideally, we seek to draw together work from a wide variety of sub-disciplines, creating a dialogue which connects often-separated fields such as book history and literary history.

Focussing in particular on the period 1700-1900, which saw an explosion of literacy and publishing both in the West and beyond, we therefore invite proposals for papers which enlarge and nuance our understanding of the concept of authorship by concentrating on examples of variety, agency and meaning. We especially encourage submissions that focus on the historical significance of marginal or otherwise 'forgotten' authors. This includes: papers highlighting minority and female authors, or authors of generic and non-canonical works; research that seeks to examine the authorial or quasi-authorial roles of the publisher, printer, editor, illustrator, bookseller, or translator; and work that centres around notions of authorship in non-European and colonial contexts. We also encourage methodological, historiographical, and theoretical proposals dealing critically with the notion of authorship – including its birth, death or troubled adolescence.

Possible additional topics include, but are not limited to:

- 'Accidental' authors: writers of texts initially intended for private uses such as catharsis, remembrance or private entertainment.

- Authorial agency versus constraining factors such as audience expectations and genre conventions.
- The different facets of authorship and the production of the book in transnational perspectives.
- Processes of presentation of the author, both by themselves, and by others.
- The legal frameworks of authorship, including censorship and copyright conventions.
- The commercialisation and marketing of authors, e.g. name recognition, press, tours.
- The uses and meanings of anonymous and pseudonymous authorship, and the status of the author as a person or a professional apart from their works.

#### **Submissions:**

**Abstracts of up to 300 words and a short academic CV including full contact details should be sent to [authorshipeui@gmail.com](mailto:authorshipeui@gmail.com) by **31 January 2017**.** Participants will receive notification of acceptance no later than 15 February 2017. (If notification is needed earlier, for example for reasons of visa deadlines, please indicate this on your application.)

**Travel bursaries for graduate students:** Thanks to funding generously provided by SHARP and the EUI, a limited number of bursaries are available for graduate students to cover travel costs. If you would be interested in applying for travel funding, please indicate this alongside your abstract.