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WORKSHOP

# ENTAILING PERPETUITY

Corporate endowments in late medieval  
and early modern Europe

Family strategies and archival practices

March 19 at Huntington Library (by invitation only)  
March 20 at UC Riverside

USA ~ CALIFORNIA ~ 19-20 MARCH, 2020

Few legal phenomena have been so relevant to premodern European societies as entails, a specific strategy that evolved to protect family inheritances and reproduce elite social status. Continued in modern practices such as trusts and LLCs, entails as corporate bodies became one key site of elite social agency across Europe in the early modern period. By enabling aristocratic families to create stable patrimonial endowments immune to division by inheritance or dispersion by lack of heirs, entails of various kinds (*mayorazgo*, *morgadio*, *fedecomesso*, *Fideikommiss*, *strict settlement*) fundamentally shaped the trajectory of European elites by creating impersonal multigenerational legal entities that became, in a very real way, key actors in shaping elite kinship patterns, national political life and rural social orders. Significantly, the process of establishing, reproducing, and contesting entails depended on and profoundly transformed the production of both public and private archives and their organization, as recent research by the organizers has shown. Equally, the stepwise abolition of entails in much of Europe by 19th-century liberal states transformed elite identity and left profound traces in elite family archives. Yet many questions remain open that can be researched by bringing critical archival theory and new historical models of kinship to this phenomenon. How did entailment become authorized and institutionalized, how were the tensions between aristocratic self-interest and central control that it embodied negotiated, how did it function in comparative perspective, and how did it change?

Building on the Portuguese-Iberian case studied by the European Research Council VINCULUM project in Lisbon, this workshop will examine entailment as a diverse but pivotal practice embedded in law, aristocratic discourse, and kinship-based organization, which was routinely constituted in and documented by private and public archives. The workshop will systematically break with traditional research frontiers by examining cases from the 14th to 17th century in both continental and Atlantic spaces, including both comparative perspectives and the study of later archival figuration and reconfigurations of entails as a social practice.

**March 19 (by invitation only)**  
**Thursday – Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA**

≈ President’s Conference Room

*The Materialities of Entailment:*  
*A workshop with Huntington manuscripts*

8:30 Light breakfast served

9:15 **Welcome**  
Vanessa Wilkie, Maria de Lurdes Rosa, Randolph C. Head

9:30 **Documents of entailment: presentation and discussion of materials from the Huntington collections**  
Vanessa Wilkie, Clay Stalls, and Huntington archival staff

10:30 Coffee

*ERC projects involving family archives*

10:45 **Presentation and discussion:**  
**The VINCULUM project in comparative perspective: Goals, materials, scope**  
Maria de Lurdes Rosa

**Roman noble family archives in the PerformArt project**  
Marco Cavietti

12:00 Reception and Lunch

**March 20**  
**Friday – UC Riverside**

≈ Round Room INTS 1111

*Entailment, social agency, and archival dynamics*

9:00 **Welcome**  
Randolph C. Head, Maria de Lurdes Rosa, Benjamin Liu

9:15 **Premodern corporate societies: a historiographical review**  
Pedro Cardim

**The social history of the aristocracy in Iberia in the later Middle Ages**  
Michael Crawford

10:45 Coffee

11:00 **Kin and archival strategies in oligarchic republics: Swiss perspectives on family archives**  
Randolph C. Head

**Historiographical perspectives on premodern family archives**  
Filipa Lopes

12:00 Lunch at the History Department Library

13:30 **Entail (fedecomessi) in Italian societies**  
Jean François Chauvard

**Entail in Iberian societies: an overview**  
Maria de Lurdes Rosa

14:45 Coffee

15:15 **Les fidéicommiss et la noblesse française d’Ancien Régime**  
Elie Haddad

**English dimensions of entail in historical comparison**  
Lloyd Bonfield

16:30 **Closing roundtable**  
Maria de Lurdes Rosa and Randolph C. Head