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Playing at the World: Students, Chess Knowledge, and Its Global Dimension

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The game of chess is a transnational and global phenomenon, with a long and complicated history of how knowledge of the game was transmitted, transformed, and translated. My paper will zoom in on one particular episode in the transmission of chess to the modern world. In 1604, Lucas Wielius, student at Strasbourg, dedicated a copy of his commented edition of Marco Girolamo Vida's *Schacchia* to Duke August the Younger of Braunschweig-Lüneburg. The copy with the handwritten dedication of Wielius and underlinings by Duke August is still preserved in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel. I will discuss three aspects: the special role played by students in the transmission of chess; the problems associated with the transfer of gaming know-how; and the transnational and global dimension of chess in an early modern perspective.

Short Biography

Matthias Roick is currently postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for the History of Renaissance Knowledge of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. He works within the framework of Prof. Valentina Lepri's ERC project "From East to West, and Back Again: Student Travel and Transcultural Knowledge Production in Renaissance Europe (c. 1470 - c. 1620)". After his PhD in European history at the EUI in Florence, he worked at the University of Göttingen. From 2014 to 2021, he was an affiliated fellow of the Lichtenberg Kolleg, Göttingen's Institute for Advanced Studies, and Freigeist Fellow for the History of Ethics at the University of Göttingen. From 2022-2024, he worked as PASIFIC (MSC) Fellow on a project on early modern friendship.

He is the author of *Pontano's Virtues. Aristotelian Moral and Political Thought in the Renaissance* (2017) and the co-editor of two recently published collected volumes, *Teaching Ethics in Early Modern Universities, 1500-1700* (2021), together with Valentina Lepri and Danilo Facca, and *Vera Amicitia. Classical Notions of Friendship in Renaissance Thought and Culture* (2022), with Patrizia Piredda. Matthias has also widely published on different aspects of early modern ethics and virtue theory, including pieces on animal ethics, Petrarca's moral self-fashioning, the virtue of magnificence, and the relationship between literature, collection history, and ethics, and early modern game culture.

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