

*The UCLA Department of Art History, UCLA Department of Italian, and
UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies present*

Julius II: the Warrior Pope Between Celebration and Condemnation

By Dr. Massimo Rospoche



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Abstract: Julius II Della Rovere (1443-1513) is the epitome of the Renaissance pope. Impetuous politician, determined pontiff, and magnificent patron of art, he embodied all of the grandiosity and contradictions that characterized the Renaissance papacy. With his bloody wars and splendid artistic patronage, Julius II has strongly shaped our collective conception of the Renaissance. But what did his contemporaries think about him? Not just men of letters, clerics or ambassadors, but the less elite members of society, the artisans and city dwellers of the early sixteenth century? What images and opinions of Julius circulated in his own day not only within the courts and the chanceries, but also in the streets, squares and markets of European cities?

This paper explores the representations of Pope Julius II in European political communication during the tumultuous decade of his reign. By combining ballads performed by street singers and images of printed ephemera with humanistic texts and Renaissance portraits, it will present a more complex portrait of the warrior pope, one that was continuously oscillating between celebration and condemnation, between war and holiness.

Dr. Rospoche received a BA in Literature and Philosophy from the University of Trent in 2002 and a Ph.D. in History from the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence in 2008. Currently, he is a full-time Research Fellow at the Institute for Italian and German Historical Studies (2007-present). His broad area of research is the political and cultural history of early modern Europe. He is particularly interested in the ways in which both cultural exchange and political communication occurred in urban public spaces (such as streets and squares) through the interaction of orality and print. Dr. Rospoche has held fellowships at several institutions including the British Academy, Centro Studi sulla Civiltà del Tardo Medioevo, CIU (Ascona), Centre of Reformation and Renaissance Studies (Toronto), and Yale University among others. He also served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Trent from 2007-2009. From 2011-2015, Dr. Rospoche collaborated on the European Research Council (ERC) project "Oral Culture, Manuscript and Print in Early Modern Italy, 1450-1700" based at the University of Leeds. He is currently one of the core members of the project "The European Dimensions of Popular Print" (EDPOP) based at the University of Utrecht.

