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Doctoral School of Historical
and Cultural Studies

SE Religion and State

The Power Dynamics and their Spatial Impact

7th May 2025

Department of Classical Archaeology

1190 Vienna, Franz Klein-Gasse 1, 1st floor, Seminar room 12

Programme

13:30 – 13:40 Welcome by BASEMA HAMARNEH and BERNHARD PALME

SESSION I

Chair: ROGELIO TOLEDO

13:40 – 14:00 ISABELLA ZAUNBAUER: Die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung von römischen Zwischengoldgläsern mit Porträts in der Spätantike

14:00 – 14:20 MIHAJLO N. DŽAMTOVSKI: The Emperor Justinian I and the foundation of Iustiniana Prima

14:20 – 14:30 Discussion

14:30 – 14:45 Coffee Break

SESSION II

Chair: MIHAJLO N. DŽAMTOVSKI

14:45 – 15:05 NOUR SABER: The Gift of the Imamate: Religion and Sovereignty in the Almohad Caliphate 594H.A (12th Century)

15:05 – 15:25 NORBERT H. ORBÁN: The "Other" Within - Shaping the narrative of the integration of Cumans in medieval Hungary from the 13th-14th century

15:25 – 15:45 EVA BOISGARD: Zwischen Heiligenverehrung und Herrschaftsinszenierung: Kaiser Maximilian I. und der Harnisch mit Georgsbezügen

15:45 – 16:00 Discussion

Die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung von römischen Zwischengoldgläsern mit Porträts in der Spätantike

In Anbetracht der großen Bedeutung von Porträts im Bereich der Toten- und Grabkulturen durch Jahrhunderte hinweg, widmet sich dieses Projekt einer Kunstgattung der spätantiken Bestattungskultur, den römischen Zwischengoldgläsern. Diese verdanken ihren Namen der Goldverarbeitungstechnik. Es handelt sich um Glasobjekte mit Goldblattauflagen, die herausgearbeitete, ornamentale oder figürliche Darstellungen tragen oder mit Malereien versehen sind. Etwa 500 Goldglas-Objekte aus dem 3. und 4. Jahrhundert, vorwiegend aus den römischen Katakomben sind belegt. Sie werden als Grabbeigaben und/oder Grabmarkierungen angesehen. Jüdische, pagane und christliche Motive belegen die kulturelle Vielschichtigkeit der römischen Bevölkerung in der Spätantike.

In dieser Studie werden nur Zwischengoldgläser mit Porträts berücksichtigt. Nachgegangen werden soll der Frage, inwieweit diese die gesellschaftlichen Werte und sozialen Hierarchien der spätantiken Gesellschaft widerspiegeln und in welchem Kontext sie hergestellt wurden. Die Herstellung dieser goldenen Manufakturen fällt in eine Zeit des großen Umbruchs im römischen Reich. Die Umschichtung der politischen, wirtschaftlichen und soziologischen Verhältnisse, vor allem die Hinwendung der Römischen Welt zum Christentum führte zu massiven Veränderungen.

Zwischengoldgläser sind keine isolierten Kunstobjekte, denn sie erfüllen eine Aufgabe im Leben der betreffenden Gesellschaftsschichten. Die Porträtdarstellungen auf den Gläsern werden aufgrund historischer und kultureller Hintergründe interpretiert und spiegeln somit möglicherweise die gesellschaftliche Umstrukturierung wider.

The Emperor Justinian I and the foundation of Iustiniana Prima

The city of Iustiniana Prima, founded by Emperor Justinian I (527–565 CE) in the early years of his reign, stands as a remarkable example of imperial intervention in urban and religious affairs during Late Antiquity. Unlike earlier Roman cities, which were typically founded in plains during times of peace and followed classical urban planning principles, Iustiniana Prima was a newly constructed urban centre, devoid of previous settlements. Its establishment was a commemorative act, honouring the emperor's birthplace, and it was richly adorned with churches and promoted to the status of an archbishopric in 535 CE.

Following the political and socio-economic disruptions from the late 4th century CE onwards, Roman cities in the Balkans experienced significant transformations. Urban centres disintegrated and ruralised, and previously established models of urbanism were abandoned. Within this context, Iustiniana Prima represents a new vision of urban development, reflecting the altered realities of the 6th century CE.

The relationship between the Roman state and religious institutions was long established, and by Justinian's time, imperial involvement in church matters was deeply rooted. Earlier interventions culminated in events such as the Edict of Milan and the convening of the ecumenical councils. Under Justinian I, imperial church policy intensified, with numerous churches being constructed as symbols of imperial authority, notably the third phase of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

Iustiniana Prima, conceived both as a political and ecclesiastical centre, embodied these developments. Serving as the religious hub for several provinces, it was integral to Justinian's strategy of reinforcing imperial presence through religious and urbanistic means. This paper aims to present Iustiniana Prima within the framework of Justinian's church policy and analyse how this policy is reflected in the archaeological remains of the site.

Nour Saber

The Gift of the Imamate: Religion and Sovereignty in the Almohad Caliphate 594H.A (12th Century)

This paper investigates the relationship between religion and political authority in the Almohad Caliphate (12th century), focusing on the Arabic chronicle *al-Mann bi-l-imāma* by ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Ṣāhib as-Ṣalāḥ, an Andalusian official and chronicler closely connected to the Almohad administration. Written during the reigns of the first three Almohad caliphs, the text reflects a unique fusion of religious dogma and state ideology. Central to the Almohad claim to power was the doctrine of the imām al-mahdī—the infallible, divinely guided leader—through which the dynasty asserted both spiritual and political supremacy in the western Islamic world. Through a literary and historical analysis of *al-Mann bi-l-imāma*, this paper highlights how it was strategically employed to support a theocratic model of governance. It situates the chronicle within broader traditions of Arabic Jihād poetry and Almohad political theology, showing how literary form and religious ideology together shaped the concept of statehood in the medieval Maghreb and al-Andalus.

The "Other" Within - Shaping the narrative of the integration of Cumans in medieval Hungary from the 13th-14th century

The ongoing threat posed by the Mongols compelled the Hungarian king Béla IV (1206–1270) to seek potential alliances in order to ensure the security of his realm. In a manner similar to that of several preceding Árpád kings, he did not necessarily look for them within neighbouring Christian kingdoms, but rather among the pagan nomadic horsemen of the Eurasian steppes. The Cumans, a Turkic people that traditionally inhabited the steppes, were known to be involved in political power struggles within the Russian, Byzantine, and Eastern European domains from the 11th century onwards. Regarded as accomplished mounted warriors, they were heirs to the martial traditions of other steppe nomads. Their units, consisting of mounted archers who employed nomadic tactics such as “false retreat”, became integral components of several Christian armies.

The Hungarian King Béla IV also sought to exploit these military capabilities, thus inviting the Cuman prince, Kuthen (Kötöny), and approximately 40,000 other, mostly pagan Cumans to establish themselves as a military entity within the Christian kingdom in 1239. In exchange for military assistance, whereby King Béla also obliged the Cumans to address potential internal conflicts, he assured the Cumans a series of privileges that guaranteed the preservation of ethnocultural traditions as well as autonomy over the territories allocated by the monarch (Kunság). As might be expected, this initiative was met with a certain measure of incomprehension, if not aversion, from the prominent Hungarian nobility (magnates), but, most notably, from the clergy. Conflicts between the pagan, nomadic aliens and the Christian, settled Hungarians were inevitable, and even in the first decades after the settlement there were regular and even violent clashes.

The paper sets out to analyse how chroniclers of the 13th and 14th centuries portrayed the first decades of the attempt to integrate the Cumans into the Kingdom of Hungary. The specific passages in a total of four chronicles will be examined and analysed for any similarities, differences or even caesuras. The objective of this study is to ascertain whether a divergent perception and reception of the integration of the Cumans into the Kingdom of Hungary in the 13th century has emerged over the centuries.

Eva Boisgard

Zwischen Heiligenverehrung und Herrschaftsinszenierung: Kaiser Maximilian I. und der Harnisch mit Georgsbezügen

Der Harnisch als zentrales Objekt maximilianischer höfischer Repräsentation steht im Mittelpunkt dieser Arbeit. Im Fokus stehen ausgewählte Stücke, die bildlich oder textlich auf den heiligen Georg verweisen. Sie bilden eine geschlossene Gruppe, da sie Georg als Reiterheiligen – die zentrale Identifikationsfigur Kaiser Maximilians – thematisieren und in seinem Umfeld entstanden sind. Mittels ikonographischer und ikonologischer Analyse wird untersucht, ob das Tragen eines mit Georgsbezügen versehenen Harnisches durch Maximilian als Ausdruck einer Selbstidentifikation mit dem Heiligen zu deuten ist. Die Arbeit argumentiert jedoch, dass der Harnisch weniger als Zeichen persönlicher Identifikation zu verstehen ist, sondern als bewusste Inszenierung politischer und historischer Botschaften – etwa zur Erinnerung an die Verteidigung der südöstlichen Grenze. Dies verdeutlicht, dass Religion und Staat im spätmittelalterlichen Herrschaftsverständnis untrennbar miteinander verbunden waren.