

Medieval History Seminar

Veranstalter: German Historical Institute London (GHIL) / German Historical Institute Washington, D.C.

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Bericht von: Paul Schweitzer-Martin, Institut für Fränkisch-Pfälzische Geschichte und Landeskunde / SFB 933, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

The 11th Medieval History Seminar, like earlier seminars, brought together a group of twenty Ph.D. students from both sides of the Atlantic, as well as professors from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany, who chaired the nine panels along with Cornelia Linde and Stephan Bruhn from the GHIL. The seminar invited Ph.D. students to discuss their current or recently completed research.

True to the seminar's well-established format, the papers were the centre of discussion. These were circulated prior to the conference and were not presented. Instead, short commentaries, prepared by fellow participants, on the key arguments of the individual papers and overarching aspects concerning the whole panel, kicked off each session. This allowed for more and in-depth discussion. The peer group and the conveners shared questions, criticism, suggestions, and advice. A wide range of topics and of periods was represented, from late antiquity to the early modern era, with a strong concentration on central Europe, and some papers on the Mediterranean sphere. Interestingly, gender and the non-European Middle Ages were barely touched upon specifically, even though aspects of gender were repeatedly discussed throughout the seminar. Overall, the papers and discussions were open to a variety of methods and fields of research.

The seminar opened with a discussion of AARON VANIDES's (Yale/Graz) paper on speech and empire under Sigismund of Luxembourg, who is often seen as emblematic of the ambiguous nature of authority in the later Middle Ages. Based on speeches and other rhetorical sources from the fifteenth century, Vanides argued that we should conceive of Sigismund and the idea of the emperor in this

period not as an author or authority, but as an audience. RIKE SZILL (Kiel) discussed accounts of the fall of Constantinople in light of trauma studies. Based on Dukas's historiographical account, she asked to what degree the "catastrophe" of Constantinople's fall was sayable, or is even described in the sources. The paper also investigated strategies of attributing meaningfulness to the events, which were common knowledge and therefore could not be omitted from the narrative. Both papers used new approaches, drawing on rhetoric and trauma studies, which were thoroughly discussed.

Moving on from the late to the high Middle Ages, the second panel discussed Sicilian and Iberian history. DANA KATZ (Jerusalem/Toronto) examined the parklands and palaces of Norman Sicily. The construction of the royal palace of La Favara and its monumental lake marked a key moment in the secular self-fashioning of the 12th-century kings of Sicily and their courts. Taking elite Islamic extramural estates as their models, the Norman rulers created a landscape of power recognizable both to their Muslim subjects at home, and their contemporaries in the Mediterranean. SANDRA SCHIEWECK (Heidelberg) examined the frontier and borders of Castile in the 12th and 13th centuries. The paper highlighted questions about how borders were described in the sources. Were Christian-Muslim and Christian-Christian borders perceived and organized in different ways? How important were natural demarcations such as water and mountains? While Katz drew not only on textual sources, but also on archaeology, emphasizing the role of water and technological transfer, Schieweck's research relied on new perspectives provided by the spatial turn.

In a panel on two aspects of kingship, MICHELLE HUFSCHMID (Oxford) argued that Pope Innocent IV used a crusade against the Staufer (1246–51) as a tool to facilitate regime change in the Holy Roman Empire. Without framing the military campaign as a crusade, Henry Raspe's and William of Holland's attempts to become the new king of the Romans would have immediately collapsed. CHRISTINA BRÖKER (Regensburg) looked at the description of the king's psyche in

Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*. Her aim was to better understand the function of the emotions described, as the interpretation of emotions as rituals of political communication does not seem adequate for the episodes narrated in the sources.

The fourth panel introduced new perspectives on medieval society. First, DALLAS GRUBBS (Washington) analyzed the *Vita Dagoberti Regis Francorum*. He explored how the author of the *Vita* used his sources creatively, selectively, and with significant alterations to present a nuanced portrait of 7th-century society to address contemporary political realities and concerns. FRIEDERIKE PFISTER (Bochum) went down a different route, exploring how late medieval texts viewed different kinds of knowledge and potentially classified them as „foreign“. Roger Bacon's and Dante Alighieri's narratives of the origin story of astrology functioned as case studies.

Legal traditions of the late Middle Ages were illuminated in the fifth panel. MIREILLE PARDON (Yale) introduced a greater complexity into the traditional narrative of legal history that a centralizing judicial bureaucracy contributed to the decline of communal reconciliation procedures and the rise of bodily punishment. She argued that a change in the perception of homicide encouraged execution over reconciliation. Increased emphasis on the „common good“ curtailed the idea of excusable masculine violence and encouraged the development of early modern judicial systems in the Low Countries. JULIA BÜHNER (Münster) likewise questioned a traditional narrative in legal history by re-dating the formation and conventionalization of international law. She showed how aspects of international law arose during the conquest of the Canary Islands. Treaties between indigenous people and the Spanish conquerors are one example. The paper also showed the influence of non-European entities on the formation and idea of international law. Bühner's work could result in the history of international law having to be rewritten.

The sixth panel discussed three papers on late medieval religious orders and theology. ROBERT FRIEDRICH (Leipzig/Paris) analyzed mendicants functioning as envoys for

the kings of Mallorca and Aragon in the first half of the 14th century. His key questions concerned the role that the mendicants played in the bigger picture of medieval diplomacy, their selection, and what implications their association with a religious order had. While the source base for Mallorca proved to be too small to allow conclusions to be drawn, examples from Aragon show that the selection of envoys was deliberate and influenced by the intended recipient. ALEXANDER PEPLOW (Oxford) considered Alvarus Pelagius in the context of both the Apostolic Poverty controversy of the late 13th and early 14th centuries, and the clash between the Emperor Ludwig IV and Pope John XXII. Alvarus argued for absolute obedience to the Pope, believing that this obedience should be used to reform the Church along Franciscan lines. AMELIA KENNEDY (Yale), finally, examined Cistercian attitudes towards abbatial retirement, particularly the opposition to retirement evident in 12th-century sources. She claimed that these attitudes reflected the importance of productivity, service, and labor in later life, and that the 13th-century trend in favor of abbatial retirement stemmed from increasing bureaucracy and new understandings of what constituted the „common good“ for a monastic community. The discussion showed that age and perception of age are important categories of analysis for historical research.

Another three-paper panel then dealt with the compilation of manuscripts and materiality of incunabula. OLIVER GLASER (Wuppertal) presented the compilation, variation, and discourse of changing marriage rules in manuscripts between 750 and 1050. He highlighted that Isidor of Seville's definition of how many degrees and generations kinship comprises was often omitted in excerpts concerning the topic in order to avoid contradictions within the text collections. LENNEKE VAN RAAIJ (Exeter) showed that the growing authority of the archbishops within the city did not visibly influence the composition of local masses for the saintly patrons of Trier in the late 10th century. Separate institutions produced their own liturgy with specific themes and structures, following the examples of creativity and prefer-

ences for older sources known in Echternach. PAUL SCHWEITZER-MARTIN (Heidelberg) analyzed what information textual sources provide on the supply chains of paper for print workshops in Speyer. These findings were compared with results of watermark analyses in the incunabula from Speyer. Both approaches showed that the paper supplies came from multiple mills in different regions. The analysis also showed that the average thickness of the paper declined over time.

The eighth panel comprised only the paper by DANIEL SCHUMACHER (Freiburg) on Conrad I. He questioned three key arguments that interpreted Conrad as the last of the Carolingians and reassessed his election, conflicts with nobles, and strategies of legitimization. The reassessment of the historiography and sources showed that the analysis of single events has barely influenced the long-standing narratives of Conrad I. The second paper by SUKANYA RAI-SHARMA (Oxford) was not reviewed as she unfortunately could not attend the discussion.

Two different types of networks linked the papers of the last panel. On the one hand, MICHEL SUMMER (Dublin) considered the significance of the cartulary of the *Liber Aureus Epternacensis* for the analysis of Willibrord's political network. By examining the context of the cartulary's compilation and discussing the problems associated with its modern edition, he argued that Willibrord's network was not restricted to the family of Pippin II, but characterized by its wide political and geographical range. DANIEL GNECKOW (Kassel), on the other hand, studied the Swabian League of Cities (1376–89) with network analysis. He explored how different powers, such as kings, lords, and other cities, interacted with the members of the Swabian League, as well as how the League's cities themselves dealt with each other. The concept of securitization was used to examine the cities' strategies for coping with conflicts and their struggle for autonomy and peace. Both papers broadened the existing research by including new perspectives on the role of women and the nobility, in addition to those of kings and dukes.

SIMON MACLEAN (St. Andrews), one of the conveners, delivered a public lecture, pre-

senting a close reading of Charles the Bald's *Edict of Pitres* (864). The critical edition marks six added clauses that probably have to be understood as parts of the King's speech when the edict was issued. Based on this finding, MacLean concluded that the edict is not applicable to the general situation in the 9th century but has to be read in a very specific context, namely, that Charles the Bald was concerned about resources being diverted from a bridge-building project at that moment.

The seminar concluded with a final discussion chaired by Ruth Mazo Karras, whose term as convener ended with this 11th Medieval History Seminar. The discussion ranged from traditions in historiography to academic structures on both sides of the Atlantic. A key question was how to deal with well-known older scholarship without ignoring it, but also adapting it to take account of the methods and questions of the 21st century. At the same time, strategies to find adequate terms and descriptions for historical phenomena were deliberated. Interestingly, many participants highlighted that the bilingual debate helped them rethink the meaning and accuracy of the terms they used. On the one hand, almost all papers tended towards presenting detailed case studies, which added new aspects and complexity to the established narratives, and some even deconstructed long-standing scholarship. On the other hand, the question remained how to implement new, more complex findings into textbook-compatible knowledge. Overall, the Medieval History Seminar was a great opportunity to engage in current research going well beyond the interests of our own institutions and regions, and to meet other early career researchers from far and near.

Conference overview:

Panel 1

Chair: Paul Freedman (Yale)

Aaron Vanides (Yale/Graz): *Securitas loquendi: Speech and Empire under Sigismund of Luxemburg, 1410-1437*

Rike Szill (Kiel): *Von Sprachlosigkeit und Erklärungsnot. Herrschaftsvorstellungen nach der Einnahme Konstantinopels 1453 im Spannungsfeld von Destabilisierung und Restabil-*

isierung

Panel 2

Chair: Bernhard Jussen (Frankfurt am Main)

Dana Katz (Jerusalem/Toronto): A Modified Landscape of the Medieval Mediterranean: The Parklands and Palaces of Norman Sicily

Sandra Schieweck (Heidelberg): Die Grenzen Kastiliens im Übergang zum Spätmittelalter – Genese und Begriffe

Public lecture

Simon MacLean (St. Andrews): The Carolingian Origins of the Medieval Castle

Panel 3

Chair: Simon MacLean (St. Andrews)

Michelle Hufschmid (Oxford): The Crusade against the Staufer in Germany, 1246-51

Christina Bröker (Regensburg): Das Herz des Königs im Konflikt. Beschreibungen emotionaler Reaktionen auf Widerstand in Chroniken und herrscherlichen Briefen in England (13. Jahrhundert)

Panel 4

Chair: Ruth Mazo Karras (Trinity College Dublin)

Dallas Grubbs (Washington, D.C.): Using the Merovingian Past in Later Carolingian Lotharingia: The Evidence of the *Vita Dagoberti Regis Francorum*

Friederike Pfister (Bochum): Von ehrenwerten Vorfahren, hochmütigen Riesen und arabischen Gelehrten – Der Ursprung der Astrologie in Texten lateinisch-christlicher Gelehrter des Spätmittelalters

Panel 5

Chair: Len Scales (Durham University)

Mireille Pardon (Yale): The Changing Perception of Lethal Violence and the Rise of Spectacular Justice in Late Medieval Flanders

Julia Bühner (Münster): Majos, Majoreros und Bimbachos: Vergessene Völker in der Geschichte des Internationalen Rechts

Panel 6

Chair: Cornelia Linde (GHI London)

Amelia Kennedy (Yale): Elderly Cistercian Abbots and Retirement from Abbatial Duties

in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Western Europe

Robert Friedrich (Leipzig/Paris): Reisen im Auftrag des Königs. Franziskaner und Dominikaner im Königreich Mallorca (1276–1349)

Alexander Peplow (Oxford): Alvarus Pelagius's *De planctu Ecclesiae* and the Virtue of Obedience

Panel 7

Chair: Cornelia Linde (GHI London)

Oliver Glaser (Frankfurt am Main): Kompilation, Varianz und Diskurs. Heiratsregeln in Sammelhandschriften der fränkischen Manuskriptkultur (750–1050)

Lenneke van Raaij (Exeter): Celebrating Holy Mass and Remembering the Local Past: Local Liturgy in Trier (c. 900–1050)

Paul Schweitzer-Martin (Heidelberg): Zum Verhältnis von Papier und Buchdruck im Spätmittelalter

Panel 8

Chair: Stephan Bruhn (GHI London)

Sukanya Rai-Sharma (Oxford): The Good Place of Arles in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Age

Daniel Schumacher (Freiburg): Konrad I. – „der letzte Karolinger?“

Panel 9

Chair: Dorothea Weltecke (Frankfurt am Main)

Michel Summer (Dublin): „Harbinger of Frankish Power?“ The Networks of Willibrord's Mission (AD 690–739)

Daniel Gneckow (Kassel): Der Schwäbische Städtebund 1376–1389. Methodische Überlegungen zu Sicherheitsproblemen in urbanen Netzwerken

Final discussion

Tagungsbericht *Medieval History Seminar*. 10.10.2019–12.10.2019, London, in: H-Soz-Kult 09.04.2020.