

Conflict Management: Networking Emperors and Bishops

Programme Workshop: 22nd-23rd March 2021

Registration: liliane.marti@hist.unibe.ch

Zoom-link will be sent out on Monday morning, 22nd of March

MONDAY, 22nd March 2021

13.00 – 13.15

Opening Address by the Project Team

Session I: Emperors

Chair: Jan Meister

13.15 – 13.45

Kamil Choda (Tübingen)

Narrating and Exercising Influence: 4th-Century Councils in the Christian Historiography

13.45 – 14.15

Jessica van 't Westeinde (Bern)

Theodosius II Facing Anarchism at Ephesus

14.15 – 14.30 *Screen break*

14.30 – 15.00

Peter van Nuffelen (Gent)

Performing Social Roles in a Hierarchical Society in Cases of Conflict and Violence

15.00 – 15.30

Peter Riedlberger (Bamberg)

Petition and Response: You Can't Always Get What You Want

15.30 – 16.00 *Afternoon break*

Session II: Bishops

Chair: Georgiana Huian

16.00 – 16.30

Eric Fournier (Pennsylvania)

Constantine and the alleged persecution of Donatists

16.30 – 17.00

Liliane Marti (Bern)

Bishops as Referees in the Donatist Controversy

17.00 – 17.15 *Screen break*

17.15 – 17.45

Paul van Geest (Tilburg/Leuven)

Augustine's Letter 185 and the Donatists

17.45 – 18.15

Closing discussion Emperors and Bishops

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TUESDAY 23rd March 2021

Session III: Mediating Conflict

Chair: Stefan Rebenich

13.30 – 14.00

Marijke Kooijman (Gent)

Preparing for Court? Pre-Conciliar Consensus Building in the Letter Collections of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451)

14.00-14.30

Wolfram Kinzig (Bonn)

The Creed at the Council of Chalcedon (451): Establishing Structures of Doctrinal Dependency

14.30 – 14.45 *Screen break*

14.45 – 15.15

Mantė Lenkaitytė Ostermann (Fribourg)

Believers, Heretics, and Judaizers: Religious Categories in the Greek Councils of the 4th Century

15.15 – 15.45 *Afternoon break*

Chair: all

15.45 – 16.30

Closing discussion

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This workshop serves as a platform to analyse and discuss the dynamics of inner-Christian conflicts in the Roman Empire during the fourth and fifth centuries CE. Whereas many aspects of the church councils have already been researched extensively, the interpretation of councils as form of conflict management has thus far received little attention. In order to address that gap and analyse the councils from a conflict-theoretical perspective, the workshop brings together an interdisciplinary selection of emerging and leading scholars who specialise in aspects of the interplay of agency, power, conflict, and violence.

It is from the early fourth century onwards, that Christianity is increasingly able to profile itself publicly, to influence society, and to take to the 'public stage' to fight internal conflicts. This development was first triggered by Emperor Constantine's official toleration of Christianity, and thus Christianity became one of the legal religions of the Empire. The imperial understanding of what religion was, and what it should be, may explain the Emperor's interest in ecclesial affairs. This is already manifested in the imperially convoked councils in the so-called 'Donatist Controversy' (313 CE Rome, 314 CE Arles), as well as in the equally imperially convoked First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. It implies that this imperial shift triggered a change in the way churches dealt with internal conflicts (Lim 1995). From the 'open debate'-style synods in the third century, councils now became highly politically charged. Prior to a council, an intricate train of networking, influencing, and petitioning would be set in motion. Leading bishops adopted strategies of influencing to strengthen their networks and to win imperial support. A string of correspondence often preceded the convocation of a council, and it would hardly cease once the council had been concluded. If one considers councils as a means to settle disputes, in other words conflicts, then the convocation, organization, and execution of a council may be understood as forms of conflict management. Our workshop discusses concrete case studies that reveal larger questions of the tensions between politics and religion, and the conflict and violence that may erupt if these powers intertwine. The subsequent question then is if and how coping strategies are employed to resolve that tension to come to peaceful coexistence.

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Liliane Marti, Jessica van 't Westeinde



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