

Kingship and Political Culture in the Visigothic Kingdom

The publication of *On Kings*, by anthropologists David Graeber and Marshall Sahlins (2017) has raised numerous questions about kingship and its relation to state formation, political theology, and state-society relations. In particular, the concluding chapter in Graeber and Sahlins's book, "Notes on the politics of divine kingship: Or, elements for an archaeology of sovereignty" (*On Kings*, pp. 377-464), offers a model to understand the "politics of kingship" in early societies. Briefly, politics fluctuated between two models of kingship: divine-like, unrestricted power and sacralized, contained power.

This model potentially offers new opportunities to study the Visigothic kingdom, a period rich in political literature despite the documentary dearth in other areas. What does Visigothic political theory or political theology reveal about the politics of kingship? How did different actors in Visigothic society envision limits to and powers of royal authority? Do discussions over kingship reveal a particularly Visigothic political culture beyond the traditional concepts of "Roman", "Christian", or "Germanic"? Were Visigothic kings the only locus of sovereignty in Visigothic society? What role did religious and non-religious ritual play in limiting or expanding kingly authority?

Contact

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefan Esders

Freie Universität Berlin
Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut
Geschichte der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters
Koserstr. 20
14195 Berlin
+49 30 83856823
esdersst@campus.fu-berlin.de

Prof. Dr. Damián Fernández

Freie Universität Berlin
Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut
Geschichte der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters
Koserstr. 20
14195 Berlin
dfernandez@niu.edu

Prof. Dr. Sabine Panzram

Universität Hamburg
RomanIslam - Center for Comparative Empire and Transcultural Studies
Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1 / R. 021
20146 Hamburg
+49 40 42838 4524
sabine.panzram@uni-hamburg.de



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**June 29-30, 2023,
Freie Universität Berlin**



Thursday June 29, 2023

„Despoten-Villa“, Fabeckstr. 15, 14195 Berlin

- 9.30 h **Jörg Klinger** (Freie Universität Berlin)
Welcome address
- 9.45 h **Stefan Esders** (Freie Universität Berlin)
Damián Fernández (Northern Illinois University - Freie Universität Berlin)
Sabine Panzram (Universität Hamburg)
Welcome and Introduction
- 10.00 h **Courtney Booker** (University of British Columbia)
Sacred Kingdom, Penitential State: A Short History of L'Augustunisme politique
- 10.45 h Coffee

Kingship and Literary Culture

Chair: Stefan Esders (Freie Universität Berlin)

- 11.15 h **Wolfram Drews** (Universität Münster)
Observations on „Tyranny“ in Julian of Toledo
- 12.00 h **Julia Aguilar** (Universitat de València)
Political Theology in Taio of Saragossa's Sentences
- 12.45 h Lunch

Kingship between Theory and Practice

Chair: Sabine Panzram (Universität Hamburg)

- 15.00 h **Paulo Pachá** (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro)
Fragile kings? Royal Authority and Visigothic Political Culture between Theory and Practice
- 15.45 h **Pablo C. Díaz** (Universidad de Salamanca)
Regia potestas/iudicandi potestas: The Visigothic King and The Monopoly of the Law in the Liber Iudiciorum
- 16.30 h Coffee
- 17.00 h **Damián Fernández** (Northern Illinois University)
Kingship, Property Law, and the Visigothic Politics of Land
- 17.45 h **Stefan Esders and Gerda Heydemann** (Freie Universität Berlin)
The Visigothic Oath of Fidelity and the Power to Bind and Release
- 20.30 h Dinner

Friday June 30, 2023

„Despoten-Villa“, Fabeckstr. 15, 14195 Berlin

Kingship and the Sacred

Chair: Benjamin Savill (Freie Universität Berlin)

- 9.30 h **Céline Martin** (Université Bordeaux-Montaigne)
El monarca hispanovisigodo: ¿un rey obispo?
- 10.15 h **Molly Lester** (US Naval Academy)
Setting and Resetting the Boundaries of Royal Religious Authority in Visigothic Iberia
- 11.00 h Coffee
- 11.30 h **Óscar Perdomo Ceballos** (Freie Universität Berlin)
Narratives of Tension between Local Forms of Piety and Representations of Kingship around the Marian Cult in the Visigothic Kingdom
- 12.15 h **Caroline Goodson** (Cambridge University)
Reifying rex: Votive Crowns and Early Medieval Kingship
- 13.00 h Lunch

Kingship, Cities, and Political Culture

Chair: Damián Fernández (Northern Illinois University - Freie Universität Berlin)

- 15.30 h **Sabine Panzram** (Universität Hamburg)
„The Power of Cities“? Local Government in Visigothic Hispania
- 16.15 h **Lauro Olmo Enciso** (Universidad de Alcalá)
State Formation and Visigothic Kingship: An Interpretation through Materiality
- 17.00 h Coffee
- 17.30 h **Ruth Pliego** (Universidad de Sevilla)
Visigothic Divine Sovereignty: Evidence from Coinage
- 18.15 h **Stefan Esders** (Freie Universität Berlin)
Damián Fernández (Northern Illinois University - Freie Universität Berlin)
Sabine Panzram (Universität Hamburg)
Conclusions
- 20.30 h Dinner

Location

Kollegforschungsgruppe 2615 „Rethinking Oriental Despotism“

Fabeckstr. 15 („Despoten-Villa“), Raum O13

14195 Berlin, Germany

