

Visigothic Kingship in Action: Impact and Re-signification

The study of Visigothic kingship has a long and respectable tradition. On the one hand, scholars have scrutinized the numerous normative texts from the Visigothic kingdom to recover the legal foundations of kingship and the institutions surrounding kings (court, councils, army). As a corollary, a robust series of studies that combine normative and historical texts have explored the interactions between kings and magnates and kings and bishops in what can be described as the kingdom's "high politics." On the other hand, scholars have combined the study of normative texts with theological treatises or descriptions of rituals to discuss cultural traditions of the post-imperial world. As a result, Visigothic kingship has been presented as having evolved from a supposed ancestral form of Gothic or Germanic kingship, as resulting from the transformation of Roman rulership, or as having developed Christian ideas of government.

This conference will gather experts in different areas of Visigothic history to redirect the study of kingship in new directions. By discussing "kingship in action," the papers will consider how different social actors perceived kingship, how they resignified and repurposed top-down ideas on kingship in the Visigothic kingdom and the early medieval polities after the kingdom's demise, and the perception of the materiality of kingship (buildings, art, coinage). Concurrently, contributors will explore how local practice and historical events shaped kingship "from below." The combination of a multidisciplinary approach will allow new ways of interpreting kingship, showing them to be more fragmentary and contingent institution than previously thought.

Contact

Prof. Dr. Sabine Panzram

RomanIslam - Center for Comparative Empire and Transcultural Studies
Universität Hamburg
Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1 / R. 23
20146 Hamburg (Germany)
sabine.panzram@uni-hamburg.de

Prof. Dr. Damián Fernández

Department of History
Zulauf Hall 724
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115
dfernandez@niu.edu

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefan Esders

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



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June 11–13, 2026

Universität Hamburg



Thursday, 11.06.2026

17.00 h Sabine Panzram (Universität Hamburg)
Damián Fernández (Northern Illinois University)
Stefan Esders (Freie Universität Berlin)
Welcome and Introduction

The Transformation of Visigothic Kingship

17.30 h Jeroen Wijnendaele (Ghent University)
Aquitanian Gothic Kingship: What it should have been and what it was

18.15 h Molly Lester (US Naval Academy)
Religious Rulership Reworked: Visigothic Experiments in Orthodox Kingship

20.00 h Reception

Friday, 12.06.2026

09.30 h Paulo Pachá (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro)
Was the Visigothic Kingdom of Toledo a Theocracy? Sacred Kingship and the Nature of Power

10.15 h Céline Martin (Université Bordeaux-Montaigne)
The Episcopal Model in Visigothic Kingship

11.00 h Coffee

Visigothic Kingship and Historical Memory

11.30 h Julia Aguilar Miquel (Universidad de Valencia)
The Concept of Kingship in Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel: a Visigothic Heritage?

12.15 h Jorge Elices Ocón (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas Madrid)
Visigothic Kingship in Arabic Sources: an Image in/between Contexts

13.00 h Lunch

Kingship and Rebellion

15.30 h Wolfgang Drews (Universität Münster)
Sacral Kingship performed in Historiography: The Opposition of Princeps Religiosus and Tyrant in Julian of Toledo

16.15 h María Esperanza Osaba García (Universidad del País Vasco)
Stefan Esders (Freie Universität Berlin)
The Deposition of Archbishop Sisbert of Toledo (690-693): Kingship, High Treason and Political Trials in Late Seventh-Century Visigothic Iberia

17.00 h Coffee

Kingship and the Law

17.30 h Damián Fernández (Northern Illinois University)
The Visigothic Politics of Land: Royal Gifts and Property Rights

18.15 h Pablo Díaz (Universidad de Salamanca)
Regia potestas/iudicandi potestas: King and Monopoly of the Law in the Liber Iudiciorum

20.30 h Dinner

Saturday, 13.06.2026

The Material and Spatial Contexts of Kingship

09.30 h Isabel Velázquez Soriano (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
Gisela Ripoll (Universitat de Barcelona)
The King's Gifts: Experiencing Royal Donations in Texts, Inscriptions and Material Culture

10.15 h Lauro Olmo Enciso (Universidad de Alcalá)
State Formation and Visigothic Kingship: An Interpretation through Materiality

11.00 h Coffee

11.30 h Ruth Pliego Vázquez (Universidad de Sevilla)
Visigothic Divine Sovereignty: Evidence from Coinage

12.15 h José Carlos López Gómez (Universidad de Málaga / Universität Hamburg)
Episcopal control over territory in Suevic and Visigothic Iberia: Insights from spatial technologies

13.00 h Lunch

Kingship and the Government

15.30 h Sabine Panzram (Universität Hamburg)
„The Power of Cities“? Local Government and Kingship in Visigothic Iberia

16.15 h Kay Boers (University of Amsterdam)
Rapina Civium: Poverty and Kingship in the Visigothic Kingdom

17.00 h Coffee

17.30 h Sabine Panzram (Universität Hamburg)
Damián Fernández (Northern Illinois University)
Stefan Esders (Freie Universität Berlin)
Conclusions: Visigothic Kingship in Action: divine-like, sacralized, theocratic...?

20.30 h Conference Dinner

Location

Warburg-Haus
Heilwigstr. 116
20249 Hamburg (Germany)
T. +49 40 428386148
www.warburg-haus.de

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