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In order to attend online or in presence please register by **Nov. 2, 2026** with **maximilian.schlimm@uni-hamburg.de**

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RomanIslam
Center for Comparative Empire and Transcultural Studies

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The Roman, Islamic, and Spanish empires all seem paradigmatic for our understanding of a transformative imperialism. Their imperial missions were driven by salvation religions of Middle Eastern Origins. Subsequent empires and political regimes until today have all drawn, in one way or another, on the common heritage of Roman, Islamic, and Hispanic imperial legacies. These empires were all understood multiethnic, despite some ruling ethnicities. They transferred a dominant imperial language and a dominant—if not exclusive—salvation religion to the regions they conquered.

These set them apart from other, later Imperialisms in Asia and Africa. Even more strikingly, they led to the complete transformation of their colonial subjects, who initially embraced different religions and languages, and in one way or another carried the imperial idea. The new imperial religion and language became an integral part of their identity: Romance languages and Christianity in Western Europe and the Mediterranean, Arabic and Islam in most of the Middle East and North Africa, and Spanish and Catholicism in the Americas.

There are also obvious differences between these three paradigmatic empires. Among other differences, one empire was maritime, one was primarily land-based, and one was oceanic. Comparing them provides a better understanding of their transformative power. Comparison does not only look at similarities and differences. It also involves examining the approaches of imperial elites to overcome challenges and strategies of conquered peoples to comply, resist, and become the new elites.

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IMPERIAL TRANSFORMATIONS - COMPARATIVE STRATEGIES IN EMPIRES OF SALVATION RELIGIONS

NOV. 11-14, 2026
AS-SAAL
UNIVERSITÄT HAMBURG

HYBRID WORKSHOP



Wed., Nov. 11, 2026 AS-Saal (ESA 1)

18.00 **Stefan Heidemann (Universität Hamburg)**
Introduction

18.30 **Alan Strathern (University of Oxford)**
Abrahamic Transcendentalism and the Imperial Management of Religious Pluralism

19:30 Reception



‚Sol Invictus' on a coin of Constantin I © Numimarket.pl

Thu., Nov. 12, 2026 AS-Saal (ESA 1)

10.00 Registration & Coffee

10.15 **Stefan Heidemann (Universität Hamburg)**
Welcome

Empire and Salvation Religion – Conceptual Approaches

Chair: **Katharina Mewes (Universität Hamburg)**

10.30 **Stefan Heidemannn (Universität Hamburg)**
Empires of Salvation Religions

11.15 **Lutz Berger**
(Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel)
Religion and Empire in Early Islam

12.00 Coffee Break



Dirham, al-Andalus, 116/734-5 © Orientalisches Münzkabinett Jena

The Ritual and Religion in the Empire

Chair: **Katharina Mewes (Universität Hamburg)**

12.15 **Michaela Konrad (Universität Bamberg)**
The Rise of Salvation Religions in the Roman Empire

13.00 Lunch Break

15.00 **Andrew Marsham (Cambridge University)**
The Umayyad Empire as a Syro-Mesopotamian Pastoralist Empire and its Ecological Context

15.45 **Javier Francisco (Universität Basel)** – *Online*
The Contributions of "Religion" to Empire-Building: The Spanish Case

16.30 Coffee Break

16.45 Discussion: Ritual and Religion in Comparison

17.30 End of Day One

Fri., Nov. 13, 2026 AS-Saal (ESA 1)

10.00 Registration & Coffee

Providing Justice in the Empire

Chair: **Max Schlimm (Universität Hamburg)**

10.15 **Clifford Ando (The University of Chicago)**
Religion, Citizenship, and Social Cohesion

11.00 **Christian Müller (CNRS Paris)**
Islamic Law in the First Islamic Empire: From Caliphal to Juridical Authority



4 Reales (1539) Mexico City Mint © Heritage World Coin Auctions

11.45 Coffee Break

12.00 **Johannes Meier (Universität Mainz)** – *Online*
The Church's Role in Spanish Rule Over the Americas

12.45 Discussion: Law and Justice in Comparison

13.15 Lunch Break

Integration of Conquered Local Population

Chair: **Kurt Franz (Universität Hamburg & Universität Göttingen)**

14.30 **Kristian Kanstrup Christensen (Stellenbosch, Western Cape University)**
Christianity and the Administration of the Later Roman Empire

15.15 **Philip Wood (King's College London)**
Appropriating Difference: Christian Sectarian Discourses and the Construction of Islamic Imperial Ideology



Metropolitan Cathedral Mexico © Wikimedia Commons

16.00 Coffee Break

16.15 **Amira K. Bennison (Cambridge University)**
The Almohad City and its Integrative Functions

17.00 **Federico Tavelli (Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina)** – *Online*
Indians as Protestants?
The Transformation of Ancient America through European Christian Social Models in the Sixteenth Century

17.45 Discussion:
Questions of Integration in Comparison
Discussant: **Kurt Franz (Universität Hamburg & Universität Göttingen)**

18.15 End of Day Two

20.00 Conference Dinner

Sat., Nov. 14, 2026 AS-Saal (ESA 1)

9.15 Registration & Coffee

Spread of Imperial Language(s)?

Chair: **Stefan Heidemann**

9.30 **Stanisław Adamiak (Nicolaus Copernicus University at Toruń)**
Augustine's Languages of Power and Weakness

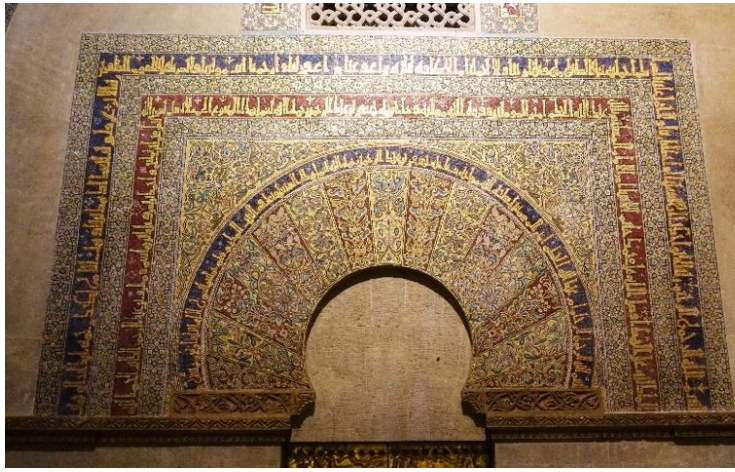
10.15 **Caroline Cunill (EHESS)**
A Patchwork of Languages? The Scope and Reach of the Indigenous Languages in the Spanish Empire

11.00 Coffee Break



Arch of Constantine © Wikimedia Commons

11.15 Discussion: Imperial Languages in Comparison



Mihrab at Madinat al-Zahra © Stefan Heidemann

Economic Integration – Formation of the Empire?

Chair: **Katharina Mewes (Universität Hamburg)**

11.45 **Ulrich Gotter (Universität Konstanz)**
Empire(s) of the Mediterranean

12.30 **Marie Legendre (University of Edinburgh)**
Imperial Wealth: Between Caliph, Court and Province

13.15 Lunch Break

14.15 **Stefan Heidemann (Universität Hamburg)**
The Integrative Role of Imperial Currencies in Comparison

15:00 Discussion: Economic Integration of Empires and the Wealth of Elites in Comparison

15:45 End of the Conference