

# IMPERIEN <sup>GRK2571</sup>

Dynamischer Wandel  
Temporalität und  
nachimperiale Ordnungen

DEC 2022

## CONFERENCE BOOKLET

politics of pasts and futures in  
(post-)imperial contexts

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## Introduction

# *Politics of Pasts and Futures in (post-)Imperial Contexts*

The conference aims to explore how references to past empires and imperialism have shaped perceptions of history and imagined futures, both in imperial and in post-imperial contexts. These include, for example, not only references to imperial foundation myths, but also stories of success and resilience during times of crisis, and uses of imperial symbolism and history to express civic, national and/or imperial identity. It also explores legacies of pre-existing empires in post-imperial political orders. In connection to imperial claims of universalism, longevity and a transcending historical significance, analyzing these temporal aspects of imperialism can serve as an important key to understanding imperial dynamics. Accordingly, markers of (imperial) temporality can be found, for example, in political discourse, but also in cultural products, social relations and religious practices.

The conference is the first of a series of annual conferences organized by the DFG Graduate School 2571 "Empires: Dynamic Transformation, Temporality and Postimperial Orders" (University of Freiburg). More information on the research group can be found at [www.grk2571.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.grk2571.uni-freiburg.de)

Panel 1

Classical Receptions  
and Translatio Imperii





Christine Tauber

(München)

# Emperor in his own Castle. François' *Terfranslatio Imperii* at Fontainebleau

In the years 1515-1525, the French king François Ier resorted to a genuinely French arsenal of motifs for self-representation, since at that time he still believed he could maintain the French *Regnum Italiae* in Italy itself. Only after 1526, when the „Italian Dream“ had visibly failed, did he adopt the strategy of importing Italy to France and building his own Italy in Fontainebleau, whose aspirations, however, went far beyond mere cultural transfer: the French king wanted to outdo Italy in France through his import of artists, to build a new Rome that would eclipse the old Rome in virtuosity, differentiation, ironic refraction, and modernity. In Fontainebleau, his mannerist art play programmatically wants to replace Italian *Italianità* with Gallic over-refinement. This *Translatio Artis* expands to an imperial claim to power in the sense of the *Translatio Imperii*, which is not abandoned after the futile imperial candidacy in 1519, but is expressed in an artistically sublimated form.

A particularly demonstrative act of the import of *Romanità* is the commission to Primaticcio to cast those Roman antiquities that were linked to the highest papal claim to representation: the statues in the Cortile del Belvedere, whose power-politically highly charged semantics are used for his own demonstration of power. Fontainebleau thus becomes the pure form of the „state as a work of art,“ for there the French king created a cosmos of art, over which he could dispose at any time in the sense of interpretive sovereignty as an act of rule. These strategies can be seen most clearly in the centerpiece of royal representation, the Galerie François Ier in Fontainebleau, whose program focuses entirely on an aesthetic of intellectually overwhelming the viewer through iconographic sophistry and subtle quotations on the one hand, and a richness and mixture of materials on the other. The Roman-German Emperor Charles V, to whom this message of overbidding was directed as an ideal-typical viewer, was expectedly overchallenged by this decoration, which repeatedly trumped up with imperial iconographies, during his visit on December 25, 1539, as the lecture would like to show, among other things.



F. I



**Rhiannon Garth Jones**

(Aarhus)

# *Early 'Abbasid Use of Graeco-Roman Traditions to project imperial Authority and Power*

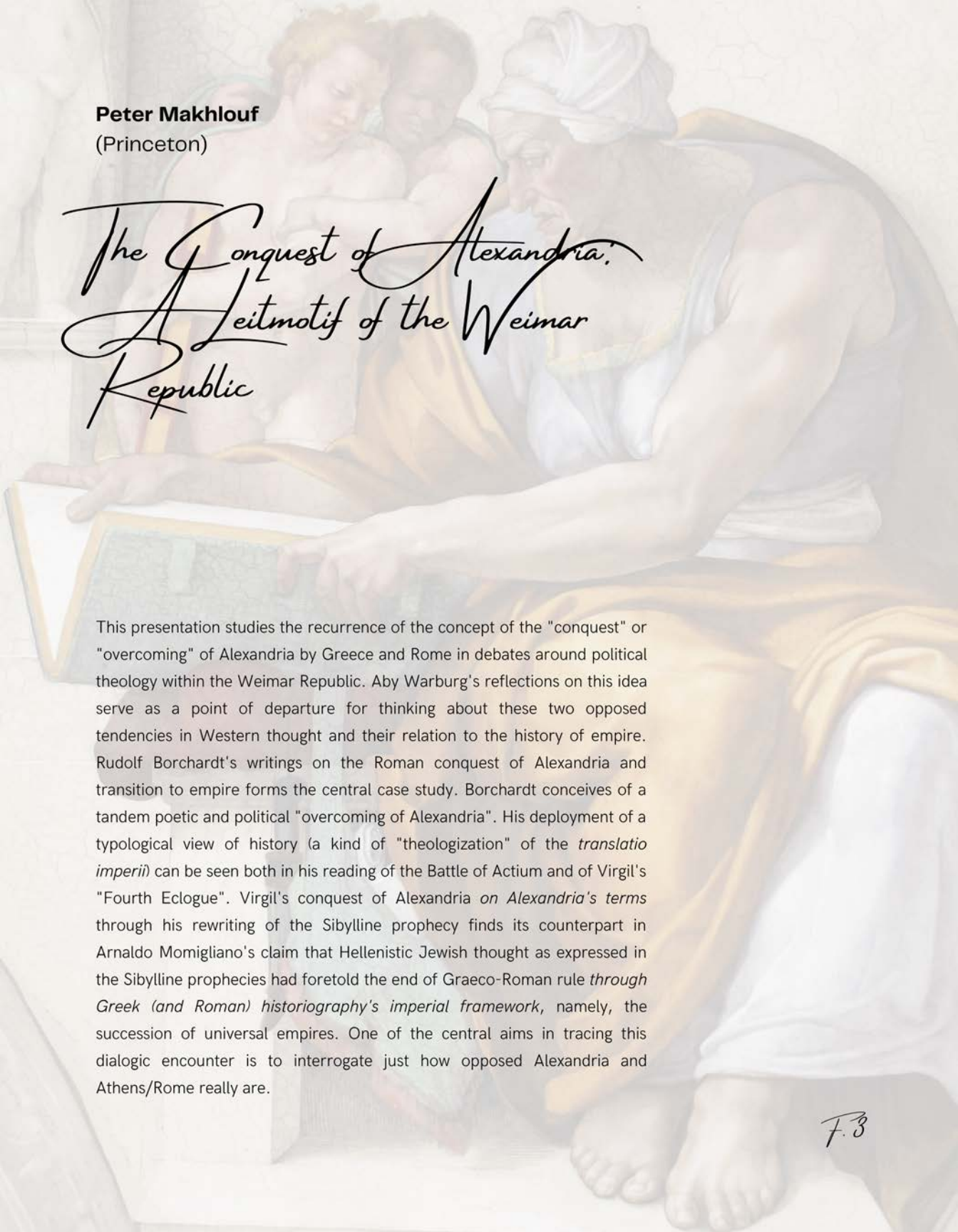
The vast spread of cross-cultural contacts and subsequent interconnected nature of elite culture and visual language in antiquity across Eurasia is increasingly understood, as is the way items and motifs from other cultural spheres could be used in the construction of elite identities. In this paper, I apply that cross-cultural theoretical understanding of antiquity to the early 'Abbasid caliphate. I present the imperial urban centres of Baghdad and Samarra' that were founded and expanded by a succession of caliphs through the lens of late antiquity and its cross-cultural visual koiné. I examine how caliphs from al-Mansur to al-Mutawakkil created a visual language of power that spoke to the whole empire and those outside of it to unify their empire and assert imperial authority from 754–861 CE.

In particular, I focus on the ways that 'Abbasid caliphs in the "Golden Age" used Graeco-Roman influences, as well as and in combination with Sasanian and Arab traditions, to speak to the whole caliphate and those outside of it. I argue that the early caliphs recognised the practical and symbolic value of multiple previous imperial powers and presented themselves as a successor and a superior to all three, selectively and creatively using their predecessors in sophisticated, innovative, and transformative ways that would have been recognised by multiple audiences.

That projected identity, of the 'Abbasid Caliphate and its capital cities of Baghdad and Samarra' as the cultural and intellectual centre of the known world, lasted long after the practical authority of the 'Abbasid caliphs faded, as the successor courts that emerged interpreted and referenced imperially for their own ends.



F.2



**Peter Makhlouf**  
(Princeton)

# The Conquest of Alexandria: A Leitmotif of the Weimar Republic

This presentation studies the recurrence of the concept of the "conquest" or "overcoming" of Alexandria by Greece and Rome in debates around political theology within the Weimar Republic. Aby Warburg's reflections on this idea serve as a point of departure for thinking about these two opposed tendencies in Western thought and their relation to the history of empire. Rudolf Borchardt's writings on the Roman conquest of Alexandria and transition to empire forms the central case study. Borchardt conceives of a tandem poetic and political "overcoming of Alexandria". His deployment of a typological view of history (a kind of "theologization" of the *translatio imperii*) can be seen both in his reading of the Battle of Actium and of Virgil's "Fourth Eclogue". Virgil's conquest of Alexandria *on Alexandria's terms* through his rewriting of the Sibylline prophecy finds its counterpart in Arnaldo Momigliano's claim that Hellenistic Jewish thought as expressed in the Sibylline prophecies had foretold the end of Graeco-Roman rule *through Greek (and Roman) historiography's imperial framework*, namely, the succession of universal empires. One of the central aims in tracing this dialogic encounter is to interrogate just how opposed Alexandria and Athens/Rome really are.



**Julian Zimmermann**

(Regensburg)

*"da caput a cauda mundi."*

# *Reciprocity of Metropolitan Identity and Post-Imperial Logic in Medieval Rome*

Using the example of the 'Eternal City' of Rome, this presentation discusses a city-community that can very clearly stand for imperial claims across the epochs. Rome was the capital of the ancient Imperium Romanum, the seat of the globally active medieval papacy and, throughout the ages, always a concrete point of reference for pre-modern imperial claims (e.g. Sacrum Imperium Romanum; coronation ceremonial of the medieval ages; legal-historical interpretations of the *translatio imperii*). In all these facets, the city of Rome presents itself as a metropolis, a city of outstanding importance and the capital of an empire of equally outstanding imperial significance.

At the same time, this ideal image was opposed by another medieval image of the city: Rome had degenerated from the head of the world to the tail of the world (*da caput a cauda mundi*), as Boccaccio sneeringly articulates in his Decameron. By this he means, that the high- and late medieval settlement, apart from the magnificent buildings of the Roman church, was little metropolitan and imperial. The city was characterised by the *membra disiecta* of the ancient building remains that told of the former greatness of the capital of an empire, but which was perceived as a distant, glorious past and had nothing to do with the marginalised significance of the post-imperial medieval city of Rome.

Starting from this setting, the paper will focus on the function of imperial logic as a resource of political legitimacy and mobilisation in the commune of Rome. The Eternal City, especially in the Middle Ages, is characterised by an ambivalence that can be seen between still current significance and equally lost former greatness. The narrative of the 'post-imperial' past, thus the reference to the former sovereignty and imperial role of the city, is an omnipresent resource of political claims over the city in medieval Rome, but especially also of the city, i.e. the Roman population itself. The latter reveals an interaction between metropolitan identity and imperial logic, which reciprocally condition and promote each other. The metropolis of Rome seems to be both the resonance space of imperial logic and the starting point of specific narratives of imperialism as a resource for its own claims to validity. This can be highlighted in the example of Rome, especially with regard to the communal phase of the city. Here, the city's own history and communal-metropolitan identity becomes a reference to former imperial greatness ('temporal aspects of imperialism') to be used for current and future claims. These different dimensions of a (post-)imperial metropolis will be discussed in this presentation.





Panel 2

Distant Imperial  
Past





**Rolf Strootman**  
(Utrecht)

F.3

## *Imperial Leapfrogging: How Empires anchor their Rule in the Past*

Modern historiography has described Alexander the Great as 'the last of the Achaemenids', the Persian dynasty he overthrew. Indeed, much of the empire-building done by Alexander and his principal successors, the Seleukids, was in fact a continuation of previous Achaemenid practices. Yet Alexander rather saw himself as the direct successor of Cyrus the Great, the legendary but long-dead founder of the Persian Empire.

There are many more examples of conquerors in premodern Afro-Eurasia who jump over their immediate predecessors to whom they are most of all indebted in order to associate themselves with legendary figures from a more distant past. Thus they were able to present regime change as a restoration of an imperial Golden Age—a past that could be manipulated to resemble the post-conquest present—while the rulers they had defeated were made to look like insignificant, incompetent kinglets who had been rightfully replaced. This is for instance what Republican Roman leaders did to the Hellenistic kingdoms – they subdued by idealizing the long-dead Alexander (the epithet 'the Great' is a Roman innovation).

In this paper we will look at the ideological strategy of 'imperial leapfrogging' and its effects by examining two case studies from different historical contexts: the Seleukid 'invention' of Nebuchadnezzar and the Golden Age of Babylon in the third century BCE; and Mehmet II's association with Constantine the Great and his alleged restoration of the Roman Empire after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453.

**Aleksandr Osipian**

(Berlin)

# Political Justification of territorial Expansion from Catherine II to Putin: Inventing Novorossiia in imperial and in post-imperial Context.

Province of "Novorossiia" was established in 1764 as Russia's movable borderland. Then, after the Russian-Ottoman wars in 1768-1774 and 1787-1791, Russia conquered the Ottoman provinces, dissolved the Zaporozhian Cossack Host and incorporated its lands (1775), and annexed the Crimean Khanate (1783). Therefore, the Russian Empire spread its borders to the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Province of "Novorossiia" was imagined and developed as Enlightenment's project by the Empress Catherine II (1762-1796) whose plans reached as far as reconquest of Constantinople and restoration of the Byzantine Empire. The new province was reinvented and appropriated neither as former "realm of Islam" nor as "land of savages" but as restoration of the periphery of ancient civilisation. Catherine II's triumphant journey to her new domains in 1787 greatly contributed to the foundation myth of "Novorossiia" - the narrative of "enlightened power" reclaiming back this space after the "dark ages of barbarianism." The ancient Greek and Roman pasts of this area were rediscovered in the framework of Enlightened absolutism. New colonised space was shaped through replacing the Tatar and Ottoman placenames with "ancient" ones. Settlers of various religious and ethnic backgrounds - Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Lutherans and Mennonites - were invited from Western and South-Eastern Europe to settle in "Novorossiia" along with the Empress's own subjects.

In the 19th century "Novorossiia" was reimagined by Russian men-of-letters as promised land for adventurous businessmen, industrious landowners, runaway serfs, even as a foreshadow of the communist utopia. Then, in late 19th and early 20th centuries "Novorossiia" was replaced with urbanized industrialized "South Russia" and "Donbas" as its "industrial heart," and, finally, put into oblivion in the USSR and independent Ukraine.

After annexation of Crimea and efforts to claim south-east of Ukraine as Russia's "Novorossiia" in 2014, the old imperial narratives were used for justification of territorial expansion. Despite claiming succession to the imperial past, Putin's "Novorossiia" has nothing in common with Catherine II's cosmopolitan project and its Greek-Roman background. In current revanchist narrative "Novorossiia" is represented as the promised land for ethnic Russians blessed by the Russian Orthodox Church. While the old imperial myth of "Novorossiia" symbolized the imagined futures and progress, Putin's "Novorossiia" is reinvented as a stronghold of radical nationalism and isolationist obscurantism.



**Rogier van der Heijden**

(Freiburg)

# Empire and Imagination in Roman Sardis: The Wadi B Temple of the imperial Cult as a mnemonic Cluster

Well-known is the example of the creation of landscapes of memory in ancient Rome: Glorious episodes in Roman historical and contemporary times were anchored in the urban environment through the construction of public buildings, the erection of statues and inscriptions, and the insertion and relocation of religious, political and cultural functions and public events. This way a collective memory was literally constructed in the city, visible for the people roaming the streets. It was not only a process that occurred in the imperial metropolis, but also in regional centres throughout the empire.

In a race for prestige among the cities of Asia Minor, the city of Sardis erected and re-erected inscriptions and ancient monuments throughout its urban and direct extra-urban environment that referred to the archaic Lydian empire, a deliberately non-Greco-Roman past. Throughout the second and third century CE, it styled itself as "first of the earth" and "metropolis of Asia, and all of Lydia, and Greece" in an attempt to gain privileges and prestige within the Roman imperial framework. In this sense Sardis differentiated itself from surrounding cities, which mostly took Greek mythological figures and events for promotional strategies and the formation of collective memory.

This focus can be seen especially well in the case of the so-called Wadi B imperial cult temple. The paper discusses to what extent a post-imperial Lydian memoryscape was constructed in Sardis by taking the Wadi B imperial cult temple as case study. The nature of the sanctuary as dedicated to the imperial cult formed a symbolic space for the interaction between city and empire in the city itself and therefore as a space for negotiation of Sardis' place within the imperial structure. By adding the layer of a contemporary empire onto the construction of post-imperial memory, it shows the importance of the imperial framework in the formation of cultural memory in a local context. Through establishing the expressions of memory in the sanctuary itself and through the spatial connections between the temple and other elements in the city and in the landscape around the city, the paper will show the intricate relations between the city, its past and the Roman empire. It will also show the importance of landscape for the construction of (post-imperial) memories.



F.7





**Elena Fellner**

(Freiburg)

# *Memories of Empire – Imaginaries of Pasts and Futures in Iranian anti-regime Online Spaces*

Iranian nationalists today like to pride themselves on their nation's 7000-year history, during which it watched the rise and fall of several Persian empires as well as conquests by other empires in its neighborhood. Among these imperial experiences, three instances are of special importance to Iranian understandings of self and other today: the Achaemenid empire (ca. 550-330 BC), which in historical consciousness fuses with other Persian empires of antiquity as well as semi-mythological epics about Iran's glorious past; the Arab-Islamic conquest of the Iranian heartlands (633-654 AD), which irrevocably changed Iran's religious make-up and brought it into much closer contact with its Arab neighbors; and Iran's contacts with British, Russian, and US imperialism, which fell short of turning the country into a colony, but nevertheless left deep traces in its legal and education system, language, social stratification, and self-image.

In my presentation, I am going to examine how these experiences of empire come together to shape notions about what it means to be (truly) Iranian in oppositional online spaces. Iranian social media users are faced with the challenge to chart a path towards a collective identity with (affirmative and negative) reference to conceptions of self and other formulated by the three above-mentioned empires that on the one hand provide enough contrast so as to defend oneself from accusations of heteronomy, but on the other leave enough space for the formation of a broad coalition against the ruling regime. These conceptions, derived from (imaginings of) the past, influence the way that oppositional actors diagnose the present and envision the future, especially with regard to who is to blame for Iran's current ills and must therefore be excluded from this project of nation-rebuilding. In my presentation, I will pursue two arguments: first, that various imperial experiences of the past hold relevance for the allocation of social and political legitimacy and are actively used to in- and exclude representatives of certain groups in an alternative political sphere; and second, that experiences of empire manifest themselves in exemplary and often heroized or demonized figures that articulate the values, hopes, and fears connected to collective memories of empire.

Panel 3

Breaches and  
Continuities in  
Post-Imperial  
Narratives





**Deborah Holmes**  
(Salzburg)

*Empire Pays. Imperial Celebrations in the late British and Austro-Hungarian Empire*



Towards the close of the nineteenth century, a new dynamic developed as regards patriotic public events in the British and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Factors as diverse as accelerated urbanisation, increased mass media reach, the efforts of an ever-growing voluntary sector and the formalisation of primary schooling played a role in intensifying the perceived need for celebrations of empire. The lecture will examine how imperial jubilees and birthdays in particular were marked, beginning with Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887 and considering the jubilees of Emperor Franz Joseph in 1888, 1898 and 1908, as well as the invented ritualistic tradition of Empire Day, first celebrated in Canada on Victoria's birthday in 1898 and established throughout the realm from 1904 onwards.

In both empires, the impetus for such celebrations was always intriguingly mixed: alongside or in anticipation of top-down attempts to foster imperial cohesion, private or semi-official initiatives were invariably decisive in events' planning and realization. Among the wealth of source material, I will highlight subjective (autobiographical) and literary accounts wherever possible and consider what they can tell us about the lived experience of empire as it crystallized around these occasions.

Despite the obvious differences – not least of sheer scale – that distinguish the history of the British from that of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, celebrations of empire in both realms display striking and, I will argue, revealing similarities during this period. Features that lend themselves to comparative analysis include the ways in which imperial festivities were aimed at and directly involved children, as well as the popularity of historical or folkloric pageants. I will examine the ways in which these were used to represent both the diversity and unity of empire, while also tapping into older traditions of carnival and spectacle. Although the main focus of my lecture will be on the years around 1900, I will conclude with a brief survey of developments during and after World War One. Interwar changes in celebratory and commemorative culture serve to throw into clearer relief the particular nature of the fin de siècle period in the history of empire.

**Christina Wu**

(Paris)

*Curating Indigeneity: Imperial Past and the  
Shaping of Communal Identities in the Malay  
Archipelago  
(19th - 20th Centuries)*

This paper seeks to unravel how the imperial past of British Malaya has served as a political tool to ascribe and shape the identity politics of diverse ethnic groups (Chinese, Malay, Indian...) in Malaysia and Singapore over the course of the 19th-20th centuries. In particular, it concentrates on how this imperial past has been instrumentalised to construct and perpetuate stereotypes or preconceived notions of ethnic communities and their (self-)identities. In contemporary Malaysia and Singapore (former British Malaya), these identity politics, which take their roots from discourses dating to the colonial era, continue to significantly impact both post-colonial societies. As case in point, Malaya's imperial past has been instrumentalised to justify the implementation of affirmative action policies designed to favour indigenous ethnic communities (bumiputera) such as the Malays - who form the majority of the population- at the expense of minority communities in Malaysia.

To understand this, it is necessary to analyse how the concept of indigeneity arose within the backdrop of imperial history to begin with. As this paper demonstrates, communal identities in British Malaya underwent a transformation during the 19th-20th centuries as the irruption of colonial capitalism in the Malay Archipelago reconfigured local economies, social dynamics, and political cultures. As many local Malays refused to work under perilous conditions for the benefit of the enterprise of colonial capitalism, colonials actively encouraged the mass immigration of Chinese and Indian labourers to exploit the region's resources. This, in turn, contributed to colonial stereotypes of Malays as "lazy natives" who were "economically irrational" (since they did not partake in colonial capitalism). In contrast, Chinese and Indian immigrant labourers were identified and typecast as "industrious" or "vigorous" since they supported the economic success of the plantations and mining industries under imperial rule. These developments further led towards social schisms between indigenous and allochthone societies which persist and have a profound impact in the contemporary era.

In uncovering how the imperial past has been instrumentalised in the formation and shaping of communal identities and politics in post-colonial Malaysia and Singapore, this paper seeks to draw attention to the concrete ways in which imperial histories have played a role in constructing images of alterity and indigeneity. While extant literature on communal identities have mainly focused on the post-colonial era, this paper argues for the importance of understanding how the imperial past has been instrumentalised to perpetuate these images of the "other" and to justify political ideologies.





Oliver Pejic  
(Firenze)

*Contesting the Habsburg Empire in Everyday  
Life: The Habsburg Legacy as a Source of everyday  
Conflict in interwar Yugoslav Society*

After the conclusion of the First World War, a sizable portion of the former Habsburg Empire ended up within the borders of the newly established Yugoslav nation-state. While the zeitgeist of the new "national" world demanded that its citizens should unanimously reject the defunct empire's legacy, the state's diverse population related to the collapse of Habsburg rule in more differentiated terms. Employing extensive archival records from the Regional Courts of Sombor (Serbia) and Maribor (Slovenia), the present paper explores how discussions of the Habsburg Empire functioned as a source of everyday conflict among predominantly non-elite actors in interwar Yugoslav society. In such interpersonal clashes, references to the bygone empire served a diverse array of discursive functions. Nostalgic memories of the "imperial" past were used as polemical counterpoints in critical discussions of the "national" present, and the labelling of people or institutions as "Habsburg" also functioned as a form of othering and boundary-drawing within Yugoslav society. In effect, the Habsburg legacy remained an important subject of Yugoslav identity politics throughout the interwar period and was regularly contested by people of diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

**Sebastian Fahner**

(Freiburg)

# *Socialist Perspectives on History in Spain and the Habsburg Monarchy, 1890-1914. A study of internationalist Commemorations in a Context of national Strife and imperial Crisis*

This paper shall explore how the socialist parties associated with the II. International commemorated history and referenced historical narratives to shape a sense of historical mission and purpose among their members. Thereby it sheds new light on the question if and to which extent international solidarity actually over-wrote national loyalty and created a sense of supra-national integration. By looking at the Partido Socialista Obrero Español and the Austrian Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei it engages with two case studies that show the interaction of an internationalist labour movement with competing nationalist narratives. These cases also enable us to see how both the socialists and their nationalist rivals tried to construct historical narratives in opposition to an imperial legacy that was perceived as backward and declining. While the need of nationalist movements to legitimise themselves by creating national histories is a well-researched topic both in the Spanish and the Austrian-Hungarian context, the literature on the worker movement so far has only produced a few studies that explicitly focus on the strength of narratives and their ability to integrate national and international aspects. The need to provide a historical counter-narrative was especially urgent for those socialist parties that operated in the context of a multi-national imperial legacy, as they shared the role of anti-system opposition with emboldened nationalist movements. Starting in the 1890s, both Austrian and Spanish political institutions saw their very legitimacy attacked by a variety of political movements that used a perceived moment of imperial crisis as opportunity to formulate alternative political trajectories, for example the federalisation of the empire (or what was left of it) or outright independence.

The paper focuses on the analysis of commemorations that served to foster a sense of historical mission within the socialist camp. These commemorations provided an interpretation of the past, set a political agenda for the present, and formulated hopes for the future. Using a comparative approach, I try to answer the following questions

- (1) To which extent did the socialists use their historical commemorations to create a sense of internationalist loyalty?
- (2) How did they engage with and at sometimes appropriate national historical narratives to present themselves as part of their "own" respective nations?
- (3) What was their attitude towards other views on history, especially towards patriotic and/or imperial commemorations organised by the state?



F.9



**Fatma Eda Çelik**

(Paris)

## *Islamization as an imperial and post-imperial Feature*

At the turn of the 20th century, in the realm of the Ottoman Empire, interpretation of Islam became a crucial question in the context of imperial power, and hence an establishing feature of the post-imperial formation of the nation-state, i.e. the Republic of Turkey.

Under the rule of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), Islam was instrumentalized as a political regime strategy to hold the Empire together while the imperial territory and non-Muslim population were in decline and the Muslim population grew rapidly in contrast. This strategy included an intention of internal colonization of the Empire's Arab provinces and an implicit irredentist claim of dual sovereignty over certain territories such as Crimea. As a result, the strategy was a combination of ambitions related to imperial political power and social cohesion as well as expansionist projects in the name of Islamism and Pan-Islamism. This also gave rise to a strong demand for new interpretations of Islam, including the re-conceptualization of caliphate and ummah within the Empire.

In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the Committee of Union and Progress continued the strategy through a homogenization policy to the detriment of non-Muslim communities, but this time with additional emphasis on Turkification. The First World War came to be the last expansionist drive of the Empire led by the Committee. During the war, the sultan-caliph of the Empire called for a "Great Jihad", not only in order to unite all the Muslim population of the Empire, but also to set the stage for the wars in the Arabian Peninsula and future expansions in the Caucasus. At the center of these attempts were the new formulations of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turanism underpinned by new interpretations of Islam.

On the one hand, the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire (1918-1922) undermined the demographic, social, cultural and religious ground for Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turanism politics; but on the other hand, it strengthened the homogenization process at a smaller scale. The legacy of Islamization strategy had a heavy impact on the post-imperial political and social reformation processes. The scale, the expansionist nature and various institutions emerged during the previous periods created controversies and significant roadblocks for the post-imperial republicanism and secularism.

This paper will discuss the importance and impact of this Islamization process on the formation of ideas of a leading but neglected figure of the post-imperial period, Mehmet Şerafettin Yaltkaya. First as vice-president and then as president of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey, he was a central figure from religious circles engaging in debates on the imperial era about the re-interpretation of Islam. More importantly, he formulated a new interpretation of Islam based on sociological and historical grounds instead of cohesive features of ummah and political power. Therefore, understanding the relationship between his ideas and the changes occurred over the immediate post-imperial period will help us to develop a more holistic understanding of post-imperial reformation of Turkey with reference to Islam and the distinguishing features of post-imperial secular institutions.

# *Save the Date*

THE CONFERENCE WILL TAKE PLACE  
AT FREIBURG UNIVERSITY FROM 1.  
TO 3. DECEMBER 2022

SEE [GRK2571.UNI-FREIBURG.DE](http://GRK2571.UNI-FREIBURG.DE) FOR  
MORE INFORMATION





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1: G. B. R. Fiorentino: detail of the Gallery of Francis I. at Fontainebleau, 1530-1540.

2: Carved stucco panel from Samarra, 3rd century AH. 1st style. Iraq Museum.

3: Michelangelo, Cumaean Sibyl in the Sistine Chapel.

4: J. Zimmermann: View on San Giorgio in Velabro & Arco di Giano.

5: Charles Le Brun, The Entry of Alexander into Babylon, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

6: de Mays, Ferdinand. Catherine II's journey in her own country in 1787.

7: R. v. d. Heijden.: View of the landscape of Sardis (2022).

8: Queen Victoria leaving Buckingham Palace for Westminster Abbey, 21 June 1887.

9: Commemorative booklet celebrating the 50th anniversary of the revolution of 1848, Polizeiarhiv Wien.

all other illustrative pictures are free and can be found on [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) (Library of Congress, US etc.)

