



CEU SUMMER UNIVERSITY

Nádor u. 9., Budapest, Hungary 1051
Tel.: (36 1) 327 3069, 327 3811
Fax: (36-1) 328-3698 or (36-1) 327-3124
E-mail: summeru@ceu.hu
Website: <http://www.sun.ceu.hu>
Skype name: ceu-sun

Medieval Studies

***THE BIRTH OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE – INTERACTIONS OF POWER ZONES AND
THEIR CULTURES IN LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY MEDIEVAL ITALY***

July 16 - 27, 2007, BUDAPEST

- Course Director:** József Laszlovszky, Medieval Studies Department, CEU
- Course Coordinator:** Péter Bokody, Medieval Studies Department, CEU
- Faculty:** Andrea Augenti, University of Ravenna-Bologna
Irene Barbiera, University of Padua - CEU
Marina di Castelfranchi, Lecce
Neil Christie, University of Leicester
Evangelos Chrysos, University of Athens/Institute of Byzantine Research of the
National Hellenic Research Foundation
József Laszlovszky, CEU
Walter Pohl, University of Vienna
Marianne Sághy, CEU
Vasco la Salvia, Science of Antiquity Department, University of Chieti
-

INTRODUCTION

The fall of the Roman Empire and the emergence of medieval power centres was one of the most debated historical issues in the last century. Historical, archaeological, and religious studies were dedicated to this problem, and military, economic, and climatic explanations were put forward to highlight and explain the relatively fast decline of the Western Roman Empire and the emergence of new power centres (Byzantine, Carolingian). The survival of the late antique economic system into the early medieval period is one of the most powerful historical concepts for the explanation of the transitional period, and it has been the most debated historical question of the period since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Recently, major monographs have reinterpreted the whole period and the authors have proposed fundamentally new concepts for the explanation of this period. They represent an extremely wide range of modern ideas of reinterpretation and many complex issues concerning the concept of Roman continuity, regional development patterns in early medieval Europe, and a very general concept of “clashes” of cultures. Three very important new works were published in this year and they present a completely controversial image of these issues. The thought-provoking, or rather provocative, essay of Brian Ward-Perkins interprets the whole issue in the light of recent political agenda, arguing that this entire circle of discussions is only the result of historical retrospective arguments, where the modern enlarging EU wants to find a historical justification in this misleading interpretation. In his argument, a

peaceful transition, the concept of acculturation, is just a modern political agenda and the end of the Roman world and the emergence of medieval Europe should indeed be seen as a period of invasions, terrible destruction, and the end of an ancient civilization. A fundamentally different explanation and interpretation can be found in the richly documented and clearly argued work of Chris Wickham, who follows the concept of a gradual transformation and takes into consideration the evidence for war and destruction as well as evidence for revival or restructuring. Neil Christie's major monograph entitled *From Constantine to Charlemagne* offers a wide panorama on the fastest growing source material, the archaeological evidence of this period, which has fundamentally changed our understanding of the main issues of the period.

Based on these recent studies and the discussions and debates generated by them, the summer course will focus on these questions in an interdisciplinary approach for scholars.

PREVIOUS SUN COURSES AND RESEARCH PROJECTS CONNECTED TO THE PROPOSED COURSE

The extremely successful SUN course on Late Antiquity, under the direction of Peter Brown and István Perczel, proved that the study of this period is one of the fastest developing areas of historical, philosophical, art historical, and archaeological studies, and the course presented an excellent example for an interdisciplinary approach. The focus of the course was the intellectual aspects of that period, including religious, language, and cultural questions, and it was also argued that more “material based” interpretations of the period are also worth of investigating. Leading experts of this period (Avril Cameron, László Török, Robert Markus, etc.) supported the idea of continuing these discussions and focusing on other major aspects of the period.

Furthermore, two important SUN courses have been organized by the Department of Medieval Studies on the theoretical and methodological aspects of cultural heritage. The present proposal is also connected to that problem circle, since a significant part of the course material is based on a heritage project (Ravenna-Classe) which focuses on the archaeological investigation and later presentation of an important archaeological site. The investigation addresses major historical and archaeological research questions and at the same time prepares the site for visits by the wider public.

In 2005-2006, the CEU Medieval Studies Department joined an international research project in Ravenna. The main aim of this project is to focus on archaeological evidence for the economic, administrative, and religious changes of Late Antiquity (Roman), Byzantine, and Early Medieval cultural heritage from the area of the most important power centre of this time and to put it in the context of a European-wide image of this transitional period. The participating institutions and their specialists (Neil Christie, University of Leicester; Gisella Ripoll, University of Barcelona; Andrea Augenti, University of Ravenna; József Laszlovszky) are conducting a four-month archaeological investigation at one of the most important and complex monuments, the St. Severo church complex in Classe-Ravenna. They are also investigating local and regional contexts (Britannia, Iberian peninsula, Italy, and Pannonia) of this historical period. Three important workshops have been organized in the framework of this project (Abandoned Antique Towns – Leicester, Transformation of Religious Practices and Cult Places – Budapest, Church Architecture and its Historical Context – Barcelona), and the most important results of the excavation, as well as of the workshop discussions, will be summarized in the proposed SUN course. Thus, this course would be a logical extension of the Late Antiquity course and the Ravenna-Classe research project. It would also be a major contribution to the most recent debates mentioned in the introduction, and the focus on Italy with an European wide comparative analysis would offer a course for a very broad, but at the same time specialist, audience.

PROPOSED TOPICS AND COURSE STRUCTURE

The SUN course would focus on four major issues, starting from the local-regional context of one of the most important power centres of the period (Ravenna and Classe). Until very recently the main emphasis of research was connected to the artistic monuments of Ravenna (mosaics), but recent studies have started to focus on economic and topographic issues and on their impact on the later Medieval period. Second, the local regional aspect will be incorporated into an Italian panorama of the period, with the main questions centering on the interactions of different power zones and cultural centres. In this part, the interaction of Late Antique (Roman) heritage, its Byzantine transformation, and the emergence of the new power centre will also be discussed in the context of “Barbarian” invasions and the arrival of new ethnic groups (Goths, Lombards, etc.) The third main block of lectures and discussions will focus on the general interpretation of the period from a European-wide perspective, and the new research data derived from the archaeological project in Ravenna will be compared with the general historical debates mentioned in the introduction. Finally, discussion will turn to the afterlife of these places and sites, covering the extent to which this Late Antique archaeological and architectural heritage was reinterpreted, transformed, and re-utilised in the Late Medieval period.

I. Late Antique and Early Medieval Ravenna and Classe and its recent interpretation:

1. Topographical and economic changes and their interpretation in the context of recent debates – Andrea Augenti
2. Churches and their architectural -- religious programs in Ravenna and in the contemporary architectural heritage – Gisella Ripoll
3. The Church of Saint Severo and its emergence in the general historical context – Andrea Augenti, Gisella Ripoll, Neil Christie, József Laszlovszky
4. The interpretation of the Byzantine period of Ravenna – old discussions, new evidence – Evangelos Chrysos
5. The Byzantine Art of Ravenna – Continuity or Change -- Marina di Castelfranchi

II. Italy and the birth of medieval Europe – battlefield or melting pot?

1. Interpretation of the late antique and early medieval archaeological material in Italy – new concepts and their impact on the historical questions – Neil Christie
2. Invasions or peaceful settlement – struggles or acculturation. The Lombards and their Italian impact -- Irene Barbiera, Vasco la Salvia
3. “Barbarian” invasions and their impact on the early medieval Iberian peninsula – a comparison with the Italian situation – Gisella Ripoll, Vasco la Salvia
4. The Byzantine impact on early medieval art in Italy – Marina di Castelfranchi
5. From Roman Italy to Early Medieval Italy – Rome, Tuscany, Ravenna – Andrea Augenti

III. The recent debates on the Fall of the Roman Empire

1. The transition between Roman Ravenna and its Early Medieval Period – Andrea Augenti
2. From Constantine to Charlemagne – as present archaeological studies interpret this question in Italy. – Neil Christie
3. The Transformations of Rome in the late Antique period. Spiritual and religious changes, the churches of Rome. – Andrea Augenti, Mariann Sághy.

4. The Fall of an Empire, the Rise of an Empire – Rome, Milan, Ravenna, Constantinople – Evangelos Chrysos
5. Acculturation or clash of cultures: Lombards, Avars, Franks – Walter Pohl

IV. The Impact of the Late Antique and Early Medieval Heritage

1. Ravenna and its afterlife in the Middle Ages – Andrea Augenti
2. Transition or break in the heritage of Italy (Roman-Early Medieval) – Neil Christie
3. When did the Roman heritage finish in Pannonia? – New concepts and interpretations – József Laszlovszky, Mariann Sággy
4. Byzantine heritage in the modern historiographic context – Evangelos Chrysos
5. The impact of Italian-Byzantine art – Near East, the Caucasus - Marina di Castelfranchi

Each lecture will be followed by a seminar discussion and the four blocks will be followed by a workshop-type discussion (round-table) with the participation of all the resource persons of the block.

The course will also include a field trip to visit the ancient Christian monuments in Pécs (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and we will discuss there the impact of these Late Antique monuments on the later development of Pécs as an ecclesiastical centre in the Middle Ages.

LEVEL OF THE COURSE

The course is designed for postgraduate students and for scholars with previous knowledge gained in at least one aspects of the course (the Roman period, the early Middle Ages, continuity problems, etc.)

COURSE TO BE ADVERTISED FOR

The course themes and its program structure have been designed for specialists in ancient history, Late Classical and Early Medieval history, archaeology, art history, and/or church history. Academics in the field of religious studies, Byzantine studies, Italian studies, and European studies are also among the expected applicants for the course. As one important aspect of the course is the interpretation of cultural heritage monuments, specialists in this field working in heritage institutions are also potential participants in the course.

Non-discrimination policy statement

Central European University does not discriminate on the basis of--including, but not limited to--race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, gender or sexual orientation in administering its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.