Thursday 9 July 2015

Session 1533 – Parkinson Building, Room B.09

09.00-10.30
Visions of Community I
Socio-Cultural Diversity in Medieval South Arabia

Session 1633 – Parkinson Building, Room B.09

11.15-12.45
Visions of Community II
A Force of Habit? Gender and Monasticism in the Carolingian Era

Session 1733 – Parkinson Building, Room B.09

14.15-15.45
Visions of Community III
Thinking Genealogically
Abstract

Over the course of the medieval period, South Arabia increasingly became economically and politically intertwined with its regional neighbours. As a result, groups of diverse origins, including Africans, Persians, and Kurds, came to South Arabia through various means and motivations. This session aims to look at more closely the contexts in which they first arrived, as well as the types of economic and social roles they took on as they integrated into Yemeni society. Additionally, it will examine the levels and sorts of political agency they possessed, if any at all, within local hierarchies. Finally, their impacts or legacies that they left behind will be questioned, as the Persians and Kurds seemingly disappear in the historical record, while the Africans remain as a distinct group in Yemen up until today.
Abstract
Throughout the early Middle Ages, gender issues were inextricably bound up with questions of monastic identity. While always present, such issues seemed to have become especially persistent whenever tensions occurred in the lives of monks and nuns – in the wake of attempts to reform their communal lives, for example, but also when dealing with afflictions of the body. The papers in this session attempt to shed new light on gender and its role in the making of early medieval monastic identities, not by taking recourse to newly created theoretical frameworks, but first and foremost by allowing the sources to speak for themselves. Albrecht Diem will start with an overview of the ways early medieval thinkers have dealt with gender divisions (or lack thereof) in the monastic world. Rutger Kramer will then take a closer look at the way gender issues may have played a role in the reform efforts undertaken at the court of Louis the Pious, one the one hand by analysing the role of gender in the drafting of different sets of rules for male and female communities, and on the other by studying at the over-arching authority structures that may account for the different approaches both types of community.
Abstract

Genealogy – i.e., the comprehension of present phenomena and institutions through a consideration of lineage and descent – is commonly regarded as one of the most archaic forms of historical thinking. Its prevalence among pre-modern societies is often taken for granted and has only occasionally been reflected upon by researchers. The proposed session aims at a critical re-evaluation of the genealogical paradigm. Drawing upon case studies from European as well as Chinese historiography, the papers will examine the epistemological foundations of genealogical thought, the methods employed in genealogical inquiries as well as the different applications – from individual family trees to the collective genealogy of gentes and nationes. As such, the session will be thematically linked to Social Cohesion IV: Methods in Reconstructing Social Cohesion – History, Archaeology, and Genetics, based on the assumption the pre-modern genealogies and modern genetics can be interpreted as related and interdependent discourses on descent.

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