



Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung
Universität Wien, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Wien

EINLADUNG

zum 209. Institutsseminar
am Montag, dem 3. April 2017, um 17 Uhr c.t.
im Hörsaal des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung

Susan Reynolds
(London)

The historiography of *Lehnrecht* and *Lehnswesen*

In 1994 I published a book called *Fiefs and Vassals* in which I argued that the modern idea of feudalism or *Lehnswesen* in England, France, Germany, and Italy was derived from medieval academic treatises, with a dash of medieval romance, rather than from medieval law in practice. Unsurprisingly it received mixed reviews, with most rejecting this attack on a central aspect of medieval history. In 2010, however, Jürgen Dendorfer and Roman Deutinger published a collection of essays to respond to what Professor Deutinger called my *Weckruf*. Other German-language work has also taken up the subject, which has been encouraging and has produced fine work even if a good deal of it has resumed the study of *Lehnswesen* rather than questioned whether the word represents something that helps us understand medieval society. Having already written articles about the historiography of French and English feudalism, I now turn to the kingdom of Germany. I shall argue that modern ideas of *Lehnswesen* can only be understood by tracing the way that they started from a brief conjectural history of *feuda* given in the early twelfth-century compilation known as the *Consuetudines Feudorum* or *Libri Feudorum*. They were developed by legal historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the great works of Roth, Waitz, and Brunner, and finally the syntheses of Mitteis and Ganshof.

Much as we owe all these, I end by asking how far a conglomeration of ideas from eight centuries is confounded by a confusion, discussed by Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand in another context, of words, the various notions they convey to different people at different times, and the actual phenomena (like rights in property or political and social relationships) that they seem to represent.

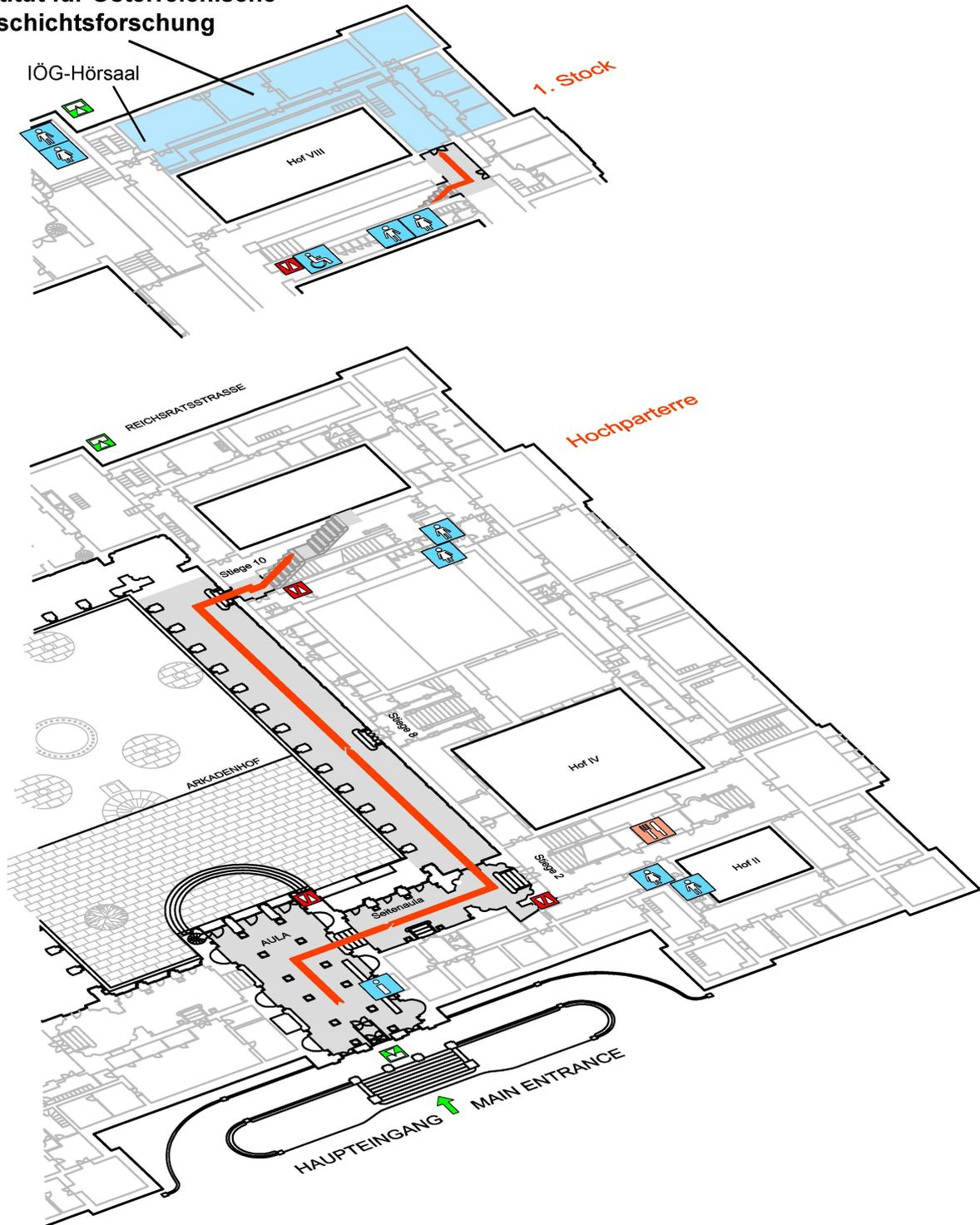
Susan Reynolds was born in 1929, did a first degree in History at Oxford, where she taught for 22 years after training as an archivist, working on local history for the Victoria County Histories, and school-teaching. She has lately been interested chiefly in collective activity in medieval government and society and ideas of feudalism, nations, and states.

Moderation: Walter Pohl

Thomas Winkelbauer
Institutsdirektor

Gäste sind herzlich willkommen!

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