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RELIC: Religiopolitics and Christianisation of the Everyday People on Micro- and Macroscales

Mária VARGHA und Stefan EICHERT (Wien)

293. Institutsseminar des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung

Montag, 18. November 2024, 17 Uhr c.t., Hörsaal 32 (1. Stock, Stiege 9)

The lecture introduces the ERC StG project RELIC, which models religiopolitical change by exploring how Christianisation influenced material culture and everyday life across varying spatial scales. It challenges the conventional binary interpretation of religious transformation, often depicted as a clear-cut shift from paganism to Christianity, and instead promotes a nuanced understanding of Christianisation as a gradual, adaptive process.

Focusing on both unpublished archaeological data and established research, RELIC examines Christianisation among commoners. On a macroscale, it contextualizes the siting of rural churches and field cemeteries within broader networks of secular and ecclesiastical authority, mapping their relationships to power centres. On a microscale, it investigates material evidence at specific sites to reveal patterns of religious adaptation and practice within communities. By integrating archaeological findings with historical narratives, the project seeks to reconstruct a layered understanding of how Christianisation permeated daily life and local identities.

Stefan Eichert is an archaeologist working as Vice-Head of the Department of Prehistory at the Natural History Museum Vienna. After earning his doctorate at the University of Vienna, his research has focused on early medieval burial sites and societal structures in the Eastern Alps through interdisciplinary approaches, including digital humanities and experimental archaeology.

Mária Vargha is an archaeologist and medievalist working as an Assistant Professor at the Department of History, University of Vienna, where she conducts her ERC StG project RELIC since January 2024. Her publication mainly concentrate on social and religious history, social, landscape and burial archaeology, and the material culture of the High Middle Ages using diverse Digital Humanities methods.

Moderation: Judit Majorossy