

Centre for Advanced Studies

Polycentricity and Plurality of Premodern Christianities (POLY)

## Bishops

Leaders and Ministers, Judges and Diplomats,  
Scholars and Saints



Variations on a Global Institution in the Middle Ages

Online Workshop, February 24–25, 2022

Organized by

Dorothea Weltecke

Ralph Barczok

Bernd Andreas Vest

The episcopal office is a shared feature of Christianities around the globe. This of course also holds true for medieval times. Although the office originates from a common set of sources, the duties and the tasks of the bishop vary greatly in scope. The reasons for such variation include the actual political situation, the social and cultural interactions, and the regional as well as religious background. What power did bishops wield as political agents, as judges, or as counsellors? How and with whom did they interact, and for which purposes? What was expected of a newly elected bishop and which were the categories by which individuals were deemed good candidates for the episcopacy? How did that change the actual form of the office? For whom was the episcopal office desirable at all, and why? Were there other offices that took over episcopal duties by force or necessity? In times of political unrest, bishops assumed political leadership in their residential cities, such as in early medieval Gaul and in the Middle East after the Muslim conquest. They even participated in military activities. As physicians, scholars, and diplomats, they became influential agents in the courts of rulers. In certain regions they acted as judges within their own parish even in secular cases. But in other instances their importance was overshadowed by that of mighty abbots or powerful rulers so that bishops found themselves reduced to liturgical functions. At times the title of bishop was even taken up by other institutions and stripped of all religious meanings.

The workshop in Frankfurt from February 24–25, 2022 will focus on the many faces the episcopal office could assume in the course of the Middle Ages (ca. 700–1400) beyond the traditional theological and canonical interpretation of the transmitted sources. It seeks to cover a broad geographical area, ranging from al-Andalus to Iraq and from the Caucasus to Ethiopia.

## Schedule

Thursday, February 24, 2022, 1:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Dorothea Weltecke (Berlin) 1:00 pm – 1:15 pm

### Address of Welcome

**Section I:** Chair Dorothea Weltecke

Steffen Patzold (Tübingen) 1:15 pm – 2:00 pm

### **Bishops and their Office in the Early Medieval Frankish Kingdoms**

Philip Wood (London) 2:05 pm – 2:50 pm

### **Melkite Bishops and their Critics in the Ninth-century Levant**

30 min break

**Section II:** Chair Bernd Andreas Vest

Marianna Mazzola (Jerusalem) 3:20 pm – 4:05 pm

### **Dhimmi Bishops in a Muslim Polity: Syrian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Leadership and the Changing Dynamics of Power in the Omayyad and Early Abbasid Period (7th–9th c.)**

Klaus-Peter Todt (Mainz) 4:10 pm – 4:55 pm

### **The Greek Orthodox Patriarchs and Bishops in Syria and Palestine in the Period from the Arabic Conquest of the Near East to the First Crusade (ca. 635–1095)**

30 min break

**Section III:** Chair Birgit Emich

Stephen Rapp (Huntsville, TX) 5:25 pm – 6:10 pm

### **The Office of Bishop among the Georgians from Late Antiquity to the Mongol Conquest**

Ana Echevarria (Madrid) / Matthias Maser (Erlangen–Nürnberg) 6:15 pm – 7:00 pm

### **The Role of Bishops under Muslim Rule in the Iberian Peninsula: between the Latin and the Eastern Churches**

Friday, February 25, 2022, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

**Section IV:** Chair Bruno Boute

Adam Łajtar (Warsaw) 9:00 am – 9:45 am

### **Nubian Bishops: Social Origin, Career Models, Operational Modes**

Johannes Pahlitzsch (Mainz) 9:50 am – 10:35 am

### **Greek Orthodox Bishops as Judges in Late Byzantium, Lusignan Cyprus and the Melkite Church**

30 min break

**Section V:** Chair Andreea Badea

Andrew Jotischky (London) 11:05 am – 11:50 am

**Greek Bishops in the Latin Church: a Comparative Sketch of Institutional Pluralism**

Ralph Barczok (Frankfurt) 11:55 am – 12:40 pm

**The Office of the Metropolitan in the Syriac-Orthodox Church according to Michael the Great and Bar 'Ebroyo**

60 min break

**Section VI:** Chair Ralph Barczok

Martina Ambu (Paris) 1:40 pm – 2:25 pm

**Yā'əqob (1337–1344) and Salāmā “the Translator” (1348–1388), Metropolitans of Ethiopia: Two Opposite Political Models**

Emanuel Van Elverdinghe (Louvain-la-Neuve) 2:30 pm – 3:15 pm

**Bishops as Cultural Mediators in Medieval Armenia: Their Role in the Production and Circulation of Manuscripts**

Dorothea Weltecke (Berlin) 3:15 pm – 3:30 pm

**Conclusion**

Register for the online event at:  
[pluralchristianities@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:pluralchristianities@em.uni-frankfurt.de)

Polyzentrik und  
Pluralität vormoderner  
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