

European Science Foundation

## **ESF EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP**

# **POWER AND AUTHORITY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF HISTORY, LAW AND LEGITIMATION IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

**Madrid 11-14 September 2002**

### **Scientific Report**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

All political, religious and cultural groups legitimise themselves in a variety of fashions, conscious and unconscious. To explore these processes over a broad chronological and geographical span, the Workshop analysed the legitimation of power in the period c. 750-1400, a period crucial in Europe to the formation of nations and of the state. In particular, it examined the role of law and history as sources of legitimacy. It developed methodologies for comparing the sources of legitimacy and processes of legitimation in different areas, east or west European, northern or Mediterranean, Christian or Islamic. In the process, it produced a comparison of different historiographical traditions, but traditions sharing an interdisciplinary ideal.

### ***(A) BACKGROUND AND ORGANISATION***

For the Exploratory Workshop to function successfully it was essential to assemble a body of scholars who would collaboratively debate and explore beyond the areas of their particular specialism. The Workshop group evolved from participants in a St-Andrews-CSIC Madrid Acción Integrada (sponsored by the British Council and the Spanish Ministry of Education between 1999 and 2001) and a further workshop at the University of St Andrews in March 2001. These considered the theme 'Political discourses and forms of legitimation in the Middle Ages'. For the Exploratory Workshop, it was decided to include a group of scholars from central/eastern Europe in order to expand the comparative range. In addition, representation of Islamic history was reinforced. Particular focus on law allowed consideration of legitimation from the most practical of arguments in courtrooms to the most theoretical of debates in Universities. At the same time, the planning for the Workshop emphasised more generally the development of methodologies for comparative study between regions, periods, and cultures.

Nineteen of the twenty-one invited participants were able to attend the workshop, and they were supplemented by five researchers present in the Mediaeval History Department at the CSIC in Madrid. Meetings took place within that Department and, on the final day, at the Residencia de Estudiantes, where delegates were accommodated. Both proved excellent environments for small and plenary sessions.

The Workshop combined various forms of meetings: papers delivered to the whole group, followed by discussion; simultaneous small sessions of four to six participants on a variety of specific themes, followed by plenary discussion of these themes; pairs of papers to groups of ten to twelve. The purpose of this multiplicity of forms was to allow the most intense possible discussion, particularly in small groups, whilst maintaining a shared agenda and a sense of the breadth of the issues under debate.

## ***(B) ACADEMIC CONTEXT***

The prominence of issues of power and authority, involving states, regions, and other communities in contemporary Europe reinforces the existing need for historical re-examination of these issues. When previously they were the major focus of historical study, particularly in the nineteenth century, historians concentrated on the nation state, often in a nationalist spirit; historians must now look at a wider variety of social networks. They must also examine, and indeed seek to reveal, the strategies of self-representation by the powerful – and by others – which again are a prominent and often criticised characteristic of today's politics. Although in recent years historians and others have studied aspects of these themes, such work has generally been restricted in geographical or chronological range.

A central method for overcoming such limitations is through the analysis of the legitimation of power and authority over a wide area and long period. This can be conducted through analysis of certain key problems; (i) defining or clarifying a vocabulary for the analysis of legitimation in its various forms; (ii) assessing differences in such practices according to the authority / power seeking legitimation, - king or lord, lay or ecclesiastical, individual or institution; (iii) investigating the degree of variation in legitimising practices between Christian and Islamic, eastern and western European societies; (iv) identifying chronological change, and its causation (iv) exploring the pressures leading to different degrees of investment in legitimation; (v) analysing the effectiveness of legitimising discourses, and the means whereby this could be assessed; (vi) incorporating unconscious legitimation of power through social and cultural values.

## ***(C) THE EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP***

The Workshop's specific contributions to these issues are described below, 'Scientific content ...', its more general contributions below, 'Assessment of results ...' Given the emphasis on comparison, and on interdisciplinarity, a key task was to discover ways of combining the general and the specific in a feasible historical methodology. Also to be investigated was the possibility of distinguishing what would now be called the 'political' from other types of power and authority, for example the religious. These questions further relate to the problem, common to historical and social scientific study, of the applicability of our own terminology to the analysis of other societies or cultures.

The Workshop began with two papers setting out questions and approaches. Next came a series of sessions examining specific themes or specific case studies, followed by general discussions which set the conclusions from these specific instances within the context of general questions, and, where necessary, modifying those questions. On the final day, conclusions were drawn concerning key elements of a methodology for the study of legitimation, and plans laid for further investigation.

#### ***(D) IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES***

The outcomes of the Exploratory Workshop are described further below, ‘Assessment of the results ...’. Immediate collaborative outcomes were (i) decision to apply for an ESF-funded European Network; (ii) sessions by Workshop members at the International Medieval Congress, 2003; (iii) a conference on Material Culture and Political Legitimation at St Andrews in 2003/4 (funded by School of History, University of St Andrews); (iv) plans for joint publications amongst individual Workshop participants.

#### **SCIENTIFIC CONTENT OF THE EVENT**

##### **Day one:**

Hudson’s presentation, and his pre-circulated paper, introduced the main issues for the Workshop. He emphasized the need to define the subject matter, distinguishing between legitimising discourses and the workings of authority, and suggesting that the former might be seen as one part of the latter. He also asked whether ‘political legitimation’ could be separated from legitimation of other forms of power and authority; this necessitated definition of the term political. He then raised the issue of definition of terms more generally. He argued for a dialogue between current terminology and that used in the society / societies being studied; this was necessary for our own understanding of other societies, for purpose of comparison between societies, and for discussion of unverballed assumptions. Next he turned to the question of conscious and unconscious legitimation. Further investigation is needed of the legitimator’s motives, particularly when in a position of apparently unassailable power; it is a question of the psychology of those in power. At the same time it grounds analysis of legitimising discourses in specific situations. Also needed is examination of the assumptions of those enjoying and those subjected to authority, and the ways in which language and law, for example, may themselves reinforce authority without the actors involved being conscious of this. Drawing on the school of Critical Legal Studies, the example was given of disputants over a piece of land basing their claims upon tenure from a landlord, thereby *unconsciously* re-affirming the lordship basis of society. Finally Hudson considered forms of legitimation and delegitimation often neglected in existing studies: legitimation through war, personal honour, patronage, consultation; delegitimation through alternative images such as the unjust favourite, through humour, satire, and parody, and through gossip. He suggested that such activities helped to explain the efforts expended upon legitimation, and asked whether legitimation should be seen as a constant dialectical struggle, either between legitimising and de-legitimising discourses, or between competing legitimising discourses.

At the start of his paper, **Bak** emphasised his background in a different historiographical tradition, the Germanic one of studies of Herrschaft (rulership); this contrasted with Hudson’s background in anthropologically-influenced studies of law. He then began with the central point that, confronted with the theoretical / theological tenet (at least in monotheistic religions) of the equality of all created humans, medieval societies – like others - needed a justification for inequality, for the power of one man over another, and for private property. He examined justifications in the Old Testament

(particularly relating to the Fall), the New Testament, and the Q'uran. Within the Q'uran, there could be no justification of secular rule, as the community was governed by the Prophet; in contrast, the New Testament maxim 'Render unto Caesar ...' could be used to justify the necessary acceptance of worldly rule. Legitimation of rulership in medieval Christendom was strongly based on such scriptural tenets. At the same time, there were also elements in common with the legitimation of rulers in pre-Christian Europe: divine/metaphysical sanction; descent from gods/heroes; suitability; origin myths; control of specific locations for symbolic-magic and pragmatic-power reasons. These elements are closely inter-related, for example suitability is at least in part inherited. They could be supplemented, for example by ideas of election, but election was virtually never from outside a ruler's descent group. Ritual / ceremonial invoked all these legitimising elements. Such rituals could be constitutive or / and demonstrative of authority. For historians it is therefore vital to understand the reception of such legitimising discourses by those whom the powerful desired to accept their legitimacy,

The **discussion** following these papers concentrated attention on certain key issues: **(i)** terminology, notably the possibility of distinguishing between justification and legitimation. The former would be the product of, and focus upon, a specific situation. The latter would be a more constant process whereby power was established or maintained as authoritative; **(ii)** social psychology, notably the way in which legitimation aimed to produce unquestioning belief rather than investigative understanding; **(iii)** comparison, notably the possible peculiarity of legitimation of kingship, when compared either with Islamic rulers or with other secular powers in Christian Europe.

The two afternoon papers explored more particular issues of legitimation relating to law and history within the broad context of the Workshop's theme. Again speakers represented different historiographical traditions, Ryan that of scholars of the ius commune and also the Cambridge school of the history of political thought, Isla that of political and social history. **Ryan** began by contrasting historians' widely expressed acceptance that later medieval kingship was law-centred with their failure to study law as a language or a symbolic reservoir; exceptions - such as the cases of Frederick II and the Liber Augustalis or Alfonso the Wise and the Siete Partidas - are few. A significant cause of this neglect is the fact that law was much more than the statutes and ordinances commonly associated with rulers; law in the later middle ages and beyond must be understood as the outcome of at least the following factors: text, academic tradition, forensic tradition, individual circumstance. Although law was the most effective and in any case necessary vehicle for the legitimation of medieval rulership, it was very frequently the creation of more than merely the rulers: professionals made the law work, they taught it, and they took much of the responsibility for transmitting it. Law could, then, de-legitimate as well as legitimate; law as a discipline and as a praxis could undermine the foundations of kingship even as it upheld them.

**Isla** emphasized the proximity of Law and History in the minds of the learned at least in the early middle ages: both focussed on the king, both were closely tied to the workings of God. In addition, the production of and submission to laws was considered a Roman attitude by those wishing to build a new, strong, political power. Through promulgation of laws, moreover, kings aimed to give coherence to their people and to

stress their superiority to that people. Law-making was both a regal privilege and made a king; this is particularly clear in the Visigothic Liber Iudicum, promulgated by King Reccesvinth (d. 672). The writing of history likewise came to have a legitimising function for new polities. However, this was not a continuous process. A notable and thought-provoking case is the kingdom of Leon, which produced neither historical works nor new written laws during the tenth century before a revival in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Such silences, and their termination, demand explanation – a point of general importance in the context of the Workshop. Possible explanations include the technological / educational – in this case a decline in legal studies and Latin literacy; the specifically textual – in this case the problems of continuing / interpolating the Liber Iudicum; the cultural – in this case a sacralization of the Visigothic past, prohibiting any alteration or addition; the political – in this case a decline in royal power.

The **discussion** following these papers developed the three key points of the morning debate, and added the following: **(iv)** the methodological difficulties of moving between the general and specific, the case study and the comparative; **(v)** the issue of the limits to the flexibility of justificatory / legitimising models, and the degree to which these models themselves exerted control upon the powerful, or could be exploited by the powerful; **(vi)** the impact of social, political, and intellectual change upon legitimising practices. These six points were used as an agenda for the discussions throughout the second day.

## **Day 2**

This day's discussions were designed to be more diffuse than Day One's, and to involve experiments in approaches and explorations of the utility of case studies. Coherence was retained through the setting of an agenda at the end of Day One, and the use of plenary as well as small group sessions.

Small group sessions (deliberately composed of both specialists and non-specialists in the particular field)

### **(a) Islamic law:**

Key conclusions: (i) theoretical texts regarding legitimacy and actual practices differed considerably, for example with respect to succession to rulership; (ii) divine choice was regarded as of major importance in choosing a legitimate ruler; (iii) legitimation also worked through other religious practices, such as sermons, or practices resting on religious beliefs, for example oaths of allegiance.

### **(b) Legislation**

Key conclusions: (i) legitimation through legislation varied considerably according to the choices of actors within specific situations; (ii) legitimation through legislation involved ideas of reciprocity and social contract; (iii) crucial to much legislation was the articulation of the relationship of central and local power, and hence the legitimation of the authority of both; (iv) in considering such relationships, the scale of political units is

of considerable importance; (v) the relationship of the oral and the written requires further consideration concerning law-giving, as in other contexts.

### **(c) Church law**

Key conclusions: (i) the transformation of canon law into a professional and academic discipline (c. 1160-1230) profoundly affected its use as a means of legitimation; (ii) canon law differed from other forms of religious argument (e.g. allegory) in having potestas (power) as well as auctoritas (authority); (iii) the momentum of litigation drew disputants into the use of legitimising discourses; (iv) forms of justificatory / legitimising argument may differ if they are directed upwards to an adjudicatory authority, more generally to a less specific audience, or downwards to subjects.

### **(d) Urban law**

Key conclusions: (i) the need to perpetuate legitimation in the absence of any charismatic authority; (ii) the coexistence of separate secular and religious forms of legitimation; (iii) the importance of non-verbal forms of legitimation, notably building.

The **plenary discussion** following these small group sessions looked back to the agenda of Day One and developed it further: **(i)** the justification : legitimation distinction was found to be of practical use. Its theoretical aspects needed further consideration; **(ii)** key aspects of the creation of belief in the legitimacy of power were isolated as (a) assumptions on the origins of authority, and (b) the range of practices and thought-worlds referred to as ‘custom’; **(iii)** comparison between Christian nations and Islam suggested some distinct similarities, which needed further exploration. This clearly also related to **(iv)** the question of the specific and the general. One possible way forward here, it was suggested, was to apply a common set of clearly defined questions to a variety of situations differing in terms of social status, chronology, or geography. There was division between those who wished to emphasise the strategic use of legitimising discourses by actors according to their specific situation and those who laid greater emphasis on the ways in which structures of belief and society determined legitimising processes; **(v)** the question of the flexibility of legitimising models clearly relates to their possible strategic use. In addition, it was suggested that flexibility might differ culturally – with more models available in the Christian west than in Islam – and chronologically – for example with the professionalization of law (see point **vi** in the conclusion to Day One, above).

In the afternoon, the Workshop split into two groups to discuss short papers on case studies. One group, formed largely of non-Spanish historians, considered history and law in twelfth-thirteenth century Castile; the other considered two early mediaeval presentations.

**Woolf** drew attention to four 'legendary' narratives contained within the early thirteenth-century recension of *Cyfreith Hywel* (the Welsh Law) known as *Llyfr Iorwerth*. He suggested that, rather than look at these as fragments of an otherwise unattested saga tradition, one might consider their function as legitimising tracts. Whilst two of the narratives might indeed date from the eleventh century or earlier, the other two probably belonged to the generation in which *Llyfr Iorwerth* was compiled. Set in the immediately post-Roman period, their tales attempted to legitimise Llywelyn ap Iorwerth [the first prince of Wales]'s policy of seeking support for his domination of other native rulers through integration into English royal structures. **Airlie** emphasized that law in the Carolingian capitularies was focused, on one level, on administration and government and, on another, on the bringing into being of a Christian society. The Carolingians were legitimised through this on the narrow level of being the only family permitted to hold the Frankish kingship, and on the broader level of being kings, supreme guarantors of the public order. The capitulary collection of Abbot Ansegisus was neither commissioned by the emperor nor compiled at court, although it is nonetheless a thoroughly royal document. Its emphases on hierarchy and royal administration form a strong legitimising statement.

**Escalona** examined uses of the past in the context of the division and reunion of the kingdoms of Castile and León. In the thirteenth century, epic, often fictional, stories about the Castilian origins suddenly found a way into official history writing, primarily because it was the only material available for telling the story of a part of the kingdom which now could not be overridden. Such epic material contained narratives significant to the articulation of power relations. Thus the story of the judges of Castile provides a totally fictional notion of a constitutional moment in which Castile parted from León. This is expressed in legal terms, by the rejection of the Gothic law in favour of the region's custom, a notion that lived long in Castilian ideology. In addition, there is an explicit denigration of great aristocrats, with lesser knights better personifying the values of good and justice – again an image which would recur. **Rodriguez** looked in greater detail at the rapid expansion of historical writing following the revival of campaigns against Muslims in al-Andalus in the mid-1220s and the reunion of Castile and León in 1230. The first of these elements presented a historical problem – a tension between, on the one hand, re-establishing Visigothic territorial divisions, in particular with regard ecclesiastical organisation, and, on the other, taking into account of the multiplicity of Hispanic Christian kingdoms. This tension produced historical writing which manifested competing discourses of legitimation under an apparently shared political programme, that is the legitimation of the Castilian and Leónese monarchy. Thus chronicles of rival ecclesiastical powers used different logics of legitimation, focussing, for example, on saintly relics (those of St Isidore of Seville) or on a place (Toledo, the *urbs regia*). Three general conclusions were drawn from these two papers. First, political legitimation might involve competition between mutually contradictory discourses, but might also involve competition for the use of the same discourse. Secondly, whilst political legitimation seems constantly to have been running at different levels in medieval societies, there were periods – for example those of the separation and then reunion of Castile and León – when the effort expended in redefining the past led to a new historical identity, which in turn became a crucial element in a body of widely shared notions and values, the raw



material of political legitimacy. Escalona suggested that such episodes be entitled ‘constitutional periods of social memory.’ Thirdly, analyses of legitimation must take into account the complexities arising from multiple levels of authority participating in legitimation, as when two ecclesiastical authorities were mutually competing whilst sharing an attachment to a higher national / monarchic authority.

The **plenary discussion** following these papers again established an agenda for the final day: **(i)** key terminology. A workable shared language of analysis, comparison, and debate had now been established. At the same time, further exploration remained necessary: how far are justification and legitimation distinguished by situation? by nature of argument? Does the public : private distinction help in analysis of legitimation? **(ii)** legitimation and adjudicatory authority. It was agreed that the generation of legitimising discourses is particularly vigorous in times of conflict, but also varies with type of conflict. What difference does a litigatory or quasi-litigatory context make to legitimising discourses and strategies? How do ‘upward’ and ‘downward’ legitimation / justification differ? Did law, at different times, work to increase or decrease the number of situations in which explicit legitimising / justificatory arguments were produced? **(iii)** habitus (Bourdieu) and custom (Thompson). There was consensus that legitimation was most effective if the legitimising discourses were accepted and internalised by those at whom they were aimed, although coercion also had an important role. Further investigation again was required – how does legitimation relate to the habitus or mentalité of those in the society concerned? are there circumstances in which previous assumptions are revealed as part of a legitimising process? how do different aspects of legitimation – e.g. the periodic inauguration ritual, the frequently repeated ceremony – relate to the desire to avoid the questioning of authority; **(iv)** arguments relating, on the one hand, to the strategic use of legitimising discourses by actors according to their specific situation and, on the other, to the determining of legitimising processes by the structures of belief and society. Debate continued on this subject, but there was agreement that it needed discussion in the context of other issues such as **(ii)** above – legitimation and adjudicatory authority; **(v)** the need to relate processes of legitimation and their discourses to social structure and competition for social power. It was argued that the generation of legitimising discourses and processes was connected not only to clear instances of conflict between those possessing power / authority, but also to continual competition for social power. How does the complexity of social structure affect legitimising processes? How do changes in the degree of social competition affect processes of legitimation?

### **Day Three**

The morning sessions aimed to draw general conclusions and identify further problems and areas requiring study.

#### **(a) Comparative approaches to religion and political legitimation**

Key conclusions: **(i)** the importance in both Islam and Christian regimes of wide-ranging notions of order / ordo; **(ii)** the much greater immediate involvement in particular earthly

affairs of the Christian God, and the impact of this upon the interpretation of political situations / events; (iii) differing distinctions between lay and ecclesiastical, secular and spiritual, and the utility of a comparative approach to these issues; (iv) the wide-range of circumstances in which legitimation takes place – and the need to, or difficulty of, isolating particular areas for study.

### **(b) Relative importance of law and history in legitimation**

Key conclusions: (i) the need to consider all forms of recall and record of the past, as well as written histories; (ii) the close relationship of law and history, and at times the impossibility of dividing clearly between the two; (iii) our knowledge of the historical situations in which efforts were expended on legitimation is itself often derived entirely or significantly from texts which themselves had a legitimising function – a problem throughout the Workshop.

### **(c) The utility of the concept ‘political legitimation’, and its relationship to the social history of power**

Key conclusions: (i) the level of social competition relates directly to the need for legitimation; (ii) processes of legitimation arise from specific situations, but it is necessary to understand the social dynamics before analysing cultural manifestations; (iii) the close relationship of notions of property (together with its protection) and of social status to political legitimation; (iv) the need for further consideration of theoretical analyses of social networks and competition.

### **(d) Other forms of legitimation, and approaches to its history**

Key conclusions: (i) a focus on deligitimisation – through destroying, disabling, dismantling, or dismissing the one seeking legitimation or the processes of legitimation; (ii) further emphasis on the non-written, be it the oral or the non-verbal; (iii) further consideration of the audience for legitimising discourses.

The **plenary discussion** following these small group discussions drew general conclusions about the workshop and set up an academic agenda for further collaboration: **(i)** the benefits of drawing on a variety of historiographical traditions, whilst recognising the need for further theoretical reflection to produce the best possible approach to the field; **(ii)** very clear progress in developing a terminology and other methods permitting comparative analyses; **(iii)** the success of bringing specific case studies to an audience with a wide range of interests, but noting that a more specific framework of standard questions would ease the drawing of comparative and general conclusions; **(iv)** a focus on the inter-relationship of social structure, competition for power, and processes of legitimation, together with questions of how best to study and understand these; **(v)** debate over the degree to which legitimising processes were produced strategically according to specific situation, or were determined by the structures of belief and society; **(vi)** concentration on the psychology of legitimation, on the part both of the powerful – the self-perceived need for legitimation -, and of the subjects of legitimising processes –

their understanding, acceptance, internalisation of ideas; **(vii)** the need to relate **(iv-vi)** to the possession or actual use of force; also the degree to which the very exercise of power was self-legitimising, in that it prevented the use of power by others.

The afternoon session discussed continuing collaboration centring on the group present at the workshop, and assessed the which form the workshop itself had taken. For further details, see below, ‘Assessment of results, contribution to the future direction in the field.’

**FINAL PROGRAMME**

**Power and Authority: Comparative Analyses of History, Law, and  
Legitimation in the Middle Ages**

**Madrid 12-14 September 2002**

**Sept. 11:** arrival of participants

**Day 1 (Thursday 12 Sept.):  
Methods and themes**

4 sessions formed of brief presentation and then plenary discussion of pre-circulated papers

*Morning session:*

10.30 Assemble

10. 45: Introduction: John Hudson (University of St Andrews, Project leader)

11.00 'Approaches to the history of political legitimation': John Hudson

12. 00 'Legitimation of Rulership': Janos Bak (Central European University, Budapest)

1.00 – 1.30: Initial meeting of groups for Day 2 (morning) to plan activities

1.30-3.15 Break

*Afternoon session:*

3.15 'Learned and practical approaches to legitimation': Magnus Ryan (All Souls College, Oxford / Warburg Institute, London)

4.00-4.15 Coffee

4.15 'History, Law, and Silence in Medieval Spain': Amancio Isla (University of Tarragona)

5.00 – 6.00 Summary discussion of first day

***Day 2 (Friday 13 Sept.):  
Experiments at approaches***

*Morning session*

Thematic discussion: 'Old law, new law, and legitimation'.

10-11.30 a.m: Small Groups (conveners named):

- (i) Islam (Kennedy)
- (ii) Legislation (Fouracre)
- (iii) Church law (Staunton)
- (iv) Urban law (Andrews)

11.30-12 Coffee

12-1.00 Plenary discussion

1.00-4.00 Break

*Afternoon session*

Case studies

4.00-5.15 Groups of about ten people, to discuss short presentations:

- (i) History, law, and legitimation (short presentations: J. Escalona (CSIC, Madrid), 'A tenth century we can use: Epics and law as a substitute for history in 12th-century Castile'; A Rodriguez (CSIC, Madrid), 'Latin chronicles and political context in Castile in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries')
- (ii) Law books, propaganda, and political legitimation (short presentations: A. Woolf (University of St Andrews), 'Legitimising legends from Llyfr Iorwerth'; S Airlie (University of Glasgow), 'The capitulary collection of Abbot Ansegisus and Carolingian royal authority'.)

5.15-6.15 Summary discussion of day 2

***Day 3 (Saturday 14 Sept.):  
Summary and development***

*Morning session:* two x 1.25 hour slots, first in groups of 4-5, second plenary

Groups: summary of previous discussions, possibilities for further investigation

10.30-11.45: Small groups

(i) Comparative approaches to religion and political legitimation

(ii) Relative importance of law and history in legitimation

(iii) The utility of the concept 'political legitimation', and its relationship to the social history of power

(iv) Other forms of legitimation, and approaches to its history

11.45-12.15 Coffee

12.15-1.30 Plenary session – academic conclusions of workshop, and areas and themes for further study

Lunch: 1.30-3 p.m.

*Afternoon session:*

The Way Forward

3 p.m. Introduction: Eduardo Manzano (CSIC, Madrid)

Discussion session

4.15: Summary: John Hudson

Close – 4.30 p.m.

## **ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS,** **CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUTURE DIRECTION IN THE FIELD**

The 'key benefits' of the Exploratory Workshop, as outlined in application were to be '(i) the introduction of diverse bodies of scholars to one another; (ii) the comparison of different historiographical traditions; (iii) the further development of comparative methods.' Aspect (i) was an undoubted success. In particular, the use of small groups of shifting membership ensured that all participants worked closely and intensively with each other. A very fertile group dynamic was present throughout. Aspect (ii) was also a considerable success, although deliberately no specific session in the Workshop was entirely devoted to the comparison. Awareness of different methods was raised, possible combinations of methodologies suggested. Shared commitments to a variety of interdisciplinary approaches were manifest. Distinct views persisted, most notably over the prioritisation of, on the one hand, the study of social structure and competition, on the other hand of cultural discourses and mentalities. This division stimulated rather than hampered debate, did not rule out integrating the two approaches, and will be a crucial theme for further collaboration. Aspect (iii) was central to the workshop. General comparison between eastern and western Europe, Christendom and Islam, was immensely stimulating. More difficult was the integration of case study and general comparison – a normal, indeed essential problem of historical study. However, considerable progress was made in finding ways for better integration in future. Time constraints restricted consideration of potentially important topics (for example notions of property) and source areas (for example vernacular literature), but this was expected within the context of an Exploratory Workshop. Very importantly, a shared and profitable language of analysis, comparison, and debate emerged.

The Workshop made a major contribution to defining the field of study, and defining terms useful to that study. Whereas participants' earlier collaborations had concentrated on political discourse, the Workshop broadened the area of enquiry by exploring whether political legitimisation could be separated from the whole field of legitimising discourses. It was concluded that it was valid to focus on the political in a broad sense – described in the introductory paper as 'the representation of individuals and groups within the social order, how they are recognised in that order, how they are governed; the establishment of power relations within society.' Likewise, commitment was re-affirmed to concentration on the period c. 700-1500, as one wherein emerged distinctions between east and west of Europe, Christian and Islamic polities - distinctions still of very considerable importance today and incomprehensible without understanding of their medieval roots. At the same time, it was felt that the comparative element could be reinforced by the inclusion of a limited number of historians of ancient and modern periods; by further discussion with scholars in social sciences and political theory; and by additional consideration of issues of sex / gender.

Overall the Workshop was highly successful in achieving the 'key benefits' outlined in the application, in assessing the forms which discussion within collaborative meetings might take, and in setting an agenda for future study.

The importance of the field, and the success of the Workshop in terms of collaborative working amongst scholars, led to the decision to continue collaboration through shared publication by individuals within the workshop,<sup>1</sup> through joint conference sessions, and through application for a European Network to concentrate on constitutionality (that is, ideas concerning the extent and limitation of powers); on the articulation of social power; and on the relationship between competition for social power and legitimising discourses.

These future collaborations, and other future studies in the field, must focus on certain key issues:

(i) the relationship between social complexity, social competition, and legitimising discourses; the manifestation of these, for example, in the relationship of social organisation and the emergence of ‘constitutional’ ideas of reciprocity or social contract.

(ii) choice, or its absence, as to use of legitimising discourses according to political / social / litigatory situation; the relationship of these to choices as to the threat or use of force

(iii) the impact of institutionalisation, professionalisation, bureaucratisation; the relationship of these to notions of charisma and social / symbolic capital.

(iv) the internalisation of legitimising discourses (incorporation in habitus); the impact of political, social, or cultural change on such internalisation.

(v) the development of secular forms of legitimation in Western Europe, their relative absence in Islam.

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<sup>1</sup> The possibility, mentioned in the application, of publication of work arising from the Exploratory Workshop and the earlier Acción Integrada was rejected for two reasons (i) because of the importance of the exploratory nature of the workshop; (ii) because specific studies from the earlier collaboration have now moved to publication by Brill as Building Legitimacy: Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimation in Medieval Societies, ed. I. Alfonso, H. Kennedy, J. Escalona; see also article by A. Isla in Journal of Medieval History, (2002).



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### STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PARTICIPANTS

#### AGE:

30-34: Mickunaite, Staunton

35-39: Ryan; Escalona, Woolf,

40-44: Hudson, Manzano, Rodriguez, Andrews, Duffy, Dalewski

45-49: Fierro, Fouracre, Isla, Airlie

50-54: Kennedy

55-59: Alfonso, Beaucamp

70-74: Bak

(AVERAGE AGE APPROX: 44)

#### NATIONAL ORIGIN

England 2 (Fouracre, Ryan)

France 1 (Beaucamp)<sup>2</sup>

Hungary 1 (Bak)

Ireland: 2 (Duffy, Staunton)

Lithuania: 1 (Mickunaite)

Poland 1 (Dalewski)

Scotland 5 (Airlie, Andrews, Hudson, Kennedy, Woolf)

Spain: 6 (Alfonso, Escalona, Fierro, Isla, Manzano, Rodriguez)

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<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately both of those invited but unable to attend were from France, reducing French representation. However, the group still included several historians of France.