

M.E.S.S. 2019

The Mongols and Religion

“The Catholic inquisitors of Europe who defended nonsense by cruelty, might have been confounded by the example of a barbarian, who anticipated the lessons of philosophy and established by his laws a system of pure theism and perfect toleration... a singular conformity may be found between the religious laws of Zingis khan and of Mr. Locke”

(Gibbon 1914, 4, fn. 8.)

The 4th meeting of the **Mongol Empire Spring Series** will be held in Vienna on **May 16-17, 2019**. It is jointly organized by the Institute for Austrian Historical Research (University of Vienna) and the Institute of Iranian Studies (Austrian Academy of Sciences).

Scholars from Europe and beyond are invited to submit their papers on the topic of **“The Mongols and Religion”**.

The conference will address the attitude of the Mongol ruling elite towards the various religious forms and bodies of religious specialists they encountered during the construction of the Empire and of the successor Khanates, between the 13th and 14th centuries.

On the one hand, the Mongols’ interaction with the religions and religious institutions they encountered, either through patronage, conversion, or persecution, profoundly impacted the landscape and structures of Eurasia in this period. On the other hand, religious communities played a decisive role in shaping Mongol policies, both as pillars of the state and of its legitimacy, as would-be monopolizers of knowledge and vectors of cultural exchange, as well as key agents in the economic life of the empire.

Gibbon's words testify to scholarship's longstanding approach on the Mongol rulers’ attitude towards religious leaders and communities. However, recently, scholars increasingly have questioned whether the Mongols were indeed so tolerant or whether seeming tolerance was not, rather, a part of their empire-building policies, as they recognized religions' potential as an instrument to control countless sedentary subordinates throughout the *Yeke Mongyol Ulus*'s vast territories.

We invite the submission of papers dealing with various aspects of these dynamics, among others: religious personnel and personalities, texts and text transmission, interreligious dialogue, dynamics of power, material culture.

Submission of Abstracts

Abstracts for proposed papers (max. 250 words) as well as inquiries should be directed to:

Karin Jirik: karin.jirik@univie.ac.at

Submission deadline: **5th December 2018**.

Accepted applicants will be offered accommodation for up to 2 nights in Vienna, but are expected to arrange for their own funding for travel. Selected papers will be considered for publication in the workshop proceedings.

Organizers:

Francesca Fiaschetti (University of Vienna)

Bruno De Nicola (Goldsmiths College, University of London/Austrian Academy of Sciences)