



Universität
Zürich^{UZH}

Historisches Seminar

Humility across Times and Cultures: Concepts, Practices, Artifacts

Conference
23.09. – 25.09.2026

University of Zurich
RAA-G-01
Rämistrasse 59
8001 Zürich

Scientific Responsibility:

Silvia Negri
(UZH, Historisches Seminar)
James Weaver
(University of Oxford)

Practical Coordination:

Larissa Herzog
(UZH, Historisches Seminar)

Contact:

SekNegri@hist.uzh.ch

The event is part of the SNF
Starting Grant research project
*Humility in theory and practice:
Historical approaches across
cultures (1250–1500)*. You can
find more information about
the project here



Schweizerischer
Nationalfonds

UZH alumni

GEGRÜNDET 1883 ALS
ZÜRCHER HOCHSCHULVEREIN



Universität
Zürich^{UZH}

Conference, 23.09. – 25.09.2026

Humility across Times and Cultures: Concepts, Practices, Artifacts



Image: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Bağdat 282, fol. 16r

Wednesday
23.09.2026

16:30 – 17:30
Introduction

Silvia Negri
Universität Zürich

James Weaver
University of Oxford

18:15 – 19:45
Evening Lecture

Beth Williamson
University of Bristol
Making Humility Visible:
The Madonna Seated on the Ground,
the Sacred Reimagined

20:00
Apéro Riche

Thursday
24.09.2026

9:30 – 10:30
Panel 1

Katharina Heyden
Universität Bern
Humility as a Religious Core Virtue
and a Social Force in the “Sayings of
the Fathers”

Karen Bauer
IIS London
Mental, Bodily, and Social Spaces of
Humility in the Qur’an

10:30 – 11:00
Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30
Panel 2

Felix Maier
Universität Zürich
The Politics of Humility: How Late
Roman Emperors Reimagined Power

Maxim Venetskov
University of Glasgow
The Highest Virtues and Their Contrary
Vices in the Ladder of Divine Ascent and
Its Manuscript Reception

Maria Parani
University of Cyprus
A Contradiction in Terms? Humility and
the Expression of Piety in Medieval
Byzantium

12:30 – 14:00
Lunch

14:00 – 15:00
Panel 3

Rebecca Sauer
Universität Zürich
Humility in Medieval Arabic Dream
Interpretation Manuals and Beyond

Antonella Ghersetti
Università Ca’ Foscari, Venezia
Humility, Modesty (and Haughtiness) in
Arabic Literature of the Mamluk Period

15:00 – 15:30
Coffee break

15:30 – 16:30
Panel 4

Marion Katz
New York University
Humility, Dignity and Status in
Mamluk-era Islamic Sources

Gowaart van den Bossche
Universität Zürich
Historical Memory and the Imposition
of Humility on non-Muslims in Late
Medieval Egypt

18:15 – 19:45
Evening Lecture

Christopher Melchert
University of Oxford (ret.)
The Humility of the Ideal Muslim
Scholar in the Earlier Middle Ages

20:00
Dinner

Friday
25.09.2026

09:00 – 10:30
Panel 5

Catherine Hezser
SOAS, University of London
The Torah Is Not Preserved by the
Haughty, But With Someone Whose
Spirit is Humble: Humility as a Rabbinic
Value in Late Antiquity

Lennart Lehmhaus
Universität Tübingen
Torah, Distress and Poverty – the Ideal
of Humility and Morality between Elites,
Scholars and the Unlearned in Seder
Eliyahu

Annette Kehnel
Universität Mannheim
Humilitas – a Remedy for Pleonexia?

10:30 – 11:00
Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30
Panel 6

Roberto Leggero
Università della Svizzera italiana
Make Space. Occupy Space. Renegotiating
the Individual Social Positioning
through Humility, Communication and
Performance (12th c.)

Christopher M. Bellitto
Kean University
Pierre d’Ailly’s Examination of Conscience:
Humility, Grace, and Free Will

Isabella Lazzarini
Università di Torino
The Lexis of Humility in Political Corre-
spondence (Italy, 1450–1520 ca.)

12:30 – 14:30
Lunch

14:30 – 16:00
Discussants

Letizia Osti
Università degli Studi di Milano

Miri Rubin
Queen Mary University of London

Simon Teuscher
Universität Zürich

16:00 – 16:30
Coffee break

16:30 – 17:30
Conclusion

Silvia Negri
Universität Zürich

James Weaver
University of Oxford

19:00
Dinner