



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)

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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



UZH alumni

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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

08:30 – 09:30
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 Lehnhäus

Universität Tübingen

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

09:30 – 10:30
Panel 6

Annette Kehnel

Universität Mannheim

Humilitas – a Remedy for Pleonexia?

Matthias Tischler

ICREA, Barcelona

Gentle, Quiet, and Effective:
The Subtle ‘Monastic Reform’ of the
Post-Visigothic World Reflected in
Carolingian Paraenetic Literature and
Its Concept of Humility, Ninth to
Thirteenth Centuries

10:30 – 11:00
Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30
Panel 7

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
