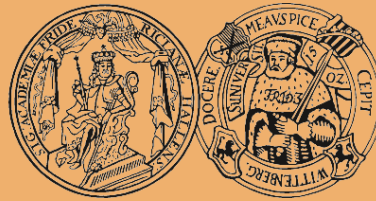




Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung  
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT  
HALLE-WITTENBERG



**Distinguished Lecture of the IMPRS ANARCHIE | 13 November 2019 | 6 p.m.**

# The Representation of Power and the Power of Representation

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The English queen rules, but she does not govern. But if she does not govern, what does “she rules” mean? Her power is only indirect and consists in representation. That means she symbolizes the stability of the political order. Throughout history, “political order” has generally meant monarchy based upon the quasi-religious faith of the subjects. No state without faith! Therefore, the papacy became the prototype of European monarchical domination, the incarnation of both spiritual and secular power (*plenitudo potestatis*). Loss of material power was compensated by ideological achievements. Popes were masters of the representation of power through architecture and ritual. Another major sacral and ceremonious society was the ancient Chinese empire. But whereas ritual performance in Roman Christendom was characterized by transcendence, Chinese rituals remained world-immanent. The Chinese monarchy was hereditary, but the Roman system had at least as much stability as any dynasty due to the systematic circulation of electing cardinals and elected popes. The culturally different strategic elites of these two systems were functionally almost equivalent. Today, however, power is represented not so much by monarchs as by nations. But national representation is still just as much the basis of political power as it was during the times of kings. (*Speaker's abstract*)

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