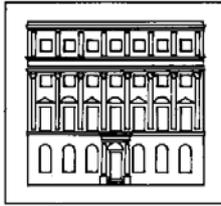


GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE LONDON



SEMINARS — SUMMER 2012

8 May **JONATHAN STEINBERG (PENNSYLVANIA/CAMBRIDGE)**

Is Biography an Academically Respectable Way to Study History?

For many years serious academic historians avoided biography. It lacked the rigour of social or economic history and the formal properties of history based on political science: biography was too personal, too literary, and too soft. In the last twenty-five years, Ian Kershaw, Richard Bosworth, Lothar Gall, Paul Preston, John Röhl, Niall Ferguson, and many others have written biographies that command respect and attention from all serious students of European history. This talk will argue that reflection on the nature of historical knowledge, that is, an epistemology, can be deployed to give that change in the status of biography sound methodological foundations. Jonathan Steinberg is the Walter H. Annenberg Professor of Modern European History at the University of Pennsylvania and Emeritus Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. His recent biography *Bismarck: A Life* (2011) will be published in German translation in autumn 2012.

15 May **LEONORE DAVIDOFF (ESSEX)**

Close Marriage, Incest, and the Development of Class Societies

Recent historical studies have established that far from previously held beliefs about the trajectory of modern society from patrimonial households to large bureaucratic organizations and a rational labour market, there was a rise in kin ties in Western societies from the mid eighteenth to the early twentieth century. These kin networks were a major factor in the development of class stratification. This paper explores the central feature of kin networks in the British middle class in this period: intra-familial marriage and its consequences. Leonore Davidoff is a Research Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Essex. She is the co-author, with Catherine Hall, of the classic, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1950* (1987). Her new book, *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780–1920* was published in November last year. She is the founding editor of the international journal *Gender and History*.

22 May **STEFFEN PATZOLD (TÜBINGEN)**

Senatorial Bishops? The Rise of Episcopal Power in Gaul (400–600)

Bishops became leading figures in their towns and gained considerable secular power in the transitional period between late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The politico-religious framework forged in this period displayed a remarkable continuity, lasting until the nineteenth century in Germany. The paper challenges established views about the rule of bishops in Gaul and proposes a new explanation. Steffen Patzold teaches medieval history at the Eberhard Karls Universität in Tübingen. His research focuses on European history from 500 to 1200, in particular, on political history and the history of religious institutions. He is the author of *Episcopos: Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (2008) and his current project is a prosopography of the Gaulish episcopate from 400 to 700.

12 June **DAGMAR FREIST (OLDENBURG)**

One Village, Five Religions: New Approaches to the Analysis of Religious Coexistence in Early Modern Germany

Neustadt Gödens was a small village in early modern Germany with a unique multi-religious character. Calvinists, Lutherans, Catholics, Mennonites, and Jews all coexisted there, practising their individual faiths almost undisturbed. This paper seeks to shed new light on the discussion of religious coexistence and segregation by examining the legal framework of religious coexistence, its social and cultural context, and its economic underpinnings including migration. Dagmar Freist is Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Oldenburg and co-founder of the research network NESICT <www.nesict.eu>. Her research interests include religious diversity, political culture, and the public sphere in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England and Germany. Her publications include *Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in London, c.1637–1645* (1998); *Absolutismus: Kontroversen um die Geschichte* (2008); and *Living with Religious Diversity in Early Modern Europe* (co-ed. 2009).

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Seminars are held at 5 p.m. in the Seminar Room of the German Historical Institute,
17 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2NJ.

Tea is served from 4.30 p.m. in the Common Room and wine is available afterwards.

Guided tours of the Library are available one hour before each seminar.