Late Antiquity was a time of social, political, and cultural change. The authorities and powers which emerged during this period came to influence and control the lives of people through religion, political ideology, and scholarship. The aim of the conference “Establishing, Defending, and Representing Authority in Late Antiquity” is to take a closer look at the processes through which these new authorities and powers emerged and the ways in which they were consolidated and expressed in the political, social and intellectual spheres. The conference also seeks to pose such questions as: Can we observe similarities in the establishment of authority in these spheres, or are there instead different methods, strategies and approaches unique to each of them? How do imperial and clerical powers arise? In what way are these powers legitimized and represented? How do holy men acquire spiritual authority during their lifetimes and how, by contrast, do theologians and philosophers posthumously obtain status as authorities through their writings as, for example, the church fathers? By which means are those beliefs established as orthodox defended and distinguished from heresies? How do secular and sacred texts attain canonical status? What roles do force and constraint play in implementing authoritative power? We hope to address these and similar questions within a geographical sphere extending from Iran in the east to the Mediterranean in the west and from Ḥimyar and Aksum in the south to Armenia in the north. The timeframe is the period from the fourth to the eighth century, though extensions in both directions will be allowed where necessary.
Wednesday 7 November
Venue: Erika-Weinzierl Saal, Universität Wien, Hauptgebäude, 1. Stock, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Wien

Welcome Address: Gisela PROCHÁZKA-EISL (Head of the Department of Near Eastern Studies)
Chair: Florian SCHWARZ

KEYNOTE LECTURE
Matthew CANEPÁ (UC Irvine)
Creating and Contesting the Imperial Infrastructures of Authority in Late Antiquity

Conference Dinner for speakers and chairs

Thursday 8 November
Venue: Schottensaal, Schottenstift, Freyung 6, 1010 Wien

Christophe ERISMANN and Elvira WAKELNIG
Introduction
Chair: Elvira WAKELNIG

George KARAMANOLIS (Vienna)
Early Christian Philosophers on Political Authority

Mossman ROUECHÉ (London)
Anonymous Authorities (exothen) in the Philosophical Commentaries of 6th Century Alexandria

Michael CHASE (Paris)
The Triad of Goodness, Power, and Wisdom. Pagan, Christian, and Muslim Authors in Search of Authorities

Chair: Chiara BARBATI

Daniel KING (Cardiff)
Contesting Authorities of Knowledge in the Syriac World

Ute PIETRUSCHKA (Berlin/Göttingen)
An Authority across Denominational and Cultural Boundaries: The Teachings of Isaac of Niniveh

Jack TANNOUS (Princeton)
Holy (and Unholy) Men

Friday 9 November
Venue: Alte Kapelle, Campus Altes AKH, Spitalgasse 2, Hof 1, 1090 Wien

Chair: Christophe ERISMANN

Yonatan MOSS (Jerusalem)
Scriptural Self-Authorization: A Late Ancient Journey from Reading to Writing

Peter SARRIS (Cambridge)
Defining the Orthodoxos Politeia: Justinian’s ‘Novels’ and the Imposition of Imperial Authority at the End of Antiquity

Peter VAN NUFFELEN (Ghent)
Performing Authority in Late Antiquity

Paul YULE (Heidelberg)
Royal Authority in the Art and Architecture of Late Antique South-Western Arabia

George HATKE (Vienna)
Power and Authority in Late Antique Himyar: The Epigraphic Evidence

Ildar GARIPZANOV (Oslo)
Visual Symbols of Authority in Context: Christian Graphic Signs in Late Antiquity

Reception