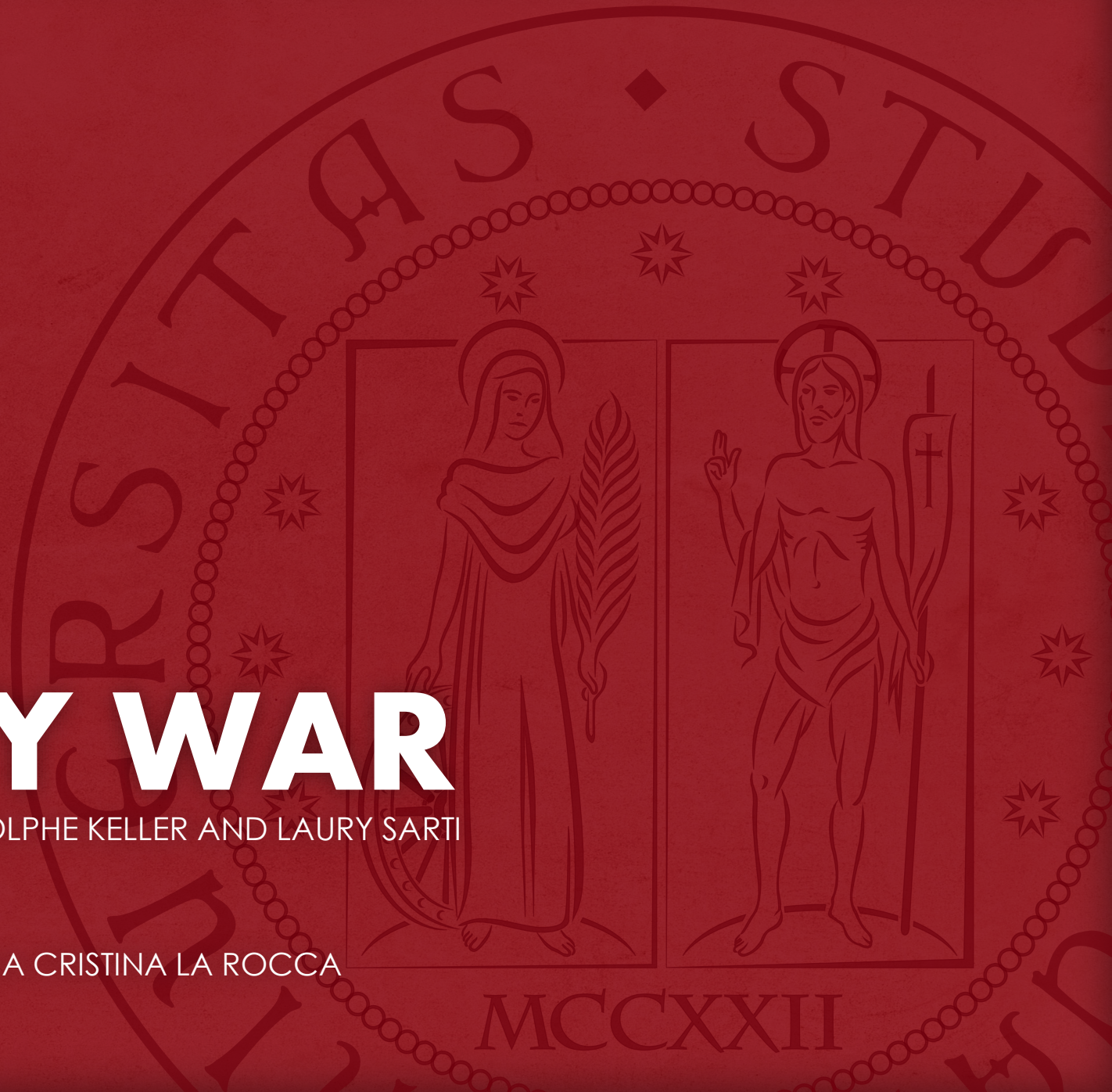


PREDATORY WAR

BASED ON „PILLAGES, TRIBUTS, CAPTIFS“ BY RODOLPHE KELLER AND LAURY SARTI
A PRESENTATION BY LUDWIG JUNG

HISTORY OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES - PROF. MARIA CRISTINA LA ROCCA



WHAT ARE WE DISCUSSING?

I. INTRODUCTION

[terminology – methodology - research interest]

II. PERSPECTIVES ON PREDATORY WAR

[article analysis – comparison of case studies]

III. DEDUCTION & CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?



TERMINOLOGY

PLUNDERING

as an aspect
of war

=

key-aspect of late antique/
early medieval societies

many times interpreted as a
legitimate method of enrichment

TERMINOLOGY

PLUNDERING = the act of stealing goods from a place
(ger. *plündern*) or person, typically using force and
in a time of war or civil disorder

PREDATION = a conscious form of coercive seizure in
(lat. *praedatio*) the context of war, including plundering
as well as human captives and tributes



PREDATION



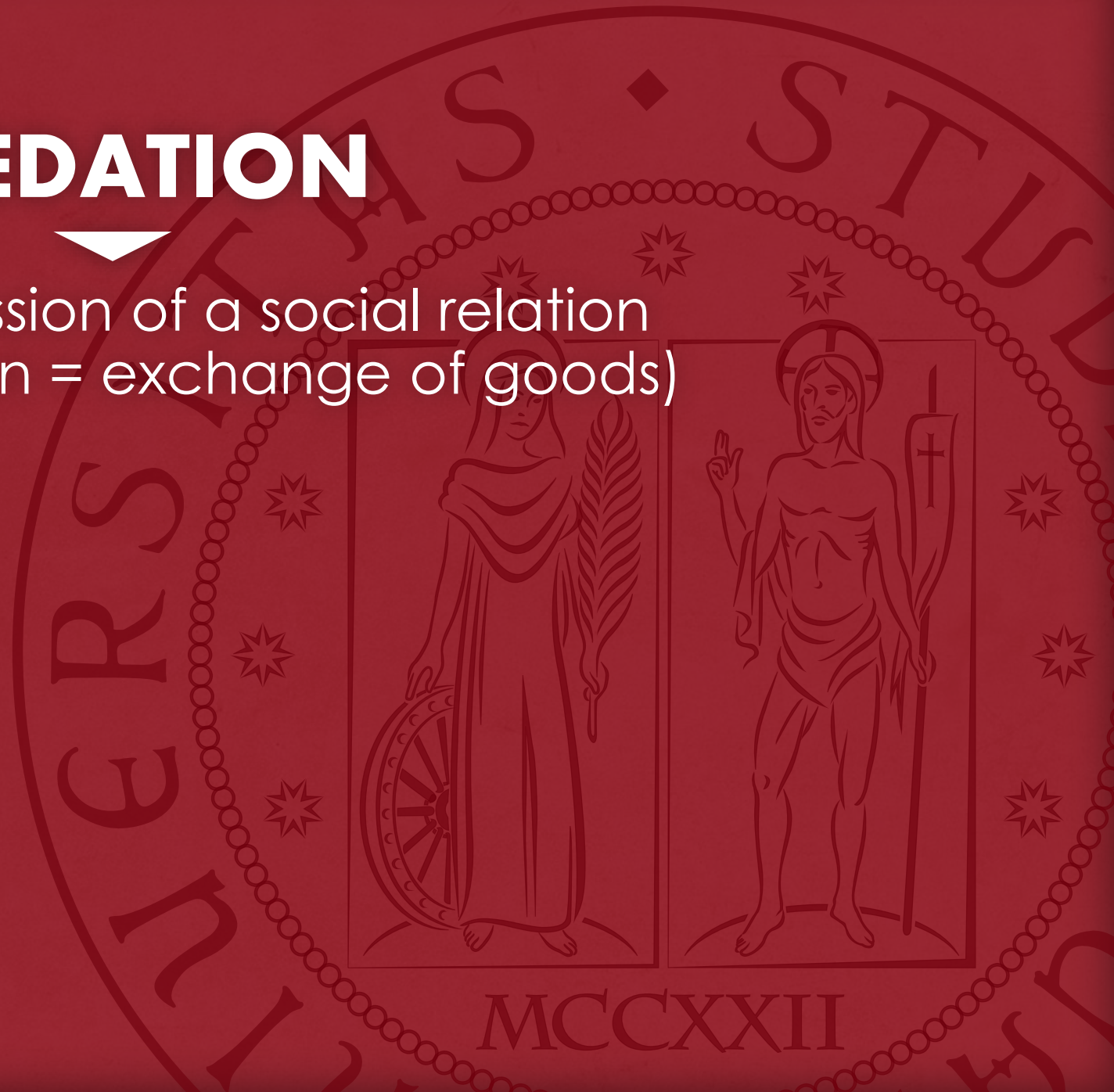
PREDATION



PREDATION



physical expression of a social relation
(social dimension = exchange of goods)



PREDATION



physical expression of a social relation
(social dimension = exchange of goods)

hostile



friendly



PREDATION



physical expression of a social relation
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hostile

friendly



negative
exchange



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physical expression of a social relation
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negative
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neutral
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PREDATION



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negative
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neutral
exchange

positive
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PREDATION



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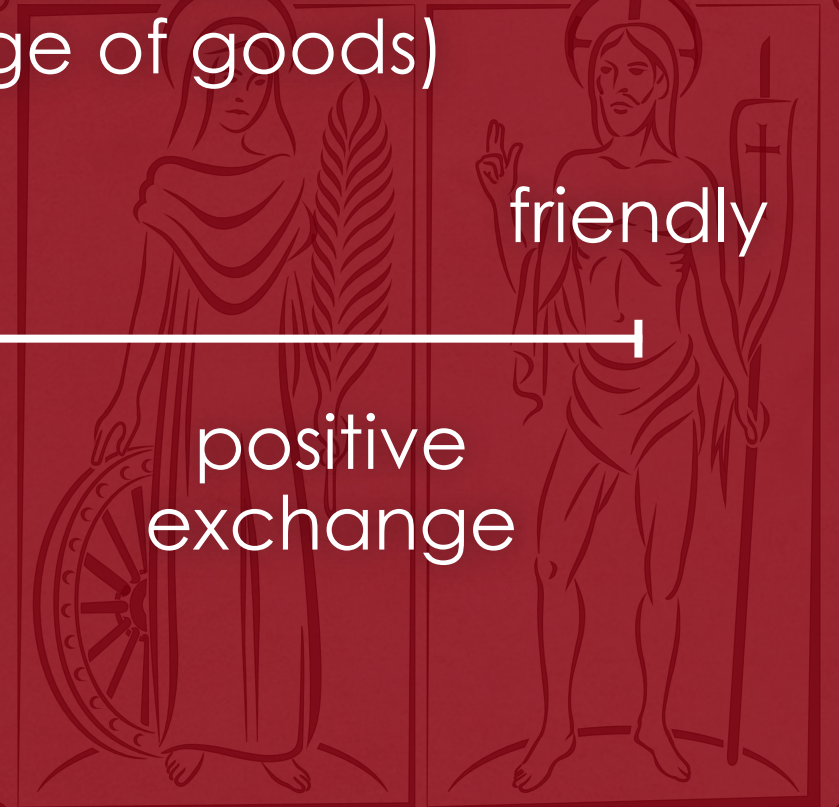
friendly



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PREDATION



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e.g. gift giving



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e.g. trade



e.g. gift giving



PREDATION

physical expression of a social relation
(social dimension = exchange of goods)

hostile

friendly

negative
exchange

e.g. predatory
warfare

neutral
exchange

e.g. trade

positive
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e.g. gift giving

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DIMENSIONS OF PREDATORY WARFARE



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DIMENSIONS OF PREDATORY WARFARE



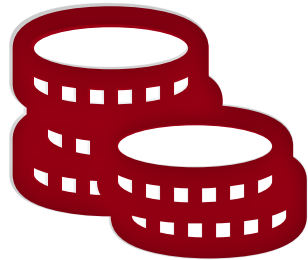
SOCIAL



DIMENSIONS OF PREDATORY WARFARE



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



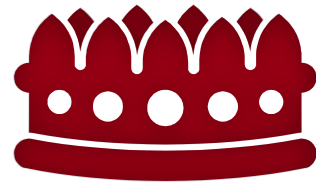
DIMENSIONS OF PREDATORY WARFARE



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



POLITICAL

DIMENSIONS OF PREDATORY WARFARE



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC

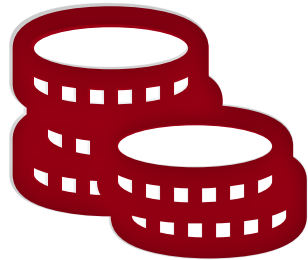


CULTURAL

DIMENSIONS OF PREDATORY WARFARE



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



POLITICAL



CULTURAL

METHODS OF PREDATION

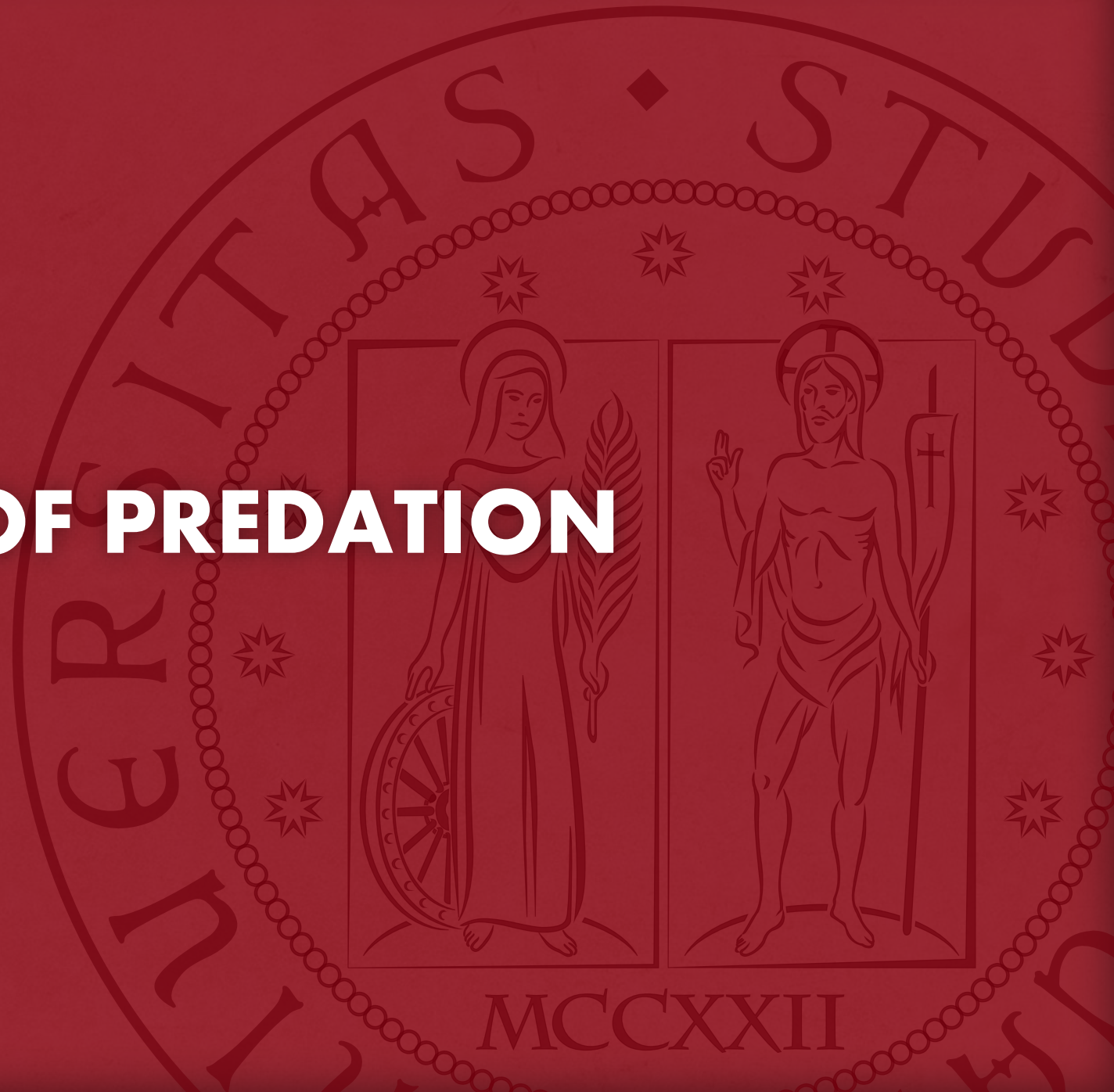
TIMEFRAME = late antiquity – early middle ages

OBSERVATION = predation as a common social phenomenon
(very much legitimate/accepted)

- appropriation of goods/enrichment
- way of ruling/securing rule
- gain of prestige

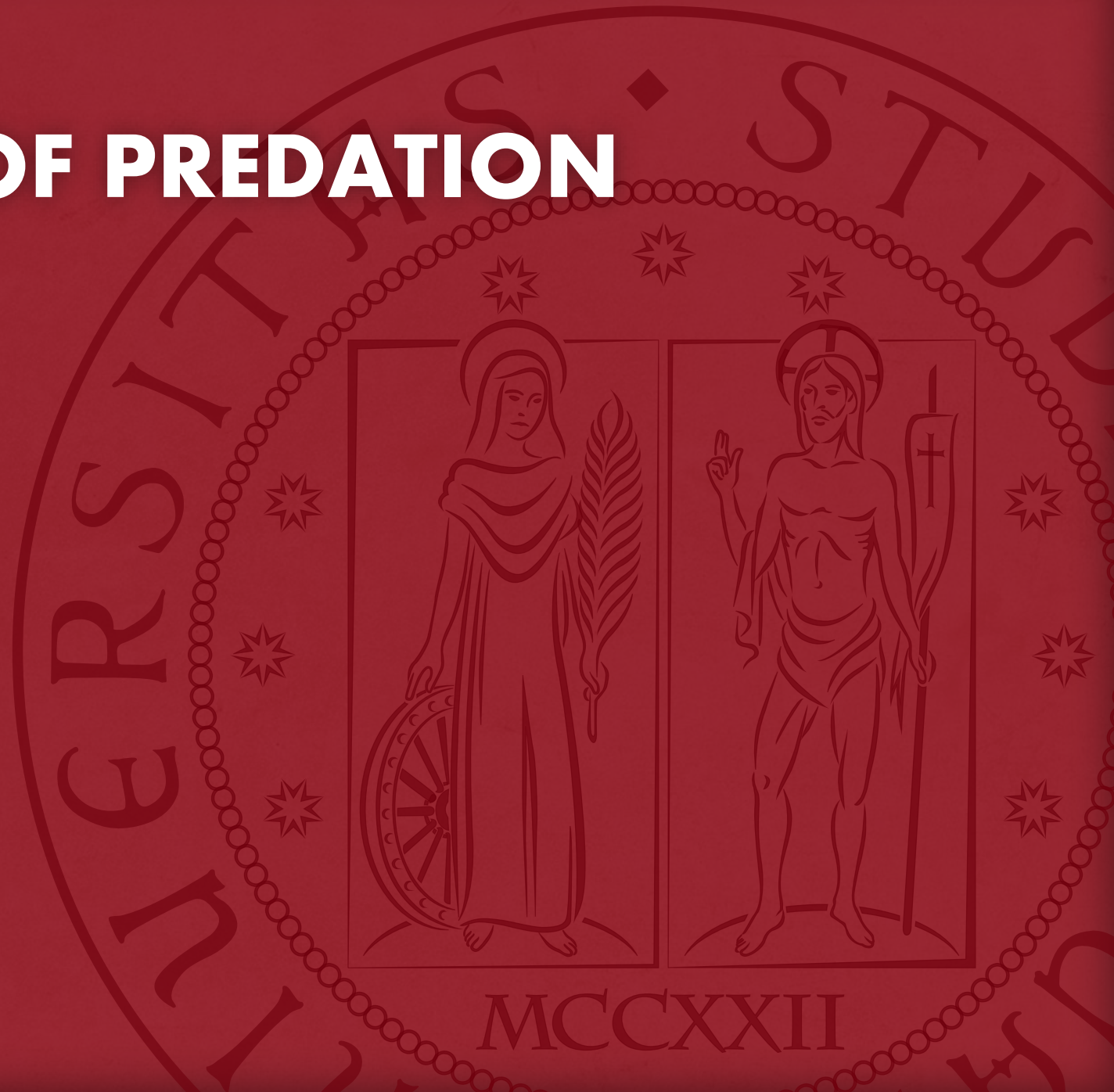


FORMS OF PREDATION



FORMS OF PREDATION

▼
TRIBUTE



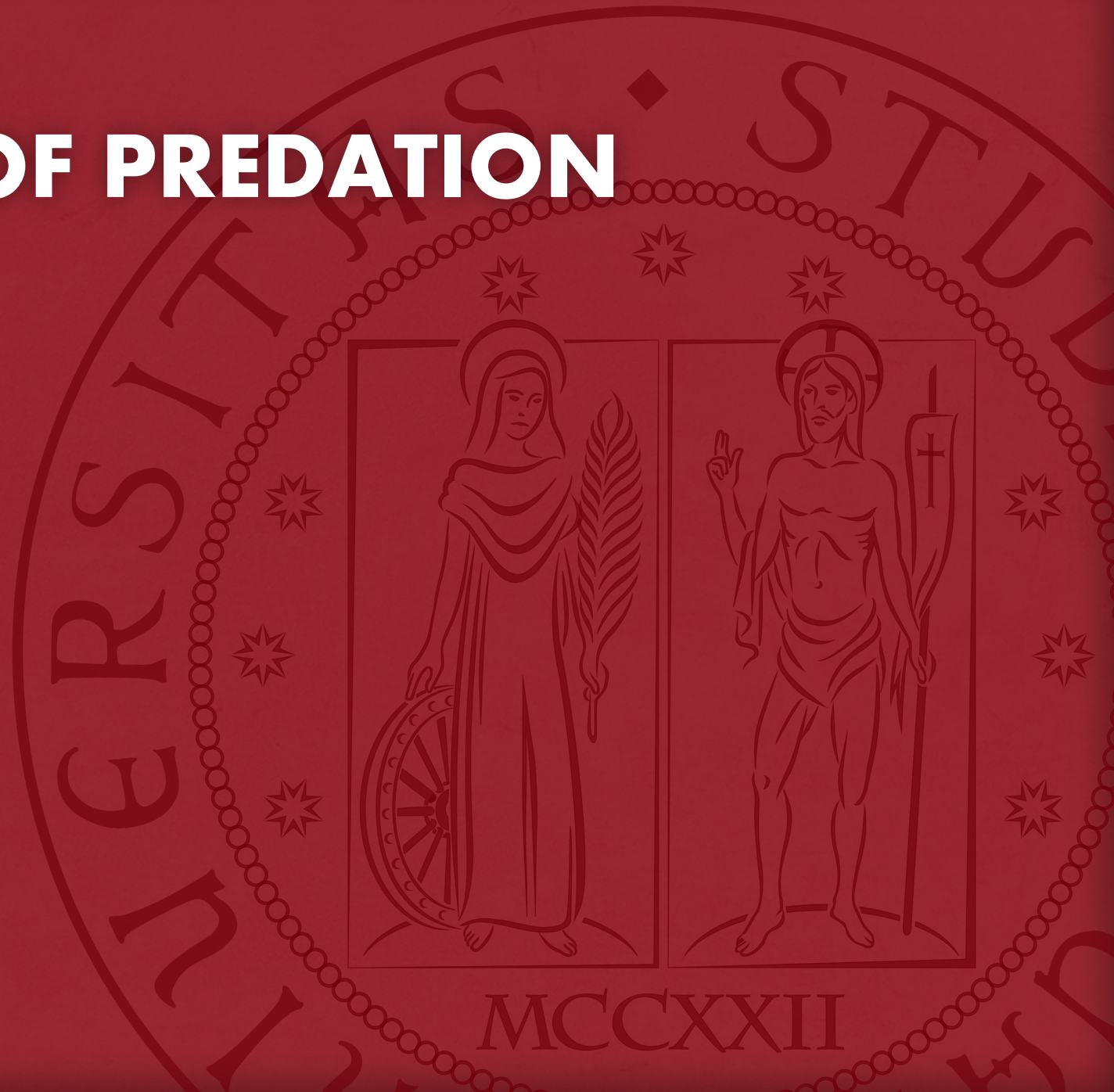
FORMS OF PREDATION

▼ TRIBUTE

one-time/regular
payment

threat/protection/
compensation

possible long-term
submission;
supplementation
of spoils of war; ...



FORMS OF PREDATION

TRIBUTE

one-time/regular
payment

threat/protection/
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possible long-term
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CAPTIVES



FORMS OF PREDATION

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threat/protection/
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supplementation
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CAPTIVES

payment or
exchange

buying a prisoner's
individual freedom

integration of
captives into
society; political
hostages; ...



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PLUNDERING



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PLUNDERING

violent
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enrichment/
revenge/strategy

destabilization
of territory;
submission of
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PREDATORY WAR

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AND CASE STUDIES



THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE

TIMEFRAME = 2nd – 4th century AD

OBSERVATION = ideology/proclamation of internal peace; constant low intensity predation

- piracy and banditry
- active slave trade
- growing threat of predation whenever/wherever authority was absent

THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE

SPECIFICS OF THAT CASE

- instability especially in frontier-regions
- struggle intensifies in moments of low authority/political crisis
- issue of imperial legitimacy (victory in defensive wars; reversal of plundering; redistribution of goods)

THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE

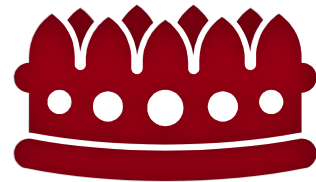
CONCLUSION

- “booty” as a political, social, and ideological subject
- imperial authority through output-legitimization (soldiers/provincial subjects)
- crucial in narrating the crisis of the 3rd century as well as the downfall of Rome

DIMENSIONS OF PREDATION



SOCIAL



POLITICAL

ECONOMIC

CULTURAL

WARFARE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

TIMEFRAME = 5th – 9th century AD

OBSERVATION = warfare can be a lucrative enterprise
(not necessarily due to plundering)

- tribute as the most profitable way of predatory warfare
- threat of battle as a cost-efficient way of extorting payment
- non-physical dimension of warfare

WARFARE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

SPECIFICS OF THAT CASE

- "booty" is mainly gained through battle or the threat of battle
- plundering itself isn't common
- warfare isn't mainly fought over material goods/physical objects
- prestige, honor, and patronage as valid reasons behind warfare
- political dimension of tribute is more important than its physical dimension

WARFARE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

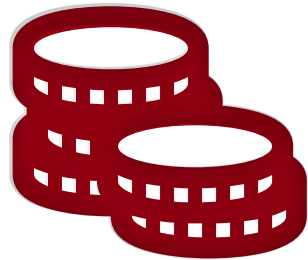
CONCLUSION

- “booty” as a political and economic subject
- authority is demonstrated through the (symbolic) extortion of tribute
- predatory warfare itself can not be discussed on an economical level alone

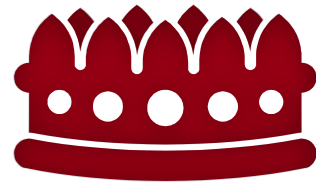
DIMENSIONS OF PREDATION



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



POLITICAL



GOTHIC FACTIONS

TIMEFRAME = 5th – 8th century AD

OBSERVATION = Gothic factions turn into independent warrior-bands (post Attila)

- tributes payed by the Eastern Roman Empire weren't sufficient (territories couldn't supply the Goths)
- rapine methods instead of subsistence economy

GOTHIC FACTIONS

SPECIFICS OF THAT CASE

- Gothic leaders actively decide to apply predatory methods
- the mere presence of Gothic warriors needs to be intimidating
- pillaging of local settlements as well as ransom payments for captives
- different predatory methods due to different socio-economic situations

GOTHIC FACTIONS

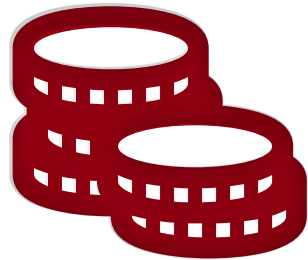
CONCLUSION

- “booty” as an economic subject
- Gothic tribes are supplied through tributes as well as predatory warfare
- different intensities of robber-economy even inside the Ostrogothic kingdom (e.g. Amal brothers; Theoderic)

DIMENSIONS OF PREDATION



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



BYZANTIUM

TIMEFRAME = 8th – 12th century AD

OBSERVATION = huge changes in the byzantine relation to an economy of plunder

- prisoners of war and their economic/social role are especially important
- military/diplomatic/social issue
- relevant for culture and communication

BYZANTIUM

SPECIFICS OF THAT CASE

- narrative/legislative sources;
focus on hagiological sources
- Roman attitude towards prisoners
changes due to Christianity; common
exchange of prisoners with the Arabs
- exchange grows to be an important
economic/social activity
- captivity as transitional period
(captives in various roles)

BYZANTIUM

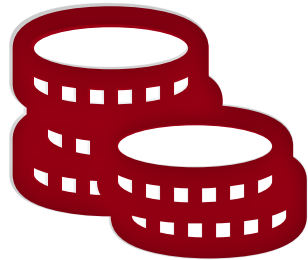
CONCLUSION

- captives appear as a multi-dimensional aspect of byzantine warfare
- economic, social, and cultural relevance
- exchange of captives grows in importance over time (eventual decline into mechanisms of slave-trade)

DIMENSIONS OF PREDATION



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



CULTURAL

SOUTHERN GERMANY

TIMEFRAME = 8th – 10th century AD

OBSERVATION = evaluation of two prominent legal sources on the topic of military discipline

- Lex Alamannorum & Lex Baiuvariorum
- broad spectrum of legal prohibitions of plunder
- focus on the need for supplies during a military campaign

SOUTHERN GERMANY

SPECIFICS OF THAT CASE

- historiographic sources tend to stress political and economic benefits of plundering
- the examined Leges rather try to regulate the practice of plunder
- internal conflict/destabilization due to plunder should be prevented
- but no real attempt to prevent plundering

SOUTHERN GERMANY

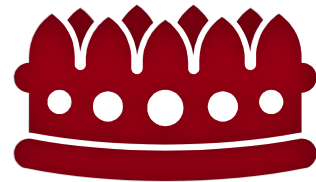
CONCLUSION

- awareness of the effects of plundering
- Lex Baiuvariorum didn't even restrict plundering of one's own territory
- goal of discouraging disruptions to society/controlling private violence in times of war (military campaign)

DIMENSIONS OF PREDATION



SOCIAL



POLITICAL

ECONOMIC

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NOMADIC TRIBES

TIMEFRAME = 5th – 10th century AD

OBSERVATION = relationship between mounted nomadic tribes and sedentary post-roman kingdoms

- continuous exchange of large amounts of valuables

NOMADIC TRIBES

SPECIFICS OF THAT CASE

- kingdoms pay tribute/are plundered by nomadic tribes
- kingdoms regain their valuables through victory in battle against said tribes (e.g. Ardarich; Charlemagne)
- very different uses of said valuables (mainly precious metals) by the different rulers

NOMADIC TRIBES

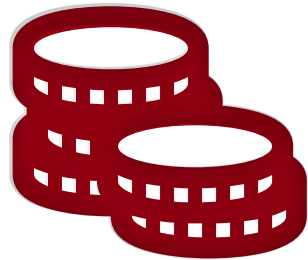
CONCLUSION

- strong emphasis on the history of said exchanged precious metals
- valuables as means of security (tribute) as well as prestige (regained through battle)

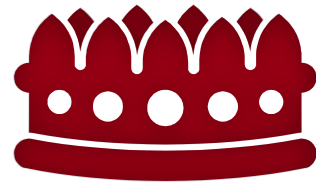
DIMENSIONS OF PREDATION



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



POLITICAL



CULTURAL

MCCXXII

SLAVIC TRIBES

TIMEFRAME = 9th – 11th century AD

OBSERVATION = predatory attitudes as possible way of political subordination

- Dalemincians are targeted by the Franks requesting hostages/tribute
- Saxons conquer the Dalemincian territory as a protective zone against the Hungarians

SLAVIC TRIBES

SPECIFICS OF THAT CASE

- territory isn't understood as connected to the Dalemincian society
- tributary status might have stabilized social structures (establish local elites)
- elites were integrated in Saxon culture through hostages
- decimation of the Dalemincian elite through violent conquest is possible

SLAVIC TRIBES

CONCLUSION

- captives as possible catalyst for cultural assimilation
- tributes as stabilizing factors of tribal hierarchies
- violent submission of tribes as a political agenda of more powerful rulers

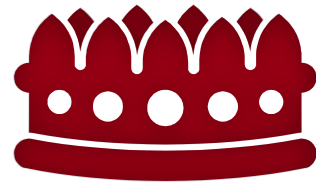
DIMENSIONS OF PREDATION



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



POLITICAL



CULTURAL

VIKING PLUNDERING

TIMEFRAME = 8th – 11th century AD

OBSERVATION = reevaluation of Scandinavian societies regarding predatory war and value systems

- view of Viking plundering is defined by the western descriptions (monks)
- internal Scandinavian perspective differs immensely from that

VIKING PLUNDERING

SPECIFICS OF THAT CASE

- plundering has to be distinguished from theft
- source of individual and societal wealth/prestige
- huge economic role of redistribution (spoils are put back in circulation)
- internal plundering between Scandinavians is very common (proven through local sources)

VIKING PLUNDERING

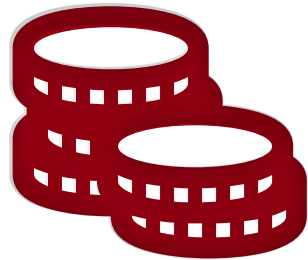
CONCLUSION

- “Viking” as a defensive as well as an offensive actor (proven by new archeological findings/ written sources)
- indiscriminate in status/origin of the victim; plundering is almost always centered around the individual's wealth

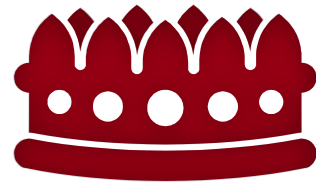
DIMENSIONS OF PREDATION



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POLITICAL



CONCLUSION

AND WHAT IS STILL OPEN TO DEBATE



WHAT TO TAKE AWAY?

- predatory warfare is a multidimensional aspect of the late antique and early medieval period
- it distinguishes between plundering, dealing with captives, and tributary relationships
- its influence can be seen in a social, economic, political, and cultural context
- the phenomenon as a whole is very heterogeneous and can not be generalized

WHAT IS STILL UP FOR DEBATE?

- comparison with other regions globally (very eurocentric perspective)
- is there an evident anthropologic perspective on predatory behaviour?
- what is the ethnographic perspective of e.g. oral cultures on predatory warfare?

THANK YOU

FOR YOUR ATTENTION

HISTORY OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES - PROF. MARIA CRISTINA LA ROCCA

