

CONFERENCE

DIE WIENER REICHSKRONE. EIN FORSCHUNGSPROJEKT.

Vienna, 26–27 June, 2025

Weltmuseum Wien, Forum, Neue Hofburg, 1010 Wien

PROGRAMME

26. Juni 2025

9.15–9.30 Uhr

Welcome: GD Jonathan Fine

Moderation: Martina Pippal

9.30–10 Uhr

Franz Kirchweger (Wien): Das Forschungsprojekt zur Wiener Reichskrone. Eine Einführung

10–10.30 Uhr

Rebecca Müller (Heidelberg): Die Reichskrone in der Kunstgeschichte

10.30–11 Uhr

Michael Brandt (Hildesheim): Ottonisch – Salisch? Schatzkunst einer Epochenschwelle

11–11.30 Uhr: Coffee break

Moderation: Katja Schmitz-von Ledebur

11.30–11.50 Uhr

Franz Kirchweger (Wien): Vergleichsobjekte im Rahmen des Forschungsprojektes

11:50–12:30 Uhr

Herbert Reitschuler für Helene Hanzer (Wien): Die kunsttechnologischen Untersuchungen zur Reichskrone

12.30–14 Uhr: Lunch break

Moderation: Michael Brandt

14–14.30 Uhr

Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen (Köln): Die Goldschmiedeelemente auf den Platten des Kronreifs

14.30–15 Uhr

Martina Pippal (Wien): Die Emails der Reichskrone aus kunsthistorischer Perspektive

15–15.30 Uhr

Lothar Lambacher (Berlin): Kronreif und Emails – Die Konsequenzen der Werkbefunde für die Spolienthesen

15.30–16 Uhr: Coffee break

Moderation: Sabine Stanek

16–16.30 Uhr

Ina Reiche (Paris): Materialanalysen – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen

16.30–17 Uhr

Martina Griesser (Wien): Naturwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Materialbestand der Reichskrone

17–17.30 Uhr: Diskussion

19 Uhr: Evening lecture

Moderation: Franz Kirchweyer

Bernd Schneidmüller (Heidelberg): Das Heilige Römische Reich und seine Kronen

27. Juni 2025

Moderation: Lothar Lambacher

9–9.30 Uhr

Albert Gilg (München): Der Stein- und Perlenbesatz der Reichskrone

9.30–10 Uhr

Teresa Lamers (Wien): Die Emails der Reichskrone aus konservierungswissenschaftlicher Perspektive

10–10.30 Uhr

Stefan Röhrs (Berlin): Glasanalysen an Vergleichsobjekten

10.30–11 Uhr: Coffee break

Moderation: Martina Griesser

11–11.30 Uhr

Irmhild Ceynowa / Thorsten Allscher (München): Ausgewählte Goldschmiedeeinbände der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek

11.30–12 Uhr

Marie Godet (Paris): Der Buchkasten aus Maastricht als Vergleichsobjekt (englisch)

12–12.30 Uhr

Angelo Agostino (Turin): The ‚Paci‘ in Milan, Chiavenna and Vercelli. A reconsideration (englisch)

12.30–14 Uhr: Lunch break

Moderation: Andreas Zajic

14–14.30 Uhr

Sebastian Scholz (Zürich): Die Reichskrone in der Geschichtswissenschaft

14.30–15:30h Uhr

Clemens M.M. Bayer (Lüttich): Die Inschriften der Reichskrone: Überlegungen zu Datierung und Semantik

15.30–16 Uhr: Coffee break

Moderation: Bernd Schneidmüller

16–16.30 Uhr

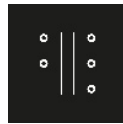
Ludger Körntgen (Mainz): Mehr als ein Herrschaftssymbol. Zu möglichen Funktionen einer personalisierten Krone

16.30–17 Uhr

Romedio Schmitz-Esser (Heidelberg): Gibt es eine Synthese? Versuch einer Entwicklungsgeschichte der Reichskrone

17–18 Uhr: Abschlussdiskussion

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ABSTRACTS

Franz Kirchweger (Vienna)

The Research Project on the Viennese Imperial Crown. An Introduction

This paper outlines the rationale behind the decision to launch an interdisciplinary research project on the Viennese Imperial Crown - one of the most materially and symbolically significant goldsmith works of the medieval West. It introduces the key research questions, objectives and various approaches that guided the project as well as the thematic focus of this concluding conference. Material-analytical and art-technological perspectives and examinations offer new observations, reflections and insights about the object itself, that have not existed in this form or scope until now. These are intended to compliment and broaden the art-historical and historical views of the Imperial Crown. Within the context of this conference, their significance and relevance across disciplinary boundaries will be discussed. The second part of the paper examines a side aspect of the project; the research into visual and textual sources, which have thus far been barely evaluated as testimonies to the history of the use and modifications of the Imperial Crown in the early modern period.

Rebecca Müller (Heidelberg)

The Imperial Crown in Art History

This paper discusses the art historical study of the Imperial Crown, noting that a strict delineating between fields - such as the work of polymaths of the late 18th century - does not seem productive. Given the intensity of the scholarly debate, questions about the crown's time of production and place of origin take centre stage. The starting point is the question of the extent to which art historical approaches can be distinguished from other disciplinary perspectives, particularly archaeology. By tracing the history of scholarship largely in chronological order, this paper will highlight the arguments used by art historians over time. This reveals areas of tension - some shaped by their historical context - and also makes clear that theses and findings from historical research were often adopted selectively and according to specific interests. Certain observations were forgotten for a time, only to gain significance again later. Some observations were forgotten and became only later relevant again. The aim is to offer a disciplinary self-assessment - necessarily one-sided in terms of expertise, as dictated by the "experimental setup" - which, through a critical examination of the methods used in art history, seeks to contribute to an interdisciplinary analysis of the crown.

Michael Brandt (Hildesheim)

Ottonian-Salian? Treasures at the Turning Point of an Epoch

How Ottonian is Ottonian treasure art really, or in other words, what is commonly understood by this term? The standard reference works in the field offer only limited insights into this question—either because they tend to perpetuate older scholarly opinions without examining their underlying foundations, or because the group of monuments in question is, by its very nature, difficult to access and therefore only rarely subject to in-depth study.

The goal of this presentation, conceived as stimulus talk, is not to critically review these contributions in the sense of a comprehensive overview of the current state of research. Instead, the focus will be on identifying reliable reference points based on a representative selection of characteristic treasure objects. To illustrate the uncertainty of the terrain, the paper will begin by examining four supposed period-typical *Zimelien*, whose commonly accepted dating to the Ottonian and Salian eras proves questionable upon closer scrutiny. Four further examples will then highlight historically well documented anchor points that shed more light on the patrons and circumstances of creation. The question of possible precursors to the Imperial Crown then draws attention to different types of crowns and their chronological classification. Finally, this paper will address the Imperial Crown itself and its innovative setting technique for which two comparative examples found at locations far apart from each other can be identified, for which an origin at the turn of the 10th to the 11th century is likely. This raises new questions.

Franz Kirchweger (Vienna)

Comparative Objects in the Research Project

At the centre of the CROWN research project were questions regarding the materiality, manufacturing techniques and state of conservation of the Viennese Imperial Crown. To judge and contextualise the observations and results of the crown's examinations, a sample of additional historical goldsmith works were considered and - as far as possible - analysed using the same methods and instruments. The works were selected based on technical aspects (gold cloisonné), as well as art historical reference points and/or the dating. At the same time, the actual availability and accessibility of these works was decisive.

In total, 17 additional goldsmith works were examined in Essen, Cologne, Munich and Vienna. In addition, scholarly exchange concerning a book cover in the Musée du Louvre as well as three works in Northern Italy (Vercelli, Chiavenna, Milan) was initiated. Altogether, data of ca. 410 individual enamel plaques ranging from the late 10th to the 12th century was collected. This offers scholarship an unprecedented volume of data on gold cloisonné works. In total, circa 48.000 data entries were generated whose scholarly debate and processing is yet to be finalised. The paper presents a selection of comparative objects and explains their respective relevance to the research framework as basis for further papers of this conference that will include these works.

Helene Hanzer (Vienna)

The Technological Examination of the Imperial Crown

This paper presents the findings of extensive, primarily optical investigations into the technological structure, manufacturing techniques, and state of preservation of the Imperial Crown. 3D-microscopy images with high depth of field reveal detailed information about the crown's three-dimensional surface structures. 3D-scans provide additional insights into the crown's structural composition as well as constructive connections between its main components: the circlet, the arch and the cross. Special attention is given to the joints and the connection techniques used, especially in the context of later, historical changes and modifications. First, the components - crown circlet, arch and cross - will be considered individually. Their technical construction will be visualised with exploded-view drawings and schematic drawings. The analysis of the settings and the decorative elements highlights their distinctive technical features, while also illustrating the differences and similarities among them. Exploded-view drawings illustrate the findings and confirm the unique technological and formal character of the settings on the circlet. In examining the modifications, the paper will attempt to clarify the interdependencies between the individual modifications and determine their sequencing. Virtual reconstructions offer new insights in this regard. By combining the technological findings with various studied sources, the current state of how the cross was mounted on the circlet has been newly explained. A novel aspect of the study is also the discussion of the iron bands attached to the inner side of the circlet, whose structural impact on

the circlet, arch, and cross is analysed. These findings provide a broader and more nuanced view of the Imperial Crown and deepen our understanding of its complex history of manufacture and preservation.

Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen (Cologne)

The Goldsmith Elements on the Plates of the Imperial Crown Circlet

Comparable examples for the extraordinary settings of the Imperial Crown are found almost exclusively in jewellery that, over the past century, has been associated with the names of two empresses: Gisela, who died in 1054, and Adelheid, who died in 1077. This lies beyond the chronological boundary that Birgitta Falk and I had set for the catalogue of the 2017 Darmstadt exhibition - very generally, the first half of the 11th century. Significant parts of this so-called 'Mainz Gold Jewellery', now mainly held in Berlin and consisting of brooches, earrings, rings, and ceremonial regalia, were identified by Otto von Falke in 1918 as imperial coronation jewellery. According to current research, however, the supposedly coherent find from Mainz was likely assembled by a group of dealers, with the help of a learned Mainz prelate, to suit the tastes of the Darmstadt collector Maximilian von Heyl. Particularly since elements now clearly recognised as Wilhelmine additions can no longer be regarded as valid ornamental references for the Viennese Imperial Crown. Only a single motif remains relevant: relatively large, freestanding granules (*Granalien*), set between two rows of thinner filigree wire. This element is a key feature of the large stone settings on the crown. Alongside many complex filigree patterns - though by no means dominant - such rows of granules also appear in the 'Mainz Jewellery'. Since then, they have also been documented in several individual brooch finds between Denmark, Minden, and Schleswig, suggesting that they form part of a broader ornamental motif group used in jewellery of the later 11th century. This jewellery is, in terms of style and the extremely intricate construction of its filigree elements, far more developed than the much simpler arrangement of ornamental elements on the crown. However, a few pieces of jewellery with a less transparent construction exhibit two important features that also serve as identifiers of the Imperial Crown: Backs with ornamental filigree, and light-enhancing openings beneath the gemstones, bordered with filigree wire. These can be considered a preliminary stage of the so-called 'bottomless filigree jewellery' in a structurally modular 'element-based design'. If one assumes that this development - from more solid to extremely delicate construction - occurred only after the turn of the millennium, then the crown's settings, which appear almost monumental in comparison to the 'bottomless' brooches yet are still optimally illuminated, may have been created before the year 1000.

Martina Pippal (Vienna)

The Enamels of the Imperial Crown from an Art Historical Perspective

While any figurative elements present have traditionally served as starting points for art-historical analysis, the four cloisonné plaques set into the diagonal plates of the Imperial Crown have so far remained largely unexamined in this capacity. Isolated attempts by art historians to relate them to technically similar works have failed due to the sparse number of comparable objects and the frequently uncertain classification of those that do exist.

In recent decades, historians have introduced palaeographic and iconographic arguments suggesting that the plaques could not have been created before the late 11th century. However, this view has already been refuted in the course of the crown's recent re-examination. The spolia theory (Elbern et al.), which proposed that the plaques originated from an older object, must also be set aside.

Recently published objects and high-quality photographs of long-known comparative works now make it possible to situate specific motifs and stylistic features of the crown plaques within clusters of comparable items. This in turn allows for a more precise hypothesis regarding the date of origin—and therefore the likely patron—of the crown's circlet. Iconologically, the plaques prove to be constitutive of a ruler narrative, revealing how strongly visual media were already being used in the High Middle Ages to obscure reality and to legitimise power ambitions.

Lothar Lambacher (Potsdam)

Circlet and Enamels – The Consequences of the Technical Findings for the 'Spolia-Thesis'

Since Mechthild Schulze-Dörlamm considered the possibility in 1992 that the four enamel plaques of the Imperial Crown might be spolia, the theory of a secondary use of these image carriers has been picked up on repeatedly and expanded on by Sybille Eckenfels-Kunst in 2008 and by Erhard Brepohl in 2018. The main argument for assuming an origin from a different work context has always been the characteristic contours of the plaques, with their slightly indented arched fields, which supposedly demand an architectural framing.

This thesis will be assessed critically. In addition to various art historical aspects, the latest technical findings by Helene Hanzer will also be considered, focusing on any traces that might point to a secondary use of the enamel plaques. Since the filigree decoration on the ground plates follows the contour of the bezel settings precisely, we can confidently assume that the existing enamel plaques were part of the original design of the circlet. Although there are clear signs of removal and reinsertion on the bezel settings of the enamel plaques, there is neither evidence of formal modification, nor do the enamel plates show any traces indicating previous mounting elsewhere.

One cannot rule out that the enamel plaques were originally intended for a different purpose but were subsequently used in the design and production of the plaques of the circlet. Iconographic and epigraphic arguments for such a 'repurposing' of the image plaques might support such 'spolia theories' but they can no longer rely on formal characteristics or technical findings as evidence. From the perspective of goldsmithing techniques, none of the findings of the CROWN-project are pointing to a secondary use of the four enamel plaques on the Imperial Crown.

Ina Reiche (Paris)

Material Analyses – Possibilities and Limitations

'Material analyses of the Imperial Crown'? At first glance, there is no obvious link between scientific investigations and research on art historical objects. Furthermore, it may seem difficult to justify why valuable, unique and often fragile objects should be subjected to complex analytical procedures. Nevertheless, material sciences can make valuable contributions to the study and conservation of art objects. It is particularly important when revealing the objects' characteristic features that cannot be uncovered in art historical research alone. Material analyses can therefore provide information on historical production techniques and the type of raw materials used. Used methods, ideally non-invasive, contact-free and on-site, should generate various information about the composition and state of preservation of the objects. They therefore provide valuable support in establishing suitable conservation methods. Indeed, historical objects often change over time. It is important to distinguish between the original characteristic properties and those resulting from aging. To this end, it is necessary to develop integrated analyses strategies that are based on the relevant research question. This paper illustrates the possibilities and limitations of scientific analyses, based on the example of the non-invasive, interdisciplinary investigations of outstanding medieval goldsmith works such as the *Hiddensee Treasure* and the so-called *Gisela-Jewellery*.

Martina Griesser (Vienna)

Scientific Investigations of the Materials Used for the Imperial Crown

The aim of the CROWN project was to provide information on the materials, technologies and state of preservation of the Imperial Crown for the first time. An interdisciplinary approach was combined with the use of state-of-the-art analytical methods.

The comprehensive scientific studies focused on characterising the decorative elements – i.e. multi-coloured enamels, gemstones, and pearls – used on the eight base plates of the circlet and the later added arch and cross. The main objectives concerned the detailed investigation of the cloisonné work, its manufacturing process, the enamels' chemical composition as well as the degradation and corrosion and material changes across different enamel colours.

The presentation introduces the different analytical methods used in the project: HIROX high resolution 3-D microscopy, multiband photographic techniques, X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF), Raman and photoluminescence spectroscopy as well as fibre optic reflectance (FORS) and UV-VIS spectroscopy.

In addition to discussing challenges and limits of the strictly non-destructive investigations of this highly complex three-dimensional mediaeval artwork, the presentation also offers an overview of selected

findings. The presentation aims to provide a basis for subsequent, more detailed contributions by other researchers, who will present specific results in greater depth.

EVENING LECTURE

Bernd Schneidmüller (Heidelberg)

The Holy Roman Empire and Its Crowns

The crown and imperial regalia reflected the pre-eminence of the medieval Holy Roman Empire within the Christian salvation history. This paper dives into the vanished world of symbols and sketches the self-conception of a divinely ordained order on earth. To represent this ideal, kings and emperors repeatedly turned to new imperial crowns. Only in the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern era did the precious Viennese Crown – supposedly the crown of Charlemagne – displace its many rivals and rise to the status of the exclusive imperial crown. This paper addresses the mysteries surrounding the origin and use of the Viennese crown and presents the Holy Roman Empire through the lens of the crowns' history.

H. Albert Gilg (Munich)

Gemstone and Pearl Decoration of the Imperial Crown

The gemstone and pearl decoration of the Imperial Crown was analysed using a combination of mobile and non-destructive methods, primarily optical microscopy, Raman spectroscopy, photoluminescence, UV-VIS-NIR spectroscopy, and X-ray fluorescence analysis, with the aim of determining the materials and their provenance. A total of 71 blue sapphires, 50 red garnets, 20 emeralds, 13 amethysts, 4 chalcedonies, 3 red spinels, and 11 artificial glass imitations were identified. The unusually large transparent coloured stones on the front and back plates were likely unrivalled in their time. The gemmological characteristics of the large sapphires, most of the various types of garnets, and the emeralds are consistent with deposits in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Egypt, which have been exploited since antiquity. Three ancient amethyst intaglios and the frequent perforation of irregularly shaped stones indicate the reuse of older jewellery material. The spinels—including the approximately 118-carat, heat-treated central spinel on the front plate—and six small basaltic sapphires in the crown's cross originate from deposits that were only discovered in the Middle Ages. Six sapphires with pyramidal facets document the beginning of medieval hardstone cutting. Approximately two-thirds of the large pearls, as well as all the small, inscribed pearls on the arch, are of marine origin. The frequent presence of very large, likely European freshwater pearls is notable. The gemmological findings support the assumption that the cross and arch are later additions to the crown.

Teresa Lamers (Vienna)

The Enamels of the Imperial Crown from a Conservation Science Perspective

Based on art-historical questions and the outlined analytical approach, the four enamel plaques are also examined from a conservation scientific perspective. The focus is placed on the technique, the material and the condition of the enamel plaques. Microscopic examinations provide insights into specific manufacturing features, such as the structure of the golden ground plates or the colour-specific characteristics of eleven fused, translucent as well as opaque glasses.

Since glass is a complex mixture of a variety of base materials, several analytical methods were used to gain insights into the chemical composition. The results confirm the presence of different glass types and indicate recycling practices that were already common in the Middle Ages. A direct comparison with gold cloisonné objects and classifications within the current state of research can highlight unique features and aid in determining the date and geographical origin of the enamel plaques.

Throughout history multiple interventions have been made on the four enamels, some of which are partly visible in their present condition. Among them are adhering residues of polishing materials, coloured fillings, or attempts to repair losses on the *Majestas* plaque through re-enamelling. Various types of damage were observed during the investigations, which can be traced back to mechanical stress and

chemical-physical processes. A preventative conservation strategy is set to ensure the preservation of the enamel plaques.

Stefan Röhrs (Berlin)

Glass Analyses of Comparative Objects

The chemical composition of cloisonné enamels from objects discussed as potentially comparable to the Imperial Crown, was analysed with different non-destructive analytical methods. The presented examinations were taken in Essen, Köln and Munich with the aim of identifying the composition of the enamels' glasses in order to compare them with those of the Imperial Crown. In this regard both the glass compositions as well as the colouring and opacifying components were determined non-destructively. The findings provide valuable insights into the production techniques and manufacturing context of the examined objects and can thereby contribute further aspects to the ongoing discussion.

Irmhild Ceynowa / Thorsten Allscher (Munich)

Selected Goldsmith Bindings of the Bavarian State Library

Since late antiquity, gospel books and other liturgical texts have been adorned with precious bindings or stored in valuable caskets. Due to the high appreciation of both the texts and their materials over the centuries, these artworks - featuring gold and silver craftsmanship, enamel and ivory work, ancient cut stones as well as gemstones and pearls - were repeatedly adapted to reflect the styles of their respective times. Only for a very small percentage of the surviving pieces, we therefore can assume an original setting. This makes the chronological and geographical classification of the goldsmith work more difficult.

This paper provides an overview of previous and current findings of art-technological and material scientific analyses of selected goldsmith bindings in the Bavarian State Library. Many new recordings of all sides complement the detailed images of ivories, enamels, cut gemstones, settings and 3D microscope images of particularly relevant areas.

The results, along with all their research data, digital copy and (art) historical descriptions, are accessible online via the Bavarian State Library's Digital Collections.

Marie Godet (Paris)

The Book Case from Maastricht as a Comparative Object

As part of the CROWN project, the French Museums Research and Restoration Center (C2RMF) was commissioned to carry out a material analysis of the "reliure de Maastricht", with a particular focus on the enamels. Beyond their comparative value, these analyses aimed to address two main questions: first, to compare the chemical composition of the cloisonné enamels on gold by distinguishing between the so-called en plein enamels (eagle, lion) and the "enfoncé" enamels (angel, ox), which present distinct stylistic features; second, to identify the nature of the enamels used for the inscribed panel. Additional investigations were conducted to determine the gold fineness across different parts of the object and to identify the embedded gemstones. This presentation will highlight the most significant findings, with the aim of providing a reference point for comparison with the analyses carried out on the crown and the other objects in the European corpus.

Angelo Agostino (Torino)

The *paci* in Milan, Chiavenna and Vercelli. A Reconsideration

The study of early medieval gospel book covers, commonly referred to as *paci*, offers a unique opportunity to closely examine exceptional masterpieces of goldsmithing which, through their craftsmanship, reflect the transitional phase from late Roman culture to the emerging Romanesque art.

As liturgical objects of sumptuous art, these artifacts held intrinsic significance from the moment of their creation. Today they allow us to trace the technological transformations occurring in the delicate shift from antiquity to the medieval age.

These are precious artifacts, generally composed of gold or silver sheets applied to wooden supports, adorned with vitreous enamels produced using cloisonné and champlevé techniques and set with hardstones and gemstones of different origins.

The coexistence of reused elements from the Roman world alongside components crafted with new artisanal techniques provides a vivid snapshot of the spirit of innovation that defined this transformative medieval period.

This study presents an analytical approach based on a protocol that rigorously excludes any potentially harmful practices to the objects. It is a non-invasive, in situ method developed over the past twenty years, which includes a preliminary phase of data acquisition and processing, followed by a chemometric analysis aimed at correlating a large redundancy of measurements. From this, quantitative chemical composition data relevant to historical and artistic interpretation can be extracted.

While the method has some inherent limitations, it offers greater representativeness of measurements, leading to more meaningful readings and contextualisation of the studied artifacts.

For example, it enables the identification of enamels clearly of Roman origin, opacified with antimony, alongside medieval enamels that employed cassiterite for opacification, or the recognition of ancient cameos repurposed as gemstones, set alongside stones of so-called “barbarian” origin.

This work will present the specific features of the *paci* of Chiavenna, Ariberto, and Vercelli, highlighting their differences while also focusing on the material similarities that link these goldsmithing masterpieces from the transitional period between the 10th and 12th centuries.

Sebastian Scholz (Zürich)

The Imperial Crown in the Historical Scholarship

For over 200 years, researchers from various disciplines have studied the ‘Viennese Imperial Crown’. This paper focuses on the contributions to the Imperial Crown by historical scholarship. They cannot, however, be understood without considering their entanglements with findings from other disciplines, which therefore are included only as far as necessary. Since the middle of the previous century, historical research has been heavily influenced by the findings of art historical research. Conversely, conclusions drawn by historians have been taken up again by art historians, creating a recurring cycle of circular reasoning and overinterpretation of certain aspects. However, since the end of the 1990s, historical approaches towards the crown have changed. Greater attention has been paid to the inscriptions, the term ‘Imperial Crown’ has been problematised, and questions about why the crown was personalised by a name on the arch, and why the crown then became a quintessential transpersonal insignia of the imperial empire, have been raised. With the approach taken in the CROWN-Project, it now appears possible for the first time to undertake a critical review and reassessment of all the arguments that have been presented to date.

Clemens M.M. Bayer (Liège)

The Inscriptions of the Imperial Crown: Reflections on Dating and Semantics

The crown bears a total of ten inscriptions, which are executed in four different techniques and colours, that are mostly visible and also have an aesthetic function. This paper will focus primarily on a more detailed examination of the eight inscriptions found on the four enamel plaques.

Regarding the dating of the enamelled inscriptions, two different aspects are considered: First and foremost, palaeographic evidence, and secondly the types of dispositions of these inscriptions. After a renewed critical analysis of the relevant material and based on currently known examples of script monuments, the earliest paleographically justifiable dating points to around the mid-11th century. In addition to the four short tituli used to identify persons, the enamel plaques feature four inscriptions belonging to the epigraphic text type of “image-complementing speech”. The way these are arranged (three on scrolls, one in large letters above the respective depiction) also points most likely to the second half of the 11th century. If this dating is correct, then the emperor named on the arch can only be Conrad III (cf. Scholz 2005).

As for their semantics, three of the four image-complementing texts can, when considered individually, be understood (almost) directly in relation to royal conduct: respect for the law (David), fear of God and avoidance of evil (Solomon), and the establishment of rule in Christ as Wisdom (Christ). However, the divine promise of a 15-year life extension (Isaiah / Hezekiah) requires further explanation.

Whether the four enamelled images and their inscriptions, as components of the crown, convey a unified meaning depends on whether they were made specifically for the crown or not (cf. lecture by Lambacher).

Ludger Körntgen (Mainz)

More than of Symbol of Power. On the Possible Functions of a Personalised Crown

This contribution assumes that the exceptional case of a crown whose imperial wearer is named through the inscription on the arch requires a special explanation. There are few but in their specific execution hardly comparable, examples of personalised crowns which point to contexts of donation and memoria. The fact that at least one High Medieval ruler – whether Konrad II or Konrad III - remained permanently associated with the crown, refutes the proposition of a generally accepted practice of identifying the current wearer through the object itself. Rather, referencing a named emperor on the crown may have served a specific legitimising function in the context of succession disputes; but such reflections remain purely speculative, as long as the dating of the crown and the arch cannot be determined more precisely based on the object's specific evidence. An interpretation of the arch inscription is unlikely to provide further clarification in this regard. Overall, however, the question of the possible function of a personalised crown demonstrates that there were far more crowns than the number of surviving objects suggest, and that an individual crown could acquire different meanings in changing contexts.

Romedio Schmitz-Esser (Heidelberg)

Is there a Synthesis? Attempt at a Developmental History of the Imperial Crown

This paper attempts to reflect on the new impulses generated by the CROWN project and the contributions of this conference, in order to chart the new paths that these open up for future research. The proposed approach does begin with a historical narrative but instead focuses on the object biography of the Viennese crown. First this paper establishes a relative chronology of the crown's individual parts in relation to each other, which highlights its changing historical contexts of use and its modifications over the centuries. On this basis – which, offers relative reliability thanks to scientific findings - the evolving nature of the crown's history is demonstrated, which rules out simplified interpretation and attribution. From this, the paper aims to conceptually pave the way for new research, which will follow from the now-concluding CROWN project.