

Monday, 20.11.2023; 4:15 - 6:00 pm CET

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On the move. Gender and mobility in late antique letters

Abstract:

Gender creates asymmetries and inequalities. This thesis also occurs in mobility studies: for a long time, scholars have underestimated the agency of mobile women; they assigned them the role of travel companions rather than decision-makers. Based on late antique literary and documentary letters, my paper presents the ancient gender discourse and its actual influence on traveling and mobility. Letters were sent to establish and keep in contact with absent people; they contain stories of traveling and migrating people, and offer valuable insights into decision-making processes. What influence did the authors attribute to women and men regarding mobility? How did women and men gain influence to shape their own mobility and that of others? Was gender the only determining factor for the agency? Mobility stories serve as a lens to unravel ideas about gendered mobility in late antiquity.

Bio:

Nadine Riegler is a doctoral fellow in Roman history at the University of Vienna. After studying history, classical philology, and classical archaeology, she now specializes in mobility studies in the Later Roman Empire. Her research aims at opening up new perspectives in the field of ancient history by including approaches of gender studies and intersectionality.

Research interests: Later Roman Empire, Women's and Gender History in Roman Antiquity, Mobility Studies

Current research project: Gehen oder bleiben? Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse in Mobilitätsgeschichten des 4. und 5. Jh. n. Chr. anhand einer intersektionalen Analyse spätantiker Briefe

In her research project, Nadine Riegler is looking for mobility stories in literary and documentary letters from the Later Roman Empire. With an intersectional point of view, she is exploring dependencies and underlying power factors in antiquity. The initial questions are: Are women only mobile in dependency on male relatives? Do only women travel in the company of other (male) persons? Does only sex play a role for ties and dependency on the move?

The aim of her dissertation is to raise awareness that women were not the only ones to be dependent when it comes to mobility. In fact, not only sex but also other factors did influence the possibilities and limits of one's own mobility.