

ELITE WOMEN AND SYSTEMS OF DEPENDENCY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

WORKSHOP

SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

THE BONN CENTER FOR DEPENDENCY AND SLAVERY STUDIES

hosts the Cluster of Excellence “Beyond Slavery and Freedom”, which aims to overcome the binary opposition of “slavery versus freedom”. We approach the phenomenon of slavery and other types of strong asymmetrical dependency from methodologically and theoretically distinct perspectives.

The purpose of this workshop is to analyse and discuss the underexplored gendered dynamics of asymmetrical dependencies in which Late Antique elite women and their dependents participated. By engaging with material across various types of sources, such as papyri, epigraphy, curse tablets, legal codes, historiography and religious texts, we hope to illuminate how elite women interacted with the large variety of people who depended on them, from enslaved attendants and servants to clients and other beneficiaries of patronage.

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**BONN CENTER
FOR DEPENDENCY
AND SLAVERY
STUDIES**

VENUE

University of Bonn

Conference Room
Niebuhrstraße 5
D-53113 Bonn

CONTACT

Workshop Organizers:

Aleksander Paradziński

BCDSS Fellow

Grace Stafford

University of Vienna

Jan Hörber, Event Coordinator

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Please **register** for the conference **by September 18, 2025**
via

<https://terminplaner6.dfn.de/b/9c4405d78a7b5f08baafd926cb831e9c-1338786>



Picture credit: Volker Lannert/University of Bonn

Friday, September 26, 2025

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Welcome and Introduction

Grace Stafford (University of Vienna)

Aleksander Paradziński (BCDSS Fellow)

9:30 – 11:00 AM: **Session 1**

Moderator: Grace Stafford (University of Vienna)

"So Too is the *Domina* of Greater Worth than the *Ancilla*": Gendered Structures of Power in the Pastoral Context

Lucy Grig

(The University of Edinburgh)

Coercion and Conversion: Slaves in the Framework of Roman Elite Women's Conversion to Christianity

Jessica van 't Westeinde

(In)voluntary Virgins. Slavery and Early Monasticism Reconsidered

Lisa Pilar Eberle

(The University of Edinburgh & University of Tübingen)

11:00 – 11:30 AM – Coffee Break

Friday, September 26, 2025

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM: **Session 2**

Moderator: James Harland (BCDSS, University of Bonn)

Two Faces of Sixth-century Elite Women: The Paradox of *Ad Gregoriam in Palatio*

Kate Cooper

(Royal Holloway, University of London)

The *Domina* and her Slaves in the Merovingian Home

James Burns

(University of Leicester)

A Female Slave-owner in the Visigothic *Liber Iudiciorum*

Marta Szada

(Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun)

1:00 – 2:00 PM – Lunch Break

2:00 – 3:00 PM: **Session 3**

Moderator: Aleksander Paradziński (BCDSS, University of Bonn)

Evidence from Private and Public inscriptions for Systems of Dependency in Late Antiquity

Charlotte Spence

(University of Oxford)

Benefaction, Debt, and Gossip: Local Elite Women and the Perpetuation of Dependencies in the Egyptian Countryside?

Anna Kelley

(University of St. Andrews)

3:00 – 3:30 PM – Coffee Break

Friday, September 26, 2025

3:30 – 4:30 PM: **Session 4**

Moderator: Giulia Cappucci (BCDSS, University of Bonn)

Sex between Female Slave Owners and Their Slaves in Late Antiquity: Fear, Punishment, and Privilege in Elite Households

Erin Dailey

(University of Leicester)

The Dependents of Imperial Women and Power-brokering at the Imperial Court

Aleksander Paradziński

(BCDSS Fellow)

4:30 – 5:00 PM – Coffee Break

5:00 – 6:00 PM

Response by Julia Hillner and Conclusion by Grace Stafford and Aleksander Paradziński

6:30 PM – Conference Dinner (for Speakers, Organizers, Moderators and Respondents only)