

WOMEN AND JUSTICE: FEMALE AGENCY IN LATE ANTIQUE LEGAL CULTURES

HYBRID WORKSHOP
JUNE 10 – 11, 2022

CO-FUNDED BY:



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.

Much of late Roman written law is, famously, status-based, but gender-neutral. Because both men and women could hold citizenship and property, in theory women had access to legal procedure to defend their interests in the same way as men, as long as they were free. Nonetheless, we know remarkably little about female agency in late Roman legal procedure. This may be because the frequent gender-neutral language of Roman legal writing has led modern scholars to prioritise the perspectives of men, and because contemporary moralising literature tends to downplay or denigrate female agency and needs to be read against the grain. It may, however, also be due to gender differentiation in legal practice. This workshop brings together classicists, historians, theologians, legal scholars and scholars of Judaism to investigate potential scenarios and loci of conflict resolution through which late antique women of different types and status could access or facilitate justice, or were denied doing so, from the courtroom proper to the household to religious communities. In particular, we aim to recover the role some women may have played as informal legal patrons, negotiators and arbitrators of justice for their dependents.

**Bonn Center for Dependency and
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VENUE

University of Bonn
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and online via Zoom

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Please **register** for the conference
by May 27, 2022 via [email](#).
Please visit our [workshop website](#) for more information.



Friday, June 10, 2022

9:30 – 10:00 AM CEST – **Welcome and Introduction**

Julia Hillner
BCDSS, University of Bonn
Muriel Moser-Gerber, Goethe University of Frankfurt

10:00 – 11:15 AM

Panel I: The Representation of Female Agency

Women in Court: Gender and Visibility in the *Novellae Iustiniani*

Katharina Wojciech
(University of Würzburg)

Biblical Women Working for Justice:
Deborah and Tamar in the Church Fathers **(online)**

Agnethe Siquans
(University of Vienna)

11:15 – 11:45 AM – Coffee Break

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Panel II: Women and Legal Authority

'Weaker' Sex and 'Weaker' Dispute Resolution? Women and Arbitration in Late Antique Papyri

Jakub Urbanik
Marzena Wojtczak
(University of Warsaw)

The Legal Authority of an Abbess in Late Antique Monasteries

Maria Munkholt
(University of Bonn)

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM – Lunch Break

Friday, June 10, 2022

2:00 – 3:15 PM

Panel III: Female Legal Agency and Male Letter-Writing

The Vanishing Ladies in Symmachus' Letters:
In Search of Female Legal Agency

Cristiana Sogno
(Fordham University)

Women and Legal Problems in the Letters of Gregory the Great

Boudewijn Sirks
(University of Oxford)

3:15 – 3:45 PM – Coffee Break

3:45 – 5:00 PM

Panel IV: Women and Legal Rights

Women and Legal Agency in Rabbinic Case Stories

Catherine Hezser
(SOAS, University of London)

A Strong Female Lead. Women as Tomb Owners in Roman and Late Antique Asia Minor

Karin Wiedergut
(Austrian Academy of Sciences, OeAW)

5:00 – 5:45 PM

Discussion of the first day

Chair: Kate Cooper
(Royal Holloway University of London)

7:30 PM Conference Dinner (only for speakers and organizers)

Saturday, June 11, 2022

9:15 – 10:30 AM

Panel V: Women as Defendants from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages

Women as Penitents in the Late Antique and Early Medieval Penitential Books

Henriette von Harnier
(BCDSS, University of Bonn)

Agency, Gossip and Legal Process in an Adultery Scandal in the Karaite Community of Late 12th Century Cairo **(online)**

Oded Zinger
(The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

10:30 – 11:00 AM – Coffee Break

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Panel VI: Women and Legal Autonomy

Beyond the Law: Guardianship, Female Agency, and Legal Autonomy in the Late Antique Papyri

Lydia Schriemer
(University of Ottawa)

The Bedrooms of Power: Female Agency Beyond Testament Law in Late Antique Rome **(online)**

Maik Patzelt
(University of Freiburg)

12:15 – 1:15 PM – Lunch Break

1:15 – 2:00 PM

Response and Final Discussion

Chair: Benet Salway
(University College London)