Ancient History/Oxford-Princeton Seminar MT23

EXPLOITATION IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

Tuesdays at 4pm, Ioannou Lecture Theatre

Ancient historians working on a wide range of topics – enslavement, gender, agriculture, economy, environment, interpersonal relations, imperialism, colonisation – touch upon what we might term ‘exploitation’. However, these different topics and phenomena are rarely considered together under this heading.

This seminar series aims to connect these conversations about different spheres of the ancient world and to ask what viewing them through the lens of ‘exploitation’ adds to historical understanding. Where are the links productive; where do they misalign? The notion of ‘exploitation’ is inherently relational and is therefore a potentially fresh way to focus attention on questions of power, unfairness, inequality and asymmetry within and between different groups and bodies.

Our modern concept of ‘exploitation’ is inflected by certain moral and anthropological assumptions. It does not map neatly onto any single piece of ancient vocabulary. One set of questions is therefore about concepts and vocabularies. Did the ancients have a unified concept of exploitation? With what language(s) and metaphors did they communicate and think about it? Another set of questions surrounds the means, mechanisms, agents and objects of exploitation. How comparable were mechanisms of exploitation across different spheres and societies? How conscious was exploitation? In what or whose interests was it pursued? What were its consequences for both human society and the natural world?

In pursuit of these questions, speakers are encouraged to take broad and diverse approaches to the topic. Papers might cover political, social, cultural and/or economic phenomena and consider the exploitation of people, relationships, labour, resources and/or the environment. They might embrace or challenge the concept of exploitation and its relevance to ancient societies. Some might look to the ways the ancient past has itself been exploited in periods up to the present. We hope that through these conversations over the course of the seminar, we will come to a more nuanced and productive understanding of exploitation in the ancient world.

Convenors
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Schedule Overleaf
**Schedule**

**Week 1 (Tuesday 10th October):** *Oxford Ancient Slavery Group:*
Josephine Ekeland (Oxford)
‘The sexual exploitation of enslaved people in the thought of John Chrysostom’

Matthew Hewitt (Oxford/Turin)
‘The exploitation of freed persons in Classical and Hellenistic Greece’ (exact title TBC)

**Week 2 (Tuesday 17th October):**
C. W. Marshall (University of British Columbia)
‘Exploitation without Prostitution? The *pallakē* in Greek and Roman comedy’

**Week 3 (Tuesday 24th October):**
Myles Lavan (St Andrews)
‘Manumission, mechanisms of exploitation and Roman strategies of slaving’

**Week 4 (Tuesday 31st October):**
John Weisweiler (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich)
‘Exploitation, élite power and the nature of the late Roman economy’

**Week 5 (Tuesday 7th November):**
Lin Foxhall (Liverpool)
‘Feeling exploited: probing experiences of exploitation in ancient Greece’

**Week 6 (14th November):**
Andrea Brock (St Andrews)
‘Environmental exploitation and its consequences in early Rome’

**Week 7 (Tuesday 21st November):**
Nandini Pandey (Johns Hopkins)
‘Exploitation and Reparation: economies of guilt in classical *topoi* and their modern receptions’

**Week 8 (Tuesday 28th November):**
Graduate Lightning Talks