



CALL FOR PAPERS

Freedom as Metaphor - Metaphors of Freedom Metaphorical Notions of the 'Free' and the 'Slave' in Ancient Thought



Picture: ArchaiOptix, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

PANEL ORGANIZATION:

Diego De Brasi
Julia Pfefferkorn



ORGANIZER 1:

name	Diego De Brasi
e-mail	debrasi@uni-trier.de
affiliation	Trier University
country	Germany
biography	Diego De Brasi received his Ph.D. in Greek Studies from the University of Bamberg in 2014. From 2011 to 2020 he was Assistant Professor of Greek Studies at the University of Marburg, and during the academic year 2015-2016 he was a distinguished residential fellow at the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study. Since 2020 he has been Professor of Classical Philology/Greek at the University of Trier. His main publications include: "L'immagine di Sparta nei dialoghi platonici" (2013) and "Den Menschen dem Menschen erklären. Deskriptivität und Normativität in den Anthropologien von Laktanz, Gregor von Nyssa und Nemesios von Emesa" (2024). He is the editor of volumes on ancient philosophy and ancient biology and the author of papers on various aspects of Greek literature.

ORGANIZER 2:

name	Julia Pfefferkorn
e-mail	pfefferkorn@uni-trier.de
affiliation	Trier University
country	Germany
biography	Julia Pfefferkorn (PhD 2020, Tübingen and Salerno) is Assistant Professor in Ancient Philosophy at the University of Trier. Previously, she held the same position in Mainz and was a visiting researcher in St Andrews (School of Classics). She specialises in classical Greek ethics and aesthetics, particularly moral education and responsibility, emotions, and dance. Her dissertation Platons tanzende Stadt. Moralphysikologie und Chortanz in den Nomoi (published as BPSS 11, 2023) won the Conrado Eggers Lan Prize of the International Plato Society. Other publications include an article in Phronesis (66/4, 2021), several papers in collected volumes, and four co-edited books, among which Platonic Mimesis Revisited (IPS 40, 2021).



PANEL SYNOPSIS:

In the absence of philosophical notions of ‘freedom’ in early classical texts, studies on the subject usually focus on the political significance of the term. Thus ‘freedom’ has been analysed primarily as the achievement of a (democratic) political order in which citizens, endowed with rights such as ‘freedom of speech’ (parrhesia), ‘equality’ (isonomia) and ‘equality of speech’ (isegoria), could take the reins of the polis in their own hands and are not subject to tyrannical rule. However, quite early on in classical Greece expressions like ‘to be free’ and ‘to be a slave’ were used as metaphors in Greek literature. This creative use of the semantics was pivotal for the development of notions of freedom beyond the political sphere, but it is mostly sidelined in scholarship on the subject. For example, ‘slavery’ occasionally acquires a metaphorical connotation in Greek tragedy. In Sophocles’ *Antigone*, for instance, Creon criticises Antigone’s inflexibility and ‘manly arrogance’ by reminding her that “there is no place for pride, when one is his neighbors’ slave (doûlos)” (473-485). Moreover metaphors of freedom and slavery were used by sophists in relation to the claim that law is the result of convention and not by nature (cf. Antiphon B44 Col. 4, Pl. Grg. 483a7-484b1, 491e5-492c8, Lg. 889e3-890a9): to serve the law means to enslave oneself, to rule is to be free. Moreover, we have ample evidence of a debate in the 4th century BC about what kinds of education and studies were suitable for a ‘free man’, i.e. a citizen (see e.g. Isoc. 12.26-28, 15.266-269), which is the root of the expression *studia liberalia* (cf. Sen. Ep. 88.1.1). It may have been partly this debate which prompted Plato to define the philosopher as the only truly free person (Tht. 172c8-173c6, 175d7-176a2). But again, Plato developed the metaphor further to include the idea of ‘freedom from the body’ (and its contrary: slavery to bodily desires). This panel aims to close the existing gap in the scholarship on the notion of freedom in classical antiquity and beyond by exploring metaphoric uses of the semantics of ‘slave’ and ‘free’ across a broad range of ancient texts, including both literature and philosophy.

Observations:

Please submit a 300-word abstract in English by 20 February 2025 to debrasi@uni-trier.de and pfefferkorn@uni-trier.de, using the template from the CCC website: www.uc.pt/cech/16-ccc/calls/call-for-papers/. Papers should be 20 minutes, followed by discussion. The results will be communicated by the end of February 2025. Please note that travel and accommodation expenses will not be reimbursed, and that the conference is an in-person event only.