



Utrecht University

Call For Papers: The Citizen in Late Antiquity
University of Utrecht, 25th November 2019

The Postgraduate and Early Career Late Antiquity Network



The Postgraduate
and Early Career
Late Antiquity
Network

'Citizen' in Late Antiquity was an emotive and complex term. In the classical world, the term not only signified the distribution of rights and duties of members of city and empire, but perhaps much more importantly reflected the intricate processes of inclusion and exclusion that shaped Greco-Roman culture in a myriad of ways. Conventional historiography, which tended to focus on legal citizenship almost exclusively, once characterized citizenship as defunct by the onset of Late Antiquity: it has argued that the mass enfranchisement of the edict of Caracalla and the gradual transformation - or collapse - of the *classical city*, turned the 'citizen' into an anachronism, with its social, cultural and political significance returning only at the onset of the Renaissance. Recent scholarship however has started to contest this view by positing that neither the collapse of the Roman Empire in the west nor the transformation of the *classical city* brought an end to the concept of the citizen.

Next to other forms of self-identification, such as gender, class and ethnicity, people in late Roman and post-Roman polities continued to imagine and conduct themselves as citizens and these categories could themselves be understood in terms of legal and social citizenship. The citizen was also omnipresent in religious discourses, most significantly in late antique Christianity where the followers of Christ could either be perceived as citizens par excellence (viz. of the *civitas Dei*) or as intrinsic strangers and outsiders, namely to the *civitas* of the transitory world. Furthermore, citizens, of whatever kind, were also represented in material and visual culture, they took part, as citizens, in economic and artistic life and they appear most frequently in a vast number of textual sources and genres. An understanding of the full spectrum of 'citizenship' and 'the citizen' in Late Antiquity thus requires the use of a wide range of sources and approaches, and the fresh insights of a new generation of scholars.

This workshop, *The Citizen in Late Antiquity*, aims at providing an informal, constructive environment for post-graduate and early career researchers to present their work, meet others working in the field, and discuss current trends and issues. The *Late Antiquity Network* provides a single platform for those working on a broad range of geographical and disciplinary areas within the period of Late Antiquity, and participants are thus encouraged to interpret 'citizen' in a broad sense, thinking about how the theme intersects with their own research. Papers will be of twenty minutes, with ten minutes allocated for discussion. Facilitating this will be an address by our visiting speaker, Professor Engin Isin of Queen Mary University London, an acclaimed and prolific theorist on the subject of citizenship. The workshop is generously supported and hosted by the Dutch NWO VICI research project "Citizenship Discourses in the Early Middle Ages" and the *Utrecht Centre for Medieval Studies (UCMS)* at Utrecht University. *Some suggested topics for discussion are:*

- Different types of citizens
- Citizens and material culture and imagery
- Citizens and non-citizens, and interactions between different kinds of citizenship
- The spatial dimensions of citizenship
- Citizens, universalism and cosmopolitanism
- Criteria for becoming or ceasing to be a citizen
- Alternatives to citizenship discourse
- Citizens and the city
- Citizens and religion
- Poverty and citizenship
- Citizens in different literary genres
- Citizens and lawmaking

Abstracts of no more than 400 words with a brief biography to be sent to the conveners Thomas Langley (tr136@cam.ac.uk) and Kay Boers (K.Boers@uu.nl) by Friday 26th July. Please include your affiliation (independent scholars welcome) and current academic status (or the year your PhD was awarded). If interested in the opportunity to run the seminar next year, please detail any relevant previous experience alongside the biography when you submit the abstract. Successful applicants will be notified by Monday 19th August.