

Between the 4th and the 8th century CE the various regions of the Mediterranean and neighbouring areas experienced major macro-political changes resulting from new military and political (as well as religious) elites and take-overs: the Vandal, Byzantine and later Muslim conquests of Africa; the impacts of nomadic groups from the Sahara on communities and polities in Africa, Cyrenaica and Egypt; the collapse of the Roman administration in Britain; the rise of the Visigothic kingdom in Spain; and conflicts in the Near East culminating in the occupation of eastern Roman provinces from northern Mesopotamia to Egypt by the Sassanian Persians and then the Muslim Arabs, to name but a few.

Due to the wide range and complexity of the changes taking place in regions of the Roman world which were so historically, socially, economically, and politically different, it is not yet clear how to grasp the socio-economic implications of these periods of transition both in terms of methodologies applied and in terms of broader historical conclusions that can be reached. Our proposed workshop thus aims to discuss comparative perspectives on the phases of transition affecting different regions using historical and archaeological evidence. The focus will be on the socio-economic continuities and adaptations „on the ground”, adopting a micro-historical, micro-regional approach which can then be set against the macro-historical political changes mentioned above.

The contributions will be based on the assumption that at a smaller economic scale, there is more evidence for continuity, even when broader, region-wide changes were taking place concurrently. The potential ‘invisibility’ of both textual and material evidence will also be an important consideration of the papers. When power relations changed, alliances shifted, polities were destabilised and administration apparatuses re-organised, local economies were of course heavily impacted. However, even if consumption patterns and market networks changed in many areas, the idea that these changes often resulted in a total hiatus in productivity is not so likely according to recent research. A focus on factors such as elite integration, connectivity, alliances, and resource availability, as well as perpetuated societal bonds in times of transition in which people also faced conflict, destruction, depopulation, and migration, helps better understand the dynamics and continuing dynamism of local social and economic capital and action under new political powers.

The contributors will combine archaeological and historical sources to investigate economically (inter-)acting groups in areas as diverse as Late Antique Britain, Early Islamic Syria and Visigothic Spain. They will discuss the question of what remains at local levels when larger structures change rapidly or dwindle slowly, when patterns of industrial production and market networks shift or shrink; and will shed light on both transitions and stability during periods of broader political disintegration. The papers will explore the momentum that drove the transitions, taking into account the complex dynamics, the multifaceted impacts, and the local forms of the socio-economic adaptations. Strategies, time spans, and intensities as well as the outcomes varied across regions depending on their pre-existing socio-economic conditions. Our hope is to identify patterns of socio-economic change, continuity, vulnerability, and resilience in regions affected by micro-political changes which might allow us to better understand their ground level impact.



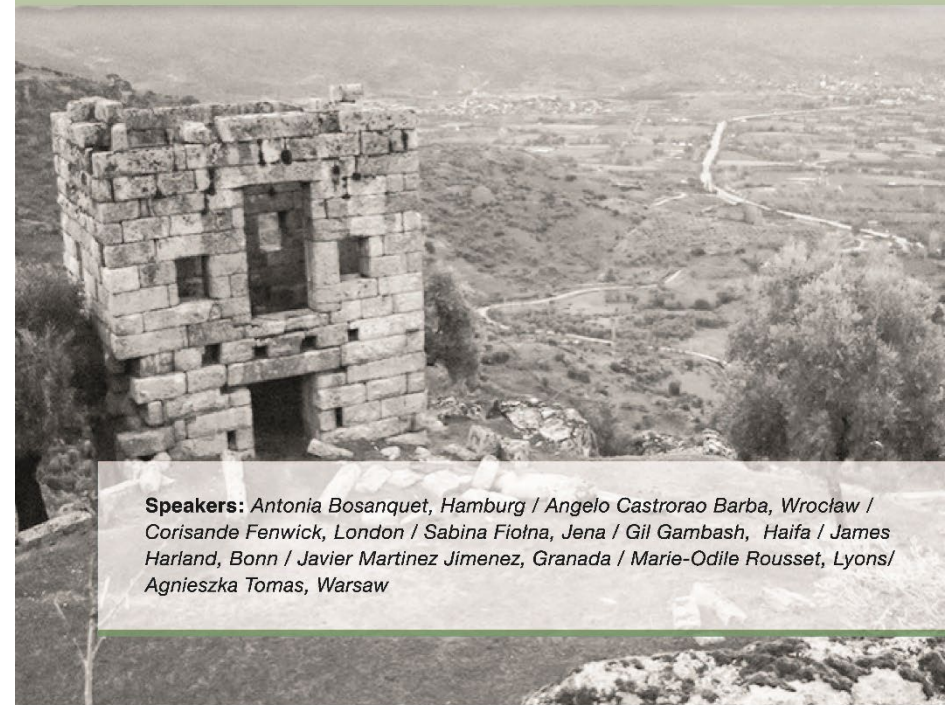
Times of Transition

Socio-economic changes in the post-imperial Mediterranean (4th-8th c. CE)

Workshop: October 17 and 18, 2022

Column Hall, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw

Organisers: Katharina Rieger, Alexander Sarantis



Speakers: Antonia Bosanquet, Hamburg / Angelo Castrorao Barba, Wrocław / Corisande Fenwick, London / Sabina Fiolna, Jena / Gil Gambash, Haifa / James Harland, Bonn / Javier Martinez Jimenez, Granada / Marie-Odile Rousset, Lyons / Agnieszka Tomas, Warsaw



Monday 17th October 2022

- 13:30 Get together and introduction
- 14:00 **James Harland**: The *annona militaris*, the Rhine frontier, and the 'End' of Roman Britain
- 14:45 **Javier Martínez Jimenez**: Municipal economies and civic investment in Visigothic Hispania
- 15:30 *Break*
- 16:00 **Antonia Bosanquet**: Mediating Authority: Ifrīqiya and Caliphal Rule in al-Andalus
- 16:45 **Corisande Fenwick**: Going local? Settlement and society in early medieval North Africa
- 17:30 *Break*
- 17:45 **Angelo Castrorao Barba**: Rural settlement patterns and socio-economic changes in Late Antique, Byzantine and Islamic Sicily

Dinner

Tuesday, 18th October 2022

- 09:30 **Gil Gambash**: Between Political Scylla and Environmental Charybdis: The Negev Economy in Late Antiquity
- 10:15 **Marie-Odile Rousset**: Rural settlement and agricultural development in the Hama region (Syria) from 4th to 10th c. CE
- 11:00 *Break*

11:30 **Sabina Fiolna**: The effects of the Roman globalisation in the Late Roman / Early Byzantine on the local landscapes inferred from the palynological, archaeological and numismatic evidence from the territory of Tripolis in Western Anatolia

12:15 **Agnieszka Tomas**: Novae (Lower Moesia / Moesia II). From the Legionary Fortress to the Late Roman Town

13:00 *Discussion / Lunch buffet*