Intersectionality in Ancient and Pre-Modern Contexts. Considering Aspects of Privilege and Marginalisation

11–12 June 2026 | University of Basel

Questions of identity and the marginalisation of specific groups have become central to both academic and public discourse. Awareness of these concerns is currently increasing in ancient and pre-modern disciplines. **Intersectionality**, a concept coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) within Black Feminism and Critical Race Theory, offers a valuable framework for understanding how overlapping of aspects of identity – such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and bodily dispositions (e.g., disability, age) – shape individual experiences of privilege and marginalisation. These dynamics unfold on the interpersonal (everyday interactions), structural (government, law, education), and socio-spatial (urban form, spatial governance, land control) levels.

While intersectional approaches are well established in the social sciences, their application to ancient and pre-modern contexts remains mostly unexplored. The nature of pre-modern source material – often fragmentary and strongly reflecting elite perspectives – poses specific challenges. This conference aims to bring together scholars working in ancient and pre-modern fields who already engage with intersectionality or seek to explore its potential. Contributions from MA students and PhDs are explicitly encouraged.

Key questions include:

- How can intersectional frameworks be meaningfully and methodologically applied to pre-modern contexts?
- What challenges arise when reconstructing the experiences of marginalised individuals in societies with different structures and belief systems? How are spaces shaped by these systems?
- How do researchers’ own social positions influence the representation and interpretations of historical identities?

We **invite papers** that address, among others:

- Theoretical and methodological reflections on the use (and limitations) of intersectionality in historical disciplines
- Case studies showing how intersecting identities shaped experiences of marginalisation or empowerment (interpersonally, structurally and socio-spatially)
- Analyses of intersectional dynamics in ancient or pre-modern public spaces
- Interdisciplinary approaches bridging history with sociology, anthropology, gender or disability studies
- Critical examinations of how ancient and pre-modern identities were constructed, transmitted and later interpreted by scholarship

We encourage submissions from scholars across disciplines, including but not limited to ancient, byzantine and medieval history, archaeological disciplines (Pre- and Protohistorical Archaeology,

Mediterranean Archaeology, Archaeology of the Roman Provinces, etc.), ancient Eastern studies, classical philologies, Egyptology.

Abstracts of no more than 250 words, along with your title and a short bio (max. 150 words), should be submitted by **1 September 2025** to the organisers. Presentations should preferably be given in English (exceptions are possible, e. g., German). Presentations cannot be held via Zoom. However, a Zoom link can be provided to allow participants to listen to the presentations on demand. We anticipate being able to offer a limited number of travel and accommodation bursaries to support MA and PhD students. If you would like to be considered for a bursary, please indicate this in your submission email.

Please send your abstract, title and bio to the organising committee:
Ana Maspoli ana.maspoli@unibas.ch and Sarah Siegenthaler sarah.siegenthaler@unibas.ch.
Notification of acceptance will be provided by 26 September 2025 at the latest.

Selected Literature

A. Biele Mefebue – A. D. Bührmann – S. Grenz (Eds.), Handbuch Intersektionalitätsforschung (Wiesbaden 2022).
K. Crenshaw, Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, Stanford Law Review 43, 1991, 1241–1299.
K. Ganz – J. Hausotter, Intersektionale Sozialforschung (Bielefeld 2020).
A. Griesebner – S. Hehenberger, Intersektionalität. Ein brauchbares Konzept für die Geschichtswissenschaften?, in: V. Kallenberg – J. Meyer – J.M. Müller (eds.), Intersectionality und Kritik: Neue Perspektiven für alte Fragen (Wiesbaden 2013) 105–124.
P. Hill Collins – S. Bilge, Intersectionality[2] (Cambridge 2020).
E. Scambor – F. Zimmer, Die intersektionelle Stadt: Geschlechterforschung und Medienkunst an den Achsen der Ungleichheit, Gender Studies (Bielefeld 2014).
Ch. Sweetapple – H.-J. Voss – S. A. Wolter, Intersektionalität. Von der Antidiskriminierung zur befreiten Gesellschaft (Stuttgart 2020).
G. Winker – N. Degele, Intersektionalität (Bielefeld 2009).

Please contacts us if some of the publications are not available to you.