

**Call for Papers: (Re-)Constructing Ἐλευθερία and *Libertas*: Thinking and Imagining  
Freedom in Ancient Greece and Rome  
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt (29 – 31 May 2026)**

**Organizer: PD Dr Lothar Willms (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)**

Freedom is a core concept of the Western world; it is crucial to political discourse and theory and fundamental in social and philosophical debates. The idea of freedom arose in ancient Greece and progressively unfolded. Ancient freedom has been the object of intensive research and found increasing interest in the new millennium, with various facets and related forms covered (freedom of speech, autonomy, political, philosophical) and new light shed on old questions.

Despite the plethora of studies in freedom and its varieties, there is still scope for deepening our understanding of this notion. Previous research has focused on reconstructing the idea and notion of freedom and its ramification. The question of how freedom was constructed in Antiquity has been incidentally touched upon for the best. The scope of this conference is to fill this gap and to explore systematically how freedom was conceptualized and imagined in Greece and Rome in various fields such as visual art, literature, historiography, rhetoric, jurisprudence, philosophy and philosophy with a chronological range from the Mycenaean Bronze Age to Late Antiquity. Freedom is thus viewed not as monolithic and static, but as fluid, dynamic, and performative. We are therefore not looking for thematic studies, but papers that investigate the practices, devices and strategies by which freedom was constructed in Antiquity. These devices and strategies may have been ritual, visual, argumentative, rhetorical, or terminological (i.e. linking freedom to other, potentially related terms, e.g. ἔλευθεριότης, προαίρεσις, τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῶν, αὐτονομία, *libertas*, *liberalitas*, *licentia*, *dignitas*, *honor*, *virtus*).

Abstracts in English of no more than 300 words with some bibliographical references (which are not included in the word limit) should be sent to [Willms@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:Willms@em.uni-frankfurt.de) in both pdf and Word format no later than **25 February 2026**. Notifications about acceptance will be sent after **15 March 2026**. No conference fee is charged, but please note that travel and accommodation expenses will not be reimbursed, and that the conference is an in-person event. A publication of the contributions in an edited volume is planned.

Confirmed key note speaker:

Klaus Vieweg, Professor, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena