

"Doing whatever she wants, and going wherever she pleases"; Women's Agency in the Delphic Manumission Inscriptions

Tuesday, May 16, 2023 | 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Village 15A, 2202 Scholars Dr N., La Jolla, CA 92093

An usual set of documents, dating between 200 BCE and 100 CE, records grants of freedom to some eight hundred and forty women. Inscribed on the foundations of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, these documents not only publicize the grant of freedom, but describe the conditions upon which freedom was granted. In this lecture, Professor Forsdyke will argue that these documents reveal that enslaved women actively negotiated the terms of their freedom and often extracted quite remarkable concessions from their enslavers. Focusing on a few case studies, this lecture will explore the significance of these documents for women's agency, in particular their ability to secure legal recognition of their property rights and family relations, as well as their ability to make and enforce contracts. Comparison with similar efforts by enslaved women in modern slave-owning societies (e.g., the Caribbean and the American South in the 19th century) will further illuminate the efforts and ingenuity of enslaved women in securing their rights.



Guest Speaker: Sara Forsdyke, Josiah Ober Collegiate Professor of Ancient History, University of Michigan.

Bio: author of three books and numerous articles on democracy, law and slavery in ancient Greece. Her books are *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy: The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece* (Princeton 2005), *Slaves Tell Tales and Other Episodes in the Politics of Popular Culture in Ancient Greece* (Princeton 2012) and *Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 2021).

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