



Four-year Research Position, subproject (i) (open rank: PhD / post-doc)

100%

The Department of History at the University of Zurich offers a four-year research position in intellectual history as part of the project *The Just City: The Ciceronian Conception of Justice and Its Reception in the Western Tradition (JustCity)*, funded by an ERC Consolidator Grant (2020-2025) and headed by PD Dr. Benjamin Straumann. The appointment will be at the rank of PhD student or post-doc research fellow, according to the nominee's academic qualifications. Appointment of a post-doc may be extended until September 30, 2025. Starting date is April 1, 2021 or as agreed upon. The Department of History in Zurich is the largest historical institute in Switzerland and renowned for its wide range of themes and methods in research and teaching.

Project description

With a focus on Cicero's conception of justice and its lasting intellectual legacy, the *JustCity* project delves into one of the most innovative and influential, yet widely neglected contributions the history of Western political thought has to offer. Not only does Cicero's law-centred conception of justice, both within and between states, mark a significant departure from the virtue-centred conceptions of justice typical for earlier, Greek theories, it also paved the way for what has come to be known as the Constitutionalist Tradition in political thought, as well as for the emergence of natural and international law in early modern Europe. In order to fully appreciate its massive impact in the long term, the project will trace Cicero's conception of justice through three historical inflection points: (i) its inception in the late Roman Republic; (ii) its transmission by the Christian writers Lactantius and Augustinus; (iii) its use by Alberico Gentili and other early modern thinkers engaged in debates on international politics and the law of nations. These inflection points designate the main themes of the project, each of which will be investigated by an individual research team member in a subproject of its own.

Key responsibilities

The successful candidate will be assigned the subproject *Justice and Skepticism: Cicero's Roman Theory of Justice and the Carneadean Debate*, which **is linked to subproject (i)** and designed to examine Cicero's notion of justice as elaborated in the *Republic*, the *Laws* and *On Duties*, as well as in some of the speeches. Research topics that shall be addressed include an accurate determination of the ways in which Cicero's conception of justice differs from, and may be at odds with, the ones of his Greek predecessors; an account of the specifically legal nature of Ciceronian justice; and an assessment of the extent to which Cicero's views on what constitutes a just commonwealth were shaped by his experience of the breakdown of political order during the ongoing crisis of the late Roman republic. At the end of the appointment, the successful candidate shall publish his/her research findings as a monograph, which may be submitted as a doctoral or postdoctoral thesis; in addition, she or he is expected to publish regularly in peer-reviewed journals; further responsibilities involve the participation in the regular meetings of the research team, attending research-related conferences in Zurich and abroad and helping to organize the project's conferences and symposia.



Selection criteria

Applicants must hold a master's or doctor's degree in History, Classics, Philosophy or Political Science, and should have expertise in ancient philosophy and an interest Roman law. Excellent command of written and spoken English as well as good knowledge of Latin are imperative; Greek reading comprehension is an asset.

Applications

Please submit your application (PDF) by **November 13, 2020**, containing:

- a detailed CV with your academic track record and publication list
- a motivation letter
- scans of all supporting documents
- a published article, or excerpt (no more than 20 pages) from Master's thesis

Further informations and application: Dr. Benjamin Straumann: benjamin.straumann@uzh.ch