



Four-Year Research Position in Intellectual History, subproject (ii) (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 *Ciceronian Justice in Lactantius' and Augustine's Political Thought*, **which is linked to subproject (ii)**. The subproject will primarily be concerned with the question as to how Cicero's conception of justice could exert such a long-lasting influence on Western political thought, given that for centuries its most important intermediaries had been two early Christian authors who were not prepared to acknowledge the possibility of "pagan" justice in the first place. Research shall accordingly focus on the somewhat twisted way Lactantius and Augustinus handed down Cicero's views on justice in general and their treatment of the Carneadean debate in particular. At the end of the appointment, the successful candidate shall publish his 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, with a specialization in late antiquity and intellectual history. Excellent command of written and spoken English as well as good knowledge of Latin are imperative; basic Greek reading comprehension would be 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