

CALL FOR PAPERS

Who was poor in pharaonic Egypt and in its Near Eastern neighbourhood. Social Stratification and Visibility according to texts, pictures and archaeology.

International Conference, 4-6 September 2024

Location: Vienna (Austria)

Submission Deadline for abstracts: 26 February 2024

Poverty in the ancient world is a complex subject that remained quite unexplored by disciplines such as Egyptology and Near Eastern studies. Many questions arise when it comes to studying poor people. The first is the definition of poverty itself. In such a case, it is absolutely essential to deconstruct the notion of our own definitions and attempt to retrace the definition of the ancients. To do so, we need to turn to the available sources and critically review them. How are the poor described? How is poverty defined? How are such notions depicted in written and iconographic sources? What can we learn from archaeology? These initial questions lead to further questions and issues. How did society perceive the poor and how was it reflected? We might also wonder about the establishment of criteria for categorising, via material culture, people in social strata seen as 'poor'. Poverty and consideration of who were the poor is therefore a broad area of research that can be approached in a variety of ways.

The aim of this conference is to bring together scholars who would like to contribute to research on the history of poverty in ancient Egypt and the Near East, spanning the period from the middle of the 3rd to the end of the 1st millennium B.C.

Among the topics to be discussed during this conference, we would like to draw attention to the following:

- definition of poverty and its problems;
- the methods for studying poverty in ancient societies, and more broadly methodologies to assess social groups in antiquity;
- visibility of the poor in texts and images;
- vocabulary and description of poverty;
- perception and reflection of the poor by the rest of the society;
- visibility of the poor in archaeology;
- establishing criteria for defining the poor and the categorisation of these social groups.
- habits and practices of the poor including their professions – what work did poor people do?

The conference will be held in English. The event will take place mainly in person but a hybrid format is envisaged. The presentation of papers at this conference will be 20 to 25 minutes.

Please note: the contributions will be published in a proceedings volume soon after the conference takes place. We would therefore ask the speakers to consider the possibility of providing an article for March 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter.

We kindly ask all interested scholars to send their abstract (approx. 300 words), with their full name and academic affiliation, by 26 February 2024, to <delphine.driaux@univie.ac.at>

The participation is free of charge. Some financial support for travel expenses may be possible for the speakers (further information will be provided at a later stage).

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Conference organised by:

Delphine Driaux

FWF – Elise Richter Fellow

Institute of Egyptology

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Bettina Bader

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