

Call for Papers
Unfreedom in the Premodern World:
Comparative Perspectives on Slavery, Servitude & Captivity
Dublin, 23rd-24th June 2022



Two fugitive 'Saracens' brought before the king, from the Vidal Mayor (Navarre or Aragon, c. 1290-1310). Los Angeles, J Paul Getty Museum, MS Ludwig, XIV, 6, fol. 244r (detail).

The global history of slavery and dependency has flourished in recent years, as scholars have deployed new theories and methodologies to explore the varieties of unfreedom across a range of regions and societies. Studies of the premodern period have been part of this expansion, revealing nuanced analyses of how unfreedom intersected with gender roles, labour patterns, economic networks and religious values before the growth of the early modern trans-Atlantic slave trade. In spite of this work, the periods prior to European colonial expansion remain comparatively understudied, but present enormous opportunities to explore key questions and to push the boundaries of the wider history of slavery and dependency. *Unfreedom in the Premodern World: Slavery, Servitude and Captivity in Comparative Perspectives* seeks to bring together scholars studying a wide range of regions and periods to address common themes and questions in the history of slavery, and to build towards a comparative and collaborative global approach.

Unfreedom in the Premodern World will be held over two days (June 23rd & June 24th, 2022) at the Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin's Arts and Humanities research centre. Keynote lectures will be delivered by **Prof. Hannah Barker (Arizona State University)** and **Prof. Stefan Brink (University of Cambridge/University of the Highlands & Islands)**. Proposals are invited for twenty-minute papers which explore any aspect of the history of unfreedom, slavery, servitude or captivity in the period before 1492. Papers are welcome from any academic discipline and with any geographical focus. Interdisciplinary papers and studies of regions outside of Western Europe are particularly encouraged. Potential topics could include (but are not limited to):

- Definitions and parameters of unfreedom
- Methodologies for histories of unfreedom (source interpretation; archival erasure; theoretical perspectives)
- Unfree labour and the economics of unfreedom
- Unfree mobilities, forced migrations and slave trades
- Manumission and life after unfreedom
- Representations of unfreedom in literature, arts and culture
- Religious reactions to unfreedom (prohibitions; justifications; complicity)
- The histories of unfree women and children
- Resistance to unfreedom (rebellions, escapes, sabotage)

Proposals, consisting of a title, an abstract (max. 250 words) and a short academic biography, should be sent to nosuille@tcd.ie by **Friday, 17th December 2021**. It is expected that this conference will be held in-person in Dublin, subject to the global public health situation. Limited funding will be available to assist early-career, precariously-employed and independent researchers with travel and accommodation costs.

For any queries and further information, please contact the conference organiser, **Dr. Niall Ó Súilleabháin (nosuille@tcd.ie)**.