

Twisted Transfers: Discursive Constructions of Corruption in Ancient Greece and Rome

April 2020–March 2024

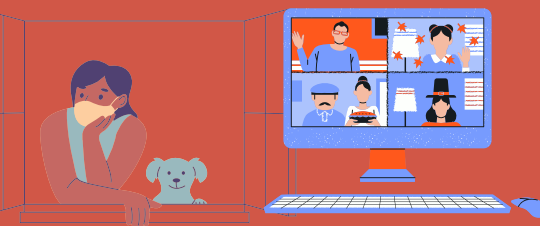
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Was the notorious Roman governor of Sicily, Gaius Verres, really corrupt? While Cicero tried to prove he was, Verres claimed that he was "just" making and receiving gifts. Corruption is a problem that affects all human societies, past and present, yet it is also difficult to define. It requires the transfer of material or immaterial things, as well as its identification as legally or morally wrong by a mistrusting observer. The project's aim was to understand why and how forms of transfer in ancient Greece and Rome were perceived and presented as "twisted" and, therefore, as acts of corruption. Discursive constructions allow us to move beyond legal definitions and explore the specific contexts in which corruption takes place. As discourse, the "twisted transfer" is embedded in normative values and in stereotypes of correct/incorrect behaviour. Ultimately, the project aimed to demonstrate why the study of ancient corruption matters today.

1 Aims and Scope

2 Challenges



The impact of Covid 19, and the lockdown



4 Deliverables and Academic Activities



- 11 Subprojects (3 PhDs, 2 postdoc projects)
- 6 international workshops (4 online, 1 in Sevilla, 1 in Potsdam)
- 2 Co-organised International conferences on Historical Corruption (Madrid, Nov 22) and on Citizenship and Corruption (Milan, Jan. 23)
- 1 International core conference in London (Twisted Transfers, Institute of Classical Studies, April 23)
- 1 Cycle of Public Lectures in Potsdam (Summer 23)
- + Guest lectures in Hamburg, Turin, Pisa, Newcastle



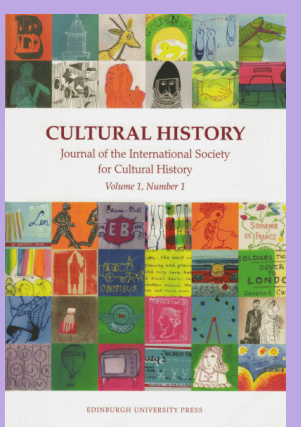
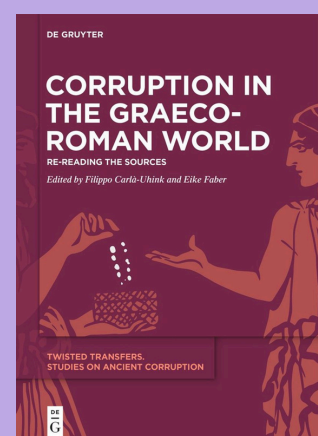
3 More Challenges

2022: Institutional crisis. Closure of the Department of the UK Team at Roehampton. Project moves to Durham



5 Publications

- A new series with De Gruyter
- 3 collective volumes
- 5 forthcoming monographs
- 1 special issue of the journal "Cultural History"
- 5 journal articles in English, German, Italian and Spanish



6 Outreach – Public Engagement



- Coproduction of the AHRC awarded BBCArts animation video "Are you corrupt?" (2020).
- BBC HistoryExtra Podcast: Corruption in the Ancient World (2021)
- Public lecture on ancient corruption for the "Potsdamer Tag der Wissenschaften" (May 2024).
- Training course for state officers on anti-corruption in antiquity for the German Federal Ministry of Finance (2022).
- Training course on ancient corruption for the computer technology company Oracle Corporation (2022).

7 Present & Future



Newcastle University

- "Corruption in the Spotlight": Educational and Impact project (Newcastle, Classics for All, UK state schools, ClassicsFest 2025 (Lit&Phil). Schools in Germany and Italy to get involved from 2026.
- Collaboration with public institution and anti-corruption bodies: development of in-service training programs for anti-corruption campaigns and governance education (German Federal Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Italy).
- Future project on the interplay between psychosocial factors and ancient economic mentalities.