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8th Meeting of Young Historians of Greek Law
8° Incontro dei giovani storici del diritto greco

Athens, September 12-13, 2025

The 8th Meeting of Young Historians of Greek Law, organized by Professor Athina A. Dimopoulou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) and Professor Emeritus Edward M. Harris (Durham University), took place at the Athens University History Museum on September 12-13, 2025. This biennial gathering brought together emerging scholars in the field of ancient Greek legal history to present cutting-edge research on topics ranging from Mycenaean landholding to Roman-era judicial procedures in Asia Minor.

Friday, September 12, 2025

Linda Rocchi (Kopenhagen) – "Finding the 'who' in 'whoever wishes': the legal capacity of volunteers in ancient Greek statutes"

Linda Rocchi's presentation explored the institution of voluntary prosecution (*ho boulomenos*) in ancient Greek law, examining who possessed the legal capacity to act as volunteer prosecutors in public cases. Through careful analysis of both literary sources (particularly Athenian orators) and epigraphic evidence, Rocchi demonstrated that while voluntary prosecution in Athens was primarily designed to enlist citizen participation, non-citizens—including metics—were permitted to prosecute in certain types of public cases, such as *probolai* related to the Eleusinian Mysteries and *graphai adikōs heirchthēnai*. Her research revealed that when statutes explicitly specified "whoever wishes among the Athenians," this restriction

DOI 10.54103/1128-8221/30231
Pubblicato il 09/12/2025
Pubblicato da Milano University Press

to citizens was typically maintained, but when sources simply stated "whoever wishes" without further qualification, the matter became more ambiguous, possibly indicating broader participation. Rocchi argued that this ambiguity was particularly evident in religious matters and foreign policy contexts, where broader involvement of both citizens and non-citizens appears to have been the norm, suggesting a more nuanced understanding of legal capacity than previously recognized.

Julian Schneider (Hamburg) – "Between Success and Failure: Interstate Arbitration and the (Un)Reliability of Arbitral Awards in Ancient Greece"

Julian Schneider addressed the long-standing scholarly debate about the effectiveness of interstate arbitration in ancient Greece, challenging both overly pessimistic and optimistic assessments. He examined the phenomenon of "repeaters"—cases where the same two *poleis* returned to arbitration multiple times over the same dispute—which had led earlier scholars like Bérard to dismiss arbitration as fundamentally ineffective. Through detailed analysis of specific cases, including the territorial dispute between Sparta and Messene (eight decisions) and boundary conflicts between Narthakion and Melitaia (five decisions), Schneider demonstrated that repeated arbitrations did not necessarily indicate failure, but rather reflected the complex political realities and enforcement challenges of the Greek interstate system. He argued that the reliability of arbitral awards depended heavily on several factors, including the careful construction of arbitration agreements with witnesses and penalty clauses, the choice of a high-authority arbitrator, the production of detailed *apophasis* documents that transparently explained the decision-making process, and the commemoration of decisions through public inscriptions. Schneider's analysis revealed that while arbitration could not guarantee permanent resolution—especially when powerful political actors like Rome became involved—it provided a sophisticated legal framework that Greek *poleis* consistently chose to utilize despite its limitations.

Alexandra Bartzoka (Patras)– «La seconde Confédération maritime, les tribunaux athéniens et les alliés dans la première moitié du IVe siècle avant J.-C.: l'apport des inscriptions»

Alexandra Bartzoka's presentation examined the judicial relationships between Athens and its allies in the Second Athenian Confederacy (377

BCE), focusing on whether Athenian courts exercised jurisdiction over allied matters as they had during the Delian League. Through careful analysis of inscriptions, particularly the decree of Aristoteles, she demonstrated that references to trials before "the Athenians and the allies" remained ambiguous—possibly indicating either joint tribunals or separate judgments by each party—and that this ambiguity likely reflected Athens' deliberate attempt to present a more collaborative image than during its fifth-century empire. Bartzoka's detailed examination of evidence from Keos, following its revolts in the 360s BCE, reveals a complex picture: inscriptions concerning the Athenian monopoly on ochre show the use of specific legal procedures like *endeixis* (denunciation leading to arrest) and *phasis* (denunciation of contraband). These cases involved both local Keian magistrates (*astynomoi*, *prostatai*) and Athenian officials (the Eleven), sometimes suggesting a two-step judicial process or the possibility of appeal (*ephesis*) to Athens. Her analysis of the term *ekklētos* (a city called upon to judge) in these and other inscriptions suggests that this institution allowed for the transfer of certain cases to Athens, but without necessarily reproducing the total interventionist judicial control of the fifth century.

Laura Loddo (Pisa) – "Exile and Civic Reconciliation: Remarks about a New Inscription from Airai"

Laura Loddo presented groundbreaking research on a recently published (2024) inscription from the Ionian *polis* of Airai concerning civic reconciliation following internal conflict (*stasis*), placing it within the broader context of Greek amnesty practices. The inscription, which dates to sometime between the 350s and 340s BCE and involves the prominent figure Hermias of Atarneus, records reconciliation agreements that include the famous *mē mnēsikakein* formula (the commitment "not to remember past ills") and provisions for property restoration, making it a valuable addition to the corpus of Greek amnesty documents. Loddo challenged the editors' interpretation that this represented a "bipartisan reconciliation," arguing instead that Hermias likely imposed or heavily influenced the settlement, particularly given the unusual provision that exiles should immediately recover their lands and, after reimbursement of purchase prices, their houses—with Hermias himself designated to determine the funding source for these reimbursements. Through comparison with other cases of property restoration in Greek amnesties, including those at Methymna, Phlious, and Sicyon, Lod-

do demonstrated that the Airai inscription's approach—full restitution with compensation paid to new owners—was characteristic of reconciliations imposed by external powers or strong individuals rather than negotiated settlements, suggesting that the normative framework governing property rights in such contexts was fundamentally shaped by power relations rather than purely legal principles.

Adrian Häusler (Zürich/Warszawa) – "Paradeixis, enechyrasia, prosbolē: Ptolemaic debt enforcement within Greek legal history"

Adrian Häusler's presentation examined the sophisticated debt enforcement procedures developed in Ptolemaic Egypt, focusing on three key stages: *paradeixis* (designation of assets by the creditor), *enechyrasia* (the executory pledge constituted by officials), and *prosbolē* (the public auction of seized property). Using detailed analysis of several early Ptolemaic documents, including the well-preserved *prosbolê*-protocols in BGU XIV 2376/2377 (36/35 BCE) and the much earlier document, probably a full protocol of a *paradeixis* and an *enechyrasia* in P.Hib. I 32 (245 BCE), Häusler demonstrated that a formally regulated execution procedure following a *diagramma* (royal regulation) can be traced back at least to the mid-third century BCE, likely during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphos or early in Ptolemy III's reign. He argued against Hans Julius Wolff's influential thesis that these procedures were part of the early *Justizdiagramma* of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE), showing instead that fragmentary texts like P.Hib. II 197 and P.Hal. 1, which mention *enechyrasia* followed by *embateusis* (entry into possession) rather than auction, likely represent earlier, local practices—possibly Alexandrian *politikoi nomoi*—that predated the centralized diagrammatic regulation. Häusler's comparative study of Greek execution practices outside Egypt—drawing on sources like the Pergamon inscription, loan documents from Arkesinē and Delos, Athenian procedures, and Gortyn law—established that *enechyrasia* was a pervasive Greek institution. This strongly suggests that the Ptolemaic system of debt enforcement, while formalized through royal legislation, was fundamentally based on customary practices shared throughout the Greek world, rather than being an entirely new, top-down imposition originating solely from the royal palace.

Maria Elina Koulouri (Hamburg) – "Unintentional Homicide in Ancient Greek Thought: Exploring the Spectrum from Accident to Negligence in Plato's Laws"

Maria Elina Koulouri's presentation explored whether ancient Greek law recognized a distinction analogous to the modern legal differentiation between negligent and accidental homicide, focusing on Plato's *Laws* as a key philosophical source. She demonstrated that while earlier sources like Draco's homicide law and Antiphon's *Tetralogies* established the foundational *hekōn*/*akōn* (voluntary/involuntary) distinction, they lacked a clearly developed conceptual framework for differentiating degrees of culpability within unintentional killing. Koulouri argued that Plato, operating within his distinctive curative rather than retributive philosophy of justice, transformed this traditional dichotomy into a sophisticated diagnostic tool: the prescribed penalty reveals an implicit diagnosis of the fault's source within the individual's soul and its impact on the *polis*. Through analysis of Plato's treatment of "special cases"—unintentional killings in athletics, military training, and medicine, which receive only purification or complete exoneration rather than exile—she showed that Plato recognized varying levels of culpability based on factors like benevolent intent, accepted risk in socially valuable activities, and the role of chance (*tychē*). Koulouri further demonstrated that Plato's concept of *ameleia* (neglect), particularly in contexts of familial and civic duties, reveals an incipient notion of negligence as a failure to fulfil specific, legally defined obligations, while his acknowledgment of *tychē* (chance) marks the boundary where human responsibility dissolves into pure accident—together creating a nuanced spectrum of unintentional harm that moves beyond simple binary categories and provides a foundational grammar for Western legal thought on this complex issue.

Saturday, September 13, 2025

Edward Jones (London) – "The Athenian Logistai in the Fifth Century"

Edward Jones examined the Athenian *logistai* (accounting officials) in the fifth century BC. He noted that the *logistai* played an important role in Athenian finances and administration, as they were responsible for examining accounts during *euthynai* (an annual accountability procedure) and also

calculated debts to sacred treasuries. Jones highlighted that scholars have differing views about the number of boards and exact roles of the fifth-century *logistai*. His paper resolves this problem by working through the slim (and mostly epigraphic) evidence, arguing that in the fifth century there was probably a single board of thirty *logistai* with broad accountability-related and public and sacred accounting duties.

Anna Dolganov (Wien) – "Roman constitutional reforms in Achaea and Macedonia in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE"

In her presentation, "Roman constitutional reforms in Achaea and Macedonia in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE," Anna Dolganov investigated the sweeping constitutional reforms imposed by Rome following its conquest of mainland Greece. Dolganov's research directly challenges modern historical accounts, which have often downplayed these Roman interventions as being merely temporary or superficial. She argued that the significance Polybius testimony has been largely overlooked. Through a careful analysis of epigraphic evidence, Dolganov demonstrated that these reforms were, in fact, neither temporary nor superficial. Rather, they constituted a lasting Roman reconfiguration of Greek political institutions and the shape of the local ruling class.

Giacinto Falco (Milano) – "Homonoia and Nomos: Legal and Cultural Foundations of Concord in Archaic and Classical Greece"

Giacinto Falco explored the relationship between the concepts of *homonoia* (concord, like-mindedness) and *nomos* (law, custom) in archaic and classical Greek thought, examining how these principles functioned both as cultural ideals and as practical legal foundations for social cohesion. His presentation traced the development of *homonoia* from its early appearances in Greek literature through its more developed expression in classical political philosophy. Falco demonstrated that *homonoia* was not merely an abstract philosophical ideal but had concrete legal manifestations in civic procedures, particularly through arbitration mechanisms and oaths of unanimity designed to foster agreement among citizens. Through analysis of both literary sources and inscriptions, he showed how Greek communities institutionalized concord through these legal mechanisms, including the appointment of arbitrators to seek compromise before judgment and

constitutional arrangements requiring citizens to swear oaths of concord. This analysis revealed *homonoia* and nomos as complementary forces in the construction and maintenance of Greek political order.

Kyriaco Nikias (Wien) – "Possession and ownership in the Mycenaean vocabulary of landholding"

Kyriaco Nikias presented a challenging reassessment of Mycenaean land tenure by questioning whether modern legal concepts of possession and ownership can be meaningfully applied to Linear B documents from Bronze Age Greece. Through careful linguistic analysis of terms like *ki-ti-me-na* and *ke-ke-me-na* land found in the Pylian land records, Nikias argued that the traditional scholarly distinction between "private" and "public" land oversimplifies a more complex and fundamentally different system. He demonstrated that the Pylian documents reveal a land regime characterized by overlapping and stratified claims to property, with multiple partial alienations (*o-na-to* interests) creating webs of interdependence rather than absolute ownership—suggesting a customary, decentralized normative structure rather than one imposed by palace authority. Nikias challenged influential scholarly models, including Yves Duhoux's recent attempt to apply a possession-ownership framework overlaid on a feudal model, arguing that such anachronistic legal categories obscure rather than clarify Mycenaean property relations. His analysis suggested that focusing on patterns of alienation—both full and partial—and the distribution of land among different social groups provides better insight into Mycenaean land tenure, revealing it as a fundamentally relational system embedded in social and economic networks rather than one based on abstract legal rights analogous to Roman *dominium* or modern ownership.

Sophia Regopoulos (Nürnberg) – "Power through wealth as a (legal) reason for ostracism? A study on Aristotle's Pol. III 13, 1284a20"

Sophia Regopoulos examined a famous passage in Aristotle's *Politics* (III 13, 1284a20) where the philosopher states that democratically governed *poleis* ostracized those "thought to be outstandingly powerful on account of wealth or popularity or some other form of political strength," investigating whether private wealth could serve as legal justification for this extraordinary measure. She began by establishing through historical ev-

idence—including ostraka inscriptions mentioning Megakles' wealth and horse-breeding, Plutarch's account of Pericles' fear of ostracism due to his wealth, and accusations against Hyperbolos regarding money acquired through wickedness—that wealth was indeed a motivation for ostracism in practice, though never as a solely sufficient criterion and always intertwined with concerns about bad character (*mochthēria*). Regopoulos then turned to Aristotle's theoretical framework, demonstrating that his philosophical position—rooted in his conviction that wealth is neither inherently good nor bad but depends on the character of its possessor and the purpose for which it is used—shaped his analysis of ostracism as a constitutional remedy. Through careful reading of the *Politics*, she argued that Aristotle's ostracism passage must be understood within his broader discussion of constitutions: ostracism based on wealth is just "in a certain way" (*dikaion ti*) insofar as it serves to restore a certain equality and preserve the constitution from disruption, functioning as a "second-best" therapeutic measure (*deuteros plous*, *iatria*) when proper constitutional design (*eunomia*) is lacking. Regopoulos concluded that while Aristotle acknowledges ostracism's philosophical justification as responding to constitutional imbalance caused by excessive wealth, his treatment reveals it as a pragmatic political tool whose application he views as both theoretically limited and historically problematic—particularly when used for partisan rather than constitutional purposes—and whose focus on temporary exile rather than property confiscation suggests that the "cure" addresses the immediate political disruption rather than the wealth itself.

Dionyssis Filias (Athenai) – "Plutarch's demosiai dikai (Prae. Ger. Rei. 805a-b) in the light of honorific decrees: ekdikoi and trials of public interest in late Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor"

Dionyssis Filias presented an innovative interpretation of a passage in Plutarch's *Praecepta gerendae rei publicae* where the author advises young politicians that "public lawsuits (*demosiai dikai*) and embassies to the Emperor" offer the best opportunities for launching a political career in the limited environment of the Roman Empire. Through systematic analysis of honorific inscriptions from Asia Minor, Filias argued that Plutarch's seemingly generic term *demosiai dikai* actually referred to a specific institution: the *ekdikoi*, legal representatives appointed by Greek *poleis* to defend communal interests before higher judicial authorities, including

Roman governors and emperors. He demonstrated that while the term *ekdikoi* originated in Hellenistic interstate arbitration, where representatives defended *polis* claims before foreign courts, it evolved under Roman rule into a crucial mechanism through which Greek cities engaged with imperial justice—particularly in cases involving territorial disputes, property claims, financial matters, and misconduct by Roman officials (such as the case of Veranius Philagros of Kibyra, who successfully prosecuted Tiberius Neikophoros before Emperor Claudius for illegally extracting 3,000 drachmas annually from the *polis*). Filias showed that *ekdikoi* often combined their role with that of ambassadors (*presbeutai*), appearing before emperors in trials concerning matters of public interest, and that their success in such cases—recovering disputed territories, reclaiming public property, or stopping extortion—brought them recognition and launched political careers, precisely as Plutarch described. His analysis revealed that Plutarch, while using traditional Athenian legal terminology and drawing on classical examples (Pericles, Themistocles, Cleon), was actually describing a contemporary Roman-era practice specific to the Greek East, thereby demonstrating the continuity and adaptation of Greek legal institutions within the framework of imperial power.

The two-day meeting demonstrated the vitality and diversity of current research in ancient Greek legal history, bringing together papyrologists, epigraphists, legal historians, and philosophers to address questions ranging from Bronze Age property systems to imperial-era legal practice. The conference highlighted both the rich potential of new epigraphic discoveries (such as the Airai amnesty inscription) and the continued value of reexamining well-known sources through fresh theoretical and comparative lenses. The presentations collectively emphasized the importance of moving beyond Atheno-centric approaches to recognize the diversity of Greek legal cultures while also identifying common principles and institutional frameworks that transcended individual *poleis*. The meeting's success in fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and introducing emerging scholars' research bodes well for the future of Greek legal history as a field, and the assembled scholars look forward to future gatherings that continue this important work.