

# THE BODY IN CONFLICT

## IN THE ROMAN IMPERIAL PERIOD

**Workshop | July 19, 2024**

**VENUE**

Freie Universität Berlin  
Fabeckstraße 23-25

14195 Berlin

**Holzlaube: Room 0.2051**

**Organised by** Anke Walter (Newcastle University / BAK Fellow 2024)  
and Burkhard Emme (Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Klassische  
Archäologie)



[www.berliner-antike-kolleg.org/link/body-in-conflict](http://www.berliner-antike-kolleg.org/link/body-in-conflict)

The conference is part of the the BAK annual theme  
2023/24 “Conflicts [and how to] deal with them”

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## THE BODY IN CONFLICT IN THE ROMAN IMPERIAL PERIOD

Conflict is an eminently physical phenomenon, one that often leads to the violent confrontation of bodies, to destruction, and death. According to its original meaning, the word „conflict“ emphasises the physical aspect of an altercation between two opponents (Latin *confligere*: to strike, bring together). The central meaning of the (human) body is therefore inherent to the concept of conflict. Nevertheless, the use and significance of the body in conflict situations can vary. The spectrum ranges from threatening gestures and physical attacks to the physical destruction of an opponent. Conflicts also bring with them an intense interplay between invisible psychological and visible physical phenomena. In both ancient literature and art, the portrayal of the development, the breaking out, and the aftermath of conflicts, and of bodies in conflict in particular, remains popular throughout antiquity. The two media, though, find different ways of representing conflict, while being in dialogue with each other at the same time. While literature, for instance, can more easily depict the invisible, psychological side of conflicts, a sense of the physical existence of those involved in a conflict fully comes to the fore once bodies are torn apart, injured, or killed.

In our workshop, we want to discuss what role the human body played in the conceptualisation and representation of conflict in the Roman imperial period as well as the interplay between literary and artistic approaches to representing the human body in conflict. To what extent do conflicts stem from physical contacts or invisible, emotional processes, and how do these find physical expression in literature and art once a conflict has broken out? How were different conflicts (of interest) in imperial literature and visual art specifically expressed in images of the body? How do literature and visual art of the imperial period depict bodies in conflict and what similarities and differences do we find between different media? How do the depictions of mythical and real conflicts relate to each other?

Our aim is to bring together colleagues from the fields of archaeology and classical philology and, on the basis of these and similar questions, to jointly achieve a better understanding of corporeality and its representation in the aforementioned context.

### Programme

- 10:00 Introduction**  
Burkhard Emme, Anke Walter
- 10:20 Bodies in Conflict with God: Claudius Marius Victorius and the Epic Tradition**  
Thomas Kuhn-Treichel
- 11:05–11:30 Coffee break —————
- 11:30 Amazons on the Battlefield of Love and Death**  
Christian Russenberger
- 12:15 The Hero-Warrior’s Thousand Bodies: Polymorphous Heroism and Heroic Otherness in Roman Imperial Epic**  
Helen Lovatt
- 13:00–14:30 Lunch break —————
- 14:30 *Corpus* and Related Terms in Lucan**  
Martin Dinter
- 15:15 The Physiognomy of Defeat: Severed Heads, Torn Hair, and Despondent Faces in Roman Battle Representations**  
Stephan Faust
- 16:00–16:30 Coffee break —————
- 16:30 The Seven against Thebes in Statius’ *Thebaid* and Roman Imperial Art**  
Burkhard Emme, Anke Walter
- 17:00 Concluding Discussion**
- Conference Dinner —————