

05.06.2026

Oikos: A new history of the ancient Greek household?

The recent publication of John Ma's magisterial *Polis: A New History of the Ancient Greek City-State* has put political history firmly back centre stage. Ma writes what he describes as 'the biography of a political and social form' (p. 541) from an Aristotelian perspective which gives rise to a focus on formal institutions, citizenship, and access to political power, but Aristotle also very clearly views the oikos as a constituent part of the polis.

If we were to write a similarly-ambitious book called *Oikos*, what would it look like and how would we do it? What are the promises and the drawbacks of such a framing? What would it reveal or conceal? Would such a book *only* be a social history of the family or the household or (how) can we think about the oikos in economic and political terms too?

Some questions we might consider: To what extent, or in what ways, does the oikos change over time over the course of Antiquity? What discourses governed the oikos within literary evidence at which points in time and to what ends? In what contexts does the oikos appear, disappear, or reappear in the material record? How might the oikos be used to write the history of groups traditionally excluded from the narratives about the polis? *Can* an oikos-centred history be a bottom-up history and in what sense?

The aim of the Meisterklasse, therefore, is to think through the 'biography' of the oikos as a political, social—and economic—form, what that might mean, and how (or whether) it might prompt us to consider aspects of Greek history in a different light

Who can participate? *Everyone who is interested in this topic!*

Place and Time: BZW / ASG 04, Bürogebäude Zellescher Weg 17, 09:00-17:00

Requirements for the workshop: *Reading of the provided texts. They are available via OPAL. Scan the QR code at the end to get to the course or search for the course „Meisterklasse SoSe 2026 – Oikos: A new history of the ancient Greek household“ in OPAL.*

The language of the workshop: *English*

How to sign up for the workshop? *please send a short application via eMail to:*

katrin.boerner@tu-dresden.de



We are looking forward to welcome you at the workshop !