

Uti Tabes Invaserat
Decay, Disintegration, and Aftermath in the Ancient Mediterranean World

Graduate Conference

Sponsored by the departments of Classics, Near Eastern Studies, History, the Archaeology Program, and the Program on Freedom and Free Societies

Cornell University
Ithaca, NY

Saturday, March 9, 2013

Keynote Speaker: Michael Fronda, McGill University

Call for Papers

From Hesiod's grim assessment of the "Ages of Man" to Tacitus' harsh appraisal of Roman morality, the concept of decay loomed large in the minds of ancient authors. To these observers, the present usually failed to measure up to the past—and the future seemed likely to be even worse. The archaeological record sometimes illustrates the exaggeration in these narratives; at other times, however, it shows the palpable effect that the material and social aftermath of political disintegration had on daily life. The realms of science and knowledge were likewise affected by decay either directly—such as the obsolescence of Egyptian hieroglyphic writing—or by preoccupation with its prevention—as in mummification and embalming practices.

This conference will examine the role of decay—both real and perceived—in the literature, history, and archaeology of the ancient Mediterranean from the Bronze Age through the Late Antique period. We welcome papers critically addressing topics such as (but not limited to):

- the rhetoric of decadence
- the erosion of moral and ethical traditions
- the disintegration of political institutions or social relations
- the effect of the aftermath of empire on social groups
- scientific or material aspects of decay
- the obsolescence of crafting or artistic techniques
- the degradation of knowledge, forms of writing, language, or literary styles

Instructions for Submission

Please send anonymous abstracts as an attachment to decayconference.cornell@gmail.com by **December 15, 2012**. In the body of the e-mail, please provide your name, institution, and paper title. Abstracts should be approximately 250 words in length. Please submit abstracts as attachments in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format. Each paper will be allotted approximately 20 minutes for presentation and should be written for an audience of graduate students and faculty in fields related to the ancient Mediterranean world. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by mid-January.

Accepted papers will receive an award of \$100 to be used toward travel costs agreed in advance, furnished by the Department of Classics.