

CRASIS

Culture, Religion And Society – Interdisciplinary Studies

In Graeco-Roman Antiquity

ANNUAL MEETING & MASTER CLASS

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN | FEBRUARY 5 & 6 2015

CRISIS!

THE IDENTIFICATION,
ANALYSIS, AND
COMMEMORATION
OF **CRISES** IN THE
ANCIENT WORLD

Keynote and Master:
Prof. Monika Trümper
(FU Berlin)

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rijksuniversiteit
groningen

LOCATION:

Faculty of Theology & Religious Studies
Oude Boteringstraat 38, Groningen

Annual Meeting: Programme

February 6, 2015 – 09:00-19:00
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Courtroom
Oude Boteringestraat 38, Groningen

08.30 – 09.00 Registration and Coffee

09.00 – 09.15 Welcome

Session 1 *Chair: Wim Jongman*

09.15 – 10.00 **Mladen Popovic:** The Jewish Revolt and the Aftermath of the Destruction of the Temple

10.00 – 10.45 **Darja Sterbenc Erker:** Ritual Responses to Crisis: Supplicationes and Ludi Saeculares

10.45 – 11.15 Coffee break

Session 2 *Chair: Peter Attema*

11.15 – 12.00 **Miko Flohr:** Resilience and Commemoration: Response to Seismic Upheaval in Pompeii, 60-79 CE

12.00 – 12.45 **Catherine Psilakis:** Integrating a Crisis Moment into the Paradigmatic History of Athens: Demosthenes, Against Timocrates, 142-143

12.45 – 13.45 Lunch at the H.J. Bruinszaal in the Academy Building

Session 3 *Chair: Christoph Jedan*

13.45 – 14.30 **Constanze Graml:** Dealing with the Crisis. The Athenian Ephebeia under Macedonian Occupation

14.30 – 15.15 **Polyxeni Strolonga:** Social Crisis and Resolution in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter: An Anthropological Approach

15.15 – 15.45 Coffee break

Session 4 *Chair: Ruurd Nauta*

15.45 – 16.30 **Elisa Perego, Rafael Scopacasa and Silvia Amicone:** Collapse or Survival?
Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to Micro-Dynamics of
Crisis in the Late Prehistoric and Early Roman Central Mediterranean

16.30 – 17.15 **Kim Beerden:** Panic in the Streets! Developments in Graeco-Roman
Responses to Crises: Epidemics

17.15 – 18.15 **Annual Lecture by Monika Trümper:** Morgantina under Roman Rule: a
City in Crisis?

18.15 Conference Reception

19.00 Conference Dinner

Annual Meeting: Abstracts

The Jewish Revolt and the Aftermath of the Destruction of the Temple

Mladen Popovic, University of Groningen

Ritual Responses to Crisis: Supplicationes and Ludi Saeculares

Darja Sterbenc Erker, Humboldt University Berlin

In ancient Roman society performance of a ritual supplication usually presented a response to a crisis (disturbance of political or social order, natural catastrophe or to imminent military defeats). In the paper I will present republican mechanisms of ritual response to crisis and discuss how a crisis was identified, how decisions were made about rituals which had to be performed to appease the gods. Augustus' religious restoration is a prominent example of religious response to an alleged crisis of Roman cultural values at the end of the Republic. In the late twenties of the first century BC serious portents (signs of divine anger in form of epidemic and famine) had to be expiated. The Sibylline books predicted that a performance of the festival *ludi saeculares* was a possible cure for the crisis. Therefore Republican *supplicationes* in which the representatives of the people of Rome offered sacrifices to the gods to appease them, were reenacted in the festival of the *ludi saeculares* of 17 BC. I am going to discuss the festival, its various rituals of the priests *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* and of 110 matrons as described in the inscription with the protocols of the rituals. This inscription was set up in Rome to commemorate the festival as an enactment of the beginning of the Golden Age. The ideology of the inscription will be analysed and confronted with poetic and historiographic sources which stress the aspects of the social or political crisis which was supposed to be dealt with by the performance of the celebration.

Resilience and Commemoration: Response to Seismic Upheaval in Pompeii, 60-79 CE

Miko Flohr, Leiden University

One of the best documented crisis of antiquity is the seismic upheaval that struck the Bay of Naples in the decades preceding the 79 CE eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Literary, epigraphic and especially archaeological evidence provide detailed insight into not only the physical damage done by the earthquakes that struck the region in this period, but also into the impact of the disruption on its socio-economic well-being, and on the way the events were integrated in the collective memory. Arguably, understanding this evidence is central to any debate about crises in the ancient world, though it is true that so far, the crisis has mostly been discussed in the context of Pompeian studies.

This paper will explore ways to improve our understanding of the responses to these seismic events at Pompeii, and to integrate it into a wider debate. It will look both at the socioeconomic impact, and at the commemoration of these events. This will add a new chapter to the debate about the last years of Pompeii, and provide a new way of looking at this period, particularly emphasizing the importance of understanding economic changes, and their impact on the urban landscape: behind the few snippets of direct information about the formal commemoration of seismic events lies a world of implicit evidence about continuity and change that provides an essential context for our understanding of the way the seismic disruption of the 60s and 70s CE was handled, and perceived, in Pompeii.

Integrating a Crisis Moment into the Paradigmatic History of Athens: Demosthenes, Against Timocrates, 142-143

Catherine Psilakis, Lille 3 University

Many scholars have focused recently on the way of coping with the crisis of the second oligarchic Revolution in Athens. After the Tyranny of the Third, it was inscribed in the Athenian law “not to remember past wrongs” (me mnesikakein, Andocides, On the Mysteries, §91). Apart from the moment when Athens pacified and reunited refunds the debt contracted with the Lacedaemonians by the Thirty (Athenaiôn Politeia, XL, §3), one cannot really talk about great achievements in this particular period. Nevertheless and very surprisingly, Demosthenes uses vocabulary to emphasize the recent past from 403 less than fifty years later, in his speech Against Timocrates, §142-143. This way of representing democratic restoration adopting unanimously laws of Solon takes part to the blame of the politicians of the present, certainly, but it is an interesting proof of the role of time in dealing with crisis moment in social memory. However it was a dark period for the city torn by a civil war, Demosthenes does not hesitate to present it as a paradigmatic moment of the Athenian history. Doing so, he follows the official discourse of reunification. A detailed comparison with authors like Isocrates or Plato shows how deep Demosthenes accepts and integrates in this youth speech official propaganda for unifying the city. But the most interesting element of integrating crisis moment into paradigmatic history of Athens consists on the modification of the tradition about Solon. In a sense, Against Timarchos offers an interesting testimony dealing with the success of the political willingness to control the past’s memory. But what is quite new is to underline how this process heavily influences another tradition, less known, the tradition about Solon’s legislation and its reception.

Dealing with the Crisis. The Athenian Ephebeia under Macedonian Occupation

Constanze Graml, Ludwig-Maximilians-University München

The late 4th and 3rd century BC was a time during which the Athenian Polis faced a serious political crisis. With the beginning of the Macedonian occupation in 322 BC the Polis lost the sovereignty over important parts of its territory¹. Because of the organisation of political institutions based on geographic units of Attica² the political, civic and religious life was affected.

Epigraphic sources on the Athenian ephebeia, the training of the Athenian youth in order to become fully educated citizens, show a transformation of the ephebeia during this period. In the ephebic decrees of the late 4th century, a decrease in the number of ephebes can be detected. This fact has been interpreted as a change from compulsory to voluntary participation. Until now, these changes have never been linked to the territorial effects of the crisis.

Part of the ephebic training was the participation in religious rituals³. Sources from the 2nd century BC show that by performing these rituals the ephebes explored the sanctuaries situated in the countryside of Attica. The sanctuaries were linked to the commemoration of the Persian wars, when Athens was hegemon of Greece. No references to the less glorious history of the Macedonian occupation can be detected.

Social Crisis and Resolution in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter: An Anthropological Approach

Polyxeni Strolonga, American School of Classical Studies at Athens

The Homeric Hymn to Demeter focuses on the abduction of Persephone by Hades with the permission of Zeus. Demeter targets her wrath at Zeus and manages to retrieve her daughter after a series of negotiations and a final resolution where she will have to share her daughter with Hades. By applying anthropological theories on reciprocity I trace this narrative movement from a crisis, encapsulated in the abduction of Persephone but also in the crop failure imposed by Demeter, to the compromise in the end, as a transition from negative reciprocity (taking without giving) to balanced reciprocity (a quid pro quo exchange). Similar examples in the narrative development from the other major Homeric Hymns to Apollo, Hermes and Aphrodite show that since crisis is always the outcome of negative reciprocity, the Hymns condemn such anti-social practices (e.g. theft, piracy, abductions) and showcase the effectiveness of balanced exchanges as a way to overcome a crisis. The historical time of the composition of the Hymns may explain the Hymns' emphasis on the value of reciprocity. During the Archaic Age in Greece, when most of the Hymns were composed, social conflicts emerged after the rise of the class of the merchants and the threat it posed to the aristocratic social order. The longer Homeric Hymns address such phenomena and propose the practice of reconciliatory reciprocity, which pointedly in the mythic narrative takes place between gods of different status.

1 Especially during the Chremonidean War (268/267 - 263/262 BC), the fortifications of Munichia, Peiraeus, Salamis and Sunion were under Macedonian control.

² The reforms of Cleisthenes targeted on the reorganisation of the Athenian citizens based on the geographic facts of Attica. This new organisation was e. g. linked to the composition of military units, the number of representatives in the council and other public offices.

³ Aristot. Ath. Pol. 42,3: "συλλαβόντες δ' οὔτοι τοὺς ἐφήβους, πρῶτον μὲν τὰ ἱερὰ περιῆλθον, [...]." The ephebic decrees (e. g. IG II² 1006, 1008, 1027 et al.) mention the sanctuaries and the associated rituals. A change in the participation in religious rituals cannot be excluded.

Collapse or Survival? Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to Micro-Dynamics of Crisis in the Late Prehistoric and Early Roman Central Mediterranean

Elisa Perego (UCL), Rafael Scopacasa (UFRN & University of Exeter) and Silvia Amicone (UCL)

This paper addresses some methodological issues concerning the investigation of crisis in the past; in doing so, we present the preliminary results of the Collapse or Survival project, which explores the nature of “micro-collapse” events and their relation to socio-technological change in the ancient central Mediterranean. Preliminary research supported by the British School at Rome concentrated on selected instances of “crisis”, namely those following occurrences of natural “disaster”, and explored new methodologies and research questions for investigating the consequences of disaster episodes on the daily lives of people. By focusing on late prehistoric northern Italy, where a wealth of highly contextualized material and environmental evidence allowed us to explore the impact of disasters in view of the micro-dynamics of community daily life, we adopted an agent-focused approach that emphasized the close connection between social practice and environmental factors in determining change in society. In particular, research on Veneto 650-525 BC focused on flooding events that were not destructive enough to hamper survival and inhabitation, but still affected the trajectories of development of the sites involved, and left evident proxies in the archaeological record. In this context, a presumptive increment in flooding episodes from 650 BC was concomitant with a phase of accelerated socio-political transformation and instability, when innovation in ritual, technology, settlement organization, trade links and consumption patterns seems accompanied by an increase in social inequality and evidence of violence directed against marginal subjects. An investigation of socio-ritual practices of resilience identifiable at the micro-scale revealed both the elite's concern for ancestral burial sites damaged by the floods, and the development of ritual forms of abuse, including human sacrifice, which were possibly a response to social strain determined by intense social competition and worsened environmental conditions.

Panic in the Streets! Developments in Graeco-Roman Responses to Crises: Epidemics

Kim Beerden, Leiden University

An epidemic is a true crisis: for a reflection of how a community can be shaken to its core, and even driven towards anomy, one only needs to consult the newspapers about Ebola or Thucydides' account of the Athenian plague.

The purpose of this paper is to compare responses to epidemics in the Greek world to those in the later Graeco-Roman world on the basis of four case studies. The case studies do not need to be historical or, if historical, their depiction need not be accurate: the way responses to epidemics are depicted is revealing enough. The first epidemic discussed is the plague that raged among the Greek troops at Troy; the second the Athenian plague during the Peloponnesian war; the third the first-century plague AD that spread in the East; and the fourth the second-century AD plague coming from Persia.

Responses could be religious or political; and on societal, communal, organizational and individual levels (Quantarelli 1978: 4). Were decisions made *ad hoc* or structurally? I will argue that these case studies indicate that increasing political centralization in the Roman world did not lead to more structural communal crisis management or attempts to prevent or future crises. The opposite is visible, especially where prevention is concerned.

Morgantina under Roman Rule: a City in Crisis?

Monika Trümper, Free University Berlin

The Sicilian city of Morgantina saw its heyday in the 3rd century BC, which is reflected in a significant urban development and building boom. A large agora, a theatre, several sanctuaries, two public baths, and many lavish houses were built, as revealed by the American Excavations at Morgantina since 1955. In 211 BC, Morgantina was captured by the Romans and given to Spanish mercenaries. While for a long time this conquest has been reconstructed as a catastrophic event with dramatic consequences for the city, entailing a complete exchange of its population and a major decline and reduction in size, recent research has begun to revise the notion of collapse and crisis.

This paper reassesses the urban landscape and socio-historical context of Morgantina after 211 BC, based on fieldwork (South Baths and West Sanctuary Project 2013/2014; <http://morgantina.org/>) and on a synthesis of recent published research, and with a focus on methodological questions. Selected areas, among them the recently excavated baths and sanctuary, the agora and domestic architecture, will be analysed, focusing on significant changes in architecture, function, and users after 211 BC. While the general notion of regression is not challenged, a more nuanced picture is presented of which parts of the city were reused and how. By re-evaluating post-211 BC Morgantina, this paper also contributes to current trends in research that adopt a much more differentiated approach to Sicily under Roman rule, challenging long-held ideas of decline and insignificance of Rome's very first province.