

CRASIS

Culture, Religion And Society - Interdisciplinary Studies

In the Ancient World

ANNUAL MEETING & MASTER CLASS

GRONINGEN, FEBRUARY 11-12, 2016

CALL FOR PAPERS

HELLENISM:

Interaction, Translation and Culture Transfer

Keynote and Master: Dr. Benjamin Wright (Lehigh University, Pennsylvania)

CRASIS, the interdisciplinary research institute for the study of the ancient world at the University of Groningen, is organizing its fifth Annual Meeting and Master Class. CRASIS brings together researchers from Classics, Religious Studies, Ancient History, Late Antiquity Studies, Archaeology, Ancient Philosophy, and Legal History, focusing on Greek and Roman societies as well as on Jewish and Near Eastern civilizations and their mutual interaction. The CRASIS Annual Meeting and Master Class is a two-day event, set up as a meeting place for students at PhD or Research Master level, Post-Docs, and senior staff to promote discussion and exchange of ideas beyond disciplinary boundaries.

We cordially invite *PhD and Research Master Students, Post-Doctoral Researchers*, as well as *Senior Researchers* to submit a proposal for the CRASIS Annual Meeting and PhD/ReMa Master Class (11-12 February 2016).

The theme of this year's Annual Meeting and Master Class will be, **Hellenism: Interaction, Translation and Culture Transfer**. We in the modern world are used to thinking of the globe as a fairly small place, one that is getting smaller all the time with instant access to information and almost unlimited possibilities for continuous contact with other people. Increased exposure to other people and places also brings with it exposure to different cultures. Although in some regions of the world, imperial domination may have ceased, the cultures of those former imperial nations continue to serve colonialist and imperialist agendas. Whether we see t-shirts for sale with the Coca-Cola logo and slogan in Thai or we watch wars waged to establish "democratic" political institutions (and all their attendant institutions) in places where they have never flourished, most people in the world have interacted in a variety of ways with what is often dubbed "Western" culture, often articulated through English, the language of the dominant culture. Yet cultures are not monoliths, nor are they stable entities unaffected by the people who practice and enact them. Not only does the receiving culture undergo change: the dominant culture is also affected. Indeed all culture is dynamic and local.

The ancient Mediterranean, in some ways like the modern world, became a fairly small place after Alexander's conquests and into the Roman period. People in the Near East, Central Asia, and Africa came into close contact with Hellenistic – and later Roman – culture in the form of the Greek and Latin languages, education, and social and political institutions. Increased mobility and intensified trade routes facilitated the movement of people and goods between distant communities. Numerous peoples lived

under the rule of Hellenistic kings and queens, particularly the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in the Near East, and later the Roman empire dominated the entire Mediterranean basin. In scholarly analyses of the dominance of Hellenistic and Roman cultures in Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, the tensions between indigenous cultures and those cultures are magnified. Yet, we find that in those areas dominated by Hellenistic, and later Roman, rule a more nuanced and complex set of interactions takes place. The same breadth of intellectual resources that are necessary for understanding these intersections in the modern world must be applied to the ancient world as well.

These interactions raise critical questions. Did the intersection of Hellenistic and Roman cultures with indigenous cultures create social tension? If so, how was that tension resolved (or not) and what strategies were employed? What kinds of accommodations or translations were made in the process? How did indigenous populations fare under foreign Hellenistic and Roman rule? Who prospered and who did not? How did such cultural contact affect issues such as ethnic or religious identity during the Hellenistic and Roman periods? What cultural symbols—literary and material—reflected and constructed those identities?

We welcome papers exploring these questions with textual, visual, and material sources. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- **Translation:** How did language function as a cultural marker or as a transmitter of culture? What role did language play in the larger arena of cultural contact?
- **Material Culture:** How do the material sources help us to understand cultural contact and interactions? How did material cultural symbols and markers work to create and reinforce local or new identities?
- **Identity:** What aspects of identity became significant markers of similarity or difference, of being an insider or outsider?
- **Literature:** How did literature become a vehicle for cultural expression, change and transmission?
- **Theory:** What theoretical models and approaches help to illuminate how we ought to think of culture and the way that cultural contact and transmission worked in the Hellenistic world? What models help us to arrive at a more nuanced view of identity formation and valorization in the ancient world?

Keynote Speaker and Master

This year's Keynote Speaker and Master is Benjamin Wright, professor of the History of Christianity in the Religion Studies Department at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. His area of expertise is the history of Judaism in the Second Temple period, with a focus on Jewish Wisdom literature, the translation of Jewish literature from Hebrew into Greek (Septuaginta, Ben Sira, Aristeas) and the Dead Sea Scrolls. His broad array of publications in these and other areas shows his interest in larger questions such as Hellenization, (cultural) translation, heritage and identity. In September 2015 his commentary on the Letter of Aristeas appeared with De Gruyter (Berlin). He is currently preparing a commentary on the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira, has recently co-edited a new English translation of the Septuagint, and will be Dirk Smilde Fellow at the Qum'ran Institute in Groningen from February to May 2016.

Deadline for Abstracts

PhD and Research Master Students are invited to submit a topic proposal (500 words) for the Master Class (February 11th) explaining how their own research relates to the theme. We invite Post-Docs and senior scholars to submit a title and short abstract (250 words) for a lecture on the second day (February 12th). Proposals should be submitted no later than **9 November 2015** with Sjoukje Kamphorst, via crasis.aws@rug.nl. When possible, CRASIS will contribute to travel and accommodation costs.

Information for PhD/ReMa Students

Research Master students are expected to submit a paper of 3000-4000 words and PhD students a paper of 5000-6000 words. These papers will circulate among the participants and are to be submitted before

11 January 2016. During the Master Class participants will present their paper, followed by a response and discussion under the expert guidance of Professor Benjamin Wright. The Master Class is an **OIKOS** and **ARCHON** activity and students will earn 2 ECTS by active participation.

For more information, send an e-mail to crasis.aws@rug.nl or see: <http://www.rug.nl/crasis>.

On behalf of CRASIS,

Lidewijde de Jong
Sjoukje Kamphorst
Onno van Nijf
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 groningen**

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