C R A S I S

CRASIS Call for Abstracts

CRASIS invites applications for its sixteenth Annual Meeting and Masterclass, which will take place on 25 (Masterclass) and 26 (Annual Meeting) February 2027 at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. The Annual Meeting and Masterclass is a two-day event, designed to promote discussion and the exchange of ideas about the ancient Mediterranean world across traditional disciplinary boundaries among graduate students, postdocs, and established scholars. Each year, an internationally acknowledged expert in one of the fields represented by CRASIS is invited to teach a masterclass for MA and PhD students and to deliver the CRASIS Keynote Lecture at the annual meeting.

This year we are honoured to welcome **Prof. Penelope Davies** (University of Texas at Austin), who will teach the masterclass and deliver the keynote at the Annual Meeting. The theme of the 2027 Masterclass and Annual Meeting will be:

Urbanism and regime change

The intersection of regime change, on the one hand, and urban design and city life, on the other, is apparent across the globe throughout history and today. With regime change, urban designs become more or less controlled and controlling; governments insist on a greater or lesser degree of oversight of administration and institutions; and daily life is monitored to a more or less intrusive level. At the same time, city life and urban design play a role in effecting and then buttressing regime change.

This Master Class and Annual Meeting of CRASIS aims to explore urban causes, mechanisms and results of regime change in the ancient world. In the Greek world, for instance, did the Hippodamic city plan, thought to reflect democratic ideals, come to an end with the rise of kingdoms and presumed loss of autonomy, as scholars long believed? What is the role of the monumentality in public monuments: from the reign of Greek tyrants in the archaic period to later accelerations of monumentalisation of cities in the East, often sponsored by a Rome-centred

elite? How did Rome itself change as a city from Republic to Empire? Beyond the euergistic provision of 'bread and circuses', articulated by Paul Veyne (1976), and the supply of water, how did local elites use urban form to propel political shift? What kinds of urban discontent generated political instability across the Empire, how vulnerable were urban designs to sedition, and what kinds of urbanistic change helped control or suppress political dissent?

This event asks participants to explore urban manifestations of regime change, abrupt or gradual, and the ways in which architecture and city life articulated, constructed or questioned popular and elite seduction or appropriation. Topics might also cover monumental construction, urban narratives and associations, religion, provisions for food or health, changes in housing or living standards, or architectures of control and fear. In defining "regime change" broadly it may also encompass research relating to conquest, colonial foundation, changes in civic government and gradual transfers of authority.

Topics for consideration may include (but are not limited to):

- New rulers, old streets: Did political change transform movement and access, or accommodate an inherited urban layout?
- Who benefited from urban renewal? Did new public buildings improve access to amenities, displace activities, or privilege particular groups?
- How was regime change experienced, negotiated and materially expressed beyond elite building programmes and can archaeology also reveal continuity, unintended consequences and the actions of urban inhabitants?
- What place did urban transformation play in literature dealing with regime change and how were the histories of such changes constructed, told and contested?
- How does urban change affect intellectual discourse, or, put differently, how do literary texts (e.g. satire or historiography) undermine or legitimate the organization, renewal, or destruction of the urban space in different periods of history?
- What role did urban space play in the way new religious movements organised themselves (notably the early Christians in the Roman Empire)?
- How did religious changes within a ruling regime (e.g. Constantine's adoption of Christianity) alter urban space, for instance with monuments or other spatial/architectural/building propaganda?

Deadline for Abstracts

PhD and Research Master students are invited to submit a proposal for a topic (500 words) for the Master Class (**25 February 2027**), explaining how their own research relates to the theme. Proposals must be accompanied by a short CV of no more than 150 words and submitted **no later than 10 December 2026 via crasis.aws@rug.nl.** All other researchers are invited to submit a title and abstract (250 words) for a lecture at the Annual Meeting (**26 February 2027**) by the same deadline of 10 December.

If possible, CRASIS will contribute to travel and accommodation costs of graduate students, up to a limit of €200 for participants from outside the Netherlands, and up to €100 for participants from the Netherlands.

About the Keynote Speaker

Penelope Davies is Professor of Art History (Roman Art and Architecture) at the University of Texas at Austin. She is also Hedda Andersson Professor in Classical Archaeology at Lund University, where she received an honorary doctorate in 2021. Specializing in the architectural history of ancient Rome, Penelope Davies is author of *Death and the Emperor* (Cambridge University Press 2000, University of Texas Press 2004) and A*rchitecture and Politics in Republican Rome* (Cambridge University Press 2017), a Choice Outstanding Academic Title, which was supported by grants from the British School at Rome, the American Philosophical Society, and the American Council of Learned Societies. She is a former winner of the Dallas Museum of Arts' Vasari Award. She has co-edited, together with Christina Williamson, the first volume of the recently published *Cambridge Urban History of Europe* (2025) and is currently working on a new book, *Ancient Lives of Roman Buildings*.

Information for PhD/ReMa Students

To participate in the Masterclass, Research Master students are expected to submit a paper of 3,000–4,000 words. PhD students submit a paper of 5,000–6,000 words. These papers will be pre-circulated among the master and the participants of the Masterclass and are therefore to be

submitted **no later than 31 January, 2027**. During the Masterclass, the participants will introduce their paper, followed by responses from a fellow student and Prof. Penelope Davies.

For graduate students registered at a Dutch university, the Masterclass counts as an OIKOS or ARCHON activity and students will earn 3 ECTS by active participation.

CRASIS

CRASIS is the interdisciplinary research institute for the study of the ancient world at the University of Groningen. It brings together researchers from Classics, Theology and Religious Studies, Ancient History, Archaeology, Ancient Philosophy, and Legal History, focusing on Greek, Roman, Jewish and Near Eastern civilizations and their mutual interaction.

For more information, please send an e-mail to crasis.aws@rug.nl.