

Workshop (April 13-14, 2023) and a volume:

Constructing and performing hope in the premodern world

Throughout history, people have gone on with their lives despite many kinds of trials and tribulations. In this, hope has been a main driving force to manage uncertainty and to give meaning to living. There are historically changing sets of practices anchored in social and cultural values, through which individuals deal with the ultimate question of existence and anxiety: how is one to live a meaningful life in the face of inevitable death?

To this end, people have constructed different strategies for hope in their everyday life. These can be categorized as strategies for securing one's life – hope to recover from an illness or overcome poverty or old age; strategies for reproduction – which have at their core the hope of continuity through children; strategies for the preservation of memory and reputation, transmission of values and family traditions; and strategies for transcendental hope and continuity. As is easy to recognise, most of these strategies are, ultimately, social and communal. Therefore, hope is a central factor in everyday life through which both individuals and communities think about future and negotiate their personal and communal crisis.

Indeed, in historical research, hope refers not so much to a psychological state maintaining meaningfulness in life, but it points to a goal-oriented disposition and strategical agency. Hope, therefore, offers a fresh perspective on human experiences and action, as it has only too seldom been discussed in historical research.

With the described methodological background, we aim at organising a workshop concentrating on the ways in which the future of individuals, their families and communities were negotiated in ancient, Byzantine and Western medieval Europe, with special focus on the practices and practicalities of everyday life. Analysing how premodern societies found ways of managing anxieties about the future amidst cultural change is of essential relevance for understanding the functions and motivations of individuals and communities.

We especially welcome papers which explore experience-related and performative aspects of hope and futurity: How did the practices of hope manifest in everyday life and what shapes did they take? What kind of agency and strategies would have given people a sense of hope? What kind of strategies to maintain hope and plan for the future were adopted in everyday life? How did changing discourses and social circumstances affect decision-making aimed at maintaining hope, and how did this manifest in the *longue durée*? Comparing the continuities and changes in the ways in which individuals pursued their future-oriented goals is at the very heart of our project. Themes we seek to discuss in the workshop include the following (but are not limited to these):

- practices to ascertain the continuity of the family in social capital, wealth and progeny (e.g., marriage, divorce, childlessness, adoption)
- permanence of the individual/communal memory and name (e.g., material donations, gifts and promises, benefactions and vows, as well as death and wills)
- religious hope and futurity through personal piety, religious rituals and lifestyle
- emotions and experiences related to hope and futurity

- legal, ideological and conceptual aspects (while keeping in mind the relationship with lived experience)

We aim at publishing an edited volume (with a leading publisher) based on the papers presented in the workshop in April 13-14, 2023, Tampere, Finland. Therefore, those whose papers are accepted to the workshop are asked to send their early drafts of what will become their contributions to the edited volume beforehand (in mid-March 2023), so that we can circulate them to all the workshop participants. This way we will be able to give discussion a good start, to concentrate on discussing the central ideas of the papers in the workshop, and to move swiftly to the final phases to write the volume with 9000 word chapters (inc. bibliography, notes).

We will be able to accept only ca. twelve to fifteen participants for the workshop and the volume. **Deadline** for the abstracts (with 300 to 500 words, with description of the theme, methodology, main questions, and sources) is **May 20, 2022**.

Keynote speakers:

Stavroula Constantinou (University of Cyprus)

Jenni Kuuliala (Tampere University).

For further references on the study of hope you may want to check some of the following:

- Bobou, O. 2018. 'Hope and the Sub-Adult', in Kazantzidis & Spatharas 2018, 329–350.
- Caston R.R. and Kaster R.A. (eds.) 2016. *Hope, Joy, & Affection in the Classical World*. Oxford University Press.
- Chaniotis, A. 2018. 'Elpis in the Greek Epigraphic Evidence, from Rational Expectation to Dependence from Authority', in Kazantzidis & Spatharas 2018, 351–364.
- Feldman, D.B. 2013. 'The Meaning of Hope and Vice Versa: Goal Directed Thinking and the Construction of a Meaningful Life', in J.A. Hicks and C. Routledge (eds.), *The Experience of Meaning in Life: Classical Perspectives, Emerging Themes, and Controversies*. Springer, 141–150.
- Kazantzidis, G. and Spatharas, D. 2018. *Hope in Ancient Literature, History, and Art*. De Gruyter.
- Nelis, D. 2016. 'Emotion in Vergil's Georgics: Farming and the Politics of Hope', in Caston and Kaster 2016, 45–74.
- Rosenwein, B. 2006. *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.
- Scheer, M. 2012. 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have A History?)', *History and Theory* 51, 193–220.
- Tataranni, F. 2013. 'Hope and Leadership in Ancient Rome', *Teoria. Rivista di filosofia* 32:2, 65–75.
- Vlassopoulos, C. 2018. 'Hope and Slavery', in Kazantzidis & Spatharas 2018, 235–258.
- Vuolanto V. 2015. *Children and Asceticism in Late Antiquity: Continuity, Family Dynamics and the Rise of Christianity*. Ashgate.
- Wisman, A. and Heflick, N.A. 2015. 'Hopelessly Mortal: The Role of Mortality Salience, Immortality and Trait Self-esteem in Personal Hope', *Cognition and Emotion* 30:5.