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Call For Papers

The Day after Tomorrow: Resilience and Recovery between City and Countryside in the Greek World



Foto: V. Brigola

International Conference
Basel, 21st –23th January 2025

In the Greek world, from the Archaic age to the Hellenistic period, the crisis and disappearance of states, essentially the *poleis*, are due in most cases to external causes (i.e., war). The practice of destroying a city—or urbicide—with its related material and psychological consequences, is rare in the Archaic period but becomes gradually more common from the late fifth century B.C. onward, reaching its zenith in the Hellenistic age. Recent research emphasizes that our textual sources for the destruction of cities and the tragic fate of their populations are often exaggerated and tell a different story when compared with the one that can be reconstructed from the archaeological record. But even when documented, “destruction” rarely brought an end of a site, showing how ancient communities were endowed with a great capacity for recovery, and could overcome the critical moment following a destructive event. Recovery does not mean, however, that material and psychological violence left no traces on the community, as shown by the fact that in many cases a different society emerges from the *post*-destruction phase.

A destructive episode thus constitutes a turning point in the history of a community, which is why this topic has attracted so much scholarly attention, focusing almost exclusively on the dynamics concerning an urban centre itself while neglecting data from the surrounding territory, even though these data are crucial to reconstructing a complete picture.

Traditionally, the destruction of a city is read as a direct and inevitable cause of the crisis that also affects the city's territory, which is assumed to become impoverished and depopulated. But how true is this? Indeed, recent studies have pointed out that *asty* and *chora* often respond differently to breaks caused by destructive events, showing how the latter is more capable of adapting to new conditions and can provide the human and financial resources for the recovery of the former.

Building on these premises, the conference 'The Day after Tomorrow: Resilience and Recovery between City and Countryside in the Greek World' aims to offer new insights about the relationship between city and countryside in times of crisis, analyzing how the two elements dialogue and condition each other in a far more complex equation than the traditional bipolar centre/periphery model.

Key questions include:

- How does the caesura manifest itself in relation to the settlement of the territory of a destroyed city? What changes can be recognised with regard to the social embedding of the affected actors?
- What happens to the population of the city and the Chora after a destruction?
- Changes/continuities in the organisation of the sacred space?
- Changes/continuities in the use of resources and economic networks?

The conference will focus on the Greek world, but will also look at parallel phenomena in the indigenous milieu. The conference will deal with this topic from a cross-disciplinary perspective. We welcome therefore historical and methodological reflections as well as context-based case studies that engage the issues outlined above.

We invite scholars interested in addressing aspects of the topic sketched above to submit a short abstract (max. 250 words) with a working title **by July 31th, 2024** to **infomeetingbasel@gmail.com**

Notice of acceptance will be sent **by 31th August 2024**. Papers should be 20 minutes, followed by a discussion. The conference language is English, Italian and German. Financial support for travel and accommodation will be provided for contributing participants. A publication in a peer reviewed format is planned.

Organisation: Prof. Dr. Martin A. Guggisberg, University of Basel
Prof. Dr. Alessandro Pace, Università degli Studi di Milano