

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## Grandparents in the Ancient World

Basel, Switzerland. 19.09.2024 - 20.09.2024

“The age of the grandparent has arrived”  
*The Economist*, Jan. 15, 2023

With the ageing demographics and the gradual downsizing of our households, grandparents are more present than ever. Fast forward to 2050 and we find ourselves in a scenario where grannies and grandpas are estimated to outnumber the under-15s. In this shifting landscape, grandparenthood has emerged as a subject of newfound scholarly fascination. Noteworthy, yet equally intriguing, is the relative paucity of research dedicated to grandparents in previous civilizations. Moreover, the occasional reference to ancient grandparents tends to linger within the realm of clichéd representations or hold an assumption of uniformity, despite the evident cultural diversity that characterises grandparenthood within contemporary societies.

This interdisciplinary conference will be the first to bring together knowledge on grandparents and grandparenthood from civilizations around the Mediterranean, including ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, Greece and Rome up to the rise of Islam in the seventh century A.D. The conference will examine what can be ascribed to socio-cultural patterns and expectations towards grandparents as well as individual realities and attitudes. In honour of the 2024 World Grandparent Day, we invite proposals for papers that explore social and cultural perceptions of ancient grandparents and pursue a synthesis of evidence from literary, epigraphical, papyrological and legal sources. To what extent does the public/private character of these sources influence the presented image of grandparenthood? What were the daily concerns and difficulties experienced by grandparents in the ancient world? And, (how) can we unravel the intricate interplay of continuity and change within the perceptions and societal roles attributed to grandparents when adopting a trans-Mediterranean perspective?

**Submission Guidelines:** We welcome brief abstracts (max. 300 words, title and biographical note excluded) for a 20-minute presentation to be delivered in English, allowing for 10 minutes of discussion time after each paper. Please confirm attendance preference (in person or remote) promptly. We plan to publish an edited volume based on the conference proceedings in an international peer-reviewed series. Qualified junior researchers and recent PhD graduates are encouraged to apply.

Please submit your abstract by email to [lisa.brunet@unibas.ch](mailto:lisa.brunet@unibas.ch), including the full title of your paper as well as a short biographical note on your affiliation and previous research. The deadline for full consideration is **March 15, 2024**.

**Organised by**  
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