



CALL FOR PAPERS (by 1 August 2026)

First International Congress of Studies on Popular Cultures in Greece and Rome from II millennium BCE to modern folklore

Rome, 9-12 september 2026 – Università di Roma Tre, via Ostiense 236

Although Greek and Roman literature rarely focuses explicitly on popular culture, a substantial body of evidence allows us to reconstruct what may be described as the folklore of the ancient world. From precious testimonies emerge beliefs and 'superstitions', folktales and proverbs, imaginary beings, songs and other types of musical forms, folk-pharmacopoeia and medicinal remedies, apotropaic gestures and practices, along with many other traits characteristic of a popular culture of the ancients. This Greek and Roman folklore can often be approached (and effectively compared) on the one hand with other ancient Euro-Mediterranean traditions, and on the other hand with the documentation of modern popular culture, especially in certain culturally conservative areas such as central Greece and southern Italy. Studies on ancient Greek and Roman popular culture have witnessed significant developments in recent decades. New approaches and new research have contributed to a renewed reading of Greek and Roman authors and texts. Building on the experience of **folkloricum.it**, the time now seems ripe for organising an International Congress of Studies, aiming to bring together scholars from different disciplines (including Classics, folklore studies, anthropology, history of religions, and archaeology) and devoted to all aspects of popular culture in the Greek and Roman world. These will be the main fields of interest:

- 1 – Definitions and Methods.** What is 'popular'? 'Lower' and 'upper' cultures; ancient and modern cultural levels; diachrony and synchrony; 'popular' and 'learned' magic; comparison and philology; orality and literacy.
- 2 – Material Cultures.** Art; archeology; history and sociology; objects; dress and clothes; amulets; games and toys; frescoes and gems.
- 3 – Languages and Non-verbal Codes.** Non-standard and vernacular grammar, morphology and lexicon; proverbs and popular sayings; gestures; music and dances; riddles; dreams; curse formulae.
- 4 – The sacred and the supernatural.** Cults and rites; festivals; religious practices (weddings, mourning, funerals, child-related protective practices); 'superstitions' and beliefs; Evil Eyes; figures of fear: monsters, witches, and others;
- 5 – Nature and Techniques.** Animal-, plant- and stone-lore; agricultural practices; popular medicine, remedies and pharmacopaea; beliefs about stars and celestial phenomena.
- 6 – Beyond Literature and Orality.** Narrative patterns (types and motifs), myths and folktales; fables; legends and belief tales; fairytales; sub-literary genres (folk theatre, mimes, popular narrative literature); popular songs (work-songs, festival-songs, seasonal and quest-songs).

The list is not intended to be exhaustive, and proposals addressing related topics are also encouraged.

Anyone interested in contributing a paper to the conference is invited to submit their title and a brief abstract (in English, Italian, French, Spanish, German: languages of Congress) of no longer than 200 words to the two organisers, Prof. Tommaso Braccini (tommaso.braccini@unisi.it) and Prof. Emanuele Lelli (prof.emanuele.elli@gmail.com) **by 1 August 2026** (please send a Word document and cc both organisers).

Scholars at all levels of juniority/seniority are equally welcome.

We will evaluate all submissions and inform all applicants about acceptance or rejection by mid-August. Papers should be no longer than 20 minutes. Each accepted paper must be accompanied by an handout/abstract in English no longer than 3000 characters (including spaces).

Only in limited cases it will be possible online participation for speakers.

Conference fee (100 €) includes welcome dinner on sept. 9th, three lunch buffet, material and Proceedings volume.

**With the Patronage of Fédération Internationale des Associations d'études classiques
Associazione Italiana di Cultura Classica, Delegazione "Antico e Moderno"**

Scientific Committee: Igor Baglioni, Simone Beta, Tommaso Braccini, Ignazio E. Buttitta, Andrea Ercolani, Emanuele Lelli, Sonia Macrì, Camillo Neri, Riccardo Palmisciano, Giulia Pedrucci, Eleonora Rocconi, Silvia Romani, Andrea Taddei.

