

TOPOI: Wandering Narrative Patterns in Ancient Greek Literature

Call for Papers

International Conference

Universitat de Barcelona. 14, 15, and 16 April 2027

Narrative patterns often transcend the boundaries of individual genres, periods, and authors, reappearing in new contexts and acquiring new meanings. Ancient Greek literature provides a particularly fertile field for investigating these processes of transmission, adaptation, and transformation. From epic and historiography to biography, novel, hagiography, epigrammatic poetry, rhetorical treatises, and beyond, recurring narrative structures reveal complex networks of literary memory, education, and cultural exchange.

The international conference **TOPOI: Wandering Narrative Patterns in Ancient Greek Literature** seeks to explore how specific narrative patterns broadly understood—including motifs, structures, scenes, and rhetorical devices inter alia—migrate across texts, genres, and historical periods within the Greek literary tradition. Particular attention will be given to the role of rhetorical education and the *paideia* of ancient authors in shaping, preserving, and reinventing these narrative patterns. The conference aims to foster dialogue on the mechanisms through which literary *topoi* circulated and evolved, becoming shared cultural resources while retaining the capacity for innovation and reinterpretation.

We invite contributions that investigate the presence, continuity, transformation, and reception of narrative patterns in Greek literature from the Archaic period to Late Antiquity. Comparative approaches across genres, authors, and historical contexts are especially welcome.

Aim of the Conference

By bringing together specialists from diverse fields of Classical Studies, the conference aims to advance our understanding of how narrative forms circulated across the Greek literary world, how they were shaped by educational practices and rhetorical training, and how they contributed to the creation of a shared literary culture extending across centuries and genres. We look forward to welcoming contributions that illuminate the rich and dynamic trajectories of these wandering narrative patterns and their significance for the study of Ancient Greek literature.

The conference welcomes proposals from **scholars at all career stages**, including doctoral candidates, early-career researchers, and established academics. We particularly encourage contributions that combine close textual analysis with broader reflections on literary, rhetorical, and cultural dynamics.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Theoretical approaches to narrative patterns (*topoi*) and literary transmission.
- The influence of rhetorical education on narrative composition.
- The migration of narrative motifs across literary genres.

- Shared narrative structures in epic, tragedy, comedy, historiography, novel and philosophy.
- Narrative patterns in Greek biography and historiographical writing.
- The transformation of classical motifs in the Greek novel.
- Rhetorical exercises (*progymnasmata*) and their literary legacy.
- Narrative *topoi* in late antique and early Byzantine hagiography.
- Epigrammatic adaptations of established narrative paradigms.
- Intertextuality, imitation, and creative rewriting.
- School culture and the circulation of literary models.
- Gender, identity, and characterization through recurring narrative schemes.
- Narrative patterns and cultural memory.
- Reception and reconfiguration of *topoi* in late antique Greek literature.

Presentation Format

Accepted papers will be allotted **20 minutes for presentation**, followed by **10 minutes of discussion and questions**. Participants are encouraged to leave sufficient time for scholarly exchange, which constitutes an integral part of the conference's aims and spirit. Please note that the conference is planned as an exclusively in-person event. No provision will be made for online or hybrid participation.

Submission Guidelines

Abstracts in English of approximately **300–500 words**, accompanied by a brief biographical note including the author's institutional affiliation, should be submitted by **31 October 2026** to topoiwanderingnarrative@gmail.com

Notifications of acceptance and provisional programme will be sent by **20 December 2026**.

Conference Language

The conference will be conducted primarily in **English**. However, presentations may also be delivered in **French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Catalan**.

Participants are encouraged to provide visual presentation materials (handouts or slides) in English whenever possible, in order to facilitate discussion among attendees from different linguistic backgrounds.

Conference Organizers

Research Project *TOPOI: The Repertoire of Paideia in Greek Literature of the Imperial and Late Antique Periods* (PID2022-137964NB-I00). <https://web.ub.edu/ca/web/grup-recerca-paideia>

Institution: Department of Classical, Romanic and Semitic Philology. Section of Greek Philology. Faculty of Philology and Communication. Universitat de Barcelona.

Organizing Committee:

Prof. Pilar Gómez, Universitat de Barcelona

Prof. Sergi Grau, Universitat de Barcelona

Publication

A peer-reviewed volume based on selected papers presented at the conference is planned. Authors whose proposals are accepted will be invited to submit a full written version in English of their contribution by **30 June 2027**. All submissions will undergo a process of **anonymous peer review** before acceptance for publication.

Registration Fees

Category	Fee
Speaker registration	€100
Postgraduate student speaker registration	€70
Non-speaker registration (certificate of attendance included)	€35
Attendance without registration or certificate	Free of charge

Practical Information

The registration fee covers participation and attendance in all conference sessions, as well as coffee breaks and lunches provided during the conference. Travel expenses, accommodation, and dinners are not included and must be arranged independently by participants.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

Prof. Francesca Mestre, Universitat de Barcelona

Prof. Koen De Temmerman, Universiteit Gent

Prof. Orestis Karavas, University of the Peloponnese

Prof. Anna Tiziana Drago, Università di Bari

Prof. Mélanie Lucciano, Université de Rouen

Prof. Fabrizio Petorella, Università di Pisa

Important Dates and Venue

- **Conference dates:** 14-16 April 2027
- **Venue:** Universitat de Barcelona. Facultat de Filologia i Comunicació. Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 585, 08007 Barcelona
- **Submission deadline:** 31 October 2026
- **Notification of acceptance and provisional programme:** 20 December 2026