

The Search for Life in Ancient Mediterranean Cultures

Workshop for the SNSF-Project “Resonances through History”

October 8–9, 2025

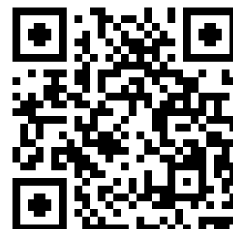


The purpose of this interdisciplinary, international, multilingual workshop is to explore the diverse ways that ancient authors conceptualized and expressed the idea of (true and good) life. While the concentration on “life” becomes particularly pronounced in the religion and philosophy of the early Roman Imperial era, such that philosophy could be understood as an *ars vitae*/τέχνη περὶ τὸν βίον and such that one can also speak of the development of a “theology of life” in the New Testament gospels, the preoccupation with life is not at all restricted to this period. (How could it be otherwise with such an existential topic?) Accordingly, a central aim of the workshop is to collaborate in assembling a tableau of the conceptions of life that we find in various ancient Mediterranean cultures. Of course, we will not discuss only the topic of life, but also death, liminal states, and the way in which certain traditions, persons, and rituals are portrayed as reservoirs of (true and good) life.

- October 8: Berghaus Niesen Kulm
- October 9: UniS, Room S201

To register, contact travis.niles@unibe.ch; space is limited.

Further information: <https://www.resonances-through-history.ch/the-search-for-life-in-ancient-mediterranean-cultures/>



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October 8–9, 2025

Bern, Switzerland

Wednesday, October 8, 2025 (Berghaus Niesen Kulm)

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| 7:20 | <i>Departure from Hotel Arabelle</i> |
| 8:20 | <i>Arrival: Talstation Mülenen</i> |
| 8:30 | <i>Gondola to Berghaus Niesen Kulm</i> |
| 9:15 | Travis Niles (Bern) – Introduction: “Il n’y a qu’un problème philosophique vraiment sérieux ...” |
| 9:30 | Anthony Ellis (Bern) – Herodotus and the <i>Timaeus</i> on the Nature of Human Life |
| 10:15 | Dominic O’Meara (Fribourg) – Ancient Biographies of Plato as Images of the Good Life |
| 11:00 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 11:30 | Arianna Fermani (Macerata) – Vita buona e beni esteriori in Platone e Aristotele |
| 12:15 | Francesca Masi (Venice) – Il principio e il termine della vita beata: Une rilettura dell’Epistola a Meneceo di Epicuro |
| 13:00 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 14:15 | Silvia Fazzo (Univ. del Piemonte Orientale) – ἡθὺς ἀνθρώπων δαίμων: Fate and Responsible Conduct of Life in Alexander of Aphrodisias |
| 15:00 | Mark Edwards (College of New Jersey/Princeton) – Life in Chains: From Socrates to Boethius |
| 15:45 | <i>Coffee break</i> |

16:15	Ruth Ebach (Lausanne) – “Es ist dir gesagt, Mensch, was gut ist” (Mi 6,8): Das gelingende Leben in der alttestamentlichen Prophetie
17:00	Heike Wilde (Heidelberg/Prague) – Die religiöse Bedeutung von Aromata in Ägypten während der ptolemäisch-römischen Zeit
18:00	<i>Break until dinner</i>
18:30	<i>Dinner</i>
20:30	<i>Gondola to Valley Station; trip to Bern</i>

Thursday, October 9, 2025 (UniS, S201)

9:00	<i>Coffee & croissants</i>
9:15	Luca Mazzinghi (Gregoriana Rome) – La concezione della vita in Qohelet (<i>via Zoom</i>)
10:00	Géraldine Hertz (Nantes) – La vie selon Philon d’Alexandrie
10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15	Marie Duruz (Lausanne) – Identités en tensions: les catalogues de vices comme définition d’une bonne/mauvaise vie dans les lettres de Paul
12:00	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30	Samuel Vollenweider (Zürich) – Was ist besser: Leben oder Sterben? Philipper 1,21-26 über eine topische Alternative
14:00	Concluding Discussion
14:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:00	City Tour (optional)
19:30	<i>Dinner</i>