

Scuola Normale Superiore
Pisa (Italy), 26 May – 4 June 2026

Summer School “Ancient Religions in a Digital World” (ARDW)

Presentation

The Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS, Pisa), in collaboration with Université Toulouse - Jean Jaurès (UT2J) and Collège de France, is organising for the academic year 2025/2026 – within the MERITA Project, the network for talent, with funding of the Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (PNRR) (NRRP, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan), Mission 4 – Education and Research, Component 1, Investment 3.4 “Advanced university training and skills” – “Reinforcement of the Scuole universitarie superiori (the university institutes of higher education)”, Public notice pursuant to Director’s Decree No. 594/2024 – a Summer School denominated “Ancient Religions in a Digital World” (ARDW). The School will be held in person from Tuesday 26 May to Thursday 4 June 2026 at the site of the SNS (see below).

This event, situated in the wake of the project “Mapping Ancient Polytheisms. Cult Epithets as an Interface between Religious Systems and Human Agency” (MAP-741182; <https://map-polytheisms.huma-num.fr/>), is conceived as an advanced thematic school on the approach to ancient religions (divine names, representations, cult spaces, ritual practices, actors and forms of agency), and to the ways in which the study of these multiple historical and religious aspects can be implemented through the methods and resources of the Digital Humanities. More specifically, the purpose of this School is to engage with the question of how the study of ancient religions may be reconciled with, and indeed enriched by, the widespread presence and use of multimedia technologies, and how these technologies can be rendered productive for advancing our understanding of historical and religious phenomena in the ancient world.

Born as an ERC Advanced Grant project (2017-2023), the MAP project studies the naming systems of the divine in the Greek and West Semitic worlds from 1000 BCE to 400 CE. The “onomastic sequences” are identified in epigraphic sources, recorded in a database (<https://base-map-polytheisms.huma-num.fr/>), and analysed as evidence of the way in which divine powers are constructed, arranged and mobilised according to spatio-temporal contexts. The analysis focuses on both the structural aspects of religious systems and their appropriation by social agents. Considered as elements of a complex language, the onomastic sequences referring to the gods give access to a cartography of the divine, to its modes of representation and to the strategies of communication between men and gods. At present, the MAP database is managed in collaboration between the SNS and UT2J, with Prof. Corinne Bonnet (SNS) and Sylvain Lebreton (UT2J) serving as joint directors.

Course Offering

The Summer School will be conducted primarily in English.

The training will be based on a wide range of sources from across the Mediterranean area: inscriptions on a multitude of media; literary, numismatic, and papyrological evidence; iconographic and archaeological material. The Summer School will focus on the employment of different digital tools and resources to enable a more insightful, wide-ranging investigation of topics concerning religious conceptions, representations, and practices.

Throughout the School, tutoring sessions will support participants in progressively engaging with the tools and methods presented, and in applying them to their own research fields. A final restitution of this personal work will take place on the last day, in the form of a 15- or 20-minute presentation, delivered either individually or in pairs, and followed by a collective exchange.

Participants will be welcomed in Pisa on Monday 25 May 2026 and invited to a welcome dinner in the evening. The course will start on Tuesday 26 May and run until Thursday 4 June, leaving on Friday 5 June. A farewell dinner will be offered to participants on Thursday evening (4 June). Various visits and outdoor excursions will be offered during the stay. The working sessions will be held at the SNS (Palazzo della Carovana, Piazza dei Cavalieri 7, 56126 Pisa).

The courses will include:

- thematic workshops on various approaches to gods, cultic spaces and actors, ritual practices, etc., in different contexts and from different angles;
- methodological workshops devoted to the application of digital tools and resources to the study of the history of ancient religions;
- lectures delivered by invited researchers;
- various visits to the main cultural and historical attractions of Pisa, in particular:
 - Museo delle navi antiche di Pisa (Lungarno Ranieri Simonelli 16, 56126 Pisa);
 - Architectural complex of Piazza dei Miracoli (Dome, Baptistry, Tower, Monumental cemetery), and its associated museums (Museo dell'Opera del Duomo; Museo delle Sinopie);
 - Museo Nazionale di San Matteo (Piazza San Matteo in Soarta 1, 56127 Pisa);
 - Permanent exhibition at Palazzo Giuli Rosselmini Gualandi ("Palazzo Blu", Lungarno Gambacorti 9, 56125 Pisa), including a collection of Greco-Roman antiquities and archaeological remains of ancient foundations.
- outdoor excursions to archaeological sites, related to the Summer School's broad historical and religious interests.

A certificate of participation will be issued at the end of the Summer School.

Funding

There are **15 places available**.

Successful applicants will benefit from:

- journey from Pisa airport to the city centre and back;
- accommodation;
- a welcome and a farewell dinner;
- lunch at the SNS mensa on a daily basis;
- entrance fees to sites and museums, as well as transport for outdoor excursions.

Consequently, successful candidates will be responsible for covering **their own travel expenses and dinners** (preferably by applying for funding to their home institutions: see below).

Application

The Summer School is open to **both PhD students** (who must still be enrolled in a doctoral programme at the time of their application) **and postdoctoral researchers**, whose work falls within the following research fields: History/Anthropology/Sciences of Religions, Ancient History, Archaeology and Art History of Antiquity, Classical Literature and Philology.

The application file, in English, will include:

- 1) the *completed application form*;
- 2) a *cover letter* explaining the expectations towards the School (1 page);
- 3) a *CV* (max. 4 pages);
- 4) a *summary of the PhD dissertation topic / postdoctoral project* (250 words);
- 5) a *letter from the supervisor (for doctoral students), academic mentor (for postdoctoral researchers), or laboratory director*, indicating that the candidate's institution is committed to covering travel and, possibly, dinner expenses. If the host institution cannot commit to supporting the travel costs, an explanation must be attached to the applicant's file. Additionally, we encourage candidates to ask their institution about any scholarship schemes supporting the mobility of PhD students.

Applications should be sent, **no later than Friday 30 January 2026**, as a **single PDF document including all the required attachments** to the following e-mail addresses:

- corinne.bonnet@sns.it
- giuseppina.marano@sns.it
- alessio.ranno@sns.it

Incomplete applications will not be considered for selection.

Results will be announced by **mid-February 2026**.

Summer School 2026

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Pisa, 26 May - 4 June 2026

Registration form**Personal data**

I authorise the processing of my personal data for the purpose of registration to the Summer School ARDW 2026 and for non-commercial purposes.

*Last name:**First name:**Institutional E-mail address:**Level of study or date of PhD dissertation defence:**Name of PhD supervisor / academic mentor:**Institutional affiliation:**How did you hear about the Summer School?*

- ☐ Website of the Scuola Normale Superiore
- ☐ Social Network (Instagram, LinkedIn, ...)
- ☐ Communication of the Scuola Normale Superiore
- ☐ Professors/colleagues at the University
- ☐ Network EELISA
- ☐ Other (specify)

Ancient Languages level.

<i>Greek</i>	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<i>Latin</i>	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<i>Other (specify)</i>	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced

Digital tools.

Date

Signature