

**SHIFA-ANA WORKSHOP II:
HISTORIES OF DEATH AND DISEASE IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN WORLD
JUNE 15 - 16, 2026 | ANAMED, ISTANBUL**



Following a very successful workshop in June 2025, [The SHIFA-ANA Project](#)* invites applications for its second two-day workshop to be held again at Koç University's [ANAMED](#) in Istanbul on June 15-16, 2026. Last year's workshop focused on histories of death and disease in Anatolia, and led to very fruitful discussions that underscored the need to expand our geographic scope beyond Anatolia and pursue a comparative/connected perspective. Thus, this year's workshop aims to address histories of death and disease in the broader Mediterranean World.

The purpose of this year's workshop is to showcase new research, address emerging questions on methodology and sources, and collectively seek out new perspectives for studying death and disease in (and around) the Mediterranean World. We hope that the workshop will ultimately open up new collaborative possibilities for the SHIFA-ANA Project: an interdisciplinary research and public history initiative dedicated to the study of death, disease, and healing in Anatolia's longue durée history. Using a unique methodology, we explore the intersecting histories of Anatolian lives across biological, environmental, and cultural contexts. The project will help flesh out forgotten stories of ordinary historical actors (human and nonhuman), how they endured death and disease, and their journey into life and death.

We invite proposals from early-career and/or senior specialists in history, archaeology, anthropology, medical humanities, human-animal studies, and related disciplines studying the Mediterranean World.

Papers may focus on specific case studies or address broader methodological issues – we especially welcome proposals with interdisciplinary, comparative, and connected approaches.

Proposals may address, but are not limited to, the following questions and themes:



Methodology - Sources - Interdisciplinarity

- How do we approach questions about death and disease in different disciplines of the humanities, social sciences, and health sciences? How can interdisciplinarity contribute to the study of death and disease?
- How is the study of death and disease related to each other? What are the points of intersection between them? How can we put these two distinct fields of study into conversation with each other?
- Death and disease in spatial and material context (e.g., places and monuments; objects, instruments, and substances used in daily life)
- What are the different types of sources (textual or material evidence) that can help us explore death and disease in the Mediterranean's *longue-durée* history? Can they speak to each other? How can different types of sources help the study of death and disease not only in humans but also animals and plants?
- How can we retrieve the patient's perspective through available sources? What kind of new sources (e.g., ego-documents or bones) can help recover the experience of ordinary historical actors (human or nonhuman)? Why do nonhuman lives matter?
- How can historical imagination help explore past experiences of death and disease?
- How did differences in class, race, and gender produce different experiences of death and disease? How did it make certain stories more visible on historical record while rendering others invisible? How do we recover these lost voices? How do we address these epistemic injustices?
- Emotions related to disease, death, and dying, and their expression in literature, art, film, and popular culture



Disease

- What were the different diseases that affected the Mediterranean world across the ages? Case studies of specific diseases or other ailments (e.g., injury, trauma, mental illness, infectious disease, zoonoses)

- What is disease, and how has its definition changed across time? What can changing understandings of disease tell us about the entanglements between humans and nonhumans? Can such entanglements help us reinstate animal agency in anthropocentric historical narratives?
- What is health? Is it the opposite of illness? How did the perceptions of wellbeing and prophylactics transform over time? What changed? What remained the same?
- How can we study the diverse healing traditions in the Mediterranean? What is *shifa* – is it different from healing?



Death

- Thinking about mass mortality in the Mediterranean world: fires, plagues, and wars, but also earthquakes, droughts, floods, as well as riots, rebellions, and crime, along with methods of resilience and survival
- What can the study of death teach us? Liminality between the living and the dead: states of in-betweenness or transition? Porous boundaries between the living and the dead: narratives of near-death experiences, ghosts, zombies, *jinn*, and the revenants
- Anthropological, ethnographic, and theological approaches to beliefs, practices, and rituals about death, dying, and burial

The workshop will include panels with formal presentations and roundtable discussions featuring short position papers, as well as poster presentations. We invite abstracts of 300 words by March 1, 2026: [please fill out this form](#).

The participants whose papers are accepted for panels will be asked to submit their full papers, and roundtable participants will be asked to provide a position paper for pre-circulation by June 1, 2026.

This event is organized by the SHIFA-ANA team (Zeynep Akçakaya, Fatma Elcan, Fatma Nur Karaaslan, Alper Kerem Koşar, Batuğhan Tatar, Nükhet Varlık, Caner Yıldız) in collaboration with ANAMED and Rutgers University-Newark.

For further questions, please contact: shifaana.project@rutgers.edu.