

## ***Greek Literature in Italy (8th to 12th c.)***

organized by the international project  
**Retracing Connections** (Uppsala, Odense, and Athens: <https://retracingconnections.org/>)  
in collaboration with the **Dipartimento di Scienze Umanistiche of Università di Palermo**  
and the **Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici "Bruno Lavagnini"**

### **Programme**

**Monday Oct. 23, 2023, Sala Lanza, Orto Botanico (<http://www.ortobotanico.unipa.it/>)**

9:15: Reception

9.30-9.40 Opening remarks

9.40-10 **Stratis Papaioannou**: Greek literature in Italy (8th to 12th c.): Preliminary remarks

#### ***Hagiographical Storytelling***

10-10.30 **Gioacchino Strano**: Agiografia italogreca: genere letterario e riferimenti storici. Alcuni casi di studio

10.30-11 **Eleni Tounta**: The Lives of the Italo-Greek saints (10th -11th century): constructing communities and space in Southern Italy

11-11.30 Pause

11.30-12 **Emma Huig**: Narrating voice(s) in Italo-Greek hagiography

12.00-12.30 **Anna Lampadaridi**: Réécrire la légende d'une martyre sicilienne : le cas de Lucie de Syracuse

12.30-13.00 **Daria Resh**: Rewriting Barbara in Southern Italy: Latin and Greek narratives

13.00-15.20 Lunch break

15.20-15.50 **Mario Re**: Un *unicum* nella letteratura agiografica italogreca: la *Vita* di s. Marina di Scanio

15.50-16.20 **Francesca Potenza**: L'inedita *inventio* delle reliquie dei santi anacoreti Nicandro e compagni (*BHG* 1329) e il monastero messinese di S. Nicandro

16.20-16.50 Pause

16.50-17.20 **Giulia Rossetto**: Palestino-Sinaitic echoes in the "itinerant library" of Nilus the Younger and his disciples

**Tuesday Oct. 24, 2023, Sala Lanza, Orto Botanico**

#### ***Cultures of Literature***

9.30-10 **Daniele Bianconi**: A classical motif in the *Vita Nili*

10-10.30 **Aglæ Pizzone**: Elusive readership: Hermogenes in Middle Byzantine Italy

10.30-11 **Stephanos Efthymiadis**: The siege and fall of Syracuse (877-878) and their echoes in Byzantine literature

11-11.30 Pause

11.30-12 **Filippo Ronconi**: Maximus the Confessor, his works and southern Italy: westwards from Constantinople or from the Near East? The instructive case of Vat. Gr. 1809

12-12.30 **Daniel Galadza**: Holy Week and Hymnography Between the Liturgy of the Holy City and South Italy

12.30-13.00 **Marina Loukaki**: Nikolaos Hagiothéodoritès en Sicile

13.00-15.20 Lunch break

15.20-15.50 **Andreas Rhoby**: Inscribing Greek poetry in Norman Italy. Texts and contexts

15.50-16.20 **Nikos Zagklas**: From Anonymous Malta to Eugenios of Palermo: Constantinopolitan and regional characteristics in Sicilian poetry

16.20-16.50 Pause

16.50-17.20 **Cristina Rognoni and Charis Messis**: Conclusions

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### **Abstracts**

**Gioacchino Strano, Università della Calabria**

#### **Agiografia italogreca: genere letterario e riferimenti storici. Alcuni casi di studio**

In recent decades, the attention of scholars has turned to Italo-Greek hagiography in order to investigate its historical, literary and genre values. Especially in the past, one wanted to see in hagiography the reflection of the epoch that produced those works and left in them an echo. Italo-Greek hagiography flourished with works born in Sicily and Calabria and which responded to various needs: legitimization of the cult of a local saint, exaltation of a monastery and a bishopric and also the ideological position towards the agitations present within the Byzantine Greek Church, primarily the Iconoclasm. Having now eliminated the alleged distinction between fictional hagiography and historical hagiography, it must however be said that the Italo-Greek hagiography of the 10th-12th centuries takes on particular characteristics, which I intend to focus on here. The works produced in Sicily and Calabria in this period in fact have constant references to the historical events of the time, dominated by aspects that take on a topical character. Here I will examine only a few case studies, relating to two Italo-Greek *bioi* that cover a rather broad chronological span: I am referring to the *Life* of St. Elias of Enna (or the Younger) and that of St. Philaretus (X -11th century).

**Eleni Tounta, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

#### **The *Lives* of the Italo-Greek saints (10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> century): constructing communities and space in Southern Italy**

Hagiography, understood by medieval people as a form of history-writing, was the most prominent literary genre, through which the Italo-Greek communities in Byzantine southern Italy perceived their past to satisfy their present needs and future aspirations. Narrating the stories of extraordinary individuals who acted in a local setting, the Italo-Greeks offered themselves patron saints whose lives assumed a normative function for shaping their communities. On this premise, the present paper examines the narrative representations of sanctity in the *Lives* of Elias Speleotes (d. 960. *BHG* 581), Elias the Younger (d. 903. *BHG* 580), Leo-Luke of Corleone (9<sup>th</sup> c. *BHL* 4842), Luke of Armento (d. 984. *BHL* 4978), Neilos of Rossano (d. 1004. *BHG* 1370), Sabas of Collesano (10<sup>th</sup> c. *BHG* 1611), and Vitalis of Castronovo (d. 994. *BHL* 8697). Taking cue from the saints' constant mobility and the importance of space as a constituent of social and cultural systems, the paper studies the spatial discourses, which emerged from the narratives. It aims to analyze how space produced by the saints' itineraries embodied power relations, constructed identities and shaped the mental horizons of social groups and communities.

**Emma Huig, Ghent University**

### **Narrating voice(s) in Italo-Greek hagiography**

In recent years, the number of publications studying Greek hagiography using narratological theories has increased significantly. This paper aims to contribute to this development by analyzing the narrating voices in two Italo-Greek hagiographical texts: the *Passion of Saints Senator, Viator, Cassiodoros and Dominata* (BHG & Nov. Auct.1622) and the *Life of Saint Neilos of Rossano* (BHG 1370). In the *Passion of Dominata c.s.*, the primary narrator is heterodiegetic and covert throughout the narrative, but in the final paragraph switches to homodiegetic and overt. In the *Life of Neilos*, the narrator is overt and heterodiegetic, but at the end becomes homodiegetic, whilst staying anonymous. In this paper, I first discuss whether these two narrators are unique when compared to Italo-Greek hagiography in general. Next, I analyze how the shifting narrators function within the narratives as a whole. I aim to discuss the effect of these shifts for the credibility and authenticity of the narratives as a whole.

**Anna Lampadaridi, CNRS HiSoMA (UMR 5189), Paris**

### **Réécrire la légende d'une martyre sicilienne : le cas de Lucie de Syracuse (BHG 995d)**

Lucie, une vierge issue d'une riche famille de Syracuse, compte parmi les martyres ayant trouvé la mort sous Dioclétien, vraisemblablement en 304. Avec Agathe, elles forment l'un des binômes les plus célèbres de l'histoire religieuse de Sicile. Comme c'est le cas pour les légendes de la plupart des martyrs siciliens, la *Passion* ancienne de Lucie nous est parvenue aussi bien en grec (BHG 995) qu'en latin (BHL 4992). Dans le cas de Lucie, c'est la version grecque de cette *Passion* épique (BHG 995) qui est censée représenter un état du texte plus authentique, étant dépourvue de plusieurs éléments narratifs à caractère fictif que l'on trouve dans le latin. Cette légende ancienne fut à l'origine de maintes réécritures hagiographiques en langue grecque. Après un bref aperçu de différentes pièces de ce dossier hagiographique, nous nous attarderons sur la *Passion* BHG 995d. Transmise par un seul manuscrit d'origine italo-grecque (Messina, Biblioteca Regionale Universitaria Giacomo Longo, S.S. Salvatore 37 [diktyon 40698]), cette réécriture savante de la légende de Lucie mérite d'être étudiée à nouveaux frais. Marqué d'un fort ancrage local, ce récit se trouve intrinsèquement lié à la ville de Syracuse. Les références classiques et les amplifications rhétoriques y sont légion, alors que les interventions sur plan narratif ne manquent pas. La recherche autour des *hypotextes* permettra d'esquisser le portrait de l'auteur de la *Passion* BHG 995d et de mieux cerner le milieu de sa production. Dans le même temps, une attention particulière sera prêtée aux modalités de réécriture de la légende, en tâchant de définir quelles sont les transformations formelles, quantitatives et narratives déployées par l'auteur et à quelles fins.

**Daria Resh, Swedish Institute at Athens**

### **Rewriting Barbara in Southern Italy: Latin and Greek narratives**

Among many versions of the Greek *Passion* of Barbara, one stands out for its purely apocryphal character. W. Weyh convincingly argued that this was also the earliest of the surviving texts, while H. Delehayé and P. Paschini retraced its provenance back to the circles of Coptic hagiographers in late antique Alexandria. But curiously enough, its Greek text survives only in three South Italian manuscripts. However, in the Latin tradition of Barbara's legends, this version had much wider circulation. In this paper, I survey the circulation of this early apocryphal legend in both languages, re-evaluate the relationship between its Greek and Latin texts, and further retrace how the story was gradually, yet differently, rewritten in each language. Finally, I inquire whether the fact that this earliest *Passion* survives in Greek only in three South Italian manuscripts could be linked to the parallel wide circulation of its Latin translation and specifics of Barbara's cult in Southern Italy.

**Mario Re, Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici "Bruno Lavagnini"**

**Un *unicum* nella letteratura agiografica italogreca: la *Vita* di s. Marina di Scanio**

Nel periodo successivo alla conquista arabo-islamica della Sicilia, iniziata con la presa di Mazara del Vallo nell'827, la produzione agiografica italo-greca mostra caratteri sostanzialmente diversi rispetto ai testi dei secoli precedenti. Alle *passiones* dei primi martiri e alle biografie, per lo più leggendarie, di vescovi e protovescovi, subentrano, con poche eccezioni, le *Vitae* dei santi monaci, molti dei quali dalla Sicilia raggiungono la Calabria per sfuggire all'invasione islamica. Caratteristica saliente di questi testi è la ricchezza e, in genere, l'esattezza dei dati storici forniti e il quadro realistico che essi offrono della società italo-greca del tempo. La *Vita* di s. Marina di Scanio (BHG 1170), databile genericamente alla prima metà del secolo XII, è l'unica biografia dedicata in questo periodo a una santa monaca. Il testo, diversamente dalla coeva produzione italogreca, si presenta, in un contesto spazio-temporale del tutto indeterminato, quasi come un frutto fuori stagione, costruito su motivi e temi letterari (la follia simulata e il travestimento in abito maschili) che avevano avuto ampio sviluppo nei secoli precedenti, ma che vengono inseriti nella narrazione in forme estremamente semplificate (in particolare il motivo della *holy foolery*, appena accennato). Nella mia comunicazione si presenterà un'analisi di questi motivi, secondo un approccio principalmente narratologico.

**Francesca Potenza, Università degli Studi di Palermo**

**L'inedita *inventio* delle reliquie dei santi anacoreti Nicandro e compagni (BHG 1329) e il monastero messinese di S. Nicandro**

The unedited *inventio* of the relics of St. Nicander the Anchorite and his companions (BHG 1329) is attested by the famous *Menologium* of Daniel, σκευοφύλαξ of the monastery of St. Saviour of Messina. As is known, this *Menologium*, dated 1307, is divided into two manuscripts preserved in Messina: *Messan. gr. 30* and *Messan. gr. 29*. The *inventio* BHG 1329 is transmitted by *Messan. gr. 30* (ff. 54v-58r), from which some copies and Latin translations were made between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. My paper will present the text of the *inventio* and its manuscript tradition, as well as other hagiographic sources of St. Nicander. Then, it will suggest that the writing of the *inventio* is probably connected to the monastery of St. Nicander, situated in the northern part of the city of Messina and among the Greek monasteries subject to the monastery of St. Saviour of Messina during the Norman age.

**Giulia Rossetto, University of Vienna**

**Palestino-Sinaitic echoes in the "itinerant library" of Nilus the Younger and his disciples**

In the manuscripts copied and owned by Nilus the Younger and his followers are texts with a clear connection to the Sinaitic-Palestinian area, including works of John Klimax, Anastasius of Sinai, and Dorotheus of Gaza. How popular was Palestino-Sinaitic literature in 10th-11th century Southern Italy in comparison to texts originating from other places? How did it spread? What do we know about contact and exchange between Nilian monks and those living in Sinai and Palestine? This paper aims to answer these questions by taking into account, among other sources, the extant manuscripts traceable to the "Nilian school", with a special focus on those which ended up at Sinai, in the Monastery of Saint Catherine.

**Daniele Bianconi, Università di Roma 'La Sapienza'**

**A classical motif in the *Vita Nili***

The paper will focus on Saint Neilos the Younger's entry into monastic life and, in particular, on a prodigious event that marks its beginning: on his way from Rossano to Mercourion, Neilos is miraculously recovered from an illness that was assailing him by crossing the waters of a river, probably the Krathis. The motif is traced in other Lives of Saints and possible antecedents and references in classical literature are detected.

**Aglæ Pizzone, University of Southern Denmark**

**Elusive readership: Hermogenes in Middle Byzantine Italy**

While one of the major middle Byzantine commentators of Hermogenes, John Sikeliotēs, was possibly of Italian origin, direct evidence on circulation and readership of the handbook in Southern Italy at the time is fragmentary and elusive. This contribution aims to review the manuscript and textual material at hand to trace engagements with the *Corpus* in the Byzantine-occupied parts of the peninsula. The paper also tries to provide new insights in the debated question regarding the authorship of the commentary preserved by the manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, suppl. gr. 670 and ascribed to Nilus, offering fresh evidence on his later readership along the way.

**Stephanos Efthymiadis, Open University of Cyprus**

**The siege and fall of Syracuse (877-878) and their echoes in Byzantine literature**

On 21 May 878, after a siege of nine months, the Eastern Roman empire lost to the Arabs Syracuse, a major and historic Western outpost. The event will be felt as a serious blow for the empire and receive due attention in tenth-century historiography and chronography. It will also find its echo in other kinds of literature of which pride of place must be undoubtedly assigned to the *Letter* of Theodosios, monk and *grammatikos*, who presents himself as an eyewitness to the siege. Moreover, taken as a defeat in a conflict between religions, it will shape the identity of the saintly heroes and intrude into the narrative of the so-called Siculo-Calabrian hagiography, which was to flourish in later decades.

This paper's aim is to survey the texts that refer to or echo the fall of Syracuse also treating them through the lens of 'Trauma Theory' and looking to which extent this can be applied to Byzantine literature at large.

**Filippo Ronconi, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris**

**Maximus the Confessor, his works and southern Italy: westwards from Constantinople or from the Near East? The instructive case of Vat. Gr. 1809**

The paper will reconstruct in detail the genesis of a 10th-11th century manuscript from southern Italy (the Vat. gr. 1809) that is the fundamental witness and sometimes the *codex unicus* of some texts by Maximus the Confessor, of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* and of the *Life of Patriarch Nicephorus* by Ignatius the Deacon. Based on this example, we will reflect on the usefulness of such a complex approach to reveal some otherwise unknowable aspects of the transmission of texts in the medieval world. We will also focus on the main stages of the importation of Greek Oriental literary texts into southern Italy between the 7th and 10th centuries.

**Daniel Galadza, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome**

### **Holy Week and hymnography between the liturgy of the Holy City and South Italy**

The liturgical tradition of Jerusalem influenced the practices of Holy Week throughout Christendom and the liturgical poetry of hymnographers active at the Church of the Anastasis in Jerusalem and in Palestine spread throughout the Byzantine realm. These prayers, rubrics, lections, and hymns have been preserved in codex Jerusalem Hagios Stavros gr. 43 (ad 1122), also called the “Typikon of the Anastasis,” one of the best-known witnesses of many of these unique hymns. However, some of their earliest extant witnesses are found not in Jerusalem but in manuscripts copied in South Italy, most notably the eleventh-century Tropologion Vatican gr. 771, raising questions of provenance, diffusion, and performance. This paper examines the liturgical elements common to the Jerusalem and South Italian manuscripts, attempting to address the following questions: What motivated the choice of the diverse repertory of hymns for Holy Week in the South Italian and Jerusalem manuscripts? What were the unique characteristics of Holy Week in South Italy? Can criteria established here assist in identifying a South Italian provenance of other liturgical manuscripts of unknown origin?

**Marina Loukaki, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**

### **Nikolaos Hagiothéodoritès en Sicile**

Nikolaos Hagiothéodoritès, issu d’une éminente famille byzantine des juristes et des fonctionnaires civils à la cour des Comnènes du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, mourut à Athènes en 1175. Il était métropolitain de la ville ; la date exacte de sa mort est attestée par une inscription sur l’une des colonnes du Parthénon. Ses amis, le métropolitain de Thessalonique Eustathe et le métropolitain de Neai Patrai Euthymios Malakès, à leurs éloges funèbres pour le défunt mentionnent et soulignent les missions d’ambassadeur de Nikolaos en tant que représentant de Manuel I<sup>er</sup> en Italie et plus particulièrement en Sicile. D’après leurs dires, il ressort clairement que Nikolaos Hagiothéodoritès a eu, en Sicile, des discussions à contenu théologique, et plus précisément à propos de l’interprétation de certains passages de l’Écriture. Notamment, Nikolaos Hagiothéodoritès fut *didascale œcuménique* du patriarcat de Constantinople et *maïstor des rhéteurs*, il était c’est-à-dire le responsable officiel pour l’exégèse théologique de l’Évangile au patriarcat de Constantinople et celui qui exprimait et diffusait officiellement la politique et l’idéologie de l’empereur byzantin. Nous pensons que Nikolaos Hagiothéodoritès avait d’une part prêché à un public probablement hellénophone en Sicile et, de l’autre part, qu’il avait participé à un dialogue sur la question de l’interprétation de la phrase évangélique « Pater major me est », une dispute christologique qui avait ses racines en Occident.

**Andreas Rhoby, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna**

### **Inscribing Greek poetry in Norman Italy: Texts and contexts**

The persistence of Greek culture following the loss of Byzantine Italy is well-documented. Particularly, at the court of the Norman king Roger II, Greek-Byzantine culture flourished. This is substantiated by the production of a significant number of Greek inscriptions. While some of these inscriptions are bilingual or multilingual, displaying the linguistic and cultural diversity of Sicily and southern Italy, a substantial portion of them, especially donor inscriptions, are composed in verse. The structure of these inscribed poems closely adheres to the Byzantine model, and the authors can often be identified.

During the lecture, we will analyze and provide context for examples of these metrical inscriptions. Additionally, we will explore the extent to which these inscriptions served the political propaganda of the Norman royal court.

**Nikos Zagklas, University of Vienna**

**From Anonymous Malta to Eugenios of Palermo: Constantinopolitan and regional characteristics in Sicilian poetry**

During the Norman and Hohenstaufen rule, Sicily experienced a multi-cultural flourishing, with the production of texts in four languages: Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. During the same time, the composition of poetry in Greek becomes very common. Three poets (the so-called Anonymous Malta, Leo the Grammarian, and Eugenios of Palermo) are considered the leading agents of this poetic blossoming. Their works exhibit many peculiar characteristics, but at the same time they have similarities with works produced in Constantinople. The first part will explore the Constantinopolitan influence on these works. It will also address the question whether the sudden rise of Greek poetry in Sicily is linked to Constantinopolitan developments. The second part will focus on the work by Leo the Grammarian to show how its prosimetric construction has some similarities with schedographic material produced in Constantinople and Sicily.