



INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

ΔΙΕΘΝΕΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΟ ΕΡΓΑΣΤΗΡΙΟ

**Storyworlds in Collections:
Toward a Theory of the Ancient
and Byzantine Tale**
(2nd – 7th Century CE)

Τύποι Αφηγήσεων σε Συλλογές
Προς μια Θεωρία της Αρχαίας και
Βυζαντινής Σύντομης Διήγησης
(2ος – 7ος αι. μ.Χ.)

**Friday 4 & Saturday 5
December 2020**

**Παρασκευή 4 & Σάββατο 5
Δεκεμβρίου 2020**

**Department of Byzantine and
Modern Greek Studies
University of Cyprus**

Τμήμα Βυζαντινών και
Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών
Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου

**Old Campus, Kallipoleos 75, Nicosia
Room A106**

Κεντρικά Κτήρια, Καλλιπόλεως 75, Λευκωσία
Αίθουσα A106

Online Presentations via ZOOM

Διαδικτυακές Παρουσιάσεις μέσω ZOOM

PROGRAMME / ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ

FRIDAY, 4 December | ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ, 4 Δεκεμβρίου

10.15-10.30

WELCOME AND SHORT INTRODUCTION / ΚΑΛΩΣΟΡΙΣΜΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΣΑΓΩΓΗ

Stavroula Constantinou / Σταυρούλα Κωνσταντινίου

TALE POETICS / Η ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΣΥΝΤΟΜΗΣ ΑΦΗΓΗΣΗΣ

10.30-11.00

Telling a Thaumata in Greek Hagiography and Paradoxography

Christian Høgel

11.00-11.30 Discussion / Συζήτηση

11.30-12.00 Coffee Break / Διάλειμμα για Καφέ

12.00-12.30

'La vertigine della lista': Comparing the Poetics of Ancient Paradoxographical and Miracle Collections

Julia Doroszevska

12.30-13.00 Discussion / Συζήτηση

13.00-14.30 Lunch Break / Μεσημεριανό

TALE VOICES AND HEROES / ΦΩΝΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΡΩΕΣ ΤΩΝ ΣΥΝΤΟΜΩΝ ΑΦΗΓΗΣΕΩΝ

14.30-15.00

The Voice of the Tale: The Storyteller in Miracle Collections and Collections of Edifying Tales

Stavroula Constantinou and Andria Andreou

14.30-15.00 Discussion / Συζήτηση

15.30-16.00 Coffee Break / Διάλειμμα για Καφέ

16.00-16.30

Encounters Between Monks and Demons in Edifying Tales

Christina Hatjiafxenti / Χριστίνα Χατζηναυξέντη

16.30-17.00 Discussion / Συζήτηση

20.00 Dinner / Δείπνο

SATURDAY, 5 December | ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟ, 5 Δεκεμβρίου

**TALES AND LONGER NARRATIVES /
ΣΥΝΤΟΜΕΣ ΔΙΗΓΗΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΥΤΕΡΕΣ ΑΦΗΓΗΣΕΙΣ**

10.00-10.30

"To Render Unbelievable Tales Believable": Paradoxographical Features in the Storyworlds of Novels and Miracle Tales

Ingela Nilsson

10.30-11.00 Discussion / Συζήτηση

11.00-11.30 Coffee Break / Διάλειμμα για Καφέ

11.30-12.00

The Beneficial Tales of Sozomenos' Ecclesiastical History

Marina Detoraki / Μαρίνα Δετοράκη

12.00-12.30 Discussion / Συζήτηση

12.30-14.30 Lunch Break / Διάλειμμα για Μεσημεριανό

PHYSICAL AND METAPHYSICAL WORLDS / ΦΥΣΙΚΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΑΦΥΣΙΚΟΙ ΚΟΣΜΟΙ

14.30-15.00

Space in Edifying Stories: The Case of Anastasios Sinaites

Markéta Kulhánková

15.00-15.30 Discussion / Συζήτηση

15.30-16.00

At the Origins of the Byzantine Narratives of the Other World

Luigi Silvano

16.00-16.30 Discussion / Συζήτηση

16.30-17.00 Coffee Break / Διάλειμμα για Καφέ

17.00-17.30

How to Talk About God: The Use of Sensual Materials in Rendering the Dissimilar Divine

Manolis Patedakis / Μανόλης Πατεδάκης

17.30-18.00 Discussion / Συζήτηση

18.00-18.30 Round Table Discussion / Συζήτηση Στρογγ. Τραπέζης

20.00 Dinner / Δείπνο

Online Presentations via ZOOM
Διαδικτυακές Παρουσιάσεις μέσω ZOOM

For registration, please, click here:
Για εγγραφή στο συνέδριο, μπορείτε να πατήσετε εδώ:

<https://ucy.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYsce2rqT4pGdQ59gj5-P1BsRVVxKT1A6YQ>

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Storyworlds in Collections Toward a Theory of the Ancient and Byzantine Tale (2nd – 7th c. CE)



ABSTRACTS

This workshop is organized in the framework of a two-year research project (2019-2021) entitled “Storyworlds in Collections: Toward a Theory of the Ancient and Byzantine Tale (2nd – 7th c. CE)”, which is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Republic of Cyprus through the Research and Innovation Foundation. The Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Cyprus has also supported the workshop’s organization.

Το επιστημονικό αυτό εργαστήριο έχει διοργανωθεί στο πλαίσιο ενός διετούς ερευνητικού προγράμματος με τον τίτλο «Τύποι Αφηγήσεων σε Συλλογές: Προς μια Θεωρία της Αρχαίας και Βυζαντινής Σύντομης Δίηγησης (2ος – 7ος αι. μ.Χ.)», το οποίο συγχρηματοδοτείται από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης και την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία μέσω του Ιδρύματος Έρευνας και Καινοτομίας. Επίσης, αυτή η επιστημονική διοργάνωση έχει υποστηριχθεί από το Τμήμα Βυζαντινών και Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών του Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου

Stavroula Constantinou and Andria Andreou

The Voice of the Tale: The Storyteller in Miracle Collections and Collections of Edifying Tales

While extended Byzantine narrative forms, such as the novel and the saint's life, have attracted the attention of Byzantinists, short narrative forms, such as the miracle story and the edifying tale, have been largely unexplored despite their popularity in Byzantium. The present paper constitutes a first attempt to tackle and understand the voice of the tale, the storyteller, and his characteristics, as depicted in two types of tale collections: the miracle collection and the collection of edifying tales. Our analysis is based on texts that were composed between the 5th and the 7th centuries.

Our approach to the storyteller appearing in the examined collections draws significantly on Monica Fuldernik's work on conversational storytelling, as brought forth in her famous book *Towards a Natural Narratology* (1996), as well as on Walter Benjamin's discussion of the storyteller, as developed in his "Der Erzähler: Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows" (1936/37). Through our analysis, we aim at achieving a double purpose: first to revise the impression that the storyteller in question is a catholic and canonical force having repeated characteristics in every tale, and second to suggest that the storyteller is an inherent feature of short hagiographical narratives.

Marina Detoraki

The Beneficial Tales of Sozomenos' Ecclesiastical History

This paper aims at exploring the presence and function of beneficial tales in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Sozomenos (5th c.). More specifically, I investigate through a systematic cataloguing the number of tales appearing in the examined text, their thematical classification, their function as historiographic arguments, and their relation to extended monastic Lives (e.g. *the Life of Saint Spyridon*), as well as to collections of beneficial tales (e.g. *the Lausiac History*). The attempted analysis allows to reconsider the genre of Sozomenos' work as a history of oriental monasticism, but also to find parallels with the didactic character of Byzantine Chronography. The paper's purposes are achieved through its twofold structure consisting of (a) a short presentation of the above-mentioned points, and (b) a close analysis of two representative tales in which these points are exemplified.

Julia Doroszewska**La Vertigine della lista: Comparing the Poetics of Ancient Paradoxographical and Miracle Collections**

In his seminal essay *Vertigine della lista* (2009), Umberto Eco reflects on the idea of making catalogues which he finds a revealing feature of the Western thought from Homer onward. In his view, a culture prefers complete, stable forms when it is sure of its own identity, but when the latter begins to break down into a variety of ill-defined phenomena, it starts making lists. This strategy has been labeled by scholars the “topos of unspeakable” which is an expression of a certain helplessness before the infinity and inconceivableness of the universe.

In this paper, I would like to examine the “pagan” and Christian miracle collections through the lens of the phenomenon called by Eco the “dizziness of lists.” The rationale behind juxtaposing these two types of collections lies in the notion of the “miracle” (*thauma*, *thumasioi*, *thumastos*) which links them. I will problematize the idea of the “collection” itself by focusing on the principles which underlie it: the criteria of selection and organization of the material, as well as the motivations, strategies, and aims of presenting the miraculous “facts” as lists and catalogues. I will also tackle the issue of what is left out of the list and why.

Furthermore, I will argue that each of these two types of collections technically constitutes a list of lists made up by the embedded details which reveal the name, origin, status, and profession of the miracle recipients and witnesses, and provide catalogues of illnesses and deformations, or of guilts and sins. In both cases, finally, we are confronted with a listing of supernatural manifestations and interventions in the world. In sum, I am going to offer an insight into the rhetoric of enumeration and poetics of “et cetera” represented by both traditions.

Christina Hadjiafxenti**Encounters Between Monks and Demons in Edifying Tales (4th-7th c.)**

This paper attempts to investigate the narrative structure of tales in which monks, especially abbots, are confronted with demons as part of their spiritual battles. I will particularly concentrate on tales from the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (4th c.), the *Lausiac History* (5th c.) and the *Spiritual Meadow*, (7th c.). Through a comparative analysis of these works, similarities and differences as regards the role of demons in terms of narrative structure will be unravelled.

More specifically, I will first analyse the different personas into which the demons are transformed in order to deceive monks and prevent them from successfully completing their spiritual advancement. Within this framework, demons are either presented as comic performers, or as monstrous creatures, or physical disastrous phenomena. The satirical and/or catastrophic effort of the demons to peeve the monks will be discussed in detail in order to show the ways in which demonic presence ultimately influences the development of the stories' plots. Another prevalent expression of the demonic in the corpus in question concerns cases in which sins and passions are described as demons (e.g. the demon of prostitution and the demon of lust). The narrative significance of these personified depictions of passions will also be considered. Furthermore, I will examine the various forms that the confrontation between monks and demons takes and its effects on the first who undergo a transformation.

Christian Høgel

Telling a Thaumata in Greek Hagiography and Paradoxography

Hagiography and paradoxography present miracles and wonders – both *thaumata* in late classical Greek and later –, and readers and listeners would have recognized these through their being a violation of the rules of nature, or at least a transgression of nature as one would know it. Hagiography and paradoxography had different notional frames – with hagiography insisting on a transcendent power, which is normally not accounted for in paradoxography. They would, however, share certain thematic features, not least in hagiographical travel accounts taking the saint into e.g. the “deep desert”, just as a number of narrative features would recur in both: the way readers are prepared, how the accountability of the authorial voice is assured, and – not least – the brevity of the transition phase from nature to beyond-nature.

Markéta Kuhlankova

Space in Edifying Stories: The Case of Anastasios Sinaites

The edifying story, a minor but prolific hagiographic genre, is one of the most concise Byzantine narrative forms. Given its brevity, there is usually not much room left for descriptions of the scenery and places in the stories. Still, the construction and perception of space often plays a more important role in this genre than in saints’ Lives, because edifying stories, similarly with novels and unlike saints’ Lives, focus on a relatively limited time span, but often extend the narration in space. The aim of this is to examine the notion and function of space in edifying stories taking as a case study the work of Anastasios Sinaites.

I will analyse a number of edifying tales by focusing on three concepts relevant to the cultural reality of the genre: first, the binary opposition of the profane and the sacred space, strongly present in the monastic literature from the very beginning, but developing in an interesting way in its presentation and function; second, the concept of liminality, first described by Arnold van Gennep as the state and process of transition from one phase of a transitional ritual and further developed, with a special focus on Christianity and third, pilgrimage, as developed by Victor and Edith Turner, who also focused on the specifics of sharing a liminoid experience by a group of people (*communitas*); and finally, Michel Foucault’s concept of *heterotopias*. My analysis will achieve a double purpose: to demonstrate how these three concepts are carried out in Anastasios’ stories, and to argue that space, or rather the different representations of it, function as one of the strongest organizational elements of Anastasios’ work.

Ingela Nilsson***“To Render Unbelievable Tales Believable”: Paradoxographical Features in the Storyworlds of Novels and Miracle Tales***

In the present paper, I would like to investigate the storyworlds of (ancient) paradoxography and their inclusion in (late antique) novels and miracle tales. As far as I know, paradoxographical material has not been investigated from any narratological perspective, probably because the form is fragmentary and often survives in excerpts. But collections such as “Περὶ Ἀπίστων” of Heraclitus the Paradoxographer offer interesting examples of subverted storyworlds by explaining the “reality” of ancient myths: Circe, for instance, was not a witch who used potions to enchant her victims, but a prostitute who controlled men through their lust (Heraclitus 16). This is not only a means of euhemerizing the myth, but also a complete change of the story world (in David Herman’s sense of mental model) in which the character is placed: Heraclitus makes “unbelievable tales believable”, as Eustathios of Thessalonike notes (1504.55 Stallbaum) by turning fiction into history. Other and more well-known kinds of paradoxography focus on inexplicable phenomena appearing in nature, such as strange qualities of stones or plants, or the wonders of different places and peoples; such material appeared in various authors and genres from Herodotus to Pliny the Elder, collected by others such as Phlegon of Tralles and Alexander of Aphrodisias.

The narrative potential of both myths and paradoxography was fully explored by Lucian in his True Stories and by the authors of the Greek novels, but the emplotment of what is “unbelievable” also plays an important role in miracle tales – inexplicable events such as the resistance to fire or water appears in both novels and miracle stories as indications of the innocence or holiness of certain characters. What interests me here is the effect that such paradoxographical elements have on the storyworlds in which the characters are placed: what effect is achieved in the novel vs the miracle tale and how do these effects relate to each other?

Manolis Patedakis***How to Talk About God: The Use of Sensual Materials in Rendering the Dissimilar Divine***

In the early Byzantine period, Christian terminology contained – among others – a range of directions on how to describe and actualize God and the divine sphere by using material means. In this paper, through a selection of passages from authors, such as Dionysios the Areopagite, John of Climax, and Maximos the Confessor, the immaterial reality of God will be examined, aiming to detect certain terms and techniques of the representation of the divine that were formulated between the 5th and the 7th centuries.

In particular, the representation/actualization (“ἀνάπλασις”) of the intelligible (“νοητά”) through forms and symbols from the sensual (“αἰσθητά”), the likeness with the divine through dissimilar similarities (“ἀνομοίους ὁμοιότητας”), the exposure of human situations, such as love, fear, and emulous desire, as images (“εἰκόνας”) resembling God, and the use of examples (“παραδείγματα”) from the natural and real world in order to narrate celestial things, were all articulated as elements of a theory under development and were applied in the narrations of contemporary Christian and later Byzantine authors.

Luigi Silvano

At the Origins of the Byzantine Narratives of the Other World

Around the tenth century a more or less coherent idea of the Christian afterlife emerges from a series of narratives such as the “moral apocalypses” of the Theotokos and Anastasia, the vision of Cosmas and those embedded in the Lives of saints (e.g. *the Life of Basil the Younger*), to name just a few of the most famous examples. Indeed, the depictions of Hell and Heaven and the conceptions on the fate of souls that are to be found in these texts are rooted in a more ancient tradition of folklore and tales that can be traced back into Late Antiquity. In the collections of edifying tales and of the sayings and deeds of the Desert Fathers, in particular, one can find the archetypes of several motifs that will become part of the later Byzantine imagery of the other world. My paper will try to map the presence of such elements in edifying tales and *Apophthegmata Patrum*, to highlight connections between the various stories, and between this tale tradition and the later tour-of-hell literature.

