CALL FOR PAPERS

Telling stories in Byzantium

AN EXPERIMENTAL WORKSHOP ON BYZANTINE NARRATION AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN NARRATOLOGY
HOSTED BY UPPSALA UNIVERSITY, 26–28 NOVEMBER 2015
SUBMIT TITLE AND ABSTRACT TO INGELA NILSSON@LINGFIL.UU.SE BEFORE JUNE 1
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“Man is fond of fables, and in all stations of life takes pleasure in narratives”. This declaration, quoted from the scholia on Dionysius Thrax’s *Technē grammatikē*, appeals to the notion of storytelling as an anthropological universal in order to give grounds for the preoccupation of Byzantine secular education with poetic fictions and rhetorical fables. Mastering the art of delivering tales, true or false, was recognized as an advantageous skill in all spheres of human life and society, not least for actors in performative and textual culture. The surviving corpus of Byzantine oratory, progymnasmata, hagiography, historiography, novels, liturgy, dialogues and other less easily classifiable texts abound in inventive and complex applications of the art of storytelling. Since several decades, modern Byzantine studies have often turned to classical narratology for heuristic tools or rigorous methodologies to study the logic and principles of narrative representation in these texts. In recent years, however, this curiosity appears to have declined, or at least remained unconnected to the advancement of the state of the art of narratology since the 1970s and 80s. What (if anything) can scholars studying Byzantine narrative gain from engaging with present-day discussions within the diversified field of post-classical narratology on topics such as media studies and narratology, gender and narratology, cognitive approaches to narration, unreliable narration or “unnatural narratology”?

The aim of this workshop is to accommodate open-minded discussions and experimental studies of narrative representations from all periods of Byzantine literary history. Contributors are strongly encouraged to test unfamiliar methodologies and to theorize their practice. It is the first of three annual events hosted by Uppsala University within the collaborative research network “Texte et récit à Byzance”, in cooperation with Monde byzantin (UMR 8167 Orient et Méditerranée) and Centre d’Études Byzantines, Néo-Helléniques et Sud-Est Européennes, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

The deadline for abstract submission is Monday, 1 June 2015. If you would like to propose a contribution, please send the title and a short abstract (not more than 250 words) to Ingela.Nilsson@lingfil.uu.se.

CONFIRMED GUESTS
Charis Messis (École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris)
Margaret Mullett (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington)
Aglae Pizzone (Centre for Medieval Literature, Syddansk Universitet, Odense)