

CONVENER:

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PRE-REGISTRATION is mandatory for the online event.
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Organised in the framework of the project 'Spaces that Matter: Enclosed and Secluded Places in Early and Middle Byzantine Hagiography', funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF no. P34478-C)

FWF Österreichischer
Wissenschaftsfonds

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Image: Imprisonment of the martyrs Eudoxios, Romylos, Zenon, and Makarios
©British Library Board, Cod. Add. 11870, f. 67r, 11th Century (Metaphrastic Menologion). Image from: C. Papavarnavas, *Gefängnis als Schwellenraum in der byzantinischen Hagiographie* (Berlin/Boston, 2021), p. V.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

SPACES MAKE SAINTS

EXPERIENCING CONFINEMENT IN BYZANTINE HAGIOGRAPHY

ABSTRACTS

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KEYNOTE LECTURE

BRYAN WARD-PERKINS

University of Oxford

Resting in Their Graves: Sainly Behaviour in East and West Compared

The 'Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity' project that I ran in 2014-18 had a different focus from the current 'Spaces that Matter' project in Vienna. While the focus of the latter is on the lifetime experience of saints in their hagiography, we were primarily concerned with already-established saints resting in their graves, and the two-way relationship they then had with their devotees. But the behaviour of our saints, however well established, also had a strong spatial element to it, in particular a marked contrast between the Greek East and the Latin West in the extent to which they were seen outside their graves, active in the world.

It has long been recognised that this difference can primarily be attributed to the prevalence of incubation at saintly shrines in the East Mediterranean, and its absence in the West, but the full extent of this difference, and its wider implications, has not received the attention it deserves.

My lecture will explore the different behaviour from their graves of eastern and western saints, not only inside their churches but also more widely in the world.

SESSION 1: SPATIAL THEORY AND MONASTIC CONFINEMENT IN CONTEXT

MYRTO VEIKOU

University of Patras/Uppsala University

Enclosed Private Spaces in Byzantine Hagiographical Texts: A Geocritical Approach

The paper will consider literary spaces narrated as enclosed in two eleventh-century hagiographical texts that belong to the literary genre of saints' Lives. The first text is the *Life of St Lazaros from Mount Galesion* written by Gregory the Cellarer (Γρηγορίου του κελλαρίτη Βίος Λαζάρου του ἐν τῷ Γαλησίῳ) edited by Hippolyte Delehaye in 1910 (BHG 979). The second text is the *Life of St Symeon the New Theologian* written by Niketas Stethatos (Νικήτα Στηθάτου Βίος Ἀγίου Συμεῶν τοῦ Νέου Θεολόγου) edited by Symeon Koutsas in 2005. These spaces are private monastic spaces, ranging from different kinds of cells to mountain caves, and they are represented as enclosed in a variety of ways. Control of enclosed, private spaces offers an ascetic the ability to selectively communicate with others and protection from their intrusion. It allows an ascetic to establish a 'private sphere' through regulating the balance between concealment and exposure, between access to oneself and communication with others. Enclosure will be taken as the central attribute of the literary spaces in question, and it will be scrutinized on the basis of geographical and literary theory. Different alternatives for the purpose of enclosure and its possible meanings in the texts will be explored, taking into account the respective literary and narrative contexts.

CHRISTODOULOS PAPAVERNAYAS

Austrian Academy of Sciences

The Other Space of Enclosed Saints: Double Confinement in Byzantine Monastic Hagiography

Although ascetic practice and holiness seem to be interwoven with the notions of isolation and spatial confinement (ἐγκλεισμός), a systematic analysis of the nexus between enclosed space and sainthood in Byzantine monastic hagiography is still lacking. The goal of this paper is to examine crucial aspects of this thorny question by focusing on monastics, both male and female, who, at some stage of their spiritual journey, find themselves confined both within a monastic complex and within a smaller, narrower space, such as a cell or cave. In this sense, such recluses, all protagonists of hagiographical narratives, experience a kind of 'double confinement'.

In order to analyse the relationship between these 'other', small, narrow, and often dark spaces of the enclosed protagonists and the monastic society surrounding them, I will draw on the Foucauldian concept of 'heterotopia' (i.e., a space of otherness). As I will argue, these places acquire the status of being heterotopias as they constitute realms within, but, at the same time, distinct from the larger monastic society. Specifically, these narrowly confined spaces and their inhabitants, the enclosed holy men and women, reflect religious functions and principles of the monastic world in which they are embedded but in an extreme fashion: in some cases, they seem to invert the reality experienced by the monks or nuns living outside these narrow spatial confines.

Cases of male and female double confinement will be discussed based on examples of recluses from early and middle Byzantine hagiographical texts: an ascetic and his cave, a monk and the metaphor of his tied body, a nun and her hut, and a repentant prostitute and her cell. Overall, the present study aspires to infer the significance of ascetic double confinement in religious-literary contexts as described in the monastic hagiography of Byzantium.

SESSION 2: HIGH-RANKING ECCLESIASTICS IN ENCLOSED SPACES

CLAUDIA RAPP

University of Vienna/Austrian Academy of Sciences

Bishops on the Move: Spatial Aspects

The social and administrative position of bishops entailed mobility on different scales. They moved across long distances to attend synods and church councils, or travelled to faraway places as emissaries of their cities, regions or even of the emperor. Their appointment to a higher level in the ecclesiastical hierarchy usually necessitated a change of location, as did those not infrequent cases when they were forced to go into exile.

This paper will be concerned with the small-scale events that were part of these larger movements, based on select Byzantine hagiographical texts up to the seventh century. Particular emphasis will be placed on bishops moving in confined spaces, while travelling on board of ships, or in enclosed buildings at their destination

(churches, residences, palaces). How does the different spatial setting affect their self-representation? In what way does unfamiliar and reduced space define their ability to assert themselves in their role as bishops?

The answers to these questions will add further insights into the representation of episcopal power in Byzantine hagiography from a spatial perspective.

STEPHANOS EFTHYMIADIS

Open University of Cyprus

(En)closed vs. Open Space in the Hagiography of Sainly Patriarchs of Constantinople (Eighth-Tenth Centuries)

The *Synaxarion of Constantinople* celebrates a number of Constantinopolitan patriarchs as spokesmen for orthodoxy, focusing on their involvement in the controversies that rocked the Church in the period from the eighth to the tenth century. A work of hagiography (a *Life* or an *Enkomion*) was written in honour of most of them, often in sophisticated prose. In accordance with the motive behind the composition of these texts, i.e., to enhance the prestige of the Church in relation to imperial authority, the narrative focuses on the patriarch's audiences with the emperor and episodes of conflict with other prelates. Contrary to the prevailing image in late antique hagiography of ecclesiastics preaching and wonderworking in public spaces, these later *Lives* and *Enkomia* of saintly patriarchs are mostly set in enclosed spaces and the private domain. This paper will touch upon the literary aspects of this development and will comment on the cultural and historical factors that contributed to this shift in perspective.

SESSION 3: ASPECTS OF ENCLOSURE IN BYZANTINE ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

NANCY PATTERSON ŠEVČENKO

Vermont, USA

In the Dark Enclosures: Some Byzantine Images of Confinement

In Byzantine works of art there is no shortage of images of dark enclosed spaces: various Biblical events are associated with caves, martyrs and political opponents are consigned to prisons, monks fall off the Heavenly Ladder into pits, and holy men are shown inhabiting caves out in a rocky landscape. There is an alarming image in some Psalter manuscripts of a pleasant enough landscape that in fact conceals a dark hole in the surface of the earth into which the unwary may plunge.

In this paper, following some of the themes introduced by Christodoulos Papavarnavas in his book on prisons as liminal spaces in hagiography, I will concentrate on painted images of prisons, pits, and caves with special regard to their physical characteristics, their ambiguity of meaning, voluntary versus involuntary confinement, and the concept of ultimate escape. I will pay particular attention to the manuscript illuminations that accompany Chapter V of the *Heavenly Ladder* of John Climacus wherein John recounts his visit to the foul Prison for the ἅγιοι κατάδικοι, the 'holy criminals', and to the closely related, but fundamentally different, illustrations to the so-called Penitential

Canon that is based upon this very Chapter. These enclosed spaces inevitably bring with them the idea of confinement's opposite, namely release and freedom, however defined. It is only in the very darkest places in Hell that escape is shown as truly impossible and can no longer be even contemplated.

GALINA FINGAROVA

University of Vienna

Bridging Spaces: Experiences and Interpretations of Bridge Spaces in Byzantium

The bridge is a man-made structure whose main purpose is to provide safe passage over natural obstacles, especially rivers. It appears as an ingenious architectural construction creating new spaces between two riverbanks and above a watercourse that are experienced and interpreted in multiple ways. Firstly, there is the space above the bridge: not only does it provide a safe and convenient crossing and access to new areas, but it is also a platform that rises high above its supports, offering a unique triumphal view over the waterscape and implying proximity to heaven. Secondly, there are also the ends of the bridge – the entrance and the exit – which are associated with the sense of approach and departure, entry and exit, security and defence, and are often supplied with buildings of relevant functions. Finally, there is the space beneath the bridge: the uncanny underside which encompasses and encloses the sometimes unruly flow of water. It is the place of secrets, dangers and damp smell which constructs an underworld, both in a literal and a metaphorical sense.

In fact, these experiences and interpretations of bridge spaces are archetypal and ahistorical, but they shift and change from one historical culture to another in close relation to the worldview of their builders and users. The present paper will begin with a discussion of open versus enclosed spaces formed by or built on preserved Byzantine bridges. It will then examine the evidence found in Byzantine written and visual sources that associate ambiguous spaces with protagonists and opposing worlds – demonic creatures and saints, heaven and hell. In sum, the investigation will juxtapose real and symbolic, open and enclosed, sacred and devilish spaces in order to gain deeper insights into the Byzantines' perception of bridge spaces and their traversal.

ELIZABETH ZANGHI

Sorbonne University

The Enclosed Saint and His Column: A New Archaeological Approach to Stylitism in Cappadocia

Stylite saints are alluring. To our modern eyes, theirs was one of the most romantic, or perhaps peculiar, varieties of asceticism. Luckily, many hagiographical texts and iconographic representations of stylites have allowed us to study the lives of some of the most famous stylite saints – the two Symeons, Daniel, Alypius, etc. However, stylitism was widely practised throughout the Mediterranean world, and in addition to the stylite saints celebrated in medieval vitae, lesser-known stylites may offer us a

more rounded understanding of stylite asceticism. To that end, it is important to look at the material evidence for stylites in addition to the textual information.

The archaeological remains of rock-cut stylite columns in Cappadocia and the inscriptions in some of the associated churches provide an opportunity to study otherwise unknown monks who may have lived as stylites. This paper will first reconsider the definition of stylitism by using examples of previously studied stylite dwellings in Cappadocia, and it will then present another possible stylite dwelling in the proximity of the El Nazar Kilise in Göreme. This example allows us to consider the stylite column in relation to its community, as a good number of rock-cut spaces with other functionalities remain in its vicinity, including a church, other monastic cells, and various agricultural facilities. Furthermore, as this paper will demonstrate, the materiality of the stylite space reveals many aspects of the inhabitant's daily life as well as his spiritual progression.

Although Cappadocian cases of stylitism are certainly not standard examples, and the lack of textual sources for identifying stylites in the region complicates matters, they serve as useful case-studies. The surviving archaeological material in Cappadocia, rare in other parts of the empire, allows us to add new evidence for understanding material trends that will be helpful in identifying stylite structures in the future.

SESSION 4: TRANSLATING SPACE IN SAINTS' LIVES

ELISABETH SCHIFFER

Austrian Academy of Sciences

Spatial Descriptions in the Metaphrastic Menologion: The Case of Stylites

As the most important hagiographical collection of the Middle Byzantine period, the *Metaphrastic Menologion* is one of the sources that should definitely be examined when studying the literary representation of space in hagiographical texts. It is particularly valuable when a parallel reading of the Metaphrastic texts and the respective earlier texts on which the Metaphrastic redactions are based is possible.

Among the different types of saints that we encounter in the *Metaphrastic Menologion*, there are a few stylites (Symeon the Stylite the Elder, Daniel the Stylite and Alypius the Stylite, as well as Stephen the Younger who also lived on a pillar for a certain period of his life). Their form of asceticism is highly relevant to the question of the significance of space on their path to holiness. The experience of voluntary confinement in the life of a saint – whether for a short, temporary period or as a permanent condition – offers the author of a hagiographical text the possibility of describing the outer circumstances, the saint's inner world, and the interplay between the two. In the case of *Metaphrastic Lives* of the stylites, we are fortunate that their source texts have also survived and are available in modern editions. This allows us, through a close reading of these texts, to focus on the literary representation of how the saints found their place of retreat. Furthermore, we can also address the question of how the local conditions and needs of a stylite differ from those of other anchorites and how they shape the spiritual path of the saintly protagonist.

CHRISTIAN HØGEL

Lund University

Rewriting Confinement in the Metaphrastic Menologion

As with most middle Byzantine rewritings of hagiography, the rewriting energy behind the *Metaphrastic Menologion* (late 10th century CE) is mainly concerned with style and with what one could call the narrator's engagement with and control over the text. Symeon Metaphrastes, the composer of the *Metaphrastic Menologion*, carefully classicised the style of his source texts, and he made his narrative voice speak in a more involved and responsive manner, expressing surprise and admiration. These changes in style and engagement may easily be ascribed to a wish to bring the diction of the new texts a bit closer to that of *enkormia* (festive homilies). The general thrust of this manner of hagiographical rewriting was clearly to include the saints' Lives and martyria into a world of performative literature, from which at least upper strata of society would expect a classicising style.

But the intensification of the presence of the narrator also connects to another shift in emphasis in the *Metaphrastic Menologion*. In its evaluation of actions of the saints, or, more generally, in its theological reflection on saintly performances, the *Metaphrastic Menologion* introduces a concept of pleasure into various aspects of its stories. Enjoyment is included in several prologues as a probable outcome of reading the Metaphrastic texts, suggesting a kind of aesthetic-religious enjoyment shared by the narrator and the reader/listener. But pleasure is also introduced into various scenes where the saints' asceticism, bodily deprivation, or even torture led to notions or descriptions of pleasure. The aim of this paper is to assess the extent to which scenes of confinement in the Metaphrastic texts bear the hallmarks of this thematic shift.

SESSION 5: NARRATIVES WITH A SPATIAL NUCLEUS

MARKÉTA KULHÁNKOVÁ

Czech Academy of Sciences/Masaryk University

Functions of Space in Two Lives of St. Theophano (BHG 1794 and 1795)

The life of Empress Theophano (ca. 866–896), wife of Emperor Leo VI, is preserved in two hagiographical accounts. The first (BHG 1794) was likely authored by an aristocrat with close ties to Theophano's family and dates to the late ninth or early tenth century. This account transforms the empress' sad life story into an idyllic one, emphasising her devotion to the pious life and extolling her relationship with her husband, despite their tumultuous marital history. The second text (BHG 1795) was written by Nikephoros Gregoras (ca. 1295–1360). This account stands out for its use of metaphorical language (including spatial metaphors), and shows a penchant for elegant expression, including frequent classical allusions and references to ancient mythology.

The aim of my analysis is to examine the different functions of space in these two iterations of the same life story. Through a comparative analysis, I will trace the

changes in the conceptualisation of space, from its primarily functional role as a setting and spatial frame in the earlier *vita* to its more symbolic and multifaceted role in Gregoras' work, including the characterisation of the protagonists. I do not aim to provide a comprehensive comparison between Middle Byzantine and Palaiologan hagiography or to comment on the evolutionary changes in the genre. The main purpose of my paper is to investigate how the nuanced use of spatial representation shapes the overall character of a narrative.

CAROLINA CUPANE

Austrian Academy of Sciences

Natural and Supernatural Spaces: The Dynamics of Spatial Settings in the Beneficial Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph

A very popular tale in the Middle Ages was the story of the Indian prince Joasaph, who converted to Christianity through the advice and instruction of the pious monk Barlaam, abandoned his high social status, and retreated to the desert in order to reach God's realm through ascetism. Modern scholarship often describes this story as a romance and compares it to ancient tales of love and adventure. Quite rightly so, for the bond between prince and teacher is indeed one type of love relationship, although it is deprived of sexual connotations, and the happy ending is not a marriage but a holy death. Yet looking at the story through the generic lens of the romance novel, one immediately notices striking differences, the most conspicuous of which are in the construction and representation of space. These spatial peculiarities have more to do with the genre of hagiography.

Although the action takes place in a precise geographical space (India), with clearly defined boundaries, this geographical space is never described. Neither are its cities, the countryside, and other landscapes. The open space of human activity does not lend itself to an entirely inward looking story whose only adventure is a spiritual one. Accordingly, only enclosed places appear to have a vital function in the narrative. On the one hand, there is the palace where Joasaph must dwell in order to avoid the ugliness and the suffering of the world and where his conversion took place. On the other hand, there is the desert, the mirror image of the palace, where Joasaph successfully completed his path to sanctity. Both are liminal spaces outside the ordinary world and above all play a symbolic role.

In addition to these real, albeit symbolically charged spaces, the Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph opens up to a higher, purely spiritual space that can only be reached by divine grace. The city of God in heaven as well as the place of eternal damnation appear to Joasaph in a vision at critical moments along his journey to sanctity and help him overcome the temptation of carnal love. These invisible places are both made visible through flowery descriptions: indeed, they are the only spaces that are deemed worthy of being 'seen' by readers and listeners and thus become more real than reality itself. Overall, my paper will explore the ways in which mental and concrete spaces interact, highlighting the different narrative functions enclosed (real) spaces were meant to fulfil.

SESSION 6: PRAISING AND PREACHING CONFINEMENT

ANTONIA GIANNOULI

University of Cyprus

The Saints' Experience of Enclosure in Hymnography

This paper examines whether and to what extent the themes of isolation and spatial confinement attested in the *Life* of a saint are also reflected in the hymns dedicated to him or her. The hymns are celebratory rather than narrative in nature, and their purpose was to praise and preach. This paper will trace the ways in which hymnographers explicitly or implicitly referenced these themes and how such allusions contribute to the purpose of the hymns.

MARTIN HINTERBERGER

University of Cyprus

Sanctifying Space in Hagiographical Enkomia of the Middle and Late Byzantine Period

This paper aims to investigate how different authors of hagiographical *enkomia* present sacred space in their texts and what features they consider essential for the holiness they promote. In particular, I will look at the rhetorical means they use to draw their picture and highlight the characteristics of the sacred space they describe. I will also try to identify common features in different works by the same author in order to understand whether a coherent concept of sacred space underlies these representations in different texts.

With this aim in mind, I will examine the *enkomia* of three extremely prolific authors of hagiographical *enkomia*, namely Niketas Paphlagon (10th century), Neophytos Enkleistos (12th/13th century), and Constantine Akropolites (13th/14th century). Furthermore, in the case of Neophytos, I am particularly interested in whether the author emphasises similarities between the sacred spaces surrounding his heroes and his own one, the cave he had prepared for himself in Paphos. At the end of my investigation, I will try to observe the diachronic development of this concept, if such a development can be seen at all, i.e., whether the concept changes considerably over time or remains more or less stable.