

Pilgrimage and Greek Identity in Byzantine and Norman Southern Italy (9th-12th Century)*

Southern Italy, and especially Apulia, is mainly known as the transit point for Western pilgrims journeying to and from the Holy Land. Pilgrims travelled to Rome and followed the road network of Roman times to reach southern Italian ports in order to embark for Palestine. On their way, they usually stopped to venerate two of the most important international pilgrimage shrines in Apulia, that of the archangel Michael at Monte Gargano (from the 8th century onwards) and the basilica of St Nicholas in Bari (from the late 11th century onwards)¹. Apart from these prestigious holy places, many local pilgrimage sites emerged throughout southern Italy to serve the local population in their pursuit of the divine. All these sanctuaries were used as vehicles of religious, cultural and political ideas, as the area was not religiously and demographically homogenous. The modern regions of southern Italy, Apulia, Basilicata (ancient and Byzantine Lucania) and Calabria were under Byzantine (876-1071) and Norman rule (1071-1194) successively. Greeks (Greek-speaking, Byzantine-in-rite), Lombards (Latin-speaking, Latin-in-rite) and, from the 11th century onwards, Normans co-existed². The present study investigates pilgrimage as an expression not only of politics, but also of the religious and cultural identity of the Greek population under Byzantine and Norman rule³.

Greek local pilgrimage sites

The main source for Greek pilgrimage sites in southern Italy is hagiography. A series of *vitae* of Siculo-Calabrian and Calabrian saints, who founded monasteries in Calabria and

in Basilicata from the 9th until the 12th century, are valuable sources for the society and the religious culture. However, the study of such texts presents some drawbacks, since the hagiographers' aim was to establish a new cult through the use of certain *topoi*. These monks, whose sanctity was acknowledged when they were still alive, founded many monasteries and attracted disciples and pilgrims⁴. Although it is a *topos* in all of these Lives that the saint's fame spreads beyond his monastery and many people visit him to be cured or have spiritual guidance⁵, few of these texts give information on pilgrims and pilgrimage itself. The Lives of St Sabas the Younger (died c. 990) and St Elias the Speleot (860/870-c. 960) are the most detailed accounts on pilgrimage from the Byzantine period. St Sabas founded monasteries, today unidentified, at Merkourion (probably in northern Calabria on the borders with Basilicata), at Latinianon and Lagonegro (prov. Potenza) in Basilicata⁶, while St Elias the Speleot founded the monastery of the apostles Peter and Paul in Melicuccà (prov. Reggio Calabria). On the other hand, the Life of St Lukas (c. 1092-1114), Bishop of Isola Capo Rizzuto (prov. Crotone) in Calabria, is the only source on pilgrimage to his now-lost monastery of St Nicholas on Monte Vioterito from the Norman period (fig. 1)⁷.

According to hagiography, healing was by far the most common motive for pilgrimage to a living saint or to a saint's tomb⁸. Pilgrims came from all social strata, including aristocrats⁹, clergy¹⁰, the saints themselves¹¹, and ordinary lay people¹². Women were not allowed to enter the monastery of Melicuccà and they had to find ways, occasionally with assistance from some monks, secretly to visit the cave where

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1 Avril/Gaborit, *Itinerarum* 293-297. – Stopani, *Itinerari*. – Vanni, *Itinerari*. – Oldfield, *Sanctity* 181-190. 200-208.

2 The other regions of southern Italy, Lazio, Abruzzi and Campania are excluded from the current analysis as they did not belong to the Byzantine or former Byzantine territories during the period under study; references are made to Sicily only after the Norman Conquest from the Arabs. For the Byzantine period cf. Gay, *Italie*. – Falkenhausen, *Dominazione*. For the Norman period the bibliography is vast. More recently cf. Loud, *Guiscard*, and the collected essays in Loud/*Metcalfe*, *Norman Italy*, with all the previous bibliography.

3 For the Latin-rite local pilgrimage sites and Latin pilgrims cf. the excellent study of Oldfield, *Sanctity*.

4 For Greek hagiography of southern Italy, its models, and its historical value cf. Hester, *Monasticism* 147-164. – Re, *Hagiography*. – Strano, *Echi storici* and

more recently the detailed analysis by Efthymiadis, *L'hagiographie* 349-354. 366-397.

5 Hester, *Monasticism* 274-314.

6 The exact site of the monastic centre at Mercurion is much debated. Cf. the comments by Follieri, *Vita di Fantino* 61 and more recent Roma, *Mercurion*.

7 See the comments on topography and dating by Schirò, *Vita di S. Luca* 10. 12-13.

8 De S. Leone Luca 101. – De S. Elia Spelaeotae 871-873. 881-883. 884. 886. – Orestes, *Sabae* 152-155. 157-158. 164-165. 315-316. – Orestis, *Vita S. Christophori* 393-395. – *Vita di S. Luca* 116-124. – *Vita di S. Elia di Giovane* 48-50. 60-62. – *Vita di S. Nicodemo* 110. 114. – *Bios Neilou* 273-275.

9 De S. Elia Spelaeote 871. 885. – Orestis, *Christophori* 393. – *Bios Neilou* 273.

10 De S. Elia Spelaeote 871. 881-882. 886. – *Vita di S. Luca* 114. 118. 122.

11 De S. Elia Spelaeote 879. – *Vita di Nicodemo* 118.

12 De S. Leone Luca 101. – De S. Elia Spelaeote 871-872. 882-884. – Orestes, *Sabae* 152-153. 154-155. 157-158. 160-162. 164-165. – *Vita di S. Elia di Giovane* 74.



Fig. 1 Map of South Italy and Sicily with sites mentioned in the text. – (Map M. Ober, RGZM).

Elias' tomb was placed¹³. Onomastics reveals that pilgrims to the Byzantine monasteries were mainly Greeks¹⁴, while non-Greek pilgrims are attested rarely, such as Gaudiosus, judging from his name a Lombard, who visited the tomb of Elias the Speleot in Melicuccà to be cured¹⁵, and Revetos, a Frank i. e. a Norman, who made a pilgrimage to the monastery of St Lukas, Bishop of Isola Capo Rizzuto in Calabria¹⁶.

Pilgrims would walk to reach the monastery¹⁷ or if unable to walk were carried by others¹⁸ or transported on carts¹⁹. These people came from the nearby villages and towns as pilgrimage was confined within the territories of Calabria and Basilicata²⁰. Only a young paralysed man was transported from Taormina (Sicily) to the tomb of St Luke of Isola Capo Rizzuto²¹. Despite the short distances, pilgrimage to these monasteries was not an easy task, because the pilgrim had to traverse the wild, densely forested, mountains of Calabria or Basilicata to reach the monasteries²².

When the pilgrim arrived at his destination he would either meet the living saint or venerate the saint's tomb. When the saint was still alive, the *katholikon* of the monastery was the centre where pilgrims were led to be cured²³. The saint performed the miracle by touching the pilgrim²⁴, by making the sign of the cross²⁵, or by using oil from the lamps²⁶. Upon the saint's death, it was his tomb that was the focal point of pilgrimage. Pilgrims either venerated the tomb and were cured²⁷ or more often, after a long prayer, fell asleep next to the tomb, dreamed of the saint and were cured²⁸. Sometimes, they had to wait many days next to the tomb for the miracle to be performed²⁹. The *vitae* do not mention pilgrims' accommodation and the only reference to houses built to hospice pilgrims (οἴκους ἀνὰ τὴν μονὴν ἐπιτηδείους πρὸς τὴν τῶν ξένων ὑποδοχὴν) is attested in the Patirion Monastery founded by St Bartholomew of Simeri (1050/1060-1130) near Rossano (prov. Cosenza)³⁰.

13 De S. Elia Spelaeotae 881-883.

14 De S. Leone Luca 101. – De S. Elia Spelaeote 871-872. 882-884. 886. – Orestes, Sabae 152. 164. – Vita di S. Luca 122. – Vita di Elia il Giovane 60. 74. – Vita di Nicodemo 116. – Bios Neilou 273.

15 De S. Elia Spelaeote 871.

16 Vita di S. Luca 120.

17 De S. Elia Spelaeote 886. – Orestes, Sabae 48.

18 Vita di Elia il Giovane 60. – Vita di S. Luca 122.

19 Vita di S. Luca 114. 124.

20 De S. Leone Luca 101. – De Philareto 614. – De S. Elia Spelaeote 865. 871. 882. 883. – Orestes, Sabae 152. 154. 157. – Orestis, Christophori 393. – Vita di S. Luca 116. – Vita di Elia il Giovane 60. – Bios Neilou 273.

21 Vita di S. Luca 124.

22 For the geomorphology of the area cf. Noyé, *Économie* 212-213.

23 Orestes, Sabae 153. 155. 157-158. 165. – Vita di Nicodemo 114. – Bios Neilou 273.

24 Orestes, Sabae 157. 316. – Vita di Elia il Giovane 48.

25 De S. Elia Spelaeote 871. – Bios Neilou 275.

26 Orestes, Sabae 153. 155. 158. 165. 316.

27 De S. Elia Spelaeote 871. 882. – Orestis, Christophori 395. – Vita di S. Luca 120. 122.

28 De S. Elia Spelaeote 882. – Vita di S. Luca 118-120. 122.

29 Vita di S. Luca 122. 124.

30 Bios di Bartolomeo da Simeri 220.

Monasteries with a longer tradition of pilgrimage were those of St Elias the Speleot in Melicuccà and of St Elias the Younger (823-903), today unidentified, in Salines (prov. Reggio Calabria). St Nikodemos of Kellarana (c. 950-1020) made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Elias the Speleot, and when pilgrims visited his monastery he used to send some of them to venerate both the tombs in Melicuccà and Salines³¹. In the Norman period, St Lucas, the Bishop of Isola Capo Rizzuto, used to visit the monastery of St Elias the Speleot to preach on his feast day (11 September), when the monastery was crowded with pilgrims, in order to attract a wider audience³².

The local pilgrimage shrines in Calabria and Basilicata share the same characteristics with those of the rest of the Byzantine Empire. They were visited by locals of diverse social status and the practices the monks employed for miracles to be performed (i.e. sleeping next to the saint's tomb or the use of oil from the lamps) coincided with the Byzantine conception of pilgrimage³³.

Byzantines, Lombards, Normans and the Sanctuary of the Archangel Michael at Monte Gargano

In the third decade of the 10th century St Phantinos the Younger (c. 902-974), one of the great ascetics of Byzantine southern Italy, went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of the archangel Michael at Monte Gargano in Northern Apulia (prov. Foggia). Phantinos desired to see the Archangel's glory with his own eyes and he walked for eighteen days from his monastery, today unidentified, at Merkurion to Gargano while fasting from food and water, accompanied by three of his monks³⁴.

The Gargano peninsula was within the Byzantine territory in the theme of Longobardia, but the shrine was a Lombard one. It was founded by Constantinople in the 5th century, under the influence of the famous shrine in Chonai³⁵. When the Lombards conquered southern Italy, they identified in the figure of Michael a great warrior, a strong protector and acknowledged him as their national patron saint and his cave church as their national shrine. The special connection of the Beneventan Lombards with Michael was based on their struggles against the Byzantines for control of the

area. The Lombard conquest of southern Italy was achieved with the Archangel's protection, while in 650 Michael's supposed supernatural intervention in favour of the Lombards led them to a victory against the Byzantines, after the latter had conducted a military campaign against the shrine itself³⁶. Gargano was favoured by its geographical position and was incorporated in the international pilgrim route which connected the two most important Christian pilgrimage destinations, Rome and Jerusalem. From the 7th century onwards, the fame of the Gargano shrine surpassed the boundaries of Apulia and from the 8th century on not only did it become one of the most important pilgrimage sites of Western Europe attracting pilgrims even from Ireland, but also a prestigious one, including among its most prominent pilgrims the German emperors, Otto III (980-1002) in 999 and Henry II (1002-1024) in 1022, and Pope Leo IX (1049-1054)³⁷.

Gargano was an already established international pilgrimage site which had become utterly Lombard when the Byzantines reconquered southern Italy and in 892 recaptured Siponto³⁸, the town that claimed control over the sanctuary. However, as Gargano was within the Empire's territory in northern Apulia the Byzantines tried to claim their domination over it. In 938 Basilio Klados, the *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Sicily and Longobardia, confirmed to the Bishop of Benevento the possessions of his see, except for the shrine of the archangel Michael, which, as he stated, belonged to the Byzantine emperors³⁹. This official statement was preceded by the Greek version of the *Liber de apparitione sancti Michaelis in monte Gargano* (= *Apparitio*)⁴⁰, in the early 10th century, with the title Ἀποκάλυψις καὶ θαῦμα τοῦ ταξιάρχου Μιχαὴλ ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῷ καλουμένῳ Γαργάνῳ (Cod. Vat. gr. 821 and 866)⁴¹. The Greek Ἀποκάλυψις is a pro-Byzantine version of the anti-Byzantine Latin *Apparitio*, whose author purposely changed one of the episodes of the Latin text⁴². The *Apparitio* narrates that the pagan Neapolitans attacked Siponto, but with the alliance of the Beneventans and the protection of the Archangel the Neapolitans were defeated⁴³. The pagan Neapolitans are used in the narration as an allegory of the Byzantines, and the episode is an allusion to the Lombard victory of 650⁴⁴. On the contrary, in the Ἀποκάλυψις Archangel Michael intervened against the pagan Beneventans who attacked Siponto along with the Neapolitans, and gave the victory to the Sipontines⁴⁵.

31 Vita di Nicodemo 110. 114. 118.

32 Vita di S. Luca 88.

33 For Byzantine local shrines, pilgrimage and practices see Talbot, *Healing Shrines*.

34 Vita di Fantino 130. 430.

35 Otranto/Carletti, Gargano 31-35. – Otranto, Longobardi 57. For the connection between the shrines at Gargano and Chonai cf. Gothein, Michele 110-112. – Peers, *Subtle Bodies* 165-171. On Chonai cf. Belke/Mersich, *Rhrygien* 222-225.

36 Gothein, Michele 137-141. – Otranto, *Metodologia* 385-393. – Otranto/Carletti, Gargano 37-48. 91-97. – Otranto, Longobardi 57-62. – Campione, *Angeli* 321-323.

37 Otranto/Carletti, Gargano 49-55. 98-117. – Martin, *Culte* 396-401. – Vanni, *Itinerari* 93-101. 104-108. Oldfield, *Sanctity* 200-202. 245-246. 261.

38 Falkenhausen, *Dominazione* 32.

39 The sanctuary remained under Byzantine control until 978, when Siponto was recognised by the Byzantines as a suffragan see of the Benevento archbishopric,

Gay, *Italie* 356-357. – Falkenhausen, *Dominazione* 56. 180 no. 10. – Martin, *Culte* 392-393.

40 De *Apparitione* 541-543. The *Apparitio* is a Latin narration on the establishment of the sanctuary, written as early as the 6th century, but which was given its final form by the Lombards of Benevento probably in the second half of the 8th century. The dating of the *Apparitio* has been much debated. For the problem of its dating cf. Otranto, *Metodologia* 383 – 384. – Campione, *Storia* 187-188. – Otranto/Carletti, Gargano 15. – Everett, *Apparitione* 389. Otranto, Longobardi 57. – Campione, *Angeli* 318-319 with ann. 54.

41 Leanza, *Versione greca*.

42 For a comparison between the two texts and their differences cf. Leanza, *Versione greca* 307-316.

43 De *Apparitione* 542, 5-16.

44 Gothein, Michele 138-139. – Otranto, *Metodologia* 391-393. – Campione, *Storia* 187-188. – Otranto/Carletti, Gargano 39-40.

45 Leanza, *Versione greca* 302. Cf. Otranto, *Metodologia* 402.

Moreover, the Greek author mentioned that Gargano was on the border of the theme of Apulia (τοῦ θέματος τοῦ λεγομένου Ἀπουλία), instead of Langobardia, which was the Byzantine technical term for the theme⁴⁶. This was a deliberate action to disassociate the area from the Lombards⁴⁷. The association of the shrine and the bishopric of Siponto with Constantinople was supported by the edition of a second text, the Latin *vita minor* of St Lawrence, Bishop of Siponto⁴⁸. In this pro-Byzantine *vita*, Lawrence, a relative of the Byzantine emperor, was sent from Constantinople to Siponto by the emperor himself and was appointed as bishop of the town. Michael himself gave Lawrence and the Sipontines authority over his cave church, while the Lombards were totally obliterated from the narration⁴⁹.

The Lombard-Byzantine antagonism in southern Italy gave way to the Norman-Byzantine conflict for the control of the area and the Gargano shrine became once again the focal point of anti-Byzantine expression. The south Italian historian William of Apulia wrote that the first Normans who came to southern Italy were pilgrims to Gargano. There, they met Melus, an aristocrat from Bari who had led a rebellion against the Byzantine authorities, and at his request they agreed to ally themselves with him against the Byzantines in Apulia in 1017⁵⁰. This episode and the way the Normans appeared in southern Italy in general have been much debated by scholars due to the contradictory evidence of south Italian historians, whose information is often perceived as fictitious⁵¹. This episode in William's history, fictitious or not, presents the Gargano shrine as the place where a rebel against the Byzantines could find refuge and the place from where the Normans started their first fights against the Byzantines. It was during the Norman conquest of southern Italy that a new edition of the Life of St Lawrence of Siponto, the *vita maior*, was issued. In this new version, emphasis was placed on the new role of the Roman Church, as the Constantinopolitan Lawrence was consecrated by the Pope, reflecting in this way the Norman's alliance with the Church of Rome for the conquest of the region⁵².

St Phantinos' pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the Archangel is the only known reference for a Greek pilgrim at

Gargano⁵³. The journey was made after the Greek version of the *Apparitio* had been issued and in the same decade as Basilios Kladon officially stated that Gargano was Byzantine. Although Archangel Michael was especially venerated by the Greek monks in southern Italy and a great number of Byzantine churches were dedicated to him⁵⁴, the Gargano shrine is never mentioned in the Greek saints' *vitae* or in the Byzantine documents of the area, nor are there references to Greek pilgrims. Written sources regarding Byzantine officials visiting Gargano or making donations to the shrine are also non-existent⁵⁵. Although the Gargano sanctuary was easily accessed, the Byzantine authorities and the Greek population seem to have deliberately avoided going on pilgrimage there. In this way, there was an indirect understanding of Gargano as the stronghold of Lombard identity and as a shrine distinct from the Greek culture of the area, albeit within Byzantine territory, while the circulation of pro-Byzantine texts concerning the sanctuary did not succeed in integrating it into the Byzantine Empire.

Pilgrimage to Rome

St Phantinos' pilgrimage to Monte Gargano was a unique case among the Greeks of southern Italy. As documented by the saints' *vitae*, the main pilgrimage destination in the Byzantine period was Rome, especially in the 10th century⁵⁶. Monks travelled from southern Italy to Rome by sea⁵⁷ to venerate the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul, the martyrs' relics and other saints' tombs⁵⁸.

The Lives do not give details on pilgrimage itself. The most explicit *vita* is that of St Sabas the Younger⁵⁹. Sabas desired for many years to visit the tombs of the apostles, but was impeded by God's providence. He finally visited Rome when he miraculously found a companion for his journey, Niketas, a pilgrim monk from Byzantium. Niketas, St Sabas and his brother St Makarios (d.c. 1000) departed from Mercurion for Rome by sea. They disembarked at the port of Terracina⁶⁰ and after travelling about 75 km they reached the castle of Albano Laziale, which lies 25 km south of Rome. First, Sabas

46 Leanza, *Versione greca* 300.

47 Otranto, *Metodologia* 401-402.

48 De Laurentio 60-62. The *vita minor* was dated by Gay, *Italie* 199 at the end of the 9th century after the Byzantine conquest of Siponto. Modern research dates the text in the 11th century after 1022 when the Byzantines raised Siponto to a metropolitan see independent from Benevento cf. Otranto, *Metodologia* 393. 398-400. – Campione, *Storia* 199-202. – Martin, *Culte* 393-394.

49 Gay, *Italie* 198-199. – Otranto, *Metodologia* 393-397. – Campione, *Storia* 178-179. 185-186. 188-193. Campione, *Angeli* 324-325.

50 Guillaume, *Geste* 98-102. For Melus' revolt in detail cf. Gay, *Italie* 399-413.

51 For the best discussion on the subject cf. Loud, *Guiscard* 60-66.

52 De Laurentio 57-60. Cf. Otranto, *Metodologia* 399 with ann. 79. – Campione, *Storia* 186-187. 211. It must be noted that after the conquest the Normans did not associate themselves with Michael and his shrine at Gargano as the Lombards had done, Oldfield, *Sanctity* 60. 106. 208.

53 Vita di S. Fantino 63 with ann. 19. The only known pilgrim from Byzantium is the aristocrat Artellaide, the niece of the general Narses in the 6th century when the shrine was Byzantine, Otranto, *Langobardi* 58.

54 Campione, *Angeli* 327-329.

55 The Byzantine catepans of Italy made donations to the bishopric of Siponto and the monastery of St Giovanni in Lamis on the south-west side of Gargano, but not to Michael's shrine itself. Cf. Falkenhausen, *Dominatione* 189 no. 32. 199. no. 47. 203. no. 56. 201 no. 50.

56 Eight saints went on a pilgrimage to Rome in the 9th and 10th centuries, Leo-Luke of Corleone (De Leone 99), Vitalios of Castronuovo (De S. Vitale 27), Elias the Speleot (De S. Elia Spelaete 851), Sabas and Makarios (Orestes, Sabae 141-143), Christopher (Orestis, Vita S. Christophori 389-391), Elias the Younger (Vita di Elia il Giovane XX, 54, 154), and Neilos the Younger (Bios Neilou 159). Cf. Russo, *Peregrinatio*. – Luongo, *Itinerari* 46-47. The only known lay pilgrim to Rome in the 11th century is scholastikos Ioannis who departed from Sicily, Vita di Bartolomeo 20-22. 42-43. – Cf. Sansterre, *Coryphées* 541-542. – Morini, *Rome* 852-853. 866.

57 De S. Elia Spelaete 851. – Orestes, Sabae 142. – Orestis, Vita S. Christophori 389-390. – Vita di Elia il Giovane 54.

58 De S. Vitale 27. – Orestes, Sabae ch. 19. – Orestis, Christophori 391.

59 Orestes, Sabae 141-143.

60 St Vitalios also disembarked at Terracina, De Vitale 27. 61. – For the cathedral of St Pancrazio cf. Martorelli, *Albano* 7. 13. 14.

venerated all the churches in the castle and finally arrived at the pilgrim-crowded cathedral of San Pancrazio where the martyr's relics were kept⁶¹. From Albano the company arrived at Rome where their first stop was St Peter's tomb, then they venerated St Paul's tomb, and finally the martyrs' tombs. An account of a pilgrim's approach to the tombs is given in the Life of St Elias the Speleot. Elias approached the tombs (τὰς θήκας τῶν Ἀποστόλων), kissed them and prayed with scalding tears⁶². Pilgrimage to Rome was blessed by the *Koryphaioi* who appeared in visions to approve the journey and give their protection. Elias the Younger and Daniel made their first attempt to visit Rome to pray when they were at Bouthroton in Epirus (end of 881- beginning of 882), but they did not manage to make the journey⁶³. They finally went on a pilgrimage from their monastery at Salines in Calabria (885-before 888) when the two apostles appeared in a vision to Elias telling him that he should depart for Rome the next day⁶⁴. St Macarios saw the two apostles navigating the ship on its way to Rome in order to help pilgrims to have a safe voyage⁶⁵.

Influences of pilgrimage to Rome can be attested in hagiography, in church dedication and in Byzantine monumental art in the area. In the Life of St Neilos the Younger (910-1004) Peter and Paul have a prominent role⁶⁶. The saint himself used to send some of his pilgrims to venerate the tombs of the *Koryphaioi* and other martyrs' tombs in Rome in order to be cured⁶⁷. Elias the Speleot, one of the pilgrims to Rome, dedicated the *katholikon* of his monastery in Melicuccà to Saints Peter and Paul⁶⁸. According to M. Falla Castelfranchi⁶⁹, the Embrace of Peter and Paul (end of the 10th century), which was painted in the cave church of Sant' Archangelo at Monte Consolino near Stilo (Calabria), should be also connected with the Greek saints pilgrimage to Rome.

The preference for a pilgrimage to Rome in this period can be associated with three factors. First, the *Koryphaioi* had a special connection with southern Italy as two of the metropolitan sees of the Byzantine themes of Calabria and Longobardia were related to the apostles: Reggio was associated with Paul by the Byzantines from the 8th century⁷⁰ and Otranto was connected with Peter⁷¹. Second, Rome was one of the most important pilgrimage sites of the Byzantine world alongside Constantinople and Jerusalem and the veneration

of the tombs of Peter and Paul was an ideal for Byzantine monks. There are many well-known examples of pilgrims to Rome during the Middle Byzantine period⁷², and Greek monks in southern Italy could not have been an exception. Third, Greeks from southern Italy were attracted to such an illustrious pilgrimage site due to the geographical proximity⁷³. Greeks could reach Rome within a few days without facing the dangers of a long-distance journey across the Eastern Mediterranean which was necessary for a visit to the Holy Land⁷⁴.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Evidence on Greek pilgrims travelling from Byzantine southern Italy to Jerusalem is scant. St Elias the Younger, after having been liberated from his slavery by the Arabs in North Africa, left for Jerusalem to become a monk. He venerated all the important pilgrim shrines of Palestine and Egypt during the period 876/877-880⁷⁵. In the next century, St Sabas, who eagerly wanted to visit Jerusalem for many years, managed to fulfil his desire only in a vision⁷⁶. In 1058/1059, Lukas, the abbot of the monastery of Sant' Anastasio of Carbone (prov. Potenza) in Basilicata, expressed in his testament his desire to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the forgiveness of his sins⁷⁷.

The aforementioned examples might convey the idea that the Holy Land was part of the religious thought of the Byzantine monks in southern Italy⁷⁸, but they also indicate that pilgrimage to the Holy Land was particularly rare under Byzantine rule. St Elias was not a pilgrim who left southern Italy to reach Jerusalem, but he started his journey from North Africa. St Sabas had been trying to travel to Jerusalem for years but was unable to do so for unknown reasons. It is well documented that Byzantine pilgrims, mainly monks, continued to visit the Holy Land uninterrupted during the Arab conquest of Palestine, albeit in relatively small numbers⁷⁹, but the journey was difficult and dangerous. The Muslim authorities forbade pilgrimage for short periods of time and there is evidence that some Byzantine monks were arrested and killed, while others did not even succeed in reaching the Holy Land⁸⁰. In addition, the maritime route in the East-

62 De S. Elia Spelaote 851.

63 Vita di Elia il Giovane 44, 154.

64 Vita di Elia il Giovane 54, 158. Cf. Kaplan, Saints 111. 119-120.

65 Orestes, Sabae 142. The same visions occur in other Byzantine saints' Lives, Morini, Rome 860.

66 Bios Neilou 128. 132-134. 172. For Peter and Paul in the Life of St Neilos in general cf. Sansterre, Coryphées 532-534.

67 Bios Neilou 276.

68 De S. Elia Spelaote 865.

69 Falla Castelfranchi, Monasteri 205-206 fig. 7.

70 Falkenhausen, Reggio 260.

71 Safran, San Pietro 189.

72 Morini, Rome. – Malanut, Routes 147-148. 316-317. – Kaplan, Saints 110-111. 114-115. 116. 119.

73 The duration of the maritime journey from Taormina (Sicily) to Rome was twenty days, Vita di Elia il Giovane 54.

74 Oldfield, Sanctity 43.

75 Vita di Elia il Giovane 26-32. 138-143. Cf. Hester, Monasticism 358. – Malanut, Routes 102. 109-110. 256-258. – Talbot, Pilgrimage 102. – Kaplan, Saints 113. 122. – Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt 33. – Re, Jerusalem 173-174. 175-176.

76 Orestes, Sabae 313. Cf. Falkenhausen, Testamente 182. – Hester, Monasticism 358. – Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt 40-41. – Falkenhausen, Pellegrinaggi 162. – Re, Jerusalem 174-175.

77 Robinson, History II/1, 169. Cf. Falkenhausen, Testamente 182. – Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt 41. – Falkenhausen, Pellegrinaggi 163.- Vanni, Itinerari 109. – Oldfield, Sanctity 270.

78 Re, Jerusalem 175.

79 For Byzantine pilgrimage to the Holy Land cf. Malanut, Routes 314-316. – Külzer, Peregrinatio. – Talbot, Pilgrimage. – Talbot, Introduction 59-60. – Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt. – Falkenhausen, Pellegrinaggi. For a useful overview on Byzantine and Western Pilgrimage to the Holy Land up to the 11th century and its fluctuation cf. Jacoby, Gunther. – Jacoby, Impact 697-701.

80 Talbot, Pilgrimage 100-101. – Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt 39-40. – Falkenhausen, Pellegrinaggi 161-162. 164-165.

ern Mediterranean was not safe until the mid-11th century because of the Arab presence⁸¹. These risks seem to have prevented southern Italian Greeks from making such a long journey, and only after the mid-11th century is Lukas of Carbone the first known pilgrim from Byzantine southern Italy who was apparently able to plan such a venture.

In the Norman period, there was a significant shift in the numbers of Greek pilgrims from southern Italy and Sicily to the Holy Land. In 1098, the monk Pankratios of the monastery of St John Theristes co-operated with Genesis Moschatos against his monastery in a land dispute after Genesis had promised to pay him the journey to Jerusalem⁸². Gregory, the abbot of the monastery of St Philip of Fragalà in Val Demone in Sicily in his second Testament (1105) mentioned that the hieromonk Blasios had made many requests to him to travel to Jerusalem. Gregory gave his permission, but in a note dated in 1107 writes that after three years of absence Blasios had not returned⁸³. In 1123, the abbess Aloysia of the probably Greek nunnery of St Bartholomew in Taranto (Apulia) left her convent in order to spend the rest of her life in the Holy Land⁸⁴. St Leo the Thaumaturgos (first half of the 12th century) was a pilgrim from Calabria who died at Methone in the southern Peloponnese, while *en route* to Jerusalem⁸⁵. In 1149, Lukas, the archimandrite of the monastery of San Salvatore *de lingua phari* in Messina, ordered that the monks desirous of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or to other holy places should take the permission of their superiors⁸⁶. Bartholomew, a Greek monk from Bruzzano (south of ancient Locri) in Calabria managed to visit Jerusalem as a pilgrim twice in 1157/1158 and in 1168. His journeys are known from two notes he wrote in a Tetraevangelon (cod. Barb. gr. 319) which he bought in Jerusalem⁸⁷.

The considerable rise in the number of Greek pilgrims from Norman southern Italy to the Holy Land coincides with the widespread popularity of Western pilgrimage in this period and the key role that Apulian ports played as transit stations for maritime communications with the Eastern Mediterranean. After the First Crusade (1099), Western pilgrims to the Holy Land increased significantly and pilgrimage became a mass phenomenon⁸⁸. Barletta, Monopoli, Brindisi, Trani and Bari were the main ports a pilgrim from the West should reach to embark for the Holy Land⁸⁹. Greeks could undertake this journey easily from their homeland ports without facing the dangers of the Byzantine period. Another significant factor that contributed to the growing interest in the Holy

Land was monasticism. The currently known Latin pilgrims from southern Italy came from different social strata, i.e. archbishops, priests, nobles and laity⁹⁰, but the Greek pilgrims known to date were solely monks. In the 12th century the Holy Land acquired a new religious meaning for the Byzantines as a response to the Crusades. The Komnenian dynasty showed a special interest in the Holy Land with donations of works of art and the restoration of Byzantine monasteries in order to promote the association of the Holy Land with Orthodoxy. This had an impact also on Byzantine pilgrimage since the Byzantine monasteries, which were conceived as the ideals of asceticism, were included in the pilgrims' route alongside the biblical holy places⁹¹. And it was apparently this new ideal of Byzantine asceticism in the Holy Land that attracted Aloysia to abandon her convent in Taranto and the Greek Calabrian monks to reinhabit the abandoned Byzantine monastery on Mount Carmel in the 1160s⁹². The new conditions were also reflected in the Greek hagiography of the region. In the 12th-century Greek Life of the Sicilian St Marina of Scanio, it is mentioned that Marina journeyed twice to the Holy Land disguised as a monk and lived in a monastery by the River Jordan⁹³. A significant part of this *vita* is dedicated to her journey and to the Holy Land and not to Sicily, as the reader would expect from a biography of a local saint. Her biographer seems to have been inspired by this movement and the new association between the Greek monasticism of the region and the Holy Land.

Conclusion

When the Byzantines reconquered southern Italy, Gargano, associated entirely with the Lombard identity, even though founded by Constantinople, was already thriving as an international pilgrimage site. The Byzantines failed to reconnect Archangel Michael's cave church with their political presence in the region and to constrain in this way the influence of the antagonistic Benevento in the northern parts of Apulia. Neither did they try to find an analogous illustrious pilgrimage shrine to compete with Gargano. Indeed, in southern Italy the Byzantines established their own tradition of pilgrimage to promote their political, religious and cultural agendas, since they had a very different conception of pilgrimage from the Latin West. For a Byzantine, pilgrimage did not involve necessarily a long-distance journey to a famous shrine, but

81 Malamut, Routes 237. – Oldfield, Sanctity 43. For traveling in the Byzantine Empire in general cf. Kislinger, Reisen.

82 Mercati/Gianelli/Guillou, Théristsès 55. Cf. Falkenhausen, Testamente 182. – Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt 41.

83 Spata, Pergamene 202. Cf. Falkenhausen, Testamente 181. 183. 184-185. – Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt 41. – Re, Jerusalem 172.

84 Robinson, History II/1, 258-259. Cf. Falkenhausen, Testamente 182. – Oldfield, Sanctity 272.

85 Follieri, Metone 402-451. – Hester, Monasticism 161.

86 Mercati, Tipico 219. Cf. Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt 38. – Re, Jerusalem 171.

87 Schreiner, Handschriften 146-152. Cf. Falkenhausen, Pellegrinaggi 172. – Re, Jerusalem 172.

88 Jacoby, Impact 701-702.

89 On southern Italian ports and pilgrims' transportation cf. Oldfield, Sanctity 185-189.

90 Oldfield, Sanctity 269-273.

91 Patlagean, Terre sainte. – Jotischky, Solitude 83-100. – Jotischky, Monasticism 86-92. – Falkenhausen, Pellegrinaggi 168-175.

92 For the Calabrian monks on Mount Carmel cf. Jotischky, Solitude 120. 123. 131. 134-138. – Jotischky, Monasticism 93.

93 Vita di Marina 94-102. For the Life of St Marina cf. Re, Hagiography 236-237. – Oldfield, Sanctity 165-166. For various aspects of Marina's pilgrimage cf. Falkenhausen, Wallfahrt 44. – Re, Jerusalem 175. – Oldfield, Sanctity 272-273.

it did involve the veneration of icons, relics, saints' tombs or living saints even in a nearby church⁹⁴. Consequently, the monasteries that had been founded by the Byzantine saints throughout Calabria and Basilicata and attracted the Greek population should be included within the local pilgrimage sites of the rest of the Byzantine Empire⁹⁵. There the faithful could come into contact with the divine, discover spiritual guidance, be cured and find salvation either by meeting the living saint or by venerating his tomb. Pilgrimage to these monasteries forged the Byzantine religious and cultural identity on Byzantium's multicultural western frontier⁹⁶, and at the same time was used as a political tool by the Byzantine authorities to exert and maintain religious as much as political control over a remote part of the Empire, as was southern Italy. The religious control and use of holy shrines with high importance such as Gargano were sought equally by Lombards, Byzantines and Normans as part of a power play for acquiring, extending and/or preserving their political control over this multicultural region. After the Norman conquest Greek monasticism continued to flourish with the support of the Norman rulers and many new Greek monasteries were founded⁹⁷, but the information on pilgrimage itself is very limited, since Greek hagiography declined and the time of significant monastic figures, who in life or *post mortem* in their tombs would attract pilgrims, came to an end⁹⁸. Except for the monasteries of St Elias the Younger and St Elias the

Speleot which continued to attract pilgrims during the Norman period, and probably the monastery of St Bartholomew of Simeri, founded under the Norman rule, pilgrimage to the rest of the Greek monasteries can only be hypothesized.

The analysis of the evidence illustrates that, whereas lay pilgrims travelled short distances, the long-distance pilgrims were monks. Rome and the Holy Land were the focal points of pilgrimage, but the choice of each one of these destinations was made according to the political and historical conditions in the Eastern Mediterranean and in southern Italy itself. During the 9th-11th centuries the tombs of apostles Peter and Paul attracted pilgrim monks from the Byzantine Empire, many of whom travelled via southern Italy to reach Rome, such as Niketas, the travel companion of St Sabas. Monks from southern Italy, who lived closer to Rome than any other Byzantine, preferred to head for the same destination, whereas the Holy Land was viewed as rather distant in this period. In the Norman period the direction of pilgrimage was altered, and the Holy Land became the centre of Western pilgrimage due to the Crusader movement. Greek monks from southern Italy followed this new pilgrimage orientation with the purpose of not only venerating the famous biblical shrines, but also of seeking monastic inspiration in the Holy Land. In both the Byzantine and Norman periods Greeks in southern Italy played an active role in the movement of pilgrimage in Central and Eastern Mediterranean for several centuries.

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94 For Byzantine conceptions of pilgrimage cf. Talbot, Introduction 60-61. – Weyl Carr, Icons 76-77. 81-88.

95 On the contrary, these monasteries have not been included within the local pilgrimage sites of southern Italy by Oldfield, Sanctity.

96 For the Lombard and Greek identity in southern Italy cf. Peters-Custot, Convivencia.

97 For Greek monasticism in southern Italy under Norman rule see Peters-Custot, Grecs 291-306. 364-372.

98 For Greek hagiography in the Norman period cf. Strano, Echi storici. Some Greek saints lived in Sicily in the 12th century, but their personalities do not seem to have been influential. For these saints in detail cf. Oldfield, Sanctity 167-168.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Pilgerfahrt und griechische Identität im byzantinischen und normannischen Süditalien (9.-12. Jahrhundert)

Dieser Beitrag untersucht das Pilgerwesen als Ausdrucksform von Politik und Identität in Süditalien unter byzantinischer und normannischer Herrschaft. Die ethnische und religiöse Verschiedenheit dieser Region trug dazu bei, dass für die Pilger byzantinischen und lateinischen Ritus' unterschiedliche Pilgerorte entstanden. Eine gewisse Anzahl von lokalen griechisch geprägten Pilgerzentren entstanden in Übereinstimmung mit der Byzantinischen Konzeption von Pilgerfahrt für das Seelenheil der griechischen Bevölkerung und um die byzantinischen politischen, religiösen und kulturellen Agenden zu fördern. Die Fernpilger waren griechische Mönche aus der Region, deren Ziele zu einem Großteil von der Situation im östlichen Mittelmeerraum abhingen. Rom war der Schwerpunkt der Pilgerfahrt in byzantinischer Zeit, und erst unter den Normannen zog das Heilige Land die griechischen Mönche an.

Pilgrimage and Greek Identity in Byzantine and Norman Southern Italy (9th-12th century)

This paper focuses on pilgrimage as an expression of politics and Greek identity in southern Italy under Byzantine and Norman rule. The demographic and religious diversity of the region led to the emergence of different pilgrimage sites for the Latin-rite and the Byzantine-rite pilgrims. A number of local Greek pilgrimage sites were established in conformity with the Byzantine conception of pilgrimage in order to offer salvation to the Greek population and to promote the Byzantine political, religious and cultural agendas. The long-distant pilgrims were the Greek monks of the region whose destinations depended a great deal on the historical conditions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Rome was the focal point of pilgrimage in the Byzantine period, whereas in the Norman period it was the Holy Land that attracted the Greek monks.

Pèlerinage, politique et identité grecque dans le Sud de l'Italie des Byzantins aux Normands (9^e -12^e siècle)

Cet article examine le phénomène du pèlerinage comme expression de la politique et de l'identité grecque en Italie du Sud sous la domination byzantine et normande. La diversité démographique et religieuse de cette région a favorisé l'émergence de lieux de pèlerinage distincts pour le rite latin et pour le rite byzantin. Un certain nombre de lieux de pèlerinage grecs fut établi selon la conception du pèlerinage byzantin pour offrir le salut à la population grecque locale et promouvoir les intérêts politiques, religieux et culturels byzantins. Ce sont les moines grecs de la région qui entreprenaient des pèlerinages éloignés dont les destinations dépendaient en grande partie de la situation politique en Méditerranée orientale. Rome fut le point de mire des moines grecs durant l'époque byzantine, relayée par la Terre sainte à l'époque normande.