READING THE LATE BYZANTINE ROMANCE

The corpus of Palaiologan romances consists of about a dozen works of imaginative fiction from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries which narrate the trials and tribulations of aristocratic young lovers. This volume brings together leading scholars of Byzantine literature to examine the corpus afresh and aims to be the definitive work on the subject, suitable for scholars and students of all levels. It offers interdisciplinary and transnational approaches which demonstrate the aesthetic and cultural value of these works in their own right and their centrality to the medieval and early modern Greek, European and Mediterranean literary traditions. From a historical perspective, the volume also emphasizes how the romances represent a turning point in the history of Greek letters: they are a repository of both ancient and medieval oral poetic and novelistic traditions and yet are often considered the earliest works of modern Greek literature.


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READING THE LATE
BYZANTINE ROMANCE
A Handbook

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Acknowledgements

The present volume goes back to a conference held at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 27–29 November 2014, entitled ‘Romance Between East and West: New Approaches to Medieval Greek Fiction’. The conference was generously financed by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond). We are very grateful to the Foundation for its financial support and to the Institute for hosting the conference. A special thanks to Eleni Androvic for helping us with all the practicalities and to the then director of the Institute Arto Pentinnen.

The aim of the conference was to open up new avenues of exploration for the so-called Palaiologan romances, to account for new scholarly developments and to encourage comparative, cross-disciplinary and theoretical approaches. Not all papers that were presented at the conference are included in the volume, and some of the contributors did not attend the conference. The call for papers and the conference remain, though, the source of inspiration for the majority of chapters, and we would therefore like to thank all those who were present in Athens and contributed to the interesting and stimulating discussions. We are grateful also to those contributors who agreed to join the volume at a later stage.

Adam Goldwyn wishes to thank Dumbarton Oaks, where much of the work was completed during a 2016/17 research fellowship, the other fellows and in particular Elena Boeck, then director of Byzantine Studies. He would also like to thank his colleagues at North Dakota State University for the collegial and supportive environment they provide.

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Note on the Late Byzantine Romances
and Their Editions

Readers who approach the late Byzantine romances for the first time may be confused by the fluctuant boundaries of the corpus, as well as the varying use of titles and spelling of those titles. In addition, the textual situation of several of the romances, surviving in different versions that are edited separately and read as different works, may seem unusual and the dating of several works is still tentative. In this volume we have standardized the transliteration of titles and names, but have left it to the contributors to use the editions they prefer and indicate the dating for which they argue. We hope that the cross-references will help readers to navigate among the different chapters, but we should also like to offer an annotated list of titles and what may be seen as standard editions of the romances discussed in this volume. Translations into modern languages have also been included. Our list is organized according to tentative dating and does not divide the romances into ‘originals’ and ‘translations’ or ‘adaptations’. For further details of dating and textual transmission, readers may consult the more detailed discussions of the individual chapters.

Livistros and Rhodamne – also Tale of Livistros and Rhodamne (Mid-Thirteenth Century)


1 For instance, some of the standard works, such as Beaton 1996 and Agapitos 2004, do not define the corpus according to the same criteria. See also Cupane 2016.
2 Again, standard works tend to use different titles and different spelling; cf. for example Cupane 2016 with Agapitos 2004. As for Byzantine names beyond the Palaiologan romances, they are in this volume transliterated according to their spelling in the ODB, whereas we use the Latinized spelling of ancient Greek names and places (i.e. Photios, but Herodotus).
3 Following, in principle, Agapitos 2004 and 2012.
Note on the Late Byzantine Romances and Their Editions


War of Troy (Second Half of Thirteenth Century)


Velthandros and Chrysanta (Late Thirteenth Century)

J. M. Egea (ed.), Historia extraordinaria de Beltandro y Crisanza. Estudio preliminar, texto griego, traducción, notas y comentarios (Granada 1998) (with Spanish trans.).

Kallimachos and Chrysoorhoe (First Half of Fourteenth Century)


5 Dating according to Jeffreys 2013; for a detailed discussion, see Chapter 8 in the present volume. The War of Troy was included in Beaton 1996, but excluded in the discussion by Agapitos 2004: 14; in the present volume it is argued that it belongs among the Palaiologan romances (see Chapters 7, 8 and 12).
6 Dating according to Agapitos 2004: 13.
7 This is one of the few Palaiologan romances that may perhaps be attributed to a specific author: Andronikos Komnenos Palaiologos, a cousin of the ruling emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos.
Note on the Late Byzantine Romances and Their Editions


Tale of Achilles – also Achilleid (Mid-Fourteenth Century)\(^8\)

D. C. Hesseling (ed.), L’Achilleide byzantine publiée avec une introduction, des observations et un index (Amsterdam 1919) (N and L).

O. L. Smith (ed.), The Oxford Version of the Achilleid (Copenhagen 1990) (O).\(^9\)


(1282–1328). For a recent discussion, see Cupane 2016: 95–7. See also Chapter 3 in the present volume.

\(^8\) Dating according to Agapitos 2004, following Smith 1999. For a brief discussion of manuscripts and a detailed summary of the plot, see Lavagnini 2016: 240–4.

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_Apollonios of Tyre – also The Story of Long-Suffering Apollonios of Tyre_ (Mid-Fourteenth Century)^10^  
A. Janssen (ed.), _Narratio neogreca Apollonii Tyrii_. Diss Nijmegen 1954 (with Latin trans.).  

_Florios and Platziats flavours (Second Half of Fourteenth Century)^11^  
D. C. Hesseling (ed.), _Le roman de Phlorios et de Platza Phlore_ (Amsterdam 1917) (L).  

_Tale of Troy – also Byzantine Iliad (Late Fourteenth–Early Fifteenth Centuries)^13^  

^10^ Dating according to Rizzo Nervo 2002 and Kechagioglou 2004. On the many versions in different languages of this text, see Chapter 6 in the present volume.  
^11^ Dating according to Agapitos 2004: 13.  
^12^ On the problems of ‘mixed’ editions such as Kriaras and Ortolá Salas, see Agapitos 2004: 13, n. 14, referring (for the specific case of Florios and Platziats) to di Benedetto Zimbone 2000.  
Note on the Late Byzantine Romances and Their Editions

Alexander and Semiramis (First Half of Fifteenth Century)\textsuperscript{14}

Old Knight (First Half of Fifteenth Century)
F. Rizzo Nervo (ed.), Il Vecchio Cavaliere (Soveria Mannelli 2000).

Imperios and Margarona (Mid-Fifteenth Century)\textsuperscript{15}
E. Kriaras (ed.), Βυζαντινά ἱπποτικά μυθιστορήματα (Athens 1955), 215–49 (unrhymed version).\textsuperscript{16}

Teseida – also The Marriage of Theseus and Aemilia (Late Fifteenth Century)\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} Dating according to Agapitos 2004: 13.
\textsuperscript{15} Dating according to Agapitos 2004: 13.
\textsuperscript{16} Problematic ‘mixed’ edition of several versions and fragments; see Agapitos 2004: 13, n. 17. On the complex textual situation, see Jeffreys and Jeffreys 1971. See also Chapter 5 in the present volume.
\textsuperscript{17} According to Agapitos 2004: 14, the Greek Teseida is ‘barely connected to the Byzantine tradition’ and probably catered to a Greek audience in Italy. The Teseida was one of the few vernacular Greek texts to be printed in Renaissance Venice; see Kaklamanis 1997.
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In addition to this more or less stable core of twelve Palaiologan romances, some other texts that are more loosely connected to the corpus are discussed in the present volume and therefore deserve to be mentioned and listed here. One is the Digenis Akritis (ed. Jeffreys 1998), previously dated to the twelfth century and by Beaton referred to as a ‘proto-romance’, but here treated as narratologically and thematically related to the Palaiologan romances, at least in its version G (dated to the late thirteenth or even fourteenth century). Another is the Alexander Romance, the immensely popular fictional biography that survives in numerous versions and translations from late antiquity onwards. Usually treated very differently in scholarship, the different versions among the varied manuscripts may be said to straddle the learned and vernacular traditions, representing an impressively long span of storytelling. Frequently mentioned in several chapters in the present volume and often referenced in the discussion of the Palaiologan romances more generally are also the four Komnenian novels, which therefore deserve to be listed below. Finally, two allegorical poems are often mentioned in relation to the romances: the anonymous Consolatory Fable about Bad and Good Fortune, probably from the first half of the fourteenth century and written in the vernacular register, and the Verses on chastity by Meliteniotes, composed in learned Greek in the middle of the same century. Our first list may then be complemented with the following.

Komnenian Novels (Twelfth Century)\(^\text{19}\)

E. Jeffreys (trans.), Four Byzantine Novels: Theodore Prodromos, Rhodanthe and Dosikles; Eumathios Makrembolites, Hysmine and Hymnias; Constantine Manasses, Aristandros and Kallitheia; Niketas Eugenianos, Drosilla and Charikles (Liverpool 2012).


\(^{18}\) For editions and details of the many versions, not included in the above list, see Chapter 10 in the present volume.
\(^{19}\) For the sake of convenience, only the Conca edition is included here. For other editions and issues of dating, see Jeffreys 2012. On the Komnenian novels, see also above, n. 11.
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Digenis Akritis (Twelfth Century/Version G of Thirteenth–Fourteenth Centuries)²⁰


Consolatory Fable about Bad and Good Fortune (First Half of Fourteenth Century)


Meliteniotes, Verses on Chastity (Mid-Fourteenth Century)²¹


Many other texts from various stages of the Greek language, along with western and eastern romances, are mentioned in the course of the following chapters, but we hope that this brief introduction to the most frequently discussed late Byzantine romances and related texts will help the reader to navigate both this volume and the secondary literature to which the respective chapters refer.

²⁰ On the dating of the manuscript and the potentially Palaiologan context of Digenis, see Chapters 9 and 11 in the present volume. Agapitos 2004: 14 excluded Digenis from his discussion due to the dating and to the secondary role of the love story in the overall plot.

²¹ On the complex textual situation, see Schönauer 1996. For a recent and detailed discussion, see Cupane 2013: 84–90.

²² In the following chapters, editions are indicated for all Byzantine and medieval texts, while more widely known Greek and Latin texts of the ancient tradition are expected to be easily located and available in various editions and translations.