Eleni Tounta – Curriculum Vitae

Professor of Western Medieval History (4th–15th centuries)
Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
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Academic positions

- **2024–present** Professor of Western Medieval History, Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- **2019–2024** Associate Professor, Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- **2013–2019** Assistant Professor (tenured from 2017), Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- **2007–2013** Lecturer, Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- **2008–present** Tutor, Hellenic Open University, module "Byzantine and Western World" (module coordinator since 2017)
- **2007** Research Associate, Historisches Seminar, University of Heidelberg (DFG-funded project; resigned on appointment at Thessaloniki)
- **2006–2007** Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Methodology, History and Theory of Science, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Education

- **2006** PhD in Medieval History, Department of Methodology, History and Theory of Science, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Thesis: *The Western* sacrum imperium *and the Byzantine Empire: Ideological Frictions and Interactions on the European Political Stage of the Twelfth Century (1135–1177)*. Grade: Excellent. Supervisor: Prof. Michael Vellas. Completed as a doctoral

researcher at the Historisches Seminar, University of Heidelberg (2004–2006), in the research seminar of Prof. Stefan Weinfurter.

- **1997** DEA in the History of Religions (Ancient Greek and Roman Religion), University of Liège. Thesis: *Dionysos, dieu du banquet chez Athénée*. Grade: Grande Distinction. Supervisor: Prof. André Motte.
- **1995** BA in Classical Philology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Erasmus semester at the University of Liège, 1994–1995).

Research profile

My research focuses on the late medieval Mediterranean, examining travel, the production of space and knowledge, early ethnographic and colonial discourses, the transformation of the crusading idea and images of the East in Italian, French and Burgundian sources of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Recent work extends these questions to romance, analysing imaginative geographies and emotional landscapes in Burgundian and Sicilian court literature.

My earlier research addressed political ideology in the German kingdom, its interactions with Byzantium, and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, with particular attention to historiography, identities and alterity, political imaginaries and the cults of local saints.

My work draws on postcolonial theory, gender studies, spatial studies, cultural geography and literary criticism. It is based on sources in Latin, medieval Greek and medieval French, including historiography, hagiography, travel accounts, geographical descriptions, crusade treatises and literary texts.

Publications

Monographs

1. *The Travels of Cristoforo Buondelmonti and Ciriaco d'Ancona in the Aegean Sea: Humanism, Early Colonial Politics, and Agency*. London: Routledge, 2024.
2. *Stories of Saints: Communities, Space and Memory in Medieval Southern Italy (Late Ninth–Early Thirteenth Century)* [in Greek]. Athens: Eurasia, 2021.

3. *Medieval Mirrors of Power: Historians and Narratives in the Norman Italian South* [in Greek]. Athens: Eurasia, 2012.
4. *The Western* sacrum imperium *and the Byzantine Empire: Ideological Frictions and Interactions on the European Political Stage of the Twelfth Century (1135–1177)* [in Greek]. Athens: Rizarios Foundation, 2008. Award of the Stauferstiftung Göppingen, 2014.

Edited volumes

1. With Nikolaos G. Chrissis. *Travelling in the Eastern Mediterranean, c. 1300–1500: Politics, Agency, and the Production of Space*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2026.
2. *Byzantine and Western World: Political, Social and Cultural Contacts and Interactions (5th–15th Centuries)* [in Greek]. Patras: Hellenic Open University, 2026.
3. With Ioannis Xydopoulos and Kostas Vlassopoulos. *Violence and Community: Law, Space and Identity in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean World*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
4. With Gerald Schwedler. *Usurping Ritual*, section of *Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual*, vol. 3: *State, Power and Violence*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010.
5. *Late Medieval Political Theory: An Anthology of Texts. Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius of Padua, Bartolus of Sassoferrato* [in Greek]. Introductions and editing with Philemon Paionidis; translation and commentary by Eleni Tounta. Thessaloniki: Stamoulis, 2016.

Articles in peer-reviewed journals

1. "The Italo-Greek Courtiers and Their Saint: Constructing the Italo-Greek Elite's Collective Identity in the Twelfth-Century Norman Kingdom of Sicily." *Mediterranean Studies* 28, no. 1 (2020): 88–129.
2. "Conflicting Sanctities and the Construction of Collective Memories in Byzantine and Norman Italo-Greek Southern Calabria: Elias the Younger and Elias Speleotes." *Analecta Bollandiana* 135, no. 1 (2017): 101–144.

3. "*Licet christiano armis pro veritate decertare*: Religious Discourse and the Violence of Power in Medieval Western Europe" [in Greek]. *Culture and Research* 6 (2017): 26–40.
4. "Saints, Rulers and Communities: The *Vitae* of the Italo-Greek Saints (Tenth to Eleventh Centuries) and Their Audiences." *Journal of Medieval History* 42, no. 4 (2016): 429–455.
5. "Terror and *territorium* in Alexander of Telese's *Ystoria Rogerii regis*: Political Cultures in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily." *Journal of Medieval History* 40, no. 2 (2014): 142–158.
6. "Esthétique et politique: le cas de la mosaïque de l'apôtre André dans la Chapelle Palatine à Palerme." *Byzantinische Forschungen* 31 (2013): 51–61.
7. "Thessaloniki (1148) – Besançon (1157). Die deutsch-byzantinischen Beziehungen und das Heiligwerden des staufischen Reiches." *Historisches Jahrbuch* 131 (2011): 167–214.
8. "The Perception of Difference and the Differences of Perception: The Image of the Norman Invaders in Southern Italy in Contemporary Western Medieval and Byzantine Sources." *Byzantina Symmeikta* 20 (2010): 111–142.
9. "Westliche politische Kanzleipropaganda und byzantinische höfische Literatur im Dienst der Weltherrschaftsideologie: Die feierliche Ankunft Berthas von Sulzbach und ihr Ableben in Konstantinopel (1160)." *Byzantina* 28 (2008): 137–158.
10. "Conceptions of *translatio imperii* in the Western Empire in the Twelfth Century: Ideology, Political Practice, Propaganda" [in Greek]. *Byzantiaka* 27 (2008): 197–221.

Book chapters

1. "Ethnographic Discourse and Colonial Politics: Crete's Cultural Space in Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Descriptio Insulae Cretae*." In *Travelling in the Eastern Mediterranean, c. 1300–1500*, edited by Eleni Tounta and Nikolaos G. Chrissis, 101–124. Turnhout: Brepols, 2026.

2. With Nikolaos G. Chrissis. “Travelling in the Eastern Mediterranean, ca. 1300–1500: An Introduction.” In *Travelling in the Eastern Mediterranean, c. 1300–1500*, 1–40. Turnhout: Brepols, 2026.
3. Three chapters in *Byzantine and Western World* [in Greek], edited by Eleni Tounta (Patras: Hellenic Open University, 2026), on the concepts of “Middle Ages” and “Byzantium” (19–43), southern Italy as a meeting place of the Byzantine and Western worlds (91–127), and the Italian and late Byzantine Renaissance (403–435).
4. “Crusading Discourses in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.” In *Handbook on the Later Crusades*, edited by Magnus Ressel and Emir Filipović, 379–407. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2025.
5. “An ‘Emperor’ under the Guise of a Moses: Narrative Representations of the East in the *Songe du Vieux Pèlerin*.” In *The Late Byzantine Romance in Context: Narrativity and Identities in the Mediterranean (13th–16th Centuries)*, edited by Ioannis Smarnakis and Zissis D. Ainalis, 109–126. London: Routledge, 2024.
6. “Conceptualisations of Revolt in Leonardo Bruni’s *History of the Florentine People*” [in Greek]. In *Social Protest, Revolt and Revolution in the Pre-modern Italian States (13th–18th Centuries)*, edited by Gerasimos Pagratis, 89–119. Athens: Laboratory of Italian History and Historiography, University of Athens, 2024.
7. “‘Empire’, Space and the ‘Classical’ Past: Ciriaco d’Ancona in Greece and Asia Minor (1443–1449)” [in Greek]. In *Local, Trans-national and Global in European History: Mobilities, Encounters, Hierarchies*, edited by Androniki Dialeti, Rika Benveniste and Giorgos Plakotos. Athens: Themelio, 2024
8. “Political and Cultural Encounters between Byzantium and the Normans, 11th–13th Centuries.” In *A Companion to Byzantium and the West, 900–1204*, edited by Nicolas Drocourt and Sebastian Kolditz, 247–269. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022.
9. With Yannis Smarnakis. “The Revolts of the Zealots and the Ciompi: Political Violence, Rituals and Transformations of Urban Space” [in Greek]. In *European*

Cities in Crisis: From the Twelfth Century to the Present, edited by Konstantinos Gaganakis et al., 113–134. Athens: Herodotos, 2022.

10. "Norman Rulers and Greek-Speaking Subjects: The *Vitae* of Italo-Greek Saints (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries) and the Negotiation of Local Identities." In *Rethinking Norman Italy: Studies in Honour of Graham A. Loud*, edited by Joanna Drell and Paul Oldfield, 152–170. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021.
11. "Admiral Eugenius of Sicily (12th c.): Court Poetry and Political Propaganda in a Cross-Cultural Environment." In *Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality (11th–15th c.)*, edited by Nikolaos Chrissis, Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki and Angeliki Papageorgiou, 171–183. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.
12. "Relations between the Byzantine and the Western Empire, 10th–11th Centuries" [in Greek]. In *Byzantium: History and Civilisation*, vol. 6, edited by Telemachos Lounghis, 313–327. Athens: Herodotos, 2019.
13. "The Norman Conquerors between Epos and Chanson de Geste: The Perception of Identities in Cultural Flow." In *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage*, edited by Stefan Burkhardt and Thomas Foerster, 125–147. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.
14. "Die Konstruktion des Rituals: Macht des Individuums oder der Ideen? Überlegungen am Beispiel der byzantinischen Krönungszeremonie." In *Ritualmacher hinter den Kulissen*, edited by Jörg Gengnagel and Gerald Schwedler, 71–90. Münster: LIT, 2013.
15. "Autorität im Kontakt der Kulturen: Die Darstellung von Majestät in Byzanz und Sizilien." In *Autorität und Akzeptanz: Das Reich im Europa des 13. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Hubertus Seibert, Werner Bomm and Verena Türck, 285–307. Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2012.
16. "Muslims in Medieval Europe: Tolerance and Violence between Collective Imagination and Sociopolitical Reality." In *Religion and Conflict*, edited by Erik Eynikel and Angeliki Ziaka, 63–91. London: Harptree, 2011.

17. "'Sicilians' or 'Muslims'? How Religiously Was Religious Identity Perceived in the Middle Ages?" [in Greek]. In *Philotimia: Studies in Honour of Alkmini Stavridou-Zafraka*, edited by Theodoros Korres, Polymnia Katsoni et al., 601–623. Thessaloniki: Vanias, 2011.
18. "Byzanz als Vorbild Friedrich Barbarossas." In *Staufisches Kaisertum im 12. Jahrhundert*, edited by Stefan Burkhardt, Thomas Metz et al., 159–174. Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2010.
19. "Süditalien als Konflikt- und Kontaktzone zwischen Staufern und Byzanz." In *Verwandlungen des Stauferreichs*, edited by Bernd Schneidmüller, Stefan Weinfurter and Alfried Wieczorek, 432–445. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010.
20. "Usurpation, Acceptance and Legitimacy in Medieval Europe: An Analysis of the Dynamic Relations between Ritual Structure and Political Power." In *Usurping Ritual*, edited by Gerald Schwedler and Eleni Tounta, 447–473. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010.
21. With Gerald Schwedler. "Usurping Rituals: The Correlation between Formalized Repetitive Behaviour and Legitimacy." In *Usurping Ritual*, 349–359. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010.

Forthcoming

1. "Manuel Chrysoloras and Cristoforo Buondelmonti on Fifteenth-Century Constantinople: Humanistic Discourses on Its Urban Space and Their Political Contexts." In *Espressioni delle città di Bisanzio e del Rinascimento*, edited by V. Koukoussas et al. Venice: Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia.
2. "From Solitary Monastic Foundations to Family Networks: Hagiographical Narratives and Cultural Contexts in Tenth-Century Calabria." In *Greek Literature in Italy (8th to 13th c.)*, edited by Stratis Papaioannou, Cristina Rognoni and Charis Messis.
3. "Crusading Discourse, Imaginative Geographies and Representations of Imperial Power in Philippe de Mézières's *Songe du Vieux Pèlerin* (1389)" [in Greek]. In

Studies in Honour of Taxiarchis Kolias, edited by E. Sygkellou, Ch. Makrypoulias and M. Alysandratou. Athens.

Other publications

A study of the Fourth Crusade between history and historiography [in Greek] (Athens: Domos, 2013); entries in the *Encyclopaedic Prosopographical Lexicon of Byzantine History and Civilization*, vol. 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012); seven book reviews in *Byzantina Symmeikta*, *Sehepunkte*, *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, *Historein* and *Frankokratia*; and scholarly editing of the Greek translations of Daniel Woolf, *A Concise History of History* (2025) and R. H. C. Davis and R. I. Moore, *A History of Medieval Europe* (2011).

Research projects

- **2007** Research project "Imperial Representations in the Kingdom of Sicily and the Byzantine Empire in the Thirteenth Century", funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), University of Heidelberg (awarded for 2007–2009; resigned on appointment at Thessaloniki).
- **2007** Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 619 "Ritual Dynamics", University of Heidelberg: catalogue and translation of Byzantine sources on ritual.
- **2007–2008** Research associate for the exhibition "Die Staufer und Italien", Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim (2010–2011): documentation of material evidence for Byzantine–Western relations in southern Italy and Sicily.
- **2006–2007** Research project "Die Staufer und Italien", Historisches Seminar, University of Heidelberg: relations between the Staufer and the Byzantine emperors in their Italian policies.
- **2004–2006** Research project "Byzantium and the West", Institute for Byzantine Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation: dictionary of palaeographical and diplomatic terms.

Conference organisation

- **2026** Organiser, panel sessions "Politics, Spatial Dynamics, and Emotions in Late Medieval 'Mediterranean Romances': Western European, Byzantine and Islamic Literary Narratives in Historical Perspective", Ninth International Conference of the Society for the Medieval Mediterranean, "Small Worlds, Big Worlds: Medieval Mediterranean Perspectives", Universidade Nova de Lisboa.
- **2025** Organiser, student conference "Neomedievalisms: Contemporary Representations and Ideological Uses of the Middle Ages", Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- **2022** Co-organiser (with Nikolaos G. Chrissis), panel sessions "Travelling in the Eastern Mediterranean, ca. 1300–1500: Politics, Agency and Production of Historical Knowledge and Space", International Conference of the Society for the Medieval Mediterranean, "Interruptions and Disruptions in the Medieval Mediterranean, 400–1500", University of Crete, Rethymno.
- **2022** Co-organiser (with Ioannis Xydopoulos), study day "Discussing Orientalism", Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- **2021** Member of the scientific committee, conference "Social Protest, Revolt and Revolution in Pre-modern Times", National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.
- **2012** Co-organiser (with Ioannis Xydopoulos and Kostas Vlassopoulos), session "Violence and the City: Law, Territory and Civic Identity in Ancient and Medieval Times", 11th International Conference of the European Association for Urban History, Prague.
- **2008** Co-organiser (with Gerald Schwedler), panel sessions "Usurping Ritual", International Conference "Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual", University of Heidelberg.

Selected conference papers and invited lectures (since 2019)

- **2026** "Questioning Orientalism at the Burgundian Court: The East in *Gillion de Trazegnies* and *Gilles de Chin*", Society for the Medieval Mediterranean, Ninth International Conference, Universidade Nova de Lisboa.
- **2026** "Constructing Colonized Masculinities in the Early Renaissance: Cristoforo Buondelmonti in Venetian Crete (Early Fifteenth Century)", international workshop "Aspects of Gender from Antiquity to the Era of AI", Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- **2026** "Cultural Tensions and Questions of Identity in the Relations between Byzantine Scholars and Italian Humanists (14th–15th Centuries)" [in Greek], invited lecture, Nikos Oikonomides Postgraduate Seminar, University of Athens and National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- **2025** "Eugenius of Sicily and the Emotional Landscape of the Sicilian Court", international conference "Literature across Borders in Medieval Sicily", University of Padua (invited).
- **2025** Erasmus teaching visit, Faculty of Arts, University of Antwerp: undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and a public lecture on orientalism and colonialism in the late Middle Ages and on Italian humanists' perceptions of Latin rule in the Aegean.
- **2024** "From an Imperial Capital to an 'Open-Air Museum': The Transformation of Constantinople in the Fifteenth-Century Western Spatial Imaginary", international study day "East and West: Cultural Transfers in Byzantium and Beyond", École française d'Athènes and National Hellenic Research Foundation (invited).
- **2024** "Problematising Orientalism: The Multiple Easts of the Middle Ages" [in Greek], workshop "Orientalisms and Colonialisms, 14th–16th Centuries", University of the Aegean, Mytilene (invited).
- **2023** "The Images of the East in Bertrandon de la Broquière's Travel Narrative", international conference "Travelers to the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires (12th–17th c.)", Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini, Venice (invited).

- **2023** "The Lives of the Italo-Greek Saints (10th–11th Century): Constructing Communities and Space in Southern Italy", international conference "Greek Literature in Italy", Universities of Uppsala and Palermo, Palermo (invited).
- **2023** "Manuel Chrysoloras and Cristoforo Buondelmonti on Fifteenth-Century Constantinople", international conference "Espressioni delle città di Bisanzio e del Rinascimento", Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini, Venice (invited).
- **2022** "Ethnographic Discourse and Florentine Identities: Crete as Cultural Space in Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Descriptio insulae Cretae*", Society for the Medieval Mediterranean International Conference, Rethymno.
- **2021** "Crusading Discourses of the Fifteenth Century", international conference "Handbook on the Later Crusades (1400–1700)", Goethe University Frankfurt (online).
- **2021** "An 'Emperor' under the Guise of a Moses: Narrative Representations of the East in the *Songe du Vieux Pèlerin*", international conference "The Palaiologan Romance in Context", University of the Aegean (online, invited).
- **2019** "Empire, Space and the 'Classical' Past: The Travels of Ciriaco d'Ancona (1443–1449)" [in Greek], conference "Local, Trans-national, Global", University of Thessaly, Volos (invited).

Earlier papers and invited lectures were given at, among others, the Universities of Heidelberg, Zurich and Haifa, the International Medieval Congress (Leeds, 2007) and the European Social Science History Conference (Vienna, 2014).

Fellowships and awards

- **2014** Award for the doctoral thesis, Stauferstiftung Göppingen, Germany
- **2010** DAAD research fellowship, Historisches Seminar, University of Heidelberg
- **1996–1997** Onassis Foundation scholarship for postgraduate studies, University of Liège
- **1994–1995** Erasmus scholarship, State Scholarships Foundation (IKY), University of Liège

Editorial, peer-review and professional activities

- **Editorial experience:** co-editor of three volumes (Brepols 2026, Routledge 2017, Harrassowitz 2010) and of an anthology of late medieval political theory (2016), and editor of a university textbook (Hellenic Open University, 2026); see Publications.
- **Peer review:** *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*; *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*; *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean*.
- **Research evaluation:** doctoral research proposals, University of Crete; postdoctoral research projects, General Secretariat for Research and Technology (2013–2015).
- **Academic appointments:** member of more than twenty electoral and evaluation committees for faculty appointments and promotions at Greek universities (since 2020).
- **Academic administration:** Director of the Section of Ancient Greek and Roman, Byzantine and Medieval History, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2019–2020, 2026-2027); Coordinator of the Department's Internal Evaluation Team (2023–2024, 2025–2026); Coordinator of the module "Byzantine and Western World" and member of the Programme Committee "European Culture", Hellenic Open University (since 2017).
- **Memberships:** Society for the Medieval Mediterranean; Hellenic Historical Society; Association of Greek Historians.

Teaching and supervision

- Undergraduate and postgraduate teaching at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki since 2007, on medieval Western history, medieval political thought, gender and sexuality, medieval cities, the Kingdom of Sicily, the crusades, and Byzantium and the West; further teaching at the Hellenic Open University (since 2008), the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Ionian University.

- Supervision of three doctoral theses (in progress), one postdoctoral project (2024), and nine MA theses (2016–2025); member of doctoral advisory and examination committees at three Greek universities.

Languages

- **Modern languages:** Greek (native); English, French, German and Italian (fluent)
- **Source languages:** Ancient and medieval Greek; classical and medieval Latin; medieval French