

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ
ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ

ΤΜΗΜΑ ΡΩΣΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
ΚΑΙ ΣΛΑΒΙΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ

ΔΙΑΛΕΞΗ

Του Δρς Jiří Dynda

Ερευνητή του Ινστιτούτου Σλαβονικών Σπουδών
της Ακαδημίας Επιστημών της Τσεχίας με θέμα:

The Saint and the Idols: Representations of Slavic Deities in the Hagiographies of St. Otto of Bamberg

Τετάρτη 13 Νοεμβρίου 2024, ώρα 15.00, Αίθουσα 209
Φιλοσοφική Σχολή, Πανεπιστημιούπολη Ζωγράφου

Η διάλεξη θα πραγματοποιηθεί στα Αγγλικά και είναι ανοιχτή σε όλους.



The lecture will present the historical survey of the pagan religions of the Polabian Slavs, with a particular focus on the case study of Saint Otto of Bamberg, the so-called Apostle of the Pomeranians. In addition, it will examine the approach of his hagiographers toward the Slavic deities and their visual representations.

With regard to the visual representation of Slavic pagan deities, such as statues, relief woodcuts and war banners, a considerable corpus of information is available from a variety of medieval Christian authors. These accounts, however, also suggest that a material and artistic conception of Slavic deities was not a necessary condition for their representation in the world. As evidenced by the existence of statues of deities, including many-headed ones, and their other visual expressions, it is notable that some deities were not represented by any material form at all (*nullae sunt effigies expressae*, as Helmold of Bosau puts it).

In this lecture and against this backdrop, I will focus on the biographies of Otto of Bamberg, who sought to Christianize the twelfth-century Pomeranians through peaceful and diplomatic means. By presenting a comprehensive overview of the various figurative, metonymic, and non-figurative representations of Pomeranian deities, as documented by the Otto's biographers (Herbord, Ebbo, and the Prüfening Anonym), I aim to examine the ways in which medieval Christian authors conceptualized Slavic paganism and its deities. Nevertheless, in addition to this discursive analysis of sources and focus on semiotics of divine representations, I aim to provide insights into the Slavic emic understanding of their gods and their complex relationship with medieval politics, power relations, war, economy, and agriculture, showcasing a novel approach to the religious tradition of Polabian Slavs.

