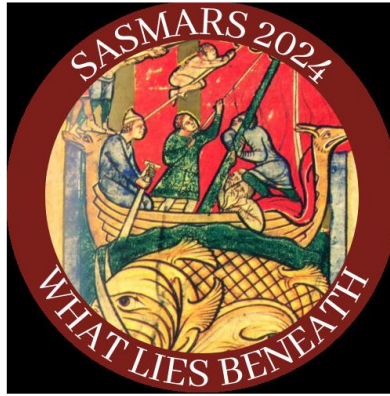




SASMARS 2024

‘WHAT LIES BENEATH’

CALL FOR PAPERS

PROPOSITION OF NORCIA CAMILLA

FROM THESSALY TO NORTH EUROPE: A COMMON MYTHOLOGICAL UNDERLYING STRATUM

ABSTRACT:

Greece, 7th century B.C.: In the mountainous region of Thessaly an ancient mythological tradition emerges: the monstrous Centaur clan instills fear in the polis, promising chaos and violence. Moving to the rhythms of Dionysian cymbals alongside Nymphs and Satyrs, they act in the half-light, often in withdrawn. They await the Anthesterias, when their master, Dionysus, releases them from infernal chains, allowing them to emerge from the underlying stratum in search of women and sustenance, marking a cyclical renewal of life.

Northern Europe, 1400: In the coldest and most isolated areas, a popular belief takes hold among commoners. Sounding like a village legend, it draws on ancestral notions known to all. On the twelve nights of Christmas, a formidable creature emerges from underground, powerful and ravenous. Stealthily navigating the night, it is massive, black, hairy, and emits a screeching sound with each step. It's the Krampus, St. Nicholas' demonic assistant.

What underlies this ambivalent and apotropaic figure? Why the association with St. Nicholas? Most importantly, what connects the underworld, specifically the underlying stratum, to these ancient folk traditions? By tracing the footsteps of these monsters, we unravel their history and delve into the mysteries beneath their fur and the earth we tread daily.

An epochal revelation is poised to restore coherence to the intricate tapestry of folk traditions, not only reinstating Greece as the epicenter of modern culture but also highlighting the Middle Ages as a pivotal era in safeguarding ancient cultures that continue to shape our contemporary heritage.

AFFILIATION:

PhD student at the Université de Louvain (UCL); researcher at the Institut de Civilisation, Art et Lettres (INCAL) and Centre d'étude des mondes antiques (CEMA).

CONTACT DETAILS:

Institutional: camilla.norcia@uclouvain.be

Personal: camillanorcia@gmail.com

BIOGRAPHY:

2021: Graduated in Classical Philology (UnivAQ), after an Erasmus+ stay at Uliège, where I underwent comprehensive training in Greek Historiography and Religion under the supervision of professor V. Pirenne (College de France), who proposed me to start a PhD with her. For eight months, she contributed to my academic training through periodic evaluations. Due to a lack of funds, the project could not materialise.

2022: research collaborator in G. Caneva's *PHRC* project.

2023: PhD at UCLouvain with an interdisciplinary project intitled 'The Myth of the Greek Centaur under the Prism of Animal Studies' and supported by several English universities.