

LECTURES AT THE ACADEMY

Luisa Nardini, Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America
Compositional Strategies in the Creation of New Mass Formularies:
The Case of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Southern Italy

Tuesday, December 7, 4:00 pm
5th Floor Conference Room
Italian Academy for Advanced Studies
1161 Amsterdam Avenue

Abstract: The feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord (6 August) is not found in the earliest liturgical Gregorian and Roman sources and is only occasionally present in books copied after the tenth century. Beneventan manuscripts are among the earliest and richest sources for this feast. They display a rich corpus of music and texts that includes three different Mass formularies, Tropes, Sequences, Prosulas, an Office, a Responsory, used as a processional song to be performed before the mass, and a benediction for the squeezing of the new grape at Mass. This articulated corpus testifies of the complex work that medieval liturgists and musicians often accomplished to compose new formularies. The recourse to preexisting music belonging to different traditions (Gregorian, Byzantine, and Old Beneventan in this case) was matched by a corresponding effort to create new music. The two local formularies, datable one before and the other after the half of the eleventh century, also testify of the aesthetic shift recognizable in other artistic productions of the time.

Biographical statement: Luisa Nardini, earned her postdoctoral Licence in Mediaeval Studies at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto in 2004 and her PhD in Musicology at the University of Rome "La Sapienza" in 2001. A former lecturer at the University of California, Santa Barbara and an Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellow at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, she is currently an associate research fellow at Columbia University–Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America. She has published articles and delivered conference presentations on Gregorian chant, medieval theory, tropes, and eighteenth-century keyboard instruments and is presently working on her book "Music from the South: Edition and Study of the non-Standard Proper Mass Items in Beneventan Manuscripts".