Ca' Foscari University of Venice

ITNUN

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Beneficiary: Ca' Foscari University of Venice (I), Department of Humanities

MARIE CURIE ACTIONS

The Project

Recent history demonstrates the importance of ***religious belief*** as a *fundamental historical force*. In studying *early medieval Europe*, we see how crucial it has been in the creation of our **identity** today, underlying our ***belief systems, cultural assumptions*** and ***core values***, as well as our institutions. The use of ***anthropology, archaeology*** and ***art history*** as part of *multidisciplinary* approach helps us pose questions of immediate concern on **ETHNICITY** and **NATIONALITY**, **WOMEN** and **GENDER**, **IDENTITY** and **BELIEF**.

This research project examines **Italian Female Monasteries from 700 to 1100.**

To understand ***medieval society***, it is essential to understand ***medieval monasticism***, and crucial to include a key player like Italy. An integrated and broad-sweeping perspective approaches the study of ***Italian religious wome***n as a laboratory for exploring the complex ***relationship between gender and power***.

Before 1100, monasticism was not the essentially individualistic contemplative lifestyle which it is today in western societies, but an ***essential motor of political, economic, social and cultural life, as well as a spiritual choice***. In addition, while men had the choice of exercising power and influence through a variety of means, either in or outside the church, as rulers, military men, priests and bishops, lawyers or merchants, ***women were often in the position of exercising such power and authority only indirectly***: if they were not queens, they were almost all abbesses.

Royal or aristocratic monasteries have left sources detailing the names, background and activities of nuns. These sources, spread out in time and space, are representative of the ***political and ethnic composition of Italian society***. To study the evolution of nunneries makes it possible to ***trace changes in Italian political, social and cultural patterns***, with the intermingling of family and politics.

Understanding the tensions between early medieval Italian society's ***male-controlled political and religious power,*** and the great ***influence of noble women*** as queens and as nuns, is essential for grasping ***women's ideological and spiritual power in Italy*** and their influence within the elite and in society generally, and to recognize the different and changing configurations of medieval Italy. The latter is essential for grasping some ***issues still at stake in Italian society today***

More generally, a study of **key mechanisms** concerning the **relationship between women, religious belief and behaviour**, and politics and society can, through comprehending these in the past, illuminate **key aspects of modern European societies**.

Monasteries

San Salvatore/Santa Giulia, Brescia

History

The monastery of S. Salvatore in Brescia was founded in 757 by the Lombard King Desiderius and his wife Queen Ansa. Later it became better known as Sta Giulia. Its first abbess was Desiderius' and Ansa's daughter Anselberga. It attracted the daughters, sisters and nieces of the most elevated aristocratic family both in the Lombard kingdom and, after its end in 774, under the rule of the Carolingians in Italy, then that of the Emperor Berengar. Emperor Lothar's daughter Gisla, then his son Louis II's daughter of the same name, as well as Berengar's daughter, were nuns and abbesses there, and several princesses and queens were in charge of the affairs of the abbey.

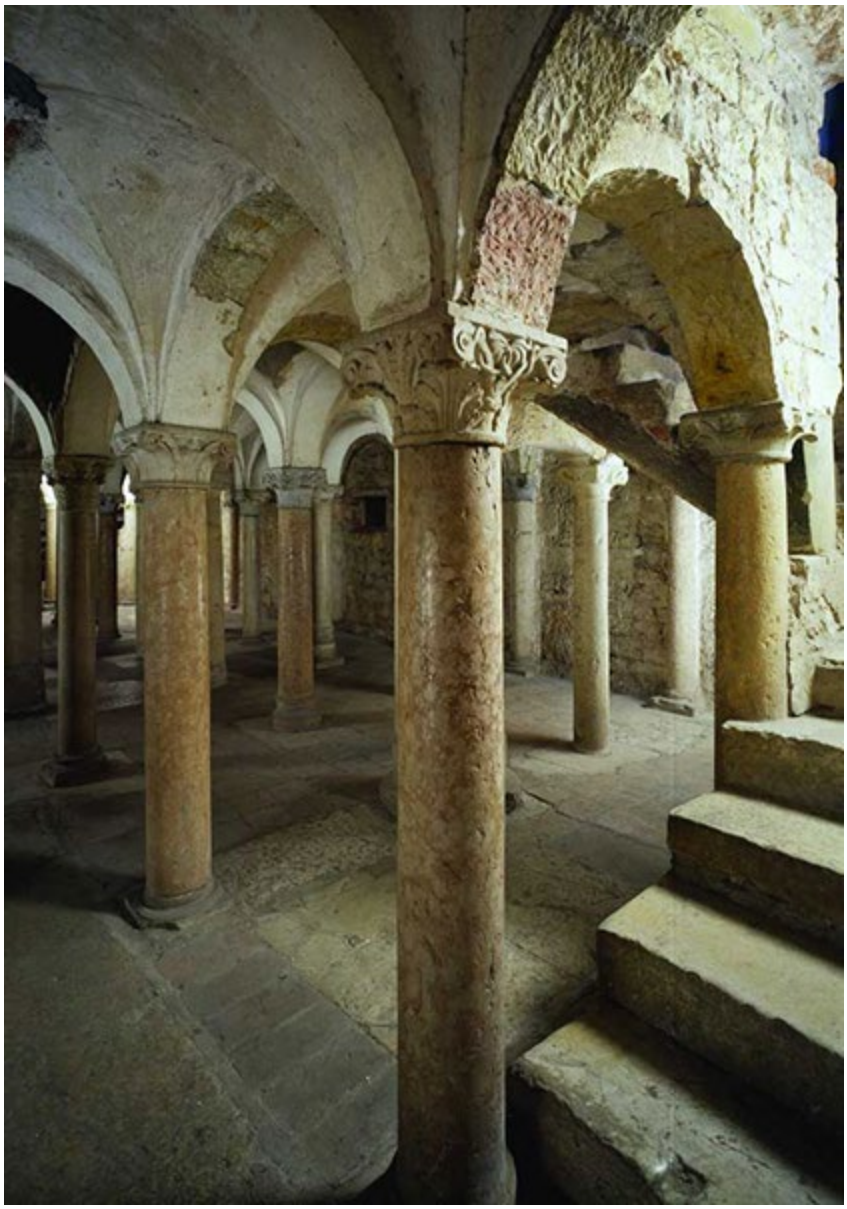
While the authority of the abbesses was in theory restricted to the monastery, in practice they wielded considerable economic, political and social influences on account of both the enormous amount of property they owned, and of their social and political status in relation to the rulers and powerful men with whom they were associated.

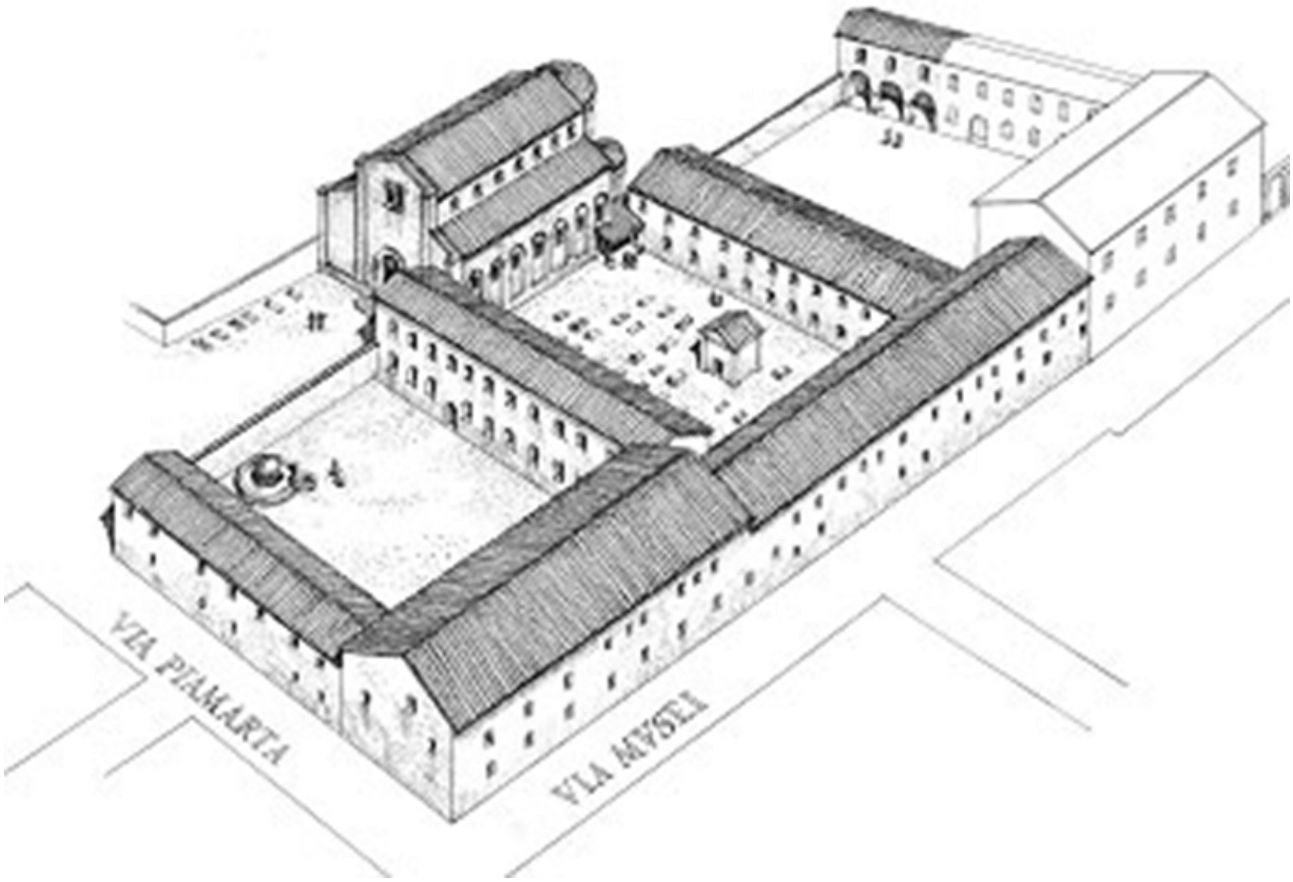
Moreover, the monastery was an important cultural centre, producing painting, metalwork and books, including a Necrology (Book of the Dead for whom the nuns prayed to preserve the memory of the family), a rare and valuable document allowing a knowledge of the individual nuns rarely found at this period.

The monastery continued as one of Italy's main female houses until its dissolution in the 17th century.

Sources and further reading:

- **San Salvatore/Santa Giulia, Brescia**
- **Santa Sofia, Benevento**
- **San Zaccaria, Venezia**
- **Sant' Andrea Maggiore, Ravenna**
- **San Ciriaco/Santa Maria in Via Lata, Roma**




VIA PIAMARTA
VIA MYSEL

Monasteries

Santa Sofia, Benevento

History

The *Beneventan Annals* tell us that the church of S. Sofia was begun by Duke Gisulf II (742-51) of Benevento and finished by Arechis II (758-87). The latter was the founder of the female monastery established there, and completed before 774, on the model of S. Salvatore of Brescia. Arechis appointed his sister abbess of the new monastery, and granted it numerous properties, which made it one of the richest in Lombard Southern Italy. The monastic complex, whose dedication recalls the Haghia Sofia, was also enriched with the relics of the 12 Brothers in 760 and of St Mercurius in 768, thus turning it into the nucleus of ducal power and of the sacred geography of the city.

Arechis placed the monastery under the authority of Montecassino. Around 940, possibly as a result of the weakening prestige and political weight of S. Sofia, the female monastery was substituted by men, and in its new incarnation, became independent of Montecassino, which attempted to retake control of it in the second half fo the 11th century. S. Sofia

opposed this attempt with the compilation of the *Chronicon S. Sofiae*, a catalogue of charters compelted in 1119, and still out main source for the study of the abbey.

The monastery of Arechis was destroyed by an earthquake in 986. The present-day complex ws built tin the second half of the 12th century, then abandoned in 1595. It now houses the Museo del Sannio. The church was severely damaged in the earthquakes of 1608 and 1702, and was restored before 1705 in the Baroque style, then again in 1957, when it was returned as close as possible to its original style.

Sources and further reading:

- **San Salvatore/Santa Giulia, Brescia**
- **Santa Sofia, Benevento**
- **San Zaccaria, Venezia**
- **Sant' Andrea Maggiore, Ravenna**
- **San Ciriaco/Santa Maria in Via Lata, Roma**

Monasteries

San Zaccaria, Venezia

History

For the two centuries after its foundation before 829 the monastery of S. Zaccaria was probably the most valued in the city. Its first appearance in the will of Doge Justinian Particiaco that year saw the start of its exceedingly close association with ducal power in the city.

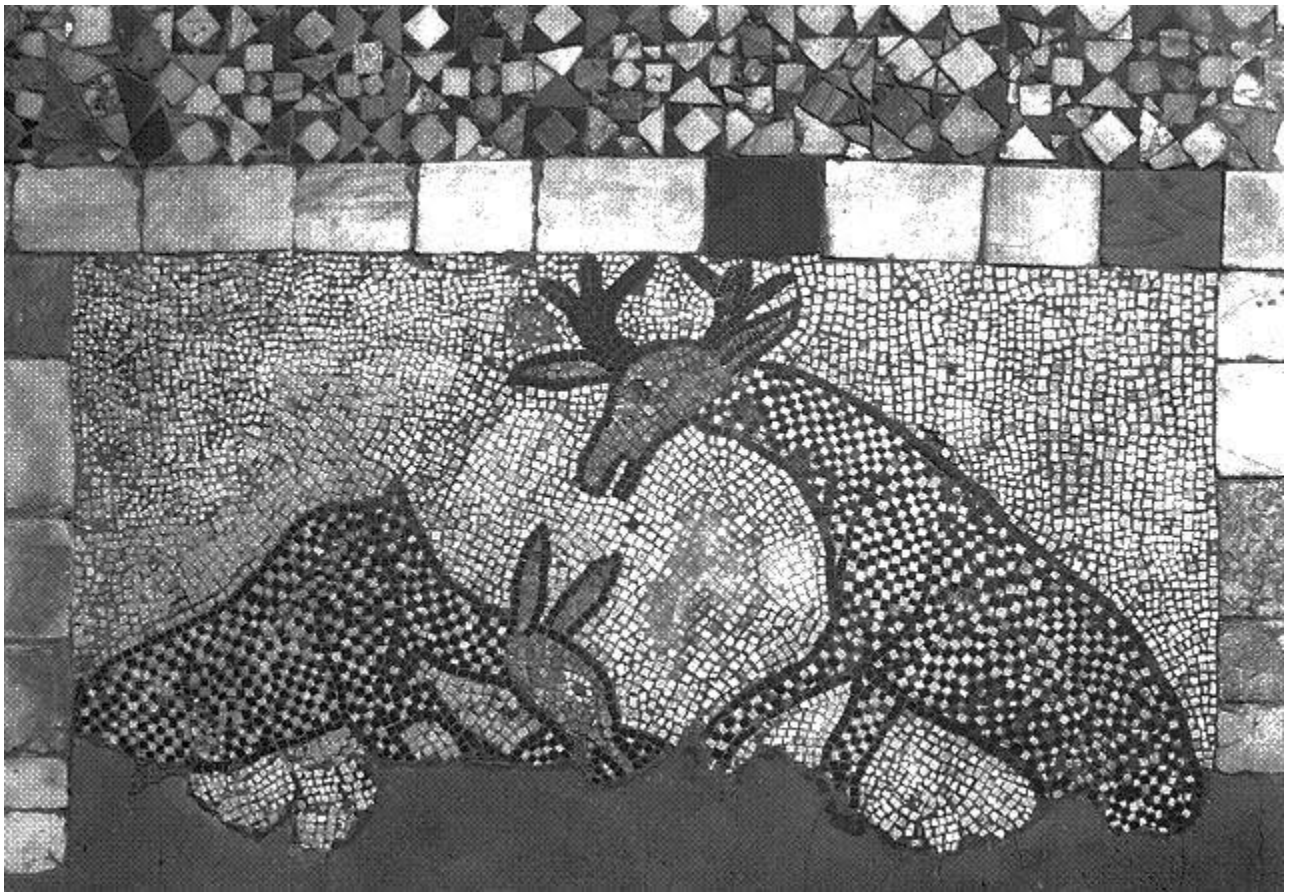
Although endowed by a member of that family, whose widow and daughter-in-law became nuns there, the specificity of S. Zaccaria resides not so much in the very prominent role that it played in the politics of the developing Venice, welcoming emperors, burying doges and keeping their memory, and reconciling warring parties, but even more so in the fact that, unlike many contemporary religious houses, it was never associated with one family of doges, but with the support and spiritual welfare of the Doge ex officio. This very close connection, making the monastery effectively a ducal one, not only gave it exceptional political influence, but also contributed to spreading its reputation well beyond the city, so

that it was the only Venetian monastery to receive property grants from men and women on the Terraferma, on account of this connection.

The monastery's remained powerful but less uniquely so once the doges became more a figurehead from the 12th century onwards, but it continued to be the convent of choice for the aristocratic ladies of the city until its dissolution under Napoleon Bonaparte.

Sources and further reading:

- **San Salvatore/Santa Giulia, Brescia**
- **Santa Sofia, Benevento**
- **San Zaccaria, Venezia**
- **Sant' Andrea Maggiore, Ravenna**
- **San Ciriaco/Santa Maria in Via Lata, Roma**



Monasteries

Sant' Andrea Maggiore, Ravenna

History

The monastery, founded in the 6th century, was at first male, but by 1031, having incorporated and amalgamated the two female monasteries of Sta Maria in Celeseo and S. Martino, it became female under the rule of an abbess.

A unique feature of the monastery's archives consists in the existence of a practically uninterrupted list of abbesses, both while it was Sta Maria ad Celeseo, and after 1031. This shows both the close association of the monastery with the ruling families of the aristocracy of Ravenna and its archbishop, to whom several of the abbesses were related and interconnected in economic terms, to manage and cultivate considerable estates in the province of Romagna.

Sources and further reading:

- **San Salvatore/Santa Giulia, Brescia**
- **Santa Sofia, Benevento**
- **San Zaccaria, Venezia**
- **Sant' Andrea Maggiore, Ravenna**
- **San Ciriaco/Santa Maria in Via Lata, Roma**

RAVENNE Ville Antique de l'Etat de l'Eglise .

Monasteries

San Ciriaco/Santa Maria in Via Lata, Roma

History

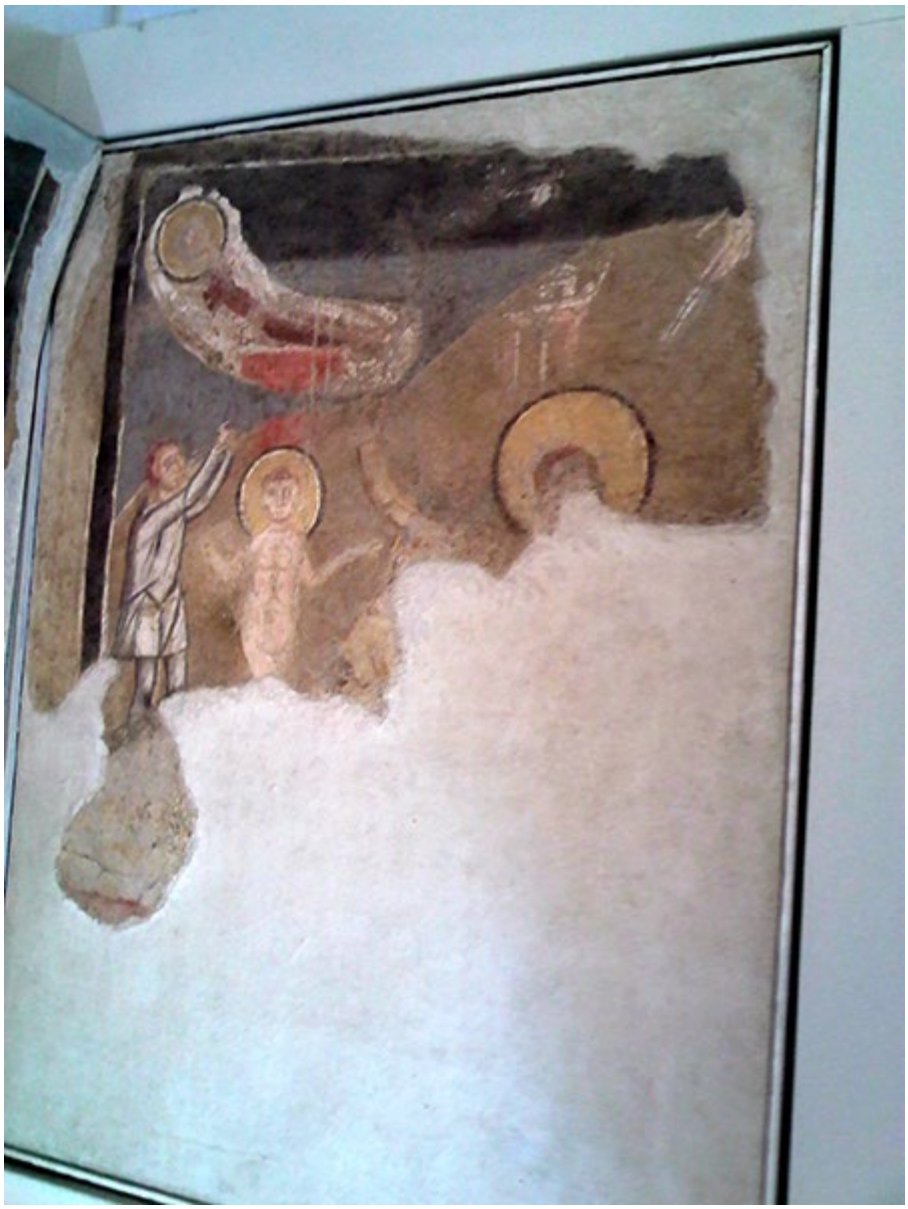
The monastery was founded, probably in 946, by Prince Alberic's three cousins Marozia, Stefania and Theodora, perhaps as part of his planned revival of monasticism in the city under his rule. It was closely associated with his family, and contained the relic of the head of St Cyriacus, brought into Rome from the catacombs. Several high-born women from the Roman aristocracy were nuns and abbesses there during the first hundred years of its existence.

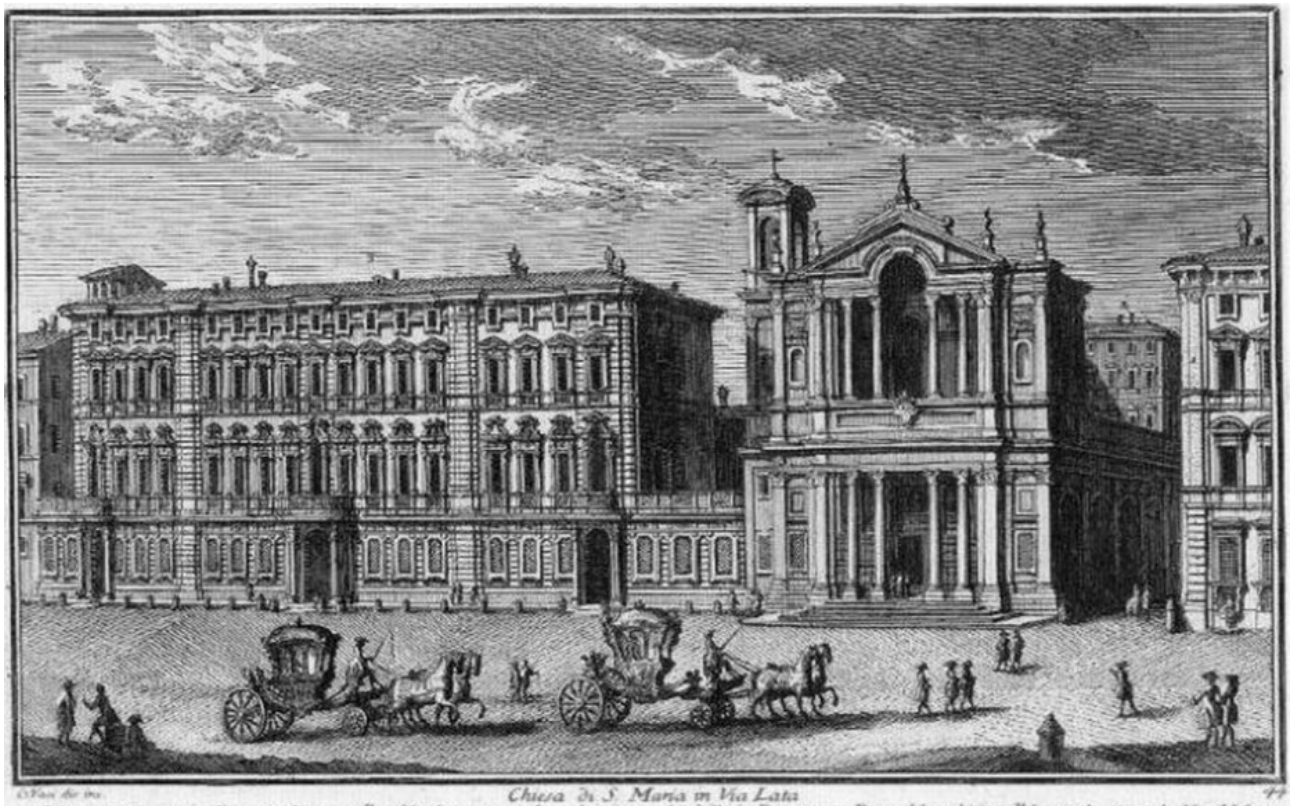
The monastery was given by Alberic then by others an considerable amount of property, both in and outside the city, and proceeded to develop into a major landowner into the 11th century, as well as receiving and producing artistic works of great quality. It became amalgamated with the church of Sta Maria in Via Lata.

While the monastery was dissolved in 1435, the church is still visible in the centre of Rome.

Sources and further reading:

- **San Salvatore/Santa Giulia, Brescia**
- **Santa Sofia, Benevento**
- **San Zaccaria, Venezia**
- **Sant' Andrea Maggiore, Ravenna**
- **San Ciriaco/Santa Maria in Via Lata, Roma**





Chiesa di S. Maria in Via Lata

1 Palazzo de Doganoli 2 Parte del Palazzo Pamfili, che corrisponde su la piazza del Collegio Romano 3 e Parte del medesimo Palazzo, che sta su la Via del Corso

MedItaNunC

Notes to the database entries:

1. Fundamental principles for the structuring of the database:

The purpose of the database ***MedItaNunC*** is to provide an usable and easy-to-interrogate corpus of all known people associated with the five monasteries whose data it includes. The database is built on two pillars: the prosopographical data of people, and the monastery-based data. Ideally, they should recoup each other, so that one can access all names from either departure point. All names are clickable on, and cross-referenced across the whole database every time they appear, with all the information available for each person from whatever point of access.

1. The prosopographical data.

This includes the names, status, extended family and relations, economic transactions involving the person concerned, and any other data such as association of the person with relics or artefacts, for

- All nuns and abbesses
- All other people who have some association with the monastery, whether through involvement in economic transactions, political activity, family groups, gifts and any other form of connection.

  The large category of 'Nuns' is further subdivided into 'Nuns without relations', ie names of nuns which appear in the sources once, and have no means of further identification, and 'Nuns with relations', including all others of whom anything more than the name is known.

  The category of 'External People' includes every person with a connection to the monastery, directly or indirectly documented. At this point in the work, such entries refer to anyone, from a person leasing a piece of land from the monastery to rulers (imperial, royal, ducal, local), BUT ONLY in the context of that specific relationship or transaction. This explains the presence of rulers such as Charlemagne or Alberic mentioned in the context and with the dates as they arise from the current sources, rather than including a complete history of this person's known activities. For that reason, a limit has been set to the number of people included, for example in the *Liber Vita* of Brescia, where among the names mentioned as part of the commemorative entries, have been included those of some importance, for example the bishops of Brescia, but not all others, such as the names of all the cathedral clergy individually recorded.

2. The monastery data

The information is divided into areas which are all accessible through clicking on the title. It is divided into the list of nuns, the entries in necrologies, the transactions into which the monastery is involved, its relics, artefacts, and when appropriate, the secondary monasteries over which it has control. All information is clickable and cross-referenced to the names, tables and information panels in the prosopography.

2. The main sources used are the following and a direct link has been provided for them when they are available on the Web:

Brescia:

- U. Ludwig et al. eds, *Der Memorial- und Liturgiecodex von San Salvatore/Santa Giulia in Brescia*, MGH. Libri memoriales et necrologia nova ser., 4 (Hannover, 2000), web site .
- E. Barbieri, I. Rapisarda, G. Cossandi eds, *Le carte del monastero di S. Giulia di Brescia I (759-1170)*

Benevento

- J-M. Martin ed., *Chronicon Sctae Sophiae (cod. Vat. Lat. 4939)* (Rome, 2000)

Ravenna

- R. Benericetti, *Le carte ravennati del secolo decimo. IV: Archivi minori* (Faenza, 2010).
- R. Benericetti, *Le carte ravennati del secolo undicesimo*: *Archivio del monastero di Sant'Andrea Maggiore V (aa.1000-1049)* (Faenza, 2009).
- R. Benericetti, *Le carte ravennati del secolo undicesimo*: *Archivi minori.Monastero di Sant'Andrea Maggiore VI (aa. 1050-1098)* (Faenza, 2010).

Rome

- P. Egidi ed., *Necrologi e libri affini della provincia romana* (Roma, 1908), web site .
- F. Martinelli, F., *Primo trofeo della S.ma Croce eretta in Roma nella Via Lata …e chiese detti Santi Stefano, Ciriaco e Nicolo di Camigliano* (Rome, 1655), pp. 57-71.
- L. M. Hartmann ed., *Ecclesiae S. Maria in Via Lata Tabularium*, I (Vienna, 1895-1913).

3. Abbreviations and style:

(nun): unconfirmed but supposition based on parallel entry with that of attested nuns in the same necrology

The titles and functions are in English if obvious: eg king, doge, bishop, notary, and in Latin if specifically medieval or associated with a specific function: *advocatus, rectrix*

The definition of properties and contracts is in English if it one which has remained in current use: land, vineyard, lease, emphyteusis, investiture, but in Latin if specific to the area or to the medieval period: eg *condome, sala pedepladana*

The names of rulers are in English if they are in current use: eg Emperor Otto, Berengar of Friuli, Pope Gregory V, Theophylact. The same rule applies to place names: eg Venice, Tuscany. The names of churches has been left in the original form if it has now disappeared, or in current Italian if extant.

Individual names have been anglicised when they are in common use eg John, Peter, Stephen, Martin, George, Constantine, Justinian, Guy, Hugh (but Ugo/Ugone has been kept); English spellings have been used instead of Latin/Italian ones eg Stephania, Joanna, Theodora, Christina, Bertha, Agatha rather than Stefania, Giovanna, Teodora, Cristina, Berta, Agata.

Spelling variations of most uncommon names have been standardized: the first entry in bold is the standardized form, the others are forms found in the sources.

Aso/Asa= Acio; Aczo; Azo; Azzo; Azone; Azzone; Atjus, Acza

Aio = Aione

Atto = Ato

Baruncius = Baruncus

Bonus = Bonius

Constantia = Constantie; Constancia

Formosa = Fermosa

Fosca = Fuscha; Fusca

Gerardus = Garardus; Girardus

Gisla = Gisella

Imelda = Imilda; Immila

Lavinia = Labinia

Lucia = Liucia**;** Liuta; Lutja

Marozza = Marocia; Maroza; Marozia

Some names are recorded in documents with a different initial: in this case, they are found under the first name as entered below:

Bercunda-Percunda

Berlinda-Perlinda

Christina-Schristina

Crimera-Grimoara

Ermengarda-Irminrat

Adelardus-Donaldus.

Dates:

Sovereigns and rulers are entered with the dates of their reigns or rule. When known, the dates of the nuns are those of their entry into the monastery, death, transactions, abbacy - or whichever of these is known. If none are known (in some cases in the Necrology of S. Ciriaco), the date according to the context is 11th century.

For the relatives of the oblate nuns of S. Salvatore (other than the emperors), the dates entered here pro tem are the same as those of their female relatives' entry into the monastery.

Events

Aperitivo Archeologico a Torcello:

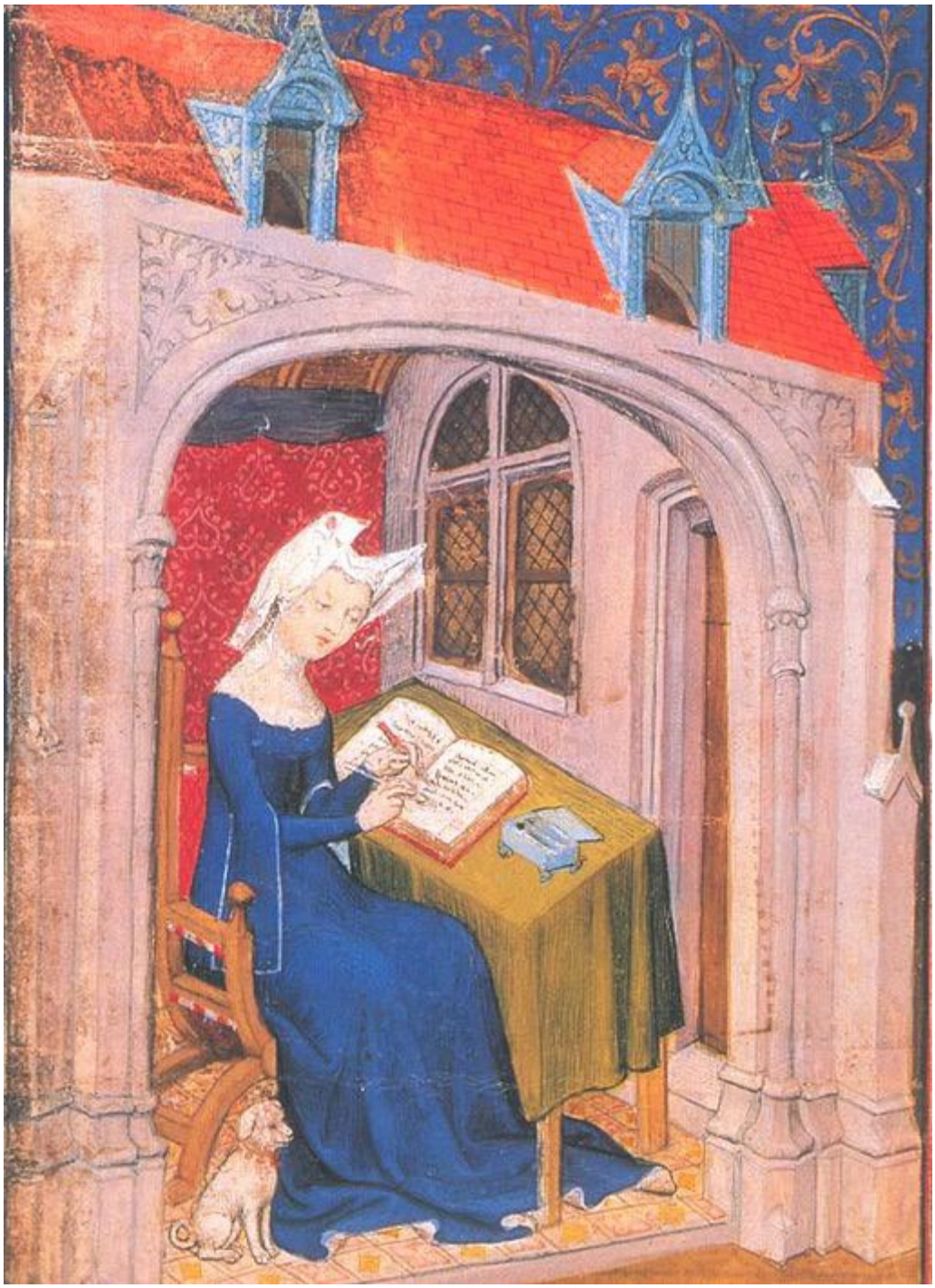
- Un'isola di Monasteri
- Una Laguna di Donne
- Archeologia e Storia

Venetonight - La Notte Europea dei Ricercatori

L’intreccio della nascente Venezia. Sculture, iscrizioni e narrazioni della Venezia del IX secolo

VISITA

con Diego Calaon e Veronica West-Harling



Project Exhibition panels

Exhibition panels for the Conference of the ITNUN project on 4 May 2017

Presentation of the Database MedItaNunC

Video presentation of the functioning and search facilities of the Database MedItaNunC

Conference 4 May 2017

This workshop comes towards the end of a Marie Curie Fellowship project.

It has two aims.

Focus news: Ricerca sul ruolo di potere delle monache medievali

Donne potenti e determinate, le monache medievali sono figure cruciali per esplorare dal punto di vista storico la relazione complessa, e sempre attuale, tra genere e potere.

Presentation of the project