

PYTHAGORAS BYZANTINUS Seminar

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ABSTRACTS

The Reception of Neo-Pythagorean Theories in Michael Choniates' *Theano*

Marco Carrozza

(Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

The aim of the paper is to analyse the complex interweaving between Neo-Pythagorean theories and orthodox doctrine in the ἔκφρασις of the fig tree which appears in *Theano*, a little-known poem by the archbishop of Athens Michael Choniates (1140-1220), also considering that the author has intended to shape, through this rhetorical device, a symbolic and allusive depiction of Trinitarian Ontology.

In the description of the tree, several arithmological references emerge which will be interpreted and related to early and contemporary Christian thought, and which encompassed various features typical of Neo-Pythagorean philosophy. The ἔκφρασις, quite convoluted because of the intentional allegorical portrayal of the arboreal ramifications, therefore takes the form of an arithmosophical imaging full of references to Pythagoreanism and its subsequent developments.

The Reception of Pythagoras among Intellectuals of the Palaiologan Era

Pantelis Golitsis

(Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Like Plato and Aristotle, Pythagoras was either totally condemned or praised for some parts of his intellectual endeavours by Palaiologan scholars. Unlike any other ancient philosopher, however, Pythagoras had a fervent and sincere admirer for what he achieved (and not for alleged anticipations of Christian doctrines), namely Theodore Metochites.