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NEWS, NOTES & NARRATIVES

Supernatural
Belief
Narratives



Carrassi, Vito. 2021. *Il lago e la città scomparsa. Una leggenda eziologica nel Gargano settentrionale*. (The Lake and the Vanished City: An Etiological Legend in the Northern Gargano). Bari, Italy: Edizioni di Pagina.

Il lago e la città scomparsa.

Una leggenda eziologica nel Gargano settentrionale.

(The Lake and the Vanished City: An Etiological Legend in the Northern Gargano)

Vito Carrassi

Lake Varano—along with the narrow isthmus separating it from the Adriatic Sea and the five towns standing around it (Ischitella, Carpino, Cagnano Varano, Rodi Garganico, Vico del Gargano)—is not only an enchanting piece of Gargano (Apulia, Southern Italy) landscape; it is also at the centre of an oral narrative tradition that is here examined in its wholeness (historical background, written and literary sources, ethnographic data, narratological and comparative analysis). It is an etiological legend, namely a narrative explaining the origin and the features of something or someone. As a mixture of history, myth, and vernacular beliefs, this legend tells an extraordinary event, i.e., the sinking of an ancient and prosperous city, Uria—punished by a biblical deluge due to the sins of its inhabitants—and the resulting birth of the lake, the surrounding towns and the Annunziata shrine. This last one, according to the legend, was originally the outlying house of Nunzia, a young and pure woman, devoted to praying and spinning. Nunzia is the key figure of the story: thanks to her miraculous ball of thread, she (along with her house) is the only survivor of the deluge and, at the same time, the founder of a new order, both geographical and spiritual, as symbolized by the holy crucifix worshipped within the shrine. As a form of space- and place-lore, as well as of religious tale, this legend tells about the ideas, beliefs, and images raised by a particular landscape, and the relationships the human communities establish with the territory they inhabit.

The book includes eight chapters, among which are: Narrating the Origin and the Features of a Territory; Uria, Between History and Myth; The Religious Component; and The Legend in the Web, Plastic Arts, and Folk Music. The book is available at Amazon.it.