**ISCoLDD: The First International Sicilian Conference on**

**Language Documentation and Description**

Siracusa, Castello Ferediciano “Maniace” in Ortigia

*26 February – 2 March 2014*

The VolkswagenStiftung, in the context of the DoBeS project for the documentation of the endangered languages of the world, has the pleasure and privilege to organise The First “International Sicilian Conference on Language Documentation and Description (ISCoLDD)”. This conference is the very first ever held in Sicily on language documentation and description and is organised by Graziano Savà, native *Aretuseo* (i.e. from Siracusa) and principal investigator and main scientific supervisor of the DoBeS-funded project “A documentation of Bayso (Cushitic) and Haro (Omotic): two Afroasiatic endangered languages of the Abbaya Lake, in the Ethiopian Rift Valley”.

The organisation of the ISCoLDD is integral part of the Bayso and Haro project. The idea of organising it in Siracusa has several advantages in terms of costs and, simply, happiness! Siracusa is a veritable jewel. It would probably be the town with the highest living standard in the World, if parameters such as weather, food, history and cultural events would be taken into account together with wealth in making such a kind of living-quality ranking (the result nowadays is that such impossibly cold places such as Vancouver are elected as places which is best to live in, amazing ; )!!).

Siracusa, between February and March, period in which the ISCoLDD is organised, will display an astonishingly beautiful whether that will make it hard for you to sit inside and listen to the talks. For this reason, we will apply the highest quality parameters for the selection of the presentations. Otherwise, the risk is that you get bored and will prefer to get an ice-cream on a terrace in front of the *Mare Nostrum* rather than sleep in front of a bad relator…...

Already 11 papers are scheduled. 10 will be presented by the team members of the Bayso and Haro Project and one by a Siracusan scholar, Fabio Salerno, who has recently published a book in collaboration with Salvo Adorno on the memories and impressions of people living in the highly polluted industrial area of Priolo, just North of Siracusa. The Sicilian language, of course, has an important role is Fabio’s talk. Additional 40 papers will be accepted.

The venue is the amazingly beautiful Castello Maniace, on the tip of the historical Island of Ortigia, the main and real historical center and beating heart of Siracusa. The Maniace is a magic place, where history, present and future mix to define the minds of the Siracusan people deep inside their genes, as reflected in their honest, life-loving, family devoted and beauty-admiring character and behaviour. Beyond the Castle, you will breathe all around the shining past glory of Siracusa, the greatest capital of the whole Greek colonies on the Jonic sea and beyond. This happens few centuries after its foundation by Archia in 734 BC, much, much earlier than the date of foundation of Rome (a time in which northern Europe people were not even able to write in any kind of piece of paper!!!!).

In spite of the fact that the Castle is called after the Bizantin General “Maniace”, who has stolen from the Siracusans the body of their Saint Patron *Santa Lucia* (still, alas, in Venice), it is the probably the first ever example of wonderfully shaped and ingeneered Federician castle, built in the 13th Century by Federico II di Svevia. The Castle is presently part of the Faculty of Architectue of Siracusa University together with the old Caserma Abela, which is a de-militarised military post, taken from its war functions and totally devoted to culture and the training and formation of the best architects in the world. These scholars/artists are already doing a great job in Siracusa with astonishingly beautiful restoration and building projects, as you will clearly see and surely enjoy.

The dates of the ISCoLDD are from 26 February to 2 March 2014. The organisation of accommodation and car rental, as well as the answer to any other practical question is the job of a delicious Lady called Germana D’Amico. Please contact her for any query. She will provide any kind of accommodation for any need, from the smallest bed and breakfast, to the most luxurious five stars hotel. It is also possible to rent small apartments or villas by the sea, just 15 minutes away by car form the venue. You might also think about extending and enjoy your stay even longer. Think about that and contact Germana as soons as possible to make arrangements. Please use the email: **damicog@hotmail.it** and the telephone number: **0039.339.6389685.**

Any kind of paper on language documentation and descritpion are accepted and welcome. We expect also paper on musicology, written literary tradition and philology. Quality must be excellently high, as mentioned above, and there will be no discount for any highest ranking professors who think to have the door open only because of his/her name. I personally, Graziano Savà, will evaluate the papers and, if it is the case, reject with full justification. The only two invited speakers and Peter Austin form ELDP and Vera Szoelloezi-Brening form DoBeS.

Fees are 200 euros only for full professors, free for the others, including lower-ranking professors. Fees are to be paid in advance on a bank account number that will be communicated. I am doing it in a way to organise a fully typical, traditional, Sicilian catering all over the conference period, with delicious food and drinks (and waiters and waitresses) served continuously for free. Social nights and events are not official, but will be spontaneously organised by the participants themselves since Ortigia is extra-full of beautifully decorated and architecturally perfect bars, pubs, restaurants, wine-bar, snack bar, etc etc. all serving great and often innovative food based on our tradition. By the way, do not forget to visit the Caravaggio, as we from Siracusa call the painting “La deposizione di Santa Lucia” that the amazing painter Michelangelo da Merisi created and left in Siracusa on his way to Malta. The painting resides in the marvellous Chiesa di Santa Lucia alla Badia at Piazza Duomo, most probably the most beautiful Square in the world, where it is also visible the Cathedral of Siracusa, a Baroque stone jewel that was a Greek temple devoted to Minerva/Athena dating V centuries BC and still showing the original doric colons, the basement and the central cell in which Greek rites where performed.

Please let us know as soon as possible your willingness to take part to the ISCoLDD. The deadline for the presentation of papers is February 12. We expect from you a title in any language you prefer, as well as a half-page abstract. The papers will be, of course, published and the publication will be for free because financed by the Italian state and private sponsors. Please send the abstracts to iscoldd@gmail.com and visit us on Facebook.

All the best, and looking forward to meeting you in Sicily!!!!

Graziano