



HELLENIC LINK-MIDWEST
A SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL LINK WITH GREECE
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Reciting the Nation: Nikolaos Loukanes and the Poetics of a Renaissance Epos

On Sunday, April 27, 2025, Hellenic Link-Midwest will present Prof. Calliope Dourou in a lecture titled: “Reciting the Nation: Nikolaos Loukanes and the Poetics of a Renaissance Epos”. The event will take place at 3:00 pm at the lecture hall of the Holy Taxiarchai and Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, 7373 N Caldwell Ave, Niles, Illinois. Admission is free.

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This presentation will explore Nikolaos Loukanes' 1526 Iliad, the first printed rendition of Homer's epic in a modern language. Born at the dawn of the eventful sixteenth century, the Cinquecento of the startling transatlantic discoveries, the ceaseless Italian Wars, and the vociferous emergence of the Protestant Reformation, Nikolaos Loukanes, like so many of his erudite compatriots (e.g., Ianos Laskares, Markos Moussouros), ardently devoted himself to humanist intellectual endeavors aimed at instigating a revival of classical literature. Gravely concerned about the alarming Ottoman advance into European territory, the young author composed his adaptation of the Iliad in a period when hopes for a crusade against the Ottomans were still simmering if not running high. Published one year after Laskares' urgent plea to Charles V to organize a crusade against the Turks, Loukanes' Iliad could well have contributed to the cause of liberation in Greece, had the quest for a unified mobilization of the Christian powers against the Ottomans not been irreparably thwarted in the wake of the anti-imperialist League of Cognac and the subsequent Sack of Rome in 1527. Written in an era of profound ideological ferment that gradually culminated in a precocious conceptualization of national identity in Europe, Loukanes' patriotically imbued Iliad, long predating the nineteenth century Hellenic Library of Adamantios Koraes, offers a unique glimpse into fascinating pre-Enlightenment conceptualizations of post-Byzantine Greek identity.

Calliope Dourou is an Associate Professor (Instructional) in Modern Greek Literature and Culture in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Chicago. Before joining the University of Chicago, she was a Visiting Assistant Professor in Modern Greek in the Department of Classics at Harvard University, where she also completed her PhD in Modern Greek Literature. She specializes in modern Greek literature and cultural history. Her main research and teaching interests embrace, but are not limited, to the following areas: classical reception studies, Renaissance Hellenism, history of the Greek language, Greek modernism, and contemporary Greek cinema.