



# HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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## Upcoming Events

### POSTPONED \*\*\* Chicago Greeks at the Turn of the 20th Century \*\*\* POSTPONED

On Sunday December 13, 2020, at 3:00 pm, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Dr. Michael Davros in an online lecture titled "*Chicago Greeks at the Turn of the 20th Century*". Because of the pandemic, this lecture will be delivered online. ~~The Zoom link for this webinar is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84783181970>, and the webinar ID is: 847 8318 1970.~~

Dr. Davros will present archival research on Greeks from their early arrival in the city of Chicago. Greeks played a significant role in rebuilding the city after the Chicago Fire, yet confronted many of the same acculturation difficulties faced by all immigrants at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Greeks not only participated in the rebuilding of the city, but established a firm basis for cultural participation in their own community and in Chicago with the establishment of educational institutions, businesses, and churches which helped to promote and maintain Hellenic culture. Many Greek immigrants faced prejudice and discrimination, but managed not only to survive but thrive despite disruptions of their communities. The lecture will also turn to focus on problems associated with the displacement of Greektown by the relocation efforts of Mayor Richard J. Daley to situate the University of Illinois at Chicago in its current campus.

*Dr. Michael G. Davros*, teaches in the Departments of English, at Northeastern Illinois University, and as an adjunct at Oakton Community College. As Honors Program Professor at Northeastern, he has taken students on Field Study tours to many locations in Greece. He has lectured throughout the United States, in Greece, and in India on diverse topics in Greek American and African American literature. As author of the photohistory *Greeks in Chicago*, Davros worked with Alice Kopan and Steve Frangos to memorialize many of the photographs of DePaul University Professor Andrew Kopan. In his courses, he teaches the literature of conflict and features Greek-American authors as well as other ethnic authors. Davros holds degrees from Tulane University, Louisiana State University and a doctorate degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

### Remembering Sappho

On Sunday, January 17, 2021 at 3:00 pm, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Patricia Graham-Skoul in an online

lecture titled "*Remembering Sappho*". Because of the pandemic, this lecture will be delivered online. Information on how to join the lecture will be provided separately by email and regular mail.

According to one ancient account, Solon, the Athenian poet and politician credited as the "*Father of Democracy*," asked his nephew to teach him a song by Sappho. When someone asked Solon why he made this request, he responded "*So, once I learn it, I may die.*"

Sappho, a lyric poet from the island of Lesbos about 600 BCE, composed poems to and about women that won the admiration of contemporary and future poets, historians, philosophers, and artists. This talk places Sappho in her time, surveys noteworthy individuals and media influenced by her, and examines how her poetry presents a view of life that justifies her enduring appeal that supports her assertion, "*Somebody I say will remember us*"

Paramount in this paper's examination is the agency of "desire," *eros*, which can bring deep pain. But it also can activate richly enjoyable experiences. These experiences integrate sensory, affective, and cognitive faculties and effect a lasting good. Taken in sum, Sappho's poems suggest a love of life and rich appreciation for ethical concepts. She acknowledges the realities of the human condition, which include suffering and loss. But she attests also, and most powerfully, her belief in the potential for a flourishing life and a good that can transcend our temporally limited existence.

*Patricia Graham-Skoul* is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Classical Studies at Loyola University Chicago and Faculty advisor for Iota Kappa, Loyola's chapter in Eta Sigma Phi, the National Honorary Collegiate Society for Students of Latin and Greek.

She received her A.B. degree in Latin from Loyola University and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Classics from Northwestern University. She has attended also special programs at the American Academy in Rome and Indiana University's International Summer Institute in Semiotics and Structural Studies. Her research interests focus on Greek Lyric Poetry and Ethical Values, Artistic and Literary Imagery Associated with the Representation of Women in Greek and Roman Society, and Pedagogy. Her most recent paper on Sappho, "*Sappho's Ethical Trajectory of Desire*" was presented at the «ATELIER CLISTHÈNE sur la pensée

et les pratiques des anciens Grecs d'Homère à Platon,» at the Université de Franche-Comté, April 2019.

## ***In Brief***

### **Microsoft Data Centers in Athens, Greece**

According to the Associated Press News, last month Microsoft announced plans to build three data center sites in the Athens area by investing up to \$1 billion. The agreement includes digital-skills training programs for some 100,000 government and private sector workers, educators and students.

At a ceremony held in the Acropolis Museum, Microsoft President Brad Smith said *“This significant investment is a reflection of our confidence in the Greek economy, in the Greek people and the Greek government. It’s not something we do often and it’s not something that we do lightly.”*

The Greek economy has been hard hit by the pandemic, it contracted by 15.2% in the second quarter of 2020. Unemployment in June climbed to 18.3% from 16.4% at the beginning of the year. Tourism accounts for about 18 percent of the Greek GDP and for one in five jobs. Travel receipts during the seven-month period from January to July dropped by 86.3 percent. According to budget figures submitted to parliament on October 5, 2020, Greece’s economy is expected to contract by 8.2% this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, and to grow by up to 7.5% next year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the country’s heavy reliance on tourism. The Mitsotakis government has said that it wants to diversify the Greek economy by growing the energy, technology, and defense sectors. Referring to the tens of thousands of university graduates who left the country during the financial crisis, the prime minister said: *“We are starting to create the conditions for their return. The creation of a data center upgrades a country as an investment destination ... Greece has the sun and now it’s getting a cloud.”* Currently, Microsoft has data centers in 26 countries, including seven in the European Union. It said that the process for the establishment of the data centers takes about two years. The Greek officials have said that Greece would comply with Microsoft’s pledge to run all its data centers worldwide on renewable energy sources by 2025.

### **Microsoft App on Ancient Olympia**

Greece’s Central Archaeological Council has approved a project involving a new app to be designed and sponsored by Microsoft to introduce to people around the world Ancient Olympia. Microsoft will develop a digital application that will offer a 3D presentation of the monuments and artifacts of the archaeological site and museum in Ancient Olympia, as they were in antiquity. It

will be based on scientific data provided by a committee to be established by the ministry of Greek Culture.

Culture Minister Lina Mendoni said: *“The promotion of our cultural heritage through the use of modern technology is a basic desideratum and a political choice of the Ministry of Culture. This sponsorship, apart from highlighting the archaeological site and museum of Ancient Olympia, also contributes to the promotion of the values of harmony and peace that are strongly connected with the sanctuary of Olympia as host of the [ancient] Olympic Games.”*

Microsoft will also create a website that will offer a virtual tour around Ancient Olympia’s archaeological site.

The website and app will be developed at no cost to the Greek state, as part of Microsoft’s *“AI for Good”* Corporate Social Responsibility program.

### **Greek MP doctors volunteer for hospital duty**

Twenty-one Members of the Greek Parliament who are doctors by training, volunteered to help overwhelmed hospitals during the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic in Greece. They include Giorgos Lambroulis from the Communist Party, who asked the parliament president to excuse him from his duties as a vice president of the body. Four lawmakers were from ruling New Democracy, ten from the main opposition SYRIZA-Progressive Alliance, five from Movement for Change/KINAL, one from the Communist Party of Greece, and one from Greek Solution.

Health Minister Vassilis Kikilias said: *“After the Parliament’s donation of 50 ICU beds, this provides more proof that the leading democratic institutions and the people serving them honor and respect the Greek citizens.”*

### **EU Parliament Calls for Sanctions on Turkey**

On November 26, 2020, the European Parliament adopted an amendment to a resolution on the Cypriot coastal town of Varosha, calling on the European Council to impose sanctions on Turkey over the partial reopening of the town, which violates UN Security Council resolutions.

The amendment, states that the European Council must *“maintain its unified position vis-à-vis unilateral and illegal actions by Turkey”* and *“take action and impose tough sanctions”* on Turkey, *“in response to [its] illegal actions.”* EU has condemned Turkey for re-opening Varosha, a beach resort abandoned by Greek Cypriots fleeing Turkey’s invasion in 1974, saying that *“the creation of a new fait accompli undermines mutual trust and the prospects for a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem.”*

## ***From Our History***

**Excerpts from the monumental work of the Byzantine historian, Speros Vryonis:**

***“The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century”***

(continuation from the previous Newsletter issue):

Also, and most important, Asia Minor was strewn with sanctuaries and cults of numerous saints. Some of the cults centered on the martyrs, others on the personages of later saints, and still others on the personalities of "mythical" saints. Asia Minor had been one of the earliest provinces of Christian missionary activity, intimately associated with the personality, activity, and writings of Apostle Paul.

Less spectacular, perhaps, but of equal importance was the significance of these cults for the integration of the majority of the Anatolians into a generally homogeneous society and culture. These cults were absorbed by the Byzantine church, an institution that played such a critical role in unifying the empire. Though the church tended greatly to regularize the practices attendant upon these cults in consonance with the Orthodoxy of Constantinople, many local strains were so firmly entrenched that they were simply accepted. It has been repeatedly stated that the bishops and metropolitans, and the clergy in general, attempted to care for both the spiritual and physical needs of their flocks, and the local saints, in the eyes of the provincials, did much the same thing. It was this close attachment of the provincial peoples to the saints which forced the church to accept many of the anomalous practices attendant upon their cults. The principal city or town of the saint was usually identified with that in which his bones rested, though of course there would be numerous churches and shrines (to say nothing of bones) associated with that particular saint elsewhere. Usually the saint was the possessor of a special town, and the inhabitants of that town thought of the saint almost as their co-citizen, and they naturally conceived of him as being partial to this city. One of the most important functions of the saint was to protect his city from devastating invasions of various foreign peoples, which came to be such a salient feature of Byzantine life. The miracles of the various saints credit them with considerable success in this respect. St. Theodore is said to have routed the Arabs, who were besieging Euchaita in 934, by appearing before the gates of the city on horseback. St. Eugenius performed the same task for the Trebizondines by interceding from above and turning away and smashing the bows and swords of the godless barbarians. George of Amastris, while still living, went out of the walls of that city, gathered as many of the Christians in the neighborhood as he could, and then brought them to safety within while the Arabs were raiding the area. St. Amphilochius is credited with turning away the Ismaelite army from the walls of Iconium. But these saints, not always content to remain on the defensive, often took the offensive, even leading the imperial armies to victory in foreign lands. The Archangel Michael is credited with helping Heraclius defeat the Persians, and John Tzimisces as a result of the victory over the Russians in the Balkans, which he attributed to the intervention of St. Theodore, rebuilt the saint's church

in Euchaita. The saints also figure quite prominently, at least in their miracles, in the repatriation of Christians taken prisoner by invaders. Accordingly, Saints Theodore, Nicholas, and George answer the prayers of the local inhabitants of Caria, Paphlagonia, and Euchaita who have lost relatives to the Arabs, and then secure the return of these relatives from Crete and Syria. Some of the cults were particularly close to soldiers, those of the so-called military saints, Theodore, George, and Mercurius.

The saints are frequently alleged to have intervened with Byzantine administrative authorities, and especially with the tax collectors, on behalf of their co-citizens. The most numerous miracles and services, however, attributed to the saints are those that have to do with healing. In a period of history when knowledge of medicine had not progressed sufficiently, particularly in the more remote provinces that might be even less well equipped medically, it was to the local saint that the ill came, or sometimes they would travel long distances from their own villages and towns to the shrines of particular saints whose medical reputations were widespread. A steady column of lepers, epileptics, paralytics, and cripples marches through the countless pages of miracles on their way to the shrines in hope of cure. The provincials also appealed to the saints to still the dreadful forces of nature. If disease came upon their livestock, if drought or floods destroyed the crops, one invoked the saints with special prayers and invocations.

The subject of religious conversion does appear in the hagiographical texts, though the accounts are not often as precise as one would desire. St. Nicholas, at least according to his miracles, was known as far afield as Muslim Egypt and Syria. St. George Tropaioforos is credited with the conversion of Muslims in Syria. St. George of Amastris was responsible for the conversion to Christianity of the pagan Russ who, while raiding Amastris, broke into his sanctuary in order to steal the rich treasures they believed to be buried under his casket. Indeed, one of the tenth-century Anatolian saints St. Constantine was himself a converted Jew. St. Lazarus converted a village of heretics, probably Paulicians, in the vicinity of Philetis in Caria, and the same hagiographer describes the conversion of a Saracen in Ephesus. The references to conversion are scattered and few in number, but there is no reason to doubt that the church, through the shrines and sanctuaries, exerted a considerable proselytizing and missioning force upon the non-Christians and heretics of Anatolia. This role of the saints and their shrines as vital integrating forces in society is more forcefully illustrated by the activities of St. Nicon in Crete and Sparta and by the mass program of conversion which John of Ephesus implemented in the sixth century.

The shrines of the saints, as indeed the whole of the ecclesiastical institution, were intimately involved in the economic life of the Anatolians. The saints and their churches were the sponsors of the local fairs (some of which were of an international character) or panegyris held on the feast days of the saints. Such were the panegyris of St. John

at Ephesus, St. Eugenius at Trebizond, St. Phocas at Sinope, St. Theodore at Euchaita, St. George throughout the lands of Paphlagonia, and Michael at Chonae. These fairs were important for the church of the particular saint, and for the town and rural environs as well, by virtue of the economic activity and economic prosperity that they brought. These

### ***From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage***

#### **Poetry by Kostis Palamas**

##### Ο ΣΑΤΥΡΟΣ Η ΤΟ ΓΥΜΝΟ ΤΡΑΓΟΥΔΙ

Ολα γυμνά τριγύρω μας,  
όλα γυμνά εδώ πέρα,  
κάμποι, βουνά, ακροούρανα,  
ακράταγ' είναι η μέρα.  
Διάφαν' η πλάση, ολόνοιχτα  
τα ολόβατα παλάτια  
το φως χορτάστε, μάτια,  
κιθάρες, το ρυθμό.

Εδώ είν' αριά κι αταίριαστα  
λεκκιάσματα τα δένδρα,  
κρασί είν' ο κόσμος άκρατο,  
εδώ είν' η γύμνια αφέντρα.  
Εδώ είν' ο ίσκιος όνειρο,  
εδώ χαράζει ακόμα  
στης νύχτας τ' αχνό στόμα  
χαμόγελο ξανθό.

Εδώ τα πάντα ζέστηθα  
κι αδιάντροπα λυσσάνε  
αστέρι είν' ο ξερόβραχος,  
και το κορμί φωτιά 'ναι.  
Ρουμπίνια εδώ, μαλάματα,  
μαργαριτάρια, ασήμια,  
μοιράζει η θεία σου γύμνια,  
τρισεύγενη Αττική!

Εδώ ο λεβέντης μάγεμα,  
η σάρκα αποθεώθη,  
οι παρθενιές, Αρτέμιδες,  
Ερμήδες είναι οι πόθοι.  
Εδώ κάθε ώρα ολόγυμνη,  
θάμα στα υγρόζωα κήτη,  
πετιέται κ' η Αφοδίτη  
και χύνεται παντού.

- Παράτησε το φόρεμα  
και με τη γύμνια ντύσου  
Ψυχή, της γύμνιας ιέρισσα,  
ναός είναι το κορμί σου.  
Μαγνήτεψε τα χέρια μου,  
της σάρκας κεχρμπάρι,  
τ' ολύμπιο το νεχτάρι  
της γύμνιας δος να πω.

Σκίσε τον πέπλο, πέταξε  
τον άμοιαστο χιτώνα  
και με τη φύση ταίριασε  
την πλαστική σου εικόνα.

panegyreis attracted great numbers of people, both from the neighborhood and from far away. The Trebizondine fairs were international and attracted traders and goods from the whole of the Islamic and Indic worlds.

*(to be continued)*

Λύσε τη ζώνη, σταύρωσε  
τα χέρια στην καρδιά σου  
πορφύρα τα μαλλιά σου,  
μακρόσυρτη στολή.

Και γίνε ατάραχο άγαλμα,  
και το κορμί σου ας πάρη  
της τέχνης την εντέλεια  
που λάμπει στο λιθάρι

Of Art's perfection chiseled  
Upon the shining stone.

### THE SATYR, OR THE NAKED SONG

All about us naked!  
All is naked here!  
Mountains, fields, and heavens wide!  
The day reigns uncontrolled;  
The world, transparent; and pellucid  
The thrice-deep palaces.  
Eyes, fill yourselves with light  
And ye, O Lyres, with rhythm!

Here, the trees are stains  
Out of tune and rare;  
The world is wine unmixed;  
And nakedness, a mistress.  
Here, the shade is but a dream;  
And even on the night's dim lips  
A golden laughter dawns!

Here all are stripped of cover  
And revel lustfully;  
The barren rock, a star!  
The body is a flame!  
Rubies here and things of gold,  
Priceless pearls and things of silver,  
Scatter, O divinely naked Land,  
Scatter, O thrice-noble Attica!

Here manhood is enchanting,  
And flesh is deified;  
Artemis is virginity,  
And Longing is a Hermes;  
And here, and every hour,  
Aphrodite rises bare,  
A marvel to the Sea-Things,  
And to the world, a wonder!

Come, lay aside thy mantle!  
Clothe thee with nakedness,  
O Soul, that art its priestess!  
For lo, thy body is thy temple.  
Pass unto me a magnet's stream,  
O amber of the flesh,  
And let me drink of nectar drawn  
From Nakedness Olympian!

Tear thy veil, and throw away  
Thy robe that flows discordantly!  
With nature only match thy form,  
With nature match thy plastic image.  
Loosen thy girdle! Cross  
Thy hands upon thy heart!  
Thy hair is purple royal,  
A mantle fairly flowing.

And be a tranquil statue;  
And let thy body take