



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

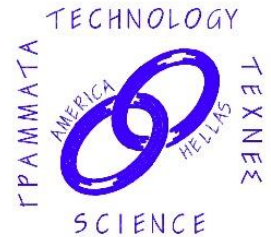
A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

No. 125 October–November 2023

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<http://www.helleniclinkmidwest.org>

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Upcoming Events

Chicago Greeks at the Turn of the 20th Century

On Sunday, October 22, 2023, at 3:00 pm Central Time, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present *Dr. Michael Davros* in a talk titled: “*Chicago Greeks at the Turn of the 20th Century*.” The event will be held at the lecture hall of the Holy Taxiarchai and Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, 7373 N Caldwell Ave, Niles, Illinois.

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 20th 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.

Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos and the Early Byzantine Empire

On Sunday, November 12, 2023, at 3:00 pm Central Time, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present *Professor Young Kim* in a talk titled: “*Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos and the Early*

Byzantine Empire.” The event will be held at the lecture hall of the Holy Taxiarchai and Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, 7373 N Caldwell Ave, Niles, Illinois.

Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (1815–91) was the “Herodotus” of Modern Greece, and his monumental *History of the Hellenic Nation* offered a grand narrative of Greek history from antiquity to his own day. Paparrigopoulos challenged the view prevalent among European intellectuals in the nineteenth century, of a discontinuity between the Greeks of the classical world and those of the modern Greek state. According to this “Enlightened” perspective, between the inspired giants of Pericles and Plato, and the backward peasants of the fledgling nation, stood the behemoth of Byzantium, a state burdened by decadence and superstitious religiosity. Paparrigopoulos was among a handful of Greek intellectuals who thought otherwise, and he told a story of continuity, of an unbroken but ever-evolving Hellenism. This lecture considers how Paparrigopoulos thought about key moments in the early Byzantine Empire and how he (re)interpreted them as part of the larger story of the Greek people.

Dr. Young Richard Kim is Associate Professor and Head of the Classics and Mediterranean Studies Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is a historian of the ancient Mediterranean world, with a focus on late ancient Christianity, early Byzantium, and the history of Cyprus. Prior to his position at UIC, Dr. Kim worked as the Director of Educational Programs at the Onassis Foundation USA.

In Brief

The Perennial Problem of Illegal Construction and Occupation of Public Spaces in Greece

On August 18, 2023, *The Greek Newspaper Ekathimerini* reported that during raids carried out by the competent authorities in Mykonos, Paros and Rhodes, police have made 22 further arrests for the violation of regulations on occupying public spaces on beaches. During the raids, inspectors found loungers and umbrellas that had no permits or were within five meters of the shoreline, and spaces being used that fall under archaeological protection legislation.

In Mykonos, a company representative and 17 other people were arrested after they were found working on the installation of a metal platform, covering 380 square meters, on a beach without a permit.

In Paros, a business owner was arrested for placing 206 sets of loungers and umbrellas along a beach without a permit, as was the manager of tourist accommodation who had erected 12 umbrellas, 24 sunbeds, and a wooden gazebo on a beach without a permit.

In Rhodes, a store manager was arrested for erecting 136 umbrellas and 272 sunbeds, some within five meters of the shoreline, which prevented the public from freely accessing the sea. Inspectors also found that 220 tables and chairs, as well as fixed wooden structures, had also been placed in the area without the required permits and approval of the competent archaeological directorate.

On August 10, 2023, *Ekathimerini* reported that after the departure from Naxos of a Cyclades Property Service team, businesses on the iconic beaches of Plaka, Agia Anna, Agios Prokopios and Agios Georgios started again to reposition sunbeds, umbrellas and assorted beach furniture, occupying most of the coast.

The social media page of the “Save Naxos Beaches” movement was filled with incriminating photos. Georgia Papadopoulou, a visitor of Naxos said: “[On Tuesday] at about 1 a.m. we were walking along Plaka beach and we saw people with drills screwing the umbrellas into place. In the sunlight, work was continuing as normal.”

The Finance Ministry has intensified inspections on Greek island beaches, and in a recent statement said that since July 21, 918 businesses had been inspected throughout the country (178 in the Ionian Sea, 110 in the Cyclades, 85 on Crete, 35 in Halkidiki). A total of 336 violations were found concerning occupation of land beyond the leased area and in some cases occupation of the seashore without a lease.

On June 30, 2023, *Ekathimerini* reported that in Rhodes, dozens of beach bars continue to do brisk business this summer despite blatantly trespassing on public, environmentally sensitive and/or archaeologically protected land while demolition orders for unlicensed structures sit in the drawers at various public services.

Judicial investigations are under way for many of these violations. *Kathimerini* understands that their completion is frozen at the Police Department of Public Property, which should have forwarded the case files to a prosecutor months ago. The delay is raising questions about the potential role of certain state officials.

Rhodes’ land zoning service blames the delays in shutting down the illegal beach bars on the municipality and the failure to demolish them on the Decentralized Administration of the Aegean, which, in turn, claims it does not have the staff or equipment to respond in a timely manner.

On November 18, 2022, *Ekathimerini* reported that Greece’s highest administrative court gave to the Municipality of Athens a deadline of three months to seek the removal of the top two floors of a controversial hotel in the central Athens

district of Makriyianni, at the foot of Acropolis. Following a public protest campaign by local residents and backed by Europe’s federation for the protection of cultural heritage Europe Nostra, two and a half years ago the Council of State ruled that the building’s construction permit was void as it lacked the necessary permits from the Ministry of Culture.

In a subsequent ruling, the court’s compliance council said Athens Municipality must take steps to have the two floors removed, and it would return to the matter on February 14, 2023.

The 10-floor Coco-Mat Athens BC, which at 33 meters exceeds the maximum building height allowed in the area by 9 meters, has been operating since 2019.

According to *Greek Travel Pages*, on July 12, 2023, Greece’s Tourism Ministry said that it would be shutting down Coco-Mat Athens BC hotel after it was found to be in violation of building and zoning laws. Meanwhile the owner of the hotel said that an Athens Administrative Court of Appeal has ordered the suspension of both the autopsy report and the fines for the two floors under investigation.

A 2009 article by *Ekathimerini* stated that according to research by *Kathimerini*, of some 25 million buildings in Greece, 10 percent are totally illegal, while 90 percent of the remainder have been extended or embellished in some way that is also unlawful. In many cases, owners with permits for private homes build nightclubs or other businesses. In one such building in the coastal resort of Voula, town planning officials carried out inspections in 2004 and the owner was handed a hefty fine. But no action was subsequently taken to demolish the building and the business is still operating. According to reports compiled by public administration inspectors, the country’s 173 town planning offices are among the most inefficient and corrupt state services.

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*”

POLITICAL AND MILITARY COLLAPSE

Events Leading to Manzikert

BYZANTINE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS (1025–71)

(Continuation from the previous issue)

The generals consisted of the landed magnates in the provinces, who served as the leaders of the armies levied in Anatolia and the Balkans. Often these aristocrats belonged to families with centuries-long military traditions while others had arisen more recently, during the wars of Basil II or even later. In any case, these aristocrats were characterized by their possession of great landed estates and by a virtual monopoly of the generalships of the provincial armies. The families of Phocas, Sclerus, Maleinus, Comnenus, Melissenus, and others, dominate both the agrarian and

military history of Byzantium. By virtue of this combination—great landed wealth and military prominence—the provincial aristocrats were an inordinately powerful and ambitious social group. It was this power of the provinces which eventually corroded and in effect destroyed centralized government in Byzantium and in this sense constituted a "feudalizing" element.

The political ambitions of the provincial generals had already threatened to exceed all bounds in the tenth century, but fortunately Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimiscas, though of this social class, were able as emperors to exercise a restraining hand on the political activities of the generals. In the early years of the reign of Basil II, however, the generals plunged the empire into a long civil war that almost succeeded in removing the Macedonian dynasty and in dividing the empire. Thanks to the appearance of the grim Basil, the disrupting violence of the provincial aristocracy was temporarily bridled by policies of persecution which entailed discriminatory legislation, confiscation of their great landed estates, and exile. As a result of Basil's successful opposition to the political designs of the generals, the bureaucrats were able to keep the generals from political power for thirty-two years after the death of Basil II (1025–57).

During the course of these thirty-two years, the heads of the bureaucratic group, most important of whom were John Orphanotrophus and Constantine IX Monomachus, waged a constant war against the ambitions of the generals. The fact that Constantine VIII had died in 1028 leaving no heir save his three daughters added fuel to the struggle, and thus the contest between bureaucrats and generals centered on the question of succession. The bureaucrats attempted, successfully, to find a "bureaucrat" husband for the unfortunate empress Zoe, one who would be subordinate and obedient to those bureaucrats promoting him. On the other hand members of the military class also appeared as candidates; but because of the tight hold that the bureaucrats had on the central apparatus of administration in Constantinople, they succeeded in promoting to the position of power men who were in sympathy with the bureaucrats. The only recourse that the generals had in this struggle for political power was the provincial armies. During this thirty-two year period of civilian preponderance in the capital, the sources record thirty major rebellions, or about one every year, and the list of the generals who were exiled, executed, or blinded is a long and monotonous one. Rebellion became such a commonplace occurrence that the shrewd general Cecaumenus included in his *Strategicon* a chapter on the conduct of a prudent man during the outbreak of rebellions. As the program of the bureaucrats called for the elevation to the throne of men who would be primarily obedient to the bureaucrats, obedience alone came to be the criterion of selection with the consequence that there was a series of husband-emperors of little ability and with no worthy conception of the duties of such an august office. The Byzantine state had the evil fate of experiencing as its rulers (from 1028 to 1057) emperors of the lowest caliber, for the

most part ill, old, or dominated by women and the eunuchs, and concerned only with enjoying the pleasures of their office.

In 1057 the generals were able to win their first victory in the struggle with the bureaucrats when the Anatolian general Isaac Comnenus revolted. Aided by other Anatolian magnates (most important of whom were Sclerus, Bourtzes, Botaniates, Argyrus, and Cecaumenus), he brought the military forces of Anatolia against Constantinople. In spite of this impressive show of force, it is highly doubtful that the generals would have succeeded had it not been for other factors. Within the capital itself the patriarch and the guilds had sided with the generals, and of equal importance was the split in the ranks of the bureaucrats, which saw the Ducas family temporarily abandon the bureaucrats and join the generals. As the generals had been able to win only with the aid of other social groups, their victory was not complete and so their enjoyment of the political fruits was correspondingly incomplete. Upon the illness of Isaac in 1059, the representatives of the bureaucratic party, Psellus and Constantine Ducas, seized power and the generals were once more excluded. By 1067 a military reaction and another split in the ranks of the bureaucrats once more brought an Asia Minor general Romanus IV Diogenes to the throne. But the reign of Romanus was hamstrung, as had been that of Isaac, by the incomplete victory of the generals and by the persistence of the leading bureaucrats (Psellus and John Ducas) in the government. The results of this military-civil hatred were disastrous for the state. From the death of Basil II in 1025 down to the fateful battle of Manzikert, Byzantine society lay in the convulsive throes of civil strife between administrators and soldiers. Other segments of society, the church and the guilds in the capital, had also been drawn into the power struggle, first on one side then on the other.

The contest was characterized by a feature that usually marks all such political struggles: the determination to attain political power at all costs and in spite of all consequences. Obviously the principal weapons in the hands of the generals were the armies stationed in the provinces and so when the generals rebelled in the east or the west, all the armies of Anatolia or the Balkans would be mustered and then directed toward the capital city of the empire.

It was in this manner, when Isaac Comnenus I rebelled in 1057, that Anatolia was denuded of its military defenses for reasons of political interest.⁴ And in 1047-48 during the rebellion of Tornices, the western armies were commanded to march on Constantinople, leaving much of the Balkans bare of troops. In this case the eastern borders were also stripped in order to bring troops to defend Constantinople against the armies of Tornices. The generals were determined to use this, their only weapon, in the struggle with the bureaucrats. In so doing, however, they were simultaneously baring the frontiers in the face of growing enemy pressures and destroying these forces by pitting the armies of Anatolia against those of the Balkans.

(To be continued)

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage Poetry by Odysseas Elytis

From Axion Esti

ΑΥΤΟΣ ο κόσμος ο μικρός, ο μέγας!
ΑΛΛΑ ΠΡΙΝ ακούσω αγέρα η μουσική
που κινούσα σε ξάγναντο να βγω
(μιαν απέραντη κόκκινη άμμο ανέβαινα
με τη φτέρνα μου σβήνοντας την Ιστορία)
πάλευα τα σεντόνια Ήταν αυτό που γύρευα
και αθώο και ριγηλό σαν αμπελώνας
και βαθύ και αγάραγο σαν η άλλη όψη τ' ουρανού
Κάτι λίγο ψυχής μέσα γστην άργιλο
Τότε είπε και γεννήθηκεν η θάλασσα
Και είδα και θαύμασα
Και στη μέση της έσπειρε κόσμους μικρούς κατ' εικόνα
και ομοίωσή μου:
Ίπποι πέτρινοι με τη χαιτή ορθή
και γαλήνιοι αμφορείς
και λοξές δελφινιών ράχες
η Ίος η Σίκινος η Σέριφος η Μήλος
«Κάθε λέξη κι από 'να χελιδόνη
για να σου φέρνει την άνοιξη μέσα στο θέρος» είπε
«Και πολλά τα λιόδεντρα
που να κρησάρουν στα χέρια τους το φως
κι ελαφρό ν' απλώνεται στον ύπνο σου
και πολλά τα τζιτζίκια
που να μην τα νιώθεις
όπως δε νιώθεις το σφυγμό στο χέρι σου
αλλά λίγο το νερό
για να το 'χεις Θεό και να κατέχεις τι σημαίνει ο λόγος του
και το δέντρο μονάχο του
χωρίς κοπάδι
για να το κάνεις φίλο σου
και να γνωρίζεις τ' ακριβό του τ' όνομα
φτενό στα πόδια σου το χώμα
για να μην έχεις που ν' απλώσεις ρίζα
και να τραβάς του βάθους ολοένα
και πλατύς επάνου ο ουρανός
για να διαβάζεις μόνος σου την απεραντοσύνη»

ΑΥΤΟΣ ο κόσμος ο μικρός, ο μέγας!
«ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟ ΑΥΤΟΝ ανάγκη να τον βλέπεις και
να τον λαβαίνεις»
είπε: «Κοίταξε!» Και τα μάτια μου έριξαν τη σπορά
γρηγορότερα τρέχοντας κι από βροχή
τα χιλιάδες απάτητα στρέμματα
Σπίθες ρίζα μες στο σκότος πιάνοντας και νερών άξαφνων
πίδακες
Η σιγή που εκχέρσωνα για ν' αποθέσω
γόνους φθόγγων και χρησμών φύτρα χρυσά
Το ξινάρι ακόμη μες στα χέρια μου
τα μεγάλα είδα κοντόποδα φυτά, γυρίζοντας το πρόσωπο
άλλα υλακώντας άλλα βγάζοντας τη γλώσσα:
Να το σπαράγγι να ο ριθιός
να το σγουρό περσέμολο
το τζεντζεφύλλι και το πελαργόνι
ο στύφνος και το μάραθο
Οι κρυφές συλλαβές όπου πάσχιζα την ταυτότητά μου ν'
αρθρώσω

«Εύγε» μου είπε «και ανάγνωση γνωρίζεις
και πολλά μέλλει να μάθεις
αν το Ασήμαντο εμβαθύνεις
Και μια μέρα θα 'ρθει βοηθός ν' αποκτήσεις
Θυμήσου:
τον αγχέμαχο Ζέφυρο
το ερεβοκτόνο ρόδι
τα φλεγόμενα ωκύποδα φιλιά»
Και ο λόγος του χάθηκε σαν ευωδιά
Η ώρα εννιά χτύπησε πέρδικα τη βαθιά καρδιά της
ευφωνίας
αλληλέγγυα στάθηκαν τα σπίτια
και μικρά και τετράγωνα
με καμάρα λευκή και λουλακι πορτόφυλλο
Κάτω απ' την κληματαριά
ώρες εκεί ρέμβασα
με μικρά μικρά τιτιβίσματα
κοασμούς, τρυσμούς, το μακρινό κουκούρισμα:
Να το πιπίνι να το λελέκι
να το γυφτοπούλι
ο νυχτοπάτης και η νερόκοτα
ήταν και ο μπόμπιρας εκεί
και το αλογάκι που λεν της Παναγίας
Η στεριά με τα σκέλη μου γυμνά στον ήλιο
και πάλι δύο οι θάλασσες
και η τρίτη ανάμεσα -λεμονιές κιτριές μανταρινιές-
και ο άλλος μαϊστρος με τ' απάνω του αψηλό μπογάζι
αλλοιώνοντας τ' οζόνιο τ' ουρανού
Χαμηλά στον φύλλον τον πυθμένα
η τριβίδα η λεία
τ' αυτάκια των ανθών
κι ο θαλλός ο αδημονώντας και είναι

Τα Παθη

Ιδού εγώ λοιπόν
ο πλασμένος για τις μικρές Κόρες και τα νησιά του
Αιγαίου•
ο εραστής του σκιρτήματος των ζαρκαδιών
και μύστης των φύλλων της ελιάς•
ο ηλιοπότης και ακριδοκτόνος.
Ιδού εγώ καταντικρύ
του μελανού φορέματος των αποφασισμένων
και της άδειας των ετών, που τα τέκνα της άμβλωσε,
γαστέρας το άγγρισμα!
Λύνει αέρας τα στοιχεία και βροντή προσβάλλει τα βουνά.
Μοίρα των αθώων, πάλι μόνη, να σε, στα Στενά!
Στα Στενά τα χέρια μου άνοιξα
Στα Στενά τα χέρια μου άδειασα
κι άλλα πλούτη δεν είδα, κι άλλα πλούτη δεν άκουσα
παρά βρύσες κρύες να τρέχουν
Ρόδια ή Ζέφυρο ή Φιλιά.
Ο καθείς και τα όπλα του, είπα:
Στα Στενά τα ρόδια μου θ' ανοίξω
Στα Στενά φρουρούς τους ζέφυρους θα στήσω
τα φιλιά τα παλιά θ' απολύσω που η λαχτάρα μου άγιασε!
Λύνει αέρας τα στοιχεία και βροντή προσβάλλει τα βουνά.
Μοίρα των αθώων, είσαι η δική μου η Μοίρα!