



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

Hellenism and Byzantium

On Sunday, 10 April, 2011, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Anthony Kaldellis, Professor of Greek and Latin of the Ohio State University, in a lecture titled “*Hellenism and Byzantium*”. The event will take place at 3 pm at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road). Admission is free for HLM members and \$5 for non-members.

The question that historians of Byzantium are asked most commonly in Greece is whether Byzantium was a Greek civilization. Byzantium has figured as a major component of national Greek history for over a century, but still the question is not easy to answer. Its language and literature were Greek and it included mainland Greece and the islands within its territory. This talk will present evidence for how the Byzantines did (and did not) engage with the Greek past and how they viewed themselves in relation to the Greeks. It will consider both literature, especially the writing of history and philosophy, as well as monuments, notably the Parthenon in Athens. The lecture will then discuss the reception of Byzantium in modern Europe and Greece in particular in order to highlight the difficulties, advantages, and disadvantages of incorporating a medieval civilization into a modern national narrative. At the time of the Revolution in 1821, most Greek intellectuals were hostile to the idea of Byzantium, following the tastes of their western supporters, but that gradually gave way to full identification with the “Greek empire.” Byzantium became a symbol that enabled Greece to situate itself strategically in rather difficult situations, including the Balkan Wars of the early twentieth century and in the tension between Greece’s “eastern” and “western” cultural allegiances.

Anthony Kaldellis has taught Byzantine literature and history at the Ohio State University since 2001. He obtained his PhD from the University of Michigan. He has published studies of Byzantine historians (Psellos, Prokopios, Agathias) and the reception of the classical tradition in Byzantium (*Hellenism in Byzantium* and *The Christian Parthenon*), in addition to translating many Byzantine sources into English. His current project is on Byzantines’ Roman identity and their notion of the political sphere.

From Professor Vryonis’ Writings on Hellenism and Byzantium

Pletho who, temporarily, revived a form of ancient paganism in Ainos, Constantinople and the Peloponnese, wrote to the emperor these well-known words

“We, whom you lead and rule, are Hellenes in ‘race’, as our language and traditional education testify”.

It is almost uncanny that this late secularist Byzantine religio-philosopher projects a view of the identity of the Byzantines that is identical in most, but not all the view on Byzantine identity that we saw in the writings of the medieval monk chronicler Theophanes.

The fifteenth century atticizing historian Laonikos Chalkondyles perhaps grasped this thought and trend most succinctly in his history, and in doing so explained why in the reign of Constantine I the title of the emperor had been changed:

“The Hellenes, from that time, mingled there (Constantinople) with the Romans, but since the Hellenes were far more numerous than the Romans, they preserved their tongue and culture, finally. They changed their name moreover and no longer called themselves by their ancestral name, in no way accepting to be called emperor of the Hellenes (sic)”.

In his long and richly informative history Chalkokondyles utilize the ethnicon Hellene and its derivatives to refer to any and everything Byzantine, reserving the use of the term Rhomaios and its derivatives exclusively for the pope and the western emperor.

Most striking in this reappearance of the ethnicon Hellene, with such force and influence, is its extensive employment by the conservative Gennadeios Scholarios, the first patriarch of Ottoman rule in Constantinople. Though he wrote a short treatise on the fact that he considered himself a Rhomaios and not a Hellene, a sampling, culled from the entirety of his works, of his employment of ethnika to denote his contemporary Byzantine society and its remnants after the fall of Constantinople, shows that in the great majority of cases he uses the ethnicon Hellene for everything Byzantine: “In 22 instances where Gennadeios uses an ethnicon to denote a Byzantine, 15 passages utilize the ethnicon Hellene, and only seven employ the word Rhomaios. When he speaks of language and education he uses

extensively the word Hellene. In over twenty instances he employs the term Hellene for ancient Greek and pagan Greek. On four other occasions when he employs Rhomaios the term is used to refer to the ancient Romans. In a sermon, dated 1467, he refers to "this very Hellas which is our ancient fatherland". He contrasts the ancient Hellenes with *εν τοις νυν Ελλησιν*. He also differentiates between contemporary Hellene with contemporary Italian. He speaks, further, of the present day Byzantines throughout the scattered lands as the entire race of the Hellenes"; of Byzantine rulers as "Emperors of the Hellenes" of the inhabitants of Constantinople as "Hellenes"; and finally he speaks of the "evil fate of the Hellenes", when describing the catastrophe ridden Byzantines of the fifteenth century.

Conclusions: There was indeed a Greek identity in Byzantium as witnessed by the identification with the Greek language and Greek education on the formal cultural level, but one in which the Hellenistic absolutist political tradition in its Roman political form was the characteristic political feature. To the civilizations of medieval and western Europe, of the eastern and south Slavs, and to the Muslims the Byzantines were Greeks, or else in the latter case, Rum descended from the ancient Greeks. The distinct identity felt within Byzantine society is reflected in the conception which the neighbors held of the Byzantines. The major change within Byzantium occurred with the rise and development of classical scholarship and the political and territorial decline of the Byzantine empire. With little left to claim in the political realm, the Greek identity of the Byzantines was that of a people Greek in language and education, Orthodox in religion, who had lost the real power of the Roman empire, and who increasingly returned to the epithet Hellene.

In Brief

Greece's Exclusive Economic Zone

One of the hot issues in the relations of Greece with Turkey is the extension of Greece's territorial waters up to 12 nautical miles and the claim of an exclusive economic zone (EEZ), in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982). The EEZ is a zone up to 200 nautical miles from the coast over which a state has special rights on the exploration and use of marine resources.

Because of a disagreement with Turkey regarding the continental shelf of the Greek island of Kastelorizo, which is very close to Turkey, Greece has not yet claimed its exclusive economic zone. Turkey, although has expanded its own territorial waters in the Black Sea to 12 nautical miles, has not signed the UNCLOS and claims that the Aegean, as a semi-closed sea, is a special case. In 1995 just after Greece ratified UNCLOS, Turkey declared that if Greece would expand its territorial waters over 6 nautical miles, this action would

be considered as a direct offense to her sovereignty and threatened Greece with a war (*casus belli*).

In an interview to the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini* (March 9, 2011), the foreign minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoglu said that he is hopeful that a comprehensive solution can be reached in the Aegean, indirectly leaving open the option of going to The Hague. However, he insisted that the island of Kastelorizo cannot be part of such a solution because it is in the Mediterranean, not the Aegean. He said that the process of the exploratory talks is purposefully mandated to deal with the outstanding issues in the Aegean. Therefore, our focus and priority is the Aegean. Yet the island of Kastelorizo is located in the Mediterranean. As to the island of Kastelorizo, Turkey has a well-considered political and legal position based on international law as well as the adjudication of relevant international tribunals, including those of the International Court of Justice. And we know that Greece and Turkey uphold different views with regard to their maritime jurisdiction areas in the Eastern Mediterranean. Notwithstanding the geographic relevance or other specificities, we would like to settle all our differences with Greece sooner than later.

On February 18, 2011, it was reported (*newsbeast.gr*) that according to published maps, Israel recognizes the Greek Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which is a continuation of the Cypriot EEZ.

The maps were sent to Greek authorities, and describe the course of the gas pipeline which will transfer gas from the Leviathan reservoir to Europe, through an undersea pipeline crossing Greece. The gas pipeline travels the eastern Mediterranean area of Kastelorizo, Ro and Megisti, which according to international law is part of the Greek EEZ. By this proposal, Israel recognizes the Greek EEZ in the area of Kastelorizo and offers an advantage that Greece can use during negotiation procedures to support its claims on the area.

From Our History

Civil War and the "Macedonian Question"

From the book "Blood and Tears, Greece 1940-1949" by George C. Papavizas

The first attempt to press the fledgling KKE (Communist Party of Greece) into forming an "Independent Macedonia" occurred in 1921 during the Third Communist International in Moscow. The leader of the Greek delegation, Ioannis Georgiadis, who immediately opposed the idea proposed by the Bulgarian Communist leaders, was dismissed from the Party when he returned to Athens. The pressure culminated in the combined decision of the Comintern and the BCF's (Balkan Communist Federation) Executive Committee, representing the Communist parties of the Balkan countries, to pursue "independence" for Macedonia.

During the Third Special Congress of the KKE in December 1924, the Party, by then the captive of the BCF's deft manipulations of the Macedonian issue, endorsed the BCF plan with the following resolution:

"As long as the division and oppression of Macedonia and Thrace continues, we cannot avoid an imperialist war. That is why we are fighting for the unification and independence of the three sections of Macedonia and Thrace."

In doing so, the KKE thoughtlessly embraced the irredentist plans of an organization that was assiduously promoting malign relationships in the Balkans at Greece's expense.

In December 1931 in Athens, the Plenum of the KKE's Central Committee unanimously approved the following resolution:

"Greece is an imperialist country which has conquered by force whole regions populated by other nationalities. In the name of the fundamental principles of Bolshevism the KKE declares for Macedonia and Thrace the principle of self-determination, which includes the right to separate themselves from Greece, and the Party actively sustains the revolutionary efforts of the people of these regions directed toward their own national liberation."

Other serious events exacerbated the turmoil associated with the Macedonian problem. One such event was the KKE's unwise and hasty decision to characterize the slavophone minority in Greece as Slavomacedonians and allow formation of an independent political slavophone organization, the Slavomacedonian National Liberation Front (SNOF). Initially, the KKE's decision predictably stirred intense resistance among ELAS(Greek Liberation Army) officers from western Macedonia, who were critical of the KKE's leadership for allowing' SNOF's formation. Dogmatic KKE leaders, however, adherents of the "full equality for the minorities" platform, encouraged Slavomacedonian nationalism and allowed SNOF to operate its own armed bands within Greece. The actions of SNOF's guerrilla bands, however, many of whom were incorporated into ELAS units, were not restricted to fighting the occupation forces (Germans and Italians). Instead, they made every possible effort to proselytize the villagers into their ultimate goal - secession of Macedonia from Greece.

To secure Bulgarian military support Zachariadis committed another great error. He appointed trusted Slavomacedonians to DAG(Democratic Army of Greece) positions and regional Macedonian organizations. He also reshuffled the government of the mountains and gave top positions to Slavomacedonians.

At the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee, held near Lake Prespa in northern Greece on 31 January 1949, KKE resurrected "the 1924 platform" for the immediate formation of a united and independent Macedonia, which

was to include the Greek, Bulgarian, and Yugoslav sections of Macedonia within a Balkan Communist federation.

Balkan Union of Soviet Republics Agreement

From the book "Πόλεμος και Αίμα" ("War and Blood") by Margarita Lazaridou, fighter on the side of the "Greek Democratic Army" (communist side) during the Greek Civil War (1947-1949)

The Communist Party of Greece (K.K.E.) and the Communist Party of Bulgaria (C.P.B.), after the dissolution of the Communist International, taking into consideration the final official political line of the International and its last directives and the wish to cooperate for the speediest and most effective action having final target the establishment in the Balkan peninsula of a Soviet Republic Union, and in order to put an end once and for all the differences among the peoples of the Balkans, resolve through their following representatives signing this agreement:

- 1) comrade Yannis Ioannides on behalf of K.K.E
- 2) comrade Dousan Daskaloff on behalf of C.P.B.

the following:

1. The final goal of both parties is defined as the establishment of the Balkan Union of Soviet Republics, to include Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia.
2. The Communist Parties of Greece and Bulgaria have the freedom to plan their tactical action as they see fit in order to reach the final target.
3. To secure the safety of the northern borders, the two parties will work in order for the combined borderline of Bulgaria and Serbia to extend from the river Danube to north of Fiume in the Adriatic.
4. Bulgaria will be provided with land access to the Aegean Sea.
5. Istanbul and the straits of Dardanelles will form an independent and autonomous Republic under the control of the U.S.S.R.
6. Macedonia: Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian, i.e. the territory that is outlined by the river Nestos, mount Rodopi, mounts Rila, Osnikof Sar (Skardos) to the North; the Albanian Alps and the Pindos mountains to the West; mount Olympus and the Aegean to the South, and including the island of Thasos, will form an independent and autonomous Republic within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of the Balkans.

The official languages will be Greek and Bulgarian.
This agreement was stated in Greek and Bulgarian

Petritsi July 12, 1943.

On behalf of K.K.E. (signed) Yiannis Ioannides
On behalf of C.P/B. (signed) Dousan Daskaloff

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry of Costas Karyotakis

Γυρισμός

Γέλιο των θεών, Σαρωνικέ, πάντα μεγάλε, που δρομείς,
του πλοίου μας ευλογία,
όμοια γαλήνη σου βαθιά κι όμοια βαθιά θ' ακούαμε μεις
εδώ την τρικυμία.

Κάτου απ' την πάχνη αναρριγιά, με του κορμιού της την υγρή
νωχέλεια, περιστέρα
η Αθήνα, κι ηδονεύεται ακί σαν νυμφίον ακαρτερεί
τον ήλιον από πέρα.

Είναι, που αιθρίασεν, ο ουρανός χήτη του Πήγασου, ξανθή
του Παρθενώνα μοίρα,
ποτήρι και ξανάστροφα το κρεμεί ο Δίας για να χυθεί
τ' ονειροφώς πλημμύρα.

Άσωτο φτάνω εγώ παιδί πάλι σε σας, να λυγιστώ
στην αύρα σα λουλούδι,
χώμα, ουρανέ και θάλασσα της Αττικής, που σας χρωστώ
τα πάντα, το Τραγούδι!

Γραφιάς

Οι ώρες μ' εχλώμιαναν, γυρτός που βρέθηκε ξανά
στο αχάριστο τραπέζι.
(Απ' τ' ανοιχτό παράθυρο στον τοίχο αντικρινά
ο ήλιος γλιστράει και παίζει.)

Διπλώνοντας το στήθος μου, γυρεύω αναπνοή
στη σκόνη των χαρτιών μου.
(Σφύζει γλυκά και ακούγεται χιλιόφωνα η ζωή
στα ελεύθερα του δρόμου.)

Απόκαμα, θολώσανε τα μάτια μου και ο νους,
όμως ακόμη γράφω.
(Στο βάζο ξέρω δίπλα μου δυο κρίνους φωτεινούς.
Σα να 'χουν βγει σε τάφο.)

Αθηνα

Ωρα γλυκιά. Ξαπλώνει ωραία δομένη
η Αθήνα στον Απρίλη σαν εταίρα.
Είναι ηδονές τα μύρα στον αιθέρα,
και τίποτε η ψυχή πια δεν προσμένει.

Στα σπίτια σκύβει απάνω και βαραίνει
το ασήμι του βλεφάρου της η εσπέρα.
Βασίλισσα η Ακρόπολη εκεί πέρα
πορφύρα έχει τη δύση φορεμένη.

Φιλί φωτός και σκάει το πρωταστέρι.
Στον Ιλισσό ερωτεύεται τ' αγέρι
ροδονουφούλες δάφνες που ριγούνε.

Ωρα γλυκιά χαράς και αγάπης, όντας
πουλάκια το ένα τ' άλλο κυνηγούνε
τ' Ολύμπιου Δία μια στήλη αεροχτυπόντας...

Return

In your current is the laughter of the gods,
Saronica immortal, the blessing of our ship,
like your deep calm, and just as deep the tempest
we'd have heard here.

Beneath the hoar-frost, body damply torpid,
the dove that's Athens, shivers, and
is enraptured, as it awaits the distant sunrise
like a bride.

Where the clouds clear, there the sky is Pegasus' flank,
as fair as the fate of the Parthenon;
Zeus inverts a glass to spill the
flood of dreamlight.

Prodigal, I arrive a child again to you, to bend
before the breeze just like a flower;
earth, sky, and sea of Attica, to you I'll always
owe the Song!

A Clerk

The hours have faded me, found once again
leaning across the thankless table.
(The sun slips through the window in the wall that
faces me, and plays.)

Doubled up, I grope for breath
in the dust of all my papers.
(Life pulses sweetly and its thousand voices rise
from the freedom of the street.)

My eyes and mind are weary and disturbed,
but still I write.
(I know that in the vase beside me are two glowing lilies.
As if they've come up from a tomb.)

Athens

A sweet hour. Athens sprawls like a hetaira
offering herself to April.
Sensuous scents are in the air,
the spirit waits for nothing any more.

The silver of the evening's eyelids
droops, grows heavy up above the houses.
Queenlike the Acropolis puts on
the sunset's crimson like a robe.

The first star rises with a kiss of light.
A zephyr by Ilissus falls in love with
quivering laurels, rosy nymphs.

A sweet hour of delight and love, when
small birds chasing one another raise a wind
that beats upon a column of Olympian Zeus...

