



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

No. 107 February–March 2019

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<http://www.helleniclinkmidwest.org>

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Upcoming Events

The Poet Posidippus in the Court of Ptolemy II

On Sunday, February 24, 2019, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents *Professor Elizabeth Kosmetatou* in a lecture titled: “*The Poet Posidippus in the Court of Ptolemy II*”. The event will take place at 3:00 pm in Room 1610, at the Oakton Community College, 1600 E. Golf Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016. Admission will be free.

In 2001 scholars of the Hellenistic world celebrated the publication of an almost complete poetry book attributed to the poet Posidippus, who was previously known from a handful of epigrams that survived in the *Greek Anthology*. Posidippus was from Pella in Macedonia and flourished as an epigrammatist, and possibly also as a diplomat, in the court of Ptolemy II in Alexandria (3rd century BCE). The new book, preserving 112 epigrams, 110 of which were previously unknown, offers unique insights into the lives of the Greeks in Egypt, especially their connection to Greece and Greek customs.

It covers topics from the conventional, like poems on tombs, to the unusual (on Ptolemaic victories at Panhellenic games to stones or “turnings”). Evidence suggests that the epigrams may have been dedicated to widower Ptolemy II’s new *de facto* queen, Berenice Syra, who was his daughter by his former disgraced queen Arsinoe I, and who replaced in importance his beloved mistress Bilistiche. The new Posidippus papyrus offers us glimpses and insights to the court of Ptolemy II and potentially its inner intrigues.

Dr. Elizabeth Kosmetatou joined the History Department of the University of Illinois–Springfield in 2008, where she teaches Greek and Roman History & Archaeology. She has participated in archeological excavations in Greece and Turkey including Epidaurus, Vergina, Midea, and Sagalassos. Her research interests include Classical and Hellenistic Greek history and archaeology, early Rome, Greek and Latin epigraphy and numismatics, cultural studies, and political theory.

Professor Kosmetatou, holds a Ph.D. degree in Classics from the University of Cincinnati, a Master of Arts in Classics from the same University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Archeology and Art History from the University of Athens, Greece.

Talking about a Revolution: The Greek War of Independence and the Remaking of Thessaloniki.

Celebrating the Greek Revolution of 1821, on Sunday March 17, 2019, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents *Dr. Paris Papamichos Chronakis* in a lecture titled: “*Talking about a Revolution: The Greek War of Independence and the Remaking of Thessaloniki*.” The event will take place at 3:00 pm in Room 1604, at the Oakton Community College, 1600 E. Golf Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016. Admission will be free.

The Greek War of Independence shook the Ottoman Empire from the Danube in the north to Crete in the south. Urban populations across the two shores of the Aegean felt its impact in multiple ways—direct and indirect, political, economic, and social. The repercussions of the Revolution were empire-wide. They touched all of the empire’s ethnoreligious groups and reconfigured social hierarchies and interethnic relations in many of its major urban centers.

This talk zooms into the celebrated multiethnic port city of Thessaloniki to consider the shifts the war caused in the city’s Greek Orthodox community. The outbreak of the revolution in the nearby peninsula of Chalkidiki led to a wave of violence against the city’s Greek Orthodox Christian population. Mob violence, mass killings, and forced migration dealt a severe blow to a hitherto thriving community and significantly weakened its status among the city’s multiethnic population. The long-term consequences were not less important. Thessaloniki’s Greek Orthodox Christians lost control of the lucrative export trade to the advantage of their Jewish rivals who would virtually monopolize it until the end of Ottoman rule. Moreover, Greek Orthodox Christians from the Ottoman Macedonian hinterland would migrate in Thessaloniki, fill the community’s depleted ranks and slowly rise to become its new elite. Thessaloniki might have escaped the revolutionary imbroglio, but the Greek War of Independence nonetheless effected truly revolutionary changes in the social hierarchies and ethnic identities of the city.

Dr. Papamichos Chronakis, (Ph.D., University of Crete, 2011; MA in Comparative History, University of Essex, UK, 1998; BA Aristotle University of Thessaloniki,

Greece, 1996), is Lecturer in Modern Greek History at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His research focuses on the history of the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean and his manuscript in progress narrates the passage of Salonica from the Ottoman Empire to the Greek nation-state by bringing together the interrelated histories of Sephardic Jewish, Greek Orthodox, and Muslim entrepreneurial elites. He has co-edited and contributed to a special issue of *Jewish History Journal* on the history of the Jews of Salonica and has written on interwar Zionist youth cultures in Greece; Zionism as a localized identity; Greek anti-Zionism and antisemitism; Greek Jewry in the First World War; the uses and performances of Greekness among concentration camp Jewish prisoners.

In Brief

The Thirty-Year Genocide

Harvard University Press, published recently a book by Benny Morris, and Dror Ze'evi, titled *The Thirty-Year Genocide: Turkey's Destruction of Its Christian Minorities, 1894–1924*. The book forward reads: *A reappraisal of the giant massacres perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, and then the Turkish Republic, against their Christian minorities.*

Between 1894 and 1924, three waves of violence swept across Anatolia, targeting the region's Christian minorities, who had previously accounted for 20 percent of the population. By 1924, the Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks had been reduced to 2 percent. Most historians have treated these waves as distinct, isolated events, and successive Turkish governments presented them as an unfortunate sequence of accidents. The Thirty-Year Genocide is the first account to show that the three were actually part of a single, continuing, and intentional effort to wipe out Anatolia's Christian population.

The years in question, the most violent in the recent history of the region, began during the reign of the Ottoman sultan Abdulhamid II, continued under the Young Turks, and ended during the first years of the Turkish Republic founded by Ataturk. Yet despite the dramatic swing from the Islamizing autocracy of the sultan to the secularizing republicanism of the post-World War I period, the nation's annihilationist policies were remarkably constant, with continual recourse to premeditated mass killing, homicidal deportation, forced conversion, mass rape, and brutal abduction. And one thing more was a constant: the rallying cry of jihad. While not justified under the teachings of Islam, the killing of two million Christians was effected through the calculated exhortation of the Turks to create a pure Muslim nation.

Revelatory and impeccably researched, Benny Morris

and Dror Ze'evi's account is certain to transform how we see one of modern history's most horrific events.

Fresh Air Living Index: The Best Countries for Outdoor Enthusiasts to Live

The brand new Fresh Air Living Index ranks the best places for outdoor enthusiasts to live, 365 days of the year. Important factors include the number of natural UNESCO sites a country has, the average level of air pollution and the number of recognized, long-distance hiking routes available to trek. The Fresh Air Living Index sites writes:

At the top of the list in first place is Spain, with an incredibly low air pollution score and a high rate for the attractiveness of its natural assets. Key features helping Spain in the ranking include the Gaztelugatxe, a little islet in the Bay of Biscay, and the Somiedo National Park, near the Cantabrian Mountains, which is a designated UNESCO biosphere reserve and a European Union special protection area for birds.

Greece is at the 2nd place followed by Costa Rica, 3rd, New Zealand, 4th, Mexico, 5th, Dominican Republic, 7th, Switzerland, 8th, U.S., 9th.

Whether it's swimming with turtles in the Aegean Sea or pitching your tent in the shade of an orange grove and exploring the white-washed fishing villages of the Greek coast, there are few finer (or sunnier) spots to turn up and go camping than this historic stretch of continental Europe. Bring the tent, park the campervan or seek some camping accommodation and enjoy the best of Greece at this collection of incredible campsites.

Erdogan: Turkey will protect its rights in Cyprus

According to the newspaper Cyprus Mail, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reiterated in his New Year message his country's determination to protect its rights in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean. He said that Turkey has demonstrated its determination to protect its rights in Cyprus, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean both in the political sphere and in the field. Turkey has no aspirations on the sovereignty of anyone. "Our only aim is to bring our nation and our brothers who live in our region to safety, peace and a safe future," Turkey was "not responsible for the incidents in the region and will not be a victim of them. Basically, Turkey, from the beginning of the Syrian crisis, has taken a humanitarian and moral stance and has always been by the side of the victims and the oppressed. We side with stability, justice, tolerance and peace across the world, together with our region."

He added that through this understanding, Turkey defends the rights of Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad,

Cairo, Tripoli, Sarajevo and Crimea, continues to contribute to the stability of Iraq, and more importantly, Turkey was setting an example to the world through its humanitarian stance.

From Our History

The Cyprus Tragedy and the Culpability of the British

(Excerpts from the book: *The Mechanism of Catastrophe: The Turkish Pogrom of September 6-7, 1955, and the Destruction of the Greek Community in Istanbul*, by Speros Vryonis)

Britain's inability to maintain order in Cyprus was increasingly apparent in the course of 1954 and during the first half of 1955; indeed, in concert with British efforts to obtain more direct Turkish participation, the Foreign Office thought that this failure would provoke a Turkish reaction that would lead to further British loss of control. In his incisive and perceptive study of this neglected aspect of the Cyprus issue, Robert Holland concluded that: *"Although officials and ministers in London were always aware of the danger that Turkey's own claims could easily escalate if incautious encouragements were given, the logic of their own tactical embarrassment progressively forced their hands into yielding that 'consultation' with Ankara which some warned was bound to be the thin end of a very dangerous wedge."*

The decision by Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan and Prime Minister Anthony Eden to accept Adnan Menderes's proposal of *"collusion"* in advance of the London conference sealed the fate of the gathering, which, in turn, became tied to the pogrom of September 6–7. In fact, the Turkish mission under Zorlu's leadership arrived in London fully prepared to announce Turkey's new Cyprus policy, and to do so in all its expansive and aggressive detail.

Already, in a Foreign Office memorandum a year before the pogrom (September 14, 1954), at a time when British apprehension had been conveyed to Turkey, an English official had stated that, *"A few riots in Ankara would do us nicely."* Holland summarizes the total effect of all this succinctly and logically: *"It had also become obvious that the Greek community in Istanbul was a hostage to the Cyprus dispute. The anti-Greek riots in Istanbul which broke out on September 6, 1955 did not therefore come as a complete shock to those involved in the higher reaches of the dispute."*

Naturally, the full details of Britain's policy of encouraging Turkey's aggressive behavior are not forthcoming. However, the facts that have come to light are sufficient to suggest that, by the early fall of 1954, the British government may have made vague informal

references on the desirability of some demonstration in Istanbul as a political barometer of public, and violent, Turkish sentiment on the subject of Cyprus. Holland's perceptive book on Cyprus gives proof that there was a direct connection between British and Turkish policy over the issue at this stage—as well as a British connection to Turkish behavior at the London tripartite conference.

It is against this background that a marked change occurs in Turkey's position on Cyprus and Greece, a change increasingly characterized by the Menderes government's rapidly intensifying efforts to formulate an aggressive policy over Cyprus. The accelerating, and open, development of this policy was carried out both on official and quasi-official (that is, semi-covert) levels. In August 1955, these two institutional levels of action were to peak, and to inflame Turkish nationalist passions to such a degree that events at the London conference would combine with the successful plot of the Turkish government to explode dynamite on its consular grounds in Thessaloniki to culminate in the devastating Turkish pogrom that destroyed the Greek community of Istanbul on the night of September 6–7, 1955. It is clear that governmental institutions and quasi-official organizations shifted their attention in 1954–1955 from the Turkish minority in Greek Thrace and Cyprus to the hostage Greek community of Istanbul. The subsequent attacks on the Greek community reached a point of hysteria in the summer of 1955, and they were characterized by a series of dangerous and ominous episodes in which the government itself, along with student and irredentist organizations (all approved and controlled by the government), were the principal instigators.

The National Federation of Turkish Students and the National Union of Turkish Students, afforded Menderes vehicles for political action and pressure that were legally not a part of the state apparatus but were, nevertheless, under strict government control. In conformity with the new direction in Turkish policy on Cyprus in 1954, the two organizations' role became to attack, through demonstrations and demands, the Greek minority in Istanbul, as well as the ecumenical patriarchate residing in the city.

Other organizations joined the fray, including the Society for Relief of Refugees from Western Thrace, and the Committee for the Defense of Turkish Rights in Cyprus, which proved to be particularly active and was reorganized as the *Kıbrıs Türktür Cemiyeti* (KTC, or *Cyprus Is Turkish Association*). It was *Kıbrıs Türktür Cemiyeti* that was to figure most prominently in arousing Turkish interest in Cyprus, and it was an organization in which Menderes was to centralize much, but not all, of the plans and schemes for an energetic policy in asserting Turkish claims on the island. Its creation

marked a significant transition from a passive stage during which the Turkish government had maintained a formal neutrality on Cyprus (according to Köprülü) to one in which the government had decided to prepare public opinion for a more direct policy.

Kibris Türktür Cemiyeti's founder, Hikmet Bil, was to have a relatively close and much-discussed relationship with the Turkish prime minister during late 1954 and throughout much of 1955, that is, during the crucial phase in the change of Turkish policy on Cyprus and in the transformation of public opinion. *(To be continued)*

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Ποίηση Γιώργου Σεφέρη

ARGONAYTES

Και ψυχή
εί μέλλει γνώσεσθαι αὐτήν
εἰς ψυχὴν αὐτῆ βλεπτόν:
τον ξένο και τον εχθρό τον είδαμε στον καθρέφτη.

Ήτανε καλά παιδιά οι συντρόφοι, δε φωνάζαν
ούτε από τον κάματο ούτε από τη δίψα ούτε από την
παγωνιά,

είχανε το φέρσιμο των δέντρων και των κυμάτων
που δέχονται τον άνεμο και τη βροχή
δέχονται τη νύχτα και τον ήλιο
χωρίς ν' αλλάζουν μέσα στην αλλαγή.

Ήτανε καλά παιδιά, μέρες ολόκληρες
ίδρωναν στο κουπί με χαμηλωμένα μάτια
ανασαίνοντας με ρυθμό

και το αίμα τους κοκκίνιζε ένα δέρμα υποταγμένο.
Κάποτε τραγούδησαν, με χαμηλωμένα μάτια
όταν περάσαμε το ερημόνησο με τις αραποσυκιές
κατά τη δύση, πέρα από τον κάβο των σκύλων
που γαβγίζουν.

Εἰ μέλλει γνώσεσθαι αὐτήν ἔλεγαν
εἰς ψυχὴν βλεπτόν, ἔλεγαν
και τα κουπιά χτυπούσαν το χρυσάφι του πελάγου
μέσα στο ηλιόγεμα.

Περάσαμε κάβους πολλούς πολλά νησιά τη θάλασσα
που φέρνει την άλλη θάλασσα, γλάρους και φώκιες.

Δυστυχισμένες γυναίκες κάποτε με ολολυγμούς
κλαίγανε τα χαμένα τους παιδιά

κι άλλες αγριεμένες γύρευαν το Μεγαλέξαντρο
και δόξες βυθισμένες στα βάθη της Ασίας.

Αράξαμε σ' ακρογιαλιές γεμάτες αρώματα νυχτερινά
με κελαηδίσματα πουλιών, νερά που αφήνανε στα χέρια
τη μνήμη μιας μεγάλης ευτυχίας.

Μα δεν τελειώναν τα ταξίδια.

Οι ψυχές τους έγιναν ένα με τα κουπιά και τους σκαρμούς
με το σοβαρό πρόσωπο της πλήρης
με τ' αυλάκι του τιμονιού

με το νερό που έσπαζε τη μορφή τους.

Οι σύντροφοι τέλειωσαν με τη σειρά,
με χαμηλωμένα μάτια. Τα κουπιά τους
δείχνουν το μέρος που κοιμούνται στ' ακρογιάλι.

Κανείς δεν τους θυμάται. Δικαιοσύνη.

ARGONAUTS

*And if the soul
is to know itself
it must look into a soul:
the stranger and enemy, we've seen him in the mirror.*

The companions were good men, they never complained
about the work or the thirst or the frost,
they had the bearing of trees and waves
that accept the wind and the rain
accept the night and the sun
without changing in the midst of change.

They were good men, whole days
they sweated at the oars with lowered eyes
breathing in rhythm
and their blood reddened a submissive skin.
Sometimes they sang, with lowered eyes
as we were passing the dry island with the Barbary figs
to the west, beyond the cape
of the barking dogs.

If it is to know itself, they said
it must look into a soul, they said
and the oars struck the sea's gold
in the sunset.

We went past many capes many islands the sea
leading to another sea, gulls and seals.

Sometimes unfortunate women wept
lamenting their lost children
and others raging sought Alexander the Great
and glories buried in the heart of Asia.

We moored on shores full of night-scents
with birds singing, waters that left on the hands
the memory of great happiness.

But the voyages did not end.

Their souls became one with the oars and the oarlocks
with the solemn face of the prow
with the rudder's wake
with the water that shattered their image.

The companions died one by one,
with lowered eyes. Their oars
mark the place where they sleep on the shore.

No one remembers them. Justice.