



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

The Contributions of Greeks of Egypt to Homeland and Adopted Country

On Sunday, October 18, 2020, at 3:00 pm, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents professor Alexander Kitroeff in an online lecture titled *"The Contributions of Greeks of Egypt to Homeland and Adopted Country"*. This lecture is supported by the Hellenic Foundation, Chicago. The support of the Foundation is greatly appreciated. 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.

From the early nineteenth century through to the 1960s, the Greeks formed the largest, most economically powerful, and geographically and socially diverse of all European communities in Egypt. Although they benefited from the privileges extended to foreigners and the control exercised by Britain, they enjoyed a special relationship with Egypt and the Egyptians, and saw themselves as contributors to the country's modernization.

Alexander Kitroeff, Professor of History at Haverford College, demonstrates how this community contributed to Egypt while also maintaining its identity and ties to the homeland, based on his recently published book *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt*. The Greeks forged ties with the local population and the other European residents and played a central role in the development of Egypt's principal economic sector, cotton cultivation and export and pioneered a range of other economic activities, and also helped the opening and running of the Suez Canal. They also maintained a strong attachment to Greece through their contributions to the pursuit of the Great Idea and other projects and the establishment of many schools and cultural institutions including the Benaki Museum in Athens. Finally, the wealthy Greeks of Egypt funded a network of churches, schools and ethnic associations and newspapers that fostered the development of Greek culture and produced major intellectual figures such as the poet C.P. Cavafy.

Alexander Kitroeff is Professor of History at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. He received his doctorate in Modern History from Oxford University. He is author of *The Greeks in Egypt, 1919-1937: Ethnicity and Class*; *Griegos en América* [The Greeks in the Americas]; *Wrestling with the Ancients: Modern Greek Identity and the Olympics*; *Hellas, Europe Panathinaikos! 100 Chronia Hellenike Istoría*; *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt*, and *Greek Orthodoxy in America: a Modern History* (forthcoming). He has collaborated with film director Maria

Iliou as historical advisor in several documentaries including *"The Journey: the Greek Dream in America"* and *"Smyrna 1922–the Destruction of a Cosmopolitan City."* Their most recent film, *"Athens Between East and West, 1821-1896"* which is the first of a five-part series, premiered in February 2020 at the Benaki Museum in Athens.

Greece: Recovering from Two Debt Crises and a Pandemic

On Sunday, November 15, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Dr. Miranda Xafa in an online lecture titled *"Greece: Recovering from Two Debt Crises and a Pandemic"*. **Please note that this lecture will start at 2:00 pm U.S. Central Time.** This lecture is supported by the Hellenic Foundation, Chicago. The support of the Foundation is greatly appreciated. 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.

The crisis that hit Greece in the aftermath of the 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis ended a debt-financed consumer boom and triggered a deep recession. After two EU/IMF-funded adjustment programs and a massive debt restructuring in 2012, the Greek economy returned to growth and re-accessed capital markets in 2014. The disastrous negotiations with creditors conducted by the SYRIZA government in 2015 set back the adjustment effort and resulted in a third bailout agreement. With Greece and its creditors aligned in their desire to avoid a fourth bailout, Greece achieved a smooth exit from the program in August 2018, even though growth-enhancing reforms were not fully implemented. The New Democracy party returned to power in mid-2019 promising reforms to attract investment and spur growth, but its agenda was put on hold after the country was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. This lecture will assess (1) the state of the Greek economy in 2019; (2) the economic impact of the pandemic; (3) the policy measures adopted by the Greek government to soften its impact on companies and workers; (4) the EU response to the pandemic, including the €560bn "Recovery and Resilience Facility" (RRF); (5) the Pissaridis report on a roadmap for sustainable growth in Greece; (6) how Greece plans to use its €32bn share of the RRF [to be clarified in October]; and (7) the risks and uncertainties ahead.

Dr. Miranda Xafa started her career as an economist at the International Monetary Fund in Washington in 1980, and moved on to senior positions in government and in the financial sector. In 1991-1993 she served as chief economic advisor to Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis in Athens, and subsequently worked as a financial market strategist at

Salomon Brothers/Citigroup in London. After serving as a member of the IMF's Executive Board in 2004-2009, she is now a senior scholar at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and member of the academic board of the Greek Liberty Forum (KEFIM). She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania and has taught economics at the Universities of Pennsylvania and Princeton.

In Brief

Pandemic - Drastic Decline in Greek Hotel Occupancy Rates

According to the Greek newspaper Kathimerini, Greek tourism has been hit badly by the pandemic. The occupancy rate at Athens hotels plummeted in July to 36.5%, although the average room is 42.7% cheaper than in July 2019.

For the first seven months of the year, the occupancy rate dropped from 77.2% in 2019 to 39.2% this year. These figures include the good pre-pandemic times of January and February, when business was marginally better than last year.

The average price per room in January-July 2020 was €78.95, from €105.57 in the same period last year, and in July it was €69.49, from €121.32 a year ago.

Earnings per available room fell in the first seven months of the year to €30.99, from €81.56 in January-July 2019, and in July from €108.69 in 2019 to €25.36 this year.

Hotel owners have said that the occupancy rate had started showing signs of a decline from the end of 2019, "for reasons unrelated to the global health emergency, but rather due to faulty policies adopted to promote tourism development and which led to an excess in supply at all levels of hotel accommodation in Athens and elsewhere."

The crisis started to become apparent in bookings for corporate tourism events in mid-February, April and May when a lockdown was imposed by government decree and all hotels except a few designated per locality were shut down.

Year-round hotels were allowed to operate from June 1, but not all chose to open. Despite the fact that air connections were gradually re-established and Greece enjoyed the competitive advantage of a relatively safe destination, June and July were disappointing, with the occupancy rates at 25.7% in June and 36.5% in July.

The drastic decline in hotel occupancy rates is global. Rates fell 66.3% in Rome, 61.2% in Barcelona and 60.3% in Vienna. But Athens showed the greatest decline in the average room price.

The Greek Connection: The Life of Elias Demetracopoulos and the Untold Story of Watergate

A few excerpts from reviews of the recently published book: *The Greek Connection: The Life of Elias Demetracopoulos and the Untold Story of Watergate* by James H. Barron. The

book has received extensive coverage in the American media, including The New York Times and Washington Post.

He was one of the most fascinating figures in 20th-century political history—yet, until today, Elias Demetracopoulos (1928-2016) has been strangely overlooked. His life reads like an epic adventure story.

As a precocious twelve-year-old in occupied Athens, he engaged in heroic resistance efforts against the Nazis, for which he was imprisoned and tortured. After his life was miraculously spared, he became an investigative journalist, covering Greece's tumultuous domestic politics and America's increasing influence in the region.

A clever and scoop-hungry reporter, Elias soon gained access to powerful figures in both governments, Greek and American, and attracted many enemies. When the Greek military dictatorship took power in 1967, he narrowly escaped to Washington DC, where he would lead the fight to restore democracy in his homeland—while running afoul of the American government, too. His discovery of an illegal money transfer from the Greek CIA to the 1968 Nixon campaign could have changed history.

Mr. Demetracopoulos told Lawrence F. O'Brien Jr., who was managing Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey's presidential campaign in 1968, that the Greek junta had pumped \$549,000 (about \$3.7 million in today's dollars) into Nixon's coffers and that Richard Helms, the director of central intelligence, could confirm the transaction.

"O'Brien took the story to the president, but Johnson refused to act on it. He would neither ask Helms to investigate the report nor consider leaking it to the press, should it prove to be true."

President Johnson had three reasons for not taking action: Johnson considered Demetracopoulos a "troublemaker" to whom the State Department had originally hoped to deny asylum; he was by then personally disinclined to help Humphrey; and he did not want to further provoke Nixon, fearing, as he confided to the White House counsel without elaborating, that he might be prosecuted if Nixon became president.

James Barron uncovers the story of a man whose tireless pursuit of uncomfortable truths would put him at odds with not only his own government, but that of the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan administrations, making him a target of CIA, FBI, and State Department surveillance and harassment—and Greek kidnapping and assassination plots American authorities may have purposefully overlooked.

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):

Villages played a very important role in the commerce of the towns, the Byzantine villages being more closely connected to the towns than was the case with many areas in western Europe. The towns served as markets for the produce of the peasants most important items of which were grain, fish, wine, fruit, legumes, nuts, livestock, and lumber. Each town had its group of villages, the inhabitants of which brought these products to town, very often during the big fairs held on the feast day of the saints. Here the villagers sold their produce and bought the products of local or foreign industry. Many of these villages were quite large and thriving. Thus, parallel to the larger movements of trade, there was generated also this smaller local trade between the villages and the towns, which was just as important in some respects as the larger scale trade. In this manner, the farmers and herdsmen received cash for their goods. The towns in turn were able to dispose of the villagers' produce both by sale among the townsmen and by selling it to merchants of Constantinople and other cities.

Great Landed Families

One of the critical phenomena in the history of Anatolia was the evolution of the great landed families, whose deeds permeate the chronicles and legal literature of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Possessed of vast estates and high official positions in the provincial administration and military, they were largely responsible for the social and historical development in Asia Minor prior to the Seljuk invasions. Most of the families rose to power and eminence via the armies and then consolidated their position by an economic expansion that was largely, though not exclusively, based on the acquisition of great land holdings. These magnates, by virtue of their control of the provincial armies, wielded great power. Very often the exercise of the *strategia* (the holding of the position of army general) in a particular province tended to become semi hereditary in a particular family, as in the case of the Phocas' and the theme of Cappadocia. Aside from control of these thematic armies, the large estates of the aristocracy enabled them to maintain large bodies of private troops. So long as the government was able to check their more extreme political and economic abuses, this provincial aristocracy contributed to the defense and expansion of Byzantium in the east. In the eleventh century, however, this powerful class played a crucial role in the decline of the state.

Demography

Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about the numbers of the population in Byzantine Anatolia and its towns, for little has survived in the way of comprehensive tax registers or population figures. The silence of the sources and the thoroughness of the cultural transformation effected by the fifteenth century have led many scholars to conclude, erroneously, that Byzantine Asia Minor was sparsely inhabited. Estimates, which are really little more than

educated guesses, have been made for the size of Anatolian population in antiquity. These estimates, all based upon an assumption of commercial prosperity and urban vitality in the period of the Roman and early Byzantine Empires, vary from 8,800,000 to 13,000,000.

The Church

Anatolia had an elaborate ecclesiastical organization of metropolitanates, archbishoprics, and bishoprics subordinated to the patriarch of Constantinople. In the earlier centuries this provincial organization of the church had followed the pattern of the imperial administrative organization. Thus, the town, or polis, became the seat of the bishopric. By the eleventh century, Asia Minor possessed approximately forty-five metropolitanates, ten archbishoprics, and a great number of suffragan bishoprics. In the tenth century there had been approximately 371 bishoprics subordinate to them, and by the eleventh century there was a significant increase in their number due largely to the expansion of the frontiers in the east. The metropolitans were the ecclesiastical lords of large areas and usually of a number of towns as well as villages. The powers and influence of these hierarchs in their respective provinces were considerable, not only in the spiritual domain but also in the sphere of administration and in the courts. It was the metropolitans and archbishops who linked the provincial administrative structure of the church to Constantinople, patriarch, and emperor. They had the right to participate in the meetings of the synod in Constantinople and also to participate in the election of the patriarch. The elaborate structure of metropolitanates—bishoprics—indeed of the whole ecclesiastical institution—was supported by extensive properties and certain cash incomes. It was with these incomes that the metropolitans and bishops provided for guesthouses, poorhouses, orphanages, hospitals and to a certain extent, local education. The ecclesiastical as well as the bureaucratic, administrative personnel were recruited from the local population and Constantinople, so that the priesthood and hierarchy represented both the capital and the provinces.

Asia Minor was not only the most important Byzantine province militarily and economically, but also it was so in the religious domain. Anatolia possessed the richest, most populous metropolitanates of the empire. Their importance relative to that of the European metropolitanates is clearly reflected in the official lists, the *notitia episcopatum*, composed for purposes of protocol, where the metropolitanates are listed in order of their rank. Of the first twenty-seven metropolitanates listed in a *notitia* of the eleventh century, only two were located in Europe, the remaining twenty-five were situated in Anatolia. This emerges more clearly when one compares the number of bishops to be found in the two regions of the empire. bishoprics in Asia Minor, 99 in Europe, 18 in the Aegean isles, and 16 in Calabria and Sicily.

(to be continued)

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Ποίηση Κώστα Καρυωτάκη

ΣΤΡΟΦΕΣ

Απ' όλα θέλω ελεύτερος
να πλέω στα χάρη του κόσμου.
Αν ένας φίλος μου 'μεινε,
να φύγει, να περάσει.
Κι όταν ζητήσει ο θάνατος
τα πλούτη ποχω μάσει,
σένα, πικρία μου απέραντη,
μονάχο να 'χω βιός μου.

Για τη ζωή σου μου 'λεγες,
για το χαμό της νιότης,
για την αγάπη μας που κλαίει
τον ίδιο θάνατό της,
κι ενώ μια ογρή στα μάτια σου
περνούσε αναλαμπή,
ήλιος φαιδρός απ' τ' ανοιχτό
παράθυρο είχε μπει.

Η νύχτα μάς εχώρισεν
από όσους αγαπάμε
πριν μας χωρίσει η ξενιτιά.
(Να 'ναι όλοι εκεί στο μόλο;)
Σφύρα, καράβι αργήσαμε.
Κι αν φτάσουμε όπου πάμε,
στάσου λίγο, μα ύστερα
σφύρα να φεύγουμε όλο.

Λεύκες, γιγάντιοι καρφωτοί
στα πλάγια εδώ του δρόμου,
δέντρα μου, εστερέζατε ο βοριάς
τα φύλλα σας να πάρει.
Σκιές εμείνατε σκιών
που ρέουν στο μέτωπό μου,
καθώς πηγαίνω χάμου εγώ
κι απάνω το φεγγάρι.

Χαρά! Η χαρά! Στα νέα χαρά
παιδιά! Τραβούνε - ωραιόι
μαύροι ληστές - την κόρη ζωή
δεμένη ν' αγαπήσουν.
Μα στο βιβλίο σου ολάνοιχτο,
στα φύλλα του αύρα πνέει,
τρελέ, τρελέ, που εγέρασες
και νέος ποτέ δεν ήσουν.

- Ποιητή, κυλάει το γέλιο μου
μέλι και χλεύη, αλλά
δεν παύεις να σφυροκοπάς
των ήχων τα στεφάνια
- Κόρη, δουλεύω ανώφελα,
μα η στείρα τι ωφελά
και σιωπηλή του αχάτινου
ματιού σου υπερηφάνια;

Αντίο! Αντίο! Με τα ουράνια
μάτια σας και με βιόλες
στο λαιμό, εφύγατε, ξανθές
ερώτων νέων ελπίδες.
Αντίο, κι εσύ που στρέφοντας,
όταν χαθήκανε όλες
πάλι να παίρνω το βαθύ,
σκοτεινό δρόμο μ' είδες!

STROPHES

Free from everything I want
to sail to the end of the world.
If I have any friend left,
he should flee, escape.
And when death demands
the wealth I've amassed,
you, my vast bitterness,
will be my only estate.

You told me about your life,
about the loss of youth,
about our love which cries
over its own death,
and while in your eyes,
the hint of a tear glinted
briefly, through the open window
bright sunlight entered.

Before life abroad could do so,
night had already separated us
from everyone we love.
(Are they all there on the pier?)
Blow your whistle, ship, we're late.
And if we approach our destination,
hold up for a while, then
blow your whistle so we can finally disembark.

Poplars, giants fixed
here on the road-side,
my trees, you've agreed to let
the north wind take your leaves.
You're still the shadow of shadows
cascading across my brow
while I walk the ground below
and the moon is up on high.

Joy! The Joy! Ah the joy of young
children! They capture that girl
life and bind her—these handsome,
dark highwaymen—and make love to her.
But your book is always open,
a breeze flips its pages.
Fool, fool, you've grown old
without ever being young.

- Poet, my laughter flows
like honey and scorn, but you
never stop beating out
your crown of sounds.
- Girl, I work in vain
but what use is the barren
and wordless vanity
of your agate eye?

Farewell! Farewell! You've gone
with your heavenly eyes
and with flowers around your neck,
you fair hopes for new loves.
Farewell, and you—the one
who looked back when all the rest
had vanished—you saw me again
taking the deep dark road.