



# HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

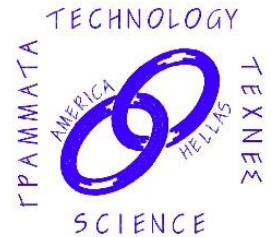
A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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## Upcoming Events

### The Greek Millet and the Late Ottoman Empire 1821-1912

On Sunday, December 1, 2024, at 3:00 pm, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present *Professor Nick Doumanis* in a lecture titled “*The Greek Millet and the Late Ottoman Empire 1821-1912*”. 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.

The lecture will consider the changing conditions experienced by Greek Orthodox Christians in the last century of Ottoman rule, between the Greek Revolution and the Balkan Wars. It will address the changing nature of the Ottoman state, including the Tanzimat Reforms and the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, and how Ottoman Greeks adjusted to the changes. Some consideration will be given to the growth of migration of Greek nationals to the empire, particularly Smyrna, and the divisions among Ottoman Greeks about the community’s future.

*Nick Doumanis* is the Foundation for Hellenic Studies - Illinois Chair of Hellenic Studies and Professor of History at the University of Illinois Chicago. He has previously taught at the University of Newcastle and the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. His publications include *Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean*, which considers Greek experiences of Italian rule in the Dodecanese (1912-1947), *A History of Greece*, which is now being prepared for a second edition, and *Before the Nation*, which deals with everyday Greek and Turkish relations in nineteenth century Asia Minor. More recently he produced the *Oxford Handbook of European History 1914-1945*, and *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries*, which he co-authored with Antonis Liakos, Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Athens.

## In Brief

### Europe’s Population Decline

Rolf Strauch, chief economist of the European Stability Mechanism, in his latest report on demographics and financial stability, wrote: “*More immigration is necessary. Existing projections already assume substantial immigration, which, however, is insufficient to reverse aggregate aging.*”

In a report on the future of European competitiveness that followed shortly after Strauch’s report, former European Central Bank president Mario Draghi said that “*positive net*

*inward migration does not compensate for the EU’s population decline. Long-term population projections suggest a further continued decline of the EU’s population. This decline stands in contrast to the US, whose population is expected to continue to grow during the next decades, albeit at a slowing pace.*”

According to projections of the United States Congressional Budget Office, the US population will increase from 342 million people in 2024 to 383 million people in 2054. Population growth will slow over the next 30 years, from 0.6 percent per year, on average, between 2024 and 2034, to 0.2 percent per year, on average, between 2045 and 2054. Net immigration increasingly drives population growth and will account for all population growth beginning in 2040. Fertility rates remain below the rate that would be required for a generation to replace itself in the absence of immigration.

Right now, Europe has the smallest population growth in the world. A declining and aging population will exert a great stress on the economies of the European countries. Because people cannot be forced to have more children, the available options to ameliorate this stress are limited. Such options include: raising the retirement age, increasing the participation of women in the labor force, the reduction of unemployment by improving the match between the skills of workers and those required by the employers, and the integration of immigrants. (Sources: Greek newspaper *ekathimerini* and *US Congressional Budget Office*)

### Greece Extends Workweek to Six Days in Some Companies

In Greece, last July a law was enacted that allows some companies to enforce a six-day workweek. The intent of the law is to remedy problems of its work force and respect the rights of workers by compensating those participating in the longer workweek. The workforce problems arise from an aging population, a lower participation of working age people in the workforce, and according to employers, to a mismatch between skills demanded by employers and the skills of workers seeking work.

The law applies to private sector workers in certain industrial and manufacturing sectors, or to those who work in a business that operates continuous shifts 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with some exceptions. And it would be allowed only “in exceptional circumstances,” like an unexpectedly increased workload.

The law has been opposed by labor unions, which seek better working conditions and respect of workers’ rights. Greece

already has the longest average workweek in the European Union, and workers in developed countries are seeking a shorter work week on the grounds that a shorter work week increases productivity. Moreover, the unemployment rate in Greece is over 10 percent. At this level of unemployment, it would be expected that the country should not have a shortage of workers.

According to the law, workers will get an extra 40 percent on their sixth day, and this would rise to 115 percent on a Sunday or a public holiday. In Greece, some workers are already working more than 40 hours per week without getting paid for the extra time. Supporters of the new law argue that the new measure affords them protections because employers would have to declare the extra hours to the government.

The labor shortage is partly attributed to the financial crisis that started in 2009. During the crisis, many young workers left the country seeking better prospects abroad, and some companies cut back on training and development that has added to the problem. (Source: *New York Times*)

### **Salaries in Greece**

According to data released by Eurostat, at 17,000 euros, the average annual full-time adjusted salary in Greece was the third lowest in the European Union —Bulgaria at 13,500 euros, and Hungary at 16,900 euros, while the EU average stands at 37,900 euros. The highest average annual full-time adjusted salary was recorded in Luxembourg at 81,100 euros, followed by Denmark at 67,600 euros and Ireland at 58,700 euros

In the US, in 2023, the average wage and salary per full-time equivalent employee was at 81,359 US dollars, and the real median household income was \$80,610 dollars. For a family of one person the poverty threshold income was 15,480 dollars, and for a family of four was 31,200 dollars. A comparison of these incomes with the incomes in other countries should take into consideration the differences in the cost of living.

### ***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 (Continuation from the previous issue)***

***Interrelation of Byzantine Decline and Turkish Pressure (1042-1071)***

In the three decades between the accession of Constantine IX (1042) and the battle of Manzikert (1071), one can discern a definite pattern in the reaction of the Turkmen groups building up on the eastern borders to the deteriorating internal conditions of the empire in Anatolia and the Balkans. The raids, starting out in a somewhat cautious manner, were not frequent in the beginning. But as the condition of the

empire progressively weakened each year, and as the number of Turks on the borders increased, the audacity, frequency, and extent of the raids increased considerably. One gets the impression from the Greek chronicles that, even before the defeat at Manzikert took place, the Turks were raiding deep into Anatolia with little danger from Byzantine forces.

In this period of roughly thirty years, the struggle between the provincial magnate-generals and the bureaucracy did not abate but rather became more acute. The armies of Anatolia were turned against Constantinople and the bureaucrats, or they were brought to defend Constantinople against rebellious generals at the head of the armies in the Balkans, or else to combat the Patzinaks who had crossed the Danube. At the same time the indigenous provincial armies were being dissolved. It is no mere chance that the Seljuk incursions became prominent for the first time, and permanent, in the reign of the bureaucrat emperor Constantine IX Monomachus (1042–1055). Constantine's inept military policies, which led to the dissolution of the indigenous soldiery of the Iberian theme and of the region of Byzantine Mesopotamia with their accompanying conversion into tax-paying units, have already been discussed elsewhere. These border areas, among the most vital regions in the defense of the eastern provinces, had been disturbed previously by other events. In 1047 there had taken place the revolt of Leo Tornices, who, supported by many of the dissatisfied and idle western generals, marched on Constantinople. Because the capital itself was without defenders, Monomachus summoned the magister Constantine from the eastern borders where he was waging war against Abu'l-Sewar the Shaddadid. As a result of the civil strife in the empire, he was forced to conclude peace with Abu'l-Sewar and to bring the eastern armies to Constantinople. Soon after the revolt of Tornices and the withdrawal of the magister Constantine, the empire's Anatolian frontiers became the object of serious Turkish raids when, in 1048, a body of Turks under Asan descended from the regions of Tabriz and proceeded to lay waste Vaspuracan. Aaron, the governor of that province, did not have sufficient forces to meet the invaders and so he summoned Cecaumenus the governor of Ani, and upon the arrival of the latter the combined forces defeated the Turks by resorting to a ruse. In 1049 a larger army of Turks appeared in Vaspuracan under the Seljuk prince Ibrahim Inal, and as a result Cecaumenus and Aaron had to await the arrival of Georgian reinforcements under Liparites. While the Byzantines awaited reinforcements this considerable Turkish force captured and plundered the important commercial center of Artze near Erzerum. The destruction of this city marks the beginning of the sacking of many of the important urban centers in Byzantine Anatolia. On the arrival of the Georgians, the Turkish and Byzantine forces came to blows at Kapetru, but the outcome was indecisive. The Byzantine forces had not been numerically sufficient to meet the Turkish armies in the beginning, and even after the arrival of the Georgians, they had not been able to destroy the Turkish forces. The incursions of Asan and Ibrahim, as well as the destruction of Artze, were no doubt the consequences of the revolt of the western generals which had so weakened the defenses of the eastern borders.

The Patzinak raids in the Balkans during the reign of Monomachus were a more visible and far more immediate threat to the empire, as it seemed virtually impossible to halt them. On at least two occasions the emperor removed troops from Anatolia to bolster the Balkan front. In 1050 troops were brought from the east to augment the Byzantine armies in the Patzinak campaigns, but as the Patzinak ravages continued unabated, Monomachus employed eastern armies in the Balkans as late as 1053. It was soon after this, in 1054, that the sultan Toghrul, appeared in the regions of Lake Van where his army spread out to raid. The cities of Paipert and Perkri were besieged and sacked, and the key city of Manzikert underwent a difficult siege. It was as a result of these events, it would seem, that Monomachus subsequently transported the troops from the Macedonian theme to the east under Bryennius.

In the years 1056–1057 the Turkish chief Samuh appeared with 3,000 Turks in greater Armenia, where he remained for a number of years. In the face of the growing number of Turks massed on the eastern frontier in Armenia, the military aristocracy of Anatolia launched a revolt that marks a turning point in the acceleration of the Turkish raids into the peninsula. Isaac Comnenus, supported by the Anatolian generals, raised the majority of the thematic, mercenary, and Armenian troops of Anatolia, and marched them toward the Bosphorus. Those of the Anatolian forces which had not adhered to the rebellion, the troops of the Anatolia and Charsianite themes, joined the western military contingents loyal to the government. The two armies, east and west, met in a sanguinary battle just outside the city of Nicaea, and though the Anatolian generals won the victory, the empire actually suffered defeat, for the soldiery of east and west were locked in a mutually destructive struggle and the number of the dead was great. One chronicler states that on that day Isaac Comnenus plunged the whole Greek nation into mourning, and another remarks that Isaac's revolt brought misfortune to Armenia. Both were correct, for not only did the slaughter further exhaust the already depleted armies, but the borders were left unguarded. This battle, in 1057, marked the departure of the traditional Byzantine armies from the Anatolian scene. On October 3, 1057, just one month after the entry of Isaac into Constantinople, a Turkish army under the emir Dinar, finding the east undefended, approached Camacha where it spread out. One column marched against Coloneia, the home of Catacolon Cecaumenus who had just raised the armies of that area for the civil war and had left his province undefended; the second column besieged Melitene, one of the great commercial centers of the eastern Anatolian regions. Melitene and its population of wealthy Syrian, Armenian, and Greek merchants suffered the fate of Artze, as great numbers of the inhabitants were either killed or enslaved, and the booty the Turks took—gold, silver, and other loot—was great.

In the twelve years between the death of Isaac Comnenus and the battle of Manzikert, the internal crisis of the empire became further aggravated and the Turkish tribesmen continued to saturate the border lands. Thus, the financial, administrative, and military collapse of the Anatolian

provinces characterized this period of slightly more than a decade. The bureaucratic fear of the armies and financial difficulties of the state caused the final disappearance of the locally levied troops as effective military units. The ethnic groups of Byzantine Anatolia—Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians—were at the throats of one another as separatist movements among the Armenians commenced, and open warfare broke out between Greeks and Armenians, Armenians and Syrians, and Greeks and Syrians. In such a situation the mercenary units began to disregard the commands of the government and to act as free agents. It was during this time of military, administrative, and fiscal anarchy that the Turks began to raid Anatolia almost without hindrance, and started the systematic pillaging of the urban hearths of Anatolian Hellenism.

For this twelve-year period, we have a firsthand witness to the military deterioration in the Byzantine armies, the historian Michael Attaliates who served as an official in the armies during many of the Anatolian campaigns and who was present at the battle of Manzikert. The dismantling and demoralization of the military, well on the way in the time of Constantine IX, was largely consummated by the end of the reign of Constantine X (1067). The temporary interregnum of the generals under Isaac I had not lasted long enough to effect any significant change in this demilitarization, and when Constantine X ascended the throne in 1059 the government was once more completely in the hands of the bureaucrats. Their antimilitary sentiment set the fashion for the society of the day. The very soldiers themselves abandoned their weapons and military service and became advocates and devotees of legal problems and questions.

The military catalogs were no longer fully maintained, the bravest and most able troops being completely withdrawn from service because of expense and fear of the generals. Even Psellus, the archbureaucrat, felt constrained to protest at the extremity of the emperor's cuts in the military budget. With the appearance of the Turkish chief Samuh and the Khurasan Salar and their raiding Turks in Anatolia, Constantine X was finally obliged to send an army to halt their ravages. But, Attaliates remarks, this army was not satisfactory, because it was unarmed and uneager as a result of the deprivation of its provisions. So to speak, it was the worst section of the army, for the better soldiers were removed from military service by reason of the greater rank and salary involved. That which occurred was blameworthy, for nothing brave or in keeping with the former Rhomaic magnificence and strength was accomplished by the army.

The same emperor virtually handed over Ani to the Turks because the Armenian Pancratius promised to defend it without spending money on military forces. This left Ani without military defenders and caused it to fall to the Turks. Shortly after Constantine Ducas's death in 1067 and during the brief regency of Eudocia, the state of the armies had become chaotic. On many occasions these tattered remnants of the military forces simply retired to the safety of walls and refused to march out and oppose the Turks.

*(To be continued)*

## *From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage*

### **Poetry by Odysseas Elytis**

#### **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!

Τη γλώσσα μου έδωσαν ελληνική το σπίτι φτωχικό στις  
αμμουδιές του Όμηρου.  
Μονάχη έγνωια η γλώσσα μου στις αμμουδιές του Όμηρου.  
Εκεί σπάροι και πέγκες  
ανεμόδαρτα ρήματα  
ρεύματα πράσινα μες στα γαλάζια  
όσα είδα στα σπλάχνα μου ν' ανάβουνε  
σφουγγάρια, μέδουσες  
με τα πρώτα λόγια των Σειρήνων  
όστρακα ρόδινα με τα πρώτα μαύρα ρίγη.  
Μονάχη έγνωια η γλώσσα μου, με τα πρώτα μαύρα ρίγη.  
Εκεί ρόδια, κυδώνια  
θεοί μελαχρινοί, θείοι κι εξάδελφοι  
το λάδι αδειάζοντας μες στα πελώρια κιούπια  
και πνοές από τη ρεματιά ευωδιάζοντας  
λυγαριά και σχίνο  
σπάρτο και πιπερόριζα  
με τα πρώτα πιπίσματα των σπίνων  
ψαλμοδιές γλυκές με τα πρώτα πρώτα Δόξα Σοι.  
Μονάχη έγνωια η γλώσσα μου, με τα πρώτα πρώτα Δόξα  
Σοι!  
Εκεί δάφνες και βάγια  
θυμιατό και λιβάνισμα  
τις πάλες ευλογώντας και τα καριοφίλια.

Στο χόμα το στρωμένο με τ' αμπελομάντιλα  
κνίσες, τσουγκρίσματα  
και Χριστός Ανέστη  
με τα πρώτα σμπάρα των Ελλήνων.  
Αγάπες μυστικές με τα πρώτα λόγια του Ύμνου.  
Μονάχη έγνωια η γλώσσα μου, με τα πρώτα λόγια του  
Ύμνου!

Στον πηλό το στόμα μου ακόμη και σε ονόμαζε  
Ρόδινο νεογνό στικτή πρώτη δροσιά  
Κι από τότε σου πλάθε βαθιά στα χαράματα  
Τη γραμμή των χειλιών και τον καπνό της κόμης  
Την άρθρωση σου 'δινε και το λάμδα το έψιλον  
Την αέρινη άσφαλτη περπατηξιά

Κι απ' την ίδια εκείνη στιγμή μέσα μου ανοίγοντας  
Άγνωστη φυλακή φαιά κι άσπρα πουλιά  
Στον αιθέρα ερίζοντας ανέβηκαν κι ένιωσα  
Πως για σένα τα αίματα για σένα τα δάκρυα  
Στους αιώνες το πάλεμα το φριχτό και το υπέροχο  
Η σαγήνη για σένα και η ομορφιά

Στα πνευστά των δέντρων και κρούοντας ο πυρρήχιος  
Δόρατα και σπαθιά να λες άκουσα Εσύ  
Μυστικά προστάγματα και παρθενοβίωτα  
Με την έκλαμψη πράσινων αστέρων λόγια  
Και πάνω απ' την άβυσσο αιωρούμενη γνώρισα  
ΤΟΥ ΣΠΑΘΙΟΥ ΣΟΥ ΤΗΝ ΚΟΨΗ ΤΗΝ ΤΡΟΜΕΡΗ!

Μόνος κυβέρνησα τη θλίψη μου  
Μόνος αποίκησα τον εγκαταλειμμένο Μάιο  
Μόνος εκόλπωσα τις ευωδιές  
Επάνω στον αγρό με τις αλκονιδες  
Τάισα τα λουλούδια κίτρινο βαυκάλισα τους λόφους  
Επυροβόλησα την ερημιά με κόκκινο!  
Είπα: δε θα 'ναι η μαχαιριά βαθύτερη από την κραυγή  
Και είπα: δε θα 'ναι το Άδικο τιμιότερο απ' το αίμα!  
Το χέρι των σεισμών το χέρι των λιμών  
Το χέρι των έχτρων το χέρι των δικών  
Μου, εφρένιασαν εχάλασαν ερήμαξαν αφάνισαν  
Μία και δύο και τρεις φορές  
Προδόθηκα κι απόμεινα στον κάμπο μόνος  
Πάρθηκα και πατήθηκα σαν κάστρο μόνος  
Το μήνυμα που σήκωνα τ' άντεξα μόνος!

Μόνος απέλπισα το θάνατο  
Μόνος εδάγκωσα μες στον Καιρό με δόντια πέτρινα  
Μόνος εκίνησα για το μακρύ  
Ταξίδι σαν της σάλπιγγας μες στους αιθέρες!  
Ήταν στη δύναμή μου η Νέμεση το ατσάλι κι η ατιμία  
Να προχωρήσω με τον κορνιαχτό και τ' άρματα  
Είπα: με μόνο το σπαθί του κρύου νερού θα παραβγώ  
Είπα: με μόνο το σπαθί τον νου μου θα χτυπήσω!