



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

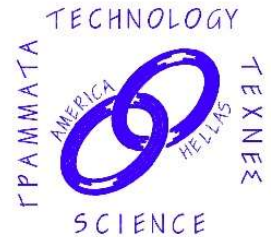
A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

The Unexamined Life is not Worth Living—Why Liberal Arts Matter More than Ever

On Sunday, February 23, 2025, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present Prof. Theodore G. Zervas in a lecture titled: “*The Unexamined Life is not Worth Living—Why Liberal Arts Matter More than Ever*” The event will take place at 3:00 pm at the lecture hall of the Holy Taxiarchai and Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, 7373 N Caldwell Ave, Niles, Illinois. Admission is free.

More than two and a half millennia ago, Socrates proclaimed, “*The unexamined life is not worth living.*” He made this statement during a time when Athens, his great city, grappled with sustaining its democratic system. To Socrates, democracy symbolized freedom, but more importantly, it granted him the right to question and examine life without fear of persecution. Amid the current social and political challenges in the United States, are American universities making a critical error by eliminating liberal arts majors? Dr. Theodore G. Zervas will explore the evolution of liberal arts education, from its roots in ancient Athens to its present role in the American academy and its critical relevance to contemporary life. In an era marked by the rise of social media, the proliferation of misinformation that critically influences the decision making of citizens, increased mental health challenges, diminished face-to-face human interaction, and the need for business and political leaders, as well as for everyone else to understand their responsibilities to the society, make the need for a significant share of everyone’s education in a liberal arts curriculum to matter more than ever.

Dr. Zervas is a professor of education at North Park University in Chicago. He has also taught at Technologico Superiores De Monterrey (Mexico), and The American University in Cairo, Egypt. Much of his research focuses on the history of education both in Greece and the United States. His first book *The Making of a Modern Greek Identity: Education, Nationalism, and the Teaching of A Greek National Past*, explores the ways in which the teaching of Greek history in Greek schools during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helped shape a Greek national identity. His second book *Formal and Informal Education During the Rise of Greek Nationalism: Learning to be Greek*, was published in 2016. He has published a co-edited volume with Fevronia Soumakis titled, *Educating Greek Americans: Historical and Contemporary Pathways*. His most recent work is a coauthored edited volume with Ehab Abdou titled: *Ancient and Indigenous Wisdom Traditions in*

African and Euro-Asian Contexts: Towards More Balanced Curricular Representations and Classroom Practices.

The Bavarian Rule in Greece and the Foundations of the Modern Greek State and Society (1830-1843)

On Sunday, March 16, 2025, in celebration of the Greek Revolution of 1821, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present Yannis Haralambidis in an online lecture on *The Bavarian Rule in Greece and the Foundations of the Modern Greek State and Society (1830-1843)*. The event will take place at 2:00 pm. The Zoom link will be announced.

This lecture will focus in the transition between the Revolution and the setting of the foundations of the modern Greek state, roughly after the signature of the Protocol of London that certified Greek independence and till the aftermath of the revolution of the 3rd of September, 1843, that ended the absolute Othonian monarchy. Key points will include: the destabilization and the end of the Ioannis Kapodistrias government, the choice of Othon as the new King of Greece, the establishment of the Viceroy's interim period (1833-1835), the years of the absolute monarchy (1835-1843), the setting of the foundations of the administrative, legal, military, educational, and ecclesiastical structures of modern Greece, the changes that took place in Greek society, the clash between the “*autochthons*” and “*eterochthons*”, the revolution of 1843, the Constitution of 1844, and the establishment of the “*Megali Idea*” (Great Idea) as the national ideology. The objective of the presentation will be to contribute to the understanding of the processes that transformed Greece from an Ottoman province to a model and ambitious Balkan and eventually European state.

Yannis Charalambidis is a journalist and historian specialized in Modern History. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Greek history from the University of Crete, Greece, and he is enrolled in an MA Postgraduate Program in Modern Greek and European History at the same University. He has worked in multiple public history projects in the media and internet. He is currently the manager of Patris.gr, the web portal of “PATRIS”, the most historic and popular newspaper in Crete, Greece.

In Brief

Henry Kissinger – Greece and Cyprus

Thomas Alan Schwartz, professor of history, political science and European studies at Vanderbilt University and author of the book “*Henry Kissinger and American Power: A Political*

Biography” published in 2020, in an interview to the Greek newspaper Kathimerini, published on December 12, 2024, said:

Question: What international concerns did Washington have in the 1970s and what share could we say corresponded to the situation in Greece and Cyprus?

I think Nixon and Kissinger sought, above all, to maintain the status quo in the sense they wanted to. When they looked at Greece and Cyprus, they didn’t want change that would cause difficulties. And their biggest concern, to the extent that they really ever thought much about Greece and Cyprus – which before 1974 I don’t think you can see a lot of indication that they did – were about some degree of stability. They didn’t really care about issues like democracy promotion or questions of minority rights or the possibilities of what Cyprus, what Archbishop Makarios were about. They didn’t care that much about those issues. They really just wanted to preserve stability in that area and not have NATO’s eastern flank weakened by a conflict between Greece and Turkey in that sense.

To what extent did the Watergate scandal influence Kissinger’s and Nixon’s foreign policy in the Mediterranean?

Well, this is an interesting question. And it’s been disputed, of course, in his memoirs, Kissinger argued that the travails of Watergate, the issues that consumed Nixon, particularly from about the beginning of 1973 until his resignation in August of 74, seriously weakened American foreign policy, and became a great distraction in American foreign policy and lessened its ability to be effective in all parts of the world, not just the Mediterranean. Now, others have argued, and I have argued in my book that, of course, one of the effects of Watergate was to give Kissinger considerable power. And in fact, I call him the president of foreign policy. During this time, and to a degree, Kissinger was in effect running American foreign policy as Nixon tried to deal with the scandals connected to Watergate. What that meant, I think, is that Kissinger’s priorities were set around what he needed, what he felt he needed to do. And in this case, I think his major concern was always Cold War and great power issues, and he had relatively little concern for the types of things going on between Greece and Turkey or on Cyprus, until they affected anything more significant. And so, in a way, I think the degree to which he centralized power in his own hands during this time – he was both national security adviser and secretary of state – meant that his attention span for other issues was limited by what he was up to at the time. In particular, during this period in which Cyprus exploded. That was the Middle East issue that he was very concerned with, particularly trying to get disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt and Syria.

Kissinger, coming off of his Middle East diplomacy, saw Cyprus as essentially a lose-lose situation and told Gerald Ford that, you know, Turkey’s more important to us.

During a conversation with President Ford in the Oval Office he made the most famous – at least in Greece –

comment, that “there is no American reason why the Turks should not have the one third,” of Cyprus. But he also said “the British have made a mess of it.” So, my question is, was he always guided by realpolitik, or did he think that the situation in Cyprus was already out of hand?

I think what you have there is the degree to which Kissinger, when he was running foreign policy on his own, slipped into his geopolitical reasoning, which was always, you know, what is the strongest state to be allied to, what matters most for American national interests? And it was a fairly narrow way of conceiving of American interests - the idea there is no American reason why the Turks couldn’t have a part of Cyprus. And in a way, that’s a very narrow and blinkered way of looking at it. Not incorrect, I think, because most Americans would not really think that it mattered much to the United States what the political arrangements were on Cyprus. But I think it underestimated the degree to which issues like this could inflame public opinion, especially if it was seen as a violation of human rights, ethnic cleansing, the types of things that did go on in Cyprus, and that would then have an effect on Kissinger’s image and on the United States, the image of American foreign policy in the Mediterranean. So, I do think these quotes and what you’ve cited show the degree to which Kissinger, coming off of his Middle East diplomacy, saw Cyprus as essentially a lose-lose situation and told Gerald Ford that, well, you know, Turkey’s more important to us without, I think, alerting the president on the degree of political difficulties this was going to cause. I think this was a case of Kissinger being affected by his own tendency to centralize power and to only be concerned about the issue in front of him at the time, to the extent that he really did not understand or recognize some of the politics of the Cyprus situation until it was too late.

Why did Kissinger refuse to meet Konstantinos Karamanlis in exile in Paris? Would he have preferred someone else to lead Greece after the restoration of democracy?

I went back to his memoirs on this just to see, because I had never questioned him particularly on that, and it wasn’t an issue that came up a great deal in other biographies, and it was rarely raised outside of a few journalists who raised it at the time in his memoirs. He’s really somewhat dismissive of Karamanlis when he did meet him in Paris in the late 60s, early 70s, before the issue [of his return] came up. He described him as vain and somewhat detached from really what was going on in his own country, something that he recognized was frequent among exiled politicians who basically lose touch. And so he seems to have been rather dismissive of Karamanlis. I think the fact that he didn’t meet with him afterwards right away or recognize that he would be coming back into power, is also indicative of Kissinger’s relative lack of interest in democratic leaders, relative or in situations where he thought, in fact, that countries were not going to have democratic transitions and that he would be dealing with authoritarians. And in that sense, I think he dismissed Karamanlis as largely ineffectual. So in this case, I think he underestimated him. And this was characteristic in some ways of Kissinger’s tendency to be less committed, you might say, to democratic institutions and developments.

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)

The Turks, who were raiding the east again came against the Rhomaic armies encamped in Mesopotamia, but especially against those around Melitene. These, being in want of their salary and deprived of the provisions usually supplied them, were in an abased and deprived state.

Because of this condition they refused to go out against the invaders, with the consequence that the Turks sacked the city of Caesarea.

When, to the southeast, combined Turkish and Arab forces raided the regions about Antioch, Nicephorus Botaniates tried to muster an army, but again the miserliness of the administration paralyzed these efforts. As only a portion of the salary was paid, the soldiers took it and then scattered to their homes leaving the enemy forces free to ravage the neighborhood of the city. So this time an attempt was made to levy a few raw youths.

But they were without military experience and without horses, and more or less without armour, naked and not even provided with daily bread.

Having temporarily overthrown the bureaucrats, the general Romanus Diogenes found the armies in an even more dreadful state. Cedrenus, in pages filled with Gibbonian melancholy, describes the mustering of the armies by Romanus for his first great campaign against the Turks in 1068:

“The emperor, leading an army such as did not befit the emperor of the Rhomaioi but one which the times furnished, of Macedonians and Bulgars and Cappadocians and Uzes and the other foreigners who happened to be about, in addition also of Franks and Varangians, set out hastily. All were mustered by imperial command in Phrygia, that is in the theme of the Anatolicoi, where there was to be seen the incredible. The famous champions of the Rhomaioi who had enslaved all the east and west [now] consisted of a few men. These were bent over by poverty and distress and were deprived of armor. Instead of swords and other military weapons ... they were bearing hunting spears and scythes {and this} not during a period of peace, and they were without war horses and other equipment. Inasmuch. as no emperor had taken the field for many years, they were for this reason unprofitable and useless, and their salary and the customary provisions had been stripped away. They were cowardly and unwarlike and appeared to be unserviceable for anything brave. The very standards spoke out taciturnly, having a squalid appearance as if darkened by thick smoke, and they had few and poor followers. These things being

observed by those present, they were filled with despondency as they reckoned how low the armies of the Rhomaioi, had fallen and by what manner and from what monies and how long it would take to bring them back to their former condition. For the older and experienced were without horse and without armor, and fresh detachments were without military experience and unaccustomed to the military struggles. Whereas the enemy was very bold in warfare, persevering, experienced, and suitable.”

This is the military instrument that Romanus inherited from a quarter century of bureaucrat policies. The conditions of the armies were obvious to the Byzantine contemporary observers, and their great inferiority in terms of equipment, experience, and morale to the Turkish troops clearly noted. Romanus, however, did the best he could with the poor material at hand. He collected youths from all the regions and cities, but as they were completely inexperienced, he mixed them with what veterans were at hand, especially from the Balkan *tagmata*. Though this energetic emperor was a capable soldier, his armies were not equal to the enormous task before them and their nervousness and cowardice in the face of the Turkish enemy had by now become an almost ingrained characteristic.

The mercenaries, upon whom the Byzantines were forced to rely, began to demonstrate clearly that their loyalty depended directly on, and was proportionate to, the strength of the central and provincial governments and their pay. When the central and provincial administration became weak in this period, and as the government no longer had sufficient funds to live up to its terms of hire, the mercenaries showed themselves to be independent agents. This twelve-year period, then, witnessed an intensification of the unruly conduct of the foreign soldiery. The Muslim military leader, Amertices, who had served Byzantium, deserted to the Turks because his pay had been withheld, and then played a major role in the raids in Anatolia and around Antioch. The Armenian troops had an old tradition of instability, and when the Turks appeared before Sebasteia in 1059 the Armenian princes and their troops abandoned the city to its fate. A decade later (1068) while Romanus Diogenes' army was before Syrian Hierapolis, the Armenian infantry caused a major crisis by threatening to rebel. The rebellion of the Frankish leader Crispin in 1069 was of a major dimension. Having considered his reward from the emperor as unsatisfactory, he returned to the Armeniac theme and there raised the Latins in revolt. The tax collectors and the land were plundered, and when Samuel Alusianus (the general of the five western *tagmata* encamped in that area) took the field, Crispin defeated him and inflicted severe losses on these western forces, All this having occurred as Romanus was setting out on his second Turkish campaign, it seemed as if the whole military expedition against the Turks would have to be redirected to stay the rapacity of the Franks who were ravishing the very provinces they had been hired to defend. Crispin finally made his submission, but in the end had to be imprisoned. As retaliation, the Latins then proceeded to ravage the regions of Byzantine Mesopotamia at the same time that the emperor was forced to proceed to Caesarea to meet a serious Turkish raid. (To be continued)

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry of Costas Karyotakis

Ζωές

Κι έτσι πάνε και σβήνουνε όπως πάνε.

Λέω τις ζωές που δόθηκαν στο φως
αγάπης γαλήνης, κι ενώ κυλούν
σαν ποταμάκια, εντός τους το σφαλούν
αιώνια κι αζεχώριστα, καθώς
μες στα ποτάμια φέγγει ο ουρανός,
καθώς στους ουρανούς ήλιοι κυλούν.
Λέω τις ζωές που δόθηκαν στο φως...

Λέω τις ζωούλες που 'ναι κρεμαστές
απ' τα ρουμπίνια χείλη γυναικός
ως κρέμονται στα εικονοστάσια εμπρός
τα τάματα, οι καρδιές ασημοτές,
κι είναι όμοια ταπεινές, όμοια πιστές
στ' αγαπημένα χείλη γυναικός.
Λέω τις ζωούλες που 'ναι κρεμαστές...

Που δεν τις υποψιάζεται κανείς,
έτσι όπως ακολουθάνε σιωπηλές
και σκοτεινές και ξένες και θλιβές
το βήμα, την ιδέα μιας λυγερής
(κι αυτή δεν υποψιάστη), που στη γης
θα γείρουνε, θα σβήσουν σιωπηλές
Που δεν τις υποψιάζεται κανείς...

Που διάβηκαν αμφίβολα, θαμπά
σαν άστρα κάποιας ώρας αυγινής,
από τη σκέψη μιας περαστικής
που, για να τρέχει τόσο χαρωπά,
δεν είδε τις ζωές που σβηθούν σιγά
σαν την ψυχή καντήλας αυγινής.
Που διάβηκαν αμφίβολα, θαμπά...

Νοσταλγία

Μεσ' από το βάθος των καλών καιρών
οι αγάπες μας πικρά μάς χαιρετάνε

Δεν αγαπάς και δε θυμάσαι, λες,
κι αν φούσκωσαν τα στήθη κι αν δακρύζεις
που δεν μπορείς να κλάψεις όπως πρώτα,
δεν αγαπάς και δεν θυμάσαι, ας κλαις.

Ξάφνου θα ιδείς δυο μάτια γαλανά
— πόσος καιρός! — τα χάιδεψες μια νύχτα
και σα ν' ακούς εντός σου να σαλεύει
μια συφορά παλιά και να ξυπνά.

Θα στήσουνε μακάβριο το χορό
οι θύμησες στα περασμένα γύρω

και θ' ανθίσει στο βλέφαρο σαν τότε
και θα πέσει το δάκρυ σου πικρό.

Τα μάτια που κρεμούν — ήλιοι χλωμοί —
το φως στο χιόνι της καρδιάς και λιώνει,
οι αγάπες που σαλεύουν πεθαμένες
οι πρώτοι ξανά που άναψαν καημοί...

Αγάπη

Κι ήμουν στο σκοτάδι. Κι ήμουν το σκοτάδι.
Και με είδε μια αχτίδα

Δροσούλα το ήλαρό το πρόσωπό της
κι εγώ ήμουν το κατάξερο ασφοδίλι.
Πώς μ' έσεισε το ξύπνημα μιας νιότης,
πώς εγελάσαν τα πικρά μου χείλη!

Σάμπως τα μάτια της να μου είπαν ότι
δεν είμαι πλέον ο ναυαγός κι ο μόνος,
κι ελύγισα σαν από τρυφερότη,
εγώ που μ' είχε πέτρα κάνει ο πόνος.

Νύχτα

Είναι αζημέρωτη νύχτα η ζωή.
Στις μεσονύχτιες στράτες περπατάνε
αποσταμένοι οι έρωτες
κι οι γρίλιες των παράθυρων εστάζανε
τον πόνο που κρατάνε
Στις στέγες εκρεμάστη το φεγγάρι
σκυμμένο προς τα δάκρυα του
κι η μυρωμένη λύπη των τριαντάφυλλων
το δρόμο της θα πάρει
Ολόρθο το φανάρι μας σωπαίνει
χλωμό και μυστηριώδικο
κι η πόρτα του σπιτιού μου είναι σα ν' άνοιξε
και λείψανο να βγαίνει.
Σαρκάζει το κρεβάτι τη χαρά τους
κι αυτοί λέν πως έτριξε
δε λεν πως το κρεβάτι οραματίζεται
μελλοντικούς θανάτους.
Και κλαίνει οι αμανέδες στις ταβέρνες
τη νύχτα την αστρόφεγγη
που θα' πρεπε η αγάπη ναν την έπινε
και παίζουν οι λατέρνες.
Χυμένες στα ποτήρια καρτερούνε
οι λησμονιές γλυκύτατες
οι χίμαιρες τώρα θα ειπούν το λόγο τους
και οι άνθρωποι θ' ακούνε
Καθημερινών χαμώνε κοιμητήρι
το πάρκον ανατρίχιασε
την ώρα που νεκρός κάποιος εκίνησε
να πάει στη χλόη να γείρει.