



# HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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## Upcoming Events

### Reading from Cavafy's Life

On Sunday, April 26, 2026, at 3:00 pm Chicago time, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present professor Gregory Jusdanis, in a live lecture titled "*Reading from Cavafy's Life*." The event will take place at 3 pm, at Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park, Illinois (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road). Admission is free. This lecture is supported by the Hellenic Foundation.

Constantine Cavafy lived almost all his life in Alexandria, Egypt and wrote in Greek, a language then spoken only by six million people. Yet today he is celebrated as one of the most original poets of the world. How did he achieve this seemingly improbable achievement? Gregory Jusdanis, co-author of the award-winning and best-selling *C. P. Cavafy. A New Biography*, will provide insights into the family, social background, poetry, and inner life of this remarkable poet who changed the direction of Greek poetry. By reading passages from Cavafy's biography, commenting on his life, and reciting poems, Jusdanis will bring light to the personal and poetic journey of one of the great poets of world literature.

*Gregory Jusdanis*, Distinguished Arts and Humanities Professor at Ohio State, teaches Comparative Literature and modern Greek. The author of six books, *The Poetics of Cavafy*, *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture*, *The Necessary Nation*, *Fiction Agonistes: A Defense of Literature*, *A Tremendous Thing*, *Friendship from the Iliad to the Internet*, and *Constantine Cavafy. A New Biography*, he has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. He has served as Visiting Professor at Kwara State University in Nigeria, the University of Buenos Aires, the University of Cartagena and Universidad del Rosario in Bogota. He has been invited to give lectures around the United States and Canada, Europe, Latin America, Australia, Africa, and the Near East. *Constantine Cavafy. A New Biography* has received wide press coverage in North America, the UK, and Greece where it was for weeks on the best-selling charts. It has received the Ouranis Prize for Biography by the Athens Academy and has been long listed for the National Book Critics Circle Award (US) and the Runciman Prize (UK).

### From the Cockpit to the Cosmos: My View of the New Aerospace Age

On Sunday, May 17, 2026, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present Dr. Pete Michalakos, in a live a lecture titled "*From the Cockpit to the Cosmos: My View of the New Aerospace Age*" The event will take place at 3 pm, at the lecture hall of The Holy Taxiarchai and Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, 7373 N Caldwell Ave, Niles, Illinois. Admission is free.

Growing up along the O'Hare flight line, Pete Michalakos watched planes take off and land and never stopped wondering how they worked. That fascination became a thirty-year career spanning commercial aviation, military systems, and human spaceflight — and a front-row seat to the most consequential transformation in aerospace since the jet age.

This talk traces that arc in three acts. The first is the foundation: commercial aviation as the proving ground for the engineering disciplines — air management, materials, thermal systems, life support — that make everything else possible. The second is scaling those disciplines to their limits: enabling supersonic military aviation, life support for pilots at the edge of the envelope, human spaceflight aboard the International Space Station, and the hypersonic systems now reshaping modern conflicts.

The third act is where we are headed. The rockets being built today are not an end — they are infrastructure. Near-term destinations include global communications constellations, rapid delivery of materiel across the globe, and the early foundations of permanent human presence beyond Earth. Further out: in-situ resource utilization, asteroid mining, and in-space manufacturing that once belonged to science fiction. That infrastructure is also now strategically contested, with consequences for how nations compete and how conflicts may be decided.

*Dr. Pete Michalakos* is building the road to space as Director of Thermal Protection Systems at Blue Origin. Prior to Blue Origin, he spent 25 years making the world safer, more secure, and energy efficient at Honeywell Aerospace. His work spans commercial aircraft, military flight and ground systems, and human spaceflight. He holds over 30 patents worldwide spanning air management, thermal and power systems, hypersonic systems, alternative fuels, and advanced materials. Pete was born and raised in Chicago and earned a PhD in Chemical Engineering from Northwestern University. Outside aerospace, Pete mentors students from junior high to college, coaches soccer and basketball, and

serves on the Parish Council of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

## ***In Brief***

### **Rebuilding the Lighthouse of Alexandria, Block by Virtual Block**

*(Excerpts from an article published on New York Times, February 6, 2026)*

For nearly 1,600 years, the lighthouse, known as the Pharos of Alexandria, recognized as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, stood on an island at the entrance to the city's eastern harbor. However, in 1303, A.D. an earthquake caused a tsunami so intense that it left the structure in shambles. Another quake, 20 years later, brought the rest crashing down, a tumble of statues and masonry eventually swallowed by the ever-rising sea.

For the last four years, Dr. Isabelle Hairy, an archaeologist at the National Center for Scientific Research in France and the Center for Alexandrian Studies in Egypt, has led the Pharos Project, guiding an elite squad of historians, numismatists, architects and graphics programmers to create an accurate 3D digital representation of the ancient lighthouse. Having so far analyzed roughly 5,000 blocks and artifacts on the sea bottom, the team is reverse-engineering the ancient structure from its 14th-century collapse. This ambitious fusion of antiquity and innovation relies on photogrammetry, which stitches together thousands of two-dimensional images to create precise three-dimensional models, effectively virtually assembling a colossal archaeological puzzle piece by piece.

Last summer, working with the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the team used a barge-mounted, high-capacity crane to hoist 22 granite blocks, some weighing up to 80 tons, from the seafloor. The operation recovered more than 100 submerged relics, including lintels, foundational paving stones, lead clamps and uprights from the gargantuan entrance. Notably, the haul included remnants of a previously unrecorded pylon, featuring a doorway that seamlessly blended Egyptian stylistic elements with Greek construction know-how.

Once safely brought to the surface, these colossal components underwent high-resolution scanning by engineers from *La Fondation Dassault Systèmes*, which documented and virtually repositioned them to reimagine the Pharos's lost design without putting the original stone at risk. After the blocks were measured, they were returned to the sea for long-term preservation.

The finds confirm that large blocks of local limestone were used for the core and granite for the structural doorway, assembled using advanced interlocking techniques rather than relying solely on mortar, which helped the building withstand centuries of environmental stress. The jambs and lintels have allowed researchers to map the precise entrance of the lighthouse, changing previous assumptions about its scale.

Dr. Hairy estimated that the Pharos Project was still generations from completion, hampered by minimal state

funding and worsening pollution. As garbage and rising silt cloud the water, stalling photogrammetry and recovery, future missions must revert to basic lifting, using heavy-duty inflatable bags to raise submerged blocks. But the mission has already defied expectations. According to Dr. Cartledge, a historian of Greek culture at the University of Cambridge who is not connected to the operation, the team has proved the unthinkable: The lighthouse truly was as prodigious as ancient chronicles claimed, outlasting the skeptics who long dismissed those accounts as mere Ptolemaic flattery.

## ***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 Interrelation of Byzantine Decline and Turkish Pressure (1042-1071) (Manzikert (1071)—Continuation from the previous issue)***

The Turks on the heights, by now becoming aware of this amazing development, informed the sultan and so they came out to attack the emperor who had been abandoned on the field by much of the army. Romanus and those about him defended themselves bravely and for a long time, but as the men fled toward the encampment, the rumors began to spread among the demoralized men. According to some the emperor had defeated the Turks, but according to the others he had been killed. The terrorization was finally completed by the gradual desertion of the Cappadocians and the appearance of the imperial horses in the camp. By this time the Turkish horsemen were attacking the fleeing troops, slaying, capturing, and trampling them underfoot, Romanus fighting until he was wounded in the arm and his horse shot out from under him. For the first time in the long history of the Byzantine empire, the supreme disgrace had occurred: the august and living person of the Basileus Rhomaion had fallen into the hands of barbarians. In reexamining the details of this most important battle, one is struck by a number of factors that, by 1071, had already enjoyed a considerable history in the empire's evolution during the eleventh century. The treachery of Andronicus Ducas was purely and simply one of the more dramatic and consequential acts in the long and bitter strife between bureaucrats and militarists. Unfortunately for the empire, it was not to be the final act of this drama, and the struggle between administrators and soldiers was to have dire consequences in the decade to follow. The desertion of the Uze mercenaries under Tamis to the Turks is again another act from the same drama, that is, the demobilization of the local armies and use of hired foreigners, policy much employed by the bureaucrats as an antidote to the power of the generals. The Franks of Roussel and the Uzes who were sent to Chliat simply fled on news of the sultan's approach, and Germans had attacked Romanus at Cryapege. All this was complicated by the enmity of Greeks and Armenians, so ominously forecast when Romanus had stopped at Sebasteia on his way to Manzikert. Michael the

Syrian relates that the Armenian troops, as a result of religious persecution, were the first to flee and that all of them fled from the battlefield.

The great victory of Alp Arslan in 1071 was due to a large degree, then, to these internal developments in the Byzantine Empire which had fused to produce the situation prevailing in the Byzantine ranks in 1071.

### ***Initial Turkish Conquest and Occupation of Anatolia (1071-81)***

Alp Arslan was apparently not interested in exploiting directly his great victory at Manzikert; it was instead the Turkmen tribes that consummated the military victory by swarming into Anatolia literally unopposed. There is no indication that they attempted to found a state when they first came. Rather they came to raid and plunder in the vast expanses of Anatolia and thus disrupted what little was left of the Byzantine administrative and military apparatus. It is true that the defeat of the Byzantine armies in 1071 had opened Anatolia to the Turks, but their appearance, and finally their settlement, were greatly facilitated and accelerated by the continuation of those very factors that had brought Byzantium to the brink at Manzikert. The strife between the generals and bureaucrats not only did not abate, but the very appearance of the Turks in Anatolia seemed to add a certain zest to the struggle as each side strove to outdo the other in purchasing Turkish military aid in a quest for power. This graphically illustrates how narrow and selfish political considerations outweighed all other factors, the Turkish danger included. By this time the true nature of the Turkish menace was apparent to all, to both bureaucrats and generals, but the desire for the imperial crown was overpowering.

The mercenaries, creating ever greater difficulties, attempted to found a new Normandy in northern Asia Minor during the chaos that enveloped Anatolia following Manzikert. Farther to the south, the Armenian princes and adventurers, secure in their mountain strongholds in the craggy Taurus area, at last had a good opportunity to throw off the hated Byzantine authority and to give expression to their own separatist desires. Finally, out of all this chaos and upheaval, the Seljuk princes founded a new state in Nicaea, at the northwestern extremity of the peninsula. Simultaneously, other Muslim dynasties were arising in the political debris at the end of the century in northeastern Anatolia. Manzikert resulted in the destruction of a comparatively stable political unity in Anatolia and substituted for it a relatively unstable system of smaller quarreling states which would keep Anatolia in a more or less constant state of war and unrest, enduring until the final Ottoman reunification and political conquest of the large peninsula. In short, immediately following Manzikert, Byzantine administrative authority collapsed in Asia Minor, and in the vacuum Turks, Armenians, and Normans attempted to found states.

Alp Arslan, knowingly or unknowingly, contributed to the Turkish penetration of Rum when he released Romanus Diogenes after the latter's defeat and capture. The captivity of Romanus had enabled the Caesar John Ducas to seize

control of the government in Constantinople and to promote his nephew Michael VII to the throne. Upon receipt of the news of Romanus' release, the Ducas family in the capital was faced with a serious problem and the result was a civil war in Anatolia which involved what was left of the Byzantine armies. Romanus tried vainly, first at Doccia, then in Cappadocia, and finally at Adana to alter his evil fate, but without success. In the end he was defeated and captured by the very man who had betrayed him at Manzikert, Andronicus Ducas. The description of his brutal blinding, on the very Anatolian soil that he had so valiantly but vainly fought to protect, is a fitting finale to this act in the political collapse of medieval Hellenism in its foyer. Consequently, the fragmentary Byzantine armies were used to fight one another at the very moment when the borders were completely open to the Turkish tribes. Still more fateful was the precedent of Romanus in appealing to the Turks for aid in the civil war, a pattern that was to become firmly established in the internal strife of the next critical decade.

The bureaucrats, first under the leadership of the Caesar John and then under the notorious eunuch Nicephoritzes, were able to control the government for six years after the death of Romanus. But when the military reaction came, in 1077, it was violent and once more mobilized what was left of the armies in the west and the east in a suicidal war. At that time two generals, Nicephorus Bryennius and Nicephorus Botaniates rebelled in the Balkans and Anatolia respectively. Nicephorus Bryennius, as a reward for his suppression of the Bulgarian rebellion at Skopia which had previously broken out, was to be assassinated by the agents of Nicephoritzes. Because his brother and Basilacius were likewise slighted by the bureaucrats in the capital, they also rebelled, declared Nicephorus Bryennius emperor, and marched the western armies on Constantinople. During this rebellion in the west, the Patzinaks, finding no armies before them, raided to the very walls of Adrianople unopposed. Simultaneously, Nicephorus Botaniates, supported by the Anatolian magnates Cabasilas, Synnadenus, Goudeles, Straboromanus, Palaeologus, and Melissenus, capitalized upon the provincial dissatisfaction with the government's neglect and inability to halt the Turks, and so raised the standard of rebellion in the east. It is significant that up until the time he reached Nicaea, Botaniates had been able to gather no more than 300 men with which to take Constantinople. Again one sees how complete was the breakdown that the provincial military system had suffered. When news of the outbreak reached the court, Michael VII immediately hired the services of Sulayman to halt the advance of the rebel, thereby causing Botaniates to abandon the regular roads and to travel by night in order to avoid his Turkish pursuers. Even so, the Turks caught up with him before he was able to reach Nicaea. Fortunately for Botaniates, the Turkish renegade Chrysoseule, who was with him, intervened with Sulayman and was able to bribe him to abandon the emperor and to support Botaniates. Thus, Sulayman changed sides, and accompanied the insurgent to the shores of the Bosphorus, where he probably had his first sight of the city destined to become the center of Turkish might.

*(to be continued)*

## *From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage*

### **Ποίηση Οδυσσέα Ελύτη**

#### **Με το λύχνο του άστρου**

Με το λύχνο του άστρου,  
στους ουρανούς εβγήκα  
Στο αγιάζι των λειμώνων  
στη μόνη ακτή του κόσμου  
Που να βρω την ψυχή μου  
το τετράφυλλο δάκρυ!

Λυπημένες μυρσίνες  
ασημωμένες ύπνο  
Μου ράντισαν την όψη  
Φυσώ και μόνος πάω  
Που να βρω την ψυχή μου  
το τετράφυλλο δάκρυ!

Οδηγέ των ακτινών  
και των κοιτώνων Μάγε  
Αγύρτη που γνωρίζεις  
το μέλλον μίλησέ μου  
Που να βρω την ψυχή μου  
το τετράφυλλο δάκρυ!

Τα κορίτσια μου πένθος  
για τους αιώνες έχουν  
Τ' αγόρια μου τουφέκια  
κρατούν και δεν κατέχουν  
Που να βρω την ψυχή μου  
το τετράφυλλο δάκρυ!

Εκατόγχειρες νύχτες μες στο στερέωμα όλο  
Τα σπλάχνα μου αναδεύουν  
Αυτός ο πόνος καίει  
Που να βρω την ψυχή μου  
το τετράφυλλο δάκρυ!

Με το λύχνο του άστρου  
στους ουρανούς γυρίζω  
Στο αγιάζι των λειμώνων  
στη μόνη ακτή του κόσμου  
Που να βρω την ψυχή μου  
το τετράφυλλο δάκρυ!

#### **Της Δικαιοσύνης ήλιε νοητέ**

Της Δικαιοσύνης ήλιε νοητέ  
και μυρσίνη συ δοξαστική  
μη παρακαλώ σας μη  
λησμονάτε τη χώρα μου!

Αετόμορφα έχει τα ψηλά βουνά  
στα ηφαίστεια κλήματα σειρά  
και τα σπίτια πιο λευκά  
στου γλαυκού το γειτόνεμα!

Της Ασίας αν αγγίζει από τη μια  
της Ευρώπης λίγο αν ακουμπά  
στον αιθέρα στέκει να  
και στη θάλασσα μόνη της!

Και δεν είναι μήτε ξένου λογισμός  
και δικού της μήτε αγάπη μια  
μόνο πένθος αχ παντού  
και το φως ανελέητο!

Τα πικρά μου χέρια με τον κεραυνό  
τα γυρίζω πίσω απ' τον καιρό  
τους παλιούς φίλους καλώ  
με φοβέρες και μ' αίματα!

Μα 'χουν όλα τα αίματα ξαντιμεθεί  
κι οι φοβέρες αχ λατομηθεί  
και στον έναν ο άλλος  
μπαίνουν εναντίον οι άνεμοι!

Της Δικαιοσύνης ήλιε νοητέ  
και μυρσίνη συ δοξαστική  
μη παρακαλώ σας μη  
λησμονάτε τη χώρα μου!

#### **This Wind That Loiters...**

This wind that loiters among the quinces  
This insect that sucks the vines  
This stone that the scorpion wears next to his skin  
And these sheaves on the threshing floor  
That play the giant to small barefoot children.

The images of the Resurrection  
On walls that the pine trees scratched with their fingers  
This whitewash that carries the noonday on its back  
And the cicadas, the cicadas in the ears of the trees.

Great summer of chalk  
Great summer of cork  
The red sails slanting in gusts of wind  
On the sea-floor white creatures, sponges  
Accordions of the rocks  
Perch from the fingers even of bad fishermen  
Proud reefs on the fishing lines of the sun.

No one will tell our fate, and that is that,  
We ourselves will tell the sun's fate, and that is that.