

## MEDIEVAL GREECE: BACKGROUND AND LEGACY

## A SYMPOSIUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

The Committee for Medieval Studies of the University of Colorado was host to a Symposium on "Medieval Greece: Background and Legacy," during the weekend of April 21-22, 1967, which was jointly sponsored by the University of Colorado Graduate School and the Institute for Balkan Studies of Thessaloniki, Greece. The Symposium was the main event in the spring lecture series entitled "Unexplored Areas of Medieval Studies."

Although the Symposium was directed by the present writer, the stimulus and incentive for the meeting was provided by Mr. Basil Laourdas, the Director of the Institute for Balkan Studies in Thessaloniki, Greece, while he was visiting the United States as the 1966/67 Johnson Professor at the Institute for Research in the Humanities of the University of Wisconsin. It was his original query that caused the chain of events that led to the cooperation of a number of persons at the University in order to arrange for the Symposium, including Professor Stephen Fischer-Galati, editor of the *East European Quarterly*, and especially Professor E. James Archer, Dean of the Graduate School and patron of the Medieval Studies Program, together with the members of that Committee. Without their help and support, and the encouragement and cooperation of the Institute for Balkan Studies in Thessaloniki, the Symposium would never have become a reality. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to those that made the Symposium both a reality and a success.

The purpose of the present report is to give a brief summary — inadequate though such a summary must be — of the papers that were presented at the Symposium, because the interval between Symposium and publication of the papers is usually much longer than originally planned. It is hoped that the papers will be published in a special issue.

The scope of the Symposium was somewhat broader than the title suggests; although the focus was on Medieval Greece, and most of the papers dealt with some aspect of that period, the participants were selected because their individual fields of specialty covered a particular area of the entire spectrum of Greek Studies, from pre-historic to modern times. Unfortunately, three of the invited participants were unable to attend or present papers: Professor J.A.O. Larsen (University of Missouri) and Professor Peter Topping (University of Cincinnati), due to the pressure of forthcoming publications;

and Professor Kurt Weitzmann (Princeton University) because of illness. They were greatly missed by the other participants.

During the two day program, ten papers were presented, in four fairly well defined sessions.

The first morning session was opened by Professor Emmett L. Bennett, Jr. (Institute for Research in the Humanities, University of Wisconsin), with his humorous and highly provocative paper "From the Dark Ages before the Dark Ages," in which he rapidly surveyed the background of Greek History from the prehistoric through the Homeric and into the classical period, and in the process not only gave a general introduction to the Symposium but also put forward a number of ideas and tested some old and new theories concerning the question of cultural and historical continuity in an attempt to establish some links between the two periods. As an example of the problems involved in any such investigation he pointed out that the destruction of Minoan and Mycenaean civilization was so thorough, Hellenic civilization so innovating, and the discontinuity so great between them that even Classical Greece, *which must have* transmitted the legacy of the Bronze Age if it was transmitted, was unaware of its real existence. On the other hand, one legacy of Medieval Greek civilization was, he thought, itself as a subject of historical study, and Aegean civilization of the Bronze Age has left directly that same legacy. In conclusion, Professor Bennett stressed that language, religion and technique depend on continuity, and therefore were factors that could be traced, and together with geography and natural environment were factors which should be pursued in any such examination.

The second paper was presented by Professor John E. Rexine (Colgate University) on "Hellenism and the Roman Emperor Hadrian." After a brief historical survey of what happened to Greece under the Romans, beginning with the period of Hannibal and Philip V, and an inquiry into the impact of the Greek occupation upon Roman culture, Professor Rexine pointed out that while the Romans came in greater contact with Greeks and Greek culture than ever before, and though Greek culture played a dominant role in the development of the civilization of Rome, the Romans had an ambivalent attitude toward the Greeks themselves, whom they considered unworthy and untrusty descendants of their great ancestors. He concluded that the curious Western tradition of great respect and admiration for Greek culture and great disdain for the direct heirs of that culture probably began with the Romans. In contrast, Professor Rexine pointed out that two Roman Emperors were particularly important for their Hellenism: Nero and Hadrian; of the two, Hadrian (117-138 A.D.) was by far the more spectacular. An Emperor

who spent twelve of his twenty-one year reign in wanderings throughout the Empire, which he knew well, his visits to Athens were the highlights of this imperial career and his Hellenism. In Athens, Hadrian rebuilt the city; in fact, he built a new city, Hadrianopolis, that did not interfere with the old and that stretched as far as the slopes of Mt. Hymettus and had as its center the great Temple of Zeus and was accessible through the monumental entrance now known as the Arch of Hadrian. Temples, aqueducts, other new buildings graced the new Athens with the Roman Emperor becoming first Zeus Olympios and then Zeus Panhellenios, living the life of a Greek and summoning "all the Greeks in the world to remember their race, to act in the consciousness of being Greek." A Roman Emperor, who was more comfortable in Greece than in Rome, Hadrian inaugurated a new Humanism that reasserted the gods with their cults and mythology and Greek art and learning and proclaimed the idea of the Greek *polis* as the form of community in the East. Hadrian proclaimed the viability of the Greek idea of the *polis*, the equality of all nations among each other but under the leadership of a fatherly and benevolent Roman Emperor. As an Emperor who had been initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries and who spoke Greek and lived as a Greek, he utilized the ideals of Panhellenism to unify the Empire as a whole, while at the same time promoting and strengthening ethnic self-consciousness. In conclusion, Professor Rexine pointed out that Hadrian's influence was felt throughout the Empire. The Hellenism admired by Hadrian was to be preserved by the Byzantine Empire as was Roman law, administration, and military traditions, together with Greek learning and literature. The brotherhood of men under God with the Emperor as secular leader would continue in the medieval Greek world but the basic dichotomy between East and West would also characterize East-West relations in medieval times, and Roman suspicion of Greek culture would persist well into medieval and modern times; Western intervention in Eastern affairs would become a familiar practice.

With the beginning of the afternoon session, the papers take on a new emphasis. The Graeco-Roman background becomes secondary as the transition is made to the Middle Ages. Of the three papers, the first deals with the literary history of late antiquity, in a study concerned with the rhetorical tradition in Greek letters which tries to define the process of adaptation of pagan literature into Christian forms by indicating the continuity and power of the classical tradition. The second, is concerned with recent finds from Thessaloniki, especially the frescoes from the Church of St. Nicholas Orphanos. And, the third deals with one of the most crucial problems of

Byzantine scholarship: the question of the Slavic penetration into Greece, which is considered in the light of some recent publications.

In his detailed and scholarly presentation concerned with "Late Greek Rhetoric: A.D. 200-550," Professor George L. Kustas (State University of New York at Buffalo) pointed out that by stressing truth as the object of rhetoric the Stoics supplied an ideological base for the development of Christian literature. Hermogenes becomes the main rhetorical handbook, used by Neo-Platonists and Christians alike. One feature of the age is the transformation of literary forms, particularly dialogue and epistle, to serve the new Christian purpose. The homily has no pagan antecedent but draws from a wide spectrum of contemporary literary practice. The school of Gaza, in the sixth century, made up of scholars calling themselves both Christians and sophists, neatly symbolizes the dual heritage of Christian letters: one, the refined and tested ideals of the pagan rhetorical tradition adjusted to Christian needs, and two, the spontaneity and freshness of new literary forms, also growing out of a pagan base but evolving in response to new religious purpose; and concludes that the literary history of late antiquity is marked by the interaction of these two forces.

The paper of Mrs. Louiza Laourdas, Research-Associate of the Institute for Balkan Studies, on "The Byzantine Art in Thessaloniki," offered to the participants the opportunity to see and to enjoy a series of beautiful color slides of the mosaics in the churches of the city of Saint Demetrius as well as the frescoes in the church of Saint Nicolas Orphanos, which recently cleaned or restored, is one of the most fascinating examples of early fourteenth century Byzantine painting. Mrs. Laourdas stressed the importance of this monument and connected the work of its artist with the artistic tradition of the city.

"The Slavic Penetration into Greece and their Ultimate Hellenization," was the topic of the highly animated paper presented by Professor Peter Charanis (Rutgers University). After an examination of the sources and an analysis of what the Byzantines meant by Hellas, Helladekoi, Sclavinia and the "lower regions," Professor Charanis concluded that the Slavs who settled in Greece, settled there at the time of the great invasions towards the end of the sixth century. If additional Slavs came later, in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries they could not have been very numerous. Meanwhile, he showed that there was no break for any appreciable length of time of Byzantine administration at least insofar as central-eastern continental Greece and the eastern Peloponnesus were concerned. The Slavs in Greece eventually lost their identity and became Greeks. In this development

the administration, the church, and books even played their role, but it is extremely doubtful if this could have been achieved if Greeks in some number had not survived the Slavic invasions.

The morning session of the second day of the Symposium was devoted to the papers dealing with the impact of Byzantium on Islam and the influence of the West on Byzantium. In the first of these "Medieval Hellenism and Islam: 7th-17th centuries," Professor Speros Vryonis (University of California at Los Angeles) pointed out that Byzantine civilization was sufficiently vital at the time of the Arab conquest to determine much of the administrative structure, society, and economic life of the early Arab empire. At the end of this first cycle of Byzantine *epibiosis* the forces of Iranism, Arabism, and Islam replaced or transmuted the Byzantine forms in government and society. Simultaneously, however, the new Muslim society, by virtue of mass conversions and confrontation with this sophisticated society, was constrained to adopt and adapt Byzantine intellectual culture. The result was the *fortleben* of Hellenism in the very intellectual foundations of Islamic civilization. In the final cycle Byzantium exercised both a direct and an indirect influence on Turco-Muslim society. Because the Turkish polity took root in the heartland of medieval Hellenism and because of the vast extent of conversions among Greeks and Armenians, Byzantine civilization had a profound and direct influence on this very important portion of the Islamic world. But it also exercised an indirect influence on the Seljuks and Ottomans by virtue of the Islamized Byzantine traditions which the Turks found in Islamic civilization at the time of their conversion to the religion of Muhamman. Therefore, Professor Vryonis concluded that medieval Hellenism constitutes one of the most important formative elements in the creation of Islamic civilization.

In a highly provocative paper on "Some Western Cultural Influences on Byzantium," that will not be easily accepted by either Byzantinists or Medievalists, Professor Deno J. Geanakoplos (University of Illinois) maintained that contrary to what most scholars have for long believed, the Latin West, despite the cultural superiority of Byzantine to Western civilization up to at least the late 12th century, was able even in the early period to make a few minor contributions to medieval Greek culture in the non-intellectual sphere. In the theological and more purely intellectual spheres, however, Western contributions were made only after the Council of Lyon (1274) when the East, for the first time on a more permanent basis, became interested in Western theology, but primarily in order, through the dialectic method, to combat the more aggressive Western Scholastics. Nevertheless, some Greek theo-

logians, notably Demetrios Cydones, became sincerely interested in Western Scholastic theology, though to be sure seeing a Greek base for it, and a virtual cult of Thomists developed in the 14th century in the Byzantine Court itself. As for interest in ancient Latin classical literature, this is first to be seen with the late 13th century monk Maximos Planudes who, despite his many translations of Latin authors into Greek, left no real followers. Thus, both Latin theology and Latin classical learning, despite what seemed at the time to be a surprising influence, in the last analysis left no important impact on medieval Greek civilization after 1453. This fact was primarily due not only to the perennial Byzantine feeling of cultural superiority over the West, but, even more, to the Greek animosity toward the Latins, indeed their fear of Latinization, itself brought about as a result of the traumatic experience of the sack of Constantinople in 1204 and the ensuing Latin penetration of virtually all aspects of Byzantine life.

During the final afternoon session of the Symposium, three papers were presented dealing with various aspects of modern Greece. Two dealt with the period of transition from the medieval to the modern: and the third with the contemporary period, although in such a way as to form a synthesis of the entire period covered by the present Symposium. In the first of these papers, entitled "Medieval Origins of Modern Greek Nationalism," Professor Stephen G. Xydis (Hunter College) tests the views of modern Greek historians on the origins of modern Greek nationalism in the period 1204 to 1453 A. D. against the theories about nationalism drawn from the realms of political science and sociology. After presenting the historical data that reveal the process through which disputes, armed conflict, and rivalries, even efforts at peaceful coexistence, between Eastern and Western Christendom generated first among the rulers and the elite of Eastern Christendom, then among their subjects, too, attitudes of ethnic pride based on the belief of belonging to the *genos* of the ancient Hellenes, Professor Xydis submits that nationalism is not a suitable term for designating such sociopolitical phenomena, but that these should be placed in a class distinct from nationalism. The appropriate term he proposes for designating such phenomena is "proto-nationalism." Protonationalism and nationalism, he concludes, should be regarded as two distinct species of the generic concept "ethnocentrism" coined by the American sociologist William Graham Sumner.

In the second paper, entitled "The Dawn of Modern Greece," Professor George G. Arnakis (Department of History, University of Texas) dealt with the period of transition from the time of the fall of Constantinople to the eve of the Greek Revolution. In the process he traced the plight of the

Greek people in the 15th and 16th centuries; the role of the Church in maintaining the few sparks of education; the significance of Crete, still under Venice, as a cultural center; the similar role of the Ionian Islands; the 17th and 18th century growing awareness of Hellenism; the impact of the West, especially of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution; the apostles of national regeneration; and, the final preparations for the struggle of national liberation.

The last paper, "Modern Greece" by the University of Wisconsin 1966/67 Johnson Professor Basil Laourdas dealt with the fascinating problem of the interrelations of Classical, Medieval and Modern Greece. The speaker explained that the problem could be best studied by a careful comparison of cultural, historical, linguistic and folklore data; biological arguments are out of place first because the evidence is controversial and second because they do not actually mean anything at all. He spoke of the "diversive continuity" of Hellenism and its "polymorphous unity" and made a sharp distinction between the "Hellenism" of the Philhellènes and the way Modern Greeks look at themselves. "The Philhellènes" he said "were looking at the Athenian Republic. The Modern Greeks in the depth of their heart were and are still longing for a combination of the Classical, the Byzantine and the Western ways of life." This beautiful and hard task is the creative mainstream in Modern Greek life.

This summary of the papers read during the Symposium indicates the wide range of topics considered, each of which dealt with some major aspect of the period; some papers advanced new ideas, others elaborated on well established themes. Yet, certain general conclusions emerged from the proceedings, and the Symposium illustrated the recent progress that had been made in various fields, but also made one aware of the limitations that are present to more rapid progress in these areas. Of course, it is almost impossible to even attempt an abstract of most of the papers, or to summarise the discussions, as so much depends on the documentation and the argument used by the authors. For example, it would be fatuous to try and indicate, in summary, the scope of the evidence used by Professor Charanis in his paper, such as the information from Nicephorus and Theophanes, so crucial to any examination of the problem of the Slavs in Greece; or, to weave through the intricacies concerned with the rhetorical tradition, and deal with the significance of the interpretation of texts, with the detail that Professor Kustas did in his presentation. Furthermore, no report can indicate those other aspects of a Symposium: the exchange of ideas by the participants among themselves; the active participation in formal discussion, and informally, by those that at-

tended the meetings, including both scholars and students from varying disciplines; or, to indicate that discussions and the exchange of ideas continued into the leisure hours of the participants, many of whom had not seen each other for a number of years and were eager to renew old friendships; or, to indicate the great degree of good-fellowship that was everywhere in evidence during those days we spent together.

It only remains to add, that we who were involved in organizing the Symposium felt that the theme was appropriate: to consider the entire development of a civilization, but with an anchor well fixed in a special period. Also, its timing was auspicious, as our Symposium followed — by a little more than a week — the more elaborate three day Symposium on “Greece Since the Second World War: The Twentieth Anniversary of the Truman Doctrine,” that was held at the University of Wisconsin, on April 10th to 12th, 1967, and sponsored by the Institute for Research in the Humanities at that institution.

University of Colorado

BYRON C. P. TSANGADAS

### POLITICS AND SCHOLARSHIP IN BULGARIA\*

The contemporary relationship between science and politics in Eastern Europe presents an intriguing focus for students of comparative politics and history. On one hand, the undeniable importance of science and scientists to the present Eastern European regimes has led them to efforts to control closely the intellectual community. At the same time, the long-presumed incompatibility between political discipline and scientific creativity seems to have occasioned periods of “thaw” in which the requisiteness of dogma and political activity has been somewhat eased in the hopes of stimulating scientific output and reducing anti-regime sentiment among leading intellectuals.

The contemporary science-politics nexus in Eastern Europe can be understood only in the context of two parallel factors: 1) the pre-Communist relationships between the scientific and political communities in these countries; and 2) the crucial and changing relationship between the Soviet Union and

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