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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ETHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACTS

DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ETHNOLOGY
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"STUDIES IN LOCAL HISTORY - INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES"

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ABSTRACTS

Paschalis Androudis

The decoration of Yeni Camii at Komotini

The New Mosque (Yeni Camii) at Komotini (Gümülcine) is situated within a complex of buildings which also comprises the offices of the müfti of Komotini, the library, study rooms, the mausoleum of Fatma Hanım, wife of the Grand Vizier Hasan Paşa, a fountain, and a graveyard. The original mosque (which was enlarged in the northern and western directions) is a single-aisle square hall which preserves its rich decoration in a very good condition. It was built, according to the information given in the *salname* of Edirne for 1892-1893 by Ahmed Paşa Ekmekçioğlu. The latter served as *Defterdar* during the reigns of sultans Ahmed I (1603-1617) and Osman II (1618-1622) and was a founder of many buildings and architectural complexes.

On the west side of the hall, the women's gallery is formed, supported by four columns. The structure has low marble perforated pediments. The ceiling of the structure is richly decorated with floral motifs, with the technique of *Edirnekari Laka*. Among the marble constructions in the interior of the mosque, we can also include the *kürsü*, which stands on a low column, to the left of the mihrab. The *mihrab* is made of white-gray marble. On either side of the *mihrab* are two rectangular panels made of 1580-1590 Iznik wall tiles with inscriptions and rich floral decoration. Each panel contains a religious, but not Koranic, calligraphic inscription. The Iznik tiles of the mosque are among the best-preserved examples of Iznik ceramic art commissioned for a mosque outside present-day Turkey. Of particular craftsmanship is the *minbar*, which is the original. Carved in white marble of fine quality, it has a relief decoration, perforated in many parts and presents similarities with *minbars* at Istanbul, such as the one in Ramazan Efendi Camii (1585).

Iordanis Arampatzis

Burial monuments of the Metropolis of Derkoi (Constantinople) in the late modern period: The case of the Mavrogenion Mausoleum

The "Mavrogenion Mausoleum" is an impressive funerary monument located in the courtyard of Saint Paraskevi church in Tarabya, on the Upper Bosphorus in modern Istanbul. Constructed in the early 20th century by the Lyritis brothers, it constitutes an example of eclecticism with clear Western influences, reflecting both the social standing of the family within late Ottoman society and the architectural trends prevailing in Constantinople during that period.

The mausoleum is the final resting place of five family members, two of whom held prominent positions and official titles. The Mavrogenis family is among the most distinguished families in modern Greek history, and this study presents, the funerary monument of the Constantinopolitan branch of the family, for the first time.

Michail Asfentagakis

Post-byzantine artistic tradition and neohellenic painting:
The painter Fotis Kontoglou as a “bridge-builder” of two eras

The great painter and belletrist Fotis Kontoglou, one of the basic representative of the Generation of the '30s in Greece, built a bridge between two eras by using his art· two eras that seemed they had lost any contact, due to the contemporary artistic movements which were prevailing in the first decades of the 20th century. He was raised on the coasts of Asia Minor, which were Greek until 1922, and he was strongly influenced by Western Art, not only during his travels in Europe, but also during his stay in his motherland. He connected the artistic tradition of the “post-Byzantium” and the neohellenic painting of Greece, when the Asia Minor Catastrophe wounded the country. And he made this connection without limits since its marks are as visible in religious as in secular artworks.

Kontoglou, who is considered by several scholars as the “last post-Byzantine painter”, no matter when an era ends, he created an “ark” through his art, where he placed moments of his life, memories, and his nostalgia for everything that has been lost forever (e.g., his motherland, Aivali). In the same “ark” put the whole Hellenic tradition, since he knew, better than anyone, that memories stay alive and vivid not only through the texts, but also through images.

Styliani Balioglou

The Significance of Renaming Public Buildings, Monuments and Streets in Yugoslav Federation during the Post-Tito Period

The research aims to highlight the impact of changing names of public buildings, streets, squares, and bridges on the societies of the Republics within the Yugoslav Federation during the post-Tito period. Generally, the names of public buildings and spaces play a decisive role in strengthening national sentiment, as the naming of public buildings serves as a way to remember, but also as a way to shape and present the values and history of a nation.

Thus, when a state begins to engage in renaming public spaces, these names begin to lose their local character and cease to be products of private initiatives, thereby initiating the process of monopolizing memory and nationalizing memory, and this public space becomes a political space for manipulating society.

In the Republics of the Yugoslav Federation during the post-Tito period, there was a notable replacement of socialist names with names of local writers, heroes, and generally individuals who played significant roles in the history of each respective Republic. This replacement became particularly evident in the names of schools, streets, bridges, and squares.

Grigor Boykov

The convent of Kütüklü Baba in Western Thrace and its architectural patron

Modern scholarship has long acknowledged the fundamental role played by convents of various dervish orders in colonizing spaces and establishing the "Ottoman" ruling order within newly conquered Balkan territories. Furthermore, a gradually emerging scholarly perspective seeks to position these convents not merely as facilitators of human and material movement along major imperial routes but also as active participants in complex Ottoman political dynamics, wherein provincial stakeholders frequently opposed centralizing and Sunnitizing policies emanating from the imperial center.

The convent of Kütüklü Baba in Western Thrace is among the few surviving fifteenth-century monuments reflecting the complexities inherent to Ottoman state-building processes. Despite the popularity of the recently restored mausoleum even among the wider audience, scholarly research has thus far provided minimal insights into the convent's historical background. Remarkably, even the benefactor who commissioned the construction of this monumental building remains largely unidentified.

This paper seeks to situate the Kütüklü Baba convent within the broader network of Abdal convents across the Eastern Balkans and examines the spatial significance of its location. More significantly, it presents evidence drawn from Ottoman documentary sources, conclusively identifying Yahyapaşaoğlu Bali Bey as the architectural patron.

Alkiviadis Charalampidis

Constantin Brancusi: Sculpture from Folk Primitivism to the Apex of Avant-garde

The Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) is counted among the leading artists of the 20th century and has been credited with formulating the principles of modernist abstract sculpture. A peasant from the Carpathian region, where wood craftsmanship was an integral part of everyday life, he pursued academic studies in Craiova and Paris, where he was exposed to the kaleidoscopic social and artistic milieu of the era.

This paper examines the course of his creative journey in the heart of modernism. His sculpture drew from the material culture and folklore fiction of Romania, incorporating the contemporary trends and infusing them with eastern philosophical traditions. The uniqueness of Brancusi's contribution to modern sculpture lies in that he reverted the pattern of influences flowing from the center to the periphery and he redefined the sense of craftmanship and commitment to the materiality of art mainly through his technique of direct carving.

Georgios Charizanis

The policy of the union of the Churches and the anti-union popular sentiment during the Late Byzantine period. Some remarks

The aim of this paper is to examine the two Synods of the Union of the Churches that took place during the Late Byzantine period. 1. The first in Lyon of France in 1274 under the reign of the Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282), and 2. the second in Ferrara-Florence of Italy in 1438-1439 under the reign of the Emperor John VIII Palaiologos (1425-1448). The reasons that led to the convening of these two Synods will be clarified, as well as the results they had for Byzantium. The anti-union reactions that were provoked within Byzantium, except of theological, seem to have been due to economic and social reasons.

Anastasios Deleoglou

The perception of the *History* of John Kinnamos from Paul Magdalino in his work 'The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180)'' and the importance of the Byzantine historian

The main sources of Byzantine History for the period of the reign of John Komnenos (1118-1143) and the reign of Manuel Komnenos (1143-1180) are the historical works of Niketas Choniates and John Kinnamos. However, the older modern historians of this period (1118-1180), such as Kap-Herr, Chalandon and Lamma, made much more use of the work of Niketas Choniates and less of the *History* of Kinnamos.

The main reason was that they considered the work of Niketas Choniates more reliable, mainly due to his critical attitude towards Manuel Komnenos, but also to the praising character of Kinnamos towards the same emperor.

The modern great historian Paul Magdalino in his work "The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180)" (Cambridge 1993) somehow restored the importance of the *History* of John Kinnamos in the study of the above period. In the announcement we will explore the reasons why Magdalino used the History of Kinnamos to a great extent.

At the same time, we will discuss the importance of the *History* of Kinnamos through the relation of his work with that of Niketas Choniates. We will also contrast some parallel passages of the two historians, in order to strengthen our views.

In addition we will refer some other elements that support Kinnamos' reliability, such as the fact that, despite the laudatory nature of the work, he does not hesitate to criticize Manuel at certain points.

Finally, we will draw a number of conclusions.

Dimitrios Feggomytis

Post-World War I Nationalist Movements: The Case of Cafer Tayyar (Eğilmez) in Eastern Thrace (1920)

This presentation will examine the actions of the Ottoman senior officer Cafer Tayyar (Eğilmez), commander of the 1st Army Corps during the advance of the Greek army into Eastern Thrace in 1920.

Cafer Tayyar attempted to resist the Greek forces by trying to mobilize the Muslim population of Eastern Thrace through the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Thrace–Pashaeli (Trakya-Paşaeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti). The movement was completely suppressed, leading to his capture by the Greek army.

For the preparation of this presentation, Ottoman documents, telegrams sent by Cafer Tayyar, and contemporary Greek press sources will be examined.

Stamatia Fotiadou

Refugee Settlement, Archival Documentation and Oral Testimony: A Case Study of the Greek-Bulgarian Population Exchange

This study explores aspects of refugee settlement within the framework of the Greek-Bulgarian population exchange agreement, through the combined use of archival research and oral testimonies. Using a selected case study, it seeks to bridge historical documentation with personal accounts, in order to highlight dimensions of early 20th-century experience that are not sufficiently reflected in official sources.

The paper focuses on the political processes that preceded the movement of populations, including the procedures of voluntary emigration declarations and the liquidation of property in the country of departure. These processes were carried out in accordance with specific legal provisions stemming from both the Treaty of Sèvres (1920), particularly its Minority Convention, and the Treaty of Neuilly (1919). In parallel, the research examines the living conditions of Greek communities in Bulgaria prior to their movement, the difficulties they encountered upon arrival in Greece, and the initial challenges of integration.

This analysis aims to understand the refugee experience not merely as an act of displacement but as a complex political, social, and human process of transition. The presentation situates this case within a broader historical and geopolitical context, shedding light on Greek-Bulgarian relations during the early 20th century – a period marked by military conflicts, territorial disputes, and diplomatic negotiations. Particular attention is given to international developments and agreements that contributed to population restructuring, providing a well-documented framework for understanding the conditions surrounding the settlement process.

Evangelia Georgitsoyanni

Funerary Monuments of Greeks in the Bellu cemetery in Bucharest

Historical cemeteries are a significant aspect of cultural heritage, as the funerary monuments are often remarkable sculptures, while the epitaphs provide useful information about local history and society.

One of the most important cemeteries of Southeastern Europe is the Bellu Cemetery in Bucharest, which is an open-air museum of monuments dating from the 19th century onwards.

This cemetery houses the tombs of many notable Romanian personalities, including people of Greek origin, who distinguished themselves as politicians, businessmen, scientists, artists, writers and philanthropists, such as: Ion Mitilineu and Michail Pherekyde, ministers, Christof Zerlendi and Jean Saparis, businessmen and philanthropists, George Kyriazis, doctor and philanthropist, Michail and Nicolae Manicatide, George Darvaris and Maria Koutsarida doctors, Radu Manicatide, airplane engineer- builder, Hariclea Hartulari- Darclee and Margareta Metaxa, opera singers, the Ioanid brothers, painters, the novelist Panait Istrati, and others.

Moreover, family tombs and signatures on monuments testify to the presence of Greek marble sculptors who lived and worked in Bucharest, such as the Halepas, Lambaditis, Colios, Mihelis, Liritis and Laloudis families.

These funerary monuments are evidence of the history of the Greek diaspora and the development of sculpture in Southeastern Europe. The paper is based on field research, written sources and literature.

Fotini Grammenidou

Icons of the iconostasis in Archangels' Michael and Gabriel Church
in Petrota, Orestiada

The settlement of Petrota is located near Evros River, on the Ortakioi-Adrianople road, in an area that during the Ottoman period was of pivotal importance.

The church of the settlement is dedicated to Archangels Michael and Gabriel. The founding inscription of the old church preserves the year 1834. The current appearance of the building though is largely attributed to its reconstruction in 1973.

The iconostasis features the typical three-part division and is adorned with ten icons. Three of them bear the artist's signature, while five have recorded dates of creation.

The artwork on the Diaconicon door is also old, whereas the one on the Prothesis door is more recent.

One of the icons on the iconostasis was painted by the leading painter of the Adrianople workshops, Nikolaos Adrianoupolitis, who is known for his artwork found in Churches in the broader Thrace and Macedonia region. Other two icons on the iconostasis were created by Athanasakis Kesanlis. Among the imperial icons, seven currently remain unidentified. Besides the icon art influenced of Adrianople workshops, the church also features artistic elements from the Ortakioi region.

Dimitrios Kalpakis

The Strymon valley during the Late Byzantine era, as part of the greater athonic space: the case-study of the monastic estates

The athonic estates can be considered as a complex phenomenon, with a remarkable footprint. It is the sum of the areas where the athonic monasteries had interests which actually formed what we call the athonic vital space, particularly during the Late Byzantine era. This contribution is part of a greater research about the athonic estates in total, whose first part has been completed.

The present case-study focuses on the Strymon valley which is one of the areas with the highest density of athonic estates. It is actually a region located to the south of the city of Serrai, between Zichna and Drama, across the lower Strymon River and the lake of Achinos. It also includes the area around Pangaion mountain up to Symbolon and the coastline to the south, eastwards of the mouth of Strymon.

This particular economic space attracted very soon the interest of the Athonites, while one of the extension factors has always been the donation of lands and rights.

The research resulted more than 250 estates, recorded of course via specific methodological criteria. Though in many cases further refinement of the data was feasible, we decided not to proceed, in favor of the information "balance", given the general orientation of the research which was the promotion of the historicaltopography of the area through the athonic presence, instead of focusing onmicrotopography issues, which is expected to be covered by the second phase of the research.

Panagiota Katopodi

The evolution of post-Byzantine iconography in the central Peloponnese through the work of the Pediotes (18th century)

The Cretan painters Petros and Michael Πεδιώτες (Pediotes) were collaborators and continuators of the work of Victor at the Philosofou (Φιλοσόφου) Monastery in Arcadia. Their artistic career in the prefectures of Arcadia and Messinia includes the decoration of six churches (1705-1715). Their work was continued by their descendants, Ioannis and Michalakis, in at least five churches in the prefectures of Arcadia and Laconia (1720-1739). Our presentation aim to highlight the evolution of their iconographic work, which is valued in the adoption of new themes and in the influences they received from both Western engravings and other painters. The influences of the spiritual environment of the monasteries in which they were active will also be highlighted. Their work, which in recent years has gradually begun to be revealed and studied, provides an important aspect of ecclesiastical painting of the 18th century and the study of their work gives us information to evaluate with more respect the art during that period that had been wrongly characterized as the decline of art. Our aim is, through the course of the Πεδιώτες painters, to describe the gradual transition from late Byzantine art, which is defined as post-Byzantine, to the art of modernity that will dominate the Greek space after the establishment of the Greek state. This period of post-Byzantine painting transfers the Byzantine tradition in art unchanged during the turbulent years between the Venetian rule and the second Ottoman rule in the Peloponnese.

Aikaterini Kiltzanidou

Christian Women in Islam: Case Studies of Female Patrons in Orthodox Churches During the Early Ottoman Period in Macedonia

This presentation explores the dedicatory portraits and inscriptions associated with female donors in Orthodox churches across Macedonia during the early Ottoman era (15th–16th centuries). These artistic representations and textual memorials highlight the contributions of women from local aristocratic lineages, including both laywomen and nuns, to the longstanding tradition of philanthropy directed towards religious institutions. Concurrently, they illuminate crucial aspects of the lives of Christian women during this period, yielding important insights into marriage, widowhood, motherhood, origin, social status, as well as their political and ideological orientations. Additionally, they reveal the abilities, perceptions, desires, and fears of these women. The analysis of these dedicatory portraits and inscriptions enriches our understanding of women's roles and influence within the Orthodox Church community during the Ottoman period.

Eleni Kiosse

The Bulgarian occupation of Drama in the literature of localism

History and literature are inextricably linked and complement each other. History feeds literary production, while literature contributes to historical understanding and the preservation of collective memory. In this paper entitled: ''The Bulgarian occupation of Drama in the literature of locality'', our aim is to trace the way in which the coexistence of Greeks and Bulgarians is presented during the third Bulgarian occupation of Drama, as well as the image of the 'other' (the Bulgarian) and the connection of space with this image. The object of our analysis is the novel The Garden of Souls by the writer from Drama Vassilis Tsiabousis.

The methodological tools used are content analysis, Genette's theory of narrative, the theory of space and time in literary narrative and iconology. The novel depicts this difficult period in dark colours by presenting the historical events of the occupation and the brutality of the Bulgarian occupiers through the experiences of the heroes and heroines.

However, there is an attempt to undermine the stereotypes and mitigate the hatred. There is an attempt to construct a national subject that preserves its national historical memory, but forgives and lives in harmony with 'the others', leaving hostilities and hatreds behind.

Yura Konstantinova

‘Bread Upon the Waters’: the building of the first Bulgarian school in Sofia

The paper will present the nearly century-long history of the building that housed the first Bulgarian school in Sofia. It was constructed in 1849 with donations from clergy members and prominent Sofia citizens. Among the benefactors, the name of Ivan Nikolaevich Denkoglu stands out—his contribution to the Sofia school was one third larger than the next highest donation, made by Metropolitan Paisiy. In the years that followed, and through his will, Denkoglu continued to support the school, which eventually took his name.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a transformative period for Sofia, as the city evolved from a small Ottoman town into a modern European capital. The rapid modernization inevitably affected Denkoglu’s school as well. It underwent several relocations, changed the levels of education it offered, and saw generations of teachers and students come and go. Yet, its name endured, symbolizing the lasting significance of philanthropy.

Chryssa Kouliaki

The Public Image of Women through the Press in Interwar Rhodope: 'For Reasons of Women's Morality'

This presentation examines the public image of women in interwar Rhodope, focusing on how ethics and cultural perceptions of women were shaped through contemporary press. It explores the relationship between the redefinition of feminine ideals, urban modernization trends, and the broader aspiration for modernity, which sought to establish an organized national urban state. These trends signify a shift away from the 'tradition' of natural life and conventional morality, while still upholding fundamental societal values. The aim is to demonstrate that ethics conveyed through the press in interwar Rhodope functioned as a tool for cultural production, shaping public perceptions of women and their social roles. A key objective is to analyze how the image of women, particularly the 'anonymous woman,' was constructed and understood by society.

Dimtrios Kountourakis

An unknown collection of portable icons
by the Aenite painter Demetrios Vasileiou in the central region of Evros

In this announcement unknown portable icons by the great Ainite painter Demetrios Vasileiou are presented, which come from the iconostasis of the historic Monasteries of Virgin Mary's Nativity in Dadia and Panagia Portaitissa in Kornofolia. One of these icons presently decorates the iconostasis of St George's Cathedral in Soufli. There are ten works in total, with the Ainite painter's signature on them, which were created between the years 1850 and 1860. The fact that his great works were dispersed in several places all over Greece and Bulgaria, is proof that he was a prominent painter of his era and an appreciated representative of all the Ainite painters.

The objective of the announcement is, on the one hand, the presentation of unknown works of the painter, and on the other hand the explicit demonstration of his unique talent. The painter's activity in the region of Central Evros highlights the economic prosperity of the three emblematic churches in the area and the high standards on the part of their owners, since behind their restoration as well as their decoration, highly esteemed metropolitans and Athonite clergymen can be found. Moreover, the unhindered movement of painters and their works is confirmed which is further supported by the existence of a variety of artistic movements in the region.

Artemisia Kourela

From Architecture to Social Dynamics: The Quay of Smyrna

From the mid-17th century onwards, Smyrna experienced remarkable growth, becoming one of the Ottoman Empire's most important commercial ports. This economic development had a direct impact on the urban space, highlighting the pressing need for modernizing its infrastructure. Among the most significant projects of this period were the expansion of the railway network and the construction of a new port – the Quay.

This presentation focuses on the construction of Smyrna's harbour infrastructure, examining how the project was presented in the Greek press during the period of its implementation. Throughout the duration of the project, from the signing of the initial contract to its completion, Greek newspapers closely followed the progress of the Quay's construction, informing the public and reflecting contemporary debates. Through this analysis, the paper traces the evolution of the project while exploring the broader social and economic changes in 19th-century Smyrna, offering insights into the city's ongoing process of urban transformation.

Theodoros Kyrkoudis

Nikolaos Fardys, the doctor, the scholar

Nikolaos Fardys was a doctor and scholar from Samothrace, born in 1853. He attended the Gymnasium of Smyrna and worked there as a teacher from 1872 to 1874. During the search for information, his unpublished certificate of proficiency in studies (file 1T2034) was found and is presented, originating from the Departmental Archives of the Bouches du Rhône department in Marseille. We located the Certificat d'aptitude, i.e., the certificate of proficiency in studies, which Fardys received on October 28, 1884. Upon studying the Archives, we find that in France there were three levels of medical studies, certified by corresponding examinations. One could work as a doctor even if they passed only the first level. Nikolaos Fardys' title was not "doctor" (docteur) but "officier de santé," i.e., "health officer."

In 1887, he returned to his homeland, Samothrace, married Asanio Fragomichali, and had eight children with her. Simultaneously with practicing medicine, he engaged in cultural matters. He was elected mayor of Samothrace twice.

Dimitrios Liakos

The presence of the Byzantine elite and its Christian partners on Mount Athos (14th-17th centuries): written and archaeological evidence

The pattern of sponsorships and donations in Athos from the 14th to the 17th century is linked to the historical context, the political disputes and rivalries, but also to the occasional emergence of new powers in the Balkans. The patronage of the Byzantine ruling class went in parallel with that of prominent Serbs from the early 14th century onwards, in the context of the realization of deeper political aspirations. Shortly afterwards astute rulers of the Danubian Principalities selectively benefited certain monasteries at first in their attempts to penetrate Athos. When conditions allowed it, having a strong economic advantage, they will seek to implement their plan to restore the ideal continuity with the Byzantine imperial past and to strengthen the ties or rather the unification of the multi-ethnic Christian communities in the Balkans; their high religious feeling was rewarded to their advantage by the monasteries of Mount Athos, securing buildings, monumental decorations and many objects. The above-mentioned context will be discussed in this paper on the basis of written sources and archaeological data.

Anastasia Linda

Example of the transformation of religious monuments under political conditions and their consequences in the early 20th century between the region of Asia Minor and the Greek mainland

This study examines the political conditions between the Greek and Turkish states in the early 20th century, which contributed to the transformation of christian religious monuments. Two indicative cases are presented: one from Asia Minor and another from the hinterland of Chalkidiki.

In Silata, Cappadocia, the church of the Greek Orthodox community, which had been built exclusively with its own resources, was forced to comply with the radical transformation policies imposed by the Kemalist regime in order to continue existing. For instance, there was a formal directive to remove Christian symbols of Byzantine heritage, such as the relief of the double-headed eagle. However, the events of the Asia Minor Catastrophe were even more decisive, leading to the forced conversion of the Christian monument into a Muslim Mosque following the expulsion of the Christian population—ultimately ensuring its continued existence to the present day. On the other hand, the Church of Karvia (present-day Nea Silata), in a Chalkidiki village with historical roots dating back to Byzantine times, underwent a different transformation due to the same events. What was once an ordinary parish church serving a small congregation became the central point of reference for the displaced Silata refugees. The church came to house their most significant tangible connection to their lost homelands, their religious relics, thereby shaping not only their religious practices but also their collective identity and daily lives.

Maria Louka

The Thracian tomb of Svestari

In this paper, we explore the Thracian Tomb of Svestari, a significant monument that offers valuable insights into the lives, customs, and beliefs of the Thracians, particularly regarding their views on the afterlife. Located in the village of Svestari in modern-day Bulgaria, this tomb highlights the rich cultural heritage of the Thracians and their interactions with the Greek world.

The tomb probably belonged to the king of the Getae, Dromichaetes, and its decoration indicates the Thracian belief in the afterlife and the heroization of their dead rulers. The architectural design, sculptural elements, and frescoes of the tomb reflect Hellenistic influences, showcasing a blend of Thracian and Greek styles, with the Mother Goddess having a central position in the transition of the Thracian rulers from life to death. These elements illustrate the cultural exchanges and mutual influences between the two civilizations.

The importance of the Svestari tomb is further underscored by its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site just three years after its discovery. This recognition emphasizes the tomb's significance as a cultural and historical monument, preserving the Thracian legacy for future generations.

Gregory Manopoulos

The monuments of Pogoniani in their historical and epigraphical context (14th-17th c.)

This study will deal with some of the oldest monuments surviving in the area of Pogoniani in Epirus, Greece dating from the 14th to the 17th century. After a presentation of the history and topography of the area from the 14th century on, special attention will be given to the inscriptions found in the churches, which will be analyzed from the point of the donors. As evident from the material, after a period of turmoil in the 14th-early 15th century, the area got on a steady path of growth, leading in the 16th century to the rise of the population, the establishment of the Pogoniani archbishopric, the formation of strong ties with the Danubian Principalities and subsequently the erection of several churches, which were the focus of donations from the rulers. Re-examination of old and presentation of new data help us understand in a more solid way the context in which art flourished in this area during the period in question.

Aikaterini Markou

Reassessing the monumental reserve of stone bridges in Thrace in the context of the region's cultural heritage

The bridge unites and separates, it is the construction that connects people with the materialities of nature and creates culture and memories. In Thrace there is an interesting stock of stone bridges, both numerically and artistically, which are monuments of cultural heritage. In this paper we will present some stone bridges of particular interest and refer to their historical and cultural significance, their architectural features and the art of bridge building, as well as their connection with the cultural landscape of the region. More specifically, we will be concerned with the issue of the transformation of the cultural landscape into a monumental site, i.e., the recognition of this site as part of the cultural heritage by incorporating the anthropological, social and symbolic dimension of the site.

Chrysoula Mendrinou

Icons of the Metropolitan Church of Saint Nicholas in Alexandroupolis

The national and religious diversity of the population of Dedeagatch (present-day Alexandroupoli) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries encouraged the flourishing of eclecticism – not only as a movement and method in architecture and iconographic practice but also as an ideology, often infused with the dominant political and secular views of the time.

Thus, on the site of the pre-existing Church of Saint Nicholas, originally built in 1876, a new church –the Metropolitan Church– was erected, with its foundation laid in 1898 and its inauguration taking place in 1901. It is a three-aisled, cross-in-square domed basilica with a narthex, an elevated gallery for women (gynaikonitis) shaped like a balcony, and twin bell towers that were added in 1912.

The church exhibits elements of Greek-Byzantine and Neo-Gothic styles, along with Balkan influences. The despotic icons on the iconostasis follow the aesthetic trend that appeared in Athonite painting from the mid-19th century onwards, characterized by a shift toward more Western models. This trend reached its peak in the early decades of the 20th century, during which time this style spread throughout Greece, shaping a new style in ecclesiastical painting.

Additionally, the church houses portable icons brought by refugees from Eastern Thrace after it was evacuated by its Greek inhabitants.

Elias Messinas

The Synagogues of Greece: preserving a lost cultural heritage through technology and story-telling

Greek Jewish history, with roots to antiquity, was nearly wiped out in the Holocaust. Synagogues were looted and destroyed. Some survived abandoned or occupied by new users or repurposed to other uses. In 1993 the author undertook the detailed study and survey of remaining synagogues, some of which subsequently demolished. In 2023, a rare previously unknown archive by architect Semtov Samuel (1939-2009) was introduced to the author by the architect's family, including synagogue surveys from 1960-61, most subsequently demolished.

Synagogue surveys and digital drawings form the basis for a complete record of synagogue architecture in Greece. In-situ photography and interviews with survivors or neighbors, recorded personal stories, impressions and memories of the synagogues from the time they were still in use, have been compiled and published by the author, and form the human aspects of the buildings. The author, as a scientific advisor to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture – contributed in the enrichment of the Archaeological Registry of Greece. More than 270 Jewish sites and synagogues were made digitally visual in the urban context of Greek cities. Through stories and digital technologies, including 3D models and VR technologies, lost synagogues, are digitally reconstructed and their experience brought back to life.

Marco Miotto

Egypt as a factor of geopolitical changes in Southeastern Europe in the first half of 19th century

My presentation is about the role, which Egypt played in the political developments that took place in Southeastern Europe during the first half of the 19th century, mainly in Greece in the 1820s.

I will also discuss Egypt's pivotal role in the so-called Eastern Question that affected the whole of Eastern Mediterranean region. Particular emphasis will be given to the political and social developments that took place, in Egypt, during the rule of Muhammad 'Ali (1805-1841) transforming Egypt into an active and influential geopolitical factor in the Near East and in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

I will also try to offer some elements about the relevant role played in Muhammad 'Ali's Egypt Southern-Balkan -from today's Greek Eastern Macedonia)- people.

Kortesia Mouloudi-Passadaki

Metropolitan of Adrianople Polycarp:
His contribution to Thracian Hellenism

The bust of Metropolitan Polycarp at a central point of Orestiada is the expression of the dominant memory community, in the context of commemorating his contribution to the first settlement of refugee population groups and the establishment of the city. The monument as a "mnemonic site" projects historical memory into the public space which it dominates.

Monuments support the state, institutional units and approved collectivities to "reappropriate" the past according to the mnemonic needs of the present, legitimize social and political choices, form a national identity and transmit intergenerational historical experience as meta-memory.

Metropolitan Polycarp, the last Metropolitan of Adrianople, faced Turkish and Bulgarian anthellenic persecutions, co-organized the Thracian Struggle, welcomed the liberating Greek army in 1920, celebrated, in affliction, the last mass at the Metropolitan Church of Adrianople two years later and led his flock to Karagač-Orestiada setting up a new homeland, only to abandon it soon after the concession of Karagač to Turkey, due to diplomatic reasons and international politics.

Polycarp fought for the cohesion of the East-Thracians who accompanied him and, being a pioneer, he co-founded a new Orestiada as an ark of memory to safeguard the unbroken continuity of Hellenism and its heritage in Thrace, religious relics and historical dignity.

Ioannis Mpakirtzis

Sources about the Ottoman army in the 19th century

The Ottoman army in the last quarter of the 19th century, was obliged to suppress internal upheavals in the Balkan provinces and Russia's very attempt to resolve by her own means the Eastern Question; so the army was a critical institution whose condition reflected that of the entire Ottoman Empire.

This general observation, means that the economic condition and excessive borrowing of the Empire that had led to the bankruptcy of 1875 had forced the Ottomans to cut radically their defense expenditures and investments. Even more, the doubtful progress of the Tanzimat reforms (1839–1876), due to the long time mentalities the corruption and the reaction of privileged social classes and administrative apparatus, determined the final conclusion. These are the main obstacles which must be estimated for the negative attitude against the efforts of progressive initiatives aiming to reorganization, westernization and modernization of the army. All these factors considered in combination, led to the inevitable outcome of the Russo-Turkish war (1877–1878).

Although the Ottomans were defeated their Empire didn't disintegrate at that moment, but the abeyance of the fatal downfall was a result exclusively due to the vigorous British reaction to Russian imperialism and not an effect of Ottoman army's deterrent power.

Ivaylo Nachev

The Wandering Monument of the Unknown Soldier in Sofia – Contested Memories, Artistic Interpretations, Changing Ideologies

The idea for a large monument in a central place in the Bulgarian capital city honoring the memory of the deceased soldiers in the Balkan and the First World Wars was first floated in the early 1920s. The project design was awarded to famous sculptor Andrey Nikolov (1878-1959) whose proposals for the monument, however, faced fierce criticism from various sides, most notably army circles. After several redesigns of the first drafts, the monument was officially unveiled as late as 1941 to be silently dismantled a few years later. In the early 1980s, on the same spot was built a new Monument of the Unknown Soldier, utilizing quite different ideas but using a notable element of the old one, a giant lion figure that survived after several relocations during the socialist period.

The paper aims to analyze versions of the first original monument as a process of a dynamic interplay between the initial state order, Andrey Nikolov's artistic interpretation and opposing visions under changing political circumstances in a bid to reconstruct and analyse the complexity of public memories and commemorative culture.

Maria Nanou

Aspects of the 16th century wall-painting at Mount Pelion (eastern Thessaly, Greece)

Following the definitive Ottoman conquest of Thessaly in 1423, the earliest extant wall-paintings on Mount Pelion date to the late 15th or early 16th century and are located in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin on the hill of Episkopi, the episcopal seat of the Diocese of Demetrias during that period. The next surviving examples of wall-painted monuments in the region are attributed to the latter half of the 16th century. These include the church of Panagia Portarea (1581) in Portaria and three churches in the Katichori area: the Dormition of the Virgin (1582), Panagia Megalogenous (second half of the 16th century), and Saint George (second half of the 16th century).

This study focuses on the mural decoration of the aforementioned monuments, beginning with an examination of the surviving votive inscriptions, which offer valuable insights into the identities of the painters and patrons involved. The analysis then proceeds to a comparative investigation of the iconographic programmes of the churches, the iconography of selected scenes, and the stylistic features of the paintings as a whole. Through this comparative approach, the study aims to identify iconographic and stylistic affinities and divergences, thereby situating the Pelion monuments within the broader framework of prevailing artistic currents in 16th-century post-Byzantine monumental painting.

The paper concludes by suggesting that, despite their fragmentary character, the 16th-century murals in Pelion constitute a representative sample of local painting featuring partial iconographic relevance, painterly eclecticism and stylistic diversity. Moreover, their study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the conditions and the artistic practices of post-Byzantine painting in the mountainous Christian communities of the Ottoman periphery.

Eleonora Naxidou

Territorial Dimensions of Nationalism in the Balkans:
The Bulgarian Case

This paper examines the territorial dimension of nineteenth-century Balkan nationalism, a crucial aspect of the region's national movements. Imported from the West by diasporic intelligentsias, national ideology rapidly spread and gained dominance across Southeastern Europe during the long nineteenth century. More specifically, it was the principle of nationalism –the alignment of political and national identity– that prevailed, fueling revolutionary activity against Ottoman rule. In this context, Balkan nationalist intellectuals and activists faced the challenge of defining the borders of their prospective nation-states. To accomplish this task, they employed historical and ethnographic criteria. Consequently, medieval Balkan states were reinterpreted through a national lens, and the ethnic origins of contemporary populations were invoked. Both approaches, however, proved inadequate: the borders of medieval states were fluid, and the region's populations were ethnically mixed. These limitations led to overlapping territorial claims and gave rise to transborder or external homeland nationalisms after the emergence of nation-states. This paper focuses on how the Bulgarian national leadership during the Revival period defined the boundaries of the Bulgarian national territory and how this definition influenced the national policy of the newly established Bulgarian Principality.

Tina Georgieva

The Fate of the Russian Monuments in Bulgaria

The attitude of Bulgarians towards Russia has always been charged with a lot of emotions, in contrast to their pragmatic perception of the other European countries. It ranges from idealization of the Russian state to its complete demonization. Disputes between Russophilies and Russophobes continue to be an invariable element of the political battles in Bulgaria.

The special attention shown by the Bulgarians towards Russia is expressed in the impressive number of monuments devoted to Russia. Most of them were erected as a tribute to the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, which led to the liberation of the Bulgarians from Ottoman rule. Russia's monumental presence in Bulgaria grew after the World War II, when the communist authorities in Sofia erected new monuments as a demonstration of their loyalty to Moscow.

The fall of the pro-Soviet regime in Bulgaria initiated a heated public debate about the role of Russia in Bulgarian history. It also raised the question of the fate of monuments devoted to Russia or the Soviet Union. The text analyzes the history of monuments dedicated to Russia, the main motives for their erection, the debates in society about their presence, as well as the fate of the most controversial of them.

Alexandros Papadopoulos

Churches of Edirne (16th -20th c.) in the context of modernity

In this paper, we will present the churches of Edirne (Odrin) that have been recorded from 16th to the 20th century. In addition to written sources, mainly by Greek authors, narratives by German, English and French travelers describing the churches of the town, will be presented.

There will be also a topographical presentation of the churches, based mainly on Ottoman maps of the early 20th century and contrasted with European maps of 19th and 20th centuries.

An attempt will also be made to illustrate the temples in early 20th century pictures /photographs.

Many of them had been damaged in previous centuries, mainly by fires, but communities always found ways to rebuild them, despite the difficulties imposed by the Ottoman state.

The number of churches in Adrianople varied over the previous centuries. At the end of the 19th century though, Edirne/Adrianople had about thirty Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Bulgarian and Catholic churches and chapels in the city and its suburbs, of which only a few have survived till now.

The role of the reforms of 1839 (Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerif), 1856 (Haṭṭ-ı Hümayun), 1876 (establishment of Constitution), as well as older, as yet unknown fermans, in the construction of new churches and the renovation of old ones, will be discussed through the prism of modernity. Last but not least, the Russo-Turkish wars of 1829, and 1878, the occupation of Edirne from the Russians and the repercussions in church building, will be discussed in this context.

Magdalini Parcharidou

The hagiographer and 'protothitis' of Chaldea Grigorios Symenos and his works at the Church of St George on the hill of Kilkis

Grigorios Symenos (before 1695-1749) was a prominent member of the Symenon family of painters, who originated from Argyroupoli of Efxeinos Pontos and were active in the region for at least three centuries. According to the scholar Georgios Kandilaptis, he studied at Mount Athos in 1708. Since 1695, he is mentioned as the high priest (protothitis) of the Metropolis of Chaldea, where he also held the position of steward (oikonomos). He was the main scribe of the well-known Codex of the Church of the Virgin Mary (entries from 1723 to 1749), as well as the painter of a series of frescoes in the Monastery of Saint George Choutoura (1709), in churches of Argyroupoli (1708, 1718, 1728/29, or 1730, 1732), Imera (1719), Atra (1724), Malaha (1730), and in the courtyard of the Sumela Monastery (1741). He also painted the despotic icons of the Monastery of Saint George Choutoura, around 1734.

Recently, works by Grigorios were discovered at the Church of Saint George on the hill of Kilkis, where they were donated by refugees from Efxeinos Pontos. These include the Crucifixion accompanied by the lypera with the Virgin Mary and Saint John on the top of the iconostasis, where he signs as '*ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑ ΧΕΙΡΟϹ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΟΘΥΤΟΥ ΧΑΛΔΙΑϹ ΤΟΥ ϹΙΜΕ¬ΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ / ἐν ἔτει χιλλιοστῶ ἑξακοσιοστῶ ἑνενικοστῶ πέμπτω, ἰνδικτιῶνος ΙΓ*' (by the hand of Grigorios Symenos, high priest of Chaldea / at the year of one thousand six hundred ninety and five, indiction 13th = 1695). These are his earliest known works, which confirm both his connection to Mount Athos and the high quality of hagiography in Argyroupoli during the 17th and 18th centuries. In this paper, we study Symenos' works and compare them with other works of the era, aiming to contextualize their place within the broader art landscape.

Roumiana Preshlenova

Independence and Urban Development in Early Modern Bulgaria

The paper examines the urban development of Bulgaria in the early post-liberation period (late 19th and early 20th centuries), focusing on how newly independent Bulgarian cities sought to express their national identity and modernity through urban planning and architecture. It argues that urban spaces became sites for showcasing Bulgaria's break from Ottoman rule and its aspiration to join the ranks of European nations.

The paper analyzes the transformation of the capital Sofia, exploring the construction of new administrative buildings, public spaces, and cultural institutions. Special attention will be payed to monuments, a novelty in urban development. It investigates how these projects incorporated both indigenous architectural traditions and Western European styles, reflecting a complex interplay between national self-assertion and European integration.

Furthermore, the paper considers the social and political dimensions of urban development, examining how these changes impacted the daily lives of urban dwellers and contributed to the formation of a modern Bulgarian civic culture. By analyzing the urban legacy of this period, the paper sheds light on the crucial role of the capital Sofia in the process of nation-building and the construction of national identity in Southeastern Europe.

Konstantinos Sampanis – Dilara Kaplan

"Cosmopolitan" or "safe" spaces? The visibility of the Greek-Orthodox institutions in contemporary Istanbul.

Given the so-called "Pact of cUmar" which ordained that in dar al-Islam (namely in a territory administered by Muslims) no new churches were allowed to be constructed (cf. Wharton 2015) as well as the conversion of almost all Byzantine churches into mosques until the sixteenth century (Faroqui 2010: 242), the Greek-Orthodox presence in Ottoman Constantinople must have been barely visible. Up to the Tanzimat era, churches were renovated (or newly constructed) only after intense negotiations with the ruling authorities (that also included "offering of gifts", cf. Bruce 2001: 73). These churches were simple basilicas surrounded by high walls that restricted their visibility (cf. Tsilenis, 2012, p.110, cf. also Pulat and Mazlum 2020). It is after the Edict of Gülhane (also known as the Tanzimat Edict) in 1839 and especially after the Hatt-ı Hümayun in1856 that non-Muslims were granted the right to raise religious edifices (as well as schools and other buildings) to a larger scale. As Scarlatos Byzantios reports (1862: 29) the first church to have a dome and a belfry was Ayos Athanasios in Tatavla (erected in 1858), followed by several other architectural works such as the emblematic church of Ayia Triada in Taksim (inaugurated in 1880) and the current building of Phanar (Fener) Greek Orthodox College (completed in 1883) that, to some extent, define Istanbul's cityscape.

This acquired visibility of the Greek-Orthodox community however will become after 1923 a thorn in the Republican era in Turkey. On the one hand, communal life was restricted within the walls of these institutional edifices and, on the other, churches and schools were targeted and vandalized during the September 1955 events/pogrom (cf. Alexandris 1983, Güven 2012). Nowadays, due to the massive expansion of Istanbul these monumental minority buildings become less and less visible to the untrained observer. At the same time, however, the presence of non-Muslim

minority educational and religious institutions in an otherwise predominantly Muslim society is reinterpreted as part of a presumed cosmopolitanism of the past, a component of a constructed nostalgia.

In this paper, we present an initial examination of Greek-Orthodox institutional buildings, mainly through the lens of ongoing ethnographic field research in Istanbul, focusing on the following two topics:

a. We approach churches and schools as a (religious) safe space and a meeting point for the (Greek)-Orthodox population (but also progressive members of the majority), in which the physical seclusion (through walls etc.) provides a feeling of distinctiveness and security.
b. We investigate how churches and schools are perceived by academic, cultural and administrative agents in Turkey and how their view enhances (or obscure) their visibility.

Konstantinos D. Serafeimidis

Churches and relics of refugee settlements in the Municipality of Komotini

This paper focuses on the history of the churches and relics of the refugee settlements in the Municipality of Komotini. The arrival of refugees in Thrace after 1922 –and particularly within the modern boundaries of the Municipality of Komotini– radically changed both the urban and rural landscape. Refugee churches, often dedicated to the patron saints of their lost homelands, functioned as both places of worship and cultural centres, helping to preserve collective identity and facilitate the integration of refugees into their new environment. The construction of these churches, as well as the icons and vessels brought by the refugees, enriched the cultural heritage of the area. As tangible and intangible remnants of the lost homeland and as symbols of a new beginning, these churches and relics maintain the link between past and present and reflect the painful efforts to create a new social reality.

Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou

Between East and West. Artistic trends of monumental post-Byzantine painting in the Ionian islands (15th-18th c.)

The period between the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the fall of Chandax (Crete,1669) marks a long era of Latin domination over the Ionian islands, Lefkada being the sole exception (1489-1684: Ottoman rule), during which Venetian occupation persisted for approximately two centuries. The 18th century was succeeeded by brief periods of French (1797-98) and Russian occupation (1798-1807). The specific social and cultural conditions that emerged during this time influenced both the domestic artistic production and the reception of artworks and artistic workshops on the islands. At the same time, most of the population remained steadfast in their adherence to the Orthodox doctrine and the Greek language. Therefore, the study of Orthodox ecclesiastical painting, particularly monumental painting, on the islands during this period emerges as a subject of distinct scholarly interest.

Although notable fresco ensembles from the 15th and 16th centuries do exist, it was the 17th century that witnessed remarkable flourishing frescoes- an outcome closely linked to the islands' economic growth fostered by the prolonged period of peace, under the Venetian rule. In the town of Corfu, for instance, the frescoes gradually became confined primarily to the broader area of the sanctuary, while iconographic themes of distinctly Western origin -usually derived from engravings- also began to appear.

During the same century, traditional iconography, as practiced in mainland Greece or introduced to the islands by Cretan painters of portable icons, with few Western loans, experienced a notable flourishing. This style appears to have constituted the dominant trend in both rural and urban ecclesiastical settings, a trend that persisted well into the 18th centrury. It was during this period (18th century) that Panagiotis Doxaras introduced an Italianate

mode of painting that overturned traditional iconography and had a special impact on the wealthy bourgeoisies of the islands.

Eleni Stoumpou-Katsamouris

Paul Zepdji and the Monuments of Thessaloniki

Paul Zepdji was a distinguished photographer of Thessaloniki, active from around 1880 to the end of the 1920's. He was specialized in antiquities and urban landscape. He was trained at the Abdullah frères and won recognition among the learned and the travelers alike. A considerable number of monuments are depicted in his photographs. For some of them, destroyed at the fire of 1890 or the great fire of 1917, his photographs constitute the only evidence.

This paper traces his trajectory following the copies of his photographs in various photographic archives, printed books and engravings for the Press. We propose that his preferential access to the monuments was related to his connection with the authorities and the Sultan, which made of him a kind of local official photographer. His albumen prints in high definition scans made recently available could be a valuable tool for archaeological research.

Dimosthenis Stratigopoulos

From Serbia to Wallachia via Bulgaria: The Distinctive Journey of Saint Spyridon the Younger

Saint Spyridon the Younger is unknown in the Hagiologion of the Orthodox Church. He was born in Serbia and chose the monastic life. Due to his virtuous life, he was elected as the archbishop of Tarnovo during the time when Asen was the ruler of the region. However, he came into conflict with the ruler, and after being slandered, he was forced to resign from his position and seek refuge in the hermitages around the Danube, where he eventually passed away.

By the 16th century, his relics were reportedly venerated in Târgoviște, and the Wallachian ruler Radu commissioned Manuel of Corinth to compose a liturgical *Service* in his honor. This composition constitutes the sole extant written source concerning the saint. According to the *Service*, Saint Spyridon lived in the 12th–13th centuries, although its author wrote three centuries later.

However, no archbishop named Spyridon is mentioned in the episcopal catalogues of medieval Bulgaria from that period. This raises important questions about his identity and historical authenticity. Was he a genuine historical figure whose memory was omitted or lost in contemporaneous records? Could he have been confused with another saint bearing the same name? Or does his cult reflect a later, possibly intentional, creation—an obscure or legendary figure revived, or even invented, by local rulers some three centuries after his supposed death?

Garyfallia Theodoridou

The Khatchkar Monument of the Armenian Community of Xanthi

In this paper, I study the monument of Khatchkar, a stone column of the main category of "outdoor/religious" (however of multidimensional utility), transferred in 2016 from the Republic of Armenia to the courtyard of the Holy Church of Surp Ashvajadzin (Dormition of the Virgin Mary) of the Armenian Community of Xanthi, as:

1. a symbolic object, a superimposed symbol of the Armenian homeland (the first Khachkars date back to the 4th and 6th century AD), through which the local community/dispersion cultivates its identity, national memory, solidarity, cohesion in dispersion (ethno-culture),
2. the religious and ideological influences in the formation of the cultural tradition of the monument and of the Armenian stone carving art of cross stone, in the local (Xanthi), but also in the national context of Armenianism,
3. its historical (characteristic of medieval Armenian Christian art), national, religious function in the sacred space of the Armenian Church, which additionally identifies and defines as a place of "memory of destruction" of 1915 ("founding event" of the Great Dispersion) and of the space-time of the commemorative rituals of the genocide (performed annually in front of the monument),
4. The symbolic connection through it with the mother-homeland, the "tyrannized". But which homeland? The "mother"? The "stepmother"? The mythical/imaginary idea? Which "lost homeland"? The pre-Christian Armenian Empire? The kingdom of Cilicia? Armenia/Anatolia of 1915? Soviet Armenia? Asia Minor for the Armenian refugees of Xanthi who did not know the "mother land"? The contemporary?
5. The role of political developments and their connection with the monument as extroversion of the diasporic Armenian identity in the face of the silence of the older generations. In 1965 the Armenian question was politicized on a global level

with an ever-growing national discourse, impetus was given to the beginning of dynamic mobilizations of the dispersion communities.

The establishment of the Armenian Committee in Athens with branches in Thessaloniki and Xanthi is a part of the global network for the promotion of the Armenian Cause, and the presence of this monument is aligned with specific perspectives of the Armenian national identity for the Armenian Community of Xanthi.

Evgenia-Petkova Troeva

Memorization and Monumentalization of the Medieval Origins of the State in Socialist and Post-Socialist Bulgaria

The presentation focuses on the process of transforming the region of the medieval Bulgarian state into a site for national veneration of the ancestors during the 20th and early 21st centuries. It examines various initiatives that create a new cultural landscape through the construction of monuments and the reconstruction of archaeological sites. One of the focuses is the celebration of the 1300th anniversary of the establishment of the Bulgarian state and the construction of the cultural-historical sculptural complex Founders of the Bulgarian State in Shumen, inaugurated during the jubilee year of 1981.

The presentation examines also the transformations in cultural policy towards the region in the post-socialist period. This section focuses on initiatives related to the city of Pliska, where in 2007 a monument of Boris I the Baptizer was erected. It also discusses the ongoing restoration of the Great Basilica near the first capital. Additionally, a private initiative is presented – the so-called Court of the Cyrillic Alphabet, a unique complex featuring large-scale models of Cyrillic letters, monuments of Cyril and Methodius and Boris I, an art gallery, and silicone figures of Bulgarian rulers from the First Bulgarian Kingdom.

Based on the presented cultural initiatives, conclusions are drawn regarding the use of the symbolic resources of the medieval past. During the socialist and post-socialist periods, its representations exhibit a shift in thematic focus as well as continuity in relation to the foundational for the context cultural nationalism.

Dionysios Tsentikopoulos

The ideological controversies of the 18th century in the literary work of Kaisarios Daponte

The present paper will consider the parameters that constitute the ideological background of the aforementioned thought, and attempt to identify, interpret and relate them.

The study will demonstrate how Daponte's work reflects his attitude towards the Enlightenment, a movement which, at the time, was gaining traction in south-eastern Europe.

The paper will demonstrate that Daponte's relationship with the Enlightenment is superficial. The environment in which this relationship was cultivated, manifesting as a love of knowledge and a passion for travel, is a subject of interest. The question arises as to whether this affinity genuinely stemmed from the Enlightenment, or whether it emanated from disparate factors. Furthermore, the question arises as to whether this attitude influenced his worldview.

In addition, the movement of asceticism (i.e. the tradition in which the Orthodox world expressed itself during the period of Ottoman rule) is a further notable element of the author's work.

It is evident that Dapontes participated most firmly in the aforementioned asceticist tradition. From childhood, he was immersed in the Hesychasm of the Ottoman period, through which he perceived and interpreted the world around him, religious life and the identity of the Christian. The pinnacle of his actions, the renovation and curation of the iconography of the Katholikon of the Monastery of Xeropotamou, offers significant illustrations of creative assimilation and expression of this tradition.

It is evident that, irrespective of his origins and the manner of his actions, which evolve and reach their zenith primarily from the moment he assumes the monastic vow, Dapontes exhibits certain unexpected deviations from the ascetic tradition. This paper seeks to provide an interpretative analysis of these deviations.

Georgios Chr. Tsigaras

Icons from early modernity in Xanthi
(17th and 18th centuries)

This paper is focused on fourteen portable icons, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, currently on exhibit in the Ecclesiastical Museum of the Holy Metropolis of Xanthi and Peritheorion.

The majority of the icons discussed in this paper date from the 17th century. Their iconographic and stylistic characteristics suggest that they were made in Macedonian workshops. These works seem to have been produced by painters who were active within the broader artistic trends observed in the region of Kastoria during this period - such as in Grammosta, where a particularly dynamic painting workshop is known to have flourished.

Although many of these icons show signs of fire damage and significant deterioration of their painted surfaces, which necessitates their conservation, they nevertheless reveal the spread of artworks from Macedonian and northern Greek workshops into Thrace. At the same time, they reflect the reception of this artistic production and highlight local aesthetic preferences in Xanthi and its surroundings during the period in question.

Finally, two icons date from the 18th century. One of them represents depicts St. Charalambos and can be attributed to a Macedonian workshop, while the other depicts Christ the Pantocrator and follows Palaiologan iconographic and stylistic models, according to the guidelines of the hieromonk and painter Dionysios of Fourna (Agrafa). This last example underlines the artistic links between the region and Mount Athos.

Nikolaos Tsouris

The Journal 'I Niki': a Sports and Military Review on the Eve of the Balkan Wars

The subject of this paper is the examination of the character of the sports magazine "I Niki" (Victory) during its initial publication period, between 1909-1911. The magazine was published in Athens by the gymnast Angelos Fetsis, a significant figure in the field of sports in the first half of the 20th century. In the first five issues, "Victory" introduced itself as a gymnastics review, while from the sixth issue onwards, it was referred to as a military and gymnastics review. Initially, its purpose was to promote the idea of gymnastics and sports within Greek society, especially among the youth. Subsequently, it aimed to inform its readership about military matters as well. The magazine reflects the developments taking place in the field of sports and simultaneously the ideological orientations prevailing in the Greek kingdom during that era.

Nikoleta Tzani

Fragments of Byzantium: Representations of Mount Athos in the American Popular Press

In the first half of the twentieth century, numerous articles in the American illustrated press reflect a "mania" for Byzantine themes that captured artists, travelers, and photographers who had visited Mount Athos and other significant Byzantine monuments. In this project, we propose to write about photographs, books, and reproductions of artworks that helped form the opinion of Americans toward Mount Athos.

Most importantly, we seek to directly and creatively approach the way that Americans understood, imagined, appropriated, and were influenced by Mount Athos. In 1916, National Geographic Magazine published a twenty-two-page article titled "The Hoary Monasteries of Mt. Athos" with dozens of photographs presenting the monastic community. This research will also include books and other written and photographic accounts by American travelers and journalists. For example, in his bestseller Seven League Boots (1935), Richard Halliburton described his epic adventure across the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia, including a visit to Mount Athos (chapter "No woman's land").

Finally, this "American" material will be examined in relation to important contemporary Greek publishing efforts related to Mount Athos, such as Σταγιονόρος (1926) by Nikos Velmos, illustrated with woodcuts by Polykleitos Regos, and Άγιον Όρος (1934) by Zacharias Papandoniou with woodcuts by Efthymis Papadimitriou.

Kalliopi Tzimagiorgi

Modernism Extra Muros: Avant-garde Movements in Yugoslavia

When recounting the history of western modern and contemporary art, references to Southeastern Europe and the Balkans appear sporadically. It appears as though the integration of peripheral versions within the walls of metropolitan modernism is only incidental. In that respect, the vantage point of "western history of art" or "history of western art" becomes critically narrowed, leading to marginal narratives, whether examining artistic groups per se, their respective formal principles and goals or their interplay with contemporaneous avant-garde movements elsewhere in Europe. In the following discussion the case of Yugoslavia will be examined in the context of this exclusion.

The aim of the present paper is to address the issue of inclusiveness when it comes to writing the history of western art, shedding some light on the case of Yugoslavia in the first decades of the 20th century, where a thriving, vibrant, robust modernism flourished in the outskirts of the metropolitan paradigm.

Through particular reference to associated periodical publications as well as juxtaposition of visual material, the parallel paths of regional groups and dominant trends in the rest of Europe (German Expressionism and New Objectivity, French Cubism, Italian Futurism, French and German Dada, Dutch and Nordic Neoplasticism, Russian Constructivism and Geometric Abstraction) will be illustrated.

Elmira Vassileva

The Protestant Church in Bansko in local history and memory

The formation of a Protestant congregation in the 19th-century mountainous village of Bansko was due to the work of American missionaries, as well as to the development of a kind of indigenous reformist movement.

The evangelical church in Bansko was the earliest one to be founded among the Bulgarians (1871) and for a long time it had the largest and the best organized congregation. In 1885 the Protestants erected a two-storey building, which was utilized both as a church and a school. It became the center of the Bulgarian evangelical movement in the Ottoman Empire and an important symbol of the achievements of Protestant propaganda.

In the same time, it was a manifestation of the initiative characteristic and entrepreneurial spirit of the local people. The building has been preserved and is still used for the purposes of the Evangelical church.

Maria Vavva

Saint Catherine's iconography as the patroness of letters in Cretan art: a theme rooted in a social context?

In 2000, Saint Catherine's College of Oxford University received an unexpected donation. Ben Sylvester, president of the North American alumni at the time, offered an icon of Saint Catherine signed by the Cretan painter Fraghias Kavertzas. Currently, it is located within the college Library.

The saint is depicted seated, surrounded by books and astronomical instruments, and the wheel of her martyrdom. This iconographic type has been attributed to the early 17th-century Cretan painter Ieremias Palladas but can be found in Cretan paintings as early as the second half of the 16th century. This transition from the standing virgin martyr of Eastern iconography to the intellectual patroness of letters and sciences seems to have gradually evolved, with influences from Byzantine and Western iconography.

On the occasion of the Oxford icon, we will attempt to interpret the popularity of this iconography in Cretan icon painting during the first half of the 17th century, primarily looking for some of the possible reasons that led to its spread and how it was established with this "new" status in Cretan societyThomas

Thomas Zikos

Refugee Heritages in Nea Moudania, Halkidiki

In recent years, and especially with the celebration of the centenary of the Asia Minor Disaster (1922), research has progressed considerably regarding the relics of refugees from various regions of Asia Minor. These relics are mainly kept in parish churches. The recording of the relics is still in its early stages, however, it is constantly being enriched with new announcements and publications. The research brings to light icons, but also various ecclesiastical relics in various regions of Macedonia and Thrace. The research reveals the activity of various artistic workshops, as well as the names of painters.

In the region of Halkidiki, refugees from Asia Minor have settled in several areas. Nea Moudania is the seat of the Municipality of Propontis of the Regional Unit of Halkidiki. The city was built in 1922 by refugees from Asia Minor, who lived on the coast of Propontis (in Moudania, near Constantinople).

In Nea Moudania is built the church of Saint George, with one of the largest bell towers in Macedonia. Also, at the highest point of the city, the church of Panagia Korifini has been built. In this church is the icon of Panagia Korifini. The icon was brought by refugees from the monastery of the Theotokos to the island of Kalolimnos, opposite Moudania in the Propontis.

The church of Saint George houses a rather rich collection of portable icons, which were brought by the refugees from Asia Minor. These icons have been brought from Mudanya, the island of Kalolimnos, Kouri, Eligous (or Ligoumi) and Sigis. To the collection of portable icons we must also add three counter-reliefs with a scene of the Epitaph of Lamentation.

These are two icons of Saint Paraskeva, a despotic icon of Christ Pantocrator, an icon of the Theotokos, an icon of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helen, a second icon of the Equal-to-the-Apostles with angels at the top, an icon of Saint George, a small icon of Deesis, an icon of the Protomartyr Stephen, an icon of Saints Anthony and Euthymius, an icon of Saint Christopher, an

icon of Saints Christopher and Saint Michael of Sinade, an icon of the Infanticide of the Holy Infants, an icon of the Annunciation of the Theotokos (Holy Mary), a two-piece icon of the Theotokos and saints at the bottom, a an icon of Saint Tryphon, an icon of Saints Cosmas and Damian the Silversmiths, an icon of the Crucifixion, an icon of the Synaxis of Saints with Saint John the Forerunner, a Russian icon of the Cross with saints, an icon of an untitled saint (probably Saint Kyriaka) and finally a Russian icon of Saint George the Dragon-slayer. Two 19th-century Antiminsions (altarclouths) are also preserved in the church.

Some portable icons are marked with dates. According to the dates that are indicated, the icons date from 1820 (Saint Tryphon) to 1892 (Saint Christopher and Saint Michael of Sinade). These icons have recently been cleaned (1998) and are currently kept in a landscaped area next to the church of Saint George.

Their presentation and publication enriches our knowledge of unknown artistic workshops, that were active in the Propontis region, but also in the wider region.

Angel Zlatkov

The Macedonian House of Culture in Sofia through the 20th century

The Bulgarian "national catastrophes" after the devastating Second Balkan War and the First World War led thousands of refugees from the region of Macedonia to the Kingdom of Bulgaria. The terms of the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine leaved these people with no other choice, but to start a new life with no hope to return in the homeland. But in their new country they sticked together by establishing numerous charity organizations, which in 1936 were all united in the newly built Macedonian House of Culture in the center of Sofia.

The presented paper traces the story of the building through the turbulent 20th century in the Balkans when the fast-changing political systems and regimes made significant efforts to transform the cultural and historical heritage in a simplified propaganda tool.

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