**Early modern culture in the Greek diaspora; the presence of Greeks in Italy and Ukraine from the thirtieth century onwards**

The collapse of Constantinople, which signaled the end of the Byzantine Empire, was accompanied by a mass exodus of a Greek scholars to Florence, Venice and Genoa. The movement of the Renaissance, as it has been argued by several authors, partially owes its existence to the presence of post-Byzantine Greeks in Italy, who disseminated sources and influential philosophical manuscripts in the Latin world (Syros 2010; Cameron 2014, p.20; Gouguenheim 2019, p.113; Theodosiadis 2021a, p.221) Consider, for example, Emmanuel Chrysoloras, a student of Demetrios Cydones, who taught Greek in Florence (Syros 2010, p.486) and translated classical Greek philosophical and literary works into Latin, works entirely unknown to literary and philosophical circles outside Byzantium (Hankins 1990, p.108; Rosser 2012, p.18; p.53; Gouguenheim 2019, p.113). As the notable Hellenist historian, Georgios D. Contogeorgis, explained in the fifth Volume of his *Anthropocentric Cosmosystem* (2021a), the Greek diaspora in Italy contributed to the spread of anthropocentric ideas, that is, to concepts and worldviews anchored to the principles of political freedom, civic virtue and cosmopolitanism not exclusively in Italy but also in France, Switzerland, Germany and Austria. As the same thinker explains in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth Volumes of his *AC* (2020a, 2020b, 2021a, 2021b), these ideas were profoundly rooted in the social conscience of the Byzantines. The Greek communities of the Black Sea, particularly the Greek diaspora in Odessa and Mariupol (contemporary Ukraine), had developed a similar anthropocentric culture. In terms of scholarship, the impact of Greek emigrants in Italy has been thoroughly researched by Western academics. In contrast, this particular (anthropocentric) culture of the Greeks in the Black Sea has not attracted the attention it probably deserves. The present lecture fills this lacuna, attributing the development of this particular culture of openness and freedom to the engagement of the Greeks in Ukraine with economic activities that not only contributed to the strengthening of their ties with the Greeks of the Byzantine Empire, but simultaneously shaped social environments within which the foundations for the birth and spread of anthropocentric concepts is made possible. As Contogeorgis explains, the same economic activities developed thanks to the *systemana* (that is, through networks emerging during the Hellenistic and Byzantine age) had laid the foundations for the consolidation of anthropocentric social environments in the Hellenic world (Contogeorgis [Κοντογιώργης] 2014, p.115; p.197; p.670; p.688; 2020a: p.50; p.57; p.74; p.250; p.371).

The first part of this lecture will shed further light on the anthropocentric becoming of the early modern culture of the Greek diaspora in Odessa and Mariupol, on its dialogue with the culture of the Greek emigrants in Italy, Austria and Switzerland, and, more importantly, on its decisive impact to the spread of democratic ideas in the Danubian Principalities. Along with Western ideas, borrowed from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment (which as mentioned earlier, partially owe their existence to the post-Byzantine Greek diaspora of Italy), the second part will emphasize the contribution of Greeks in Ukraine in the anthropocentric revival of the Greeks under the Ottoman Occupation. A good deal of historians pay exclusive attention to the Society of Friends (the Filiki Etairia), a Greek revolutionary organization founded in Odessa (Kitromilides 2021, p.xx; Grenet 2021, p.40). Beyond the establishment of Filiki Etairia, the present lecture will shed light on the particular socio-political worldview the Greeks in Ukraine had exerted to the men behind the Greek Revolution, a worldview deeply embedded in the anthropocentric and cosmopolitan aspects of the modern Greek national identity before the Revolution of 1821. From a different angle, to consider the anthropocentric, cosmopolitan and democratic Greek revolution ‘peripheral’ and, therefore, less influential than the proto-anthropocentric French and/or the American Revolutions, which laid the foundations of Western modernity, is a commonplace for most Western scholars and academics, as I have explained in a previous study (Theodosiadis 2021). In other words, the French and the American Revolutions were inspired only by certain aspects of the anthropocentric worldviews the post-Byzantine thinkers had injected in Western thinking. The Greek Revolution, on the other hand, was not just inspired by Western systems of thought, as many contemporary historians assume (Kitromilides 2021); it embodied the anthropocentric spirit of Hellenism, which was preserved thanks to the post-Byzantine emigrants in Italy and, more decisively, by the Greeks of the Black Sea. The historical significance of this particular community, whose physical existence is currently threatened by the savageness of a war broke out after the Russian invasion in Ukraine, rests on its active perseverance of an ancient culture and philosophy that could allow us to understand that nation-building does not exclusively have to follow the Western proto-anthropocentric liberal model.

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