

Modern Greek Program

Winter 2006 Newsletter

The Glory of Byzantium Revisited

The work of Dr. Helen Evans, a highly regarded specialist in early Christian and Byzantine art, is known to a large public. She was curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's two major Byzantine exhibitions: *The Glory of Byzantium (843-1261)* in 1997 and *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* in 2004. Both were named major cultural events of their years by the New York Times and top shows of their years by Apollo Magazine. *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* also won the prestigious Alfred H. Barr Jr. and the George Wittenborn Awards for its catalogue.



View into exhibition gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photograph, the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Dr. Evans will visit the University of Michigan on Thursday, February 9, 2006, to deliver the fourth annual Dr. Dimitri and Irmgard Pallas Lecture in Modern Greek Studies. Her lecture, "Byzantium Revisited: The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia in the Twentieth Century," highlights an earlier, groundbreaking exhibit of Byzantine glory.

In 1944 as World War II ended, the Metropolitan Museum hosted a major exhibition, *Arts on the Soil of Turkey*. That exhibition presented works from all eras of history; but its images from the restoration of the mosaics in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the greatest church of the Byzantine world, captured the attention of the public. The existence of the mosaics was known from the nineteenth century. Since the Hagia Sophia was a mosque at the time, however, the mosaics could not be cleaned and placed in view. It was only after the great building became a museum that the mosaics were restored by the Byzantine Institute under Thomas Whittemore from 1931 to 1939, with financial support from major American institutions. Then the tumult of World War II intervened. Finally in 1944 the Metropolitan Museum brought the mosaics into public view through an exhibit of plaster casts,

painted copies, and photographs of the works and the restoration process. Scholars, artists, and the interested public were equally spellbound, stunned to discover the power and exceptional quality of the mosaics.

An article in the Metropolitan Museum Bulletin at that time addressed the historical importance of the works, which revolutionized public appreciation of the Middle Byzantine centuries. Major contemporary artists like Fernand Leger, the French cubist painter who, from 1946 to 1949 worked on a mosaic for the facade of the church of Assy in France, called the mosaics an inspiration for the development of modern art.

In her lecture Dr. Evans will revisit the story of the mosaics of Hagia Sophia in the twentieth century. She will explore the duality of images from the restoration of the mosaics as evidence

of the exceptional arts of the Byzantine Empire and as inspirations to a generation of artists and art historians nearly a thousand years after their original execution.

A seasoned lecturer, accomplished curator at the Metropolitan Museum, and well-published scholar of Byzantine art, Dr. Evans has co-authored catalogues for exhibitions she organized at the Met as well as the Morgan Library, the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, the Benaki Museum in Athens, and the Foundation Pierre Gianadda in Switzerland. She has taught at the Institute of Fine Arts of New York



Restorers at work with Thomas Whittemore to far right. Restoration tools in the foreground. Photograph, the Metropolitan Museum of Art

4th Annual Pallas Lecture

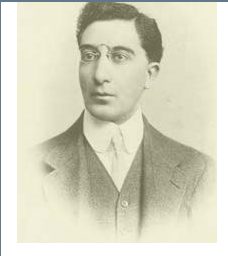
Byzantium Revisited: The Mosaics in the Twentieth Century

Lecture by
Dr. Helen C. Evans
 Thursday, Feb. 9, 2006
 7 p.m., Michigan League
 Hussey Room

University, Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and Oberlin College and has lectured extensively in Europe and America, recently giving the Annual Walton Lecture for the Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. She was chosen the Newcomb Alumna of the Year at her alma mater, Tulane University, in 2005 and has been presented the American Hellenic Institute Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award and the Hellenic American Women's Council Aristeon Award.

Dr. Evans's talk will be the fourth in a lecture series that has brought to campus Professors Stathis Kalyvas, Dan Georgakas, and Kevin Featherstone. Dr. Dimitri and Irmgard Pallas established the Lecture through a gift agreement between the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies and the Regents of the University of Michigan in order to bring annually to Michigan an eminent speaker of international reputation who offers new views on significant phenomena by drawing on the Greek experience. Through her research on Byzantine Art and through exquisitely-curated exhibits, Dr. Evans has helped a very broad audience overcome prejudice, indifference, and ignorance about Byzantine art. She has also brought to people's attention the vitality of our own century's dialogue with Byzantium. Her lecture in February promises to develop further that dialogue.

C. P. Cavafy



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From the Modern Greek Program Coordinator

Greek-American Artists and Intellectuals: a growing DVD archive of their reflections

"I'm the daughter of Greek immigrants. I was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia in 1920. I'm exactly the age of the amendment that gave women the right to vote!" This is how **Eva Catafygiotu Topping**, Harvard-trained classicist and scholar best known for her lectures and writings on women in the Orthodox Church, has introduced herself on more than one occasion. The introduction reveals much that is dear to this exceptional woman: her Greek ancestry, immigrant parents, roots in historic Fredericksburg, interest in women's rights, and passion for politics. Eva Topping spoke to me on these topics in a three-hour interview I recorded in August of 2004. A marvelous storyteller, she filled her oral account of her life—in which she never missed a beat—with anecdotes of growing up Greek Orthodox in a Baptist Church; singing confederate songs at the tombs of soldiers on Memorial Day; studying classics at Radcliffe-Harvard when fellow Greek American women were barred by parents from attending college; lecturing on Byzantine hymnography; and speaking out, often to unsympathetic ears, about what she called repeatedly the "second-class status of women in the Orthodox Church."



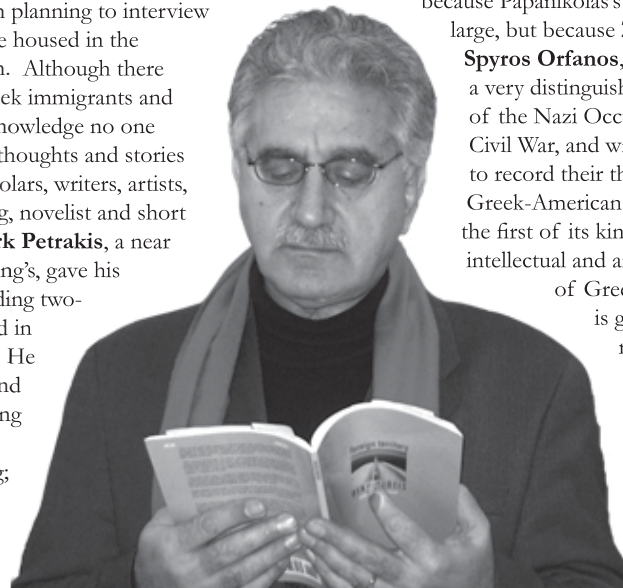
Eva Catafygiotu Topping

Eva Catafygiotu Topping is just one of several Greek-American intellectuals and artists I have been interviewing or am planning to interview for a DVD archive to be housed in the Modern Greek Program. Although there are oral archives of Greek immigrants and their offspring, to my knowledge no one has been recording the thoughts and stories of Greek American scholars, writers, artists, or scientists. Last spring, novelist and short story writer **Harry Mark Petrakis**, a near contemporary of Topping's, gave his reflections in a spellbinding two-hour interview, delivered in his rich, baritone voice. He covered the fertile ground of his own life, explaining how illness in his youth bore the fruit of writing; observing that "I don't know what else I would do if I did not write"; describing

the books he has written as "small jewels in the great litter of my life"; and marveling at "having survived this long...in the midst of such tranquility." Labor historian **Dan Georgakas**, interviewed in winter 2004, spoke with mixed emotions of changes in Detroit from the years of his youth before the War to the prosperous post-War era to the tumultuous decade of the 1960s. For years Georgakas has been writing about Greek Americans—and Detroit—in books, newspapers, magazines, and journals. In the first interview I conducted, also in winter 2004, author **Dino Siotis**, for many years Greece's Press and Communication Counselor at the Consulate General in Boston, narrated his adventures as founder of Wire Press and publisher and editor of eight political and literary magazines in San Francisco, New York, and Athens.

As this newsletter goes to press, I'm flying to San Francisco. My anticipation of the journey is great. I will take part in a Memorial tribute to Helen Zeese Papanikolas, Greek America's most important folklorist and ethnohistorian, who died last year. The tribute will consist of dramatic readings from Papanikolas's work by Zeese Papanikolas, Helen's son, editor of her work, author of two books, and Emeritus Professor of English at the San Francisco Art Institute; specialist in Greek-American studies and psychologist Spyros Orfanos; Nick Smart, writer and grandson of Papanikolas; and myself. Organized by the Center for Modern Greek Studies at San Francisco State University, this will be a fitting memorial to a woman inexhaustible to her very last breath. I met Papanikolas when she was well into her 80s, flying around the country lecturing while also patiently collecting stories from her audiences. I never got the chance to interview her—she was too weak from illness by the time I began this project. I regret this. She was a great, generous woman whose innocent question to me, "Don't you have the compulsion to write every single day?" spoken from her own unstoppable calling, rings in my ears every day. I am looking forward to the trip not just because Papanikolas's memory looms large, but because **Zeese Papanikolas**, **Spyros Orfanos**, and **Leon Petrakis**, a very distinguished chemist, survivor of the Nazi Occupation and Greek Civil War, and writer, have all agreed to record their thoughts. And so the Greek-American archive at Michigan, the first of its kind to attend to the intellectual and artistic contributions of Greeks in America, is growing. When I return from San Francisco, I'll begin planning next year's interviews...

Artemis Leontis



Dino Siotis, interviewed in 2004

My Greece by Yona Stamatis



Yona Stamatis and Maria Farandouri

My great passion is a marriage between Western music and the folk music of my own country. This marriage should be made from a basis of equality so that the combination can be a dialectic and biological synthesis and not merely juxtaposed. (Iannis Xenakis, Program Notes of "Duo" addressed to Institut National de Radiofusion, March 1953)

In 1996, I took my first trip to the Greek island of Kos, in order to visit my father's homeland, or *patrida* as he calls it. Immediately upon arrival, my entire extended family surrounded me and pointed at my violin in earnest, apparently begging me to play for them. I finally agreed and performed Wieniawski's *Scherzo Tarantella*, my fastest and most impressive showpiece of the time. To my dismay my audience quickly lost interest and abruptly brought me a different piece to play; an island folksong scribbled on an old scrap of paper. As I played the song that mysteriously delighted my family, I began to question the concepts of "good" music that my Western musical training had instilled in me. The folksong was repetitive and certainly technically unimpressive

and yet my family was ecstatic with my performance. Where did the discrepancy in our musical tastes lie? Until this point, I had always understood music to be a universal language. I suddenly realized that *Scherzo Tarantella* did not speak to my family in the same way that it did to me.

In 2004, I entered the Ethnomusicology PhD program at the University of Michigan and began my initial investigation of Greek music. What role did folk music play in Greek society and in Diaspora communities throughout the world and how did this role differ from that of the Western classical music that I was accustomed to hearing? With the generous assistance of the Center for World Performance Studies as well as the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies, I traveled to Athens this summer in order to perform research at the Theodorakis Archive of the Lilian Voudouri Music Library of Greece. The archive contains a large majority of the personal writings, musical scores, and recordings of Mikis Theodorakis, a composer whose music has come to embody contemporary Greece. It was his soundtrack to the film *Zorba the Greek* that was chosen to represent Greece in the 2005 Summer Olympics. This summer, Theodorakis celebrated his 80th birthday. In honor of the occasion, a series of concerts and lectures dedicated to his oeuvre took place at the Athens Concert Hall and in the beautiful Theater of Herodes Atticus that stands just below the Acropolis. Numerous musicians, such as the acclaimed singers Maria Farandouri and Petros Pandis, performed a selection of his major



Mikis Theodorakis

compositions including the infamous *Zorba* ballet and *Canto General*. I had the opportunity to attend three such concerts, and to meet Mr. Theodorakis.

Theodorakis serves as a perfect choice of study in my investigation of the space that lies between the Western classical and Greek folk traditions as he merges elements from the Western classical and Greek folk traditions in a majority of his compositions. My research this summer focused specifically on his song cycle *Epitaphios* (1958), a work that marked a major turning point in his career; it was with this composition that Theodorakis altered his path from a composer of contemporary classical music to one of Greek popular music. However, in his popular compositions, Theodorakis inserted elements of his Western compositional technique and in this way created a new sound for Greek music. I believe that Theodorakis has achieved a level of bi-musicality in which he has a true insider's understanding of both musical traditions. As a result, a study of his compositions can provide great insight into the similarities and differences between the two musical languages. After all, they do provide a stunning example of the dialectic and biological synthesis of the two traditions that Theodorakis's compatriot composer Iannis Xenakis sought in his work. Next summer I hope to return to Athens to continue my study in the Theodorakis Archive in an effort to fully grasp Theodorakis's merging of the two traditions. Perhaps one day I too will be able to travel between the traditions with the understanding of an insider.

Yona Stamatis is pursuing a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology in the University of Michigan School of Music.

In Their Own Words: Modern Greek Students Describe Summer Internships



Elise Liadis (second from right) in Greece with friends

Embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus, learning the different positions and responsibilities available in foreign affairs, experiencing first hand the work comparable to that of a junior officer, and immersing myself in the world of diplomacy. Cyprus, a Greek-speaking country, a recent addition to the European Union, and possessing the last divided capital in the world, is a fascinating post with intriguing political, social, and economic developments that truly bring the importance of diplomacy to the forefront. The State Department offers student internships in Washington, D.C. and in U.S. Embassies abroad.

Elise Liadis - I was fortunate enough to have been given the opportunity to expand my knowledge from coursework in Modern Greek, as well as Economics and Organizational Studies through an internship with the U.S. Department of State. I spent seven weeks last summer interning at the U.S.



Alice Shukla at the U.S. Consulate-Thessaloniki

the American University in Washington, D.C. where I am pursuing a J.D. and M.A. in International Politics, my international internship experience gave me a solid background to pursue my professional goals, continue my coursework and allowed me to gain hands-on working experience while enjoying the Greek culture.

Alice Shukla - I spent last summer in Thessaloniki, Greece working as a State Department intern at the U.S. Consulate. My experience working with the U.S. Consul General and staff of the Consulate on projects involving human rights, trafficking-in-persons, and various public diplomacy events in Thessaloniki was extremely valuable. The internship supplemented my previous experience working at the U.S. Embassy in Athens during summer 2004 and helped me develop a clear understanding of the issues facing Northern Greece. As I have just begun my graduate studies at



Professor of Modern Greek, Dimitris Tziovas, visiting from the University of Birmingham, U.K.

A Very Full Fall Term, 2005

The 4th Annual Platsis Symposium on the Greek Legacy was held on September 16. The topic, Happiness/Eudaimonia, focused on how classical Greek ideas of happiness have influenced our own and what we can still learn from them. The speakers included Stephen White from the University of Texas, Austin; Darrin McMahon from Florida State University; and Daniel Robinson from Oxford University. In early October, Modern Greek students gathered in the Classical Studies library to eat pizza and share their study abroad and internship experiences with prospective students at the Modern Greek Student Reception. On October 3, Rev. Father Nicolaos Kotsis from Ann Arbor's St. Nicholas Church addressed a packed room at his lecture, "1054: The Great Schism between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches." Modern Greek Professor Dimitris Tziovas came from the University of Birmingham to give his lecture "Crossing National Borders: Greek Literature Today" on November 7. Prof. Constantinos Cartalis from the University of Athens spoke on December 1 as part of the European Union Center's Conversations on Europe Lecture Series.



Dr. Dimitri Pallas, Vassilis Lambropoulos and Despina Margomenou at Prof. Tziovas's lecture: "Crossing National Borders: Greek Literature Today."



Reception for current and prospective Modern Greek students



4th Annual Platsis Symposium on the Greek Legacy

Alumni News

Chris Apostoleris, B.A. Modern Greek (Spring 2005), has been admitted to the M.A. in Divinity Program at Hellenic College-Holy Cross in Brookline, MA.

Christina Bakalis, B.A. Modern Greek (Spring 2004), has been accepted to the University of Southern California School of Medicine.

Natalie Bakopoulos, M.F.A., Creative Writing (Spring 2005), currently holds a lecturer position in the English Department at the University of Michigan.

Eleni Eleftheriou, B.A. Political Science and Philosophy (1990), will hold a position at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland in College Park, beginning in January 2006.

Erin Mays, B.A. History with a Minor in Modern Greek (Spring 2002), joined Franco Public Relations Group, Detroit, as an account executive. Mays provides day-to-day public relations services and support to the Ford Community and Performing Arts Center, International Transmission Co., Solutia Automotive, The Salvation Army, and Yazaki North America.

A special thank you to our supporters...

Mr. Achilles Paparsenos from the Press and Communications Office of the Embassy of Greece in Washington and Mr. Denny Stavros; both for recent gifts to the Program.

We couldn't do it without you!

As always, we are grateful to the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies whose scholarships enable students to study, conduct research, serve as interns, and present their work. This fall semester graduate student Asli Igsiz received financial support from the Foundation to present her paper at the 2005 Modern Greek Studies Association Symposium.

Upcoming Events

"The Restoration of the Athenian Acropolis (1834 – 2005)," lecture by Dr. Fani Mallouchou-Tufano, Head of the Documentation Office at the Acropolis Restoration Service. Wednesday, January 18 at 7 p.m., Michigan League Hussey Room.

Hellenic Student Association's first ever talent show! Friday, January 20 at 7 p.m., Michigan Union's U-Club.

4th Annual Pallas Lecture "Byzantium Revisited: The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia in the Twentieth Century," lecture by Dr. Helen Evans, Curator for Medieval Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Thursday, February 9 at 7 p.m., Michigan League Hussey Room.

Jackie O, a playful opera produced by the University of Michigan School of Music and composed by U of M's own Michael Daugherty. March 22 – March 26 at the Mendelssohn Theatre. For more information, go to www.music.umich.edu

For more detailed information on these exciting events, check our website:

www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek

Save the date! The Foundation for Modern Greek Studies, wishing to acknowledge the generous financial support of many individual donors, is organizing a gala event on April 1, 2006 to celebrate the ten years of its existence. The Foundation was officially established in 1997 to promote the study of Modern Greek Language and Culture. In 2001 the Foundation endowed the Professorship in Modern Greek at the University of Michigan. The Foundation works closely with Professors Vassilios Lambropoulos and Artemis Leontis on outreach events for the Greek American community and the community at large, and to support students with scholarships.

Winners of the 2005 Platsis Prizes

James Boufides—LS&A Honors, for his "Augustus Woodward and Catholepistemia"

Michael Djupstrom—School of Music, M.A., for his "Aglaope"

Julen Etxabe—Law School, S.J.D. Candidate, for his "Why Only for a Brother? The Nomos of the Last Antigone"

Derek Mong—M.F.A. in Creative Writing, for his "Approaching (and Pouching) the Greek Fragment: Medley Translations in Lowell, Carson, and Phillips"

Thomas Wisniewski—School of Music and College of LS&A, for his "Fabled Cities"