

Abstracts

Oleh Vus - Aristeia Papastathopoulou

The Hexamilion Wall and Theodosian Wall in the context of the Byzantine Refortification of the beginning of the 5 TH century CE

This study undertakes a comparative analysis of two early Byzantine monumental defensive complexes: the Theodosian Wall in Constantinople (405-413 CE) and the Hexamilion Wall across the Isthmus of Corinth in the Peloponnese (408-417 CE). Both fortifications were constructed as part of an empire-wide refortification program initiated in the early fifth century. Despite their contemporaneity and shared typological framework, the two complexes exhibit pronounced differences in architectural design and engineering techniques. Their erection played a decisive role in obstructing the advance of the Huns toward both the imperial capital and the Peloponnese, while simultaneously providing fortified zones of refuge for local populations. In subsequent decades, the Theodosian and Hexamilion Walls served as influential prototypes for the planning and construction of other linear defensive systems across the Eastern Roman Empire. Their strategic function, coupled with their architectural distinctiveness, represents a pivotal contribution to the evolution of Byzantine military architecture and illustrates the adaptive mechanisms employed by the Empire in responding to external threats during the early Byzantine period.

Petya Krusheva

Friend or Foe at the Ruler's Byzantine feast - setting and overstepping boundaries (mid IXth century - 1204)

The article explores the relationships between Byzantine rulers and their guests at formal palace feasts during the oppositions “ideal or real” and “Friend or Foe”. The roles of clergymen, diplomats, high dignitaries, the empress, the Patricia zosti and the mistress are analyzed. Subject to review are the basic elements in the organization of feasts - the occasion and the place, spatial arrangement and the order of entry, the presentation and the appearance to the guests, sharing meals from the imperial table, the symbolism of the decor and dishes. Those practices emphasize not only the hierarchy and the importance of the guest in society, but also his closeness or estrangement from the ruler. Crossing established boundaries was tolerated when it served the state interests, yet the prevalence of personal biases compromised the emperor's authority, leading to his dethronement and political instability, demoralizing the administrative structures and accelerating the decline of the empire.

Pagona Niki Efstathopoulou - Valbona Kalo

Residual Law and Literary Resistance: The Reinterpretation of Kanun in Albanian and Greek Narrative

This paper examines the residual cultural dimensions of the Kanun - the traditional Albanian customary law - and their role in the narrative structures of Albanian and Greek fiction. The analysis focuses on two Albanian novels, *The Shadow of the Mountain* and *Broken April*, which portray the Kanun both as a source of communal cohesion and as a mechanism of individual constraint, as well as on three Greek novels, *Blood*, *Code of Honor* and *The Silver-grass Blooms*, where the Kanun appears as a central narrative element and as an inherited framework shaping diasporic identity. As a normative code, the Kanun regulated essential aspects of life - honor, hospitality, kinship, and justice - not

only within Albania but also among emigrant communities beyond its borders. The works discussed demonstrate how the Kanun functions within narrative emplotment as a residual, transhistorical structure that adapts across borders and literary traditions, while still retaining its core symbolic authority.

Konstantina Tortomani

The vampire as cultural imperialism: Eastern European folklore or Romantic monster?

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the origins and evolution of the vampire motif in literature, tracing its roots back to Eastern European folklore. By examining accounts from British and French travelers and vampire scholars like Joseph Pitton de Tournefort and Montague Summers, the study reveals that while the folkloric vampire was initially more akin to a ghoul in form, the literary depiction diverged significantly apart from sharing only the name and geographic origin. Interestingly, the superstition surrounding vampires also had historical presence in medieval Britain and Nordic cultures during the Middle Ages, but waned in popularity with the emergence of witchcraft and demon lovers in the early modern era. The transition to the aristocratic and seductive vampire seen in Victorian Gothic literature aligns more closely with Western European Romantic ideals, portraying them as alluring predators. Ultimately, the article argues that the literary vampire emerged as a result of Western European cultural influences, displacing indigenous Eastern European folklore and perpetuating a perception of the region as more superstitious.

Evangelos Katsaras

Montenegro and the Balkan Alliance of 1912: Political Objectives and Military Commitments

Montenegro, with a military strength of only 35.000 men, was the last member to be admitted in the Balkan Alliance of 1912. The article examines its role in the formation of the aforementioned alliance and its decision to declare war first against the Ottoman Empire, thereby initiating the First Balkan War. Although its military contribution was limited, Montenegro's political and diplomatic maneuvering proved significant. Its participation was not merely symbolic or ideological but represented a calculated strategy to secure territorial expansion, strengthen its international standing, and assert itself as an independent factor in Balkan politics.

Athanasios Syroplakis

The Question of Albanian Properties in Greece in the Context of Greek-Albanian Relations and the Chams Issue in the Interwar Period

The paper examines the Albanian property question in Greece and its entanglement with the Chams Issue during the Interwar period. It traces how the compulsory expropriations of land in Greece under the agrarian reform provoked disputes with Albania, as Albanian nationals sought compensation through negotiations between the Greek and Albanian governments and appeals to the League of Nations. Greece argued that the matter was strictly internal, offering compensation only within the framework of its Agrarian Law. The narrative follows the interplay between bilateral talks, international mediation and the influence of Italy, which aimed to use Albania as an instrument of its Balkan ambitions. Venizelos' return to power in 1928 opened a brief period of rapprochement, marked by gestures of goodwill in bilateral relations. The article follows this shifting landscape through the 1930s, noting how Greece gradually settled the Chams property issue but struggled to resolve all Albanian claims definitively. The article illustrates how an

ostensibly technical issue of landownership became a key factor shaping Greek-Albanian relations and reflected the wider dynamics of agrarian reform, minority politics and regional rivalries in interwar Southeastern Europe.

James Pettifer

Patrick Leigh Fermor and the British perception of Twentieth Century Greece - Between East and West

This paper investigates aspects of the growing influence of the military hero and author Patrick Leigh Fermor (1915-2011) on British views of contemporary Greece, and explores the wider intellectual, political and cultural contexts in Anglo-Greek relations now that memory of the World War II period is fading. Two major influences on Leigh Fermor are discussed, the archaeologist, Hellenist and military intelligence officer Stanley Casson (1889-1944), and the RAF officer Air Marshall Arthur Gould Lee (1894-1975). Leigh Fermor's complex literary relationship with Byzantinist author Robert Byron (1905-1941) is set out, and Leigh Fermor's view of travel and modern Greek tourism.

Christina Georgaki - Maria Ioanna Gkountakou

Teaching difference: Historical, political and modern approaches to minority education in Greek Western Thrace

This paper examines the complex historical and political context shaping the education and integration of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace, Greece. Starting with the region's diverse cultural heritage and strategic significance, it reviews key historical events, including the Balkan Wars, the annexation of Western Thrace, and the Asia Minor Catastrophe, all of which significantly affected national policies toward minorities. The turbulent political landscape of early 20th-century Greece, characterized by instability and frequent government changes, profoundly impacted educational reforms and efforts to integrate minorities. Although international agreements

guaranteed minority rights, the education system often reflected strategies of assimilation and political oversight. Since the 1990s, Greece has gradually adopted a more multicultural approach to education for the Muslim minority, primarily influenced by pressure from the European Union and international organizations advocating for minority rights and cultural recognition. However, the implementation of these policies remains inconsistent, with continued challenges in fully integrating minority students while allowing them to maintain their linguistic and cultural identities. Overall, this paper highlights the ongoing tension between assimilationist traditions and modern multicultural initiatives within Greek education, emphasizing the need for transparent and inclusive policies that meet the specific needs of Muslim minority communities in Thrace.

Giulia Sorrentino

Ilias Venezis in Venice: Itinerary of an Uprooted Hellenism

In his Venetian travel writings, Ilias Venezis (1904-1973) transforms the city into a symbolic landscape of exile, where memory, myth, and melancholy converge. This article explores how, in *Autumn in Italy* (1950), Venice—with its layered history and ambiguous symbolism—becomes a site of reflection for a displaced Hellenism, evoking the wounds of the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the impossibility of return. Through a close reading of the Venetian chapters and the consultation of newspaper articles preserved in the Venezis archive, the study highlights how the author reworks the classical motif of *nostos* into a modern narrative of exile and loss, where the characters bear the marks of history, each embodying a fractured identity. Against the backdrop of postwar Europe, and in dialogue with Byzantine memory and national trauma, the city emerges as a threshold between East and West, past and present, homeland and exile. Venezis' gaze does not seek aesthetic pleasure but human truth: he confronts the traces of violence and the fading signs of belonging with a quiet dignity. Through travel, he stages a *nostos* that fails to reach home—but in this failure, preserves the essence of a Greekness that survives in memory, gesture, and light.