



THE HELLENIC CULTURAL SOCIETY
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THE HELLENIC CULTURAL SOCIETY
Affiliate Of UC San Diego

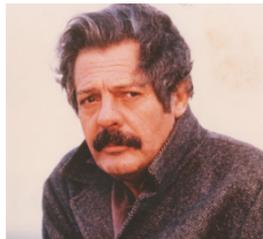
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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE HELLENIC CULTURAL SOCIETY

Fall 2022

EVENTS

THEO ANGELOPOULOS FILM RETROSPECTIVE



The UCLA Film & Television Archive and the UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture, with the collaboration of the UCLA Center for European and Russian Studies, present, under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles, **Landscapes of Time: The Films of Theo Angelopoulos** from Oct. 14 through Dec. 18.

The series will launch on October 14 with opening remarks by the Consul General of Greece in Los Angeles, the honorable Ioannis Stamatekos. The Archive and its partners will also be announcing additional, related events and special guests over the course of the series as we celebrate and engage with Angelopoulos' life and career.

Community partners: Los Angeles Greek Film Festival, South East European Film Festival Los Angeles.

PHIDIAS UNBOUND: HOW ROBOT-GENERATED REPLICAS COULD SOLVE THE PARTHENON MARBLES QUANDARY

with Roger Michel

Michel is the founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Digital Archaeology (IDA).

October 14, 11:00 am-1:00 pm (Zoom)

RSVP: https://ucla.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WofhLJWMTwS6_OYse8D9hw

Presented by the UCLA College of Humanities, Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture, and the Getty Museum.

tions in Southern Italy, Sicily, and Dalmatia. In the end, though, Charlemagne's attack on the Eastern Empire consisted of a few naval skirmishes around Venice. The empires ended hostilities and signed a peace treaty in 812 that recognized the imperial titles of both eastern and western sovereigns.

Although the early ninth century invention of the fall of Rome in 797 led to very little immediate conflict, its reclassification of the Eastern Roman Empire as a heretical Greek state did long term damage. For more than 1200 years, this argument that the true Roman state resided in the west has allowed people in northwestern Europe to pretend that the Eastern Roman Empire was not Roman. Sometimes, as when the soldiers of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople in 1204 because "the Greeks as a people had seceded from the Church of Rome", this willful ignorance justified violence. At other times, like when people today use the name Byzantium for the Roman Empire centered on Constantinople, this idea deprives the Romans who lived in that state of the identity that they claimed for centuries. No less an authority than Martin Luther acknowledged that the coronation of Charlemagne represented a moment when the popes "robbed" the "emperor at Constantinople, who was the true Roman Emperor" and turned his title "over to the Germans." This robbery was quite real, even if nearly everyone has now forgotten that it ever occurred.

Dear Fellow Members,

Fall has arrived and I hope all is well with you and your families. Last newsletter I introduced Natalie Novella, an extraordinary young woman and one of UCSD's Byzantine Studies graduate student of Professor Ed Watts. She has been accepted to Oxford University's master's degree one-year program. I am so happy to announce that with our Koulaxes/Marinos graduate scholarship program and many of our members' support, we were able to present Natalie with a check in the amount of \$20,000. She was overjoyed and touched that the San Diego Greek Community was so generous. We look forward to seeing how Ms. Novella continues her academic path.

In this issue, we commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe with the burning of the great center of Smyrna. The Asia Minor Catastrophe was a cataclysmic event of such enormous importance for modern Greek history that it shaped generations after 1922, adding an unforgettable and unutterably tragic milestone to Greece's long history. The destruction of Smyrna, when Greeks were forced to flee the city due to a fire set by Turkish forces, still haunts Greece a century later.

We have planned an exciting lecture on Sunday, November 6, 2022, given by Edward Watts, Department of History Chair, Alkviadis Vassiliadis Endowed Chair and Professor of History University of California, San Diego. Professor Watts will discuss his latest book, entitled "The Eternal Decline and Fall of Rome". Information regarding the book can be found inside this newsletter. It will be hosted at St. Constantine and Helen's Church Hall and will start at 2:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served. This is our first event since the pandemic, and I am looking forward to seeing all of you again!

The Society Board continues to work to keep our organization updated and current to the needs of all our members. Your vital financial support allows us to continue our work. Your dues are fully tax deductible as we are a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation. You can donate today via credit card at our website, www.Hellenic-Culture.org. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for your continued support.



Best Regards,
Alexia Koulaxes Anas, President

hellenic-culture.org

How Did the Roman Empire Fall?

By Ed Watts

When did the Roman Empire fall? Ancient historians often answer that the empire fell in the fifth century A.D. because of the barbarian attacks and internal political conflict. Medievalists point to May 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottomans. But one of the most consequential stories of Rome's fall is hardly ever told anymore. It places the end of the Roman Empire in 797, the year when the empress Irene, the first Roman woman to rule the empire in her own name, took power.

This seems an odd date to choose. The Roman Empire then controlled lands reaching from central Italy and Sicily to what is now eastern Turkey. It possessed one of the strongest militaries in the Mediterranean and one of the greatest concentrations of ancient artistic, cultural, and literary masterpieces the world has ever seen spread out behind the formidable walls of its capital, Constantinople. None of this mattered, though, because the story of Rome's fall in 797 grew out of western European ambitions in Italy rather than Eastern Roman realities.

The emperors in Constantinople had controlled much of central and southern Italy since the mid-sixth century through an official called the exarch of Ravenna. In the 710s, however, Lombard kings based in Pavia began to threaten Roman possessions along the Italian coast and across the strip of land that joined the city of Rome with Ravenna. Constantinople often lacked the military resources to respond to Lombard pressure, so popes used their prestige and money to secure the return of fortresses the Lombards seized from the Roman state. By the early 740s, Lombard pressure on Rome prompted the popes to

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forge an alliance with the Franks, a Germanic kingdom whose lands now comprise much of modern France and Germany.

For much of the 740s, popes performed a delicate dance in which they courted the Franks, placated the Lombards, and voiced their loyalty to the emperor in Constantinople. The Lombard capture of Ravenna in the summer of 751 changed papal calculations and forced Pope Stephen to scramble to save Rome before the Lombards could seize it. He first tried to negotiate with the Lombards, but the forty year truce he believed he had secured lasted only a few months. Stephen then appealed to Constantinople for imperial troops. None came. Realizing that "no help would come from the imperial power," Stephen was "inspired by divine grace" to ask the Frankish king Pippin for help. In April of 754, the king and the pontiff agreed that Frankish troops would enter Italy and compel the Lombard king to "return the property of the holy church of God of the Roman Republic."

This reference to God's "Roman Republic" would have puzzled anyone not privy to Pippin and Stephen's conversations. This divinely administered Roman Republic protected by the Franks had nothing to do with the ancient Roman Republic that ended nearly 800 years before. It also had no relationship to Rome's actual eighth century status as a city that belonged to the Eastern Roman Empire. When Pippin's Frankish

soldiers defeated the Lombards in 756, the king surprised many Italian observers by giving Ravenna and all of the territory he had taken from the Lombards to "St. Peter, the holy Roman church, and the pontiffs of the Apostolic see forever." God's Roman Republic now controlled the central Italian lands that had, until five years before, belonged to the Roman emperor in Constantinople. Rome itself was also effectively independent from Constantinople.

Now that the papacy had its own Roman Republic, it needed to explain its secession from the Roman Empire. Popes across the 760s and early 770s developed two distinctive tools for doing this. First, they started calling the Romans in Constantinople "heretical Greeks" and claimed the need for Frankish protection against them. The second tool was a forged document called the Donation of Constantine. The Donation purported to be an imperial law issued by the fourth century emperor Constantine I that "relinquished" to the pope "the city of Rome and all the provinces, districts, and cities of Italy and of the western regions" of the empire while Constantine would retain only "the regions of the East."

The Donation of Constantine took on added importance after Pippin's son Charlemagne captured the Lombard capital of

Pavia in 774. The papacy initially pressed Charlemagne to turn the northern Italian lands he had seized over to the papal Roman Republic. When Charlemagne refused to do this, the popes continued to meet, flatter, and negotiate with the Frankish king. Pope Stephen had granted Charlemagne the honorific title of Roman patrician in 754, but the king became increasingly enchanted by a possible claim that he could make on the Roman imperial legacy as the eighth century neared its end. Sometime before 800, Charlemagne started construction on an imperial capital in the German city of Aachen. He built an octagonal church that he decorated with columns and marbles scavenged from old buildings in Ravenna and Rome. He also constructed a palace in the city center that included an audience hall modeled on a Roman basilica and three silver tables. One represented the city of Constantinople, the second bore the likeness of the city of Rome, and a third that represented the known world. Charlemagne then renamed the city Roma Ventura. Future Rome.

On Christmas day of 800, Charlemagne got the Roman imperial title he desired. Pope Leo III "crowned him with a precious crown" and "all the faithful Romans... cried out with one voice: 'To Charles, pious Augustus crowned by God, great and pacific emperor, life and victory...and by them all he was established Emperor of the Romans.'" Leo claimed the right to do this because, in addition to control over the Western half of the Roman Empire, the Donation of Constantine also gave the pope the imperial diadem, the imperial palace, and "the crown from [the emperor's] own head." These objects and the imperial power they symbolized were the pope's to bestow on whoever he thought worthy of them.

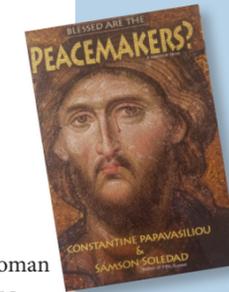
After Charlemagne accepted the imperial title, he began issuing new denarii, coins modeled on the silver coins issued by ancient Roman emperors like Augustus. These denarii showed a portrait of Charlemagne

with the laurel wreath worn by early Roman emperors on their own denarii. The new coin also bore the obverse legend KARLVS IMP AVG—Charles, Emperor, Augustus—another evocation of the titles used by ancient emperors on their denarii.

The western story of the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 797 emerged around this time. Until Charlemagne's coronation, no one had claimed that the Donation of Constantine or any other document delegitimized the Roman Empire based in Constantinople. They simply claimed that it proved there should be a second Roman state, based in the west, answerable to the pope, and centered on the city of Rome. Now that Charlemagne enjoyed the title of Roman emperor, he looked to the east and he saw political chaos. In 797, the empress Irene deposed and blinded her own son. She then took control of the empire herself, but struggled to rule effectively.

The political problems in Constantinople offered men around Charlemagne the chance to claim that Charlemagne should be considered the sole legitimate Roman emperor. The author of the Annals of Lorsch wrote: "Because the title of emperor had become extinct among the Greeks and a woman (i.e. Irene) claimed the imperial authority, it seemed to Pope Leo...that Charles, king of the Franks, ought to be named emperor, for he held Rome itself where the Caesars were always accustomed to reside and also other cities in Italy, Gaul and Germany." The accession of Irene had ended one Roman Empire and birthed another.

Charlemagne began laying the groundwork for military action to press his claim to universal Roman sovereignty. Diplomats traveled from Aachen to Baghdad so that they might forge an alliance with the Abbasid caliph, Constantinople's most powerful rival to the east. Frankish and Constantinopolitan sources describe preparations for a Frankish military attack on Roman posi-



9/11/1922 in Smyrna

This September 11, 2022, we acknowledged another milestone that marked a very tragic and important event for us as Greek Americans. That is because on September 11, 1922, exactly 100 years ago, a monumental catastrophe befell the Greek people of Asia Minor.

On that date, the new Turkish Nationalist Army set in motion the destruction of the cosmopolitan city of Smyrna by fire. In the ensuing blaze, hundreds of thousands of Greek and Armenian citizens' lives were extinguished by marauding Turkish soldiers. Aeolian Greek inhabitants had first settled in Smyrna in the 11th century B.C. In three days, the Turks destroyed the city that was known worldwide and the Paris of the East. Along with the destruction of the city, hundreds of thousands who had fled their burning buildings became trapped on the city's 50-foot quay at the water's edge. Behind them was death by fire. In front of them was death by drowning. And on either side of the trapped women, children and aged citizens, were Turkish soldiers firing their rifles into the crowd huddled in front of them.

The Greeks had been appointed the allied occupation force in Asia Minor in 1919. But in their new quest for oil to fuel their navies, the allies abandoned their Greek proxy force and chose to pander to the new Turkish government. As the Greek refugees stood helpless on the quay, there were 21 allied warships anchored in the bay. Not one allowed any of the refugees who could swim out as far as the ships to board.

A book has been written that our Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew, in his review stated:

"... a moving story... unique and personal, so familiar and yet entirely unparalleled, especially inasmuch as it reflects the precious history of the Orthodox Church in this part of the world."

HCS is proud to offer this explosive account that is a critical part of migration of Asia Minor Greeks to America. It is fitting that one of HCS' founders, George Koulaxes, copy-edited the book for the author.

This book can be purchased for \$20.00 (shipping not included.) Please call the Society office 858-755-2017 to order.

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