

IN MEMORIAM

## LINOS G. BENAKIS

### 1928-2022

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*The Historian of Byzantine Philosophy Dr. Phil. Dr. h. c. Linos G. Benakis*

The Historian of Byzantine Philosophy and Scientific Fellow of the Academy of Athens, Dr. Phil. Dr. h. c. Linos G. Benakis, passed away on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in Athens, Greece. He was married to Academician Professor of law and politician Anna Psarouda-Benaki. Linos G. Benakis served as Director of the Centre for the Research of Greek Philosophy of the Academy of Athens and editor of its periodical *Philosophia*. As Research Fellow of the Academy of Athens, Benakis was in charge of the Philosophical Library “Elli Lambridi” that belongs to the Academy of Athens. Further, he was the Director of the two series of critical editions “*Philosophi Byzantini*” and “*Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina*” published by the Academy of Athens under the auspices of the International Union of Academies.

Benakis was Dr. Phil. of the University of Cologne, Germany, and Honorary Dr. Phil. of the University of Ioannina, Greece. He was a Visiting Professor of the University of Crete in Rethymnon and was invited and taught on Byz-

antine philosophy in USA universities Princeton, Austin (Texas) and Tampa (Florida), as well as in European universities. Further, Benakis served as Vice-President of the Ionian University (Corfu, Greece), he was a long-term Member of the Board of Directors of “*Société Internationale pour l' Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale*” (SIEPM) and chairman of the “Byzantine Philosophy Committee” of this Society.

Linus G. Benakis served as the General Secretary of the Greek Philosophical Society as well as of the International Democritus’ Foundation. He was Vice President of the Society “The Friends of Gennadeion Library”, President and Honorary President of the Society of “The Friends of Panagiotis Kanellopoulos”, Vice-President and President of the Society “The Friends of Benaki Museum”, President of the Greek Group for the Promotion of the Study of Byzantine Philosophy. Besides, he was a long-term Member of the Board of Directors and Honorary Member of the Hellenic Society for Aesthetics, as well as a Member of the Editorial

Committee of its periodical *Annals for Aesthetics*, edited by the Panayotis and Effie Michelis Foundation in collaboration with the Hellenic Society for Aesthetics. Further, he was a long-term Member of the Board of Directors of the Society of the Greek Fellows of Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

Benakis was a Member of the Editorial Board of significant periodicals, such as *Philosophia*, *Annals for Aesthetics*, *Wisdom*, *Philosophical Inquiry*, *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* (BPJAM), *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, and *European Journal of Science and Theology*. In 2006, Professor Benakis co-founded with Assoc. Professor John A. Demetracopoulos (University of Patras) the international “Thomas de Aquino Byzantinus” research and editorial project (<https://thab.upatras.gr/>); thanks to him, the project was hosted by the National Hellenic Research Foundation (Athens) during his tenure as a member of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees (2006-2009).

Benakis was a Foreign Member of the Philosophical Academy of Armenia. He was a good friend of the leading Armenian philosopher Georg Brutian (†2015) and had a special interest in the philosophy of David the Armenian (the Invincible). Thus, he was invited and participated in the “Scientific Conference dedicated to the 1500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of David the Invincible” (Yerevan 1980) with the communication “David der Armenier in den Werken der byzantinischen Kommentatoren des Aristoteles”. This communication was published in Armenian translation with Russian summary (1983). The completed text entitled “David the Armenian and his Presence in the Works of the Byzantine Commentators of Aristotle” was published in Greek (1983). Further, Benakis was a member of the Editorial Board of the periodical *Wisdom* and contributed two articles to this periodical: “Aristotelian Ethics in Byzantium” (2017) and “Byzantine Musical Theory (Harmonics)” (2018).

Linos G. Benakis was born on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1928, in Corfu, Greece. He studied classical philology and philosophy at the University of Thessaloniki and went on to the University of Cologne, Germany, to study philosophy with a scholarship of the Greek Foundation of State Scholarships. At the University of Cologne, Benakis completed his dissertation on the unedited commentary of Michael Psellos on Aristotle’s

Physics under the supervision of Professor Paul Wilpert and obtained the Dr. phil. diploma. The aforementioned Foundation had entrusted Professor Basileios Tatakis as the supervisor of Benakis’ studies. Wilpert was Professor of Medieval Philosophy, Director of the Thomas-Institute at the University of Cologne and a well-known researcher of ancient Greek philosophy, especially of Aristotle’s philosophy. Tatakis was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Thessaloniki and had already published his pioneering work “La philosophie byzantine” (Paris 1949, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1959). Benakis’ initial research and encounter with these distinguished professors determined his future research path that was ignited by his interest in the traditions of Aristotle’s philosophy and in Byzantine philosophy, as well. However, his interests extended to topics of ancient Greek, Post-Byzantine Hellenic, and Neo-Hellenic philosophy of the twentieth century.

After his studies in Cologne, Benakis returned to Greece and worked at high schools in Preveza and Athens. Benakis was appointed as Associate at the “Centre for the Research of Greek Philosophy at the Academy of Athens” in 1966, and he served as its Director from 1971 to 1983. From these years and onward, Benakis developed a wide program of scientific activities that included -among others- participation in the work of philosophical and cultural associations, organization of many philosophical congresses, the presentation of papers in congresses in Greece and abroad, publication of studies, edition of proceedings and other books, translations, critical edition of philosophical works. Benakis was Executive Secretary and Treasurer of the “World Congress on the 2300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Aristotle’s Death” (Thessaloniki, 1978). He organized -among other congresses- the following ones: The “Pan-Hellenic Congress on Benjamin from Lesbos” (Mytilini, 1982; Proceedings 1985), the “First International Congress on Democritus” (Xanthi, 1983; Proceedings 1984), “Néoplatonisme et Philosophie Médiévale” (Corfu, 1995; Proceedings 1997), the “International Congress on Plethon and his Times” (Mystras, 2002; Proceedings 2003 eds. L. G. Benakis / Ch. P. Baloglou), the Conference “In Memoriam Basileios Tatakis (1896-1986). First Symposium” (Andros 2001; Proceedings 2002 in the periodical *Andriaka Chronika*), the Conference “In

Memoriam Basileios Tatakis (1896-1986). Second Symposium: Tatakis and Ancient Greek Philosophy” (Andros 2003; Proceedings 2004 in the periodical *Andriaka Chronika*), the Conference “In Memoriam Basileios Tatakis (1896-1986). Third Symposium: Tatakis and Byzantine Philosophy” (Andros 2008), the “Scientific Congress on Panagiotis Kanellopoulos” (Athens 2012; Proceedings 2013).

Benakis’ publications are in Greek, English, German, French, and in other languages. They refer to problems of Ancient Greek, Byzantine, Post-Byzantine Hellenic, and Neo-Hellenic Philosophy. They are innovative contributions on significant problems, such as “Democritus Studies Today”, or “The General Concepts in Neoplatonism and Byzantine Thought”, or “The Presence of David the Armenian in the Works of the Byzantine Commentators of Aristotle”, or “An Unedited Greek-Arabic Vocabulary of Terminology of Aristotelian Logic by Bessarion Makris”, to mention only a few cases. Further, he published a book entitled “Iamblichus. The Exhortation to Philosophy” (in Greek, Athens 2012). Benakis has written many entries on Byzantine, Post-Byzantine Hellenic, Neo-Hellenic, and European philosophers in the “Universal Biographical Lexicon” (in Greek, 1983ff.). Further, he published the article “Phantasia. II Byzanz”, in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (1989), as well as the article “Byzantine Philosophy” in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998). Besides, he contributed bibliography or introduction to the translations of Tatakis’ work *La philosophie byzantine*.

It should be mentioned that Benakis considered Byzantine philosophy part and mediator of the continuity of Hellenic philosophy from antiquity up to nowadays. He avoided the conceptions of “revival” or “renaissance” of Hellenic philosophy in the modern epoch. In his view, the continuous life of Greek language preserved a direct approach to the texts of ancient Greek philosophy through the centuries, while Byzantine philosophy as a special kind of theorizing posed the philosophical problems in the horizon of Christianity. Therefore, he argued, this kind of theorizing is the main characteristic of Post-Byzantine Hellenic philosophy up to the end of nineteenth century. Thus, the continuity of Hellenic philosophy was never broken. Benakis’ consideration is obvious also in the titles of his

books: *Ancient Greek Philosophy. Historiography and Research Publications* (2004), *Text and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy* (2002), *Byzantine Philosophy. B.* (20013), *Post-Byzantine Philosophy of the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Research in the Sources* (2001).

As regards Byzantine philosophy, Benakis suggested that a novel synthetic exposition of Byzantine philosophy will be possible after the critical edition of unedited philosophical texts, when the systematic problems posed by them will be explained and considered in the broader horizon of the history of philosophy. Through his publications, he enriched relevant research as a research in progress. Especially the two series of the critical editions “*Philosophi Byzantini*” and “*Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina*” (both included in “*Corpus philosophorum medii aevi*”) directed by Benakis, enlarged the research field of Byzantine philosophy and contributed to reconsidering the position of Byzantine philosophy in the broader horizon of the history of philosophy. Benakis edited two volumes: 1) Michael Psellos, *Kommentar zu Physik des Aristoteles*, editio princeps. Einleitung, Text, Indices von Linos G. Benakis (Athens, 2008, 2015). 2) Theodoros of Smyrna, *Epitome of Nature and Natural Principles according to the Ancients*, editio princeps. Introduction, Text, Indices by Linos G. Benakis (Athens, 2013).

Benakis’ book *Byzantine Philosophy. An Introductory Approach* (Saarbrücken, 2017) has been translated in Spanish (Granada, 2020). As regards Neo-Hellenic philosophy, Benakis has published - among other studies - the book *Memory of Five Philosophers: I.N. Theodorakopoulos, P.K.Kanellopoulos, K.D.Tsatsos, E.P.Papanoutsos, B.N.Tatakis* (in Greek, Athens, 2006).

Benakis is a pioneer in the research of Byzantine philosophy, since he has contributed to establishing it as an autonomous field in scientific research. He has opened novel paths through his whole work on the history of Hellenic philosophy and enlarged the philosophical dialogue on the vivid traditions of our culture. Benakis encouraged younger researchers, invited them to participate in the two series of critical editions mentioned above, and collaborated with other researchers in significant projects of edition and elucidation of philosophical texts. Benakis’ work remains a source of admiration and inspiration for society, research, and education.