

Posted 14<sup>th</sup> November 2009

## *Jannaris Symposium A Great Success!*

As was announced earlier, fifteen international scholars, experts in the various periods of Greek, came to St Andrews, Scotland, for the dates 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> June 2009 to pay their tribute to Antonios N. Jannaris on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 1909.

As was remarked, this was a unique symposium, in that it had gathered scholars from some twelve Universities in Europe and America, who covered the Greek language and its development all the way from Homeros to Neohellenic. Ever since Erasmus, through his unfortunate book, caused the Greek language to be divided into ancient and modern, Homericists and classicists have had no idea what Byzantinists and Neohellenists were doing and vice versa. It has become a case in which the left hand does not know what the right hand doeth. The language has been atomized, and we have had experts on brief periods of Greek, say, for example “New Testament Greek”, as though this Greek was a different language from what had been and from what was to come. Thus, New Testament scholarship has for five centuries starved on the literary crumbs that are found in the New Testament and the few illiterate papyri that have on occasion been invoked. Here is fulfilled the saying: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth”.

The present author has for years advocated a holistic approach to the Greek language, in which relevant evidence from all its periods must be used to throw light on anyone period. This is so particularly in the case of the New Testament, which appearing during the period of transition from ancient to modern, receives illuminating light both from the earlier periods and from the later periods, all the way to Neohellenic. The present author has exemplified this with innumerable examples in his book, *The Development of Greek and the New Testament*. More work needs to be done and many more treasures are waiting to be discovered.

Thus, it was a beautiful sight to see Homericists, Classicists, Hellenists, Byzantinists and Neohellenists all lecture to one another and discuss with one another, being deeply conscious that we were discussing one and the same language—the unity of the language being grandly affirmed—although our earliest and our latest limits were separated by 2800 years!

The program ran perfectly smoothly, just as planned (for the contents of the program, see [“A. N. Jannaris Symposium Program”](#) under [“Announcements”](#)).

The conference opened on Sunday evening, the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, by a warm reception hosted by the University of St Andrews, represented by the Head of the School of Classics and Chairman of the Scottish-Hellenic Society, Prof Greg Woolf and the Vice Principal for Governance and Planning, Prof Ron Piper. Their speeches were replied by the Organizer, Prof Chrys C. Caragounis, and a Presentation of Antonios Jannaris’ life and work by Profs N. Papadogiannakis and Nikoloudaki followed.

All the invited scholars were in place, and it was easy to see that each one had done his/her work conscientiously. Here was an ambition to push the present state of research further by original contributions. Although we were for the most part strangers to one another, most of us meeting one another for the first time and coming from so many different areas of the Greek language, the discussions were lively, exuding appreciation but also—as is right in such contexts—constructive critique toward one another. The contents were extremely rich, which we hope will benefit the reader as well.

The conference was concluded on the evening of the last day by a gala dinner at the superb Old Course Hotel of St Andrews.

For the forthcoming edition of the lectures, see the [“Greek. A language in Evolution”](#) under [“Announcements”](#).