

*From Revolution to Regress; the history of the Greek state and economy from the nineteenth century to the age of crisis*

Saturday, 7 April, Royal Ontario Museum Theatre 10.00

Conference at the Royal Ontario Museum, April 7, will examine the history of the Greek state and economy from the revolution of 1821 to the current crisis.

Historians from Canada, Greece and the United States will discuss the history of the Greek revolution of 1821, the formation of the Greek state and the course of its economy from the nineteenth century to the current crisis. History can offer a unique gaze to the trajectory and development of the Greek state, its economy and the role of institutions, such as the Church, especially in times of crisis. There will be presentations by seven speakers, Dean Kostantaras from Northwestern University, Maria Christina Chatziioannou from the National Hellenic Research Foundation in Athens, Thomas Gallant from University of California-Davis, Sakis Gekas from York University, Tassos Anastassiadis from McGill University, Kostas Kostis from University of Athens and Michalis Psalidopoulos from Tufts University.

190 years since 1822 when the first Greek national assembly convened during the war of independence from the Ottoman Empire, and 150 years since 1862 and the less well-known revolution that ousted the first king and paved the way for Greek territorial expansion, this conference is timely for understanding the historical origins of the Greek state, its economy and some of its most important institutions. How much of a break did the formation of the new state constitute with the pre-revolution Ottoman reality? How important were the initial conditions of foreign lending and dependency for the subsequent history of the state? What was the role of violence before, during and after the war of independence? These are some of the questions the first session of the conference will seek to address.

The history of the Greek state and its formation is often seen as a linear success-story of territorial expansion. The second session of the conference will look at the challenges and opportunities the Greek state and economy faced following the annexation of various and diverse regions. Despite this enlargement though, institutional reform lagged behind. What was the role of institutions such as the monarchy and the Church? At various moments of economic crisis reforms were imposed by foreign creditors, since Greeks were unable to implement them without external pressure. Why has the Greek economy failed to stabilize and has suffered debt crises time and again? The last session will look at the history of bankruptcies in Greece and explain their different origins as well as their diverse consequences; it will also be an opportunity for the historians in the panel to reflect on the writing and teaching of Greek history during the times of crisis.

The event is organized by the Hellenic Heritage Foundation Chair in Modern Greek History, the History Department at York University and the Hellenic Canadian Academic Association of Ontario.

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