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Institut für Byzantinistik
und Neogräzistik

University of Vienna
Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Announcement:

Symposium:

**“Science Deceived: A Genius Fools Europe.
Symposium for the 194th birthday of Konstantinos Simonides”
November 13th - 14th, 2014.**

Accompanying Exhibition

November 12th – December 12th, 2014

Opening Ceremony: Wednesday, November 12th, 2014, 8 PM

The deception and beguiling of the sciences, the problem of recognizing the "authentic" and the "fake": these themes, with particular reference to the forgeries of **Konstantinos Simonides**, constitute the principal focus of this symposium, organized by the **Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies** of the **University of Vienna**. The symposium will be held on **November 13th and 14th, 2014 in the Aula on the Main Campus of the University (Altes AKH), Hof 1**, and will be accompanied by an exhibition. (Vernissage: Wednesday, November 12th, 8pm, Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Hof 9).

Constantine Simonides is considered to be the most adroit and daring 19th-century forger of ancient manuscripts. He even forged an account of his own life, intimating that he was born in November of 1820 (elsewhere he writes 1823), on board the warship of his father Simon of Stageira, when it was at anchor in the harbor of Hydra. Because his mother came from Symi, he was baptized there several days later, in the presence of none other than the freedom fighter Andreas Miaoulis (1769-1835). He lost his parents at an early age and consequently became a student of Neophytos Dukas (1760-1845) at the Orphanage of Kapodistrias in Aigina. He later studied typography under Andreas Koromilas (1811-1858) in Athens, as well as painting and calligraphy at Mount Athos. It was here that he made his first steps in the imitation and copying of texts, as well as producing the first of his great "discoveries" of ancient and wholly unknown manuscripts, which he would attempt to market to respected researchers as authentic, a habit which stayed with him to the end of his life. He died of leprosy in 1867 in Alexandria or, according to a different account, in 1890 in Meteora. As Alexander Von Humboldt comments "Constantine Simonides is a living riddle and an unsolved Gordian knot."

The following speakers will participate in symposium:

Friederike Berger (Leipzig University Library), **Luciano Bossina** (University of Padua), **Lilia Diamantopoulou** (University of Vienna), **Christian Gastgeber** (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), **Jürgen Hammerstaedt** (University of Cologne), **Mariliza Mitsou** (EHESS, Paris), **Andreas E. Müller** (University of Vienna), **Anna Mykoniati** (KMST, Thessaloniki), **Pasquale Massimo Pinto** (University of Bari), **Robert Sablatnig** (Vienna University of Technology), **Manfred Schreiner** (Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna), **Niketas Siniossoglu** (University of Athens), **Wolfgang Speyer** (University of Salzburg), **Birgit Wagner** (University of Vienna).

Organizers: **Andreas E. Müller**, **Lilia Diamantopoulou** and **Christan Gastgeber**. Publication of the proceedings is planned.

Exhibition:

The symposium will be accompanied by an exhibition which is grounded on the legendary life and work of Simonides, focusing on important publications such as the *Symais* (1849), the *Painter's Manual of Dionysios of Phourna* (1853), the *Codex Sinaiticus*, his decipherment of hieroglyphs and the palimpsest of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a part of which can be found today in the Austrian National Library (ÖNB).

Additionally, eight artists from Greece have been invited to take part in the exhibition. Each will take up the concepts of “the fake” and “the authentic” using as his/her starting point and inspiration the adventurous life and work of Konstantinos Simonides. The following artists are participating in the exhibition: **Eleanna Koumarianou**, **Alexandros Magkaniotis**, **Virginia Mastrogiannaki**, **Vassiliki Matta**, **Antonis Michailidis**, **Elena Provata**, **Giorgos Tserionis** and **Vassilis Zografos**. Curators: **Andreas E. Müller** (University of Vienna), **Lilia Diamantopoulou** (University of Vienna) and **Anna Mykoniati** (KMST, Thessaloniki).

The exhibition will last until November 12, 2014 and is open to the public free of charge during the operating hours of the Department of Art History (Mo.-Do., 9.00-18.00; Fr., 9.00-17.00), University of Vienna (Hof 9).

For more information please see:

Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies

<http://www.byzneo.univie.ac.at/institut/>

or visit our Facebook event page:

https://www.facebook.com/events/907268512636367/?ref_dashboard_filter=upcoming

