Greeks in Görlitz: Exile – Memory – Cultural Representations (Athens, 20 Nov 26)

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Auditorium Goethe-Institut Athen, Nov 20, 2026
www.goethe.de/ins/gr/de/sta/ath/ver.cfm?event_id=27357412

Eugenia Alexaki

The international conference “Greeks in Görlitz: Exile – Memory – Cultural Representations” aims to examine, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the history, experience, and memory of the Greek presence in the German city of Görlitz, from the transfer of approximately 7,000 Greek soldiers, officers, and gendarmes during the First World War to the settlement of political refugees from the Greek Civil War in postwar Zgorzelec, Poland.

Military and political events, experiences of the peculiar captivity, but also of exile and migration, practices of propaganda and political disputes, various forms of cultural encounters and perceptions of the “other,” diplomatic aspirations, and national stereotypes will be explored by researchers from Greece, Germany, and Poland. The conference presentations will also focus on the 1917 recordings collected at the “Greek camp” by the Prussian Phonographic Commission, as well as on written primary sources, such as diaries, memoirs and local publications. Furthermore, the conference will examine the ways in which Görlitz re-emerges today as a “memory site” and is reframed within the field of public history, in contemporary literature, artistic interventions, and documentaries.
As part of the conference, an exhibition of archival material will be held, featuring photographs, notebooks and other documents left behind by the “Greeks of Görlitz,” as well as of contemporary studies and publications.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

10:00–10:30
Opening of the Conference and Greetings

Eugenia Alexaki
Scientific Coordinator

Marc-André Schmachtel
Head of Cultural Department Goethe-Institut Athen and Region Europe I-Head of Cooperations and Third-Party Assignments Region Europe I

Andreas Kindl
Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Greece

Platon Petridis
Head of the Department of History and Archaeology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Achilleas Chaldaeakes
Member of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens Administration Council

PANEL 1: HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES Chair: Kostas Raptis
10:30-10:50
Christos Papaioannou
From Rupel to Görlitz: The Collapse of Greek Sovereignty in Eastern Macedonia and the Peculiar Captivity of the IV Army Corps (August- September 1916)

10:50-11:10
Stratos Dordanas
German Interwar Searches: Tracing the Görlitzers in Greece

11:10-11:30
Elżbieta Opiłowska
Refugees from Greece in the Post-War Melting Pot of Zgorzelec

11:30-11:50
Discussion

11:50-12:15
Coffee break

12:15-12:45
KEYNOTE SPEECH
Gerassimos Alexatos
The Greeks of Görlitz: The Continuation after their Repatriation

PANEL 2: CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS
Chair: Katherina Mitralexi

12:45-13:05
Nikos Dionysopoulos, George Kokkonis, Aigli Brouskou,Miranda Terzopoulou
The Greeks of Görlitz and the 1917 Recordings: From Discovery to Publication

13:05-13:25
Ifigeneia Papouli
„Distichen, die ich zarten gepressten Heimatblumen vergleichen möchte…“: August Heisenberg and Gustav Soyter in Görlitz

13:25-13:45
Petros Koris
Confirming National Stereotypes: Greekness and Germanness in the Context of the Public Discourse on Görlitz (1918- 1933)

13:45-14:05
Discussion

14:04-15:00
Lunch break

PANEL 3: TESTIMONIES AND MEMORY
Chair: Dimitra Lampropoulou

15:00–15:20
Georgios Limantzakis
The Cretan Gendarmes at Görlitz (1916 – 1919): A First Approach through the Diary of Emmanouil Kontaxakis

15:20–15:40
Dimitrios Benekos
The Memoirs of the Greek Corporal Nikolaos Margaritoulis and the Treatise of the German Consul Helmut Scheffel

15:40–1 6:00
Ulrich Moennig
“Memories of my Stay in Görlitz”: Was There such a Thing as Enforced Remembrance in the Camp?

16:00-16:30
Eugenia Alexaki, Konstantinos Androutsopoulos, Youlie Chronopoulou
Round Table: Family Archives and Testimonies from Görlitz: The Written Accounts of the Cretan Gendarme Giorgos Pantalakis, the Reserve Corporal Antonios Kazolis, and the Officer John Chatzi-panagos

16:30–16:50
Discussion

16:50–17:20
Coffee break

PANEL 4: REPRESENTATIONS
Chair: Iwan-Michelangelo D’ Aprile

17:20-17:40
Zafos Xagoraris, Katerina Tselou
The Welcoming Gate

17:40-18:00
Nikolaos-Ioannis Koskinas
The City of the Absent: Görlitz as a Site of Memory and the Renegotiation of the Past in Contemporary Greek Literature

18:20-18:20

Thanasis Petrou
Giving Voice to the Forgotten

18:20-18:40
Sabine Jainski
Filming the Greeks of Görlitz

18:40-19:00
Discussion

19:00-19:15
Elli Lemonidou
Closing Remarks

Organised by National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of History and Archaeology. With the kind support of the Goethe-Institut Athen.
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The full programme, book of abstracts, and information about the speakers are available on the conference website: https://conferences.uoa.gr/e/GreeksinGoerlitz

Scientific and Organising Committee
Eugenia Alexaki, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Elli Lemonidou, University of Patras
Katherina Mitralexi, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Free admission
No prior registration required

Reference:
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