

## **THE FUTURE OF THE PAST IN ACADEMIA AND SOCIETY**

**A discussion forum made possible by a MacArthur Foundation X-Grant**

**Further supported by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and the Townsend Center for the Humanities, UC Berkeley**

**Special thanks to Eva Seto (Associate Director, Social Science Matrix, UC Berkeley) and Maureen Miller (Professor, Department of History, UC Berkeley)**

**Co-organizers: Maria Mavroudi (UC Berkeley) and Cornell Fleischer (University of Chicago)**

The forum will focus on the memory of the past in public discourse and the intersection (or lack thereof) between academia and society. The problem we want to address: the study of the past is viewed as secondary (and even tertiary) to the study of STEM; COVID-19 and other factors even before its rise create an enormous amount of social tension, for which historical perspective is needed although it is almost never provided; universities are in the process of profoundly revising their intellectual agenda and institutional structure, according minimal place to the study of the past.

Ample time will be allotted to discussion. The audience is encouraged to actively participate.

**WHEN:** Saturday, September 17, 2022, 9:00–5:30  
Sunday, September 18, 2022, 9:00–12:30

**WHERE:** Social Science Matrix, 820 Social Sciences Building (formerly Barrows)  
<https://www.berkeley.edu/map>

**Note on access:** Social Science Matrix is wheelchair accessible via the east entrance of Social Sciences Building and Elevator 2, which goes directly to the 8th floor.

**Saturday, September 17**

9-10:30: INTRODUCTION

**Asad Ahmed**, Chair of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, opens the forum**Maria Mavroudi**, “Motivations and objectives of the meeting”**Cornell Fleischer**, “Anachronism and exclusion from history”

10:30-10:45: COFFEE BREAK

10:45-12:30: THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

**Maria Pantelia** and **Jim Porter**, “The electronic database of Greek texts *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* and the future of philology”**Joan Breton Connelly**, “The future of archaeological discovery: Interpretation of evidence, shifting global priorities, and the preservation of cultural heritage”

12:30-2:00: LUNCH BREAK

2:00-3:30: LITERATURE

**Aleksandar Hemon** and **Indu Sundaresan** in conversation: a discussion with two novelists who have written historical fiction.

3:30-3:45: COFFEE BREAK

3:45-5:30: POETRY

**Panayotis Ioannidis**, “(Re-)focusing (on) poetry during a historical crisis”**Ekin Öyken**, “Poetry and sign: A glance at the social constructive role of sign language poetry”**Sunday, September 18**

9-11:00: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE ‘HARD’ SCIENCES

**Carl Haber**, “Reflections on the future of the past in education and research”**Pedro Ferraz de Abreu**, “‘Hard’ sciences, engineering and social sciences: shaken, not (just) stirred”**Phil deVries**, “On natural history”

11:00-11:10: COFFEE BREAK

11:10-11:50: MUSIC

**Christopher King**, “Arguments Over Air: Historical Amnesia & the Music of the Folk”

11:50-12:30: PHILANTHROPY

**Andreas Zombanakis**, “Philanthropy as an interface between academia and society” (a conversation)

## INFORMATION ON THE PRESENTERS (in order of appearance in the program)

**Maria Pantelia** is professor of Classics at UC Irvine and (since 1996) director of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG), a complex digital tool for the study and linguistic analysis of Greek texts conceived in 1971. This is by far the oldest example of “digital humanities.” Among other challenges involved in maintaining and further developing the TLG, Pantelia oversaw its transition from a CD ROM to an online version and the extension of the canon of Greek literature to include the Byzantine and modern Greek period.

<http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/history.php>

**James Porter** is the Irving Stone Chair in Literature and Distinguished Professor of Rhetoric and Classics, Program in Critical Theory at UC Berkeley. His research interests include Greek and Roman literature and philosophy; Modern philosophy (materialism, aesthetics, ethics, subjectivity; Kant, Nietzsche, Foucault, Critical Theory); interactions between politics, culture, and critique; history and theory of classicism and postclassicism.

<https://rhetoric.berkeley.edu/people/james-i-porter-1/>

**Joan Breton Connelly** is a classical archaeologist and Professor of Classics at NYU. She has excavated in Greece, Kuwait, and Cyprus where, since 1990, she has directed the NYU Yeronisos Island Excavations integrating ecological and archaeological fieldwork. Her books *The Parthenon Enigma* and *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* have challenged conventional wisdom in the interpretation of Greek myth, ritual, architecture, iconography, gender, and social hierarchies. An advocate for the protection of world heritage, she has served a total of 12 years on the Cultural Property Advisory Committee, U.S. Department of State. MacArthur Fellow 1996.

**Aleksandar Hemon** is the author of *The Lazarus Project*, which was a finalist for the 2008 National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award, and three collections of short stories: *The Question of Bruno*; *Nowhere Man*, which was also a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award; and *Love and Obstacles*. His other works include two books of nonfiction, *My Parents: An Introduction* and *The Book of My Lives*, the novel *The Making of Zombie Wars*, journalism, screenplays, and content for the Netflix original show *Sense8*. Born in Sarajevo, Hemon visited Chicago in 1992, intending to stay for a matter of months. While he was there, Sarajevo came under siege, and he was unable to return home. Hemon wrote his first story in English in 1995. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2003 and a “genius grant” from the MacArthur Foundation in 2004. Hemon has taught at Northwestern University and New York University. He is currently professor of creative writing at Princeton University.

**Indu Sundaresan** was born and brought up in India, on Air Force bases around the country. By day, her father was a fighter pilot with the Indian Air Force, and, an avid storyteller by night. He told her stories of India’s kings and queens, and took her to roam around the magnificent palaces and forts where they lived. It was better than being in a classroom. After college, Indu came to the U.S. for graduate school and has an M.A. in economics and an M.S. in Operations Research. She began writing novels and short stories soon after. She is the author of six books so far: the three novels of the Taj trilogy, *The Twentieth Wife*, *The Feast of Roses* and *Shadow Princess*; a collection of short stories, *In the Convent of Little Flowers*; a novel set in India during four days in May of 1942 titled *The Splendor of Silence*; and, a novel based on the Kohinoor diamond, *The Mountain of Light*. *The Twentieth Wife* won the Washington State Book Award and has been

converted into a 42 episode television series called *Siyaasat*. It's airing (with subtitles) on Netflix in most countries. Indu is also the recipient of the Light of India award for Excellence in Literature. Her work has been translated into some 23 languages worldwide. The translation that makes her the most happy and proud is that of the Taj trilogy novels in Tamil, her mother tongue, translated by her mother, Madhuram Sundaresan, and published by Vanathi Pathipaggam in Chennai, India. She lives in the Seattle, Washington area with her husband and her daughter. <https://www.indusundaresan.com/books/>

**Panayotis Ioannidis** (poet, critic, editor, translator, educator; born 1967, Athens, Greece) has published four poetry books and co-authored two collections of essays. His poetry has been translated and published in anthologies and journals in several languages.

Website: <https://springstreefellers.blogspot.com/>

An interview about his work: <https://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/interviews/reading-greece/7050-reading-greece-panayotis-ioannidis-on-poetry-as-an-art-of-sounds-and-the-quest-to-immortalise-the-moment-through-words>

**Ekin Öyken** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Latin Language and Literature of Istanbul University, where he teaches Latin grammar, Latin poetry, and Roman religion. In 2013, he held a one-year postdoctoral research position in the Department of Ancient Greek and Roman Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. His current research interests cover a range of topics from ancient musical thought to classical reception.

<https://avesis.istanbul.edu.tr/eoyken>

**Carl Haber** is a senior scientist in the Physics Division at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. He develops instruments and methods in particle physics research. He also works on cultural heritage science assisting institutions in the preservation and restoration of historical sound recordings. MacArthur Fellow 2013.

**Pedro Ferraz de Abreu** is a Research Coordinator at the University of Lisbon (CIAUD - Research Center for Architecture, Urbanism and Design) and a Research Associate at MIT (since 2003). He is also founder and president of CITIDEP - Research Center on Information Technology for Participatory Democracy ([www.citidep.net](http://www.citidep.net)). His several books and articles reflect his concern with the solid scientific foundation necessary for political and civic intervention. In his native Portugal he is known as a leader of the student anti-fascist movement that contributed to the Carnation Revolution of 1974. He found his way into politics as a fourteen-year old honors student at the Liceu Pedro Nunes, where he founded and directed the Club of Physics and the high school science magazine *Prisma* (1965-66). When the magazine was shut down by the headmaster, the repression led him to join the resistance movement against Salazar's dictatorship. He eventually joined the Central Committee of a left-wing revolutionary party, from which he resigned after the success of the Carnation Revolution. He holds an MA in Intelligent Computer-Human Interface (MIT-Media Lab, 1989), and a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning (MIT-DUSP, 2002). In 2003, as a lecturer at MIT, he taught a new course that launched a new scientific area, e-Planning, articulating Engineering with Social Sciences for better e-government, e-governance and e-citizenship.

**Phil DeVries** is an eclectic naturalist and field ecologist whose research has taken him to many habitats and countries. Quote: "As a tropical ecologist, I am concerned with two great realities occurring during my lifetime: the catastrophic destruction of biodiversity, and the

dissolution of first-hand knowledge about organisms and the habitats where they occur." He has published numerous scientific papers and book chapters on natural history, behavior, ecology, evolution, demographics, and species diversity. His two field guides on Costa Rican butterflies remain classic reference works throughout Central and South America. His publications on metalmark and fruit-feeding butterflies strongly influenced how we understand the evolution of butterfly-ant symbioses, and tropical insect diversity, population dynamics and community ecology. His interests continue to be tropically peripatetic. Phil is an enthusiastic documentary photographer, and collaborates extensively on projects involving science, art, cooking and writing with his wife Carla Penz. When not in the field or working on butterfly-related projects, Phil cooks, experiments with charcuterie, listens to and photographs improvisational musicians, reads science fiction, and quite successfully laughs about life everyday. He is an unrepentant emeritus Professor of Biology at the University of New Orleans. MacArthur Fellow 1988. <http://fs.uno.edu/pdevries/>

**Christopher C. King** is a writer, ethnomusicologist, and a folk music advocate. His work focuses on the function and process of music making and musical narratives in the southern Balkans and the American South in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. [www.longgonesound.com](http://www.longgonesound.com)

**Andreas Zombanakis** is a former investment banker and private equity investor. He is a Trustee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and chairs its Gennadius Library which houses a unique collection of rare books, manuscripts and archives relating to "post antique" Hellenism. He also chairs "Hara", a residential home for severely disabled children, and is on the Board of Elliniki Etairia, Greece's leading heritage and environmental organization. He is a founding member and vice president of the Climate Change Governance Initiative and is on the Board of Greece's leading asset manager, Eurobank. He is involved in various initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and was president of the "Archons" of the Patriarchate. He now lives between Athens and Crete where he tends his family olive groves. Andreas has an AB from Harvard University, an M. Arch. from the School of Fine Arts at Penn, and an MBA from Wharton.

#### **ON THE CO-ORGANIZERS**

**Cornell Fleischer** grew up in Germany, Egypt, Iraq, and California. He received his PhD in Ottoman history at Princeton in 1982 and lived in Turkey for nine years. He taught at the Ohio State University and at Washington University in St. Louis, before joining the Departments of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and History at the University of Chicago in 1993. His contribution to the better understanding of the intellectual and political organization of Islamic and Ottoman society was recognized with a MacArthur Fellowship in 1988.

**Maria Mavroudi** was born in Thessaloniki, Greece and studied Philology at the University of her native city before earning a Ph.D. in Byzantine studies at Harvard. Her scholarly work began by focusing on a tenth-century Byzantine book on dream interpretation that had been widely received in Latin and the European vernaculars and counted as the Christian dreambook of the Middle Ages. While generally viewed as a Byzantine invention partly based on the second-century manual of Artemidorus, she showed that it was a Christian adaptation of Arabic Islamic material and one among a larger group of texts originally written in Arabic or Persian and received into Greek between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries. During the next two decades, she worked on identifying the place of these translations within Byzantine literary culture and its reception in "East" and "West" during the medieval and

early modern period. This begs reconsidering the position of the ancient Greek classics within the Byzantine, Arabic, and Latin intellectual traditions, as well as the supposed marginality of Byzantium within a broader medieval intellectual universe. Her work was recognized with a MacArthur fellowship in 2002.