



Boris Pahor and Lucija Čok

A strong advocate of Slovenian identity and language did gain appreciation among Slovenians. Today not only Slovenian readers embrace him, but also foreign literary circles accept him with open arms. In 1986, in Paris, on the occasion of the exhibition *Trouver Trieste* at the Centre Pompidou, the author met the philosopher Evgen Bavčar who introduced him to his first French publisher. The masterpiece *Necropolis* thus began its ascent. In 2001 Germany included it in the famous *SWR-Bestenliste*, the prestigious list of the twelve most beautiful books published in that year. The Parisian publishers Phébus and Le Rocher have published much of his work. In France he frequently participates in symposia and public readings. Today the writer, awarded many prestigious national and European awards, is considered the author of classic twentieth-century literature.

He supported the integration of Slovenia into the European Union in 2004, but he considers the globalisation processes and the integration of Slovenians into any kind of political union to be risky. From the past Slovenians gained wisdom and vigour. Regarding the question concerning what Slovenians should add to EU strategies and policies he reacted: *"First of all, the example of how one can remain true to one's identity without armies, without generals and without admirals. An identity that is sufficient in culture. And this the Slovenians learned to do by surviving, in history they have always been suppressed, several foreigners tried to absorb them, to enslave them."*

The 106-year-old man who endured the First World War, the Spanish flu, the Second World War, four camps and three totalitarian regimes, now survives the coronavirus epidemic and communicates to Slovenians: *"Stay home, read books, Slovenian and world classics, forget about egoism and follow Christ who said we should take care of each other."*

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Georgios Babiniotis: The Renowned Greek Linguist

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Prof. Emer. Stella Priovolou

Georgios Babiniotis, Emeritus and Honorary Professor of Linguistics at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, is a tireless linguist with multifarious activities to his credit, distinguished both in Greece and abroad.

He was the one to introduce Modern Linguistics into the University of Athens and, through the thousands

of students that he taught during an impressive career spanning more than four decades, he has considerably influenced the evolution of language science in Greece, both in the academic field and in the sector of education. What greatly contributed to this was his broader communication with speakers of Greek through language programmes in the media and articles on language in the Press, public appearances and lectures, classes at the Free University of the Books' Archway (Stoa tou Vivliou), and, mainly, with his nine dictionaries of the Greek language and his comprehensive Modern Greek Grammar, along with the rest of his published works (20 books, more than 150 studies and scientific articles and numerous articles on language

and education). Even after retirement he still retains his youthful enthusiasm and energy, as proved by his recent works including *Modern School Grammar for All* (1), *The Greek Alphabet, Alphabet-Writing-Orthography* (2), and *Our Language: 180 Texts on Language* (3). Regarding his latest book, he has declared: *"I believe that anyone who loves language and wishes to know its essence from many aspects and in greater depth, anyone who wishes to enter the 'magical' world of language and the paths of Linguistics without any special prerequisite knowledge, anyone who believes that mastering language in all its dimensions is not mere additional knowledge but the shortest way connecting us to thought, will appreciate better the texts and the goal of this book"*.

Georgios Babinotis has consciously devoted his entire career and all his efforts to two fields: language and education. He has been president of the Arsakeia-Tositseia Schools for years, has conducted the National Dialogue on Education, headed the Greek Pedagogical Institute, promoted Greek culture as President of the Hellenic Foundation for Culture, and served as Rector of the University of Athens for two consecutive terms and as extra-parliamentary Minister for Education and Religious Affairs.

He has repeatedly been honoured for his work and his contribution to science both in Greece and abroad and was recently awarded the Outstanding Contribution to the Republic of Cyprus medal by President Nicos Anastasiades. The honorary titles and distinctions awarded to Georgios Babinotis so far include the following:

- Honorary Professor of the University of Athens (the highest honour conferred by the University Senate to distinguished active or emeriti professors, following a proposal made by their Department).
- Honorary Doctor of "La Trobe" University of Melbourne, Australia, and of the University of Montreal, Canada.
- Herder Award
- Officer of the Order of Academic Palms (Ordre des Palmes Académiques) of the French State.
- Golden Cross of the Russian Federation.
- Medal of the Church of Greece – Golden Cross of Paul the Apostle.
- Grand Cross of the Order of Civil Merit (Orden del Mérito

Civil) of the Spanish State.

- Archon Teacher of the Nation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

An interview given by Georgios Babinotis to the journalist Myrto Loverdou in 2018 on the occasion of the publication of "Modern School Grammar for All" reveals his multifaceted personality and his connection not only with language but also with "paideia" (rearing, training and teaching), and his strong bonds not only with the society of students but also with the Greek society in general. *"I identify myself with the two pillars to which I have devoted all my work: language and education," said the professor. "I always remember the great scholar Adamantios Korais, who associated education with language."*



Georgios Babinotis

Babinotis points out that education is a precondition of paideia; the latter is something much broader, it is everything we have read and heard and, most of all, it is self-education. The worst thing of all is to think that your relationship with language is over once you graduate from school. If you don't have inside you an inclination to lead yourself to constant spiritual alertness, to read, to listen, to question, to discuss, if you do none of these, then you have already died but you have not realised it yet.

As regards the publication of his Grammar, he confesses: *"I yearned to write a school grammar that would help children learn the logic of language. As a scientist, what I feel about words is that 'they are all my children'. Some words may express me better, others may enchant me with their etymology, which could be a real revelation, or I may be likewise fascinated by a newly discovered syntactic structure."*

Ever since he was a child, Georgios Babinotis wanted to become a philologist and showed particular sensitivity to language before he even knew Linguistics as a science. As a professor he never believed that his role was to work enclosed in an office. He appeared on television with reporters in the shows "Do You Speak Greek?" («Ομιλείτε Ελληνικά;»), "The Language Given to Me Was Greek" («Τη γλώσσα μού έδωσαν ελληνική»), and "The Words are to Blame" («Οι λέξεις φταίνε»), had a daily radio programme on Vima FM (2015-2017) and today is still carrying on with the television show "3 Minutes for the Greek Language" («3 λεπτά για την ελληνική γλώσσα») on History Channel. He communicates with the public for hours in every possible way and people now know him and consider him to be one of them. He believes, however, that we don't care about the correct use of the language as much as we should, and the way that successful and accomplished people disregard language really upsets him.

1. Babinotis G. *Modern School Grammar for All*, Lexicology Center, Athens 2017.

2. Babinotis G. *The Greek Alphabet. Alphabet – Writing – Orthography*, Athens 2018

3. Babinotis G. *Our Language : 180 Texts on Language*, Athens 2020.

He never aspired to be a professor, but has always been driven by passion for his subject and always tells his students "If you have true passion, don't ask yourself what you will do professionally later". In addition, he categorically declares that connecting University to the labour market is annoying because University is not a trade school.

According to Georgios Babiniotis, our present educational system is based on information at the expense of knowledge and culture. It fills children's minds by accumulating information but repels them mentally. It is not a coincidence that children do not love school. There is no ideal educational system, of course, but there are some very good and substantial ones.

Georgios Babiniotis has also contributed to quality education serving pro bono as honorary president of the Arsakeia Schools, from which 450 literate and well-mannered students graduate per year. Furthermore, during his two-and-a-half-month tenure as extra-parliamentary Minister for Education, he cooperated harmoniously with all competent officials to start implementing the decisions made in the National Dialogue on Education. He has never

been fascinated by politics, however.

In Greece, the name of Georgios Babiniotis has become synonymous with the concepts of Linguistics and the dictionary of the Greek language. Although he is now Professor Emeritus, and a fervent supporter of the Body of Professors Emeriti, he has not given up any of his activities. I met Professor Babiniotis during my studies, when he was a senior lecturer, and I can assert that even today, at age 82, he retains an unabated passion for language, the inspiration to write and an enviable ability to communicate and interact with society.

The American writer William Arthur Ward says "The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates, the great teacher inspires," and Georgios Babiniotis is, indeed, a great teacher.

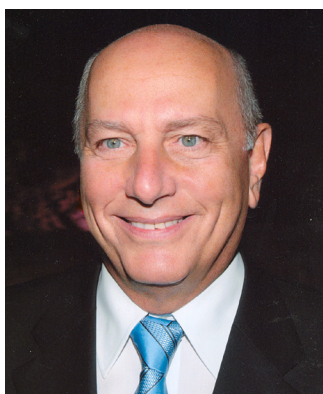


Using Red-to-Green Ratios in Paintings by Great Masters to Reveal Volcanic Aerosols in the Atmosphere in the Past 500 Years

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We have examined sunsets painted by famous artists as proxy information for the aerosol optical depth (AOD) after major volcanic eruptions. Images derived from precision colour protocols applied to the paintings were compared to online images, and showed that the latter, previously analysed, provide accurate information. Aerosol optical depths (AODs) at 550 nm, corresponding to Northern Hemisphere middle latitudes, calculated by introducing red-to-green (R/G) ratios from a large number of paintings to a radiative transfer model, were significantly correlated with independent proxies from stratospheric AOD and optical extinction data, the dust veil index, and ice core volcanic indices. AODs calculated from paintings were grouped into 50-year intervals from 1500 to 2000. The year of each eruption and the 3 following years were defined as "volcanic". The remaining "non-

volcanic" years were used to provide additional evidence of a multidecadal increase in the atmospheric optical depths during the industrial "revolution". The increase of AOD at 550 nm calculated from the paintings grew from 0.15 in the middle 19th century to about 0.20 by the end of the 20th century. To corroborate our findings, an experiment was designed in which a master painter/colourist painted successive sunsets during and after the passage of Saharan aerosols over the island of Hydra in Greece. Independent solar radiometric measurements confirmed that the colourist's R/G ratios which were used to model his AODs, matched the AOD values measured in situ by co-located sun photometers during the declining phase of the Saharan aerosol. An independent experiment was performed to understand the difference between R/G ratios calculated from a typical volcanic aerosol and those measured from the mineral aerosol during the Hydra experiment. It was found that the differences in terms of R/G ratios were small, ranging between -2.6% and +1.6%. Also, when analysing different parts of cloudless skies of paintings following major volcanic eruptions, any structural differences seen in the paintings had not altered the results discussed above.