



HELLENIC LINK – Midwest Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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<http://www.helleniclinkmidwest.org>

Upcoming Events

Opening the Space Frontier

On Sunday, December 8, 2002, at 3:00 pm, Hellenic Link – Midwest presents Dr. Peter Diamandis in a lecture on Space Exploration. This lecture will be held at Four Point Sheraton Hotel, 10255 West Irving Road at Schiller Park (corner of Irving and Manheim by O'Hare airport, phone: 847 671 4230.

The Space Age began on October 4th 1957 with the launch of Sputnik. Four years later, Yuri Gagarin and Alan Shepard rocketed into space. Eight years after that, Americans set foot on the Moon. Today space exploration has stalled. Each Space Shuttle flight costs nearly \$1 billion and the International Space Station was 10 years and \$20 billion behind schedule. There are no plans for the human exploration of Mars. The future of space exploration depends upon a new paradigm for space exploration -- one in which the economic benefits of space can be capitalized upon, and a new generation of spaceships reduce the cost to orbit by 100-fold. The development of space will lead to limitless energy, materials and wealth for humanity and thereby the long-term survival of the species. Get ready for an evening of fun and exciting discussion.

Dr. Peter Diamandis is the leading space entrepreneur, with a passion for leading the rest of us into space. He has founded numerous space companies focused on opening the Space Frontier for tourists, industry, and future colonization. He co-founded Space Adventures the company which launched Dennis Tito and Marc Shuttleworth. He is the Chairman and CEO of the XPRIZE Foundation (www.xprize.org) offering \$10 million to the first group to privately build and launch a three person spaceship to 100 kilometers twice in two weeks. Dr. Diamandis received his undergraduate degree in Aerospace Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and his M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School.

Annual Dinner Dance - Scholarship Awards

The 16th Annual Dinner Dance, New Year Celebration, and Scholarship Awards of Hellenic Link–Midwest will be held on Saturday, January 25, 2003, at the Four Point Sheraton Hotel, 10255 West Irving Road at Schiller Park. The proceeds from the Annual Dinner Dance are used to

support the scholarships, cultural and educational programs, and all other activities of our organization. The generous support of our members and friends will be greatly appreciated. Our Dinner Dances are distinguished for the excellent food, the unique kefi, and the fine music. For tickets (including food and open bar), \$60 for adults, and \$30 for children and students, please call 847 498-3686, or contact any of the Board Members.

In Brief

New Chair of Modern Greek Studies at the University Of Illinois At Chicago

The Department of Classics and Mediterranean Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago invites applications for a tenure-track appointment in Modern Greek Studies at the rank of Assistant Professor, effective August 2003, pending final budgetary and administrative authorization. Candidates should demonstrate promise in research and teaching and should have completed the Ph.D. by fall semester 2003 with a specialization in the field of Modern Greek literature, which can be broadly understood to range from the Modern Greek language to Modern Greek culture. The teaching load will be two courses per semester, and in addition to courses that grow out of the candidate's special interests, duties will include teaching one Modern Greek course per semester. Salary will be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

For fullest consideration, please send the following so as to arrive by 7 December 2002: a cover letter, curriculum vitae, dossier containing a minimum of three letters of recommendation (together with transcripts of graduate courses for candidates who have not yet earned their terminal degree), and a sample of scholarly writing.

Materials should be addressed to: Professor John T. Ramsey, Chair, Department of Classics and Mediterranean Studies (MC 129), University of Illinois at Chicago, 601 South Morgan Street, Chicago IL 60607-7112. Please do not submit applications by fax or by e-mail. Inquiries by e-mail may be addressed to: j-ramsey@uic.edu.

Greece gears up for draconian smoking ban

Health Minister Costas Stefanis told reporters that even government ministers will not be exempt from the tough anti-smoking rules that come into effect in Greece. They

will have to go to designated smoking areas within their ministries if they cannot quench their desire for a cigarette. He said the smoking ban did not discriminate against smokers but actually did them a favor, since they would help them kick a dangerous habit. He was less clear on how the measures would be enforced in a country where 45 per cent of the population are smokers - the highest percentage in the EU by far - who have largely ignored similar efforts in the past and routinely smoke in areas where smoking is strictly forbidden, such as hospitals. Stefanis said that the government had no intention of becoming some kind of "smoking police" and that the emphasis would be on making people understand that they must stop smoking in order to protect their health. He made it clear that no-smoking rules would be strictly enforced in hospitals from now on and that visitors would not be allowed to bring cigarettes in at all, while smoking areas in hospitals would be for staff use only. The rules would be made even tougher for patients caught smoking, where penalties for offenders might even include a disciplinary hospital release.

The ministry said that it was now in negotiations with private firms to extend the measures to private workplaces as well, though Deputy health minister Ektoras Nassiokas noted that it was hard to persuade people to stop smoking on their own private premises. No-smoking signs have been set up in public places throughout the country, including public transport and health services. The ban applies to all state and public services, schools and universities, while restaurants and cafeterias have until November 30 to divide their space into smoking and non-smoking sections, with the exception of late-night bars, clubs and traditional coffee shops (kafenias). As of January 2003, there will be a ban on cigarette advertising on billboards and in cinemas.

Greece wants EU labeling of genetically modified foods

Greece said on October 14 that it wanted to see genetically modified (GM) foodstuffs labeled in the European Union in order to give consumers the right to choose. Agriculture Minister George Drys told reporters in Luxembourg "GM produce is a reality. As minimum protection for the public, this information must be provided. We cannot allow people to buy products containing modified organisms without being aware of it. This consumer information and protection must be imposed." Handling GM produce in the market is being debated by EU committees, with approval expected at an agriculture ministers' meeting in November.

European Commission consolidates feta cheese's name

The European Commission decided on October 14 to finally consolidate the name of feta cheese. According to an announcement, the European Commission ratified, with a written process, a European Union regulation by which feta cheese is finally consolidated as a product of a "Protected Name Origin." The regulation notes that feta can only be produced in certain regions of Greece with strict observance of the product's specifications. Producers from other member-states or producers failing to observe specifications have a time limit of five years either to change name or stop production.

From Our History

The Foundation of Constantinople

From: *Modern Greece – A Short History*

By C.M. Woodhouse

Constantine required a capital and a populace wholly dependent on himself, thus making a clean break with the past. He had climbed to power by bloodshed and treachery, in which he slaughtered both enemies and friends, and even his own family. Weary of the succession of civil wars in which he had himself been the final victor, he determined to set the civil above the military power. That could not be done in a capital which was also an armed camp, such as Nicomedia. There were other motives besides security for choosing a new site. A simple one was for the personal glory of Constantine and the immortality of his name. Another, more complex was to provide a focus for the re-integration of the diverse peoples of the Empire, which was to be achieved, though not in Constantine's lifetime, through the Christian religion. To this religion Constantine himself was undergoing a gradual but politic conversion, impelled by reasons of state rather than by the miracles with which later piety garnished the story.

The western tide carried to the East the principles of Roman law and administration, and the power of civil and military technology. The eastern tide carried to the West the influences of Greek philosophy and oriental religion. The two tides met along an axis running through the Greek-speaking lands, with its southern pole at Alexandria and its northern pole among the Greek colonies of the Black Sea, such as Cherson or Khersónaisos, in the Crimea. Constantinople lay near the centre of this axis. But the city was also ideally situated in a more practical sense at the confluence of two tides which, in the nature of things, flowed with equal and opposite force. The principal trade-routes between Asia and Europe passed through Byzantine territory. It was well furnished with ports, all of them in Greek hands. Constantinople, with its superlative

harbour, became the natural centre of a system comprising a circle of ports which were in turn the natural outlets of vast commercial hinterlands. The site of the city was also eminently defensible. Indeed, there were times when it alone held out after all its territory had fallen into enemy hands.

Constantinople thus occupied a key point on the map not only strategically but ideologically and economically. Here, or approximately here, was the natural meeting-point of the tides of East and West, Christianity and paganism, Roman and Hellenistic and even oriental tradition. This is another reason why a new site had to be found. Athens, for instance—still a cultural centre of great wealth and influence, with its own university until the 6th. century—was as closely associated with the past as the old Rome; Nicomedia was a military camp; Alexandria was too exclusively Greek.

His intention was defeated within a few generations. Latin might be the language of the courts and the administration, but Greek was already the language, of the Church. It was also the *lingua franca* of the Near East: hence its name, the *koiné* or common tongue. It was unavoidable in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the new capital that it should become a Greek city. This was the certain consequence of Constantine's own choice of the Christian religion, which attracted him because of its highly organized character. How long the transition from a Latin to a Greek character took at Constantinople is not easily settled. Most scholars would agree that, although the legal conceptions of Rome continued to form the basis of the Byzantine constitution, Latin elements in the language and culture were fast disappearing by the 7th century. The eastern tide prevailed over the western, and Constantine unconsciously willed it so. Christianity was both the motive and the undoing of his plan.

In the 4th century Christianity was still only the religion of a minority, but it was a powerful and well-placed minority. Even in the reign of Diocletian, who somewhat reluctantly persecuted the Christians in the early years of the 4th century, they held influential posts at court and in the army. Proportionately they were more numerous in the eastern provinces, and Greek was the language of the church. Rome, despite the eminence of its bishopric, was still essentially a pagan city, where the old religion had its most lasting roots and the Vestal Virgins still performed their duties. It has been estimated that the proportion of Christians was about one in fifteen in the west, but nearer to one in ten in the east. Perhaps the decisive factor for Constantine was not, as he claimed, his vision of the monogram of Christ's name with the words "In this sign conquer" on the night before his victory over one of his rivals for the

empire (314). It was rather the knowledge that the enemy forces contained a large proportion of Christian troops. He saw the value not only of their predominance in the army, but of their ecclesiastical organization as the framework of a civil administration. Moreover, the last of his rivals, Licinius, made the mistake of persecuting the Christians, and thus gave Constantine another motive for conciliating them.

Constantine's religious convictions are still something of a puzzle, as they probably were to himself. He retained pagan inclinations, especially towards Mithraism, which had come near to defeating Christianity as the established religion of the Empire. But in fact there was no established religion in Constantine's day. Not until the reign of Theodosius I, more than a generation later, did Christianity achieve that status (380). The effect of Constantine's edict of toleration (313) was simply that there was no official religion at all. He himself was baptised only on his death-bed—a not unusual practice. At his funeral the ceremonial was pagan rather than Christian. Ambiguity, also, enveloped his intentions towards his new capital. He called it the "New Rome", and wished it to be unsullied by pagan cults. But temples as well as churches were allowed to be built there. Though it might be a replica of Rome even to the point of being built on seven hills, it was only under Constantine's successors that the city was invested with the trappings of a capital—a senate and magistracies. He claimed to have received the command of God to build Constantinople, so it must be primarily a Christian city. But Christianity was to prevail only gradually, and not by enforcement.

From The Riches Of Our Cultural Heritage

From the "Axion Esti" by Odysseas Elytis
(from GENESIS)

GENESIS V

Then I came to understand the sea-murmur
and the long endless whispering of trees
I saw red jugs lined up on the mole
and closer by the wooden window shutter
where I lay sleeping on my side
the North Wind spoke in a louder tone
And I saw
girls as beautiful and naked and smooth as pebbles
with a bit of black in the nook of their thighs
and that abundant and luxurious spread of it
along the shoulder blades
some erect blowing the Conch Shell and others writing
with chalk words strange and enigmatic:
ROES, ESA, ARIMNA
NUS, MORIMLATITY, YLETIS
small cries of birds and hyacinths
or other words of July
At the stroke of eleven
five fathoms deep perch gudgeon sea-bream
with enormous gills and short tails astern
Rising higher I found sponges
and starfish
and slender silent anemones
and higher still at the water's lips
pink limpets
and half-open wing-shells and saltweed
"Precious words," he said, "ancient oaths
preserved by Time and the sure hearing of distant winds"
And close by the wooden window shutters
where I lay sleeping on my side
I pressed the pillow tight against my chest
and my eyes filled with tears
I was in the sixth month of my loves
and in my entrails stirred a precious seed

THIS
small, this great world!

(from THE PASSIONS)

PSALM I

This then is I
created for young girls and the islands of the Aegean;
lover of the roebuck's leap
and neophyte of the olive trees;
sun-drinker and locust-killer.
This is I face to face

with the black shirts of the resolute
and the empty womb of the years that aborted
its children, the seductive cries!
Air unleashes the elements and thunder attacks the
mountains.

Fate of the innocent, you are here, alone
again at the Pass!

At the Pass I opened my hands
at the Pass I emptied my hands
and saw no other riches, and heard no other riches
but cold fountains pouring out
Pomegranates or Zephyrs or Kisses.
Each with his own weapons, I said:
At the Pass I'll deploy my pomegranates
at the Pass I'll post my zephyrs guard
I'll set the old kisses free, made holy by my longing!
Air unleashes the elements and thunder attacks the
mountains.

Fate of the innocent, you are my own fate!

PSALM II

I was given the Hellenic tongue
my house a humble one on the sandy shores of Homer.
My only care my tongue on the sandy shores of Homer.
There sea-bream and perch
windbeaten verbs
green currents within the cerulean
all that I saw blazing in my entrails
sponges, medusae
with the first words of the Sirens
pink shells with their first dark tremors.
My only care my tongue with its first dark tremors.
There pomegranates, quinces
sunburnt gods, uncles and cousins
pouring oil into enormous jars;
the exhalations rising out of ravines, scenting
osier and lentisk
broom and pepper root
with the first chirping of the goldfinch,
sweet psalmodies with the very first Glory to Thee.
My only care my tongue, with the very first Glory to
Thee!

There laurel and palm branches
the incense burner and the incensing
the blessing of battles and flintlocks.
On the ground spread with the vineyard cloth
fumes of roasting meat, the cracking of eggs
and Christ is Risen
with the first gunfire of the Greeks.
Secret loves with the first words of the Hymn.
My only care my tongue, with the first words of the
Hymn!