



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

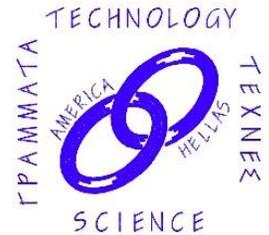
A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

From Olive Oil to Oil: Why The Reunification of Cyprus is Both Closer and Further Away Than Ever Before

On Sunday, December 14, 2014, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Endy Zemenides in a lecture titled “*From Olive Oil to Oil: Why The Reunification of Cyprus is Both Closer and Further Away Than Ever Before*”. The event will take place at 3 pm at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road). Admission is free for HLM members and students with ID, and \$5 for non-members.

Ten years ago, the Annan Plan for the reunification of Cyprus—the only such referendum since the island was invaded and divided by Turkey—when put to vote, was rejected spectacularly by the Cypriots. A decade later, the context within which the Cyprus problem is considered has changed dramatically. The Republic of Cyprus is now a member of the EU, is an ally of Israel, has turned away from the Non-Alligned Movement and towards a decidedly pro-Western stance, and—most importantly—has confirmed significant hydrocarbon deposits in its Exclusive Economic Zone.

With a new round of reunification negotiations having started at the beginning of 2014, only to be interrupted by Turkey’s October provocative intrusion into Cyprus’ EEZ with seismic and naval vessels, it is time to consider what the prospects are for an end to the 40 year Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus and what the related implications are for the Eastern Mediterranean region as well as for the Aegean.

Endy Zemenides is the Executive Director of the Hellenic American Leadership Council (HALC), a national Greek-American advocacy organization. In that capacity, he has directly worked on the latest Cyprus negotiations with the government of the Republic of Cyprus, other diaspora groups and the Hellenic and Congressional Hellenic Israel Alliance caucuses in the U.S. Congress. For the last decade, Zemenides has been a board member for the Cyprus Federation of America and the National Coordinated Effort of Hellenes, and is an Emerging Leaders Fellow for the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Annual Dinner Dance - Scholarship Awards

The Annual Dinner Dance, New Year Celebration, and

Scholarship Awards of Hellenic Link–Midwest will be held on Saturday, January 24, 2015, at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Road at Schiller Park, starting at 6:30 pm. 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. For tickets in advance at \$70 per person (\$25 for children up to 12 years old), please call 847-498-0421 or contact any of the Board members. If you wish to purchase tickets at the door on the night of the event, the price will be \$75.

In Brief

Is the Greek Economy Turning Around?

According to the monthly survey of the Greek Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research, published on Monday, November 1, 2014, last month the economic sentiment in Greece improved significantly as the economy seems to be stabilizing and some growth is anticipated in the latter half of the year.

The latest estimates of the Association of Hellenic Tourism Enterprises, show that this year the total number of visitors to Greece is expected to reach about 23 million, exceeding even the most optimistic tourism forecasts for 2014. Despite the deterioration in the economic climate in Europe and Russia, Greece is expected to enter the world’s top 15 tourism destinations. Data from the country’s main airports in the first 10 months of the year point to a 15 percent growth in tourism arrivals compared to the same period in 2013. The biggest annual increase was observed at the Kalamata Airport (72.3 percent), followed by Myconos (39 percent), Athens (29.4 percent) and Santorini (26.9 percent). In October alone, air arrivals from abroad broke the one-million barrier, posting an annual growth of 23.5 percent, with a 200 percent rise at the Kalamata Airport and a 38.6 percent increase at the Athens Airport.

Data from the Bank of Greece shows that in the first half of 2014 foreigners doubled their investment in Greek properties, mostly holiday homes, compared to the same period in 2013. Taking advantage of bargain prices, from January to June 2014, foreigners invested 117.4 million euros in Greek real estate. Since the start of the crisis six years ago, in Greece holiday home prices have dropped more than 40 percent. The growth in real estate investments has been attributed not only to the drop in

prices, but also to the constant increase in tourism arrivals and to government measures that have made real estate transactions more attractive, such as the reduction of the transfer tax from 8–10 percent last year to 3 percent now, and the concession of a residence permit to non-European Union citizens who buy properties valued 250,000 euros or more. These investments have generated optimism that the stock of unsold holiday properties, estimated at around 30,000–40,000 across the country, may gradually be absorbed, and this could give a lift to the collapsed real estate market in Greece.

Greece met its fiscal target in 2012 and surpassed it last year after the general government recorded a primary surplus compared to a flat prediction by the bailout program. On November 14, 2014, an article in Bloomberg declared: “Greece ended its worst recession in more than a half-century, emerging from a period marked by two bailouts and financial-market turmoil that almost pushed the country out of the euro.” According to Eurostat data, Gross Domestic Product increased 0.7 percent in the third quarter, and the economy grew 1.7 percent from a year earlier.

On November 4, 2014, the European Commission reported that the Greek economy will end six years of recession in 2014, with the sky high unemployment finally falling slightly. The Commission predicts that the Greek economy will grow by a slim 0.6 percent this year, then pick up to 2.9 percent in 2015 and 3.7 percent in 2016. Despite these positive signs, the state of its public finances is fragile, and EU officials have signaled that some sort of credit line for Greece is in the works.

At the end of the year, Greece's public debt would stand at 175.5 percent of annual output, nearly three times the EU limit of 60 percent, and too high for Greece to win over bond markets. Unemployment dropped to 25.9 last August and is predicted to fall to 22 percent by 2016.

But this promising picture is threatened by political uncertainty. A minimum of 180 votes in the Parliament is needed to elect a new president next February. This is much higher, than the slim majority of 155 that supports the government. The Greek constitution requires new elections if the parliament would fail to elect a president.

The leftist party SYRIZA, which enjoys a lead in the opinion polls, but has the support of only 26% of the voters, is demanding new elections. The markets have reacted negatively to the prospect of new elections, driving the yield-to-maturity of the 10-year Greek bond to above 8 percent and that of the 5-year bond above 7 percent (November 3, 2014). New elections could lead to a protracted political instability that could drive the Greek economy to another tailspin.

Yield of European Bonds

Yields of most low-rated eurozone bonds fell on Monday, November 16, 2014, after European Central

Bank President Mario Draghi said that unconventional monetary policy measures could include the buying of sovereign bonds. He also said the ECB would continue to do “whatever it takes” within its mandate to save the euro, and reiterated the single currency was irreversible. Italian 10-year bond yields fell to 2.29 percent, while equivalent Spanish yields fell to 2.21 percent. Irish and Portuguese yields also dipped, while Greek yields remained higher, with the benchmark 10-year bond yield closing at 8.07 percent, up from 8.02 percent on the previous Friday.

Greek hotel voted Europe's best all-inclusive unit

A poll of TripAdvisor's online users showed that the Ikos Oceania Club in Halkidiki is considered the continent's best and is the only European entry in the world's top 25 all-inclusive hotels, at number 21. Greece has a strong presence in the European top 25, as the all-inclusive system is growing fast in the country. Four other such hotels have made the rankings, with Club Med Gregolimano on Evia at number 14, Holiday Village Rhodes at 16, Nana Beach on Crete at 18 and Atlantica Porto Bello Royal on Kos ranked 20th. Meanwhile the Myconos-based Bill & Co Suites picked up the Best Beach or Coastal Boutique Hotel in Europe Award at the World Boutique Hotel Awards 2014 in London.

From Our History

The Fate of the Vanquished

Excerpt from S. Runciman's book "The Fall of Constantinople, 1453" continued from the previous issue

The church was still thronged. The Holy Liturgy was ended, and the service of matins was being sung. At the sound of the tumult outside the huge bronze gates of the building were closed. Inside the congregation prayed for the miracle to save them. They prayed in vain. It was not long before the doors were battered down. The worshippers were trapped. A few of the ancient and infirm were killed on the spot; but most of them were tied or chained together. Veils and scarves were torn of women to serve as ropes. Many of the lovelier maidens and youths and many of the richer-clad nobles were almost torn to death as their captors quarreled over them. Soon a long procession of ill-assorted little groups of men and women bound tightly together was being dragged to the soldiers' bivouacs, there to be fought over once again. The priests went on chanting at the altar till they too were taken. But at the last moment, so the faithful believed, a few of them snatched up the holiest vessels and moved to the southern wall of the sanctuary. It opened for them and closed behind them; and there they will remain until the sacred edifice becomes a church once more.

The pillage continued all day long. Monasteries and convents were entered and their inmates rounded up.

Some of the younger nuns preferred martyrdom to dishonor and flung themselves to death down well-shafts; but the monks and the elder nuns now obeyed the old passive tradition of the Orthodox Church and made no resistance. Private houses were systematically plundered; each plundering party left a little flag by the entrance to show when a house had been thoroughly emptied. The inhabitants were carried off along with their possessions. Anyone who collapsed from frailty was slaughtered, together with a number of infants who were held to be of no value; but in general lives were now spared. There were still great libraries in the city, some secular and many more attached to monasteries. Most of the books were burnt; but there were Turks astute enough to see they were marketable objects and saved a number that were later sold for a few pence to anyone who might be interested. There were scenes of ribaldry in the churches. Many jeweled crucifixes were borne away with Turkish turbans rakishly surmounting them. Many buildings were irreparably damaged.

By evening there was little left to plunder; and no one protested when the Sultan proclaimed that the looting now should cease. The soldiers had enough to occupy them during the next two days sharing out the loot and counting the captives. It was rumored that there were about fifty thousand of them, of which only five hundred were soldiers. The rest of the Christian army had perished, apart from the few men who had escaped by sea. The dead, including the civilian victims of the massacre, were said to number four thousand.

The Sultan himself entered the city in the late afternoon. Escorted by the finest of his Janissary Guards and followed by his ministers, he rode slowly through the streets to the Church of the Holy Wisdom. Before its gates he dismounted and bent down to pick a handful of earth which he poured over his turban, as an act of humility towards his God. He entered the church and stood silent for a moment. Then, as he walked towards the altar, he noticed a Turkish soldier trying to hack up a piece of the marble pavement. He turned on him angrily, and told him that permission to loot did not involve the destruction of buildings. Those he reserved for himself. There were still a few Greeks cowering in corners whom the Turks had not yet bound and taken away. He ordered that they should be allowed to go in peace to their homes. Next, a few priests came out from the secret passages behind the altar and begged him for mercy. Them too he sent away under his protection. But he insisted that the church should at once be transformed into a mosque. One of his ulema climbed into the pulpit and proclaimed that there was no God but Allah. He himself then mounted on to the altar slab and did obeisance to his victorious God.

When he left the Cathedral the Sultan rode across the square to the old Sacred Palace. As he moved through its half-ruined halls and galleries it was said that he murmured the words of a Persian poet: "The spider

weaves the curtains in the palace of the Caesars; the owl calls the watches in Afrasiab's towers". With the Sultan's progress through the city order was restored. His army was sated with booty, and his military police saw to it that the men returned to their bivouacs. He rode back to his camp through quiet streets.

Next day he ordered all the booty that had been taken to be displayed before him and selected from it the proportion to which he as commander was entitled; and he saw that a proper share was given to those of his troops whose duties had not allowed them to take part in the pillage. He reserved for himself all the captive members of the great families of Byzantium and such of its high officials as had survived the massacre. He freed at once most of the noble ladies, giving many of them money so that they might redeem their families; but he retained the fairest of their young sons and daughters for his own seraglio. Many other youths were offered liberty and commissions in his army on condition that they renounced their religion. A few of them apostasized; but the greater part preferred to accept the penalties of loyalty to Christ. Amongst the Greek captives he discovered Lucas Notaras the Megadux and some nine others of the Emperor's ministers. He himself redeemed them from their captors and received them graciously, releasing the Megadux and two or three others. But many of Constantine's other officials, among them Phrantzes, were not identified and remained in captivity.

No such mercy was shown to the Italian prisoners. Minotto, the Venetian Bailey, was put to death with one of his sons and seven of his leading compatriots. Among them was Catarino Contarini, who had already been ransomed from Zaganos Pasha's troops but who was retaken, and another seven thousand gold pieces demanded for his release. This was a sum that none of his friends could pay. The Catalan Consul, Pere Julia, was also executed, with five or six of his fellow-Catalans. Archbishop Leonard had been captured but was not recognized, and was soon ransomed by merchants from Pera who had hastened to the Turkish camp to rescue Genoese compatriots. Cardinal Isidore was even luckier. He had abandoned his ecclesiastical robes, giving them to a beggar and wearing the beggar's rags in their place. The beggar was captured and slain, his head being displayed as the Cardinal's, while Isidore was sold for practically nothing to a Pera merchant who had recognized him. The Turkish prince Orhan had also tried to escape in disguise; he had borrowed the habit of a Greek monk, hoping that his perfect knowledge of Greek would save him from suspicion. But he was captured and betrayed by a fellow-prisoner, and was decapitated on the spot.

The Genoese galley to which the wounded Giustiniani had been borne was one of those that managed to escape from the Golden Horn. He was landed at Chios, and there he died a day or two later. To his own followers he remained a hero; but the Greeks and Venetians, greatly

though they had admired his energy, his gallantry and his leadership throughout the siege, considered that in the end he had proved himself a deserter. He should have had the courage to face pain and death rather than risk the whole collapse of the defense by his flight.

Many even of the Genoese felt shame for him. Archbishop Leonard blamed him bitterly for his untimely terror.

(to be continued)

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry by Constantine Kavafy

ΚΑΙΣΑΡΙΩΝ

Εν μέρει για να εξακριβώσω μια εποχή,
εν μέρει και την ώρα να περάσω,
την νύχτα χθες πήρα μια συλλογή
επιγραφών των Πτολεμαίων να διαβάσω.
Οι άφθονοι έπαινοι κ' η κολακείες
εις όλους μοιάζουν. Όλοι είναι λαμπροί,
ένδοξοι, κραταιοί, αγαθοεργοί·
κάθ' επιχείρησιν των σοφοτάτη.
Αν πεις για τες γυναίκες της γενιάς, κι αυτές,
όλες η Βερενίκες κ' η Κλεοπάτρες θαυμαστές.

Όταν κατόρθωσα την εποχή να εξακριβώσω
θάφινά το βιβλίο αν μια μινεία μικρή,
κι ασήμαντη, του βασιλέως Καισαριώνος
δεν ειλκυε την προσοχή μου αμέσως.....

Α, να, ήρθες συ με την αόριστη
γοητεία σου. Στην ιστορία λίγες
γραμμές μονάχα βρίσκονται για σένα,
κ' έτσι πιο ελεύθερα σ' έπλασα μες στον νου μου.
Σ' έπλασα ωραίο κ' αισθηματικό.
Η τέχνη μου στο πρόσωπό σου δίνει
μια ονειρώδη συμπαθητική εμορφιά.
Και τόσο πλήρως σε φαντάσθηκα,
που χθες την νύχτα αργά, σαν έσβυνεν
η λάμπα μου —άφισα επίτηδες να σβύνει—
εθάρρεψα που μπήκες μες στην κάμαρά μου,
με φάνηκε που εμπρός μου στάθηκες· ως θα ήσουν
μες στην κατακτημένην Αλεξάνδρεια,
χλωμός και κουρασμένος, ιδεώδης εν τη λύπη σου,
ελπίζοντας ακόμη να σε σπλαχνισθούν
οι φαύλοι —που ψιθύριζαν το «Πολυκαισαρίη».

ΦΩΝΕΣ

Ιδανικές φωνές κι αγαπημένες
εκείνων που πεθάναν, ή εκείνων που είναι
για μας χαμένοι σαν τους πεθαμένους.

Κάποτε μες στα όνειρά μας ομιλούνε·
κάποτε μες στην σκέψη τες ακούει το μυαλό.

Και με τον ήχο των για μια στιγμή επιστρέφουν
ήχοι από την πρώτη ποίησι της ζωής μας —
σα μουσική, την νύχτα, μακρυνή, που σβύνει

KAISARION

Partly to throw light on a certain period,
partly to kill an hour or two,
last night I picked up and read
a volume of inscriptions about the Ptolemies.
The lavish praise and flattery are much the same
for each of them. All are brilliant,
glorious, mighty, benevolent;
everything they undertake is full of wisdom.
As for the women of their line, the Berenices and
Cleopatras,
they too, all of them, are marvelous.

When I'd verified the facts I wanted
I would have put the book away had not a brief
insignificant mention of King Kaisarion
suddenly caught my eye...

And there you were with your indefinable charm.
Because we know
so little about you from history,
I could fashion you more freely in my mind.
I made you good-looking and sensitive.
My art gives your face
a dreamy, an appealing beauty.
And so completely did I imagine you
that late last night,
as my lamp went out—I let it go out on purpose—
it seemed you came into my room,
it seemed you stood there in front of me, looking just as
you would have
in conquered Alexandria,
pale and weary, ideal in your grief,
still hoping they might take pity on you,
those scum who whispered: "Too many Caesars."

VOICES

Voices, loved and idealized,
of those who have died, or of those
lost for us like the dead.

Sometimes they speak to us in dreams;
sometimes deep in thought the mind hears them.

And with their sound for a moment return
sounds from our life's first poetry—
like music at night, distant, fading away.