



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

Promoting Social Cohesion through European Schools: The Case of Greece

On Sunday, October 4, 2015, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents *Dr. Angelyn Balodimas-Bartolomei*, professor at North Park University (Chicago), in a lecture titled: “*Promoting Social Cohesion through European Schools: The Case of Greece*”. 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 current HLM members and students with ID, and \$5 for non-members.

Within the past few decades, European societies have become increasingly multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-religious. The changing face of the European Union has brought on new challenges for social inclusion and cohesion of migrants and immigrants in all Member States. Consequently, this transformation has led to the creation of numerous legal frameworks such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Maastricht Treaty, and the provisions of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights – all which are designed to enforce mutual respect, tolerance, and protection of the diverse people within Europe. Whereas education is seen as an instrument of social integration and a means for promoting social identity, the recognition of otherness has become a highly prioritized objective of educational policies and institutions throughout the EU. However, there are often obstacles in implementing such measures due to the differing cultural, historical, social, and political contexts of each country. Such differences lead to a divergence of attitudes and perspectives concerning multiculturalism, assimilation, integration, and interculturalism.

This presentation examines the stance of social cohesion in Greece, a homogenous society that was unprepared to deal with its sudden influx of migration. It particularly focuses on the pedagogical orientation taken by the Greek government for the promotion and encouragement of social cohesion within the Greek educational system while also investigating the various, existing, educational provisions available for immigrant students. Insights are provided by comparing the Greek educational landscape to other EU school systems. Lastly the presentation addresses key challenges that the schools have encountered in attempting to eliminate

xenophobia, racial discrimination, aggression and unrest on behalf of Greece’s “Others”.

Dr. Angelyn Balodimas-Bartolomei is a professor in the School of Education at North Park University (Chicago). She received a BA in Greek Studies & Social Work from Deree College in Athens, Greece; a BA in Greek Pedagogy from Rallios Pedagogical Academy of Greece; an MA in Linguistics & ESL from Northeastern Illinois University; and a PhD in Comparative International Education & Policy Studies from Loyola University, Chicago.

Her research areas include comparative studies on: Greek and Italian Americans; Greek Romaniote Jews; Southern Italian Griko communities; Holocaust Education; the Greek Crisis & Education; Anti-Mafia Education; Cultural Diversity in Foreign Language Textbooks; the Regional Dialect of Colognora, Tuscany; and Post World War II Tuscan Artisan Immigrants in Chicago.

In addition to several journal and magazine articles, Angie is the author of “*Footsteps to Athina—A Traveler’s Guide to Athens & Greek Culture*”.

“Byzantine Humanism and the Italian Renaissance”

On Sunday, November 15, 2015, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents *Dr. John W. Barker*, in a lecture titled: “*Byzantine Humanism and the Italian Renaissance*”. 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 current HLM members and students with ID, and \$5 for non-members.

If not “Greek by ethnicity, for many hundreds of years the Byzantines did cherish the treasures of Classical Greek language and literature. By the thirteenth century Byzantines began to think of themselves in “Hellenic” terms after all. Then, as the Byzantine state was entering phases of dismal decay and decline, a series of peripatetic and then expatriate Greek scholars discovered the hunger in Italy, among the early Western Humanists, for recovering the Greek language and literature that had been lost to them over the centuries. To these Byzantine scholars is due the recovery of ancient Greek literature and thought for the subsequent Western heritage. Ironically, the speculations of Byzantine scholars

became the foundation for the establishment by Erasmus of a recreated "Classical" pronunciation of the Greek language, as distinct from the Medieval and Modern sounds.

Dr. John W. Barker earned a B.A. at Brooklyn College and his graduate degrees at Rutgers University. He is a retired professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he taught Medieval History from 1962 to 1999. His specialty was Byzantine History and Civilization, with additional fields in the Crusades and the history of Venice. He has also explored in his courses the relationship of music and the other arts to history. Long a passionate music-lover, he assembled an enormous record collection of classical music and a large library. He has been a staff record reviewer for the American record guide for some 55 years. He has done much radio broadcasting on music, for 37 years for Wisconsin Public Radio, and then for 12 years for the local station WORT. He has been active as a music journalist, and is currently the music critic for the local Madison weekly *Isthmus*. He has published numerous articles and books on both history and music.

In Brief

The Flight of Greek Companies to Other Countries

<http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-greek-business-exodus-to-safe-haven-bulgaria-2015-7>

Faced with a deep economic crisis at home, at least 11,000 Greek companies have found a safe haven in neighboring low-wage Bulgaria -- the poorest member of the European Union.

"We have stability here: reliable taxation, sound legislation and a positive environment," said Ioannis Politis, manager of Greek hygiene products company Septona, which established a plant in the northern Bulgarian city of Ruse 10 years ago.

Some 120 large Greek businesses set up in Bulgaria in the 2000s in sectors such as retail, metallurgy, fuel distribution, construction and real estate.

A rising number of small and medium Greek companies — especially ones that trade with Europe, the Balkans and Russia— have continued moving to Bulgaria to take advantage of its lower taxes.

Another Greek businessman said: *"Bulgaria gave me an opportunity to survive, which is difficult in Greece these days. It is almost impossible to run a business in Greece, companies disappear within one, two, three months because the taxes and (bank) rates are very high."*

The crisis in Athens has also spurred the flight of Greek capital into Bulgaria.

According to Krasen Stanchev of the Sofia-based Institute for Market Economics, *"Greek enterprises invested 4.5 to 5 billion euros in six years in Bulgaria's economy,"* and between 50,000 and 60,000 Greeks opened accounts in Bulgarian banks over the same period, he added.

The Bulgarian central bank assured investors last month that the four banks with Greek shareholders operating in Bulgaria -- which control some 21 percent of Bulgarian banking assets -- had *"above-average levels of liquidity and capital adequacy"*.

Bulgaria itself defaulted on its debt in 1990 after the fall of Communism, and was again on the brink of bankruptcy in 1996-97 after the collapse of 14 banks.

Bulgaria's public debt stands at 28.8 percent of output, one of the bloc's lowest, compared to Greece's 177 percent.

The Greek newspaper *Kathimerini* reported recently that foreign companies are revisiting their plans drafted in 2011 and 2012 for reducing their activities in the Greek market or even departing altogether, with a number of Greek-owned businesses following their example.

The introduction of capital controls, combined with the absence of reforms that would have encouraged entrepreneurship have lead many firms to revise their investment plans and strategies regarding Greece.

US-owned pharmaceutical and medical equipment firms are moving closer to leaving the Greek market. These are companies to which the Greek state (especially the social security funds) owes significant amounts of money, in the range of many millions of euros. They started considering their departures in the spring, when the uncertainty increased, and they are now closer to a final decision.

A major multinational group active in food production with four plants in the country is examining the reduction of its presence in Greece. Another multinational in the food and drink sector, that has been in decline for years, is seeking to disengage itself from its non-alcoholic beverage activity in Greece.

More and more Greek enterprises are also contemplating heading abroad. A recent survey by Endeavor Greece showed that 23 percent of local firms have immediate plans to leave the country to enjoy greater security, stability and liquidity. Business associations are reporting that there has been an increase in calls to law firms and chambers in the last few weeks inquiring about requirements for the emigration process.

Some estimates say one in every 10 firms in northern Greece will move beyond the country's borders in the next few months.

From Our History

Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind

From the Raleigh Lecture on History, read before the British Academ in 1933, by British classical scholar and writer Sir W. W. Tarn

What I am going to talk about is one of the great revolutions in human thought. Greeks of the classical period, speaking very roughly, divided mankind into two classes, Greeks and non-Greeks; the latter they called barbarians and usually regarded as inferior people, though occasionally someone, like Herodotus or Xenophon, might suggest that certain barbarians possessed qualities which deserved consideration, like the wisdom of the Egyptians or the courage of the Persians. But in the third century B.C. and later we meet with a body of opinion which may be called universalist; all mankind was one and all men were brothers, or anyhow ought to be. Who was the pioneer who brought about this tremendous revolution in some men's way of thinking? Most writers have had no doubt on that point; the man to whom the credit was due was Zeno the founder of the Stoic philosophy. But there are several passages in Greek writers which, if they are to be believed, show that the first man actually to think of it was not Zeno but Alexander. This matter has never really been examined; some writers just pass it over, which means, I suppose, that they do not consider the passages in question historical; others have definitely said that it is merely a case of our secondary authorities attributing to Alexander ideas taken from Stoicism. I want to consider today whether the passages in question are or are not historical and worthy of credence; that is, whether Alexander was or was not the first to believe in, and to contemplate, the unity of mankind. This will entail, among other things, some examination of the concept which Greeks called *Homonoia*, a word which meant more than its Latin translation Concord means to us; it is more like Unity and Concord, a being of one mind together, or if we like the phrase, a union of hearts; ultimately it was to become almost a symbol of the world's longing for something better than constant war. For convenience of discussion I shall keep the Greek term *Homonoia*.

Before coming to the ideas attributed to Alexander, I must sketch very briefly the background against which the new thought arose, whoever was its author; and I ought to say that I am primarily talking throughout of theory, not of practice. It may be possible to find, in the fifth century, or earlier, an occasional phrase which looks like a groping after something better than the hard-

and-fast division of Greeks and barbarians; but this comes to very little and had no importance for history, because anything of the sort was strangled by the idealist philosophies. Plato and Aristotle left no doubt about their views. Plato said that all barbarians were enemies by nature; it was proper to wage war upon them. Aristotle said that all barbarians were slaves by nature, especially those of Asia; they had not the qualities which entitled them to be free men, and it was proper to treat them as slaves. His model State cared for nothing but its own citizens; it was a small aristocracy of Greek citizens ruling over a barbarian peasantry who cultivated the land for their masters and had no share in the State - a thing he had seen in some cities of Asia Minor. Certainly neither Plato nor Aristotle was quite consistent; Plato might treat an Egyptian priest as the repository of wisdom, Aristotle might suggest that the constitution of Carthage was worth studying; but their main position was clear enough, as was the impression Alexander would get from his tutor Aristotle.

There were, of course, other voices. Xenophon, when he wanted to portray an ideal shepherd of the people, chose a Persian king as shepherd of the Persian people. And there were the early Cynics. But the Cynics had no thought of any union or fellowship between Greek and barbarian; they were not constructive thinkers, but merely embodied protests against the vices and follies of civilization. When Diogenes called himself a cosmopolite, a horrible word which he coined and which was not used again for centuries, what he meant was, not that he was a citizen of some imaginary world-state - a thing he never thought about - but that he was not a citizen of any Greek city; it was pure negation. And the one piece of Cynic construction, the ideal figure of Heracles, laboring to free Greece from monsters, was merely shepherd of a Greek herd till after Alexander, when it took color and content from the Stoics and became the ideal benefactor of humanity. All that Xenophon or the Cynics could supply was the figure of an ideal shepherd, not of the human herd, but of some national herd.

More important was Aristotle's older contemporary Isocrates, because of his conception of *Homonoia*. The Greek world, whatever its practice, never doubted that in theory unity in a city was very desirable; but though the word *Homonoia* was already in common use among Greeks, it chiefly meant absence of faction-fights, and this rather negative meaning lasted in the cities throughout the Hellenistic period, as can be seen in the numerous decrees in honor of the judicial commissions sent from one city to another, which are praised because they tried to compose internal concord. (*to be continued*)

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

“Nefelai” (“The Clouds”) by Aristophanes

STREPSIADES

Look: who's that dangling up there in the basket?

STUDENT Himself.

STREPSIADES Who's Himself?

STUDENT Sokrates.

STREPSIADES

Then call him down. Go on. Give a great big shout.

STUDENT

Hastily and apprehensively taking his leave.

Er ... you call him. I'm a busy man. *Exit Student.*

STREPSIADES O Socrates!

No answer from the basket. Yoohoo. Sokrates!

SOKRATES

From a vast philosophical height.

Well, creature of a day?

STREPSIADES

What in the world are you doing up there?

SOKRATES

Ah, sir, I walk upon the air and look down upon the sun from a superior standpoint.

STREPSIADES

Well, I suppose it's better that you sneer at the gods from a basket up in the air than do it down here on the ground.

SOKRATES

Precisely. You see, only by being suspended aloft, by dangling my mind in the heavens and mingling my rare thought with the ethereal air, could I ever achieve strict scientific accuracy in my survey of the vast empyrean. Had I pursued my inquiries from down there on the ground, my data would be worthless. The earth, you see, pulls down the delicate essence of thought to its own gross level.

As an afterthought.

Much the same thing happens with watercress.

STREPSIADES

Ecstatically bewildered. You don't say? Thought draws down ... delicate essence ... into watercress. O dear little

Sokrates, please come down. Lower away, and teach me what I need to know!

SOKRATES What subject?

Sokrates is slowly lowered earthwards.

STREPSIADES

Your course on public speaking and debating techniques. You see, my creditors have become absolutely ferocious. You should see how they're hounding me. What's more, Sokrates, they're about to seize my belongings.

SOKRATES

How in the world could you fall so deeply in debt without realizing it?

STREPSIADES

How? A great, greedy horse-pox ate me up, that's how. But that's why I want instruction in your second Logic, you know the one-the get-away-without-paying argument. I'll pay you any price you ask. I swear it. By the gods.

SOKRATES

By the gods? The gods, my dear simple fellow, are a mere expression coined by vulgar superstition. We frown upon such coinage here.

STREPSIADES

What do you swear by? Bars of iron, like the Byzantines?

SOKRATES

Tell me, old man, would you honestly like to learn the truth, the real truth, about the gods?

STREPSIADES

By Zeus, I sure would. The real truth

[At this point the chorus of clouds enters, singing.]

STREPSIADES

Holy Zeus, Sokrates, who were those ladies that sang that solemn hymn? Were they heroines of mythology?

SOKRATES

No, old man. Those were the Clouds of heaven, goddesses of men of leisure and philosophers. To them we owe our repertoire of verbal talents: our eloquence, intellect, fustian, casuistry, force, wit, prodigious vocabulary, circumlocutory skill.

(to be continued)