



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

Greek Theatre in Modern Dance: An Alternative Archaeology

On Sunday, December 13, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Professor Artemis S. Leontis, in a lecture titled “*Greek Theatre in Modern Dance: An Alternative Archaeology*”. The event will take place at 3 pm at the Four Points 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 \$5 for non-members.

Greek theatre is an important component in the work of great figures of modern dance from Isadora Duncan to Martha Graham. From the mid 1920s to 1940, the lesser known American choreographer, composer, and director Eva Palmer Sikelianos experimented in Greece and in the U.S. with ways to animate ancient drama. Drawing on unpublished photographs, correspondence, and notes, this talk unearths a little-known episode in the story of modernism’s encounter with the Greek legacy involving Palmer Sikelianos and the “father” of modern dance Ted Shawn, and shows Palmer Sikelianos to be a missing link in modern dance’s Greek story. Through this episode, it explores how performance artists pursued a popular, non-material archaeology using observation, intuition, and practice to retrace elements of the past that decay immediately.

Artemis Leontis is Associate Professor of Modern Greek at the University of Michigan. She has published essays on Greek culture in Greek and English. She has just published *The Culture and Customs of Greece*, a reference book covering all dimensions of Greek culture (history, religion, society, literature, music, dance, art, architecture, theatre, film, leisure, sports, food) for a general educated audience. Previous books are *Topographies of Hellenism: Mapping the Homeland; Greece; A Travelers' Literary Companion*, an edited volume of short stories by Greek authors; “*What These Ithakas Mean...*”. *Readings in Cavafy*, coedited with Lauren E. Talalay and Keith Taylor; and *Culture and Customs of Greece* (forthcoming); she has curated two exhibits: *Women's Fabric Arts in Greek America* (Columbus, Ohio 1994) and *Cavafy's World* (University of Michigan, 2002). She is writing a book on Eva Palmer-Sikelianos.

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 23, 2010, 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. For tickets in advance, \$65 for adults and \$25 for children and students, please call 847-498-3686, 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 \$70.

In Brief

The EU Accession Progress for Turkey and FYROM.

The Commission of the European Union (EU) released on October 14, 2009 its reports on the EU accession progress for Turkey and FYROM.

The Commission points out that Turkey has made no progress towards the full implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement. Turkey has kept its ports closed to vessels from the Republic of Cyprus despite several calls by the EU to Turkey to fulfill its obligations. Turkey has made no progress in normalizing bilateral relations with the Republic of Cyprus. Civilian vessels prospecting for oil on behalf of the republic of Cyprus were hindered by the Turkish navy on several occasions during the reporting period.

“The threat of casus belli in response to the possible extension of Greek territorial waters made in the resolution adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1995 still remains”, despite EU Council guidance on “good neighborly relations” in December 2008.

“A considerable number of formal complaints were made by Greece about continued violations of its air space by Turkey, including flights over Greek islands.”

“...Turkey continues to object to EU-NATO cooperation which would involve all EU Member States.” Turkey objects to Cypriot participation in EU-NATO cooperation activities and vetoes the participation of Cyprus activities as a matter of course.

“The Greek minority continues to encounter problems with education and property rights, including on the islands of Gokseada (Imvros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos).”

The Report notes the 2008 European Court of Human Rights decision regarding the violation of property rights of the Greek Orthodox Church in Turkey. It notes the continuous problems encountered by Greek nationals in inheriting and registering property in Turkey and related Court decisions adverse to Turkey. It identifies problems relating to the operation of the Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarchate and the Armenian Orthodox Church.

The Report has a very “mild” discussion regarding FYROM relations with Greece and the “name issue”, and counsels avoidance of actions with negative impact on good neighborly relations.

The Turkish Secretary of Foreign Affairs: Revival of the Ottoman Balkans

According to the Greek Newspaper *To Vima* (October 26, 2009), the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, *Ahmet Davutoğlu*, speaking at a meeting in Sarajevo on “*The Ottoman Heritage and the Moslem Communities of the Balkans*” said: “We want to see a new state of affairs in the Balkans, which would be founded upon political values, economic interdependence, cooperation and a cultural harmony. All these were secured in the Ottoman Balkans ... We will revive this age, the Ottoman Balkans were a success and now they should be revived. We will make the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, together with Turkey, the epicenter of the world political stage. This is the goal of our foreign policy for the future and we will succeed.”

From Our History Bloody December

From the book “Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of the Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949” by Professor Andre Gerolymatos

What is certain is that immediately following the arrival of the Soviets, the KKE and EAM suddenly decided to join the Government of National Unity as well as place ELAS under British command.

Until Soviet documents are released, the exact purpose of the Popov Mission will remain a partial mystery. Unknown to both the KKE and the British liaison officers in Greece were the negotiations between Stalin and Churchill over the division of the Balkans into Soviet and British spheres of influence.

These discussions culminated with the so-called Percentages Agreement between Churchill and Stalin in Moscow on 9 October 1944. The minutes of the meeting between the two leaders indicate that after dealing with the problem of Poland, Churchill turned to Stalin and said:

There were two countries in which the British had particular interest. One was Greece. He was not worrying about Rumania. That was very much a Russian affair and the terms which the Soviet Government had proposed were reasonable and showed much statecraft in the interests of general peace in the future. But in Greece it was different. Britain must be the leading Mediterranean Power and he hoped Marshal Stalin would let him have the first say about Greece in the same way as Marshal Stalin about Rumania. Of course, the British Government would keep in touch with the Soviet Government.

According to the minutes, Stalin acknowledged Churchill's position with regard to Greece and said that it was a "serious matter for Britain, when the Mediterranean route was not in her hands." He agreed with the Prime Minister that "Britain should have the first say in Greece."

Following this amicable exchange, Churchill writes:

The moment was apt for business, so I said "let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans. Your armies are in Rumania and Bulgaria. We have interests, missions, and agents there. Don't let us get at cross-purposes in small ways. So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have ninety per cent predominance in Rumania, for us to have ninety per cent say in Greece, and go fifty-fifty about Yugoslavia?"

While this was being translated, Churchill produced what he called a "naughty document" showing a list of Balkan countries and the proportion of interest in them of the Great Powers. Churchill then pushed this paper across the table to Stalin, who had by then heard the translation. After a brief pause, recalls Churchill,

He took his blue pencil and made a large tick upon it, and passed it back to us. After this there was a long silence. The penciled paper lay in the center of the table. At length I said, "Might it not be thought rather cynical if it seemed we had disposed of these issues, so fateful to millions of people in such an offhand manner? Let us burn the paper." "No you keep it," said Stalin.

The fortunes of the Greek communists and the left-wing resistance with respect to the immediate postwar period, insofar as Stalin was concerned, took second place to the security and grand strategy of the Soviet Union. In early September 1949, Stalin confided to Nikos Zachariadis that he could not advance the Red Army into Greece in 1944 because he did not wish to clash with the British; besides, the Soviet Union did not have a navy for such an undertaking.

The KKE learned about the Percentages Agreement in 1952, which raises an intriguing question: Had they known earlier, would they have acted otherwise in December 1944? As devout communists and Stalinists, the KKE leadership had to conform its policies to those of the Soviet Union and accept doing so without knowing all the facts. The needs of the Soviet motherland superseded the immediate ambitions of the Greek communists, and

the KKE had little choice but to toe the line blindly, even when the leadership could not even be certain what that line was.

Under the leadership of Nikos Zachariadis, the policies of the KKE were practically dictated by the Soviet Union. Zachariadis had been Moscow's choice to head the KKE in the 1930s, and he managed to oversee the Bolshevization of the party during this critical period. The senior leadership of the Communist Party identified exclusively with Moscow and any deviation resulted in purges.

The occupation, however, altered the dynamic of the KKE and shifted the direction of the party to other men, especially after Zachariadis remained in prison and was subsequently transferred to Dachau concentration camp and thus took no part in the events that followed. George Siantos, one of the senior cadres who had evaded capture, took over the direction of the KKE, and thanks to him the communists established the mass-based EAM, which quickly dominated the resistance.

Siantos, a tobacco worker by profession, was a mainland Greek from a small village in Thessaly, central Greece. To those who met him, he appeared less a fanatic communist leading a revolution than a kindly village elder. A self-made man with little formal education beyond the fourth grade, he started working from the age of thirteen as a tobacco worker in Karditsa and at fifteen joined the Tobacco Workers' Union. Within a short time he became an active member and took part in strikes, demonstrations, and riots. In the early 1920s he joined the KKE.

He survived the purges, but he was demoted in the party hierarchy and lost the post of general secretary. In 1934 he was downgraded to a substitute member of the politburo, but a year later he was reinstated as a full member. After 1936, he was one of the few KKE leaders to escape arrest and thus, by default, became part of the handful of senior KKE leaders in a position to rebuild the party during the early period of the occupation. Friends and enemies alike described him as a mild-mannered and soft-spoken individual. C. M. Woodhouse, who spent three years in Greece trying to counter the influence of the KKE in the resistance, describes him: "Ruthless and ambitious though he was, Siantos had a simple bonhomie and good humor. He was a tobacco worker, like many other communists, but he seemed to have no bitterness about his hard life."

In contrast to some of the other, more sophisticated KKE leaders, most of whom had grown up in cities and large towns, he had a better understanding of the Greek villager and an appreciation of the power of nationalist sentiment in Greece. Siantos understood that in order for the party to exploit the opportunities created by the war, it was necessary to drop the narrow and dogmatic communist rhetoric and replace it with moderate and nationalist

slogans that appealed to mainstream society. The establishment of EAM as a patriotic and pan-Hellenic organization gave the KKE legitimacy and placed it on a par with the mainstream political parties. Despite EAM's invitation to all to join a common front to fight the Axis, the traditional parties viewed EAM as a front for the KKE and declined to participate—they failed, however, to offer an alternative. This omission enabled the KKE, through EAM, to establish a predominant and powerful influence over the armed resistance and to hijack the intellectual discourse over the future political reorganization of Greece.

The KKE, under the direction of Siantos, saw the possibilities offered by the establishment of guerrilla forces—specifically, that they could be used to impose a political settlement in the aftermath of liberation. Later in the same year, Ioannidis commissioned a military plan designed to take over Athens once the German army withdrew. Ioannidis claimed that ELAS could have secured Athens and would have been in an advantageous position to oppose the arrival of the British. He had proposed this strategy to Siantos and the other KKE leaders, but at that time they were not interested. Ioannidis' hindsight is obviously self-serving and a means of distancing himself from Siantos and from the KKE policies that ultimately led to failure and defeat. In the postmortems conducted by the KKE after the December Uprising, responsibilities for the Caserta Agreement, participation in the Government of National Unity, the decision not to oppose the arrival of British troops, and the December Uprising were all consigned to Siantos and his closest associates. Sharing the grave with Siantos is the ghost that the KKE did not consider the possibility of taking over the country just after liberation. According to Ole Smith, "It is one of the KKE's cherished fairy tales that at the time of the country's liberation from the Germans there were no plans for a military takeover and that the party did not face squarely the question of political power."

After Siantos' mysterious death in 1947, his opponents went so far as to accuse him not only of incompetence, but also of being an agent of the security services, which they argued explained why he went along with the Caserta Agreement and intentionally lost the Battle of Athens. In October 1950, at the Third Party Conference he was denounced by Zachariadis as a "traitor and an agent of the class enemy."

Siantos had decided that he would direct the battle only against the forces of the provisional government and avoid striking the British. He believed that if ELAS could seize control of Athens quickly, the British would have little choice except to recognize a new government dominated by the KKE. To avoid provoking the British, the battle had to be confined to the capital and waged against government targets.

(to be continued)

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry by Andreas Karandonis (Ανδρέας Καραντώνης, 1910–1982)

Παλαιά Ωροσκόπια

Βεβαιωθείτε κύριε Σιλβέστρε ότο το μαγαζί μου είναι
από τα καλύτερα.
Δε θέλω να πω το καλύτερο γιατί ο υψών εαυτόν
ταπεινωθήσεται
Κα κανένας ποτέ δεν ξέρει το είδος και την ώρα της
τιμωρίας.
Όταν γενιόμον χιλιάδες όντα γεννιόνταν μαζί μου
διορισμένα στη ζωή με δικιά του προθεσμία το καθένα
για έργα μάθηση έρωτα για προσκυνήματα στα μονα-
στήρια
για ξεκαλοκαιριάσματα στις θάλασσες και στα βουνά
και για τ' ανώτατα αξιώματα της Πολιτείας.
Εγώ φυσικά γεννήθηκα αρσενικός. Με βλέπετε κύριε
Σιλβέστρε.
Χάρηκαν οι γονιοί μου και γιόρτασε ο πατέρας μου τη
γέννησή μου
πυροβολώντας τρεις φορές στ' αντικρυνά κεραμίδια
ενώ τα δέντρα φέγγαν μες στο χιόνι γιατί έζωνε τη γης
βαρύς χειμώνας.
Άνθρωποι φώναζαν χαρούμενοι κι ο πατέρας μου
άνοιξε το παράθυρο και κάρφωσε το μάτι του στο
πρώτο αστέρι
– κι έτυχε εκείνη τη βραδιά να στέκεται στον ουρανό
ένα μονάχα αστέρι
Αυτό που το λέμε αποσπερίτη.
Φαντάστηκε ο πατέρας μου ότι παρακαλώντας το
άστρο
Θα συμφωνούσαν για τη μοίρα μου.
Ποιός γονιός δε θέλει το γιό του βασιλιά;
Μα καθώς βλέπεις κύριε Σιλβέστρε δεν έγινα βασιλιάς
Μήτε τίποτα παρόμοιο.
Ανεδείχθην βεβαίως εν τη κοινωνία καλος
επιχειρηματίας
Ένα από τα καλύτερα καταστήματα της πόλεώς μας.

Old Horoscopes

You can be sure Mr. Silvestro that my shop is one of
the best.
I don't want to say the best because even the mighty
are humbled
and you never know what the punishment will be or
when it will come.
As I was being born thousands were being born with
me
each assigned his own stretch of time
for working learning loving for worshipping at
monasteries
for summers at the shore or in the mountains
and for the highest offices of the state.
I of course was born male. As you can see, Mr.
Silvestro,
My parents were glad and my father celebrated my
birth
by shooting three times at the rooftiles across the
way
while the trees shone in the snow since a heavy
winter had girded the earth.
People were shouting with joy and my father
opened the window and fixed his eye on the first
star
– for it just so happened that there was only one star
in the sky
the one we call the evening star.
My father imagined that by wishing on it
he and the star together would decide my fate.
And what parent doesn't want his son to be king?
But as you can see, Mr. Silvestro, I didn't become
king
or anything of the sort.
Of course I've made a name for myself in society as
a good businessman
with one of the best shops in our city.

Αθήνα

Στίχοι: Σώτια Τσώτου

Ξέρω μια πόλη που η άσφαλτος καίει
και δέντρου σκιά δε θα βρεις
μεγάλη ιστορία προγόνοι σπουδαίοι
λυχνάρι και τάφος της γης

Θυμίζεις Αθήνα γυναίκα που κλαίει
γιατί δεν τη θέλει κανείς
Αθήνα, Αθήνα πεθαίνω μαζί σου
πεθαίνεις μαζί μου κι εσύ

Ξέρω μια πόλη στη νέα Σαχάρα
μια έρημο όλο μεπτό
οι ξένοι οι στόλοι λαθραία τσιγάρα
παιδιά που δεν ξέρουν κρυφτό

Θυμίζεις Αθήνα γυναίκα που κλαίει
γιατί δεν τη θέλει κανείς
Αθήνα, Αθήνα πεθαίνω μαζί σου
πεθαίνεις μαζί μου κι εσύ

Ξέρω μια πόλη στη γη της Αβύσσου
κουρσάρων κι ανέμων νησί
στης Πλάκας τους δρόμους πουλάς το κορμί σου
για ένα ποτήρι κρασί

Θυμίζεις Αθήνα γυναίκα που κλαίει
γιατί δεν τη θέλει κανείς
Αθήνα, Αθήνα πεθαίνω μαζί σου
πεθαίνεις μαζί μου κι εσύ.