



Greek Minister of National Defence, Nikos Panagiotopoulos, meets UK Defence Minister, Ben Wallace, in UK, 7 February 2023



Seferis Office at the Hellenic Residence

ALPHABET POETS

*Poetry
Competition*

#GreekLanguageDay
FEBRUARY 9

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Greek Minister of National Defence, Nikos Panagiotopoulos' visit to the UK



Marking a new milestone in the enduring defence and security relationship between Greece and UK, on February 7, Greece's Defence Minister Nikos Panagiotopoulos signed with UK Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, the Joint Vision Statement (JVS), an agreement aimed at further strengthening and deepening Greece-UK defence and security ties. The JVS, signed aboard the HMS Diamond at HM Naval Base in Portsmouth, underlines the two countries' shared will to take forward our cooperation as partners and NATO Allies and our determination to work closely together to tackle shared threats, enhance resilience, and achieve shared security objectives.

The visit kicked off early in the morning of the same day with Minister Panagiotopoulos being warmly welcomed by his British counterpart in London where he was greeted by a Guard of Honour on Horse Guards Parade.

Defence Minister Panagiotopoulos and UK Defence Secretary Wallace then travelled to Portsmouth for a tour of the HMS Diamond, the Type45 air defence destroyer described by the UK Royal Navy as a jewel in the naval crown and one of the most advanced warships in the world. In the meeting that followed they had the opportunity to exchange views on regional security issues, focusing mainly on the Eastern Mediterranean and Ukraine, and to discuss ways to further deepen the defence and security cooperation between Greece and the UK building on our common values and principles and our shared commitment to International Law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, commonly known as UNCLOS. As strategic partners and NATO allies, both sides reaffirmed their respect of sovereignty, sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all States.

Giorgos Seferis – A new 'Museum' in the heart of London



This year we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the awarding of the Nobel Prize to the Greek poet Giorgos Seferis, for his eminent lyrical writing, inspired by a deep feeling for the Hellenic world of culture". So, at the initiative of the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mrs. Katerina Sakellaropoulou, the Embassy of Greece in the UK presents 32 personal objects of the Nobel Laureate, found in the collection of Anna Londou and Nikos Paisios.

During his speech at the Nobel Banquet in Stockholm, in 1963, he stressed: "I belong to a small country. A rocky promontory in the Mediterranean, it has nothing to distinguish it but the efforts of its people, the sea, and the light of the sun. It is a small country, but its tradition is immense and has been handed down through the centuries without interruption. The Greek language has never ceased to be spoken. It has undergone the changes that all living things experience, but there has never been a gap. This tradition is characterized by love of the human; justice is its norm. In the tightly organized classical tragedies the man who exceeds his measure is punished by the Erinyes. And this norm of justice holds even in the realm of nature".

Giorgos Seferis lived in the Hellenic Residence at 51 Upper Brook Street between 1957 and 1962 when he served as Ambassador in London. The Residence is a landmark for the Greek community in the UK, a meeting place for the Greek and British societies. In 2000, a commemorative Blue Plaque by the English Heritage was placed on the building to mark his 100th anniversary.

Today 32 objects, including books, paintings and official documents, are placed in his office in Upper Brook Street to mark the 60 years since his Nobel Prize award. Seferis' personal objects are now returned to the place where he served as the Greek ambassador to the UK.

9 February : International Greek Language Day

The International Greek Language Day, observed annually on 9 February, aims to highlight the role that Greek has played in world culture, and to encourage Diaspora Greeks as well as anyone interested in Hellenic culture to learn more about the Greek language. Established in 2017, it coincides with Commemoration Day of Greece's national poet, Dionysios Solomos (8 April 1798 – 9 February 1857), author of the iconic Hymn to Liberty, a long poem inspired by the Greek struggle for independence, which became the national anthem of Greece and Cyprus. Dionysios Solomos is regarded the national poet of Greece, not only because he wrote the Hymn to Liberty that became our country's national anthem, but also because he set the basis of Greece's contemporary poetic tradition and paved the way to modern literature.

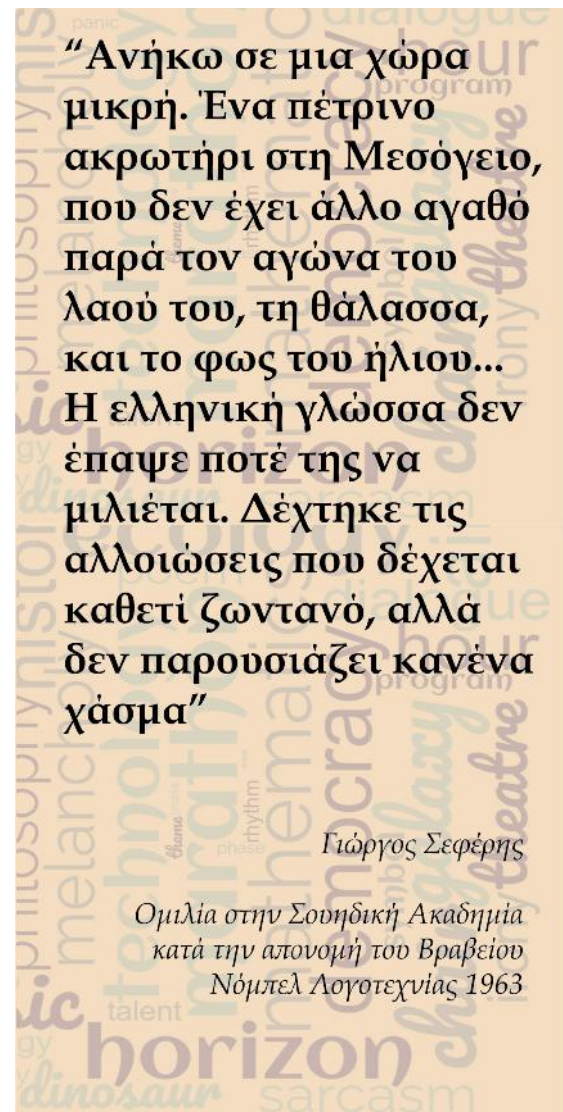
The Greek language is also the foundation of Western civilization as many Greek words have been adopted into the English language and are still used today. In 1957 and 1959, the Greek economist Professor Xenofon Zolotas, Governor of the bank of Greece and Governor of the Funds for Greece, delivered two speeches in English using Greek words only. As Professor Zolotas said: "I always wished to address this Assembly in Greek, but I realized that it would have been indeed Greek to all present in this room. I found out, however, that I could make my address in Greek which would still be English to everybody. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I shall do it now, using with the exception of articles and prepositions only Greek words".

This day we do not just celebrate the "Greek Language". We celebrate what could be called "an ancient language in the service of a modern Revolution". We honour the language of great men of literature such as Dionisios Solomos, Andreas Kalvos, who also lived in London, but also great philhellenes like Lord Byron.

This year the Embassy of Greece in London invited pupils from schools across the UK to participate in the "Alphabet Poets" Competition. We had 72 poems submitted and we want to take the opportunity and thank all pupils across the UK who entered our poetry competition. We were really impressed by their amazing work and creativity. All 72 poems were exceptional. The great prize of our competition is a return flight ticket from London to Athens, courtesy of Aegean Airlines. Unfortunately due to the devastating news of the deadly train collision in Greece and the subsequent declaration of a 3-day national mourning by the Greek PM, the event for the celebration of the International Greek Language Day was cancelled.

Also, under the initiative of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs children from 23 countries across the world recited some of the most renowned Greek verses of all time. In order to celebrate the continuity and timelessness of the Greek language, 23 young people, who attend Greek schools and Greek language programmes, were asked to recite verses by some of the most prominent Greek poets and authors. The video titled "The Greek Language in its Timelessness... The Re-enchantment of the World" was created at the initiative of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Diaspora Greeks and the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad & Public Diplomacy of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs to celebrate this year's International Greek Language Day.

You can watch the video [HERE](#).



Greek Ambassador meets with the Mayor of London Borough of Bexley



On the 1st February 2023, Greek Ambassador in UK, Mr Ioannis Raptakis, met with the 58th Mayor of London Borough of Bexley's, Councillor Nick O' Hare, who is originated from the island of Chios.

Councillor O'Hare, in his welcoming speech the Greek Ambassador, talked about the importance of his presence in Bexley, due to a very strong and large Greek community living in Bexley the last 60 years. He also outlined the long-standing history of two nations, Greek and British, making a special mention to World War II, where the two nations fought side by side and expressed his hope that the two nations will always work together for a safer world. The contribution of Greek culture all around the world and especially in Britain cannot be ignored, Mr Mayor said, and he emphasized the value of the Greek civilization and language and its influence in British academic world.

From his side, Greek Ambassador, Mr Raptakis, also stressed the traditional friendship between UK and Greece saying that the two countries have always been at the same side of history, following same traditions and same values. He underlined the symbolic importance of having Greek people in British public administration and thanked the Mayor for the warm welcome. Greek Ambassador, also, met with representatives of Greek community as well as executive members of the Borough, while students from the Greek School Christ the Saviour, Welling, recited Greek poems and performed the Greek anthem, in an atmosphere of joy and national pride.



CEO of Hellenic Development Bank, Ms Athina Chatzipetrou, visits London



In February 10, the CEO of Hellenic Development Bank SA, Ms Athina Chatzipetrou, met with the Senior Management of the British Business Bank (BBB), the Confederation of Business and Industry (CBI) and TheCityUK in London. The discussions focused on enhancing entrepreneurship via exchanging best practices and knowledge. Ms Chatzipetrou had also fruitful talks on developments in the banking sector with the Executive Committee of the Hellenic Bankers Association in UK.

Application for uniform Schengen visa by intellectual or artistic creators



Holders of UK travel document, who intend to work in Greece for a time period between 1 and 90 days as intellectual or artistic creators, including, particularly, authors, novelists, film directors, painters, sculptors, actors musicians, singers, choreographers, scenographers, as well as artists and staff of audiovisual works taking place wholly or partly in Greece, have to submit an application to issue uniform Schengen visa. That visa is granted for entrance into Greece for a period between 1 and 90 days, within any period of 180 days, with a right of access to work exclusively for the sake of creating intellectual or artistic works.

For more information regarding the procedure and the submission of visa applications: <https://www.mfa.gr/uk/en/visa.html?mission=lon>

“Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean” at the Fitzwilliam Museum



200 unique objects from Crete, Cyprus, and Sardinia travelled -most of them for the very first time- to the UK to be part of the The Fitzwilliam Museum’s major new exhibition that takes the visitor on a 4,000-year journey to discover the stories, life and culture of Islanders and the way insular identity helped shape the Mediterranean world.

At the centre of the exhibition -which is the result of a longstanding research project- lies the question of insular identity, of what being an islander means and has meant throughout history.

The objects brought together from the three Mediterranean islands highlight how being of an island affected and shaped everyday life, art and creativity; they help us understand the ways these island cultures reflected, and reveal how creative, adaptable, and inventive islanders have been in dealing with environmental and cultural changes, assimilations and invasions of their land and cultural horizons.

Contrary to common belief that sees notions of “otherness” and “isolation” frequently associated with that of insularity, the exhibition argues that island life and the islanders’ history have been mainly defined by how connected they are. Similarly, the exhibition sees the Mediterranean itself as a linking rather than a dividing body, a bridge motivating and maintaining informal and formal connections.

The exhibition, which opened on February 24 and will run until June 4, is under the auspices of the Greek Embassy in UK, the High Commission of Cyprus in the UK and is organised in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and Sports, Greece; the Department of Antiquities, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works, Cyprus; and the National Archaeological Museum, Cagliari, Sardinia.

Find out more: <https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/visits-us/exhibitions/islanders>

“LABYRINTH: Knossos, Myth & Reality” at the Ashmolean Museum



«LABYRINTH: Knossos, Myth & Reality», is the title of the exhibition at Ashmolean museum which explores one of the most celebrated stories of modern archaeology: the Labyrinth, the Minotaur and the Palace of Knossos. The exhibition features more than 200 objects, over 100 of which are on loan from Athens & Crete. They are shown, for the first time in more than a century, alongside the Ashmolean’s collections and the archive of photographs and documents that illustrate the moment when the Palace of Knossos was discovered between 1900–1905. The story of the Minotaur and the Labyrinth remains one of the most enduring of classical myths and Knossos is now one of the most visited archaeological sites in Greece.

The exhibition traces the story of the excavation of Knossos, in 1878 when the remains of an ancient building at Knossos were initially discovered by a Cretan businessman and scholar, Minos Kalokairinos. Local authorities prevented him from properly excavating the site as Crete was under the Ottoman Empire, and until it gained independence, any finds were at risk of being removed to Constantinople. Kalokairinos’s discoveries attracted international attention and in 1900, it was the British archaeologist and director of the Ashmolean, Sir Arthur Evans, who was granted permission to dig. Evans began his excavation, convinced that this building was the Labyrinth. He rapidly found colourful frescoes, clay tablets showing an early system of writing and even a room with an intact stone throne. He referred to this labyrinthine building as the ‘Palace of Minos,’ and he was able to establish that it was around 4,000 years old. The exhibition features some of the finest Minoan objects that Evans uncovered, many on loan from the Heraklion Archaeological Museum. They are reunited with drawings made during the excavation from the Sir Arthur Evans archive.

Find out more: <https://www.ashmolean.org/exhibition/labyrinth-knossos-myth-reality>

Interview with the curator of Ashmolean Museum, Andrew Shapland on Knossos exhibition



Tell us a few things about the exhibition...What do you like the most on the current display? What are the challenges and/or the difficulties you encountered while planning this exhibition? Is it easy to acquaint the British public with Bronze Age and Crete?

- Knossos is an amazing archaeological site: not only is it associated with the mythical Labyrinth, but it was also the centre of the Minoan civilisation and even the earliest farming settlement in Europe. What I like most is the way we have placed the excavations of Sir Arthur Evans at the site in context, starting with the search for the Labyrinth and the discovery of the palace by Minos Kalokairinos in 1878 and finishing with spectacular finds made by Greek archaeologists only a few years ago.

Some of the British public, particularly those who go on holiday to Crete, are familiar with Knossos and Evans's concrete reconstructions but I hope this will deepen their engagement with the site. I also hope that it will encourage other people to travel to Crete and see Knossos for themselves! I have been travelling to Crete for nearly 20 years, and have done fieldwork at Knossos, but the one time when I really needed to go in order to discuss the loan list and look at objects was in 2020, and I was stuck in Oxford! As a result I had to choose some things without seeing them first, and negotiate loans by email, but everyone in Crete has been very helpful so I hope it hasn't affected the exhibition too much. It was exciting to see some objects for the first time when they came out of the crates at the installation for the exhibition.

As we can see from your work and publications, you have an expertise on Bronze Age and Classical Greece. In what way this Age and Greece is fascinating and how is this displayed in the current exhibition?

-The Bronze Age, particularly the second millennium BCE, when the palaces such as the one at Knossos flourished on Crete and mainland Greece, appears to be the inspiration for many Greek myths. These myths were shaped and retold by later Greek authors and have become familiar to us now as a result. At the start of the exhibition is a striking sculpture of the Minotaur which was found in Athens. Theseus was a mythical king of Athens and the sculpture shows that even as late as the Roman period the Athenians celebrated his triumph over the Minotaur. We use objects to show how these myths were told in antiquity, including Greek vases showing Theseus and the Minotaur, papyrus fragments with the texts of Homer and Euripides, and coins from Knossos showing the Labyrinth. What I find fascinating is how these myths changed over time, but still have a recognisable Bronze Age core. Later in the exhibition we look at the various depictions of bulls and bull-leaping at Knossos, and also evidence for human sacrifice, and ask how these might have been related to the myth of the Minotaur.

You have managed to include in this exhibition more than 100 objects which have never left Crete and Greece before. What do you think of the exhibitions in rotation worldwide and for the discussion over the new role of museums in modern society, their ethical responsibility and their disengagement from past mentalities?

The permanent displays at the Heraklion Archaeological Museum (and the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, where the sculpture of the Minotaur comes from) offer a chance for visitors to see spectacular objects in their country of origin, and this is an important aspect of tourism to Greece. Visitors can see the archaeological site of Knossos in the morning and finds from the same site in the afternoon. Temporary exhibitions like this one allow us to show these objects in a different context: in Oxford we have brought finds made by Sir Arthur Evans together with his archaeological archive of notebooks, plans and drawings for the first time in over 100 years. But I hope that once the exhibition has finished we will continue the Ashmolean Museum's successful collaboration with institutions in Greece, by sharing Evans's archive digitally and also perhaps sending other things on loan to Crete in return. Museum collections in Greece and abroad are the product of history but I think collaborative efforts such as this exhibition benefit both sides.

Presentation of the volume: "Hagia Sophia. The Churches of the Wisdom of God around the World" in London



The Interparliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy presented in London the volume entitled "Hagia Sophia: The Churches of the Wisdom of God around the World" at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Divine Wisdom (St. Sophia) in Moscow Road. The Volume includes brief presentations and photos of 37 historic monumental Churches dedicated to the Wisdom of God, the Churches of Hagia Sophia.

The volume presented is part of an initiative that aims to raise public awareness on the monument of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. This is a monument of world cultural heritage, recognized by UNESCO. Since the 1930' it served as a museum, but in 2020 Turkey converted Hagia Sophia into a mosque and today the monument is in danger of destruction.

In this context the Internarparliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy, with the participation of MPs from 25 countries, has undertaken a campaign to awaken international public opinion. They have published a volume with 37 emblematic, historical temples, from Scotland to China, dedicated to Hagia Sophia (God's Wisdom). Six of them are Catholic churches, so this is a matter of concern for the Christian world as a whole and not just for the Orthodox Church.

MP Maximos Charakopoulos, secretary of the Interparliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy, holds this initiative: "Preservation and protection of the world's cultural heritage are at the core of our constitution", Mr Charakopoulos stated.

The event was attended by Professor Richard Clogg, Gold Cross of the Hellenic Order of Honour in 2002, Commander of the Order of the Phoenix in 2022 and author of the article "Another Hagia Sophia suffered first" where he describes his experience of participating in the maintenance of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond in the 1960's, which was also converted into a mosque.

Elefsina is officially the European Capital of Culture for 2023



The city of Elefsina is officially the European Capital of Culture for the year 2023. This universal celebration inaugurated on Saturday 4 February with an impressive event on the seafront and a colourful programme of exhibitions, concerts and parallel events all over the city. The emblematic start of the 2023 Eleusis programme is a conception of General Artistic Director Michail Marmarinos, directed by distinguished British director Chris Baldwin.

The Opening Ceremony was inspired by the history and the mythology of the city: the Processions and the link between the Upper World and the Underworld. Four Processions of people arrived in Elefsina from sea and land: TimeCircus, the art collective from Belgium, having travelled on foot 3,000 km all over Europe on a Landship; the Elefsinian Movement, 14 local associations comprising the cultural mosaic of the city, bringing music and dance to its streets; dozens of Hemerodromes, starting from Kerameikos, walk the 21 kilometres of the Sacred Way. The inaugural journey of the "Sacred" Sea Route, a unique cultural experience at sea, sails through 7 historic municipalities, connecting Piraeus and Elefsina for the first time in modern history, accompanied by the sounds of top Greek composers. The Nymphs appeared unexpectedly throughout the city streets, under the choreographic direction of Konstantinos Rigos and the costume design of Olga Karaververi. Last but not least, a very impressive event took place along the seafront, titled Mysteries of Transition, where the grand stage was the sea itself. Original music by Angelos Triantafyllou and lighting by Petko Tanch, framed by CHÓRES by Marina Satti, all culminated in the emergence of a bright mythical entity from the water in a spirit of optimism.

*Photo Credits: John Kouskoutis
<https://2023eleusis.eu/>*

Agenda

Labyrinth: Knossos, Myth & Reality

When: 10/02/2023- 30/07/2023

Where: The Ashmolean Museum, Cambridge

<https://www.ashmolean.org/exhibition/labyrinth-knossos-myth-reality>

Islanders: The Making of the Mediterranean

When: 24/02/2023 – 4/06/2023

Where: The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

<https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/visit-us/exhibitions/islanders>

The Light of Greece

When: 13/03/2023 – 15/03/2023

Where: Jill George Gallery

<https://www.jillgeorgegallery.co.uk/>

Greece's strategy vis-à-vis Turkey: from 'hard' to 'smart balancing'?

When: 14 /03 / 2023, 6.00-7.30pm

Where: LSE, Hellenic Observatory

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/Hellenic-Observatory/Events/Research-Seminar-Series/2022-2023/Greece-Turkey/Greece-Turkey>

A female take on Cypriot History: The case of three contemporary women authors

When: 16/03/2023, 7.00pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/gender-and-history-in-modern-cypriot-writing/>

Exploring 'Culture Wars' in Greece: mapping new conflicts and voter support

When: 22 /03 / 2023, 6.00-7.30pm

Where: LSE, Hellenic Observatory

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/Hellenic-Observatory/Events/Research-Seminar-Series/2022-2023/Culture-wars/Culture-Wars>

«140 χρόνια από τη γέννηση του Νίκου Καζαντζάκη» – Τιμητική Εκδήλωση Λονδίνο

When: 18/03/2023, 6.00-9.00 pm

Where: Greek Library of London

<https://www.greeklibrary.org/>

Nistisima: The secret to delicious Mediterranean vegan food

When: 23/03/2023, 7.00pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/nistisima-the-secret-to-delicious-mediterranean-vegan-food/>

Seminar: The Archbishops of Cyprus 'Betwixt Greeks and Saracens'

When: 23/03/2023, 5.30pm

Where: River Room, King's College Strand Campus

https://21in21.co.uk/s/?fbclid=IwAR2eREHHgFZG16EjIMG5OkYE_170m_qyztJ-gcPJhhyjDVBsNfAOOnEgg_ds

Book Presentation and Discussion: TAKTIKON: A Digital Introduction to the Byzantine State Officials of the Thematic Administration

When: 24/03/2023, 5.30pm

Where: River Room, King's College Strand Campus

https://21in21.co.uk/s/?fbclid=IwAR2eREHHgFZG16EjIMG5OkYE_170m_qyztJ-gcPJhhyjDVBsNfAOOnEgg_ds

Love, War and the Self in Renaissance and Modern Cypriot Poetry

When: 30/03/2023, 7.00pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/love-war-and-the-self-in-renaissance-and-modern-cypriot-poetry/>

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