



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR HELLENISM TO SURVIVE IN THE DIAPSORA?

Hellenism is always a difficult subject to cover a let alone explore and I for one, am not convinced that this topic alone will cover all the bases. Hellenism as an idea or a concept has spanned the centuries and somehow has managed to survive. Like the olive tree that has been cut down so will a new shoot finds its way to the surface and grow stronger than its predecessor.

I wonder whether the concept of Hellenism will survive in the Diaspora in today's age, in a world where we have global communication, where resources have become the new weapons of political and strategic importance. Why therefore is it so important to retain our Hellenic heritage in the Diaspora?

Today, very few Hellenic communities in the Western world are persecuted, reviled, targeted and/or ostracized as a culture. People are free to live where they want, join any community, educational institution, follow whatever faith want and raise their families according to their own needs and expectations. Many Hellenes in the Diaspora who have intermarried have retained their Hellenic heritage, while others have discarded it all together. Having said that one needs to ask the question, what Hellenism is about: What does it mean? What compels a person to retain those links? What are those drivers?

Are the drivers, (1) need to know who we are, (2) where we came from, (3) peer group pressure (4) fear of assimilation as against integration, (5) government policies, (6) the immediate environment, (7) security, (8) fitting in (9) belonging, (10) feeling special, (11) links to the past, (12) self preservation (13) economic and property (14) keeping a culture alive, (15) language, (16) Religion, (17) food, (18) dance, (19) music, (20) freedom, or just wanting to feel special. Whatever ones drivers are, I could fathom a guess that it may include all of the above and much more. (See below for articles)

When mixed marriages do occur and they happen quite often, many families and I don't mean all, embrace the new cultures. The families look for common interests, concepts and aspects from both sides of the cultural divide and welcome the marriage of the two cultures wherever possible. However, that does not always work amicably as one side of the family may appear to dominate the other as to religion, children's names, living conditions, etc, and etc.

When families grow, one wonders whether communication between the two families becomes less and as a result the children do not get the opportunity to profit from both sides of the cultural divide. How does Hellenism fit into the overall mosaic of mixed marriages and those especially in a Diaspora environment? What happens when marriages fail and what happens to the children? Based on anecdotal evidence, separation and divorce going of mixed marriages have the same propensity to fail as those of the same cultural group.

Will Hellenism be further diluted as a result of the absence of one parent for whatever reason and will it be important to maintain those links. This dilemma is facing many couples who are of mixed marriages today and there are no known studies on the residual of effects of such breakups.

What then is the fate of Hellenism if there is no other influx of a new wave of Hellenic peoples? Is therefore important for Hellenism to be relevant in the future or will it become entangled and enmeshed within the dominant culture prevailing at the time. If Hellenism is not lost, what form will it have taken and will it be the same as that of the original concept.

I would have to confess that the following articles (URLS) depicted below have gathered from internet sources and at first glance may appear to answer all of the questions as to what constitutes Hellenism. However I have my misgivings and doubt that they cover at all the thoughts and feelings of those who consider themselves Hellenes in the Diaspora.

<http://www.greece.org/ahepa/d8/dahlnsm.html>

<http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/explore-hellenism/hellenism/>

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_is\\_hellenism](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_hellenism)

## WHAT IS HELLENISM?

<p>The word "Hellenism" is a derivation from the Greek word "Ellinismos". Dona Papadimitriou (AHEPA Family D22).</p> <p><u>In the Greek Language</u></p> <p>1) For the last 3,500 years, the word "Ellinismos" has been used to describe the <u>people</u> of Greek lineage.</p> <p>2) Starting about 2,500 years ago, "Ellinismos" has also been used to describe <u>a set of values for living</u>. Even though these values were invented by the Greeks of that time, anyone could have them, whether Greek or not. These values became the basis of our today's Western civilization.</p> <p><u>In the English Language</u></p> <p>In the last few centuries, the Greek word "Ellinismos" was adopted by the English language as "Hellenism". Its meanings in English derive from the Greek meanings:</p> <p>* Hellenism (noun) (First appeared in 1609)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Grecism 1</li> <li>2: devotion to, or imitation of ancient Greek thought, customs or styles</li> <li>3: Greek civilization, esp. as modified in the Hellenistic period by oriental influences</li> <li>4: a body of humanistic and classical ideals associated with ancient Greece, and includes reason, the pursuit of knowledge and the arts, moderation, civic responsibility, and bodily development.</li> </ol> <p>* Hellenic (adjective) (First appeared in 1644)</p> <p>: of or relating to Greece, its people, or its language, specifically: of or relating to ancient Greek history, culture, or art, before the Hellenistic period.</p> <p>* Hellenic (noun) (First appeared in 1847)</p> <p>See Greek 2</p>	<p>* Greek 2 (adjective) (First appeared 14th Century)</p> <p>1: of, relating to, or characteristic of Greece, the Greeks, or Greek architecture.</p> <p>* Hellenism (verb) -nized; -nising. Often capitalized. (First appeared in 1613)</p> <p>Verb intransitive: to become Greek or Hellenistic.</p> <p>Verb transitive: to make Greek or Hellenistic in form or culture.</p> <p>[Source: Adapted from Merriam-Websters Dictionary, Edition 2000, AOL reference pages.]</p> <p><a href="http://www.greece.org/ahepa/d8/dahlnsm.html">http://www.greece.org/ahepa/d8/dahlnsm.html</a></p> <p>The word "Hellenism" derived from the Greek word "Ellinismos" (ελληνισμός). In Greek, Ellinismos has been used to describe the people of Greek lineage and also to describe a set of values for living that were invented by the ancient Greeks. These values became the basis of today's Western civilization.</p> <p>First appearing in English as Hellenism in 1609, the word came to represent all things related to Greece including a body of humanistic and classical ideals associated with ancient Greece, and includes reason, the pursuit of knowledge and the arts, moderation, and civic responsibility.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/explore-hellenism/hellenism/">http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/explore-hellenism/hellenism/</a></p> <p>Hellenism means Greek Culture, Hellenization means the spread of Greek culture, including especially the Greek Language, so as to mix with other cultures</p> <p><a href="http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_hellenism">http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_hellenism</a></p>
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