

The Greek Studies Section of Jordan University (1998-2002)

Latest report (December 2002)

In October 2002 the Greek Studies Section of Jordan University in Amman completed its fourth year of existence. The HSNES which has a particular interest in Greek civilisation in the Near East has yet another reason to celebrate this anniversary. Professor Dimitris Karadimas, HSNES founding member, was the one who persistently and patiently fought for the creation of the Greek Studies in the Near East. Such a department was finally established in the summer of 1998 after initiatives by Ambassador Aristides Sandis (Amman), and began functioning during that autumn with staunch support from the Greek Ministries of Education and Culture.

The newly-founded department offered courses in modern Greek language and culture, as well as ancient Greek. With the exception of a few universities in Egypt (Cairo and Alexandria) where there is a strong tradition of Greek studies, Jordan University is the first the Near Eastern country to host a department of Greek studies. The result was a resounding success. The department which began in 1998 with five students had 25 registered for modern Greek and another 25 for ancient Greek during the 2002-2003 academic year. Considering its brief four-year duration, the department achieved significant cultural activities, including lectures and seminars on Greek civilisation, film screenings, educational field trips to Greece, organising an exhibition on Greek inscriptions and photographic exhibits. One of the events included the invitation of the Chairman of HSNES to present a series of lectures at Jordan University in Amman.

In only four years the Greek Studies Section of Jordan University succeeded in developing a sound foundation for future development. Beginning from the 2002-2003 academic year, Mr Vassilis Economides took over from Professor Karadimas, who now teaches at Cambridge University in the U.K.

The successful endeavour of the Greek Studies Section at Jordan University will hopefully encourage Greek society and institutions to support the establishment of similar such departments at other Near Eastern universities. The presence of the Greek language and culture is a key factor in the bolstering of Greece in the Near East.