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Editor's Note

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EDITOR'S NOTE

It is a pleasure to report to readers of the journal that at the Paris meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations early in July, the editors of the journal presented our candidate to become the new Managing Editor. She is Ms. Ilana Abend-David of the Girne American University, Girne (Kyrenia), Turkish Republic of North Cyprus.

The search for a new Managing Editor had begun in earnest at the last meeting of the ISCSC, held at St. Thomas University in Minneapolis, when the incumbent and much beloved former society president, Prof. Matthew Melko of Ohio, announced his decision to step down as soon as a replacement was found. Matt has served as Managing Editor, in fact if not in title, for many years, and he is also the Peer Review Editor.

The journal editors also expressed at Paris their sincere gratitude to Dr. Melko for the wonderful job he has done shepherding the storage, distribution, and retrieval of the journal and also to Prof. David Orenstein, a colleague of Dr. Melko's from the Sociology Department of Wright State University, who has been kindly serving as Associate Managing Editor for a long time.

Since Matt has also been in charge of the repository – many of the materials being stored in his own home for years – he requested in addition last summer that a new home be found for the back issues of the journal. Happily, talks with Chancellor Serhat Akpinar of Girne American University culminated in an agreement whereby that university will both take over Managing Editorship duties via its head librarian, Ms. Abend-David, and also serve as the new repository for the old issues of the journal. As a result, and after a transfer of many of our materials from the snow drifts of Ohio to the sunny Mediterranean littoral of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, on the grounds of the largest American-style university in all of Europe, our journal repository has found an excellent home.

We now have a location in which our materials will be centralized and stored, and be readily accessible to civilizationists worldwide, helping to assure that the institution will survive long after those of us currently associated with it have moved on to other realms of reality.

Our new Managing Editor and member of the Editorial team is Ilana Abend-David. Ms. Abend-David became the head Librarian of the Girne American University this past academic year. In addition, she

will be serving as Librarian of the University of Northern Virginia's new branch campus in Cyprus; this institution (full disclosure – I serve as President of the Virginia campus and as an international director) is co-located with GAU on a stunningly beautiful campus. Backed up by a jutting mountain range and facing the azure blue Mediterranean Sea near Girne (also known as Kyrenia) in the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, the campus as of Fall, 2006, is home to roughly 7,000 students. The student body comes from all over the world, but the majority are from Turkey or the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus. Instruction is generally in English.

Ms. Ilana Abend-David, the new Managing Editor, is a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York – Binghamton. While at the campus this summer, I asked her a few questions.

CCR: Welcome to the post of Managing Editor of the Journal.

IA: Thank you.

CCR: Could you describe your main jobs here in Cyprus?

IA: I am Director of the Library for Girne American University and also for the newly-created Cyprus campus of the University of Northern Virginia.

CCR: Could you describe the facilities and why we think this is such a wonderful setting for the repository of our *Comparative Civilizations Review*?

IA: This is a brand new library; the construction phase is just being completed and the air conditioning is going in this week. We have a great deal of space to store books and periodicals. The library has been on the top floor of the Millennium Building, itself only one year old, but now we are moving to an even more impressive space at the ground level, in a building which connects to the Millennium Building but is slightly downhill from it.

CCR: I notice that you have a top-of-the-line facility for archives.

IA: Yes, I am pleased to report that there is a large "compactus" waiting to incorporate the repository for the copies of the journal of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations as these arrive from the United States,

(I found out during our interview that a compactus is a machine that is used to store books on closed shelves. There are many bays to the compactus, and the researcher simply turns wheels in order to open up the various bays and access the materials.)

CCR: Are the archives going to be accessible to students and others? Is there any danger from theft, for example?

IA: No. In general, readers cannot get into the room alone. You will notice that this room is for librarians and is used for archives principally. Of course, there are over a dozen of these machines, so that will enable us to access a very large number of materials and several researchers can be working simultaneously. We hope to include in the ISCSC repository as many copies of all the editions of the *Comparative Civilizations Review* as we are sent, both by Dr. Melko and by others who may donate their collections to us. We know that there is a major collection of ISCSC materials at Dickinson College, but we would welcome any additional copies of papers that have been read over the years at the conferences, books by ISCSC authors on civilizational matters, and so forth, that members might wish to send to us for storage.

CCR: It looks to me as if thousands of books are going to be shelved in the next room in addition to the archival space that will serve as the ISCSC repository here.

IA: Yes. In addition, there are many computer stations ready to be located right outside of the archive room – 15 at least, along this wall here. Plus, we have another 100 or so computer stations two floors up in the Millennium Building, where the library used to be. What is happening is that we are converting that old library space into what we call our cybrary and others call an e-brary – an electronic library – and this space down here will be the hard copy and archives portion of the library. Library Science is changing with the times, and the facilities here will enable the fullest possible use of libraries, I believe, for quite a while to come.

CCR: It seems to me that overall, this is about to become a major library resource for the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus. The university is growing significantly. And I think that if we have parallel growth in enrollment at the University of Northern Virginia, which begins its classes on this same campus next fall, there will be quite a need by students, faculty, administrators, and TRNC readers in general, for this library. Not to mention how much we at the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations appreciate the facility.

IA: Thanks. We hope that all of these constituencies will be served adequately.

CCR: Could you cover some of the highlights of your personal academic background? Where have you studied?

IA: Well, first I took my bachelor's degree in Tel Aviv University in Art History. My special interest was ancient and medieval art and archeology. After that, I got my degree in Library Science from Bar-Ilan

University. Then, I earned my master's degree in art history at SUNY Binghamton and the thesis I wrote is on politics and archeology. I did a case study on Masada; I compare the excavation results that were submitted to the university with the book that was distributed publicly. In other words, I try to compare the dry archeological results with the way they were described in the famous book by Yigal Yadin.

CCR: Oh, yes. I remember that book. It was a staple of our home library.

IA: Well, what was the significance of it for Israelis and others? All the archeological excavations at that time in fact had to be approved by the Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, himself. Up to that period, from what I can discover, he approved only those excavations that proved the conquest of Canaan by the tribes of Israel. This meant such places for excavation as Hazor and Megiddo.

CCR: In our Spring, 2005, number we featured as the lead story an investigative report by John K. Hord, one of our leading comparative civilizationists. He wrote in great depth about Megiddo and asked whether, at a certain period of time, Megiddo was actually Jerusalem. He argues that "Jerusalem" at that time may have been a general word, not the specific place. If he is correct, there could be a major impact on the centrality and meaning of Jerusalem, both in ancient times and today, for religious, political, and national purposes, I think.

IA: In my research I found that around 1965 there developed a pan-Arabism unity movement. As a result, many people in the State of Israel felt apprehension. They wanted to show to the outside world their underdog position in their current situation. Therefore, excavating such sites as Masada meant showing the world the heroism of this minority group; how it defended itself to its very end was important in a contemporary context. To the Jewish community, in Israel and abroad, it was significant for reasons of solidarity and to the foreign governments – I argue — it enabled the state to appeal for sympathy as an underdog. After my master's degree, I continued on at SUNY Binghamton in Art History. I am now working on completion of my doctoral dissertation.

CCR: What is your topic?

IA: It is going to be a case study of the shrine and cult of St. Heribert. The shrine is located in Germany, on the outskirts of Cologne, and the building and cult flourished from the 11th to the 13th century. My paper is going to show that, although a lot of money was invested in the cult and in the production of expensive art objects, the cult did not in fact succeed in becoming a permanent entity.

Usually, the assumption is that when we have expensive art objects, it means that the cult was very successful and was able to attract and absorb a lot of funding. However, in this case, a different conclusion is apparent: the monastery located there in fact invested heavily in art in order to promote the cult – and it ultimately failed to do so. The process is the reverse of what would typically be thought to occur, therefore.

CCR: Turning to your new role with CCR, do you have any suggestions about how to improve the distribution of the journal?

IA: Certainly I look forward to working with the members and authors within the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations and I will be delighted to answer any questions – including research issues. I'm a librarian as well as a researcher, so I hope that those delving into this fascinating field will feel free to ask for my assistance on their research projects. Moreover, this island, fabled for its location at the point where many civilizations have met in the past and, depending upon how you define it, meet today, is the perfect spot for the Journal of the ISCSC to find its home library. Also, I hope that in the future the ISCSC may hold an annual meeting here and I would look forward to joining with my new colleagues in those sessions.

CCR: Could you tell our readers a bit more about yourself?

IA: Well, I am an avid reader, especially of novels. I love the theatre and greatly enjoyed living in New York City because of this.

My husband is Dr. Dror Abend-David. He is a scholar of comparative literature, holds the Ph.D. in comparative literature from New York University, and is currently an Assistant Professor at the Eastern Mediterranean University in Famagusta, Cyprus. And I have a lovely daughter, as well. She is Gil Alexandra. And, although she is barely three years old, I am proud to say that she already speaks three languages: Hebrew, English and Turkish.

CCR: Congratulations, Ilana. Finally, let me ask you: how should libraries, individual scholars, or fulfillment personnel contact you, either for old copies or for your suggestions on comparative civilizational research?

IA: I think that the best way to reach me is via email. My email address is ilana@gau.edu.tr.

Thus, the journal, as the society, reaches out to new people in new lands, ever attempting to add to the ability of all interested in the comparative study of civilization to undertake their work.

It was a wonderful conference in Paris this summer, with many fascinating papers and delightful conversations in both English and

French. All of us are indebted to our American and Japanese leaders, including Dr. Lee Snyder, Dr. Wayne Bledsoe, and, especially, Dr. Michael Palencia-Roth and Dr. Eiji Hattori, for helping to make sure it happened.

We are also deeply grateful to the wonderful leadership team from France that coordinated the meeting, especially Dr. Marie-Francoise Courel, president of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. She was joined by a team of colleagues from the Universite Paris 7 Denis Diderot, the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, UNESCO, INALCO, and Languages O'. Together, they represented a sizable and impressive segment of the elite of the contemporary French intellectual world.

Best wishes to all those who work in higher education for a very pleasant new academic year.

Joseph Drew