



The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Newsletter 39

January 2005

We wish you all a Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year 2005

We also want to take a minute to think of all those who are suffering in South-East Asia because of the earthquake and ensuing tsunami. If you want to do something about it, here are some options:

"SOLIDARITY" - N.G.O. of the Church of Greece

<http://solidarity.gr/news/index.php>

United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)

<http://www.wfp.org/index.asp?section=4>

A number of relevant agencies are listed at CNN:

<http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/12/28/tsunami.aidsites/index.html>

Similarly, many organizations (based in the US) are at:

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/tsunami/ngolist.html

Department of International Development (DFID of the United Kingdom)

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/emergencies/asian-earthquake-help.asp>

Mark your Calendar

Prometheas' Greek Movie Night

On Friday, January 14, 2005, 8:00 p.m. Prometheas will show the Greek movie H KALPIKH LYRA at St. Katherine's Church, at Falls Church, VA.

The Counterfeit Coin (I Kalpiki Lira), *In Greek with no subtitles*, is one of the most renowned films of Greek cinema. Directed by George Tzavellas in 1955, it features major stars such as Elli Lambeti and Dimitris Horn in the main roles, but also Logothetidis, Lyvikou, Myrat, Fotopoulos, Dianellos, Vrana, and others. In this and other films by Tzavellas (Agni Tou Limaniou, Soferaki, Ziliarogatos, Mia Zoi Tin Ehoume), one can experience firsthand the multifaceted, complex everyday life in a rapidly changing postwar Athens.

In the Kalpiki Lira, the engraver Anargiros Loubardopoulos (Logothetidis) decides to make a counterfeit British pound and place it in circulation. The coin promises to fulfill the dreams of the bearer, but four successive owners may be in for a surprise...

Prometheas' Greek Letters Day Celebration

On January 28th at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda, MD.

Guest speakers: Professor Carlos Montemayor and Dr. Achilles Adamantiades. After the speeches, we will cut the Vassilopita.

For more information on Prometheas' upcoming events click [here](#).

Other Events

- ***February 5th in Charlottesville, VA: The Hellenic Society of University of Virginia has its "Winter Ball" with live music by Achilles & Company.*** For information, call 804-247-4565 or email: ELLHNIDA@gmail.com
- ***February 20th: the Macedonian Association of the Greater Washington DC has its 15th Annual Dinner Dance;*** Music by Apollonia Band. Reservations by Feb 10th. For information call:
 - Angelo Abatzis: 703-281-7318
 - Stelios Kirimlis: 301-948-3570

Book Reviews

Barry Strauss, The Battle of Salamis/The Naval Encounter That Saved Greece -- and Western Civilization.

New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004.

Reviewed by Anthony Mavromatis (ahm203@yahoo.com)

In "The Battle of Salamis. The Naval Encounter That Saved Greece -- and Western Civilization" Barry Strauss tries to recount and bring to life the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. between Greece and Persia. With no known eyewitness accounts, military historian Strauss relies on Herodotus' writings a generation or so later. Still, Strauss refines and validates Herodotus's claims with accounts of other writers of his era. This extensive and meticulous research base forms the foundation for marvelously intriguing details threaded together by dynamic storytelling that will have you believing that you too are in the midst of the battle.

Starting off with some basics on the key naval weapon of war, the trireme, each chapter thereafter begins with a portrayal of a particular person, from the first rank of

Themistocles, Xerxes and Artemisia, through Polycritus of Aegina down to the unknown rowers. Strauss's emphasis on the people and characters of the war contextualizes each battle move. It also serves to highlight the importance of psychological warfare as each side seeks to outmaneuver the other.

Starting with the first naval engagement at Artemisium, Strauss draws sharp distinctions between Persia and Greece: Xerxes' ruthless rule of one versus the seemingly chaotic but democratic rule of the people of Athens, the half-hearted and coerced actions of Persia's collection of allies versus the eerily dogged determination of Spartans and Athenians. Strauss sheds light on the nature of this war as one of cultures. He highlights, what in retrospect may seem obvious to a reader today living in modern democracies, the extremes to which free people will go to maintain their freedom and the rule of law: from agreeing by vote to evacuate the entire city of Athens, to crafting creative unorthodox naval tactics at Artemisium, to fighting to the death at Thermopylae.

Yet for all these sharp distinctions, Strauss also manages to stress the importance of one man in willing the outcome of the Battle of Salamis in the Greeks' favor. Continuing his emphasis on the personalities of the war, Strauss progressively brings Themistocles in all his cunning and manipulative ways to life. When the fate of all Greek cities and Athenian democracy hung in the balance, it was effectively the unconventional leadership of one person that was the key tipping factor.

While still recognizing the enormity of the asymmetrical victory of the Greeks over the Persians, Strauss closes out the book with a compelling counterpoint epilogue "Susa". Beyond strengthening the biographical context of the book by wrapping up the lives of the people driving the story, Strauss also shows how the mighty Persian empire could have played down what to the Greeks was a glorious victory.

Sure there are a few minor criticisms. The repetition in the start of each chapter of a detailed people portrait may not be for everyone, and Strauss seems to contradict his own subtitle (that the battle saved Western Civilization) when he suggests that the Greeks may well have survived by avoiding the Persians altogether and emigrating to Italy. On the whole though this is a riveting read that brings new perspective and depth to this landmark event in Western civilization.

Note: The November/December issue of the Odyssey Magazine has a similar review of the same book.

Hellenic American National Council

Πέμπτη, 9 Δεκεμβρίου 2004

ΝΑΙ, κ. ΠΡΩΘΥΠΟΥΡΓΕ ΑΥΤΗ ΕΙΝΑΙ Η ΕΥΚΑΙΡΙΑ

*Ανοιχτή επιστολή του Προέδρου του Εθνικού Συμβουλίου κ. Θ. Σπυρόπουλου
στον Έλληνα πρωθυπουργό*

κ. Πρωθυπουργέ,

Με ιδιαίτερη ικανοποίηση λάβαμε το μήνυμα που στείλατε από τη Μόσχα στους απανταχού Έλληνες. Μας διαβεβαιώσατε πως η Ελληνική κυβέρνηση και εσείς προσωπικά θα καλύψετε τις παραλείψεις του παρελθόντος στον τομέα της πολιτικής απέναντι στην Ελληνική ομογένεια.

Πράγματι η αντιμετώπιση των Ελλήνων του Εξωτερικού δεν είναι εθνική πολυτέλεια. Είναι ιστορική αναγκαιότητα και επιταγή. Και πρέπει όντως να γίνει με όραμα, αυτοπεποίθηση και κοινωνική ευθύνη.

Αναφέρατε ως άμεση προτεραιότητά σας την Παιδεία και τον Πολιτισμό. Τη διατήρηση και τη διάδοση της Ελληνικής Γλώσσας.

Ελλάδα και Παιδεία είναι έννοιες ταυτόσημες. Σ' αυτή την Ελληνική Παιδεία στηρίχθηκε ο Οικουμενικός Πολιτισμός. Σ' αυτή στρέφεται και πάλι η ανθρωπότητα για να αναζωογονηθεί. Γιατί οι Ελληνικές ιδέες είναι οι μοναδικές που επιβιώνουν ως σήμερα. Είναι πάντα σύγχρονες.

Στην Ελληνική Παιδεία θα στηριχθεί το Νέο Παγκόσμιο Πολιτισμικό Πεύμα. Γιατί αυτή πρεσβεύει την επικράτηση της Δημοκρατίας, Ελευθερίας, Λογικής, Δημιουργίας, Σεβασμού του Συνανθρώπου. Μόνον αυτή μπορεί να μας βγάλει από τα κοινωνικά προβλήματα, από την στείρα εκπαίδευση της εξειδίκευσης, από την τρομοκρατία, μισαλλοδοξία και τον θρησκευτικό φανατισμό.

Η ανθρωπότητα είναι έτοιμη για έναν νέο Φιλλελληνισμό. Την ευκαιρία αυτή οφείλετε να αξιοποιήσετε κ. Πρωθυπουργέ. Την ευκαιρία που δίνει η επιτυχία των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων στη γενέτειρα. Και οι Έλληνες του εξωτερικού είναι οι εστίες στις οποίες πρέπει να στηριχθείτε.

Ο Ελληνισμός της Αμερικής ευημερεί σε όλους τους τομείς. Είναι πρόθυμος να συνεισφέρει με έργο και πράξεις στην υπόθεση αυτή. Αυτή είναι και η μοναδική του ανάγκη από την Ελλάδα. Το γνωρίζετε.

Το Ελληνο-Αμερικανικό Εθνικό Συμβούλιο πρωτοστατεί τα τελευταία χρόνια στην προώθηση και διείσδυση της Ελληνικής Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού στις ΗΠΑ. Ζητήσαμε κατ' επανάληψη τη συνεργασία της Ελληνικής Πολιτείας και μας αγνόησαν.

Είναι απαράδεκτο κ. Πρωθυπουργέ, η Ελληνική Πολιτεία να μην έχει χαράξει εκπαιδευτική πολιτική για την ομογένεια. Η Ελληνική Ομογένεια της Αμερικής είναι η μεγαλύτερη στον κόσμο. Κι όμως, κ. Πρωθυπουργέ δεν έχει υπογραφεί καμμία διακρατική εκπαιδευτική συμφωνία!

Εσείς δηλώσατε τις προθέσεις σας. Εμείς δηλώνουμε τις δικές μας. Αξιοποιείστε μας. Ανοίξτε επιτέλους έναν γόνιμο διάλογο με την Οργανωμένη Ομογένεια.

Οχι πια, «παχειά λόγια». Οχι κατασπατάληση Ελληνικών οικονομικών πόρων για φευτο-φιέστες με την ομογένεια.. Οχι, άλλες «συμφωνίες» στο παρασκήνιο για ίδια συμφέροντα σε βάρος του παγκόσμιου Ελληνισμού. Η ιστορική αυτή ευκαιρία επιτάσσει συλλογικότητα και συνεργασία. Συντονισμό. Δεν είναι υπόθεση δύο και τριών ανθρώπων. Η Ομογένεια δεν συντονίζεται ερήμην της.

Ζητούμε διάλογο με την αρμόδια Επιτροπή της Βουλής για θέματα Ελληνισμού του Εξωτερικού. Και ο διάλογος να ανοίξει κ. Πρωθυπουργέ με τους πραγματικούς και εκλεγμένους ηγέτες της Ομογένειας, με τους Ελληνοαμερικανούς επιστήμονες, επιχειρηματίες, πολιτικούς, lobby και με εκπροσώπους των νεωτέρων γενεών. Με όλους αυτούς που τόσα χρόνια αγνόησε η Ελληνική Πολιτεία. Ας μην χάσουμε λοιπόν κι αυτή την ευκαιρία διότι όντως δεν θα μας συγχωρέσει η ιστορία.

Αναμένουμε και ευχόμαστε τα λόγια σας να γίνουν πράξεις! Αναμένουμε την πρόσκλησή σας.

Μ' εκτίμηση,

Θεόδωρος Σπυρόπουλος

Πρόεδρος του Ελληνο-Αμερικανικού Εθνικού Συμβουλίου

2155 WEST 80th Street CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60620-5315

Tel. (773) 994 2222/ Fax: (773) 602 2236

E-mail: Thspyropoulos@yahoo.com

A Byzantine Blockbuster

By CAROL VOGEL

Last spring, a group of Carmelite nuns left their cloistered home in Sugarloaf, Pa., and traveled to New York to see "Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Because they are not allowed to see men, the nuns arrived after the museum had closed, and officials there made sure only female guards crossed their paths.

In some ways, the nuns were the expected audience for the exhibition, the third in a trilogy devoted to early Christian and Byzantine art. On view were beautiful but arcane religious objects: miniature mosaics created in court ateliers of Constantinople and richly illustrated manuscripts; elaborately embroidered religious vestments and sumptuously gilded metalwork.

But to everyone's surprise - including the curators who planned the show - the religious and somewhat academic material drew a huge audience. By the time "Byzantium" ended on July 4, more than 300,000 people had come to see it, making it one of the Met's most popular shows of the year.

What drew the crowds?

"It was word of mouth. It was the positive reviews. It was the ads," said Helen C. Evans, the exhibition's curator. Universities like Oxford and the Courtauld Institute of Art in London organized special trips. So did a host of religious groups, Ph.D. candidates and just plain museumgoers.

Jeffrey K. Smith, a professor of educational psychology at Rutgers University who researches visitorship for the museum, said that visitors came prepared: before visiting, they read about the show on the museum's Web site, in much the way opera lovers read the plot and listen to the music before seeing a production.

Mr. Smith said his research also showed that about a quarter of the audience developed an interest in Byzantine art after having been to the Met's previous Byzantine exhibitions, especially the last one, "The Glory of Byzantium, A.D. 834-1261," in 1997.

"To a large extent, the audience was sophisticated," Ms. Evans said. Indeed, according to Mr. Smith's research, about 15 percent of the visitors had studied Byzantine art; 14 percent had religious ties and 4 percent were artists with an interest in the period, he said.

By the show's end, the museum had sold nearly 10,000 copies of the 658-page catalog, for which they paid \$75 for the hardcover or \$50 for paperback, making it one of the museum's best-selling catalogs of the year.

As the museum frequently does for special exhibitions, it produced a line of jewelry and objects designed around the show's theme. Some were particularly popular. A Byzantine wine-leaf gold plate cuff bracelet, priced at \$98, generated about \$20,000 in sales. The museum also sold more than 100 pieces of Byzantine-period jewelry, including an emerald cross on an emerald chain that went for \$48,700. But perhaps the biggest

surprise of all, museum officials said, was when a Los Angeles shopper snapped up two pieces of Byzantine jewelry on the museum's Web site for a total of \$33,000, by far the highest single sale it has seen on the Internet.

[Copyright 2004 The New York Times Company](#)