



## The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Newsletter 31

April 2004

### The 183<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Greek Independence Day Celebration

On Saturday, March 27, 2004 at the Grand Hall of Saint George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda, MD Prometheas in collaboration with the other organizations of the Washington Metropolitan area celebrated with great success the 183<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Greek Independence. About 300 people attended the event. The dignitaries included Mr. Angelopoulos, Minister Counselor of the Greek Embassy, who greeted the audience and spoke briefly about the significance of the day; also, present were Ms A. Klotsa, General Consul, G. Demetriades, Naval Attache as well as representatives of the Greek Armed Forces. The president of Prometheas, Mr. L. Karmires made brief remarks in turn about the meaning of our national independence and the progress Greece has made in the intervening years.

The keynote speaker was Mr. Vassilis Lambropoulos, C. P. Cavafy Chair of Modern Greek Studies, at the University of Michigan who spoke with subject "The Paradoxes of Philhellenism". He delivered a thought-provoking lecture touching on both the positive and the negative aspects of our make up as a nation during the early years following independence. To honor the philhellenes, members of Prometheas recited appropriate poems from the literature and our poet Christoforos Agritellis sang beautifully the classic demotic song of "Gero-Demos". The evening closed with Greek folk dances by the RTO Troupe under the direction of Elena and Rena Papapostolou. A reception followed.

Όπως κάθε χρόνο, διοργανώθηκε και εορτάσθηκε από τον πολιτιστικό σύλλογο ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΑΣ της περιοχής Ουάσιγκτον, η επέτειος τής Εθνικής μας Ανεξαρτησίας. Η εορτή ήταν διττή: για την Ελλάδα και για την Κύπρο, και έγινε το Σάββατο, 27 Μαρτίου, στην αίθουσα δεξιώσεων της εκκλησίας του Αγίου Γεωργίου στην Μπεθέσντα, με μεγάλη προσέλευση ομογενών. Ήταν παρόντες ο πρέσβης κ. Αγγελόπουλος, ο οποίος εκφώνησε σύντομο λόγο υπό το πνεύμα της ημέρας, η Γενική Πρόξενος, δεσποινίς Αδαμαντία Κλώτσα, ο ναυτικός ακόλουθος της Πρεσβείας, κ. Γ. Δημητριάδης, κ.α. Με σύντομο λόγο του, σχετικόν με το μήνυμα της ημέρας, απευθύνθηκε στους παρευρισκόμενους και ο πρόεδρος του ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΑ, κ. Λευτέρης Καρμίρης. Η εκδήλωση ήταν αφιερωμένη στο κίνημα του φιλελληνισμού και στα παράδοξά του. Σ' αυτό αναφέρθηκε διεξοδικά ο κύριος ομιλητής της βραδιάς, κάτοχος της Έδρας Σύγχρονων Ελληνικών Σπουδών "Κ. Π. ΚΑΒΑΦΗΣ" του Πανεπιστημίου τού Μίτσιγκαν, καθηγητής κ. Βασίλειος Λαμπρόπουλος. Με φωνή αντάξια της περιστασης,, ο ποιητής Χριστόφορος Αγρατέλλης τραγούδησε το Γέρο-Δήμο τού Παύλου Καρρέρ. Έγιναν απαγγελίες για τους φιλέλληνες ποιητές: Μπάϋρον, Σέλλευ και Κητς, και χόρεψε ελληνικούς χορούς ο όμιλος της Ρένας Παπαποστόλου. Ακολούθησε δεξίωση. Ευχόμαστε στον ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΑ και του χρόνου σε ανώτερα.

## Mark your calendar

### **“Tribute to Greece and to the Athens 2004 Olympics”**

Prometheas, with the support of the Greek Ministry of Culture, is organizing a concert of classical and contemporary music with the theme **“Tribute to Greece and to the Athens 2004 Olympics”**. The event will take place on Sunday, May 23, 2004 at 7:30 pm at the prestigious Lisner Auditorium of the George Washington University. It will be a world premiere of a concert to be conducted by the renowned composer **Dinos Constantinides**, Boyd Professor of composition at the Louisiana State University and Music Director of the Louisiana Symphonietta. A 14-member ensemble from Baton Rouge, Louisiana and the Greek mezzo soprano **Angelica Kathariou** will perform (see the [attached flyer](#)). A brief video presentation about the Olympics will precede the musical part.

## **THE GREEK ARCHITECTURE OF WASHINGTON - SMITHSONIAN**

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Classical is Washington's predominant style. Columns, arches, and domes were major features of the city's earliest buildings and monuments, and they are prominent architectural elements in the latest additions to the city, such as the new Ronald Reagan Building. This course traces the surprisingly resilient history of the classical tradition in Washington, from its selection for the earliest Federal architecture through its cyclical rise and fall from favor, each time transformed in new ways to suit the tastes, politics, and symbolic needs of changing times.

## **Metropolitan Museum of Art holds Byzantium exhibition**

Displays feature rare icons and manuscripts spanning three centuries

By Richard Pyle - The Associated Press

New York - The Metropolitan Museum of Art has mounted its third exhibition on Byzantium in 27 years, presenting icons, manuscripts and other works from the final

three centuries of a religious empire whose art and culture influenced the world for more than a millennium.

“Byzantium, Faith and Power, 1261-1557,” features some 350 Orthodox Christian masterpieces gathered from 30 countries, many of them never before shown outside the churches and monasteries that own them.

Philippe de Montebello, director of the Met, said the exhibition covers the “great artistic flowering” of Byzantium after Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos’ 1261 reconquest of Constantinople from crusaders who had sacked it in 1204, and “the subsequent appropriation of this culture by rival claimants to power.”

The capital of the eastern Roman Empire was seized by the Ottomans in 1453, but its Greek-based culture and art endured for another century, not only spreading the Orthodox gospel but influencing Islam and other cultures.

As the successor to previous Met exhibits in 1977 and 1997, the latest presentation of Byzantine art “will enhance public appreciation of the exceptional artistic accomplishments of an era too often considered primarily in terms of political decline,” de Montebello said at a preview Monday.

“When (Edward) Gibbon described the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, he set an image of the last centuries... as one of failure and sadness, and I hope this exhibition will make people understand the optimism with which the empire regained its capital in 1261 and the cultural exuberance that went with that optimism,” said Helen Evans, curator of the exhibit.

The items include more than 40 icons, manuscripts and liturgical treasures including from a sixth-century monastic outpost of Christianity on the purported Biblical site where Moses witnessed the Burning Bush.

Stunning both in beauty and preservation, the collection includes many handwritten and illustrated manuscripts dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, textiles, painted icons that survived or postdate the iconoclasm (726-843) that saw the destruction of images as objects of veneration, and other relics.

A centerpiece is the “Virgin Pafsolype with Feast Scenes and Crucifixion with Prophets,” a large, painted wood icon from the late 14th century, described as a “powerful evocation of Christ as the savior of mankind,” on loan from the Ecumenical Patriarchate located in Istanbul.

Other noteworthy items include a 13th-14th century copper chandelier made of 1,100 pieces, loaned by a Munich museum, and a 20-centimeter (8-inch)-diameter mosaic of St George slaying the dragon, from the Louvre.

The exhibition, sponsored by Greece's Alpha Bank and three foundations, will run from March 23 through July 4. Along with a 3-kilogram (7-pound) catalog, the museum published a 96-page photographic essay book on St. Catherine's Monastery.

### ***Misc Articles of Interest***

#### **The countdown to the Athens Games began in earnest on Thursday when the Olympic flame was ignited in Olympia**

For the first time in history, the flame will visit all five continents represented by the Olympic rings on a 78-day world tour. The torch relay will begin with a seven-day trip through southern Greece. Greek former javelin medalist Costas Gatzidouis was the first torch-bearer, handing over to Russian swimmer Alexander Popov. Popov won two sprint gold medals at the 1992 Olympics, two in 1996 and a silver in 2000.

Other prominent runners on the first few days include Prince Albert of Monaco, who took part in former Winter Olympics, and legendary pole vaulter Sergei Bubka. The flame will burn outside the marble Panathenian stadium, site of the first modern games, until 4 June. It will then embark upon its world tour, with the Australian city of Sydney the first stop. The flame will make its first trips to South America and Africa, and visit the United States from 16-19 June.

Its route will include all of the nine cities bidding for the 2012 Olympics - London, Paris, Madrid, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Havana, Moscow, Istanbul and Leipzig. It is due in Paris on 25 June and in London the following day, where it will make an appearance during the Wimbledon championships. Athens is facing a race against time to deliver the Games following delays in the construction of key Olympic sites and transport networks. But the lighting ceremony itself went off without a hitch, with the torch bursting into flame as it was held inside a parabolic mirror and ignited by the sun's rays. Prokopiou said a prayer to the ancient Greek god Apollo for the sun to shine.

The ceremony was preceded by an address from the International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge and organizing committee president Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki. "Today the Olympic flame will be reborn yet again to enfold the whole world in its light," said Angelopoulos-Daskalaki. "This is the day that all of us have been waiting for so eagerly."

Rogge added: "The Olympic Games are returning to their country of origin, for it was here in Olympia that everything began in 776 BC. "And today everything is going to begin again. "More than ever before, Athens and Greece will be the focus of the attention for the whole world. "What better image can the organizing committee offer than to organize the first ever global Olympic torch relay. "Whether we live in a rich or disadvantaged country, the flame will unite us all.

## **The Greek Embassy's Olympic Arts Marathon**

By Jonathan Padget  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Thursday, March 11, 2004; Page C05

The Greek Embassy has launched its Olympic Arts Festival with the exhibition "Penelopeia, the Other Journey: Shifting" at the Gallery at Flashpoint. It's the first in a series of U.S. events planned to celebrate Greece's role as host of this year's Summer Games.

"The Olympic spirit includes both the body and the mind," notes Zoe Kosmidou, curator of "Shifting" and cultural counselor for the embassy.

Details of upcoming festival events are still being worked out, she says, but it will likely include a June exhibition in Los Angeles that will relate, like "Shifting," to the multifaceted Penelopeia Project and coincide with the U.S. leg of the Olympic Torch Relay. The embassy also hopes to mount an exhibition in Washington featuring artwork from every country participating in the Summer Games.

The Penelopeia Project plays a role beyond the festival as well. Inspired by the long-suffering Penelope in Homer's epic poem "The Odyssey," it was initiated last year in Greece by the country's Office of the European Union Presidency to draw attention to the work of female artists and highlight the alternate paths women often take toward personal fulfillment. (Penelope, if your memory of ancient Greek poetry fails you, was the wife of Odysseus, stuck at home in Ithaca, weaving and fending off suitors while her husband spent 20 years fighting in and getting home from the Trojan War.)

Kosmidou organized the first Penelopeia Project exhibition last year at the International Monetary Fund, involving different artists from those in "Shifting." The Flashpoint exhibit features eight women -- four with Greek roots, plus artists from Belgium, Korea, Luxembourg and Mexico -- who worked in pairs to create pieces in various media, from video installation to textiles.

Kosmidou envisions the Penelopeia Project as an ever-evolving "art network" that can generate gallery exhibitions and online projects, but that also has the potential to connect women throughout the world and support their creativity.

"The Penelope figure is quite symbolic, particularly on the artistic side," says Kosmidou. "Women can make great journeys without ever traveling. And you can use art to reach goals, express yourself and look for better opportunities."

## Bodies and Images

Sunday afternoon the Baltimore Museum of Art continues its annual Women's History Month tradition of presenting the special tour-workshop "Feast, Famine, and the Female Form" to the public. The exploration of female body representation in art was introduced by the museum in 1996 and primarily targets girls and young women struggling with society's unrealistic body ideals. It is also offered year-round to school groups and Girl Scout troops.

"One tour won't completely change perceptions," says Dorothy Valakos, the museum's program specialist for youth and families. "But it raises awareness and starts discussion."

The tour focuses on works in the BMA collection ranging from the 1881 Edgar Degas sculpture "Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen" to Robert Colescott's 1985 painting "At the Bathers Pool (Venus Is Still Venus)." It touches not only on body issues such as shape and weight, but also racial issues such as skin color and hair texture that can factor into social acceptance and self-esteem. The program also includes a hands-on component in which participants are encouraged to use clay and wire to create an image of their own bodies.

"It's a very different kind of tour," Valakos says, "because it's not based on a particular period or style, but on art concepts. What's considered beautiful, and who gets to decide?"

To reach a wider audience, the museum is developing a virtual tour for the Web. Valakos says the museum is also considering how the program can evolve to also address such emerging issues as teenage boys' increasing preoccupation with their appearance and a rise in eating disorders among middle-aged women.

Valakos attributes the success of "Feast, Famine, and the Female Form" to a "sea change" in teaching art history and a shift away from "authoritarian and elitist" attitudes from museums.

"Art has broad relevancy in people's lives," she says. "People don't need to be experts to form meaningful interpretations of art."

Penelopeia, the Other Journey: Shifting, at the Gallery at Flashpoint, 916 G St. NW, through March 29. Open Tuesday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m. Free. A program featuring an artist discussion, performance and presentation by Zoe Kosmidou from her book "The Power of Visual Logos: Greek Women Artists" will be held next Thursday at 6 p.m. Call 202-315-1310 or visit [www.penelopeia.net](http://www.penelopeia.net) and [www.flashpointdc.org](http://www.flashpointdc.org).

Feast, Famine, and the Female Form, at the Baltimore Museum of Art, 10 Art Museum Dr., Baltimore. Sunday at 2 p.m. \$5-\$7, free for ages 18 and under. Call 410-396-6322 or visit [www.artbma.org](http://www.artbma.org).

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## **Books**

### **George Seferis: Waiting for the Angel**

*By Roderick Beaton (Yale University Press, Oct. 2003)*

Excellent biography of George Seferis, the poet and diplomat.

### **Athens and Beyond: 30 Day Trips & Weekends**

*By Diana Farr Louis (Athens News)*

Louis writes about her fascination with the many layers of Greece; the mythical, ancient, Byzantine, Frank-Venetian, Turkish, neoclassical and contemporary. She provides personal accounts on the unique history and color of many destinations near Athens.

### **Coming of Age in Ancient Greece**

*By Jennifer Neils & John H. Oakley (Yale University Press, Sept. 2003)*

This book is published to accompany the eponymous exhibition which is currently in the Onassis Cultural Center in New York and will travel to the Cincinnati Art Museum (May 1 – Aug 1) and the J.Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles (Sept 14 – Dec 5, 2004). The focus of the book is the representation of children in art. It features such archaeological artifacts such as toys, gaming pieces, images of children on ancient vases, coins terracotta, figurines, bronze, stone sculpture and marble grave monuments.

## **Maze**

*By Panos Karnezis (Farrar Straus & Giroux, March 1, 2004)*

Novel is set in Asia Minor in 1922 and tells the story of a retreating Greek brigade that has lost its way, pursued by the Turkish army.