



The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Newsletter 45

July 2005

Mark your Calendar

The general program of Prometheas with planned activities for the next 12 months has been recently reviewed by the Board. The following events, scheduled for September and early October of 2005, have been substantially firmed up and are presented below:.

1. ***Lecture:*** “Linking Greek Culture and Environment to Human Health in Greece”.
Speaker: Eugene G. Maurakis, Ph. D. Associate Professor, University of Richmond. Friday, September 9, 2005, St. George Greek Orthodox Church.
2. ***Kafeneio:*** The traditional Prometheas’ Kafeneio. Friday, September 30, 2005.
St. Katherine’s Greek Orthodox Church.
3. ***Elections of Prometheas Board:*** Elections and presentation of Prometheas’ future program of activities. Thursday, October 13, 2005. St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

For final confirmation, please look for related announcements to be circulated prior to the date of each event.

Misc. News

Rigas Kappatos’ impressions from Latin America

Mr. Rigas Kappatos, writer, poet and member of Prometheas, visited in April and early May three Latin American Countries on the occasion of the publication of his book “The Presence of Greece in the Poetry of Latin America”. As you may recall, Prometheas sponsored a lecture on this book in November, 2003. Rigas’ observations from this trip are recorded in six short articles he wrote. [Attached](#) are the second part of these articles; the [first](#) appeared in the June 2005 Newsletter.

The American Hellenic Institute Foundation Elects Kyriakos Tsakopoulos to the Board of Directors

June 14, 2005 (202) 785-8430
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WASHINGTON, DC—The American Hellenic Institute Foundation (AHIF) is pleased to announce the election of Kyriakos Tsakopoulos to the Board of Directors of AHIF. Mr. Tsakopoulos and his family have demonstrated their strong commitment to supporting the Greek American community through various endeavors.

On April 14, 2005 Mr. Tsakopoulos, with a gift of \$1 million, completed the endowment of the Kyriakos Tsakopoulos Chair in Hellenic Studies at Columbia University's Hellenic Studies Program in the Classics Department, which will also include an annual lecture series on "Aristotle and the Moderns."

The donation was made as a tribute to Mr. Tsakopoulos' late grandfather--for whom he was named--and to focus study on the timeless relevance of the teachings of the great Greek philosopher Aristotle.

"This Chair will make Columbia one of the premier centers for Modern Greek Studies in the United States," said Professor Karen Van Dyck, the director of the program in Hellenic Studies at Columbia University.

"We are honored to welcome Kyriakos Tsakopoulos to the AHIF Board of Directors. He brings a unique perspective as we continue to expand our goals and objectives. He has a long tradition of being involved in the Greek American community. We look forward very much to working with him," said AHIF President Gene Rossides.

"I am honored to continue my family's support of AHI. AHI is an important advocate of principle and the rule of law and I intend to add value as a member of its Board," said Kyriakos Tsakopoulos.

Mr. Tsakopoulos is President and Chief Executive Officer of KT Development Corporation, a land development company headquartered in Roseville, about 20 miles east of Sacramento, CA. He actively serves both charitable and political causes. He is a Trustee of the California State University System, Chairman of the University of California at Davis MIND Research and Development Institute, and a Democratic National Committeeman. Mr. Tsakopoulos also serves on the Board of Visitors of Columbia College and the Crocker Art Museum. He is a member of the California and U.S. Supreme Court bars.

After 2,600 years, the world gains a fourth poem by Sappho

Friday June 24, 2005

A newly found poem by Sappho, acknowledged as one of the greatest poets of Greek classical antiquity and seen by some as the finest of any era, is published for the first time today.

Written more than 2,600 years ago, the 101 words of verse deal with a theme timeless in both art and soap operas; the stirrings of an ageing body towards the nimbleness, youth and love it once knew.

The poem is the rarest of discoveries. Sappho's pre-eminent reputation as an artist of lyricism and love is based on only three complete poems, 63 complete single lines and up to 264 fragments.

These are all that have survived of the writings of a woman who the Greek philosopher Plato said should be honoured not merely as a great lyric poet but as one of the Muses, the goddesses who inspire all art.

On hearing one of Sappho's poems sung, the sixth century BC Greek ruler Solon, a contemporary of hers, asked for someone to teach him the song "because I want to learn it and die".

The poem which is now her fourth to survive had a tortuous and not unromantic discovery. It was found in the cartonnage of an Egyptian mummy, the flexible layer of fibre or papyrus which was moulded while wet into a plaster-like surface around the irregular parts of a mummified wrapped body, so that motifs could be painted on. Last year two scholars, Michael Gronewald and Robert Daniel, announced that a recovered papyrus in the archives of Cologne University had been identified as part of a roll containing poems by Sappho.

Researchers realised that parts of one poem corresponded with fragments found in 1922 in one of the great treasure troves of modern classical scholarship - the ancient rubbish tips of the Egyptian town of Oxyrhynchus.

The completed jigsaw is today published in an 1,500- word article with commentary and translation in the Times Literary Supplement by Martin West, emeritus fellow of All Souls, Oxford, a renowned translator of Greek lyric poetry, described by the British Academy as "on any reckoning the most brilliant and productive Greek scholar of his generation".

Sappho - writing on the isle of Lesbos, apparently for a court of younger women - is treated as the patron saint of love between women. She has become "a litterateurs' Lorelei, a feminist icon, a scholars' maypole", writes Dr West.

Ostensibly at least, the craving in the final image of the new poem is for love from young men - with a cautionary note. Tithonus was a youth so beautiful that the dawn-goddess took him as husband. At her request Zeus granted him immortality. But she forgot to ask for eternal youth.

So Tithonus grew old and feeble, having eventually to be shut in his room "where he chatters away endlessly but barely has the strength to move", Dr West says. [The Guardian](#)

Books

Athens: A Cultural and Literary History (Cities of the Imagination) by Michael Llewellyn Smith "Every Friday morning, early, vans and trucks laden with produce converge on Xenokratous Street in the Kolonaki area on the southern side of Mount Lycabettus,..." (more)

Editorial Reviews

Book Description

Modern Athens is a bustling, overgrown city, continually coming to terms with its illustrious past. Dominated by the Parthenon, the world-famous symbol of classical antiquity, it has been touched by every aspect of Greece's turbulent history, suffering invasions and occupations, sieges, division and dictatorship, and has grown dramatically into a metropolis of four million people. Mixing old and new, the Greek capital is a treasure house of eastern Orthodox and western culture, rich in the visual arts, architecture and poetry.

Michael Llewellyn Smith describes the history and culture of Athens, site of the 2004 Olympic Games and city of monuments enduring, purged and restored. Exploring its streets and squares, he reveals layers of Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine history, elegant Bavarian neoclassical buildings, and a modern city of concrete and glass, metro and tram.

*THE CITY OF VISITORS: treasure hunters and Philhellenes; Byron and Chateaubriand; Thackeray and Mark Twain; Freud, Virginia Woolf and Winston Churchill.

*THE CITY OF OLYMPIANS: host of the first modern Games of 1896 and the Olympiad of 2004; the revival of the Olympic idea.

*THE CITY OF ATHENIANS: classical soldiers and thinkers; poets, politicians and princes; migrants and refugees from Greece and beyond.

About the Author

Michael Llewellyn Smith is a historian who has lived and worked in Athens for more than ten years as a student, teacher, and diplomat. He was British Ambassador to Athens between 1996 and 1999.

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