



# The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Τη γλώσσα μου έδωσαν Ελληνική

Το σπίτι φτωχικό στις αμμουδιές του Ομήρου.

Μονάχη έγνοια η γλώσσα μου στις αμμουδιές του Ομήρου.

[www.Prometheas.org](http://www.Prometheas.org)

*Οδυσσέας Ελύτης*

## Newsletter

### May 2010

#### Prometheas Events

- Friday, May 14, 2010 at 8:00 pm: “*A Greek Musical Evening to benefit the Haiti earthquake victims*” at St. George Greek Orthodox Church. For more information see brochure.

Attached to this newsletter you will find the speech of Ms. Elina Karmokolias “*Tribute to the women of 1821*” which was delivered during the celebration of the March 25<sup>th</sup> National Celebration.

#### Other Events

- Wednesday, May 5, 8:00 PM: Panorama of Greek Cinema presents “*BRIDES (Νύφες)*”. More info and tickets: <http://www.theavalon.org/programs-events/panorama-of-greek-cinema>
- Thursday, May 6th, 2010, 6:30pm-8:30pm: “*Café Tempest: Adventures on a Small Greek Island*”, a Book presentation by Barbara Bonfigli with illustrations by Gaia Franchetti at the Greek Embassy. Rsvp (acceptances only): [rsvpculture@greekembassy.org](mailto:rsvpculture@greekembassy.org)
- Saturday, May 15th, 7:00 pm” “*The Light of Greece: Mario Frangoulis and George Perris* sing Hadjidakis, Theodorakis, Markopoulos, Xarhakos and others”. Location: Lyric Opera of Baltimore. For more information see brochure. Orchestra seats available to Prometheas members for \$45.
- Thursday, May 27th -- 6:45 PM to 9:30 PM: “*Astronomical Computers in Antiquity? The Antikythera Mechanism*” by Dr. John Seiradakis and Mr. Tom Malzbender.

Location: S. Dillon Ripley Center, 1100 Jefferson Drive, SW. Tickets:  
<http://residentassociates.org/ticketing//tickets/reserve.aspx?performanceNumber=220294>

### ***Misc. Attachments***

- Newsletter of Parthenon Sculptures, April 2010
- Hellenic Link Newsletter, April 2010

### ***Books***

- “Oedipus the King” by David Grene. One of the best English translations.

### ***Websites of the month***

- ***“Bring Them Back”***:
  - Greek version: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0\\_dN\\_gQmEg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0_dN_gQmEg)
  - English Version: [www.bringthemback.org](http://www.bringthemback.org)
- ***Gabby Awards Diaspora Video with Glykeria***:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=-m-ovKkyBE8](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=-m-ovKkyBE8)
- ***ΦΩΤΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΠΑΛΙΑ ΑΘΗΝΑ***: <http://vfrh.forumotion.net/forum-f47/topic-t1087.htm>
- ***The Most Famous Manuscript of the Iliad*** (Circa 950):  
<http://www.historyofscience.com/G2I/timeline/index.php?id=1864>

## **News Articles**

### ***Οι περίφημοι λόγοι του Ξενοφώντα Ζολώτα.***



Ο Ξενοφών Ζολώτας ως 'πρέσβης' της Ελληνικής γλώσσας εξεφώνησε ενώπιον του ΔΝΤ έναν λόγο στα Ελληνικά χρησιμοποιώντας την Αγγλική, προκαλώντας παγκόσμια αίσθηση.

Έκπληξη προκάλεσε ο Ξενοφών Ζολώτας, ως αντιπρόσωπος της Ελλάδος, με τον απροσδόκητο λόγο του στις 26 Σεπτεμβρίου 1957, ενώπιον του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου, σε μία από τις πιο ουσιαστικές του ενέργειες για την προβολή της Ελληνικής γλώσσας. Ο εκλιπών, μίλησε στην Ελληνική και τον κατάλαβαν όλοι γιατί χρησιμοποίησε ατόφια την Αγγλική γλώσσα! Επακολούθησε ανυπόκριτος ενθουσιασμός και χειροκροτήματα από τους συνέδρους όρθιους. Την επομένη είχαν πρωτοσέλιδο το λόγο του οι "New York Times" και η "Washington Post", περνώντας σε όλο τον κόσμο το μήνυμα, ότι η Ελληνική γλώσσα μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθεί και να λειτουργήσει σε όλες τις Ευρωπαϊκές γλώσσες. Μάλιστα, τόση ήταν η εντύπωση που προκάλεσε η πρώτη αυτή ομιλία στα Αγγλικά, ώστε ο τότε Πρόεδρος της Διεθνούς Τράπεζας Γιουτζίν Μπλάκ, τον παρακάλεσε και σε επόμενη ετήσια συνεδρίαση του ΔΝΤ και της Διεθνούς Τράπεζας να μιλήσει πάλι στην Αγγλική, αλλά με Ελληνικές λέξεις, κάτι που επανέλαβε το 1959.

Ο ίδιος ο Ξενοφών Ζολώτας ανέφερε σχετικά: "Βέβαια τη δεύτερη φορά ο λόγος είχε περιεχόμενο ουσιαστικό . Αναφερόταν στην ουσία: για το νομισματικό και οικονομικό πρόβλημα της εποχής". Μάλιστα, δεν παρέλειψε να αναφέρει, ότι οι πατέρες της Αμερικανικής Ανεξαρτησίας, ο Ουάσιγκτον, ο Τζέφερσον, ο Άνταμς και άλλοι όταν συνέτασσαν το Σύνταγμα των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών, το 1787, είχαν προτείνει η γλώσσα του νέου κράτους να είναι η Ελληνική, προς τιμήν της γλώσσας του Έθνους εκείνου, που πρώτο γέννησε τη Δημοκρατία και τη διέδωσε στον κόσμο.

Μία ψήφος , όμως ήταν αρκετή για να προκριθεί η αγγλική.

*Ο λόγος στις 26/9/1957:*

I always wished to address this Assembly in Greek, but realized that it would have been indeed «Greek» to all present in this room. I found out, however, that I could make my address in Greek which would still be English to everybody. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I shall do it now, using, with the exception of articles and prepositions, only Greek words.

Kyrie,

I eulogize the archons of the Panethnic Numismatic Thesaurus and the Ecumenical Trapeza for the orthodoxy of their axioms, methods and policies, although there is an episode of cacophony of the Trapeza with Hellas. With enthusiasm we dialogue and synagonize at the synods of our didymous organizations in which polymorphous economic ideas and dogmas are analyzed and synthesized. Our critical problems such as the numismatic plethora generate some agony and melancholy. This phenomenon is characteristic of our epoch.

But, to my thesis, we have the dynamism to program therapeutic practices as a prophylaxis from chaos and catastrophe. In parallel, a Panethnic unhyprocritical economic synergy and harmonization in a democratic climate is basic. I apologize for my eccentric monologue. I emphasize my eucharistia to you, Kyrie to the eugenic arid generous American Ethnos and to the organizes and protagonists of his Amphictyony and the gastronomic symposia.

*"Απόδοση"*

«Κύριοι,

Ευλογώ τους άρχοντες του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου και την Οικουμενική Τράπεζα για την ορθοδοξία των αξιωμάτων, μεθόδων και πολιτικών, παρά το γεγονός ότι υπάρχει ένα επεισόδιο κακοφωνίας της Τράπεζας με την Ελλάδα. Με ενθουσιασμό διαλεγόμαστε και συναγωνιζόμαστε στις συνόδους των διδύμων Οργανισμών των οποίων τις πολύμορφες οικονομικές ιδέες και δόγματα αναλύουμε και συνθέτουμε. Τα κρίσιμα προβλήματά μας όπως η νομισματική πληθώρα παράγουν κάποια αγωνία και μελαγχολία. Αυτό το φαινόμενο είναι χαρακτηριστικό της εποχής μας.

Αλλά, η θέση μου είναι ότι έχουμε τον δυναμισμό να προγραμματίσουμε θεραπευτικές πρακτικές σαν μέτρο προφύλαξης από το χάος και την καταστροφή. Παράλληλα μια παγκόσμια ανυποκρίτως οικονομική συνέργεια και εναρμόνιση σε ένα δημοκρατικό κλίμα είναι βασική.

Απολογούμαι για τον εκκεντρικό μου μονόλογο. Εκφράζω με έμφαση την ευχαριστία μου σε εσένα Κύριε, στο ευγενικό και γενναιόδωρο Αμερικανικό Έθνος και στους οργανισμούς και πρωταγωνιστές της Αμφυκτιωνίας και του γαστρονομικού Συμποσίου».

Δύο χρόνια αργότερα, το 1959, ο Ξ. Ζολώτας έδωσε μία άλλη Ελληνο-Αγγλική ομιλία, ζητώντας να τον ακούσουν με προσοχή, ακόμα κι αν υπήρχε ο κίνδυνος να κουράσει τους ακροατές του.

Ιδού ο λόγος και η Ελληνική του «μεταγραφή»:

Kyrie,

It is Zeus' anathema on our epoch (for the dynamism of our economies) and the heresy of our economic method and policies that we should agonize the Skylla of nomismatic plethora and the Charybdis of economic anaemia. It is not my idiosyncrasy to be ironic or sarcastic but my diagnosis would be that politicians are rather cryptoplethorists. Although they emphatically stigmatize nomismatic plethora, they energize it through their tactics and practices. Our policies should be based more on economic and less on political criteria. Our gnomon has to be a metron between economic, strategic and philanthropic scopes. Political magic has always been anti-economic. In an epoch characterized by monopolies, oligopolies, monopolistic antagonism and polymorphous inelasticities, our policies have to be more orthological, but this should not be metamorphosed into plethorophobia, which is endemic among academic economists.

Nomismatic symmetry should not antagonize economic acme. A greater harmonization between the practices of the economic and nomismatic archons is basic. Parallel to this, we have to synchronize and harmonize more and more our economic and nomismatic policies panethnically. These scopes are more practicable now, when the prognostics of the political and economic barometer are halcyonic. The history of our didimus organization on this sphere has been didactic and their gnostic practices will always be a tonic to the polyonymous and idiomorphous ethnical economies. The genesis of the programmed organization will dynamize these policies. Therefore, I sympathize, although not without criticism one or two themes with the apostles and the hierarchy of our organs in their zeal to program orthodox economic and nomismatic policies, although I have some logomachy with them. I apologize for having tyrannized you with my Hellenic phraseology. In my epilogue, I emphasize my eulogy to the philoxenous aytochtons of this cosmopolitan metropolis and my encomium to you, Kyrie stenographers.

*"Απόδοση"*

«Κύριοι,

Είναι «Διός ανάθεμα» στην εποχή μας και αίρεση της οικονομικής μας μεθόδου και της οικονομικής μας πολιτικής το ότι θα φέρναμε σε αγωνία την Σκύλλα του νομισματικού πληθωρισμού και τη Χάρυβδη της οικονομικής μας αναιμίας. Δεν είναι στην ιδιοσυγκρασία μου να είμαι ειρωνικός ή σαρκαστικός αλλά η διάγνωσή μου θα ήταν ότι οι πολιτικοί είναι μάλλον κρυπτοπληθωριστές. Αν και με έμφαση στιγματίζουν τον νομισματικό πληθωρισμό, τον ενεργοποιούν μέσω της τακτικής τους και των πρακτικών τους. Η πολιτική μας θα έπρεπε να βασίζεται περισσότερο σε οικονομικά και λιγότερο σε πολιτικά κριτήρια. Γνώμων μας πρέπει να είναι ένα μέτρο μεταξύ οικονομικής, στρατηγικής και φιλανθρωπικής σκοπιάς. Σε μια εποχή που χαρακτηρίζεται από μονοπώλια, ολιγοπώλια, μονοπωλιακό ανταγωνισμό και πολύμορφες ανελαστικότητες, οι πολιτικές μας πρέπει να είναι πιο ορθολογιστικές, αλλά αυτό δεν θα έπρεπε να μεταμορφώνεται σε πληθωροφοβία, η οποία είναι ενδημική στους ακαδημαϊκούς

οικονομολόγους. Η νομισματική συμμετρία δεν θα έπρεπε να ανταγωνίζεται την οικονομική ακμή. Μια μεγαλύτερη εναρμόνιση μεταξύ των πρακτικών των οικονομικών και νομισματικών αρχόντων είναι βασική. Παράλληλα με αυτό, πρέπει να εκσυγχρονίσουμε και να εναρμονίσουμε όλο και περισσότερο τις οικονομικές και νομισματικές μας πρακτικές πανεθνικώς. Αυτές οι θεωρήσεις είναι πιο εφαρμόσιμες τώρα, που τα προγνωστικά του πολιτικού και οικονομικού βαρομέτρου είναι χάλκινα. Η ιστορία της δίδυμης οργάνωσης σε αυτήν την σφαίρα είναι διδακτική και οι γνωστικές τους εφαρμογές θα είναι πάντα ένα τονωτικό στις πολυώνυμες και ιδιόμορφες εθνικές οικονομίες. Η γένεση μιας προγραμματισμένης οργάνωσης θα ενισχύσει αυτές τις πολιτικές. Γι' αυτόν το λόγο αντιμετωπίζω με συμπάθεια, αλλά όχι χωρίς κριτική διάθεση, ένα ή δύο θέματα με τους αποστόλους της ιεραρχίας των οργάνων μας στον ζήλο τους να προγραμματίσουν ορθόδοξες οικονομικές και νομισματικές πολιτικές. Απολογούμαι που σας τυράνησα με την ελληνική μου φρασεολογία. Στον επίλογό μου δίνω έμφαση στην ευλογία μου, προς τους φιλόξενους αυτόχθονες αυτής της κοσμοπολίτικης μητρόπολης καθώς και το εγκώμιό μου προς εσάς, κύριοι στενογράφοι».

# Greece, actually: This time, he wanted to see a different side of the country

By Tyler Guthrie  
Special to The Washington Post  
Sunday, April 11, 2010; F01

We're squeezed onto local bus No. 96 to the Greek port city of Piraeus, surrounded by European holiday-goers. They're all rushing to catch the ferries and hydrofoils that will scatter them across the Aegean Sea to Minoan ruins, fancy whitewashed hotels and iconic beaches.

My wife and I are after something different: After two days visiting all the high spots of Athens, we want a night away from the tourist zone and a look at a different side of the metropolis that more than 15 million foreigners visit every year.

We pass rubbish and graffiti all along this main road, and I'm reminded of how much I hate the bustle of Athens -- the side that never makes it into my photos. As a Hellenophile and a general fan of antiquity, I have strong but fickle feelings for Greece.

I love this country and relish the opportunity to touch the stones and buildings that have seen so much history, but whenever I visit, I have a hard time getting past the reality of the city I see before me. Each time I want it to be the way I've imagined it: grand yet quaint, bustling but without the tourists, and entirely old.

Yet it never is. Greece often feels as though it's inhabited by more foreign tourists and souvenir shops than it is by native Greeks and any real local life. That's why this time, I want to walk parallel to the crowds, to see a different side of the country and meet some of the Greeks that I -- and the other tourists who flood the streets and clog the pipes every year -- normally wouldn't get to know.

Because it's my wife's first visit to the country, though, we've made a point of hitting the must-sees -- the museums, the tree-lined avenues and the monuments that you can't simply pass by. Even though it's the shoulder season, we've still taken extra precautions, rising with the sun on our first day to make the most of the empty streets. This is when Athens is at its best, when there's a chill in the air and no one else milling around the posh neoclassical districts of Plaka and Kolonaki to ruin the magic and remind you that you're not the only ones in town.

We climbed the steps to the Acropolis slowly, taking in the beauty of both the city and the ancient sites from all the overlooked angles afforded to those who aren't in a rush. Once the doors opened at 8 a.m., we headed past the other early risers and tried to imagine what the Acropolis was like before the Venetians blew part of it up in 1687 during their spat with the ruling Ottomans, and before the British removed the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon for "protective" reasons. But those images were hard to conjure amid the guided tour groups that

were already arriving and cutting across our path, the fashionistas striking glamour poses and the shiny new marble slabs filling in the gaps of what used to be the temple of Athena.

In a way I don't to other European cities, to Athens I bring a double standard. Instead of caring to blend in, I come here as a sightseer to touch history and wear khaki pants; I just want to be the only one doing it. I am constantly reminded, however, that I'm 100 years too late for a Lord Byron moment. In this sprawling capital, with such a strong touristic focus on the past, it seems nearly impossible to find a peaceful place or a restful moment to contemplate the city-that-was without being jarred by throngs of other tourists in the city-that-is.

After hours of wandering around these ancient ruins, we set the afternoon mood with ouzo at Bretto's Distillery before visiting the last of our must-see sights: the new Acropolis Museum, which opened in June 2009. It's a sleek modern building housing more than 4,000 Acropolis artifacts in over 150,000 square feet of austere exhibition space. A glass floor reveals an open excavation site, providing a welcome distraction while you wait in line at the entrance to pay the admission fee.

### **Coming alive**

Once in Piraeus, the starting point for Greek island-hopping, we check into a rundown hotel near the center. Created to house the navy by the infamous Athenian general and statesman Themistocles in 493 B.C., the port turns out not to be the historic seaside town I was hoping for. Only 20 minutes from Athens on the subway (the bus took about 40 minutes), Piraeus seems to have little to offer tourists but an overflow of seedy local life and intriguing characters. The hotel clerk, an ancient man watching Greek drama on TV in a small smoke-filled office, is entirely indifferent to us but willing to negotiate the price of a room. He scrawls "40 Euros" on a scrap of paper, then "30" as we start to leave. We finally settle on 25 (about \$33) and when we see our room, we know we've paid too much.

No matter, we've stayed in worse. As we wait for the night to thicken, we meet our neighbor on the small fire escape balcony between the two rooms. She is Greek, weathered and sad. Also very confused to hear voices coming from our room. Though she speaks only a little English, she talks for far longer than you'd think possible. She tells us that this is mostly transitional housing. With arms flailing, she tells a gripping story of her kids coming to get her and of a tenant conflict that we can't really understand. She draws a map on a scrap of paper and points out where the hidden charms of Piraeus are -- the ancient churches, the small parks and the stretches of orange trees. Excitedly, she insists that we go to her favorite restaurant later for dinner and says that maybe she will meet us there.

Following her directions, we wind through the old parts of Piraeus, killing time until after 9 p.m., when the city comes alive and locals come out to enjoy the day. We eat at an unnamed seafood shop next to an outdoor market, but we don't see our new friend.

Afterward, we ride the subway back into Athens's Psiri neighborhood for music and conversation. The tourist crowd is thinning and now, at night, it feels as though Athens is a real city again. We grab bottles of Mythos beer and sit on the steps of Monastiraki Square with young

Athenians who are watching a street performance. A theater troupe is acting out a play in Greek that we can't follow, but there is also juggling and plenty of people to watch, so we don't mind. The mood is festive and everyone around us is friendly. We wish we had spent every night this way.

The next morning, we rejoin the established tourist path and catch a ferry to the islands to see the beaches and the postcard-perfect towns that everyone comes here to see. At each stop, we take it easy and avoid the crowds as best we can, using local buses to get around instead of the large coaches packed with travelers going to the same few places at the same time, staying on the outskirts of towns or at family homes and trying to meet the local residents.

### **Getting lost in Santorini**

Our ferry pulls into Santorini, the jewel of the Cyclades, and we make sure to lodge away from the cliff-top towns of Fira and Oia. These places are stunning but little more than a stretch of hotels and fancy restaurants, no longer real or really worth the price and trouble for frugal travelers like us.

Instead, we find the charming Villa Dimitris in the shadow of a small cliff-top monastery, just steps from the Black Beach in the town of Perissa. Here we don't mind the other tourists, thanks to the owners, Kostas and Rula, who are wonderful hosts. They take the time to get to know us and make us feel like friends. In perfect English, they tell us where the secluded beaches and the best small villages are and how to get there. Over coffee, Rula shares stories of her family, and Kostas offers to drop us anywhere on the island when he goes out.

Down the road from our place, we end up renting the cheapest ATV we can find, which turns out to be far too weak to keep up with local traffic. So we take our explorations slow, scouting out several beaches our hosts had suggested in the morning, some crowded and some empty, as we make our way to Fira for the afternoon.

The road swerves along steep cliffs, reminding motorists that this island was once a powerful volcano that erupted 3,500 years ago, possibly destroying the Minoan civilization that once thrived around these waters. There's no doubt, though, that Fira is gorgeous. The whitewashed buildings planted in the cliffs are extraordinarily romantic, and as I lean in to kiss my wife, the moment is ruined by the loud hotel-bashings of an irate American tourist in a T-shirt that incorrectly reads "Whose the Daddy?"

After tasting some local wine in the center of town, we continue on to Oia, on the northernmost point of the island, to catch a panoramic glimpse of Santorini, crescent-shaped after the fatal eruption submerged half the land. A popular spot for watching sunsets, Oia is quickly overrun by couples, so we leave to race the falling sun to the island's far southern tip and the lighthouse at Faros. Thankfully, we arrive just in time to snag a spot at the farthest edge of the rocks. We're pleased to see just a few others enjoying the view.

The next morning, we walk from Perissa to the nearby town of Emporio for coffee and to see our hosts' home town at their suggestion. This is the part of Santorini that I loved the most and hate

to share. Here, there are no English signs directing us to taverns or hotels. There are no tourists at all, in fact; just quaint houses, colorful doors and the tranquility on display in the wall calendars for sale in all the island's shops.

We spend the day alone exploring the town and the nearby hills until we find a path that leads to ancient Thera on the hill. This was the island's main settlement before the eruption, and the walk to it is empty and a joy. The way is steep, with wild onions growing along the path, but the views are rewarding. When we reach the top, though, we spot several cars and buses parked in a lot at the gate, so we turn and head down a different path that goes somewhere else.

That night we return to Emporio to eat with the locals at a small restaurant along the main road. Against the far wall, beyond the three tables in the dining room, we see several whole chickens, cuts of lamb and something else I can't make out all rotating on a spit over a fire. At first we're concerned that all this meat will sit there for hours. But soon we're watching as dozens of families come in and place orders for takeout, and we realize that the restaurant is barely keeping up with orders. We struggle to place ours with the little bits of Greek we've picked up along our journey. We feel gratified by how far we've come.

### **Finding our way in Kos**

From Santorini, we catch a ferry to the island of Kos in the Dodecanese, on Greece's eastern edge, to explore the main town and the impressive Neratzia Castle built by the Knights Hospitaller in the 14th century to defend against Ottoman expansion. Kos town isn't as pretty as many other island centers, but the fortress is magnificent and the overall feeling is lively.

We stroll along the top of the fortress wall, taking in the views, before hitting the ruins of the nearby agora where we meet up with George, a bohemian couch-surfing host whom we'd found online. He takes us to the island's Asclepieion, a healing temple amid cypress trees overlooking Kos town where the sick used to come to see a priest or an early physician and to swim in the baths and be healed. Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, lived and worked here during the time when Kos was the center of medical learning, around 400 B.C.

George then takes us into the hills to his home, a rundown series of buildings that was once an important rural estate. We stay for a couple of days with him and his dog, Terror, hiking around the small hills, bathing in the sulfur waters known as the Thermes and discovering hidden ruins all over the island. We sleep on the roof of the main building and decide that, apart from the biting ants, this is how we want to spend the rest of our trip, stretching our budget and our time -- and pushing back our flight home.

*Guthrie is a Seattle-based freelance writer.*

# Crete draws visitors from all over with its food, history and beaches

By Jane Black  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Sunday, April 11, 2010; F01

It looked like a scene out of "Exodus" -- if the Jews making their way to Palestine had been wearing bikinis and carrying beach umbrellas. The ship opened its creaky steel doors and lowered the gangplank. And we stepped out onto the soft sand, blinking in the glare of the midday sun. The path to the promised land was a crystal pool of warm, ankle-deep water. In small groups, we splashed our way across to Balos Beach.

The beach is a narrow strip of pink sand. On one side is a natural wading pool. On the other, the Sea of Crete, striped turquoise, emerald, then sapphire, and surrounded by a ring of dusty cliffs. The waves are gentle but just feisty enough to elicit a bubbly foam. It's like an amusement park wave pool as imagined by painter David Hockney.

Balos is the kind of beach you envision ucky tourists stumbling upon by accident. The kind of place you find when you get lost on a hike or if you're lucky enough to sail your own yacht. And so what's most miraculous about it is that you can easily get there on a cheap tourist day cruise. Also included in the price are several hours of smooth sailing and a steep but rewarding hike to a 16th-century Venetian fort that once served as a base for Greek pirates.

I had expected Crete to be full of sites as impressive as Balos. After all, it's Greece's most popular destination: A quarter of the country's visitors head to this mountainous island that's renowned for its food -- Crete is the birthplace of the Mediterranean diet -- its history and its beaches. The diversity is an attraction in itself. Guidebooks tout plenty to entertain travelers for a week or more, with no pesky inter-island ferries or flights.

Those were the reasons two friends and I had chosen Crete for a recent vacation. But the most hyped destinations didn't quite meet expectations. Knossos, reputed in Greek mythology to be the palace of King Minos and home to the Minotaur, was a series of re-imagined rooms and temples, many of which came with the disclaimer that they may not have actually looked like that. Hania, which is advertised as a Venetian town with a maze of streets populated with boutiques and elegant churches, was overrun by traffic and European chain stores.

I also had a bias. Previous travels to the Greek islands had taken me to picture-perfect blue-and-white villages decked with bougainvillea. Crete was more, well, real: The cities were modern; the beaches, many very beautiful, spoiled by tacky holiday developments. As a traveler, I'm all for seeing the real world. Most of the time. On this trip to Greece, I was seeking escape.

Crete's northwest corner, which includes Balos Beach, fit the bill. For three days, we made our headquarters in Falassarna, a sleepy but functional town. There's no town center per se, just a

string of mid-priced hotels, a grocery/souvenir shop, a beach cafe and a restaurant. There are no high-end digs, no high-end anything, for that matter. (Luxury hotel chains: If you are looking for a new European beachfront property, this is it.)

We checked into the Plakures, a compound of whitewashed condos, neatly trimmed in Tiffany blue. Each room comes with a wrought-iron bed, a marble floor, functional Ikea-style furniture and a small, well-equipped kitchenette. Though the area is dry, the hotel property is lush. Gravel pathways that connect the rooms to the pool and restaurant are lined with palm, fig and pomegranate trees. The hotel is Greece just as you imagine it . . . if you were German.

Owned by a German family, Plakures caters almost exclusively to middle-aged Teutonic couples who want nothing more than to lie in the sun by day and drink beer -- lots of it -- at night. (The only other guests were my group and a few other young American women who also had been seduced by the hotel's sexy Web site.) The contrast between the cerulean sky and the pink, full-figured guests gave me a start at first. But we soon appreciated the bicultural aspect of the hotel, which seamlessly blends the good parts of Greece (the food, the weather) and Germany (intense efficiency and very large breakfast buffets).

With the exception of one (accidentally strenuous) hike, we spent most of our days lying on the beach. The approach is not encouraging -- a quarter-mile path down a scrubby hill -- but the reward is a stretch of soft white sand and placid, jewel-colored water. The sea is cool enough to be refreshing but warm enough that even a temperature wimp like me can walk right in. On either side are rocky coves, with smooth gray boulders that look as if they have been placed specifically for a high-fashion shoot. At sunset, the sand begins to glow hot pink, a result of crushed pink shells that have washed ashore. Lounge chairs are available for about \$7 per day, but never once did anyone come by to collect money. (The Greeks, not the Germans, are clearly in charge of the waterfront.)

It was easy to fall into a rhythm of sunbathing, swimming and dinners at the hotel, including generous meze platters of feta cheese, grape leaves, lentils and garlicky tzatziki, pork souvlaki and a surprisingly delicious rendition of spaghetti Bolognese. (I thought I would never tire of Greek salads, but that turned out not to be true.) On our last day in Falassarna, though, we decided to risk being tourists once again with a cruise to Gramvousa Island and Balos Beach.

\* \* \*

I'm skeptical of day cruises. Too often, what seems like an attractive itinerary turns out to be a string of third-rate "sights" and long stays at shops owned by the cruise operator's cousin. Our trip to Gramvousa did not start out auspiciously. The Kissamos ferry terminal, a few miles from Falassarna, has several operators. Ticket agents told us that the price for the eight-hour cruise was 30 euros per person (about \$41), three times the price listed in our guidebook. When we feigned to "think about it," the price came down to 20, 15 and then, finally, 10 euros (about \$13).

Once we were on the boat, however, everything was as advertised. The ferry cruises to the northwest tip of Crete, a lick of land called Cape Vouxa. The first stop is the island of Gramvousa. It's a forbidding-looking rock, though the "pirate" ship docked in front gives the

place a slightly Disney feel. We considered a dip, but the thin strip of beach is rocky and there's little shade. So we headed up to the island's 16th-century ruined castle instead.

Good decision. The 25-minute hike is a little tricky in flip-flops but worth the effort. The fortress, built in 1579 by the Venetians, was used to fight the invading Turks until 1692, according to our Blue Guide. It was later used as a base for pirates (hence the pirate ship in the harbor). You can see why the spot was coveted. It offers 360-degree views of the sea and a prime view of ships crossing from Crete to the island of Antikythera. Today, the distressed walls and tumbledown arches make an ideal place for holiday snapshots.

Back on the ferry, there was just enough time for a quick lunch before arriving in Balos. Where an American ferry would serve unappealing hot dogs, chips and sodas at extortionate prices, the Greek equivalent offers a host of fresh, reasonably priced food: fresh Greek salads, chicken souvlaki with delicious roasted potatoes and bowls of fresh red grapes, which we wrapped up for a beachside snack. This is also the time when you can rent a beach umbrella for the upcoming three-hour stop at Balos. Don't. They are available for less, about \$4 for an umbrella and two chairs, at the beach.

After such a successful day out, we decided to venture to a restaurant beyond the hotel. There aren't many to pick from, and most didn't look like anything special. But we got lucky at Spilios, a taverna on a hill above Falassarna. We had driven by several times and rejected it because it looked like the kind of place that survived because of its panoramic views, not the food. How sorry we were that we had prejudged it. This was the best food we had on the island. Everything was homemade, from the phyllo pies stacked with greens and a little fennel for brightness to the rich, cinnamon-laced moussaka and the boureki, a homey layered dish of potatoes, creamy local cheese called mizithira, and zucchini. It was also one of the most reasonable meals. The bill for three, including two rounds of beer, was about \$47.

Yet another example of how the best of Crete is found in the most unexpected places.

## Hellenes Abroad / Greece



### [The Great Granddaughter of the Nobel Nominated Greek Poet Angelos Sikelianos on ANA-MPA](#)

Thessaloniki, 19.01.2010

She was born in California US, in 1965 carrying a name of great historical importance. The great granddaughter of our great poet Angelos Sikelianos, Eleni, who even though she never met her great grandfather, she inherited his talent in poetry, with which she has been experimenting from her early years and she managed to evolve into a renowned and recognized poet.

Her father John, son of Glafkos Sikelianos, the only child of Angelos Sikelianos and Eva Palmer. She was briefly a biology student in her undergraduate career, drawn to oceanography and microbiology. Although those formal studies were abandoned, the language of wild oceanaria and cellular activity continues to inform her writing.

As a young woman, Sikelianos spent nearly two years traveling (often by thumb) through Europe and Africa (from London to Ankara, and from Haifa to Dar-es-Salaam), seeking new worlds and broadening her horizons. This is actually when she first visited Greece and got a hold of her first Modern Poetry book in Greek.

“I started to write stories, when I was about seven or eight years old. I used to write as a teen, although I am not certain, whether this was actually poetry or stories. It was certainly not good. I presume that I started thinking that I wanted to write poetry, specifically, at the age of 19, during my first trip in Greece.

At that time I purchased a book from an island (maybe Crete) with modern greek poems and I started to write bad replicas of these poems” states to ANA – MPA Ms. Eleni Sikelianou who conferred numerous awards for her poetry, nonfiction and translations, including the National Poetry Series, residencies at Princeton University as a Seeger Fellow, at La Maison des écrivains

étrangers in Brittany, and at Yaddo, a Fulbright Writer's Fellowship in Greece, a New York Foundation for the Arts Award in Nonfiction Literature, the James D. Phelan Award, two Gertrude Stein Awards for Innovative American Writing, the New York Council for the Arts Translation Award, and a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship in Poetry.

Her great grandfather, Aggelos Sikelianos, passed away before she was actually born, and this is the reason why she first got to know him through family photos, stories and some books which were displayed on their family bookshelf. "We always had Keeley's and Sherad's translation at home.

I was not brought up with the Greek language which is why it was impossible to read the original work. Until I manage to do this, I don't think I will ever be able to realise who the poet actually is. I was also brought up with family stories, which actually helped me further understand his writing" stated Eleni Sikelianou.

Critics have characterized her as one of the most original and powerful "voices" who made their appearance over the past years in American poetry. She currently teaches in and directs the Creative Writing program at the University of Denver, and spends her days with her husband, the novelist Laird Hunt and their daughter, Eva Grace.

Source: ANA-MPA