

Friends of the Hellenic Institute

Newsletter: December 2001

Dear Friend of the Hellenic Institute,

Welcome to the first Friends' Newsletter, bringing you a brief account of our activities over the past year. It has been a busy one and a great deal has happened, but here are some of the highlights.

January: Inauguration of *Byzantium: History, Culture, Society*

In January, February and March, the Institute and the Hellenic Centre in London staged a series of twelve illustrated lectures on the Byzantine Empire. Julian Chrysostomides, Kara Hattersley-Smith and Jonathan Harris traced the development of the empire from the foundation of Constantinople to the city's fall in 1453 to an enthusiastic and loyal audience.

March: Charalambos Dendrinos dons the habit of a Byzantine monk scribe for the BBC2's Horizon science series documentary *Archimedes' Secret* (14 March, 9pm). The documentary reconstructed the story of the Archimedes palimpsest, a manuscript that could have changed the history of the world. It contains a compendium of mathematical treatises by Archimedes, including the unique copy of the treatise *Method of Mechanical Theorems*, in which Archimedes explained how he drew upon mechanical means to elucidate his mathematical theorems. It is also the only source in the original Greek for the treatise *On Floating Bodies*, in which Archimedes explores the physics of flotation and explains the formal proof for the principle of specific gravity. It is a remarkable tale of an ancient text, lost for two thousand years. Buried away in a middle eastern library, written over by a mediaeval monk, broken up, painted on, cut up and re-glued, this precious fragile document has been saved by scientists in the nick of time. And it is revealing for the first time just how revolutionary Archimedes' ideas were. The programme suggests that, if the treatise had been read during the Renaissance, man might have reached the moon a hundred years ago. Dr Dendrinos was invited by Horizon to take part in the programme, acting as the anonymous 12th-century Byzantine monk in Jerusalem who copied a prayer book upon the scraped text of Archimedes in the same parchment manuscript.

Dr Dendrinos says:

"The BBC needed someone who would be able to read and immitate 10th-12th-century Greek scripts. So, just before Xmas I found myself in a monk's habit in the Roundchurch, Cambridge, copying the prayer book on a pseudo-parchment leaf over the Archimedes text which was printed on the parchment through computer.

"Another actor played the role of the 10th/11th-century anonymous scribe who pretended to copy the Archimedes text from an imaginary exemplar, which I prepared for him using 9th-century majuscule type of script. As he was not a palaeographer or calligrapher, I was asked once more to copy the Archimedes text as it appears on the original manuscript (enhanced by computer programmes) under the prayer text. I was

happy to "lend" my hand again - they succeeded in "ageing" it by 20-30 years using special make-up! It was great fun."

For the Archimedes palimpsest, now at The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, consult the web page <http://www.thewalters.org/archimedes/>

May: The Institute is awarded a major research grant

For some years, the Institute has provided the base for the Porphyrogenitus Project, one of the most important undertakings in modern Byzantine studies. The project aims to compile a lexicon of the abbreviations and ligatures found in Greek manuscripts written in minuscule between about 800 and about 1600. This importance was recognised in May when the Arts and Humanities Research Board awarded the project a grant of £121,000 to complete the work over the next three years.

September: International Colloquium on the Greek Islands and the Sea.

The Institute hosted a conference on this theme on 21 and 22 September, as part of the ongoing *Greece in Britain* series of events sponsored by the Embassy of Greece. The Colloquium was made possible by generous sponsorship from the British Academy, Easy Jet, the Hellenic Foundation, the Hellenic Foundation for Culture, the Hellenic Ministry of the Aegean, the Laiki Bank, the A.G. Leventis Foundation, the London Hellenic Society, the Eleni Nakou Foundation, and the Orthodox Archbishopric of Thyateira and Great Britain.

The papers given covered a wide chronological and geographical span. Cyprian Broodbank focused on Kythera in pre-history, Ian Rutherford looked at the Cyclades and the religious cults based there in the archaic period, and Kim Ayodeiji, Christy Constantakopoulou and Nick Vella looked at classical times, discussing fishing, agriculture and coastal shrines. Three papers looked at the periods of Byzantine and Latin rule: John Pryor on Byzantine warships in the 949 expedition to Crete, Demetrius Letsios on the Jewish communities of the Aegean islands, and David Jacoby on the demography of Euboea under Venetian rule. Elizabeth Zachariadou and Elisabeth Malamut discussed the Aegean islands under Latin and Turkish rule. Nasa Patapiou and Alexis Alexandris looked at the Ionian islands, Cyprus and Imbros in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In spite of this wide range, one theme recurred frequently: the comparative absence of 'insularity', and the way the islands were to connected the mainland and to each other by trade, immigration and religion.

However it was not all weighty academic discussion. The Embassy of Greece hosted a dinner for the speakers on the second evening, which was also attended by Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain.

September: New Students Arrive

A new part-time MPhil/PhD student Gerard Van Werson enrolled to carry out research into Images and Self-Images of Byzantium in Nineteenth-Century Literature. He joins Jae Hwan Han (Language and Political Culture in Classical Athens), Michael Kaplanoglou (The Economic History of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, 1700-1850), Leonora Miles (The Family in Late Roman Egypt), Liz Potter (The Uses and Representation of Greek Thought in Nineteenth Century Britain), Judith Rice (Memory in Ancient Greek Literature and Philosophy), George Siderountios (The use of the word 'Hellene' in Byzantine literature), Christos

Triantafyllopoulos (The Treatise On the Errors of the Latins and the Heresy of Barlaam and Akindynos by Macarios, Metropolitan of Ankara, 1397-1405), James Tuck (Central and Local Administration in the Later Roman Empire), and Christopher Young (Byzantine émigrés as diplomats: Franculios Servopoulos and his contemporaries, c.1450-c.1520).

Four new students enrolled for the MA in Hellenic Studies (Bernadine Corrigan, Persa Georgoulakou, Jane Stratton, Eirene Varella), joining our three returning part-timers, Elin Bjerre, Josie Bradley, and Dawn Thomas. Two students, Christopher Wright and Christina Chartomatidou enrolled for the MA in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies.

October: Lecture by William Dalrymple

Mr Dalrymple, author of *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium*, came to Royal Holloway to give an illustrated on his travels to monasteries in the Near East. Afterwards the speaker confirmed that the perils of travelling in the mountains of the Levant and the deserts of Egypt were as nothing compared to the difficulty he had experienced in trying to reach Egham on the M25 at rush-hour.

November: More Lectures

Julian Chrysostomides gave a talk on 'Symbiosis in the Peloponnese in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade', at King's College London. The *Byzantium: History, Culture, Society* series resumed when Charalambos Dendrinis and Panagiotis Antonopoulos (University of Ioannina) spoke on 'Byzantium in the year 1000/1 AD' at the Hellenic Centre. Jonathan Harris gave a public lecture on 'Byzantium: the Forgotten Empire', at King George's Hall, Esher.

December: Oikonomides Studentship to be offered

The Friends of the Hellenic Institute have now raised £2,066 towards the £2,800 needed to fund a fees-only studentship for the MA in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies, named in honour of the prominent Greek Byzantinist, Nikolaos Oikonomides (1934-2000). It has therefore been decided to advertise the studentship for the academic year 2002-3, in the hope that the remaining funds will become available before September 2002. It would greatly help us to do this if Friends who joined before July 2001 could return the enclosed slip along with their subscription for 2002 and any donation that they would like to make. Friends could also help by urging qualified candidates to apply for the studentship.

Coming up in 2002:

Further lectures in the *Byzantium: History, Culture, Society* series are planned for the new year, when Charalambos Dendrinis will speak on Byzantine autograph manuscripts. Further details may be obtained from Maria Kalli, The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street, London, W1U 5AS. Tel: 020 7487 5060 Fax: 020 7486 4254.

The London University working Seminar on Editing Byzantine Texts, will recommence in January 2002, on Thursdays or Fridays in the Institute of Historical Research, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Chaired by Julian Chrysostomides and Charalambos Dendrinis, the Seminar is editing and translating the voluminous

correspondence of the thirteenth-century scholar and theologian George of Cyprus, who later became Patriarch of Constantinople as Gregory II (1283-9). Everyone with an interest in Greek palaeography is welcome to attend. Further details from Charalambos Dendrinos at the Hellenic Institute (c.dendrinos@rhul.ac.uk).

We look forward to seeing you at future events.

About the Hellenic Institute

The Hellenic Institute, established in 1993 aims to promote the study of the Hellenic history, literature and culture across the centuries, from archaic and classical Greece, through Byzantium, to the modern world. The Institute currently receives funding from Royal Holloway, University of London, the Ministry of Culture of the Hellenic Republic, and the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

Director: Miss J. Chrysostomides

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Porphyrogenitus Project: Dr Charalambos Dendrinos

Lecturer in Byzantine History: Dr Jonathan Harris

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