Welcome to the second issue of “AGORA”, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centre for Hellenic Studies at SFU’s bi-annual newsletter. “AGORA” is the Greek name for a public space. It is the place where citizens come together, where ideas and goods are exchanged, and where politics are created. This newsletter informs students, faculty, and the community at large who share our interest in Hellenism. We highlight those individuals and groups that have joined us on our Hellenic journey and have impacted our program. Their contribution and enthusiasm have made the journey worthwhile.

Our second edition of “AGORA” covers the period of July 2011 – January 2012 and is dedicated to the memory of Professor Harry Psomiades (page 11).

Maclean’s on campus Lists Hellenic Studies as “...an enticing program”

For the past 21 years, Maclean’s University Rankings have had the difficult task of measuring excellence in education. This year, Hellenic Studies was ranked “In a class of their own”. Thanks Maclean’s for the honour!

Obsessed with the Greeks? The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centre for Hellenic Studies at SFU offers undergraduate and graduate degrees that focus on various aspects of Greek history, language, and culture. Teachings range from the ancient musings of Plato and Aristotle, and the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire, to the history of 20th-century Greece. The Centre for Hellenic Studies has also created an online Greek language tool called Odysseas. More than 4,500 people have downloaded its iPhone application, while a tablet app is in the works. As an added program perk, students can take a semester on the Greek island of Kefalonia, where they learn how to conduct archaeological digs at an excavation site in a 2,500-year-old cemetery.

The above is from the 21st Annual Maclean’s University Rankings. Story by Alex Ballingall.
By Professor Andre Gerolymatos

On 16 September 2011 the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centre for Hellenic Studies was established at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver British Columbia. The new Centre will concentrate on its ongoing program in Greek history, both Byzantine and modern and its focus on developing creative methods in making the Greek language available. The Centre’s SNF New Media Lab works on cutting edge technology as it continuous to pioneer new techniques in the delivery of online courses in Greek language, history and culture.

A major part of the Centre’s activities involve maintaining and expanding the introduction of Hellenic Studies in China. The Centre’s partnership with fifteen of China’s top universities has made Greek language and history to thousands of university students in China. In the immediate future the Centre is in the process of establishing, in collaboration with Greek and American universities, a new online graduate certificate to train and certify high school teachers in teaching the Greek language at their institutions. Negotiations are in progress with the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and a joint committee has been established – The New Media Hellenic Culture Group – which will examine how to use the SNF New Media Lab to help the Ministry expand access to Greek cultural products to the international community through the use of new technology.

These initial programs and activities are part of a larger effort that began when the Hellenic Canadian Congress of British Columbia, after ten years of fund-raising and with matching funds from the province and Simon Fraser University established the first chair in modern Greek history. The faculty and staff of the new chair program worked hard and managed to evolve Hellenic Studies as part of the university’s mainstream programs. Early work on developing online courses in Greek language opened new horizons and helped establish the initial contact with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. From the beginning of the relationship with the SNF it was clear that the Foundation had a very unique and broad view of Hellenic Studies. This view was shared by the Hellenic Studies Program at SFU and with the support of the Foundation Odysseas, the first platform that delivered an intelligent online course in Greek language made history.

The result of the this initial success led to further development in Greek and history courses online as well as the first online Greek-Chinese-Greek Lexicon. Indeed, both the location of Hellenic Studies on Canada’s Pacific Northwest and the growing influence of China in world affairs led to the first major relationship between a Greek program at SFU with a series of Chinese academic institutions. With the support and encouragement of the SNF that relationship has fostered (continued on Page 3)
close ties with Chinese universities and through the Odysseas platform is giving access to thousands of Chinese students to ancient and modern Greek language as well as to history and courses on Greek culture. More recently the Vancouver School Board has adopted Odysseas and for the first time in the history of Canada, students can take Greek language as an elective credit course.

These successes and pioneering developments have only been possible because of the innovative and imaginative policies of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. With all modesty the new Centre is one of the foremost centres of Hellenic Studies in the world. It would not be possible without the support, encouragement and trust that the Stavros Niarchos Foundation has given and we are will always be grateful to the co-presidents and members of the board for their faith in our university and us.
After the inauguration of the new centre, partnering universities in China sent their warm congratulations. Brian Olsen, our liaison with China, discusses our current relationships with these partners in the East.

**Nankai University (Tianjin):** We received an official letter of congratulations from Dr. Chen Zhiqiang, the Dean of the History College. We are currently planning to have Dean Chen visit SFU later year and give a mini-course/seminar series in Byzantine history from a Chinese perspective. The Centre will also send representative to the Society of Ancient and Medieval World History conference at Nankai University in June.

**Sun Yat Sen University (Guangzhou):** SYSU is our largest partner and has over 200 students using Odysseas at the same time. We were lucky enough to have Greek history professor, Dr. Lin Ying, come to Vancouver from SYSU for the official opening of the Centre. Last November, we contributed Odysseas textbooks and an SYSU library link to Odysseas as part of their Southern China’s “Window on Greece” activities. We hope to include SFU online courses as preparation for SYSU students to enter graduate programs in Hellenic Studies at SFU.

**Beijing Foreign Studies University:** BFSU is one of China’s premiere language learning and teaching universities, and two of our visiting scholars coming to SFU this year are graduates from there. The video features Dr. Wang Man and her Greek language students.

**The University of Hong Kong:** We have a relatively new relationship with this world-famous university, which began registering students in our Odysseas courses last spring. The video message is from Dr Wayne Cristaudo, who is the Deputy Head of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at HKU, and we also received a congratulatory letter from the head of the Greek Studies program, Mr. Georgios Repousis.

**Northeast Normal University:** NENU has a well-respected history department in China, and we were delighted to receive a video message put together by and featuring our valued friend, Professor of Medieval and Byzantine History, Dr. Xu Jialing.

**Zhengzhou University:** This charming video features the students of the history department with their talented and enthusiastic teacher, Dr Sun Peng, leading them in the singing of Night-time Thoughts, a song based on one of China’s most famous poems by Li Bai.

Left: Congratulatory videos from China. From top: A group from Beijing Foreign Studies University; Dr. Wayne Cristaudo of The University of Hong Kong; Dr. Xu Jialing of Northeast Normal University; a group from Zhengzhou University. View the videos on our website, www.sfu.ca/snfchs/china.html
Public Lectures & Events

Iphigenia in Tauris: A Theatrical Performance by Euripides

On September 15th 2012, The Consulate General of Greece in Vancouver, in cooperation with the Hellenic Community of Vancouver, the Hellenic Canadian Congress of BC, “Omeros” Hellenic Canadian Association, the Hellenic Canadian Congress of BC Chair in Hellenic Studies and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centre for Hellenic Studies at SFU, presented an open-air theatrical performance of “IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS” by Euripides at Robson Square. The play was directed and produced by award winner Leonidas Loizidis.

Plot Description (via The New York Times): An exiled brother is driven mad by guilt and remorse. A sister is saved from the sacrificial knife of her father to serve as high priestess in a barbaric land. Swept together in a net of fate, will they avert the tragedy that awaits them both? Combining the suspense of Hitchcock with the adventure of Indiana Jones, ‘Iphigenia in Tauris’ is the most modern and compelling of all Greek tragedies.

“I aspire to a result that will elevate the thoughts and sentimental richness of Evripidian poetry. We must not forget that theatre is precipitation, aesthetic and education of the soul.” - Leonidas Loizidis

Public Lectures

Europe, Middle East & The West: History and Conflicts in South Asia and the African Nations, October 4, 2011. Lecture by Professor Andre Gerolymatos. Part of The Hollyburn Speaker Series at the Hollyburn Club of West Vancouver.

‘The Greek Debt Crisis’ with Dr. Thanos Veremis

Above: Dr. Andre Gerolymatos and Dr. Thanos Veremis discuss the Greek Crisis on TV Ontario; at the podium, Dr. Thanos Veremis speaks to the Vancouver Club.

The Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation together with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for Hellenic Studies at SFU held a presentation on Wednesday October 19, 2011 by Greece’s distinguished Historian Thanos Veremis, Emeritus Professor University of Athens. He discussed the current crisis in a presentation titled: Greece’s crisis and the need for a general overhaul of institutions, social practices and mentalities.

Since 2008 Greece has been embroiled in the economic turmoil that started with the crisis on Wall Street and soon engulfed the whole planet. Professor Veremis has for years participated in broad formal and informal conversations on reform in Greece. His expertise is timely given this current crisis is Greece.

Student News

Graduation
Congratulations to Aleksandar Petrovic for completing his PhD.

Awards & Scholarships
The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Doctoral Fellowship went to Jamie Horncastle, while The Harry & Helene Katevatis Graduate Scholarship in Hellenic Studies went to Lucia Petersen.

Special thanks to Harry & Helene Katevatis for donating an additional $55,000 towards a new scholarship and for supporting Hellenic Studies over the years.
Study Greece and You Study the World

By Jamie Horncastle, PhD Student

My research examines the role that Macedonian Slavs had upon the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) during the Greek Civil War. My working hypothesis is that an examination of the Macedonian Slav component of the DAG will demonstrate that their preponderance within the DAG allowed them to influence the conflict in ways disproportionate to what ethnic minorities can normally accomplish. This research aims to enhance our understanding of the role of ethnic minorities in civil conflicts while offering insights into the political processes. The discourse developed by the Modern Greek and Macedonian nations is an important aspect of my research. As a result, obtaining a greater understanding of how this national discourse developed in 1946-49 will lead to a better understanding of contemporary Balkan politics.

These assertions rest on three foundations. First, given the preponderance of Macedonian Slavs within the DAG, one would be remiss not to consider the impact of the decision-making processes of the DAG and the KKE. Second, outside nations such as Yugoslavia were aware of the significant role played by the Macedonian Slav component in the DAG. While Western scholarship may not emphasize the significance of the Macedonian Slavs in the Greek Civil War, contemporary actors were well aware of their importance. The third foundation relates to the attitudes established during the Greek Civil War by the Macedonian and Greek nations persist to the present day.

Although I had always been aware of the great impact and debt, which the world owes to the Greek people through my grade school education it was only when I began graduate studies that I started to gain a full appreciation of the scope of Modern Greece History. Normally when people talk about the influence that Greece had upon the world they talk about Ancient Greece and the intellectual legacy that it bequeathed upon the world. While this legacy is important, and should be celebrated, in some ways it detracts from the influence that the Modern Greek state has had upon the world. Although this information has largely been neglected in the West hopefully my research, as well as that of other forthcoming students can share this wealth of knowledge with the world. One of the most rewarding parts of my work is bringing the legacy of Modern Greece to the forefront of academic discussion and it is the reason why I chose to study at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centre for Hellenic Studies at Simon Fraser University.
Dig Greece: An Unforgettable Learning Experience

By Tate Mason, SFU Undergraduate Student
Photographs by Andrew Fraser, Emily Carr University of Art & Design Student

Discovering relics from antiquity is thrilling in any setting; discovering them in Greece perched upon a mountain top with landscape views was, for lack of better phrasing, truly indescribable. As breath taking as the Greek landscape is and as exhilarating as it was to see the numerous ruins and multiple UNESCO world heritage sites my séjour in Greece was so much more than anything that could have been accomplished had I merely travelled to Greece in traditional fashion. From our travels to our treatment and food, everything was wonderful, unique and tailored to be an exceptional experience I won’t soon forget.

Our group’s integration into such a tightly knit community was so quick, warm and open that it felt as though we weren’t arriving for the first time but returning from extended travels. I felt much like Odysseus, another man whose travels presumably led him back home to Kefalonia. And it was under that presumption that we, as a group, were offered the chance to help with a secondary dig site, in relatively close proximity to our own, which was likely the home of Odysseus. Although a topic still under debate, it was nevertheless an incredible opportunity and I’m extremely excited about having participated in the dig. On the other hand, our actual site was quite the handful but toward the end yielded some extraordinary results. The digging was arduous at times and tedious at others, but was so enjoyable that many days our group would ask to stay after our scheduled finishing hour for we just could not stand to see our projects left incomplete and exposed.

“Our group’s integration into such a tightly knit community was so quick, warm and open that it felt as though we weren’t arriving for the first time but returning from extended travels.”

From top: Mark Lappan (L) and Everett Pritchard (R) look over Athens from the Acropolis; Laurel Riske explores the St. Gerasimos Festival Market; Tate Mason (L), Gioria Panagapoulou (centre) and Everett Pritchard (R) at the dig site.
Outside of the excavations there was plenty to do and without extending yourself too much you would find daily life full to the brim. Ranging from lounging on the beautiful beaches and swimming in bath temperature waters, to geo-caching and exploratory hikes, I was never without something to do. I joined a local soccer team and frequented the town’s (Poros) gym and in the process got to know many locals I might not have met without involving myself. Through these residents I gained access to opportunities I would not have been privy to had I not known them; for example, a team trip to Ithaca. Another benefit of knowing the locals was their intimate knowledge of their own country that one wouldn’t find in any travel book. With their aid we were able to take full advantage of one of the great benefits of the program: long weekends. In a single long weekend I managed to see Athens and its port city of Piraeus; travel practically the length of the Aegean to Santorini and cover the entirety of the island; travel back to Piraeus; make my way north to Delphi and visit its beautiful heritage site; then continue further north to Meteora where I visited practically all the monasteries; finally making my way back down to Patras and ferrying across the Ionian back home to Kefalonia.

In sum, the experience is best not described but lived and I must give high regards to the program’s director Professor Geoffrey Schmalz for making a 10/10 trip an 11/10. I’d go back in heartbeat if I could, but if that was standard practice I’m sure the program would never have any room for new participants.
Publications: Faculty & Students

Book Reviews by Professor Dimitrios Krallis:  
*Being Byzantine: Greek Identity Before the Ottomans* by Gill Page, published in the Journal of Hellenic Studies  
*Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World* by Youval Rotman, published in Speculum.

Publication by Jamie Horncastle, PhD Student:  

Professor Dimitrios Krallis and Professor Thomas Kuehn edited Volume 28 of the Journal of Modern Hellenism. This particular issue is titled ‘Hellenism and Islam: Global and Historical Perspectives’ and contains their coauthored introduction.

Upcoming Events

April 17th & 18th 2012: ‘East Meets West’. The Hellenic Studies Arts & Letters Committee will hold their first event featuring a lecture by Dr. Michael J. Murphy (Princeton) and exhibition by artists Golfo Tsakumis and Dehai Wang. See poster below.

April 26th & 27th 2012: ‘Debt, Sovereignty and Civil Society’. The SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies will hold a roundtable discussion on the Greek and European debt crisis featuring experts whose discussion will be webcast in North America, China and Europe.

Save these dates & follow us on Twitter @sfuhellenic for details.

The Arts & Letters Committee invites you to explore the dynamics of early Chinese and ancient Greek thought with Dr. Michael J. Hunter, followed by an art exhibit featuring Golfo Tsakumis (far left and centre paintings) and Dehai Wang (above right painting).

“EAST MEETS WEST”

LEcTURE, April 17 2012, 7pm  
Join Dr. Michael J. Hunter of Princeton for “Masters & Philosophers: Comparing Early Chinese and Ancient Greek Thought”

WHERE  
Libett Hall  
Room 1700, SFU Harbour Centre  
555 West Hastings, Vancouver

ART EXHIBIT, April 17 2012, 8pm  
Come meet artists Dehai Wang and Golfo Tsakumis, enjoy their work, participate in the Silent Auction and join us for light refreshments.

WHERE  
Joseph and Rosalie Segal Room  
Room 1400, SFU Harbour Centre  
555 West Hastings, Vancouver  
*The exhibit continues on April 18 from 10am – 7pm.

Please RSVP by April 3rd, 2012 to artsandletters@sfu.ca
In Remembrance
Professor Harry Psomiades (1928 - 2011)

In 1987 I was invited to take part in a conference titled ‘Fifty Years After the Truman Doctrine” at the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at CUNY. For a young scholar from Montreal, New York was enchanting and meeting Harry Psomiades an added bonus – I had heard about him, certainly read his articles but Harry in person was a treat. The conference was a major success and had attracted all the young and promising academics interested in Greek studies.

In hindsight, I can not believe that we were that young and confident. Academic arrogance was common at a time when universities were competing for the “youngest and the brightest” and we all assumed our version of the past was the way history must be interpreted.

Then I met Harry. He taught me that humility and simplicity made one a better person and a more effective scholar. He was accomplished, a brilliant academic, and that meant not one who had published dozens of obscure articles that litter the bookcases of libraries or the digital memories of databases, but rather a scholar who was well-read and a teacher who had the ability to inspire. For nearly three decades Harry was my tonic of inspiration. I would call him whenever I had doubts or an idea for a book or article. He provided guidance and there was always advice to consult a book or article that I did not know even existed.

In later years I was one of the lucky ones who benefited from Harry’s hospitality. His apartment on Riverside Drive was always open and Harry the consummate host. I would arrive with a bottle of duty free brandy and a carton of cigarettes. Harry had a cabinet full of brandy (seems every visitor had the same idea), but on all these occasions he would open the best bottle and we would spend the night sipping brandy and smoking cigarettes. Harry smoked and drank to that extent only when he had guests. For me, this was the ultimate break from everyday life – going to book stores and visiting publishers in New York by day and spending the evenings with Harry discussing the quirks of writing history fortified by French brandy, Camel cigarettes and the occasional cigar.

During the course of these evenings, I asked Harry why did he chose his professional, and to a great extent his personal life, to developing a Centre of Hellenic Studies. He told me that it was not so much for his daughters, who he adored, but for his grandchildren. He believed that Hellenic Studies was the medium by which modern Greek society both in the Diaspora and in Greece could be understood by third generation Greek-Americans, Greek-Canadians, Greek-Australians and their neighbours. Harry was also convinced that the best lobby for Greek issues was academia, because the university held greater gravitas than overpriced lobbyists – besides, he said, Greece could not afford the overpriced lobbyists anyway.

Indeed, Harry anticipated the dramatic changes that took place in North American campuses in which the traditional classical Greek studies that had educated generations of diplomats and politicians have practically vanished. What most North Americans know about Greece today is that it is a corrupt and bankrupt country with lovely beaches and good light.

Listening to Harry I was convinced that Hellenic Studies was the means by which to understand and explain Greece but also to salvage and resurrect the classics. Harry taught me that the continuum of Hellenism was based on culture and history not race. I followed Harry’s footsteps and today I am the director of the recently established Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centre for Hellenic Studies at Simon Fraser University. It is breaking my heart that he passed away before I could share this with him and thank him for the inspiration.
Meet the Team

Andre Gerolymatos  
Chair, Professor

Maria Hamilton  
Manager & Program Coordinator

Dimitrios Krallis  
Assistant Professor

Maria Kalogeropoulou  
Adjunct Professor

Geoffrey Schmalz  
Associate Professor

Costa Dedegikas  
External Consultant, SNF New Media Lab

Sally Xiaoyun Huang  
Researcher, SNF New Media Lab

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