Funding Granted for Renovation of the West Wing

The Gennadius Library has received a generous grant from the National Strategic Reference Framework to renovate the West Wing to respond to the growth in the Gennadeion collections, the transformation effected by digital technologies, and advances in collections management. The renovation of the West Wing, an extension built in the 1970s, will refurbish the current space to create a four-story open-stacks facility for non-rare books while a modest expansion to the west will offer a new state-of-the-art exhibition space where treasures of the Library and temporary exhibitions will be displayed for the edification and pleasure of all. A separate entrance for the public and a new flexible seminar space will allow public education programs and extended opening hours. All archival holdings and special collections will be consolidated into the Gennadius East Wing, which was fully restored in 2004. Several projects are underway to set up the new unit for special collections: inventory of rare materials, conservation of manuscripts, and digitization of unique materials including maps, works of art, and manuscripts.

Budding Byzantinists at the Gennadeion

Thanks to the generous support of the A. G. Leventis Foundation, an impressive group of twelve young scholars studying Late Antiquity and Byzantium participated in the 2013 Medieval Greek Summer Session. Selected out of a pool of 46 applicants from all over the world, these stellar graduate students of classics, history, art history, and theology spent the month of July at the Gennadeion reading and translating Byzantine texts; they were all awarded full fellowships. Their diverse interests and skills were addressed in individual tutorials. The rigorous program was led by two gifted

Library Contributes Works of Elytis to Le Noir et le Bleu Exhibit

The Mediterranean is the subject of a breathtaking exhibit at the newly established Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée (MuCEM) in Marseille. One of the four temporary exhibits, titled Le Noir et le Bleu. Un rêve méditerranéen…, features two temperas and a manuscript by Nobel laureate poet Odysseus Elytis from the Archives of the Gennadius Library.

If blue is associated with the dream of a unified Mediterranean (“un rêve méditerranéen”), black shows the dark side of the sea, its shores, and the people who occupied them. Elytis’s Sappho, Night (?), and the first pages of Āγορά Ευρί and part of a thematic unit that explores the reconfiguration of the Mediterranean dream by the European savants after the end of World War II. Here enter historians of the magnitude of Ferdinand Braudel and Jacques Berque (a most accomplished Arabist, also known for his critique of Edward Said’s Orientalism), anthropologists like Germaine Tillon and Julian Pitt-Rivers, philosophers of the caliber of Egyptian René Habacchi, artists Nicolas de Stael and Shafic Aboud, and poets Odysseus Elytis and René Char. Char was the co-founder, with Albert Camus, of a new periodical, Ἐμπέδοκλη, in the 1940s. Elytis in Ἀντίτητα Χαρτιά recalls that Ἐμπέδοκλη was founded with the express purpose of defending light and the Mediterranean sensation. Elytis’s Night (?) features in the rich catalogue of the exhibit, an impressive publication, with Juan Miró’s Bleu II (1961) on its cover. Author Takis Theodoropoulos has written the entry “Antiques” in the catalogue’s most informative “Abécédaire.”

— Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan

Odysseus Elytis’s Night (?) is on display at the exhibit in Marseille.
FROM THE ARCHIVES

Poet Nikos Fokas Donates Papers to the Library Archives

One of the most important figures in postwar Greek literature, poet Nikos Fokas, and his wife Angela have recently donated the poet’s personal papers to the Archives of the Gennadius Library. Born in Kefalonia in 1927, Nikos Fokas lived in London from 1960 to 1974 where he worked in the Greek division of the BBC World Service. He has published several collections of poetry and has translated extensively the work of Thomas Hardy, Thomas de Quincey, Robert Frost, and Philip Larkin. An Honorary Fellow at the University of Iowa, and a former Stanley J. Seeger Writer-in-Residence in the Hellenic Studies Program at Princeton University, the poet has also received the Grand Prize in Literature from the Greek Ministry of Culture and the Medal of Distinction in Letters from the Athens Academy of Arts and Sciences for lifetime achievement.

His papers include correspondence, manuscripts of his poems, essays and translations, notes (τετράδια εργασιών), photos, and some audio material. Fokas’s poetry has been translated into English by Kimon Friar and Don Schofield; the latter published in 2010 an anthology of Fokas’s poetry in Greek and English titled Nikos Fokas The Known Selected Poems (1981–2000), by Epsilon Editions.

— Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan

News from the Librarian

Several important acquisitions and gifts enriched the collections. Two rare schoolbooks were acquired at auction: Ο Στρατιώτης (The Soldier), a children’s novel by Galateia Kazantzakis, published in 1927, and a 1936 second-grade reader compiled by Aristoteles Kourtides. A very rare edition of Aesop printed in Venice in 1815 has two columns of unequal width that contain the classical and Modern Greek text, and an engraved caricature-like portrait of the author on the verso of the title page.

In September 2013 the Library acquired a 17th/18th century manuscript from the Vadaloukas family of Ioannina, a rare manuscript specimen of the period. The codex contains several religious works of metropolitan Paisios Ligaridis and bears an autograph signature of George P. Voulgaris, which links the manuscript with the island of Corfu. It may also be associated with codex no. 517 of the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre. Paisios Ligaridis was a controversial figure and his works, still unpublished, are linguistically very important.

Among the many generous gifts that were donated to the Library, we would like to single out two rare 19th-century schoolbooks of geography and classics offered to the Gennadeion by Th. Kontaras. The collection of journals and periodicals has been enhanced by the addition of several volumes of Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως (Government Gazette) covering the period 1886–1898 offered by The Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive.

Director Travels to Conferences

In May 2013, Gennadius Library Director Maria Georgopoulou contributed to the 2nd International Workshop “Byzantium in Transition,” organized by the University of Cyprus on the island of Paros, with her presentation on “Continuities and Changes in Artistic Trends on Crete.”

In September, Georgopoulou spoke about the Holy Sites of Venetian Crete at a conference of the Medieval Institute of the University of Fribourg on “The Sacred Geography of Navigation in the Middle Ages.”
**Fellows at the Gennadeion**

The 2013–2014 Alison Frantz Fellow is Alexandre Roberts, a PhD candidate at the University of California, Berkeley. His dissertation research focuses on Aristotelian philosophy in Byzantium and Islam and is entitled “The Transformation of Matter in the Eastern Mediterranean at the Turn of the Millennium.”

Dr. William Kynan-Wilson of Trinity College, Cambridge, recipient of the Cotsen Traveling Fellowship, will be studying the important collection of Ottoman costume books at the Library.

Elena Boeck from DePaul University opened this academic year’s Cotsen Lecture Series with a lecture on the famous illuminated Byzantine chronicle of Skylitzes in Madrid. Focusing on the representations of Constantinople as a place for imperial intrigue and demise, she showed that the manuscript was made in Norman Sicily and had as its objective to diminish Byzantine supremacy.

An award-winning documentary film entitled “The Other Town,” by Nefin Dinc (director) and Hercules Millas (writer), attracted large crowds to Cotsen Hall. The film explores ethnic stereotypes and compares the experience of the inhabitants of a Greek and a Turkish town; it was followed by a discussion on ethnic controversies with the filmmakers.

In November, authors Vasilis Vasilikos and Alexis Panselinos along with literary critic Alexis Ziras discussed aspects of the latest works of author Vangelis Raptopoulos, whose archives were donated to the Library last year. All events are livestreamed and archived for future viewing under the Digital Resources section of the ASCSA website: www.ascsa.edu.gr.

**Budding Byzantinists**

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Philologists, Professors Alexandros Alexakis of the University of Ioannina and Stratis Papaioannou of Brown University, Art historian Stavros Arvanitopoulos familiarized the students with the Byzantine monuments of Athens, as well as the Benaki, the Byzantine, and the Akropolis museums. One of the highlights was a tour of the Akropolis by architect Tasos Tanoulas, who supervised the restoration of the Propylaea. The Summer Session concluded with a rich five-day trip to Byzantine sites in Thessaloniki, Meteora, Hosios Loukas, Delphi, Ancient Corinth, and Mystras. Various local experts, including the director of the excavations of Ancient Corinth, Guy Sanders, made this trip quite memorable.

**Library Receives Large Digitization Grant from E.U.**

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens is the recipient of a large grant under the European Union’s National Strategic Reference Framework (ESPA) to digitize and enhance access to the collections of the Gennadeion.

Over 120,000 digital images will be created from the collections of the Gennadius Library and the archival collections of the School’s repositories. These will include maps, works of art, rare books, engravings, and photographs of many American archaeologists (Carl W. Blegen, Richard H. Howland, Doreen Canaday Spitzer, Gladys Davidson Weinberg, to name a few), and the papers of poets (George Seferis and Odysseus Elytis) and novelists (Angelos Terzakis, Stratis Myrivilis, and Elias Venezis). Several applications including online exhibitions will showcase the material, which has been broadly divided into two projects: The 30s Generation Through Pen and Spade and Travel and Exchange of Information in the Mediterranean (1500–1900).
Upcoming Gennadeion Events

On December 3, Katerina Kiona, harpsichord, and mezzo soprano Effi Minakouli, who also plays theorbo and lute, will give a concert of baroque music entitled “Musical Humors.” They will perform works by William Byrd, John Dowland, Antonio Cabezón, and François Couperin.

Two lectures on cartography open the New Year: Artemis Skoutari of the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation will discuss cartography in the era of Claudius Ptolemy on January 28 and Evangelos Livieratos of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki will present the World Map of Matteo Ricci (1604) on February 11. Paschalis Kitromilidis of the University of Athens will delve into the visitors of the Laurentian Library of Florence in the 18th and 19th centuries on February 18; Artemis Leonitis of the University of Michigan will discuss “The Alternative Archaeologies of Eva Palmer Sikelianos” on May 6, while on March 18 Christopher Clark of the University of Cambridge will deliver the 33rd Walton Lecture on “The Balkan Dimensions of the Origins of the First World War.”

Various events and lectures organized by the Association of the Philoi of the Gennadius Library enrich the lecture program in Cotsen Hall. A documentary on Dimitris Mitropoulos, whose archives are at the Gennadius Library, will be shown on December 11. Written and directed by George Skevas, the documentary is entitled “Bare Hands.” On January 15, the Day of Johannes Gennadius will be celebrated. George Dolanitis, the founder of an important historical library, will speak about “John Gennadius and the Revival of the Olympic Games.”

Philoi Events for 2013–2014

Various activities in Athens are once again planned for 2013–2014 by the Association of the Philoi of the Gennadius Library, including lectures by Professor Meropi Preka on the painter Thaleia Flora-Karavia and by Ioannis Trohopoulos, Managing Director of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, who will address the role of cultural foundations in times of crisis. The Fall Bookfair was organized in the gardens of the Gennadius Library on October 19, 2013. The traditional cutting of the pita will take place on January 15, while a new Board will be elected at the Philoi’s General Assembly on February 5.

Overseers Tour Cyprus

Board members and friends of the Gennadius Library toured the island of Cyprus in June 2013 with Gennadius Director Maria Georgopoulou and School Director Jim Wright and his wife Mary Dabney. The participants visited several museums as well as medieval archaeological sites in Larnaca, Nicosia, Kyrenia, Famagusta, Paphos, and Limassol. The Ancient, Bronze Age, and Neolithic sites at Salamis, Kourion, Lemba, Kissonerga, Kalavasos Tenta, and Ayios Dimitrios also made quite an impression on the group thanks to the erudition of Jim Wright and many of the local archaeologists. They all had a memorable time and lots to share afterwards.

Save the Date: March 3, 2014

Friends of the Gennadeion will celebrate Clean Monday for the 14th year in the U.S. The event will be held at Kellari Taverna in New York City. Mark your calendars!