

Ancient Greek vessel docks for Pompey refit

The most complete ancient Greek ship ever found – which is being painstakingly pieced back together by marine archaeology experts in Portsmouth – is shown here as it would probably have looked when it sailed around the Greek islands at the time of Homer.

Discovered in silt off the coast of Sicily, the vessel is believed to be around 2,500 years old. It arrived in boxes at the Mary Rose Centre in Portsmouth Harbour last week for what is expected to be a 10-year programme of preservation and reconstruction. Archaeologists believe the craft was heading

for Gela, then a Greek colony, when it was caught in a storm and sank with its cargo. Charles Barker, of the Mary Rose Centre, said:

"It has an elm keel, an oak frame and pine planking. It is the most complete Greek trading vessel yet found."



Greek bronze in the pool

Greece have dominated in the women's water polo bronze medal match, dowing China 13-9.

With two Olympians in the pool, perfect weather conditions and a medal up for stake - the game was on.

Evdokia Tetzalidou and Christina Tsoukala scored nine goals between them, and barely giving the Chinese a chance.

"Today we were more aggressive," Greek player Eleni Goula said. "We were better."

The team left the pool with big smiles on their face after their victory.

"It was the fourth training today," Greece's coach Konstantinos Petrakis said. "The first day we didn't have any tactics when we got into the pool because it was our first time as a team playing together."

"You see every player is a piece of the puzzle. You have to put them in the right position to make a good team,"

Despite missing out on a medal, the Chinese team feel they do not leave the AYOF empty handed.

"We are satisfied," coach Wei Fan said. "We had a good chance at winning this game but regardless it was a good match that was a good experience to be a part of."

Greek envoy regrets no direct flights

A staple in the diplomatic community paid his final farewells recently before embarking on his next posting. Greek Ambassador Constantin Drakakis spent almost five years improving relations between Greece and Korea.

His only regret was not being able to get one of the two major local airlines onboard to start direct flights to Athens. Nonetheless, things might change this year.

"We have a promise from Korean Air that they are going to establish a flight in the summer of 2009," said Drakakis.

During the past couple of years Greek ministers of transportation visited Seoul with the purpose of making this happen. While here they also worked on communication initiatives.

"Starting a direct flight is crucial not only for tourism but it also facilitates business, trade, everything," he told The Korea Herald.

Trade between both countries fluctuates. During the best of times trade was higher than \$2 billion and at its lowest over \$1.1 billion. Exports to Greece are fueled by the shipping industry and also includes traditional products like automobiles and general household items.

Greek exports to Korea are the Mediterranean country's weak spot reaching anywhere between \$80-100 million in exports.

Besides the traditional tobacco and



Greek Ambassador Constantin Drakakis

Yoav Cerralbo/The Korea Herald

agricultural goods, Greek products that enter Korea also include shipping machinery and maritime software.

"The best way to balance this is to attract more Korean tourists to Greece, that is why we have sought very intensely to inaugurate a direct flight between Seoul and Athens," he said.

Greece attracts more than 16 million tourists each year contributing to about 15 percent to the nation's GDP.

Since antiquity, Greece has been an attraction for international visitors not only for its rich and long history but more recently for its glorious Mediterranean coastline and beaches.

A direct flight would take visitors leaving Incheon about 10 hours instead of almost 20 hours.

"If you don't have a direct flight you cannot expect to achieve as much as you would hope. The catalyst of the direct flight works exponentially," he said.

One aspect of the relationship Drakakis is proud of is the development of the Greek language program at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies which kicked off almost 5 years ago. There are currently 80 Korean students studying Greek. The first wave of students graduated last year.

"I consider this to be a major development because they are the seeds that will increase our relationship," he said.

As for culture, there have been numerous troupes entertaining the crowds during his five-year stay.

The one that stands out the most happened last year when the Greek National Theater performed the immortal classic "Electra" by Sophocles.

Politically both countries share

above average relations.

In September 2006, former President Roh Moo-hyun paid a visit to Athens to promote Korean interests.

Drakakis' funniest moment happened when he attended a naming ceremony for one of the many ships to be delivered from Ulsan to its new home in Greece.

While looking up at the ship from the dock, the ambassador decided to climb the stairs of the brand new 300,000 ton cargo ship to reach the ceremony held on the ship's command center.

"It was so high, I didn't realize it when looking up how high it was and I kept climbing and climbing and when I reached the deck I had the same height to climb again to reach the bridge," he said.

"It took me 10 minutes," he said, laughing. "It was incredible; it was almost like a skyscraper -- like a 27 story building."

His worse memory is the traffic, a part of life that everyone who spends any time in Seoul has experienced.

The ambassador explained that he once spent almost three hours stuck in traffic traveling from Incheon airport to Seoul. What he will miss about Korea are the people, friends and the work he accomplished here.

"It has been five years well spent. I really like this country and I don't mean this as diplomatic courtesy," Drakakis said. "If you have problems they can easily be taken care of."

For example the speed and services rendered when the ambassador had work done in his residence or embassy.

"Professionally speaking, it was one of my best posts if not the best."

Greeks smoke up to 3,000 cigarettes annually

Athens. An average Greek smoker lights about 3,000 cigarettes per year, Greek Kathimerini newspaper reports. According to statistical reports, 45% of Greek citizens are smokers. According to the Economist newspaper, Greeks are the "most fanatic smokers in the world".

The data of the World Health Organization states that in 2007 Greece was ranked first in terms of women smokers – 31.3%.

It is believed that every year about 15,000 Greek citizens become "victims" of the bad habit.

The latest survey of the Institute of Economy in Athens says that 44.6% of the smokers in Greece are women and the biggest group is aged 30-40, Kathimerini informs.