



the afterlife and reincarnation - they are the most religious people in the world, Herodotus writes - or their interest in animals such as cats and crocodiles. Again such intriguing objects as tiny mummified crocodiles bring this remote past vividly to life.

Herodotus is a wonderful guide, always interested and genuinely enthusiastic, yet alert and critical. He travelled widely to research what was meant to be a history of the Persian Wars but expanded into a comprehensive account of the Near East, its land and its people. The whole of Book II ended up being devoted to Egypt.

Not only is Herodotus the inventor of history as we know it - he even gave us the word, which originally meant inquiry - he was, as has been said recently, also a geographer, anthropologist and foreign correspondent. One of his most attractive qualities is a genuine and unprejudiced curiosity about other civilisations and cultures. Even in the aftermath of the epic struggle by the Greeks to resist Persian invasion, Herodotus is deeply interested in understanding the history of the Persian people and their beliefs and way of

life.

He is always willing to consider that some of the practices of other nations may even be preferable to those of the Greeks.

Even more notable, especially since we tend to associate the Middle East with the religious bigotry that the Jews, Christians and Muslims have all embodied at various times, is his openness in the matter of religion. His natural instinct, as was always the case with the Greeks and later the Romans, is to seek to identify the gods of other people with the ones he knows: thus in Egypt Amun is taken as a form of Zeus and Osiris as a form of Dionysus.

This enlightened ecumenism precludes any thought of trying to root out other religions or forcibly converting people to your own.

Herodotus is accepting of different beliefs and notes that the Persians consider the Greek representation of the gods in human form as foolish (Book I,131). If only the so-called people of the book had subscribed to his generous dictum, "I consider that all men know equally about the gods" (Book II, 3), the world would be a much saner place today.

Article from The Australian

Greeks red-faced after selecting banned athlete

ATHENS — The Greek Olympic Committee has admitted an error in selecting an athlete serving a doping suspension to run in the torch relay for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. Fani Halkia, Greece's former 400m hurdles Olympic champion, is serving a two-year ban over a doping violation during the Beijing 2008 Olympics but was one of many runners to carry the flame during the Greek leg of the relay.

The Greek Olympic Committee torch relay supervisor, Spyros Zannias, admitted the blunder shortly after a ceremony in Athens on Thursday to hand the Olympic flame to Vancouver organisers after the week-long relay leg in Greece.

Zannias admitted the relay committee was "wrong" to include Halkia following a proposal from the association of Greek Olympic



winners, on whose board the athlete sits.

He gave no indication whether any form of sanction would follow, but said: "The standard position of the Greek Olympic Committee is that athletes serving suspension have no right

to participate in athletic activities and events." A gold medallist in the Athens 2004 Olympics, Halkia was formally expelled during the Beijing Games after testing positive for the banned steroid Methyltrienolone.

Halkia claimed she was sabotaged. A trial on the issue is ongoing after a scheduled hearing was postponed in June.

The same drug had previously been found in the samples of over a dozen Greek athletes in other disciplines, severely embarrassing Greek authorities in the run-up to Beijing 2008.

A Hellenic corner in Peru



Thousands of kilometres away from the Aegean's blue waters or the rugged mountains of mainland Greece lies a kindergarden roughly an hour's drive from the Peruvian capital of Lima. Located in a poor district, San Juan de Lurigancho, the school has been "adopted" since 2003 by the Greek state, which supplies the school with equipment and writing materials.

Pupils at the "Centro de Educacion Inicial Republica Helenica" wear blue and white uniforms and hoist both the Peruvian and Greek flags at the school.

In fact, Greece's ambassador to the Andean nation, Amb. Yiannis Papadopoulos, visited the school in person on the occasion of the Oct. 28 national holiday, celebrated in the east Mediterranean country last week, where he was received by more than 200 pupils of the school.

The presence of Hellenism in Peru dates from the earliest Spanish colonial period, with the first Greek names appearing on texts dating to 1560, whereas there are some 40 registered Greek families in the country today.

"Greece is helping a school in one of the most downgraded areas of Lima. Both the children and teachers want to thank the country, and feel that it is a member of our family. It may sound strange, but in this neighbourhood Greece lives in all the families, as for several years now since the first years of the school's operation, they (kindergardeners) are taught that Greeks are our brothers," Principal Olinda Florentina Vasquez Rojas told.

Andronas takes major architectural prize

129 years after the first sod of soil was turned on the historic site of St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne conservation architects Falkinger Andronas has taken out the prestigious Lachlan Macquarie Award for Heritage at the Australian Institute of Architects national award held in Melbourne yesterday.

The Melbourne-based architectural firm has been working to restore the stonework of the impressive neo-gothic cathedral for almost a decade. Company director Arthur Andronas was elated this morning at the victory. "Last night when I was called up [to receive the award], I was surprised we had won it because there were another 18 national projects of excellent quality."

Mr Andronas emphasised the nine years of hard work that had gone into the project, and the need for a major and detailed plan for a restoration



project of this scale. "You also need to have a vision, a sense of where the work will go. The building itself is considered to have a substantial Byzantine flavour, with the interior banding drawing attention to the altar, so we tried to stay true to the building's original form," he said. When asked by NKEE about what impact the prize will have on his architectural practice Mr Andronas said, "Now the capacity to work for federal government and for major institutions is easier. It also validates the skills and our experience that we have gathered over a long period of time."

Mr Andronas will now begin to extend the practice overseas. "I am concentrating on stone conservation for the United States and India. We are in discussion with architectural firms there."

He emphasised that his main focus is still Australia, where he will aim to secure large national projects. At last night's ceremony, the jury said: "Falkinger Andronas have been responsible for the conservation of both of Melbourne's major cathedrals, and at St Paul's have been involved for over nine years. The decay of the building has been slowed, stormwater failures have been addressed and the building surfaces cleansed, so that we can more readily appreciate the visual qualities of the cathedral as its designers intended."

The Sydney based practice of Greek Australian architect Angelo Candalepas, Candalepas Associates, also won two awards; the National Architecture Award for Residential Architecture - Multiple Housing, for Pindari, a multiple housing project in the Sydney suburb of Kensington; and the National Award for Public Architecture, for its design of the All Saints Primary School in the Sydney suburb of Belmore.