



Historically Speaking

Volume 2, Number 11 November 2023

The Islands

Six thousand Greek islands...that is the number put forth by www.visitgreece.gr. Only 227 of those islands are inhabited...ONLY? All of these islands are scattered among the seas surrounding Greece. Obviously this newsletter will only be dealing with a few of these islands. I will choose some of those that have been featured in my books. Many of the islands are grouped under a collective name, but each has its own name and many of them play significantly in the history of Greece.

The Cyclades

The name of this group of islands means "encircling islands." They are called this because they form a rough circle around the sacred island of Delos, the legendary birthplace of Artemis and Apollo. Whenever Strymon comes to such an island, he uses it as an opportunity to share the stories of mythology to the crew of whatever ship he is on at the time. His original function in my books was to provide an historically accurate way of including mythology within the narrative, as shepherds, sailors and soldiers were the early storytellers. Besides Delos, there are several other Cyclades included in the trading stops of the maritime ships around which the books are written. Andros, Thera and Seriphos are the most significant for the story events that occur on each of them. On Seriphos Strymon tells the story of Perseus.



Crete

This island is the largest of the Greek islands in the Mediterranean Sea. There is so much mythology associated with this island. King Minos, the Minotaur, Theseus, Ariadne, Daedalus and Icarus. Strymon calls upon those stories on several occasions. Much of the trading events happen there as well.



Sidebar piece

The next book (or series of books) is in the earliest stages of development. I have chosen some names and I am beginning development of characters. I have chosen a time period (around 700 BCE) and a starting location (southern Egypt.) I will make this next book my NaNoWriMo project for this year. NaNoWriMo is the National Novel Writing Month. I sign up on that website and pledge to attempt to write 50,000 words during that month. I have used this to get the first draft of the last three books I have written. I like that challenge because the website creates progress charts and all kinds of incentives to keep the process moving. I am looking forward to the challenge.

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The Dodecanese

This group of islands is in the southeastern Aegean Sea. Though Rhodes is the most significant historically speaking, other islands in the group get more mention in the books, specifically Kos, Patmos and Karpathos.



Evia (Euobia in my books)

The second largest Greek island in the Aegean Sea. The *Amphitrite* stops at the village of Eretria on Euboea. Strymon was drugged and robbed at that stop. After they leave that major island, Strymon tells the story of Heracles and the Stymphalian Birds when they stop at the tiny island off the tip of Euboea.



The Ionian

Several major events in the books occur on a few of the Ionian islands. Ithaca provided not only a story opportunity for Strymon, but several significant events occur there. The islands of Kerkyra, Kythera and Lekada also play significantly into the books. From STRYMON- After all had eaten and were enjoying the wine following the meal, he announced, “Gather around and I shall share with you the legend that gave the island of Kerkyra its name, if the Muses will grant me the words to share with you.”



Islands of the North Aegean

Throughout all four books, the island of Lesbos is centrally important. It is the home of Sappho, the one historically real person in the books. Strymon's story begins and ends there and Sinon, Mentu, Anissi each also have significant events happen on this island. In addition, the islands of Lemnos, Icaria and Chios appear in significant events in the books.



The Sporades

Of the Sporades, Naxos plays the most significant role in my books, with Kefalonia and Kos also appearing.



Because the books are centered around maritime trade, the islands are at least as important to the stories as the mainland locales.



Many thanks to Maura Stockton for the Sinon cover and to Kristi Stalder of Stalder Books and Publishing for the covers of Mentu, Anissi and Strymon.