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FROM THE EDITOR



Tou Theou Ta Pragmata

This month's issue features our story about Somerset Hall Press, a publishing company that has been a labor of love for Dean Papademetriou, a lawyer by day, a publisher by night, who has published over 40 books close to his heart since he started the press in 2001. One of them is a

collection of the stories and poems of his late uncle, John, who was killed during the Korean War. Another is by his mother, Presvytera Athanasia, on the Virgin Mary. Still another is a graphic novel about the catastrophe of Smyrna. And he publishes them the old-fashioned way: he prints them. "We Greeks have a respect for books and something that's on paper," he says. "We like something tangible."

My father was an educated man (an education hard-earned: he came from poverty and five years serving in the civil war in Greece to earn a PhD from Columbia) and our house was studded with books: the complete volumes in green leather binding with brown brittle pages and written in *katherevousa* of Paparrigopoulos, biographies of Churchill and Roosevelt and Eisenhower, textbooks with serrated edges on Greek pedagogy, complete *Time-Life* editions of ancient civilizations, and the Old West, and World War II, *Reader's Digest* condensed books; and in the basement, neatly tied and labelled in stacks like a wall made of paper instead of brick, the complete issue of the magazines *Time* and *Life* and *Look*, stretching back to when Kennedy was assassinated and continuing till they ran out of business.

And the prized possession of my grandfather back in Greece, the man who sent my father to school instead of making him work in the fields the rest of his life, were books in his old green military chest with the metal clasp that contained workbooks in Greek (he taught himself how to read), with illustrations of Hercules and Poseidon, a biography of the strongest man of Greece, and a book about a celebrated shrine, all in those pages that you had to cut, so they were all serrated like a knife.

My son-in-laws read on Kindle (my daughters, true to faith, read actual books) and I have more books than I can read in my lifetime, everywhere in the house, my bedroom, my office, our basement, our garage. A life without books would not be complete and the sheer wisdom and pleasure they give you is incomparable: it's like talking privately to the greatest conversationalist in the world and the greatest storyteller. It's like going everywhere and anywhere in history and being there to witness it: it's like seeing a movie in your head, in a theater of your own.

Dean Papademetriou is right that books, books on paper, and education itself, are our cultural legacy as Greeks and a hunger that we all share as a people. Remember the old school song about learning *grammata, tou Theou ta pragmata*? As Greeks, our faith is strong, but our faith in our books is almost as strong. Happy reading.

DIMITRI C. MICHALAKIS

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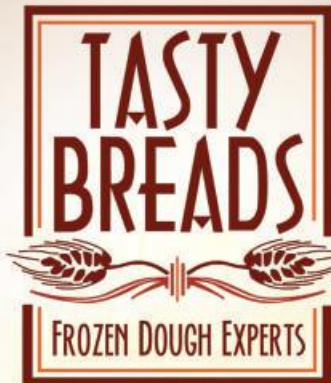
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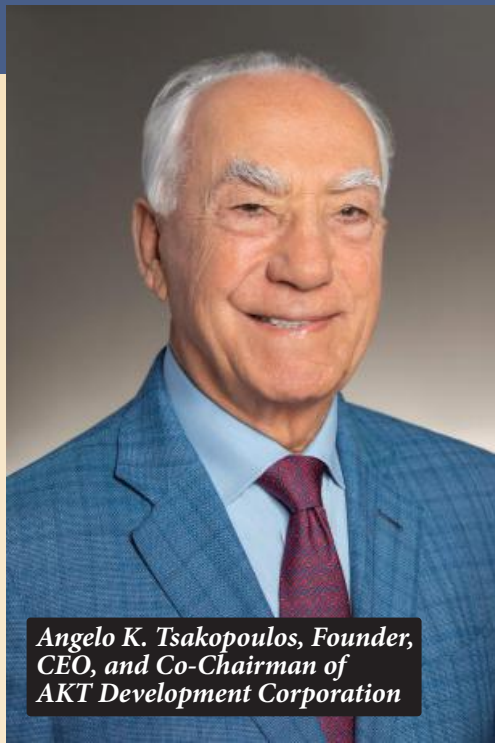
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American Hellenic Institute's Golden Jubilee Celebration



Angelo K. Tsakopoulos, Founder, CEO, and Co-Chairman of AKT Development Corporation

The American Hellenic Institute (AHI) will mark its Golden Jubilee with a concert by the internationally acclaimed classical crossover tenor Mario Frangoulis at the historic Warner Theatre in Washington, D.C., Friday, April 12, 2024 at 8 p.m. It will also host the 50th Anniversary Hellenic Heritage Achievement and National Public Service Awards Dinner,

scheduled for April 13, 2024, at 6 p.m., at The Capital Hilton in Washington, D.C. This prestigious black-tie event will honor outstanding individuals for their exceptional contributions, including Angelo K. Tsakopoulos, Founder, CEO, and Co-Chairman of AKT Development Corporation, and Caterina Papoulias-Sakellaris, a distinguished Retired Business Executive and Philanthropist. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening will be Fox News Channel Chief Washington Correspondent Mike Emanuel, adding to the grandeur of this milestone occasion.



Caterina Papoulias-Sakellaris, a distinguished Retired Business Executive and Philanthropist

Tenor Mario Frangoulis, born in Africa and raised in Greece, celebrated a milestone year in 2023, marking his 35th anniversary on stage. Discovered by Sir Cameron Mackintosh in 1988 and signing with Sony Classical New York, his international career took off vying for the top 3 positions with Andrea Bocelli on the Billboard charts for 52 weeks. He continues to captivate audiences with 22 albums and 7.5 million in sales, showcasing his mastery in classical crossover music to popular musical theater and other genres, all whilst singing in five different languages.



Mario Frangoulis

Mario Frangoulis' Concert will feature an enchanting collaboration with up-and-coming soprano Theresa Carlomagno, known for her timeless vocal artistry. Carlomagno's repertoire includes notable portrayals of characters such as Adele in Die Fledermaus and Adina in Donizetti's L'Elisir D'Amore. Her recent acclaimed portrayal of Adina in Norma for the 100 years of Maria Callas opposite Frangoulis as Pollione, demonstrated her deep reverence and respect for the composer's intent, infusing her performances with emotional depth and musical finesse.

This magical performance promises to be a very



Theresa Carlomagno

memorable experience as Mario Frangoulis, renowned for his powerful and emotive vocals, takes the stage accompanied by the Warner Theatre Studio Orchestra conducted by Maestro Stathis Soulis.

You can secure tickets for this performance at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

Also, for the Hellenic Heritage Achievement and National Public Service Awards Dinner you can visit [americanhellenicinstitute.org](https://www.americanhellenicinstitute.org).

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Leadership 100 Concludes 33rd Annual Conference in Naples Florida



Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, (Left) and Demetrios G. Logothetis and Paulette Poulos (Far Right) present the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Award for Excellence to (L to R) to Dr. Theodoros Teknos, Dr. Leonidas Platanias, Matina Kolokotronis, and General Andrew P. Poppas, at Leadership 100 Grand Banquet; PHOTO: DIMITRIOS PANAGOS

The 33rd Annual Leadership 100 Conference, which took place February 29-March 3, 2024, at The Ritz-Carlton in Naples, Florida, concluded with the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy officiated by Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, assisted by Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, National Chancellor of the Archdiocese Fr. Nektarios Papazafiroopoulos and Fr. Demetrios J. Mott at St. Katherine Church in Naples, Florida on Sunday, March 3. The conference, which saw record attendance of 725 members and guests, commemorated the 40th Anniversary of the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Fund, according to Demetrios G. Logothetis, Chairman.

Logothetis, who was reelected to a second two-year term, stated: “We experienced a joyful and exhilarating conference with inspiring speakers and record attendance, especially among our young professional members and their guests, in which we set forth our unified goals for the next 40 years and beyond.”

The Conference began with the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees Meetings on Wednesday, February 28. In his paternal exhortation, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America remarked, “I am, of course, delighted to be with you again here at the annual Leadership 100 Conference – the thirty-third in the forty-year history of this incredible organization. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America – as it stands today – would be unthinkable without Leadership 100.”

The full membership gathered on Thursday, February 29, when the birthday of Ecumenical

Patriarch Bartholomew was celebrated and Logothetis introduced a specially prepared video based on the exhibit titled Leadership 100, 1984 to 2024, 40 Years of Philanthropic Service, displayed at the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago. John P. Calamos, Sr., Museum Chairman and a prominent member of Leadership 100, spoke of the pivotal role of the museum in the history and life of the Greek Community in America and thanked Leadership 100 for underwriting the exhibit, part of the larger exhibit, Legacy, Renewal & Unity: Celebrating 100 Years of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Archbishop Elpidophoros delivered a lecture in acknowledgment of the 40th Anniversary on Friday, March 1st in which he praised the important work of Leadership 100. “Leadership 100 is a potent endowment, because to ‘endow’ really is to empower, and that is what the Fund has been doing for these past four decades,” he stated. He further emphasized the current and future role of Leadership 100 in advancing Orthodoxy and Hellenism, supporting Hellenic College-Holy Cross School of Theology, guiding youth and young adults, and creating a program for expanding its philanthropy.

Following the Archbishop’s remarks, the General Assembly was held where reports were given to the members about the work of Leadership 100 over the past year. One of the highlights was the report offered by Dr. Demetrios Katos, newly appointed President of Hellenic College/Holy Cross, who provided an update on the status of the School, and his vision for its future. Later that day, His Eminence met with the Young Professionals chaired by Alexandra Lambiris for a private dialogue. Archbishop Elpidophoros

emphasized the importance of youth and young adult participation in our Church telling the attendees, “You are the future of this organization, and this organization is very much linked to the future of our Archdiocese.”

Speakers included General Andrew P. Poppas, Commanding General, US Army Forces Command; Matina Kolokotronis, Chief Operating Officer, Sacramento Kings; Dr. Theodoros Teknos, President and Scientific Director at the UH Seidman Cancer Center and Professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland; Dr. Leonidas Platanias, Director of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center and Professor at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago; Deacon Marek Simon, Executive Director of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), with representatives Maria Tsarnas and Chris Kontomaris; Bishop Andonios of Phasiane, Director, St. Michael’s Home; Dr. George T. Koulianos, Clergy Family Initiative Steering Committee; Rev. Protopresbyter Andreas Vithoulkas, Archepiscopal Vicar, Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine & Andrew Veniopoulos, Executive Director, Saint Nicholas National Shrine; Dr. Stratos Safioleas, Director, Department of Communications, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese & Senior Advisor to the Archbishop; and Eugenia Manolidou, Director, Elliniki Agogi.

The Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Award for Excellence was presented to General Poppas, Ms. Kolokotronis, and Drs. Teknos and Platanias at the Grand Banquet on Saturday, March 2. The Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Award for Achievement was presented to Deacon Marek, earlier, on Thursday, February 29. In his Welcome Address at the Grand Banquet, Chairman Logothetis made the joyous announcement that Leadership 100 had reached its goal of 100 new members!

An announcement was made at the banquet acknowledging a \$1 million matching gift to St. Michael’s Home offered by Chairman Emeritus Argyris and his beloved wife Ann Vassiliou in memory of their parents, Mary and John Pappajohn. An additional \$100,000 was offered anonymously toward the matching gift. Longtime Leadership 100 members, Helen Carlos and Ron Hilliard, offered a \$50,000 donation to Hellenic College in support of the new President.

Other events included the New Member/First Timers Orientation, the Welcome Reception on Thursday, February 29, the Hellenic Glendi on Friday, March 1, the Annual Walk/Run chaired by Executive Committee member, Mike Manatos, the Golf Tournament chaired by John Aivazoglou, Tennis and Tournament Awards on Saturday morning, March 2, the Obelisk and Icon Photo Presentation, and the Children’s Program, chaired by Maria Pardalis.



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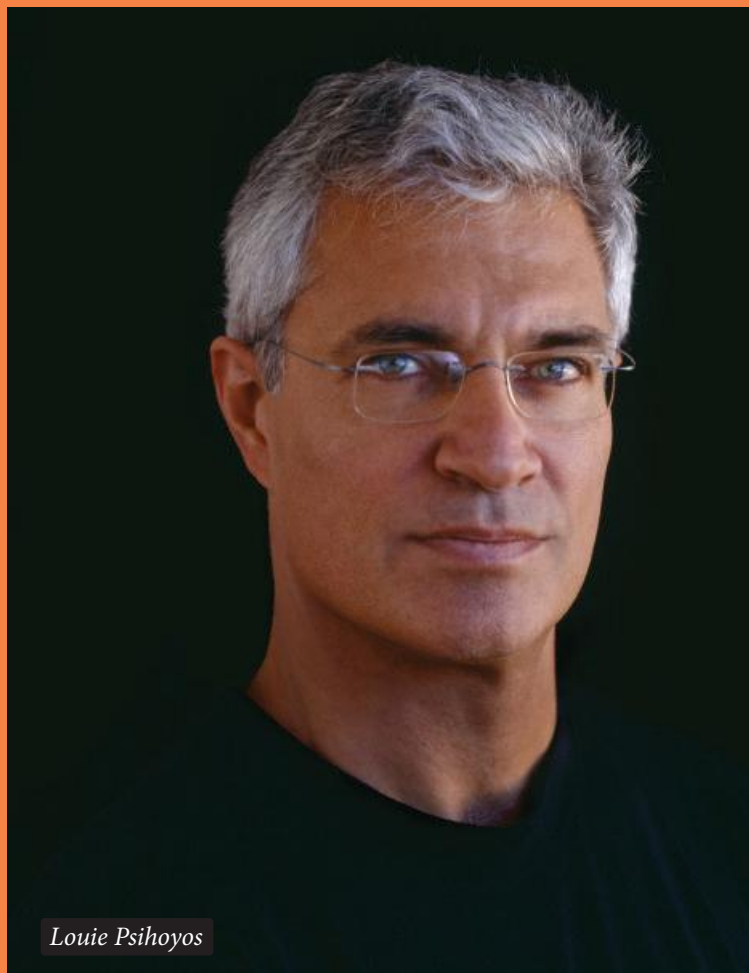
*In the beginning was the Logos, and
the Logos was with God,
and the Logos was God.
John: 1:1
And the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us,
and we beheld his glory, the glory as
of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:14*



Louie Psihoyos latest doc-series shocks the medical community

The Oscar-winning director talks to NEO

by Kelly Fanarioti



Louie Psihoyos

Through his latest doc-series, *You Are What You Eat: A Twin Experiment*, the Oscar-winning director Louie Psihoyos highlights the impact of vegetarianism in the human body. During the four-part documentary, which is available on Netflix, we see pairs of monozygotic twins who follow a specific diet plan for eight weeks.

In each pair, one twin follows a strict vegetarian diet and the other a meat-eating one. At the end of the eight weeks, all of them underwent medical examinations, with quite impressive results. Those who followed the vegetarian diet had, among other things, lower cholesterol and a younger biological age. In fact, this particular method pleasantly surprised the scientists, among whom the Nobel laureate in Physiology and Medicine Elizabeth Blackburn.

“Selfishly, I want people to live longer and healthier lives. Look at a place like Icaria, Greece which is called ‘the Island where people forget to die.’ It’s one of the five so-called Blue Zones: geographical regions around the world where people live the longest and healthiest without chronic disease-what all these regions have in common with food is they eat primarily plants. I’m Greek and have many Greek relatives that died young of heart disease and diabetes, and when you love someone you want them not to suffer. I feel I have an obligation to let people know there’s a way they can upgrade their lives, have more energy and be around to see their children and grandchildren grow up,” Psihoyos tells NEO.

As he admits, with *You Are What You Eat: A Twin Experiment*, he wanted to know the truth, but the outcome shocked not just him,

but the medical community around the world.

“Elizabeth Blackburn won the Noble Prize for her work with telomeres, which are the end caps of our DNA, longer telomeres are associated with a longer life - shorter telomeres shorter life. Her lab analysed the twins DNA before and after the study and what they found was that after a just 8-week dietary intervention the identical twins weren’t identical any more - all the twins on the plant-based diet had longer telomeres so they were biologically speaking, younger than their meat-eating counterpart. It seems pretty



Louie Psihoyos during filming "The Cove"

evident that there is a strong relationship with diet and the longevity all-stars living in Icaria and the other blue zones.”

As for the 21 pairs of twins who participated in the experiment, most of them decided to follow a plant-based diet in their everyday life. “The Stanford Twin Nutrition study, which was our idea, has struck like a lightning bolt through the medical community. Altmetrics is a service which measures engagement for scientific studies - a score of 20 is high ours is 1776,” the director says excitedly.

Psihoyos describes himself as a person who wants to leave the world a slightly better place and, therefore, he feels an obligation to use his ability to scale social change as effectively as possible. His actions in recent years prove the above.



Twin sisters, Pan & Wendy Drew who took part at "What You Eat: A Twin Experiment"

In 2010 his documentary "The Cove," exposed Taiji's dolphin slaughter and was awarded the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. The film was secretly filmed at night, with the film crew constantly in danger of being caught by the police. Following the release of the documentary, the Japanese government announced it was particularly offensive, and since then Louie Psihoyos is considered persona non grata in the country.

"A lot of people don't want to change, but many do. I had one of the first electric cars in America and it was powered by batteries charged by solar panels - in fact my whole house and business were charged by alternative energy - back then people thought I was a lunatic. Now of course electric cars are

becoming mainstream - it just took time before society realized EV's are an upgrade - they are more fun to drive, they pollute less and they are much cheaper to power and repair."

He supports the view that one of our goals as human beings is to relieve suffering, not just for our families, but for our communities, and for the planet. According to him, many people are unaware of the consequences of the seemingly-innocuous act of eating. However, he stresses that if people spend only ten seconds in a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, they would change their eating habits.

"If you spent 10 seconds in one of them, you would be appalled by the overwhelming smell of ammonia and feces--10 seconds! And these animals have to live in these foul environments their entire lives. The average American eats about 10,000 animals in their lifetime - now imagine an entire country eating that way - that's a lot of suffering. Raising animals this way is also bad for the environment. Unlike with humans, their sewage goes untreated and runs off into streams, rivers and eventually the oceans- it's the biggest cause of freshwater pollution, and

ocean dead zones. Raising animals for human consumption also creates more greenhouses gases than the entire transportation sector, which creates an immigration issue for people fleeing to Greece, because their homelands are becoming deserts."

Concluding our interview, I couldn't help but ask him about the inequalities. The food choices I saw in his doc-series are, unfortunately, not affordable by a large portion of people. High prices for fruits, vegetables, oil and other healthy foods make it, unfortunately, easier for a family to buy and cook something with lower nutritional value.

"There's a myth that eating healthy is more expensive. Lentils are cheap. Beans are cheaper than meat. In all the Blue Zones, people eat beans. Beans are cheap and packed with protein and fibre. People in Icaria and all around the world grow their own vegetables and they taste much better. In America we now spend more on health care than food. Almost 75-80% of the diseases we have can be reversed by eating healthier. When you factor in the cost of healthcare to the cost of eating animal products - vegetables are the deal of a lifetime. You have a choice to pay a little more for your food now or pay a lot more later for your hospital bills. When you're on your deathbed, because your arteries are clogged with trans-fat and saturated fat from eating meat - vegetables will look pretty cheap."

Wishing a Happy Greek Independence Day to Our Greek American Friends and Clients

George Likourezos, Esq.



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SYRIA AND THE GREEK REVOLUTION

by Dean Kalimniou*

In recent years, tens, if not hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria have flooded Greece, in order to seek refuge from the brutal war that has blighted their homeland. Two hundred years previously, it was the Greek freedom fighters that sought to enlist the assistance of Syria in their quest for independence, through an ill fated campaign that had unforeseen consequences in the Levant.

As Islam tended only to distinguish between religions, nationality being an irrelevant concept in its worldview, the Ottomans considered all followers of the Greek Orthodox Church to form a homogenous unit. As such, with the onset of the Greek Revolution, all Greek Orthodox Christians were considered as



Hatzimichalis Dalianis

potentially disloyal and the province of Syria, containing modern day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel, did not escape Ottoman punitive measures. Fearing that the Orthodox (known as the "Rum" or Romioi) of Syria might rise up to join the Greek Revolution, the Sublime Porte issued an order that all Christians should be disarmed. In Jerusalem, the city's Christian population, who were estimated to make up around 20 percent of the city's total were also forced by the Ottoman authorities to relinquish their weapons, wear black, and help improve the city's fortifications. Just as the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregorios V was executed in Constantinople, so too did the Ottomans order the execution of the Patriarch of Antioch as well. However, local officials neglected to carry out these orders. Finally, in the aftermath of a daring Greek landing in Beirut, various Greek Orthodox holy sites, such as the Monastery of the Panagia of Balamand, located just south of the city of Tripoli in Lebanon, an important centre of Orthodox spirituality, were subjected to vandalism and revenge attacks, and the monks of Balamand were forced to abandon their monastery until 1830.

The inspiration for a Greek landing in Syria

supposedly came from a Lebanese monk who met with Montenegrin freedom fighter, Vaso Mavrovouniotis, one of the few guerilla fighters not to be defeated by Ibrahim's Egyptian army that nearly destroyed the Greek forces in the Peloponnese and imperiled the Greek Revolution. Tearfully, the

monk outlined the various outrages committed against the Syrian Christians by the Ottomans and begged Mavrovouniotis to liberate them. The leader of Free Greece, Ioannis Kolettis, believed that, given the parlous state of the Revolution in Greece, a successful uprising in Syria could divert troops away from the Greek mainland and ultimately save the revolution. Consequently, he approved of the expedition, sending to accompany him, the Epirot captain Hatzimichalis Dalianis, who was already in secret correspondence with the Emir of Lebanon, Bashir Shihab.

Bashir Shihab, was remarkable in that he was a Muslim convert to Maronite Christianity. Already a seasoned and wily diplomat, he had refused to aid Napoleon during his siege of Acre, and was the ultimate cause of his failure to capture Syria. A year prior to the Greek expedition, he had collaborated with the Ottomans in removing the rival Druze Jumblatt family from Mount Lebanon. Being beholden to the Ottomans for his position, it is unclear what, if any advantage a Greek rebellion in his territory would be to him, with scholars speculating that he possibly hoped that such a landing would grant him further aid against his Druze rivals.

On 18 March 1826, after first having landed in Cyprus in order to loot and pillage, so as to pay their troops, a flotilla of around fifteen Greek ships, led by

Mavrovouniotis and Dalianis landed in Beirut. Their exploits were documented by the Smyrna-born British Consul John Barker, stationed in Aleppo, in a memo to British Ambassador Stratford Canning in Constantinople. Barker viewed the landing more as an act of piracy given that Greek pirates were reknown for such types of raids in the Mediterranean. He reported that the Greek "assailants scaled part of the defence walls, while ships cannonaded the town." Caught off guard, "in the absence of all regular military force" and with "a very scanty supply of firearms and ammunition," the fort that was supposed to secure the town from sea invasion "was as ill provided as the inhabitants." Resistance surfaced, however, thanks to a local mufti who "distinguished himself in instructing and animating the townspeople" to defend Beirut. The fighting resulted in casualties: "the loss sustained by the besiegers was in all 40 or so persons," while the besieged suffered "14 killed and 20 wounded." The town incurred damage "from 500 cannon balls, of which 2 struck the French consular house and 3 that of the Austrian agent." Although rebuffed, Greek invaders did not immediately depart but took refuge near the seashore, occupying "a number of detached houses in the silk grounds, but that being chiefly inhabited by Christians," the Greeks "did not injure them." The attackers, according to one of Barker's sources, appealed to the Christians "to rise and join them." He opined: "If so, they must have entertained a most erroneous idea



of the number and power of the Christians in Beirut. It is also said they sent an invitation to the chief of the Druzes to unite his forces to the

Christian standard.”

Seeking help from Bashir Shihab's rivals seems to have fatally compromised the expedition. He immediately mobilised troops to dislodge the Greeks from their positions and they, having received no aid, retreated back into their ships. The landing however, had serious repercussions for the Christians of the region. A few days after the Greek withdrawal, on 23 March 1826, after the departure of the Greeks, an Ottoman lieutenant arrived with nearly 500 Albanian irregular forces and wreaked havoc among

Beiruti Christians. According to Barker, "The inhabitants suffered more in their property from these undisciplined troops than the invasion of the Greeks had inflicted upon



"these gentlemen and their families were put in fear of their lives, maltreated, and robbed." Only with great difficulty did European consuls "repel" the "insolent attempts" of the

them, and the Christian part of the population, without distinction of Latin, Maronite, or Greek, was pursued and persecuted in a most merciless manner by the established authorities, while the Europeans themselves were not secure as well from the effects of the insolence and rapacity of the soldiery ... " A French merchant and an American missionary under British protection felt the direct impact of random

violence when local troops forcibly entered their dwellings:

attackers and "protect the rayahs in their service from sharing the fate of the other Christians, whose houses and silk plantations were confiscated, and all that could be seized were reduced to beggary after having been tortured for the purpose of extorting from them sums, which it was impossible for them to raise by the immediate sale of all their effects."

The arbitrary and unwarranted acts of reprisal against the Christians by the Ottomans as a result of the Greek landing destroyed the hitherto largely peaceful equilibrium existing between the various denominations in western Syria. As people of the region of long memories (the Shihab and Jumblatt families are still major players in the politics of Lebanon today and there exist in Greece prominent politicians who have married into these clans), some have argued that this singular attempt to bring Syria into the Greek War of Independence sparked off a chain of events that led ultimately to the Lebanese Civil War, and possibly, the present conflict.

**) Dean Kalimniou (Kostas Kalymnios) is an attorney, poet, author and journalist based in Melbourne Australia. He has published 7 poetry collections in Greek and has recently released his bi-lingual children's book: "Soumela and the Magic Kemenche." He is also the Secretary of the Panepirotic Federation of Australia.*

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BEFORE ITHACA

by Dean Kalimniou*

“Odysseus, noble son of Laertes, stop this warful strife, or Zeus will be angry with you.” Homer, the *Odyssey*.

The summary of perhaps Cavafy’s most famous poem ‘Ithaca,’ ‘It’s not the journey but the destination,’ has been so often quoted that it has passed beyond the realms of the trite and well and truly entered the territory of the cliché.

Cavafy drew from the Homeric epic return journey of Odysseus for his inspiration. According to most readings, the idea of nostos, homecoming, is a particularly powerful one. We all seek a return, one that will see us venture out into the unknown, gain a wealth of experiences that will, to use the most contemporary buzzwords, enrich us, expand our skill sets and enable us to grow.

*“As you set out for Ithaca
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.”*

Odysseus’ journey was a particularly lengthy one. Because he inadvertently angered the gods by appropriating their wagyu beef, they made sure that the wily but hapless traveler took a decade to reach his home after a series of harrowing near death experiences. Rather than being a paean to the idea that immersed in lives of haste, and easy, instantaneous rewards, it is easy to forget that the path, or any kind of process, is not only that which can teach us the most but that which is also the most enjoyable, one cannot help shake off the suspicion that the polysemic Cavafy is actually engaging in the type of deadpan irony that is latent in all of his work.

*“Laestrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don’t be afraid of them:
you’ll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laestrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won’t encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.
Hope your road is a long one.”*

The usual reading of these lines entail the conviction that perils are endogenous, that in fact, our own demons impede us in the process of achieving our goals. Apparently, this motivational advice is of significant ontological implication, to be applied to the simplest and most mundane of life’s processes, with surprising, illuminating results. It has among certain practitioners of mindfulness, led to the creation of a philosophy of life, that relates in a profound way to meditation, to the work of keeping our minds in the present.

Except that Odysseus’ actual experience was acutely different. He met, through no real fault of his own, not only Laestrygonians and

Cyclopes, but also Sirens, Scylla, Charybdis and the particularly ardent Circe and Calypso who imprisoned him and used him for carnal pursuits. Having escaped from the perils of these vicious monsters (Scylla for example, was a frightful beast with four eyes and six long snaky necks equipped with grisly heads, each of which contained three rows of sharp shark’s teeth, while her body consisted of twelve tentacle-like legs and a cat’s tail, while six dog’s heads ringed her waist,) and borderline psychotic women by the skin of his teeth, a traumatised Odysseus could only take Cavafy’s pious wish: *“Hope your road is a long one,”* as a travesty in the poorest of tastes. To suggest to someone that has just avoided being eaten by one-eyed giants, killed by singing winged female assassins, enveloped by a whirlpool created by the belching of a sea-monster, and metamorphosed into a pig by a precursor to Doctor Moreau, that they could have avoided their ordeal had they maintained a positive outlook, is the epitome of insensitivity, one that would have required Odysseus, had he lived in the present, to indulge in years of therapy, soy lattes and interminable attempts at body art, in order to recover.



*“May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you’re seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.”*

Gaining experiences that will change and assist one to evolve is the yardstick of growth in life, in accord with modern conceptions of life-long learning and re-skilling. Yet Cavafy well knows that Odysseus’ sojourn in Egypt was occasioned in the context of a violent and failed raid of that country by him. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus makes no representation that he learnt anything from the erudite Egyptians. Instead, he claims simply not only of having been spared in the wake of the Egyptian raid, but of spending a subsequent seven years in the land of the pharaohs, during which he gathered great wealth. Similarly, in the *Odyssey*, while he praises their skills at craftsmanship, calling them polydaedalic, Homer is ambivalent about the Phoenicians,

having Odysseus tell the plausible lie that the Phoenicians stole steal all his accumulated wealth from the Trojan war and left him stranded. Time and time throughout the text, Homer depicts them as scheming traders obsessed with material wealth as opposed to the heroism of the Greeks and Trojans. By subverting the myth, Cavafy is clearly making the opposite point to that which is commonly wrung from these lines: that pursuit, of whatever substance, is often futile, or tainted by motivation.

Cavafy’s ‘Ithaca’ culminated with its grandiloquent conclusion:

*“Keep Ithaca always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you’re destined for.
But don’t hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you’re old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you’ve gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.
Ithaca gave you the marvellous journey.
Without her you wouldn’t have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.
And if you find her poor, Ithaca won’t have
fooled you.*

*Wise as you will have become, so full of
experience,
you’ll have understood by then what these
Ithacas mean.”*

Stay the course, eyes on the prize, play the long game, never forget your goal but enjoy the journey, no pain, no gain: these are the clichés that are commonly employed to encapsulate the meaning of these magical stanzas. Yet Odysseus arrived in his home, to find that not even his father recognised him. His faithful dog died at his feet. His house was overrun by suitors lusting after his wife and property and he was compelled to engage in wholesale slaughter in order to set his house in order. The people of Ithaca, enraged at the killing, rise up against him as an interloper and he is only saved by divine intervention. We gain no insight on the change in the relationship between Odysseus and his faithful Penelope, but in subsequent classical embellishments of the myth such as the *Telegonia*, we learn that rather than arrive, wise but worn at his tranquil terminal point, Odysseus can find no peace in Ithaca. He travels to Thesprotia, marries another woman Kallidike, and finally is killed by *Telegonus*, the son he had while a sex-slave to Circe. Ithaca is thus not a home but a symbol of the loss of home and rootlessness, a source of eternal torment. It is only when keeping Odysseus’ final fate in mind that we can understand the true message of the ambivalent Cavafy: “you’ll have understood by then what these Ithacas mean.” Rather than serving an inspirational new-age influencer, Cavafy has instead, cleverly rendered, an artful, but nonetheless sick parody of human existence and aspiration.

In penning his paean to pessimism, Cavafy seems to have been closely responding to a little known poem penned by Joachim Du Bellay in 1558, in Middle French, that barely rates a mention in most discussions about

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FOKION AVGERINOS - DR. IKE:

**Athletic Director,
Youth Mentor,
and Healer**

by Athena Efter

Fokion “Ike” Avgerinos, DC or “Dr. Ike” is paving the way for student athletics by bringing his expertise in chiropractic medicine to mentor and train student athletes in his community by specializing in Sports and Industrial injuries, as well as treating patients of all ages with musculoskeletal complaints and injuries.

Dr. Ike began his studies at Hofstra University, and developed his specialty in Chiropractic at Palmer College of Chiropractic in Iowa. He began his work in November 1994, and is now in his 30th year of practice. In 1986, he started working for Dr. Steven A. Teran, a Chiropractor, as a Chiropractic Aide, and his journey was inspired. He recalled his experience with great fascination: “I was amazed at how Dr. Teran was able to treat patients just using his hands and some

physiotherapy modalities. I researched Chiropractic and decided that this was my future.”

While in Chiropractic College he met his mentor Dr. Mitch Mally, who developed an Extremity Technique that treats the extremities as well as the spine. He had the privilege to be his first Preceptor Intern while in Chiropractic College and learned from him both in his seminars as a student and then assisting him teaching. He believes that addressing the patient as a whole will help them recover from their injuries by addressing the extremities. He uses chronic neck pain and chronic low back pain, which many of us suffer from, as examples. With chronic neck pain, he evaluates the shoulders for any biomechanical dysfunctions. With chronic low back pain, he evaluates the foot/ankle

joints. The addition of therapeutic exercises and nutritional counseling completes the treatment plan for his patients.

So what is chiropractic and how is it different from traditional medicine, and how can it benefit an individual seeking this form of treatment? Well, one does not have to look far if they are looking for notable quotes that can explain the benefits of chiropractic. Dr. Ike provided a few that came to mind:

“Look well to the spine for the cause of disease.” – Hippocrates

“The doctor of the future will give no medicine but will interest the patient in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease.” - Thomas Edison

“Chiropractic embraces the science of life, the knowledge of how organisms act in health and disease, and also the art of adjusting the neuroskeleton.” -Daniel David Palmer, founder of modern Chiropractic

Chiropractic is a Greek word in origin and literally translates to “done by hand”. In 1895, David Palmer founded the healing benefits of chiropractic. It was his belief that nervous system controls the whole body. By treating the spine, several other illnesses can be treated. It is a form of alternative medicine that focuses on diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mechanical disorders of the musculoskeletal system, specifically the spine. Though they are not medical doctors, chiropractors receive similar training and schooling as do medical doctors. The best way





Dr. Ike with his mom Anna Gigiakos and Archbishop Elpidophoros

student athletes began when he returned to Holy Cross High School. A 1984 graduate, he treated the football team which he was part of while there, as a student Athletic Trainer. His Coach Tom Pugh and Athletic Director Brother Francis Leary asked him if he would be interested in getting certified as a Student Athletic Trainer. He accepted the challenge and spent two weeks at the Bone & Joint Disease Hospital in NYC where he studied how to provide preventative and emergency care to injured athletes. He was the on-site doctor at Holy Cross High School from 2003-

conditioning coach. In their senior year, they get to participate in a 10-week outpatient clinical internship and patient case study presentation.

The program has seen exceptional growth since its inception under his guidance and supervision. His goal as the Medical Director at TMLA is to ultimately prepare student athletes to compete at a very high level of fitness. The student athletes undergo sport specific strength training, have nutritional counseling, and their injuries are addressed immediately in order to return quickly and safely. Dr. Ike and his staff provide Baseline Concussion Testing prior to the start of their season to be able to quickly evaluate and determine the extent of their head injury so that they can be properly diagnosed and referred to a specialist for further evaluation. He also volunteers his time to provide examination and treatment at TMLA two days a week and attend as many sporting events as possible.

to understand Chiropractic medicine is to understand it as a healthcare profession that emphasizes the body's ability to heal itself by adjusting or manipulating other parts of the body to correct problems in spinal alignment, relieve pain, and assist the body's natural ability to heal itself. It is a whole-person, patient centered approach most often used to treat back pain, neck pain, joint pain, and headaches. Treatments can also include heat and ice, electrical stimulation, relaxation techniques, rehabilitative and general exercise, and nutrition/diet and lifestyle counseling.

2017, and currently serves as the Medical Director of The Mary Louis Academy (TMLA), from 2014 to present.

In 2017, while traveling to the NYS Girls Basketball Championships in Glen Falls NY, Dr. Ike and the Athletic Director Mr. Joseph Lewinger discussed new ideas that could be implemented to enhance the Athletic Department and the students at TMLA. He recommended starting a sports medicine program that would introduce the students to the various healthcare professions involved in the treatment of Athletes. His pioneering idea would give students the opportunity to intern at leading medical institutions such as NY Langone and NY Presbyterian.

Two weeks later, he received an outline and proposal from the Athletic Director to begin a Diploma Designate Sports Medicine Program to be introduced to the students at TMLA. He and his staff, which consists of a certified athletic trainer and a certified strength & conditioning specialist, started to create the program, a multiyear track for motivated students who are interested in pursuing careers in sports medicine, athletic training and physical therapy. The students work with TMLA Sports Medicine Staff to receive hands-on training. Entrance requirements into the program are highly selective. Students must earn a 90 or above GPA in Living Environment or Chemistry, and submit an application accompanied by an interview process with sports medicine staff. Students enrolled in the Sports Medicine Program attend two lectures each month, complete labs and case assignments, and observe/volunteer up to 10 hours a week with the athletic trainer and strength and



In the Fall of 2022, TMLA Diploma Designate



Dr. Ike's passion for his work in chiropractic extends to his community involvement as a leader in student athletics. His treatment of

Sports Medicine Program partnered up with NY Presbyterian Hospital. Senior interns are now able to observe in the NY Presbyterian outpatient physical therapy clinics. The senior interns volunteer 100 hrs., which enables them to experience first hand how PT's, OT's, and other healthcare specialists examine and treat patients. It will also allow them to decide if healthcare is in their future or not. Dr. Ike is especially excited about this achievement in the Sports Medicine program. He has received tremendous support to establish a state-of-the-art training room at TMLA and is deeply appreciative of the support he has received: "Within the first 2 years, with the help of an amazing administration and donations from various organizations, TMLA has a state-of-the-art Athletic Training room with



in NYC. Much had changed, including new iconography and a new Priest. He was inspired to go more often: “Rev. Protopresbyter Panagiotis Papazafiroopoulos is an amazing Priest. His liturgy enabled me to forget the craziness of the Pandemic and made me realize how much I missed attending Church and serving.”

In November 2021, he was nominated and became a member of the St. Gerasimos Greek Orthodox Church Parish Council, where he was elected to be Vice President. He is both proud and humbled by this honor: “I was baptized and was an altar boy at St. Gerasimos, spent my summers in Kefalonia, NEVER did I imagine to be able to serve my church in this capacity.”

In October 2023 Dr. Ike was part of the parish delegation to accompany Archbishop Elpidoforos to Kefalonia to celebrate St. Gerasimos. It was an historical trip that started with a simple invitation by the Parish Council President Gerasimos

Dr. Ike is also looking forward to 2026. It promises to be an exciting year for St. Gerasimos Greek Orthodox Church, which will be celebrating its centennial: “My co-workers on the Parish Council, Ladies of the Philoptochos and I have our work cut out for us. We are looking forward to having an AMAZING 100-year celebration to Honor our Patron Saint Gerasimos and ALL of the past members that worked hard to maintain our Beautiful church.”

When asked about any advice he had for our young readers, Dr. Ike takes his role as a youth leader reverently: “Every year I am responsible for the health and well being of about 200+ student athletes. Many Seniors either athletes or interns ask me about what career they should choose. I simply tell them that they need to choose a career that will make them happy. Life has many surprises, good and bad. Choose a career that you enjoy going to work, returning home in a positive mood because that will help maintain a healthy, happy home environment for your family.”

As a doctor, healer, and youth leader, he applies the human touch that is so often needed in our approach to healthcare and leadership practices. If Chiropractic is a hands-on approach to treating the whole person, Dr. Ike is a strong, hands-on advocate for the well-being and best interests of his patients and students. He feels blessed to have been raised by “an amazing mother and godmother.” His patients may laugh when he tells them he treats them as if they were his mom, but he has no hesitation in telling them “If my treatment plan is good enough for my mom, then it will be good enough for you.”

physiotherapy modalities to rehab our injured student athletes, a fully equipped gym that our strength coach is able to provide sports specific strength and conditioning programs.”

Dr. Ike and his staff provide services to all the students and administration that need treatment.

The goal is not to treat injuries, but to prepare student athletes to prevent injuries, and be physically and mentally strong in order to avoid injuries and showcase their talent in a pain free manner. It’s a winning combination: “Couple that with amazing Coaches and the result is CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS.”

He has big plans for the long-term future of this innovative sports training program. He is working to continue program growth and to introduce new technology for evaluation and treatments that will help student athletes avoid injury. And he has been incentivized by the students and former students to continue expanding this innovative approach to student athletics, as well as career builder: “Many of the student interns have chosen to pursue a career in healthcare. The interns often visit me either at the games or my office to say hi and update me on their career path.”

Dr. Ike is also very involved in his church community. His career took up much of his time that he couldn’t attend church as often as he liked, but the pandemic in 2020 changed all of that for him. During the pandemic he started going to the Church he grew up in and loved, St. Gerasimos Greek Orthodox Church

Athanasatos and Mr. Vasili Kokossis, a Board Member and President of Cephalonian Association of AENOS to his Eminence to visit Kefalonia to Celebrate St. Gerasimos Feast Day. He was deeply moved by this experience: “What an amazing experience. I was able to accompany his Emminence visit the St. Gerasimos Monastery, a place that I attended as a child and have many fond memories of.”

And who wouldn’t trust a doc who has a great deal of respect and love for his mom?



He also attributes his success to the help and support his staff, Office Manager Christina Bova, business associate Drazen Ceniza, PT and the Chiro/PT aides Anthony, Vickie, Nicolette, Jafar and Carolina: “My schedule is always changing due to my responsibilities with TMLA and St. Gerasimos Church. They somehow keep me going. A BIG THANK YOU to ALL my Patients, Friends and Family for your Trust and Support.”

Dr. Fokion Avgerinos, DC receives consistently good reviews and has a 5-star rating on Zocdoc. His practice is located at 44-20 Francis Lewis Boulevard in Bayside, Queens and accepts all types of in-network insurance plans. For more information, their phone number is (718) 357-0297.

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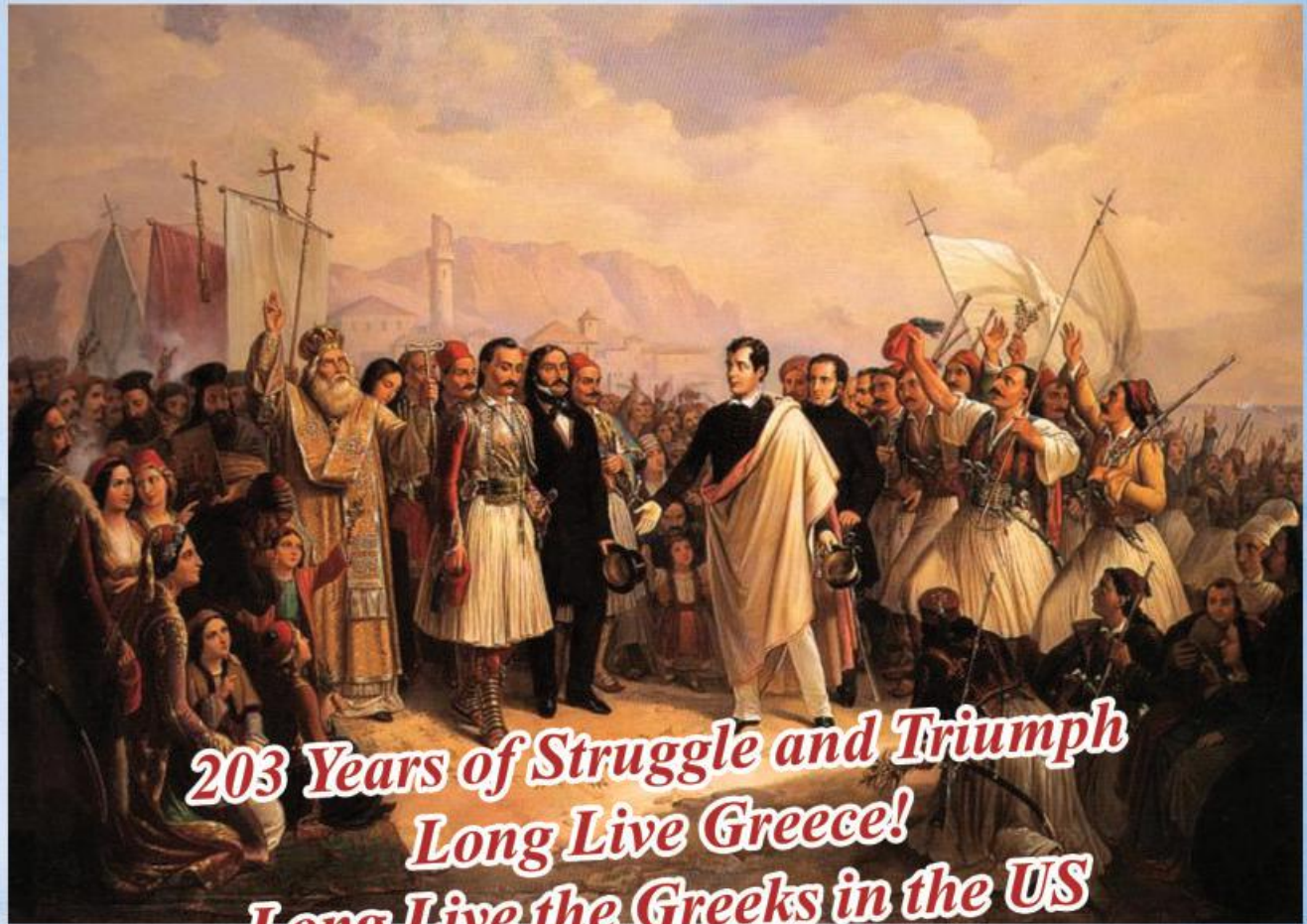
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The 9th Annual Greek Jewish Festival to take place on May 19, in NY



Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum (KKJ) is excited to announce it will host the ninth annual Greek Jewish Festival on Sunday May 19, 2024 from 12pm-6pm. The festival will take place in front of KKJ's landmark historic synagogue at 280 Broome Street between Allen Street and Eldridge Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

The Greek Jewish Festival celebrates and showcases the unique Romaniote and Sephardic heritage of the Jews of Greece. The festival offers a feast for the senses including authentic kosher Greek foods and homemade Greek pastries, live Greek and Sephardic musical performances with four different bands, two different traditional dance performances, an outdoor marketplace full of vendors, arts and educational activities for kids, Sephardic cooking demonstrations, and much more. This is the only festival of its kind in the world.

In past years the festival has attracted thousands of people, and more are expected this year as people are eager to come together and celebrate with new performers and community partners. KKJ is proud to collaborate with more than thirty different community organizations that include local, national, and international partners. Long-standing local partners include the Tenement Museum, the Museum at Eldridge Street, Lower East Side History Month, and Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox Church, among others. National partners include the

Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, the American Sephardi Federation, the Panepirotic Federation of America, Combat Antisemitism Movement, the University of Washington Sephardic Studies Program, and many other community institutions. New partners in 2024 include the National Hellenic Society, PJ Library, and renowned Chef Susan Barocas and the Savor Sephardic Music and Food Experience.

Live international performers will keep the music flowing and are guaranteed to get attendees up on their feet and dancing throughout the day. Melodies will span the Mediterranean and feature songs that cut across cultures and history, including Greek, Turkish, Ladino, Israeli, Cypriot, and other genres.

"As the only Greek Jewish Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, Kehila Kedosha Janina is thrilled to bring our community together to celebrate our phenomenal festival once again this year. Visitors will be guaranteed an afternoon of delight that celebrates the rich culture of Greek Jews," said Marvin Marcus, President of KKJ. "As a Lower East Side native, I grew up experiencing different cultures among neighbors, and the Greek Jewish Festival is our way of sharing our traditions with the broader Lower East Side and New York community."

"No matter your ethnic, cultural, or religious background, there is something for you at our

Greek Jewish Festival," said Festival Director Andrew Marcus. "Join us and learn more about a community you may not have known existed, while enjoying our delicious foods and energetic music and dancing."

"We are very excited to share our rich culture from Epirus at this year's Greek Jewish Festival" said John Katsimbaris, President of the Panepirotic Federation of America. "We are especially proud of Epirus' rich art, food, and music, probably Europe's oldest surviving folk music! This major multi-ethnic festival is sure to be a rewarding experience for all who join."

"The Greek Jewish Festival has become our signature event of the year," said Marcia Haddad Ikonopoulou, Museum Director of KKJ. "I have seen the festival bring together extended families and friends, and this year is sure to reunite many more. Greek Jews have come from all over the country to eat our traditional foods, dance to Greek music on the tenement-lined Lower East Side streets where our families first arrived as immigrants, and to remember what makes us so special."

Kehila Kedosha Janina (the Holy Community of Janina) is the only Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere. Romaniote Jews are a unique community of Greek-speaking Jews whose history in Greece dates back over 2,300 years to the time of Alexander the Great. The Romaniotes are historically distinct from the Sephardic Jews, who settled in Greece after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.

The congregation was first organized in New York in 1906 by Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews from the city of Ioannina (sometimes spelled Janina) in Northwestern Greece. In the early twentieth century there were hundreds of other synagogues on the Lower East Side that served Ashkenazi Yiddish-speaking Jews or Sephardic Spanish-speaking Jews. Needing a place of their own where they could preserve their unique traditions, customs, liturgy, and language, property was purchased at 280 Broome Street and the congregation opened its doors to worship at its current location in 1927.

The synagogue is a designated New York City landmark and continues to hold services every Shabbat as well as all Jewish holidays. In 1997, a Museum was created within the synagogue to tell the story of the Greek Jewish community to a world that knew so little about them. The museum is open to the public every Sunday and serves as a repository for Romaniote and Sephardic history, both in Greece and on the Lower East Side. The museum hosts numerous educational programs including lectures, book signings, movie screenings, and concerts.

Today, KKJ is proud to be one of only a handful of active synagogues that remain on the Lower East Side.

For more information on the Greek Jewish Festival, their website is GreekJewishFestival.com



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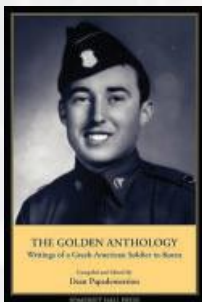
Dean Papademetriou of Somerset Hall Press: literary publisher of the Greek voice

by Dimitri C. Michalakis



The first book that Dean Papademetriou published under his imprint Somerset Hall Press was actually in the family.

“My father and Uncle Van told me about some poems and stories that their brother John had written when he was young,” says Papademetriou, by day a lawyer with the Boston Housing Authority, by night and weekends an independent publisher of more than 40 books since 2001 mostly, but not exclusively, on Greek literary and scholarly subjects. “My uncle John was a medic in the Korean War and was killed in action helping a fellow soldier. He died a hero and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.”



The book of his uncle's stories and poems became *The Golden Anthology: Writings of a Greek American Soldier in Korea*. And it became only the first of a distinguished list that now includes everything from new translations of classics like the *Odyssey* of Kazantzakis and *Bacchae* of Euripides, to a

graphic novel about Smyrna before and after the catastrophe of 1922 called *Aivali* by an author named Souloup, to the stunning and memorable memoirs and poems of the late author, actress, musician and teacher, Lili Bitá.

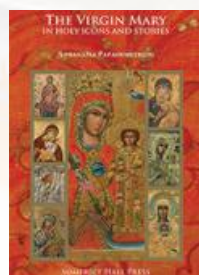
“I have so many wonderful memories of Lili,” says Papademetriou, still moved by their

literary and personal association. “We would talk all the time, multiple times a week, and she was such a wonderful person. She was very intense, very dramatic, but so loving, and just a wonderful person.”

For *Aivali*, the graphic novel, Somerset Hall arranged a book tour that brought the author from Greece and included appearances on the West Coast, including San Francisco and Sacramento, through to Philadelphia, and up and down the East Coast, including stops in Boston and New York.

“That was a whole book tour,” says Papademetriou, “and also reaching out to academic audiences, as well as graphic novel aficionados.”

Another volume, *The Virgin Mary in Holy Icons and Stories*, written by his own mother, Presvytera Athanasia (his father George C. is a retired Greek Orthodox priest and a former librarian at Hellenic College) had a foreword by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and commendations from Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and Metropolitan Methodios of Boston, among others.



“We reached out to parishes, we reached out to theologians, and we got a good response,” says Papademetriou.

In the world of small presses like Somerset Hall, it's all about filling in the niches.

“It's niches, within niches, within niches,” says Papademetriou. “We get a lot of interest for specific books. There's kind of sub-communities within the Greek community, just like in any other population. People are going to be interested in different subjects. My press promotes Greek culture and Greek Orthodox religion, but not everyone wants to read every single book, so I do have to reach out in different ways.”

The publication in 2022 of the *Aivali* book about Smyrna coincided with the centenary of the actual event, but other books have to be promoted doggedly and creatively, at universities where Greek is taught, and Hellenic studies, in churches, schools, and through Greek media because, he says, it's more than a practical effort, “it's a mission.”

“I try to promote Greek culture, and I wish there was more interest,” he says, “but I'm happy with the support I get. I always wish I had more, but we get through.”

After all, it began as a labor of love, and the publication of books a natural inclination for a self-professed “bookworm.”

“My father was a professor at Holy Cross, my mother was a Greek teacher, and I was a total bookworm,” says Papademetriou. “I was in an elementary school play and my part was the Bookworm—I even remember the costume I wore!”

He was born in Fort Worth, Texas, where his father was serving at the time, but mostly grew up in Annapolis, Maryland and Lexington, Massachusetts (following his father's circuit of assignments: “He dedicated his entire life to the church and academic work, and my mother too, of course, supporting his mission”).

He went to the University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in economics, but also English and French, before getting his law degree from Boston College Law School and working as a private and public attorney, and joining the Boston Housing Authority in 2005, where he's the in-house counsel specializing in real estate development and management, including affordable housing, public construction, and nonprofit law.

“I do real estate finance and public finance on huge development projects for affordable housing,” he describes it. “So it's very mission-oriented. I feel fortunate that I have something that's using my legal and business skills, but in a mission-oriented way.”

His two siblings are on a similar family mission of service. His sister, Jane Kourtis, works for a Fortune 500 company, but also headed EOK (Epsilon Omicron Kappa), the Hellenic Women's Club philanthropic organization. And his brother, Dr. Tom Papademetriou, is a professor of Greek history and the director of the Hellenic Studies program at Stockton University in New Jersey.

“We all had that growing up in a household like ours,” says Papademetriou. “Where education and scholarship and service are always important. And I have that in me, the scholarly side with Somerset Hall Press and the mission to promote Greek culture, but working in law and business also being creative and mission-oriented in developing public housing.”

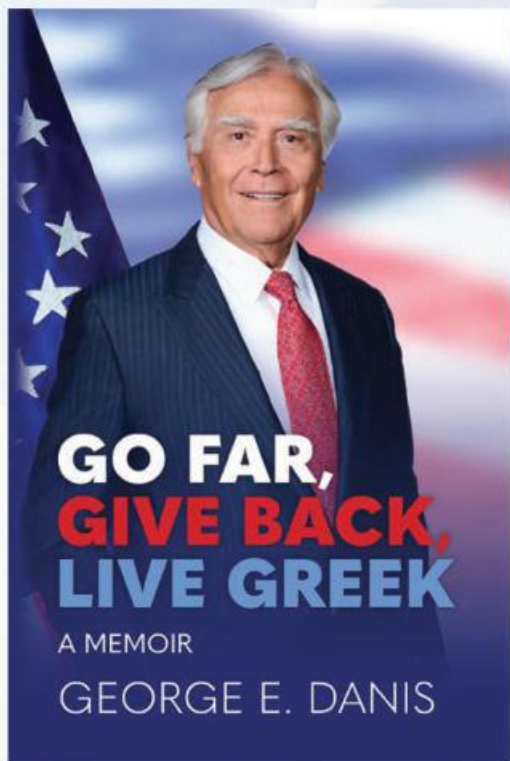
And as for the future of Somerset Hall Press, he says, “I think I'd be happy with how things are going. I have avoided going all-electronic because I think people do still like print books and something tangible in their hands, especially us Greeks. We have respect for books. And so I think I'm gonna continue doing what I'm doing.”

Happy Greek Independence Day!

March 25th 1821-2024

On March 25th, we honor those who fought for Greece and its freedom. Please, join me in celebrating Greek Independence Day.

George E. Danis



Tony Ganos

By Nikos Linardakis, M.D.

The gentle giant who was a Renaissance man A tribute on his passing

I met Anthony Ganos in 2006, and we quickly became close friends. I was introduced to Tony by actor and co-star Scott Colomby (Porky's and Caddyshack). Scott was going to direct a film adaptation of Harry Mark Petrakis' book, *In the Land of Mourning*, which I had optioned. My first phone call with Tony must have lasted at least five hours long. We talked about our Greek family histories, strategic military marches, Xenophon's *Anabasis*, people we knew, classic cars we owned, and music we cherished from the 1950's. It began one of those friendships you rarely find anymore. I know he must have experienced this with several others, because he was a cherished friend to many.

Despite Tony's likely preference for a short obituary, I believe he deserves a detailed tribute and to honor his private life. This is his story.



Anthony Ganos passed away on Sunday, February 18, 2024, leaving behind a cinematic legacy that resonated around the world. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on October 21, 1959, Ganos' life journey unfolded against the hard-working city backdrop, with his film debut in *The Wanderers*. This 1979 cult classic movie was written and directed by Philip Kaufman and starred Ken Wahl. Almost everyone recognizes Kaufman from his blockbuster movies, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *The Right Stuff*; and Wahl from the highly successful *Wiseguy* television series.

Tony Ganos' upbringing reflected his Greek-Italian heritage, and his family played a significant role in molding his life. As a beloved actor, Tony was known best for his roles in *The Wanderers* and *Porky's*. Ganos' father came from northern Greece to New York City, where he later married Marie, and gave birth to Tony. Several years later, his father remarried and Tony's sister Trinity was born. Each of his uncles, including his favorite, "Pete," were physical giants. They were men crafted in the glory of Greek Gods, as though fashioned from bronze or marble. Although his uncle Pete had the opportunity to play the role of the father in the *Wanderers*, his heavy Greek accent may have limited that acceptance. His uncle's part went to another strong broad-shouldered man, William Andrews.

Just as equipped with door-wide shoulders and impressive biceps, Anthony towered at 6-feet-4-inches tall. Tony possessed remarkable strength, capable of bench pressing over 400 pounds and deadlifting over 700 pounds. The Brooklyn-born Tony Ganos entry into the film industry was somewhat unexpected. At the age of eighteen, his uncle Pete, even larger and more powerful, interrupted Tony's workout to push him into auditioning for director Philip Kaufman. Tony secured the part as Perry, and the rest, as they say in show business, is history.

His physical presence always matched his on-screen roles. Ganos also appeared in *Back Roads* (1981), a role he actually landed by hurling the film's script into the chest of its director. Next, he played a former football player turned mountain man in the 1981 John Belushi film *Continental Divide* before another "coming of age" film beckoned, and he was cast as Meat in the raunchy, but highly successful *Porky's* franchise (1982). Ganos repeated the popular role in *Porky's II: The Next Day* (1983) and *Porky's III: Revenge* (1985). Tony's other well-known role was in the 1990 hit film *Die Hard 2* as Baker, a member of the terrorist team.

A military history and period weapons expert, Ganos was one of Brazilian jiu jitsu pioneer and UFC founder Rorion Gracie's original students. Some of Ganos' other film and television credits include *The Taking of Beverly Hills* (1991), *Ring of the Musketeers* (1992), *The Rising Sun* (1993), and the Emmy Award-winning television series *Wiseguy* (1987-1990). As well as creating the concept and writing the screenplay for *Daddies' Girls*,

Tony was to portray the father of the film's female lead, and take on the role as Producer.

He possessed a commanding presence. In a memorable incident from his youth, he shared with me how he was challenged to lift a car; however, his strength proved too much, causing the car to flip over onto the sidewalk! From a short distance away, he apologized to the owner who witnessed the scene unfold in slow motion, unable to intervene in time. Reflecting on the event, Tony recounted, "The man asked me why I did that, and I just looked at him, shrugging my shoulders, 'I don't know, but sorry!'" The teenagers responsible for the dare ran off with mixed emotions of accomplishment and guilt. Tony's robust build undoubtedly served him on the silver screen. Especially as his breakout role came in 1979, as Perry, a tough and recent loyal member of the *Wanderers* street gang. Set in the Bronx in 1963, the film portrayed the dynamics of power struggles among ethnic groups and captured the essence of youth culture, camaraderie, and life's challenges.

His iconic line, "Leave the kid alone!" became as legendary as Arnold Schwarzenegger's "I'll be back"—which surfaced later from the *Terminator* film. Ganos' portrayal resonated deeply with audiences, cementing the film's status as a cult classic, and his persona has persisted for 45 years. His widespread acclaim stemmed from his authenticity and genuine talent.

This reminded me of how occasionally, Tony would glance at my son, Constantine, who tried to impress the formidable Ganos. In his trademark low voice, echoing his famous line, Tony would playfully tell my son, "Costa, stop the evil!" My children loved that, and like many Greek kids, grew up wanting to embody righteousness.

Tony soon played a memorable role as Meat in Bob Clarke's raucous teen comedy, *Porky's* (1981). The film follows mischievous high school students who band together to outwit the lecherous owner of a nearby strip club. Starring alongside another Greek actor and former football player, Alex Karras, who portrayed a tough police officer, *Porky's* became a cultural phenomenon. Regarded as one of the first and highest grossing teen-sex comedy of its time, it generated millions at the box office and for decades to come, and solidified Ganos and his peers as rising stars in Hollywood.

Throughout his illustrious career, Ganos

graced the screens in several notable films, such as *Die Hard 2*, *Rising Sun* (alongside Sean Connery), and the 1981 film *Continental Divide* with Chicago's John Belushi, whose family we knew in Chicago and were Albanian Orthodox background. In *Continental Divide*, Tony portrayed the brawny ex-football player turned mountain man Max Bernbaum alongside Belushi. He also continued into television, with the help of his pal Ken Wahl. His role as an attorney in the highly-successful late 1980's *Wiseguy* series featured actors Kevin Spacey, Jonathan Banks, as well as Jerry Lewis and Robert Davi. During one of our conversations about *Wiseguy*, I mentioned knowing his Director of Photography, Frank Johnson, through my work as Chairman of the Utah Film Incentive Committee. It was gratifying seeing them reconnect. Frank always held fond memories of Tony and Ken, and these enduring friendships meant a lot.

Beyond his on-screen achievements, one remarkable aspect of Tony was that he was a savant. Not many knew this, and he wanted to protect the fact that he possessed the ability to memorize any subject. As he said several times when I would ask him in disbelief, "How do you know all that, word-for-word?" He would humbly reply, "I'm just interested in it." While we all have interests in our fields, talents, hobbies, and families, Tony's knowledge and passion went beyond mere curiosity. He was a self-taught military historian, versed in the exact events, timelines and strategies of historical leadership. When confronted with another historian, religious leader or person who knew their topic, Tony would be leagues above in the level of understanding and knowledge. Yet, he never let anyone know about this gift. He was humble, and wanted to learn more. He was blessed with the mind of a savant.

In my lifetime, I've been privileged to know three savants, and Tony Ganiotis was one of them. To grasp the magnitude of such a miracle mind, a man of brilliance, one might recall Kim Peek, immortalized in the movie *Rain Man*. I once introduced Kim and his father to my mother. She asked Kim if he knew anything about her village in Greece. Without hesitation, he provided detailed facts of her small childhood kingdom, "Yes, the village is in the center of the Peloponnese, in Arcadia, with a population of 140..." Moving my mother and me to tears. He was faster than any computer to provide information. While Kim struggled with social connection, Tony navigated social interactions with ease. He kept his intellectual prowess discreet, a fascinating aspect of his persona. When you looked at Tony, you thought he was a thug. How wrong could people be, and Tony kept

that to his advantage. It was fascinating to observe.

He memorized the Bible, Quran, Torah, and Book of Mormon cover to cover, in a single reading, engaging in conversations with full understanding and agility. "We would stay up until 3 or 4AM talking about Christ and Mohammed. We respected one another and he was deeply religious, knowledgeable about



his faith and respectful of others' opinions," said his friend Abdul Mullahkhel. "I was fortunate to have known him."

Tony had a fondness for birds, filling his home with them, and his favorite was his dusky conure "Pixie." His affection for birds, particularly Pixie, revealed his gentle nature. During a visit to Los Angeles one weekend, Pixie unexpectedly landed on my shoulder. Tony cautioned me not to move, because Pixie could tear off my ear lobe. Despite the warning, I couldn't help but laugh, my shoulders bounced, and Pixie bobbed his head up and down. With his massive hands, Tony gently removed the bird from my shoulder—saving my earlobe from harm. It was a moment filled with laughter and relief, leaving me to wonder if that bird mirrored Tony's gentle demeanor, or if it would have led to a trip to the plastic surgeon.

On another occasion, I brought Tony with me to a legislative meeting at the Utah State Capitol building to support a Bill I was advocating. The police seemed apprehensive, lurking behind marble columns, eyeing him as if he was about to cause trouble. They murmured into their shirt collars and earpieces, warning each other to be cautious around this tough guy. I had to reassure the authorities that he was with me. Once they recognized who he was, we all shared a laugh. The State passed the bill into law, and we marched to my 1970 Ford Fairlane and drove away.

On a different time, Tony attended my son Michaelis' basketball game. Prior to the event, Tony asked me to fetch a white cardboard sign and a blue marker. With swift strokes, he sketched a picture of Spartan King Leonidas wearing his warrior helmet, and wrote "ΜΟΛΩΝ ΛΑΒΕ" in bold Greek letters. "Now we can go. Let's cheer him on, the way the Spartans would." Tony remarked. ΜΟΛΩΝ ΛΑΒΕ ("Come and take them!") encapsulated one of his life's mottos.

Despite his imposing appearance, Ganiotis was known for his honesty, humility and generosity. Much like the characters he portrayed on screen, he was passionate about defending the underdog. He cherished his Greek and Italian heritage, and took pride in his Brooklyn roots. Learning of his passing through a post by Ken Wahl deeply affected me. It was hard to fathom the loss of such a towering figure at the young age of 64. My heart went out to his wife, who together for 32 years of marriage, they carved out a private life in the realms of Hollywood and Los Angeles, with a preference for New Rochelle, New York.

He is survived by his wife Shirley Ganiotis (they recently celebrated their 32nd wedding anniversary), his sister Trinity, his birds and pets, his friends, and of course his movies.

At the time of his death, Tony was working on producing his film, *Daddies' Girls*, the brainchild of Tony and castmate, Cyril O'Reilly.

And he is mourned as well by his friends and co-stars, including Ken and Barbi Wahl, Cyril O'Reilly, Scott Colomby, Jim Youngs, Alan Rosenberg, Mark Lesley, and others from his films and television shows.

My own children, Michaelis, Constantine and Angelina, deeply feel his loss. They grew up with Tony in their lives, a presence of the gentle-yet-stern giant, whose reassuring voice they always listened to.

His wife, Shirley Ganiotis, shared some tearful words, "On Sunday, February 18, 2024, I lost the love of my life and my best friend...Anthony, known as Tony by many, was brilliant, witty, loyal and kind to a fault...Tony would have appreciated a candle lit, and a small prayer for each of us."

For those who wish to send sympathies or care letters, please address them to:

Fr. Anthony Salzman
St. Philothea Greek Orthodox Church
3761 Mars Hill Rd
Watkinsville, GA 30677



Mnemosyni's Musings...

You've heard of Mnemosyni, the Greek goddess of memory. Mythology buffs will know that she's also the goddess of storytelling—and mother of the Muses! So, it's only fitting to name a literary column in her honor. Here, you'll learn about authors, poets, books, and all things "Greek" literary.

by Maria A. Karamitsos

Greek Travel Memoirs

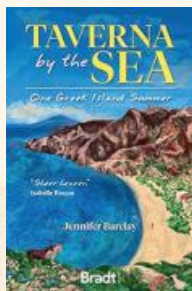
Welcome back! Greeks and non-Greeks alike adore Greece. Many non-Greeks, let's call them PhilHellenes because they truly love Greece, share stories of their travels. Some have made Greece their home, while others visit for extended periods. I love to see Greece through their eyes. Here are some authors who write Greek travel memoirs.



Peter Barber

When this Londoner married into a Greek family he became immersed in Greek life and culture. Fascinated by the people, history, and traditions, Barber wished to be among the locals and experience Greek life

first-hand. He so loved his adopted homeland, that he decided to share his stories, so people could see the "real Greece," "not just sun and sea, but the wonderful people, rich history and culture." You'll feel his love for the country and laugh as he pokes fun at his cultural blunders and the challenges he faces along the way. Check out his books (all published by Ant Press) in "The Parthenon Series": A Parthenon on Our Roof (2022) and A Parthenon in Pefki (2023). A third book is due later this year. Also, his Musings from a Greek Village, Vol. 1 (2023), includes "a year of observations and philosophy from a Greek village."



Jennifer Barclay

While growing up in the hills of Northern England, Barclay traveled to Greece for the first time with her family, then later moved to Greece after completing university. After a few years she left to

travel and pursue a career as an editor. Turning 40, she realized it was time to pursue her dream of living on a Greek island, but off the beaten path. She moved to Tilos in 2011.

She recounted her early days on Tilos in Falling in Honey: How a Tiny Greek Island Stole My Heart (Summersdale, UK 2013; Sourcebooks, US 2014) and in An Octopus in My Ouzo: Loving Life on a Greek Island (Summersdale, 2016). Next came Wild Abandon: A Journey to the Deserted Places of the Dodecanese (Bradt Travel Guides, 2020). Her latest, Taverna By the Sea (Bradt Travel Guides, 2022), follows Barclay and her dog Lisa to the island of Karpathos, where she had the opportunity to live near the sea and explore the area in exchange for running a taverna.



Sharon Blomfield

This Canadian author was bitten by the travel bug early. A former elementary school teacher with s u m m e r s o f f, Blomfield enjoyed the extended time to explore the globe. She loved to share stories about her travels, and

upon her retirement in 2003, became a freelance travel writer. Blomfield discovered Sifnos through research on islands off the tourist track that provided an authentic experience. In 2006, she and her photographer husband visited Greece for the first time. They fell in love with Sifnos and have returned several times for extended stays. Ripe with inspiration, she thought she'd write some travel articles about the island. But Sifnos had other plans.

In The Sifnos Chronicles (The Parea Group, 2016) and Sifnos Chronicles 2 (The Parea Group, 2019), Blomfield takes us on her visits to Sifnos, slowing us down to island time, and we get to know the l o c a l s . The Blomfields are now honorary Sifnians. A third book is in the works.

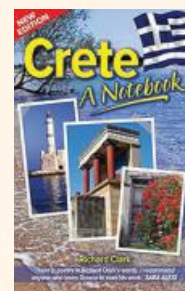


V.D. Bucket

V.D. Bucket is this B r i t a u t h o r ' s pseudonym, which he uses "to avoid

embarrassing his wife". It's derived from a moniker hoisted on him as a baby abandoned in a bucket. After moving to a tiny Greek village several years ago, he decided to chronicle his adventures. Bucket also withholds the names of places and changes the names of people they encounter to protect everyone's privacy.

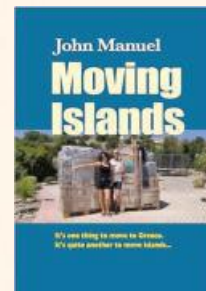
Since 2019, he's published 15 volumes of Bucket to Greece (independently published). The books are a l i g h t h e a r t e d look at the couple's trials and tribulations adapting to village life—one so incredibly different than their life in Britain.



Richard Clark

Another Brit who fell in love with Greece, Clark now lives part of the year in Elounda, Crete. He's also worked as a journalist. C l a r k h a s i n d e p e n d e n t l y published nine memoirs (including

two anthologies) about his travels to various parts of Greece and shares his affection for his adopted homeland, including: The Greek Islands: A Notebook (2011), Rhodes: A Notebook (2013), Corfu & the Ionian Islands: A Notebook (2014), Crete: A Notebook (2014), More Hidden Crete (2017), and Eastern Crete: A Notebook (2018). He's also written five novels set on Crete, and a sixth is due this year.



John Manuel

John Manuel grew up in Bath, in the West of England and was introduced to Greece through his Greek wife. Not long after their wedding, his mother-in-law insisted that the

couple visit Athens to meet the family. John said he became "addicted" to Greece "as soon as the plane door opened". He and his wife moved to Rhodes in 2005 and currently live on Crete. Reading books by Peter Mayle and Bill Bryson inspired Manuel to share his experiences. Feta Compli, the first of three books in his 'Ramblings from Rhodes' series, came out in 2011. To date Manuel has written nine novels, seven memoirs, and a dystopian short story. His other memoirs

(all published by lulu.com) include A Jay in the Jacaranda Tree: Over a decade of living on a Greek island (2017), A Motley Collection of Greek Oddities (2021), Moving Islands (2023), and more.



Marjory McGinn

The Scottish-born author and journalist spent her formative years in Australia and now lives in Cornwall, England. She and her husband moved to Greece in 2010, along with their cheeky dog

Wallace. They stayed for four years and in different locations. She chronicled their adventures in four bestselling memoirs in her 'Peloponnese Series', all independently published: Things Can Only Get Feta (2013), Homer's Where the Heart Is (2015), A Scorpion in the Lemon Tree (2016), and A Donkey on the Catwalk (2021), that highlight their love for Greece, plus tales of cultural faux pas and crazy dogs, and the warm and colorful people they met along the way. She's also written two novels set in Greece. Her latest book is a collection of essays of her experiences on press junkets to exotic locations, including Greece, called Wake Me Up for the Elephants (2023).

Sally Jane Smith

This Australia-based author was born in South Africa and has lived on five



continents. An intrepid traveler, she has visited 33 countries. The first book in her 'Packing for Greece Travel Series' is Unpacking for Greece (Journeys in Pages, 2023). Upon discovery of a travel diary from her mother's 1978 trip to

Greece, she had a revelation: perhaps a trip to Greece could not only release her from her travel fear following a 2006 bus accident in Sri Lanka and reignite her passion for travel. But also, it might provide some connection to her late mother and bridge the gaps in their relationship. Smith packed a suitcase, her mother's diary, and on her small budget, set out for a trip that would change her life in endless ways. She often says that Greece not only turned her into a writer but also helped her get her kefi back. In her new book, Repacking for Greece (Journeys in Pages, 2024), Smith takes us back to Greece, where she learns more about the country's rich history and "connects the dots between legend, location, and contemporary literature". A third book is in the works.

Suzy Stembridge

Born in Yorkshire, UK, Stembridge is an entrepreneur, traveler, tour operator, and the author of historical and contemporary novels, and a children's book, plus three independently published travelogue/memoirs about her



time in Greece over the last several decades. They cover travels throughout the Greek mainland, the Peloponnese, the Ionian, Dodecanese, the Sporades, Northeast Aegean, and many of the Saronic and Cycladic islands. Check out her

No Ordinary Greek Odyssey memoirs, Book One (2020), Book Two (2021), and Book Three (2022).

There are more, but space limitations stop me here. Now you have some great new memoirs to add to your To-Be-Read list! See you next time for more of Mnemosyni's Musings.

** Maria A. Karamitsos is a journalist, author, and poet. She's the founder & former publisher/editor of WindyCity Greek magazine and former associate editor & senior writer for The Greek Star newspaper. She's a contributor to TripFiction. Her work has been published in Voices of Hellenism Literary Journal, Highland Park Poetry, Greek City Times, GreekCircle magazine, The National Herald, GreekReporter, NEO magazine, Harlots Sauce Radio, Women Who Write, KPHTH magazine, XPAT Athens, and more. One of her poems was recently published in The Magic of Us — A Moms Who Write Anthology. Maria has contributed to two books: Greektown Chicago: Its History, Its Recipes and The Chicago Area Ethnic Handbook. She's currently querying her 1st novel.*



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Sam Bale and Alex Doringer: Steering Future Capital Partners through a transforming global investment landscape

The logo for Future Capital Partners (FCP) consists of the lowercase letters 'fcp' in white, set against a solid red square background.

Let's talk about how the world of investment is evolving. With the U.S. taking a different stance globally, everyone rethinking this whole globalization thing, plus all sorts of demographic shifts happening, the way we invest is changing big time.

That's where Future Capital Partners (FCP) is making a mark. Led by Sam Bale and Alex Doringer, FCP is reshaping the game in private equity and private credit investments in the U.S. and Europe.

Adjusting to America's Changing Role

So here's the deal: America isn't playing the global powerhouse role like it used to – and that's shaking up the investment scene. Sam Bale from FCP sums it up perfectly: "With America's influence shifting and the world stepping back from globalization, there are some unique chances for savvy investors. It's not just about spotting trends; it's really about understanding what different communities need and connecting with them. Our investment approach? It's more than just putting money in; it's about unlocking potential in emerging markets, where today's needs are tomorrow's opportunities."

In the U.S., FCP is diving into areas that aren't too tangled in global matters – think infrastructure, renewable energy, and tech. These are big for an America that's looking more inward.

Over in Europe, it's a different play. They're getting into stuff that makes Europe stronger by itself, like cutting-edge manufacturing and green tech, gearing up for a future where Europe stands more on its own.

Benefitting from a slowing globalization trend

As the world pulls back from being super connected, FCP is spotting some unique

opportunities. In the U.S., it's all about businesses rooted in local communities, or those smart enough to not lean too heavily on global trade.

In Europe, the strategy shifts a bit. It's strengthening regional supply chains and investing in businesses that focus on local markets. It's about building a safety net against global supply chain issues and catching the wave of people wanting local stuff.

Tuning into demographic changes

Now, here's the interesting bit. Globally, especially in developed countries, populations are getting older. FCP is tapping into this, looking to put money into healthcare, biotech, and elderly services.

But there's more. A lot of business owners are hitting retirement, and there's a wave of well-established businesses needing new leaders or investors. This is a big opportunity happening in both the U.S. and Europe. Stepping into a business that's already got its place in the market? That's gold. In Europe, FCP is mixing it up and focusing on the needs of the older folks in some places, while in others, it's all about the younger, tech-savvy crowd.

In conclusion

Under Sam Bale and Alex Doringer's watch, FCP isn't just adapting to the changing investment scene – it is leading the charge. It's aligning its strategies with what's happening around the globe – America changing its tune, the world cooling on globalization, and all these demographic shifts, including businesses looking for new blood.

And don't forget what Alex Doringer adds to this: "With Sam over in the U.S. and me based in Europe, our global networks stretch far and wide. This unique setup puts us in a great spot to spot and grab some really exciting

investment chances. Our teamwork across the Atlantic isn't

just about keeping the spirit of globalization alive, it's also about offering our partners a whole variety of investment options. It's a win-win, really." So, there it is. FCP isn't just rolling with the changes, it's right at the forefront. And with Sam and Alex steering the ship, it is set to be a benchmark for others in the field.

Sam Bale profile:

Renowned for his pivotal involvement in groundbreaking M&A deals, Sam Bale's has built his career on his exceptional expertise in Fundamental Analysis, M&A, and Capital Allocation. His career so far includes multiple influential board advisory roles, underlining his significant impact in the finance sector. With a deep understanding and experience in working with institutional investors, including family offices and HNWI, Sam has demonstrated a remarkable ability to navigate complex financial landscapes.

Alex Doringer profile:

Embodying the quintessence of a self-made entrepreneur, Alex Doringer is a visionary leader, boasting a unique and expansive global network. His impressive career spans nearly two decades in the power sports arena, crowned by outstanding achievements such as leading his team to victory in the prestigious Dakar Rally multiple times.

Alex's expertise extends to business strategy, operations, business development, and deal flow, highlighting his multifaceted skill set.

His global connections, particularly with family offices and entrepreneurs, are a testament to his broad and influential reach in the business world.



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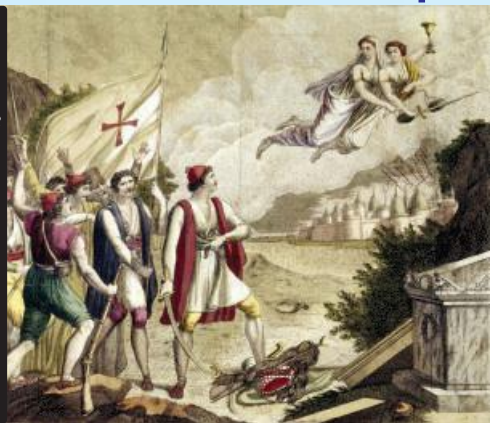
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Long Live Greece and the Greek People!

Allegory of the reawakening of the nationalist feeling of Greece under Ottoman domination which led to the Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) or the Greek Revolution.
By unknown artist.



What more to say, friends, Long Live Greece and the Greek People! The revolution of 1821 was the first step in dismantling a brutal empire, the Ottoman, and paved the way for freedom to all Balkan peoples, Turks including! Let us all rejoice and celebrate!

by Demetrios Rhompotis
dondemetrio@neomagazine.com

continued from page 16

Cavafy's Ithaca. However, the parallels are compelling; Du Bellay makes mention of the return journey, and of the acquisition of wisdom. He also maintains that it is better to be poor at home than living in splendour elsewhere:

"Happy he who like Ulysses has returned successful from his travels, or like he who sought the Golden Fleece, to rest well earned - wise to the world - amongst his family. When shall I see again my place of birth, its chimney smoke, and at what time of year, when seen that little, modest, plot of earth which means far more to me than I draw here. I'm drawn far more to my ancestral home than to a Roman palace fine and proud, prefer fine slate to marble, rather roam along the Loire than sport midst Tiber's crowd. My Liré I prefer to Palatine, and to sea air, soft climate Angevine."

Du Bellay's work does lend itself to the reading almost universally applied to that of Cavafy's response to it. Yet Cavafy's response is infinitely more layered and displaying deep insights into the original Homeric texts that underlies both poems, constitutes a nuanced and psychologically complex analysis, affirmation and simultaneous negation of time, fate and trajectory and humanity's relationship to it. Viewed from this perspective, that of the work that engendered it, and gauging the extent of Cavafy's departure from it, the power of his equivocal vision of humanity and the majesty of his contrapuntal treatment of the foundation texts of its civilization, are granted stark clarity.

*) Dean Kalimniou (Kostas Kalymnios) is an attorney, poet, author and journalist based in Melbourne Australia. He has published 7 poetry collections in Greek and has recently released his bi-lingual children's book: "Soumela and the Magic Kemenche." He is also the Secretary of the Panepirotic Federation of Australia.

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by Markos Papadatos

Meet Sam Vartholomeos: Greek-American actor



PHOTO: EMILY ASSIRAN

Thoughts on the Greek-American

Vartholomeos shared his thoughts on the Greek-American community in the United States. “These days, I see a lot of Greek-Americans wanting to be a part of the culture more and that’s a wonderful thing especially since when I was little, I feel like they were trying to get away from Greek culture.”

“I love seeing this switch now where everyone is proud to be proud,” he exclaimed. “Greece is the most beautiful country in the world with the best and healthiest food. I also love seeing non-Greeks gravitating towards the culture. We need to be proud of where we came from, and let’s celebrate that.”

Message for his Greek-American fans

For his Greek-American fans, he said, “We need to support each other more as a culture. I think we have a lot to offer. Not for nothing but the Greeks made acting cool and we started theatre. I would love to see more support of Greeks in all industries in general because a

Greek-American actor Sam Vartholomeos shared insights about his Greek ethnic background and his acting career. On his Greek heritage, he said, “I was born and raised here in Astoria, which is little Greece. It still is, even though it is changing a lot. Astoria is a hidden gem for New Yorkers. A lot of people come here for the Greek food or the feta. It’s a beautiful place and not because it’s my home but there’s an energy here that everyone feels when they first come.”

Both of his parents are Greek. “They met here after they came. My mom is from Karpenisi from up in the mountains, and my father is from the island of Andros. It’s a big but beautiful island to explore. I am a part of the Andriotiko Society of America. Just growing up here, it is hard not to be touched by our beautiful culture.”

He also ...underwent Greek education. “I went to St. Demetrios in Astoria for Greek afternoon school, so I think that’s why I’m a little sane,” he said with a sweet laugh. “Much love to St. Demetrios. My two siblings and I went there for Greek afternoon school. At the end of the day, I am grateful for going to Greek school because I know our wonderful language, our dances, and our beautiful history. I was a part of the plays at St. Demetrios and the Hellenic Cultural Center in Newtown Avenue, and that is where I discovered theatre.”

While he is not a model per se, he noted that he “dipped his toes in modeling.” “Funny enough, my SAG union got in the way of it,” he said. “If you know anyone in the modeling industry, I am interested,” he said with a laugh.

‘The Crowded Room’

Vartholomeos played the recurring role of Mike in the psychological thriller series “The Crowded Room” on Apple TV+. “My part was super fun, and I was very happy with that, especially bringing levity to such an intense

show,” he admitted. “I was very happy to be Mike in this miniseries.”

On being a part of “The Crowded Room,” he explained, “That was a wild ride even from the beginning. It was an amazing experience because of the people that I got to work with. Tom Holland was simply awesome, and Sasha Lane is a sweetheart.”

‘Bridge and Tunnel’

He described “Bridge and Tunnel,” where he starred as Jimmy Farrell, as a “very special show.” “It was my life on Long Island in the ‘80s,” he pointed out. “I recently learned that I was born in Manhasset at North Shore Hospital on Long Island. We filmed that during the pandemic, so that whole process was a bit challenging.”

The creator, writer, and director Ed Burns is the man. “I will always be forever grateful to Ed,” he exclaimed. “Ed took so much of our personal lives, and he put that into Season 2, so that was nice because we were connected to it in a different way. The cast and I built this camaraderie, and it felt like a family for two seasons, which was so much fun,” he added.

‘Star Trek: Discovery’

Vartholomeos opened up about his experience doing “Star Trek: Discovery.” “That was a ride and a half. At the time, it was the biggest job that I had ever gotten. It was really special because I had grown up with ‘Star Trek’ and ‘Star Wars.’ I built camaraderie in a show like that. Doug Jones is a good friend to this day and Sonequa Martin-Green is such a sweetheart. Michelle Yeoh played our fearless captain; she is a total badass, and an absolute legend.”

I would love to see more support of Greeks in all industries in general, because a rising tide lifts all ships. Let’s get together a little more...

rising tide lifts all ships. Let’s get together a little more, especially because good or bad always come back to you.”

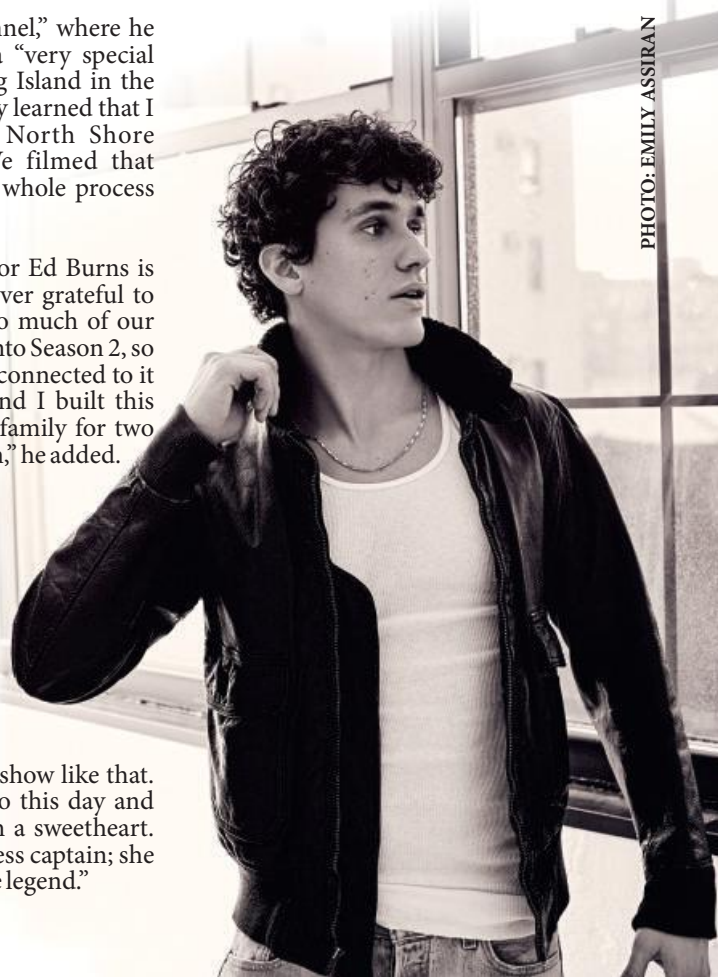


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