Harry J. Psomiades: Pioneering Scholar and Educator 1928–2011

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The issue at hand of the *Journal of Modern Hellenism* (JMH) is dedicated to the memory of its founder, Harry J. Psomiades, who passed away on August 13, 2011, at the age of 82. It was Professor Psomiades who, along with Nomikos Vaporis, founded the *JMH* in 1984 and led it until 2002. Under his guidance, the *JMH* emerged as an important scholarly publication with an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the modern Greek world. The scope of the *JMH* covers Greece, Cyprus and their regional environment, as well as the Greek Diaspora with special emphasis on Greek American community dynamics. As such, the *JMH* offers a valuable platform which promotes research and advances knowledge on the phenomenon of modern Hellenism. In this regard, the *JMH* constitutes a lasting legacy of Professor Psomiades.

To this legacy, one must include the other multifaceted contributions of Harry J. Psomiades to the fields of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies in America. His academic career was characterized by an unrivaled ethos, fairness, and respect for the other point of view, all reflecting the nobility of his spirit. Coming from Columbia University, he founded the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at Queens College in 1974. He was Director of the Center for three decades, and during his tenure, with Assistant Director
Effie Lekas as his right hand since 1985, he elevated it to a beacon of Hellenic letters through the teaching and study of Byzantium, modern Greece, Cyprus, and the Greek American community. With regard to Byzantine Studies, Professor Angela Constantinides Hero, a renowned Byzantinist, was a close collaborator of Professor Psomiades over the years. As an academic teacher, he was loved by his students who benefited from his wisdom. As a researcher and author, he covered a wide spectrum of topics, reflecting his vast knowledge of subjects ranging from Greek politics, to Greek-Turkish relations, to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to the Cyprus issue, to the Balkans, to the Greek American community. He paid special attention to Asia Minor Hellenism and the Pontos. His parents came from Pontos and he was proud of his Pontian roots.

Throughout his life, through his academic and community activities, Harry Psomiades strived towards achieving the recognition of the Pontian genocide by the United States. His dedication to Asia Minor Hellenism and the plight of the Greek refugees, following the Asia Minor Catastrophe, led him to pursue an ambitious project regarding their story. He was able to bring this project to fruition, but unfortunately, his *Fridtjof Nansen and the Greek Refugee Question, 1922–1924* had to be published posthumously. As such, this last book by Professor Psomiades will remain a classic in this field. In this issue, we are publishing a selection from that title.

Given his contributions to Hellenism, we believe it is quite fitting, therefore, to dedicate the present issue of the *JMH* to the memory of its founder, a giant of Greek *paideia* in America, Harry J. Psomiades. The contributors to this issue, under the editorial supervision of Dan Georgakas, are academics and diplomats, all colleagues and friends of Professor Psomiades. They are honoring his memory through their writings because *scripta manet*. Their articles are related to subjects that preoccupied this enlightened scholar during his illustrious career. Below is a synopsis of Harry J. Psomiades’ academic career.

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**Educational Accomplishments**


Founder of the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at Queens College in 1974, serving as its Director, 1976–2002.

Professor of Political Science, Queens College and Graduate School, City University of New York, 1970–2002.


Deputy Executive Officer, Ph. D. Program in Political Science, Graduate School, City University of New York, 1975–1976.

Visiting Research Associate, Middle East Institute, Columbia University, 1971–1972.

Chairman, Department of Political Science, Queens College, City University of New York, 1969–1971.


Associate Professor of Political Science, Queens College and Graduate School, City University of New York, 1965–1969.

Assistant Dean (1959–1962), Associate Dean (1962–1965), Graduate School of International Affairs, Columbia University.


Books: Authored


———. The Economic and Social Transformation of Modern Greece. NY: Columbia University School of International Affairs, Institute on East Central Europe, 1965.

———. The Ecumenical Patriarchate Under the Turkish Republic: The First Ten Years. New York: Greek Archdiocese of North and South America, 1964.

Books: Co-authored/edited


**Selected Essays**


*Greece and Turkey: Mutual Economic Interests*, NATO Parliamentarians Conference of Nov. 1964. Entered into Congressional Record III, 100 (June 3, 1965).


“Greek-Turkish Relations since the Cyprus Invasion,” in *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Greece and Cyprus*, edited by Theodore A. Couloumbis. Washington D.C., Center of Mediterranean Studies, 1975, 146–148.

“The Geopolitics of the Mediterranean Triangle,” *Greek World*


Academic and Professional Honors

Phi Beta Kappa (1953).


American Philosophical Society Research Award (1980).


Senior Fulbright Research Fellow in Athens (1986–87).

CUNY Research Foundation Award-France (1987).

CUNY Research Foundation Award-Greece (1993).

Senior Research Fellow, Speros B. Vyronis Center for the Study of Hellenism (Fall, 1993/Fall, 1994).

Commander, Order of Honor, the Greek Republic (1996).