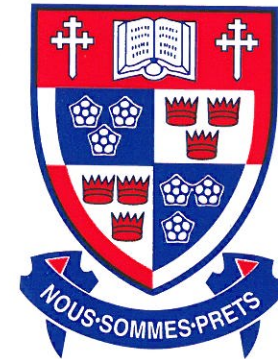


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Journal of Modern Hellenism

Christos P. Ioannides, André Gerolymatos,
Michael Cosmopoulos, and Ellen Lanzano
Editors

Alexandros K. Kyrrou
Associate Editor

John Papson
Guest Editor

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The purpose of the *Journal* is to reflect activities of the sponsoring institutions in promoting scholarly work on the history, language, institutions, and culture of the Greek people from the late Byzantine period to the present. The articles which appear in the *Journal of Modern Hellenism* are those prepared by the faculty of the institutions, and those of outside scholars offered in seminars, conferences, and special lectures sponsored by them.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the sponsoring institutions. It should be noted that wherever possible Greek names are written in their Greek form.

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EDITORS

Dr. Christos P. Ioannides Director, Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Queens College, CUNY.

Dr. André Gerolymatos – Canadian Congress of B.C. Program in Hellenic Studies, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada.

Dr. Michael Cosmopoulos – Hellenic Government/Karakas Family Foundation Program in Greek Studies, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

Dr. Ellen Lanzano is Associate Professor of English, Hellenic College, Brookline, Massachusetts.

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Note from the Guest Editor

JOHN PAPSON

George Pilitsis himself planted the small seed which would eventually grow into this collection of essays. Several months before his death, during one of my visits with him in the latter stages of his illness, I brought him a copy of *Mistika Anthi*, a collection of essays by the blessed Fotis Kontoglou, because I knew he would appreciate the clarity and insightfulness of Kontoglou's use of demotic Greek in his philosophical and spiritual writings, for which he was as well known in Greece as he was for his iconography. This occasioned a discussion about modern Greek literature and Greek studies, George's loves and his life's work. During that conversation he said to me, "You know, we should do a book together sometime."

This would not, of course, come to pass, at least not in the form George had suggested. That conversation, however, came to mind in the several days after George's death, being the seed which George had planted. This collection of essays, then, is George's, a reflection of his love for and untiring devotion to his life's work.

All of the authors knew George personally, most for many years, most as colleagues and collaborators. They all responded to the request for contributions with joy and enthusiasm that we might honor our friend in death even as we esteemed his friendship and scholarship in life.

I would like to thank the editors of the *Journal*, Father Nicholas C. Triantafilou, President of Hellenic College and

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and Dean Lily Macrakis of Hellenic College for the opportunity to serve as guest editor. It is an honor and privilege much appreciated. Thanks and appreciation are also extended to the contributors for their wonderful work and cooperation and especially to Tanya Contos and Herald Gjura of Holy Cross Orthodox Press for all their help.

A Tribute to George C. Pilitsis

So many are the harmonious expressions and venues in our glorious and fertile world. To live in appreciation and respect for God's creative touch in blessing us with abundant harmonies among people and within the natural order is a most wholesome stewardship. Such a life marked the pilgrimage of George Pilitsis. George searched each day to impart the harmony of language, whether in poetry or in hymnology and song. He loved family with a delicate sensitivity and labored for the continuous edification of his students. The general community was not impersonal to him. Rather, it was a human garden to be admired and honored.

George Pilitsis wrote and translated poems, yet even more importantly, he wrote stanzas of joy along with verses of peace on the hearts of all who knew him. As professor, he significantly advanced the mission of Hellenic College and Holy Cross. He heralded wisely and passionately the *kallos* of Hellenism while practicing humbly his Greek Orthodox faith.

George Pilitsis will be remembered as a faithful steward.

Rev. Nicholas C. Triantafilou

President

Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox
School of Theology, Brookline, Massachusetts

* * *

George Pilitsis was my friend and colleague.

I met him twenty-six years ago at a conference while he was working towards his Ph.D. in classics at Rutgers University. A young man, an idealist, a dreamer. We had long conversations then which we resumed later as colleagues at Hellenic College and especially during a long trip to Greece, where he received an important prize from the prestigious literary society "Parnassos" for his translation of Yannis Ritsos' poems. He had a passion for Ritsos, for epic poetry, and for modern Greek literature and language.

During our trip he talked with affection about his family, with passion about his teaching, ruefully about his health, with resignation about difficult professional experiences, always the gentleman, a man of God, approaching life with dignity and humility. He spent long hours with his students who were devoted to him and long hours of research for his work – so many publications, translations, essays, speeches: on myth, on folklore, and on rebetika songs, his latest passion!

The essays in this volume were written by his colleagues and by his friends as a tribute of his devotion to his students and his love for Hellenic College.

AIONIA SOU I MNIMI, KALE FILE.

Dr. Lily Macrakis

Dean

Hellenic College, Brookline, Massachusetts

* * *

It is particularly fitting that we honor the memory of George Pilitsis in this issue of the *Journal of Modern Hellenism*. I came to know and respect George during the years we worked together as co-editors of the *Journal*. As a result of our numerous encounters both professionally and socially, I was always struck by George's professionalism, civility, thoughtfulness and unfailing consideration of the needs and requirements of others. He was indeed a rare and special spirit. He was a gentle soul and a deeply committed man – to his scholarship, his wife, his children, his teaching and his students. He was a triumph of character and shall be sorely missed.

Harry J. Psomiades

Professor Emeritus

Queens College and the Graduate School,
City University of New York