



WELCOME CONSUL GENERAL VALASSOPOULOU

10-13



A CONVERSATION WITH TASSOS BOULMETIS

14-17



A FOCUS ON CYPRUS

19-25

UCLA

Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Center *for the* Study of Hellenic Culture



The painting of St. George in the narthex showing a highly stylized painting technique. Church of Panagia Phorbiotissa (Asinou), Cyprus.

## Letter from the Director

Dear friends of the UCLA SNF Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture,

Καλή Χρονιά! Με τις ευχές μας για έναν ειρηνικό χρόνο γεμάτο υγεία, ευτυχία, και επιτυχίες, προσβλέπουμε στο νέο έτος με αισιοδοξία και ζεστές καρδιές. Our Center wishes you a prosperous and joyful 2024!

As we welcome 2024 at our Center, we embrace a year that is particularly resonant for our community, marking the 50th anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. This anniversary compels us to reflect on the resilience and enduring spirit of Cyprus, which we are dedicated to exploring



Ioanna Kakoulli, Acting Director



through our Center’s activities.

Cyprus stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of human civilization. Its geographical location at the nexus of Europe, Asia, and Africa has positioned it as a melting pot of cultures, languages, and religions. Throughout history, its fertile lands and abundant resources have attracted myriad peoples, each contributing layers to its rich tapestry. From the Achaean Greeks, who introduced Hellenic traditions, to the Phoenicians, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Persians who each left their mark, Cyprus has been shaped by a confluence of influences.

The Roman period ushered in Christianity, which transformed the cultural and spiritual landscape of the island. The Byzantine era maintained this Christian heritage, even as it faced challenges such as Arab invasions. The Lusignan and Venetian rules introduced Western influences, which were then supplanted by Ottoman traditions. This intricate history has carved a unique Cypriot identity—one that is deeply Hellenic yet distinctly its own.

In 2024, our Center will host a series of events that celebrate the cultural richness of Cyprus. We will explore the unique Greek Cypriot dialect on International Greek Language Day, examine the island’s linguistic diversity on International Mother Language Day, and immerse ourselves in the poetic and musical traditions of Cyprus with esteemed guest lecturers and performers. Our gastronomy event will invite participants to savor Cypriot cuisine, a delectable gateway to the island’s history and cultural fusion.

Moreover, we are introducing an event titled “Heritage at High Tide: Island Archaeology and Climate Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean—A Deep Dive into Cyprus and Greece’s Imperiled Treasures,” focusing on climate change and its impact on coastal and submerged heritage. This initiative underscores the urgency of protecting our cultural legacies against the backdrop of environmental challenges.

As we honor the 50th anniversary of a momentous period in Cypriot history, we are reminded of the island’s journey through conquests and divisions, its quest for unity, and its cultural vibrancy that has withstood the test of time. Our Center’s activities this winter and spring will not only commemorate the past but will also cultivate a conversation about the future—one where culture and understanding flourish beyond borders.

Let us proceed with the wisdom of history and the optimism for tomorrow, treasuring the Cypriot traditions that enhance our Hellenic heritage.

Sincerely,

Ioanna Kakoulli  
Acting Director

### ***Faculty Advisory Committee***

**Michael Cooperson**

**Michael Dukakis**

**Arion Hadjioannou**

**Laurie Kain Hart**

**Ioanna Kakoulli**

**Peter Kazaras**

**Anastasia Loukaitou-**

**Sideris**

**Kathryn Morgan**

**John Papadopoulos**

**Areti Tillou**

### ***Community Advisory Board***

**Kelly Vlahakis-Hanks  
(Chair)**

**Aris Anagnos**

**Minos Athanassiadis**

**Alexander Caloyeras**

**Yorgos Karamihos**

**Maria-Elena Kolovos**

**Michele Patzakis**

**Lilian Evgenidi Polydor**

**Joseph Skarzenski**

To support our Center’s activities, please click on the [Giving link](#) on our website or email us at [hellenic@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:hellenic@humnet.ucla.edu)

# Center News

## New Lecture Series on the Reception of Hellenic Culture

The 2023-24 academic year sees the inauguration of a new lecture series titled Reception of Hellenic Culture, co-organized by the UCLA SNF Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture and the UCLA Department of Classics. This collaboration marks another chapter in our longstanding partnership with the UCLA Department of Classics, a valued partner in the pursuit of advancing knowledge and understanding of Hellenism as a dynamic transhistorical and transcultural phenomenon. The Reception of Hellenic Culture lecture series seeks to unravel the rich tapestry of influence that Hellenic culture has woven across diverse societies and periods. This series is not merely an exploration of historical footprints; rather, it is an invitation to reflect on how the reception of Hellenic culture is a vital component of the ongoing dialogue between past and present and a catalyst for connections between cultures and generations. We are thrilled to present a lineup of distinguished scholars and experts who will delve into the ways in which ancient Greek ideas, art, literature, and philosophy continue to resonate and shape the contemporary world. The first lecture in the series, “The Dolphine-Haunted Artifacts of Dimmed Atlantis: Evocations of Graeco-Roman Antiquity during the HIV/AIDS Crisis,” delivered in November by Professor Emilio Capellini (Classics, UC Santa Barbara), examined the uses of Greco-Roman antiquity in the works of Paul Monette and Derek Jarman as a response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis. The series continues on March 12, when Professor Anthony Kaldellis (Classics, University of Chicago) will offer a thought-provoking lecture titled “Who Invented the ‘Modern Greeks’ and Why?” We look forward to welcoming you to the events of this exciting new venture.

---

## *Kouvenda*: Greek Language Table – Fostering Community-Based Language Learning

We are thrilled to announce the commencement of *Kouvenda*: Greek Language Table, an innovative online language forum that transcends campus boundaries and promotes community-based learning. This unique initiative aims to bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds, fostering an inclusive space for learners of modern Greek at all levels. This dynamic language table invites UCLA students and Greek speakers from the community to engage in a collaborative learning environment. Whether one is a beginner navigating



the intricacies of the Greek language or an advanced learner looking to refine their skills, *Kouvenda* welcomes everyone. Going beyond the traditional classroom, *Kouvenda* offers to learners of Greek the opportunity to enhance their language skills through real-world interactions and cultural exchange. We believe that *Kouvenda* will serve as a catalyst for language learning, cultural exchange, and community building. Join us in this exciting venture as we embark on a journey of shared knowledge and cross-cultural connections. For more information or to express your interest in participating, please contact Center Associate Director, Dr. Simos Zenios, at [szenios@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:szenios@humnet.ucla.edu).

## Gefyra News

*Gefyra (Bridge) is a collaborative program established with the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) by the UCLA SNF Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture and the SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies at Simon Fraser University. Gefyra’s mission is to connect students, faculty, and communities along the West Coast of North America with Greek scholars, artists, and other creators, so that they can together explore expansive and imaginative approaches to Greek culture and knowledge production. The program additionally supports academic conferences and cultural projects that bridge the West Coast and Greece.*

### Ongoing Collaboration with the Cultural Society of Geraki

Our collaboration with the Geraki weavers has continued long past the end of the summer. After initially cataloging approximately 50 kilims woven between 1686 and 2020, we have discovered more than 55 additional works, primarily woven between 1880 and 1920. Among the most interesting kilims are those representing the Tree of Life, a motif symbolizing the human life span. A small group of Tree of Life kilims depict people – both in the traditional dress of villagers and in European costume. These figures, positioned around the Tree, may be portraits of the weaver and her family or the members of the family who commissioned the kilim (see photo). Together with them are depictions of animals, fish, and birds, including roosters which are signs of fertility, and snakes, considered the protectors of the house. We have now



UCLA Ph.D. candidate Sofia Pitouli and master weaver Chrysoula Stamatopoulou

completed a catalogue which includes essays on the history of Geraki, evidence for weaving in the ancient and medieval periods, mentions of kilims in dowry agreements, and plans for the future of weaving in the village. This catalogue will accompany an exhibition of Geraki kilims at the Benaki Museum in Athens. At the same time, we have been designing a webpage that will include interviews with the weavers, historians, and archivists and creating a logo for the Cultural Society of Geraki, which is based on the design of a *tagari*. This shoulder sack is decorated with an olive tree, the mainstay of the village’s thriving economy. As part of *Gefyra*, a small group of students will accompany Professor Sharon Gerstel to the village in June 2024 to map the houses of weavers in order to create a craft tourism route running through the picturesque streets. A report of 1946 recorded 200 looms in Geraki, the largest number of looms in any village of Laconia! Showcasing Geraki as a weaving village over millennia is an essential step in ensuring its vitality. We are proud to partner with the Cultural Society of Geraki in this endeavor and are grateful to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) for its ongoing support.

## Reconsidering the Generation of the 1930s

A one-day conference, “Reconsidering the Generation of the 1930s: The Roots and Breadth of Greek Modernism,” was held at UCLA on November 18, 2023. Organized by Sharon Gerstel, Professor of Byzantine Art and Archaeology, and Sofia Pitouli, Ph.D. candidate in Byzantine Art and Archaeology, the speakers challenged the attribution of the term “Generation of the 1930s” (Γενιά του ’30). This term has historically been associated with poets and writers of the era. The artists of this so-called generation were credited with the creation of modernism in Greece, which was inspired by Western European movements but was also deeply rooted in history, particularly in Orthodox Byzantium and the Greek folk tradition.



Professor Sharon Gerstel (Art History) delivering her paper (photo: Gefyra)

The conference explored the various poles of artistic inventiveness during the 1930s. It examined artists’ work throughout the 20th century, prompting us to conceive their work diachronically rather than within the confines of a single decade. Given the socio-political circumstances of the 19th century in Greece — the traumatic changes resulting from the Greco-Turkish war, the ensuing population exchange, the collapse of the *Megali Idea*, the dramatic upheavals of interwar Greece, the Metaxas dictatorship, and the Junta regime — the conference also examined transnational and cosmopolitan orientations within Greek modernism and how these intertwined with narratives of nationality and folklore.

Seven speakers from Los Angeles and Greece addressed the conference topic from various perspectives. In her paper “Approaching Byzantine and Modern Geraki through the Eyes of Kontoglou and Tsarouchis,” **Sharon Gerstel** examined how, between 1931 and 1934, the painters Fotis Kontoglou and Yannis Tsarouchis were deeply engaged in the study of Byzantine and folk art. She focused on the village of Geraki, known for its many Byzantine churches and its rich folk tradition of weaving. In her talk, she also examined the critical role played by the Greek Byzantinist Andreas Xyngopoulos in the work of the artists. **Arete Adamopoulou** (Professor of Art History, University of Ioannina), in her talk “The ‘Generation of the 1930s’ in Art: Cold War Cultural Politics and Modern Painting in Greece,” examined how from initial references to the country’s landscape and the Athenian light to formal elements and subjects taken from Byzantine and Greek cultural history and traditions, the quest for “Greekness” played a decisive role in the formation of a local version of European modern art. **Nikos Daskalothanasis** (Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History, Athens School of Fine Arts) focused on the painter Theophilos (Hatzimihail), problematizing his placement under the umbrella term “Generation of the 1930s” since he died in 1934. The artist’s “primitive” visual idiom but also his idiomatic modernist language, according to Daskalothanasis, influenced later painters who saw these contradictions in their own goals as bearers of European modernity. Drawing on the testimony of writers and intellectuals of the period, **Poppy Sfakianaki** (Postdoctoral Researcher, Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH) asserted that the artists who lived and worked in Paris during the interwar years did not belong to only one group nor did they identify as members of a generation. Examining the impact of Paris on the artists of the “Generation” and the effects of Paris after their return to Greece, she suggested that what bound the artists together were shared aesthetic ideas and a system

of networks (relational, professional, economic) rather than the vague concept of “generation.” **George Baker** (Professor of Art History, UCLA), in his paper “Yannis Tsarouchis and Anachronic Modernism: Lateness, Counter-Memory, and the Redefinition of the Human,” looked closely at Tsarouchis’ origins as a painter and addressed the contexts — from abstraction to Surrealism — within and against which the artist defined his work. **Polina Kosmadaki** (Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, The Benaki Museum) examined in her paper “Concepts of Artistic ‘Greekness’ in the Post-Junta Period: The Case of the Exhibition of Tsarouchis, Ghika, Kontoglou, Theofilos in the *Greek Month* in London, 1975,” a major artistic event which animated the art world right after the fall of the Dictatorship in Greece and provoked heated debates around national identity and the international re-framing of Greek art. A vital exhibition included in the Greek month focused on the work of four critical painters associated with the “Generation of the 1930s”: Theofilos, a naive painter who was heralded at the time as representing the most authentic expression of Greek art; Kontoglou who revisited Byzantine tradition and whose work was framed as a version of local expressionism; Tsarouchis, who had developed a personal manner of depicting everyday Greek reality; and Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghikas, a Greek post-cubist painter who frequented the circles of Picasso. **Sofia Pitouli**, in her paper “Toward Greekness: Dimitris Pikionis’ Architectural Fantasies of Japan,” explored how the architect employed a version of Japan in his tectonic works in the decade of the 1930s, which in 1956 shaped the paved storylines leading to the Acropolis and around the Philopappos Hill. By intertwining the Classical (Acropolis) and Byzantine (the 9th-century church of Hagios Dimitrios Loumbardiaris) layers of art, architecture, and history of the 80,000-meter complex with Japanese references, Pikionis synthesized a modern Greek identity.

The event, which took place in Royce Hall, was held under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles. The Honorable Ioannis Stamatekos, Consul General of Greece in Los Angeles, opened the event. In addition to generous support from the Mary Jaharis Center for Byzantine Art and Culture, the conference received funding from the UCLA Department of Art History and the UCLA Center for European and Russian Studies. The UCLA SNF Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture and the SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, hosted the conference through *Gefyra*, a collaborative program underwritten by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

---

### Aesthetics of Crisis: Street Art in Athens, 2013-2023: Engaging Students and the Community

On October 13, 2023, Julia Tulke, Assistant Professor at Emory University, spoke to UCLA’s Modern Greek language students about the significance of street art in Athens and its role in documenting the contemporary crises facing Greece. This session provided students with a deeper understanding of Greek culture,



encouraging them to contemplate the cultural, social, and political climate in Greece. As an example, Tulke focused on a famous image of the Athens Polytechnic uprising of 1973 in which university students occupied the building in a revolt against the military Junta, and painted the walls in an act of rebellion. She then related the image to the significance of learning language and understanding Greek words with multifaceted meaning. The following day, Tulke delivered to our community an in-depth lecture entitled “Aesthetics of Crisis: Political Street Art and Graffiti in Athens, 2013-2023.” A recording of that lecture can be found here: <https://hellenic.ucla.edu/event/aestheticsofcrisis/>.

## Envisioning the Greek Landscape



Participants in the policy panel, left to right: Svend Robinson, Professor Constantinos Cartalis, Ino Afentouli, Argyro Psaltakou, Andreas Borgeas (photo: Gefyra)

Scholars and policymakers from 10 countries met in Athens from October 19-21, 2023 to discuss climate change from ancient to modern times. The conference, “Envisioning the Greek Landscape: From Thera to Climate Change,” explored how the various peoples and institutions who have overseen the Greek landscape have understood its natural wealth and how they have overcome natural climatic challenges. Scholarly panels devoted to studying all periods of Greece’s history looked at a range of topics, from water management and forestry policies to earthquakes and disease control. The conference ended with a keynote address by Andreas A. Papandreou, Professor of

Environmental Economics at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, and a lively roundtable with policymakers and business leaders from California, British Columbia, and Greece. The conference was co-organized by *Gefyra*, California State University, Sacramento, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. In his message to the organizers and participants, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew applauded this endeavor and conveyed his support “on such a vital issue at such a critical time.” In her recorded introduction to the policy session, Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis noted: “How we respond [to global climate change] will define the 21st century.” In looking to the past for sources of inspiration, this conference succeeded in generating ideas while beginning conversations that will help shape future policies.

## Reflecting on “Maria Callas: The Sacred Flame,” a Lecture by Helena Matheopoulos

On November 4, 2023, renowned Greek Opera journalist Helena Matheopoulos visited UCLA to deliver a lecture titled “Maria Callas: The Sacred Flame.” The event was held in part to commemorate the 100th



Left to right: Helena Matheopoulos, Professor Sarah Morris, Professor John Papadopoulos (photo: Gefyra)

anniversary of Maria Callas' birth. In fall 2023, the mayor of Athens inaugurated the Maria Callas Museum next to Athens Cathedral and UNESCO included Maria Callas' centennial birth on the celebratory list of anniversaries. In the days preceding her lecture, Matheopoulos engaged in discussions with opera experts from the UCLA community. This facilitated a vibrant exchange of knowledge and collaboration between opera specialists from the United States and Matheopoulos, drawing on her profound understanding of opera. During the lecture, Matheopoulos delved into the life and enduring impact of Maria Callas, shedding light on the challenges, victories, and details of her personal life that shaped the depth of her artistry and made her legendary. The presentation emphasized the significance of a Greek female figure in history and her global impact on art.

## Research Fellow, Dr. Michalis Sotiropoulos, to Deliver Lecture on “Liberalism and the Foundations of the Modern Greek State (ca 1830-1880)”

On March 16, 2024, Dr. Michalis Sotiropoulos, research fellow at the British School of Athens, will be visiting UCLA to deliver a lecture titled “Liberalism and the Foundations of the Modern Greek State (ca 1830-1880).” This lecture will address 19th-century Greek liberalism and the ways in which it engaged in reforms in the Greek state after independence from the Ottomans (ca 1830-1880). Sotiropoulos will discuss the ideas, concepts and practices adopted by the authorities of the new state to produce and legitimize its legal and political system. He will reveal the intellectual and institutional disputes, as well as the various reform projects inherent in this transformative process. By focusing on the thought and actions of a group of legal scholars who took up important posts at the bar, the bench, the parliament, the government, in legislative committees, and in the newly established University of Athens, the lecture challenges some of the assumptions of Western-centric histories of 19th-century liberalism, and its relationship with the state. As it will show, influenced by a number of intellectual currents which they used creatively for their own purposes, liberals during this time in this European periphery, did not just transform liberalism into a practical mode of statecraft; they preserved liberalism’s radical edge at a time when it was losing its appeal elsewhere in Europe. This was a political language that was going to have a long life in Greece and elsewhere. It is also one that, considering the rise of illiberal politics currently unfolding across the world, may be worth recovering and reassessing.

For more details or to RSVP, visit: <https://hellenic.ucla.edu/event/michalis-sotiropoulos/>.

## Karla Paniagua Barajas’ *Kindness* Wins West Coast Consortium Photo Competition

Karla Paniagua Barajas, an undergraduate History major at California State University, Sacramento, was awarded first place in a photo competition organized by the West Coast Consortium of Hellenic Studies Programs. The subject of this year’s competition was *periptera* (kiosks), in Greece. Paniagua Barajas’ winning photo was entitled *Kindness*.

In Greece, kiosks sell various items, including newspapers, magazines, snacks, and beverages. They are traditional fixtures of the Greek urban landscape. In recent years, however, their number has waned substantially. Of the 9,904 kiosks found across Greece in 2010, only 4,985 remain open for business today. The reduction in their number makes their documentation imperative.

Paniagua Barajas beautifully depicted a *peripteras*, a kiosk owner who, in addition to selling everyday items, also provided directions and assistance to the student, who was late to catch a flight. Her story serves as a poignant reminder of the central role of the *peripteras* in daily life, a role that has been enshrined in popular literature and music.





# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR UCLA STUDENTS - 2023-24

## Undergraduate Scholarships

### **Aristides G. Alexopoulos Endowment Student Fund**

This fund provides assistance in the form of small need-based awards to continuing UCLA students in financial need (paid as scholarships to undergraduates, or fellowships to graduate students), with preference given to undergraduate and graduate students of Hellenic descent or with parents of Greek citizenship.

Award: up to \$2,500

### **Vlahakis-Hanks Undergraduate Scholarship**

This annual undergraduate scholarship is available to currently enrolled students in the UCLA College of Letters and Science. Eligible students must demonstrate leadership in Hellenic causes, environmental issues, or community empowerment.

Award: up to \$3,000

## Graduate Student Fellowships

### **Aristides G. Alexopoulos Endowment Student Fund**

This fund provides assistance in the form of small need-based awards to continuing UCLA students in financial need (paid as scholarships to undergraduates, or fellowships to graduate students), with preference given to undergraduate and graduate students of Hellenic descent or with parents of Greek citizenship.

Award: up to \$2,500

### **Peter and Vivi Demopoulos Endowed Graduate Research Fellowship**

This fellowship supports graduate student travel to Greece for research during the summer.

Award: up to \$4,000

### **James and Carolyn Kolokotronis Endowed Graduate Research Fellowship**

This fellowship supports graduate student travel to Greece for research during the summer.

Award: up to \$4,000

### **George Olympios Family Endowed Graduate Research Fellowship**

This fellowship supports graduate student travel to Greece for research during the summer.

Award: up to \$2,000

### **The George and Cleola Gavalas Fund for Archaeology**

This fund is used to support students studying archaeology in Greece, from any period of the country's history.

Award: up to \$2,500

## Student Awards

### **The Gus and Judie Christopoulos Award for Modern Greek Language Study**

Annual award provided to the student with the best performance in the first year of Modern Greek language courses.

Award: up to \$500

Apply through the Financial Aid Office scholarship portal. For more information and requirements, visit <https://hellenic.ucla.edu/student-support/>

Application deadline:  
February 15, 2024

Inquiries: Email [hellenic@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:hellenic@humnet.ucla.edu) or call 310-825-5323

**UCLA**

Stavros Niarchos Foundation  
Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture

## Welcome, Consul General Christina Valassopoulou!

*Professor Sharon Gerstel sat down with our new Consul General for a discussion about her preparation for her new post, her commitment to human rights, and her priorities for her term in Los Angeles.*

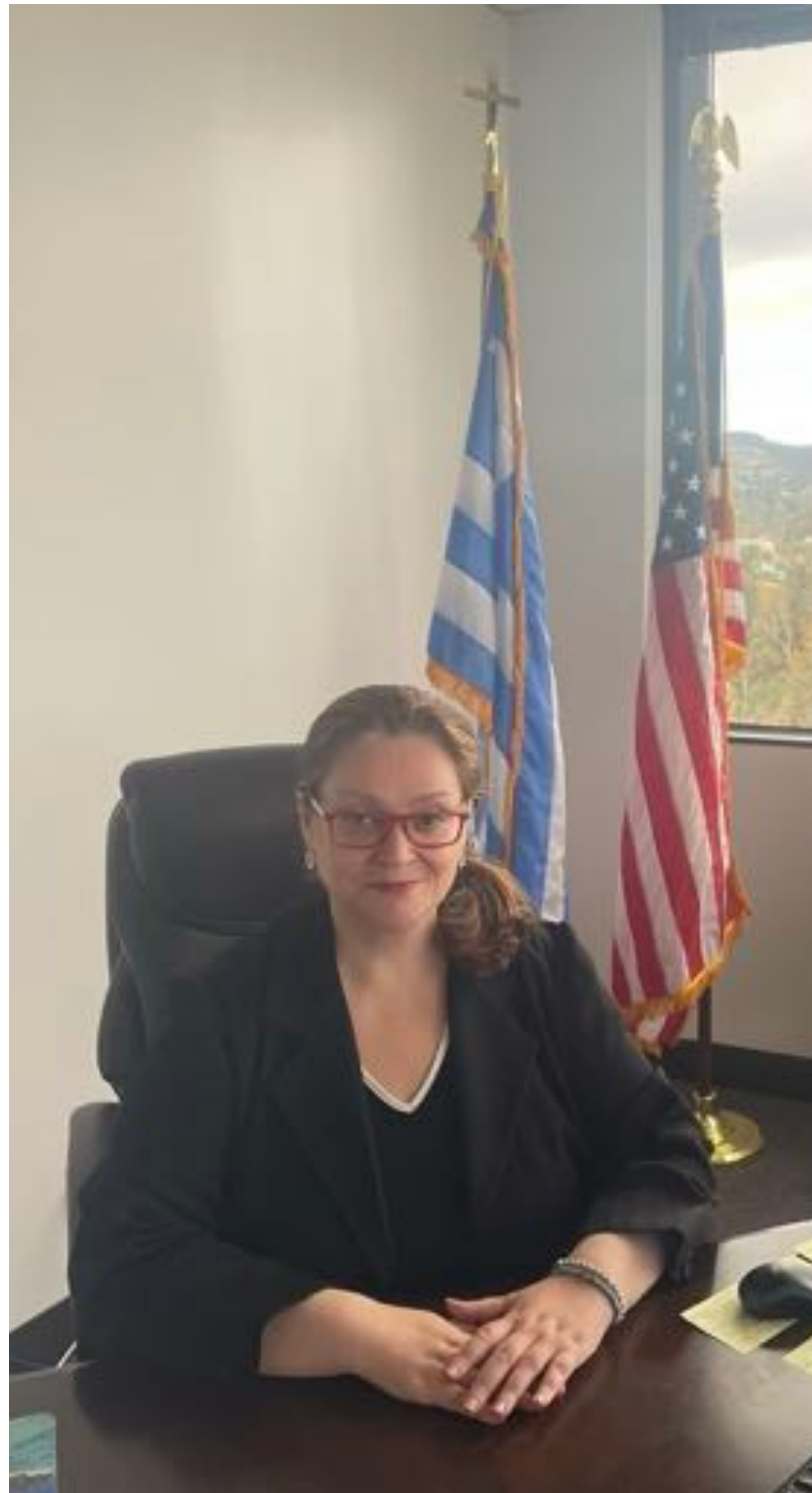
**Welcome to Los Angeles! Can you tell us something about your background as a diplomat? What posts have you held so far?**

Thank you! I am very honored and happy to be the new Consul General of Greece in Los Angeles. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for my predecessors' work in Los Angeles and to assure your readers that my colleagues at the Consulate-General and myself will do our best to serve those who reach out to us.

I have been a career diplomat in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the past twenty years, serving in various posts both at headquarters in Athens and abroad. To name just a few, I have served in the Ministry Spokesperson's Cabinet, in the Directorate for Southeast Europe, the Directorate for European Union External Affairs, as well as in the Greek Permanent Mission to the European Union in Brussels, in our Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, in our Embassy in Ottawa, Canada, and in the Greek Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Before taking up my duties in the Consulate General in Los Angeles, I was working in the Ministry's Directorate dealing with the Council of Europe and Human Rights. Let me just add that by training I am a lawyer, but I also have a Master's Degree in Social Sciences — thus I have also the theoretical background to support my professional experience.

**You have a long-term interest in human rights. Please tell us something about the work you have done in this area.**

Indeed, this is true. Although I have worked on different files during my twenty years in the Diplomatic Service, my work in Geneva and in the



relevant Directorate of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had human rights as a constant theme. Promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a prime national policy. I worked on fulfilling this task via, among others, promoting the areas of human rights that are a particular priority for Greece, such as the rights of the child, the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community, the rights of persons with disabilities and religious freedom in international fora: for example, drafting speeches and preparing national reports ahead of U.N. review processes. In collaboration with my colleagues in the Directorate, we promoted Greece's participation in a series of initiatives at relevant U.N. fora as well as within various international organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Let me also recall that the new Director General of IOM, Ms. Amy E. Pope, is an American, as is the Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Kelly T. Clemens. Under their leadership, these organizations continue to play a crucial role in the heart of the U.N. system in the areas of migration and refugees.

In my new post as the Consul General of Greece in Los Angeles, I look forward to working with you on issues of mutual interest from the wide array of activities and initiatives of the UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture. I also look forward to working in partnership with all Greek American organizations and centers within my consular area of responsibility. There is a great number of competent, brilliant women and men who work diligently and with dedication to advance bilateral relations and studies on Greece.

**What makes you excited about coming to Los Angeles? What goals have you set for your tenure as Consul General in this region?**

*"There are many areas that Greece and the U.S. can work together on; the forthcoming XXXIV Olympiad to be held in Los Angeles in the summer of 2028 is definitely one of them. Another goal is to continue providing quality service to Greeks and Greek Americans who reside within our Consulate's jurisdiction; we are here for them and they are our first priority."*

Every assignment, whether at headquarters in Athens or abroad, holds its own challenges and responsibilities. Coming to Los Angeles, I welcome the opportunity to work with, to assist, and to listen to the Greek diaspora residing in this region and will spare no effort in serving them. The work of the Consulate General also includes extensive collaboration with several U.S. academic and cultural institutions and partners, another aspect of my work for which I am excited. Before coming to the U.S., I had a very useful exchange of views with my counterpart in the United States Embassy in Athens and we explored areas of mutual interest. I have also met with Greek Deputy Minister Papadopoulou, the previous Ambassador of Greece in Washington, D.C., and with Deputy Minister Kotsiras and Secretary General for Greeks Abroad Chrysoulakis. Their vision, as well as the overall national policy for Greeks abroad, provides the guidelines for our work in the Consulate General. I

also look forward to working closely with my colleagues at our Embassy in Washington and Her Excellency Ambassador Ekaterini Nassika.

There are many areas that Greece and the U.S. can work together on; the forthcoming XXXIV Olympiad to be held in Los Angeles in 2028 is definitely one of them. Another goal is to continue providing quality service to Greeks and Greek Americans who reside within our jurisdiction; we are here for them and they are our first priority.

I also hope to be able to explore the West Coast and experience it fully. This is a fascinating region, full of natural wonders and beauty, a thriving wine industry, and unique, multicultural cities. Indeed for me, this multicultural character of the West Coast, and of Los Angeles in particular, with the Greek community being an integral part of its character, is one of its most attractive elements.

**What opportunities do you envision for foregrounding the importance of the West Coast in terms of its Greek and Greek American population, as well as the large number of educational and cultural organizations that promote Hellenic interests?**

The West Coast has a lot to offer. It is an important business, commercial, tourist, and multicultural region. Each of the six states covered by the jurisdiction of the Consulate, i.e., Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, as well as a part of California has its own characteristics, but all offer important opportunities for collaboration. Let me elaborate a bit more on this point: the presence of a significant number of businesses, big or small, owned by Greek and Greek Americans, the fact that many Greeks have chosen this part of the U.S. to call home, to study, to work and to contribute positively to this country's continuous growth, is a considerable parameter that I endeavor to explore in depth. Part of that dynamic is, of course, as you mentioned, the large number of educational and



Consul General Christina Valassopoulou, cutting the *vasilopita* at St. Sophia Cathedral

cultural organizations located in this region. I look forward to exchanging views with their respective representatives with the aim of enhancing our collaboration and further exploring ways, issues, and projects of mutual interest. These organizations are already very active and very dedicated to various projects and programs and I look forward to both learning more from them and contributing to their work.

**You will be Consul General in the years leading up to the Los Angeles Olympic Games. What is Greece's involvement or potential involvement in these games?**

This is a very pertinent question and one that links directly to our desire to further enhance our

collaboration with West Coast-based institutions and centers. The 2028 Olympic Games is a sports event of the highest caliber and worldwide importance. For the duration of the Games (July 14-30, 2028) and even before the official opening, Los Angeles – and the U.S. in general – will be the beating heart of sportsmanship, of noble competition, and of the idea of the Olympic truce. The same is true, of course, of the Paralympic Games, scheduled to start on August 14, 2028. Los Angeles certainly has the necessary know-how to host the world's most exciting sports event; it has hosted the Games twice before (in 1932 and 1984). I was excited to see that the sports program has already been announced – including five sports that will make their Olympic debut in Los Angeles! – and we are all looking forward to sharing the athletes' enthusiasm, talent and best efforts. Needless to say, the Olympic Games hold special importance for Greece, the birthplace of the Games and the host of the 2004 Summer Olympics – when “the Games came home,” and history came to life once again. The Olympic torch will be lit prior to the Games in ancient Olympia, in a ceremony that I find very moving. It will then travel the world before lighting up the Los Angeles sky during the Games.

**Are there ongoing programs of the Greek government that may be of special interest to Greeks in diaspora? For example, do people need to learn about the new government-issued ID cards? Are there new platforms that people should be aware of?**

In recent years, various programs and projects have been initiated by the Greek state such as the international Bachelors degree program offered by Greek universities in English, called “Study in Greece.” Another initiative is the incentive for a cash rebate so that movie, television, and other production companies come to Greece. Given its beautiful scenery, hospitable people, and multiple business opportunities, this can provide the basis for an extremely fruitful collaboration between Greece and Los Angeles, the center of the

entertainment business. Moreover, a number of startups have been flourishing in Greece in recent years, and this presents an excellent opportunity for B2B cooperation.

Regarding the new digital ID cards, which adhere to high-security standards, every Greek citizen is entitled to one. The old ID cards will no longer be valid as identification documents after August 2026. So, all Greek citizens, including any Greek Americans with dual nationality registered in Greece (in the Citizens Registry) and interested in acquiring the new ID card, should present themselves to the local police station of their place of residence in Greece. More information can be found at the dedicated website: [id.gov.gr](http://id.gov.gr), which is also available in English – and, of course, the Consulate General is ready to advise further on this.

Moreover, just recently, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kotsiras launched a project on the digitization of services provided by Greek Consulates and Consulates General worldwide. At the heart of this project is the “Digital Request Management System,” whereby a number of requests can be processed electronically. It will be fully operational in all 125 Consulates and Consulates General soon. There is also the “Virtual Assistant” service, available via the websites of all Greek consular authorities. Whether face-to-face or digitally, we are always happy to assist those who contact us.

**Finally, tell us three things that you love about Greece.**

Just three? That is challenging, but I will try. I love the bustling everyday rhythm of downtown Athens, the peace and serenity of the islands, and the refreshing and invigorating scenery of the mountains. I love homemade Greek dishes and evening walks. I love the blue of the sky and its reflection on the sea, and the shining sun. I look forward to exploring the similarities and enjoying the differences of Los Angeles, my new home.

## A Conversation with Tassos Boulmetis

*We had the opportunity to discuss with renowned Greek filmmaker Tassos Boulmetis his experience as the inaugural Gefyra Artist-in-Residence.*

**Reflecting on your experience as the inaugural Gefyra Artist-in-Residence, could you share with us some highlights of your time at UCLA? How has this opportunity enriched your creative work?**

First of all, I would like to thank the people in the *Gefyra* program and the two Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centers at UCLA and Simon Fraser University (SFU) for their invitation to be the inaugural artist-in-residence. This experience started by spending one month as a guest at SFU in Vancouver. There, I had several stimulating exchanges with academics who are working on Hellenic and Byzantine studies and with film scholars. I also valued the opportunity to offer lectures at other institutions, like the Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Furthermore, I met with local filmmakers and filmmaking students and I learned more about film education in Vancouver. And, of course, I was able to connect with the members of the local Greek community who welcomed me very warmly. In fact, one of the most memorable experiences involved visiting the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Two members of the Greek community secured me a private tour of the museum. To see the art, culture, and heritage of the First Nations that is housed in the museum was an incredible experience.

As for my stay here in Los Angeles, what can I say? UCLA is my *alma mater* and it is a place full of memories for me. I should mention, of course, the screening of *1968* at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum, which was a great honor for me. The most important benefit of the program was the fact that *Gefyra* supported meetings with important

local industry people, with whom we explored the possibility for future collaboration in my projects. That part proved to be very successful especially during a period of strikes and turbulent situations in the local entertainment industry. Another



highlight was the opportunity to attend a course on Greek archaeology by John Papadopoulos, a renowned UCLA professor and a good friend of mine. Archaeology was always something like a second thought for me after my studies in filmmaking and I am glad I was able to study it in a more systematic manner.

**You mentioned that the screening of 1968 was a special moment for you. The screening also attracted a diverse crowd, as local artists, members of the Greek American**



*"The topic of displacement resonated with [students], as many came from families who had been displaced from their ancestral homes, whether in Asia, Latin America, or Europe. Displacement is a very topical and contemporary issue, but it can also be examined in antiquity."*

**community, and UCLA students and faculty were in attendance. Reflecting on its enthusiastic reception, what is it that enables this story and this film, in particular, to speak to and bring together multiple audiences?**

Indeed, it was a very special moment. The Hammer Museum is one of the archetypal cultural centers of Los Angeles and it is also a UCLA emblem. Both the screening itself but also the Q&A that followed were very rewarding experiences. As to why this film was able to speak to a lot of people, I think a major reason is the theme of displacement which speaks to people of various backgrounds. It was moving, for instance, to hear during the Q&A with the audience what one young woman from Armenia had to say. She commented that she had no particular interest in the film before coming to the theater, she had simply accompanied her husband. However, she found that so much of her own family story was reflected in the film. In addition to displacement, the victory of a Greek team in an international basketball competition and the topics it raised, in terms of the broader historical and social context of the period, made it resonate, I think, to broader audiences, especially in a country like the U.S. with a strong sports culture.

**During your residency, you also taught a popular course on cinema and the ancient world. Can you tell us about the inspiration behind this course and the key elements you aimed to convey to your students?**

It was the second time that I offered this course. The whole inspiration behind it came, in a way, even as early as when I was studying film here at UCLA in the early 80s. One of my professors, Robert Rosen, made the point that all westerns can be compared with the *Odyssey*, that the adventures that the Western hero faces reflect exactly the same ordeals and the same obstacles that Ulysses faced. So that was a trigger for me, even at that time. So, I started studying the genre of the western and, over the years that followed, I continued to reflect on how Greek antiquity has influenced cinema, American cinema in particular. It was very interesting to see that many works of ancient dramaturgy are reflected in modern cinema both in content and in context. By “in content” I mean that, in some cases, specific works of Greek antiquity are the inspiration for contemporary filmmakers, like the *Trojan Women*, *Electra*, or *Iphigenia in Aulis* for Michalis Cacoyannis. By “in context” I mean the overall influence of the structures or the themes

that are used in works of Greek antiquity, for instance how *Oedipus Rex* is reflected in today’s cinema genres, like film noirs, neo-noirs, and whodunnit films.

So, when I received this invitation from the UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center here and I found out that I could offer this class in the Department of Classics, I was really thrilled. I never considered myself a professor of Classics, but I have done some research to teach this course. The interactions with the students were memorable. After the end of the last class, many students came to me to say how much they enjoyed the concept of this class and I received several emails from other students saying that the course inspired them to change their major to classics – and not film, for some strange reason! The topic of displacement resonated with them, as many came from families who had been displaced from their ancestral homes, whether in Asia, Latin America, or Europe. Displacement is a very topical and contemporary issue, but it can also be examined in antiquity. In fact, the same places appear to be the setting for displacement crises from antiquity to today.

**Your movies show the importance that places have for one’s sense of self and personal history. Your presence at UCLA was a homecoming of sorts, as you are an alumnus of the university, having graduated from the School of Theater, Film, and Television in the 80s. What do UCLA and the city of Los Angeles in general mean to you and your own development?**

Well, UCLA, as I said, is my *alma mater* and Los Angeles is, probably, the third most important city in my life, the first being Constantinople and the second Athens. The turning points of my life were in these three great cities. I was born in Constantinople and I lived there until I followed my father, who was deported. Athens is the city where I grew up and went to school and university, but also the place where I developed the inclination to



Tassos Boulmetis and Paul Malcolm (Senior Public Programmer, UCLA Film & Television Archive) at the Billy Wilder Theater



*"Artists, even early in their careers, have to be honest with the themes that they will choose to film, to shoot, to produce. These themes have to be part of their lives. They have to care about these things at a personal level."*

become a filmmaker. And in Los Angeles, I studied film and explored storytelling in a way that I really wanted to do which, at the time, was possible only at UCLA. At that time there were four major institutions in the U.S. where you could study filmmaking but UCLA was for me the most important. I decided to become a filmmaker early in my life, when I was 16 years old. At that time, studying film was not really possible in Greece, so I had to negotiate with my parents and we had a deal, that I would first study physics and then I would become a filmmaker. So, after I got my degree in physics, I applied to UCLA, and with the support of the Onassis Foundation I was able to travel here. I can share an interesting coincidence related to this transition. While I was a student in Greece, and in order to get some pocket money, I would translate articles for *Film*, a Greek journal on cinema. I had a chance in this way to come into contact with the work of some film scholars of the time, like Shirley Clarke, Gene Youngblood, who had written *Expanded Cinema*, a famous and still topical work, and John Whitney, one of the pioneers of computer animation. Imagine my amazement, when I came to UCLA, to find these three important figures as teachers. Los Angeles, the capital of filmmaking, was a very stimulating place to be in the early 80s. What was important for me and my work was that I found myself at UCLA at a period when the transition from analog to digital started taking

place. So, when I came here, I did not focus only on production and direction, even though that was my degree, but I also focused on technology and screenwriting. I was even an early owner of a personal computer, something new at that time. That transformation I underwent here was critical for the rest of my career.

**As both a filmmaker and educator, what advice do you often find yourself giving to aspiring filmmakers, drawing from your own journey and experiences?**

Obviously, don't make the mistakes that I made during my career! In my case, I wish that already in my first works I would have taken up the themes that really matter to me rather than trying to show how I had technically mastered the art of direction. Artists, even early in their careers, have to be honest with the themes that they will choose to film, to shoot, to produce. These themes have to be part of their lives. They have to care about these things at a personal level rather than try to make films that simply comply with current trends in society. If you do that, you lose what is essential. Let me offer the example of gender issues, which are in people's minds and they are, of course, very serious issues in the contemporary world. If you want to talk about them, you have to have a personal connection to them, they must mean something to you, rather than taking on that theme because it's popular. You must have something to say.



Tassos Boulmetis discussing his work with students in Intermediate Modern Greek

# Alkinoos Ioannidis at UCLA

— Save the Dates!

**Lecture “The Word and the Note”  
April 26, 4:00 p.m., Mong Auditorium**

**Solo performance  
April 27, 7:30 p.m., Schoenberg Hall**



Event details and ticketing will be announced soon: [hellenic.ucla.edu/events](http://hellenic.ucla.edu/events)

The events are held under the auspices of the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in the United States, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles. The lecture is co-sponsored by the UCLA Dean of Humanities. This program is made possible thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).

## A Spotlight on Cyprus

### Message from Dr. Vasiliki Kassianidou, Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus

Preserving and promoting our culture is fundamental for safeguarding our cultural identity and history, as well as upholding the core values of our society. With this in mind, I wholeheartedly commend the exceptional efforts being undertaken by the UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture to promote Hellenic culture and values and to interact with the vibrant Hellenic community of southern California.

The decision to include events, throughout this winter and spring, that celebrate Cyprus is of particular importance for us. This is because 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the Turkish invasion and occupation of our homeland, an enduring trauma for all Cypriots who seek the long-awaited solution of the Cyprus problem. A solution that will restore human rights and basic freedoms, while simultaneously fostering conditions of peace, opportunity, and prosperity for all legitimate inhabitants of Cyprus.

The fact is that Cyprus has endured many such conquests through the centuries. Nevertheless, the island managed to keep the local Hellenic culture as it is deeply rooted in the millennia that have passed. It is truly remarkable that the Greek language, which was introduced to the island at the end of the second millennium BC, endures to this day. It is, therefore, a great pleasure that one of the scheduled events on International Greek Language Day will focus on the Greek Cypriot dialect.

But Cyprus has always been the home of other communities who have lived together in harmony and who have preserved their own traditions and languages. It is thus also greatly appreciated that a conference held in celebration of International Mother Language Day, seeks to examine the island's linguistic diversity. Furthermore, the Center's programming provides the opportunity to get a taste of Cypriot cuisine and listen to Cypriot music. Both are essential elements of our intangible heritage which has received influences from East and West and yet managed to preserve its unique character.

Over the past five decades, because of the invasion Cypriot cultural heritage has been under threat. Since 1974, archaeological sites, historical and religious monuments have been destroyed and desecrated while priceless Cypriot antiquities have fallen into the hands of illicit antiquities traffickers. As the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, we emphasize that the protection, restoration, and preservation of our cultural heritage must not be regarded as optional but as a fundamental human right. Furthermore, we remain steadfast in our ongoing efforts to preserve our cultural and intangible heritage, and enhance cultural education, which are important components of preserving our history and identity.

I wish to take this moment to express my profound appreciation for the achievements of the Center in promoting Hellenism and its values. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Professor Ioanna Kakoulli, Acting Director and Dr. Simos Zenios, Associate Director of the Center, for their initiative in organizing this series of events. These gatherings highlight Cyprus' contributions to culture and history, illustrating its important role in the Hellenic world and beyond. I wish every success in this year and the years to come, during which the Center will continue to be the beacon of our common culture on the West Coast of the USA.

Dr. Vasiliki Kassianidou,  
Deputy Minister of Culture, Republic of Cyprus



## Message from H.E., Evangelos Savva, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the USA

It is with great pleasure that I extend this message of warm greetings and congratulations to the leadership and members of the UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture.

Since its establishment, the Center promotes the fundamental values and principles of Hellenism within a broad historical and contemporary context, in a comprehensive set of academic and public initiatives, both in collaboration with organizations in Southern California, as well as with the Embassies of Cyprus and Greece to the United States.

To this end, we welcome that a series of events highlighting Cypriot history and culture are planned in 2024, in close collaboration with our Embassy. This year's International Greek Language Day will be dedicated to the Cypriot dialect, a dialect that dates to ancient Greece and the Hellenistic period, followed by a symposium on language varieties in Cyprus and the conference "Heritage at High Tide: Island Archaeology and Climate Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean – A Deep Dive into Cyprus and Greece's Imperiled Treasures," concentrating on raising awareness of the impact of climate change on cultural heritage sites in Cyprus and in Greece and on promoting policy discussions. Events also includes a lecture and concert by the well-known Cypriot singer and composer Alkinoos Ioannidis and an event highlighting the Cypriot cuisine, themes which contribute to fostering cultural exchanges and relationships.

Fifty years after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, the preservation of Cypriot cultural heritage constitutes an important tool in the struggle to find a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus question based on international law, the rule of law and human rights. A settlement that will reunite the people, the culture and the social fabric of the island.

Located in the heart of California's academic, economic and political life, the Center's activities in the social, political, cultural, and civic spheres contribute to the development and the enrichment of the relationship between Cyprus and the United States, as well as in developing strong relations within the Cypriot American Community and in maintaining links with Cyprus and Hellenism in general.

I take this opportunity to commend the Center's achievements and reiterate the Embassy's full support and high appreciation for the continuation of its important mission.

Evangelos Savva  
Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the USA



## Message from Andreas Kyprianides, Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles

It is with great pleasure that I applaud the UCLA SNF Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture for its remarkable contributions to the promotion of Hellenism and its commendable efforts in fostering connections with the Hellenic community in Southern California.

This year, as the focus turns towards Cyprus in the Center's programming, I am delighted to witness a rich array of lectures, conferences, and cultural events dedicated to our beloved island. Cyprus, with its unique cultural heritage and historical significance, stands as a vital component of Hellenism. The Center's commitment to highlighting Cyprus' contributions to this rich tapestry is truly commendable. The cultural and historical wealth of the island has played a pivotal role in shaping the broader Hellenic identity.

This acknowledgment resonates strongly with the Southern California Hellenic community. As 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus that partitioned the island, I reflect that one of the key organizations of the community, the American Hellenic Council, was originally founded in the aftermath of the invasion under the name Save Cyprus Council. Its goal was to promote the cause of Cyprus as a Pan-Hellenic cause and as a pressing international issue of human rights.

The series of lectures, conferences, and cultural events planned for this year will undoubtedly serve as a platform to deepen understanding, foster dialogue, and celebrate the diverse facets of Cyprus' culture. It is through such initiatives that we strengthen the bonds between communities and contribute to the continued vibrancy of Hellenism in Southern California.

As Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles, I express my appreciation for your dedication to the promotion of Hellenic culture and your recognition of the significance of Cyprus within this narrative and I affirm my continued support of your Center that goes back to its very beginning.

Andreas Kyprianides  
Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles



Archbishop Makarios III, first president of the Republic of Cyprus, at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in 1974, invited by the Save Cyprus Council. Photo from the archive of Andreas Kyprianides.

## Lecture on Cypriot Greek in Celebration of International Greek Language Day



Join us in celebrating International Greek Language Day with a captivating lecture by **Professor Stavroula Tsiplakou**, Dean of Arts at the Open University of Cyprus. The lecture, which will be offered on February 10 via Zoom, is entitled “Present-day Cypriot Greek: Will the Dialect Survive?” and it explores the fascinating dynamics of the contemporary Cypriot Greek variety, shedding light on its evolving nature due to close interactions with Standard Greek. Recent research indicates a transformation in Cypriot Greek, manifesting in mixed, hybrid structures that render the Pan-Cypriot, *koine* variety more standard-like. Professor Tsiplakou delves into the complexities, revealing that despite the influences, Cypriot Greek maintains linguistic vitality, resisting full convergence to Standard Greek. The lecture dissects structural and social factors contributing to this phenomenon, including the heightened local prestige of the dialect.

The event is held under the auspices of the Embassy of Greece in the United States, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in the United States, the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles. This program is made possible thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).

For more information and to register: <https://bit.ly/47ulI50>.

## Cyprus, a Language Archipelago

The Center proudly presents the conference “A Language Archipelago: Linguistic Contact and Variety in Cyprus,” taking place on February 24-25, via Zoom. In celebration of International Mother Language Day, this event delves into the intricate linguistic tapestry of Cyprus, exploring it as a dynamic zone where diverse languages have intersected. Listen to renowned scholars and experts as they gather to unravel the rich linguistic ecosystem of Cyprus, shedding light on the influences and interactions that have shaped its language landscape. The presentations will offer in-depth analyses of prevalent dialects like Cypriot Greek, Cypriot Turkish, Cypriot Arabic, and Gurbetcha and they will also probe into the nuanced facets of linguistic interchange, prevailing ideologies, and policy-making within the Cypriot milieu, including code-switching practices among Cypriot Armenians, the dynamics of translanguaging, and the prominence of various languages in civic spaces.

The conference is held under the auspices of the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in the United States, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles. It is co-sponsored by Thesaurus Linguae Graecae®, the Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Studies, the UCLA Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, and the UCLA Center for World Languages, with the support of the UCLA Promise Armenian Institute. It is made possible thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).

For more information and to RSVP, visit: <https://bit.ly/47IQV4F>.

## Cultural Heritage in the Era of Climate Crisis

The Center is thrilled to host a panel discussion addressing the urgent challenges facing the Eastern Mediterranean—a region with a rich cultural heritage that extends back to major ancient civilizations, now standing at the brink of unprecedented threats. Coastal areas, including those of Cyprus and Greece, grapple with the relentless impact of climate change, endangering archaeological sites and historic landmarks. The panel, titled “Heritage at High Tide: Archaeology and Climate Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean -



World Heritage Site: Paphos Archaeological Park  
(Photos: Roxanne Radpour)

A Deep Dive into Cyprus’ and Greece’s Imperiled Treasures,” will take place on April 6-7 via Zoom. It aims to serve as a catalyst, fostering discussions on rising sea levels, extreme temperatures, and climate threats in the low-lying coastal zones of Cyprus and Greece. Through presentations by leading experts from numerous academic and policy institutions, the panel seeks to bridge the awareness gap and use climate data for decision-making in the cultural heritage sector. It’s about bringing the right people together, introducing the critical topics, and fostering a shared understanding that can serve as a springboard for future action.

The event is held under the auspices of the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Embassy of Greece in the United States, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in the United States, the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles. This program is made possible thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).

---

## Voices of Cypriot Renaissance Poetry in Celebration of National Poetry Month

Few works have exerted such strong influence on the imagination of recent generations of poets and musicians as the anonymous collection of poems known as *Rimes Agapis* (“Rhymes of Love”). Composed in Cypriot Greek and preserved in a single manuscript at the Marciana Library in Venice, the collection is one of the masterpieces of Greek literature during the Renaissance. It is also a document of the cultural connections between the island and the Italian peninsula. Longstanding questions about the collection, however, persist: Who was the anonymous author? When exactly were they composed? What were the circumstances of their performance and circulation? The annual lecture in celebration of National Poetry Month is devoted to this unique work. **Professor Irene Papadaki** (University of Cyprus) will introduce the collection and will discuss recent discoveries about its cultural and historical contexts. The lecture, entitled “Love’s Labour and the Angelic Beloved: Voices from Cypriot Renaissance Poetry,” is offered on April 13 via Zoom. The event includes selected poetry readings by **Alkinoos Ioannidis**, the acclaimed singer, musician, and composer.

The event is held under the auspices of the Embassy of Greece in the United States, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in the United States, the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles. It is co-sponsored by the Department of European Languages and Transcultural Studies and the CMRS Center for Early Global Studies. This program is made possible thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).

For more information and to RSVP: <https://bit.ly/42f9Frq>.

## A Taste of Cyprus

Get ready for a culinary journey to Cyprus as the Center partners with Saint Sophia Cathedral to present an unforgettable event, co-sponsored by Farmer Boys®, celebrating the rich cuisine of the island on June 12. Renowned food author, Christina Loucas (<https://afroditeskitchen.com/about/>), will be our guide through this gastronomic adventure, sharing insights into the vibrant and diverse cuisine of Cyprus. We extend a warm *kopiaste* and welcome to the members of our community and we invite you to stay tuned for more details that will follow. This promises to be a night of culinary delights and cultural exploration that you won't want to miss! Event details and ticket information will be available on our website soon.

In the meantime, as a special treat, the speaker has graciously provided a delightful recipe for traditional sweet tahini pies (*tahinopites*) from her book, *Cyprus Cuisine* (<https://www.whitecap.ca/Detail/1770503374>). We thank her and the publisher, Whitecap Books, for their generosity – happy cooking and *kali orexi!*

### Sweet tahini pies (*tahinopites*) from Cyprus, by Christina Loucas

*Tahinopites* are a traditional Cypriot bread made with tahini, cinnamon, and sugar that I think would be extremely popular outside of Cyprus if more people knew about them. In the past, I remember being able to buy *them* off the backs of bicycles when shopping in town, or even on the beach during the summer. Nowadays there are very few street vendors that continue to sell *tahinopites* this way, although all the bakeries around Cyprus continue to carry them. I struggled for many years to develop a recipe that yielded the gooey, flat, sweet *tahinopites* I remember from my childhood, so I am particularly proud of this recipe.

When I first started to make *tahinopites*, I often found they ended up too small, they rose too much and they were too dry. There are a few tricks I have learned over the years from seasoned *tahinopita* bakers, such as the importance of baking soda, letting the dough rest before you roll it out, and the method by which you twist the rolls. Use brown (not black) tahini (tahini butter from unhulled seeds) if possible, but white tahini (tahini butter from hulled sesame seeds) works well too, so don't worry if you cannot find brown tahini. In Cyprus, it is usually possible to go to a bakery and ask to buy some brown tahini directly from the shop.

A special thanks you to Agathi Ioannou, my aunt's friend who is a professional *tahinopita* baker, who took a full day a few years ago to teach me how to make these. This also happens to be one of my most popular blog recipes, and I am always so touched by how many people enjoy this recipe.

For the tahini filling:

- 1 cup (250 mL) brown tahini (or white tahini)
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) vegetable oil
- 6 Tbsp (90 mL) white sugar
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) baking soda



Christina Loucas  
(photo: Lia Crowe)



For the dough:

1 cup (250 mL) + 1 scant cup (under 250 mL) of traditional Cypriot “village flour” (or bread flour)

1/4 cup (60 mL) “00” flour (or all-purpose flour)

1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt

1/4 tsp (1 mL) baking soda

2 Tbsp (30 mL) vegetable oil

3/4 to 1 cup (180 to 250 mL) warm water

1/2 tsp (2 mL) active dry yeast

**FILLING:** Prepare your tahini filling. Add the ingredients together and stir. The texture should be a bit rough.

**DOUGH:** In a large bowl, combine the flours, salt, baking soda, and vegetable oil. Use a tablespoon of warm water to dilute the dry yeast, then add this to the mixing bowl. Using a dough hook on your mixer, mix the ingredients together (about 1 to 2 minutes). Continue to mix for about 5 to 8 minutes and slowly add the water. Do not over-knead. The dough should come together as a smooth ball, with a slight shine to it. You may need to adjust the water (a little less or a little more) depending on when your dough forms a ball. Place the dough into a lightly oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let rest for 20 minutes. Once the dough is ready, divide it into 6 equal pieces. Using a rolling pin, roll out 1 piece of dough into a rectangle about 8 × 12 inches (20 × 30 cm). Spoon about 3 tablespoons of the tahini mixture in the middle of the rectangle and spread it out thinly, covering all of the dough except for 1/2 inch (1 cm) around the edge. Fold the bottom of the rectangle to the top, leaving a 1/2-inch (1 cm) lip at the top to fold down and creating an envelope-like shape. From the bottom of the rectangle, roll the rectangle up to create a long cylinder shape, which you will then stretch out with your hands to about 16 inches (40 cm). Twist the cylinder so it starts to swirl, then fold the swirled cylinder in half and roll it out again while continuing to twist each end in opposite directions to create more of a swirl stick pattern. Continue rolling until the length of the cylinder is about 8 inches (20 cm; less is okay too). Some of the tahini mixture may squeeze out during the rolling, but this is okay—it is supposed to be a bit messy. Curl the ends of the cylinder in opposite directions (creating an “S” shape) and take one end and place it on top of the other. Make the other tahini pies the same way. Using a rolling pin, flatten each tahini pie into a flat disc about 8 inches (20 cm) or less across, then place on a baking tray lined with parchment paper. Let rise for 15 minutes and heat oven to 325 °F (160 °C). Place pies in the oven for about 20 minutes. Pies are ready when they are lightly brown on top and sound hollow if you tap the bottom.

Makes 6 tahini pies.



## Faculty News

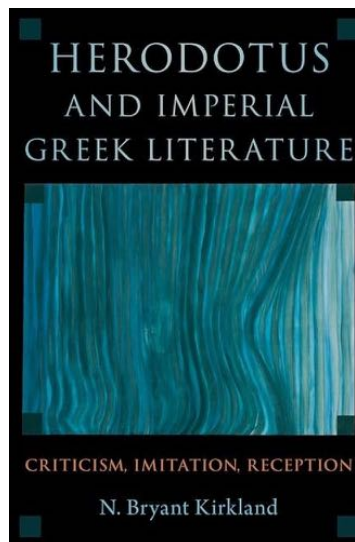
### Publication on Late Antique Armenian Literature and Hellenic *Paideia*

**Professor Peter Cowe** (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures) published recently an article entitled “Yovhannēs Ōdznets’i’s Canon on the Synod of Manazkert (726): End of an Era or New Beginning?” (*St. Nersess Theological Review* 14/2, 2023). The article continues Cowe’s research focus on Late Antique Armenian texts that highlights the degree to which their thought and expression are grounded in Hellenic *paideia*. This author of the early 8th century belongs to a generation, several of whom are designated with the title *imast-a-sēr*, a direct calque on the Greek term *phil-o-sophos*, indicating that, in addition to grammar and rhetoric, they had also studied logic, mainly in association with Alexandria. Cowe’s study shows how the writer employs this to develop his argument in defense of Armenian theology. Meanwhile, the work largely reproduces the structure of elevated Greek prose with a penchant for coining new compound forms and preference for verbal and abstract nouns as the main vehicle to convey semantic content rather than finite verbs.



### Professor Kirkland Receives Charles J. Goodwin Award of Merit

**Professor Bryant Kirkland** (Classics) has been named a recipient of the Charles J. Goodwin Award of Merit (<https://bit.ly/3tCQZF4>), given each year by the Society for Classical Studies to honor three outstanding contributions to classical scholarship. Hailing his first book, *Herodotus and Imperial Greek Literature* (Oxford, 2022), as an “extraordinary study of Herodotus,” the award citation declares that it “demonstrates the freshness and intellectual vibrancy of reception studies at their very best.” The citation goes on to state, “[t]his is a highly original book, a real crucible of scholarly analysis that obliges us to think in fresh ways about the interrelationships between different texts ....” Kirkland’s book examines how Roman-era authors of the 1st and 2nd centuries C.E. interpreted Herodotus’ *Histories* (5th century B.C.E.) to understand major issues of their own day — including the meaning of the Roman empire, the nature of identity and difference, and the ethical obligations involved in writing about one’s past.



# Student News

## Awards and Publications for Ph.D. Candidates, Nicolyna Enriquez and Sofia Pitouli

Congratulations to **Nicolyna Enriquez** (Ph.D. candidate, Art History) and **Sofia Pitouli** (Ph.D. candidate, Art History) for their recent distinctions and accomplishments! Enriquez published an article entitled “Sailing Across the Wall: Ship Graffiti on Cretan Church Wall Paintings” in the recent issue of the prestigious journal *Viator*. She was also the recipient of a Keck Humanistic Inquiry Research Award to create a pattern recognition algorithm that will analyze ornamental patterns in Byzantine churches. Pitouli was awarded a Graduate Student Prize from the Byzantine Studies Association of North America for her presentation at the 2022 Byzantine Studies Conference. She attended the Dumbarton Oaks Study Day “Egyptian Textiles and Medieval Indian Ocean Trade” in October and presented a paper, “Toward Greekness: Dimitris Pikiotis’ Architectural Fantasies of Japan,” at the “Reconsidering the Generation of the 1930s” conference held at UCLA in November.

## A Vibrant Year Ahead for the UCLA Hellenic Students’ Community

The UCLA Hellenic Students’ Community (HSC) was active throughout the previous quarter, organizing several social gatherings for students at UCLA. For the opening event of 2024, the HSC collaborated with our Center to host an event open to all UCLA students, faculty, and staff of Greek, Cypriot, and Greek American descent as well as Bruins with a philhellenic interest. This event aimed to foster connections between the community and share blessings for the new year, marking the occasion by cutting the *vasilopita*, a cherished Greek tradition. The HSC is committed to active engagement and expanding its reach. A calendar marked with diverse events aimed at cultivating a tight-knit, thriving community will soon be made public while, in addition to social gatherings, the HSC aspires to introduce more networking opportunities and volunteer events. Anyone interested in the events of HSC can find information on their Instagram page (@hsc\_ucla) or write to [hellenicstudentscommunity@gmail.com](mailto:hellenicstudentscommunity@gmail.com).



Consul General Christina Valassopoulou with HSC members and other Helleno-Bruins at *vasilopita* event held at Rolfe Courtyard.



<https://hellenic.ucla.edu/>



<https://www.facebook.com/UCLASNFCenter>



<https://www.instagram.com/uclasnfhellenic/>

# Winter-Spring 2024 Events

## [www.hellenic.ucla.edu/event/](http://www.hellenic.ucla.edu/event/)

- JANUARY 20**  
10:00 AM  
VIA ZOOM  
**GEFYRA CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR**  
Κωνσταντία Σωτηρίου, *Brandy Sour. Μυθιστόρημα σε 22 δωμάτια* (Πατάκης, 2022)
- FEBRUARY 10**  
10:00 AM  
VIA ZOOM  
**LECTURE IN CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL GREEK LANGUAGE DAY**  
Stavroula Tsiplakou (Open University of Cyprus), “Present-Day Cypriot Greek: Will the Dialect Survive?”  
*Held under the auspices of the Embassy of Greece in the USA, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in the USA, the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles*
- FEBRUARY 24-25**  
8:30 AM  
VIA ZOOM  
**CONFERENCE**  
“A Language Archipelago: Linguistic Variety and Contact in Cyprus”  
*Held under the auspices of the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles*
- MARCH 2**  
4:00 PM  
LOCATION TBD  
**LECTURE**  
Katherine Fleming (President and CEO, J. Paul Getty Trust), “How to Think about the Past”  
*Held under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles*
- MARCH 12**  
5:00 PM  
247 DODD HALL  
**RECEPTION OF HELLENIC CULTURE LECTURE SERIES**  
Anthony Kaldellis (University of Chicago), “Who Invented the ‘Modern Greeks’ and Why?”  
*Co-hosted by the UCLA Department of Classics*
- MARCH 16**  
4:00 PM  
314 ROYCE HALL  
**GEFYRA LECTURE**  
Michalis Sotiropoulos (Research Fellow, British School at Athens), “Liberalism and the Foundations of the Modern Greek State (ca. 1830-1880)”  
*Held under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles*
- MARCH 30**  
10:00 AM  
VIA ZOOM  
**GEFYRA BOOK CLUB**  
Θωδωρής Καλλιφατίδης, *Η πολιορκία της Τροίας* (Πατάκης, 2022)
- APRIL 6-7**  
8:30 AM  
VIA ZOOM  
**PANEL DISCUSSION**  
“Heritage at High Tide: Archaeology and Climate Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean – A Deep Dive into Cyprus’ and Greece’s Imperiled Treasures”  
*Held under the auspices of the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus, the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles*
- APRIL 13**  
10:00 AM  
VIA ZOOM  
**LECTURE IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL POETRY MONTH**  
Irene Papadaki (University of Cyprus), “Love’s Labour and the Angelic Beloved: Voices from Cypriot Renaissance Poetry” and selected poetry readings by Alkinoos Ioannidis  
*Held under the auspices of the Embassy of Greece in the USA, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in the USA, the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles*
- APRIL 26**  
4:00 PM  
MONG AUDITORIUM  
**LECTURE**  
Alkinoos Ioannidis (Singer and Songwriter), “The Word and the Note”  
*Held under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles*
- APRIL 27**  
7:30 PM  
SCHOENBERG HALL  
**PERFORMANCE**  
Alkinoos Ioannidis Solo  
*Held under the auspices of the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus, and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cyprus in Los Angeles*
- MAY 25**  
10:00  
VIA ZOOM  
**GEFYRA CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR**  
Σωφρώνης Σωφρώνιου, *Οι πρωτόπλαστοι* (Ροδακίό, 2015)
- JUNE 12**  
7:00 PM  
ST. SOPHIA CATHEDRAL  
**CULTURE**  
“A Taste of Cyprus,” a lecture and food tasting with Christina Loucas (food author)  
*Held under the auspices of the Deputy Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus, and the Honorary Consul General of Cyprus in Los Angeles, co-organized by Saint Sophia Cathedral and co-sponsored by Farmer Boys®*