



HELLENIC UNIVERSITY CLUB

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UCLA

Stavros Niarchos Foundation
Center *for the Study of Hellenic Culture*



Letter from the Director

Dear friends of the UCLA SNF Hellenic Center,

Five years ago, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, in partnership with generous members of the Los Angeles community, established a permanent Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture at UCLA. These five years have seen enormous growth. We offer a wide range of programs, witnessing our commitment to connecting our community, both on and off campus, to each other and to Greece and Cyprus. I am proud of what we've accomplished and am mindful of the work we still have before us. Our opening-of-the-year event, held on September 29 at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, introduced our community to Geraki, a small village in Laconia. The villagers are proud of their connection to UCLA, which has provided the opportunity for the



Cultural Society of Geraki and the village's weavers to reach an international audience. The Center continues its efforts to support the women of Geraki and honor their commitment to sustaining a traditional craft practice that ties the modern village to its past and creates new revenue streams to bolster an economy based mainly on olive oil production. All proceeds from sales of our recently published catalogue, *Weaving Dreams: Kilims from Geraki, Laconia*, benefit the weavers of Geraki and the Benaki Museum, which will host an exhibition on woven textiles from the village in spring 2026.

I am also very proud that the Center collaborated with the Herb Alpert School of Music and Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral to present Cappella Romana's "In the Footsteps of St. Demetrios." This stunning performance featured the superlative voices of Cappella Romana's chanters, together with the beautiful voices of the UCLA Chamber Singers, an undergraduate vocal ensemble directed by Professor James Bass. Following the performance, both groups re-created the repertoire in the Evelyn & Mo Ostin Music Center at UCLA, where, through digital technologies, the singers' voices were placed within the acoustical shell of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki. The acoustical and performative connection of two cathedrals dedicated to the Holy Wisdom of God, one in Los Angeles and the other in Thessaloniki, is the culmination of an international collaboration sponsored by UCLA and USC, *Soundscapes of Byzantium*, which, in 2014, analyzed church architecture, monumental decoration, chanting, and acoustics in eight churches in Byzantium (and Greece's) second largest city.

As we look forward to the next five years, we will be expanding our Modern Greek teaching program and bringing new scholars to UCLA to teach different aspects of Hellenic history and culture. We renew our commitment to hosting public-facing events, a commitment we made when we were given the responsibility of continuing the work of the Hellenic University Club (see the article in this newsletter). In the next months, we are focused on hosting two exceptional speakers sponsored by *Gefyra*, our collaborative program with Simon Fraser University. Dr. George Manginis, Academic Director of the Benaki Museum and a long-time friend of the Center, will lecture on "Pretty in Pink: A Portrait of Queen Olga of Greece at the Benaki Museum." We are equally honored to host Dr. Leon Saltiel, Director of Diplomacy, Representative at UN Geneva and UNESCO, and Coordinator on Countering Antisemitism for the World Jewish Congress. Dr. Saltiel's lecture, "Fighting Antisemitism and Preserving the Memory of the Holocaust: Advances in Greece and Europe?" is co-presented by the USC Shoah Foundation. I warmly invite you to attend both of these lectures, which touch upon important aspects of Greece's culture and history.

As part of our ongoing collaboration with the Benaki Museum, UCLA is one of three universities to offer residencies to scholars at the Leigh Fermor House in Kardamyli, Mani. This fall, Professor Kathryn Morgan enjoyed a writing fellowship at the house to advance work on her study of "Plato, Thucydides, and the Uses of History." In February and early March, I will take up residence at the house to write about weaving and the women of the Generation of the 1930s. Professor Michael Cooperson, Associate Director of the Center, will "mind the store" during my absence. These residencies, as well as other fellowships we provide to faculty members and students, demonstrate our Center's commitment to supporting excellent scholarship. Many generous donors from the community have endowed fellowships to support graduate student research in Greece. The outcome of these fellowships can be seen in the work of UCLA Ph.D. candidates Paul Melas, Nicolyna Enriquez, and Sofia Pitouli featured in this newsletter. These endowed fellowships are not only a valuable donation to the UCLA SNF Hellenic Center, but are also an investment in the work of emerging scholars and support for the sustained investigation of all aspects of Hellenic culture.

***Faculty Advisory
Committee
(2024-2025)***

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

I invite you to have a close look at the Center's calendar of offerings on the back page of this newsletter. There are many additional events that we will be announcing, including a book celebration for *Weaving Dreams* in Geraki (Greece) on February 22, 2024 and events tied to an upcoming blockbuster exhibition, *The Kingdom of Pylos: Warrior-Princes of Mycenaean Greece*, which opens at the Getty Villa on June 25, 2025 (see the conversation about this exhibition featured in this newsletter). Please consult our website for the most up-to-date announcements about public lectures and opportunities to engage with Hellenic culture, both in Southern California and in Greece.

On behalf of our Center, I wish you and your families a peaceful holiday and a joyous New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Sharon E. J. Gerstel



The tradition of decorating boats for Christmas stems from Greece's long history as a seafaring nation.

For Center news and recordings of past events:

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

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

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

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@uclasnfhelleniccenter5902>

Center News

Remembering a remarkable performance!

On October 27, the community came together to hear the world premiere performance of Cappella Romana's "In the Footsteps of St. Demetrios" at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Presented by the UCLA SNF Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture, the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, and Saint Sophia, and directed by Dr. Alexander Lingas, this performance introduced works that were transcribed from medieval manuscripts. Many of the hymns were chanted for the first time since the 15th century. Joining the wonderful voices of Cappella Romana's singers were the UCLA Chamber Singers, an undergraduate vocal ensemble directed by Professor James Bass (Chair of the Department of Music, UCLA Department of Music). A celebratory reception following the performance brought together chanters, students, lovers of liturgical music, and members of the Hellenic community. The performance was followed by a recording session for future release, with the chants sung in acoustic auralizations of the church of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki, connecting the cathedral of Los Angeles with the cathedral of Byzantium's second largest city.

In the words of one of the UCLA Chamber Singers, "I loved working with Cappella Romana! The musicians were incredibly talented, and so kind to work with. It was amazing to get to experience this music alongside those who have studied it extensively, and it is truly such an honor. The sound and aesthetics of the space were shockingly gorgeous, and I think the space did the piece so much justice." Εύγε!



Members of Cappella Romana and the UCLA Chamber Singers performing at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral (photo: Rich Schmitt)



Dr. James Bass (Director, UCLA Chamber Singers) and Dr. Alexander Lingas (Music Director, Cappella Romana) (photo: Rich Schmitt)



(l-r) Jim Kolokotronis, Tina Kolovos, George Kolovos, and Carolyn Kolokotronis (photo: Rich Schmitt)



(l-r) Tracey Reif, Minos Athanassiadis, Alexander Caloyeras, Katie Caloyeras, and Caroline Belz Caloyeras (photo: Rich Schmitt)



UCLA Chamber Singers with Dr. James Bass, Director (photo: Rich Schmitt)



(l-r) Dr. Sharon Gerstel (Center Director), Nicole Hadjoannou, Dr. Arion Hadjoannou (Chair, Faculty Advisory Committee), Kathy Sanchez (Center Assistant Director) (photo: Rich Schmitt)

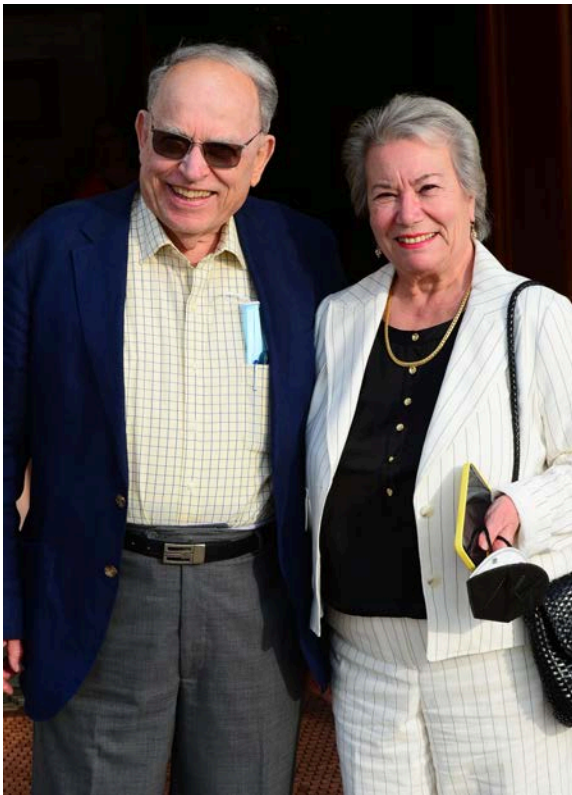


(l-r) Anna Counelis, Steve Counelis, Anne Lingas, Dr. Alexander Lingas, Stacia Counelis, and Mark Powell (Executive Director, Cappella Romana) (photo: Rich Schmitt)

Community News

Culture, Connection, and Community: The Hellenic University Club's Enduring Impact

In January 1973, Vivi Demopoulos arrived in Southern California. Originally from Athens, Greece, Vivi knew the quickest way to plug into a community in this new environment would be the church, and her visit to Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral immediately connected her to two members of the Hellenic University Club of Southern California. The timing couldn't have been more serendipitous with the club's dinner dance just around the corner.



Peter and Vivi Demopoulos (photo: Rich Schmitt)

The night Vivi entered that gala ballroom, she encountered a wondrous scene of folk dance, music, and connection — something that transported her right back to Greece. Through the Hellenic University Club, Vivi built lifelong friendships and a supportive community. She reconnected with her culture and even met her husband Peter, who would go on to lead as club president from 1992 to 1998, and then again from 2001 to 2012. For Vivi, Peter, and all other members, the club was their home away from home. It was an answer to a call for togetherness for the Greeks and Cypriots of Southern California.

On December 1, 1961, a small group led by Theodore Saloutos and Speros Vryonis Jr., esteemed professors at UCLA, established the Hellenic University Club. Their mission was to stimulate artistic, intellectual, and historical engagement with Hellenic life beyond the borders of Greece and Cyprus. The Hellenic University Club launched with just 25 members, but what the group lacked in numbers, they matched in commitment. Peter Demopoulos explains, “At UCLA there were about ten students from the club, and yet, when major political and cultural events were taking place in the homeland, take the political instability brought about by the Junta in Greece,

for example, you could feel the Hellenic voice on campus. It's not about the numbers, it's about the commitment and the feeling.”

The Hellenic University Club created a space for intellectual exchange between members of the Greek-American community. From its inception, it was more than just an organization—it was a forum for unity. This, in conjunction with a plethora of community nurturing events, grew the club's membership from its original 25 members to over 300 at the time of its 25th anniversary. The club raised funds to support Hellenic organizations. The largest beneficiary was the Basil P. Caloyeras Center for Modern Greek Studies at LMU where, for many years, the club's dinners and lectures were held. Other beneficiaries included the Speros

Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism in Sacramento, the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage in Washington, D.C., the Greek Heritage Society of Southern California, the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae at UC Irvine, and the UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture.

One of the club’s key achievements was its ability to bring Hellenic culture to life through a vibrant array of events, from theatrical productions to intellectual debates. Peter recalls one such milestone: the production of *Kapetan Michalis* in 1993. It was the dream of Athan Karras, a dedicated club member, to bring this classic work to the stage. The community rallied together to secure the rights and mount the production, a labor of love that drew over a thousand attendees. “Truly, the world was thirsty for culture and togetherness, and this event delivered exactly that,” Peter reflects. The success of *Kapetan Michalis* ignited a tradition of annual theatrical performances that ran for six consecutive years. Scans of the programs of these productions, as well as other publications supported by the Hellenic University Club, can be found on the website of the UCLA SNF Hellenic Center under “Community” (hellenic.ucla.edu).

The theatrical productions were a testament to the club’s resourcefulness and dedication. Members volunteered their time and talents to create sets, costumes, and props, transforming modest venues like the Torrance Community Theater into spaces of cultural celebration. Tickets covered expenses, and everyone involved—from actors to lighting technicians—contributed their skills out of love for the Hellenic arts. “It was a lot of work but also a lot of fun,” Peter adds, recalling the camaraderie that defined those efforts.



Kapetan Michalis (above); *Theophilos and His Fairy Tales* (below)



Beyond the stage, the club also fostered intellectual enrichment through lectures featuring prominent speakers. One memorable event hosted Nicholas Gage, who shared the story of his mother as chronicled in his acclaimed book, *Eleni*. Over 250 attendees gathered at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral for the lecture, one of many times the community united around meaningful dialogue.

For first-generation Greek immigrants like Vivi and Peter, the Hellenic University Club was a cornerstone of cultural preservation. However, as Peter observes, engaging third- and fourth-generation Greek Americans presents new challenges. “The world has changed,” he says. “Greece is more accessible now through travel, social media, and video calls. Perhaps there isn’t the same need for connection as there was back then, but the desire for meaningful engagement is still there—it just needs to take new forms.” This changing dynamic was one of the reasons why, in 2019, the club’s leadership decided to pass the torch to the UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture. Hellenic University Club members viewed this transition not as an ending, but as a continuation of the club’s legacy. “We didn’t want to have competition between the club and UCLA,” Peter explains. “It felt right to entrust the next generation with this responsibility and see what they can build from here.”

Looking forward, the Demopouloses believe that the future of Greek cultural engagement lies in balancing tradition with innovation. They see potential in events that combine fun with education, like concerts, glendis, and interactive workshops, to draw in younger generations. “It’s not just about learning,” Peter notes. “It’s about creating spaces where people can connect, collaborate, and celebrate.” For Peter, Vivi, and the many others who found a home in the Hellenic University Club, the journey has been one of friendship, passion, and cultural pride. Their story is a reminder that while the forms of connection may evolve, the essence of community remains timeless.

Our Center is proud to build on the hard work of Hellenic University Club members who honored the past while building a future.



Members of the Hellenic University Club enjoy dancing at a Christmas Party (photo: Hellenic University Club)

Backgammon Night



Join us for mezedes and conversation

January 24

6:00 – 8:00 P.M.

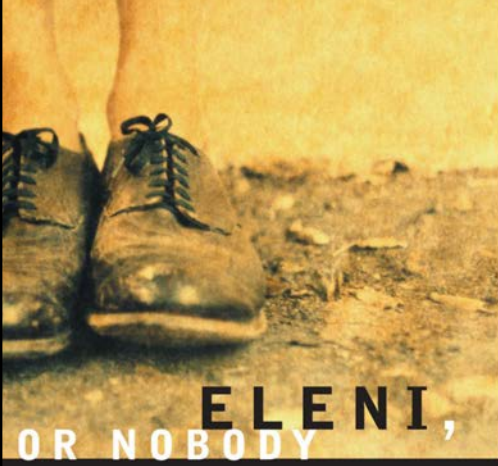
2117 Rolfe Hall, UCLA Campus

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

RSVP:
<https://forms.gle/QuMHXDuPM37S>
Ho4TA

Hosted by:

UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation
Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture



Gefyra Book Club: *Eleni, or Nobody*
by Rhea Galanaki, trans. David Connolly
(Northwestern University Press, 2002)

Discussion led by **Professor Sharon Gerstel**,
Director, **UCLA SNF Hellenic Culture** and
Dr. Eirini Kotsovoli, Senior Lecturer, **Global
Humanities at Simon Fraser University**


**This academic year's book club will feature
Greek books in translation.**

The discussion will be held in English.

Saturday, February 8, 2025
10 a.m. Los Angeles / 8 p.m. Greece
By Zoom

★ For more information and to RSVP:
<https://hellenic.ucla.edu/event/eleniornobody/>

RHEA GALANAKI translated from the greek by david connolly



A Conversation with Getty Curator Claire Lyons



Professor David Schneller (Art History and member of the UCLA SNF Hellenic Center's Faculty Advisory Committee) chatted with Claire Lyons (Curator of Antiquities, J. Paul Getty Museum) about the upcoming exhibition The Kingdom of Pylos: Warrior-Princes of Mycenaean Greece. The Center will be offering several programs connected to this exhibition in fall 2025.

Schneller: We're excited for the exhibition The Kingdom of Pylos: Warrior-Princes of Mycenaean Greece! First, can you give us some orientation on the chronological and geo-graphical scope of the show?

Lyons: So are we! The exhibition, which has already been several years in the making, will first open in Kalamata in February and then at Getty Villa in Malibu this coming June 25. It features 230 finds discovered at sites in Messenia and spans the Late Bronze Age (1700–1070 BCE). This period saw the rise of the Mycenaean civilization on the Greek mainland. Over time, independent settlements came under the control of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos, so named by the archaeologist Carl Blegen after the mythical King Nestor described in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. At its peak, the Pylian Kingdom encompassed 800 square miles and flourished throughout the 13th century BCE. The palace was destroyed in a fire about 1180 BCE, part of the widespread violence and depopulation that brought the Mycenaean era to an end.

Schneller: Why did you choose to curate this show now? Were there any recent developments in archaeological exploration that sparked your interest in this material?

Lyons: The idea for the exhibition actually goes back to 2015. Jack Davis, the Carl Blegen Professor of Greek Archaeology at the University of Cincinnati, phoned with news of a sensational find at ancient Pylos. In an olive grove near the palace, Sharon Stocker, co-director of the Palace of Nestor Excavations, had unearthed an unlooted Mycenaean shaft grave containing the remains of a thirty-five-year-old warrior. He is known as the Griffin Warrior, and surrounding his burial were several thousand artifacts, including ivory- and gold-hilted weapons, body armor, jewelry, and gold and



The Combat Agate from the Grave of the Griffin Warrior at Pylos. Courtesy of The Palace of Nestor Excavations, The Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati (photo: J. Vanderpool)

silver vessels. Dating no later than 1450 BCE, the grave goods are simply spectacular. Stocker and Davis's discovery was widely covered in the international press, and when they presented their finds at the Villa, we immediately knew that we wanted to host an exhibition.

Schneller: What makes this exhibition different from other recent shows at the Getty Villa? What is the story you hope to tell?

Lyons: What the public will encounter are the results of Greek and American excavations in Messenia, displayed to emphasize the archaeological context of each object and grave group. With the exception of finds from the palace, including wall paintings and tablets inscribed in Linear B (the first written form of the Greek language), the objects come from rich funerary contexts. This is the first Bronze Age exhibition at the Villa, and—surprisingly—the first major display of Mycenaean art outside Europe. Thanks to exceptionally generous loans from museums in Athens, Kalamata, Chora, and Pylos, the installation presents a number of very recent discoveries, some of which are still unpublished. The story centers on Messenia as an epicenter of Mycenaean culture, and eleven sites in the orbit of Pylos.

Close ties with Minoan Crete, through trade and dominance, are evident in the visual arts and political and religious symbolism; some outstanding works on display are, in fact, Minoan imports.

Schneller: Can you describe some of the standout objects that you are most excited to bring to the Getty for this exhibition?

Lyons: No doubt, the most fascinating object is the Pylos Combat Agate, an almond-shaped Minoan sealstone about two inches long, with an iconic vignette of three warriors—a hero lunging against an adversary over the limp body of a third opponent sprawled at their feet. The details are nearly invisible to the eye and raise an immediate question: how did a master gem-carver create this miniature masterpiece? Our challenge is to display the Combat Agate so that viewers are drawn to it. Other works include luxury imports from the Near East and Egypt, which emerged from two monumental tholos tombs that Sharon Stocker uncovered at Pylos in 2018...excavation there is still ongoing. The recent excavation of tholos tombs at Psari produced a boars' tusk helmet, typical of Mycenaean Messenia. This material is new to scholars and the public.



The Griffin and Lion Pyxis Lid from the Grave of the Griffin Warrior of Pylos. Courtesy of The Palace of Nestor Excavations, The Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati (photo: J. Vanderpool)

Schneller: What has been the most rewarding part of collaborating with colleagues in the United States and Greece in preparation for the exhibition?

Lyons: The enthusiastic support for this project on the part of our collaborators in the Ministry of Culture, especially Evangelia Militsi-Kechagia, director of the the Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia, and fellow curators and archaeologists in Kalamata and Athens has been immensely gratifying. There have been countless memorable moments, not least the time spent at Pylos, visiting the dig in progress, and shaping a list of loan objects. Jack Davis, Sharon Stocker, and staff in Pylos and the University of Cincinnati have generously shared excavation resources with us. Few colleagues outside museums are prepared for the complexities of organizing an international exhibition and preparing a major catalogue; it's been intense, but the outcome will make it all worthwhile.



The gold necklace from the grave of the Griffin Warrior. Courtesy of The Palace of Nestor Excavations, The Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati (photo: J. Vanderpool)

Schneller: What have you learned about Pylos, the region of Messenia, or the Bronze Age Aegean that you did not know or appreciate before your work on the exhibition?

Lyons: Honestly, there was a lot to catch up on, because apart from organizing the Getty's display of Bronze Age art, my last direct contact with Aegean prehistory was as a graduate student at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. We visited the Palace of Nestor, and I couldn't have imagined that it would eventually occupy so much time and thought. Curating exhibitions means three or four years of full immersion in a new subject. That's the part I'm drawn to, and above all the personal relationship with each object that grows with every step of research, conservation, planning for its journey, and presentation to the visitors, students, and fellow archaeologists.

The Kingdom of Pylos: Warrior-Princes of Mycenaean Greece will run from June 25, 2025 – January 12, 2026 at the Getty Villa in Malibu. Keep an eye on the Villa's website for forthcoming details: <https://www.getty.edu/visit/villa/> and watch the Center's calendar for co-sponsored events related to this exhibition in fall 2025.

4:00 P.M.
SATURDAY
JAN. 11, 2025
314 Royce Hall, UCLA
Campus



Pretty in Pink

A PORTRAIT OF
QUEEN OLGA OF GREECE
AT THE BENAKI MUSEUM

Lecture by George Manginis, Academic Director, Benaki Museum in Athens

Description

On the third floor of the Benaki Museum in central Athens hangs a portrait of **Queen Olga, the consort of Greece's second king**, painted a few years after her wedding to George I. In March 2021, the portrait, attributed to an unknown artist, was included in the Museum's anniversary exhibition celebrating the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution. This lecture will unfold the story of this radiant but enigmatic painting, from its creation to its bequest to the Museum, offering surprising insights into 19th- and 20th-century Greek and European history.

Conversation following the lecture with **Sharon Gerstel**, Director, UCLA SNF Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture. Reception to follow.

Bio

George Manginis is the Academic Director of the Benaki Museum in Athens. He has taught and researched Cypriot prehistory, Islamic art and architecture, Sinai studies, Chinese ceramics, European decorative arts and the Greek and Armenian diasporas. In 2016 he published *Mount Sinai: A History of Travellers and Pilgrims* and *China Rediscovered: The Benaki Museum Collection of Chinese Ceramics*, followed by *Ceramics from Korea at the Benaki Museum: The George Eumorfopoulos Collection* and *Director's Choice: Benaki Museum in 2021*, and *Imperial China* in 2023.

For more information, **scan the QR code** below or visit: <https://hellenic.ucla.edu/event/george-manginis/>



This event is held **under the auspices** of the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles and made possible thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).



Student News

Paul Melas (Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Anthropology)

The Women of Mount Athos, Greece: Absence and Connection



In 2023, I concluded a year of ethnographic fieldwork in the Orthodox Christian monastic community of Mount Athos, Greece, for my dissertation project. This work sought to document the social conditions within the Athonite monasteries while attending to the networks that connect them to the broader Orthodox Christian “world.” Imperial decree established the community of Mount Athos more than one thousand years ago and, to this day, the holy mountain maintains many of its Byzantine traditions and proscriptions. The most notable is arguably the *Abaton*, which prohibits women from entering Athos’ bordered, peninsular territory. As such, during my year in the community, I was surprised to see the material and spiritual connections that Athonite monks had established with Orthodox women throughout Greece. These women could never come to Mount Athos, yet their devotion was oriented toward its monasteries, monks, and liturgical traditions.

Generously supported by the James and Carolyn Kolokotronis Endowed Graduate Research Fellowship, I traveled to Greece in the summer of 2024 to continue my research into this unexpected phenomenon. This ethnographic work brought me into several Athonite dependency parishes (*metochia*) that monks from Athos traveled to and liturgized in often. While dependency parishes in mainland Greece have been a feature of Athonite monasticism for centuries, since the 1970s in particular, monastic brotherhoods have made a concerted effort to invest in their development in the urban centers of Athens and Thessaloniki. These parishes provide a unique space for the Greek public to interface and communicate with otherwise cloistered Athonite monks. This space is especially important for women, who lack the right to visit Mount Athos as pilgrims or as aspiring monastics.

In 2024, I focused on one such parish in a working-class neighborhood of Athens. The parish was a dependency of the Athonite monastery of St. Demetrios, where I had spent the majority of my time conducting research the previous year. It was established formally in 2016 when a small chapel dedicated to the “Athonite Fathers” was consecrated on its premises. Since then, priest-monks from St. Demetrios have traveled to the parish weekly to perform liturgies and other sacramental and social functions. The property was originally a family home that was donated to the monastery in the early 2010s by a woman named Eleni. Eleni had known the Abbot of St. Demetrios for decades. In the 1980s and 90s, she would invite him to her home often, where he would deliver sermons and perform confessions for a small neighborhood group of Orthodox Christians she organized. In 1982, her youngest son, now Father David, joined the monastic brotherhood. Just before she died, she gave her house to the monastery as well so that it may continue to function as a node of connection between Mount Athos and urban Athens.

This votive act has brought the brotherhood of St. Demetrios much closer to the devout Orthodox Christians of this Athenian neighborhood. Since 2016, the small parish has grown substantially, with dozens of men, women, and children attending its weekly services and events. Many have also fostered deep relationships with monks; some have become their spiritual children, confessing to them and actively seeking their guidance and advice. The women I met and interviewed this past summer reflected positively on these connections. “It is wonderful to have the fathers here,” one woman told me, “The atmosphere is different; there’s a different air.” Indeed, the relationship between the “*here*” of the parish and the “*there*” of Mount Athos featured prominently in many of these descriptions. One woman, Maria, described Mount Athos as “the holiest place on Earth, [where] even the stones emanate grace.” I responded that despite her great enthusiasm, she cannot visit the community. She responded, “Yes, my husband and sons go, however, and the monks come *here*...and they bring the *Holy Mountain* with them.”

Sacred objects and ritual aesthetics also represented another important mode of interrelation between Mount Athos and the parish that extended beyond the monks’ embodied presence. On many of their trips from Mount Athos, monks frequently brought sacred objects (relics and icons) from the monastery, which the parish would venerate communally. Parish services also featured Athonite liturgical traditions, such as the absence of artificial light and an “Athonite style” of chanting. After a particularly long midnight vigil, one young woman—knowing I had lived a year in the Athonite community—excitedly pronounced that *she* had also experienced a service “on Athos.”



Chapel of the “Athonite Fathers” in Athens (photo: Paul Melas)

The all-male monastic community of Mount Athos has maintained a gender prohibition for a millennium. This prohibition is absolute and enforced by a physical border and cultural convention. However, the actions of certain devout women in Greece have made the (in)famously isolated Athonite community slightly less so. As organizers, benefactors, parishioners, and mothers, they have created inclusive spaces of Athonite devotion that transcend the *space* of Mount Athos itself. Recent history has brought small and significant transformations to the monastic community and its relationship with contemporary Greece, Europe, and the world. Athonite monasteries have developed economically and infrastructurally, welcomed reporters and researchers (like myself), hosted hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, and increased their contact with communities outside their territory. The stories shared in this essay reflect this broader shift and speak to the work of those who have brought it to bear—frequently without recognition from *this* world.

Nicolyna Enriquez (Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Art History) publishes article in *Viator*

SAILING ACROSS THE WALL: SHIP GRAFFITI ON CRETAN CHURCH WALL PAINTINGS

Nicolyna Enriquez*

Abstract: Perched above the world at an altitude of eight hundred meters, the Church of the Panagia in the village of Kapetaniana lies ten kilometers inland from the southern coast of Crete. In the building's narthex, two large graffiti of ships, their sails full and oars extended, seem to glide across the images of St. Peter and St. John the Studite. These nautical images, found in a church overlooking the sea, are far from isolated examples of ship graffiti. Demetrios Tsougarakis, in his *Corpus of Graffiti from the Churches and Monasteries of Crete*, identifies thirty-five complete and three partial images of ships across the island, including several in monasteries around Kapetaniana. Placing the images in the Church of the Panagia within the broader context of Cretan ship graffiti, this paper explores how these ships mark locations of prayer by those whose lives and livelihoods depended on the sea for sustenance and trade. Together with the dedication and location of the church in the landscape and the location of the imagery on its walls, these unsanctioned images reveal the intertwining narratives of land and sea and track the individuals and communities who moved through these environments.

Keywords: Venetian Crete, Kapetaniana, ship graffiti, graffiti, landscape, pilgrimage, maritime, ports and harbors.

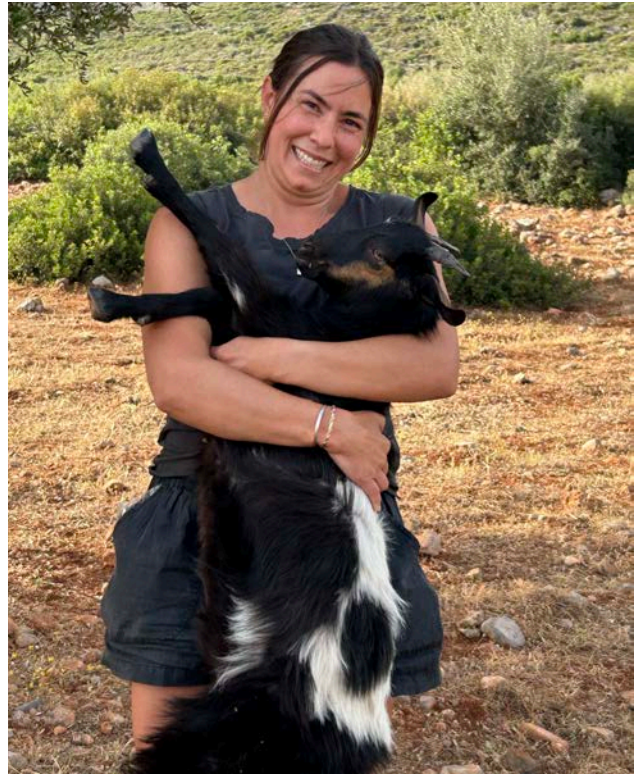
The Church of the Panagia, in the village of Kapetaniana, overlooks both mountain and sea.¹ Located ten kilometers inland from the southern coast of Crete and at an altitude of eight hundred meters, the church surveys both the Libyan Sea to the south and Mount Kofinas, the highest peak of the Asterousia mountain range, to the east (fig. 1). Dated by inscription to the Byzantine year 6910 (1401–2), the vaulted nave is divided into two bays by a transverse arch. A narthex, whose pointed barrel vault is higher than that of the nave, is positioned on the western side of the building and is connected to the nave by means of an archway. The wall paintings, generally well preserved, include one of the most extensive cycles of the *Life of the Virgin* in Byzantine art.² The representation of a large number of holy monks in the decorative program indicates the

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¹ Ioannis Spitharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete* (Leiden: Alexandros Press, 2001), 157–60; Manfred Bissinger, *Kreta: Byzantinische Wandmalerei* (Munich: Editio Maria, 1995), 223–34 (no. 198); Giuseppe Gerola and Konstantinos Lassithiotakis, *Τοπιογραφικός κατάλογος των τοιχογραφημένων εκκλησιών της Κρήτης*, ed. Konstantinos Lassithiotakis (Heraclion: Εταιρεία Κρητικών Ιστορικών Μελετών, 1961), no. 670; Giuseppe Gerola, *Monumenti Heretici nell'isola di Creta* (Venice: Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1932), 4–566 (no. 8); and Demetrios Tsougarakis, *Σύντομος (Corpus) μαρτυρημένων διακρίσεων και μνημίων της Κρήτης* (Athens: Κέντρον Ερετών του Μεσαιωνικού και Νέου Ελληνισμού της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών, 2015), 183–90 (no. 159).

² Spitharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings*, 160.

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Sofia Pitouli (Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Art History) co-edits *Weaving Dreams: Kilims of Geraki, Laconia* and publishes article in the *Journal of the Christian Archaeological Society*



Sofia Pitouli

CROSSROADS OF POWER: THE LANDHOLDINGS OF A VLACH NUN IN 13TH-CENTURY THESSALY

Ένα χρυσόβιλλο που εκδόθηκε από τον Ανδρόνικο Β΄ Παλαιολόγο το 1289 εφορούσε τα προνόμια της μονής της Παναγίας της Ελευσίνης, που ίδρυσε η υπερσυντοκράτορσα και Βίλαχη μοναχή Υπομονή στο Θρονό της Καστίλης. Το χρυσόβιλλο αποτελεί σφραγίδα για την επεξεργασία των γεωμετρικών και κοινωνικών δικτύων του 13ου αιώνα. Με βάση το χρυσόβιλλο, χαρτογραφείται τα χωριά και οι εκκλησίες της μονής, όπως είναι αποκατασκευασμένο από το έγγραφο, ώστε να καταγραφούν τα όρια ορίων της Υπομονής καθώς και η παρουσία των Βίλαχων στη Θεσσαλία.

A chrysobill issued by Andronikos II Palaiologos in 1289 secured the privileges of the subdiakonissa and Vlach nun Hypomoni's monastic foundation Panagia Eleousa in Phanari, Karditsa. The chrysobill provides an opportunity to reconsider the monastic and communal networks of the 13th century. This study maps the villages and estates that emerge from the document to record the boundaries of Hypomoni's power and the Vlach presence in Thessaly.

Λέξεις κλειδιά
13ος αιώνας, Βίλαχη, χρυσόβιλλο Ανδρόνικου Β΄, Παναγία Ελευσίνης, Θεσσαλία, μονή της Υπομονής.

Keywords
13th century, Vlach, Andronikos II's chrysobill, Myrtilif Vigna (Panagia Eleousa), Thessaly, Likhosada Monastery.

In March 1289, Emperor Andronikos II (r. 1282–1328) issued a chrysobill for the monastery of the Panagia Eleousa (Παναγία Ελευσίνης; Merciful Virgin), also known as Lykosada. The foundation, which no longer survives, was located in Phanari, a hillside village at the western end of the Thessalian plateau. The village is crowned by a late-13th to early-14th-century fortress.¹

The monastery's privileges were renewed in chrysobills issued by Andronikos III in March 1336, Stephan Dusan in November 1348, and Nikephoros II Orsini in 1356–1358.² Additional documents concerning the monastery include an ortomostikon letter by the local archbishop Michael Gabrieleptikos in June 1342, Eucemistianos M. Vaphelaidis, and the abbot of the Holy Monastery of the Great Metastasis for providing images of the icon of the Panagia Eleousa. I am indebted to Stavroula Sidiropoulou from the Epkrateia of Antiquities, Larissa, who, in the early stages of this research provided me with photographic material and information about Phanari.

¹ For the fortress, see S. Sidiropoulou, "Ταφρικά στην ανασκαφή του Φαναρίου: Καρδίτσας (1289-1437)", *Θεσσαλική Βαρκελώνη* 12 (1987), 129–144. I. Vlachostephanou, "Επίγονοι αποκατασκευασμένης Κοιτίδας Φαναρίου Καρδίτσας 2002–2007", *ΑΒΟΔΕ* 2/1, Νίκαια 2006, 511–565. G. I. Καλαβροπούλου, "Η επεξεργασία της γεωμετρίας των κτισμάτων Τριφυλίας και Φθιώτιδας και η σημασία τους στην την συνολική τους και την ενδεχόμενη σημασία της «Αθωότητας», *ΑΒΟΔΕ* 4/1, Νίκαια 2012, 403–410.

² D. Sofianou, "Το υπόγειο της Παναγίας της Αποστολικής

AJA/EJMS (2023-2024), 399-414 399

Hellenic Studies Student Conference

The West Coast Consortium for Hellenic Studies Programs will host its biannual Hellenic Studies Student Conference from April 11-13, 2025, at the Angelo K. Tsakopoulos Hellenic Studies Center at California State University, Sacramento. This year's conference theme is *East Meets West: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Greece's History and Culture*. The conference includes a workshop at the Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection and a musical performance, "East Meets West," by the Orestes Koletsos Ensemble.

Advanced undergraduate and graduate students will present research on Greece's interactions with the East or West in the Ancient, Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern periods. The conference will provide an opportunity for participants to engage in discussions that seek to strengthen ties between students and scholars working in different time periods and disciplines. The conference also provides the opportunity for students from different campuses on the west coast to network, exchange views, and share resources.

Members of the program committee for the conference include Professor Sharon Gerstel (UCLA), Professor Alexander Hollmann (University of Washington), Professor Dimitris Krallis (Simon Fraser University), and Professor Katerina Lagos (Sacramento State). To find out the latest information about this conference, please visit: <https://hellenic.ucla.edu/event/eastmeetswest/>

ELLINOMATHEIA EXAMS AT UCLA

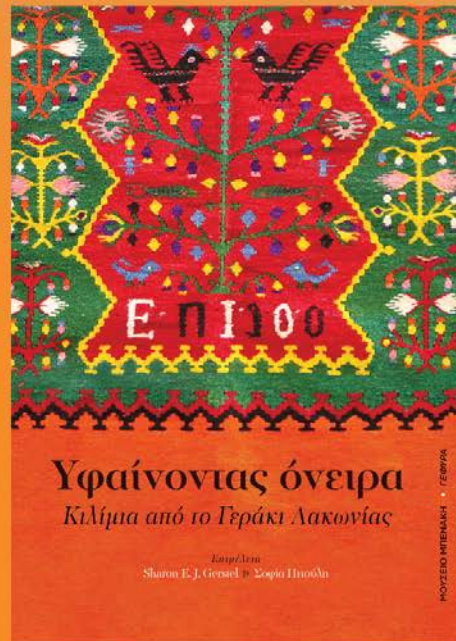
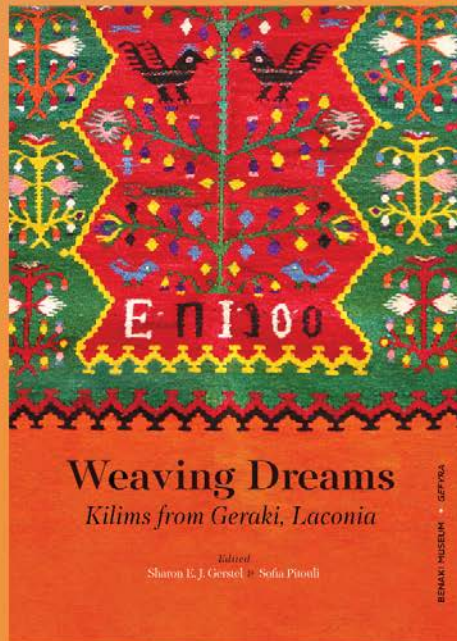
REGISTRATION: FEBRUARY 1-MARCH 20, 2025

The Certificate of Attainment in Greek, or Ellinomatheia, is the only certificate of proficiency in the Greek language that is offered and recognized by the Greek state. The Centre for the Greek Language (CGL) in Thessaloniki supervises and, in collaboration with officially recognized examination centers, administers examinations that test listening and reading comprehension, speaking, and writing. The Certificate can be obtained at each of the six proficiency levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, Γ1, Γ2) defined by the principles of the Common European Framework of Reference for Teaching Foreign Languages (CEFR).

TO APPLY AND FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

[HTTPS://HELLENIC.UCLA.EDU/ELLINOMATHEIA/](https://hellenic.ucla.edu/ellinomatheia/)

WEAVING DREAMS: KILIMS FROM GERAKI, LACONIA



Purchase your copy today at:

<https://hellenic.ucla.edu/weaving-dreams/>

All proceeds from the sale of this book will benefit the Cultural Society of Geraki (the Geraki weavers) and the Benaki Museum in Athens.

Update on the Geraki Weaving Project

We were delighted that so many people were able to join us to celebrate the publication of *Weaving Dreams* at our opening-of-the-year event. Since the volume's publication, many new kilims have come to light, introducing new weavers and weaving families into our community. The kilims come from Athens, Sparta, Argentina, and elsewhere, demonstrating that woven textiles from Geraki traveled widely, either carried by Greeks as they emigrated from the village, or passed down through generations. Here is a small sample of new works that will be included in a second volume the catalogue:



CELEBRATE 5 YEARS WITH US!

As we mark the 5th anniversary of our Center, we reflect on the rich heritage we've shared and the community we've built together. This milestone is not just a celebration of past achievements but a stepping stone for future endeavors. Your support enables us to continue preserving and promoting our vibrant Hellenic culture. Please consider making a donation through our website or the QR code below. Join us as we pave the way for a future filled with cultural enrichment and educational opportunities.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS: WINTER – SPRING 2025

FOR MORE DETAILS, VISIT WWW.HELLENIC.UCLA.EDU/EVENT/

- JANUARY 11**
4:00 PM
314 ROYCE HALL
- GEFYRA LECTURE**
George Manginis (Academic Director, Benaki Museum), “Pretty in Pink: A Portrait of Queen Olga of Greece at the Benaki Museum,” Co-sponsored by the UCLA Department of Art History and held under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles
- JANUARY 24**
6:00-8:00 PM
2117 ROLFE HALL
- GAME NIGHT**
Backgammon
- FEBRUARY 2**
4:00 PM
UCLA
LENART AUDITORIUM,
FOWLER MUSEUM
- GEFYRA LECTURE**
Leon Saltiel (Director of Diplomacy, Representative at UN Geneva and UNESCO, and Coordinator on Countering Antisemitism for the World Jewish Congress), “Fighting Antisemitism and Preserving the Memory of the Holocaust: Advances in Greece and Europe?” Co-presented by the USC Shoah Foundation and held under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in Los Angeles
- FEBRUARY 8**
10:00 AM
ZOOM
- GEFYRA BOOK CLUB**
Eleni, or Nobody by Rhea Galanaki, translation by David Connolly
Discussion led by Professor Sharon Gerstel, Director, UCLA SNF Hellenic Center and Dr. Eirini Kotsovili, Senior Lecturer, Global Humanities at Simon Fraser University
- MARCH 30**
2:00 PM
SAINT SOPHIA
- LECTURE**
Rev. Fr. John Chryssavgis (Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Professor of Theology, Executive Director, Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Hellenic College Holy Cross), Title TBA
Co-sponsored by the Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral
- APRIL 11-13**
CSU SACRAMENTO
- CONFERENCE**
Hellenic Studies Student Conference: *East Meets West: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Greece’s History and Culture*, hosted by the West Coast Consortium for Hellenic Studies Programs and co-sponsored by *Gefyra*
- MAY 17**
10:00 AM
ZOOM
- GEFYRA BOOK CLUB**
Niki: A Novel by Christos Chomenidis, translation by Patricia Felisa Barbeito
Discussion led by Professor Sharon Gerstel, Director, UCLA SNF Hellenic Center and Dr. Eirini Kotsovili, Senior Lecturer, Global Humanities at Simon Fraser University
- MAY 20-22**
UCLA
- ELLINOMATHEIA EXAMS**
- MAY 31**
JAMES BRIDGES THEATER
UCLA
- FILM SCREENING**
Los Angeles Greek Film Festival Screening, co-sponsored by the UCLA SNF Hellenic Center