

# BULLETIN

## The Modern Greek Studies Association

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### A Brief History of the Modern Greek Studies Association\*

The Modern Greek Studies Association came into existence through the convergence of chance, timing, energy, and determination. On April 10, 1967, a symposium had been held at the University of Wisconsin sponsored by the History Department on "Greece Since the Second World War." April 21st was yet to come. Scholars had met and talked. Enthusiasm had been generated.

The following fall an informal meeting was held to discuss the possibilities of another symposium, this one to be focused on literature. It would be sponsored by the Department of Comparative Literature of the University of Maryland, since its acting chairman, Konstantine Mitsakis was keen on holding the symposium. Present at that meeting were the scholars who later were to form the core of the first Executive Committee of the Modern Greek Studies Association: Andonis Decavalles, Kostas Kazazis, Edmund Keeley, John Nicolopoulos, Byron Tsangadas, and of course Konstantine Mitsakis.

The result was the Maryland Symposium, 29 April to 1 May 1968. Although rather loosely organized, since its original sponsor, Mitsakis, was by that time making preparations to take a new post at Oxford, and it lacked a really cohesive theme, other than that of literature, it aroused a great deal of interest among scholars. The speakers included Basil Laourdas, the Director of the Balkan Studies Institute in Thessaloniki, whose topic "Modern Trends in a Tradition-Bound Environment: Contemporary Greek Literature," surveyed the novels of Pandelis Prevelakis; A. O. Aldridge, who spoke on "Kazantzakis and the Modern Spirit;" Kimon Friar, with a dynamic talk on "The Spiritual Odyssey of Nikos Kazantzakis;" Andonis Decavalles, who surveyed the novels of Kosmas Politis; Basil Christidis, who spoke on "C. P. Cavafy: the Poet of the Greek Diaspora;" John P. Anton with the topic, "Mythology and Modernity in Cavafy;" and on the last day, Edmund Keeley, who spoke on "George Seferis and the 'Mythological Method,'" and Benjamin Jackson from the State Department, who gave the last lecture of his life just before his untimely death, "Modern Greek Literature: a Quest for Identity."

The enthusiasm engendered by this symposium, and one should remember that it took place just at the beginning of the first series of violent student riots, was such that the participants were determined to maintain it. Meeting informally after lunch Anton, Decavalles, Keeley, Mitsakis, Nicolopoulos, and Tsangadas each "put

\$5.00 down," as the legendary story is now told, to buy stationary. Bien, Topping, Doulis, and Mary Gianos were approached later in the day. And thus the provisional Executive Committee of the MGSA was born. Keeley was designated President, Anton, Vice-President, Nicolopoulos, Secretary-Treasurer. Bien, Nicolopoulos and Decavalles were charged with the task of drawing up a constitution.

Perhaps most of all, however, the MGSA owes its existence to the organizational talent, selflessness, and level-headed vision of Edmund Keeley. He realized that if the Association were to go beyond the many already existing ethnic "culture" groups, it would have to affiliate itself with national organizations. It was he who took the necessary steps to make MGSA a member of the Modern Language Association and the American Council on the Teach of Foreign Languages. He saw to the organization of the first MGSA Seminar held in conjunction with the MLA meeting in New York December 27, 1968. The topic of the seminar was "The Greek Novel in the 20th Century," and at the close of the seminar the first official business meeting of the Modern Greek Studies Association was held. It was at this meeting that the constitution was approved, subject to the balloting by mail of all members.<sup>1</sup>

Since that historical December meeting, the Modern Greek Studies Association has grown and become truly international. Its members come from Greece, Switzerland, Sweden, France, Germany, Japan, England, Canada, and almost every state in the Union. It has presented two dynamic symposia. The first, on "Modern Greek Literature and its European Background," was held at Princeton University from October 30 to November 1, 1969. The second, commemorating the Greek War of Independence, took place at Harvard University from May 7 to May 9, 1971. The papers from the first symposium, have been compiled in a volume, *Modern Greek Writers* with an introduction by Peter Bien, now available from the Princeton University Press. Negotiations concerning the papers from the Harvard Symposium are still going on. A third symposium, on "Forces Shaping Modern Greece," is in the planing stage.

Much has been done. Many universities are now offering courses in Modern Greek language or in literature in translation, a great many of these courses through the pressuring of members of the Association.<sup>2</sup> But there has yet to be established a single chair or professorship in Modern Greek alone, and almost every course offered in Modern Greek is given at a sacrifice by a professor who must neglect his original discipline in order to bring the importance of Modern Greek studies into the limelight. Scholars and enthusiasm can create the Association, but only the tireless work of propaganda and proselytizing, and the conviction that the cause is more than the individual will make it a continuing, vital organization.

\*The sources for this brief history are comments from various MGSA Executive Committee members, MGSA archives, letters from Mrs. Louiza Laourdas, and most important, the comprehensive introduction by Peter Bien to the volume of the Princeton Symposium papers, *Modern Greek Writers*, soon to be off the Princeton University Press.

<sup>1</sup>Copies of the Constitution can be ordered from the Secretary.

<sup>2</sup>See *MGSA Bulletin* volume 3 No. 2 December 1971.

## REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### April 22, 1972

The Executive Committee of the Modern Greek Studies Association met on April 22, 1972 at the home of Lily Macrakis in Belmont, Mass., at 12:30 p.m. Present were Peter Bien, Andonis Decavalles, Edmund Keeley, Julia Loomis, Lily Macrakis, John Nicolopoulos, John Petropoulos, and Niki Scoufopoulou. The following topics were discussed: the publication of the Harvard Symposium papers, the 1973 Symposium, journal affiliation, the MGSA contribution to the Basil Laourdas Fellowship (see page 8), membership drive, and fund-raising.

The 1973 Symposium on "Forces Shaping Modern Greece," now scheduled for the fall of 1973, if possible, at Columbia University, is still in the planning stages. A possible roster of speakers was discussed covering the following disciplines: Sociology, Anthropology (including micro-studies), Economics, Domestic and International Policy, the Church, the Arts, and Literature.

Concerning the problem of journal affiliation, the Executive Committee decided to press for collaboration with Bryer in his *Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* in keeping with its earlier decision of May 6, 1971, provided that he notify the MGSA Executive Committee by October 1, 1972 as to whether a publisher had been found and a date set for the first issue.

Considering the importance of the establishment of the first scholarship to be offered in the United States for someone in the field of Modern Greek studies, the Committee voted to contribute \$50.00 to the fund and to urge MGSA members also to contribute.

The Committee heartily supported Niki Scoufopoulou in her efforts to encourage regional activities at the local level in order to stimulate interest in the MGSA and to solicit new members. Chairmen of the local committees should hold at least one event a year, to be attended by the nearest Executive Committee member, if possible, who would discuss MGSA aims and achievements. Regional areas with their tentative chairmen are:

Atlanta, John Anton; Boston, Niki Scoufopoulou; Canada, Anne Farmakides; Chicago, Kostas Kazazis; Los Angeles, Speros Vryonis; New York, Angela Hero; San Francisco, Thanassi Maskaleris; Washington, Lila Washburn.

In response to Evro Layton's request for assistance if she were to continue her vital work as Bibliographer, the Committee voted \$125 annually to help her with this task, and Lily Macrakis agreed to obtain two student assistants through the World Study Program at Regis College to help in indexing periodicals. Peter Bien volunteered to index those periodicals held by Dartmouth.

Because of the importance of the membership drive and fund-raising, the Committee authorized the publication of a brochure which would contain the vital information about the MGSA. Edmund Keeley and Julia Loomis agreed to write up the brochure and Niki Scoufopoulou to see that it was printed. Members wishing to obtain copies of this brochure should write to the head office, 185 Nassau Street, Princeton, N. J. 08540, during the summer, since Niki Scoufopoulou who is in charge of distribution will be unable to fill requests until the fall.

Lastly, in connection with fund-raising, the President announced the pledge of \$2,000, consisting of \$1,000 each from Mathilde V. Keeley and James H. Keeley, to establish a fund for the endowment of a chair or lectureship in Modern Greek. It was decided that the President make use of this money to solicit matching grants, and that it not be used for current operating expenses. Suggestions for increasing this fund are most welcome.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

### Important Notice

Since many members of the Executive Committee will be away during the summer months, please address all urgent correspondence to the Secretary, Dr. Julia W. Loomis, Aristodemou 25, Athens, 140 Greece.

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### Journals Containing Information and Literature on Modern Greece

*BALKAN STUDIES*, published twice a year under the auspices of The Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, Greece. Address all correspondence to Prof. John O. Iatrides, Dept. of Political Science, Southern Connecticut State College, New Haven, Conn. 06515.

*THE CHARIOTEER*, a review of Modern Greek culture, published annually by Parnassos, Greek Cultural Society of New York. Address all correspondence to *The Charioteer*, Box 2928, Grand Central Station, New York, N. Y. 10017.

*EAST EUROPEAN QUARTERLY*, published four times a year by the University of Colorado. Address correspondence to the University of Colorado, 1200 University Avenue, Boulder, Col. 80301.

*JOURNAL OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE*, a new journal still bringing out its first issue. Address correspondence to Prof. Victor Papacosma, Dept. of History, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44240.

*NEO-HELLENIKA*, published under the auspices of the Center of Neo-Hellenic Studies at the University of Texas. Address correspondence to Prof. George G. Arnakis, Dept. of History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712.

### Chicago Organizes MGSA Chapter

The first meeting of the MGSA Chicago Committee was held at the home of Theodora Vasils in Oak Park, Ill. on Friday, May 12, 1972. Present were Irene Cheronis, Peter Chiaculas, Elizabeth Gebbard, Alexander Karanikas, Helen Karanikas, Thalia Selz, Themis Vasils, Theodora Vasils, and Lena Xedes.

The meeting was called for the purpose of discussing and effecting plans for organizing a Chicago area chapter of the Modern Greek Studies Association. Alexander Karanikas was appointed Chairman and Theodora Vasils, Secretary.

The plans discussed included a membership drive to be worked out by Peter Chiaculas and Elizabeth Gebbard, publicity, arrangements for a general meeting in the fall under the auspices of the Downtown Center of the University of Chicago, to be organized by George Anastaplo, as well as a possible event later in the year featuring a guest speaker.

Theodora Vasils and Alexander Karanikas, who organized the meeting, are certainly to be congratulated. It is hoped that the membership chairmen in the other vital areas where MGSA is not properly represented, will be inspired by the energy and action of the Chicago chapter.

## THE BASIL LAOURDAS FELLOWSHIP FOR MODERN GREEK STUDIES AND GRECO-SLAVIC RELATIONS

**In Memoriam Basil Laourdas, March 12, 1912 - March 19, 1971**

The history Department of the University of Minnesota announces the establishment of a special fellowship as a memorial to Basil Laourdas who passed away on March 19, 1971. His untimely death at the age of 59 is a tragedy for scholars and students alike. As the director for 17 years of the Balkan Studies Institute in Thessaloniki, which was established largely through his vision and creative energy, and as editor-in-chief of its journal, he was in the position of being able to offer substantial help and guidance to scholars and graduate students from all over the world visiting Greece to pursue special projects. He had patience, interest, knowledge, kindness, a sense of humor, warmth, and a marvelous historical perspective.

It was this sense of the continuity of history which led him to broaden his scope of interest from his original discipline of Classical Philology, which he studied at the University of Athens, to include Byzantine and Modern Greek studies. His many visits to the United States, in

addition to his four years as researcher and teacher (1949-1953), during which period he attended Dunbarton Oaks, brought him in contact with the leading international figures interested in Greece and the Balkans. There was not a scholar whom he did not know personally. He was particularly keen on promoting a "one world" of scholarship through collaboration with institutes and universities, which would transcend ethnic and national barriers, and to this end he dedicated his energy, insight, and scholarly articles (which number upwards of 300). For the same reason he believed in the value of international symposia. He held several in Thessaloniki, and attended the one held at the University of Wisconsin in April 1967, the Maryland Symposium of May 1968, (during which the Modern Greek Studies Association was born) and the Princeton Symposium of October 1969. He was making preparations to attend the Harvard Symposium of May 1971 when he was stricken by a heart attack.

It is fitting that, with this announcement of the scholarship, whose express purpose is to support qualified graduate students pursuing special work in Modern Greek studies and Greco-Slavic relations, the MGSA pay special tribute to Basil Laourdas. He was involved with the association from the time when it was only a vision and was so thrilled when it became a reality. Members sincerely believing in the importance of Modern Greek studies are urged to send donations to the fund. Who knows, maybe someday a student who has been helped by the scholarship will eventually hold a chair of Modern Greek! Checks should be made out to The Basil Laourdas Fellowship, and mailed to Professor Clarke A. Chambers, Department of History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455.

### Supplement to the December 1971 report on the State of Modern Greek Studies

Modern Greek Language is offered as an independent study at:

Beloit College  
Professor Beverly E. Clarity  
Dept. of Modern Languages  
Beloit College  
Beloit, Wisconsin 53511

#### *PROGRAMS IN GREECE*

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(Six weeks study specializing in the Social Sciences and Philosophy)

E. Pepelasis  
Box 8932 JFK Station  
Boston, Mass. 02114

or  
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Central Post Office  
Athens, Greece

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(Three weeks August-September forum of lectures panels, and projects on the ecological balance of our natural resources)

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#### *AREA STUDIES*

Included in a general course emphasizing literature and the cinema, offered by the Dept. of Comparative Literature at Beloit College the role of Modern Greece is stressed.

For information write:

Prof. Arthur G. Robson, Dept. of Classics, Beloit College, Beloit, Wis. 53511.

### Notice of the Fifth Annual MLA Seminar and MGSA Business Meeting Dec. 1972 in N. Y.


The fifth annual MGSA Seminar in conjunction with the Modern Language Association has been scheduled for December 1972 on the topic, "Ritsos, Elytis, and Romiosyni." Professor Thanasi Maskaleris, chairman of the Seminar, reports that a preliminary panel has been selected. Prof. William Spanos from the State University of New York, Binghamton, and Prof. John Chioles from Stamford University will discuss Ritsos, and Prof. Nanos Valaoritis from San Francisco State College will talk on Elytis. Prof. Maskaleris welcomes another panelist to cover Elytis with Prof. Valaoritis. Please write: Prof. Thanasi Maskaleris, School of Humanities, San Francisco State College, 1600 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco, Cal. 94132. The date for the Seminar has not been set, but it is hoped that it will take place the same day as the Business Meeting.

In conjunction with the Seminar, the annual Business Meeting of the Modern Greek Studies Association is scheduled for Wednesday, December 27th, 1972, from 3:00 PM to 4:15 PM in at the New York Hilton, Gibson Room A.



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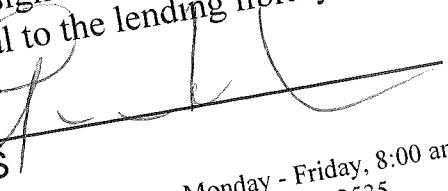
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