

**Athens' Grassroots Regeneration: Reflections from Mayor Georgios Kaminis**

**Xenia Kalogeropoulou presents her book for children**

**Natural and Organic Products Europe 2019, 7-8 April 2019, Excel London**

**Four Greek companies presented their products at Conway Hall, where an event in celebration of World Bee Day was hosted.**

**Greek wine producers participated for the first time in the 39th London Wine Fair**

**Sofka Zinovieff: 'I have a strong belief in the resilience of Greeks'**

**Professor Antonios Tzanakopoulos - Associate Professor of Public International Law; Fellow of St Anne's College**

**Artist Stavros Ditsios participates in London Art Biennale 2019**

**How do we view Classical Greece? A sterile worship or an innovative approach?**

**Runciman Award 2019 goes to works of the highest calibre**

**Apple, Cinnamon and Sugar: Children's play by Fournos Theatre**

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**Agenda**

## Athens' Grassroots Regeneration: Reflections from Mayor Georgios Kaminis

### LSE, 2 April 2019



*The Mayor of Athens, G. Kaminis*

The Mayor of Athens, Georgios Kaminis gave a speech on Tuesday, 2nd of April, where he discussed Athens' SynAthina Programme, which was launched in 2013, as well as Athenian civil society. At the event were also present Professor Myria Georgiou, Professor of Media and Communications at the Department of Media and Communications, LSE and Professor Kevin Featherstone, Eleftherios Venizelos Professor in Contemporary Greek Studies and Professor in European Politics & Director of the Hellenic Observatory, LSE. The Chair of the event was Professor Ricky Burdett, Professor of Urban Studies and Director, LSE Cities/Urban Age project, LSE.

Mr. Kaminis opened his speech by discussing the challenges which the city of Athens has faced and how it nevertheless managed to weave together bonds of trust by relying on the power of networks of devoted citizens and inspired individuals. The mayor pointed to how Athens had to come together to overcome any challenges it faced, and to fill the void of a faltering state. Athens, a city seeped in

culture and history, has managed, according to the Mr. Kaminis to reclaim her place in the world almost against all odds: facing a perfect storm of depleted public funds, a dysfunctional administration and a combination of crises that shook our continent to the core. Mr. Kaminis stressed that the ways in which Athens tried to overcome obstacles could prove to be valuable lessons, especially in the world which we currently live in, which is constantly evolving, creating a new reality which requires new ways of thinking.

When Athens started developing the SynAthina platform, after winning the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge Prize back in 2013, the basic idea was to document, strengthen and support the vibrant civil society that was emerging as a response to the social crisis that hit Greece. The mayor discussed how he and his colleagues realized that an overwhelming numbers of citizens were working together to improve their neighborhoods and support communities in need. Hence, they could feel society yearning to help and looking for ways to channel this frustration in a creative way. But there was no clear way for city government to engage with their activities, often overlapping or complementing our own social services. At the heart of Synathina is a platform that allows members of the community to engage in problem solving and reform. Individual citizens and groups submit activities, as well as ideas on how to improve their city. By creating SynAthina, these citizens' groups now have a valuable tool at their disposal to connect with each other but also with potential partners from



*Professor Myria Georgiou and Professor Ricky Burdett*



the non-profit, academic and the private sector, in order to maximize the impact of their actions. And through SynAthina, they can easily connect with the municipality services that are more useful to achieve their goal. But SynAthina's most important contribution, according to the mayor was how it completely revamped our way of thinking in the municipality and changed our approach to problem-solving.

As Mr. Kaminis pointed out in his speech, they had to become extroverted, to become ambitious, to get out of their comfort zone, in order for Athens to fully realize its potential.

Some of the most emblematic projects can be directly traced to either the SynAthina platform itself, or to the methodology of SynAthina, expanded in various other fields of municipal activity.

In more than 30 of its recent projects, Athens has adopted inclusive methods by allowing citizens and stakeholders to participate in various ways, ranging from just sharing their ideas to co-designing solutions and even "owning" results.

For example, a neglected neighborhood, Kypseli, is engaged in an extensive public consultation to decide the best use for an old market building, now turned into a model social entrepreneurship centre,

The Athens Partnership, a philanthropic incubator for innovative public-private partnerships is a way to leverage the goodwill of private companies, foundations, even private citizens, to benefit our city. This is how partnerships are encouraged, across different sectors, with the City of Athens, in order to benefit its citizens.

Notably, Mr. Kaminis pointed out that schools have become lively community hubs through the Open Schools project, reigniting social life in

whole neighborhoods. Moreover, he discussed the creation of the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrants and Refugees, an umbrella network that provides physical and virtual space for 92 different organizations working for refugees in Athens.

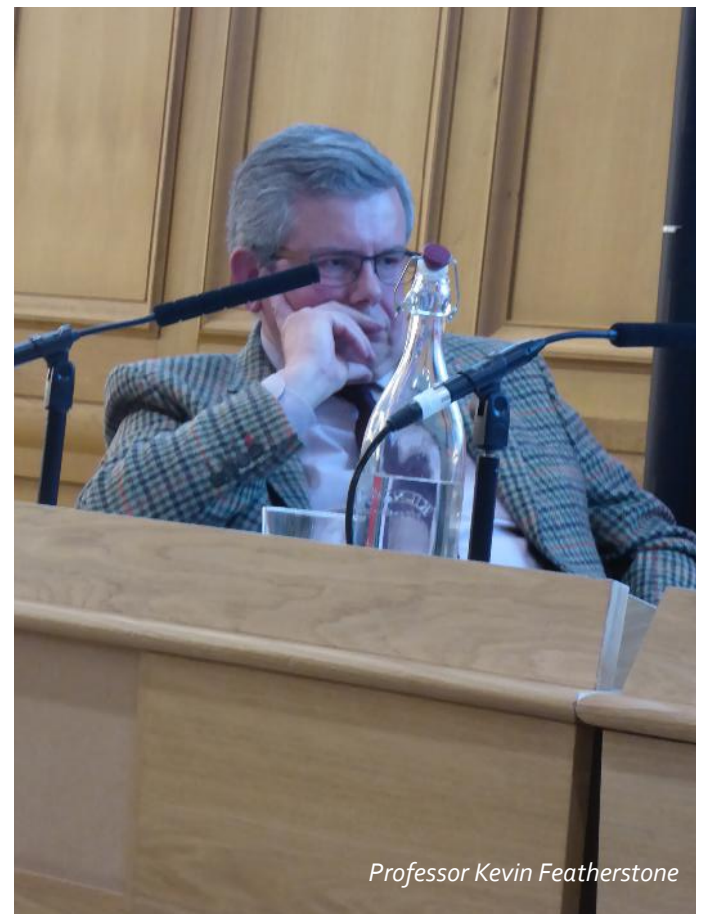
With Curing the Limbo, refugees are connected to active community groups to regain their self-belief and sense of purpose by serving the city, thus accelerating their integration in society and addressing their lack of housing and job skills.

In the Athens Digital Lab, young developers sit with city officials to digitize outdated services and test their ideas in real conditions.

A historic building is turned into a Digital learning centre, where digital skills are considered a public asset and offered freely to disadvantaged groups

Emblematic areas of the city, lingering until recently between despair and abandonment, gain a second chance and become hubs of innovation and urban design through concrete proposals by citizens' groups

In a city renowned around the world for its culture, all relevant stakeholders are, for the first time in Athens' history, brought around the same table and under the same roof to design and offer a unique and comprehensive cultural product



*Professor Kevin Featherstone*



Professor Myria Georgiou

Finally, Athens has tried to capture the wisdom of the world by participating in active cities' networks, like EUROCITIES, C40 or 100 Resilient Cities, getting expertise and knowledge in areas we were lagging behind. In this framework, an extensive public consultation was organised with more than 800 stakeholders in the city to come up with a comprehensive Resilience Strategy in 2017.

Mr. Kamiris reflected on how all this work touches upon the current global debate about cynicism and the erosion of trust to politics and public institutions and what the 'Athens experience' can tell us. He said that in his opinion, it is impossible to create trust in the "system" if they do not gain the trust of citizens. Hence this is what he aims to achieve.

\* Create trust in government to public employees themselves. SynAthena is designed to work with the administration and not bypass it. This way, motivated city public servants are energised by this cooperation and their sense of purpose renewed.

\* Create trust in government from the side of the private sector and civil society. In Athens, they see a credible partner. Instead of being discouraged, they choose to cooperate with us. That's a paradigm shift for Greece.

\* Create trust in government from the side of the citizens: When first engaged, citizens naturally start off being very cynical. As time goes by time, they witness first hand that the projects that affect them are indeed realized and are working. This creates a sense of ownership to the citizens that feel they have a stake in what is happening in their neighborhoods.

What links these three elements is clear: trust.

And it is exactly by building trust in these three distinct layers that we managed to create a real

sense of belonging for its inhabitants, at a time when this feeling was starting to fade.

It was these conditions that allowed Athens to embrace its untapped capacity, and by doing so, it energized marginalized communities and won back disillusioned citizens.

This way, everyone has a stake and a personal investment in what happens in his city. This is how you leave no one behind. This is our very own "social innovation", that won the European Capital of Innovation Award just recently.

In addition, the mayor also stressed that in order to legitimize these policies, citizens need to be consulted and they need to feel a part of what is happening in their city. And, ultimately, they need to be empowered to not only design the solutions to their problems but also implement them in their neighbourhoods, in their city. In order to achieve this, they need an administration to trust them with those powers and provide them with the necessary framework and tools to enforce their will. This line of thinking is, according to Mr. Kaminis, exactly what he and his colleagues have managed to do in Athens over the past years.

Towards the end of his speech, Mr. Kaminis advised others political actors to engage everyone, believe that solutions can be found everywhere, and to trust their citizens and give them the framework to work together on the solutions. He also remarked that what makes cities unique, as opposed to central government is their capacity to deliver, and their capacity to connect. Remarking how he has reached this conclusion through his experience in Athens, Mr. Kaminis said that he firmly believe that this type of systemic change could not but happen in a city, this laboratory of progress and innovation..





## About SynAthina

SynAthina is the common space which brings together, supports and facilitates citizens' groups engaged in improving the quality of life in the city. By coordinating the invaluable resource of citizens' groups, the City of Athens actively listens to the needs of its people and is thus revitalized. By supporting the activities of the citizens the City creates a new perception about the relationship between civic society and local governance and cultivates their dynamic, bidirectional bond.

SynAthina is an initiative of the City of Athens. It was created in July 2013 and today comes under the Vice Mayoral Office for Civil Society and Innovation.

The digital platform of synAthina offers citizens' groups the ability to significantly enhance the prominence of their activities and to contact possible sponsors.

The synAthina kiosk functions as an actual meeting point where groups of citizens organize and actualize their activities and collaborate.

From when it was launched, in July 2013, up to this day, the webpage and the kiosk of synAthina have hosted 3625 activities which have been realized by 415 groups of citizens and institutions in cooperation with 134 sponsors. Based on the data we collect from the activities, we gather valuable information about the citizens' priorities regarding their city.

SynAthina actively participates in international networks which exchange experience and knowledge, thus playing a leading part in a worldwide dialogue about innovation and the participation of citizens in local governance.

## Process

### Collecting

**We collect the activities of citizens and through them we learn what their priorities are for the city.**

### Connecting

**We enable the groups and the citizens to actualize their activities and we encourage them to cooperate with other groups, sponsors, and institutions.**

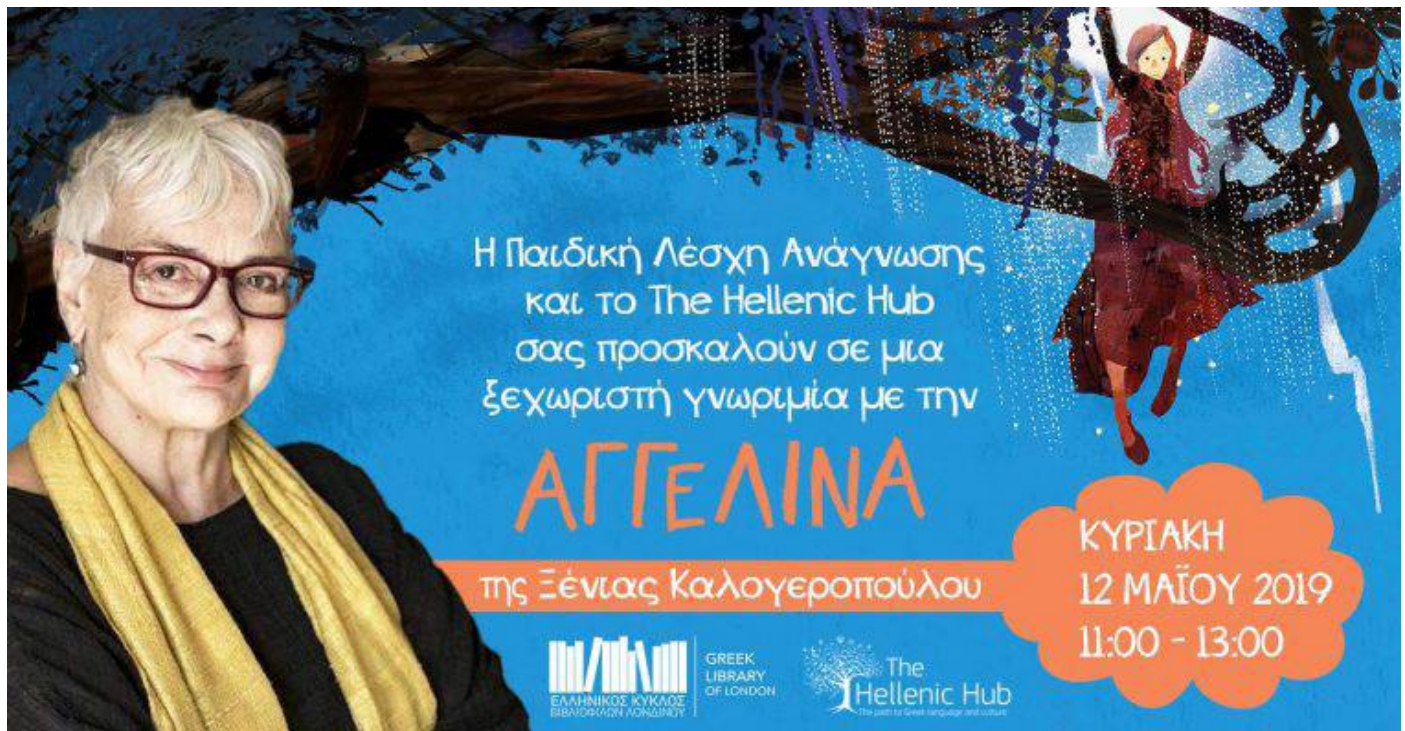
### Sieving

**We pick out those activities which have a greater impact on the city and we explore their potential for use in local governance.**

### Incorporating

**We activate the City's reflexes so that its services can be improved in relation to the current needs of its citizens. The citizens' activities can lead to changes in the City's political priorities, to an upgrading of the regulations and to a simplification of procedures.**

## Xenia Kalogeropoulou presents her book for children



The acclaimed Greek actress and author Xenia Kalogeropoulou, presented her children's Book 'Angelina' on 12th May. The event was organised by the Greek Library of London and the Hellenic Hub and took place in Blandford Hall. The book presentation was entertaining for children and parents alike, as the heroine of the book, Angelina, is a strong and inspirational character. Following the presentation, the children had the opportunity to engage in theatrical games, where they expressed themselves creatively with the help of a teacher from the organisation Theatre Studio, which is directed by Ms. Kalogeropoulou.

@GreeceInUK spoke with Xenia Kalogeropoulou about Angelina and more...

**1. How did the collaboration with the Greek Library of London, the Children's Reading Club and the Hellenic Hub occur? How did you experience the play yesterday?**

I received an email from Ms. Giota Nakou. I was very surprised at first; I asked Titos Patrikios and he told me that it would certainly be a nice experience to come here, so I decided to come with Anna Papafigkou. The experience was great, especially yesterday with the children. I told them a fairy tale and they asked me really interesting questions. Just looking at their faces was so nice! In the evening, I found it a bit strange that the discussion about the book "A

letter to Kostis" was held at a "cafeneio" (cafe), but the atmosphere was very warm nevertheless.

**2. Do you believe that this sort of activities are more important for Greek children that live abroad?**

They are definitely important. When they hear a fairy tale in their own language, they are brought back to a Greek world. However, one is not enough; they should hear many, one after the other. I think it captures their attention. It was great that many children decided to take two or three books for their bookcase. I hope they read them. But also I realised that there are many schools here and many children that learn Greek. I had no idea they were so many!

**3. How did the idea about "Angelina" come to you?**

About 13 years ago, Peggy Stefanidou who is directing our workshop asked me to tell a fairy tale to the children. That is how this whole thing began, with "Angelina". I started improvising the story, which I was then elaborating along with the children. My grandson -who was 5 at the time and now is 18- was also present. Then I started to build on the story on my own and, when it was eventually deemed ready, we decided to publish and record it; but I didn't like it at all! So I put it aside and we worked on other tales; but then I started working on it again and last year I felt that it was ready. Considering that it was the only one that was originally mine and not an adaptation, we decided to publish it on

its own with a nice illustration. We collaborated with the illustrator Daniel Egneus, who is known internationally and quite difficult to get. I translated the tale in English for him, he read it and liked it very much so he decided to work on it. The book was a success and I love it very much.

**4. You mention the word "different" both in your book and your narration. Why is this word important to you?**

To me it has something magical. It means the opposite of an ordinary every-day thing; the "other". This "other" is very interesting and important. It is something you imagine and create. It can have various meanings of course. Creating someone like Angelina did with Zymotos in the fairy tale could mean that we can change and be changed by a person whom we love and live with.

**5. Which are the biggest challenges for primary school children and how can books and theatrical plays help to deal with them?**

They help them know themselves better and reflect upon the world around them.

**6. You have a long career in writing theatrical plays for children, which are presented at "Porta" Theatre. What led you to work on children theatre?**

It happened during the Dictatorship amidst a very heavy atmosphere. I wanted to do something new, light and fresh. I have never watched children's theatre before. I gathered a group of talented actors such as Minas Chatzisavas, Lida Protopsalti, Stamatis Fasoulis, Yvonne Maltezos. We created this excellent company and made the play without thinking twice. It was then that I experienced the





*Xenia Kalogeropoulou with teachers and children from the Greek Primary School of London and the Greek Preschool of London*

great thrill of having children in front of you who absorb everything you tell them. So that's how I got stuck with it!

Later though I realised that it is much more meaningful than I thought and that I could do much more. So I started writing the plays and gave my own direction, like I did with "Odyssevach" and "Eliza". Then I collaborated closely with Thomas Moschopoulos, who gave another perspective. Sofia Paschou -who is amazing- is also involved now as well as other young people. Our current play is my own "Sklavi", which has a great success and has been directed in a different way, which is much more modern and minimal.

#### ***7. What does the contact with children mean to you as a person and as an actor?***

Joy, thrill, youthfulness and mental rejuvenation; for me it is something precious and I cannot find the words to express it better.

#### ***8. Can you explain to us what exactly is it that you do at Xenia Kalogeropoulou's workshop theatre? To whom is it addressed and what is its role?***

I founded the workshop with Peggy Stefanidou, who has studied in the UK and is very talented on this subject. It has been 20 years already and we have children from preschool till Senior High School age. The groups are divided by age and they participate

in games which are quite important. The word game might fail to depict the seriousness of the activities. It is about searching deep within themselves at any age to learn about themselves and the world around them. We also have an adult group, where teachers, professors, preschool teachers and psychologists come to learn how to play with children. After one year of studying, they learn the knowhow and go on to practice on children with programs of their own, while being supervised by Stefanidou and her colleagues. Many good theatre teachers have been educated all these years. We also have a very good partner, Chris Cooper. He lives in Birmingham but he works everywhere, even in China, and he appreciates our workshop. He visits us every year, he teaches the children and the teachers and he does a master class; so his involvement and contribution is very important. The workshop has advanced a lot. According to Chris, there is not any international equivalent where teachers can learn in theory and in practice along with the children. It is something unique.

#### ***9. Tell us about your childhood. What are your memories? Is there anything that affected you?***

I was practically an only child; my siblings were 20 years older so I was like an only child. I was immersed in books since I was 5 years old. My godfather was a great book seller, he owned the Kaufmann bookstore where he sold French books. I could read French so



I found myself immersed in books ever since. That was the thing that affected me.

**10. Tell us about your studies. You have studied in the Royal Academy of London. Why did you choose London and not Greece?**

I didn't choose, my parents did. I wanted to study at the Art Theatre of Karolos Koun. My mother was best friends with Amalia Fleming since they were little. Amalia had married Fleming, she was living in London and she offered to host us so I could study there. In the end I didn't live with her but we rented a place next-door so we were close. I passed the entry exam, which was simple. But it was not a good school, so unfortunately I didn't learn anything.

**11. You have lived during the "Golden Era" of Greek Cinema. How different was the cinema of the 60's from now, seen both as an industry and as an artistic outcome?**

The cinema of that time was originally primitive, but it had something fresh. Its messages resembled fairy tales and that is why people loved it. But it wasn't interesting cinematographically or -most importantly- content-wise. All the scripts were very conventional and they were shot in a conventional and rushed way. Nowadays, young directors are looking for more. They are not always successful, but they do try to find another way even though sometimes they are graceless in doing so. As my husband used to say: "Simple things appear difficult". So sometimes the new directors are afraid to do simple things and try to do something complicated which may not turn out right; but at least, it is an effort. At the moment there is not even any substantial help on behalf of the state for them.

**12. You also had a great theatrical career with lead roles in many classic and modern plays. Do you prefer cinema or theatre after all?**

I didn't do cinema the way I wanted to, except for the movie "Before midnight" in 2012, which is the kind of work I would like to do. But in theatre I had the chance to collaborate with different people and choose what I wanted to do. So the most interesting things for me happened in theatre.

**13. Tell us a bit about your latest film "Before midnight". How did this happen?**

I was recommended and had an audition but I think they had already decided that they wanted me for the part. I was very happy to work with them and they were too. Ethan (Hawke) told me: "It was a

blessing to have you here". To which I replied: "It was a blessing to be here". He was such a sweet and tender person. The crew was also amazing, so I spent 10 magical days with them.

**14. Would you be interested in a career abroad? Did you pursue it or not and why?**

I almost did. I made some foreign films. At some point I did pursue it, but not systematically. Had I pursued it systematically, I would have made it because there was great interest in London on behalf of producers. But on the other hand, I wanted to be in Greece. I didn't like social-climbing. I like being in a place and fighting for something. I haven't regretted it!

**15. You have written other genres apart from children books. What do you like writing the most?**

I haven't written any novels, so I am not a writer in that sense. I have written theatrical plays suitable for children but also adults, the book "A letter to Kostis" which is something special, some fairy tales and many translations. I like writing but acting is more necessary to me, because writing is a nice but solitary business while acting is great as you collaborate with other people.

**16. Your book "A letter to Kostis" was published in 2015 from Patakis Editions. What led you to publicly confess your feelings?**

I felt the need to speak out. I wrote it as if I was writing to Kostis. I knew that Kostis could never read it but it was very beneficial for me. It is strange because it got very personal, but in the end I have no regrets about it. Now I find it strange having written such personal things, but they have touched the people with whom I shared them.

**17. What is your opinion on translation? Can it depict the original meaning of a text?**

That is the whole meaning of translation. One should feel the language from which they translate and the language they translate to.

## Natural and Organic Products Europe 2019, 7-8 April 2019, Excel London

The **“Natural and Organic Products Europe 2019”** Exhibition took place on 7-8 April 2019, at the Excel Exhibition Centre. “Natural and Organic Products Europe” is Europe’s leading business event and biggest trade show for natural & organic products making it the ‘must attend’ event for buyers of natural health and living products, natural and organic food & drink as well as natural beauty & personal care products.

This year the event hosted over 700 exhibitors, showcasing the best choice of eco and clean label products from around the world – including supplements, superfoods, personal care and beauty, natural living, and food and drink.

Alongside the show’s bustling exhibition, the three theatres (Food, Beauty & Health) were a hive of activity throughout the two days with talks by the industry’s leading pioneers, influencers and business leaders. In the Natural Food Talks Theatre, the Soil Association, Organic Trade Board (OTB), The Fairtrade Foundation, Craig Sams, Health Sales Group, Patrick Holford, and many more draw in the crowds with topics covering organic farming and retailing, GMOs, ethical consumption, farmers living income, the continuing rise of conscious consumerism, and Brexit.

London’s “Natural & Organic Products Europe 2019” exhibition has highlighted the global trend for fast but healthy food that respects the environment, and modern Western markets are increasingly catching up with this trend. Among more than 700 vendors who exhibited their products, there were also giant companies in the production of organic products such as Clearspring, Coconut Merchant, Suma Wholefoods, Raw Chocolate Company, Inika Organics, Lavera. The natural and organic products industry is a rapidly growing industry around the world, as in Britain. According to a report by the Organic Product Certification Organization of the United Kingdom “Soil Association”, sales of organic food in 2019 are already up by 5.3% since last year.



## Greece in the Natural and Organic Products Europe 2019

At the exhibition more than 55 Greek companies participated from the regions of Crete, Central Greece, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, as well as representatives from the Larisa Chamber of Commerce, the DIO Inspection and Certification Organization of Organic Products bodies and several individual Greek companies. Their products were mainly food products (olive oil, honey, herbs, pomegranate, snails, dairy products etc.) and natural cosmetics.

The Greek participation included new, innovative companies from all over Greece, highlighting the excellent quality of Greek products, as well as more established companies, claiming the expansion of their export activity, such as the Greek Family Farm (bio-cheese products business from Magnesia), Kourellas S.A. (organic milk products from Grevena), Latzimas S.A. (producer of virgin olive oil in Crete) and many more.

The country’s famous Mediterranean diet, its natural and organic food products, its rich flora and biodiversity, all are at the epicenter of modern Greece: both in Greeks’ daily lives and the country’s economy. Exports are the key driver of the Greek economy. The last three years have been banner years for Greek exporters, with exports growing at double-digit rates and now Greek exports equal to a third of the country’s GDP. Greece is famous all around the world for its excellent food products and healthy and delicious Mediterranean cuisine. Greek wines and beverages are also gaining ground in international markets. This is reflected in Food & Beverage being among the top sectors in the list of Greek exports.

**The participation of Greek companies at the “Natural and Organic Products Europe 2019” Exhibition was under the auspices of the Office for Economic and Commercial Affairs of the Greek Embassy in London**, with the support of the British–Hellenic Chamber of Commerce. Greek participation in the exhibition was also supported by Enterprise Greece, the official Greek export promotion agency.

**The Chairman and CEO of Enterprise Greece, Grigoris Stergioulis** had the opportunity to visit the



Greek stands and discuss with the Greek exhibitors. On April 7th Enterprise Greece hosted an exclusive networking event for nearly fifty international and British buyers, importers and wholesalers who operate in fields relevant to the export of Greek products, in order to promote the Greek products and introduce the participating companies to new commercial and distribution networks. At the dinner organized by Enterprise Greece its Chairman Mrs Grigoris Stergioulis indicated the following:

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*It is my pleasure to be here in London with you and to be participating in Europe's most exciting natural and organic products exhibition.*

*The father of medicine, Hippocrates, declared: "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."*

*In Greece, we still believe that today. And the country's famous Mediterranean diet, its natural and organic food products, its rich flora and biodiversity -- are all a central part of modern Greece: both in our daily lives and in the country's economy.*

*Greece has an astonishing biodiversity – it boasts more endemic species than any other country in Europe -- with a profusion of herbs and medicinal plants that is unmatched anywhere. The country has thousands of years of accumulated knowledge and tradition in the field.*

*Even today, you will find carefully curated and tended gardens of medicinal herbs on the campuses of Greek*

*medical schools. While in villages, ordinary people still maintain and use traditional knowledge of healing plants. Some scientists attribute the traditional longevity of Greeks to the secret ingredients in the native and endemic flora of the country.*

*As Greece enters its third year of growth and leaves behind its crushing economic crisis, a new Greece is emerging: one based on exports and foreign investment, and which is focused on bringing to the world many of Greece's famous natural products. Among the fastest growing and most promising export sectors are two that are particularly important drivers of the Greek recovery: food & beverage exports and beauty products.*

*Greece is already a leading producer of quality Mediterranean produce – from olive oil to citrus fruits, from Feta cheese to fine wine. Increasingly Greek producers are also focused on exporting the quality products unique to Greece. A good example is the famed mastiha of Chios.*

*Mastiha is the natural resin of the mastic tree, and the product has been greatly valued since ancient times for both its delicious flavor and its therapeutic qualities. You will find a diversity of exciting products in the market today, including mastiha flavored sweets, ice cream and liquors, among others.*

*Other natural products unique – or at least special – to Greece are: Greek mountain tea, several varieties of honey, and some 300 native varieties of grape, which are found nowhere else in the world.*



*Drawing on Greece's rich flora and biodiversity, Greek beauty product makers have also been expanding into natural beauty products, and have found a receptive world market as consumers increasingly turn to natural and organic products. Greek exports of natural beauty product have been growing at a rate of 20% per year, according to industry experts.*

*That has also drawn the interest of international investors. In the last two years Greece's two pre-eminent natural cosmetics firms – Korres and Apivita, which were pioneers in the field of natural beauty products – have been acquired by foreign investors.*

*Greece is moving ahead and is drawing on its traditional strengths. At Enterprise Greece, we are proud to be able to present the best that Greece has to offer in the field of natural and organic products. We welcome you to visit with us and find out more of what Greece has to offer.*

*Thank you.*

## Plenty of room for growth for the Greek exports to the UK

**Panayotis Papanastassiou**, Head of the Economic and Commercial Section of the Greek Embassy in London noted, at an interview with the Greek News Agency, that the British market can be considered as highly competitive and demanding in the area of food products, as it follows the pattern of most western countries. The British market attracts and buys more and more new, healthy, innovative, tasty and user-friendly food products and the local consumers become more and more aware on particular social and environmental issues (child labor, experimental animals, etc.). At the same time, integrated systems concerning both social awareness and certification are being developed and innovative products expand the range of British consumers' options.

"There is a need for even further innovation, research and specialization of the Greek products, so that Greek exporters can compete on equal terms producers from other countries, who are currently improving the ingredients of their products, their packaging and their user-friendly characteristics. If particular Greek products manage to enter such

a competitive market as it is the British one, this will be the passport in order to gain access to other markets as well", he said.

In 2018 the United Kingdom ranked 11th among Greece's trading partners (9th without oil products) and 8th among its customers (6th without oil products). Moreover, Greece ranks 41st among customers and 48th among UK suppliers. According to the 2018 figures, the value of Greece- UK bilateral trade in goods amounted to £ 2.07 billion (12% increase), while Greek exports amounted to £ 900 million (5% increase). Total exports of food and beverages for the same year amounted to approximately £ 321 million, with main export products being feta cheese, yoghurt, olives, grapes, bakery products, peaches, raisins, dairy products, tomatoes, olive oil etc.

Mr. Papanastasiou noted that the unclear prospect of Brexit is affecting the local market, as importers reduce their orders and become reluctant to take risks. However, Greece will enhance its export promotion activities as Britain will continue to be a major trading partner, regardless of how Brexit will evolve and what form it will take.

"Our exports to the UK market have a great potential to perform even better," he said, adding that the efforts to establish closer cooperation between Greek exporters and British importers relates to a wider range of Greek products such as food and beverages, wine, fruits, dairy products as well as clothing and footwear, machinery and equipment, cosmetics and pharmaceutical products. "In close co-operation with all relevant entities – Enterprise Greece, Business Unions, Greek-British Chamber of Commerce and respective Ministries – we aim to create a culture of extroversion and to promote a more outward-looking Greece open to new markets and sectors" he said.

Mr. Stergioulis commented at the Greek News Agency that, the challenges Greece faces domestically in its efforts to increase exports, have to do with the establishment of a strong brand name for Greek products and the total reorganization of the entire production model as well. "A strong brand name is needed, it is what is lacking, it has delayed too much over the years. But the guarantee that Greek products will keep their high quality is also a necessary factor," he said.

## Enterprise Greece

### Invest and Trade Framework

Enterprise Greece promotes Greece as an investment destination, especially in the key sectors in which the country offers a highly compelling advantage: tourism, energy, food and agriculture, logistics, ICT, environmental management, and life sciences.

Enterprise Greece is designed to promote the vast natural and human resources of the country and expand the significant export potential of Greece's manufacturing, agricultural, cultural heritage, and service sectors.

### Invest

#### Enterprise Greece:

- \* Attracts, welcomes, promotes, supports and retains investment in Greece
- \* Promotes Greece internationally as an attractive investment destination through marketing, events, and strategic outreach
- \* Accepts applications, evaluates and supports Greece's Strategic Investment (Fast Track) projects
- \* Provides investors with the Investor Ombudsman service
- \* Informs investors of Greece's institutional, tax, legal, and financial framework

- \* Supports investors in accessing funds

- \* Partners with relevant organisations, domestic and international, to promote Greece as an investment destination

### Trade

#### Enterprise Greece:

- \* Promotes the export of Greek products and services internationally through marketing, events, and trade centres
- \* Supports Greek producers and service providers with guidance, assistance, information and resources to better reach international markets
- \* Connects Greek exporters and entrepreneurs with potential partners around the world
- \* Organises the presence of Greek companies at conferences, fora, exhibitions and trade shows in global markets
- \* Hosts foreign delegations and visitors to Greece
- \* Briefs foreign buyers on the Greek market and Greece's export potential
- \* Partners with relevant organisations, domestic and international, to promote Greece's export market

Four Greek companies presented their products at Conway Hall, where an event in celebration of World Bee Day was hosted.

“The World of Bees and Honey” -an event honouring the World Bee Day of 20/5- was hosted in London by the Embassy of Slovenia in partnership with BeeMidtown. The event took place in 21.5.2019 at Conway Hall and aimed to promote regional honey and honey-based products from all over the world to the UK consumers.

The participation of Greece was organised by the Commercial and Financial Affairs Office of the Embassy of Greece in London. Attiki-Pittas, Maltby & Greek, Odysea and Nikkitas were the four participating companies, while the Greek Federation of Beekeepers Associations offered promotional material.

The success of the event -which attracted almost 400 people- was a great chance to promote greek honey to the UK market and raise awareness about the importance of bees and pollination.

Over 30 hives from around the world had stands presenting and sampling products distinctive to their region including honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly and wax, as well as honey-based products including biscuits, mead, spirits, candles and more.



The aim of World Bee Day – which has been designated by the United Nations on the initiative of Slovenia – is to raise awareness of the importance of bees and other pollinators for their contribution to sustainable development, food security and biodiversity.

Bees pollinate as many as 170,000 species of plant and every third spoonful of food is dependent on pollination. Safeguarding bees safeguards biodiversity: the vast majority of pollinators are wild, including over 20,000 species of bees.

### Greek wine producers participated for the first time in the 39th London Wine Fair

Greek wine producers participated for the first time in an organised and coordinated manner, under the brand name of Wine of Greece, in the 39th London Wine Fair 2019 held on May 20-22, aiming to cover the needs of the mature British market that is now seeking quality wine and new indigenous varieties. The Greek wines were very popular among the sommeliers, importers and journalists, who "fought" for a place in the Greek Masterclass that was hosted for the first time on the sidelines of the London International Exhibition, leaving behind specialised seminars on famous wines from Italy, Spain and France. The coordinated presence was supported by Enterprise Greece, the National Interprofessional Organisation of Vine and Wine, the Greek-British Chamber of Commerce and the Economic and Commercial Department of the Greek Embassy in London. British Hellenic Chamber of Commerce (BHCC)



## Sofka Zinovieff: 'I have a strong belief in the resilience of Greeks'



*1. You have lived and traveled in Greece, have studied and written about Greek culture and history and are married to a Greek man. In your autobiographical book, *Eurydice Street*, you recount your efforts to acquire the Greek citizenship and "become" Greek. In your opinion, what does it mean to be Greek?*

I am fascinated by Greece and have loved the country since I was an anthropology student in the 1980s. Acquiring citizenship was more symbolic than practical. It represented my commitment to an ideal, rather in the way you commit to a person when you marry them. I see my relationship to Greece as a lifelong endeavour, with all the ups and downs that anyone has with the country they choose to make their own. However, it is certainly based on love. As to what it means to be Greek – that is something

I've been trying to work out in my books over many years! A short answer would be impossible.

What does it mean to be Greek? What connects Greek and British people? How does the ancient Greek heritage weigh on contemporary Greeks? These are some of the questions that the acclaimed British author, Sofka Zinovieff, attempts to answer in her autobiographical book *Eurydice Street: A Place in Athens* (2004) and the two fictional *The House on Paradise Street* (2012) and *Putney* (2018), which feature Anglo-Greek families based in Athens or London.

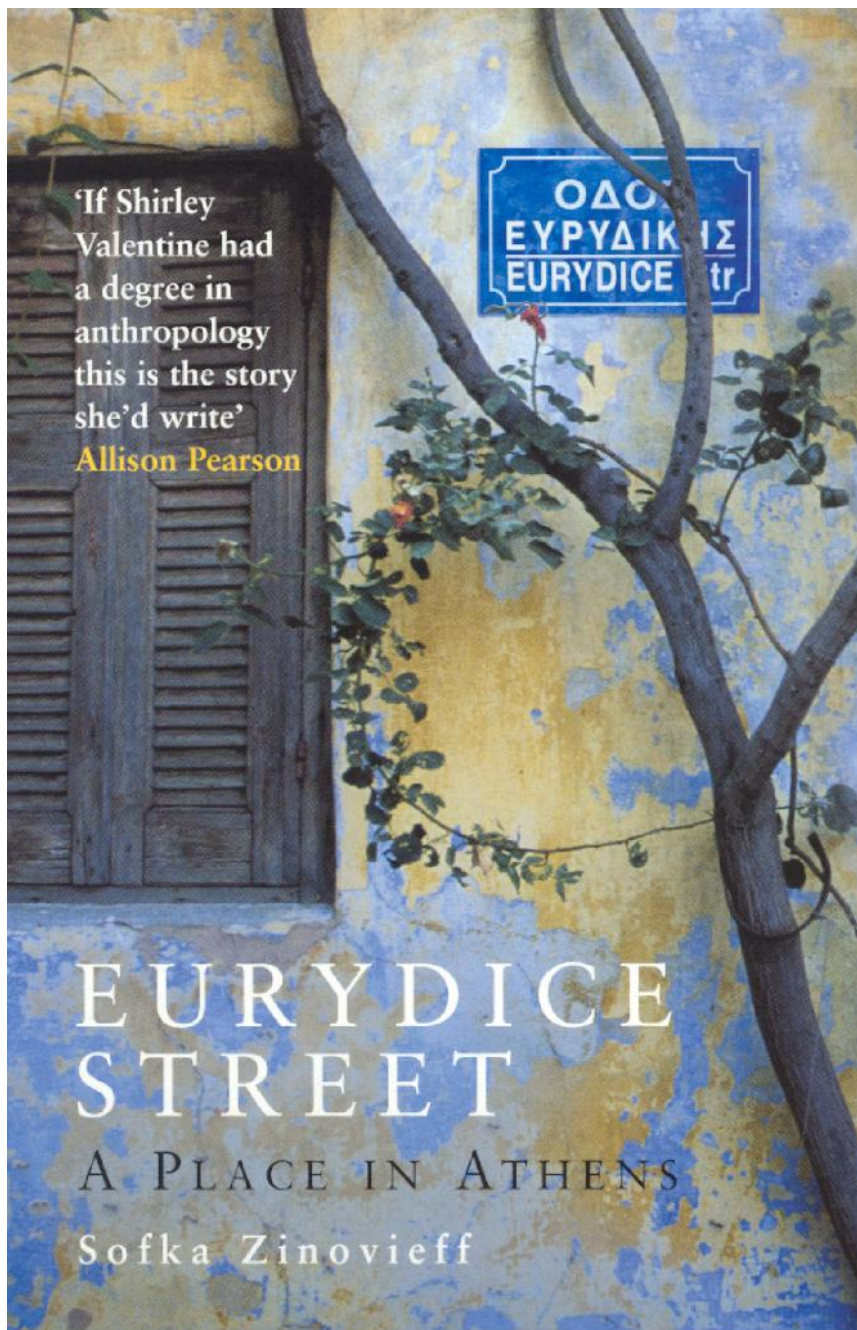
On 2 April, Mrs Zinovieff gave a captivating speech on those three books at the Hellenic Centre in London. The event was organized by the Anglo-Hellenic League and raised £525 for the Greek disability charity, ELEPAP.

In an interview with @GreeceInUK, Mrs Zinovieff talks about Greek language, history and politics, the complex relationship between Greece and Britain; and everyday life in Athens, based on her personal observations and research.

*2. In the same book you recall the language games that you used to play with your daughters, translating Greek expressions literally into English, i.e. "You are going to eat wood". Your Greek is excellent. What are the benefits of learning modern Greek?*

Greek is a rich and marvellous language and another lifelong endeavour for me. I never learned it officially - I didn't study it at university - so my written Greek is not as good as I'd like. Nevertheless, I love speaking it and it's what I talk at home with my husband, Vassilis and with my Greek friends. I would recommend anyone to learn Greek, even though it is not one of those languages classified as 'easy'. I'm so happy my daughters both grew up bilingual, with all the benefits that brings in terms of broadening horizons and versatility of thought.





*3. In your words, "You dig any little hole in Athens and you're immediately inside the ancient world." What is the connection between ancient and modern Greece? How important is the ancient past for contemporary Greeks and Brits who study Greece?*

When I was a youthful anthropology student I was rather annoyed by the fixation on ancient Greece – often by foreigners who seemed to value the long-lost past over the present. Now, I think the interaction between the present and the past is something we can't escape. We should examine it and in Greece, the ancient past is very much part of identity and above all, the physical surroundings. The old chestnut about whether modern Greeks are descended from the ancients in terms of DNA is irrelevant to me. I believe what my late father-in-law used to say: modern Greeks walk along the

same paths and in the same landscapes as the ancients did. Even without the language, the myths and the ruins, this has a huge impact and is a powerful connection.

*4. Describing Greeks' attitude towards Greece you have written "If Greeks have a passionate pride and love for their country, they also hold feelings of shame, pity and disappointment." How would you explain this ambivalence?*

I'd say it's the result of the complexities of Greece's history. Greeks managed to keep their 'Greekness' alive during all the years of Ottoman rule. Passionate pride was encouraged by the battle for independence and by the wave of nationalism sweeping across Europe through the nineteenth century. Having become a nation state, Greece then found itself repeatedly at the mercy of stronger nations, which I think provoked insecurities from not being able to determine its own future. In addition, the state has often shown itself to be dysfunctional and has perpetuated the lack of trust by individuals in anything other than their own efforts and connections.

I wonder whether the burden of ancient Greece might not also play a part in these mixed feelings. I think of Seferis' reference in *Mythistorema* to waking with the overwhelming weight of a marble head in his hands and how it has been hard to live up to the vast significance of history.

Sometimes Greece reminds me of a family which has many wonderful qualities, but also has problems: its members fight and feud but they don't appreciate outsiders criticising them and can unite in the face of external opposition.

*5. In the fictional work, The House on Paradise Street, Maud, an English woman - married to a Greek man - tries to fit into Greek society, but feels that she will always be a xeni (foreigner), "an awkward hybrid who belonged nowhere". What are the perks of being an outsider, of belonging nowhere?*

I have felt an outsider ever since I was a child in England, so it's something I have built into my character already. I find being an outsider in Greece

an excellent way of living – I'm rather a different person to Maud! I'm enough of an insider in Greece to have friends, family and a way of life I love, but I don't need to engage with some of the more painful aspects of being Greek and can step back from the fray.

*6. The House on Paradise Street is a story of a family riven by the Greek Civil War. Do you think that divisions created by the Greek Civil War still play out in Greek politics? To what extent does political orientation define Greeks?*

I used to think that Greeks were very different to the British in their passionate political beliefs and the divisions between right and left that were played out in such a deadly and destructive way during the Civil War. Now, with the bizarre and humiliating mess of Brexit, I've changed my mind. We can see that families and friends are divided in Britain and that instead of discussing differences of opinions, people often merely express hatred.

Having said that, I do think that the Greek Civil War was a particularly painful episode and that the scars have still not healed properly. It has led to people identifying very strongly with their political orientation – often that of their families.

*7. In the same book, you also refer to the relationship between Britain and Greece, highlighting both heroic events of Greek-British collaboration, such as the blowing up of Gorgopotamos bridge, as well as dark moments such as the Dekemvriana in 1944. How deeply have the relations between Britain and Greece affected Greek history and society?*

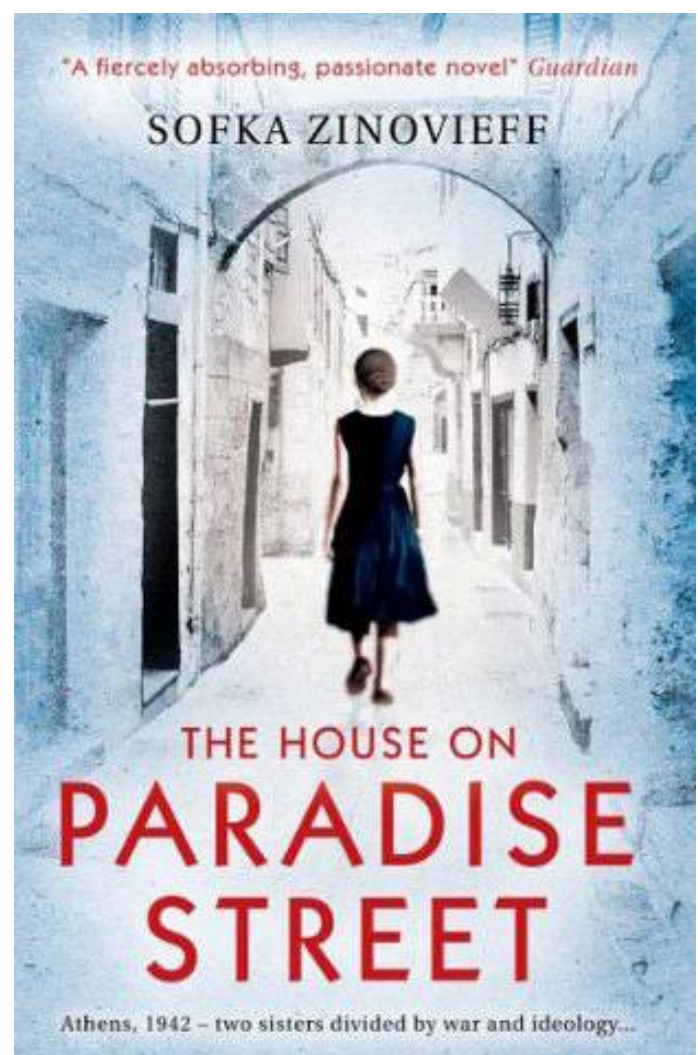
It was so interesting for me to research the complex relationship between Greece and Britain for *The House on Paradise Street*. In Greece, I spoke to people on both sides of the Civil War and I created two divided sisters - Antigone and Alexandra, who represent these allegiances. It was shocking to hear the stories from women who had 'gone to the mountains' in the resistance against the Nazi occupation – not just what they had gone through then, but how they were arrested, executed and persecuted afterwards by the right-wing regime that was supported by the British and the Americans. In the eyes of these women (on whom I based Antigone), the British were traitors who fought and killed their erstwhile allies on the streets of Athens in the Dekemvriana. To those who feared the rise of communism (like Alexandra), the British were quite right to have helped Greece escape Stalin's grasp and prevented it ending up like its northern communist neighbours.

These are incredibly important elements in Greek history and while they underlie so much in Greece, I've been surprised by how little known they are in Britain.

*8. Having written about your daughters' experience in Greek school, you note the value that Greeks place on education. What is the role of education in defining Greek identity?*

Education is held in utmost esteem in Greece. It has been the way of improving life chances for countless Greeks who might have begun their lives in humble circumstances but have reached the highest offices and made their fortunes through becoming educated. In Britain, education is appreciated but it is complicated by the class system and the way that private schools have dominated the education of the ruling classes.

Greek education is far from ideal – the fact that state schools are supplemented to a dramatic degree by parents paying for private lessons for their children means that it is actually a rather strange hybrid system. However, it is always remarkable to me how even the most remote villager with few means will



do whatever they can to get the very best education for their children. I don't think it's like that in Britain.

*9. When describing Greek everyday life you mention religious rituals, followed in Greece even by Greeks who do not believe in God. What is the role of religion in Greece?*

We moved back to live in Greece from Rome, so I inevitably compared Italian Catholics with Greek Orthodox. There seemed to me to be an ease with the religion in Greece, where you can be relaxed in your relationship to the Church and not wracked with guilt or questions of Faith. Religion has been a fundamental element in identity and is embedded in Greek life, so an individual will still probably be baptised, married and buried by a priest, even if she or he is not a believer. Orthodoxy is a constant and a bedrock, even if, like every religion, it has its own problems and contradictions and could probably do with being separated from the state a bit more.

*10. Eurydice Street is an affectionate, but not rose-tinted, picture of Greek society before the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, written during a rather affluent period. How would you describe Greece today, after an 8-year-long economic recession and the influx of a large number of refugees?*

Eurydice Street would surely be a very different picture of Athens if I wrote it today. 2004 was a high point in recent times and there was a sense of optimism that has evaporated over these recent difficult years of the economic crisis and the tragedy of refugees seeking refuge in a place not fully equipped to cope. It has been a traumatic time in Greece, but I have a strong belief in the resilience of Greeks who have been through so much over the last century. If they can bounce back after wars, occupations and dictatorships, they can surely do it again now. The first signs of things improving are beginning.

*11. You describe Athens as exciting and erotic. "People looked into your face as you walked down the street, making a visual contact, however brief, that was not found in northern European cities."*

*What are your favorite places in Athens? How could a traveler, visiting Athens, get the feel of Greek everyday life?*

I do believe that Athens is an erotic city, though of course it's down to the people, not the place! And perhaps the term sensual would also apply. I like the engagement that goes on between people that you don't find in northern Europe.

I'd say the best way of getting a feel of everyday life is to talk to people and to walk around. The neighbourhood is such a significant aspect of living in Greece, so hanging around almost any neighbourhood square, checking out shops, cafes and the local church is an obvious way of getting some insight. I also believe that going to the area around the central markets and Omonia gives a sense of Athenian openness – both to incomers from the villages and islands but also to foreigners and refugees. Greeks often have strong links to their local origins but wide horizons to the rest of the world.

*12. In your latest book, Putney, your interest moves from intercultural to intergenerational differences, as you explore the changing attitudes towards consent and child sexual abuse since the 1970s. How has your understanding of different cultures helped you engage with different perspectives on such a sensitive issue?*

Putney has been described as 'A Lolita for the era of #MeToo' and it describes a 13-year-old girl's 'love affair' with an older man in the '70s and the fall-out decades later when she starts to realise it was actually grooming and abuse. I am interested in the pendulum swing between attitudes during my youth and those in the present day when arrests for historical child sexual abuse make up a large section of police work. We see things differently now.

I was definitely helped in analysing this by having studied social anthropology as it gave me the ability to stand back and realise that everything is relative and cultural. There is no 'normal' in our attitudes towards sexuality, which vary hugely across societies and across time.

Although this novel is set mostly in London, the family at its centre is Anglo-Greek and there are many parts which take place in Greece. It seems almost impossible to keep Greece out of my writing, even with a title like Putney!

*13. What are you working on at the moment? What are your plans for the future?*

I'm working on another novel now, as well as some short stories. I won't say more except to add that I couldn't keep Greece out of this one either!

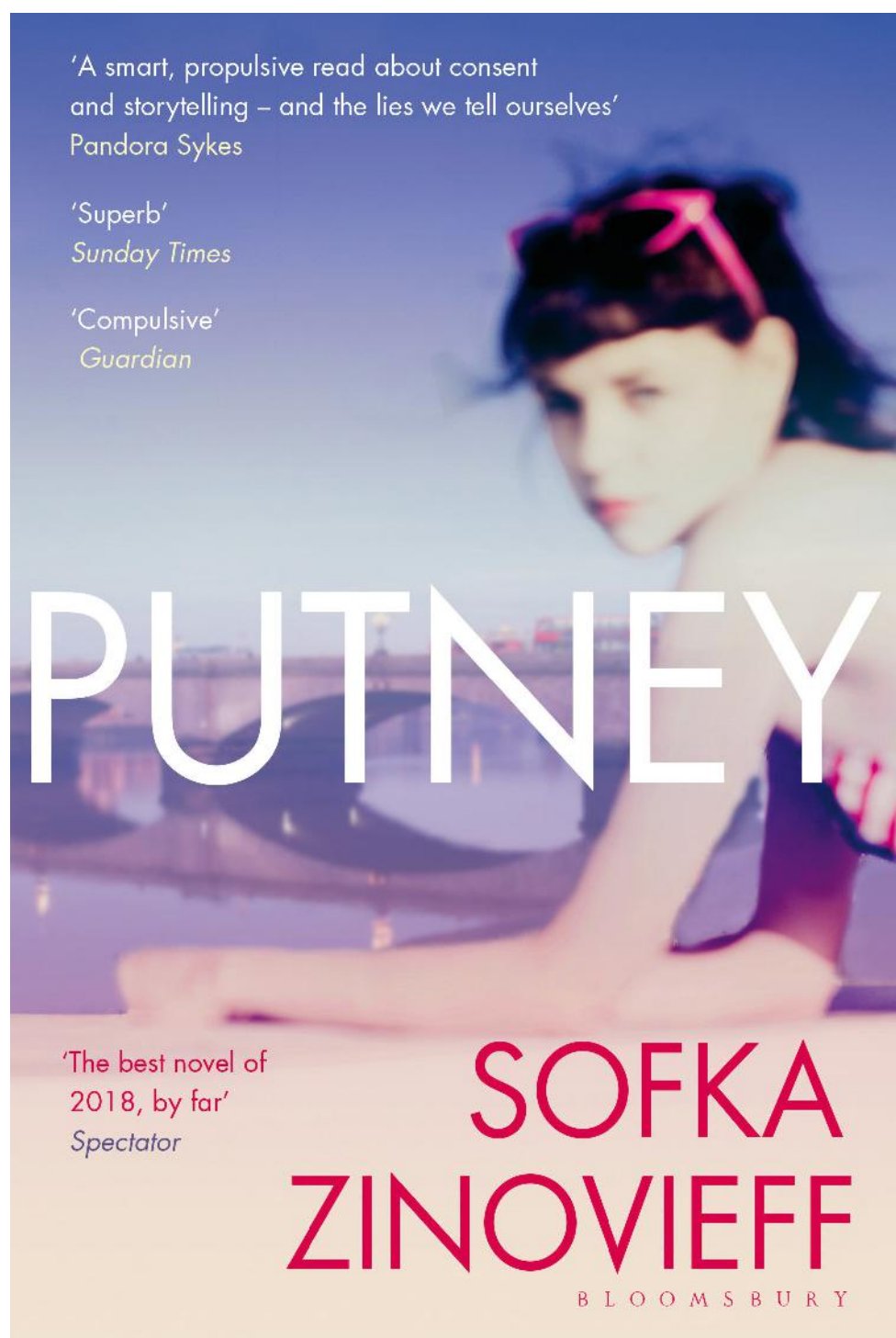
My plans for the future are to be based in Athens but with plenty of time in London, where our two daughters live. I'm hoping that a balance between the two countries will be the ideal way of life.

Sofka Zinovieff was born in London, has Russian ancestry and is deeply attached to Greece. After studying social anthropology at Cambridge, she wrote her PhD thesis on modern Greek identity and tourism and then lived in Moscow and Rome, working as a freelance journalist for British newspapers and magazines such as *The Telegraph*, *The Times Literary Supplement* and *The Independent*.

She is the author of five books, including a memoir, *Eurydice Street: A Place in Athens*, (a *New York Times* '100 Notable Books' 2005). Her first novel, *The House on Paradise Street* explored the Athenian riots of 2008 and the Greek civil war. *Putney* is her latest novel and has an Anglo-Greek family at its heart. A 'Best Book of 2018' in *The Observer*, *The Spectator* and *The New Statesman*, it was described by the *Financial Times* as 'an important addition to an urgent, current conversation'.

Sofka is married, has two daughters and lives mostly in Athens.

For more information, see Sofka's website [www.sofkazinovieff.com](http://www.sofkazinovieff.com)



Photos Courtesy of Sofka Zinovieff

## Professor Antonios Tzanakopoulos

### Associate Professor of Public International Law; Fellow of St Anne's College

#### About

Professor Tzanakopoulos is a general international lawyer and has published in a number of areas including international disputes, the UN Security Council, the law of treaties, the law of the sea, and international investment law. He has advised states, international organizations, and private entities on matters of public international law. He has advised and assisted counsel and members of tribunals or provided expert opinions in a number of cases before international and domestic courts and tribunals, including the International Court of Justice, EU courts, the European Court of Human Rights, ad hoc and ICSID arbitral tribunals, and the High Court of England and Wales. He has also provided training on international law to domestic judges, as well as diplomats, military officers, and other government officials.



Professor Antonios Tzanakopoulos

*1) Professor Tzanakopoulos, you have developed a long and illustrious career in Public international Law both as an academic and as a state and international organisations and private entities expert and advisor on international law issues. What has motivated you to develop such a keen interest in international law? What challenges does each of these capacities (academic and ex-pert) pose to you?*

Thank you for your warm words. It is difficult to trace exactly where the interest in international law came from. I guess it is due, in equal measure, to an early fascination with the vocabulary used by lawyers, this exotic language that is not understood by outsiders, and to an interest in (international) politics and history developed during my secondary education. In school I participated in Model United Nations competitions, and then in the first year of law school in Athens I had some fantastic professors teaching international law. This pretty much sealed the deal early on. Since then, I have been in a love-hate relationship with the subject, which continues to fascinate me.

As for my two distinct roles, that of an academic and that of a practicing international lawyer, the biggest challenges that they pose are the pressure that is put on my time, leaving space for little else, and the care that is required that neither is 'left behind'. But

being able to act as both is hugely rewarding, as doctrinal analysis, legal practice, and teaching are in a constant feedback loop with one another. Each informs and is informed by the other, and this allows one a good and inclusive view of the whole field.

*2) You have had an extensive academic career in the UK. How do you compare the academic environment and educational system of the country to the Greek equivalent?*

A very difficult question. Each have their own significant upsides and downsides. Trying to be diplomatic (this is an Embassy newsletter after all), I would say that, when it comes to tertiary education, UK facilities and organisation are an obvious plus (which, it could be said, is quite a minus in Greece), but on the other hand it cannot be ignored that this comes at what I think is an enormous cost to the students in terms of fees (and consequently also access). Greece, despite various problems including chronic underinvestment, has excellent – and indeed consistently excellent – quality in the education provided at the tertiary level. This is evident in the disproportionate number of Greek-university-educated students accepted for postgraduate degrees in top UK universities.

*3) Despite the international community considering the Prespes Agreement to be an important step in promoting peace and stability in the Balkan area and an ideal way to resolve an almost thirty-year-long bilateral dispute, some Greek political groups and part of public opinion did not accept this view. What do you think about the future of this agreement? Which factors do you think will influence the agreement's success in the future?*

The Prespes Agreement is a very significant achievement, not only for Greece, but also for the Balkans. And even beyond our immediate neighbourhood, it provides a blueprint for the resolution of highly politicised and highly sensitive disputes between states that touch upon such sensitive areas as history, ethnic origin, culture, and so on. In my view, the Prespes Agreement is extremely beneficial for Greece on a number of levels: not only does it reverse a situation where the vast majority of States in the world had recognized our neighbour with its former constitutional name, ie the Republic of Macedonia, it also safeguards Greek history and culture (in particular through Article 7), and opens up a great number of areas for cooperation with one of our closest neighbours.

Now, it is true that, as you say, some political groups and a part of public opinion were not 'convinced'. However, I should distinguish between the two, as I do not think that both are 'unpersuaded' for the same reasons. As far as part of the political establishment is concerned, it is clear to me that they have no substantive reason for being unpersuaded. They raise hollow legalistic points, which have been responded to convincingly by both local and international legal scholars (eg with respect to the term 'nationality' and what it means, or with respect to provisions regarding trade-marks etc). But they use these points, which are necessarily obscure to the great majority of lay people, not because of genuine concern (as the points are baseless), but rather in order to avoid proper political engagement with fundamental points about what Greece is and how it should be conducting its policies towards its neighbours, as well as about how we as Greeks understand ourselves and our history. Their nationalist rhetoric is rather aimed at provoking sentimental reactions, and parts of the Greek population have fallen for that. This is understandable, but very very dangerous indeed. However, I think there has been a serious attempt on the part of those who are in favour of the agreement to lay to waste the legalistic arguments of the deal's

opponents, and to explain and expose the deep insecurities that we must address as a people. The way to do this is not to take it out on a small state to our north, but rather to seek peaceful cooperation.

As for the deal itself, I think it is a blueprint for the resolution of relevant disputes globally. It contains a number of mechanisms in order to safeguard its full and fruitful implementation, and these constitute an excellent insurance policy for the future. These include cooperation commissions in various subject areas, as well as carefully calibrated dispute settlement mechanisms. The agreement is already seen as a paradigmatic achievement, and in a few years it will have proven its worth, even for those in Greece that are currently criticizing it.

*4) How would you comment on the efforts of the Greek government both to develop a more out-ward looking foreign policy and upgrade Greece's role in the Balkans and East Mediterranean? Based on your experience as a scholar living in the UK, how do you think Greece's efforts to play an active role in the East Mediterranean are viewed by British foreign policy that historically has had an interest in this area? Do you think that there may be a revived interest of the UK in the region of East Mediterranean?*

Outward-looking foreign policy is, in my view, the only proper policy for a state like Greece, with its strategic geopolitical position in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is an excellent opportunity for Greece to take initiatives at a time of turmoil in the region, and to show itself as the trusted, stable partner that conducts itself in accordance with international law and in a cooperative spirit. The UK will certainly welcome a stable European regional power taking an initiative in what has traditionally been a turbulent area of the world.

*5) What will, in your opinion, be the challenges for Greece's foreign policy in the coming years?*

I think a major challenge will be to capitalise on this new outward-looking foreign policy and its initially fruitful results. Resolving disputes with our neighbours, in particular maritime delimitations that will enable us to make use of resources in the sea that have been 'locked into' disputes, the Cyprus problem, and so forth, should be at the forefront of our policy, as indeed it is, and will present challenges, but not challenges that we cannot deal with. With each issue we resolve, each challenge that we deal with, we strengthen Greece's profile and reputation, as we strengthen the country's development potential.

*6) The referendum on the UK's future in the EU has brought an extended political dispute to the country, which after three years is still an unresolved issue. What is the cause of this delay and do you think that the situation could be considered a "constitutional crisis"? And if so, what does this crisis entail?*

Another huge question (or rather set of questions) that I will try to deal with as succinctly as possible. First of all, the cause of the delay lies in the fact that the UK government made undeliverable promises in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum. The adoption of a hard Brexit stance, promising that the UK would exit both the common market and the customs union, all the while ensuring access to that market on favourable terms, basically meant that the UK government had to achieve the unachievable. While this bought the government some time domestically, at the level of negotiations with the EU it became clear very quickly that the UK could only achieve a deal along the lines of the one it presented to Parliament at the end of 2018. Such a deal would (and did) ultimately alienate both the hardliners, who wished for a clean break (which would come with enormous economic pain) and who had been placated and encouraged by the government's initially hard stance, and those who would look to a soft Brexit in order to honour the referendum result but also to ensure continuity and close cooperation with the EU for a minimum of economic harm to the UK.

All this came to a head in Parliament when the latter came to vote (repeatedly) on the deal, with the government playing for time in the hope that a looming no-deal Brexit would force MPs to 'hold their nose' and approve the deal. This strategy failed, and for a number of reasons: the expectations that the government's hard stance had created in the hard-Brexiters, the disastrous decision of Theresa May to go to an election in 2017 which resulted in her loss of a parliamentary majority, the further disastrous decision not to try and foster some sort of cross-party cooperation in view of the wholly foreseeable split between hard and soft/no Brexit in the ranks of MPs from both major parties, and the general lack of flexibility for Tory party-political reasons. All this has led us in the midst of a full-blown constitutional crisis which has harmed the image and reputation of the UK and its political system, and which it will take a long time to recover.

The crisis, however, was not inevitable, as should be evident from what I have already said. A more sensible policy would be a far less rigid interpretation of the

referendum result, with a concomitant attempt to achieve some sort of national and parliamentary consensus as to what the national line of negotiation would be. Here is a counter-example, which, if it did not avoid vigorous parliamentary battles, did in the end achieve the ratification of a major deal: Greece established a national negotiating line as to how to resolve the Macedonian name issue in 2008, and the Greek government delivered on this fully in 2018. This led to the ratification of the Prespes Agreement in parliament despite the SYRIZA government also being a minority government, as is the Tory government in the UK.

*7) What do you think will be the consequences (economical and political) of Brexit to the European entity? In particular, do you think that Greece could be seriously affected by Brexit?*

This question is difficult to answer, as it is currently still unclear what form Brexit will take. Barring any sort of no-deal Brexit, the consequences for the EU will be minimal, even if they will be significant for the UK. Greece will not be seriously impacted in any such situation.

*8) What is at stake as regards to the outcome of the EU Parliamentary election in May?*

Quite a lot, in particular in view of current polling, which shows a significant rise in the representation of anti-European voices from the right and far right in the next European Parliament. I fear that this will be detrimental to the European project, whatever view one might take of its development and success thus far. I would say that it is important to respond to such extremist, nationalist, divisive views as those coming from the far right not by reiterating how fantastic the European project and the EU really is, but by acknowledging that many things need to be revisited, re-discussed, and potentially changed in the European Union. It is ok to be pro-Europe and take a critical stance towards the manner in which the European project has developed and what it has become. Unfortunately, politicians think that people have little appetite for nuance and for complex arguments. This is where they lose to the far right: the far right will make a simplistic, clear argument against the status quo which is far more convincing than any attempt to make a simplistic, clear and convincing argument in favour of the status quo—this will just alienate all those who are clearly unhappy with it and for good reason. It is thus upon those of us who are serious about Europe to put forward a nuanced argument in favour of Europe, recognizing its shortcomings and the need

for fundamental reform. This is the only way to get those who are currently disenchanted to dismiss the extremist anti-European voices and to join in an attempt to construct a Europe that works for the European peoples.

*9) For more than 2 decades globalisation and the fierce opposition against it has seemed like an unstoppable phenomenon. This can be seen in interactions on a commercial, transactional, gov-ernmental, cultural and societal level. What is your opinion on the phenomenon?*

Well, to the extent that anybody could have an opinion on a fact, and globalization is a fact, not a policy, I would say that it is obviously here to stay. However, we should be careful when using the term globalisation, in particular when also coupling it with 'opposition' to it. I am not aware of any serious opposition to the increasing interaction of people, governments, traders, professionals, cul-tural groups, political groups, etc, beyond borders—unless of course you are referring to marginal communities that refuse to use electricity and eschew contact with modern technology and the out-side world.

Globalisation as a phenomenon is neither good nor bad. It is just a fact of life, given the tremendous technological advances in all areas and types of communication over the last decades. There is of course opposition, but it is opposition to particular kind of globalisation: globalisation of capital, globalisation of one particular political agenda, globalisation of certain economic actors who domi-nate areas of economic activity around the world, globalisation, in short, that is neoliberal in charac-ter. I think that this is understandable, and indeed right. People should fight against the type of globalisation that they do not want, and seek to promote the type of globalisation that they do wish to see—such as for example the globalisation of environmental standards of protection, of equal rights, and of equality and solidarity more generally.

*10) Globalisation has set some important dilemmas to nations, governments, political actors, public opinion influencers and social communities: is it possible to bypass the national sovereignty of a country when there is a human rights violation taking place? How legitimate is the intervention of the international community as regards the reinstatement of democratic institutions and the protection of freedom and human rights?*

This is a question on which I could be talking for a very long time, as I have written about it and it

is close to my heart. Legally, and in short, we do have means of intervention in cases of violations of human rights, humanitarian norms, and other rules of international law. It's called the United Nations, and the Security Council has the power to take significant measures, including through armed force, in order to maintain or restore international peace and security wherever this is threatened. And even the UN General Assembly can intervene when the Security Council is unable to act due to the veto of a recalcitrant permanent member of the Council, through the process established by the Uniting for Peace resolution.

Even states can individually or in groups take measures that put pressure on states that violate human rights, whether lawful but unfriendly measures (such as downsizing diplomatic representation, withdrawing voluntary aid, refusing to invest or to make trade deals etc), or even countermeasures, ie violations of the law towards the target state that are taken in response to that state's violations of human rights or other international legal obligations.

And international civil society can also take measures to intervene in such situations and put pres-sure on states that violate international law. What is however illegal, and in my view never legitimate, is unilateral intervention by states into other states through the use of armed force. Forcible intervention under the pretext of protection of human rights or of democracy has always proved to be simply a cover for far less honourable intentions, and—more importantly—has always singularly failed to protect democracy or human rights. Note that I am talking about unilateral intervention, ie intervention by one or a few states deciding for themselves, and not about intervention by the inter-national community through the collective decision of a global organisation such as the UN.

*11) Would you say that we are currently living in an increasingly inward-looking world, with a ten-dency to protectionism, strict borders, nationalism and traditionalism, or on the contrary do you believe technology and international shared interests will boost the 'global village' no matter what?*

There is nothing 'natural' or deterministic about where we are and where we are going. This will be determined by the political decisions that we make, about whether we will understand that we need global action to protect the environment, to reverse the trend of ever-expanding growth and neoliberal policies which hurt both the people and the planet, and so forth. Action to address these



issues will hopefully lead to a global village living in peace, equality, and solidarity. This is within reach. But continuing on the current trend will just lead to a global village of capital in increasing contrast to centrifugal, nationalist, tribalist, and far-right forces.

*12) There is a growing perception that international law is impotent, that there is no effective sanction for its violation. As one reads about civil wars, humanitarian crisis, abuses of human rights, torture and mistreatment of prisoners, we see a very casual attitude taken towards the Geneva Convention, as if this is not binding legislation. Would you agree with such a perception? What threats would such an attitude provoke for the international community?*

I do not agree with this perception. International law is a peculiar area of the law. It deals with states, that is to say with quintessentially imaginary entities, entities that do not actually exist except in our minds and constituted there as entities by the law itself. This is the concept of a legal entity, of which the state is one. We tend to anthropomorphise the state, to imagine it as being a unitary entity that acts, feels, and thinks like a natural person, like me and you. This leads most people to imagine that states ought to be 'punished' when they violate the law, and that law which does not lead to court cases and to corporeal sanctioning of sorts is not really law. This is a fundamental error in thinking if one wishes to understand how international law operates.

Sanctions do exist, and while they are not always as effective as we might wish, they do serve to induce compliance with international law. Violations of international law, however, are best averted through the fear of sanctions, reputational costs, financial costs, cooperation costs, and others (which is the case, by the way, with all law). This is a long discussion, which I do hold with my students in Oxford at the start of each academic year. It would take too long to discuss further here, but I am happy for those interested to join us in Oxford for a course on public international law!

Finally, it is important to highlight how the expression 'international law is impotent' tends to anthropomorphise not the state this time, but the law! International law cannot be powerful or impotent. International law is simply rules made by states, and its content depends on the decisions and behaviour of the states, who are the makers of international law. So whatever qualms we may have regarding the power and content of international law, we only have our states, and thus ourselves, and the policies that we enable in our states, to blame.

*13) Given the disputes among UN Security Council members (US-Russia, US-China, UK-Russia, UK-France concerning Brexit), how effective could the Council be in deciding to maintain international peace and security, in developing friendly relations between countries, in cooperating to solve international problems, in promoting respect for human rights and in coordinating the actions of member states?*

The Security Council is legally awesomely powerful. The UN Charter gives the Council very significant powers of intervention in all sorts of issues. Also, the Security Council has demonstrated, that it can use that power to good or bad effect, as well as that it may be relegated to impotence because of political and legal disputes between its permanent members. I have written a whole book on this issue, called *Disobeying the Security Council* and published by Oxford University Press, and given relevant lectures, one of which is available for all to watch on the website of the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law. There I argue that the Security Council can be a fantastic and a terrible tool, and it depends on how states decide to use it, if at all. In short: the Security Council can harness enormous power when states decide to act together. But please do not assume that when states, and in particular the permanent members, decide to act together, this is necessarily for what you or I would consider a 'good cause'. Sometimes disagreement between the states means precisely that there are issues that need to be resolved and agreed upon before these awesome powers of the Council are used.

*14) To conclude, what do you think are the biggest challenges to both the international law and International law organizations at the moment?*

I think the greatest challenge of our time is climate change and the protection of the environment. But this also relates to the dominant economic model around the world, which is not sustainable. Our fixation with growth and profit will be detrimental to the planet and to all of us. But this is not a challenge for international law: it is a challenge for international and national politics. International law has the tools, very effective tools, for dealing with these issues. What is lacking is not international law, but political will to use it to address global challenges. It is this political will that we should work towards creating, and international law will be there to give us the tools that we need to put it into effect.

## Artist Stavros Ditsios participates in London Art Biennale 2019

Greek artist Stavros Ditsios participated this year in London Art Biennale, one of the world's most respectable hubs for contemporary art, bringing together emerging artists and some of the most well-known names in the art world today.

Inaugural event took place in the heart of the King's Road, at Chelsea Old Town Hall on 22 May 2019. The exhibition was inaugurated by Lady Sophie Windsor, the Countess of Wessex. This year, the exhibition showcased the work of 120 artists from 40 different countries, including a piece by the Thessaloniki-based abstract expressionist.

The work titled METALLAXIS - 'Mutation' is oil on canvas. Mr. Ditsios is a special artist, whose works reflect his strong personality. By creating his own technique, he depicts on canvas all the 'sounds' of everyday life but also more existential and philosophical themes. His works capture the viewer and, through his abstract look, he creates intense contrasts in feelings and thoughts. The METALLAXIS project focuses on the continuous journey of the artwork as it ceases to be a boundary between art and reality. The work of art is the freezing of the moment, but the search is constant and mutates.



## How do we view Classical Greece? A sterile worship or an innovative approach?



The inaugural Niki Marangou Annual lecture hits the nail on the head and provokes the audience into thinking seriously about the issue.

The Niki Marangou Prize was first established in 2016, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Constantis Candounas, in memory of the inspirational Cypriot poet, novelist, and painter Niki Marangou, who died in 2013. From 2019 onwards, the prize will be awarded annually for a literary translation from Modern Greek into English of one poem and one prose extract from the work of Niki Marangou.

Niki Marangou was born in Limassol but part of her family hailed from Famagusta. She studied sociology in West Berlin from 1965 to 1970. After graduating she worked as a dramaturge at the Cyprus Theatre Organisation, and she also ran a bookshop in Nicosia. A gifted painter, she staged multiple solo exhibitions. She authored many books of prose, poetry and children's fairy tales. She won the Cavafy prize for poetry in Alexandria in 1998 and again in 2008, and the poetry prize from the Athens Academy for her book *Divan* in 2006.

The 2019 Winner of the Niki Marangou Translation Prize is Petros Nicolaou. Petros delivered an excellent translation of select passages from Marangou's poetry and prose and showed deep understanding and subtlety of expression, much like Marangou herself.

Petros was born and raised in Nicosia, Cyprus. For the past four years he has been living in London. He graduated with a degree in History from King's College London and has enjoyed studying all aspects of history. His main area of interest is Byzantine History. Currently, he is an MA student reading Medieval History at King's. He likes delving into historical research and hopes to pursue an academic career in the future.

On the occasion of the 2019 Niki Marangou Translation Prize ceremony, a lecture by Professor Vayos Liapis (Open University of Cyprus) was given on 23 May 2019 at the Strand Campus, King's College London on the topic: *Blowing up the Parthenon: Greek Antiquity as a Burden and as a Rival on the Modern Greek Stage*. It was the inaugural Niki Marangou Annual lecture. Given under the auspices of Mr Euripides Evriviades, High Commissioner of Cyprus, the lecture focused on relatively recent iconoclastic productions of Greek drama in Greece as acts of aggression against images of classical antiquity as a sacrosanct relic. Among the productions surveyed, pride of place was given to the causes célèbres of Matthias Langhoff's *Bacchae* (1997) and Anatoly Vassiliev's *Medea* (2008), both of which provoked violent reactions from the Greek public as a result of their perceived desecration of some of the towering monuments of Greek culture. The lecture also discussed two more recent productions of Greek tragedy, namely Katerina Evangelatos' *Rhesus* (2015) and *Alcestis* (2017). Without adopting Langhoff's or Vassiliev's violently deconstructive approaches, Evangelatos put forward ironical (even campy) readings, which can undermine received wisdom about the classical heritage, without necessarily becoming scandalous.

Vayos Liapis (Open University of Cyprus) is Professor of Theatre Studies at the Open University of Cyprus. He has taught at the Universities of Cyprus, Montreal, and Patras, and as Visiting Professor at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. In 2014, he was Elizabeth and J. Richardson Dilworth Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. He has published on classical and postclassical

Greek tragedy, Greek wisdom literature, textual criticism, Greek religion, and the reception of Greek tragedy. His latest book is *A Commentary on the Rhesus Attributed to Euripides* (Oxford, 2012). He is currently co-editing *Greek Tragedy after the Fifth Century and Adapting Greek Tragedy*, both for Cambridge University Press, and working on a new commentary on Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* for Oxford University Press.

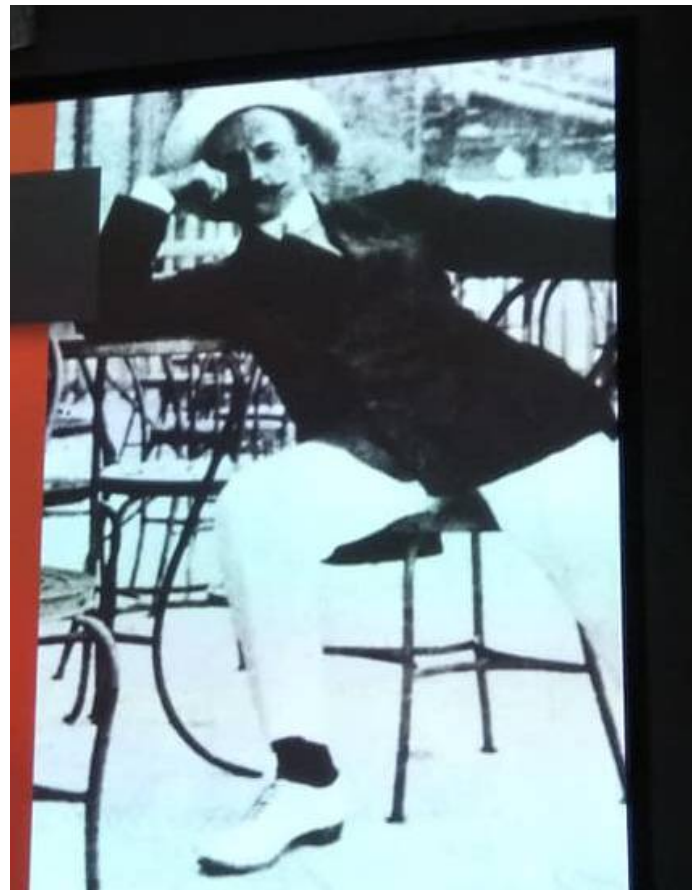
@GreeceInUK attended the event and talked with Professor Liapis.

*1. In your lecture you referred to opposing approaches to ancient Greek drama by stage directors over the decades, using dichotomies such as Burden vs Rival and Respectful vs Irreverent approach. It seems that each of those approaches reflects a broader perception of the Greek Antiquity and the glorious past of Greece. Would you like to describe briefly what are the elements of these contradictory views?*

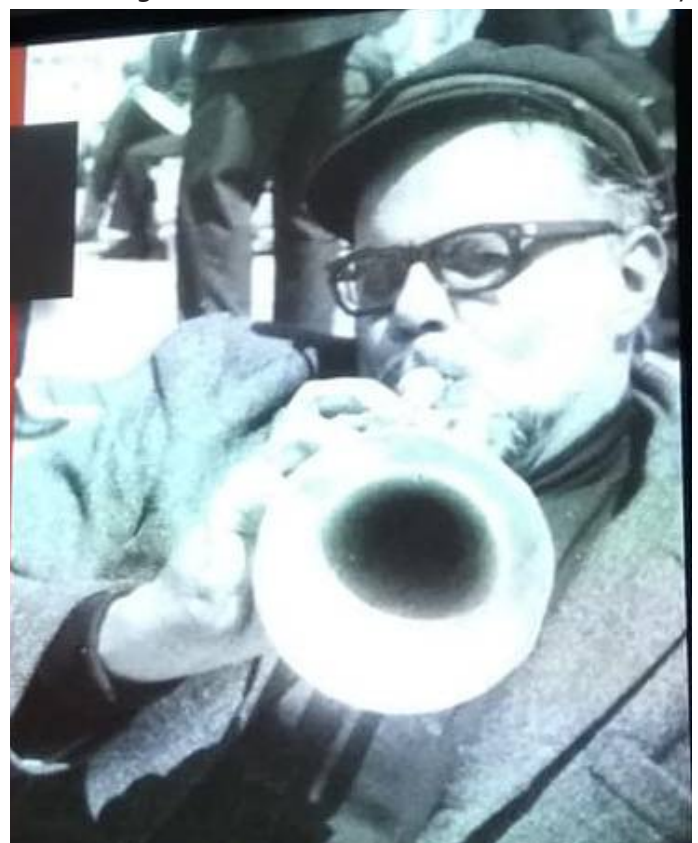
Let me stress that the dichotomy I used in my talk, like all dichotomies, is bound to be schematic and reductive. Keeping that in mind, I would define as "respectful" a broad range of modern performances of Greek drama, so long as they lay claim to "fidelity". "Respectful" approaches purport to be able to identify and bring out such aspects or properties of the ancient play as may allow modern audiences to experience something as close as possible to the "original".

You will have noticed that I enclosed "fidelity" and "original" in quotation marks. This is because I dispute (as many others have done) the essentialist notion that classical texts are imbued with eternal and unchangeable attributes, which simply wait to be unearthed, reverentially, by the initiated. Simply put, this approach regards classical texts, including classical Greek drama, as a sacrosanct burden that must be borne with humility and reverence. It is against this sort of attitude that the "aesthetic saboteur" Yiorgos V. Makris, with whom I began my talk, directed his famous *cri de cœur*: "we must blow up the Parthenon, which is literally stifling us."

Now, the "irreverent" approach often bespeaks an antagonistic attitude towards the classic. If respectful approaches treat classical drama as



a sacred burden, irreverent ones place it in the position of an opponent, a rival, that must be somehow outwitted by clever, subversive, shocking contrivances. The ostensible motive here is, usually, to "update" the classical work, to render it more relevant or urgent, or simply more agreeable or interesting to modern audiences. There is obviously



a danger of commodification here, insofar as the cultural product is treated as a commodity to be consumed by mass audiences, which have been conditioned by the uniform standards of the culture industry to respond to a very limited spectrum of simplified and undemanding stimuli. So long as this possibility is kept at bay, "irreverent" approaches may yield exciting results, which both acknowledge Greek drama's canonical status and contest the notion of the classic as an authoritative centre regulating the creation of meaning. At their best, such approaches celebrate polyvalence, diversity and eclecticism, and may even advance anti-classical and anti-canonical agendas, which enact politically liberating alternatives.

*2. Which of the two approaches do you think has generated the most stimulating and soul-stirring performances, wilful innovation or conformist conservatism?*

In order to answer your question, I would have to assume, it seems to me, the existence of homogenous audiences, whose responses can be anticipated to a significant degree. In other words, in order for me to label this or that approach as "stimulating" and "soul-stirring", I would have to treat audiences as a uniform body, which can be expected to be uniformly stimulated, or emotionally aroused, by the approach this or that author or director may adopt. This kind of approach would presuppose that the intellectual or emotional impact of an artistic endeavour depends solely on the intent and skills of its author (writer, director, producer etc.)—that the author is the centre from which all meaning derives, with audiences being reduced to the role of artfully manipulated responders.

This notion has, of course, a glorious ancestry, as it goes back to Plato himself; but it has been challenged, repeatedly and effectively, by various contemporary theorists, who have argued that audience reception is a much more complex and nuanced procedure than previously recognized. We now know that audience reception is never homogenous, and that it depends on the interplay between a number of important factors. For instance, much depends on a reader's or spectator's "horizon of expectations"—that is to say, the range of meanings audiences are



likely to actuate as a result of the kind of texts or performances they have previously assimilated. A lot depends, as well, on the "interpretive community" to which a reader or spectator belongs—that is to say, on the set of interpretive assumptions and strategies commonly adopted by the community which conditions a reader's or spectator's linguistic, intellectual, cultural, aesthetic, or ideological make-up.

So, to get back to your question, it seems to me that the impact that "respectful" or "irreverent" performances may have on audiences cannot be predetermined: it depends on the point at which meaning is actuated—the point of audience reception—at least as much as it depends on authorial intent.

*3. Elaborating on the ancient drama viewed as «a sacred burden», you used the term 'self-colonisation' to describe Greece's turning itself to a colony of its own self-image. Would you like to explain what you mean by that?*

In 1935, Eliza Marian Butler published a book entitled *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*, in which she argued that ancient Greece exerted a powerful, indeed tyrannical, influence over major

German intellectuals from the 18th century onwards (Winckelmann, Goethe, Hölderlin, Schiller, Heine, Nietzsche), so much so that it came to define German identity itself. Needless to say, those Germanic images of ancient Greece were largely fictional constructs—reflections of an idealized universe of unsurpassable intellectual, aesthetic and even political perfection, which left German poets like Hölderlin and Heine feeling crushed under its burden.

As I argued in my lecture, the perceptual lenses imposed on the study of the classical past by Western (principally German) poets and scholars have also conditioned, for historical reasons, the way we Greeks view both our classical past and ourselves. Modern Greek perceptions of classical Greece have been mediated by layer upon layer of Western constructs and interpretations. More often than not, this has resulted in Greek antiquity becoming, for contemporary Greeks, a sacrosanct burden, which we find ourselves unable to bear. The unbearable burden of the ancient Greek legacy has led to a conflicted cultural and national identity, whereby we Greeks see ourselves as privileged heirs to the classical past, while at the same time we feel crushed by a sense of our collective self as unworthy heirs to an unsurpassable achievement. All too often, we view our modern Greek culture as derivative culture, which draws such legitimation as it can from its supposed organic relationship with a glorious past—a past which remains, however, irretrievably remote and alien, and a pre-packaged, artificial construct to boot.

*4. What do you think is the prevailing perception of Classical Greece nowadays in the Greek public opinion? Do you think that Modern Greece has weaned itself off the crushing burden of a glorious past?*

More or less, we still tend to view ourselves as museum guards, as caretakers of a static, and multiply mediated, reflection of classical splendour — which is to say, as poor relatives and unworthy heirs to a glorious past.

In my lecture, I discussed the unintentionally ridiculous pageants organized by the Colonels' Junta to celebrate "the martial valour of the Greeks". A standard feature of those celebrations was the re-

enactment of glorious moments from Greek history, from the Trojan War through the Battle of Marathon down to the Greek War of Independence and even the colonels' putsch itself. One would have thought that such sword-and-sandal spectacles have long been consigned to deserved oblivion. However, they enjoyed a surprising resurgence during the 2004 Athens Olympics opening ceremony. As you will recall, in that ceremony, Greek and international audiences were regaled with a pharaonic extravaganza, which perpetuated the ideological construct of unbroken historical continuity, from Minoan times through classical Greece, Macedonia, and Byzantium, to the Greek War of Independence and to the present day. Now, I do not mean to say that the 2004 Olympics spectacle was not technically flawless, or that it bears comparison to the Junta's kitsch. However, both the Olympics pageant and the Junta's militarized processions had one thing in common: both of them promoted for public consumption a ready-made, monolithic image of Greek history as a natural, eternal, triumphalist continuum. And I do not think that this image has been substantially altered in the fifteen years that have elapsed since the Athens Olympics.

*5. What do you think is the mainstream approach of scholars and artists to the Greek Antiquity today?*

As I am not qualified to generalize about artistic approaches, I shall confine myself to a few words about contemporary classical scholars. My impression is that we cannot speak of a "mainstream approach", as there is currently no dominant or privileged way of interpreting the classical past—and I think we should be thankful for that. Although it would be impossible even to summarize the large variety of interpretive modes currently utilized in classical scholarship, one may perhaps single out, as a general trend, the opening of classical scholarship, previously a rather isolated profession, to an impressive variety of disciplines, theoretical approaches, and fields of study. This is a trend that has led to new and exciting insights into the ancient world.

New historicism, for one, has helped us move away from formalist, text-centred philology to embrace the interaction between literature and the historical

and cultural milieu in which it is produced and consumed. Further, thanks to the flourishing field of gender studies, scholars have attuned themselves to the function of classical texts (but also of artefacts, institutions and social structures) as phenomena which may reflect, legitimize but also question dominant gender relations. Moreover, performance studies have alerted us to a fundamental characteristic of ancient Greek literature, mainly poetry, which had long remained under-represented in traditional classical scholarship. We have come to realize that Greek literature, especially of the archaic and classical eras, was inextricably bound to a variety of ritual, institutional, social performance contexts. This realization has helped us, again, to broaden our field of vision and to take into account non-textual aspects of classical literature. Finally, reception studies have alerted us to the continuing vitality of classical antiquity, no longer as an idealized vision of the past but as an urgently relevant presence, which can help us redefine our relation to what remains a fundamental constituent of our cultural identity — one that can and must be renegotiated, challenged, and even subverted.

*6. What is the official narrative embraced by the Greek state currently and disseminated domestically through education, and internationally through public diplomacy and official soft power campaigns?*

My knowledge of cultural diplomacy, and of the official image of Greece disseminated abroad, is, I confess, woefully limited. As for state education, my impression is that, as I said above, it appears to perpetuate an ethnocentric view of Greek history as an uninterrupted national and cultural continuum, with alarmingly identitarian inflections. For instance, tired mantras about the supposed superiority of Greek language are parroted time and again, and state-sanctioned school history seems to reproduce historically naïve notions of Hellenic exceptionalism—basically, the notion that the Greek nation is somehow exempt from the laws of history. None of this can be conducive to the understanding of historical development or to the production of historic knowledge. I hope I may be proved wrong, but for the time being I see very little that encourages a more optimistic view of things.



Vayos Liapis

Classicist (BA Athens 1994, PhD Glasgow 1997), specializing in Greek literature.

Professor of Ancient Theatre and Its Reception at the Open University of Cyprus.

Formerly: faculty at the Universities of Cyprus, Montreal, Patras; visiting professor at the École Normale Supérieure; Member of the Institute of Advanced Study.

## Runciman Award 2019 goes to works of the highest calibre



The Runciman Award Ceremony 2019, organised by the The Anglo-Hellenic League, took place in the Hellenic Centre in London on 13th June 2019. The award is named in honour of the late Sir Steven Runciman CH FBA (1903-2000), a renowned scholar and expert in the Byzantine Empire. Aiming to generate interest around Greece, the award is presented to authors whose books explore themes such as Greek culture, history and the world of Hellenism.

This year's award was shared between Professors Paul J. Kosmin and Robin Osborne. Paul J. Kosmin's impressive book 'Time and its Adversaries in the

'Seleucid Empire' examines the concept of historical time and chronology. The book offers a captivating insight into how the Seleucid Empire introduced a new way of measuring time and examines how this way of measuring time and chronology can illuminate aspects of the past. Robin Osborne's book is 'The Transformation of Athens: Painted Pottery and the Creation of Classical Greece' and is a study of the significance of changes in Greek pottery artwork. It is a thought provoking study, drawing parallels between Classical Greek Art and changes in Athenian Society, and highlights the significance of the images depicted on Greek pottery. The Ambassador of Greece to the UK Dimitris Caramitsos – Tziras presented the awards to both winners.

Besides the winners, all the books which were shortlisted for the Runciman Prize, are works of a high calibre. The shortlisted books for the Runciman Award 2019 are: 'The Gardens of Corfu' by Rachel Weaving with Marianne Majerus, 'The Excerpta Constantiniana and the Byzantine Appropriation of the Past' by András Németh, 'The Best of the Grammarians' by Francesca Schironi and 'Hesiod-Works and Days' by A.E. Stallings (trans.)

The winners as well as runners-up who attended the ceremony spoke about their books. Everyone attending had the opportunity to meet and talk with the authors, and the judges, during a reception which followed the formal proceedings.



*The Greek Ambassador Dimitris Karamitsos - Tziras with Prof. Paul Kosmin*



## Apple, Cinnamon and Sugar: Children's play by Fournos Theatre Group followed by a series of creative and fun activities delivered by The Hellenic Hub

With an interactive play performed by Theatre Fournos in Athens and Easter activities delivered by the Hellenic Hub, the Hellenic Centre offered another amazing event to its little friends and their parents. On Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st of March around 120 children in total between the ages of 3 and 10 and their parents attended the Easter event which started with the one-hour theatre play "Apple, Cinnamon and Sugar" in Greek and Grandma Fevronia who was trying to find apples in order to make an apple pie. The play teaches a valuable lesson to young children, regarding determination and perseverance. Moreover, the young children also had the opportunity to express themselves creatively as the play was interactive.

The second part of the event started with the making and baking of Easter koulourakia followed by the creation and decoration of colourful Easter baskets.

The young students of St Sophia's School went to see the event. It was a fantastic play and the children had an amazing time!



Photos Courtesy of The Hellenic Hub

## Singing for the Parthenon Marbles in the British Museum's Room 18 on the 10th anniversary of the Acropolis Museum



On Thursday, 20 June, from 3:45pm to 5:15pm, singer and songwriter Hellena, sang without a microphone or amplifier, for the reunification of the sculptures from the Parthenon in the Acropolis Museum ([www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en](http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en)), celebrating this world-class museum's 10th anniversary.

This peaceful protest took place in the British Museum's Parthenon Gallery. Hellena showed her support for the campaign for the return of the Parthenon Marbles, and their reunification in Greece by performing her song 10 times – once for every anniversary year of the Acropolis Museum.

On 07 June 1816, British Parliament voted to purchase from Lord Elgin his collection of sculpted marbles from the Parthenon and elsewhere on the Athenian Acropolis, despite repeated requests from Greece and elsewhere to find a way to reunite them, these have remained in the British Museum.

On 20 June 2009, the Acropolis Museum in Athens was opened to the public and since it opened it has welcomed over 14 millions of visitors from all over the world. The missing sculptures, those still here in the UK are exhibited as casts. These were made by the British Museum and bought by Greece. Underneath these casts are the words: 'BM'.

Hellena's song, "The Parthenon Marbles (bring them back)" was released on Thursday 20 June, 2019, to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Acropolis Museum – where the songwriter believes the marbles should safely be housed once they are returned to Greece.

*British Committee for the Reunification for the Parthenon Marbles ([www.parthenonuk.com](http://www.parthenonuk.com))  
Photo Courtesy: British Committee for the Reunification for the Parthenon Marbles*

## Irini Tzortzoglou: UK MasterChef Winner 2019



### Irini 's Story

Irini Tzortzoglou is the wonderfully charming winner of MasterChef 2019. Throughout the competition she successfully used a variety of traditional Greek ingredients in dishes which consistently impressed the judges as well as guest chefs such as Raymond Blanc and Michel Roux Jr. In the competition final, her take on classic Greek dishes which she elevated to a new level in her uniquely playful style won over judges, John Torode & Gregg Wallace and she was crowned the popular winner.

Irini was born in a small village on the island of Crete and was the youngest of three. Her early memories of life are of scarcity of luxuries but an abundance of fresh, home-cooked food in a loving home full of people. Treats were rare and usually home-made, delicious and created with produce the family grew, were given or sourced. Being raised in a culturally mixed environment - Irini's mother originated from Crete and her father from Anatolia – Irini was blessed with different but equally valuable life lessons and

principles. Hospitality, responsibility and pride on one side and humility, appreciation and a zest for life on the other.

When she was 20, Irini started working in her uncle's hotel in Crete where she met her first husband who was English and they moved to London in 1980. Whilst working for the National Greek Bank of Greece she studied for professional qualifications, and later completed a History of Art Degree. Her artistic flair was reflected in the way in which her Masterchef-winning dishes were presented.

In 2010, Irini moved to the small village of Cartmel in Cumbria with her now husband, John, where life could not be more different to London. Cartmel is similar to Crete in that there is great appreciation of food, cooking and entertainment. The focus is on quality and freshness of produce – themes reminiscent of Irini's upbringing.

In 2018 Irini decided to enter MasterChef, driven by the hope to inspire both old and young (such as her grandchildren). She loved every single minute of the competition, including those of fear, anxiety, pressure and the occasional personal disappointment although these were greatly outweighed by the sense of achievement and the joy of having her food appreciated by others. Greek food has always had its fans amongst the millions who have visited the country over the years with appealing strong flavours, the freshness of the ingredients and the simplicity of their preparation. Irini firmly agrees that the ingredients are king and respects the traditional methods of their treatment, but she has developed a much more refined approach and style of presentation.

Irini currently works with potters in both Crete and the UK creating dishes inspired by Minoan pottery and with graphic designers on the creation of fabrics inspired by Greek plant life. She is very involved in the local community - belonging to the Cartmel in Bloom group and Cartmel Village Society.

*This text has been copied from  
Mrs I. Tzortzoglou agents' webpage  
<http://www.dml-uk.com/our-clients/irini-tzortzoglou/>*



Irini Tzortzoglou was interviewed by @GreeceinUK about her participation in the reality show UK Masterchef and her love for cooking that crowned her the winner of the 2019 show

**1) What inspired you to apply for the show, and did you ever imagine you would progress to the final and end up winning?**

I had been watching the programme for years and found the prospect of learning, growing as a cook and experiencing the excitement of the Masterchef kitchen and meeting renowned chefs very enticing. Also, family and friends were praising my food and were encouraging me to enter.

**2) When did you first start cooking, and what first ignited your passion for food?**

I started cooking when I married at the age of 22. I then while I was working for the bank I did not have much time on a daily basis to cook but I still entertained. Still, I only started cooking regularly when I left banking at the age of 50. I think my passion however had been ignited from a very young age, watching my grandmothers and my paternal grandfather cook.

**3) What was the greatest challenge you faced whilst on masterchef?**

In terms of the culinary challenges, I found that I struggled with timing, always giving myself too much to do for the allocated time for the task. On a personal level, I struggled accepting the positive critique of the judges, always thinking that my food did not merit their praise. This is something that the competition taught me and I am very grateful to Masterchef for challenging the value of modesty I had all my life which I realised had deprived me of much joy.

**4) What do you think your victory represents for Greek and Cretan cuisine, and do you feel a**

**responsibility to showcase it?**

I am very happy that my strategy to show case Greek produce and cuisine resulted to a victory for me. I had no way of knowing how far I would get into the competition cooking Greek food but I was determined to show for as long as I was in the competition to the millions who watch Masterchef that there is more to our cuisine than they may have experienced in the past. And, yes now following my success and the reactions I have seen in the social media, I feel a great responsibility to continue the work that started in the competition. I hope to be able to combine this with other aspects of my life which I value and consider very important such as spending time with my mother or being there for my husband, my local community where I have undertaken some duties in two groups I belong and my step children and step grand children

**5) In your time in Hong Kong, you were able to put a distinctive Greek twist on traditional Chinese cuisine. Do you think that fusion cooking is an important step in the future of Greek food?**



I think that cuisine as language is a continually evolving activity. Resisting this evolution and change may massage our ego and sense of patriotism but is a losing battle in an ever changing way of eating I found that by marrying the Greek produce and techniques with food that everyone was familiar with kept me in the competition and led to my winning it. Had I cooked the way my mother or grandmother had before me, I know that I would not have had that opportunity.

**6) How do you think this experience has changed you as a person and as a chef?**

As I said on the programme, I am now more confident both as a person and as a cook and as such I want to play even more with food and create dishes that will be unmistakably Greek but will appear easy to make and more familiar.

**7) What are your next steps going forward after masterchef, do you have any plans to go professional with your cooking?**

I have been invited to cook in food festivals, in collaboration with other chefs or alone in pop-up restaurants, to cook as visiting chef in the UK and Greece and am talking with publishers for a book. My agents will no doubt bring me more opportunities but I have no plans to open a restaurant.

**8) How do you think Greek and Cretan food compares to other international cuisines, and how did you capitalise on this in the masterchef competition?**

Greeks and Cretans have always been demanding diners and as such the Greek and Cretan cuisine offers some wonderful ingredients which need to find a route to market. Masterchef showed that there is great appeal in the simpler, more natural way of treating ingredients resulting in non-pretentious delicious food but I also believe that the demonstration of my emotional connection to food (perhaps as a nation we have held onto this more than others) won the judges' hearts. I hope to do more work on that and show Greek food through the ages where these days we find that we are perhaps coming full circle with some ancient foodstuffs that we are re-discovering.

*Photos from the webpage <http://www.dml-uk.com/our-clients/irini-tzortzoglou/>*

## Events to come

The Nature and the History in the Paintings and  
The Cobelins from Greece, Cyprus and Mediterranean  
When: 5 July, 5:30 pm  
Where: The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street,  
Marylebone, London W1U 5AS

Stavros Kougioumtzis: A tribute  
When: 7 July, 7 pm  
Where: The Water Rats, 328 Grays Inn Rd,  
Kings Cross, London WC1X 8BZ

Family Concert with Asterakia and Rebetiko Carnival  
When: 7 July, 10:30 am  
Where: Chestnut Grove, East Barnet School,  
London EN4 8PU

The Turbulent Life of Ririka Schweitzer  
By Eustathia Supertitles  
When: 8 July, 7:30 pm  
Where: The Cockpit Theatre Gateforth St,  
Marylebone, London NW8 8EH

Myth as Inspiration: A Contemporary Perspective  
When: 8 July, 7:15 pm  
Where: The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street,  
Marylebone, London W1U 5AS

Tapiserie Nights: Greek Rebetiko  
With Ankor at Jamboree  
When: 10 July, 7 pm  
Where: Jamboree, 27 Three Colt St,  
Poplar, London E14 8HH

Greek Night – Live Rebetiko  
When: 12 July, 8 pm  
Where: Café Barcelona, 344A Streatham High Road,  
London SW16 6HH

Tsaf Tsouf Children’s New Event (in Greek)  
When: 14 July, 3 pm  
Where: Fairfield East, Kingston upon Thames,  
London KT1 2PT

Eleftheria Arvanitaki – Live in London  
When: 24 September, 8 pm  
Where: Barbican Centre, Silk St, Barbican,  
London EC2Y 8DS

Memories of the English School  
When: 20 September, 7 pm  
Where: The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street,  
Marylebone, London W1U 5AS

Aspects and Visions of Greece in European Travellers’  
Imagery from the Renaissance onwards  
When: 27 September, 7 pm  
Where: The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street,  
Marylebone, London W1U 5AS

Play ‘Americana’  
When: 28 September, 8 pm  
Where: The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street,  
Marylebone, London W1U 5AS

@GreeceInUK is a newsletter with news related to Greece, Greek Politics, Economy, Culture, Civil Society, the Arts as well as Greece’s distinctive vibrant presence in the UK.

Our ambition is to offer an accurate and rich source of information to those interested in Greece and her people.

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