

# THE OWL

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF COLLEGE YEAR IN ATHENS

Fall 2020

Arrivals Day for the nine determined students who made it to CYA this fall despite COVID-19; students enjoy the view from CYA's rooftop terrace during Orientation.



5 PLATEIA STADIΟΥ, ATHENS, GREECE

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The happy faces on this issue's cover tell the story of how in the middle of the pandemic nine determined, highly-motivated students from our partner schools chose to have a CYA semester in Athens. The credit goes also to their schools which allowed them to pursue this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. CYA had made it clear that it would run a regular in-person semester with very few students if necessary, as a tribute to its beginning with five students in 1962.

This time, strict Covid-related protocols have been put in place with social distancing and sanitization in apartments, classrooms, dining-room, and field trips. Single occupancy rooms are made available, daily temperature monitoring is required, and lunch is offered in protective packaging, just to list a few of the Covid-protection measures taken by the school.

During my welcome address to our group on the CYA roof terrace overlooking the Acropolis and the Parthenon - the eternal symbol of democracy—we discussed among other issues how democracy is threatened today in many parts of the world, just as the pandemic and climate change are global threats that do not stop at borders. The realization that humanity faces a new borderless reality was an obvious takeaway from this meeting. Studying abroad allows one to see the stark truth of this statement. Hopefully, our cohort of nine brave students will act as an example to others so that CYA will start regaining its lost ground in the spring semester of 2021, the summer, and the semesters that will follow.

Covid-19 has had a profound impact on our school. For an institution that relies almost exclusively on tuition revenue,

losing its students is catastrophic. To meet the challenge, we had to institute severe budget cuts and eliminate all non-essential expenses. Keeping students, faculty and staff safe is our main concern but our thought also is how to support our personnel so that together we can see the school through this extremely difficult period. It should come as no surprise that our administrators and faculty have shown solidarity and a focus on the common aim, the survival of the school.

Many of our administrative staff have gone on part-time work and most of our instructors, who have no courses to teach, have been provided, thanks in part to donations by a few Trustees, with research stipends to lessen the impact on their income. Our apartments have to be kept vacant at this time, hoping that better days ahead will require us to provide student residential housing in haste. The biggest challenge has been the uncertainty; the fog of this strange war is debilitating and does not allow safe planning.

There is a silver lining to this dark cloud. CYA, like so many other institutions, had to reinvent itself by introducing digital tools and new virtual educational products: a set of virtual courses is made available to students of our partner schools that have canceled in-person study abroad; a virtual internship program places students as trainees in Greek companies, museums, labs, think-tanks, and NGOs; finally, a Virtual Lecture Series is a free contribution to a broad CYA audience in celebration of the oldest study abroad program in Greece. Our alumni are now able to enjoy virtual reunions and already the classes of the 60's and 70's have had the opportunity to meet and enjoy each other's company virtually.



CYA operates in a Greek environment and thankfully the country is run by a serious and responsible, moderate but reformist government. Its preemptive policies have kept the numbers of Covid-19 cases and deaths relatively low. The government has to navigate the economic impact of the pandemic but also the serious dangers posed by neighboring Turkey and its neo-Ottoman quest for "vital space" in the eastern Mediterranean.

Nevertheless, the decade-long economic crisis has been left behind and foreign investments are starting to give the economy an uplift. Remarkable is the commitment by Microsoft to establish a regional cloud data center that will reach an added value of 1 billion euros; another investment has been announced by Amazon Web Services, and the Neorion shipyards in Syros are operating again thanks to an investment by Onex, an American company. Finally, work at the old Athens airport site has started, making this the biggest current real estate development project in Europe. As soon as the battle with Covid-19 is won, the days ahead for Greece and for CYA are bright.

ALEXIS PHYLACTOPOULOS, *President*

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**Deadline for submissions for the next OWL: March 1, 2021**



## VOLUNTEERING AT ETZ HAYYIM, THE LAST REMAINING SYNAGOGUE IN CRETE

During her January term, full-year student **Gwen Ellis** (CYA '20) volunteered in Chania, Crete at the Etz Hayyim synagogue, the last Jewish monument remaining on the island. During her month in Chania, Gwen learned about Crete's rich Jewish history and the importance of cultural preservation. Thank you to all of those who work at Etz Hayyim including Anja Züickmantel, the Administrative Director of the synagogue, and historian Katerina Anagnostaki, as well as CYA Faculty **Daphne Lappa** and Executive Director of Student Affairs at CYA **Nadia Meliniotis**, for facilitating Gwen's eye-opening experience.

Being a full-year student at CYA, one of the things I had to think about before coming abroad was what I was going to do with my January term. By the time I got to Athens, I still didn't have much of a plan. However, this changed during our September field trip to Crete: on the second-to-last day, we visited Etz Hayyim, a historical Romaniote synagogue in Chania with a very remarkable history.

Etz Hayyim was located in the Jewish Quarter of Chania for centuries until its destruction by the Nazis and the slaughter of the Jewish community during World War II. Afterwards, it lay in ruins until the 1990s, when a scholar named Nikos Stavroulakis gathered funds to reconstruct it and revive the community. It now serves a religiously and culturally diverse community (havurah) and is very much reanimated. In the winter, there are around 15 people who regularly attend Shabbat, and not all of them are Jewish. Most of them are not



The Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Chania  
photo: Nikater/CC BY-SA



At left, Gwen Ellis; above, Chania harbor



Greek, either: some are American, some are Israeli, some are German, and the Rabbi is French. Etz Hayyim welcomes them all. Overall, though our tour wasn't very long, I was totally fascinated by the place, and instantly knew that I had to come back.

After the trip, with the help of Nadia Meliniotis and CYA, I got in touch with two historians doing research at Etz Hayyim and asked them if I could intern with them and help them out with their project (as a history major, I have some experience with archiving). They graciously said yes. Their project revolves around reconstructing the Jewish community of Chania that existed before the arrival of the Nazis, and they are currently creating a searchable online database with the name of every Jewish person in the town, making the crucial information accessible to the diaspora community and to scholars. They assigned me the task of transliterating all the 1,200 Greek-Jewish names into the Latin alphabet for the database. It was really exciting to put my Modern Greek studies into practice! I also started sorting/archiving the personal collection of the aforementioned scholar Nikos Stavroulakis, which involved sorting an incredible amount of slide film. Essentially, I spent a lot of time either squinting at spreadsheets or squinting at 35mm slides. It was fantastic, and so valuable to me as a prospective historian. The many cats who live at the synagogue were the cherry on top. My only warning to prospective volunteers is that those with cat allergies might want to think twice!

I also must add that living in Chania for a month was amazing. It's very quiet in the winter, so wandering around town was always very peaceful. I spent one whole day just walking down the coast, exploring caves and little tide pools, and finding snails. The food is also very good—I ate lots of Cretan sheep milk yogurt, *koulouria* (cookies), olive *kritsinia* (breadsticks), and drank lots of *dictamos* (Cretan tea). My favorite thing to do was to go to the harbor and just sit by the water.

Overall, I would highly encourage future CYA students with an interest in history or Jewish studies to consider volunteering with Etz Hayyim. There are always exciting projects going on at the synagogue, and the community is so warm and welcoming. It really is a very special place—friends of the synagogue would often drop by and drink coffee with us in the office or bring in interesting materials for us to look over. The Friday Shabbat services were small, but moving and full of life. Even though I was only there for a month, I am very glad that I was able to contribute something to such a loving and vibrant community"

[Etz Hayyim's website](#)

[Etz Hayyim's Facebook](#)

## PLEASE NOTE

Due to budget constraints because of COVID-19, CYA will not print the alumni newsletter this year. We have every intention to resume print copies as soon as we can.

## ACADEMIC ADVISORY ROUNDTABLE

In 2018 CYA established a new advisory body: the Academic Advisory Roundtable. With its curriculum growing and diversifying, CYA recognized the importance of convening a group of colleagues, administrators and faculty in a forum to exchange ideas on CYA's curriculum and other matters, especially as they pertain to US institutes of higher learning and study abroad.

The Academic Advisory Roundtable gives CYA the opportunity to explore new courses or curricular directions, to review existing courses, and to hear advice and recommendations directly from those most interested in CYA's program. It helps CYA remain current with evolving academic issues and trends on campuses by engaging administrators and faculty.

The Academic Advising Roundtable has met four times since its launch and its members have offered valuable advice on curricular matters, and student affairs, particularly during the pandemic. **Annmarie Whalen**, special advisor to the President, has been acting as liaison and coordinator of the group.

The Academic Advisory Roundtable members are:

**Michael Arnush**

Chair, Department of Classics, Skidmore College

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Director, Office of International Programs, Brown University

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Professor of French, University of Notre Dame

**Margaret Weidenhoeft**

Executive Director, Center for International Programs, Kalamazoo College

## FACULTY NEWS

New faculty, **Nina Papathanasopoulou's**, work on Aristophanes' *Acharnians* was published in an edited volume on Aristophanes and Politics (Brill, April 2020). Her paper focuses on the comedy's treatment of space and argues that *Acharnians* can be profitably read as a dramatization of the devastating consequences of Athenian war policy on the individual oikos during the first years of the Peloponnesian war.

Nina also writes monthly posts for the blog of the *Society for Classical Studies* discussing innovative projects that bring Classics to new audiences and foster collaborations between Classics and other fields.

Here's a link to the page that discusses the Classics Everywhere initiative. Most of Nina's posts are [listed here](#)

Here's a [link to her latest post](#) (published August 31):





## CYA DEVELOPMENT OFFICE UPDATE

The role of the Development Office at College Year in Athens is to enhance the already established fundraising program therefore, leading to an increase in revenue, raising awareness of CYA in the community, and building strong relationships with alumni, Trustees, and friends, which will help CYA continue and expand its program.

Below is an overview of additional CYA Development and Fundraising initiatives.

### William C. Kontes '99 Memorial Scholarship Initiative

CYA alumna **Zoë Kontes** (CYA '95), who serves on the CYA Board of Trustees, approached CYA and Mr. Phylactopoulos in May 2020 with the initiative of establishing an endowed scholarship in her brother's name for CYA students. **William Constantine Kontes** (CYA '99) passed away suddenly in April 2019. Will was known for his skilled leadership, generosity, humor, strength of character, dynamic personality, and kindness to all. He was a great advocate for the people and causes he believed in. He represented what CYA strives to achieve, helping young people become successful citizens of the world, well anchored in Hellenism, and happy individuals.

This initiative is a beautiful and most memorable gesture to honor Will, and CYA is appreciative and grateful for such a decision. Will was a gentleman and a wonderful brother to Zoë, Alexa, and Laura, and a caring husband and father to his wife Kim and his two children, Constantine and Sophia. Through this scholarship, his legacy in life and at CYA will continue.

### Yiannis Monovoukas' Initiative

CYA Trustee, **Yiannis Monovoukas**, has established a fund for students who are enrolling in Fall '21 semester or for CYA's Gap Term program, in order to support students during the difficult times that Covid-19 has created. Mr. Monovoukas will provide funding that will cover a portion of air travel costs to students who would come to CYA amidst the uncertainty surrounding us with this pandemic.

### CYA introduces Planned Giving

For our alumni and friends who are interested in leaving a legacy at CYA by including our institution in their estate plans, College Year in Athens has outlined ways to do so. The CYA Planned Giving booklet, prepared with input from **Peter Allen** '65, who serves on CYA's Board of Trustees, is available now! An independent campaign will be launched next year concerning Planned Giving.

We are deeply grateful to the more than 1,600 alumni and friends who have given their financial support to CYA throughout its nearly 60-year history as a leader in study abroad education. As we look to the future, we will be asking for alumni and friends' continued partnerships in furthering important, ambitious initiatives that will define CYA for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support.

For more information on supporting CYA with a contribution, or questions about how to donate, please contact Vassilis Simopoulos at [development@cyathens.org](mailto:development@cyathens.org).

### CYA Poster Drive

To honor committed donors who contributed \$100 or more between March and the end of June of this year, CYA gave a poster illustration of Athens' Historical Triangle featuring CYA's Academic Center to donors, as a token of our appreciation. The original piece, created by CYA friend and graphic designer, **Philippos Avramides**, is on display at CYA's Academic Center.



## THE PEOPLE OF CYA: VASSILIS (BILLY) SIMOPOULOS, CYA DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

*When did you start working for CYA?  
Could you briefly describe your role and some of the things you do on a typical day?*

I joined CYA in March of 2018. Since then, my primary responsibility as Development Officer has been to augment the already established fundraising program leading to an increase in revenue, heightened awareness of CYA in the community, and to build relationships with alumni, trustees, and supporters of CYA, which will help CYA continue and expand its program.

My main focus has been to understand CYA's culture, the institution itself, the students, and to try to get to know our alumni. Therefore, on a typical day, I allocate my time planning fundraising campaigns and activities and forecasting and evaluating the potential of these plans. I spend some time conducting research, and I try to identify potential prospective targets. I manage the donation process by maintaining relationships with past donors—thanking donors for donations made and making sure that they are involved and informed about what we are doing at CYA—and deal with various donor requests. Every week, I meet with the Media Lab Team and our Director of Alumni Relations to discuss tasks for upcoming projects and any reports that are due.

*What positions did you hold before?*

I began my professional career in 2003 when I worked as the Transportation Logistics Officer for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. After my mandatory military service in the Greek Armed forces, I served as a communications professional (campaign consultant and communications manager) in various PR companies in Greece. I specialized in the formation of election strategies and programs, speech writing, and local media relations in this capacity.

After 2012, my professional interests focused on various service and non-profit organizations in the public and the private sector. I served in the Hellenic Government, at the Ministry of Education, first as a Special Advisor to the Secretary-General for Lifelong Learning and then as Head of Communications at the General Secretariat for Youth.

In 2015 I returned to the private sector, where I served as a Project Manager for two non-profit organizations (Lascaris Foundation and HOPEgenesis NPO). It is here where I first became interested in development and fundraising.



Vassilis (Billy) Simopoulos, CYA Development Officer

*What have you studied and where?*

I was born and raised in Athens, Greece, but hold dual citizenship in Greece and the United States. I have a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Communication from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles, with minors in Business Administration (Marshall School) and Cinema-Television (Lucas Film School). I also earned a Master's degree (ALM) in Government at Harvard University, completing my Master's Thesis on Political Marketing and Party Ideology in Greek Political Campaigns.

*We know you have a "parallel career" in professional basketball! Tell us about this.*

For the last fifteen years, I have been an active semi-professional basketball player in Greece's A2 Basketball category (Greece's second-highest league—division II of the pro league, similar to the minor leagues of professional sports in the US, to put it in context). I retired this past year as captain of my basketball team, Papagos BC, the team that I watched as a young boy when they competed in Greece's Professional League (A1-Basketball League). Playing for Papagos was a dream of mine ever since I started dribbling.

Although many do not realize this, my basketball career has taught me many things in life. It has taught me first and foremost to be unselfish, to be a team player; it has

taught me the importance of communication and the attention to detail, and most importantly, it has taught me to be persistent, to be patient, and to persevere in life—what I call my "3Ps."

*What would you like CYA Donors and supporters to know about how important they are to CYA?*

With the help of our Alumni, our Trustees, and our friends, the school can build upon its strengths, enhance the student experience, and create the best possible environment within which students can excel. This has been a turbulent year for CYA; the current unsettling times of Covid-19 has left us facing an unprecedented financial crisis. I hope that anyone who is able to, will consider a gift to CYA this fiscal year.

### AMAZON SMILE

Thank you to our alumni and friends who used AMAZON SMILE for CYA donations. For those of you who want to know more, please visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com).

## DONORS 2019-2020

In the list below we have combined all gifts, including matching gifts, received between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. Thank you again for your generosity and support.

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 Popi Triantafyllidou  
 Emanuel Tsarnas  
 Jennie Tucker '66  
 Carlyle Vincent '15 (In honor of all  
 the remarkably brilliant professors  
 in the CYA program!)  
 Celia Weberg '18  
 Jerrick Wee '16  
 Nicole Williams '09  
 Patrick & Phaedra (Saltis '95)  
 Yachinski  
 Jody Yetzer '93  
 Colleen Yockey '90  
 Stanley and Elena Zajechowski  
 (In Memory of Keith Adams '74)

## VIRTUAL LECTURE SERIES 2020

In our effort to stay connected with our community and engage with our students, alumni, friends, and partners during the COVID-19 pandemic, CYA launched a series of virtual lectures.

## Plague Crisis Management: From Pericles to Capodistrias

On Wednesday, June 10, CYA launched its Virtual Lecture Series with a discussion entitled **Plague Crisis Management: From Pericles to Capodistrias**.

The distinguished speakers were professor at CYA and Professor Emerita of Classics & Mediterranean Studies at the University of Illinois, **Nanno Marinatos**, and CYA Trustee Emeritus and Professor of Political History Emeritus at the University of Athens, **Thanos Veremis**. Our speakers discussed the handling of contagious illnesses in Athens from the era of Pericles in 439 BC to Greece's War of Independence and Capodistrias's leadership. CYA professor of Sociology, **Rosa Vasilaki**, was the moderator of the event, handling questions from viewers, guiding the discussion, and encouraging a fascinating exchange of ideas between the two speakers. CYA President **Alexis Phylactopoulos** introduced the speakers, establishing the event as an engaging dialogue and exchange of information.

[Watch this lecture on YouTube](#)



Nanno Marinatos



Rosa Vasilaki



Thanos Veremis "backstage"

## The Intersection of Technology and Politics in Today's Reality

On Wednesday, June 24, CYA continued its effort to engage with its community through virtual events with its second live lecture. The discussion, titled **The Intersection of Technology and Politics: 2020 Edition**, was given by CYA Trustee **Michail Bletsas**, Research Scientist & Director of Computing at MIT's Media Lab and moderated by **Elias Papaioannou**, professor of Economics at the London Business School and Visiting Professor at MIT.

[Watch this lecture on YouTube](#)



Michail Bletsas



Elias Papaioannou

## Travels to Athens from Cyriac to Baedeker

Although international travel is not an option for many at the moment, followers of CYA Professor **Robert Pitt** were able to journey to Athens through the eyes of travelers from antiquity to the nineteenth century during his lecture **Travels to Athens from Cyriac to Baedeker** on Wednesday, July 8. The lecture highlighted the rich history of travel and tourism in Greece through the study of travel writing from many different periods. The lecture was moderated by CYA professor **Christine Harrison**, who offers a course in travel writing.

As professor Pitt noted, the writing of such travelers is extremely important in that it provides us with information, including



Robert Pitt

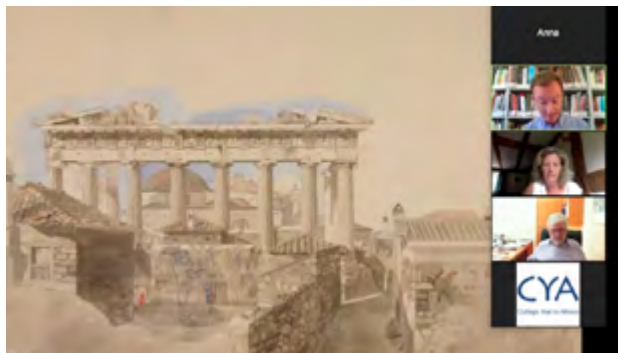


Christine Harrison

descriptions and drawings of monuments that have been destroyed or influenced by modern construction, as well as dress, culture, and linguistic elements from Greece's past. Tourists' writings and architectural drawings helped bring about neoclassical movements in Western Europe.

However, these travelers did not always have an easy journey to Greece. Professor Pitt mentioned cases of robbery, disease, and even quarantine, which is familiar to us all now, but was quite frequent throughout history.

[Watch this lecture on YouTube](#)



Slide from the lecture "Travels to Athens from Cyriac to Baedeker"

### Exploring Themes of Greek Art in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston

On Wednesday, July 15, **Christine Kondoleon**, CYA trustee and the George D. and Margo Behrakis Chair, Department of Art of Ancient Greece and Rome at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and **Phoebe Segal** (CYA '98), the Mary Bryce Comstock Curator of Greek and Roman Art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, offered a [virtual tour](#) of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's rich collection of significant works of Greek art.

The tour and discussion were facilitated by author, academic, and curator **Athena Hadji**, who offers the course the **Art and Craft of Curating: Making Sense of Art in the 21st Century** at CYA. This eye-opening tour of the collection was part of CYA's ongoing mission to maintain connections with the broader community through its Virtual Lecture Series.

Dr. Kondoleon and Dr. Segal stated their mission of emphasizing antiquity's relevance to contemporary life in the museum's exhibits to encourage viewers' curiosity while maintaining intellectual rigor rather than simplifying their message.

[Watch this lecture on YouTube](#)



Christine Kondoleon



Phoebe Segal



Athena Hadji

### Stereotypes and Realities: Reflections from Rural Greece

On Wednesday, July 22, CYA's Virtual Lecture Series hosted former faculty and long term advisor, **Michael Herzfeld**, the Ernest E. Monrad Research Professor of the Social Sciences in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University for a presentation on **Stereotypes and Realities: Reflections from Rural Greece**.

Professor Herzfeld addressed the importance of knowing village life to understand Greek cultural attitudes even in the most sophisticated urban contexts today.

Having spent decades studying the Cretan village of Zoniana, Herzfeld discussed themes commonly found in the Greek village life. Themes, such as *philotimo*, a notoriously difficult word to define, which has been said to mean 'love of honor, respect, and virtue,' and *philoxenia*, or hospitality. While these virtues are typically associated with villages, even by urban Greeks, Herzfeld argued that concepts found in rural Greece are also present in urban centers, just in different forms.

The discussion, which was monitored by **Aimee Placas**, professor of Anthropology, who teaches at CYA, was the last in this season of CYA's Virtual Lecture Series and other equally enticing lectures are scheduled for the fall.

[Watch this lecture on YouTube](#)

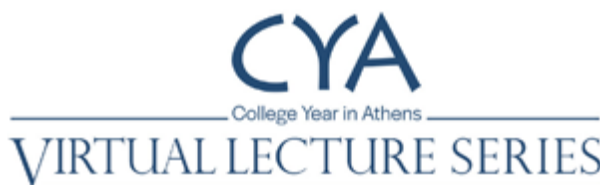


Aimee Placas



Michael Herzfeld

Photo by Wankun Sar





## EIGHT DAYS IN EGYPT IN 1998—FROM FEAR TO UNDERSTANDING

by Ed Brzytwa, Spring '98

As a Classics major at the College of the Holy Cross, I could not resist the call of Egypt. Greece was the first country I visited as a 21-year-old CYA Spring semester student in 1998 (not including Canada). I immersed myself in Greece and its history every day after landing in Athens in January. But Egypt... the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the mystery, and the idea of experiencing a culture so vastly different from my Catholic upbringing in Ohio all drew me to this most ancient of civilizations and most challenging of countries.

When the topic of spring break destinations came up at CYA, I had convinced myself that going to Turkey was the right call, so I could see ancient sites all along the Turkish coast of the Aegean. It was the easy choice—Istanbul was a short flight from Athens and was welcoming for students and tourists. After discussion among my CYA classmates, my mind opened.

I'm not quite sure who made the suggestion of Egypt. I had initially dismissed it as unsafe due to the massacre of 62 tourists at the Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor in November 1997. But the originator of the idea argued that it was more cost-effective to visit Egypt given the broad drop in flight and hotel prices to re-attract tourists. Given my limited resources, I bought that argument and dropped Turkey from consideration (NB: I did not visit Istanbul until 2015 for work to attend B20 meetings).



Me on United Boeing 767 cockpit after a flight to Switzerland, on which I got to 1,000,000 lifetime miles



My trip group (Tim, Nadia, Roberto, and Zoe) worked with an Athenian travel agent on our itinerary, which included: roundtrip flights from Athens to Cairo and flights from Cairo to Luxor, Luxor to Aswan, and Aswan back to Cairo; and three nights at three-star hotel near the Pyramids. Before we departed Athens, the central bank of Greece devalued the drachma, so our strong dollars made our adventure even less costly. I may have paid for my itinerary in drachma bills after cashing a traveler's check. Our plane tickets and hotel reservations were all on paper.

In Egypt, we were typical tourists, exploring the Pyramids at Giza and Saqqara; wandering through the crowded Cairo Museum; paying our respects to the temples of Karnak, Luxor, and Hatshepsut; and sailing a felucca on the Nile at Aswan. Yet what still stands out for me after over two decades of world travel are not the sights and sounds, but the human interactions.

As a naïve young American with limited understanding of the world (at the time Athens seemed exotic to me), I was completely overwhelmed from day one of our trip. I could not process people speaking Arabic and the call to prayer. The panic in my eyes was obvious, so as a defense mechanism I wore my sunglasses almost all the time, even indoors. My travel mates can attest to this. I wanted to separate myself physically and psychologically from the children in the bazaars and tourist sites who were happy with the simple gift of a pen. I declined our felucca captain's invitation to attend a wedding, mostly out of fear. Overall, the inequality that I witnessed—for example, in the poor neighborhood surrounding ancient Roman catacombs in

Alexandria—did not compute relative to my privileged upbringing.

One experience still resonates today. Our wily felucca captain encouraged us to visit Elephantine Island in the middle of the Nile. He did not provide a reason but said that it was something that we should see. We took a ferry there one morning. Perhaps we disembarked at the wrong spot on the western shore. In retrospect, it was the right spot. We saw an open field of garbage with goats tied to posts, munching on

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*My time in Egypt and Greece inspired me to prioritize building bridges across economies and cultures as a way of addressing systemic inequality.*

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various items for breakfast. We interacted there with little children with protruding bellies and flies circling their orifices. None of this made sense; we did not understand why we were there. We witnessed human suffering of a high magnitude for the first time in our lives. I recollect that we wanted to leave as quickly as possible. I don't think we ever saw what we thought we were going to see, which was likely more ancient ruins. Elephantine Island was a shock to my system. I reflected on that day during the remainder of my time at CYA and often still do. How could people live in such dire poverty? Why is there such economic inequality in Egypt? What are people doing about this? Sadly, the story of modern Egypt is one of great tragedy and unfulfilled promise. I had only witnessed a small snapshot of a much bigger Egyptian story,

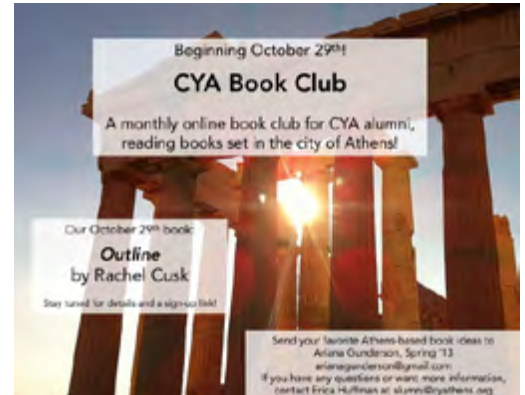
*Eight Days in Egypt, continued from previous page*

but it did spark and shape my career. I have not been back to Egypt since that trip.

After my time at CYA, I shifted my focus from the Classics to a life in international affairs. Through higher education, travel to forty-five countries on every continent except Antarctica, and a commitment to open mindedness and listening, I established a career in international trade policy and negotiations, first as a civil servant with U.S. federal government and then as a global industry advocate in the technology and chemicals sectors. I have seen similar scenes of economic inequality and human suffering, but none as severe as that morning on Elephantine Island.

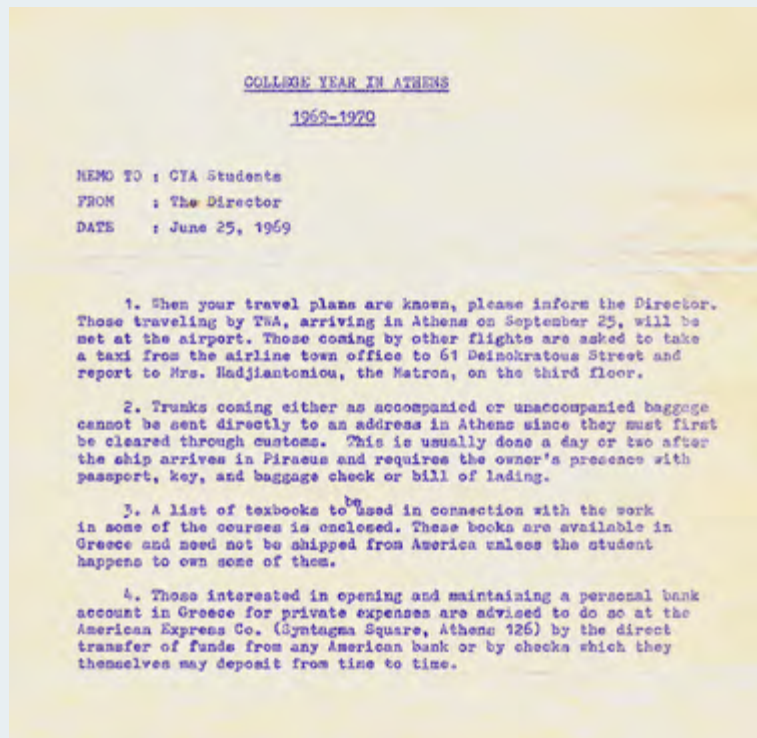
My memory of the place itself is faded but my emotional experience still burns. My time in Egypt and Greece inspired me to prioritize building bridges across economies and cultures as a way of addressing systemic inequality. I am mindful that our current time of pandemic and economic upheaval may lead to ever greater inequality and poverty in the poorest of countries. My hope is that rather than shying away from the problem and turning inward (like I did in Egypt), leaders, citizens, and the international community choose to listen, understand, cooperate, and help. Thank you to Tim, Rob, Nadia, and Zoe for being part of my journey.

*Ed Brzytwa attended The College of the Holy Cross*



## FROM THE CYA ARCHIVES...

For each issue of The Owl we will be sharing something from the CYA archives which are housed in the CYA Library. If you want to contribute something, please email [alumni@cyathens.org](mailto:alumni@cyathens.org). Thank you.



## IS THAT AN OLD FRESCO?

'Is that an old Fresco?'  
No, Evans removed it.  
'Is this the old throne room?'  
Yes, Evans improved it.  
'Now, here's the Queen's courtyard.'  
Well, it's been re-done.  
'Yet, there's an old column!'  
No, that's a new one.  
'And this ancient stair case?'  
Evans re-did it.  
'And where is the artwork?'  
The Cretans have hid it.  
'This chamber? This panel?'  
The arch and the wall?'  
All built by Evans  
and painted each fall.  
'This room?'  
Restored.  
'This hallway?'  
Re-floored.  
'But why did he do this?'  
What was the meaning?'  
The ruins disturbed him  
He thought they were leaning.

I came here to day-dream  
to dream of old Crete.  
But Evans came first, and  
he dreamt in concrete.

*Stephen Fay | October 20, 1970*



## MY LAST DAY IN ATHENS: REFLECTIONS ON AN EARLY DEPARTURE

by Hannah Ziomek

Going into the week of midterms, I had no idea what would be in store for the next few days. I was stressed out studying for my exams and had pushed all other thoughts to the side. Even on that Wednesday, when Donald Trump had announced the first of many travel bans from Europe to the United States, I wasn't thinking about the possibility of having to go home. However, the next day I was forced to face reality when my home institution sent the dreaded email which told me that I was now required to leave my new home. Friday morning I woke up and was determined to make my last day in Athens a day worthwhile.

Over the course of the semester I had been pressing flowers into my journal from my favorite places that I had seen in Greece: wild flowers from Mycenae, violets from Olympia, and daisies from Messene. However, I realized that I had yet to collect any from Athens. I set off in pursuit that morning and was lucky to find some small white flowers as I passed by the Zappeion. I sat on a bench for a while there looking up at the building that I had passed on my way to Syntagma Square so many times and hadn't given much thought to. But I had to keep walking to my real destination; I crossed the street and walked past the Temple of Olympian Zeus, past Hadrian's Arch, until I was finally at the steps that led up to the Acropolis.

It was a very hot day, perhaps even the hottest it had been since we'd arrived in January, and I felt the warmth on my back as I started the journey up. I used my ICOMOS student card one last time, able to appreciate the value that it held with the free ticket in my hand. And I don't know what I was expecting to happen when I got to the top; are there even flowers on the Acropolis? I couldn't remember. But my question was answered quickly as I spotted some yellow flowers just as I walked through the Propylaea. And as I reached down to retrieve the flowers, I looked at the Parthenon up close for the first time in a long time and realized that this was the first time I had ventured to the Acropolis alone. And even though I was surrounded by hundreds of people, I felt like I was the only one there.



Yellow wildflowers from the Propylaea of the Parthenon.

I spent my time that day just walking around the Acropolis again and again, taking in every last second of how incredible this city was. I looked out onto the view and tried to see if I could pick out all of the places I had been. The Panathenaic Stadium looked so small from a distance, but I felt the large hold that it had on me. I'm not sure when I decided to leave, but eventually I found myself walking back past the entrance and back to Pangrati. By the time I reached my apartment I was a sunburnt version of myself. As I started packing up my room, the sun started to set through my window and as the day started to slip away I realized that there was one last thing I needed to do: I needed to see one last sunset over the stadium.

I left my apartment in a hurry and walked up the street to the back entrance of the stadium, but to my disappointment found that it was padlocked for the first time this semester. Perhaps to encourage social distancing and prevent people from using the park? I wasn't sure but just as I was about to walk home defeated, a group of guys my age walked up to the gate where I was. They looked just as disappointed as me but then one of them looked optimistic and beckoned the others to follow. I don't know if I was just losing it at this point but I thought it would be a great idea to follow them. Sure enough, I saw them climb through an area of the fence and walk down a hill towards the stadium.

When I reached the fence, I realized that I had climbed through this same opening the very first day that I was in Athens—a friend and I had gotten lost and decided to go through to find ourselves back at the stadium.

As I watched the sunset with the Acropolis in the distance, I realized something very important. Even though I could be sad right then, I chose not to be, because even though I had been acting like this was my last day in Athens it didn't have to be. Of course, it was still a bittersweet moment. After all, I'm not sure when I am going to be able to return, but this city has been here for thousands of years, and it can wait a little longer. And even though our experience may have been cut short, that doesn't make the time we had any less incredible or valuable. It's just different than we expected. My only regret is that I didn't spend my time in Athens like I did the last day: appreciating every part of what I loved about the city. But no matter what, I will always look back at this time in my life and know how lucky I was to have experienced all that I did and I will always be grateful to CYA for that.

*Media Lab intern Hannah Ziomek (Spring '20) attends Skidmore College.*



## CODING WITH REFUGEE TEENS AT SOCIAL HACKERS ACADEMY

by Bliss Perry

*Even though the Spring '20 semester ended early due to COVID-19, students still had productive and meaningful volunteer experiences during their time in Athens. Bliss Perry spent his semester teaching coding to refugee students with Social Hackers Academy, and continues to work for the organization now that he's returned home.*

My time working with Social Hackers Academy (SHA) was easily one of the main highlights of my experience in Greece. The organization is very well-run, the fellow volunteers were extremely welcoming and friendly, and my students were outstandingly sharp, enthusiastic, and motivated.

*How did you decide to volunteer? How did CYA help you find the best fit for you?*

I want to provide some basics about the organization and my responsibilities, since to my understanding I'm the first CYA student to work there. SHA seeks to provide tech education in the form of seven-month long coding bootcamps for refugees and other economically vulnerable groups in Athens. I've taught coding at Harvard and other settings in the US, so when I found this organization online before coming to Athens, it seemed like a natural fit. I reached out virtually to the managing director via LinkedIn, and during my first week in Athens I went in for an interview and started volunteering immediately afterwards that evening.

My main responsibilities consisted of serving as a mentor and advisor for a group of five students who were working on their final project, a social media site seeking to provide a centralized place for local NGOs to create profiles, receive messages, post status updates, etc. — all coded from scratch. In addition, I conducted two series of school-wide workshops—one on algorithms, and one on data science—and, for my birthday in April, **I raised over 3,000 euros** in donations for the organization. Now, I've been working on creating a curriculum covering the basics of entrepreneurship (innovation, accounting/finance, strategy, and marketing) and putting together a series of guest speakers—who are successful startup founders from the US and Europe—to accompany this course.

*Do you think you gave back to the community and how?*

In my opinion, SHA is a very special organization in Athens because it seeks to offer

a sustainable solution to the refugee crisis in Greece through empowering its students with a path towards a prosperous career in the ever-growing tech industry. As a mentor, I've sought to empower my talented students by emphasizing our similarities rather than differences—most of all, our shared love of technology and desire to harness its power to make the world a better place—and by urging them to think ambitiously about careers at famous tech companies or further education in the US or elsewhere. I'd consider it a resounding success if these efforts have played any role in helping to move my students one step closer to their goals.

*What was your favorite moment from volunteering? And the most meaningful?*

The best moment I had at SHA was a workshop on algorithms which I taught in late February. The room was packed with students, and their enthusiasm for the material was palpable at all points during my two-hour session. I like to make my lectures as interactive as possible, and, whenever I had a question, half of the room immediately raised their hands, often responding to each other's comments about the fine points of algebra or Python. All this technical material, however, is not to say that we didn't have any fun: paying homage to a classic ritual performed by my CS professor at school, David Malan, I ended my lecture by ripping a phone book in half to illustrate the "binary search" algorithm. That night really made clear my students' sheer passion and motivation, and I was so happy when many of them sent me Slack messages that evening to ask about more ways they could keep studying algorithms beyond the workshop!

*Do you think volunteering changed your view of Athens? Why or why not?*

Although Athens is best known for its ancient history, working with SHA allowed me to explore another side of the city—its growing status as a regional hub for technology and entrepreneurship. SHA is very well-plugged-in to the city's tech ecosystem, and I relished every moment of my time spent with the local software developers, expat volunteers, and tech-savvy students. One day, for example, a fellow volunteer took me to visit [Hackerspace.gr](https://hackerspace.gr) a space open to the public for coders, engineers, and builders



Bliss teaching algorithms at SHA

to work on personal projects. Especially since CYA is a more humanities-focused program, it was very great to dip my toes in Athens' tech scene through SHA!

*Did volunteering encourage you to explore different parts of Athens/Greece?*

SHA is located on a vibrant street near Omonoia square which is marked by signage in Bengali in addition to Greek, and by street-vendors selling delicious South Asian fast food rather than gyros or souvlaki. Ever since my first day working there, I fell in love with the neighborhood and the contrast it posed with the rest of Athens. Spending time at SHA and exploring the restaurants and shops of its environs showed me a pocket of diversity in Athens which greatly augmented my perception of the city, and helped to contextualize some of the reading I'd been doing in classes at CYA about the refugee crisis which has affected Greece greatly in recent years.

*Did you meet any new friends while volunteering?*

Of course! My supervisor Abed, the organization's Head of Education and the recipient of a Vodafone Foundation grant, is definitely the closest connection I made at the organization, but I also became good friends with my five students, who hailed from places as far as Afghanistan and Sierra Leone but all shared a common passion for technology and its global potential. Additionally, it was a fun experience to get to know my fellow volunteers—whether Greek software developers, German consultants, or American video game artists—and to hear their best recommendations for the coolest restaurants, music venues, and activities in Athens, which gave me constant motivation to explore the whole city of Athens beyond just Pangrati."

*Bliss Perry, (Spring '20) attends Harvard University.*

## CYA AMBASSADOR FLIGHT AWARD WINNER



We are excited to announce that **Erin Hahn** from Trinity University is the Spring CYA Ambassador Flight Award Winner! Erin went above and beyond in her role as an ambassador, and exceeded all expectations! She was always one of the first to step up whenever we needed volunteers or support material.

We would also like to congratulate the two runner-ups **Jill Robins** (Emory University) and **Jessica Kleinfelder** (UNC Chapel Hill) as well as all of our **student ambassadors** for putting in time and effort in representing CYA!

Here's what Erin told us about her experience studying in Athens with CYA:

"Living in an ancient yet modern city and being immersed in the culture of city life in Athens was an eye-opening experience. It changed my perspective on what I thought a city should be like, and solidified my desire to pursue a career in city planning. Studying and living abroad for a semester or summer is rewarding on a level that is incomparable to temporarily visiting a new country. It is immersive; it throws you into a new culture in an authentic and intimate way. It pushes you out of your comfort zone, allowing for personal growth and advancement on a level I had never before experienced. It 'makes the familiar strange', and allows you to see the society you grew up in in a new light"

### \*ANNOUNCING VIRTUAL CLASS REUNIONS\*

CYA is excited to share that we will be hosting some virtual alumni reunions this fall; the dates are listed below. We will use ZOOM as the platform and hope that alumni will be able to join in. If you are interested in participating, please look for announcements via email, on social media, OR you can express interest now by signing up here:

1960s	October 17, 2020	<b>1960s RSVP</b>
1970s	October 24, 2020	<b>1970s RSVP</b>
1980s	November 14, 2020	<b>1980s RSVP</b>
1990s	November 21, 2020	<b>1990s RSVP</b>
2000s	December 5, 2020	<b>2000s RSVP</b>
2010s	December 12, 2020	<b>2010s RSVP</b>

These will be casual get-togethers where attendees can get an update on CYA and mingle/reminisce with friends and classmates. We will have special guests (CYA Faculty!!!) and members of CYA's Administration attending each one. The events are scheduled for 12:30EST.

## COOKING CORNER

### SOUFIKO- TRADITIONAL IKARIAN VEGETABLE DISH

*Shared by Maria Tsahas, CYA Registrar*

Soufiko is a traditional Ikarian summer dish (as the main ingredients are in season). Like in most Greek villages, each home had a designated outdoor cooking space that was used during the summer months. Soufiko was cooked outdoors over burning wood—nothing compared to the taste!!

#### Ingredients (Serves 4 to 6)

4 big onions  
2 medium eggplants  
2 large zucchinis  
1 large potato  
3 green peppers  
3 red peppers  
4 cloves of garlic  
3 ripe tomatoes, grated  
1 tablespoon sugar  
Salt and pepper to taste

#### Directions

Cut the eggplants in roundlets and soak in salt water for 1 hour to remove bitterness, then rinse and let drip.

Cut the onions, zucchinis, and peppers in roundlets or bite-size chunks, and the potatoes in wedges. Chop the garlic.

Heat 1 cup of extra virgin olive oil in a large sauté pan (Dutch oven or cast-iron skillet if available)

Add the onions and sauté until translucent

Add the potatoes and cook for about 5 minutes

Add the zucchinis, eggplants, peppers, and garlic

Add grated tomatoes, sugar, salt, and pepper

Gently mix everything well and simmer for 5 minutes

Cover the pan, reduce heat to low and cook for 45 minutes (if you want vegetables to be more tender cook for more time). Check periodically making sure vegetables have not soaked up all the liquid- add small amount of water to replenish absorbed liquid.

Serve warm or cold drizzling extra virgin olive oil on top. Best enjoyed with crusty bread!



## BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CYA LIBRARIAN

If you are a fan of Greek mythology, if you like myths retold from the women's point of view, if you enjoy stories about goddesses, witches, wars, spells, suffering, victory, betrayals, then these books are for you! Four books that will keep you company when you feel nostalgic for Greece and your course on Myth and Religion!

### **The Penelopiad**

by Margaret Atwood. Toronto: Knopf, 2005.

In Homer's account in *The Odyssey*, Penelope—wife of Odysseus and cousin of the beautiful Helen of Troy—is portrayed as the quintessential faithful wife, her story a salutary lesson through the ages.

In a splendid contemporary twist to the ancient story, Margaret Atwood has chosen to give the telling of it to Penelope and to her twelve hanged maids, asking: "What led to the hanging of the maids, and what was Penelope really up to?"

### **The Silence of the Girls: a novel**

by Pat Barker. New York: Doubleday, 2018.

The ancient city of Troy has withstood a decade under siege of the powerful Greek army, which continues to wage bloody war over a stolen woman—Helen. In the Greek camp, another woman—Briseis—watches and waits for the war's outcome.

Briseis is just one among thousands of women living behind the scenes in this war—the slaves and prostitutes, the nurses, the women who lay out the dead—all of them erased by history. With breathtaking historical detail and luminous prose, Pat Barker brings the teeming world of the Greek camp to vivid life.

### **Circe: a novel**

by Madeline Miller. New York: Little Brown and Company, 2018.

In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child—not powerful, like her father, nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power—the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves.

### **The Autobiography of Cassandra: Princess and Prophetess of Troy**

by Ursule Molinaro. Kingston: McPherson & Co., 1992.

Princess of Troy, daughter of Priam and Hecabe, sister of Paris and Hector, and finally prize captive of Agamemnon. Cassandra is central to the ancient Trojan story. Only she could know what fate



CYA librarian Georgia Katsarou

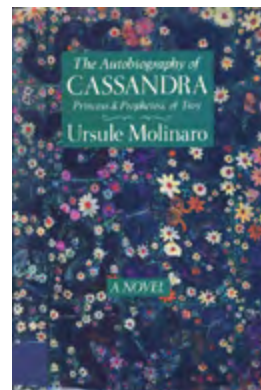
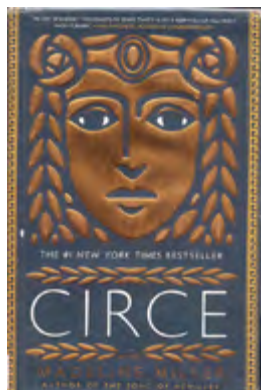
would be brought to all, including her own at the hands of Clytemnestra. Passionately alive, Cassandra's disembodied voice echoes through time with an unheeded warning against the subjugation of woman and contamination of the earth.

### **A Thousand Ships**

by Natalie Haynes. London: Mantle, 2019.

The devastating consequences of the fall of Troy stretch from Mount Olympus to Mount Ida, from the citadel of Troy to the distant Greek islands, and across oceans and sky in between. These are the stories of the women embroiled in that legendary war and its terrible aftermath, as well as the feud and the fatal decisions that started it all...

Powerfully told from an all-female perspective, *A Thousand Ships* gives voices to the women, girls and goddesses who, for so long, have been silent.





Do you have memories to share?

Please send them to [alumni@cyathens.org](mailto:alumni@cyathens.org) and you may be featured in the next issue of The Owl.

*Submissions from Maureen Carpenter '70*



In the photo, A.R. is on the left, standing. Dean Maragos is the seated gentleman with dark hair and mustache in the middle of a bevy of girls!

Here are two stories about **Andrew Robin Burn** (A.R. Burn), a professor at CYA from 1969-1972.

During the first week of classes at CYA in 1970 (yes, 50 years ago) we were all tremendously excited by our classes and the people that were teaching them. Some were evidently famous, although most of the California students were not too clear on that. I think we had heard of H.D. Kitto and were possibly familiar with his book *The Greeks*, but many of us had no clue. We were a small group taking **Fifth Century Athens** with A.R. Burn. He was a Scotsman, and always wore a lovely tweed jacket and often a jaunty little cap. He was famous in his own right, but we were still all so new and full of excitement we did not have time to think about such things. So, our first assignment was to read the Book One of Herodotus Histories. We of course read it all, and excitedly walked into class, knowing that we had it down! In walked Mr. Burn (which is what we called him), he unloaded his briefcase, looked up and asked, "Where was Herodotus born?" This was followed by a deafening silence; in a sense we were all paralyzed, and had NO answer (although it's all there in the Penguin Classic very first page...I still have my book!) After an incredibly long pause with no end in sight, we were saved by the brave **Dean Maragos** in the back row. Arm fully extended in an attempt to be called on, Dean blurted out, "but Mr. Burn, Mr. Burn, we've all read the book and are ready!" Slowly A.R. looked up at all of us and quietly said: "Don't ever come into this classes unprepared again." And we didn't.

Later during the first semester of classes, possibly in November, A.R. Burn announced that he would be leading students to the plains of Marathon and both he and Peter Green would be discussing the famous battle giving us insight to Athens and the 1st Persian invasion of Greece. Dean Maragos got right on it and came up with "Burns Battlefield Tours" and put the sign-up sheet on our bulletin board outside the dining room. Soon a large crowd had signed up. The school got us a small bus and we all managed to ride directly to the site. There on the very plain this historic battle with the Persians took place, we stood, or sat or leaned on trees and rocks to listen to both of our professors giving us their most up-to-date knowledge and research on the famous slaughter. Of course, Marathon looks totally different than it did in 490 B.C. and that was all explained to us and taken into account. It was a lovely afternoon, and everyone was having a jolly good time. Suddenly we heard people whispering and humming and someone said that Spyridon Marinatos was on site!!! (He was the Director of excavations at the Plataean Tumulus, or the Tomb of the Plataeans) and sure enough he was there dressed in a suit! He kindly took his keys and walked over to unlock the doors to the entrance to the tumulus. We all marched in smiling and repeatedly saying thank you in the best Greek we could muster. We were totally impressed by the fact that this giant of Greek archaeology was letting *us* into his excavation and showing us around. Of course, he most likely was familiar with CYA and most certainly with Peter Green and A.R. Burn. At the end of our tour Mr. Burn announced that he would be walking back to Athens!!! and everyone was invited. Overcome with shame I rushed back to the bus to hide, and to this day I regret not walking back (at least part way) to Athens with A.R. who was 70 at the time!!!

**Margaret Elwell** was our "housing director". She was terribly English and quite proper and at the time we thought she was strict and very business-like. It was up to Margaret to be sure we all got settled in and got along with roommates and happy in our apartments. She did a surprise



Margaret Elwell (and Maureen Carpenter?)

drop-in one evening at our apartment at 42 Xenocratous; she was just checking in and came into our room that I shared with **Carin Christensen**. She looked over at my bed and noticed I had no sheets! I explained to her I had turned them into the laundry (which we did weekly) but my clean ones were not ready, so I just came home and slept without them. Margaret was horrified; no sheets!!! just a plain pillow and a blanket on top of the mattress; she could not understand, but I told her I was fine. I definitely dropped a few points that evening, but nothing came of it. Toward the end of the year I had come down with hepatitis and naturally Margaret would come in and check. The class was getting ready for the annual trip to the north, and everyone was excited about it. Margaret felt it was best to put me in the hospital, and I refused. I told her I would get a room at the Hilton Hotel before going to the hospital (pretty nervy for someone quite yellow and nauseous and broke). I think she thought I really was serious and ended up finding one of the students (lovely **Anne Hajis**) who was staying in Athens while the rest of the class went to the north. It worked out wonderfully, and everyone was happy. So, it was with great surprise that when I returned to Greece with my sister three years later that I ran into Margaret at the Friday market on Xenocratous. We were both so happy to see each other, and she insisted on taking me and my sister out to her favorite taverna. That night we walked over to her apartment which was very close to the American School. We chatted while drinking a glass of wine, and then we headed out in the most unusual British car out to the suburbs, which I never could figure out where we ended up. It was a lovely night and the tables were actually set down in

an olive orchard lit up with lots of lights. It was great fun, and Margaret did all the ordering, including the retsina wine. Three or four hours later the food was gone, but we were still drinking. Margaret proved to be amazing, and the most sober of the three of us. She then decided to drive us back to our hotel and to this day I don't know how she did it, but we got to the Divani Hotel, and she poured both us out of her car, and sped off. From that point in time Margaret became a dear friend and we exchanged letters, photos, and post cards till her death.

I've included a favorite photo of the Phyls, in their lovely backyard. I made it a point to visit them when I returned to Athens and they were absolutely delightful. It's just great fun seeing both of them together.



*Submission from Sharon (Miller (71) Bishop*

I have very fond memories of spending time in their beautiful home. I would take the bus each morning and work with Mr. Phyl in his office (just doing simple paperwork and filing — no computers!). Maria would be bustling around the house, shaking out *flokati* rugs and sweeping. She would bring us coffee and a pastry mid-morning and would then disappear to the kitchen to prepare lunch. Mr. Phyl and I would work a few more hours and then join Mrs. Phyl for a delicious lunch. I remember the wonderful feeling of “family” being with them. They were always so good to me. Sometimes Mrs. Phyl would drive me home and we would sit in her car and talk for a long while. She was a great listener. Although I miss them both, I especially miss her.

## EVDOKIA RETIRES

**Evdokia Kleni**, the oldest member of our Housing Department, retired this past June.

Evdokia worked as Housekeeper both in Kolonaki and Pangrati apartments since 1998 and many of our alumni will remember her sweet smile, calm manner and impeccable work.

CYA deeply appreciates Evdokia's dedication, accomplishments and personal integrity. It is people like her who truly make our workplace a joy.

Again, Congratulations on her retirement! We wish her all the best for her future.

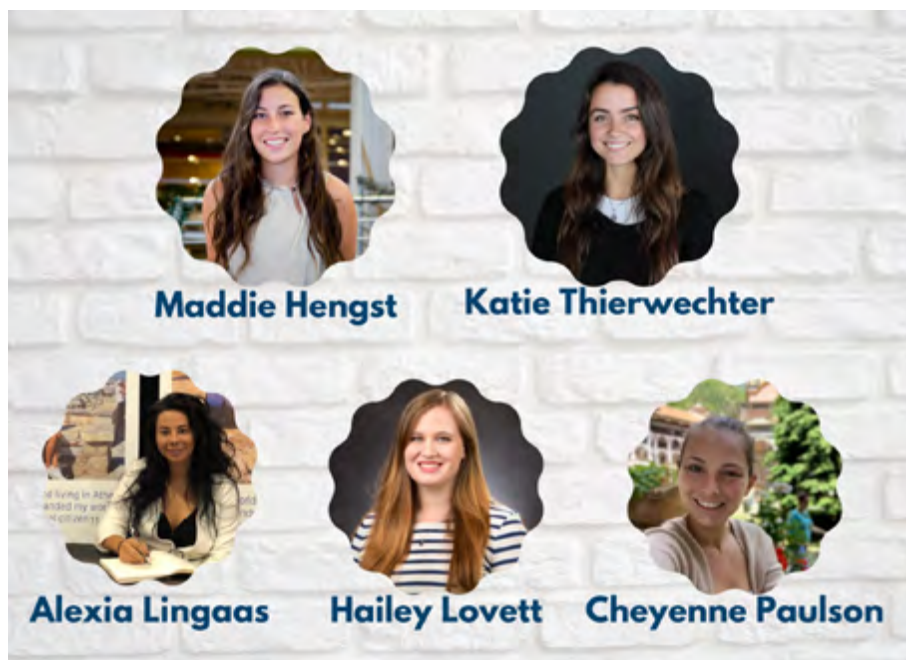


Evdokia at her farewell party, with President Alexis Phylactopoulos and Ms. Popi Baloglu, Director of Housing & Catering.

## TRAVEL REPS FOR FALL 2020

This fall was unique for our recruitment team as they had to do all of their school visits and info sessions virtually. They definitely rose to the challenge and we are very proud of them for all of their hard work and efforts. Maddie and Katie were outstanding representatives of CYA.

Pictured below are **Maddie Hengst**, Spring '18 from the University of Southern California and **Katie Thierwechter**, CYA Summer '15, from Indiana University along with members of our North American Staff.





**Viridiana Villalva Salas** (Spring '19) was selected by members of the Commencement Student Speaker Selection Committee to address her classmates at the 2020 Commencement of Connecticut College; read more [here](#).

**Amanda Yeoh** (Spring '18) is pursuing a Master's in Interaction Design at California College of the Arts.

**Dimitris Stavropoulos** (Fall '15) writes: "As my second master's degree at the London School of Economics came to an end, I am honored to have joined NATO in such challenging time for the Alliance. I am extremely grateful for all the amazing people I met in London the past year, while also looking forward to such a unique experience in Brussels."

**Cami (Beekman) Jones** (Fall '12) "I am beginning a new role within the graduate student ministry of Cru, formerly Campus Crusade for Christ. I will give direction to our Grad Fellows Program. My son, Thomas William Jones, is turning one next month!"

**Carly Machado** (Spring '05) I will be seven years at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in January 2021, where I am Administrator for Investments. I have been back to Greece twice since CYA and look forward to traveling there again when we are all able.



**Kim Gray** ('80), daughter **Glenna** (Summer '12) and **Valerie (Gilmore) Paul** ('80) met up in Massachusetts in August. Kim wrote: "It was SO much fun to re-connect again and it felt like no time at all had passed since we had seen each last. Val and I, who were roommates at CYA, hadn't seen each other in 35 years or more!"

**Maureen Carpenter** ('71) writes: still busy in Belize, at the incredible Maya site of Caracol. This past season we found the largest lithic workshop at Caracol and managed to uncover 58,000 pieces of chert and quartzite used as drills. No one really cares about lithics, but I persevere on. Also, I was chosen to be part of an international group working at the Maya site of Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico. Sadly, so far three other projects, including a medieval castle in Roscommon Ireland, have been cancelled so I am at home in California trying to breathe the incredibly bad ashly air. We have really had a very tough year between the covid and the forest fires. This is the fourth year for us having fires in our county, so we are hoping for more rain this year and less fires in the future. In case ANYONE gets down to either Caracol, Palenque, Las Cuevas or Roscommon please drop me an email, and I'll be happy to help you on a visit, or actually guide you if you come down while we are all working. You'd ALL be welcome.

**Stephen Fay** ('71) retired last spring and he and Martha ("Muffin") have moved to Holyoke, Mass. "It's an old New England mill town that was once extremely prosperous but has been struggling for years. The diversity here is really cool. It is in the Connecticut River Valley surrounded by more solvent towns such as Amherst and Northampton. We chose Holyoke over others because we like that it's scrappy and real estate is remarkably affordable. Holyoke was in the news recently because the Holyoke Solders Home was especially hard hit by the coronavirus. The whole state of Massachusetts has been pretty hard hit. We are hunkered down and being very, very careful...so far so good."

**Beth Marshall** ('71) is really looking forward to our class' rescheduled 2021 reunion and knows it will be amazing. "I am enjoying CYA's Virtual Lecture series, as it makes me feel like I am still connected to Greece in some way." While admitting she has been delinquent in submitting updates, she has plans on writing a more in-depth catch-up soon. "I recently wrote to the former Chair of the Classic Dept. at the University of Pittsburgh. He was my Major advisor and was instrumental in helping me get a full scholarship from the Greek Community in Pittsburgh to attend CYA. As I said to him, that year changed my life in every way imaginable!"

**Lynne (Dominick) Novack** ('71) "While stranded in our Chilean Patagonia second home, I saw several of the CYA zoom lectures. During one with **Michael Herzfeld**, I spotted my roommate **Katharine Weld Harding**, and sent her a virtual hug. She wrote me right away, cc'ing our third roommate **Elizabeth Brittain**, and now we have had phone reunions and emails bringing us together as we always were, after 52 years! So much fun to reminisce about our incredible year 1967-68. I also had an email exchange with our wonderful Greek history professor **Peter Green**, who was just turning 95 with a mind as sharp as ever. Classmate **Alexa Pallas** and I also connected and are Facebook friends. It has been a joy to bring my Greek experiences into sharp focus all these years later. I am so grateful! Now my husband John and I will finally be flying home to Dallas after seven months, including our first winter here. And then, I can pull out my CYA Greece photo album and journal to reminisce even more. Thank you, CYA!"

**Grace Holden** (Fall '70) wrote that she will still plan on joining her class in Athens, NEXT YEAR!!! when hopefully our lives will be very different. "I'm still living in Arlington, Virginia. I retired three years ago and am enjoying taking all kinds of classes, including Italian, Japanese, yoga and dancing (temporarily suspended). I am also fostering rescue dogs and have a small dog boarding business. And I am on the Board of a small wildlife rescue group and a supporter of many environmental and animal causes. I have a son working in Cambridge MA, who is doing well and loves skydiving!!!!

**Elizabeth (Gilpin) Darbro** ('64) My husband, Don, and I retired the end of October last year. After an exciting beginning to our plans to travel (Thanksgiving with children in southern Alabama followed by a bucket list trip to St Augustine Florida) an influenza like illness kept us home until the Covid19 shelter in place order brought a halt to all plans! Our garden has provided a wealth of cucumbers and tomatoes over which we sprinkle olive oil and feta and remember trips of days gone by!



## VISITORS WHO SIGNED NADIA'S BOOK:

Dear Nadia and CYA,  
Thank you for welcoming me back to CYA after 26 years (1994). You and this school changed my life and led me on a path to travel the world. Now that I am back in Athens it is wonderful and emotional to remember the past and live in the present in the culture of Greece. I will always be grateful and endlessly thankful for the experiences and people I have met and continue to make and meet. CYA is a special place!

*Thank you and love, Scott  
Scott Weigand, Fall '94*

Hello CYA!

Τι να πρωτοπώ για το CYA?! I was here in '92 and fell in love with the country of my background. After graduating in 1994, I decided to move back to Athens and find a job, and live in Greece for one year. Over 20 years later I am still here, living, laughing, loving and enjoying every minute. CYA was a turning point in my life, and pointed me in the right direction. Much love to everyone at CYA, a sincere thank you for making the CYA experience so special"

*Gigi Papoulias, Fall '92*

## CLASS OF 1970-71 VIRTUAL GET TOGETHER



Keith Nighthenheler, Mo Carpenter, Stephen and Muffin Fay, Jack Hermansen, Nicholas Bromell, Kathy Poyntz, Lavonne Miller, Rebecca Fay, Joan Crider, Martha STrock, Bob Findlay, Deborah Wince-Smith, Connie Woolridge, Mimi Hauenstein, Sharon Miller and Dean Maragos

## CYA ADMINISTRATION

### Executive

**Alexis Phylactopoulos**, President

**Elina Sinopoulou**, Assistant to the President

### Academics

**Theoni Scourta**, Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Maria Tsahas**, Registrar

**Georgia Katsarou**, Librarian

**Demetrios Kritsotakis**, Academic Advisor

### Administration

**Peggy Myresiotou**, Vice President for Administration

**Kristallia Sarlani**, Front Desk Coordinator

**Alex Makropoulos**, Staff Assistant

**Anthi Papageorgiou**, Staff Assistant

**Giota Vouzna**, Staff Assistant

### Alumni Relations

**Erica Huffman**, (CYA '93)

Director of Alumni Relations

### Development

**Vassilis Simopoulos**, Development Officer

### Educational Travel & Short-Term Programs

**Vasso Matrakouka**, Short-Term Programs Manager

**Vassilis Karavassilis**, Short-Term Programs

Coordinator

**Evgenia Ghizas**, Short-Term Project Administrator

### Financial/Accounting

**Maria Malliou**, Financial Officer

**Vana Bica**, Accountant

### Housing/Food

**Popi Baloglu**, Director of Housing & Catering

**Kallia Alexandridi**, Housing & Catering Assistant

**Michalis Alexandridis**, Maintenance

### Media Lab

**Spiros Kourkoulos**, Digital Designer

**Sofia Stavropoulou**, Social Media Coordinator

**Anna Wichmann**, (CYA '18) Copywriter

### Strategic Planning

**Popi Triantafyllidi**, Director of Strategic Planning

### Student Affairs/Services

**Nadia Meliniotis**, Executive Director of

Student Affairs

**Jennifer Holland**, (CYA '99) Student Affairs Advisor

### US Administration

**Maria Marakas**, Bursar and Manager of the North American Office

**Alexia Lingaas**, Institutional Relations Manager

**Hailey Lovett**, Student Advisor

**Cheyenne Paulson**, (CYA Summer '15)

Student and Campus Relations Coordinator

New address? To update your address, use [this link](#)

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COLLEGE YEAR IN ATHENS

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## COLLEGE YEAR IN ATHENS ALUMNI/AE NEWS AND INFORMATION

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ADDRESS (if different from label) \_\_\_\_\_

MOBILE PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

If the above is a temporary address, please indicate how long you expect it to be valid (until? \_\_\_\_\_)

To update you address, please visit [this link](#)

\*Our system is to list Fall semester and Spring semester students as belonging to the class of the full academic year (e.g., people who attended in Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 both belong to the class of '91). Summer students are listed by the year they attended.

UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE and MAJOR(s) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

WORK ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I WOULD LIKE CYA TO CONTACT ME ABOUT A POSSIBLE MAJOR GIFT.