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Τα Επτάνησα αποτελούν ένα ιδιαίτερο κομμάτι του Ελληνισμού το οποίο από την αρχαιότητα έως σήμερα έχει σημαντικότερη προσφορά σε όλους τους τομείς της πατρίδας μας, με ιδιαίτερη έμφαση σε αυτούς των Γραμμάτων και των Τεχνών.

Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, θα ήθελα να σας παροτρύνω να αναδείξετε ακόμη περισσότερο την πλούσια πολιτιστική κληρονομιά και παράδοση του κάθε νησιού καθώς μάλιστα, για ιστορικούς λόγους, τα Επτάνησα κατάφεραν ν' αφομοιώσουν και ν' αναπλάσουν στοιχεία άλλων ευρωπαϊκών χωρών ενσωματώνοντας τα στον ελληνισμό.

Με τις θερμότερες ευχές μου.

Δρ. Σταύρος Κυρίμης

Γενικός Πρόξενος της Ελλάδος στο Σύδνεϋ

# A short history of the Ionian Islands

*“You enter Greece as one might enter a dark crystal, the form of things becomes irregular, refracted ... Other countries may offer you discoveries in manners or lore or landscape; Greece offers you something harder – the discovery of yourself”*

When the great English writer, Lawrence Durrell, first arrived in Corfu he was moved to write these words. His gaze was in fact turned towards the Ionian Islands where “the blue really begins” as far as he was concerned.

The Ionian Islands have always been different from the rest of Greece. For nearly 400 years the Seven Islands (Heptanesos or τα Επτάνησα) of Corfu (Kerkyra), Paxos, Ithaca, Kefalonia (Cephalonia), Lefkada (Santa Maura), Zakynthos (Zante) and Kythera (Cerigo) at one and the same time flourished under and were subdued by their Venetian overlords. After brief encounters with the French and Russians in the Napoleonic turmoil that was unleashed in the Mediterranean in the late 1700s, the islands finally came under the ‘protection’ of the British and from the beginning of the nineteenth century for a period of over fifty years they were almost a part of the far-flung British Empire.

And then in 1864 the seven islands were ceded to Greece and the Venetian/Italian and British dominion over the Ionian Sea had formally come to an end.

## Why the Ionian Islands?

This island group almost appears like stepping stones down the west coast of mainland Greece with Kythera (historically if not geographically) making up the seventh island at the southern tip of the Peloponnese, between Cape Malea and Crete.

There are more than seven islands in the Ionian Sea and extending as far as Antikythera but the seven largest islands account for the name “Eptanisa”. The origin of the name “Ionian” is somewhat more obscure, but is thought to derive from the goddess Io, one of Zeus’ lovers who fled the wrath of a jealous Hera and passed through the waters now known as the Ionian Sea.



The islands figure prominently in history and legend. They were settled by Greeks possibly as early as 1200 BC. Kerkyra was occupied by colonists from Corinth in 734 BC but almost 300 years later it staged a successful revolt against Corinth, which was then allied to Sparta, and became an ally of Athens. This alliance eventually helped precipitate the Peloponnesian Wars (431–404 BC). Ithaca is the legendary birthplace of Odysseus and from where he began, and ended, his legendary Homeric Odyssey. Cerigo is the mythological starting point for the cult of Aphrodite.

The islands then passed into Roman and later Byzantine spheres of influence until 1204 with the fall of Constantinople following the Fourth Crusade. Venice was allocated parts of mainland Greece, various posses-

sions in the Aegean and the Ionian Islands. The islands were over the ensuing centuries the subject of interest and conquest by various invaders, including Aragonese, Genoese, Angevins, Franks and the Turks. Several of the islands changed hands a number of times but essentially they remained under Venetian tutelage as the Venetian Republic and its ‘watery kingdom’ grew and prospered in the Levant. As a result, the Ionian Islands largely escaped the Ottoman yoke that enveloped the rest of the Greek-speaking world. Corfu was in fact the only Greek island never conquered by the Turks.

The islands were known as the Venetian islands of the East and for a long time prospered as trade opportunities expanded within the empire. But this also brought social upheaval as the new middle classes grew to resent the local nobility and wealthy land owners who dominated the local administrative structures. At the same time, the military fortification of the islands proceeded with the construction of dominantly-positioned castles in the islands, notably Corfu and Kythera.

During the 18th century, a Greek national independence movement began to emerge and the relatively independent status of the Ionian Islands attracted exiled Greek intellectuals, freedom fighters and foreign sympathisers. This movement took rapid shape as the Romantic Nationalism movement of the early nineteenth century spread across Europe and into Ottoman-occupied Greece.

In 1797, after Napoléon Bonaparte’s victory over Venice, the Ionian Islands were transferred to France. On Corfu, French rule was welcomed and the symbols of Venetian feudal rule, such as the *Libro d’Oro* (the Golden Book which listed the nobility of the island) and the coats of arms of these families were burnt.

However, not long after, in 1799,

naval forces under the command of the Russian Admiral Ushakov evicted the French and established the Septinsular Republic under joint Russo-Ottoman protection, the very first semi-autonomous Greek state. The newly established state's flag depicted the Lion of St Mark holding the gospel in its right paw, seven lances held together with a ribbon with the year 1800 engraved – the date of the newly established state. The new republic had Corfu as its capital and Greek was made the official language.



However, in 1807, the islands were annexed again to the French under the Treaty of Tilsit because of Napoleon's obsession with the strategic importance of the islands as military bases. But this was not well received in the islands, particularly by the commercial and bourgeois classes in Cephalonia and Zante who wanted closer ties with Britain. In 1809 British forces landed on the Ionian Islands capturing Zante, Ithaca, Cerigo and Cephalonia, where their commander proclaimed: "We present ourselves to you, Inhabitants of Cephalonia, not as Invaders, with views of conquest, but as Allies who hold forth to you the advantages of British protection." In 1810 Santa Maura was captured after heavy fighting.

The islands were referred to as the "Liberated Islands". Although Corfu did not fall militarily to the British, the French presence in the Ionian was gradually being eroded until finally in 1815 after the Battle of Waterloo the British Empire acquired all of the islands (Including Corfu) pursuant to the Treaty of Paris. The Ionian Islands were declared "a single, free and independent state, under the denomination of the United States of the Ionian Islands (and) under the immediate and exclusive protection of His

Majesty the King of Great Britain".

The creation of the Ionian Protectorate is now regarded by many commentators as a form of semi-colonisation as they were ruled by a Lord High Commissioner appointed by the British who also had and exercised the right to keep a military garrison on each of the Islands as well as the right to intervene in the internal affairs of the state. According to the historian Robert Holland, the British regime that oversaw the Seven Islands was the first classic case of an anomalous 'quasi-colony', where the relations between the islanders and the expatriate British colonising forces were quite embittered, more so than in territories where a formal empire structure had been imposed.

At the same time, the British had developed stereotyped constructions of the Ionian islanders who they regarded as European aborigines or Mediterranean Irish; a somewhat ironic reflection on past experiences with other cultures subdued by the British. The Greeks were frankly seen as corrupt and unreliable, whom the British nevertheless had a responsibility to protect.

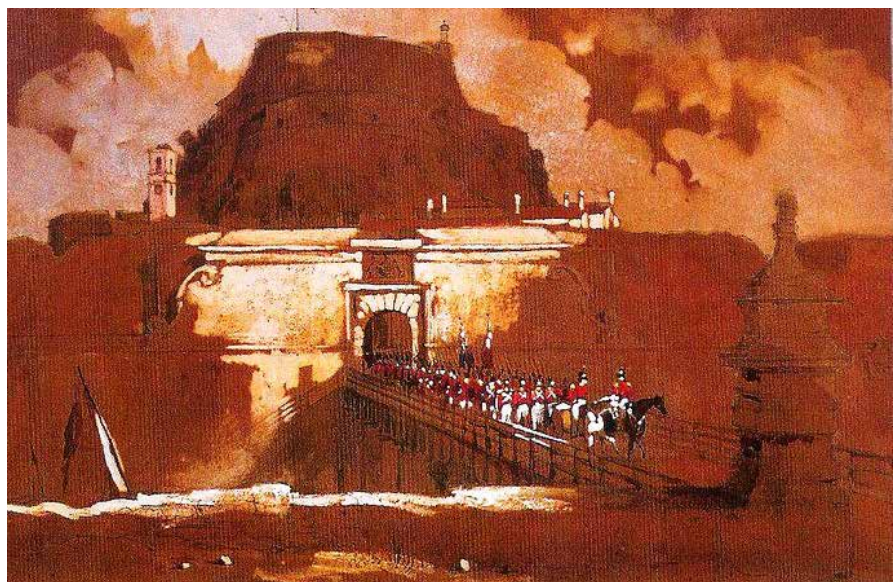
The British did introduce a number of economic, social and judicial reforms and the islands' separate Residents (equivalent to local governors) were active in carrying out public works, particularly roads, bridges and schools as well as the Lancastrian model of education. Many of those works, such as colonial buildings and schools throughout the islands, the intricate road networks on Cephalonia,

and the impressive masonry viaducts on Kythera, provide a vivid testimony. But as Martin Young wrote in his *Traveller's Guide to Corfu and the Other Ionian Islands*, the price of efficient administration was foreign rule and after Greece had achieved its independence the omnipresence of the British had become quite irksome to a local population which, despite centuries of Venetian/Italian domination, had never ceased to feel Greek.

Gradually the challenge to British imperial authority started to resonate. When William Gladstone arrived in the Ionian Islands in 1858 to survey the Ionian political and colonial landscape he was met by demonstrators who demanded *Κάτω η Προστασία* (Down with the Protectorate).

On the 27 September 1859 the Ionian Parliament demanded Union with Greece. Eventually, the Ionian Assembly in October 1863 formally called on Britain to renounce the Protectorate and to hand the islands back to Greece. The Great Powers met in November 1863 and finally agreed to cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece on condition that the islands remained neutral and the imposing fortifications in Corfu were demolished. 1864 was to mark the end of England's mastery of the Mediterranean.

And so it was that on 21 May 1864, after more than 50 years of British rule, the British regiment lowered its colours as it left the Old Fortress in Corfu for the last time. The formal handover of the Ionian Islands was complete and they were Greek again.



# DIONYSIOS SOLOMOS – Greece’s National Poet



Dionysios Solomos, was born in Zante in 1798. He went to Italy to study and then returned to Zakynthos before settling in Corfu where he lived until his death in 1857. He was influenced by his Italian upbringing but was persuaded on his return to write poetry and satire using demotic Greek (or spoken Greek). Indeed, one of the influential people who advocated the return to demotic was John Vilaras who originally came from Cerigo.

In 1821 the Greek struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire began in earnest and the revolutionary fervour that spread through Europe also inspired poets and artists both in England and on the continent.

In 1823, whilst in Zakynthos, Solomos was following the course of the revolutionary struggle. A writer and historian, Spyridon Trikoupis, was passing through Zante on his way to Corfu and challenged the young poet to write a poem in Greek to celebrate some of the Greeks’ early successes. Solomos responded with his epic poem, Hymn to Liberty, the first two stanzas of which went on to become the Greek national anthem. His words invoked the personified image of Liberty, reborn and renewed out of “the sacred bones of the Greeks”. Solomos’ own Ionian islands, under British rule at the time, are described as being “artfully chained” and having “False Freedom’ written on their foreheads.” The poem exhorts the Greek independence fighters to maintain the just fight for freedom, whilst also employing literal imagery of the Romantic era. In the Hymn to Liberty Solomos rejoices in the sight of “lily-fingered virgins” whose “breasts are preparing the sweet-suckled milk of bravery and freedom.”

Solomos in his poem reminds Liberty that she has long remained dormant within the dead bones of the ancient Greeks - as if their immortal soul - waiting to be summonsed to life by Greece’s now enslaved citizens.

In 1828, Nicholas Mantzaros, a Corfiot musician and a friend of Solomos, set the poem to music as an oratorio and the “Hymn to Freedom” was progressively played on national holidays until it was officially adopted as the country’s national anthem in 1865. Solomos was hailed as the “Byron of the East” and his statue now adorns the Plateia Solomou in the town of Zakynthos.

Dionysios Solomos, a native of the Ionian Islands and its literary genius, will forever have a sacred place in Greece’s national conscience.

1. Σὲ γνωρίζω ἀπὸ τὴν κόψι  
Τοῦ σπαθιοῦ τὴν τρομερῆ,  
Σὲ γνωρίζω ἀπὸ τὴν ὄψι,  
Ποῦ μὲ βία μετράει τὴν γῆ .
  
2. Ἄπ' τὰ κόκκαλα βγαλμένη  
Ἐτῶν Ἑλλήνων τὰ ἱερά,  
Καὶ σὰν πρῶτα ἀνδρείωμένη,  
Χαῖρε, ὦ χαῖρε, Ἐλευθεριά!

I shall always recognize you  
by the dreadful sword you hold  
as the Earth with searching vision  
you survey with spirit bold

From the Greeks of old whose dying  
brought to life and spirit free  
now with ancient valour rising  
let us hail you, oh Liberty!





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**Eptanesian Federation of NSW Committee 2014**

**Back Row:** Theodoros Konstantopoulos, Jim Gouskos, Stamatis Tsirimiagos, George Vardas, Steven Orfanos, John Koutsis

**Front Row:** Alekos Dalietos, Cleo Trilivas, Kathy Samios, Victor Kepreotis

# CORFU

## *Apex of the Eptanisos*

Lawrence Durrell got it right when he famously wrote that somewhere between Calabria and Corfu the blue really begins.

Corfu is perhaps the most famous of the Ionian Islands. Formerly known as Corcyra (from which the Greek name Kerkyra is derived) it became a Corinthian colony in around 734BC. Christianity came to the island through two disciples of Paul, Saints Jason and Sosipater. The island, as with the other Ionian Islands, also attracted foreign occupiers. It fell to the Angevins from Naples in 1267 and finally came under Venetian domination in 1386. Before the onset of the British Protectorate, Corfu was occupied briefly by the French whose influence, together with that of the British, can be seen in the neoclassical architecture that is a highlight of Old Corfu Town

This is best seen in the arcaded Liston, a tribute to the Parisian Rue de Rivoli, which overlooks the green esplanade of the Spiniada. Watching cricket on the Corfiot village green or just people-gazing whilst sipping a coffee at one of the nearby cafes adds to the cosmopolitan ambience. The Esplanade in turn separates the town from the Old Venetian built fortress whilst its distinctive Neoclassical building, the Palace of St Michael & St George - once the lavishly-furnished residence of successive British Lord High Commissioners - is home to the renowned Museum of Asian Art. Across the Spiniada, one comes across the statue of Ioannis Kapodistrias, a Corfiot hero and Greece's first President, and the Maitland Rotunda built in honour of Sir Thomas Maitland and the British who ruled the island from 1815 until enosis in 1864. When viewed from the New Fortress, Old Corfu Town with its mixture of pastel shades, blue and gold, narrow alleys and colonnades and Italianate-style buildings does remind you of a Venetian town.

The island's protector, Saint Spyridon, is venerated by worshippers in the ornate Church of St Spyridon by kissing his sacred and beautifully-embroidered slippers as he lies in a silver casket.

But elsewhere Corfu has a "delectable landscape" as Durrell wrote in *Prospero's Cell* (so named because of the view that this enchanted isle was the setting for Shakespeare's "The Tempest"), featuring beautiful beaches, a hinterland of soaring mountains and lush woodlands and a network of walking paths and trails. The lower slopes of the mountainous range are clad with olive groves and cypresses leaning towards the sea.

The seaside town of Paleokastritsa is described by Durrell as a little bay which "lies in a trance, drugged with its own extraordinary perfection - a conspiracy



of light, air, blue sea and cypresses". The imposing Byzantium fortress at Angelokastro (which the Venetians called Castello Sant'Angelo) is one of the most important fortified complexes on Corfu occupying a strategic and seemingly impregnable position on the north-western part of the island with a commanding view over the Adriatic.

Two other towns also stimulate the traveller's imagination, but for different reasons. Kalami, situated on a bay in the north east of the island, is the location of the famous White House which was home to the Durrell family just before World War II. As Durrell himself described it, a "white house set like a dice on a rock already venerable with the scars of wind and water". The other town, nestling beneath Mount Pantokrator (The Almighty), the highest mountain on the island, is Old Peritheia, Corfu's oldest village that has been preserved with the careful and faithful restoration of Venetian mansion buildings, churches and houses.

Corfu's attractions also spread to the Diaponte group of islands. One of those islands, Othonoi, is the westernmost point in Greece and lives up to its reputation for offering an experience that is well off the beaten track. Othonoi is a rocky island with lots of olive trees and beautiful beaches, notably Aspri Ammos. At Kastri near the lighthouse there are traces of a small Venetian fortress, whilst a sanatorium for British soldiers operated at Kassimatika from 1814 to 1864.

One of Othonoi's sons, Alekos Dalietos, is now the President of the Corfu Brotherhood of NSW. The fraternal association was formed in 1975 and, although its membership is small (as is its counterpart association in Melbourne), it still holds family dances and other functions to maintain the noble Corfiot traditions. The current committee in Sydney also includes Stamatis Tsirimiagos (Secretary), Spyridoula Spinoula (Treasurer) Alexandros Konstantas (Assistant Treasurer) and committee members Christos Mazis and Athanasios Gavos. Each year the feast day of Saint Spyridon is celebrated by the Corfu Brotherhood.

The island of Corfu is truly beautiful - a place where, to quote Lawrence Durrell (again), "it is a sophism to imagine there is any strict dividing line between the waking world and the world of dreams".

# SCENES FROM CORFU



# PAXOI

## *Islands of Heritage*

Paxos is the smallest and least populated island, but arguably the greenest with the island covered in olive groves, cypress and other species which add to an allure already created by fjord-shaped beaches and underwater caves. According to the author of *The Travellers' Guide to Corfu and the Other Ionian Islands*, "Paxos floats on the blue depths of the Ionian Sea like a fragment of some prelapsarian garden – an enchanting working model of an island which, like Gulliver, you can step in a stride or two". In fact, one can walk the length of the island in a day.

In antiquity Paxos played host to Antony and Cleopatra before the Battle of Actium in 31BC. During the years of Ottoman oppression on the mainland, many Epirots moved to Paxos to escape the Turkish tyranny.

The Patron Saint of Paxos is Agios Haralambos who is revered for stopping a plague in 1815, the year that the British rule of the Ionian Islands reached Paxos



The capital and main port of Paxos, the town of Gaios, is separated from its natural breakwater, the tiny island of Agios Nikolaos (Saint Nicholas), by a narrow channel, making for one of the most beautiful port seascapes in Greece. Other highlights include the Venetian fortress of Agios Nikolaos, the English Governor's former mansion and the Paxoi Cultural Museum. The picturesque villages of Loggos and Lakka are dotted with Venetian-style pink and cream houses lined up on the waterfront and framed by the luscious green hills in the distance.

Paxos, and its neighbouring Antipaxos, are small but significant islands within the Seven Islands group and worth a visit when the traveller is next in Corfu.

## SCENES FROM PAXOS



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# LEFKADA

## *Island of Lafcadio Hearn*

### LEFKADIAN BROTHERHOOD OF NSW

Migrants from the Ionian Island of Lefkada (also known as Santa Maura by the Venetians) originally founded the Lefkadian Brotherhood in Sydney in 1962 although it was not to be formally registered until 1977. The first dance was held at the Maccabean Hall in Sydney on 27 April 1963 under the presidency of Stavros Vlachos

The association holds functions and other social events to bring together Lefkadians in Sydney to raise monies for worthwhile causes and to ensure that their rich Ionian heritage can be passed down through the generations. In 1992, on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Brotherhood's founding, the then President, Ioannis Grapsas, urged all members to aspire for an association that embraced the goodwill of all Lefkadians, provided support for philanthropic endeavours and represented the interests of all descendants from the island of Lefkada.



Lefkada is the fourth largest island in the Ionian group, although it is actually connected to the mainland by a long causeway and floating bridge. It derives its name the word "leuca" (white), referring to the colour of its huge cliffs on its west coast and its mountainous terrain. In Venetian times it was known as Santa Maura. In fact the island changed hands many times and was variously occupied by the Romans, Franks, the Ottomans and the Venetians (1684-1797) before eventually coming within the British Protectorate until 1864 when the island, as with the other Ionians, came back into the Greek fold.

The main town and port, named after the island, is characterised by its beautiful narrow streets, small squares, traditional coloured houses, historic churches and paved pedestrian walkways. The medieval castle



of Agia Mavra - built around 1300 in the time of the Frankish conquest by the Sicilian Giovanni Orsini to protect the island from pirates - is the imposing fortification which the traveller first encounters when crossing the bridge. In 1463 a chapel dedicated to Santa Maura was built inside the walls by a Byzantine princess, Eleni Paleologou, as a gift of thanks to the saint for saving her daughter from drowning at sea during a terrible storm off the coast of Lefkada. Henceforth, the whole island was known as Santa Maura.

From Lefkada town, the island reveals itself in the form of hidden bays and archipelagos, relatively unspoilt beaches, windmills, picturesque winding roads and traditional mountain villages and olive forests. Porto Katsiki is the island's most celebrated fine sandy beach. Egremni is another remote pebbled beach with its 300 almost dizzying steps.

In antiquity (6<sup>th</sup> century BC) the white cliffs of Cape Lefkatas, situated at the southern most point of the island and across the waters from Kefalonia and Ithaca, were the scene where the legendary poetess Sappho made her "ill-fated leap into eternity" because of her unrequited love of the demi-god Theon after Aphrodite (another goddess with Ionian connections) had cast a spell on her. Sapphos Leap in turn is said to have given rise to the katapontismos where sacrificial victims were thrown off the cliffs in ancient times. In modern times, the visitor simply wants to immerse himself in the translucent waves that strike the beaches along the coastline.

Lefkada is also an island of poets and artists. First and foremost, it is the spiritual home of Lafcadio Hearn, the poet and writer who forged a remarkable link between east and west but never forgot his Ionian heritage and whose story is now permanently on display in the Lefkas Cultural Centre. But the island also produced one of Greece's leading 20<sup>th</sup> century poets, Angelos Sikelianos who in 1927 revived the Delphic Idea by holding the Delphic Festival. Sikelianos is also remembered for the inspirational oratory he delivered at the end of the funeral of the poet Kostis Palamas in 1943 during the German occupation. Rising above the general lamentation, this proud Lefkadian's voice thundered as his fist pounded on the coffin and he declared "On this coffin stands Greece" and he turned to the crowd, beseeching:

*"Trumpets, sound! Bells, thunder  
shake the whole country, from one end to the other  
Drums of war, moan! Terrific flags of Freedom  
unfold yourselves in the air."*

# SCENES FROM LEFKADA



# ITHACA

## *Island of Odysseus*

### ITHAKI (ITHACA)

Always keep Ithaca in your mind.  
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.  
But do not hurry the voyage at all.  
It is better to let it last for many years;  
and to anchor at the island when you are old,  
rich with all you have gained on the way,  
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.

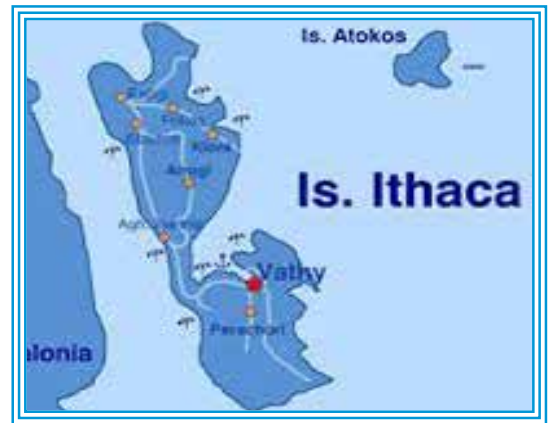
*ITHACA - Poem from Constantine P. Cavafy (1911)*

Ithaki, the second smallest of the Ionian Islands, is the home of the legendary Greek king and Homeric hero, Odysseus (or Ulysses). The epic odyssey and journey to Ithaca continue to resonate in this poetic version of an island which offers so much to the imagination of the traveller.

During the Greek War of Independence Lord Byron visited the island as well as Kefalonia and returned in 1823, shortly before his death. In the courtyard of the Archaeological Museum there is a memorial to the Ithacans who have died fighting for Modern Greece, with an inscription of the words attributed to Byron when he first saw this verdant paradise: "If this island belonged to me, I would bury all my books here and never go away".

Ithaca seemingly rises from a lake-like sea, its two peninsulas joined by a narrow isthmus and defined by sheer cliffs, steep mountains and pockets of Cypress pine forests and olive groves. The capital, Vathy, is the island's main town and is nestled along an elongated waterfront which is dotted by pretty Venetian-style mansions. The island's hidden beaches and crystal-clear, turquoise waters, mountain walks, archaeological sites and heritage villages are all attractive for the tourist looking to get off the beaten track.

But Ithaca has also lived up to its seafaring legend when thousands left the island to migrate, first to America and then Australia. Ithacans were one of the first regional groups to settle here. The Ithacan Philanthropic Society "The Ulysses" was established in Melbourne in 1916. The Ithacan Association of Sydney was established in 1926



under the presidency of Ioannis Raftopoulos and later George Poizis. Though small in membership - with now about twenty five families - its continued existence after more than seventy years is testimony to the fact that, despite the passage of time and the ravages of generational change, there remains a strong emotional, cultural and spiritual connection to Ithaca. This was recently highlighted by the publication of a seminal oral history, Ithacan Voices, Ithacan Memories.

As Cleo Trilivas, President of the Ithacan Association and a third generation Greek Australian, has reaffirmed the sense of nostalgia and the desire for a connection with Ithaca have never been lost:

"Something draws you there. Whether it's the blood, whether it's the air, whether it's the sea. As Ulysses did, you do go back home. Not to a house, but to home. There are the roots there. I've travelled the world extensively, been to lots of different places, but Ithaca is still home. I can't define it. It's hugely abstract, but it's in the psyche, as we say."

Together with Cleo Trilivas, the 2014 committee is made up of Jason Peters (Vice-President), Ricky Manias (Treasurer), Antonia Karavias (Greek Secretary), Angie Antzoulatos (English Secretary) and committee members Louisa Delaporta, Ouranita Karadimas, Maria Rouvalis, Ann Karavias, Tassia Konstantinou, Julie Michalopoulos, Christina Den-drinos, Lee Stefanatos and Stathis Mavros.

The Ithacan Association of NSW supports various philanthropic causes, including the sponsoring of a young child in Africa. The island's patron saint, Panagia Kathariotisa, is also venerated on 8 September each year at the Agia Triada Greek Orthodox Church in Surry Hills.

Ithacans all over the world will never forget their island home.



# SCENES FROM ITHACA



# KEFALONIA

## *Island of Heritage*



### **THE KEFALINIAN BROTHERHOOD 'O KEFALOS' OF NEW SOUTH WALES LTD**

After World War II migrants from Kefalonia gathered in Sydney to form an association to support persons of Greek origin from the island of Kefalonia. That group was known as the "Kefaliniakos Syllogos 'O Kefalos'" and in 1964 it was incorporated as the Kefalonian (also known as Kefalinian) Brotherhood.

One of the main objects of the Brotherhood was to unite all Kefalonians in New South Wales in the work of promoting their highest interest and those of the Brotherhood; to promote and encourage social intercourse and good fellowship amongst members; to develop and elevate their mental and moral character; to emulate the purest principles of philanthropy, honour and patriotism; to alleviate the wants of the poor and needy amongst the members of the Brotherhood their dependents and Kefalonian people in general; to encourage and support science, art, sport and athletics.

The Association today continues to serve its members and succeeding generations of Greek-Australians who will always cherish their links to their beautiful island homeland.

The island of Kefalonia has been immortalised in the writings of Luis de Bernieres in his historical novel, Captain Corelli's Mandolin, whose narrator gazes over the lush green fields and reminisces:

"The half-forgotten island of Cephallonia arises improvidently and inadvisedly from the Ionian Sea; it is an island so immense in antiquity that the very rocks themselves exhale nostalgia and the red earth lies stupefied not only by the sun, but by the impossible weight of memory."

Kefalonia is in fact the largest of the Ionians, an island of rugged mountains, towering coastal cliffs and golden beaches, where the mountains literally meet the sea. The Kefalonians are renowned

as seafarers - a tradition that can be traced back to Homeric times when Odysseus embarked on his famous journey of Trojan conquest with the "light-hearted men of Kephallenia". Its residents were fiercely supportive of the Greek War of Independence despite the attempts by the British to enforce a neutrality amongst the Ionian Islands. Kefalonians were also to the forefront of the radical movement that was behind the push for enosis with Greece.

Today Kefalonia is renowned for its beautiful beaches, highlighted by Myrtos Beach. Travelling north from the capital Argostoli, with its broad walkways and sophisticated shopping, the visitor passes by the town of Assos, with its dominant Venetian fortress, before reaching the picturesque village of Fiskardo (which survived the earthquake of 1953 to retain its authentic charm). Another reminder of the azure and crystal clear waters of this area is the cave of Melisani where you pay a ferryman to take you on a mystical voyage around this subterranean sea-water lake.

One of the most famous of cantadas from Kefalonia is Yialo Yialo (from Shore to Shore) whose lyrics and melodies still resonate amongst all Ionian Islanders wherever they may be:

If the sea were only wine  
and the islands *mezedes*  
the boats could be the glasses for  
revellers to drink!

From shore to shore we go  
And always speak of you  
The sea will take you, bring you back,  
And you'll remember my words!

# SCENES FROM KEFALONIA



# ZAKYNTHOS

## *Island of Dionysios Solomos*

### **Zakynthian Association of Sydney and NSW Ltd**

The island of Zakynthos - the third largest of the Ionian Islands - was known popularly by its Venetian name, Zante and was regarded as the Fior di Levante or the "Venice of the South" because of the handsome Italianate style architecture and picturesque landscape and where poetry, painting and music flourished. Although devastated by the terrible earthquake that struck Zakynthos and Kefalonia in 1953, Zakynthos was rebuilt in a manner sympathetic to its Venetian heritage.

The island was under Venetian rule from 1489 until the French under Napoleon seized the island in 1797 and then under British rule for over fifty years before union with Greece occurred in 1864. It is an island whose western and central regions are mountainous and verdant with some interesting seaside attractions, including the Blue Grotto and its distinctive indigo blue waters and the famous Shipwreck Beach that draws photographers and tourists from all over the world to capture the iconic wreck buried in the sand on the beach.

Zakynthos is also renowned for its singers. Passionate bel canto voices serenade visitors and locals alike with local cantadas, accompanied by mandolins and guitars. One popular Zakynthian cantada is I Xanthoula ("Little Blond Girl") based on a poem composed by Dionysios Solomos upon his return to the island in 1822, a poignant piece that has at its heart the pain and ecstasy of the migration phenomenon that affected the Ionian Islands, no less Greece itself:

*I saw the little blond girl,  
I saw her late yesterday;  
She boarded the small boat  
To go to a foreign land ...  
I don't cry for the little boat  
With the white sails,  
I only cry for the little blonde girl  
Who goes to the distant land.*

Zakynthians in fact arrived to Australia in significant numbers after the Second World War (and its aftermath the Greek Civil War), and following the destructive earthquake of 1953. They settled mainly in Melbourne and Sydney, but also in the NSW industrial towns of Wollongong and Newcastle.

In 1963 the first Zakynthian Philanthropic Association was formed, to help the new arrivals



and later the fledging Zakynthian Community. The present Zakynthian Association was formed in 1982 to meet the changing needs of the Zakynthian Community of Sydney and NSW and, specifically, to carry on Zakynthian culture and traditions in Australia and pass them on to the next, Australian-born generation.

Since 1982, apart from countless dances, dinners, barbecues, excursions and the like, the Association has achieved a lot, including hosting the visits of eminent dignitaries from Zakynthos as well as the "Tragoudistades Tis Zakynthos" choir, the establishment of the Zakynthian Library, and of course the acquisition and development of our own premises. Zakynthian House can accommodate up to 150 guests in a very comfortable environment with entertainment and catering services as well as being used for cultural events functions such as the Photographic Exhibition "Zakynthian Culture and Heritage"

We are also proud of the formation of the Zakynthian Ladies Committee which has tirelessly supported all functions of the Association for the last 14 years. The establishment of the "ZakCity" group, the next generation of members and friends of the Association, has resulted in their successfully staging a number of functions over the last 10 years.

It is to be hoped that this link with our beloved Zakynthos, its culture and traditions can continue for many years to come.

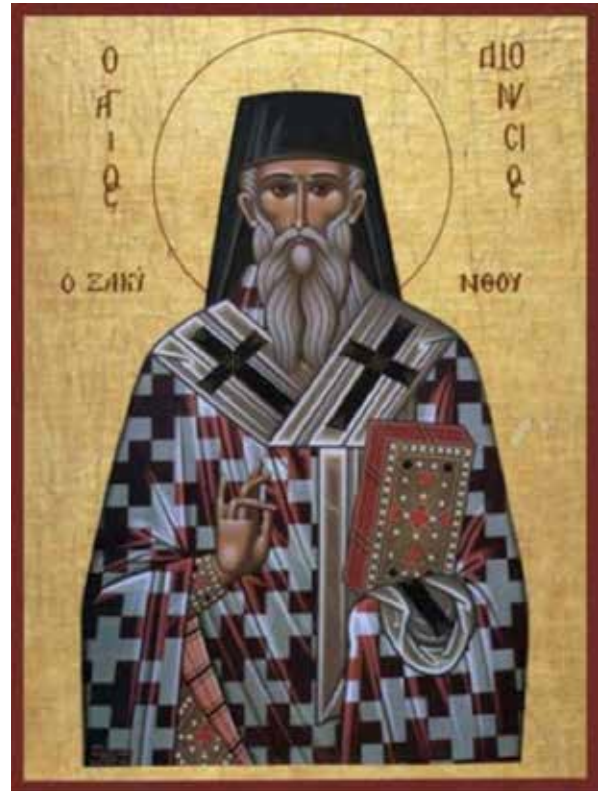


# SAINT DIONYSIOS OF ZAKYNTHOS

Saint Dionysios was born on the Greek island of Zakynthos in 1546. Bearing the name Draganigos Sigouros, his ancestry is traced back through the Venetian conquerors in a family tree whose roots lay in part in Italy and in part Normandy. Born into the ruling class during the Venetian occupation, Dionysios formed lasting friendships with his fellow islanders from all walks of life, and refused to take advantage of his social position other than to avail himself of a full education which brought out the power of his extraordinary intellect. By the time he was twenty-one he had not only established himself as a deep thinker and profound theological scholar, but had also mastered several languages.

With the death of his parents, Dionysios entered the Monastery of Strofades as a monk. By the time that he was ordained a priest in 1577, he was already highly respected not only for his piety but also for his wisdom and beneficence. He had long since given his entire worldly goods to the poor and had earned a reputation for kindness and charity.

In 1572 he assumed the post of Archbishop of Aegina and Poros and with it the name of Dionysios. He was sought out by pilgrims from all around for his blessing and benediction that seemed to produce true miracles. However, he was overwhelmed by his immense popularity, and after much soul searching he asked for and was given permission to return to the comparative tranquility of his native island, which he did in 1578, retiring to the monastery of Anafonitria. He died peacefully at the age of 75 on 17 December 1622, which is now his feast day, and was made a saint of the Orthodox Church in 1703. His body is preserved in the Church of Agios Dionysios on Zakynthos.



# SCENES FROM ZAKYNTHOS



# SCENES FROM KYTHERA



# KYTHERA

## *Birthplace of Aphrodite*

In the Lonely Planet guidebook “Corfu and the Ionians” the island of Kythera is referred to as the “Holy-Grail of island-hopping” since a traveller has to make a special effort, both mentally and physically, to get there. Although Kythera is the most southerly of the Ionian Islands, it is somewhat of a paradox in that its architecture and topography lean towards the Aegean but its history and culture are historically Ionian.

Kythera is the birthplace of the goddess Aphrodite in mythology. Over the centuries the island - given its location in the crossroads of the Mediterranean - has witnessed the rise and fall of Byzantium; the acquisition of the island by the Venetians in 1204; the cruelty and barbarism of the Ottoman Admiral Barbarossa (who sacked the island in 1537); successive invasions by Phoenicians, Minoans, Romans, Myceneans, Franks, Saracens, Normans, Genoese, Russians and the French, and finally the ‘protection’ afforded by the British Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, during the British period Cerigo (as the island was then known) was regarded as the “Botany Bay” of the Ionian Islands because of its solitary station and the tyranny of distance.

Kythera is a captivating landscape of mountainous terrain and olive groves and is famous for its honey amidst hidden gorges and rare wild flowers. The town of Hora is dominated by the Venetian fortress that overlooks Kapsali Bay and is characterised by white washed houses, narrow alleyways and Cycladic-style arches. The hamlet of Katouni presides over a magnificent 12 arch stone viaduct built in 1826 at the direction of the industrious British Resident, John MacPhail. The beautiful verdant village of Mylopotamos on the western side of the island is literally named after the twenty two water mills that operated in a bygone era. Today the ruins and the adjoining waterfalls are the focal point of a stunning walking trail. The village of Kato Hora is dominated by an old Venetian fortress which is approached by passing one of the English-built, Gothic-style Lancastrian schools in the main square. The Venetian and British empires intersect at this point. Avlemonas to the east is the port



where Lord Elgin’s ship, the Mentor, sank whilst carrying a cargo that included some of the Parthenon Sculptures stolen by Elgin.

On 24 September each year the island’s most well-known saint, Panagia Myrtidiotissa (Our Lady of the Myrtles), is venerated at Myrtidia where most of the islanders descend for the procession of the original icon.

Because the island could not sustain its population at the beginning of the twentieth century Kytherians were amongst the first migration waves to America first and then Australia. Not surprisingly, the Kytherian Brotherhood of Australia (now known as the Kytherian Association of Australia) had its humble beginnings in Sydney in May 1922 when several Kytherian expatriates met in a café to discuss the formation of a new fraternal association which would function almost like a substitute family for the many newly-arrived Kytherians.

In fact, before the Second World War, Kytherians accounted for one fifth of male Greek immigrants to Australia. They were the first to invade the country towns of NSW and they helped establish the Greek cafe and milk bar culture that was embraced by the local population. The Kytherian nexus to the bush is also part of the grand narrative of Kytherian migration to Australia. In April 2011 we helped celebrate the rebirth of the beautifully-restored art deco cinema, the Roxy, together with the adjoining Peters Café in Bingara in north western NSW

The Kytherian Association in Sydney has traditionally held social functions – including debutante balls, family dances, picnics, movie nights and other functions – to attract families and to maintain the Kytherian connection. We have promoted Greek folk dancing amongst our youth. We sponsor sporting teams and other recre-



## 2014 Kytherian Association Committee



**Back Row (L-R):** George Giaouris (Treasurer), Michael Mallos, George Poulos (Secretary), George Vardas, Theo Poulos, Angelo Andrew, Dimitri Kepreotes

**Front Row (L-R):** Angelo Notaras, Kathy Samios (Vice-President), Victor Kepreotis (President), Kalie Zervos, Esther Calligeros

ational activities such as prefa and tavli nights, Greek cooking classes, genealogy lessons and wine-making. And with the generous assistance of the Nicholas Aroney Foundation, the Kytherian Association supports many worthwhile projects on the island of Kythera, such as sponsoring community-based archaeological digs, exploration of the Mentor underwater wreck and publication of the island's summer tourist guide.

The Kytherian Association has also helped with the publication (and in some cases the translation) of numerous books, including *Kytherian Surnames and Place Names* by the eminent Kytherian historian, Manuel Kalligeros; *In Search of Kythera* by Tzeli Hatjidimitriou - a Lonely Planet-type guide - and *Britain's Greek Islands* by Peter Prineas who researched the Colonial Archives in Kew, London and photographed and archived over 9,000 records and correspondence documenting the British occupation in the Ionian islands.

In 2012 the Kytherian Association finally unveiled the jewel in its crown: a fine, Hellenic-themed library and cultural resource centre on the first floor of Kythera House at 24 King Street, Rock-

dale. The Association has also been instrumental in creating and maintaining the Kythera family website, an acclaimed website that has brought people of Kytherian background and friends of Kythera together across the internet, reflecting the new digital progression from the chain migration of the pre and post-war years.

Over the years the Kytherian Association has tried to keep its members informed, culminating in recent years with a monthly full colour newsletter (*The Kytherian*) which has developed into a quality publication that both informs and entertains. It has been described as the "glue" of the Kytherian community and finds its way into more than 800 households.

As we approach the centenary of the formation of the Brotherhood we will continue to strive to maintain and promote our Kytherian, Ionian and Greek roots for successive generations to come.



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# LIBRUS DESIGN

Nick And Tynea Papadatos

*Nick and Tynea Papadatos and family congratulate the Eptanesian Federation of New South Wales on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of Enosis with Greece and for a highly successful event. We wish the committees and all participants every success and a fantastic and memorable night.*

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*Victor and Kathy Kepreotis extend their Best Wishes to the Eptanesian Federation and all participants on this special occasion of the 150th anniversary of Enosis.*

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*Extend their best wishes and congratulations to  
the Eptanesian Federation of New South Wales  
and all participants on the occasion of the  
150th anniversary of Enosis with Greece*

*May it be a successful and wonderful Evening*



# THE UNION OF THE IONIAN ISLANDS IN COINS, BANKNOTES, AND STAMPS



The Union of the Seven Islands has traditionally been captured in both commemorative coin and stamp issues in Greece, featuring a mythological symbol or emblem characteristic to each island within the group.

In 1964, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of enosis, Greece issued a First Day Cover featuring stamps of each of the islands as well as a special coin minted for the occasion. In 2014, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary is marked by the issue of a special 2€ coin and a postage stamp commemorating the union of the Ionian Islands with Greece.

In the commemorative coins **CORFU** is represented by the trireme as its sailors were well known for their nautical abilities and skills since ancient times. **ZAKYNTHOS** is symbolised by the sacrificial tripod of Apollo. In the case of **ITHACA**, the legendary Odysseus is depicted wearing the ancient pileus (or hat) during his journeys. The emblem for **PAXI** is a trident for according to legend the island was created when the god Poseidon hit Corfu with his trident, splitting it in two. **KYTHERA**, the island of celestial Aphrodite, is symbolised by the goddess of love's emergence from the sea. **LEFKADA** is represented by the Apollonian harp, a symbol of the island's great musical traditions. Finally, the emblem for **CEPHALONIA** is its mythical hero, Cephalus, depicted with his hound and spear.



Interestingly, in the stamps appearing on the 1964 First Day Cover, as with the island's flag, the emblem for the island of flowers is its namesake and first resident, Zacynthus, partially draped in a robe and sitting on a rock holding a semi-coiled snake. The image of St George slaying the dragon (or possibly the Archangel St Michael slaying Satan) represents Lefkada.



The Seven Islands were also celebrated on the face of banknotes and coins. By a decree of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Ionian Islands, the Ionian State Bank was established in 1839 in order to finance trade between the Ionian Islands and Britain. The bank, which later changed its name to Ionian Bank, was awarded the exclusive privilege of issuing and circulating banknotes for the Ionian Islands. The early banknotes featured the familiar eptanesian emblem adopted for the Protectorate of the Ionian Islands.





This medallion was struck in 1964 on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Enosis.

In 2004 a commemorative coin was issued by the Hellenic Parliament to celebrate 140 years of unification.



Finally, with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Union of the Ionian Islands with Greece, a 2 euro commemorative coin was issued in 2014, once again reproducing the famous Eptanesian emblem of the Seven Islands that came back into the Greek fold.

In terms of coins, both Rule Britannia and the Venetian Lion of St Mark appear on the coins of the Ionian State as reflected in this classic 1819 coin:

In addition, over the years a number of commemorative medallions have been struck to celebrate defining moments in the rich history of the Ionian Islands, including the following:

In 1817 a medallion in both silver and bronze was struck to commemorate the Constitution given to the Ionian Islands. On the obverse side, Britannia is seated holding a shield of the Union Jack and supporting a double tablet of the Constitution with her right hand. The figure of Poseidon on a pedestal holding a trident appears behind her. On



the reverse, seven draped female figures holding hands (representing each of the Seven Islands) dance around a standard from which the Union Jack is flying.



# EDWARD LEAR:

## *The painter of the Ionian Islands*

The English artist and writer, Edward Lear (1812-1888), was a charismatic landscape painter of 19th century Greece and the Ionian Islands. Lear in particular loved Corfu where he spent more than three years in the period between from 1848 and 1864. In *Views in the Ionian Islands* (1863) Lear's drawings and paintings of the panoramic Ionian landscape, from Corfu to Cerigo, are at once evocative and soothing.

The painter of "topographical poetry", Lear captured the dreamy and relatively untouched idyllic essence of the islands through the cypress and olive green hues, the bright blue sky, luscious valleys, rugged hills and imposing mountain landscapes.

Lear had an artist's eye for the Romantic spirit of the landscape and from his works emerges the intrinsic beauty of the Ionian world as Lear saw it in his lifetime and as described by him:



**CORFU:** Everywhere the olive-tree grows in abundance and gracefulness; one of the greatest charms of Corfu being the perpetual framing of beautiful scenes by its twisted branches, and the veil-like glitter it throws around by its semi-transparent foliage. Paliokastritsa, a sacred place, is one of the most beautiful bays it is possible to imagine.



**PAXOS:** The town and harbour of Gaios, the capital of Paxos, an island which is hilly and nearly everywhere covered with olive-woods. Quiet and cheerful as is the aspect of this little port when the calm sea reflects the line of houses on its border, it is no safe refuge for ships when the south wind blows.



**SANTA MAURA** (Lefkada): this view is taken from the low ground near the fortress of Santa Maura looking towards the town and the higher mountains in the centre and south of the island, the forms of which, though bare, are often beautiful.



**ITHACA:** Vathy, the pretty little capital of the island of Ithaca, stands on the southern side of its deep harbour and is as trim and neat in its interior as it is beautiful and romantic in its situation. The harbour is so landlocked as to appear much more like a lake than a portion of the sea.



**CEPHALONIA:** The largest of the Ionian Islands. The Black Mountain is the dominant feature of the island. Argostoli, the island's capital, is built at the head of the harbour. A long causeway divides the Port from the shallow water at its southern end; and a fine carriage-road winds to the great pine-forest at the top of the Black Mountain.

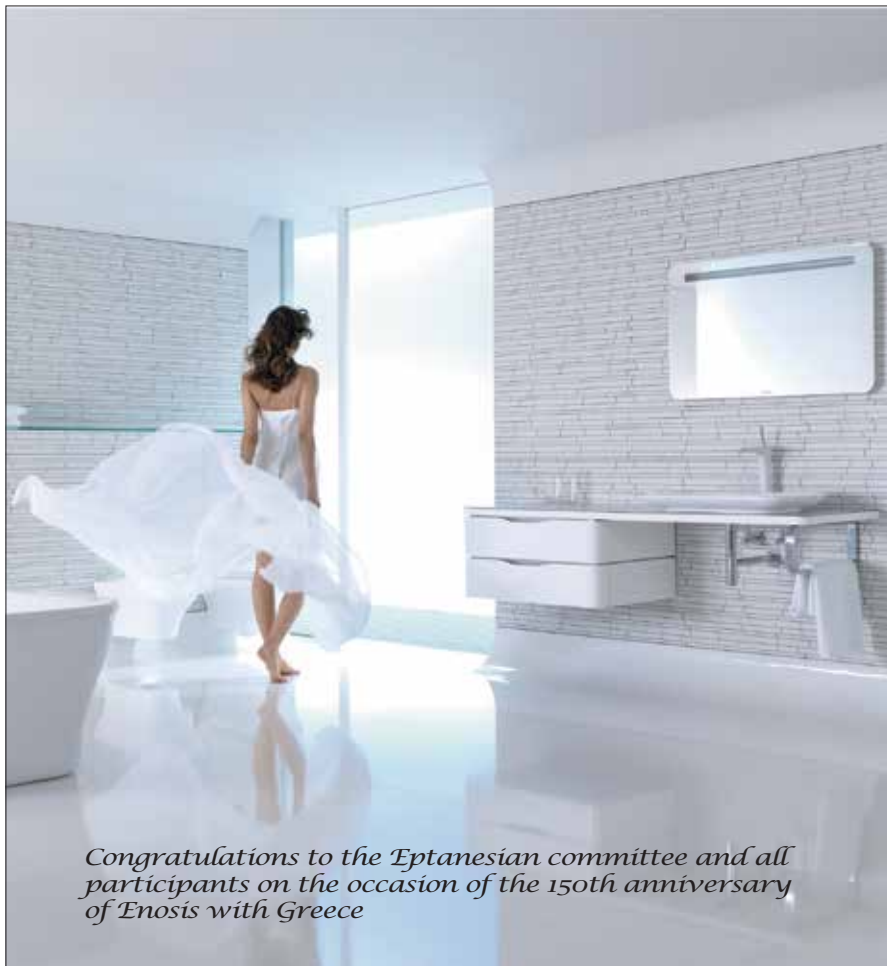




**ZAKYNTHOS** (Zante): The Town, with its gay white houses and its many tall and elegant campanili, spreads along the edge of the bay beneath the castle hill, on the slopes of which, in beautiful contrast with them, thick groves of olive, orange, cypress and fruit trees, cluster around the scattered villas.



**KYTHERA:** The grand plane and hills around the site of Kythera, the fertile valleys of Milopotamos, Mitata and Karavas, the green and pleasant district of Livadhi ... the rock on which the fortress and little town are placed, the double harbour at its foot and the lofty hill with its sharp outline rising behind them, form a most characteristic scene



*Congratulations to the Eptanesian committee and all participants on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Enosis with Greece*



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*We wish the Eptanesian  
Federation of NSW  
a highly successful  
evening celebrating the  
reunion of the  
Seven Ionian Islands  
with Greece*

# LAFCADIO HEARN'S SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY

## *from the Ionian Islands to Japan*

Ithaca may be the legendary home of Odysseus but the Ionian Islands in more modern times have also seen another of their famous sons embark on a literary and spiritual odyssey of his own.

Patrick "Lafcadio" Hearn was born in Lefkada (or Santa Maura as it was then known) on June 27, 1850 following a romantic tryst between Rosa Cassimati and Major Charles Hearn (an Irish surgeon serving with the British army). Major Hearn had been sent to British outposts in Zante, Ithaca and Corfu and from early 1848 he was stationed in Hora on Cerigo (Kythera). There he met and fell in love with the strikingly-beautiful Rosa but the couple moved to Lefkada after she fell pregnant.

In July, 1852, the young boy and his parents moved to Dublin but following his parents' divorce a few years later he never saw his mother again as he was sent off to be raised by his great-grand aunt in Ireland. At the age of 19 years the young Hearn studied in England before travelling to the United States where he found work as a journalist and writer. He also took the name "Lafcadio" as a way of reconfirming his Hellenic roots.



He eventually arrived in Japan in 1890 where he literally discovered a whole new world. He married a Japanese woman of samurai descent, with whom he had four children. In 1896 he became a Japanese citizen, taking the name Koizumi Yakumo. He researched Japanese culture and also wrote a prodigious number of stories and books based on Japanese folktales. Lafcadio Hearn died in Tokyo in 1904 and is revered throughout Japan almost as a national hero



because of his interpretations of Japanese folk stories, mythology, and daily life in turn-of-the-century Japan which helped open Western eyes to this Asian culture. Hearn did not just translate the exotic folktales into English; he “re-told” them by modifying the original Japanese tales. On the 150th anniversary of his birth, the Japan Times carried a special eulogy to Lafcadio Hearn and referred to him as a “story reteller of genius with an instinctive knack for grasping the essence of another culture’s spirituality, legends, rituals and myths”. Hearn was given the ultimate laurel, that of Japan’s ‘gaijin laureate’, the single greatest interpreter in Japanese eyes of their inmost cultural secrets. Lafcadio Hearn had found in Japan a sanctuary for his open mind and imagination.



Lafcadio Hearn loved both Greece and Japan although he was enchanted by Japanese civilisation which he saw as being similar to Greek culture. He also compared the natural beauty of Greece and Japan which he likened to the “spirit and the body”.

Although Lafcadio Hearn had drifted to a new world, the imagery of Rosa, the “lost” world of Lefkada and the feelings of loss of his mother’s embrace continued to haunt Lafcadio. In *Dream of a Summer Day* Hearn wrote about a faraway birthplace:

“I have memory of a place and a magical time, in which the sun and the moon were larger and brighter than now. Whether it was of this life or of some life before I cannot tell, but I know the sky was very much more blue and nearer the world. ...The sea was alive and used to talk and the wind made me cry out for joy when it touched me.”

And then he recalled when he was separated from his mother:

“At last there came a parting day; and she wept, and told me of a charm she had given that I must never, never lose, because it would keep me young, and give me power to return. But I never returned. And the years went; and one day I knew that I had lost the charm, and had become ridiculously old.”

Rosa Cassimati in fact died in December 1882 in Corfu.



In July 2014, on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of his death, a new Lafcadio Hearn Museum was officially opened on the ground floor of the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Lefkada. The Museum includes first editions, rare books and Japanese collectibles. Visitors to the museum, with the aid of photos, texts, books and exhibits, can reflect upon key moments in the impressive life and fertile imagination of Lafcadio Hearn, who from humble beginnings went on to become one of the most influential and revered interpreters of Japanese folklore and culture, spanning East and West.

Lafcadio Hearn was finally being reunited with the spirit of his mother, Rosa, and with his Ionian homeland.

GEORGE VARDAS





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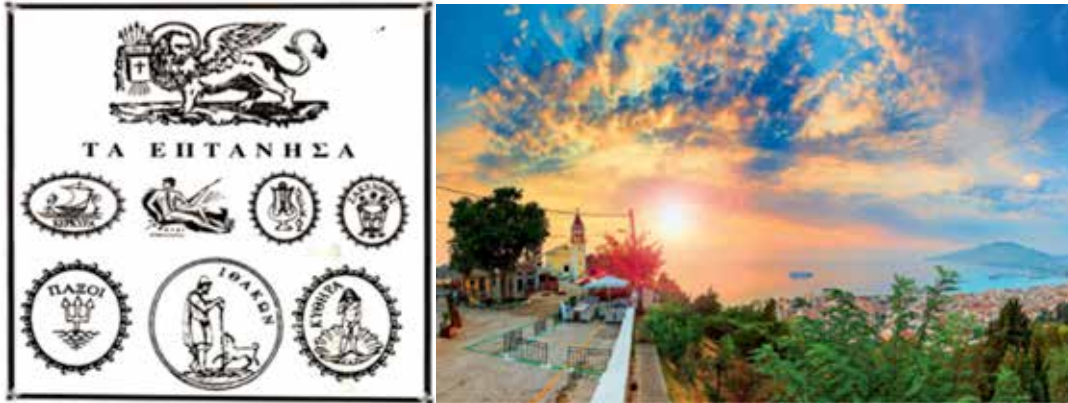
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# SONG OF THE SEVEN ISLANDS



by Kostis Palamas

"Your waters dazzle like a floor of diamonds  
Westward your tides  
Grove and caress the shores of Italy.

In a circumference of blue the seven islands  
Foam-chiselled, rise, dissolve,  
Join hands and dance upon the waves.

Zakynthos drowned in flowers  
Cephalonia seamed with toil  
Kythera and Paxoi  
Corfu the enchantress of the mind and heart  
Ithaka a mariner's rhyme in stone  
Levkas the watch-tower of the Armatoli.

From the Ionian shore  
From the Ionian sea  
Since Homer, since Solomos,  
The poet's song, the statesman's art  
Haunted these islands like sea-birds."

Note: Kostis Palamas, one of Greece's most revered poets, was born in Patras and brought up in Missolonghi but, his cultural gaze was towards the Ionian Islands out of admiration for islands that in mythology had produced Odysseus who set on his Homeric journey and in more recent times had seen the rise of Greece's national poet, Dionysios Solomos.



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*We wish the Eptanesian Federation of NSW a most enjoyable evening on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Enosis with Greece.*

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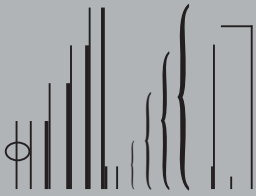
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## SLATTERY THOMPSON Solicitors

Slattery Thompson Solicitors congratulates the Ionian Islands on their celebrations for 150 years reunion with Greece.

We wish the Federation a very successful evening and best wishes for the future.

*Peter, Helen, Marianne and Christina Livers*

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## Congratulations to the Eptanesian Federation of NSW on the 150th Anniversary of the Enosis

*The Kytherian Association of Australia and the Eptanesian Federation of NSW would like to thank Mr Nick Nikas of THE GOOD GUYS Caringbah for his continuing support and his donation of the raffle prize for this occasion.*

***Proud to be a supporter of the Greek Australians Honouring their Heritage***



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Peter and Helen Magiros and family would like to Congratulate the Eptanisian Federation of NSW on the 150th anniversary of the Enosis.



Prime Minister Tony Abbott during his visit to Frutex.

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