



# “Zoi En Afstralia” to be republished

FOREWORD BY GEORGE POULOS

The Book Η Ζωή εν Αυστραλία - Life in Australia was written in 1916, and published in 1917. Many Greek Australians are aware of the book, and its impact on future generations of Australia. I have been surprised however, as to the number of Greek Australians who are not aware of Η Ζωή εν Αυστραλία. The purpose of this series of articles to raise awareness of Life in Australia, amongst as many Greek Australians as possible.

Under the auspices of the Kytherian World Heritage Fund, (KWHF), the book has been translated into English. Plans are well advanced, to print, publish and distribute the original book in both a Greek and an English edition. Type-setting is almost complete. Most of the funds required for printing have already been pledged, and collected. Additional funding is still required, however, to ensure the largest possible “print run” can be undertaken. Larger print-runs contribute to a smaller amortised cost-per-book, and hence a reduced sale price

## **Zoi en Afstralia**

**Author:** Sponsored by Ioannis D. Kominos (John D. Comino) and largely written by Georgios Kentavros and the brothers Kosmas and Emmanouil Andronikos

**When Published:** 1916

**Publisher:** Australia Press

**Available:** Out of Print.

Rare. Expensive.

**Description:** Hard cover, 310 pages.

*Extracts taken from Hugh Gilchrist's Australians and Greeks. Volume II. The Middle Years - Chapter XIV Guides for the Greeks pages 253-257.*

per book.

Those conversant with Greek-Australian history, will know that this book has remained at the forefront of the Hellenic consciousness in Australia. It has maintained its reputation and appeal for almost a century. People who own a copy of the book, take it down from their bookshelves or safe storage place, and read it, and refer to it constantly, throughout their lives.

When I pick up an original copy of the book, Η Ζωή εν Αυστραλία - Life in Australia - I always kiss the front cover, and the back cover, before opening it. I regard the book as a Hellenic & Kytherian “bible”, and I treat it accordingly. All Hellenes who own a copy of the book would rather die than part with it. Most only part with it when they die.

Life in Australia is a seminal book; the definition of seminal being - highly influential in an original way; constituting or providing a basis for further development. It is seminal in its impact upon the genesis, perpetuation and acceleration of

Greek and Kytherian migration to Australia. The spiritual value of Life in Australia is congruent with its economic value. If a copy of the original book were to become available commercially, I doubt whether 'a small fortune' would be sufficient to purchase it.

The simplest and quickest way to introduce to Life in Australia to the general public, is via eminent historian and scholar, Hugh Gilchrist's explanation of the genesis of the book. Hugh, as many of you will know, is the esteemed author of Greeks and Australians, Volumes I -III. Let us allow Hugh Gilchrist to explain to us, the genesis and history of the book, ζ ZùP áí Aóóñáëßá - Life in Australia.

### I Zoi en Afstralia

Between 1915 and 1939 three Greek books were published in Australia. All had a similar purpose: to guide Australia's Greeks and promote their welfare. What they also did was to raise comparisons between aspects of the Greek and the Australian way of life, as then lived.

I Zoi en Afstralia - Life in Australia—which appeared in 1916, was sponsored by Ioannis D. Kominos (John D. Comino) and largely written by Georgios Kentavros and the brothers Kosmas and Emmanouil Andronikos, Sydney merchants and leaders of the Greek Orthodox Community. Sub-titled "An Encyclopaedic Book, with many Artistic Pictures, Biographical Notes on Prominent Citizens, Interesting Statistics, a full Commercial Guide, etc, etc", it also recorded exemplary instances of successful Greek enterprise in Australia. Its aim, as stated by Kentavros, was "to provide useful information about Australia and the Greek communi-



Angelo Notaras, Trustee



George C. Poulos, Trustee



ty there, both for those already living in Australia and for those who come here in the future.” He firmly denied, however, any intention to stimulate migration, saying: “Not for one minute did we have that in mind, nor have we told a single untruth which might lead people to regard us as advocates of emigration.”

A hard-cover book of 310 pages, *I Zoi in Afstralia* was published in Sydney by the Australia Press. Its setting and printing, however, were done in Melbourne by the Australian Printing and Publishing Company Limited, which, directed by Efstratios Venlis, was printing Australia’s first Greek newspaper, *Afstralia*. Ten thousand copies were printed, of which the majority were to be donated to various official bodies concerned with Greek welfare at home and abroad. Today it is one of Australia’s rarest books.

*I Zoi en Afstralia* provided facts, figures and photographs of many aspects of Australian life: history, population, constitution, government, industry, transport, and communications with Europe. It outlined—very sketchily—the history of Greek settlement in Australia, especially in New South Wales, and of the activities of the Greek Orthodox Church and its Sydney and Melbourne Communities. Practical information was offered on Australian immigration policy, labour laws and business practices, and on the functions of the Greek Consulates. Some 215 brief biographies followed, in most cases adorned with photographs, of Greeks who had succeeded in Australia—most of them as shop-keepers in New South Wales—and who were praised for their industry, philanthropy and philhellenism.

Compilation of the book, Kentavros declared, had been no easy task; nor had its compilers received as much co-operation from their compatriots as they had hoped. Many of our compatriots refused or disregarded our requests for information—and efforts to identify every Greek in Australia had fallen far short of success. When attempts to elicit replies to letters proved largely futile the authors had visited Greeks wherever they could be found—a slow and costly process; a tour of New South Wales had cost about £1,500.

When the text was nearing completion, Kentavros wrote, “serious difficulties occurred, due to jealousy, indifference and misunderstanding”, and the outbreak of war in 1914 had created “insurmountable obstacles.

“For 14 months we laboured to pro-



## HUGH GILCHRIST

Hugh Gilchrist was born in Sydney on 8 August 1916. He was educated at Edgecliffe Preparatory School, Sicup Place School Kent, and Cranbrook School. He received his tertiary education at Sydney University. World War II saw him serving with the Australian Military Forces (1941-1943) and the Australian Imperial Forces (1943-1945), reaching the rank of Captain.

He first joined the Department of External Affairs in 1945 and held a number of overseas postings with that Department, namely London and Berlin (1947-1948), Paris (1949-1950), Djakarta (1950-1952), and South Africa (1955-1959). He represented Australia as High Commissioner to Tanganyika (1962-1964) and Tanzania (1964-1966) and as Ambassador to Greece (1968-1972) and Spain (1976-1980). He has been a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly (1963) and a Member of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (1949-1950). In Australia he has held the offices of Assistant Secretary of the Information and Cultural Relations Branch, Department of External Affairs (1966-1968) and of the Legal and Treaties Branch, Foreign Affairs (1972-1974) as well as First Assistant Secretary of the Consular and Legal Division of Foreign Affairs (1974-1976). After retiring in 1981 he became a member of the Literature Board of the Australia Council until 1984. His publications include “Australia’s First Greeks” in the *Canberra Historical Journal*, 1977.

duce this very difficult and expensive publication, and achieved what many thought impossible: the production of the first book in Australia, about Australia, in the Greek language.”

For its completion he gave credit to the patriotic faith and strong will of John D. Comino, and to the help provided by four Brisbane Greeks: Christos Frylingos, Emmanouil Meimarakis, Theodoros Kominos and Ioannis Mavrokefalos (John Black), and by TM. Mantzaris in Newcastle and Konstantinos Argyropoulos (Fisher) in Parkes, and also Greeks in up-country New South Wales, “without whose enthusiastic subscriptions the book would never have published”. (Its price was not recorded.) In a diplomatically-worded reference to the host country Kentavros added:

“On the whole, the laws of Australia, which are to be found in no other country, and the excellent results of their enforcement, have greatly contributed to our venture”; and no official obstacles had been placed in its way while Australia was at war.

The Andronicus brothers seem to have provided most of the book’s factual information, to which Kentavros added an account of his tour in 1914 of the New South Wales north coast. Greeks in other Australian states received scant mention, and were clearly beyond the authors’ financial resources. Despite its shortcomings, however, the authors felt that they had produced a work which Greek communities everywhere would value.

*I Zoi en Afstralia*’s moral tone was lofty and its message specific: work, honesty, philanthropy, compliance with Australia’s laws, and devotion to the Hellenic fatherland. Its biographical sketches were strenuously complimentary, although Kentavros disclaimed any intention to publicise individuals, saying the aim was to tell the truth about those who had created something good by honesty, industry and efficiency—and “to prod those who think that success comes through a philosophy of ‘easy come, easy go’, or who offer the excuses that the present is not a propitious time for achievement, or that Australians dislike foreigners, or that wages are too low and costs too high, or that nothing can be done unless one is supported”.

Writing of Australian immigration policy, the authors stated that persons with a knowledge of farming were preferred, but that anyone free from contagious disease and able to work was allowed entry except “people of Oriental origin” (Chi-



nese, Japanese, Indians and Africans), criminals deported from other countries during the last five years, deprived or mentally retarded persons, persons considered to be a danger to public security, and a few other categories; migrants might be subjected to a language examination, but that was "very rare and confined to certain types of case"; anyone entering Australia without official permission, however, risked six months imprisonment and a fine. Intending migrants were told that if they applied to the Australian High Commission in London they could expect an answer within 15 days, whereas an enquiry addressed to Australia would not be answered within less than three months.

Advice on nationality was also offered, including a warning by Consul Maniakos that Australian nationality acquired by a Greek had absolutely no effect in Greece, and that a Greek who had not complied with his national obligations before leaving Greece would be prosecuted on his return there; indeed, that the only way to



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σώπους εἰς τὰ κυριώτερα μέρη τῆς Ν.Ν.Ο., καὶ  
καταβάλλομεν πᾶσαν προσπάθειαν ὅπως εὐχαρι-  
στήσωμεν τὴν πολυπληθὴ πελατείαν μας, μεταξὺ  
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divest oneself of Greek nationality was to have it annulled by royal decree. Nor would a Greek be entitled to consular help unless he had paid his annual "residence fee" of eight shillings to the Consulate.

I Zoi en Afstralia conceded that a Greek could change his name in Australia without formality, but declared that it was better to do so officially and to announce it in the press. Many Greeks in Australia, it went on, had changed their name, but this was not advisable, because it could arouse suspicion, and could also create difficulties on return to Greece. "It is certainly true that long, unintelligible and not easily pronounced Greek names are an obstacle in foreign countries, especially in the British Dominions and among business people; but it is better to leave one's name as it is, or at the most alter it slightly to make it sound more English, rather than replace it by something quite different."

Among other practical counsel the authors recommended solicitors Harold I Morgan in Sydney, Eustace Flanagan (of Pavey, Wilson and Cohen) in Melbourne, and O'Shea and O'Shea in Brisbane, as legal advisers; and, for medical attention, Dr Howard Bullock and Dr Ramsay Sharp in Sydney and Dr Constantine Kyriazopoulos in Melbourne.

"Indispensable guidance" was also given on how a Greek should



## Greeks and Australians, Vol's I-III

It is impossible to convey the impact of the publication of Hugh Gilchrist's encyclopaedic 3 volume History of Greeks and Australians on Greek Australian historiography. Gilchrist transformed the manner in which Greek Australian studies are undertaken. A new high standard was set for all future research, and, the study of Greek Australian history was taken far more seriously amongst Australian intellectuals. As Angelo Notaras noted in the opening section of the Epilogue, Gilchrist has inspired subsequent historians and researchers to research, write and publish, works of a similar, very high standard. A number of them are listed in this books with a Kytherian or Hellenic theme section.

Volume I, The Early Years, published in 1992, encompasses the period from

Ancient Greek history to the beginning of the First World War. For background information on the heavy involvement of Kytherians in early 20th century Australia, readers are referred in particular to, Chapter 11, The Shop-keeping phenomenon.

Volume II, The Middle Years, encompasses the period between 1914, and 1939, the beginning of the Second World War.

Volume III, the later years, encompasses the period from 1939 to 30th March, 1953, when Dimitrios Lambros, the first Greek Ambassador to Australia, was appointed.

Greeks and Australians, Vol's I-III,

must form the centrepiece on every Greek Australian library in Australia.

"Gilchrist has created a monumental and praiseworthy work of three volumes, which will be treasured not only by historians but also by the community at large, both in Australia and Greece. One can be assured that the contents of this invaluable reference book will enlighten the reader about Australia's ties with Greece and Greece's relationship with Australia". - John Yiannakis, Curtin University of Technology

Hugh Gilchrist has been a Philhellene all his life. From 1945 until his retirement in 1981, he served in the Department of External Affairs. >From 1968-1972 he was Ambassador to Greece in Athens.

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**Angelo Notaras,**  
**info@atomindustries.com.au**





**It is extremely important that all major Hellenic Organisations, Clubs and Charities in Australia help to finance this most seminal of Greek Australian publications. If you are on the Executive or the Committee of a major Hellenic group, please insist that some level of funding is provided for this project.**

"It seems to me that we are the anointed ones. We are the group who can and do make a difference, and through our generosity and benefaction we can leave behind a better Greek Australia than the one we have inherited". James Agapitos, Art Collector & Benefactor.

The e-mail came from the next room. "You gotta see this!" Jorge Moll had written. Moll and Jordan Grafman, neuroscientists at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA, had been scanning the brains of volunteers as they were asked to think about a scenario involving either donating a sum of money to charity or keeping it for themselves. As Grafman read the e-mail, Moll came bursting in. The scientists stared at each other. Grafman was thinking, "Whoa — wait a minute!"

The results were showing that when the volunteers placed the interests of others before

their own, the generosity activated a primitive part of the brain that usually lights up in response to biological primary gratification, such as food or sex. Altruism, the neuroscience experiment suggested, was not a superior moral faculty that suppresses basic selfish urges, not a sociologically learned secondary superimposition, but rather basic to the brain, hard-wired and pleasurable. Their

2006 finding that

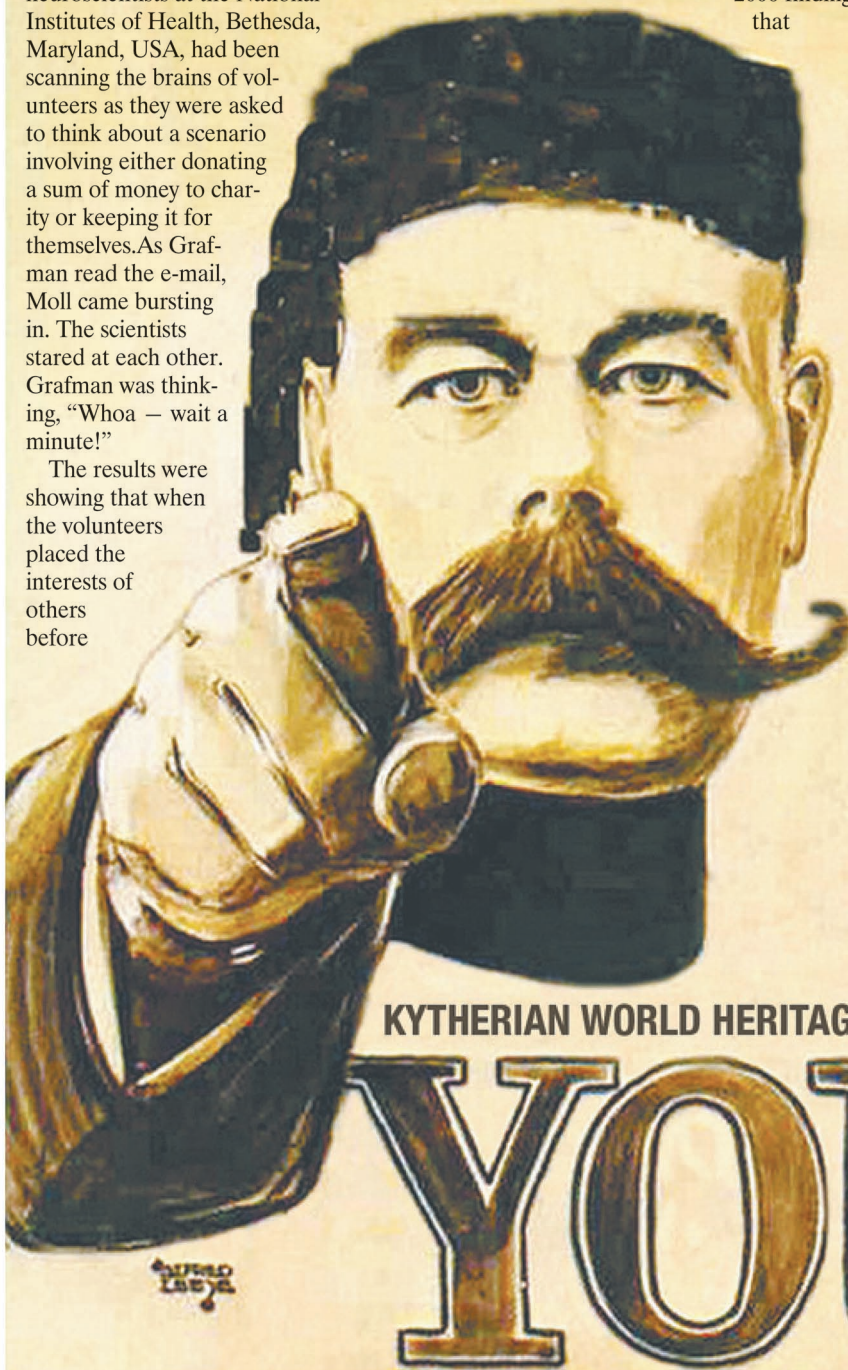
unselfishness can feel good lends scientific support to the admonitions of spiritual leaders such as Saint Francis of Assisi, who said, "For it is in giving that we receive."

James Agapitos reinforces this philosophy, "The act of giving is in itself a source of immense enjoyment; it is a particular feeling understood by all benefactors and philanthropists". He argues further that "benefaction is my way of paying back to society what it provided to me over the years". It is a form of social and civic "pay back", and a way of leaving the planet, society, human knowledge, and Greek Australian knowledge, in a better state than we found it.

The link between these findings and statements, and the needs of the Kytherian World Heritage Fund, is obvious. George Poulos is appalled that there are numerous Greek Australians with a net worth of between \$20 - 700 million, who have not seen their way clear to contribute a single cent to the Fund. He is appalled that when he has approached certain Greeks and Kytherians to donate to the Fund they have either gone white and clammy with anxiety, or become belligerent, and/or avoided the issue, despite having a net worth of more than \$10 million. He is appalled that amongst 50-something Greek Australians, he is the only one to have contributed \$A2,000, or more. This is despite the fact that many Greeks and Kytherians in this age category are Doctors, Specialists, Solicitors, Barristers, Accountants, Financial Advisors, Property Owners, Business Owners and Public Servants on massive 6-figure salaries and earnings. He is appalled that not one cent has been donated by 40-something Greek and Kytherian Australians. This despite the fact that much of their success can be directly

attributed to being the sons and daughters of Greek and Kytherian immigrants.

The superior projects funded by the Kytherian World Heritage Fund require on-going financial support. The cultural, psychological and



**KYTHERIAN WORLD HERITAGE FUND NEEDS**

**YOU**



the sociological impact of the projects will benefit all Greek and Kytherian Australians, their children and their grandchildren around the world.

Please make the decision to donate to the Kytherian World Heritage Fund, to keep it going, and to take some pressure off the other sponsors. Donate as little or as much as you can afford. But donate something. Don't leave it to the same visionary benefactors to always provide the funding for projects of this kind. Become a visionary yourself.

Funds you donate over the next 3-4 months will be channelled into the project to print, publish and distribute Life in Australia. Some Greek Australians Trusts, Associations and Clubs have donated \$15,000. Most have donated more than A\$5000. All donations over A\$500 will be acknowledged in the DONERS LIST, in the Epilogue of the 2008 edition. This acknowledgement, if the impact of the 1917 publication of Life in Australia can be used as a guide, will resonate with Greek Australians for another 100 years. All donations, either corporate or individual, over A\$2000 will be acknowledged on the SPONSORS list of [www.kythera-family.net](http://www.kythera-family.net), in perpetuity, and can be dedicated to an ancestor(s) or a loved one(s).

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George Poulos, Secretary, Secretary,  
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Angelo Notaras, Trustee, Trustee,  
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behave in Australia. Many Greeks, it was stated, flattered themselves that they were superior to Australians in their level of civilization and in their commercial astuteness. On the contrary, I Zoi en Afstria asserted, the Australians—with the few exceptions to be found in all countries—were superior to the civilized peoples of Europe. Greek migrants were therefore advised to preserve their own customs, but also to familiarise themselves with those of the host country. “Shouting, banging the table, gesticulating, rudeness, going about in gangs in the streets, and dirty attire” were things which aroused Australian dislike of foreigners, the authors warned, adding that this was not due to xenophobia. “The Australian, wherever he may be, eats, dresses, sleeps and walks with care and circumspection, and always prefaces his conversation with ‘Please’ and ends it with ‘Thank you’.”

Every Greek was urged to do his duty not only to himself and his family but also to his neighbour in trouble, to Greece, and to the Church, and to pursue the highest Christian ideals. Some had apparently fallen below this standard, for the authors added:

“The worst aspect of all—not just for our compatriots in Australia now but for those who may come in future—is that some individuals—probably only a few—after working honestly for years and having made their money, evade their obligations to other businessmen who have behaved honourably towards them, and think it clever to abscond from Australia, persuading themselves that they will never return.” On such persons, they warned, “the heavy axe of justice will inexorably fall, condemning them to six years jail and payment of all debts and costs.”

Contrasted with such delinquents were those who had voluntarily returned to Greece to fight in the recent wars against Turkey and Bulgaria. On them I Zoi en Afstria bestowed the highest praise, listing 23 by name and recalling that many had paid their own passages home

to enlist, at great financial sacrifice; and somewhat acidly the authors noted that, although Greek law imposed imprisonment for evasion of the call-up, the Greek Government had made no proper arrangements to help men to return to Greece.

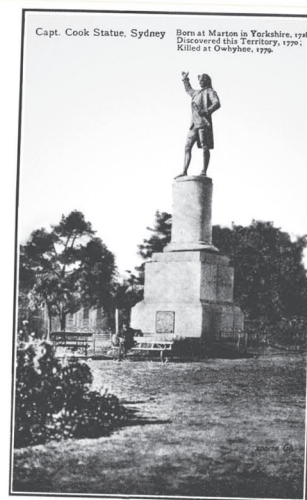
I Zoi en Afstria's account of the discovery of Australia was imaginative, referring to “an ancient Chaldaean legend about a great continent to the south of India”, and to rumours brought back by soldiers of Alexander the Great, and to mention of Australia by the ancient geographers Aimilianos, Manilios and Ptolemy, and alleged Arab visits before the Dutch and Portuguese.

On firmer ground was Kentavros's account of his ten day tour of northern New South Wales. Armed with a suitcase

and a rug, he took the train to Taree and by various means reached Murwillumbah, calling on Greeks in the region's towns, and travelling up the Manning River in the motor-launch Ariadne, operated as a ferry service by a member of the Comino family. A hired car and driver took him to Wauchope, Port Macquarie, Kempsey and other towns. He travelled by train to Casino and in a wildly driven buggy from Kyogle to Byron Bay, and ended his journey with a stormy voyage in a small steamer from Lis-

more to Sydney. Despite bumpy roads and occasional punctures, he found the scenery beautiful and his compatriots hospitable, and he was impressed by the region's dairying and oyster-culture. Every Australian farmer is his own master, he declared, and he fears neither domination nor theft nor loss.

“A future edition”, Kentavros hoped, would show Australia's Greeks “demonstrating the same intense love of their native land, as well as higher levels of commercial and social success”. And Charles (Kosmas) Andronicus, regretting that lack of space had precluded mention of many interesting aspects of Australian life, declared his intention to remedy this in the next edition. None eventuated, but I Zoi en Afstria retains a unique place in the history of Greek settlement.



Τὸ ἀγαλμα τοῦ ἀξιωματικοῦ Κόκιν, ἐν «Sydney».  
Οὗτος ἐγεννήθη εἰς Marton τοῦ Yorkshire τὸ 1728,  
Ἀνεκάλυψε τὴν Αὐστράλιαν τὸ 1770, καὶ  
Ἀπέθανεν εἰς Owhyhee τὸ 1779.