

## Codifying the Academic Contributions of the Australian Institute of Macedonian Studies (AIMS<sup>1</sup>)

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The Australian Institute of Macedonian Studies (AIMS) is celebrating its 38th anniversary; during this period its entire focus has been the history, language, heritage and culture of Macedonia from ancient to modern times. This has been achieved by organizing international conferences, publishing books and academic journals, inviting noted scholars to present public lectures at Australian Universities and in the Greek Community, and contributing to the cultural life of the Greek Australian community.

### A: Conferences

In 1988, 1991 and 1995, AIMS organised three international conferences one at LaTrobe University and the other two at the University of Melbourne. The first Conference was held at Latrobe University between February 4–12, 1988, with scholars from both Greece and Australia. There were presentations from the fields of linguistics, archaeology, political science, ancient and modern history, literature, sociology and folklore. Some notable presenters were Drs. Evangelos Kofos, Georgios Babinotis, Loring D.Danforth, Ioannis Hassiotis, and Polychronis Enepekidis. The conference was also attended by Greek Ministers and Parliamentarians such as Stylianos Papathemelis, Nicholas Martis and Vassilios Papas.<sup>2</sup> Despite the success of the first conference, the Macedoslavs staged a

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<sup>1</sup> This is an expanded version of this paper originally published in *Macedonian Studies Journal*, Vol.11, Issue, 1 in <https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/article/view/19> (accessed September 22, 2024). I would like to thank Professor Anastasios Tamis for allowing me to use his article: *A short appraisal on the Australian Institute of Macedonian Studies*. Hereafter cited as *AIMS* with pagination added by the author. The original word document had no page numbers.

<sup>2</sup> *AIMS* fn.3., pp.1-2

large protest marching through the Agora Plaza inside the LaTrobe University campus with flags protesting the staging of the conference. With banners and provocative slogans, they claimed the Greeks had no right to stage a conference using the name of Macedonia. This protest attracted wide media coverage in the mainstream press and television news in Australia.<sup>3</sup> The conference proceedings were published in an edited volume titled *Macedonian Hellenism* which included 32 articles in six chapters which covered archaeology, history, politics and international law, anthropology and culture, linguistics, literature and immigration, and Macedonian art.<sup>4</sup>

The second conference focused on ancient Macedonia's history and archaeology which took place between July 8–13, 1991, organized in collaboration with Professor Dimitri Pantermalis. Professor Nicholas Hammond officially opened the conference in the great hall of the National Gallery of Victoria with a large audience in attendance. He described some of his archaeological work carried out in Northern Greece, while other keynote speakers which included Professors E. Borza, R. M. Errington and D. Pantermalis, described their own work. The conference attracted specialists in the fields of archaeology, history, anthropology, ethnography, and literature.<sup>5</sup>

The theme of the third conference focused on Byzantine Macedonia and was held between July 10–15, 1995, organized in collaboration with Prof. Phaedon Malingoudis. The official opening of the conference took place at the National Gallery of Victoria with a famous Byzantinist scholar. Professor Johannes Koder (University of Vienna) delivering a lecture entitled: "The Macedonians and Macedonia in the Byzantine field of thought". Professor Phaedon Malingoudis (University of Thessalonika) was perhaps the best known of the forty-four Greek scholars who presented papers covering the economics, administration and history of Byzantine Macedonia. Some scholars from Skopje<sup>6</sup> also participated which highlighted the scientific nature of the conference, thus avoiding any accusations of being a propaganda event.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 1988: The Macedonian Question has reached Australia (Vox Populi, SBS-TV) on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNwhC-OhcFk> (accessed on October 4, 2024)

<sup>4</sup> A.M Tamis (ed) *Macedonian Hellenism*, River Seine Press, Melbourne, 1990, 395ff in *AIMS* p.2 & fn.6

<sup>5</sup> *AIMS* p.2

<sup>6</sup> Skopje is the capital of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) now known as Republic of Northern Macedonia.

<sup>7</sup> *AIMS*, pp.2-3

**B: Publications**

The proceedings of the three conferences have been published, making them available to scholars and the public interested in Macedonian studies in its various manifestations. In the first case, the 1988 conference proceedings appeared under the title *Macedonian Hellenism* compiled by A. M. Tamis published by River Seine Press in 1990 which contained papers such as: "Post-war literary and publishing activity in Florina"; "Death of Alexander the Great: clinical reappraisal"; "Linguistic unification of Macedonia"; and "Insurrectionary movements in Macedonia during the early Ottoman period".<sup>8</sup>

The second conference proceedings titled *Ancient Macedonia an Australian Symposium* published in 1994 was edited by Peter J. Connor which contained eleven contributions. Among the papers included were Eugene N. Borza, "The ancient Macedonians; a methodological model"; Greg Horsley, "The Politarchs in Macedonia and beyond (pls. 7–14)"; Nicholas Hammond, "Macedonia before Philip and Philip's first year in power"; and Ian Worthington, "Alexander and Athens in 324/3". It should be noted the entire conference proceedings were dedicated to Nicholas Hammond.<sup>9</sup>

The proceedings of the third conference titled *Byzantine Macedonia Identity, Image and History: Papers from the Melbourne Conference July 1995* edited by John Burke and Roger Scott listed nineteen papers. A sample of these include Angeliki Laiou, "Thessaloniki and Macedonia in the Byzantine period"; Gerhard Podskalsky, "Two Archbishops of Achrida (Ochrid) and their significance for Macedonia's secular and church history"; and Johannes Koder, "Macedonians and Macedonia in Byzantine spatial thinking".<sup>10</sup>

All the conference proceedings show clearly the Greekness of Macedonia presented through the contributions of various non-Greek specialists. Professor Anastasios M. Tamis, the President of AIMS, has written many books on Macedonian Hellenes in Australia and the Greek diaspora. Among these are an award-winning volume on Greek Macedonia and Macedoslav migration and settlement in Australia, depicting the patterns of occupation, settlement, the model and structure of the social organizations, the level and degree of integration and the ideological strife emerging from historical, political, and social-economics reasons.<sup>11</sup> *The Greeks in the Far Orient* documents the Greek diaspora in Manchuria (China), Japan, Philippines, India and Korea using Japanese and Chinese sources, *The Greeks in Latin America*, which depicts and documents the

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<sup>8</sup> See fn,4

<sup>9</sup> See fn.5

<sup>10</sup> *AIMS* p.3 & fns,8-10

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4 fn.11 (A.M. Tamis, *Immigration and Settlement of Macedonian Greeks in Australia*, La Trobe University Press, Melbourne, 1994)

migration and settlement experience of approximately 40,000 Hellenes, of whom at least 4,000 were Macedonians, and *Macedonian Hellenes in Oceania* which documents the migration and settlement of Macedonian Greeks in Australia from 1924–2005. At the Adelaide book launch of the Oceania volume, Senator Nick Xenophon of South Australia stated that “this is a landmark book not just about Macedonian Greeks in our region but also about the broader contribution Hellenism has made. It is significant because it tells stories that need to be told and recorded in what is a historical document.”

In the last few years, AIMS has organized a series of book launches for Professor Tamis’ more recent publications. These include: ‘*The Aegis of Hellas: The Continuing Vigour of PhilHellenes*’, ‘*The Children of Aphrodite: Cypriots in Australia*’, ‘*Filius Patriae: Lieutenant Kouromichelakis*’ and ‘*Hellenes in Australia (1974-2016)*.’ All these book launches were well-attended and received extensive coverage in the Greek-Australian media.<sup>12</sup>

AIMS also publishes a scholarly, peer review journal containing articles on different aspects of Macedonia. For example, in the edition of the July 1994 of its *Journal of the Australian Institute of Macedonian Studies*, Volume 2, number 1 articles appeared written both in English and Greek such as: by Phaedon Malingoudis, “Linguistic Norm and National Identity”; Costas Allimonos, “An Understanding of the ‘Macedonian Problem’”; A. M. Tamis, “Macedonia: the most blood-soaked region of Greece”, and S. Stavridis, “The Asia Minor Campaign Revisited”.

Since 2014, AIMS’ official publication<sup>13</sup> has been renamed as the *Macedonian Studies Journal*, and Volume 1, issue 2 (2014) contained the following articles: John Melville-Jones, “The Borders of ancient Macedonia I”; A. M. Tamis, “Macedonian Hellenes”; Christopher A. Matthews, “Alexander-the Great Tactician”; Marcus A. Templar, “Skopje’s Political Efficiency”; Terry Stavridis, “The Greek-Americans and Balkan Wars 1912–13”; and Eugenia Zaliou-Basiakouli, “Women and costumes of Naousa, the end of an era”.<sup>14</sup>

The 2015 Volume 1, issue:3 comprised of the following pieces: Loukianos Hassiotis, “Macedonia in the Great War (1914–18)”; Ioannis Mourellos, “The Salonica theatre of operations and its parts in the outcome of the First World War”; Vlassis Vlassidis, “Constructing and maintaining Commonwealth WW1 cemeteries in Greece 1920–40”;

<sup>12</sup> <https://aims.edu.au/the-children-of-aphrodite-cypriots-in-australia-book-launch-held-in-nicosia-cyprus/>; <https://aims.edu.au/book-launch-the-children-of-aphrodite-cypriots-in-australia/>; <https://aims.edu.au/book-launch-in-melbourne-the-aegis-of-hellas-the-continuing-vigour-of-philhellenism/>; <https://aims.edu.au/book-launch-in-melbourne-filius-patriae-lieutenant-ioannis-kouromichelakis/>; <https://aims.edu.au/hellenes-in-australia-book-launch-in-south-australia/> (accessed September 22, 2024)

<sup>13</sup> <https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/index> (accessed September 22, 2024)

<sup>14</sup> <https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/issue/view/2> (accessed September 22, 2024)

John Melville-Jones, "The borders of Ancient Macedonia II"; Angelos A. Chotzidis, "Demonstrations in Macedonia in the era of the Young Turks"; Stavroula Mavrogeni, "Public art in FYROM"; "The Museum for the Macedonian Struggle"; and Evangelos Kofos, "Macedonia's name".<sup>15</sup>

The *Macedonian Studies Journal* Vol.2 (no.1), 2021 contains a series of interesting articles covering ancient Macedonia, the contributions of AIMS to Macedonian Hellenism, the Greek language, directions of the recent historiography of Skopje and the role of the Greek diaspora.<sup>16</sup> Beginning in 2023-24, special editions of the journal have been published online which can be accessed from the AIMS website.<sup>17</sup>

These new journal articles continue to concern aspects of Macedonia's history from antiquity until modern times.

### C. Public Lectures

AIMS also invites leading scholars to present public lectures at Australian Universities and to the Greek community. During the last thirty years AIMS has invited more than 200 distinguished scholars, academicians, researchers and prominent academics from all over the world. Among those who were sponsored and gave public lectures under AIMS auspices are: Prof. G. Babiniotis, Prof. M. Damanakis, Prof. Artemis Xanthopoulou-Kyriacou, Prof. I. Hassiotis, Prof. E. Chryssos, Prof. Evangelos Constantinou, Prof. A. Manthos, Rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In November 2006, Professor of Linguistics, George Babiniotis returned and gave a series of public lectures and seminars in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. AIMS has collaborated with other institutions to sponsor many lectures and seminars such as the Nafsika Stamoulis and the Hellenic Museums.

Professor Iakovos Michaelidis presented the following lectures on 13–20 November 2011: Greece as a factor in the stability of the Balkans at Notre Dame University, Fremantle, WA; Greece and the Balkans: Divergence v Convergence, Pan Macedonian House, Melbourne; a round table discussion in English and Greek with the topic: Current trends in Balkan Politics: the case of FYROM and Greece with Professor Michaelidis, Professor Tamis, Terry Stavridis, Panayiotis Gogidis took place at Pan

<sup>15</sup> <https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/issue/view/3> (accessed September 22, 2024)

<sup>16</sup> <https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/issue/view/4> (accessed September 22, 2024)

<sup>17</sup> <https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/issue/view/6>

<https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/issue/view/7>; <https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/issue/view/8>  
<https://ojs.aims.edu.au/index.php/msj/issue/view/9> (accessed September 22, 2024)

Macedonian House, Melbourne; and AHEPA building in Sydney with the topic Greece and the Balkans: Divergence v Convergence.

Another noted Greek historian, Professor Ioannis Mourellos visited the antipodes in October 2016. He presented a series of public lectures at Notre Dame University, Melbourne and Sydney. In Melbourne, his lecture titled Periodization of Contemporary Greek history gave new insights into modern Greek historiography, especially in defining and categorizing particular periods. He considered the Asia Minor catastrophe of 1922 as a defining moment in Greece's modern history. His presentation on the Salonika front in World War I concerned the involvement of great powers on Greek soil and Premier Venizelos' differences with King Constantine. A rarely seen fully digitized film from the French military archives greatly enhanced his lecture.

Other public lectures were given by Dr Theodora Constantinidis who presented What hides behind the walls of the graves at Amphipolis, at the Pan Macedonian Building on April 19, 2016, and the former Greek female Olympic gold medalist, Voula Patoulidou who gave a talk at Alphington Grammar on March 24, 2016.

AIMS committee members have also presented public lectures over the years. Terry Stavridis presented two PowerPoint lectures on the *Greek-American community during the Balkan Wars 1912–3* and Asia Minor in 2011 and 2015 respectively. On November 18, 2016, Dr Vasilis Sarafidis gave a lecture on Asia Minor at the Greek Center organized by Thessaloniki Association "the White Tower" in conjunction with the Greek Community of Melbourne and Hellenic Women's Cultural Association-Estia.

Our two women committee members Theofani Karabatsas and Helen Kalaboukas presented a joint lecture on Manto Mavrogenous, the heroine of the Greek War of Independence along with a short Greek film on the life of this incredible woman in March 2015. The lecture was well-received by the audience.

In 2023, Dr. Constantine Hatzidimitriou (USA) was invited to Australia under the AIMS Christos Mantzios Scholar Award and presented lectures in Melbourne and Sydney.<sup>18</sup> He gave five lectures concerning Asia Minor and the Greek Revolution, and two of these lectures compared the actions of the United States during the events of the Greek War of Independence of 1821 with those of the destruction of Smyrna in 1922, a comparison that had never been made before<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> <https://aims.edu.au/dr-constantine-hatzidimitriou-visit-to-australia/> (accessed September 22, 2024)

<sup>19</sup> <https://aims.edu.au/the-role-of-eleftherios-venizelos-in-the-asia-minor-expedition-and-its-outcome-an-american-perspective/>; <https://aims.edu.au/understanding-two-important-commemorations-americas-involvement-in-the-greek-revolution-of-1821-and-the-smyrna-catastrophe-of-1922/>; <https://aims.edu.au/who-destructed-christianity-in-asia-minor/> (accessed September 22, 2024)

### **C: Cultural Life**

The greatest cultural event in the history of AIMS was the concert titled “Alexander the Great: Pioneering Multiculturalism” held at the Melbourne Recital Center on October 26, 2016. Composer Christos Ioannidis produced a fine original piece of music which was well received by the audience. Douglas Heywood conducted the twenty-five piece Camareta Orchestra including a fifty-two-member choir. There was also a “complimentary program during which all guests received a keepsake of this cultural concert containing detailed lyrics, songs and excerpts of poetry that had been recited in both English and Greek.” It was a memorable night never to be forgotten. This concert took twelve months of planning and discussions between AIMS and the composer. Many local Greek businesses, community and sporting organizations sponsored this event.<sup>20</sup>

In 2024, AIMS screened two important documentaries George Bizos ICON and Lethal Nationalism. The former “is about the life of George Bizos, a Greek refugee who migrated to South Africa during the Second World War and became a human rights lawyer who defended Nelson Mandela and campaigned against apartheid in South Africa” whereas the latter “chronicles the genocide of the Greeks, and other indigenous Christians, at the hands of the Ottoman and Nationalist Turks” which also had its Australian premiere.<sup>21</sup> It should be noted that ‘Lethal Nationalism’ was shown on May 19 which coincided with the commemoration of Pontian Genocide .

### **D: Community Engagement**

AIMS also acts as a resource for the Greek community and beyond concerning the historical veracity of information and actions taken concerning Hellenic Macedonia and Northern Macedonia (formerly FYROM). For example, it was recently successful in advocating with the Ministry of Education to stop a public school from teaching false and politically motivated lessons concerning Macedonian ethnic identity.

AIMS committee members also use historical evidence and data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to debunk other false claims and to inform the wider Australian community through the press and social media on the Macedonian issue.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://aims.edu.au/alexander-the-great-pioneering-multiculturalism/> (accessed September 22, 2024)

<sup>21</sup> <https://aims.edu.au/george-bizos-icon-documentary/> ; <https://aims.edu.au/lethal-nationalism-documentary-screened-on-the-19th-of-may-2024/> (accessed September 22, 2024). This documentary was shown in Australia in collaboration with the Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center of Chicago, Illinois, USA.

### E. Bibliographic Project

Since early 2020, AIMS has been involved in an ongoing bibliographic project consisting of finding and uploading materials that deal with Macedonia, Epirus, Samothrace, Thrace, Lemnos, Imbros and Tenedos. The materials include books, journal articles, official documents, pamphlets, maps, and historical newspapers. For e.g. some of the official documents are from the British, Australian, US and Greek archives which cover issues like immigration, war, and diplomatic relations. Alternatively, the historical newspapers are old Greek newspapers which are no longer published but provide valuable insights into daily life of ordinary Greeks, Greek politics, the Asia Minor disaster, military coups during the 1920s-30s and Greece's relations with other nations. So far, over 50,000 images have been uploaded. Access to this information is available upon request.<sup>22</sup>

In conclusion, AIMS has accomplished many milestones in its thirty-eight-year history through its international conferences, publications and community involvement. It has stuck to its role as an academic organization by contributing to the study of Macedonia through various thematic perspectives. At no stage has it ever engaged in polemics or propaganda but has stuck to its mission as an academic organization which always advocates for accuracy and balanced perspectives.

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