AGHIA: THE TOWNSHIP AND ITS PEOPLE
PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

by
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Senior honor thesis (I.D. 499) submitted to the
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the degree of Bachelor of Arts with
Honors

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Assistant Professor of History

Date Approved: 5/20/94
"My Son we cannot speak easily to each other in our languages but the spirit of my soul has communicated with your spirit and all is well between us."

Spoken to me by a very old, holy monk on Friday, July 17, 1970 at Mount Athos, Greece.
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iii
The purpose of this paper is to record my observations and experiences during my two month stay in the township of Aghia, and my association with its people. In this paper, I shall attempt to present the physical, political, economic and cultural aspects of the township; with special emphasis on my personal experiences and observations.

As a member of the expedition, (Research Assistant to Dr. Koumoulides), which under the supervision of Dr. John T.A. Koumoulides, was engaged in the conservation and restoration of the Monastery of Ayios Fanteleimon. I shall attempt at the end of this paper to present a summary of our activities related to this monument during the summer of 1970.

This was a most fascinating summer for me and enriched my life and my academic career in many ways. Chances to study a different culture come seldom to one and I feel doubly blessed in that I was able to study the culture from within--while living in the township. Secondly, I feel I was contributing somewhat to their culture by helping to preserve one of their religious

1Saint Fanteleimon
monuments. To partially repay these blessings is one purpose of my thesis.

To gain the background information necessary for the current aspects of this paper, I spent several weeks working and living with the people of Aghia. I am deeply indebted to all of these people for their many efforts on my behalf. We suffered a distinct language barrier, but the barrier was gapped by trust and friendship.

My experiences, adventures, trials and tribulations, in the township, were shared with the fellow student members of this expedition. They were:

Marvin Green - Brighton, Michigan
Steve Cousperis - Long Island, New York
Aris Mentis - Muncie, Indiana
Thomas H. Winn - Clarksville, Tennessee

To each of them goes my sincere thanks for sharing with me their observations. Insight from more than one point of view added to my understanding in many instances.

I am greatly indebted to my professors in the Ball State University Department of History who through their instruction gave me the necessary background to be able to understand the area I was visiting. For immediate help and advice on this particular project in preparing me with the necessary reading
and his ever present guidance at the spot; I am, and
will remain, forever grateful to Dr. John T.A. Kou-
moulides, Assistant Professor of History, Ball State
University. (Fig. #1)

Throughout the entire summer, Dr. Koumoulides gave
of himself without hesitation or reservation. Without
his many hours of untiring efforts on my behalf and his
superbly professional assistance, this paper could not
have been finished.

I am also grateful to the staff of the Gennadeios
Library of the American School of Classical Studies in
Athens, Greece, for their kind assistance and under-
standing and also, to the staff of the United States
Air Force base Library in Athens, Greece for their
most valuable assistance on several occasions.

To the photographer of the expedition, Mr. Demetrios
Tloupas, of the city of Larissa, Greece, goes my sin-
cere appreciation for his excellent photographs of the
township which he has taken on my behalf.

Last but not least, I wish to express my most sin-
cere appreciation to my wife, Evelyn, whose patience
and devotion as well as her continuous moral support
and understanding made this trip possible. To her,
our two children, and our families - who helped Evelyn
with the children this summer - goes my ever lasting
love and devotion. I could only wish that my father

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might have lived to read this paper, for in all I do
be shares.
DEDICATION

This summer's experiences has been made possible through the love, understanding, and devotion of my wife, Evelyn, and our two children, David Scott - age six years, and Misty Ann - age twenty-one months. To them, because I love them, I dedicate this study.
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AGHIA
THE TOWNSHIP AND THE PEOPLE

I. GEOGRAPHY

Aghia\(^1\) lies at the foot of Mount Ossa\(^2\) in the Kissavos Mountain range at the far eastern edge of the Great Larissian Plain. Aghia was first approached by our group on a day early in June, 1970, and we could see it lying in the flatland and extending gracefully upward along the side of the foothills. (Fig #2) Coming into the village from Larissa, which is thirty-four kilometers from Aghia, we had the advantage of passing along almost the same route that Sir William Martin Leake traveled in 1831, and of seeing Aghia somewhat as he described her in his book, *Travels in Northern Greece*.\(^3\)

Sir William traveled by horseback in December, 1831, and we by bus in the summer, June, 1970, but

\(^1\) Also spelled Agia and Agyia.

\(^2\) Mount Ossa is the ancient name of Mt. Kissavos.

part of his description quite adequately fits our present observations today:

In thirty-five minutes we pass through Flessia, a small-tifftlik-village, and then turn the angle of the hills which form the southern side of the entrance into the valley which branches eastward from the Great Larissian Plain, and extends to Dugan, Dhesiani, and Aghia ... The valley into which we now enter makes a pleasant contrast to the immense naked plains which we have left, and which, although as well cultivated as any in Greece, are less remarkable for beauty than for the grandeur derived from their great extent and their noble horizons of mountains.\

Traveling through the Great Plain of Larissa, one sees why Thessaly is referred to as the "bread-basket" of Greece. The plain remains much as Sir William described it 140 years ago. Although, now covered with grain of every variety, it does indeed look vast and almost naked. Broken now by a more complex crisscross of roads and by man's modern trees (poles holding power lines) the image of space remains, and one feels a sense of awe that these Greek farmers with their simple farm tools have managed to harness this land to their use.

Sir William gives the following description of the valley in which Aghia is situated:

---

3Small village under direct Turkish influence and rule.

5Ibid.
"The valley of Dhesiani ... is enlivened by a riverillet which flows to the Asmaki, and is shaded in some places by majestic plane-trees, in others by the oleander, and agnus costus. The villages on the including height of Ossa and Pelium, as well as those in the valley, are surrounded by mulberry plantations, vineyards, and fields of corn6...(Fig #3) To the left, the snowy peak of Kissavos surmounts lower heights well covered with a variety of trees; on the right Mount Pelium, less elevated, but having a small quantity of snow upon it, is clothed in this part almost entirely by oaks.7"

The mountains in the area today are no longer covered by trees but are in fact almost barren except for shrubs. This is not a result of nature's action, but rather by the order of the loyalist commander of Aghia during the Greek Civil War of 1945-47. The commander wanted no cover to afford the communist aid in case of attack, so all trees were ordered to be cut down. The trees were never manually replaced, but only by nature's slow process, and the damage caused by the commander's action is still evident today; aside from the obvious loss of beauty the farmers suffer through lack of a proper watershed to protect their land from water runoff erosion. (Fig #4)

Entering Aghia by bus, we arrived at the center of the village in about five minutes. The Plateia con-

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6 Used in European context to mean all grain.
7 Ibid., p. 408.
# Population and Service Breakdown on the 862 Households

### Members of Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
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<th>45-65</th>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>1522</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>224**</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1545</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>215**</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>348</td>
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### Members of Households 10 Years Old and Over

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<th>Total</th>
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<td>1298</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>942</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1327</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>81</td>
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### Number of Persons Per Room

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<td>85</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>327</td>
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### Out of Total Number of Households Those Not Having A:

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<th>Indoor Bathroom</th>
<th>Electricity</th>
<th>No W.C. at all***</th>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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*Regular dwellings 804, out of which 200 are shared households.

**Within the 5-14 year span of M-F, there are 70 that are less than 10 years of age.

***W.C. Water Closet.
tinues on up through the central, business and resi-
dential sections of Aghia and then beyond the town-
ship, it becomes the main road again. This road leads
past the Monastery of Ayios Panteleimon of Aghia and
then on over the Kissaros Mountains, through sev-
eral villages, such Melivola, to Achiocampos, at
the seashore, which is approximately 27 kilometers
away.

In Sir William's time, there were about 500
families and now there are over 870, so there has
been a fair rate of growth. (Chart #1) Many of the
newer houses lie in the lowlands with most of the old-
er houses occupying positions higher up the side of
the foothills. (Fig #5)

Aghia is a most pleasant and picturesque village
with its multicolored houses and beautiful back-
ground of mountains. We were captivated by its sim-
ple rough beauty. The houses are of many styles and
designs and seem to follow no set pattern as far as
construction models go. (Fig #6-#7-#8)

Stone, mortar, wood, and marble are the chief con-
struction materials used; even in Aghia we were con-
tinuously amazed at the amount of marble the people used
in building. Even small houses might have a marble
floor or terrace. Marble abounds in Greece and the
people make good use of it in all constructions. The
people paint their homes in a variety of bright, vivid colors, e.g., a good friend of ours in the village, Themios Archontis, has his house painted pink, blue, white, and a light shade of purple. Themios built his own house and is quite proud of it; although somewhat startling when first seen, we grew to enjoy its color and style. (Fig #6)
II. ECONOMIC

As the administrative seat of the district of Aghia, the township enjoys a position of market head-quarters for the twenty-six villages and twenty communities of the district. This is most clearly manifested each Saturday as the people from all villages and communities bring their wares to Aghia to sell. They come, also, to buy supplies for the next week from other marketers gathered there.

The people begin arriving as early as noon on Friday to obtain a favorable location in the Market Square. (Fig #9) I asked everyone possible in an attempt to determine the order used in assigning spaces for the displaying of the wares; as nearly as could be determined it depends entirely upon a first come - first serve basis. After observing the general chaos it is quite apparent that no particular order is used. Throughout Friday afternoon and evening, people would arrive, pick their location, set up their display and then proceed to visit with friends and neighbors in the immediate vicinity of their wares. Those early arrivals, who came on
Friday, would spend the night in the square sleeping on or near their wares. From our hotel room, which directly overlooks the square (Fig #10), we have watched this phenomenon on five different occasions and it never failed to amaze us.

Come 5:00 A.M. Saturday morning and further sleep was out of the question for us, people were pouring into the square in earnest by then and the noise and clamour were unbelievable. Animals, people, trucks, tractors, handcarts, it seemed that every noise known to man echoed from the square in ever increasing loudness. The wares offered for sale ranged from every variety of farm produce, including livestock of every kind, to crude handcrafted items. (Fig #11) There were also sundry items of every description and clothes for the more wealthy shoppers. It would seem that for their simple way of life the visiting villagers and farmers could, and did, fill most of their needs through this market place.

By 8:00 A.M. the entire market square was like a beehive of activity (Fig #12) and it continued in like fashion until 4:00 or 5:00 P.M. Saturday afternoon. At this time, and it varied somewhat by how good a day the individual had, and by how far he had to travel home, the people packed up their re-
mainling wares and returned to their respective vil-
lages until the next market day. Not every farmer or
villager would come each week, but we observed many
that did come each market day. When we were ready to
leave our room for dinner around 7:30 P.M., the square
would be deserted by the marketers and set up for
normal operation. (Fig #9)

The normal operation of the Market Square is that
of a gathering place for the villagers. Many children
play in the square in the daytime; we Americans
created one of the biggest attractions of the year
when we played football in the square early in the
mornings. In the evening the villagers gather around
the tables (Fig #9) and drink orange-aid, lemon-aid,
cokes and Greek coffee, which is almost too thick to
cour. There are four "Efimeridopolis" around the
square that sell many sundry items and seem to do a
fairly consistent business.

We may safely conclude that the economy is main-
ly a "service" type economy. I intend that to mean
that the majority of businesses in the village operate
to support each other in their daily needs rather than

1Newspaper stand

2We may safely conclude that the majority of
the township businesses are of the "service" type.
to produce an exportable item. There are approximately one hundred businesses along either side of the main street or within one-half block of main street. There are barber shops, jewelry stores, restaurants, grocery stores (not supermarkets), appliance stores, sweet shops (one of which we visited once or twice a day), hardware shops, blacksmith, lumber yards, tile shop, garages, etc., the list could go on and on, adding up to about the same as one could find in most small towns in America, with the exception of the blacksmith and the number of sweet shops and barber shops. Each shop is quite small because of the building size and the relative small inventory they maintain. In almost every case the lack of substantial capital investments was quite easily apparent.

We visited many of these shops to check items as to cost and quality; although the products were crude in many instances they were completely serviceable and much cheaper than similar items would be in Athens, or any other large city.

In every shop we visited we were treated with courtesy and respect, the owners were quite happy and proud to take the time and trouble to show us around. Sometimes we would purchase a small item, but regardless if we did or not we were much to feel completely at ease and welcome.
The largest factory in Aghia, in fact the only business that fits the American description of a factory, is the FLOKATI factory. (Fig #13) When I visited the factory, which is only two blocks from our hotel, Mr. Lambides, part owner and plant superintendent, was most kind and gave me a complete tour of the facilities. We began where they unload the incoming wool to start the production process, all but 2 percent of the wool is imported from New Zealand which came as quite a surprise to me, tracing the wool through the many, and very complicated, steps of processing until Mr. Lambides showed me the room where they pack the product for shipping.

The factory employs one hundred and forty men and women, and produces 1.8 tons, or 1,000 square meters of Flokati per day, of which they export 75 percent. Their export area is, at present, Europe, 95 percent of their exports, but on October 5, 1970, Mr. Lambides has scheduled an appointment with a large distributor in New York City. They hope to be able to increase production by 30 percent in two years, with the market being America.

The rugs come in a large variety of colors ranging from a pure white - thru a deep brown. The most attractive to me were the bright vivid oranges, reds, greens and blues. A new Flokati has been pro-
duced this year which incorporates designs of varying colors within the patterns and they are extremely beautiful. The average export price of a Flokati ranges from $100.00 to $250.00, depending on the size and design. This factory is a growing concern and is attempting to broaden their market base. Aghia needs this sort of operation in order to grow and prosper; I wish them well as a similar attempt has been made before.

According to Sir William:

"Aghia had begun to share in the commerce of dyed cotton thread with Germany ... but the interruption caused by the war with Russia and the Porte, has at Aghia almost annihilated the traffic with Germany."3

Now Aghia begins again to trade with the world, may they have every success.

One block beyond the Flokati factory stands the second largest single business, and maybe for the present rural situation, the most important, in Aghia. The Refrigeration and Shipping Plant serves not only Aghia, but the entire district. (Fig #14) It is here that the farmers of the entire district bring all exportable produce. The Refrigeration factory

buys their products and processes them in one of two ways.

The majority of the produce is simply boxed, refrigerated and then shipped by refrigerated trucks or trains to the large cities. During the peak season, this operation employs 40-50 workers. The second process is that of cleaning, cooking and canning the produce for shipment. This is much more involved, expensive and time consuming, therefore, it is only about 20 percent of the factory's output. Fresh garden produce is a staple item in any Greek diet, individual and restaurant.

The Refrigeration and Shipping Plant occupies a very important position in the district's economy in that without this service much of the farmers' produce would be lost, due to poor transportation and the extreme heat.

The most important occupation of the people of the township and the district is farming. Farms surround the township; they vary in size but none are over 50 acres and the majority are merely a small tract of land among hundreds of others of the same general make-up. There are no fences in the area, however, the farmers all worked in the crazy patch-quilt pattern of land with no apparent problems.
Land in the district is very dry looking, and does not appear to be very rich, however, the farmers take out excellent looking crops and have done so for many years. The crops have changed very little in the 140 years since Sir William's time:

"The upper classes at Aghia live upon the produce of their corn-fields and vineyards ... mulberry plantations, and gardens."

The farmers are no longer the upper class and the mulberry plantations are two or three acres in size now, but the farmers still live off their produce. The amounts of each grain grown shifts with the market demands, but each farmer retains a basic crop structure that is as much a part of his heritage as the land itself.

Techniques of farming have changed somewhat but not as much as one might imagine. We observed many farmers still using one donkey or horse (Fig #15), especially in the hills above Aghia. The farmers travel a road now, dirt, gravel and some pavement, whereas in many years gone by their fathers and grandfathers followed simple dirt trails up into the hills.

These farms lie quiet and unchanging tucked away

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4 Due in a large part to the arid conditions of the surrounding mountains. (Brought about partially by lack of trees.)

5 Leske, IV, pp. 409-410.
in the hills and were very beautiful in the unbelievably clear days of Greece. The sky is so blue as to be almost colorless and one seldom sees a cloud. Here in the hills the farmers still work the soil with the simple hand tools (Fig #16-#17).

In the valley farms one sees more evidence of the changes wrought by time. The farmers now use irrigation pipes to water their crops and produce a greater yield. There are tractors and other modern equipment in use, but we also observe many donkeys and horses being used in large fields covered with modern irrigation pipes.

The farmer is the backbone of the economy and yet, here, as in America, they seem to struggle for existence.

Income per person in Aghia was impossible to determine and so I have relied on figures compiled by the Department of Interior, Greek Government. It would appear that many of the people of Aghia make well above the average shown for "the rest of Greece", but the people at the Ministry said for the village and the district that this would even out about right. (Chart #2)
ECONOMIC

All figures are based on the official report released by the Ministry of Interior, Greece

Per Capita Income for Greece

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<th>Blue Athens</th>
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Chart #2
III. POLITICAL

On April 21, 1967, a group of righteous military officers took over the political administration of Greece by a coup d’etat and established themselves as the new administrators of the nation, with the expressed aim to bring into the nation a greater political "stability". Although elections and returns to parliamentary government have been promised, that day is apparently quite far away, this at least is our conclusion from our frequent conversation with people of all walks of life in Greece and our observation of the present administrations "stability".

One senses an air of uneasiness in the land which, however, is difficult to describe as political apathy. In general, however, one can describe the villager (peasant) as being apathetic about the world outside his own environment. In general, the peasants seem to be sympathetic towards the new political situation, however, this may be due to the fact that the present administration seems to be paying more attention to the needs of rural and village population of Greece.

While in reality, a very simple structure, village government is hard to write about. This proved to be
the main area in which I experienced difficulty with my research due to the fact that the villagers did not wish to talk about politics or any matters related to the subject.

For hundreds of years, the village has been guided by a "Council of Elders", consisting of twelve men of the village and a mayor; this is still somewhat true today but with several important differences. Whereas in times past, the council ruled all civil and political functions, their power has been severely curtailed today. Prior to 1967, the council and its president, Proedros, were elected by their fellow villagers, today they are appointed by the Greek government. The council, especially the Proedros, retains some civil authority, but in matters of state, they are usually subordinate to the government and to the Prefect of Larissa.¹ Aghia has approximately fifteen constables in the village plus a small contingent of garrisoned army troops.

We experienced one incident where the force, and the inborn fear of that force of the government, was evident. When we first arrived in Aghia, we returned

¹Politically the district of Aghia is administered by the prefect of Larissa and ecclesiastically by the Metropolitín of Demetriadós, whose administrative seat is in the city of Volos.
each night to Larissa to sleep, because we were, at
the time, waiting to rent a house in Aghia. One evening as we were waiting for the bus, a police officer, in civilian clothes, came up to the Greek worker waiting with us and proceeded to accuse us of being in the area merely to steal items from the churches. The officer's biggest mistake was in overlooking the fact that Dr. Koumoulos speaks excellent Greek and he understood every word the man said. Dr. Koumoulos was furious, he ordered all work on the project stopped at once, speaking in Greek, informed the police officer he was reporting him all the way to the top. The officer was visibly shaken because he knew very well Dr. Koumoulos had full government approval for our work and that his blunder had placed his career in jeopardy. The officer got on the bus with us, after trying to apologize to Dr. Koumoulos in the five minutes before it left, and rode all the way to Larissa with us, apologizing profusely all the way. Dr. Koumoulos agreed not to press charges but he did file a report and the very next day, cables arrived from very high within the government structures ordering the local officials to be more cooperative. This is offered as an example of the fear that exists even within the structures of the government itself.
IV. CULTURAL

Living in the village, as we did, was a real experience; although rough and lacking in all luxuries, and most so-called necessities, we managed to not only survive, but to even enjoy ourselves. The people of the village were somewhat hesitant and leary of us at first, since this was their first prolonged contact with Americans, however, before our stay in the village was completed, two months, we had made many friendships in Aghia. We earned these friendships based on our common experiences of living and working together.¹

We traveled through the village, on foot, each day on our way to the monastery and we observed, and were observed, the people as they lived, worked and sometimes as they relaxed and enjoyed themselves. Our

¹What the villagers knew about American students is naturally what they had heard on the radio and read and seen in newspapers, which unfortunately, as we all know, is not very impressive. Naturally, when they first heard of our arrival and first saw us, they were a bit skeptical and hesitant in approaching us. One could easily sense an air of suspicion around us, however, through our work and behavior, we were able to change hesitancy to warm acceptance which evolved into sincere friendships.
ways of dress, bermuda shorts and T-shirts, were strange to them, and for the first few weeks we received many stares and a few laughs. We in turn were constantly amazed at the many varieties of clothing we observed being worn by the villagers; they ranged from the few elite who wore suits to the old men, and women, dressed almost in rags. (Fig #18-#19) We grew to see beyond the clothes they wore and knew them as the real and wonderful people they really are; the villagers also accepted our strange ways of dress, or rather they accepted us in spite of our way of dress.

The people of Aghia are as varied in physical appearance as one might expect to find in several countries rather than one small village. We observed so many different types of people that we found it impossible to select a "typical" villager as per general appearance.

In regard to a stereotype of a villager I selected one family to study and write about. One reason for my particular selection is that this family worked with us each day and so I was able to observe them very closely, however, the most important reason is that the Archontis family represents three generations of village life and one sees both the old and the new of Aghia. (Chart #3)
The father and mother of the Arhontis family are farmers, both of them, and I doubt if their lives have changed much in forty years or if they will during the next forty. They are both hard workers and good people whom I enjoyed knowing. I ate at their house on two different occasions and while it was simple food, it was well prepared and tasted excellent. Simple people of the soil, but good-hearted and very kind to an American, a group of Americans really, who wandered into their lives one summer.

Agathon, the eldest of the four sons, is a Master Sergeant in the Greek Air Force, stationed at Larissa. Agathon choose to leave Aghia when he was only 18 years old, and except for short visits with his family, he will not return. He and his wife and his baby daughter live in the city of Larissa.

Themios, Konstantine and Christos, the other three sons, seem perfectly content to remain in Aghia for the remainder of their lives. By the plain fact that they are construction workers, they worked on the monastery with us all summer, they have shown that they do not choose the way of their father, although Chris still lives at home and helps in farming occasionally, but, nevertheless, they chose to remain in Aghia.
ARCHONTIS FAMILY

FATHER - MOTHER
FARMER
FARMER - HOUSEWIFE

SON
AGATHAN
WIFE
DAUGHTER
GREEK AIR FORCE

SON
THEMIOS
WIFE
TWO SONS
CONSTRUCTION
FOREMAN/WORKER

SON
KONSTANTINE
WIFE
DAUGHTER
SON
CONSTRUCTION
WORKER

SON
CHRISTOS
WIFE
SON
CONSTRUCTION
WORKER/FARMER

"Two daughters who I did not have the pleasure of meeting."
We, all the American students, ate in the same restaurant throughout our stay in Aghia and George, the owner, became one of our good friends. He often fixed us special foods just because he knew we got a little tired of the regular Greek food with the spices and oil they contain. George speaks no English and most of us American students no Greek, with the exception of Aris Mentis, but we managed to get along and George never let us leave hungry.

The last night in Aghia, Marvin Green and myself were the only two left, we took a can of Spam, a can of Corn-on-cob, and a can of mixed vegetables to the restaurant and asked George to cook it for us; he went us one better. He fried the Spam, no oil, scrambled four eggs in with the Spam, fixed a large salad, tomatoes, green peppers and jeta (goat cheese), boiled the corn and then joined us for dinner. We thoroughly enjoyed our last meal in Aghia, and we will remember that George always took the time to see that we were treated well; he sat with us a few minutes each day to see if the food suited us, better treatment than one receives in restaurants at home.

Another of our favorite spots in Aghia was the Sweet Shop we visited so often. It is owned and operated by two brothers, Jimmy and Gus, who did all the work themselves - from baking to selling.
visited the shop at least once a day and usually twice; the brothers were very friendly and our last night in Aghia, Marvin and I received free sweets. I have no real "sweet-tooth" myself, but to supplement our diet, I did eat large amounts of sweets in Aghia. These brothers could make a real success anywhere in the world; they have the rare business combination of excellent products at low prices.

EDUCATION

The school system in Aghia is controlled by the government and the day Aris Mentis and I choose to visit, we were informed that testing was in progress plus, we would have to have a paper from the government giving us permission to enter the school. The principal took us to his office, however, and was very kind. He gave us the information we needed: there are 350 high school students, 12 teachers, and they go to school 6 days a week from October 1st thru June 26th. The teachers make approximately $2,000 a year, 60,000 DRACHMAE, so this places them above the average income even of people in Athens (Chart #2).

The principal could give us no figures on the elementary pupils except that they come to Aghia for elementary schooling from all over the district. He also pointed out that the majority of high school
students are now girls, 65-35 percent ratio, since the boys leave to work by age fourteen. The building itself is old and the village has been promised a new school, for four years, so that sounds familiar. (The pictures did not turn out satisfactorily to use).

RELIGION

The people of Aghia are very religious, being 100 percent Greek Orthodox, and most villagers practice their faith as a part of their daily lives. The Priests, or Pappas, are looked up to by all villagers and treated with a great deal of respect. Their garb in public is always the same, plain black robes and black caps; they all have beards and all wear their hair long and knotted behind the head.

We were fortunate during our stay in the village to observe a High Mass conducted by, His Grace, Ellias, Bishop of Demetriados. It was almost two hours long but quite beautiful and it obviously meant a great deal to the people of Aghia to have the Bishop with them.¹

¹This same Bishop later had Dr. Koumoulides, Marvin Green and myself to his house in Volos. He visited with us in private; we had an excellent dinner with him and then he gave each of us a personal gift, a real remembrance of our entire summer.
In the church itself, the people are segregated; the men on the right and the women on the left, and in some cases, the women wait in the rear of the church. All churches we visited, fourteen in Aghia alone, are very ornate inside with many beautiful wall paintings\(^2\) and icons.\(^3\)

The religion of the village borders sometimes on what I would deem a type of mysticism; for instance, in the church at the Monastery of Ayios Panteleimon, they have scraped out the eyes of the Saints depicted in the wall paintings. They feel that by wearing these plaster eyes in a small bag around their neck that the Saint will protect them; they did not consider the irreparable damage done to the wall paintings. Another example is that the women of the village felt the church, at the monastery, would look much nicer with clear white washed walls instead of the old dirty paintings, and so many of the wall paintings were covered with layers, ten or twelve in places, of whitewash, which we spent many hours slowly and carefully removing. Mrs. Archontis offered to repaint the

\(^2\)Wall Paintings (FRESCO) are Holy Images painted on immovable surfaces or objects.

\(^3\)Icons are Holy Images painted on movable surfaces or objects.
interior before our ceremony on Saints Day, Dr. Kou-moulides almost fainted, but managed to very politely decline her offer.

The people are good hearted, hard-working, simple-living villagers, but I enjoyed my stay in Aghia and I felt I left old friends the last time I took the bus out of town.
MONASTERY OF AYIOS PANTELEIMON

The main reason for my trip to Greece was to assist Dr. Koumoulides in his project at the Monastery of Ayios Panteleimon (Fig #20). Dr. Koumoulides first discovered the monastery in the summer of 1966 while traveling in the area with some friends from Cambridge. His first view drew him like a moth to a flame and the restoration of Panteleimon has remained his main purpose in life ever since.

Our days working on the monastery were often long, hot and dirty, but each day held new discoveries and new experiences. We worked with the Greek construction crew at times (Fig #21) but often it was our task to handle the more physical part of the work and leave the building to the Greeks.

Marvin Green and I spent more time at the monastery than the other Americans and we grew to love its beauty and quietness. It can never be as dear to us as it is to Dr. Koumoulides, but we know somewhat now what he feels for Panteleimon and we are better men for having shared in this project.

A typical work day for us would go as follows:

Up at 7:00 A.M., eat breakfast and walk the two
miles, up hill, to the monastery. We would work at whatever task assigned until around 1:00 P.M. and then break for lunch. Sometimes we would bring food from the village ourselves and other times we would share with the Archontis family. The Greeks always took a siesta from about 1:00-3:00 P.M., but we usually ate, rested a few minutes and returned to work. We usually quit around 4:00-5:00 P.M. and returned to the village - all down hill.

When there were six of us working we drew straws to assign shower priority and then prayed that the hot water, or even cold water, would hold out long enough for us to clean up. Most of the time it did, but on several occasions, we were forced to go to dinner dirty and to bed in the same condition; those were the bad days.

On July 27, 1970, completion of the conservation of the Monastery of Ayios Panteleimon was celebrated. The full completion is scheduled for August 30th, but July 27 is the Saints Day Festival for Panteleimon and so we celebrated on that day. (Fig #22)

The celebration was attended by representatives of the American Embassy, high ranking Greek officials, civil and military, and members of the Greek Academic Community. Special religious service was conducted in which Ayios Panteleimon was the focal point.
After religious services there were speeches by several people from the Greek representatives and Dr. Koumoulides and I spoke representing the American contingency. Dr. Koumoulides spoke of the necessity that this work be recognized as an academic and cultural effort of two countries and expressed his intentions of continuing his efforts to further cultural exchanges between our countries.

I spoke as a representative of Ball State University, thanking and congratulating Dr. Koumoulides for his years of work and the truly magnificent success he achieved.

I also spoke as the American Students representative saying ADIO to the villagers of Aghia. I spoke in Greek, with Dr. Koumoulides prior assistance, and they appeared moved that we cared enough to single them out for praise on this special day.

I remember the words of the monk from Athos and while I suffered a language barrier with the people of Aghia, I feel that our spirits communicated in friendship and all is well between myself and the people of Aghia.

XAIPETE
Figure 1. The author and Dr. John T.A. Koumouides at the entrance to the Monastery of Ayios Panteleimon. The sign depicts the goal of the project.
Figure 2. Aghia as it begins in the flatlands and extends upward into the foothills.
Figure 3. Orchards and fields surrounding Aghia.

Figure 4. Erosion caused by lack of proper watershed around Aghia.
Figure 5. Newer houses in the lowlands and the older houses higher up in the township.
Figure 6-7-8. Different styles of houses in the township of Aghia.
Figure 9. Aghia Market Square as it normally looks.

Figure 10. Hotel Kissavos where I lived while in Aghia; the balcony overlooks the Market Square.
Figure 11. Produce and hand crafted items offered for sale on market day in Aghia.

Figure 12. Market day in full swing, often times the square was completely covered with people.
Figure 13. The Flockati Factory of Aghia.

Figure 14. The Refrigeration and Shipping Plant.
Figure 15. One Aghia farmer on his way up into the mountains with his single labor animal.

Figure 16. Here a farmer weeds his crops with a hand hoe, much the same as his ancestors have done for centuries.
Figure 17. A farmer dusts his fruit trees with a sulfa compound tied up in a sack on a pole, very slow and primitive, but it seems to work for Aghians.
Figure 18. An old man of Aghia resting in the shade in front of his house.

Figure 19. Two old women of Aghia gathering water from one of the many springs in the valley. Many of the homes have no water and so all water is carried in by hand.
Figure 20. The Monastery of Ayios Panteleimon, taken from a road about one-half mile above the monastery.

Figure 21. The American Students Cultural Corp, working hand in hand with the Greek construction crew to remove the old roof of the obbets tower at the monastery.
Figure 22. Part of the ceremony of the Saints Day Celebration.


BACKGROUND BIBLIOGRAPHY


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