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What Was The Real Location Of Ithaca?

Author of "Odysseus Unbound" Says Homer's Ithaca was in Cephalonia

By Liana Sideri
Special to the National Herald

NEW YORK - In his book, "Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca" (Cambridge University Press, October 2005), author Robert Bittlestone and co-authors Professors James Diggle (Classics, Cambridge University) and John Underhill (Geology, University of Edinburgh), have set out to provide an explanation for the real location of Homer's Ithaca, the Greek island to which Odysseus finally returns after ten years of wandering after the end of the Trojan War.

The authors argue that the modern Ionian island of Ithaki, as Greeks know it today, does not correspond to Homer's Ithaca, which they contend was really a peninsula on the island of Cephalonia.

When Odysseus makes himself known to King Alcinoos on the island of Scherie (thought to be present-day Corfu), Mr. Bittlestone said, he introduces his homeland with a description which scholars have pondered over for many centuries:

I am Odysseus, Laertes' son, world-famed

For stratagems: My name has reached the heavens.

Bright Ithaca is my home: It has a mountain,

Leaf-quivering Neriton, far visible. Around are many islands, close to each other,

Doulichion and Same and wooded

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Greek & Turkish Fighter Jets Collide in Midair

NEW YORK - Greek and Turkish F-16 fighter jets crashed following a mid-air collision over the Aegean Sea on Tuesday, May 23, while shadowing each other in disputed airspace.

The Turkish pilot was rescued by a passing merchant ship after ejecting from the plane, officials said, but there were conflicting reports on Costas Eliakes, 36, the missing Greek pilot. A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement said the Greek pilot had died, but at press time, officials in Athens said a rescue operation was still underway.

Rescue ships and helicopters searched around the island of Karpathos. Hellenic authorities said the search would last for 72 hours after the time of the crash, but the chances of finding the Greek pilot alive were considered slim. Eliakes' helmet and survival kit were recovered late Tuesday night.

The two F-16s collided over international waters near Karpathos after two Greek jets intercepted two Turkish warplanes, military officials from both countries said. Karpathos, in the southeast Aegean, is about 440 kilometers (270 miles) from Athens.

Greek officials claimed that the Turkish planes were acting as escorts to an R-F4 photoreconnaissance plane.

Both Greek and Turkish military chiefs and Foreign Ministers Dora Bakoyanni and Abdullah Gul spoke shortly after the crash, and rejected notions that the crash would escalate tensions between the two rivals.

"The two ministers expressed their regret for today's incident, and agreed that this incident must not affect the two countries' goal of improving their relations," the Greek Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Long-standing disputes over airspace and territorial rights in

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AP PHOTO/KENAN GURBUZ

ABOVE: A Turkish Air Force F-16 flies over a military airbase in Dalaman near the southwestern Turkish city of Mugla, this past Tuesday, May 23. Greek and Turkish warplanes collided over the Aegean island of Karpathos as they shadowed each other that day. BELOW: Rescue efforts to for Costas Eliakes, the Greek pilot who was downed after his F-16 collided with a Turkish F-16, continued near Karpathos for 72 hours after the accident. The Turkish pilot ejected safely.



EUROKINISSI

Angelides: Now is the Time to Help Out

Phil Must Get Past Primary Opponent to Get a Crack at Arnold

By Evan C. Lambrou
Special to The National Herald

NEW YORK - With scores of education, environmental and business leaders, labor organizations and law enforcement associations; dozens of minority leaders; and hundreds of his state's elected officials backing him, California State Treasurer Phil Angelides is kicking and clawing his way towards a Democratic Primary on June 6 in his bid to secure his party's nomination for Governor.

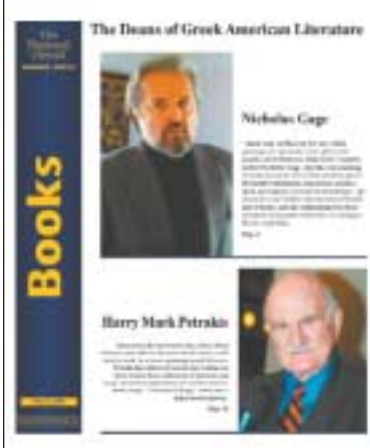
He picked up endorsements from the Los Angeles Times and the Sacramento Bee on May 14, and California's Democratic establishment is solidly behind him. But with many voters still undecided, Mr. Angelides pointed out, there is no guarantee, and this the time he needs the Greek American community to step up in order to counter his opponent's deep pockets.

"My opponent just dropped \$27 million into his own campaign, and said he has no qualms about spending even more. He's trying to buy the governorship," Mr. Angelides said, referring to his opponent's ongoing bombardment of television ads.

Mr. Angelides, who early on had been considered the Democratic frontrunner against Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, has found himself in a much tougher fight than expected against California State Controller Steve Westly, who made a fortune sell-

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With this issue:



Cathedral School Gets \$450K Challenge Grant

By Demetris Tsakas
Special to The National Herald

NEW YORK - The Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation approved a \$450,000 challenge grant to the Cathedral School of the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan.

Speaking to the National Herald last week, Cathedral President John Stratakis confirmed the information, which also reported in the

Herald's Greek-language daily last Friday, May 19.

The Cathedral School is the only Greek American school in Manhattan. The will be issued once the Cathedral's Board of Directors and Education Committee raise an additional \$300,000. The Cathedral has until April 30, 2007 to do so.

Of the \$450,000, a sum of \$150,000 will be made payable over three years, and will fund scholarships primarily to families in finan-

cial need. The grant will be issued to help cover administrative and academic program costs.

Payment will be made upon receipt of documentation up to the full amount of the grant in two installments. None of the funds may be used for reducing the school's deficit, according to the terms of the grant.

The Foundation has asked the school to submit a report by November 1 documenting raised

funds during the first six months of the challenge grant period.

In the past five years, the Niarchos Foundation has donated \$800,000 to the Greek American High School of the St. Demetrios Church in Astoria. It has also donated \$500,000 to erect a new educational and cultural center for the Greek Orthodox community of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Flushing,

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St. Demetrios Student Gets Accepted at Yale University

By Stavros Marmarinos
Special to The National Herald

NEW YORK - It was at 11 AM on a Saturday when Evangelia Podaras a senior at St. Demetrios High School in Astoria picked up her home phone to hear the good news.

"A lady from Yale University was calling to tell me that, after checking my grades and my application documents, the school had accepted me," Miss Podaras told the National Herald.

Her first reaction upon hearing the news? "I was jumping around, with the phone still in my hands," she said. Her mother and younger sister Androniki, a sophomore at St. Demetrios, were both there next to her when she received the good word, she said, and hugged and kissed her.

"It was hard to believe that I got into one of the top American universities, that is renowned around the world," she added.

A few days earlier, Miss Podaras' family and her school had similar reasons to celebrate, as the young girl had received notice of her acceptance to other top-notch schools: Columbia University and Barnard College, and Fordham University. But it was getting into Yale which gave her the most satisfaction, she said.

"I want to tell other students to study hard and set high standards for themselves, and to always keep hoping," she said. "I didn't expect to get into Yale, but here I am," she added. "I like studying and

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Greek School In Toronto Gets \$180K

By Theodore Kalmoukos
Special to The National Herald

BOSTON - The Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation has approved a grant of \$180,400 for the Greek Day School of the Transfiguration in the Metropolis of Toronto. The grant will go towards supporting the school's Greek-language and computers programs.

In an interview with the National Herald, His Eminence Metropolitan Soterios of Toronto and All Canada said "the donation was a very moving gesture on behalf of the Foundation," adding that it gave him "the wings I need in order to continue working."

The announcement of the donation, though expected, still came

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Greek American Marine Goes to Resting Place

By Stratos Boudouridis
Special to The National Herald

NEW YORK - Family and friends of Corporal Steven Vahaviolos, the Greek American marine who drowned during a military vehicle accident in Iraq on May 11, gathered at the Evangelical Free Church in Montvale, New Jersey last Saturday, May 20 to pay their final respects.

The 21-year-old marine was killed alongside three more servicemen, when their M1A1 main battle tank flipped into a canal in the Province of Anbar. Their battalion (2nd Tank Battalion of the 2nd Marine Division from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina) had started its second assignment in Iraq less than two months ago.

At press time, the Department of defense had not yet furnished details about the accident, although the Pentagon reported that hostile forces did not appear to be responsible for the deaths.

At the funeral service last Saturday, Corporal Vahaviolos' parents, Costas, 48, and Vasiliki, 46, and his sister Penny, 23, could not come to grips with the tragedy



TNH/COSTAS BEJ

Corporal Steve Vahaviolos was buried with full military honors last Saturday, May 22. Friends and family gathered at the Evangelical Free Church in Montvale, New Jersey for the funeral. Corporal Vahaviolos, U.S. Marine Corps, died in a tank accident on May 11 while serving his country in Iraq. Above, U.S. Marines carry Corporal Vahaviolos' coffin to its final resting place.

which struck their family.

"He's my marine, and he will always be my marine," said the grieving mother in her eulogy, struggling to hold back her tears, adding that her son was a shy and kind-hearted child, who never showed disrespect and never used foul language. He was proud of his country, she added, and realized his life's dream of serving in the United States Marine Corps.

Mrs. Vahaviolos, a native of Tripolis in Greece, then recalled incidents and images from her son's childhood: his favorite foods, his pretending to be a power ranger, and his close relationship with his sister.

"He was not just her brother, but also her best friend," she said. "They loved and respected each other, and shared secrets together. When he was little, he imitated power rangers and other superheroes on television. He also liked drawing army tanks. Ironically, it turned out that one such tank took his life."

Corporal Vahaviolos also liked reading science fiction, playing

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Angelides

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Mr. Angelides' investment policies and programs have been aimed at achieving solid returns, while bolstering California's long-term economic strength and quality of life. His nationally acclaimed "Smart Investments" initiative outlined a strategy for investing in the infrastructure needed to support environmentally responsible growth patterns for California's future. His May 2000 initiative, "The Double Bottom Line: Investing in California's Emerging Markets," targeted investment capital to broaden economic opportunity throughout the state. Together, Mr. Angelides office points out, the two initiatives have directed more than \$25 billion in investments to spur economic progress in California communities.

Recently, Mr. Angelides launched the "Green Wave" initiative, which calls on California's two large public pension funds to achieve positive financial returns by investing in firms developing the environmentally clean technologies of the future. The initiative also seeks to reduce risks posed to the funds' portfolios by climate change and poor environmental practices among companies in which the funds invest.

Mr. Angelides, 52, is a graduate of Harvard University and a Coro Foundation Fellow. He served in California government from 1975 to 1983, and was a leader on affordable housing, urban planning and public finance. He entered the private sector in 1984. In 1986, he formed his own investment and management business. Among his business ventures, the new town of Laguna West was featured in Time, Newsweek, the New York Times, U.S. News & World Report and ABC's "Good Morning America," and sparked a national dialogue on how to plan and build more livable communities.

Mr. Angelides has been active in the civic life of his community and state for more than three decades. Before his election as Treasurer, he served as Co-Chair of the Sacramento Mayor's Commission on Education & the City's Future in 1995-96, and then led a unique bi-partisan civic committee which helped turn the troubled Sacramento City Unified School District around. He served as Chairman of the California Democratic Party from 1991 through the 1992 election victories.

Mr. Angelides and his wife Julie reside in their hometown of Sacramento. They have three daughters: Megan, Christina and Arianna.

Those who wish to contribute to Mr. Angelides' campaign are encouraged to visit the web at www.angelides.com, or send a check to ANGELIDES 2006, 1331 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 (make checks payable to Angelides 2006).

British Author: Homer's Ithaca was probably Cephalonia

Continued from page 1

Zacynthos. Ithaca itself lies low, furthest to sea Towards dusk; the rest, apart, face dawn and sun. Odyssey 9.19-26

However today's island of Ithaca is not low-lying, it is mountainous, Mr. Bittlestone pointed out. It is clearly not the furthest out to sea, and it does not face towards dusk (i.e., west), nor do the adjacent islands face towards the dawn and sun (i.e., east). The geographical layout is almost opposite to that described by Homer, so how can his description of ancient Ithaca make any sense? And where are Same and the lost island of Doulichion?

The part of the island called Paliki (also known as Louxourio), in the western region of Cephalonia, was once separated from the rest of the island by a sea channel which, over time and major geological changes, was filled with rock, thus forming what eventually came to be known as modern Cephalonia.

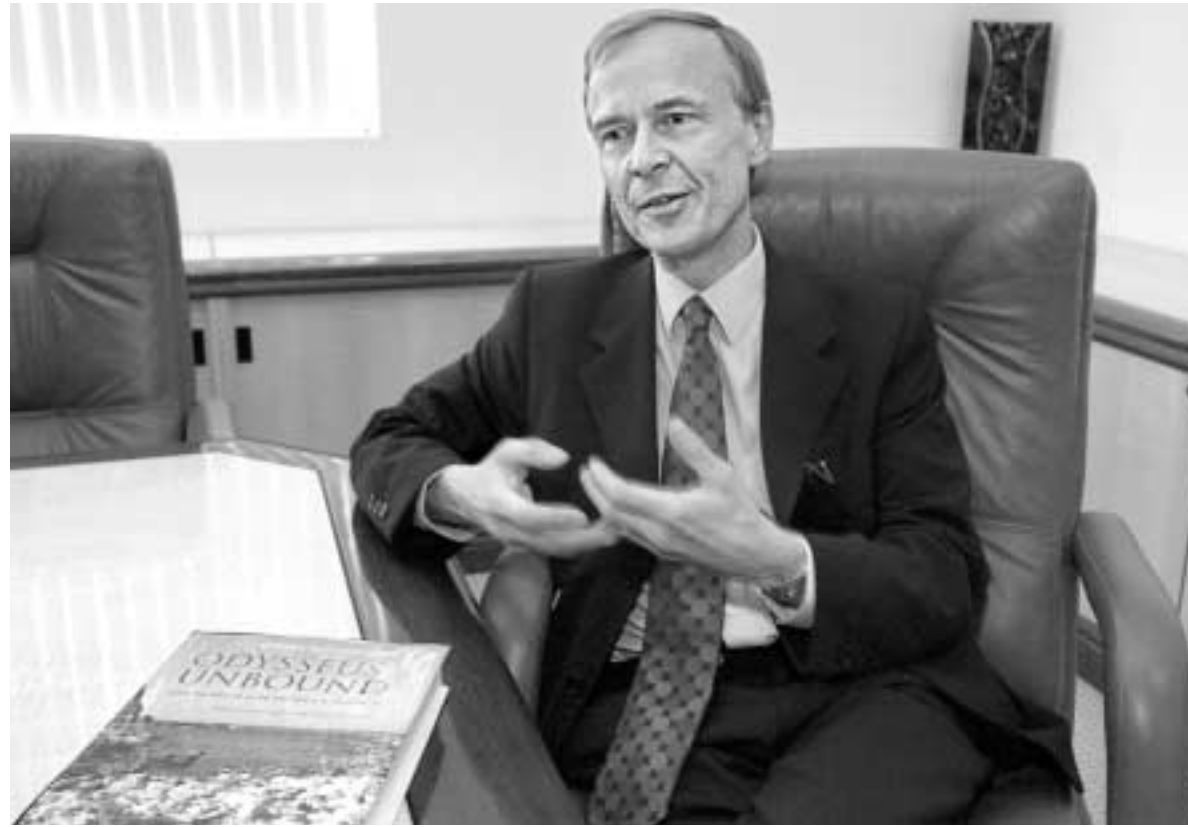
Mr. Bittlestone, a Phil-Hellene with extensive knowledge of classical history and literature, studied Economics at Cambridge and works as a management consultant. He became fascinated with this idea on which he bases his theory. He revisited Greece in 2003 and spent his vacation on the island of Cephalonia. In preparing for his trip, Mr. Bittlestone reread various translations of Odyssey, particularly one by Dr. Diggle, which Mr. Bittlestone says is more of a literal interpretation of Homer's epic poem, and was struck by the ancient poet's detailed geographical description of Ithaca, which led him to develop the "what if" theory.

"Many have assumed that Homer's description of Ithaca was wrong, based on facts that do not match reality," he told the National Herald.

Odyssey's descriptions present a very clear and specific description for Mr. Bittlestone, who asks, "What if Homer was right?"

The popular notion maintains that Homer based his poem on stories he had heard from others since he had never visited the island himself (he is thought to have lived in the distant land of western Asia Minor, present-day Turkey). Moreover, it could be argued that Homer did not really care much about such details, since he was writing a poem, not a travel guide.

Mr. Bittlestone and his team of scientists and archaeologists wanted to prove that this idea was not accurate: "We wanted to prove that Homer was right in his descriptions of Ithaca all along. Why was Homer, living in Asia Minor, so specific? It would have been so easy to be more vague and not risk scrutiny," he pointed out.



TNH/COSTAS BEJ

Robert Bittlestone, author of "Odysseus-Unbound: In Search of Homer's Ithaca," a groundbreaking book proposing that the modern Ionian island of Ithaca was not the one described in Homer's Odyssey. Mr. Bittlestone says Homer's Ithaca was actually part of Cephalonia.

With Homer as their guide, the interdisciplinary project team of geologists, classicists and archaeologists set out to test the hypothesis that the shifting of tectonic plates in the geologically active zone beneath the Ionian Islands resulted in changing the geography of that region, and that Ithaca, according to Homer, was actually located on Paliki.

They shared the evidence of Greek geographer, historian and philosopher Strabo (63 BC - 24 AD), who described the island of Cephalonia in his "Geographica," a 17-volume geographic guide written in Greek: "Where the island is narrowest, it forms an isthmus so low-lying that it is often submerged from sea to sea (10.2.15)."

The isthmus Strabo describes has not been identified on the island of Cephalonia, but Mr. Bittlestone, Dr. Diggle and Dr. Underhill believe that the peninsula of Paliki, in the western part of Cephalonia, was separated from the rest of the island during the late Bronze Age by an ancient canal, which later was filled by landslides, not much different than those which took place in Pakistan in October of 2005.

The scholars thoroughly examine the geological explanations for such landslides in the book, and they concluded that Doulichion, "the lost island," is modern Ithaki. Strabo's evidence came in support of Mr. Bittlestone's proposal, which fits many facts he and his team have discovered.

YET TO PROVE

The authors have yet to prove their theory, but the book aims at bringing their evidence to the public domain. If the team's hypothesis proves to be correct, "it will not

solve the problem, but will dissolve it," Mr. Bittlestone said. "The problem would have come about due to an unexpected geological change."

"The book makes the case that both Homer and Strabo were right in their descriptions. If the hypothesis is correct, the question is how we can reinterpret the Odyssey and understand what Homer meant about all the places, cities and palaces that he described," Mr. Bittlestone added, stating that another objective of the book is "to go as far as we can to test the hypothesis and see if it stands up to its initial geological survey. And it does, very effectively."

The book is intended to be accessible not only to specialists, but also to the general reader, he explained. It is an adventure story with interesting events ranging from everyday tales to the major earthquakes of 1953, geological facts and several archaeological references.

"It is a learning experience for both the reader and the writer,"

says Mr. Bittlestone, who does not deny that there are "blind alleys" in the book, as some mistakes are unavoidable.

To continue proving their theory, the team plans to perform a "body scan" of the entire area in order to accurately date the bottom layer of rock in Cephalonia. By using the oil industry's sophisticated technology, the team is hoping to obtain imaging of what lies beneath the rock surface underneath the island's mountains. If the mountains intersect below sea level, the theory concerning the canal gets close to being proven. There is also recent evidence from saltwater extracted from underneath the surface of this rocky area, which also indicates the existence of an ancient canal.

There are three phases to this project, he said:

A. 2003-2005 - Initial research to demonstrate the strength of this proposal, covered by the book itself, and includes workshops and seminars with the purpose of communicating the discov-

ery and creating a forum for open debate.

B. 2006-2007 - Definitive geological assessment and non-invasive archaeology, scheduled to begin this summer, is a preliminary geological assessment which will evaluate the hypothesis.

C. 2008-2012 - Excavation of the key sites, including Odysseus' palace and Ithaca city, a full-scale archaeological and geological investigation, including excavation of ancient sites.

Phase C will be the most expensive phase of the project, and Mr. Bittlestone and his team are currently in dialogue with the Greek Culture Ministry and Institute of Geology & Mineral Exploration to work out prospects for funding and future excavations. Mr. Bittlestone is currently looking for support in Greece and elsewhere. This Summer, he hopes to conduct additional tests to enhance the profile that his team is on the right track, and find supporters who will show genuine interest in being involved.

"This project could be as important as (Heinrich) Schliemann's discovery of Troy," Mr. Bittlestone said. "If we are wrong, we still gave it our best shot, but if we are right, we could find ancient Ithaca, the source of Western culture or, to be specific, the source of the textbooks that made Western culture possible."

The publication of "Odysseus-Unbound" has captured the imagination of readers globally, resulting in sales of over 10,000 copies of the book and a series of seminars, interviews and film documentaries. The book will also be translated into Greek. In March, the History Channel broadcasted a documentary called "Digging for the Truth," a non-academic archaeological project involving the viewer, which included a five-minute segment on Mr. Bittlestone's work. The April issue of the Smithsonian Magazine also included a feature article and location photos about the project, which continues to receive considerable publicity.

For more information about "Odysseus Unbound," visit the web at www.Odysseus-Unbound.org.

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Presented by: *The Hellenic Link, Inc.*
Sponsored by: *The Order of AHEPA, Gold Coast Chapter No. 456*

SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

Dr. Constantine J. Efthymiou, Hellenic Education Project Coordinator:
Introductions

Dr. Alice Scourby, Prof. of Sociology:
"Greek Ethnicity at the Crossroads"

Dr. Michael Soupios, Prof. of Political Philosophy:
"The Eternal Legacy of Ancient Greece"

Dr. Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou, Educator, NYC Dept. of Education:
"Avoiding Past Errors, and Seizing the New Opportunities for Hellenism in Public Education: Understanding the Road Ahead"

Rev. Dr. Demetrios J. Constantelos, Prof. of History and Religious Studies:
"Greek Christian Orthodoxy in the Context of Hellenic Education"

This Program and Invitation are addressed to the Greek American Community of Greater New York, particularly to the members of the Greek Orthodox Churches and Greek-American Organizations of Long Island.

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