Preface

The sixth Biennial Conference of Greek Studies held at Flinders University from 23 to 26 June 2005 marked an important step forward: it became an international conference, thus attracting a considerable number of specialists from Europe as well as academics and post-graduate students from Australia. The focus was still research in Greek studies, but it was broadened by including the work of colleagues without a connection to Australia. The atmosphere of the conference was all the more cordial and stimulating in that we were able to exchange views and experiences with people from Greece, Cyprus and other parts of the world. We feel fortunate that the conference lost none of its friendliness while gaining in breadth and depth of scholarship.

Eighty two papers were selected for presentation at the conference, and fifty five were accepted for publication in these Proceedings after being assessed as significant contributions to knowledge by scholars of international repute who were not associated in any way with the conference. As always, we are grateful for the care with which these independent assessors approached their task. The sixty authors and co-authors join with the editors to thank them especially for their wise comments and suggestions. We are pleased to note that these and previous Proceedings have given young academics, especially post-graduate students, their first experience of publication in a scholarly volume.

As usual, the papers cover a wide spectrum, including several contributions on migration to and from Greece. This is very pleasing, given our situation on the other side of the world from Greece, but it in no way diminishes the interest of the papers on philosophy, language, literature and history.

The papers in English are just as rigorous and at the same time lively as those of previous years. There is a particular focus on migration, largely on migration from Greece to Australia and some of the ways it has enriched this country; but a light is also shone on migration to Greece in the modern era. Greek language and literature are well represented, with a number of papers on the links between Greek and other European languages and some fascinating insights into Modern Greek literature in Greece and Australia. The history section is especially rich and varied, with papers on several aspects of Greek and Cypriot history, from the fifteenth century to the present day. We were saddened by the premature death just before the papers were printed of one of our contributors from the University of the Aegean, Dr Alexandra Stefanidou. A tribute to her appears immediately before her paper.

For the first time an entire section of the conference was devoted to philosophy and ancient history, with a particular focus on the Greek contribution to science.
Andrew Gregory argued in a public lecture that the Greeks laid the foundations of science. There was an interesting debate on whether Aristotle or the atomists contributed more to science. Recently, interest in Aristotle has been growing in many parts of the world and several other contributions to the conference and to this collection reflect this growth of interest, with contributions on Aristotle on time and truth, on teleology, and on justice. In addition, there are valuable contributions on other aspects of Greek political philosophy, metaphysics, aesthetics and ancient history.

The papers in Greek cover several areas of research. Most of the studies of literature focus on important Greek literary figures and texts. One study examines Cypriot literature in the post-colonial context, and another looks at Greek-Australian literature. Carefully researched aspects of Greek migration to Australia provide fascinating insights into the ways in which Greeks have become such a vital element in Australian society, with one paper on the Greek press in Australia and another on music and identity issues in Melbourne for migrants from Florina, northern Greece.

Studies in the section on teaching examine crucial issues related to the teaching of Modern Greek in Greece and outside Greece as a second language. Finally we have two studies regarding important Greek cultural and intellectual developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Greece. All studies are original and explore new issues and challenges in analysing historical or cultural phenomena and interpreting various literary texts.

We are proud to publish in Australia research papers written in Greek, and are determined to continue to do so, firstly because it is a language taught at all levels of education in Australia, secondly, because in Australia there are hundreds of thousands of people whose mother tongue or “thinking” language is Greek, and thirdly, in this way many scholars around the world from various linguistic backgrounds can exchange opinions and debate ideas using Greek as a common language. After all, Greek was a universal common language not so long ago, and for scholars in many areas it remains a valued intellectual language.

We acknowledge the kindness of the holders of the rights to the works of the painter Vlase Zanalis, who allowed us to reproduce two of his paintings. Zanalis was a remarkable immigrant who carved a thoroughly individual path for himself in his country of adoption, and it seemed entirely appropriate to reproduce one of his paintings on the cover of this volume.

The editors would like to thank Maria Sakellaridis for the exemplary way in which she has carried out the many practical tasks which the production of such a complex volume demands, and the authors for their helpful and friendly responses to the frequent, often rather trivial, queries of the editors.

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