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## *Was Jesus Christ a Historical Person?*

Louis A. Palivos

Especially in our generation, many persons question the Jesus Christ of the Holy Scriptures and the Jesus Christ of history. Was Jesus Christ the Messiah



Pantocrator, 6 th Century, Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai.

that the Jewish people were waiting for at the time of Caesar Tiberius and Caesar Augustus' rule? Were there other historical messiahs at this time? Do Historians of those times corroborate Jesus Christ historically? This article shall present evidence that indeed Jesus Christ was a historical person and that indeed He was the awaited Messiah of Humanity.

### **The Jesus Seminar**

The Jesus Seminar, active in the 1980s and 1990s, was a group of about 150 liberal members, 50 scholars and 100 layman, that voted with colored beads to decide their collective views of the deeds and sayings of Jesus of Nazareth. According to the Jesus Seminar:

1. Jesus of Nazareth was born during the reign of Herod the Great.
2. His Mother's name was Mary, and he had a human father whose name may not have been Joseph.
3. Jesus was born in Nazareth, not Bethlehem.
4. Jesus was an itinerant sage who shared meals with social outcasts.
5. Jesus practiced faith healing without the use of ancient medicine

or magic, relieving afflictions we now consider psychosomatic.

6. He did not walk on water, feed the multitude with loaves and fishes, change water into wine or raise Lazarus from the dead.

7. Jesus was arrested in Jerusalem and crucified by the Romans.

8. He was executed as a public nuisance, not for claiming to be the Son of God.

9. The empty tomb is a fiction, Jesus was not raised bodily from dead.

10. Belief in the Resurrection is based on the visionary experiences of Paul, Peter and Mary Magdalene.

The above conclusions of the Jesus Seminar are vigorously opposed by conservative scholars who argue: that some on the Jesus Seminar are relative unknowns or are undistinguished in the field of Biblical Studies; that some are not scholars, but laymen; that some have published nothing; that most do not have distinguished academic positions; that most have a bias against the Canonical Biblical sources; that for the Jesus Seminar trying to find the historical Jesus is, "Not like finding diamonds in a dunghill, but like finding New York City at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean"; that it lacks conservative scholars and that it relied on the *Gospel of Thomas* and *Q*.<sup>1</sup>

*Q*, for *Quelle*, meaning "source", is a document that does not exist, but hypothetically helps explain materials not found in St. Luke's and St. Matthew's Gospels when expressing material not found in St. Mark. A conservative Chris-

(Continued p. 3)

## THE NATIONAL HELLENIC MUSEUM RAISES FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF HELLENIC LEGACY AT 2018 ANNUAL GALA

*Community Members Gathered Saturday Evening, May 12, For Night of Philanthropy and Greek American Entertainment*



At its Annual Gala, "Connecting Generations," Saturday, May 12, at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, The National Hellenic Museum and more than 500 Greek Americans, friends and community members from across the country raised more than \$800,000 during the night of auctions, live music, dancing and celebrating the legacy of Hellenism. The philanthropic support from the evening is set to benefit tens of thousands of museum visitors, with 83 cents of every dollar spent on programming.

The event was emceed by WGN's Very Own Dean Richards with live musical stylings by the Chris Sarlas Orchestra, with George Dimas and Voula Karahaliou, and The Levendes, featuring singer Nikos Koutras.

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# NATIONAL HELLENIC FREE PRESS

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## THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
- 2.To support the ideas of the Hellenic-Christian tradition
- 3.To promote the preservation of the Greek language
- 4.To encourage all worthy Community causes
- 5 To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

## THE NATIONAL HELLENIC MUSEUM RAISES FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF HELLENIC LEGACY AT 2018 ANNUAL GALA

(From p. 1)



“What a wonderful night it was with so many elegant attendees, the spectacular live music, and of course, the great generosity of our donors,” said Dr. Laura Calamos, President of the National Hellenic Museum. Celebrity emcee Dean Richards of WGN TV and Radio, thanked the mothers in the room, recalling the importance of his own mother and yiayia to his upbringing. Cubs Legend and National League All-Star, Ryan Dempster wowed the crowd by offering signed jerseys to bidders in the live auction. One attendee exclaimed: “The dance floor was packed with 10 lines of Greek dancing circling all around! This was definitely one of the best galas to date!”

One highlight of the evening included the presentation of the inaugural Alec K. and Viena P. Gianaras Philanthropy Award, given this year to The Gianaras Family and Frank S. Kamberos, in recognition of donors who have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to the National Hellenic Museum and to the ideal of philanthropy. The National Hellenic Museum Philanthropy Award is named after Alec K. and Viena P. Gianaras because they exemplified all the aspects of true philanthropists. Their vision in supporting the National Hellenic Museum modeled to others the spirit of giving to great causes in the Greek American community.

Boasting a rich repository of 20,000+ artifacts, photos, historic newspapers, books and an archive of 450+ recorded histories, the NHM serves as the physical hub of Greek American history,



now many generations strong and celebrates the mosaic of the Greek diaspora, immigrant journeys and the breadth of the American experience.

The Museum preserves the largest collection of artifacts and oral histories dedicated to the Greek American story anywhere in the world, serving as a central repository for researchers, teachers and students of all ages. Special events help to fund classes, field trips, tours, programs, and, as highlighted in



this year’s theme, the protection of the museum archives and the important memories preserved for all. The artifacts in the NHM Collections serve as a crucial component of NHM’s educational outreach.

The National Hellenic Museum (NHM) portrays and celebrates Greek heritage and the Hellenic legacy through educational classes, exhibitions and programs. With a growing repository of over 20,000 artifacts, the Museum catalogs and highlights



the contributions of Greeks and Greek Americans to the American mosaic and inspires curiosity about visitors’ own family journeys through cultural expression, oral history and experiential education. Located in Chicago’s Greektown, the NHM provides lifelong learning for the whole community using artifacts and stories to spark inquiry and discussion about the broader issues in our lives.



# Was Jesus Christ a Historical Person?

(From p.1)

tian scholar concludes: “And what is the evidence that should compel us to accept these scholars’ radical views? Well, there is a brief allusion to a lost“secret” gospel in a late 2<sup>nd</sup> century letter that has, unfortunately, only been seen by 1 person and now has itself been lost, *Secret Mark*. There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> century account of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, which includes a talking cross, that less than a handful of scholars think predates the gospels, *Gospel of Peter*. There is a 2<sup>nd</sup> century Gnostic document, parts of which some scholars now want to date early, the *Gospel of Thomas*, and of course, there is the hypothetical reconstruction of a hypothetical document, Q, built on very shaky assumptions that are pieced together in a viciously circular fashion.”<sup>2</sup>

Roman Historians

Cornelius Tacitus, ca. 55-120 AD., known for his two works, *The Annals* and *The Histories*, referenced once Jesus Christ and twice Christianity. He wrote in *The Annals*: “Christus, from whom the name had its origin, i.e. Christians, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procreators, Pontius Pilate. Another Roman Historian, Gaius Suetonius Tranquillas, ca. 117-138 AD., Chief Secretary to Emporer Hadrian, wrote: Because the Jews in Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Christus, (a variant name for Christ).”

Further, he again references Christians: “After the great fire at Rome... punishments were also inflicted on the Christians, a sect professing a new and mischievous religious belief. “

Another historian, Thallus, ca. 52 AD., cited by Julius Africanus, ca. 221 AD., wrote:” On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea, and other districts were thrown down. This darkness recorded by Thallus in his 3<sup>rd</sup> book of his *History*, appears to be without reason, an eclipse of the sun.”

Another Roman, Pliny the Younger, ca. 112 AD., wrote letters and refers to:”They (the Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to God, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to do any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate and then reassemble to partake in food, but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. Pliny received a reply from Emporer Trajan, as follows: The method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those denounced to you as Christians is extremely proper. Similar trials were conducted by Serenius Granianus, Procounsel of Asia, ca. 117-138 AD., as to “Charges against the Christians.”

Jewish Historians

Flavius Josephus, ca. 37-97 AD., wrote *The Antiquities*, and stated, “As to James, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ.” A questionable passage by Josephus given in an Arabic manuscript is as follows: “At this time there was a man who was called Jesus...Pilate condemned to be crucified...he appeared to his disciples three days after his death and that he was alive...accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah.”

Another compilation in the Talmud, ca. 70 to 200 A.D., comes from the Tannatic period, in the Sanhedrin 43a, as follows: “On the eve of the Passover *Yeshua* was hanged, for 40 days before the execution took place, a Herald went forth and cried, “He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.” But since nothing was brought forward in his favor, he was hanged on the eve of the Passover.”

Syrian History

Mara Bar Serapian wrote to his son from prison whose name was also Serapian to emulate wise teachers of the past:”What advantage did the Athenians gain for putting Socrates to death? Famines and plagues came upon them as a judgement for their crime. What advantage did the man of Samos gain from burning Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their Wise King? It was just after that, that their kingdom was abolished.”

Greek Historians

Lucian, writing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, criticized Christians:”The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day, that distinguishing personage who introduced their novel rites and was crucified on that account...that they are immortal... that all are brothers... that they deny the gods of Greece and worship the crucified Sage and live after his laws, despising worldly goods, regarding them as common property.”<sup>3</sup> A plethora of gentile writers provide further evidence of Jesus Christ, historicity: Frontos, Noumenios, Loukianos, Kelsos, Flegon, Epiktelos, Marcus Aurelius, Galinos, Porferios, Iaroklis, Philostratos, and others.<sup>4</sup>

Christian Sources

Major sources referencing Jesus Christ historicity are the Epistles of St. Paul, St. James, St. Peter, and St. John. The early creeds, esp. “That Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.” I Cor. 15:34. The Four Gospels, esp. the Gospel of St. Luke and his Acts of the Apostles. St. Luke considered not only an Evangelist, but one of the greatest historians about Jesus Christ. Further the great Fathers and Apologists: Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrne, the Teaching of the Twelve, Barnabus, Hermas, Papaius and Irenaeus of Lyon. The Great Apologists: Quadratos, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras of Athens, Theophilos of Antioch and the Epsitle of Dionysios. These Fathers and Apologists wrote and lived during the early centuries and wrote and believed that Jesus Christ was not only a historical person, but the awaited Messiah.

( Continued p. 6)

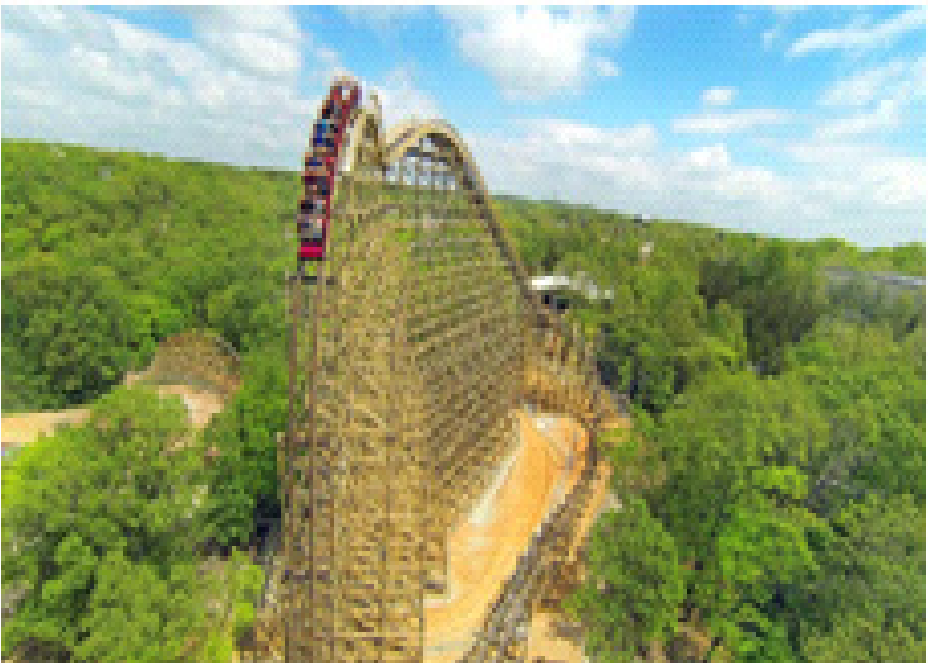
## AMAZING TOURIST ATTRACTIONS



Preikestolen is one of the most popular natural tourist attractions in Norway. The steep cliff, located in Forsand, Norway, rises 1,982 feet above Lysefjorden.



Daredevil guests of the Natura Vive Skylodge Adventure Suites stay in vertically hanging capsules suites located at the top of a mountain with a 300-degree view of Peru's Sacred Valley. To get to the capsules, guests must climb a 400ft cliff



Located at Silver Dollar City amusement park in Branson, Missouri, Outlaw Run was the first wooden roller coaster that featured multiple inversions. It is the fourth-fastest wooden roller coaster in the world, with the second steepest wooden roller coaster drop. (Silver Dollar City Attractions)



Thousands of tourists visit the "troll tongue" in Norway, 2,296 feet above the ground. (TerjeN/wikimedia)



# The 'Macedonia' effect? Deal may boost Greek debt relief hopes



With a brief formulation of words, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras may have boosted his chances of persuading foreign creditors to free his nation from years of financial humiliation on better terms than a few days ago.

Tsipras agreed a deal with his counterpart from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) at the weekend under which Greece's neighbour will be renamed "Republic of North Macedonia", a formulation offering a chance to end a 27-year dispute with Skopje that has bedevilled the European Union's eastward expansion.

Now the hope is that the political goodwill will earn Athens a warmer-than-usual reception when euro zone finance ministers meet in the Eurogroup on Thursday to plot Greece's steps toward exiting its bailout programme, Greek and EU officials said.

That includes possible relief on the country's debts, which have soared since the first EU/IMF rescue in 2010.

Tsipras acknowledges that the FYROM deal, which opens the way for the former Yugoslav republic to seek EU and NATO membership, is separate from any Greek debt relief.

"I feel like a chess player who is simultaneously playing two games, because you know at the same time (there are) the name issue negotiations and crucial negotiations for the debt issue," he told the head of the euro zone bailout fund last week after the name talks achieved a breakthrough.

But he added: "I'm hoping, as we had a breakthrough yesterday, we will have the same next week in maybe the most crucial for the country after eight difficult years."

Tsipras has often had testy relations with the EU as austerity measures imposed under the bailouts hurt Greeks badly.

But an EU official expressed cautious optimism that the FYROM settlement, which must be approved by both countries' parliaments, will have a positive psychological effect.

"I think the deal will help (Greece) in debt relief talks. The government will head to the talks with a different morale," the official said on condition of anonymity, while adding that the deal had never been linked to bailout talks.

## Problem solver

The deal was warmly welcomed in the EU and by the United States, long impatient with what it perceives as Greek obduracy over the name, potentially destabilising the Balkans. "One cannot rule out that it will have a positive impact, since Greece appears to be a force that solves instead of creating problems," a Greek government official said, dismissing any suggestion that debt relief is dependent on the FYROM settlement.

"It was never demanded by European lenders, there was never a trade-off."

Another person who has participated in past bailout talks sounded a note of caution as the German government, whose support is vital for any debt deal, is unlikely to be more generous as it is currently preoccupied by an internal row over migrant policy.

The FYROM deal has led to fiery protests in both countries and unrest in Tsipras's left-right coalition, which has a fragile parliamentary majority and is trailing the conservative opposition in opinion polls.

It survived a confidence vote on Saturday night but lost one lawmaker from the right-wing Independent Greeks party, Tsipras's junior ally, which has vowed to back the coalition but rejects any settlement that includes the name Macedonia.

On Monday, Dimitris Kammenos, who was expelled from the Independent Greeks after backing the no-confidence motion against the government, insisted the deal was indeed a quid pro quo.

He said a group of right-wing lawmakers had been dissuaded from submitting a censure motion against Greece's foreign minister who signed the accord on Sunday.

"There were arguments related to the economy," Kammenos told Skai TV. "Whether Greece would get the debt deal was subject to whether it would give the name Macedonia," he said.

His comments have frequently caused public uproar on social media and angry responses from politicians. The Independent Greeks dismissed his comments.

"There was never reciprocity between the process for a deal over Skopje's name and negotiations on financial issues within the framework of the EU," said Independent Greeks' spokesman Theodoros Tosounidis.

"He (Kammenos) is obviously trying to link things to cover up his actions." [Reuters]

## NATURAL WILD BEAUTY



El Caminito del Rey provides hikers with the most dangerous route in the world. The unsecured, narrow path is located 300 feet above the river below, and offers little more than a 3 foot ledge to walk on. (Wikimedia/Gabirulo)



Bryce Canyon is a small national park in southwestern Utah famous for its worldly unique geology. Ice and rain have eroded and shaped the colorful limestone rock into bizarre shapes, including slot canyons, windows, fins, and spires called 'hoodoos.'



Arches National Park is beautiful all year long, but in winter, the white snow contrasts brightly against the red rock. Visitors should expect freezing temperatures in winter and are advised to plan ahead. (Flickr/Four Corners School of Outdoor Education/Jacob W. Frank)



It snows from November to May in Grand Teton National Park. Visitors can access this park by ski or snowshoe, though. (Flickr/Jeff Gunn)



# North Macedonia: gains, losses, and a preceden

After a quarter of a century marked by acerbity, confrontation and occasional insults, Athens and Skopje have reached a compromise. It is painful for both sides. We all knew that any accord to emerge from the name talks would entail concessions. Otherwise, we would have reached a deal a lot earlier. That is the nature of compromise. Now it is up to each of us to decide whether we choose to see the glass as half-full or half-empty.

The deal has both positive and negative aspects. A composite name with a geographical qualifier for universal use – if this is indeed the case remains to be clarified – has been Greece’s official position for the past decade, ever since New Democracy’s Costas Karamanlis was prime minister and Dora Bakoyannis his foreign affairs chief.

It was the position that allowed Greece to score a win at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest. If Greece at the time had adopted an absolute stance we would never have got the positive decision of the summit pegging FYROM’s NATO membership to a resolution of the name dispute.

I am not speaking theoretically here. I was at that summit in Bucharest and felt the pressure. I saw the look on the faces of Karamanlis, Bakoyannis and Defense Minister Evangelos Meimarakis. It was a tough situation. If Greece had gone into the discussion with maximalist demands, we would have lost.

I remember shortly after the famous phone call between Bakoyannis and her American counterpart Condoleezza Rice, meeting outside the State Department with an American diplomat involved in Greek issues. He looked at me almost with hostility and said, “That’s no way for anyone to speak to the US secretary of state.” It was not a pleasant time, but Greece persevered, largely because it maintained its firm but conciliatory stance. Back to the present. Did Greece get everything it wanted? Of course not. The negatives foremost include the recognition of a “Macedonian” nationality and language, even if it comes with an explanation that they are of Slavic origin and are unrelated to ancient Greek Macedonia.

A lot of mistakes have been made by a lot of people. Some were not bold enough, others made exaggerated demands. Regardless, we have come to a deal now. It’s painful, and many of us are not happy with many of its provisions. But after many years, the international community is praising Greece and we are looking at the possibility of recouping our influence in our neighborhood.

If we back down from this position, it will come at a great cost to Greece’s image and its ability to play the role it deserves in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. Last but not least, whatever happens in the next days, weeks and months, the world community will know that a composite name is not only desirable by Greece, but has been accepted by our neighbor’s democratically elected government. TOM ELLIS-KNorth Macedonia: gains, losses, and a preceden

KATHIMERINI

online chat

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# Was Jesus Christ a Historical Person?

(From p. 3)

A modern day Greek scholar, Georgios P. Patronos, has concluded as follows:Given all the evidence presented... without pressure, persuades t o - day, a good faith researcher, but also the most demanding researcher, that without doubt, Jesus was a historical person.<sup>5</sup>

**False Messiahs**

In the Holy Scriptures, Gamaliel, a teacher of the Pharasees, stated that there were false messiahs, Theudas and Judas of Galilee. Acts 5:34-49. Later, St. Luke wrote that Simon the Magician, thought, that he was, “someone great”, and thought that he could purchase with money “the gift of God”. Acts 8:9,20. In Jewish history, there were many false messiahs, Athronges, Simon Barcoba, Moses of Crete, David Elroy, Moses Botarel, and many others. Also, there were/are many false Christian messiahs and false prophets (pseudochriste and pseudoprofitess) like, Simon Magus, Dositheos the Samaritan, Bernard Mueller, Mitza Husayn Ali Nuri, Father Divine, Sun Myuns Moon, Jose Louis de Jesus, David Corresh, Reverend Jones, and Drunvalo Melchizedek. <sup>6</sup>

Rightly, the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, and the Protestant Churches *must* protect persons from both false christs and false prophets who according to the Holy Scriptures will increase before the *Parousia* of the Lord Jesus Christ to deceive and seduce if possible even the “very elect,” Mat.24:24.

In closing, the real issue is not the historicity of Jesus Christ, but Who He claimed that He was in history! He claimed He was the Son of God, the Messiah both through His actions and through His teachings. What other Messiah has performed miracles, forgiven sin, given us the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes? What other Messiah has fulfilled prophecy? Only Jesus Christ, the true Messiah!

- 1. Jesus Seminar, Wikipedia.
- 2. Gregory A. Boyd, *Jesus Under Siege*, Victor Books/SP Publications, Inc. Wheaton, IL 1995.
- 3. Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, College Press Publishing Company, Joplin, MO, 1997. (The author highly recommends this book and has used portions above relating to Roman, Jewish, Syrian, and Greek sources).
- 4. Angelo Panagiotis Sakketos, *Jesus Christ Hellenism-Christianity*, Liakopoulos Publication, Thessaloniki, Greece 2004.
- 5. Dimitris Tsinikopoulos, quoting Georgios P. Patronos, Emeritus Professor of the University of Athens, in *Did Jesus of Galilee Really Exist?* Strange, 7/12/07.
- 6. List of Messiah Claimants, Wikipedia.



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

## Press Release

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To the Editor:

We can never predict our weather across Chicagoland, but we do know that heavy rains and storms are more than likely to hit our region as spring turns to summer. This weather brings the potential for serious flooding. Heavy storms can and have wreaked havoc in the basements of many Cook County residents. The weather also stretches the capacity of our sewer systems.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) is the governmental agency that treats wastewater and manages storm water. We work hard to protect homes and businesses from flood damage. Protection is provided through our Tunnel and Reservoir Project, also known as the Deep Tunnel. TARP is one of the nation’s largest public works projects for pollution and flood control.

When heavy rains hit Cook County this past February, our newly opened McCook Reservoir kept storm water out of many basements, and from flushing into Lake Michigan.

While most people feel helpless when flooding hits our region, there are simple steps that homeowners can take to make a difference. The MWRD encourages residents to use less water at home when forecasts predict significant rains in order to give sewers more capacity to handle the rain. These water -saving actions include reducing the length of showers, and waiting to run your dishwasher and washing machine until after the rains have subsided.

There are also simple tips that we can all utilize to conserve water and save money on water bills. Replace your old faucets and showerheads with more efficient ones. The average household can save up to 700 gallons of water in a year. You can also consider installing a low-flow showerhead for substantial water savings and only running your dishwasher when you have a full load of dishes.

Water is our most vital resource, let’s work together to protect it.

*Mariyana T. Spyropoulos*  
*President*  
*Metropolitan Water Reclamation District*

# Ifantis Dental Care

## John Ifantis, DDS, PC

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GREEK NEWS

ND will seek wider coalition if elected in government, says Mitso-takis



New Democracy will seek to form a wider cooperation with other parties if it is elected in government in the next general elections, even if it achieves full majority in parliament, party leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis told private broadcaster Skai in an interview on Sunday.

However he excluded the governing coalition of SYRIZA and the Independent Greeks (ANEL) from those plans.

“SYRIZA is not part of these forces. ANEL are in the same category as SYRIZA. The dilemma is not right or left, it is progress or populism,” he said.

Asked about the anarchist group Rouvikonas, Mitsotakis said they are doing great damage to the country.

On Wednesday, the group warned the ND leader that it planed to target him following his criticism of Rouvikonas’ attack against the Council of State, Greece’s top administrative court.

“I wasn’t scared, it didn’t trouble me,” he said. “The problem with Rouvikonas is wider. It is a problem of tolerance towards a group that tolerates — if not incites — violence,” he added.

Mitsotakis said violence must be condemned “either it comes from the right, or the left,” and mentioned the assault against Thessaloniki mayor Yiannis Boutaris.

However he criticised Boutaris’ work, saying “he has not succeeded as a mayor” because success or failure is judged by the quality of daily life.

Commenting about the ongoing talks between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to resolve the decades-old name dispute, Mitsotakis said Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras told him he is discussing the name “Republic of Ilinden Macedonia.”

“It is the worst possible name. It is the erga omnes of irredentism,” he said.

“From the very first moment we set the national framework for a comprehensive package solution with a change of the constitution and a complete elimination of irredentism. Revision of the constitution is essential. I will be able to state my view when I have a specific proposal,” he added.

Figures expose Greeks’ poor waste disposal habits



More than 40 percent of the waste placed in blue dumpsters designated for

recyclable materials is estimated to end up in the country’s landfills, according to 2016 data seen by Kathimerini.

Of the 365,285 tons of trash that reached 33 of Greece’s 39 waste sorting centers (there is no available data on the other six), 142,340 tons, or 39 percent, was nonrecyclable and had to be redirected and deposited at one of the country’s landfill sites.

Data showed that 47 percent of the waste that arrived at Greece’s largest collection center for recyclable materials (KDAY) in Koropi, eastern Attica, ended up at a landfill.

At Greece’s second-biggest KDAY, in the western Aspropyrgos district, that figure was 54 percent. The data suggests a lack of public awareness, or plain indifference, experts say, about the type of rubbish that must be disposed in blue dumpsters. Greece’s recycling rate is 17 percent, below the European Union average of 39 percent.

US Congress- man: F-35s could be ‘used against Greece’ if sold to Turkey



The United States should freeze the sale of the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets to Turkey because they are more likely to be used against Greece than against terrorists, Democratic US Congressman Brad Sherman told US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, during a Foreign Affairs Hearing on May 23.

“I hope that the administration will oppose and prevent the sale of F-35s [to Turkey]. They are not a weapon to be used against terrorists. They are a weapon to be used against Greece,” he said.

A US Senate committee passed earlier this week a defense policy bill that includes a measure to prevent Turkey from purchasing the F-35s, citing the country’s detention of US citizen Andrew Brunson and its agreement with Russia to buy its weapons systems in December.

Sherman also called on the State Department not to block a House resolution on genocidal campaigns committed by the Ottoman Empire.

“I hope the State Department will at least be neutral should Congress consider, as we are considering, the remembrance of the millions of Armenian, Greek, Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac victims of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the last century,” he added.

President wary as name deal goes to FYROM's Parliament



A day after officials from Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) signed a deal to change the Balkan state’s name to North Macedonia – which has fuelled protests in both Athens and Skopje – President Prokopis Pavlopoulos on Monday sought to strike an conciliatory but firm tone.

“We want relations of friendship and friendly relations, and we favor its European and NATO prospects,” he said referring to FYROM.

“However, this requires a solution to the name issue in a way that is compatible with history, international law and the *acquis communautaire*, and in a way that eliminates irredentism,” Pavlopoulos said during a meeting with his visiting Indian counterpart, Ram Nath Kovind.

The next step in the Balkan country’s bid to join the EU and NATO, he added, is the “appropriate revision of FYROM’s constitution,” he added.

Pavlopoulos came under fire last week by former conservative premier Antonis Samaras, and others, for not opposing the deal reached between the leftist-led government and Skopje’s administration.

As political parties in Athens continued to trade barbs over the name deal, and whether Greece made too many concessions to its neighbor, the accord was submitted to FYROM’s parliament on Monday.

The deal, which was signed by Greece and FYROM’s foreign ministers at a lakeside ceremony in Prespes in northern Greece on Sunday, is to be put to debate in Skopje’s parliament from tomorrow with a vote expected by Friday night.

The deal is expected to be ratified but must then also pass a referendum in FYROM.

The agreement must then also gain approval in Greek Parliament, where the outlook is less clear.

The junior coalition partner, Independent Greeks, has said it will oppose the deal and the centrist political forces which had suggested they would support it now appear to be divided.

FYROM govern- ment submits deal on new name to parliament

The government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) set in motion Monday the process of ratifying a pending agreement to change the country’s name to "North Macedonia" in hopes of ending a bitter 27-year dispute with southern neighbor Greece.

FYROM government spokesman Mile Bosnjakovski said Prime Minister Zoran Zaev’s Cabinet approved the deal he reached last week and forwarded it for parliament’s approval.

The agreement, which will take months to complete and faces several hurdles on the way, was signed Sunday by the two countries’ foreign ministers in the border Prespa Lakes area.

FYROM’s parliament speaker told the state MIA news agency the ratification debate would start Tuesday and is forecast to end by Friday night. Lawmakers are expected to endorse the proposal. The governing coalition controls 61 of the 120 seats in parliament.

While the deal would commit Greece to lifting its objections to FYROM joining NATO and the European Union, politicians and residents in both countries oppose the compromise their prime ministers reached on the name.

They argue that the other country benefited at the expense of their own.

Seven policemen were injured and 25 protesters detained late Sunday in FYROM’s capital of Skopje as demonstrators opposed to the name deal tried to push their way into the parliament building.

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# Hawaii volcano: How many people do volcanoes kill?

With its red-hot rivers of lava and clouds of ash, Hawaii's Kilauea volcano has captured the world's attention. But how dangerous are such eruptions?

Every year about 60 volcanoes erupt. Some take us by surprise but others are regular offenders.

Kilauea is one of the world's most active - its present eruption began 35 years ago, but there has been an increase in activity in recent weeks.

Its lava flows have quite literally been erupting in people's backyards, but thankfully only one serious injury has been reported - a man hit by projectile molten rock as he sat on his balcony.

This could appear to suggest that volcanoes aren't all that dangerous, but much of the world's population lives close to an active volcano - and many of these are much deadlier than Kilauea.



Since the year 1500, about 280,000 people have been killed by volcanoes - 170,000 of those by just six eruptions.

We have compiled these figures using media reports, public records and historical documents.

About 2,000 people have been killed since the year 2000.

Most of these deaths were caused by volcanic mudflows in the Philippines, pyroclastic flows in Indonesia, lava flows in the Democratic Republic of Congo and volcanic projectiles in Japan. Last year three tourists died in Italy when they fell into a pit in a volcanic crater.

At present, about 800 million people live within 100 km of an active volcano - a distance well within reach of potentially lethal volcanic hazards. Of these, about 200 million are in Indonesia.

As populations continue to grow, it is likely even more people will set up home close to one of the world's 1,500 active volcanoes, which are spread across 81 countries.

"Active" does not mean that all of these volcanoes are erupting, but that we think they have been recently active and are capable of new eruption

Volcanoes pose many different types of danger to those who live near them.

In the case of Kilauea, the United States Geological Survey noticed a marked increase in seismic activity at the end of April, with the first fissures appearing at the start of May.

Since then, lava flows have travelled about three miles (5km) to the ocean, destroying homes and leading to the evacuation of thousands of people.

Such lava flows don't kill many people.

While it burns and buries everything in its path, lava - molten rock that glows red-hot, with temperatures of about 1200C - moves slowly enough that people can normally just walk away.

The danger arises when people fail to evacuate quickly. In Hawaii, several people were airlifted to safety after their escape routes were cut off.

Lava can cause explosions, including the ignition of pockets of methane gas produced as it buries vegetation.

And when it reaches the ocean it forms unstable new land and laze - plumes of steam, hydrochloric acid and glass shards.

Another hazard in Hawaii is sulphur dioxide, one of several gases that can be released by volcanoes, even when they're not erupting.

However, lava and gas combined account for less than 2% of recorded volcanic fatalities.

The largest loss of life to volcanic gas was in Cameroon in 1986, when more than 1,500 people were killed as carbon dioxide from Lake Nyos flowed into surrounding villages.

Most people killed by volcanoes are the victims of pyroclastic flows and lahars - volcanic mudflows, packed with debris - which have been responsible for about 120,000 deaths over the last 500 years.

These are normally associated with large conical volcanoes found at tectonic boundaries, such as the ring of fire, unlike the gently sloping shield volcanoes, like Kilauea.

Pyroclastic flows are very fast avalanches of rock, ash and gas, which can reach temperatures of 700C. They destroy everything in their path, and death is near certain for anyone caught in their way.

It was pyroclastic flows that destroyed the Roman city of Pompeii in AD 79. And they claimed nearly 30,000 lives on the Caribbean island of Martinique in 1902.

# End of bailout means fresh reductions



Millions of salaried workers and pensioners stand to lose at least one monthly payment within two years, in 2019 and 2020. For Greece to boast of a successful – as the government desires – exit from the third bailout program without facing any obstacles by August, the Finance Ministry has ruled out the option of avoiding a reduction to pensions from 2019 and will

also be proceeding with demands to reduce the minimum tax threshold as of 2020.

Official confirmation of the program's implementation has put an end to speculation that the government may scrap plans to reduce pensions further, even though several officials repeatedly suggested in the last few weeks that the cuts would not be necessary. At the same time, of course, the cost of the bill footed by millions of low-income workers and pensioners just keeps growing.

On the issue of pension cuts in particular, confirmation that the agreed program would be adhered to in full came just as the Council of State is expected to rule on whether cuts to new pensions and the reduction of old ones to current levels are constitutional. And while leaks suggesting that the reductions would be found in accordance with the constitution have reduced some of the pressure on the government concerning what is one of its most unpopular laws – and resulting in the resignation of the head of the country's highest administrative court – it has also deprived the Finance Ministry of an argument for supporting its case against proceeding with the cuts.

Greeks will find out the end result at the bank, when they see their balance lower than expected, as the Labor Ministry is eager to avoid there being signs in this summer's pension clearance of the so-called personal difference (between pensions issued before and after 2016, with some exceptions), which is an indication of the reduction that should be expected as of next year.

January 2019 is when the barrage of cuts to pensions is due to start, lasting at least until 2022, with reductions to main as well as auxiliary pensions and also the abolition of family benefits.

The bulk of cuts will affect some 1.1 million retirees, who will see their main pension slashed as of this December (when the January 2019 pensions are paid out) by up to 18 percent, through the partial or complete reduction of the personal difference.

In total, in the private and public sector, the reduction of pension expenditure from this particular measure in 2019 is estimated at 2.13 billion euros. Reductions will start at 5 euros a month and may reach up to 350 euros a month. There will even be cuts to pensions where there is no personal difference, owing to the abolition of family benefits currently being paid out with the pensions in the public and private sectors. This is expected to concern around 1 million pensioners. Some 200,000 pensioners will also be affected by the cut of the personal difference from auxiliary pensions. According to the midterm fiscal plan, the reduction in 2019 will amount to savings of 232 million euros for state coffers, which is the amount pensioners will also be deprived of.

According to the government's plans, the sum of cuts that will become evident as of this December will mean that new pensions will eventually be 30 percent below the original level before the law introduced in May 2016 by then labor minister Giorgos Katrougalos. Therefore, the vast majority of monthly pensions will hover in the 700-euro range, even for retirees who used to bring in an average of 1,300 euros.

Furthermore, pensions will remain frozen for all pensioners at least until December 31, 2022. This measure by itself will save the state 128 million euros, while by the end of that period the reduction of pension expenditures will come up to 750 million euros.

Similarly in the case of the reduction to the tax-free threshold that will slash the income tax discount, the public relations strategy of advertising the avoidance of bringing it forward to 2019 as a concession by the International Monetary Fund will not only put off social discontent, but actually exacerbate it. That is so because in 2020, for the first time, some 1 million taxpayers whose incomes currently stand below the tax-free threshold will have to pay an annual tax of 650 euros, while pensioners with monthly incomes of 500-600 euros will lose an entire month's pension just because of the new, tough taxation.

Still, as one senior government official said, the measures will be applied along with the so-called counter-measures, also known as "good measures." However, according to measures that have already been voted through, taxpayers with annual incomes of up to 25,000 euros are not going to feel any less pressure, even with the application of the counter-measures. It is only those earning more than 25,000 euros per year who can look forward their tax load being somewhat reduced one the economy starts meeting its targets so that the counter-measures can start applying. This will be achieved thanks to the drop of the lowest income tax rate from 22 percent to 20 percent and the new, more favorable bracket rates for calculating the solidarity levy.

Therefore, government rhetoric will revert to the "fiscally neutral result," though in practical terms this will not mean that for every euro that comes out of the pocket of salaried workers and pensioners, another will go in.

The government will also try to manage the reduction of pensions through the rent subsidy. Its strategy will focus on the fact that 550,000 households will receive a monthly handout of up to 1,000 euros that can even be used for the repayment of their mortgage. This measure will by no means cover the losses, as it will not be handed out to the pensioners – though not to all of them – who will be bearing the brunt of the cuts.