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Nostalgia for Being Otherwise*

CONTENTS

SECTION ONE

Joy Damousi	Ethnicity and Emotions: Psychic Life in Greek Communities	7
Gail Holst-Warhaft	National Steps: Can You Be Greek If You Can't Dance a <i>Zebekiko</i> ?	26
Despina Michael	Μαύρη Γάτα: The Tragic Death and Long After-life of Anestis Delias	44
Shé M. Hawke	The Ship Goes Both Ways: Cross-cultural Writing by Joy Damousi, Antigone Kefala, Eleni Nickas and Beverley Farmer	75
Peter Morgan	The Wrong Side of History: Albania's Greco-Illyrian Heritage in Ismail Kadare's <i>Aeschylus or the Great Loser</i>	92

SECTION TWO

Anthony Dracopoulos	The Poetics of Analogy: On Polysemy in Cavafy's Early Poetry	113
Panayota Nazou	Weddings by Proxy: A Cross-cultural Study of the Proxy-Wedding Phenomenon in Three Films	127
Michael Tsianikas	Τρεμολογία/Tremology	144

SECTION THREE

Christos A. Terezis	Aspects of Proclus' Interpretation on the Theory of the Platonic Forms	170
Drasko Mitrikeski	Nāgārjuna's <i>Stutyatātastava</i> and <i>Catupstava</i> : Questions of Authenticity	181

Vassilis Adrahtas and Paraskevi Triantafyllopoulou	Religion and National/Ethnic Identity in Modern Greek Society: A Study of Syncretism	195
David Close	Divided Attitudes to Gypsies in Greece	207
Bronwyn Winter	Women and the ‘Turkish Paradox’: What The Headscarf is Covering Up	216
George Kanarakis	Immigration With a Difference: Greek Adventures in the South-Pacific Rim	239
Vrasidas Karalis	The Socialist Era in Greece (1981-1989) or the Irrational in Power	254
Steve Georgakis and Richard Light	Football and Culture in the Antipodes: The Rise and Consolidation of Greek Culture and Society	271
Ahmad Shboul	Greek destinies among Arabs: <i>Rumi</i> Muslims in Arab-Islamic civilization	287
Elizabeth Kefallinos	‘Mothers From the Edge’: Generation, Identity and Gender in Cultural Memory	305
	BRIEF NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS	321

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FOOTBALL AND CULTURE IN THE ANTIPODES:
THE RISE AND CONSOLIDATION OF FOOTBALL IN
GREEK CULTURE AND SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, Australian sports historian Roy Hay published an article which looked at the reasons why Association Football (football) never became the main code of football in Australia. Hay and others over the last two decades noted a number of definitive reasons why it did not become the national football code. While the above theme dominated sports history scholarship, no scholar has questioned the reasons why football was the main sport for non-British ethnic groups who migrated to Australia. Hay (2006) noted:

In Australia the great waves of immigration in the 1880s, the decade before the First World War, the 1920s and the period after the Second World War saw the growth in the popularity of football as a participant sport among migrants... These migrants, arriving in a strange society which welcomed their labour but expected them to become assimilated Australians and to eschew links with their homelands, found very few institutions catering for them. Football clubs became one of the places where migrant groups could gather for more than just the sport. Aside from providing them with recreation and entertainment in a sport with which many were familiar, unlike Australian rules or cricket, the football clubs assisted migrants in a variety of ways (p.173).

This article is the latest in a long line of scholarly works which have documented only the sport of football in the various ethnic communities. It would seem that regardless of the ethnic group (Greek, Italian or Lebanese) football was the only sport these groups engaged in. While British immigrants transplanted a number of different sports to Australia such as Rugby Union (Hickie, 1993), cricket (Cashman, Franks, Maxwell & Stoddart, 1996), boating (Sherington & Georgakis, 2008), athletics (Vamplew & Stoddart, 1994) and shooting (Adair & Vamplew, 1997), non-British immigrants seem to have involved themselves only in football. In particular the literature on the history of Australian football has tended to focus on the post-World War II influx of immigrants who affected football in an enormous way. The most detailed of these accounts are in texts by O'Hara's (1994) and Mosely, Cashman, O'Hara & Weatherspoon (1995). A more recent attempt to reinforce this focus was the edited book by Murray & Hay (2006), while Moore (2009) reinforced this generalization by stating, 'New Australians brought the game with them as an integral part of their own traditions, and on settling in Australia they sought ways to express themselves through their sport' (p.89). It would seem from the Australian academic literature that all immigrant groups to Australians actively participated in football and nothing else. This simplistic interpretation fails to identify the complex nature of migrational patterns to Australia. For example German immigrants who migrated to South Australia in the 1830s established gymnasiums and gymnastic clubs, long before football was made its first appearance in 1880, while Scandinavian immigrants introduced skiing to the New South Wales snowfields (Mosely, 1995).

While the above scholars have lumped ethnic groups into the 'all playing football' category other commentators when they are not visible in football circles simply do not document their traditions. Kreider (1996) who looked at the history of football in Western Australia noted:

The history of WA football before the Second World War shows that the league was culturally dominated by a sense of connection with the United Kingdom. Indeed, except for the 'Maccabeans'. The winners in Division One of the local league are overwhelmingly sport names that identify them either with cultural heritage in the UK or else by local location, such as: Thistle and Caledonians or else Perth City United, Victoria Park, Claremont and so on (p.49).

Studies have documented the presence of a diverse ethnic community in Western Australia before World War II (Yiannakis, 1996; Tamis, 1997), so if they did not play football what did they involve themselves with? As this paper will show the history of ethnic sporting traditions is more than just football. This paper will highlight this theme by concentrating on a case study of the sport of football in the Greek society of Australia. To understand this phenomenon it is important to look at the history of football in Greece, the history of Greek migration to Australia and the inter-relationship between the two.

The hosting of the 2004 Olympic Games and the success of the Greek national football team in the European championships in the same year had a significant impact upon the general Greek population but scholars were not keen to dissect or match this enthusiasm. This interest did not stimulate scholars to examine the place of modern sport in Greek society and for the most part any scholarly publications which were produced centred on established themes such as the ancient Olympic Games. Consequently, there are few publications acknowledging the important place of sport in contemporary Greek culture. This academic sporting silence is also reproduced in the Greek diaspora where, for example, issues of modern Greek journals published since 2004, such as *The International Journal of Modern Greek Studies* and the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, pay no attention to sport. There are discussions on Greek literature and writers such as Kazantzakis and Cavafy and political articles dealing primarily with Greek and Turkish issues but no references to sport. This still is a major tendency in Greek studies to investigate traditional topics and to disregard, or even deplore, the importance of sport in modern Greek culture.

This article aims to redress this oversight in the literature by examining the development of Greek football in Australia and the role it played in the reproduction of Greek culture. It provides a full perspective of Greek football in Australia from the establishment of the first club, The Apollon Club in Melbourne in 1934 up until the 2004 European Championships, highlighting the social and political role played by football in the Greek community in Australia.

GREEKS AND FOOTBALL

The Greeks have always been athletes and interested in athletic pursuits. Giatsis (2000) clearly illustrates a tradition of Greek sport which has been continuous down the centuries, unbroken through the history of the Greek people, which otherwise

has been full of changes and revolutions. In order to understand the rise of football in the Greek society of Australia, it must be understood that this phenomenon has to be seen as the local embodiment of the millennial tradition, because throughout Greek history sports activities have always been of importance.

It may even be said that the ancient Greeks invented the game of football. Around 2000 BC, the Greeks developed a kicking game called *episkyros* which is mentioned by the Greek playwright, Antiphanes and later referred to by the Christian theologian Clement of Alexandria (Crowthers, 1997; 2007). A famous marble relief from the National Museum of Archaeology in Athens shows an athlete balancing a ball on his thigh while a younger athlete is watching. In the ancient Olympic Games, however, team sports did not exist. During the Roman Period 146BC-331AD, Byzantine Period 331-1453, and Turkish Occupation 1453-1821, there is no hint of football taking place (Giatsis, 2000). It would seem that football was only being played in medieval and early modern Britain. For example, between 1314 and 1660, orders prohibiting football, were issued by authorities on numerous occasions (Dunning, 2001, p.84). By the 1800s, embryonic football spread into the wider society due to two social developments; first an expansion of the middle-classes which occurred correlatively with industrialisation, urbanisation and state formation; and second, its introduction in the educational system.

In modern Greece football was a late-comer compared to other countries in Europe. Up until the establishment of refugee teams in Greece after 1922, football and other teams sports such as basketball and volleyball had made very little impact on Greek sporting traditions and were considered alien. From the establishment of the modern Greek State in 1821 until 1922, Greek sporting culture was based on militaristic gymnastics with a focus on individual sports such as athletics. Manitakis (1930) highlights this by tracing the establishment of sporting clubs and sporting traditions in Greece up until 1930. This militaristic based program was also evident in the various schools which were established, that is physical education was closely linked to the military with instruction including military drill and regimented activities (Koulouri, 1997; Antoniou, 1988).

In the urbanised Greek centres of the diaspora, in places such as Smyrna, Constantinople and Alexandria, football emerged as the most popular sport and the two reasons for its success are not difficult to understand. First, football was a world phenomena and as Dunning (2001) noted:

It does not require much equipment and is comparatively cheap to play. Its rules – apart perhaps from the offside law – are relatively easy to understand. Above all, these rules regularly make for fast, open and fluid play, and for a game which is fiery balanced among a number of interdependent polarities such as force and skill, individual and team play, attack and defence. As such, its structure permits the recurrent generation of levels of excitement which are satisfying for players and spectators alike (pp.103-104).

Second, in cities of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish authorities were suspicious of gymnastic type instruction anyway because of its militaristic links and thus in many places banned gymnastics. Conversely, Turkish authorities saw no real danger of allowing the playing of team sports such as football (Soldatos, 1989). Therefore football flourished in the Greek diaspora.

In mainland Greece, however, up until 1922, football was a marginalised sport, even though the first official game dates back to 29 January 1866 on the island of Corfu between the officers of a British warship. In modern Greece the few football teams which existed operated at a basic level and were confined to port cities of Pireaus and Thessalonike, predominantly made-up of English ex-patriots living and working in these cities (Bilidakis & Bairaktaris, 1991). In 1906 football was included in the program of the Athens Intermediate Olympic Games and the Greeks were obliged to enter a team into the competition. Leading up to the Olympic Games, the first Panhellenic Football Games were inaugurated with Ethnikos losing to Panhellenios in the final. The low standard of Greek football at this time is illustrated by the fact that a few days after the final Ethnikos played and was soundly defeated 18-0 by a select team of British soldiers stationed in Pireaus. The Greek national team made its debut in the 1906 Olympic Games (although the team was basically the Ethnikos team in disguise). The national team only managed a half game in the competition as they accepted defeat at half time after conceding 9 goals against Denmark (Savvidis, 1907). After the Olympic Games most teams in Greece folded, even Ethnikos. The following year the game of football was banned in Greece by the government for reasons concerning military training. The government officials believed that football would undermine the militaristic gymnastic instruction then in place (Kounesoulas, 1896, pp.1-35; Koulouri, 1997, pp.187-189).

The Greek football scene in the diaspora was significantly different especially in Asia Minor. Football had been introduced by English sailors and engineers in the

late 1880s. In port cities, the British played football near the docks and in the city squares. The Greeks were captivated by the games and began to organise their own football teams. The first known teams formed in Smyrna were Apollon and Panionios, while in Constantinople it was Hephestos, Hercules and Asteras (Stamatopoulos, 1996). Panionios Football Club, established in 1890, has the distinction of being the oldest surviving Greek football club (Linardos, 1998). In the Greek diaspora, in places where Greeks were minorities, participation in militaristic gymnastic instruction was viewed by the hosts with great suspicion. The Turks for example viewed it as preparation for an uprising. On the other hand the playing of team sports was not viewed with any such suspicion.

The turning point for football on the Greek mainland occurred in 1922, with the exodus of Greeks from Asia Minor. The Greek populations in Asia Minor in particular those centred in the coastal areas of the Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Seas were captivated by the sport. While these refugees brought with them a number of customs, such as music, dancing and education, it was the football club which became a main focus of their communities. Therefore in the immediate post-1922 period a number of clubs sprang up, created by refugees from Asia Minor. The most notable of these were Athletic Union Constantinople (AEK Athens), Pan-Macedonian Athletiko Omilo Athens (PAOK), Panionios Athens and ARIS Thessalonike. Sometimes these refugees did not establish a new club, for example, refugees from Smyrna simply transplanted the Smyrna Panionios Football Club in Athens in 1923. In the first few months after re-establishment in Athens this club's athletes trained on the area surrounding the temple of Olympian Zeus, until they built a stadium in Nea Smyrni (Linardos, 1998).

The proliferation of football clubs led to the establishment of the Greek Football Federation in 1926 when the three major unions in Greece (Athens, Thessalonike and Piraeus) amalgamated and in 1927 the Greek Football Federation became a member of FIFA. The first Greek Football Championship was contested in 1927-28, with only three teams participating. In the 1930-31 season eight teams took part including Asia Minor supported clubs AEK, PAOK, Apollon, Aris and Iraklis. The influence of Asia Minor refugees was undisputable and mainland Greeks took a while to warm to the sport of football, so much so, that on a few occasions leading up to World War II, the championships did not take place or did not finish. Up until this present day descendants of Asia Minor refugees continue their fanatical support of Greek football.

Until the formation of Asia Minor football clubs in Greece, most Greek sports were dominated by track and field and classical sports and even after the Greek Football League was formed in 1927-28 most Greek sporting clubs in Greece were not actively involved in football including the two biggest Panellinios and Ethnikos (Linardos, 1991; 1993). Therefore, unlike the situation in most European countries, such as England, Scotland, Spain and Italy, football was a late-comer to mainland Greece.

GREEK FOOTBALL IN THE PRE-WORLD WAR II PERIOD IN AUSTRALIA

The situation in Australia was also very similar to that in Greece. Up until the arrival of Greek immigrants from diaspora communities such as Asia Minor, the sport of football was non-existent even though the Greek society up until 1934 had a dynamic sporting environment. Up until 1934, even with a relatively small Greek community in Australia, sport played a significant role in the lives of Greeks. During this period sport took place at annual picnics of the regional fraternity, Pan-community and schools. For example, the first regional fraternity to participate in sport was the Ithakan regional fraternity of Melbourne, 'Odysseus' founded in 1916, with a committee elected in 1917. By 1918 the Odysseus book of minutes notes:

The first annual picnic will take place on the 24th March 1918 and will be held at South Morang. Entrance will be 1/6 and children under the age of 12 years half the price... The committee for the organisation of the games of the picnic will be Mar. Lekatsas, Nick Lekatsas, Georgios Tsoukaladakis and Ioannis Savitsianos. They will be in charge of organising the events and buying medals. (22 February 1918)

The next entry in the minutes describes that the picnic did take place with over 200 people in attendance. What is interesting to note here is that it was athletics which was promoted. The following events took place: Footrace 120 yards, Footrace 340 yards, one mile championship, veteran's race and high jumping and no mention of team sports (13 April 1918). The first annual ball, on 23 April 1918, also doubled as the first presentation night of the club, where winners of the above events were presented with their awards. For example a silver cigarette holder was presented to

the first Odysseus games winner Nicholas Lekatsas – winner of the 120 yards footrace. The situation with the Ithakans was also replicated with the two other dominant regional fraternities in the pre-World War II period, the Kastellorizans and the Kytherans who also initiated games at annual picnics in Perth and Sydney.

When the Greek communities grew in size with the arrival of more diverse Greek immigration, Pan-community picnics were established in the mid-1930s where the individual regional fraternities competed against each other. The first Melbourne Pan-Community picnic took place on the Australia Day Long weekend at Mount Evelyn in 1935. Four main regional fraternities provided athletes for the games: Kytherans, Kastellorizans, Ithakans and Macedonians. The Ithakans won the most events and were presented with the Pan-Community Shield. Over 500 people paid to watch the games which were organised by Theo Marmaras, president of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne. Within a month a presentation night took place. Filmed highlights of this Pan-Community picnic were shown at Garrick Theatre and at the conclusion of the viewing 16 medals were presented to successful athletes (*Hellenic Herald*, 7 February 1935, p.6; 28 March 1935, p.7). Like the regional fraternity picnics, the activities of the Pan-Community picnics focussed on track and field competition.

In every city of Australia the first organisations established were the Greek afternoon schools (Tsounis, 1975). A feature of the Greek schools of Australia in the pre-World War II period was sport held at the school picnics. Many of these school picnics were annual, although some Greek schools organised more regular games with associated presentation nights and trophies and regular visits to gymnasiums. In Sydney the first school picnic was held in 1930, while the Greek school in Brisbane, established in 1930, held its first games the following year. In Adelaide the Greek school, established in 1933, held its first athletic games in 1934. The tradition of Greek games at regional fraternities, Pan-Community and schools where track and field competitions took place continued up to and during World War II.

Up until World War II Greeks in Australia had little understanding of football. It was as foreign to them as Rugby League or even cricket. The first attempts to establish football in Australia were opposed by community leaders who had not understood the concepts of team sports. This is illustrated by an article and large photo (depicting a local football derby in Athens) which was titled 'Young Athenians in their Popular Sport', which appeared in *Ethnikon Vema* (28 August

1939, p.6). The use of the words 'their popular sport', is very significant, for the majority of the Greek immigrants of Australia even as late as 1939, were unfamiliar with the sport.

This all changed when certain Greek immigrants in Australia primarily from Asia Minor attempted to form football teams in three capital cities, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide in the mid-1930s as a means of socialising the Greek youth into their ethnic group. Apart from the venture of the Apollon Club in Melbourne in 1934-35, the other two clubs, Hellenic (1934) in Adelaide, and Olympiakos (1936) in Sydney, met with little success or enthusiasm from the local Greeks. Another two attempts occurred in 1939 in Sydney and Adelaide but the outbreak of World War II and a lack of support put an end to both of these ventures. The majority of Greeks in Australia prior to World War II were not ready for football.

In 1934 in Melbourne, the sport of football was adopted primarily because of three figures, George Martiki, Floros Dimitriades and Basil Colligas; George Martiki, was introduced to the sport in Constantinople, while Floros Dimitriades and Basil Colligas both played football in Cyprus and Smyrna respectively. It would seem that the above three were responsible for teaching the rules of the sport not only to the players but also to Community leaders. The Apollon club had an exciting beginning with training sessions occurring every Sunday morning at Albert Park. In the first sessions the club members competed against each other with curious spectators present. By the end of July the club played against Savoia, the Italian Club, at Middle Park at what would be considered the first ever inter-ethnic football match in Australia. Apollon next played the First Division side, South Melbourne, in a friendly match at Middle Park. The Greek team lost 6-3 but even so, this was a good result for a team that had been together for only a few weeks. *Ethnikon Vema* lauded 'in this team youth participate who had no idea about football before the establishment of the club.' On that historic day, the team line-up was George Vlahos, George Theodoros, Kosta Ioannou, Atzemis, George Martaki, brothers Floro, Con and Xanthos Dimitriades, Basil Coligas and Chris Kiasos (*Ethnikon Vema*, 1 August 1934, p.5). A fortnight later, Apollon played a select side from the South Melbourne and St. Kilda teams and the score was a 4-4 draw (*Ethnikon Vema*, 15 August 1934, p.5). The growth of the club stimulated the Greek press in Australia to publish a world history of the sport, highlighting the previous lack of insight into the game and the emerging keen interest in the game (*Ethnikon Vema*, 15 August 1934, p.1).

In 1935 Apollon played competitively in the third division of the Victorian Metropolitan Football Association. That season the club came third with eight wins, four losses and two draws and also participated in the knock-out Docherty Cup competition (*Hellenic Herald*, 22 August 1935, p.7). The truth was Apollon received very little support, even the *Ethnikon Vema* urged ‘The only Greek team in competition needs financial and moral support, not only because they are the only Greek team in competition but because they are going well’ (17 July 1935, p.5). Lack of interest and lack of funds meant that the club folded at the end of the year and was never resurrected.

The other four clubs established in this pre-World War II period were even less successful and failed to see out a season. Hellenic of Adelaide (1934) and Olympiakos of Sydney (1936) folded due to lack of interest while Atlas of Sydney (1939) and Hellenic of Adelaide (1939) folded due to lack of support which would not have been helped by the onset of World War II. In a similar way to the situation in mainland Greece before the arrival of Asia Minor refugees, many of the Greeks in Australia had very little experience of football and therefore the game had very little impact on the Greek community. Community leaders also had their own sports which they promoted at community picnics and they felt that football would undermine these traditions.

THE POST-WORLD WAR II RISE OF GREEK FOOTBALL IN AUSTRALIA

The post-World War II period saw the emergence and growth of a significant Greek youth culture. On the one hand, the few Greek who had settled in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s had produced children who were growing up in the late 1940s, while on the other hand there was a huge wave of immigration in the late 1950s and the 1960s which brought out youth from Greece. In short there was a much larger youth population but it was made-up of two groups of young Greeks namely the second generation and the young first-generation migrants. Generally speaking the second generation of Australian born Greeks were interested in individual sports and Australian sports such as AFL, Rugby League and cricket, while first generation immigrants on the 1950s and 1960s were primarily interested in football.

In the immediate post-World War II period second generation Greeks established sporting clubs, usually named ‘Olympic’ in cities around Australia. These clubs

developed not only because of the common bonds of the fellow members, and their love of certain sports, but because existing organisations found it hard to cater for the second generation, who had outgrown the sporting auxiliaries of the Pan-Community and regional brotherhoods. The active role in the clubs was taken by the second generation. This generation, even though they had been educated in Australian schools, spoke English much better than Greek, and had been subjected to the Australian way of life, had never stopped being Greek. Therefore, after World War II, the following clubs were established; Melbourne Olympic Club (1943); Sydney Olympic Club (1945); Castellorizan Sports Club (1945) Adelaide Olympic Club (1946); Perth Youth Club (1945). These clubs promoted team sports which were mainstream, such as cricket, AFL, Rugby League and Rugby Union, which the members had come across in the school setting. These clubs played in the local competitions and also had annual sporting exchanges amongst themselves in sports. For example, Melbourne Olympic Club played cricket in the summer and Australian Rules Football in the winter. The Castellorizan Sports Club of NSW and the Brisbane Olympic Club played Rugby League.

These youth clubs began playing against each other in interstate sporting exchanges in 1946. The first encounter in the sport of Rugby League took place between the Castellorizan Sports Club and the Brisbane Olympic Club in Brisbane, while in December 1946 the Melbourne Olympic Club played the Sydney Olympic Club in cricket in Melbourne. The Hellenic Youth Club of Perth had strong cricket teams and ventured into the sport of Rugby Union, while Netball teams began competing in 1948. These sporting encounters increased and by 1953 the Confederation of Greek Youth was established as an umbrella organisation to coordinate sporting exchanges including the annual Greek-Australian Panhellenic Games (Confederation of Greek Youth Organisations, 1953, Constitution). During December 1953 Melbourne hosted the first Panhellenic Games and for a while they were very successful until interest waned. There were two reasons for this. First, the games were becoming political and the ecclesiastical crisis which had manifested in the Greeks society impacted on the various youth clubs. Second, new immigrants began arriving in large numbers and their choice of sport was football.

The demise of most sporting clubs and the Panhellenic Athletic Federation in the wake of the ecclesiastical crisis had left the Greek youth in Australia very liable to lose their ethnic consciousness. What was significant for the coming years was that those clubs which were still growing, some of which called themselves Panhellenic

and Hellas were football clubs, and they already formed part of ethnic state football organisations that were established in the late 1950s in most states.

FOOTBALL FEVER

The word, Olympic, used for the names of previous youth clubs was discarded in preference to the more identifiable ethnic names such as Panhellenic or Hellas. The Panhellenic clubs, it was hoped, would create a Greek society. In the late 1950s the Greek population was divided along a number of lines not only ecclesiastical. It was not homogenous. It was divided by church, politics, class, gender, age, sex. They did not have a single community of opinion or interest. If the faults were not repaired, the Greek population would lose their sense of Greek identity and become subsumed under Australian society. The question was, in Australia in the late 1950s, how to prevent this. The answer promised to be, the establishment of Panhellenic football teams in every metropolitan city.

The three biggest clubs were: South Melbourne Hellas, Panhellenic of Sydney and Adelaide Hellas. Panhellenic teams also existed in Perth, Hobart, Brisbane, Darwin, Newcastle, Port Pirie, Wollongong and Geraldton. All these clubs, large or small, were formed at the same time in much the same way.

Perhaps the most successful club was South Melbourne Hellas which was formed at the height of the religious schism. The *New World* newspaper acknowledged that, 'It is very embarrassing that there is not one Greek team, that can remain in the State League ... There are many causes ... The only solution is for a union of Greek teams' (22 April, p.7). Therefore, representatives of two of the four existing teams in Melbourne, Ajax and Hellenic, met and decided to form a union of their respective clubs. Representatives from Alexander the Great and Florina did not attend (*Hellenic Herald*, 10 December 1959, p.8; *Athletic News*, 20 August 1959, p.1). Theo Marmaras became the first president while Floros Dimitriades was vice-president of the newly formed organisation called Hellas. Due to the high number of Greeks in the South Melbourne area, the local football club was approached and agreed to amalgamate. Therefore Melbourne Hellas was the amalgamation of three clubs and for a while was actually referred to as 'The Union'. Greek players were added to the playing roster and in the first year 1960 the club won the second division competition (*Football World*, 2 September, 1960, p.4). In the second year of its existence Hellas played in the top division of the Victorian State League. The Club won the Victorian State League title

on four occasions in the 1960s (1962, 1964, 1965 and 1966), while in the 1970s it won the title on three occasions (1972, 1974 and 1976). Adelaide Hellas was established in 1961 after the amalgamation of the Cypriot Omonoia Club and the suspended Olympic Club. The establishment of the club corresponded with the establishment of the ethnic supported South Australian Football Federation (*Hellenic Herald*, 27 July 1961, p.6). The team played in the second division in 1962 and 1963 until its promotion in 1964. Two years later the club won its first title and dominated South Australian football by taking out the title again in 1968, 1969, 1971, 1973 and 1976.

The various panhellenic teams were also responsible for supporting football throughout Australia and many of these clubs became stalwarts of the National Soccer League. The National Football League (NSL) spanned 28 seasons from its inception in 1977, until its demise in 2004. In the inaugural competition four Greek teams competed: Sydney Olympic, South Melbourne Hellas, Adelaide Hellas and Alexander the Great were foundation members and had very successful records in the league. In fact South Melbourne Hellas were champions on four occasions and runners-up twice; Sydney Olympic were champions twice and runners-up on four occasions; while Adelaide Hellas took out the title in 1978.

However, it was not enough for the Greeks to simply watch the elite players on Sunday afternoons. They also expected to play themselves. Therefore there were numerous Greek football clubs which were established to cater for more community-based levels of competition in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These teams were second tier teams which were established by regional fraternities, geographic locations, church and work teams such as restaurants. Melbourne and Sydney were the main arrival points for Greek immigrants so it was therefore only natural that the majority of these teams were established there. For example, between the period of 1960 and 1963, thirteen clubs alone were established in Melbourne to cater for the needs of Greeks wanting to play. In 1960 alone eight clubs were established: Olympic Club North Carlton, AEK Club North Parkville, Keravnos Club, Windsor Club, Yarraville Club, Garden City Club, Albert Park Club and Astrape West Melbourne Club.

CONCLUSION

The highpoint of Greek football in Australia occurred in January 2000 when South Melbourne Hellas became the first Australian team to represent Australia at the inaugural World Club Championships which were held in Brazil. Hellas had been

back-to-back National League Champions (1997-98 and 1998-99) and had also been Oceania Club Champions. In 2000 the Greek club was grouped with eventual runners-up Vasco Da Gama of Brazil, North American champions Necaxa of Mexico and European Champions Manchester United of England. A number of second generation Greeks were represented including John Anastasiadis, Con Blatsis, George Goutzioulis, Iosifidis, Steve Panapoulos, Jimmy Tsekenis and Psonis, while the team was coached by Ang Postecoglou. Despite losing all three matches – it was a Greek football club in Australia which gave Greek football much needed exposure. The next time that this would occur was four year later in 2004 in Portugal when Angelos Charisteas scored in the 57th minute to give Greece a 1-0 win. The final whistle created memorable scenes of celebration wherever Greeks were – Athens, Ioannina, New Jersey, Cape Town and Sydney. Greeks together: people spatially separated but emotionally united through football.

This paper has outlined both the development of football in the Greek community in Australia and its importance for the reinforcement and reproduction of Greek culture and identity in a country where Greeks are in a minority. As it did for many other European minorities in Australia, football came to form an important cultural practice used in many ways to reproduce and express Greek cultural values. Football practised in Greek communities was also explicitly used to socialize Greek youth into Greek cultural and social values. This was the way in which the rising middle classes used sport as a central element of education in English nineteenth century schools and has been similarly used in many other cultures. Many European communities in Australia used football to reinforce and express ethnic identity over the post war period. This cultivation of identity was so successful that a deep concern arose with the divisive nature of football matches and the subsequent violence often associated rightly or wrongly with the ethnic identity of the football teams. This caused Football Australia to restructure the elite competition forcing teams to drop specific references to ethnicity from the team names. Nevertheless football has played and continues to play a significant part in the production and reproduction of Greek culture in Australia. We close by suggesting that Greek scholars should recognise the ways in which sport is not somehow separate from the rest of society but is, like any other cultural practice, one dynamic aspect of the mainstream society and of the Greek society as well. As such sport deserves some consideration, not just from scholars working in the socio-cultural or historical aspects of sport, but also from scholars working in the areas of Greek culture and society within the Greek diaspora.

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