

The Hellenic Medical Society of Great Britain: Thirty years on.

by

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Past President

London UK.



FOUNDERS

Professor Andrew Nicolaides - Professor Gabriel Panayi - Dr Spyros Retsas

Introduction

Professor??... My newly appointed Australian secretary - although accustomed to Greek syllables - was uncertain about the pronunciation of the name.

Professor .. is on the line she said and wishes to talk to you. It was Gabriel Panayi, the distinguished Professor of Rheumatology at Guy's.

I read your paper he said and I gather from your name and from what you write that you must be Greek. There are now many of us, Gabriel added and it is time we got together and formed a society.

On a misty Saturday morning in May 1982, three men met at the old building of the Royal Society of Medicine in London. At this first constituent summit Andrew Nicolaides, Professor of vascular surgery at St. Mary's, Gabriel Panayi and I, resolved and shook hands. The Hellenic Medical Society of Great Britain was conceived.

The gestation period was rather long. There was paucity of action until several of us met again in July 1984 at a private gathering, hosted by Diana Retsas in Essex, to resume the initiative. We formed a steering committee and elected our Interim President, George Mouzas Consultant Surgeon at Chase Farm Hospital. The intention to form a Medical Society of Hellenes living and practicing in the United Kingdom was announced in the local Greek Press (*Greek Gazette*, August 1984) inviting interested colleagues to join. But it was not until October 25th 1985, that Gabriel Panayi convened the inaugural meeting of the Society at the Hodgkin Seminar Room at Guy's Hospital.

In his letter of invitation to prospective members, dated 14th August 1985, Gabriel had stated that the founder members of the Society were **Dr K. Barbatis, Dr N. Bouras, Professor A. Nicolaides, Professor G. Panayi, Dr S. Retsas, Dr G. Spathis, Dr A. Theodosi and Dr P. Vanezis**. Forty-two members enrolled at the inaugural meeting of whom 27 became Full, 12 Associate and 3 Medical Student members. The rest is History.

Gabriel Panayi graciously offered to act as Junior Secretary. The Officers of the first Executive Committee were endorsed by the assembly and its membership is shown in **Table 1**.

Evi Nicholas working in the Medical Illustration Department at Guy's Hospital was invited to design the logo of the Society. It remains our Emblem thirty years later.

The Early Years

The first Scientific Meeting of the Society with Andrew Nicolaides Presiding was held on 7th February 1986 at the Almoth - Wright Lecture Theatre, St Mary's Medical School, Praed Street, London. Four papers were given:

- 'Immunosuppression in Pregnancy'
by Nicos Nicholas (Hillingdon Hospital)
- 'Non-A, Non-B Hepatitis'
by Petros Karayiannis (Royal Free Hospital)
- 'Impact of Chemotherapy on Survival of Patients with Disseminated Malignant Melanoma'
by Spyros Retsas (Westminster Hospital)

- ‘Air-Plethysmography: A New Method to Assess Calf Muscle Pump Function’
by Demetris Christopoulos (St. Mary’s Hospital)

The enthusiastic participation of the audience in the discussion that followed all four presentations marked the strength of the Society as a multidisciplinary scientific forum.

With the success of this meeting the Executive resolved that there should be five major events annually in the calendar of the Society. An **annual scientific meeting** with presentations by members of the Society; a meeting for the **Galen Prize**, during which junior members would compete with presentations of their work; the **Hippocratic Oration** awarded annually to a Distinguished Physician or Surgeon from Britain or abroad and the **Annual General Meeting** combined with the **Presidential Address**. The main social occasion, our **Vasilopitta Dinner**, was to be held in January every year with an invited guest speaker;

Mr H.H.C. Eastcott was our first Hippocratic Orator to address the Society on Friday 3rd October, 1986 with a talk entitled ‘*Hygeia or Aesculapius*’ in front of a large audience at the Royal Aeronautical Society. The Hippocratic Orator for 2014 was Professor Athanasios Fokas of the University of Cambridge and of the Academy of Athens in a line of distinguished speakers internationally known in their field, listed in **Table 2**.

On December 5th, 1986 Andrew Nicolaides delivered the first Presidential Address on ‘*Occult Atherosclerotic Disease*’. The Society began with a very successful first year and was now fully operational.

The first Vasilopitta Dinner was held on 16th January 1987 at St. Ermine’s Hotel in London with John Ebdon, Director of the London Planetarium as our guest Speaker. It was an entertaining evening with John reading excerpts from his book of travels to the Greek Isles and singing in the end, in perfect baritone Greek accent, a well known revolutionary Cretan song to the long applause of the diners. Since then several guest speakers graced with their presence the social functions of the society, some outstanding scholars of Greek History and friends of Hellenism, notably the Late Professor Robert Browning **Figure 1**.

The establishment of the Hellenic Medical Society (**HMS**) was communicated to the *Medical Society of Athens* and on 7th March 1986 we received a congratulatory letter signed by Pericles Tsapogas, President and Gerasimos Regatos, Secretary, with an invitation for future collaboration at scientific meetings.

In May 1990 the two societies joined forces and with the initiative of Nikandros Bouras they convened in Athens the *1st World Medical Congress of Greek Diaspora* held in conjunction with the 16th Annual Pan-Hellenic Medical Congress. Dimitris Kardamakis, now Professor of Radiation Oncology and Dean of the School of Health Sciences at the University of Patras Medical School and his team worked tirelessly for the success of this global affair. In May 2005 the 8th *World Hellenic Biomedical Congress* was again held in Athens this time hosted by Professor C. Soldatos. The *World Hellenic Biomedical Association* a clone of the HMS and the brainchild of Nikandros Bouras, is still finding its way into the future.

The *Hippocratic Oration* and *Galen Prize* established the eponymous scientific meetings of the Society in commemoration of the two pillars of ancient Hellenic Medicine. The Hippocratic Oration is now firmly observed annually and a coveted distinction by the Society. The Galen Prize was transformed after two years into the *Papanicolaou Prize* with Gabriel Panayi’s initiative. He argued, rightly, that we Greeks rely too much on our glorious past and ignore the outstanding contributions in the field of medicine of contemporary distinguished Hellenes.

George Papanicolaou the eminent Pathologist known globally for his ‘Pap’ test was chosen to represent and honour contemporary Greek Medicine and the Galen prize was renamed after him. It is now awarded to Post-Graduate Researchers.

In November 2012 the Society commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of Professor George (Georgios) Papanicolaou in a scientific meeting Presided by Dimitrios Paschos and held under the auspices of the Hellenic Foundation for Culture, the Embassy of Greece in London and with UK- UNESCO representation. The speakers were Mr Anthony Falconer, President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Dr Margaret Stavrou, Histopathologist and Past-President of the Society.

Personally, I feel that there is room to honour both contemporary and old in the calendar of the Society but it is for the future Executive to implement this. The *Papanicolaou Prize* is now one of the most popular and best attended scientific events in the diary of the membership.

The Italian Medical Society of the UK, whose constitution was modelled on our own, has been declared a fraternal Society. On occasions post-graduate researchers of the two Societies have competed jointly for the prize which, when feasible, alternates every other year with the Malpighi prize named after the distinguished physician of the 17th century and the first Italian to become a member of the Royal Society of London. Let us hope that this paradigm of European co-operation and common purpose will continue in the future. The names of our colleagues who won these prestigious prizes are shown in **Table 3**. The majority of these winners have had distinguished careers and most are excelling in their fields. One brilliant graduate from Guy's espoused subsequently the monastic life and now continues to practice medicine as a nun in Northern Greece.

Adulthood

As a non-political, learned Society, the HMS sought charitable status and this was granted by the Charity Commission for England and Wales on 8th August 1991.

The Society's smooth function over the years has always depended on the selfless contribution of free time by the Officers of the Executive. All have worked with commitment whilst in office and beyond, but a special reference should be made to two past-Secretaries. The indefatigable Thrasyvoulos Podas, Gastroenterologist, who is currently practicing medicine in Thessaloniki, and the dedicated Dimitrios Paschos who subsequently became President of the HMS.

Thrasyvoulos Podas established the first Directory of the society with the contact-particulars for each member and initiated a highly successful *Newsletter* which in the Nineties became the cohesive force for the membership. Communications are now conducted by email but an electronic *Newsletter* would be a welcome continuation of Thrasyvoulos' legacy.

Under the aegis of




Hellenic Foundation for Culture HMS-UK

The President of the Hellenic Medical Society - UK
 Dr Constantinos Anagnostopoulos PhD FRCP FRCR FESC
 requests the pleasure of your company to

An Audience with Galen
A symposium on his life and work

Thursday 17th May, 2007, 5.30pm

The Hellenic Centre
 16-18 Paddington Street
 Marylebone
 London W1U 5AS

Chair: Professor Paul Cartledge, University of Cambridge
 Speakers: Rebecca Flemming, Spyros Retsas, Ralph Jackson

RSVP:

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 e-mail: drpaschos@hotmail.com



Dimitrios Paschos was closely involved in the organisation of two scientific colloquia under the auspices of the HMS-UK. The first was held on 17th May 2007 at the Hellenic Centre in London with the title “*An Audience with Galen*”. The theme of the meeting was the life and work of the second-century Greek

physician from Pergamum, Galen (Γαληνός). It was chaired by Professor Paul Cartledge of the University of Cambridge with the participation of Dr Ralph Jackson Curator of Romano-British Collections of the British Museum, Dr Rebecca Fleming also of the University of Cambridge, and this author.

The meeting was placed under the aegis of the Hellenic Foundation for Culture within the programme of the *Greece in Britain* activities. The assistance of Ms Victoria Solomonidou, Cultural Attaché of the Greek Embassy, is gratefully acknowledged here for this and similar meetings.

The second scientific conference under the auspices of the HMS-UK was an International Symposium held on 14th May 2010 at the Vlatadon Monastery in Thessaloniki, in collaboration with the University of Sorbonne and under the aegis of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The focus of this meeting was the discovery in 2004, of the **Vlatadon Codex 14** in the library of the monastery by the Sorbonne researcher Antoine Pietrobelli. Against all odds and in the most adverse circumstances at the time – Greece was already in the depths of an unprecedented financial crisis – the meeting proved a success. It was chaired by the late Emeritus Professor Spyros Marketos of the University of Athens with contributions by Pietrobelli himself, the distinguished scholars from the Sorbonne, Véronique Boudon-Millot and Jacques Jouanna, Ralph Jackson from the British Museum and several other medical historians and physicians from Europe. This meeting provided the stimulus for the first publication in Greek with critical scholia of Galen’s treatise *PERI ALYPIAS* which was discovered in the **Vlatadon Codex 14** and which until then was considered lost (ΓΑΛΗΝΟΥ - ΠΕΡΙ ΑΛΥΠΙΑΣ 26.310 *Κείμενο, απόδοση στην Νεοελληνική και σχόλια. Π. Κοτζιά και Π. Σωτηρούδη. ΔΗΜΟΣΙΕΥΜΑΤΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ. ΑΝΑΤΥΠΟ ΑΠΟ ΤΑ «ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ», ΤΟΜΟΣ 60.1 ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ 2010*).

This is an opportune forum to acknowledge again with grateful thanks the support provided by the Most Reverend Professor Panteleimon Rodopoulos Metropolitan of Tyrolöë for hosting the Seminar free of charge in the facilities of the Vlatadon Monastery; Professor Nicholas V. Dombros, President of the Medical School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki for his support and the endorsement of the meeting; As. Professor Helen Aletra and her team for the local organisation; and the A.G. Leventis Foundation for an educational grant in support of the conference.



Exhibition
on
**Medicine and the
Olympic Games of
Antiquity**

**Library of the
Royal Society of Medicine
London**

June 2012

**Under the auspices of the
Hellenic Medical Society - UK**



Similar activities that projected the long medical tradition of Hellenism and the Society's scientific and educational profile included two exhibitions hosted by the Royal Society of Medicine; the first in 2010 during the Presidency of Dr Theodora Foukaneli on *Ancient Hellenic Medicine* accompanied by a series of thematic lectures (see Horton R. Offline: Greek medicine: *an addendum*. *The Lancet*. Vol 375:1148. April 3, 2010.) and the second in celebration of the 2012 London Olympiad, on *Medicine and the Olympic Games of Antiquity*.

At a medical innovations meeting, The Royal Society of Medicine hosted on March 24th 2010, jointly with the HMS UK, Dame Sally Davies, now Chief Medical Officer in England and Professor Chris Toumazou of Imperial College. Dame Sally Davies was interviewed by the journalist Vivienne Parry on the future of the National Health Service, and Professor Toumazou made a fascinating presentation on new digital technologies

applicable to health care. Dr Theodora Foukaneli, HMS-UK President at the time gave an elegant address on the objectives of our Society and its collaboration with the Royal Society of Medicine.

The 25th anniversary from the formal establishment of the HMS-UK was celebrated on 9th October 2010 at the Royal Society of Medicine in London. Gabriel Panayi presented the accomplishments of the HMS-UK during the first quarter of a century of its existence. The meeting was attended by Professors Dimitrios Kardamakis and Gregory Sivolapenko from the University of Patras in Greece, and the Hellenic Biomedical Diaspora of the USA was represented by Professor Paul Kymissis and Dr Konstantinos Drosatos who contributed to the proceedings. The Guest speaker at the Dinner that followed was The Rt Hon Lord David Owen, who spoke on the theme "*In Sickness and in Power*".

In October 2013 during the Presidency of Dr Effrossyni Gkrania-Klotsas a Joint Academic Meeting took place in London between the Hellenic Psychiatric Association and the Hellenic Medical Society-UK on the topic of *Mind and Body*.

The HMS acquired in recent years a base at the Hellenic Centre of London where most business and scientific meetings now take place.

Having attended a number of the scientific and social events of our Society I have often reflected in recent years on the extraordinary progress that our organization has made as it has reached adulthood. Our society is now the undisputed focus and forum of a pulsating medical community of Hellenes living in Britain, with robust contributions to the National Health Service and the Academic life of the country.

Eminent Physicians and Surgeons of international repute such as Sir David Weatherall and Sir Magdy Yacoob have acknowledged our presence and have enriched our scientific meetings with presentations of their outstanding work. They are our *Hippocratic Orators*.

Distinguished scholars and philhellenes such as historian Professor Paul Cartledge, an honorary citizen of Sparta, and author Victoria Hislop have been our guest speakers and graced our dinners.

The competition every year of our visionary younger colleagues with elegant presentations of original research for the prestigious *Papanicolaou Prize*, is a reflection of their dynamism and aspirations, the embodiment of our Society and the future.

We have come, I like to think, a long way from that misty May morning in 1982 when three men met at the Royal Society of Medicine in London and resolved.

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Table 1.

PRESENT	Hellenic Medical Society of Great Britain
	Foundation Meeting Held on 21-07-1984 in Loughton, ESSEX.
Kalypso BARBATIS	Consultant Histopathologist Lewisham Hospital London
Nikandros BOURAS	Consultant Psychiatrist, Guy's Hospital, London
George MOUZAS	Consultant Surgeon, Chase Farm Hospital, London
Andrew NICOLAIDES	Professor of Vascular Surgery, St. Mary's Hospital, London
Gabriel PANAYI	Professor of Rheumatology, Guy's Hospital, London
Spyros RETSAS	Consultant Medical Oncologist, Westminster Hospital, London
Peter VANEZIS	Consultant Forensic Pathologist, London Hospital, London.

Table 2.

OFFICERS	FIRST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 1985	
President	Professor A. Nicolaides (St. Mary's Hospital)	
President-Elect	Dr S. Retsas (Westminster Hospital)	
Treasurer	Dr. A. Epenetos (Hammersmith Hospital)	
Junior Secretary	Professor G.S. Panayi (Guy's Hospital)	
MEMBERS		
(a) FULL	Dr C. Barbatis (Lewisham Hospital)	
	Dr A. Theodosi (Mayday Hospital)	
	Dr D. Kiouisis (Middlesex Hospital)	
	Dr P. Vanezis (London Hospital)	
	Dr N. Nicholas (Hillington Hospital)	
	Dr C. Tannatos (King's College Hospital)	
(b) ASSOCIATE	Dr L. Sakkas (Guy's Hospital)	
(c) STUDENT	Mr P. Iacovides (University College Hospital)	

Table 3.**Hippocratic Orators**

YEAR	<u>Name</u>	<u>Institution</u>
1986	Mr Felix Eastcott MS FRCS	Consultant Surgeon St. Mary's Hospital
1987	Professor Harold Ellis FRCS	Vice-President Royal College of Surgeons
1988	Professor S. Antonarakis MD	Geneticist, John's Hopkin's Hospital
1989	Professor George Canellos MD	Professor of Oncology Harvard Medical School
1990	Professor John Studd FRCOG	Professor of Gynaecology Chelsea & Westminster Hospital
1991	JLT Birley FRCPsych	Past-President, Royal College of Psychiatrists
1992	Professor Briars	Professor of Classical Studies University of Birmingham
1993	Sir David Weatherall FRS	Regius Professor of Medicine, University of Oxford
1994	Dame Sheila Sherlock FRCP	Professor of Medicine, Royal Free Hospital
1995	Sir Brian Jarman OBE	Professor of Primary Health Care, Imperial College.
1996	Professor Kypros Nicolaidis	Professor of foetal Medicine, King's College Hospital
1997	Mr Brian Conway	At the Oral Surgery Department Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton
1998	Professor D. Purdie FRCOG	Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology University of Hull
1999	Sir Magdi Yacoub FRCS	Professor of Cardiac Surgery, Royal Brompton Hospital
2000	Dr Argeris Karabelas MD	Vice-President, Novartis, Switzerland
2001	Sir Ara Darzi FMedSci	Professor of Surgery, Imperial College
2002	No Oration	
2003	No Oration	
2004	Prof Richard Frackowiak	Neurophysiologist, Vice-Provost UCL
2005	Professor Peter Vanezis	Chief Forensic Pathologist, Home Office
2006	Professor Gabriel Panayi	Professor of Rheumatology, Guy's Hospital
2007	Professor Charalambos Moutsopoulos	Professor of Medicine, University of Athens

2008	Professor Fotis Kafatos	Founding President of the European Research Council.
2009	Professor Nikandros Bouras	Professor of Psychiatry, Guy's Hospital
2010	Professor Argiris Efstratiadis	Scientific Director, Biomedical Research Foundation, Academy of Athens, Emeritus Professor of Genetics University of Columbia.
2011	Professor Michael A. Gatzoulis	Professor of Cardiology, Imperial College
2012	Professor Joe Millward	Emeritus Prof. of Human Nutrition, University of Surrey
2013	Professor Theoklis Zaoutis	Thomas Frederick McNair Scott Professor of Pediatrics and Professor of Epidemiology at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.
2014	Professor Athanasios Fokas	University of Cambridge and of the Academy of Athens

Table 4.**Presidents of the Society**

YEAR	Name	Appointment
1985	George Mouzas FRCS	Consultant in Accident & Emergency, Enfield Hospital
1986	Andrew Nicolaides FRCS	Professor of Vascular Surgery, St. Mary's Hospital
1987	Spyros Retsas MD FRCP	Consultant Medical Oncologist, Westminster Hospital
1988	Gabriel Panayi FRCP	Professor of Rheumatology Guy's Hospital
1989	Agamemnon Epenetos PhD FRCP	Consultant Medical Oncologist, Hammersmith Hospital
1990	N. Nicholas FRCOG	Central Middlesex Hospital
1991	Nicandros Bouras PhD FRCPsych	Consultant Psychiatrist, Guy's Hospital
1992	J. A. Polyzoides FRCS	Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Solihull District Gen Hospital
1993	John Demades FRCGP	General Practice
1994	Dimitris Economides FRCOG	Consultant Gynaecologist, Royal Free Hospital
1995	George Kouloumas FRCGP	General Practice
1996	Michael Savvas FRCOG	Consultant Gynaecologist, Lewisham University Hospital
1997 - 98	Margaret Stavrou FRCPATH	Consultant Histopathologist, Queen Mary's Hospital Roehampton
1999 - 2000	George Geroulakos MD, FRCS, FRCS(Ed), DIC, PhD	Consultant Surgeon, Hammersmith & Ealing NHS Trusts
2001 - 02	Luke Meleagros FRCS	Consultant Surgeon, North Middlesex Hospital
2003 - 04	Yiannis Zoukos MD	Consultant Neurologist, The London & St Bartholomew's Hospitals

2005 - 06	Peter Karayiannis BSc, PhD, FIBMS, FRCPPath (Virology)	Reader in Molecular Virology, Imperial College, London.
2007 - 08	Constantinos Anagnostopoulos PhD, FRCP, FRCR, FESC	Consultant in Nuclear Medicine, Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS trust & Chelsea & Westminster Hospital Hon. Senior Lecturer, Imperial College
2009 - 10	Theodora Foukaneli MD FRCPPath	Consultant Haematologist Addenbrooke's Hospital - Cambridge University Hospitals NHS FT Consultant in Intellectual Disability Psychiatry
2011-12	Dimitrios Paschos MRCPsych	Camden and Islington NHS FT Consultant in Infectious Diseases Addenbrooke's Hospital - Cambridge University Hospitals NHS FT
2013	Effrossyni Gkrania-Klotsas MD, MPH, FRCP, PhD (Cantab)	Senior Lecturer & Honorary Consultant Neurologist, UCL Institute of Neurology.
2014-15	Christos Proukakis PhD FRCP	

Table 5

**Recipients of the Society's Galen or
Papanicolaou/Malpighi Prize**

1988	A. Aristodemou
1989	M. Panos
1991	A. Bamias
1992	P. Zarmakoupis
1993	E. Linardou
1995	K. Kolocassidis
1996	K.N. Syrigos
1997	E. Boleti
1998	W. Turner-Ioannou
1999	G. Gruden
2002	G. Gaitanis
2004	M. Doufexis
2005	D. Liolitsa
2006	F. Carlucci (P/M)*
2007	I. Karakasiliotis jointly with M. Bombardieri (P/M)*
2008	N. Lambrianides (P/M)*
2009	No data
2010	Ai. Fotopoulou jointly with K. Mandilaras
2011	E. Pazarentzos jointly with A.M. Chioni
2012	A. Margariti jointly with I. Eleftheriadou
2013	No data
2014	J. Kokkinopolulos jointly with Astero Klabatsa

***Note (P/M) denotes joint Papanicolaou / Malpighi competition taking place at the Italian Institute or the Hellenic Centre in London.**



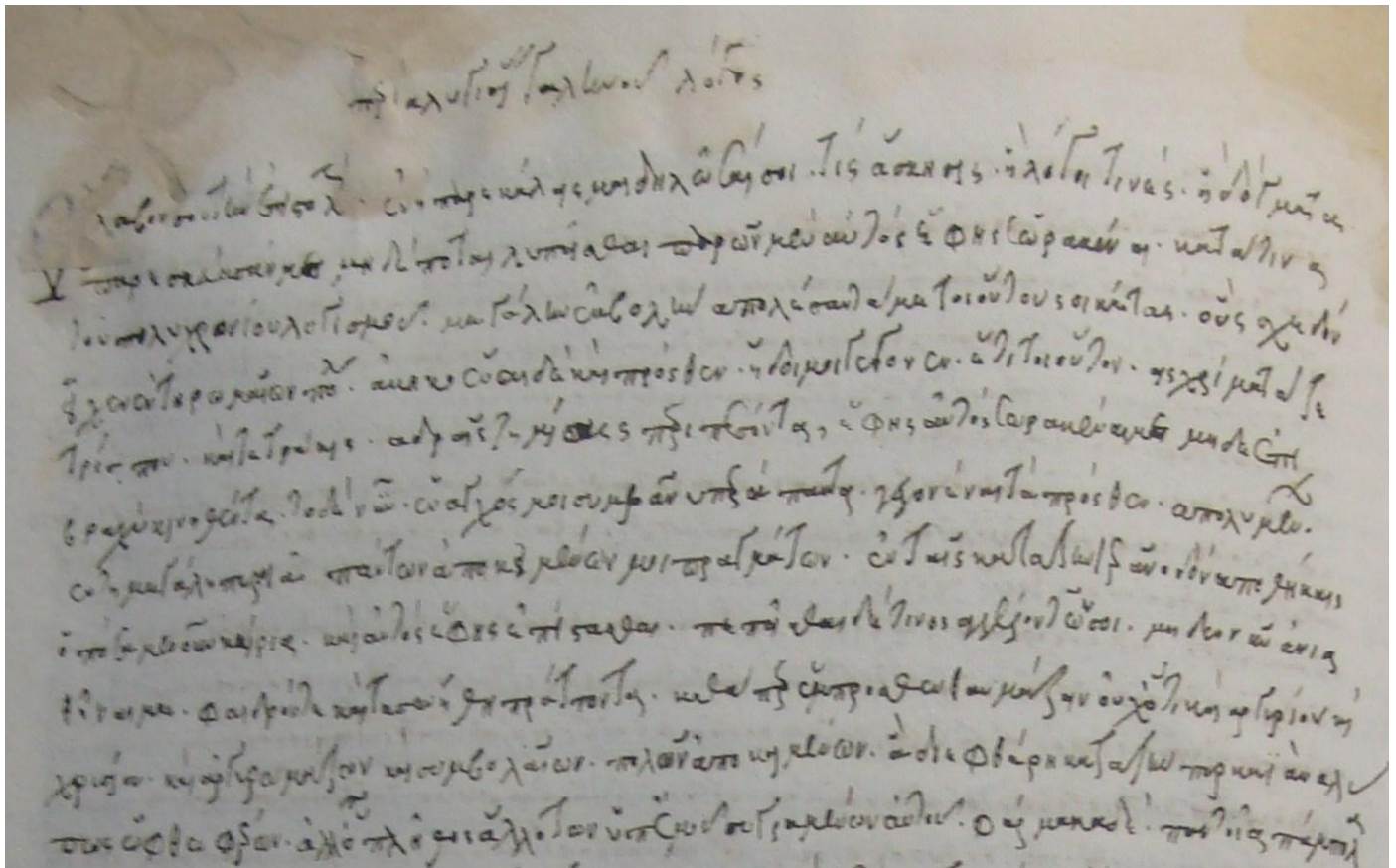
Figure 1

The Late Professor Browning (Standing) addressing the society at the Vasilopitta dinner of 1991. To the left the guest of honour, the Late Lady (Mary Cawadias) Henderson and President of the Society Nikandros Bouras. To the right, Ms Agnè Balta, Consul General of Greece in London.



Figure 2

Peter Karayiannis, President of the Society, presenting the Papanicolaou Prize to the 2005 recipient Danae Liolitsa, Neuro-geneticist, in the Great Hall of the Hellenic Centre in London.



The discovery of **Vlatadon Codex 14** in the library of the Vlatadon Monastery of Thessaloniki was the subject of an international conference organised by the Hellenic Medical Society UK in collaboration with the University of Sorbonne and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Above - «περί αλυπίας Γαληνοῦ λόγος»

The first page of Galen's treatise *PERI ALYPIAS* (On The Avoidance Of Sorrow) found in Codex 14. Until its discovery by Antoine Pitrobelli this treatise was considered lost.

Bottom (next page) - the Vlatadon Codex 14 volume was used as the background for the final announcement of the conference. The photograph was taken by this author in the restoration laboratory of the Museum of Byzantine Civilization of Thessaloniki, Greece.

