Byzantine poem appears in English through professor’s ‘labor of love’

An allegorical poem written more than six centuries ago in vernacular Greek is now available in English for the first time, thanks to a math professor at SUNY Oswego.

Columbia University Press last year published *An Entertaining Isle of Quadrupeds: Translation and Commentary* by Oswego’s George Baloglou and his partner in the project for the last eight years, Nick Nicholas of the University of Melbourne in Australia.

The poem was written around 1370 in the waning era of the Byzantine Empire, probably in Constantinople itself. “Behind the Quadrupeds’ coarse dialogues and self-exalting monologues, one can observe the poet looking decline and death in the eye,” Baloglou has written.

Baloglou’s engagement in the project began when he happened upon an anthology of medieval Greek poetry in a used bookstore on the Greek island of Crete in 1996, where he had traveled for a computer science conference.

In the anthology, this “strange, allegorical poem about a certain animal conference stood out thanks to an obliquely subversive style of writing blended with sarcasm and a powerful language combining elements of both ancient and modern Greek,” Baloglou explains on his blog site.

Finding a collaborator

The Internet was to play a notable role in the journey of the medieval Greek work to its publication in English. By 1993, Baloglou, who is a native speaker of Greek, had found a complete version of the Greek text. By 1994, he had made a stab at a complete English translation and posted it on usenet online, asking questions and welcoming comments.

That is how he found Nicholas, his collaborator, in 1995. A linguist raised in Australia by Greek parents,

Baloglou’s goal was to get the poem to a general audience. In 1997, he recorded a CD of the poem in Greek. See ‘Complementary perspectives,’ page 4

New campus Red Cross club to help save more lives through grant

The formation of a campus Red Cross club is a legacy of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. While that day’s events took thousands of lives, the club’s goal is to save lives.

The recent award of a $5,000 grant for promotional activities will help the club continue to thrive, noted club co-presidents Chris Thuman and Jenny Hawley. The grant underwrites posters, brochures, table tents, T-shirts and other promotional materials, plus opportunities to bring in speakers and visit other campus chapters, Hawley noted.

“It is a big deal, really,” Carol Hunn, Oswego branch director of the Onondaga/Oswego Chapter of the American Red Cross, said of the club’s Preparedness, Youth and Young Adult Programs and Services Grant from the national chapter. She said 88 organizations applied for grants from a pool of $55,000, and the campus club was one of only 12 chapters to receive funding.

Hunn recalled the club’s beginnings, as members of the campus community formed long lines to give blood on Sept. 11, hoping to do something — anything — to help others. “I stood on a chair and asked the students if they wanted to form a club,” she said. The club’s foundation proved compelling enough to merit a story in the American Red Cross’ CrossNet online newsletter.

The campus chapter has 25 to 30 members, about half of whom attend meetings, Thuman said. The club can promote its blood drives but needs more support as it expands into other services like CPR classes and disaster training. “Once we increase involvement, we can do more activities on campus,” he said.

Tying part in club activities and going through Red Cross training is “a great résumé builder,” Hunn said. “If students learn to become instructors, they can use that as a summer job.”

The club’s blood drives for two days every semester remain successful, Hawley said. For last week’s effort, they set a goal of 55 people each day, and...
Legal music online

“The University of Rochester has signed a deal with Napster to stream popular music to the 3,700 students who live on the campus, and company officials say several other colleges are pondering deals to take advantage of Napster for campuswide music services as well. Rochester officials said a prime motivation for the deal was to encourage students to get their music legally, rather than pirating copies of songs.”


Student/professor romance

“When students and faculty at the nine University of California campuses returned to classrooms last fall, they faced a new rule governing their intimate affairs. . . . Teachers can no longer date stu-
dents in their classes, or students for whom they ‘should reasonably expect’ in the future to have academic responsibility. That goes for deans, too, or anyone else in a supervisory role. . . . It highlights some questions about the ethics of relationships, especially when they involve a dif-
ference in authority, and who has a right to gov-
ern those relationships. And it’s a question that more and more universities are wrestling with.

The University of California’s decision is unusual in its scope — it affects an entire system — but it’s hardly leading the pack. In the past decade, schools such as Yale, Duke, Ohio Wesleyan, and the College of William & Mary have enacted similar bans, some stricter, some more lenient. The majority of universities may have no official policy at all, but more are moving from vague statements: ‘Don’t mess with the faculty-student relation-
ships to specific bans.’”

— Christian Science Monitor, Feb. 17, 2004

‘Academic bill of rights’

“Professors who unnecessarily interpret their political views into the classroom contribute to conservative students’ feelings of isolation on campuses that often seem to be dominated by fac-
ulty members with liberal views, . . . critics say. Several students who say they have Republican leanings argue that their grades have suffered or that their participation in classroom discussions has been stifled by liberal professors. . . . Now, conservative activists are fighting back. David Horowitz, president of the California-based Cen-
ter for the Study of Popular Culture, is leading a national campaign to change campus climates. The centerpiece of his efforts is an ‘Academic Bill of Rights,’ which he is urging Congress and state legislatures to adopt. It enumerates several principles that colleges should follow, among them that they should foster a variety of political and religious beliefs in such areas as making tenure decisions, developing reading lists for courses, and selecting campus speakers. . . .”


College trends

Language candidates scramble

“Advancements for foreign language jobs in the October and December 2003 issues of the list were down more than 18 percent from a year ago. On the basis of that decline, the MLA [Modern Language Association] is bracing for a 12 percent drop-off in openings this academic year. The outlook in English isn’t much brighter. According to the MLA, the total number of faculty job open-
ings in English fell a modest 3 percent in 2002-3, but the number of positions is projected to plunge by 10 percent this academic year. . . . Ironically, . . . since 1998, the number of students studying foreign languages has grown by 17 percent, ac-
cording to a recent MLA survey.”


Honoring King’s legacy — The recent 15th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration continued a tradition of honoring the legacy of the civil rights leader. As part of the event, the Alpha Phi Alpha fra-
ternity presented Martin Luther King Community Service Awards to student Jeffrey Jones, Professor Bruce Altshuler of the political science department and Casey Walpole of the Registrar’s Office. In front from left are: Altschuler, the Rev. Ed McNally of the Newman Center, and Walpole. Standing from left are: Sem Phillippe, Owego chapter president of Alpha Phi Alpha; guest speaker the Rev. Richard Rice of Peace Baptist Church in Rochester; Tony Henderson of Residence Life and Housing, chief organizer of the cer-
emony; and Maxime and Frederick Jones, accepting on behalf of their son Jeffrey.

People in action

Honoring King’s legacy — The recent 15th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration continued a tradition of honoring the legacy of the civil rights leader. As part of the event, the Alpha Phi Alpha fra-
ternity presented Martin Luther King Community Service Awards to student Jeffrey Jones, Professor Bruce Altshuler of the political science department and Casey Walpole of the Registrar’s Office. In front from left are: Altschuler, the Rev. Ed McNally of the Newman Center, and Walpole. Standing from left are: Sem Phillippe, Owego chapter president of Alpha Phi Alpha; guest speaker the Rev. Richard Rice of Peace Baptist Church in Rochester; Tony Henderson of Residence Life and Housing, chief organizer of the cer-
emony; and Maxime and Frederick Jones, accepting on behalf of their son Jeffrey.

All faculty are invited to join their colleagues in recognition of recent campus scholarly and creative activity at the 15th annual reception honoring Owego faculty and their scholarly and creative works in this year’s Display-to-Archives Program. The recep-
tion is today from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in Penfield Library’s Lake Effect Café. Faculty, emeritus faculty and staff who have donated their 2002 and 2003 publications and documents related to their creative works to the college’s Display-to-Archives Program between the November 2002 display and November 2003 are: David Andrews, George Baloglou, Ivan Brady, Robert F. Card, Jean Casey, Jean E. Chambers, Ram Chaudhari, Robert Cole, David Conrad, Donald D. Cox, Thomas Darvill, Tim Delaney, Ranjit S. Dighe, Susan Fitzgerald, Geraldine Forbes, Kristin Gublo, Brooks Gump, Michel Hellfret, Mark Kottkowiak, Alok Kumar, Kirk Avert-Swanger, Juan La Manna, Mary Lo, Edward Lonky, Joan Loveridge-Sonnomatsu, Linda Rae Markert, Mary McCune, Fritz Messere, Ampalavanar Natarajaasamy, Anthony Quelette, Jennifer Ramo, James P. Pagano, Jaqueline Reihman, Stephen J. Rosow, Audrey Rule, William Rule, Barbara Shaffer, Karen Shockey, John Kares Smith, Steve Smith, Lawrence Spizman, Evgeny Steiner, Paul Stewart, Ira Sukrungruang, Lewis Turco, Sydney Van Atta, Donald Vanouze, Georgina Whitting-
ham, K. Brad Wray, Helen J. Zakin and Richard Zakin. Their works have joined the library’s sing-
ing faculty display since last summer. After being ex-
hibited, this material is made accessible in the college archives.

The faculty and staff of the art department have once again collaborated on a new Art Show in The Forum Restaurant. A grand opening reception from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Thursday will provide an op-
portunity to meet the artists. Faculty and emeritus faculty with works in the show are: Judith Ann Benedict, Al Bremmer, Cythia Caldwell, Julieve Jabin, Juan Perdiguerio, Laurie Smith and Kate Timm. Students with works on display include: Sara Harden, Heather Bivens, Anthony Candela, Nicole Cathcart, Brad Cole, Cythia Connors, Pasouelle Dorman, Brenda Mastauskas Dunn, Casey Fee-
ney, Cheryl Forbes, David Fults, Rona Gelman, Crystal Hanehan, Jeremy Hammond, Amanda Haas, Mindy Helfenbrand, Priscilla Keim, Laura Kuryla, Jay Miller, Richard Mulye, Erik Peterson, Emily Potter, Millie Schmidt, David Schott, Mariel Spans, Azel Tanner and Jessica Williams.

Auxiliary Services named Sandra Fraser its new campus catering manager after a wide search process. Fraser previously worked as an assistant catering manager on campus.

John F. Lalonde II, chair of the modern languages and literatures department and professor of German, was recently invited by the department of German at Duke University and by the North Carolina chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German to present a workshop on the teaching of German liter-
ature in elementary- and intermediate-level language courses. The workshop, designed for German educators at the high school and collegiate levels, was held Feb. 7 at Duke University. Organizers reported record attendance for this workshop.

Lawrence Spizman, professor of economics, pre-
sented a paper he co-authored with two other econ-
omists titled “The Effect of the Loss of a Parent on the Future Earnings of a Minor Child” at the Eastern Economic Association annual meeting in Washing-
ton, D.C., on Feb. 20. Economists are often called upon to estimate the loss of services, guidance and income to minor children resulting from the personal injury or death of a parent. An established methodol-
ogy exists for valuing these losses. Receiving much less attention is the effect of the death of a parent on the future earnings of a minor child. Spizman and his co-authors did some quantitative exercises where they examined the effect of not having both parents in a household and how that affected a child’s future earnings. They also reviewed economic and psychol-
ogy literature on this issue. To their surprise, they found that there were not any long-term negative economic consequences to the minor child when a parent died.

President Stanley again offers open hours in Culkin for students

President Deborah F. Stanley will continue her tra-
dition of inviting student input by hosting open hours throughout the semester. All open hours are scheduled for the President’s Office, Room 706 in Culkin Hall. Dates and times are: 11 a.m. to noon Monday, March 8; 10 to 11 a.m. Thursday, April 1; 10 to 11 a.m. Monday, April 19; and 3 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, May 5.

“I have found these sessions to be very beneficial, informal opportunities to listen to any suggestions and concerns students may have,” Stanley said.
Women Aloud performances to benefit women’s studies scholarships

Readings and musical performances will mark the 15th annual edition of Women Aloud, benefiting scholarships for the women’s studies program, at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 8, in Bell Auditorium.

The title twists the idea of “no women allowed,” as the program is intended to show the contributions of women to all facets of life, organizers said.

Performers will include students Damali L’Elie, Jenny Lackey, Kaelyn Rich, Annyers Vasquez, Jus-
tine Vehrs and Renee Voge, as well as Neelika Jayawarande of the English department. Deb Engelke, owner of Time and Again Used Books and Tea in Os-
we go, will serve as emcee.

Participating students said the worthiness of the cause and the opportunity to perform drew them to take part.

Important issues

Vehrs, a freshman communications major from Ful-
ton, said she learned of the opportunity after taking a class from Mark Cole, professor and chair of theatre and a member of the planning committee. “He asked me to be a part of it, and it sounded like a great idea,” Vehrs said. “It’s a good cause and it should be a fun night.”

Vehrs said she plans to read “Eleven,” a piece about childhood experiences by Sandra Cisneros that is “funny and touching at the same time.”

L’Elie, a senior public relations major from Brook-
llyn, has been involved with the show since her fresh-
man year. She was encouraged to take part in Women Aloud early and has since served as a teaching as-
sistant in women’s studies. “I felt the issues we deal with are important and should be brought up more,” she said.

She will perform two pieces by acclaimed poet Nikki Giovanni, who visited campus in 2002. “I think she has a very subtle way of saying a lot of things,” L’Elie said of Giovanni. “I can relate to her as a mod-
ern writer. The lyrics in her poems are very lively.”

Tickets for the show cost $3 for students, $5 for the general public. There is also a special $10 dona-
tion for those interested in providing a higher level of support to the women’s studies scholarship fund. Refreshments will be served after the event.

— Tim Nekritz
Professor adapts two Bradbury stories to stage

Two of Ray Bradbury’s mythical and supernatural stories will come to life with a fresh take in director Mark Cole’s original adaptation of “The Traveler” and “The April Witch,” opening Friday in Tyler Hall’s Waterman Theatre.

The stories are from what could be considered Bradbury’s early period of writing. “The Traveler” dates from 1945 (first published in the pulp magazine Weird Tales) and “The April Witch” from 1952. Both feature the Elliott family, particularly the teen-aged boy, Cecy, who possesses the ability to travel psychically into other living things as she sleeps. While “The Traveler” is a more serious, scary tale of insanity and revenge, “The April Witch” changes gears and lets the audience see Cecy attempt to experience what human love is like, said Cole, professor and chair of theatre.

“The stories explore the awkwardness of growing up, the desire of an adolescent to gain attention from a parent and the need to experience love as well as the tension and violence that results from suspicion and betrayal,” Cole said.

“I imagine ‘Our Town’ by way of ‘The Twilight Zone,’” and that gives some sense of the tone of these tales,” he added. “What Bradbury does so well here, as he does in so many stories, is make the strange (a family with supernatural powers) familiar and the familiar (a kiss, lusting in love) strange.”

Cheryl Winkins-Mitchell, an adjunct professor of dance at Oswego and director of the Onondaga Institute of Dance, developed original choreography for the show. The production also features music composed by Julie Pretzat, chair of the music department.

“The April Witch” represents a wonderful collaboration between the director and myself to bring the story to life on stage,” Winkins-Mitchell said. “The dance represents such an exciting challenge to choreograph for triple-threat performers: those who can act, sing and dance, blending their talents into a seamless story line.”

The play also showcases the design work of theatre faculty Joseph Rul (scene design) and Kitty Macey (costume design). Johan Godwaldt, technical director for the department, is the lighting designer.

A preview performance of “The Traveler” and “The April Witch” will be staged at 8 p.m. Thursday with all seats priced at $5. The show will continue with 8 p.m. performances Friday and Saturday and March 5 and 6 and a 2 p.m. Sunday matinee March 7. Tickets for the main run cost $10, $9 for seniors.

Library welcomes book donations

Penfield Library Associates and Penfield Library are now accepting donations for the annual book sale, to be held in the library on April 12, 13 and 14.

Donations of books, videos, CDs and children’s books are welcome. Both hard cover and paperback books are accepted, fiction and nonfiction. Donated materials should be clean and in good condition.

Interested donors should call librarians Drew Urbanek (312-3567) or John Thomas (312-3544) for more information or to make arrangements for delivery of large donations.

Counseling staff offers screening

Mental health professionals from the Counseling Services Center will offer the opportunity to learn about the signs and symptoms of stress and anxiety and to participate in a tree screening as part of National Anxiety Screening Day on Wednesday, March 15. The program will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the normal lounge of Hewitt Union.

Participants will be able to complete an anonymous written screening test for anxiety and discuss the results with a mental health professional. Two licensed massage therapists, Sue Parisian and RoseMarie Cerkeliewich, will be offering 10-minute massages.

Anxiety disorders, which afflict an estimated 23 million Americans, include panic, social phobia, generalized anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and post-traumatic stress.

Police report

Since Feb. 6, University Police investigated several cases of theft and harassment. They made five arrests.

Two visitors to campus were charged with petty larceny, Both are accused of providing a Cayuga Hall resident with two counterfeit $50 bills in exchange for marijuana, in their account, or for change, in the student’s account.

Following those arrests, police obtained a search warrant for the Cayuga resident’s room and charged the 19-year-old student, with criminal sale of marijuana, possession of marijuana and possession of alcohol with intent to consume.

Officers charged a 24-year-old student with assault and harassment. He is accused of harassing a student in her room in Seneca Hall. When a student from the room next door came in and refused to leave, police said, he picked her up, put her over his shoulders, carried her to her room and dropped her on the floor, causing a concussion and bruises.

Police charged a 19-year-old Cayuga Hall resident with assault. He is accused of assaulting a fellow resident, knocking out a front tooth, blindsiding an eye and causing bruises.

Complementary perspectives

Continued from page 1

“I always had this playful view of the poem,” he said. “Nicholas was more serious.” In the foreword, the two write, “This book has not ended up as either of us envisioned it — and is probably all the better for it.”

Support from three sources — Oswego’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and the Kalypso and Grigoris Grigoriadis Foundation — assisted in publication.

The book is available at the River’s End Bookstore in Oswego and online from Columbia University Press for $54.50 in hardcover and $27.50 in trade paperback. Excerpts are available through Baloglus’s Web site, www.oswego.edu/~baloglus.

— Julie Harrison Blissett

Strong turnout

Continued from page 1

had the first day and 65 the second. “One pint of blood saves three lives,” Hawley said. “We saved 1/4 people the first day, 1/5 the second day.”

Increased exposure can cultivate more volunteers to help with registration, serve refreshments and perform other tasks at the blood drive, Thuman said. “The student participation as far as giving blood has been excellent,” Thuman noted. “People have been very good. They want to help.”

Organizers hope more “faculty and staff will give the gift of life,” Hnn said. “I think it looks good to students to see faculty participate.”

The SUNY Oswego Red Cross Club meets at 8 p.m. every other Wednesday, with the next meeting tonight in Room 220 of Hewitt Union.

For information, e-mail jhawley1@oswego.edu or thuman@oswego.edu.

— Tim Nekritz

Calendar highlights

• College Council meeting, Feb. 25
• Reception for the Display-to-Archives Program, Feb. 25
• Art Show reception, Feb. 26
• "The Traveler" and "The April Witch" opening, Feb. 26
• "Trav'in: A Musical Journey in Blues and Jazz," Feb. 28
• Tyler Art Gallery exhibit opening, March 5
• Rice Creek Ramble, March 6
• President Stanley’s open hour, March 8
• Women Aloud, March 8
• College Choir, Chamber Singers and College-Community Orchestra concert, March 8

For a more complete calendar, see the Events Calendar link at http://www.oswego.edu/news.html — the News button on the college home page.