

# ODYSSEY

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MAY/JUNE 2001

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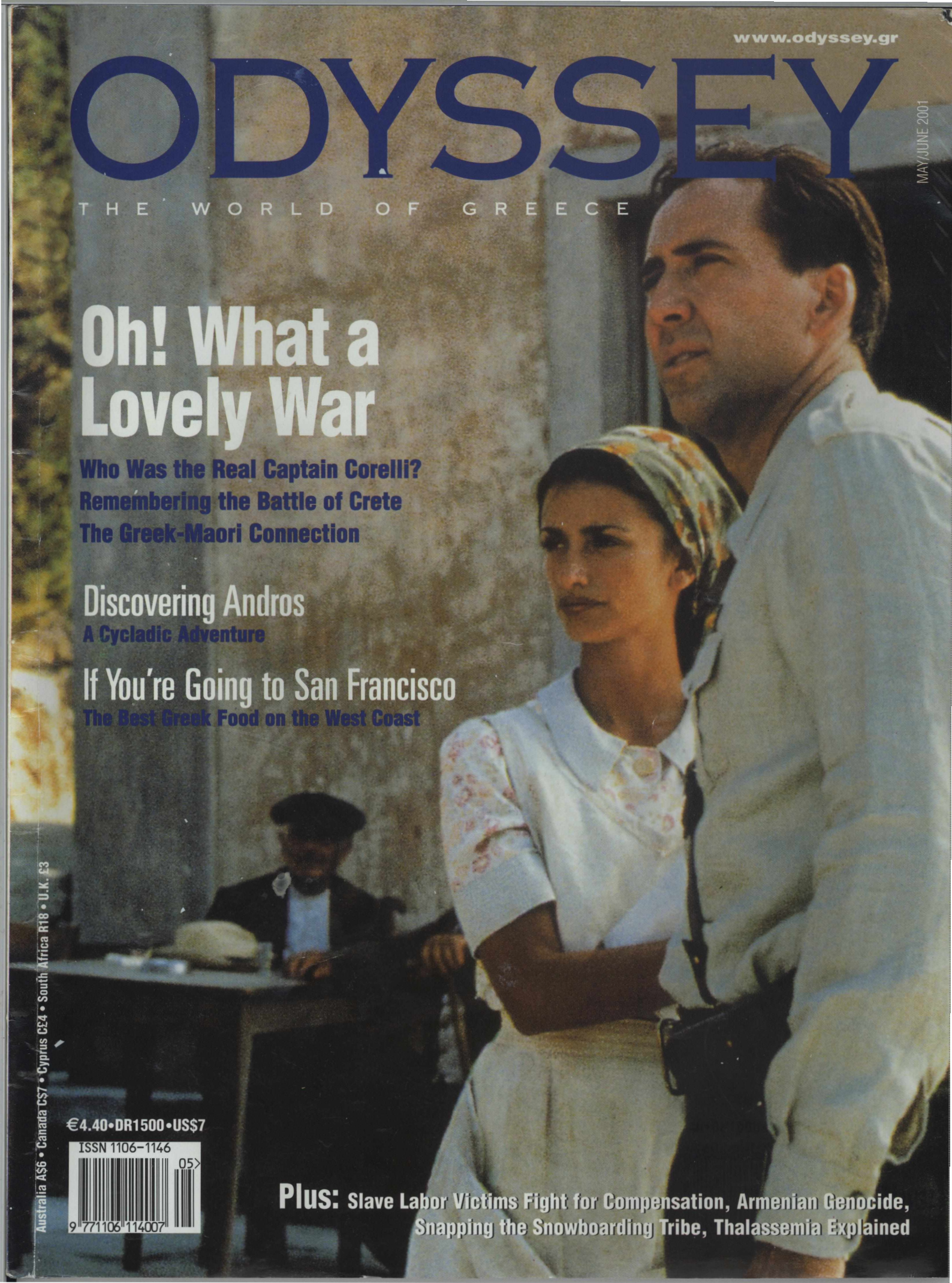
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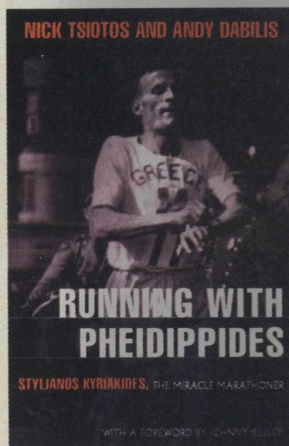
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**Plus: slave Labor Victims Fight for Compensation, Armenian Genocide,  
Snapping the Snowboarding Tribe, Thalassemia Explained**



## The Boston Runner

Stylianos Kyriakides & the Miracle Marathon



*Boston Globe* reporter Andy Dabilis could not resist the story. While researching a book about legendary Greek American baseballer Harry Agganis, Dabilis heard about a Greek champion marathon runner who had won the Boston marathon in 1946.

Almost five years of research later, Dabilis and co-author Nick Tsiotos tell his story in *Running With Pheidippides; Stylianos Kyriakides and the Miracle Marathon* (Syracuse University Press 2001).

Kyriakides was the favorite when, as a fit young champion, he first went to Boston in 1938. The US press dubbed him "the modern Pheidippides," after the man who ran from Marathon to enlist help against the invading Persians. But in a quirk of fate,

Kyriakides lost the race and vowed to return and win.

In the intervening years, Nazi occupation and the ensuing bitter civil war left Greece and Kyriakides emaciated. He returned to America in 1946 determined to win the 50th Boston Marathon and draw attention to the plight of his country, despite now being 36, malnourished, and not having trained for six years.

"They were not going to let him run," Dabilis recalls. "But he pushed his body to limits that everyone said were impossible to reach, and beat his personal best by 17 minutes."

After defying the odds, Kyriakides stayed on in the US and raised money for equipment and medical supplies for Greece. He was subsequently welcomed home by nearly one million people who lined the road from the airport.

"I have always been interested in where people get the willpower to triumph over adversity, and this to me was the ultimate story of that," Dabilis says.

He and Tsiotos were able to draw on the *Boston Globe's* vast archives and testimonies from Kyriakides' widow and children, including a scrapbook kept by son Demetri, which had nearly every story that had been written in the Greek press about Kyriakides, as well as some English clippings.

Another priceless find was the archives of former *Globe* sportswriter Jerry Nasan. "Nasan said he had covered 40 Boston Marathons but this one was the only one that mattered because it was being run for life," Dabilis says.

*Running with Pheidippides* is being published in the US in May, and in Greece in September (in Greek and English) by Kedros Publishing.

"For those of us who were young and Greek American," recalls former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, "his victory in the 1946 Boston Marathon and the response of so many Americans to his pleas for help for his people was one of the most searing experiences of our young lives."

Victoria Kyriakopoulos

## HISTORY

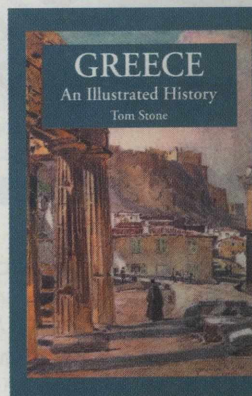
### Greece. An Illustrated History

Tom Stone. Hippocrene Books Inc, New York 2000

Tom Stone came to Greece in 1970 and stayed for 22 years. He seems to have learned a little something in that time. In his illustrated history of Greece, the whole of Greek history is paraded before us, from the first wave of settlers in about 6500 BC to today's immigrants flowing down from the Balkans; from the tyrants of the classical age to modern politicians like

Papandreou, whose career was to prove that "power both corrupts and is the ultimate aphrodisiac"

It's a solid account in which fun facts also abound; how the croissant, representing the Turkish crescent moon, was invented by a



Venetian baker to celebrate the repulsion of the Ottoman Turks; how Pericles cried before an Athenian court begging it to show mercy on his paramour, Aspasia; or how the priests at Delphi, jealous of Aesop's smashing success in his tours throughout Greece and Persia, hid a golden cup in his luggage and accused him of stealing it, then had him thrown off a cliff to his death.

Science and the arts are not given short shrift, either. We learn, for example, about philosophers' creative if ineffective efforts to decide on the basic substance of the universe. Thales of Miletus thought it was water, but his pupil, Anaximander, preferred to go with an "indefinable something." Anaximenes thought vapor or air was the likeliest candidate, but Pythagoras, the math god, naturally believed everything ultimately boiled down to numbers.

The Peloponnesian wars, the Roman conquest, the rise of Christianity, the ups and downs of Byzantium, the Ottoman conquest, the War of Independence, everything up to the year 2000 are brought to you in vivid color. (Well, the photographs are black and white, but are the better for it.) The upshot is that this little book is indisputably a great and entertaining crash course in the Greek adventure.

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