

## Byzantine and Modern Greek Library Gets an Upgrade

Thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous donor, the Queens College Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies is in the middle of a project that will modernize its Harry J. Psomiades Library and increase its usage.

Since the center was founded in 1974, it has acquired thousands of books. The Harry J. Psomiades Greek Studies Library has been building an extensive collection of books, journals, and scholarly publications that supports the center's academic initiatives as well as the country's largest Greek community, located here in Queens.

For most of its history, the library, located in Jefferson Hall, was not integrated into the main library's catalogue, limiting its potential reach in the community. However, in November 2022, the center received a large donation from an anonymous benefactor that has helped modernize the library.

"We were looking for ways to improve the center and for ways to make the library more accessible. In the meantime, we had a donor who came to us and wanted to donate a considerable sum to the center," explained Gerasimus Katsan, director of the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. "Because the library had not been catalogued using the Library of Congress system, it has never been part of the main library system. We decided to use his donation to catalog the library and incorporate it into the main library computer system."

Through the work of Katsan and Neophytos Ioannou, assistant to the Greek center, the library's extensive collection of Greek and Byzantine studies is being added to QC's main library computer. Books from the collection—which comprises texts on history, politics, literature, poetry, and more, and includes books written in English, Greek, and even French and Italian—can be checked out by anybody through Interlibrary Loan. This service allows patrons to borrow materials from other libraries that aren't available at their local facility.

"Now the library is more useful and searchable in a way that will make it open to anyone who is looking for titles in the field the library covers," added Katsan. "Basically anyone in the world can request it through their own university library system."

As an additional part of the project, the center is determining what books are rare and valuable and hopes to digitize them in the future, so that they can remain in the collection in the long term. They are also working to preserve any fragile books.

"The goal is to finish cataloging the main collection and identify the books that need special preservation. We'll finally have a complete knowledge about what's in the collection."

While much has been accomplished, a lot remains to be done. Cataloging is a labor- and time-intensive process. But thanks to the hard work of Katsan and Ioannou as well as many employees in Rosenthal Library, the project has made great progress; the anonymous donor was pleased enough to make an additional contribution so that the project can continue until its completion.

"We worked very diligently in that first year to get the project underway to organize with the library, because it required coordinating with the library's cataloging department," added Katsan. "Our goal is to make it available to people to get the word out so that researchers, whether students or faculty, can come and discover something useful here."