Preface

Αναπαυμένη συνείδηση.
Πράξαμε το καθήκον μας
χαράξαμε το κρύσταλλο
Τώρα άς έρθουν άλλοι
για να δούν άν υπάρχει
το μεγάλο διαμάντι

Βασίλης Βασιλικός
"Ηλιε μου, Αρταξέρξη μου"

Relieved conscience.
Our duty is done
The crystal is carved
Now let others come
to discover the diamond

Vasilis Vasilikos
"My Sun, My Artaxerxes"

The present issue of Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica was compiled to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Hellenic Association of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology (HAOST). During its half-century of existence, HAOST which now has over 1000 members, has shown a number of noteworthy achievements which today has placed it among the leading Orthopaedic Societies in Europe, as well as among some of the most advanced societies in the world.

By listing just a few of the outstanding achievements of HAOST, an index of the development and progress of Greek orthopaedics over these past 50 years is seen. First, it is noteworthy that all of the community hospitals which cover all of the major urban and rural areas in Greece have well-established and fully-functioning departments of orthopaedics and traumatology. By all measures, these adequately cover the needs of the local population in both trauma and reconstructive orthopaedics. In addition to these well-endowed and very active orthopaedic units in the community hospitals, Greece boasts 5 university level departments of orthopaedics which are scattered in the periphery. These departments belong to large university hospitals which cover both the teaching and referral needs of the major geographical areas in Greece. Thus, along with the two largest university hospitals which are located in Athens and Thessaloniki, the 5 peripheral university departments provide a full and high level service to the Greek population in both trauma and reconstructive orthopaedics.

Training in orthopaedics and traumatology in Greece closely follows the guidelines and directives established by the European Community. Thus, residents in Greece match the number of years, content and quality which has been recommended by the EEC to ensure that a high standard of training is achieved. Today, 6 years of orthopaedic training is required in Greece. Moreover, additional openings for further postgraduate studies and subspecialization are available and encouraged at selected centers. Advanced training is offered on a fellowship basis in diverse areas including, spine surgery, hand surgery, athletic injuries, children orthopaedics, and metabolic diseases, among others. More importantly, the Greek College of Orthopaedic Surgeons with the assistance of the major University Departments, annually hosts a high level continuous educational program available to members and fellows from all over the country.

In turn, it is noteworthy that most Greek orthopaedic surgeons who today play a leading role in the scientific process and academic development, have spent at least one year of their postgraduate studies and orthopaedic training in renowned, clinical and research centers throughout Europe and North America. Thus, Greek orthopedic science, today, is characterized by both a high quality of training, by a more than adequate number of surgeons. This, in turn, ensures that the needs for trauma and reconstructive orthopaedics in the entire country are sufficiently covered.

The vast majority of Greek orthopedic surgeons are members of prestigious International and National orthopedic societies and play an active role in their scientific activities. Among these are the European Federation of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology (EFORT), the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), the British Orthopaedic Association (BOA), just to name a few. Furthermore, Greece is one of the founding members of one of the leading societies in Europe, EFORT. As measure of its role and esteem, HAOST was elected by EFORT to host

the 5th EFORT Congress in Rhodos, Greece in the year 2001.

The international orthopaedic literature is full of Greek orthopaedic surgeons who foster and contribute to both clinical and basic orthopaedic science. Thus, the names of Greek orthopaedic surgeons are on articles published by renowned and high caliber peer-reviewed journals, on book chapters, monographs, and so on. In addition, Greece has two of its own well-respected orthopaedic journals, Acta Hellenica Orthopaedica and Orthopaedics which are issued alternatively with 2 issues per year published in English. Numerous Greeks, as well as foreign friends contribute to both journals.

HAOST has shown a high level of activity over the past 50 years. Today it consists of several different sections which cover in depth the entire content of reconstructive orthopaedics and trauma in Greece. Among these are the Section on Hand Surgery, Spine Surgery, Surgery of the Hip, Children Orthopaedics, Oncology, Arthroscopy, Reconstructive Microsurgery, as well as others. Almost as a standard policy, HAOST annually hosts one combined meeting with another major European Orthopaedic Society. By this, HAOST encourages a high level scientific interaction for the exchange of ideas and experience on the one hand, and on the other hand, fosters the tightening of bonds and friendships with colleagues from all over the continent.

For the last 7 years, HAOST has been one of the very few orthopaedic societies in Europe to have its own central office which houses the secretariat, the library, offices for the elected officers, workshop space for training courses and an amphitheater for lectures. This acquisition was possible owing to the generous gift of the Konialidis family with the encouragement of Professor Emeritus, George Hartofilakidis, the father of modern orthopaedics in Greece, as well as contributions volunteered by the members of the society. Keeping up with electronic age, HAOST now keeps a page in the internet making information on its activities readily available to its members and friends.

This special supplementum is possible because of the trust and efforts of Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica, which has supported similar endeavors in the past (20 years of trauma and reconstructive microsurgery in Greece, Supple 264, Vol 66, June 1995). This issue serves as a tribute to the 50th anniversary of the Hellenic Association of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology and is part of a number of scientific activities and publications (Clin Orthop 341, 1997) which will take place in order to commemorate this special event. It was my particular goal in guest editing this supplementum, that the readers of Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica would be served twofold. First, the body of 35 original papers collected in this Supplementum would reflect the progress of orthopaedics in Greece over the last 50 years in virtually the entire spectrum of trauma and reconstructive orthopaedics, both clinically and in basic research. Second, the readers of the journal would be introduced to the young, promising orthopaedic surgeons in Greece who represent most of the authors and coauthors in this issue. In order to best celebrate the entire family of HAOST, care was taken to include an equal representation of authors from all of the University departments, community hospitals, and the private sector, as well. In this regard, I would like to thank the authors for responding to the call of such a demanding publication and for their sincere efforts in making this commemorative issue possible. Upon reflection, this proved to be a very demanding endeavor, but indeed, worthwhile, as I believe that this Supplementum will serve as a true mark of the evolution and progress of modern orthopaedics in Greece. Gratitude is also owed to the current President of HAOST, Dr. George Nikolakakos, for support in this effort on behalf of HAOST.

On a final note, but of great significance, I would like to extend my full-hearted thanks to the Editorial staff of Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica, for giving me the opportunity to use a journal of international acclaim, as a scientific platform to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Hellenic Association of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology.

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Vasilikos V. "My Sun, My Artaxerxes" In: Laka - Souli, Poems 1967–1973, Dorikos, Athens, 1982.