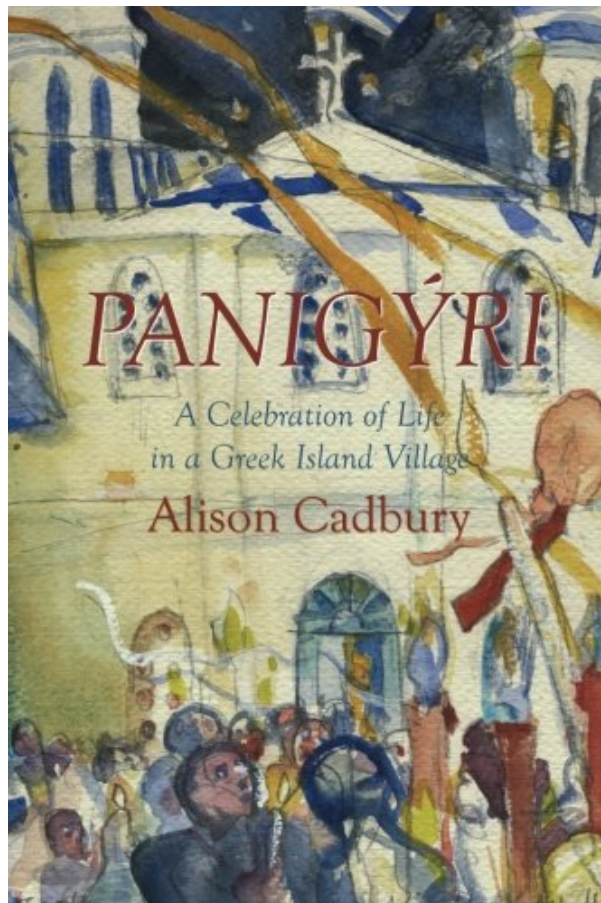
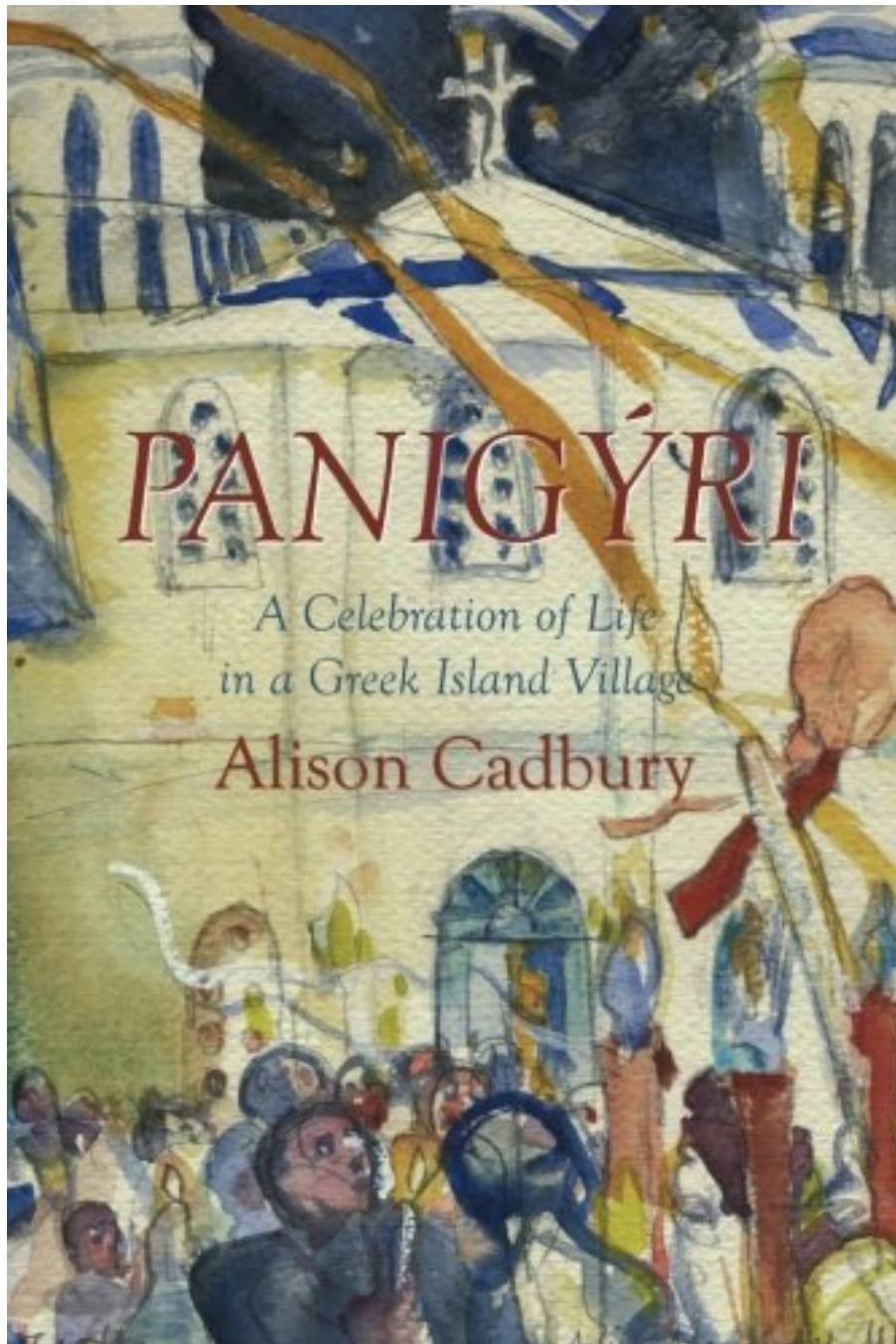


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About the Author

Alison Cadbury lived for many years on the island of Paros, observing and participating in village life: harvesting olives and grapes, keeping company with housewives and shopkeepers, and eating, drinking and dancing in the panigyria.

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PANIGYRI: A CELEBRATION OF LIFE IN A GREEK ISLAND VILLAGE BY ALISON CADBURY PDF

On one dark blue midnight in the late summer of 1971, I climbed down the ladder of the Evangelistria, a rusty old tub of a ship, and set foot on the soil of Paros, a medium-size island in the Aegean Sea. I had been drawn to the island by pictures of many-colored fishing boats and snow-white cubical houses, and was curious about the people who created such beauty. I intended to stay three weeks. I stayed, the first time, five years. , and have visited often since then, fascinated by the island culture-at once spare and joyous, traditional but alive, pragmatic but grounded in spirituality. This book is an ode to the culture and the people of the village of Naousa, island of Paros in the Cyclades, Greece, as I knew them.

Alison Cadbury

Alison Cadbury has the sure touch of a born story-teller, which she combines with close observation of Greek village life. Most of what she writes she heard from her neighbors or saw for herself, living in Naousa, a village on the island of Paros. She is a good listener. If the tellers embroider a tale, they do so because they know she will absorb the smallest details and carry them into her own language. This is a book that will not only appeal to lovers of Greece but to those Greeks who have grown up in cities and never experienced what Seferis called the "rich order" that once characterized rural Greek life. Cadbury observes how the rituals, music, dancing and festivals create a life that is, as the villagers say, *Kathiméra panigyri*, "Everyday a celebration."

Gail Holst-Warhaft, Author, *Road to Rembetika*

Like sea salt scraped with a spoon from stones along the shore of the Greek Island Paros, these essays and stories bring the immediate taste of a way of life to the reader, a way of life that is at once austere and joyous, thrifty and generous. Island villagers from fisherfolk and farmers to priests, sweet bakers, and carpenters struggle to adapt millennia-old traditions as a global culture in the form of tourism deluges the peaceful village, challenging old values, changing even the landscape, the phrygana, the dry rocky land where sheep graze and bees burrow into blossoms of thyme and oregano.

Change also affects intimate relations, especially love and marriage: Ilias, the young socialist priest-to-be, determined to be "modern," is mated in the oldest tradition; a schoolteacher loses her lover to higher education; while traditionalist Thanasis falls in love with a liberated Swedish woman, with whom he forms a unique union.

The villagers are great storytellers. The mami, the midwife, tells a story of tragic love in days gone by, and white-haired Marina spins a tale of a fisherman who might have made friends with a mermaid. That fisherman, decades later, teaches a foreign painter what Greek art is really about.

Along with stories of life on the farms and the sea go traditional beliefs: why you should not hang your clothes out overnight, work on St. Michael's day, wash your hair in August, or marry in May. Women's work and pleasures inform their lives: embroidery, spinning, washing clothes, laying out and mourning the dead.

Seasonal activities are described in lyrical language: in Autumn the grape harvest and wine-making, in July the reaping and threshing of the wheat, in Spring the astounding flowering of the fields. Times and places named for them keep a myriad saints and other holy persons alive in the minds of the villagers, as their miracles are celebrated not only with liturgy but with feasting and dancing.

- Sales Rank: #831046 in Books
- Published on: 2008-08-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.21" h x .99" w x 6.14" l, 1.34 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 436 pages

About the Author

Alison Cadbury lived for many years on the island of Paros, observing and participating in village life: harvesting olives and grapes, keeping company with housewives and shopkeepers, and eating, drinking and dancing in the panigyria.

Most helpful customer reviews

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Alison Cadbury captures Greece and offers us a taste...yum, yum, yum...

By A. M. Traisman

Alison Cadbury has written an extraordinary memoir of her time in Greece. Her sentences are as rich and deep as the sea that surrounds her. This is a gem of a book, filled with stories and descriptions that will transport the reader to this magical place. Ms. Cadbury gives us exquisite characters as rich as any you will find in the pages of fiction. She captures these people, her island friends and neighbors, maintaining heritage and culture against the tide of the encroaching modern world. Ms. Cadbury's gift is that she was able to witness such life and craft it so brilliantly on the page. Each story honors the life of the people and places she so vividly describes. Greece has never been more beautiful, never been so affordable.

Postscript: Alison passed away on Oct. 26th, 2010 after a prolonged illness. Her sharp wit and sensibility, her honesty, wisdom and friendship will be deeply missed. Her art is eternal. Panigyri was her passion project and it was honor to be an early reader of this extraordinary work. Alison, you are a writer and teacher of the first order. Thank you for all the words you shared with us.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

One of a kind

By Cynthia Cotts

Panigyri is beautifully written and it moved me in so many ways. I am an American woman who only got to Paros for the first time in 2002 at the age of 44. Despite how much it has changed, I also fell in love with Naousa and have been back twice and will return this June. The book is especially electrifying for me, because it took me back to the pure island culture that doesn't exist anymore and allowed me to live it vicariously.

The only thing missing from the book is a full appreciation of the author, a native English speaker who has produced a contemporary version of the Parian Chronicle. How on earth did Alison Cadbury, a foreigner and a poet, land on this island with rudimentary Greek, become assimilated and evolve into the town crier? While she tells us little about her own background, we get to know her as a gyristria (or gadabout) and her

personality is revealed through her writing: She uses language beautifully, she is an empathetic listener and powerful observer of detail. Her personality is reflected in the way the islanders embrace her, and the way she immerses herself in the lives of the olive growers, vintners, fishermen, butchers, priests, midwives and artists, not to mention the myriad shopkeepers, gossips and drunks. It's as if she set out to write a medieval encyclopedia, or Chaucer's Tales. Funny comments are frozen in time, like "It's only Roman," "Ta papoutsia!" and "Women do not tread grapes."

Cadbury's power of description is so keen as to border on magical. Every sentence is kataprosopon, or super-white! I love her descriptions of the land and the rich variety of flowers and plants. Every time she stops to admire the landscape, I feel like I'm standing next to her. I especially love the first walk from Naousa to Laggeri, the moment she watches a lizard on a cold autumn day and the two views of Naousa from a mountaintop. Stunning.

I learned a lot of island history from the author and I'm grateful for her knowledge of the customs and how they connect to agriculture, fishing, Christianity and superstition. There are some sections that I want to read again, just for the information: her lessons on noikokyrio, to mati, the agora and ta psaria. It is amazing that she was able to absorb all of this, not to mention the traditional dance styles. I like to imagine her on a winter night dancing into the wee hours. I have been told she is a very good dancer.

As the book unfolds, Cadbury seems to float through many levels of oral history. First the islanders tell her all the gossip, then over time, they begin to tell her the darker stories, the tragedies that chill the bones. I'm thinking of the tales of the Poloneza, the captain's wife and the schoolteacher.

The author writes beautifully about the inland coast of Laggeri and the deep troughs cut into the shore. I met a man in Paros who calls the troughs "rock channels" and says they were used to roll chunks of Parian marble onto ships for exportation. I wonder if anyone has confirmed his theory, or if the troughs will remain one of the island's enduring mysteries.

The overwhelming impression Cadbury creates is that of the power of the community, the communal spirit, the culture of constant communication that exists to this day on the island of Paros. Through one portrait after another, she shows us the distinct island personality that is creative, self-sufficient, full of peace and joy and jokes. She mourns the passing of time and the irrevocable transition to a tourist economy, and this nostalgia is the primary theme of the book. It made me terribly sad. I also felt sad to think of the author saying goodbye to this magical island and returning to her native Oregon.

Surely she will go back? Surely the distinct personality of the Parians has not changed, only adapted to the times?

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Panigyri--a celebration of an endangered way of life

By Catherine Siskron

An amazingly original and multi-layered book on Greece, and a way of life endangered by globalization. Alison Cadbury weaves such diverse topics as ancient lore and fishing, icon painting and post modern art into a loving portrait of a village way of life and of the men and women who embody that life. The style is both poetic and easy to follow. I enjoyed it so much, I sent a copy to all my friends who have been to Greece! A great example of creative non-fiction--informative, nostalgic and, at the same time hopeful. The source of hope seems to be Cadbury's understanding of the complexity and longevity of Greek culture. It was especially poignant reading this book in the context of the current political and economic developments in Athens.

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