

# Travels with Cornelius

1985

## A long Summer in Greece 1985



Cornelius in his room in Berkeley

Cornelius was doing very well in Berkeley. During the Winter of his second year he asked to be allowed to take a break from Berkeley and spend a year in India. As a condition I demanded that he first secure an official readmission for his third year, and that he make a detailed plan of what he wanted to do in India. He persuaded Marc Hermans from Holland to join him. Together we eventually concluded that twelve months in India would be too long, and I found him a "post-doctoral" research-fellowship with Fritz Keilmann in Stuttgart for the Fall of 1985.

He flew to Europe in June, and was for all purposes incommunicado.

During the early summer of 1985 he roamed Italy alone. His trip was to end in Greece, and we decided to meet him in Athens and spend four weeks in the islands together with him, before he would fly to Stuttgart to start working for Fritz. India would follow in February 1986.

We had pulled several long strings between us. Cell-phones did not exist then, letters to Europe took 10 days. Neither did he write regularly. I had found a small hotel in the Plaka, where we would meet on August 16, 1985. This was the first such long-distance arrangement. We had still to learn confidence into each other to make it work.

The story of our meeting in Athens has assumed mythical proportions. I had arrived early that day and was, at night, sitting on the room's small balcony waiting for him. It had become very late when I spied his curly head and immense backpack in the lane below. Soon we fell into each others arms. "My," he said, "Here you are, was it difficult to find this place. Nobody knew it or could tell me. I searched for over an hour."

## The Stones of Athens

We roamed Athens for two days. Cornelius had taken a course "The Stones of Athens" at Berkeley and became my guide. I still remember his explanations especially in the Agora.

In the evening we had dinner on the Plateia Koutlou Mousiou ("Square of the Musical Courtesans") where I took the glorious portrait of him, which tells all about my joy of being with him.



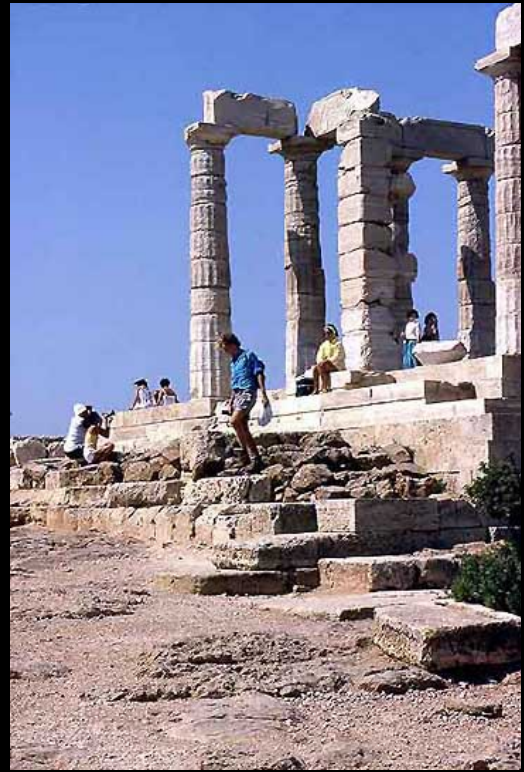
Cornelius in Athens 1985

## Sounion

We took the bus to Sounion and spent a day on the beach there



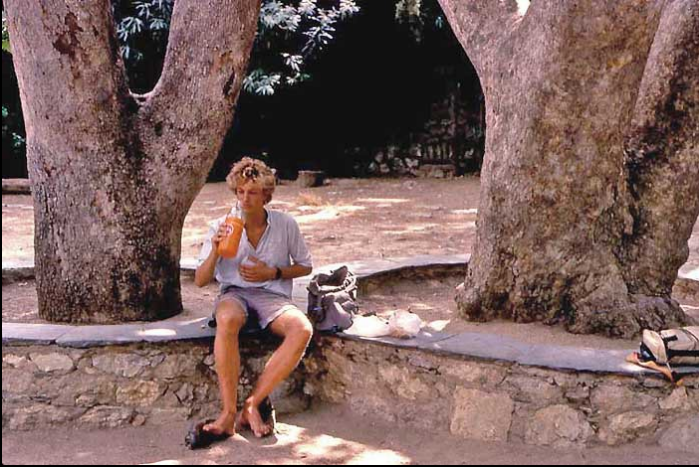
Cape Sounion



The Poseidon Temple

## Kaiseriani

On a very hot day I took him to Kaiseriani. The long walk uphill from the bus stop to the monastery exhausted us. After a picnic lunch Cornelius fell asleep.....



## Expedition into the Deep Mani

For many years Fermore's *Deep Mani* had been a destination on my mind. It is the western-most and longest southern peninsula of the Peloponnese. Its barren, rocky spine had been the refuge of "free" Greeks during the decades of Turkish rule. To avoid a tiring 10-hour bus ride, we took a boat following the eastern pirates' coast of the Peloponnese. We met several congenial foreigners, among them a Swede and his wife who presented us with his hunting knife as token of his friendship. Before he handed it to me he cut his finger with the knife then mine. Mingling our blood would prevent it to be ever used against each other.... We reached Gythion after nightfall and found a room above the chicken-coop of a restaurant on the quay.



The towers of Ano Boulari  
from the road to Gerolimenas



Cornelius explored this church of St. Stratigios  
and found it full of sake skins

Next day we continued on the only bus to Geriolimenas at the southern tip of the Mani. The landscape was iridescent and hallucinatory with light. Olive trees and tower villages. Like in Svaneti and in San Gimignano, blood feuds taught the inhabitants to build defense towers next to their houses, where to they could retire, if one's neighbors were them. The one who had the highest tower and the largest number of male off-spring survived.

## The Castle of Tigani in the Mani

Tigani is a mysterious castle and settlement, the ruins of a fortified city of the French Crusader Villehardouin. In my version of the tale, Vilharduin built this castle for one of his mistresses - who was as

beautiful as the place was forbidding: a rocky promontory, waterless, except for cisterns, with a large cathedral surrounded by dozens of rock tombs.... like at Montmajour near Arles.



The pan-handle of Tigani and the Sangias Mountains



The path to Tigani

Cornelius and I walked there and nearly lost each other in the stalagmites and salt ponds along the path. Take plenty of water along, there is not a drop

## Mykene and the Argolid

In Gerolimenas we had befriended an English couple on their honeymoon, Rose and Tony Shipman. She was from an upper-class family, he a journalist of half-Italian descent.... A charming pair. They had rented a car and took us back as far as Navplion in the Argolid.

That night we went by bus from Nauplia to Mycene, got a room, and walked up to the Atrides' castle when everyone was leaving.



The citadel is on the small hill in the center foreground. Underneath the field we are standing on are the royal beehive tombs.

We returned to Athens by bus early next morning.

# Amorgos 1985

We picked up Barbara at the airport in Athens and took the night boat to Amorgos: 12 hours on the most rusted ship plowing the Aegean Sea. I believe it was called *Kyklades II*.... Its toilets were a stinking mess, but the captain was of the old stock. When we arrived dreary-eyed from the humid night on deck at six in the morning, he sang opera arias through his megaphone! All of Katapola was at the harbor to welcome the boat, and an old woman ran to the chapel at the harbor entrance and wildly rang its bell.



Once more Tassia took us in



Breakfast at Tassia's

In Katapola, for the last time, an aged Tassia took us in. Her husband had died, and she served us the special cookies, she had baked for his 40-day celebration.

## Hiking Amorgos



The venerable old Bus



Katapola from the path to the Chora

Every morning Cornelius and Barbara walked up to the Chora – whilst I took the bus.



Lunch in VROUTSI



The hills of Dokathismata,

One day we took the bus to Vroutsi in the south-western part of the island, from where we walked back to Katapola. Later we hiked part of this monopati again with Jutta in the evening.....



Sunset behind the houses of Levkas and the Lesser Cycladic Islands

## The Eastern Escarpment and...



The Eastern escarpment of Amorgos is a 50-km long rock wall, in the crevasses of which hide an 11th-century Byzantine monastery (invisible from this point), Aghias Annis, the chapel below, a secluded nude beach (out of the photo) - and the Secret Garden of the Monks (in the dark shadow)....

### ...the Secret Garden of the Monks

On our last visit to Amorgos Barbara and I had stumbled quite accidentally across a retaining wall into the vegetable garden of the monks – a Greek paradise. We told nobody, it became our secret garden. In 1985 we spent hours, entire blissful days there.



The old bus wheezed down as far as Aghias Annis, but we usually walked down together from the look-out on top where I met Barbara and Cornelius recovering from their morning hike.



Barbara in our secret garden

A stone bench and a table under a fig-tree next to a tinkling spring with drinkable water. What else does one need for a day of happiness – how about a pool of cool water with a view of the sea?



A gust of wind on the Aegean Sea seen from...



...monks' garden pool

## The Monastery of Panagia Chosoviotissa



Cornelius and Barbara at the gate to the Moni



In the cavernous entrance of the moni, where the monks kept a pile of old clothes for the tourists to cover their bareness with, we met two Austrian girls: Jutta Micheus and Angelika Kovacic from Eisenkappel. I got into a teasing argument with Angelika - an architecture student in Graz, who was sketching the monastic cavern. Later Barbara said, but did you not notice quiet, charming Jutta? Jutta would soon become Cornelius' friend and Barbara's and my very special attachment. After 30 years and many ups and downs she still is a very close and dear friend, a precious corresponding member of our family.





Barbara dreaming of the garden

One day the children left. The Austrians had to go back to Graz, and Jutta followed Cornelius



Rolf and Barbara left behind.....

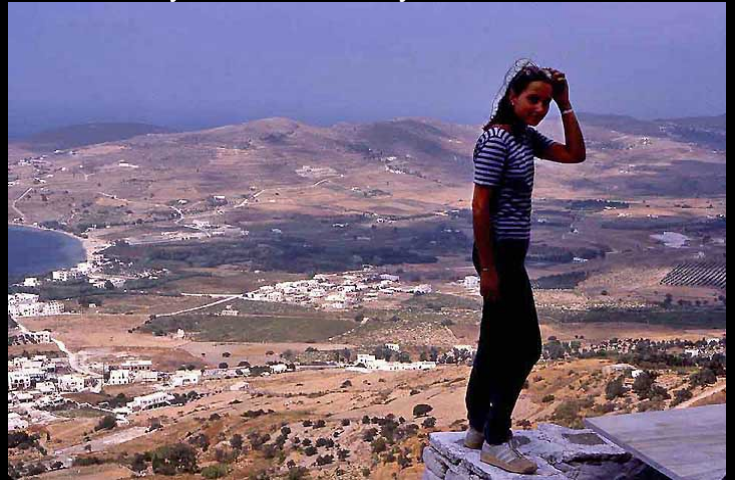
But it was not the end of that Summer yet

Left to ourselves, I decided to move to Naxos. We took the next boat - and while I drove a motorcycle exploring Naxos, Barbara ran into Angelika and her pianist sister. Cornelius and Jutta had gone to Santorini together - but would arrive in *Paros* at midnight. Against Barbara's express wishes we all went to Paros that night and surprised Cornelius and Jutta. Cornelius was not at all enthused to see his parents again. We took a room and they went to sleep on the beach.

# Paros



We met them at breakfast - but Cornelius was very defensive - as one can see. On Cornelius' birthday (15 September) Barbara invited all to dinner in a small restaurant.... In the early morning I found Barbara vomiting into the toilet: obviously meat poisoning. In great panic I ran along the Paroikia's beaches and found C&J, deep asleep. They were all right but Barbara had to stay in bed for 2 days.



Persuaded by Jutta Cornelius allowed me to take them to the Paroika moni on the mountain....



The Children's Crusade waiting in Paroikia for the boat. Eventually also this respite came to an end. Cornelius and Jutta took the boat to Athens from where she went home, and he flew to Stuttgart to join Fritz's laboratory.