

# Olympic Memorabilia

Lot. 9001

## ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ ΤΟΦΑΛΟΣ - DEMETRIOS TOFALOS' Collection

### Collection of photographs

A collection of a total of **232** personal photographs with descriptions handwritten by the Greek Olympic Winner, covering a long period of his life, extending from before the Olympic Games of 1906 until his death (1966). A part of the collection is related to the period of common life of D. Tofalos with the famous Greek wrestler Jim Londos, with a series of photos where they are pictured together.

More specifically, the collection includes:

- Silver printed photographs, of various sizes, from 26x34cm to 7x11.5cm
- **10** photos on thick carton paper, of the "cabinet" type and size
- **185** small size photos (7x11.5cm - 9.5x15cm)
- **17** medium size photos (11x17cm - 15.5x21cm)
- **20** large size photos (20x25cm - 26x34cm)

On the back sides of at least **90** photos there are (on most occasions, lengthy) **handwritten descriptions**.

The collection covers a large part of the life of Demetrios Tofalos starting from a school picture taken ca. 1890-1895. The period before the Olympic Games of 1906 is reflected on 3 portraits of the most recognizable athlete in weightlifting, photos on thick carton paper, taken by the photographers A. Atzaritis (Patras), Boehringer (Athens) & D. B. Lempesopoulos (Kalamata).

The largest part of the collection deals with the period of Tofalos' settlement in the United States where he initially worked as a professional wrestler in freestyle wrestling and later became manager of the famous Greek wrestler Jim Londos. His business activity included the establishment of companies which imported products from Greece, including alcoholic beverages (from companies like Achaia Clauss, Votrys & Delphi). In this section of the collection are included photos with his personal handwritten dating, ranging from as early as 1914 to 1952 - when Demetrios Tofalos returned to Greece. The photographs of this period include portraits, scenes from everyday life and wrestling games, as well as photos with fellow athletes, friends, and prominent businessmen of the Greek Diaspora.

Of particular interest are four photographs which belong to the era of the close cooperation of Demetrios Tofalos with Jim Londos, showing them together. Jim Londos is also depicted in 12 more photos. Another set of photos highlights unknown moments of Tofalos' life in America. In a large size picture (ca. 1915) he is shown wearing an artistic ancient greek outfit (while there are indications that during his early years in America he worked as a tenor!).

A small number of photographs is related to the period of Tofalos' life after his repatriation (1952-1965). Ca. 15 images (incl. four on thick carton paper) depict members of his family, with most particular that of his dead sister, who was a victim of the bombing of Patras in 1940.

Finally, a large framed photo (132x21cm) with an inscription in the negative: "Panhellenic Sports Games of the 'Hermes' Club, on the 21st August, 1932, at ? Park, Brooklyn, N.Y. / Athens Studio, 150 East 39th St." shows Greek athletes, members of the sports club of New York, of which a co-founder was D. Tofalos.

### Collection of manuscripts, documents & other objects

An accumulation of almost a thousand personal documents of D. Tofalos related to the period of his life from his settlement in America until his death in Greece. A particularly important and rare part of the material includes the minutes of Tofalos' life, recorded with his own hands in **two personal diaries** and a large number of **hand-written letters** to his mother, relatives and friends. In the concisely written texts are outlined the exuberant character of the Greek Olympic champion, his political beliefs and unknown aspects of his personality.



In another section of the collection, is presented D. Tofalos' business activity as a representative of **ACHAIA CLAUSS** in America. The material covers in depth all aspects of business development and decline of his company in the USA (ca. 1935-1949), as well as the prosperous network of businesses of expatriate American Greeks at a time when the Greek products were extensively promoted in the American market in the decades of 1930-1940.

The collection includes also a large number of Greek American newspapers and the Tofalos' personal collection of newspaper clippings, mainly focusing on the wrestler's career from the early years of his settlement in America and the famous Jim Londos wrestler's career alike.

Finally, the collection is complemented with rich personal material such as signed checks, personal letters to eminent Greek politicians, artists and entrepreneurs, and administrative documents related to him and his family members. More specifically, the collection is divided into the following general categories:

#### 1. Set of D. Tofalos' manuscript documents:

- Two (2) personal diaries with over 350 handwritten pages, with daily notes. The first concerns the period from 12th May 1952 through 11th September 1952. As is noted in parts of the text, those days Demetrios Tofalos was still in America and was preparing his return to Greece. The second diary is titled **"My Daily Notes since Apr. 1955"** and refers to the period from 1st April 1955 through 30th June 1955. Those days, D. Tofalos was in Patras, Greece, staying at a hotel (Magestic) because he had no access to his family home. In the first page of this diary there is an introductory text which reads (with original spelling): *"Since 1940 and the ... damned November (November 3, 1940) when I was informed about the disastrous bane of my family, the bombings of our town Patras, that murdered .... my dear sister Ioanna ... (I decided) to keep a diary of my life and the historical events of the glorious ... the holy & glorious my Fatherland Greece. I stopped keeping them (the notes) ... on 22nd December 1952, the day that I departed from Big-Hearted Holy America with the aim to calm ... my soul from the pain, ... the misery of our country ... because I was leaving for a new life in order to heal the pain .... I arrived at wounded Greece. I came on October 8, 1952 ... not a single day did I see relief of my soul since I arrived in Piraeus and that is why, with this record, I write down, with my own hands, my new sufferings"*. The everyday notes begin with comments on the weather while frequent are the references to political and economic news. They are particularly important as the concisely written text highlights unknown aspects of the character and personal life of D. Tofalos while, for a total period of six months, it gives details of his everyday life, his daily meetings and contacts, as well as his thoughts.
- Three (3) envelopes from the period just before D. Tofalos' return to Greece in 1952, with enclosed leaves from *"my favorite tree which is in the 102 Str. Central Park West ..."* and hairs from his chest, with handwritten text *"June 4, 1952. Hairs from my chest that I keep..."*.
- Handwritten list of names and addresses, mainly of U.S. expatriate Greeks, ca. 1945.
- Four (4) **letters sent from America to his mother** in 1941, shortly after the tragic death of his brother and sister, Dionysios and Ioanna, due to the bombing of Patras by Italian warplanes.
- A letter which seems to be sent by D. Tofalos to himself (!).
- A set of personal letters written by D. Tofalos, with reference to significant events of the era (such as the impact of the Second World War or, later, the Cyprus matter) where it is apparent his involvement - as an Olympic champion and prominent personality of the Greek American community - in political issues such as the German wartime reparations.
- Personal letters addressed to D. Tofalos by expat friends and businessmen.
- 3 pages of handwritten notes on the results of weightlifting in the 1932 Olympic Games.
- 3 handwritten letters to the Minister for Justice Mr. Theofanopoulos and a typewritten letter to the Prime Minister A. Papagos, regarding the re-assignment to D. Tofalos of his paternal residence in Patras. For a long time, after D. Tofalos returned to his hometown Patras, he lived in hotels because he found out that his paternal house had been rented.
- 25 sheets of handwritten notes that give records of his family property, inventory of the paternal home and family barges and claims for compensations.

#### 2. Newspapers & clippings

- A series of ca. 130 complete newspapers of the Greek Diaspora of America [ca. 1939 - 1950 ("America", "National Herald", "Atlantis", "The Greek-American Tribune", etc.)].
- In the newspaper (~1915?) D. Tofalos appears in an advertisement.
- 70 clippings from newspapers with reports on wrestling, mostly focused on Jim Londos.
- Clippings from newspapers with advertisements for products of the companies 'Achaia-Clauss', 'Votrys' & 'Delphi'.

#### 3. Legal / Administrative documents related to three (3) general categories:

- The death of his brother & sister, the clarification of the circumstances under which they died, the claims for compensation from the USA after the end of WWII and the settlement of inheritance issues:
  - 1940, two (2) death certificates for Dionysios Tofalos & Ioanna Tofalos, brother & sister of Demetrios Tofalos: "the death occurred due to the bombardment of the city of Patras".

- 17 documents from the District Courts and Port Authorities of Patras related to the clarification of the conditions of the deaths of Dionysios and Ioanna Tofalos, as well as the claims for compensation for the destruction of two barges owned by the family of Tofalos due to the Italian bombardment of the port of Patras.
- The claim for his family home which began with his return in Greece, in 1952
  - Letters to Greek politicians in which he was requesting their assistance for the return of ownership of the family home that was lost during the war and after the death of members of his family.
- The dissolution of the Branch of ACHAIA CLAUSS in America and the settlement of remaining outstanding issues
  - 35 documents / correspondence between D. Tofalos, ACHAIA CLAUSS and their representatives, on the dissolution of the Branch of ACHAIA CLAUSS in New York (of which, CEO was D. Tofalos), the settlement of remaining outstanding financial issues, the economic trade-offs and the disputes between them.

#### 4. Commercial Documents & correspondence:

- **Establishment and dissolution of 'ACHAIA CLAUSS America'** (1935/1949)
- Agreement between D. Tofalos & ACHAIA CLAUSS for the development of the company in America (1935)
- Lettersheets of 'ACHAIA CLAUSS', 'RC Williams' (partner company) and Dionysios Tofalos
- Copies of certificates issued by Greek Authorities for the designation of the origin of the product 'Mavrodaphne' of ACHAIA CLAUSS, the method of its production, the type of the grapes and the quantities produced by region, the non-export to other countries, and their translations. These documents were apparently used during the company's growth in the USA, when its representative was D. Tofalos.
- A "Price List Official" of ACHAIA CLAUSS (1945)
- A series of documents giving an outline of the businesses of D. Tofalos in Greece and America, including receipts from transactions, deposit slips, checks and payments.
- Orders and typed customer lists
- Agreements and precise texts from newspaper ads and American radio stations
- Travel documents, estimates & lists of costs, hotel bills
- Telegrams
- Ca. **300 checks signed** by D. Tofalos

#### 5. Other

- **Telegram from King Paul II** expressing gratitude to D. Tofalos
- Typed letter to the Minister of Education A. Gerokostopoulos in which D. Tofalos stigmatizes the Minister's decoration by the German state and reply letter sent by the Minister (1957)
- Three (3) typed letters of Nicholas John **Cassavetes**, father of the famous actor and director John Cassavetes, addressed to D. Tofalos. In an excerpt from the first one (26.3.1956): "... *John had a great success in theater and he has already concluded a 5- year contract with the great Film Company MGM...*", in another from the second (17.12.1956) : "... *John goes wonderful at theater...*" and from the third one (20.2.1957): "... *John triumphed with his latest movie, now on Broadway. His name shines up and down in the Broadway, with huge neon lights ...*"
- Personal stationery, programs and magazines related to wrestling, focused on himself or Jim Londos
- 13 producers' labels, mainly for Mavrodaphne wine but, also, for Samos Muscat & olive oil 'Delphi'
- Promotional brochures of ACHAIA CLAUSS for the Greek 'AHEPANS'
- A letter (1956) with a text in which a woman is seeking for traces of her brother who was a boxer in America
- Maps of American Cities & States (Chicago, New York, California) with handstamps "D. TOFALOS"
- **Manuals for freestyle wrestling** and swimming
- Greek-English dictionary

In the collection is also included a **Greek flag of impressive size (ca. 4 meters long)**, dating back to the first decades of 1900 and **believed to be the one from the 1906 Olympic Games**.

In conclusion, the present collection consists of unique and first-time-seen material covering a very large part of the life of the famous Greek Olympic champion, showing unknown aspects of it. Apart from the section with the manuscripts and their undeniable importance in understanding the personality of D. Tofalos, it is extending and delineating the life of expatriates in America during the critical decades of 1930-1940. Whereas material concerning both D. Tofalos and Jim Londos is very rarely available for sale, this collection can be called unique - also in terms of rarity. Both the extent and personal character of the material and the diversity of the collection give it a whole museum character.

**Starting Price: 55000 €**

**"Nearly 80 images of items from the collection & a full description in Greek at: [www.karamitsos.com](http://www.karamitsos.com)"**