ALEXANDER S. ONASSIS PUBLIC BENEFIT FOUNDATION (USA)

ATHENS–SPARTA

In collaboration with the
National Archaeological Museum of Greece

December 6, 2006–May 12, 2007

Explore the history and cultural achievements of the
two most important city-states in the ancient Greek world,
from the Archaic to the Classical period.

Monday-Saturday
10:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.
Free admission

ONASSIS CULTURAL CENTER
Olympic Tower
645 Fifth Avenue
(entrances on 51st and 52nd Streets)
New York, NY 10022

Tel: (212) 486-4448
Fax: (212) 486-4744
www.onassisusa.org
info@onassisusa.org

Status of a hoplite, known as “Leonidas” (detail). 480-470 B.C. Parian marble.
Found southwest of the peribolos of the sanctuary of Athena Chalkikinos on the
Acropolis of Sparta. Archeological Museum, Sparta, 3385
Welcome to the second issue of “Books.” Thanks to the talented authors of the books and the excellent work of the reviewers, we have had a wonderful response to this new feature. The National Herald’s “Books” enables our readers to discover books written about Greece, Cyprus or Greek Americans and the authors who create them. We hope you will be enticed to read the many fine books that are available.

We receive a variety of fiction and non-fiction books, including translations and poetry, from authors throughout the United States and Canada. We are impressed with the quality of their work and would like to review more of them, but because of space limitations, it is not possible.

In this issue, to further acquaint you with the wide variety of books available on the Greek American experience we have included Steve Frangos’ well-researched “Suggested Readings on the Greek American Experience.” He notes that even this lengthy list covers only a fraction of the books available and that nearly 100 books have been published on this topic since 1980.

If you have published a book, we invite you to send it for possible review to The National Herald, 37-10 30th Street, Long Island City, New York 11101.

Elaine Thomopoulos
Managing Editor, Books
Heart Murmurs from Home

By Robert Krause
Special to The National Herald

For best-selling author George P. Pelecanos, family and heritage are the essentials. When I spoke with him in September, he seemed initially tired from a working trip to Baltimore, but he quickly became enthusiastic and energized.

Pelecanos’ latest novel, “The Night Gardener,” is described on the author’s website as, “The haunting story of three cops – one good, one bad, one broken – and the murder that reunites them in a showdown decades in the making.” While “The Night Gardener” does indeed continue in Pelecanos’ successful streak of violent gritty crime stories, the novel is elevated to something greater by its presentation of the Ramone family. The “good cop,” Gus Ramone, is a diligent Detective Sergeant. He and his wife Regina, a one-year dropout from the force and now full time mother, met during Gus’ first year as a patrolman. Some 20 years later in 2005, they are now parents of a middle school son, Diego, and his seven-year-old sister, Alana.

The Ramones form a rainbow family. With the given name Giuseppe, Gus is of Italian American ancestry, while Regina is an African American. The family and heritage here are again essential, especially considering where Pelecanos has come from, and where he is today.

George P. Pelecanos was born in Washington, D.C. in February 1957. Although his father was born in Greece, he considers himself third generation. “Dad” was in the Marine Corps in World War II. He boxed, he played baseball.” For both his mother and father, the family hometown was Sparta.

After settling in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood, Pelecanos’ father began his lifelong work operating a lunch counter. “My dad had a really nice little business, a nice little diner. He went to work every day. Every day and he did good work.”

An earlier Pelecanos novel from 1996, “The Big Blowdown,” features much biographical information of Pelecanos’ family. “My Dad grew up poor in Chinatown after he came over from Greece. He fought in the Pacific in the Philippines.” It’s his story up to (a) point of that book. My Mom makes a cameo. All my relatives are there somewhere. It’s a testament to all of them.”

George grew up a member of the neighborhood, an American kid, developing affinities for street basketball and rock music, both heavily featured in his 1997 novel “King Suckerman.” He is a former altar boy of Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, located in Northwest Washington on Embassy Row.

A perfect-attendance graduate of Saint Sophia’s Sunday School, he is still active at the church.

Other than working at his dad’s lunch counter, Pelecanos has experienced a wide variety of jobs. He has been a line cook, dishwasher, bartender, electronics salesman, unskilled construction worker and women’s shoe salesman. Often quoted for saying of the latter, “Best job I ever had.” It certainly wasn’t what he was born to do. In 1988 while operating a chain of electronics stores, “I had an early midlife crisis. The next step would’ve been to get my own business, but instead I decided I wanted to be a writer.”

Quitting the retail market, Pelecanos gathered writing material by tending bar at a policeman’s watering hole in downtown Washington. From his experiences he wrote his first novel, which eventually plucked from the stack as a blind entry by an editor at St. Martin’s Press, the only publisher he submitted the work to. (“I was naive. I believed what it said in ‘The Writer’s Market’ – no simultaneous submissions.”) Described as “very autobiographical,” “A Firing Offence” was published in 1992.

Pelecanos still resides near D.C. “right over the district line in Silver Spring, just steps over the line.” He and his wife Emily met in 1978 while both were working as salespersons at The Gap during the holiday season. Married since 1985, they now have three adopted children: two boys, 15-year-old Nick, and 13-year-old Pete, are both from Brazil. Their nine-year-old sister Rosa is from Guatemala. His parents still live in the neighborhood, “about 15 minutes from me. I talk to them everyday or I see them.”

As a writer, Pelecanos is a man with a driven work ethic, or “the Greek work ethic” as he calls it. His latest best selling novel “The Night Gardener” is his 14th novel in as many years. During that time he was also executive producer of four films, including the documentary “The Long Haul of A.J. Bezzerides.” Since 2002 he’s been a writing contributor to the critically acclaimed HBO series “The Wire,” which has been picked up for a fifth season.

Somehow he also finds time to read and could probably earn a living solely as a critic. He routinely peppers interviews with recommendations. “I’m a fan. I got into this because I fell in love with crime novels. I had a teacher in college turn me on to them. When I read a good book, a really good book that turns me on, I want to tell people about it.”

“I like this guy Jeff Eugenides. I thought ‘Middlesex’ was a fantastic novel. A modern Greek American writer I think is extraordinary.

“There’s not a lot of books where Greek people are depicted in literature especially well. It’s the jolly guy with a mustache behind the counter wearing the apron.”

“The Night Gardener,” however, has no central Greek characters. Yet, he doesn’t plan on abandoning Greek Americans. “I’ll continue to tip my hat to this because I fell in love with crime novels. I had a teacher in college turn me on to them. When I read a good book, a really good book that turns me on, I want to tell people about it.”

Pelecanos is well aware of his heritage, and how he may be seen as a Greek American writer, appreciated by the Greek community. “People that I meet are enthusiastic. There is a bond between us because we’re Greek. In the same way when I was a kid when I’d watch movies I would wait for the credits, and I’d try to find a Greek person in the credits. If you did find a Greek person it made you feel proud, and it gave you a little bit of hope. It’s the jolly guy with a mustache behind the counter wearing the apron.”

“Middlesex” was a fantastic novel. A modern Greek American writer I think is extraordinary. “There’s not a lot of books where Greek people are depicted in literature especially well. It’s the jolly guy with a mustache behind the counter wearing the apron.”

“The Night Gardener,” however, has no central Greek characters. Yet, he doesn’t plan on abandoning Greek Americans. “I’ll continue to try to find a Greek person in the credits. If you did find a Greek person it made you feel proud, and it gave you a little bit of hope. It wasn’t the traditional bit for our people in America.”

“I come from a generation where just about all of our fathers were in the food service business (which, by the way – there’s nothing wrong with that. I know how to run a restaurant). And so if you were the kind of person who aspired to do anything different, like be a writer, or work in the movies, it was always hopeful to see somebody else who was doing it.”

Pelecanos has become that someone. The author laughed when I asked if Gus and Regina are the first functional couple he’s written...
about. "It could be. I was ready to write about a loving married couple and a family that was really whole. I've written for years about the different ways to make a family that can include foster parents or coaching kids. I've explored many times the workplace as a place where someone who doesn't have a home life can find another family.

"This is the first time that I really went deep into what it's like to be a husband and father and to come home every night and not be a screw-up. Let's face it, I've written about a lot of screw-ups in my career. There's other people out there too."

"The Night Gardener" is not all family wholesomeness. The screw-ups remain, even among those on the right side of the law. Those who, from the book, "were trying to stay out of bars or simply unwilling to face the loneliness, unhappiness, duties, or plain boredom of their home lives."

Yet, the part of the book most resonant with the reader is the bond between Gus and Regina Ramone. From midway through the book, with the reader knowing the type of family that will result, Gus reminisces on his first sight of Regina with tender poignancy, a poignancy not normally seen in hard-core crime novels:

"As it always did when he descended those stairs, the movie in his head rewound twenty clicks, to his first full year on the force. It was through the frame of that same open doorway that he had gotten his initial look at Regina, standing in her blue one-piece suit on the pool's edge, looking into the water preparing to dive. The sight of her, muscular but all woman, with a shapely buttocks and nice, stand-up breasts, had literally stopped him in his tracks. He was not a guy who was particularly adept at talking to the opposite sex … but he was not afraid, and he walked right into the pool area, introduced himself, and shook her hand. Please let her be as nice as she is beautiful, he thought, as his hand gripped her smooth fingers and palm. Her big brown eyes drooped a bit with her smile, and, swear to God, he knew."

Pelecanos manages to present deep love between the family members clearly and concisely. For example, during a brief exchange between Diego and his basketball-playing friend, Richard, Diego's inner thoughts reveal a depth of feeling not typically expressed by boys of his age:

"What he want?" said Richard.

"(He told me to get home after dark. He asked me how school went today. He told me he loved me. The same way my Mom always does before she hangs up the phone.)"

"Nothing much," said Diego to Richard. "He just told me to beat you Bamas to within an inch of your lives."

The book's central crime touches the family closely: A friend of Diego's has been murdered, and the brutal details have deeply disturbed the young man. After another late night, Gus comes home to comfort his son:

"(Diego's) eyes were hollow and it appeared he had been crying. His world had been tilted. It would right itself, but never to the degree of comfort where it had been.

"You okay?"

"I'm blown, Dad."

"Let's talk a little," said Ramone, pulling a chair over to his son's bed. "Then you should get some sleep."

"A little while later, Ramone closed Diego's door behind him and walked down the hall to his own bedroom."

By withholding details of the conversation taking place behind closed doors, Pelecanos allows the reader to share the intimate bond between father and son, while maintaining true family intimacy. The author has his own deep bonds of family involvement. "We've got this kind of rainbow family. I've started from an early age with my children. I've taken them to church every Sunday, got them indoctrinated into the Greek community, and they definitely know who they are."

"My sons are black, but they also consider themselves to be Greek, and they dig it, because it's cool to something else other than just a white American. We have the traditions, we have the language, we have the food, all these things."

"They're very comfortable in their own skin."

Pelecanos is no doubt also comfortable in his own skin — as a Greek, as a husband and father, as a gifted writer. In "The Night Gardener," he's again written a well-paced story with crystal true dialogue and settings the reader can see. Yet it's the characterizations and their relationships that will remain.

The character of Gus Ramone shows the heart of Pelecanos' writing. Ramone is a focused, driven man who, though possessed of reasonable day-to-day fears and concerns for his family, is well aware his dreams have come true. In this regard, Ramone is similar to Pelecanos himself.

Pelecanos, by drawing on his own experience of heritage and family, brings life to Ramone and the others in "The Night Gardener." He writes from the heart.

Robert Krause works in two public libraries as an assistant librarian. He reads and writes in Lake County, Illinois.
Meet Me in Greektown!
A New Concept in Greek American Literature

By Steve Frangos
Special to The National Herald

“Greektown Chicago: Its History — Its Recipes” by Alexa Elaine Ganakos is an entirely new genre of Greek American literature. Quite unintentionally, Ganakos has successfully blurred several time-worn genres into an entirely new format. This single volume is simultaneously a history book, a cookbook, and an album of historic photographs. The potential implications of Ganakos’ new volume for Greektowns everywhere is nothing short of revolutionary.

As part of this volume’s title implies, Ganakos has written a concise history of Chicago’s old Greektown district that was once bordered by Harrison, Halsted, Polk Streets and Blue Island Avenue, all situated on the western edge of Chicago’s downtown business district. This area was long known as the “Delta” since Blue Island ran roughly at a diagonal to Harrison and Halsted. It is said that between 1880 and the end of World War II some 40,000 Greek immigrants made this general area their home. It should be noted, even if just in passing, that Ganakos does stray geographically in her various historical sections. Still in her broader goal of describing Greek life in Chicago this occasional crossing of boundaries works to the volume’s overall purpose.

In the 1950s and 1960s, urban redevelopment and the construction of first the Eisenhower Expressway and later the Kennedy Expressway destroyed much of the north and east ends of the old Delta District. Today’s bustling Greektown is a two to three block corridor running north along Halsted Street, which still thrives as a frenetic business district active on nearly a 24-hour basis.

Eighteen sections compose the overall history offered in this volume. Very much like sections within a museum exhibition the content of the various historical vignettes and the historical images seen in each span nearly a 100 years of Greek life in Chicago. Churches and formal events, picnics, dances, weddings, entertainment and an array of other themes fill this volume. And Ganakos is most certainly not focused exclusively on the past.

A significant part of this volume’s appeal is that Ganakos carries the history of Chicago’s Greektown well past the 1960s (where most authors have left the story) and offers a sound appraisal of the neighborhood’s ongoing service to the local Greek community.

The innovative techniques in the volume’s photographs mirror the historic narrative’s mixture of individual memories with the voices of contemporary restaurateurs and notable others throughout this 200 page volume. And here lies true inspiration.

Ganakos’ view of the Delta District in terms of history, images and recipes is squarely focused on the neighborhood in the widest sense of that term. This perspective allows Ganakos to offer the reader not simply a random memory, an old photograph or just a collection of recipes but rather what sociologists call the total social fact or what artists have long called the spirit of a place.

This spirit of old and new Greektown is powerfully invoked through the stunning assembly of historic and contemporary photographs that lavishly illustrate this volume. Ganakos has accomplished what so few academics ever do, an insightful fusion of historical documentation with memories and commercial information that comprise the content of every page.

An unintended consequence of fusing a cookbook with a history book is that in order to sell cookbooks, publishers have long recognized that the photographs of the food must be especially clear and printed on the highest quality paper. Since this volume is — in part — a cookbook, every photograph has been printed on the highest quality paper with special computer enhancement given to each and every image.

So this cookbook’s attention to the reproduction of food images has amplified the quality of the reproduction of historic photographs, portraits and contemporary scenes of Chicago’s Greektown to crystal clear clarity.

Ganakos’ vision of people and commerce working together sees expression in the recipe sections. In yet another twist on standard convention there are two distinct recipe sections. First 24 treasured family recipes from many regions of Greece are offered, and we see the individual or family members who share with us their most treasured recipes. In yet another section, four of Greektown’s finest restaurateurs (and sometimes their families as well) share the recipes of a wide array of their showcase dishes.

No other Greek cookbook in North America has thought to offer both food and portrait photos. The photographs in both recipe sections are simply offered as illustrations or out of respect for those involved. However, in the future these photographs and the other contemporary photographs in this volume will become the very source of “historical” images of Chicago’s Greeks and Greektown during the New Millennium.

Interestingly, “Greektown Chicago: Its History — Its Recipes,” is being marketed as a model for other ethnic groups. This vision of the American ethnic experience as being a common cycle of events that should be both celebrated and...
shared is yet another example of Ganakos as a committed coalition builder of the first order.

I do have one observation. More specific information should have been made on each photograph. Many will find this request utter nonsense since nearly (and that is the word to attend to) every photograph does have some sort of caption. But that is no longer enough.

Certainly with a number of the historic images exact identification may no longer be possible. In such cases the provenance, that is, the source of each photograph, should have been provided. This is far from a minor issue. Greek American historic photographic books such as the one compiled by Ganakos are exceedingly rare. It may be a hard thing to hear but there is no assurance whatsoever that another book of this sort (forget the high quality of this particular volume) will see print again.

Since we have already lost so much of our collective immigrant past, just knowing where photographs are archived is a major contribution. Identifying individuals within these historic photographs is nothing short of a sacred trust.

Let me offer an example. On the “Greektown Chicago: Its History — Its Recipes” title page we see three images. The first shows an icon of St. Nectarios, the second a photograph of flaming saganaki, and the third an unidentified couple. No documentation of any sort is offered for this last photograph.

Since the man is holding a bouzouki we can assume that this image was selected for that reason alone. I know that these individuals are Zafiri and Anastacia (nee Rapanos) Harlambopoulos and that the photograph was taken in front of their home in Libertyville, Illinois circa 1926-1931. If we knew where this photograph came from then this image of the Harlambopoulos family could conceivably receive the identification it deserves. Quite obviously other Greek Americans could help in this overall identification process.

This point aside Ganakos’ volume unquestionably serves as a model that can be employed to great success not just in Chicago but Astoria, Baltimore, Detroit, Los Angeles, Ontario, Toronto and many other cities where Greek business districts can still be found. Since Ganakos’ book is obviously (and I would stress rightly) in full support of community’s commercial sector this means Chicago’s Greektown businesses will offer this book for sale for as long as copies are available. Potentially this volume will stay in print far long than either strictly a Greek cookbook or any history book. Given the potential longevity of this book it is conceivable that this will be the only historical account many tourists, Greeks as well as non-Greeks, will ever read on the Greeks of Chicago. The added responsibility for any high-profile historical volume is that it be as accurate and as detailed as possible.

All reservations aside, “Greektown Chicago: Its History — Its Recipes,” like good food everywhere, is an irresistible mixture of individual items that when brought together form a bouquet of sight, experience and content that does nothing less than feed the soul. We can only urge Greek America at large to immediately employ Ganakos’ fine volume as a template for documenting every Greektown neighborhood in Canada and the United States.

To order “Greektown Chicago” contact G. Bradley Publishing at www.gbradleypublishing.com or 1-800-966-5120.

Steve Frangos, a regular contributor of TNH, is a freelance writer who travels throughout the country investigating and gathering historical information about the Greek American community. Readers interested in contacting him are encouraged to e-mail him at greekwrite@yahoo.com.
Ikaria Remembered
By Nicholas G. Lardas, with artworks
By Zacharias A. Lardis
Lardis Fine Arts, 61 pages, $11.95 paperback

...to present a unified voice of the Hellenes in Northeastern Ohio that will promote the Greek experience through education, collection and preservation

The Hellenic Preservation Society of Northeastern Ohio
P.O. Box 422
N. Olmsted, OH 44070

A Dark, Brooding But Beautiful Book about Childhood Memories of Ikaria

By Elaine Thomopoulos
Special to The National Herald

As I looked over the gorgeous multi-colored Florida sunset reflecting on the azure water, I felt like my body was going to burst. There was a funny swelling sensation deep inside of me, something I cannot adequately explain. I experienced this same feeling when reading “Ikaria Remembered” by Nicholas G. Lardas, with artworks by his younger brother, Zacharias A. Lardis. The book is majestic, just like a glorious sunset. The volume of six short stories and three poems enthralled me with its descriptions of rural village life in Ikaria and life's lessons learned from childhood experiences and village legends. The author uses poetic, mag ic words that capture the mystery of the human spirit.

“Ikaria Remembered” is not a happy book. It is a dark, brooding but beautiful book. While reading it I remembered a phrase that Greek American author Theano Papazoglou Margaris used to describe why she wrote: “I put my pain on paper.” In this book, Lardas puts his pain on paper, while his brother Zacharias Lardis expresses himself through provocative, expressionist art. A notation by Nicholas Lardas explains the difference in the spelling of their names: “When I took my birth certificate to be registered for military service in 1943, I discovered that my last name is Lardas, spelled with an ‘a’ not an ‘i.’ Others in my family, including Zacharias, continue to use Lardis.”

In 1932 Nicholas Lardas journeyed with his mother, brother and two sisters from Hempstead, Long Island, New York to the Greek island of Ikaria, the land of his parent’s birth. It was the Depression, and he was eight years old. He returned with his family when he was 13. His father stayed in Long Island, working in a restaurant and supporting his family by sending monthly money orders.

Lardas crafts his bittersweet and sometimes painful youthful memories and impressions of the rugged Aegean island of Ikaria into beautiful poems and engrossing short stories. Some of the stories are true while others are a product of his imagination. All of them are deeply grounded in the real-life superstitions, beliefs and traditions of rural Ikarian life.

In a riveting story entitled “The Fortune Teller,” we meet an old fortune-teller who goes house to house, village to village, predicting fortune by dropping molten lead into a bucket of water and studying the form it takes. The narrator recounts the reaction of his mother to the fortune-teller’s prediction of his father’s death: “To this date, almost sixty years ago, I can still see the gesture of my mother’s hand to her throat, and I can still hear the gasp of fear and the hollow moan from deep inside her.”

Also, we learn about the “Honeferion” (depository for the bones of the deceased after they are interred from the cemetery.) The narrator relates Angelo’s feelings as he wakes in the morning.

“He felt the flushing warmth of love, and although he recalled nothing of the night, the nagging perception that something very important had occurred filled him with delight. He knew that he loved Mamoushka as completely as was ever possible. A great joy was in his heart.”

Lardas’ family in Greece in 1932 or 1933.
Top row, Nicholas, age 8. Bottom row from left to right: Annabelle, age 10; Elizabeth, age 4; Zacharias, age 2.

Program Highlights
• Enriched curriculum focused on meeting and exceeding THE STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS in all curriculum disciplines
• Daily class of Greek language, history, art, literature/mythology
• Reduced class size
• Theater workshops/internships
• Partnerships with the Greek government
• Educational field trips
• Foreign travel

The National Herald, December 2, 2006
The narrator recalls having shunned a fellow classmate, the mean teacher’s son, after he snitched to his father about their feasting on fermented mash:

“With taunting words at recess time we lacerated him into a cowed silence. We turned from him undisguised rejection whenever he approached us. We ignored the pain and pleading evident in his bulging eyes.

“Thereafter, we would see Yiani at a distance, following us wherever we went. And that distance increased with the passage of the day, for we were adamant in our rejection of him and made no effort to forgive him. One day he stopped following us.

“I sit here now, recalling with such tremendous sadness and shame my own inhumanity. Perhaps if I had not played such an enormously dominant influence, he might have been alive today, raising his own family, enjoying his own grandchildren. Perhaps we might have grown together through the years, and might even be sitting at some coffee house today, drinking an ouzo together.”

Nicholas Lardas in his Ann Arbor, Michigan office with photographs of friends and family from America, Athens and Ikaria.

Lardas’ younger brother, Zacharias Lardis, a talented artist based in Beacon Falls, Connecticut, incorporates his collection of artworks about Ikarus in the book. The art, done in various media, is based on the tragic mythical figure, Ikarus, who flew too close to the sun with wings of wax and feather. The sun’s rays melted the wax, causing the wings to fall apart, sending him toppling into the Aegean Sea and forming the Island of Ikaria. In explaining his art Lardis says, “The island has a mysterious aspect about it. I was there as a child. A lot of my work deals with the subconscious aspect of people and places. (My work) is the feeling of Ikaria when I am there.”

Lardis started doing his art on Ikarus after having a strong vivid dream about the island. He explains, “The dream was very surreal. I realized that after a while that I was part of the island. It goes with my beliefs of primal feelings people have: love, hate, pain, fear and anger. When you are with people

Continued on page 18

This Christmas give a meaningful gift

A book from

“D.C. Divry’s”

A gift that will bring you closer to your roots and to your culture

To be remembered every day of the year

CALL NOW

Get now a classic D.C. Divry’s book and learn to converse in Greek, improve your vocabulary or learn how to cook like your grandmother

$14.00 $12.50 $12.50 $25.00

$23.95 $6.50

- Shipping and handling additional -

Look for these and other D.C. Divry’s Books at your local book stores and Greek shops

HOMERIC GREETING CARDS & IMPORTS
289 New Main Street, Yonkers, NY 10701
Tel.: (914) 968-7551 • (914) 968-0220
Fax: (914) 968-7552

THE PERFECT SMILE
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO COSMETIC DENTISTRY
From Tooth Whitening and Reaching to Veneers and Implants

For information on cosmetic dental options and implant tooth replacement, read “THE PERFECT SMILE” http://dentsplyfc.com/Recommended_Reading/Recommended_Reading.shtml published by the Hatherleigh Press

You can review the book by going to www.healthylivingbooks.com!
Type “doundoulakis” in the author box!
Why is the West Sacrificing Cyprus on the Turkish Altar?

By E. G. Vallianatos
Special to The National Herald

The books under review, “War and Cultural Heritage” and “An International Relations Debacle,” examine how Turkey takes advantage of the West to continue its plunder and domination of Cyprus. These books tell a story of tragedy in Cyprus, itself a symptom of the declining state of Western civilization.

On May 16, 2006, I heard Michael Jansen lecture on the Turkish plunder of Cypriot antiquities. The objective of the lecture, which took place on Capitol Hill, was to enlighten the indifferent American political class to the destructive consequences of being in bed with Turkey, an enemy of the Greeks and Western civilization.

Jansen, an experienced American reporter writing for the Irish Times, did not pretend she was lecturing us on an issue that had a beginning and an end, much less an easy solution. The Embassy of Cyprus sponsored Jansen, who had just published a report on the fate of the Cypriot Greek culture in northern Cyprus since 1974, the year the Turks invaded and captured a third of Cyprus.

“War and Cultural Heritage: Cyprus after the 1974 Turkish Invasion” presents a scholarly and personal examination of the brutal plunder of Cyprus in our time, a war against the Greek culture and people of Cyprus. Jansen speaks of the “looting and destruction” of the cultural heritage of Cyprus. It is that – and much more.

Her honesty impresses me. The destruction of the monuments of culture in northern Cyprus made a difference in her life. Her whole being got involved in her work of documenting and denouncing that destruction. That drive to bring us the truth, as well as her outstanding writing ability, make the book interesting and memorable.

Tomb robbing is probably the second oldest profession. Humans express their hatred against their enemies with the looting and destruction of whatever is left after the annihilation or slavery of those enemies.

Once the Turks were through with their bloody 1974 invasion and capture of northern Cyprus, looters, smugglers, thieves and the “international art mafia” started pilfering the 12-millennia-old Greek cultural heritage of Cyprus. Stolen works of art found themselves in homes in Munich and Berlin in Germany and the art markets of London, ending in American and European private collections.

According to Jansen, the agents of that cultural genocide include Turks, above all, as well as Greek Cypriots and thieves and merchants from the top museums of Europe and America, including U.N. officials. For example, in 1979, one of the thieves of Cypriot antiquities was the Austrian-born prince Alfred zur Lippe-Weidenfeld, a friend of the U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim and representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Cyprus. Officers of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also suppressed critical reports of the Turkish plunder.

Jansen interviewed some of those thieves so her story, at times, reads like a mystery novel: how gangsters plan and execute a crime. Most of what she reports zeros in on the Turks’ plunder of churches, cutting out the extraordinarily beautiful and, sometimes, ancient frescoes from the walls of the destroyed churches, and the trade in the stolen icons. She also recounts how the Church of Cyprus is using legal challenges and money in (1) discouraging the trade in the art from churches under Turk-
ish occupation; and (2) buying back the stolen treasures from northern Cyprus.

Jansen also says that the Turks are causing inestimable damage to the pre-Christian history of the 12-millennia-old island of Cyprus. There are illegal digs and the perpetual robbery of tombs and ancient monuments, which not only disrupts Cyprus' extremely ancient civilization but also defiles Western culture.

As long as Greece remains impotent, incapable or unwilling to throw Turkey out of Cyprus, and as long as the international “community” and, especially, Western Europe and America tolerate the violent and criminal occupation of northern Cyprus by Turkey, the looting and destruction of Cyprus' patrimony will continue.

The best artifacts of the Turks' plunder of Cyprus end up in Western private collections and museums. Jansen says that Britain is “the hub of the European trade in antiquities.” Without that option, without the huge sums thieves earn by robbing tombs and churches, there would be little if any systematic cultural looting of the antiquities of Cyprus. The Turks would have made many Cypriot churches, as they have already done, into stables and mosques. Or, out of revenge, they would probably wreck many of them, as they have already done, or convert them into property for their use.

In my estimation, the moving flame behind the cultural plunder of Cyprus, and all other plunder of Greek antiquities, is the envy of rich institutions and persons in the West who like to surround themselves by the ancient products of Greek culture. They know that Greek art is incomparable in beauty, the model of all Western art. And since they cannot create even Greek-like culture, much less Greek culture, they resort to robbing it from its rightful owners, the Greeks of Greece and Cyprus.

Aydin Dikmen, perhaps the most successful of the Turks in the illicit trade of Cypriot antiquities, is a petty thief compared to Luigi Palma di Cesnola, a U.S. consul in Lar- naca, Cyprus from 1865 to 1876. This American diplomat pillaged Cyprus on a grand scale. He managed to excavate and sell more than 100,000 Cypriot archaeological pieces. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York “bought” 35,000 of those stolen artifacts from di Cesnola.

Jansen's timely and thoughtful book is an introduction and a case study to this grand looting of culture. War is terrible for all living things. But war is also a great opportunity for the industrialization of cultural robbery, as was the case with the Turkish conquest of northern Cyprus. Jansen's book is a reminder of how delicate and corrupt the edifice of the West has become – allowing a Moslem country with a documented history of hatred for Greek and Western civilization to continue to provoke and destroy the essence of what brought Greek and Western civilization into being.

More evidence of this corruption comes from Claire Palley's book, "An International Relations Debacle." On the surface this book is about the efforts of a small but powerful group of U.N. experts (Secretariat) working for Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to find a solution to the Cyprus problem. The author, Claire Palley, a British lawyer and legal scholar, advised the president of Cyprus for 25 years. Her report is not a typical bureaucratic or diplomatic account. It is rather a personal, pro-Cyprus story based on intimate knowledge and understanding of the main actors and events in the recent tragic history of Cyprus, especially the role the Secretariat played from 1999 to 2004 in its advocacy of a pro-Turkish policy in order to put “a Cyprus set-

Continued on page 14
Greek Jews on the Battlefields of World War II

By Dan Georgakas
Special to The National Herald

During World War II, Greece mounted the largest per capita resistance to the Nazis of any nation in Europe, delivered the first battlefield defeat to a fascist army, and forced Hitler to divert so many troops to Greece that he had to delay, perhaps fatally, his invasion of Russia. Despite these realities, the loss rate of Greek Jews was nearly 90%, among the highest in Europe. Some Holocaust commentators have speculated that the Greek Christians must have abetted the Nazis in their attempted genocide of the Jews or at least remained inactive. Other authors have opined that the Jews were unwilling to take up arms to defend themselves. Steve Bowman’s new book tells an entirely different story. Many Greek Jews took up arms and the Greek Resistance welcomed them.

Steven Bowman, Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati, is well known in academic circles for his "The Jews of Byzantium: 1204-1453," which presented all the existing Byzantine documents relating to Jews. Bowman has taken the same care with documentation in his writing on the Holocaust. Not content with recounting anecdotal tales, he has added his own original research to already existing data to give a detailed accounting of all the forms of resistance undertaken by Greek Jews. He includes detailed biographies of particular Jewish resisters, and his final 30 pages contain the names of 650 individual fighters, often with their city of origin and their military unit. Bowman is generous in acknowledging his sources, most notably a landmark article by Joseph Matsas, "The Participation of the Greek Jews in the National Resistance," which appeared in the Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora (1991).

Bowman divides the Jewish resistance into three major categories: battlefields, espionage and combat in other nations. His most detailed and longest chapters involve Jews who participated in military units. Other chapters identify Greek Jews who worked as spies and saboteurs in Occupied areas. A final section chronicles Greek Jews who rebelled even after being captured by the Nazis, most notably in Poland.

Bowman concentrates on what he specifies in his title and does not cover the broader topic of all the forms of aid offered to Greek Jews by their fellow Greeks. Consequently he does not dwell on the well-known heroism of Archbishop Damaskinos and the Greek Orthodox Church in general. Nor does he write at length about others who aided Jews, such as Police Chief Everet in Athens. Similarly, he does not spend much time discussing Greek collaborators. His focus is on the numerous forms of resistance directly taken by Jews themselves, and he tells that story magnificently.

ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Bowman begins by reminding readers that 13,000 Jews fought in the Greek army on the Albanian front. Among the national heroes of that victorious campaign was...
Colonel Mordechai Frizis, a career officer who was killed leading non-Jewish troops in a successful counter-attack that turned the Italian flank. Even after the Greek army was decommissioned, numerous Jews continued to fight in the remnants of the British Expeditionary Force and in scattered units of the Serbian and Greek armies that would not surrender. In the Battle of Crete, Jewish dockworkers were involved in the crucial provisioning of the resistance forces and later the successful evacuation; and Jews from Palestine, units in the British force, fought alongside Greeks.

When “andarics” bands began to form in late 1941, Jews were in their ranks. At that time, Jews could still slip out of most cities relatively easily. Michael Matsas of Yannina has told such a tale in his brilliant, “The Illusion of Safety,” which is frequently cited by Bowman. The largest Jewish community in Greece, by far, however, was the 50,000 Jews in Thessaloniki.

The largest Jewish community in Greece was the 50,000 Jews in Thessaloniki.

EAM-ELAS, by far the largest of the Resistance formations, welcomed Jews, usually placing them within its regular ranks rather than creating all-Jewish units. Not content to make it a crime to turn in Jews, EAM-ELAS announced that in territories it controlled it also was a criminal offense to not assist Jews. EAM-ELAS would eventually have the largest numbers of Jews of any of the Resistance groups and Jews occasionally commanded EAM-ELAS units.

EDES, the largest of the royalist resistance organizations, had fewer Jewish fighters than its rival, but a number of these Jews were closely associated with Col. Alexis Zervas, the EDDES leader. David Nahmias, for example, was one of Zervas’ personal guards. Dr. Errikos Levi, a personal friend of Zervas, gave up refuge in the mountains, when Zervas convinced him he would be more valuable as a German-speaking spy in the medical corps. Working with Major Makrinioti of the Greek police, Levi undertook that risky assignment and supplied vital information to EDEN and British intelligence.

What has always puzzled outsiders not familiar with the specific history of the Holocaust in Greece is why more Jews did not escape to the already liberated zones. Part of that tragedy turns on the actions of Zvi Koretz, the Chief Rabbi of Thessaloniki.

Continued on page 15
Why is the West Sacrificing Cyprus on the Turkish Altar?

Continued from page 11

The Secretariat manufactured this pro-Turkish policy with its briefings and reports, which did two things. They misled the international community and, second, they put the tiny Republic of Cyprus under tremendous pressure to self-destruct by accepting as inevitable and legitimate the aggression of Turkey. Cyprus, of course, refused to self-destruct.

The consequences of the Secretariat's taking sides, what Palley describes as "an unhappy episode in international relations," are bad for the reputation of the United Nations and for future U.N. efforts to be of help to Cyprus or in resolving political crises in other countries. The Greek Cypriots, who had faith in the U.N. for four decades, have been particularly disheartened with the bias of the Secretariat. That's why On April 24, 2004 the Greek Cypriots rejected Annan V, the fifth version of the Secretariat's Plan for a "United Cyprus Republic." On June 7, 2004, the president of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, complained to Kofi Annan that the Secretariat's Plan provided immediate benefits to the Turkish Cypriots but leaves the Greek Cypriots at the mercy of Turkey, a country not friendly to them. Papadopoulos was particularly bitter because of the failure of the U.N. Plan to guarantee that Cypriot Greeks could recover their property and land in northern Cyprus and for the years it would take for the Turkish army to reduce its size under the agreement.

Cypriot Greeks also have been concerned with Turkey's insistence it has a unilateral right to send its armies to Cyprus, claiming, falsely, that Article IV of the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee is the source for its aggressive attitude. So Papadopoulos told Kofi Annan it would be imprudent for the Greek Cypriots to rely on Turkey's good will. The Greeks were convinced the U.N. proposed settlement was "blatantly unjust, uncertain of application and full of grave risks for the future."

Not only did U.N. officials manipulate international opinion in favor of the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, wishing to erase Turkey's bloody invasion and occupation of northern Cyprus, but threatened the Greek Cypriots with dire consequences precisely because they had exercised their democratic right in rejecting the biased U.N. Plan. The Secretariat's revenge found expression in its May 28, 2004 report: that the Turks' pseudo-state in the conquered territory, the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, should be given all the support and attributes of an independent country, thus legitimizing Turkey's fruits of aggression. This report, of course, remains silent about the 119,000 illegal Turkish settlers, the 35,000 troops Turkey maintains in northern Cyprus or that Turkey appropriated 36.4 percent of Cyprus.

Such behavior, well documented in Palley's outstanding, timely, and lavishly illustrated book, undermines international relations, weakening the machinery of conflict resolution, while sowing seeds for further trouble. And, of course, the dishonest policies of the Secretariat solidify the aggression of the Turks, convincing them that, in fact, might is right, a barbarous concept of long standing.

The British and U.S. governments, meanwhile, worked behind the Secretariat, shaping its pro-Turkish policies, thinking nothing of the horrific injustice of the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, while boosting Turkey's ominous ambitions.

These policies continued a long-standing anti-Greek Cypriot tradition. England brought Turkey to Cyprus in 1955 to become the wrecking crew among the Cypriot Greeks. England simply had to have its pound of flesh because the Cypriot Greeks resisted British colonialism and, later, fought England for their freedom. Fifty years later, England continued with its subversion of Cyprus by activating Turkey. The United States did the

Continued on page 19
Greek Jews on the Battlefields of World War II

Continued from page 13

saloniki. The German-educated Korzetz stupidly believed the German assurances that the Greek Jews were just going to be resettled in Germany. He was told that as long as Jews remained cooperative, no one would be harmed. The Nazis then demanded that Korzetz show his good faith by providing the names and addresses of all the Jewish families in Thessaloniki. With that information in hand, monitoring the community became a simple matter.

One of the first acts of the Nazis was to examine family lists to determine if anyone of military age was missing. When this was the case, they assumed such males (and sometimes females) must be in the mountains. The Nazis indicated this meant that the community was not being cooperative. The response of the Jewish leadership was to ask those who had gone into the mountains to return! Many, in fact, did so, and many who would have left remained in the city, opting to share the fate of their families. When Jews began to be rounded up and brutalized it was no longer easy to escape. Jewish communities in cities such as Yannina that followed the Thessaloniki pathway suffered the same horrific losses. Rabbis in cities such as Athens and Volos were not deceived by German lies, and the loss rates in those cities were quite low. Bowman discusses how Jews already in the Resistance, often working closely with Orthodox clergy, were crucial in persuading those rabbis to urge their congregations to go into hiding. The total number of Jews in those cities, unfortunately, was much lower than the Jewish population in Thessaloniki.

Bowman’s account is especially strong in detailing individual acts of courage and the comradeship felt by all the patriots. He offers a poignant account of the only Jews who remained in Athens. The German-educated Korzetz early in the war and Sam Modiano did particularly valuable espionage in concert with British intelligence. The creation of networks to smuggle Jews out of Greece by sea had the added value of being a means of bringing Allied officers and equipment into Greece. Much of this activity involved Jewish Zionist organizational units operating out of Turkey.

WARSAW AND AUSCHWITZ

Bowman includes tales of Jews who escaped the Nazis during roundups or who killed Nazis at the camps rather than simply succumbing. An intriguing story involves Jewish Greeks used to do menial labor in Poland. When the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto staged an armed revolt, a number of the Greeks broke free from their Nazi guards and joined the insurrection. Among those who fought were officers and enlisted men who had served in Albania in 1940. These Greeks frequently participated in the commando-style assaults on the German positions. Two prominent fighters were Albert and Dario Levi of Thessaloniki. They used colored cloth to make a Greek flag that served as the banner for their unit.

Perhaps the most amazing resistance occurred in the death camps themselves. Even as the Russian army was getting closer to the crematoriums, the ovens continued their murderous work day and night. A core of Jews from different nations tried to organize simultaneous uprisings at various camps with the hope of destroying the ovens and allowing for a mass escape. Unaware of this plot, Alberto Errera, a former officer in the Greek Army, acted individually. When he was sent to dump bodies in a river, he overpowered his Nazi guards and escaped. He was later captured and publicly executed, but survivors of the camp have testified that his heroism inspired many Greeks to join the plot to blow up the ovens.

Crucial to the revolt were the young men who made up the Sonderkommando. These were the units assigned to clearing the ovens of bones and ashes. Anyone so assigned was doomed as the Nazis periodically killed them to eliminate eyewitnesses to their crimes. When 400 Greek Jews were selected by the Nazis at the Auschwitz complex for the task, 100 simply refused, preferring to be killed. The bulk of those who did go into the Sonderkommando were committed to the planned revolt.

The broader plot eventually fell apart, but the Greeks at Auschwitz went forward with the plan. They were able to wrest weapons from the some of the guards and managed to blow up two of the ovens. Nazi reinforcements came swiftly and in great number. As they battled to the death, the doomed Greek Jews sang the Greek National Anthem. Over 400 Greek Jews would be executed for their part in the rebellion. Another 30 managed to escape from the camp proper, but were later recaptured and executed.

The dominant image of Greek Jews during World War II has always been that of passive victims, often misled by politically naïve rabbis. Greek Jews usually are seen as somehow separate from the Greek nation. Steve Bowman has written a powerful corrective to such depictions.

He shows that from the time of the Albanian campaign through every stage of the Resistance, Greek Jews were part of the national effort to defeat the Nazis and that Greek Jews were welcomed into the ranks of the Resistance. Today, too few Greeks in the homeland or the diaspora are aware that Greek Jews not only fought valiantly for Greece on the home front, but that they raised the Greek flag during the Warsaw Uprising and sang the Greek National Anthem as they fought to the death at Auschwitz. Greek heroes one and all.

Dan Georgakas is a Fellow of the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at Queens College and the author of, “My Detroit: Growing Up Greek and American in Motor City.”
Economou Rediscovers Amorous Ancients in “Acts of Love”
Marvelous Poems Celebrate Love & Physical Passion in Contemporary Idiom

By Penelope Karageorge
Special to The National Herald

Erotic. Playful. Yearning. Heartfelt. These are just a few of the words that apply to eminent scholar and poet George Economou's brilliant translation of the ancient Greek poets and their amatory verse, "Acts of Love, Ancient Greek Poetry from Aphrodite's Garden," published by Modern Library. In this small, blue volume, 255 poems topped by Eros' arrow, Dr. Economou brings ancient poetry out of the dusty literary archives and into the 21st century.

For today's Greeks, always hungry to know more about the life experience of their illustrious forbears, these impassioned poems arrive like a huge present. The poets hold forth on the entire spectrum of love and desire, homoerotic and heterosexual, from lusty youth to poignant old age.

Economou selected the poems from "The Greek Anthology," a compilation of more than 4,000 short poems from Ancient Greece through the Byzantine era and translated them with wit, brio and sexual candor.

"While there have been fine translations of some of these amatory epigrams, they have also been subjected to a series of translation practices that have distorted or suppressed an important aspect of their linguistic and aesthetic integrity," Economou writes in the Translators Preface. "Too often, readers have encountered these poems in English versions that have Latinized or sanitized their discourse in Greek through euphemism, circumlocution, or downright bowdlerization."

"I wanted to be true to the poetry and the language," Economou told The National Herald. "Translating a poem is the ultimate form of studying a poem. And so I learned a lot about the poetry, and at the same time I know there's an awful lot more to know about the ancient Greeks."

Economou was led into "Acts of Love," he says, by the poet Philodemos. "I discovered Philodemos in 'The Greek Anthology' on my own. I was reading a book by Havelock Ellis about Catullus, and he was talking about this Greek poet who influenced Catullus. So I followed up on it. And then I found 29 poems of Philodemos, and I translated those. They were published by Walter Hammond."

Economou was led into "Acts of Love," he says, by the poet Philodemos. "I discovered Philodemos in 'The Greek Anthology' on my own. I was reading a book by Havelock Ellis about Catullus, and he was talking about this Greek poet who influenced Catullus. So I followed up on it. And then I found 29 poems of Philodemos, and I translated those. They were published by Walter Hammond."

When Modern Library Editor Will Murphy approached Economou about doing a book and asked him to suggest a topic, Economou said: "We need a full book of amatory ancient Greek poetry." The contract was inked, and two summers ago Economou, a Philadelphia resident, set to work on the translations in his summer home on Cape Cod.

"I wish I could say I had done the translations on a Greek island, but I did it in Wellfleet, the perfect place to work. I was getting up early in the morning – 6:30 or 7 – and coming up to my study. I'd do four or five poems a day. Sometimes a couple a day. I worked on the poems every day, except when we had company."

"I had such a good time, and when I was done, finally, I felt bereft," Economou says, his voice tinged with more than a touch of nostalgia. "It's like I had a wonderful love affair with all the poets and all the people and their poems. The subject was just so wonderful. People talk about the post-partum after finishing a book but it was different from that. I had an affiliation with these people. And a 'philiation' as well. Because they were Greek, and I'm Greek, and I just felt that – it's gone. It's over with."

He came to like particular poets.
“ acts of Love” Poetry Selections

From the Garland of Philippos of Thessalonika

p. 47
Here’s the Laconian river Eurotas,
Leda with nothing on, Zeus hidden in the swan.
Loves, why do you test me so? Me a bird?
If Zeus is a swan, then I’m a white duck.
Antipilos (first century A.D.)

From the Garland of Philippos of Thessalonika

p. 61
Thirty-seven years have already turned,
pages torn out of my life’s work;
already my hair’s sprouting whites,
messengers, Xanthippe, of wisdom’s age.
But the lyricism of carousal – I
still care for, and a hungry fire burns in my heart.
So write me an ending with a flourish, Muses,
to my madness with this very girl.
Philodemus (ca. 110-30 B.C.)

A Dark, Brooding But Beautiful Book about Childhood Memories of Ikaria

Continued from page 9

People can feel that about them or the place. Ikaria has a lot of shadows, metaphysically speaking, and they hide mysteries that emanate from the island ... The island was not liberated from the Turks until the 1920s. I heard as a child stories told by relatives of terrible bloody battles between the Turks and Greeks.”

Although Lardis was born in East Chicago, Indiana, he lived on Ikaria during his formative years, from age one to five. He explains his early interest in drawing. “When I started school I could not speak English, so I drew pictures. I was expressing myself visually instead of with words.”

Lardis expresses his admiration for his brother in his drawing, which appears on the cover of the book. “It is of Nick, my brother, who always had flights of imagination. Subconsciously he is like the Ikarus in my drawings. He dares to soar with his imagination and his insight. I did that drawing of him for his birthday in 1978. The title is ‘You Saved My Life.’ He saved my life by being there for me. He would carry me up the mountainside or would come to find me in an olive tree when everyone was looking for me. He was like my surrogate father. He put me on some good paths. He is one of the most important persons in my life.” It is heartwarming to experience the love and creative collaboration between the brothers Nicholas and Zacharias. They have brought us an exception book.

NICHOLAS LARDAS, AUTHOR

After serving for three and a half years in the U.S. Army during World War II, Nicholas Lardas returned home confused and angry. Man’s inhumanity haunted him for many years.

He drifted to Manhattan where he worked in his father’s Bar and Grill on Fourth Avenue. On his off hours he sat in subways, cars observing the riders and making up vignettes about them. Other times he would go to the Bowery and listen to the sagas of the drunkards and the derelicts.

When the Bar & Grill closed, he moved to Detroit, Michigan with his father and uncle. His father and uncle bought a restaurant which they ran the Village in memory of Greenwich Village. The night shift at the restaurant provided Nicholas with a first class seat to the world of Runyon-like characters.

Dissatisfied with restaurant work, Lardas enrolled at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where he studied architecture and design. In his sophomore year he married Betty Perros. They raised three children.

Lardis became a registered architect and opened his own firm in 1971. After his retirement at the age of 65, he felt a void. With the urging of his wife Betty, he returned to school to develop his dormant writing abilities. He took courses in writing and literature where he was the star student amongst the college youth. His writings include stories of the Village Restaurant, the war years, poems and a collection of stories dealing with the struggles humans endure, their failings and triumphs.

He traveled to Ikaria in 1992, seeking to understand vague feelings of unfinished connections from his early formative years in Greece. On his return home he wrote “Ikaria Remembered.”

ZACHARIAS LARDIS, ARTIST

Zacharias Lardis graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Information Design with a minor in Fine Arts. After working as an advertising art director in Manhattan, he traveled in Europe with his wife, Jill, and settled in Amsterdam, Holland for five years. He successfully developed an art department for a new office for the advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson Company (JWT). During their stay in Holland, Lardis and his wife produced four musical comedies and a concert with Eartha Kitt. He also had the opportunity to return for a visit to his Ikaria, where he had lived for four years as a young child. When he returned to New York, he art directed many national accounts for JWT. He moved to Connecticut where he started his own agency and remarried. He and his wife Shirley raised four children.

He continued his art studies at The School of Visual Arts in New York, The University of Hartford and Wesleyan University in Middletown. Lardis’ art started to solidify as he focused on the human face. Intrigued with the dark and mysterious side of his subjects, he sought to capture in his portrayals an aspect of the primal feelings people were afraid to acknowledge or express in their conscious world. He has had numerous exhibitions and awards as well as solo shows in New York, Connecticut, Indiana and Michigan.

Impacted by the catastrophic event on September 11th, 2001, Lardis sought a visual symbol for his artistic expression. He discovered that the common 55-gallon oil drum was a powerful metaphor for global issues involving the environment, the energy crisis and the Middle East war. He started a non-profit art organization called Oil Drum Art and explored the transformation of oil drums into aesthetic and geopolitical art statements. He has curated ten Oil Drum Art Exhibitions.

Two years ago Jack initiated the collaboration with his brother that resulted in the book, “Ikaria Remembered,” a book well worth reading.

To order “Ikaria Remembered” send $11.95 plus $3.00 for shipping to Lardis Fine Arts, P.O. Box 73, Beacon Falls, CT 06403.

Elaine Thomopoulos, who has a doctorate in psychology, is a freelance writer and independent scholar. She edited and contributed to the book, “Greek-American Pioneer Women of Illinois” and is currently project director and curator of the exhibit, Greeks of Berrien County, Michigan. She can be reached at thomop@msn.com.
Why is the West Sacrificing Cyprus on the Turkish Altar?

Continued from page 14

same thing. America is pathologically connected to Turkey through the cold war and the military alliance of NATO. This included America’s approval of Turkey’s 1974 invasion of Cyprus. America has also had the delusion Turkish Islam is amenable to democracy and Western values. The Moslem attack of September 11, 2001 against America affected Cyprus even more because now the United States is fighting a war against Iraq, wanting Turkey on its side; sacrificing Greek Cyprus is small potatoes. This is the picture emerging from Palley’s pioneering study, shedding light on the suffering of the Cypriot people. The corrupt politics of England and America corrupt the U.N. and prop Turkish aggression, diminishing hope for a just settlement of the grievances between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus. It is this international lawlessness that allows, nay encourages, plunder of northern Cyprus.

Economou Rediscovers Amorous Ancients in “Acts of Love”

Continued from page 17

today in a large, open study space in their Wellfleet home. “We had the house built for us in ’74, and nobody had ever lived in this house before, and so that’s special,” Economou says. The couple reads each others work, and occasionally they give poetry readings together. They went to Greece together in 1977, and again in 2000. “Rochelle loved it, and my relatives loved her. I have a lot of Greek cousins there. I would like to go again.”

For Economou, his first trip to Greece in 1957 after earning his master’s degree proved significant. On that trip, he not only discovered his Greek family, including a Zorba-like uncle, but got to know the poets Odysseus Elytis and Nikos Gatsos.

“They were pals,” Economou recalls. “They were wonderful. They were older. I saw them numerous times. I would go to the cafenio where they met every afternoon for coffee. They talked about poetry, and gossiped a little, but they wanted to talk mostly about literature, and I felt at times they were testing me. For instance, they wanted to talk about James Joyce.”

When Elytis came to New York City on a State Department visit, Economou played host, showing the famous Greek writer around New York. He and wife Rochelle then invited Elytis to their apartment for a real American dinner: T-bone steaks, a large Greek salad, and corn on the cob. Elytis dined the corn. “He said that in Greece, we feed corn to pigs. But we said, ‘Here we love corn. This is not horse corn.’ But he ate the steak and salad with relish, and drank the wine. He was a very elegant man, and gave me books and signed them.”

Economou has new projects underway, including a Cavafy translation, soon to be published, and a poetry book about “an invented ancient Greek poet.” Economou never took a creative writing course and questions the efficacy of their proliferation.

“I used to tell my students, you will not become a creative writer by taking this workshop,” he says. “So now I catch myself saying, look at all these assembly line poets -- you know you contributed to that. Writing has become kind of a business, and an industry. Wherever you look, there are ads for prizes, ads for summer workshops, and all those are money-making things. They have guest faculty. They have people come in for a day or two. People pay good money, and then they sit around and have someone else look at their poems. Some of the faculty doesn’t even look at the poems. They go in and talk about their own work. But who am I to criticize?”

Asked “Do you think poetry’s become too much of a hobby?” he offered his trenchant view on the topic.

“When you’re a writer, you meet people. If people ask what you do, and you say ‘I’m a poet,’ the response is usually something like ‘My daughter won a prize for poetry in the first grade.’ Of course, poetry is made of words, which is the most common coin of the realm. But right away people say ‘I do poetry, too,’ a rather different response than if one announced, ‘I’m a brain surgeon.’ ”

A Journey of Transformation in Epirus

By Penelope M. Petropoul
Special to The National Herald

Literature is a gift and Eleni Gage has given us one that is utterly enchanting in her first book, “North of Ithaka: A Journey Home Through a Family’s Extraordinary Past.” The title of the paperback is “North of Ithaka: A Granddaughter Returns to Greece and Discovers Her Roots.” Set in the picturesque, remote mountain village of Lia, in northwestern Greece, this story chronicles the adventures of Gage, a young Greek American woman who takes a hiatus from her fast-paced life in New York to move to Lia for a year and rebuild her family’s ancestral home.

This ancestral home, which had belonged to Gage’s grandmother and namesake, Eleni Gatzoyiannis, was in ruins when young Gage arrived in Greece. The decline of this once beautiful home began when Communist guerillas invaded the village after the defeat of the Axis powers from Greece and took the home as their headquarters. They held trials in the main rooms and converted the basement into a prison in which 31 villagers, including Gatzoyiannis, were tortured and imprisoned. After a series of tragic incidents in which some villagers betrayed Gatzoyiannis and testified that she had planned the escape from the village of her young son Nick (Gage’s father) and his sister, Gatzoyiannis was arrested, and as so many others, brutally executed. Gage’s father details this tragic story in his book, “Eleni.”

Despite her aunt’s stern warnings, Gage follows the longing of her heart to create a new, positive memory in their ancient village. She gives up her comfortable life in New York to move to Lia in 2002. Through a series of humorous encounters, she hires an eccentric architect from Athens as well as builders from neighboring Albania, and embarks on a journey to rebuild the home, and to rebuild the trust of the villagers with her and their relationship to the place they love. In doing so, she helps to heal her family’s and the village’s scars from the terrible tragedy and recreates the family home as a place of peace and inspiration.

“Just as Ithaka provided a psychological home for Odyssey even though he spent most of his adult-hood away from it,” she writes, “so Lia loomed in my mind: as a home for me from long ago that would require much effort to be reached.” This gutsy act of pleasure to read about—the book is sprinkled with fascinating bits of history and culture, colorful characters, and an honest, playful writing style that evokes a profound sense of place. The reader not only learns about the war that tore the region apart after World War II, and the political differences that led to Gatzoyiannis’ tragic death, but also learns about how the region has related to Alba-nia historically and culturally, and about all kinds of local customs. From Lenten traditions, to views of the afterlife, and local politics, the reader gets a distinct flavor for life and history in this remote area of Greece.

For example, as the local election heats up and consumes daily conversation throughout the village (There are six candidates for the same office in a town of 130 people), Gage writes, “Politics is still the major divisive factor in so-ciety. Modern Greek life has always been overshadowed by history, not just the legends of ancient Greece but the still-fresh scars acquired by the growing Greek state in the twentieth century. Even today, some people affiliate themselves with their family’s political party with a messiah-grade devotion.”

As Gage observed early on in her stay, “Greece is not for spectators. It’s as if the entire nation has been raised to believe that in the University of Life, participation counts for 90 percent, not grades.” This active involvement of Greeks in life was illustrated to her in numerous ways, most markedly in the celebration of Easter. Religion is a major part of people’s lives in Lia, and Gage participated in each service and custom. She writes about them in vivid detail and makes the reader feel as if he/she is there witnessing each service with her: “My favorite celebration occurred at the ‘panegyric’ in Agia Triada, Antonis Makos, the church council president, picked up the icon and took the lead, followed by Father Prokopi wielding his censer, Spiro the cantor, Sofia the lady cantor, and several boys who had come for vacation with their families and been given the important task of carrying the gold standards used in Church parades. We proceeded toward the church of Agia Paraskevi, in front of men drinking coffee or moonshine at the ‘kafenion’ (café) who rose to cross themselves as we passed by singing hymns devoted to particular saints.”

In each new setting and language, Gage transforms even the simplest daily activities of village life into events teeming with excitement. Her visit to the “kafenion” one day is one such example. As she had her coffee, an argument erupted about who makes better sausage, Greeks or Germans. “In one corner, representing Germany, was a Liotan lady who had married a German, settled in Munich, and was in Lia on vacation. In the other corner was everyone else, loudly protesting on behalf of the Greeks and particularly the Ianniys sausage dynasty, whose patriarch had been born in Lia.” As she describes her frequent conversations with German-speaking villagers from Dina and Vangelis, the reader feels as if he/she is with her, eating pita in the neighbors’ yard, and laughing about the events of the day. “That night, over dinner at Dina’s, I told everyone about the Great Sausage Debate, the newcomers at the ‘kafenion,’ and how Iimagined they...
all were by culinary chauvinism.”

Her colorful descriptions of the story’s characters bring them to life. In response to Gage’s announcement that she would return to Lia to rebuild the family home, her chorus of aunts in America replied, “What? You crazy? ... You gonna get killed by Albanians and eaten by wolves!” And in reply to Gage’s question of how long it would take to rebuild the house, George Zervas, the Greek architect, replied, “Time is just a construct. I’ve been able to break the boundaries of time, like scientists are always trying to do. It’s easy – just don’t wear a watch! He added that he also didn’t believe in cell phones, computers, or answering machines – anything that allowed the outside world to intrude on his thoughts.”

Gage’s new neighbors in Lia are described with similar panache. As Gage is sitting on her terrace drinking tea, she hears a piercing voice call, “Eleni!” It’s her neighbor Dina, inviting her over for breakfast. “Guess what I have for you today?” Dina asks once Gage is at her kitchen table. “It’s milk, fresh from the goat!” and Dina places a full eight-ounce glass of creamy liquid in front of Gage, saying, “I told Iphigenia, the shepherdess, that you’ve never had fresh goat’s milk and she gave me this for you – it’s so healthy!”

Lively descriptions like this abound throughout the book and make the reader feel as though he/she is vicariously traveling to Lia with every word.

Whether by moving from a city of 8 million to a village of 130 (with the median age of 70), transitioning from working as a magazine beauty editor to overseeing the construction of a historic house or dancing at a gypsy wedding, Gage has transcended borders of time, age, culture and lifestyle in a way many people dream about. In so doing, she learned about her past and about herself, transformed superstitious fear into a feeling of being blessed and open to miracles, and gave readers a lens through which to view an area of Greece often overlooked by visitors and writers. As she notes in referring to herself and her Tho Angelo who had just returned to his childhood home in Albania, “The places our families came from were an inextricable part of our identity.” This reader ventures to say that this is true for all of us. And in reading this book, one might just be inspired to learn about one’s own family history.

In this lovely memoir and travelogue, Gage honors the memory of her grandmother, and creates a new memory for herself and for the reader – one which continues to provide joy even once the story has ended. This reader was left wanting the journey to continue, and is delighted to report that it may indeed. Gage has returned to life in New York, but this time not as an editor for People. She is in a Masters of Fine Arts program at Columbia University, where the muses may be inspiring her to write her next book.

Penelope Petropoul received her bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Chicago. She plans alumni programs for the University of Chicago and enjoys traveling and writing.
The following books on Greek American life and experience, in fiction and non-fiction, are all readily available. Not all of these volumes are newly released. In fact several of the books cited below are non-fiction books long available. Unfortunately, some volumes are out of print. All of these suggested readings are meant to make books that are important to Greek American self-awareness known to a wider audience.

All books cited can be effortlessly ordered from your local bookstore, the Internet or obtained from your neighborhood library via inter-library loan.

Listed alphabetically we have arranged these volumes into several categories: history/sociology, biography/memoirs, returning to Greece, growing up Greek, fiction and celebrity biography.

I. HISTORY/SOCIETY

A. EARLY GREEK IMMIGRATION


Christophorus Castanis was one of some 40 Greek refugees and orphans brought to the United States during the Greek War of Independence. The reprinted and edited edition was originally published in 1851. The book deals principally with the author’s experiences during the tragic year of 1822 when the Turks massacred over 60,000 Chians and sold another 40,000 into slavery.


This is another account by an 1821 refugee to America who was destined to become a captain in the United States Navy. George M. Colovocaroess took part in the Wilkes Expedition and is the author of a noted book on that naval adventure. Since Captain George Colovocaroess, each generation of his descendants have served in the United States Navy.


This is a stirring historical account of the New Smyrna Colony, established in eastern Florida in 1768 during Great Britain’s administration. Over half of the nearly 1,200 colonists were Greeks. Today the St. Photios Shrine in St. Augustine Florida, which was the Averoo House and location of worship for the survivors of this ill-fated colony, is now maintained by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.


A massive collection of documents related to the American response to the Greek War of Independence is included in this volume. News of the outbreak of the war ignited a world wide response called “The Greek Ecver.” The United States government documents, newspaper accounts, journal entries of selected Philhellenes and other materials are reproduced here as testimony to the immediate, overwhelming and sustained response of the American public and its government to this bid for freedom.

B. GREEK IMMIGRATION AFTER 1880


Greek American studies can be understood as the effort to relate academic research, intellectual understanding and artistic expression to the manifold and ongoing experience of Americans of Greek ancestry. A major threshold was crossed at “The Greek American Experience: A Conference on the State Scholarship and an Agenda for the Future” sponsored by the Immigration History Research Center of the University of Minnesota in May 1989. This volume presents a selection of those papers, which opened up new and important research areas in the nascent field of Greek American studies.


This long delayed publication is a major contribution to Greek American history. It covers the Age of Exploration through the Colonial Era, into the 1880 to 1920 era of mass migration. The authors have presented historical material not readily available in other volumes.


This reader consists of 12 articles on various aspects of the Greek American experience. It includes articles on early and late immigrants, first and second generation Chicago Greeks, Greek Orthodox and Greek American ethnic identity, the Greek American family, Greek American entrepreneurs, the Greeks of Asia Minor and Egypt, migration of Greek scientists, conflicts of Greeks in the diaspora, Greek Americans and the future of Greek America.


This book, a fine combination of sociological insight with historical detail, traces the Greek experience in the United States from the 1700s through the 20th century.


This college reader was assembled and used by Dr. Spyros Orphanos over a 20-year period of teaching Greek American studies. The 18 essays are divided into three broad areas of concern: history and politics, society and culture, and psychology. An amazing array of topics, events and issues are assembled and reviewed.


This is a fine summation of Helen Zee Pee Papazikolas’ half a century of research and writing on Greek immigrant life. Based on extensive study, personal interviews, historical photographs and a vast array of other documents, Papanikolas offers a convincing and graceful presentation of Greek American history and culture.


Louis Tikas was a union organizer killed by state militia at the Ludlow Massacre during the coal strike of 1913-1914 in Colorado. Papanikolas offers this unusual merger of biography and labor history as the forum for reflecting upon a whole generation of Greek immigrant workers.


This especially fine guide’s purpose is to “explain the meaning and beauty of Greek customs and foster the appreciation they deserve” and to “provide useful information on those traditions and customs as practiced in America.” Originally a most useful guide for non-Greeks marrying into the culture and faith, this book has helped those of the third and fourth generations understand their own cultural past.


This landmark book in American immigration studies is still regarded as the foremost history of Greeks in the United States.


Five essays report upon the lives, careers and accomplishments of five notable Greek American women of Illinois.

II. BIOGRAPHY/MEMOIRS


This account written by Thea Halo’s daughter, Sano, relates her gradual discovery of her mother’s complicated past as a Greek Pontic survivor of the Asia Minor 1922
the Greek American Experience

HOLocaust.


This biography interweaves the lives of two Greek Macedonian sisters, Connie and Christine, who were born in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Once Christine is diagnosed with the HIV virus, the sisters band together and try to make some sense of the nonsensical. The events in this volume span the years as they try to understand how “a working class, non-smoking, non-drinking mother of three (could) contract AIDS.”


In this biography of her father and distinguished family, Eleni Sikelianos (who is herself a noted American poet) fuses narrative, journal entries, letters and her own reminiscences to offer a loving and critical portrayal.


This much praised volume is the memoir of a daughter’s account of her Greek Jewish family’s recollections of experiences in Romania and their travels across Eastern Europe in their journey to America in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

III. RETURNING TO GREECE


Katherine Kizilos, a journalist born in Australia, reports on her return to her father Angelo’s village of Chrysambela. Kizilos’ inheritance of an olive grove, held for generations by her family, focuses all of her memories and concerns onto the question of her own identity.


This is a reprint of the highly entertaining volume recounting the author’s journey back to his family’s island villages. The grandson of two Kasiot sea captains and the son of a Kasiot shipowner, Elias K lukundis, was born in London but raised in Rye, New York. It was originally published in 1967 with the subtitle “A Journey to a Greek Island.”

IV. GROWING UP GREEK


This is a continuing story of a Greek American family made famous through the international best seller “Eleni” by Nicholas Gage.


This book gives a detailed account of community life among the Greeks of South Bend. Photographs add interest to this comprehensive volume.


Aphrodite Matsakis interweaves her family’s experiences before and after immigration with those of other Greeks within the broader community of St. Louis, Missouri. Numerous photographs help to provide an added dimension to this finely rendered fusion of stories.

V. FICTION


This massive novel offers a fictional survey of the life, loves and ambitions of the first Greek immigrant to win the Medal of Honor, George Dibboy.


This massive tome is the foremost study on Greek characters in American literature. Anyone wishing to learn about Greek American literature or how non-Greek writers in America have utilized Greek characters in fiction should first consult this one-of-a-kind study.


This is a vivid allegory of the changes undergone in the Greek American experience by one Greek-town family, from one epoch to the next.

VI. CELEBRITY BIOGRAPHY


The famed actress’s biography includes much discussion about her interaction and relationship with her Greek immigrant mother.


Internationally famed athlete, Dean Karnazes, discusses his career achievements with some very brief mention of his Greek family. According to the British publication, The Economist, Karnazes’ book is rated “the seventh biggest sports bestseller” in the world.


This collection of 16 in-depth interviews with prominent Greek Americans includes: former Prima Ballerina Helene Alexopoulos, Dr. Teni Boulikas, founder of Regulon Inc.; Peter Chrisanthopoulos, Azteca Communications; Philip Christopher, president of Audiovox Communications; Dr. Peter Diamandis, founder of the International Space University; Michael Dukakis; Demetrios Giannaros, state representative from Connecticut; Chris Giftos, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Evangeline Gouletas, co-founder of American Invesco; Dr. George Hatsopoulos, founder of Thermo Electron; Matina Souretis Horner, former president of Radcliffe College; Tom Maniatis, Professor of Molecular Biology, Harvard University; Nikolaos Robakis, Professor, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine; Alex Spanos, real estate developer and owner of the San Diego Chargers; George Stephanopoulos, ABC News Analyst and former advisor to President Clinton; and Dr. P. Roy Vagelos, former chairman of Merck Pharmaceuticals. The interviewees share their lives, their work and their feelings for their Hellenic heritage.


An infamous rock musician offers something of his life. In part the publicity release for this memoir notes: “I am Tommy Lee, born Tommy Lee Bass in Athens, Greece on October 3, 1962, and raised in a suburb of California by an American father and a Greek mother. At 17, I joined Motley Crue and we became one of the baddest-ass rock bands in history.”


Alex Spanos, self-made billionaire real estate developer and owner of the San Diego Chargers, recalls episodes from his life.

Steve Frangos, a regular contributor of The National Herald, is a freelance writer who travels throughout the country investigating and gathering historical information about the Greek American community. Readers interested in contacting him are encouraged to e-mail him at greekwrite@yahoo.com.
Come to explore the harmonious colors of the sun, the sea and the sky, the beauty of nature, the inspiring culture of the past and the present, the joy of life. Explore all your senses in Greece.