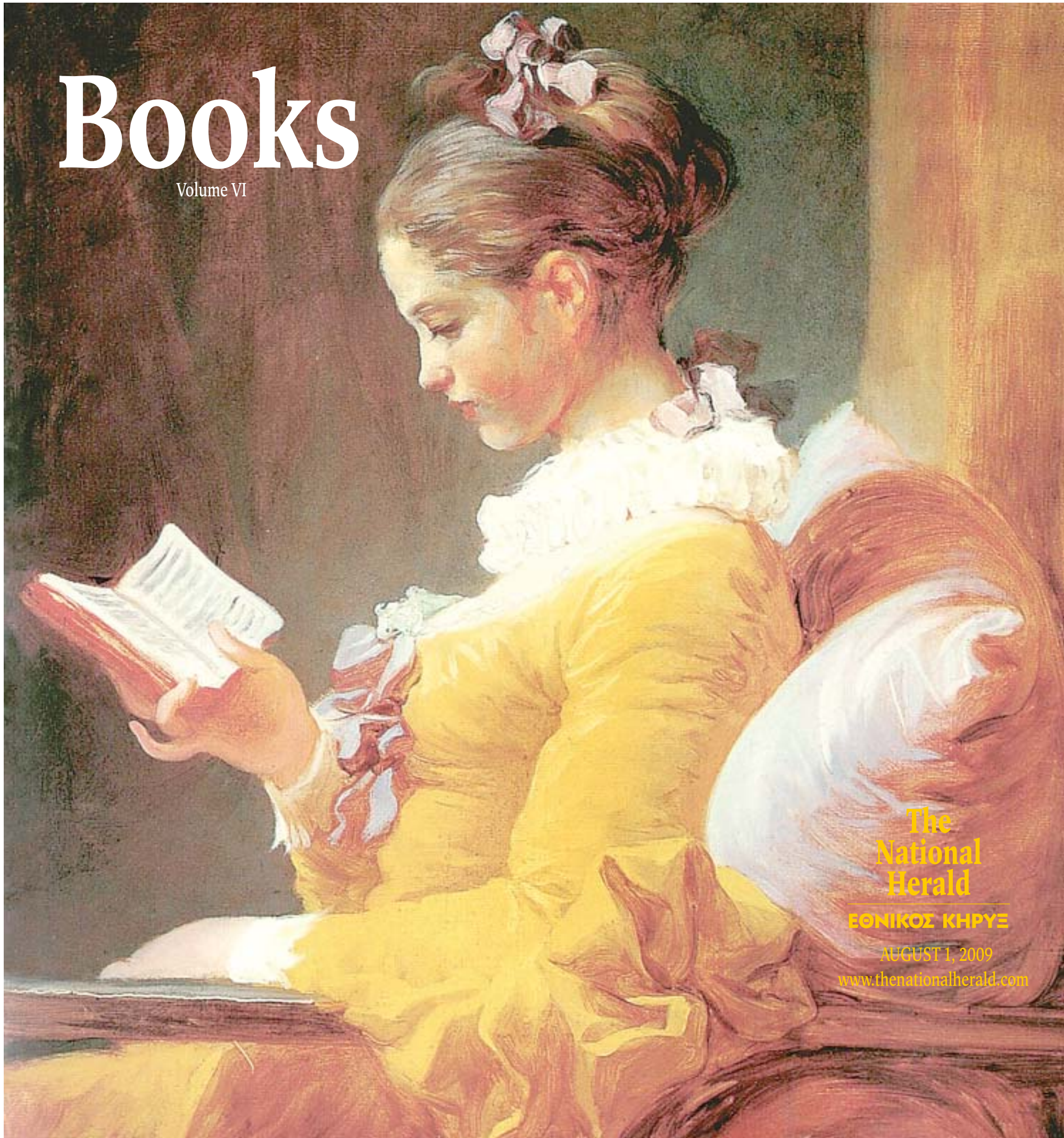


# Books

Volume VI



The  
National  
Herald

ΕΘΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΗΡΥΞ

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## The National Herald

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Publisher-Editor

**Antonis H. Diamataris**

Assistant to Publisher, Advertising

**Veta H. Diamataris Papadopoulos**

Special Section Managing Editor

**Elaine Thomopoulos**

Production Manager

**Chrysoula Karametros**

37-10 30th Street, LIC, NY 11101-2614

Tel: (718)784-5255,

Fax: (718)472-0510,

e-mail: [english.edition@thenationalherald.com](mailto:english.edition@thenationalherald.com)

[www.thenationalherald.com](http://www.thenationalherald.com)

Democritou 1 and Academias Sts,

Athens, 10671, Greece

Tel: 011.30.210.3614.598,

Fax: 011.30.210.3643.776,

e-mail: [athens@ekirikas.com](mailto:athens@ekirikas.com)

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Being managing editor of “Books” is a fantastic privilege. I am awed by the interesting books we review. Although the books focus on Greece or Greek Americans, they explore universal themes: the creative process, science, art, religion, death, war and love. Let me introduce you to each of the books we have reviewed in this issue.

“The Archimedes Codex: How a Medieval Prayer Book is Revealing the True Genius of Antiquity’s Greatest Scientist” by Reviel Netz and William Noel reveals how modern day scientists discovered and deciphered copies of Archimedes’ writings, which were found hidden underneath the pages of a 13th century prayer book. Evaggelos Vallianatos, the reviewer of the book, says, “It is a very interesting and extremely important study about the Archimedes palimpsest and the technological trials, and they were extensive and difficult, in deciphering a manuscript in an appalling state of disintegration and disappearance.”

Jo Marchant’s “Decoding the Heavens,” which is also reviewed by Evaggelos Vallianatos, describes the discovery of the “Antikythera Mechanism” and enthalls us with the genius of an unknown scientist of 2,000 years ago. In 1900, Greeks sponge divers returning home from the waters of Tunisia were thrown off course to Antikythera, a tiny island south of Kythera. While waiting for the storm to dissipate, a sponge diver discovered a wrecked ancient ship some 60 meters below the surface of the water. Among the many artifacts the divers brought up from the sea was a formless lump of corroded bronze from about 100 B.C. After being out in the yard of the National Archeological Museum for many months, it cracked open revealing gearwheels and Greek inscriptions. More than a century after the discovery, scientists revealed that this mechanism was actually an amazing invention, the world’s first computer.

Greeks since ancient times have expressed themselves creatively in poetry, songs and the visual arts. “The Weft of Memory” explores Greek village life through 234 poems and songs and 37 couplets recalled by centenarian Vasiliki Scotos. She has lived in the U.S. for three-quarters of a century. Her poems and songs were lovingly translated and edited by her son Thomas J. Scotos. The book they have produced, as reviewer Artemis Leontis notes, “brings into view the tapestry of a vanishing, but not forgotten, Greece.”

Author Dean Kostas has been organizing weekly readings for Greek American writers at the Cornelia Shop Café in Greenwich Village for 18 years. The creation of “Pomegranate Seeds: An Anthology of Greek-American Poetry,” which presents the poetry of 49 poets, is rooted in the enthusiastic reception of the reading series. Reviewer Anastasia Stephanidou says, “It reinforces the nature of Greek American contribution to American literature as a collective force of distinct yet interconnected voices. Nor is it simply a must reading for literary scholars. ‘Pomegranate Seeds’ invites Greek and non-Greek readers to join Greek American poets in a marvelous array of passions, fears, mysteries, dreams and hopes.”

“Ecclesia” demonstrates the creative vision of Panos Fiorentinos. Through glowing photographs and descriptive prose, he explores the beauty and majesty, as well as the history, of the 59 churches of the Chicago Greek Orthodox Diocese. “To say that Fiorentinos’ imagery is gorgeous is to mistake the scholarship that has gone into defining each church’s history. Fiorentinos records the emergence of each parish community, its various previous sites and current location. Each of these historical descriptions is embedded in the

sacred and secular history of the founders and significant clergy of each church,” reviewer Michael G. Davros says.

The musical comedies of Greece from the 1950s to the 1970s come to life in “The Greek Film Musical: A Critical and Cultural History” by Lydia Papadimitriou. Although some of the films were imitative of Hollywood productions, they also began to draw on the native music of Greece. As reviewer Dan Georgakas points out, story lines often focused on the need to upgrade the quality of Greek life. Georgakas notes, “Papadimitriou has produced a rarity, a thoroughly scholarly work that is fun to read.”

On a darker note, two of the books explore the tragic consequences of the occupation of Greece during World War II and the Civil War that followed. The famine of the winter of 1941 serves as a reference point in many of the essays included in “Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s” by Richard Clogg (editor). Each essay in the book deals with a different aspect of aid in a decade when Greeks suffered occupation (by Italians, Germans and Bulgarians) and then experienced a brutal civil war. Reviewer Angelike Contis points out: “Working independently, together and sometimes against each other were groups as different as the Swedish Red Cross, the Turkish Red Crescent, Greek Americans, Quakers, Greek and Yugoslav Communists and the Greek Orthodox Church. The essays are not about a grand success story, but rather the tales of people swimming against a hostile tide to offer a helping hand.”

Viki Karavasilis’ book, “The Abducted Greek Children of the Communists,” is based on documents in the Greek Parliament and in the Library of the University of Athens; on news reports and official documents from the U.S., Italy and other countries; and on extensive interviews with people who remember, witnessed or were part of the Paidomazoma, which took place during the Greek Civil War. Karavasilis tells the story of Dora, whom she interviewed as an adult. After Communist rebels abducted 12-year-old Dora, she spent 33 years behind the Iron Curtain. Dora’s widowed mother continuously searched for her but never saw her again. Reviewer Aphrodite Matsakis says, “The author exposes the loneliness, terror, starvation and the emotional, physical and sexual abuse reported by the survivors, as well as the as the anguish of the families they were forced to leave behind.”

“Unsafe Harbor” by Gus Leodas revolves around a series of unexplained murders at the exclusive Long Island Yacht Club. Mitchell Pappas, a Greek American investigative journalist, is called in to determine who killed whom and why. Each additional death makes it clearer and clearer that those involved in solving the crime are at risk of being murdered too. Reviewer Aphrodite Matsakis says: “Reading ‘Unsafe Harbor’ is like going through the maze of the mythological labyrinth at Knossos, Crete which housed the man-eating Minotaur. As Pappas proceeds through the maze of possibilities, he isn’t sure which way to turn to find the Minotaur (or perhaps several of them). The ultimate outcome of “Unsafe Harbor” is a shocker, and it’s a testimony to Leodas’ writing skills that the reader is held in suspense until the very end. ...”

We have been able to bring you this issue of “Books” thanks to the caliber of writers who have written the reviews, as well as the guidance of Publisher/Editor Antonis H. Diamataris and Production Manager Chrysoula Karametros.

I hope you enjoy the reviews, and that they inspire you to read the books.

**Elaine Thomopoulos**  
Managing Editor  
Books  
[Thomop@msn.com](mailto:Thomop@msn.com)



## Mr. Costantinos Gioulekas' Message to The National Herald

With great honour for your warm hospitality, with sheer pleasure and feelings of deep gratitude, I am addressing all members of the Greek American Community, all Greeks of Diaspora, the readers of your newspaper, our newspaper.

Your newspaper, in the trail of long Struggles of the Greek Nation, has evolved to a powerful vehicle of the ideals of our Nation, having proved that it worthingly bears its name : Our National Herald.

All the newspapers of the Greek Diaspora are the voice of the Greek Community. They provide information to our brothers abroad, like the Greeks of the USA, who have been welcomed by that Great Country and Friend and were given the opportunity to grow roots, pursue a career and prosper.

The Greek government and I, myself as deputy minister of the Mass Media Portfolio, stand by you, in your challenging task, fulfilling our duty towards the Greek Diaspora.

The philosophy and mentality as dictated by the international reality is our guide.

It is the same reality that obliges us to work together planning the guaranties for progress and prosperity.

Under these circumstances the historic role of Greek people appears to be a necessity now more than ever. The Greeks are called upon to present their values and create the belief that their ideals are the ideals of the modern world.

The ecumenical values , that were the milestones of the international community.

Our beloved brothers, its you, the seven million of Greeks who live and achieve greatness abroad, who are the cohesive tissue of the Greek Nation.

Unfortunately, Greece has never helped to transform this power of Hellenism from a simple community to a lobby, that is an interest group that serves our national interests.

We believe though that this policy could be implanted with a joint lasting effort. The 24 hour information flow from back home is the means of preserving the Greek presence in the international community. The means to keep the torch of the Greek spirit



burning worldwide, thus transfusing the Greek Education, the Greek civilization into the world.

We are convinced that Greece owes its existence in the world not only because it is on the map but also because of its heavy and great heritage, and also thanks to the All Greeks living all over the world. Thanks to the Greek Diaspora. Thanks to you.

Thanks to our common journey through the centuries.

You, the Greeks of Diaspora, preserve the sacred and holly. You keep Greece alive in the world. You salvage the tradition and Greek history alive.

Today, Greece aims high and conquers the position it deserves through the common efforts of Hellenism.

With these efforts, I call upon you to become supporters of our common work , I pass on to you the gratitude of the Greek government, I personally thank you for your struggles delivering the message of Hellenism all over the world .

With my sincere regards,

**Constantinos P. Gioulekas,**  
Deputy Minister for the Interior,  
responsible for the Mass Media Protfolio

# The 1940- 1941 Greek Epic Struggle

## The day by day depiction of the war through the newspapers of that period

A unique work for the war of 1940 by **Constantinos P. Gioulekas**, deputy Minister for the Interior, responsible for the Mass Media Portfolio.

**A** narration for the 1940 – 41 War through its original sources: for the first time the glorious epic struggle of 1940-41 is depicted through the newspapers of that period. The morning of October 28th 1940, was meant to become one of the most heroic, glorious moment in the Greek Modern History, a day of Glory . The seven months of the Greek resistance against the Axon Forces were enough to morally justify Greece in the Global conscience of the peoples.

This is exactly that historic moment that the writer is seeking to salvage and preserve with the present edition. That was the motive behind the work: to contribute to the depiction of an entire epic struggle, delivering the 1940 War intact and vivid to the reader. The epic struggle that has everything to owe to the soldiers, the journalists, the Greeks.

“Without a doubt the Greek people owe it to their country to have a knowledge of its history. What is more, however, it is the duty and an honor, for a journalist and a citizen who is involved in politics, to contribute actively so as to ensure that this knowledge will be passed on intact to the future generations.

The memories must not fade in this steep niche of the Mediterranean Sea, where millions of people sacrificed their lives to make history, important part of which, is the 1940-1941 Epic struggle,” writes in the preface of his book the writer, Constantinos P. Gioulekas, responsible for the Mass Media Portfolio.

The main part of the two volume work “The day by day depiction of the war through the newspapers of that period. The 1940-1941 Greek Epic struggle.”, mainly consists of 1940-1941 newspapers. It is the first time that the



The first edition of the two volume luxury publication.

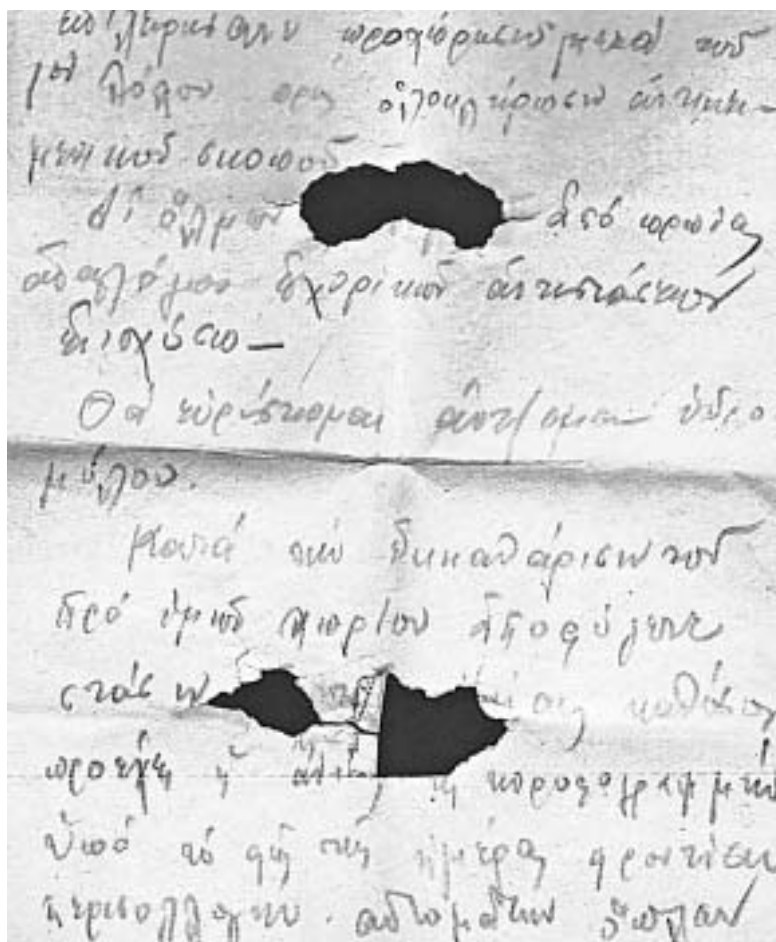
Greek-Italian and Greek-German Wars are presented as depicted in the newspapers of that period. The readers follow the trail of events from October 28th 1940 until the end of May 1941, when Greece

heroically fell to the Germans after the Battle of Crete. All the events of that turbulent but heroic period

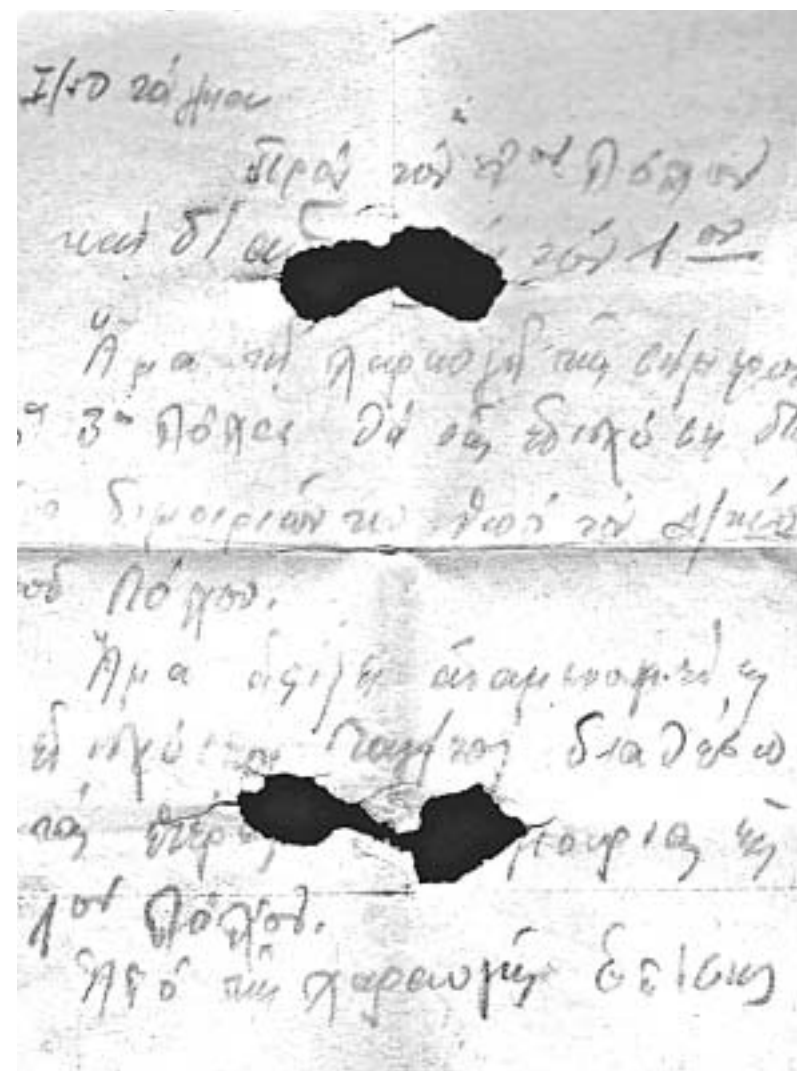
are documented in the two volume work and commented on, when necessary, for the complete comprehension of the ambience of that time.

The situation in Europe at that time, before the Italian attack against Greece, the war incidents, mainly in Europe until the fall of France, the provocations of the fascists against Greece and the neutrality policy that was implemented by Greece, until the Italian Invasion, the War, the German attack against Greece, the events that followed the occupation period in Greece and in the rest of Europe, in the backdrop of the Second World War, are the chapters of this book that accompany the newspapers, thus shedding light to the scene behind the newspaper articles. At the end of volume two there indexes, which include certain documents of particular importance, War comic strips, and certain advertisements that are telling of the Greeks everyday life during that period.

The material used for the two volume work comes entirely from Deputy Minister’s personal archive. For more than thirty years the Deputy Minister tries to put togeth-



A hand-written order filled with the blood of hero Captain George Michalakis, who was killed in an attack outside Leskovic, N.Epirous, December 1940.



er anything relevant to the Greek struggles of Modern History. His collections consists of documents, photographs, maps, letters, heirlooms, uniforms, weaponry, used in 1821, in the Macedonian Struggle, the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, the Asia Minor Campaign, the 1940-1941 Epic struggle, the Occupation, the Civil War, the Revolution of the Greek Revival until the 1940-1950's. This collection reflects Mr Gioulekas' ongoing effort to salvage any information or other material, that could contribute to the preservation of Greek Collective Memory.

The newspapers of the 1940 Epic struggle, that were used for this book, are part of the fore-mentioned collection. The two-volume book that is actually a formal diary and a war calendar for the researchers, the historians and scholars.

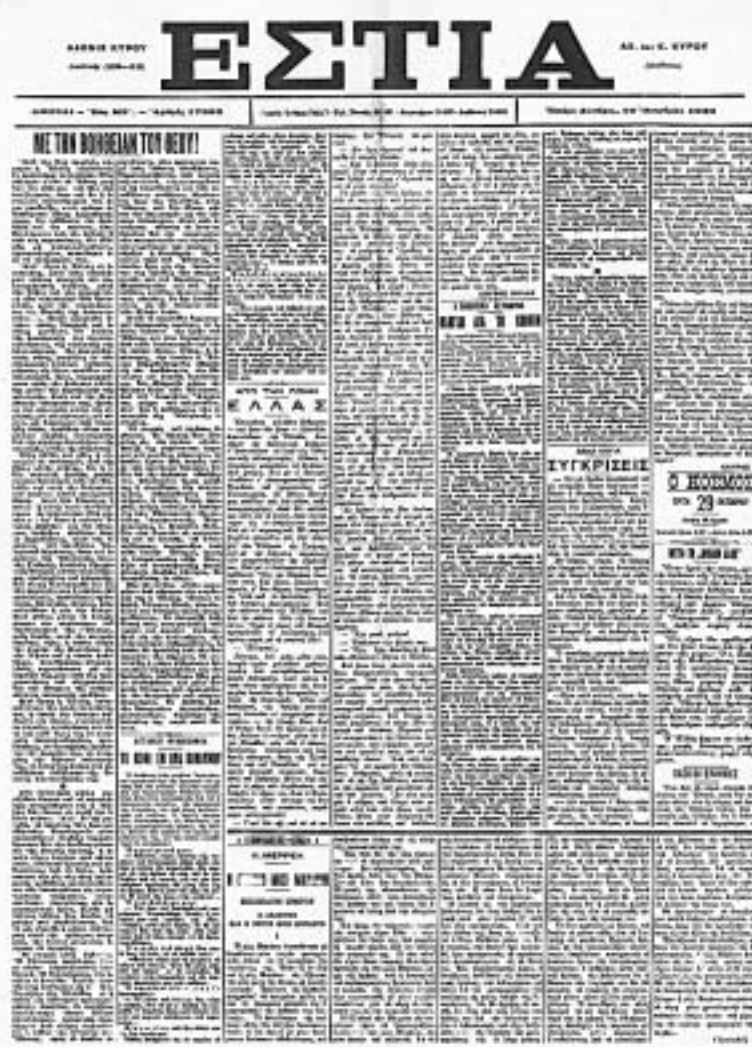
The events that took place in the warfronts, back home, the war communiqués, the reports from the battlefields, the press releases, the personal correspondence of the soldiers and their families- in a nutshell everything that weaved the war scene of Greece in the 1940's, are depicted vividly in the present edition. The deputy Minister, C.Gioulekas writes in the preface of his work that the book seeks to depict the 1940 Epic struggle, intact and vivid, as it was written and captured by the war reporters and photographers.

The work is a minimum honor due to all the journalists, war correspondents, photographers, publishers, who contributed enormously to the information, updating and encouragement of the Greeks, in the battlefield but also back at home.

We have these to thanks for the open communication line between the Battle Field and the civilian areas. They are the ones that described, in their unparalleled way, the spirit of the warfront to the Greek civilians.

They managed to depict the moment of Glory of an entire nation, that was feverously serving the ideals of victory and national integrity by keeping its morale high and by writing from the bottom of their soul.

Finally, one has to mark that the Deputy Minister waives all its author rights and gives the money from the book's sales to create a special account for commission of a statue dedicated the 1940 Anonymous Soldier that will be placed in the Military Hospital of the village Mpouliarates in the N.Epirus, an important battlefield, where are buried many of the 1940-1941 heroes that never made it home - the sleepless guards of Greece, shot to death by enemy fire.



Certain front pages included in the two volume publication by Constantinos P.Gioulekas, Deputy Minister for the Interior, responsible for the Mass Media Portfolio.



From the book indexes. A page with photos and names of our heroes that fell to the battlefield, as published in the newspapers of that period. The rest indexes include letters from and towards the battlefield, political comic strips, rare documents of that period as well as a series "wartime" commercials.

# Archimedes, the World's Greatest Scientist

## The Archimedes Codex: How a Medieval Prayer Book is Revealing the True Genius of Antiquity's Greatest Scientist

By Reviel Netz and William Noel  
Da Capo Press, 313 pages  
\$ 27.50, paperback

By **Evaggelos Vallianatos**  
Special to The National Herald

**A**rchimedes, born in Syracuse in 287 BCE, was the greatest scientist who ever lived. His work in mathematics, astronomy, physics and engineering set the foundation of Greek and Western science. His writings were essential for the rebirth and evolution of science.

### THE GOLDEN AGE OF GREEK SCIENCE

Archimedes lived in the third century BCE, the golden age of Greek science. This is a period that crowned the global conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE. Alexander and his successors spread Hellenic civilization throughout Asia and the Middle East while uniting Greece for the first time.

The Greek kings of Alexander's empire, especially those who ruled Egypt, created the infrastructure for a rational commonwealth characterized by scientific exploration, state-funded research, the scholarly study of earlier Greek culture and the editing of the Greek classics. They also founded and supported great scientific institutions like the Library of Alexandria.

Archimedes was one of the founding fathers of the Greek scientific revolution. He probably did his advanced studies in Alexandria, a leading center of science and Hellenic culture, surpassed only by Athens. He then became the science advisor to the king of Syracuse, Hieron II, employing his engineering and scientific skills for the construction of powerful weapons in order to defend Syracuse against Roman aggression.

Thanks to the ingenuity of Archimedes, Syracuse was invulnerable until a traitor led the Romans to the capture of the city in 212 BCE. In the midst of looting

and carnage, a Roman soldier killed Archimedes.

Archimedes put his scientific discoveries in letters he wrote to Greek scientists. These letters are models of brevity, conciseness and clarity. Scholars copied and spread them throughout the Greek world. The surviving works of Archimedes include: "On Plane Equilibrium," two books; "The Quadrature of the Parabola;" "On the Sphere and Cylinder," two books; "On Spirals;" "On Conoids and Spheroids;" "On Floating Bodies," two books; "The Measurement of a Circle;" "The Sand Reckoner;" "The Method;" and "The Cattle Problem."

However, 66 years after the death of Archimedes, in 146 BCE, the Romans obliterated Carthage and Corinth, occupying Greece. Then, some five and a half centuries later, an unprecedented event took place: The Roman Emperor Constantine I, c.285-337, abandoned the traditional religion of the Greeks and Romans in favor of Christianity.

This ushered in an era of darkness in Greece and Europe. I believe the introduction of Christianity was responsible for the catastrophic loss of most of the scientific, literary, artistic and philosophical works of ancient Greek thinkers and scholars. As a result, some of the works of Archimedes did not make it to our day.

Fortunately, the Christians of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire, which included Greece, did not have an Inquisition. The educated people of Byzantium considered themselves Greeks, so, despite paroxysms of clerical intolerance, they protected enough of the classical texts for the continuation of their culture. In addition, some emperors and senior ecclesiastics were less fanatical than others. During those truces in the war against the "pagan" Greeks, wealthy lovers of antiquity or philhellenic emperors and patriarchs funded the copying of texts.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, libraries in Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium, began to replenish their ancient Greek collections. The copying of the "Method," "Floating Bodies" and "Stomachion" of Archimedes in 975 was part of that cultural revival.

The latter book ended up in the library of a Greek monastery in Jerusalem. In 1229, monks ripped the Archimedes book and other ancient Greek books apart, folding their large vellum folios to create

an Euchologion or prayer book. The monks used orange juice to delete the original writing on the vellum or scraped off the ancient Greek text with a knife and then used the "clean" folios for writing their hymns and prayers. Books created after cleaning the print from old books are called palimpsests.

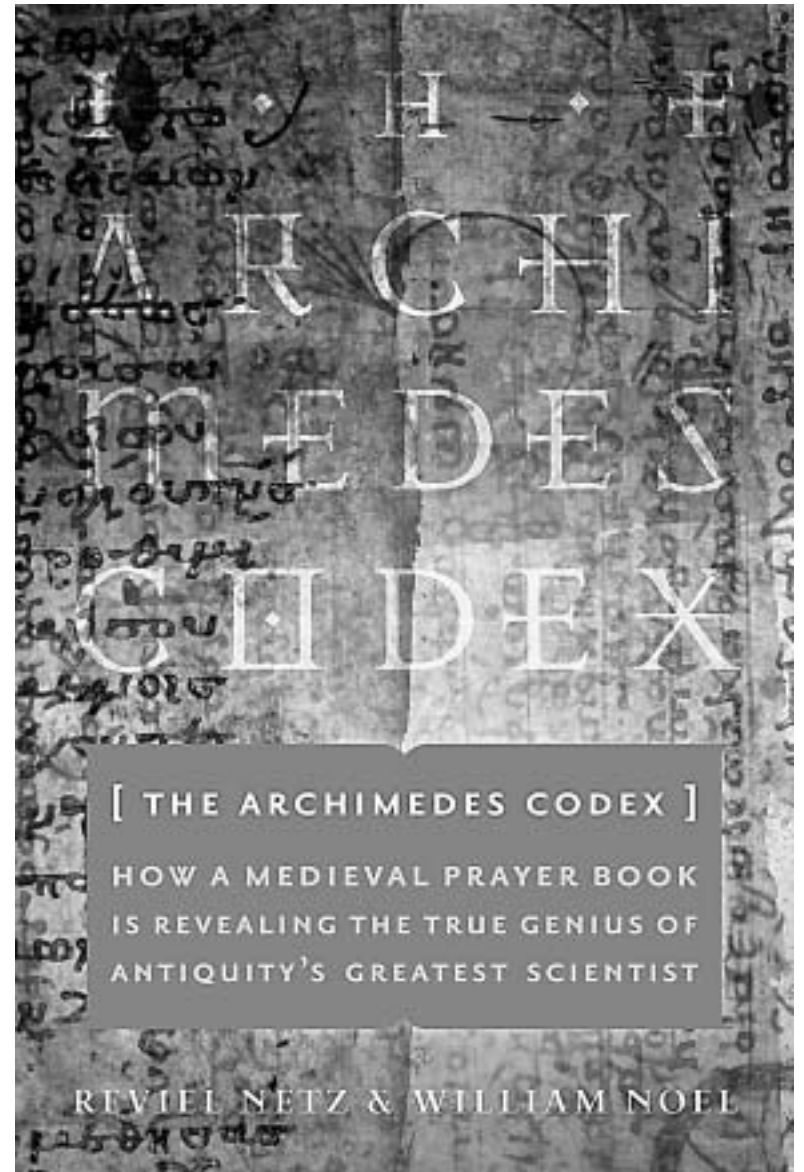
In late 1890s, Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, a Greek scholar, catalogued the Archimedes palimpsest, which was then in a monastery in Constantinople. The news of the discovery of the writings of Archimedes in a prayer book, led the Danish philologist, Johan Ludwig Heiberg, to Constantinople where he studied the Archimedes palimpsest. For the first time since 1229, an expert in classical studies looked at the folios of the prayer book with a magnifying glass, confirming the findings of Papadopoulos-Kerameus that underneath the prayers lay the thought of Archimedes. Heiberg transcribed as much of the Archimedes text as he could. Then he took pictures of two-thirds of the folios. His edition of the works of Archimedes in three volumes was of inestimable value, especially for any future decipherment of the palimpsest text.

### THE PLUNDER OF THE BURIED ARCHIMEDES

We don't know what happened to the Archimedes palimpsest after Heiberg studied it in 1906 and published his findings in the 1910s. According to Reviel Netz, classics professor at Stanford University, and William Noel, curator of manuscripts at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, the worst damage to the Archimedes palimpsest occurred during the 20th century. They describe a story they stitched together from court documents relating to the legal contest on the "ownership" of the Archimedes book, interviews with art dealers, professors, antiquity thieves and prestigious houses cashing in the shady trade in stolen treasures.

In the 1920s, two dealers in antiquities, Salomon Guerson and Dikran Kelekian, stole or bought the palimpsest from the monks of the monastery in Constantinople. Guerson brought the manuscript to Paris where, sometime after 1938, he sold it to Marie Louis Sirieix, a Frenchman who, after hiding the book in his basement for decades, passed it on to his daughter Anne Guersan who, finally, sold it.

Netz and Noel, quite by acci-



dent, collaborated in a project of taking care of the Archimedes palimpsest. An anonymous American bought the Archimedes palimpsest for \$2 million when it surfaced in an October 1998 auction. William Noel had the admirable insight of convincing this very wealthy man to let the Walters Art Museum exhibit the palimpsest and, above all, use the latest imaging technologies in reading the Archimedes text under the Christian prayers.

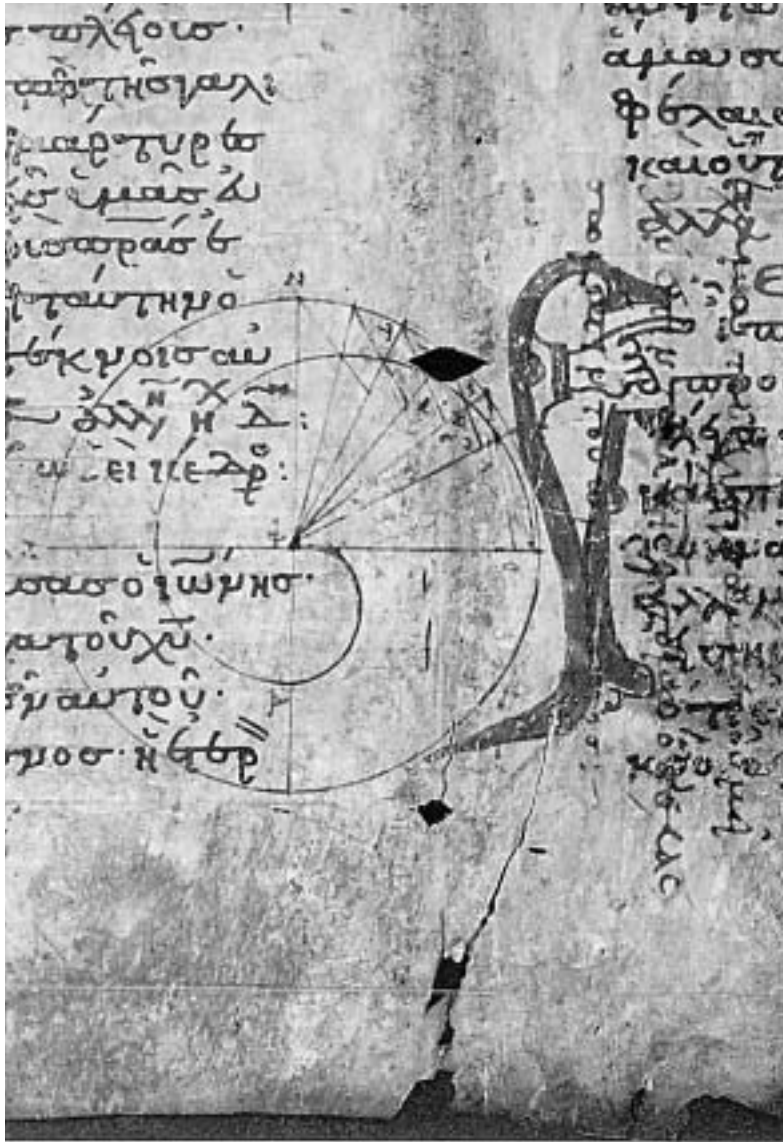
The good will, almost Renaissance-like philhellenism and generosity of the rich Archimedes patron and, especially, the working together of Netz and Noel resulted in the 2007 book, "The Archimedes Codex." It is a very interesting and extremely important study about the Archimedes palimpsest and the technological trials, and they were extensive and difficult, in deciphering a manuscript in an appalling state of disintegration and disappearance. For example, Abigail Quandt, a colleague of William Noel at the Walters Art Museum,

took four years in disassembling the folios of the manuscript. Noel documented how imaging experts and classical scholars, following the leads of the Danish philologist Heiberg, managed to decode the hidden Archimedes text.

### THE HOMER OF MATHEMATICS

The heart of the "The Archimedes Codex," however, is in the science chapters that Reviel Netz wrote. He is one of a handful of scholars who is genuine in his interest in the Greeks, appreciating their inestimable contribution to Western culture and, in the case of Archimedes, making it clear that he is the greatest scientist who ever lived.

I was touched by the intelligence and affection with which Netz writes about Archimedes. He said he cried when he saw the tattered palimpsest holding the almost destroyed words of Archimedes. He brings to his philological and mathematical examination of the surviving thought of Archimedes an intimate knowl-



In 1229, a 10th century copy of Archimedes' treatises was erased and prayers were written on top of it. Modern scientists revealed and deciphered the Archimedes text under the prayers by using the latest imaging technology. This photograph, using ultraviolet fluorescent light, shows a drawing of a spiral found in the ancient prayer book. The spiral from proposition 21 of the Spiral Lines of Archimedes is drawn not as a true spiral but as a sequence of arcs of different circles. The straight lines are drawn to represent arcs. The drawing appears in the book, "The Archimedes Codex: How a Medieval Prayer Book is Revealing the True Genius of Antiquity's Greatest Scientist."



William Noel (left) and Reviel Netz, authors of "The Archimedes Codex," examine a folio of the Archimedes Palimpsest. William Noel is curator of manuscripts at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore and director of the Archimedes Palimpsest Project. Reviel Netz, professor of classics and philosophy at Stanford University, specializes in ancient science.

edge of an expert and the confidence and the pleasure of a humanist who has just discovered the lost treasure of a great thinker. It helps that Netz is a mathematician who thoroughly understands Archimedes, explaining lucidly the diagrams of geometry Archimedes used in measuring curvilinear objects.

In solving his geometry propositions, Archimedes brought together mathematics and physics, setting the foundations of calculus and, therefore, helping us to understand the meaning of infinity. This knowledge of measuring curves and, in general, using mathematics as a language of nature also explains the universe. Archimedes filled a "tool kit" for the reinvention of the sciences of the physical world, the kind of science that Galileo Galilei, 1564-1642, and Isaac Newton, 1642-1727, developed.

Sometimes Greeks used infinity but, purposefully, they avoided it. The Greeks, Netz says, "were ahead of the infinity game ... Archimedes was capable of producing the kind of science of physics that Galileo and Newton produced. He made the decision not to – other things occupied his mind."

Galileo had a tremendous respect for Archimedes whose mathematical physics became the core and spark of his own science. He started studying Archimedes early on in his life. In his 1638 book, "Two New Sciences," he admitted that he found "infinite astonishment" in the works of Archimedes.

The Greeks almost specialized in geometry, the diagram being the main tool of their mathematics. They made advances in number theory – showing that there are an infinite prime numbers. Related to their interest in numbers, they invented combinatorics, counting and figuring out the number of possible solutions to a problem. This study of probabilities rose to a high level under Hipparchos, a famous astronomer of the second century BCE.

Archimedes was the most important player in the probability theory. In fact, one of the three works overwritten in the Christian prayer book, "Stomachion," is, according to Netz, the "earliest evidence, anywhere, of the science of combinatorics." "Stomachion" was such a difficult game that it triggered a bellyache, hence the name "Stomach." The challenge was to figure out how many ways one could devise in using 14 geometrical diagrams to make a square. Archimedes solved this game but the condition of the "Stomachion" is so bad that it proved impossible to read more than a few lines of

Archimedes.

Netz asked some combinatorial mathematicians to solve the Archimedes problem. They figured out that there are 17,152 ways the 14 geometrical figures could be arranged in making a square.

In general, Archimedes measured curves, shaping calculus in the process. He invented combinatorics, which is at the core of our understanding of the theory of probability. These, among many other great mathematical and technological achievements, form the underbelly of computer and imaging science that is, according to Netz, fundamentally, Archimedean. It was that science that helped in the decipherment of the hidden and almost destroyed works of Archimedes.

#### THANKING THE MONK THAT BURIED ARCHIMEDES?

The only thing I found disturbing about "The Archimedes Codex" was an effort to tone down the crime of the monks in scrubbing off Archimedes for hymns and prayers.

The authors started by saying that the monastery was a "tomb" for Archimedes. Then, later on in the book, they made the "tomb" into a "safe house." Somehow, they took the Christian writing over the scrubbed works of Archimedes to mean "Christian disguise" as the only condition of "safety" for Archimedes. But safety from what enemies? If Christian clerics did not hate Greek texts, why should they disguise them to make them safe among themselves? For the authors, however, the price we paid for having the immortal works of Archimedes hidden under prayers "was a price well worth

paying." Then they say that just like the love of Greeks for mathematics protected the letter Archimedes sent to Eratosthenes for a millennium, "it was love of God that ensured its survival to the twentieth century." I would think the exact opposite is true. The only reason that the Archimedes palimpsest survived to the 20th century had nothing to do with love of God but ignorance that underneath the prayers was an ancient Greek text that could still be read.

Reviel Netz and William Noel added Ioannes Myronas, the monk who erased the works of Archimedes, to those to whom they dedicated their book.

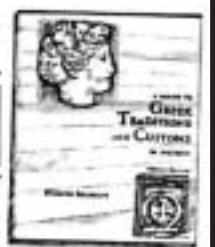
"The Archimedes Codex," however, serves its purpose, wetting our appetite for the real thing – the text of Archimedes that, one hopes, will see the light of the day soon. Ideally, the commentary of Netz and the technical details of uncovering the words of Archimedes ought to have prefaced the edition of the Greek text. But in the extremely long and murky history of the survival of the thought of Archimedes, the decipherment of the palimpsest was another victory against a ceaseless obscurantism trying to keep the Greeks buried in palimpsests.

When we have a chance to read the excavated Archimedes, we will be able to appreciate reason, science and humanism even more. These are values of Hellenic culture that gave birth to Archimedes who gave birth to Western science.

Evaggelos Vallianatos is the author of "This Land is Their Land" and "The Passion of the Greeks."

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# How the Greeks Invented the World's First Computer

## Decoding the Heavens

By Jo Marchant

Da Capo Press, 328 pages, \$25

By **Evaggelos Vallianatos**  
Special to The National Herald

In the fall of 1900, sponge fishers from the Greek island of Symi, near Rhodes in the Aegean, were returning home from their sponge fishing in the waters of Tunisia when a storm threw them to Antikythera, a tiny island south of Kythera. While waiting for the storm to dissipate, Elias Stadiatis, a sponge diver, discovered a wrecked ancient ship some 60 meters below the surface of the water. He bumped onto a mound of statues – horses, men, women and vases.

The sponge fishers reported the wreck to the Greek government. The government, in turn, funded them to recover the ancient artifacts. The successful underwater archaeological expedition, the first in the world, took several months in 1901. It yielded a great treasure that found a place at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.

In one of the crates holding the Antikythera treasure, one could see a formless lump of bronze that, after being out in the yard of the museum for many months, cracked open revealing gearwheels and Greek inscriptions. It's also possible that some one broke it up. This turned out to be the most precious of the ancient artifacts fished out of the waters of Antikythera, being the world's first computer that museum staff dubbed the Antikythera Mechanism.

Jo Marchant, former editor of the British science magazine "Nature," and author of this book, tells the story of the Antikythera Mechanism. In 10 chapters and illustrated by 20 pictures, "Decoding the Heavens," explains how Greeks and non-Greeks treated and studied the corroded fragments of the lump of bronze dated to around 100 BCE. After a century of trials and errors and periodic insights scientists concluded the Antikythera Mechanism was advanced technology from the Greeks the like of which did not appear in Europe for about 1,500 years until the Renaissance.

First, the Greek archaeologists mischaracterized the Antikythera device as an astrolabe, which in Greek means the "star catcher." Astrolabes were invented by the

Greeks and helped to figure out the position of the sun and stars in the sky. They also gave clues for astronomical predictions, but were not useful for navigation.

In 1905, Konstantinos Rados, a Greek naval historian, argued that the Antikythera device was too complex to be an astrolabe. In 1907, Albert Rehm, a German classical scholar, studied the Antikythera device and sided with Rados, calling the Antikythera computer a planetarium. In 1920s, John Theophanides, a Greek rear admiral, said the ancient mechanism was a navigation device. Both Rehm and Theophanides became obsessed with the Antikythera Mechanism but failed to publish their work.

Marchant starts the third chapter with the statement that up until WWII all scholars who studied the Antikythera Mechanism "floundered." This situation changed in the 1950s. Archaeologists of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens dated the Roman ship that carried the Greek loot to the first century BCE.

A French team of Jacques Cousteau and Frederic Dumas visited the Antikythera water grave of the Greek device in 1953 and 1976. The search of 1953 yielded nothing; that of 1976 only a few minor artifacts and coins, which date the Antikythera ship to around 70 to 60 BCE.

The next important phase in the decipherment of the Antikythera

Mechanism starts in the fourth chapter and Derek de Solla Price. Price was a British scientist with two doctorates, one in physics and the other in the history of science with emphasis on the history of scientific instruments and astronomical instruments in particular. While studying at Cambridge, Price was influenced by Joseph Needham, a historian of Chinese science. He then collaborated with Needham in a review of ancient Chinese astronomical clocks.

This experience prepared Price for the Antikythera Mechanism as nothing else could. In reading the papers of the Greek scientists and the German scholar Rehm, he understood that the Antikythera Mechanism was probably the most sophisticated technology of the ancient Greeks that remained unrivalled for 1,500 years.

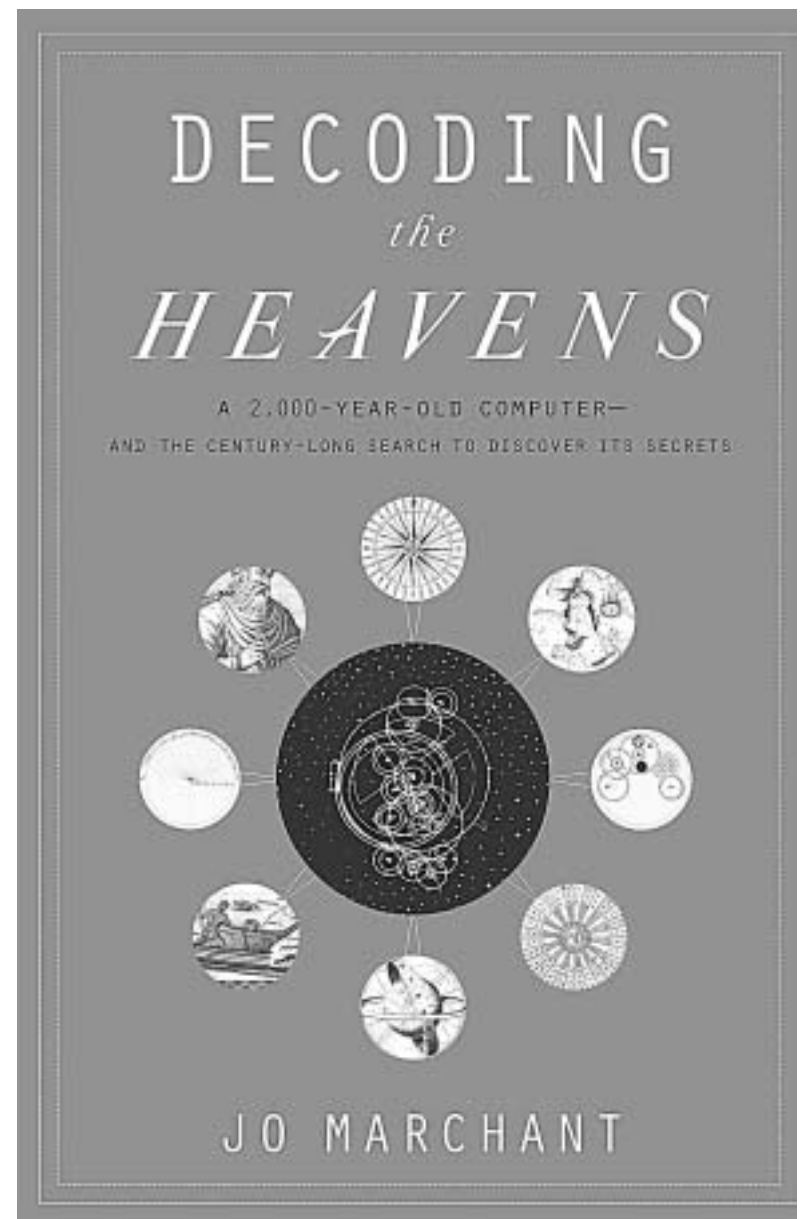
In 1971, Price came back to the Antikythera fragments. This time the breakthrough came with X-rays. The Greek Atomic Energy Commission in Athens had a nuclear physicist, Charalambos Karakalos, who responded to Price's request to X-ray the Antikythera fragments.

Price wanted to know how the gearwheels meshed with each other and how many teeth each wheel had. Only then would he be able to figure out the purpose of the Greek machine. The photos of Karakalos opened the insides of the Antikythera device. The wife of Karakalos also counted the teeth of the gearwheels for Price. This enabled Price to publish his assessment of the Antikythera Mechanism in 1974. This was "Gears from the Greeks," a masterful account of how he decoded the Greek computer.

Michael Wright, who worked at the Museum of Science in London, also spent his life studying the Antikythera device. Marchant devotes chapters 6 and 7 on the career of Wright who, although he was inspired by the work of Price, turned against him.

The spark for Wright's interest in Greek technology came from Price. But, according to Marchant, Wright was slowly disillusioned with Price, finding him arbitrary with evidence, pulling "his ideas out of nowhere."

This is a harsh judgment for the scientist who nearly single-handedly decoded the Antikythera machine and put it on the agenda of Western science. The animosity of Wright towards Price was probably a result of competition and jeal-



**Jo Marchant, a former editor for Nature Magazine and New Scientist, is a freelance journalist specializing in science and history. She lives in London.**

ously rather than faulty "slight of hand" or technical incompetence on the part of Price. Of course, Price may have made mistakes in his reconstruction of the device, but I don't think he willfully invented things out of nowhere.

In his "Gears from the Greeks" Price demonstrated that it was the differential gear that gave the Antikythera Mechanism its advanced technology. He defined the differential gear as "one of the greatest basic mechanical inventions of all time." That is the reason that Price was certain the Antikythera Mechanism was a calendrical computer for calculating the movements of the sun and the moon and figuring out the days and months of the year.

Wright denied that the differential gear was in the Antikythera Mechanism, thus downgrading the device to a planetarium. This would also have the effect of obscuring the scientific and technological achievement of the Greeks.

However, another British scien-

tist, Tony Freeth, challenged Wright. Freeth put together a group of international scientists to go to the bottom of the Antikythera Mechanism by using the latest imaging technologies.

Marchant uses chapters 8 and 9 in tracing the efforts of Freeth and his collaborators to study the fragments of the Antikythera machine. The new project took off in 2005.

Like Wright, Freeth got the idea he should be the first to decode the Greek computer. And according to Marchant, he started raising doubts about the accuracy of the 1974 work of Price. He suggested that Price "massaged" the numbers of the gear teeth to "fit his theories." Once again, another investigator of the Antikythera device, Tony Freeth, made dubious allegations against the integrity of Derek de Solla Price. Marchant assures us that Freeth, too, was "infected" by the "Antikythera bug."

Freeth convinced two companies to volunteer their high tech imaging technologies for the An-

tikythera Mechanism: X-Tek from England and Hewlett-Packard from the U.S. He applied for permission to the Greek museum to study the Antikythera device and the museum said no. Freeth then brought to his project three Greek scientists: John Seiradakis, an astronomer at the University of Thessalonike; Xenophon Moussas, a physics professor at the University of Athens; and Agamemnon Tselikas, director of the Center for History and Paleography in Athens.

In

in intensity and sophistication. Out of thousands of photos of the interior and exterior of the ancient machine, there emerged the architecture, engineering and a user's manual. Now it was possible to understand more clearly how the Antikythera computer was constructed.

According to Marchant, Freeth was dazzled with the results of the high tech imaging of the An-

have been developed for a few rich people to play with. The Antikythera computer was an everyday workhorse of Greek astronomical knowledge and useful calendar. This calendar predicted eclipses of the sun and moon and connected those celestial happenings and the practical needs of knowing the seasons and when to offer sacrifices to the gods with the four-year cycle of athletic celebrations in the Greek world. No one would even dream of creating such a machine for the pleasure of a few rich Greeks.

Predicting the

ativity and advanced science.

In the tenth and last chapter of "Decoding the Heavens," Marchant tried to answer the question of who dreamed up the Antikythera computer. Inevitably, she took up the more important issue of why the Greeks invented technology. She admits there might have been philosophical and religious reasons explaining technology among the Greeks. But, in general, she says technical skills in the Greek world circulated among few powerful people who used those skills to inspire "wonder in the masses" and keep the "lower classes in their place."

This theory is wrong but it fits Marchant's proposal that the Antikythera Mechanism was for the rich. In both cases she relied on speculation.

However, Marchant is right that it took generations to perfect the Greeks' gearwheels for modeling the heavens.

Marchant ends her book with some reflections that restore the overall importance of her work. The Antikythera Mechanism started by celebrating the heavens. Yet, the clocks it spawned broke our ties to those heavens. Marchant seems to be saying, yes, we are masters of the heavens but we have lost immeasurably in that journey. We use machinery to measure time and think nothing of it. But the Greeks doing the same thing did much more than measuring time. They gained knowledge and demonstrated the beauty of heavens while getting closer to their gods.

I could not agree with her more. You need to read her book. It's a story of drama and discovery. It brings together disparate and similar strands of scientific narrative about what at first seems to be just an insignificant lump of bronze from 100 BCE, yet turns out to be the world's first known computer.

The Antikythera Mechanism has been studied in such technical detail that it speaks to us like an ancient text. That text rewrites history, showing that 2,000 years before our time, the ancient Greeks who designed the Antikythera Mechanism "thought like us, solved problems like us, built machines like us." The Antikythera Mechanism "turns upside down any notion we might have had about ancient technology being 'primitive' and our own being so 'advanced.'"



eclipses of the sun and the moon was so exact that Freeth looked at the Antikythera Mechanism as an "eclipse predictor." In addition, Freeth was certain that the gears of the Greek computer accommodated both circular and elliptical motion.

Marchant says that thinking up and executing such a scheme was "breathtaking – more impressive than a differential gear and beyond any but the most skilled clockmakers today." No doubt, taking care of the moon's wobble was unprecedented in Greek astronomy for that would be clashing with an established tradition of fitting the heavenly bodies into circular motion. But such an original thought and technology were not more impressive than the differential gear, but coequal and complementary in cre-

September 2005, Freeth and his technicians started their imaging work at the museum. One of the technicians, Tom Malzbender, came to Athens from California. He took pictures of the Antikythera fragments with his flashbulb dome. Then X-Tek used its state-of-the-art technology, the Blade Runner, to probe the insides of the Greek computer. In addition, Hewlett-Packard revealed buried surface inscriptions. All in all, the fragments of the computer were exposed to X-ray bombardment unprecedented

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# Centenarian Vasiliki Scotese Remembers Traditional Poems and Songs

## A Weft of Memory: A Greek Mother's Recollection of Songs and Poems

By Vasiliki Scotese and Thomas J. Scotese

Aristide D. Caratzas, Publisher, 299 pages, \$30

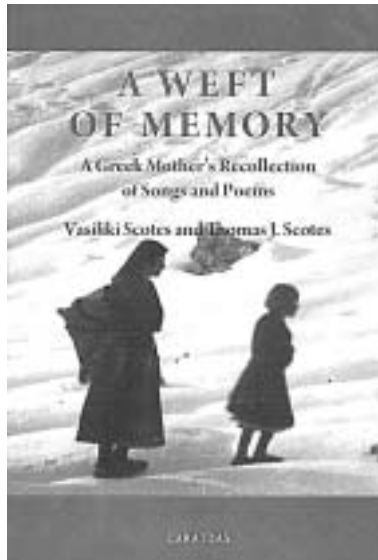
By Artemis Leontis

Special to The National Herald

We are what we remember and what others remember of us. In human societies around the globe, identity and memory are inextricably intertwined.

Consider a traditional Greek folk song of Epirus, which begins, "Glykharazoun ta vouna" (the mountains catch the dawn's sweet light). At the break of dawn, a "xenos" (foreigner) reaches a marble fountain in a mountain village and there finds a young woman weeping for her absent husband. He has been away in "xenitia" (a foreign place) for five years now, she declares, and if he doesn't return in another three, she will join a convent. To the stranger's assertion that he is her husband, she answers with a test, asking him to recall the "simadia" (signs or marks) first of the house, then of her body. Only after he recalls the blemishes on intimate spots not publicly visible on her covered face and torso does she acknowledge him as her own: "You really are my husband and the man who is my lover."

"Glykharazoun ta vouna" is one of 234 poems and songs and 37 couplets appearing in the original Greek and in English translation in "A Weft of Memory: A Greek Mother's Recollection of Songs and Poems." The book is a remarkable collection of traditional Greek verse as recalled from memory by Vasiliki Scotese, a woman who has lived in "xenitia" for more than three quarters of a century and is now in her 101st year. With this prodigious sign of memories retained from her youth, Scotese has surely proved her identity as a woman from Theodoriana, a mountainous village tucked away at an altitude of 3,148.8 feet in the Pindus range in the northwestern Greek province of Epirus. Moreover, as a singer and composer of verse in the oral tradition, she has also shown herself to be a worthy descendent of bards who have



been reworking Greek poetry and song for thousands of years.

The existence of "A Weft of Memory" is nothing short of a miracle. Here is how it came about. In the summer of 2004, Thomas J. Scotese, a retired diplomat from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (he was U.S. Ambassador to Yemen and Chargé d'Affaires in Syria) and a notably attentive son, asked his then 97-year-old mother to retrieve the few poems he remembered hearing her recite in his youth. He intended to record and translate them for the benefit of her descendants. Scotese accepted the challenge and began pulling at those long-submerged threads of childhood memory, word by word,



**From 2004 to 2007, Vasiliki Scotese recited from memory 234 songs and poems she had learned as a child in her home village of Theodoriana in the Tzoumerka region of Epirus, Greece. Born in 1908, she is 99 years old in this picture. Photograph courtesy of Michael Vovakes.**

line by line. For the next three years she extracted verses she hadn't heard recited or sung since she immigrated to the U.S. in 1931. Ballads from the era of Greece's Turkish occupation, bandit songs from the Greek War of Independence, patriotic songs, and songs of holidays, love, marriage, absence and lament all came back to her even though an accretion of newer memories from more than 70 years of life in the U.S. stood between her and the horizon of her youth. Mother and son were both astonished by the outpouring of verse. As the collection grew, Thomas Scotese saw it was something bigger than a family album. With guidance from fellow Epirote publisher Aristide Caratzas and editor Christiane Lange, he refined his translations, added evocative photographs, and wrote useful annotations and a rich, unsentimental introduction. Together these offer a rich, multi-layered context for appreciating the poems. Thus the long thread of memories became a beautiful, well-conceived book of 300 pages for many people to take into their hands and enjoy.

The genesis of this book has everything to do with its content. The book records verses from oral tradition, which for centuries has depended on human memory to keep them alive. In a Darwinian sense, the fittest verses have survived. That is to say, verses that match the capacities of human memory continue to circulate, while those less suited have faded into oblivion. Yet in our day remembering even a single poem of many lines is no easy task. To grasp the miracle of Scotese's accomplishment, consider how difficult it is for most of us, young and old, bombarded as we are by printed, broadcast, and electronic words, to retain the most brilliant quotation, useful vocabulary, or important set of facts and to bring these to mind at will without the assistance of written cues. What made it possible for Vasiliki Scotese to retain and perform large chunks of literary language?

Two considerations shed light on this question. The first has to do with the context of oral poetry's inscription on Scotese's memory. From her birth in 1908 until 1931, Scotese lived in a society of semi-nomadic sheep and goat herders, who transmitted cultural memory by word of mouth, often in verse form. This is not to say that young people of Theodoriana were not also learning to read and write.



**Thomas J. Scotese (right), retired U.S. Ambassador to Yemen and Syria from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is the oldest of three children born to Vasiliki and Dimitrios Scotese. His siblings are Anna and Theodore. As his mother approached her 100th year, he asked to her recite from memory the few poems and songs he had heard as a child. His intention was to record and translate them for his mother's descendants. Little did he know that her memory was a veritable treasure trove. His project grew into a book of 300 pages, with annotations relating to customs and traditions provided by his mother and historical material gathered through his own reading and consultation with relatives and friends. Photograph from the Scotese family archives.**

Scotese attended a few years of primary school and was an avid reader of Greek throughout her life. Yet people entertained themselves by reciting poetry. Moreover, they distilled in their poems and songs useful knowledge about their way of life: about the dangerous trek between rich summer pastures near Theodoriana in the summer and temporary homes in the plains in winter; about successive raids, recent battles for access to pasture lands, brigandage and ethnic conflict, courtship and marriage; about the effects of emigration and more generally their harsh existence and the life-affirming values by which they survived. The poetry collected in this anthology usually gets straight to the point, without sugar coating reality. It reminded villagers to recognize the fickleness of fate and to keep a grip on the

present social order by valuing heroic acts, distinguishing between productive and disruptive desires, and anticipating the sorrows of loss, separation, and old age. As a piece of its entertainment value and an equally important lesson in survival, it gave a humorous twist to village life. Subtle humor is a feature of even the most ceremonious verse, for example this understated couplet, sung when a marriage party escorted a bride to a neighboring village:

*Min mas parexigisete porthaman sto horio sas.  
Emeis tin nyfi pairnoume, kai to horio diko sas.  
(Don't find fault with us for coming to your village.  
We're taking away the bride and village is still yours.) (216-217)*



Thomas Scotes dressed in his great-uncle's foustanela for the "panegyri" (festival) in Theodoriana in 1956. Photograph from the Scotes family archive.



Vasiliki Scotes dressed in this traditional costume for the "panegyri" in Theodoriana in 1965. Photograph from the Scotes family archive.

The processes of oral transmission by which people of Theodoriana explored their social order contrast with those in a literate society, where values receive analytical explorations in critical treatises made possible by writing. People of our era are both the beneficiaries and the victims of the cultural up-

heavals that have accompanied the invention of technologies for the transmission of the word, from the invention of alphabetic scripts in the second millennium B.C. to Gutenberg's printing press in 1436 to the digital revolution in the 20th century. On the one hand, writing technologies have made possible the instantaneous retrieval of great stores of information. They are the precondition for the categorization of knowledge and composition of analytical expositions and long, episodic novels in arrhythmic, non-rhyming, unmemorable prose. On the other hand, technologies of writing have displaced the human capacity to verse. Scotes' collection takes us back to an era before that displacement. It stands as a "kind of time capsule" (xvii), hearkening back to a time when people's cultural identity hung on the remembrance of poetry.

But what exactly made the verses memorable? This brings us to a second consideration: the very important question of style. The stylistic features of oral poetry have been carefully studied by scholars such as linguist Milman Parry, whose research in the 1930s vindicated ancient Greek rumors that the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" were works of a rhapsode: a singer of tales (literally a "tailor of songs"). Parry observed a stylistic feature of epic verse: its repetition of rhythmic formulaic structures. Homeric poetry repeatedly renders Achilles swift-footed, Odysseus a man of many turns, words winged, and dawn rosy fingered. Parry and his successor Alfred Lord identified such rhythmic word groupings as the poems' building blocks: the necessary tools for the poems' composition-in-performance and remembrance.

Formulae recur in the verse recorded in "A Weft of Memory." For example, "Glykoharazoun ta vouna," the poem about the returning emigrant mentioned above, incorporates several formulae. The opening phrase is formulaic, appearing in several recorded songs with completely different subjects, including one by the famous Greek composer Vassilis Tsitsanis, whose parents were from Epirus. Another formula describes the wife's marital situation, "Eho andra stin xenitia edo kai pente hronia / ki akoma dyo ton kartero, tria ton perimeno" (My husband's off in foreign lands, for five years he is absent / And for two years I've expected him, I'll wait for another three") (112-113). It appears again in "Mia ligeri tragoudage" (A graceful girl in a marble tower) (240-241), with slight modification. Similarly the narration of the test that the returning emigrant must take to convince his wife that he is her hus-

band in Scotes' version of "Glykoharazoun ta vouna" also appears in the recorded song "Mia kori Trike-riotissa."

Formulae are just one of several systems of constraint that make oral poetry memorable. According to cognitive psychologists, long-term verbal memory requires fea-

tures such as strong imagery and sound and structural patterns, which narrow down the choice of words. Scotes' verses contain such memory constraints. The rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration in the folk song that begins, "Kato sti Rhodo, sti Rodopoula / Tourkos agapise mia..." (On Rhodes the island, on

the isle of Rhodes), make the word "Romiopoula" at the close of the second line predictable and memorable: "Tourkos agapise mia Romiopoula" (A Turk fell in love with a young Greek girl) (158-59). Structural patterns such as causal

Continued on page 23

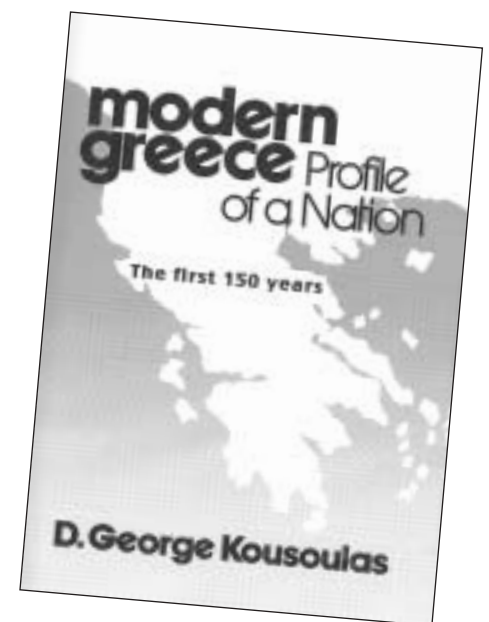
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*Henry J. Ferry, Mediterranean Quarterly*

# Greek American Poetic Currents: Traversing the Paths of Time and Space

## Pomegranate Seeds: An Anthology of Greek-American Poetry

By Dean Kostos, Editor

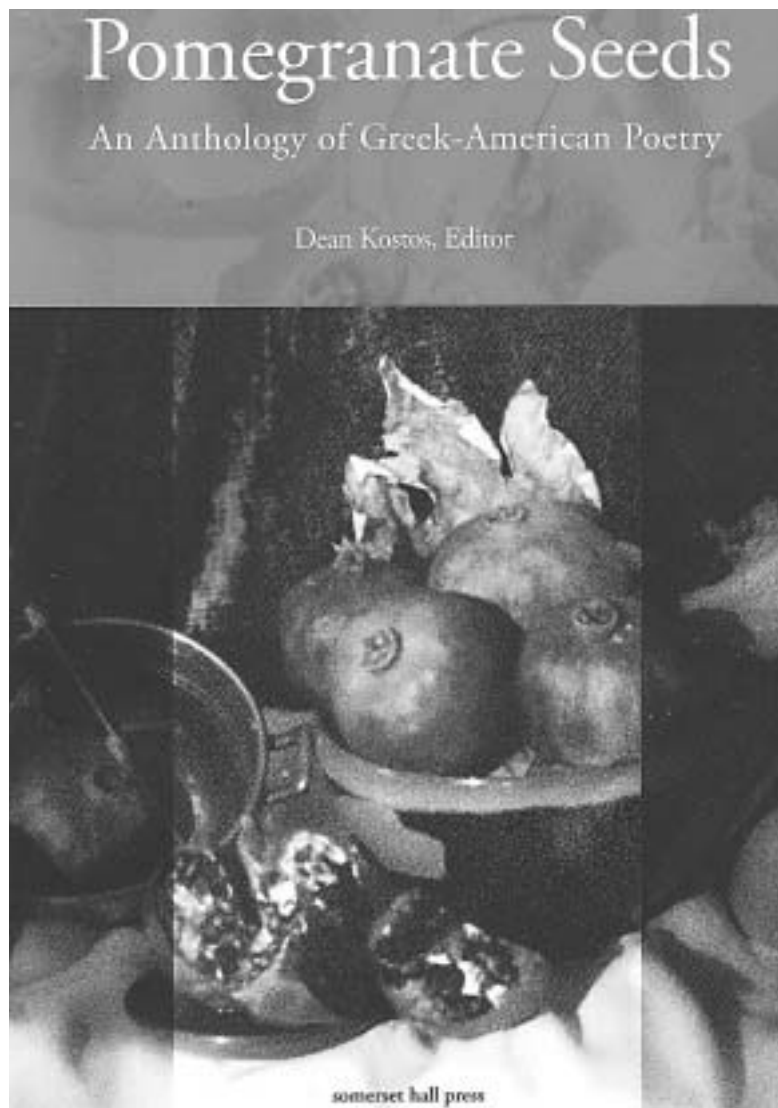
Somerset Hall Press, 299 pages,  
\$19.95 paperback

By Anastasia Stefanidou

Special to The National Herald

The very first anthology of Greek American poetry, "Pomegranate Seeds" is a definite landmark in the history of Greek American literature. With obvious dedication and critical ingenuity, Dean Kostos offers a book that has long been missing, especially when considering the century-old presence of this poetry in the United States. An author of three poetry books ("Last Supper of the Senses," "The Sentence That Ends with a Comma" and "Celestial Rust"), as well as a translator, reviewer and teacher of poetry, Kostos edited a volume which privileges the versatility of American poetry. At a time when there is a proliferation of multicultural and ethnically-oriented poetry collections and anthologies in the United States, "Pomegranate Seeds" fulfills a fundamental need in Greek American literature. Additionally, it demonstrates the diverse artistic power and boundless vision of 49 contemporary authors, most of whom were born in the United States, while a few in Greece or Cyprus. Almost all of them have received poetry awards and been published by American presses.

When Kostos mentioned his project to friends, he repeatedly received the same reply: "Are there that many Greek-American poets?" a question similar to what I was accustomed to hearing when I began my doctoral work on Greek American poetry more than ten years ago. "Is there Greek American poetry?" was almost always followed by "What is Greek American poetry?" The anthology not only answers those questions in the most gratifying way but also sets an unequivocal standard for more works of equal range and depth. "Pomegranate Seeds," of course, builds on a vigorous tradition starting from the first known poetry collection "Tragoudia tis Xenitias" ("Songs of a Foreign Land"), which was published in 1912 by Demetrios Valakos, to the



most recent prize-winning "An Almost Pure Empty Walking" by Tryfon Tolides. Greek American poetry has been unfolding and affirming the complexities of ethnic and diasporic identity in America, while, at the same time, it is a participant in the ongoing dialogues and developments within American literature.

The creation of "Pomegranate Seeds" is rooted in the enthusiastic reception of the reading series at Cornelia Street Café in Greenwich Village, which Kostos has been organizing for the last 18 years. For Kostos, a major set of criteria for the anthology has been "a strong voice, powerful writing and rigorous craft" (personal communication). Aware of, yet not intimidated by, the obvious marginalization of Greek American poetry and "saddened by the fact that no such anthology existed to represent the Greek American experience," Kostos carefully selected poems of varied thematic scope and aesthetic sensibility. The alphabetical arrangement of the poets provides readers with the liberty to en-

joy their literary journey without any pre-established selection principles or theoretical agenda. Moreover, the biographical notes are not merely informative but often give us glimpses into the poets' spiritual worlds, particularly in relation to their own perception of Greekness.

Many of the poems evoke, memorialize or blend figures, images and emotions related to Greek family, tradition, myth or landscape. These are usually explored in stimulating and innovative ways, especially when compared to the more lyrical, symbolic and nostalgic Greek American poetry written before and around the middle of the 20th century by such poets as Aristides Phourides and George Koutoumanos. Moreover, a prevalent theme in Greek American writing, just as in the writing by and about the Other America, has always been immigration and diasporic existence. These are now not necessarily associated with feelings of permanent loss, anxiety of displacement or fear within an intimi-

dating new world. Quite the contrary, emotional and geographical distance from one's roots can make it possible for the anthologized poets to engage in inspirational cultural flows between the different locations and imagined spaces they inhabit, whether they are first, second or third generation Greek Americans.

Recovering the original meaning of diaspora as an opportunity for adventurous wanderings and cross-cultural discoveries, Stathis Gourgouris in "Poseidonians (Fin de Siècle)" focuses on the Greeks' essential need to travel:

*As Greeks, we left behind  
lonely and homeless columns  
turning to face the sea  
like still-voiced women.*

*To strangers we showed  
what psyche means, what is infinity.  
Without a compass, without  
purgatory  
(foreign inventions)  
we took to the dark seas  
out of sheer fondness  
for studying stars. (141)*

Gourgouris seems to imply that despite the obvious role of history and tradition in shaping the course of our lives, we should feel free to go beyond them in order to explore the mysterious and the unknown. In this way we can reconsider and revise our sense of self and our position within our social and historical worlds.

The endless potential of diaspora for artistic gain and cosmopolitan insight are also suggested, this time in surreal colors. In "The Poet of the Diaspora" by Nicos Alexiou, "A man is counting sky-blue boats / in his blind palms / they tear open his hands / he travels on red seas" (26). The inevitable feelings of sadness and separation in diaspora can also lead towards more creative routes and greater self-awareness. This is especially true when identity is viewed as borderless and nationless. An example of this sentiment is found in Nicholas Samaras' poetry. In "Studio Apartment," Samaras writes about the transcendence of the physical dimensions of exile and its transformation into ecumenical citizenship:

*. . . In every country,  
every village and city, then, what did  
we ever find  
but the patchwork of ourselves?*

*It was all good Daniel.*

*If we were no country, we could be  
every country.*

*Displaced by the world's history, we  
inhabited the world.*

*And you can only find the world  
through exile. (260)*

Immigration, however, is also a highly painful condition of lost safety and abandoned dreams of genealogical continuity. This reality is very evident in the early immigrants of the first half of the 20th century, who were usually driven away from their homelands for economic and political reasons. They have not always adapted comfortably to life in America. In "Greek Widows of America," Dan Georgakas adds a rarely discussed dimension to this experience by shedding light on the women immigrants who were commonly brought to America as brides for the chiefly bachelor Greek communities:

*Consider these Greek widows of  
America  
completing blackclad lives  
in the rented rooms of the old  
neighborhood  
or dreaming alone in their aging  
homes  
now that children sleep in the  
wedlock  
so eagerly sought for them. (116)*

For the second and third generation Greek Americans, adaptation to America has not always been a smooth or consistent process either. Indeed, the Americans born to Greek parents have often felt uncertain and confused not only regarding the more obvious issues of language and religion, but also those of deeper moral values and cultural identity. Their unique standing as carriers of a fabled cultural legacy at times gives them pride and reassurance and other times reasons to feel alienated or ashamed. In "Mavraki," Stephanos Papadopoulos traces the steps of an elderly man dragging himself around old Athens where tourists ". . . have made the ocean crossing to come to this: / a street of jewelry shops and plaster, / authentic Greeks in authentic shops. / This city is like a shirt worn inside out" (246). The obvious irony undermines any sort of unquestionable identification and emotional connection with one's home culture. Nevertheless, some poets regard this ambiguous and mediating position with a sense of humor, usually with

ironic overtones, as does George Economou in the poem "An Evening in Kingfisher." An elderly American guard is confused by a Greek American professor's perfect English, especially after finding out about the professor's foreign name and origins:

- "Well, George, how d'yuh like workin' here among all these Americans?"  
- "I told you, Huck, I was born here."  
- "I like yuh, George, I'd like to talk to yuh 'bout your beliefs." (101)

Memory, whether arising directly from personal experiences or being passed on as part of a family's oral history or a nation's past, is always compelling and illuminating. It simultaneously expands and unfolds the intersecting layers of Greek American identity. Even when supplemented with invented stories and impressions, recollection resists imposed silences and carries meaningful practices and traditions, which may be subsequently revised to fit into an American present. In Cleopatra Mathis' poem, "Cleopatra Theodos," grandmother and granddaughter overcome a significant language barrier through non-verbal communication. Their bonding becomes a visceral witness of the Greek genocide in Asia Minor, for which the Greek woman imagines taking revenge through the ritual of warding off the evil eye that has afflicted the American girl:

*Five brothers in a nation of murdered children  
came back and spoke, safe for once  
in the sanctuary of her face. Held  
there in Ayvali,  
stone's throw from the ancient cities  
of grief,  
the devil met his history. His gift for  
division  
could not stand up to the power of  
her losses. (223)*

In "Litany of Tears" by Sofia Kontogeorge Kostos, the Christian extermination by the Turks (1894-1922) is recalled in a determined, realistic and forceful tone which aims at restoring important historical omissions: "Those who did not freeze, were raped / Those who were raped, went mad / Men, women, children—all (186). Other poets such as Eleni Fourtouni and Manya Coulentianos Bean bring back the Greek national past with striking images of the women of Souli dancing towards their death and of hunger-struck children during the Nazi occupation of Greece. E.D. Karampetos attacks the junta for casting darkness over the Greek spirit and killing Diogenes who "isn't coming / it's possible someone . . . else will bring the light" (176).

Another prominent cultural



**Dean Kostos, editor of "Pomegranate Seeds," is the author of three poetry books as well as a translator, reviewer, literary judge and teacher of poetry writing. He was born in Forest Hills, Queens, and lives in Manhattan. Founder of the Greek-American Writers' Association, Kostos hosts a reading series on the third Saturday of every month at the Cornelia Street Café, in Greenwich Village. For more information about Kostos and the reading series you can visit [www.dean-kostos.com](http://www.dean-kostos.com).**

source on which Greek American poets draw extensively is ancient Greek history and mythology. These are not revived only for the sake of guarding their timeless value and

symbolic nuances. Through the dynamic viewpoint of their binational Greekness (the term coined by historian Dan Georgakas), Greek American poets defy worn-out assumptions, rewrite highly idealized moments of the past and transfer them creatively into the present. At the same time, they allow mythical and legendary figures to emerge in contemporary settings and to speak in unfamiliar, bolder or subtler, voices.

In John Bradley's "Song of Icarus," the playful tone of Icarus accentuates the generational gap between son and father, disputes notions of traditional authority and questions the attainability of eternal truths. With the firm statement that he lives "in the absence / of rules" flying far beyond "the old man and his old man fears," Icarus fabricates all over again his supposedly fatal experiment by claiming: "I tell you I didn't die. / I just never bothered / to turn back" (59). In the poem "Theseus: Mythology of Consciousness" by Yiorgos Chouliaras, a self-doubting and unheroic Theseus is wandering around the labyrinth "endlessly unraveling" the thread in his hands which is not capable of ". . . guiding me / without showing me / what I'm doing here / and where I may find myself at the end." (77)

Alexander the Great acquires human weaknesses in Neil Carpathios' poem "For the Vessel Within the Vessel." In a series of speculations on the reasons why Alexander wept on his deathbed, Carpathios captures the entire kaleidoscope of

life's essences enclosed within instances of natural beauty, sensual pleasure and spiritual freedom. His poem reminds us that these traits may ironically remain unnoticed during our lifetime. Alexander did not cry because he would never "taste another succulent / pear" nor "feel the sudden gush of blood on his hands." He realized, too late, the inevitable transience of happiness and fulfilling truth, while resigning to the knowledge granted by the finality of death:

*He wept, they say, for the soundless ballroom  
of the body, where spirits of those times  
we're most alive dance. Where what lasts  
by not lasting expands what we are,  
cracking us. For what, they say, held it all,  
he wept. And for what he could now hold. (75)*

Embedded in realism, fantasy, myth, magic realism and other aesthetic underpinnings, Greek American poetry creates a new mythology of the self and continually affirms and re-imagines Greekness in the United States. It broadens and crosses over the borders of language, his-

tory, tradition and culture. Bringing together the poets' separate artistic trajectories, the anthology effectively reflects a new phase in Greek American literature. "Pomegranate Seeds" is thus more than the first of its kind. It reinforces the nature of Greek American contribution to American literature as a collective force of distinct yet interconnected voices. Nor is it simply a must reading for literary scholars. "Pomegranate Seeds" invites Greek and non-Greek readers to join Greek American poets in a marvelous array of passions, fears, mysteries, dreams and hopes.

"Pomegranate Seeds: An Anthology of Greek-American Poetry" can be ordered from: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and other bookstores or directly from Somerset Hall Press from: [www.somersethallpress.com](http://www.somersethallpress.com).

**Anastasia Stefanidou, Ph.D., has taught American literature and multicultural poetry at Aristotle University, Greece. Her scholarly work on Greek American literature has appeared in the "Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora," "The Charioteer," the "Journal of Modern Hellenism" and "The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature."**



Photo by A. T. Chakalis

The restoration and replanting of the Greek Cultural Garden is being coordinated by the Hellenic Preservation Society of Northeastern Ohio



The mission of HPS is to present a unified voice of the Hellenes in Northeast Ohio that will promote the Greek experience through education, collection and preservation.

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**Best wishes**  
*to the*  
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*authors*

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# Ecclesia: A Sense of Sacred Space

## “Ecclesia: Greek Orthodox Churches of the Chicago Metropolis”

By Panos Fiorentinos  
Kantylis Inc., 224 pages, \$54

By Michael G. Davros  
Special to The National Herald

A surface appreciation or glance of “Ecclesia: Greek Orthodox Churches of the Chicago Metropolis” by Panos Fiorentinos suggests a sumptuous coffee table book, but on closer inspection the book invites a deeper read. “Ecclesia” is more than a careful photographic representation of the churches of the Greek Orthodox metropolis of Chicago, it is a study of the Orthodox faith.

Over a period of three years, Fiorentinos traveled throughout the six states and 59 parishes of the metropolis to build a reverential compendium. He not only meticulously catalogued each church’s history but also used his consummate professionalism in photography to showcase the life of the spirit.

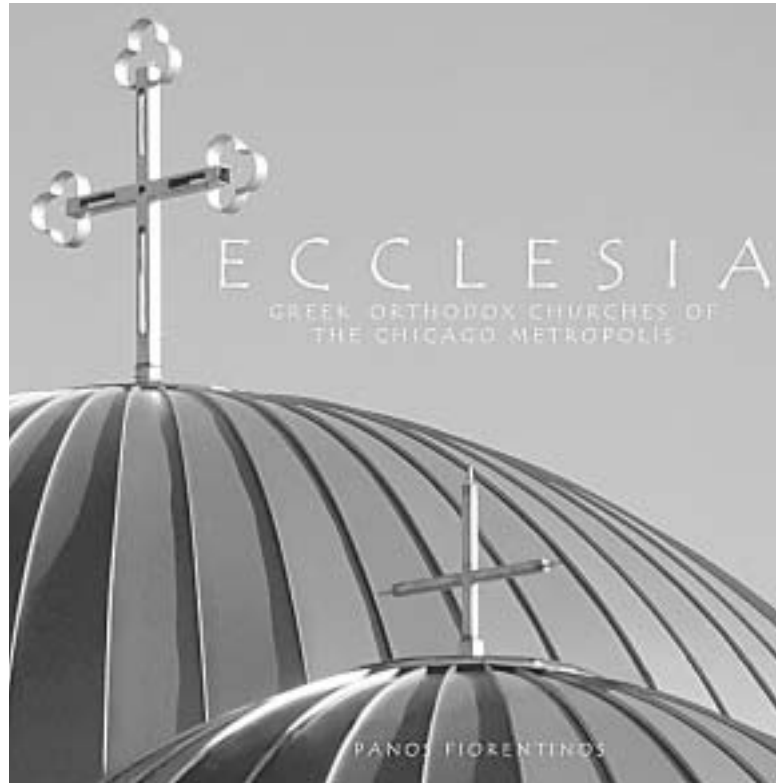
Panos Fiorentinos has worked hard and the quality and meticulousness of his work shows. Each photograph has been taken with great care and precision to display exteriors and interiors in the most complimentary lighting. In a recent interview Fiorentinos observed that “at first I wanted to photograph the outside of churches.” Most of the churches are represented by a front exterior elevation, without automobiles, or people or telephone poles so that each church is presented without extraneous distractions. Thus, front elevations demonstrate a composed seriousness and serenity. For interiors, Fiorentinos attempted to photograph in the mornings to allow and capture more sunlight. Again, an attention to detail omits such items as microphone stands, cables and other elements that would otherwise clutter interior space. Each photograph of an interior space literally shimmers with a light that is neither contrived nor garish. The luminosity of each icon is brought forth with an honesty that the iconographers would have welcomed. It is difficult to write about this book without praising the spirit of artistic composition which brought “Ecclesia” into being.

Professional photographers or

art historians may appreciate the particularities and techniques involved. Most all of the pictures were taken with slide film, at slow speed, using Ektachrome except two that were shot digitally. Photographs were taken using a Canon A2 35mm camera and were then developed commercially at considerable retail cost. If the church was photographed in natural light, daylight film was used. If the church was too dark, church lights were turned on and the appropriate film was used specially for the type of light source. The lay person dispenses with those categories in appreciation of the final product, which is truly a work of art. Perhaps best classified as a work of art history, “Ecclesia” is completely “sui generis.” No other book of this kind and quality exists, and readers will want to have Fiorentinos work his magic in representing every church of every metropolis with the same care, skill, professionalism and reverence. Fiorentinos has placed his professionalism in the service of his faith and reverence for Orthodoxy.

Besides presenting irreplaceable photography in 400 color plates, “Ecclesia” functions as a teaching text on the faith. Fiorentinos offers readers a brief history of “The Immigrants’ Story” written by renowned scholars Andrew T. Kopan and Michael Tsihchlis. Drawing upon his personal knowledge of and devotion to the faith, his love for the liturgy and his contacts with writers about the faith, Fiorentinos calls upon Dan Christopoulos to provide a “Brief Introduction to the Orthodox Faith.” Noted Chicago lecturer and teacher Faye Peponis writes about the “Iconography in the Orthodox Church.” Rounding out the prefatory material of “Ecclesia” are sections on “Parish Names” and “Church Symbolism.” Except for information about local history, much of the front matter could be duplicated for use in other similar volumes that could be produced for other metropolises. In fact, it is hard to believe that Fiorentinos would not have the remaining metropolises in the United States lined up for similar texts. And this kind of work is the work of a devoted lifetime, every bit as significant as a theological or monastic treatise.

While Fiorentinos has established himself as a brilliant church historian with one text, he needs help to continue his work. Other metropolises need to recognize the



valuable service and contribution that Fiorentinos’ work can provide throughout the country not only to inform others but also to spread the faith. Orthodox Christians often claim that Orthodoxy is a carefully guarded secret, but Fiorentinos’ love of the church, of space and color are clearly visible to even

the most casual observer who might mistakenly classify “Ecclesia” as a coffee table text.

About his deep appreciation of color, Fiorentinos passionately comments that “color is such a subjective thing.” In having to contend with priests, parishioners and parish councils who claimed that



**A San Francisco native, Panos Fiorentinos, author of “Ecclesia,” now makes his home in Chicago with his wife and daughter. A parishioner at St. Andrew’s Greek Orthodox Church on the city’s North Side, he is a photographer, a researcher of church history, and a highly sought after professional model maker for architectural design firms in the Chicago area.**

the camera missed a shade, Fiorentinos’ work argues well that he has unmistakably captured the essences of the colors of sacred spaces. Sensitive to color, Fiorentinos observes that “what I’m struck by” about St. Andrew’s in Chicago is “the blueness of the windows. Something about the blueness of the windows that somehow touches my soul. Something about that hue of blue and when the morning sun shines through gives me such a feeling that someone, something is present.” Thus, as with the production of so many books, authors do their work out of labors of love rather than the promise of wealth.

To say that Fiorentinos’ imagery is gorgeous is to mistake the scholarship that has gone into defining each church’s history. Fiorentinos records the emergence of each parish community, its various previous sites and current location. Each of these historical descriptions is embedded in the sacred and secular history of the founders and significant clergy of each church. He observes that when he went to St. Demetrios in Waterloo, Iowa, “you could feel the history ... I wasn’t after business stories, but stories of personal sacrifice” that show the devotion of Orthodox Christians to their faith and the church.

While the most dominant feature of “Ecclesia” is the photography, an iconography of iconography, the historical information in the text is invaluable because it carries with it the scholar’s mark. Of Annunciation Cathedral in Chicago, Fiorentinos writes, “Organized in 1892, Annunciation was the first Greek Orthodox community in Chicago” (50). Given the continuous arguments ranging over a century about which parish was first, Fiorentinos is courageous to make a bold statement that any parish was the first anything in Chicago. He continues, “In that year, the Lycurgus Society, a Greek fraternal organization composed of immigrants from Sparta and Laconia, petitioned the Synod of Bishops of the Church of Greece to send a priest to the city. The fledgling community began worshipping in a warehouse at Union Avenue and Randolph Street, near the produce market where the Greeks lived and worked” (50). In this quotation from “Ecclesia,” Fiorentinos demonstrates his concern that his audience may be unfamiliar with Greek, church or immigrant history in Chicago. He carefully explains the significance of such entities as



ABOVE LEFT: Holy Trinity in Chicago, Illinois celebrated its centennial in 1997. ABOVE RIGHT: Perhaps one of the most famous designs, Annunciation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin was the vision of Frank Lloyd Wright. RIGHT: Although Annunciation in Kankakee, Illinois is the smallest church in the Metropolis with ten pews, it is also one of the oldest, having been established in 1925. RIGHT, 3RD FROM TOP: Although it has no dome, Assumption Church in Town and Country, Missouri, has the most complete iconography of all the churches in the Metropolis. BOTTOM RIGHT: In 1966, Holy Apostles in Westchester, Illinois received special recognition from the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for outstanding architectural achievement.



PHOTOS: PANOS FIORENTINOS



the Lycurgus Society and thus provides a valuable lesson.

In his discussion of Assumption Church in Chicago, Fiorentinos points out the various styles “present in the church: Renaissance, classical, neo-Byzantine, and Byzantine” (54). His discussion of St. Basil in Chicago reminds readers of the church’s roots in the Jewish Anshe Shalom Temple. Today, visitors can still see elements of the temple visible in the church.

From Minnesota to Missouri, Fiorentinos has covered each Greek Orthodox church carefully for both historical and aesthetic accuracy. In yet another example, the interior of “modernistic” Frank Lloyd Wright’s Annunciation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin is bathed in a cool blue light that asks the viewer to watch the solea and altar practically hover (206). No matter the richness of text, however, a reader will always return to the photography in “Ecclesia” as the consummate artistic achievement.

Fiorentinos’ personal devotion to the careful production of photography as fine art also supports yet additional service to literature and ethnic preservation. In preserving the legacy of the late DePaul University professor Andrew T. Kopan, Alice Orphanos Kopan writes “Professor Kopan’s research reinforced that ethnic survival is

not static, and knowledge of a group’s struggles and triumphs of the past give valuable insight for the preservation of cultural and religious legacies. Over the years he urged that strategic and collective community intervention is essential for any group to survive and be vibrant over time” (“Greeks in Chicago” 6). While the Kopans’ comments relate to ethnic survival and preservation, Fiorentinos’s efforts in “Ecclesia” go far beyond representing iconography of the faith by depicting the churches of the Chicago metropolis in such ways that not only are the church and the text preserved, but the churches endure.

To purchase “Ecclesia” visit Fiorentinos’ website, [www.Kantyl.com](http://www.Kantyl.com) for ordering information. Customers will receive a signed copy with a complimentary “What’s Missing?” poster, a handsome 24” x 36” visual display of all of the churches gathered with a simple message.

**Michael G. Davros, Ph.D.,** teaches in the English department of Northeastern Illinois University. He is currently researching Greek American literature for a scholarly text and has recently authored “Greeks in Chicago,” a pictorial history available through Arcadia Publishing.

# Greek Musicals: 1955-1975

## From Imitation of Hollywood to Bouzaki and Syrtaki

### The Greek Film Musical: A Critical and Cultural History

By Lydia Papadimitriou  
McFarland & Co., 190 pages,  
\$49.95 softcover

By Dan Georgakas  
Special to The National Herald

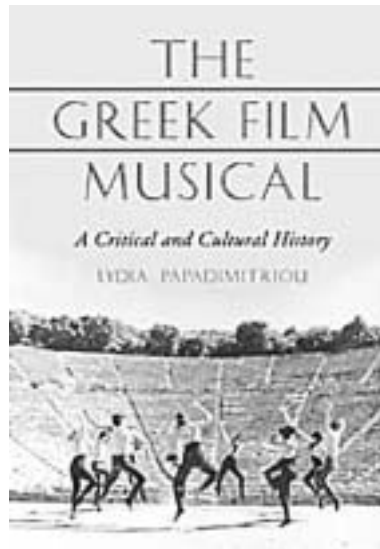
The Greek musical was by far the most popular genre of Greek cinema in the three decades following World War II. English-language studies of these films, however, are non-existent and even serious scholarly work in Greek is scant. Lydia Papadimitriou has now addressed both problems in a thoroughly scholarly yet populist narrative that is a delight to read. Appropriate stills and promotional posters that evoke the Greek studio era generously illustrate her lively commentary.

Just what constitutes a Greek musical is Papadimitriou's starting point. It can't simply include any film with music. Do Greek musicals just mimic those produced so magnificently in Hollywood? Do Greek musicals deal with youth culture as was so popular in the United States in the 1960s? More significant culturally, are there any specific Greek forms of the musical? Papadimitriou gives a very convincing yes to all of these questions.

The Greek musical was a creation and creature of the studio area in Greek cinema, which flourished from the 1950s through the mid-1970s. Greek musicals were so popular that specific musical films were the number one box office hits in Greece every year from 1963-1969. Although conceived as popular entertainments, these films also reflect all the conflicts and changes Greek society experienced as it moved out of the chaos of war to cultural normalcy. Common to many plots was the struggle between the desire to achieve modernity while retaining the positives of tradition.

#### THE THREE PERIODS OF THE MUSICAL

Papadimitriou divides her analysis into three periods. The first period (1955-65) is when Greek musicals came into being.



The number of these films was relatively few and quite imitative of Hollywood productions. The films, however, also began to draw on the

native music of Greece. Story lines often focused on the need to upgrade the quality of Greek life. As Papadimitriou ably notes, "They convey a message of optimism, hope and promise of a better future." The first Greek musical was appropriately named "Charoumeno Xekinima" (Joyful Beginning), 1955. A group of musicians and singers want to work on radio. After numerous misunderstandings, they end as three successful couples who indeed become singing stars on radio.

The most creative period of the musical (1965-1970) was a time when Greek directors and musicians gave musicals a more distinctive Hellenic favor. The bouzouki, folk dances and popular music were the major means of nationalizing this previous Hollywoodian genre. The films often mocked or

admired tourists in a succession of rags to riches plots that challenged existing class relations. They also often used traditional village culture as a nostalgic touchstone for Greekness. Above all, however, the musical began to feature stars. None was more famed or beloved than Aliki Vougiouklaki. Typical of films she starred in was, "I Neraida ke to Palikarim" (The Fairy and the Young Man), 1970. This Romeo-Juliet story is set in Crete where traditional feuds, misunderstandings and familial insistence on arranged marriages threaten to frustrate true love. But in the end, with the help of six musical numbers, love triumphs.

The last phase of the musical (1970-75) reflects the distress the junta brought on the usual Greek sense of joy. This was also when television became a mass media in

Greece. The studios responded by unwisely putting all of their creative eggs together in films that tried to combine music, melodrama and slapstick comedy. The power of stars also was squandered as the industry tried to transform them into celebrities in the idle hope that audiences would come out for their favorite performers whatever the quality of the film.

"Eraste tou Onirou" (Lovers of Dream), 1970, the last of the musical, is an example of the ill-conceived mixture of incompatible genres. A worker/singer robs a rich family to prove his worth to friends, but he falls in love with the daughter of the people he robbed. The wealthy family turns out to be bankrupt and want to marry off their daughter to a wealthy savior. The girl, in turn, is disillusioned when she learns her lover is a thief.



This vintage poster advertises the Aliki Vouglouklaki-Dimitri Papamichail hit from 1968, "To Pio Lambro Asteri, (The Most Shining Star)."



Lydia Papadimitriou, author of "Greek Cinema," is a senior lecturer in screen studies at Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom. Her publications include articles on Greek war cinema, Greek film musicals, and medical practices.

The worker/singer goes to prison, but when he is released, he becomes a singing sensation and the couple is reconciled.

#### STRUCTURE

Papadimitriou's initial chapters deal with the Greek film industry as a whole and Greek national culture before defining what constitutes a Greek musical. She seeks to understand the initial musicals by stressing authorship, genre conventions and industrial needs. She offers an engaging analysis of the works of specific filmmakers such as Giannis Dalianidis. His work offered a rich mix of spectacle, comedy, and modernity. Many of his films ended with gala, lavish production numbers that brought scores of singers and dancers into the final scenes. Typical of his work is "Agapi Mas" (Our Love), 1969, a behind-the-curtain tale revolving among numerous singers, dancers, vengeful sweethearts and steadfast lovers. With the assistance of nine musical numbers and the benefit of Eastmancolor, almost everyone gets on stage for the happy final curtain call.

Three fascinating chapters deal with the nationalization of musicals. The titles of some of these films are sufficient to indicate how American big band music and dances such as the Charleston and Jitterbug gave way to Greek themes. Four examples of this Hellenized form of the musical are "Diplo pennies" (Dancing the Syrtaki), 1966; "Mia Kyria sta Bouzoukia" (Lady at the Bouzouki Club), 1968; "To Pio Lambro Bouzouki" (The Most Shining Bouzouki), 1969; and "I Komissatis Kerkyras" (The Countess of Corfu), 1972.

Papadimitriou ends with a dis-

cussion of the great musical stars. Topping the list is Aliko Vougiouklaki who was the Queen of the Musical and Rena Vlachopoulou who was almost as popular. Vougiouklaki's dancing partner in no less than 16 films was Dimitri Papamichail. Their Ginger Rogers/Fred Astaire public profile carried over into real life when the couple married. Papadimitriou observes that Vougiouklaki's film image, enhanced by dyed blonde hair, was that of a naïve sex kitten with childish mannerisms that melted male hearts. In real life, however, Vougiouklaki was quite a serious person who valued traditional Greek notions of family.

The formal narrative is followed by an invaluable ten-page appendix listing of all Greek musicals. The plot summaries and credits make it possible for individuals to draw up their own viewing lists while making it easier for scholars to understand the evolution of particular directors, formats, themes, and performers. Another appendix includes the titles of every film considered to be a musical by the four leading sources on Greek film, even though a number of them do not conform to Papadimitriou's criteria. A concluding glossary defines the Greek-language, musical terminology used in the text. Many of the words will be familiar to most Greek Americans, but I, for one did not know that "komidvillo" is a comic song that draws on folk wisdom.

Papadimitriou has produced a rarity, a thoroughly scholarly work that is fun to read. We can hope that her approach will be appropriated by other writers in what is now one of the fastest growing areas in Modern Greek Studies. A final compliment also needs to be



In the 1964 musical, "Kati na Kei" which is set in Thessaloniki, Rena Vlachopoulou ultimately marries her childhood sweetheart and her sister marries a pop musician.



This still from the 1966 movie, "Diplo pennies (Dancing the Syrtaki)" illustrates how bouzouki players and classic architecture became ways of Hellenizing musicals.

given to McFarland Publishers, which also published the English-language edition of Dimitris Kolodimos' "The Greek Filmography, 1914 through 1996," an indispens-

able tool for any research into Greek film.

Dan Georgakas is a Fellow at the Center for Byzantine and Mod-

ern Greek Studies at Queens College City University of New York. His most recent book is "My Detroit: Growing Up Greek and American in Motor City."

# Lending a Helping Hand: The Politics, Ideals and Logistics of Wartime Relief

## Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s

By Richard Clogg (Editor)

Palgrave Macmillan (St Antony's),  
288 pages, \$74.95

By **Angelike Contis**

Special to The National Herald.

"Katohi" (occupation). The word often causes the eyes of young Greeks to glaze over in anticipation of yet another old war story with no obvious connection to their lives.

Historian Richard Clogg confirms this part of Greek history has been written about many times in his introduction to "Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s." He writes, "There is a very substantial literature on the political and military aspects of the occupation period and of the ensuing civil war." (2) But one aspect of this history has remained unexplored -- humanitarian aid, according to Clogg, a major authority on modern Greek history.

Today, Greece sends humanitarian aid around the world, but the book's dozen essays take the reader back to a time when Greece required such help itself. Mostly written by academics, the essays were first presented at Oxford in March 2005. Each focuses on a different aspect of aid in a decade when Greeks suffered occupation (by Italians, Germans and Bulgarians) and then experienced a brutal civil war. Working independently, together and sometimes against each other were groups as different as the Swedish Red Cross, the Turkish Red Crescent, Greek-Americans, Quakers, Greek and Yugoslav Communists and the Greek Orthodox Church.

The essays are not about a grand success story, but rather the tales of people swimming against a hostile tide to offer a helping hand.

### BITTER WINTER

The winter of 1941-2 serves as a tragic reference point in many of the essays. A devastating famine hit Greece soon after the Germans occupied the country in April 1941.

In her essay, University of Newcastle upon Tyne lecturer Violetta Hionidou examines the causes of the famine, focusing on the islands

of Mykonos, Syros and Chios. Depending on the source, Hionidou points out, perhaps between 1.4% to 6.4% of the total Greek population died in the winter of 1941-2. Reeling from a war with Italy, Greece faced lower agricultural production. The black market thrived and food stocks were depleted by the occupiers. With a British blockade in effect and local trade routes cut off, the situation was desperate.

Before official organisations like the Swedish Red Cross helped out, people relied on individual efforts. In her chapter, photographer/researcher Marie Mauzy draws on the story of American School of Classical Studies archaeologist, Gene Vanderpool, and his wife, Joan, who set up one of the first soup kitchens in Athens in 1940. Joan Vanderpool writes that as the number of children they fed in their Melissia neighbourhood swelled to 300, "We found ourselves no longer able to supply an adequate meal to an already undernourished child, and we often found children fallen by the roadside while trying to fight their way through the wind and rain to get to us." (106)

The Greek Orthodox Church played a critical role too, as Vasilios N. Makrides of the University of Erfurt writes. Archbishop Damaskinos formed the National Organisation of Christian Solidarity, which worked with the state to feed "Four hundred thousand children, 4000 pregnant women, 14,000 nursing mothers and 23,000 destitute people." (154) The church helped soldiers' families, prisoners and orphans. Religious organisation Zoi gave medical support, ran soup kitchens and asked people to save a "holy portion" of their meals for the needy.

From the other side of the political spectrum, Communists also tried to provide social welfare. In his essay, scholar Rolandos Katsiaounis focuses on the National Solidarity (Ethniki Allilengyi), the welfare arm of Communist resistance organisation EAM. Katsiaounis writes that National Solidarity's soup kitchens "threatened to render irrelevant the upper class philanthropic organisations, which were proven to be incompetent as well as corrupt." (129) But Makrides argues the opposite. He writes, "The communists generally feared the extensive charitable activities of Zoi, because they demonstrated an unprecedented sensitivity to social issues and might undermine the communists' own claim to be the sole promoters of so-

## BEARING GIFTS TO GREEKS Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s

Edited by **RICHARD CLOGG**



cial equality and justice." (162) In any case, as Katsiaounis points out, regional clergy often helped National Solidarity.

### GEOPOLITICS AND PROPAGANDA

The essays indicate that just as the source of the problems were international, the solutions too had to come from abroad. Getting the word out on Greek suffering was vital.

Thessaloniki aviator/politician/Red Cross representative Alexandros D. Zannas created a photographic album entitled "What I Saw in Today's Greece." In his essay, Benaki Museum archivist Alexandros P. Zannas writes that the album was "intended to be used as a propaganda tool to exert pressure on governments and to convince them of the immediate need to ship food to Greece ..." (120) A hidden camera documented the misery in Greece. Images -- including very shocking ones -- filled three hand-made al-

bums, which Zannas sent abroad. These had "tremendous impact" Zannas writes. (121)

Greek Americans were important unsung heroes in relief efforts, launching a campaign that would raise \$100 million in aid by 1945. Salem State College's Alexandros K. Kyrrou reveals how important these efforts were in steering U.S. policy. Greeks in the U.S. quickly mobilised around churches, schools and groups including the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. In 1940 they formed the Greek War Relief Association (GWRA) with 20th Century Fox mogul Spyros Skouras at its head. Before Germany invaded Greece, GWRA had already raised \$4.7 million. At the same time, the Greek American press, including the daily Ethnikos Kiryx (National Herald) under publisher/editor Basil Vlaivianos' leadership, drew attention to Greece's plight.

The essay by George Kazamias,

of the University of Cyprus, considers the big geopolitical picture. Although the Germans held the Italian allies responsible for alleviating the Greek famine, they were incapable of providing relief. So Greece's survival was pinned on finding a suitable loophole to Winston Churchill's policy of blockading occupied countries. British intelligence was well aware of the famine in Greece, writes Kazamias. A September 1941 message, for instance, reads: "The food situation is disastrous." (40) But Britain became split on the blockade policy, with U.K. public opinion and the U.S. government both favoring the lifting of the blockade. Kazamias writes: "Initially, Britain appeared prepared to go so far as to leave Greece to its fate; later it was ready to use relief as a means to maintain its dominant position." The U.S. only entered the war in December 1941, but aid to Greece became a power balance between the Allies. "For the United States, the fledgling superpower, still struggling to reconcile itself with its newly-acquired power and world role, it was but the beginning of the journey of an 'innocent abroad'." (54)

In his chapter, Kyrrou describes the compromise: "London accepted a plan whereby food purchased in Turkey by a British commercial corporation acting on the behalf of, and funded by the GWRA and the Greek government-in-exile would be shipped to Greece and distributed under the supervision of the International Red Cross (IRC)." (67) When the Turkish ship Kurtulus brought its first cargo of nearly 3 million lbs of food to Greece on October 29, 1941, the GWRA wasn't mentioned because the U.S. wanted to keep a low profile. However, by 1943, the U.S. took over payments for aid shipments to Greece.

### NEIGHBORS & IDEALISTS

Yildiz Technical University assistant professor Elcin Macar explains why Turkey was involved. He writes, "Turkey was chosen as the centre for the aid, because it was the only neutral state within the region and shared a border with Greece." In 1939 Greeks had sent earthquake relief to Eastern Turkey. Two years later Piraeus crowds welcomed the Kurtulus ship with its Red Crescent symbols, aid cargo and packages from Istanbul Greeks. (89) On another voy-

Continued on page 19



TERRY LEE

Professor Richard Clogg, the editor of "Bearing Gifts to Greeks," is an authority on modern Greek history. He has taught at King's College London and edited and written influential books like "A Concise History of Greece." He is currently an emeritus fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford.

age of the ship, the Turkish crew chose to leave behind their own food and eat stale bread on the return home.

It was far from smooth sailing, however. Though 10 Turkish shipments would feed over 250,000 people, Ankara cut off shipments

twice between 1941 and 1942 due to food shortages. But in those dire times, the Mayor of Athens requested -- and received from Turkey -- help packages for city employees, and the Greek Minister of Health drafted an unrealised plan for thousands of Greek children to be sent to Turkey.

Another neutral country, Sweden, soon took over the role of transporting aid to Greece. Marie Mauzy explains "the country's neutral position was crucial both in initiating negotiations, in organising the logistics of delivering relief, in supplying the large vessels required and in establishing a neutral commission in Greece to oversee the distribution of relief." (99) The Swedish and the Swiss Red Cross used the Marasleion School in Kolonaki as a base from 1942 until the war ended in 1945. Eight Swedish ships received "safe passage" to cross the Atlantic with grain for Greece in 1942-1943. Though they bore Swedish Red Cross insignia, they faced threats from German submarines. Red Cross workers fed 900,000 people in Athens, including 300,000 children.

Swedish relief workers were among the humanitarian staff that fell into Nazi snares. Two Swedes were included in the death toll when 16 people perished in the Royal Air Force bombing of the Swedish ship Wiril in Chios harbor on February 7, 1944. A miscommunication on the ship's whereabouts

led to the tragedy. Among the dead were Nils Erik Nilsson, who was to marry a woman from Chios the very next day.

British Quaker relief workers also suffered, writes Mary Jo Clogg, formerly the librarian of Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Center. Germans seized members of a Quaker ambulance unit that came to Greece in 1941. They sent the pacifist Quakers to camps in Germany and Poland. Some were freed in 1943/44, others were released at the war's end. One died. Other Quaker activities on behalf of Greece included public opinion-shaping talks by Edith Pye in Oxford and help at Greek refugee camps in Palestine.

After the Germans left and the Civil War flared, aid was unsurprisingly used as a weapon by both sides. York University postdoctoral fellow, Flora Tsiliga, focuses on the new United Nations and Rehabilitation Administration's (UNRRA) role. UNRRA provided \$347 mil-

lion from 1945 to 1947, but it failed, Tsiliga argues, to maintain its aim of impartiality. After the December 3, 1944 shooting of EAM protesters in Syntagma square by police, the UNRRA Greece head, Laird Archer, complained of being associated "with a regime of force and discrimination." (199) Things didn't improve by 1947; in a self-evaluation, UNRRA identified "mass political discrimination against the Left Wing" and "misdistribution of essential supplies that resulted in discrimination against the indigent." (204)

Finally, University of Belgrade professor Milan Ristic focuses on the controversial aid by Communist Yugoslavia to the Greek communists. Not only did Yugoslavia provide bazookas and hand grenades, but food and medical supplies. At one point in 1948, 1,000 wounded Greek Communists were carried across the border every day to Yugoslav hospitals. Between 1944 and 1949, Yu-

goslavia also welcomed thousands of refugees from Greece, including many identifying themselves as Slav-Macedonians. The refugees fleeing Greece, Ristic writes, were "driven by political instability, hunger, military operations, political terror and ideological and political dissent." (221) Among them were 11,000 children, who the Greek government considered abduction victims.

Were the children abducted or saved? Which aid was politically motivated and which was purely altruistic? Such questions run through the essays. Together, the writings excavate long-forgotten historical details, while pointing to the challenges in delivering any humanitarian aid during wartime.

Angelike Contis is a journalist and documentary filmmaker based in the U.S. She resided in Athens between 1997 and 2008, writing for publications including the Athens News.

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# Child Victims of a Savage Civil War: True Survivor Stories

## The Abducted Greek Children of the Communists: Paidomazoma

By Niki Karavasilis

RoseDog Books,  
238 pages, \$23 paperback

By Aphrodite Matsakis

Special to The National Herald

If courage is required to live through a war, yet another kind of courage is required to write or speak about its many horrors, thus making them visible to others. Since, in general, we humans often wish to deny or minimize the darker side of life, those who bring the reality of human cruelty and irrationality to light take the risk of being accused of distorting the facts or “overreacting.” In her book, “The Abducted Greek Children of the Communists: Paidomazoma,” which concerns the over 28,000 Greek children who were taken from Greece and sent behind the Iron Curtain during the Greek Civil War, Dr. Niki Karavasilis has taken that risk. As for her critics, she says, “I ignore them and continue with my research.”

Her book is especially courageous given that the Paidomazoma and subsequent issues of the repatriation of these Greek children are heavily entangled in a host of heated controversies surrounding the Greek Civil War and the role of various Greek officials and of U.S., England and other foreign powers in the shaping of modern Greece. Such issues cause tempers to flare even today in that they continue to affect current international relations and the ongoing emotionally charged debates regarding ethnic identity in Macedonia and the Balkans. Hence even though the Paidomazoma took place some 60 years ago, this book is a timely one.

Karavasilis’ book is based on documents in the Greek Parliament and in the Library of the University of Athens; on news reports and official documents from the U.S., Italy and other countries; and on extensive interviews, both in Greece and abroad, with people who remember, witnessed or were part of the Paidomazoma. Through the real life story of Dora, a 12-year-old girl who is forcibly taken from her village by Communist soldiers, the author exposes the loneliness, terror, starvation and the emotional, physical and

sexual abuse reported by the survivors, as well as the anguish of the families they were forced to leave behind.

The structure of the book is similar to that of Nicholas Gage’s well-known book, “Eleni.” Each chapter begins with a short historical synopsis, sometimes accompanied by newspaper reports, photographs and other documents from various countries. The narrative which follows shows how the flow of events outlined in the synopsis impact Dora, her devastated mother, and others whose lives were disrupted by the Paidomazoma.

Like Dora, about 11,600 of the 28,000 children removed from Greece between 1946-1949 went to Yugoslavia; the rest, to Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Russia. Considerable controversy exists as to how many of these children were taken by force and how many were sent away voluntarily in hopes of saving them from the starvation and savagery of the ongoing war and as to how many were better off behind the Iron Curtain and how many were brutalized instead.

In Karavasilis’ book it is the Communists who subject the children to almost unspeakable cruelties. However, the fundamental purpose of her book is not political. In this reviewer’s opinion, had the author’s research revealed that it was Greek Nationalists or some other group who mistreated the children, the text of her book would probably be the same, save for changes in the names of the offending parties. “As a person, I always had a deep feeling for children, perhaps because of my profession,” states Karavasilis, an internationally recognized educator.

Karavasilis received her B.A. and M.A. from the University of New Hampshire and her Ph.D. at Columbia Pacific University in foreign languages. She is fluent in several foreign languages, including German, Spanish, Greek and English. For over 35 years she has lectured at numerous universities and colleges and has founded several foreign language programs, both in the U.S. and abroad. The awards she’s received are too numerous to mention.

Karavasilis does not deny that some families, both Communist and non-Communist alike, viewed the Paidomazoma as a rescue operation, similar to the evacuation of English children to the countryside during the Nazi aerial bombings of London. Some of the Greek parents in her book relocate to Communist lands, either for political reasons or in an

## THE ABDUCTED GREEK CHILDREN OF THE COMMUNISTS: PAIDOMAZOMA



by Dr. Niki Karavasilis



COURTESY OF NIKI KARAVASILIS

**Dr. Niki Karavasilis, a professor of foreign languages, was born in Greece and educated in the United States. Fluent in many languages, she taught for 35 years at high school and college levels in Athens, Greece and at several universities in New England. She has written seven language texts and four books on the Greek experience, including “The Abducted Greek Children of the Communists: Paidomazoma.” This book concerns the over 28,000 Greek children who were taken from Greece and sent behind the Iron Curtain during the Greek Civil War. She is currently working on “The Whispering Voices of Smyrna.”**

effort to keep the family together. For example, once the widow Olga, a non-communist, realizes that she is powerless to prevent her children being taken, she begs the soldiers to be allowed to go with them. “There was no reason for her to stay behind. Without her children, life had no meaning.” (24) Later, however, Olga is ordered to go the mountains to fight Greek nationalists and her children are sent elsewhere. The Communists, she learned, held that allegiance to the party preceded family ties.

While it is and may forever be impossible to determine how many children were sent away willingly and what “willingly” meant under the dire circumstances of the Greek Civil War, Karavasilis does not attempt to settle such issues. Instead she chronicles the experiences of those children who were taken at gunpoint or who were lured into the trucks of Communist soldiers with promises of white bread and marmalade. According to Karavasilis, such promises of good food and safety usually proved false.

Karavasilis was born in the village of Trikorfon in northern Greece, an area particularly affected by the Paidomazoma. “My siblings and I could have been part of Paidomazoma if it wasn’t for my parents’ fast decision to take us to the town of Grevena, protected by the Greek National Army. In Grevena, we lived as refugees for four years, among the thousands of other homeless people from the surrounding villages,” (xi) explains the author. She further notes that “eight hundred thousand refugees, nearly 10% of the population of Greece fled from the villages for big cities, trying to escape recruitment ... and the ... Paidomazoma,” (28) and that families who resisted the Paidomazoma were often “seen as traitors” and “slaughtered like lambs.” (20)

Decades after leaving Greece for the U.S., Karavasilis returned to her native village. There she was greeted warmly by an old woman, Dora, the main character of the book, who subsequently shared her life story with the author. “The majority of the characters of my book are real and in some cases I injected the stories I heard from the survivors,” the author explains. However, because the Paidomazoma remains “a very sensitive topic among the Greeks,” she needed to alter the names and other identifying information of the survivors in order to protect their anonymity.

In January 2009, Karavasilis lectured at the University of Missouri in

my hometown of St. Louis. In the audience were Greek Americans I had grown up with, some of whom had experienced the Paidomazoma first hand. As a child, I recall that among the post-Greek Civil War immigrants to St. Louis, some panicked when they learned about U.S. mandatory education laws. They came running to my father, seeking assurances that if they sent their children (especially their daughters) to school, that their children wouldn't suddenly disappear. These parents recognized that their fears were ungrounded and sincerely wanted their children to become educated. Yet the very word "education" terrified them to the core.

In Greece, these parents had seen young girls, like young boys, wrenched from their parents and sent to Communist countries ostensibly for purposes of "education." Since most of the schools in Greece had been destroyed during WWII or the Civil War, one of these parents had voluntarily sent his daughters behind the Iron Curtain in hopes that they would receive the education they could never obtain otherwise. He never saw or heard from them again. In Karavasilis book, the only education the abducted children receive is indoctrination in Communist ideology, accompanied by systematic attempts to strip them of their Greek identity.

Yet, as the experience of world renowned nuclear physicist, Dr. Thanasis Economou illustrates, some children of the Paidomazoma did receive a solid education which, in Economou's case, led to advanced degrees and prominent career. As described in George Chiagouris'



THE PHOTOS ARE FROM "ABDUCTED GREEK CHILDREN OF THE COMMUNISTS" BY NIKI KARAVASILIS. SHE THANKS THE GREEK PARLIAMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS FOR ASSISTING HER IN GATHERING THE PHOTOS AND INFORMATION FOR THE BOOK.

**Although this photo depicts only Greek boys, Greek children of both sexes who were taken behind the Iron Curtain, either by force or with the consent of their parents, were often trained to become child soldiers and fight the Greek National Army. (p 84)**

2008 article in The National Herald, "Economou Explores the Solar System," leaders from Economou's native village of Ziakas and the surrounding area purposely decided to send some 200 of their children to Albania to insure their safety and well being. The schooling Economou received in Czechoslovakia is credited with having provided him with educational opportunities unavailable to him in Greece at the time.

According to Karavasilis, however, many of the abducted children never even made it to their Communist destinations. Some died after

being herded into crowded vehicles that lacked adequate ventilation, food, water or sanitary facilities; others perished during long marches in the cold or during their stays in cold cramped filthy quarters similar to those of Nazi concentration camps. Indeed, in some instances children were housed in former concentration camps.

Some of the children we meet in the book are raped; some purposely disobey their captors, thus inviting torture and certain death; while others confess to "crimes" they didn't commit, such as defying a teacher or a soldier, in order to spare the lives of other children. Still others are used as human shields or serve as child soldiers and die on the front lines fighting other Greeks.

One of the most compelling aspects of this book are descriptions the various forms of mental illness developed by some of the children due to being separated from their parents and the violence surrounding that event. Others had mental breakdowns as a result of being required to disavow their origins by Communists chanting slogans which contradicted the values taught to them by their parents or which vilified Greek leaders and institutions they had been raised to admire. Some children handled this disconnect between their past and their present by wholeheartedly embracing Communist thinking. Others became severely depressed, committed suicide or developed various forms of psychoses.

Although Karavasilis is not a psychologist, her descriptions of the psychological impact of the Paidomazoma, as related to her by the interviewed survivors, are consistent with psychological research on chil-

dren who are separated from their families at a young age; who witness violence, such as assaults on family members; or who are made captives and then subjected to brainwashing. In particular, the author's portrayal of the post-traumatic reactions of Greek girls, like Dora, who were raped, matches perfectly with current knowledge about rape survivors.

The narrative follows Dora through her 35-year struggle to return to Greece. During these decades she, along with other Greeks behind the Iron Curtain, including Greek Communists who voluntarily relocated there, finds herself treated as a second-class citizen, if not worse. As one reads about Dora's many aborted attempts to return to her village and her mother's equally persistent but futile efforts to find her daughter, one wonders if the ever shifting international and national political dynamics of times

will ever permit these ill-fated people their deepest wish, to be reunited. You will need to read this emotionally riveting and historically significant book to find out.

Karavasilis has authored a total of 11 books, seven in language instruction and three on the Greek experience. Her book "Scattered Leaves" concerns the utter devastation experienced by rural families during the Italian and German invasions of Greece and the subsequent Civil War. Like the book on the Paidomazoma, "Scattered Leaves" is based on true stories and each chapter begins with a short historical summary. "Reaching America" (to be released in July 2009) is the true story of a courageous Greek woman who is able to relocate her family to the US illegally.

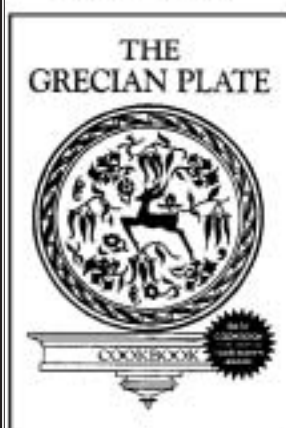
Karavasilis currently lives with her husband in New Hampshire and is working hard on her next book, "The Whispering Voices of Smyrna," to be released in 2010. Just as she was willing to spend her retirement years pouring over dusty documents and interviewing survivors to find out more about the Paidomazoma, she has now focused her considerable intellectual and emotional energies into learning all she can about yet another neglected chapter of Greek history, the catastrophe of Smyrna. Her other passions are reading and writing, especially about Greece. "The closer I get to my last years of my life, the more I want to know about my roots and try to instill this into the lives of my children and grandchildren," she states.

**Aphrodite Matsakis, Ph.D., counseling psychologist, is the author of "Back From the Front: Combat Trauma, Love and The Family" (www.backfromthefront.org), as well as 13 books on a variety of psychological topics and "Growing Up Greek in St. Louis" (Arcadia Publishing, 1998). Visit www.matsakis.com for further information.**



**Parents who resisted the Paidomazoma by hiding their children or sending them to areas protected by the Greek National Army were often tortured or killed. This photo depicts a "Greek soldier carrying a child that he found hidden in the forest by the mother who was slain." (p 118)**

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# Greek American Sherlock Holmes to the Rescue

## Unsafe Harbor

By Gus Leodas

iUniverse, Inc., 296 pages, \$28.95 paperback.

By Aphrodite Matsakis

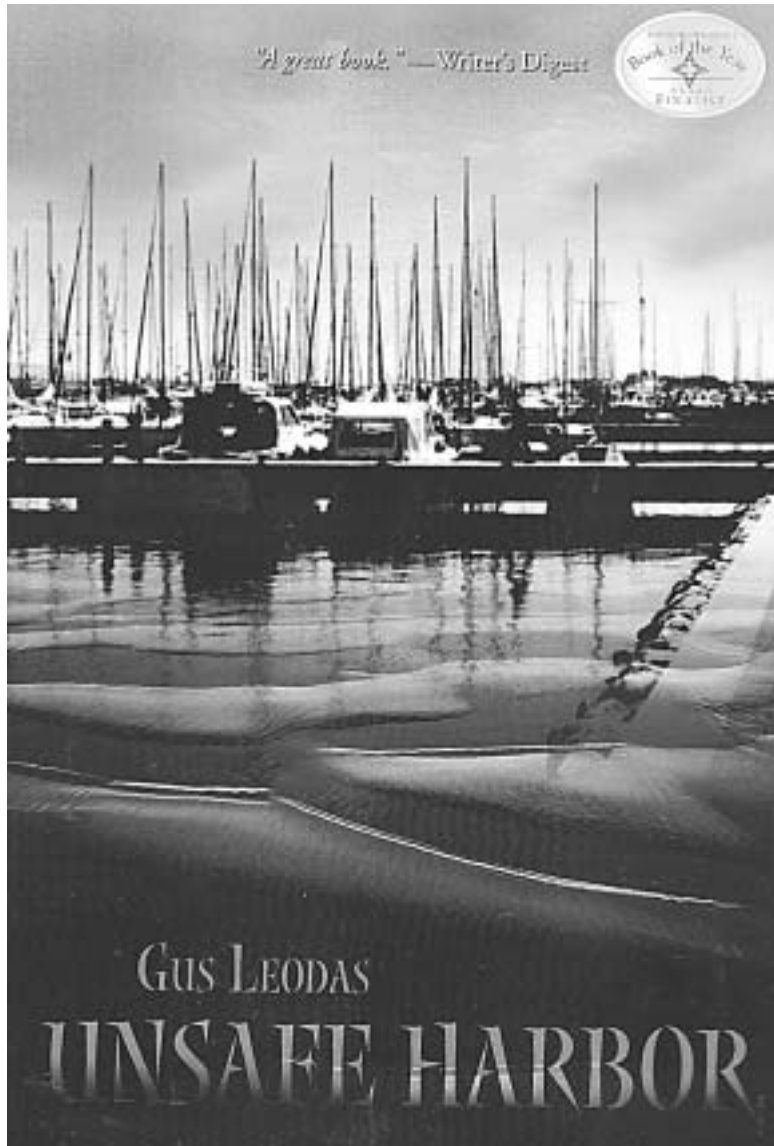
Special to The National Herald

"Unsafe Harbor" by Gus Leodas revolves around a series of unexplained murders at the Long Island Yacht Club, an exclusive boat club located in Huntington Bay, New York. First, the club's most vivacious member, an attractive widow named Renata Tredanari, is found naked, raped and murdered on her boat, *The Champagne Queen*. Shortly thereafter, a student on a magnetic fishing expedition near the club pulls up a "chain wrapped around a man with his hands tied behind his back." (5) The man is the prominent attorney, Arthur Dryden, also a member of the elite club.

At this point the local community, especially boat club members, begin to panic and Mitchell Pappas, a Greek American investigative journalist, is called in for the rescue. When Leodas wrote his first mystery thriller, "The Forgotten Mission: A World War II Cold-Case Mystery," he purposely made the lead character Greek American. "And why not?" explains Leodas. "There weren't any ... Greek American ... fictitious protagonists in any mystery or suspense novels that I read about at that time. So, I called him Mitchell Pappas - Pappas being a popular Greek name and Mitchell because I had a Greek friend named Mitch and a cousin named Micho, thus Mitchell ... and that was close enough to a Greek and English name. I had no previous detectives in mind. My priority was to make him Greek."

Although Pappas isn't found drinking ouzo or dancing the *kalamatiano*, he is very Greek in being an independent worker, in being loyal to his friends, and in the sharpness of his analytic mind. (According to Leodas' wife, Carole, a graduate of Hunters College with a masters in education, these traits describe her husband as well.) When Pappas arrives at the crime scene, he struggles to determine if the two murders are related and if so, how. Did the now deceased Dryden kill Renata? If so, did one of Renata's other admirers then decide to kill Dryden to avenge her death?

Among the life-loving Renata's



pool of admirers are two of the most powerful men in Huntington Bay, Mario Colarossi and Edward Marlowe. Colarossi, a wealthy businessman with alleged mob connections, had been enamored with Renata for years. They had dated

some, but to the best of Pappas' knowledge, they never had sexual relations and when Colarossi proposed marriage, Renata had refused.

If Colarossi saw Renata enjoying one lover after the next, did his



Gus Leodas with his wife Carole at the Huntington Yacht Club, which is described in "Unsafe Harbor" with a different name. The couple has sailed the Long Island waters to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket on their boat, *Kalliope*. Carole's license plate is also *Kalliope*.

frustrations rise to the point of killing her? On the other hand, didn't Colarossi love Renata too much to even conceive of harming her, especially since Renata was also his cousin? Even if Colarossi was innocent of murdering Renata, if he knew or suspected that Dryden had murdered her, did he then kill Dryden (or arrange to have him killed) in order to avenge her death? Yet Pappas has no positive proof that Dryden murdered Renata or that Dryden and Renata even had an affair.

Renata's other politically and financially powerful admirer is Edward Marlowe, director of the CIA and friend of the president of United States. Was Marlowe one of Renata's lovers? If he was, at some point did she threaten to expose him, thus jeopardizing his career? If so, did he (or one of his guards) then kill Renata to silence her? Pappas' life-long friend, Professor Josh Trimble, swears he saw Marlowe leaving Renata's boat around the time of the murder. Yet other boat club members swear that Marlowe was with them the entire night Renata was killed.

The subsequent murders of additional club members could the point the finger at either Marlowe or at Colarossi. That these two men are political rivals only complicates the situation. Is one of these prominent figures using the murders to frame the other? On the other hand, perhaps both men are innocent and someone else is the guilty party. Adding to the intrigue are the cryptic notes citing lines from Shakespeare and other classic works that attend every murder. Are all of the notes being sent by the murderer or are some (or perhaps all) of them being sent by someone who wants to throw the police investigation off course.

In the Greek analytic tradition, Pappas diligently pursues every clue and evaluates each piece of evidence with a keen eye for multiple interpretations. No one is above suspicion, not even Pappas' beloved friend Trimble or Dryden's wife. With each subsequent murder, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine who killed whom and why. It also becomes increasingly dangerous: each additional death makes it clearer and clearer that those involved in solving the crime are at risk of being murdered too.

Meanwhile Leodas artfully introduces us to additional characters and potential suspects. His descriptions of the complex relationships among various boat club members (alive and dead) are rem-

iniscent of the complicated bonds in Greek villages of old (and those of today which have somehow been spared the effects of commercialism and the tourist trade). Like the traditional "horio" (village), the Long Island Yacht club is a relatively small community. Everyone knows everyone else. Many relationships extend beyond mutual club membership to include casual affairs, serious love triangles and economic and professional partnerships.

Perhaps because of his Greek background, Pappas is able to appreciate the role of these relationships in helping to solve the crime. Like a skilled Greek politician, he is able to identify actual and potential tensions between news reporters, police officials and other important characters and uses his diplomatic skills to prevent these tensions from undercutting the investigation.

Reading "Unsafe Harbor" is like going through the maze of the mythological labyrinth at Knossos, Crete which housed the man-eating Minotaur. As Pappas proceeds through the maze of possibilities, he isn't sure which way to turn to find the Minotaur (or perhaps several of them.) The ultimate outcome of "Unsafe Harbor" a shocker, and it's a testimony to Leodas' writing skills that the reader is held in suspense until the very end.

"Unsafe Harbor" received an award at ForeWard Magazine's 10th Annual Book of the Year Book Fair in 2007 and has been published in Germany and England. Like "The Forgotten Mission," "Unsafe Harbor" is being sold in various foreign countries in English. It has been praised by readers on the Internet for the freshness and uniqueness of its setting. Leodas is also to be applauded for not relying on fillers, such as sensationalist sex scenes or lengthy descriptions of the personal lives of the detectives, to sustain reader interest. Every aspect of his book is clearly designed to promote the plot.

"He (Leodas) promises action, drama and mystery. It is there," writes the New York Daily News regarding "The Forgotten Mission." The same holds true for "Unsafe Harbor." It has enough action to make it appealing to a wide variety of readers. It may be of special interest, however, to the academically inclined in that most of the characters are highly educated. Yet even some of the most Apollonian (that is, intellectual) boat club members are subject to Dionysian-like erotic and other obsessions, to

## Greek American Sherlock Holmes to the Rescue

primitive revenge fantasies and to other untamed emotions.

Leodas' parents came to the U.S. before WWII from Pirgi, the largest mastiha village on the island of Chios.Leodas' father spoke four languages. When his export grocery business failed during the war, he found work at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Shortly after the war, he opened a grocery in Astoria where the author worked regularly after school.

Leodas was born in the Bronx, but grew up in the Ditmars area of Astoria where he attended St. Demetrios. "Astorians consider St. Demetrios the Cathedral of Long Island," saysLeodas. Upon graduation from New York University, he married Carole Georgaras and began working at the television department of McCann-Erickson/Interpublic, one of the top three advertising agencies in Manhattan. There he produced national television commercials, such as Coca-Cola, Buick, Nestles, Miles Laboratories (Alka-Seltzer) and many more. This led to his starting his own film production company/creative service in Manhattan. Here for 25 years he made short films, corpo-

rate films and documentaries as well as television commercials. He also wrote advertizing copy and script and met many talented persons, all of which fueled his creativity and ultimately led to his career as a novelist.

Somehow in between making over 1500 commercials (for which he received four dozen advertizing and film awards),Leodas found the time to write his first mystery, "The Forgotten Mission," featuring the Greek American protagonist, Pappas. Pappas appears again not only in "Unsafe Harbor" but inLeodas' third mystery manuscript, "The Huntress," and in a fourth manuscript, already plotted but not yet named. In "The Huntress"Leodas includes "clever clues from Greek mythology ... to expose the killers ..." and adds to Pappas' many talents by making him a "Greek chef who cooks classic Greek cuisine." NowLeodas' wife wants him do the cooking. "That won't happen,"Leodas says confidently. "She's the best Greek cook I know."

Leodas' fifth suspense novel, which does not include Pappas, is about women working at the United Nations. One of the most enjoyable

parts of "Unsafe Harbor" is that women are not portrayed in a stereotypic unidimensional manner. The major female characters are not simply family women or professional women, but women who value both worlds and experience the conflicts and the joys inherent to having multiple roles.

Leodas is a member of the Directors Guild of America and the Mystery Writers of America. For six years he also served on the board of the Performing Arts Foundation of Long Island. For four years he was a volunteer participant on the board of the Heart Council of Long Island. During two of these years, he served as chairman and made speeches and raised funds to improve heart health in the area.

Following their marriage,Leodas and his wife became active at the Transfiguration of Christ Greek Orthodox Church in Corona.Leodas headed the sports program for five years and wrote the monthly church newsletter. Upon moving to the Huntington suburbs, theLeodas family attended St. Paraskevi. They are now members of the St. Nicholas Church which was destroyed on 9/11. TheLeodas'

daughter Laura teaches math and their daughter Deanna is a television producer. "All is well on the home front,"Leodas reports.

In the late ninetiesLeodas surrendered to his muse and decided "to give up the long hours and travel" associated with his advertising and media activities and focus on his family and his writing. "Now," he states, "I have the time to return to what I realize is passion – writing, loving the challenge (and probably the 'masochism' because of the commitment). ... My writing today is not connected with needing finances. It is a source of joy nearly equaling the time I am spending with my grandchildren ... And to prevent the possibility of being hit by a frying pan, I'll add Carole to my other source of joy."

When asked what role does Greek culture play in his life, he replied, "I am a Greek American. Is there anything else to be?"

**Aphrodite Matsakis, Ph.D., counseling psychologist, is the author of "Back From the Front: Combat Trauma, Love and The Family" (www.backfromthefront.org), as well as 13 books on a variety of**



**Why is Gus Leodas smiling? Is it because his mystery thrillers are international successes or because he has six grandchildren? His license plate is PAPOU 6. "Greeks on the highway usually honk when they pass by," saysLeodas.**

**psychological topics and "Growing Up Greek in St. Louis." (Arcadia Publishing, 1998). See www.matsakis.com for further information.**

## Centenarian Vasiliki Scotese Remembers Traditional Poems and Songs

Continued from page 11

chains also aid memory. The tongue twister "Itane mia kori pou kentage mantili" (266-67) is an impressive example. Scotese was able to recite it because she at one time memorized first the opening lines about a girl embroidering a kerchief by the glow of an oil lamp, then the sequence of disasters that keep being added to all that preceded: the mouse takes away the lamp wick, the cat eats the mouse, the dog strangles the cat, etc., until finally Death appears—for "O Haros einai ekeinos pou zei kai vasilevei" (Death lives and reigns over all) (266-71). Performing the entire poem of 83 lines is not impossible, because meter, strong imagery, repeated lines, a logical sequence, the poem's harsh outcomes, and additive structure channel the memory to follow a set of cues. Still it is no mean feat, as it requires an alert mind, verbal fluency, and a strong desire to remember.

These qualities Vasiliki Scotese clearly possesses in abundance, even now at age 101, as she continues to recall more poems. Thomas



**Thomas Scotese and his sister witnessed this marriage procession in Theodoriana in 1956, when they visited their parents' village to attend the wedding of their mother's youngest brother. Photograph from the Scotese family archive.**

Scotese reports that he has recorded another 65 since the printing of "A Weft of Memory." Yet the wow factor in Scotese's accomplishment is just the initial draw. There's beautiful poetry here. It combines tough realism with an effort to see the facts of life from fresh angles:

*Kalotycha einai ta bouna,  
kalomoiroi oi kampoi  
yiati pote den arrostan kai Haro  
den fovantai.  
To kalokairi prasina kai to heimona  
aspra.  
(How lucky are the mountains how  
fortunate the rolling plains,  
Because they never sicken and have  
no fear of Death.  
Green during the summertime and  
throughout the winter white.)  
(220-21)*

Thomas Scotese anthologized his mother's songs and poems with gracious intelligence. He did not inflict editorial vandalism on his mother's recollections. By this I mean the common practice of adjusting the performance of a poem to fit a printed version or suit a particular ideology, as found in many existing anthologies of Greek folk

verse.

With respect for his mother and her subject, he added notes detailing practices, customs, performances, and even the legal contracts by which people lived. He was careful not to impose an anachronistic view. He also drew interesting connections and insightful contrasts with the village he encountered after World War II. Scotese wanted to make the book available to as many people as possible in the Greek diaspora. His translations, the product of countless hours searching for 21st century English words to render the Greek of another era, convey some of the poetry's grace to English readers. By his great act of love, he produced a book that endures many readings as it brings into view the tapestry of a vanishing, but not forgotten, social order.

**Artemis Leontis is associate professor of Modern Greek at the University of Michigan. She is the author and editor of several books and curator of two exhibits. Her newest publication is "Greece: Culture and Customs" (Greenwood 2009).**



# NICHOLAS J. BOURAS

25 DeForest Avenue, Summit, NJ 07902



We would like to Congratulate

All the Greek American Writers

Who are Making

Literary Contributions to Society

