



The International Lawrence Durrell Society

The Herald

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Table of Contents

Lawrence Durrell and Gostan Zarian: An Accidental Discovery	2
<i>Naneh V Hovhannisyan</i>	
Report from James Decker	4
The History of the Coptic Orthodox Church: from Chalcedon (451) to the Coptic Congress of Assyut (1911)	5
<i>Pamela J. Francis</i>	
On Miracle Ground XXII” July 4-6, 2024, Athens, Greece	11
The Chart Room	12
<i>Grove Koger</i>	
<i>Trois Alexandrines</i> by Sybille Vincendon	13
<i>John Howard</i>	
ILDS Mini-Minutes; Executive Board Meeting, 25 February 2023	14
<i>Anne Zahlen</i>	
Colenso Books Update	15
<i>Anthony Hirst</i>	

The Herald - Editorial

The Provencal writer Jean Giono (1895 – 1970) supplied me with the phrase ‘le voyageur immobile’, the traveler who stays still. During the last winter months, not only Lawrence Durrell but also Giono have enabled me to travel in the imagination. I have a generous wife who, when we downsized our home after the children had left the bigger house we used to occupy, allowed me an ample room as study, den, hideaway, man-cave (or should it be ‘person-cave’?) where I can find silence to read and listen to music. Here I can travel with Durrell back to Provence and eaves-drop on imaginary conversations between him and Giono.

We travel wide and far in this issue of The Herald – Athens, Louisville, Armenia, Egypt plus other compass points in the articles generously provided to the editors by the contributors we approach.

With John Howard, who has written on the book in this edition of The Herald, I stumbled upon the memoir of the Vincendon family by Sibylle Vincendon, a remarkable account of the author’s family which included Lawrence Durrell’s third wife, Claude. Sibylle has generously agreed to write for us in the next edition of The Herald.

We understand that Michael Haag’s biography of LD covering the years 1912 to 1947 will be published next January by Profile Books in the UK.

We are told that the next edition of the scholarly journal, *Deus Loci*, published by the ILDS will be available soon – we have not been provided with more details so watch the ILDS website for announcements – www.lawrencedurrell.org.

After the successes of previous ILDS Zoom meetings, Vice-President Pamela Francis is setting up another such meeting for this coming May. Again, watch the ILDS website and social media for times and log-in details [Now confirmed for Saturday, 13th of May].

Lawrence Durrell and Gostan Zarian: An Accidental Discovery

By Naneh V Hovhannisyan, with thanks to Peter Baldwin

It started from an unassuming paperback. Whilst reading Alan Ross's *Reflections on Blue Water*, I saw the following paragraph:

*'I did not meet Durrell then, though we later became friends and I edited his Selected Poems. After unproductive periods in South America and Yugoslavia, where he was attached to the Embassy, he began to write again on a visit to Ischia. While still at the British Legation in Belgrade he received a string of letters from his old friend Constant Zarian [sic], then settled in Forio d'Ischia, praising the beauty and the cheapness of the island and imploring Durrell to join them. This he did, in the summer of 1950, having begun to detest Belgrade.'*¹



© Steve Young
Photography

As an Armenian in Britain, I do not often see mentions of Armenia and Armenians in English-language literature. I am used to my small, peripheral home country being remembered in history books: to do with ancient, medieval, or - more recently - Ottoman world at that.

This passage piqued my interest. While both names, Zarian's and Durrell's, were familiar to me, their work was not. I'd heard of Zarian at school back home but, not considered a major writer, his works were not required reading. As for Durrell, confused about which brother wrote 'the trilogy' and which 'the quartet', I had stopped there. Alan Ross's book, however, was about to gift me a most fascinating research de-tour and a still-unfinished learning.

In 1935, in the days before mass tourism when Greece was cheap, writer and journalist Gostan (Constant) Zarian (1885–1969) was already on Corfu with his second wife, American painter Frances Brooks, when the aspiring Durrell moved there with his then wife Nancy. As part of a group of creative expats, the two struck a friendship, which was later sustained by correspondence, second only to that of Durrell's with Henry Miller.

Durrell's letters (Zarian's part of the correspondence has yet to be published) reveal affection and respect for Zarian, and a companionship where ideas and ideals are discussed, philosophical foundations for life and art are sought, and where Eastern and Western civilisations are equally accessible for these exiles' intellectual nourishment. Both are 'maverick, cosmopolitan figures,' to quote from William Boyd's introduction to the latest Faber *Mountolive*.

A writer of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, Zarian is probably the most outward-looking of 20th century Armenian writers, with his travelogues and essays on European countries and European art, such as *Spania*. Yet he was also acutely reflective on the Armenian character, such as in *The Ship on the Mountain*. A larger-than-life character, a polyglot and an erudite, he spoke English, French, Russian, Italian, German and Spanish, yet remained firmly an Armenian-language writer. Born in imperial Russia, his mainly Russian-speaking family sent him to be schooled in Paris and Brussels. As a young, emerging multi-lingual author, he was advised by Belgian poet Emil Verhaeren to write in Armenian, as that was the language of his prayers. And teenage Zarian started learning the language of his ancestors to do his literature justice.

1 pp. 49-50, Alan Ross, *Reflections on Blue Water*, The Harvill Press 2001

I realize now that as an originally diasporan writer, he was underappreciated, if not deliberately sidelined in Soviet Armenia. His vast archive is partially unpublished; censored during the communist era, he is being reassessed and revived. During his career mostly outside Armenia, he corresponded with Miguel de Unamuno and Rabindranath Tagore. As I read through his published works, such as *The Traveller and His Road* – a collection of musings and a portrait of a country and a people – I am struck by whom I have found. Of course, he was always there, an author who looks back to our heritage with pride and speaks to a future with trepidation.

Meanwhile, not speaking Armenian, Durrell would have read Zarian in translation. Still, he has multiple references to him, most prominently in *Prospero's Cell*, where the main character is writer Zarian. Durrell also wrote a poem about his older colleague, whom he called 'master' or 'arch-master', as well as an essay entitled *Constant Zarian: Triple Exile*.

I have finished *Reflections on Blue Water*. But as I read my way through Durrell's poetry and daydream through *Reflections on a Marine Venus*, as well as chuckle my way through his brother's (I now know the difference!) *My Family & Other Animals*, where Zarian appears as Zapotec, I realize how much more literary pleasure awaits me on this unexpected journey.

Naneh, originally from Armenia, is a long-time resident in the UK. She writes memoir, reviews and short stories, and lives with her family in Warwickshire, where she runs a second-hand bookshop.

She invites from readers any comments in response to this article: nvhovhannisyan@gmail.com

Lawrence Durrell's essay 'Constant Zarian: Triple Exile' is available in the essay collection 'From the Elephant's Back'; a selection of Lawrence Durrell's letters to Zarian appear in vol 1 of 'Endpapers and Inklings' ed by Richard Pine, pub Cambridge Scholars Press.

Further information on Zarian can be found at 'The Librarian at Armenian Institute London' www.armenianinstitute.org.uk. The foremost specialist and translator of Zarian is Dr. Vartan Matiossian whose new translation of Zarian is about to appear in Canada. He can be found all over online, including on <https://www.academia.edu>.

James Decker reports:

On 25 February 2023, the International Lawrence Durrell Society sponsored a panel at the 50th annual **Louisville Conference on Language and Culture since 1900**. Its largest in-person gathering since before the pandemic, “‘Emanations of the ground’: Disruptive Landscapes, Modernist Identities” boasted four presentations on a wide variety of Durrellian topics.

In his “Reflections of a Marine Venus: Reflecting on Durrell and Digital Humanities,” James Clawson gave a fascinating talk on *The Revolt of Aphrodite* and its foreshadowing of recent AI technology. For Clawson, *Tunc* represents artificial intelligence at the practical level (AI as functional), whereas in *Nunquam* artificial intelligence serves in a more dynamic, creative way (AI as generative). Clawson also demonstrated how AI could produce a fairly nuanced “Durrellian” text with minimal instruction.

James Gifford shared the latest developments of his project on the connections between Durrell and the science fiction world in “Lawrence Durrell and Samuel R. Delany; or, ‘Trouble in Alexandria: An Ambiguous Heterotopia.’” Gifford made a convincing case that Durrell’s contributions to modern literature have been overlooked and that Delany, in particular, incorporated a Durrellian approach to time and identity. After examining Delany’s allusions, Gifford argued that Durrell served less as a marker of literary status than as a thematic and stylistic point of reference.

In the session’s third presentation, Pamela Francis explored *The Avignon Quintet*—specifically *Quinx*—and how Durrell transforms and relocates physical space. Pointing out a likely analogue for Durrell’s fictive caves, Francis ably demonstrated that Durrell did not confine himself to a literal rendering of place or time in *Quinx*. Reinscribing the “real” caves with imaginary properties, Durrell disregards likely post-war context in favor of what Francis views as a more gothic approach that relies on distortion and inversion.

Finally, James Decker, contemplated Henry Miller’s attitudes toward film in his “‘Dead for me now’: Henry Miller, King Vidor, and the Deleuzian Time-Image.” Noting that in Paris Miller rebuked Vidor, whom he had previously admired, Decker suggested that Miller ultimately rejected external realism. Examining several of Miller’s unpublished manuscripts, including an invective on Vidor’s *Street Scene*, Decker concluded that in Paris Miller emphasized a film’s ability to ignite an ecstatic impulse within its spectators rather than its external veracity.

Numerous ILDS members were in the audience as well, and after a robust question and answer period the group adjourned to the Brown Hotel, where Durrellian conversations continued well into the night.

The History of the Coptic Orthodox Church: from Chalcedon (451) to the Coptic Congress of Assyut (1911)

Pamela J. Francis

Part one of this essay appeared in the last edition of The Herald, vol 49 (NS 10) – autumn 2022.

The 1500 years from Chalcedon to the 20th century consisted of long periods of theological and cultural stagnation, punctuated by intense periods of both persecution and progress.

Post-Chalcedon

The years immediately after Chalcedon entrenched a confirmed Chalcedonian/Non-Chalcedonian divide that to an extent still exists, though Christologically, there is little in either that is exclusive to the other. The incorrect attribution of “Monophysite” to the non-Chalcedonians for centuries implied a difference in Christologies, when, in fact, “Miaphysite” is the more correct term for most of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. In both dyophysitism and miaphysitism the true nature of Christ indivisibly combines the human and the divine natures. Yet until the twentieth century, this important misunderstanding prevented any communion between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. As of 1990, however, the Greek Orthodox and Coptic Orthodox Church patriarchs agreed that “both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of Apostolic tradition” and agreed to mutually recognize the sacrament of baptism.¹ In 2017, Pope Francis and Pope Tawadros II recognized each other’s sacrament of baptism as well.²

But from the Council of Chalcedon (451) until the Arab Conquest (c. 639), Coptic theology and its attendant politics were focused on the Christological schism, and most Egyptians consistently resisted any attempts by the Melkite Patriarch to convert them, and they deliberately distinguished themselves from the Melkites.³ For instance, by the beginning of the seventh century the Copts had adopted Bohairic Coptic for liturgical use, replacing Greek, and while the Melkite patriarchs ruled from Alexandria, with substantial imperial protection, Coptic popes, from Peter IV (576-78), resided in desert monasteries.

The Arab Conquest

The Arab Conquest, beginning in 639, ended Byzantine, and therefore, Melkite, rule. It also represented an entirely different conflict for the Copts, as now they found themselves subjected to Islamic, rather than Christian rule. The Rashidun Caliphate, the four caliphs who immediately succeeded Muhammad, had engaged in rapid expansion of their religious and political power throughout the Middle East and North Africa. As they conquered territories throughout the Near and Middle East, rulers followed (as did the Ottomans several centuries later) the Qur’anic maxim that “there is no compulsion in religion” (2:256). While this meant a certain amount of religious autonomy for the Copts, it also meant the payment of *jizya*, a tax on People of the Book (monotheists, that is, Jews and Christians), also prescribed in the Qur’an (9:29). Many wealthy landowners and

1 [Orthodox and Copts are one Church, says Patriarch of Alexandria / OrthoChristian.Com](#)

2 [Roman Catholic Church and Coptic Orthodox Church recognize shared baptism. – Jacobite Online](#)

3 Please note a significant error in the first section of this article, published in October of 2022. In the last paragraph of that article, I write “The next few decades saw more conflict between the factions, and as the non-Chalcedonians (the Melkites) refused to accept ordination by the Chalcedonian patriarch, traditional...” The sentence should read “...and as the non-Chalcedonians refused to accept ordination by the Chalcedonian (Melkite) patriarch...” My sincere apologies for this very significant error.

people of position paid the tax; others, particularly poorer agricultural workers, converted to Islam. By the ninth century, even without forced conversion (the *jizya* provided a much-needed source of income for the new rulers), Coptic Christians had become a religious and cultural minority in Egypt.

Generally, relations between the Coptic community and the Muslim community were genial throughout the Middle Ages. Copts held civic posts and generally accepted their positions as Qur'an, but interpreted locally. *Dhimmi* paid the *jizha*, but in turn were exempted from *zakat* (obligatory alms required of all Muslims), military service, and Islamic laws concerning religious beliefs. They were also allowed to legislate marriage and family law in their own courts.

However, occasional persecutions restricted or abrogated those protections. Particularly, Caliph Al-Hakim (996-1021) disrupted the otherwise tolerant rule of the Fatimids with a violent persecution of non-Muslims. Al-Hakim's indignation over the dominance of Copts within the government prompted the execution of a few Coptic notables, and he expelled numerous others from their offices. Additionally, he required Christians to wear large wooden crosses around their necks and forbade church festivals and bell-ringing.⁴ This level of persecution was actually quite rare in Medieval Egypt, and more often a product of individual tyranny rather than dynastic policy. Still, the damage was done, and the Coptic community's minority status was confirmed.

In ecclesiastical matters, there seems to have been intermittent moments of intense spiritual activity between the 11th and 14th centuries. Pope Christodoulos (1047-77) moved the papal seat from Alexandria to St. Mary's (The Hanging Church) in Cairo, closer to the political center, a move which served both the Fatimids and the Copts. By the 12th century, even though most hymns were sung in Coptic, the Church had adopted Arabic into the liturgy, which in turn prompted a "brief Christian Arabic renaissance" in theological activity.⁵ However, from the 14th century, the written record appears to be silent, and we can find only glimpses of Coptic life through references by Muslim writers or Western travelers.^{6 7} By the time Napoleon arrived, in July of 1798, the Coptic Church was moribund, both spiritually and culturally.

From Napoleon to the Coptic Congress of Asyut

Napoleon's initial arrival put the Copts and all other Christians in immediate danger, as the ruling Ottomans feared the Copts would join forces with Napoleon. However, tensions were relieved somewhat when Napoleon reportedly declared himself a Muslim, an act that more likely reflected his admiration of Muhammad as a military leader and "creator of societies" than any religious sentiment. Napoleon established a General Divan in Egypt which employed many of the previously ruling elite, including Coptic fiscal agents, who Muslim leaders from nearly all previous dynasties had depended on to develop and implement effective taxation policies and financial advice. One Copt, Ilyas Buqtur, became Napoleon's private secretary and the official interpreter for the French army; he returned with the French to Paris, and contributed to the first French-Arabic dictionary.⁸ Several officers from the Coptic Legion fought with Napoleon in the European campaigns as well.

4 Anastasia M. Ivanova, "Traits of positive and negative discrimination of the Copts in medieval Egypt as described by the "History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria," *Serinum* 16 (2020), 221-222.

5 Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, The American Press in Cairo, 2015, 65.

6 Meinardus, 66.

7 The Black Death may have something to do with this as well; in the mid-14th century, the plague killed 40% of the population (<https://countrystudies.us/egypt/57/htm>).

8 Meinardus, p. 67.

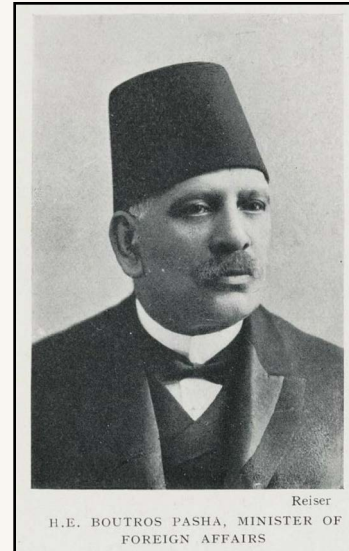
Constant interference by the British, and Napoleon's failure to manage what he thought would be an attack from Syria, led to his withdrawal from Egypt. The Ottomans, who had only nominal rule over the Mamluks before Napoleon, returned to power in Cairo; a few Copts, accused of cooperating with the French, were executed.⁹ Continued unrest in Egypt led to the appointment, in 1805, of an Albanian military leader, Muhammad 'Ali, to the position of Ottoman viceroy, or pasha.

While his methods, including monopolizing trade in Egypt and nationalizing farmlands, engender debate, there is no question that Muhammad Ali (Mehmed Ali in Turkish, the language of his Egyptian court) was an extraordinary leader who brought Egypt into the 19th century. Muhammad 'Ali, succeeded in several important areas: modernizing Egypt's agricultural, textile, and munitions industries, expanding education, and, to the chagrin of wealthy landowners, securing consistent tax revenue. That he succeeded was in large part due to his policy of hiring the right persons for these tasks. Armenian Christians, Syrians, and Italians immigrated to Egypt in large numbers during his reign; the Jewish community began to prosper as well.

Particularly, Muhammad 'Ali's economic and social reforms provided a much-needed boost to Coptic identity and culture. Many Copts prospered in their time-honored fields of finance (two family names that appear frequently are that of Boutros and Ghali), as well as in medicine. By the death of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha in 1849, the Coptic community had achieved a portion of Egyptian wealth and honor that far exceeded their actual numbers. Integration into Egyptian civil society continued throughout the 19th century: the customary *jizya* tax was lifted in 1855, and Christians were allowed to join the Egyptian army.

The Church itself experienced a spiritual and educational revival of sorts; Cyril IV ("the Reformer," 1854-1861), established schools for both boys and girls, founded the Coptic Patriarchal College, and rebuilt the patriarchal cathedral in Ezbekiya. Unfortunately, he also condemned icon display as idolatry, prompting the destruction of many medieval icons.

The long papacy of Cyril V (1874-1927) witnessed what Meinardus calls "the Coptic Enlightenment" as well as significant political changes in Egypt.¹⁰ Cyril oversaw the significant expansion of Coptic education, in large part as a response to aggressive Protestant missions in Upper Egypt. Protestant missionaries, having had little to no luck converting Muslims, saw the Copts as prime targets for conversion, an action Cyril found quite offensive. When told by one American that missionaries only wanted to share the Bible with them, Cyril replied: "Only the Bible? Why then did they come to Egypt? The Bible existed in Egypt



The Copt Boutros Ghali Pasha served as Prime Minister of Egypt from 1908 until his assassination in 1910. He kept his position as Minister of Foreign Affairs while serving as Prime Minister.



Christ and Abbot Mena, 8th century, painting on wood, Apollo Monastery. Now in the Louvre, Paris. Many icons of this nature were destroyed in the iconoclastic movement during Cyril IV patriarchate

⁹ Meinardus, p. 68 (although he does not cite a source for this information).

¹⁰ Meinardus, p. 69.

long before America was discovered. We do not need the Americans here to teach us. We know the Bible better than they.”¹¹

Most significant, to matters both political and ecclesiastical, the late 19th century saw the organization—and occasional dissolution—of the *Maglis al-milli*, a Coptic council of lay members intended to share with the Pope in the leadership and direction of civil affairs, as allowed by Egyptian law. The council failed to meet for long periods of time, however, and both the Pope and most clergy, including the inhabitants of the seven major monasteries, resented the power of the council to control Church funds. Cyril V, especially, was determined to keep financial and organizational affairs under his own control, even though it had been that very body that had appointed him as the 112th Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Conflict intensified in 1892, when Cyril wrote to the khedive, the Ottoman viceroy of Egypt, noting that he, the leader of the faithful, was responsible for all matters related to the Church and therefore, “There [was] no need for the council which some members of the congregation seek to create.”¹² The *Maglis al-Milli*, led by Boutros Ghali Pasha, also sent a letter to the khedive, Abbas II, claiming that the aforementioned “patriarch has violated the laws of the church, breached its charter and brought harm to the congregation, whose misfortune it is that its council elected him to head the church.”¹³ The khedive responded by banishing Cyril to a monastery; Cyril, in turn, responded by excommunicating his appointed replacement. After three months in exile, he was allowed to return, enthusiastically welcomed by Coptic students, clergy, and apparently, a large portion of the lay community.

This moment signifies an intensification of Egyptian nationalism among Copts, a movement which would continue throughout the British period (1882-1953). Indeed, Cyril V had supported the Urabi revolt (1879-1882), which intended to depose the khedive, who was seen as a British puppet who had allowed the British increasing control over Egyptian finances. However, in 1882, the British quelled the Urabi revolt, and took that opportunity to establish a “veiled protectorate,” which gave them *de facto*, if not legal control of the autonomous Ottoman province. Cyril V made clear his nationalist views, even to Lord Cromer himself; when Cromer told Cyril that he would ask for support of Coptic schools from benevolent societies in England, he responded, “Thank you very much. The assistance of our Egyptian government is quite sufficient. We have no need for help from other countries.”¹⁴

The British victory upset the carefully balanced relationship between the Coptic community and the Ottoman pashas. Many readers will recall in Durrell’s *Mountolive*, that Nessim Hosnani and his embittered father clearly blame the British for the loss of Coptic integration into civil society. The patriarch of the family tells Mountolive, “the Moslems [*sic*] knew us, they knew we were Egyptians first and Christians afterwards.”¹⁵ It was the British, he claimed, who hated the Copts, and were therefore responsible for their loss of prestige. He then lists several restrictions on Coptic life, all, he claimed, a result of British influence:

...the Copt is debarred from holding the position of Governor...Even those who work for the Government are compelled to work on Sunday because, in deference to the Moslems, Friday has been made a day of prayer. No provision has been made for the Copts to worship. They are not even properly represented on Government Councils and Committees. They pay large taxes for

11 [Al-Ahram Weekly | Chronicles | The selfless patriot \(archive.org\)](#)

12 [Al-Ahram Weekly | Chronicles | The selfless patriot \(archive.org\)](#)

13 [Al-Ahram Weekly | Chronicles | The selfless patriot \(archive.org\)](#)

14 [Al-Ahram Weekly | Chronicles | The selfless patriot \(archive.org\)](#)

15 Lawrence Durrell. *Mountolive*. E.P. Dutton, 1961, p. 26.

education — but no provision is made that such money goes towards Christian education. It is all Islamic. But I will not weary you with the rest of our grievances.¹⁶

The fictional Hosnani's grievances were very real, and by the time of the events of *Mountolive*, had intensified. Initial Coptic chagrin stemmed from disappointed expectations. When the British arrived, some had assumed that as Christians, they would receive favors from the British. They were surprised by the British attempt to be nonpartisan, although “nonpartisan” was construed by many to mean pro-Muslim. And not only had the Copts failed to get any special treatment, but many Coptic officials were also replaced by the British with Syrian Christians. Even the fact that Boutros Ghali Pasha, a Copt, served as the prime minister was of little comfort; he was known to be pro-British, and his part in the Denshawai incident of 1906 cemented the conviction that he was willing to privilege British control over Egyptian interests.¹⁷ His assassination was not a surprise to many Egyptians.

After more than three decades of British rule, Coptic grievances had accumulated to the point that a concerned portion of the Coptic community called for a conference to discuss the situation. Cyril V, concerned about government retaliation, and recognizing the importance of the Coptic relationship with the Muslim nationalists, issued a statement a few days ahead of the conference, asking “our beloved children to refrain from building up a huge gathering in Asyut, which could result in agitation and render them liable to criticism.”¹⁸ The Metropolitan of Asyut, a city in Upper Egypt home to both Christians and Muslims, answered the Pope with assurances that, as “the main objective of the Congress [was] the forging of stronger ties among all Egyptians through the safeguarding of the legitimate rights of Copts,” he did not feel “the slightest apprehension of its being held in Asyut.”¹⁹

The Coptic Congress of Asyut (6-8 March 1911) brought together 1150 delegates. Conference objectives reflected the same concerns expressed by the elder Hosnani in *Mountolive*; delegates specifically wished to discuss enforced labor on Sundays, religious requirements for government positions, religious qualifications and quotas for parliamentary elections, funding for Coptic schools, equal opportunity to apply for government contracts and grants, and, finally, the establishment of separate personal status courts for Copts. While Cyril had feared that the Congress would be seen as divisive, it in fact recognized the community's desire to be included in Egypt's nascent nationalist movement.

The “veiled protectorate” of the British continued to chafe Egyptians, both Muslim and Copt. Nationalist sentiment increased after the declaration of World War I, when the British gave up all pretense of a “veiled” protectorate, and placed Egypt directly under its protection, thus formalizing its decades-long political, economic, and military control of the country.

Growing Egyptian nationalism provided an opportunity for cooperation between Muslims and Christians. The most visible sign of this new collaboration was the Wafd Party, founded in 1919 and dedicated to the immediate termination of British occupation. The flag of the new organization

16 Durrell, p. 27.

17 The Denshawai Incident, in 1906, involved British soldiers shooting cultivated pigeons belonging to an Egyptian village. An altercation erupted, and the soldiers asked others soldiers to join them in retaliating against the villagers. Villagers were shot, and one soldier died of heat stroke. Several villagers were tried for the soldier's death and executed. One of the villagers was executed in front of his home and family, a particularly brutal action on the part of the tribunal.

18 [Coptic Congress of Asyut - Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia - Claremont Colleges Digital Library](#)

19 [Coptic Congress of Asyut - Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia - Claremont Colleges Digital Library](#)



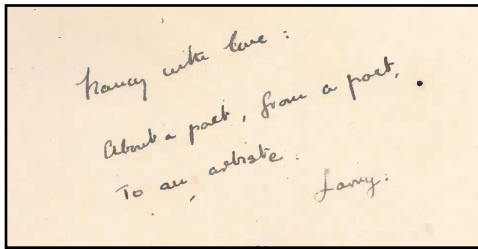
The flag of the Wafd Party; against a green background, symbolizing hope, a white crescent and a white cross. Significantly, the Star of David is missing here; as much as 90% of the Jewish population (about 80,000 in the 1920's), lacked Egyptian citizenship

expressed the hope for a new Egypt: a green banner featuring both a white crescent and a white cross. Many other banners waved over Egypt, and the new century would be one of contention, as it wrestled with its identity. The Coptic community likewise struggled as it adjusted to yet another version of minority status.

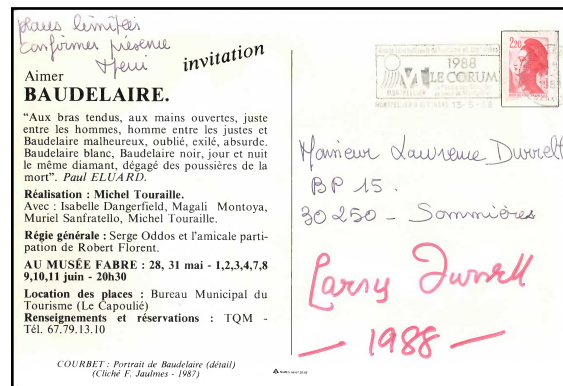
In the next issue: Coptic nationalism, persecution, and revival. Also, folk practices and ecclesiastical organization.

Pamela J. Francis is the current Vice-President of the International Lawrence Durrell Society. She teaches literature at the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

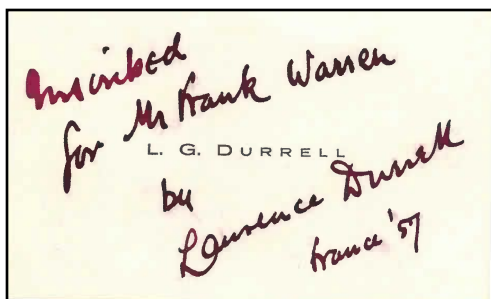
Reading Durrell in her early twenties led her to pursue a master's degree in religious studies (with an emphasis on Eastern Christianity) and a Ph.D. in British literature.



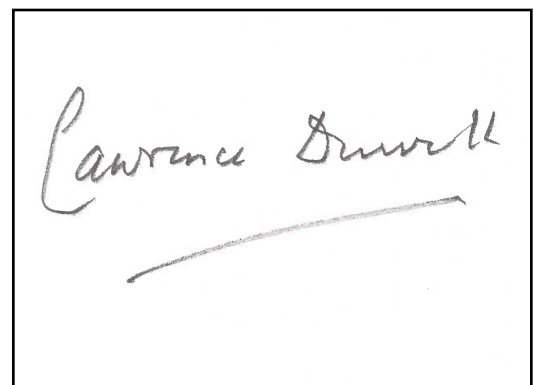
1932 inscription to Nancy (Durrell's first wife) on the flyleaf of a book for William Blake's engravings for The Book of Job, published in London by Ernest Benn Ltd.



1988 an inscription on an invitation to Durrell to a Baudelaire event.



1957 inscription to Mrs Frank Warren on a business card.



1989 an autograph on a blank preparatory to a signing session.

Various Lawrence Durrell signatures courtesy of Peter Baldwin

Athens based Durrell scholar Athanasios Dimakis reports:

Conference Announcement – Save the Date!

“On Miracle Ground XXII” July 4-6, 2024, Athens, Greece

The International Lawrence Durrell Society “On Miracle Ground XXII” International Conference will be hosted by the Hellenic American College (<https://www.haec.gr/en>) [the Athens branch of the Hellenic American University (<https://www.hauniv.edu/>)] at the hospitable premises of the Hellenic American Union. The conference venue is on Massalias 22 Str. Kolonaki, in the centre of Athens (More information on the Doxiades new building and the venue history is available here: <https://www.hau.gr/en-us/information/profile>).

Please join us to reappraise Durrell in the Anglophone literary canon on Hellenism, as well as trace his steps. The Conference theme and Call for Papers will be announced within the next few months. The conference dates are:

Thursday, July 4: Conference Opening, Welcome Reception

Friday, July 5: Conference Panels and Keynotes

Saturday, July 6: Conference Panels and Keynotes

Sunday, July 7: Excursion (TBD)

We would like to mobilize our network of academics, friends, and followers of the Society with the hope of welcoming a large crowd.

We look forward to welcoming you to Athens!



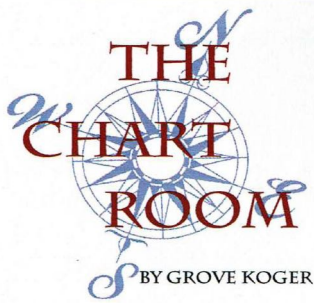
Lawrence Durrell and Philip Sherrard at the Byzantium Café «Καφενείο το Βυζάντιον» (1960s), Kolonaki Square, Athens.

Dimitri Papadimos archive, ELIA-MIET Photographic Archive.



Lawrence Durrell in the Acropolis of Athens (1962)

Dimitri Papadimos archive
ELIA-MIET Photographic Archive.



THE CHART ROOM

In *Try Not to Be Strange*, Michael Hingston recounts the convoluted history of the Kingdom of Redonda, a tiny island near Montserrat in the West Indies. Prolific supernatural writer M.P. Shiel was named King of the island by his father in 1880, and Shiel subsequently passed on the title to Durrell's friend John Gawsworth, who in turn named Durrell Duke of Cervantes Pequeña. More recently, Spanish novelist Javier Marías reigned as King Xavier from 1997 until his death last

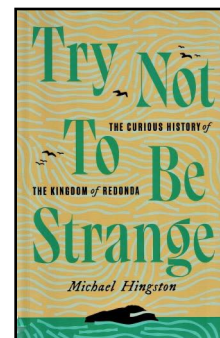
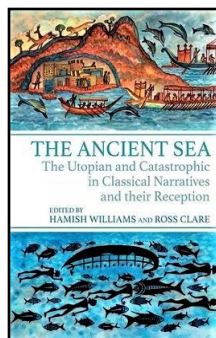
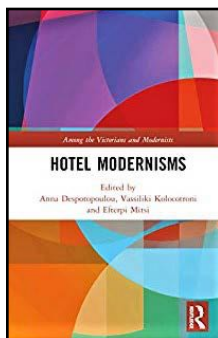
year. An appreciative review of the book by Michael Dirda appeared in the *Washington Post* for Oct. 6, 2022.

Corinne Alexandre-Garner's essay "Narrative and History in Lawrence Durrell's *Avignon Quintet*" appears in *Time, History and Cultural Spaces: Narrative Explorations*, edited by Jayita Sengupta and published by Routledge. According to the publisher, the collection provides an introduction to narrative theories as well as "philosophical discourses on time, memory and the self" and draws "insights from western and eastern philosophy."

Caroline Zoe Krzakowski's study *Diplomacy in Postwar British Literature and Culture* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press) includes a chapter on the third volume of *The Alexandria Quartet*, "Diplomatic Revisions: Lawrence Durrell's *Mountolive* and the Postwar Novel." The book argues that the "codes and protocols of diplomatic practice have shaped modern British fiction and film, and that diplomatic papers and protocols offer a new way to trace the continuities between geopolitics and cultural production in the aftermath of the Second World War." Krzakowski also considers works by Rebecca West, Olivia Manning, John le Carré and Alfred Hitchcock.

An essay by Athanasios Dimakis, "'No longer a hotel': Colonial Decadence in Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet*," appears in *Hotel Modernisms*, edited by Anna Despotopoulou, Vassiliki Kolocotroni, and Efterpi Mitsi and published by Routledge. According to the publisher, the essays explore "the hotel as a site of modernity, a space of mobility and transience that shaped the transnational and transcultural modernist activity of the first half of the twentieth century."

Hamish Williams' essay "Minoan Utopias in British Fiction, after the Thalassocracy: Lawrence Durrell's *The Dark Labyrinth* and Robert Graves' *Seven Days in New Crete*" appears in *The Ancient Sea: The Utopian and Catastrophic in Classical Narratives and Their Reception*, edited by Williams and Ross Clare. "The thirteen papers in this volume," explains publisher Liverpool University Press, "explore the themes of utopia and catastrophe in the liminal environment of the sea, through the lens of history, philosophy, literature and classical reception."



The Chart Room (cont)

Paul Herron and Sky Blue Press have continued their series of programs “Catching Up with Anaïs Nin” on YouTube. Recent episodes have included “The Discovery and Censoring of Anaïs Nin’s Lost Erotica” and “The Unpublished Diary Part 1.” The latter, which was uploaded on February 4, deals with the “astounding” influence of Louise de Vilmorin on Nin’s fiction, including *The House of Incest* and *Under a Glass Bell*.

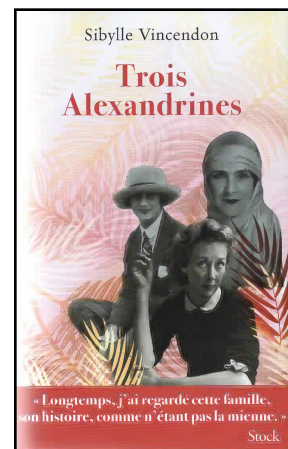
“June Miller: More Than an Erotic Muse?” by Emily Zarevich appeared in *JSTOR Daily* on December 15, 2022. The article deals with the manner in which Anaïs Nin and Henry Miller modeled characters in their works on Miller’s wife, adding that they “used June’s appearance, personality, and life experiences as material for books so sexually explicit that they sent shock waves through the literary world.”

The exhibition *Alexandrie: Futurs antérieurs* at Marseille’s Museum of the Civilization of Europe and the Mediterranean combines archaeological research with contemporary art. Featuring some 200 artifacts dating from the city’s first eight centuries, it highlights the daily life of its inhabitants as well as their scientific and cultural accomplishments. In addition, sixteen contemporary artists, including Wael Shawky, Jasmina Metwally and Mona Marzouk, explore the contemporary city through painting, photography, sculpture, and audiovisual installations. *Alexandrie: Futurs antérieurs* runs through May 8.

***Trois Alexandrines* by Sybille Vincendon**

Published May 2022 by French publisher Stock

Claude Vincendon was Lawrence Durrell’s third wife. Fascinating and extremely well written, *Trois Alexandrines* traces the story of Rosette, Claude’s grandmother, Claire, Claude’s mother, and Claude herself, giving precious insights not only into the high society of Alexandria but also, of course, Lawrence Durrell, his personality, his writings and his life with Claude. We learn of the major role of Claude in the conception and realisation of *The Alexandria Quartet* and the extent to which the character Clea is based on Claude, and how many of the events in the book (such as being shot at from a French naval vessel in Alexandria Harbour) are derived from her own experiences.



Claude came from a family of rich bankers in Alexandria, which will ring a bell with anyone who has read *Justine*. What is amazing is how Rosette, a poor Hispano-French shop assistant with a baby, married into one richest and most influential families in Alexandria. A family who built hospitals! The book is written in French; unfortunately no English translation has yet been published.

Sybille, who speaks and writes fluently in English has agreed to write a contribution to the next Herald.

By John Howard

John Howard is a retired Anglo Swiss Information Technology and Finance Director who lives in a village in French-speaking Switzerland. Originally from Brighton, UK, he has been based in France and Switzerland since 1979. With a specialty in natural sciences, he rediscovered Lawrence Durrell's travel writing, novels and poetry in 2022 mainly thanks to the International Lawrence Durrell Society and its Facebook page.



ILDS Mini-Minutes Executive Board Meeting 25 February 2023

The Executive Board of the International Lawrence Durrell Society met in the Board Room of the Brown Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky, and via Zoom, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. EST/U.S. on Saturday, 25 February 2023, President James Gifford presiding.

First on the agenda was consideration of a site for the ILDS conference scheduled for Summer 2024. Board member Athanasios Dimakis presented a proposal that the Society locate *On Miracle Ground XXII* at the Hellenic American College in Athens, Greece. Having detailed his connection to the college, Dr. Dimakis described the facilities available as well as the many attractions of the Kolonaki neighborhood and the city of Athens. Response was enthusiastic and, after detailed discussion, the Board agreed to hold the OMG XXII conference at the Hellenic American College in Athens. After

further consultation with the College and consideration by the Board, it was decided that the conference be scheduled for dates around the 4 July 2024 weekend.

After Secretary-Treasurer Paul Lorenz's reports on membership and finances (both sound), the Board considered publications. *Deus Loci* editor Anna Lillios estimated that the NS 17 issue of *Deus Loci* would be in readers' hands in May 2023. A committee (James Clawson, James Decker, James Gifford, Isabelle Keller-Privat) was formed to work with Anna in improving the online availability of articles and other materials published in *Deus Loci* over the years. Discussion then turned to *The Herald*, edited since 2019 by Peter Baldwin and Steve Moore, who report that they have met their goal of appealing to general as well as academic readers. The news that Peter and Steve have decided to step down after the Autumn 2023 issue was met with great regret by the Board.

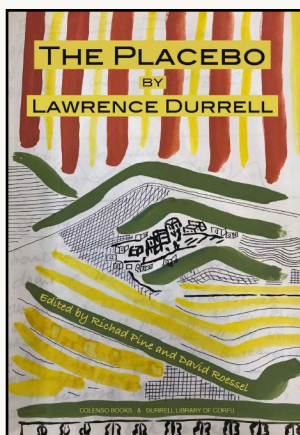
Isabelle Keller-Privat reported on the project undertaken by Anthony Hirst to issue a new edition of Durrell's *Key to Modern Poetry*, originally published in 1952. Much progress has been made in checking and correcting the editorial apparatus of the book, and the Board agreed to continue support for the project. Isabelle reported also on the collection of essays that she and Anne Zahlan are editing, a book tentatively titled (or sub-titled) *Mysticisms, Heresies, and Heterotopias in the Works of Lawrence Durrell*. Editing is in progress and publication scheduled for 2024.

The Society's many outreach projects include The William Godshalk Prize for Scholarship, an award intended to encourage research and publication on Durrell. The committee to oversee the 2024 Prize will be appointed in the near future. James Decker will continue to organize the ILDS presence at the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900. This year's stimulating and well-attended panel included presentations by James Clawson, James Decker, James Gifford, and Pamela Francis, and the Call for Papers for the 2024 Durrell session will be announced soon. Finally, the White Mice poetry competition, organized for many years by David Radavich on behalf of the Society, will soon announce the theme for the 2023-24 competition; winning poems will be posted on the website, published in *Deus Loci*, and read at OMG XXII in Athens.

Finally, the Executive Board reviewed the Society's varied efforts in online communication. ILDS Webmaster James Clawson indicated that the site is up-to-date and thanked David Radavich for his assistance in posting material. Pamela Francis reported that the ILDS presence on Facebook is strong and promised a Durrellian Zoom reading this spring. The Twitter feed, ably administered by Charles Sligh, continues to attract followers—the possibility of changing platforms is being considered. Finally the board considered the Durrell Society's online bibliography ably administered by James Clawson and James Gifford. One piece of news is that the bibliographers are now working on including critical works on Durrell in languages other than English.

The next meeting of the Board will be scheduled by President James Gifford for May 2023.

---Anne Zahlan

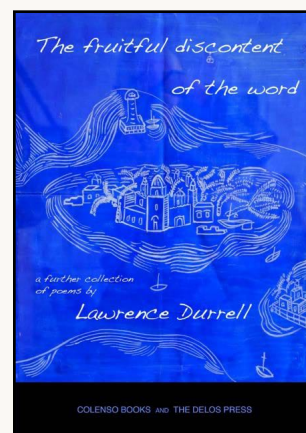


Colenso Books, a small London Publisher, which was featured in *The Herald* vol. 42, December 2019, was set up in 2014 with three initial and overlapping aims: the publication or republication of the complete works of Theodore Stephanides, mentor of Lawrence and Gerald Durrell; the publication of English translations of Greek literature of all periods; and the publication of new editions or reprints of volumes in the series Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translation as the originals sold out. But in 2018 it branched out with the publication of two volumes of the work of Lawrence Durrell: *The fruitful discontent of the word: a further collection of poems*, edited by Peter Baldwin (published in conjunction with his Delos Press), intended as a supplement to *Collected Poems 1931–1974*; and *The Placebo*, edited by Richard Pine and David Roessel (published in

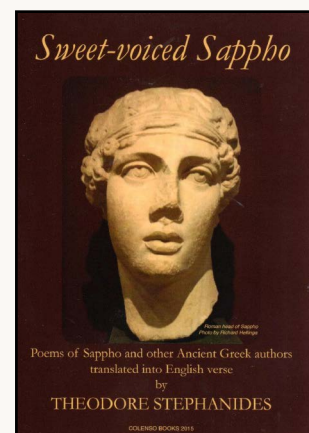
conjunction with the Durrell Library of Corfu) and containing three partial drafts of what became the novel *Tunc*, with extensive essays by the editors occupying almost half the volume. This marked a general widening of the remit to include modern and contemporary works of poetry and fiction, and occasionally non-fiction. In 2019 came the enlarged, revised and reorganized third edition of the late Brewster Chamberlain's *A Chronology of the Life and Times of Lawrence Durrell*, with a new main title (chosen by Brewster): *The Durrell Log*. This was reviewed in *The Herald* vol. 42, and the account of my co-operation with Brewster in the production of this volume can be found in vol. 47, Fall 2021.

A new edition of what was originally Durrell's *Key to Modern Poetry* was mentioned in an interview with me in *The Herald* vol. 42, and this is now nearing completion. The *Key* is a substantial, fascinating, little-known and under-appreciated work of literary criticism — and Durrell's only extensive work in that field. It was closely based on a series of lectures he gave when working for the British Council in Argentina in 1948. It was published by Peter Nevill (London) in 1952 and later in the same year in a typographically identical US edition by the University of Oklahoma Press, with the modified title *A Key to Modern British Poetry*. The word *British* seems a necessary addition, and *Modern* can hardly stand seventy years later, without qualification. The proposal is to call the new edition *A Key to British Poetry 1890–1939*. The dates derive from the book itself. Durrell states at the start of Chapter 5 ("Poetry in the Nineties") "The year 1890 marks a convenient point of departure for the student of modern writing in general — and the student of modern poetry in particular." And in the last chapter ("Poetry in the Thirties") he says "The outbreak of the war in 1939 sets up a convenient milestone at which we should perhaps call a halt." There is currently a dispute about the proposed change of title but this will, hopefully, soon be resolved.

But why is a new edition necessary? There would be no point in a photographic reprint of the 1952 edition, since this is now available (in breach of copyright) on at least two websites. There are two compelling reasons for a new edition. In the first place, the original is riddled with errors — errors in names of persons, titles of books and of poems; incorrect dates of publication; errors of spelling, punctuation, and grammar, and typographic errors, while almost every quotation in the book longer than a few words contains errors of transcription. But the second and more serious failing that stands in the way of the *Key* becoming a



respected, informative and useful work of criticism (as it deserves to be) is the almost total lack of source references for the quotations and works cited. Tracing all the quotations etc. has been an immense labour, carried out in part on the Internet but largely in the British Library, which was, unfortunately closed (or had restricted access) for long periods during the Covid pandemic. The research is being partly funded by the ILDS and I was able to appoint a research assistant, Josephine Wilks, to undertake much of work, but she had to take on a full-time job at the beginning of 2022, leaving me to complete it, and unfortunately I was out of the UK for much of last year. I was able to spend a week in the British Library in late March last year, two weeks in May and a week before Christmas. But there is still work to be done. The new edition of the *Key* will have a comprehensive index, a list of all significant corrections, and a lengthy Introduction by Isabelle Keller-Privat — a slightly revised version of her 2015 essay, “Poetry at the risk of criticism in *Key to Modern Poetry* by Lawrence Durrell”. There will also be an Editorial Note explaining the process of revision, while the references and other explanatory editorial material will appear in footnotes, using for concision the Harvard System of reference to link to a very extensive Bibliography. I had originally hoped that this new edition of the *Key* would be ready for publication in 2022, the seventieth anniversary of the original publication, but it now looks more likely that it will be published in late 2023.



As for the works of Theodore Stephanides, three volumes have already been published by Colenso Books: two translations from Greek, appearing for the first time in book form: the dual-language volume *Sweet-voiced Sappho* (2015) and *Karaghiozis: Three Modern Greek Shadow-play Comedies* (2020), which was reviewed in *The Herald* vol. 46, Spring 2021); and a new edition of Stephanides’ first collection of original English poetry, *The Golden Face*, featuring a Greek translation by Vera Konidari. Many other volumes are in preparation and three of these are almost ready for publication: *Modern Greek Poetry of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, consisting of the 1926 volume of translations by Stephanides and George Katsimbalis as revised, with modernised diction, by Stephanides in the 1960s, together with other poems translated by Stephanides alone or, in the case of two poems by Cavafy, in conjunction with Lawrence Durrell; then a thematic arrangement of Stephanides’ own collected poems with the provisional title *From First Memory to Last Adventure*; and one of Stephanides’ last translations *500 Epigrams from the Greek Anthology* (the *Anthology* was a massive collection of over 4,000 poems compiled around AD 1000 from earlier anthologies). The original Greek texts will appear on facing pages, all tracked down for this edition, since Stephanides had not identified his sources.

Perhaps of interest to the greatest number of *Herald* readers will be *The Macedonian Front 1917–1918: A Diary and a Memoir*, with a Preface by the eminent historian of Modern Greece, Sir Michael Llewellyn-Smith. In this volume I have interleaved Stephanides’ Diary, written day by day on the Front where he was serving in the Greek Army, with the retrospective memoir of his war experiences written in the 1920s and revised in the 1960s, followed by extensive correspondence and military documents from his continuing service in the Greek army 1919–1922, including his court martial for insulting the Greek King! I discussed and quoted from the Diary in a presentation at a conference in Thessaloniki in 2018, and this can now be read in the conference proceedings, *The Macedonian Front 1915–1918: Politics, Society and Culture in a Time of War* (Routledge 2022).

For a complete, classified and illustrated list of all Colenso Books publications to date or expected within the next twelve months, please write to colensobooks@gmail.com. All Colenso Books publications are available from various sellers on amazon.co.uk and some on amazon.com. Any individual wanting to buy three or more volumes may get a better deal by emailing Colenso Books. Booksellers can order at trade prices from Gardners Books Ltd of Eastbourne, an international book wholesaler and distributor (the largest one in the UK). Gardner's also offer customer fulfillment for retailers who do not wish to purchase stock. In either case, contact sales@gardners.com.

*Anthony Hirst
15 April 2023*

The Herald - editorial guidelines and publication dates

The Herald is the newsletter of the International Lawrence Durrell Society [ILDS] – see: www.lawrencedurrell.org/. It will be emailed as a matter of course to all members of the ILDS. It will also be uploaded to www.lawrencedurrell.org/ for free access to any interested reader.

Should a member wish to receive a printed version of *The Herald*, they may contact the editors at newsletter.ilds@gmail.com to make the change.

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Readers are invited to contribute articles, news items, events and details of new publications by or about Lawrence Durrell for future publication in *The Herald*. Articles and contributions should, in the first instance, be limited to no more than 300 words. Unpublished photos or illustrations which may be of interest to readers of *The Herald* will also be welcome provided the editors are satisfied that appropriate copyright consents have been obtained.

Would-be contributors are advised to email the editors (newsletter.ilds@gmail.com) to discuss the scope of their contribution and its suitability for *The Herald*.

All inquiries about *The Herald* should be sent to newsletter.ilds@gmail.com

Copy date for the next edition of *The Herald* [NS] is October 15, 2023 for publication in November, 2023.

The views and opinions expressed in *The Herald* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the International Lawrence Durrell Society.