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Letter from the Editor: Rendezvous in Vancouver

by David Melville Wingrove

Will this winter ever end? Will something called ‘spring’ ever come to take its place? One thing at least is sure. The International Lawrence Durrell Society is coming to Vancouver for our On Miracle Ground XXIII conference on 16-18 July. For many of my fellow Durrellians, this means a jaunt to some exotic place they have never been to before. (Isn’t that, at least partly, what conferences are about?) For me, it feels weirdly like a homecoming. Growing up on Vancouver Island in the 70s, I knew Vancouver as one of two Big Cities lying just across the water. Vancouver lay on the far side of the Strait of Georgia. The other was Seattle in the United States, which lay



across the Strait of Juan de Fuca. We always used to giggle at the name, which sounds very rude indeed if you don’t pronounce it correctly.

Our theme is “Writing Port/Cities in the Blue Humanities” and blue is the colour that springs to mind when I think back to my own childhood. Life in the Pacific Northwest was

lived in three primary colours. Deep green for the boundless pine forests that covered most of Vancouver Island and much of the interior of British Columbia. White – with a touch of silver on sunny days – for the dazzling snow-capped mountains. And blue, endless expanses of blue, for the sea that stretched beyond the horizon and the clear blue sky that floated just above our heads. Vancouver too was a place of blue sea, snow-capped mountains and deep green forests. Except today it just happens to have a city of 2.6 million people cradled in between them.

Our host, Fairleigh Dickinson University, is one of several world-class seats of higher learning. A lot of my school friends crossed the water to Vancouver for their studies. But I was resolved to go a whole lot further than that. My main reason for wanting to escape was an odd one. At the age of 16, I read a book called *Justine* by an author named Lawrence Durrell, whom I had known previously as the pompous elder brother Larry in *My Family and Other Animals* by his zookeeper sibling Gerald. The impact of that book on my adolescent mind (and libido) cannot be overstated. As a schoolboy at a private school in Victoria, I felt I was drowning in a sea of bland suburban gentility, a world so impeccably WASP it made *The Brady Bunch* look quite dangerously exotic.

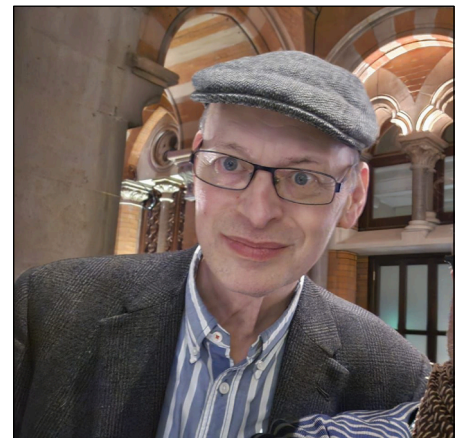
Dare I say that *Justine* – and the other three books of *The Alexandria Quartet*, which I found in local libraries – was my longed-for antidote to the cosy but oppressive world of home, my guide to that arcane and strangely-coloured ‘other world’ I might one day explore and inhabit? Living – as I would later come to do – on the Lower East Side in New York, in the red-light district of Madrid, in a high-rise tenement in a Roma quarter of Bucharest, I got occasional flashes that told me *yes*, Durrell might approve. When I made the pilgrimage to Alexandria, and called a friend from a pay phone in the lobby of the Hotel Cecil, I turned and saw myself reflected in the same gigantic mirror where Darley first saw Justine. I knew, in that moment, I had come perilously close to living my own dreams.

How strange will it feel to come back – forty-five years later – to the place where I grew up (well, almost) and spend three days talking about Lawrence Durrell? It was TS Eliot who wrote:

...the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

I hope this new issue of the *Herald* brings you plenty to explore. Enjoy the work of our many fabulous contributors – and if you would like to contribute to future issues, please feel free to contact me on davidfmwingrove@yahoo.co.uk We look forward very much to seeing you in Vancouver!

David Melville Wingrove is an Honorary Lecturer in Literature and Film at the University of Edinburgh Centre for Open Learning. He writes and lectures on a range of bizarre and arcane topics. In his few unoccupied hours, he is co-editor of the Herald.



Winners of the International Lawrence Durrell Society's 2025 White Mice Poetry Competition

https://lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/white-mice/

Congratulations to all the winners and runners-up in our 2025 White Mice Poetry Competition! Thanks also to our three dedicated and hardworking judges: Cal Freeman, Julie Kane and Gregory Leadbetter. This year, the competition received over 280 poems from more than 30 countries. The selection was unprecedented in its thematic and geographic scope – and the judges deserve an award of their own for choosing from so many outstanding entries.

Please look out for the winning poems in our sister publication *Deus Loci*. A full list of winners and judges is included below:

1st Place (tie): “On the Runway with Guns” by Gabrielle (Gaby) LeMay, Oxnard, Cal. USA
“Penelope” by Jane Maltby, Kent U.K.

2nd Place (tie): “Let's Steal a Boat” by Judymay Murphy, London U.K.
“Migration inheritance” by Jeremy Pak Nelson, Manchester U.K.

Runners Up:

“In Irish There Are Nine Directions” by Cat Brogan, Inishowen, Ireland
“Fortune Telling My Older Self” by Stephanie Saywell, Sunnyside, NY, USA
“Washed up” by Helen Smith, Dundee, Scotland, U.K.

Judges:

Cal Freeman

Cal Freeman (he/him) is the author of the books *Fight Songs* (Eyewear 2017) and *Poolside at the Dearborn Inn* (R&R Press 2022). His writing can be found in many publications, including *The Glacier*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, and *North American Review*. His latest book, *The Weather of Our Names*, was released by Cornerstone Press in September 2025.



Photo: Shadia Amen

Julie Kane

Julie Kane has published six books and two chapbooks of poetry, most recently *Naked Ladies: New and Selected Poems* (LSU Press, 2025). Her poems appear in more than sixty anthologies and textbooks including *Best American Poetry* and *The Book of Irish American Poetry from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. She is a past Fulbright Scholar, Louisiana State Poet Laureate, and winner of the National Poetry Series and the Donald Justice Poetry Prize.



Gregory Leadbetter

Gregory Leadbetter's new collection of poetry is *The Infernal Garden* (Nine Arches Press, 2025). His previous books and pamphlets include *Caliban* (Dare-Gale Press, 2023); *Balanuve*, with photographs by Phil Thomson (Broken Sleep, 2021); *Maskwork* (Nine Arches Press, 2020); *The Fetch* (Nine Arches Press, 2016), and *The Body in the Well* (HappenStance Press, 2007). His work for the BBC includes the extended poem *Metal City* (Radio 3, 2023). As a critic he publishes widely on the history and practice of poetry, and his book *Coleridge and the Daemonic Imagination* was awarded the University English Book Prize 2012. He is Professor of Poetry at Birmingham City University.

Bellapais Revisited

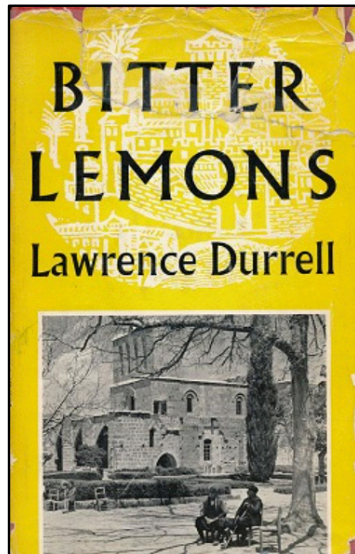


by Paddy Briggs

The “Tree of Idleness” has a huge symbolic significance in Lawrence Durrell’s story of his time in Cyprus in his book *Bitter Lemons*. So, on my recent first visit to Bellapais I headed for the main square to see it. It is rather reduced compared with what Larry saw in early 1953 but it still provides shade and has been cared for with regular pruning. The carob is a long-living tree so there is hope that Durrell fans will be able to see it for quite a while to come. As with so much of Larry’s writing, he uses an object as a metaphor; the tree, with its sense of timelessness and continuity, provides a reference of normality

(Cyprus-style) as the troubles of the island gather pace during Durrell's time there. I have called this brief account a "return" despite it being my first visit – because I feel I knew Kyrenia, Bellapais and the surrounding area from the vividness of Larry's writing. To sit idly under the tree as the world around you begins to crumble must have been a welcome escape in the 1950s. It remains rather a good one today and we had lunch in the restaurant where the tree stands.

Bitter Lemons was my introduction to Lawrence Durrell. I first read it on my honeymoon in 1969! A curious honeymoon choice perhaps but appropriate as it is quite a romantic tale – at least at the beginning, before the dark clouds begin to gather. Larry arrived on Cyprus with his infant



daughter Sappho, though the book does not mention this, nor the later role of Larry's mother Louisa as carer for the child. Larry was planning a "golden year off work" after the personal and professional challenges of the immediate post-War period in Argentina and Belgrade. The family (and other animals) are mentioned in passing but not Sappho or her mentally unwell mother, Larry's wife, Eve Cohen. That said, the book can be seen as a truthful memoir, albeit one with some personal aspects redacted.

As you would expect, *Bitter Lemons* is a highly literate telling of the story but it mostly eschews poetic prose and flowery language. This is, I think, because the characters are described so vividly as they actually were. There was no need for embellishment. The story of Larry buying the house in Bellapais is a magnificent piece of comic writing and characters like the Turkish property agent Sabri Tahir

simply leap off the page. He was the sort of "honest villain" who would appeal to the Larry, who describes Tahir's Turkishness as having a "monolithic poise, an air of reptilian concentration and silence." Larry actually flatters him by calling him a "rogue"! Initially in Kyrenia, and then in Bellapais, Durrell integrates with the locals, especially his drinking pals like Clito who runs a combined bar and wine shop. He wants to find the Cyprus "...beyond the red pillar-boxes and the stern Union Jacks." Larry's fluency in Greek helps him do that, while his love/hate relationship with his own Englishness means he is quite unlike the many retired English ex-pats whom Larry calls "extraordinary human beings ... as if every forgotten Victorian pension between Folkestone and Scarborough had sent a representative to attend a world conference on longevity."

The house that Tahir finds for Durrell is in Bellapais, which was then a small village off the tourist track and best known for its magnificent 13th-century Abbaye de la Paix. He describes the monastery as "one of the loveliest Gothic survivals in the Levant." Its beauty is enhanced by its location, with stunning views down to the sea.

Durrell was enchanted by the village with its architecture in the "pure peasant tradition" and everywhere "grew roses, and the pale clouds of almonds and pease blossom". Today, inevitably, it has changed into a tourist destination with shops and bars galore. Some are a bit tatty, but others charming (including the restaurant where the Tree of Idleness is situated). The Abbey

(left) is the main attraction, but a small number of visitors braved the climb up to Durrell's house as, of course, did we.

The house is up a slope "where the village vanished" and there, of course, it remains not far from the centre in yards or metres but challenging because the slope is very steep. It was easier for us to climb in 2025 than it had been for Larry in 1952. The slope is no less steep, but it is now paved and dry whereas then it "resembled



the bed of a torrent." But primitive though it was, Larry fell for it – not least because of its balcony with its "incredible" view looking down onto the village, the Abbey and "grey-gold fields of cherries and oranges and the delicate spire of Kasaphani's mosque and... five miles away upon Kyrenia whose castle looked like a toy."

The negotiations to buy the house are told with great good humour and, in the end, a deal is done. Durrell buys the house for £300. In Michael Haag's biography of Durrell, there is a



Over the main door there is a plaque recording the Durrell days.



photograph of work being carried on at the house in the year he bought it, with an annotation presumably in his own hand.

The house today looks no less splendid than it did seventy years ago





British colonial rule (as well as equally strong supporters). All this was anathema to the majority of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, who wanted only to live in peace, if often separately.

Durrell had hoped for a break from employment, in part, to focus on his planned cycle of novels that would eventually be published as *The Alexandria Quartet*. But with money running short, he started work initially as a secondary school teacher and, later, as the colony's information officer – the latter taking him away from Bellapais to Nicosia, where the office was located. Durrell's role in the colonial occupation – and his defence of it in *Bitter Lemons* – has been seen by some as a defence of both colonialism in general and British colonialism in Cyprus in particular. It was with great regret that he wrote at the end of the book: "The island I had known, the friends I had made [in] the small familiar world of Bellapais had vanished as completely as if they had never existed..." It makes for a deeply sad conclusion.

Larry left Cyprus in August, 1956 and four years later the island became independent. After Turkey invaded in 1974, the island was split between the Turkish north and the Greek south. At that time Durrell reflected on these complexities and on the island's communal tensions, but

Bitter Lemons is not an intentionally political book but, inevitably, politics first intrude and then take over. The colonial status of Cyprus was the primary cause of the "Troubles," as we might call them. The comparison with Northern Ireland, decades later, is sadly appropriate. It is another case of a divided community in which colonial rule, religious enmity and – in the Cypriot case – the opposing external powers of Turkey and Greece combine to make the divisions ever sharper. When Durrell first arrived in Kyrenia, the rivalry between Greeks and Turks was muted. On the day of his arrival, he travelled through villages where signs were displayed that read "ENOSIS AND ONLY ENOSIS". But inter-community relations were benign, although there were already strong opponents of



his reflections were personal rather than academic or political. He wrote rather of “this magnetic, bedevilled island that tugs at my heart.”

This year marks seventy years since Larry and his family left Cyprus. At last, there are signs the North has normalised despite its failure to gain any international recognition. It is now overwhelmingly Turkish in character. With the Southern part of the island being not only independent but also a member of the European Union, there seems to be little chance of a reunion with the North. But neither, on the other hand, does there seem to be much chance of an ‘Enosis’ with the Greek mainland. It is likely that Larry would regret what looks like a permanent division of the island. At the same time, I think he would relish the fact that Kyrenia, Bellapais and the surrounding areas are peaceful, welcoming and as magnetic as ever. And if you look closely, you may just about see traces of the troubled colonial past.

Paddy Briggs had a career with oil company Shell for 45 years in various locations in Britain, Europe, the Far East and the Middle East. On retirement he has worked (and is sometimes paid!) as a journalist and writer (particularly biography and sport). He is widely travelled with a particular affection for the Levant and the writers who describe it. He has been to Cyprus a number of times but this was his first trip to the Turkish North.



by Bartolo Casiraghi

On the Tepebaşı hill, in Istanbul’s vast Beyoğlu district, in full-view of the Golden Horn and just a few steps from İstiklal Avenue, stands the Pera Palace Hotel. Established in 1892 by the Orient Express Company, it was designed to provide suitable accommodation for wealthy European travellers reaching the gateway between East and West. Its elegant Art Nouveau façade and richly Oriental interiors are steeped in history, bearing witness to the social and political upheavals that marked the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the early days of the young Turkish Republic.

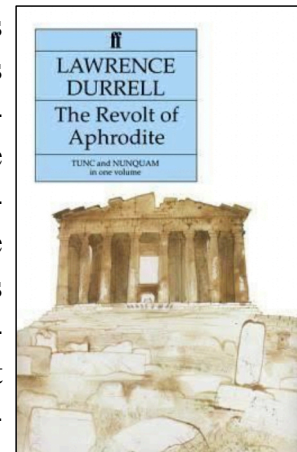
Over the decades, the hotel’s refined rooms and bars have hosted an extraordinary cast of characters. As carefully recorded on the hotel’s own website, guests have ranged from Greta Garbo and Ernest Hemingway to Agatha Christie – who is said to have written *Murder on the Orient Express* here – along with Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary and Second World War spy Cicero.



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, was also a regular visitor during the Allied occupation of the city after World War I, a turbulent interlude that preceded the War of Independence.

This transformative era is vividly recreated in Charles King’s *Midnight at the Pera Palace: The Birth of Modern Istanbul* (2014), an engaging account of the city’s rebirth as seen through the cosmopolitan community that lived in and gravitated around the hotel, in a neighbourhood that had come to be known as “Little Europe.” An entire Netflix series has been loosely inspired by this book; light in tone and meant primarily as entertainment, it succeeds nonetheless in evoking an atmosphere of political intrigue, cultural friction, and rapidly-changing social habits.

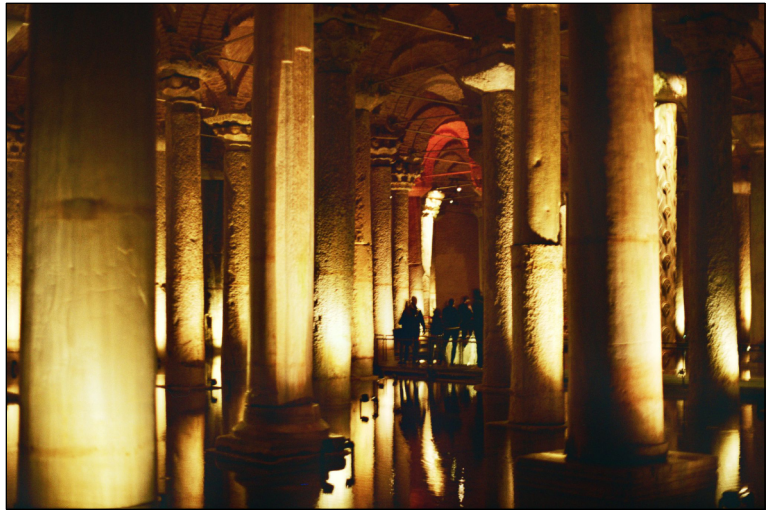
It is into this same world of mystery, conspiracy, and political turmoil that Lawrence Durrell plunges his fictional inventor Felix Charlock, who, a few chapters into *Tunc*, checks in at the Pera Palace – an apt setting for someone who is about to fall into the grasp of the tentacular Merlin Firm. “For tonight,” Charlock’s guide Sacrapant announces, “the Pera Hotel will enable you to rest. There is every luxe.” From the heights of the Pera, the city unravels before the novelist’s imaginative eye as *The Revolt of Aphrodite* unfolds. But how exactly does this happen? Durrell’s mental geography of Istanbul – compelling in his most intense passages (for example, his chromatic evocations of the Bosphorus) – is at times erratic, sketchy, and controversial. Few sights of the city are brought fully to life. Istanbul, after all, is one of the few major locations (or is it, perhaps, the only one?) that Durrell described at some length without ever having visited. This point, in particular, is what haunts me. Do we have irrefutable proof that Durrell never visited mainland Turkey and/or Istanbul? Capitally, what is this city of his? What kind of spirit of place emerges from pages devoted to the streets, buildings, and inhabitants of what Durrell describes to the reader as an immense graveyard?



For someone who was seemingly unfamiliar with the actual place, Durrell appears remarkably opinionated about the city and its inhabitants. This did not pass unnoticed: Ahmet Kayıntı’s paper “Images of Turks in the Works of Lawrence Durrell” (2011) argues that Durrell relies heavily on belittling Orientalist tropes in his portrayal of both Turks – depicted as lazy, seedy, soulless, and

degraded – and Istanbul itself, imagined as a city of decadence and ruins, stifling and lethargic. On the surface, *The Revolt of Aphrodite* seems to support this reading. In general, Charlock’s observations are, at best, veiled in sincere but naïve romanticism and, at worst, outright derogatory. This is apparent from the beginning: catching sight of the Golden Horn for the first time, the protagonist confronts what he perceives as Turkey’s immense inertia and marasmus – a city of hollow monuments, haunted by a heavy melancholy and depression. The boat that is carrying Charlock to meet the Firm’s emissaries gets delayed in quarantine for a health inspection. Combined with repeated references to the damp climate, this episode contributes to an overall sense of unwholesomeness. Perhaps more significantly, it also marks the first of many details that Durrell appears to have ‘borrowed’ from one of his main sources on Istanbul, George Young’s *Constantinople* (1926). This work retraces the history of the city from its foundation, through the Byzantine and Ottoman empires, in an ambitious blend of political record, topographical analysis, and cultural divulgation.

Young remains an important (though not exclusive) reference for Durrell throughout both *Tunc* and *Nunquam*. At times, Durrell copies scrupulously from his source; at others, he reworks the material. In the passage mentioned above, for instance, the scenic entrance to Istanbul via the Bosphorus does not quite add up. While both Durrell and George Young mention the yellow quarantine flag hoisted on the boat, Young’s



ship arrives from the Black Sea and calls at Anadolu Kavak, whereas Charlock enters from the Sea of Marmara and stops at Kebir Kavak – a location for which I was unable to find any clear geographical match. Minor as this may seem, such inconsistencies recur throughout Durrell’s Istanbul, reflecting his well-known tendency to fuse real detail with invention, especially when cities function as full-fledged characters or as the forces that shape them. Keeping this in mind, it is still possible to map out a clear itinerary that takes in a few specific and essential locations.

Let us begin, then, with Pera and Galata. Much of Charlock’s wandering – before and after his meeting with the Firm and Benedicta – takes place on the European side, north of the Golden Horn. Even more so today than back then, visitors arriving from the West often find this part of the city more familiar than the Byzantine and Ottoman core of Fatih, home to most of Istanbul’s canonical sights. Neighbourhoods like Çukurcuma, for example, tend to have a certain European flavour dictated by their historical development, while on the other side of the Horn both urban planning and architecture are perceptibly different. Durrell mirrors this division in his text: the Euro-



pean area of Beyoğlu is broadly referred to as Pera or Galata, while “Stamboul” is reserved for the old city, roughly corresponding to the area of Fatih.

The same occurs in Sir George Young. In his chapter on Constantinople in the 19th century – a period marked by both Westernisation and slow imperial decline – Young suggests that the story of that era can be told conveniently through a tour of Galata and Pera. Constantinople proper, Stamboul, recedes into the background. In the pages that follow, Young seems to associate the newly gained prominence of the area with a general loss of grandeur on the part of the Ottoman Empire. Galata, in particular, is presented as morally dubious and potentially dangerous: “after dusk, these backstreets of Galata

near the docks are not places to venture into at all,” the British diplomat warns. A similar atmosphere is evoked by Charles King for the post-war years, with an additional touch of *bohème*: a burgeoning hotel and entertainment industry intersects with a district full of foreign embassies. Jazz orchestras and glamorous clubs are cheek by jowl with traditional shops and tavernas, which reflect the older make-up of the neighbourhood. Readers of Durrell may appreciate how this concoction of diplomacy, fancy hotels, and bar counters is also a prominent colour in his Alexandrian palette.

With the possible exception of Kadıköy on the Asian side, visitors in search of vibrant nightlife today will probably still favour the Taksim–Galata axis in Beyoğlu. In *Tunc*, one of the characters cruising the area is Count Banubula, who is revealed as leading a secret, licentious double life while in the city. When the Count and Charlock visit Sipple entertaining drunken sailors in a sleazy bar, the location is described simply as a “Greek Quarter.” Historically, this might point to Fener or Balat, but it is not far-fetched to imagine Galata instead, which still had a substantial Greek population at the time.

I say “at the time” – but when exactly is it? In *The Revolt*, temporality is also ambiguous. My own guess would place the events in the early 1920s, but does it really matter? More likely, Durrell treats the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth as a single, blurred continuum. At one point in *Tunc*, for example, Sultan Abdülhamid II is tricked by the Firm into welcoming the Allied occupation fleet – an event that took place historically in 1919, a decade after the Sultan had already been deposed by the Young Turks (who, in the novels, are themselves entangled with the Firm).

Incidentally, the Young Turks bring us back to antiquity as we move on to the area of Sultanahmet. Here, Durrell briefly adopts an Eric Ambler/Dan Brown mode when Charlock spies on Young Turk officials in one of Istanbul's most famous landmarks, the Basilica Cisterns. Charlock's admiration for the Byzantine underground water reservoir is genuine: "it was awe-inspiring to be plunged all of a sudden into this watery cathedral," he tells the reader, before describing the effects of light and shadow on the rows of columns that can still be admired today. Beyond its artistic effect, this passage may hide subtle political undertones. Charlock is rowed through the gallery of dark chambers by an old, silent Turk wearing a fez – which had, by then, been officially banned by the Kemalist reforms. (In 1925, the Hat Law mandated the wearing of Western-style hats and abolished the fez as a symbol of the Ottoman-Islamic past.) Elsewhere in the novel, Charlock resents the enforced sartorial uniformity of "an artificially modernised country"; Sacrapant reveals that the Firm "was in touch with Mustafa's party" well before he took power, and knew of his plans. Through skilful bribes, the Firm secured an exclusive contract for the nationwide supply of cloth caps. When Charlock overhears and records the officials' secret conversation, Durrell describes their language as bark-like and lacking subordinate clauses. Strictly speaking, this assessment is only partially true, as subordination simply functions differently in Turkish than in English. Charlock and his guide are shot at as they flee the cistern. While this episode may not signify outright aversion to republican Turkey, Charlock and his circle – much like Sir George Young – display a clear preference for anything that predates the 19th century.

This bias is most warmly expressed less than a mile deeper into Fatih, where we encounter Charlock and Vibart touring the Grand Bazaar. Here, we enjoy what is perhaps the most positive alignment between character development and place. As Vibart overcomes his existential frustration, the writer *manqué* suddenly takes on the role of knowledgeable guide, chaperoning the protagonist through what was, up until the 19th century, one of the most important commercial hubs in the world. Readers are provided with a few figures and indications. ("It claims to contain 7,777 shops. Mystic numbers?") These include an erudite mention of the Byzantine eagle relief on the Booksellers' Gate in the Bedestan, which is still visible today (even though it is probably on the Jewellers' Gate). What truly matters, however, is Vibart's ability to evoke and describe with fervor even what is absent. "I could see now that Vibart was living in the romantic schoolboy glow of the mysterious East," remarks a slightly condescending but nonetheless impressed Charlock, as Durrell proceeds to copy and paste a good chunk of a paragraph directly from Young. Both authors then move on to the marvellous Beyazid Mosque, close to the ancient Byzantine paper market (which today houses mainly booksellers). There Durrell borrows another figure from Young – the finely turbaned scribe, whose only tools are a reed pen and a colour box, "filling page after page of parchment with exquisite illuminated script." Such figures, Durrell adds in his own style, are remnants of an age in which art was as graceful as it was necessary. Today, he laments, the same scribe is burdened with trivial commissions from government clerks and ignorant farmers. Romantic nostalgia in full swing? Meanwhile, Benedicta is thought to be in Eyüp, visiting her mother's grave. In the same

area, visitors today can enjoy views over the Golden Horn from the Pierre Loti Café, dedicated to the memory of the arch-Romantic French author who was once a regular patron. Ironically, Benedicta is ultimately found at yet another bar, Gatti's, which apparently never existed in Istanbul but was well known in London.

The last stop of our tour is something of a conjecture, as we seek the location of the dying Jocas's abode on the Bosphorus. I am not entirely certain that this is the same place first indicated as "Avalon" in *Tunc*. There, it is described as a hybrid of Byzantine fortress and ruined seraglio, cum water pavilion and villa. In *Nunquam*, dignified decay mingles with a sense of vegetation encroaching upon the living space. Jocas has moved to a martello tower on the ramparts, which is accessible by stone staircase. From the top of the tower, visitors enjoy a commanding view of the gulf. By a process of exclusion, I would venture to suggest this is the Rumeli Hisari Fortress, on the European side of the strait. As inspiration, Durrell may have drawn on a striking photograph of the castle as it was reproduced in Young's book. The fortress has changed little since then and still retains a unique fascination among the attractions I personally visited in the city. Here – where Mehmed II positioned his forces to lay siege to the final Byzantine stronghold, where the Ottoman epic began and unfolded over subsequent centuries – the architect Caradoc reminds the reader that Turkey is no Greece: "Listen to Turkey, listen to what it says... it's a heavy death-propelled wavelength, the daze of an old alligator slumbering in the mud."

What, then, are we to infer from such sharp pronouncements? Ultimately, making sense of whatever Durrell may have thought about Turkey and Turks seems to lead us into the familiar loop of his typically ambiguous, at times controversial, and at times oracular utterances. Still, I suspect there is more to be grasped. After all, even "beloved Alexandria" undergoes a similar love-and-hate treatment in the *Quartet*. Further reading and further research are, I think, both necessary and welcome. For now, it is maybe Charlock himself who makes the wisest point of all – when he concedes, somewhat uncharacteristically, that "Turkey takes time to know." That is undeniably true.

Bartolo Casiraghi [left] is an independent scholar and TEFL teacher based in Milan, Italy. In 2014 he started his Master's degree in English Literature at the Università degli Studi di Milano. While a visiting student at the University of Cambridge, he first became acquainted with Lawrence Durrell and in 2018 submitted his dissertation, "My word, what an Experience! Form and Readership in Lawrence Durrell's Alexandria Quartet." An amended version of this work was published in 2023 in *Re-Reading the Alexandria Quartet of Lawrence Durrell*, edited by Richard Pine. Together with his usual co-author Luca Barbaglia [right], he has been active since 2018 in the International Lawrence Durrell Society.



Lawrence Durrell and Gustaf Gründgens or Portrait of the Author as a Playwright

by Rena Schröder



Admirers of Lawrence Durrell know him primarily as a novelist and, to a lesser extent, as a poet and travel writer. An aspect of his work that tends to be forgotten is his lesser-known but still successful career as a playwright. It is no help to English-language readers that this career transpired largely in Germany and in German translation. Also, that it came about at the instigation of the actor and director Gustaf Gründgens [left: as *Hamlet* in 1936], a man who has been widely misrepresented as a Nazi stooge. It was Gründgens and his Hamburger Schauspielhaus who staged the world premieres of Durrell's three major dramatic works: *Sappho* (1959), *Acte* (1961) and *An Irish Faustus* (1963). While all three were successful with German audiences, they are as little-known to English-language readers as the life and work of the man who brought them to the stage.

The acclaimed German actor, director and theatre manager Gustaf Gründgens (1899-1963) achieved world-wide fame with his famous 1957 production of Goethe's *Faust* where he played the role of Mephisto. Gründgens – nickname GG – also played in 31 films, for example starring as international safecracker and gangster boss Der Schränker in Fritz Lang's thriller *M* (1931) and as betrayed Baron Eggersdorf in Max Ophüls' drama *Liebelei* (1933). Gründgens was also well-known via Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto* (1981) which his former brother-in-law wrote in 1936. This book, which offers a heavily fictionalized version of the actor's life, was later filmed by István Szabó. The film version won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film and became an international box-office success.

It has to be stated that Gründgens was never the amoral opportunist (renamed Hendrik Höfgen) who is portrayed in both the novel and the film. He did not sacrifice everything and everybody to his own fame and was never the protégé of Reichsmarschall Herman Göring. GG's Berlin State Theatre was known as 'the Island' because it was a haven for persecuted artists. A bisexual himself, he protected Jews, Communists and homosexuals from the Nazis and saw it as his duty and responsibility to save his theatre and his art from "this era of stupidity," as he called it. In an interview shortly before his early death at the age of 63, he mentioned that his job as theatre manager from 1934 to 1944 had been highly stressful and dangerous, even "unreal" in his eyes, and his success had meant nothing to him. Neither had he believed the Nazi regime would last as long as

it did. He did not opt for his office on purpose; it came to him involuntarily, even by surprise. Furthermore, he hated the title of ‘State Advisor’ that Göring had ‘foisted’ onto him against his will, allegedly to protect him from the risks posed by his sexuality. At one point, Göring had even threatened to shoot him when they disagreed over the dismissal of a stage director.

In the words of his good friend, the actor Maximilian Schell: “It is a great misunderstanding to think that Gründgens had in any way supported National Socialism. He was anything but a comfortable actor just thinking of his career. He was not even comfortable with himself. During the Third Reich, he saved lots of people from persecution and death. We should imagine Gründgens as a person with no alternative. He was German, he understood only German (having learned Latin, Greek and a little French at grammar school), he knew that he would not be able to survive artistically in another language, in another culture, in another country. He could only stay in Germany in passive resistance and get through the darkness of this time. He did that with as much decency as was possible in his situation. If every German had done as much for his fellow citizens as Gründgens, there would have been no Third Reich.”

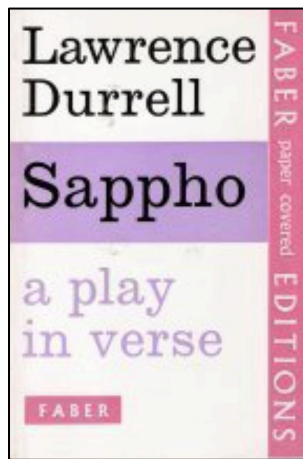
The house in Düsseldorf where Gustaf Gründgens was born – the eldest child of well-off parents – is still standing. Attached to it is a plaque that reads: “The most important actor, director and theatre manager of the 20th century was born here.” After the Second World War, GG was not only a legend in the German-speaking parts of Europe, but also toured the world with his inimitable Mephisto in *Faust* – which he also directed. He performed it at the Edinburgh Festival as early as 1949 and in Moscow in 1959 at the height of the Cold War, meeting the celebrated Russian author Boris Pasternak. In 1961, he staged it in New York City, Brussels and at the Venice Biennale where he was awarded First Prize. He was also booked to perform it in Japan just before he died.

Klaus Mann described Gründgens [*Right: as The Snob in 1946*] as a handsome man with “eyes like jewels.” He was almost six feet tall with blue eyes, blond hair and an athletic figure – and on stage he managed to look youthful even in his fifties, although a hairpiece became necessary. He loved sports such as swimming and tennis, which served him well in his intensely physical style of acting. His three-octave voice was made for poetry and verse. His fans revered him in an almost religious way, while his personal life was a permanent roller-coaster: he was married and divorced twice (Erika Mann 1926-29; Marianne Hoppe 1936-46) and proposed marriage to at least four other women. Being bisexual, he also had male lovers, most of whom were heterosexual. This contrived to make his life even more complicated.



As a theatre manager, Gründgens showed great talent; his productions were mostly sold out, with long queues at the box-office and hardly any need for state subsidies. His actors were nick-named the ‘Gründgens players’ which was an honour tantamount to a knighthood. Apart from his historic Mephisto in *Faust*, GG was a celebrated Hamlet – his favourite role, together with Orestes in Goethe’s *Iphigenia in Tauris*. As a stage director, he preferred classical drama but also had a taste for light entertainment such as operetta and comedy, in which he occasionally starred. Gründgens introduced the modern Broadway-style musical to the German stage as early as 1936, and even sang his own *chansons*.

Gründgens’ favourite reading in the late 1950s/early 1960s was the four books of *The Alexandria Quartet* – *Justine*, *Balthazar*, *Mountolive*, and *Clea* – all of which he read in German translation. As his command of English was limited, GG sent a translated letter inviting Durrell to collaborate



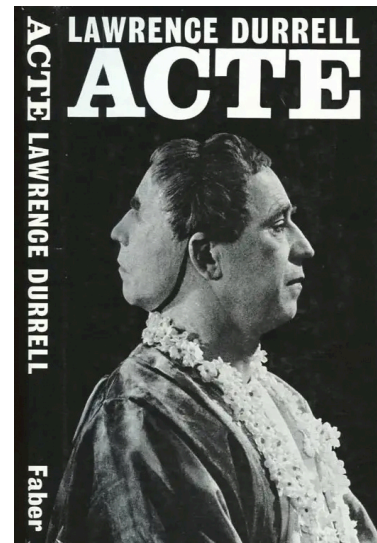
with his theatre, the Hamburger Schauspielhaus, in staging his verse play *Sappho* – which had been published in book form in 1950 but never publicly performed. He told Durrell that a world-famous star, the Swiss actor Maximilian Schell, had agreed to play Sappho’s lover Phaon alongside the great actress Elisabeth Flickenschildt (the neighbour Marthe Schwerdtlein in Gründgens’ 1960 film of *Faust*) as the tragic Greek poetess. Durrell agreed and Gründgens directed the play in its world premiere. Schell joked about his love scene with Elisabeth Flickenschildt, who was 25 years his senior. The actress was reclining on a sloping board, which represented an island in the Aegean Sea. As the impatient Gründgens exhorted him to “Come on! Kiss her!” Schell said that he did not find her attractive. Furthermore, he had never kissed a woman on sloping ground. “How is that?” replied Gründgens. “Aren’t you from Switzerland?”

Yet from its opening night on 21 November, 1959, the production was a triumph. One critic wrote that: “Gustaf Gründgens’ staging of *Sappho* is an artistic rope dance. It pushed the play close to the hermetic mysteries of Cocteau.” Another wrote how “Gründgens did not indulge in any scenic tricks. He created (the play) out of the language. We could feel the outstanding quality of the text, with every line of verse precisely honed.”

Following on from this triumphant collaboration, Gründgens asked Durrell to write another play for another world premiere in Hamburg. Durrell agreed and sent the first draft to GG for editing, with help from the translator Robert Schnorr. The two artists began a correspondence so intriguing it was published as a German-language booklet in 1961. A gifted dramaturge, GG suggested to Durrell which characters and scenes should be added or omitted, which order the scenes should come in and how to shape the play’s leading figures. Furthermore, he noted that Durrell’s choice of a title, *Acte*, would not go down well with German audiences – as *Akte* in German means simply

the acts in a play. Hence, they agreed on *Actis* as a name for the heroine at the play's German premiere.

Here is a short summary of *Acte* – as it is still called in English – which deals with what we would now call the “colonialism” of the Roman Empire. *Acte*, a young princess from the wild and remote province of Scythia, has been blinded and brought to Rome as a hostage by the Roman general Fabius, who had been sent to quell a revolt. This simple and uneducated princess finds herself immersed in the power politics of Rome, the capital of Empire. Lacking in judgment and unused to intrigue on this scale, she makes one tragic mistake after another, resulting in a further campaign against Scythia and a personal tragedy in her relations with the Roman general, whom she has come to love. Finally, *Acte* is killed while Fabius becomes an alcoholic. The political and, indeed, metaphysical issues that engulf her make this more a philosophical text than an ordinary drama, romantic in colouring and compact in structure though it is. Apart from *Acte* herself and her counsellor Galba, the main characters are the Emperor Nero, who has moods in which he trusts her; her lover Fabius and his wife Flavia as well as Petronius Arbiter, a writer who commits suicide in the final scene.



On 8 May, 1961, Gründgens wrote to Durrell: “I hugely enjoyed reading *Acte* with great attention and am happy to tell you I can direct your work in October. You certainly know that the strongest scene is between Fabius and Nero and the farewell scene between *Acte* and Arbiter is wonderfully written. Once again, your multi-faceted characters pose a great challenge to our bourgeois theatre.... But as regards the plot, I'm worried that everybody seems to know everybody else and each person is closely related to someone. At

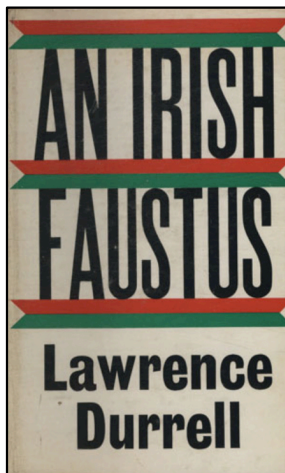
the end, when Metellus gets involved once again, that makes me nervous. Some situations are implausible and don't have credible motivations; on the other hand, you're not audacious enough to skip entirely over the laws of logic.

“Then there is *Acte*'s relationship with Nero. This dangerous woman is allowed to see the closely-guarded Nero over a period of months and cook him bread soup, even though his food taster clings to him like a leech. He discusses top-secret matters with her. How did she gain his trust? And what

does she expect Galba to do when she points Nero out to him? She surely knows how he feels. When Fabius is in danger, why does she not kill Nero? Why is she half-unconscious at the end, as she has witnessed Nero's meeting with his mother several times? And Galba's final sentence in this scene leaves me unsatisfied.

“You see, I'm voluntarily playing Devil's advocate. I'm not satisfied with the scene between Acte and Flavia either, as it just seems too sentimental. It starts so brilliantly – and the fact that Flavia doesn't love her husband is the basis for a really strong scene.”

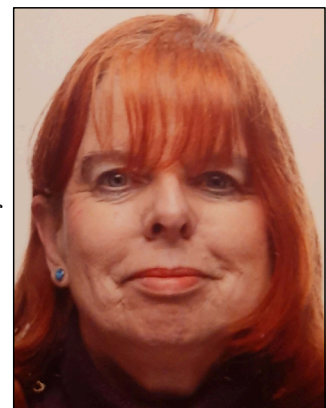
His criticisms go on in this vein, and by the end Gründgens starts to feel bad about his own letter. Yet, Lawrence Durrell is grateful to GG for his “thoughtful and intelligent letter which has fascinated me.” He tells him that of course he is prepared to improve any weak spots and has implicit faith in GG's stage experience “to guide my steps.” He wants to “try and write some new scenes in line with what you have suggested. Even if some titles or words cannot be translated correctly and will have to be changed... Feel completely free to change whatever and whenever is necessary.” Durrell then explains some scenes to GG from his own historical point of view.



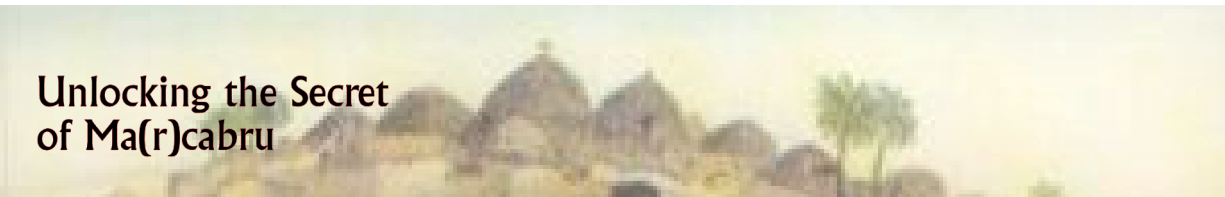
This correspondence lasted for months and is one of the best-documented instances to date of a playwright and director working in close collaboration. At this time, Durrell was also writing his play *An Irish Faustus* and Gründgens was intrigued by the idea. “You know I always wanted to play Faust instead of Mephisto! So far, I have been unable to make my dream come true, due mainly to the uproar it would have caused.”

Sadly, when the play was finally completed, Gründgens had already died at the age of 63. The Hamburger Schauspielhaus went on to stage *An Irish Faustus*, but without GG in the title role. Yet the four-year collaboration between Durrell and Gründgens – and the ample documentation they left behind – casts an intriguing light on Lawrence Durrell not just as a novelist, poet and travel writer but also in his little-known guise as a playwright.

Rena Schröder worked for many years as a teacher and language instructor in Germany – and first heard of Gustaf Gründgens from her mother, who had a passion for the theatre. Since her retirement in 2018, she has dedicated herself full-time to Gründgens and her collection of books and memorabilia now includes 300 volumes. She hosts a Facebook page dedicated to the actor and has written two book-length studies of his life and work.



*Have you ever wondered about the mysterious oasis of Macabru, which plays a key role in Durrell's magnum opus of the 70s and 80s, The Avignon Quintet? We know that Durrell had a genius for names, but where and how did he ever come by this one? The modern-day Medieval troubadour **Siarlot Lloyd** may well have found the answer. — DMV*



by Siarlot Lloyd

The writing of this article is an odd bit of happenstance, sprung from of a moment of shared music and conversation in a rented holiday apartment in West Yorkshire last summer.

My uncle and I are both musicians, though of very different worlds. He a long-standing figure of the Californian folk world, myself a dabbler in the reconstruction of High Medieval chansons and based in the North of England.



So of course, we ended up talking shop. During the conversation, he lent his mandolin to my bandmate and me and it just so happened that the piece we wound up singing was by a 12th century troubadour. My uncle was curious to know more and – always more than happy to expound on our obsessions – we explained: “It’s a type of song called a pastorel – about a shepherdess and a knight, by a trobador called Marcabru.”

“Sorry,” he said. “Did you say Marcabru?”

We agreed that yes, that was what we had said. Both of us were bewildered by my uncle’s sudden amazement. Little did we know this was a mystery that had been plaguing the International Lawrence Durrell Society for some decades.

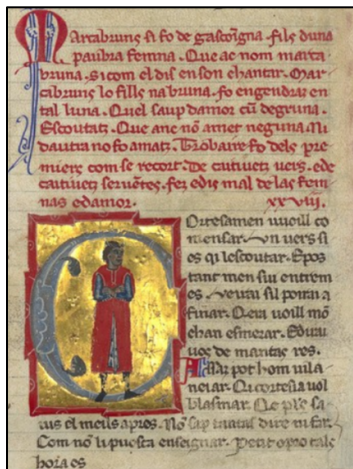
The connection between Macabru and Marcabru makes perfect sense. Provence was once part of a rich culture of music and courtly love that epitomises for so many the ideal of High Medieval life.

Firstly though, a bit of context. When I speak of trobador, that is what I mean to say. In the many dialects of langue d’oc, the languages of what is now Southern France, trobar means to find, or in this case, to compose. While the term ‘troubadour’ is also valid, I use trobador – and its feminine variant trobairitz – to differentiate these southern composers from their counterparts in the North of France, the trouvères, who composed in the northern langues d’oïl.

The troubadors were separated from the trouvères not only by their different languages but also by their different monarchs. It was not until 1228 and the end of the Albigensian Crusade that the South of France officially became French. The troubadors also predated their northern counterparts by a good thirty years. Travelling between the courts of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Alfonso the Chaste of Aragon and Countess Ermengard of Narbonne, the troubadors essentially got there first.

However, we have comparatively little concrete information about any but the most famous. Of the troubairitz, we know almost nothing. For many troubadors, all we have to go on are their *vidas* – short biographies that accompany their songs in *chansonnières*, the medieval song anthologies of the 13th to 15th centuries. And these are often looked upon with scepticism by scholars. Even the very earliest academic work on the subject (Jeanroy, 1925) viewed them as a mix of fact and fiction at the very best, at worst as works of outright fiction.

Apart from what remains of Marcabru’s work, this is all we have to tell us about his life. One of his two surviving *vidas* (now a public domain manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale Française) states that: “Marcabru was from Gascony, son of a poor woman who had the name Marcabrina, as he says in his song: Marcabru the son of Lady Bruna, conceived under such a moon that he knew how love unravels. Listen! For he never loved anyone, nor was by another loved.”



The other reads: “Marcabru was abandoned at a rich man’s gate, and no-one knew who he was or from where. And Sir Aldric del Vilar had him brought up. Afterwards he stayed with a troubadour named Cercamon until he himself started to compose. And at that time his name was Pan-Perdut, but from then on, his name was Marcabru. And in those days people did not use the term *canso*, but everything that was sung was called *vers*.

And he was greatly famed and listened to everywhere, and feared because of his tongue, for he spoke so vituperatively that in the end the castellans of Guyenne whom he had criticised so much put him

to death.” (Translation courtesy of *Marcabru: A Critical Edition*, ed. Gaunt, Harvey and Paterson, 2024)

The issue with these scant biographical details is that both manuscripts were written at least a century after the fact. In addition, there is no documentary record of his existence as there is for other troubadors – Marcabru is mostly likely a nickname or stage-name, rather than his name by actual birth. However, it is likely he was born a peasant, as this is something upon which both his

vidas agree. While there is no concrete evidence that he was from Gascony, it is a reasonable assumption based on the dialect his songs were written in.

Anything more can only be gleaned from the content of his songs. There are 44 surviving songs attributed to him, only four of which have surviving melodies. He explored a variety of genres, sirventes, pastorelas and may have also helped to invent the incredibly popular tenso, a form of debate song. His only surviving crusade song is also attributed to the Reconquista, the Christian attempts to retake Spain from the Moors, which places him firmly as having been active in the 1130s and 1140s (Barton, 1997).

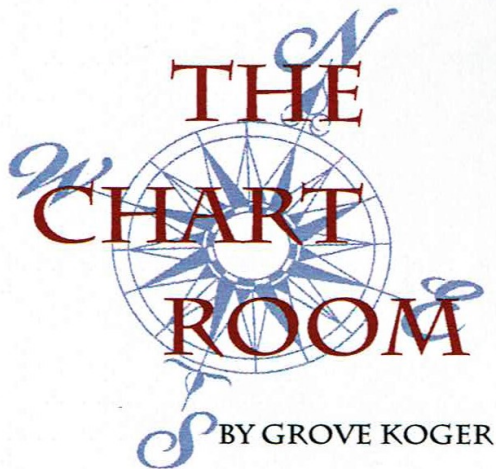
Better scholars than I have analysed these themes in far more detail, but much of his poetry does indeed echo the ‘vituperative’ claim of his longer vida. As Spence (1985) notes “Marcabru’s lyric persona is everything his vida says he is (irascible, provocative, misogynistic). At the same time, despite this layer of misogyny, and indeed, Marcabru falling decidedly into the ‘realist’ camp of trobadors at the time rather than their idealist counterparts, Marcabru was also a vehement champion of fin’amors – that is courtly love, while decrying fals’amors (Cholkian, 1989).”

Equally, the song that started this article, L’Autrier jost una sebissa (‘The other day near a hedge I came across a shepherdess’) could almost be seen as proto-feminist by the standards of the day. It is a pastorela, a song of a knight attempting to woo a shepherdess – but in this particular story, it is definitely she who has the final word. The song stands in stark contrast to most of Marcabru’s other work, where he decries the lasciviousness of the lords and ladies of the High Medieval court.

That is all we know of Marcabru. Of Macabru we know arguably less. Still, it seems more than likely that Durrell’s many years in Provence would have brought Marcabru to his attention – and that, in turn, has brought Macabru to ours.



Originally from West Yorkshire and now living in the North East of England, Siarlot Lloyd grew up in a musical family and learned violin from a young age. When she joined a 12th century re-enactment group, it seemed only natural to transfer her passion for music into the Middle Ages. Along the way she recruited bandmate Cerys Blake and the two now perform around the UK as ‘The Nightingale and The Lark.’ In her day job she is a French and German teacher – which comes in handy when deciphering manuscripts.



Richard Pine of **The Durrell Library of Corfu** has announced the publication of a new one-volume edition of *Endpapers & Inklings: 1933-1988*, which originally appeared in two volumes in 2019. Richard tells me that this edition of Durrell's uncollected prose "includes some new discoveries: a radio lecture for the BBC on 'Greek Peasant Superstitions' from 1947; Durrell's review of **Nikos Kazantzakis'** *Freedom and Death* (1956); Durrell's original prospectus, entitled 'Provence Entire,' for the book which eventually became *Caesar's Vast Ghost*; a brief essay on Rilke's *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*; an essay on the sig-

nificance of the Provençal *mazet*; 'Novel Notions,' a lighthearted 'letter to a young writer'; and a brief note accompanying an exhibition of paintings by his friend **Nadia Blokh** in Rome, 1965."

Richard also tells me that the "new (and final!) edition" of his *Lawrence Durrell: The Mindscape* is just off the press and will be available in 2026. Both of these new editions are published by the Durrell Library of Corfu, but, due to new postal regulations, they are not available for shipment to the United States.

Omar Sabbagh writes about two modern masters in "Bodies of High Style: Insight and Form in Lawrence Durrell and **Vladimir Nabokov**," which was published in *Nabokov Studies* 20, 2025. Sabbagh explains that he wants to start with "a commonality, the way in which both [novelists] endeavor in different, but still cognate ways, to poeticize narrative in a gambit to elude temporality and thus, mortality."

Patrick Garner celebrates Durrell's 1978 book *The Greek Islands* in "Lawrence Durrell's Odyssey of Greek Islands, a Travel Masterpiece" in the August 8, 2025, issue of *Greek Reporter*. According to Garner, the book "remains one of the most exciting travel books of all time," and describes it as a "marvelous launching place for learning about Greece's history, its unique islands, and its lovely people."

The symposium "**Henry Miller** in the 21st Century" was held October 16-19, 2025, in Pacific Grove, California. **Agata Popęda** reported on the event in *Monterey County Now* in "The Literarty World Has Sidelined Henry Miller: Now Scholars Are Trying to Transform His Reputation." The event included the world premiere screening of the film *Henry Miller's Paris*. In addition, Miller's art dealer and art publisher, **Gary Koeppe**, assembled an exhibition of Miller's artistic work, *The Art of Play*, at the Asilomar Conference Center over the same dates. The exhibition included more than five dozen framed artworks, along with exhibition catalogs, posters, and so on.

According to Popęda’s article, “*Tropic of Cancer* was the first of her father’s books that Miller’s daughter, **Valentine**, read, at the age of 12. They were in Paris, she shares, with her brother and Miller’s fourth wife, **Eve McClure**, visiting writer **Alfred Perles**. ‘I asked Fred [Perles] what all the fuss was over the *Tropic of Cancer*, and he gave me a copy to read. I didn’t understand most of it, being a naive girl.’” Her personal favorites? *The Books in My Life* and *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch*.

Lawrence Durrell’s friend **Patrick Leigh Fermor** was profiled as “The English Writer Who Fought for Greece” in the November 18, 2025, issue of *Greek Reporter*. The article also includes a photograph of Fermor and **General Heinrich Kreipe** (whom Fermor and **W. Stanley Moss** had abducted in Crete during World War II) [see below] toasting each other in Athens in 1972, with the Acropolis rising behind them.

Historian **Jim Claven** also writes about Fermor in “Finding Mani and Patrick Leigh Fermor in Melbourne” in the July 3, 2025, issue of *Neos Kosmos: The Hellenic Perspective since 1957*, while **Janak Pandya** discusses Fermor in “An English Walker, a Greek House, and the Art of Reading Slowly” in the July 13, 2025, issue of *Swarajya*.

Lily Janiak reviewed **Lynne Kaufman**’s biographical play about **Anaïs Nin**, *Shameless Hussy*, in the *San Francisco Chronicle* for April 28, 2025. Janiak’s review, “In ‘Shameless Hussy,’ Anaïs Nin Makes Incest and Bigamy Look Conflict-Free,” faults the play for the heroine’s “self-reverential tone,” which she describes as being “a bit as if *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations* had become a stage show.”

According to an article in the November 21, 2025, issue of the *Orange County Register* “**Steven Reigns** Moved Anaïs Nin’s Papers to Safety Prior to the Palisades Fire” Reigns is the first Poet Laureate of West Hollywood as well as Board President of the Anaïs Nin Foundation. The article is largely devoted to Reigns himself, but notes that the “archive of the late writer [Nin], who had lived in LA, is being readied for UCLA.” It had been “stored in a Malibu shipping container.”

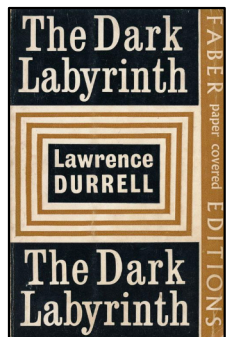


Patrick Fermor and his former prisoner,
General Heinrich Kreipe, toasting each other in Athens

OffCampus and Into the Labyrinth

by David Nigel Lloyd

Is the OffCampus initiative simply another proverbial case of a solution looking for a problem? Anne Zahlan recently reminded me of the varied nature of all On Miracle Ground conferences. “On Crete” – she told me – “we spent a day in a bus visiting German Occupation sites, vineyards, and tavernas.”



OMG! I would have loved to have attended that conference! And not just because I believe that Lawrence Durrell’s Cretan potboiler *The Dark Labyrinth* (1947) must be mentioned whenever possible. That wonderful novel, as I’m sure we all know, concerns a group of tourists trapped by a cave-in in a well-advertised labyrinth. Each tourist, whether an academic or a non-academic, must face their own version of The Minotaur. This begs the question: What is our Minotaur?

Anne put it this way: “Like it or not, CFPs are really the life-blood of OMGs.” In my previous OffCampus article, I had argued that [a] there’s nothing like a CFP to make us look like a gang of academics and [b] Lawrence Durrell was not an academic. Therefore, the ILDS needs to do a better job of pointing out that our conferences are all-inclusive events. We need to stop scaring off the non-academic.

“Dons vs. fans,” as Anne calls it, is an old issue for the ILDS and any other organization dedicated to the life and work of an author. “If our meetings and activities and output were not academically respectable, there would be no ILDS. Most of the people who attend have funding from their academic institutions to cover some part of their expenses.”

Now, I understand! With my sudden epiphany, the words of Lawrence Durrell’s young friend Dylan Thomas came to mind: “That’s the rub, the only rub.” Dylan’s Minotaur, unlike our own, was a matter of Life and Death. Poor Dylan.

Setting aside the fearsome bellowing of a minotaur named Donald reverberating through the labyrinth of the World, bright and brilliant on and OffCampus events await us this July in Vancouver. We hope to see you there.

David Nigel Lloyd lives with his wife, the painter Gita Lloyd, in far northern California. In August 2022, *The Herald* published his story of encountering a Dickensian caricature named Larry rampaging through Gerald Durrell's books and how he became a devoted reader of the poet behind the caricature. The longer story – of how DNL used Lawrence Durrell's *A Key to Modern British Poetry* as part of his self-selected syllabus on the art of folk singing and song poetry – can be read <https://davidnigellloyd.com/blog/how-i-taught-myself-to-write-songs>. He is one of two co-editors on the *ILDS Herald*. He is the proud uncle of Siarlot Lloyd.



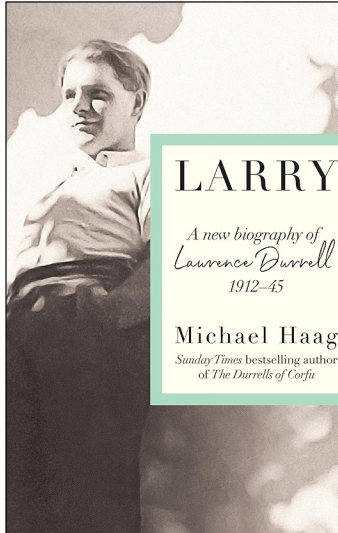
by Peter Baldwin

Lawrence Durrell has been very well served by biographies, especially given that I think that his reputation has not fared well since the heady days of *The Alexandria Quartet* and *The Avignon Quintet*. As to those biographies, we have (in short title form) in date order by their latest editions:

Ian MacNiven's *Lawrence Durrell*; Gordon Bowker's *Through the Dark Labyrinth* (useful for its attempts to understand LD's mind, even if inaccurate in many respects); Michael Haag's highly respected *Alexandria: City of Memory*; Richard Pine's *The Mindscape* (about to be republished in its third edition and, in my opinion, the best analysis of LD's psychology); *Amateurs in Eden* by Joanna Hodgkin, which looks at the shared lives of Larry and his first wife Nancy; Haag's *The Durrell's of Corfu*, published by Profile contemporaneously with the TV series *The Durrells*; and Brewster Chamberlin's *The Durrell Log: a chronology of the life and times of Lawrence Durrell*, in my view the essential guide to LD's life.

Chamberlin's work is a simple chronology of significant events in Durrell's life and comes in at 230 pages (including index). Its value appears to me to lie in the fact that it does not seek to offer any view, critical or otherwise, of the life and behaviour of LD.

Finally, we have Richard Bradford's *The Durrells; the story of a family*, which, to quote the book jacket blurb, talks of how "behind the façade of sunshine and happiness [lies] a much more eccentric, dysfunctional truth. Gerald grew to prefer animals to humans and treated each accordingly and his brother Lawrence hid a misanthropic lechery behind his experimental literary novels."



And, of course, Michael Haag's book which I am considering in this review: *Larry: a new biography of Lawrence Durrell, 1912 to 1945*. Profile Books, 2025.

I think it worthwhile pausing to think upon what we/ I expect of a biography, particularly of a creative artist. I must stress that what I have to offer here is a personal view. In some respects that may be the only valid one as each of us approaches a creative work with her/ his own insights and demands on the work.

What I look for is a narrative of the artist's life which helps me understand what the artist has created. It is through such creation that I seek to understand the world in which I function and have feelings and to reach a better understanding of myself.

MY FRIENDSHIP WITH HAAG

I need to tell you a little about myself. I am a retired solicitor (attorney) and have been an enthusiast for the work of the novelist and poet Lawrence Durrell for nearly 50 years. I had the pleasure of meeting with Durrell on several occasions in the late 1980's and lost a friend when Larry died in 1990.

Michael's engagement and support for Larry and his work first came to my attention in Michael's own publication in 1982 of a revised edition of E M Forster's classic account of Alexandria: *Alexandria - A History and a Guide* (1922) with a specially written new introduction by Durrell.

While Larry explored Alexandria in 1941 using Forster's Guide as his own guidebook, Michael used Larry's novel *Justine*, the first of *The Alexandria Quartet*, as his own guide for his own first visit to Alexandria in 1973.

In 1988, under his own imprint with that of Faber and Faber, Michael published a much expanded version of the correspondence between Durrell and Henry Miller – over 500 pages, ably edited by Durrell’s official biographer, Ian MacNiven.

In 2004, came the book *Alexandria – City of Memory*, Michael’s masterpiece, published by Yale. In 2017 came *The Durrells of Corfu* which, to quote the book’s front cover, is ‘[the] real life story of the Durrell family...in pre-war Corfu, England and India.’ Yale University Press, the publishers of that book, had commissioned Michael to write a new biography of Durrell.

Michael was unable to deliver his biography to Yale before his death, but Profile Books – who had published many of his previous titles – took on the task of bringing what could be termed a ‘finished’ book into print. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Mark Ellingham for his work in this respect, borne partly, I am sure, out of his respect for Michael as a very well-seasoned traveller and writer in and of the Middle East.

I had the pleasure of visiting Michael in his basement flat in North London on several occasions. How I wish I had made notes at the time of our conversations! Michael showed many insights into Durrell’s complex emotional life, snippets of which he would tempt me with during my visits to his flat.

Thinking back, I have enjoyed my meetings and friendship with Michael for a number of reasons beyond this mutual enthusiasm. I appreciated his extensive knowledge of Egypt and the Middle East; I was fascinated to hear of his research into the life of Durrell, particularly the people he had met in the course of it, many for whom I have also met; I was intrigued and respected his insight into the complexities of Lawrence Durrell’s personality.

Many of us are entranced by LD’s writing, which works so well on so many levels – it challenges us philosophically; it brings new ideas to our attention. It is sexy, which is fun to read when you are in your twenties, as I was when I first encountered LD’s work through *Tunc*, a novel which often *defeats* even otherwise enthusiastic readers of LD’s other work.

But there are, with the benefit of hindsight, more sinister and subversive forces at work in his novels and poetry. After all, *Justine* is based on an adulterous relationship with Darley, who, otherwise, is in a relationship with a prostitute. Much as I love Durrell’s magic as a prose writer, with the benefit of age – I am now 74 – I start to doubt the moral integrity of the world imagined by LD. Given that sex is so important to LD – both in his novels and in the interviews he gave when asked to explain his ideas – I might ask him, were I to believe he would answer the

question honestly: ‘Why did you struggle so much with personal relationships, particularly with women?’

The *Quartet*, very misleadingly, purports to be “an investigation into modern love.” Well, my late wife of 46 years – who bore me four fine children – would certainly have said, ‘If adultery and going with a prostitute are ‘modern,’ let me stay romantic.’ So, I quickly come back to my question a few seconds ago ‘Why did you struggle so much with personal relationships, particularly with women?’ I would hope that a biographer would deal with this question, but not a bit of it. Michael seems to shy away from the question, despite his lengthy conversations with Eve Durrell, Durrell’s second wife.

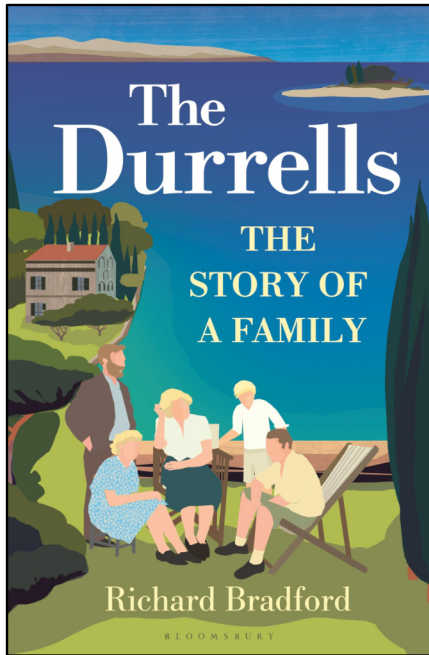
Bradford does deal with the *results* of LD’s psychological make up, which led him to be married four times and to have numerous extra-marital liaisons. From the blurb from Bradford’s book cited earlier, there can be no doubt as to his perspective. He undertakes an almost forensic investigation into LD’s deeply aberrant behaviour, but his point of view has a deep bias against LD’s novels – to quote from p xii of the Introduction “elitist, inaccessible books, that few humans would choose to read.” But Bradford equally shows insight – that LD used “fiction as a hideaway from the truth” (p xiii).

Michael’s book ends with LD and Eve sailing from Alex in June 1945, setting off together for Rhodes, LD’s next place of residence. How Michael would have dealt with the couple’s time in Rhodes, Argentina, Yugoslavia and Cyprus – where the couple’s marriage eventually fell apart – we will never know. Nor will we ever know why Eve had her breakdown; was it inevitable given her existing psychological state, was it exacerbated by LD’s behaviour? How much of Sappho’s behaviour and mental condition was a result of inherited features? Answers still need to be found to these questions as they impact on our understanding of the creative daemon which drove LD to create such powerful and imaginative books.

This essay is dedicated to Barbara, 438. It is a slightly revised version of my contribution to an online presentation and discussion sponsored by the ILDS on 25 October 2025 shortly after the publication of Michael Haag’s biography reviewed in this essay.

Peter Baldwin is a retired English solicitor (attorney). He has collected the works of Lawrence Durrell since 1976 and has published several short works by Durrell through his imprint Delos Press.





Review of *The Durrells: The Story of a Family*
by Richard Bradford
Bloomsbury, 2025

by James Gifford

One may reasonably regard biography as caught between competing forces. We have the drive for historical context: the urge to always historicize, and the deterministic economism we might associate with such perspectives. In contrast, biography's preference for the Enlightenment individual speaks to subjectivity: the rational individual exercising self-determining choice through the exercise of reason, and the entire body of bourgeois liberalism we might associate with fragmentation of social unity. The former sees the latter as hopelessly neoliberal, and the latter sees the former as naïvely vulgar. But both have a purpose, an aim, when it comes to biography. Biography is meant to *do something*. We know *why* we read it, whether we care about the philosophical backdrop or not.

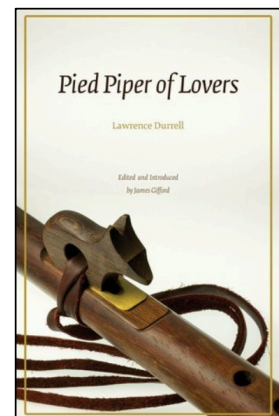
This is my problem reading Bradford's 2025 biography *The Durrells: The Story of a Family*. What is it supposed to *do*? As near as I can tell, Bradford's central point is that the Durrells are bad people and bad writers whom we shouldn't read (he calls such readers "insane"). The book's "do" is to stop people from reading the Durrells. If he's right, why read *The Durrells*? If he's wrong, why read his biography? In the strictest logic, it may not be entirely correct to say if it's true it's false, and if it's false it's false, so it's false, to paraphrase (Russell 15), but it's reasonable to ask why we should read Bradford? Also, in all fairness to Bertrand Russell, one may reasonably claim his Nobel Prize was for his work in biography... In any case, this is one of six biographies about Lawrence Durrell, two of the Durrells, two of Gerald, an autobiography by Margot, and more than 10 closely related biographies and autobiographies.* So Bradford's *The Durrells* truly needs to *earn* its readers... Instead, he tells us that his subject matter isn't worth reading, despite his walking a well-trod path carved into the literary landscape by many, many prior readers.

The cover of Bradford's book is a clear visual reference to the television program *The Durrells*, as is his title. Michael Haag has already mined this area in *The Durrells of Corfu* (Profile, 2017),

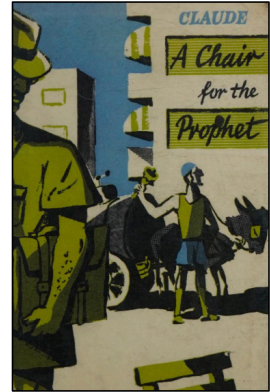
so again, this book requires a rationale for duplication. Surprisingly, Bradford has virtually nothing to say about the show. It is understandable that Bradford would want to capitalize on the opportunity, if only for sales. But a book that sells is a different beast from one that's meant to be read. If we still lived in the time of the ubiquitous book knife, as Durrell's Pursewarden so loved, we'd know if our used books had been read or not. This seems to be a book meant for uncut pages, placed on a table to be noticed, for conversation attuned to the television's preoccupations. Less so for reading.

All of this is to say I am left puzzled as a reader about the rationale for my reading this book. Bradford cannot resist any opportunity to imply that the merits of his subject matter are such that they do not merit being his subject. The aim of entering into dialogue with the large number of other related biographical studies is also absent. This perhaps leaves an unstated intention of doing a *better* biography than has been done before, or of correcting errors. Biography as a genre aims at veracity and generally refrains from overly strong interpretive ventures. Scholarly editions tread a careful line between implicitly and explicitly doing hermeneutical work. Every edition will implicitly interpret the work, even if only by deciding what to annotate and what to leave to the reader. At a minimum, the contextual additions and clarifications, just as much as the textual work of choosing among variant witnesses, prefigure a hermeneutical position, yet these implicit interpretations are always careful of how far they stray into proscriptive positions for readers. Literary biography has an easier norm. It notices but does not judge. It draws our attention but does not prescribe our reaction. Bradford accepts none of this. His opinions come first and the material is shaped up to justify them – biography follows only afterward.

There are some instances that stand out. Where Bradford finds opportunities for a quick dismissal, he takes it, even if the topic has far more afoot. Bradford sets aside the biographical matters for a time to dwell on anti-semitic images in Durrell's first novel, *Pied Piper of Lovers*, claiming that Durrell's writing is so virulently hateful that it makes T.S. Eliot's anti-semitism appear loving. This is hardly true, but the more fascinating matter is that some of the antisemitic images are allusions to Eliot's poetry... Eliot's influence is clear in the novel but goes without note in this biography. Moreover, the quoted imagery is among a series of urban grotesques in the novel, so not all of Bradford's examples are of Jewish characters. Still, this is a matter that matters to literary studies, and there is a great deal for the biographer here. How does this relate to Durrell's Jewish wives? Does the closeness of his third wife Claude's family to the



Menasse family, the Zionist cause, and the founding of the modern state of Israel bear on this? What of his in-laws' similarity to the Coptic Hosnani family in *The Alexandria Quartet*, who engage in smuggling arms to Israel? How do we as readers deal with the changes in Durrell to the point where he writes a Zionist novella in pieces for periodical publication, *Judith*, and eventually makes it into a film script? How do we read this beside Claude's overtly Zionist novel *A Chair for the Prophet* (1959) with its several passages bearing her husband's clear stylistic fingerprints? Or harder still, how do we then deal with the darker reflections on the Holocaust and antisemitism, sincere or ironical, in *The Avignon Quintet* at the end of his career? Of course, Bradford clarifies none of this. His biography fails to note the direct links between Claude and the founding figures of modern Israel, their transformation in a hidden form into the Hosnanis, nor the complexity of the Zionist themes in Durrell's mid-career works. Michael Haag's new biography details this terrain carefully, but Bradford must have known of all of this since Haag has published on the matter repeatedly over the past twenty years. Instead, we're given only the bizarre charge that Eliot was "the chief felon with Pound not far behind" (32) with regard to interwar antisemitism. Of course, Eliot's famously antisemitic remarks in public and private contrast with his support for Jewish refugees during the war, whereas Pound quite literally advocated for fascism, and as Matthew Feldman has shown in his study of Pound's typewriters, directly supported mass murder. Even more literally, Pound was indicted for treason, so both literally and figuratively he seems more apt to bear the title of "chief felon." Obviously, Bradford's aim is to inflame, but this is hardly the objective of a serious biography. What feels painfully missing in these casually tossed invectives is something like a meaningful analysis or detailing of Eliot's direct influence on Durrell as his editor (or the legacy of Pound's editing of Eliot and James Joyce), or more obviously Durrell's quotation of the closing words of Pound's "Canto I" in his own revision of the final line of *Justine*, the version of the novel we read today, and a revision he made while writing a review, "Enigma Variations," of Pound's *Section: Rock Drill*.



In order to inflame, Bradford also relies on two posthumous topics around Durrell that remain uncertain: speculations about whether he was a spy and the nature of his relationship with his second daughter Sappho. Bradford implies much but actually says very little about the latter, and he points excitedly to the former. Based on the theme of sibling incest in Durrell's novels, some posthumous accusations have been made about his relationship with his daughter, typically with the claim that this issue is detailed in her diary excerpts published in *Granta*. Of course, anyone

who has read those materials is aware they do not contain any such accusations, regardless of how lurid the claims are, even when Sappho outlines conflicts with her parents. This is likely why Bradford leans on implying something that might drive a curious reader but ultimately says nothing directly about it because there is nothing for a biography to rely on here. On the matter of espionage, there is far more leaning into the feel of a thriller here than new information. Durrell certainly interacted with people working in these fields at various points in his life, and his job brought him into such work, but calling him a spy is a bit like conflating affiliation and fact. Affiliation has its importance, and there's much to recommend we read Durrell's novels with such a perspective in mind and see him in such a network, but the biographer's task is to be steadier.

Perhaps the most revealing element of this book is the absence of meaningful citations. Bradford drops in several 'facts' without citing sources, and since some of these contradict other documented materials, the reader is left to wonder after their veracity. The early remarks about Durrell's friendship with the anarchist writer George Woodcock is a case in point – are these sections derived from Woodcock's autobiographies or other archival materials (or even from my own writing on this topic)? I don't know, and that's a problem. The nuances I hadn't already known from prior work go without citations, so I don't know if they have a sound basis. This marks *The Durrells* out as a book for a popular readership that wants a hook, some flair, and the pleasure of peeking behind closed doors or through keyholes, rather than a research-based project undertaken by an academic with research funding for scholarly productivity.

So what do readers leave this biography knowing that is new? I don't know, for instance, what happened to Sir David Attenborough's "Foreword" that Bradford described as "already contributed" in his project description for his university. I also don't know, to return to my own opening sentences, how the material conditions of empire and its decline manifested traits seen in the Durrells, as the same project description promises to detail (and would be genuinely fascinating). I do, however, leave this book knowing that Bradford sees Margaret Thatcher as a savior and feels that authors who drink and fail to abide by his sense of monogamy are evil and therefore unreadable. Neither matters to me as an academic, though. Of some 3,000 scholarly works on Durrell, Bradford would call such academics "insane." What more do I know about the Durrells after this book? About as much as I learned from the fictional television series on whose coat tails the book rides toward sales, sales, sales. But the unreal series at least made me smile and laugh a few times. It entertained and didn't pretend to be truth rather than fiction. It's a shame because the book is a missed opportunity. Bradford may have a few more pounds in his

pockets after all is said and done, but our bookshelves have gained only pounds of weight (1.36 pounds to be precise).

Finally, there is the truly great missed opportunity here that I had hoped would at least make a quick appearance. Durrell, after all, has already written this scenario with Blanford in his novel *Monsieur* and his variations on names through Bloshford, Sutcliffe, and one almost dares to feel “Bradford” as biographers chasing after his protagonist-narrator. “Bloshford does something quite hard to do – he trivialises reality” (*Monsieur* 264). I have the same feeling reading Bradford, and Durrell seems to have seen it coming more than 50 years ago. So that...



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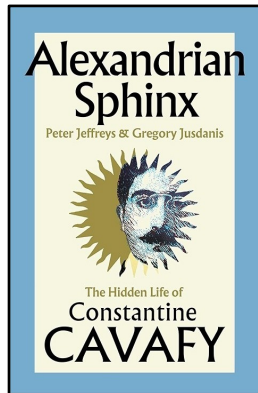
* Yes, really... Theodore Stephanides published several biographical pieces and the autobiographical *Climax in Crete*. Daniel Todd's dissertation "An Annotated, Enumerative Bibliography of the Criticism of Lawrence Durrell's Alexandria Quartet and his Travel Works" (1984) begins with a 200-page biography. We have the direct biographies by Ian MacNiven, Michael Haag, Gordon Bowker, Joanna Hodgkin, Mary Sanders Pollock, and Douglas Botting. Jeremy Mallinson and Margot Durrell wrote autobiographies that attend closely to the Durrells, and Michael Haag wrote a biographical book on the Durrells in response to the television series. Beyond this, we have Alfred Perles's biographical *My Friend Lawrence Durrell* and his own autobiographical writings, G.S. Fraser's autobiography *A Stranger and Afraid*, and the many autobiographies by and biographies about those in Durrell's immediate circle. In other words, this book truly needs to earn its cover price to compete for our attention.

Durrell, Lawrence. *Monsieur; or, the Prince of Darkness*. Faber, 1974.

Feldman, Matthew. *Ezra Pound's Fascist Propaganda, 1935–45*. Palgrave, 2013.

Russell, Bertrand. *An Inquiry Into Meaning and Truth: the William James Lectures for 1940 Delivered at Harvard University*. Unwin, 1980.

Review of *Alexandrian Sphinx: The Hidden Life of Constantine Cavafy* by Gregory Jusdanis and Peter Jeffreys Simon and Schuster, 2025



by Vassilis Letsios

Nearly a century after the death of Constantine P. Cavafy, the appearance of *Alexandrian Sphinx: The Hidden Life of Constantine Cavafy* by Gregory Jusdanis and Peter Jeffreys may seem both overdue and improbable.

Overdue, because Cavafy's global stature has long demanded a full-scale, modern biography; improbable, because Cavafy has persistently resisted biographical capture. The result is a study that is as much a meditation on the limits of biography as it is a portrait of the poet. For readers of *The Herald*, long attuned to the layered mythologies of Alexandria through Lawrence Durrell and others, this new life of Cavafy offers a timely recalibration of both poet and city.

It is striking that, despite Cavafy's canonical status, "true" biographies have been remarkably few. Early accounts were shaped by proximity and personal allegiance. Timos Malanos (1933; rev. 1957) wrote as an intimate who presented himself as confidant and quasi-analyst, reading the poet through a proto-psychoanalytic lens and foregrounding sexual "deviation" as an interpretive key. Michalis Peridis (1948), also from within Cavafy's circle and with access to archival material, adopted a more protective stance, guided by Victorian codes of reputation and moral discretion; his portrayal of Cavafy is reverential, almost hagiographic, genealogically anchored and carefully shielded. Stratis Tsirkas (1958) approached the poet historically and ideologically, situating him within the Greek community of Alexandria and the shifting social conditions of late Ottoman and British Egypt; the biographer here becomes historian, reconstructing a matrix of circumstances that shape poetic consciousness.

The only substantial English-language biography for decades was that of Robert Liddell (1974), who was a long-time Alexandrian resident. Liddell combined Boswellian anecdote with nostalgic elegy. His Cavafy stands at the twilight of cosmopolitan Alexandria, a figure inseparable from the fading aura of a pluralistic city. That elegiac note – so resonant for readers shaped by Durrell's Alexandria – has proven to be enduring. Yet it also risked imprisoning Cavafy within a nostalgic narrative of loss.

Even earlier, neither E. M. Forster nor Philippos Dragoumis wrote biographies per se, but their portraits have deeply influenced reception of the poet and his work. Forster's image of Cavafy "at a slight angle to the universe," aligned with the Hellenistic past of Alexandria, became foundational for Anglophone readers. Dragoumis' lesser-known testimony, by contrast, sketched

a city “without character,” offering vivid ethnographic glimpses that scholarship has only partially absorbed. These divergent Alexandrias – Hellenistic palimpsest, cosmopolitan twilight, provincial backwater – have haunted every subsequent biography of Cavafy.

Against this background, *Alexandrian Sphinx* announces both continuity and rupture. Jusdanis and Jeffreys acknowledge the paucity and fragility of their materials. Many of Cavafy’s letters have not survived; no recording of his voice exists; archival gaps remain conspicuous, particularly concerning his erotic life and his views on Muslim Egyptians. Earlier contemporaries either obscured these areas or transformed them into rumor. The new biography does not claim to fill such silences. Instead, it foregrounds them as constitutive absences. In an age attuned to queer historiography and the politics of the archive, this methodological candor is one of the book’s great strengths.

Formally, the authors depart from the conventional cradle-to-grave model. They begin and end with Cavafy’s death, structuring the narrative thematically rather than chronologically. Family, city, friendships, poetry, and the cultivation of literary fame form distinct yet interwoven strands. This circular, thematic design resists teleology: the life is not presented as linear ascent from obscurity to greatness, but as a network of tensions and contradictions. Such a structure mirrors Cavafy’s own poetics, with its recursive meditations on time, memory, and belatedness.

The first section situates the poet within the Cavafy family’s transnational migrations between Alexandria, England, and Constantinople, exploring the intersection of commerce and culture that shaped the siblings’ aesthetic horizons. The commanding presence of the family matriarch, Charicleia, is given due weight. Here the biographers complicate the familiar image of the solitary clerk-poet by embedding him within a matrix of shared intellectual ambitions and economic precarity.

The second section revisits Alexandria – not as romantic backdrop, nor merely as emblem of decline, but as paradoxically enabling and constraining. The city emerges as a social and poetic center that both limited and liberated Cavafy. By tracing commercial networks, communal hierarchies, and imperial politics, the authors move beyond the mythic Alexandria beloved of European imagination. For readers of the *Herald*, this demythologizing does not diminish the city’s aura; rather, it thickens it with historical specificity.

Friendship occupies the third section, revealing fluctuating degrees of intimacy and estrangement. Cavafy valued his friends deeply yet often risked those bonds through aesthetic severity or emotional reserve. An interlude on his reading habits and literary influences further

destabilizes the notion of isolation. The poet appears as an avid, strategic reader, in dialogue with English, French, and Greek traditions.

The fourth and fifth sections examine poetic development and self-fashioning. Particularly compelling is the attention paid to Cavafy's midlife renunciation of much of his earlier work – a radical act of self-curation. The authors frame this not simply as maturation but as deliberate aesthetic and reputational recalibration. Cavafy's distribution of handmade pamphlets, his careful control over publication, and his ambivalence toward translation are read as elements of a long-term strategy to secure posthumous recognition. In this respect, the "hidden life" is not merely erotic or psychological; it is also the hidden labor of reputation-building.

Perhaps the most provocative question the book poses is how a man who seemed, by middle age, to offer few signs of imminent greatness – living in what could be perceived as a provincial city and writing in a "small" language – came to produce poetry of global reach. The answer is not reducible to genius alone. It lies in a confluence of diasporic positioning, multilingual cultural traffic, strategic self-presentation, and the later mediations of translation and advocacy – beginning, crucially, with Forster. The global Cavafy was not inevitable; he was, in part, constructed.

What distinguishes *Alexandrian Sphinx* from its predecessors, then, is not access to sensational new documents but its self-awareness about biographical artifice. The authors explicitly remind us that biography, like any genre, is governed by conventions; the "life" that emerges is always a product of selection, arrangement, and narrative craft. In this respect, their study is almost a meta-biography—an inquiry into how lives are written and rewritten across generations.

For readers invested in Alexandria's literary afterlives, this book offers both corrective and enrichment. It tempers nostalgia without extinguishing complexity; it reframes Cavafy as neither mere sphinx nor domesticated figure "in slippers," but as a restless, self-conscious architect of his own posterity. Nearly a hundred years on, the enigma remains – but it is now illuminated by a biographical practice attuned to silence, construction, and the unstable interplay between life and art.

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