



# HELLENIC SOCIETY NEWS

Newsletter of the Hellenic Society of Maine

the Hellenic Society of Maine is a tax exempt non-profit public charitable organization

Vol. XVIII  
Spring 2022

**Website:** [www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org](http://www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org) **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine](https://www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine)

## “How the Greeks Learned to Write -Twice!” by Cynthia Shelmerdine

When did the ancient Greeks learn to write, and what purposes did this new skill serve? This and other questions will be answered when Prof. Cynthia Shelmerdine gives her talk on this interesting topic at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 31 via Zoom.

The earliest known texts in the Greek alphabet date to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. We'll look at what kinds of texts these are, and how the uses of writing expanded over the next couple of centuries. But there is another story here as well. As we will see, the Greeks also learned to write several hundred years earlier, in a different script and for very different purposes.



Cynthia W. Shelmerdine is the Robert M. Armstrong Centennial Professor of Classics, *emerita* at the University of Texas at Austin, and Research Associate in Classics at Bowdoin College. She has published extensively on the Aegean Bronze Age, particularly the archaeology, history and culture of Mycenaean Greece.

She has worked in the field as a ceramic expert with the University of Minnesota Messenia

Expedition (1970s), the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project (1990s), and currently the Iklaina Archaeological Project (from 1999).

She was educated at Bryn Mawr College, Cambridge University and Harvard University (Ph.D. 1977). Among her many publications, she edited the *Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age* (2008), and collaborated with her sister, Susan C. Shelmerdine, on the third edition of her ancient Greek textbook, *Introduction to Greek* (2020).

## In These Trying Times: An Update

As we head into a third year of the pandemic (and hopefully the last!) we are amazed and humbled by the wide support we continue to receive from our members. Thanks to you we have strong membership numbers and increased donations. But the inability to hold events in person has put a damper on what we can offer. That worries us, but we have adjusted as best we can.

Our film series has shifted to be entirely online. Folks have continued to “attend” by watching the films themselves, then tuning into Zoom for discussions – even though it isn’t the same as sharing laughs, ohhs, and reactions when we are together in a room.

Another problem is finding available films. Irwin Novak has been spending hours searching for titles available to stream, and also working on technical issues, to keep the series running. We have repeated some oldies-but-goodies, and

## Biblia Mazi – Books Together

Don’t delay! Find these books and join us as we explore works about Greece or by Greek authors.

In November the Biblia Mazi book club held its inaugural discussion -- of the book *Circe* by Madeline Miller – attended by nearly 20 readers. Current members of the Hellenic Society are invited to sign up for the next two book selections.

*Scorpionfish* by Natalie Bakopoulos is a novel set in contemporary Athens. Following the death of her parents, a Greek-American woman returns to her old apartment and neighborhood, now filled with captivating characters - expats, refugees, exiles - and an elusive sea captain. A thoughtful book about relationships, it is evocative of the modern-day city and culture of Athens. (Tin House Books, 2020 ISBN: 978-1947793750) The book will be discussed at 7 p.m. **Tuesday, February 1**, on Zoom.



*A Greek Odyssey in the American West* (also known as *Aimilia-Georges* or *Emily-George*) by Helen Papanikolas is a non-fiction account of the stories of the author’s parent’s migrations to the United States. It includes their meeting and courtship, and their migrations within the country particularly in the West. As they try to succeed, while retaining their cultural heritage, they ultimately enrich the culture of their new adopted country. (Published by University of Nebraska Press, 1997 ISBN: 978-0803287471) A discussion will be held at 7 p.m. **Tuesday, April 12** on Zoom:

You may sign up for either of these sessions by sending Angela Bournakel an email at [about@me.com](mailto:about@me.com). You will be sent a link to the Zoom session a week before. Please contact her if you have any questions. The Biblia Mazi book committee also includes Lucky Hollander, Evie Papacosma, and Mary Snell.

found some newbies, but occasionally there is a small cost to view the films, or the tech is slightly compromised. Please be patient and generous of spirit in our current situation.

Conversely, some events are as good or even better via Zoom. Our Greek Table sessions are fun and lively, and now include folks from as far away as Florida, New York and Budapest! The grammar lessons led by Cynthia Shelmerdine work perfectly. We may never go back to in-person again.

Our lectures work well on Zoom too, although it’s always more engaging when you are sitting in the same room with the speaker. We have had some scheduling problems for this spring so will offer only one lecture, but it will be complimented by our new Biblia Mazi sessions.

The big news is that we are planning some great events for the Fall 2022 which is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Catastrophe in Asia Minor. We have lined up speakers, plus books and films, all dealing with aspects of this significant event in Greek history. Stay tuned for names, topics and dates.

Eighteenth Annual - Spring 2022 -Via Zoom

## GREEK FILM SERIES

Contemporary & Classic Films about Greece

presented by

Hellenic Society of Maine

**WATCH AND DISCUSS FILMS** via the Internet and on ZOOM  
Once again we will offer films via an Internet link one week before a planned ZOOM discussion of the film (the ZOOM link will also be sent separately.)

If you are interested in viewing the films below, send an email to [novak@maine.edu](mailto:novak@maine.edu) prior to the date shown, and the links will be sent to you.

**“Trojan Women”** Dir. Michael Cacoyiannis, USA, 1971

**ZOOM Discussion: Thursday, February 10 at 7 p.m.**



**During the week of February 3-10: watch on the link to be distributed by February 3.**

Iphigenia was sacrificed, the winds blew, and the Greeks went on to destroy Troy. Euripides wrote “The Trojan Women” in 415 B.C., but his tragic play about the aftermath of the fall of Troy continues to resonate many centuries later – particularly in this stunning film, strongly anti-war in its telling. All of the Trojan warriors and princes have been killed and the conquerors must divide the remains of the war – including the Trojan women and their children. The film stars Katharine Hepburn as Hecuba, wife of King Priam; Vanessa Redgrave as Andromache, the wife of Prince Hector; Geneviève Bujold as Cassandra, prophetess daughter of Priam; and Irene Papas as Helen of Troy. Score by Mikis Theodorakis. Cacoyiannis made several other films based on Euripides’ plays, but may be best known for his classic film, “Zorba the Greek.” *In English. 106 minutes*

**“FAMILY MEMBER” (Μέλος Οικογενειας)** Dir. Marinos Kartikis, Cyprus, 2015

**ZOOM Discussion: Thursday, March 10 at 7 p.m.**

**During the week of March 3-10: watch on the Internet. URL or ZOOM link to be distributed by March 3.**

A Cypriot couple, George and Sophia, are trying hard to cope with their financial problems and the needs of their two children. The grandfather helps them out with his pension since the family business, a small grocery store, does not provide them with enough income. When suddenly the grandfather dies in his sleep, the couple decides to keep it a secret for as long as they can so as to continue collecting the money from his pension. But things become more complicated when officers from the social security department start looking for grandfather. How will they survive without that pension? *In Greek w/ English subtitles. 129 minutes.*



**“AMERICA AMERICA”** Dir. Elia Kazan, Greece, 1964

**ZOOM Discussion: Thursday, April 28 at 7 p.m.**



**During the week of April 14-28: watch on the Internet. URL or ZOOM link to be distributed by April 14 (two weeks to view).**

Director Elia Kazan, ethnic Greek but Turkish by birth, tells the real story of the struggles of his uncle in emigrating to America. In the 1890's, the young, kind-hearted but naive Stavros lived in Anatolia, where the Greek and Armenian minorities were repressed by the majority Turks. This repression often led to violence. Stavros dreamed of a better life - specifically in America - where, as a result, he could make his parents proud by his grand accomplishments. Instead, his parents, with most of their money, sent Stavros to Constantinople to help fund the carpet shop owned by his first cousin once removed. What Stavros encountered on his journey, which he made on foot with a small donkey, made him question life in Anatolia even further. Once in Constantinople, he resolved to earn the 110 Turkish Pound third-class fare to the United States. But try after try, his efforts were thwarted. As he seemed close to achieving his dream,

it appeared certain that it would be snatched away from him. But an earlier good deed may have helped him, ultimately, to achieve his goal of reaching the United States and a better life. *In English. 174 minutes.*

# Hellenic Society of Maine

P. O. Box 8007

Portland Maine 04104-8007

a tax exempt non-profit public charitable organization

[www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org](http://www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org)

## Board of Directors

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## Do We Have Your Latest Mail / E-mail Contact Information?

We want to keep our lists up-to-date.

If you've changed your address or e-mail please send a note to: Irwin Novak at [novak@maine.edu](mailto:novak@maine.edu).

For more information on HSoM go to the Hellenic Society of Maine website (see above) or "like" the HSoM Facebook page

[www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine](http://www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine)

## In Honor or In Remembrance

This is a new column that will list donations that are made IN MEMORY OF (IMO) a special person by family and friends. May their memory be eternal. Donations can also be made IN HONOR OF (IHO) a living person. Listings will include the name of the donor and honoree and run for two consecutive issues. To donate you can use the membership form found in this newsletter, or send the information and a check to HSoM at P.O. Box 8007, Portland, ME 04104-8007.

### Crown of Olive Level - \$500 or more

Gold Level - \$250 or more

**IMO – Taxia Efthimion Paras**

*Maria & Demetra Anagnostopoulos of The Greek Institute, Cambridge MA*

Silver Level - \$100 or more  
**IMO – Taxia Efthimion Paras**

*Carl and Margot Lenhart*

*Evangelos Liaras*

*Mari Anne Paraskevas and Peter Paras*

*Mary Snell and Irwin Novak*

Bronze Level – under \$100

**IMO – Constantine Karvonides**

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*Marilyn Wescott*

**IMO – Tina Stratis**

*Jana Magnuson*

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*Irwin Novak and Mary Snell*



ABOVE 2012 - Back, L-R: C. Gianopoulos, T. Paras, G. Spatoulas, S. Harrell, D. Deveres, D. Klimis-Zacas, M. Zacas, J. Yalouris. Front, L-R: C. Ziagos, J. Allen, M. Snell.

## From the Archives Former and current HSoM Board Members

BELOW 2018— Seated, L-R: C. Ziagos, J. Antonacos, I. Novak, A. Antonacos, J. Allen, C. Gianopoulos. Standing: M. Schneller.



## YOU CAN NOW JOIN THROUGH OUR WEBSITE

Our dues cover the period of July 1 to June 30 each year, **NOT** a calendar year. If you want to become a member, or renew, through our website, go to: [www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org](http://www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org) and use the "Donate" button to pay through PayPal or Credit Card, and indicate "For Membership" - **OR** fill out the form below and mail it in.

*✂ Cut Out and Return!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**For July 1, 2021—June 30, 2022:** Renewal / New member (<— circle one)

\_\_\_\_ \$19.75 (date of Greek constitution) Annual Full Member (grants the right to vote on policy issues)

\_\_\_\_ \$12.50 (BC date of Trojan War) Annual Associate Member

Number of Memberships \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a contribution of: \_\_\_\_\_ in support of HSoM.

**OR** enclosed is my donation of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor or Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_.

Make check or money order payable to:

Hellenic Society of Maine

Send to: Chris Ziagos, Treasurer

P.O. Box 8007

Portland, ME 04104-8007

## Quick Calendar Summary

### *All online via Internet and ZOOM*

**Tues., Feb. 1, 7 p.m. - Biblia Mazi Discussion** of the book *Scorpionfish*.

**Thurs. Feb. 10, 7 p.m. - Discussion** of the film *"The Trojan Women"*  
View the film from Feb. 3-10.

**Thurs., Mar. 10, 7 p.m. - Discussion** of the film *"Family Member"*  
View the film (Fee: \$2.99) from Mar. 3-10.

**Thurs., Mar. 31, 7 p.m. - Talk by Cynthia Shelmerdine:** "How the Greeks Learned to Write -Twice!"

**Tues., Apr. 12, 7 p.m. - Biblia Mazi Discussion** of the book *A Greek Odyssey in the American West*.

**Thurs., Apr. 28, 7 p.m. - Discussion** of the film *"America, America"*  
View the film from Apr. 14-28.

**E-mail [novak@maine.edu](mailto:novak@maine.edu) for film & discussion links**

✂ *Clip and Save!* ✂

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Portland Maine 04104-8007**

## A Fall Highlight

Twenty-six viewers tuned in on March 11 on Zoom to hear Professor Jerry LaSala of the USM Physics Department, deliver a presentation on the Antikythera Mechanism. This ancient Greek computing device was recovered by sponge divers from a Roman shipwreck dating back to the first century BCE. Professor LaSala explained how, with the use of X-rays and detailed CT scans, astronomers believe they have unraveled the mechanism's mysteries, and how it predicted many astronomical and other events. If you missed the talk, contact [novak@maine.edu](mailto:novak@maine.edu) for links to the presentation.

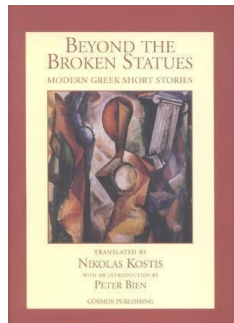


Antikythera Mechanism

## Ellenika Biblia

*A column with suggestions for other Greek-related books to read.*

Short story collections are a great way to sample the work of different authors. *Beyond the Broken Statues: Modern Greek Short Stories*, translated by Nikolas Kostis, includes unknown and famous writers alike. The authors in this volume are presented chronologically so that it becomes a mini-course in Greek literature as you read. Included are works by well-known writers such as "Dream on the Wave" by Alexandros Papadiamantis, "In Broad Daylight" by C.P. Cavafy, "The Little Hunchback" by Stratis Myrivilis, and "Mycenae" by Elias Venezis. (Cosmos Publishing, 2006; originally published in 1993 as "Modern Greek Short Stories" by Odysseas Publications, Athens).



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