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MODERN GREEK STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (MGSAANZ)

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MODERN GREEK STUDIES
(AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND)

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The periodical welcomes papers in both English and Greek on all aspects of Modern Greek Studies (broadly defined). Prospective contributors should preferably submit their papers on disk and hard copy. All published contributions by academics are refereed (standard process of blind peer assessment). This is a DEST recognised publication.

Το περιοδικό φιλοξενεί άρθρα στα Αγγλικά και τα Ελληνικά αναφερόμενα σε όλες τις απόψεις των Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών (στη γενικότητά τους). Υποψήφιοι συνεργάτες θα πρέπει να υποβάλλουν κατά προτίμηση τις μελέτες των σε δισκέτα και σε έντυπη μορφή. Όλες οι συνεργασίες από πανεπιστημιακούς έχουν υποβληθεί στην κριτική των εκδοτών και επιλέκτων πανεπιστημιακών συναδέλφων.

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Panayiotis Diamadis

AEGEAN EUCALYPTS

The subject of this study is both historical and political in nature. In light of the current debate on the involvement of Australian troops in the US-led occupation of Iraq, we need to always keep in the back of minds the fact that history, the past, IS the present IS the future. We cannot understand why events such as September 11 unfold the way they do without understanding what has already occurred. As a great philosopher once said, 'He who forgets the past, is doomed to repeat it.' Hence by exploring Hellenic and Australian history, we are exploring ourselves as Australian Hellenes.

The scenes of delirium across this country triggered by the Hellenic national football team's conquest of the 2004 European Nations' Cup once again brought into the public domain the depth of the pathos many Australians feel for the that corner of the Mediterranean that makes up the Hellenic Republic and Cyprus.

Australian Hellenes form a vibrant, living link to that part of the world, so distant from the Antipodean shores. Australian Hellenic studies have tended to focus on the ancient, medieval and modern Hellenic heritage of the sun-burnt country, renowned for its philoxenia. This study seeks to examine the reverse side of this traditional view of Australian Hellenic history, presenting a panorama of Australian heritage in the Hellenic Republic.

Australian heritage extends far beyond our country's shores. 'Aegean Eucalypts' looks at the living, military, athletic and even environmental elements in the diverse Hellenic mosaic.

As is widely known, Australia is home to approximately 500,000 persons of Hellenic descent. Melbourne is home to the second largest Hellenic Diaspora community in the world.¹

Less well known is that the Hellenic Republic is home to the second largest Australian Diaspora community in the world: according to estimates of the Department

of Foreign Affairs, some 135,000 Australian citizens live permanently in the Hellenic Republic.² To this figure should be added the tens of thousands of Australians who call Cyprus home. These substantial populations on opposite sides of the ocean form a living bridge, not only between countries and peoples, but also between cultures, faiths and continents. Australian heritage in the Hellenic world can be loosely grouped into military, athletic, philanthropic and environmental categories.

MILITARIA

This island-continent has been deeply involved militarily, financially, commercially, diplomatically and politically with the region since the **BALKAN WARS OF 1912–1913**. Although Australian military forces were not directly involved in this conflict, at least 32 Australian citizens and residents fought with the Hellenic forces against those of the Ottoman Empire. Funds raised in this country (over 12,000 Australian pounds) were used for relief work amongst the refugees flooding into Hellas from Thrace and Asia Minor. When the fighting was over and the Ottoman Empire virtually expelled from Europe, some of these soldiers returned to Australia with wives and families.

A few short months later, Hellas was once again at war, as was Australia – for the second time in its brief existence.³

The Federal Government's attitude to Hellenism during the **GREAT WAR (1914–1918)** was one full of contradictions. At least 50 Australian Hellenes served overseas in the Australian armed forces, at the same time as the tiny Australian Hellenic community was under surveillance and further Hellenic immigration was quietly suspended. These restrictions were exclusively to the pro-German stance of the then-King, Constantine.

In January 1914 the government of the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP; *Ittihad ve Terrakke i Cemayeti*, nicknamed the 'Young Turks') began systematic attacks on the Hellenes and Armenians of eastern Thrace.

'Sooner or later the complete Ottomanization of all Turkish subjects must be effected, but it was becoming clear that this could never be achieved by persuasion, and recourse must be had to force of arms.'⁴

In April 1915, the deportations and massacres of Armenians and Assyrians began throughout the Ottoman Empire. By May, these pogroms had spread to the Aegean coast of Asia Minor. All three groups were singled out for who they were, persecuted and murdered. Indeed, the word 'Holocaust' was originally used by then British Secretary of the

Admiralty, Winston Churchill, to describe the carnage of the Armenians and by US journalist Melville Chater in relation to the sacking of the city of Smyrne (Izmir) in September 1922.⁵

Hellenes had inhabited the Gallipoli Peninsula since at least the 6th century BCE. The name Gallipoli is the Anglicised version of the Hellenic name for the town of Kallipole (Good City), located on the north-eastern side of the peninsula. The region's Turkish name is Gelibolu.

‘From elsewhere on the peninsula came a stream of Greek refugees whom the Turks had expelled from their villages, after seizing most of their possessions, and those who wandered into the ANZAC lines were promptly moved to Greece.’⁶

The **DARDANELLES CAMPAIGN OF 1915** has developed into a pivotal event in the evolution of the Australian national identity. The stories of the heroism exhibited by the ANZACs on the shores of the Gallipoli Peninsula have become contemporary Australian parables, didactic tales for young and old alike. The selective nature of these ANZAC paradigms, though, is a topic for another paper.

The Hellenic element of the Dardanelles Campaign is little known, even amongst historians of Hellenism.⁷ The exploits of Lieutenant Pavlos Gyparis for example, who led a force of Kretan volunteers on a number of raids on Ottoman targets along the Thracian and Asia Minor coasts; raids designed to divert the enemy's attention from major Allied offensives on the Gallipoli Peninsula, are virtually unknown.⁸

Owing to their positions, the Hellenic-populated north-east Aegean islands of Lemnos, Imvros⁹ and Tenedos played an important part in the campaigns against the Ottoman Empire during World War One. Lemnos was occupied by a force of British marines on 23 February 1915 in preparation for the assault on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The deep-water sheltered harbour at Mudros presented the Allies with an ideal location for a base; the fishing village subsequently became a considerable Allied camp.

On 4 March, a force of 3200 Australian troops landed on the rugged island.¹⁰ The 1st and 3rd Canadian Stationary Hospitals, two Australian army hospitals and other medical units were stationed around Mudros Bay and a considerable Egyptian Labour Corps detachment was employed. In the waters around Lemnos, an armada of some 200 Allied vessels assembled, in preparation for the coming assault.

Beginning on 25 April, tens of thousands of Allied troops, drawn from Australia and New Zealand, Great Britain, France, Nepal, India and Africa, landed on the shores of eastern Thrace's Gallipoli Peninsula. The combined naval-land assault was designed to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war by capturing the capital of Constantinople.

From the first hours of the landings it was obvious that things had gone disastrously wrong, with the troops being landed at the wrong locations. The British High Command was on the verge of recalling the men and abandoning the mission when they received a radio signal from the first Allied vessel to penetrate the Ottoman defenses along the Hellespont (the Dardanelles). It was the Australian submarine AE2. The message that they were inside the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara) was enough to convince the High Command that the Campaign could still succeed. The rest as they say is history.

Gallipoli may seem like an utter failure.

While it was a military defeat, it was not a complete failure. Those eight months bled the Ottoman Empire of some of its best troops and opened the way for the successful British-led offensive in Palestine and Mesopotamia, beginning in mid-1916.¹¹

After the evacuation from the Gallipoli Peninsula, a garrison remained on the island, while the 1st Royal Naval Brigade was on Lemnos, Imvros and Tenedos for the first few months of 1916. By early 1917, all Allied forces had left the islands. On 30 October 1918, the Armistice between the Entente Powers and Turkey was signed at Mudros.

The irony of the Gallipoli Campaign never fails to amuse. The Ottoman Empire was fighting against the Allies for control of this strategic piece of land and stretch of water. Three great imperial states were fighting over territory that belonged to none of them. The original inhabitants and owners of eastern Thrace had been deported and massacred a few months before the ANZACs arrived.

The only physical remains of this brief but vast presence on Lemnos are the island's Commonwealth War Cemeteries established by the Commonwealth forces and the ANZAC war memorials erected by the regional government and the Lemnian Associations across Australia.

The East Mudros Commonwealth Military Cemetery is situated about one kilometre north-east of the village of Mudros. Opened in April 1915, the final burial took place in September 1919. It contains 885 Commonwealth burials of World War One and one World War Two burial. The Portianos Commonwealth Military Cemetery, situated in the hamlet of Portianos, on the west side of Mudros Bay. Opened in August 1915, the final burial took place in August 1920. It now contains 347 Commonwealth burials from World War One.

Many of the graves from the 1914–1918 Great War belong to veterans of the Gallipoli Campaign – including many Australians – veterans who were evacuated to Lemnos' hospitals for treatment of wounds or disease but who were destined not to recover. Their graves and the memory of their sacrifice continues to be honoured on Lemnos, although it is largely forgotten in Australia.

MACEDONIAN FRONT. An estimated 100 Australian men served in the British forces¹² on the front that stretched from the Adriatic Sea to the Aegean coast of Thrace.

The Salonika (Lembet Road) Commonwealth Military Cemetery is on the northern outskirts of Thessalonike, adjoining the Roman Catholic French and Italian War Cemeteries, on the west side of the road to Serres.

At the invitation of then Prime Minister, Eleutherios Venizelos, Thessalonike was occupied by three French Divisions and the 10th (Irish) Division from Gallipoli in October 1915. Other French and Commonwealth forces landed during the year and in the summer of 1916, they were joined by Russian and Italian troops.¹³

In August 1916, a revolution broke out at Salonika, with the result that Hellas came into the war on the Allied side. The city thus became the base of the British Salonika Force and contained, from time to time, eighteen general and stationary hospitals. Three of these hospitals were Canadian, although there were no other Canadian units in the force. The earliest Commonwealth burials took place in the local Protestant and Roman Catholic cemeteries. The Australians and other Allied soldiers endured extreme climate, air raids, illness and boredom.

‘Exposed on their rocky heights to the full anger of the storm, they could not even dig trenches in which to shelter. Their sodden clothing frozen, and in some cases split like wood when attempts were made to bang garments back into shape. Not all men, in the hurried transfer from Lemnos, had been issued with warm clothing. Communications, never good, had been made hazardous by the ice on the mountain paths.’¹⁴

They had to deal not only with attacks by Bulgarian, German, Austrian and Turkish forces, but also with the fear of guerrilla attacks from local Bulgars and Turks, not to mention pro-German Royalist Hellenes.

SERVICEWOMEN. Throughout the course of World War One, some 371 Australian nurses – all volunteers – served in Hellas: 360 in British army hospitals¹⁵, 10 in Scottish Women’s Hospitals and one bacteriologist, Dr Elsie Jean Dalyell. The most famous Australian woman to serve in Hellas was orderly/assistant cook Stella Miles Franklin, at a Scottish Women’s Hospital in 1917–1918.

‘When July gave place to August more and more went down with malaria... As many as a quarter of our staff would be seedy at one time, and everyone else, in the tremendous heat, was thereby forced to do double and triple duty. Those

among us who escaped malaria could be counted on the fingers of one hand, excluding the thumb...'¹⁶

Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin was born on 14 October 1879 at Talbingo, her maternal grandmother's grazing property near Tumut in the New South Wales Snowy Mountains. She spent the early part of her life at Brindabella, the family home station in the Monaro region to the east. In 1889 the family moved north to a dairy property near Goulburn, and then in 1903 to Penrith, an outer western suburb of Sydney and finally in 1914 to Carlton, an inner southern suburb of Sydney.

After the publication of *My Brilliant Career* in 1901, Franklin tried a career in nursing, and then as a housemaid in both Sydney and Melbourne. While cultivating her literary contacts with such writers as Henry Lawson, she wrote as a freelance journalist for the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* under the pseudonyms. She then became involved in the early Australian feminist movement via her friendship with Rose Scott and Vida Goldstein. Franklin left Australia in 1906 for the United States and undertook secretarial and editorial work for Alice Henry, another Australian, in the National Women's Trade Union league. She then moved on to England in 1915 and used her nursing knowledge in the Scottish Women's Hospital.

Some of these nurses were returning to Hellas for a second time after serving on Lemnos during the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915. From 30 July 1917, Australian nurses began arriving in Thessalonike, just in time for the Great Fire that practically destroyed the 'Bride of the North'. British General Hospitals were established at Hortiatis¹⁷ (in Halkidike), at Kalamaria¹⁸, and in Thessalonike¹⁹ itself. Scottish Women's Hospitals were located at Mikra (near Kalamaria) and Ostrovo (Arnissa) on Lake Vegoritiss²⁰.

The service and sacrifice of the Allied servicemen who fought in Macedonia, as well as the sacrifices of the women who nursed them, are commemorated on numerous memorials across the province. The largest of these are at Stavroupole and overlooking Lake Doirane.

Opened in November 1915, the Thessalonike Cemetery at Stavroupole in the city's north has Commonwealth, French, Serbian, Italian and Russian sections. The Commonwealth section remained in use until October 1918. After the Armistice (November 1918), some graves were brought in from other cemeteries in Macedonia and from the Scala Cemetery, near Cassivita, on the northern Aegean island of Thasos. There are now 1648 Commonwealth servicemen from World War One buried or commemorated in this cemetery – including a number of Australians.

Situated approximately eight kilometres south-east of Thessalonike's centre, on the road to the Makedonia International Airport, in the municipality of Kalamaria, is the

Mikra British Cemetery. Access is via the main entrance on Vryoylon Street, directly opposite the Kalamaria communal cemetery.

Mikra was opened in April 1917, with the final burial taking place in 1920. The cemetery was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when graves were brought in from a number of other burial grounds in the area. Mikra now contains 1810 Commonwealth burials of World War One. Within the cemetery stands the Mikra Memorial, commemorating almost 500 nurses, officers and men of the Commonwealth forces who died when troop transports and hospital ships were lost in the Mediterranean, and who have no grave but the sea. They are commemorated here because others who went down in the same vessels were washed ashore and identified, and are now buried at Thessalonike.

PRISONERS-OF-WAR. Off the field of battle, Australian prisoners-of-war laboured on one of the world's greatest engineering projects, the Constantinople–Baghdad Railway, alongside Hellene, Armenian and Assyrian slave-labourers. The Australian and other Allied POWs have provided us with invaluable eyewitness accounts of the fate of the Christians of the Ottoman Empire: deportation and massacre.

*Famished and spent across the waste, beastlike you drove us on,
And clubbed to death the stragglers by the way.
Our sick men in the lazar huts you left to die alone,
And you robbed the very dying as they lay.
Naked and starved we built you roads
And tunnelled through your hills,
And you flogged us when we fainted at our work.
Fevered beneath the sun we toiled, wrecked by winter chills,
Till death released us, kindlier than the Turk.
And the tunnels we drove for you, the roads that we have made,
Shall be highways for the armies of your foe.
We shall mock you in our graves, that in what we did as slaves
We helped, we too, to work your overthrow.²¹*

Escapee Australian prisoners like RFC Captain Thomas White, Flight-Lieutenant Francis Yeats-Brown and AE2 Seaman John Wheat, found aid and comfort amongst the indigenous Hellenic populations of Constantinople as well as across Asia Minor and on British-controlled Cyprus. Wheat, for example, recorded that prior to his unsuccessful escape attempts, 'I made friends with some Greeks and Armenians and got all the information I could.'²² The experiences of many of these prisoners-of-war are well-documented in autobiographies they published after the war.²³

THE GREEK CAMPAIGN. During World War Two, Australians once again played crucial roles in the course of events in the Eastern Mediterranean. During the ill-fated Greek Campaign of 1941, Australian troops fought a rear-guard action during the retreat of the Allied forces from Hellas in the face of the overwhelming Nazi invasion. While France resisted the Nazis for six weeks in 1940, it took the Axis forces seven months to subdue Hellas, from the invasion of 28 October 1940 to 31 May 1941 when the last Allied troops on Krete surrendered. While certainly heroic, what was the use of this delay? It forced the Nazis to postpone their invasion of the Soviet Union by three months. As it turned out, the onslaught of the fierce Russian winter caught the invaders short of their target, and ultimately defeated them, as much as any Allied military force.

The Phaleron War Cemetery lies a few kilometres to the south-east of downtown Athens, at the boundary between the Old Phaleron and the Kalamaki districts. It is on the coast road from Athens to Vouliaghmene, five kilometres from the former international airport at Hellenikon.

The site of what is now Phaleron War Cemetery was chosen originally by the 4th Division as a burial ground for Commonwealth casualties of the opening phase of the Hellenic Civil War (the so-called *Dekemvriana*: December 1944–February 1945). Subsequently, the military authorities, in conjunction with the Hellenic Government and the Army Graves Service, decided that it would be the most suitable site for a World War Two cemetery for the whole of mainland Hellas. The 23rd and 24th Graves Registration Units and the 21st and 22nd Australian War Graves Units worked together to bring in graves of the 1941 campaign from the battlefields, temporary military cemeteries and from various civil cemeteries.

There are now 2028 Commonwealth servicemen of World War Two buried or commemorated in this cemetery – 596 of them unidentified. Special memorials commemorate casualties known to have been interred in certain groups of graves in the cemetery, but whose individual graves cannot be precisely located within these groups.

Other special memorials commemorate casualties re-buried in the cemetery from original graves which, owing to the destruction of local records, could not be identified.

Also within the cemetery is the Phaleron Cremation Memorial, commemorating 74 men of the army of undivided India who died during the Hellenic Campaign during World War Two and who were accorded the last rite required by their religion – committal to fire.

The Athens Memorial, commemorates the nearly 3,000 members of the land forces of the Commonwealth who lost their lives during the campaigns in Hellas in 1941 and 1945, and in Yugoslavia from 1943 to 1945, and who have no known grave. In the north-east corner of the cemetery, a plot contains the graves of servicemen and civilians who

after serving in the Crimean War, died in Hellas, and were buried in the Anglo-French Crimean Cemetery, Neo Phaleron. The graves were moved in 1966 when that cemetery could no longer be maintained.

In May 1941, the **COMMONWEALTH FORCE ON KRETE** was organised in five widely separated defence areas along the north coast – around the three airfields at Heraklion, Rethymnon and Maleme, and at Souda Bay and the port of Chania. The Nazis launched their attack on 20 May with airborne paratroops. Two days later, at the village of Galatas,

‘a motley collection of primitively armed old men, women and children charged, shouting, over open ground and into the sights of soon-faltering German airborne units’

recorded Prof. Christopher Thorne in his travelogue ‘Between the Seas: A quiet walk through Crete’. The village was later utterly destroyed. The sacrifices of Cretans and ANZACs alike are commemorated by the Commonwealth War Memorial now marks the site of this remarkable episode.

The airfield at Maleme was quickly captured and used for landing Nazi reinforcements. The attacks on the Heraklion and Rethymnon positions were repulsed. On 23 May, the remainder of the Maleme position had to be given up and its defenders fell back to Chania. On 26 May, the Allied line west of Chania was broken.

Souda Bay became indefensible and the troops from these two positions, with the remainder of the Maleme garrison, withdrew across the island to Sphakion on the south-western coast, where many of them were evacuated by sea on the nights of 28 to 31 May. Heraklion was successfully defended until the night of 28-29 May when the garrison was evacuated by sea. Orders for the Rethymnon garrison to fight its way southward for evacuation did not arrive, and it was overwhelmed on 31 May. At Komitades, on the island’s south-west coast,

‘the remnants of the British, Australian, and New Zealand forces that had been defeated in the crucial battles around Hania came wearily down to the sea in the hope of evacuation, many of them exhausted by the trek across the mountains...’²⁴

Of the total Commonwealth land force of 32,000 men, 18,000 were evacuated, 12,000 were taken prisoner and 2000 were killed. The month-long campaign produced enduring

bonds between Australians and Cretans that continue to be developed in the 21st century.

The Souda (Suda) Bay War Cemetery is at the north-western corner of the Bay, five kilometres east of Chania and three kilometres north of the Chania – Rethymnon – Heraklion road. The site of the Cemetery was chosen after the war and graves were moved there by 21st and 22nd Australian War Graves Units from the four burial grounds that had been established by the German occupying forces at Chania, Heraklion, Rethymnon and Galatas, and from isolated sites and civilian cemeteries.

There are now 1502 Commonwealth servicemen of World War Two buried or commemorated in the cemetery: 778 of the burials are unidentified. Special memorials commemorate a number of casualties believed to be buried among them. The cemetery also contains nineteen World War One burials brought in from the Souda Bay Consular Cemetery.

HELLENIC CIVIL WAR. The first small ‘hot’ war of the post-World War Two geopolitical order was the Hellenic Civil War of 1946–1949. A United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted on 21 October 1947 established a ‘Special Committee on the Balkans’ (UNSCOB) to assist the states of south-eastern Europe to achieve a peaceful solution of their disputes and to observe the decisions of the General Assembly. The UNSCOB comprised representatives of the Soviet Union, Poland, Brazil, China, France, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. We were represented initially by Sam L. Atyeo and Hugh Gilchrist, and later on by B. C. Ballard and John Ryan.

In the latter stages of the Civil War, the communist-led rebel army proceeded to forcibly remove 28,300 children and teenagers from villages they controlled across mainland Hellas, predominantly from southern Epiros and western Macedonia. The Sydney Morning Herald’s Staff Correspondent reported on 13 March 1948 that ‘evidence shows that the parents have little choice and are threatened with reprisals if they do not let their children go.’²⁵ The youngsters were scattered across the Eastern Bloc with the aim of raising them to be the new generation of fighters for a socialist Hellenic Republic.

One of the UNSCOB’s main roles was ‘the repatriation, through the medium of national and international Red Cross organisations, of Greek children at present away from their homes, when the children, their father or mother... express a wish to that effect.’

Numerous items appeared on this issue in the Australian press between 1948 and 1950, inspiring the Federal Government and non-governmental agencies to join the Australian Hellenic community in agitating for their return to their families. In a Sydney

Morning Herald Editorial (11 May 1950), proclaimed that ‘the world, or that part of it still sensible to outrages against humanity, must speak for them.’²⁶

The first of the abductees to be re-united with their parents in Australia arrived – thanks to substantial Federal Government funding – on 14 June 1950. The Hellenic Consul-General, F. E. Vrisakis, told the assembled media that 200 more abducted children awaited evacuation.

Sydney radio station 2GB held a radio appeal on Saturday, 28 October 1950 to raise funds to finance the reunification of abducted Hellenic children from various Eastern bloc states. Former Australian servicemen were amongst the guest broadcasters.²⁷ The appeal raised 10,000 pounds for a charter flight from Belgrade, Yugoslavia, to Sydney.

Ultimately, with the organisational assistance of the Australian Council for International Social Services and the generosity Australian philanthropists, approximately 100 abducted children were brought to Australia to be reunited with their migrant parents. Hundreds more made their way to these distant shores years later, as adults, by then often with children of their own.²⁸

PHILANTHROPY

George Treloar, Sydney and Joice Loch and Ethel Cooper are four virtually unknown Australians who rendered incalculable service to Hellenism in one of its hours of greatest need: the aftermath of the *Katastrophe* of 1922.

MAJOR GEORGE TRELOAR was appointed to northern Hellas to coordinate efforts of the League of Nations to provide relief and resettlement for hundreds of thousands of Christian refugees flooding into the country from the east. These destitute survivors of the Asia Minor Holocaust had been expelled from the Republic of Turkey by the Kemalist government.

From late-1922, Treloar worked first in Komotene (in western Thrace), then in Thessalonike, distributing food aid, administering refugee hospitals and medical services, and establishing cottage industries. A prolific writer, Treloar wrote numerous articles appealing for aid from the international community. Major Treloar was instrumental in establishing eight new villages (including Vroktion, now called Roditis, in western Thrace, and Thrylorion) and enlarged several others.

It was during his service in Macedonia that Treloar met his wife, a teacher who had served as a nurse in Thessalonike during World War One. In 1923, Treloar was awarded the Gold Cross of the Redeemer. By 1926, the League of Nations’ relief effort was effectively ended; the Treloars left for Australia the following year.

JOICE LOCH AND ETHEL COOPER were members of the Society of Friends³⁹. Joice was born during a cyclone on a cane plantation outside Ingham, north Queensland, worked by Kanaka (Pacific Island) labour in 1887. After her parents went bankrupt Joice and her family went from a plantation homestead to a remote bark hut with a dirt floor. She grew up in grinding poverty in eastern Victoria's Gippsland region and emerged from years of unpaid drudgery by writing a children's book and freelance journalism. In 1918 she married Sydney Loch, Gallipoli veteran and writer, with whom she was commissioned to produce a book on Ireland. After a dangerous time in Dublin during the Anglo-Irish War and the subsequent Irish Civil War, the Lochs went to Poland to conduct relief work amongst the dispossessed. There they rescued countless people from disease and starvation and risked death themselves. The Australian philanthropists arrived in Macedonia in May 1923. They set up base at the American Farm School at the foot of Mount Hortiatiss³⁰, working selflessly for decades to save victims of war, famine and disease. Only six months later, Joice fell ill and was moved to England to recuperate. She returned in 1925, spending the next four years at the school where her husband, Sydney, was Principal. The couple relocated to the town of Ouranoupolis, next to the monastic republic of Mount Athos.

In 1922, approximately 50 families, fisherfolk from around the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) and rug-weavers from Kaesareia (Kayseri) had been abandoned on this malarial site upon their arrival in Hellas. Under the auspices of the League of Nations, they were looking for a new home. The land was confiscated from the monks of Mount Athos. The first refugee houses, white-washed, red tiled, one bedroom single story houses with small gardens were built by a German contractor. To help the refugees each family was given a cottage, a plot of land to cultivate, some olive trees and ten sheep which died soon after from starvation and were replaced by more resolute goats. Fishermen were given a grant to buy a boat. Life was harsh as water was scarce and the dry land produced very little. The only available source of employment was Mount Athos. Men disappeared into the monasteries for many months where they worked as labourers, struggling to provide for their families.

More families arrived four years later. By 1928, the village consisted of some 90 cottages. Without a road to connect it to the rest of the world, the village remained isolated and life was hard. It was not until 1947 that the locals took shovels and spades and cut a crude dirt-track road which ended the isolation and brought the very first adventurous tourists to the village.

The imposing landmark of Ouranoupolis is the fortified Byzantine tower which nests on the rocks on the sea-front by the jetty. The largest monumental structure in Halkidiki, it was built in the 1300s by the Monastery of Vatopedi, for the protection of its *metochion* (farm) in the area. Tradition has it that it was built by the Byzantine

emperor Andronicos II (1282–1328) who financed many projects in Mount Athos. Another local tradition refers to a tunnel starting from the cellars of the tower and ending at another tower, a ruin on the present border of Mount Athos, three kilometres away.

The stone tower with its narrow windows and slits only on the upper floors is a testimony to its history of pirate raids and battles. In a recess on one of the balconies an old human skull surveys the sea below, thought to be that of an Abbot killed by pirates. The tower has now been restored and serves as a museum of Christian antiquities from Halkidiki. This one-time monastic retreat became the Lochs' home until their deaths.

Their intention had been to spend a relaxing summer on one of the deserted islands opposite Ouranoupolis, following the strains of their Polish mission. When they saw the mysterious tower and the little village around it they fell under its spell. The Lochs and Cooper helped the young community establish itself, providing much needed nursing care and medicines. They also encouraged the production of hand made carpets, developing it into a very successful cottage industry.

In 1932, Ethel returned to her hometown of Adelaide³¹, shortly before a devastating earthquake struck. The Lochs spent the next 45 hours helping the injured before relief arrived. It took the onslaught of World War Two to force these two dedicated philanthropists away from Ouranoupolis. The couple were evacuated to Cyprus, only to return in 1947. After the war, the Lochs returned to their beloved village, destroyed by the *andartes*, leftist guerrillas.

By the time she died in 1982, she had written ten books, saved many thousands of lives, and was one of the world's most decorated women.³² At her funeral, the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Oxford named her 'one of the most significant women of the twentieth century', for saving the lives of hundreds of Poles and Jews, for saving Ouranoupolis from starvation by starting a women's rug weaving co-operative and selling the rugs to Australians and Americans, writing a book about the village and donating the royalties to bring piped water to the villagers of Ouranoupolis.

The plaque on his grave at Ouranoupolis reads:

'FREDERICK SYDNEY LOCH
 London, Jan 24th., 1889 – Prosfhorion, Feb 6th., 1954
 THE SOUL TO GOD
 Let me make wing as swallows wing
 to where summer dwells,
 striking the clouds as autumn's sting

*on the meadow falls.
 My fleshy home with gladness leave
 and to Thee return,
 cleaving to Thee as swallows cleave
 to where summers burn.
 Let me approach to Thee, so pass
 on as swallows speed,
 that skim a last time o'er the grass
 of the watered mead.
 This ailing flesh my green fields are
 where autumn runs,
 and I arriving from afar
 towards new suns.'*

The plaque on her grave at the cemetery at Ouranopolis reads:

*'Joice NanKivell Loch
 Australia 1893 – Prosthion 1982
 Exultation.
 Why should you cry?
 Do you think I lie
 quietly, silently under the sky.
 And wist not the murmuring wind steal by?
 Why should you weep?
 Do you think I sleep?
 But I dance – dance where the wild waves sweep!
 In ecstasy over the stars I leap!
 You think me dead.
 I had only fled.
 Swiftly, joyously, faery-led,
 when the stars were glittering overhead.
 You raised a cross
 to your grief and loss.
 But I danced over the golden gorse
 and laughed as you covered my grave with moss.'*³³

ATHLOS

Australians are renowned for their pathos for all athletic pursuits. As history records, it was the ancient Hellenic civilization that first developed the concept of athletic pursuits for their own sakes, beyond religious purpose. Indeed one renowned academic at the University of Sydney has gone as far as to describe football (also known as soccer) as ‘a secular religion’.

Australia and Hellas are two of only a handful of countries to have participated in every modern Olympic Games since the revival of the ancient institution in Athens in 1896. At those inaugural contemporary Games, a solitary British-born Australian resident ‘carried the flag’ for a country that was not to be born for another half a decade.

The sole Antipodean representative was Edwin ‘Teddy’ Flack. Born in London, he was raised in South Yarra³⁴ from the age of one. A runner without peer in Australia – Flack won distance races in New South Wales and Victoria throughout the early 1890s – before moving to London (to a position as an accountant with Price Waterhouse and Company). Having secured a month’s holiday from his employer, Flack traveled to Athens under the auspices of the London Athletic Club.

‘Before I left Australia, I knew that they [the Olympic Games] were coming up in Athens, and I decided then that, if I could arrange it, I would take part in them, or at any rate, go to see them. Well, I went across as a member of the London Athletic Club, but I ran in my old Melbourne [Grammar School] colours.’³⁵

As it turned out, Flack was the southern hemisphere’s sole representative! On the second day of the athletics competition, the Melbournian won the 1500m in 4 minutes 33.2 seconds, five metres ahead of the runner-up, the first middle-distance champion in modern Olympic history. Two days later, he won the 800m in 2 minutes 11 seconds.³⁶ An official of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, Charalambos Anninos, called Flack an ‘incomparable runner’.

In true Australian style, Flack tried his hand in other events: the singles and doubles tennis, near the remains of the Temple of Olympian Zeus. He has knocked out in the first round of the singles by a Hellene named Akratopoulos. Paired with George Robertson, an English friend of his, they lost (once again in the first round) to Demis Kasdaglis and Demetrios Petrokokkinos, the eventual runners-up.

Although he had never run a race longer than ten miles (less than half the marathon distance), Flack attempted a treble the day after securing his second victory of the

Games. In second place for much of the race, the Australian found himself in the lead at the 32 kilometre mark when the French athlete dropped out.

With just four kilometres to go, Flack himself collapsed in exhaustion. He was so delirious that when a Helene spectator tried to help the fallen athlete, Flack punched the man to the ground! Crown Prince Nikolaos was so impressed by the Australian's efforts, that he took Flack back to the Royal Palace (now the Parliament building) for recuperation.

Although Edwin Flack competed under the Union Jack and heard the strains of 'God Save The King' in his ears as he received his olive wreath, he is generally regarded as Australia's first Olympian. So began the proud Olympic tradition Australian athletes continue to build upon with every Olympiad.

Another forgotten chapter of Australia's heritage in Hellas is the participation of five Australian athletes in the 1906 Athens Interim Olympic Games. The 1900 Paris and 1904 St Louis Olympic Games had proven so farcical that the Olympic movement itself was in danger of petering out. The Intercalated Games rectified that.

'The people in Athens seemed pleased at the prospect of having Australians across with a chance to beat them [the Americans]. E.H. Flack must have produced quite an impression – and it is lasting, too.'³⁷

This was the mood in the 1906 Olympic city as captured by rugby union player-cum-sprinter Nigel Barker, who became the first Australian world record holder, running the 440 yard race in 48.5 seconds. He followed this up with two bronze medals in the 100m and 400m races. Harold Healy won silver in the 110m hurdles, while his brother Cecil took bronze in the 100m freestyle swimming event. George Wheatley finished the 1500m race in fourth place, while George Blake finished sixth, twice: in the 5 mile race and in the marathon.

The catalogue of Australian Hellenes representing Australia in international competition is quite extensive, covering every major athletic pursuit in Australian society. Long jumper Konstantinos Koukodimos was born in Melbourne in 1969 and remains an Australian citizen. He has however represented Hellas since migrating there at the age of 14. Representing the Panellenios Athletic Club in Athens, Koukodimos was national champion for almost a decade and competed at numerous international competitions.

Amongst Koukodimos' career highlights were gold medals at the 1991 and 1992 Balkan Games and the 1991 Mediterranean Games, a silver medal at the 1994 European Indoor Championships, and bronze at the 1994 European Championships.³⁸

An unheralded indigenous Australian runner burst onto the international scene at the 1997 IAAF World Championships, held at the Olympic Stadium in Athens. Storming home to win the women's 400m, Hellas continues to hold a special place in Cathy Freeman's heart, as evidenced by her frequent visits to the country.

Dozens of Australian footballers ply their trade in the Hellenic National and First Divisions, the most prominent of them being Melbourne's Kyriakos Tohouroglou, goalkeeper with Thessalonike National Division club PAOK. In addition, Australian basketballers (most famously Shane Heale) and volleyballers have in the past, and continue to, compete in Hellas' domestic leagues and in European competition.

ENVIRONMENTAL

In late-1889, Melbourne-born Vernon Warburton Delves-Broughton went to Hellas as an assistant engineer with the **BRITISH LAKE COPAIS COMPANY** – a corporation set up to drain the marsh lands of Lake Copais, near Thebes in central Hellas. Twelve years later, Broughton departed, with the project still incomplete.

Broughton originally lived at Moulki, near Thebes, contracting malaria soon afterwards. By 1896, he was in Athens, living in an apartment on Amalias Boulevard, facing the Royal Gardens. He was joined there by his writer-painter mother, Augusta Arbutnot Delves-Broughton, who produced a work on Athens' antiquities during her sojourn in the city. That same year, Broughton rode a bicycle behind his schoolmate Edwin Flack in the Olympic marathon.

Three years later, he married Frangiski, daughter of a Hellene mathematics lecturer, at the British Consulate in Piraeus. From Athens, the couple moved to Kerkyra (Corfu) in 1900, then to London two years later. Broughton passed away in London in 1936, leaving behind Frangiski and six children. The project he had spent some much of his life on, draining Lake Copais, was finally completed in 1931, creating 60,000 acres of new farmland.

EUCALYPTUS. The most omnipresent Australian presence in Hellas and Cyprus are the thousands of eucalypts that line roads and coastlines all over both countries. Introduced to French North Africa in the 1830s, Professor Theodoros Orphanides of the University of Athens, brought Tasmanian blue gums to Hellas. In his own words, 'the eucalypt is an ornamental tree quite suitable for Hellas'.³⁹ The botanist believed the temperate climate of southern Hellas was ideal for the native Australian trees.

The Ministry of the Interior took up his idea with almost maniacal devotion, distributing eucalypt seeds and seedlings imported from Algeria and France. The first

Hellenic governor of Krete brought the eucalypt to the island in the first years of the 20th century. A few years later, the colonial Italian administration brought the trees to the Dodecanese Islands. Large numbers eucalypts continue to thrive alongside railway lines and boulevards throughout the south of the country, though the red river gum is now the most common species there.

CONCLUSION

As has been illustrated in this paper, Australia has a legacy in Hellas with deep roots. It should be kept in mind that this is but a brief survey, an introduction to the tangible and intangible parts of Australian history to be found within the borders of the Hellenic Republic.

Hundreds of Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen gave their lives on battlefields all over Hellas in the cause of freedom and democracy. There is no better way of Australians living in, or visiting Hellas, to honour those Australians who sacrificed so much for this country than to visit the battlefields where they fought and the war cemeteries where they lie and pay their respects.

Visits to Hellas, should not include solely the 'classical' tourist sites like the Akropolis and the famous *barakia* and nightclubs. The writer had the privilege and honour to escort a group of young Australian secondary students on a tour of Hellas in January 2004.

Time should also be set aside to analyse, to evaluate, the synthesis of what it means to be an Australian Hellene.

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NOTES

- 1 Only Chicago in the USA, is larger.
- 2 Only the United Kingdom has a larger Australian expatriate community. *Sydney Morning Herald*
- 3 The first time was the Boer or South African War of 1899-1902.
- 4 The Salonika Congress; The Young Turks and Their Programme, *The Times*, 3 October 1911, 3. At a second congress in 1911, again held in Thessalonike, chaired by Talaat Pasha, Dr Behaeddin Sakir stated: 'The nations that remain from the old times in our empire are akin to foreign and harmful weeds that must be uprooted.'
- 5 M. Chater, History's Greatest Trek *National Geographic*, 1925, 533-583
- 6 H. Gilchrist Volume II (1997): 39
- 7 Hellenes ferried supplies to the Gallipoli beaches, as well as to the soldiers inland, often under enemy fire. A Cypriot contractor (for example) provided beef cattle. They were also employed building jetties, as interpreters and even cooks.
- 8 'A feint was also made by several hundred Greek irregulars who landed at Karachali on the coast of the Gulf of Serres.' The raid by Gyparis and his men, who were under French command, was a diversion from the main Australian assault on Lone Pine.
- 9 The 1st Australian Army Field Bakery on Imvros supplied 14,500 fresh bread rations daily.
- 10 The Australian force consisted of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, the brigade's transport, an engineer company, a field ambulance, a casualty clearing station and part of a field bakery.
- 11 Moorehead (1997): 302
- 12 Four enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps. Some remain to be identified. Three were killed in action. Four returned in 1941 to fight for Hellas again.
- 13 By the war's end, there were 26 Allied divisions along this front: 9 Hellenic, 6 Serbian, 6 French, 4 British and 1 Italian.
- 14 Gilchrist Volume II (1997): 94
- 15 These included Australian Army Hospitals.
- 16 H. Gilchrist Volume II (1997): 146
- 17 60th British General Hospital
- 18 52nd British General Hospital
- 19 50th British General Hospital
- 20 The Mikra hospital was established in November 1915 after the retreat from Serbia. The Ostrovo hospital, commanded by Australian Dr Agnes Bennett, was set up in September 1916.
- 21 A stanza from the poem 'The Roadmakers', was written at the Akroinos (Afion Karahissar) prison camps by Royal Flying Corps Flight-Lieutenant Leonard Woolley
- 22 J.H. Wheat, *Diary*, Australian War Memorial Archives, File No. 3DRL/2965, Australian War Memorial Record Centre, Canberra
- 23 For a more detailed discussion of the ANZAC POWs see P. Diamadis 'Precious and Honoured Guests of the Ottoman Government' *Genocide Perspectives II* AIHGS Sydney 2002
- 24 Thorne (1992): 109
- 25 (Staff Correspondent) 'Greek Children Seized From Parents' *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 March 1948, 3

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- 26 (Editor) 'The Abducted Greek Children' *Sydney Morning Herald* 11 May 1950, 2
- 27 —, 'Appeal for Greek Children' *Sydney Morning Herald* 28 October 1950, 7
- 28 For a more detailed discussion, see Diamadis, P. et al (1995) *A Child's Grief. A Nation's Lament*. Stentor Publishing Sydney
- 29 Commonly called Quakers.
- 30 Five miles east of Thessalonike.
- 31 Ethel Cooper passed away in 1961, aged 90 years. For more information, see Denholm, Decie (editor) (1982) *Behind The Lines. One Woman's War 1914-18. The Letters of Caroline Ethel Cooper* Sydney Collins
- 32 De Vries, Susanna (2000) *Blue Ribbons Bitter Bread: The Life of Joice Nankivell Loch, Australia's Most Decorated Woman* Hale and Iremonger
- 33 <http://www.microbiology.adelaide.edu.au/cthomas/pafn94.htm>
- 34 A suburb of Melbourne, Victoria.
- 35 Gilchrist Volume I (1997): 152
- 36 The 800m involved two laps of the restored ancient Panathenaic Stadium, and the 1500m four laps. The stadium once again hosted events in the 2004 Olympic Games, a short distance from the Akropolis itself.
- 37 H. Gilchrist Volume I (1997): 179