Update 2, October 2007

Crete: Women, History, Books and Places

(HOLO Books 2005)

Itineraries and amendments (24 A4 pages)

This update contains new material on places in the following itinerary chapters:

- Chania (and Chalepa) – chapter 20
- Environs of Chania – chapter 21 (Alikianos and Armenoi)
- Tylissos – Rethymnon – chapter 18 (Arkadi Monastery, Eleutherna and Rethymnon)
- Herakleion – chapter 15
- South to the Mesara Plain – chapter 19 (Gortyn)
- Lasithi Plateau – chapter 22 (Trapeza cave)
- From Lato to Myrtos – chapter 24 (Spinalonga)
- Harriet Boyd and the Americans – chapter 25 (Gournia)
- East Crete – chapter 26 (Zakros)

insert p.260 CHANIA Introduction (see also introduction to historical update above)

I started the chapter on Chania with a sentence which I wish to withdraw (head lowered): 'Chania is perhaps the most accessible of Crete's big towns but, for our purposes, identifiable places within its bounds are a bit limited ...' In the second paragraph I wrote, 'It would obviously repay more attention than we gave it. I suspect one should ideally stay in the town for a few days. ...'

We went back to Crete in April 2005, staying in Chania for a week, not so much to give the town another chance as to fulfil my urgent need to find Baroness Schwartz's house. Both missions were successful, and I shall give Chalepa, the suburb where that house is situated, a separate section in this update to the Chania itinerary.

Any page numbers in what follows refer to my book.

(p.263 insert at end of 2nd paragraph - additions to the Archaeological Museum).

A second visit allows me to give a tweak or two to my original text.

- I've written in my notebook 'Aphrodite and Eros; both headless and armless; playing a guitar
- As usual her shawl has slipped.' But who was armless? Who was playing the guitar?
- another grave stele of a woman found at Aptera (4-3 century BC)
- nymph (headless) and basin, Kydonia (2-3 century AD)
- Lissos – girl not with ball but fruit

- another girl leaning forward – running?
- (add to p. 262) (not to be missed) Hellenic jewellery (4-3 century BC) from cemetery Kydonia: 3 necklaces placed with the body of **Sossima** who died in childbirth
- (p.262-3) the Tanagra figurine is tiny, as is the woman with v-neck bodice (both easy to miss but don't)
- I couldn't find again Hygeia from Lissos (p.262), but there was a headless one (1-2 century AD) found at Aptera in 1905 – snake round her shoulders and a pot in her hand. Marvellous draped frock.

(insert p. 263 after Museum) The bookshop whose virtues I extolled at the harbour end of Chalidon Street should be avoided – hardly still a bookshop. Try instead Pelekanakis towards the top of Chalidon on the right (walking from the harbour). They might even have a copy of my book!

(insert p.263 before **wandering aimlessly)** Between the Cretan House Folk Museum and the Archaeological Museum is the Roman Catholic Church dedicated to the Virgin. It is in the Capuchin Convent once attached to it that Mary Walker may have stayed on one of her visits (see both p.265 and my historical update discussing where Mary might have stayed, following a lead by Amy Yule)

(insert p.263, last paragraph, end of 1st sentence) We did go back to that restaurant but further along Zambeliou Street is the Taman (a former hamam – bath house) at which we ate more often. I suggested that this area, once empty of tourists, is the most picturesque; that is because we had not delved further eastwards.

(insert p.264) Moving now further eastwards, which I only did in a literary sense on my previous visit, I'd like to firm up on Catré Street (not marked on many maps), as the location for Madame Hortense's activities. Turning right off Kanevaro Street into Catré, there is an enclosed Minoan site, but it is further down on the left, towards Karaoli Dimitriou Street, that we are headed, to the deserted, neglected and closed skeleton of a hamam, opposite remains of old city walls. Climbing up the steps and walking round to the side, you can readily imagine Mme Hortense and her light and shaded life.

In Paris, in the same Greek secondhand bookshop in which I had found a novel about her, I found a copy of *Chronique d'Une Cité* (1980) by Pandelis Prevelakis which gives the fullest history of Mme Hortense, as she told it to the humane French Consul in 1923. She spent 12 years working as prostitute in Chania. Her earlier time with the admirals (p. 143) from her own lips makes quite a read: 'I was naked nine hours out of ten ...' for several weeks. (Incidentally, Kanevaro and Potier Streets do not abut, but form a sort of dog leg with Catré Street).

Back on Kanevaro Street, and further along on your left, is the main Minoan archaeological site of Chania. I said (on p.261) that this site was open to the public. It is not. That is to say, you cannot (or could not in April 2005) walk around inside, but it, and the archaeologists at work, are wide open to public gaze from the perimeter. By now they may have put on the proposed roof which should allow entry.

Walking further along Kanevaro Street, you come, on your left, to a series of much later (Venetian/Ottoman) ruins cradled from behind by the remains of the city walls overhanging the harbour below. How much of the destruction is due to time, how much to a fire in 1897, and how much to bombing in the Second World War, is unclear. But the governor's palace, in both Venetian and Ottoman times, was in this area. The Ottoman palace – its upper stories of wood – was built partly on the site of the Venetian *palazzo*. Mary Walker describes the setting pre-1897:

> *We were sitting in the large 'sala' of the konak, or Government House, overlooking on three sides the harbour, the blue expanse of the Mediterranean, and the distant headland of Cape Melec; through the open windows came the health-laden breezes of that exquisitely pure atmosphere, untainted by smoke of railway engine or factory chimney – breezes perfumed by countless aromatic plants that cover the wild stretch of common beyond the city. We could trace the roads bordered by aloes and cactus and blossoming bay and myrtle; the ravines, bright streams of rose-coloured oleander; and all the further spread of the plain – a dense mass of orange and olive and mulberry groves, the golden crosses of the monastery of Chrissopighi gleaming through the dark foliage at the foot of the Rhiza.*

(The Khrysopiyi monastery still stands on the road from Chania to Souda; Pat Cameron's *Blue Guide* tells you how to get there.)

I'm going to assume that Leyla, daughter of Crete's governor Pasha Ismail (1861-66) lived in the same government house. (The seat of the Ottoman Governor was moved to Chania in 1850). Leyla will mean nothing to you unless you first read the historical update above this one. In that I introduce you to the English traveller Anna Vivanti, what she wrote about Mlle Elizabeth to add to our previous knowledge (pp.264 and 131-2) and her pupil Leyla (later known as the poet and composer Leyla Saz). This is how Anna described Leyla's appearance in 1865:

> *Although her father is a Greek by birth, the daughter was of the Turkish type. She is short, and would be considered too stout with us, but has only the* en bon point *indispensable to a Turkish beauty. Her round face wore an expression of kindness and good humour, and was remarkable for a pair of fine large intelligent black eyes. Her dress was entirely composed of green silk, trimmed with crimson velvet. On her head she wore a little round black hat, evidently an European importation, for it was very much like those worn in England; it had a fine white feather fastened to it with a diamond ornament; and a brooch with the miniature of her father, in a setting of diamonds a Queen might have coveted, sparkled on her breast. This splendid ornament had previously contained the portrait of the late Sultan, who had given it to the Pasha.*

As well as her father being Greek, her mother was half Cretan, so that Leyla had little Turkish blood. To come across this talented fifteen-year-old confined to her father's harem was intriguing enough, and to learn of her relationship with the famous Mlle Elizabeth. But to read the epilogue to her book *The Imperial Harem of the Sultans: Memoirs of Leyla (Saz) Hanimfendi* (1994) is, as a researcher, to be positively thrilled.

Before her arrival in Crete with her father, leaving her mother and sister behind in what Christians still called Constantinople but which was the Ottoman city of Istanbul, Leyla, from the age of four, was brought up in the Sultan's harem where her father was the chief physician. Her account of life in the harem is not directly relevant to Crete, but her grandsons, who edited the publication of her memoirs from the French version (1925), added other notes, including some she had made about her life in Crete.

Leyla wrote of sailing to Crete, presumably aged eleven, in 1861 when her father took up his posting, on the imperial frigate *Kayvan*:

> *On the boat my father introduced to me a Christian lady whose name was Elizabeth Verf. She did not know Turkish and I did not know any of the languages she spoke. She was a well-educated person and I was impressed with her immediately. She wrote down the Greek and French alphabets and demonstrated the sounds they represented. During the few days we were on the boat, I had learned the syllables in those languages.*
>
> *When we reached Crete she became my governess. She had a writing cabinet placed in a small room where I studied with her every morning. I was spending the rest of the day sewing and accepting guests.*
>
> *Elizabeth Verf, the Christian ladies of Crete and I would go to the sea-baths which were a little outside the town. After we had a swim, we would find a rock on the shore to sit on and she read me Robinson Crusoe. I could not understand all of it. The whole summer went on like this. Then, in winter, my grandmother forbid me the lessons. When the old lady returned to Istanbul, we continued our lessons. The concubines in the house would often come and knock on the door wishing to relieve me – they thought I had enough and was getting bored! We did not mind them and continued with our lessons. I pleaded for a calligraphy teacher and my father invited Esad Efendi of Candia ... from the secondary school in Crete.*
>
> *After reading some literary books, I started scribbling some verses myself but I never dared show them to anybody. One day my father noticed my writings and asked me to recite. He liked them and I was very happy. He showed them to Sadik Efendi who was the son of Kutbi Efendi, the famous poet in Crete. Gradually I began to learn to write poetry and songs. Within one year, I had learned to speak Greek and begun to understand French. The ladies of Crete would come to me to have their dresses cut to measure.*
>
> *Soon after our arrival in Crete, I heard that Sadullah Bey had been married. I was very sad but tried not to think much about it. I was asked to marry Hilmi Bey, the son of Mustafa Paşa but my father would not consent.*
>
> *In the year eighty [the editor has put 1880 in square brackets, but must be mistaken] we went to Istanbul on leave for two months and returned. While we were making preparations to entertain Sultan Abdul Aziz on his return journey from Egypt, his daughter Mürşide Sultan came to stay with us in Crete for a convalescence. In*

eightythree [interpreted 1883] upon the encouragement of my father, I wrote a poem for Sultan Aziz and sent it to the Mother Sultan. Sultan Aziz liked it very much and sent me a gift of a coffee cup holder engraved with diamonds. I also sent two songs to Fatma Sultan and heard that she was very pleased. As a souvenir she sent me a medallion which I still keep.

Perhaps her father would not consent to her marriage with the son of Mustafa Pasha because he would not only have been her uncle but probably considerably older. I have come across no other writing of this period of an Ottoman woman in Crete, nor indeed that of any other woman who was not a foreign traveller. Leyla's position was unique but her account does, nevertheless, convey rivetting general sociological, as well as personal, information. We will meet her again in Chalepa when she writes of Baroness Schwartz.

As for Mlle Elizabeth, these updates have added much to her personal life, and the suggestion that she was a teacher, but not much to her political activities. And I still have not got to the bottom of those (p.131). I did, in April 2005, visit the Historical Museum and Archives of Crete in an attempt to do so. But got almost nowhere. There is a file in Greek containing letters, among other material, written by Elizabeth in the 1850s. At the time of my visit they were only frustrating but I did note some English names: one, on 1 July 1858, is that of Ongle (sic) which must refer to the British Consul Henry Sarell Ongley who was forced to leave Crete that year – see historical update above about Henry and his wife Lucy. And a diary entry of the same month and year mentions Lord Longworth who came from Istanbul when Sarell Ongley was in hot water. The consul had been there 21 years and may have had good political relations with Elizabeth; indeed, he may well be the key British connection that originally alerted me to Elizabeth's existence. (The Crete dates of the British Consul Thomas Sandwith (p.131) should be changed to 1870-85).

Leyla herself married an Ottoman administrator and man of letters of Cretan origin, Sirri Pasha Kiritli, and travelled with him to his various posts in Anatolia, the Balkans and Baghdad. In Istanbul, their residence was a draw for the world of arts in which she held her own as poet and composer well after his death in 1895, writing her memoirs when she was seventy.

Just beyond the remains of the governors' palaces, at the northern end of Agio Markiou, are those of a Roman Catholic Cathedral and the attached S. Maria dei Miracoli Convent, built in 1615 by Marussa Mengano for Dominican nuns. Part of these ruins is now a clearly marked bed and breakfast – Monasteri (E35 a night in 2005). There is still enough of the unoccupied part to get a clear impression of the past, and a bit of step climbing gives a good view of the Arsenali area beyond and below.

Wiggle your way round now into the Arsenali quarter. At Karapatakis, run by a wife and husband team, in Katechaki Square, we celebrated my birthday with a very nice Italian meal – more of a dress-up place than most other restaurants.

The restaurants built now into the old boatyards were a bit uninviting in April, mainly because it was rather windy which seemed to have affected the staff. But sit there with a drink and picture Jane Franklin (see historical update above for more details and political

comments). Here, in 1833, she spent her days of quarantine. On 29 September, a note arrived from Capogrosso, the Dalmatian-born British Consul, about a 'tent' arranged for her accommodation – one made of 'sail cloth painted a pea-green colour lined with pieces of old chintz and shawls. It was so hot, however,' she continued 'that I could not stop in it and I placed my seat outside a dilapidated building which occupied the inner corner of the harbour'.

Then and in the days that followed she had a stream of visitors – names rather illegible – but they included Capogrosso and his daughter, 'a pleasant-looking married woman'. Her visitors gone, she inspected her quarters in the lee of the Arsenali and noted that it looked like rain – all a bit unpleasant and hazardous. She got wet and felt unwell. The Health Inspector called and was surprised that she was not in the tent. She explained that it let in the rain and that the wind was boisterous; the tent might have blown down in the night. I am paraphrasing all this because her diary is rather difficult to follow.

On 1 October, there was an invitation to dine from Mr Firmin Cousinery, a Frenchman, and his sisters, on Thursday. The weather continued boisterous making it less likely that she could leave for the island of Syra to join her husband as she was constantly trying to do. Then you realise that she is accompanied by her maid who is unwell. The diary comes to an end, leaving blank pages. But there is enough there, I think, to picture the Arsenali in a new light.

Turn south now into the Splantzia area, and here you will find much historical atmosphere and gorgeous little houses, buildings and streets without the tourists that rather detract from the old Western part of the city. In Kalinikou Sarpaki, you will find the delightful restaurant In The Well of the Turk, owned and run by Jenifer Perschke (closed on Tuesdays). When we were there and having a good gossip with Jenny, she was planning to extend her operations in the area. If you wander completely aimlessly in this area as the light fails, you can get rather spookily lost as you hit the city walls and aren't sure which way to turn back.

North east of Splantzia and east of the Arsenali, there is a gap in the city walls, through which you escape to a different atmosphere. Along here is *Kum Kapi*, a seaside promenade and lots of open air cafes which are pleasant on the right day. In April, in the middle of a working afternoon, there were more Cretans than tourists – sort of *jeunesse dorée* territory. You could walk from here to Chalepa along the front, linking up eventually with Venizelou Road, but that is not the way we went. And Chalepa really does merit a separate visit.

Chalepa

(Add to page 267, end of 2nd paragraph) I think if I was going again, and not desperate to find Baroness Schwartz's house, and decided to walk rather than take a taxi (which would be a perfectly understandable option), I would walk along the sea front. What we did was go the Municipal Market way. (Do find time, perhaps on another occasion, to go to the market which is good fun and the place to buy all sorts of Cretan herbs and packets for presents and your own kitchen cupboard.)

The market fronts on to Venizelos Square and you continue along Venizelos Road, which is not particularly interesting, for a while. We then turned off down Koundourou Street, and so, eventually, to the Schwartz house. But here I am going to leave the house till last, to make it the climax of this jaunt.

So, along the sea front, you should come eventually to Venizelos Road (further on from where we turned off), and continue up towards Chalepa. Mary Walker sets the scene for us in the second half of the nineteenth century:

> *We find ourselves winding upwards towards Khalepa, and, in spite of the sun, which in these Southern countries is almost as burning at its rise as at its meridian, the air is deliciously cool and bracing, scented by the thyme, myrtle, balm, basil, mint, and a multitude of aromatic plants, among which the pungent aroma of the 'lavdanum' predominates ... We do not enter the village of Khalepa, the residence of most of the European consuls and the wealthy merchants.*

Just as she was about to leave Crete, and after a visit to Rethymnon and Candia (Herakleion) Anna Vivanti 'went to pay a farewell visit to Leila, at a country-house in Kaleppa, where the Pasha had removed his family during my absence from Canea. I drove there in the Pasha's carriage, the only vehicle of any kind on the island, and which resembled somewhat the Lord Mayor's coach.' Where that house is or was I have yet to discover, but other Chalepa places are emerging.

If you have come by taxi, ask for the Halepa Hotel (164 Venizelos Road). This was the British Consulate and residence between 1888 and 1913, which Cretans call the Cretan Democracy Era. I understand that there has been some out-of-keeping extension done to the mansion, but the original, rather grand, is still there. This was not the home of Lucy and Henry Sarell Ongley (see historical update), nor that of Thomas Sandwith and his family. I still don't know where they lived – Stephen Boys Smith has tried to discover his great grandfather's residence. But it was that of the Howards – 1903-6.

Isabella Howard (1867-1963, née Donna Maria Isabella Giovanna Teresa Gioacchina Giustiniani-Bandini) married Esmé Howard (later Baron Howard of Penrith) in 1898. Howard, who until his marriage had led an unsettled life, adventurous even, realised that he needed to retrieve the diplomatic path he had earlier abandoned. He arrived in Crete as British consul-general in July 1903, leaving his pregnant wife at her family home in Italy. That Christmas he returned to Chania from leave in Italy bringing with him his new family. Isabella, whom he called Isa, was to stay in Crete until the heat of the summer in 1905 when, expecting the second of their five sons, she returned to Italy. It is not clear whether or not she rejoined her husband in Crete.

The Howard family have done their best to find for me letters that Isabella undoubtedly wrote home to Italy, to her sister Elena and her niece Maria Sofia – without success. How would she have described the palaeontologist Dorothea Bate (p. 165) who arrived at the start of her expedition in March 1904 with a letter of introduction to the consul-general? Dorothea was invited to lunch and started out nervous 'but found them all very pleasant,' she wrote, 'and easy to get on with. ... Lady Isabella H is Italian but talks

English quite well – Mr H seems quite ready to help me which is an enormous relief.' (An unfortunately incident to do with fossils later impeded this relationship as Karolyn Shindler describes in *Discovering Dorothea* (2005).)

Esmé Howard, protecting Britain's interest vis-à-vis the Eastern Question, played a major role in the political upheavals in Crete of 1905 (p.145) and remained there until November 1906. Thereafter he continued what became a distinguished diplomatic career which he describes in his two volume autobiography, *Theatre of Life* (1935-6). In the second volume are some evocative passages, which I shall run together here, describing his life with Isabella in Chania.

> *After Isa arrived with the baby and had settled in, our life passed pleasantly enough. The spring was enchanting. We rode our Syrian Arabs over the fields full of iris and red and purple anemones, under olive groves and up valleys with running water, the banks of which were covered with myrtle and oleander and cystus; we visited quaint villages with great plane trees in their central squares in which blue coated Cretan men danced in circles on feast days while the women, mostly in black, sat and watched; we went to see Arthur Evans' wonderful excavations at Knossos, the cradle of all European civilisation.*
>
> *The green and the flowers of spring gave way to the heat of summer, but we never suffered at Halepa, for in the day we had a breeze off the sea and at night a breeze off the mountains. Every day an old Cretan with a little mule went up to the mountains and came back in the night with a load of frozen snow to cool our drinks. We had nearby on the shore, only a few yards from the sea, a spring of delicious water, to which we sent our small donkey with barrels twice a day for fresh drinking water for the house. We were never short of fresh meat, fish, vegetables or fruit, though perhaps a French* chef *would have complained of a lack of variety.*
>
> *On one occasion the Duke and Duchess of Connaught called in at Suda Bay in an English man-of-war on their way back from India. They were accompanied by their two daughters, Princess Patricia and Princess Margaret. ... We dined on board their ship and they paid us a visit, delighted, as Princess Margaret told me years after, with our drawing-room decorated entirely with peach or almond blossom.*

I suspect that the other consulates, including the earlier ones such as the American where the Stillmans lived 1865-68, during the insurrection, were in this area. The nearby Hotel Dolma was the 19th century Austrian consulate.

(Add to p.270, last paragraph) Continue up that incline and you come to the former mansion of Prince George (p.270) and the family home of Venizelos which front onto Elena Venizelos Square, named after the revolutionary leader's second wife.

The Venizelos Museum is worth visiting (open out of season, October-May 11.30-13.30; 18.00-20.00 Monday-Friday). The house was built in 1877 by Venizelos's father, and the whole family lived there. On the ground floor, in the room to the left of the entrance is a portrait of Maria, Venizelos's first wife (p.275). At the top of the stairs is a photographic

portrait of his mother, Steliani Plumidaki (p.272). Elena (p.275), of whom there is also a photograph upstairs, lived here from time to time – in 1927 (from when the contents and renovation date) and between 1933-35. The staff here were memorably helpful - Valia later sending me an article about Baroness Schwartz.

Turn left out of the house and walk eastwards (away from the direction from which you approached Chalepa). You are headed towards Bella Vista, the house in which Mercy Money Coutts (pp.170-1) and her family lived following her marriage to Michael Seiradaki. It is also described by David McNeil Doren who lived there with his partner Inga (p.271).

When you reach the big modern church of the Evangelist (*Evangelistria*) on your right, take the second little road opposite (northwards) down to the sea. At the end you come to 27 Tzortzi Papadaki Street. It is a private house, so you have to decide how much you intrude. The area is obviously not as it was, but it seems quiet and pleasant and the view marvellous (though the house is no longer called Bella Vista).

Mercy is a particularly attractive character in the link between Crete, Britain and archaeology; and she had more of a personal stake in Crete than the other women archaeologists – summed up in her biographical details (pp.170-1). There, too, I mention how, in 1936, she helped Sir Arthur Evans organise the Knossos section of the London exhibition to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the British School at Athens. I have come across a book that adds to that story, and provides an original insight, happily through a personal interview with Mercy. In *The Find of a Lifetime: Sir Arthur Evans and the Discovery of Knossos* (1981; 1988), the archaeologist Sylvia L. Horwitz, tells how when 85-year-old Evans needed an assistant for the exhibition, Mercy was considered ideal because the often tyrannical Evans was too much of a Victorian gentleman to lose his temper with a woman. Mercy had worked with him in the past, and she got on well with him now. They only had problems over the labelling of the artefacts. She wanted neat, unobtrusive labels, he wanted big, bold ones telling the whole story of his remarkable finds. Sylvia tells how, years later, Mercy wondered whether Sir Arthur's insistence on large labels was due to his own peculiar eyesight. Perhaps even with glasses he could only see one object at a time and was not disturbed by the feeling of clutter in the showcases, as other viewers might be. It was even possible, judging from the sometimes overvivid restorations of the Knossos frescoes, to suspect him of not seeing colors quite like other people. Still, she thought that the restorations were justified and based on valid evidence, though the two of them did have one notable argument over the famous fresco called the 'Saffron Gatherer.' The young woman insisted that the Blue Boy was really a Blue Monkey. The old man finally admitted that she might be right. 'But of course by the next morning it was a Blue Boy again!' Admitting error was not easy for Evans.

In 1939, when Evans turned over his collection to the Ashmolean Museum and arranged the artefacts himself in the Minoan room, Mercy was at his side.

We had lunch in a perfectly adequate little restaurant back on the main road, further eastward, not memorable enough to recommend but I mention it in case you too are hungry by this time; restaurants in the area are not common, particularly out of season, but don't

despair. (I seem to remember we caught a bus back to town from here at the end of our exploration; but you have more delights to come.)

Make your way back to Elena Venizelos Square and walk a few yards south down Dagkli Street which leads from it; on your right, you come to the Russian church, St Mary Magdalene (pp.270-1) which will already have caught your attention. Prince George's sister Maria did visit Crete; indeed, the church was named in commemoration of her visit. And it was inaugurated on 6 January 1903 in the presence of Prince George and their mother **Queen Olga of Greece** (1851-1928).

But Olga's connection with Crete is rather more intriguing than her presence then. She was born Grand Duchess Olga Konstantinovna of Russia, granddaughter of Tsar Nicholas I and first cousin of Alexander III. She married George I of Greece, a love match, aged 16, in 1867 – and bear in mind that this was a time of insurrection in Crete when, as I have shown in the historical update, the Great Powers pulled and pushed seeking advantage in The Eastern Question. Russia's relations with the Ottoman Empire were, to say the least, strained. Amy Yule gives us this intriguing nugget in *A Little Light on Cretan Insurrection:*

> *Russia ... in the fertile brain of General Ignatieff at least, had altered her game, and was playing for a smaller but more profitable stake than any vague general scheme for the disruption of the Ottoman Empire. The project in hand was to transfer Crete to the Greek Crown – not State – as dowry and personal* apanage *of the Grand Duchess Olga, then on the eve of marriage to the Greek King.*

How much did Queen Olga of Greece know about that as she attended the ceremony in 1903? Crete was not yet part of Greece and would not be for another ten years.

The distinctively Russian church is set in a large, unmanicured garden which has become a playground for children who nick bread from the communion baskets, and a meeting place for mothers and nannies. There is a Greek flag to one side of the church, and the Russian Tsarist one on the other. A sign asking visitors not to destroy the flowers and fruit trees seems an invitation to children to swing on the branches. (On his departure, Prince George gave the church to the Municipality of Chania and the Parish of Chalepa.)

A little further along Dagkli Street, also on your right, look out for number 22 – a walled and gated house and garden with a plaque outside telling you that **Florentini Kaloutsi** (1890-1971) lived here. As we passed, the name meant nothing to me, but I jotted it down because she was a woman and one who merited a plaque. I have since run her down, and I'm very glad that she did not escape my attention.

Following an English education, Florentini emerged in Chania in the early nineteen twenties as a talented painter. Inspired by the finds being excavated at Knossos, she decided to depict the motifs on fabric – reviving, as she did so, the art of Cretan weaving. The warmth with which her work was received encouraged her to explore further, incorporating, for example, Cretan folk themes. She had started out with one weaver; eventually a large workshop employed 150 women which, in 1925, adopted the name 'Double Axe', the Minoan goddess symbol. In the years that followed, their output was exported and exhibited

throughout Europe and the USA garnering prizes. The showroom in Athens is run by the third generation of the Kaloutsi family. I have not been able to lay my hands on *Florentini Kaloutsi and the Art of Crete from the Minoan Period to the Present* by Z Mitsotaki (Benaki Museum, 1999).

Continue walking a few yards further. Just past the turning to the left - Katsanevaki Street - indeed, on that corner, you cannot miss Baroness Schwartz's house (pp.134 and 267). I understand it is still in the same state as when we 'discovered' it in April 2005 – very much a highlight of our several visits to Crete. There have been plans for some time by the Prefecture of Chania to restore it and use it for cultural activities but it would be a major job and require a fortune. There it stood – an absolute ruin, set in a wild garden of poppies and daisies; nature had almost reclaimed it.

Somehow this abandoned and neglected ruin fitted the romantic story of Espérance Schwartz. If something is not done it will soon be lost; if something is done, it must lose some magic!

In its heyday, this house must have been impressive, even among the fine mansions of the area and, during the insurrection of 1866-9, Espérance turned it into a revolutionary hotbed. Which brings us back to Leyla the daughter of Pasha Ismail, the Ottoman representative against whom the insurrection was directed.

At the end of the passage that I quoted from above about Leyla's life in Crete, she wrote: 'During the local revolt in Crete, I was the translator and secret secretary to my father.' This adds definite spice to the stories of politics and insurrection. The following paragraph reads:

> *At any rate, my life in Crete was not in vain. Foreign ladies resident in Crete and travelling ones passing through, used to visit and stay with us. I had met the Countess Tene who was later condemned to death in Tripoli. Madame la Countess de Schatz [Schwartz] who resided in Crete liked me very much. One day she saw my head-gear and asked me what it was called and I replied 'Garibaldi'. She happened to be a close friend of Garibaldi and they were corresponding with each other. Soon after, she conveyed me his greetings.*

Did Leyla come to know of Espérance's revolutionary activities, and that her father forbade her to leave Chania after one of her escapades? Did a charming friendship falter? Who knows, but it is a neat example of life being rather more shaded than it is black or white. As for poor Countess Tene, I cannot find out anything about her or permutations of her name. Can anyone help?

The article I later received from Valia at the Venizelos House dates from 21 September 2003, appeared in *Kathimerini*, and was written (in Greek) by Peggy Kounenaki – (kindly translated, as usual, by my Cretan friend Emmanuel Voyiakis). It adds some new points about Espérance and her relationship with Crete. Of the insurrection, Peggy writes 'It is not accidental that during this time a whole swarm of Garibaldian fighters came to fight on the side of the locals, as Schwartz herself had asked from Garibaldi.' She also writes of

Espérance's 'affair' with the Greek consul in Crete, Konstantinos Voulgaridis, which was to 'prolong her stay in the island indefinitely.' As a young woman, Espérance was 'beautiful, clever, very well-educated ... and above all very rich.'

Another Cretan relationship was, perhaps, more platonic: 'Under the charm of the Cretan landscape, she invites and finances the young painter Joseph Winkler, a rising member of the Munich school. Winkler tours the three prefectures of the island and creates twelve exceptional landscape paintings of Chania and Rethymnon. However, all these paintings are now considered lost.' Peggy says that Espérance (under the pen name Elpis Melena) published in Greek in 1891 a book which, if it had been published in English, would be called something like Events and Notes on My 20-Year Stay in Crete; but a year later it was only published in German. I have not, unfortunately, been able to find a copy (there is one for sale on the internet for nearly £700!) but it apparently contains Winkler's paintings; Espérance later claimed that she paid 'far too much' for them.

Peggy writes too of Espérance's diplomatic visit to Rome on Crete's behalf and her meeting with British Prime Minister William Gladstone (p.136). But it was 'without success'. And Peggy continues:

She will share her disappointment with Garibaldi, whom she tries to convince to come to the island in order to help the situation. Old and battered from arthritis, he responds: 'An enslaved people is fighting so near to me and I am impotent ... the shame of it!' This is one version of the position of the Italian revolutionary. In her visit to the last Cretological Conference, descendent Anita, director of the Garibaldi Museum in Italy, presented evidence that her great-grandfather had come incognito to Crete for two weeks, but had to leave after he received an urgent letter from his father.

Another mystery still to be unravelled!

(Environs of Chania – chapter 21)

Alikianos

(p. 276) I have been caught out here! Although we drove through it, and hoped to find the remains of the 'Molino Castle', we failed. I assumed that two other sources from which I drew had been more successful and that I could depend on their account of a lintel and its inscription, *'Omnia Mundi Fumus et Umbra*. Then I came across a tough review of one of those sources by a scholar of Crete (Stelios Jackson) taking to task the two sources – one a guidebook, the other a traveller. While there are remains, neither the lintel nor the inscription exist.

In forming my correction, I have been initially further confused, and then helped, by the authors of *Candia Veneziana: Venetian Itineraries Through Crete* who, in their book published at much the same time as mine, wrote:

> *On the architrave of the main doorway of the old tower there was the same inscription as that found in palazzo Clodio at Arghiroupoli:*

OMNIA MUNDI FUMUS ET UMBRA

(*All things of this world are nought but smoke and shadows*)

The palazzo is now in a totally ruined state. A lady helps us to locate it in the old part of the village, in the Fanari area, where it stands beside the small Byzantine church of Agios Georgios, behind a modern house and hidden under a thick blanket of ivy and thorn bushes. It seems hardly possible that these ruined walls might have been the setting of a love story and acts of cruelty that occurred in the distant past but are still recalled today all over the island.

When I wrote to Alberta Galla, one of the authors, with the doubts that had been raised about this inscription (without telling her how forcefully, since I was questioning her account!), she replied:

We went there for our researches for Candia Veneziana but we saw only an arch and some ruins. The house, as Gerola [early 20th century scholar of Crete's Venetian monuments] reports, belonged to the Venetian family Dal Molin but he doesn't mention any inscription. Stergios Spanaki in his 'Choria and Poleis' states that ***probably****, as in most Venetian villas, there was the same inscription 'omnia mundi fumus et umbra' as in Arghiropoli, which we saw on the magnificent gate of palazzo Clodio.*

To strengthen his opinion he, most humorously, has immortalized himself in a picture of the ruins of Alikiano villa with the title 'fumus ... et umbra'. Spanaki, as you probably know, is the most important scholar of Venetian Crete, exegete of Gerola and translator in Greek of a big amount of Venetian documents (Relationi etc.) Shall we trust him?

Where Alberta and her co-author's account of the castle remains differs from mine is the word 'was' which her email to me explains. I, and my two sources, stated that it 'is' there now. There is no lintel and no inscription now – only an arch and some ruins. Do find them! Argyroupolis, south west of Rethymnon, with its lintel and inscription, is also a possible location for the Kandanoleon wedding tragedy.

I thank Alberta for the trouble she took to answer my emails on that and other points, and recommend her compact, scholarly and accessible book which should be available in Crete. And I thank Stelios Jackson for enabling me to confess to him my error before he could review my book, and to explain that, knowing I had failed to find the ruins, I did approach the traveller to check details, but had no reply.

While you're in Alikianos, picture it three and a half centuries after the fatal wedding breakfast, as it was in Mary Walker's day under the Ottomans; she wrote in her second Crete account, *Old Tracks and New Landmarks* (1897):

We gradually approach a more wooded region, and at length, reaching the village of Alikianos, we feel stifled amongst the dense foliage of orange and olive groves. An orange grove in these parts – its poetical associations notwithstanding – is by no means, on nearer acquaintance, always the scene of enchantment dear to the poetic mind. On level ground it is dull, and unquestionably stuffy; nothing grows in the dark shadow of the heavy canopy of leaves, therefore the bare ground is varied only by the small ditches surrounding the black trunks for irrigation, and the whole is enclosed by an uninteresting stone wall. ...

As we wound along the airless and sultry lanes ..., we found the caimakam of the district, warned of the approach of the party, had ridden forward, followed by his secretary, to invite us to his fortified konak on the summit of the hill. It is a stiff climb, but we are repaid by the splendid view from the battlements of the surrounding country, and refreshed by lemonade and English biscuits. The whole of this part – frequently under water in the winter – is very feverish; two or three of the soldiers of the small garrison – although the castle is raised above the level of the marshes – were suffering unmistakably from this terrible scourge of ill-drained lands; but the conditions of existence seem to agree wonderfully with the orange-trees, which are, they say, the finest in this part of Crete.

So I am left with another question, is there any sign of that *konak* left? Do let me know if you get there before me.

Armenoi

(insert p. 283) In 1865 Anna Vivanti, like us in 2001, had a meal in Armenoi, en route from Chania to Rethymnon, and wrote:

After three hours' ride we arrived at Armenos, a hamlet, where we halted, and Sali and Arif unpacked some of our provisions. I never enjoyed a lunch more. It consisted of cold chicken, hard boiled eggs, oranges, and Turkish coffee, and we partook of it in the shade of a splendid plane tree, on the borders of a clear murmuring stream. On leaving Armenos, the country became wilder, and the roads even worse than they had been; an ascent of about half an hour, the whole country around was strewed with fragments of rocks. It would have looked terribly wild and desolate, had not the wild flowers and plants covered and hidden a great deal.

(Tylissos – Rethymnon - chapter 18)

(insert pp. 240 and 242) In the book, the order was Eleutherna (archaeological site), Arkadi (Monastery); on the ground, in April 2005, it was more practical to visit the monastery first. (Following the itinerary in the book, you would have driven east to west via Anogia. On our second attempt to complete this itinerary, we were driving from Chania; indeed, I suggested (p. 240) approaching this part of the itinerary from the west.

In the morning, we by-passed Rethymnon on the east to west highway looking hopefully out for signs to the monastery. Then we had to double back. In my notes I have

written, ‘To get to Arkadi and Eleutherna, don’t wait for the signs off the main highway; only one appeared – a dud. Instead, get onto the old Rethymnon Road once past the town, and there will then be signs.’ Of course, signage may have improved by now. It is then an attractive drive, but you still have to keep your direction wits about you.

Arkadi Monastery

I’m glad we finally had a chance to visit this historic site. On the patchy green space near the car park were a dozen or so head-scarfed women (and one man) collecting *horta*, and happy to explain themselves. They conveyed a timeless quality that was a pleasing introduction. Inside the walls you might be surprised to find a well-visited site that doesn’t jar. This may well be because although many visitors are tourists, others are pilgrims. And they visit not so much for its purely religious connotation as because of the destruction and massacre of November 1866 during the 1866-69 uprising against the Ottomans. That is why we were there: because of the hundreds of women and children who died (p.133)

Some of the structures built round the rectangular courtyard – with the church and its famous facade in the middle - have been restored over the years since 1866, though only one part was actually blown asunder in the explosion; but the whole seems to have the patina of centuries. A museum is devoted to 1866 and there one meets individual women who were involved. The best-remembered is **Chariklea (Hariklea) Daskalaki** from the nearby village of Amnatos whose three sons were killed in the uprising. During the two-day siege of the monastery, she not only urged on the few armed fighters but did what she could to help the defence.

Artistic depictions of the siege and the final destruction show women taking part. One that illustrates *Arkadi: the Historic Monastery* (on sale there) shows one woman heaving a large brick and another brandishing a sword.

Chariklea survived the siege – many who did not die in the explosion were slaughtered – and was taken as a prisoner to Rethymnon under terrible conditions. The women and children were kept for a week in a church and then, it seems, released; the men were imprisoned for a year. Upon her release, the monastery information suggests that Chariklea went to her daughters in Athens where she died, apparently that year - that is, within weeks of the siege.

But Hilary Skinner, the British Philhelline who arrived in southern Crete on board the blockade-runner *Arkadi* in January 1867, two months after the monastery tragedy, to help the insurgents, tells a different story. He writes in *Roughing it in Crete in 1867* (1868) of meeting the wounded Cretan leader George Daskalaki a few days after his arrival and being told that if he wished to see the monastery ‘his mother could go with us; she had been in the siege and could tell all about it.’ (Skinner later learned that Chariklea’s ‘brave’ son was ‘doomed’).

As they approached the monastery, Skinner continued, ‘The old lady who had escaped the slaughter, shuddered when she saw it.’ Bodies still lay about and he describes how in one room a ‘woman clings to a child as if to protect it, and another, with a look of terror,

which has not yet faded from her face, turns her head away to avoid the threatened blow.' Chariklea tells him that a hundred other women were spared but that 'thirty of her kinsfolk perished around her, and she relates with tears how one grandchild, six years old, was cut down before her eyes'.

Outside the west gate of the monastery is the Heroes Monument – an ossuary made of stone salvaged from the explosion where the bones of those who fell are kept. And there, among the busts of heroic male leaders, is one of Chariklea Daskalaki.

Hilda Pendlebury (p. 242) shows how the monastery and its gracious receipt of visitors revived. And I understand that the monastery still offers visitors hospitality.

Eleutherna (Eleftherna)

The Arkadi Monastery may not be that easy to find – we overshot it to begin with – but the way in and out of it makes getting to the archaeological site of Eleutherna easy, for it is sign-posted there, and for 8 kms you simply have to keep your head, passing through the village of the same name, and then down an interesting (i.e. rough) winding road. Keep your eyes skinned here and be ready to park before you get to the bottom – you may well be the only car – because, at least when we went in April 2005, that is all you will see of the site. It's an excellent spacious view, as the other side of the valley rises and spreads before you covered with archaeological remains, but the site is fenced in and you end up at a padlocked gate from where you see very much less than you did while descending into the valley. I hope it is not always locked, that we were unlucky.

Hilda Pendlebury's 1929 description (pp. 240-1) throws you back to a time when the archaeological treasures were waiting there, still mostly under the soil.

Rethymnon

(insert p. 243) We didn't visit the Melidoni cave on this trip either; instead, after Eleutherna, we turned back towards Rethymnon and sought somewhere for lunch; I had to make a better fist of the town than I do in the book, and there is only so much you can do in a day.

If you have set your heart on visiting the Archaeological Museum, you need to get to it well before the closing time of 15.00; it was closed by 14.50 on a Saturday and we missed it and, therefore, among other finds, a rather fetching Roman Aphrodite from Argyroupolis and a late Minoan clownish goddess with upraised arms from Pangalochori. *Rethymnon: Soul of Crete* (2002), with a useful text by archaeologist Stella Kalogeraki, and handsome illustrations, is a good guide.

The Eleni Franzeskaki Collection I mention (p.245) is in the building opposite the nearby Municipal Kanakakis Gallery for contemporary art in Chimaras (Heimaras) Street, and the Historical and Folklore Museum is 28-30 Manouil Vernadou. Avoid Saturday afternoon out of season, I suspect.

Leaving the Archaeological Museum, the entrance to the Fortezza now faces you. This extraordinary construction still dominates the town, lowers over it; and it is like entering a town itself but without much in the way of buildings. It did once have public buildings within and, indeed, there was an unsuccessful attempt by the government in Venice to get families to live inside the walls – forbidding the construction of new houses without – but the women demurred, preferring not to live in such close quarters with soldiers. So now it is just a vast, walled, windswept, rather desolate space with the odd remains of a building, high above the town, with splendid views all round. If you go in the summer, at the time of the Renaissance Festival, I'm sure the atmosphere is different. In the Erifoli Theatre – an open air amphitheatre – there are concerts and plays, Greek, of course, but also other European classics such as those of Shakespeare and Molière.

As you roam around the Fortezza at less celebratory times, imagine the Venetian women taking refuge there from the Ottomans during the siege of September-November 1646 (p. 116). (I see on page 244, I say 1645 – that is when they started to besiege Chania). And imagine their last view of the town, for ever. Two centuries later, in 1865, Anna Vivanti arrived, and wrote of the town:

It lies on a promontory, which ends in a cliff, on which a fortress is built that looks strong and foreboding. There are no gardens here like in Canea, the shrubs and trees here and there are stunted, and grow in a horizontal direction, as trees and shrubs will do near a sea-shore which is exposed to high winds. One solitary palm-tree is an exception; it stands in some little garden in the town, and rises high above the houses, waving its graceful leaves. 'What is this town here for, in this stony wilderness, on a rocky coast, with but a small harbour, which can be entered in fair weather only?' I asked our host, M. G-. He told me that behind these mountains are fruitful valleys full of olive-trees, the fruit of which the peasants bring to Rettimo, where it is made into oil and soap. We visited one of the many soap manufactories in Rettimo; the soap was very nice and pure, and I heartily wished that it had been more extensively used in the island, instead of being exported to Constantinople, Trieste, &c.

Mr G, The 'English' vice-consul was an Ionian Greek with whom they communicated in Italian. Anna's description of his family gives some idea of Rethymniot women then:

> *Mr G-'s wife, daughter, and daughters-in-law understood nothing but Greek. I could, therefore, only speak with them by signs, and as one can convey but very simple ideas by that mode of communication, we did not tell one another much. They were dressed in a way that was a mixture of primitive simplicity and gorgeous finery. With a plain cotton dress, and a handkerchief tied round the head, they would yet wear splendid diamond ear-rings, pearl necklace, bracelets, etc. There was the same incongruity observable in their houses, which were wanting in many of what seem to us the very first and indispensable comforts of life, while the beds had gold embroidered counterpanes. With the children I got on better than with these ladies.*

How far had Rethymnon changed by the time the writer Lilika Nakou (Nakos) arrived as a teacher seventy years later, in 1933? When my book was already at the proof stage, having come upon a brief reference to her, I googled her and found Deborah Tannen's *Lilika Nakos*

(1983), a survey of the writer's work. Although I was able to add a few words about it, the book itself did not arrive until too late to tell you more about Lilika and her writing. Since then, after much searching, I have also found a French copy of her novel based on her Cretan experience - *Madame Do-ré-mi: Professeur en Crète* (1956) - on the internet (in Holland). It is so delightful that I can't believe that it hasn't been translated into English; (originally written in French (1947), Lilika also published a Greek version (1955)).

Deborah Tannen describes how, after the ordeal of the German occupation of Athens during the War, having lost everything, Lilika arrived penniless in Lausanne. There a friend told her that a Swiss magazine wanted her to write a humorous story about Crete.

Born in Athens, Lilika had spent her early childhood there, followed by spells in Switzerland, where she was educated and was part of a bohemian and literary set and had a love affair with a leftist historian, associate of the Cretan revolutionary Venizelos (p.145). Later she worked in Paris, again among writers. Her first publication, in 1928, was a story translated from the French into Greek by Crete-born Galateia Kazantzakis (p.194). Against her father's wishes – writing was not a suitable occupation for women – she was set on a literary career. But his death in 1933 left his wife and daughter not only without income but also in debt and with no means of support. That is how she came to leave Athens, where she had started writing in Greek (she was one of the first to write novels in modern Greek), and take up a teaching post in Rethymnon – calling upon her Swiss degrees in music and belles lettres and her father's connections.

Because the novel has no English version, as far as practical I shall tell Lilika's Cretan adventure, particularly her impressions of Crete and Cretans, in her own words, or, rather, those of her alter ego twenty-one year old Katerina Makri. Katerina's arrival in Rethymnon sets the scene and introduces us to Herakles, the larger-than-life school factotum who was to take her under his wing:

> *The following morning, at about 10 o'clock, Rethymnon appeared, girdled by Venetian walls, with sullen houses dominated by the lighthouse and the two or three Turkish minarets. My distress hit me, and my courage abandoned me. Strapping fellows with carefully-dressed beards and sinister black moustaches, and dressed in their baggy blue pantaloons, shouted and gesticulated from the long boats. They accosted and boarded our boat like pirates, springing up from the deep by a trembling ladder. Prey to a nameless terror, I hurtled down to the smoking room and fell to the carpet.*
>
> *'Where is Katerina Makri?' called out a voice of thunder. 'Where is she? She's our new school teacher.'*

Herakles finally tracks her down and carts her off towards the school (and Anna Vivanti's earlier description of a leafless town is partly explained):

At last, leaving the main road, we ventured into narrow streets bordered with walls higher than the tree tops. Through the grilled gates you could see delicious clusters of almond trees, orange trees in flower and cypress. Right at the back, hid the houses covered

in jasmine and honeysuckle. No window looked onto the street, no chance of an indiscreet glance out. ....

> *[Herakles explained] 'This is the Turkish quarter. The muslim houses don't have openings onto the street so the women can't amuse themselves by seeing what's going on. Since the exchange of population* [in 1923 – p. 148]*, after the war* [1918], *Christians live here'.*

The whole journey is physically hot and tiring and emotionally oppressive; Katerina moans to herself: 'What wouldn't I have given to be transformed into a *hanoum* [Turkish woman], cloistered in these gardens, without having to confront the headmaster and turbulent pupils!'

They arrive at the school where the headmaster, it turns out, is sympathetic, though doubtful that she will be able to cope; and he stands by her almost to the end. But what he tells her about her pupils appals her:

> *They are ill-disciplined and brawling. You will see them with knives or revolvers at the waist and they don't hesitate to use them, even in class. In addition, because there are too many of them, teaching is very difficult, if not impossible. But I would be unjust to them if I didn't also tell you about their qualities. They have generous hearts; these are men with a chivalrous side to them, a grandeur of feeling, and a love of panache. They are proud and gentle at the same time; they have great amour-propre and, if you are able to get to them, you will be loved and respected. They love that which is large, heroic ...*
>
> *I felt lost: I was only one metre 45 tall. If the esteem of my students was measured by my height, what a disaster!*

The oldest pupils were, indeed, men – men who had already done their military service and come back to their studies.

Herakles then takes Katerina off to her lodgings – it transpires some way out of town. Asked why, he explains that a previous teacher had misbehaved herself. Katerina remarks that 'The house to which my guide led me was outside the village and rather far from the school. But the countryside was beautiful. On one side was the sea, on the other a plain, and in the distance towering blue mountains with summits immaculate with snow.'

And her landlady is welcoming. She is not Cretan but a refugee from Smyrna in 1922. Herakles is not impressed by such people: 'All these refugees have houses and gardens,'snarled M. Herakles. 'As for me, a Cretan, I haven't a roof to shelter me.' And Katerina doesn't care for the distance from school or the accommodation offered and demands to be taken elsewhere. Eventually she has to drag her way back to Mme Marika who turns out to be a kindly woman, a seamstress with a bevy of apprentices. Katerina eventually settles down there.

But the teaching is a nightmare: there are 20 teachers for 1,000 pupils. That means enormous classes, too many hours, totally unruly pupils – worse even than the headmaster has painted them: there are constant pitched battles and disruptions. To the French lessons are soon added musical appreciation classes and they are more impossible even than the French ones. In addition, Katerina finds that a false life story has been spread about her by a malicious man whose motive she never gets to the bottom of. And the inhabitants of Rethymnon are narrow-minded gossips only too ready to believe the worst.

There is one other woman teacher, Mlle Frosso, and they become friends Katerina recounts how,

> *I told her my life story. I told her that our society was unjust towards women who had no means of providing for themselves.*
>
> *'Yes, everything is unjust,' she cried with fervour. 'I've felt this injustice since I was very young. My father reproached me for being a girl, and he let my brothers do anything. For him, woman is a slave to man. That's how my mother lost her health. I heard my father say that he made her constantly pregnant out of jealousy. It's odious.'*

Katerina is brave and determined and a good teacher; she begins to make some headway with French, but music is beyond her pupils – apart from one small aspect:

> *One day, one of the older boys called out as I came into the classroom, 'Here comes Madame Doremi!'*
>
> *They all burst out laughing and the whole class cried, 'Madame Doremi! Madame Doremi!'*

Should I pretend that I hadn't heard? I was hardly deaf! I felt hot and cold all over. Not because it displeased me to hear myself called Madame Doremi, but it showed that I had no authority left. Should I get angry? That would be worse! What could I do with these strapping fellows armed with pistols? With what pleasure would they have made me feel fear! Distribute slaps? Even if I had wanted to, their cheeks were out of my reach. Burst into tears, as I was ready to do? In a flash I understood that it was best to remain pleasant and accept my name with a smile.

> *The lads continued to call out, '*Kalimera, Kiria *Doremi, good day Madame Doremi.'*
>
> *'All right, good day children. You flatter me by greeting me with these three musical notes; thank you very much for my surname. That way, you will not forget me too quickly when I leave Crete.'*

What with that, and an unpleasant incident in a cafe, the chivalrous side of at least one of her pupils reveals itself. Lefteris, two years older than her, reveals his love for her and soon she is in love with him. He invites her to his village up in the mountains above Rethymnon and there she meets not only his loving grandparents but also an unconventional

Englishwoman, Sally, who has settled there. Sally's story of her welcome in the village mirrors that offered to Katerina:

We arrived in the village at dawn. Everyone came out to welcome us, and the grandmother, without knowing me, made ready a lovely bedroom, sacrificed the finest chicken in honour of the stranger and treated me like a princess. The following day, the villagers came with offerings: a basket of fruit, honey, handmade lace. Surprised, I said that it wasn't either Christmas or my birthday. 'It's our custom,' replied one of them. 'You are visiting our village for the first time ...' These were people more splendid than I had ever met! And so I decided to rent a cheap little house, and to leave forever Rethymnon, so full of spiteful bourgeois.

Herakles, meanwhile, is in love with the maid of the headmaster and his invalid wife who, in turn, relies for her well-being on the ministrations of Herakles. But another man has his eye on the maid and abducts her, in time honoured tradition. As Katerina puts it, 'In Crete, since the departure of the Turks, there was nothing but abductions.' A battle royal ensues. Herakles tries to get his loved-one back and his side fights with the other, bullets fly. Lefteris is wounded. Katerina is amazed by the reaction of her landlady's apprentices:

I went into the kitchen. The apprentices there were making tea made from the aromatic plant gathered on the heights of Mt Ida. Laughing, they recounted how a bullet had brushed past one of them. According to them, they had taken part in a gentle battle of flowers!

Strange young Cretan women who have no fear of bullets, I salute you!

When Lefteris's bourgeois parents discover his intentions towards Katerina, his father does everything he can to break it up. Katerina is free-spirited and liberal-thinking enough herself, but the rumours put about by her tormentor and her friendship with the atheist Sally, provide him with even more ammunition. Even Mlle Frosso finds she can no longer risk friendship, as she tells Katerina what is going on:

'I know, I know but that's what they're saying. I tell you, my father didn't want me to accept your invitation for this afternoon. We need to hide if we want to go on seeing each other. But you are free to do what you want. Most important, don't get angry, dear Mademoiselle Katerina. I'm telling you as a friend so that you are forewarned. So you won't be surprised if ...

'But to whom am I accountable for my private life, which is after all so austere?'

' Oh, it's always about those medieval prejudices against women. If you knew how certain teachers hate us because we work. They complain that we're taking their jobs, and they judge us inferior to men.'

To add to Katerina's teaching burden, she has been given a class of girls to teach. She has, meanwhile, found a delightful walk up on the slopes of the Fortezza where she meets some interesting women. She thinks how pleasant it would be to take her class there. Unfortunately, she does not know that the denizens of her discovery are prostitutes plying

their trade. But before they get back everyone else knows what has happened and the town is up in arms; even the headmaster cannot save Katerina – she must leave. In case you can get hold of a copy, I won't spoil the end.

Katerina's new hill-side acquaintances or, rather, Lilika's for, as she was later to tell Deborah Tannen, even that part of her novel was true, brings me back to the prostitutes of Rethymnon (p.244). Until relatively recently, the area just below the Fortezza was the red light district. Then there was the discovery there, in a hamam, in 1923, when the populations of Greeks and Turks were being exchanged, of a bathhouse attendant called Fatma who turned out to be Madame Hortense – she who had once entranced admirals and, when that caravan moved on, worked as a prostitute in Chania . Brought out into the daylight from the nether regions of the hamam to be deported, she told her story to the French consul who ensured that she could stay. To wander through these alleys with their often crumbling walls and time-worn carved doors is to get a feel of old Rethymnon, the less gracious part, and number 25 Radamanthios Street used to be a bathhouse; (it's now in private hands). Definitely worth finding.

Herakleion (chapter 15)

(insert p. 183, just before Mary Walker) Mary Walker saw Candia (Herakleion) as she arrived in Crete; she was seeing it from the sea and was doubtless full of pleasurable anticipation. Anna Vivanti, ten years or so earlier, was leaving after fulfilling a dream. Her account is less happy:

> *We walked through the town, which is a desolate place – ten times too large for its inhabitants. Grass grows in all the streets, and the very dogs seem more lean and hungry here than elsewhere. The fine massive old Venetian walls that surround the harbour and town have been cracked by earthquakes, and they seem unable to resist the general decay. There are many palm-trees in Candia whose graceful forms rise up amidst the ruin and desolation which surround them; and beyond the town, as in Canea, one sees a chain of snow-covered mountains.*

(South to the Mesara Plain – Chapter 19)

Gortyn

(insert p.251, end of penultimate paragraph) Europa and the Bull is, indeed, in the British Museum but not yet on display. In 2005, Lesley Fitton (author of the fine *Minoans* (2002)), the curator concerned, was kind enough to take us into the basement storage area. There Europa, headless, armless but elegantly dressed, sat facing sideways, as is traditional, on an animal that, quite honestly, looks more like a great sheep than a bull. The statue was in much need of repair and cleaning. As I write, I am happy to report that, two years later, Europa is a new woman – clean, better adjusted on her bull, and probably ready to face her public by the end of 2007. We may yet see her sparkling in the Great Court.

(Lasithi Plateau, chapter 22)

Trapeza cave

(insert p.299) More of the Pendleburys' first independent Lasithi excavation can be gleaned from a new biography: *The Rash Adventurer: A Life of John Pendlebury* (2007) by Imogen Grunden. Indeed, it emerges that Hilda later wrote up their time in Lasithi on that occasion – now an uncatalogued item in the British School at Athens' archives. Many of her letters there, which I used, are catalogued.

The team set up their dig house in nearby Tzermiado (p. 299). The Trapeza cave had already been gone over by the villagers searching for gold, complicating interpretation, but they could decide from their finds that its use preceded that of the Diktaian cave (p. 295-8). The name now on the signpost to lead the unwary astray – Kronia – was then given to the cave by the villagers, determining that it must have been that of Zeus' father Kronos.

A villager from Psychro (pp. 292-5), George Markogiannakis, was in charge of the teenage pot-washing girls from Tzermiado. Hilda wrote how 'they teased and plagued him with their frivolous ways.'

At the end of the two week dig, Hilda and John set off on a three-day walking trip and stayed first at George's Psychro house. We have met his daughter-in-law Ourania in 1962-3 at Palaikastro (p.370) where her husband Manolis, the Knossos foreman, was supervisor. Ourania cooked for archaeologists at Knossos in the 1950s and '60s, and she prepared the food that Hilda and John took with them as they left on their walk in 1936. Hilda was to write of their stay: 'George had a delightful village house, with a terrace and courtyard: our beds were spotlessly clean but I shall never forget the rasp of Ourania's homespun sheets on my chin.'

(From Lato to Myrtos – chapter 24)

Spinalonga

(insert p. 319 between **Lato** and **Agios Nikolaos**) The only place we have visited on the west coast of the Bay of Mirabella is the administrative tourist centre of that region. But the area north of Agios Nikolaos (pp.319-322), such as Elounda (pp. 76, 85, 321), has been developed for tourists in recent years. If anything were to tempt a visitor there, it would be Victoria Hislop's novel *The Island* (2005).

The story takes place in both the present day, as one of the heroines, Alexis, a London career woman engaged to be married, goes in search of her past, and in that past, starting in 1939. The setting then is the village of Plaka, opposite the island of Spinalonga.

Traditionally, Spinalonga was the site of a Venetian fortress built in 1579 on the ruins of an ancient acropolis. When Crete fell to the Ottomans in 1669, refugees, including women and children, sheltered there, and it did not capitulate until 1715. But from 1903 to 1957 the fortress housed a leper colony.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, lepers were treated as both Anna Vivanti and Mary Walker describe travelling westwards out of Chania. Anna wrote in 1865:

> *When we were about a mile out of the city, we came to the mud huts where the poor lepers live. These miserable creatures lay or crouched before their doors, and stretched their mutilated hands out towards us, begging for alms. My husband threw a few piasters among them, but I turned my face away, for they were frightful to look at.*

A decade or so later Mary added:

> *The winding road takes us under the shade of a few trees, as we pass through the picturesque but melancholy leper village. Many victims of that hideous malady, most of them wrapped in great hooded cloaks, the hood drawn down, sit under the trees, or crouch by the wayside, begging, more as a semblance of occupation, in most case, than necessity, for a liberal allowance of bread is regularly made by the Government, and many of the lepers own property, the proceeds of which are brought by their friends and placed on a stone of the well that stands in the centre of the cluster of square whitewashed huts.*

The leper colony on Spinalonga is a sad place that the villagers of Victoria Hislop's Plaka try not to think about. But the fisherman Georgiou Pekakis is a humane man and when he undertakes to convey some poor unfortunate into permanent exile on the island, he is as sympathetic as possible. Then one day he has to carry a member of his own family consisting of his wife Eleni, the village teacher, and their two daughters.

Alexis is directly related to this family. That is the crux of the story – to tell you more would be to spoil a moving, engrossing and dramatic book. But I can give you a flavour of it from one evocative quotation about the two daughters – Maria aged 10 and Anna 12 at the start of the story – and their friend Fortini who, in her old age, helps Alexis unravel her family's past:

> *The girls were heiresses to a millennium of secretly evolved folklore and were now considered old enough to be taught the crafts and skills that had been handed down through generations without written record. Fortini's grandmother was a great source of such lore and showed them how to dye wool with extracts of iris, hibiscus and chrysanthemum petals, and how to weave coloured grasses into elaborate baskets and mats. Other women passed on to them their knowledge of the magical benefits of locally grown herbs, and they would walk far into the mountains to find wild sage, cistus and camomile for their healing powers. On a good day they would return with a basket of the most precious herb of all,* origanum dictamus*, which was said to heal wounds as well as cure sore throats and stomach problems. Maria would always have the right potion to minister to her father if he was sick, and soon her reputation for mixing useful remedies spread round the village.*
>
> *While they were on their long walks into the mountains they would gather* horta*, the iron-rich mountain greens that were a staple part of every diet.*

In the days before all this area was fully opened up to tourism, it was the setting of Daphne du Maurier's story 'Not After Midnight', originally published in 1959 in *The Breaking Point*. I found it in a compilation *Don't Look Now: And Other Stories* (1973).

Archaeological artefacts are, not surprisingly, behind this tale of skulduggery. It's not quite *Rebecca* but it is taut enough and nicely atmospheric. Our hero, a schoolmaster on holiday with his easel who gets himself into the soup through nosiness, writes:

> *I followed the winding road to the left of the hotel, and having climbed for several kilometres descended again from the hills to sea level, where the land on my right suddenly flattened out to what seemed to be a great stretch of dried marsh, sun-baked, putty-coloured, the dazzling blue of the sea affording a splendid contrast as it lapped the stretch of land on either side. Driving closer I saw that it was not marsh at all but salt flats, with narrow causeways running between them, the flats themselves contained by walls intersected by dykes to allow the sea-water to drain, leaving the salt behind. ... then the salt flats ended abruptly, and the land rose once more to form the long, narrow isthmus of Spinalongha beyond*.

The narrator sets up his easel and then sees something suspicious. One evening he follows the couple he suspects into Agios Nikolaos:

> *I paid for my lemonade, and strolled to the end of the quay and back – the line upon line of fishing-boats would be colourful by day, and possibly the scene worth painting – and then I crossed the street, my eye caught by a glint of water inland, where a side-road appeared to end in a cul-de-sac. This must be the feature mentioned in the guidebook as the Bottomless Pool much frequented by tourists in the high season [p.320]. It was larger than I had expected, quite a sizeable lake, the water full of scum and floating debris, and I did not envy those who had the temerity to use the diving-board at the further end of it by day.*
>
> *Then I saw the Mercedes. ...*

Harriet Boyd and the Americans – chapter 25;

Gournia

(insert p. 344; add at end of Dorothea Bate quotation) We also know, from Karolyn Shindler's biography of Dorothea Bate, what Edith Hall thought of their visitor. Edith wrote to her parents on 29 May 1904:

> *The Miss Bates [sic] I spoke of is one of the jolliest, most capable, and fearless girls I ever knew. She is interested in palaeontology, and is digging caves to get bones ... She goes about by herself with one native to guide and help manage her luggage. And the beauty of it is that she is entirely unconscious and girlish, she dresses well, and is altogether a most companionable person.*

That view of Dorothea allows her biographer to quash, in a footnote, a myth concerning her subject – certainly one that I was keen to know the truth of:

> *I was fascinated at the idea of Dorothea dressing well in the middle of Crete, given the primitive nature of her accommodation. Edith's letter also serves to dispose of another erroneous story, which has had some currency. According to this one, Dorothea rode around Crete dressed as a man. There is not even a hint in her diary of anything that could even remotely account for this, nor in any known letters. It is a splendidly romantic notion but ... without foundation.*

(East Crete – Chapter 26)

Zakros

(insert p.56, end of penultimate paragraph and p. 378, end of penultimate paragraph) The sites excavated in the wider area of the Zakros Minoan palace by the 'Minoan Road Gang', starting in 1984, adds to the evidence for the theory that the Minoans may not have been as peaceable as has previously been assumed. When I mentioned (p. 56) that archaeologist Stella Chryssoulaki had drawn conclusions from the strong walls seen when she was a child travelling with her father, a civil engineer constructing the road system of Crete during the sixties and seventies, I was inadvertently running together two stories, one from childhood, another from her work as an archaeologist.

Since Stella (Head of the Educational Programme and Communications Department of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture in Athens) contacted me and sent me material, I am better informed. What she learned as a child were such principles as how to trace a land communication, so that it was easier to detect the Minoan roads when she and her team started their surface surveying.

The 'Minoan Road Gang' consisted originally of Stella, team leader, two other women archaeologists – Maria Avgouli and Yianna Venieri – and the architect Liana Kyriopoulou. Their story is most simply told in a summer 1992 article for the general reader by Diana Farr Ladas – 'Of Women and Minoan Watchtowers'. It describes how the team set out to explore on foot 'the Minoan Road system' in Eastern Crete and what they found. As Diana writes,

> *The women had 'tripped over' an intricate system of 60 forts and watchtowers, defence walls and military roads in the area of the palace at Zakros. Many of the roads went nowhere near the palace, zigzagging instead to odd locations to provide links to the forts. ...*
>
> *Today, nothing remains but the foundations, sometimes reaching up to window level, but their height has been estimated at 5 to 6 metres. Each tower was in visual range of the next, so that it would have been impossible for anyone to pass through the region undetected.*

Before the article was written, the team had excavated five and a half towers and unearthed artefacts that could have been used by military men camped there. As Stella explained to

the author, 'Strangely enough, the finds dating from the New Palace period show signs of every day rather than military life. After the destruction of the Old Palaces by earthquakes and fire around 1750 [BC], the forts were never used again for defensive purposes.' And Diana adds,

> *Looking over the history of Crete, Stella Chryssoulaki feels that the early defences may have been intended just as much to keep the local population at bay as to ward off intruders from across the seas. The Cretans were practically never united; warring tribes, bickering city-states were much more the rule. The palaces at Knossos, Mallia and elsewhere seem to have been widely fortified in their first phase (though this has yet to be systematically studied).*
>
> *The failure to rebuild them may suggest that Crete at last had a powerful ruler who decreed wall-less cities in order to have more control over their occupants.*

The 'Road Gang', now joined by male colleagues, as well as other women, from Greece, Italy, Germany, England and the Czech Republic have continued their excavations though, not unnaturally, the harmony and happiness of the past 'heroic' days of the initial 'Road Gang' cannot be the same. Their findings are made public through conference papers and in learned journals.

Corrections

p. x (illustrations) and p.18 (caption) the Myrtos goddess is in the Agios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum (not Siteia)

p.58 **Helen Hughes-Brock** (should be in bold)

p.117 Evmenia's dates are 1643-1715

p.131 omit Thomas Sandwith; his corrected dates in Crete are 1870-85

p.136 Syria should be Syra

p. 165 Karolyn Shindler (not Schindler)

p.375 change Arthur's Evans' excavations from Zakros to Knossos (though he did do some early excavating at Zakros)

p.398 Stella Chrysssoulaki in the index should be p.**56**
p.401 add Helen Hughes-Brock to the index, p.**58 (**and my thanks to Helen for her support post-publication)

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