
Cincinnati Hellenism: Two Early Greek Pioneers, Zachos and Hearn

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DIASPORA, A GREEK WORD, HAS CHARACTERIZED THE GREEK experience for almost three thousand years. Ever since the eighth century B. C. Greek women and men have left their rocky barren homeland, dispersing themselves all over the world in search of a better life in more promising lands. When the ancient historian Herodotus remarked that "Poverty is the foster-sister of Greece," he identified the primary cause of Greek emigration. Since poverty and Greece never broke their relationship, it was inevitable that Greeks would some day come to the New World and that some of them would somehow find their way to Cincinnati. That day came before the middle of the nineteenth century, in 1840.

John C. Zachos, the Queen City's first Greek, arrived in late summer of 1840. Seven years after Zachos left Cincinnati in 1862, Lafcadio Hearn arrived. His unusual first name certified the Greek half of his ancestry as well as his birth on the Greek island of Lefkas. This interesting pair of pioneer Greek residents of Cincinnati came from opposite ends of the Greek world, Zachos from Constantinople, Hearn from a small island in the Ionian Sea. Although neither remained permanently in Cincinnati, the Ohio metropolis played a pivotal role in the evolution of their lives and careers. Both, moreover, are among the handful of distinguished Greek-born Americans who are listed in the multi-volume *Dictionary of American Biography*.

John Zachos and Lafcadio Hearn belong to the first period of Greek immigration to the United States, from 1768 to 1880. These immigrants were few in number. By 1880 there were no more than 300 Greeks dispersed throughout the United States. Most of them had not emigrated because of poverty. Belonging to the middle or upper-middle classes,

they were students, teachers, businessmen. The Greek Revolution and the fortunes of war were responsible for Zachos' coming to the new republic across the Atlantic, family squabbles and personal misfortunes in the case of Hearn.¹

Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas, as Cincinnati's Greek Orthodox community is called, represents the second period, the mass immigration of Greeks to America between 1880 and 1930. Unlike the immigrants of the earlier period, these newcomers were mainly peasants. Fleeing from the endemic poverty and lack of opportunity in Greece, they sailed to the promised land in America, where, some believed, they would find streets paved with gold. In May 1907 twenty-six young immigrants founded the Greek community of Cincinnati, which subsequent waves of immigrants have since steadily enlarged and strengthened.

From Zachos and Hearn to the present community of Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas close to a hundred and fifty years have elapsed. Thus a Greek presence has existed in Cincinnati for almost three-quarters of the city's history, a startling fact since Greeks were among the latest Europeans to immigrate to the United States. Unlike Zachos and Hearn who moved on to other places, later, many hundreds of their compatriots from many parts of the Greek lands, stayed, to fashion new lives for themselves in Cincinnati, on the banks of the Indians' "Beautiful River."

Greek Zachos of the Silver Tongue

In one of her rare poetic whimsies Fate decreed that the first Greek to live in Cincinnati, the Queen City of the West, would be someone born in Constantinople, an ancient and more famous Queen City. The son of Nicholas and Euphrosyne Zachos, John Zachos was born on December 5, 1820, in Constantine's city, where Greek emperors had ruled an empire for one thousand years. In 1820 Cincinnati was a small pioneer outpost in the American midwest. Zachos' destiny was bound to both the old and new Queen Cities.

Zachos had no memories of Constantinople. Within a year after his birth, the Zachos family found themselves refugees. Zachos never again saw the great city of his birth. Nevertheless, in far-off America, a young Greek immigrant claimed historic Constantinople as his heritage. The 1833-34 catalogue of Bristol College in Bristol, Pennsylvania includes a student directory. Among the names is one exotic entry: "Ioannes Zachos, Constantinople, Asia Minor." The thirteen-

¹ See E. C. Topping, "John Zachos: Cincinnati from Constantinople," *The Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 34 (1976), 47-69; Elizabeth Bisland, *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*, 2 vols. (New York and Boston, 1906); Elizabeth Stevenson, *Lafcadio Hearn* (New York 1961); Theodore Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge, MA, 1964).

year old foreign student had been in the United States already for six years. Yet he still retained the Greek form of his baptismal name and gave his birthplace as his address.

Zachos never forgot his roots in imperial Greek Constantinople. In his second book, published in Cincinnati in 1852, Zachos illustrates the phonetic idiosyncrasies of the English alphabet with a striking example: "Constantinople" could be spelled 11,628 ways. On the title page of this book the author is identified as "A Native Greek."

Two years later, as editor of *The Ohio Journal of Education*, Zachos inserted into an issue a description of Constantinople's legendary beauties. Finally, his tombstone in a Boston cemetery documents a native son's enduring pride and love of his birthplace. Incised in large capitals across the grey granite are the fourteen letters CONSTANTINOPLE, the name of a real place which distance and eight decades of absence had turned into a sacred myth for Zachos.

Zachos' journey from the Queen City of his birth to the one in the New World lasted twenty years. The road between them was not direct. Nor was the journey without stops in other places.

War-torn Greece was Zachos' home for the first seven years of his long life. The outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in the spring of 1821 brought Turkish reprisals on the elite Greek community in Constantinople. Along with other prominent Greeks, John's father, Nicholas Zachos, an ardent Greek patriot, was arrested, jailed and sentenced to death. Fortunately, bribes saved his life and enabled the family to escape to mainland Greece. There Nicholas joined the revolutionary army. In 1824 he fell in battle. That same year, far across the seas in the American Mid-West the citizens of Cincinnati were reading about the Greek Revolution and raising money to send to the Greeks, who were fighting for their independence.

His wife, Euphrosyne, four year-old John and an infant daughter survived him. Zachos' earliest memories were thus of Greece, its smiling seas, blue skies and fig-trees.

Three years after her husband's death Euphrosyne decided to send John to the United States for his education. After a long voyage of almost three months on the American relief ship *Jane*, a little Greek immigrant aged seven stepped ashore at New York on February 5, 1828. During the Greek Revolution about forty Greek children, some of them war-orphans, were brought to this country to be educated. Some of them later returned to Greece. Others, like John Zachos and George Colvocoresses, remained, and distinguished themselves in their adopted country, the former as an educator, the latter as an officer in the United States Navy.

From 1828 to 1840 young Zachos was a student at institutions in

three different states. His American education began in Amherst, Massachusetts, at the Mount Pleasant Classical Institute, where he remained until 1833. His mother paid for the first three years of his schooling. Meanwhile, Mrs. Zachos had remarried. After her second husband, Nicholas Celivergos, ran through the Zachos fortune, she was unable to send money to her son in the United States. For the next two years the Greek Committee of Boston contributed the funds for John's education. After that John had to provide for himself.

His next school was Bristol Manual Labor College, an Episcopalian institution located twenty miles north of Philadelphia. Since the college program combined work with study, the students were self-supporting, a godsend for the thirteen-year-old Greek boy who was on his own in a foreign country. From 1833 to 1837 John worked and studied at this college. The training he received there in mechanics proved helpful later, when Zachos invented a typewriter which he patented in 1876. Subsequent improvements were patented in 1883 and 1886. To Cincinnati's first Greek belongs the honor of being the first Greek-American inventor.

At Bristol College the Greek student also found a good friend in the Rev. Chauncy Colton, the school's founder and president. As is very often the case in the experience of immigrants, the friendship of a native influenced Zachos' future. When in 1837 Colton went to join the faculty of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, he took the young Greek student with him.

Having enrolled as a sophomore in 1837, Zachos graduated with honors from Kenyon College on August 5, 1840. At the commencement exercises he was the only orator to give two speeches, an early tribute to his "silver tongue." Identified on the program as "John C. Zachos, Athens, Greece," the new Bachelor of Arts was openly proud of his Greek birth. His first oration, entitled "Homerus," was delivered in classical Greek. The second, "Greece: Influence of Her Memorials and Literature," was given in English. Three years later his alma mater granted Zachos a Master of Arts degree.

By 1840 the new Kenyon alumnus had been separated from his family in Greece for twelve years. Ties with them had probably weakened and Zachos, whether consciously or not, opted for a future in the United States rather than in the newly established Greek kingdom. Soon after graduation he went to Cincinnati, the hometown of his good friend and classmate, Stanley Matthews, a future United States senator and Supreme Court justice. In the fall of 1840, the road that John Zachos had traveled from Constantinople, the first Queen City, reached the second one in Ohio.

During the eleven years of Zachos' first residence (1840-1851) in

Cincinnati the pattern of his personal and professional life was fixed. He was perhaps more a child of the second Queen City than of the first. In the river-town in the American midwest, he became a Unitarian and an abolitionist, an author and an educator. Constantinople was part of the immigrant's natural nostalgia, Cincinnati the reality of his present and future.

A booming commercial, industrial metropolis in 1840, and boasting to be the "Athens of the West," Cincinnati offered young Zachos opportunities for both work and further education. From the City Directory of 1842 we learn that he lived with the congenial and academic family of his classmate, and that his teaching career had already started: "John C. Zachos, teacher, boards T. J. Matthews." Two years later the Directory informs us that he was also studying medicine: "John C. Zachos, medical student, Mussey's office." His choice of a medical career was probably influenced by the example of Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the American philhellene who had served as surgeon in the Greek revolutionary army and to whose care Euphrosyne Zachos had entrusted her son when she sent him to America. In the end, however, education and not medicine was to be his profession.

Zachos had his first schoolroom in Cincinnati in 1842. By 1848 he was "Professor of Mathematics in Dr. Colton's Academy." Colton was the friend from Bristol, who had brought him to Kenyon College in Ohio. John Zachos was now settling down in the Queen City.

On July 26, 1849, he married Harriet Tompkins Canfield (1824-1896), a colleague described as a woman of "education and intelligence and of superior virtues." The wife of Cincinnati's first Greek was a seventh-generation American, the descendant of an early seventeenth-century settler at Plymouth. Six children were born of the Zachos-Canfield marriage.

He was also participating in the lively social and intellectual life of the city. In October of the same year Zachos and eleven friends won immortality by founding The Literary Club, the country's oldest continuous literary society. The "immortal dozen," as the club affectionately still refers to them, were teachers, lawyers, writers and a painter. They were also serious, sociable and articulate. In 1850 they sponsored Emerson's first visit to Cincinnati. The illustrious guest from Concord found his hosts to be a "knot of excellent young men."

Thus Greek-born Zachos belonged to an elite group of Americans which produced presidents of the United States, justices for the Supreme Court, as well as governors, senators, generals and ambassadors. Stanley Matthews, his Kenyon classmate, helped steal the presidency in 1876 for Rutherford B. Hayes, another Kenyon alumnus and member of the Club. Zachos' closest friend in the club was Ainsworth Spofford,

the brilliant Librarian of Congress from 1864 to 1897. When Zachos' first son was born, he was named for Spofford.

Aimiable, witty, with a flair for drama, Zachos sparkled in this company of New Englanders and Westerners. He was the Club's most exotic member. The impact of his personality lasted long after he had left Cincinnati. In 1894, John Herron, father-in-law of William Howard Taft, read a paper to the club on John Zachos entitled "A Native of Constantinople . . . Prominent in this City Forty Years Ago." The Club had not forgotten "Greek Zachos of the Silver Tongue." Nor had he forgotten the Club. Remembering the fellowship and pleasures of the Cincinnati Literary Club, he founded in December, 1866, the Meadville Literary Union in Meadville, Pennsylvania, an organization still in existence.

At the same time, Zachos was advancing professionally. In 1849 he became co-owner and co-principal of The Cincinnati Female Seminary, which was well regarded as an institution of "high rank." Convinced that girls deserved the same education as boys, he included mathematics in the curriculum of his school. The idea of girls studying mathematics was an advanced opinion at a time when women were considered incapable of abstract thinking or of learning much beyond a few rudiments. This first experience of teaching girls in Cincinnati made Professor Zachos a life-long, strong advocate of equal education for women.

The successful teacher and school administrator turned author in 1851, when the local firm of W. W. Derby and Co. published Zachos' first book, *The New American Speaker*, a large volume of 552 pages. Widely used in schools, within three years it went into four editions. The fourth edition was reprinted in 1857 and a fifth edition was issued in New York in 1865. Hard on the heels of the first, a second book, *Introductory Lessons in Reading and Elocution*, was published in 1852. From "A Native Greek" Americans in the nineteenth century were learning how to read and speak English.

In 1851 Zachos and his associate Miss Margaret Coxe became co-principals of Cooper Female Institute in Dayton Ohio. This "attractive and scholarly" school was well-known throughout the state. Intense professional activity marks the years 1851 to 1854. Besides directing a school for girls, he was active in a state-wide crusade to improve Ohio schools and the training of teachers. Professor Zachos figured prominently in the newly organized Ohio State Teachers Association and led special groups like The Association for the Advancement of Female Education. He was also one of the editors of the new *Ohio Journal of Education*, to which he contributed articles on pedagogical problems and on the value of the humanities. Not surprisingly, he

enthusiastically promoted the study of ancient Greek, "the noble instrument of aesthetic culture, and the refinement of taste."

On the lecture circuit, Zachos used his "silver tongue" to communicate his ideas to the wider public. This notice of a lecture in Columbus appeared in *The Ohio State Journal* (December 21, 1853):

Prof. Zachos.—We wish to remind our citizens that Prof. Zachos of Dayton, will deliver the fifth lecture before the Athenaeum on tomorrow. . . . His topic will be "The Poet." As he has the reputation of a deep thinker as well as a brilliant one, we can assure our people that their patronage will be wisely bestowed. . . .

In the lecture Zachos warned his audience against "the pursuit of wealth" and recommended the study of poetry as an antidote to creeping materialism.

A meeting with Horace Mann in December 1853 determined the next phase of Zachos' teaching career and associated him with America's foremost reformer of education. The first president of Antioch College was recruiting faculty for the new institution that he hoped to make into a co-educational, non-sectarian Harvard. Impressed by Zachos' talents and experience, Mann offered him the position of Professor of English and Principal of the Preparatory Department.

In 1854 Zachos assumed his new duties at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. For the next three years he was Mann's valued collaborator in a significant experiment in education. Mann and Zachos did not restrict their activities to the college, but traveled tirelessly, addressing "Teachers Institutes" to spread their gospel of democratic education and professional excellence. In the summer of 1855 Zachos taught at such an Institute in Oxford, Ohio. Forty-two years later one of the teachers present described Zachos as "a Greek of fine Oriental temperament . . . in the flush of young manhood." She recalled that his "small, lithe, graceful body was clad in neat elegant attire" and that he wore a diamond. He had, she concluded, a "vivid individuality."

The victim of academic politics involving a quarrel between the trustees and the president, Zachos left Antioch College. With his family of six he returned to Cincinnati in 1857, after an absence of six years. During the next five years Zachos earned a livelihood lecturing and teaching. In 1861 Zachos appeared for the last time in a Cincinnati Directory. It repeats the listing of 1842, "John C. Zachos, teacher." The Panic of '57 and the increasing tensions between southern sympathizers and abolitionists affected Zachos' career.

Zachos was known to be an abolitionist. On September 22, 1861 he preached an eloquent sermon before the Unitarian Society of the Church of the Redeemer. In it Zachos spoke about slavery and the war that had begun in April, declaring "There is not one of us that is not

personally responsible for these national evils." Zachos' own sense of personal responsibility for social problems was not new. Sixteen years earlier he had written an article advocating the abolishment of capital punishment. Published in *The Literary Journal and Monthly Review* (April, 1854), it is the earliest known publication of Zachos, the first in a considerable list. The sermon of 1861, entitled "Liberal Theology and Christianity," appeared as a pamphlet of sixteen pages.

During this second and last period of residence (1857-1862) in the Queen City that had been his first true home, Professor Zachos published four more books for use in schools. Written to "promote the noble art of speaking," *The Primary School Speaker* and *The High School Speaker* appeared in 1858. The latter was reprinted in 1871. That same year, a sixth-grade student, a future president and chief justice of the United States, used it. William Howard Taft's marked-up copy of Zachos' *The High School Speaker* is in the library of The Literary Club, to which both the student and the author had belonged. Long interested in spelling reform, Zachos published in 1859 *The Analytic and Phonetic Word Book*. Another book appeared in 1860, *Analytic Elocution*, which went into a second edition eight years later. In nineteenth-century America many children studied reading, writing and speaking from the books of Professor John Zachos.

Early in 1862 Zachos left the Queen City, never to return. As indicated by his purchase of Lot 80 in Section 30 of Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati's first Greek had once thought that he would spend the rest of his life in the city to which he had come in 1840. Twenty-five years in the Buckeye state, most of them spent in Cincinnati, had made him an Ohioan. As such he is included in the sixth volume of *The Biographical Cyclopaedia and Portrait Gallery with an Historical Sketch of the State of Ohio*.

The fate that brought him from the Queen City on the Bosphorus to the Queen City on the Ohio now mapped another road which led him away to other places. But in all those other places John Zachos pursued the ideals and vocation that had become his in Cincinnati, in the 1840s.

On the morning of March 3, 1862, Professor Zachos sailed from New York, bound for Port Royal, South Carolina. One of forty-one men and twelve women, he had been chosen to participate in an experiment which was to affect the future of blacks in the United States. Under pressure from his Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, an abolitionist from Cincinnati, President Lincoln had reluctantly authorized the "Port Royal Experiment," whose aim it was to prove that nature had not condemned the black race to permanent inferiority and slavery. Zachos and his colleagues were determined to prove

that blacks could be educated and could live as free people.

On March 13 the abolitionist born in Constantinople was installed as superintendent on Parris Island, seven miles from Port Royal. For the next eighteen months he was the only white person on the island, in complete charge of five cotton-raising plantations and four hundred newly-freed blacks.

In the first letters written after his arrival, Zachos described his many tasks. He had first to clothe four hundred blacks whom he found "all in rags and utter destitution." Then he began to teach them. Within two weeks of his arrival he had established three schools, one for adults, two for children. "These I teach daily myself, and have an old negro for an assistant, —the only man that could read on the island." In order to hasten their progress Zachos used the "phonic method," in which he had been interested from his earliest years of teaching in Cincinnati. In a letter of April 5, 1862, he wrote: "It is truly gratifying to see the eagerness and success with which these people are learning to read."

Professor Zachos saw to the many needs of four hundred ex-slaves. He was their one doctor: "I have on an average, from six to ten patients a day to prescribe for. I never thought my studies in medicine would ever come so well into play." At this time Zachos, who had abandoned the study of medicine in Cincinnati in favor of teaching, was now commissioned "acting surgeon" in the United States Army.

He cared for their spiritual needs as well. Every Sunday Zachos preached, finding his congregation "the most attentive and interested audience I ever had." He was also the chief storekeeper on the island, distributing and selling supplies provided by the government. Since Confederate forces were not far off, he served as captain and drilled a company of blacks organized to protect the island against enemy attacks. All this in addition to supervising the cultivation of 578 acres, including 221 acres of cotton.

A sensitive friend and teacher, John Zachos initiated four hundred black Americans into the ways of freedom. His success did not go unnoticed. He was recognized as "one of the best superintendents" at Port Royal.

On Thursday, January 1, 1863, the ten thousand black "contrabands" at Port Royal were set free by Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Charlotte Forten, a free black teacher from Philadelphia, noted in her diary that it was "The most glorious day this nation has yet seen." At the celebration, she recorded, "An ode written for the occasion by Prof. Zachos, originally a Greek, now superintendent of Paris Island—was read by himself and then sung by the whites."

Some months later, Zachos, exhausted by his labors, left the Sea Islands. The daring experiment at Port Royal succeeded. Liberal human-

itarian John Zachos had helped it happen. It is one of history's more fascinating surprises that the Moses who led four hundred blacks in South Carolina to the promised land of freedom should have been a Greek immigrant born in a distant Queen City, halfway around the world.

After a period of recuperation, Zachos was installed in 1864 as minister of the First Unitarian Society in West Newton, a suburb of Boston. While he preached to his suburban congregation, Zachos did not forget the blacks' need for education. He published in 1864 a book introducing a new oral method by which reading could be more quickly learned. By the long title the author states his purpose: *The Phonic Primer and Reader. A Rational Method . . . Designed Chiefly for the Use of Night Schools Where Adults Are Taught, and For the Myriads of Freed Men and Women, Whose First Rush from the Prison-House of Slavery Is to the Gates of the Temple of Knowledge*. The title tempts us to visualize a Greek temple set high on a hill with Zachos waiting to welcome the nation's illiterates. Confident that he had tested his method on Parris Island, Zachos published a related book, *Phonic Primer and Primary Reader*, the following year.

In May 1866 Zachos became Professor of Sacred Rhetoric at Meadville Theological Seminary, in a college-town north of Pittsburgh. At the same time he occupied his second Unitarian pulpit. Born a Greek Orthodox within the shadow of Hagia Sophia, Zachos, as a young man in Cincinnati, had adopted the liberal creed of Unitarianism. The church in Meadville long remembered him as a "versatile man, with an uncommonly wide range of interests: a Greek in temperament as well as by birth. . . . a faithful minister who was ready to devote himself to every good cause and who had endeared himself to all classes by his affable manner and his kindness of heart." Having resigned the Meadville pulpit in 1868, Zachos accepted another in Ithaca, New York, where he remained until 1871. During this time he also lectured at Cornell University.

Forty-three years after his arrival as a seven-year-old Greek immigrant, John Zachos returned to New York City where he had landed in the winter of 1828. In 1871 Peter Cooper, the inventor and philanthropist, invited him to become Professor of Literature and Curator of Cooper Union Institute, a position he held until his death on March 20, 1898. A reformer of education through the decades since the 1840s, Zachos now dedicated his energies and talents to the pioneering enterprise of Cooper Union Institute in mass education.

He grew old, an honored patriarch, lecturing on literature, directing the library and supervising the busy reading room. To thousands of students, many of them immigrants from Europe, Professor Zachos

at Cooper Union communicated his love of freedom, his optimistic faith in humanity, his delight in ideas and words.

To the end of his life the problem of illiteracy (still unsolved in 1992) engaged his interest. Under the auspices of the "National Society for Illiterates" Zachos published in 1891 "An Address to the Friends of Education, Especially Among the Illiterate Classes." Two years before his death the tireless educator published *A Manual of Instruction of the Phonetic Typewriter*. This manual explained the typewriter that Zachos had first patented in 1876, an instrument designed to facilitate the teaching of illiterates.

For more than half a century a gifted teacher, Zachos contributed to the success of three notable pioneering experiments in American education: at Antioch College in Ohio; on Parris Island in South Carolina; and finally at Cooper Union Institute in New York. The collaborator of Horace Mann, and of Peter Cooper in New York, Zachos advanced the cause of equal education for women, blacks and the masses. American education and society continue to profit from the achievements of these experiments and from the contributions of John Zachos, Cincinnati's first Greek.

Lafcadio Hearn: A Greek not a Goth

Critics and biographers have difficulty in classifying Lafcadio Hearn, in pinning him down. He was a world traveler, folklorist, musicologist, journalist, teacher, translator, critic, story-teller, Japanologist and writer. His works have been collected in sixteen volumes. Hearn was born in Greece, the son of an Anglo-Irish father and a Greek mother. He was educated in Ireland, France and England. For most of his life he was a British subject. Baptized Patrick Lafcadio in the Greek Orthodox Church on his native island, he died as Koizumi Yakumo, a Japanese citizen, and was buried in Tokyo according to Buddhist rites. His first words were spoken in Greek, the last in Japanese. Strange and confused though his identity may seem to us, it was clear to him. Hearn always considered himself a Greek. While still a boy in Dublin, he had decided that he was "Greek Lafcadio." There is no evidence that he ever changed his mind.

Despite the many twists and contradictions of his life, this is what he remained. In a letter from New Orleans, "this enchanted City of Dreams," addressed to H. E. Krehbiel, the noted New York music critic and a friend from his Cincinnati days, Hearn wrote in 1880, "You cannot make a Goth out of a Greek, nor can you change the blood in my veins. . . ." As he had from boyhood, he chose to deny the Irish blood also present in his veins. That same year he explained his absorbing interest in French literature and Latin culture by attributing it to his

ancestry, "Being of a meridional race myself, a Greek." Given this self-identification and his residency in Cincinnati from 1869 to 1877 Lafcadio Hearn has a place in this account of Greeks in the Queen City. He arrived in Cincinnati seven years after Zachos left.

On June 27, 1850 Patrick Lafcadio Hearn was born on the Greek island of Lefkas, ancient Leucadia, in the Ionian Sea. He was the second son of Charles Bush Hearn, an Anglo-Irish officer and surgeon in the British army, stationed in the Ionian Islands that were then an English protectorate. Rosa Antonia Cassimati, the daughter of a Greek family belonging to the Ionian nobility, was his mother. She had been born on Cythera, said to have been the birthplace of Aphrodite, the southernmost of the seven Ionian Islands. When Hearn was christened in the parish church of St. Paraskevi, he received the two names, Patrick Lafcadio, that symbolize his hybrid, tragically tangled lineage.

Once in the United States, he dropped the first name, calling himself simply "Lafcadio Hearn," thereby rejecting his father and his Anglo-Irish ancestry in favor of his mother and his Greek heritage. "Lafcadio" always reminded him, and others as well, that he was Greek. Although fate separated him at an early age from Lefkas and Rosa, all his life he remained passionately attached to both.

On August 1, 1852, Patrick Lafcadio, a dark-skinned, Greek-speaking, little two year-old boy with long black hair and tiny gold rings in his ears arrived in Dublin with his mother. (The first son of Rosa and Charles Hearn had died two months after the birth of the second.) Hearn could remember very little of his native Greek island. Nevertheless, he cherished dream-like memories of it all his life. They accompanied him through childhood and through two decades of wanderings in the New World, and all the way to the Far East. In 1895, forty-three years later, when he had settled in Japan, he wrote in *Out of the East* these lines which are full of nostalgia for the lost island-paradise of Lefkas:

I have a memory of a place and magical time in which the Sun and the Moon were larger and brighter than now. . . . I know the sky was very much more blue, and nearer to the world, —. . . . The sea was alive, and used to talk,—and the Wind made me cry out for joy when it touched me. . . . And all that country and time were softly ruled by One who thought only of ways to make me happy.

Separated forever from his mother in 1854, he was haunted by what he called the "very peculiar and cruel" circumstances of her life. He spoke about his Greek mother to Mattie Foley, the mulatto whom he married in Cincinnati and later to Setsu Koizumi, his Japanese wife. He carried with him always the memory of Rosa's "dark and beautiful face—with large brown eyes like a wild deer's eyes . . ." He remembered

too that every night she had showed him how to cross his fingers "after the old Greek Orthodox fashion, and utter the words—'In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' " After Rosa Hearn left Dublin, never to return or to see her son again, the little boy imagined that the Mother of God with the divine child in her lap, pictured in the Byzantine ikon hanging on the wall of his room, was his mother holding him. The memory of his mother's Orthodox piety probably accounts for Hearn's sympathy for the Eastern branch of Christianity, a sympathy which he vehemently denied all other branches.

For eight years after his mother's return to Greece, Patrick Lafcadio lived in Dublin with Mrs. Sarah Holmes Brebane, the sister of his paternal grandmother. A wealthy childless widow and a devout convert to Catholicism, Aunt Sarah regarded him as her son and heir. Until he was twelve, young Hearn was tutored at home. Already an eager reader, one day he discovered in his aunt's library an illustrated book of Greek mythology. He at once claimed the ancient heroes and Olympian gods of Greece for his own, part of the legacy legitimately inherited from his Greek mother.

In 1862 Patrick Lafcadio was sent to a Catholic school for boys, located near Rouen in France. There he learned French. But his experience as a school boy in a foreign country provided Hearn with another lasting pain-filled memory. The following year, on September 9, 1863, he entered another school, this time in England.

He remained four years at St. Cuthbert's, a Catholic preparatory school, college and seminary near Durham. Outwardly "Paddy Hearn" but inwardly still pagan "Greek Lafcadio," he soon turned into a rebel, challenging the institution's religious teachings as well as its stifling routine. Hearn's fellow-students recalled him as being "wild as a March hare," the writer of "very respectable verses," and an "omnivorous reader." He was very popular with his classmates, who admired his free spirit and found his conversation "highly picturesque." His teachers also liked Paddy Hearn, despite his "skeptical turn of mind" and his imaginative pranks.

At age sixteen this creative and exuberant lad suffered the blow that changed him for life. In a game, a boy holding a knotted rope struck Paddy Hearn in the left eye. A severe inflammation set in and an operation in Dublin was performed. The operation failed, however, to save the sight of the wounded eye. The sightless left eye was not removed. Over the years, the right eye, burdened by the strain, became enlarged and protruded. Hearn referred to it as "mine Cyclops-eye." Henceforth Hearn was convinced that he was "horribly disfigured" and repulsive in appearance. When he returned to St. Cuthbert's after the operation, he was not the same boy. He had, writes a sympathetic biographer,

"stiffened into a self-protective unresponsiveness." All pictures taken of Lafcadio Hearn after 1866 show him in right profile, the deformed left eye hidden from the camera.

On October 28, 1867 Paddy Hearn was withdrawn from St. Cuthbert's. By this time elderly and infirm, Mrs. Brebane had fallen completely under the influence of a distant relative. Henry Molyneux had not only displaced Patrick in his aunt's affections, he had also destroyed Mrs. Brebane's fortune. There was no longer money to pay for Patrick's tuition, or any concern for his future.

At age seventeen he was dispatched to London, to live with a former maid of Mrs. Brebane, now married to a dockworker. For two years he lived such a lonely and destitute life in London that for the rest of his life Hearn feared and hated all big cities. London had given him a first lesson in dehumanizing poverty and degradation. At this time of hopeless misery young Hearn discovered and was reading Swinburne. From this poet he learned another kind of lesson, how to rebel and be "Greek."

During the spring of 1869, Patrick Lafcadio Hearn arrived in Cincinnati, friendless, half-blind and penniless. Anxious to be rid of any responsibility towards Mrs. Brebane's nephew, Molyneux had sent Hearn passage money and instructed him to go to Cincinnati. The presence of Molyneux's brother-in-law in that city determined Hearn's place of exile. Not by choice did Hearn become another early pioneer, Greek-born immigrant in Cincinnati.

Hearn, who confessed that "it was no small disadvantage in life to be 5 ft. 3 in. high," found Cincinnati a "beastly city" with "mammoth slaughter-houses, enormous rendering establishments, vast soap and candle factories, immense hog-pens and gigantic tanneries." In contrast to Cincinnati, the elfin size of everything in Japan, where he spent the last fourteen years of his life, delighted him from the start.

It was, however, in the crass metropolis on the Ohio that Lafcadio Hearn discovered his vocation. There he first cultivated and trained the talents, the passion for words that made him a person of local fame and then a notable American author of the nineteenth century, with a permanent place in the literary history of the United States.

During his first year and a half in Cincinnati Hearn experienced loneliness, poverty and despair a second time. Many years later, he described his second experience in a big city as "the wolf's side of life . . . the ugly facets of the monkey puzzle." Looking for work and a place to sleep, he wandered through the streets of Cincinnati. To earn a living, he tried being an accountant, errand-boy, mailing-clerk, proof-reader, telegraph messenger-boy, peddler of mirrors. He even became a "Boarding-house servant, lighted fires, shovelled coals, etc., in

exchange for food and privilege of sleeping on the floors of the smoking-room." Unlike the advantaged Zachos and like most of the Greek immigrants who came later to Cincinnati, Lafcadio Hearn started at the bottom.

Henry Watkin, an English printer, was Lafcadio's first friend in busy, unfriendly Cincinnati. Thirty years older than the new immigrant from England, Watkin had preceded Lafcadio "into exile forty years earlier." His print shop was, like the Public Library, a haven for Lafcadio. Twenty years later Hearn recalled that from the self-educated, intellectual Watkin he had first become acquainted "with hosts of fantastic heterodoxies." The older immigrant also gave the younger one much-needed affection. More important, he encouraged Lafcadio to write.

Meanwhile, Lafcadio was reading regularly in the Cincinnati Public Library and writing stories. Some of these appeared in journals which Hearn described as "cheap Weekly Papers, long extinct." The desperate author was never paid.

On Watkin's recommendation, the editor of a local trade journal hired Lafcadio in 1872. It was his first real job, although it did not last long. The City Directory of 1872 lists Hearn, his address, 215 Plum Street, and his occupation, "Assistant Editor, the *Trade Journal*."

On November 24 and December 1, 1872 Hearn made his journalistic debut in the Cincinnati *Enquirer*. His essay on Tennyson was the first of the many articles that he would write for that paper during the next three years. He sometimes wrote one quarter of the Sunday edition. Prowling the streets and alleys by night, the *Enquirer's* perceptive, near-sighted and half-blind reporter saw and wrote about people and conditions which no one else saw or cared to know, much less write about. Ragpickers, blacks, barmen, seamstresses, river-boatmen, Jews, Chinese laundrymen, artists' models, the city's "foreign" populations which spoke foreign tongues and lived as if "in the Fatherland"—all these stirred Hearn's endless curiosity and boundless sympathy. His vivid articles documented the fact, already twice confirmed by personal experience, that in Cincinnati, as in all big cities, "beauty is for the rich; bare walls and foul pavements and smoky skies for our poor . . . a hell of eternal ugliness and joylessness."

A regular job as staff reporter on the *Enquirer* gave him status and introduced some stability into Hearn's life. It lasted a few years, only until 1875.

The high point of Hearn's connection with the *Enquirer* was reached in 1874. By his sensational reporting of the gruesome Tanyard Murder of November 9 Hearn added bright laurels to his reputation and new subscribers to his paper. Cincinnati's acknowledged star reporter won

anew the respect and admiration of his circle of friends and colleagues. These included other young ambitious journalists: Charley Johnson of the German-American paper *Volksblatt*; Joseph S. Tunison and H. E. Krehbiel of the *Gazette*, as well as two artists, Henry F. Farny and Frank Duveneck, both of whom had drawn illustrations for the coverage of the Tanyard Murder.

Hearn and Farny were kindred, spirited young rebels. They had become acquainted when, on one of his earliest assignments for the *Enquirer*, Hearn had interviewed local painters. In his article "Our Artists," he had featured Farny. In June 1874, painter and journalist, combining their talents, launched a new weekly paper, which they called *Ye Giglampz*. It ran through nine issues and folded in August. Cincinnati could not tolerate the two editors' irreverent jibes against orthodox piety, respectability, the YMCA, greedy doctors and apostles of temperance.

The same summer as the birth and death of *Ye Giglampz* Hearn married a twenty-one year old mulatto ex-slave in a futile attempt to stabilize an uneasy relationship. Since Ohio law forbade interracial marriages, the groom lied to obtain a license for a wedding he knew to be illegal. On June 14, 1874 Lafcadio Hearn married Mattie Foley. The marriage was first kept a secret, known only to his closest friends. But in 1875 it was no longer a secret. The *Enquirer's* sensational reporter had created such a scandalous sensation of his own that he was fired from the paper.

The *Commercial* then hired Hearn, the town's ace reporter. At twenty dollars a week, he was a great bargain. Two years later, a failed "marriage" and social pressures forced Hearn's departure. Although he scoffed that Cincinnati claimed it had become another Paris, it was time for him to leave.

In 1877 Lafcadio left Cincinnati for southern climates. He went first to Louisiana and then to the West Indies, searching for warmth and color, more congenial to his Greek temperament. Except for a visit of a few hours ten years later, he never returned to Cincinnati. Yet it was in that city he had established the patterns that characterized the remaining twenty-seven years of his life.

For a decade (1877-1887) Hearn lived in New Orleans, his "Paradise of the South," a change from cold "beastly" Cincinnati. The first months were like the two years in London and the first year and a half in the Queen City. Lafcadio, now twenty-seven years old, experienced for the third time bitter loneliness and poverty. He was again desperate, friendless and unemployed. In addition, weakened by months of lean living, he succumbed to the dengue or breakbone fever. Fortunately for Hearn there were Greeks in New Orleans.

In cosmopolitan New Orleans "Greek Lafcadio" found "many Greeks," sailors, laborers, and even beautiful "maidens with faces to remind you of the gracious vase paintings of antiquity." So far as I know, Hearn does not mention Holy Trinity, the city's Greek Orthodox Church. Founded in New Orleans in 1863, it is the oldest Greek church in the United States.

Hearn's first friend in New Orleans was a Greek, Professor Alexander Dimitry (1805-1883), a scholar, former diplomat and head of the Board of Education. Member of a distinguished Greek-American family, Dimitry was then a venerable figure. "I never met a finer old man," Hearn wrote. Dimitry's face reminded him "of portraits of stone of Aristophanes and Sophocles." Dimitry introduced the newcomer to the editor of the *New Orleans Republican*. Although Major Robinson had no job for Hearn, he generously opened his library to him. As earlier in London and Cincinnati, in times of distress books again comforted St. Cuthbert's "omnivorous reader."

A year after his arrival in the Creole city, Hearn's life style repeated that of his Cincinnati period. In 1878 he resumed his career in journalism, first as associate editor of the *Item* (June 1878-December 1881) and then at the *Times-Democrat* (1881-1887), which he helped to make into a distinguished paper.

Hearn exulted in the color and verve of life in the Latin city on the Mississippi. Its European past suggested to Hearn bonds with his own origins. An experienced investigator and reporter, Hearn once again immersed himself in studying the city's diverse peoples, their cuisine, proverbs, folklore, music and ways of living. His articles on New Orleans reflect the charm of that city and Hearn's pleasure in it.

Nevertheless, even at the height of his success as a journalist, both in Cincinnati and in New Orleans, Hearn was never content with newspaper writing: "Journalism is not really a literary profession." He regarded it as just a way of earning a livelihood.

In the Queen City, having found at the Public Library the latest French literature, Lafcadio had seriously begun his "literary profession" by translating contemporary French writers. His Cincinnati friends remembered how "In the small hours of the morning . . . he could be seen under merely a poor jet of gas, with his one useful eye close to a book and manuscript, translating Gautier." Already underway in Cincinnati, Hearn's translation of Gautier's *One of Cleopatra's Nights and Other Fantastic Romances* was published in 1882.

During the decade of residence in New Orleans Hearn continued to translate French masters. He considered them important to the realization of "my ancient dream of a poetical prose,—compositions to satisfy an old Greek ear. . . ." At this time he produced over two

hundred translations, including the first English translations of contemporary writers like Loti and Maupassant. According to one scholar, Hearn's translations of Gautier, Flaubert and Anatole France "remain English classics never surpassed by those of his successors."

In May 1887 Hearn resigned from the *Times-Democrat*. By this time some of his work had appeared in the North. And critics had praised him as a serious American writer. Moreover, he had grown "weary" of New Orleans, "being," in his own words, "a civilized nomad." Lafcadio was still searching for a "magical" place "full of fantastic light." The island-born nomad thought he would find it in Martinique, a French island in the Caribbean. En route to New York in June 1887, he paid a brief afternoon's visit to his friend Watkin in Cincinnati. He never saw either again.

From July 1887 to May 1889 Hearn's address was St. Pierre, Martinique. This small tropical city provided a quiet home to the writer who described himself as "a tropical being in mind and physique." For two years he lived simply, enchanted by the flamboyant natural beauty of the island, as well as by its inhabitants of mixed color, his neighbors on a poor street. In two books, *Two Years in the French West Indies* and *Youma*, both published in 1890, Hearn, always respectful of people—"No heart-beat is cheap"—pays tribute to the nobility of everyday life, which he had observed first on the streets and levees of Cincinnati, then in the Creole quarters of New Orleans and now in Martinique.

The plain folk of Japan were the last on whom Hearn would lavish his passion for people. Before leaving for Japan in 1890, Hearn had considered going to Greece to make stories out of the folk-lore of the islands. The land of his birth, however, was not lucky enough to receive again her nineteenth-century Odysseus born on Lefkas, adjacent to the island-kingdom of Homer's wandering hero.

On April 4, 1890 Lafcadio Hearn, an American writer on assignment for *Harper's Magazine*, arrived in Japan: "Here I am in the land of dreams, surrounded by strange gods. I seem to have known and loved them before sometime." Fourteen years later, on September 26, 1904, he died in Tokyo, a Japanese citizen named Koizumi Yokumo. His wife, three sons and a daughter survived him.

In January 1891 Hearn had married Koizumi Setsu, the twenty-two-year-old daughter of a samurai family in Matsue, the small medieval town where he had begun his new teaching career. Setsu brought tranquillity into her husband's life. And Herun-san relaxed, enjoying "the friendship of marriage" and his Japanese family, "my little smiling world of old ways." In order to safeguard the rights of his wife and children Hearn had been adopted by her family in 1895. Assuming their

name, he had been naturalized that same year.

At his death Hearn was mourned by the Japanese people whom he had served as an extraordinary cultural intermediary, explaining them and the West to each other. By his writings the island-born Hearn had interpreted to Westerners the island-country of Japan. From the day of his arrival Hearn had fallen in love with Japan: "the stranger finds himself thinking of fairyland." For fourteen years he tirelessly explored the villages of Japan, its shrines, temples and gods, the everyday lives of fishermen, laborers and outcasts, their traditions, customs and beliefs. From this insightful friend and gifted author came a dozen books on Japan, the first, a two-volume work appearing in 1894, the last in 1905. Many of these are now being reprinted.

By his teaching in the secondary schools and colleges of Japan for thirteen years Hearn interpreted the mysterious West to the Japanese. Within several months of his arrival in Japan, he had been appointed to teach English in two schools in Matsue, a town on a remote coast of Honshu. From November 1891 to October 1894 he taught in a large government college in Kumamoto in Kyushu, the southernmost island of Japan. After an interlude as editor of the *Kobe Chronicle*, although he loathed the prospect of life in a big city, Hearn accepted an appointment to the Imperial University of Tokyo. He was Professor of English Literature there until his resignation in March 1903. All of Hearn's Japanese students had idolized their teacher. After his death they assembled and published his lectures which they had copied verbatim. It was their final tribute to Hearn.

The Japanese revere the memory of Lafcadio Hearn. In the United States scholars analyze his work and place him among the significant American writers of the nineteenth century. Hearn, however, considered himself neither Japanese nor American. Had he not been tied down by obligations to his family, the "civilized nomad" would have left Japan too, just as he had left Cincinnati, New Orleans, Martinique.

Repeatedly identifying himself as Greek, Lafcadio Hearn credited his ideals and talents to his mother. To Rosa Antonia Cassimati he owed his character as well as his literary achievements: "Whatever there is good in me . . . came from that dark race soul. . . . My love of right, my hate of wrong, my admiration for what is beautiful or true, my capacity for faith in man or woman, my sensitiveness to artistic things, which gives me what ever little *success I have*—even that language-power . . . came from Her." Since his career as a writer began in Cincinnati (1869-1877), the Queen City numbers Lafcadio Hearn as one of her most fascinating Greek-born adopted sons.