

ὄριστε and buyrun, *περαστικά* and geçmiş olsun, *τρώγω ξύλο* and dayak yemek etc. 5) H. Hennepf: «Der Kampf um das Prooimion im Xiphilinischen Homiliar» (pp. 281-299). Contrary to the earlier views of Erhard and Bones, the author believes, à propos of the prooimion of the *Ἑρμηνευτικαὶ διδασκαλῖαι* of Patriarch John Xiphilinus, that: «Solange jedoch die Entscheidung in der Verfasserfrage aussteht, werder wir gut daran tun, dem vorliegenden Homiliar das Adjektiv xiphilinisches zu belassen». 6) M. Kiel: «Yenice Vardar (Vardar Yenicesi-Giannitsa), A forgotten Turkish Cultural Centre in Macedonia of the 15th and 16th Centuries» (pp. 300-329). The article is concerned with the town of Giannitsa which was founded in the 15th century by Ghazi Evrenos Bey, and with its Islamic buildings. 7) M. A. Lindenburg: «Le Parfum Royal de Sappho (pp. 330-339). Interpretation of the phrase *μύρω βασιληῖω* in the 94th fragment of Sappho» not as royal perfume, but as a scent distilled from the well-known herb basil (*Ocimum Basilici*). 8) K. Rosemond: «Casimir Oudin» (pp. 340-345). Short notice on the French historian and philologist C. Oudin, who spent the later years of his life working in Leiden (1690-1717).

K. MITSAKIS

Edmund Keeley & Peter Bien, editors, *Modern Greek Writers*, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 266.

Justifiably, ever since its beginning our century has often been called Hellenistic, the term implying the fact that foundations kept being shaken, old values kept being questioned, and questionings kept growing to points of no limit. We must by now have reached the rock-bottom of things. The masks have been pulled completely away, whatever pretenses have been revealed, and we contemplate chaos face to face.

If this is decay, times of decay happen to be times of fermentation as well. Where something dies, something is also hopefully born, hard as the labor may be. Yeats's *gyres* made the point accurately enough. We may find some comfort in the fact that, no matter still how violent, the shrinkage of our globe has drawn us more closely together, culturally (for a culture *to be* shaped) and socially (after the solution of the extant problems) — even though the contraction has caused us no little tension and discomfort: we have considerably lost our individualizing differences and distinctions.

We have passionate interfusions, passionate courtings of para-rational Asia and dark Africa and a great deal more. There are exports and imports everywhere of all possible panaceas. The taste of our classical Greco-Roman inheritance seems to have lost most of its appeal. Exotic herbs of all kinds and flavors are bacchically poured into our big cauldron, and something must be getting brewed under the magic of our discordant incantations.

Of the literatures that have enjoyed a steady growth of popularity abroad in the last fifteen or twenty years, modern Greek is one, and one is inclined to wonder whether the real son is a kind of «exoticism». For the most part, the interest may still be limited to the four or five or six authors made available in English or other translations, but gradually other figures enter the limelight. A question might rise about whether their appeal is strictly individual, or substantially fortified and enhanced by their common origin. The manners and messages of Cavafy and Seferis reveal striking affinities, but also great differences of all kinds, and there are more differences than affinities between the two of them and Kazantzakis. Elytis is another Greek world, and Ritsos still another, just to mention these few. Does the not-so-well-acquainted foreign reader, among the American college faculty and youth in

particular, own his affirmative response to the artistic virtues, the ideological message, or the emotional stand of these authors, or to all these plus the undefinable feeling that all these dissimilar voices are bearers in common of what might be called modern Greece as an entity in its variety?

The not knowing outsider won't necessarily be made aware by these authors that modern Greek literature was born in a battle of survival, liberation, rebirth; that it was born by a combative spirit which had known much suffering and deprivation and struggled hard to gain or regain and shape its world. At its most substantial and best, modern Greek literature was not born simply as literature, but as the immediate offspring and part of life itself and the battle for life. Its founder, its creator was the unknown, anonymous poet-chronicler who created what he needed as a solacing outburst of his grim truth and as a companion, and whose voice was both individual and common, the voice of a man expressing a race's dire experience, the voice of a race expressing the individual as well as the universal soul. In spite of all that has been said about Greek individualism of all times and the undeniably high prices it has paid, few other poetries on earth have made such an extensive use of the first person plural, indicating the sharing in suffering and in hope, in failure and in accomplishment.

From slavery to freedom, then to painful reconstruction through self-search and discovery of racial precedents, resources, objectives, hopes, historical destinies, current realities; and almost simultaneously, from forced dark isolation to contacts to help span the gap of four nightmarish and standstill centuries; these were the stages. With often some romantic attachment to a rediscovered past, especially as infiltrated through the sophistication of the French Enlightenment, the autochthonous and folk elements were successively tinged and modified by the imports of Romanticism, Parnassianism, Symbolism, and Surrealism, as well as by the speedily changing current Greek reality and circumstance.

The unavoidable dependence on externals, in the updating of awareness, helped Greek literature pass gradually from an *ethographic*, parochial, nationalistic stage of self-acquaintance to the stage where a still substantially Greek inspiration was to produce a literature of value beyond the national boundaries. To this day, the main foreign importer there is still France. Whether her imports have always been fruitful and constructive is another matter. Greece could not perhaps have wished a better schooling, yet let it be said that there are marked differences between the physical, intellectual, and emotional climate and the genius of middle-European France and mediterranean Greece. Critics have, consequently, often regretted the failure in acclimation and assimilation in Greece of French elements and movements where they remained, to some extent, out of place and tune, foreign bodies within the developing body of Greek literature. There were, however, the highly gifted masters, Solomos, Palamas, Gryparis, Seferis, Elytis, and some few others, who were able to marvelously acclimate, fructify, and hellenize a wide variety of foreign borrowings. There was quite a wealth in the three millenia of culture and experience to stand as an inexhaustible source, to be «made new», and to enrich substantially a modern conscience and awareness.

It is, perhaps, this anything-but-intellectual cultural awareness of a long and live inheritance of wide variety and modern relevance that has stamped its mark on much of modern Greek literature. Consciously or intuitively, Greek writers have expressed a first-hand recognition of their need of and responsibility to preserve a deeply meaningful continuity. Consciously or unconsciously, they have been stirred by the feeling that the present is, in large part, only a later stage of a long past which has shaped it by mythical, legendary, historical precedents. And this may be one of the strength of this literature, that helped it gain its wide modern appeal. In a «hellenistic» time of change and exchange, of instability, insecurity, and conflicting directions, Greek literature happens to carry a world of its own

with it, homogeneous in its variety, questioning but within a framework of weighty and meaningful foundations.

The opportunity of the above remarks was given by a significant recent publication of Princeton University Press, under the title *Modern Greek Writers*, edited by Professors Edmund Keeley and Peter Bien. It contains the papers read at the symposium sponsored by the Modern Greek Studies Association on the campus of Princeton University in the Fall of 1969. The topic of that symposium was «Modern Greek Literature and Its European Background». The speakers in it were scholars gathered from various parts of the United States, from France, England, Switzerland, Italy, and Greece. The authors dealt with were Kazantzakis, Solomos, Kalvos, Matesis, Palamas, Cavafy, Seferis, and Elytis.

This publication deserves to be greeted as an outstanding landmark for sundry reasons. It is, first of all, the first intellectual common product-in-print of the activities of the Modern Greek Studies Association founded in 1967 with the general purpose of «fostering and advancing modern Greek studies, particularly in the United States». Of its birth and growth Professor Bien, in his excellent Introduction, gives full account. It was born not only to be the directional, encouraging, and helping nucleus, uniting the previously rather haphazard and divided activities, but also to supplement constructively these activities with the aura and weight of scholarship, and so help modern Greek literature, as a recognized and established field of study, enter, in the New World for the first time, universities and scholarly institutions and communities. It was born to unite and coordinate the intellectual activities and interests not merely of a Greek minority abroad, but of all those who, regardless of origin and nationality, have in common an interest in, love for, and devotion to modern Greek culture in general.

One is admiring the perception and familiarity with which Professor Bien, a «foreign Greek», reviews in his Introduction the phenomenon of modern Greek letters as a fusion, «a merger of the foreign with the indigenous, the cultivated with the popular», as this view is amply illustrated by the individual studies in this volume, the merit of each of which needs not be praised individually. They all have in common the advantage of viewing Greek literature — its standards, claims, and expectations — from the objective distance of an international and modern vantage point. An impressive accomplishment, this foundational collection of studies, of a subject of fast-growing interest, is indispensable to any sophisticated reader in the field, for it is an advances initiation into the core of that literature's involvements.

Fairleigh Dickinson University

ANDONIS DECAVALLES

C. P. Cavafy, *Passions and Ancient Days*, New Poems Translated and Introduced by Edmund Keeley and George Savidis, New York, The Dial Press, 1971, pp. 68.

C. P. Cavafy, *Selected Poems*, Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 97.

Constantine P. Cavafy (1863-1933) is one of the few modern Greek poets whose work has achieved international fame. Next to the works of George Seferis and Nikos Kazantzakis, Cavafy's major poetry has already appeared in book form in four different English translations, two French ones, one German, and one Italian. Individual pieces by this great Alexandrian artist had started appearing in the non-Greek literary press, in the original or in translation, as early as 1924, when E. M. Forster persuaded T. S. Eliot to publish «Ithaka» in his influential *Criterion*.