

Austrian leaders encouraged the Rumanians in their delusion with half-promises about self-determination and the "satisfaction of their just grievances." However, when the Rumanian peasant soldiers were no longer necessary for the defense of the Monarchy, even the half-promises were forgotten. Iancu, from his contact with Austrian military commanders, perceived early the duplicity of his "allies." They never genuinely co-operated with Iancu and other Rumanian prefects because they regarded the Rumanian peasant with disdain and distrust and were, consequently, little inclined to supply him with provisions and weapons.

Around the figure of Avram Iancu Professor Dragomir has woven an engaging narrative of the revolution of 1848 in Transylvania. He has made wide use of both Rumanian and Hungarian sources and has preserved an admirable objectivity. *Avram Iancu* is a major contribution to the interpretative literature on the revolution of 1848 and deserves the attention of every scholar who wishes to understand its course in Eastern Europe.

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Pandelis Prevelakis, *The Sun of Death*, translated by Philip Sherrard.
London: John Murray, 1965. 206 pp.

This is a translation, praiseworthy for the naturalness of its style, of a novel about life in Crete during the first world war. In 1960 it was awarded the prize in Athens as the best novel of the year. The story is relatively short. Yet it compellingly grips the reader's mind and heart with its scenes of life —and death— on the island which as one of western civilisation's cradles is a very fit setting for events which have "the timelessness of any classic." As in an ancient Greek tragedy, the plot moves inexorably onwards to the murder of Aunt Rousaki in the novel's last two paragraphs just as she said "I heard there's no killing in holy week." It would be hard to find a tale in world literature that could more deeply sear the feelings.

The claims made (on the dust-jacket) for the greatness of Yorgaki's Aunt are fully justified. She is the novel's heroine, the "one unique sun" around whom the local life revolves—"a character worthy to rank with the greatest in her completeness and in the lasting impression she makes." She shows the penetrative imagination of poetic genius as when she tells of how the South Wind was sent by God against the North: "Blowing gently it melted the palace and only the tears of the North Wind were

left, flowing down into the plain like a river . . ." (p. 79). Compare also her superb story telling (122-4) and her modest suggestion that the tale belongs to an oral tradition which is "thousands of years old" (p. 124). Truly Mistress Demeter is an age-old Greek character. Yet the treatment of Eleusinian folklore here is charmingly fresh and natural.

Scenes of horror are to be expected in a novel that deals with war. The actual carnage of battle and the torpedoing of the *Berengaria* are left to the reader's imagination. Instead of that we are presented with the tearing to pieces of a greyhound with litter. The humaneness of Aunt Roussaki in contrast with the brutal indifference of the hunters and the monk in this savage scene (p. 62) is matched with her compassion on other occasions—in her view of the Bulgarian prisoners (p. 27) and in her trying to gather together food for the sick children (p. 182). It is this essential compassion which emerges at the end of a dialogue with Loiso which starts with the observation (p. 188). "Man's a cork. He can't stay down in the depths where his despair's taken him."

A typical Greek device, the rhetorical figure called *prosopopoeia*, is used very effectively when the Aunt talks to the tree as she prunes it (p. 39). There is much else, too, to remind the reader of the primitive days of ancient Greece. "It was as if some sinister bird was pecking at her bowels" (p. 45). There is the copper coin as fare for the bull in its passage to the underworld (p. 47). Nemesis follows the shedding of blood "all the rivers of earth can't wash the hands of a murderer" (p. 51). The divination by fig-leaf looks very old (p. 64). The boiled death-feast of wheat (p. 82), the Orthodox *kollyva*, can be paralleled in the ancient cults which Christianity supplanted. The introduction of an Ariadne story (p. 111) is a very effective application of classical mythology to modern events which have their setting in Crete.

The lamentation by Spithouraina's relatives (p. 54) is typically Greek. So is the picture mentioned on p. 65, so reminiscent for the present reviewer of similar mural decorations to be seen in the monasteries on Mount Athos. In short, the novel possesses not merely the "rare simplicity, beauty and compelling strenght" claimed for it but also an abundance of the magic atmosphere that allures the stranger to Greece and particularly to age-old Crete.