

of the various artistic currents existing in Macedonia before the time of the Palaeologues took place¹.

The decisive role that Thessalonike played for a long period of time as the center of art in the Balkans, and more precisely in Macedonia, gave to the artistic tradition of this region the character of a centralized art, whose appearance in various places is marked by distinct similarities. It is in the light of this "koine" in Macedonia art that we must see and understand the similarities in the popular art of the various peoples of this region, and not in the light of racial or national homogeneity.

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Robert Payne, *The Splendor of Greece: A Journey into the Sunlight*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1960. Pp. 200 & 24 reproductions.

Students and devotees of Greece and the Greeks are already familiar with Robert Payne's interest in things Greek from two of his previous publications, *The Holy Fire* (1957) and *The Gold of Troy* (1959). Both these books have done much to enhance the Greek educational cause among the English-speaking public and to make known to this same public the achievements of the Greeks by an author whose experience and outlook have truly been international. *The Splendor of Greece* is a beautifully written book that strives to introduce the reader to the land of light. This land of light author Payne confesses he can find nowhere else in all his experience—neither in Europe, nor in Africa, nor in Asia, and certainly not in the New World. This Greek light is "unlike any other light on the surface of the earth" (p. 1).

This light has to be seen to be believed. Anyone who has visited Greece knows that Robert Payne is absolutely correct when he characterizes this light as a fundamental fact in Greek history and life:

"There are places in Greece which seem to have been made of crystallized light so intense and pure that it seems more real than the objects it embraces, as though light itself had form and shape and substance. There is a moment at dusk when everything becomes bathed in a pale transparent light, in a pure limpid glow, which is so theatrical that you feel you could leap into the sky and go swimming there, and this is especially true of the cities near the sea and the islands of the Aegean, which seem to be no more than jumping off places into the habitable sky" (p. 3).

Robert Payne sees Greece as a land of light, a land that was blessed by divine visitation, a land whose glory can be measured by the amount of light. There have been periods of darkness, but the Greeks have always looked to the light for inspiration and progress.

1. André Xyngopoulos, *Thessalonique et la Peinture Macédonienne*, (Athènes, 1955), p. 25 and passim.

It has been difficult to describe Payne's book as a travel book, though this is certainly the way the book will be listed. It is not a guide book, though the reader will find useful facts here and there. It is not a history book nor an art history, though the book does contain historical and art information. Rather it is a series of brilliant essays on Mycenae, Phaistos, Olympia, Delos, Myconos, Cos, Delphi, Aegina, Athens, Sounion, Daphni, Eleusis, Corinth, Patmos, and Rhodes. The list itself indicates clearly enough that *The Splendor of Greece* is concerned with a limited number of Greek sites. It is of course regrettable that the author did not extend his travels to northern Greece, with its immense archaeological material from the classical times, like Pella, and from the Byzantine period, with the churches in Thessalonike, Castoria and the monastic communities in mount Athos.

Payne is interested in introducing Greece relevantly to the reader of our own time. In the Greeks author Payne sees a people with a closeness to divinity, a people from whom we can learn to perfect ourselves and our civilization: "This vision of perfect beauty is the particular contribution of Greece to the Christian tradition. Without it we are nothing. The vision implies that men should live abundantly and nobly in cities that are worthy of them, and with a sense of awe before the ghostly beauty of the earth" (p. 194).

The Greeks saw holiness everywhere. Robert Payne believes that holiness must come again, and for this reason men in their determination to find the source of holiness, the light, will always return to the splendor of Greece. Robert Payne has helped the reader of modern times along the way back to the light.

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Anthony Heckstall-Smith and Vice-Admiral H. T. Baillie-Grohman, *Greek Tragedy 1941*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1961. Pp. 238. 12 plates.

The title of this book might at first well be misleading. It has nothing to do with ancient classical drama but is concerned with the British evacuation of Greece in 1941. It is called a tragedy because it seemed fated that the British would be unable to help the Greeks in sufficient numbers at the right time to withstand the Nazi onslaught. It was a tragedy because at the time the mechanized Nazi army was coming to the rescue of Mussolini's beleaguered forces, when the Nazis invaded Greece on April 6, 1941, British troops were still arriving to help the Greeks. The British Navy was planning evacuation even as and before the troops were landing.

The surrender of the Greek army under General Papagos spelled disaster for the British forces which suddenly found themselves compelled to withdraw or perish. Vice-Admiral Baillie-Grohman, twenty years after the event, with Anthony Heckstall-Smith, saw fit to record "Operation Demon", as the British evacuation was called in code.