

*Ἀνθολογία Συγχρόνων Σλοβένων Ποιητῶν* (=Anthology of Contemporary Slovenian Poetry), Translated into Modern Greek by Marijan Tavčar, Editions «Ἀδελκάτη Ὦρα», Athens 1972, pp. 80.

Translations contribute more than anything to a better understanding of other peoples. Almost everything important in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish literature is translated into Modern Greek, yet we practically know nothing about the literary production of our neighbouring countries, that is Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey etc. Whenever therefore a certain work of literature from the Balkan countries is translated into our language, it is accepted with gratitude. So being the case we should be grateful to Marijan Tavčar, who has compiled and presented in a pretty little book twenty six poets of Slovenia. I am now very sorry to say that Tavčar's work does not help us to make the acquaintance of Slovenian poetry whose richness and signifiante we only begin to suspect. His book is creepled by certain basic weaknesses.

Instead of a short but essential and condensed introduction to Slovenian poetry there is an extremely brief preface, mainly full of acknowledgements, which does not assist the reader to see where Slovenian poetry stands to-day. As far as the Greek translation is concerned I am also very sorry to say that it is a failure. Mr. Tavčar's knowledge of Modern Greek is very good indeed but this does not qualify him to translate from Slovenian into Greek. I understand that he is an excellent translator from Modern Greek into Slovenian, but Slovenian is his mother tongue and he has the feeling for it. To translate from Slovenian into Greek is an altogether different thing. He should not have taken the risk. His Greek is often marked by grammatical and syntactical errors: τοῦ μέλλοντος ζωῆ (p. 18), πλαταγιαζει (p. 39), δεύτερα (p. 77) etc. On the whole his style is poor, awkward and sometimes funny: σὰν χαμένα σου ὄνειρα (p. 20), ὅπου ψάχνω τὸ σερνικοβότανο τῆς ἐκπληξῆς (p. 39), ἡ Σίβυλλα καμώνεται (p. 40), εἶχε ἐκδοθεῖ (i.e. the poet) στίς παρακάτω συλλογές (p. 52) προγευματίζω σέ μία κανονισμένη ἀγκαλιά (p. 72) and so on. There is nothing poetic in this Anthology but only a prosaic rendering of the Slovenian prototypes which do not function as poetry in their Greek form. Yet there are certain poems which in spite how poor the translation is, make an impression upon the reader, for instance Gradnik's «Eros-Death», Kocbek's «Prayer», Klopcic's «The three desires of a child», Zlobec's «Evening», Minatti's «The two of us», Zajc's «Dead things» and some others.

Mr. Tavčar had a chance to present his country's poetry to the Greek readers but I am afraid that he was involved in a very difficult job and that he overestimated his strength. He should have asked for the assistance of some native Greek and it is very strange indeed that he has not done so. What I do not understand is how his Greek publishers, D. Vlachoyannis and P. Panayotounis (who are both poets and who «ἐπεμελήθησαν», i.e. they took care of the Anthology, according to the note at the back of the book), have not protected and prevented Mr. Tavčar from this failure. To me they are more responsible for it than Mr. Tavčar, who should have better advisors in his literary projects.

K. MITSAKIS

Zygmunt Kubiak, *Antologia Poezji Nowogreckiej*, Warsaw, Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, no date of publication, pp. 210.

The interest in modern Greek literature is rapidly growing every day all over the world. It is now generally recognized that there is a literary renaissance in modern Greece, particu-

larly since 1930. People abroad who have read the prose of Kazantzakis or the poetry of Kavafy and Seferis begin to realize that if Greece can offer to the modern world three great writers standing at the top of the pyramid, the solid and broad basis of that pyramid must also be exciting and important. The present Anthology published in Poland is one of the many proofs of the internationally growing interest in modern Greek literature.

This very handsome volume is accompanied by a long introduction (pp. 7-23) written by Z. Kubiak who has also compiled the texts and provided the book with notes about the poets and comments on some of the poems. The introduction proves to be very short for a poetry spanning ten centuries, beginning, that is, with the acritic folksongs and ending with Odysseas Elytis; it mostly deals with the development of the Greek language throughout the ages and the author only speaks *en passant* about poetry.

The Anthology opens with a sonnet (p. 27) from the early XVIIIth century (1708) collection called «Flowers of Piety» but neither is the poem of high literary merit nor is its attribution to Andreas Myaris safe.

It is remarkable though that the Anthology is far from being representative of modern Greek poetry because apart from the 12 folksongs that have been compiled (pp. 35-48) what belongs to modern Greek poetry proper is disproportionate: Poets like Solomos, Sikelianos and Elytis are represented by only one poem, an exception being made for Palamas who is represented by three poems that are not among his best. The rest of the Anthology is then devoted to Cavafy (33 poems) and Seferis (34 poems). The Polish reader thus hardly becomes acquainted with modern Greek poetry when so many important poets are misrepresented or have been left out completely. My knowledge of the Polish language is so limited that I cannot speak about the quality of Kubiak' translations but I hope that the Polish scholar has been more successful there.

K. MITSAKIS

*Blue Guide: Greece*, edited by Stuart Rossiter, London, Ernest Benn Ltd., and Chicago, Rand Mc Nally and Co., 1973, pp. 768 with Atlas of Greece, street Atlas of Athens and 94 Maps and Plans.

The Blue Guides series is internationally known for its handsome and reliable volumes offering not only practical information about transportation, routes and accomodation but also a first class brief historical and cultural background for each place. The present volume no doubt will prove very helpful both to ordinary tourists and to scholars who come to Greece to spend their vacation and to study Greek civilization over four millenia.

K. MITSAKIS

*Merian*, Das Monatsheft der Städte und Landschaften im Hoffmann and Campe Verlag, Hamburg, vol. 25, 12 (1972), pp. 132: *Makedonien und Athosklöster*.

This issue of the German monthly periodical «Merian» is dedicated to Macedonia and Mt. Athos. It is a beautifully illustrated issue with articles written by mostly German and some Greek authors including the distinguished novelist J. M. Panayotopoulos. The articles refer mostly to Macedonia but also to Thrace, to the capital of Northern Greece, Thessaloniki, and to other smaller towns and places rich in history, monuments and natural attraction: Kavala, Thasos, Samothrace, Samarina, Platamon, Chalcidice, Mt. Athos etc.

«Merian» is a periodical addressed to the general reader, and the above articles, well written and fascinating, are therefore not scholarly contributions but of a descriptive and informative character. It is a many-sided presentation of Macedonia covering a wide range of interests: history, landscape, local feasts (such as for example the extraordinary «anasteneria»), monuments, everyday life, folksongs and folkdances and the like. Everything is written with objectivity and at the same time with affection, a difficult balance admirably achieved by the German authors.

Macedonia is a province of Greece that has gone through many adventures and misfortunes throughout the centuries. To-day after many bitter disputes and international treaties the situation has cleared and peaceful life and co-operation has been established in this part of the Balkan Peninsula. «Since 1923», remarks Georg Mergl, «Greek Macedonia has had a purely Greek population and almost the same boundaries as had the state of the Macedonian kings before Alexander the Great» (p. 16).

K. MITSAKIS

*Modern Greek Poetry, From Cavafis to Elytis.* Translation, Introduction and Notes by Kimon Friar. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973. xx+780 pages.

The artistic and cultural merits of Greek poetry written during the post-classical, hellenistic, medieval, Byzantine, and Renaissance periods of European history have finally started attracting the attention of literary scholars and historians in this country, long after they had attracted German, French, British, Russian and other intellectuals and critics.

Modern and contemporary Greek verse, however, has fared much better with the English-speaking public. A number of books of modern Greek verse in English translations have been published in the last fifteen years or so, and several dozen literary and scholarly magazines have been publishing periodically Greek poetry in translation in the United States alone, since the 1950's. The British magazines *Agenda* (1969) and *Modern Poetry in Translation* (1969), and the American *The Atlantic Monthly* (1955), *Chicago Review* (1969), *Micromegas* (1971), *Arion's Dolphin* (1972), *Boundary 2* (1972), and *The Literary Review* (1973) have dedicated whole issues to modern Greek poetry and literature in general. This unique phenomenon for a small country is certainly due to the high quality of this poetry, as well as to the talent, conscientious work, and personal sacrifice of its various translators. The most talented, prolific, and successful is probably Kimon Friar, translator of Nikos Kazantzakis's monumental *The Odyssey; A Modern Sequel* (1958) and of several other Greek texts, and the author of numerous scholarly articles and reviews, plus textbooks.

In *Modern Greek Poetry* Mr. Friar has collected some 450 of the best and most representative lyrics and passages by thirty major Greek poets born up to 1912. These artists have been judiciously classed in five more or less homogeneous groups on the basis of aesthetic affinities, poetic idiosyncracies, and social ideologies. Under the heading «Forerunners and Traditionalists» Mr. Friar presents Constantine Cavafis, Angelos Sikelianos, Nikos Kazantzakis, Kostas Varnalis, Kostas Ouranis, Kostas Kariotakis, and Takis Papatsonis. Under «Traditions and Transitions» is presented the work of some less well known artists—some of whom are erudite critics as well: Alexander Baras, Alexander Matsas, Nikos Kavadhias, D.I. Antoniou, I.M. Panayotopoulos, Pandelis Prevelakis, George Sarandaris, and Andreas Karandonis. The group titled «The Turning Point and the Surrealists» offers sampled of the work of George Seferis, Nicolas Calas, Andreas Embiricos, Nikos Engonopoulos, Nikos Gatsos, and Odysseus Elytis. «The Social Poets» includes lyrics by Yannis Ritsos—Greece's