

work is not fully presented by the inclusion of photographs of equal quality of the frescoes after their cleaning.

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Stratis Myrivilis, *Life in the Tomb*, translated by Peter Bien, published for Dartmouth College by the University Press of New England, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1977, pp. 325.

The most celebrated novel by Stratis Myrivilis, *Life in the Tomb*, is finally available in English translation. Although most critics consider the novella *Vasilis Arvanitis* (1943) to be Myrivilis's greatest artistic achievement, *Life in the Tomb* is by far the most popular of his works in Greece. Judging by the number of editions and printings it has gone through, it may even be the single most successful Greek novel.

The first large-scale work by Myrivilis, *Life in the Tomb* has been described as the beginning of the 'trilogy of the war', which includes *The Schoolmistress with the Golden Eyes* (1933, English translation by Philip Sherrard, 1964) and *The Mermaid Madonna* (1949, English translation by Abbot Rich, 1959). The phrase 'trilogy of the war', used primarily by 'Estia', his publisher, may mislead the unwary by appearing to claim a structural unity among these works that does not in fact exist. In reality, these are three separate novels by the same author in the same style—a magnificent though often verbose demotic—employing three separate protagonists, each living in different historical circumstances and each involved with different issues. Sergeant Anthony Kostoulas of *Life in the Tomb* keeps a journal of his thoughts and experiences as he undergoes trench warfare in the Balkans; Leonis Drivas of *The Schoolmistress with the Golden Eyes* tries to come to terms with a now-peaceful world after the horrors of the Asia Minor Disaster; Smaragdi, the disquietingly beautiful girl of *The Mermaid Madonna*, grows to adulthood as the refugee community of which she is a part gradually adjusts to the loss of the Anatolian homeland. Neither of the two later novels of the triptych has the power and the eloquence of *Life in the Tomb*. Both have flaws, although the aesthetic and philosophical problems of *The Mermaid Madonna* seem to be pitiless, while these of *The Schoolmistress with the Golden Eyes* are not. *Life in the Tomb*, if one is willing to forgive Myrivilis his occasional confusions and his frequent prolixities, is flawless.

A work like *Life in the Tomb* (1930), had it been available in English immediately after being published in Greece, would have been favorably compared to similar works in the other European languages, novels like *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Paths of Glory*, *The Good Soldier Schweik*, *Under Fire* and *Farewell to Arms* that have left their marks on the post-war culture of the West. Greeks frequently complain about their nation's 'cultural lag', but in the case of Myrivilis this certainly does not apply, for his novel, virtually contemporaneous with the above, is every bit as good as they. The phrase does not apply to Ilias Venezis's superb *Number 31,328*, either, for if it had been available in English translation soon after it was published in 1931, it would have anticipated (by virtually a decade and a half!) the concentration camp fiction that began to appear in Europe and America during the later 1940s. The novel, incidentally, is still not available in English.

Life in the Tomb has waited much too long to find an American publisher. It is ironic, indeed, that this most interesting of all of Myrivilis's work would be published, not by a commercial house (as were the other two novels of the 'trilogy') but by a university press. Clearly, the commercial publishers nowadays felt that this novel about trench warfare in the Balkans

during World War I is not trendy enough and sure to lose money, particularly since the previously published novels did not have the financial success hoped for them.

Peter Bien, who has distinguished himself as a neo-Hellenist with his work on Kazantzakis and Cavafy, is also a translator of note, having produced excellent English versions of *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Saint Francis*, and *Report to Greco*.

The prose style Bien uses to translate *Life in the Tomb* is somewhat less idiomatic than the original, but this is certainly due to the language of Myrivilis, which is as difficult to translate adequately into English prose as that of Palamas is into poetry. Bien, however, manages occasionally to make Myrivilis sound a bit stuffy. In one instance, a frequent Greek sentence beginning with "Καί" is rendered as "in addition", which makes Myrivilis sound almost academic. The same problem crops up a bit later when Bien translates *φύσημα Θεοῦ* as *flatus divinus*, which is accurate, of course, but not, I feel, appropriate for the diction of Kostoulas. The same applies to "Ὅμως τῶπαμε ὅλοι μ' ἓνα στόμα (referring to the name "Balafaras"), which Bien translates as, "Yet everyone called him this; it was applied *en masse*". In all these cases, Myrivilis, is made to sound more erudite in English than he does in Greek. Aside from these examples, all of which come at the very beginning, Bien's translation compares well with his fine work on Kazantzakis's fiction.

As a book itself, the University Press of New England's *Life in the Tomb* is an excellent piece of work. Judiciously edited, it provides the reader who may know little or nothing of the political and cultural background of the time with useful maps of Greece and Environs, of the Island of Mytilene, and of the Front at the time the novel's action takes place. There is a valuable section of "Terms and References" and, in the "Translator's Preface", informative bibliographical references to military histories of the Balkan Front.

Very few commercial publishers would have been interested enough to produce an edition as conscientious as this. *The Mermaid Madonna*, it must be recalled, was edited drastically. A quick leafing through the original and the Crowell edition leads to the estimate that it was cut by at least half. But the novel, a self-indulgent and everstuffed one, should have been pruned by Myrivilis himself. *Life in the Tomb* does not have the excessive bulk of *The Mermaid Madonna*. It is a powerful and eloquent statement against war, one of the very first manifestations in Greek letters that the emergent Generation of the 1930s would scrutinize, undermine, or explode the conventionally optimistic and patriotic sentiments of their elders.

The book holds up. It should have been translated and published in England and America when it first appeared, almost half a century ago. We can be thankful, however, that Myrivilis, who died in 1969, has finally been given his due in the English-speaking world.

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Kyriakos C. Markides, *The Rise and Fall of the Cyprus Republic*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1977, pp. xvii + 200.

Published shortly before the death of President Makarios this timely volume attempts to explore the social dynamics of the Greek Cypriot community which contributed to external interference and internal upheaval and led to the tragedy of July 1974. The author analyzes the problem of Cyprus through current theories of societal transformation, political accommodation and the breakdown of democratic regimes.

The book's major contribution is in its in-depth examination of Makarios' authority