

was continued through the consistent copying of ancient miniatures. The unexpected turning up of scenes from the Iliad, from the Tragedies of Euripides and other texts of ancient literature can be explained through this tradition (p. 33).

Weitzmann goes on to discuss the influence or rather the use made of the classical element in purely religious representations of the New Testament, analysing certain of them, e.g. the Crucifixion, the Pietà, the Descent into Hades, the Bath, the Nativity scene, etc., and establishing parallels with ancient scenes (Adam: river god; Pietà: mourning scene with Aktaeon; Resurrection: scene of Hercules and Cerberus; Bath: bath of the boy Dionysus). He concludes that the Byzantine painter did not limit himself to the form of the scenes but took over elements of content too and identified them with one another (p. 37 ff.)

The Macedonian Renaissance with the background and origin it had, was not only continued into the 9th and 10th centuries but also later, just as the revival of classical studies which was started with Photius and Arethas was continued in later centuries. Michael Psellus, Anna Komnena, Joannes Tzetzes, Maximus Planoudes, Theodorus Metochites and finally Plethon, are but a few names that tell of a continuous tradition of humanistic studies in Byzantium.

After a certain faint reaction in the 11th and 12th centuries, which had no real impact, there was some innovation in the art of the 13th century which was founded on the art of the 10th century and only in few cases looked for models in the classics.

Ancient Greek art influences the West at that time *via* the Crusaders' states in Syria and Palestine and even *via* the temporary Latin state of Konstantinople (1204-1263) thus contributing to the Italian Renaissance and the development of art in Western Europe.

These are the main lines of this excellent book in which Weitzmann summarizes the results of his long and detailed studies and explains once more the basic ideas which he himself has introduced into the study of Byzantine Art.

University of Thessaloniki

ST. PELEKANIDIS

Donald M. Nicol, *Meteora, the Rock Monasteries of Thessaly*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1963. 210 pp., 15 plates.

In a monograph that will be indispensable for Meteora studies Nicol very modestly disclaims all thought of having written "a definitive work." In the nature of things his book cannot be a great book — but it is certainly a very good one.

Like all of us others who have first stared at and afterwards climbed up the Rock of Varlaam, Nicol is fascinated by the uniqueness of the whole scene. Meteora can be exactly paralleled by no other place in the world. The monasteries "are among the strangest monuments to the religious aspirations of mankind."

Nowadays, of course, the tourist who goes to Meteora in a pull-man coach will not expect to be hoisted up at the final stage of his journey in a rope net. The days of Curzon, Leake and Uspensky are no more. Three of the 187 pages of Nicol's text (viz. 13-15) are taken up with some graphic accounts of the traditional ascent and descent as recorded by earlier visitors. It is indeed a far cry from the rope and the hook, the pulley and the windlass to the "splendid Motel" which Nicol enjoys seeing in existence now at Kalabaka (174).

Rather less than a third of the book is devoted specifically to the individual Meteora monasteries (viz. Chapters VI-VIII). Nicol does not offer any explanation as to how the supplies and equipment were taken up (the stone was at top all the time!) but merely notes: "No one bothered to record exactly how the first inhabitants ever scaled the perpendicular heights on which they settled." (70). Very fairly although he eulogizes the monks for their human failings. It may be true to say that "Like the eagles circling round their rocks, they put forth new feathers." (186). But as in all other human societies there could be the manifestations of arrogance, pride and anger (41) and the anecdote quoted by Nicol on p. 115 not only reminds us of Naboth's vineyard but also shows how spiteful and vindictive the "good old men" could be at times. The condition of mind which Athanasius sought and which is well compared by Nicol to the *ataraxia* of the Stoics (but a similar ideal also inspired the Epicureans, the Neoplatonists and even the Sceptics!)¹ seems to live on at Meteora even in this age of helicopters and transistor radios,² for the present reviewer on asking one of the monks how long he would stay there was told "For as long as God wills" and received from another in answer to thanks "I am only doing my duty."³

The rule forbidding women to set foot inside monasteries "has been relaxed for reasons...of the tourist industry." (36). It may be a good thing. But the monks stand no nonsense. The present reviewer remembers how peremptorily some female tourists at Varlaam were ordered to drape their bare shoulders on a hot August morning.

The complicated history of medieval Thessaly is well treated in

1. Not to mention the "peace of God" ἡ ἀπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν, of *Philippians* 4, 7.

2. It was a considerable shock to the present reviewer to find a monk in possession of a transistor set at the Monastery of Docheiariou on a recent visit there.

3. These utterances are worth relating to what Nicol writes (186) about the present state of the Meteora monasteries: e.g. "The truth or the illusion that the full potentialities of the human spirit can only be realised when a man can say 'None but God and I are in the world' seems unpalatable in the twentieth century." The burning enthusiasm that Nicol misses (*ibid.*) has been replaced by a gentle resignation, good in its way, but lukewarm in comparison with the "sincere and single passion" that he portrays (*ibid.*).

Chapter III: Bulgars, Vlachs and Venetians, Franks and Lombards, Catalans and Serbs all jostle together on the scene and the genealogical table on pp. 188-9 gives some help for understanding a complicated part of Byzantine History. But perhaps this is not the most interesting aspect of Meteora for the average foreign tourist today.

Some small points may be noted. Nicol admits the difficulty in transliterating Greek names. He regularly writes *Berroia* and *Ioannina* (*Verria* appears as an alternative in the Index). Despite his acceptance of *Vatopedi* he always puts *Barlaam*.

The book is carefully documented and has an exceptionally good bibliography (but one for scholars: a knowledge is assumed of French, German, Spanish, Russian and Modern Greek). A scale map would have helped (cf. "no bigger than the county of Lincol" 46). The painting of Sisois gazing at Alexander's skull could have been mentioned on p. 140. A word might have been said about the white-washed "farmhouse church" of All Saints at Kalabaka, a very precious heirloom.

Nicol mentions Cockerell's "pretty and most faithful drawing" (8) of Varlaam. The photo of this opposite p. 116 is attractive but there are too few plates for the price of the book. The frontispiece plate in colour might have brought out the wonderful detail across the valley.

London

R. E. WITT

Paul P. Vouras, *The Changing Economy of Northern Greece since World War II*. Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, No 58, 1962, XVI+223 pp., 83 tables, 76 illustr.

Ce livre du professeur P. Vouras consiste une étude économique et sociologique de la Grèce du Nord. L'auteur a passé neuf mois dans la région, pendant lesquels a essayé de visiter pas seulement les villes, mais aussi les villages éloignés et montagnards qu'on atteint assez difficilement même de nos jours. C'est ainsi que l'auteur essaye de baser la plupart de ses conclusions sur des constatations personnelles faites sur place. Évidemment, l'auteur a le désavantage qu'il n'a pas vécu en Grèce et que, par conséquent, il n'est pas toujours en état d'attribuer à l'évolution réalisée dans cette région depuis 1912 et jusqu'à nos jours, sa juste valeur. Les villages montagnards de la Grèce du Nord sont encore et sans aucun doute insuffisamment développés, surtout si l'on les compare aux villages américains; mais le progrès effectué dans la plupart des cas est immense. L'auteur, néanmoins, comble en partie cette lacune, en ayant recours à des données statistiques, qui montrent chronologiquement l'évolution dans les diverses domaines de l'économie de la Grèce du Nord.

L'étude est dans son ensemble descriptive, facile à lire et très utile à cause du riche matériel statistique réuni. En outre, le but de ce livre n'est nullement de proposer des solutions, mais tout simplement de mettre en lumière certains détails de la vie rurale, plus ou moins in-