

économique, les institutions et la civilisations des îles Ioniennes, souvent traitées sous un aspect nouveau et enrichies par des données nouvelles, édition ou présentation des documents d'archives dans leur ensemble inédits, mise en question des problèmes de recherche et de méthode—voilà l'apport essentiel et la contribution du IIIe Congrès Panionien aux études heptanésiennes.

Nous attendons avec le même intérêt l'édition du second volume, qui comportera les communications des deux autres sections du Congrès sur *Les Lettres et l'Art et Archéologie*.

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Linos Politis, *Ποιητική 'Ανθολογία*, Galaxias, Athens 1964-1967, in seven volumes [Book one: *Πρὶν ἀπὸ τὴν "Αλωση*, 1967 (pp. 210); Book Two: *Μετὰ τὴν "Αλωση, 15ος καὶ 16ος αἰώνας*, 1965 (pp. 174); Book Three: *Ἡ Κρητικὴ ποίηση τοῦ δεκατονέβδμου αἰώνα*, 1964 (pp. 222); Book Four: *Οἱ Φαναριῶτες καὶ ἡ Ἀθηναϊκὴ Σχολή*, 1966 (pp. 233); Book Five: *Ὁ Σολωμὸς καὶ οἱ Ἑφτανησιῶτες*, 1965 (pp. 215); Book Six: *Ὁ Παλαμᾶς καὶ οἱ σύγχρονοί του*, 1965 (pp. 211); Book Seven: *Σικελιανὸς-Καβάφης καὶ οἱ νεώτεροι*, 1965 (pp. 255)].

The late Lord Keynes, in his undergraduate days, compared once his reading of the Greek Anthology to the pleasure of dipping into a box of assorted chocolates. If the enjoyment of poetry amounts to something more than this *pose* of lazy hedonism, then, surely, any poetic anthology should justify its public existence by some objective structure counterbalancing the inherent subjective license of the anthologist. The most obvious of such structures is the historical, which in fact transforms the garland into a collection of texts illustrating the history of the art of poetry in a particular language or culture, during a definite period.

Yet what is most obvious to us now has not always been so. Thus, although the first full-size anthology of Modern Greek poetry (arranged by Chantzeris according to ill-defined *genres*) appeared in 1841, and although our first attempt at a historically structured anthology (by Raptarchis) dates from 1868, it was not until 1967 that this essential *desideratum* was properly fulfilled, thanks to Professor Linos Politis and his

publishers. One explanation for this strange delay might be found in the fact that the first scholarly history of Modern Greek literature (by Dimararas) was published in 1948; that same year Professor Politis filled the long vacant chair of Apostolakis at the University of Thessaloniki.¹

To be just, one must add that, after a new norm of our anthologies was set painstakingly but most subjectively in 1933 by Her. Apostolidis (who chose the mechanical arrangement of a telephone directory, which would be acceptable only in a selection from poets belonging to the same generation), there was no lack of more historically-minded anthologists, whose work however was limited either in size (Ep. Chryssanthopoulos, 1937; Trypanis, 1951) or in scope (St. Alexiou's *Cretan Anthology*, 1954) or in method (Peranthis, 1954). Separate mention should be made of the highly ambitious and tendentious anthology, concocted by M. Avgeris, V. Rotas, Th. Stavrou and M. Papaioannou (1958-1959), which was heavily criticized even from a marxist angle.

What Professor Politis has achieved is modestly stated in his Preface:

This Anthology . . . divides its matter into seven volumes, each of which comprises a self-contained cycle. The first three volumes represent the first phase of Modern Greek poetry [11th-17th century], and the other four the second phase, reaching to the present day, i.e. including the poets who had made their appearance before 1940. This historical structure determines up to a point the selection: the poets and the works anthologized here have a rightful place in the history of our poetry, and their contribution to its evolution has been decisive. Yet an anthology, which is always the result of a responsible act, cannot base itself on these objective criteria alone. The personal feeling is finally and unavoidably an essential determining factor; and this is the main responsibility of the anthologist, whose work remains after all a labour of love.

Great attention was given to the presentation of the texts; they are always based on the first editions or publi-

1. The importance of 1948 as a turning-point in our literary-historical awareness is clearly instanced by Valetas' *Anthology of Demotic Prose* (1947-1949) and by the 48 volumes of the *Vasiki Vibliothiki* (1952-1959).

cations, and their philological form has been strictly kept. For most of the older texts a new critical recension was found to be necessary. The spelling has been unified throughout in accordance with the official Modern Greek Grammar (by Triantaphyllidis). The poems are presented in their entirety, and only in the case of very long works were we obliged to give extracts; this necessity arose mainly for certain older works (*Digenis, Erotokritos*, etc.) and is always clearly stated. In each volume, a concise introduction places the period and its poets within the historical flux of our literature, while the somewhat more detailed notes at the end of each volume give the essential bio-bibliographical data and provide the elucidations necessary for the better understanding of the texts.

A more detailed view of this unique conjunction of scholarship, taste and didactic experience, may be obtained by a brief inspection of the actual contents (brief perforce, for each volume provides us only with a mini-table listing the names of authors or the titles of anonymous works contained therein, while the entire work curiously lacks both a cumulative index of authors and an index of titles and first lines).²

The first volume, entitled *Before the Fall* (of Constantinople to the Turks), contains passages of works written in the vernacular from the middle of the 11th century to the middle of the 15th, i.e. *Digenis Akritas* (Grottaferrata version), *Spaneas*, Michael Glykas, the Prodomic poems, *The Chronicle of Morea*, *Livistros and Rodamne*, *Callimachos and Chrysosroe*, *Velthandros and Chrysantza*, *Imperios and Margarona*, *Florios and Platziaflore*, *The Tale of Apollonios of Tyre*, *The War of Troad*, *The Achilleid*, *The Consolatory Tale of Unhappiness and Happiness*, *The Story of Ptocholeon*, *The Sinner's Prayer* (entire), *The Drunkard's Philosophy*, *On Exile*, Leonardos Dellaportas, *The Tale of the Four-legged Beasts*, *The Banquet of the Birds (Poulologos)*, and an Appendix with specimens of Byzantine popular and mocking songs. Also, in addition to the general Preface and to the regular Introduction and Notes, this volume contains a Glossary of the most frequent difficult words, while the particular linguistic difficulties are elucidated at the end of each passage.

The second volume, entitled *After the Fall* and subtitled "15th and 16th century," consists chiefly of passages from poems written outside

2. This deficiency is now being remedied by one of our students.

the mainland of Greece. The works or writers represented are: *The Dirge* (Anakalima) for *Constantinople*, the *Catalogia* (mainly popular love-songs), Emmanuel Georgilas, *The Mourning of Death*, James Trivolis, *Of the Old Man that should not marry a Girl*, George Choumnos, Manolis Sklavos, Stephen Sachlikis, Marinos Falieros (no relation to the famous doge), Bergadis, John Picatoros, *The Rime of the Girl and Youth*, *The Fair Tale of the Donkey and the Wolf and the Fox*, the Cypriot love-poems, and — a most welcome innovation — specimens of epigrams written in Ancient Greek by scholars of the Renaissance (Apostolis, Lascaris, Mousouros, Moschos, Devaris, Portos). This volume too contains a Glossary, while a word for word translation is provided for the Cypriot love-poems (rather unnecessarily) and for the scholarly epigrams.

The third volume, as its title shows, is entirely devoted to passages from *The Cretan Poetry of the 17th Century* (in fact up to 1669, i.e. not including Bounialis, Palladas and others who carried on the tradition elsewhere). Its contents are arranged according to the main *genres* (no author's name appears in the table of contents), starting with the early idyll of *The Fair Shepherdess*, proceeding with the tragedies (*Erophili*, *King Rodolinos*, *Zenon*) and the comedies (*Cazzurbos*, *Stathis*, *Fortunatos*), followed by the pastoral tragicomedy of *Panoria* (better known as *Gyparis*) and the religious drama of *Abraham's Sacrifice*, and ending with the romance of *Erotocritos*. This neat arrangement presents one disadvantage: the works of the most important dramatic poet produced by Greece after Menander, George Chortatzis, are thus scattered in three different parts of the book and in inverse chronological order. And this volume is the last to contain a Glossary.

The fourth volume, entitled *The Phanariots and the Athenian School*, bravely attempts to span two centuries of a now underrated tradition of verse rather than poetry. In fact, the 18th century and the early 19th are somewhat niggardly covered in 68 pages, 42 of which are deservedly dedicated to Christopoulos and Vilaras, whereas the first 26 pages compress specimens of *Flowers of Devotion*, four pre-Solomic poets (Xanthopoulos, A. Sigouros, Coutouzis, Martelaos), Dapontes, Calfoglou, N. Mavrogordato, Rigas, and anonymous Phanariot lyrics. The remaining 140 pages of text present a fair selection from the neoclassical or romantic works of Panayotis and Alexander Soutzos, A.R. Rangabe, Zalocostas, Orphanidis, Tantalidis, Coumanoudis, Carasoutsas, Valavanis, D. Paparigopoulos, Vassiliadis, A. Paraschos, Vlachos, followed

by the fresher samples of Papadiamantopoulos (later famous as Jean Moréas), Vizyinos, and (unexpectedly but appositely) Provelengios.

The fifth volume, entitled *Solomos and the Sevenislanders*, concentrates, like the third volume, on the extraordinary poetic efflorescence of a shorter period and of a narrower geographic area. Solomos, Calvos, Matessis, Tertzetis, Lascaratos, Typaldos, Melissinos, Polyas, Marcoras, Manoussos, Panas, Avlichos, A. Martzokis, Iliakopoulos and (last but certainly not least) Valaoritis truly represent Greek nineteenth century poetry at its most vital and refined. One might cavil at the anthologist's decision to place Valaoritis (and not Calvos) apart — indeed at the end of a sequence where one could expect to find Mavilis, Theotokis and possibly Sikelianos (especially after having met Provelengios at the end of the fourth volume); but it seems more legitimate to wonder whether it would not have been fitter to have placed at the beginning of this volume the pre-Solomic poets congesting the entrance to the Phanariot-Athenians.

The sixth volume, entitled *Palamas and his Contemporaries*, carries us well into the twentieth century, via Parnassus and the Symbolists. The poets represented are: Cambas, Drossinis, Polemis, Crystallis, Palamas, Eftaliotis, Pallis, Mavilis, Theotokis, Gryparis, Nirvanas, C. Chatzopoulos, Sp. Passayannis, Malakassis, Porphyras, A. Photiades, Petimezas (Lavras), Papantoniou and Tsirimokos.

Finally, the seventh volume (to the composition of which the writer of the present review had the privilege of collaborating) is entitled *Sikelianos, Cavafy and the Moderns*, and contains selections from: Cavafy, Kazantzakis, Sikelianos, Varnalis, Melachrinos, Kyriazis, Athanas, Filyras, Ouranis, Lapathiotis, Papatzonis, Caryotakis, Scarimbas, Agras, Papanicolaou, Seferis, Embiricos, Antoniou, Baras, Sarantaris, Ritsos, Cavadias, Engonopoulos, Matsas, Vrettacos and Elytis.

A work of such scope cannot be assessed adequately by any one person. Just as its composition involves not only a life-time's experience in reading and teaching, but actualizes the tradition of several generations (in this particular instance: the formidable academic and literary tradition of the Politis' clan), even so its eventual evaluation must be the result of its use by hundreds of teachers and thousands of students or general readers. This process is already in motion, and if one is to judge by the number of readers whom Professor Politis' Anthology has hitherto found, this work of his too is certain to become a classic;

indeed, it is most gratifying to anyone who cares about poetry and scholarship in Greece, to observe that — no doubt helped by the elegant *format* and the accessible price — three of the seven volumes (the Cretans, Solomos, and Palamas) have reached their third printing (ten to eleven thousand copies), while another two (the second and the seventh) have been reprinted — all of them with corrections — within two years of their first publication.

Therefore, let no one think that the few observations and criticisms that are being sketched here, amount to anything more than a single (comparatively inexperienced but deeply devoted) reader's attempt at holding "a candle in the sunshine" . . .

The first question to ask, when invited to give an opinion on an anthology of such sterling credentials, is whether any of the writers or works selected should have been left out. My answer is an unqualified *no*; and I am glad of this opportunity to express publicly my gratitude to Professor Politis for many delightful discoveries or positive reappraisals, several of which are due not merely to the catholicity of his taste but also to his delicate skill in carving the most poetically significant passages from a number of older works which normally are relegated to the status of historical documents or linguistic quarries. Naturally, one may sometimes deplore the fact that some relatively short works are not given *in toto*, but apart from historical considerations, it is well to remember that one of the main aims of any conscientious anthologist is to goad the reader towards a wider and closer acquaintance with the authors and the works merely represented in the pages of the anthology.

The second question (usually the first and not unfrequently the only one that is asked, but in its rhetorical form) is whether any of the poets and poems that were left out, would not have really deserved their inclusion. As far as poems are concerned (especially by writers already present), the game is open *ad infinitum* to anyone's special or peculiar favourite — and if I were to play it, I doubt that I would restrict myself to querying the reasons given by Professor Politis for not including any part of Elytis' *To Axion Esti*. As for anonymous works, a basic exception shall be taken in the next paragraph. So let us turn to authors: personally, I cannot think of any single major figure that has been excluded from this anthology, except perhaps George Souris — whom, however, Professor Politis apparently refuses to acknowledge as a poet of any description, and consequently he ostracizes as well

a handful of lesser writers of light or satirical verse (e.g. Triantaphyllos and Cocco, or Tsakassianos and Molfettas), all of them notable for their steady cultivation of a more colloquial style. Of course, scores of other minor omissions may occur to each of us, e.g. Manés and Momars, Photinos and James Rangabe, Sakellarios and Perdicaris (among the Phanariots), Carydis and Cambouroglou (among the Athenians), Gouzelis and John Zambelios, Martinellis and Mavroyannis (among the Ionians), Manos and Cambyssis (among the contemporaries of Palamas); as for the last volume, it seems to me now surprising that no woman (e.g. Myrriotissa) and no Thessalonian (e.g. Vafopoulos) is represented.

The third and last question is the hardest to answer: does this anthology ultimately provide a commensurate image of the history of Modern Greek poetry? Let us make some distinctions: there can be no doubt that it fully illustrates Professor Politis' view of this history, as delineated in his seven Introductions (which have fittingly taken a more permanent and organic form in his recently published *Short History of Modern Greek Literature*).³ Yet with one capital reservation: except for a few marginal specimens in the first two volumes, the vast stream of the anonymous folk-songs and ballads, which fertilizes most of our erudite poetry, is totally and (one surmises) deliberately ignored by the son of Nicholas Politis, with no explanation given for this puzzling omission.⁴ On the other hand, one should always, allow — nay, even pray — for the possibility of a different view, especially such as might be taken by a major critic and craftsman, of the calibre of Palamas or Seferis. But until a new, equally authoritative attitude towards the history of our poetry is formulated, the Politis Anthology is likely to remain the standard instrument for the conscious enjoyment, by natives and foreign students alike, of our most permanently valuable national expression.

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3. Δίνου Πολίτη, *Ἱστορία τῆς Νέας Ἑλληνικῆς Λογοτεχνίας, Συνοπτικὸ Διάγραμμα—Βιβλιογραφία, Θεσσαλονίκη 1968* (Publ. of Σπουδαστήριον Νεωτέρας Ἑλληνικῆς Φιλολογίας τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης).

4. Thanks to a very fortunate coincidence, this gap was worthily filled in 1966 by a young writer and teacher from Thessaloniki, George Ioannou (a pupil of the late Stilpon Kyriakidis), who from his own angle, but with similarly high standards of taste and scholarship, also testifies to the protean vitality of the Politis tradition.