

colony in Istanbul, as Poles came there not only to carry on these activities, but also in many other capacities, including that of missionaries for the protection of the Catholic faithful in Turkey. The community grew in number as the century was closing, when the partitions of the kingdom and the abortive revolts of the Poles brought many exiles to the Ottoman capital in the vain hope of obtaining the support of the High Porte in their struggle for national liberation. For the ancient Polish Kingdom ceased to exist.

Reychman's highly valuable work has twenty-one pages of annotations; a three-page dictionary of oriental expressions; an index of names of ten pages; and is enriched by eighty-seven contemporary illustrations. It is deserving of a translation into one of the more accessible Western European languages.

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Theodor Vrettos, *Hammer on the Sea*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965. Pp. 182.

This is a very short novel with a given theme. The preconceived theme is the religious conflict and rehabilitation of a young Greek guerrilla fighter in German-occupied and tortured Greece during the years 1942 and 1943. But neither the novel's important theme nor its terrible background, Greece during that period, is plausibly dealt with or shown convincingly. Stavro, the hero of the novel, is not justified as a character from his actions or from his words. He is confused, not because of his beliefs or lack of any belief, but because of the author's failure to present him clearly as he really is, *i.e.* as his author wants him to be. And the other characters in the novel — guerrilla fighters, priests, common people — are not presented any better, except perhaps Uncle Petro, the only person occasionally making some sense, though most of the time babbles nonsense or obscenities.

The author tries hard to be factual, yet he seldom succeeds. Often he has no sense of time and place. For instance, on November 12, 1942, Stavro, the author tells us, was 23 years old and his uncle Petro 48; but in December 1943 they are still 23 and 48 respectively! The village Platano, the author says, is on the slopes of Taygetos and a harbor on the Aegean, but it is also near Kalamata in the most southern part of Greece to the West! These are only two of the many inaccuracies and inconsistencies of the narration. They are not important in themselves, except

that the author himself gives great significance to such "factual" information. Of course, no one denies an author the right to mould his people and facts as he likes, as long as he adheres to and is consistent with the "reality" that he himself conceived. But Mr. Vrettos transgresses and destroys his own "reality" without any reason or justification.

The theme and its background are very important subjects, and worthy of full development; every page, every line, even every word of this very brief novel ought to be limited to these subjects, so that they might have been presented powerfully, distinctly, convincingly, in all their fullness. No extraneous or unrelated persons, actions and scenes should have been permitted to enter it, especially if they did not help in creating the proper atmosphere of the novel or in illuminating a character, an action, a situation. Yet, this short novel is full of repetitions and scenes which contribute nothing to the main action; it is burdened with commonplace or nonsensical dialogue and inconsequential statements; and it is also burdened with "stories" and "anecdotes" which have nothing to do with the course of events or with the characterization of the individuals involved.

Finally, since the action takes place in Greece and the characters are Greek, the author tries hard to give his novel a Greek "flavor" by inserting Greek mores and customs, Greek historical and mythological memories, and Greek words. But he often misrepresents Greek life and tradition, or uses them injudiciously and inappropriately. One or two examples may suffice: In two separate scenes he presents Greek Orthodox Christians drinking coffee and eating breakfast before taking holy communion! He even presents an Orthodox priest drinking coffee and his wife insisting that he even eat breakfast before going to the church for the holy liturgy and holy communion! On p. 73 Stavro remembers his little dead brother Stellio, about whom the author writes: "Stellio, who had always symbolized life to him—young, beautiful, radiant life... red cheeks, vibrant brown eyes, strong chin, sturdy legs... Trismegistos Hermes!" Now, what has a small boy like Stellio to do with Hermes Trismegistos, the reputed author of books of occult wisdom? Such unrelated references and reminiscences from the Hellenic world are many in the book. Also, modern Greek idiomatic expressions are sometimes so mistranslated that they become incomprehensible and meaningless. For instance, on p. 45 he renders the expression "ζωή σέ λόγου σου!" — which is said in sympathy to a relative of a deceased person — into "Word of Life..." which means nothing in this circumstance.

The author of the *Hammer On The Sea* conceived a worthwhile theme in a very interesting background, but in working it out as a novel he failed to give it convincing life.

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ἙΑκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν. Μνημεῖα τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ἱστορίας. Τὸ Ἀρχεῖον τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου Μανροκορδάτου [Academy of Athens, Monuments of the Greek History, The Archive of Alexander Mavrokordatos], edited by E. G. Protopsaltis, Athens, 1963, 1965, Volumes I, pp. 407 and II, 285.

The publication of the Papers of Mavrokordatos which are to be found in the Greek State Archives and in the MSS Department of the Benaki Museum, Athens, is the most important contribution during recent years to the source material of the history of Modern Greece. Alexander Mavrokordatos (1791-1865), a Phanariot without territorial or class interests in Greece itself, was one of the most politically gifted of the Greeks. A man with elegant manners and appearance, he spoke seven languages and might have looked more at home as Greek Ambassador to the Courts of London and Paris than, as he is usually depicted, standing in the midst of his mountainous compatriots in their *fustanellas*. He was shrewd, amiable, very accessible and open to persuasion, but he was perhaps too temporising, too fond of finesse, to obtain (if that were possible) the unchallenged leadership of the nation. When he joined the Greeks in August 1821, he observed that both Demetrius Ypsilantis (who claimed to be the successor to his unfortunate brother Alexander and the leader of the *Philiki Etairia*) and the primates of the Morea were acting unwisely and were advancing into false positions from which it would be difficult for them to retreat with honour. He therefore avoided what purported to be the central government and obtained the political direction of the Revolution in Western Greece. The result was to weaken still further the authority of the central government; for, in the constitution which was eventually adopted, provisions were inserted, encroaching on its powers.

Through his prudence and finesse Mavrokordatos gained many personal friends, and he succeeded in creating a political party. This achievement aroused the jealousy of Ypsilantis, which jealousy was intensified when the First National Assembly at Epidaurus (January 1822) elected Mavrokordatos as the first president of liberated Greece. His