

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Professor Cyril Mango writing from King's College, London (he has since gone to the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies) has reviewed in the last issue of the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 88 (1968, pp. 256-259), the two first volumes of my *Ἱστορία τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνισμοῦ* (Thessaloniki, 1961-1964), and the first volume of my *Πηγές τῆς Ἱστορίας τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνισμοῦ* (Thessaloniki, 1965). His review is very short and incomplete. In fact he reviews only the first 75 pages of Volume I (400 pp.), to which task he devotes one page, and he dismisses Volume II (500 pp.) in some 15 lines. To the volume on the sources he devotes barely half a page.

I am reluctant to call attention to this review, but I wish to clarify certain points for those who do not know my work and who may be misled by Mango's criticism. Mango begins by saying that the term "Hellenism" *suffers from considerable ambiguity*, that it sometimes represents the collective substantive *Ἕλληνες* and sometimes an abstract idea with laudatory overtones. It is, he says, even harder to define the expression "neos Hellenismos." *Is it, he asks, the Greeks of modern times (and, if so, since when?) or is it some ideology that distinguishes the modern Greeks from the medieval and ancient?*

Mango seems not to be aware of the meaning of the term as employed in Greek and non-Greek writings — a term which has been in use since the middle of the last century (e.g. the work of S. Kyriakides, *Ἱστορία τοῦ συγχρόνου Ἑλληνισμοῦ*, 1832-1892, Athens 1892, and that of A. Firmin-Didot, *Alde Manuce et l'hellénisme à Venise*, Paris, 1875) and which has had particularly wide use since the turn of the century. The term usually denotes the history of the Greeks and of Greek civilization, not only within the national frontiers but in cultural centers outside. Had I employed either the title *History of the Modern Greeks* or *History of Modern Greece* it would not have been clear that I wanted to write also about Greeks outside those frontiers which have changed on several occasions — in 1830, 1864, 1881, 1912, 1913, 1920, 1923, 1947. It would not have been clear that I intended to write about the cultural, political and economic activities of the Greeks of Thrace, or Asia Minor, and of the Greek colonies in Europe. Employed in this sense the term is generally intelligible and acceptable. As such it is employed by foreign writers (e.g.

Griechentum, hellenism, hellénisme) and it is precisely as such that I employ it, and not, as Mango seems to think, with *superlatively laudatory connotations* (whatever he means by this). All this is perfectly clear to anyone who takes the trouble to read what I have written. Mango however states (citing no evidence at all) that my purpose is to maintain an *official myth* (whatever that may mean) and *to fill it out by combining the results of detailed investigations into a vast synthesis*.

What I have done is to describe historically and methodically the origin of the modern Greeks and their communities, and I find myself in good company with the literary historians, who working in a parallel field and basing their conclusions on literary and philological materials, date the origin of modern Greek civilization in the period 1000 to 1204. These findings Mango completely ignores. I would therefore ask him, have the literary historians, non-Greek as well as Greek, been influenced by the charms of the official myth?

Mango's whole approach is to misstate what I have written and then, without producing any evidence (but only generalities) to criticise these mis-statements. He says e.g. that *predictably* I reject Fallmerayer's thesis, that I emphasize the Albanian elements to suit my purpose, and that I claim (*rather surprisingly on the authority of a gentleman called Koumas*) that the Vlachs are Latin-speaking Greeks and that the Frankish and Turkish influence was minimal. He adds that, *having thus established that the modern Greeks are true Hellenes* (the implication here is that I am saying that the Greeks are of a pure race), I then proceed to give their history from 1204 to 1461.

Obviously Mango would have liked me to adopt Fallmerayer's thesis. This thesis has indeed contributed in some measure to the investigations into the Slavic settlements in Greece but the theory is rejected by most reputable historians, who base their findings on documentary, archaeological and linguistic evidence. This evidence, as everyone knows, is scanty, but it is more plentiful than that on which Fallmerayer based some of his theories. More plentiful is the evidence on the Albanians, who survive in hellenized settlements in the Peloponnese, Attica, and certain islands. Mango seems to think that I emphasize their importance in order to diminish the importance of Slavic elements and to claim the Albanians because of their Illyrian descent. Surely it is not my fault that the evidence concerning the Albanians happens

to be plentiful. As for the Vlachs and the *gentleman called Koumas*, surely Mango must know that my principal source here is John Lydos, contemporary of Justinian, who explicitly states that the Greeks of the Greek peninsula, especially the State officials, spoke also Latin (see: *Περὶ ἀρχῶν τῆς Ρωμαίων πολιτείας*, ed. Teubner, p. 68). And why does Mango state that I regard all the Vlachs as being of Greek ethnological descent? Why does he ignore my statement on p. 37 of Volume 1, where I say that the Northern Greek provinces were entered by *numerous Latin-speaking elements from the Danube area?*

As for the Frankish ethnological influence, I state that certain Frankish elements, which were hellenized, survived in certain of the Aegean islands. But I do not think that they were of importance. My views on all these ethnological problems I have published in an article "Byzantinism and Hellenism" (*Balkan Studies*, Vol. 9, 1968, pp. 102 ff.). If Mango has any evidence which conflicts with that I have used, I should be glad to hear of it. The same goes for Turkish ethnological influence, on which subject I have written in my first volume, p. 39.

On the question of Slavic words in Greek, the evidence that there are only 273 is generally accepted. What, may I ask Mango, is the evidence for 3,000 Turkish words? What are the words in question? Surely he could have cited some authority! But even though the number happened to be as large as he says, then I would ask: do the existence of numerous French words in English prove a considerable French ethnological influence on the English people?

Where Mango speaks of the cultural activities in Athens during the Frankish occupation, of the significance of the Alexander Romance, of communal institutions I can only say that he either fails to understand me or chooses not to do so. He quotes me as saying that *Athens never ceased to be a centre of Hellenic culture* (and gives the reference Volume I, p. 49). What I state is that though Athens during the Frankish occupation was in cultural decline, there yet remained erudite men, chiefly scribes, about whom we have indisputable evidence. I then go on to say: *The information according to which Master John of Basinstoke archdeacon of Leicester during the reign of King Henry III (XIIIth century) and many Georgians found Athens an illustrious center of learning is suspected as exaggerated if not totally unreliable.*

Having misinterpreted my views on other matters, Mango, having admitted that my study is a *great mass of useful material*, concludes with the

hope that someone will write an *impartial and comprehensive history of the Greek-speaking peoples*. I can only reply to this irresponsible implication that I probably have the advantage of being a general historian, who is tied to documents and whose work has been recognised by scholars from both the East and the West. And indeed I should be the first to welcome any scholar who writes another history of modern Hellenism, provided he is free from the racial myths of neo-Fallmerayerism.

Yours faithfully,

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