

been considerably illuminated by the discoveries of Mr. C. Mertzios and Professor G. Schirò. Mr. Mertzios has published from the Venetian Archives four letters of the Despote of Ioannina Charles I Tocco and his son and successor Charles II, addressed to the Doge and written in 1425, 1427, 1428 and 1432 respectively. Professor Schirò had the good fortune to find in the Vatican Library an important unpublished chronicle of the fifteenth century, written in Ioannina in political verse and in demotic Greek. It contains an account of the events which led to the establishment of the rule of the Tocco family, the rulers of the islands of Cephalonia and Leucas, in Epirus in 1418, their wars with the Albanians and the history of the Tocco rule in Epirus in general to about 1425.

In the last eight years Professor Schirò has discussed in a number of papers the contents of this newly discovered Chronicle and indicated its great value as an historical source, inspite of the fact that it tends to be biased in favor of the Tocco family. In the present booklet the author reviews the contents of the Chronicle and summarizes the results of his previous research concerning problems of its authorship, dating and veracity. He also publishes for the first time in an appendix the parts of the text which refer directly to the history of Ioannina. Professor Schirò has promised to publish soon the entire text in a critical edition, accompanied by an Italian translation and commentary — an undertaking which will be fully appreciated by every student of the poorly documented history of mediaeval Epirus.

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Leslie Finer, *Passport to Greece, an Informative Guide to Enjoying the Country, illustrated by Spiros Vassiliou*; Longmans, 1964. Pp. 259.

The author of this attractive book (in his own words "just a free-hand pencil sketch") is a press reporter with a Greek wife. He has lived in Greece for eight years, has travelled about it extensively, and has learned the language. His love for Greece, he declares, "is genuine, but not indiscriminate." His purpose in writing this *Passport* is to supply "the factual information of a guide" without forgetting "the personal touch": and this he has fully achieved.

His twelve chapters neatly fall under the two headings "Key Patterns" and "Key Decisions." The range is wide — motels and bouzouki, modern newspapers and advice on bathing, interpretation of dreams and visiting Mount Athos. The titles indeed smack of newspaper headlines: "A Comforting Chronicle of Continuity," "Not Quite All Greek,"

"Mainland and Minorland." Chapter 3 is one of the best. In it the writer brings out well the survival of customs which go back to pagan antiquity (p. 31). As he points out elsewhere (p. 21) the Orthodox Church reveals direct links with pre-Christian beliefs and practices. In his graphic account of the Easter midnight service he refers (p. 132) to "overtones of a Hellenic tradition which is much older than Christianity." The same is true of the ceremonies in the Macedonian villages of Langedas and Monoklissia (p. 133).

From personal experience the present reviewer can agree with what Finer says (p. 92) about the relative uselessness of a knowledge of ancient Greek for ordinary conversation in demotic Greek. Some other observations which can be fully endorsed are those about "two interrelated features of post-war Greece; the growing material prosperity of an expanding middle class and increased contact with the outside world" (p. 119); about the country's industrial development (p. 124); about the value of the *siesta* (p. 125); about "the dominance of the male" (p. 134); about air-travel (p. 139); and about the alleged "express trains" running to Greece through Yugoslavia (p. 140). Finer is also worth reading on Greek food and drink (21 pages of it) and on the Parthenon and the museums of Athens (pp. 193-5).

Although about one tenth of the book is devoted to Athens (the Chapter is appropriately entitled "Inevitable Athens") the author does not ignore "the much-neglected attractions of northern Greece" (p. 237), declares Thassos to be one of his favorite islands and allows a page and a half to Athos. (He does not mince words about the hardships there). The paragraphs on pp. 236-7 (though unfortunately condensed) reveal Thessaloniki as deserving the name of Greece's 'co-capital,' and there is a very pleasing mention of Castoria and its importance for ecclesiological studies.

Some of Finer's views may not find acceptance by all his readers especially in Greece. He remarks "There has never been such a thing as a pure Greek race" (p. 11). He suggests (p. 87) that the Orthodox Church inclined to the use of *demotiki*. He speaks of the "parochial" tendencies of Modern Greek literature (p. 103, 106). Remembering the national habit of sitting and strolling out of doors in the cool of the evening (p. 121) he wonders (p. 115) whether "Greece may turn out to be the first country where TV fails to take a powerful grip." Unlike the reviewer Finer dismisses the fish *gopa* as worthless (p. 168). To some of his readers the political assessments on pp. 59-60 may now seem in need of reconsideration and there is plenty of wishful thinking a little later on. Finer's

phrase (p. 26) about the Greek attitude towards Cyprus, "a jilted lover's bitterness," is reminiscent of one used in the same connection by *The Times*, "quarrel among friends."

A *passport* ought to be free from whatever looks like personal bias. Was the author wise, therefore, in writing such tributes as these (however well-deserved)? "...the only place in Athens which knows the secret..." "The proprietor gives every diner his personal attention and advice." "She also has unusual ties." Perhaps, however, there is justification for the sentence (p. 237): "I doubt if Greece has another restaurant as good as the Olympus-Naoussa."

Two or three minor points remain to be noted. Finer himself talks of the "challenge" of the Greek alphabet (p. 85) and states that reading the words is "a compelling ambition." It is a pity, therefore, that (apart from Brigitte Bardot, Donald Duck, and the inevitable "bar") he himself prints no Greek at all. How much better if on p. 127 one could have seen $\delta\chi\iota$ and $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\iota\alpha$ $\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$ (even if only in brackets)! On p. 97 he implies that $\pi\acute{o}\rho\tau\alpha$ is borrowed from the Italian. The word, however, enters Greek from Latin and is at least as old as the Council of Constantinople (536). The reviewer must disagree (as a result of a very recent visit) the statement (p. 35) that during the Koimesis at Tinos "supplicants with their *mattresses and household paraphernalia*, lie on the floor of the church" and that the doors "are *locked* from nine at night till early next morning." The word "Attican" (pp. 24, 87) is obsolete.

The illustrations by Spiros Vassiliou, one of Greece's foremost painters, add much to the charm of the book. At the end there are some useful aids: a map, a table of holidays, a brief bibliography and an adequate index.

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D.M. Metcalf, *Coinage in the Balkans 820-1355*. Institute for Balkan Studies, No. 80. Thessaloniki, 1965. Pp. XIX + 286; Pls. XV.

This book bears witness to the greatly enlarged interest of recent years in the numismatic and monetary history of the Balkans during the Middle Ages. M. offers essentially the first synoptic view of the evidence from hoards and excavation deposits in the area of modern-day Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Greece. It is a credit to his talent and his industry, first, to have collected such a vast and amorphous mass of material, much of it scattered about in publications difficult of access, written in languages few of us can read, and,