

écrite" qui, renouvelée oralement, devient, finalement, une propriété commune. En d'autres termes, nous avons ici une création culturelle qui conditionne la communication directe entre l'artiste (dans notre cas le joueur de Karagkioz) avec son public, ses spectateurs; l'artiste interprète et improvise sur son texte pendant la présentation. Or, le contact s'établit facilement grâce au dialogue continu entre les deux facteurs du spectacle, c.à.d. l'artiste et les spectateurs. Le rôle de ce dernier revêt d'une signification particulière dans le rapport mentionné, puisque il impose à l'artiste (en réalité au théâtre de Karagkioz) ses désirs et ses goûts et mène le jeu de la présentation. Cette participation du public aboutit à une vraie fête populaire, une célébration collective qui prête à discussion.

Primo, les réactions du public guident les interprètes dans les improvisations à adopter le texte à ses goûts; secondo, l'association des joueurs de Karagkioz élabore seuls les éléments qui sont approuvés par le peuple et considérés dignes d'être répétés; ce répertoire est toujours renouvelé et adopté aux exigences contemporaines.

Par ailleurs, le dialogue qui s'engageait entre les deux facteurs de la représentation, l'artiste-joueur et son public était tout à fait réel, puisque le public pouvait four à four accepter cette vraie fonction du dialogue. Sans doute le même schéma—Proposition d'un sujet par l'artiste + approbation des spectateurs = Résultat, création collective—est valable pour d'autres expressions de la civilisation populaire; il s'agit là d'un objet de recherche qui mérite d'être étudié plus longuement. Terzo, le théâtre populaire de Karagkioz, toujours dans le cadre de la réalité néohellénique, est un échange entre les artistes de Karagkioz et les spectateurs et est à l'origine de ces représentations populaires constituant ainsi une sorte de tradition orale. Cependant le public se désintéresse vite et se dirige vers d'autres formes de spectacle (cinéma, télévision plus tard). Par conséquent, la théâtre de Karagkioz, privé de ses sources authentiques de son inspiration perd, en même temps, le fil de la tradition orale. L'éducation, la civilisation et la technologie modernes ont donné un coup décisif à cette tradition en voie de disparaître et ont modifié tragiquement sa figure. Pour conclure Mr. Kiourtsakis insiste sur l'importance et la force de cette tradition orale et populaire qui agit comme une force motrice dans toute création collective.

Le livre, donc, de Kiourtsakis, pose le problème de la présence de Karagkioz dans toute sa vigueur dans notre vie et son rapport avec nos péripéties nationales après l'Indépendance de 1821. Cependant, l'essentiel dans ce livre reste la constatation de cette impuissance de notre civilisation moderne d'assurer la continuité de la participation spontanée du peuple à la création collective, voire même la continuité de la tradition populaire.

Institut d'Etudes Balkaniques

ATHANASSIOS E. KARATHANASSIS

Kostas Palamas, *The King's Flute*, Preface by Charles Diehl and Introduction by E. P. Papantousos, Translated by Theodore Ph. Stephanides and George C. Katsimbalis. Athens: The Kostas Palamas Institute, 1982. 336 pages. Bilingual.

Since Kostas Palamas (1859-1943) is one of the major poets of twentieth-century Greece, the publication of this volume should be hailed as a happy event, and congratulations should be extended to all those who laboured for its realization.

The King's Flute (1910) is Palamas's second best-known work after the celebrated lyrical

epic, *The Twelve Words of the Gypsy* (1907). Since several reviewers, including myself, discussed its nature and contents in various academic journals when the first English translation appeared—Cf. *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, No. 18 (1969), 86-9; recently reprinted in my book, *Greek Poetry Translations: Texts—Views—Reviews* (Athens, 1981), pp. 182-7—I shall concentrate here on an evaluation of the quality of the Stephanides-Katsimbalis translation and its overall presentation by others.

The original and the English text are printed *en face*, on opposite pages, as is the summary of the twelve Cantos of the poem, done by Palamas himself. Prefatory materials and Notes (on Byzantine historical details) complete the book.

As I maintained in my 1969 review of the American version of *The King's Flute*, the translator, Professor Frederic Will, had done a disservice to Palamas's reputation for two main reasons. First, his knowledge of the language was much too limited for him to understand the text correctly even on the literal level; as a result numerous words and expressions were mistranslated. Second, Dr. Will's poetic skill was no match for the linguistic celebration and harmonious melodies that characterize the verse of Palamas, an artist comparable to Tennyson and Longfellow in terms of craftsmanship, and to Walt Whitman in terms of expressing the conscience of his nation. Dr. Will's Palamas "spoke" in very, very prosaic unpoetic English.

By contrast to the unfortunate but well-meaning and philhellenic American classicist, Dr. Theodore Stephanides (a retired London physician) and the late George Katsimbalis (the hero in *The Colossus of Maroussi* by Henry Miller) succeeded in obtaining a good working approximation of the Greek fifteen-syllable unrhyming demotic line in English verse consisting of metrical (not free), blank verse, and occasional tetrameters or hexameters. This poetic medium is comfortably close to the British cultural tradition, as it sounds natural and offers itself to long and sustained lyrical narration. Dr. Stephanides is perfectly bilingual. He has written many lyrical, dramatic, and narrative poems in English, and has published some of them in England. His translations of Greek verse started appearing way back, in 1925. The handsome hardbound bilingual edition of his translation of *The Twelve Words of the Gypsy* in the United States (1975) sold out against the boldest expectations of the most optimistic Neohellenists. His preference for traditional, conventional, versification and form, enabled Dr. Stephanides to render most of Palamas's rhetorical, luxurious, melodious, grandiose poetic language into a competently comparable rhythmical and sensitive English that has nothing in common with the dry, prosaic, and incorrect translation of Professor Will, or of Professor George Thomson's aggressively prosaic rendition of *The Twelve Lays of the Gypsy* (1969).

The passage—

O fecund earth of Greece, you seem to flow!
O shore, a ripple stirs your calmest sea!
O woman, your whole body, arched and lithe,
Is like a wave even when motionless! (p. 155)

—eloquently and economically renders the challenging Greek from the opening of Canto V:

Γεννήτρα γῆ, κυματιστά σ' ἔσένα εἶν' ὄλα, Ἑλλάδα!
Γιαλός, κ' ἓνα ἀνατρίχιασμα καὶ στὴ γαλήνη σου εἶναι,
κορμί γυναίκα, καὶ ὄλα σου, κι ἀπὸ κορφή ὡς τὰ νύχια,
κι ἀνάερα καὶ καμαρωτὰ λυγιένται, καὶ σὰ στέκουν. (σελ. 154)

"You seem to flow" has skillfully conveyed the sense of the Greek κυματιστὰ σ' ἑσένα εἶν' ὅλα which cannot be translated more literally without becoming unidiomatic in English. Excellent is also the choice of "a ripple stirs your calmest sea", to transfer the image and the feeling of ἀναρπίζισμα. Finally, very effective is the transposition of words in the last two lines to obtain a remarkably natural and sensuous simile in English, which still keeps the paradox of the original imagery: "woman, your whole body, arched and lithe, / Is like a wave even when motionless!" Only a gifted translator would have thought of that splendid epithet, "lithe".

Much praise, then, to the two great translators for maintaining the same high degree of precision and poetic effect throughout. After seven whole decades *The King's Flute* can finally utter sounds and rhythms pleasing ears, hearts, and minds in the wide English-speaking world. Unfortunately, the rest of the materials in the volume, and especially, on the back cover and the two inside flaps, is of a much lower quality. To be more explicit:

The list of English translations of Palamas's works ignores the two well-printed hard-bound volumes, *The Twelve Words of the Gypsy*, translated by Stephanides and Katsimbalis, and published by the Memphis State University Press in 1975; and *The Twelve Lays of the Gypsy*, translated by George Thomson, and published in London by Lawrence & Wishart in 1969. Despite its Marxist bias, the scholarly introduction to, and analysis of, all aspects of Palamas's lyrical epic by the eminent hellenist of Birmingham University, by far surpasses the dated generalities of Charles Diehl (1934) that are religiously preserved trilingually in the book. Of even less consequence today are the equally 'ancient' opinions of French and other newspapermen and commentators some half a century ago! Couldn't the editors have quoted something from the British, Canadian, American, Australian and anglophone or Greek studies and articles on Palamas published since 1970? If asked, I could have supplied them with several up-to-date items by erudite specialists. The brief excerpt from the late Dr. E. P. Papanoutsos's book, *Palamas-Cavafy-Sikelianos*, first published in 1949, doesn't alter this poor impression much. The Academy of Athens, and the Schools of Philosophy in at least four of Greece's universities, number among themselves anglophone hellenists who could have done a greater service to the memory and reputation of Kostas Palamas with a recent, informed of all contemporary developments, and of a comparative nature, introduction to *The King's Flute*, than the dated statements of Byzantinologists, reporters, and educators fifty odd years ago!

Minor typos (e.g., *Trhee* for Three), multiple or wrong spellings (D. Synadenos and D. Synadinos; *Millers* instead of Miller's), unnatural English (*institute* instead of foundation, for the Greek ἵδρυμα; *fifteen-syllabic* instead of decapentasyllabic or fifteen-syllable, *race* instead of the less racist nation) are among the details that annoy the anglophone reader to whom, after all, the volume is addressed.

The overall "museum piece" aura of the book, plus its editorial and typographical peccadillos are not enough to lessen the overwhelmingly positive impact caused by the fine Stephanides-Katsimbalis poetic translation, and the handsome picture of the poet on the front cover. The Palamas Foundation (not "institute") should be congratulated on their noble gesture of offering to the anglophone a very beautiful poem to enjoy in their tongue.