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Evvia portage: the Jews, ELAS and the Allies in Evvia, 1943-1944

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The "Evvia portage" is a topic little known in its complexities even among students of the Greek scene during World War II. It is important however for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it represents the rescue of some 1,500 Jews from the clutches of the Nazis, who sought to send all the Jews of Greece to the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz. It is important too in that it is the tip of an iceberg that touches upon the relations between Greeks and Jews, the British and the Americans, the Allies and the Turks, and a host of other relationships during that tragic period. It is a story of rivalries, betrayals, heroism and venality that parallels many other episodes during the war. In short, it is a story rich in detail and drama and so worth telling for the historical record from which all great ideas and plots derive their inspiration.

Evvia (Euboea) is an elongated mountainous island that hugs the coast of Central Greece. It is divided from the mainland by the volcanic action that supplies the hot springs of Thermopylae and generates the shift of current that so perplexed Aristotle. The northern end faces Volos and the southern end, with its string of islands that lead to the Archipelago, beckons Attica with its mountains and beaches. It was to the mountains that Jews of Halkis, the capital of the island, fled for safety and where most of them survived. Some Jewish mothers from Volos crossed to the northern end of the island and parcelled out their children among the mountain villagers for the duration of the war. And it was via Oropos that Jews from Athens, including numerous refugees from Salonika, crossed to

Evvia for the long trek to safety in Palestine. In addition to the sanctuary that Evvia provided, there was its importance as a transit between Attica and Turkey. Traffic ran in both directions with recruits and refugees moving east across the Aegean and Greek and British officers moving west via various carriers into occupied Greece.

The Evvia story sheds light on those individuals who were between the top leadership that set policy and the victims who experienced it. Within this middle level there is a further division between leaders and teachers and the rank and file. Jews, due to their cultural and educational experience, were found proportionately more among the former. This middle level, we should note, is usually ignored in historical studies, particularly in Greece.

As is known,[1] Nazi policy was to eliminate the Jews, first from the expanding Reich by forced emigration and later by wholesale murder in the death factories of Poland. Only a small percentage of Jews had the opportunity to escape after the war broke out, but these too were handicapped by their ignorance of the broader scheme. And it is that lack of knowledge or understanding of the lethal anti-Semitism that contributed to an even higher percentage of victims of the Final Solution. Hence the Jewish story during the war has to take into effect the inability of the Jewish masses to plan or react in a constructive way to the new circumstances that were organized toward their very destruction. This was even more so the case among the Greek Jews to whom Nazi malevolence came swiftly and unexpectedly in the spring of 1943. The series of persecutions in Salonika during the second half of 1942 did not seem much worse than the vicissitudes being suffered by their fellow Greeks under Bulgarian occupation.

The number of Jews in the *andartiko* was less than it could have been for a number of reasons. Many of the Greek-Jewish

[1] Especially from several libel trials in Great Britain: those of Leon Uris in 1964 and Deborah Lipstadt in 2001, in which David Irving was denounced by the court as a Holocaust denier.

memoirs recall the solidarity of Jewish families and the unwillingness of young Jews to abandon their parents who, they thought, were going to a new and strange home in the Kingdom of Krakovia. It was also difficult for city boys and girls to adjust to rough life in the mountains, especially before the resistance was sufficiently organized to receive them, how much the more so their parents and grandparents. These sentiments are clearly stated in the memoirs that Yad Vashem, the Israeli Center for the Study of the Holocaust, has collected over the past half-century from Greek survivors who immigrated to Israel.

Other sources record how young Jewish girls through force of personality rose to positions of importance within ELAS. One was a redheaded beauty known for the sweetness of her singing who recruited women and men for the resistance. She was from western Greece and so it is unknown whether she participated in the pre-war Socialist movement's wakening of young women, something that was more common in Salonika, from where a larger number of young women went to the mountains. Several times this *kapetanissa* appeared on the island of Skopelos where ELAS sent her for rest periods. There she stayed with Lily Mitrani, a teacher from Salonika who had asked the Greek government to transfer her to a safer locale. She managed to teach openly as a Jew throughout the war. She too was in the underground, and for that reason was able to assist the resistance with such occasional hospitality.[2]

The story of women in the resistance during World War II was a fascinating one for contemporary readers. This was the first war in which they fought alongside men and brought their special characteristics to the mountains that hitherto in Greek tradition had been reserved for the *kleftis* and the *pallikari*. Neither Kazantzakis nor Prevelakis would have thought to

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[2] The Molho family, booksellers from Salonika, hid out on Skopelos. Neither knew of the other's presence during the war. After the war Molho's son reopened the bookshop and employed Daisy Carasso Mosheh (she married *Kapetan* "Kitsos") until she emigrated with her family.

write a novel showcasing the fighting role of Cretan women against Hitler's finest, the paratroopers of General Student. Yet a Greek-American journalist had just that eye for his American audience, where women were entering the workforce and the military.

After the German evacuation from Greece, a gaggle of journalists accompanied the British and Greek forces that replaced them. Even before their arrival however, while Greece was still occupied, reports were being prepared by adventurous souls, in particular Constantine Poulos, the intrepid Greek-American correspondent, who entered Greece in mid-August 1944 and was already in Athens the day before the British forces arrived. His byline story of another *kapetanissa* begins: [3]

> Athens, Oct. 23. (ONA – By Wireless) – Sarika Y—, 18-year-old Jewish Greek girl from the city of Chalkis, is the captain of a company of uniformed women Andartes (Greek guerrillas) on the island of Euboea.
>
> Wearing a pair of British soldier boots and a cap, jacket and culotte uniform made from an American blanket, she leads her company daily in doing whatever job the Andarte regiment to which it is attached orders.
>
> She is a short, stocky girl with dark hair and blue eyes. She runs like a man and can shoot a walnut from a tree at 200 yards. Whether she is calling out marching orders with a steady "Hep, Hep, Hep" or pounding out a beat with her arm as her Company goes singing down a mountain path, she does it vibrantly and proudly.
>
> Only after the Greek surrender to the Italians was it necessary for her to flee to the mountains. From there, as a peasant, she periodically went back to German-held Chalkis to gather information for her Andarte regiment. When this became too dangerous, she began teaching in mountain schools. Following this, she went to work in the Resistance Movement's central

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[3] Constantine Poulos, "Report on Greece", Tamiment Library, New York University, Box 1, File 39, pp. 21-3 (reprinted with permission of the Taminent Archivist). Poulos entered Greece from Turkey via the OSS caique ferry (see below) and wrote a series of articles based on his extensive travels throughout occupied Greece.

> office. And later when a women's Andarte Company was organized, she was selected as its Captain.
>
> Of a large family of sisters and brothers-in-law and uncles, only she and her mother are left. "This is my country," Sarika told me, "I was born and raised here. The Greeks are my people, their fight is my fight. This is where I belong."
>
> Sarika is one of the incredible number of Greek women who took part in the fierce Resistance Movement. Sometimes it seems as if more women than men were in the mountains.[4]

Sarika's image was well known to journalists, although Poulos is the only one to have interviewed her and recorded her Jewish identity. As a result of the post-war persecution of former *andartes*, Sarika emigrated to Palestine in 1946 where she returned to a more sedentary life. This former *kapetanissa* at the Headquarters of ELAS in Evvia married Marcello Fortis and raised a family. She later related her story for the Israeli record, and it appears that Poulos only got a surface look at this rather remarkable teenager.[5]

Sarika was an excellent student and prominent as a youth leader in her high school in Halkis, the capital of Evvia. Born Sara Yehoshua, she was the niece of Lt. Col. Mordecai Frizis, hero of the Battle of Kalamas where he helped turn the Italian flank and precipitated their retreat.[6] She, but 15, and her

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[4] Poulos continues with other heroines of the resistance. See now Deborah Renee Altamirano, "Up in arms: The lives and times of women activists in the World War II Greek Resistance", PhD thesis, University of California at Santa Barbara (March 1993). Altamirano states that up to one third of the female population was involved in resistance activities. Cf. Th.-S. Pavlidou and Roudiger Bolts (eds.), *Μην αλείφεις ποτέ τα ίχνη...* (Thessaloniki 1999), p. 37: 1,740,000 women out of 3,000,000 in Ethniki Allilengyi and about 50% of EPON and Paidiko Kinima were young girls. See also: Eleni Fourtouni, *Greek women in Resistance* (New Haven: Thelphini Press 1985); Janet Hart, *New voices in the nation. Women and the Greek Resistance, 1941-1964* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1996).

[5] Further details will appear in my forthcoming study of Jews in the Greek Resistance.

[6] As the highest ranking officer to be killed in battle Metaxas promoted him as a national hero after his death at Premeti.

mother escaped to the hills on a donkey and took refuge in the village of Steni, where she taught the women to read and write and to waken their female consciousness. Such activities were a central part of the resistance movement's participation in the social revolution that permeated the Greek hinterland during the war, and were performed by the young women of EPON, the youth wing of ELAS. When word came that the Germans were sweeping through the area, her contact took her to the mountains, where she began to serve more actively. Sporting two bandoleers, she moved through the villages explaining the resistance to the women and eventually succeeded in organizing a unit of young women to serve first as camp auxiliaries, working in the mess, laundry etc. Later they were taught to handle weapons and to make "Molotov cocktails" (gasoline-filled bottles that exploded into flames on contact). British observers would later note in amazement the anomaly of the tiny lass who paraded two-metre tall male fighters for their benefit.

At the beginning of 1944 they were ready for action. *Kapetanissa* Sarika and her 200 girls became a special diversion unit for the Resistance. When an action was planned against the Germans, Sarika led her girls, armed with "Molotov cocktails", to a distant village where they simulated an attacking force. The Germans responded; the girls melted away since they were above suspicion; and the main resistance force carried out its action elsewhere. Once she was sent by her commanding officer to the village of Kabia, where the local priest was a German informer. Dressed in peasant garb the young lass shyly told him she had a confession to make but was too embarrassed to reveal it in such a holy place. When he left the church, the *andartes* arrested him. The story spread quickly throughout the area and the reputation of the unit and its Jewish leader was accordingly enhanced.

When the Germans learned that "the teacher" was operating out of the village of Steni, they sent an informer to flush her out. It turned out however that he caught the wrong "teacher", i.e. a young Jewish girl from Salonika named Medi

Moskowitz. His mistake was that he asked for "the teacher". The Germans arrested her and destroyed the house where she was hiding. The informer was given the privilege of shooting "the teacher". Sarika, hearing of the tragedy, asked her commander for permission to avenge the deed. The *andartes* verified the identity of the informer and Sarika went to the village. On the way she encountered the informer and asked him about the affair. He replied, "Finally we are rid of the Jewish teacher." She took out her revolver and shot him. This act too added to her local legend.[7]

In another incident, word came that the Germans were planning a *razzia* in the environs of Halkis. Sarika was sent to warn them. From a rooftop she called on the villagers to flee to the *andartes*. Her teenage voice found a response and the young males fled to the resistance. After the Germans retreated from Greece, she returned to Halkis where she continued to work with the youth. Since the former partisans were out of favour with the new leaders of Greece, Sarika was soon arrested. Her reputation, however, saved her. The police investigator warned her to hurry and ask the local rabbi to send her to Athens, whence she could leave Greece. Since 1946 she has lived in the environs of Tel Aviv, where she raised her family.

Evvia, during the war, was the assembly point for Jewish refugees from Athens (mainly survivors from Salonika who either fled before the deportations or escaped with foreign papers under the aegis of the Italian authorities there), who embarked on caiques for the Turkish port of Çesme. This "underground" ferry service, one of several to ply the Aegean escape route, had been organized by the two Barki brothers, Solomon in Athens and Rafael in Izmir – both with Turkish citizenship – in conjunction with two Palestinian Jewish defence forces, the Hagganah and the Mossad for Aliya Beth, and under the protection of ELAS. Ultimately it would be respons-

[7] Details differ in the literature. The above is based on interviews with Sarika herself.

ible for the rescue of over 1,000 Jews and several important non-Jewish Greeks, including George Papandreou. By comparison nearly 20,000 mainland Greek Christians were ferried to Turkey.[8]

The Evvia-Çesme route, which wove through the patchwork of Aegean islands, was already in operation by pre-war smugglers. During the 1941 negotiations between the British and the Nazis, mediated through the International Red Cross, over the question of provisioning the Greeks in light of the impending famine, it was agreed that Turkish wheat would be sent to Greece on Swedish ships flying the ICRC flag. We know now that the British took advantage of this commerce (in addition to other avenues) to smuggle agents into Greece; the Germans probably knew or at least suspected as much. Nonetheless the ships did sail and, while the famine was not averted, the food saved thousands of lives during 1942 that otherwise would have been lost. Later Argentinian wheat, at first 50,000 tons and in increasing amounts, would be sent in 1944 under the aegis of American War Relief.

Hundreds of Jews began to converge on Evvia, especially after the Italian surrender in September 1943 when it became obvious that the Germans were going to arrest them. As soon as the Athens Jews realized the danger, they began to flee to the mountains or to Evvia. The latter route via Marathon to Oropos was rather safe since it was controlled somewhat by the "pirate" clans of Attica. A short ride by car, taxi or bus to the coast, a ferry to the island, refuge with the help of EAM or ELAS or independently among the local villages were relatively easy preliminaries to arrangements to cross the sea to Turkey. So, Eli Hassid, aged 20, fled Salonika by train to Athens in March 1943 with Joseph Hassid; they remained there until

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[8] For figures, see Burton Berry's report "Movement of Refugees from Greece through Izmir" in Franklin Delanor Roosevelt Library (Hyde Park, New York), War Refugee Board, Box 31, Folder: Greek Government in Exile. See his "Further Information..." dated 3 June 1944 in the same file for a summary of Solomon Barki's report.

September when they took a bus to Oropos and then crossed to Evvia and went to the *andartes*, whose headquarters were in Steni. Yomtov Mosheh and several other Jews from Ioannina also crossed from Oropos, where they joined the *andartes* of Eretria in October 1943.[9]

The increasing number of refugees soon made it evident that a more organized process of escape was necessary. Contrary to published accounts, however, contact was apparently initiated by the *andartes* on the island and not by the Jews. A report in the Hagganah Archives summarizes the interview with Alberto Amarilio (alias "Aleko"), who had been a prominent Zionist in Salonika until 1941 and later served in Athens.[10] Shortly before he left Greece on 19 April, Byron and Mimi, two leaders of the *andartes* on Evvia, invited him to a restaurant. They had heard of his relationship to the HQ of the VIth Corps at Kalyvia during his three-month stay there and proposed that he pass on their desire to institute relations with the "Leftist" party in Palestine, of which they had heard much. They passed on their appreciation for the several hundred (actually 200) pairs of boots that "the Jews sent them". They requested that the Jews of Turkey be organized to send them money, ammunition and clothing. Their contact would be

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[9] Interviews with the author in March 1997.

[10] Greece – March 1943 to April 1944, Hagganah Archives, file 14/51, dated 11.6.44, p. 84. He was the legal representative of the Zionists to the Jewish Community in Salonika and treasurer for the community and for the Hirsch Hospital, as well as director for the Keren Hayesod in Greece, and hence an impeccable source for the Jewish Agency. In 1941 he left for Athens and from March to December 1942 he served on the ad hoc secret Jewish Counsel in Athens to aid Salonikan Jews with Daniel Alchanati, Pepo Benoziliu and two non-Zionists, Hayyim ben Dubi and Eli Attas. The last two were members of the Bnei Brith and possibly maintained relations with Greek Masons, who later helped Jews to hide and escape.

Alberto Amarilio escaped with his son Paulos to the mountains, where he hid under the protection of ELAS in Kalyvia from September to December 1943 during the initial phase of the German persecution in Athens. He left Greece on 19 April with 62 Jews on a caique that ferried a group of Greeks to Turkey.

Michail Tragonis in the village of Kouste near Çesme. They gave him half of a 5,000-drachma note to establish contact. Amarilio was unsuccessful in arranging the affair in Izmir and passed on the information and torn bill to the American Vice-Consul Davis in Izmir.[11] Davis asked him to make a written report on the situation in Greece and the problems Jews encountered in escaping. The report was also read by the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) and the Jewish Agency. According to Ehud Avriel, the Mossad (Organization for Illegal Immigration, a branch of the Hagganah) sent Moshe Agami from Palestine in early 1944 to Rafael Barki in Izmir, who was already engaged in the process of smuggling food and medicines to his brother Solomon in Athens.[12] Barki sent Agami to Thomas, the leader of the smugglers, who informed Agami that he was a member of EAM-ELAS.[13] Soon an agreement was concluded whereby the Mossad would pay one gold coin for each Jew who reached Turkey. (This figure should correct the tendentious reports filed by the British that ELAS was making a fortune by selling places to Jews rather than contributing to the rescue of British agents, POWs and Royalist recruits for the Greek army.) By the end of the war this escape route had brought over 1,000 Jews to the safety of Turkish shores, from where they were sent overland via Syria to Pales-

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[11] Davis reported all to Burton Berry, the American Consul, who sent informative reports to the State Department, where they languished unread until Michael Matsas utilized them for his book *The illusion of safety* (New York 1997).

[12] Ehud Avriel, *Open the gates! A personal story of "illegal" immigration to Israel* (New York 1975), cited in Matsas, *The illusion of safety*, p. 102, where he identifies the contact as Rafael Barki.

[13] Thomas was imprisoned by the British in their crackdown on ELAS after the liberation of Greece. He wrote a plaintive letter to the Jewish Agency requesting their intercession with the British that he be deported to Russia, where he could continue the fight against the enemy. There is no further data on Thomas in the files I examined.

tine, Sinai and Egypt. Other individuals attempted to find their own way, and some did not succeed.[14]

Amarilio's report provides a sociological profile of the resistance leadership that helps to explain further the difference between the fate of the Jews in Salonika and Athens. In Salonika, over 45,000 of whose Jewish population were deported to Auschwitz during the spring of 1943,[15] the Jews were relatively isolated from the rest of the population since their major pursuit was trade. Thus Salonika did not produce many Jewish professionals or intellectuals who could establish the same kind of relationships with their counterparts in the resistance as in Athens.[16] In the capital, on the contrary, Jews had been pursuing professional careers since the late nineteenth century. The men Amarilio denotes as friends of the Jews were important Venizelists in Athens, as were their Jewish friends.[17] In Salonika it was lower-middle-class Greeks, students, and army veterans who were friends with their social equals; the university faculty and student body was divided into pro- and anti-Jewish groups. Many of those involved in supporting Jews were Masons, and the popularity of the Masons among the Greek military, the Church leadership and the Jewish professionals is a subject that demands further research.[18] And finally, the family network that embraced close friends paralleled the general structure of Greek paternalism; this phenomenon was a characteristic of the Athenian Jews, who by virtue of education,

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[14] See Matsas, *The illusion of safety*, pp. 102-6 and sources cited in my *The agony of Greek Jews during World War II* (forthcoming). See sources and discussion in Tuvia Frilling, "Between friendly and hostile neutrality: Turkey and the Jews during World War II", in: Minna Rozen (ed.), *The last Ottoman century and beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans 1808-1945* (Tel Aviv University 2002), II, pp. 407-16.

[15] The problem of numbers is discussed in my forthcoming *The agony of Greek Jews during World War II.*

[16] Exceptions were of course to be found among those who held foreign citizenship. These were generally the wealthier merchants and manufacturers or journalists with important ties to the wider community.

[17] To complicate matters many Venizelists in Salonika were anti-Jewish.

[18] My thanks to the late P. K. Vatikiotis for this observation.

interests and language were Jewish counterparts of their fellow Greeks. Amarilio also supplied the names of local ELAS officials and commanders on Evvia and a few EDES supporters.

Already at the beginning of 1944 it was known in Jerusalem to the Jewish Affairs-Emigration desk via the Amarilio report that Leon Azouli had been appointed by EAM as representative of all the Jewish refugees in Evvia. Azouli had been a member of EAM for over two years by that time and was a logical choice to organize an increasingly burdensome and potentially dangerous situation. If enough Jews were to come to the island and destabilize it, then the Germans might come in force to capture them and punish the local population. There were after all sufficient collaborators to inform the Germans of the developing situation.[19] This concern was manifest among the British and American Secret Services, who were unaware of Azouli's existence. Another report[20] lists the location of a number of Jews on the island and cites their distribution among the Greek villages where the resistance was quartering them. Leon Azouli was located in the village of Yimnon, where he was the head of 24 Jews. Isac Chanen (alias "Sophianos") led 50 Jews. In the villages of Theologos were several Jews from Halkis and in Magoula there were 14 Jews. At the Headquarters of the partisans in Steni there were 50 Jews. The report notes

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[19] According to Eli Hassid, who accompanied him, *Kapetan* Orestis crossed to the island at the beginning of 1944 to organize Eretria and blow up houses of collaborators. The head of the OSS Mission "Stygia" to Evvia described General Orestis, Executive Officer of the 5th Brigade, as "quite a character – a large edition of Adolph Menjou, resplendent in captured finery – a Brooks quality flannel shirt, gabardine jodpurs, good boots, a sheepskin coat I'd give my eyeteeth for – all set off by a fur cap and a large handlebar moustache... He had come to Evvoia with fifteen officers and men, all mounted on beautiful horses which they brought over on caiques" (NARA 226/190/2/file 19). Hassid later took part in fighting near the ferry that crosses to Volos in September-October 1944, apparently to harass the German retreat from the island (interview 17 March 1997).

[20] "Greece – up to December 1943/Jewish Affairs – Emigration", Hagganah Archives, File 14/51, dated 4.1.1944.

that the Rabbi remained in Halkis. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of Sarika or any of the other Jewish *andartes*.

Till now we have been dealing with a story whose outline has long been known, although the newly discovered reports add important details and reveal an organized infrastructure hitherto unsuspected. This material should adjust the Allied view of the Jews as passive victims of the Nazi persecution. Rather Jews, at least the contingent on Evvia, should now be seen as partners with ELAS in the rescue of Jews and as arbiters of their own fate. We now turn to a story that became available to scholarly research only in the past two years from recently declassified OSS files. Already at the end of 1942, shortly after the Soviets had sent agents into Greek cities and the British had established their mission in the mountains of Sterea Ellada, the Americans began to organize their Greek option.

Most scholars, following wartime British opinion and relying on the domestic American scene, have ignored the American interest in Greece during the war. Rather the American role in Greek relief and in its intimate connection with the Greek Government in Exile has been the subject of research. But in general it is true that American interests were subsumed to the British claim on Greece. Additionally, the American perspective was focussed primarily on Italy, the weakest ally of the Axis; American troops were in North Africa heading toward Tunisia and preparing for an invasion of Italy. American strategy seemed poised to invade Europe from the south to liberate Rome and from the north-west to liberate Paris. The Office of Strategic Service had a broader vision, however, which is now revealed. The background to this story necessitates a brief return to 1942.

The Deputy Director of OSS was Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) Ulius L. Amoss. On 25 June 1942 he sent to Major David K. E. Bruce, Head of OSS Intelligence Section, a "Primary Blue Print for Creation and Functioning of East

European Section's Secret Intelligence".[21] Amoss followed up on 11 August with a conceptual plan for a Greek Irregular Project that apparently had been the basis for his joining the Strategic Services on 16 December 1941 at the request of "Wild Bill" Donovan, Roosevelt's hand-picked head of the OSS. Amoss explained the rationale for his plan – to be kept absolutely secret[22] – to Donovan via a summary of a conversation he had with a Professor Carl Haushofer in 1922. According to Amoss, Haushofer had enunciated a "Geo-Politik that affected every civilized person in the world", and especially the Germans. According to him Greece was the most important of the Balkan states with enormous potential to impact on East Mediterranean strategy.

Well, that had to be one impressive performance to influence Amoss for the next two decades! Though Haushofer, according to Amoss, was considered to be a charlatan in the west, nevertheless Amoss was sharp enough to realize the potential of Haushofer's argument; and indeed anyone who analysed the growth of German influence in Greece during the 1930s would see the Nazi reliance on his vision. Hence Amoss took the opportunity to propose a counter-Haushofer plan under the auspices of the OSS. The first stage would be the Greek Irregular Project headed by Stavros Theofanides, Minister of Mercantile Marine for Greece, and answerable to Vice-Premier Kanellopoulos of the Greek Government of Exile in Cairo. The Greek Minister in Ankara would also collect data and forward it to Theofanides ("the Specialist in American Affairs") in New York. Ultimate control however would be with OSS. The data would come from the worldwide Greek diaspora that was linked by Greek seamen. The importance of Greek colonies from Ethiopia to Rumania and from Turkey to Vienna

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[21] NARA 210/410/04.

[22] As far as he was concerned, only SIS Cairo could be trusted to keep the secret. On the internecine competition within SOE and between SIS and SOE see André Gerolymatos, *Guerrilla warfare and espionage in Greece 1940-1944* (New York 1992), passim.

blanketed one of the important theatres of the war. Maniadakis, former head of Metaxas's National Security and still on the government payroll, was active in South America. Admiral Canaris of the Abwehr was a Greek and could potentially be turned. Amoss's argument for a worldwide net of potential Greek agents totally eclipsed the Nazi fear of the "Elders of Zion" and the growing American fear of the "Communists". Amoss had plans, and even promises, to organize the American Greek community through AHEPA, the ubiquitous Greek fraternity in the United States, and the worldwide presence of the Orthodox clergy. OSS files contain various lists of potential recruits assembled by Orthodox priests throughout the United States. Donovan was impressed enough to fund the Greek Irregular Project for six months (January-July 1943) with $300,000. On 16 July he recommended that GIP be discontinued and that the project should become regular.

Amoss's vision and argument succeeded in the establishment of a secret liaison with British SIS in Cairo that fostered an important American base on the Turkish coast near Çesme, with listening posts set up throughout the Aegean and sponsoring missions to the eastern part of Greece and Crete. That base, called by its code name Boston, was headed by Major John L. Caskey.[23] Already on 11 July 1942 he (then a Captain) was designated "to set up a contact center in Izmir for occupied Greece". His SIS contact was Lt. Cmdr N. C. Rees, who had his own base in another bay. The bound volume of Caskey's mission reports contains weekly reports, the first of which is from 30 December 1943 to 5 January 1944. The volume continues to the end of 1944.[24] Amoss was soon out of the picture and the saga of the Greek-American effort was put on a regular basis. Eventually it would be expanded through the War Refugee Board effort to save Jews, in addition to its primary military

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[23] Caskey was an archaeologist who would lead a distinguished post-war career alongside Carl Blegen at the University of Cincinnati. His cover in Turkey was as representative of the Land-Lease Program.
[24] NARA 210/277/02.

function of gaining intelligence on the mainland. We shall confine our survey in this paper to Caskey's contacts with Evvia.

On 11 January 1944 Caskey reported that the Evvia *andartes* were suspicious of the British, who had failed to establish a mission among them, but they were willing to work with the Americans. This entry would characterize nearly all of the OSS reports from Greece and would contribute to the friction between the American and British missions. On 4 February a caique returned with three Italian soldiers, four Jewish refugees and 35 Greek civilians from Evvia for recruitment to the Greek military. The caique landed at the British base and resulted in a change in British policy to accept civilians in the future. On 3 March Captain Trig of the *Agios Nikolaos* (one of the ten caiques operating the "caique-ferry" at the time) acceded to the request of the *andartes* to take 26 Jewish refugees to Turkey. Due to a breakdown[25] he landed at the British base named Kioste and left the refugees there. Rees protested the intrusion and, after Caskey apologized, "Rees said he was quite willing when necessary to take care of refugees brought by our caiques and landed unobtrusively on the Chesme peninsula." Caskey for his part was not annoyed by the delay in August of one of his caiques for a week "in order to bring out 40 Jewish refugees, who were undoubtedly milked of their possessions" by local Greek sub-agents.[26]

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[25] A constant problem for the American caiques that was never resolved. When a Report of the Aegean Caique Ferrying Service was drawn up, the technical complaint of inefficient and constant breakdowns – of fifteen caiques on 2 January 1944, only two were possibly fit – led to a query to the British in Haifa. Lt. Cmdr Therin was happy to explain how the British solved the problem. When they began the caique service they converted British Leyland tank engines to maritime use. Major Wallace, the British conversion engineer, was available to explain how to adjust the caique to carry the weight. NARA 210/277/2.

[26] Report No. 31, 3-9 August 1944. NARA 210/277/2. Caskey lists German and Italian prisoners brought on his caiques. Other reports indicate the help rendered to the British invasion of Samos.

Herein lay a fundamental difference between the Americans and the British. The British were annoyed that the Jews had flooded Evvia with refugees and bid up the price of caiques in their panic to escape Greece: both interfered with a prime British directive to rescue British soldiers.[27] It also interfered with British attempts to smuggle their own agents into Greece. This annoyance on the front line (understandable) masked the larger British problem of Arab complaints against Jewish migration to Palestine, which the British had curtailed in their infamous White Paper of 1939. A conference on 29 April 1944 between Major Caskey, Col. Simonds and Major Caridia of A Force cleared the air somewhat.

> Col. Simonds stated that the increasing number of Jews who are coming out (partly, no doubt, because they pay big sums privately to the caique captains) are straining relations between A Force and the anti-Semitic Turkish authorities. He regretted on humanitarian grounds to discourage the rescue of Jews, but felt that, for the sake of the principal work, this traffic should not be carried by the secret services now operating. He hoped that a jewish [sic] rescue service would be established, make its own arrangements with the Turks, and operate its own caiques.[28]

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[27] The report of agent "Brigand" dated 7 April 1944 (NARA 210/277/4) describes the failure of his mission at the end of September 1943. "Conditions in Athens were abnormal due to the collapse of Italy, the persecution of the Jews, and internal strife between factions. Prices for caiques were sky-high and no suitable boats were to be found because Jews were paying large sums for craft of any kind."

[28] Lt. Col. Tony Simonds was previously closely associated with Palestinian Jewish Intelligence Forces who were recruited for service in the East Mediterranean and the Balkans with MI 9, SOE and SIS and had supported rescue missions of Jews from the Balkans. Simonds was sympathetic to the Zionist enterprise in Palestine and had worked with the Jewish Agency since the Arab Revolt of the previous decade. See Eldad Harouvi, "British Intelligence Cooperation with the Jewish Agency during the Second World War", MA thesis, University of Haifa (1992) [in Hebrew].

Caskey summarized the problem he faced and asked Cairo for direction:

> OSS Izmir has long been aware of the dangers to its own work which are inherent in any activity unwelcome to the Turks, and therefore normally steers clear of all rescue and escape operations. Maj. Caskey gave assurance that every effort would be made to avoid embarrassing A Force with Jewish refugees, but pointed out that in the light of recent statements by President Roosevelt and Ambassador Steinhardt it might become increasingly difficult for an American service to avoid giving help to stranded Jews. It was the opinion of Maj. Caskey, as of Lt. Comdr. Rees and others, that the Turks would certainly not authorize the operation of a caique service by Jews for their own rescue work. The problem is knotty, and OSS Izmir would welcome a statement of policy, or a directive from headquarters on this subject.

Caskey's reference to the "recent statements" by the American president and the U.S. ambassador to Turkey points up a tragedy that affected any warning or aid to the Jews of the former Italian zone. On 26 January 1944 Cordell Hull, the American Secretary of State, sent a circular airgram to all American missions except London, Lisbon, Madrid, Stockholm, Bern and Ankara announcing the formation of the War Refugee Board at the highest level of the American government (Secretaries of State, Treasury and War) "to take action for the immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution". For some reason that the State Department files from Greece do not explain, this message did not reach the American ambassador in Cairo until March. The aide-memoire to the Royal Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Cairo, dated 16 March 1944, mentions only aid and rescue of refugees; there is no reference to Jews. On 23 March, Harold Schwartz, Counselor of the Embassy, noted apologetically the lack of receipt of the message and the aide-memoire with no explanation for the delay. Hull sent a telegram on 24 March announcing the President's evening radio bulletin warning the Axis and its satellites not to assist

"Hitler's program to exterminate the Jews and other similar groups". On 29 March the radio statement was given to the Greek Government in Cairo and that night the Greek Prime Minister Emmanuel Tsouderos issued a declaration:

> ... address to all Hellenes the request that they take particular notice of his recommendation that the Allied Balkan peoples help in the rescue and escape to neutral or friendly countries of the Jews now threatened by new and inhuman persecution, or of any other victims of Nazi tyranny.

This declaration was broadcast to Greece on 31 March at 1.15, 7.30 and 10.30 p.m.[29]

The Jews of the former Italian zone were arrested on Passover 1944, which fell on the night of 24/25 March. The question mutely rises from the grave: why was there a delay of two months between President Roosevelt's executive order and its reaching his faithful Ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh in Cairo?

A number of agencies, political, military and civilian, were already in place among the British and the Americans capable of effecting the rescue of large numbers of Jews from Greece. These included ELAS, British, American and private caique service,[30] and representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee, UNRRA, the Jewish Agency, and the

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[29] NARA 84/2649A/69/848/Greek refugees.

[30] Including rumours about a Jewish Organization starting up a ferry service with a few caiques; there is even an obscure mention of an Operation Moses to rescue Jews, possibly under U.S. auspices. For Palestinian efforts at rescue from Greece via a boat service, see Tuvia Frilling, "Between friendly and hostile neutrality". This was apparently the rescue service noted earlier that the Americans suggested be coordinated or curtailed lest it interfere with a broader rescue effort planned by the United States. He does not mention any Operation Moses. The Palestinian agent in charge of the operation, Mosheh Averbuch (Agami), estimated 2,000-3,000 Jews rescued. Historians more conservatively suggest about 1,000. American Joint Distribution Committee lists of Greek Jews brought to Turkey number less than 1,000 (see AJDC Archive, Jerusalem, File L15/57). See reports in FDR Library Boxes 31, 32, 45.

American diplomatic services in Cairo, Istanbul and Izmir along with the hospitality of the Greek consul in Izmir. "Considering the geographical position of Greece, which is one of the best in occupied Europe, the number of escapes have been very few," observed Alfred Cohen, Legal Advisor at the Greek Foreign Office on 31 May 1944. Earlier in the month Irving Friedman, in a memorandum dated 18 May, noted: "Since December about 250 Jewish refugees from Evvia via caiques operated by British navy in conjunction with American military personnel." It would be better, he noted, if the caiques, which could carry 50-60 people, were more full than the 20 on average transported.[31]

On 28 June Burton Berry, the American Consul General in Istanbul visited Major Caskey and asked if he could "do anything to help the Jews". Caskey replied that he did not have the facilities to do so. Unfortunately he was unaware that Berry was

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[31] In the last six months of 1943 some 280 Jews were rescued by the Palestinian-ELAS boat service (see previous note) according to Menahem Bader, who reported on 29/12/43 to the Executive Committee of the Histadrut on efforts organized from Istanbul. Three other boats were on the way and some 600 Jews were on Evvia waiting for boats. The problem was the unwillingness of the Mandatory Government to award them certificates to enter Palestine as Jews and even the difficulties involved in having them registered as refugees. See extracts in Yosef Ben, *Jews of Greece in the Holocaust and in the Resistance, 1941-1944* (Tel Aviv: Institute for Research of Salonika Jewry 1985) [in Hebrew], p. 114f. and discussion in Frilling, art. cit. To put the Jewish figures in perspective, we should look at the broader relief problem that the British faced. The multitudes of Orthodox Greeks who reached Cyprus via British warships and the Middle East via Turkey were set up in a series of camps that eventually became part of the extended War Relief administered by MERRA (later superseded by UNRRA). A memorandum on foreign relief and rehabilitation operation dated 26 July 1943 lists 12,695 Greek refugees as of 8 April 1943 (NARA 59/1410/2/Greece DPs). After the September 1943 British invasion of the Dodecanese islands over 12,000 Greeks abandoned the islands for Cyprus and a newly established camp in Gaza. By December the British were planning to build 50 caiques in Haifa for relief services. This idea was proposed by Major Baker (Istanbul), Sidney Simonds (British Embassy commercial attaché) and Stavros Theofanides (Greek Minister of Merchant Marine). NARA 84/2649A/61.

expending considerable effort both in Turkey and in Washington to effect the rescue of Jews in accordance with the directives of the War Refugee Board, and so had little patience with military protocol.[32] The difficulties with the Turks would continue until the government broke off relations with Germany at the beginning of August 1944. From that time it was free to act openly with the Allies and so some of the problems connected with Jewish refugees were alleviated.[33]

The issues summarized by Alfred Cohen in his report were listed in the memorandum prepared by Henry Hill, dated 5 July 1944, for Ambassador MacVeagh, to be carried by the latter to the United States (resulting in further delays). We must pause for a moment in order to appreciate what happened to the President's call in January "to take action for the immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution".

Greek Jews – War Refugee Board

> The Embassy has reported as to savings, upkeep, possibly using ferry service of Anglo-American Intelligence Services for Greek Jews. State Department has been requested to approach War Department, they in turn to approach British War Office, both to instruct British and American intelligence Services, facilitate departure of Jews from Greece, supply Gold sovereigns in Greece for the upkeep of Jews in hiding, matter being handled principally by Ambassador Steinhardt. [34]

The problem went much further than the Evvia-Izmir ferry service however. It reached up through the various British services as far as London and permeated nearly all British

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[32] Berry's story has still to be told. Michael Matsas (*The illusion of safety*) was the first to point out his importance, although he was unaware of the broader network that extended to Ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh in Cairo and thence to the WRB in Washington, which reported directly to President Roosevelt.

[33] See Tuvia Frilling, "Between friendly and hostile neutrality" for a summary of the Turkish difficulties.

[34] NARA 84/2649A/62/folder 123.

diplomatic stations throughout the Mediterranean theatre.[35] Even Rabbi Barzilai's appeal, after he reached the protection of ELAS, for funds to assist the Resistance came to the highest level and was characteristically responded to in rather cavalier fashion by Churchill:

> This requires careful handling. It is quite possible that rich Jews will pay large sums of money to escape being murdered by the Huns. It is tiresome that this money should get into the hands of E.L.A.S., but why on earth we should go and argue with the United States about it I cannot conceive... We should take a great responsibility if we prevented the escape of Jews, even if they should be rich Jews. I know it is the modern view that all rich people should be put to death wherever found, but it is a pity that we should take up that attitude at the present time.
>
> After all, they have no doubt paid for their liberation so high that in future they will only be poor Jews, and therefore have the ordinary rights of human beings.[36]

Great Britain had its own agenda, which was to bring the King back to Greece and defeat EAM-ELAS, from which it feared a Communist takeover.[37]

The above material points out the divergences of tactics between the British and the American military and the difficulties the military encountered in the face of political pressures by diplomats. The Jews were only the bellwether for such

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[35] See Tuvia Frilling, "Between friendly and hostile neutrality".

[36] Letter to Foreign Secretary from 10 Downing Street dated 14.7.44 (FO 371/43689/137459); the file contains further discussions about Rabbi Barzilai's call for aid and diplomatic notes to Cairo for consultation with the Greek government there. The discussion was prompted by Ambassador Leeper's call for guidance; the latter ignores the Jews in his memoir *When Greek meets Greek* (London 1950). See further my forthcoming book *The agony of Greek Jews*, ch. 9.

[37] A report on the Activity of the KKE in Karystos, Evvia, supported by the EAM-ELAS and dated 5.10.44 indicates that there was substance to his fear. Collaborators were executed, property confiscated, "all government bureaus were abolished and their own authorities installed" (NARA 226/190/2). This report may reflect *Kapetan* Orestis's sweep; see note 19 above.

tensions. Britain, for its own political reasons, was reluctant to send supplies to ELAS, which desperately needed shoes, weapons and ammunition. The British would not allow the Americans to interfere with their curtailment of aid to ELAS and OSS Izmir was under orders not to distribute weapons outside its own organization.[38] Still, the disappearance of Jews from government summaries of front-line reports and their isolation, if one can use such a neutral term, that follows both in scholarship and histories about the war distorts the reality of problems and tensions both in the field and at higher levels. In other words by removing the Jews from the story in an area where they were more than superficially present and indeed quite active demands an explanation to clarify the resulting obfuscation. The higher humanitarian principle that the British invoked on occasion sounds hollow in the face of unrestricted warfare on German civilians and lack of concern for "collateral damage" among the slave workers and other prisoners of the Nazis.

Evvia, given its fortuitous geographical location, emerges from these reports and anecdotes as an important station on the transportation network into and out of Greece. Its mountains and beaches made it virtually impossible for the Germans to control, although they could punish the resistance in occasional sweeps, such as in January 1944. It succeeded in protecting its own Jews who sought out *andartiko* aid and in providing refuge for many more who came from the mainland. ELAS even interfered with Allied missions by placing Jewish refugees on their caiques. Jews could be found active in the resistance, in helping their co-religionists to escape to Turkey, and in organizing a new supply line for the *andartes* in Evvia and Central Greece to supplement declining British support.

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[38] See Caskey report 13 December 1944 (NARA 210/277/4). This was contrary to British policy, which supplied Tito in Yugoslavia with huge amounts of materiel. It also did not acknowledge the various forms of assistance that Palestinian Jews rendered the British war effort in the Balkans and in Palestine.

The statue to Colonel Mordecai Frizis that stands prominently in Halkis, a legacy of Ioannis Metaxas's respect for his valour and sacrifice during the fight against the Italian invaders, is fitting tribute and a reminder of the contributions of Greek Jews and Palestinians on the island during the war.

Writing the history of Greece: forty years on

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Early in 2002 I spent an agreeable three months as Visiting Fellow at the British School at Athens, sometimes erroneously referred to as the British School of Archaeology. I say erroneously because from the School's foundation in 1886 it was never intended that it should focus narrowly on archaeology or the study of the Greek lands in antiquity. Indeed, in the years before the First World War a number of those associated with the School managed to combine their classical and archaeological concerns with a profound interest in the language and culture of the Greek world in modern times. In this context the names of R. M. Dawkins, F. W. Hasluck, A. J. B. Wace, A. J. Toynbee, A. W. Gomme and C. A. Scutt spring to mind.

My 2002 stay was almost forty years after I had first spent time at the School when I was setting out on my career as a student of the history of Greece in modern times. As I am nearing retirement, this recent sojourn at the British School prompted me to take the opportunity of looking back at some of my experiences in attempting to write the modern history of the Greek lands, and of considering some of the changes, very significant changes, and changes very much for the better, that have taken place in recent years in my own primary field of study, the modern history of Greece. The fact that my first stay at the School coincided with the Colonels' coup of April 1967 contributed to a significant shift in the focus of my research. The experience of living through the establishment of a military dictatorship that was nasty, brutish and altogether too long in duration was to precipitate a rather abrupt change in my

interests in Greek history and caused me to receive from Greek friends a crash course in Greek politics.

Perhaps I could begin by quoting from a description of the British School as it appeared in 1915:

> the photographs upon the walls of temples, theatres and mountains: the faded groups of student archaeologists in old-fashioned straw hats, who in bygone years had sojourned here for a while and hence sallied forth to excavate some classic site; the library of Hellenic scholarship and research; the long table in the deserted dining room; the subtle air of learning which permeated the whole place with a faint dusty perfume.

The description is that of Compton Mackenzie, novelist, teller of tall tales, war time πράκτορας, or intelligence agent, and, at the end of his life, grand old man of Scottish letters, in his *First Athenian memories* (1931). At school in Edinburgh in the 1950s I did once meet the great man but, unfortunately, my interest in the Greek world had not at that time developed and I thus missed the chance of hearing Mackenzie's reminiscences of his Athenian adventures and escapades at first hand. All I remember of that distant encounter was that he claimed to have had total recall since the age of two. Compton Mackenzie's description of the British School during the second decade of the twentieth century will strike many a nostalgic chord with those familiar with the School. It certainly held good when my wife and I first spent time in the School some fifty years later, in the mid-1960s. It is, moreover, a description which in substantial measure held good in 2002, not far short of a century after it was first written.

Many will be familiar with Compton Mackenzie's extraordinary stories of intrigue in Athens during the First World War in the service of British intelligence, the "Intelligence Service", which Greeks, against all the evidence, are wont to credit with almost superhuman omniscience and cunning. His tales are certainly hugely entertaining but many, by their nature, are incapable of independent verification. There is one anecdote, however, which, had I the time, I might be able to try

to verify. This is his account of the running aground in Phaleron Bay of a ship carrying frozen sheep carcasses. The ship subsequently broke up and the next day Royalist, anti-Venizelist newspapers had huge banner headlines reporting that headless victims of the "Anglo-French secret police" had been washed ashore in Phaleron. Presumably a search of the newspapers of the time would reveal whether or not this particular anecdote is true. Compton Mackenzie wrote three books on his activities in Greece during the First World War, for much of which Greece was, of course, neutral. For writing one of these, *Greek memories*, he was charged in 1932 with breaching the draconian provisions of the Official Secrets Act and the book was withdrawn and issued in an amended form. The original, unexpurgated edition became a collector's item and very expensive. However, an American publisher issued a reprint a few years ago of the unexpurgated version with the offending passages helpfully highlighted. On perusing these it is difficult to believe that Mackenzie was letting much out of the bag in the book's initial recension but then intelligence services tend to be hypersensitive in matters of security. The trial and the £100 fine that was imposed on the author inevitably served only to enhance the reputation of Mackenzie, who wreaked his revenge on the authorities by penning a novel, *Water on the brain* (1933), in which he mercilessly satirised his erstwhile masters in British intelligence and revealed such sensitive secrets as that "C", the head of MI6, habitually wrote in green ink.

It is not immediately apparent that Mackenzie's tireless intrigues were ultimately of much value to the cause of the Entente Powers, Britain and France. They may, indeed, have been counter-productive as is suggested by the story, not necessarily an apocryphal one, about Mackenzie's arch-rival, the German Baron Schenk, the head of German intelligence. Schenk, of course, was obliged to leave Athens when, in the summer of 1917, Greece entered the war on the side of the Entente allies. His parting words to a group of well-wishers who had come to see him off were apparently: "I am more than

content to leave the interests of the Central Powers in the capable hands of my friend Captain Compton Mackenzie."

When I speak not of modern Greek history but of the modern history of Greece or the history of Greece in modern times, this is deliberate and reflects a growing concern on my part that we should abandon the epithet modern when talking about present-day Greece. Greece, after all, is the only country which, in English at least, we routinely refer to as "modern"; Greek is the only language which we almost always refer to as "modern"; and Greeks the only people who are often referred to as the "modern" Greeks. If we talk about, say, Italy, Italian or Italians, we generally assume that we are talking about the modern country, the modern language and the modern people. If we want to talk about medieval Italy or ancient Rome we say so. It is difficult to think of circumstances in which we would speak of "modern" Italians.

I have written two general books on Greek history. One is entitled *A Short History of Modern Greece* (1979), the other *A Concise History of Greece* (1992). I'm not entirely sure quite what the difference is between a *Short History* and a *Concise History*, save that in its second edition the *Concise History* is rather longer than the *Short*. More to the point, however, my second such venture, the *Concise History*, although it covers a shorter chronological period (roughly from 1700 to the present day) than the *Short History*, omits any reference to "modern" Greece in the title. It is called simply *A Concise History of Greece*. So that I imagine there will have been a few careless purchasers of the book who will have bought it on the assumption that it is about ancient Greece. I can only hope that the booksellers will not have given them their money back when they stormed back to the shop to try to return it.

In my view, by referring so frequently to "modern" Greece, "modern" Greek and "modern" Greeks we simply reinforce the notion that present day Greece continues to lie in the shadow of ancient Greece and is but a pale reflection of "the glory that was Greece". This is of course a perception which is encouraged

by government policies in Greece whichever party is in power. The current campaign over the return of the Elgin Marbles is one instance of such attitudes. Another is that at the new Athens airport at Spata the visitor is greeted by reproductions of antique statuary. In the light of such attitudes it is correspondingly more difficult to project the view that "modern" Greece has a fascinating history and a very rich culture in its own right. Perhaps I am particularly conscious of these nuances because at Oxford where I am based there is such a strong tradition in classical studies. When I last counted there were, at Oxford, twenty-three historians of ancient Greece and Rome and but one of the modern country, myself. And I don't actually have a job. Something of an imbalance I would suggest.

While talking of classics at Oxford I might mention in passing one of my earliest publications, a long article, quite unnecessarily pedantic in nature and of the kind that academics are wont to write early in their careers in an effort to establish their scholarly credentials. This was a study of an attempt made in 1788 to secure a post in Oxford for Adamantios Koraes, who was subsequently, of course, to emerge as the intellectual guru of the movement for Greek independence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the movement that was to culminate in outbreak of the war for independence in 1821.

Koraes's French patron, the classical scholar D'Ansse de Villoison, wrote in 1788 to the Revd Thomas Burgess, a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, to ask whether a position might be found for a young Greek who was a classical scholar of quite exceptional brilliance. No post was forthcoming for him and it was hardly to be expected that the port-sodden backwater that was Oxford in the eighteenth century, so well described by Edward Gibbon in his memoirs, would open its doors to a foreigner, however distinguished. And so, in that same year, 1788, Koraes moved not to Oxford but to Paris where he was to live until his death in 1833. He thus experienced at first hand the turbulent years of the French Revolution and of the revo-

lutionary and Napoleonic wars, an experience that was necessarily to have a profound influence on him, although he was certainly no political radical. It is tempting to speculate how Koraes's career and thinking might have evolved had the dons at Oxford been more open-minded and had Koraes spent his career sequestered among the dreaming, albeit somnolent, spires of Oxford rather than in the turmoil of revolutionary and Napoleonic Paris. Might his interests have been entirely devoted to classical scholarship rather than trying to instil a sense of national consciousness, an awareness that they were the heirs to an intellectual inheritance that was universally revered, into his fellow countrymen under the Turkish yoke? For we sometimes forget that Koraes was among the *koryphaioi*, the most outstanding, of the classical philologists in the Europe of his day. Richard Porson, the great Cambridge classicist, who had nothing but contempt for most of his contemporaries, had high praise for Koraes as a textual critic. However, if no room could be found for Koraes in Oxford, nonetheless it is noteworthy that what appears to be his first publication in the field of classical studies, the "Observationes in Hippocratem", was published by Thomas Burgess in Oxford in 1792 in his *Musei Oxoniensis Litterarii Conspectus.* Koraes had a long association with another Oxford scholar, the Revd Robert Holmes, a Fellow of New College. He collated manuscripts for what Holmes hoped would be the definitive edition of the Septuagint, work for which Koraes was paid but which he found uncongenial and referred to as "*mon collier de misère*".

Increasingly, my interests are turning, or perhaps I should say returning, to the history of the Greeks who have lived outwith the present boundaries of the Greek state and to the history of the Greek diaspora, not necessarily the same phenomenon. It is therefore somewhat frustrating to find that the obvious title for my book, *The Greeks overseas*, was preempted many years ago by my Oxford colleague, John Boardman, for his excellent study of the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia. But a book entitled *The Italians overseas* would

surely be about the world-wide emigration of Italians in modern times, what the Italians themselves call *l'altra Italia*, the other Italy. As I shall clearly have to come up with another title for my study of the Greek diaspora, perhaps I should take a leaf out of the Italian book and call it, not *The Greeks overseas*, but *The other Greece*: Η άλλη Ελλάδα. This would not be a bad title at all.

Greeks have of course in modern times settled in many parts of the world. The Earl of Cromer, sometime British High Commissioner in Egypt, in his magisterial two volume anatomy of *Modern Egypt* published in 1907, necessarily wrote of the large Greek community in the country. He was fulsome in his praise for what he termed the "highly respectable" and "high-class" Greeks whose presence in Egypt was "an unmixed benefit to the country". He was less enthusiastic about the "low-class Greeks" but nonetheless wrote somewhat patronisingly that "many of the small Greek traders are fully deserving of respect." "The Greek of this class," he wrote,

> has an extraordinary talent for retail trade. He will risk his life in the pursuit of petty gain [...] the Greek pushes his way into the most remote parts of the Soudan and of Abyssinia. Wherever, in fact, there is the smallest prospect of buying in a cheap and selling in a dear market, there will the petty Greek trader be found.

He recalled having visited in 1889 Sarras, some thirty miles south of Wadi Halfa, at that time "the farthest outpost of the Egyptian army" and "situated in the midst of a howling wilderness".

> The post had only been established for a few days. Nevertheless, there I found a Greek already selling sardines, biscuits, etc., to a very limited number of customers, out of a hole in a rock in which he had set up a temporary shop.

It is precisely the entrepreneurial spirit described by Cromer that has taken Greeks to many parts of the world. One of the

few areas of the planet with only small numbers of Greeks is south-east Asia, for the Chinese in this region have no need of the entrepreneurial talents of the Greeks. In the two-thirds of the world where they have settled, Greeks have striven to recreate, so far as they have been able, familiar aspects of life in the πατρίδα, their homeland; focusing on church, καφενείον (coffee shop) and τοπικά σωματεία, associations of migrants from the same village or region of Greece. The history of Greek emigration, as is so frequently the case with other diaspora peoples, is often the story of chain migration, with migrants from the same village or town in the Greek lands migrating to the same town or city in the new world. There they would have the comfort and support in an alien (and, in the early days, not infrequently hostile) environment of familiar faces (and, very importantly, familiar food), neighbours and relatives, and above all of being able to converse in their own language and worship in their own churches. My wife's family on her mother's side, before they joined the great westward migration of the 1920s, came from Monessen, a town on the Monongahela river in Pennsylvania. We were therefore intrigued some years ago to visit the museum on Chios and to learn that Monessen was a favoured destination of early migrants from the island to the US. So much so, indeed, that there is apparently a saying on Chios, "Έλληνες στην Αμερική, Χιώτες στη Μανέσση" ("Greeks in the United States, Chiots in Monessen").

I have a particular interest in the history of Greek migration to the western states of the United States. Thanks to the pioneering and tireless researches of Helen Papanikolas of Salt Lake City we have a fascinating insight into Greek immigrant life in Utah in the early years of the last century and of the way in which the early immigrants, mainly railroad workers and miners, strove to reconstruct, in many respects successfully, a simulacrum of life in the old country in Utah. Almost without exception these early immigrants to Utah were young men. In the early years their chances of returning to their πατρίδα to

find a bride were minimal. Many of them married local girls, who, in Utah, were of course very often Mormons. When I visited Salt Lake City some years ago I was fascinated to learn that there was a Latter Day Saint, that is to say Mormon, Hellenic Society. This was composed of the children and grandchildren of these marriages. They were Mormons by religion, very few of the third and later generations knew any Greek, but they had Greek names and were extremely proud of their Greek ancestry. They had lost not only their language, which was inevitable, but also their religion. This raises the question of how do we define "Greekness", a big subject that I cannot discuss here.

In parenthesis, however, I might somewhat frivolously add that until the early 1990s there was one simple and straightforward indicator of "Greekness". In a characteristically populist gesture, Melina Mercouri, the flamboyant Minister of Culture in the PASOK government of the 1980s, decreed that entry to Greek museums and archaeological sites would be free to those of Greek ethnicity, whether Greek nationals or Greeks of the diaspora. In practice, not only Greeks but others of broadly "Mediterranean" appearance, e.g. Italians and Spaniards (and even Turks!), provided they had the sense to keep their mouths shut as they approached the ticket kiosk, would be waved through while "barbarians" were required to pay, with the φύλακας acting as the final arbiter of Greek ethnicity. This discriminatory practice was ended, however, at the behest of the European Commission, which decreed that either all visitors had to pay or none.

While on the subject of communities of the Greek diaspora I should like to register my regret that we still do not have a comprehensive, scholarly history of the Greek, including of course the Greek Cypriot, community in Britain. A glance at the large Greek churches built in London and Liverpool, in the Byzantine style, and in Manchester, in the neoclassical style, is evidence enough of the extraordinary prosperity of this community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. An interesting aspect of the story of Greek migration to Britain in the nineteenth century is the way in which some of the immigrants, originating mainly from the island of Chios, rapidly assimilated to the ways of the upper-middle class, a process on which A. A. Pallis's *Ξενιτεμένοι Έλληνες* (1954) is revealing. Any study of the Greek presence in Britain would necessarily include the fascinating story of the establishment in Oxford at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of a Greek College. This was established in Gloucester Hall (Aula Glocestrensis) on the site of what is now Worcester College. The College, which was supported by the Levant Company, was the brainchild of the Revd Benjamin Woodroffe and sought to prepare young Greeks as "learned and able preachers and schoolmasters in their own country". The idea was to invite Greek priests and monks to study for a few years in Oxford in the hope, altogether forlorn, that on returning to the Greek lands they might be inspired to initiate an Anglican-style reformation in the Orthodox world. Suspicions were aroused that the Anglicans were seeking to gain control of the Ecumenical Patriarchate through graduates of the College. There were also complaints that Greeks at the College had less freedom to use their own prayers and follow their own usages than they had even in Rome, the seat of the hated papacy. Moreover the damp Oxford climate and dismal food at the College proved unattractive, while the Erasmian pronunciation of ancient Greek in which it was intended that they should converse was unappealing. Had English food been better and Oxford been in a position to offer drinkable wine rather than "nasty" beer, might the Greek Church have experienced the reformation so anxiously wished for by self-deluding Anglican divines? The short-lived experiment came to an end when in 1705 the Ecumenical Patriarchate, worried by the temptations afforded to the students by the flesh-pots of London, decreed that "the irregular life of certain priests and lay-men of the Eastern Church living in London is a matter of grave concern to the Church. Wherefore the Church forbids any to go and

study at Oxford, be they never so willing." One of these alleged reprobates was Serapheim, whose revision of Maximos Kallioupolitis's translation of the New Testament was published by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1703 only, according to Alexander Helladius, to be burnt in the courtyard of the Patriarchate in Constantinople. Another alumnus was Frangiskos Prosalendis of Corfu who published a short book "most useful to the Orthodox" in Amsterdam in 1706 entitled "The Heretical Teacher reproached by the Orthodox Pupil", in which he claimed to expose the sophistries of Woodroffe and his ψευδοφροντιστήριον. While talking about early Greek students in Oxford I should not fail to mention Nathanail Konopios, a Cretan monk with the rank of Patriarchal πρωτοσύγκελλος. He studied at Balliol College in the early 1640s where he is recorded as the first person to have introduced the drinking of coffee to Oxford. Puzzlingly, he subsequently became both chaplain and a Minor Canon of Christ Church, Oxford and, latterly, Metropolitan of Smyrna.

My interest in this other Greece, the άλλη Ελλάδα, the endlessly fascinating world of the Greeks outwith the Greek state, stems from a summer which I spent over forty years ago in the fabled, but in reality nowadays rather grim, city of Trebizond, Trapezounda or Trabzon, on the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea, the last segment of the Byzantine Empire to fall to the Ottoman Turks in 1461, eight years after the Fall of Constantinople itself. Professor David Talbot Rice, one of the pioneers in the study of Byzantine art in this country and a gentleman-scholar of the old school, with whom I was to take a course in Byzantine art as part of my history degree at the University of Edinburgh, invited a student friend and myself to spend a summer assisting in the uncovering of the frescoes, dating from the thirteenth century, in the church of Aghia Sophia, at that time a mosque but now a museum. In recent years there have been calls by Islamists that the museum should revert to being a mosque but so far these have been resisted. On its conversion from a church into a mosque at the

time of the fall of Trebizond in 1461, the frescoes had been covered with whitewash and plaster. One can all too readily imagine the anguish of the Trapezuntine Greeks when, almost exactly five hundred years previously, their much cherished church had been turned into a mosque and the magnificent frescoes covered from sight, seemingly for ever. It would be our task to remove the plaster and whitewash. It was a project that sounded more enticing, for me at least, in prospect than proved to be the case in reality.

After being armed with a cheque about a foot square for £25 drawn on the Ottoman Bank, and following a train journey from London lasting the best part of a week, I duly arrived in Trebizond. I must say that I found the work extremely boring and rapidly abandoned any aspirations that I had to be an archaeologist. Perched atop rickety wooden scaffolding, in the humid summer heat of Trebizond, our job was to scrape off the plaster and whitewash with dental picks. This required an infinite degree of patience that I soon discovered that I simply did not have. Of course it was very exciting to uncover tiny areas of fresco on which no human eye had gazed since the fifteenth century. But in my case that excitement soon wore off.

The tedium of the work, however, was relieved by the excursions that we made at weekends into the fabulously beautiful hinterland of Trebizond, where the Pontic Alps fall precipitately to the Black Sea. These were led by David Winfield, who was in charge of the Aghia Sophia project. One such εκδρομή was to the spectacularly situated monastic ruin of Panaghia Sumelas. This is now visited each year by tens of thousands of visitors, almost all of them Muslims, for whom, as for Christians, it is a place of pilgrimage. But in the summer of 1960 it was not easy of access and was scarcely visited at all and we had the place entirely to ourselves.

In the course of these excursions, and in walks around the rather uninviting city of Trebizond itself, I was surprised to encounter Orthodox Churches, half ruined, or turned into warehouses or barns, that had clearly been built in the nineteenth

century, long after the fall of the Empire of Trebizond. There were also fine neoclassical mansions and school buildings, dating from the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. It was gradually borne in on me that, well within living memory, large numbers of Greeks had been living in Trebizond and in Pontos generally, something of which I had been entirely unaware before that summer. After all, the Greek population of the region had been uprooted and transplanted to Greece, under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, only 37 years previously. In fact, in the year 2002, it is rather longer since my sojourn in Trebizond in 1960 than between 1960 and 1923, when the Greeks had been forced out of a region which they had inhabited since antiquity. I returned to Edinburgh University determined, firstly, not to become an archaeologist, and, secondly, to find out more about this recent Greek community in the region, whose ghostly presence lingered on in the architecture of Pontos.

It is undoubtedly due to that distant Trapezuntine summer that I have always been as much interested in the history of the Greeks who lived outwith the boundaries of the Greek state as in the history of those who have lived within Greece's present-day borders, which might in other circumstances have been very different. One consequence of this interest is that I am now trying to write a large-scale history, not of Greece, but rather of the Greeks, in modern times. This would naturally include the history of the Greeks (and indeed non-ethnic Greeks) of the Greek state but also the Greeks of η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή ("Our" East), to use the evocative Greek expression for the great Greek-speaking Orthodox commonwealth that, until the First World War, stretched from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, from the Carpathian mountains to Egypt. The third strand would be the history of the Greeks of the world-wide diaspora, that is to say the numerous communities arising out of emigration from the generous confines of η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή. I am sure that this is a better way of looking at Greek history than focusing narrowly on the history of the Greek state.

On graduating from university, I was determined to learn more about the Greek communities of Pontos and other parts of Asia Minor in modern times and it was this interest that took me to Athens in 1966-67. By that time I had developed a particular interest in the *karamanlides* (Turkish *karamanlılar)*, the Turkish-speaking Greeks of Asia Minor, who used the Greek alphabet to write Turkish, and for whom an entire and substantial literature was printed in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in *karamanlidika* (Turkish *karamanlıca*), that is to say Turkish printed with Greek characters. One of my prized possessions is a copy of what may be the last ever publication in *karamanlidika* of which copies are known to survive. This was entitled *Aziz Alexiosun ve cümle Azizlerin ve Mahşer Divanının. Nakliyatları ve Cana faydalı Nasıhatlar. Iakov on iki Evlatları ile* (St Alexios and all the Saints and the Last Judgement. Traditions and advices useful to the Soul. Jacob and his twelve sons). It was printed in Thessaloniki in 1929, for books in Turkish in Greek characters were printed in Greece for some years after the 1923 Exchange of Populations for the benefit of the large numbers of monoglot Turkish-speakers who had been included in the transfer. One may sometimes be in a position to possess a copy of the first book printed in a given language but it is rare indeed to be able to say that one possesses a copy of what may be the last book printed in a language or a form of a language.

Like many Greek books published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a good number of these books contain lists of subscribers who contributed in advance to the cost of publication. I was looking the other day at another *karamanli* book, the *Doğru dinin talimi* (the Teaching of the True Religion), published in Constantinople in 1839. This contains such a list of subscribers, from many parts of Asia Minor, many of them rejoicing in such Turcicised names as Karaman Kalaycı Ioannoğlu and Usta Yovan Arzumanoğlu. Among the two hundred or so subscribers is a single woman, one "Elisavet" (Elizabeth) of Ürgüp (Prokopi). Who, I wonder, was this Elisavet?

My own copy has a marvellous handwritten note, likewise in Turkish with Greek characters, on the inside cover. This reads in translation: "If you ask whose book this is, it belongs to Gavriiloğlu Ozalı Giorgos. Whoever takes it let him read and return it. If he does not give it back may he go to hell. If he does give it back, may he rest in holiness. May God protect him and may he find a thousand in the place of one."

I was happily pursuing my interest in this rather obscure aspect of the recent history of the Greek people in Athens, when the Colonels' coup of 21 April 1967 took place. So absurd, crass and anachronistic does the Colonels' dictatorship appear in hindsight that it difficult to appreciate the pall it cast within and without the country. It was not long, however, before the irrepressible sense of humour of the Greeks shone through even in those grim days. They took pleasure in juxtaposing two of the junta's fatuous slogans. The first was that "On 20 April 1967 Greece stood poised on the edge of an abyss." Hence, of course, the need for the Colonels' intervention. The second was that "On 21 April 1967 Greece took a giant step forward."

It was difficult for a historian such as myself to live through a military coup without wanting to know more about how this sad state of affairs had come about. So, as I said earlier, I shifted gear and began to focus, for a time at least, on the recent history and politics of Greece. I think in this connection in particular of the late Nikos Oikonomides, the Byzantine historian, and of his wife, Veta Zakhariadou, the Ottomanist, and likewise of Yanko Pesmazoglou, the economist and banker, and of his wife Miranda. They rapidly inducted my wife, who had been serving as the librarian of the British School, and myself, into the realities and complexities of post-war Greek politics about which until then we had been sadly ignorant. When we returned to Britain I was able to gain an insight into the complex and fascinating world of Greek émigré politics. It is difficult to credit the late and unlamented Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos, the leading putschist, with having had any bene-

ficial effect whatsoever on Greek political life. Paradoxically, however, if Colonel Papadopoulos's influence on Greek politics was an altogether malign one, he did have a positive influence on British political life.

This sounds rather unlikely but it happens to be true. The story is a curious one that I hope to tell at greater length elsewhere. During the επταετία, the seven years of the Colonels' misrule, Eleni Vlachou, the courageous, independent and sharp-tongued owner of *Καθημερινή*, Greece's nearest thing to a newspaper of record and which had been founded by her father, was living in exile in London. She had levanted in disguise from her flat in Athens under the eyes of the Colonels' normally super-efficient security police.

In London she set up an émigré journal, *The Hellenic Review*, which had a rather minimal circulation, although Eleni was an exceptionally skilled performer on television and radio and did much to undermine the Colonels with her caustic wit. I used to write for *The Hellenic Review* and from time to time translated documents for it. One autumn morning in 1968 I was having a καφεδάκι with Eleni in her London office, which was the centre of a spider's web of anti-junta intrigue such as would have delighted that arch-intriguer, Compton Mackenzie. As I was leaving, she said that she had just received a document from Konstantinos Karamanlis, the once and future prime minister and future president of Greece, then likewise living in exile but in Paris rather than London. An anti-junta mole in Papadopoulos's office in Athens had filched it from the dictator's desk, photocopied it and sent it to Karamanlis. He had forwarded it on to his old friend Eleni Vlachou. She asked me to translate the document for publication in *The Hellenic Review*. There was no sense of urgency in her request, but on reading through the document on the bus back to the Library of the British Museum in which, as a graduate student, I practically lived at the time, I almost fell off my seat with excitement. For it appeared to indicate that the junta had, albeit at one remove, a British member of parliament in its pay.

The document was a Greek translation of a report sent to Papadopoulos by the head of the British public relations firm that the Colonels had hired, at very considerable expense, in a desperate but initially not unsuccessful effort to spruce up their battered image in the British and, indeed, European media. I remember dashing into the British Museum to telephone Eleni to ask whether I might take the document round to a friend who worked on the *Sunday Times*. My contact shared my view that the contents of the report were potential dynamite and the *Sunday Times* planned to splash the story in its next edition.

The public relations firm involved, however, got wind of what was afoot and secured an injunction to prevent publication. This proved to be a serious tactical error, for what would probably have proved to be a one-day wonder, or to mix metaphors, a storm in a teacup, turned into a protracted struggle in the courts. In the end, the *Sunday Times*, amid vast publicity, won the right to publish and be damned, or not, as the case might be. The exposure of the numerous, frequently ingenious, activities of the PR man and the revelation that he had a member of parliament on his firm's payroll effectively blew out of the water what had up to that time proved to be a highly successful public relations campaign on behalf of the Colonels. One of these successes was a junket which took five MPs (two Labour, one of whom was the MP on the PR firm's payroll, two Conservative and one Liberal), some accompanied by their wives, to Greece for the first anniversary of the coup in April 1968. They duly accepted Papadopoulos's "word of honour as a man, a soldier and an officer" that the junta intended to move towards democratic government. Another ploy of the PR man was an approach to the Oxford historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, who had written an article deemed favourable to the junta, to try to persuade him to write a history of Greece which would "dismiss the past intellectually", whatever that might mean, a proposal which Trevor-Roper declined. In talking in Cambridge of pro-Colonel propaganda activities I

should mention the famous Garden House Hotel affair when some 400 students sought to break up a pro-Colonel *glendi*. Stavros Papastavrou, a Fellow of Peterhouse, the then Lewis Gibson lecturer in Modern Greek in the University and a stalwart in the campaign to blacken the Colonels' regime, characteristically spoke up for those arrested, as did his Peterhouse colleague, Elias Bredsdorff, Reader in Scandinavian Studies. Bredsdorff, indeed, was described by the ineffable Mr Justice Melford Stevenson, as exerting an "evil influence" over the protesting students.

Such was the storm caused by the revelations of the activities of the Colonels' PR firm and, in particular, that an MP was in its employ as a lobbyist, that the British prime minister of the day, Harold Wilson, felt obliged to set up a parliamentary Select Committee to examine the possibility of requiring members of parliament formally to declare their outside interests. These too often took the form of substantial retainers to MPs from PR firms engaged in burnishing the image of dictatorships and other forms of concealed lobbying. Predictably, perhaps, the Select Committee on this occasion hit the issue into the long grass, failing to come to grips with what was, and indeed remains, a serious problem, and came up with vague and naïve proposals for a voluntary register of interests rather than for the compulsory register that was so obviously needed. Such a compulsory register came into existence a few years later, following another, even greater scandal, the Poulson affair, when the pressure on parliament to put its house in order proved irresistible. Papadopoulos can thus legitimately be considered to be the grandfather, or should I say godfather, if not the father, of the present compulsory register of members' interests in the British parliament. If Papadopoulos is the godfather of the register of members' interests then I might somewhat immodestly claim to be its midwife.

It is instructive to look back at the period of the Colonels' dictatorship and to speculate as to why Greek affairs received so much coverage at that time, particularly given the generally

negative press that Greece has received subsequently in the British, and indeed US, press over issues such as terrorism, the Macedonian issue and, more recently, the British plane-spotters. But to attempt to do that would require another lecture. Suffice it to say that the way in which the Greek Colonels became such hate figures for the liberal intelligentsia in Britain helped in a somewhat paradoxical way to put Greece and its modern history and politics on the map. Publishers were much more willing than in the past to consider books on Greek history and politics for publication. Newspapers and journals were much more inclined to publish articles about the country. An interest in Greece, its recent history and politics, was no longer seen as an eccentric one. I was fortunate, too, in that the development of my interest in Greece in modern times coincided with what, in retrospect, appears as the golden age of the British university system, when there was actually money for new posts in somewhat recondite subjects, thus obviating the need to go cap in hand to potential donors, most of whom have their own agenda in agreeing to fund academic posts. In 1969 a lectureship was created specifically in Modern Greek History at the University of London (yes, alas, it was named "Modern Greek History") and I was fortunate enough to be appointed to it. The post still exists but, somewhat mysteriously, it has metamorphosed into the Cyprus Hellenic Foundation Lectureship in Modern Greek History. At the same time in that bountiful era a lectureship in the History of the Orthodox Church was also created at the University of London. This was held by Philip Sherrard and, unfortunately, lapsed when he took early retirement. As Samuel Huntington's controversial thesis of a "clash of civilizations" edges towards realisation, it is sad indeed that such a potentially significant post was allowed to fall into abeyance.

The μεταπολίτευση of 1974, the return of Greece to the family of democratic nations, also had very positive consequences for the study of the recent history and politics of the country in Greece itself. Over the past thirty years the study of

Greek history and politics in Greece itself has changed beyond recognition. There are no longer any taboo subjects. An interest in social history is no longer deemed to be *prima facie* evidence of communist leanings. It is extraordinary to recall that when Nikos Svoronos published in 1955 in Paris his (extremely concise) *Histoire de la Grèce Moderne*, a Marxist analysis, he was stripped of his Greek passport. Young Greek scholars no longer feel the need to go abroad to work on topics that might be considered too sensitive to be studied at home. Significantly, the study of the modern history of Greece is no longer so dependent on the archives of foreign governments, in particular the archives of Britain, France and the United States. These archives may be seductively well organised but inevitably they give a view of Greece's history as refracted through the eye of diplomats stationed in the country. The observations of these diplomats were, and no doubt continue to be, frequently acute, but inevitably reliance on such sources can give only a partial view of Greek realities.

I remember in particular one gem. Following the Italian attack on Greece in October 1940, Lady Palairet, the wife of the then British minister to Greece, Sir Michael Palairet, organised a knitting circle to knit comforts, scarves, gloves etc. for the Greek troops on the Albanian front, an enterprise in which the German minister's wife was likewise engaged. Lady Palairet was apparently something of a battle-axe and to irreverent junior members of the British Embassy she and her knitting circle were known as the "Four Horsewomen of the Acropolis". I was amazed to learn recently that the British Ladies' Sewing Circle in Athens is, after sixty years, still in existence and, until recently, continued to meet in the British ambassador's residence.

The treasures present in Greek archives, including the very rich, if disordered, archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are now being exploited to the full. One consequence of all this exciting activity is that the centre of gravity in the study of the modern history of Greece has returned to where it

always should have been, to Greece itself. There has been a welcome resurgence of interest in the history of η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή, the Greek East. There has been much fascinating work in establishing the history of the hitherto submerged Greek populations of the former Soviet Union, many of whose members have in recent years migrated to Greece. This is a highly significant development for a country which has, of course, hitherto been an exporter rather than an importer of migrants. Likewise, there is a whole new emphasis on studies of the Greek diaspora proper, that is to say on emigration outwith the generous confines of η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή.

There are, of course, many areas of study still crying out for research. One such would be an academic study of the diaspora constituted by the flight of communist refugees following their defeat in the 1946-1949 civil war to various countries of Eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union and, in particular, to the city of Tashkent in Uzbekistan. These refugee communities kept alive, and passed on to their children, a strong sense of Greek identity, although members of this particular diaspora community were precluded from relying on the establishment of Greek Orthodox churches, which have played, and continue to play, such an important role in preserving a sense of Greek identity in diaspora communities in various parts of the world. The mechanisms by which such a strong sense of identity was preserved in such austerely secular societies certainly merits study. There is still a reluctance on the part of Greek historians to write works of synthesis aimed at a general as well as a scholarly audience. Likewise it is unfortunate that there is not much of a tradition of writing critical political biographies. It is surprising, for instance, that there is no modern life of that great and charismatic statesman Eleftherios Venizelos. Nor is there a modern life of Adamantios Koraes, a man of extraordinary intellect, one of the most significant figures in the Greek national movement and a highly important figure in the history of European classical scholarship.

In the last two or three years we have sadly witnessed the deaths of a number of British people whose connection with Greece goes back to the Second World War, and indeed before: people of the stature of Monty Woodhouse, Nick Hammond and Nigel Clive, some of the last of a generation that not only wrote about the modern history of Greece, but helped, in significant ways, to shape that history. But it is encouraging to report the emergence in Britain, the United States, Australia and elsewhere of a younger generation of historians, born long after the war, some but by no means all, of Greek ancestry, with strong academic interests in the modern history and politics of Greece, even if they remain heavily outnumbered, and outresourced, but hopefully not outgunned, by the classicists and Byzantinists.

There is still, however, a disturbing degree of ignorance in the wider world of the historical forces and events that have helped to shape Greek attitudes and attitudes in the Balkans in general. To take a case in point. At the height of the Macedonian controversy in the early 1990s, Greece generally received a bad press in Britain, Europe and the United States. Greece's partners in the European Union were baffled that a politically stable Greece, with a relatively strong economy, well-equipped armed forces and membership both of the NATO alliance and of the European Union, could view with such apparent apprehension the emergence of an independent Republic of Macedonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and regard it as constituting any kind of threat, given its small size, weak economy and the challenge to its stability posed by a large and increasingly restless Albanian minority.

Official Greek government propaganda, mistakenly in my view, focused heavily on demonstrating that Macedonia as a geographical entity had been Greek since the era of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great and, indeed, earlier. This emphasis on the distant past of the region resulted in there being little appreciation outside Greece that Greek apprehensions, which appeared to many outsiders to be exaggerated,

were occasioned by events which had occurred within living memory rather than in remote antiquity. The greater part of the refugees from Asia Minor and elsewhere had been settled in Greek Macedonia in the 1920s, and as a result many living in northern Greece had parents, grandparents or great-grandparents whose lives had been turned upside down by the process of uprooting and re-settlement. They were naturally alarmed at any suggestion of claims against the country's territorial integrity, for these might result in further upheavals. Moreover, during the Second World War, western Thrace and a part of Macedonia had suffered from an extremely harsh Bulgarian occupation. Greeks had been killed in considerable numbers by the Bulgarian occupiers or "ethnically cleansed", as we would now say, in large numbers from the region, and Bulgarians settled in their place. Those from countries whose borders have been long established and are unchallenged sometimes find it difficult to appreciate the anxieties of those living in a country whose final borders were established as recently as 1947, when the Dodecanese islands, hitherto under Italian occupation, were incorporated into the Greek state. As I liked to remind my students, in the days when I actually had some, Konstantinos Karamanlis, who retired from the presidency of Greece as recently as 1995, had been born in 1907 an Ottoman citizen in the village of Küpköy or Proti in Macedonia when the region still formed part of the Ottoman Empire and was being bitterly fought over by rival Greek and Bulgarian guerrilla bands.

I well remember how when I was carrying out research in Greece in the 1960s I would often listen to the broadcast by the Greek Red Cross that went out every afternoon at about 3 p.m. Each day there would be a plaintive litany of the names of individuals who had disappeared without trace in the series of disasters that befell Greece during the century that has recently ended. These included the catastrophic defeat of the Greek armies in Asia Minor in 1922 and the consequent uprooting of Greek populations with roots going back to antiquity and their flight or forcible transplanting to Greece. They included the

harsh years of the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation of Greece during the Second World War, years which saw savage collective punishments inflicted by the occupying powers, the wholesale deportation and virtual destruction of Greek Jewry, and appalling famine. In mentioning the terrible famine of the occupation years it is worth remembering an interesting and little-remarked coincidence. At almost exactly the same time that a party of British saboteurs was being parachuted into Greece in late September 1942 by the Special Operations Executive with the mission of destroying, in co-operation with Greek resistance forces, the Gorgopotamos viaduct carrying the railway line between Thessaloniki and Athens, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief was being established for the specific purpose of alleviating the famine in Greece. From this small acorn the subsequent mighty oak of Oxfam was to grow.

The horrors of the occupation were followed by the horrors of civil war, as Greek fought Greek in a vicious internecine conflict. At each of these junctures, besides the large numbers who lost their lives, substantial numbers of people went missing, their fate unknown to relatives and friends. Hence the infinitely sad Red Cross appeals for information about missing children, parents, brothers and sisters. These always ended with the haunting refrain, "Από τότε αγνοείται η τύχη του/της" and the name of the missing person ("Since then nothing is known of the fate of so-and-so"). Not infrequently the τότε ("then") would refer to someone last seen in the chaos of the burning and evacuation of Smyrna in September 1922. Much of this recent historical experience of the Greek people still remains a closed book in the wider world. The task of the historian must be to try to break down the barriers of ignorance that surround such a rich, if in many ways tragic and misunderstood, modern history.

In conclusion, I should say that studying the recent history of Greece has not been without incident. I am in fact writing about some of these curious ups and downs in what will, in effect, be a memoir of life in the academy. These ups and

downs have resulted in part from my interest, a strictly academic one it goes without saying, in the παρασκήνια of academic life, in the events behind the scenes, which are so important in the affairs of academic institutions, but which so seldom see the light of day, let alone get written about. This interest was both reflected in, and stimulated by, my account of the establishment in 1919 and subsequent rapid implosion of the Koraes Chair of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature at King's College, London. This chair can be considered as the progenitor of the now common phenomenon in the English-speaking world of the "ethnic" chair, that is chairs founded with endowments from foreign governments, ethnic and religious communities or rich individuals. When the first incumbent of the Koraes chair, the young Arnold Toynbee, who had a pronounced distaste for educated Greek "black coats", manifested a strong emotional sympathy with the Turkish nationalists in the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922 the rich Anglo-Greeks who had put up the money for the chair were, understandably, not best pleased. The situation became so fraught that it was not long before Toynbee submitted what he himself termed his "involuntary" resignation. But controversy continued to dog this chair even after Toynbee's departure and the subsequent history of the chair will make an interesting and instructive story. This interest in the παρασκήνια of events is one that no doubt derives from my interest in Greek politics, where a knowledge of the παρασκήνια is often the key to understanding of political events.

I shall have to find an appropriate title for this academic memoir. Once again, I find that the appropriate title has been preempted, as it was with John Boardman and his *The Greeks overseas*. This time a Greek author got there first with *Ο πράκτορας που ήρθε από την ομίχλη* – the spy who came in, not from the cold, but from the fog. For no one with an interest in recent Greek history or politics can hope not, at some stage or other, to be denounced as a spy. *Ο πράκτορας που ήρθε από*

την ομίχλη by Solon Grigoriadis is a literally fantastic book. It posits that it was Ellis Waterhouse, the art historian who played a not wholly constructive role in Greek affairs when attached to the British Embassy to the Greek government-in-exile in Cairo during the Second World War, who was the ξένος δάκτυλος, the foreign finger, who controlled with satanic cunning, on behalf of Churchill, British policy towards Greece during the Second World War.

I have to admit that I have occasionally been known to mutter out loud that I wished that, instead of studying the history and politics of Greece, I had chosen to navigate the seemingly calmer waters of, say, Norwegian history and politics. But whenever I have done so my wife has been quick to point out that while the study of the history of Greece may at times be frustrating, even on occasion hazardous to one's academic health, it is never, ever boring. And that is something indeed to be very thankful for.

Cavafy and Cantacuzenus: allies or enemies?

Anthony Hirst
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Clearly my title is a little odd. There is no obvious way in which a fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor turned monk and historian and a twentieth-century Greek-Egyptian civil servant and poet can be either allies or enemies, except in the imagination of the civil servant and poet, or in the imagination of his readers. The question, "Are Cavafy and Cantacuzenus allies or enemies?", can only address itself to our judgement, or, more interestingly, to judgements we can observe Cavafy making or infer that he made.

One of Cavafy's "unfinished" poems refers to Cantacuzenus as "that worthy person our race had at that time" (ὁ ἄξιος ἄνθρωπος ποῦ εἶχε ἡ φυλή μας τότε),[1] while a published poem on the coronation of Cantacuzenus comments parenthetically "great was the poverty of our wretched state" (τοῦ ταλαιπώρου κράτους μας ἦταν μεγάλ' ἡ πτώχεια).[2] This use of the first person – "*our* race", "*our* state" – may indicate Cavafy's sense of some diachronic unity to which both he himself and John VI Cantacuzenus belong; and Cavafy's use of κράτος may be compared to the use of ἔθνος in the title of Paparrigopoulos's major work of the 1870s, *Ἱστορία τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους (A History of the Greek Nation)*, with which Cavafy was certainly familiar. Paparrigopoulos's account of the Greek "nation" begins in remote antiquity and ends in his own

[1] "The Patriarch" (Cavafy 1994: 207).
[2] "Of coloured glass" (Cavafy 1991: II, 50).

times,[3] and like Cavafy, Paparrigopoulos associates himself and his Greek readers with Byzantium, through such expressions as "*our* Medieval empire" and "*our* emperors".[4]

One form of our question, then, is this: in the long perspective of Greek history, does Cavafy see himself and Cantacuzenus as being in some sense on the same side? Does Cavafy consider that Cantacuzenus had the best interests of the Greek people at heart, that his actions were for the good of the Greek κράτος, ἔθνος or φυλή (state, nation or race)? Or does he agree with Gibbon and Paparrigopoulos that it was Cantacuzenus's vanity and personal ambition that guided his decisions, to the detriment of the empire? At first sight the poetry suggests that Cavafy takes Cantacuzenus's part against his detractors. But the obvious in Cavafy is often misleading, as I shall try to indicate in the case of his poems on Cantacuzenus.

The question (allies or enemies?) can also be posed in the context of contemporary politics – contemporary, that is, to Cavafy. It is very striking that all of Cavafy's sixteen extant Byzantine poems reached their final form (though not, in many cases, a definitive form) in the period 1914-1927, and that only two of them were first drafted before 1914. Obviously these statistics depend on my definition of a Byzantine poem; and for my purposes, a Byzantine poem is one which refers to historically attested persons or events within or related to the Byzantine Empire, in the period between the accession of Justinian in 527 and the fall of Trebizond in 1461.[5]

Cavafy wrote several Byzantine poems around 1890, but later destroyed almost all of them. What we can call his second Byzantine period (1914-27) is the period of the First World War, the National Schism, the Asia Minor Disaster, the

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[3] Publication of the first edition of this multi-volume history was completed in 1876.

[4] Kitromilides 1998: 29.

[5] For a list of the sixteen poems which meet these criteria see Hirst 1998: 110-11.

exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, the discrediting of the Greek monarchy, and the proclamation of a republic. In the earlier part of this period Byzantium was very much a part of Greek public discourse, for there was a real expectation of achieving what had become the central goal of the Great Idea: the re-establishment of a Greek capital in Constantinople. It is scarcely likely that Cavafy's renewed interest in Byzantium was entirely unconnected with the politics and the momentous events of the times; and, as I have suggested elsewhere, his Byzantine poems up to 1922 can be read as veiled warnings of the dangers of Greek irredentism, that is, the pursuit of the Great Idea.[6] The four Cantacuzenus poems come later, though. They are closely dated to 1924-25, with an addition to one of them in or after 1927. In other words, they come after the Disaster, and after the future (or lack of future) of the Greek monarchy had, for the time being, been decided.

I will return later to the specific role which I think the person of Cantacuzenus may have played in Cavafy's exploration of historical analogies. In the meantime, I will note a third way in which our question might be posed: Are Cantacuzenus and Cavafy allies – or perhaps it would be better here to say fellow spirits – as writers and as individuals deeply concerned for their own reputations? It would be nice to say this illuminates the other versions of the question; but, as we shall see, it clouds the issue.

In the four books of his *Histories*, Cantacuzenus is, as Gibbon puts it, "like Moses and Cæsar [...] the principal actor in the scenes which he describes".[7] By the time he composed his *Histories*, Cantacuzenus had abdicated and retired to a monastery. As a monk he had taken a new name, Ioasaph, and he was, in a sense which may have been real enough to him, no longer Ἰωάννης Καντακουζηνός who had been Grand Domestic and then Emperor, and about whom Ioasaph wrote exclusively

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[6] Hirst 1998: 112-14.
[7] Gibbon 1994: III, 768.

in the third person (and even the monk Ioasaph was concealed behind the pen-name Christodoulos).

A man who had played a major role in the events of his time would not have served the interests of truth by writing with excessive modesty, and might, surely, have legitimately attempted a just estimate of his own motives and actions. But later historians have not, on the whole, felt that that it is what Cantacuzenus achieved. Having compared him to Moses and Caesar, Gibbon continues:

> But in this eloquent work, we should vainly seek the sincerity of a hero or a penitent. Retired in a cloyster from the vices and passions of the world, he presents not a confession, but an apology, of the life of an ambitious statesman. Instead of unfolding the true counsels and characters of men, he displays the smooth and specious surface of events, highly varnished with his own praises and those of his friends. Their motives are always pure; their ends always legitimate: they conspire and rebel without any views of interest; and the violence they inflict or suffer is celebrated as the spontaneous effect of reason and virtue.[8]

Gibbon's censure may be excessive, but there is no denying that the monk Ioasaph had a high opinion of his former self, and was unstinting in his praises of the statesman he had once been.

But what has this to do with Cavafy?

Cavafy spent most of his life in Egypt, in Alexandria, where he was part of an extensive Greek community based mainly on commerce, but with a well developed cultural and intellectual life and a wide range of newspapers and periodicals, among them *Γράμματα*, where a number of Cavafy's poems were first published. The proprietor of *Γράμματα*, Cavafy's friend Nikos Zelitas, also owned a publishing house and a book-shop of the same name; and one day "around 1930", Michael Peridis tells us, a representative of a French-language periodical was waiting for Cavafy in the Γράμματα bookshop. According

[8] Gibbon 1994: III, 768.

to Peridis the French-language periodical (which he does not name) had asked Cavafy to write a few words about his own work. Zelitas himself, it seems, was not present and it was his wife, the manager of the bookshop, Eftychia Zelita, who greeted Cavafy when he arrived. Cavafy promptly took a piece of paper from his pocket and began to dictate its contents to the so-called journalist. What he dictated was a short article in French. Mrs Zelita had the presence of mind to make her own copy from Cavafy's dictation, and thus, more than thirty years later, Peridis was able to include it in his edition of Cavafy's *Unpublished prose texts*.[9]

As we saw, Peridis dates the incident in the bookshop "around 1930". In fact, it must have taken place, at the latest, early in 1929. For, though Peridis failed to trace (or remember) it, the French text he reproduces had already been published, as Stratis Tsirkas was quick to point out.[10] It was, in effect, Cavafy's contribution to a special issue of the Cairo-based francophone Greek periodical *La semaine égyptienne*, dated 25 April 1929 and dedicated to Cavafy. There, however, the piece dictated in the bookshop appeared over the signature "A. Leondis". If Apostolos Leondis was the visitor to the Γράμματα bookshop who received Cavafy's dictation, it was hardly appropriate for Peridis (or Zelita) to describe him as the representative of a French-language periodical, since he was at the time the director of the Greek-language Alexandrian newspaper *Ταχυδρόμος*. We may well doubt whether the editor of *La semaine égyptienne* would have solicited an article from Cavafy himself for the special issue; if he did, Cavafy may have thought it politic to decline, but then write the article and have someone else sign it. A more likely explanation is that Leondis was one of the several dozen people invited to contribute to the special issue, and that he offered his friend Cavafy the opportunity to have his say.

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[9] Cavafy 1963: 31-2.

[10] In a review first published in May 1964 (see Tsirkas 1971: 221-2).

In this article Cavafy, like Cantacuzenus, writes of himself in the third person and without a trace of modesty. He distinguishes himself, as author of the article, from those who, seeing that Cavafy's poetry is like no other and belongs to no recognized school, consider that it will remain an isolated phenomenon and be without influence. It already has its imitators, Cavafy tells us ("superficial it is true for the most part"), "and not only among Greek poets. Rare but striking signs of Cavafy's influence are found to some extent everywhere." This is, he says, a "natural consequence of all valuable and progressive work".

"Cavafy, in my opinion," Cavafy continues, "is an ultra-modern poet, a poet of future generations." And this is his main point. He goes on to enumerate the particular virtues of Cavafy's poetry. These, he declares "are the elements which the generations of the future will appreciate even more". Cavafy has an optimistic view of these future generations who will be "spurred on" to a greater appreciation of his work by "the progress of discovery and the subtlety of their mental functions". And he speaks of a future world "which will *think* much more than today's", and where "rare poets like Cavafy will hold a predominant position".[11]

Vanity? Yes, of course it is; but not *mere* vanity. We do not have to agree with Stratis Tsirkas that this shows "a great poet in a moment of weakness". There were, in any case, many such moments. Cavafy was the author of a number of anonymous notices about his work in *Ἀλεξανδρινὴ Τέχνη*,[12] and, in all probability, of a lecture on his work delivered by Alekos Sengopoulos. We need not require "a great poet" to underestimate his own work. If he should overestimate it, though, he runs the risk of appearing foolish as well as vain. In Cavafy's case, however, his estimate of the value of his work to future generations has been borne out, while Cantacuzenus's estimate

[11] Cavafy 1963: 82-4. All translations in this paper are my own unless otherwise stated.
[12] Savidis 1966: 209.

of *his* own virtues remains contentious. It is quite conceivable that in allowing himself to write about his own work in terms of glowing praise, Cavafy was, as the saying goes, taking a leaf out of Cantacuzenus's book. Clearly they *are* allies or fellow spirits, if only in the exercise of this particular form of literary vanity.

Cavafy took several leaves out of Cantacuzenus's book in another sense: he made use of it, probably in the three-volume Bonn edition, as a source for his poems. In one case Cantacuzenus as author is cited – though not as the principal source – within the text of the poem itself. "At Epiphany", Cavafy's poem on the humiliation and death in prison of Cantacuzenus's mother, ends as follows:

> The account of the Lady Cantacuzena's sorry end
> I took from Nicephorus Gregoras' *History*.
> In the historical work of the emperor
> John Cantacuzenus, somewhat differently
> it is described, but no less piteously.[13]

In all, Cavafy offers us four glimpses of Cantacuzenus, or of events surrounding him: two in the published poems, "John Cantacuzenus prevails" and "Of coloured glass", and two in the "unfinished" poems, "The Patriarch" and "At Epiphany". The subject matter of all four falls within the years 1341-47, the period of the first civil war between Cantacuzenus and the Palaeologan party and its immediate aftermath. The subject matter of the two "unfinished" poems belongs to the early part of this period, to 1341-42, while the two published poems refer to events of 1347.

In June 1341 Andronicus III died suddenly after a short illness, and Cantacuzenus, who had served him as Grand Domestic, assumed control of the state. Cantacuzenus had been Andronicus's lifelong friend and counsellor; and had probably had as much to do with the direction of the affairs of the empire as the emperor himself. On more than one occasion

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[13] Cavafy 1994: 214.

Andronicus had invited him to become co-emperor, but Cantacuzenus had always refused. Nor did he attempt to seize the throne after Andronicus's death, but assumed the role of regent to protect the Empress, Anna of Savoy, and her son, now emperor, the eight-year-old John V Palaeologus. Anna had never liked Cantacuzenus; she had been jealous of her husband's affection for him. But she was not his most dangerous enemy; that was Alexius Apocaucus, the *parakoimomenos*, who, having failed to persuade Cantacuzenus to assume the purple, turned his energies against him. At the end of September 1341, while Cantacuzenus was encamped at Didymoteichon, preparing his army for a campaign in the Peloponnese, Apocaucus persuaded the empress that Cantacuzenus was plotting against her, and he encouraged the Patriarch John Calecas to assume the role and title of regent. Cantacuzenus was now stripped of his office and ordered to disband the army and return to Constantinople. He did not return; and with some reluctance he allowed himself to be proclaimed emperor in Didymoteichon on 26 October 1341. There followed almost five-and-a-half years of civil war, in which Bulgarians, Serbians and Turks aided one side or the other at various times, in pursuit of their own interests. Through skilful politicking and dogged persistence Cantacuzenus eventually reduced the Palaeologan enclave to the city of Constantinople, which he finally entered without bloodshed in February 1347. After negotiations with the empress it was agreed that John Palaeologus and John Cantacuzenus should reign as co-emperors, but that Cantacuzenus, though he yielded the precedence to the young emperor, should be senior in authority for the next ten years. John Cantacuzenus and his wife Eirene Asenina were crowned on 31 May 1347; a week later their daughter Helena was married to the young emperor John Palaeologus, and crowned as empress. The later history of Cantacuzenus's reign need not concern us here, since it is outside the range of Cavafy's poems.

Let us look first at the earlier of Cavafy's two published poems on Cantacuzenus, "Ὁ Ἰωάννης Καντακουζηνὸς ὑπερ-

ισχύει" ("John Cantacuzenus prevails"). The verb in the title has sometimes been translated as "triumphs" (by Rae Dalven, and Keeley and Sherrard) and sometimes as "prevails" (by Mavrogordato and Kolaitis). "Prevails" is, I think, more accurate, but either translation suggests that the title alludes to Gibbon, and is, in effect, itself a translation, from English to Greek. Having brought his narrative to Cantacuzenus's victory of 1347, Gibbon says "I hasten to conclude the personal history of John Cantacuzene. He *triumphed* and reigned [...]";[14] and of the later conflict which erupted in 1353 when John Palaeologus took up arms against Cantacuzenus, he says, "Cantacuzene *prevailed* in the third contest in which he had been involved".[15]

"John Cantacuzenus prevails" was first printed on 9 December 1924. We do not know when it was first drafted, but it had probably had a relatively short gestation period, since it does not figure in the surviving lists of work-in-progress associated with the "unfinished" poems – lists which include a number of published poems which passed through this work-in-progress stage.[16] It is, then, very likely that Cavafy conceived this poem in the aftermath of the expulsion of Greeks from the Smyrna region in 1922 and the enforced population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923, at a period, that is, when a vast number of Greeks, both rich and poor, had recently been forced to abandon their lands and houses and in many cases the greater part of their movable property.

The title apart, the poem does not indicate its Byzantine context until line 6; and it is not difficult to imagine where the first five lines of the poem might have taken the mind of a Greek reading them for the first time at the end of 1924 or early in 1925.

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[14] Gibbon 1994: III, 780.
[15] Gibbon 1994: III, 782.
[16] Cavafy 1994: 323-9.

> He sees the fields still in his charge
> with the wheat, with the animals, with the fruit
> trees. And further off the family house,
> full of valuable clothes and furniture, and silverware.
>
> They will take them from him – O Jesus Christ! – *now*
> they will take them from him.[17]

I do not know if any of Cavafy's original readers did make the connection between these lines and recent events, but I have a strong suspicion that Cavafy himself did. This is, I believe, Cavafy projecting himself not primarily into the mind of a Byzantine nobleman who had backed the losing side in the civil war, but rather into the minds of certain of his contemporaries, the better-off refugees from Asia Minor, the Pontus or Eastern Thrace, contemplating, before their flight, the lands, houses and possessions they would leave behind, to fall into the hands of new, Turkish owners. This suspicion is strengthened by the fact – a fact which Cavafy probably hoped his readers would recognize – that this poem does not quite fit the historical context he provides for it.

The speaker in the poem curses himself for ever having got involved with Anna's party, he curses the empress, he curses the δεσπότης who had persuaded him to side with the empress when his own first impulse had been to join Cantacuzenus. (It would be natural to take δεσπότης, which could be translated "prelate", as a reference to the Patriarch John Calecas.) Having backed the losers the nobleman now expects his property to be appropriated by the victor, Cantacuzenus. He thinks of throwing himself at the feet of Cantacuzenus or the empress Eirene. He has heard that Cantacuzenus is ἐπιεικής, λίαν ἐπιεικής ("clement, exceedingly clement"), but he is afraid of Cantacuzenus's followers, and of the army.

This Byzantine landowner is either singularly ill-informed about the situation he is involved in – ignorant of the full

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[17] Cavafy 1991: II, 48.

extent of Cantacuzenus's clemency – or else he is experiencing his anguish in the very first days of Cantacuzenus's victory, before he knew what would happen. In the latter case, with the benefit of hindsight, *we* know that his fears are unfounded; in the former case, we, being better informed than the protagonist appears to be, know that there is something not quite right about this poem. Let us return to Gibbon's account of Cantacuzenus's triumph:

> He triumphed and reigned; but his reign and triumph were clouded by the discontent of his own and the adverse faction. His followers might style the general amnesty, an act of pardon for his enemies, and of oblivion for his friends; in his cause, their estates had been forfeited and plundered; and as they wandered naked and hungry through the streets, they cursed the selfish generosity of a leader; who, on the throne of the empire, might relinquish without merit his private inheritance. The adherents of the empress blushed to hold their lives and fortunes by the precarious favour of an usurper.[18]

Note that in Gibbon it was his friends' and not his enemies' estates which "had been forfeited and plundered". All authorities agree with Gibbon that Cantacuzenus's friends fared rather worse than his enemies in the new dispensation. Their estates were not restored to them, while his former enemies were allowed to hold on to their own lands, and even to retain land which they had appropriated during the conflicts. The anonymous Byzantine landowner of the poem had nothing to fear, unlike his modern counterparts who fled or were expelled from Turkey, to whom the events he dreads really did happen.

From the history of Byzantium in the fourteenth century and the history of the Greeks in the 1920s, let us turn to a different kind of history, the history of Cavafy's poetic production. As I already noted, Cavafy printed "John Cantacuzenus prevails" on 9 December 1924. The next poem to be printed, exactly six weeks later, on 20 January 1925, was "Temethus,

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[18] Gibbon 1994: III, 780-1.

an Antiochean, AD 400"; and then after a further five weeks and three days, on 27 February, "Of coloured glass", the poem dealing with Cantacuzenus's coronation. By this time Cavafy had begun two more poems on Cantacuzenus, for the manuscript of "The Patriarch" is dated February 1925, and the manuscript of "At Epiphany" was first dated "Dec 1924", though the date was then altered to May 1925.[19] And while we are talking about Cavafy's poems of 1925, let us note that "On an Italian shore", printed on 30 June of that year, concerns, like "John Cantacuzenus prevails", the seizure of Greek property, in this case by the Romans. The poem's young Greek protagonist of the second century BC is watching, with distress, the unloading of the spoils from the sack of Corinth.[20]

But it is "Temethus" which may provide the key to the double meaning of the other poems, and indirectly, perhaps, to Cavafy's very strong interest in Cantacuzenus at this period.

"Temethus, an Antiochean, AD 400" is a poem about the double meaning of a poem:

> Lines of young Temethus consumed by passion.
> With the title "Emonides" – Antiochus Epiphanes'
> favourite companion, a very beautiful
> young man from Samosata. But if these lines emerge
> ardent and moving it is because Emonides
> (from that ancient time: the one hundred and thirty
> seventh year of the Greek Kingdom! –
> perhaps even a little earlier) was put into the poem
> merely as a name; suitable nonetheless.
> It is a love of Temethus himself the poem expresses
> a fine love and worthy of him. We, the initiates,
> his friends, his close friends – we, the initiates,
> we know for whom the lines were written.
> The ignorant Antiocheans read "Emonides".[21]

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[19] Cavafy 1994: 195, 209.
[20] Cavafy 1991: 52.
[21] Cavafy 1991: 49.

Emonides is a fiction. No such favourite of Antiochus IV of Syria is attested, as far as I know. Cavafy invented him for Temethus to put into his poem. And Cavafy invented Temethus too. Antiochus and the poem's two dates are the only historical anchors. Emonides, Cavafy tells us, was put into Temethus's poem merely as a name. Was Temethus in his turn put into Cavafy's poem merely as a name? The ignorant Antiocheans – or Alexandrians, Athenians, Londoners, or citizens of Cambridge or Belfast – read "Temethus". Should we, aspiring to be Cavafy's friends in spirit, to be initiates of his poetry – should we read, not "Temethus", but "Cavafy"? Does this poem, in other words, give us an insight into Cavafy's own techniques, at least at this stage of his career?

If the idea that a name of a historical or historically placed character in a poem may conceal another name seems a bit extreme, the more general idea that there may be two ways of reading a poem, the ignorant or innocent way and the informed way of the initiate, can hardly fail to commend itself. The critic must always strive to be an informed reader (the idea of being an initiate may suggest something too demanding).

I have been able to show from Cavafy's lists of work in progress that "Temethus" was first drafted before November 1923,[22] but, presumably, it only reached its final form shortly before its publication, that is, at the end of 1924 or the beginning of 1925, just after "John Cantacuzenus prevails" and just before "Of coloured glass"; and Cavafy may well have been working on all three poems simultaneously. Cavafy gives

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22 Lavagnini published the pages of the longer of the two lists (Πίνακας F21) in a plausible but incorrect order (Cavafy 1991: 325-8). My proof of this, which is long and complex and remains unpublished, demonstrates a series of real-time first entries corresponding to the dates on the manuscripts of all but the earliest eleven of the thirty "unfinished" poems. From the correctly sequenced pages of F21 it is possible to determine a *terminus ante quem* for the first drafting of some fifteen poems included in the list which were first published after 1924 but for which no information about their dates of composition is otherwise available, "Temethus" among them.

Emonides a very precise date and then makes it less precise by adding "perhaps even a little earlier" (ἴσως καὶ λίγο πρίν). The precise date Cavafy gives is the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the Seleucid Greek kingdom of Syria, that is to say, 176/175 BC,[23] the very beginning, or just before the beginning, of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164). How far back will the "little earlier" take us? One year? Two years? If we allow two years, and take 178 BC as a permissible date for Emonides, then we can say that 577 years stood between Emonides and Temethus's unnamed lover of AD 400; and if we subtract 577 from 1924 (the year in which "John Cantacuzenus prevails" reached, and "Temethus, an Antiochean" almost reached, its final form, we arrive at 1347, the year in which Cantacuzenus prevailed and was crowned with bits of coloured glass.

The exact correspondence is of course a bit of a fudge, because of the slight imprecision in the date Cavafy gives for Emonides. But however you compute it, the fact remains that between two poems on Cantacuzenus dealing with events of the year 1347, Cavafy published a poem about a poem about Emonides, which is not really about Emonides, by an imaginary poet Temethus, and that the distance in time between Emonides and Temethus is almost exactly the same as the distance between 1347 and the date at which Cavafy was completing the three poems in question.[24]

Cavafy could have located Emonides at almost any time significantly earlier than AD 400 (and that date itself is somewhat arbitrary, though a favourite of Cavafy's), but he chooses a date around 176 BC. And why does he trouble to be so precise about it? Was it really to create a numerical correspondence

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[23] Conventionally the first year of the Seleucid dynasty begins in 312 BC.

[24] If Cavafy did make this calculation, he may have miscalculated (as I did at first), simply adding the BC and AD dates together, forgetting that there was no "year nought" between 1 BC and AD 1. The miscalculation allows "a little earlier" to be computed as one year, putting Emonides back only to 177 BC.

with his own distance in time from the victory and coronation of Cantacuzenus?[25] The correspondence may be pure coincidence; but even without it, the fact that Cavafy brought the three poems to completion at almost the same time, itself suggests that we might look for connections between them. Especially when we remember that to the end of his life Cavafy circulated his post-1918 poems in strict chronological sequence by date of first publication, so that for Cavafy's initial readers "Temethus" always stood between "John Cantacuzenus prevails" and "Of coloured glass".[26]

In these two poems, and in "The Patriarch" and "At Epiphany", is "John Cantacuzenus" put there, like "Emonides", "merely as a name"? Merely? No, for Cavafy has paid careful attention to his sources, and the poems are, in all essentials historically sound (though in the case of "John Cantacuzenus prevails" we have seen that recourse to the sources reveals that there is something odd about the poem). Nonetheless, it is still possible that, like "Emonides", "John Cantacuzenus" does, in some sense, conceal another name; and if it does, that undeclared name is, I propose, that of Eleftherios Venizelos, the prime minister of Greece during much of the period in which Cavafy was preoccupied with Byzantium. The more I consider the careers of Venizelos and Cantacuzenus, the more it seems to me they have in common. At this stage of my investigations I cannot prove, or even argue persuasively, that Cavafy saw this too. It is a hunch I am pursuing. The testimony to Cavafy's political opinions is confusing, in part because of his

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[25] We should not be tempted to take it as a hint that Emonides is to be identified the unnamed "young Antiochean" on whom Antiochus had lavished gifts in Cavafy's earlier poem, "To Antiochus Epiphanes" (Cavafy 1991: II, 38), for the one-sided conversation of that poem is clearly taking place during the Third Macedonian War (171-168 BC). Besides, Emonides is not an Antiochean, but from Samosata.

[26] This was not the case for the wider readership of the first commercial editions of Cavafy's poetry (Rika Sengopoulou's 1935 edition, and the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Ikaros editions of 1948, 1952 and 1958). The proper sequence was not restored until Savidis's edition of 1963.

political "tact", for he appears to have given people of quite disparate political persuasions the impression that he shared their views. Let me just note here that Atanasio Catraro attests to Cavafy's interest in Venizelos.[27]

On any reckoning, Cantacuzenus and Venizelos were the outstanding personalities in the Greek politics of their respective times. Cantacuzenus, by his own account at least, was never ambitious for the purple; his aim was always to uphold the rule of the Palaeologi, but eventually he allowed himself to be proclaimed emperor and established a rival regime, precipitating a civil war. Venizelos was, and always remained, a constitutional monarchist at heart, but because of his prolonged feud with King Constantine (most importantly over Greece's entry into the First World War), he came to be associated with the Republican movement and the eventual removal of the Greek monarchy. Though matters stopped short of a civil war, Venizelos did at one time set up a rival government, and the events of 1915-17 bear some striking resemblances to those of 1341. In 1341 Cantacuzenus, who as Grand Domestic had long held the principal office in the state after that of emperor, was dismissed from that office by the empress; it was this that resulted in his somewhat reluctant assumption of the purple. In October 1915 the King dismissed his prime minister, Venizelos. Venizelos remained in Athens for more than a year, before he decided that it was impossible for his party to co-operate further with the royal government, and then, in September 1916, he left for Crete where he proclaimed a revolutionary movement. From Crete he went to Salonica and set up a provisional government.

But Cavafy's interest in Cantacuzenus only begins, as far as we know, in 1924. By then the Asia Minor Campaign of 1919-22 had reached its disastrous conclusion. It was Venizelos who had initiated the campaign in Asia Minor, but he was not in office at the time of the catastrophic defeat, though he was

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[27] Catraro 1970: 42.

representing Greece at the peace conferences. By 1924, it was the former and by then deceased King Constantine, rather than Venizelos, who was held primarily responsible for the Disaster.

In December 1923 Venizelos's Liberal Party won a two-thirds majority in parliament. The young King George II was asked to leave the country, Venizelos was recalled to form a government and the revolutionary committee which had controlled Greece since the Disaster now dissolved itself. The most pressing issue facing the new government was the constitutional question. Venizelos proposed a plebiscite on the future of the monarchy. The Republican party and republicans within Venizelos's party pressed for an immediate declaration of a republic, to be ratified later by a plebiscite. Venizelos resigned and the Republicans got their way. The Republic was proclaimed on 25 March 1924. In the plebiscite that followed more than two thirds of the votes were cast in favour of the Republic.

In the popular perceptions of the day, in which personalities loomed large, this looked like the final triumph of Venizelos in his long-running conflict with the crown. And towards the end of that year Cavafy published "John Cantacuzenus prevails". Cantacuzenus had prevailed over the established Palaeologan dynasty, but his triumph was tainted (at least in the judgements of the historians Cavafy read) by actions and alliances which had seriously weakened and impoverished the empire. In 1924 Greece was desperately impoverished and demoralized after more than ten years of almost continual war, a humiliating defeat and the influx of some one-and-a-quarter-million refugees whom the country scarcely had the means to support. The mournful cry from Cavafy's poem on the coronation of Cantacuzenus "great was the poverty of our wretched state" applies as much to Greece in 1924 as to Byzantium in 1347. And for the condition of Greece Venizelos could be held to bear some of the responsibility.

I am not looking primarily for specific and detailed correspondences between Cavafy's poems on Cantacuzenus and

contemporary events surrounding Venizelos. I don't think that is how it worked. My supposition is that Cavafy was perplexed by the complex character and volatile political career of Venizelos, and saw in Cantacuzenus a broadly similar personality placed in a broadly analogous situation. He could have written poems about contemporary politics, poems referring to Venizelos, as a number of Greek poets did. In fact, Cavafy wrote only one explicitly topical poem concerned with public events. It is called "27 June 1906, 2 p.m." and concerns the execution by hanging of a seventeen-year-old Egyptian boy by the British military authorities.[28] The boy was one of four Egyptians executed following a disturbance in the village of Denshawi which led to the death from heat exposure of one wounded British officer.[29] The poem was not an immediate response, written in a fit of moral indignation, since, according to Cavafy's own records, it was composed eighteen months after the event, in January 1908.[30] The poem is compromised by the speaker's implicit erotic interest in the victim, and wisely Cavafy never published it. The explicit linking of a poem to a specific recent event was an experiment he never repeated. As his confidence in his poetry grew, and with it his ambitions, he may have realized that being topical is not a good strategy when you are writing for posterity, not a good strategy for a "poet of future generations". This does not mean that his poetry ignores the political world in which he lived, but that, when it responds to it, it does so obliquely; and I am suggesting that Cavafy wrote about Cantacuzenus in part as a substitute for writing about Venizelos.

Such anecdotal evidence as there is suggests to me that while Cavafy recognized certain qualities in Venizelos, his attitude towards him was not, to say the least, one of uncritical approval. Problematically, for my hunch that Cantacuzenus in some sense stands for Venizelos, the poetry appears to imply

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[28] Cavafy 1968: 149.
[29] Tsirkas 1971: 72-5.
[30] Savidis 1985-87: II, 57, 81.

that Cavafy was rather strongly in favour of Cantacuzenus; and I propose now to look at the "unfinished" poem, "The Patriarch", precisely because it presents the greatest challenge to my persistent conviction that Cavafy was, on balance, more an enemy than an ally of Cantacuzenus.

"The Patriarch" is a complex and convoluted poem, which requires considerable glossing, and I am not going to offer an interpretation of the poem as a whole. Instead I want to concentrate on the way it describes Cantacuzenus.[31] The poem concerns one of the acts of provocation that induced Cantacuzenus to assume the purple in Didymoteichon in 1341. The patriarch's challenge to Cantacuzenus's right to be regent was based on an old and obsolete letter in which Andronicus had appointed him, the patriarch, regent for a limited period when Andronicus was going to be away from Constantinople on a military campaign, and at a time when Cantacuzenus was also engaged elsewhere. Producing this letter, perhaps at the prompting of Apocaucus, Patriarch John Calecas now assumed the role and title of regent.

From Lavagnini's transcription of the manuscripts and her analysis of them, it is clear that Cavafy originally began the poem like this:

> Ὁ αὐθάδης κι ὁ ἀχάριστος Ἰωάννης
> ποῦ ἂν ἦταν πατριάρχης τὸ χρωστοῦσε
> στὸν μεγαλόψυχο Ἰωάννην Καντακουζηνὸ
> (τὸν πιὸ μεγάλον ἄνθρωπο ποῦ εἶχε ἡ φυλή μας τότε)
>
> The insolent and ungrateful John,
> who if he was patriarch owed it
> to the great-hearted John Cantacuzenus
> (the greatest person our race had at that time)

Lines 6 and 7 contained a string of adjectives and phrases enumerating the virtues of Cantacuzenus:

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[31] For the full text see Cavafy 1994: 207.

(σοφόν, ἐπιεικῆ, φιλόπατριν, ἀνδρεῖον,
ἄνδρα πολιτικὸν ἄξιον ἄκρως)

(wise, clement, patriotic, courageous,
an extremely worthy statesman)

if "statesman" be allowed as a reasonable translation of ἄνδρα πολιτικόν (literally "political man").

Line 4 as it originally stood ("The greatest person our race had at that time") seems to echo Gibbon's description of Cantacuzenus as "the first and most deserving of the Greeks". Gibbon describes Cantacuzenus in this way in the context of his regency and his guardianship of John V Palaeologus – the same context as that of Cavafy's poem. This is what Gibbon says:

> The empress Anne of Savoy survived her husband: their son, John Palæologus, was left an orphan and an emperor, in the ninth year of his age; and his weakness was protected by the first and most deserving of the Greeks. The long and cordial friendship of his father for John Cantacuzene is alike honourable to the prince and the subject.[32]

Cavafy's phrase, "the greatest person" reflects Gibbon's superlatives, "the first and most deserving", while Cavafy's relative clause, "which our race had at that time", reflects, with an important change of perspective, Gibbon's bald phrase "of the Greeks".

Gibbon is not the only author in the background of this poem. There are at least three others we need to consider: two Byzantine historians and another modern one. The poem was, I believe, meant to conclude with a verbatim quotation from Nicephorus Gregoras extending over almost eight lines of verse with brief interruptions by the speaker of the poem.[33]

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[32] Gibbon 1994: III, 774.

[33] These lines do not form part of Lavagnini's "final text", but are included among "variants of uncertain position" (Cavafy 1994: 208). My argument for seeing them as an integral part of the poem may be summarized as follows: the "final text" ends with line 19 from ms 2β;

Cantacuzenus's own *Histories* also need to be taken into consideration; and so does Paparrigopoulos's *History of the Greek Nation*, as becomes evident when we consider another of the poem's deleted lines. When Cavafy deleted the line, "an extremely worthy statesman", he replaced it by a very different one, which was in its turn deleted:

> (ποῦ ἴσως μᾶς ἔσωζε μὰ δὲν τὸν ἄφισαν)
>
> (who would perhaps have saved us but they did not let him)

or, more literally, "who was perhaps going to save us", since the verb ἔσωζε is imperfect, but without the particle θά which would make it conditional. The same verb, in exactly the same form, occurs in a passage where Paparrigopoulos says of Cantacuzenus that,

> having become a monk, he was occupied for some thirty years in the writing of a history in order to instruct later generations that he and he alone was worthy of power, forgetting that the better demonstration of this would have been if, holding on to power, he had saved the state (ἂν διατηρήσας [τὴν αρχὴν] ἔσωζε τὸ κράτος).[34]

Just as, through a change of perspective, Cavafy may have transformed Gibbon's "first and most deserving of the Greeks" into "the greatest person our race had at that time", here it appears he has transformed, with the same change of perspective, Paparrigopoulos's ἔσωζε τὸ κράτος ("saved the state), into μᾶς ἔσωζε ("saved *us*"). And we should note, too, that Paparrigopoulos's expression "that he and he alone was worthy of power" (ὅτι αὐτὸς καὶ μόνος ἦτο ἄξιος τῆς ἀρχῆς) seems closely related to Cavafy's deleted line, "an extremely worthy statesman", as well as to the line, "the worthy person our race

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ms 4β contains a variant of 2β.19, the second half of which is taken up in 6.1; 6.1 leads smoothly to 6.3; 5β.1 is a variant of 6.3 and introduces the quotation from Gregoras which continues to 5β.8 (see ibid. 202-3).

[34] Paparrigopoulos 1925: V, 194.

had at that time"; and even to the original form of that line, "the *greatest* person our race had at that time". Thus the phrase "the greatest person", which appears to reflect Gibbon's "first and most deserving", might also reflect Cantacuzenus's high opinion of himself, as characterized by Paparrigopoulos, namely that "he and he alone was worthy of power", with its implicit superlative. In Paparrigopoulos the words ἄξιος ("worthy") and ἔσωζε (here "had saved") occur in a highly critical assessment of Cantacuzenus, and this is a first hint that the excessive praises of Cantacuzenus in Cavafy's poem "The Patriarch" are not perhaps what they appear to be.

While Paparrigopoulos blames Cantacuzenus himself for his failure to "save the state", Cavafy's deleted line seems to put the blame on others, since it reads, "who was perhaps going to save us but they did not let him". And here Cavafy may be reflecting Cantacuzenus's own expressed view of the matter. Cantacuzenus tells us that after his victory and coronation in 1347, he surveyed the parlous condition of the empire, impoverished by civil war, and sought to raise money for the treasury by a direct appeal for contributions. The appeal took the form of a public address which he records at some length. In it he declares that it was never his intention to seek imperial power and lays the blame on those who opposed him and fomented trouble at the beginning of his regency. "Surely," he reports himself as saying,

> if, when I planned to do everything for the common good of the Romans [...], the others had followed enthusiastically or if, at least, they had not hindered me, then we would not now be discussing what we must do to be saved (σώζεσθαι) [...].[35]

This is very close to Cavafy's line "who would perhaps have saved us but they did not let him". The connection is even closer than it appears when we see that Cavafy originally wrote ποῦ ἴσως μᾶς ἔσωζε ἄν ("who was perhaps going to save us if").

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[35] Cantacuzenus 4.5 (CSHB, vol. III, p. 36).

He then crossed out "if", replaced it by "but", and concluded the line "but they didn't let him". He had, perhaps originally intended to end the line with "if they had let him", or something even closer to Cantacuzenus, such as "if they had not hindered him". In any case, Cavafy's use of the imperfect (ἔσωζε) and the deleted "if" suggests that he originally had in mind a counterfactual conditional such as we find in the passages from both Cantacuzenus and Paparrigopoulos where the same verb occurs.

There is also a potentially relevant counterfactual conditional in Gibbon's remarks on the regency of Cantacuzenus: "Had the regent found a suitable return of obedience and gratitude, perhaps he would have acted with pure and zealous fidelity in the service of his pupil" (that is the young emperor John V). Gibbon then proceeds to outline the acts of defiance and ingratitude which prevented Cantacuzenus from fulfilling his role as regent. We need not follow all the details. Gibbon's marginal headings alone answer the question which Cavafy's line raises: Who were the "they" who did not let Cantacuzenus "save us"? A series of four marginal headings form a single sense unit, which reads, "His regency attacked, A.D. 1341, / by Apocaucus; / by the empress Anne of Savoy; / by the patriarch."[36] This is what Gibbon has to say about the part played by the patriarch (and here we have the essential substance of Cavafy's poem):

> The patriarch John of Apri [=John Calecas], was a proud and feeble old man, encompassed by a numerous and hungry kindred. He produced an obsolete epistle of Andronicus, which bequeathed the prince and people to his pious care: the fate of his predecessor Arsenius prompted him to prevent, rather than punish, the crimes of an usurper [...].[37]

Cavafy's poem, in its very first lines, introduces the patriarch with two defamatory epithets: not Gibbon's "proud and feeble",

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[36] Gibbon 1994: III, 775-6.
[37] Gibbon 1994: III, 776.

but "insolent and ungrateful" which neatly mirror, and invert, the "obedience and gratitude" whose lack Gibbon connects with Cantacuzenus's breach of faith with the young emperor. It seems likely that Gibbon was the initial inspiration for the poem, but that Cavafy quickly sought out the relevant passages in Paparrigopoulos and Cantacuzenus and only much later that passage in Gregoras.[38]

Renata Lavagnini has this to say about Cavafy's attitude to Cantacuzenus in "The Patriarch":

> Cavafy contrasts the two protagonists, the emperor and the patriarch, and, setting aside, we must assume deliberately, the reservations of Paparrigopoulos, praises Cantacuzenus with an abundance of epithets, while conversely belittling and making fun of the person of the patriarch. In this it seems that he is in sympathy with Gibbon, who speaks at length about the virtues of Cantacuzenus.[39]

This may be contested as regards both Gibbon and Cavafy. All historians, Byzantine and modern alike, are agreed as to Cantacuzenus's superiority over his principal opponents in Constantinople, including the Patriarch John Calecas and Alexius Apocaucus. Few would deny that in his time, or at least up to 1341, Cantacuzenus was, in Gibbon's phrase, "the best and most deserving of the Greeks". As Grand Domestic in the service of Andronicus III, or as Regent in the first months of the reign of John V, Gibbon does indeed respect and praise Cantacuzenus; but as "an usurper" as he calls him, and as the author of an "apology" for his own part in the affairs of state, Gibbon has little but contempt for him. Gibbon censures Cantacuzenus heavily for his seizure of power, for marrying his daughter to a Turk, and for allowing the passage of the Turks into Europe, which he calls "the last and fatal stroke in the fall

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[38] The piece of paper on which he wrote down the quotation from Gregoras bears a printer's colophon with the date 1927 (Cavafy 1994: 195).

[39] Lavagnini in Cavafy 1994: 295-6.

of the Roman Empire".[40] Lavagnini has not registered the complexity of Gibbon's attitude to Cantacuzenus; and, more importantly, she has, I think, misconstrued Cavafy's poem in choosing to accept its statements at face value.

We should not be so sure that Cavafy did set aside the reservations of Paparrigopoulos. And we should note that some of the epithets Cavafy uses of the emperor are also found in Paparrigopoulos, as Lavagnini herself points out.[41] Paparrigopoulos acknowledges that Cantacuzenus "was not lacking in certain virtues", but he sees his employment of those virtues as misdirected. "The man," he says, referring to Cantacuzenus as author of the *Histories*, "frequently demonstrates that he was personally courageous (ἀνδρεῖος) and that he had a practical mind" – qualities which, according to Paparrigopoulos, he should have deployed in reorganizing his forces to combat the empire's external enemies, instead of constantly struggling to maintain disastrous intrigues and alliances. "He frequently demonstrates," Paparrigopoulos continues, "that he loved power, but through his excessive clemency (ἐπιείκεια) he came to see even his own son putting obstacles in his way."[42] Two of the many positive adjectives which Cavafy uses of Cantacuzenus – ἀνδρεῖος and ἐπιεικής – are thus already somewhat tainted by the qualifications of Paparrigopoulos. And surely we should be suspicious of the very number of these laudatory adjectives in Cavafy's poem. It is highly uncharacteristic of Cavafy to be so effusive in the praise of one of his historical characters. And lines such as line 6, "wise, clement, patriotic, brave, and able", or line 14, " honourable, loyal, unself-seeking", are reminiscent of lines from "Caesarion", a poem in which Cavafy's contempt for the royal panegyrics he finds in a book of Ptolemaic inscriptions is evident:

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[40] Gibbon 1994: III, 768, 777-8, 781, 814-5.
[41] In Cavafy 1994: 205.
[42] Paparrigopoulos 1925: V, 194.

> The extravagant praise and flattery
> the same for all. All are illustrious,
> glorious, mighty and benevolent;
> every enterprise of theirs most wise.[43]

It is clear that the poet was bored (he "would have put the book aside had not a reference, / brief and insignificant, to King Caesarion / just then caught [his] attention"). The tone of "Caesarion" should warn us not to take Cavafy too seriously when he himself appears to indulge in the excessive praise and flattery of a Byzantine emperor. But perhaps the strongest reason of all for suspecting an element of irony in the "abundance of epithets" in praise of Cantacuzenus is that most of those epithets, or close synonyms of them, or their cognate nouns, are used by Cantacuzenus in praise of himself, or in the praise of him by others which he immodestly reports.

In 1347, Cantacuzenus, having already entered Constantinople and taken control of most of the city, received ambassadors from the Empress Anna, who was still secure inside the palace at Blachernai. He received the ambassadors civilly and impressed them by his words and his manner, or as he puts it, "they rejoiced at the emperor's clemency (ἐπιείκεια) and marvelled at his greatness of heart (μεγαλοψυχία)".[44] Compare Cavafy's adjectives ἐπιεικής and μεγαλόψυχος. Shortly afterwards the same two qualities are again attributed to Cantacuzenus in the context of another embassy, but this time are added σύνεσις ("intelligence") and εὐγνωμοσύνη ("kindness"),[45] which may be compared to Cavafy's adjective σοφός ("wise") and his noun καλοσύνη ("kindness"), which occurs in the final form of the opening of the of the poem, where "John, / if he was patriarch owed it / to the kindness which he [Cantacuzenus] had shown to him".

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[43] Cavafy 1991: I, 73.
[44] Cantacuzenus 3.100 (CSHB, vol. II, p. 611).
[45] Cantacuzenus 3.100 (CSHB, vol. II, p. 613).

Particularly suggestive of the style of Cavafy's apparent eulogy of Cantacuzenus is the opening paragraph of a letter from the Sultan of Egypt to Cantacuzenus which the imperial historian is pleased to reproduce:

> In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate, may the most high God always lengthen the days of the reign of this great emperor, a benefactor, a sage, a lion, a courageous man, eager in war, against whom no one can stand in opposition, most wise in his belief, most just in his country and city.[46]

The adjectives applied here to the emperor are: μεγάλος, φρόνιμος, ἀνδρεῖος, σοφός and δίκαιος (the last two in the superlative). This gives us three exact matches with Cavafy's poem (μεγάλος, ἀνδρεῖος, and σοφός: "great", "courageous" and "wise"), and they come from a sample of the conventional and flamboyant flattery exchanged between rulers, a pretty close equivalent to the Ptolemaic inscriptions which so bored Cavafy.

Examples could be multiplied, but these are, I think, sufficient to indicate that there is a case to be answered. The case is that Cavafy's excessive praise of Cantacuzenus was a conscious and deliberate reflection of the emperor's direct and indirect self-praise and is not, therefore, to be taken at its face value. That is to say, that it does not necessarily express Cavafy's personal assessment of Cantacuzenus. But it is here that Cavafy's own indulgence in self-praise, when he wrote of himself in the third person, concealed behind the cloak of anonymity or the signature of a friend, clouds the issue. How critical would he have been of the same practice in another?

The innocent (or "Antiochean") reader of "The Patriarch" will come away with a strong impression of Cavafy's admiration for Cantacuzenus. The informed reader, the reader who has gone to the sources, and thus gained an insight – been initiated, we might say – into Cavafy's methods of compos-

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[46] Cantacuzenus 4.37 (CSHB, vol. III, p. 93), tr. Miller 1975: 227.

ition, will perceive an intertextual irony which subverts the apparent meaning of the poem. And the initiate will not make the mistake that the innocent reader often makes and assume that the voice in the poem is that of C. P. Cavafy. The poem simply presents a voice speaking in praise of Cantacuzenus. The line "the worthy person our race had at that time" tells us that the speaker is Greek and belongs to a later, but not necessarily much later time than the events related; the excess of praise suggests a propagandist rather than a person of balanced judgement; but that is almost as far as we can go. The irony that subverts the poem is not within the text of the poem, but in its relations to other texts: to the self-justifying vanity of Cantacuzenus above all, but also to the mixed praise and censure of Paparripopoulos and Gibbon. Having defined what was *almost* as far as we can go in attempting to identify the voice in the poem, I will now go one tentative step further. The poem could be read as an addendum by Cavafy to the *Histories* of Cantacuzenus. Or to put it another way, Cavafy could be parodying (with malicious intent) the voice of the monk-historian and former emperor.[47] In the poem the emperor is much too good, the patriarch much too bad, to reflect the reality of politics. The heaped up adjectives of praise for Cantacuzenus (many derived from Cantacuzenus own self-praise) are matched by the equally numerous, but better distributed, condemnatory adjectives directed at the patriarch; to this mix are added some very strained syntactical suspensions and some highly colloquial modern Greek idioms, set off against the untempered Byzantine Greek of Nicephorus Gregoras with which the poem was probably intended to conclude. Though not quite finished, still in need of a little polishing, "The Patriarch" is on the way to being a linguistic tour de force – or should we say a tour de *farce*, unmasking the farce of

[47] Compare the interpretations of "Manuel Comnenus" and "Anna Dalassena" in Hirst 2000.

Cantacuzenus's own style and of his attitudes towards his former self.

I should add that the careful checking against their sources of two of Cavafy's other poems on Cantacuzenus, "Of coloured glass" and "At Epiphany", also uncovers extremely complex intertextual relationships, and reveals ambiguities and subtle ironies which are not apparent when the poems are read in isolation. But it is "The Patriarch" which, despite its apparent praise of Cantacuzenus, provides, on closer examination, the clearest evidence for an underlying hostility towards the fourteenth-century emperor, and leads me to conclude that, though the poet and emperor may have indulged in the same literary vanity, Cavafy saw Cantacuzenus not as an ally, but as an enemy, and as a target for his bitter though devious irony. But why is the irony so devious that it requires extensive familiarity with other texts to uncover it? The "poet of future generations" certainly left those generations a lot of work to do if they were indeed going to appreciate his poems better than his contemporaries did.

Cavafy's Byzantine poems have sometimes been regarded as the most patriotic of his historical poems. And perhaps they are, though not for the reasons usually advanced. If they are patriotic, it is not because they sing the praises of Byzantine rulers, but because they are founded on a broad sympathy for the Greek people, who, in the 1920s, as in the 1340s, found themselves the unfortunate victims of the misguided ambitions of their flawed rulers.

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Love in a changing climate: the rise of romance in a Greek village, 1977-80

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I'm going to start this paper with a half-hearted methodological apology, because what I really want to talk about is an aspect of social (and cultural) change. And when anthropologists talk about social change they are often accused – and often accuse themselves – of contrasting the observable changes of the present with some notion of a static and "traditional" past. That is not surprising, because their informants often talk in just that way: "In the old days we did this; now everything is falling apart." The "system", the integrated social, cultural and moral order that could be grasped and presented as a whole, seems always to belong to some earlier and idealized way of life. The present, by contrast, seems always to be the time when that system is breaking down.

In my case, however, the changes I was observing took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s – a quarter of a century ago now. I think, therefore, that I might be spared the charge of presenting a static account of the past, for that is where my changes are now located. My problem is rather different. I cannot take you up to the present. And I draw attention to this because I suspect that many of my readers who are Greek, and certainly those who represent a younger generation of Greeks, may wonder why I am talking about social change at all, since what I describe as change may now strike you as simply part and parcel of life as it has always been. Twenty-five years is after all quite a long time.

But let me go back to 1976 when I first went out to Greece, and to the tiny island of Meganisi off the coast of Lefkadha, to do my fieldwork. I had dutifully read everything I could find in English on the ethnography of Greece. It wasn't an onerous duty, because there wasn't much written: Ernestine Friedl's account of a village in rural Viotia, *Vasilika* (1962); my supervisor John Campbell's classic study of the Sarakatsani (*Honour, family and patronage*, 1964); his student Juliet du Boulay's *Portrait of a Greek mountain village*, in Evia (1974); Peter Loizos's *The Greek gift: Politics in a Cypriot village* (1975); and then Margaret Kenna's doctoral dissertation on the island of Anafi (then under the pseudonym of Nisi) (1971); Peter Allen's dissertation on a depopulated community in the Mani (1973); and a dozen or so articles published in various anthropological journals, in collected volumes edited by John Peristiany (1965, 1968), and in a volume edited by Muriel Dimen and Ernestine Friedl (1976). Up to 1976, that was about it – although a number of other scholars who also did their fieldwork before 1976, notably Renée Hirschon (1989) and Michael Herzfeld (1985), subsequently published their findings, while many of the above-mentioned anthropologists continued to publish on their pre-1976 fieldwork.

The corpus was not huge, the dates of actual fieldwork spanned over twenty years, and ethnographic locations were scattered all over Greece; nevertheless, when it came to gender roles, to what might be called a division of moral labour between the sexes, and to the question of marriage, there was a remarkable consistency in reportage. As Juliet du Boulay's villagers in Evia were wont to remark: "Τα κορίτσια είναι μπελάς" (girls are trouble) (1983: 245). And they were a trouble on two converging grounds. The first was economic, for young women had to be provided with dowries, which everyone complained about, but which everyone – fathers, brothers, and, when it came to providing the trousseau, mothers – also worked overtime to provide. As du Boulay argues, however, to explain the lamentation of daughters on purely economic grounds does

not bear scrutiny. Setting up a son in life actually cost a great deal more than setting up a daughter, while many women married with small dowries, or even with no dowry at all – as Friedl reported for Vasilika, and as I found to have been the case on Meganisi, where people claimed that they had given "whatever they could". And given that both houses and land were reserved for sons, "whatever they could" had often turned out to be not much at all. As du Boulay argues, it was not until the 1960s, with accelerating migration from the countryside to Athens and to other urban centres, that dowries began to spiral upwards, for urban migration meant that there was a shortage of eligible men in the village. In order to attract one, what often had then to be supplied was an urban residence. But whether dowries were large or small, it should still be pointed out that marriage entailed, and quite explicitly so, economic considerations; for parents, whether of daughters or sons, wished to ensure that their children had the best possible start in the world. And given that women were, as it were, the passive partners in marriage transactions, even if dowries were small, getting one's daughters married in a manner that would assure their future material well-being was a major parental concern. In this respect the situation was not far removed from Jane Austen's *Sense and sensibility* – though, as we shall see, with perhaps a little more sense and little less sensibility.

Nevertheless the economic grounds on which "τα κορίτσια είναι μπελάς" must be complemented by a second set of considerations – considerations that related to beliefs about the essential vulnerability of women, who, as du Boulay explains (1986), were by nature weak, little able to exercise self-control, and whose sexuality, in a society that placed heavy emphasis on female chastity and pre-marital virginity, posed a threat not only to themselves but to the good names of their families. Girls had to be guarded. Such beliefs were, of course, closely connected to many of the teachings of the Orthodox Church, whose fathers, as Eva Topping stridently pointed out in 1983, had consistently maintained woman's innate intellectual

inferiority, described her as "the weaker vessel", and equated her with the temptress, Eve. Sociologically, the consequences of such views about women – which cannot, I think, be attributed solely to the Orthodox Church, for they were, and are, widely distributed throughout non-Orthodox and non-Christian communities – were central to the anthropological discussion of "Honour and Shame" in the 1960s and 1970s. In a highly competitive environment, a family's honour depended substantially on its men-folk's ability to protect, and vouch for, the sexual chastity of its women.

Now: put together the economic considerations attendant on marriage, and the moral considerations related to the perceived nature of women, and it is hardly surprising that marriages in Greece were overwhelmingly, and normatively, arranged: contracted by negotiation, by *proxenia*, and often employing the services of a go-between, a *proxenitis*. It is hardly surprising, too, that what could upset the apple-cart, what could confound everybody's best-laid plans, was "love", αγάπη. As the members of Renée Hirschon's working-class community in Piraeus put it in the 1970s: "Η αγάπη είναι κακό πράγμα: φέρνει καταστροφή" (love is bad thing; it brings catastrophe) (1989: 116). Juliet du Boulay's villagers in Evia were of very much the same opinion: marriages for love would almost certainly be regretted by both parties (1974: 94). And according to Mari Clark, even in the early 1980s, villagers in Methana held a strong belief that while a sound economic base was essential to the success of a marriage, love was not (1988: 340). Please note, by the way, that I am not suggesting (and nor were any of the sources that I have cited) that an idea of romantic love was unknown in rural or working-class Greece, or that romantic love was not celebrated in song and verse (it most certainly was), or even that it was not felt by some unhappy shepherd or cloistered farmer's daughter. Campbell's Sarakatsani had heard the testimony of love songs in the 1950s; but as they remarked (in a manner, come to think of it, not so far removed from Plato), "the songs tell lies" (1964:

124). Love was not unknown or unrecognized; the point, rather, was that something so profoundly important as marriage, on which the future well-being of the next generation depended, and by which the present prestige of all the contracting parties was measured, could not be left to the transient emotional states of two immature individuals.

I was somewhat surprised, then, to find that on Meganisi in the late 1970s everybody *was* marrying "for love", and, according to my informants, always had done so – doubly surprised, since in most other respects (though not, as we shall see, quite all) gender relations were much as they had been described in all the ethnographic accounts I had read. Young women lived quite restricted lives, and though they were not locked up, they were also not much to be seen. Their appropriate place, as Renée Hirschon describes for the Piraeus, was στο σπίτι, "at home". In the evenings a group of them might walk arm-in-arm down the street, but if any young men were encountered, eyes were lowered, and no more than a mumbled "good-evening" would be exchanged. Certainly courtship, or the notion of "going-out" with a boy, was unknown in the village. Admittedly, those girls who had moved with their families to Athens for part of the year so that they, or their brothers, could study at high-school or university, had a somewhat freer relationship with the opposite sex. They would go out for coffee in mixed groups, or attend the Meganisiot Society's Athenian club-rooms, but they were still always under the benign (though watchful) eye of a brother, or, at the club, of some older Meganisiot, and they did not, at least licitly, ever go out with any particular boy. Virginity or, perhaps more importantly, the unimpeachable presumption of virginity, remained the *sine qua non* of any girl's claim to respectability.

As for marriages, one way or another they were still arranged – though what might be meant by "arranged" varied quite considerably. At one end of the scale, two girls of 17 were unceremoniously dispatched to South Africa during my stay to be married off to a couple of young Meganisiot émigrés who

had made a few weeks' visit back to the island to acquire, through the good graces of their friends and relatives, suitable brides. Similarly, a young Meganisiot man, who had spent 12 years in California and who had come back to his ancestral home for a few weeks' holiday, found himself, courtesy of his relatives, suddenly engaged to be married, and was still in a slight state of shock as I sat drinking with him on the eve of his wedding. "Hey, man, I'm not sure that this is going to work out. She doesn't even speak English..." At the other end of the scale, those young men and women who were living or studying most of the year in Athens, and who were joining Greece's new and growing professional bourgeoisie, denied that their marriages were arranged, and certainly they never used the term *proxenia*; but their parents still vetted potential partners, and it was noticeable that the better-to-do and educated were carefully marrying the better-to-do and educated. In the village itself, however, *proxenia* was still explicitly the norm. A young man was attracted to a young woman; he spoke to his father; his father secured the assistance of a trusted friend or relative; the friend or relative spoke with the parents of the young woman; her parents in turn consulted their close relatives – and if all parties were agreeable, the match was made. The part that any young woman played in the affair, other than giving or withholding her consent, was scarcely an active one. As one young man of 28 told me, he had watched his 17-year-old bride playing in the school yard since she was a little girl, and had said to himself, "I'll have this one." It was, he remarked, "like a spider with a fly".

Finally, dowry, too, was generally given – although this is a complicated matter, for there was a village consensus that "these days the boys don't seek dowry", and it was true that in some few cases women were marrying with very small dowries or with none at all (as, I think, had always been the case on Meganisi); in general, however, in the late 1970s Meganisi was experiencing the sort of dowry inflation that was being reported for Greece as a whole. What made it possible for the

Meganisiots to deny the importance of dowry was the claim that the property or money settled on a daughter at the time of her marriage played no part in *determining* the marriage; rather it was *supplementary to it*. What followed was a reclassification of the institution. The apartment in Athens, or the money given towards its acquisition, was not "dowry", προίκα – it was merely βοήθεια, "help".

It could be argued, then, that in practice gender relations on Meganisi, and the concomitant bases for marriage, were pretty much as they had been reported in the ethnographic literature prior to 1977 – with the notable exception that love was *not* considered a catastrophe. Far from it; love was extolled and very much in the air. In fact it didn't matter much who I talked to, they were all getting married "for love", or had all got married "for love", including the girls who were packed off to South Africa (at least, according to their relatives; propriety forbade me to speak to them myself). Even the elderly, those who had been married for forty or fifty years, claimed that in their youth they too had married "for love" – a claim that must have been arrived at somewhat retrospectively, since old men, bemoaning the decline of morals, also let slip the fact that they had scarcely seen the face of their bride, much less talked to her, before their wedding day.

Admittedly, there were a few dissenting voices. One old woman had been sent from Lefkadha to Meganisi as a youthful bride by her father, a merchant, who built her a dowry house there in order to procure a Meganisiot sailor as a son-in-law to transport his goods. The son-in-law died within a couple of years, leaving her stranded, a widow, on a "foreign" island. Sixty years later she still didn't think much of the Meganisiots, and she was still very cross about her marriage. It had been an εμπορικό πράμα, a "commercial matter", she snorted. But in general, romance glossed even tales of the island's historical settlement. Transhumant shepherds, it was said, brought their flocks across to Meganisi for winter pasturage. A shepherd would then "see" a Meganisiot girl (την είδε); he would fall in

love with her (την αγάπησε); and he would marry her and settle down on the island. No mention here of the obvious advantages of permanent grazing rights, and of a house to live in instead of a shepherd's hut.

But if everyone was now marrying "for love", and if even the elderly now claimed that they too had done so in the past, it could, I suppose, still be argued that all that had changed was a form of words; that whatever "love", αγάπη, now meant, it could not mean what it means in, say, Britain or the USA or northern Europe, since the context within which it arose was so different. This was brought home to me when I ran into a Meganisiot friend of mine in Lefkadha. He had been on a shopping trip and showed me the new laminex dining-table he had bought, explaining that now that his family was growing, he needed a larger one. I expressed surprise, since my friend and his wife were both in their late forties, and had only one child, a son, Takis.

"Well, Takis might be getting married soon," explained my friend.

"I didn't know he was engaged," I replied.

"No, he's not," said my friend, "But who knows? He's finished his military service now, so he might fall in love in the next few months."

From my friend's point of view, "love" was a question of ripe time – in much the same way that marriage had always been a question of ripe time in rural Greece. And if it was time for Takis to get married, then it was time for Takis to fall in love.

As for young women, I was not in a position to discuss their feelings with them, but certainly they looked happy enough when their engagements were announced, and my suspicion is that if a girl's father, and mother, and brothers, and any number of other people whom she trusted – including dear old Uncle Giorgos, who had acted as go-between – told her that the good-looking young man whom she had seen and admired in church, who had excellent prospects, and who came from a fine

family, was madly in love with her, then, *mirabile dictu*, "love" might easily label the emotional grounds on which she accepted the match. In the end, however, I think it is wrong-headed to dispute the authenticity of the Meganisiots' assertions of "love" by querying either its genesis or the social context in which it arose. After all, it is not as if the rest of the western world (that has for so long sworn by it) is particularly good at defining it. It's also not as if the rest of the west does not also "fall in love" in accordance with ripe time and any number of other socially specifiable considerations: wealth, class, reputation, education, ethnicity, or simply availability and proximity. Any sociologist will tell you that. So nowadays will any marriage bureau. Equally, I think it would be a mistake to claim that all that had changed on Meganisi in the 1970s was a form of words just because everything else connected with gender and marriage had stayed much the same. The point is surely that while we can "objectively" be shown to marry in accordance with wealth, class, education, proximity etc., no suitor (as opposed to sociologist) may dare state that truth, nor even, importantly, think it, for the role that social and economic factors play in the formation of marriage has for long been ideologically displaced, and effectively banished, from discourse by a sincere belief in the absolute moral primacy of a psychological and affective state whose determining role cannot, in all decency, be challenged.

That, I think, is what was happening on Meganisi, too, in the 1970s – and that, I think, is not just a matter of words. The Meganisiots' adoption of "love" as the basis for marriage signals a quite radical reconstruction of events, even if, "objectively", the course of those events themselves remained much the same. We enter, as Foucault would put it, a new discursive formation – a certain dispersal of regularities, a certain connection between concepts, statements, choices (1972: 38). The re-evaluation of love was why dowry, whose size had in most cases increased, had nevertheless to be transmogrified into "help"; why it had to be seen as *attendant on* marriage and not

formative of marriage, why boys could not "seek dowry" even though they usually got it and were happy to accept it. And the same applied to such other erstwhile criteria for marriage as coming from an honourable family, or having good prospects, or even coming from the same village (for village-endogamy was much preferred). What had before constituted the grounds for marriage were now seen as the happy, but, as it were, coincidental attributes of the individual with whom one had fallen in love – on which grounds, and which grounds only, one married. The real question, then, is not "what is love?" or "what was love for the Meganisiots?" (let that remain a black box), but rather, why had a discourse of love triumphed in the late 1970s over franker recognitions of material and social considerations?

There is, of course, an easy answer – a version of good old-fashioned diffusionism. Many Meganisiots had, after all, travelled the world, either as sometime migrants, or, in the case of men, as sailors in the Greek merchant marine. They were quite familiar with non-Greek society and its preoccupations. Still more had lived, or continued to live, on a part-time basis in Athens – and the Greek urban bourgeoisie, long integrated with the rest of the West, was certainly producing its own homilies to love, which, by the 1970s, were transmitted to every village. Meganisi got electricity in 1973; by 1976 every coffee-shop had a television set that relayed Greek soap opera of an outrageously romantic sort. Magazines such as *Ρομάντζο* (Romance) were available and read in the village, and as a matter of fact Mills and Boon was doing a brisk business in Greek translation. One could simply argue that rural Greece was being besieged by love – and one could also argue that there was plenty of top-down pressure within Greek society for its rural population to conform to generically western ideological modes. Socialist prime minister Andreas Papandreou's famous abolition of dowry did not take place until 1982, just after my fieldwork, but his move was symptomatic of the times, and equally symptomatic of Greece's foreign-educated leadership.

Papandreou did not, of course, abolish dowry; he merely abolished a specific form of legal conveyance. But he did speak a new language for rural Greece:

> "[Dowry]", he proclaimed, "was an anachronistic institution that humiliated women and adulterated the essence of marriage by turning it from a free choice of a profoundly human relationship into a coarse financial transaction symbolizing the woman's submission to the dominant male." (Modiano 1982)

"The essence of marriage"?; "a profoundly human relationship"?; "free choice"? Sociologically the terms may be less than pellucid; rhetorically and ideologically, however, they form a quite recognizable set: our set, indeed. Conversely, the description of dowry as "anachronistic" probably touched a few raw nerves – for there was a fear felt by many Greeks in the 1970s, and quite particularly by rural Greeks, that despite a 2,500 year head-start their society was, in comparison with the rest of Europe, culturally "backward".

And yet while I have no doubt that Meganisi (and rural Greece as a whole) was influenced by the media and by outside voices, whether Greek and foreign, I do not think this is a sufficient explanation for their adoption of love as the only acceptable motivation for marriage. Pretty much everywhere in the world these days is subject to such influences, but they have not everywhere been embraced. Why did not the Meganisiots say, much as John Campbell's Sarakatsani had said twenty-five years earlier, "The poets – and Mills and Boon, and the television, and even Andreas Papandreou – lie"? Besides which, having invoked Foucault, I can hardly retreat to saying that all the Meganisiots were doing was parroting what they had heard, and I'm too much of an old-fashioned materialist not to want to look for other conditions, other changes, that allowed the adoption of love to form part of a new and self-evident common sense.

One line of thought – and I mention it largely because it was a line of thought often articulated by the villagers them-

selves – was that with economic progress came, automatically, social and cultural advancement. For them, prosperity and "modernity" were inextricably linked (and love was decidedly western and "modern"). It is true that from the 1960s onwards the Meganisiots had become wealthier than they had ever been before, for those who were young enough and fit enough had taken full advantage of the quite lucrative employment then being offered in the Greek merchant shipping industry. By the time of my stay, there was scarcely an able-bodied man who was not, or who had not been at some stage, a sailor. Second, and in common with much of rural Greece, Meganisi had reaped the benefits of overseas emigration to the USA, Canada, Australia and South Africa. Remittances flowed in to village relatives; but further, many Meganisiot emigrants returned to Greece after ten or fifteen years overseas bringing their fortunes with them. Finally, a new generation of professionals and technicians was beginning to emerge: young doctors, lawyers, engineers and mechanics educated on the proceeds of their fathers' years at sea or their parents' foreign savings. But while the linking of economic prosperity with forms of social and cultural liberalism – whether the creation of "profoundly human relationships" (or, for that matter, democracy) – still seems to be something of an article of faith amongst many of those professionally engaged with "Development", I'm afraid I remain a skeptic. There seem to be just too many counter-instances; besides which, I see no reason why western social and cultural forms should constitute the inevitable telos of "modernity".

What the elevation of love as the basis for marriage really signalled was, I think, a shift towards a quite *particular* form of modernity (if one still wishes to retain that word): towards an ideology of individualism, as opposed to collectivism, in terms of which individual choice, individual freedom, individual happiness, individual fulfilment *as defined by the individual*, are granted absolute priority over any external or collective assessments of where an individual's best interests might lie.

The decisive elevation of some uniquely experienced affective state – call it love – exemplifies that ideology, while any suggestion that family, friends, money, property, land, or reputation should play a part in the choice of a marital partner is seen to render that choice unauthentic (and therefore immoral) simply by displacing it from the realm of individual desire. And what makes such an ideology possible, or at least what supplies the conditions for its adoption, is not actually a question of wealth or prosperity – though it remains, I would claim, a question of economic conditions. And here, I confess, I am about to travel a well-worn path: a path first marked out by Engels, but followed by any number of European social historians (Macfarlane 1987: 123-43). What makes such an ideology possible is a change in the *relations of production* – specifically, the demise of a peasant agricultural economy, and a shift towards wage-labour or individual entrepreneurship.

Put simply, in a peasant agricultural society the family was a corporate unit of production and consumption, dependent for its well-being, indeed for its very survival, not exactly on the collective ownership of property (for that was usually vested in the male head of the household), but at least on the collective exploitation of the family's property. Moreover, each generation was dependent on the preceding generation for the transmission of that property – house and land – which alone would allow them to take their place in society. People were not only morally and affectively tied to each other as family; they were also economically bound to each other through their dependence on a common resource.

That system had survived on Meganisi up to the time of my fieldwork, but it was also rapidly disintegrating (as it was disintegrating all over rural Greece in the 1970s). And it was disintegrating on Meganisi as a result of the two factors that I have already mentioned: emigration, and the employment of Meganisi's men as sailors. Actually it is not important for my argument that the Meganisiots' particular employment was at sea; nor is it important where the Meganisiots emigrated to.

What is important is that the wages and salaries that the Meganisiots earned at sea, and the capital and skills that they had acquired overseas, were totally transforming the Meganisiot economy, not only in that the Meganisiots were becoming a great deal wealthier, but also in that the nexus between making a living and the ownership of land was completely broken. And with the break between land and employment came also, of course, a shattering of the interdependence of family members as co-workers of their common resource. Economically, the Meganisiots were becoming atomized. Sons were no longer dependent on fathers for their inheritance. Brothers no longer worked their land together. Success was now individual success, dependent on individual skills, individual commitments, and individual entrepreneurship – and so, I might add, was failure (for what was also emerging by the end of 1970s was an entirely new form of social stratification). But either way, wage labour and entrepreneurship liberated the individual from the family as a unit of production.

This had some immediate consequences for the criteria on which brides were selected (as I mentioned, not everything about gender roles stayed exactly the same). A young woman's reputation, her sexual chastity, was still a primary consideration – hence the continued oversight of daughters and sisters. But any notion that a prospective bride had also to be a hale, hearty and experienced agricultural worker had completely fallen by the way. So, I might add (and for quite some time), had any notion that a prospective bride had to be capable of bearing a large family. To put matters bluntly, in a wage-labour economy, as Susan Buck Sutton (1986) also noted for rural migrants to Athens, women's work had become redundant, and the female role was rapidly being transformed from the productive to the frankly decorative. One of the notable side effects of this was a quite remarkable drop in the age of marriage for women from an average of nearly 26 years up to 1974 (with one in five women being over the age of 30 at the time of their marriage) to an average of only 20 years during the

period of my fieldwork (with nearly 20% of the brides being 18 years old or less). The boys, as they put it, might no longer be openly seeking dowry, but they were openly seeking something just, alas, as unfairly distributed: youth and beauty. As one of my older friends remarked, once upon a time if a woman was a little bit old or a little bit ugly, you could always give her a large dowry; now it didn't matter how much you gave, she was στο ράφι, "on the shelf".

But more important than the criteria by which brides were chosen was the issue of who chose them. And it seemed that overwhelmingly it was now the young men themselves. The process of *proxenia*, of arrangement, had still to be gone through, for in the absence of any tolerated means of direct courtship within the village, they still had to approach their prospective bride through the intermediary of friends and family. But the choice was theirs alone. Old men and women grumbled that these days they were marrying mere babies who couldn't even boil an egg, but any resistance to a match by a young man's parents could be dismissed on the grounds that, frankly, it was none of their business. And it was none of their business because wage labour made men independent at an early age from the economic authority of their elders. Moreover, that same economic independence allowed them to build a new house for themselves and their bride prior to, or on, marriage, rather than having to go through a period of married cohabitation with their parents until their father died and they inherited. Neolocal residence was becoming the norm, and young women, once subject to the authority (and, I suspect, choice) of their mother-in-law, were no longer the family's bride (η νύφη μας – "our bride"), but solely their husband's wife. As for dowry, or "help", as I have suggested, in most cases it was increasing rather than decreasing, but in a non-agricultural economy it no longer contributed to the basic requirements of existence. Moreover, given the shortage of eligible men in the village (since as non-agricultural workers they were no longer tied to the village), men could exercise their free choice in

selecting a bride and still expect to receive financial assistance from their parents-in-law without having to demand it. Precisely as the Meganisiots argued, dowry had become supplementary to a match, not a determinant of it.

So the choice of a marriage partner is now left to the unencumbered desire of a young man, and the at least willing acceptance of a young woman. So much was self-evident to all, grumbling elders included. And that desire already had a renowned label: love – whose occurrence was not, of course, a catastrophe, because now it was about the only way left of getting your daughter married. But let me end with a reflection that somewhat exceeds my scholarly competence. The Meganisiots were, through their work at sea, and as a result of emigration, getting richer. But, in conformity with the views of many social historians, I have suggested that it was not wealth *per se*, but the change in the relations of production and the mode of production from peasant agriculture to wage labour that allowed a discourse of love to flourish. In England, where a peasant class ceased to exist long ago (or, according to some scholars, never properly existed at all), the very early and popular celebration of marital love (pushed back, in some radical interpretations, as far as the thirteenth century) can be explained in much the same way: not because most people had become rich – quite the opposite; because, as landless labourers, and later factory workers, as an essentially property-less and, in the Marxist sense, "alienated" work-force, they too possessed no other grounds on which to base a marriage (Macfarlane 1986: 119-208). It was only the propertied classes, the gentry and the aristocracy, who had to be more cautious. All of which makes me wonder whether when, back in 1968, my generation were so loudly singing "All you need is love", it might have been pointed out from a more beady-eyed perspective that in fact love was all that most of us had.

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Seferis's Lost Centre

Mika Provata

When we think of George Seferis, we think, first of all, of the poet, the literary critic, and even, perhaps, of the diplomat. Yet there is a further, equally public, equally crucial side to Seferis, and that is his *persona*, to use Edmund Keeley's fitting term, as a serious and committed letter-writer. In his case especially, letters become a vital part of his work, wittingly and quite revealingly. Together with his diaries, they are his very own literary workshop, where he searches for ideas, shares experiences, or tries out lines, where he most importantly becomes aware of himself as a poet, as a literary figure, in the eyes of others.

Their most extraordinary quality, however, is that through his letters Seferis completes what is no less than the conscious foundation of a new world, a world that he offers as an answer to the adversity and the crisis of the historical reality that surrounds him. If, through poetry, he seeks to express that world's spirit and sentiment, and through criticism to define it theoretically, then the letters supply this world with its society, its necessary humanity; they do so, moreover, upon highly demanding terms of real life, which are opposed to all utopias or any sort of "ivory-tower" game of make-believe.[1]

This sense of purpose, which is inalienable from Seferis himself, endows his correspondence with particular significance: like the statues in his poetry, his letters have a value that is real and tangible, documenting, as they do, what we call, sometimes all too easily, the sense of an era. Yet they are also part of that

[1] G. Seferis, *Μέρες Δ΄* (Athens: Ikaros 1977), pp. 331-2, entry for 10 May 1944 (on Malanos). Seferis's term is "πυργοελεφάντινος αισθητισμός". Unless otherwise noted, all English translations in this paper are mine.

"function of humanisation", as he calls it in his crucial "Second introduction to *The Waste Land*" (1949), which lies at the centre of Seferis's vision, in all its rich hues and connotations. There are many things that we are still trying to grasp regarding Seferis, not because we are merely curious, but because the man was – and is – important, as a man and as a poet. I believe that in his letters Seferis gives us an extraordinary wealth of indispensable signs so that we may indeed understand him. They are resonant with his poetry, his rare humanity, his sharp, more than often brilliant, mind. They show us, in the most unequivocal manner, how much of a vital, almost a practical, necessity literature was for him – and in their living quality they offer us what is perhaps the best expression of the meaning that Seferis gave to this act of creation to which he dedicated his life.

This is one answer among the many that we seek regarding Seferis and his poetry, his place in Modern Greek letters. It constitutes the subject of one of the most central examples of Greek literary criticism, "The Lost Centre" by Zissimos Lorentzatos, himself a good friend of Seferis.[2] The richness of the essay would demand more time than I have at my disposal. What I would like to do, however, is to suggest how, with the help of Seferis's correspondence, Seferis's own silence regarding that essay may be finally resolved. Lorentzatos wrote "The Lost Centre" για τον Σεφέρη – for Seferis; I would like, very respectfully, to dedicate in turn what follows to Zissimos Lorentzatos himself.

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Letters are important to Seferis throughout his life. He writes regularly and assiduously, laying repeated emphasis on the value

[2] "Το Χαμένο Κέντρο", originally published in: *Για τον Σεφέρη: Τιμητικό αφιέρωμα στα τριάντα χρόνια της* Στροφής (Athens: Konstantinidis & Michalas 1961), pp. 87-146; now in: Z. Lorentzatos, *Μελέτες*. Vol. 1 (Athens: Domos 1994), pp. 334-419.

of complete communication. His letters are certainly quite lengthy, resplendent in their depth and richness when time permits it. He composes their text with conscious care, sometimes going through several versions, sometimes even sending off a well-crafted reply on the very same day. Yet the crux of his correspondence is its simplicity, its intense, personal human quality. Seferis writes concurrently to several friends or more "formal" colleagues at any one time, yet he is able to keep meticulous track of his correspondence. This may be attributed in part to the keen attention to order that would be essential to Seferiades the diplomat, and it is Seferis himself who keeps the two apart, as separate manifestations of himself. What transpires, nonetheless, from the letters, is a serious commitment to personal relationships – a declared need for deep human friendship, and for honest intellectual dialogue. Indeed, the words "friend" and "dialogue" are used time after time and have a weight that is only commensurate to his esteem for literature and for the value of life itself. In one of his earlier diaries he writes that letters "are the only means available so that one may receive some sign or other from a human being, in this chaos of our lives"[3] – a vision of connectedness that permeates (or dictates) more than his private existence. As he will assert adamantly in one of his letters to the Greek critic and poet Timos Malanos, art itself "is not an isolated pastime or amusement" but "a serious intercourse with others".[4]

By means of letters, Seferis will consciously forge a complex network of such human beings, with whom he exchanges the vital signs he yearns for. He maintains, with every correspondent, a direct, unbroken line of communication, reserving for each a fully distinctive voice and precious intimacy. Each epistolary relationship, as Seferis makes clear, is to him unique

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[3] G. Seferis, *Μέρες Β΄* (Athens: Ikaros 1975), p. 48. Entry for 28 February 1932.

[4] G. Seferis and T. Malanos, *Αλληλογραφία (1935-1963).* Φιλολογική επιμέλεια Δ. Δασκαλόπουλος (Athens: Olkos 1990), p. 237. Letter of 13 May 1944.

and personally necessary: he calls it "επαφή ζωής" – a vital touch with life.[5] At the same time, it becomes evident from the undeniable intensity and the sheer volume of these letters that what Seferis desires reaches far beyond the personal. What he is creating is a surrounding circle of humanity, which will draw its life-breath from the answer that its members may give regarding their greatest debate: the purpose of Literature and the meaning that literature could have, should have, in a world whose disintegration and crisis they all suffer deeply and profoundly.

As Seferis insists throughout and invariably, everything depends on this value of literature as not merely an aesthetic theory of art, but also – or especially – as an urgently required art of living. It is in this sense that poetry and letters are for Seferis a "vital, primal need",[6] and as such they are equally a precise and most demanding labour: they call for

> all the responsibility of a battle between life and death. Surrounded by a raging or a muted humanity, what, if anything, shall [the poet, "the sound craftsman"] salvage from it all? What can he salvage? What are the things that he ought to forsake from within this shapeless human substance, which is, nonetheless, frighteningly alive, and which haunts him even into his own private dreams?[7]

This fundamental synergy between life and art, this serious commerce with literature as a form of vital action, is certainly not unique to Seferis: perhaps the most exciting feature of European Modernism is this sense of an implicated, interested community that existed between writers and artists alike, and Seferis as a poet and as a critic is very much a part of that

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[5] *Γράμματα Σεφέρη-Λορεντζάτου (1948-1968).* Επιμελήθηκε Ν. Δ. Τριανταφυλλόπουλος (Athens: Domos 1990), p. 165. Letter of 14 April 1962.

[6] "Ημερολόγιο ενός ποιήματος" – sent to Lorentzatos 4 September 1948; see *Γράμματα Σεφέρη-Λορεντζάτου*, p. 190.

[7] G. Seferis, *Δοκιμές.* Πρώτος τόμος (Athens: Ikaros 1944, reprinted 1984), p, 267.

world. We know that he studied carefully the published correspondence of others, of Yeats, Gide or Claudel, for example, and we may therefore say that he acknowledged it as an essential part of the quest for adequate literary expression. In this respect, Seferis's correspondence is certainly intentional, more than a chat between friends or fellow-writers. And even though his letters show the finest degree of intimacy and a lack of all ceremony, they are never casual, nor are they ever simply conversational. Their deep humanity never outbalances their sense of purpose, which is always that of the meaning which must be given to every creative act. Yet it would also be right to say that, if for the great majority of writers letters became a *forum* for discussion, for Seferis they constituted *part of a way of life.* Creation and humanity are emphasised as inextricable parts of each other, and together they attain the state of solidity and of faith that Seferis sought throughout: "So that I may step on the firm stone that each of us must have inside him" (Να πατήσω την πέτρα τη σκληρή που ο καθένας πρέπει να έχει μέσα του).[8]

Among all his exchanged letters, the correspondence between Seferis and Zissimos Lorentzatos must hold, I think, a rather special place. It is indeed tremendous in its human quality, remarkable in its profundity and intellectual intensity, and no less momentous in the effect that it came to have on the literary consciousness of Greece, not only in Seferis's time, but well into our own. This relationship begins in 1947, grows excitedly warm and close during the years 1948-55, intense and urgent during 1955-62, and almost mysteriously still from that year on and until Seferis's death in 1971. The divisions are not arbitrary. They are the result of defining moments in the dialogue between Seferis and Lorentzatos, concurrent, every time, with something new and equally defining in the work of each. From N. D. Triantaphyllopoulos, we know that their friendship began in a similar way, after Lorentzatos sent to Seferis his

[8] *Μέρες Β΄*, p. 60. Entry for 14 May 1932.

study on Solomos – the first of what was to become a life-long series of seminal studies in literature.[9] The first letters that they exchange show that there was immediate recognition of all that they had in common, and after a mere five months Seferis establishes this feeling of mutual complicity of minds and of spirits with unequivocal mischief: "the name Zissimos", he writes, "feels too cumbersome" – would Lorentzatos mind terribly if he called him "Ζη"?[10] Not in the least, and Seferis himself becomes "Σε" in Lorentzatos's reply. The spell remains strong and unbroken until Lorentzatos resumes the greeting "my dear George" once on 17 February 1954, and then again on 7 March 1956, insisting on it even after Seferis tries "Ζη" for one last time in his own reply a month later. From that date, Σε and Ζη become once again George and Zissimos until the very end.

That first eight-year-long period of "Ζη and Σε", of "letters between two Chinamen", as Lorentzatos will playfully write at one point,[11] gives us the clearest image of what went into the building of their relationship, and also the signs which will determine their individual courses. For Lorentzatos, Seferis has an almost numinous aura. Self-consciously the younger of the two, by fifteen years, Lorentzatos describes Seferis as the poet he has read avidly and whose "moon-silvery tracks" he had long followed even before their meeting: he has "found Seferis waiting for him at every crossroads"[12] of his own journey. In his letters, respect and eager affinity are only matched by Lorentzatos's own extraordinary passion for literature and by the richness and the scope of his knowledge and his intellect. For Seferis, in turn, this correspondence is, I believe, equally

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[9] *Γράμματα Σεφέρη-Λορεντζάτου*, editor's note, p. 11. Triantaphyllopoulos cites George Savidis as his source.

[10] Ibid., p. 35. Letter of 26 August 1948.

[11] Ibid., p. 39. Letter of 2 October 1948.

[12] Both from "The Lost Centre": Lorentzatos, *Μελέτες*, p. 392. For the second, cf. *Γράμματα Σεφέρη-Λορεντζάτου*, Lorentzatos to Seferis, 17 March 1949: "I have met you before, in many dead-ends" (p. 57).

unique. It has all the seriousness, the immediacy, the bond of friendship and the intellectual honesty of the rest of his letter-writing, yet the tone that he adopts here has an added quality to it: more than interest, it shows affectionate care, the feeling of identity between an older man and his own younger self – who is at all times his intellectual equal:

> Your letter reminded me of my own years of "toiling" (take the word as you wish) 1925-27, perhaps 1928 as well. [...] My loneliness at the time was devastating, and yet Palamas, Sikelianos, Malakasis were still alive at the time. [...] I felt that when I spoke in Greek I couldn't keep myself from stuttering, that those who spoke to me were tongues without bodies, Aeolian harps strung by the winds of rhetoric or clever mockery. Sometime we will talk again about these things. I am telling you all this hoping that you will find support in the similar experiences of someone older.[13]

If the prevailing principle in all other instances is a common purpose or vision, in Lorentzatos's case the words that Seferis uses throughout and until his very last letter are "I follow your steps", "I read your latest text with great attention", "I know how you write", above all, "Σε προσέχω με φροντίδα" ("I watch over you with care") and repeated injunctions to "write", "complete your thought". In giving his comments on Lorentzatos's study of Gide's *Thesée*, this is how Seferis sees his younger friend:

> It shows a man who knows how to think, who can dedicate himself to his work, and who likes to stand on his feet (this is a special term: one day we must have a talk about the feet of *angels*); also, I was forgetting, it shows a man who has love and who labours for love.[14]

Seferis does not only look closely *at* Lorentzatos, he invites the same gaze back on himself: the simple, open human-

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[13] *Γράμματα Σεφέρη-Λορεντζάτου*, p. 135. Letter of 2 December 1951.

[14] Ibid., p. 79. Letter of 11 September 1949.

ity with which he talks of his personal feelings, thoughts and experiences in his letters shows a rare, natural faith in their relationship that we do not find in his other correspondences, at least not in the ones that are so far available to us, and excepting his letters to his wife Maro and to his sister Ioanna. Seferis desires sincere matter-of-factness, critical responsiveness and clarity regarding their respective work, and a very fine quality of dialogue – with all of which "Ζη" easily agrees. There is one silent condition that Seferis will insist on however: the relationship, even at its highest, most theoretical level, must be recognized as being quintessentially personal – neither is to become the intellectual "subject" of the other. Seferis being Seferis, this is not as easy as could be wished: as early as 1949, if not before, Lorentzatos finds himself seriously under siege by the forces of no lesser man than his cousin George Katsimbalis, the "Colossus of Maroussi" himself, clamouring for a study on Seferis. Reporting this back to Seferis, Lorentzatos writes: "I said to him, 'It is too early still for me, cousin; if I live that long, I will write in thirty years. You must find someone else for now'", having stated previously: "I want to write definitively (if that is possible)."[15]

In a brief paragraph at the heart of his own letter, Seferis makes his feelings quite clear:

> Your answer to the cousin was a good one, I am content, I mean in a purely selfish sense, imagine what a nuisance it would be for me to have to start looking at our relations from a different angle, from that of subject and critic, and then at the offices of Ikaros, [...], when asked "and how did you find the essay by Mr Lorentzatos on your work, Mr Seferis?", to be obliged to reply with some half-witted nonsense. No, I'd rather have our letters and your conversation, only those thirty years you blurted out are causing me great anxiety. I tell myself 30+49=79, I start counting the petals of imaginary daisies: he lives – he lives not, etc. And what if he lives? [...] Do you want to turn me into the King Lear of literature? If I am to go

[15] Ibid., p. 64. Letter of 22 May 1949.

> that far, I want to do so in peace and grow a long white beard. So please, write back to that cousin of yours: "I retract my previous statement, seeing things now more clearly, I will write on S. in 50 years' time." Do it quickly, I beg of you, so I may find peace.[16]

Neither schedule was kept, as it turned out, or at least not exactly: Lorentzatos's first essay on Seferis, "The Lost Centre", appeared 12 years later, in 1961, in a collection of texts commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of Seferis's *Turning point*. In 1979, the year marking the thirty years he had promised, and after Seferis's death, as the latter had asked, Lorentzatos will again write on Seferis, for the second and last time.

That first crucial essay, however, came during what was perhaps the most turbulent phase of their relations: since around 1951 Lorentzatos had embarked upon a vigorous revision of his perception of things, seeking this time firmer spiritual foundations. He looks for more than a "Sacred Way" as Seferis will call it:[17] he needs to identify with a sacred tradition he may call real and his own, and which will articulate this conscious spirituality as a complete vision of existence. What was expressed before as a general sense of human crisis is now being re-examined with the purpose of retrieving a lost connection with a lived reality that did meet such terms. By this time, Lorentzatos has also become friends, at the recommendation of Seferis himself, with a man who will be an important influence in this process, Philip Sherrard, Hellenist and student of the philosophy of religion. Sherrard himself has arrived at a crucial distinction at the time: namely, that in the West secular humanism, rationalistic thought and religious piety have dissolved the true notion of the sacred, and divorced man from his own existence, which is, for Sherrard, an indivisible part of the world's divinity. In the East, on the contrary, and especially in the context of Orthodox Christian theology,

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[16] Ibid., pp. 66-7. Letter of 26 May 1949.
[17] Ibid., p. 149. Letter of 16 January 1955.

Sherrard believes that the natural link between man and Creation, between man and God, is still retrievable. What has made this possible, from a historical point of view, is the East's long isolation from the European Renaissance, and the subsequent thought and worldview that was generated there, as a result of its occupation by the Ottomans.

Lorentzatos's own formulation of this position, with specific reference to Greece, constitutes the first, extensive part of "The Lost Centre". The second part is an equally lengthy examination of the poetry of Seferis from within this new perspective. Lorentzatos's analysis is rich and sensitive, and also endowed with a language of its own – his diction is strong and visionary, poetic and logoplastic, the flow intense and personal. It has Yeats's realism, Pound's richness of metaphor, the Greekness of Seferis himself, and a generous pinch of philosophy and religious history. In this reading, Seferis holds a unique position with respect to the majority of his contemporaries, since he has not lost what Lorentzatos calls the "touch with metaphysical reality", and he has moreover been able to convey this feeling of eternity and of hope in his poetry. His deep humanity has kept him "metaphysically open" and "that opening, that crack, is wide enough so that the heavens may one day enter". In order for that to happen, nonetheless, we need a different perception of literature that will be aware of this retrieved world, consciously and actually. Seferis, in Lorentzatos's view, feels the need, but has not yet articulated it to himself: he "searches anxiously under the 'light' [...] yet without being aware of the desired outcome of his search".[18] That unconscious ambiguity is his risk, or the direction of a necessary next step, and that step would be a leap of faith not simply in personal terms, but above all in terms of Greece's own sacred (and literary) tradition. In doing so, Seferis would become exemplary not only as an individual poet but, especially, and this is Lorentzatos's own crucial distinction, as the voice of a

[18] Lorentzatos, *Μελέτες*, p. 407.

true identity and of a way of existence. The Lost Centre, therefore, does not refer to Seferis or to his poetry, but to a point within the tradition for which Seferis, in his role as its poet, is here answerable, and which he can retrieve.

This discussion and its dilemma are closer to Seferis than the essay might seem to allow for. Lorentzatos's concluding pages, moreover, will introduce a new angle that will confuse the issue, as well as Seferis's own initial reaction. In his "Second Introduction to the Waste Land", Seferis had written: "We are a people with Great Church Fathers but without mystics." In closing his own study, Lorentzatos will argue that this exemplifies in the most powerful (and devastating) manner the adverse effects of humanism and of rationalism, evident here even on Seferis himself: a whole sacred tradition has been cancelled out of memory, since, as Lorentzatos points out, that statement, which he takes at face value, is dangerously inaccurate as he also goes on to prove by means of a long series of examples.

The only known public reaction from Seferis was that he revised that disputed phrase so that it would read, in all subsequent editions, "We are a people with Great Church Fathers but *now* without mystics." In 1996, however, Edmund Keeley asked me to transcribe on behalf of Zissimos Lorentzatos and himself an assortment of incomplete notes for a letter to Lorentzatos regarding "The Lost Centre": it is a letter that Seferis starts and abandons four times between 31 March and 28 November 1962. Keeley discusses one of its points briefly in the introduction to his own correspondence with Seferis,[19] and we will see how this is important below.

Throughout these notes, Seferis's reading of "The Lost Centre" is meticulous, though he stresses that he finds its language or the coherence of its argument very difficult to follow. His notes show a clear desire to discuss the essay point by

[19] G. Seferis and E. Keeley, *Correspondence 1951-1971*, ed. E. Keeley (Princeton: Princeton University Library & The Program in Hellenic Studies 1997), pp. 34-5.

point, and on the most solid, affectionate grounds of their friendship and long relationship. Seferis also wants to clear up the important question of "mystics", and we see here the process that led to the choice of the revised version of the phrase. The phrase is incomplete, Seferis admits, and, as a result, Lorentzatos's interpretation has inadvertently misconstrued its meaning. The underlying cause, he notes, is that their contact has been less frequent in these last years, years that have been so important to Lorentzatos's formation; inevitably, the immediacy of a more natural, mutual understanding may have grown somewhat rusty. Seferis's own aim in his letter would have been to retrieve that essential basis of their dialogue – something that, as he writes, he misses greatly. Yet in the same way that Lorentzatos has misunderstood Seferis's meaning, Seferis too singles out in Lorentzatos's essay only its strict theological dimension.

What interests Seferis, above all else, is the question of tradition and the question of literature, and in his attempt to articulate an adequate response, he tentatively defines tradition as being separate from faith: "tradition is secular and belongs to a people, faith belongs to God, it is metaphysical and ecumenical. It is the eternal irrespective of tradition."[20] He has taken Lorentzatos to mean that faith should be sought exclusively and unilaterally (something that Lorentzatos himself does not intend to say), and this, in Seferis's view, creates a conflict of identity regarding what seems to him to be a demand for a poet who is also (or primarily) a holy man. This leads Seferis to insist further on the importance of literature, again reading Lorentzatos's attempt to redefine its basis as being an act of total rejection. As he stresses through an odd assortment of examples, drawn from personal biography or from literary history, to him too the lost centre might indeed be the ultimate salvation, yet there is more urgent and great need, Seferis writes, for real spiritual education, for *servants* of God, rather

[20] Manuscript fragment dated February 1962.

than holy men: there is a need for poets. In this time of need, Seferis emphasises, we should not be condemning literature, for even its "heretics" might have some small wisdom to offer. The notes are copious but reiterative, moving in their insistence on closeness and humanity, on memory and on the physicality of this crucial value of sacredness, but they are also without a more clearly defined sense of purpose.

Taken in isolation, the manuscript would seem scant and disappointing – sadly so, since it might even make us think that Seferis somehow grew weary of formulating an answer. Given the particular quality of the friendship that bound him to Lorentzatos, that answer was both necessary and almost yearned for by his friend. Given the enormous significance of the question raised in Lorentzatos's essay, the same answer is as yearned for by anyone with a love and a concern for Modern Greece and its literature, as Edmund Keeley will note in his own comments on the manuscript.

This is where our understanding of Seferis's correspondence as a single breathing entity becomes crucial. First of all, it provides us with a full context of interpretation, with comparable cases, and with a clearer indication of Seferis's customary manner of responding on similar occasions. It teaches us, we might say, Seferis's own language now that the man is no longer here to speak it himself. It also makes us aware of that most prominent feature of this correspondence, namely its intentional emphasis on "salvaging", to use Seferis's term again, what is most important from a world in ruins – on setting humanity back on its feet. If each correspondent is a distinct individual for Seferis, a friend with a particular, inalienable position in his life (and in his heart), the purpose of letter-writing is declaredly public and in this manner – we could describe it as a modern quest for a living grail, by a scribbling, rather than jousting, vociferous Round Table. As Lawrence Durrell wrote to Seferis himself, the latter did, after all, and above all, search for "a

statement of the unnamable thing", which, as Durrell would add, he would always "find [...] in landscape".[21]

On that level, communication becomes openly shared, a communal act that extends beyond the personal, and Seferis's letters abound in expressions such as "I wrote to X on this", or "As I told Y", or "Z, too, has written to this effect". When an answer is particularly important, Seferis will make it the common ground of a discussion within and beyond the letters themselves: "have you read this?", he will write, or "read this and then give it to so and so to read as well". The most frequent participants of this elaborate discourse are George Katsimbalis, Zissimos Lorentzatos, Andreas Karantonis, George Theotokas, Philip Sherrard, George Apostolidis, Nanos Valaoritis, George Savidis and Constantine Tsatsos.

More than a private act, letter-writing in this respect serves their common business – and I use the word in its fullest sense of serious personal responsibility regarding the reasons, the motives, the desired value and results of what they all do: they read and write literature, and this, according to Seferis, demands full moral commitment to humanity itself. As he will write to Timos Malanos in 1944, stressing the point for a second (and by no means last) time, "I do not think that a writer ought to say 'Thank God we still have Literature'", an expression that Malanos had used in his own letter to Seferis,

> especially not when the phrase resembles an exclamation of the type "Thank God we can still have women, holiday-trips, wine, opium" or I don't know what other sort of drug to name. One shouldn't say that, because *art is not the grand oblivion, it is the great conscience*, and *it is not a consolation, it is a labour, a struggle on behalf of man or of humanity*, perhaps the most difficult thing in the sort of world that we live in.[22]

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[21] Lawrence Durrell to Seferis, 29 March 1944, quoted in George Thaniel, *Seferis and friends*, ed. E. Phinney (Stratford, Ontario: The Mercury Press 1994), p. 88.

[22] G. Seferis and T. Malanos, *Αλληλογραφία*, p. 235. Letter of 12 May 1944 (my emphasis).

I think we need to place Seferis's notes for an answer to "The Lost Centre" within the larger context that such explicitly sincere and demanding principles circumscribe.

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Long before Lorentzatos's study, there had been three other cases of essays written by people close to Seferis in which the concerns (though not the conclusions) are similar, and which occasioned letters of some form or other. These are two reviews by Takis Papatsonis, the first published on 13 March 1932 in *Καθημερινή*, and the second coming 16 years later, on 15 March 1948 in *Νέα Εστία*; and, finally, a comprehensive study of Seferis's poetry by Timos Malanos, which appeared in 1951.[23] All three texts address the following points: the crisis of literature, Seferis's poetry with respect to it, and with respect to a European or a Hellenic tradition of literary influence, and consequently Seferis's poetry as part of the effort towards a much needed cultural or civilising consciousness for Greece. Namely, the same focal points as those in "The Lost Centre".

Both of the writers are poets themselves and declared literary enthusiasts, members of Seferis's circle of friends, and his regular correspondents. The debate, moreover, is a heated one, extending beyond Seferis himself and to a choice that Greece is asking itself to make at the time: is it going to be Modern West or Traditional East? A Search for the New or a Return to the Roots? There appears to be no available (or credible) middle voice, and for a newly reborn nation ravaged by political discord and recent historical tragedy the answer holds more than a nominal value: it will determine the possible or impossible existence of its people. Even before "The Lost Centre", therefore, Seferis's work is not being judged simply for its poetic

[23] T. Malanos, *Η ποίηση του Σεφέρη* (Alexandria 1951).

merit: it is being measured for its loyalty, or for its ability to show a new way.

Although Seferis will never deny the general soundness of this enquiry for a conscious identity, he will, nonetheless, vehemently question the basis on which he sees it conducted all around him. As he will note in the draft for a letter to Andreas Karantonis dated 10 February 1950:

> The only thing that holds any sway today is the skin-deep, the outright fake, the quack's sham and mere, empty rhetoric. [...] Now they have gotten hold of the ancients and they have turned them into street-corner fare [πατσά νυκτός]. They call it "cultural revolution". [...] "Out with the foreigners! Long Live the Greek tradition!" – and just look at them! When serious academics write this sort of thing, what can you expect from "journalists"?[24]

Seferis is not in the least unconscious of his past: on the contrary, he has only been able to become a poet "by passionately rooting himself into the soil of his people", to quote Henry Miller.[25] That past is to him very much present and indeed very much alive, and he insists on this, as Edmund Keeley records from his first visit to Seferis in June 1952:

> those statues my dear [...], those statues are not always symbols. They exist. If you travel to Greece, you will see that statues belong to the landscape. They are real. And the stones. The stones are there under your feet, my dear, or there in front of you for your hand to caress.[26]

Seferis therefore does not dismiss "Greekness", past or present, nor does he object to being himself weighed up for

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[24] G. Seferis and A. Karantonis, *Αλληλογραφία 1931-1960.* Φιλολογική επιμέλεια: Φ. Δημητρακόπουλος (Athens: Kastaniotis 1988), pp. 176-7.

[25] H. Miller, *The Colossus of Maroussi* (New York: New Directions 1941), p. 47.

[26] Seferis and Keeley, *Correspondence*, p. 13.

what he can offer as a consciously *Greek* poet, as he will stress in the same draft letter to Karantonis:

> This man says that I am out to become the national poet; that man says I aspire to the place and the glory of Palamas; a third says something different. What I can say to you, now that we have twenty years of friendship and of company behind us, is that my only desire is to keep alive some few things till a better man comes along. And you may be sure that when he does, I will say with the very greatest relief: "*nunc dimittis*".

What Seferis does insist on, however, is the need for wise, or at least measured, choice:

> Our dilemma is relentless: we can either face up to western civilisation, which is in large part our own, and study its living sources with lucid and composed courage – *and I cannot see how we could do this without taking our strength from our own roots or without showing meticulous care for our own tradition*; or we can turn our back on the West and ignore it, allowing it to overpower us in some underhanded way, through its industrialised, its vulgar, its very worst form of influence.[27]

What Seferis seeks is a necessary balance between living, sustaining memory and present life:

> What can a flame remember? If it remembers a little less than is necessary, it goes out; if it remembers a little more than is necessary, it goes out. If only it could teach us, while it burns, to remember correctly. I am done. If only someone could begin anew from where I left off...[28]

"Remembering as we should" – this injunction, dating from 1932 – will be Seferis's marked position for the rest of his poetry, for the rest of his life. As for the exact content of that

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[27] "Second Introduction to *The Waste Land*", April 1949. Now in *Δοκιμές*. Δεύτερος τόμος. 3η έκδ. (Athens: Ikaros 1974), pp. 28-9.

[28] *Ο Στρατής Θαλασσινός* – «Άντρας» (1932): G. Seferis, *Collected poems*. Translated, edited and introduced by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard (London: Anvil Press Poetry 1982), p. 147.

remembrance, there is no need, as Seferis believes, to make a more precise, separate declaration of it; if it is of any real worth, it will be clear in everything he will have written, and this is something that he insists on, as for example in the following scene from his novel *Six nights on the Acropolis*. The scene takes place at a "literary salon" in Athens, and is part of a discussion on the meaning of poetry between an unnamed lady of great sophistication and distinctly western education, and the novel's hero, Stratis, a character quite close to Seferis himself:

> "And who cares the least bit for your puny little emotion! [the lady said]. Real poetry can only be made by the prophet who will give the world a new faith."
>
> "I am under the impression," replied Stratis, "that this is something entirely different. Though I do believe that if someone can succeed in truly expressing the emotion that the world gives him, he is helping others not to lose the faith that they should have inside them."
>
> "But which emotion? Will just any do?"
>
> "It seems to me that it will."
>
> "So you have no theory about life?"
>
> "My theory about life will come, should anyone want it, out of my finished work."[29]

That lady would not be the only one to ask for a specific statement of purpose from Seferis, for a "theory about life". Like his character Stratis, Seferis too wished this so-called theory, more correctly "this faith that [all] should have inside them", to emerge from his poetry or from his essays on literature, and after the manner of what Edmund Keeley has aptly called his "humanistic mysticism",[30] rather than through the prophecy that Stratis's lady seeks, or through some form of aesthetic experimentalism and abstraction. Unlike Stratis, however, Seferis will not always be able to shoo away his critics by

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[29] G. Seferis, *Έξι νύχτες στην Ακρόπολη* (Athens: Ermis 1974), p. 8.
[30] Edmund Keeley, private conversation. See also Seferis and Keeley, *Correspondence*, pp. 34-5.

means of aphoristic wisdom. He will indeed express himself explicitly in such cases, though never in a formally publicised manner. He will choose instead what I would call the *social privacy* of his "Dialogue on Poetry" with Constantine Tsatsos, of the "Conversation with Fabrice" written for George Theotokas (1967), and finally the equally public privacy of his personal correspondence and of his selectively circulating (as we know) excerpts of his diaries. As he will, once again, underline, "I never sought to express myself through philosophy, but rather through poetry and action."[31]

The cases of Papatsonis and Malanos that I have singled out, and which I will be contrasting here to that of Lorentzatos, represent in this respect the two most prominent occasions when Seferis did openly break his silence on the subject of the meaning and the purpose that he gave to his art. Let us look briefly at how he did so with each.

In his first review of 1932, Papatsonis ruthlessly criticised Seferis's seminal collection *Turning point* as being an appalling imitation of the foreign models of Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Valéry and Léon-Paul Fargue, even to the point of plagiarism, and a failure at that. Seferis's language is also under fire: his French is too loud, his native Greek outright abortive. The tone is simply vitriolic, yet Papatsonis's underlying thesis must be noted: in his view, Greek writers suffer a serious handicap compared to their European colleagues, since their vital instrument, language itself,

> will not obey them, being outdated, faded and colourless, unbearably separated from the coherence of its spiritual tradition. Such is the disorder of our language, after all that it has gone through.[32]

This almost insurmountable discontinuity of language throughout Greek history is the real tragedy for Papatsonis, pointing,

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[31] "Η συνομιλία με τον Φαβρίκιο", *Εποχές* 45 (January 1967); now in: *Δοκιμές*, Β΄, p. 298.

[32] "Νεαροί υπερόπται", *Καθημερινή* (13 May 1932).

inevitably, to a corresponding gap in Greek cultural identity; the only available solution would be

> either to resume Tradition [capitalised] at the point where it was broken [...], a Herculean task, or to behave like a new, primitive, newly-fledged race, like the Slavs, adapting to the latest cosmopolitan ideal; and that would be a shame, since we would be giving up all that treasure.[33]

Papatsonis concludes his article quoting the words of the Fascist Italian Minister of Culture and Education, dating, indicatively, from 1926:

> artists must prepare themselves to serve the new sovereign purpose intended for our national art. We must above all, and categorically, impose the principle of Italianism.

This is not at all a bad idea, Papatsonis will write, and in his second, 1948 review of Seferis's poetry, he will identify Greece's own point of severance from its tradition: the Fall of Byzantium. This, according to Papatsonis, is where we must go back to, in order to begin anew, retrieving, as we do, our true "cultural orthodoxy". The (Cavafian) title that Papatsonis chooses states his purpose in no uncertain terms: it is "Ο ένδοξός μας βυζαντινισμός" – "Our illustrious Byzantinism", and this time Seferis has failed in preserving these Byzantine roots by again being too open to western influences.

Seferis responds each time with a private letter, dismissing in the first any facile question of influence as being unworthy of a serious critic. As he would say later in his life, half in jest and more in earnest, "Do not ask me who has influenced me; a lion is made up of the lamb he has digested and I've been reading all my life."[34] His reply to Papatsonis's second critical attack is more substantial and indeed more serious:

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Quoted in *Life Magazine* (17 January 1964).

> I have neither the inclination nor the time to get mixed up in pointless literary quarrels. I have therefore always avoided them, but I must tell you, Takis, that, this time, your distinction between *"orthodox" and "heretics"*, and the principles on which you make it, has to do with something other than mere literature. What you propose is an entire vision of Hellenism, separating the "damned" from the "elect" on grounds that I for one would not be prepared to accept, and which compel me to reply to you, although I have long refrained from doing it. What forces my hand is the feeling that you are proposing to us a Greece that must become regressive and backward-looking, threatened by spiritual suffocation; also, that your project is all the more dangerous since those who read you have no way of knowing that you yourself have the closest ties with that West that you hold up (or pretend to be holding up) to public obloquy.[35]

The precise diction of the letter indicates that Seferis was quite willing to argue a point when he felt that the urgency was genuine – as he clearly does in Papatsonis's case. He can also state his position with critical severity, even when friendship might have made this difficult, since, oddly enough, Seferis and Papatsonis share quite a long, respected history as friends, and for all the latter's rather obviously peculiar character.

If Seferis disagrees with Papatsonis on serious, ideological grounds, and certainly in terms of world perception extending beyond poetry itself, his difference with Malanos addresses literature as a stance adopted towards life, as well as the question of ethical integrity in literary criticism. It all begins as a dialogue on a remark by Malanos, the phrase "Thank God we still have Literature" commented on above, which led to a volley of letters exchanged privately in 1944. In his own response, Malanos will argue that Seferis must admit that, even for him, Literature has above all the value of an alternative world of possible escape, a reserved private "Domain" that

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[35] Seferis to Papatsonis, 23 September 1948 (Gennadius Library, Seferis Papers, Folder 8, No. 62); quoted in French translation in D. Kohler, *L'Aviron d'Ulysse: L'Itinéraire poétique de Georges Séféris* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1985), p. 747.

compensates, if only for a moment, for the failure of an outside world. This is, as he claims, the reason why Seferis's poetry is so symbolic, so internally significant, and its intended result, whether Seferis wishes to admit it or not, is to "discontinue all relations with the WORLD OUTSIDE, with those, therefore who gave you your SUBJECT".[36] Seferis's reaction is as strong as it is immediate – he writes, in fact, back to Malanos on the very same day. He feels fundamentally misunderstood, trapped within this purportedly philological analysis of his work; above all, he feels betrayed in what he finds most central in that poetic act, namely its humanity:

> Since you are so infatuated with detail, take care: it often leads to contradiction, and, even worse, it sometimes nullifies man himself.[37]

Five years later, in December 1949, Malanos reclaims the phrase in his greetings to Seferis for the New Year:

> I am well; at least to the extent that this is possible for an intellectual. Thank God we still have poetry and literature. I know you do not like this expression, but I find rest in it.[38]

In the published correspondence of Seferis and Malanos the next letter comes from Seferis, dated 21 May 1951. It is bitingly brief, acknowledging receipt of Malanos's study *The poetry of Seferis*. Seferis is not simply reacting to Malanos's interpretation of his work: he is reacting – strongly – to his intentional distortion of its meaning, and of the meaning of Seferis's own letters to him, which he has misquoted in the study and without permission. Seferis will only send one more letter, requesting the return of all manuscripts that he had given to Malanos. By August of the same year, he will have drafted a

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[36] G. Seferis and T. Malanos, *Αλληλογραφία*, p. 242. Letter of 15 May 1944 (original emphasis).
[37] Ibid., p. 243. Letter of 15 May 1944.
[38] Ibid., p. 312. Letter of 28 December 1949.

full, definitive response, quoting at length and with great precision from the letters of 1944, to be sent as a statement of position to Katsimbalis with explicit instructions for publication in the *Αγγλοελληνική Επιθεώρηση*. The letter would remain in Seferis's "for publication" files in his archives, as we are told by the editor of the correspondence.[39] Yet once again, we see Seferis fully determined to set things right, especially when what is at stake is his serious commitment to literature and to the meaning of both art and life.

While Lorentzatos's own study is certainly unrelated to those of Papatsonis and Malanos by virtue of its ethos, depth and calibre, it does ask, if only indirectly, that Seferis clarify his own position with regard to the meaning of his poetry and with regard to the direction that Greek poetry, including his own, ought to take. Given their mutual respect and friendship, and as Keeley also asks, why does Seferis not engage in a dialogue with Lorentzatos, as he did, for example, with Tsatsos? It would have been indeed an extraordinary meeting of minds, of literary forces. The absence of Seferis's response, moreover, has led to mixed critical reactions, and specifically to two supporting, mutually exclusive, sides. I think, however, that Seferis's silence is not a refusal to speak. Instead, it shows the greatest care for Lorentzatos as a friend, as well as as a new, important intellectual voice.

* * *

Among Seferis's notes on "The Lost Centre", there are also a limited number of seemingly tangential, personal prompts: jotted ideas, references to people by name, or in quotation. The "ideas" are mostly images from Seferis's childhood in which he tries to describe an organic coexistence with that "metaphysical reality" in the practices of everyday rural life. The two most central names mentioned are Claudel, whose

[39] Ibid., p. 327.

"pietism", in Seferis's words, "gets on one's nerves", and Papatsonis, underlined in the manuscript as Claudel's Greek counterpart. The quotations are mostly jingles of popular wisdom, illustrating the fundamental mistrust of the Greeks for the West – including a celebrated aphorism dating from the time of the Ottoman Empire, which shows the Greeks consciously preferring the turban of the Turk to the skullcap of the Frank. These reappear in each new version of the letter, showing that Seferis intended quite an extensive response, if not a definitive answer. Certain key words and turns of phrase also show that the basis of his discussion would not have been the essay of Lorentzatos alone: Seferis would be taking the occasion to respond also to Papatsonis's second essay, "Our illustrious Byzantinism", as the references to the "heretics of literature" and to other points taken from Papatsonis's text indicate. Seferis would have argued his case in two ways: using examples from literary history and criticism, or by means of a parable, which he would have made the centre of his own exegesis. The manuscript contains such a fragment: it is an allegorical dream involving Seferis as a gate-keeper to the gates of Mount Athos, standing here for Greece itself, and in what is clearly, for Seferis, an insular vision of the future.[40]

The notes also show that this syncretism between Lorentzatos as his friend, "The Lost Centre" as Seferis reads it, and Papatsonis's own essay in all its ramifications, causes an almost violent, and in the manuscript unresolved, conflict in Seferis. He appears very unclear regarding the direction his own judgement of all three must take, crossing out ideas, adding qualitative new points, shifting from pure criticism to reminiscence, to history, coming always back to personal attachment and to his own faith in literature and in the lived experience of the sacredness of things. My belief is that Seferis is not uncertain about *what* to say, but that he is uncertain about whether he has chosen the right occasion – the right justification – for such an

[40] Cf. *Δοκιμές*, Β΄, pp. 326-7.

apology. Namely, about whether this is really a case of genuinely contrasting positions, especially with respect to Lorentzatos. I base this belief again on one of Seferis's letters, the original draft of a letter he sent to Lorentzatos in May 1956. That draft is the climactic point of a heated discussion which began in 1954, when Lorentzatos sends to Seferis his first collection of poetry, *Mikra syrtis*, describing it as "his act" and asking for Seferis's comments. Uneasy with the word "act" in its connotations of a public act of conversion after the manner of Claudel, Seferis responds primarily as the poet, giving earnest, though strict, stylistic advice. Two years letter, when Seferis's Cypriot collection of poems makes its own appearance, Lorentzatos's appraisal is severe, introducing in their dialogue an as yet unprocessed and mostly apophthegmatic version of the main thesis of the first part of "The Lost Centre". In the sent and the unsent form of his own reply, Seferis gives us, I think, the answer that we are looking for.

The unsent version is the longer, the more detailed, and the one in which Seferis allows us to see the same sense of conflict as the one we are confronted with in the manuscript. He also states, however, in this case, the real cause of this conflict:

> What can I possibly have to say to you when you accuse me of having all these theories of artistic purism and self-autonomy that I do not feel in the least? Philip, too, struggling as he does with the higher substances of this world, wrote to me the other day, like yourself, on Dante and literature. I swear to you, in the name of the Holy Virgin, that I almost turned around to see who is that stranger behind me that you both seem to be talking to.[41]

And again: "You are preaching to the converted." In the sent form of the letter, none of this will appear. Instead, Seferis writes that he cannot see clearly what the new Zissimos, the one who has renounced his past (as Lorentzatos had declared to have done) is now seeking: he will wait for an answer in

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[41] *Γράμματα Σεφέρη-Λορεντζάτου*, p. 205. Draft of 25 April 1956.

Lorentzatos's next book. The only severe remark that he allows himself is to caution Lorentzatos against abstraction, against an intellectualisation that would endanger the human side of things: "Your risk is that of becoming a prophet of abstractions." Taken as a personal remark, the words would seem harsh; this, however, is a term that Seferis has used before and as a philosophical category: he applies it to Ravel, describing him in an early diary as "un entrepreneur d'illuminations",[42] and, in the context of a serious critical analysis of his music, which he finds too cerebral, too empty of feeling.

This precedent is important, since Seferis is making the words the centre of a comparison between Ravel and J. S. Bach, in order to enhance the higher, fuller spirituality of Bach's music, which is grounded, in Seferis's view, in the recognition and embrace of the human dimension in its totality, and within the expression of the sacred. In this context, Lorentzatos too should seek this second, more positive quality. We know from their correspondence that Lorentzatos and Seferis share a mutual passion for Bach's music: perhaps we may assume, then, that this allusion would be familiar to Lorentzatos, enabling him to understand the true sentiment of Seferis's comment in this case. What is certain is that in his letter Seferis does indeed underline the positive grounds for his severity: again it is his concern for Lorentzatos, whose steps "I follow always, and with great care".

I think that similar reasons induce Seferis not to write a response to "The Lost Centre": the first would be that his own affinity to many of Lorentzatos's points in the essay would make the reply redundant and unnecessary. I also believe that the essay came at a turning point for Seferis, especially since critics such as Keeley, and Lorentzatos himself, have shown that Seferis's later poetry, most centrally the *Three secret poems*, reveals a more pronounced sense of this "metaphysical reality" in Seferis himself, now "increasingly drawn to the

[42] G. Seferis, *Μέρες Β΄*, p. 47. Entry for 25 February 1932.

Christian tradition, after "*Thrush*", for certain otherworldly images".[43] I think that the manuscript, and the difficulty that Seferis shows in articulating a distinct, separate position, show that this strong attraction was already active, as we can also infer from his consistently more frequent references to a Byzantine rather than to a Classical Greece throughout his diaries and his correspondence, almost always prefaced with words to the effect "I need to understand". A result of this conscious need would be that Seferis would also be required to distinguish expressly between the "illustrious Byzantinism" of Papatsonis, and the more complex ethos of Lorentzatos's "sacred tradition". This would be a second important reason why a letter at that point, and in the form suggested by the manuscript, would have been unnecessary.

Would there not have been, however, some later appropriate time and way for an expression of Seferis's views? Keeley records in his introduction to his correspondence with Seferis that in 1971 he had asked Seferis for a reader's report on Lorentzatos's essays and in support of an English translation of a suitable selection of his writings. Seferis replies: "Let us postpone explanations till I see you in Athens. Z. certainly important," but also that he himself does "not know enough of the American public" to serve that purpose well.[44] On the evidence of the letters exchanged between Seferis and Lorentzatos in the last years of Seferis's life, I would like to suggest a third reason for Seferis's silence: though the letters are much less frequent during those years, less bountiful in their expression, they show what is perhaps a stronger profusion of friendship, and a calm acknowledgment of relatedness. They also show that Seferis continues to follow Lorentzatos's work. The most crucial passage is from 10 August 1966:

> Maro and I spent our first days here in your company. We read your *Meletes*. I am not going to write to you my comments,

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[43] Seferis and Keeley, *Correspondence*, p. 34.
[44] Seferis and Keeley, *Correspondence*. Letter of 11 February 1971.

> you know them already. Only looking at the book in its totality, I think that what renders it incomplete is precisely its *incompleteness*. I would say that it is filled with conceptual silence marks. Every now and then, I would find myself in a closed corridor. You say at some point that you will later develop something that you do not develop, in the end, in this book – something that you *can* develop, and you alone, so that your thought may be rounded off and find completion.[45]

In the case of Lorentzatos, his own most crucial passage is the penultimate letter of their correspondence:

> The only sign that we are reaching or that we are approaching a certain wisdom is increasingly more love, more hope. Away from love and hope there is no wisdom, only *amathia* (Plato), darkness, disloyalty, doubt, grotesque mockery, death [...] Those "depths", real depths, lead there and there only. I would like to copy for you [...] just one verse that I love so much. It is by Hölderlin:
>
> *Wer das Tiefste gedacht, liebt das Lebendigste*[46]
> *(Who has thought deepest loves what is liveliest).*
>
> I dare not translate it into Greek.[47]

My view is that Seferis's silence is in a sense a conscious act of patience and of anticipation, that *nunc dimittis* he had described to Karantonis: he sees in Lorentzatos, if not the "better man", then the "good man" of a next generation, who will take care of those few things left to Greece with as much care as Seferis himself. That is why Seferis is such a demanding critic, yet also such a generous one: all he asks for (by no means a little thing) is that Lorentzatos *complete* the work, be an equally precise guardian of his own directions. For Seferis, the authentic cannot be attained through amputation, but through conscious choice – through the digestion of those lambs that do

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[45] *Γράμματα Σεφέρη-Λορεντζάτου*, pp. 170-1. Letter of 9-10 August 1966.
[46] "Sokrates und Alkibiades" (1798).
[47] *Γράμματα Σεφέρη-Λορεντζάτου*, pp. 173-4. Letter of 17 November 1968.

not change the lion from being a lion. This is not assimilation (Lorentzatos's concern), nor emulation, but itself an act of understanding of all that may be true and enriching. In his letter on "*Thrush*", Seferis gives us this significant image regarding the meaning of creation:

> Climbing down the mountain, I thought of Basho's teaching to Kikaku: We must not humiliate God's creatures; a haiku must always be inverted.
> Not:
> A dragonfly
> Remove its wings
> A chilli-pepper
> but:
> A chilli-pepper
> Add to it a pair of wings
> A dragon-fly.[48]

I do think that Seferis recognises in Lorentzatos an important addition to his own contribution regarding what they both seek in their common tradition. I also think that his public silence was necessary so that Lorentzatos could develop his own strength, stand, in that sense, on his own "angelic" feet, as Seferis hints. If Seferis himself is the Socrates of Hölderlin's poem quoted above by Lorentzatos, one of Seferis's favourite figures, and a persona he is often associated with, then Lorentzatos should not be Hölderlin's Alcibiades, but a fully-fledged Plato: not a figure *in the line of* Seferis, but one more important line to add to literature, to that literature's identity that they both so love. Above all, there should be no abstraction, but rather an enriched, matured fertility.

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[48] Ibid., p. 193.

How it strikes a contemporary: Cavafy as a reviser of Browning

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"I only knew one poet in my life: / And this, or something like it, was his way" – the opening words of Browning's celebrated poem (which provides my title) in which, with particular subtlety, the tensions between the poet's interior creative life and his myth-making public are exposed.[1] There are rather few major modern poets of whose biography we know so relatively little as Cavafy's; almost none – Yeats? Eliot? Pessoa? – around whose personality such a mystique has grown up.[2] The Cavafian physiognomy – the large nose, the thick-rimmed glasses, the tight collar – itself figures in poetic tributes from several continents, as a substantial recent anthology in Greek translation, *In conversation with Cavafy*, shows; but the ways in which Cavafy's poetic personality developed from his pre-

[1] Robert Browning, *Poems*, ed. John Pettigrew and Thomas J. Collins (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1981), 1, pp. 605-7. A Greek translation of this poem by Anthi Leousi, at the head of another three (none of which gives a good impression of Browning's forms), has recently appeared in *Νέα Εστία* 1756 (May 2003) 747-86.

[2] The only biography, as opposed to memoir from an individual's angle, is still Robert Liddell, *Cavafy* (London: Duckworth 1974). (More recently, Dimitris Daskalopoulos and Maria Stasinopoulou, *Ο βίος και το έργο του Κ. Π. Καβάφη* [Athens: Metaichmio 2002] is rich in further information presented annalistically.) Part of the reason is the aversion of Greek literati to the genre of biography (and indeed autobiography): Roderick Beaton, *Waiting for the angel* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2003), the first biography of Seferis, comes more than thirty years after this central figure's death. It might be argued, in fact, that the thinness of biographical criticism in Greece has inhibited the discussion of topics such as those explored in the present paper, in which a long-standing poetic relationship is addressed.

decessors, and his English-language predecessors especially, have been less fully explored than one might expect.[3] At the same time, an absorbing chapter in the history of Browning's after-life has been relatively neglected by comparison with, say, the question of Pound's relationship to the English poet.[4]

My discussion here will be somewhat provisional (it is part of a book in the making, *Cavafy reader and read*), but I still hope to come up with some new lines of thought. These are, of course, informed by a sense of where colleagues have gone before, and among these must be singled out Edmund Keeley, whose Oxford DPhil thesis of half a century ago contains some valuable pages on the topic.[5] I periodically tax Professor Keeley with the fact that almost none of this material has ever appeared in print, with the exception of some brief but useful comments in a conference paper for Cavafy's fiftieth anniversary. In the same volume we find a brief contribution by Aris Berlis drawing some illuminating parallels between two of my exhibits ("The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church" and "Philhellene"); and the knock-down case of Browning's influence on Cavafy, the poem "Protus", has received a fuller discussion by Joseph Fontana in a paper in *Studies in Browning and his Circle*. (To view Cavafy as being in some sense in Browning's circle is itself a congenial thought.)[6] Finally, a brief and thought-provoking survey by

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[3] Nasos Vayenas (ed.), *Συνομιλώντας με τον Καβάφη* (Thessaloniki: Kentro Ellinikis Glossas 2000).

[4] On which Pound himself is the most stimulating source: see, notably, *How to read* (London: Desmond Harmsworth 1931), p. 42.

[5] E. L. Keeley, "Constantine Cavafy and George Seferis and their relation to poetry in English" (unpublished dissertation, University of Oxford 1952), pp. 99-134, 156-65. For a handy summary of the earlier and later bibliography on the question see Maria Tobrou, "Καβάφης και Μπράουνινγκ", *Νέα Εστία* 1756 (May 2003) 787-809.

[6] Edmund Keeley, "Καβάφης και Browning", *Πρακτικά Τρίτου Συμποσίου Ποίησης. Αφιέρωμα στον Κ. Π. Καβάφη* (ed. Sokratis Skartsis, Athens: Gnosi 1984), 355-62; Aris Berlis, "Ο 'επίσκοπος' του Robert Browning", ibid., 349-54; Joseph Fontana, "Browning's 'Protus' and Cavafy", *Studies in Browning and his Circle* 14 (1986) 16-21.

Maria Tobrou of the Greek poet's creative borrowings from Browning has just appeared and is likely to engender further discussion among a Greek literary public in which English poetry is now much more widely studied than it was either in Cavafy's time or in that of Seferis and the other early Cavafy critics.[7]

But in some ways perhaps the most salutary contribution on this whole topic was the first: a few pages in Glafkos Alithersis's book, *The problem of Cavafy*, published in 1934, a year after the poet's death. There Alithersis gleefully produces Browning's poem "Protus" from *Men and Women* and takes it to be proof that the late Alexandrian poet was nothing more than a weakly imitative epigone of the fertile Englishman. The chance to dance on the newly dug grave is not missed.[8] The allegation is of a familiar type, much in the spirit of Robert Graves's reported remark that Elytis was simply Eluard with a Greek accent. So is Cavafy (the Cavafy of the historical poems, at any rate) nothing more than Browning-and-water? Or does a closer look at Cavafy's treatment of his English-language poetic inheritance in fact show the more clearly just how original a poet he is?

It would be surprising if I did not think the latter (though to trail my coat just a little, I have doubts about Cavafy's sensual poems, some of which could be seen as tamely Wildean).[9] But here is a quick road map to a topic rich enough for an entire book; for I have space to discuss only a handful of poems.

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[7] Tobrou, "Καβάφης και Μπράουνινγκ". This article, based on an essay for a graduate course convened by myself, makes some use of material presented by me there: I do not, for that reason, cross-refer to this useful discussion.

[8] Glafkos Alithersis, *Το πρόβλημα του Καβάφη* (Alexandria: Ekdoseis Spyros A. Grivas 1934), 48-55.

[9] There is a valuable discussion by Sarah Ekdawi, "The erotic poems of C. P. Cavafy", *Κάμπος: Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek* 1 (1993) 23-46; see also her "Days of 1985, '96 and '97: the parallel prisons of C. P. Cavafy and Oscar Wilde", *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 9 (1993) 297-306.

I shall begin with the two celebrated cases mentioned above, in which it is universally acknowledged that the Cavafy poem is modelled on a scenario provided by Browning: first, "Orophernes" versus "Protus", then "Philhellene" versus "The Bishop Orders His Tomb".[10] These pairs of poems may properly be seen as doublets: the later poem of each pair is a painting on a new canvas with a different palette; it is an arrangement for different instruments or a transposition into a distant key – such metaphors come to mind.

If this, however, were the sum of Cavafy's debt to Browning some of the critical ill temper associated, say, with Seferis's borrowings from Eliot, might be understandable.[11] We might just tire of hearing yet another chamber work arranging Browning's full orchestra. Indeed, it is crucial to our understanding of this phenomenon that Cavafy, who was nothing if not a reviser of his own work, could not rest content with the cunning adaptation of Browning's scenarios and came to find less obtrusive ways of employing material which we can only more speculatively read as deriving from Browning. Some such examples I have drawn attention to elsewhere and will not rehearse here. (Perhaps the neatest one conceptually is the way in which Cavafy begets from "A Grammarian's Funeral" not one but two tiny epitaphs, "Tomb of Ignatius" and "Tomb of Lysias the Grammarian" – each with a clear verbal inheritance, allowing for the traversing of languages, from the original. This is not cloning, but the working out of poetic heredity in a new environment. And if the products are bonsai versions of the original, they are none the worse for that.)[12]

The final pair of poems I will discuss is "Sculptor from Tyana" and Browning's most famous dramatic monologue,

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[10] K. P. Kavafis, *Ποιήματα.* Φιλολογική επιμέλεια Γ. Π. Σαββίδη (Athens: Ermis 1981), 1.33-4, 37; Browning, *Poems* 1.704-5, 413-15.

[11] Timos Malanos, *Η ποίηση του Σεφέρη και η κριτική μου* (Athens: Prosperos 1982).

[12] David Ricks, "Ο Βρετανικός Καβάφης", *Θέματα Νεοελληνικής Φιλολογίας. Μνήμη Γ. Π. Σαββιδη* (Athens: Ermis 2001), 270-7.

"My Last Duchess": a clinching example of how audaciously Cavafy is able to turn the tables on a Browning poem.[13] In so saying, I mean anything but to say that Cavafy wipes the floor with it. That is what revisionists do – they produce arguments for things we know to be untrue, usually in the historical sphere. There has perhaps to be a little bit of the revisionist in the best poets: think how unjust Wordsworth and Coleridge were to Pope, or Cavafy was to Tennyson.[14] But the sort of poetry which is of enduring value is not revisionist but re-visionary: by a process which is, characteristically, associated with meticulous textual revision, the later poet re-envisions the predecessor's subject.[15] Such a poem may in a deeper sense be a reply to the earlier poet than a poem which is more obviously a reply or retort. But the proof of this will be in verbal detail.

* * *

Let us begin with "Orophernes", a poem of 1915:

> This one here who on that tetradrachm
> seems to have a smile on his face,
> a handsome delicate face,
> this one is Orophernes, son of Ariarathus.
>
> As a child he was driven out of Cappadocia
> from the great ancestral palace
> and sent to grow up
> in Ionia and forget himself among strangers.

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[13] *Ποιήματα*, 1.41-2; Browning, *Poems* 1.349-50.

[14] See conveniently Gregory Jusdanis, "Cavafy, Tennyson and the overcoming of influence", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 8 (1982-3) 123-36.

[15] This has of course been the overriding preoccupation of Harold Bloom's criticism, as followed, rather too dutifully, by Jusdanis (note 14). For a model study of a modern author's revision of his own œuvre, see Philip Horne, *Henry James and revision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1990).

Ah, those exquisite nights of Ionia
when, fearlessly and in the Greek manner quite,
he came to know pleasure in its fullness.
In his heart, abidingly Asiatic;
but in his manners and his conversation, Greek,
decked with turquoise jewellery, Greek in his garb,
his body odorous with the scent of jasmine,
and of all the handsome youths of Ionia
the handsomest he, the most ideal.

Later, when the Syrians came in
in Cappadocia, and made him king,
he hurled himself into his kingly state
to find a new mode of bliss with every passing day,
to gather up rapaciously the gold and silver,
to warm the cockles of his heart and boast
at the sight of all that wealth piled up and glistering.
As for devotion to country, as for exercise of power,
he hadn't the faintest idea what was going on around him.

The Cappadocians soon unseated him;
and he found himself in Syria, in the palace
of Demetrius enjoying himself and idling.

One day, however, his chronic torpor
was jolted awake by unaccustomed reflections:
he remembered that on his mother's side, the house of
Antiochus,
he too was a scion of the Syrian crown,
practically a Seleucid.
He roused himself a while from lust and inebriety,
and feebly and bemusedly
started to set a scheme in train,
to see to things, to plan things out,
and failed miserably and was brought to naught.

His end will have been recorded somewhere, and then lost;
or maybe history passed it over,
and rightly; maybe she disdained
to record a matter so inconsequential.

This one who on that tetradrachm
has left the grace of his handsome youth,

> a light shining from his poetic beauty,
> an aesthetic memory of a lad of Ionia,
> this one is Orophernes, son of Ariarathus.

Cavafy's poem, though not a long one, is long by his standards, and it is his only one of roughly the same proportions as the relevant Browning poem. The point of departure, a coin collection, is the same; the protagonist is a comparably attractive figure from a dynasty in decline, whose ultimate fate remains impenetrable; and, having acknowledged the inadequacy of historical enquiry to the capturing of the individual personality, the speaking voice returns to the indelible visual impression of a coin. Yet, even if "Orophernes" uses "Protus" as a ground, and shows a full familiarity with Browning's manner, no-one other than the envious voice of an Alithersis could reasonably describe it as School of, or *à la manière de*, Browning.[16] There are three principal respects in which Cavafy has deviated; they may for convenience called structural, tonal, and ideological.

"Orophernes" inherits a shape from Browning, but where "Protus" circles round to the brute fact of history as encapsulated in the doomed but brutal head of John the Pannonian, with a final exclamation more or less disclaiming the power of mere words to capture the past, Cavafy instead returns to the original coin of Orophernes. The newly added phrases show, instead of an aspect of history, an individual's retrospect, in which appearances have a power of poetic generation. Orophernes's liquid name and patronymic now come to stand for a whole lost civilization, in quite a different spirit from Browning's poem.

One of the most important cues Cavafy took from Browning, as we shall corroborate in all of the poems discussed in this paper, is the English poet's preoccupation with transitional or liminal periods of history; but one of the key ways in which Cavafy revises Browning is in taking a different stance towards history. The clearest, and no doubt the most crucial, case of

[16] Discussion in Fontana, "Browning's 'Protus' and Cavafy".

Cavafy's revisionary impulse is in relation to Gibbon, and his often voluminous notes in his copy of the *Decline and fall* have been collected to our benefit.[17] Again, in the most clearly documented case of Cavafy's professed antagonism towards a respected senior, his unpublished poem "Symeon" takes on Tennyson's "St Simeon Stylites" essentially because Cavafy believes a modern Western poet to have inherited from Gibbon a blind spot to something someone of Orthodox culture can see.[18] Now the changing history of modern Greek responses to the Byzantine past is a complex one, and it would be facile to acclaim some anti-Occidentalism in Cavafy; yet it is quite clear that, compared with his English predecessors, Cavafy adopts a very different stance to the post-classical Greek-speaking world.[19] Browning's essentially Gibbonian stance (not that Gibbon's stance is itself other than highly complex) pervades his poem from the title.[20] Poor Protus's problem is that he is really Hystatus – his whole life is a *prothysteron* – and he meets his end (perhaps) in a barbarous place, Thrace, and a semi-barbarous mode of life, the monastic. A rather sharp though subtle distinction is drawn between the ever-captivating and authentic form of his lovable "baby face" in the opening lines and the more questionable presentations of him that follow: "While young Greek sculptors, gazing on the child, / Were, so, with old Greek sculpture, reconciled" (ll. 20f.). Followed as these are by the authors of court panegyric, these sculptors

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[17] Diana Haas, "Cavafy's reading notes on Gibbon's *Decline and fall*", *Folia Neohellenica* 4 (1982) 25-96.

[18] See on the general issue Diana Haas, *Le problème réligieux dans l'œuvre de Cavafy* (Paris: Sorbonne 1996); discussion of "Symeon" in David Ricks, "Simpering Byzantines, Grecian goldsmiths, et al.: some appearances of Byzantium in English poetry", in: Robin Cormack and Elizabeth Jeffreys (eds.), *Through the looking-glass: Byzantium through British eyes* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2000), 223-36.

[19] See recently David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (eds.), *Byzantium and the Modern Greek identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1998).

[20] David Womersley's introduction to Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1996) adumbrates complexities lost on some Byzantinists.

seem subject to a false consciousness.[21] In Browning's poem, both power and weakness shift in a northward direction: Protus to "some blind northern court" or in Thrace, John the Pannonian occupying the throne. Cavafy, by contrast, shifts the reader's attention to the land of Ionia, as the home of "Greek love" *par excellence*. In this country of the mind evoked by John Addington Symonds and other Victorians formative of Cavafy's version of Greek love, the old pagan impulses can never be eradicated by a semi-barbarous theocracy: they remain available for the modern poet to celebrate.[22] Where the hapless Protus is a mere innocent victim of history as written by male scribes and annotators, and perpetrated by actors such as John the Pannonian, to whom the only response can be the half-admiring, half-shuddering "What a man!", Orophernes is both complicit in his own downfall and at the same time the victim of a stern Clio. History passes him by, "και, με το δίκιο της": the personification leaps out, to produce a female presence both hostile to Orophernes and curiously forgiving of him.[23]

Cavafy, then, generates a transposition of Browning's material into a different historical epoch, as indeed he does in all the poems of this type. The new period presents some broad analogies, true; but Cavafy is too good a historian not to know that history does not repeat itself; and he knows, before Eliot so formulated it, that his theft from Browning must be "welded into a new whole of feeling utterly different from that from

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[21] I concede that other readings are possible: for commentary on the poem see *The poetical works of Robert Browning*. Vol. 5: *Men and Women*, ed. Ian Jack and Robert Inglesfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995), p. 394. The editors' assessment of the verse form is highly germane to Cavafy's technical development: "The couplets are so muted that one may well remember the poem as being in blank verse."

[22] For a recent general survey, see Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1994).

[23] Personifying History so lightly yet powerfully is an unusual move; compare, in a quite different context, Alan Shapiro's poem "Mud dancing", in *Covenant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1991), pp. 15-16, where a Frau History is apostrophized, with electrifying effect.

which it was torn".[24] Cavafy's new whole of feeling, here as elsewhere, consists essentially of an inversion of Browning's – I choose the word advisedly, given Cavafy's preoccupation with sexual inversion, a topic he handles here rather more circumspectly and less sententiously than he does in some of the sensual poems, or than some revisionist historians do in their work.[25]

The structural and ideological departures, then, of "Orophernes" from "Protus" are considerable; and so is the shift of tone. Browning's heavily enjambed heroic couplets, with their irregular paragraphs and jagged parentheses, are an ideal medium for playing off the false rhetoric of imperial discourse against the exigencies of history; and they also provide the sudden twists and turns of a dialogue with an unseen interlocutor. Cavafy's poem, though also iambic, has a looser movement, and a different sound-palette quite in harmony with its subject. It is a setting in a minor key, or in the Ionian mode. The scathing colloquialisms of which Orophernes bears the brunt in the body of the text are wiped away by the lenient coda. Whatever our final assessment of it, to call such a poem imitative of Browning would be wholly inadequate.

* * *

Structurally, Cavafy has taken Browning's approach, but his own stamp is everywhere present. "Orophernes" is an inversion of "Protus" like a photographic negative; where Browning ends with the bold chords or discords of a scherzo, Cavafy gives a diminuendo. But the analogies are unmistakable, even though of verbal connection there is little or nothing. Cavafy allows himself a little more verbal borrowing when his scenario is produced at a still greater historical, geographical and cultural

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[24] T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* (London 1977), p. 125.

[25] The late John Boswell's *Christianity, social tolerance and homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1980) is a *locus classicus* of contention.

distance, as it is in "Philhellene" (1912) when compared to "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at the Church of Saint Praxed's":

> See to it that the inscription is most artfully done.
> Expression: serious and dignified.
> The diadem by preference on the narrow side:
> those great wide Parthian ones are not to my taste.
> The inscription, as is customary, in Greek;
> free of exaggeration, free of grandiosity –
> lest it provoke any unpleasantness with the pro-consul,
> who's always digging for dirt and tattling to Rome –
> but suitably honorific.
> Choice matter on the obverse:
> some handsome young discobolus.
> Above all, I enjoin you take close note
> (Sithaspes, for heaven's sake, let this not be forgotten)
> that after the legend King and Saviour,
> there be engraved in elegant characters, Philhellene.
> And look, don't set to pleasantries
> like "What Greeks?" and "What Greek
> here beyond Zagros, on the far side of Phraata?"
> Since any number of people yet more barbarous than ourselves
> inscribe it so, so let ourselves inscribe it.
> And in the end do not forget that periodically
> we are visited by sophists from Syria,
> by versifiers and other ineffectual types.
> That being the case, we are not unhellenized, I fancy.

Browning's poem is a justly celebrated one, and Cavafy's poem demands attention as an exceptionally intelligent response to it. Ruskin's praise of "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" in *Modern painters* might have been calculated to appeal to Cavafy, who, like Proust, was deeply influenced by this greatest of Victorian cultural critics and who wrote on him (in Cavafy's case, in the form of marginalia) with scrupulous care:[26]

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[26] See Stratis Tsirkas, "Ο Καβάφης σχολιάζει Ράσκιν", *Ο πολιτικός Καβάφης* (Athens: Kedros 1971), 222-65.

> I know of no other piece of modern English, prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit,– its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all that I said of the central Renaissance in thirty pages of the *Stones of Venice* put into so many lines, Browning's being also the antecedent work.[27]

It is hard to imagine an assessment that gets so close to the heart of Cavafy's project as a historical poet to sum entire periods of history in a small compass, and to do so with an eye to all the contradictory and competing facets of a given age. All of the moral characterizations above have purchase on "Philhellene" (with the crucial shift to Greek as the culture-language), yet in a way which requires careful discussion. Indeed, the close attention with which such a doyen of Hellenistic history as Glen W. Bowersock has chosen to devote to Cavafy's work is the clearest possible sign that his poems have something to tell the historian.[28]

Cavafy, of course, characteristically boils down the efflorescence of the dying bishop's language into a more compact form still, and, what is more, the configuration of his dramatic triangle is different: the Philhellene's interlocutor is not a set of ungrateful and rapacious natural sons at a deathbed; instead, it is a long-suffering courtier. Again, the rival in the shadows is, not the dead Gandolf, but the Roman pro-consul (though Cavafy must clearly enjoy the mention of Rome as a tendril which leads back from his poem to the one that inspired it). And, though there is an object of erotic attention like the bishop's late mistress, the "tall pale mother with her talking eyes", Cavafy gives this in the form of the discobolus encapsulated in art. The respective protagonists are alike refreshing in their lack of sentimentalism, and both are conscious of how the written word can provide them with an authority which is, be-

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[27] Conveniently in Browning, *Poems* 1.1093.

[28] Glen W. Bowersock, "The Julian poems of C. P. Cavafy", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 7 (1981) 89-104.

cause of its very concision, no longer "a little brief authority", no longer at the mercy of their own frailties or the disloyalty of others. Cavafy's principal verbal borrowing brings this out: where the the bishop pleads for his tomb to be inscribed (l. 77) with "Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's very word, / No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line", the Philhellene asks for:

> Η επιγραφή, ως σύνηθες, ελληνικά·
> όχ' υπερβολική, όχι πομπώδης [...]
> Κάτι πολύ εκλεκτό απ' το άλλο μέρος.

This aesthetic – if merely aesthetic – discernment on the part of the Philhellene gives him just a sufficient claim to be "not unhellenized"; and corroboration is provided by his attention to the avoidance of Asiatic excess in headgear, in the spirit of Horace's "Persicos odi, puer, apparatus".[29]

The two protagonists, then, share something in the way of temperament, though it maps out differently on different periods. What they will also share is a historical fate. The bishop is painfully though hazily conscious of what the faith in which he no longer believes threatens for his after-life: he seems, by contrast, quite unaware of how his type of prince of the Church in the early sixteenth century will be swept away by the puritanism of the Tridentine Counter-Reformation of which Ranke's *History of the Popes* is still such a vivid evocation. Similarly, the Philhellene is properly anxious about the precariousness of his own position as the ruler of a buffer state, but much less conscious of how (as darkly hinted at in so many of Cavafy's poems) his whole culture, an inconsistent thing easy to poke holes in, but with its own modalities, will be wiped away by the Arab conquests.[30] If Browning's satire is broader (perhaps reflecting a contemporary target in the Oxford Move-

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[29] Horace, *Odes* 1.28.1.

[30] See especially "Αιμιλιανός Μονάη, Αλεξανδρεύς, 628-655 μ.Χ.", *Ποιήματα* 1.80.

ment), Cavafy's is, taken in the context of his work, darker as well as drier in tone.

* * *

It will be agreed, I hope, that these exhibits provide compelling testimony to Cavafy's ingenuity in re-setting Browning's dramas in new costumes. Were the Greek poet to repeat the method again and again in his collected poems, we might colourably accuse him of a relative lack of ambition – in effect, the gravamen of Malanos's general charge.[31] But his collection of men and women, of dramatis personae, is richer and often less easy to link conclusively with a precursor from Browning. Saving the neatest example for last, I turn to a Cavafy poem, "Sculptor from Tyana" (1911), which is just as deeply, but much more unobtrusively, related to a Browning predecessor – indeed, and this is the audacious thing, perhaps the most celebrated of Browning's poems, "My Last Duchess".

> You'll have heard I'm no tyro.
> I see my share of stone.
> Back home, in Tyana, I'm quite well known.
> And here too I've had a good many statues
> commissioned by senators.
> And let me show you
> a few without further ado. Notice that Rhea:
> august, primordial, austere.
> Notice that Pompey. Marius,
> Aemilius Paulus, Scipio Africanus.
> To the best of my abilities, true copies.
> Patroclus (I shall be touching him up a little later on).
> There, by those bits of yellow
> marble, is Caesarion.
>
> And lately I've been taken up for quite some time
> with the making of a Neptune. My concern

[31] Timos Malanos, *Ο ποιητής Κ. Π. Καβάφης* (Athens: Govostis 1933).

is above all his horses, how to shape them.
They must be light as if
their bodies and their feet are visibly
not treading earth but racing over the sea.

But here's the piece dearest of all to me,
on which I worked with feeling and with the greatest care;
this one here, on a hot summer's day,
my mind ascending to the realm of the ideal,
this one here in my dreams, young Mercury.[32]

We have seen how Cavafy's historical Orophernes (or rather, the viewer of his coin) provides a discreet but distinctively homoerotic variation on the viewer of the coin of Browning's fictional Protus; and how the floridly but illicitly heterosexual bishop in Browning is remoulded as the somewhat camp Philhellene. Cavafy is not a tireless proselytizer (or, usually, a tiresome one) for the love that dare not speak its name; and if he had merely produced a gallery of homosexual men as an alternative to the Browning version, with a reworking of the old scenarios in this fashion, he would be less than the poet he is. Instead, by pursuing a line of thought present in all the poems we have looked at so far, he goes further in using an exploration of the relationship between artist and patron to stake a claim in his own relationship with Browning.

In revising the English poet to make his own way, Cavafy may be understood to be carrying out a number of gambits, not mutually exclusive, as correctives. Among these one might include the following types of redressing of the balance: close attention to epochs neglected by English (as indeed by earlier modern Greek) poets, Browning included; a fairer, more discriminating assessment of certain periods of history; a plainer style seeming to demand less annotation (for though Cavafy does, I think, benefit from annotation, and scandalously lacks it in the rich form of our various Browning editions, he does,

[32] This version first appeared in *Modern Poetry in Translation* n.s. 13 (1998) 9.

admittedly, require it less than his senior); greater concision (in effect, taking Ruskin's generous assessment of Browning and acting on it more ruthlessly); the wider tonal possibilities afforded by freedom with line lengths and rhyme schemes; and, yes, a view of the world from a homosexual angle. But where all these can be blended most happily is in reflection in verse on a theme which so consistently preoccupied Browning, the relationship between artist and patron.

We know this question to have been of acute personal interest to Cavafy: so keen was he to avoid any connection between his œuvre and commercial publishing that he chose the eccentric but not impractical method of distribution he did. Nor is this to be understood as akin to the scruples of Hopkins: it is more in the nature of a lordly refusal to be patronized. (Being lionized was quite a different matter.) Browning's most sinister drawing of the patron-client relation comes, it will be agreed, in "My Last Duchess": Frà Pandolf, a man of the cloth, is allowed, so the Duke informs us, the space of a single day to sketch the Duchess from the life; and in painting this most vivid of portraits (in the end, the Duke's self-portrait), Browning has quiet sympathy, not only for the ill-fated Duchess herself, but also for the artists Frà Pandolf and Claus of Innsbruck who begin and end the poem.

Now Cavafy's poem is not a detective story in the same way, though it is a psychological study, and the question might be asked, what connection it has with Browning's at all. Our first two pairs of poems have not posed us this problem, but here one might ask where the tangible connection was. That we have two dramatic monologues richly revealing of the motives of the speaker in each case is not to say that the earlier poem necessarily reveals something directly about the latter (or vice versa). But it does here.

Great patrons, even more than great collectors, are jealous of their possessions. Neither the infant Protus nor, probably, the hapless Orophernes, can have had much to do with the coins that commemorated them for (a largely undiscerning)

posterity; but the Bishop at least attempted (not doubt without success) to see that a fitting monument was built, and the Philhellene likewise with his coin (again, probably without any long continuance of his rule). But the Duke of Ferrara was so anxious that the unfortunate woman whom he believed to have made a work of art by the very conferment of his title might enjoy the affections of another that he turned her into a work of art in the normal sense. And any thief who had tampered with any of the Duke's physical possessions might have expected short shrift. So it is wonderful to see with what insouciance Cavafy makes off with the poetic swag here: "Neptune... / Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity" has been purloined from the end of Browning's poem, and out of the Duke's possession, to make the Neptune (Poseidon) of the third section of Cavafy's poem, where the sculptor describes to us, not so much the rarity of the motif, as the rare challenge of the artistic process.

Prompted by this to acknowledge that there is a close and verifiable relationship between these two great poems, what may we see as its further ramifications?

The formal aspects of "Sculptor of Tyana", which I have attempted to preserve in my version, certainly have their origin in Browning's poem; but where the latter generates nervous energy through the tension between the four-square heroic couplets and the winding, often ambiguous and frequently unsettling syntax, Cavafy chooses to unravel the couplet form (I take the verb from Palamas, who, was, through gritted teeth, respectful of Cavafy's surreptitious and original verse technique).[33] Instead, in iambic lines of slightly varying length, and with the appearance and intermittent disappearance of rhyme, a freer form, in typographically discrete sections, conveys the attitude of an artistic speaker who emerges in the end emancipated from the constraints of patronage.

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[33] Kostis Palamas, *Άπαντα* (Athens: Biris n.d.), 12.306.

And when we speak of constraint, we must attend to an aspect of Browning's dramatic monologues which has classically been described by Robert Langbaum, but which has been less developed in Cavafy criticism (largely because of the neglect of Browning): the presence of the silent interlocutor.[34] The pressure point running through a poem of this kind lies between the speaker and interlocutor, and through hearing one half of the telephone conversation we are set to guessing at the power relations that prevail. The telephone is a useful analogy because one of the things the poet can most fruitfully develop is the sense of the varying distance between speaker and interlocutor.[35]

Such a social distance is all too evident in the words of the Duke, who speaks to the Count's emissary *de haut en bas* (and, for that matter, a Count is no Duke). That might be expected, but, as we can see, the Duke's talk is shot through with a courtliness of a slightly minatory kind. The poem is so rich that it admits of many interpretations (to argue that the protagonist is simply a Bluebeard who unwittingly confesses his crime would be a distortion), but what encapsulates his concealed menace is the phrase towards the end, "Nay, we'll go / Together down, sir." This is the tone of the man whose home is his castle, whose home is a castle, and who doesn't want anyone wandering off, even if they do so in the numbed and stumbling manner of the unfortunate emissary, now he knows the nature of the negotiations he has entered into. A sign that the emissary's attention, which might have started to wander once the Duke began what looked as if it would be some maudlin recollections of his last (not his late!) duchess, has been transfixed, is beautifully captured some lines earlier, when the Duke tugs the discussion back to business: "I repeat, / The Count your master's

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[34] Robert Langbaum, *The poetry of experience* (2nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1985).

[35] The relationship between poetry and technology has been a fruitful preoccupation of Hugh Kenner's criticism, notably in *The Pound Era* (London: Faber 1972).

known munificence..." There is a distinct raising of the voice here, not a mere recapitulation of the matter in hand.

In all this, both the *objet d'art*, the murdered Duchess, and the artist himself, Frà Pandolf, have been supplanted by the patron, and Claus of Innsbruck is enlisted at the end merely in a gesture of display and connoisseurship. Cavafy's deviation from the poem is at its most subtle in looking at things through the other end of the telescope. His sculptor speaks for the artist, and for the artist as exile. The Duke can summon artists from where he will and dismiss them without notice. Cavafy's sculptor is socially a fish out of water in Rome, very much a *Graeculus esuriens*. His initial approach is socially gauche salesman's patter (would you buy a used car from him?), nervously provincial – the (no doubt *nouveau-riche*) customers he is addressing may be taken by his prior work for senators but are most unlikely to be able to place Tyana on the map. They are no doubt suitably impressed by the quintessentially un-Cavafian figures of a dumpy Rhea or the Republican heroes suitable for a pompous colonnade, less interested in the beauty of Patroclus and Caesarion (here of course in bit parts from other Cavafy poems); they probably start to glaze over during the sculptor's vivid attempt to describe his technical challenges over Neptune; and he's lost them completely once he starts to point to his Mercury.

A poor bit of business, then, but an artist whose love of his work has taken him away, in just a few lines, from all pressures of patronage into a mystical and private world suitable to his origins in the birthplace of the mystic Apollonius.[36] It is as if, with the due change of orientation, Browning's Pandolf, who has been silenced apart from a mute picture we can see only through the Duke's words, has been given a voice. And this brings us to the second lesson the Greek poet has taken – but certainly not copied – from "My Last Duchess": the crucial role played by spatial disposition. Both poems are choreo-

[36] See especially "Απολλώνιος ο Τυανεύς εν Ρόδω", *Ποιήματα* 2.48.

graphed so that the present speech and gestures of the speaker, and the implicit responses of the interlocutor (possibly plural in Cavafy's case) are set in a moving context. There is stage business, and both poets direct it with some care.

"My Last Duchess" begins *in medias res*, with the portrait. "Will't please you sit and look at her?" suggests a rather peremptory seating of the emissary before the portrait, perhaps with a firm grip on the shoulders. The two find themselves in a private alcove, as the quietly authoritative bracketed phrase "(since none puts by / The curtain I have drawn for you, but I.)" suggests. Fixed there for the bulk of the poem, the two men leave at the cue, "Will't please you rise?", and the curtain on the old tragedy is drawn. At the end of the poem, the two men will go downstairs to join the company, in varying states of mind; but not before the Duke has called attention to an equally perfect, but inhuman, work of art: "Notice that Neptune."

Cavafy craftily inverts this perambulation through a ducal palace. We start at the entrance to the sculptor's atelier, with the conventional introductions and brandishing of credentials (it may of course be that the clients have enquired about the unfamiliar accent of the speaker). We proceed to a large gallery with some monumental copies ready for sale (Cavafy takes the verb "Notice" from the end of "My Last Duchess" and places it with Rhea), before proceeding to two works in progress, and then on to a work of great scale and ambition, but no doubt at an earlier stage. At the end of the poem we have come to the artist's inner sanctum: it is if he too draws a curtain to reveal, not just something he would surely never sell (any more than the jeweller in the poem "From the shop" would sell his best pieces), but an object he worked on intensely, and which so evokes erotic experience, and the complete though fleeting possession of a body that could in the right hands be transmuted into art.[37] Where the Duchess's title was inalienable, and yet

[37] "Του μαγαζιού", *Ποιήματα* 1.50 and discussion in Anthony Hirst, "Philosophical, historical and sensual: an examination of Cavafy's

her death warrant, the sculptor's model (perhaps a street boy of Caravaggio) was both anonymous and mercurial, yet given life, like the artist himself, for ever.[38] The Duke, surprisingly, has nothing to say of the next world, even as a conventional reflex ("my late Duchess"; "God rest her soul"; a crossing himself): Cavafy's sculptor has been able to dream up, not only a beautiful youth, but belief in a god that had for late Romans become as conventionalized as Rhea at the start of the poem. If Frà Pandolf's attempt to capture the innocence of the Duchess as a Madonna could not save her, the sculptor's hand has given an anonymous model the gift of eternal life; where Pandolf had but a day to model the Duchess from the life, the Greek sculptor was able to conceive his masterpiece on a particular day and to work on it lovingly and at his leisure.

What is so salutary about all this is that Cavafy sets his poem beside his predecessor's so respectfully: this is an answer, not a riposte, let alone a swipe. But it is one that allows itself a final little joke. The Duke's language is pervaded by "I" and "my", right through to the last proprietorial "me" at the end, which chillingly places his stamp on a bronze as earlier on flesh and blood. The sculptor of Tyana is himself free with first-person verbs, initially with the social awkwardness of a new-comer to the capital, at the end with the bold freedom of the creator; but the poem's last words, as we wait for the rhyme to answer θερμή, escape to another realm with Hermes, Ερμή. This taking up of a cue in the form of a mere phoneme, makes the Greek poet's dialogue with Browning's poem a much more intriguing sort of thing than Imaginary Conversations usually are.[39]

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thematic collections", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 19 (1995) 33-93 (55-8).

[38] Compare "Ενας θεός των" ("One of their gods"), *Ποιήματα* 1.73 and discussion in David Ricks, "Cavafy and the Body of Christ", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 27.1/2 (2001) 19-32.

[39] That Cavafy's jokes can be this elaborate is attested by the Alexandrine that ends the poem "Για τον Αμμόνη, που πέθανε 29 ετών στα 610" ("For Ammonis, who died at 29 in 610"): see David Ricks,

"Well, I could never write a verse – could you? / Let's to the Prado and make much of time." The engaging speaker of Browning's poem which supplied the title for this essay concludes disarmingly, having in fact shown us that he is a poet *malgré lui*: the happiest of creatures as the poet *manqué* is the most wretched. Browning, like Cavafy, has attracted a host of commentators, many of them learned and acute; he has also put generations of poets fruitfully on their mettle: "Hang it all, Robert Browning!", Pound expostulates in the second *Canto*.[40] But the case of "Sculptor from Tyana" is as subtle and pleasing an example as I know of a poetic theft, whether from Browning or anyone else. It is a theft proudly but quietly acknowledged by what we may properly call an allusion to "My Last Duchess", inserted with the same pride as a *Fecit*.[41] In his mid-twenties when Browning died full of years and poems, Cavafy, with all his serious work before him, knew the older poet to be a classic, and, struck by his contemporary, the Greek poet's own classic poems have drawn new life from the master.

"Cavafy's Alexandrianism" in: Anthony Hirst and Michael Silk (eds.), *Alexandria real and imagined* (Aldershot: Ashgate, forthcoming 2003).

[40] See discussion in David Ricks, *The Shade of Homer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), p. 142.

[41] For some discriminations, with reference to recent discussion, see Christopher Ricks, *Allusion to the poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002), pp. 1-6.

The Greek domestic novel in the 1990s and after*

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According to several recent surveys of Greek fiction published during the last two decades,[1] a preoccupation with the private and everyday lives of fictional characters, in other words with issues related to the characters' immediate family, their love affairs, their personal and existential anxieties, or a combination of all these, seems to constitute the dominant thematic tendency of the period. This of course is not accidental but at the same time is a quite new phenomenon.

This interesting preponderance of private affairs over collective ideals in the lives of fictional characters has succeeded several lengthy periods in the history of Greek literature when local politics and the immediate historical past were the dominant themes. This generally parochial tendency, which placed a particular emphasis on collective ideals and issues of national identity, was certainly the direct result of the particularly turbulent political and historical situation of Greece at the time: the last two centuries have not been at all easy and peaceful for the relatively new Greek state. Even fairly recently, that is for a short period after the restoration of democracy in 1974, interest in politics continued to be strong, since memories of the immediate historical past (civil war, the cold war period,

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[1] For representative overviews of contemporary Greek fiction, see Moullas 1999, Hatzivassileiou 1999 and 2002, Kourtovik 2002, Tziovas 2003, and Mackridge and Yannakakis (forthcoming, 2004).

dictatorship) were still fresh and painful. Since then, however, the indigenous literary production seems to reflect Greece's status as a peaceful, western-type and fairly affluent democracy which wholeheartedly shares the values of contemporary western culture in the homogenising process of so-called globalisation; literary themes have recently been very much in line with those popular in the rest of the developed world.

The development of a story that revolves around a particular family is one important aspect of the recent preoccupation with the private sphere of contemporary Greek fiction. However, the domestic novel has not been new in Greek fiction of the last two centuries, as it has not been new in western literature either.[2] What is new, though, as far as Greek fiction is concerned, are novels, mostly written by women, which critically scrutinise the relations between members of individual Greek families and particularly the role of the mother in these families. Thus, an important difference between these domestic novels and those of previous periods lies in the fact that in the recent ones there seems to be a reversal of the traditional hierarchical roles in families: here the image of the father is either weak or simply absent, so the key role, but also the blame for running a (dysfunctional) family, is placed on the mother. Moreover, in contemporary domestic novels there seems to be a strong and straightforwardly expressed criticism of the way

[2] The large bulk of western fiction is domestic and is considered to represent a stage of maturity for the genre. Its peak period was the nineteenth century. However, the family model presented in those novels constitutes a reflection of family life at the time: the father is always at the top of the familial hierarchy, while there seems to be a special emphasis on the role of the daughter (to make up for the shadowy presence of the mother), at least in relation to the father. In the twentieth century, and particularly in its second half and down to the present, the domestic novel reflects the different familial relations in real life: single-parent families, change in the role of mother etc. Here, the most popular dyad now seems to be that of mother-daughter (Cohen 1991). As far as Greece is concerned, although there have been numerous novels that might be broadly labelled as domestic, in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we cannot speak of a dominant category of fiction.

Greek families in general have functioned for several generations, in the context of a self-sustained, insulated and thus traditional culture.[3]

Several recent novels have dealt with family relations, such as Karystiani's *Little England* (1997) and *Suit in the earth* (2000), Triantafyllou's *Tomorrow another country* (1997), Thanasis Cheimonas's *Ramon* (1998), Nikos Michailidis's *The bitch and the puppy* (2002) and Ioanna Tombrou's *I'll call you life* (2002).[4] However, here I am going to examine and compare three novels, all written by women and published during the last five years, which I believe share several common features, not so much on the narrative level as on that of the subject-matter and more precisely in terms of the perspective from which the individual families are viewed. These novels are: Niki Anastasea's *This slow day was progressing* (1998), Ileana Chourmouziadou's *The personal secretary* (1999) and Marilena Politopoulou's *House of guilt* (2002).[5] The stories in Chourmouziadou's and Politopoulou's novels take place in contemporary Athens, while the plot of Anastasea's takes place in a small town in Northern Greece in the 1950s.

Besides the fact that all three novels were written by women, in two of them, those of Chourmouziadou and Politopoulou, the story is told through the single and limited perspective of two women (who are also daughters), while in Anastasea's novel the focalisation is multiple and also includes the mother herself; in all three, at the centre of the family saga is the mother, who, in two cases, dies (one suicide and one alleged murder by the daughter) and in the third is permanently paralysed after having been physically attacked by her son.

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[3] For an anthropological analysis of family structure in Greece, see Herzfeld 1991. For an analysis of the mother-daughter relationship in particular, see Dubisch 1991.

[4] Tachtsis's *Το τρίτο στέφανι* (1962) constitutes a kind of predecessor of this recent group of novels, with the mother as the dominant figure.

[5] For the Greek titles of these works see the Bibliography.

In all three families, the mother-figure is both victim and victimiser: she is usually the victim of oppression, at the hands of either her own family or her immediate social milieu, and in turn victimises her children as well her husband. In all these families, moreover, the father is absent: after some years of married life, all three fictional fathers either run away from the family home to settle down somewhere else (in two cases) or simply disappear (in one case); in all three, the mother is more or less considered (mainly by her own children) to be responsible for the father's abandoning the family. There is also a strong tendency in these families for each generation to repeat the choices of the previous one, and this is due (as the novels themselves claim, at least) not so much to genetic inheritance but rather to an imitation of these same choices. Mental illness exists in two families and is presented as the result of oppressive relations, while in the third the daughter (the alleged murderer of her mother) reaches levels of manic obsession and paranoia with regard to her mother. Incest is implied in two of the novels, that is between mother and son in Anastasea's novel and between father and daughter in Politopoulou's novel.[6] Finally, politics still exist in some way, mainly as part of the parents' past, the consequences of which the children are called upon to face in the present: in two of the three cases, the fathers (and one grandfather) were communists who wasted the families' property by funding their ideological cause, or simply resisted the capitalist ideal of amassing significant property.

We shall now present plot summaries of the three novels. In Anastasea's novel, the mother, who, as a teenager, ran away from her Asia Minor home with her future husband, an officer in the Greek army, is later abandoned by him and left to bring up her two young sons alone in Northern Greece and within her husband's extended family; fifteen years later her elder son (a schoolboy) also runs away, to return ten years later, that is

[6] Incest seems to play a crucial role in the development of the plot in Anastasea's novel; however, in Politopoulou's novel we are not told about its actual impact.

twenty-five years after her husband had left. Having chosen to remain confined in her husband's family home all these years and having refused to accept him back when he returns ten years after he first left, the mother finally resorts to a hunger strike a few weeks before the wedding of her second son, who is still living with her in the same house. When the wedding is cancelled and the relationships of both her sons with their girlfriends collapse, she hangs herself, full of guilt for the misery she has caused them. Incest is here implied but not witnessed clearly by the reader.

In Chourmouziadou's novel, the mother, the wife of a captain and an extremely beautiful woman, is abandoned by her husband, who cannot tolerate either her lovers or her indifference towards him. She is left with a young daughter, Maria, to bring up. She chooses not to work but supports herself and her daughter with the money her husband sends from time to time, but mainly with the money her sister, Maria's godmother, pays her to look after their disabled father. Her sister dies of cancer, so the role of bread-winner is soon assumed by the daughter, who abandons her legal studies at university to take up work as the personal secretary of her dead aunt's brother-in-law. The daughter, who has grown up as a "mummy's girl", hates her mother for being more beautiful and desirable than her, but also for being financially dependent on her rather than taking a job. In her turn, the mother seems to cultivate this hatred by always comparing herself openly to her rather plain daughter. Finally, the mother is drowned together with two other people, one of whom was her lover (but also the lover of her daughter), in a supposed sea accident, which, according to certain clues in the text, was directly caused by her daughter. Three months after her mother's death, the daughter accepts a proposal to marry her boss (that is the brother-in-law of her dead aunt), and thus take the place her aunt and godmother used to have in this family of industrialists.

In Politopoulou's novel, the mother is abandoned, after twenty years of married life, by the father, who never appears

again and is treated by all as dead. She is left with three teenagers to bring up, two daughters and a son. The son, Yannis, and one daughter, Marina, go away like their father, while the other daughter, Eleni, who is the narrator, stays with the mother until she starts her own family. After years at sea as a sailor and following the death of his wife, Yannis returns for good to bring up his own son; after the latter leaves, Yannis looks after their mother. In a terrible row he shakes his mother violently with the result that her spine is broken and she becomes permanently confined to bed. Guilt-ridden, Yannis goes out of his mind and is undergoing treatment in a psychiatric clinic. Eleni, who is now in charge of her disabled mother, is writing weekly letters (which constitute the text of the novel) to her absent father informing him about developments in the family since his departure and asking him to return if he is still alive. In this communication with her father she implicitly refers to an incestuous relationship with him.

Are we justified in assuming that wives and mothers in Greek families have been monsters of selfishness and manipulation, at least according to the picture contemporary Greek fiction draws of them? Things are not as simple as that and this seems to be what these novels want to discuss.

In the rest of this paper I shall employ family systems theory[7] to examine the function of these fictional families. This is based on the theory of family systems therapy[8] – a method of treating dysfunctional families which started being practised in the United States and elsewhere in the sixties.

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[7] On family systems theory in relation to literature, see Cohen 1991, Bump 1991 and 1997, Morral 1992, Shapiro 1994, and Knapp 1996.

[8] This is a development of general systems theory, which was pioneered by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1940s and was based on the assumption that life processes constitute hierarchically arranged, interconnected and interdependent systems. Family systems therapy applies the epistemology of general systems theory to the family as a way of tackling mental illness; the basic view here is that the source of illness lies within the family (Cohen 1991). For a comprehensive review of family systems therapy, see Hoffman 1981.

Family systems theory is gaining ground over traditional psychological literary criticism (classic psychoanalysis, language-oriented Lacanian theory etc.) as it is also doing in real life: family systems therapy is becoming one of the most widely used therapeutic models for mental illnesses, including schizophrenia, in the western world.[9] In Greece, family systems therapy started being used around 1975, it reached a peak in the first half of the 1980s and in the 1990s it was in decline. Whether we can attribute the emergence of this type of novel directly to that is an issue that needs further research but which lies beyond the scope of this study. Regardless of whether the practice of this therapy in Greece actually contributed to the recent booming of this type of novel, we can still use this theoretical model to approach this group of novels more thoroughly and appropriately.

According to this theory, it is the family system and not the self that provides the source of identity for a person. So, in order to understand one or more members of a fictional family, one needs to understand the family system this member or these members belong to, just as with families in real life. As Shapiro (1994: 2, 5) observes,

> The basic unit of study is not the individual as a separate entity [...] but an interactional field [...] the psyche cannot be understood as a discrete, autonomous structure [...]. The person is comprehended only within the tapestry of relationships, past and present [...]. This relational model in the social and natural sciences has implications for the critical models and frameworks that we bring to the study of literature and the arts.

Families are considered to constitute a co-evolutionary ecosystem (Knapp 1997).[10] Within the family system, each

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[9] According to the school of literary critics that applies this theory to literature, it is not accidental that the sixties in America also witnessed the proliferation of novels thematising dysfunctional families.

[10] This idea originates from the "ecology" of Gregory Bateson, a scientifically trained anthropologist, which refers to the interconnectedness of life processes in the context of general systems theory. In the 1950s he

member is believed to affect, to a greater or lesser degree, the development of all the other family members. In its turn, the function of the family as a unit is affected by the surrounding socio-cultural system; so, according to this view, at the centre is the individual, who is surrounded in a system of concentric circles by both the family and the social environment (work, school, church, neighbourhood etc.) – with all of them interacting with and affecting the rest.

One of the most important functions of the family is to encourage both *integration* into a solid family unit and *differentiation* into relatively independent selves. In functional families members develop *solid selves*, that is they are able to keep intellect and emotions from becoming fused; in the opposite case, members develop a *pseudo-self*; they are controlled by their emotions, act in a very demanding way, are ruled by anxiety and fear and take their core beliefs from outside the self and family, that is from some seemingly gifted and strong individuals who occasionally offer them patterns of behaviour (Bowen 1985). This integration/differentiation process is lifelong, since members move from the family-of-origin to their own created families.

According to family systems theory, the ability to love with a detachment which encourages the individuation of children is one important feature of a functional family; others include equality between parents, the adoption of open rather than closed family systems, clear and honest communication and emotional expressiveness, in other words flexible boundaries among the family members.

Families have subsystems: (a) that of spouse-spouse (at the top of the hierarchy), (b) that of parent-child, and (c) that of sibling-sibling. The family, which usually starts as a dyad, will soon become a triad, and so on. In some families the dyad develops into a triad ("triangulation" – which implies not only the birth of a child but also its involvement in the parents'

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developed some pioneering views on the treatment of schizophrenia (Bateson 1972).

problems), in an effort to reduce tensions between the couple caused by the inevitable pushes and pulls to establish a balance between intimacy and self-sufficiency.

Moreover, an important principle in family systems therapy is the existence of "intergenerational transmission of beliefs, attitudes and symptoms" (Framo 1996; Kerr and Bowen 1988); according to this, the partners in a marriage bring with them their internalised paradigms of "family", derived from the structure of the family-of-origin as armour in the power struggle that is bound to ensue at a certain point in the relationship. Therefore, the emotional system of a certain family includes processes and patterns copied from previous generations and which most probably will be transmitted to future ones. On the other hand, people often choose partners who resemble one of their parents in an attempt to heal, through replication, childhood wounds inflicted during the power struggle between their parents. A similar phenomenon is that of "familial repetition compulsion" (Bump 1997: 334), according to which members of the same family repeat the same mistakes again and again without being able to escape.

The role of family in the development of the children's personalities is directly pointed out in Politopoulou's novel when Eleni, the narrator and main character, says:

> Από την πράξη της καθημερινής ζωής και τα όνειρα των γονιών φτιάχνονται τα παιδιά, πατέρα. Η πραγματικότητα είναι το αλεύρι και το όνειρο η μαγιά. Έτσι και δεν τα ζυμώσεις καλά, πάει κάθισε η ζωή. (104-5)

This belief seems to dominate all three novels or even to be the very motive for their writing, that is to show the effect of dysfunctional families on their children and ultimately to criticise traditional Greek families for failing to offer a healthy environment for the family members to develop in.

As may be expected, none of the criteria of a functional family suggested by the exponents of family systems therapy seems to be encountered in our novels: there is no equality, no

emotional expressiveness or frank communication between the parents, while love, when it is allowed to be expressed – fathers for some reason fail to show their emotions to their children, let alone to their wives – is oppressive and suffocating in all three cases and communication is one-way and biased.

In all the novels the problem seems to originate at the spouse-spouse level, as would be expected, and is mainly a problem of integration/differentiation, inclusion/autonomy, in other words a problem relating to the boundaries of the self: who is going to have control in the power struggle of their marriage. In all three marriages in the respective novels, there seems to be a lack of balance in the relationship between the spouses: they do not appear to form a tight unit as they should, since each member of the couple does not fully accept the other, seems to have been disappointed by the character and actions of the other, to have been actually deceived into marrying somebody not worthwhile, with the result that he/she attempts to minimise the role of the other in the family and to impose his/her own will. Interestingly enough, in all three novels the strong partner in this power game appears to be the woman. It is the wife who oppresses husband and children and it is the wife who stays behind when the husband and, often, the children have gone.

In *This slow day was progressing*, Amalia, the mother, is depicted as being the victim of her husband's irresponsible behaviour but also, crucially, herself the victimiser (according to the views of those characters, mainly male ones, who are focalised), who never allowed her husband to return and who maintained a very tough line in bringing up her children. However, in the only chapter in which Amalia is focalised, we learn that she had actually been deceived by her husband, who had promised her a life of love and affluence in order to persuade her to abandon her parents and run away with him; after herself being abandoned by her husband, she is left alone with her remorse for inflicting such sorrow on her parents for no serious reason, and with no one (apart from her children) to turn to. In her

husband's hometown and his extended family, with which she spent her whole life, she is always treated as an outsider, especially after she decided never to go out again. Her husband's behaviour, but also that of the members of her immediate social environment who criticise her, contributed to her low self-esteem, which is becoming worse because of her self-enclosure and also because of her elder son running away. Feeling that she is about to be abandoned by the last person left to her because he is getting married, that is her younger son (for whom we have reason to believe she also has incestuous feelings, though possibly unconsummated), she goes on hunger strike.[11] Guilt, however, together with lack of self-esteem, makes her commit suicide when she finally realises that she has gone too far.

For the other two mother-figures we have to rely on their daughters' views since they themselves are never given a voice in the relevant novels. In *The personal secretary,* Savina is presented as an immature and irresponsible woman who has never come to terms with the loss of her own family's property, because of her father's wrong decisions in business, and also because he used to fund the families of exiled left-wingers; when her father ends up living with her (though in his own house) she victimises him by assaulting him on a daily basis. They live together, since her sister does not want to reveal the existence

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[11] The resort to hunger strike is an overused theme in western literature, especially in the nineteenth century. Traditionally, it is used by the fictional adolescent daughter in response to her repression by her family. In the context of family systems theory, anorexia is viewed as a family disease, both in real life and in fiction, in the sense that the anorexic localises, in the form of her symptoms, a family trauma; in its turn, the family unites to face the illness suffered by one of its members. In Greek fiction, the heroines of Xenopoulos in *Stella Violanti* (1909) and Karystiani in *Little England* (1997) are two representative, though chronologically distanced, examples. Here, Amalia is neither a daughter nor an adolescent but rather a mother; however, Amalia had been thought of as behaving like a stubborn teenager all her life; on top of that, she is now in danger of losing her son, for whom she has erotic feelings, to another woman. As expected, the family unite again to face the problem of her self-inflicted illness.

of their disabled left-wing father to her husband's family and so pays her sister to hide him from them. In addition, Savina never comes to terms with the fact that her husband has never been able to offer her the affluent and glamorous life that would suit her beauty; thus, she prefers to live in the world of her imagination (a world similar to that in which her sister has managed to live in reality) and be flattered by lovers who appreciate her beauty, rather than simply being the ordinary wife of a low-paid sailor. In this sense, Savina is also a woman with low self-esteem (albeit for different reasons from those of Amalia in the previous novel), who does not accept either herself for being what she is through her marriage or her impoverished and disabled father, or even her rather plain daughter (who has inherited her husband's looks).

Finally, in *House of guilt,* the unnamed mother, according to her daughter – again the narrator and the only character focalised in the novel – is the down-to-earth and practical person in the family who loves but oppresses her children, even when they have become middle-aged. Though left-wing herself in the past, she has compromised and adjusted to the capitalist world and its requirements and she rejects her husband for sticking to his ideological beliefs. She is described as a person full of fears and with a low self-esteem who, in her daughter's words: "έφερε [τα παιδιά της] στα μέτρα του φόβου της, γιατί βαθιά μέσα της πίστευε πως τίποτα δεν της άξιζε" (102). Similarly, her husband did not respect her for her beliefs though he was emotionally dependent on her – an indication, according to the text, of his own insecurity. Both parents are here described as people who never showed their real feelings to each other, as also seems to be the case with the other two couples in the novels we are examining.

Having low self-esteem in a marriage and not accepting the other partner implies that, in the power struggle which is certain to ensue, each partner will try to satisfy his/her own needs at the expense of the other, since each partner feels that he/she

gets too little from the relationship to sustain himself/herself. That is how Satir and Baldwin (1983: 15) explain it:

> Because they lack trust, certain areas of joint living which especially challenge their ability to take into account the individuality of the other are especially threatening to them. These areas are: money, food, sex, recreation, work, child-rearing, relations with in-laws.

Most of these areas seem to be problematic in our novels too, and particularly the issue of money, as we have already seen – one of the main, if not the main, reasons for friction between the partners. Child-rearing is definitely another of these areas, and one which not only constitutes a cause of conflict in itself, but, in a kind of vicious circle, is directly affected by conflicts caused by other reasons.

We will move now to the next subsystem in a family, which is that of parent-child. Child-rearing is usually a source of anxiety for dysfunctional families, in spite of the fact that triangulation is used by the partners as a means of rescuing their relationship, as we have already discussed. Instead of improving the situation, however, child-rearing usually becomes an area of conflict because it requires increased responsibilities from the two partners, who are already unable to satisfy their personal needs, but also because, in their power game, each parent attempts to have the child or children on his/her own side; far from being a unifying factor, the child thus estranges the two partners even further. The narrator in *The personal secretary* presents a very telling picture of the situation:

> Εμείς είμαστε ένα πορτρέτο κανονικής τριμελούς οικογένειας. Λίγο πιο πίσω μας δυο παιδιά παίζουν με ένα σκοινί, κρατούν το καθένα από μια άκρη του και τραβάνε με δύναμη. Η λεπτομέρεια τώρα μεγαλώνει κι έρχεται στο πρώτο πλάνο, καθώς για πρώτη φορά αντιλαμβάνομαι ότι ήμουν το σκοινί που ο Ιππόλυτος κι η Σαβίνα τραβούσαν ο καθένας προς τη μεριά του. Εξακολουθούν να τραβάνε ακόμη και τούτη τη στιγμή. (111)

This is a very painful situation for the children, especially if the mother is not happy in the marriage because of the nature of the relationship between mother and child. According to Napier and Whitaker (1978: 119-20):

> Because the mother-child relationship is the primary model for intimacy in our lives, it forms the basis for the deepest levels of intimacy in marriage. It is this early relationship that appears to set the tones in our lives for profound issues like the degree to which we trust and care about the Other and trust and care about Self and the degree to which we distinguish between Self and Other as separate, yet related entities. Fathers are certainly important in many ways in the early lives of their children, but this influence is expressed most crucially in the kind of participation they have in the marriage. If the relationship between husband and wife is good, the relationship between mother and child is likely to be good. But whatever the situation in the family world, this world is most intimately communicated to the child by the mother. It is the mother-child relationship that is later transferred most powerfully to the marriage.

This seems to explain to a great extent the reason why all three of the novels we are examining focus on the mother-figure and blame is addressed directly to her: this special relationship makes the mother become, among other things, the transmitter of the good or bad image of the family's function to the children, and also the person who often has to give account for its failures; therefore, she herself may ultimately be charged with these failures.

There is no doubt that all three mothers in our novels attempt the same thing: to get their children on their own side, to control their children's emotions but also their choices later in life, which will be more or less copies of their own choices and of the broader family pattern they have brought to this family from their own families-of-origin. They definitely love their children, but this is a suffocating love which does not leave them any space for individuation. Above all, the main target in their minds is always how they will manage to estrange

their children from their ineffectual fathers. In Anastasea's novel, Amalia unreservedly accepts that:

> Όταν οι γιοι μου ήτανε μικροί τους έδειχνα την πολυθρόνα μου μπροστά στο παράθυρο κι ύστερα τη δικιά του άδεια θέση στο τραπέζι για να μπορέσουν να καταλάβουν κι εκείνοι, ποιο είναι το δικό μου μερτικό, κι αυτό που ήταν του πατέρα τους και το δικό τους. Όχι πως είχαν κανένα άλλο φταίξιμο πέρα από το αίμα τους, που είναι τόσο δικό του όσο και δικό μου. Το 'καμα για να τους μείνει χαραγμένο στο μυαλό γερά, κι ας ήτανε μικροί, ότι ο άνθρωπος, από την ώρα που γεννιέται, κουβαλάει μέσα του αυτό το σμίξιμο σαν σερμαγιά, κι όλα τα υπόλοιπα, όσο να 'ρθεί ο καιρός ν' αναπαυθεί, πάνω σε τούτο αυγαταίνουνε, έτσι καθώς το 'λεγε η μάνα μου, και το κακό και το καλό, εδώ μπαίνουν τα πανωτόκια και το διάφορο. Τούτο τους το 'μαθα πρώτα απ' όλα. (282)

Eleni, in Politopoulou's novel, feels that only with her mother confined to bed, as she is now, does she dare to talk directly to her father about her deeper emotions and feelings for him – that is by addressing these letters to him – something which she would never have done if her mother was well and able to walk. Moreover, Savina, in Chourmouziadou's novel, did not allow her daughter to get close to her father, who, before he ran away, used to return home after each journey; she even hid the presents he brought her, while she always claimed that Maria was "her little girl" (το κοριτσάκι της). She finally manages to estrange her daughter entirely from her father. The mother in Politopoulou's novel has a similar attitude; her daughter (the narrator, Eleni) says:

> Έγραψα «δε με άφηνε». Δεν είπε ποτέ βέβαια «μην πας». Έλεγε κάτι άλλο, πολύ φαρμακερό. Έλεγε «το Λενάκι δε θέλει». Έλεγε «το Λενάκι δεν μπορεί τα ταξίδια, ζαλίζεται». Έλεγε «το Λενάκι κρυολογεί εύκολα, άφησε, μιαν άλλη φορά, έχει ψύχρα». Τέτοια έλεγε. Κι εγώ έγινα σιγά σιγά εικόνα και ομοίωση του λόγου της. Δεν μου αρέσουν τα ταξίδια. Είμαι μονίμως κρυωμένη. Ζαλίζομαι στο αυτοκίνητο. (46)

This patronising attitude extends to other more serious aspects of the children's lives, such as the choice of a profession (in the same novel), when the mother pressurises her son, Yannis, to study engineering and advises her daughters how to become "little witches" in order to cope in a man's world.

In Anastasea's novel, Amalia manages to destroy her two sons' relationships with their girlfriends and cancel the imminent wedding of one of them, while Maria, the daughter/narrator in Chourmouziadou's novel, knows that her mother would only approve a marriage for her similar to that of her aunt, Nana, and this is the type of marriage Maria finally chooses to have.

The transmission of stereotypes of the two genders, as another means of undermining the position and authority of their husbands, is one more aspect of the mothers' manipulation in these novels. Feeling unhappy in their marriages, they all appear to put the blame on their husbands, while they consciously try to erode the image of the father/husband in the eyes of their children; they often try to achieve this by attributing most of the blame to gender rather than to individual personalities and choices. Since there is no daughter to speak in Anastasea's novel, we have no repetition of stereotypes of men (on the contrary we have stereotypes of women from male members of the broader family), apart from Amalia's systematic efforts to blur the personality of her ex-husband in the eyes of the boys.

By contrast, the two daughters in the other two novels have been made to feel differently. For Eleni, the daughter/narrator in Politopoulou's novel, men are neither bad or good: they are simply irresponsible; they are like cats, she says:

> Κατά βάθος, να ξέρεις, πιστεύω πως οι άντρες είναι γάτοι. Ούτε περιστέρια, ούτε λύκοι, ούτε καν κόκορες. Κεραμιδόγατοι είσαστε όλοι, που σας φορτώσανε ευθύνες που δεν αντέχετε. Και μας φορτώνετε τη δυσαρέσκειά σας που σας κατεβάζουμε εμείς οι γυναίκες και τα παιδιά από τα κεραμίδια σας να βοηθήσετε στην περιπολία και στο

> τάισμα. Και πάντα ανάμεσα στη μητέρα και στον πατέρα τόση ένταση! Η ένταση που φέρνει η απαίτηση του άλλου να είσαι καλός σ' ένα ρόλο που δε θέλεις να παίξεις. Τη μισώ αυτήν την απαίτηση που μέσα της μεγάλωσα. (30)

For Maria, the daughter/narrator in Chourmouziadou's novel, fathers are simply ineffectual:

> Οι πατεράδες δεν έχουν απάντηση για όλα, ακόμα κι αν είναι κοσμογυρισμένοι. Δεν έχουν απαντήσεις, αλλά ξέρουν να κουνάνε το κεφάλι ή να ειρωνεύονται νομίζοντας ότι έτσι καλύπτουν την αδυναμία τους. Κι ο δικός μου ήταν τόσο αδύναμος που τότε τον λυπόμουν. Τώρα μπορώ να θυμώνω μαζί του. (92-3)

However, in all three novels, fathers (and consequently men in general) are presented as sentimental, prone to the pleasures of life, faithful to their personal ideology, though not necessarily faithful to their wives, and generally as weak and ineffectual characters who would rather escape than stay and face the difficulties of family life. On the contrary, women are presented (here by their children, of course) as strong, rationalistic, practical and efficient, though manipulative, who take full advantage of their husband's absence or limited presence in order to influence their children's views to their own benefit.[12]

As a result of the generally unpleasant familial situation described so far, but also the little room left to them for sufficient individuation, most of these fictional children (as undoubtedly happens with children of similar families in real life) develop low self-esteem themselves and seem to repeat their parents' mistakes to a large extent. More precisely, as we have already said, it is the primary "triad" that offers the necessary source of identity to the self. Based on the learning experience while belonging to this primary "triad", the child determines his/her place in the world and how much he/she can trust other people

[12] One gets the impression that not only the male characters but also most of the female characters in these novels tend to be stereotypically constructed.

in his/her relationships with them. This learning experience is based on the types of communication he/she gets used to as a child. If the type of communication encountered in his/her family is full of inconsistencies and contradictions and aims to repress rather than build up a relationship that would ideally be based on equality, then he/she learns that he/she cannot sense the plain truth of what is said and will have to look to the "meta-communication" level[13] for the interpretation of what the parents really mean. This lack of openness feels like a rejection for the child: he/she feels that he/she is not worthy of his/her parents' trust and of a fair and straightforward communication; thus he/she develops low self-esteem. Satir and Baldwin (1983) see four possibilities for this child: first, he/she may try to be a nice, docile child or adult who always placates others by feeling that he/she has no worth; second, to be, on the contrary, a person who blames everybody in order to boost his/her self-esteem; third, to deny his/her emotions for fear of becoming uncontrollable; or finally, to act erratically, unpredictably and inappropriately.

To return to our three novelistic families, Chourmouziadou's heroine (the daughter) appears to be the most complex, the most fully-developed and thus the most interesting case of a child of a dysfunctional family. Having experienced the deficiencies of her parents in their own relationship but also in their relationship with her, Maria learns to keep a low profile and be a seemingly nice, docile child who never reveals her own feelings, as a way to survive in this troubled family with the fewest possible traumas (much in line with the first of the above possibilities). Hiding her feelings and pretending not to have complicated thoughts become the main features of the pseudo-self she develops, which will follow her throughout her life. This may render her an efficient personal secretary but not a happy person. Feeling that it is unwise to show her emotions and at the same time that other people's emotions are not real,

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[13] For example, eye-rolling, shrugs, tonal qualities, facial gestures etc.

she cannot develop fair and honest relationships with either friends or lovers (she believes for instance that intimacy is the enemy of love and that friends become dangerous if they are allowed to come too close); consequently she has no stable partner or close friend she can really trust. It is a vicious circle, the main feature of which (being both cause and effect) is her low self-esteem. Her feeling of not being worthy is exacerbated by the fact that her mother continually compares her unfavourably with herself, and she is repeatedly told that she will never become as beautiful as her mother had been. She feels that men are not attracted to her because of her poor looks, while they are still attracted to her mother, despite her age.

While still a child, she learns to accept her mother's assaults silently, though in her turn, she assaults her disabled grandfather (who is also assaulted by her mother) since he is the easiest and most obvious target. Not daring to escape, even when she is an adult (it is well known that assault often binds the victim to the abuser), she starts assaulting her mother when she herself takes up her mother's role by becoming the breadwinner of the family (though her mother had never provided money through work).[14] By assaulting her mother she is cutting her off – she is no longer her little girl – through the anaesthetisation of her hidden feelings (the third possibility according to Satir and Baldwin); she is thus gaining the autonomy she has always been desperate for. These assaults build up and reach a culmination with the murder of the mother. Maria has by now developed into a cool-headed and cruel manipulator who will not hesitate even to kill her mother in order to fulfil her ambitions. However, strangely enough, even this murder is a way of conforming to her mother's dreams and ambitions about her which for years Maria was subconsciously internal-

[14] This is a stage in a family's life called, according to family systems theory, *parentification* (Boszormenyi-Nagy and Framo 1965), in which a child becomes the strongest member in a family and has to look after the parent(s).

ising, being unable to follow a route of her own in life. But we will come back to the episode of the murder.

In Politopoulou's novel, the development of the three children is also of great interest. The reader is given a lot of information about the personalities of two of them, namely Eleni, the narrator, and Yannis. We also learn a few things about Marina from her sister Eleni, though not enough to form a clear view of her. An interesting detail about the life of that family which is closely relevant to the development of the children's personalities is the fact that, according to Eleni, their mother denied them and their father the right to speak; this of course does not mean that she literally forbade them to speak but that they were always told off when they expressed a view different from hers, so they gradually developed the habit of keeping their thoughts to themselves: only the mother spoke in that family, and she spoke on behalf of everybody else, including the father. Similarly, both children (Eleni and Yannis) developed a tendency to withdraw into silence and possessed a low capacity for communication. Eleni, who is confined to the world of her imagination, first started "talking" (that is writing) to her father only after her mother became incapacitated. Eleni thus also develops a low-key personality by not revealing her feelings (not daring to speak) and tries to pass as unnoticed as possible in the family.

Yannis, on the other hand, though never able to communicate properly, literally lost any ability to speak after his mother's injury, for which he was responsible; now in a mental hospital, he communicates with his sister only in the sign language he used when he worked as a ship's telegraphist. According to Eleni's interpretation, he left like the father in order to distance himself from the mother he very much loved. It was after he moved to live with his mother that he started paying her back for the assaults he had received as a child:

> Μα το καημένο το κακό της το αγόρι θύμωσε τόσο πολύ όταν δεν μπορούσε να συνεννοηθεί, οργίστηκε τόσο με την έλλειψη εμπιστοσύνης, επειδή εκείνη δεν πίστευε αυτό που

> της έλεγε, που την άρπαξε και την τράνταξε και της έλεγε: ‹‹Μόνο εγώ σε αγαπάω! Μόνο εγώ σου λέω την αλήθεια. Είμαι ο τελευταίος επισκέπτης. Μετά θα έρθει ο χάρος››.
>
> Και μετά κατάλαβε πως δεν αντιδρούσε πια, δεν προσπαθούσε να σηκώσει το μπαστούνι της και να τον χτυπήσει, όπως παλιά σήκωνε την ξύλινη κουτάλα και τον βαρούσε. Κατάλαβε πως κάτι είχε συμβεί, την άφησε, και το γέρικο κορμί έπεσε κάτω. Είχε σκάσει. (141)

Thus, from being a person initially belonging to the first of Satir and Baldwin's possibilities above, as an adult he develops a personality of unpredictable behaviour.

Interestingly enough, the assault in Yannis's childhood was also related to food:[15] Yannis was once forced to eat his vomit, while all the children were forced by both parents to eat things which they did not want. According to Eleni, this assault over food, but also the craving they developed for particular types of food, was a kind of communication between the members of the family and particularly between parents and children, as there could be no proper communication. The result of all this is that both Eleni and Yannis are now bulimic and obese. Their need for huge amounts of food is due, according to Eleni, to an emotional hunger (συναισθηματική πείνα) or, according to family systems theory, to "father hunger". Whatever the term, there is no doubt that their bulimia is the result of an emotional gap, opened in childhood, and a sense of worthlessness which they attempt to cure through the pleasure of eating.

Finally, Marina, is considered (by Eleni) as the only member of the family who survived all these experiences with minimal psychological losses and without bulimic tendencies. However, the fact that at some point she left (like the father) and never returned means that she does not feel absolutely safe: she needs the physical distance in order to remain emotionally distant and, thus, sane.

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[15] Catering is included in the everyday practices of a family and is also one of the various obligations of parents to their children.

In Anastasea's novel, the two boys are described, through the different perspectives employed in the novel, as strange and as rather unsociable characters – a quality that can be easily attributed to their specific familial conditions. In the beginning they are presented as being very attached to each other, since they never had their own friends, but after Petros abandons the family, they no longer appear close to each other and they develop different personalities.

Petros paid his mother back for the assaults he had suffered as a child, such as when she used to smear their lips with pepper if they said something against her behaviour (her self-enclosure in the house for instance) or, even worse, when she informed the school about his arrest by the police for gambling.[16] According to what other people think of him, but also according to his own thoughts when he is focalised, he is a person who wants to enjoy his life, who changes choices and decisions very often, and who does not trust or forgive anybody.

In contrast, Argyris, the younger son who stayed with the mother, is presented as an extremely weak personality who never managed to rid himself of her influence – and her oppression – never assaulted her and allegedly developed an incestuous love for her; the only decision he managed to take in his life, which his mother apparently disapproved of, was to get engaged to Elli. However, on the very night of this engagement, Elli caught him playing an erotic game with his mother in her embrace. Finally, Argyris cancelled his wedding and split up with Elli because, when he had to choose between the two women, he chose his mother. Thus, Petros is considered as acting erratically and unpredictably in his life up to now, while Argyris is another case of a low-key and introverted character.

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[16] Unable to withstand the humiliation the headmaster had inflicted on him in front of the school assembly, and his mother's treachery in informing his teachers, he left her and returned ten years later, that is approximately at the onset of her hunger-strike, demanding his share of the family property.

What is striking in all these stories, however, is that, in their own lives, these children, or at least the majority of them, have copied the actions and behaviour of their parents, who had themselves copied them from their own parents and so on, since it is stated clearly in these texts that their personalities changed in response to their family experiences. This is actually the very assumption Chourmouziadou's novel seems to have been based on and which it attempts to prove. This is how the novel starts:

> Λένε ότι δεν μπορεί παρά να τους μοιάσεις. Ότι κάποια στιγμή σκίζουν τη λεπτή μεμβράνη που θεωρείς εαυτό σου, βγαίνουν στην επιφάνεια και σου γνέφουν θλιμμένα. Μπορεί όμως και να γελάσουν χαιρέκακα μαζί σου. Αν τους έχεις αντισταθεί, ίσως σου πουν: Βλέπεις; Την πάτησες! Τώρα θα καταλάβεις πώς νοιώσαμε κι εμείς! Λένε πως ο αγώνας εναντίον τους είναι άνισος και πως ό,τι σου έκαναν αυτοί θα το επαναλάβεις κι εσύ στα δικά σου παιδιά. Κάποια ανθεκτικά χαρακτηριστικά θα διυλίζονται από τους προηγούμενους στους επόμενους. Κάποιες κινήσεις θα επαναλαμβάνονται στο διηνεκές, κάποιες πολύ προσωπικές εκφράσεις θα μεταφέρονται στην αιωνιότητα. Ασφαλώς μπορείς να τους αντισταθείς, να τραβήξεις άλλο δρόμο και να τους προδώσεις. Μπορείς τουλάχιστον να το προσπαθήσεις, δίνοντας μάχες μέρα σε μέρα, χωρίς να ησυχάζεις στιγμή, αφού ποτέ δεν ξέρεις ποια γωνία θα διαλέξουν για να πεταχτούν ξανά μπροστά σου, ποια ώρα της μέρας ή της νύχτας θα σε πλησιάσουν αθόρυβα από πίσω και θα βάλουν το χέρι τους στον ώμο σου. (9)

Instead of attributing the development of a character to genetic inheritance, family systems theory would see it as the result of the impact of the family (and by this we mean mainly that of parents) on its members; in real life, of course, this view is extremely important, in the sense that the development of

character is viewed through a dynamic and not a static perspective and thus as being susceptible of improvement.[17]

Thus, the "transgenerational transmission of beliefs, attitudes and symptoms", which we mentioned before, seems to appear in all three fictional families at different levels. In Anastasea's novel, Amalia chooses a particular attitude towards her husband because her mother did exactly the same after Amalia abandoned the family home. We learn that after her escape, Amalia's father gave up his work, and both parents, following her mother's advice, remained confined to their home; they did not come out of the house even when the city was on fire, during the Asia Minor disaster, with the result that they were burnt alive. Moreover, when Amalia gives an account (the only one in the whole novel) of her actions and choices in life, it is the memory of her own mother's words that she seems to be following faithfully.

Her elder son, Petros, appears to be the one most prone to follow this pattern of "transgenerational transmission". He is obstinate and tough like his mother, but also prone to pleasure-seeking like his father (always according to what the other characters accuse him of) and he follows the example of both by running away. He comes back like his father (who also wanted to settle property issues upon his return), but unlike what had happened to him, Petros is now allowed to stay.

In Politopoulou's novel, all the children seem to be following in the footsteps of their parents as the parents themselves have done. More precisely, the children's maternal grandmother had always felt that her husband was not up to the standards of her own wealthy family; as we have seen, that is precisely the case with the children's mother, who constantly complained at her husband about money matters. It may also be the case that the children's mother chose such a husband so that she could create a family similar to her own family-of-

[17] However, even within family systems theory, there are those (Bowen 1985) who believe that the biological make-up of each person makes him/her more or less prone to follow the family's paradigm.

origin. Likewise, the children's paternal grandfather had frittered away much of his fortune on gambling and prostitutes; we know that Eleni's father also visited brothels.

To come to the children themselves, Marina repeated her father's actions by running away and never returning. Of the other two, Yannis kept on leaving for place after place, though, unlike his father, he returned in order to bring up his own child. Eleni, however, stayed, as her mother did; actually she settled down with her new family in the same neighbourhood and to some extent repeated her mother's life, as she herself accepts. Unlike her parents, she managed to have a functional relationship with her husband; she, however, managed to amass considerable wealth much in line with what her mother would have wanted and, as her mother had done to her, she made her daughter obese. Her friends consider her as being "down-to-earth" like her mother and she invents fairy-tales just as her mother did.

Finally, in Chourmouziadou's novel, the repetition model is particularly interesting, even though it does not involve three generations as happens with the other two fictional families.[18] As we have said, the writer attempts to show that people repeat, with some variations, the lives of their parents, even if they are determined not to do so. What Maria, the main character and narrator, does by the end of the novel, and contrary to her initial intentions, is exactly what her mother wanted her to do; she has done this with such commitment that she does not even spare her mother's life in order to achieve it; on top of that, she is even certain that her mother would be completely happy with the outcome.

We have already seen that her mother would very much have liked to be in the shoes of her sister, Nana: while Nana was still alive, her mother used to cut out photos and gossip articles about Nana's social life from newspapers and life-style

[18] We could say here, however, that Savina's husband closely resembled her father, as far as personality and behaviour are concerned; thus he might have been chosen by her because of this.

magazines and collect them; she also always dressed in Nana's second-hand clothes until the day of her own death. She repeatedly told Maria that she would like her to follow in the footsteps of her own sister (and Maria's godmother, in other words of her spiritual mother), since she considered herself unable to act as a life model for Maria. In this sense, Nana functions here as the double of Maria's mother.

Maria plans all her moves meticulously and carefully: in order to ensure that she could successfully take the place of Nana, she had to get rid of her mother, for fear she might attempt to attract the interest of her future husband as she always did in the past with other women's lovers: while on holiday on the island of Patmos, Maria arranged a trip on a sailing-boat for her mother and Maria's latest lover (whom her mother had just taken from her) on a day with a rough sea; Maria was supposed to go with them, but at the very last minute she failed to do so. Although there were traces of a gas explosion on the boat, the police, having searched the wreckage afterwards, did not suspect anything and attributed the wreck to the extremely treacherous weather conditions.

Therefore, in the same way that Nana "buried" her father in her sister's house so that his political past would not cast a shadow over her bright future in the family of her tycoon husband, Maria literally buried her rival – her mother– in order to materialise her own dreams of affluence in the same family – which, ironically, were precisely her mother's dreams for her daughter. Maria herself accepts that she follows her mother's choices and behaviours; in essence she copies her mother's substitute (that is her mother's sister), closely following her mother's desire.

To conclude, the three texts we have examined here constitute part of a large group of novels which focus mainly or exclusively on the characters' private lives, that is on their personal or family problems and not on those caused by a hostile society, political regime or historical events, as was the case with the great majority of novels until the beginning of

the 1980s – and this in itself constitutes an innovation in the history of Modern Greek literature. Here, politics, when it exists, is a minor decorative element that contributes to the weaving of the story's general context rather than a crucial and decisive factor in the development of plot; in fact, in the three novels we have examined here, involvement in politics and particularly in the Left is considered an out-of-date attitude that has negative effects on the families' transgenerational development. More precisely, in *The personal secretary* and *House of guilt*, several misfortunes are attributed to the left-wing political past of parents or grandparents; interestingly enough, the character/narrator in Politopoulou's novel chooses not to vote in elections, while she advises her own twelve-year-old daughter to give money to charities like UNESCO; this latter choice is promoted as an alternative to involvement in politics, since it appears in the same semantic and textual context in the novel. Thus, international and private initiatives seem to have replaced local and political ones.

Greek families seem to have been going through a period of significant changes recently, at least according to these novels; this may be due to several internal and external reasons, which include the ease with which Greeks get to know non-Greek cultures through various channels of information such as the media, travel, the accommodation of immigrants and tourism. The attack on the structure and function of the Greek family in these novels appears to be sweeping and at the same time unique; moreover, what is also striking is the fact that these novels, which fiercely attack not merely the Greek family but particularly the role of the mother in it, are written by women. Apart from treating it as an accidental phenomenon, which we undoubtedly could, we can also easily attribute it to the fact that it is chiefly women as daughters who have so far been the main victims of their mothers' oppressive role in their families, given the special status of the mother-daughter relation-

ship in Greece;[19] this role involved, among other things, the reproduction and transmission, generation after generation, of a culture of social stereotypes, which has itself contributed significantly to the continuation of women's subordinate position in society. In this sense, it is not simply the family structure that is attacked here but society itself, since it is through traditional social and cultural practices that this family structure is transmitted and perpetuated, generation after generation, without the circle ever breaking. It does not seem accidental, however, that all three mothers in the novels – the main transmitters and continuators of culture – either die or become incapacitated and are thus no longer able to intervene in the lives of their family members.

The Greek family needs a considerable amount of change at any cost, according to the message – or even the wish – of these texts, and this change will take place only if and when the traditional role of the Greek mother changes. In the words of Eleni, the daughter-narrator of Politopoulou's novel:

> Μπορείς να μου πεις πώς θα γλιτώσει από αυτά τα δεσμά η ελληνική οικογένεια αν δεν ειπωθούν τα πράγματα με τ' όνομά τους; Αν δεν βγει προς τα έξω αυτό που μας βασανίζει; Οι πιο πολλοί σώζονται αναπαράγοντας την ίδια κατάσταση; (52)
>
> Έτσι κι εμείς, και μόνο με την ιδέα πως θα άνοιγε το στόμα της για να κατηγορήσει, να βρίσει, να εξευτελίσει, προτιμούσαμε όλοι να κάνουμε το γρηγορότερο αυτό που ήθελε. Που στο βάθος δεν ήταν αυτό που ήθελε βέβαια, αλλά αυτό είναι μια άλλη μεγάλη ιστορία. [...] Έτσι αντέγραψε, όπως κάνουν τόσες, το πρότυπο της μητέρας αράχνης που ήξερε απ' το σόι της. Η αυταρχική εξουσία της Ελληνίδας που φορτώνει τους άλλους ενοχή και στέρηση. Και που

[19] According to Dubisch (1991), the mother-daughter relationship, as well as that of maternal grandmother-granddaughter, is particularly strong and able to form a kind of atypical alliance within families. Viewed as a cultural phenomenon, the rupture in this relationship presented in these three novels and the attack on the mother by her own daughter may be another indication of a recent change in Greek culture.

> κανείς δεν τολμάει να μιλήσει για το πόσο υπέφερε στα χέρια της ιερής μητέρας. (51)

At least these women writers, however, have finally dared. They have dared to defy the taboo and speak in favour of more functional families and thus of a fairer society. They have dared to speak against their own gender, though, and against the only unquestionable authority women in Greece still seem to possess, that is their authority within and over their families, and this definitely involves a certain amount of courage. Besides, questioning the very familial authority of Greek women seems to constitute the only ideological stance of these novels in the absence of any other serious preoccupation with political ideology. Are we entitled to conclude by asking whether contemporary Greek fiction has recently moved from state politics to the politics of the family?

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The year 2002-3 at Cambridge

Students

Sally Brook graduated with a II.1 in Modern and Medieval Languages; the majority of her Part II papers were in Modern Greek and she also submitted a translation project on a contemporary Greek prose-writer. Three students successfully completed their second-year (Part IB) examinations. Two of them, Timothy Coomar and Gwendolyn Edwards, now embark on a year of study in Greece, at the Universities of Thessaloniki and Crete respectively.

Three students were successful in the examinations for the Certificate in Modern Greek. Veronika Livshics was awarded a Distinction and Georgia Ladbury passed with Credit.

Efrosini (Cindy) Camatsos submitted her dissertation in October 2002 and was approved for the degree of PhD. Her dissertation is entitled: "Gendering narration? The female 'I' in Modern Greek prose fiction, 1924-1962".

Teaching staff

After four years of valued service as Language Assistant in Modern Greek, seconded by the Greek Ministry of Education, Ms Margarita Tsota moved to a similar post at the University of Birmingham and was succeeded by Dr Dimitris Karadimas. Dr Karadimas, who joined us in October 2002, is a classical scholar with a PhD from the University of Lund, Sweden; he has extensive previous experience of teaching Greek as a foreign language. Further language teaching was given by Dr Anna Mastrogianni. Dr Dimitris Livanios taught a course on modern Greek history. Dr Tina Lendari, who was appointed as Temporary Lecturer in Modern Greek during Dr Holton's leave of absence, undertook a wide range of teaching in the Lent and Easter Terms.

Visiting scholars

Vassilis Sabatakakis, of the University of Lund, paid a short research-related visit to Cambridge in February 2003. At the time he was completing his PhD thesis on *Erotokritos*, which he has since successfully submitted.

A co-operation agreement with the University of Cyprus enabled Marina Rodosthenous to spend a period of six months in Cambridge, from February to August 2003, undertaking research for her PhD on Cretan Renaissance literature.

Visiting speakers

Seven lectures were given in the course of the year. The invited speakers and their titles were as follows:

17 October. Professor Richard Clogg (St Antony's College, Oxford): *Writing the history of Greece: forty years on*

31 October. Professor Roger Just (University of Kent): *Love in a changing climate: the rise of romance in a Greek village, 1977-80*

14 November. Professor Steven Bowman (University of Cincinnati): *Evvia Transit: the Jews, ELAS and the Allies in Evvia, 1943-4*

28 November. Dr Mika Provata: *Seferis's Lost Centre*

6 February. Dr Eleni Yannakakis (University of Oxford): *Re-evaluating family relationships: the Greek novel in the 1990s*

27 February. Dr Anthony Hirst (Queen's University, Belfast): *Cavafy and Cantacuzenus: allies or enemies?*

8 May. Dr David Ricks (King's College London): *How it strikes a contemporary: Cavafy as a reviser of Browning*

Activities of members of the Modern Greek Section

Dr David Holton came to the end of his term as Chairman of the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and in January 2003 began a year's sabbatical leave. His current projects include an article on Cavafy, co-authorship of an "Essential grammar" of Modern Greek, a CD-ROM of *Erotokritos*, and research on Cretan literary texts. He has published:

"Classical antiquity and Cretan Renaissance poetry", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 27 (2001) 87-101.
Διήγησις του Αλεξάνδρου. The Tale of Alexander. The rhymed version. Critical edition with introduction and commentary. 2nd ed. (with corrections and new preface) (Athens: Morfotiko Idryma Ethnikis Trapezis 2002).

Dr Tina Lendari gave a paper on the editorial problems of medieval vernacular texts at an international colloquium held at the University of Crete. She is currently studying the treatment of the myth of Narcissus in the Byzantine vernacular romances, as well as other aspects of medieval and Renaissance Greek literary texts. Her critical edition of the Vatican version of *Livistros and Rodamne* will be published by the end of 2003. Together with Io Manolessou, she has published:
"Η εκφορά του έμμεσου αντικειμένου στη Μεσαιωνική Ελληνική: εκδοτικά και γλωσσολογικά προβλήματα", in: *Studies in Greek Linguistics. Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Department of Linguistics, School of Philosophy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (17-19 May 2002)* (Thessaloniki 2003), pp. 394-405.

Dr Dimitris Livanios taught his last course on modern Greek history as an Affiliated Lecturer in Michaelmas Term 2002. He then moved to the History Department of Brown University, in the United States, where he spent six months (January-June 2003) as a Visiting Assistant Professor. At Brown he taught two courses: an introduction to modern Balkan history from 1804 to 1995, and a seminar on religion, violence and nationalism in the Balkans (15th to 20th centuries) entitled, rather frivolously but not unjustifiably, "From Dracula to Milosevic". In December 2002 he organised (with Professor Mark Mazower) an international conference on "Missionaries and the nineteenth-century Ottoman world", held at Birkbeck College, London. At the conference he gave a paper on "Changing the script: the Patriarchate of Constantinople and missionary publishing activity, 1630s-1840s". He also gave a talk at The Watson Institute for International

Studies, Brown University, on "The Logic of Terror: some aspects of the role of violence in the Balkans, 1804-1950". In addition to book reviews in *The Times Literary Supplement*, *English Historical Review*, and *Mediterranean Politics*, he has published:
"Πολιτικές επιλογές, στρατηγικά διλήμματα του Αγώνα" [i.e. the Struggle for Macedonia, 1904-1908], *Ιστορικά* [historical periodical of the Greek daily *Ελευθεροτυπία*] 12 December 2002, pp. 12-17.

About the contributors

Steven Bowman is Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati. His research interests focus on Greek and Jewish relations throughout the past three millennia. Books include: *Jews in Byzantium, 1204-1453* (1985) and *The agony of Greek Jews during World War II* (in press). He has edited and introduced two Greek Holocaust memoirs and edited and published three other books, most recently *The Holocaust in Salonika: Eyewitness accounts* (2002). Preliminary studies on the *Book of Yosippon*, of which an annotated translation has been completed, have appeared. He has contributed articles on Greek Jewry and other topics to a number of encyclopaedias, including *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* and *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust.*

Richard Clogg is a Senior Research Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford. He has an MA in history from the University of Edinburgh and was a student at the British School at Athens. He has held academic posts at the University of Edinburgh, the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, and King's College London, becoming Professor of Modern Balkan History in the University of London in 1988. His books include: *The Movement for Greek Independence 1770-1821: a collection of documents* (Macmillan 1976); *A Short History of Greece* (CUP 1979, ^{2}1986); *Politics and the Academy: Arnold Toynbee and the Koraes Chair* (Frank Cass 1986); *Parties and elections in Greece: the search for legitimacy* (Hurst 1987); *A Concise History of Greece* (CUP 1992, ^{2}2002); and *Greece 1940-1949: Occupation, Resistance, Civil War: a documentary history* (Palgrave 2002).

Anthony Hirst is a Leverhulme Special Research Fellow and Head of Modern Greek in the Institute of Byzantine Studies, Queen's University Belfast. He is currently preparing a critical

edition of Cavafy's "acknowledged" poems, based primarily on the poet's own printings.

Roger Just studied Classics at the University of Melbourne (BA and MA) and then did postgraduate work at the Oxford Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Oxford, where he obtained his DPhil. His doctoral research, supervised by John Campbell, involved fieldwork on Meganisi. He has also done fieldwork in Indonesia and with fishermen on the south coast of Victoria. He was Assistant Director of the British School at Athens (1982-84) and then taught at the University of Melbourne until 2001. Since 2002 he has been Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Kent at Canterbury. His publications include: *Women in Athenian law and life* (London: Routledge 1989) and *A Greek island cosmos: Kinship and community on Meganisi* (Oxford: James Currey 2000).

Mika Provata has studied English, classics, French and Modern Greek, as well as philosophy and art. She has taught a variety of undergraduate courses at Princeton University. She holds a PhD and an MA in Comparative Literature (Princeton), an MA in English and Drama (Sussex) and a BA in English and Classics (Athens). Her doctoral work examined how Homer's *Odyssey* was symbolically espoused by early Modernist writers (Cavafy, Larbaud and Joyce) to raise (and perhaps answer) the philosophical and ethical question of the *Eudaimon Bios*. She is currently translating Roderick Beaton's biography of George Seferis into Greek and working on a study of the contrasting ethical paradigms proposed by Virgil and Homer. She lives in London.

David Ricks is Head of the School of Humanities, King's College London. His publications on Modern Greek poetry include *The Shade of Homer* (CUP 1989) and essays on a range of Greek poets, including Solomos, Kalvos, Skarimbas and

Sachtouris. His *Modern Greek writing: An anthology in English translation* (Peter Owen) appeared in 2003.

Eleni Yannakakis studied at the University of Athens and in London. Her doctoral thesis, submitted to King's College London, was on Modernism in Greek fiction in the inter-war period. She has published widely on issues related to twentieth-century Greek fiction. She holds the post of Faculty Research Fellow in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages at Oxford.