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Edited by David Holton and Birgit Olsen

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Editors' note

Each year since 1981 the University of Cambridge has hosted a series of "Special lectures on Modern Greek themes", given by distinguished academics and public figures, as well as younger scholars. Well over one hundred lectures have been given, embracing a wide range of disciplines associated with Modern Greek studies: literature, history, politics, linguistics, social anthropology, sociology, music, art. These lectures have been much appreciated by successive and varied Cambridge audiences of students, academics and enthusiasts for things Greek. Over the past twelve years the spoken word, together with its associated social context, has thus helped us to create a community of people with a shared interest in the history and culture of Greece and Cyprus since the fifteenth century. These winged words have, of course, often become (with a slight shift of metaphor) fully-fledged articles in learned journals at a later stage of their development. But not all lectures are destined to be published and, even when they are, publication can be delayed by years. Many excellent oral presentations thus reach only a limited audience of immediate listeners. These considerations have encouraged us to investigate the idea of making some lectures available to a larger public in a permanent form but without undue delay. Hence *Κάμπος*.

This first issue contains the texts of five of the lectures given in Cambridge during the academic year 1992-93. Their authors have been invited to add, if they wish, a limited amount of annotation and bibliography, but we have not sought to impose the strict requirements of academic journals. Nor should these contributions be seen as necessarily representing the final or definitive views of the speakers on the matters they treat. Some of the lecturers certainly regard their papers as "work in progress" and will welcome dialogue. At all events, we firmly believe that there is much benefit to be gained from making these texts accessible to a larger audience in a form which

permits study, debate and mature reflection. We hope that readers will welcome this initiative, which could, resources permitting, perhaps become an annual publication.

A few words about our title: the word κάμπος has many associations and connotations in the Greek language and in Greek culture. Its basic physical sense of a flat place, in opposition to the mountains, is certainly apposite to the Cambridge setting in which the lectures were given. The κάμπος is also the place to which warriors descend to do battle – but this is not an association we wish to press! Rather we have in mind the notion of an open natural space, which permits freedom of thought and self-expression. As the Cypriot poet puts it:

Γοιον τα πουλλιὰ τα λεύτερα στον κάμπο κλαδούσιν
κι αφόν τα βάλουν στο κλουβίν ξηχάνουν τι να πούσιν.
(Κυπρ. ερωτ. 115.9-10)

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Politics, identity and popular music in contemporary Greece

Jane K. Cowan

I Introduction

Having arrived in Greece for the first time in July 1975, as a 21-year-old university student, it is hard for me to imagine how music could be viewed, as it long has been within the dominant ideologies of my own culture, as a realm of pure expression divorced from the world of politics and power. Greece at that time was still bursting with the energy released when the dead hand of censorship and repression began to be lifted after 1974, and intoxicated with the sense of future possibilities. All the students that I got to know during that year seemed to belong either to "KKE-exoterikou" (the traditional Communist Party, aligned with Moscow), or "KKE-esoterikou" (the Euro-communist party); and when they weren't engaging their new, rather naive and as yet linguistically unskilled American friend in intense political dialogues, they were playing music: *Romiosini, Canto General, The Songs of Mauthausen, andartika, rebetika, rizitika, Savvopoulos*. I went with them to their flats and their respective Communist Party youth headquarters, to tavernas, to boîtes and to the parties' youth festivals in massive stadia – and everywhere there were songs which made my friends come alive. In later years, when my visits coincided with the pre-election periods, I marvelled how the very air became a sonic battleground, as tape-recorded theme songs of rival political parties were blasted out from morning till night from local party-political offices, from cars which cruised round the neighbourhoods, and from apartment blocks. During my fieldwork between 1983 and 1985, in a small town north-east of Thessaloniki, I was constantly witness to the ways ordinary people – at wedding feasts or at the annual dances of the town Soccer Club – used songs, whether as a defiant assertion of strength (individual or collective), or as a way to insult, annoy or challenge their fellow townspeople who belonged to a rival political organisation or faction.

One could argue that this pervasive "politicization" (πολιτικοποίηση) of everyday life in Greece, whereby party politics saturates all cultural and social activity, is a phenomenon of the post-dictatorship period; but this, I think, is only partly true. Using songs for political purposes has a much older pedigree. The practice of doing battle in song – and in dance (which I have explored elsewhere at length [Cowan 1990], and will not elaborate upon here) – is rooted in the traditional social and celebratory practices of an oral culture.

This is quite apparent when one considers music-making as a social and cultural practice in the Greek context. In the small villages where the vast majority of Greeks lived until after the Second World War (and where some, of course, still live) music-making was at the symbolic and often *literal* centre of social life. At weddings, baptisms, religious feast days, Apokreas, people came out of their houses and gathered together to feast, sing and dance. Part of being a fully-fledged member of that community was knowing the songs, the steps, the social codes, and the etiquette these events involved and participating in the social reciprocities they entailed.

Phrasing this in slightly more theoretical terms, the cultural and social practices of music and dance involved the construction of individual subjects with specific identities and locations. Conventions of what could be sung, or danced, what instruments could be played, by whom, where, when and how, expressed social distinctions based on age, gender, religion, ethnic group, status and class, and located the individual subject thus identified within various social hierarchies. At the same time, musical practices were themselves sites where subjects could articulate these (thoroughly "constructed") identities, experiences, beliefs, desires, sensations, and where they could also articulate and negotiate their relations with each other. The important point to emphasise is that the subjects constituted by these traditional discourses and practices (here, of music/dance) were also *agents*, with capacities to assert, defend, criticise and protest through their adept manipulation of such forms.

Indeed, because these *were* shared, collective forms which existed beyond individuals and enjoyed a kind of authority, and because they were comprised of metaphors and symbols whose referents were ultimately unfixed, it was possible to use them to

"say" things one couldn't otherwise "say". We need only look at the use of the rhyming couplets of the Aegean: one who had transgressed social codes could hardly expect to escape the barbed – if humorous – innuendo of the couplet singer, yet he (or she) in turn could retort in defiance or counter-accusation (see, e.g., Herzfeld 1979). Or we could consider the ways that women have used death laments (μοιρολογία) to protest not only the metaphysical injustices of death but the social injustices of their position as women, as people like Anna Caraveli have pointed out (1985); or in the case of Mani in the early part of the century, described by Seremetakis (1991), how women used laments to castigate and shame their menfolk and pressure them to seek vengeance.

Traditionally, a song provided a means of both "saying" and "not saying". One could speak through it allusively, allegorically, to comment upon a situation close to hand; such specific meanings of a song were always suggested and negotiated within a particular context of performance and its aftermath, and the processes of exegesis involved a high degree of "local knowledge" (see, e.g., Caraveli 1982, Herzfeld 1979). Meaning might be fixed here, but only fleetingly. Yet one could also take refuge in its ambiguity of meaning, its articulation of seemingly collective sentiments and – though perhaps ingenuously – in the fact that "it's only a song".

The advent of sound-recording technologies, and the widespread dissemination of folk and popular songs through phonographic disks, tape cassettes, radio and television programmes and, more recently, CDs and music videos, has resulted in a greater fixity in the *form* of a song than occurred when transmission was wholly oral. Nonetheless, in many Greek communities these songs have been added to the collective repertoire, and performed using the same etiquette and social-aesthetic codes and practices as obtained within the existing oral tradition. Here, too, what the songs are made to "say" (or "not say") is always negotiated within particular situations.

Yet it is also true that sound-recording technologies had other effects: they expanded dramatically the community which shared songs to that of the entire Greek-speaking world, both within Greece and to Greeks in diaspora, in America, Australia, Northern Europe, North Africa and elsewhere. One could argue that throughout the twentieth century songs have

been critical in the formation of an "imagined community", in Benedict Anderson's (1983) phrasing, of the Greek nation-state, as well as standing as markers of a number of smaller communities – both established and newly developing – englobed within it. Simultaneously, over time, songs have begun to be appropriated by particular figures or constituencies, to become encrusted with certain social, cultural and political connotations, and to be deployed as musical signifiers in arguments about the national body politic.

II *The "political song" until 1974*

I begin my discussion about music and politics in the period from the 1960s to the present by charting the rise and fall of the "πολιτικό τραγούδι". The existence of this term is proof, if any were needed, of the ways music and politics have been intertwined in Greek culture. Yet the term is probably best translated not as "political song" but rather as "oppositional song", in that, although generally associated with broadly left-wing positions, it is not necessarily tied to any well-defined party or ideological line, but rather signifies a protest to the status quo, however that might be defined in a particular context. A "political song" can be sung or cited to express disaffection with relations within a family or a community, or with an international situation, as much as in a national government – the signified is not fixed. Moreover, there is something misleading about the term which invites us to imagine a *restricted category* of song in which specific political messages are wholly contained within the words and music. Some of the songs I examine here *were* composed in this highly intentional way, even if – in the face of censorship – composers used cryptic or metaphorical language to do it. However, these are in the minority. What is more striking is the way the very processes of censorship have, in a Foucaultian fashion, caused "political songs" to proliferate by enabling disaffected listeners to "hear" political meanings – in other words, to insert them – in an endless number of songs.

No doubt the best place to begin a discussion of the "political song" is with Mikis Theodorakis in the early 1960s. Theodorakis wanted to be a "cultural revolutionary" by creating a Greek popular music which was rooted in traditional forms of folk (δημοτική), popular (λαϊκή) and Orthodox liturgical music yet

which drew upon features of Western European classical and light music. His compositions thus often transgressed existing boundaries – they combined, as in the *Epitafios*, orchestral forms with *laika* and *rebetika* (see Holst 1980). Theodorakis seems to have addressed himself to a new sort of Greek who appears in great numbers in the post-war period: the rural migrant to the Greek cities, who has roots in a regional culture but who comes to live and work in a regionally-mixed yet primarily working-class and petit-bourgeois urban milieu. His tunes use rhythmic and melodic forms which are familiar without being exclusive to a particular region, and thus exclusionary; evident in this strategy is both an attempt to create a "national" music, appealing to a wide spectrum of Greek society, and a music which dignifies and celebrates the folk and popular elements at its core.

Theodorakis's politics, in that period, were similarly radical, and long before the military junta took power he found his songs repressed by the right-wing authorities. In 1961 his expressly "political works" were banned by the National Broadcasting Corporation; a film for which he had written the music, *A Neighbourhood, a Dream*, was closed down, and he was harassed by police when giving concerts. After the October 1961 elections, when Karamanlis was re-elected prime minister, all of Theodorakis's works were banned from the radio.

In the following year, Theodorakis became involved in a theatre production of *The Hostage* by Irish writer Brendan Behan. The play explored the Irish experience of British rule; the parallels with Britain's intervention in Cyprus were, nonetheless, plain to see, and the authorities, deeming the play "inflammatory", closed it down. When the left-wing peace candidate, Grigoris Lambrakis, was assassinated in Thessaloniki in 1963, one of the songs from this play about Ireland, "Το γελαστό παιδί" (The Smiling Boy), became associated in the minds of Greeks with that event. This association was acknowledged by the director Costa-Gavras, when in 1969, he made the film *Z* (meaning, of course, "ζει" – "he lives") examining both the assassination and the subsequent official enquiry; he used "Το γελαστό παιδί" as its theme song.

One August morning, before dawn,
going out to take the air,
I saw a girl crying on the flowery ground.

"My heart is broken, the smiling boy is gone."
 Cursed hour, cursed moment:
 our people have killed the smiling boy.

If the reference to Lambrakis's assassination was attached to "Το γελαστό παιδί" by the people of Greece, rather than the composer (who, after all, could not have predicted the event), Theodorakis was not averse to attacking the authorities directly in his songs. During the dictatorship, when all his music was banned from the public media and when people could be arrested for singing his songs in the taverna, Theodorakis wrote the "Songs for Andreas", a political activist held – like Theodorakis – in Averoff Prison for anti-Junta activities. Kept in solitary confinement, Andreas communicated with Theodorakis through tapping on the wall in morse code, and Theodorakis's songs document the interrogation and tortures which Andreas described. In "Το σφαγείο" (The Slaughterhouse), lyrics describing brutality are set to a rousing march:

At midday they beat him in the office,
 I count the blows, I measure the pain.

Το μεσημέρι χτυπάνε στο γραφείο,
 μετρώ τους χτύπους, τον πόνο μετρώ.

Recorded abroad, these banned LPs nonetheless circulated widely in Greece; singing "Το σφαγείο" was a means to express hatred and criticism of the regime directly yet collectively.

Whatever Theodorakis might or might not have intended to say in his songs, the complete ban upon them had the paradoxical effect of making virtually all of his songs "political songs", at least potentially. Where some heard "Βράχο, βράχο τον καημό μου" (My sorrow is a rock) as a simple song of exile (ξενιτιά), others identified it as a lament of one in political exile or prison, an interpretation which imbued the refrain, "When will I see you again, mama?", with a different sort of poignancy. People found it possible to discern oppositional meanings in Theodorakis's musical settings of even politically rather conservative Greek poets. Both the words and the gentle *hassapiko* setting of George Seferis's "Άρνηση" (Denial), for example, serve to emphasise its quality of nostalgia for a chance

not taken, an opportunity not realised. When, in the final stanza, the singer wistfully asserts,

With what heart and breath,
what desire and what passion
we lived our lives: a mistake!
And we changed them.

Με τι καρδιά, με τι πνοή,
τι πόθους και τι πάθος
πήραμε τη ζωή μας: λάθος!
κι αλλάξαμε ζωή

a space is provided for the *politically* (and not just romantically) disenchanted to ponder, yes, we made the wrong choice.

Yannis Markopoulos, though less flamboyant and less widely known than Theodorakis, also crafted "political songs" in this era. In 1971, in the studios of the colonels' Greece, he produced a record of orchestral settings of the Cretan *Rizitika*, a style of traditional unaccompanied song found in Western Crete. Both through the songs he selected and through his collaboration with the much loved left-wing singer and lyra-player, Nikos Xylouris, Markopoulos signalled that these songs of struggling with Charos and of mountain goats cavorting on the mountain side were actually allusions to the political present. One song in particular, "Πότε θα κάμει ξαστεριά" (When will the skies clear?) was unmistakably a call to arms, yet its origin as a rallying cry against the Turks in the late 19th century – and later as one against the German army of occupation – wrong-footed the censor, who may not have wished to be seen prohibiting such patriotic sentiments.

A third figure who must be mentioned in the context of "political songs" is Dionysis Savvopoulos. Though clearly left-wing in his sympathies (then, at least), Savvopoulos was not, like Theodorakis, out to rouse the people to action through his songs. Dubbed the Greek "Bob Dylan" his appeal was always somewhat limited – he was most popular among students and the urban middle class whose experience his songs articulated. His harsh intense voice was reminiscent of Dylan, his melodies drew both on American rock and contemporary Italian balladry, and his rhythms and metres – though they made references to the asymmetric metres of Greek dance music – were often complex and

unpredictable. They were memorable, but not always very singable. His lyrics, in particular, were cryptic, elaborate, full of puns and allusions, and the "voice" was personal, idiosyncratic, anguished, ambivalent, altogether different from the simple, heroic voice Theodorakis employed, following the convention in Greek folksongs generally.

Savvopoulos, too, had to work around the censor from the early 1960s onwards; and this fact no doubt accounts for some of the puns, allusions, and obscurities in his lyrics. A few songs were banned outright, like "Ήλιε, Ήλιε Αρχηγέ" (Sun, Sun my leader); and others, whose metaphors seem surprisingly transparent, slipped through. "Ολαρία Ολαρά", with a tune reminiscent of a summer camp jingle, talks of "snow falling and covering our tent" (the cold, muffling qualities of repression, perhaps) and of "those kids who love little soldiers, horses and wooden swords going wild at these verses" (a swipe, it would seem, at the childish self-importance and bigotry of the police-military establishment). Yet even this song lends itself to other sorts of readings which complicate the oppositional message. Later verses, as Van Dyck (1993) has pointed out, present "a carnival-esque utopia which celebrates confusion" in which victim and victor, oppressed and oppressor, are not clearly distinguished but instead, "irrevocably confused".

Olaria olara
the kids are all around
the Marquis de Sade and a hippy
the murderer and the victim embrace.

Ολαρία ολαρά
γύρω γύρω τα παιδιά
ο Μαρκήσιος ντε Σαντ με ένα χίππυ
ο φονιάς με το θύμα αγκαλιά.

Clearly, Savvopoulos seemed to relish taunting, teasing, tormenting the censor, and indeed, sometimes smuggled in references to the process in the very songs he handed in for vetting. In "Το Θηρίο" (The Beast), for instance, the speaker cheekily complains:

I wrote a story
to tell the peanut gallery
but before it was finished

in came the cens–

Έγραψα μιαν ιστορία
να την πω στη γαλαρία.
Πριν τελειώσει η ιστορία
ήρθε η λογοκρισί–

Yet if on first hearing one understands "the beast" to refer to the censor, the Greek police, or perhaps the repressive state as a whole, here again other interpretations are possible. Van Dyck argues that a close reading (or listening) reveals that while the song begins with speaker *as beast*, it shifts with the speaker *addressing the beast*, and ends by suggesting that, since "such a beast as you are, I even pay your state health insurance", the beast clearly depends on "us" (1993: 49-50). "We" who identify with the speaker in the song are not wholly innocent; to the contrary, we are implicated in the beast's survival. Thus, although both songs can be relished for their irreverent mischief, Savvopoulos can be understood as identifying a more ambiguous political situation. Dissenting from the familiar positing of a Manichean moral universe, Savvopoulos hints that the Greek people's complicity must be acknowledged even as the attacks on the authorities continue.

Much as we saw before with Theodorakis's songs, censorship bestowed a political cachet upon all of Savvopoulos's songs, enabling any listener who wished to insert his or her own political meanings into them. Was "Συννεφούλα" (Little Cloud) really just a love song? Perhaps the lover addressed is "Freedom" (as one young Greek woman suggested to me)? What about those lines lamenting the coming of "April and May without a song, a tear, a kiss"? "This year there's no spring," the song continues – was that 1967, by any chance? By labelling Savvopoulos as subversive, the censor has inadvertently invited *us* to find this subversion everywhere; indeed, invited us to *make* these songs subversive.

It was not only through the songs of these contemporary composers that political sentiments could be articulated. *Rebetika*, the songs of the Greek underworld, were "re-discovered" by young people in this era. These songs had long been condemned by both the Right and the Left: by the Right for their immorality (their references to sex, crime, hashish), by the Left for their politically unenlightened fatalism and

individualism. They spoke of persecution, suffering, fruitless dreams, impossible loves; their tone ranged from bitterness and irony to a jaunty toughness and will to survive. It was precisely these emotional qualities, and the timeliness of their themes, which appealed to the victims of another sort of repression. Moreover, most of the songs were strangely tolerated by these authorities. "*Rebetika* you sang in the taverna, Theodorakis you sang on the road," I was told by a man who had been a university student in those days (though others who lived through that period insist one would not have sung Theodorakis even there!). Through the *rebetika*, as with Markopoulos's *Rizitika*, you could sing about "Cloudy Sunday" and not just be talking about the weather.

Yet it would be wrong to imply that the regime saw no threat in the *rebetika*. In 1968 Ilias Petropoulos was jailed for publishing his landmark book, *Ρεμπέτικα Τραγούδια*, though ironically – again – the controversy merely served to stir up interest in the subject. And the occasional recording was banned. Perhaps the most famous example is Kaldaras's "Νύχτωσε χωρίς φεγγάρι" (Night is fallen without a moon). First recorded in 1947, during the Greek Civil War, it describes a political prisoner – a leftist – spending the night in a prison cell:

A door opens, a door closes,
but the key is turned twice;
what's the kid done
that they threw him in jail?

Πόρτ' ανοίγει, πόρτα κλείνει,
μα διπλό 'ναι το κλειδί,
τι έχει κάνει και το ρίξαν
το παιδί στη φυλακή;

With the regime's prison cells full of young people brought in for interrogation and torture, the lyrics simply achieved too direct a hit.

III The "political song" after 1974

With the demise of the dictatorship in 1974 and subsequent legalisation of left political parties, a newly released political energy was accompanied by a musical "ξέσπασμα", or bursting

out. Previously prohibited songs were sung loudly and jubilantly now in tavernas, on the streets, and at political gatherings. Returning from exile, Theodorakis toured Greece conducting his *Canto General*, settings of Pablo Neruda's poems which alluded to the Chilean dictatorship; his concerts filled stadia with thousands wherever he went. His songs, as well as those of Markopoulos, Loizos and others, became featured at the enormous youth festivals held annually by all the left-wing parties between 1975 and 1982. Other hitherto prohibited songs, like the *andartika* songs of the Civil War period, were researched, re-recorded and re-issued, finding especial popularity amongst the Communist party youth. This period also produced unusual gems, like the recording *Women of the Averoff Prison*, made by women who had been detained for political "crimes" in Averoff prison during the Civil War. These now elderly women gathered together some thirty years after their imprisonment to sing together the songs they wrote commemorating such events as a transfer of prisoners, or an execution. Their songs convey a serenity and unity which strikingly contrasts with the boisterous militancy of the *andartika*.

Alongside the revival of these expressly political songs, folksongs were newly recorded with an eye not only to authenticity in style and instrumentation but also to their reappropriation by the Left in a project of rethinking/redefining what it means to be Greek. This was, after all, a period when left-wing parties strove to repudiate the pro-Western stance of the right through a focus on "our roots" (οι ρίζες μας). Domna Samiou, for instance, a singer of Asia Minor refugee descent who was also active in left politics and who frequently performed in the Communist party youth festivals, began producing a series of remarkable LPs of Greek folkmusic in this period. The vitality and immediacy of the instrumental performances and her remarkable voice, along with vivid album covers which often included full lyrics, attracted a new audience of educated urban youth. Within a different aesthetic but making a similar claim for the relevance of folksong for the present, Vangelis's album *Ωδές* presented Irimi Pappas's spare soprano voice singing "Ο Μενούσης" and "Σαράντα Παλληκάρια" (Forty Young Lads) against a background of synthesiser and folk instruments.

But the most comprehensive musical revival was undoubtedly that of the *rebetika*. Initiated during the dictatorship, it

gathered force in the years after 1974. Its early phase involved literally a search for the old records, in the Monastiraki flea-market or in dusty family storerooms. The search resulted in a plethora of authentically scratchy re-issues of old recordings, compiled with varying degrees of systematicity and care by both small independent companies (like the Falireas Brothers) and the big established labels (EMI-Columbia, RCA). The popularity and geographical spread of this music became evident as researchers found recordings produced originally in studios not just in Greece, but also in Turkey and the United States.

The search for original recordings spawned a small industry of interpreters to make sense of the historical phases and regional variations within this loose (and somewhat inaccurately titled) category of *rebetika*. Aficionados and scholars began to write books and articles analysing the music and social context, to compile collections of songs, to interview the surviving members of this subculture and to produce biographies and autobiographies (see, e.g., Beaton 1980a and 1980b, Butterworth and Schneider 1975, Gauntlett 1982, Holst 1977, Vamvakaris 1973). In the early 1980s a Centre for the Study of Rebetic Song was established in Athens. This flurry of activity raised a number of important questions: what *is rebetika*? Where did it come from? What is its relation to the demotic tradition? How did it change over time and according to the social context within which it found itself? What is its relevance for the present?

In the winter of 1981 a number of small clubs (like Kouasimodo in Kolonaki, home of the remarkable Οπισθοδρομική Κομπανία, or Retrograde Company) began popping up in Athens and a few provincial cities. Here, usually in an intimate setting, ensembles meticulously performed *rebetika* and *σμυρνέικα* (songs of Smyrna) learned from the old recordings. It is true that these clubs attracted the educated youth and urban middle classes rather than working people or peasants, who had never really abandoned this *rebetika-laika* music as it continued on its musical trajectory to Kazantzidhis, Marinella and Keti Gray, along with many less gifted performers. The clubs were deemed by some as "κουλτουριάρικα": pretentious, artificial, self-consciously "cultured". As cultural sites they nonetheless manifested the fascination of both performers and audience for two hitherto repressed aspects of Greek historical experience:

the culture of the economic and social margin and that of the Orient.

Whilst the early phase of the revival was concerned with recovering a lost history and re-presenting the treasures found with rigorous care for purity and authenticity, gradually we begin to see amongst composers and ensembles a growing confidence and willingness to experiment. No longer content simply to revive old songs, some start to compose music in one or another *rebetiko* or *smyrneiko* style. One groundbreaking and enormously popular LP of this type was *Η Εκδίκηση της Γυφτιάς* (The Revenge of Gypsiness), released in 1978, with songs by the composer-lyricist team Nikos Xidhakis and Manolis Rassoulis (who have continued to develop within this genre of *neo-anatolitika*, or "neo-Oriental songs") and featuring Nikos Papazoglou. It also features, and was produced by, Dionysis Savvopoulos, and it is he who, on the album jacket, explains the significance of the title, "The Revenge of Gypsiness":

After the war *rebetika* had become a kind of French music with a bit of bouzouki thrown in. The plebs reacted with their own homely style which later defenders of the purity of the race called "Indianish", "Turkish-gypsy-ish" (τουρκο-γύφτικο) or just "gypsiness" (γυφτιά). It's the opposite of *archondorebetika* ("posh" *rebetika*). *Archondorebetika* and *elafrolaika* ("light popular") is *rebetika* wearing a European hat, while *yiftia* is *rebetika* wearing an Eastern hat.

Appealing to a narrower audience perhaps, Nikos Mamangakis's settings of poems by Yiorghos Ioannou on the album *Κέντρο Διερχομένων* (Grand Central Station), produced in 1982, capture the idiom of *rebetika* while expanding its musical boundaries. It is worth noting that this collaboration between composer and poet presents striking differences with analogous projects by Theodorakis: the latter has always emphasised the heroic, majestic, uplifting qualities of contemporary poets like Elytis and Seferis or the dignity of the common man celebrated in Ritsos. Even his musical appropriation of rebetic sounds (such as using Bithikotsis as singer) was oriented toward ennobling this music. Ioannou's poems, by contrast, portray a sleazy underworld of prostitution and homosexuality, yet also the humanity of its people – the songs convey desire, vulnerability, cynicism. Mamangakis uses

rebetic voices and rebetic rhythms like *zeibekiko* and *karsilamas*, though not slavishly, but he combines instruments from different sub-styles of *rebetika* (bouzouki, drums, piano, violi) with strings from the western art music tradition (classical guitar, 12-string guitar, cello, bass). Indeed, one of Mamangakis's signatures is his use of violin which shifts fluidly between smyrnaic, western classical and Stefan Grappelli-ish French jazz styles.

IV *The 1980s: From musical opposition to musical reformulation*

These recordings by Papazoglou and Xidhakis-Rassoulis, by Mamangakis and by others, signal a more general shift in Greek popular music which gathers force in the mid-1980s, significantly, not long after PASOK came to power in 1981. The immediate aftermath of the election was a high-spirited musical triumphalism, with the party's supporters singing "Καλημέρα Ήλιε" (Good Morning, Sun – in direct reference to PASOK's green rising sun logo) at every public gathering or blasting it out on their tape-players. But gradually, with the Left in power, the "political song" as a variety of fundamentally oppositional song began to lose its focus for lack of an object to attack. Interestingly, during the entire period we have been talking about, it is hard to think of even one song which could be characterised as a "political song" of the Right – for the simple reason that they had always been the established power. In the early '80s the Right admitted that its lack of cultural production was a serious problem, and Robert Williams was enlisted to produce for its youth organisation an official theme song, "Ο Ύμνος της Γαλάζιας Γενιάς" (Hymn for the Sky-Blue Generation). It was only later, in 1986, under the leadership of Evert, New Democracy mayor of Athens, that the Right as an opposition force was able to launch an influential cultural initiative.

As the "political song" diminishes in importance in the early '80s, what we see in its place is a proliferation of composers and groups grappling with the problem of how to formulate and to articulate Greek identity and Greek experience within the specific political, social and cultural conditions of the late twentieth century. There is, I would argue, a major shift in the nature of the "politics" with which musicians are concerned

when they play. Hence, the "political song" presupposes, and signals a position within, a Left-Right model of politics, and is itself considered an instrument of protest and emancipation. The songs of the 1980s, by contrast, are oriented toward a more broadly defined cultural politics at a moment when the political map looks less Manichean, more fragmented and more ambiguous; they arise within and reflect a period of bizarre parliamentary coalitions between Right and far Left, and given the contradictory effects of Greece's membership of the European Community, a period of intense debate on the nature and value of Greece's identification with Europe and "the West".

Among the most striking aspects of music of the 1980s is the way categorical boundaries between Greek musical genres – δημοτικά, ρεμπέτικα, σμυρνείικα, λαϊκά, νέο κύμα, ελαφρο-λαϊκά – begin to collapse as musicians raid freely from one or another and create novel combinations. Musicians continue to explore Eastern traditions – though some of them move even further eastward – but there is also among some groups a less slavishly imitative and more creative manipulation of Western popular forms (blues, jazz, rock, disco, rap, even Latin styles). The plurality of musical approaches, which range from authentic reconstructions of forgotten traditions to a post-modern bricolage, is remarkable, and I would like to spend the final part of the present essay exploring a few of these.

Here, I think, one must return first to Savvopoulos, because he stands as a kind of barometer of such political and cultural shifts. Once a major symbol of left-wing opposition, in the years of fervent political activity following the dictatorship's demise Savvopoulos increasingly expressed his distrust and disillusionment with the political "fanaticism" that he saw on the left, particularly amongst members of PASOK. In *Πεζέριβα*, a collection of songs written between 1976 and 1979, he derided the cynical opportunists who used the rhetoric of socialism for personal gain, as in "Πολιτευτής" (Power-broker), yet he lamented equally the idealistic political fervour which, in the song "Για τα παιδιά που είναι στο κόμμα" (For the Party Youth), blinds the young woman he desires to other human passions. His songs and his interviews of this period constantly insisted that this sort of politics failed to acknowledge the complexity of people's lives and to articulate their aspirations. In a 1976 interview in "Έλευθεροτυπία" Savvopoulos confessed:

I have belonged to the Left since 1962. I feel no obligation to give allegiance to any one of the political parties. What really interests me is the signs through which young people express their differences with the machinery of whatever party they belong to. Whenever I see a young Pasoka express doubts, whenever I see a Riga (a member of the Eurocommunist Party Youth) feel likewise, whenever I see some slight melancholy expression flicker across the face of a Kniti (a member of the traditional Communist Party Youth), whenever I see some such thing amongst any of our non-Parliamentary groups, I feel right at home.

Savvopoulos' most belligerent howl of alienation from the politicized society of this period is undoubtedly "Το Χειμώνα ετούτο" (That Winter). His images are visceral – "I want to dance, I want to vomit" (θέλω να χορεύω, και να κάνω εμετό) and "I'm sixteen years old, and I fuck your lycées" (είμαι δεκαεξάρης, σας γαμώ τα λύκεια), though significantly what is best remembered is his defiant anti-political claim: "I'm not PASOK, I'm not KKE, I am what I am and what I sing for you" (Δεν είμαι Πασόκα, δεν είμαι ούτε ΚΚΕ, είμαι ό,τι είμαι κι ό,τι τραγουδώ για σε). But the aggressive style of this song is at odds with the joyous exuberance of most of the other songs on *Τραπεζάκια έξω* (Little Tables Outside), released in 1983, and taken as a whole, the recording strikes a very different chord from *Πεζέρβα*. In "Ας κρατήσουνε οι χοροί": (Let's Keep the Dances), performed to a quick *kalamatiano* rhythm, one finds something quite new: a sentimental optimism that demotic forms (symbolised by the circling dance) might form a basis for a new modern Hellenic culture. As he suggests nostalgically, "Let the lanterns of summer nights cement our friendship, and mix old and varied tracks with the 'rock' of our future" (Και στης νύχτας το λαμπάδιασμα να πυκνώνει ο δεσμός μας και να σμίγει παλιές κι αναμμένες τροχιές με το ροκ του μέλλοντός μας).

We see here and in other songs, like "Τσάμικο", with its klarino and its strong 3/4 rhythm, not only a celebration of folk/popular symbols and of the people united by them (leading some critics to identify a turn in Savvopoulos's music toward λαϊκισμός or "populism") but also an acknowledgement of Orthodoxy as central to Greekness. This album coincided, of course, with Savvopoulos's turn to neo-Orthodoxy, a move that the Greek public found enormously perplexing and difficult to

reconcile with his anarchic left-wing origins; but actually it was only the beginning. In 1987 Savvopoulos shocked the public by cutting his hair and shaving his beard and moustache, in apparent repudiation of his shaggy radical past, commemorating the occasion with an album entitled *Το Κούρεμα* (The Haircut). Its most notorious song was "Κωλοέλληνες" (literally, Greek Assholes) which scathingly attacked the "Νεοέλληνες", the rising middle class who did well economically in the years of PASOK's ascendancy. Since then he has caused numerous minor sensations and Greeks continue to puzzle over the incongruity of his present positions (his apparent support for New Democracy, his pro-military stance, his alleged materialism) with the anarchic Nionio of the '60s and '70s.

Savvopoulos has not really stopped writing "oppositional songs", even though his own politics have changed and, consequently, the institutions he attacks are different. Yet we also see in Savvopoulos an attempt to come to terms with his Greekness, to think about what this entails, what it means. Thus, above and beyond the fascination he evokes as a cultural figure, his musical trajectory reveals a composer whose changing *musical* articulations of the problem of Greek identity reflect both his own idiosyncratic development and those in Greek society at large.

Others have contributed to this musical/cultural debate in the 1980s in quite different ways. Ross Daly, the immensely talented "Κρητικο-ιρλανδός" (Cretan-Irishman), for example, must be credited with two quite distinct achievements, above and beyond the shining example of his impeccable musicianship. First, he has introduced the Greek public to music of the Orient understood in a slightly different and much broader sense than before. More than anyone else he has drawn attention to the Ottoman classical tradition which, he is at pains to point out, was a cosmopolitan, non-ethnic tradition in which Greeks, Jews, Armenians and Turks collaborated until the early twentieth century. He has also introduced instruments and musical styles from further east and south into his ensembles, playing many of these himself: from India, the sitar and tabla, and from North Africa, the percussive bendir and nakares. His second achievement follows from this: that is, in a fashion which might seem paradoxical but which is actually profoundly true to the cultural realities of Greece up until this century, Ross Daly combines a

meticulous sensitivity to the subtleties of regional (and micro-regional) ways of playing (of tuning the strings, of strumming and bowing, of melodic range, of styles of improvisation), all of which he can reproduce with exquisite mastery, with an openness to unusual combinations of instruments.

Although this reflects in part his own personal history of living in various places in the Orient and the influences these cultures had upon him as a musician, Daly insists that such borrowings back and forth amongst the different peoples of this region were entirely commonplace; and that it is only recently that these small nations and peoples located in the Orient have come to follow the West and have thus stopped communicating with each other. This is at one and the same time an argument against the rigidity of the musical purists, and an invitation to a more tolerant and open cultural (and indeed, political) discourse across national boundaries. His position is exemplified in his 1987 album, *Ανάδυση* (Emergence), in which Daly surrounds himself with a truly multi-ethnic group of musicians – Greek, Turkish, Armenian, American, Irish and North African – using instruments of equally diverse origins. It has also been echoed by other musical personalities, as evidenced in the album, *Maria Farandouri sings Livaneli* in which a singer, discovered by and best known for her collaboration with Theodorakis, interprets the work of a Turkish composer, Livaneli, and his compatriot, the poet Nazim Hikmet.

Ross Daly is no purist, but his eclecticism is by and large confined within the broadened boundaries of Eastern or Oriental music. His own compositions show no inclination to transgress the admittedly wide parameters of these traditions; he appears to find within them sufficient scope to express his experiences as an adopted Greek at this moment in history. For others, being Greek involves moving between Oriental and Western, indigenous and imported, cultural sites and cultural practices. Vangelis Yermanos, a singer and songwriter whose music shows influences of Savvopoulos, Italian modern ballads and jazz and whose name would never be associated with *anatolitika*, nonetheless included a *rebetika*-styled *hassapiko*, sung with Sotiria Bellou, on his 1981 album, *Τα Μπαράκια* (Bars). Interestingly, this *rebetiko* song – the final cut – is preceded by a tune as brief as an advertising jingle, accompanied by jazz-style vibes:

How I love going to the bars at night,
to see my friends, to have a drink.
I can't stand coffeehouses, tavernas.

Πώς γουστάρω στα μπαράκια
τους φίλους να δω, και κάτι να πω,
δεν μπορώ καφεενεία, ταβέρνα.

This melancholy rift seems to signal Yermanos's aesthetic allegiance to the culture of the urban West; it is immediately followed, nonetheless, by just the sort of *hassapiko* tune one might hear in the taverna "he" claims to despise. Each musical statement retains its cultural integrity and autonomy; yet they are intimately juxtaposed.

But the musical statements of other Greek ensembles show more ambivalence, or indeed, more self-conscious attempts to bring together East and West. Fatme is one of the most interesting proponents of a "Greek-rock" that is not merely imitative of its American prototypes, but which uses this foremost idiom of a now international youth culture, "rock", to explore Greek realities for the country's youthful generation. A particularly vivid articulation of the pain and confusion yet also regeneration involved in embracing both East and West – symbols that stand for distinct, and often opposing and incompatible, histories, traditions, identities and ways of being in the world – appears in the title song of their 1985 recording, *Ρίσκο* (Risk). Its musical style is orientalist (*ανατολίτικο*) of *archondorebetiko* vintage, with electric piano, a driving, syncopated percussion and an insistent tempo. Its lyrics adopt the trope of a love song, with the singer describing the "two loves battling deep inside me". Rather than choose between them, since he can abandon neither as both inhabit him and indeed, *constitute* him, he searches for a way "to save them, to bind them together with a rhythm, to find a song which accommodates them both". Yet there is no set of rules, no obvious vocabulary to use in producing this synthesis. The song opens with this search for the tools to cope with these two antithetical loves, as the husky, agonised voice of the male singer implores:

Find me words, find me images
find me roads and modes and rules

find me a song to suit me
that embraces them both.

Two loves have made a fool of me
and I've been ruined.
They're always asking for something
and I love them both the same.

Βρες μου λόγια, βρες μου εικόνες
βρες μου δρόμους και κανόνες
βρες τραγούδι να μου μοιάζει
και τις δυο τους ν' αγκαλιάσει.

Δυο αγάπες μου γελάνε
κ' έπαθα ζημιά.
Όλα τίποτα ζητάνε
κ' εγώ τις δυο τους είχα μία.

The loves alluded to are only figuratively women. Fatme enthusiasts insist, and the lyrics seem to confirm, that these tyrannical loves are the music of the Orient and the West. Yet perhaps they can be heard and felt as metonyms for these distinct cultural universes, and invite a more comprehensive binding together of their respective elements. This is not a comfortable process – the one who undertakes it admits to being obsessed, tormented, beleaguered, duped – and it involves, as the title emphasizes, enormous "Risk" of the loss of identity and the death of the familiar self. Yet it is nonetheless a creative and fruitful process:

How it fulfils me, taking this risk
how it torments me, as it regenerates me.

Πόσο τη βρίσκω με αυτό το ρίσκο
και πώς με τυραννά που με ξαναγεννά.

A more comprehensive account of developments in Greek music in the last decade would have to consider what many Greek critics describe as a current "crisis" of the Greek popular song, a phenomenon related as much to the changing structure of the recording industry as to the chaotic political and social conditions of the present period. Disillusioned enthusiasts of an earlier phase of Greek music frequently point out the banality of much of what is now available in record shops and produced on

radio, television and the concert circuit, noting the resurgence of a certain genre of "dog's den" *rebetika* (σκυλάδικα) as well as the promotion of glitzy but vacuous super-singers like the famous "Le Pa" (Lefteris Pandazis) and his partner, Anna Vissy. While this broader musical context cannot be denied, the composers and performers whose work is explored in this paper – though they constitute a minority – represent a proliferation of musical articulations whose heterogeneity is unprecedented within the Greek scene. Moreover, they exhibit a musical inventiveness and eclecticism which attest to the continuing dynamism of their subject matter, the very meaning and experience of being Greek at this particular historical juncture.

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The erotic poems of C.P. Cavafy

Sarah Ekdawi

I am going to talk about what constitutes the erotic poetry of C.P. Cavafy, but also about Oscar Wilde's contribution to it. I would like to begin by quoting a short extract from the court transcript of the libel suit brought by Oscar Wilde against the ninth Marquess of Queensberry, in 1894. Queensberry entered the now infamous plea of justification, which resulted in Wilde's own subsequent trial, on counts of sodomy and indecency, and his imprisonment. In this extract, Edward Carson Q.C. is cross-examining Wilde on the subject of homoeroticism in his life and art. The distinction between art and life is by no means always clear.

Carson: The affection and love of the artist of Dorian Gray might lead an ordinary individual to believe that it might have a certain tendency?

Wilde: I have no knowledge of the views of ordinary individuals.

Carson: Have you ever adored a young man madly?

Wilde: No, not madly. I prefer love – that is a higher form.

Carson: Never mind about that. Let us keep down to the level we are at.

Wilde: I have never given adoration to anyone except myself.

Carson: I suppose you think that a very smart thing?

Wilde: Not at all.

Carson: Then you have never had that feeling?

Wilde: No. The whole idea was borrowed from Shakespeare, I regret to say – yes from Shakespeare's sonnets.

Carson: I believe you have written an article to show that Shakespeare's sonnets were suggestive of unnatural vice.

Wilde: On the contrary, I have written an article to show that they are not. I objected to such a perversion being put upon Shakespeare.

In 1924, according to Timos Malanos, Cavafy himself came perilously close to bringing a similar libel suit against the journalist, Socrates Lagoudakis. The trouble began, it appears,

when Cavafy drew attention to the rough breathing used by Lagoudakis in writing Νέα Ὑόρκη, pointing out that in English it is New York and not New Hyork. Lagoudakis set about a scurrilous press polemic, heavily hinting at Cavafy's sexual proclivities. A petition signed by sixty of Cavafy's supporters, protesting at these scabrous attacks and attesting to the poet's exemplary conduct as well as his literary merit, apparently resolved the situation out of court. Cavafy might have ended up, Malanos says, "in the dock like Oscar Wilde".

If Cavafy's homosexuality was, by 1924, something of an open secret in some Alexandrian circles, it was by no means as flamboyantly open as Wilde's had been, thirty years earlier, in London and Paris, with such disastrous consequences. Circumspect about his private life, Cavafy also exercised discretion in his art, only publishing poems with erotic themes in which the sex of the addressee is unstated (such as "Γκριζα" – "Gray"), or where the kind of love referred to would only be apparent in the context of his other, unpublished work. (One example of this is "Ἐπῆγα" ("I Went"), where the speaker could very well be making a macho heterosexual boast.) In cases where the beloved is obviously male, other distancing devices, such as a pseudo-historical setting or consignment to the tomb, are employed. The poet clearly cannot be implicated in, for example, the "dangerous thoughts" of Myrtias, a Syrian student living under the joint reign of the sons of Constantine the Great; nor could his be the voice that issues from the grave of Iasis.

Apart from the small number of poems with erotic themes or undertones which Cavafy chose to publish, there are the poems of this nature which he printed for private circulation, some of which are more explicit (like "He asked about the Quality"), and then the so-called "Unpublished" poems that were neither printed nor disseminated by the poet. Among these is the poem described by Yourcenar as "an embarrassing confession of carnal fetishism": "The Bandaged Shoulder". Clearly, Cavafy was taking no chances of this kind of thing falling into the wrong kind of hands – at least in his lifetime.

No such circumspection – alas! – was favoured by Wilde, who sent pleasurable shock-waves through Victorian society, until the Public Prosecutor put a stop to him. Wilde publicised his affection for Lord Alfred Douglas and published provocative works. The most notable of these were the two that Carson

seized upon: *A Portrait of Mr W.H.* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The *Portrait of Mr W.H.* is Wilde's attempt to demonstrate that the mainspring of Shakespeare's inspiration, not just for the sonnets but also for the plays, was homosexual love. Wilde describes the sonnets, here, as "slight and secret things... intended [...] for private circulation only among a few, a very few friends."

Three things suggest that Cavafy had read *A Portrait of Mr W.H.*, published in London in 1889. In the first place, the strong connexion posited between inspiration of the highest order and homosexual love is repeatedly reaffirmed by Cavafy himself in poems written after that date. In the second place, the notion of the sonnets as secret poems for private circulation is paralleled not only in Cavafy's publishing practices, but also, as we shall see, in statements he makes about poetics in his erotic poems. For the moment, I will refer you only to the poem "Theatre of Sidon, 400 A.D.", where the speaker boasts: "I sometimes write highly audacious verses in Greek / and these I circulate – surreptitiously, of course."

In the third place, the passage where Oscar Wilde actually describes "W.H.", the supposed recipient of both Shakespeare's passion and his sonnets, and on Wilde's hypothesis, a boy-actor in the plays, is oddly reminiscent of a poem by Cavafy. Wilde writes: "I could almost fancy that I saw him standing in the shadow of my room, so well had Shakespeare drawn him, with his golden hair, his tender, flower-like grace, his dreamy deep-sunken eyes, his delicate mobile limbs and his white lily hands." This vision came to Wilde, he says, after he had been reading Shakespeare's sonnets. In "Kaisarion", Cavafy attributes a similar apparition to his own reading of epigraphs. He says, "My art gives to your face / a dreamy, appealing beauty. And so completely did I imagine you / that late last night, / as my lamp went out – I let it go out on purpose – I thought you came into my room."

Cavafy is said to have written historical, philosophical and erotic poems – and "Kaisarion", as its uncertain opening ("Ἐν μέρει ... ἐν μέρει" – "Partly ... partly") suggests, is one of many borderline cases that do not neatly fit this classification. It is not, as far as I can see, a philosophical poem; it could scarcely be called erotic, although a beautiful youth is described, and history merely serves as a kind of pretext. If we return, however,

to Cavafy's own terminology, we find that he claims to have written historical, philosophical and "sensual – or for that matter, sentimental" poems: "ἡδονικὰ – ἢ καὶ αἰσθηματικὰ ποιήματα".

Ἡδονὴ refers to sensual pleasure or hedony, while αἴσθημα designates sentiment or sensation. The first has connotations of decadence and the second, linguistically at least, of Aestheticism. It would perhaps be overstating the case to translate Cavafy's phrase "ἡδονικὰ – ἢ καὶ αἰσθηματικὰ ποιήματα" as "Decadent or maybe Aestheticist poetry" – αἰσθηματικός is not, after all, the same as αἰσθητικός – but the best way to classify poems like "Kaisarion" might well be under a heading such as "Beauty for Art's Sake". It is also worth remembering that a central concept in Aestheticism was the appeal of the arts to the senses.

The words ἡδονὴ and ἡδονικός, αἴσθημα, αἴσθησις, καλαισθησία, αἰσθητικός and αἰσθηματικός recur in the "ἡδονικὰ – ἢ καὶ αἰσθηματικὰ ποιήματα", which, for the sake of convenience, I shall now go back to calling "erotic poems". To give but one example, the youthful Kaisarion is described as "αἰσθηματικός". Love, on the other hand, is curiously lacking – an omission which has bedevilled critical discussion of this most controversial section of Cavafy's oeuvre. Stratis Tsirkas, among other eccentricities, devotes a sub-section of his book about Cavafy to "Ἀπὸ πότε καὶ πῶς παραστράτησε" – "When and how he went wrong". He speculates that the poet's initiation into – I quote – "mechanical homosexuality" must have happened in England, during his impressionable years. Malanos, as might be expected from a loyal friend of the poet, is both more sympathetic and less prurient. He lays stress on Cavafy's discretion and on the danger of scandal attendant upon what he calls, quoting Lord Alfred Douglas, "the Love that Dare not speak its name", although he also, on occasion, berates the poet for his "cowardice".

Marguerite Yourcenar was struck, she says, by the detached and impersonal nature of Cavafy's erotic poems, and concludes that either Cavafy rarely experienced love or that he chose not to mention it. Edmund Keeley expresses fervent admiration for what he calls "autobiographical honesty" in Cavafy's poems, and yet, as Margaret Alexiou has pointed out, he clearly situates what he calls Cavafy's "Sensual City" on a lower plane than

the historical one. Alexiou herself, however, in her desire to avoid a judgemental position, claims to find "The Bandaged Shoulder" no more shocking than the published poems. W.H. Auden, in common with Keeley, admires Cavafy's "honesty" on the subject of physical pleasure, but Stephen Spender objects to Cavafy's equation of "erotic memory or wish with poetry". To all these critics, Cavafy's privileging of physical over metaphysical love has obviously required apology.

Perhaps the closest Cavafy ever comes to a love-poem (and I discount, as he himself did, early romantic maunderings) is "Ερωτος Ἀκουσμα" ("On Hearing of Love"). This poem can be viewed as a kind of answer to the critics, though it is typically full of twists, and by no means a straight answer. Since it is very short, I will quote it in Greek as well as in English:

ΕΡΩΤΟΣ ΑΚΟΥΣΜΑ

Στοῦ δυνατοῦ ἔρωτος τὸ ἄκουσμα τρέμε καὶ συγκινήσου
σὰν αἰσθητῆς. Ὅμως, εὐτυχισμένος,
θυμήσου πόσα ἢ φαντασία σου σ' ἔπλασεν· αὐτὰ
πρῶτα· κ' ἔπειτα τ' ἄλλα – πὺδ μικρὰ – ποὺ στήν ζωὴ σου
ἐπέρασες κι' ἀπόλαυσες, τ' ἀληθινότερα κι' ἀπτά.–
Ἄπο τοὺς τέτοιους ἔρωτας δὲν ἦσουν στερημένος.

ON HEARING OF LOVE¹

On hearing about great love, respond, be moved
like an aesthete. Only, fortunate as you've been,
remember how much your imagination created for you.
This first, and then the rest
that you experienced and enjoyed in your life:
the less great, the more real and tangible.
Of loves like these you were not deprived.

The poem hinges on the contrast between great love (about which the speaker has heard, and to which, as an aesthete, he knows the correct response) and smaller loves, which he has actually enjoyed. Equally important is the comparison between the things he was fortunate enough to have had created for him by his imagination, and the so-called "smaller loves". But does

¹ All translations used in this article, except for "Artificial Flowers" and "From the Drawer", are those of Keeley and Sherrard.

the phrase "loves like these", in the final line, refer only to the smaller loves, or does it include the creations of fantasy, and if so, does it also include the great love – or at least the hearing about it? Implicit in the closing word, "deprived", is the idea that the closest the speaker has come to "great love" is to have heard about it and responded like an aesthete. And an aesthete, as we already know, responds primarily through the senses (or αἰσθήσεις).

The conventions of love-poetry demand that physical beauty be matched by beauty of the soul, and the physical act of love by a higher, mental or spiritual communion. In the erotic poems of Cavafy, the metaphysical counterpart of physical passion is not Love, but Art. In fact, the only stated object of love in these poems is the poems themselves: "Τὴν ἐργασία μου ... τὴν ἀγαπῶ" ("I love my work") (taken from the first line of "Ζωγραφοισμένα"). [Cavafy's erotic poems concern the relationship between Art and sensual pleasure, and in this relationship, the vital mediator and interpreter is Memory.] The poems are, without exception, retrospective, and Roderick Beaton has made the point that the present tense in Cavafy "refers to nothing but the time of writing". Thus, the creative act could be said to occupy the temporal foreground of the poems.

The argumentation of many of the poems is as follows: pleasure creates a memory; memories are transmutable into art; through art the actual physical experience of erotic pleasure can somehow be relived. This proposition could scarcely be further removed from Keeley's ideas about autobiographical honesty; it is more in keeping with what Dionysis Kapsalis has called "Cavafy's autobiographical inventions". Of equal importance to memory, which Cavafy portrays, in any case, as both selective and fallible, are fiction and fantasy. In the unpublished poem, "Half an Hour", the speaker claims that artists can, by stretching the imagination, create erotic pleasure, while in the poem "January 1904" (also unpublished), remembering is described as "remoulding with the mind". Memory is also presented as capable of enhancing the past, in the teeth of the evidence: in "On Board Ship", the speaker is reminded of a boy by a pencil sketch, but says, "I remember him as better looking" and "He appears to me better looking / now that my soul brings him back, out of Time".

The unifying themes of the erotic poems of Cavafy are erotic pleasure, Art and memory. Within this broad framework, four main categories of poems can be distinguished: poems about specific encounters; epitaphs; erotic poems of poetics; and poems about the life of the senses more generally. The clearest example of the last group of poems is "Ἡδονῆ": "To Sensual Pleasure", where this is described as "χαρὰ καὶ μύρο τῆς ζωῆς μου" – "the joy and incense of my life". One poem which exemplifies descriptions of encounters is "He Asked about the Quality", in which two young men flirt dangerously over a pile of coloured handkerchiefs. In the epitaph-poems ("Tomb of Lanis", "Tomb of Ignatius" and so on), as Valerie Caires has pointed out, the dead are treated as objects of eros in a way which is alien to their apparent source, the Hellenistic epigrams. Although it unquestionably was inspired by the epigrams, and even occasionally echoes their language, Cavafy's erotic treatment of the dead may also owe something to Wilde's "Grave of Keats", whose occupant is described as "Fair as Sebastian" and deemed to have "sweetest lips" as well as a broken heart.

Before returning in more detail to Oscar Wilde and his presence in Cavafy's poetry, I would like to look at the poems which serve as Cavafy's affirmation of the "Importance of Being Sensual": the erotic poems of poetics. I shall also discuss two Cavafian poems of poetics which, although they do not mention eroticism directly, are very clearly aestheticist and deal with the superiority of Art to Nature (in one case) and the superiority of art for secret circulation (in the other).

The erotic poems of poetics are: "Ἐτσι πολὺ ἀτένισα" ("I've Looked so Much"), of 1911; "Νόησις" ("Understanding"), 1915; "Ἡ ἀρχὴ τῶν" ("Their Beginning"), 1915; "Κι ἀκούμπησα καὶ πλάγιασα στὲς κλίνες τῶν" ("And I Lounged and Lay on their Beds"), 1915; "Ὅταν διεγείρονται" ("When they Come Alive"), 1916, and "Ἐκόμισα εἰς τὴν Τέχνην" ("I've Brought to Art"), 1921. Thus, all but the first and last belong to the years 1915-1916. It should also be pointed out that the first and last poems cover rather different ground from the others, and that it is the poems of 1915 and '16 which really state the case for sensual pleasure as the mainspring of poetry.

The first of the poems listed, "I've Looked so Much", opens with the claim, "I've looked on beauty so much / that my vision overflows with it" and goes on to provide a kind of catalogue of

the building-blocks used in the erotic poems: "The body's lines. Red lips. Sensual limbs. / Hair as though stolen from Greek statues..." These constituent parts of bodies and poems are summed up as "Figures of love, as my poetry desired them" and then the speaker seems to sink into a reverie, typographically suggested by the three dots which interrupt the penultimate line and by the row of dots with which the poem closes. Dreaminess is also indicated by the poem's concluding repetitions: "in the nights when I was young, / encountered secretly in my nights." The focus of this poem, then, is physical beauty and poetry's desire for this.

The connexion between the life of the senses ("ὁ ἡδονικός μου βίος") and the impulse to poetry ("βουλές τῆς ποιήσεώς μου") is much more strongly stated in the first of the 1915-16 poems, "Νόησις" – "Understanding":

Μέσα στὸν ἔκλυτο τῆς νεότητός μου βίῳ
μορφόνονταν βουλές τῆς ποιήσεώς μου,
σχεδιάζονταν τῆς τέχνης μου ἡ περιοχὴ.

In the loose living of my early years
the impulses of my poetry were shaped
the boundaries of my art were plotted.

Here, both inspiration and subject-matter are linked with sensuality.

"Their Beginning" opens with a reference to lawless eroticism: "Ἡ ἐκπλήρωσις τῆς ἔκνομῆς τῶν ἡδονῆς ἔγινεν" – "Their illicit pleasure has been fulfilled" and goes on to describe the silent and furtive departure of the couple, fearful that something about them will give away "σὲ τί εἶδους κλίνην ἔπρασαν πρὸ ὀλίγου" ("what kind of bed they've just been lying on"). The reader, incidentally, is only privy to the meaning of "illicit" and "what kind of bed", if he or she has read the epitaphs and the encounter-poems. "Their Beginning" ends, "But what profit for the life of the artist: / tomorrow, the day after, or years later, he'll give voice / to the strong lines that had their beginning here."

The next poem, from the same year, also elects to use the word "κλίνη" (instead of "κρεβάτι") for "bed". Here, too, the kind of pleasure sought does not correspond to the description "ἀναγνωρισμένοι ἔρωτες" – "accepted modes of love". This is a

stronger hint than the words "illicit" and "what kind of bed" at homosexuality, and it is probably for this reason that "And I Lounged and Lay on their Beds" remained unpublished. The poem recounts a visit to a house of pleasure, where, the speaker claims, "I went into the secret rooms / considered shameful even to name. But not shameful to me – because if they were, / what kind of poet, what kind of artist would I be?" and goes on to assert that celibacy would not only be preferable to commonplace pleasures, but would also be "more in keeping with my poetry". Thus the poetry, as well as the kind of pleasure alluded to, is firmly dissociated from the commonplace. "Such a poet can never be popular," commented E.M. Forster of Cavafy. Clearly, though, such a poet had no yearning to be popular, and here again it is worth remembering Wilde's statement, quoted above and emblematic of his posture: "I have no knowledge of the views of ordinary individuals."

In 1919, Cavafy rewrote a poem from 1913: "Ὅταν διεγείρονται" ("When they Come Alive"). This poem is in the form of an injunction to one addressed as "Poet". The poet is enjoined to preserve his erotic visions ("τοῦ ἐρωτισμοῦ σου τὰ ὀράματα") by placing them, half-hidden, in his poetry: "Βάλ' τα, μισοκρυμένα, μὲς στὲς φράσεις σου." This need and desire for secrecy is echoed in the last, and rather later, poem in this group, "Ἐκόμισα εἰς τὴν Τέχνην" ("I've Brought to Art"). Here, the mood of reverie, noted in "I've Looked so Much", returns: "Κάθομαι καὶ ρεμβάζω" – but in place of the red lips, sensual limbs and sculpted hair, the speaker reviews his contribution to Art thus:

I've brought to Art desires and sensations:
things half-glimpsed,
faces or lines, certain indistinct memories
of unfulfilled love affairs.

The word "μισοκρυμένα", "half-hidden", from "When they Come Alive" is recalled in "μισοειδωμένα", "half-glimpsed" in "I've Brought to Art". The poet, then, has brought to art things which remain partly hidden.

We have seen how, in these poems of poetics, Cavafy locates the origins of poetry in ἡδονή (or sensual pleasure); claims to have brought to Art "desires and sensations" ("ἐπιθυμίες κ'

αίσθησις"), and refers to a certain desire for artistic concealment, speaking of things half-hidden and half-glimpsed. We have also seen that beauty, specified as red lips, Greek hair and sensual limbs, is as important as erotic visions, and that the commonplace is scorned.

In a somewhat earlier poem of poetics, "Τεχνητὰ Ἄνθη", which dates from 1903, Art, in the guise of "Artificial Flowers", is preferred to Nature. The closing lines of this poem connect it both lexically and thematically to the "sensual and sentimental" ("ἡδονικὰ – ἢ καὶ αἰσθηματικά") poems under consideration. The lines in question refer to the flowers:

Ἐὰν δὲν ἔχουν ἄρωμα, θὰ χύσουμ' εὐωδία,
θὰ κάψουμ' ἐμπροστά των μύρα αἰσθηματικά.

For if they have no odour, we shall pour out perfume,
we shall burn before them the incense of the senses.

Edmund Keeley has identified this poem as "one of a few unacknowledged borrowings from Oscar Wilde", quoting in support Wilde's *Decay of Lying*: "[Art] has flowers that no forest knows of, birds that no woodland possesses."

In 1912, Cavafy made artificial flowers the subject of another poem "Τοῦ μαγαζιοῦ" ("For the Shop"). This poem was published, whereas "Artificial Flowers" was kept by the poet among his papers, and marked "Not for publication, but may remain here." The reason for this might be artistic, since, unlike "The Bandaged Shoulder", "Artificial Flowers" is not particularly revealing. It does, however, reveal one thing which Cavafy may well have wished to keep hidden: his interest in Wilde. The published poem, "For the Shop", is, paradoxically, about the reason for concealing certain works of art – not, as one might expect, erotic art, but flowers made from precious stones. In Cavafy's writing, then, as in Wilde's, artificial flowers acquire a symbolic status.

Both of Cavafy's poems on this subject, "Artificial Flowers" and "For the Shop", employ highly elaborate rhymes. In this way, the poet's craftsmanship is implicitly associated with the jeweller's. "Artificial Flowers" proclaims a decadent dislike for roses, lilies and narcissi, which are said to "adorn common gardens" and to fill the speaker with ennui. It may be pertinent that roses and lilies have often been used as metaphors for

female beauty. The rest of the poem lavishes extravagant praise on artificial flowers, attributing theory, wisdom, faithfulness, rhythm, knowledge and immortality to them.

"For the Shop" is briefer and incomparably less florid. It consists of five rhymed couplets, where all but the final rhyme of the poem are rich. "For the Shop" depicts a jeweller carefully wrapping up roses made of rubies, lilies made of pearls and violets made of amethyst, for the safe. The items which are "for the shop" are only mentioned in the final couplet. They are termed "περίφημα στολίδια" ("first class ornaments"), but are not described in detail or accorded a correspondingly rich rhyme. The jeweller will not offer for sale the so-called "examples of his bold, his skilful work", the artificial flowers; instead, he brings out for his customers, "bracelets, chains, necklaces and rings".

Marguerite Yourcenar, commenting on "For the Shop" and "Sculptor of Tyana", has suggested that Cavafy created, but did not preserve, a secret œuvre alongside his published and unpublished poems. More recently, Anthony Hirst, of King's College London, has argued that the flowers of "Artificial Flowers" and "For the Shop" represent poems that Cavafy "was unable to write or unable to publish". Whilst agreeing with Hirst's contention that "For the Shop" "would seem too slight if it did not have some hidden meaning", I am less sure about his conclusion, in this particular context, that "Th[e] metaphor of the safe refers [...] more to the unwritten poems stored in Cavafy's mind, than to a few written but unpublished poems among his papers". Elsewhere, however, for example in the unpublished poem "Hidden Things", Cavafy appears to be referring to precisely such "unwritten poems".

In order to open a safe, a secret numerical combination is usually necessary. On the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, we might do worse than set a poet to catch a poet. In 1947, the poet George Seferis adopted a code-breaking approach to the poet C.P. Cavafy, the results of which were not sufficiently substantial, in themselves, to be very convincing. Seferis argued that in the poem "Those who Fought for the Achaean League", Cavafy was making a coded reference to the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922, which had not quite happened at the time of writing, but was imminent. I do not necessarily regard the timing as problematic, since, as Cavafy himself says, "The Wise Perceive

things About to Happen", but whatever the explanation, the fact remains that Cavafy's historical data and datings are invariably of vital importance to the full understanding of a given poem.

For this reason, the suggestion made by George Savidis, to the effect that the dates in the poems set in modern Alexandria which contain the word "Days" in their titles are deliberately misleading fabrications, is not especially persuasive. It seems more likely that a meaning is encoded in Cavafy's modern dates, as I shall now attempt to show. For this, it is necessary to return to the subject of Wilde's disgrace and imprisonment. It should be borne in mind that Wilde was at the pinnacle of his career in the early 1890s and that few of his doings escaped comment in the British and French press. It is improbable in the extreme that anything Wilde did in this period could have escaped Cavafy's notice.

At the end of 1893, Lord Alfred Douglas visited Cairo and Luxor, disporting himself with friends in between on a gilded barge on the Nile. At around the same time, Wilde was introduced to Paul Verlaine, who had been in prison some twenty years earlier for wounding Rimbaud with a revolver. Verlaine read Wilde a poem about his prison experiences. In March 1895, the Queensberry trial opened, to be followed a month later by Wilde's own trial and imprisonment. Wilde was in prison from May 1895 until May 1897.

Between 1896 and 1897, Cavafy wrote three of the five surviving poems which he classified under the heading "Prisons" ("Φυλακαὶ") in his thematic catalogue. Of the two best-known of these, "Τείχη" ("Walls"), 1896, and "Τὰ παράθυρα" ("The Windows"), 1897, Cavafy wrote: "These are clearly allegorical poems about the difficulties of life." In 1896, Lord Alfred Douglas published "An Introduction to my Poems with some Remarks on the Wilde Case", in a French literary periodical. In the same year, Wilde's *Salomé* was staged for the first time, and Cavafy wrote a poem called "Σαλώμη".

Of course, all this could be co-incidence, but one of Cavafy's notes to a poem stretches co-incidence to its limits. The note is attached to Cavafy's unpublished poem, "Σαλώμη", and dated 11 February 1896. It is in French, and reads as follows:

"Now, Salome offered, on a golden platter, the head of the prophet to a young Greek orator who spurned her love. But he said: 'It's your head, Salome, that I want'. He said this in jest, but the following day, a slave brought him the blonde head of the woman who loved him. The sage could no longer remember his wish of the previous day: he ordered them to remove the bleeding object and went on reading Plato." Taken from an Ancient Nubian Gospel. See "Le Journal" no. 1232, 11 February 1896.

Cavafy's poem, "Salome", reproduces this account in verse. The date is significant. On 11 February 1896, Wilde's *Salomé*, which had been banned in London, opened in Paris. Cavafy's reference to a Nubian Gospel in this context reads rather like an assertion that Wilde does not exist. Cavafy does, however, leave us the date as a clue.

1896 also occurs as the date of one of Cavafy's five "Days of..." poems; the other four are all dated between 1901 and 1911. The theme of these five poems is male beauty under adverse conditions. "Days of 1903" is the shortest and has more in common with poems like "Gray" than with the other "Days of..." poems. It laments the loss of a beautiful pale face with poetic eyes, encountered only once, at night, in the street. The other poems paint portraits of beautiful young men under pressure from extreme poverty ("Days of 1908" and "Days of 1909, '10 and '11") or sexual dissipation ("Days of 1901" and "Days of 1896"). All of the young men are, as usual, anonymous and have distinguishing marks of a kind most unlikely to facilitate their identification. One has poetic eyes; another, when not naked, sports a cinnamon-coloured suit; a third has for his father a poor sailor, while a fourth has the ability, in spite of vast sexual experience, sometimes to feel like a virgin.

"Days of 1896", however, offers more concrete information:

DAYS OF 1896

He'd become completely degraded. His erotic tendencies,
condemned and strictly forbidden
(but innate for all that), were the cause of it:
society was totally narrow-minded.
He'd gradually lost what little money he had,
then his social standing, then his reputation.
Nearly thirty, he'd never worked a full year –

at least not at a legitimate job.
 Sometimes he earned enough to get by
 acting the go-between in deals considered shameful.
 He ended up the type likely to compromise you thoroughly
 if you were seen around with him too often.

But this wasn't the whole story – that wouldn't be fair:
 the memory of his beauty deserves better.
 There is another angle; seen from that
 he appears attractive, appears
 a simple, genuine child of love,
 without hesitation putting
 the pure sensuality of his pure flesh
 above his honour and reputation.

Above his reputation? But society,
 totally narrow-minded, had all its values wrong.

"Days of 1896" describes a young man who is completely ruined as a result of his erotic tendencies. He loses first his money, then his position in society and finally his reputation. He ends up likely to compromise anyone seen with him. He is condemned for placing sensuality above honour.

1896 was the central year of Wilde's prison-sentence; the only complete year he spent in prison. By this time, he had certainly lost his money – the contents of his house in London had been sold by public auction. His social standing was destroyed, and he had lost his artistic as well as his private reputation. His affairs with a series of disreputable young men – some of them blackmailers – had been detailed in the press as well as in court; his name had been removed from the board of honour in his Oxford college, and his plays from the London stage. Wilde had refused to go abroad in order to escape trial and dishonour; he could be said to be in prison for placing sensuality above honour. And very few of his former friends were prepared to stand up and be counted. Many, including Holman Hunt, Emile Zola and Henry James, even refused to sign petitions for his early release, and the French writer Catulle Mendès insisted on fighting a duel in the forest outside Paris with a literary journalist who had dared to suggest he was one of Wilde's circle.

Two details in the poem "Days of 1896" do not fit Wilde. The suggestion that he had never worked makes sense, but he cannot really be said to have acted as some kind of shady go-between.

Unless, of course, this can be read as an ironical allusion to his lecturing – or even his art – presenting him as a go-between in the service of Art and the public. The second inaccurate detail is the age: Wilde was over forty, rather than under thirty. He had, however, done his best to lie about his real age at the trial, both from vanity and to play down his seniority to Lord Alfred Douglas, who was only twenty-four.

Finally, "Days of 1896" concludes that "the *memory* of his beauty deserves better", suggesting that the poem's subject was dead at the time of writing. In 1925, when the poem was written, not only was Wilde long dead, but there had also been a number of posthumous publications and skirmishes concerning him. Wilde's prison-writings, *De Profundis* and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, were now in the public domain, and Lord Alfred Douglas had published a variety of self-exonerating articles. Douglas had also developed a taste for libel suits and had taken Wilde's friend and literary executor, Robbie Ross, and – of all people – Arthur Ransome to court. Ross had published the unabridged version of *De Profundis* and Ransome had written a book about Wilde containing disrespectful allusions to Douglas. Thus, Wilde and his homosexuality were still very much under public discussion.

"Days of 1896", if not actually about Oscar Wilde, would at least appear to contain veiled allusions to his fate, especially in view of Cavafy's "prison poems" which actually date from that year. It is probably the closest that Cavafy comes, in writing at least, to mentioning the man himself. In conversation, according to Malanos, Cavafy sometimes cited Wilde's *Salomé* as a work inexcusably lax about historical detail. This critique of *Salomé* is rather mysterious, as Wilde could scarcely be said to have been striving after historical authenticity in such a fanciful work. It is also, perhaps, significant that Wilde had actually praised Shakespeare at length, in *The Truth of Masks*, for his careful attention to historical details. It would seem that Cavafy himself, whose historical details are meticulous, would rather have been compared to Shakespeare than to – say – Wilde. Cavafy's own "Salome" is, of course, authenticated by French newspapers and Nubian gospels, and remained unpublished (and probably unmentioned) during the poet's lifetime.

Wilde drew much of the inspiration for *Dorian Gray* from the Decadent novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans, *À Rebours*. In it, the author lingeringly describes two of Gustave Moreau's most widely-acclaimed masterpieces, the paintings of Salome. Richard Ellmann has suggested that the paintings also partly inspired Wilde's *Sphinx*. In 1896, Cavafy wrote a poem called "Οἰδίπους" ("Oedipus"). Beneath the title, he made the following note: "Written after reading a description of the painting 'Oedipus and the Sphinx' by Gustave Moreau." Savidis notes that this is the first Cavafy poem to have been inspired, albeit indirectly, by a painting. It may, however, have been inspired quite simply by a poem: Wilde's *Sphinx*.

Portraiture is a very important theme in the erotic poems of Cavafy, who, as David Ricks has recently pointed out (in connexion with Cavafy's use of lighting and scene-setting), was very interested in portrait-photographs, and often posed for them himself. It is worth remembering, in this context, that the press gleefully disseminated photographs and cartoons of Wilde throughout his career, and also that Wilde's two most sensational works, as I mentioned before, were the *Portrait of Mr W.H.* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, whilst a third, *Salomé* had a painting among its antecedents.

Cavafy wrote seven erotic poems which concern depictions of young men in paintings, drawings, photographs or, in one case, beaten silver. In addition to these pictures of unnamed men, there is the poem "Oedipus", allegedly inspired by Moreau's painting, in which Oedipus is young, with his life and the road to Colonus stretching out before him, and the Sphinx, who has tumbled him suggestively to the ground, pawing at his chest. Also worthy of inclusion in the category of erotic or aesthetic poems is "Ζωγραφισμένα" ("Pictured"), which begins, "I love my work and I'm very careful about it", and concludes with the artist refreshing his eyes on a painting: "recovering through art", he says, "from the effort of creating it". The subject of the painting under scrutiny is a handsome boy, described as "lying down close to a spring, / maybe exhausted from running". Thus, the artist recovers from his exertions by contemplating the image of a boy recovering from exertions of his own.

One of the erotic portrait-poems, "Ἔτσι", translated as "The Photograph", muses on a dream-like face that has somehow got into an obscene photograph; while another, "In an Old Book",

poses the opposite problem: a boy of rare beauty whose "ideal limbs" the speaker says, "are shaped for beds / that common morality calls shameless", seen in an old water-colour painting, respectabilised by a classical allusion in its title: "Representation of Cupid".

The Conceit of classical allusion in portrait-painting is further explored in the epitaph-poem, "Tomb of Lanis". This poem recounts an episode in which the mourner at the graveside, addressed as "Markos", had commissioned a portrait of his dead love, Lanis, from a renowned painter. The artist had wanted to paint the beautiful youth as Hyacinth, but Lanis had proudly refused. The speaker comments: "Your Lanis didn't hire out his beauty like that; / reacting strongly, he told him to paint neither Hyacinth nor anyone else, / but Lanis, son of Rametichos, an Alexandrian." Valerie Caires has pointed out that in the poetry of Cavafy the word "Alexandrian" is practically synonymous with "homosexual".

According to the speaker, the portrait of Lanis as himself still preserves something of what was valuable in its original. The poem presents three possible sites where the dead Lanis might be: the tomb, which, we are told, preserves nothing of Lanis; the portrait, which preserves something of him, and the addressee's memory, which preserves, for example, the episode with the painter. The unstated site of preservation is, of course, the poem.

Preservation in memory, a picture and, by implication, poetry is again the theme of "On Board Ship", where, as already mentioned, the speaker's memory is privileged over the more tangible reminder, a pencil sketch. Once again, the speaker's memory encompasses the time at which the portrait was made and its attendant magic: the beautiful afternoon and the presence of the portrait's subject. Once again, the broader site of preservation is the poem.

"Τεχνουργὸς κρατήρων" ("Craftsman of Winebowls") concerns a portrait in silver of a young man whom the artist loved. Since the youth has been dead for fifteen years, the artist relies on memory, appealing to it as though to a muse, for help. One interesting feature of this portrait, to which the craftsman himself draws attention, is the representation of "ἄνθη κομψά" ("graceful flowers"), which are, of course, artificial. Describing the human figure, the artist says, "In the centre I put this

beautiful young man, / naked, erotic, one leg still dangling / in the water." This may contain a glancing allusion to Wilde's "Panthea", which mentions a "gleam of boyish limbs in water".

Natalia Deliyannaki has drawn attention to the use, in "Craftsman of Winebowls" and other poems, of split lines. Here, the divisions may operate to emphasize the boy's suspension between land and water, and his partial existence in memory and Art, but no longer in life. The craftsman's medium, silver, reflects Cavafy's interest, shared by Wilde, in precious ornaments.

Cavafy's poem "Picture of a 23-year-old, painted by his friend of the same age, an amateur" describes the portrait-painter scrutinizing the picture he has recently completed. The poem progresses through a catalogue of the subject's clothing, to the absence of a tie and the open shirt-collar which allows, the speaker says, "a glimpse / of his beautiful chest and neck". The artist's eyes now travel up to the face, the beautiful hair and the eyes with their sensual note, finally lingering over the lips. The poem closes with the words: "the lips ... / that mouth of his, those lips / so ready to satisfy a special kind of erotic pleasure." "Picture of a 23-year-old..." describes a painting as the painter sees it, and includes information about the painter's intentions, chief among which is to show off the subject to his best erotic advantage.

Portraits are used by Cavafy in these poems in a number of different ways, ranging from a versified description – itself apparently inspired by a description – of a painting by Moreau, to commentaries on the nature of memory and art. The portraits are presented in a variety of frames, sometimes displayed through the eyes of the artists admiring their handiwork and in one case described in an epitaph. The poems suggest many different ways of looking at pictures and also many different reasons for doing so, although the unifying factor remains male beauty.

Perhaps the most personal, if only because it is in the first person and no portrait-painter or craftsman's identity is adopted, is the unpublished poem, "Απ' τὸ συρτάρι" ("From the Drawer"). This is a circular meditation on a photograph which, because of its nature or associations, has to be kept hidden in a drawer, but which has been damaged as a result of being kept there and is therefore only fit for keeping in a drawer. In this

poem, once again, we encounter the theme of secret art. The poem reads as follows:

FROM THE DRAWER

I was intending to hang it on a wall in my room.
But it has been damaged by damp inside the drawer.
I shall not put this photograph in a frame.
I should have kept it more carefully.
Those lips, that face –
ah if for one single day, for one hour
only, their past could return!
I shall not put this photograph in a frame.
Seeing it damaged like this would upset me.
And besides, even if it weren't damaged,
it would bother me to have to be careful
in case a chance word or something in my voice
were to betray me,
if I were ever asked about it.

Ostensibly reflecting on a private photograph, Cavafy may in fact be asking a significant question about his own poetic practice. Namely, has keeping his sexual leanings partly hidden ("μυσοκρυμμένα") damaged his work, or would exposing them have occasioned even greater damage?

Codes and disguises are a recurring Cavafian theme, more often than not connected with the encoding and disguising of unconventional love and of what Cavafy calls "strong" or "daring" verses. In an autograph note of 1902, some twenty years earlier than "From the Drawer", he wrote: "It crossed my mind, tonight, to write about my love. And yet, I shall not do so." The note concludes: "Still, let me note down a letter – T – as a symbol of my feeling or of this moment." There have, of course, been plenty of attempts to decode that letter "T".

"From the Drawer", like "For the Shop", refers to a secret possession, possibly a parallel to some of Cavafy's own writings, that has to be kept hidden. Deciding not to place the photograph in a frame might represent a decision not to tell us any more about it – we only learn that its subject had lips and a face which the speaker longs to see again.

Some other photographs, about which we learn even less, provide the pretext for Cavafy's most shocking erotic poem:

"The Bandaged Shoulder". The poem is by no means sexually explicit, but it represents various reversals of the conventions of romantic love which critics of a nervous disposition, as I have indicated, have found difficult to stomach.

THE BANDAGED SHOULDER

He said he'd hurt himself against a wall or had fallen down.
But there was probably some other reason
for the wounded, the bandaged shoulder.

With a rather abrupt gesture,
reaching for a shelf to bring down
some photographs he wanted to look at,
the bandage came undone and a little blood ran.

I did it up again, taking my time
over the binding; he wasn't in pain
and I liked looking at the blood.
It was a thing of my love, that blood.

When he left, I found, in front of his chair,
a bloody rag, part of the dressing,
a rag to be thrown straight into the garbage;
and I put it to my lips
and kept it there a long while –
the blood of love against my lips.

The opening is obviously ironical; the words "He said" suggest doubt from the outset, and the two reasons given for the wound contradict and thereby discredit each other. Thus it comes as no surprise to learn that the reason was probably something else. The suggestion, here, is that the real reason is unmentionable, and the only hint at it lies in the speaker's repeated statement that the blood is a "thing of his love" ("πράγμα του έρωτός μου"). The dirty rag which the speaker ardently presses to his lips conjures up, and so subverts, a courtly parallel: the chivalrous knight kissing his lady's handkerchief; whilst the notion of "blood of love" evokes at the same time the marriage bed and Christ crucified. Finally, the blood referred to by the speaker is not even the blood of a beloved man, but of physical love and it is pleasing – even erotic ("μ' άρεζει") – in itself. It is surely these subversive reversals of western notions of honour and

religion, and not the dirty bandage, which have shocked the commentators. Worst of all, in a poem devoid of metaphysical love, there is no appeal to that other higher authority, Art. For all we know, the photographs the unnamed man is reaching for are pornographic. The subject of the poem is not disguised as Hyacinth or Cupid; nor is he modestly wrapped in a veil of historical details. The ruse of perceiving beauty amidst squalor (characteristic of the erotic poems and seen at work, for example, in several of the "Days of ..." poems) has been abandoned. But the voice, the use of irony, the unexpected twists and the ambiguous suggestiveness are unmistakably Cavafian.

"The moral life of man", wrote Oscar Wilde, in his Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, "forms part of the subject-matter of the artist, but the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium".

A comparably ignoble wound to the one concealed in "The Bandaged Shoulder" is the one received in a pub brawl by the subject of the poem "In a Town of Osroini". This poem was originally called "Χαρμίδης" ("Charmides") and inverts the logic of the Platonic dialogue of the same name. In Plato's dialogue, beauty is required to be inner as well as outward. Cavafy's poem implicitly maintains the opposite: that physical beauty is all. This is also the implied message of Wilde's ambitious and lengthy poem "Charmides" (first published in 1881), which hymns the beauty of a "Grecian lad". Ellmann states that Wilde considered "Charmides" his best poem to date. There are two strange things about Cavafy's poem: first, the removal of Charmides from the title, and secondly, the closing line: "Our thoughts went back to Plato's Charmides". Why "Plato's Charmides" and not just "Charmides"? Perhaps this line can be read as "I mean Plato's Charmides and not Wilde's" – which, of course raises the question, why not Wilde's? Like the attribution of his "Salome" to a Nubian Gospel, or his "Oedipus" to a well-known French painting, Cavafy's indication that *his* Charmides is a Platonic borrowing may simply be an effort to deny that he had any interest in Oscar Wilde.

I have tried to show that the erotic poetry of C.P. Cavafy probably owed quite a lot to Oscar Wilde, but that Cavafy was at great pains to conceal this. The reason for this reticence is unlikely to have had anything to do with artistic considerations; there is nothing in Cavafy's work or notes to indicate that he feared the charge of influence or plagiarism. The most likely explanation is that he did not wish to be associated with the Anglo-Irish writer on account of their shared sexual preferences. The connexion which Malanos was quick to make between Wilde and Cavafy, when the latter's reputation was being threatened by the journalist Lagoudakis, underlines the dangers, especially at a time when litigation was rife in England among the heirs to Wilde's literary and personal legacies. Cavafy was surely wise to avoid handing over such decadent ammunition as "Artificial Flowers" and "Salome" to his enemies. Of course, there is also the possibility that Cavafy would not have cared for comparison to Wilde in literary terms, any more than he relished personal comparisons.

Wilde believed that literary criticism was a form of autobiography, whilst his persecutors believed that art itself was autobiographical. In the erotic poems of Cavafy, the poet and his masks are very difficult to disentangle. In conclusion, I would like to quote one more poem by Cavafy, leaving the reader to decide how autobiographical it is. The poem is "Hidden Things".

HIDDEN THINGS

From all I did and all I said
 let no-one try to find out who I was.
 An obstacle was there distorting
 the actions and the manner of my life.
 An obstacle was often there
 to stop me when I'd begin to speak.
 From my most unnoticed actions,
 my most veiled writing –
 from these alone will I be understood.
 But maybe it isn't worth so much concern,
 so much effort to discover who I really am.
 Later, in a more perfect society,
 someone else made just like me
 is certain to appear and act freely.

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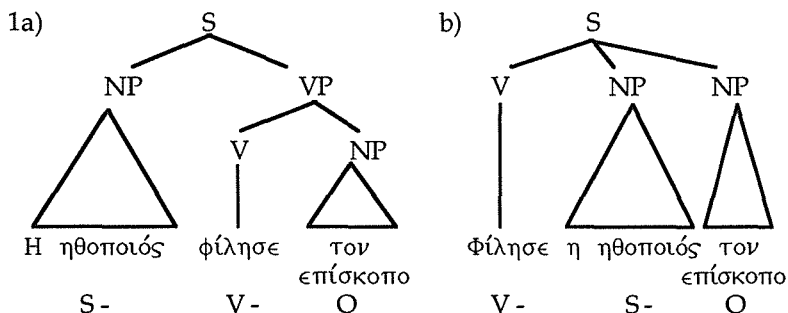
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Clause structure in Greek: Evidence from subject-object asymmetries

Geoffrey Horrocks

I Introduction

In Horrocks (1983) it was argued that the basic word orders of Modern Greek were Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) and Verb-Subject-Object (VSO), as in 1a) and 1b).



The first of these structures is assumed to be "configurational", i.e. the subject is structurally distinguished from the predicate (VP) and so appears in a position higher than that of the object, while the second is assumed to be "flat", i.e. with subject and object appearing side by side.

Since then both Philippaki-Warburton (1985) and Tsimpli (1990) have argued that the preverbal "subject" of 1a) is in fact a "topic", and that topics, regardless of grammatical function, typically appear in initial position in Greek. Thus in 2) it is the object rather than the subject which stands initially, and its topic status is marked by the "resumptive" clitic pronoun.

2) Τον επίσκοπο τον φίλησε η ηθοποιός

Philippaki-Warburton and Tsimpli therefore claim that Greek has only VSO as a basic word order, but allow for constituents whose functions are defined within this structure

II Theoretical Preliminaries

Before presenting the relevant data, however, it is necessary to provide some theoretical background. First, a distinction must be drawn between Argument positions (A-positions) and non-Argument (A'-positions) positions, as in 4).

- 4) **A-positions:** S-internal positions associating constituents with a major grammatical function: subject, direct object, indirect object.

A'-positions: peripheral (S-external) positions associating constituents with a "scope bearing" role – as interrogatives, topics, etc.

Thus in terms of the diagrams in 1) and 3), the A-positions are the positions occupied by NPs under S. By contrast, the Topic position in 3) is an A'-position, a position outside S not associated with any specific grammatical function; subjects, objects and elements bearing other functions can all appear there. Instead, an item in this position is identified as the theme of the S that follows; this has "scope" over that S and is linked to an empty position that associates it with a grammatical function. To give a concrete example, in 5) below the NP *Bill* functions both as topic, by virtue of its initial position, and as object, by virtue of the fact that it is understood as if it occupied the empty position after *stand*. This is made explicit in the "translation" into a pseudo-logical formula, where *Bill* is treated as an external "operator" that "binds" the "variable" *x* in the object position of the S which defines the operator's scope.

- 5) Bill, I really can't stand
 As for *x*, *x* = Bill [_SI really can't stand *x*]

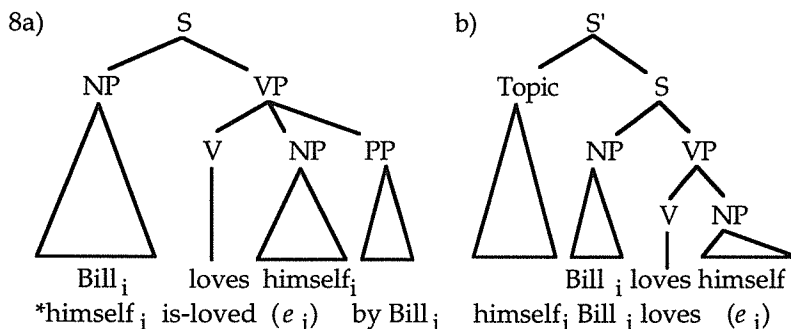
We are now in a position to ask the key question: do preverbal "subjects" in Greek behave as if they occupy an A-position (i.e. as simple subjects) or an A'-position (i.e. as topics)? The criterion to be applied in answering this question is given in 6).

- 6) Subject-object asymmetries are unaffected by movement to A'-positions.

To illustrate the force of this principle we may take the simple examples in 7).

- 7a) Bill loves himself/*Himself is loved by Bill
 b) Bill loves himself/ Himself, Bill loves

Clearly reflexive pronouns cannot appear in subject position in English. In 7a) the "passivisation" interchange between the postverbal object position and the preverbal subject position, both A-positions, produces an ungrammatical sentence. By contrast, the "topicalisation" interchange between the postverbal object A-position and the preverbal topic A'-position in 7b) presents no problems. This follows if we assume principle 6), together with the proposition that English SVO clause structure is configurational (i.e. as in 1a). A simple sentence would then have the structure of 8a), a sentence with a topicalised constituent that of 8b).

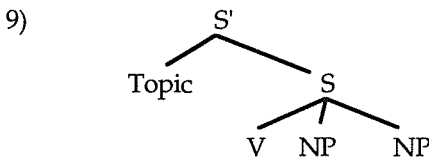


In 8a) subjects are structurally differentiated from objects, so that differential behaviour (asymmetries) might be expected on the basis of the greater prominence of the former. In particular, if we assume that reflexive pronouns cannot have structurally inferior antecedents, it follows that an object reflexive may have a subject as its antecedent, but that subject reflexives are impossible, because all their potential antecedents are necessarily structurally inferior. So when a reflexive as "logical" object with patient status is proposed to subject position as part of the process of forming a passive sentence (the empty position (*e*_i) marks the "original" position of the reflexive), the result is ungrammatical. Apparently, then, when we are dealing with an inter-

change between A-positions, as in passivisation, it is the final, and not the original, positions of the relevant NPs that enter into the calculation of structural prominence.

In 8b), by contrast, where the landing site is an A'-position, the preposing of the reflexive is unproblematical. Here the assignment of an antecedent is apparently based on the positioning of *Bill* and *himself* prior to the topicalisation of the latter; i.e. despite the preposing of the reflexive, it is the structural relation of its "original" object A-position with respect to that of the subject which determines the grammatical status of the example. In other words, for the purposes of the operation of the reflexive rule, the subject antecedent remains structurally superior to the reflexive object. Thus while displacement of a constituent to an A-position may change the relations of structural superiority that hold prior to movement, displacement to an A'-position does not.

Recall now that, according to the analyses of Philippaki-Warbuton and Tsimpli, all Greek sentences have a basic VSO structure. A sentence with a topicalised constituent therefore has the structure in 3), repeated here as 9).



Since subjects and objects are not structurally differentiated, differential behaviour is not predicted. This framework therefore implies, among other things, the existence of subject reflexives, apparently correctly.

10) Ο εαυτός μου φταίει

It also follows from what was said above that the absence of subject-object asymmetry in basic clause structure should also carry over when a subject or an object is topicalised to the preverbal A'-position. We therefore obtain the following predictions:

- 11a) If the *topic* theory of preverbal subjects is correct, Greek should behave uniformly as a VSO language with "flat" sentence structure, irrespective of whether the subject is preverbal or postverbal.
- b) If the *simple subject* theory of pre-verbal subjects is correct, Greek should behave as an SVO language with configuration sentence structure when the subject is preverbal, but as a VSO language with flat sentence structure when the subject is postverbal.

In the light of these predictions the relevant data can now be examined.

III The Data

We may begin with the examples in 12), where in each case the grammaticality judgement is based on the reading where Γιάννη is taken to be coreferential with either the subject or the object of αγαπάει, as indicated.

- 12a) * $[S \text{ Αγαπάει } (e_i) [NP_{\tau\eta} \text{ μητέρα του Γιάννη}_i]]$
 b) * $[S \text{ Του}_i \text{ αγαπάει } [NP_{\eta} \text{ μητέρα του Γιάννη}_i]]$
 c) % $[S [NP_H \text{ μητέρα του Γιάννη}_i] \text{ του}_i \text{ αγαπάει}]$

To understand the status of these examples, we must first consider the rules in 13).

- 13a) An antecedent cannot appear in the same NP or S as the pronoun it binds.
- b) A pronoun cannot command its antecedent (i.e. the constituent immediately containing the pronoun must not also contain the would-be antecedent).

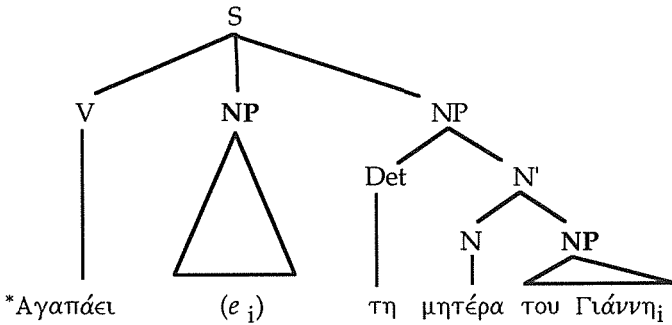
To see the force of these, consider the English examples in 14).

- 14a) * $[S \text{ John}_i \text{ loves him}_i S]$
 b) * $[S \text{ He}_i \text{ loves John}_i S]$
 c) $[S \text{ John}_i \text{ says } [S \text{ Mary } [VP \text{ loves him}_i VP] S] S]$
 d) * $[S \text{ He}_i \text{ says } [S \text{ Mary } [VP \text{ loves John}_i VP] S] S]$

The first violates 13a), the second both 13a) and 13b), since the constituent immediately containing *he* is S, and this obviously also contains *John*. 14c) is well-formed, however, because the NP and the pronoun are in different clauses, and the constituent immediately containing *him* is the VP of the subordinate clause, which clearly does not also contain *John*. 14d) by contrast is ungrammatical, because, although the NP and the pronoun are in different clauses, the pronoun clearly commands its potential antecedent; i.e. the S immediately containing *he* also ultimately contains *John*.

The structure of 12a) can now be represented as in 15).

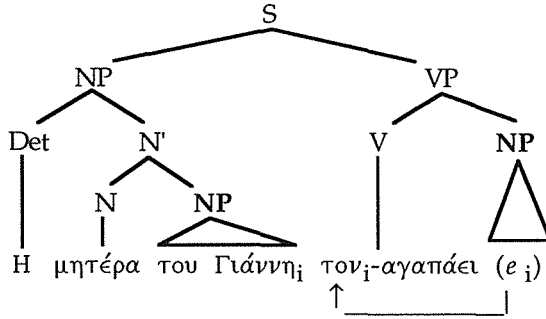
15)



If we take the subject here to be an invisible/empty pronominal (which nonetheless agrees with the verb in the usual way), it is clear that it commands its would-be antecedent, even though the latter appears inside an NP that does not also contain the former. The sentence is therefore ungrammatical.

The structure of the equally ungrammatical 12b) is provided in 16).

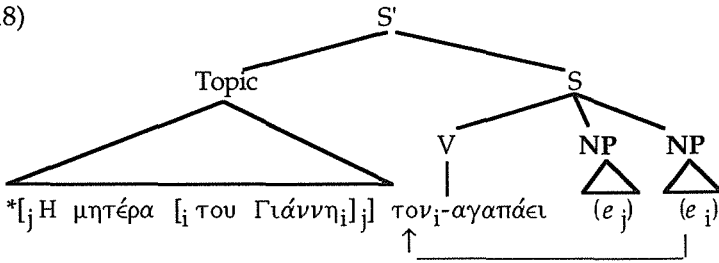
17)



The antecedent is inside an NP that does not also contain the pronoun, and, since the preverbal NP is simply a subject in its original A-position, the pronoun (whether in its initial or final position) does not command the antecedent. The sentence is therefore grammatical, given the assumption of a configurational SVO structure.

Those who find 12c) ungrammatical presumably assign it the alternative structure in 18).

18)



Since, as we have seen, topicalisation to an A'-position does not affect the superiority relations holding prior to the displacement, the antecedent (του Γιάννη) is effectively still contained within a subject NP (η μητέρα του Γιάννη) that is commanded by the object clitic. In other words, from the point of view of the rules determining possible antecedent-pronoun relations, this sentence is structurally identical to 12b)/16), and so has exactly the same ungrammatical status.

Finally, those who cannot come to a clear decision about the status of 12c) presumably waver between the two available analyses.

To confirm the plausibility of this approach we must now look for further evidence that preverbal nominative NPs may appear in both A- and A'-positions, as both simple subjects and topics respectively.

IV *Preverbal subjects in A-position*

Clear evidence that a preverbal nominative may indeed be simply a subject in an A-position is provided by the fact that there is a marked difference in status between the examples in 19).

- 19a) Το κορίτσι που ο Γιάννης συνάντησε...
 b) *Το κορίτσι που το Γιάννη τον συνάντησε...

All speakers are agreed that the appearance of an object NP between the relative marker *που* and the verb is ungrammatical (even if its topic status is explicitly marked by a resumptive clitic pronoun); the appearance of a subject NP in this slot is less problematical, however, and for some speakers at least, is perfectly acceptable. This difference could not be explained if preverbal subjects and preverbal objects were both simply topics in the same A'-position.

Similar remarks apply to the asymmetry between preverbal subjects and objects in adverbial interrogatives.

- 20a) Γιατί/πότε ο Γιάννης συνάντησε τη Μαρία;
 b) *Γιατί/πότε το Γιάννη τον συνάντησε η Μαρία;

If the topicalisation of the object NP to preverbal position is ungrammatical in 20b), the alleged topicalisation of the subject in 20a) should also be bad. The fact that it is not again strongly suggests that in this position the subject is simply a subject, and that the relevant preverbal position is therefore an A- and not an A'-position.

The evidence, however, is not all one-way, and in the next section some data are examined which suggest that preverbal nominatives may indeed be topics.

V Preverbal subjects in A'-position

We may begin with the observation that 21), with an interrogative object pronoun and a preverbal subject, is ungrammatical.

21) *Ποιόν ο Γιάννης συνάντησε;

It is important to note that there is no subject-object asymmetry in such cases, since 22), with a topicalised object in the same position, is also ungrammatical.

22) *Ποιός τη Μαρία την συνάντησε;

Nonetheless, there is no absolute restriction on the combination of a topic with an interrogative pronoun, since the examples in 23), where the topic precedes the interrogative, are both well-formed.

23a) Ο Γιάννης ποιόν συνάντησε;

b) Τη Μαρία ποιός την συνάντησε;

It seems, then, that the topic A'-position must precede the position occupied by interrogative pronouns, and, on the basis of 23a), that preverbal subjects may therefore be topics.

Since interrogative pronouns are also clearly operators,

24) **For which x, x a person** [did John meet x]

the position they occupy must also be an S-external A'-position, so that the examples in 23) can be translated into pseudo-logical formulae as in 25),

25a) **As for y, y = John: for which x, x a person** [did y meet x]

b) **As for y, y = Mary: for which x, x a person** [did x meet y]

and the ungrammaticality of 21) and 22) can then readily be explained as the result of putting topic and interrogative operators in the wrong order; apparently topics have to have "wider" scope than interrogatives.

This analysis accounts for 22) well enough, but the generalisation of the solution to 21), though clearly correct when the subject is topicalised, does not account for the full array of facts. We have already seen that there is also a preverbal subject A-position which is not available to topicalised objects, so the question to be asked now is why this A-position cannot be filled when there is an interrogative pronoun in the same sentence. The only possible answer is that preverbal subjects occupy the same structural position as pronominal interrogatives (cf. Horrocks (1983 and 1992), Drachman (1989 and 1992), and Drachman and Klidi (1992)). In this way the fact that the two items cannot co-occur preverbally in the same sentence is neatly explained; there is only one immediately preverbal position available for subjects and pronominal interrogatives, and this cannot be "filled" twice over. It should be noted, however, that interrogatives always take precedence over subjects when both are present; i.e. the inherently scope-bearing item must take priority, so that its syntactic position may overtly reflect its semantic function as an operator. There is, furthermore, an important corollary to the conclusion that preverbal subjects and pronominal interrogatives are in complementary distribution. If subjects must occupy A-positions and interrogatives must occupy A'-positions, we are obliged to draw the further conclusion that the position in question is inherently neutral between A- and A'-status, and that it takes its character from its contents; i.e. it is an A-position when filled by a subject and an A'-position when filled by an interrogative (cf. Fukui and Speas (1986), Drachman (1989 and 1992), Drachman and Klidi (1992) and Horrocks (1992)).

Clearly such an "ambivalent" position cannot easily be taken to be the "basic" subject position, and the view that VSO is the fundamental order of constituents in Modern Greek (i.e. the one in terms of which the core grammatical functions of subject, object etc. are defined) would therefore appear to be justified. Nonetheless, the usual corollary of this view, that the immediately preverbal "subject" position is in reality in the position reserved for topicalised constituents, is manifestly false; subjects *qua* subjects may appear there to the exclusion of topics, and are in complementary distribution with interrogative pronominals. The topic position proper, where subjects may also appear, is located to the left of this A/A'-position.

The answer to the question posed earlier is now clear therefore; a preverbal nominative NP may be simply a subject, in which case it appears in the A/A'-position just identified, or it may be a topic, in which case it appears in the topic A'-position at the leftmost extremity of the clause. It remains now to formalise the analysis, and to place the facts of Greek in a broader theoretical context.

VI Conclusions

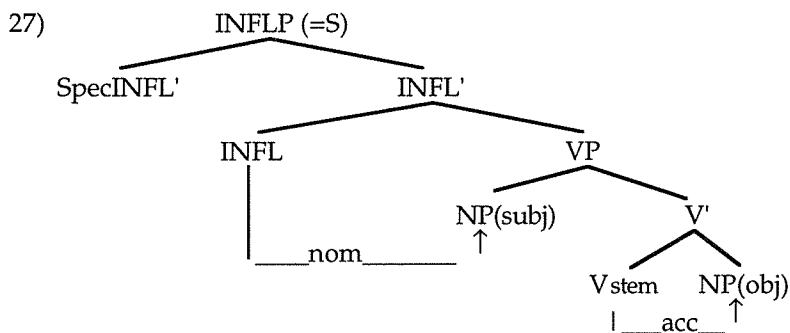
To summarise, the results of the discussion so far are:

- 26a) The basic clause structure of Greek is non-configurational VSO.
- b) The immediately pre-verbal position in a Greek sentence is a neutral A/A'-position that takes its character from its contents; these may be a subject NP (leading to A-position status) or an interrogative pronoun (leading to A'-position status), with the latter having priority when both are present.
- c) The topic position, where subjects, objects and other items may appear, is the leftmost position of the clause.

We must now tackle the question of why there are two subject positions in Greek, and how nominative case may be assigned to them. The two questions are in fact intimately related, and the answer to the second leads on naturally to consideration of the first.

One obvious principle of case assignment is that NPs are case marked by the heads that govern them; e.g. verbs and prepositions typically assign specified cases to their objects within VP and PP, etc. It should be noted, however, that while particular verbs assign designated cases to their object(s) regardless of whether they are in finite or non-finite form, only finite verb forms assign nominative case to subjects. We might say, therefore, that nominative case is a corollary of finiteness rather than something assigned by particular verbs. Following the logic of this argument, we could extend the principle of case assignment under government by supposing that finiteness is

carried by a verb's inflectional ending and that finite inflections may in principle assign nominative case to a governed subject, just as particular verb stems assign, say, accusative or genitive case to a governed object. Such an extension would require us to regard S as an Inflection Phrase whose head assigns nominative case, just as the head of VP assigns accusative case. Thus in (27), the verb stem case marks its object, and finite INFL case marks the subject.



Once accusative case assignment has been carried out, V must, of course, be "raised" to combine with its inflection, giving a VSO order. It is assumed here that all the "arguments" of a verb (i.e. subject, object, indirect object) originate within VP and are case marked there. A "flat" VSO sentence is therefore reinterpreted as one in which subject and object both appear in VP, and the structural superiority of a subject in an "configurational" SVO sentence is reinterpreted to refer to a situation in which the subject is in a position external to VP (in fact in the specifier position of INFL', i.e. SpecINFL', see below).

Clearly this option of nominative case assignment under government is not universally available, otherwise all languages would have basic VSO order like Modern Greek. Since case assignment under government normally requires a lexical head (e.g. a verb or a preposition), we might argue that nominative assignment under government is only possible when a verb stem has been raised to combine with a (finite) inflection to create a "derived" lexical head incorporating a real lexical item. Nominative assignment under government would then follow from the possibility of verb raising.

In this connection, note the contrast between Greek and English in 28), where in each case the verb in bold face has been raised from the VP-internal position marked (*v*).

- 28a) *John kissed [**often** (*v*) Mary]
 b) John **has** [**often** (*v*) kissed Mary]
 c) Ο Γιάννης φιλούσε [**συχνά** (*v*) τη Μαρία]

Assuming that *often/συχνά* are VP-internal adverbs, it would seem that verb raising is impossible in English unless we are dealing with an auxiliary (contrast 28b) with the ungrammatical 28a)), while in Greek it can apply freely (cf. Pollock (1989) for the original comparison between English and French on this basis). This distinction between Greek and English might be explained in terms of the relative "strength" of Greek inflectional morphology, where verb endings still play an independent syntactic role not only in assigning case but also in determining the person and number of an "empty" subject. This is in sharp contrast with the "weakness" of the English system, where only the third person singular of the present tense has a distinct termination and even this is no more than a conditioned marker of agreement with an obligatory overt subject NP.

How, then, is nominative case assigned in an SVO language like English which does not permit verb raising? We should note first of all that items which specify a phrase agree as far as possible with the head of the phrase. In 29), for example, the head of the NP, *γυναίκες*, forces the specifier of the NP to agree in number, gender and case.

- 29) [[μερικές] γυναίκες]
 ↑_{-nom/3/pl/fem-}

In English the agreement requirements are fewer, but we must still say *those women, this man*, etc. Now, since INFL in 27) is *inter alia* an element with which the subject must agree, either overtly as in Greek or largely covertly as in English, we may see it as essentially pronominal in character, bearing not only features of person and number but also nominative case. Thus if a subject NP cannot be assigned nominative case under government within VP because V does not raise to INFL, there is now another possibility. Since a specifier must agree with its head, a subject

NP can be raised out of VP to the specifier position within the Inflection Phrase (SpecINFL'), where it will agree with INFL in person, number and nominative case. Nominative case can therefore be assigned to a subject NP by virtue of the agreement requirement imposed under the Specifier-Head relationship. Languages which follow this course, like English, are obviously SVO languages with subjects external to VP in a "configurational" clause structure.

The discussion in the preceding section, however, showed that SpecINFL', the only subject position in English, is in Greek only optionally available as a subject A-position. Since subjects in Greek may remain within VP and receive nominative case there under government, there is naturally no need for compulsory raising to the higher position, which is therefore primarily an A'-position (for pronominal interrogatives), serving only secondarily as a subject position if/when optional NP-raising forces Spec-Head agreement.

At this point we should recall Greenberg's famous universal concerning VSO languages (Greenberg (1963)):

- 30) Universal 6: all languages with dominant VSO order have SVO as an alternative or as the only alternative basic order.

This describes Greek perfectly, and we now have the necessary mechanisms for assigning nominative case to the two subject positions concerned. To explain the availability of both, let us assume that Spec-Head agreement is a universal requirement in all phrases, so that the agreement of a subject in SpecINFL' with the head INFL, including the assignment of nominative case, is universally required when/if a subject is raised there. By contrast, nominative assignment to a subject within VP is clearly not universally available, and depends on the existence of verb raising (and "strong" verbal morphology) in the language in question. It follows from these assumptions that languages with the latter (VSO) option, like Greek, will also have the former (SVO) option, but that some languages, like English, will have only the former (cf. Koopman and Sportiche (1991) and Cardinaletti and Roberts (1991) for a wider discussion of these options and their implications). If we now assume that nominative assignment takes place once all NP-movements have been

completed, as seems necessary if we are to explain the assignment of nominative e.g. to a "derived" subject in a passive sentence, we can say that subjects originate in Greek within VP, thus giving the language a basic VSO order, but that, grammatical constraints permitting, they may freely raise to the more prominent SpecINFL'. Then whether raising takes place or not, there is a mechanism for assigning nominative case to the subject NP.

The circumstances that favour subject raising, given that this is grammatically permissible, cannot be gone into in detail here, but we may briefly mention the property of specific reference as a key factor. This extends beyond definiteness, as the two sets of data in 31) show.

- 31a) *Σεισμός έγινε στη Θεσσαλονίκη
Έγινε σεισμός στη Θεσσαλονίκη
- b) Μια παλιά γνωστή μου με πλεύρισε
Με πλεύρισε μια παλιά γνωστή μου

In other words, sentences with referential subject NPs show a clear tendency to mark the subject-predicate split syntactically by extracting the subject from VP.

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The "Cyprus Troubles" 1955-1960

Ian Martin

Having been a very minor participant in these dismal and tragic events of so many years ago, I should perhaps begin with a brief explanation of how I came to be involved. Like all young men at that time (except for the physically unfit), I had to endure two years' compulsory service in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. Now the so-called Cyprus Emergency caught the British Army unprepared in many respects, one of which was its total lack of any Greek-speakers. I had a classical background, and had dabbled a little in Modern Greek, though at that time I had never been to Greece. I therefore found myself called upon to go out to Cyprus in the early summer of 1957 and to take a crash course in Modern Greek at the British Institute in Nicosia, culminating in a rather cursory examination. I then spent the greater part of the years 1957 and 1958 as a Greek interpreter, attached firstly to the Special Branch of the Cyprus Police and later to the 1st Battalion, Royal Ulster Rifles. During this period I travelled all over the island until my release from the Army at the end of September 1958.

When I first thought of trying to write about these events, I had ideas of producing a fully documented account of the political and diplomatic history of the period. But I soon came to realise that this would be impossible within the confines of one single and relatively short paper. And so I have limited myself to what I know best, that is the actual events that took place in the island of Cyprus in those years, and which were known at the time as the "Cyprus Emergency", or the "Cyprus troubles" (*φασαρίες* in Greek). This paper will *not* be an account of my own experiences, though inevitably, my views after more than thirty-four years are still very heavily coloured and influenced by my experiences at the time. However, there is one fundamental point I should emphasize, which I suppose will surprise no one: this is the fact that everyone concerned in this miserable conflict comes out of it badly, and every side told lies,

many of which are faithfully reproduced in the various subsequent books on the subject.

I should like to begin with a quotation, which I owe to Nancy Crawshaw's very detailed book entitled *The Cyprus Revolt*:

I know little of the history of Cyprus. I think there was a short while ago some reference to its having belonged to Greece. It was my impression that it had at least some cultural connections with Greece, but that it had never, in fact, been under Greek rule, though it may once have been held to have some allegiance to Turkey.

This was actually a Belgian delegate to the Council of Europe in 1954, though it could so easily have come from the mouth of one of those set in authority over the people of Cyprus in the nineteen-fifties. The island of Cyprus first came under British rule in the year 1878, as a result of the Cyprus Convention between Great Britain and Turkey which was secretly concluded at the Congress of Berlin in that year. Originally the island was to be administered by the British while formally remaining a part of the Ottoman Empire. But in 1881 supervision was transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office, and in 1914 Cyprus was annexed by Britain on the outbreak of war with Turkey. The first fifty years of British rule were largely uneventful: roads were built, hospitals were established, malaria was eliminated, scientific forestry in the mountain ranges was encouraged, agriculture and industry began to recover from the centuries of stagnation under Ottoman rule. But the political destiny of Cyprus was very largely left in the hands of the colonial rulers.

A Legislative Council had been established in 1882, consisting of a mixture of elected members and colonial civil servants, but, as was frequently pointed out by the Cypriots, they had less control over their affairs than in many a colony where the standard of educational, economic and political development was very much lower than in Cyprus. Throughout all these years there was really only one significant issue in Cyprus politics, and this was the demand for ENOSIS or union with Greece. The passionate desire of the majority population for union with the mother country was always there, and had been recognised at various times by such notable figures as both Gladstone and

Churchill. But the feeling lay largely dormant until 1931, when by far the most serious demonstrations in favour of ENOSIS took place in Cyprus. A march on Government House resulted in a riot, and the Governor's Residence was burned down: troops were sent in from Egypt, the Bishops of Kition and Kyrenia were deported, political parties were banned, the Constitution was suspended, and the flying of the Greek flag was forbidden.

Throughout the 'thirties and the years of the Second World War Cyprus remained something of a backwater, but when the Labour Government came to power in 1945 it was anxious to bring about representative government in Cyprus after fourteen years of direct rule. Plans were laid for an elected legislature and for economic, social and political progress leading to self-government; but these were abandoned in August 1948 in the face of very strong opposition. Archbishop Leontios had in 1947 proclaimed that the solution to the Cyprus problems was "ENOSIS and only ENOSIS". His views were echoed by his successor Makarios II, who in 1949 laid the plans for the church plebiscite on the question of union with Greece. This was carried out under the auspices of the Bishop of Kition, Michael Mouskos, who succeeded to the Archbishopric in 1950 as Makarios III. 96% of the population voted in favour of ENOSIS, after which the campaign for union with Greece was very strongly and significantly stepped up.

At various times in the early nineteen-fifties, Lieutenant Colonel Georgios Grivas returned to his native island of Cyprus. Grivas was notorious as the one-time leader of the extreme nationalist and anti-communist organisation "Chi", at the end of the Second World War: he had been retired from the Greek Army with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and had tried unsuccessfully to enter Greek politics. He met Archbishop Makarios for the first time in Cyprus in July 1951, and returned in 1952, when he recruited as his leading supporter Andreas Azinas, the Secretary General of PEK, the Farmers' Trade Union. Grivas then made a thorough reconnaissance of the island. Arms and ammunition were smuggled into Cyprus from Greece over the next couple of years, and in October 1954 Grivas finally left his home in Athens, entering Cyprus illicitly and moving to a secret address in the outskirts of Nicosia. In January 1955 Grivas met Makarios in the Bishop's House at Larnaca: Makarios was able to tell him that Marshal Papagos, the Greek Prime Minister,

was now fully in sympathy with their as yet undeclared aim of achieving ENOSIS by means of violence against the colonial rulers. It was at this point that it was decided to call their now fully-fledged organisation by the name of EOKA (Ἐθνικὴ Ὀργάνωσις Κυπρίων Ἀγωνιστῶν – National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters). On 28 March Makarios gave his blessing to the struggle, and it was on the night of 31 March/1 April 1955 that the first island-wide acts of EOKA violence took place. The radio transmitter in Nicosia was blown up, the Secretariat was damaged, two police stations in Limassol were attacked, and in Larnaca the law courts, Police Headquarters and the District Commissioner's Office were all bombed. Responsibility for all these attacks was claimed by EOKA in leaflets bearing, for the first time, the name of the leader DIGHENIS, the cunningly chosen pseudonym of Georgios Grivas.

The British authorities, as so often in their various colonial trouble spots, were very largely taken by surprise. The Governor, Sir Robert Armitage, was a career colonial civil servant and ill-equipped to deal with a military emergency, and the British Army in Cyprus was then scarcely more than the conventional small-sized peace-time garrison. Further EOKA bombings followed in the months of May and June, and a large-scale campaign was begun in order to scare and intimidate Greek Cypriot members of the Police and other "collaborators", as EOKA regarded them. Two policemen named Koskopoulos and Poullis were murdered by EOKA, and for the latter crime a young man called Michael Karaolis was arrested. EOKA now began to attack Turkish Cypriot policemen, and the "Cyprus is Turkish" organisation, formed in 1954, began to demand that if Cyprus were to be given up by the British, it should become a part of Turkey. On 30 June the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, went back on his previous determination to keep Greece and Turkey out of the Cyprus dispute, and invited Greek and Turkish representatives to London to discuss the problem. A tripartite conference opened in London on 29 August, which ended in failure and the rejection of the British proposals by both the Greek and Turkish sides. During the conference violence intensified in Cyprus, and on 17 September the British Institute in Nicosia was set on fire and destroyed.

On 25 September Armitage was replaced as Governor by Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, the retiring Chief of the

Imperial General Staff. Harding's instructions were first and foremost to restore order, but also to leave the door open for negotiations with local leaders. The Archbishop had announced a plan to launch a passive resistance campaign, but on 30 September he surprised everyone by expressing his willingness to meet the new Governor. Harding and Makarios met the day after the Governor's arrival, but their initial talks broke down and Grivas launched a new EOKA offensive. The new Governor was given far wider powers than his predecessor: he took over direction of security operations, and the military forces at his disposal were enormously expanded and reinforced. Three hundred policemen of all ranks came out from Great Britain to strengthen the police, restore their morale, and weed out EOKA sympathisers. Troops were now to be trained in riot-control and crowd-breaking, and police stations were henceforth to be securely protected by the Army. By the end of the year (1955) there were nine infantry battalions on the island, and the security forces now totalled up to about fifteen thousand men.

In October Karaolis was tried for the murder of P.C. Poullis, was found guilty and sentenced to death: his appeal was turned down by the Cyprus Supreme Court on 14 November. This gave rise to riots by school-children in Nicosia, and their dispersal by troops using batons and tear-gas. (The use of children came to be a very significant element in Grivas's strategy.) EOKA violence was stepped up even further: five servicemen were killed in one week, two of whom died in an ambush directed by Grivas himself. Special courts were now set up and new judges brought into Cyprus from the U.K., and on 26 November a state of emergency was proclaimed. Troops were put on active service, the death penalty was extended to cover crimes such as bomb throwing and the discharge of firearms; deportation, censorship and the imposition of collective punishments were all now introduced. The Archbishop condemned the emergency measures, and compared British rule to Fascism. EOKA violence continued to escalate: a bomb intended for Harding went off in the Ledra Palace Hotel, a gunman called Andreas Demetriou was arrested for trying to kill an Englishman in Famagusta, bombing and ambushes increased, and on 4 December the first collective punishment was imposed on the village of Lefkoniko. Everywhere security operations were intensified, and on 8

December twenty-four monasteries were surrounded by troops and searched with mine detectors.

Churches and monasteries were now turned upside down by the security forces looking for weapons and ammunition, though very little was found. It had long been suspected that EOKA operations were being directed from a base in the Troodos mountains, where terrorist hideouts were increasingly to be located on the hillsides, and early in December strong military reinforcements from the Gordon Highlanders and the Royal Marine Commandos were moved into the area. Harding did not increase his popularity by deciding in December to arrest over a hundred left-wingers and to ban AKEL, the neo-communist party, which had consistently opposed EOKA violence and terrorism. On 11 December the first murder of a Turkish Cypriot took place when a Turkish policeman was shot dead in Paphos by four EOKA gunmen. Turkish riots ensued, but Dr. Kutchuk, the Turkish community leader, appealed for calm and Turkish feelings were contained.

During the winter curfews and cordons and searches of villages were steadily intensified, and in the towns school disruptions increased markedly as more schools were closed down and secondary education virtually came to an end. Confrontations frequently revolved around the illegal display of the Greek flag, which Harding regarded as an intolerable affront, showing as so often little understanding of Greek susceptibilities. Nevertheless Makarios and Harding had met again on 21 November, and talks between them dragged on until 3 March 1956. Harding had presented a £38 million development plan, which involved the acceptance of limited self-government, leading to a possibility of self-determination in the future.

Makarios rejected the proposals, and again EOKA violence increased. On 15 February 1956 the Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd flew in for further discussions with Harding and Makarios, but these made no headway; and on 9 March the British authorities tried their most drastic expedient yet. Makarios was suddenly arrested on the plane which was about to fly him to Athens, and was deported to the islands of Seychelles, along with the extremist Bishop Kyprianos of Kyrenia. A one-week general strike followed in Cyprus, and a bomb was placed under Harding's bed by an EOKA agent who had been employed as a servant at Government House. The bomb

failed to ignite, since the mechanism had been set at too high a temperature to allow for the Governor's very English habit of sleeping with the windows wide open.

Grivas was now in sole command of EOKA activities and nearly five hundred acts of violence took place during the months of March and April. Large-scale operations against EOKA were undertaken in the Troodos and Kyrenia mountains, and on 10 May Michael Karaolis and Andreas Demetriou were both hanged in Nicosia Central Prison. The very next day Dighenis announced a savage retribution for the hangings: two British soldiers, Private Ronald Shilton and Corporal Gordon Hill, had been "executed" by EOKA in reprisal. A wave of violence followed, and Turkish Cypriots became increasingly involved in strife with the Greeks. For the first time a barbed wire barricade was erected in Nicosia to separate the two communities in times of inter-communal trouble.

During the summer security operations in the Troodos mountains were again intensified. Grivas was tipped off by his agents in the police and escaped to the Paphos Forest, but two of his group leaders and seventeen other EOKA gunmen were captured. Grivas kept constantly on the move, and for the rest of the Emergency made use of two hideouts in the Limassol area. Grivas also declared the first of his tactical truces on 16 August, giving EOKA a breathing space and a much needed opportunity for regroupment and rebuilding its forces. At the time he refused Harding's offer of either a conditional amnesty or the opportunity of free passes to Greece for all members of EOKA. On 29 August EOKA resumed hostilities with a bomb explosion in Larnaca, and on the 31st one of its outstanding figures, Polykarpos Georgatzis, escaped from Nicosia General Hospital after a gun battle in which four people were killed. By this time fifteen hundred paratroops had been flown out to Cyprus: these were to be used both for operations in Cyprus and in preparation for the calamitous invasion of Egypt, the "Suez adventure" that took place in October. It was during this period that the British Government first released extracts from what were said to be the diaries of Grivas, found by the troops in screw-top jars buried near the village of Lysi. The diaries were said to give full details of the setting up of EOKA and to provide overwhelming evidence of Makarios's complicity in its activities from the very beginning.

After the Suez debacle, which had drastically slowed down operations against EOKA, Harding once again had many more troops at his disposal for a full-scale onslaught. Thirty-four people had died in November, and EOKA's victims included the Assistant Commissioner of Troodos, Douglas Williamson; a young journalist called Angus Macdonald who had only just arrived in Cyprus; and Dr Charles Bevan, a doctor who had devoted most of his medical career to the people of Cyprus. Even sterner penalties were introduced for acts of terrorism, and (whether or not as a result of this) violence declined sharply during the winter. Grivas however became obsessed with the thought of treachery amongst EOKA's ranks and eleven Greek Cypriots were shot dead during the month of December, mostly in village coffee-shops. The Minister of Defence, Duncan Sandys, had now visited Cyprus and concluded that the whole of the island was no longer needed as a military base, in firm contradiction of Eden's previously held beliefs. In December the distinguished judge, Lord Radcliffe, announced his proposals for the future government of Cyprus. He had made two visits to the island during the year, and his plan envisaged a constitution that accepted the principle of self-determination, but provided for local internal self-government, leaving defence, foreign affairs and internal security in the hands of the British administration (at least for the time being).

The Radcliffe proposals were immediately rejected by Greece, and soon afterwards by Turkey; Makarios too was eventually to dismiss the Radcliffe Plan from his exile in Seychelles. In the first few months of 1957 the security forces had a number of successes: an energetic new G.O.C. had been appointed, Major-General "Joe" Kendrew, and EOKA cells in the towns and villages were now being cleaned up as a result of much improved intelligence. One leading EOKA terrorist, Markos Drakos, was shot dead, whilst Polykarpos Georgatzis was recaptured: the journalist Nikos Sampson was caught in hiding near the village of Dhali and arrested for the murder of a British policeman. On 3 March Grivas's second-in-command Gregoris Afxentiou was encircled with his followers in a hideout near the monastery of Makhairas. He ordered his men to surrender, and although wounded Gregoris Afxentiou stayed on to fight alone with one follower, Avgoustis Efstathiou, who had been sent back by the British forces to tell Afxentiou to surrender.

They continued to shoot it out for eight hours, and at last explosives were used and petrol was poured down the hideout. Efstathiou was forced out, and the hideout became a blazing inferno which could not be reached by the troops until the next morning. Afxentiou's charred body was found by the soldiers with a bullet wound through the head. His death was an example of outstanding and conspicuous bravery, and was possibly the only piece of genuine heroism during the whole of the Cyprus Emergency. (Incidentally, I got to know Afxentiou's father quite well over a year later, during cordons and searches of Afxentiou's native village of Lysi.)

The success of the security forces and EOKA's heavy losses led Harding to recommend the release of Makarios from the Seychelles. This was done on 28 March: at the same time much pressure had been put on Grivas by the Greek Government, and he had reluctantly agreed to a cease-fire on 14 March. Makarios arrived in Athens to a tremendous welcome on 17 April, and as the cease-fire got under way restrictions in the island were gradually eased. EOKA violence now died down altogether, though once again a period of truce was used for consolidation, while the security forces during the spring and summer launched a major operation in search of Grivas, culminating in a fifty-four day curfew of the village of Milikouri just to the south of Kykko Monastery.

The euphoria resulting from the release of Makarios did not last for long. During the spring and summer of 1957 EOKA refrained from militant action, while pouring forth a constant stream of threatening and intimidating leaflets. Several prisoners had died after interrogation, and EOKA propaganda made the most of these incidents and examples of atrocities by the army during cordon and search operations. In May Nikos Sampson was acquitted of the murder of a British policeman, but re-arrested on a charge of carrying firearms and sentenced to death. His sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment, as was that of Michael Rossides for the murder of Private Shilton in 1956. Sampson was of course to become notorious as the "President" of Cyprus for several days in July 1974 after the military coup which overthrew Makarios and led to the Turkish invasion of the island.

During the summer and early autumn of 1957 EOKA continued to re-group and for the first time formed anti-Turkish sections,

making plans for the defence of Greek villages against possible Turkish attacks. The Turks were concerned enough about this to form a new underground movement known as TMT, the Turkish Defence Organisation. EOKA also used violence against AKEL and the few remaining mukhtars, or village headmen: its new youth organisation, ANE, was active in recruiting and making propaganda, and it was decided to have a huge show of strength on "Ochi" day, 28 October. Violent clashes broke out for the first time since the cease-fire, coinciding with the departure of Sir John Harding as Governor after his two-year appointment came to an end. Harding was replaced by Sir Hugh Foot, previously Governor of Jamaica, who had also been Colonial Secretary in Cyprus in very different circumstances from 1943 to 1945. Foot had a very strong reputation as a liberal, which caused apprehension amongst the Turkish population and near apoplexy amongst some elements in the British administration. He was also deeply suspect to Colonel Grivas, who despised politicians and administrators with liberal pretensions, and feared that Foot was intending to seek out "moderates" in both communities in order to impose the Radcliffe Constitution.

The new Governor set out at once to create a good image: he announced his willingness to see any Cypriots who wished to talk to him, he visited villages on horseback and talked to the people in coffee-shops, he called on the strongly nationalist Mayor of Nicosia, Dr Dervis, he lit a candle to peace in an Orthodox Church. He appealed to Grivas to give him a credit of time, and made a special Christmas gesture of releasing a hundred detainees. The ever distrustful Grivas responded with a call for a boycott of all British goods, accompanied by widespread sabotage. At the same time EOKA stepped up its attacks on communists and left-wing activists: AKEL had now come out in favour of independence for Cyprus, and EOKA's war against leftists steadily increased in brutality, with ever more killings; culminating in the murder in Lefkoniko, on 23 May 1958, of Savvas Menakas, a left-wing trade-unionist. Menakas was tied to a tree and slowly beaten to death, in full view of his wife and the assembled villagers. Perhaps this incident more than any other during the Emergency illustrates the full horror and inhumanity of EOKA's behaviour towards its own fellow countrymen.

The campaign of sabotage continued during the spring of 1958, though there was not yet a return to the full-scale violence of the earlier years. But it was clear that the long cease-fire was now at an end. The British intensified their pursuit of Grivas, and in May Operation Kingfisher was launched in the Southern Troodos Mountains, in the most determined attempt yet to capture the EOKA leader. However, the most significant event during these months was the decisive intervention by Turkey in the Cyprus conflict. While Foot and Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, were attending a Conference in Ankara in January, riots by thousands of militant pro-partition Turkish youths broke out in Nicosia, resulting in the deaths of seven Turks at the hands of the security forces. This was a higher number of deaths than ever occurred in any Greek-instigated riot during the Emergency. The Turkish-Cypriot leadership was now totally committed to partition of the island, and did little to discourage its young extremists. Turkish activists were incited to further action by rumours of a forthcoming massacre at the hands of the Greeks, and inter-communal violence now began on a hitherto undreamt-of scale. In two months, fifty-six Greeks and fifty-three Turks had died. Greeks were driven from the largely Turkish suburb of Omorphita, most of the Greek dwellings in Lefka were burned down, and most horrific of all was the so-called massacre of Geunyeli in June. Thirty-five Greek Cypriot suspects were arrested by the army and dropped from motor vehicles near the Turkish village of Geunyeli, where they were summarily commanded to walk home. Turks from the village were waiting in ambush, and of the Greeks who had been left to the mercy of the villagers four were killed on the spot and four more died later from their injuries.

As inter-communal violence escalated throughout the summer of 1958, the British Government once again launched a plan for the future of Cyprus. This was known as the Macmillan Plan, based on proposals the Prime Minister had worked out with the Governor, and was proclaimed throughout the island on 19 June. It involved the deferment of a final solution to the Cyprus problem for seven years, with the introduction of separate municipalities for the Greek and Turkish communities. There was to be a ruling Council consisting of the Governor, four Greek and two Turkish Cypriots, and representatives from the Greek and Turkish governments. All Cypriots were to be entitled

to either Greek or Turkish nationality, as well as British. The plan was very quickly rejected by the Greek Government and by Makarios, and was received with no enthusiasm by a Turkish Government which was still pressing hard for partition. In July EOKA's campaign against the Turks reached its highest point: inter-communal violence was raging all over the island, and every day brought news of pointless and indiscriminate murders in one community followed immediately by savage revenge killings on the other side.

In the late summer inter-communal strife died down to a large extent, to be succeeded by ever increasing EOKA attacks on the security forces and on Greek civilians. In August EOKA gunned down and killed Colonel Frederick Collier at his home in Limassol, and Sergeant Reginald Hammond as he walked through the village of Ayios Dhometios with his two-year-old son. Nine civilians and four policemen also died during this month, while over two thousand Cypriots were detained on the order of the Governor; and the most massive series yet of cordon and search operations was launched in the villages. During the month of July there had been two particularly notorious incidents involving the security forces. In the village of Akhyritou two Greek Cypriots were killed after an attack on troops patrolling the village, and in the neighbouring village of Avgorou two of the inhabitants were shot dead by the Royal Horse Guards during a riot in which twenty-three soldiers and about fifty villagers were injured. EOKA's reprisal was to shoot and kill two British soldiers from that very same regiment in a shop in Famagusta three days later.

At this point I should like to depart briefly from my usual rule of self-effacement and quote from a letter I wrote to my parents at about the time of the above incidents:

After the events of the last four days I can hardly wait to get away from here. After the Avgorou shootings things have got worse and worse and resulted in the climax of today's shooting in Famagusta. I seem to be in a minority of one: at least the R.U.R.'s [that was the regiment I was attached to as interpreter] have got the "action" they have wanted for so long. I don't really know where to start, so I will begin with the freshest news. Shortly after the shooting in Hermes St. this morning I was rushed down to the scene of the crime by the Intelligence Officer, after an immediate curfew and road blocks had been

put into operation. The shooting took place in a grocer's shop and the general theory at the moment is that it was done from a passing car and not from the building opposite which is a so-called musical and literary club: anyway two grenades were allegedly found there, so when I arrived two platoons from "B" Company and the R.U.R. riot squad were smashing up every single thing in the place: books, cups and plates, chairs, tables, furniture, mirrors, etc. (damage estimated at £2,000), everyone except me thoroughly enjoying themselves, especially the R.U.R. officers of course, one of whom said to me he hadn't enjoyed himself so much in years, and didn't today's events make me change my mind? It's useless trying to argue with such people or get them to say what good such goings on do, or even to convince them that I don't like people getting shot any more than they do. I feel I can just about restrain myself for my remaining time out here and certainly no longer. To keep up the farcical pretence of no ill-treatment, etc., everyone in authority has perjured themselves again and again: and any attempt by me or anyone else to tell the truth could never succeed, short of taking it to the United Nations. This is chiefly apropos of what happened last night at one of the worst villages in the Famagusta area: "B" Company went in strength to search coffee-shops, together with myself and a U.K. police sergeant: they were determined to be tough in advance and show the village what the R.U.R. were capable of, since a small patrol had recently been chased out by the locals. So they started proceedings (at least the officers did and the other ranks soon followed suit) by throwing chairs at people in order to get them into the coffee-shops: when people refused to take down slogans they got bashed around with batons until they did, and even then the majority still refused. You can of course get away with anything in this country as long as you don't leave any bruises, but just "poke people around a bit". Later in the proceedings, it was *our* side that threw stones through windows. Much worse things than this happen in Cyprus, but I have just about seen enough of it. During all this the local priest telephoned the Famagusta police to complain about the rough stuff, so before long the District Superintendent came along to investigate: not that he is really concerned about it. The Company Commander swears that no ill-treatment took place, or if so he never saw any: he asks his officers if there was, and they in turn ask their N.C.O.s, all of whom blandly say that they never saw anything, which is the usual form out here. It is just the same with looting: at the very same time as he stuffs something in his own pocket an officer reminds his men with a

wink that looting is one of the severest offences known to the Army, and they shouldn't forget the 11th commandment. All this brings me back to the point I made about Sir Hugh Foot in my last letter: either he is unbelievably stupid, if all his underlings have managed to keep such things secret from him, or he is the biggest hypocrite ever, if he knows about it and at the same time harps on his liberalism and his wish for a just settlement.

September 1958 opened with another truly horrendous incident in the village of Liopetri, to the south of Famagusta, where a battle took place that was compared by many to the epic resistance of Gregoris Afxentiou eighteen months earlier. Four EOKA gunmen were cornered by the Army in a barn and fought a gun-battle against enormous odds for three hours. Finally the barn was set on fire with petrol and the EOKA men were killed as they came out. Other grim events followed in September, and these led up to what was perhaps the most notorious episode during the whole of the Emergency. This was the killing on 3 October in a street in Famagusta of Mrs Catherine Cutcliffe, the wife of a British Army Sergeant. After the murder the troops went on the rampage: at least a thousand Cypriots were rounded up and the majority were severely beaten. Several of them died, including a thirteen-year-old girl, and a forty-eight-hour curfew was imposed on the whole island. Grivas had issued a leaflet threatening to hit indiscriminately at every single English person, but for once EOKA disclaimed responsibility and the killers were never found.

Here I should like to quote very briefly from another letter, not one of my own this time, but a letter to me from a good friend in the army who stayed on in Cyprus for another year after I had left. My friend wrote as follows about the Cutcliffe incident:

After you left, things got particularly bloody and disgusting: what happened the day Mrs Cutcliffe got knocked defies description, there was wholesale rape and looting and murder. Two men were beaten to death by the Grenadiers in the "Snakepit" in Karaolos, four more died in Varosha, and a thirteen year old girl was raped and killed in a cage in 51 Brigade, also a ten year old boy was strangled by a Company Sergeant Major in the Military Police. It appears that the R.U.R. did not kill anyone: it was not for want of trying, though. That night I came closer to insanity than I ever was before: I

went and sat in the garden of the Commissioner's house and tried to escape from the mess in town, but even from there, I could hear the screaming in the Police Station and in Varosha...

Shortly after the Cutcliffe shooting, General Kendrew (who had recently survived an assassination attempt) was replaced as G.O.C. by Major-General Kenneth Darling. Darling had a "fire and brimstone" image, and a nose for publicity: amongst his innovations was an offer for the first time to British civilians of firearms for their own defence. Under Darling's command the Army had some signal successes, such as the blowing-up of the EOKA gunman Kyriakos Matsis in a hideout near Dhikomo in November, but Darling's claim to have broken the back of EOKA was still a long way from the truth. Nevertheless there was now increasing pressure on Grivas from Makarios, from the Greek Government, and from the United Nations; and after Foot had reprieved two EOKA gunmen on the eve of execution, Grivas declared a cease-fire on Christmas Eve of 1958.

The Greek and Turkish Foreign Ministers met several times in January 1959, and in February they met again in Zurich with their respective Prime Ministers. By now the British Government was content to take a back seat and leave the major parties to the dispute to work out some kind of compromise solution, provided that Britain could keep its sovereign bases in an independent Cyprus. And so, after almost four years of bitter struggle, the cause of ENOSIS was lost and the conflict was about to come to an end. The so-called Zurich agreement was signed on 11 February, to be followed by the Lancaster House Conference where Makarios and Kutchuk led the Greek and Turkish Cypriot delegations, and EOKA as such was not represented. A settlement was reached on 19 February, with provision for independence for Cyprus within the Commonwealth, with a Greek President and a Turkish Vice-President, each with their own Council of Ministers and with separate communal chambers for the two communities. Makarios returned to Cyprus on 1 March 1959, and the out-witted and out-maneuvred Grivas left the island on 17 March (though he was of course to return just over four years later). Implementation of all the arrangements necessary for independence from British rule took another seventeen months; and finally, on 16 August 1960, the new

Republic of Cyprus came into being, with a Constitution that satisfied no one, and, as everybody knows, that was to be the beginning of yet another (and as yet unfinished) chapter in the tragic and turbulent history of Cyprus.

The Cyprus situation was unlike any other in Britain's troubled post-war colonial history, in that the object of the struggle was not independence but union with another country which the majority population regarded as the motherland. EOKA was from the outset a ruthless and fanatically dedicated organisation, whose direction (at least after the deportation of Makarios) was entirely in the hands of its leader, Georgios Grivas. Grivas gives little away in his writings about EOKA's intelligence and security networks, but there can be little doubt that these were consistently superior to their British equivalents. In spite of their massive military strength and considerable use of agents and informers, the British could not infiltrate the local population, let alone win their hearts and minds (to borrow a phrase from a later conflict); and they never fully succeeded in breaking the network of EOKA cells in the towns and villages. In the latter part of the Emergency, the use of Turkish extremists was actively encouraged by the British authorities: Turkish Cypriots were now recruited into the Auxiliary Police and above all into a police body known as the Mobile Reserve, which contained the most blood-thirsty band of thugs the present writer has ever had the misfortune to encounter.

It is not going too far to say that amongst the British there was a dislike of the local population that sometimes amounted to hatred. The belief that "Wogs begin at Calais" was certainly endemic amongst the British authorities in Cyprus in the nineteen-fifties. There were of course exceptions to this, as in any imperial or colonial situation, but there was little or no understanding of the historical circumstances which had given rise to the passionate desire for ENOSIS on the part of the majority population. If only this feeling had been understood, and the nettle of ENOSIS had been grasped at a much earlier stage of colonial rule; but the Cyprus tragedy is over-full of "if onlys", and "might have beens".

It may be that the British were no worse, if certainly no better, than any other colonial power in human history; and no ruling power can be expected to love an opponent when constantly

faced with the prospect of being blown up by a bomb or being shot in the back. And I cannot stress too highly the sheer savagery, brutality and viciousness of Grivas and the assassins of EOKA. Like their Irish counterparts today, they had no conscience or compunction whatever about who they might kill in pursuit of their political and nationalist aims. But there was nonetheless a strong element of arrogance, insensitivity and sheer xenophobia in the British attitude to their colonial subjects in Cyprus which is very hard to forgive or to justify. The military authorities showed no appreciation whatever of the complex history and many-sided culture of Cyprus: "this horrible bloody little island", my battalion commander used to say at every opportunity. One of my most excruciating experiences during the summer of 1958 was that of accompanying the regimental band as it marched through the villages of the Famagusta area. The sound of the pipes and drums was supposed to impress the inhabitants with the power of the British military machine; this was known as "showing the flag", or "letting the wogs know who is boss".

In case I may be accused of exaggeration on this point, I should like to call as a witness someone of infinitely more eminence than myself: that person is no less an authority than Sylvia Foot, the wife of the Governor, Sir Hugh Foot. In her book *Emergency Exit* (published in 1960), Lady Foot speaks of some of the people in authority in the Cyprus of the late nineteen-fifties as follows:

Many of them were embittered to the point of personal hate against the Cypriots. Many of them were contemptuous and vengeful against the very people whom they were here to serve.

Obviously not all the fault lay on the British or on any one side: the degree of obstinacy and stupidity on all sides in the Cyprus conflict of the nineteen-fifties is extremely hard to credit now that more than thirty years have elapsed since independence. Towards the end of my time in Cyprus I was thoroughly sick of the sight of the Greeks, the Turks, and the British: whenever possible I would seek out the very agreeable company of the Armenian community in Cyprus. The Armenians had suffered more savagely than any other people during this century, at

least until the Holocaust: and they took care to keep very well clear of the Cyprus conflict. "A place of arms" was how Disraeli described the island of Cyprus in 1878, and so it remains today. The Cyprus situation is without any doubt one of the great tragedies of the 20th century, and one which (more than thirty years after the end of British rule) continues very sadly to be as far as ever from a permanent solution.

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University College, London

Cavafy Translated*

David Ricks

I don't wish to begin with logic-chopping, or by preening myself on my choice of title. It will become quite evident that, following a procedure which some might regard as old-fashioned, I have no intention of getting in the way of the poetry. But I should explain why I have given this title to my paper.

Why not, for example, "Translating Cavafy"? An essay I published on translations of Cavafy's most important contemporary and rival was called "Translating Palamas". But I am anxious to avoid that phrasing here in order to avoid giving the impression that I speak as a practitioner: for I have published no translation which purports to be more than exegetical. The modern Greek poems translated in my little study, *The Shade of Homer*, appear without the Greek original for economic reasons only; the translations I made of the Escorial *Digenes Akrites* and the lay of Armoures face the text in a Loeb-like manner, and are designed gradually to be effaced by the reader who becomes more familiar with the original. In other words, it will be no part of my procedure here to trump the versions of Cavafy I examine by unveiling superior versions of my own making. For a rather successful example of this approach, I refer to a recent article by Walter Arndt.¹

Again, why not "Cavafy in Translation"? My reason for avoiding this is that the "in translation" label tends to suggest a

* I am grateful to audiences in Cambridge, Aberdeen, Belfast and Boston for their comments on this paper. Their eagerness to enter a dialogue about Cavafy and his translations encourages me to present here a tentative paper minimally revised from the original lecture text; I have kept footnotes few.

¹ Walter Arndt, "Verse-to-verse translation: postulates, problems, and the *sine qua non* of talent", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* [henceforth *JMGS*] 8.2 (October 1990) 325-43. (This issue contains a number of articles concerned with translation from Modern Greek.)

second-best product – a bit like those shop labels that indicate a reduction on a slightly damaged purchase. The work "in translation" is expected to present itself with apologies, "Classics in Translation" being the classic example. If you can't read the august Oxford blue hardbacks, then you must shamefacedly bed down with the colourful paper covers from Englewood Cliffs.

More promising than either of the above titles, perhaps, would be "Cavafy Translator". Although Cavafy's own translations date only from his early years and are of merely biographical interest, the fact that Cavafy – in a broader sense – *translates* so much of English literature into Greek poetry will undoubtedly have some bearing on his translation into – I had almost said, *back into* – English. Cavafy spent much of his childhood in England; he was fluent in English (as in French), and when expressing himself on subjects which demanded a high degree of abstraction apparently found it easier to do so in English: witness his notebooks on poetics and ethics. But the roots of his poetry itself are those of a late Victorian. I have shown elsewhere that, when Cavafy reads Homer and produces his highly individual poetic responses, this Homer is Pope's; or, again, that his approaches to mythological *exempla* are by way of the very words of Matthew Arnold or George Grote. Most far-reaching, and long-debated, is the influence on Cavafy of Browning – and to this I shall return at the end. So the special esteem Cavafy enjoys in the English-speaking world is not the mere product of chance or of puffing by E.M. Forster and a mafia of Kingsmen: it is, in part, because when English-speakers read Cavafy they respond to something which is not entirely unfamiliar.

I think the question of Cavafy and translation goes further than this, however. The point is not simply that, for historical reasons, the translator of Cavafy into English enjoys certain advantages. Nor is it that Cavafy is among the modern Greeks the *grant translateur* that Seferis set out more openly to be. It is that, in a broad sense, questions of translation and translatability are central to his poetry. The development of these issues is complex, and I shall adduce one or two examples shortly; but their origin is not, I think, far to seek. Cavafy's Alexandria was a trilingual society in which fluency in Greek, French and English was not unusual. (I say "Cavafy's Alexandria" advisedly: if there are Arabs in this world, they

are more or less part of the furniture, or else Hellenic in their cultural preferences. The view widely held in Greece that much of Cavafy's poetry is anti-imperialist, indeed a coded protest against British rule in Egypt, hardly squares with this – any more than it does with the larger historical fact that it was Cavafy's Greek community, looted and evicted by Colonel Nasser, that suffered as much as anyone from the overthrow of Empire.) At any rate, it is not surprising that living in more than one language generates in Cavafy a peculiar self-consciousness about the process of communication.

The classic example – a typographical *tour de force* – is the poem "Εν τῷ μηνὶ Ἀθύρ" ("In the month of Athyr"), in which the speaker tries to make out a fragmentary inscription which begins with a reference to this ancient Egyptian month which will mean nothing to almost all readers. The supplements made by the speaker to the gaps in the words on the stone appear in square brackets: in other words, this is a poem which *ex hypothesi* cannot exactly be read aloud. By the end of this tiny poem, however, the reader in the poem and the reader of the poem have discovered the central human fact: that the inscription is an epitaph set up by friends of the deceased Leukios. Through this process of barely achieved communication, the hitherto meaningless phrase "in the month of Athyr" has been invested with meaning.

Perhaps a couple more examples will illustrate how far-reaching the notion of translation is for Cavafy's poetry. In the poem "Infidelity" (1904), for example, Apollo is shown to have lied to Thetis when he said Achilles would live long. His θεῖον ἀψεudes στόμα, in the words of the Aeschylus epigraph, did not speak a human language of guarantees and promises: in other words, the tragic outcome is the result, in effect, of a mis-translation. Again, in "King Demetrius" (1906) an epigraph from Plutarch's life of Demetrius Poliorcetes relates how he abdicated and fled in disguise "like an actor". The word used is the ancient ὑποκριτής, and it has a senatorial disdain. All Cavafy does in his poem is translate the epigraph, with one bracketed addition which praises the king's magnanimity for acting like an actor, ἠθοποιός. This latter word ("a maker of character") was an invention of nineteenth-century Greece, with the feeling that the theatre – the classical theatre, at any rate – was now an established part of society, and that actors ought to

be dignified with a title that did not also mean "hypocrite". Cavafy's entire reinterpretation of history here, in that case, relies upon a translation. Finally – to allow myself one more example – in the poem "For Ammones, who died at 29 in 610" (1917) we have a more developed and internal sense of translation as a process operating within the artist himself as a means of, in turn, communicating more fully and faithfully a particular emotion. An Alexandrian called Raphael is being asked to write an epitaph for the dead man:

Your Greek is always fine and musical.
 But now we want all of your virtuosity.
 Into a foreign tongue our grief and love will pass.
 Pour your Egyptian feeling into the foreign tongue.

There are of course many other poems that dwell on the problems of communication across linguistic or cultural barriers: poets hope they can find a language acceptable to their patrons or public; Hellenized Easterners worry about, or assert, their knowledge of the culture-language, Greek; Jews and pagans, or Christians and pagans, wonder how far they share a language, or if an apparent shared language masks incompatible outlooks. Otrusive lexical items, rather than constituting the exoticism sometimes wearying (to some of us) in the poetry of Elytis, typically have that prominence to show that they are bones of contention between two different parties or passions. Cavafy's poetic language, in other words – or, his language as a frame for uneasily cohabiting idioms – exemplifies the relativity of values which we know to have preoccupied him. The poet, aware of what it is to translate, shows us the predicaments of those who cannot reduce what they wish to say to comprehensibility.

Cavafy, then, is a translator in more than one sense. But the title of this paper is "Cavafy Translated" to emphasize the further fact, in the first place, that he has – many times – been translated; and this puts him in an unusual position among modern Greek poets. His collected poems have been translated into English four times, French and German more than once, and into at least ten other European languages.² It is instructive to

² See the invaluable work of Dia M.L. Philippides, *Census of Modern Greek Literature* (New Haven 1990).

contrast the fortunes of Cavafy and the sole modern Greek poet generally agreed to be his equal, Dionysios Solomos. Like Cavafy, Solomos was fluent in more than one language; and, like Cavafy, he was conscious of the problems of translation at more than a technical level. But consciousness became crippling self-consciousness as Solomos strove to reconcile not just the Italian language in which he had been educated and the Greek in which he aspired to write, but also the two halves of his ancestry: a nobleman of Venetian descent and a Greek housemaid. With gifts that a Coleridge would have envied, Solomos embarked on a course of life which makes Coleridge's look single-minded. Poetically, the end result was all too often desperately macaronic: even single verses are unable to reconcile two fallen languages in the search for a paradisaic one. And even in the handful of masterpieces that escaped this curse, Solomos remains largely untranslated and perhaps untranslatable.

When we say "Cavafy Translated", by contrast, we mean not just that he has been translated; we may adduce a further sense of the word "translate": "to remove the dead body or remains of a Saint, or, by extension, a hero or great man, from one place to another" (OED). In his poem "The Funeral of Sarpedon" (1908), Cavafy relates just such a process, in part translating from Pope's Homer. And we may say that the same has happened to him. In an age which likes to think of World Music, Cavafy is indisputably part of World Poetry. It is not only that he is part of the range of reference of Auden, Borges, Brodsky, Milosz, Montale – it is that some of his most characteristic features have been translated into poetry in English. Examples, at once palpable and polished, are to be found in the work of Mr James Merrill; but one is just as likely to open any old poetry magazine and find some poem called "Days of 1989" or whatever. Bless him, he is translated.

*

But how well? What I shall be doing in the main part of this paper is to look at two celebrated poems, comparing several versions in each case. Although I have my own preferences, I want to avoid knocking-copy and instead concentrate on diagnostic cases of difficulty in translating from Greek to English. I shall begin with the poem "Νὰ μείνει". Before I do so,

it is perhaps worth identifying the translators by thumbnail sketches so that we have some idea of what they are translating into. John Mavrogordato, who completed his version in 1937 and finally saw it published in 1951, was an Englishman of Chiot extraction who became Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Literature at Oxford. (It is perhaps worth noting that he is the only one of the translators to have published much poetry of his own.³) The late Rae Dalven was of a family from the now extinguished Jewish community of Ioannina; her translation, which appeared in 1961, was recommended for publication by W.H. Auden and was prefaced by him.⁴ Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard are both prolific authors on modern Greek subjects, and have produced together some standard translations; Keeley is a professor of Creative Writing at Princeton, while Sherrard has been an independent writer for some years. Their translation of Cavafy first appeared in 1975, and in a thoroughly revised edition in 1992. Finally, Memas Kolaitis, who lives in California, is a native of Alexandria who knew Cavafy; his translation of Cavafy's complete poems appeared in 1989.

NA MEINEI

Ἡ ὥρα μιὰ τῆ νύχτα θάτανε,
ἢ μιάμισυ.
Σὲ μιὰ γωνιὰ τοῦ καπηλειοῦ·
πίσω ἀπ' τὸ ξύλινο τὸ χάρισμα.
Ἐκτὸς ἡμῶν τῶν δυὸ τὸ μαγαζὶ ὅλως διόλου ἄδειο.
Μιὰ λάμπα πετρελαίου μόλις τὸ φώτιζε.
Κοιμούντανε, στὴν πόρτα, ὁ ἀγρυπνισμένος ὑπηρέτης.

Δεὴ θὰ μᾶς ἔβλεπε κανεὶς. Μὰ κιόλας
εἶχαμεν ἐξαφθεῖ τόσο πολὺ,
ποὺ γίναμε ἀκατάλληλοι γιὰ προφυλάξεις.

Τὰ ἐνδύματα μισοανοίχθησαν – πολλὰ δὲν ἦσαν
γιατὶ ἐπύρωνε θεῖος Ἰούλιος μῆνας.

Σάρκας ἀπόλαυσις ἀνάμεσα
στὰ μισοανοιγμένα ἐνδύματα·

³ See John Mavrogordato, *Elegies and Songs* (London 1934).

⁴ See Rae Dalven, "An unsought for calling: my life as a translator from Modern Greek", *JMGS* 8.2 (1990) 307-15.

γρήγορο σάρκας γύμνωμα – πού τὸ ἴνδαλμά του
εἴκοσι ἕξι χρόνους διάβηκε· καὶ τώρα ἦλθε
νὰ μείνει μὲς στὴν ποίησιν αὐτή.

TO REMAIN

It must have been one o'clock at night,
Or half past one.

In a corner of the wine-shop;
Behind the wooden partition.
Except the two of us the shop quite empty.
A paraffin lamp hardly lighted it.
The waiter who had to stay up was asleep at the door.

No one would have seen us. But anyhow
We had become so excited
We were incapable of precautions.

Our clothes had been half-opened – they were not many
For a divine month of July was blazing.

Enjoyment of the flesh in the middle
Of our half-opened clothes;
Quick baring of the flesh – and the vision of it
Has passed over twenty-six years; and now has come
Here in these verses to remain.

(Mavrogordato)

TO REMAIN

It must have been one o'clock in the morning,
or half past one.

In a corner of the tavern;
behind the wooden partition.
Aside from the two of us the shop was completely deserted.
A kerosene lamp scarcely lighted it.
Dozing, at the doorway, the waiter dead for sleep.

No one would have seen us. But already
we had excited ourselves so much,
that we became unfit for precautions.

Our clothes were half opened – they were not many
for a divine month of July was scorching hot.

Enjoyment of the flesh between
our half-opened clothes;
quick baring of the flesh – the vision of what
occurred twenty-six years ago; and has now come
to remain among these verses.

(Dalven)

COMES TO REST

It must have been one o'clock at night
or half past one.

A corner in the wine-shop
behind the wooden partition:
except for the two of us the place completely empty.
An oil lamp barely gave it light.
The waiter, on duty all day, was sleeping by the door.

No one could see us. But anyway,
we were already so aroused
we'd become incapable of caution.

Our clothes half opened – we weren't wearing much:
a divine July was ablaze.

Delight of flesh between
those half-opened clothes;
quick baring of flesh – the vision of it
that has crossed twenty-six years
and comes to rest now in this poetry.

(Keeley and Sherrard)

TO DWELL

It must have been past midnight, one o'clock,
or half past one. A corner of the wineshop;
behind a wooden partitioning.
Except the two of us an empty shop.
A lamp of kerosene gave scanty light.
A dead tired waiter by the door, asleep.

No one could see us. Anyway
we were both so excited that
we were beyond all cautiousness.

Our clothes half-opened now – not many, since
it was in the divinely searing mid-July.

The joy of flesh, between
the casual half-opened clothes,
the flesh quick bared – whose image crossed
these twenty-six full years, and has now come
to dwell in this my poetry.

(Kolaitis)⁵

This poem, completed in 1919, is perhaps the most sexually explicit of Cavafy's collected poems; but while it is obvious what is going on here, the poem is also one of the hardest to translate – starting with the very title. It is a characteristic technique of Cavafy to set an elliptical title as a fuse that burns slowly till the end of the poem situates it in a sentence which gives it meaning. This basic ring-form is clear enough from all four versions: we grasp the point that a fleeting moment of sexual experience is in some way saved from loss in the poem itself. But this is just the basic point, and the Greek is in fact considerably more refined.

Perhaps the most difficult feature of modern Greek, for the foreign learner, is the fact that the verbal system contains not just tenses but aspects. Let me quote what Peter Mackridge says in his magisterial but mercifully non-technical study, *The Modern Greek Language*: "Aspect in MG concerns not the *location* of the action or state in time, but the speaker's attitude to its temporal distribution or contour."⁶ Such a thing is elusive for the translator. When Mavrogordato and Dalven plump for the title "To remain", that is a correct rendering of μένω, but not, I think, of the word in context. Cavafy's point is not that the image or vision will *abide*, for we have here the perfective aspect of the verb, the implications of which are rather different: *ὄχι μείνει*.

⁵ Text in C.P. Cavafy, *Ποιήματα* (ed. G.P. Savidis, Athens 1980), vol. 2, p. 8. Translations from the following: John Mavrogordato, *Poems by C.P. Cavafy* (London 1951), p. 107; Rae Dalven, *The Complete Poems of C.P. Cavafy* (London 1961), p. 94; Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard, *C.P. Cavafy, Collected Poems* (revised edition, London 1992), p. 97; Memas Kolaitis, *The Greek Poems of C.P. Cavafy as Translated by Memas Kolaitis* (New Rochelle, New York 1989), vol. 1, p. 99.

⁶ Peter Mackridge, *The Modern Greek Language* (Oxford 1985), p. 104f.

Now in English there does not seem to be a way of using the words "remain" or "stay" in such a way as not, primarily, to suggest duration and a continuous process. In other words – and this is of course very common in translating Greek verbs into English – we shall require completely different verbs in English depending on which aspect is used in Greek. In Cavafy's poem, the phrase of the title is not exactly a statement about the persistence of poetry; it does not anticipate a vista in which "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments/ Of princes shall outlive this pow'rful rhyme." (Though it is true that Cavafy, perhaps echoing this, does conclude another poem with the verse: Οἱ στίχοι οἱ δυνατοὶ ποὺ ἐδῶ ἦταν ἡ ἀρχή των: "The powerful lines whose origin was here".) So *να μένει* is not exactly "to remain": indeed, if we translate it thus we get the sense of the ending quite wrong. Dalven ("to remain among these verses") makes it sound wearily resigned: a mere relic of the experience now has a paper existence. (It has the ring of "a photograph was found among the deceased's effects.") Mavrogordato, by contrast, manages to make the same verb sound too ringing by changing Cavafy's word order and saying "here in these verses to remain".

Both Keeley and Sherrard and Kolaitis are cognizant of the dangers here, but their renderings too present problems. Closest to the sense of the Greek, if you isolate the phrase, are Keeley and Sherrard with "comes to rest". But the rendering has disadvantages. In the first place, we lose in the title the sense of a final clause; and the use of the indicative verb without a subject comes as a shock in itself. You can't imagine Frost entitling his famous poem that explains its title, "Had to be versed in country things". To make the best of Keeley and Sherrard's rendering one would, I think, have to go for the participle and say "coming to rest" in both the title and the final verse. One does not want, however, to suggest, through the associations of the word "rest", the impression that in this poem poetry is seen as taming the raw experience – it isn't. At the same time, I hope it won't be considered a wholly facetious remark that, in view of the poem's story-line, one might wish to avoid the word "come" altogether.

Doubtless aware of these difficulties, Kolaitis does better, I think, with "To dwell". (Actually, "to lodge" is very close to the sense of the final sentence – the image of the experience, as it were, wanders like a ghostly UFO for twenty-six years before

coming to rest in the poetry. On the other hand, "To lodge" would be an unpromising title at best.) "To dwell in this my poetry" perhaps makes a felicitous pun on *dwelling on*, which the reader is doing; but a title "To dwell" suggests that the subject of the poem, what it is trying to re-define, is some idea of "dwelling". The Greek title "Νὰ μένει" is, by comparison, curiously elliptical, even neutral: it suggests a puzzle to be made out rather than an idea to be defined. Indeed, one infers that the poem could only have been written first, with the extraction of the title coming later – exactly the opposite of Cavafy's early work, in which he will start with a title (e.g. "Ides of March") and work from there.

Cavafy's title phrase is at any rate desperately hard to capture, but not because the word is in itself in any way problematic in meaning. The best I can suggest, before passing on to other problems, is to take a leaf out of Pound's *Canto LXIV*:

and that certain images to be formed in the mind
to remain there
...
to remain there, resurgent EIKONES.

"To remain there": this takes away the too strong sense of remaining; and this is perhaps as close as we are going to get.

As we have seen, even this poem's title – especially its title – presents acute difficulties. Kolaitis is perhaps the translator who has responded most successfully here; and he is the most determined of the four translators in attempting a close approximation to the formal features of the original. James Merrill, in a review of Keeley and Sherrard, has worried that they too often neglect "formal effects [...] indispensable to meaning".⁷ Of this, Kolaitis cannot be accused; but it is unlikely that his work will find favour with those who teach university courses: his decisions are often bold enough to grasp the attention of those who come to Cavafy without Greek, but he will not serve as a crib. Kolaitis's philosophy of translation is that it is a recreating of the original in all its dimensions; and he reacted grumpily to one favourable review, which suggested that he had

⁷ James Merrill, review in *New York Review of Books* 22.12 (17 July 1975) 12-17.

presented us with a persuasive reinterpretation of Cavafy, saying that he aimed higher than that!⁸

The form that must be captured, in the case of the poem in question – and it is the dominant form in Cavafy's poetry in general – is a basically iambic line which comes in uneven lengths.⁹ This is best done, surely, by Kolaitis. Above all, the final verse, an iambic pentameter, must have the ring of formality and finality that both Keeley and Sherrard and Kolaitis succeed in giving it. For it is the interaction between versification and meaning in Cavafy that is one of his greatest achievements not only as a poet but as a teacher of poetry.

I say so because one of the things for which the translator must have a feeling – though it is asking too much for his translation to have the same authority in the target language – is the extent to which Cavafy is a model and a master for nearly all the worthwhile Greek poets of this century – as well as being the most quoted of all modern Greek authors in everyday speech. A translation that fails to convey this general authoritativeness – over and above its responsiveness to meaning in individual poems – is not entirely a success. Despite the pervasive influence of Cavafy, it is not certain that any one version of those we have has stamped its mark as *the* version; and, to use one rule of thumb, we find no Cavafy in Charles Tomlinson's *Oxford Book of Verse in English Translation*. The main reason for this, however, has not, I feel, been any failings in the attainments of the translators, but the effect of a certain time-lag in poetic generations. By the time that Cavafy's collected poems appeared posthumously in 1935, the modern poetic idiom in English had been captured by Eliot and Pound: any translation of Cavafy would have to adopt an idiom rather unlike that of modernist verse.

Keeley is most conscious of this problem, but in a way which I can't help feeling defeatist. He concludes an essay on "Problems in rendering Modern Greek" with the following declaration which we may use as a stalking-horse in what follows:

⁸ The review, a helpful one, was by Henry Gifford, *Times Literary Supplement* 24-30 August 1990, 887-8.

⁹ Peter Mackridge, "Versification and signification in Cavafy", *Μολυβδοκονδυλο-πελεκητής* 2 (1990) 125-43.

The examples of Cavafy and Seferis seem to indicate a like strategy for the translator confronting the complexities of Modern Greek: aim for a language as free of poetic diction, as free of arbitrary echoes or influences, as close to the language men actually speak in our time as that of the best contemporary verse in the translator's target language [...] the art of translation is inevitably an art that involves distortion, an art that normally survives only through compromise in the face of the impossible. Somewhat out of step with current doctrine, I tend to see translation as a fairly negative – if still a necessary and occasionally beautiful – enterprise: an effort always to minimize differences rather than to force what may pass for similarities. But whatever inevitable damage the translator may do to his source, he must try his very best not to do damage to his target language by distorting or wrenching its poetic possibilities; and the surest way of avoiding this quick route to failure is by creating a style that aspires to be as natural and as contemporary in the terms of his own tradition as the poets he renders are in the terms of theirs.¹⁰

There is much in this credo with which I find myself unable to agree; but we will be well advised to take it seriously, coming as it does from a distinguished practitioner of the art of translation. I don't know what might be meant by describing translation as a negative enterprise, unless by that we mean that we must get in first with an at least accurate rendering of a work that someone else might translate worse. Again, Cavafy's innovation was not that he renounced poetic diction: it was that he blended the poeticisms of the nineteenth-century poetry – Greek and English – on which he had been reared with quite other elements. And the influences on Cavafy must often be given their full weight in an English rendering, for Cavafy's modernity resides so essentially in his refusal to reduce the incongruent or even competing idioms of Greek, in all its longevity, to a single idiom. Where Cavafy alludes to Plutarch or Julian in their own words, the translator into English must make these words stand out irreducibly. Where Cavafy is most obviously adapting the idiom of Browning, the translator must

¹⁰ Edmund Keeley, "Problems in rendering Modern Greek", in *Μελετήματα στη Μνήμη Βασιλείου Λαούρδα – Studies in Memory of Basil Laourdas* (Thessaloniki 1975), pp. 627-36 [quotation from pp. 635-6].

quarry Browning for borrowings or analogies. This will impart, at ground level, the flavour required.

Most clearly of all, this applies to the overall form and idiom. Our attention has so far been directed in the case of "Νὰ μέλναι" to these aspects; and they provoke the making of a general distinction between the translations, which I believe holds good for each volume as a whole. Mavrogordato preserves a general formality which tracks Cavafy's word order except where to do so would involve great acrobatics in English. With a less professional knowledge of Cavafy's English models than possessed by Keeley – the valuable material on Browning in the latter's Oxford doctoral dissertation has not, I am sorry to say, been published – Mavrogordato has yet an instinctive closeness to the tone which makes his rendering still, to some readers, the best. (This is less perhaps a matter of native talent than one of background: with a broad literary education and a familiarity with the principles of verse-making, Mavrogordato can always produce at least a simulacrum of poetry even where his grasp of the original is somewhat superficial. The same may be said, for similar reasons, of the translations from Solomos that appear in Romilly Jenkins's book on that poet. In general these older translators are free of the worst lapses because they rely on a taste which is something to fall back on where inspiration fails.)

Of Dalven's translation we can only say that – despite one or two felicities – it is unclear whether it embodies principles with which one could coherently take issue: though we should be grateful for the fact that it has introduced many readers to Cavafy, it does not, it seems to me, offer anything distinctive. When it comes to Keeley and Sherrard and Kolaitis, by contrast, we are faced with two radically different approaches. We may have a preference for the one over the other, but to assert that only one of the two types has a reason for existing is to be at cross-purposes in the way we so often are when we talk about translation. Keeley and Sherrard's method is often what one could call translation by glossing: they tend to forgo rhythmical effects and even effects of lineation and punctuation – in his attention to which Cavafy has no equal among Greek poets – and attempt to concentrate instead – yes, instead – on "structure, selection, idiom, meaning, and point-of-view". The latter formulation I take from a helpful essay by the late Kimon Friar.

As Friar points out, Keeley and Sherrard are writing essentially in prose; and in interpreting the poems for the reader of English they sometimes expand on a compressed original – in part because they have forgone the use of rhythm as meaning.¹¹ Such a translation has its honourable place – perhaps most appropriately side-by-side with the Greek, as in the original edition of Keeley and Sherrard. Whether it is always sufficiently arresting as poetry to stand on its own is something on which not all readers seem to agree.

Kolaitis has taken more risks: he will be rapped over the knuckles for the strangeness of his word order, and his lexical choices ("hedonic", "panhellenium") will make the reader start. Often enough, moreover, we are reminded of the fact that the target language is not this translator's first. This one tends to think of as a crippling disadvantage, but to it Kolaitis owes some of his successes: there can be something beguiling about an idiom teetering on the edge of incorrectness, as the English poems of Demetrios Capetanakis showed in the Forties. But what I mean to point out is not merely this exotic flavour but the fact that it is in some way true of Cavafy himself. Seferis's pioneering essay on Cavafy pointed out how, on the strictest interpretation of modern Greek usage – relatively little as this may have been codified at the time compared with English – some of Cavafy's expressions were strange and even solecistic; Seferis's estranged friend Timos Malanos recalled, in what is still the best study of Cavafy, that the poet was insistent in keeping to incorrect pronunciations for which he had an aesthetic preference. And Cavafy's prose notebooks in English are both expressive and stilted in a way which is true of some of his best poems. All this to show that the best translation will not necessarily be that which draws least attention to its own idiom.

Which is not to say that there will be no ground rules. In a recent article, Peter Bien quotes from some avowedly gay translations of Cavafy: their line is that Cavafy's message is essentially one of liberation and that it must be clad in a

¹¹ Kimon Friar, "Cavafy and his translators into English", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 5.1 (Spring 1974) 17-40 [quotation from p. 25].

contemporary garb – gay bars and the like.¹² Now it is true that it is only recently that Cavafy's erotic poems have been much discussed except among the converted; and in Greece the influential interpretation of Seferis sometimes seemed almost to be pushing the question into the realm of the merely biographical. But there was always left a tone of voice in Cavafy, a certain substratum to which the most maladroit translators could do no harm – as Auden pointed out. (The same could be said of Seferis, but with less truth: the foreign reader gets an impression of his gravity, his responsiveness to the modern world and his deep and subtle recourse to mythology – but more intimate and sometimes lighter echoes of, for example, Greek folk poetry are entirely lost.)

That Cavafy's tone of voice goes into English, however, is a curse as well as a blessing. For it can lull us into the thought that all, or nearly all, of Cavafy's Greek maps out against English – while in fact considerable freedoms will be needed. We have already seen this from a look at the title of "Νᾶ μέλνει". It is easy enough to confirm from an apparently trivial example later in the poem, where literalism prevails in all four versions. Mavrogordato has "Our clothes had been half-opened – they were not many." But the Greek lacks this second pluperfect: the aorist indicates a sudden event like the negligée plunging to the floor in a James Bond movie. (Here Kolaitis too goes astray.) Nor can you in English speak, as Mavrogordato and Dalven do, of clothes being half-opened: they are half-undone. Keeley and Sherrard and Kolaitis do better with "half-opened clothes", but this you would really use of a door. Nikos Stangos and Stephen Spender, in a version not quoted here, go far off on a tangent with the rendering "through half-torn clothes".¹³ This sounds extremely exciting – scenes from the life of the late M. Foucault? – but suggests a realm of activity outside that of this poem. The preposition again is hard to render, but "in the middle of our half-opened clothes" can hardly be right, nor "between our half-opened clothes" – we shall have to have "through", graphic as it is.

¹² Peter Bien, "Cavafy's homosexuality and his reputation outside Greece", *JMGS* 8.2 (1990) 197-211.

¹³ In Jon Stallworthy (ed.), *The Penguin Book of Love Poetry* (Harmondsworth 1985), p. 370f.

More centrally, however, we come up against the total imagery of the poem, and how far, over and above the bare description, this is transferable into English. It is clear enough that the poem operates with a basic contrast between the dimly lit setting and the moment of illumination that occurs. This sort of staging and lighting is common enough in Cavafy, and it is undoubtedly connected with his obsession with portrait photographs as a way of preserving one's successive selves.¹⁴ But this point is harder to detect in our English translations, principally because the word ἐξαφθεῖ, when translated as "excited", loses its etymology from a verb meaning "ignite" – here Keeley and Sherrard are certainly closer with "arouse" – and we thus lose the picture of a scene in which a sexual blaze produces the light with which poetry can attain a retrospect. The subjects' excitement lights the room as the kerosene lamp cannot. The ultimate result of the quick exposure of the flesh, steeped for years in poetic developing fluid, is a permanent record of the experience.¹⁵

In the modern efflorescence of Greek poetry, every worthy poet has been an etymologist: all of them seek the truth latent in the words of the oldest western language. But what offers the poets opportunities does, as Keeley says, gives the translator "unusually awkward choices". In the case just mentioned the phrase "a divine July" is easy to ignore in English: it is a typical example of a difficult adjective in Cavafy. One of the most consistent patterns in the revision of his work is the pruning of epithets. Those that survive will not in that case be merely ornamental – but they are not always easy to put into English. Only Cavafy, for example, could privately rehabilitate the moribund epithet ποιητικός and endow it with new meaning. Here the word θεῖος is an excellent case in point. It is, on the one hand, a banal colloquialism ("simply divine"). As Embiricos observes in his novel *The Great Eastern*: "Πράγματι ὁ καιρὸς

¹⁴ For Cavafy's photograph portraits see Lena Savidi (ed.), *Λεύκωμα Καβάφη 1863-1910* (Athens 1983).

¹⁵ On the question of Cavafy and photography, it has to be said that the picture doesn't come out very clearly in the recent article by Cornelia A. Tsakiridou, "The photographic dimension in some poems of Cavafy", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 17.2 (1991) 87-95. Much more helpful to read in conjunction with Cavafy's poem is the (indebted?) poem by Thom Gunn, "The Miracle" in *The Passages of Joy* (London 1982), p. 55.

ἦτο θαυμάσιος. "Ένας καιρὸς ἡδονικός, καί, ὅπως λέγουν, θεῖος." ("Truly the weather was wonderful. Sensual weather, and, as they say, divine.")¹⁶ At the same time, July is "divine" in Cavafy's poem in a deeper way: the month is *divus* because of Julius Caesar, and it represents a sort of divine agency under whose benign presence a fleeting moment of illumination will survive and transcend the vicissitudes of the seasons, passing like a comet across twenty-six years to its next sighting in the poem.

The poem, then, is a re-enactment and a celebration of what it is for an experience to be translated into words; and for that reason we should attend with care to the rendering of the final verse. Cavafy uses the word "poetry", not "verses", or – as we might most naturally expect – "poem". Our attention is drawn not so much to the finished product – though the rhythm of the last verse, as we have observed, has a certain finality – as to the making of the poem. The experience is lodged not so much in a single poem as in a process of making which we cannot suggest in English by saying, for example, "poesy" rather than "poetry". And the process, though it has personal roots, is not one limited to a particular person: Kolaitis's "To dwell in this my poetry" is over-proprietary. (Keeley and Sherrard provide easily the best rendering of the poem's ending.) For Cavafy's view of poetic inspiration is that it is something essentially arbitrary. The poet Phernazes has a poetic idea that comes and goes insistently: that, rather than his own persistence, is that gives him insight into the protagonist of his epic, Darius, in the poem of that name. In "Νὰ μείνει" we end with a paradox: the poetry is here, achieved; but it is the very process of making out of surprising elements that the poem celebrates. Can a translation perform the same thing in turn?

*

I will pass on more briefly to a second poem, "Ἰωνικόν", which I give in Greek and in three translations:

Γιατὶ τὰ σπάσαμε τ' ἀγάλματά των,
γιατὶ τοὺς διώξαμεν ἀπ' τοὺς ναοὺς των,

¹⁶ Andreas Embiricos, 'Ο Μέγας Ἀνατολικός vol. 1 (Athens 1990), p. 48.

διόλου δὲν πέθαναν γι' αὐτὸ οἱ θεοί.
 ὦ γῆ τῆς Ἰωνίας, σένα ἀγαποῦν ἀκόμη,
 σένα ἢ ψυχές των ἐνθυμοῦνται ἀκόμη.
 Σὰν ξημερώνει ἐπάνω σου πρῶτὸ αὐγουστιάτικο
 τὴν ἀτμοσφαῖρα σου περνᾷ σφρίγγος ἀπ' τὴν ζωὴ των·
 καὶ κάποτ' αἰθερία ἐφηβικὴ μορφή,
 ἀόριστη, μὲ διάβα γρήγορο,
 ἐπάνω ἀπὸ τοὺς λόφους σου περνᾷ.

IONIC [three versions, all under the same title]

Because we have broken their statues,
 Because we have turned them out of their temples,
 They have not died, the gods, for that, at all.
 O land of Ionia, you, they love you still,
 And you they still remember in their souls.
 When an August morning dawns over you
 Through your atmosphere passes an ardour from their life;
 And sometimes an aerial youthful form,
 Indefinite, with swift transition,
 Passes upon your hills.

(*Mavrogordato*)

That we've broken their statues,
 that we've driven them out of their temples,
 doesn't mean at all that the gods are dead.
 O land of Ionia, they're still in love with you,
 their souls still keep your memory.
 When an August dawn wakes over you,
 your atmosphere is potent with their life,
 and sometimes a young ethereal figure,
 indistinct, in rapid flight,
 wings across your hills.

(*Keeley and Sherrard*)

Because we broke their marble images,
 because we drove them from their shrines,
 in no way dead are now the gods.

Oh, land of Ionia, 'tis thee that still they love,
 'tis thee their souls remember still.
 When breaks on thee an August morn,
 the vigor of their life flows through thine air;
 and sometimes an ethereal ephobic form,

indefinite, and with swift feet,
 passes above their hills.

(*Kolaitis*)¹⁷

The first thing to which I would like to draw attention is the way in which the poem as it stands is a case of self-translation. The form given here dates from 1911, but the first version, with the title "Θεσσαλία", appeared before 1898 as one of the published poems Cavafy later rejected. Cavafy characteristically carried out linguistic changes in his poems, but such changes reflect more than changing views on the Language Question alone. The process can be most illuminatingly documented, perhaps, in the poem "Ἡ κηδεῖα τοῦ Σαρπηδόνοσ": Cavafy, over a thirty-year period, loosens his blank verse, prunes epithets, substitutes synonyms closer to everyday speech. The result is that, just as the poem can be called in some extended sense a translation of Homer, it is also a modern poet's translation of himself into a more adequate idiom.

In the case of "Ἴωνικόν", the title is a clear change from the original one. Why Thessaly was chosen has always been a puzzle to me: perhaps there is a vague nationalist feeling relating to the disaster of 1897; but Cavafy never visited the place, and it is not clear what it meant to him. The title "Ionic" is by contrast a pregnant one. It is, in the first place, less a geographical allusion to the shores of Asia Minor than a cultural reference to the civilization which had flourished there, and with which Cavafy felt a strong affinity. This may be documented from the poem "Orophernes", where Ionia stands for a whole sensual way of life at the spatial intersection of Europe and Asia; in "Ionic" it also stands for a way of life at the temporal intersection of the Christian world and the pagan – though the time at which the poem is spoken, and the identity of the speaker, are not the clearest of matters, as we shall see. At any rate, the words "Ionian" and "Ionia" are to set off a train of thought roughly comparable to that provoked by Matthew Arnold's evocation, at the end of his lectures on translating Homer, of "the pure lines of an Ionian horizon, the liquid clearness of an Ionian sky".

¹⁷ Text in Cavafy, *Ποιήματα*, vol. 1, p. 53. Translations by Mavrogordato, Keeley and Sherrard, and Kolaitis *opp.citt.*, pp. 43, 34, 34.

In other words, Cavafy's poem expresses an attitude to life which has a geographical tag: the technique is very unlike that of the much-travelled Seferis, whose poem "The King of Asine" describes a real landscape with actual topographical details which are not solely or even primarily metaphorical. Connected with this is the fact that Cavafy's title is not "Ionia" but "Ἴωνικόν". In Greek one can use that bare and suggestive adjective to mean anything Ionian. The suggestions here are of Ionian dialect, perhaps as something with a colouring older than Attic; of Ionian architecture or music; more broadly, of a whole idiom or aesthetic. The poem itself, the reader infers, will exemplify the aesthetic features of the label which identifies its origins.

Let us look briefly, then, at the formal features of this tiny poem which need to be got over into English.¹⁸ The poem falls into two parts, each of five verses. The first makes the claim that the gods have not died, the second provides the evidence that this is so; between the two we have a chiasitic balance of 3-2-2-3 in the clauses. But a second, less obvious means of shaping the poem is provided by the three verses that end with oxytone stresses, each emphasizing the more or less solid and abiding presence of the gods: θεοί, μορφή, περνᾶ. The technique, it is interesting to note, is the exact inverse of that used in the fragment of dialogue which appears in Pound's *Canto CXIII*, where it is feminine endings that express the same affirmation:

The Gods have not returned. "They have never left us."
 They have not returned.
 Cloud's processional and the air moves with their living.

Cavafy in like manner asserts that the gods take visible if not tangible form, and the poem ends with a curious sort of evanescent firmness which he cultivated in some of his best poems. As we have seen, "Νὰ μείνει" ends not with the solidersounding "this poem" but with "this poiesis". Or again, the little, equally symmetrical poem about poetic inspiration, "Φωνές" ("Voices") describes the voices in the final verse as Σὰ μουσική, τὴν νύχτα, μακρυνή, ποὺ σβήνει. "Like music, far

¹⁸ For a helpful approach to questions of form and meaning in Cavafy, see Christopher Robinson, *C.P. Cavafy* (Bristol 1988).

away, at night, dying away": the final verb is poised around persistence and disappearance. So too in "Ἰωνικόν" the final verb περνᾶ is a firm-footed verb whose meaning, nonetheless, is "to pass on". (And to what?)

This tentative note is hard to get in English, so full as it is with monosyllables; and it would be unsporting to find fault with our translators for falling short here. And while one might hope to compensate by sticking as closely as possible to Cavafy's word order, I do not see how in English we could make the verb the last word of the poem without a sort of wrenched artificiality quite alien to it – that is, unless we introduce some new phrase and say, e.g., "is to be seen above your hills, passing by". In any case, the parallel we have between the two uses of the word περνᾶ in the Greek, once as "pass through/ permeate", once as "pass by/ go on", does not readily transfer. Mavrogordato preserves "passes... passes" but at a cost: neither use is really natural; and Kolaitis's solution is barely English. But Keeley and Sherrard give the end of the poem what seems to me quite a concise and distinguished ring. The problem is not so much that we lose the verbal echo περνᾶ-περνᾶ as that the god is seen as necessarily in winged flight. This image becomes too specific and perhaps too suggestive of an angel with a message to convey: in Cavafy's poem the god bears no message beyond his own apparent existence.

But even if we cannot reproduce all the other formal features it is vital, surely, to produce a metrical form which has the same ring as Cavafy's original. The poem is entirely iambic, but the line-lengths vary in a way perhaps more apparent on the page than to the ear, but which contributes to the overall tone. For once again we have a poem poised between certainty and uncertainty. The initial firm denial that the gods are dead is justified, not by certain proof, but by something which happens irregularly, indistinctly, fleetingly, and in no more than a transitory way. So too the firmness of the opening blank verse eleven-syllable lines is adjusted by the unevenness of the lines that follow, until we reach once again the qualified firmness of the final verses. The line-lengths in fact go as follows: 11 syllables, 11, 12, 15, 11, 15, 15, 12, 10, 10. It is as if the line-lengths increase with a sort of yearning emotion and almost overflow the bounds of Ionian propriety; and one particular aspect of Cavafy's versification here deserves mention, as it is,

apart from anything else, one of the most culturally rooted and elusive features of modern Greek poetry, presenting great problems for the translator. It is the use of the so-called "political verse", the iambic fifteen-syllable line.

Just as the origin of rhyme in the West is shrouded in mystery, so is it with the political verse in Greek. We find it used as a metrical constituent in Byzantine hymnography; what is certain is that it is already dominant as a verse form by the twelfth century. Since then the great bulk of verse in Greek has been written in this metre or in variations on it. (Not just written, too, for the political verse is also the dominant metre of folk poetry.) Now it seems to me that Cavafy, being just as suspicious of this staple metre as Pound is of the English iambic ("Too much iambic will kill any subject matter"), uses it just as sparingly, and commonly as an instrument of irony. When Cavafy's speakers use the verse, even intermittently, it is because they are hectoring, sententious, sentimental, or merely glib; when he uses it *propria persona*, as here, it is because he wants to set it against other, plainer ways of speaking. In this poem the sixth, and especially the seventh, verses have the emotional ring; but this is then, not rescinded, but *placed* by the final, more measured verses.

This shift of tone is not fully evident from Keeley and Sherrard's translation. Mavrogordato does better overall here; but Kolaitis is surely right to go for "thee" of Ionia. This is a matter not just of tone but of conviction; for the poem is, in my view, a mixed case, between the sententious, time-free poems of Cavafy's early career and the historically rooted dramatic monologues which are perhaps his greatest, and certainly his most translatable, achievement. In this poem, much of the conviction comes from the fact that what is given voice to is not solely the poet's thought, or a timeless gnome, or a boasting about the eternally divine properties of the Greek world and by extension of its poetry, but what might at first sight appear to be a historical setting. The initial verbs appear to indicate a recent event, and a strong sense of complicity, as well as the wistfulness of certain ancient epigrams on the fall of paganism. That is why we need "thee" for Ionia (the speaker still preserves traces of the pagan reverence for place); that is why we need the word order of Kolaitis. If it weren't for these elements we might feel that the poem was a piece of pure romanticism denying the

death of the gods, a theme we can trace in many Greek poets of modern times. What we have here is more convincing because the ultimate focus is not on an abstraction – the gods in the plural, contrasted with an ungrateful human race – but with a single humanoid form.

The difficulty for the translator is to preserve this sense of reverence while giving the language the plainness that it has in the Greek. So Kolaitis's "ephebic" misses the mark, as the word is so much the property of Wallace Stevens (if not of Harold Bloom!). The phrase *μὲ διάβα γρήγορο* is more difficult: Mavrogordato's "with swift transition" has the best ring to it; Keeley and Sherrard's "in rapid flight" is closer to the idiom of the Greek but, as I have remarked, too much suggests a winged god – even, perhaps, a god fleeing a fallen world; Kolaitis's version just isn't English. The final words too are tricky: I'm not sure that it isn't only Keeley and Sherrard who produce something adequate here. Cautiously, I venture my own proposal:

and sometimes an ethereal youthful form,
indistinct, swift in its passage,
is seen to make its way across thy hills.

*

I don't want in my concluding section to be too pedantic, to grade the versions. As a matter of fact, I have deliberately chosen poems which do not (like the rhymed poems particularly) demand virtuoso treatment. My reason for ignoring this category was not just a principle of charity: it was to dispel what I feel to be a heresy on the part of the indefatigable Kimon Friar, to the effect that the problems in translating Cavafy are "basically technical ones". What I have tried to show is how far, even in poems with a certain plainness of language and word order, Cavafy is presenting us with delicate touches that resist translation. Cavafy as ironist adds still further touches, but I have not dwelt on these, not just because – with Keeley – I believe them to have been over-played by contemporary critics, but – a related point – because it is precisely the ironic mode which has now become so familiar in English-language poetry. It

is by contrast Cavafy's verse of deeply felt, if tentative, statement, that can fall flat in translation.

It has been my purpose, then, to take two poems which might well seem insubstantial in English, and to see how our translators have fared. Left out of account as, in my view, less problematic have been the poems on historical themes. Less problematic, not because the Greek itself will be easier to render – here too it is an amalgam for which there are not always analogues in English – but because here we have models to work with. Though Cavafy's tone of voice is indeed different from that of both Browning and Pound, we must expect a translator of the historical poems fully to have absorbed both. The knock-down case here is to be made with reference to the poem "Protus" from *Men and Women*. I defy anyone to read the poem and deny that Cavafy spent much of his poetic career refining and reforging this mode.

"Protus" was first cited by a hostile contemporary critic of Cavafy anxious to demonstrate that he was nothing but an epigone of Browning; and it is clear that Browning has paved the way for Cavafy not just in subject matter but in idiom. The exact consciousness of the literary and other sources of history; the teasing withholding of firm fact; the sense of sympathy for the frail or minor historical personage (often regarded as a Cavafian invention); the half-archaic, half-colloquial diction – all these are characteristic of Cavafy's historical poems. To adapt a famous dictum of T.S. Eliot, Cavafy learned more from Browning than most men could learn from a lifetime in the National Library of Greece.

In Cavafy's poetry itself, when we read it in translation, it is perhaps Mavrogordato who gives us the strongest impression of a debt to Browning, not so much because he sets out to do so as because this is the natural sphere within which he moves: his idiom most bears the mark of this nurture. At his best, Kolaitis, in turn, gives us something which in its strangeness, its syntactic inversions and its exotic words, is not always unfaithful to Cavafy's strangeness. Keeley and Sherrard, finally, are scrupulously faithful to the paraphrasable sense, and where plainness is required often rise to it with a felicitous arrangement of words; but they do not always – even in their revised edition – show us a Cavafy who is a master of hard-won syntactical and metrical effects. If there is a lesson here, it might be this. Now that we have a number of translations whose

main aim and claim has been fidelity, there might now be room for a freer, more ambitious response to Cavafy's poetry, one which embraces influences from English rather than keeping them at arm's length. Only then shall we be able to say that Cavafy himself – as opposed to his themes, his predilections and his more evident mannerisms – has been truly translated into English.¹⁹ In the meantime, the reader without Greek is in the more than usually happy position of being able to use the existing translations in a by no means unavailing search for their common target.

King's College London

¹⁹ See, for an excellent example, the translation "An Old Man", by Robert Pinsky, in *The Want Bone* (New York 1990), p. 43.



