

Culture and Society in Crete

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From Kornaros to Kazantzakis

Edited by

Liana Giannakopoulou
and E. Kostas Skordyles

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Τοῖς ἀρετοστολισμένοις ἀναγνώσταις

*Αγαπητοὶ συνάδελφοι, φίλοι καὶ φιλενάδες,
δόκτορες καὶ δοκτόρισσες, αφέντρες κι αφεντάδες,
σεις, τίμιες καθηγήτριες κι ἀξιοὶ καθηγητάδες –
δε βρίσκω ἄλλες κλητικές που καταλήγουν σ' -ἀδες!
Λοιπόν, τη ρίμα αφήνω την για τς ἄλλους στιχοπλόκους,*

*κι ὅσους συγγράφουν διατριβές στην τέχνη στιχουργίας,
κι ας μην ξεχνῶ τα δίστιχα τα λένε μαντινάδες.
Ὅσοι μποροῦν ας γράφουσι στίχους ριμαρισμένους.
Το μέτρον ὅμως το κρατῶ, σαν συνηθίζω πάντα,
ἀλλ' ὄχι το δεκαεπτασύλλαβο του Νίκου Καζαντζάκη,*

*οπού 'ναι βαρετός, πολιτικός καὶ κάτι παραπάνω.
«Μηδὲν ἄγαν» ελέγαν οἱ παλιοὶ οἱ Ἕλληνες φιλοσόφοι,
μα ο Νίκος παρανόησε, θαρρῶ, σέρνει τα πάντα στ' ἄκρα!
Ὁ γιαμβικός που προτιμῶ περιέχει δεκαπέντε
καλὰ δεμένες συλλαβές, μ' ἀφθονες συνιζήσεις*

*καὶ με συχνούς διασκελισμούς, ἔτσι να μη μπορούμε
ν' αναπαιτούμε φτάνοντας στο τέλος της ἀράδας
του στίχου. Βέβαια σας μιλῶ για ἕναν ποιητὴ τῆς Κρήτης,
Βιτσέντζο τότε λέσινε, τῆς Στειᾶς το παλληκάρι,
του Ἀνδρέα μικρότερο ἀδερφό, κ' ἐκ τῆς γενιάς Κορνάρου.*

*Ἄλλος ποιητὴς παράμιλλος ο Γεώργιος ἐκ Ρεθύμνου,
ἐπίσης ἀρτίος στιχουργός, τεχνίτης καὶ του λόγου,
με φράσεις ἀλλεπάλληλες που φέρνουν ζαλισμάρα,
πολλές φορές δυσνόητος, – ναῖσκε, εἶν' ο Χορτάτης –
θέση ἔχει στη συζήτηση που ἐκάμαμεν ομάδι*

*μ' ὅλον οπού δεν ζεύρομεν πολλὰ για τη ζωὴ του,
πότε ἔγραψε τα ἔργα του, πόσ' ἄλλα εἶναι χαμένα.
Ἡ Κρήτη ἐγέννησε πολλούς, μικρούς τε καὶ μεγάλους,
ἀξιους ἀθρώπους στ' ἄρματα, στην πένα, στο τραγούδι,
παλληκαράδες θαυμαστούς, καθ' ὅλους τους αἰῶνες.*

*Πού 'ν' ὅμως οἱ γυναῖκες τους, μητέρες κι ἀδερφάδες;
Εκείνες υπαγόρευαν, κ' οἱ ἄντρες κατεγράφαν;
Μπορεῖ, μα δεν το ζεύρομε, δεν θέλομε το μάθει.
Στις μέρες μας ὅλα ἄλλαξαν: ἐπὰ οἱ γυναῖκες γράφουν,
καὶ κάνουν ὄλες τσι δουλειές, ἐξίσου με τους ἄντρες.*

*Δε θέλω να πολυμιλώ, κ' η ώρα δεν το δίδει.
Ευχαριστώ σας που ήρθετε στη Γέφυρα του Κάμη,
οπού 'ναι γνώσης ποταμός, τση μάθησης η βρώσις,
μάλιστα αντίθετο σκαμνί τς ακαδημιάς τς Οξφόρδης:
σαν τα οχυρά τα δίδυμα, Κορώνη και Μεθώνη,*

*τα δυο σκολειά φυλάγουνε τη βασιλεία της γνώσης.
Ευχαριστώ για την τιμή που δίδετε σ' εμένα.
Κατέχω το, γνωρίζω το, άξιος γι' αυτή δεν είμαι,
μα ανταποδίδω τς ευγενειές και της φιλικιάς τη χάρη
που εδείζετε με τς εμιλιές και με την παρουσία σας.*

*Βλέπω μπουκάλια με κρασί, ποτήρια γεμισμένα,
σημάδια τση ξεφάντωσης ν' αναγαλλιάσομ' όλοι.
Απόψε θα γλεντήσομε, με λόγια και με πράξεις,
και το ταχύ θ' ακούσομε κι άλλες κουβέντες άξες.
Ευχαριστώ σας ολουνούς. Εβίβα! Ζήτω η Κρήτη!*

David Holton

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INTRODUCTION

LIANA GIANNAKOPOULOU
KOSTAS SKORDYLES

The present volume contains a selection from the papers delivered at the international conference held in Selwyn College, Cambridge in honour of Professor David Holton, a scholar who has dedicated an important part of his work to researching and promoting the literature and culture of Crete, especially during the Renaissance period.

Crete, or η Μεγαλόνησος (the Great Island) as it is also called in Greek, has always attracted the interest of scholars in modern times not only because of the archaeological discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans that shed light on a rich pre-classical civilization, but also because of its rich history and the particular cultural traits and traditions resulting from the fact that the island has been at the crossroads of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam.

The most distinctive element of Crete is, of course, its geographical features. It is the largest island of Greece and the second largest in the eastern Mediterranean, almost equidistant from Asia Minor, mainland Greece and northern Africa, occupying a strategic geopolitical position. Moreover, the particularities of the island's landscape have been crucial to its socio-political development. The mountains, especially the White Mountains and Mount Ida, played, and continue to play, a decisive role in its history, society and literary imagination (as M. Rodosthenous-Balafa, N. Kakkoufa and G. Pateridou discuss in their papers) as they stand for the timeless values and mores of the place, encourage "hit-and-run" tactics and serve as a safe-haven for rebels and outlaws alike. Naturally, as a big island, Crete has many important ports, especially on the northern coast, such as the port of Herakleion (Candia), while Souda Bay is still considered to be the safest natural harbour in the Mediterranean (currently serving as a NATO military base) (Levitt 1971–2, 165; Pinar 2011, 62ff.).

It is precisely this geopolitical location that made the island the bone of contention for competing powers in the region. In the *longue durée*, the history of Crete is characterized by a succession of conquests and occupa-

tions—Roman, Arab, Venetian, Ottoman, German—that triggered a series of recurrent, but usually unsuccessful, rebellions and insurrections by the local inhabitants who, exploiting the geography of the island, were able to mount resistance to the occupiers for long periods of time.

As a consequence, the island of Crete acquired in popular imagination a mythical dimension as a land of heroes and bravery, eliciting a discourse which seems to expand beyond the local to the national and in some cases international level. The beginnings of this discourse are rooted in the folk songs of Crete and particularly so in the large number of narrative poems focusing on historical events such as revolts and heroic deeds by Cretans in their attempts to acquire their independence from the Venetians and later the Ottomans (Constantinides 2011, 409) and achieve *ἔνωσις* (union) with Greece. William James Stillman, the well-known photographer of the Acropolis who had also been a US consul in Crete, in his book-length account of the Cretan insurrection against the Ottomans of 1866–9 shows early indications of this kind of idealization, when he starts in the following way:

A student of classical ethnology, curious to restore the antique man, can do no better, so far as the Greek variety is concerned, than to go to Crete and study its people. The Cretan of to-day preserves probably the character of antiquity, and holds to his ancient ways of feeling and believing, and, within the new conditions, as far as possible of acting, more nearly than would be believed possible, and affords a better field of investigation into the nature of the classical man than any existing records. (Stillman 1874, 13)

The Greek poet Lorentzos Mavilis (1860–1912) is another early architect of this perception. He dedicated three sonnets to Crete: “Κρήτη” (“Crete”), “Πλήρωμα Χρόνου” (“Fullness of Time”) and “Excelsior!” (Mavilis 1990, 76, 81, 88) which were all inspired by his first-hand experience of the island during the same insurrection of 1866–9 (Tomadakis 1939). They give poetic expression to people’s perceptions of the island in relation to its famed pride and heroic tradition, its fabled and uncompromising love of freedom and its incomparable natural beauty. In “Excelsior!” the idealization of the Cretans reaches quasi-mythical dimensions: their bodies become statues-come-to-life and they belong to a nobler branch of humanity: “εὐγενικιά ἀνθρωπότη / Θὰ τοὺς φιλένη” (2–3); “Κορμιά ἀπὸ τὴν πλήθια χάρη ἀλαφρημένα” (4); “Ἀγάλματα θεῶν ζωντανεμένα” (5). And the Greek poet was not alone in sustaining such a myth.

The sonnet “Κρήτη,” however, is the one that altogether lifts the island outside historical time and into the sphere of myth. Here Mavilis creates a

vivid image of the lure that the island exerts on its people and the values that contribute to its unique character:

Σειρήνα πρασινόχρυση, με μάτι
 Σὰν τῆς Ἀγάπης, με λαχτάρας χεῖλια,
 Ἀχτιδομάλλα, ὀρθοβόζα, με χίλια
 Μύρια καμάρια καὶ λέπια γεμάτη,

Τραγοῦδι τραγουδᾷς μὲς τῇ ροδάτῃ
 Κατάχνια τοῦ πελάου, καὶ ἔς τὴν προσήλια
 Τοῦ ἀγέρος πλατωσιὰ καὶ ἔς τὰ βασιλεια
 Τῆς γῆς πνοὴ τὸ σέρνει μυρωδάτη.

«Σὰν τὸ γάλα τῆς αἴγας Ἀμαλθείας
 Θρέφει θεοὺς καὶ τὸ φίλι μου ἐμένα!
 Ἐλάτε νὰ χαρῆτε μὲς ἔς τῆς θείας

Ἀγκαλιᾶς μου τὸ σφίξιμο ἐνωμένα,
 Πρόσφυγες τῆς Ζωῆς, δῶρ ἅγια τρία:
 Θάνατο, Ἀθανασιὰ κ' Ἐλευτερία.»

The island is visualized as a siren or a mermaid whose song invites travelers to taste her embrace and partake of the timeless gifts she has to offer: Love, Death, Immortality and Freedom. But the Homeric myth is disconnected from its threatening side. Those who let the song ensnare their mind and senses are not the foolish or the weak but the brave. Linking the island's mythical roots (“τὸ γάλα τῆς αἴγας Ἀμαλθείας,” “the milk of the goat Amalthea”) to enduring values, the poem makes of Crete the nurse of new heroes who, having left human life behind (“πρόσφυγες τῆς Ζωῆς,” “Life's refugees”), brave Death in order to gain Freedom and ultimately embrace Immortality.

It is most interesting that this perception of the island and its people continues unabated in the 20th century, reinforced by the heroic struggle of the Cretans during the Battle of Crete (1941) and their resistance to the German occupation (see Y. Skalidakis's paper). Kazantzakis's literary representations of the Cretans has done much to sustain such attitudes, which have also been immortalized in the narratives of Patrick Leigh Fermor, George Psychoundakis, Pantelis Prevelakis and others.

This kind of “mythologization” of a place is not specific to Crete, of course. Many geographical spaces become *topoi* as they acquire a distinctive identity through human intervention in and interaction with that space: social practices, foundational narratives, historical experience, “the reciprocal interdependence of literature and place” (Leontis 1995, 9). But the

process of imparting mythical qualities to the Cretan land and people has been especially powerful, and, as we have seen, has cut across the physical boundaries of the Great Island and the time-limits of a particular period.

Indeed, speaking of Crete in history, Theodore Ziolkowski (2008, 3) compares its course to the flight of Icarus “who launched himself from the heavens—only to fall ignominiously, the prey of his own pride, into the dark seas below.” He speaks of the “thalassocracy of Minos” specifically, but considered outside that particular period, nothing could be further from the truth and poles apart from Mavilis’s sonnet, above. Mavilis’s mythical metaphor better reflects our case: a siren that travels in time carrying a narrative that becomes realized in history every time the circumstances allow it. The myths of the Minoan civilization, as Ziolkowski himself shows in his fascinating book, have emerged anew at the beginning of the 20th century interweaving themselves with the discourse of modernism (as E. González-Vaquero shows with reference to Kazantzakis’s *Odyssey*), and the creative imagination and poetics of Surrealism in literature and the visual arts (De Chirico and Picasso are characteristic examples).

Michael Herzfeld’s much quoted observations on the matter of Crete’s idiosyncrasies are concise and accurate: “Crete certainly occupies a position at once eccentric within the wider framework of Greek society, yet one that is also central to its self-image. Its people are often despised and feared outside the island, yet its role in the defence of the modern Greek nation-state is widely acknowledged” (Herzfeld 1985, 9). Such insularity has been the source of great pride associated as it is with “qualities that have made Crete the birthplace of many national leaders in politics, war and the arts” (Herzfeld 1985, 6; Levitt 1971–2, 167) and which have been collectively described by Kazantzakis as “the Cretan Glimpse.” But the papers of K. Gedgoudaité and G. Pateridou reveal a more complex, and at times darker, side of the local.

Another characteristic element of Cretan culture is its language, the Cretan dialect. Its distinctiveness does not rest solely on its phonological and morphosyntactical particularities (typical of any dialect—some of which are discussed by Io Manolessou in this volume) but on its careful chiselling and refinement as a language of high literature in the masterpieces of the Cretan Renaissance: *Erofili*, *Erotokritos*, *Panoria* and others. It is also a language whose richness of vocabulary, imagery and distinctive versification has influenced, inspired and shaped the work of major authors of 20th-century Greek literature: Solomos, Palamas, Sikelianos, Kazantzakis and Seferis to mention but the best known ones (and David Ricks’ paper delves into one such case, Solomos’s “The Cretan”). Levitt’s observation about Kazantzakis is telling: “The sophisticated freedom of

Kazantzakis's language clearly derives from the inventiveness of the Cretan dialect" (Levitt 1971–2, 171).

Indeed, the Renaissance period as a whole is one in which Crete reached another "Golden Age" during which not only literary production but also other forms of artistic output such as painting, music and architecture as well as scholarly works proliferated. As David Holton (1999, 20) has argued, the encounter of East and West that took place in Crete during the period of Venetian domination set off a process of cultural cross-fertilization of immeasurable importance for the development of modern Greek art and literature. And not just for modern Greece. It seems that the Cretan case acquires increasing relevance and importance for historians in the field of colonial studies. As Sally McKee has pointed out quoting Pope Urban V, Crete has been subjected to an "uncommon dominion" and occupies a paradigmatic position in the study of pre-modern colonization where "the symbiotic relationship between ethnicity and colonization, has yet to be explored" (McKee 2010, 5). The significance of this period is reflected in the number of contributions which, in this volume, are dedicated to its cultural production and social practices: M. Rodostenous-Balafa, N. Kakkoufa and M. Paschalis in Part I, as well as M. Mondelou in Part IV and C. Carpinato in Part V, all explore aspects of the literature and society of Renaissance Crete and the presence of the Great Island in Venice.

The fifteen papers that follow have been grouped in broadly thematic sections which give new insights into already established fields, explore original aspects of the Cretan cultural and historical tradition, and underline from the vantage point of their own particular field the repercussions and influence of its distinctive character.

Part I groups together the papers which focus on Cretan Renaissance literature in context. Starting from the fact that both Crete and Cyprus were under Venetian rule in the first seventy years of the 16th century, M. Rodostenous-Balafa explores the creative adoption of Italian models ("manneristic response") in the Greek-speaking world, focusing on the works of the Cypriot Canzoniere and Chortatsis's *Panoria*. She discusses their use of Petrarchistic themes, images and motifs in order to show how, through their differences in particular, two versions of Greek neo-Petrarchism come to the fore: more serious and refined in the case of the *Cypriot Canzoniere* (becoming an example of Petrarchism) and rather subversive and ironic in the case of the tragicomic genre of *Panoria* (which becomes thus an example of counter- or anti-Petrarchism).

N. Kakkoufa explores the world of dreams and its significance in *Erotokritos* with reference to the two love stories of the poem, that of Cha-

ridimos and his beloved on the one hand, and that of Aretousa and Erotokritos on the other. He focuses on the comparative reading of the dreams dreamt by Charidimos and Aretousa in order to assess the many different ways in which they are embedded within *Erotokritos*: they function as transformation rituals for the development of the characters; as narrative devices, they become key elements in the unfolding of the plot reflecting the couples' initiation to love; finally, they reveal Kornaros's original reworking of the poem's sources such as Ovid's Cephalus and Procris. Kakkoufa explains that the use of the dream supports the construction of male and female subjectivity as well as the psychological world of the heroine, Aretousa.

By examining the paratexts of the Cretan Renaissance works, M. Paschalis proposes an evolutionary pattern in the manifestation of authorial consciousness from Chortatsis to Marinos Tzanes Bounialis. Paschalis observes the initial timelessness of the Cretan works (*Erofilo* or *Panoria* for example) and notes that authorial self-consciousness begins to appear as a result of changes in historical circumstances, that is, with the beginning of the Cretan War. The invasion of history into the world of literature will bring the notion of homeland to the foreground, will draw attention to the author and his work and encourage pride in the Cretan dialect and in the Cretan literary activity.

Part II contains two papers that discuss the work of Nikos Kazantzakis and his real and imaginary travels.

A. Athanasopoulou explores in some detail Kazantzakis's perceptions of Britain before and after World War II and highlights the notable difference in tone and mood between the two visits of the famous Cretan. The first trip is dominated by his admiration of what Kazantzakis saw as British virtues, principles and traditions: the education provided by Oxford and Cambridge and the ideals and values that go with it, the image of the gentleman and Britain's colonial power (for which Athanasopoulou provides an ideological and a psychological explanation). The 1946 trip, on the other hand, is marked by the conflicts, tensions and disappointments inherent in war and post-war periods.

In her paper on Kazantzakis's *Odyssey*, E. González-Vaquerizo's aim is to read this ambitious work in the context and poetics of Modernism, questioning the dominant attitudes that consider it old-fashioned and obsolete. For her, this modern *Odyssey* contains the seeds of Kazantzakis' subsequent Modernism as witnessed in his internationally renowned novels. She identifies these seeds in a number of techniques, ideas and motifs: the poem's ideological debt to Nietzsche and Bergson; its formal features, which include elements of modernist formal experimentation; above all

the use of myth, and of Cretan myths at that. Considering the central position of Cretan myth in 20th-century literature and art, Kazantzakis manages to put his work on an international stage while keeping it rooted to his own homeland, culture and (to some extent) traditions. The Cretan dimension allows for this dynamic relationship between the local and the global.

Part III explores Crete in 20th-century Greek literature as it stages the tensions that emerge from the island's rich and multi-cultural historical past, the powerful traits of the Cretan character and identity, as well as the rigid social norms that governed it until very recent years. In this respect, the island becomes a *topos* and a *lieu de mémoire*.

K. Gedgoudaitè discusses the novel *The Innocent and the Guilty* by Maro Douka, a Cretan female author who turned to her native city of Chania in order to explore the tensions, frictions and negotiations that emerge between a constructed national identity and an individual identity laden with inherited multi-cultural traits. The choice is a fitting one: the city of Chania has been the stage of many conflicts as the Cretans have negotiated their space with Venice, the Ottomans and, in much more recent times, a large number of migrants and refugees. Two of these periods, the Ottoman and the contemporary, come to life in the novel through Douka's characters, who are haunted by a past that lays claims on the present just as the present struggles to come to terms with the past.

Gedgoudaitè shows how Chania turns into an arena of conflict and negotiation of identity as it becomes exposed to complex historical circumstances that challenge the univocal and homogenous tendencies of modern Greece.

G. Pateridou delves further into the particular nature of locality and its distinctive features in relation to Cretan society but also the Greek political sphere. She discusses in some detail two novels by another famous Cretan writer, Rhea Galanaki, *Deep Silent Waters: The Abduction of Tassoula* and *Bonfires of Judah, Ashes of Oedipus*, and through them explores the particularities of Cretan society as they become exposed to the changes of 20th- and 21st-century Greece. In her discussion, we become aware of the power but also of the limits and dangers of locality; we see how codes of pride and prejudice are but two sides of the same coin; as the novels engage with issues of gender, xenophobia and religious prejudice, we are introduced to the dark side of locality, since "the persistence of local laws and local logic [...] has allowed the nurturing of illegal actions and hypocrisy."

Part IV groups together papers on language, society and history from the 16th to the 20th century.

Io Manolessou, as a collaborator in the project of the Grammar of Medieval Greek of the University of Cambridge directed by David Holton, has access to a much more extensive and diverse corpus of written evidence, stretching from the works of Renaissance literary and non-literary texts to 18th- and 19th-century manuscripts. In her paper she discusses the different types of evidence available in examining the phonology of the Cretan dialect, concentrating mostly on two typical features, namely velar fronting and rhotacism.

M. Mondelou's paper, based on the notarial archive of Sitia housed in the State Archive of Venice, sheds light on family life in Crete during the Venetian rule, notably on the position of the large number of illegitimate children that existed at the time in urban and rural communities. The documents reveal that illegitimate children were normally not excluded from the family property. The paper discusses the ways in which illegitimate children received bequests, and identifies differences between male and female testators, between the childless ones and those with children, and between illegitimate and legitimate children.

P. Mackridge discusses R. M. Dawkins's project of writing a book based on the information he gathered while travelling extensively on the island of Crete. Dawkins, a renowned archaeologist and linguist attached for several years to the British School at Athens, was commissioned in 1916 as lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and sent to Crete to collect intelligence. He stayed in Crete until 1919 gathering information about the island's landscape, flora, roads and buildings as well as traditions and superstitions. The book was never completed but he left behind a draft of its chapters which, together with Dawkins's correspondence with his friend F. W. Hasluck, constitute the basis for this paper.

Y. Skalidakis discusses Crete in World War II, focusing on the encounter of Cretan society, where pre-modern socio-economic conditions by and large still prevailed, with the occupying forces that tried to strengthen their military position. The occupiers put a heavy burden on the island's agricultural economy, forcing peasants to provide a labour force for the Germans and, at the same time, continue their agricultural activities. This situation completely disrupted the traditional way of life, the people's perception of seasonal work and sense of self-employment and self-determination. Thus, a broader reaction to the occupation emerged, of which the organized Resistance constitutes only one aspect.

Finally, Part V looks at the presence of Crete and the influence of its culture outside the Great Island. C. Carpinato reverses the predominant outlook of the traditional line of research (such as Gerola, for example) which focuses on the Venetian influences in Cretan culture. Moving her

lens away from the colony and back to the metropolis, she takes the reader on a historical and cultural tour and, taking inspiration from architecture and other vestiges of visual art, draws our attention to the immanent presence and importance of Crete for the *Serenissima*, referred to by the Venetians themselves as “our city’s eye and right hand” (quoted in McKee 2010, 19).

D. Ricks’s paper gives new, original insights into a masterpiece of modern Greek literature, Solomos’s poem “The Cretan.” Through a comparative discussion with Robert Browning’s “The Italian in England” (1848) and an emphasis on “the affinities between the two poems in their historical setting, their plot, and their dramatis personae,” Ricks not only shows that “The Cretan” is a dramatic monologue and indeed the founding example in the modern Greek language. His contrastive outlook also puts into greater relief the distinctive qualities of Solomos’s treatment of national and religious elements. The powerful hold of Crete as a homeland that is now irrevocably lost and the sense of alienation the narrator experiences even though he is on Greek soil reveals the importance of the Great Island on a metaphysical, mystical level deeply ingrained in the speaker’s soul.

After a detailed introduction to the beginnings, reception and particularities of the *Classics Illustrated* in Greece, L. Diamantopoulou discusses the insights the modern researcher may get into this publishing industry through the adaptations of three specific works of Renaissance Crete: *Erotokritos*, the *Sacrifice of Abraham* and *Erofilii*. What can we learn about the criteria that affect the choice of text, or particular stylistic or illustration decisions? How do social, ideological or political issues affect the process of adaptation and its popularity? What is the relationship that develops between these “comics” and their contemporary theatrical productions? Such questions are explored in detail as Diamantopoulou analyses the Renaissance style of the illustrations, the intended readership of these texts, the decision to emphasise or underplay particular episodes and the reasons why some works, especially *Erotokritos*, have been much more appealing and popular than *Erofilii*.

Finally, Stathis Gauntlett’s contribution skilfully explores in a light vein and with fine humour the tradition of the literary defamation of letters and teachers/intellectuals in modern Greek literature, with particular emphasis on the Cretan representations from Kornaros via Kondylakis and Prevelakis to Kazantzakis. It is intended as a tribute to Gauntlett’s δάσκαλος, David Holton, of course, but it is also a testament to the procession of major authors that Crete has contributed to Greek literature, their refreshingly subversive self-reflections, and their ironic take on tradition.

To conclude, the papers presented in this volume offer readers the opportunity to familiarize themselves with different aspects of Crete's history, literature, society and language without the constraints that a thematic or chronological criterion would impose. They come to add to and extend existing discussions which bring to the fore the significance of the island as a paradigm for several strands of inquiry in areas as varied as the Renaissance, Modernism, linguistic variation, intersemiotic translation, and occupation and resistance practices.

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PART I:

**RENAISSANCE LITERATURE:
AUTHORSHIP AND POETICS**

PETRARCHISM AND ANTI-PETRARCHISM:
THE MANNERISTIC RESPONSE
OF THE CYPRIOT *CANZONIERE*
AND CHORTATSI'S *PANORIA*¹

MARINA RODOSTHENOUS-BALAFA

Abstract

During the first seventy years of the 16th century the two Greek islands, Cyprus and Crete, had more or less the same opportunities to become acquainted with Italian culture and assimilate the ideas and artistic trends of the time. For this reason, David Holton suggests that a comparative study between the Cypriot lyric poems and the Cretan texts of the Renaissance period would reveal that, despite their indirect relationship, they display many similarities in the use of certain motifs and images. This paper attempts to investigate and highlight the common themes of two different literary genres, the Cypriot Petrarchistic lyric poetry and the Cretan pastoral drama by Georgios Chortatsis Panoria, which—in accordance with the tragicomic genre to which it belongs—uses several Petrarchistic elements in a subversive and ironic manner. It seeks to detect, in other words, two different versions of the mannerist trend of Petrarchism in the Greek speaking world of the 16th century.

During the first seventy years of the 16th century, Cyprus and Crete were both under Venetian rule. As a result, the inhabitants of the two Greek islands shared many cultural similarities and connections, since they had common opportunities to become acquainted with Italian education and civilization, assimilate the ideas and artistic trends of the time and incorporate them into their native culture, creating thus a significant blend of

¹ I am grateful to Prof. David Holton and Dr Bancroft-Marcus for reading a version of my paper and kindly making very useful comments on it.

Greek and western European elements (Holton 1992, 515, 530).² For this reason, Holton (2006–7, 45) believes that comparisons between the Cypriot lyric poems and the Cretan texts of the 16th and 17th centuries would reveal many affinities in the use of certain motifs and images.³ Lassithiotakis (1996a, 153–75) was, as far as I know, the first scholar to perform a systematic examination of parallels between Cretan and Cypriot Renaissance literature and clearly showed that both literatures share many thematic resemblances. Although he did not set out to prove direct influence between the two literatures, he argued that comparative studies of this kind might contribute valuable insights into the history of 16th-century Greek lyric poetry (Lassithiotakis 1996a, 174).

This paper will highlight common themes between two Greek works, but it will focus at the same time on their dissimilar elaboration, the result of the different literary genres to which they belong: the anonymous Cypriot Petrarchistic lyrical poetry (probably collected around the third quarter of the 16th century) and the pastoral drama *Panoria* by Georgios Choratsis (composed towards the end of the same century). While the Cypriot collection largely preserves a serious, refined tone, reflecting that of its Petrarchan model, the tragicomic genre of *Panoria* predicates a subversive, ironic (Puchner 1991, 349–61), parodic (Markomihelaki 1995, 82–5) and often humorous (Bancroft-Marcus 1980, 136–7) exploitation of the normative tradition. In this way, the particular variations of the model enable us to detect and discuss two different versions of the manneristic trend of Petrarchism in the Greek-speaking world of the 16th century.

Before embarking on my analysis, I shall briefly define the three basic literary terms with which this paper deals (Petrarchism, anti-Petrarchism, Mannerism) and indicate the perspective from which I employ them in my analysis. To begin with, Petrarchism is a trend that started while Petrarch (1304–74), the author of the Italian *Canzoniere*, *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, was alive (e.g. Boccaccio, Chaucer); it reached considerable proportions in the last half of the 15th century (e.g. Poliziano, Sannazaro, Boiardo) and became the predominant mode of poetic expression in the 16th century throughout most of western Europe (Hardison, Fucilla & Klein-

² For preliminary information on the historical, social, and cultural background of the two islands during the Venetian rule (Crete 1211–1669 and Cyprus 1489–1571), see the collective volumes: Panagiotakis 1988, Papadopoulos 1996, Maltezou 2002, and Holton 2006.

³ David Ricks (1988, 241) with the Cretan romance as point of reference argued that “erotic topoi and their treatment in the abundant speeches of *Erotokritos*” show many affinities with the Cypriot sonnets.

henz 1993, 903).⁴ According to this trend, poets try to imitate the “master’s *maniera*” (Scaglione 1971, 126–7), the conceits he uses, several oxymora, the imagery and also his style, either through purity of language, elegance and refinement that is “the Bembist approach to Petrarchism” (Mirollo 1984, 69) or through a more sophisticated form of satire, irony (Hoggan 1979, 806–19), parodic juxtaposition, distortion and reversal of a thematic or stylistic feature of the norm, which is the “counter-Petrarchism” (Mirollo 1984, 69) or “anti-Petrarchism” (Forster 2010, 56–7).

The meaning of these two trends (Petrarchism and anti-Petrarchism) has shifted among critics: an anti-Petrarchist author for some would be a Petrarchist one for others (Steadman 1990, 75). In any case, both trends comprise two different outcomes of the same literary *mode* (Mirollo 1984, 68), Mannerism, which according to some researchers bears witness to the sophistication of the Renaissance style rather than reaction *against* the Renaissance (Steadman 1990, 91).⁵ Burke (1997, 50–1) finds it “difficult” and “less fruitful” to decide which author was a mannerist and which was not or to identify mannerist works, particularly outside Italy. Likewise, Mirollo (1984, 68) considers it “unwieldy” and “frustratingly vague” to use notions such as “universal mannerism,” “an age of mannerism” or even “mannerist authors.” The working assumption he prefers for literary mannerism presupposes that

there is a particular artistic sensibility that expresses itself in certain formal and stylistic ways, on occasion, and is therefore best sought in individual literary works as a modal variety of Renaissance literary style rather than a separate, autonomous phenomenon. As such, it may dominate a part of or a

⁴ For a very recent and fresh depiction of Petrarchism and Bembo’s role in its widespread dissemination in the 16th century, see Shemek 2014, 182–8. See also Brand and Pertile 2004, 253–4.

⁵ Steadman (1990, 13) also remarks that: “Many of the salient features that we now associate with late Renaissance (or post Renaissance) styles like mannerism and baroque have their roots in the culture of the High Renaissance, or earlier, and it would be misleading to regard them as symptoms of a new sensibility or *differantiae* of a new age,” Burke (1997, 53) agrees with this perspective and notes: “Mannerism is sometimes characterized as ‘anti-Renaissance’ or ‘counter-Renaissance’, but it might be better to describe it as a late phase of the Renaissance [...] the humanists of the time, the scholars and the men of letters, we find that they were concerned not to break with the Renaissance past but rather to elaborate some aspects of it at the expense of others.” For more French and Italian bibliography on Mannerism in literature, see Luciani 2006, 192. See also Luciani’s monograph on Cretan Mannerism 2005.

whole work and even appear in a series of poems or plays [...]. Mannerism is likely to be found whenever and wherever the Renaissance artist confronts the obligation to imitate both nature and art, and in the case of art, to contend with, to quote but not ape a predecessor whose achievement in a particular genre or form has been declared supreme or unsurpassable, or simply *the* norm (Mirollo 1984, 68).

From this perspective, the term “manneristic response” is used in this paper to refer to the particular and individual elaboration of certain aspects that the Greek-speaking author/s of the Cypriot collection and Chortatsis in *Panoria* attempted in relation to their predecessors, Petrarch and the Petrarchan poets. It would be useful to briefly give a description of the two works, before their comparison.

Panoria is set on Mount Ida in Crete and since it follows the conventions of the pastoral mode, it relates to two young shepherds, Gyparis and Alexis, who are hopelessly in love with two reluctant shepherdesses, Panoria and Athousa. Besides the two pairs of young people, there is also a third, aging couple: Panoria’s father Giannoulis, a widower, and Panoria’s confidante (nurse in her infancy), Frosyni. Both long for their youth’s sexual adventures and they still desire sexual intercourse, but when Giannoulis proposes to Frosyni she refuses. Frosyni, however is willing to help the two shepherds to win the girls as legitimate wives by suggesting they appeal in prayer to Aphrodite, the goddess of Love. Aphrodite responds to their invocation and sends her son Cupid to shoot Panoria and Athousa with his bow and arrows. The shepherdesses fall instantly in love with the shepherds and the play ends with a double-wedding celebration.

The anonymous Cypriot *Canzoniere* (Song-book) is a sequence of 156 poems in various metrical forms. In recent years, researchers have come to believe that the Cypriot collection had not one, but multiple authors, mainly on account of the different styles of the poems.⁶ The majority deal with the unrequited love of the poet and his anguish over the unfulfilled and unattainable desire, which comes from the Petrarchan *topos* of the idealized gaze and beauty of the ethereal beloved (Lassithiotakis 1996c, 146–8). Below we quote a poem from the Cypriot collection which is a transla-

⁶ Noteworthy is the observation by Shemek (2014, 188) that the first-ever multi-authored lyric anthology was printed in 1545 by the trendsetting Venetian publisher Gabriel Giolito, opening thus a new chapter of literary history. For two recent views on the multiple authorship of the Cypriot collection, see Mathiopoulou-Tornaritou 2007, 63–77 and Pieris 2012, 363–4; on the single authorship, see Carbonaro 2012, 13–6.

tion from Sannazaro (Siapkaras-Pitsillidès 1975, 272–3)⁷ and clearly expresses the Renaissance beauty canon through rhetoric questions:

Τούτα ἔν ἐκεῖνα τα μαλλιά ξανθά τα χρουσαφένα
 που μ' ἔδησεν ὁ Ἐρωτας που δεν <ε>ο>κνός για μένα;
 Τούτα ἔν τα μμάτια τα γλυκιά στα ποια κρατεί το βλέμμα
 που πήρεν αντάμ με ἔδασιν τέλεια ἔπου μεν το πνεύμα;

Τούτο ἔν το χιόνι τ' ἄσπρον κρυόν και καθαρόν ρουπίνιν
 ἀπού μ' ἔβαλεν στο λαμπρόν κι ἀξάφτω στο καμίνιν;
 Τούτα ἔν τα χέρια τα ἔμορφα που σύραν το ξουφάριν
 που στην καρδιάμ μου βάφηκεν κ' εἶναι με τόσην χάρην;

Τούτα ἔν τα πόδια της τιμής ἀπ' ὅπου να πατήσουν
 ἔχουν συνήθιν μυρωδιάς τραντάφυλλον να αθθίσουν;

(C.C., 114 1–10)⁸

[Are these the blond golden tresses/ to which I was bound by Cupid, who has not been indolent on my behalf?/ Are these the sweet eyes which own the glance/ that took my spirit away, when they beheld me?/ Is that the cold white snow and clear ruby/ that plunged me into the fire and I am all ablaze in the furnace?/ Are these the beautiful hands, that threw the dart/ which was dyed in my heart, and yet are so charming?/ Are these the feet of honour, which whenever they pass by,/ always make the scented roses bloom?]⁹

Not surprisingly, Chortatsis's heroine, Panoria, whose name means “all-beautiful,” is also described with standardized metaphors and metonymies, following the Petrarchistic poetic tradition but also various Renaissance dialogues on the decorum of women's beauty (Rodosthenous 2007, 182–

⁷ As for the Sannazaran influence in the Cypriot collection, Pecoraio (1976, 121) observes: “La presenza così rilevante di spunti direttamente petrarcheschi e di un poeta così classicamente atteggiandosi nel quadro del petrarchismo cinquecentesco come appunto il Sannazaro è senz'altro molto significativa, e sarà certamente da valutare ai fini di una definizione del carattere *complessivo* del nostro *Canzoniere*.”

⁸ All the citations of the Cypriot *Canzoniere*, abbreviated here to C.C., are from the Greek-French bilingual edition of Siapkaras-Pitsillidès 1975. For more examples of the beloved's appearance, see: C.C. 7, 8, 41.

⁹ The English translations of the Cypriot poems are by me especially for the purposes of this paper. They aim to assist the non-Greek-speaking reader to follow the thematic comparisons of the two texts. Therefore, I have tried to give a literal rendering of the poems, without any aspiration to reflect the linguistic, stylistic and metrical artistry of the Cypriot poet/s. I owe many thanks to Prof. David Holton for reading and refining my translations.

3): she has “tresses of gold”¹⁰ (χρυσά μαλλιά) (I. 82), “pretty eyes” (μάτια πλουμιστά) (II. 387), “silver countenance” (αργυρό πρόσωπο) (II. 388), “snow-white forehead” (χιονάτο κούτελο) (I. 79), “arms of marble” (χέρια μαρμαρένια) (I. 80) etc. Furthermore, the Cretan dramatist, like Sannazaro, uses the ancient *topos*, which Petrarch also invokes, that of “the lady’s generative footsteps” making nature flourish wherever she passes by (Mírollo 1984, 127): “The fields came out in flower, the grasses bloomed,/ The verdure flourished, and the fruit-trees ripened” (I. 321–2).

Further to their common outlooks and the fruitful impact they have on nature, all three beautiful ladies (the beloved in the *Canzoniere* and the two shepherdesses in the pastoral, Panoria and Athousa), following the Petrarchan *ethos*, refuse love in order to protect their honour and chastity:

Το πεθυμάς αἶς αὐτοῦ μου δύσκολον ἐνί [...]
 Για τὴν τιμῆμ μου ἀπόμεινε μὲν ἐν χαμένη
 κι ἀνίσως καὶ δὲν δύνεσαι τόσον ν’ ἀργήσης
 παίρνοντας ἀχ τὴν κρυότημ μου μπορεῖς νὰ ποίσης
 ἡ βράστη νὰ ’ν εἰς αὐτοῦ σου συγκερασμένη.

(C.C., 74. 1, 5–8)¹¹

[What you desire from me is hard/ [...] / Be patient so that my virtue will not be discarded/ and if you cannot wait that long/ by taking some of my coldness,/ you will temper your burning heat].

Panoria: κι ἐμένα κόρη ευγενικὴ ἤθελαν μ’ ονομάζει,
 γιατί δὲν ἔκαμα ποτέ πρᾶμα εἰσέ ντροπὴ μου,
 μηδὲ κανένα ἀφηκα νὰ πάρει τὴν τιμὴ μου.

(III. 12–4)¹²

[While I should have been termed a modest maiden,/ Because I’ve never done a shameful deed,/Nor let a man deprive me of my virtue!]

However, the way Panoria refuses Gyparis’s love and marriage is completely anti-Petrarchan, since she is not presented as the classic Petrarchan

¹⁰ For the English translation of *Panoria*, I use the bilingual Greek-English edition of Bancroft-Marcus 2013. For the Greek text and all the references to the work, see the edition by Kriaras as revised by Pidonia 2007.

¹¹ In poems C.C. 69 v. 1–8 and 120 the poet steps backwards, when he comes across the honour and nobility of the lady, because he does not want to disgrace her. For Frosyni’s attack on the Petrarchistic myth that women inspire love without feeling it, see Bancroft-Marcus 1983, 28.

¹² See also *Panoria*, IV. 23–50.