

“His Words Were Nourishment
and His Counsel Food”

“His Words Were Nourishment
and His Counsel Food”:
A Festschrift for David W. Holton

Edited by

Efrosini Camatsos, Tassos A. Kaplanis
and Jocelyn Pye

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P U B L I S H I N G

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Οι λόγοι του ήσανε θροφή
κι η ερμηνειά του βρώση
Erotokritos I 80

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Professor David W. Holton

PREFACE

David W. Holton studied Classics and Byzantine and Modern Greek literature at the University of Oxford. His Oxford DPhil (approved 1971) comprised a critical edition and study of the rhymed version of the *Alexander Romance*, first printed in 1529; a revised version of the thesis was published in 1974. In the 1970s he continued his studies at the University of Thessaloniki and then spent three years as a research fellow at the University of Birmingham. From 1981, he taught at the University of Cambridge: first, as the Lewis-Gibson lecturer in Modern Greek (1981–2000), then as a reader in Modern Greek (2000–2006), and finally, as professor of Modern Greek (from 2006 until his retirement in 2013). His primary research has focused on the literature of Renaissance Crete. In addition to editing *Κάμπος: Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek* for twenty years, he has served on the editorial boards of *The Anglo-Hellenic Review*, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, and *Mandatoforos*. He has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, notably a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (which will produce a reference grammar of Medieval and Early Modern Greek) and the “Wisdom Award” in recognition of his contribution to the study of Greek language and culture of the post-Byzantine period, under the auspices of the University of Athens. David has recently moved to Burwell near Cambridge, where he resides with Ann, his wife of forty-five years. They have one son, one daughter, and three grandchildren.

During his time at Cambridge, David supervised sixteen PhD students, some of whom have gone on to have careers in academia, continuing the study of Modern Greek literature and becoming experts in their fields.

As members of this group we felt that the preparation of a Festschrift on the occasion of his retirement would be an appropriate way to express our deep gratitude to David.

As editors we are delighted that nearly all his former PhD students have contributed to this book, some reviving their PhD interests, others pursuing new developments in their specialist areas of research and all of them, in their different ways, keeping alive the interests that David encouraged. The broad time frame and varied approaches that the articles in this volume encompass give a sense of the richness and depth of the work that David influenced as a teacher, mentor and friend.

—The Editors

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INTRODUCTION

David Holton took up his teaching post in Modern Greek at the University of Cambridge in 1981. In the thirty-two years of his tenure, he nurtured the subject, ensuring high-quality courses in Modern Greek language and literature at BA, Master's and PhD levels. This volume of essays by David's former PhD students reflects the wide range of Modern Greek literature David has taught and is intended to honour his work. It also celebrates the significant contribution of the Cambridge Modern Greek section, currently threatened with closure. It is our hope that the study of Modern Greek will continue to thrive and inspire at Cambridge, as it has done for the past 75 years.

The volume is divided into five parts, structured thematically and chronologically.

The first part of the book, "Medieval Greek Romances between East and West", situates the Greek literary production of medieval romances in an international context and includes papers that adopt a comparative perspective in examining the roles that Western medieval tradition, Eastern epic tradition and Byzantine poetry played in the genre's development.

Tina Lendari's opening article examines the imagery of the erotic gaze in the vernacular romance *The War of Troy*, an anonymous Greek translation of the Old French *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, exploring a variety of traditional *topoi* within the context of medieval poetics. Through a comparative examination of relevant sections in the Greek and French texts, the author investigates the adaptation practices employed by the Greek translator, and argues that they may suggest an intentional re-interpretation of the original with emphasis on its epic rather than romantic features. Kostas Yiavis turns to medieval Persian epics and romances and examines their affinities to the Byzantine and early modern Greek romance tradition. Using the Greek romance of *Velthandros* and the Persian epic of *Haft Paykar* as a starting point, Yiavis proposes that literary contact with the East did not take place exclusively on the level of specific narrative units, but also in a broader and more fluid frame of "cultural mobility" where exchange was the norm and not the exception. The concluding article of this section, by Eleni Lampaki, focuses on *Kallimachos and Chryssorroï* and offers new insights into the role of its

narrator and the didactic aspects of its narrative. Lampaki also investigates the romance's relation to a poem authored by Manuel Philes, thus placing the romance within the context of Byzantine didactic and allegorical poetry.

The second part, "Renaissance Poetics and Representations", is the longest section of the book, with four articles, and deals with aspects of literature and society in Venetian Cyprus and Crete, Prof. Holton's field of specialisation. Contributions to this section bring in literary, generic, metrical, anthropological, and historical considerations that enrich our perception of Renaissance Crete and Cyprus and their cultures.

Marina Rodosthenous-Balafa embarks on a parallel reading of poem no. 24 of the sixteenth-century Cypriot *Canzoniere* with its Petrarchan prototype, CCCXI, and also examines their intertextual dialogue with poem no. 34 of the Cypriot collection. The author provides an informed account of the theme of the nightingale, its literary tradition, symbolism, and metrical aspects, and further explores the dynamic relationship of poets with the bird, a relationship which proves to be of poetical and even ontological importance. Tassos A. Kaplanis's article focuses on the Cretan Renaissance masterpiece of Vitsentzos Kornaros, *Erotokritos*, and deals with a virtually unexplored subject, namely the depictions of study-rooms in Modern Greek literature. The article, based on historical data and scholarly accounts of this distinctive feature of Italian Renaissance culture, investigates the ways in which *Erotokritos*'s study-room is constructed, furnished and used in the Cretan romance, and provides a reading of the text which suggests Kornaros's familiarity with the Italian cultural milieu of the second half of the sixteenth century. Tasoula Markomihelaki's article deals with representations of the city of Kastro or Candia or Chandax/Chandakas (present-day Irakleio) in the *Catastrophe of Crete* by Manolis Sklavos and in *The Cretan War* by Marinos Tzane Bounialis. Markomihelaki provides ample examples that demonstrate how the city of Kastro acquires speech, soul and sentiments, expresses pride in her fine walls and buildings and grief at her tragic fate since she fell to the Ottoman Turks after a twenty-one-year siege, all of which, on a more theoretical level that is also taken into account, may advocate for the poems' literary qualities. From this long siege of Chandax as described by Bounialis, Maria Vlassopoulou, in the closing article of this section, extracts a highly interesting and hitherto unexplored episode of Savoyard cannibalism and examines it in a historical, anthropological and symbolic manner. Vlassopoulou provides a comparative analysis of the episode based on seventeenth-century sources, questions its authenticity, and concludes by arguing that Bounialis's narrative both conveys and

generates perceptions of history within a scope significantly wider than the island of Crete.

The third part of the book, “Crafting Modern Greek Identity”, takes us to the nineteenth century, a decisive period for the construction of modern Greek identity, and offers insights into the ways in which Greeks and foreigners attempted to harness the Greek past to a narrative of nationhood and/or folklorise the Greek present.

Stratos Myrogiannis’s article challenges the established view that Byzantium as a historical era became a distinctive part of Greek history in mid-nineteenth century due to the work of the most prominent scholars of Greek Romantic historiography, Zambelios and Paparrigopoulos, by examining the earlier historical composition of Dimitrios Alexandridis. In translating Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Grecian History*, Alexandridis expanded the prototype by adding another volume (published in 1807) that was his own original creation. Myrogiannis argues that, in this way, Alexandridis became the first Greek-speaking historian who appropriated Byzantine history as Greek history. In her article, Semele Assinder evaluates and reconsiders the view of Greece that Elizabeth Edmonds, a British Victorian translator of Modern Greek literature, brought back to Britain with her *Fair Athens* (1881). Edmonds, who was well known to the British general public, described a society in flux, felt the changes that were taking place in her contemporary Athens, but still recorded all customs and festivals she witnessed with folkloric dedication and a voice nostalgic for the vanishing traditions.

The fourth part of the book, “Revisiting Authors of the Modern Greek Canon”, discusses some of the most important modern Greek authors, which include the novelist Emmanouil Roidis, whose *Pope Joan* was admired by Mark Twain and Alfred Jarry (and was freely translated by Lawrence Durrell as *The Curious History of Pope Joan*), the poet C. P. Cavafy, an emblematic figure of modern Greek poetry worldwide, and George Seferis, one of the two Greek Nobel laureates.

With Foteini Lika’s article, we move to the realm of *synaxaria* and the lives of the saints. Lika discusses many suppressed and neglected religious sources of Roidis’s *Pope Joan* in order to demonstrate that Roidis did not fabricate his claims regarding the medieval female Pope out of thin air and that, in most cases, there is a text lying behind them, a text intentionally or unintentionally distorted. Maria Athanasopoulou’s article examines the impact of William Shakespeare on the literary tastes and texts of C. P. Cavafy. The article includes close readings of two poems by Cavafy and discusses how they both take ideas, themes and stylistic aspects from Shakespeare and how Cavafy makes these his own. In the final article of

this part, Katerina Krikos-Davis draws on largely unpublished archival material to unveil the close and enduring friendship between George Seferis and the eminent British Byzantinist Sir Steven Runciman. Her investigation underlines their mutual respect, admiration and common interest in the Greek past and present.

The fifth part of the book, “Renegotiating Identity, Empowering Marginality”, shows how marginal identities become central in several texts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Crowds acting as collective entities in mass societies, national and religious others, and immigrants are the protagonists of this chapter.

Social upheavals and the spectre of dictatorship are innovatively addressed in Nikos Katiforis’s novel *The Dictatorship of Satan* which is explored, both in narrative and social terms, in the piece by Jocelyn Pye. Pye shows how Katiforis draws on expressionist techniques and applies them effectively to open up the potential of the medium of prose fiction, and places the novel in the wider context of 1930s Greek and European fiction. Philothei Kolitsi investigates the representation of Greeks and Turks in a contemporary novel by Maro Douka. Kolitsi demonstrates how Douka attempts to depict perspectives of the national and religious other by challenging the “negative” stereotype, portraying instead a “positive” image of the other in terms of inter-personal relationships. The voice of a different other, an Albanian immigrant author, is heard in Efrosini Camatsos’s closing article of the volume. Gazmend Kapllani, an Albanian immigrant who entered Greece in the 1990s and who writes in his adopted language Greek, produced a trilogy that is carefully examined by Camatsos in order to explore the changing notion of identity, from being a fixed concept to being a construction.

We have not interfered with the system of spelling, accentuation and punctuation as regards quotations from Greek sources in individual papers. We have also allowed both BC/AD and BCE/CE for era designation according to each author’s preference. For reasons of consistency, modernised spelling and the use of monotonic Greek was applied to all entries in the reference lists.

Efrosini Camatsos
Tassos A. Kaplanis
Jocelyn Pye

December 2013

PART I:
MEDIEVAL GREEK ROMANCES
BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

GAZES IN LOVE SCENES AND GLANCES
AT THEIR DEPICTION:
NOTES ON *THE WAR OF TROY*

TINA LENDARI

Abstract

The present study examines aspects of the erotic gaze and the accompanying imagery in the love stories which are interwoven in the narrative of the medieval Greek romance The War of Troy (an anonymous translation of the Old French Roman de Troie by Benoît de Sainte-Maure) and seeks to interpret some of the features of their handling of the Greek author/translator. The comparative examination of the relevant sections in the Greek and French text concentrates on the treatment of visual imagery as well as topoi closely connected with the conventions of love romance, raising the question whether the Greek translator's practice aimed to shift the readers' interest from romantic fiction to heroic deeds. The changes in the Greek text, although not radical, might suggest a re-interpretation of the original with more emphasis on its epic, rather than the fictional-romantic dimension.

It is a commonplace, perhaps no longer universally acknowledged, that the scene of falling in love must be at the heart of a romantic work. Since antiquity, falling in love has often been depicted through scenes of visual encounter, which may involve the collocation of fire and Love's arrows piercing the lovers' heart or eyes. The description of the subject and object of the glance, the image of the beloved and the awakening of desire are sometimes further enriched by the concept of mirroring gazes and

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emotions. Reciprocated love, ideal love, or unrequited, foolish and even doomed love can be prefigured or underscored by, among other things, the handling of the love gaze dynamics. The present study sets out to examine samples of the gaze and the accompanying imagery in the love stories contained in *The War of Troy*¹ and, in the process, to explore the poetic approach employed by the author.²

The *War of Troy*, a translation of the Old French *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-Maure,³ does not qualify as a pure love romance; however, the interweaving of love stories within the narrative of the Trojan expedition is considered one of Benoît's most remarkable achievements.⁴ Although the Greek text follows the original quite closely, it tends to reduce the emphasis on the romantic element of the work without, however, eliminating it; after all, the four basic love stories (Jason and Medea, Paris and Helen, Troilus and then Diomedes and Briseida, and, finally, Achilles and Polyxena) are basic constituents of the plot. Elizabeth Jeffreys has observed that the translator of the *War of Troy* "sometimes appears impatient with the description of the mental states of the characters who fall in love" (Papathomopoulos and Jeffreys 1996, lx), mainly referring to abridged soliloquies of the enamoured characters. One might add that many of the elements constituting the intricate studies of *fine amor* in Benoît's work are condensed, abridged, or slightly modified as part of an attempt to change its atmosphere and general tone. Even though this effort does not seem to be thorough, the treatment of the love scene imagery entails some subtle but telling changes.

The first of the four love stories in the text—between Jason and Medea—introduces the lovers during a banquet, where their visual encounter takes place:

¹ The following abbreviations and editions will be used for references and text excerpts: *RT*: *Roman de Troie* (Constans 1904–1912), *WT*: *Ο Πόλεμος της Τρωάδος* (*The War of Troy*) (Papathomopoulos and Jeffreys 1996). Translations from the French and Greek texts are my own unless otherwise indicated.

² This contribution to the volume dedicated to David Holton is part of a larger project on the poetics of the gaze and the declaration of love in medieval and early modern Greek poetry (see also Lendari 2012).

³ For general information on the text, the most up-to-date contribution is Jeffreys 2013 (unfortunately, I was only able to consult this very recent publication when the present article was going to press). See also Shawcross 2003, 140–45, and Jeffreys, "Introduction", in Papathomopoulos and Jeffreys 1996.

⁴ See e.g. Lumiansky 1958; Adler 1960; Levenson 1979; Nolan 1992, 96–117; Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1997, 43–50.