Two surveys of Modern Greek literature: Stephanos Kanelos (1822) and Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos (1826)

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Is there a better way to start than *in medias res*? Especially in this particular case, for the *mediae res* into which we wholeheartedly jump are the lovely shores of the Bosphorus, where two Phanariots, Stephanos Kanelos and Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos, will be our guides on a literary peregrination through time and space. So *in medias res* then:

> εις τον ωραίον Βόσπορον, εις της Τρυφής τα στήθη,
> η ποίησις της νέας μας Ελλάδος εγεννήθη.[1]
>
> in Luxury's bosom, on Bosphorus' shores,
> the poetry of our new Hellas sprang forth.

These beautiful verses stem from the pen of yet another Phanariot, Alexandros Soutsos, and form part of a poem entitled "Letter to Otto, King of the Hellenes".

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[1] The poem "Προς τον Βασιλέα της Ελλάδος Όθωνα" can be found in Soutsos's collection of poems: *Πανόραμα της Ελλάδος* (Nafplio 1833). The poem has been reprinted on numerous occasions, e.g. A. Soutsos, *Άπαντα* (Athens 1916), pp. 96-100. On Alexandros Soutsos, see G. L. Lefas, *Ο Αλέξανδρος Σούτσος και οι επιδράσεις του στους συγχρόνους του* (Athens 1979), K. Th. Dimaras, *Ελληνικός Ρωμαντισμός* (Athens 1982), pp. 242-54, P. Moullas, *Ρήξεις και συνέχειες. Μελέτες για τον 19ο αιώνα* (Athens 1993), pp. 233-62, and N. Vayenas, "Ο ουτοπικός σοσιαλισμός των αδελφών Σούτσων", in: N. Vayenas (ed.), *Από τον Λέανδρο στον Λουκή Λάρα. Μελέτες για την πεζογραφία της περιόδου 1830-1880* (Irakleio 1997), pp. 43-58.

It is 1833, and Otto has only just arrived from his native Bavaria, full of philhellenic zest, and obviously very pleased to have become king of Greece. The Greeks are equally excited about the arrival of this young man, who will reign over Greece, like another Hercules, another Achilles, another Alcibiades, etc. Otto sets foot on Greek ground, welcoming committees deliver ardent speeches, the people cheer. The resurrection of Greece has commenced, the Ancient Greeks are rising from their graves, and the Parthenon looks benevolently upon the inhabitants of the village of Athens, who have suddenly become aware once more of their illustrious past. Alexandros Soutsos jumps at the occasion to explain to the young king the status quo on the literary front, pointing out who matters and who does not. His viewpoint is blatantly modern: he is not interested in earlier periods; instead, it is the now and here that is of importance.

The first poet Soutsos mentions as a shining example of Modern Greek poetry, with emphasis on both the words "modern" and "Greek", is Athanasios Christopoulos, whose anacreontic songs were extremely popular along the shores of the Bosphorus. The second poet Soutsos mentions is his own uncle, Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos, whom he praises for the "ancient" character of his verses: "He sounded such a magnificent melody that we saw once more the monuments of the Ancients; it is nothing short of a miracle that already in those forlorn days of slavery, he expressed ideas of liberty." Two things are striking in this passage: the ideological appeal to Antiquity as a valid standard by which to measure Modern Greek literature, and the notion that literature can only flourish in a free and independent Greece. The third poet in Soutsos's pantheon of Modern Greek poetry is Rigas Velestinlis, the archetypal revolutionary whom the Turks had tried and sentenced to death in 1798. It is interesting to note that Soutsos is otherwise rather negative about the kind of vulgar language used by Rigas and others, which was rather different from the kind of archaistic Greek Soutsos himself favoured. But in the case of a national martyr, it was of course not done to point out such flaws and shortcomings. Living poets, of course, were a different matter,

and Soutsos does not hesitate to scold Kalvos and Solomos for dressing "grand ideas in poor garments". The rest of Soutsos's poem is unimportant, because he basically repeats what by now has become more than clear: the new poetry harks back to Antiquity, is impassioned with an ardent nationalistic zeal, and strives to purify the language.

In modern discussions of this poem the verses that refer to Kalvos and Solomos are usually quoted with disbelief. How could Soutsos be so dumb as to disregard the greatness of the two poets? Such angry reactions are of course inspired by the radical turning point in literary thought that took place around 1880, after which the common language started to be regarded as the appropriate means for literary self-expression.[2] But before 1880 things were very different, at least in Athens. In the 19th century, from the establishment of the Greek state until the generation of 1880, the general view was that Modern Greece – as the direct heir to Ancient Greece – had an obligation to make its language as archaistic as possible. To understand this reasoning, we must realize that the formation of Greek national consciousness differs significantly from that of other nations. While the other European nations largely had to create their own national symbols, stories and monuments (which Hobsbawm has aptly labelled "invention of tradition"), the Greeks on the contrary received their national identity from Western Europe as a ready-to-use package.[3] The humanists, the Enlightenment thinkers and the philhellenes had all had well-defined ideas about the so-called cradle of European civilization; the only thing the Greeks had to do – as direct descendants of Pericles and Sophocles – was to live up to the idealized picture that Western Europe had painted of the Ancient

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[2] See V. Apostolidou, *Ο Κωστής Παλαμάς ιστορικός της νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας* (Athens 1992) and D. Tziovas, *The Nationism of the Demoticists and its impact on their literary theory (1888-1930)* (Amsterdam 1986).

[3] See S. Voutsaki, "Archaeology and the construction of the past in nineteenth-century Greece", in: H. Hokwerda (ed.), *Constructions of Greek past: Identity and historical consciousness from Antiquity to the present* (Groningen 2003), pp. 231-55, esp. pp. 232-41.

Greeks. But of course, reality is always much more complex, as all those inspired romanticists experienced when they rushed to reborn Hellas, only to find out that Giannis, Kostas and Dimitris, however hard they tried, were no Ancient Greeks. All this resulted in a rarely voiced sense of guilt on the part of the Greeks, for not living up to this superimposed ideal. And the less Giannis and Kostas conformed to the requirement of being Ancient Greeks, the more they tried to be like them. The *katharevousa* is a direct consequence of this obsession.

To return to Soutsos's versified letter: one cannot but notice that he forges a direct link between Modern Greek literature and the birth of the independent state. Only then could something new come about. This implies that the boundaries of Modern Greek literature are set by the boundaries of the new state. At the same time Soutsos projects the nascence of Modern Greek literature upon a slightly earlier period: that of Phanariot poetry. "In Luxury's bosom, on Bosphorus' shores, the poetry of our new Hellas sprang forth." Now this is typical of all literary histories: as they are written from the perspective of the nation state, they search for life forms of the same nation state in earlier periods. And very few people seem to care that, in doing so, they paint a distorted picture of the historical reality. This fixation on the nation state and its mythical past is a typically Romantic view.[4] The nation cannot be defined. Because the nation is in fact a metaphysical concept, it detracts from any sensible discussion and lends itself to all purposes and ends, some innocent and some not so innocent. Most attempts to get a hold on the intangible nation think in terms of the characteristics of the – usually much later – unitary states, which are then projected upon earlier historical phases.[5]

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[4] For the Greek Romantic movement, see A. Politis, *Ρομαντικά χρόνια. Ιδεολογίες και νοοτροπίες στην Ελλάδα του 1830-1880* (Athens 1993).

[5] For the Greek case, see P. M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy. Studies in the culture and political thought of South-Eastern Europe* (Aldershot 1994), *passim*, esp. no. XI.

A few years ago, a conference was held in Venice, where the most authoritative Neohellenists were assembled; the theme of the conference was the beginnings of Modern Greek literature.[6] I will not tire you with a survey of the opinions that were defended arduously and with strength of argument: some maintained that they could hear the infant cry in the 12th century, others were quite convinced that the birth of this *Wunderkind* must have coincided with the invention of the printing press, and still others thought that the Byzantine literature in the vernacular was not to be taken into consideration and that the infant's first tentative burps could not be heard until after 1453. As a cultural historian, I am not sure what to make of all these birth certificates, and to be truthful, they are of little interest to me. Periodization is a modern disease; we define our identity by compartmentalizing the past in various eras, each of which heralds a breach with the preceding one, just as our own era supposedly differs in its very essence from that of our fathers and forefathers.[7] But in fact it is a desperate headlong flight towards an uncertain future that will inevitably catch up with us, only to leave us behind as desperate as we ever were. But the truth must be told: the clinical picture of panting modernity, forever trying to catch up with itself, is an interesting phenomenon that deserves to be diagnosed.

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[6] See the contributions by Savvidis, Eideneier, Vitti, Alexiou, Kapsomenos, Kechagioglou and Irmscher, in: N. M. Panayotakis (ed.), *Origini della letteratura neogreca. Atti del secondo congresso internazionale "Neograeca Medii Aevi"* (Venice 1993), vol. I, pp. 35-105. See the critical reviews by: G. Kechagioglou, *Ελληνικά* 44 (1994) 513-40, esp. 515-19, and A. Politis, *Μαντατοφόρος* 39-40 (1995) 185-92 (reprinted in: A. Politis, *Το μυθολογικό κενό* (Athens 2000), pp. 131-42). For recent contributions to the debate on the origins of Modern Greek literature, see G. Danezis, "Οι αρχές της νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας", in: *Νέα Εστία* 159, τεύχος 1788 (2006) 784-8, and the reply by N. Vayenas, "Για τις αρχές της νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας", in: *Νέα Εστία* 161, τεύχος 1797 (2007) 296-313.

[7] See J.-Fr. Lyotard, *The inhuman: reflections on time* (Cambridge 1991), p. 25.

In what follows I shall examine two surveys of Modern Greek literature written by two Phanariots during the War of Independence.[8] It is important to note that both authors, Kanelos and Rizos Neroulos, wrote what they wrote not with the Greek public in mind, but for a public of philhellenes: Kanelos wrote on behalf of the German philhellene Carl Iken and Neroulos addressed the philhellenic circles of Geneva.[9]

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[8] For 19th-century literary histories, see: A. Angelou, "Δοκιμές για απογραφή και αποτίμηση της Νεοελληνικής Γραμματείας στην ευρυχωρία του Νεοελληνικού Διαφωτισμού", *Ο Ερανιστής* 11 (1974) 1-16 (reprinted in: idem, *Των Φώτων* (Athens 1988), pp. 337-52); Apostolidou, *Ο Κωστής Παλαμάς*, pp. 27-90; M. D. Lauxtermann, *De natie als project, of hoe de Grieken in de negentiende eeuw aankeken tegen hun nationale literatuur* (Amsterdam 2004); A. Politis, "Γραμματολογικές απογραφές και συνθετικές θεωρήσεις της λογοτεχνίας. Η σταδιακή πορεία. Α΄ 1821-1871", in: P. M. Kitromilidis and T. E. Sklavenitis (eds.), *Ιστοριογραφία της νεότερης και σύγχρονης Ελλάδας 1833-2002* (Athens 2004), vol. I, pp. 321-42. For 20th-century literary histories, see: G. Kechagioglou, "Οι ιστορίες της νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας", *Μαντατοφόρος* 15 (1980) 5-66. For the whole period, see G. Jusdanis, *Belated Modernity and aesthetic culture. Inventing national literature* (Minneapolis 1991), pp. 108-13 and 119-21. See also the contributions by Dimaras, Vitti, Veloudis, Apostolidou and Beaton in: *Ζητήματα ιστορίας των νεοελληνικών γραμμάτων. Αφιέρωμα στον Κ. Θ. Δημαρά* (Thessaloniki 1994), pp. 13-55; and the contributions by Apostolidou, Kargiotis, Lambropoulos and Paschalidis, in: *Μνήμη Άλκη Αγγέλου. Τα άφθονα σχήματα του παρελθόντος. Ζητήσεις της πολιτισμικής ιστορίας και της θεωρίας της λογοτεχνίας* (Thessaloniki 2004), pp. 277-331.

[9] When this paper was ready to go to press, I discovered that there is even a third survey of Modern Greek literature written between 1821 and 1830, once again intended for a foreign audience, this time the French: G. A. de Mano [=Γεώργιος Α. Μάνος, 1792-1869], *Discours d'introduction au cours de littérature grecque moderne, prononcé à l'Athenée de Paris, dans sa séance du 9 février 1825* (Paris 1825). The "cours" consisted of three lectures: (1) on language, (2) pronunciation and (3) literature. In the first lecture, the only one to be published, Manos deals with education, Phanariots (among others, Christopoulos) and Korais. We can only guess what he may have said in the other two lectures. I owe this reference to: Politis, "Γραμματολογικές απογραφές", p. 324.

The first Phanariot is Stephanos Kanelos.[10] His life was short, his death tragic. Having studied medicine in Germany he died from the pest at Crete in 1823 while trying to cure his patients; he was only 31 years old. He was born in Constantinople in 1792, studied at the school of Proios at Kuruçeşme, was involved in the first edition of Christopoulos's *Λυρικά* in 1811, studied in Germany until 1817, lived in Paris for two years, returned to his home city in 1819, was appointed at the Princely Academy in Bucharest in 1820, joined Ypsilantis when he entered the Danubian principalities in 1821, had to flee to Germany in the same year, and went to Paris in 1822. In the same year 1822, in the month of June, he set sail for Greece together with his friend Pikkolos; upon arriving in the Peloponnese, they were robbed of all their belongings and the money donated to the Greek cause by European philhellenes, and finally made it to Hydra. There they parted company: while Pikkolos went to the Ionian Islands, Kanelos joined the forces of Admiral Tombazis and went to Crete. Kanelos's literary output in Greek is small: firstly, the *Dream* (*Όνειρον*), included in the 1811 edition of Christopoulos's *Λυρικά*, a hilarious defence of the spoken language as a medium of literary expression;[11] secondly, his contributions to *Λόγιος Ερμής*, the most important pre-revolutionary Greek periodical;[12] thirdly, a

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[10] For the life of Kanelos (alternatively spelled Kanellos), see: Carl Iken, *Leukothea. Eine Sammlung von Briefen eines geborenen Griechen über Staatswesen, Literatur und Dichtkunst des neueren Griechenlands* (Leipzig 1825), vol. I, pp. 257-88 and N. K. Vlachos, "Στέφανος Κανέλλος (1792-1823)", *Παρνασσός* 17 (1975) 257-76.

[11] The authorship of the *Όνειρον* is disputed: see V. Rotolo, "Il problema dell'autenticità del Sogno di A. Christopoulos", *Folia Neohellenica* 1 (1975), 125-42 and E. Tsantsanoglou, "Το πορτρέτο του Αθανάσιου Χριστόπουλου στην έκδοση των *Λυρικών* του 1833 και η πατρότητα του Ονείρου", in: *Ζητήματα ιστορίας των νεοελληνικών γραμμάτων. Αφιέρωμα στον Κ. Θ. Δημαρά* (Thessaloniki 1994), pp. 243-55.

[12] As most contributions in *Logios Ermis* are signed just with an initial, it is not always possible to distinguish K(anelos) from K(okkinakis) and other K's, so the following list is probably not complete: *LE* 6 (1816) 222; 7 (1817) 36-9; 7 (1817) 153-63, 185-92, 413-28 & 437-43; 8 (1818) 409-17; 8 (1818) 633-52 & 9 (1819) 159-67 & 193-203; 9 (1819) 73-92; 10 (1820) 2-16; 10 (1820) 152-60; 10 (1820) 185-92; 11 (1821) 264-70.

number of patriotic poems: war songs (θούριοι) and laments;[13] and fourthly, a translation of a radical pamphlet on the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens.[14]

Unfortunately, his most important contribution to Modern Greek literature appears to be lost for good and the translation made of it is rarely mentioned, because most Neohellenists do not read German. I am referring to the philological letters Kanelos wrote and which can be found in: Carl Iken, *Leukothea. Eine Sammlung von Briefen eines geborenen Griechen über Staatswesen, Literatur und Dichtkunst des neueren Griechenlands*, that is: "Leukothea (the White Goddess). A compilation of letters from a born Greek concerning society, literature and poetry of Modern Greece".[15] The book, which appeared in two volumes in 1825, is based on ten letters Stephanos Kanelos sent to Iken in the years 1821 and 1822, first from Heidelberg and then from Paris.[16] In

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Cf. E. N. Frangiskos, *Τα ελληνικά προεπαναστατικά περιοδικά. Ευρετήρια, Β΄. Ερμής ο Λόγιος 1811-1821* (Athens 1976).

[13] For the θούριοι, see Vlachos, *Ο Στέφανος Κανέλλος*, pp. 264-5, and A. Politis, "Ν. Σ. Πίκκολος και Φοριέλ – και ένα αυτόγραφο του Στέφανου Κανέλου", *Ο Ερανιστής* 16 (1980) 1-27, at pp. 8-12. For the elegies, see Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. II, pp. 93-4. Another poem by Kanelos is the opening address in the 1811 edition of Christopoulos, the so-called Προσφώνημα.

[14] *Βιβλιαράκι κατ' ερωταπόκρισιν. Περί λογής λογιών πραγμάτων αναγκαίων μάλιστα εις την Πατρίδα των Γερμανών, δι' όλους τους Γερμανούς Πολίτας και Χωριανούς.* Εν παρέργω μεταφρασμένον εκ του Γερμανικού υπό Στεφάνου Κανέλλου, προς χρήσιν των Ελλήνων. Ετυπώθη διά δαπάνης Ν.Κ. εις μνήμην φιλίας προς τον μακαρίτην μεταφραστήν. Εν Ύδρα 1 Ιανουαρίου 1824. The original is a leaflet by Wilhelm Schulz (1797-1860), which appeared anonymously in 1819: *Frag- und Antwortbüchlein über Allerlei, was im teutschen Vaterlande Noth thut. Für den Bürgers- und Bauersmann* (Teutschland 1819).

[15] See the review in the Geneva periodical: *Bibliothèque universelle des sciences, belles-lettres et arts* 32 (1826) 34-52, 149-69 & 249-59: the anonymous reviewer quotes extensively from letters 1-2, 4-7 and 10 (in French translation) and criticizes Iken for the disorderly presentation of his data.

[16] Iken presents letters 3 to 10 as one long letter, divided in eight parts; but I fail to understand how Kanelos can possibly react in letter 9 to a comment made by Iken concerning letter 3 (cf. letter 3, vol. I, pp. 214-16 and letter 9, vol. II, p. 91) if these two letters were sent together. Another

these letters, Kanelos tried to sketch a lively portrait of education, literature and intellectual life on the eve of the Greek Revolution. As he declares in his tenth and last letter, his aim was to describe "the most important period of our culture, when our awareness awakened and we realized that only enlightenment and schooling could ameliorate our situation", to indicate the causes and circumstances that had led to this awareness, and to trace the path of progress that had eventually led to the miracles that were now being performed.[17]

However, Kanelos was a young man with a mission and, therefore, in a hurry. It was no time for philology, but for serious action – and it is obvious that he was growing more and more impatient with Iken and all his questions about the state of affairs in Greece. That is why the letters are written in a somewhat hasty and flippant manner; he sometimes repeats himself, he sometimes contradicts himself and, as he had to admit in his last letter, he had had no time to write about authors like Korais, Rizos Neroulos and Rigas.[18] His letters deal mainly with the Phanariot literary and intellectual milieu, with schoolmasters, language reformers, philosophers and scientists, the Enlightenment thinkers and the reactionaries, the liberals and the clerics. He is not afraid to express his personal views: for instance, about Evgenios Voulgaris and his treatise on Logic. The book is unreadable, he says, not just because of the archaistic language, but also because of the lack of clarity in the presentation of Voulgaris's arguments. The older generation are full of praise for this work, but that is because no one dares to admit that he fails to understand it. The younger

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problem is that it is not always clear who is talking: does a piece of information derive from Kanelos himself, or it is a comment by Iken? And a third, insoluble, problem is that we do not know whether Iken provided a faithful and reliable translation of Kanelos's Greek, or coloured the text by adding tell-tale adjectives, adverbs, nouns, etc., and using a semantically more expressive lexicon. Seeing how freely the French translator (in the *Bibliothèque Universelle*, see previous footnote) rendered Iken's German, one may seriously question the metaphrastic ethics of the early 19th century.

[17] Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. II, pp. 98-9.

[18] Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. II, pp. 96-7 and 99-100.

generation, on the contrary, think it is a total waste of time to read Voulgaris.[19] One of the many reasons why Kanelos's letters are so interesting is because they show the coming of age of a new generation, restless, eager to explore the unknown, prone to flights of imagination – almost romantic, one would say. He tells us about life at school, those early days of patriotism: he and his fellow students would listen in rapture to Stephanos Dounkas, their headmaster, who introduced them to modern science and philosophy, and they would wax enthusiastic about the *Aeolodoric Grammar* of Christopoulos, the *Stochasmoi* of Korais, the *Modern Geography* of Philippides and Konstantas, the *Introduction to Philosophy* by Soave in the translation of Konstantas, and the songs of Rigas. In another passage, he recounts how he and his friends, at the tender age of 12, would gather before the icon of Christ and sing the *Thourios* of Rigas. His sisters would look at them and share their enthusiasm. Older people, on the contrary, did not understand the meaning of Rigas and were indifferent to their juvenile aspirations.[20]

Although the letters have obviously been written in much haste and do not pretend to form an adequate overview of Greek literature in the 18th and early 19th centuries, they provide some keen insights into the pre-national literary culture of the Greeks, such as, for instance, the obvious generation gap Kanelos alludes to, the function of schools not just as educational, but also as literary institutions, and the language debate, in which he, a true Phanariot, chooses the side of Katartzis and Christopoulos. It must be said that in general, Kanelos's perspective on things is coloured by his cultural background and his political views. That is to say, as the regeneration of the Greek nation and its political independence are of paramount importance to him, his letters centre on the

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[19] Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. II, pp. 7-9. However, it is interesting to note that a representative of the "older generation", Neroulos (see note 25), pp. 34-7, is not very complimentary either, when he discusses the merits of Voulgaris.

[20] Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. I, pp. 243-4; vol. II, 7-9, 81 and 100. Cf. Vlachos, *Στέφανος Κανέλλος*, pp. 267-8.

crucial role played by schools in Constantinople, Bucharest, Smyrna, Chios, and elsewhere, in the last fifty or so years before the Greek Revolution of 1821. The fact that he forgets Korais until the last moment is a tell-tale omission. As Kanelos is an ardent supporter of Korais, it is not a matter of wilful concealment. It is simply that Korais is living far away, in civilized Europe and not in Ottoman Turkey, and resides beyond the cultural horizon of the Phanariot class to which Kanelos belongs.

Kanelos has remarkably little to say about literature written before the commencement of the Greek Enlightenment. It is clearly of little interest to him. In the third letter he makes the sweeping statement that not a single decent work had been written since the Fall of Constantinople and that literature in those dark ages of repression and servitude had not diminished, but rather added to, the general misery of the Greeks. The context makes it clear that he is referring to the learned, not the vernacular tradition.[21] But it must be said that Kanelos is not at all interested in texts written in demotic Greek. Only when he was pressurized by Iken to write about what the latter, not Kanelos himself, considered to be the "Nationalgedicht der Griechen" (the national epic of the Greeks), namely the *Erotokritos*, did he deign to give some information on the poem. His assessment is very positive: the poem excels in narrative structure, ornate rhetoric and poetic language, and provides a good picture of the customs and beliefs of the common people in Venetian Crete. Its only shortcomings are the many Italian loanwords and dialectal forms which are difficult to understand nowadays. Nonetheless, the poem is still popular and its two main characters have even become the subject of folk songs.[22]

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[21] Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. I, p. 208.

[22] Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. I, pp. 164-9. Incidentally, the two examples given by Kanelos (or Iken?) in a footnote on p. 171 are emphatically not folk songs. It is typical of the early 19th century that the distinction between folk poetry on the one hand and lyrical poetry (usually of Phanariot provenance) on the other was not entirely clear to Greek intellectuals.

Kanelos, this young revolutionary and one of the few intellectuals who actually gave his life for Greece, presents a highly politicized picture of – what shall we call it? – γράμματα, γραμματεία, *Schrifttum*, this general notion of educated writing on subjects that define a given culture.[23] In the end it is not literary worth, but political stance that determines whether an author is good or not – and "good" in a moral sense, not a literary one. Stephanos Dounkas, his beloved teacher, and Philippides, one of his favourite authors, are both criticized because they are not involved in the Greek struggle for independence and are minding their own business, and Christopoulos whose ideas on the Greek language Kanelos wholeheartedly embraced and the publication of whose poems he helped to accomplish, is portrayed as a machiavellian schemer, as someone without morals, a traitor of the worst kind.[24]

The second Phanariot literary historian I would like to discuss is Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos, whom we have met before as the uncle of Alexandros Soutsos, who tells us that Neroulos "expressed ideas of liberty in days of slavery". Neroulos had held high offices in the semi-autonomous principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, but was forced to flee to save his life in 1821, after the failure of Ypsilantis and his Sacred Battalion to incite a general revolution in the Balkans. After various peregrinations through Europe (Bessarabia, Germany, Italy) Neroulos ended up in Geneva, where he was asked to give a lecture on Modern Greece in 1826. But he had so much to say on the matter that one lecture turned into a series of lectures, not so much about Modern

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[23] Like so many other languages (Dutch, for instance), English does not really have a term for this category of texts that is much wider and more comprehensive than the Romantic notion of "literature". Despite all the isms of the last two centuries, including the latest one, postmodernism, the way we think and feel is still determined by the Romantic paradigm – which makes it very difficult to understand the concept of literature in the pre-Romantic age.

[24] Philippides: vol. II, pp. 79-80; Dounkas: vol. II, pp. 84-5; Christopoulos: vol. II, pp. 87-8.

Greece itself, but about the intellectual developments and the literature of the nascent Greek nation.[25]

Rizos Neroulos's *Cours de littérature* starts off with Homer – who else? He then sketches briefly the literature of the illustrious ancestors until Philip and Alexander the Great, the Macedonian brutes who were to enslave the Greek people. When the Greeks lost their freedom, decay set in – a decay that was to last for no less than 2,000 years, until the love of freedom gave the Greeks wings once more and made the nation rise like a phoenix from its ashes. According to Rizos Neroulos, the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods offer nothing worth reading, because everything that was written in those hard times of slavery was written in "grec littéral" instead of "grec moderne". Only around 1700 did the tide turn, when the Greeks (thanks to the Church and the Phanariots) regained some form of autonomy. Only then can one begin to speak of a Greek national literature.[26]

At this point, some comments are in order. First of all, we see a complete and utter identification with the Ancients: in a certain sense, Homer is already a Modern Greek poet. Secondly, we read that literature cannot flourish under foreign rule – and this foreign

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[25] *Cours de littérature grecque moderne*, donné à Genève par Jacovaky Rizo Néroulos, ancien premier ministre des hospodars grecs de Valachie et de Moldavie, publié par Jean Humbert (Geneva 1827). The book was reprinted one year later: *Cours* etc. Seconde édition revue et augmentée (Geneva-Paris 1828). The book was translated into other European languages: German 1827 and Dutch 1829 (Politis, "Γραμματολογικές απογραφές", pp. 326-8, also refers to Italian and Polish translations, which I have not been able to find); but it was translated into Greek only in 1870. For a short biography of Neroulos, see the introduction to the *Cours de littérature*, officially written by Jean Humbert (pp. V-XXV), but probably dictated by Neroulos himself; cf. the autobiographical text written in 1842 by Neroulos and published by N. I. Laskaris, *Ιστορία του νεοελληνικού θεάτρου* (Athens 1938), vol. I, pp. 133-5. It is interesting to note that in 1842 Neroulos refers to his *Cours* as an ιστορία της ελληνικής φιλολογίας, just as his *Histoire de la révolution grecque* (Paris 1829) is called an ιστορία της ελληνικής επαναστάσεως (see Laskaris, *Ιστορία*, p. 135). This indicates that at least in 1842 Neroulos is aware of the fact that he has written, not just an ordinary account of intellectual life on the eve of the Greek Revolution, but a *literary history*.

[26] Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 1-21.

rule includes, at least for Neroulos, Alexander the Great (who acquired Greek citizenship only in the second half of the 19th century) and the Byzantine emperors (ditto).[27] Thirdly, we see that the standard for true literature is the vernacular, "grec moderne" (as opposed to "grec littéral", "learned Greek"); however, Neroulos does not opt for the language of the common people, but in fact supports the language of the Constantinopolitan elite.[28] Fourthly, it is abundantly clear that he aims to present the Phanariot elite, to which he himself belonged, as pioneers who actually made the revolution of 1821 possible.[29] And fifthly, Neroulos is refreshingly modern: for him Modern Greek literature starts around the year 1700.

Neroulos divides the approximately 125 years of Modern Greek literature into three periods: the dawn of the Greek rebirth (1700-1750), the creation of schools and the flourishing of the sciences under Western European influence (1750-1800) and the pre-revolutionary period characterized by the liberal ideas and the language reforms initiated by Korais (1800-1821).[30] Like Kanelos before him, Neroulos is basically interested in schools and intel-

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[27] For the "Greek" identity of Alexander the Great, see Politis, *Ρομαντικά χρόνια*, pp. 39-47. For the reception of Byzantium, see D. Ricks and P. Magdalino (eds.), *Byzantium and the Modern Greek identity* (Aldershot 1988).

[28] Because of the vehement language debate in the later 19th and 20th centuries, we have been hampered in our understanding of the true nature of the language debate that went on before the creation of the Greek nation state. It is time to reassess people like Korais and Kodrikas and Doukas, not from the viewpoint of post-junta Greece, but within their historical contexts.

[29] Kanelos, on the contrary, is highly critical of the Phanariot elite. For instance, he bluntly accuses prince Alexandros Soutsos of plundering Wallachia and thinking only of his own petty interests (in fact, he supported Greek schools only because it was good for his image): Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. I, pp. 254-6, cf. pp. 6-9. But see the passionate plea by Neroulos in defence of the Phanariots: Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 67-87.

[30] Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 103-14, writes an encomium of Korais and his proposals for the Greek language. For those who find this accolade hard to believe, coming from the author of the *Korakistika*, Neroulos points out that the target of his satire was not Korais himself, but his followers (p. 113).

lectuals: he enumerates a long list of principals, headmasters and teachers, and their various publications ranging from the sciences to philosophical explorations. Like Kanelos, he is interested in teaching methods ("mutual instruction", the Bell-Lancaster method) and in the modernization of the curriculum; both Neroulos and Kanelos stress the fact that whereas previously the study of the Ancients centred on formal qualities, nowadays content has become crucial.[31]

As a true Enlightenment thinker, Neroulos is mainly interested in education and methods of spreading knowledge to as many people as possible in as little time as possible. This is why his highly illuminating comments on literary texts cannot be found in the main text of his treatise, but in the "appendice". This appendix is divided into generic categories: prose, consisting of theology, historiography, philosophy, translations, travel writing, and novels; and poetry, consisting of tragedies and lyric poetry.[32] I will single out four remarks by Neroulos.

(1) Question: why do the modern Greeks have no novels? Answer: they invented the genre, for which see Heliodorus, Achilles Tatius, the medieval novels (no names given) and "le fameux roman de galanterie chevaleresque intitulé *Erotocritos*"; but despite these illustrious examples, there is simply not enough "urbanité" among contemporary Greeks and this is why "les sociétés ne sont ni assez fréquentes, ni assez variées pour fournir un ample matière à celui qui veut observer les moeurs et le jeu des passions." This is an important contribution to the sociology of the novel; basically, Neroulos is reminding us of the fact that the novel is a bourgeois kind of writing, which can only flourish in a society where men and women are free to meet each other without social strictures – otherwise, how can they fall in love?[33]

(2) Question: how come that we count syllables and stress accents, and why do we rhyme? Answer: somewhere, in the Middle Ages, we developed a new kind of versification (see

[31] See Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 48-50 and Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. I, pp. 252-3.
[32] Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 126-56.
[33] Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 137-40.

Manasses, Tzetzes, Ptochoprodromos), and then, from the 15th century onwards, some Cretan poets started to use the originally Arabic, but subsequently Italian and Frankish device of rhyme. It should be noted, however, that this rhyming poetry is very Italian. And this is why these literary works (including the *Erotokritos*, *Voskopoula*, *Thysia*, *Erophili*, etc.) "pèchent par la trivialité de leur style, par une servile imitation de la littérature italienne, et par leur fastidieuse prolixité. Ces premiers essais d'une poésie nouvelle manquent totalement de physionomie, de nationalité, de couleur locale; on n'y trouve aucune trace de l'étude des ancients, aucune notion des règles. Quelques étincelles de verve poétique font tout le mérite de ces compositions informes, tombées dans un juste oubli."[34] Let's not forget that in 1818 one of the βυζαντινά παλικάρια, as Korais used to call the Phanariots, Dionysios Foteinos, had rewritten the *Erotokritos* and turned it into decent Greek (entitled: *Ο Νέος Ερωτόκριτος*).

(3) Question: what about non-rhyming poetry, I mean: these folk songs recently published by Claude Fauriel? Answer: "Notre poésie non rimée pris naissance dans les cavernes de l'Olympe [...]. Creée par de libres montagnards, elle fut comme eux simple et rustique, mais pleine d'énergie et d'originalité [...]. Cette poésie simple et sans art se distingue par des beautés mâles et naïves [...]. Le genre *klephtique* date de très-loin, et remonte peut-être aux premiers temps de la conquête. Il existe une quantité de ces chansons nationales, conservées dans la mémoire des Grecs [...]."[35] Neroulos is one of the first to suggest that the folk songs may date back to times immemorial, and to view them as a genuine expression of the Greek nation. He is followed by Rizos Rangavis[36]

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[34] Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 141-142.

[35] Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 142-143.

[36] A.-R. Rangabé, *Histoire littéraire de la Grèce moderne* (Paris 1877), vol. I, pp. 2-3. For the literary history of Rangavis, see G. Valetas, "Εκδόσεις και σύνθεση της νεοελληνικής γραμματολογίας του Αλέξανδρου Ραγκαβή", *Νέα Εστία* 10 (1936) 837-42, and E. Kovaiou, "Geschichte der Neugriechischen Literatur von A. R. Rhangabé und Daniel Sanders", in: A. Argyriou, K. A. Dimadis and A. D. Lazaridou

and by other authors of literary histories, who will treat folk poetry right at the beginning of their accounts in order to prove the continuity of the Greek nation.[37]

(4) Question: how should we judge those poems that have recently been translated into French by Stanislav Julien, namely: Solomos's *Hymn to Liberty* and Kalvos's *Odes*? Neroulos is dismissive of Kalvos's poetic merits and does not rate him highly because of his metrical oddities, his pompous language and his unusual images. He is more positive about Solomos: "Les poésies de Salomos de Zante sont parsemées d'expressions et de tournures dont l'emploi devrait uniquement appartenir à la conversation familière; elles ont cependant le rare mérite d'une verve énergique et entraînante, d'une imagination pleine de hardiesse et de fécondité [...]." Neroulos's book ends with extensive quotations from the *Hymn*, and concludes as follows: "Il faudrait le citer en entier, si l'on voulait faire remarquer tous les morceaux pleins de chaleur, d'énergie et d'entraînement." Just as in the case of Rigas, on whom Neroulos lavishes compliments, the patriotic character of the *Hymn to Liberty* outweighs any flaws in Solomos's writing.[38] Seven years later his nephew, Alexandros Soutsos, will hold the opposite opinion: great ideas are not great if they are poorly clad.

In comparison to Kanelos's philological letters, Neroulos offers not only a more thorough and comprehensive treatment of intellectual life on the eve of the Greek Revolution, but also a serious attempt to contextualize literary works historically. It cannot be denied, however, that the final result is rather dis-

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(eds.), *Ο Ελληνικός Κόσμος ανάμεσα στην Ανατολή και τη Δύση 1453-1981* (Athens 1999), vol. I, pp. 353-67.

[37] On the reception of folk poetry in the 19th century, see M. Herzfeld, *Ours once more. Folklore, ideology, and the making of Modern Greece* (Austin 1982) and A. Politis, *Η ανακάλυψη των ελληνικών δημοτικών τραγουδιών* (Athens 1984). The chapter dedicated to folk songs in Dimaras's literary history has the brilliant title "Οι αρχαίοι ζουν ακόμη"! See K. Th. Dimaras, *Ιστορία της νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας* (8th edition, Athens 1987), pp. 3-18.

[38] Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 145-6 (on Rigas), 151 (Kalvos), and 151-6 (Solomos).

appointing: incapable of understanding the course of history, Neroulos presents literature as a static whole or, perhaps better, as a series of static wholes. For him a national literature thrives as long as there is autonomy and freedom. This was the case with the Ancient Greeks, who wrote superb works until they lost their independence at the Battle of Chaeronea. Then, for a very long time, close to two millennia, not a single decent literary work was written because of the dreadful Macedonians, the dreadful Romans, the dreadful Byzantines and the dreadful Turks. Thank God for the Patriarchate and the Phanariots, who eventually obtained a certain measure of autonomy from the Turks, which led to the rebirth of the national literature, and, of course, of the nation. The whole concept of development is alien to Neroulos; he sees changes, but he does not observe the flux of time, the way things evolve and grow, never being static or constant. Of course, Neroulos is not to be blamed for this lack of historical insight, for he would have been well ahead of his time, had he grasped the historicist notion of the organic succession of periods. Historicism did not reach Greece until the mid-19th century, and even then it took a long time for this paradigm to become dominant among the Greek intelligentsia: people like Koumanoudis rejected the Ζαμπελιοπαπαρρηγοπούλειος σχολή until their last breath.[39]

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The Phanariots and all they stood for – η Βασιλεύουσα, η Μεγάλη του Γένους Σχολή, η καθ' ημάς Ανατολή – form an almost magical world that is lost forever. The Phanariots are losers in more than one sense: not only does their world no longer exist, but

[39] S. A. Koumanoudis, *Συναγωγή νέων λέξεων* (Athens 1900, reprinted Athens 1998, with an introduction by K. Th. Dimaras), *sub voce*. Koumanoudis claims to have coined the compound adjective in 1851, but, as Dimaras points out in his introduction, p. XXV, Zambelios's *Άσματα δημοτικά* dates from 1852 and the first edition of Paparrigopoulos's *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* from 1853 – which means that, unless Koumanoudis possessed powers of clairvoyance, he cannot have mocked ideas that had not yet been published.

posterity has been unfair to them and they have been vilified and denigrated by generations of demoticists, who kept kicking the corpse even long after its demise. It is about time for this to stop. As we all know, history is written by the winners. In the case of the literary canon and literary history, the winners are Kostis Palamas, Giorgos Seferis and Konstantinos Dimaras. Most of our common assumptions go back to theirs: the distinction between a learned and a vernacular tradition, the pivotal role played by the folk songs, *Digenis Akritis* as a national epic, the importance of the medieval romances, *Erotokritos* as an absolute masterpiece, Solomos as the national poet, and so on and so forth. It is basically because we are used to this story, which we have been told over and over again as students, that we find it difficult to understand that other stories, equally reasonable, are possible as well. The fascinating thing about 19th-century literary surveys and histories is that they provide alternative, almost subversive stories that undermine everything we hold to be true.

This is why I would invite you, reader, to indulge in some gymnastics of the mind and try to imagine what the literary horizon looked like in 1822 and 1826. If one compares the two literary surveys of Kanelos and Neroulos, one immediately recognizes that Kanelos does not mention Solomos, Kalvos or klephtic songs for the simple reason that in 1822 Solomos and Kalvos had not yet written anything of importance and the klephtic songs had not yet been advertised throughout Europe by that indefatigable advocate of the Greek cause, Claude Fauriel. However, in 1826, only four years later, Neroulos has to explain to his audience of Genevan philhellenes that Kalvos is not a very good poet. Solomos is on everybody's lip. And the whole of liberal Europe fantasizes about those fearsome klephts, those brave freedom fighters: Botsaris! Kolokotronis! and would you believe it, these noble savages even write poetry! (This is Edward Said all over again.) Personally I do not think that Neroulos, had he not been forced to leave his home, would have been much interested in Solomos or klephtic songs, but because he was adrift, flotsam on

the maelstrom of time, he found himself in a foreign environment of philhellenes who *were* interested.

The second thing that one may notice is the fact that Kanelos does not use the term "national", whereas Neroulos does: the klephtic songs are "des chansons nationales" and Rigas's *thourioi* "étincellent de beautés énergiques, qui sont puisées dans le caractère national", but the works of the Cretan Renaissance "manquent totalement de physionomie, de nationalité, de couleur locale" and Ioannis Zambelios's tragedies do not possess "toute la nationalité désirable" (because they are redolent of Alfieri).[40] The term "national" is a very complex one in this transitory period and can have various meanings. I have the impression that, with respect to the klephtic songs and Rigas's *Thourios*, "national" means "of the people", "popular", with a slight connotation of male Greek virtues, such as courage, honesty and trustworthiness. With respect to Cretan literature and Zambelios, the term "national" becomes somewhat xenophobic as it seems to indicate anything not tainted by foreign influences. Alexis Politis has recently pointed out that Neroulos obviously used Fauriel's introduction to the edition of the *Chants populaires*.[41] This is also true for the term "national". In his introduction Fauriel distinguishes two traditions, a literary tradition and a popular tradition – in short, *Erotokritos* versus the klephtic songs. About the *Erotokritos* he is not altogether complimentary: he recognizes that the work has literary merits, but he objects to its "prolixity" (his word, not mine) and the marked influence of Italian literature upon it. This is what he has to say about the other tradition, that of folk poetry:

> une poésie populaire dans tous les sens et toute la force de ce mot, expression directe et vraie du caractère et de l'esprit national, que tout Grec comprend et sent avec amour, par cela seul qu'il est Grec, qu'il habite le sol et respire l'air de la Grèce; une poésie enfin qui vit, non dans les livres, d'une vie factice et

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[40] Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 142 (Cretan poems), 142-3 (klephtic songs), 144 (Zambelios) and 145-6 (Rigas).
[41] Politis, "Γραμματολογικές απογραφές", pp. 326-8.

> qui n'est souvent qu'apparente, mais dans le peuple lui-même, et de toute la vie du peuple.[42]

The identification of the "nation" with the "people", on which Fauriel's definition of folk poetry is predicated, is typical of the Romantic movement, and the almost Herderian preoccupation with the native soil seems to foreshadow the concept of ελληνικότητα.[43] Whereas Neroulos's ideas on what constitutes the "nation" have clearly been influenced by Fauriel, Kanelos does not view the Greek Insurrection in such terms. Kanelos is a Greek patriot, a revolutionary who believes in civil rights, social justice and democratic values, but he is not a nationalist. For Kanelos, in 1822, it is the people who are fighting; for Neroulos, in 1826, the nation is under arms.

Thirdly, Kanelos and Neroulos leave no doubt that whatever the respective merits of poets such as Kornaros, Solomos and *tutti quanti*, the two greatest are Athanasios Christopoulos and Rigas Velestinlis.[44] Of course, Rigas is much in the picture as the great revolutionary, the *ethnomartyras*, the poet of those divine *thourioi* that inspire the Greek people to acts of great bravery. But it is worth noticing that whereas Kanelos and Neroulos express their unreserved admiration for Rigas's poetry, there are others who are less impressed by the hype. Fauriel, for instance: "ces hymnes ne me semblent pas d'un grand mérite poétique" – but nonetheless, as Rigas's poems apparently move the Greeks to tears, he has

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[42] C. Fauriel, *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne* (Paris 1824), vol. I, pp. x-xi (the two traditions), xi-xxiv (vernacular literature from the 12th century to 1669; pp. xix-xxi: *Erotokritos*) and xxv ff. (folk poetry; on p. xxv the passage quoted here).

[43] The notion of ελληνικότητα can be used in various ways: whereas the 1930s Generation used it to promote Solomos, Spyridon Zambelios, who, if he did not invent the concept, is the first I know to employ it regularly, condemned Solomos for his lack of Greekness; see his *Πόθεν η κοινή λέξις τραγουδώ; Σκέψεις περί ελληνικής ποιήσεως* (Athens 1859).

[44] For Rigas, see: Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. I, p. 244 and vol. II, pp. 99-100, and Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 145-7.

decided to publish the *Thourios*.[45] Or see Georgios Psyllas, in his famous 1825 review of Solomos's *Hymn to Liberty*: "The poems of immortal Rigas, although written with patriotic zeal, cannot set aglow the hearts of the peoples of Greece with the same fire as the poet felt burning within him, and yet even these poems do not fail to affect the sensitive hearts of the Greeks." That is why Psyllas does not consider Rigas's *thourioi* to be "national poems".[46] Most people would nowadays agree with Fauriel and Psyllas, and say that, with all due respect to Rigas, his *thourioi* do not qualify as great poetry. They would not convince Neroulos and Kanelos, however.

In contrast to Rigas, the poetic merits of Christopoulos are widely acknowledged in the 1820s. Fauriel is the only one to ignore him, because his survey of vernacular literature stops rather abruptly in 1669. Manos mentions him to the French, Kanelos to the Germans, Neroulos to the Swiss. And Psyllas to the Athenians: "In his charming songs Christopoulos celebrated the tender feelings of love and the sweet whispers of the wine barrel and the wine flask"; and these songs, he affirms, are truly "national poems".[47] Neroulos fully agrees: "Ces poésies ne cesseront pas d'être lues avec délices tant qu'il y aura des hommes qui parleront grec; elles ont eu un succès national et complet; elles font le charme de tous les habitants de la Grèce." As Kanelos is no longer interested in poetry, but in heroic deeds on the battle-field, he is rather reticent. He writes that the poems of Christopoulos are important because they bear witness to the beauty of the Greek language and because they put an end to "the unbearable tedium

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[45] C. Fauriel, *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne* (Paris 1825), vol. II, p. 18.

[46] A. Koumarianou (ed.), *Ο Τύπος στον Αγώνα* (Athens 1971), vol. I, pp. 232-6: the review was published in the *Εφημερίς Αθηνών*, 11 November 1825. For the text quoted, see p. 233. See also G. Veloudis, *Ο Σολωμός των Ελλήνων. Εθνική ποίηση και ιδεολογία: μια πολιτική ανάγνωση* (Athens 2004), pp. 78-80, 84 and 133-40.

[47] Manos: see above, footnote 9. Kanelos: Iken, *Leukothea*, vol. II, p. 87. Neroulos, *Cours*, pp. 147-8. Psyllas: Koumarianou (ed.), *Ο Τύπος στον Αγώνα*, pp. 232-3.

of our former versification" (την αφόρητον αηδίαν της προτού στιχουργικής μας – for once Iken quotes the original). Is this a reference to what Kalvos called "το μονότονον των κρητικών επών"?[48] Perhaps, but the word "our" appears to refer to Phanariot versification, not to the political verses of Cretan poetry.

Fourthly, when we look at the two literary surveys of Kanelos and Neroulos, one cannot but notice that for both Phanariots, the democrat and the aristocrat, Modern Greek literature begins somewhere in the 18th century. Kanelos mentions the *Erotokritos* after being urged by Iken. Neroulos mentions a few names and titles of older literature, including *Erotokritos*, for which his source is obviously Fauriel. In his list of "national poems", Psyllas mentions the *Erotokritos* – but had he read the work? Or is he too influenced by Fauriel?[49] This is *ben poco* for a poem that we nowadays consider to be a masterpiece of the Cretan Renaissance. As the poem circulated in cheap Venetian editions, it must not have been too difficult for Greek intellectuals to lay their hands on a copy of the *Erotokritos*. And yet, they were simply not interested. I do not think it has anything to do with the language debate. Of course, language is used as an argument against the *Erotokritos* ("it is too Cretan, it has too many Italian loanwords"), but it is a matter of giving a dog a bad name in order to hang him. Earlier poetry simply did not exist for people like Kanelos and Neroulos. They had to be reminded by foreigners, Iken and Fauriel, that this too was part of their heritage and this too was something they could be proud of. It is only in the second half of the 19th century that the Greeks discover their own medieval and Renaissance literature as a result of the growing impact of historicism.[50]

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[48] For the possible interpretations of this famous phrase, see E. Garantoudis, *Πολύτροπος Αρμονία. Μετρική και ποιητική του Κάλβου* (Irakleio 1995), pp. 16-19.

[49] Psyllas: Koumarianou (ed.), *Ο Τύπος στον Αγώνα*, pp. 232-3, only mentions the subject ("a love poem") and the dialect ("Cretan") – and fulminates in a footnote against Dionysios Foteinos's reworking of the text. I strongly suspect that Psyllas knew only Foteinos's version, not the *Erotokritos* itself.

[50] See Politis, "Γραμματολογικές απογραφές", pp. 335-7.

In fact, in the years 1822 (Kanelos) and 1826 (Neroulos), Modern Greek literature is a literature that is very modern and very Greek. It is a literature without a past; almost everything that is important enough to be recorded for posterity has happened within living memory. It is a literature of the here and the now. It is also a literature with a mission and a future: it will change the course of history. And how so, one may ask? By being Greek. By being very Greek. And here we have the paradox: Greekness is all about regaining autonomy and freeing oneselves from the Turks, but also about being, or pretending to be, Ancient Greeks. This attempt to be, or to be like, Ancient Greeks is not a thing of the past but of the future; it is not an attempt to retrieve a lost paradise, but to find a new eldorado. Early 19th-century literature is not nostalgic at all, it is forward-looking. The same goes for the two literary surveys I have presented, those of Kanelos and Neroulos. They are manifestos for the future.