

## Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών

Τόμ. 9 (1992)



### Η ποιητική απάντηση στη μικρασιατική καταστροφή

*Diana Haas*

doi: [10.12681/deltiokms.136](https://doi.org/10.12681/deltiokms.136)

Copyright © 2015, Diana Haas



Άδεια χρήσης [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

### Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

Haas, D. (1992). Η ποιητική απάντηση στη μικρασιατική καταστροφή. *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών*, 9, 199-222. <https://doi.org/10.12681/deltiokms.136>

*ΑΠΗΧΗΣΕΙΣ ΣΤΗ ΛΟΓΟΤΕΧΝΙΑ  
ΚΑΙ ΤΗ ΓΛΩΣΣΑ*



## THE POETIC RESPONSE TO THE ASIA MINOR DISASTER

«'Η μικρασιατική καταστροφή θὰ συνταράττη ἐπὶ μακρότατον τὰς λύρας τῶν ποιητῶν, καὶ ἡ ποίησις θὰ διαβλέπη πρόσφορον ὕλικὸν ἀνεξάντλητον εἰς τὰ μαῦρα σημεῖα της». Thus wrote Kostis Palamas in March 1929, in a report recommending that the Lambiki Prize in Poetry be awarded to the Smyrniot poet Apostolos Mammelis<sup>1</sup>. The Asia Minor Disaster did, indeed, inspire a plethora of poetic compositions and, if we may judge by Nikos Milioris' studies «'Η Μικρασιατικὴ Τραγωδία στὴ λογοτεχνία καὶ στὴν τέχνη» and 'Απόηχοι τοῦ Μικρασιατικοῦ ὀλέθρου στὴν ποίηση, in which some 110 poets who have dealt with the Disaster theme are named<sup>2</sup>, as well as by the recent, voluminous anthology by Apostolos and Katie Manganaris entitled *Θρῆνοι καὶ Παινέματα γιὰ τὶς Χαμένες Πατρίδες*, which includes some 260 poets<sup>3</sup>, we may conclude that Palamas' prediction was fulfilled.

It is also true, however, that much of this poetic production, in qualitative terms, does not go beyond sentimentality and rhetoric. In fact, the very title of the anthology just mentioned —*Θρῆνοι καὶ Παινέματα*— not only reflects these two characteristic features, but also demonstrates to what degree the poetry of the Asia Minor Disaster is still associated, in the collective consciousness, with its most exaggerated — I would dare to say its most romantic — manifestations.

This is not to say that «lament» and «praise» as forms of expression are necessarily absent from genuine poetry, nor to deny the sincerity of emotion of the many who, having experienced personally the tragedy and its aftermath, sought to give voice to their grief and their nostalgia through the medium of

---

1. Kostis Palamas, *Ἄπαντα*, vol. 16, Athens, n.d., p. 455.

2. Nikos E. Milioris, «'Η Μικρασιατικὴ Τραγωδία στὴ λογοτεχνία καὶ στὴν τέχνη», *Μικρασιατικὰ Χρονικά*, vol. 13 (1967), pp. 338-400; and 'Απόηχοι τοῦ Μικρασιατικοῦ ὀλέθρου στὴν ποίηση, Athens, 1980.

3. Apostolos and Katie Manganaris, ed., *Θρῆνοι καὶ Παινέματα γιὰ τὶς Χαμένες Πατρίδες*, Athens, 1988.

verse. However, as we now mark its seventieth anniversary, the time has perhaps come for a more sober assessment of the poetic response to the Asia Minor Disaster. An assessment which must, in its first phase, impose certain criteria on the selection of poets to be considered —to what degree they have withstood the test of time and of critical evaluation, and whether they were simply poets «of the moment» or had a broader involvement in poetic creation<sup>4</sup>— and, in its second phase, seek to discover and analyze the nature of the response of the poets selected in all of its richness and subtleties. This is, in very broad terms, the research I am currently engaged in, and which, from a methodological point of view, follows the evolution of the Asia Minor theme through time, taking into consideration at what point in their development, and under what historical, political, and cultural circumstances, these poets received and absorbed the events of the Disaster.

Even after completing our task of selection, we are left with an abundance of material which I could not hope to discuss in its totality here. To give some idea of its extent and make-up, however, I may list the names of poets who must be included in this study, following more or less chronological order but without distinguishing between «major» and «minor» poets, between mediocre works and masterpieces, or between incidental and sustained involvement with the theme: (1) generation of 1880: Kostis Palamas, Georgios Drosinis, Ioannis Polemis, Alexandros Pallis, and Argyris Eftaliotis; (2) C. P. Cavafy (3) descendants of the generation of 1880: Sotiris Skipis, Miltiadis Malakasis, and Georgios Athanas, and the Asia Minor poets Michail Argyropoulos, Angelos Simiriotis, Apostolos Mammelis, and Omiros Bekes; (4) poets of the inter-war period: Angelos Sikelianos, Romos Philyras, and Kostas Karyotakis; (5) generation of 1930: the Smyrniot George Seferis, George Themelis, Nikiphoros Vrettakos and Tatiana Stavrou; (6) first post-war generation: the Smyrniot George Geralis, Aris Diktaios, Dimitris Doukaris, and the Cypriot Kypros Chrysanthis; (7) second post-war generation: K. Ch. Myris [Kostas Georgousopoulos].

Of these twenty-five poets who have dealt with the Disaster, this paper will focus on only three, each of whom has given us a particularly significant

---

4. Neither Milioris nor the Manganarises appear to apply any critical criteria to their choice of poets. Moreover, the Manganaris anthology has been compiled with no concern for bibliographical accuracy — suffice it to say that a poem («Χρυσόστομος», p. 402) is attributed to Seferis which is not his — making the volume, unfortunately, far less useful for the serious student than its compilers had believed («Όλα αυτά τὰ διασωθέντα κείμενα, φροντίσαμε καὶ τὰ συγκεντρώσαμε, ὄχι μόνο μὲ τὴν καθαρὰ ποιητικὴ ἔννοια, ἀλλὰ μὲ τὸ σκεπτικὸ πὼς συμβάλλουν στὴ μελέτη. [...] Δίνοντας σήμερα στὴ δημοσιότητα αὐτὴ τὴν Ἀνθολογία, εἴμαστε βέβαιοι πὼς ἀνοίγουμε ἕνα δρόμο στὸ ἔθρο τῆς μελέτης» [p. 9]).

response to the events of the Disaster as they occurred<sup>5</sup>: Kostis Palamas, C. P. Cavafy, and Kostas Karyotakis.

At the time of the Asia Minor Disaster, Kostis Palamas, aged sixty-three, was already in his late poetic maturity. His was the reaction of someone for whom the Disaster meant the destruction of an ideal that had nourished him since his earliest childhood: that, of course, of the «Μεγάλη Ἰδέα». This is how, in 1901, he had described his early attachment to that ideal:

Ἡ Μεγάλη Ἰδέα. Τὸ παινεύομαι. Ἀπὸ τὰ πρῶτα χρόνια μου, μαζί με τὴν πρώτη μου ἀγάπη, τὸ πρῶτο ἐκστατικὸ ξάφνισμα μου φύσηξε. Στὸ σπῆτι μέσα τὴν ἄκουσα νὰ ψιθυρίζεται γύρω μου σὰν ἕνα τρανὸ μυστικό, σὰν ἕνα «μελλούσης Ἀναστάσεως» καρτέρημα. Καὶ τὴν πίστewμα μ' εὐλάβεια θρησκευτικῆ<sup>6</sup>.

This was the ideal behind all of Palamas' patriotic poetry<sup>7</sup>, and to identify its presence in his work preceding the Disaster would be beyond the scope of this paper. We may, however, remember the first two stanzas of the well-known poem «Ἄνατολή», from 1907, with its specific reference to Smyrna and Constantinople. The poet's purpose is to bring to light the common bond — a «mother»: the «lascivious Orient» — that links together the Greeks of the as yet unliberated regions of Asia Minor and Epirus, and that the poet also feels within himself:

Γιαννιώτικα, σμυρνιώτικα, πολιτικά,  
μακρόσυρτα τραγοῦδια ἀνατολίτικα,  
λυπητερά,

πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ μου σέρνεται μαζί σας!  
Εἶναι χυμένη ἀπὸ τὴ μουσικὴ σας  
καὶ πᾶει μὲ τὰ δικὰ σας τὰ φτερά.

Σᾶς γέννησε καὶ μέσα σας μιλάει  
καὶ βογγάει καὶ βαριά μοσκοβολάει  
μὰ μᾶνα· καίει τὸ λάγνο της φιλί,  
κι εἶναι τῆς Μοίρας λάτρισσα καὶ τρέμει,  
ψυχὴ ὅλη σάρκα, σκλάβα σὲ χαρέμι,  
ἢ λαγγεμένη Ἄνατολή.

5. Naturally, in a study of the impact of the Disaster on modern Greek poetry the question of the Disaster as «theme» is only one part. In another part, the study must address questions concerning the changes brought to poetry as a consequence of the event.

6. Palamas, *Ἄπαντα*, vol. 6, Athens, p. 285.

7. As Aimilios Hourmouziou has written, it was this ideal «ποῦ στήριξε τὴν πατριδολάτρισσα μοῦσα του» (*Ὁ Παλαμᾶς καὶ ἡ ἐποχὴ του*, vol. 3, Athens 1960, p. 288).

I shall now focus my attention on Palamas' reaction to the event —or rather, events— of the Disaster itself.

On 2 June 1919, only weeks after Greek forces landed in Smyrna, Palamas published a poem entitled «Σμύρνη» in the Constantinopolitan journal *Ὁ Λόγος*<sup>8</sup>. As one might expect, the poem reflects Palamas' boundless enthusiasm at what appeared to be the imminent realization of the dream of the «Μεγάλη Ἰδέα». Using once again the metaphor of the «Mother» —this time Greece— uniting her scattered children across time and space, he makes Smyrna the symbol of national re-birth:

Πέρα ὡς πέρα στὴ γῆς τῆς Ἰωνίας,  
 δοξαστικὸ ἀρχολόγησε τροπάρι!  
 Ἄπ' τὴν Κνωσοῦ ὡς τὴν Πέργαμο θεία χάρη  
 στὴν Ἑλλάδα, πηγὴ τῆς ἀρμονίας.  
 Καὶ ὦ Σμύρνη, πάντα ἐσὺ μαργαριτάρι  
 στὰ μαλλιά τῆς νεράϊδας Μικρασίας!  
 Ἡ Μίλητος δὲν εἶναι πιά καμάρι  
 τῆς ἱστορίας· τῆς δόξας Ἐφεσίας  
 οἱ καιροὶ σβύσαν τὴ φεγγοβολία.  
 —Σμύρνη, ξαναγεννητρες εἶναι οἱ Μοῖρες  
 (χτυπήστε, Ὀμήρων ἰωνικῶν οἱ λύρες)  
 μέσ' στὴ ζεστὴ τῆς Μάνας σου ἀγκαλιὰ  
 ποὺ ἀνοίγεται ὅλα γιὰ νὰ τ' ἀγκαλιάσει,  
 καὶ τὰ σκόρπια τὰ σπλάχνα της, μιὰ πλάση.

Palamas' historical and political awareness was, however, too acute for him not to understand the darker side of the situation, as we see from this second *Δεκατετράστιχο*, also written in 1919:

Στῆς Παναγιᾶς τὴν Πόλη τὸ Κοράνι  
 τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴ Σοφία πατάει καὶ βρίζει·  
 μὲ δετὰ χέρια ἂν ἴσκιοι εἶν' οἱ Σουλτάνοι,  
 ζῆ ὁ Κούρδος καί, Ἀρμένη, σὲ θερίζει.  
 Τοῦ Ζεῖμπέκου χτυπᾷ τὸ γαταγάνι,  
 καὶ ἡ Ρωμοσύνη δίχως μετερίζι,  
 κι ἡ Ἀνατολὴ τοῦ αἵματου συντριβάνι.  
 Καὶ τῆς Θράκης ἡ γῆ κι ἄς λαμπυρίζει  
 μὲ φωταχνάρια Ὀρφέων καὶ Διγενήδων,  
 μαῦρη γῆ, κούρβα Τούρκων Ὀσμανλήδων.

8. The poem was included in the collection *Τὰ Δεκατετράστιχα*, published the same year in Alexandria.

Κι ἡ Εὐρώπη στὸν καθρέφτη μαγικὸ  
 ποῦ ὁ περιπαίχτης δαίμονας τῆς δίνει  
 τῶν Ἐθνῶν, φάντασμ' ἄπιαστο λευκό,  
 καμαρώνει τὴν παναδερφοσύνη.

Here, the poet describes the plight of the Christian populations —Greek and Armenian— of Asia Minor and Thrace, victims of Turkish (and Kurdish) brutalities, but even more so, ultimately, of the nations of Western Europe who, looking apathetically at the «magic mirror» of the «Devil», «take pride» in the «ghost» of the «Brotherhood of Nations» (probably an allusion to the League of Nations). While he is certainly referring to the persecutions which had begun much earlier —his reference to the Kurdish «mowing down» of the Armenians makes this clear— the immediate motive for writing the poem was quite likely the «Disaster» which befell the Christian inhabitants of Aidini in mid-June 1919, and in which Italy played a major collaboratorist role<sup>9</sup>.

Verses from this poem, with the image of «Ρωμιοσύνη» defenseless before the deceptiveness of Western Europe, serve as an epigraph to Palamas' long poem dealing with the Disaster of 1922 itself, «Οἱ Λύκοι», published in the journal *Μοῦσα* in October 1922. The work has three parts, each of which bears a specific date. I will focus here on the first part —that which provoked a controversy following the poem's publication— and on certain passages from the second and third parts.

The first part is dated 27 August 1922, day on which the Turkish army reached Smyrna and the persecution of the city's Christian populations began<sup>10</sup>. The «Poet» speaks:

Βοσκοί, στὴ μάντρα τῆς Πολιτείας οἱ λύκοι! Οἱ λύκοι!  
 Στὰ ὄπλα, Ἀκρίτες! Μακριὰ καὶ οἱ φαῦλοι καὶ οἱ περιττοί,  
 καλαμαράδες καὶ δημοκόποι καὶ μπολσεβίκοι,  
 γιὰ λόγους ἄδειους ἢ γιὰ τοῦ ὀλέθρου τὰ ἔργα βαλτοί.

(Ἄπ' τῆς μαυρίλας τῆς ἀραχνίλας τὴν ἀποθήκη  
 σὲ σκονισμένα γυαλιὰ κλεισμένο, παλιὸ κρασί,  
 τῶν ἑκατό σου χρόνων ἀνοίγω τὸ ἀρχοντηλίκι  
 στοῦ ἡλιοῦ τὸ φέγγος, τί σὲ προσμένουν οἱ δυνατοί

9. See Chr. Em. Angelomatis, *Χρονικὸν Μεγάλης Τραγωδίας (Τὸ Ἔπος τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας)*, 3rd ed., Athens, n.d., pp. 76-77.

10. See Angelomatis, pp. 214-218. This date is according to the Old Calendar, which Palamas was most likely using. If, however, he was using the New Calendar (by which the Kemalians entered Smyrna on 9 September 1922), then the poem was written one day after the counter-attack of Kemal and the collapse of the Greek front at Afyon Karahisser, on 26 August (13 August by the Old Calendar).



Ξανά σὰν πάντα καὶ γιὰ τὴ μάχη καὶ γιὰ τὴ νίκη  
 νὰ τοὺς φτερώσεις τὸ πάτημά τους ὄπου πατεῖ.  
 Σ' ἐμὲ —κελλάρης λυράρης εἶμαι,— σ' ἐμένα ἀνήκει  
 νὰ τὸ κεράσω στὰ νέα ποτήρια τὸ ἀρχαῖο πιοτῖ).

.....  
 . . . Βοσκοὶ καὶ σκύλοι, λῶβα καὶ ψῶρα. Τ' ἄρνιά; Μουζῖκοι.  
 Ὁ λαός; Ὄνομα. Σκλάβας πλέμπας δούλα κι ἡ ὄργη,  
 Δίκη ἀποπάνω θεία τῶν ἀστόχαστων καταδίκη  
 καὶ λογαριάζει καὶ ξεπλερώνει ὄσο ἂν ἀργεῖ.

Τραγουδημένη κλεφτουριά, Γένος, ἄρματωλίκι;  
 Τὰ ξεγραμμένα καὶ τὰ τριμμένα, ψέματα, ἀχνοί.  
 Ἰδέα, βυζάχτρα τῶν τετρακόσιων χρόνων, ἡ φρίκη  
 τώρα, τὸ μάθημα τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὡς χτές, ἐσὺ  
 τοῦ ραγιᾶ μάνα βιβλική, πλάσμα ὄρφικό, Εὐρυδίκη,  
 τοῦ πανελληνίου μεγαλονεῖρου χρυσοπηγῆ,  
 μᾶς τὸν καθρέφτιζες μέσ' στῆς Πόλης τὸ βασιλίκι  
 τὸν ξυπνημένο Μαρμαρωμένο, κυνηγητῆ

τοῦ Ἰσλάμ. Ἡ Θράκη προικιό του, ὦ δόξα! Καὶ ἀπανωπροίκι  
 μιὰ Ἑλλάδα πάλε στὴν τουρκεμένην Ἀνατολή,  
 τῆς Ἰωνίας γλυκοξημέρωμα...

— Οἱ λύκοι! Οἱ λύκοι!

κι οἱ βοσκοὶ ἀνάξιοι, λύκοι καὶ οἱ σκύλοι, κ' οἱ ἀντρεῖοι, δειλοί.

Στῆς Πολιτείας τὴ μάντρα οἱ λύκοι! Παντοῦ εἶναι λύκοι!  
 Ξανά στὰ τάρταρα ἴσκιος, τοῦ ψάλτη λατρεία κ' ἐσύ.  
 Ψόφια ὄλη ἡ στάνη. Φέρτε νὰ πιοῦμε, κούφιο νταηλίκι,  
 γιὰ τ' ἀποκάρωμα ποῦ μᾶς πρέπει, κι ὄποιο κρασί.

27 τοῦ Αὐγούστου 1922

Beyond the poet's call to arms to the «borderguards» to defend once again the homeland; beyond his assuming the role of «lyre-playing steward» who will serve the hundred-year-old wine of the Greek Revolution to re-ignite the Greeks' spirits to battle and victory (a role he had played in the *Δωδεκάλογος τοῦ Γύφτου* following the defeat of 1897); and beyond his lament over the death of the «Μεγάλη Ἰδέα», on which the Greeks had «nursed» for four hundred years; what impresses us most in this poem is what Robin Fletcher has aptly called «an orgy of anger, recrimination, hate, bitterness and desperation unparalleled in the rest of his poetry»<sup>11</sup>. For, in addition to the Western nations

11. Robin A. Fletcher, *Kostas Palamas. A Great Modern Greek Poet. 1859-1943. His Life - His*

condemned in the epigraph, Palamas now finds himself forced to attribute the defeat to elements in the Greek state's institutions and society: journalists, politicians, the army, the people themselves and... the «Bolsheviks» —an important detail, to which I shall soon return.

In the second section of the poem, written a week later (2 September 1922), a «Voice» addresses the «Poet», urging him to find once again «peace and serenity», an expression which serves as a refrain in the poem. For even this «storm» will pass:

Μιά μοίρα τοῦ φτόνου, τοῦ τρόμου κακῆ ὄρα,  
 κι ἀνθούς καὶ καρπούς ὄλα τὰ ῥιξε ἡ μόρα.  
 Τὰ πάντα ἄν περνοῦν, θὰ περάσει κ' ἐκείνη  
 Εἰρήνη σ' ἐσὲ καὶ γαλήνη!

and only Fate will decide whether Greece will be «small» or «great» (an obvious reference to the opposing views of a «μικρὰ καὶ ἔντιμη Ἑλλάδα» and the «Μεγάλη Ἰδέα»), whether she will call the «Turk» or the «Frank» master:

Μικρὲς ἢ μεγάλες, γραφτὸ κι ἄν οἱ Ἑλλάδες  
 τὸν Τοῦρκο ἢ τὸ Φράγκο νὰ λένε ἀφεντάδες,  
 κανεὶς τί θὰ γίνεῖ, κανεὶς τί θὰ μείνει·  
 (Γαλήνη σ' ἐσένα καὶ εἰρήνη!)

δὲν ξέρεῖ. Ποῦ; Τί; Ποιὸ τοῦ δρόμου τὸ τέρμα;  
 Λιμάνι; Γκρεμνός; Ἥλιου ἀνάτελμα; Γέρμα;  
 Φράφει ὄλο ἓνα Χέρι. Τὶ γράφει; Τὶ σβύνει;

The section ends with the hopeful message that poetry will triumph over despair:

Γιατὶ τὸ πολέμιο σὰν παῦει τουφέκι,  
 ἀπάνου ἀπ' τὰ μαυρα χαλάσματα στέκει  
 μιὰ Μούσα. Ποτὲ τὸ τραγοῦδι δὲν παῦει,  
 χαρεῖτε, κ' οἱ ἐλεύτεροι τάχα, καὶ οἱ σκλάβοι.  
 Διαβαίνουμε, κι ἓνα τραγοῦδι θὰ μείνει,  
 τῆς φλόγας τὸ θάμα, δροσιὰ στὸ καμίνι,  
 γαλήνη τοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἰρήνη!

In the poem's third part, dated 7 September 1922, the «Poet», unconvinced

---

*Work and His Struggle for Demoticism*, Athens, Kostas Palamas Institute, 1984, p. 203. Similarly, Hourmouziou writes: «Καὶ τὸ τραγοῦδι εἶναι μιὰ δραματικὴ, ἀνέλπιδη κραυγὴ ὀδύνης ἀνάμικτης μὲ ὀργή, ἀπογοήτευση, σπαραγμὸ γιὰ τὸ γκρέμισμα ἐνὸς ὄνειρου θρεμμένου ἀπὸ τὰ χρόνια ποὺ ἀναβλάστησε κι ἀντρώθηκε στὶς ἐλληνικὲς συνειδήσεις ἡ Μεγάλη Ἰδέα» (vol. 3, p. 288).

by the «Voice's» final message, addresses a long «μοιρολόι» to his mother. He refers once again to the death of the Great Idea, to the decay of Greek society, to the disappearance of «prophets, heroes, martyrs, saviours», as well as to the threat of the homeland's enemies, as in the following stanza:

Μάνα, ή πατρίδα χάνεται,  
 Μάνα μου, ό κόσμος χάνεται.  
 Τσέτης τζελάτης χύμησε,  
 μέ τὰ σπαθιά μέ τὰ δαυλιά,  
 σπαθιά τοῦ Τούρκου καί δαυλιά,  
 παραμονεύει ό Βούλγαρος,  
 κι ό Μόσκοβος φοβέρα είναι.  
 Κι ό Φράγκος ό ἄρχοντας, ὦ! πῶς  
 τὰ σούφρωσε τὰ φρύδια του,  
 καί πῶς ἀνασηκώνοντας  
 τοὺς ὄμους, παραμέρισε  
 στό ἀνταριασμένο διάβα μας,  
 γιά νά μή 'γγίξει ἀπάνου μας!

The «Voice» responds, insisting again that «Hope», «Faith» and «Love» still exist, and that the poet's lyre may become a «flag» in the midst of «danger». The «Poet» remains unconvinced, however, and the poem ends with a quatrain repeating the theme of the first part:

Τῆς λύρας κάμε σκοινιά τις κόρδες γιά μιὰ κρεμάλα,  
 ἦ στά σκουπίδια, νά μή βαραίνει μας τῆ φευγάλα!  
 "Α! ή σαστισμάρα! Τῆς φαγομάρας ὦ! τὸ σκουλήκι...  
 Στῆς Πολιτείας τῆ μάντρα οἱ λύκοι! Παντοῦ εἶναι λύκοι!

I would like now to discuss briefly the reference to the Bolsheviks in the first part, which must be linked to the mention of the «Muscovite» in the second, for it was this element that provoked a controversy over the poem in October 1922.

Palamas was probably influenced here by articles that appeared in the newspapers *Ἡ Καθημερινή* and *Χρονικά* in late August 1922, in which the communists were blamed for the impending disaster in Asia Minor<sup>12</sup>. In *Ἡ Καθημερινή* (24 August), specifically, the view was expressed that the Greek and Bulgarian communists had collaborated with Kemal<sup>13</sup>. Based on this evidence, I would suggest that the «Bolsheviks» Palamas refers to in the poem are

12. See Yanis Kordatos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Νεώτερης Ἑλλάδας*, Athens 1958, pp. 575-579.

13. See Kostas G. Papageorgiou ed., Kostas Varnalis, *Φιλολογικά Ἀπομνημονεύματα*, Athens 1980, p. 318.

Greeks<sup>14</sup>. This view is further supported by the fact that, with the exception of the epigraph, the whole first section of the poem deals with the internal elements responsible for the catastrophe. But Palamas also knew of the treaty of friendship signed by Lenin and Kemal in March 1921 —partly as a result of the participation of Greek forces on the side of the Tsar in the Ukraine in the early months of 1919— and it is to the external communist factor that he is referring in the second part («κι ὁ Μόσκοβος φοβέρα εἶναι»).

The question of Palamas' attitude toward communism<sup>15</sup> is beyond the limits of my topic, as is that of the Greek communists' stance toward the Asia Minor campaign<sup>16</sup>. It is, however, useful to consider a «poetic response» to Palamas' «Λύκοι», namely that of Kostas Varnalis, who in November 1922 published his poem «Λευτεριά», also in the journal *Μοῦσα*<sup>17</sup>, with the epigraph «Λύκοι - Μπολσεβίκοι. Κ. Παλαμάς.» The poem is not about the Asia Minor Disaster, but rather a revolutionary piece in which an «idealist» poet —presumably Palamas— learns that:

Τὴ λευτεριά δὲν τὴ ζητᾶν μὲ παρακάλια: τὴνε παίρνουν  
μὲ τὰ ἴδια χέρια μοναχοί.

The poem ends with an image of the revolution, with the final stanza portraying the «imbecile poets» being «torn apart» by the «wolves»:

Μέσα σὲ φλόγες καὶ καπνούς, ἀνάμαλη εἶδα νὰ ξετρέχει  
τοὺς Ἴανομους γιγάντια ἢ Δίκη·  
ξάφνου τοῦ σάλαγου κοπή· γέλια μὲ φτάσανε στριγγά:  
σπάραζαν τοὺς μωροὺς Ποιητὲς οἱ Λύκοι.

14. I would therefore disagree with Stathis Maras, who writes (in *Κώστας Βάρναλης. Ἱδεολογία καὶ Ποίηση*, Athens, Kastaniotis, 1986, pp. 60-61): «Ἐ' ἓνα του ποίημα μὲ τίτλο «Τὸ τραγοῦδι τῶν προσφύγων» [= «Οἱ Λύκοι!», ὕβριστικό γιὰ τοὺς Σοβιετικούς ἐπαναστάτες καὶ τοὺς ἐπαναστατημένους λαοὺς γενικότερα, μιλάει γιὰ «μάντρες», «ἄπλα», «Ἄκρίτες», «σκουπίδια» καὶ ὀνομάζει τοὺς Σοβιετικούς «λύκους»!»; as well as with M. M. Papaioannou, according to whom (in *Κώστας Βάρναλης. Μελέτες*, Athens, Synchroni Epochi, 1984, p. 45): «νομίζει κανεὶς πὼς οἱ «μπολσεβίκοι» τοῦ χρειάστηκαν γιὰ τὴν ὁμοιοκαταληξία μὲ τὸ «Λύκοι». Ἀσφαλῶς ὁ Παλαμάς ἐννοεῖ τοὺς μόνους μπολσεβίκους, τότε, τοὺς ῥώσους κομμουνιστὲς τῆς Ὀχτωβριανῆς Ἐπανάστασης» [he quotes the stanza from the second part with the reference to the «Muskovite»].

15. Yanis Kordatos deals with the issue in his *Ἱστορία τῆς Νεοελληνικῆς Λογοτεχνίας* ('*Ἀπὸ τὸ 1453 ὄς τὸ 1961*'), 2nd ed., Athens 1983, pp. 438-444. A systematic study of it would now begin with the entry «Κομμουνισμός» in Palamas, *Ἄπαντα*, vol. 17, *Εὔρετήρια*, compiled by George Kechagioglou and G. P. Savidis, Athens, Kostas Palamas Institute, 1984.

16. See the article by Philip Carabott «The Greek «Communists» and the Asia Minor Campaign» in the present issue of the *Δελτίο τοῦ Κέντρου Μικρασιατικῶν Σπουδῶν*.

17. See Ch. L. Karaoglou, *Τὸ Περιοδικὸ «Μοῦσα» (1920-1923)*, Athens 1991, pp. 40-41.

This was not the first time Varnalis criticized Palamas' poetry: in *Tò Φῶς πού καίει*, also published in 1922 (but completed before the Asia Minor Disaster took place), he placed Palamas in the category of poets practicing the «art of morons» («ἡ τέχνη τῶν μωρῶν»). As for Palamas, in 1924 he criticized that work for its «raging Bolshevism» («ἀφρισμένος μπολσεβικισμός»)¹⁸. Despite these negative exchanges¹⁹, however, there was mutual respect between the two poets. Palamas' differences with Varnalis were based on ideological, not poetical grounds, and specifically on their opposing views of the «Μεγάλη Ἰδέα». Palamas' response, less than a year after the Asia Minor Disaster, to an interviewer's question concerning the main ideology expressed in his work is particularly illuminating:

— [...] [Ἄ] Καραϊσκάκης. Ἡ Πατρίδα. Ἡ Φυλή. Καί πρό καί μετά τὸν πόλεμον πολλές νέες ιδέες ἐφάνηκαν καί ἐκινήθηκαν. Ἀνάμεσα σ' αὐτὲς καί ἡ Σοσιαλιστική. Ὅχι πιά ἡ ιδέα τῆς Πατρίδας, μὰ ἡ ιδέα μιᾶς εὐτυχισμένης Ἀνθρωπότητας. Στὴ Ρωσία ἡ ιδέα ἐπροχώρησε πιὸ πολὺ. Ὁ Κομμουνισμός. Μὰ καί ἐδῶ ἡ ιδέα αὐτὴ εἶχε τὴν ἐπίδρασή της. Καί βέβαια κι ἐδῶ ἄν βγεί ποίηση ἀπὸ τὴν ιδέα αὐτὴ «καλῶς νὰ βγεί». Μὰ ἡ ἀντίληψη τῶν καινούργιων ιδεῶν ἴσως δὲν εἶναι τόσο κοντὰ σ' ἐμέ. Σ' ἐμέ τὸ μεγάλο Ἰδανικὸ εἶναι ἄλλο. Εἶναι ἡ «Μεγάλη Ἰδέα».

— Δηλαδή ἡ πατριωτικὴ ιδέα;

— Ναι. Καθαυτὸ ἡ Μεγάλη Ἰδέα. Ὁ Μαρμαρωμένος Βασιλιάς²⁰.

Indeed, in 1925, while distancing himself from the ideology of *Tò φῶς πού καίει*, he praised the work's poetic qualities:

[Ἄ]σο κι ἂν εἶναι ἡ ἰδεολογία τοῦ ἀποκρουστικὴ γιὰ τοὺς πιστοὺς τῶν ἔθνικῶν παραδομένων πού ἔχω τὴν τιμὴ μ' ἐκείνους νὰ συγκαταλέγομαι, ὅμως εἶναι ποίημα τέχνης πού ἀξίζει προσεχτικὰ καί ὀπωσδήποτε γαληνὰ νὰ κοιταχτεῖ ἀπὸ ὅσους ἐρωτεύονται, καθῶς ἐγώ, τὴν Πολύμνια²¹.

That same year (1925) Varnalis dedicated the first edition of *Ὁ Σολωμός*

18. Palamas, *Ἄπαντα*, vol. 12, Athens, n.d., p. 309.

19. The confrontation between Palamas and Varnalis has been discussed by Maras, pp. 60-63, and Papaioannou, pp. 44-51.

20. Palamas, *Ἄπαντα*, vol. 14, Athens, Govostis, n.d., pp. 125-126. The interview, taken by Photos Giofyllis, was published on 21 June 1923 in the newspaper *Ἐλεύθερος Λόγος*.

21. Palamas, *Ἄπαντα*, vol. 12, p. 386. In April 1925 Palamas signed the protest against Varnalis' six-month dismissal by the Ministry of Education for the publication of *Tò φῶς πού καίει*. And in 1928 he referred to Varnalis as the «ἄξια τιμώμενος Βάρναλης» (*Ἄπαντα*, vol. 14, p. 208).

χωρίς μεταφυσική to Palamas, and some time later re-wrote the final stanza of «Λευτεριά», eliminating the reference to «μωρούς ποιητές»<sup>22</sup>.

Before leaving Varnalis, it is important to mention that, although the Asia Minor Disaster as a theme is not dealt with in his poetry<sup>23</sup>, he wrote an essay on the event published as a newspaper article («Ἡ Μικρασιατικὴ Καταστροφὴ») in 1935<sup>24</sup>. He blames the Greek «κεφαλαιοκρατία» and both Greek political parties (Venezelist and Royalist), as well as British imperialism, for the defeat and the subsequent suffering of the common people, and cauterizes the Greek authorities who held the communists responsible.

Palamas once again took up the Asia Minor theme in his poetry in early November 1922, this time to speak of the plight of the refugees. «Τὸ Τραγούδι τῶν Προσφύγων» is a long-winded poem in which several well-known themes reappear (the poet's role in the resurrection of the race; Greece's eternal place in history; the unification of all Greeks, having one «mother» and one «soul»; the dead bearing seeds of new heroes), all indicative of a renewed optimism characterized by the refrain:

Μακριὰ κ' ἡ ἀπελπισία, μακριὰ καὶ ὄργη καὶ θρηῆνος!

Indeed, in only four of the poem's twenty-one stanzas does he deal with the refugee theme itself:

— Κι ἐσεῖς, χαρὰ καὶ ἡ φτώχεια σας, τοῦ ἄλβου κι ἐσεῖς καμάρια,  
 ἰκέτες τώρα ἀπλώνοντας τὸ δίσκο τοῦ χεριοῦ,  
 τῆς ἀργατιᾶς, τῆς ἀρχοντιᾶς δαρμένοι, ἀπομεινάρια  
 τῆς φλόγας καὶ τοῦ μαχαιριοῦ,

τὰ κλαῖτε ἐσεῖς τὰ πάντα σας, σπίτια, ἀγαθὰ, θεῖα δῶρα,  
 παρατημένα, ἀφανισμένα, πλάσματα, πουλιά,  
 ὅπου ὄργωνεν ὁ Ἐρωτας, θερίζει ὁ χάρος τώρα,  
 παῖ κι ἡ πατρίδα κι ἡ φωλιά.

Στάχια ὅπου χρύσωναν τὴ γῆ, μαυρολογᾷν κοράκιοι.  
 Τὰ δάκρυα καταπίνοντας, ζητᾶτε (ὄμιε ἡ στιγμή  
 ποὺ σᾶς τρυπάει τὰ σωθικὰ σαράκι καὶ φαρμάκι),  
 γωνιὰ ζητᾶτε καὶ ψωμί.

22. It is not known at what date this re-writing took place. In Varnalis' *Ποιήματα* (Ἐκλογή) of 1954 and *Ποιητικά* of 1956 the poem is printed in its revised form. Interestingly, in the February 1935 issue of the journal *Νέοι Πρωτοπόροι* the poem was re-printed in its original form with an introduction by the editors. However, as Dr. Theano Michailidou has indicated to me, this may have been without Varnalis' permission, since the poet's quarrel with Palamas had ended in 1925.

23. For a discussion of the impact of the Disaster on Varnalis' prose fiction, see Thomas Doulis, *Disaster and Fiction. Modern Greek Fiction and the Impact of the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1977, pp. 124-136.

24. Varnalis, *Φιλολογικά Ἀπομνημονεύματα*, pp. 262-69.

Κι ὅ,τι θὰ αἰσθάνεστε πῶς εἶναι ἀπάνου ἀπ' ὄλα τ' ἄλλα  
καὶ πῶς ἀξίζει θησαυρούς, τῆς ξεκληριάς παιδιά,  
κι ὅ,τι ζητᾶτε ἀνείπωτο, τὸ ξέρω· εἶναι μιὰ στάλα  
ἀγάπη καὶ καλὴ καρδιά.

While Palamas' sympathy for the refugees' misery is evident in these lines, and while he goes on to urge the Greeks to give them a helping hand, his own rage over the Disaster has clearly subsided, and even his critical disposition appears to have diminished.

Over the next nine years Palamas wrote five other poems containing direct references to the Disaster: «Γνώμες, καρδιές, ὄσοι Ἕλληνες» (1925); «Ἡ Πατρίδα στοὺς Νεκρούς της» (1929); «Χρυσόστομος» (published 1931), a hymn in praise of the martyred Metropolitan bishop of Smyrna; and «Στὸν φίλο Μιχαὴλ Ἀργυρόπουλο» (1931) and «Στὸν ποιητὴ Ἀπόστολο Μαμμέλη» (1931), addressed to poets from Asia Minor whom Palamas held in esteem. It is the optimistic tone that stands out in most of these poems, something that comes very close to the expression of a continued belief in the «Μεγάλῃ Ἰδέᾳ», such as was found in his remarks in the 1923 interview cited above. Clearly this belief, though strongly shaken by the Asia Minor Disaster, was too deeply engrained in the poet's consciousness ever to be extinguished.

C. P. Cavafy was fifty-nine years old and in his poetic prime at the time of the Asia Minor Disaster, the news of which reached him in another corner of the Diaspora. A first element in his response to the events is, I believe, the «unpublished» poem «Πάρθεν». The piece was written in March 1921, as Greece celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of its War of Independence and the Greek army, advancing toward the interior of Asia Minor and encountering Kemalian troops well equipped by the Italians, French, and Russians, had already suffered serious losses<sup>25</sup>. Remembering an earlier phase in the Greek-Turkish conflict, Cavafy, speaking with a degree of emotion rarely found in his poetry<sup>26</sup>, bridges the gap between the end of Byzantium and the

25. See Angelomatis, pp. 114-15; and G. P. Savidis, *Μικρὰ Καβαφικά*, vol. 1, Athens 1985, p. 355. Savidis also intimates (p. 351) a link between the publication of the poem «Δημητρίου Σωτήρος, 162-150 π.Χ.» in 1919 and the landing of Greek forces in Smyrna in that year «δῆθεν μετὶς εὐλογίας τῶν Ἀγγλο-Γάλλων».

26. See Zisimos Lorenzatos, *Μικρὰ ἀναλυτικὰ στὸν Καβάφη*, Athens [1977], pp. 12-13; Sonia Ilinskaya, *Κ.Π. Καβάφης. Οἱ δρόμοι πρὸς τὸ ρεαλισμὸ στὴν ποίηση τοῦ 20οῦ αἰῶνα*, Athens 1983, p. 225; Xenophon Kokolis, «Γλωσσικὴ ἀσυμβατότητα, ποιητικὴ τεχνικὴ καὶ πολιτικὴ ἐγρήγορησθ στοὺς «Πάρθεν» τοῦ Καβάφη», *Διαβάζω*, 78 (5 Oct. 1983), pp. 66-67; and Diana Haas, *Le problème religieux dans l'oeuvre de Cavafy. Les années de formation (1882-1905)*, Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne (in press), chap. 3.

beginning of the end of the «Μεγάλη Ἰδέα»; between two frontiers of Hellenism, Alexandria and the distant Pontus:

### ΠΑΡΘΕΝ

Αὐτὲς τὲς μέρες διάβαζα δημοτικὰ τραγοῦδια,  
γιὰ τ' ἄθλα τῶν κλεφτῶν καὶ τοὺς πολέμους,  
πράγματα συμπαθητικά· δικά μας, Γραικικά.

Διάβαζα καὶ τὰ πένθιμα γιὰ τὸν χαμὸ τῆς Πόλης  
«Πῆραν τὴν Πόλη, πῆραν τὴν· πῆραν τὴ Σαλονίκη».  
Καὶ τὴν Φωνὴ πού ἐκεῖ πού οἱ δυὸ ἐψέλναν,  
«ζερβὰ ὁ βασιλιάς, δεξιὰ ὁ πατριάρχης»,  
ἀκούσθηκε κι εἶπε νὰ πάψουν πιά  
«πάψτε παπάδες τὰ χαρτιά καὶ κλείστε τὰ Βαγγέλια»  
πῆραν τὴν Πόλη, πῆραν τὴν· πῆραν τὴ Σαλονίκη.

Ἵμως ἀπ' τ' ἄλλα πιὸ πολὺ μὲ ἄγγιξε τὸ ἄσμα  
τὸ Τραπεζούντιον μὲ τὴν παράξενή του γλῶσσα  
καὶ μὲ τὴν λύπη τῶν Γραικῶν τῶν μακρυνῶν ἐκείνων  
πού ἴσως ὄλο πίστευαν πού θὰ σωθοῦμε ἀκόμη.

Μὰ ἀλοίμονον μοιραῖον πουλι «ἀπαὶ τὴν Πόλην ἔρται»  
μὲ στὸ «φτερούλιν ἄθε χαρτὶν περιγραμμένον  
κι οὐδὲ στὴν ἄμπελον κονεὺ' μηδὲ στὸ περιβόλι,  
ἐπῆγεν καὶ ἐκόνεψεν στοῦ κυπαρίσ' τὴν ρίζαν».  
Οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς δὲν δύνανται (ἢ δὲν θέλουν) νὰ διαβάσουν  
«Χέρας υἱὸς Γιανίκας ἔν» αὐτὸς τὸ παίρνει τὸ χαρτί,  
καὶ τὸ διαβάζει κι ὀλοφύρεται.

«Σιτ' ἀναγνώθ' σιτ' ἀνακλαίγ' σιτ' ἀνακρούγ' τὴν κάρδιαν.  
Ν' αἰλι ἐμᾶς νὰ βαί ἐμᾶς, ἢ Ρωμανία πάρθεν».

Less than a year later, in early February 1922, when the situation at the front had become so uncertain that the Asia Minor Greeks felt compelled to create the «Asia Minor Defense» («Μικρασιατικὴ Ἄμυνα»), with the even less certain support of the Greek High Commissioner Stergiadis<sup>27</sup>, Cavafy wrote and published «Ἵπὲρ τῆς Ἀχαϊκῆς Συμπολιτείας Πολεμήσαντες». A fictitious Achaian poet, exiled in Alexandria during the corrupt reign of Ptolemy Lathyros, writes an epigram on the defeat of the Achaian League by the Romans thirty-seven years earlier, in 146 B.C., at Lefkopetra in Corinth. Diaios and Kritolaos were the unworthy generals of the League, which, according to the historian Constantine Paparrigopoulos, «ὑπῆρξεν ἡ τελευταία ὀπωσοῦν

27. See Angelomatis, pp. 127-136.



λόγου άξια άπόπειρα, ήν τὸ ένταῦθα έλληνικὸν έθνος έπεχείρησεν ίνα διατηρήσει αὐτοτελή ὕπαρξιν καὶ ανεξαρτησίαν»<sup>28</sup>:

ΥΠΕΡ ΤΗΣ ΑΧΑΪΚΗΣ ΣΥΜΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑΣ ΠΟΛΕΜΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ

Ἄνδρες! σεις ποὺ πολεμήσατε καὶ πέσατ' εὐκλεῶς  
 τοὺς πανταχοῦ νικήσαντας μὴ φοβηθέντες.  
 Ἄμωμοι σεις, ἂν έπταισαν ὁ Δίαιος κι ὁ Κριτόλαος.  
 Ὅταν θὰ θέλουν οἱ Ἕλληνες νὰ καυχηθοῦν,  
 «Τέτοιους βγάξει τὸ έθνος μας» θὰ λένε  
 γιὰ σᾶς. Ἔτσι θαυμάσιος θὰ ἔναι ὁ έπαινὸς σας.—

Ἐγράφη έν Ἀλεξανδρεία ὑπὸ Ἀχαιοῦ  
 έβδομον έτος Πτολεμαίου, Λαθύρου.

As early as 1926, within the literary circles surrounding the poet, a link had been suggested between the poem and the events of 1922; indeed, it was said that the poem's «subtitle» should be «Ἡ άπόλεια τῆς Ἰωνίας»<sup>29</sup>. According to witnesses, Cavafy was annoyed at this identification of an ancient historical event with contemporary history. Bryn Davies, a British visitor to the rue Lepsius in 1930, reported:

When I was talking to Cavafy in 1930 I had just had the poem about the Achaean League translated to me, and had been told that it had a special significance in view of what happened in 1922. It was this he said, he could not understand and evidently, from the very detailed account he gave me of the Achaean League, he had actually been thinking in terms of what he called an entirely futile and inexplicable revival, with no relation whatever to modern events at all. What struck me at the time was that he spoke of the Achaean League as though it was a purely contemporary event<sup>30</sup>.

And according to Yannis Sareyannis:

Πολλοὶ Ἀλεξανδρινοὶ θὰ θυμοῦνται τὴν άγανάκτησή του, όταν άκουε νὰ τοῦ λένε ὅτι τὸ «Ἐπὲρ τῆς Ἀχαικῆς Συμπολιτείας πολεμήσαντες» τοῦ τὸ εἶχε έμπνεῦσει ἡ Μικρασιατικὴ Καταστροφή, ὅτι τὸ θέμα τοῦ

28. Cited by Timos Malanos, *Ἄ Ποιητῆς Καβάφης. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὸ έργο του*, 3rd ed., Athens [1957], p. 358.

29. G. Vrisimitsakis, *Τὸ Έργο τοῦ Κ. Π. Καβάφης*, ed. G. P. Savidis, 2nd ed., Athens 1984, p. 38; see also Savidis, *Μικρὰ Καβαφικά*, vol. 1, p. 350.

30. Robert Liddell, *Cavafy: A Critical Biography*, London 1974, p. 163. See also Timos Malanos, *Καβάφης 2*, Athens 1963, p. 154.

«Βυζαντινὸς ἄρχων, ἐξόριστος, στιχουργῶν» ἦταν ὁ ἑαυτὸς του καὶ οἱ Ἴ�θηναῖοι λόγιοι, τὸ «Οὐκ ἔγνω» ὁ Μαλάνος κ.ο.κ. Ὁ Καβάφης δὲν ἤθελε τὰ ποιήματά του νὰ φαίνονται δεμένα μὲ μιὰ συγκεκριμένη πραγματικότητα, γι' αὐτὸ προσπαθοῦσε μὲ κάθε τρόπο νὰ τὰ ἀποκόβει ἀπὸ τὶς φαινομενικὲς ἀφορμὲς τῆς γέννησής τους<sup>31</sup>.

How much credence we should pay to Cavafy's protestations is open to debate<sup>32</sup>. However, while it is true that he did not respond poetically to the Disaster in the direct manner of Palamas —only one example of the almost diametrical opposition between their respective poetics— I believe that we may at the very least perceive in «Ἐπὲρ τῆς Ἀχαϊκῆς Συμπολιτείας Πολεμήσαντες» what George Savidis has called the «echo» of «Cavafy's anguish over the impending Asia Minor Disaster»<sup>33</sup>. For this is, in fact, one of three poems written (or re-written) during the two-month period between December 1921 and early February 1922 —a time when, as we have seen, fears over the outcome of the Asia Minor Campaign were growing— in which Cavafy treats the theme of *military* defeat. More specifically, each of the three deals with one of the important battles of the Hellenistic Greek kingdoms against the Roman army, all of which ended in defeat and led to complete takeover by Rome<sup>34</sup>. The other two are «Τεχνουργὸς Κρατήρων», where the Battle of Magnesia in 190 B.C. is named in the final verses:

ὡς δέκα πέντε χρόνια πέρασαν ἀπ' τὴ μέρα  
ποῦ ἔπεσε, στρατιώτης, στῆς Μαγνησίας τὴν ἤτταν.

and «Πρὸς τὸν Ἀντίοχο Ἐπιφανῆ», where reference is made to the Battle of Pydna in 168 B.C., once again at the poem's conclusion:

31. Yannis Sarcyannis, *Σχόλια στὸν Καβάφη*, Athens 1973, p. 121.

32. In 1946, in his celebrated lecture «Κ. Π. Καβάφης, Θ. Σ. Ἐλιοτ: Παράλληλοι», George Seferis once again proposed the link between ancient and modern history in Cavafy's poem, and also suggested that the atmosphere of decay which is described in other of Cavafy's Hellenistic poems must be connected with that of Greece on the eve of the Asia Minor Disaster (George Seferis, *Δοκίμεις*, 3rd. ed., Athens 1974, vol. 1, pp. 328-35). His analysis provoked a reaction on the part of Timos Malanos, who in 1948 argued that «ἐνῶ πράγματι τὸ ποίημα δημοσιεύτηκε στὶς 2 Φεβρουαρίου, ἡ Μικρασιατικὴ καταστροφὴ —τόσο ἀπροσδόκητη, γιὰ μᾶς ἐδῶ στὴν Ἀλεξάνδρεια— ἔγινε μονάχα τὸν Αὐγούστο, δηλαδὴ ἔπειτα ἀπὸ ἐπτὰ δόλοκληρους μῆνες» (*Καβάφης 2*, pp. 139-140). To this argument Seferis responded in turn that, for Cavafy, «ἡ πραγματικὴ καταστροφὴ —τὰ ἐπακόλουθά της δὲν ἦταν διόλου ἀπροσδόκητα— ἦταν ἡ ἔσωτερικὴ κατάρρευση τοῦ '20. Αὐτὴ ἦταν τὸ κορυφῶμα τῆς πολιτικῆς τῶν Λαθῶρων στὰ χρόνια ἐκεῖνα» (George Seferis, «Ἐστερόγραφο στὴ δοκιμὴ "Κ. Π. Καβάφης, Θ. Σ. Ἐλιοτ: Παράλληλοι"», presented by G. P. Savidis, *Ἡ Λέξη*, 23 [March-April 1983], p. 195).

33. Savidis, *Μικρὰ Καβαφικά*, vol. 1, p. 349.

34. See Savidis, *Μικρὰ Καβαφικά*, vol. 1, pp. 349-351 (in his essay «Κρίσιμες μάχες τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ στὴν ποίηση τοῦ Καβάφη»).

Ἄλλωστε, ὡς φυσικόν,  
ταχέως ἐπῆλθε εἰς Πύδναν ἢ ἀπαισία λῆξις.

Moreover, in 1925 Cavafy created an imaginary sequel to the Battle of Lefkopetra treated in «Υπὲρ τῆς Ἀχαϊκῆς Συμπολιτείας Πολεμήσαντες», with the poem «Εἰς Ἴταλικὴν παραλίαν». This may perhaps be considered one last element in his response to the Asia Minor Disaster, if, as it has been suggested, there is a parallel between the wealthy Greek youth of Magna Graecia witnessing Roman ships as they unload the «booty from Corinth», and his counterparts of 1922 witnessing the tragedy of the refugees<sup>35</sup>:

#### Εἰς Ἰταλικὴν Παραλίαν

Ὁ Κῆμος Μενεδάρου, Ἰταλιώτης νέος,  
τὸν βίον του περνᾷ μέσα στὲς διασκεδάσεις·  
ὡς συνειθίζουσαν τοῦτοι οἱ ἀπ' τὴν Μεγάλῃ Ἑλλάδα  
μὲς στὰ πολλὰ τὰ πλοῦτῃ ἀναθρεμμένοι νεοί.

Μὰ σήμερα εἶναι λίαν, παρὰ τὸ φυσικὸ του,  
σύννουσαν καὶ κατηφῆς. Κοντὰ στὴν παραλίαν,  
μὲ ἄκραν μελαγχολίαν βλέπει ποῦ ἐκφορτάνουσαν  
τὰ πλοῖα μὲ τὴν λείαν ἐκ τῆς Πελοποννήσου.

*Λάφυρα ἑλληνικά· ἢ λεία τῆς Κορίνθου.*

Ἄ σήμερα βεβαίωσαν δὲν εἶναι θεμιτόν,  
δὲν εἶναι δυνατόν ὁ Ἰταλιώτης νέος  
νά ἔχει γιὰ διασκεδάσεις καμὶαν ἐπιθυμίαν.

Finally, in closing this discussion of Cavafy's response to the Disaster, evidence of a different kind may, I believe, be cited. This is the testimony of Polys Modinos, Cavafy's younger friend who visited him shortly after the burning of Smyrna:

Μέσα Σεπτεμβρίου 1922, εἶχε συντελεσθεῖ ἡ καταστροφὴ τοῦ ἑλληνισμοῦ τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας, τὸ ξερρίζωμα καὶ ὁ ἀφανισμός. Ὁ Καβάφης, καθισμένος στὴ συνηθισμένη θέση του στὸ σαλόνι, σκυθρωπός, ἀμίλητος καὶ περιλυπός. Ἦμασταν μόνοι. Ξαφνικά μὲ πνιγμένη

35. Savidis (*Μικρὰ Καβαφικά*, vol. 1, p. 350) writes: «Τρία χρόνια μετὰ τὴν καταστροφὴ τῆς Σμύρνης, καὶ ἐνῶ ἀκόμα τὸ παλιρροιακὸ κύμα τῆς προσφυγιάς κατακλύζει τὸ ἑλληνικὸ κράτος ὅσο καὶ ὅλο τὸν ὑπόλοιπο Ἑλληνισμὸ, ὁ Καβάφης θὰ δημοσιεύσει ἕνα πικρὸ ποίημα μὲ στόχο τὴν ἐπιπόλαιη συναισθηματικὴ ἀντίδραση ὀρισμένων πλουσιῶν καὶ τρυφηλῶν νέων τοῦ Μείζονος Ἑλληνισμοῦ ἀπέναντι στὴν τραγωδία τῶν ξεριζωμένων ἀδελφῶν τους».

φωνῆ ξέσπασε: «Εἶναι τρομερὸ αὐτὸ ποὺ μᾶς συμβαίνει. Χάνεται ἡ Σμύρνη, χάνεται ἡ Ἴωνία, χάνονται οἱ Θεοί...» Δὲν μπόρεσε νὰ συνεχίσει. Στὸ φῶς τῆς λάμπας εἶδα τὰ δάκρυα νὰ κυλοῦν στὸ ρυτιδωμένο πρόσωπό του<sup>36</sup>.

While it is Cavafy's emotional response to the Disaster that is being described here, it is nonetheless significant that this response is connected to his poetry. In identifying the loss of Smyrna with that of Ionia and of the «Gods», Cavafy is consciously referring to his earlier, lyrical poem «Ἴωνικὸν» (published in 1911), in which the land of Ionia is that «loved by the Gods», immortal protectors and guarantors of the continuity of Greek civilization.

Kostas Karyotakis came of age during the years between the First World War and the exchange of populations (he was twenty-six in 1922), and much has been written on the role this experience played in creating the general climate of despair and decadence that often characterizes the poetry not only of Karyotakis but of other writers of the «generation of 1920». In my discussion, however, I will concentrate exclusively on those texts of Karyotakis which are connected to the events of the Disaster itself.

Karyotakis' poetic response consists essentially of two poems, both published in the collection *Ἐλεγεία καὶ Σάτιρες* in late 1927: «[Ἵ] Ὅταν ἄνθη ἐδένατε...» (included in the second series of the *Ἐλεγεία*), and «Εἰς Ἀνδρέαν Κάλβον» (included in the *Σάτιρες*)<sup>37</sup>.

36. Polys Modinos, *Τρεῖς Ἐπιστολές τοῦ Καβάφη*, Athens, Greek Literary and Historical Archives, 1980, pp. 9-10.

37. A direct reference to the Asia Minor Campaign is also found in the last part (VIII) of the revue «Πελ-Μέλι», written in the summer of 1921, which ends with the quatrain:

Καὶ μὲ τὸν Κωνσταντῖνο, μὲ μιὰ ἐλπίδα,  
μὲ μιὰ σκέψη, μὲ μιὰ καρδιά,  
νὰ κινήσουμε, ναί, γιὰ τὴν Πατρίδα  
καὶ νὰ μποῦμε στὴν Ἁγία Σοφία.

The circumstances surrounding the revue's composition (reported by Ch. G. Sakellariadis, «Ἵ Ο Καρυωτάκης ἐπιθεωρησιογράφος», *Νέα Ἑστία*, 27, 320 [15 April 1940], pp. 474-482; see now K. G. Karyotakis, *Τὰ Ποιήματα (1913-1928)*, ed. G. P. Savidis, Athens 1992, p. 393-394) prevent us from giving these verses the same weight as Karyotakis' other texts dealing with the events of the Disaster. I believe that they may, however, be considered indicative of a satirical attitude toward the Campaign, in view both of the satirical tenor of the entire revue (see G. P. Savidis, *Στὰ Χνάρια τοῦ Καρυωτάκη. Κείμενα 1966-88*, Athens 1989, p. 78) and of the context in which they are sung, as told by Sakellariadis (quoted in Karyotakis, *Τὰ Ποιήματα (1913-1928)*, p. 394): «[...Στὸ τέλος τῆς πράξης, ὄλοι οἱ ἄντρες συλλαμβάνονται ὡς ἀνυπότακτοι καὶ μπαίνουν στὴ γραμμὴ γιὰ νὰ πάνε] ὄλοι στὸ μέτωπο, κι αὐτοί, τὴν ἀνάγκη κάνοντας φιλοτιμία, τραγουδοῦν τὸ [τελικό, ἐκ πρώτης ὄψεως ξεκάρφωτο] τραγούδι». I would, in any case, disagree with Christos Alexiou, who

Savidis was the first to suggest that «[“Όταν ἄνθη ἐδένατε...”]» «apparently is addressed to the soldiers who were killed in the Asia Minor Campaign»<sup>38</sup>:

[ΟΤΑΝ ΑΝΘΗ ΕΔΕΝΑΤΕ...]

“Όταν ἄνθη ἐδένατε στὰ τεφρὰ μαλλιά σας,  
καὶ μὲς στὴν καρδιά σας  
ἀντηχοῦσαν σάλπιγγες, κ’ ἤρθατε σὲ χώρα  
πιὸ μεγάλη τώρα —  
οἱ ἄνθρωποι μὲ τὰ ἔξαλλα πρόσωπα, τὰ ρίγη,  
εἶχαν ὅλοι φύγει.

“Όταν ἄλλο ἐπήρατε πρόσταγμα, ἄλλο δρόμο,  
σκύβοντας τὸν ὄμο,  
τὴν βαθειὰν ἀκούγοντας σιωπή, τοὺς γρούλους,  
στὴν ἄκρη τοῦ χείλους  
ἓνα στάχυ βάζοντας μὲ πικρία τόση —  
εἶχε πιά νυχῶσει.

Κι ὅταν ἐκινήσατε λυτρωμένα χέρια  
πάνω ἀπὸ τ’ ἀστέρια,  
κι ὅταν στὸ κρυστάλλινο βλέμμα, ποὺ ἀνεστράφη,  
ὁ οὐρανὸς ἐγράφη,  
κι ὅταν ἐφορέσατε τὸ λαμπρὸ στεφάνι —  
εἶχατε πεθάνει.

The poem’s progression is, I believe, clear. In the first stanza, the soldiers’ optimistic departure, accompanied by «flowers» and «trumpets;» their arrival in a now «larger» country (Smyrna or Anatolia: the adjective «μεγάλη» cannot but remind one of the «Μεγάλη Ἰδέα»); and their discovery, upon arrival, of having already been abandoned by those who, through their unbridled enthusiasm («τὰ ἔξαλλα πρόσωπα») and patriotic fervour («τὰ ρίγη» — we think of «ἔθνικὰ ρήγη»), brought them there. In the second stanza, the new «orders»

writes («Ὁ Καρυωτάκης καὶ ἡ ἐποχὴ του», in Municipality of Preveza, *Συμπόσιο γιὰ τὸν Κ. Γ. Καρυωτάκη, Πρέβεζα, 11-14 Σεπτεμβρίου 1986*, ed. Memi Melissaroutou, Preveza 1990, p. 308): «Ἡ ἐπιθεώρηση κλείνει μὲ ἔξι τετράστιχα χωρὶς σατιρική διάθεση ἀναφερόμενα στὴ Μικρασιατικὴ ἐκστρατεία, ποὺ δὲν ἔχουν, βέβαια, τὴ λυρική μεγαλοστομία τῶν *Ἐπινίκων* τοῦ Σικελιανοῦ, ἀλλὰ διαπνέονται ἀπὸ τὸ ἴδιο δράμα τῆς “Μεγάλης Ἰδέας” καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν ἴδιο θαυμασμό στὸ βασιλιά Κωνσταντῖνο [...]».

38. In K. G. Karyotakis, *Ποιήματα καὶ Πεζά*, ed. G. P. Savidis, Athens 1972, p. 93 (see now Karyotakis, *Τὰ Ποιήματα (1913-1928)*, p. 347). From another point of view, Christos Papazoglou (in *Paratonisménh moysikh. Meléth giá tòn Karyvtákñ*, Athens 1988, pp. 112-113) in his discussion of grammatical and syntactical characteristics of Karyotakis’ poetry, cites the poem as a case where «the subject [...] is not entirely clear and precise»: «“Όταν ἄνθη ἐδένατε στὰ τεφρὰ μαλλιά σας... — (ἐδένατε, ποιοί;)».

and new road: that of retreat, with the humiliation it implies («σκούβοντας τὸν ὄμο»); where silence, broken only by the sound of crickets, has replaced the trumpets' blare; and where bitterness and darkness prevail. In the third stanza, in which the repetition of «ὄταν» is accelerated, more positive images are once again suggested: liberation («λυτρωμένα χέρια»); movement toward the heights («ὁ οὐρνός»); the crown of glory; all, however, gotten too late, or better, only through death. The condemnation of those responsible for the Asia Minor Campaign and its ultimate failure —although the Campaign is never directly referred to in the poem— as well as the sympathy expressed for the soldiers' plight fit into the larger framework of Karyotakis' well-known antimilitaristic stance, the first and clearest expression of which is found in «Μιχαλίδος» (in the *Σάτιρες*), written in 1919, after the landing of Greek troops in Smyrna, but containing no allusions to any specific historical event<sup>39</sup>.

The antimilitarism of «[Ὅταν ἄνθη ἐδένατε...]» reappears in the poem «Εἰς Ἀνδρέαν Κάλβον», this time with a direct reference to the Asia Minor Campaign. Karyotakis compares the military ideals of the Greek Revolution, sung by Calvos, when arms served the cause of Independence, with the present state of the army's moral decay, where the field of battle is replaced by the coffee house and dance hall, and the sole purpose of military strength is to exercise power<sup>40</sup>: clearly an allusion to the growing role of the military in Greek politics, which culminated in the Dictatorship of General Pangalos in mid 1925<sup>41</sup> (which Karyotakis directly satirizes in the poem «Ἡ Πεδιάς καὶ τὸ Νεκροταφεῖον»). I will cite only those stanzas (verses 31-45) which pertain to our subject:

Ἦ, ἂν προτιμᾶς, ἐξύμνησον,  
 ἀντὶς γεγυμνωμένων  
 ξιφῶν, ὅσα μαστίγια  
 πρὸς θρίαμβον ἐπισείονται  
 τῶν καφενείων.

Ἴππους δὲν ἐπιβαίνουσι,  
 ἀμὴ τὴν ἐξουσίαν  
 καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τὸν τράχηλον,  
 ἰδοῦ, μάχονται οἱ ἥρωες  
 μέσα εἰς τὰ ντάνσιγκ.

39. Hero Hokwerda («Ἐλεγεία ἢ Σάτιρες», in *Συμπόσιο γὰρ τὸν Κ. Γ. Καρυωτάκη*, p. 67) writes: «Τὸ ποίημα Ὁ Μιχαλίδος ταιριάζει στὴν ἀντιμυλιταριστικὴ ἀτμόσφαιρα ποὺ ἀκολούθησε καὶ στὴν Ἑλλάδα τὸν Πρῶτο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο — ἂν καὶ εἶναι δύσκολο νὰ καθορίσει κανεὶς ἀκριβῶς τὸ στόχο τοῦ ποιήματος».

40. See Hokwerda, p. 66.

41. See the analysis of the poem by Papakostas, pp. 62-71.

Τις δάφνες τοῦ Σαγγάριου  
 ἢ Ἐλευθερία φορέσασα,  
 γοργὰ ἀπὸ μίαν χεῖρα  
 σ' ἄλλην περνᾷ καὶ σύρεται,  
 δούλη στρατῶνος<sup>42</sup>.

What is of particular interest here is, of course, the third of these stanzas, with its direct reference to the «laurels of Sakaria». The Greek offensive launched against Kemal's troops in June 1921, which had resulted in several victories as it approached Ankara and had earned praise for the Greek army in the Greek and foreign press, was stopped in August by a Turkish counter-attack and brilliant victory at the Sakaria River, which proved to be decisive in the final outcome of the Asia Minor Campaign<sup>43</sup>. Karyotakis, condensing into one image a long series of events, which included the successive handing over of power from one government to another, appears to be satirizing here the rapid degeneration of whatever victories had been won in the name of «Freedom», into the «slavery» of military dictatorship<sup>44</sup>.

Another aspect of the Asia Minor Disaster, the plight of the refugees, elicited a response from Karyotakis in the form of a «short short story»<sup>45</sup> entitled «Ἔνας Πρακτικὸς Θάνατος». It constitutes the second part of a «triptych» of three such texts written in January 1928 under the general title «Τρεῖς Μεγάλες Χαρές». The subject of each of the three pieces is entirely different (the two others are entitled «Ὁ Καλὸς Ὑπάλληλος» and «Δεσποινὶς Βοῦρα»); they are, however, thematically connected by the common conclusion which each one ends: «Εἶναι εὐτυχής»<sup>46</sup>. A conclusion full of irony, for each story tells not of happiness but of tragedy. The irony is reinforced not only by the general title, but also by the sarcasm of the epigraph that follows it, Solomos' verse «Ὅμορφος κόσμος, ἠθικός, ἀγγελικὰ πλασμένος».

Although «Ἔνας Πρακτικὸς Θάνατος», by virtue of its genre, technically

42. Verse 62 also contains a probable reference to the Disaster: «ἡ στρατιὰ τῆς ἡττης».

43. See Angelomatis, pp. 120-125.

44. Alexiou has suggested that in another poem from the *Σάτιρες*, «Στὸ Ἄγαλμα τῆς Ἐλευθερίας ποῦ φωτίζει τὸν κόσμο», Karyotakis «indirectly denounces the attitude of the American allies toward the disaster of Smyrna» (p. 315). Papakostas, in his analysis of that poem, cites evidence regarding American economic interests in the area, of which Karyotakis must have been aware (pp. 37-43). The question remains open to debate.

45. Savidis (in K. G. Karyotakis, *Τὰ Πεζά*, ed. G. P. Savidis, Athens 1989, p. 157) calls it a «μικρο-διήγημα».

46. As Kostas Stergiopoulos writes («Τὸ πεζὸ ἔργο τοῦ Καρυωτάκη», *Νέα Ἔστια*, vol. 90, 1065 [15 November 1971], p. 1528), the only «link» between the three pieces is «τὸ γεγονός ὅτι καὶ στίς τρεῖς περιπτώσεις τὰ πρόσωπα καταλήγουν σὲ μιὰ ἀμφίβολης ποιότητας καὶ διάρκειας χαρὰ, στηριγμένη πάνω σ' ἓνα δραματικὸ περιστατικὸ ἢ σὲ μιὰ ψευδαἰσθησιὴ εὐτυχίας».

does not fall within the scope of this paper<sup>47</sup>, it should, I believe, be cited here. The «office» (meaning «government office») theme, with the opposition between bureaucracy and human needs it implies, is, of course, an important one in Karyotakis' poetry (for example «Γραφιάς», «[Μίσθια δουλειά...]», «Δημόσιοι Ὑπάλληλοι»). And the story, drawn from the personal experience of his assignment as supervisor in the «Γραφείο Ἐποπτείας Ἐγκαταστάσεως Προσφύγων» from 18 December 1923 to 28 February 1924<sup>48</sup>, attests eloquently to Karyotakis' particular sensitivity to the fate of the refugees, and especially of the children: in May 1927 he published a two-part article on the national orphanages and boarding-schools («Τὰ Ἐθνικά Ὀρφανοτροφεία καὶ Οἰκοτροφεῖα»), in which he emphasized the urgent need for such institutions in view of the large influx of refugees following the Disaster<sup>49</sup>.

#### ΕΝΑΣ ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΟΣ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Δὲν ξέρω τί φοροῦσε στὸ κεφάλι. Τὰ ρούχα της δὲν εἶχαν οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρῶμα. Ἐμπῆκε στὸ γραφεῖο κρατώντας στὴν ἀγκαλιά δύο παιδιά καὶ σέροντας τέσσερα. Καθένα ἔκλαιγε ἢ ἐφώναζε μὲ ἰδιαίτερο τρόπο. Ἄλλο τραβοῦσε τὸ φουστάνι της, ἄλλο τὰ μαλλιά της. Ἐνα ἀγόρι ὡς τριῶν χρονῶν ἔτρεμε μὲ κἀτί παράξενα ἀναφιλητά, χωρὶς νὰ κλαίει. Ὅλα μαζί —φριχτὴ συμφωνία— ἐκοίταζαν τὴ μητέρα τους ὅπως οἱ μουσικοὶ τὸ μαέστρο. Αὐτὴ ὁμως εἶχε ξεχάσει τὴν παρτιτούρα της σ' ἕνα κομψὸ γραφειάκι ἀπὸ acajou.

Στάθηκε μπροστὰ μας μὲ ὀρθάνοιχτα μάτια. Κἀτί σὰν ψεύτικο γέλιο, μὴ γκριμάτσα οἴκτου πρὸς τὸν ἑαυτὸ της, ἐξηγοῦσε τὰ λόγια της. Ἦταν Ἀρμένισσα. Ὁ ἄντρας της ἐπέθανε σ' ἕνα χωριό, κι ἦρθε ἀπὸ κεῖ ζητώντας ψωμὶ γιὰ τὰ παιδιά της. Τώρα παρακαλοῦσε νὰ στεγασθεῖ. Κάποιος ποὺ ἤξερε τὴ γλώσσα της τῆς εἶπε ὅτι δὲν ὑπῆρχε πουθενὰ θέσις. Καὶ καθὼς δὲν ἤθελε νὰ καταλάβει, τὴν ἔβγαλαν ἔξω στὸ διάδρομο. Ἐμεινε ξαπλωμένη μὲ τὰ παιδιά της ὡς τὸ μεσημέρι. Τὴν ἄλλη μέρα, ἢ ἴδια ἱστορία. Ἦρθε πολλὲς φορὲς ἀκόμη.

Ἐπιτέλους τὴν ἔριξαν σὲ μιὰ ἀποθήκη. Τριάντα οἰκογένειες προσφύγων ποὺ ἔμεναν ἐκεῖ μέσα εἶχαν χωρίσει τὰ νοικοκυριά τους πρόχει-

47. At the same time, however, it constitutes, by virtue of its length, an exception within the body of prose literature on the Asia Minor Disaster, made up of short-stories and novels. It is not mentioned in the only existing systematic study of this literature, Doulis' *Disaster and Fiction. Modern Greek Fiction and the Impact of the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922*.

48. Georgia Dalkou, *Κωνσταντῖνος Γεωργίου Καρωτάκης, δημόσιος ὑπάλληλος ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν, μετατεθεὶς εἰς Πρέβεζαν ἐσχάτως...*, Athens 1986, p. 50; and Savidis, in K. G. Karyotakis, *Τὰ Πεζά*, p. 157.

49. Savidis, *Στὰ Χνάρια τοῦ Καρωτάκη*, pp. 156-159; and Nasos Vayenas, «Ὁ Καρωτάκης καὶ τὰ ὀρφανοτροφεῖα», in *Συμπόσιο γιὰ τὸν Κ. Γ. Καρωτάκη*, pp. 377-383.



ρα, με φανταστικούς τοίχους. Μπόγοι, κασέλες, κουβέρτες άπλωμένες, ξύλα βαλμένα στη γραμμή, έσχημάτιζαν τετράγωνα, τὰ μαχητικά τετράγωνα τής τελευταίας άμύνης. Σ' αυτές τις φωλιές άκίνητοϋσαν ή έσάλεuan πένθημα σκιές ανθρώπων. Τρείς-τρεις, πέντε-πέντε, σκορπισμένοι άνάμεσα σε ρυπαρά ρούχα και ύπολείμματα έπίπλων, ήταν σὰ νὰ ψιθύριζαν παραμύθια ή νὰ προσπαθοϋσαν σιγά ν' άποτινάξουν τὸ σκοτάδι.

Τώρα ή άποθήκη φωτίζεται από ένα κερι. Κάποιο δέμα τυλιγμένο με καθαρό άσπρο πανί έχει τοποθετηθεί προσεκτικά, κάθετα πρὸς τὸν τοίχο, χάρου. Είναι τὸ μικρότερο από τὰ έξι παιδιά τής 'Αρμένισσας, πὸν πέθανε λίγες ώρες μετὰ τήν έγκατάστασή τους. Τ' άδέλφια του παίζουν έξω στὸν ήλιο. 'Η μητέρα, ξαλαφρωμένη, παραστέκει για τελευταία φορά τὸ μωρὸ τής. Οί άλλες γυναίκες τή μακαρίζουν, γιατί θὰ μπορέσει από αύριο νὰ πιάσει δουλειά. Είναι σχεδὸν εϋτυχής. Καί ὁ νεκρὸς άκόμη περιμένει με τόσο άξιοπρέπεια<sup>50</sup>...

While it would be misleading to draw general conclusions from what is only part of a much larger study, the texts discussed in this paper bring to light at least one point: that the immediate poetic response to the Asia Minor Disaster was a polyphonous one. For it includes not only voices of «lament» and of «praise», but also voices of doubt, contestation, and criticism, reflecting a profound historical, political, and social consciousness.

Over the following two decades the Asia Minor Disaster elicited new responses on the part of Greece's poets, the most significant of which is surely Seferis' *Μυθιστόρημα* (1935)<sup>51</sup>. As the experience became an increasingly distant memory, it was replaced in the poetic consciousness by the more recent tragedies that have marked the history of modern Hellenism, until finally, in our time, it seems almost to have been forgotten. It is significant that in one of the latest poems (1966) having to do with the events of 1922, or more precisely, in this instance, with their legacy forty-four years later, «forgetfulness» is one of the central themes: not that of the living, however, but, as the poet tells us on an ironical note, of the dead. I would like to conclude by quoting, without

50. Karyotakis, *Τὰ Πεζά*, pp. 31-32.

51. In studying the Disaster theme in *Μυθιστόρημα*, one must of course take into consideration the fact that, just as Cavafy had been displeased by the thesis (of which Seferis was later a proponent) according to which the inspiration for his poem «'Υπὲρ τής 'Αχαϊκής Συμπολιτείας Πολεμήσαντες» came from the Asia Minor Disaster, so Seferis himself was displeased by the critic Andreas Karantonis' identification of the experience described in *Μυθιστόρημα* with that of 1922 and angered by Malanos' use of a phrase from a personal letter to support a view similar to that of Karantonis.

further comment, George Geralis' «'Αναζητήσεις μέσω του 'Ελληνικού 'Ερυθρού Σταυρού»<sup>52</sup>:

ΑΝΑΖΗΤΗΣΕΙΣ ΜΕΣΩ ΤΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ ΕΡΥΘΡΟΥ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΥ

Όταν κατασιγάει ο άλαλαγμός  
 από τὸ πρῶτο ἡμίχρονο,  
 κι ἐνῶ προβάλλει τὸ ἐναγώνιο ἐρώτημα  
 ἂν ὡς τὸ τέλος θὰ προηγείται ὁ Ἄρης,  
 συνήθως μεταδίδονται οἱ «'Αναζητήσεις  
 μέσω του 'Ελληνικού 'Ερυθρού Σταυρού».  
 Σχεδὸν πανομοιότυπα: Ἡ Ἀγγελικὴ  
 ἀναζητεῖ τὸν σύζυγόν της Γαβριήλ Γαβριήλογλου  
 ἐκ Πισιδίας. Ἐξηφανίσθη  
 κατὰ τὴν Μικρασιατικὴν καταστροφὴν  
 ἐν ἔτει 1922. Ἐκτοτε  
 ἡ Ἀγγελικὴ στερεῖται εἰδήσεων του...» Τὸ παράδοξο  
 δὲν εἶναι, βέβαια, ἡ ἀναμονὴ  
 σαράντα τέσσερα χρόνια, ὅταν σκεφτεῖ κανεὶς  
 ἐκείνους ποὺ ἔζησαν διαστήματα τρομαχτικὰ  
 χωρὶς νὰ περιμένουν τίποτα (κι ἂς ἀφήσουμε πιά,  
 γιατί παράγινε, τῶν ἀγαλμάτων τῆ μοῖρα).  
 Τὸ παράδοξο  
 εἶναι ἡ σιωπὴ τοῦ Γαβριήλ, ποὺ ἀγνοώντας  
 τίς τόσες δυνατότητες ἐπιστροφῆς  
 — ἢ ἔστω μιᾶς κάποιας ἐπικοινωνίας —  
 τὰ οὐράνια φέγγη χαίρεται καὶ στῶν ἀγγέλων  
 τὸ οὐδέτερο κάλλος ἐντρυφᾶ, κι ἀσυλλόγιστα  
 ἀπὸ τὴν ὑπεργήνη μουσικὴ μεθυσμένος,  
 τῆς συζύγου τῆ θαλερὴν ἀγκάλη ἐλησιμόνησε.  
 Κι ἐκεῖνη  
 μέσω του 'Ελληνικού 'Ερυθρού Σταυροῦ  
 ἐπίμονα ἐκπέμπει  
 τὸ ραδιοφώνικὸ της ἄγγελμα  
 ἀνάμεσα σὲ δύο ἡμίχρονα Πιστῆ  
 σὲ ὅσα ἀπὸ τοὺς πατέρες διδάχτηκε,  
 τὸ χρέος της ἐκτελεῖ, τὸ μήνυμά της ἀκούει  
 καὶ ἤσυχη πιά, μπορεῖ νὰ παρακολουθήσει,  
 — ἴσως μὲ ἔγνοια γιὰ τὴ δόξα τοῦ ἐγγονοῦ —  
 ἂν ὡς τὸ τέλος θὰ προηγείται ὁ Ἄρης.

52. In the collection *Κλειστός Κῆπος*, Athens 1966.

## NOTE

This paper was given first in the lecture series «The Asia Minor Greeks» sponsored by the Alexander S. Onassis Center for Hellenic Studies at New York University, 7-28 February 1992, and then at the Colloquium on «The Asia Minor Disaster and Greek Society» organized by the Centre for Asia Minor Studies in Athens, 10-12 September 1992. I am grateful to Dr. Theano Michailidou, Professor G. P. Savidis, and Professor Alexander Kitroeff for bibliographical and historical references, and to Professor Panayotis Moullas and Professor Nasos Vayenas for their helpful observations as discussants at the Colloquium.