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Some remarks on Elytis' Crinagoras

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Ancient Greek poets such as Alcaeus and Sappho, and later Crinagoras, took on through Elytis' poetry a new literary significance, thanks to his personal reconstruction of fragments and the epigram respectively.

The technique of reconstruction from fragments or restoring epigrams is not unconnected with the type of so-called 'prismatic expression' used by Elytis in the creation of his own poetry: a prism's polyhedral and crystalline form allows for the coexistence of facets significant in themselves, but which, when arranged in a new composition, create a new and harmonious entity.

Keywords: Modern Greek Literature; classical reception; the poetics of the fragment

Odysseus Elytis turned to the ancient poets, as has been remarked, out of a sort of 'elective affinity'.[1] Elytis never concealed his admiration for Greek poets of the seventh and sixth centuries BC, especially those from his ancestral Lesbos, such as Alcaeus, Sappho and later Crinagoras, or Terpander from Antissa (another small town on Lesbos), and Archilochus from Paros:[2]

> Personally, as a lyric poet, I cannot but reflect with emotion that the art I make was born here, in the bed of the Aegean; and I may say on the soil of my homeland, if we take into account that Sappho in Lesbos, and Archilochus in Paros, were the first in the whole of the West to take poetry away from the epos and the myths of the gods; they tried to express their feelings and their inner world for the first time.[3]

Elytis makes a bold statement here: lyric poetry was born in the cradle of the Aegean, and remembering it is a sign of respect and reverence, just as the epic poets themselves

1 So G. Dallas, 'Elitis e la lirica antica. Un dialogo intralinguistico', in P. M. Minucci and C. Bintoudis (eds.), *Odisseas Elitis. Un europeo per metà*, (Rome 2010) 135–49.

2 *Ibid.* 135–6.

3 O. Elytis, *Αὐτοπροσωπογραφία σὲ λόγο προφορικό* (Athens 2000) 27.

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expressed their heroes' devotion to the gods. For Elytis, needless to say, the Aegean is the authentic divinity, synonymous with lyric poetry itself, and not by mere convention. As he wrote in 1984:

> Historians have spoken of an extraordinarily rich and refined way of life that developed on Lesbos in the seventh and sixth centuries BC. An amalgam of free customs and habits according to patterns of worship in which nature and love held a privileged place. If we add that, in the opposite hinterland of Asia, not so far away after all, there was Lydia, with Sardis, famous for its make-up and women's clothing, one can understand how close to the Paris of the time the women of Mytilene could even speak as Sappho did. Surely her house bore some resemblance to the 'literary salons' of pre-war Europe.[4]

A distinctive personal connection links Elytis' life and poetry to Mytilene and the island of Lesbos as a whole.[5] His interest in this land is readily seen in terms of a symbolic perception, related to a sort of poetic consecration:[6]

> There is no other place in the world where the Sun and the Moon coexist, reigning together so harmoniously, dividing their power so impartially, as in this part of the earth where once, who knows in what inconceivable times, some god, for his own pleasure, pulled it off like a plane tree leaf and blew it right into the middle of the sea. I speak of the island which later, once inhabited, had the name 'Lesbos' and whose position, as we see it marked on maps, seems to bear little correspondence to reality.[7]

Through an intangible spirit common to the poets of Lesbos, and not only geographically, one can grasp profound affinities between them and the poetic sensibility of Elytis. Alcaeus and Sappho, and later Crinagoras too, took on through Elytis' poetry a new significance – even, it may be said of the two last, a new existence – thanks to Elytis' imaginative reconstruction of the fragments of the one and the epigrams of the other.

The technique of reconstructing fragments or restoring epigrams is not unconnected with the notion of 'prismatic expression' outlined in an essay from 1964. The polyhedral

4 Elytis, 'Τὰ μικρὰ ἔψιλον', in *Ἐν λευκῷ* (Athens 2006) 218–19 (= Id., *Σαπφῶ ἀνασύνθεση καὶ ἀπόδοση* [Athens 2004] 12–13; Italian translation: Odysseas Elytis, *Le poesie di Saffo*, ed. C. Luciani (Rome 2008) 13–14. It is possible that Elytis was hinting at the lesbian circle in Paris of the American writer Natalie Clifford Barney (1876-1972), which included Eveline (Eva) Palmer (1874-1952), later the first wife of Angelos Sikelianos. Illuminating on the relationship is their correspondence: *Γράμματα της Εύας Palmer Σικελιανού στη Natalie Clifford Barney*, ed. L. Papadaki (Athens 1995).

5 Elytis states eloquently that every time he went to Mytilene he felt that in each olive leaf lay his identity: *Αὐτοπροσωπογραφία*, 9-10.

6 See also the remarks of G. Zaccagni, 'Lesbo ed Elitis. "Τα τέκνα της Αιολίδας". Un immaginario albero genealogico', in Minucci and Bintoudis, *Odisseas Elitis* 281–8.

7 Elytis, 'Ο ζωγράφος Θεόφιλος' (wr. 1967), *Ἀνοιχτὰ Χαρτιά* (Athens 1982) 255–316 (257).

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and crystalline form of a prism allows the coexistence of facets that are significant in themselves, but which, when arranged in a new composition, create a new and harmonious entity. The poet writes:

> A poet's value consists not only in seeking out rare and unexpected images, but also in knowing how to place them in the substance of a poem in such a manner that none of the brightness of these images gets lost in the process.[8]

Thus, the concept of the 'prismatic', hinted as in 1964 in an essay with regard to the long poem *Τὸ Ἄξιον Ἐστί* (*Dignum est*),[9] comes to impose itself more consistently in the essay on Romanos the Melodist, conceived in 1975, when Elytis' Sappho project was still at an early stage. Poetic expression, as Elytis describes it, can be divided into 'prismatic expression' (πρισματικὴ ἔκφραση) or 'flat expression' (ἐπίπεδη ἔκφραση):

> Greek poetry was born with certain distinctive traits. Its texts – its words – are never on the same level: they oscillate (κυματοῦνται), as Romanos would say. Even in the epic, a narrative genre in itself, Homer is the first to give an example of how to avoid flat expression. His rhapsodies are organized around prominent clusters, which subsequently constitute the ensemble. These nuclei are not necessarily 'images': they are expressive units that radiate autonomously, in which the nexus of the signifier coincides with that given signified, to the point that in the end it is not possible to know whether the charm comes from what the poet says or from the way he says it.[10]

He goes on to claim that, in the light of such an approach, poetic discourse takes on a 'prismatic' character and that poems with this characteristic

> have an impact on the reader not only in their entirety, but also in sections, in pieces, thanks to these prominences, these crystals in which the sharpness of the spirit culminates. These are expressions in which the minerals of language and imagistic iconic elements come together, and in which the formulation of a truth is also the awakening of a world that can be assimilated by the receptivity of our imagination.[11]

Elytis invokes Homer to explain this idea of homogeneous composition, based on the use of phrasal elements and images taken, so to speak, *from within* Greek poetry. The mention of Homer is to be understood not only as an allusion to epic poetry (as a

8 Elytis, *Ἀνοιχτὰ Χαρτιά*, 88.

9 Elytis, 'Ποίηση καὶ μουσική', *Ἐπιθεώρηση Τέχνης* 20 (1964) 337-40 (339).

10 O. Elytis, 'Ὁ Ρωμανός ὁ Μελωδός' (wr. 1975) in *Ἐν λευκῷ* (Athens 2006) 49–50; see E. Koutrianou, 'Η ἀνασύνθεση καὶ ἀπόδοση τῶν ποιημάτων τῆς Σαπφοῦς καὶ ἡ ποιητικὴ τοῦ Ὀδυσσέα Ἐλύτη', *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν* 36 (2004–2005) 439–49 (446); also D. Connolly, 'Sull' espressione poetica. Elitis 'In bianco', and M. Cazzulo, 'Tra significato e significante. L' onomatopea nelle poesia di Elitis', in Minucci and Bintoudis, *Odisseas Elitis*, 77-88 and 109-18 respectively.

11 Elytis, 'Ὁ Ρωμανὸς ὁ Μελωδός', 50.

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source in part of lyric poetry) but in a broad symbolic sense to convey the significance and value of the linguistic code adopted, the Greek language:

> Τὴ γλώσσα μοῦ ἔδωσαν ἑλληνική·
> τὸ σπίτι φτωχικὸ στὶς ἀμμουδιὲς τοῦ Ὁμήρου…
>
> Μονάχη ἔγνοια ἡ γλώσσα μου στὶς ἀμμουδιές τοῦ Ὁμήρου…

('Greek the language I was given; / poor the house on Homer's shores. / Language my only care on Homer's shores'), as the poet famously says in his *Axion Estì* (Passion, II).

In this respect we should consider the enhancement of the idea of the fragment, not as a mere relic to be preserved – or worse, to be venerated – but as a vital element to be grafted, to be re-composed, in the confidence that the various fragments will give rise to new, equally effective phono-semantic images through intra-lingual translation. On an iconographic level, this has an affinity with Elytis' predilection for collage, which shares the same technique of recomposing fragments.[12] Elytis himself clarifies for the reader of his Sappho the basic criteria for the re-composition of the ancient poems:[13]

a) I have not followed the classic arrangement of Sappho's fragments in any way, since my experimentation aimed at something different from philology.
b) I have gone further: to the arbitrary linking of fragments, having as a rule the nature of the content and the ultimate goal the creation of a new, albeit incomplete, poetic nucleus.
c) That is why it has often been necessary to change the verb tenses (from present to imperfect or future etc.) or to introduce conjunctions (such as 'and, 'therefore', 'however', 'but' etc.) without ever, as J. M. Edmonds once did or as Edith Mora does today, filling the gaps with conjectural intermediate meanings.
d) I have eliminated capital letters and commas. I have limited myself to full stops, dashes and exclamation marks. I also used an ornamental mark to indicate where the lines or stanzas break off (for all those times when I was dealing with a poem that has been preserved almost in its entirety).
e) After many attempts, I have found the solution of the narrow column to be appropriate, both for the original text and for the translation. In doing so, of course, the reader will find some difficulty in reading the text correctly, i.e. according to the rhythm of the verses. But in spite of this, I have preferred to

12 In Elytis' collages, the constituent elements, whether derived from photographs or works of art – where colours, paintings, the sinuous bodies of girls and angels, the crests of sea waves and robes, statues and parts of a temple, the whiteness of chalk, a verse by Sappho – are a *musée imaginaire* parallel to the images in his poems. See N. Hatzikyriakos-Ghika, 'Ο Ελύτης και η ζωγραφική', *Το Βήμα* 4/3/1990, and E. Kapsomenos (ed.), *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης, ο ποιητής και οι ελληνικές πολιτισμικές αξίες* (Athens 2000).

13 Elytis, *Σαπφώ*, 163–4. For his translation of Sappho, Elytis made use of no fewer than eleven critical studies and translations, in addition to the reference edition by E. Lobel and D.L. Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* (Oxford 1963); see also I. Loulakaki, 'Σαπφώ και Ελύτης, ο Ηλιοβόρος και η Σεληνοβάμων', *Νέα Ἑστία*, [Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Ὀδυσσέα Ἐλύτη (1911–1996)] 1674–5 (1997) 567–75.

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> achieve an emotional correspondence with the mysterious halo emanating from the ancient columns and papyri, from the very difficulty of reading them; and at the same time to free myself from the fragmented surface of the pages, so as to obtain an impression of balance and unity".[14]

And whereas the fragment does not exist in the original text, in his adaptation then Elytis purposely creates it from scratch, trying to emulate the already structured and compact composition and recreating something new with the same original power.

This is why the methods of re-composition (ἀνασύνθεση) for Sappho's fragments and re-generation (μορφή στά νεοελληνικά) for Crinagoras' epigrams by Elytis are so distinctive in their personal adaptation of the ancient source material in both cases. As a consequence, they merit special attention, more than that needed to appreciate the attempts by Edmonds, Mora, and others at reconstructing the sense of Sappho's fragments through their own interventions. It is clear, after all, that the 'versions' (let us remain on neutral ground with this generic term, though it is never used by Elytis) are an expression of his sensibility, which leads to join in a dialogue as an equal with the original text.

When tracing some of the dynamics that would later lead to the structuring of Elytis' Crinagoras, one must take into account Elytis' cultural approach to ancient authors – that is, the lens through which he searches for patterns. Ancient Greek authors are very frequently referred to in his work (poetry and prose alike), with a predilection above all for Sappho.[15] Among those interlocutors who have contributed to the construction of Elytis' personal mythology it is useful to recall the significance, beside Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, of authors extant only in largely fragmentary form such as Archilochus and Heraclitus: see the catalogue in the section "Ὅττω τις ἔραται" (Ὁ ταξιδιωτικὸς σάκος) in Ὁ *μικρὸς ναυτίλος* (1985). Yet there is no trace here of Crinagoras, to whom Elytis comes to pay distinctive attention.

Crinagoras (b. Mytilene *ca.* 70 BC, d. Rome after AD 11, probably *ca.* AD 18) was the author of some fifty surviving epigrams written in a refined style and included in the famous *Corona* (*Στέφανος*) of Philip of Thessalonica (first century AD), an anthology of poems that appeared during the reign of Caligula or Nero as a successor to the prestigious anthology by Meleager in the first century BC. All of Crinagoras' epigrams can be dated to the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. He must have been an influential figure in his home town: inscriptions document his participation in various embassies abroad. In 48-47 BC and 45 he was in Rome (cf. IG XII 35a; 35b), in order to redefine the political status of his island, and twenty years later, in 26-25 BC, we find him on another mission to Tarragona in Spain (cf. IG XII 35c). He was particularly appreciated in Rome, where he had moved under Augustus, becoming part of the circle of favourites of Octavia Minor, Augustus' sister, and establishing close relations

14 Elytis, *Σαπφώ*, 163–5.

15 For an understanding of antiquity in Elytis a basic starting point is D. I. Iakov, *Η αρχαιογνωσία του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη και άλλες νεοελληνικές δοκιμές* (Thessaloniki 2000).

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with the imperial family. To Augustus' nephew, Marcus Claudius Marcellus (42-23 BC), he sent a copy of a work by Callimachus of Cyrene, while to Antonia Minor he offered five books of lyrics. Each gift was accompanied by a 'note', stating that the poet expected nothing in return, for this was a spontaneous homage expressed in the name of an exchange between lovers of Greek literature, with no constraints of 'courtesy' between the poet and his patron.[16] In all probability his literary *otium* did not coexist with his political and diplomatic activity, but occurred later.

Crinagoras' epigrams have their charm, to which variety of theme and, especially, refinement of style contribute. The poem on winter roses for the birthday of a young woman destined for marriage; the gift of a copy of Callimachus' *Hecale* to Marcellus; a reflection on the lunar eclipse in conjunction with the death of Cleopatra Selene; the epitaph for Imnides, daughter of Evander; the ironic poem about the escape of a parrot that had been taught to greet Caesar Augustus; the celebration of Emperor Tiberius' victories from Armenia to Germany; a lament for Corinth (destroyed by Mummius in 146 BC); the horrific image of an abandoned skull as symbol of the transience of life – all these and more constitute the varied subject matter of his collection.

Elytis' *μορφὴ στὰ νέα ἑλληνικά* (the term emphasizing a project of intralingual translation) is preceded by a preface to Crinagoras (as had been the case with Sappho) in which Elytis sets out the arguments for choosing this 'minor', yet in his field excellent, poet of the Hellenistic-Roman period. It is also worth noting here the admission of a debt to Cavafy's 1920 poem, *Νέοι τῆς Σιδῶνος (400 μ.Χ.)* (*Young Men of Sidon, AD 400*):

> Ὁ ἠθοποιός πού ἔφεραν γιά νά τούς διασκεδάσει
> ἀπήγγειλε καί μερικά ἐπιγράμματα ἐκλεκτά.
>
> [. . .]
>
> Διαβάσθηκαν Μελέαγρος, καί Κριναγόρας, καί Ριανός.
>
> (The actor invited for their entertainment/recited a few choice epigrams. [. . .] Meleager, Crinagoras and Rhianus were read.)

'Μελέα**γρ**ος καὶ Κ**ρι**ναγό**ρα**ς καὶ **Ρι**ανός' – this alchemical combination of sounds as in other instances in his poetry, is perhaps what led Elytis to Crinagoras: Cavafy's choice of three epigrammists of modest value (with the possible exception of Meleager), is

16 I cite here only the most recent bibliography on Crinagoras, passing over older studies: *The Epigrams of Crinagoras of Mytilene*, Introduction, Text, Commentary, ed. M. Ypsilanti (Oxford 2018) 1–52; *Epitimbi crinagorei. Tradizione, testo, temi degli epigrammi funerari di Crinagora*, ed. C. Gandini (Nordhausen 2018) and her preliminary essay: *Diplomatico e poeta. Crinagora di Mitilene nella Roma di Augusto* (Reggio Calabria 2015). For the relations of Greek poets with the Roman imperial court, see I. Cogitore, 'Crinagoras et les poètes de la Couronne de Philippe: la cour impériale romaine dans les yeux des grecs', in I. Savalli–Lestrade and I. Cogitore (eds), *Des rois au prince: pratiques du pouvoir monarchique dans l'Orient hellénistique et romain* (Ellug 2010) 258–259. Interesting in this respect are some of Cavafy's prose writings, including the essay *'Ἕλληνες λόγιοι ἐν ρωμαϊκαῖς οἰκίαις'* (*Greek men of letters in Rome*): K. P. Kavafis, *Τὰ πεζά (1882; –1931)*, ed. M. Pieris (Athens 2003) 98–104, now also available in K. Kavafis, *Poesie e Prose*, ed. R. Lavagnini and C. Luciani (Milan 2021) 1497–1509.

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justifiable, according to Elytis, solely for the magical-evocative value perceived in the euphonic alchemy of the signifiers: 'Ας όψεται ο Καβάφης· που μολονότι δεν είναι, συνήθως, ανοιχτός σε τέτοιου είδους ευαισθησίες, έγραψε τον μαγικό – λεκτικό στίχο "Διαβάστηκαν Μελέαγρος και Κριναγόρας και Ριανός".'[17]

However, Crinagoras is an expatriate poet, a court poet at Rome, by contrast with Sappho who, it appears, never left Lesbos.[18] The story of Crinagoras' exile Τηλόθι Λέσβου ('Far from Lesbos'), which so influenced Elytis' sensibility, has been compared to that of Kalvos, he too an emigré. For Elytis, Kalvos 'seems to have banished from himself every personal aspiration and sacrificed every ambition, showing that he pursues but one goal: that of serving the patriotic love that burns within him to the best of his ability'.[19]

But Elytis is too subjective in his judgements here: the exiled Kalvos was committed to celebrating the freedom of his homeland from afar, but it is by no means clear that Crinagoras too was nostalgic, even though he was away from Mytilene: on the contrary, his high social rank allowed him to do without the support and protection of the Roman aristocracy and he could have returned to his homeland whenever he wished. He was not a recluse in Rome, nor does he appear to have had any binding client relationships: 'The poet was a man of action, often contemptuous of danger and fully interested and involved in politics, as is proven by the three documented ambassadorships',[20] in one of which 'he lost at least one of his companions' (cf. Epitaph to Seleucus 16 = *AP* 6.376) and 'it is very likely that he made other journeys, from Mytilene or Rome, as his initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries suggests' (cf. 35 = *AP* 11.42). It has also been suggested that the poet spent time in Judaea at Herod's court.[21] But the periodization, which is based on epigraphic evidence that records the poet's presence also in delegations to Julius Caesar in 48/47 and 44, is not always clear. This does not mean that Crinagoras did not maintain a relationship with the Roman court of Augustus, a relationship nourished by esteem, favours and rewards, often reciprocated by the poetic celebration of the imperial family. His predilection for epigrams, in which he seems to have excelled, so much so that he was included in the

17 Elytis, *Ἐν λευκῷ*, 267 ('Blame Cavafy, who, although not usually open to such forms of sensitivity, has written the magically expressive verse: Meleager, Crinagoras and Rhianus were read. And don't tell me he chose to mention these three because of the quality of their art!'). Elytis' attention to the rhythmic ductility of language is analysed in L. Stefanou, 'Ελύτης. Γλώσσα καὶ ρυθμός', *Νέα Ἑστία* [Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Ὀδυσσέα Ἐλύτη] 489–93.

18 J. S. Phillimore, '*Crinagoras* of Mytilene', *Dublin Review* 139 (1906) 74–86 (79). According to the classification of the *Palatine Anthology*, Crinagoras' poems may be divided into: 2 *Amatoria*, 11 *Dedicatoria*, 13 *Sepulcralia*, 21 *Demonstrativa*, 1 *Hortatorium*, 1 *Convivia* or *Irrisoria*, and 4 further *Hortatoria* transmitted by the *Anthologia Planudea*. A contrast with Sappho is that the only epigrams with erotic content are actually an epistle (5.108) and one written in Italy to a woman named Gemella (5.119).

19 Elytis, *Ανοιχτά χαρτιά*, 51 and I. Loulakaki–Moore, *Seferis and Elytis as Translators* (Bern 2010) 272.

20 Ypsilanti, *The Epigrams of Crinagoras*, 9.

21 D. W. Roller, *The Building Program of Herod the Great* (Berkeley 1998) 62–63 with n. 74.

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famous Crown of Philip of Thessalonica, well known in Rome since the time of Nero, put the poet in the best light with the imperial family.

Elytis's 're-generation' of the 52 epigrams by or attributed to Crinagoras appeared in 1987. (The term 're-generation' is here used in preference to 'translation', which is somewhat misleading in this context.) Between 1973 and 1976, Elytis had been working on Giraudoux's and Brecht's and on his volume of translations *Δεύτερη Γραφή* (*Second Draft)*. The *Crinagoras* volume followed the *Sappho* (1984), as we have seen, but also the translation of the *Apocalypse* (1985). The narrow time lapse between one publication and the next one suggests that Elytis, at this late stage of life, was devoting himself in a way anything but desultory to an enterprise of translation or reworking. It should not be forgotten that his relationship with the ancient poets 'is to be understood, rather than in terms of apprenticeship, as a relationship of elective affinity.'[22]

For the text and commentary notes on the epigrams of Crinagoras (1987), Elytis bases himself solely on the edition of the *Palatine Anthology* (Les Belles Lettres, published several times).[23] Elytis' transposition of the epigrams is based on an absolutely subjective criterion, with a division into four sections that evidently diverges from the division into seven sections (7, as we know, is one of the key numbers in Elytis' poetry) previously adopted for the reconstruction of Sappho's fragments and is obviously different from the Bellettrian edition of choice, as shown by the groups of epigrams arranged in the following scheme:

Sections Books	1ª *γηθομένη σὺν φρενὶ*	2ª *ἰὸν ἔσταξας πόθων*	3ª *ἄψευστον δ' ἵκετο πένθος*	4ª *ἀντολίαι δύσιες*
V		119	108	
VI	227, 261, 229, 100, 242, 253, 232, 161, 350, 345, 244			
VII			633, 643, 638, 371, 741, 376, 628, 636, 645, 380, 401	
IX	239, 545, 542, 513	429, 514	276, 81, 439, 234	284, 560, 559, 555, 283, 235, 516, 430, 562, 224, 291, 419
(X)				XXXIV
XI			42	
PL		199		273, 61, 40

As with the re-composition of Sappho's fragments Elytis broke away from traditional editorial criteria for *Crinagoras* as well, disarticulating the original epigram structure of the poems and putting forward a surrealist text on the basis of a different kind of elective affinity.[24]

22 Dallas, 'Elitis e la lirica antica', 135.

23 Elytis, *Crinagoras*, 145. He has used *Anthologie palatine*, ed. P. Waltz, (Paris 1929-1972): Première partie: t. I: Livre V (1929); t. III: Livre VI (1931); t. V: Livre VII (1941); t. VII: Livre IX. *Epigrammes* 1-358 (1957); t. VIII: Livre IX. *Epigrammes* 359-827, (1974); t. X: Livre XI (1972). Deuxième partie: Anthologie de Planude, éd. et trad. R. Aubreton (Paris 1980).

24 Cfr. Dallas, 'Elitis e la lirica antica', 142.

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The key to the organization of the subject matter is broadly thematic: Section 1a: 15 poems dedicated to gifts, victories and happy events; Section 2a: 4 poems dedicated to love; Section 3a: 17 poems dedicated to the theme of death and, finally, Section 4a: 16 poems dedicated to travel. These were amongst the favourite themes of Hellenistic-Roman epigrams, different and more varied than those of their origins.

Crinagoras' poetry, with its typical epic-Ionian Greek, embraced an innovative character. This extends, as scholars have observed, and as Elytis was perhaps aware, to metrical experiments likewise.[25] What is certain is that Elytis does not follow the metrical scheme of the epigram and adopts his own personal measures to reproduce what can be considered Crinagoras' stylistic peculiarities. As Loulakaki-Moore has observed: 'In order to foreground what he takes to be the suppressed poetic gift of Crinagoras, Elytis first and foremost aims at freeing him from the epigram's formal restrictions.'[26] The layout of the text in the re-generation follows a subjective line with interventions also at the graphic level: at the level of the macro-text, for example, typographic spaces replace traditional punctuation or, at any rate, determine a rhythm understood to be free of graphic impediments, in conformity with a presumed oral execution, where silence between syntagm and syntagm is signified by empty spaces, as is shown by the following examples:

Ed. Les Belles Lettres	Original text in the typographical presentation by Elytis	Elytis' target text
636 ΚΡΙΝΑΓΟΡΟΥ Ποιμὴν ὃ μάκαρ, εἴθε κατ' οὔρεος ἐπροβάτευον κῆγὼ ποιηρὸν τοῦτ' ἀνὰ λευκόλοφον, κριοῖς ἀγητῆρσι ποτ' ἐβλημένα βάζων, ἢ πικρῇ βάψαι νήοχα πηδάλια ἅλμῃ. Τοιγὰρ ἔδυν ὑποβένθιος· ἀμφὶ δὲ ταύτην θῆνά με βοιβδήσας Εὖρος ἐφορμίσατο.	κθ′ Ποιμὴν ὦ μάκαρ εἴθε κατ' οὔρεος ἐπροβάτευον κῆγὼ ποιηρὸν τοῦτ' ἀνὰ λευκόλοφον κριοῖς ἀγητῆρσι ποτ' ἐβλημένα βάζων ἢ πικρῇ βάψαι νήοχα πηδάλια ἅλμῃ ⊞ Τοιγὰρ ἔδυν ὑποβένθιος ⊞ ἀμφὶ δὲ ταύτην θῆνά με βοιβδήσας Εὖρος ἐφορμίσατο. [VII 636]	κθ′ Ξέγνοιαστος νά 'μουν ἄμποτε κι ἐγὼ βοσκὸς στά βουνά τά πρόβατα νά φύλαγα 'κεῖ στίς πλαγιές τίς χλοερές τοῦ λόφου μέ τήν ἀσπρωπή κορφή στά κριάρια τά μπροστάρικα πού πᾶν βελάζοντας μέ λόγια ν' ἀποκρίνομαι παρά πού πῆγα μ' ὅλα μου τά τιμόνια καί τοῦ καραβιοῦ τά σύνεργα μέσα στῆς πικροθάλασσας τά κύματα νά βουτηχτῶ ⊞ γιά νά βρεθῶ ἀνάπαντεχα στόν πάτο ⊞ κι ἀπέ φυσομανώντας ὁ νοτιάς νά μέ ξεβράσει σέ τοῦτο τό ἀκρογιάλι.
560 Τοῦ αὐτοῦ. Ῥιγηλὴ πασῶν ἔνοσι χθονός, εἴτε σε πόντου, εἴτ' ἀνέμων αἴρει ῥεῦμα τινασσόμενον, οἰκία μοι ῥύευ νεοτευχέα· δεῖμα γὰρ οὔπω ἄλλο τόσον γαίης οἶδ' ἐλελιζομένης.	λη′ Ῥιγηλὴ πασῶν ἔνοσι χθονός εἴτε σε πόντου εἴτ' ἀνέμων αἴρει ῥεῦμα τινασσόμενον οἰκία μοι ῥύευ νεοτευχέα ⊞ δεῖμα γὰρ οὔπω ἄλλο τόσον γαίης οἶδ' ἐλελιζομένης. [IX 560]	λη′ Θές ἡ θάλασσα εἶναι θές οἱ ἀνέμοι πού τό κύμα σου σηκώνουνε πού μᾶς τρακάρει νάει σεισμέ πιό φοβερέ ἀπό κάθε τι στόν κόσμο ἐτοῦτον μή σέ παρακαλῶ τό σπίτι μου τό καινουριοχτισμένο μήν πειράξεις ⊞ Μά τήν ἀλήθεια σείσιμο τῆς γῆς δέν ἐξανάγινε ποτές τέτοια τρομάρα νά σκορπίσει.

25 Even his way of writing epigrams 'set a school' in his time, as Albin Lesky claims: *Storia della letteratura greca*, vol. III (Milan 1984) 1003. For Crinagoras' style, see Ypsilanti, *The Epigrams of Crinagoras*, 14–30.
26 Loulakaki–Moore, *Seferis and Elytis as Translators*, 274–5.

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It is evident that the metrical form of the original elegiac couplet (hexameter + pentameter) no longer made sense to Elytis, who treated the texts as fragments, as in the different case of Sappho. The fragmentary character, which breaks all metrical regularity, is prevalent, even dominant. Striking cases of typographical layout include, the division of certain words (without employment of the hyphen) at line breaks is justifiable; so too as is the presence of extra spacing or special symbols to exorbitant to isolate a phrase.[27]

In general, Elytis prefers the way of free rendering over faithful transposition, and apparently only respects the formal characteristics of the original, with all "its verse returns (enjambments), possible hiatuses, expressive licence, syntactic disconnections, and of course with the risk that the reader, who does not have the original before his eyes, will attribute all these inconsistencies to the translator's incapacity".[28] Furthermore, one must also add the specific use of sounds and nouns, on which Elytis has always been very scrupulous since his first experiments in *Προσανατολισμοί* (*Orientations*) in 1940.[29]

Elytis's focus on Crinagoras this poet takes place at several levels of expression. The following examples will give us an idea, albeit an incomplete one. From a stylistic point of view, for example, Elytis was deeply influenced by folk poetry,[30] which contributed decisively to the rendering of some of Crinagoras' wording in perfect iambic decapentasyllables (the dominant metre of folk poetry):

1. βουερή μονιά ᾽κεῖ στῶν Βασσῶν τά βράχια ριζωμένη (στ΄)
2. Πρώτη στά κάλλη τῆς θωριᾶς πρώτη στό μέσα πλοῦτος
3. φανεῖτε ἡ μιά σας ἐλαφρά κι ἡ ἄλλη ὅλο γαλήνη (κη΄)
4. Μακριὰ στοῦ Νείλου κείτεσαι τίς ὄχθες πεταμένος (λα΄)
5. στήν πρώτη γιά τήν ὀμορφιά καί τῆς καρδιᾶς τό πλοῦτος (ιβ΄)

Elytis is faithful to the characteristics of the political verse itself, in which the two hemistichs (of 8 + 7 syllables respectively) tend to be complementary in their semantic

27 It has been observed that a stylistic antecedent of the breaking off or dismemberment of verse, which forces the reader into a mental operation of sewing together the hemistichs, is Cavafy's' poem *Ἐν τῷ μηνὶ Ἀθύρ* (*In the month of Hathor*); see Loulakaki–Moore, *Seferis and Elytis as Translators*, 276.

28 E. N. Moschou, 'Τὸ μεταφραστικὸ ἔργο τοῦ Ὀδυσσέα Ἐλύτη', *Νέα Ἑστία* (Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Ὀδυσσέα Ἐλύτη, 1911–1996), 1674-5 (1997) 510–14 (511).

29 'Τό ἐνδιαφέρον τοῦ Ἐλύτη γιά τήν παραγωγή ἤχου καί λόγου καί τή διαπλοκή τοῦ ἄναρθρου μέ τό ἔναρθρο λόγο καί τῶν ἤχων πού παράγει ἡ φύση μέ τούς ἤχους πού παράγει ὁ ἄνθρωπος διαπερνᾶ ὁλόκληρη τήν ποίησή του καί εἶναι ὁρατό ἤδη στούς *Προσανατολισμούς* (1940)', so M. Paschalis, 'Ἡ ποιητική τῶν κύριων ὀνομάτων στόν Ἐλύτη (καί ἡ καταγωγή τοῦ λογοτεχνικοῦ ψευδώνυμου τοῦ ποιητῆ)', *Ποιητική* 23 (2019) 97.

30 For Elytis' debt to folk poetry, see S. Vrettos, 'Η λαϊκή παράδοση στην ποίηση του Οδ. Ελύτη: θνησμαίον κα επιβιούν', in E. G. Kapsomenos (ed.), *Οδυσσέας Ελύτης: ο ποιητής και οι ελληνικές πολιτισμικές αξίες*, (Athens 2000), 593-609. Some useful considerations on the use of traditional Greek verse by an avant-garde poet like Elytis, see C. Daniìl, 'Οδυσσέα Ελύτη: "Παραλλαγές πάνω σε μιάν αχτίδα" και δημοτικό τραγούδι', *Θέματα λογοτεχνίας* (Οδυσσέας Ελύτης αφιέρωμα), 1 (1995–1996) 129–137.

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redundancy (especially the first three examples), with reminiscences of the lexicon of popular song and also of Solomos, from whom the expression στό μέσα πλοῦτος is taken: the (epigrammatic) lyric poem 'Φραγκίσκα Φραίζερ' famously speaks: δῶρο δὲν ἔχουνε γιὰ σὲ καὶ γιὰ τὸ μέσα πλοῦτος. ['they have no gift for you nor for the inner riches').[31] Recourse to vernacular tradition seems to be an almost obsessive choice on the part of Elytis, especially when it comes to replacing an archaic or Atticizing term in the original, the function of which is no longer readily perceived. Likewise, he is always concerned with sound, as in the case of his approach to Romanos the Melodist.[32]

Thus, in his lexical re-generation of Crinagoras, Elytis makes use of a studied selection of compound words, often with adverbial or adjectival value, capable of performing a specific function that is anything but ornamental.[33]

Let us see some evidence of this *modus operandi*. To take one example, the compound term in the original of Crinagoras, for instance, is often respected with an even-to-even ratio: e.g. νεόσμηκτον = φρεσκοχυτός, λυγοτευχέα = χλωρόπλεχτο, νεοτευχέα = καινουριοχτισμένο or it can replace a locution: ἀπό θυμοῦ = ὁλόκαρδα; sometimes the author goes so far as to use compound terms with an antiquated flavour, even though they are calques, as for example in the case of κοντυλοφόρος (< fr. *porte-plume*) to translate κάλαμον. When a combination is impossible, Elytis prefers the circumlocution often introduced by the relative omnivalent πού: πυροκλοπίης = τὴ φωτιὰ… πού ᾽κλεψε, ὑελοκικκάδες ὄγχναι = ἀχλάδια πού τά λέν κρυστάλλια. As Loulakaki-Moore has shown,[34] it is very likely that Elytis for the rendering of compound nouns has followed the French translation, which in the same way employs relative phrases to break up a Greek monorhematic compound or a dative case expression; e.g.: ἐν ὁμωνυμίῃ *qui est russi le sien* (Elytis: πού ᾽ναι καὶ τὸ δικό του); ὠδίνων μειλίχῳ *qui apaise les douleurs de l'enfantement* (Elytis: ποὺ τῆς γέννας ξέρει τὶς ὠδίνες ν'ἀπαλύνει); ἱδρυσίες *que l'on élève en l'honneur* (Elytis: ποὺ γιὰ δόξα σᾶς ἔστησαν); ῾Ριγηλὴ πασῶν ἔνοσι χθονός εἴτε σε πόντου / εἴτ᾽ ἀνέμων αἴρει ῥεῦμα τινασσόμενον *Tremblement de terre effroyable entre tous, soit que la mer soit que le vents te soulèvent sous leur flot ébranlé* (Elytis: Θές ἡ θάλασσα εἶναι θές οἱ ἀνέμοι πού / τό κύμα σου σηκώνουνε πού μᾶς ταρακου/νάει σεισμέ); ἐρημαῖόν τε κέλυφο ὄμματος *orbite qui l'oeil a*

31 D. Solomos, *Ποίηματα και πεζά*, ed. S. Alexiou (Athens 2007) 299. The bond with the poetry of Solomos is indisputable: see C. Dounià, '"Σολωμού συντριβή και δέος": Όψεις της γενεαλογίας του Οδυσσέα Ελύτη', in F. Zaccone, P. Efthymiou, C. Bintoudis (ed.), *La letteratura neogreca del XX secolo. Un caso europeo. Atti del Convegno internazionale di Studi neogreci*, (Rome 2020) 75–87.

32 See I. Loulakaki, 'Odysseus Elytis' use of Romanos the Melodist: a case of "modernization and distortion"?' *Dialogos* 8 (2000) 56–77, 'Elytis' criterion for the composition of his list [*sc.* of Romanos' words] is the euphonic effect of the words and not the uniqueness of their origin. This is evident at points where he includes ordinary adverbs or common verbal forms only for their sound–effect' (63).

33 As Loulakaki–Moore remarks, 'Elytis' compounds in general have a different function from the mere decorative function of the compounds as we find them, especially in many translations of Homer in Modern Greek', so the poet 'tried to avoid ornamental compound adjectives, precisely due to the overuse that many of these had suffered' (Loulakaki–Moore, *Seferis and Elytis as Translators*, 279).

34 Loulakaki–Moore, *Seferis and Elytis as Translators*, 280.

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déserté (Elytis: κόγχη πού σοῦ 'φυγε το μάτι). With the background of a perfectly bilingual poet like Elytis, it is not an exaggeration to conclude that his *Crinagoras* can be seen as a regeneration of the ancient poems as well as their French translations.

As for the reuses of phonic sequences, we can observe some other examples: Βότ**ρυ**ες οἰνοπέπαντοι ἐϋσχίστοιο τε **ῥοι**ῆς θ**ρύ**μματα καὶ ξανθοὶ μυελοὶ ἐκ στ**ρο**βίλων (p. 31) is echoed in Elytis' Τσαμπιά σταφύλι ζουμε**ρό** κι ἀπό μισανοιγμένο **ρό**δι **ρό**γες ξανθή ψίχα κουκουνά**ρι** (p. 31); **Αἰ**ετοῦ **ἀ**γκυλόχειρος **ἀ**κρόπτερον becomes **Ἀ**π' **ἀ**κρόφτερο **ἀ**ετοῦ, in which the phonic/semantic correspondence is almost total. Or the modern poet allows himself new images, without an exact correspondence with the original phonic texture: **Ἄ**νοιξη **ἄ**νθιζαν **ἄ**λλοτε τά ρόδα (p. 37) where Crinagoras had Εἴα**ρο**ς ἤνθει μὲν τὸ **πρὶ**ν **ῥό**δα, or: **π**υκναί τ'ἰτρινέαι **ποπά**δες καὶ **πό**τιμοι becomes, with a particular study of assonances and a thickening of combined words, **σ**φιχτοζυμωμένες **σ**ου**σ**αμό**π**ιτες νόστιμες **σ**κορδο**παπ**ούδες (p. 31). Elsewhere, too, phonic textures are transferred to sounds differing from those of the original (it goes without saying that the system of sounds on which Elytis works is governed by the modern pronunciation of Greek, which he will also have used for the original texts), but likewise helping to provide cohesiveness: **Σ**υμφορά πού **σ**οῦ 'λαχε μεγ**άλη** **Ἑλλά**δα Ποιοι **ἄλλ**οι **ἀ**ντ'**ἄλλ**ων (p. 97), while Crinagoras' text sounded **Οἵ**ους ἀνθ'**οἵ**ων **οἰ**κήτορας ὦ ἐλ**ε**εινή εὕραο Φεῦ μεγ**άλη**ς **Ἑλλά**δος ἀμμορίη.

From these limited examples, however, it is clear what kinds of effect Elytis is aiming at. He is aware of being faced with of a complex, precious, and elegant poet in Crinagoras; and this leads him to choices and solutions maybe even more daring than in his versions of non-Greek authors (such as Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Eluard, Jouve, Ungaretti, Garcia Lorca, Mayakovsky), whereby the logic of an intralingual resemantization was less coercive and the aim was only to provide historical rather than poetic accounts. While as for Sappho, so for Crinagoras Elytis must have felt a deep responsibility to handle a language as ductile and imperishable as Greek. As is well known, his poetry displays a constant formal inventiveness and exploits all the forms and registers of the Greek language, making it extremely difficult to translate, as one runs a great danger of not fully understanding the "moral force" (ἠθικὴ δύναμη) implied by the Greek language:

> Si la langue n'était qu'un simple moyen de communication, il n'y aurait pas de problème. Mais il arrive, parfois, qu'elle soit aussi un instrument de «magie». De plus, dans ce long cours de siècles, la langue acquiert une certaine manière d'être. Elle devient un haut langage. Et cette manière d'être oblige. N'oublions pas non plus qu'en chacun de ces vingt-cinq siècles et sans nulle béance, il s'est écrit, en grec, de la poésie. C'est cet ensemble de données qui fait le grand poids de tradition que cet instrument soulève. La poésie grecque moderne en donne une image fort expressive.[35]

35 Elytis, *Ἐν λευκῷ*, 352. This assumption can be linked to what Elytis expresses in his essay *Chronicle of a Decade* (Elytis, *Ἀνοιχτὰ Χαρτιά*, 328): 'The language phenomenon, in exactly the same way that a landscape is

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By way of conclusion, it is perhaps appropriate to hazard what really was the inspiration that Crinagoras the epigrammatist provided the modern Greek lyric poet, over and above his virtuosity in sound patterning. First of all, it was a particular humanity, a form of Terentian *humani nihil alienum*, that captured Elytis' attention: 'a nobility that is less aristocratic and more human, in the deepest sense of the term'. Elytis cites the following example:

> The example of the epitymbium dedicated, as an equal, to his servant Inachus, which makes him say that he died "far away, mourned by tears" [AP VI 371, v. 5] of his patron, is not to be ignored. Nor, by contrast, should his hatred for potentates go unnoticed, especially against the tyrant Eunichida who, in two successive epitymbia [AP VII 380 and 401], literally destroys him even when he is dead, with very offensive and sometimes even vulgar expressions.[36]

Below is Elytis' reconstruction of the two disparaging epitymbia:

λβ'

Ἂν κι εἶναι ἀπό μαρμάρινη πλάκα πελεκ
ητή κι ἀπό χέρι μαστόρου καλοζυγιασμ
ένος ὄχι τάφος δέν εἶναι αὐτός ἀνθρώ
που εὐγενικοῦ ▣ Μήν κρίνεις ἀπ' τήν π
έτρα τόν ἀποθαμένο φίλε ▣ Νοῦ δέν ἔχ
ουν οἱ πέτρες καί μπορεῖ ὁ πιό ἀποτρό
παιος νεκρός σκέπη του νάν τίς πάρει ▣
Ἔτσι σέ τούτη 'δῶ ἀπό κάτου σήπεται
ἀπό καιρό τό πανάθλιο κουφάρι τοῦ Εὐ
νικίδα.

[32: Though it be of hewn marble, and of a mason's hand, and well made, yet is it not a grave of a noble man. Do not judge a dead man by this stone, friend. Stones have no

not at all an aggregate of a few trees and mountains, but a complex of meanings, is not at all the aggregate of a few words - symbols of things, but a moral force that the human intellect activates, as if it existed before the things, in order to create them equally, and only in this way can they exist. Henceforth, the analogy between the phonological constitution of words and their material content which they are called upon to give to phenomena seems to have the irreducible character of Fate or of the first natural elements'. On the topic of language in Elytis, see also G. Babiniotis, "Οδυσσέας Ελύτης : Ο 'ποιητής τής γλώσσας'", *χάρτης* 35 (2021) [Αφιέρωμα: Οδυσσέας Ελύτης] to the site: https://www.hartismag.gr/hartis-35/afierwma/odysseas-elyths-o-poihths-ths-glwssas.

36 Elytis, *Crinagoras*, 9–10: 'Δέν εἶναι ἀμελητέο δεῖγμα, π.χ., τό ἐπιτύμβιο πού ἀναφέρει, σάν ἴσος πρός ἴσον, στόν δοῦλο του Ἴναχο, πού τόν βάζει ν' ἀναγνωρίζει ὅτι πέθανε στά ξένα *μακρά γοηθεὶς* ἀπό τόν κύριό του. Ὅπως, κατ' ἀντιδιαστολή, δέν εἶναι γιά νά περάσει ἀπαρατήρητο τό μίσος πού τρέφει γιά τούς δυνάστες, συγκεκριμένα γιά τόν τύραννο Εὐνικίδα πού, σέ δύο ἀλλεπάλληλα ἐπιτύμβια, ὁρμᾶ, κυριολεκτικά, νά τόν κατασπαράξει ἀκόμη καί νεκρόν, μέ τίς πιό προσβλητικές, ἐνίοτε καί χυδαίες, ἐκφράσεις'.

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λγ'

Σωρός τό χῶμα σβωλιασμένο πάνω σέ
κεφαλή φριχτή τά κόκαλα καταπλακών
ει ἀληθινοῦ φονιᾶ τά στέρνα του τά κακ
οσούσουλα τῶν δοντιῶνε του τό βρωμο
πρίονο τῶν σκελιῶν του τό ἄνοιγμα τό
δουλικό τή φαλακρή καυκάλα του λεί
ψανα ὅλα τους μισοκαμένα τοῦ Εὐνικίδ
α γεμάτα μιά πρασινοκίτρινη σαπίλα ▣
Γῆς ἐσύ ὁπού σοῦ 'λαχε νά κακοσμίξει
ς κοίτα πάνου στήν τέφρα τέτοιου ἀνθ
ρώπου μήδε καύφια νά 'σαι μήδε ἀλαφ
ρή.

mind, and the most abominable dead man may take them for his cover. So under this one here the wretched carcass of Eunicidas has long been rotting.]

[33: A heap of earth clumped on top of a hideous head covers the bones of a true criminal the chest full of dirt, with the fetid row of saw-teeth, the servile spreading of the legs the bald skull all his half-burnt relics of Eunicidas full of a greenish putridity. Earth, to whom this ugly combination falls, see that upon his ashes you lie neither empty nor light]

Elytis then goes on to emphasise the importance for Crinagoras of the exile-motif:

> However, if one wanted to specify what, in addition to this, Crinagoras brought, one would have to point out the feeling of the exile, which he tries to express: 'the sorrow of exile', as Seferis would also say. In fact, he was the first among the *minores* to open the passage that, in time, will become a great tributary running through Greek literature, up to the present day. Three or four times he returns to this subject, like a thorn in his side, because, first of all, he himself is afraid of it: the sentence to die in foreign lands.[37]

Here, too, Elytis' reading is typically Greek; so Greek that it returns to reiterate and refresh the topos of death in a foreign land which is, as is well known, one of the most favoured by the popular tradition of songs about ξενιτιά, from antiquity to Foscolo's sonnet *A Zacinto*.[38] This is an entirely personal reading of Crinagoras, who does not

37 Elytis, *Crinagoras*, 10.

38 On the well–known topic of death in a foreign land, which in the Greek mentality is the worst misfortune that can befall a man, even more so than death itself, see G. Th. Zoras, *Ἡ ξενιτεία ἐν τῇ ἑλληνικῇ ποιήσει* (Athens 1953); *Τὸ δημοτικὸ τραγούδι. Τῆς ξενιτιᾶς*, ed. G. Saunier (Athens 1990[2]); *Τὰ 'περὶ τῆς ξενιτείας' ποιήματα. Κριτικὴ ἔκδοση μὲ εἰσαγωγή, σχόλια καὶ λεξιλόγιο*, ed. G. K. Mavromatis (Heraklion 1995); A. Politis, 'Η ξενιτιά στη μακρά και στη μέση διάρκεια. Σκόρπιες σκέψεις και προσπάθειες τυπολογίας', in E. Moser Karagiannis and E. Giakoumaki (ed.), *Κανίσκιον φιλίας. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον Guy–Michel Saunier* (Athens 2002) 123–132.

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seem to have complained too much about his stay in Rome, 'far from Lesbos' In fact, Elytis even seeks to draw a sharp contrast with Sappho:

> [Crinagoras is] the reverse of Sappho's coin; and it is perhaps one more reason, just like his birthplace, that has led me to persevere with him. The healthy freedom of morals in the one, the lyrical effusion, the juice of life, and in the other, the oppressive life of the Court, the dryness, the narrowness of boundaries. Certainly, too the lack of any great talent.[39]

This last assertion, which can be traced back to Elytis' presumption that he was dealing with a minor poet of Greek literature, could justify his continuous search for the element of little importance, insignificant and neglected in literary history, but nevertheless worthy of attention, because in the modern poet's eyes it was the repository of a poetic experience useful for the construction of his own mythology. The result of this experiment, in which Elytis minimizes the mere translation function and exalts the intertextual element, charged with learned and popular tradition, takes shape in newly configured and intricate typographical artefacts. In fact, they deserve close study even independently from their ostensible source texts.

Elytis' *Crinagoras* brings to a close his own personal dialogue with Alexandrian poetry. He had begun this with a few forays – later rejected – into the translation of epigrams by various poets.[40] These had appeared in an edited by C.A. Trypanis in 1943. Elytis' attitude towards Crinagoras, as we have seen, was somewhat different, and reflects a different time and his own development forty and more years on. As Dallas puts it: 'He edited [Crinagoras] as an elderly compatriot, indulging in some of his nostalgic notes (e.g. "of the pain of exile"), although recognising that Crinagoras, living in a courtly environment, "Far from Lesbos had estranged himself from the naturalistic conception of life, inherent in the sons of the Aeolian land"'.[41]

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39 Elytis, *Crinagoras*, 11, 'Ὁ Κριναγόρας ἀποτελεῖ τήν ἀντίστροφη ὄψη τοῦ νομίσματος τῆς Σαπφῶς· κι εἶναι, ἴσως, ἕνας πρόσθετος λόγος αὐτός, ὅπως καί ὁ τόπος του ὁ γενέθλιος, πού μ᾽ ἔκανε νά ἐπιμείνω στήν περίπτωσή του. Ἡ ὑγιής ἐλευθερία τῶν ἠθῶν ἀπό τό ἕνα μέρος, ἡ λυρική διάχυση, ὁ χυμός τῆς ζωῆς· κι ἀπό τό ἄλλο, ἡ καταπιεστική ζωή τῆς Αὐλῆς, ἡ ξεραΐλα, τά στενά περιθώρια. Φυσικά – καί ἡ ἔλλειψη μεγάλου ταλέντου'.

40 Elytis, as we know, publicly disavowed this work because the editor had completely distorted his metaphrastic choices; see O. Elytis, 'Ἡ ἀλεξανδρινὴ ποίηση', *Νέα Ἑστία* 35 (1944) 118–9.

41 Dallas, 'Elitis e la lirica antica', 140. See Elytis, *Crinagoras*, 11.

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