

readership, can encourage a sense of cultural superiority whose real-life consequences can be quite dire.

One way of countering this way of reading might be to address the issue head on, engaging in a meta-conversation about this very tendency to read literature as straightforward description, as 'naturalistic' - a tendency that, as I note above, we find even in the Greek context, in which the largely urban scholarly and critical community sees Theotokis's Corfiot villages as, in essence, another world. In his introduction to the most recent Greek edition of *Corfiot Tales*, Giannis Dallas suggests that the stories present 'a world that is immovably traditional, in an era when in Greece social life has, even in literature, become urbanized' (230); even in the moment of their composition, Dallas writes, they presented a place that was already a thing of the past, if it ever existed at all. Yet in my view, the stories in *Corfiot Tales* - if not *Hangman Thomas* - present a world that is anything but immovable. Rather, they are concerned throughout with shifting social norms: the icon painter in 'The Two Loves' wonders if he will be the town's last artist, as interests shift elsewhere, while in 'Stalakti's Wedding', one character imagines the poor burning down the houses of the rich and fomenting revolution. Harnessing these moments of tension in a classroom discussion could lead to very rich discussions of both theme and style.

Of course any discussion of style, when dealing with literature in translation, is inevitably a discussion of the interpretive decisions the translator has made in presenting the text at hand to his or her readers. Here, too, there is much to consider. Theotokis's writing is relatively spare and simple, with elements of dialect in the dialogue between characters: Dallas's Greek-language edition comes with a substantial glossary at the end. Davies seems to approach the challenge of conveying the linguistic richness of Theotokis's prose by engaging a fascinating mix of registers. We find references to 'spooks' and 'coolies', and colloquial phrases such as 'Get stuffed!' - but also high-language phrases from dialect-speaking characters, such as 'I'd have collapsed if I could no longer vent my spleen', or 'now that the wastrel has abandoned me'. Lawrence Venuti has suggested that, in choosing texts to introduce in a pedagogical setting, teachers should seek out translations with what he calls a 'rich remainder', whose surface irregularities or seeming oddities '[offer] an efficient articulation of the issues raised by translation' (341). Davies' translations in both these volumes are certainly cases in point: the boldness of his decisions invites students to consider how one might translate dialect or texts from distant time periods, even if they can't access the Greek text at all.

As so often, then, an examination of a translator's (or editor's) specific choices can offer a way into larger conversations about the status of literary texts as always multiply mediated, and the worlds they create as never truly representative of external realities. One might consider even the troubling themes and scenes that Davies had to tackle in his translations of these texts as another form of 'rich remainder': vexing stones in the reader's path that force us to stop and consider precisely how we wish to move forward.

Karen Emmerich
Princeton University

Martin McKinsey, *Clearing the Ground: C. P. Cavafy Poetry and Prose, 1902-1911. Translations and Essay by Martin McKinsey*. Chapel Hill: Laertes Publishing, 2015. Pp. 163 + xii.
DOI: [10.1017/byz.2018.15](https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2018.15)

This beautifully-produced book represents a creative and critical engagement with a crucial ten-year period in Cavafy's artistic development, from the year of apparent writer's block that preceded the 'Philosophical Scrutiny' (Cavafy's statement of intent to review, revise and, where unsatisfactory, destroy his poetic output to date) to the year in which he published his most famous poem, 'Ithaca'.

The volume opens with a brief introduction, which explains McKinsey's project, and closes with an extended essay on 'The Aesthetics of Pleasure'. An appendix contains an unfinished essay by Cavafy on *The Chronicle of the Morea*. In the body of the book, McKinsey interleaves Cavafy's poetry and prose writings from 1902-1911 in chronological order of composition, a fraught enterprise given the difficulty of interpreting the available information. Much of the prose included is dated by Cavafy himself on the relevant manuscripts but for the dates of poems,

although he does not say so, McKinsey appears to have relied almost exclusively on Cavafy's chronological catalogue (F16 in G. P. Savidis, *Μικρά Καβαφικά* vol. 2, Athens: Ermis 1987, pp. 53-62). One poem for which we do not have a composition date ('Τα Επικίνδυνα': 'Dangerous Pursuits', p.122) is included without explanation under the month and year of first publication.

A major unstated principle for McKinsey's selection of poems is the systematic exclusion of items from the relevant sections of the catalogue noted by Cavafy as 'rewrites'. Unfortunately, this is at odds with his inclusion of items not marked 'rewrite' but which are known to be rewrites - a case in point is 'Μια Νύχτα' ('One Night', p. 84; C.F. Lena Savidis, *Λεύκωμα Καβάφη*, Athens: Ermis 1983, p. 325) - and items that appear with different titles in the catalogue, for which it is a reasonable assumption that the title change may not be the only revision (or rewriting) in each case. This begs the question of Cavafy's own implicit evaluations: in the catalogues, a rewrite does not have a discernibly lesser status than a new composition; it has also resulted in anomalies such as the exclusion of 'Φωνές', which Cavafy's publishing practices clearly show to have been closely associated by him with 'Έπιθυμίες' (included here: 'Desires', p. 52). McKinsey's chronological arrangement has also resulted in the breaking up of the unpublished thematic sequence kept separately by Cavafy in the 'Passions File', although interweaving these with Cavafy's prose notes yields some interesting results (see below).

McKinsey's stated criteria for inclusion (p.3) are the availability of 'reliable' texts; importance to Cavafy's creative development, and potential interest to English language readers. He elects to omit what he calls 'two important sets of writing', although he gives these 'due consideration' in his Afterword (essay): the 'self-commentaries' and 'confessional notes', on the grounds that 'no reliable or complete edition of these has yet appeared' (p.5).

McKinsey is a gifted and experienced translator as well as a Cavafy scholar. His translations of Cavafy's poetry are elegant and subtle, with understated acoustic effects that convincingly convey the closely-observed phrasing, enjambment, subtle assonance and [...] loose iambic [metre] of his 'Note on the Translation' (p.7). The prose translations are also very fine. The sequential presentation of Cavafy's prose writings and poems from a ten-year period leads to some interesting and suggestive juxtapositions: the notes '[On Wickedness]' and '[The (So-Called) Wicked Man]' immediately precede two unpublished erotic poems (from the 'Passions File'), 'On the Stairs', and 'At the Theatre', followed by a published one, 'In the Entrance to the Cafe'. Cavafy's note '[The Time of Year I Love]' on how hot summers and August nights provide the 'shapes and sensations' ['μορφές κ'αισθήσεις'] that eventually 'crystallize into written words' (p.100) is followed by 'Έπέσρεφε' (p.101), beginning, 'Come back often and take me, / beloved sensation' ['Έπέσρεφε συχνά και παίρνε με, / αγαπημένη αίσθηση']. In general, reading Cavafy's reflections on art and life interspersed with his poems, instead of separately in different volumes (hitherto the only possibility), gives a fresh and fascinating perspective on the artistic process as well as a window into his creative development.

The Afterword provides useful information on the dating of the notes and on Cavafy's non-productive year, 1902, reflecting on Cavafy's poetic coming of age (pp. 125-30) and offering a useful discussion of the 'Passions File' poems (although McKinsey does not enter into the debate about whether these function as a collection). He disposes elegantly of unsupported prurient claims (by Liddell among others) about Cavafy's purported brothel-based sex life (p. 132), arguing that the interchangeability of 'desires' and 'unfulfilled desires' in the poems, taken together with Cavafy's attested and self-confessed shyness, may well imply a lack of actual experience.

McKinsey's account of Cavafy's poetic practice (pp.133-135) is exemplary, and for this alone the book will make a very useful addition to undergraduate bibliographies. He then moves to Cavafy's (literally) hidden writings: the still unpublished confessional notes, said by Perides to be unfit for publication because of their highly graphic nature (p.135). As McKinsey wryly comments, whatever the reason for the preservation of these notes in Cavafy's archive, 'it certainly wasn't with the aim of future publication' (p. 136). McKinsey revisits earlier interpretations of these notes, which Tsirkas believed referred to a struggle with alcohol addiction and Dimaras attributed to 'incomplete erotic experiences' (p. 137). McKinsey also notes 'the likelihood' of 'errors of transcription' in such of these notes as have been published. The ensuing discussion of a difficult topic (autoeroticism in a homosexual context) is sensitive, historically grounded and well-informed; its frame of reference stretches from Walter Pater to Derrida, Lacan and Žižek by way of 19th-21st century writers on pathologised homosexuality. McKinsey points to the almost certain absence of 'a community of kindred [i.e. homosexual] souls' in Alexandria (p. 141). He makes a strong case for considering the 'autoerotic aesthetic' alongside the 'homoerotic content' of Cavafy's poetry (p. 143) and offers a close reading of poetic and prose texts that unarguably refer to the social (and hence artistic) constraints under which Cavafy lived and wrote (pp.145-157), concluding with a consideration of the homoerotic elements in certain historical poems.

Despite the reservations noted above about selection criteria and dating, *Clearing the Ground* is an interesting creative experiment and a pleasure to read. It is the fruit of a very long scholarly engagement with Cavafy and also the work of a skilled translator with acute critical sensibilities and a wide-ranging knowledge of nineteenth through twenty-first century literary, 'medical' and scholarly works. McKinsey and his publishers have produced an attractive, user-friendly, creative and informative volume, which will delight and enlighten many readers.

Sarah Ekdawi
University of Oxford

George Seferis, *Novel and Other Poems*, translated by Roderick Beaton. Athens: Aiora Press 2016. Pp. 216
DOI: [10.1017/byz.2018.16](https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2018.16)

In the present unfavourable environment, good translations of Modern Greek literature struggle to see the light of day. In this context the contribution of Aris Laskaratos, founder of Aiora Press in Athens, should be applauded: since 2002 he has been publishing slim and affordable editions of selected 'Modern Greek Classics', both poetry and prose, translated into several European languages and occasionally produced as parallel texts. Many are found on sale in Greek tourist resorts alongside foreign bestsellers, encouraging the inquiring visitor to sample something of the literature as well as the local cuisine. It is not always clear what the criteria for inclusion in the series are: indispensable works such as *Η Φόνισσα* are found alongside less obvious representatives of the canon, and while there is a noticeable preponderance of 19th century prose works, in poetry the 20th century prevails, with recent bilingual editions of selected poems by Cavafy and Vrettakos, both translated by David Connolly. Rather than this apparent bias being a reflection of a definite editorial policy on the part of the publishers, it is likely that Aiora are prepared to consider for inclusion any good translation of a Modern Greek classic that a reputable translator makes available for publication.

The latest welcome addition to the Aiora series is *Novel and Other Poems*, another anthology of selected works by a major Greek 20th century poet. This is a bilingual selection of George Seferis' poetry, with translations by Roderick Beaton, until recently Korae Professor of Modern Greek and Byzantine Studies at King's College London. His previous work on Seferis includes the distinguished biography *Waiting for the Angel*, published in 2004, a testament to many years of engagement with the poet and his work. It is clear that the intention with this anthology is not primarily to provide a representative overview of the poet's work, which one might expect to include *Κίχλη*, *Ο Βασιλιάς της Ασίνης*, or even *Επί Ασπαλάθων* (as the 50th anniversary of the 1967 coup approached), none of which appear here. Instead we find (very accomplished) translations of *Ερωτικός Λόγος* and *Τρία Κρυφά Ποήματα*, which many would consider less central to Seferis' oeuvre, alongside several important poems from *Log Book II* and one, *Engomi*, from *Log Book III*. The criteria for inclusion are explained in Beaton's own introduction, where he states that 'the translations presented here bring together for the first time the fruit of more than forty years'; indeed his version of *Τρία Κρυφά Ποήματα*, dates from 1972 and is thus published here for the first time – unrevised – forty-four years after it was written. The only poem which has been newly translated for publication in this anthology is *Μυθιστόρημα*, which occupies a prominent place at the start of the collection. Thus this volume is as much an illuminating record of the translator's craft as an introduction to the poet's oeuvre; it is an anthology of Beaton's attempts to render Seferis' poetry in English over a long period of creative engagement.

The translator of poetry inevitably has to make decisions about the extent to which he or she will be constrained by fidelity to the language, metre, or rhyming scheme of the original; in this selection it is instructive to observe how at different times and with different poems Beaton has come to very different conclusions about the strategy to adopt. Inevitably he will be compared with previous translators of Seferis into English, especially Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard, whose translations were produced over a long period of close collaboration with Seferis himself and finally published as a Complete Works in a bilingual edition in 1995. In a conversation with Edwin Honig published in *The Poet's Other Voice* (1985), Edmund Keeley recalls that '[Seferis] held the principle that the translator of his work should be as literal as possible' and insisted that