alternative source-based understanding of the relationship between the Church and the Ottoman state over the centuries, Papademetriou's provides an important new perspective on the field and a fascinating account, introducing a rich Ottoman vocabulary indicative of the author's broad insight and linguistic proficiency. Unfortunately, the glossary is somewhat inadequate and the author seems to have been let down by the copy-editor, as the text suffers from many errors, repetitions and inconsistencies that do not serve as a fair presentation of the study's effort to challenge previous ways of seeing the Orthodox Church exclusively from the perspective of the conquered and its spiritual mission. In spite of these caveats, *Render unto the Sultan* is a refreshing scholarly contribution that pragmatically observes the Church as deeply embedded in the Ottoman state and not simply as a dormant ethno-national community awaiting redemption.

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A Note from the Reviews Editor

The Modern Greek reviews section of this issue is dedicated to translations of Modern Greek Literature. Since so many of the Modern Greek books received by BMGS for review are new literary translations, it seems appropriate to celebrate not only the art of the translators but also the dedication of the small independent publishers producing them.

Konstantinos Theotokis, *The Life and Death of Hangman Thomas* (tr. J. M. Q. Davies) London: Colenso Books 2016 and Konstantinos Theotokis, *Corfiot Tales* (tr. J. M. Q. Davies) London: Colenso Books, 2017.
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Literary works in translation are, for better or worse, often taken by readers as representative not only of a particular artistic endeavour but of the broader culture, society, or nation from which they are taken to 'originate'. This readerly approach seems deeply unfair: why should a novel, short story, or play written in another language be asked to bear a burden of representation that literature 'originally' written in one's own language is not? Why should translated literature be expected to provide not just a narrative or aesthetic experience but ethnographic 'information' as well? Precisely because I dislike such habits of reading, I am often on guard against them, both as a translator and as an educator, which affects both what I choose to translate or teach, and how I choose to do so. As I read J. M. Q. Davies' new translations of Konstantinos Theotokis's *Corfiot Tales* and *The Life and Death of Hangman Thomas*, I found myself wondering how, particularly in our current '#MeToo moment', I would discuss these texts with English-speaking students who might be tempted to take these fictional works as indicative of Greek rural life, albeit of the past. How would I frame a discussion so as to responsibly treat the sexual violence, patriarchal societal structures, and pervasive cruelty and aggression that saturate every page of these works, while also checking the temptation to read Theotokis's villages as stand-ins for some larger Greek reality?

Theotokis's work is, of course, often taken even in Greece as skirting the edge of *ithografia*, engaging in a kind of folkloristic naturalism while also incorporating expressionist hues and figures—combining, that is to say, literary and artistic trends operative in Greece in the late 19th and early 20th century with those of western Europe. Theotokis was well acquainted with these larger trends, given his birth to a wealthy Corfiot family, his polyglot education, and his early adult life in Paris and Venice. The stories contained in *Corfiot Tales* (most of which were first published in literary journals between 1899 and 1912 and again in a posthumous collection in 1935) and the novella *The Life and Death of Hangman Thomas*, first published in 1920, are all set in Corfiot villages and towns, offering scenes of daily labour, describing wedding rituals, dances and dress, even the habits of livestock. And while there are fleeting moments of joy - merriment and laughter during Carnival festivities in 'Village Life' or the carefree singing of two young shepherdesses on a hillside in 'Reputation' - the overwhelming cumulative impression of both volumes is of a harsh,

unforgiving life, typified by the lack of creature comforts in the humble homes and shacks where the characters live, and by the brutality with which they treat their relations and fellow villagers.

Consider the astonishing bleakness of interpersonal relations in *The Life and Death of Hangman Thomas*. Upon the death of his wife, so neglected on her sickbed that maggots begin eating her flesh even while she's alive, the eponymous character of the novella is tricked by his wealthier neighbor Argyris into surrendering his home in return for a life annuity. Argyris is what Davies describes in his introduction as the consumptive capitalist of the piece, who exploits both the labor and good nature of his younger, 'more proletarian' brother Yannis (*xv*) and the physical charms of Yannis's attractive wife Maria, after whom Thomas lusts. But Argyris is certainly not the only calculating character: just as Thomas is dispossessed of his home, so too is Maria's elderly father, the village notary, by none other than his other daughter and son-in-law, the village priest. This relentless scheming at the expense of relatives and neighbors is augmented by the casual cruelty displayed by almost every character in the book, from the most minor to the most central: the village children who mock Thomas by calling out his hated nickname; the masons who laugh and joke as they cut down Thomas's body after his suicide; Maria, who continually mocks Thomas in life and gestures obscenely at his corpse after his death; and of course Thomas himself, who treats his wife and sister heartlessly and, after losing his house, inflicts harm on innocent neighbors simply out of a desire for others to suffer as he does.

Most shocking to me as a reader were the casual references throughout the book to domestic and sexual violence, including several scenes in which Thomas attempts to rape Maria. And these attempts have, we learn, a long history in these characters' lives: late in the book, Thomas recalls having 'leapt into the ditch and nearly caught you, and you'd have enjoyed it, too, as I was still young in those days, though already married' (91). While undoubtedly the victim of these violent attacks, Maria behaves in ways that complicate our moral calculus, taunting Thomas with her naked body, just as she has mocked and derided him throughout the story, comparing his withered body to that of her young, virile husband. And beyond those scenes, she is a generally unsympathetic character, behaving with continual unkindness to Argyris's older 'mummy' of a wife, Chrysanthi, and treating even the good-natured Yannis with derision. There is something extremely discomfiting about a narrative universe in which almost everyone we meet is worthy of blame, a world almost devoid of kindness. After all, as Thomas tells himself at one point late in the book, '[in] such an unjust world kindness received no reward, nor would crimes be punished' (96).

While *Hangman Thomas* is a litany of interpersonal wrongs that do indeed seem to go unpunished, *Corfiot Tales* struck me as a far more sophisticated series of reflections on what constitutes a 'wrong' to begin with. The last story in the volume, 'Was it a Sin?' makes this explicit, as a priest wonders whether it would be a sin to give communion to a young woman who has confessed an illicit passion to him, thereby saving her from her father's suspicious wrath; the title's question thus refers both to the girl's 'sin' of a love as of yet unacted upon and his own sin of potentially misplaced compassion. Many of the other stories likewise pit multiple wrongdoings, and multiple punishments, against one another, often escalating the violence in ways that render the original sinner a victim of seemingly disproportionate viciousness. In 'Face Down', the brutal opening story, a man returns after years away to find his wife caring for her child by another man. He forces her to bury the baby alive, face down in a grave he digs as she watches. In 'Not Done Yet?' a man kills his pregnant wife for adultery. In 'Illicit Love', Stathis lusts after his daughter-in-law and eventually forces himself on her, conceiving a child. There may be a kind of punishment here, in that Stathis loses his mind and flees the village - and yet those who suffer the most are his victims, whose own suffering precipitates his madness: Chrysavgi dies in childbirth, and the baby soon after.

These misplaced or outsized judgments or punishments comprise a theme that is developed and mused upon throughout these stories. Along the way, readers are also invited to engage not only with specific cases of interpersonal justice gone awry, but with larger social ills such as class inequality and the oppression of women. 'Village Life' contains one striking scene of class uprising, as nearly the entire village comes together to force a wealthy landowner's son to marry a peasant girl whose honour he has compromised. And while *Hangman Thomas* makes it hard to sympathize with Maria, the victim of sexual assault, the women in these tales who are killed, raped, beaten, and otherwise harmed are far more sympathetically portrayed. The stories also comment explicitly on the patriarchal nature of the society they describe: in 'Illicit Love', for instance, Chrysavgi's mother-in-law warns her that 'a woman is merely a commodity, bought today and sold to someone else tomorrow' (96). This kind of trenchant social criticism, while something I value in the Greek context, is precisely what makes me nervous about sharing these books with students. Social criticism from elsewhere, when translated for an Anglo-American

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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 richne```ss 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 aba```ndoned 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.

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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.
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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,