

## EARLY MODERN GREEK LITERATURE

KORHONEN (T.) *To the Glory that was Greece. Ideas, Ideals and Practices in Composing Humanist Greek during the Seventeenth Century.* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 143.) Pp. vi + 411, ill. Helsinki: The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 2022. Paper, €30. ISBN: 978-951-653-488-9.

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K.'s book stands as a testimony to almost 30 years of dealing with Nordic texts written in forms of ancient Greek during the early modern period, especially from what is today Finland. The volume zooms in on seventeenth-century Turku (Swedish: Åbo) and its Royal Academy, but K. does much more than that by guiding readers from Byzantium to humanists' practices in Italian and German lands to northern Europe and the admittedly modest body of texts from Turku – admittedly, since I agree with K. that this 'Turku Greek Corpus' may be called peripheral on account of both its geography and its size. It contains 400+ texts by 209 authors, a significant portion of which the book showcases partly or entirely in the original Greek, typically with English translation and *apparatus criticus / fontium*. Even if the contents and language of many poems and prose texts may be dubbed 'mediocre' (p. 353), K. has done scholarship a service by devoting a monograph-length study to this corpus, showing that even the edges of early modern Europe were Hellenised. In the process she draws attention to various idiosyncratic features of the corpus: for example, the fact that it contains application letters for scholarships, or Johan Paulinus' unique *Finlandia* (1678/21694), 'which has had a strong influence on the formation of national identity' (p. 327), mostly through its translations. Notably, a nineteenth-century editor-translator censured politically sensitive verses that criticised Russia and praised the Swedish Empire. The Fenno-Greek dealings with tensions between Christian and pagan heritage are equally remarkable, with one author (Hedelinus, d. 1721) even aiming 'to purge ... from its classical images' (p. 148) a poem written by a contemporary Greek archdeacon. Given the book's profoundly European perspective, it is justified that the title does not provide any indication of geographical scope.

K. offers readers an honest account of her research into the Turku Greek Corpus and how it developed over the course of the years, indicating where progress was made vis-à-vis her 2004 PhD dissertation in Finnish. The dissertation serves as a point of reference throughout the book, which constitutes a new gateway to the Nordic corpus. This goal is achieved with systematic references to the immensely useful HUMGRAECA database collecting all Nordic and Baltic Greek texts. K.'s book is descriptively very strong, revealing unremitting archival work and a wide reading of premodern sources and modern scholarship, while also including some unexpected personal touches. Especially the attention to the importance of rhetoric is illuminating. On a few points, I would have preferred more discussion or references to recent scholarship. For example, in treatments of Martin Crusius' Philhellenism the recent work of Richard Calis cannot be left unmentioned. The literature on Greek–vernacular kinship is moreover slightly outdated, hinging mainly on the work of J.B. Trapp. Also, the selective comparisons with the Low Countries corpus remain somewhat up in the air: how do they fit into the broader European narrative or relate to the Turku case?

K.'s book indisputably contributes to understandings of Greek in early modernity, for example by emphasising the sacred status of the language; by problematising the gender dimension; by paying attention to material aspects such as the making of Greek fonts;

or by arguing that Greek tended to be conformist (p. 151). Anticipating much ongoing work, K. discusses motivations for Latin–Greek code-switching, emphasising the aesthetic, secretive and learned-argumentative qualities of Greek. The three case studies (Section 5) are well chosen, too, resulting in a macro- and microscopic study that paints a clear picture of early modern ‘Humanist Greek culture’ (p. 358 and elsewhere).

The last quote opens up the rabbit hole of terminology, which I do not wish to get drawn into, although it is inevitable to devote a paragraph to it. K. touches upon the issue in the introduction and the conclusion, arguing in favour of *Humanist Greek* (*HG*) with particular reference to the rhetorical practices that formed the backbone of early modern humanist education. In a recent publication I explained my own preference for *New Ancient Greek* (*NAG*) at length (*New Ancient Greek in a Neo-Latin World* [2023], pp. 17–22). K.’s book has strengthened my preference. *HG* may work well for the early modern period and nineteenth-century *Neuhumanismus*, but much less for later writings. It also seems easier to get across the meaning of the term *NAG* if used in parallel to the better-known *Neo-Latin*, which in my experience often still needs explanation itself. Seen from this perspective, *NAG* may be a less exclusive and controversial term than *HG*. I do, however, agree with K. that prolonged discussion about the issue of terminology is futile and that we may proceed by simply calling the phenomenon *Greek* – as long as we adequately define our object in every study, which K. does exemplarily. The issue of terminology does not detract from the fact that K.’s book is a very informative read and contributes to our understanding of early modern Hellenism in Europe and at Turku. The numerous cross-references turn the book into a coherent whole, going from the general to the specific in the case studies and opening up the horizon again in the spirited conclusion.

There are a few minor historical mishits, for example where Listrius, the sixteenth-century commentator of Erasmus’ *Praise of Folly*, is mistakenly characterised as ‘[t]he editor . . . of the 1676 edition’ (p. 203 n. 55). Moreover, some translations, characterisations and interpretations of Greek texts show some imprecisions. For example, the short Paulinus poem on p. 343 is not in four elegiac couplets but in two hexameters spread out across four lines in lapidary style (to use K.’s terminology). It also seems unnecessary to translate plain ΠΙΟΝΟΙΣ in the maxim on the second line as ‘these efforts’. I was furthermore puzzled by the fact that Paulinus already in 1676 called his future brother-in-law Rajalenius (who married Paulinus’ sister in 1691) his ἀδελφός, an oddity that would have benefited from further discussion. Did he mean ‘spiritual brother’, or was Rajalenius already engaged to Paulinus’ sister?

Finally, the book exhibits a number of formal-editorial irregularities. Some references are absent from the bibliography. There are quite a few typos in the English, Latin and Greek (especially with regard to breathing marks), while the only Hebrew word mentioned is systematically printed in the wrong direction. More importantly, certain editorial interventions in the Greek text may raise one’s eyebrows. Why does the ‘forma Dorica’ ὑμῶσαι (not attested in the *TLG*) need to be changed to attested Attic-Koine ὑμῆσαι on p. 251? And why is ὑμῶσαι marked as Doric, while valid dialectal forms in the preceding text on p. 251 (τίθητι, καμάτως σφετέρως) are presented in the apparatus as if they were mistakes? I prefer not to interfere excessively in early modern Greek, as standardising the text effaces a layer of information from the corpus in terms of eccentric morphology, dialectal forms and use of diacritics. This practice may be adopted in publications aimed at a broader audience of philologists but does not seem desirable in works tailored to our specific subfield, all the more since in future full-text corpora these changes will probably be lost (standardisations do not tend to be marked systematically, and those that are indicated in the *apparatus criticus* are likely to disappear

from full-text corpora such as *TLG*). The danger is that the specificities of early modern Greek will be glossed over, even though the language itself has barely been studied, as K. acknowledges in the conclusion.

The overall argument of K.'s work is rich and convincing and provides food for thought in terms of terminology and editorial approaches. In the glorious niche of Humanist or New Ancient Greek studies, this monograph will no doubt become a staple reference.

*KU Leuven*

RAF VAN ROOY  
[raf.vanrooy@kuleuven.be](mailto:raf.vanrooy@kuleuven.be)