

SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL OF BYZANTINE AND MODERN GREEK STUDIES

- Barbara Crostini*
9 **Greek Astronomical Manuscripts:
New Perspectives from Swedish Collections**
- Filippo Ronconi*
19 **Manuscripts as Stratified Social Objects**
- Anne Weddigen*
41 **Cataloguing Scientific Miscellanies:
the Case of *Parisinus Graecus* 2494**
- Alberto Bardi*
65 **Persian Astronomy in the Greek Manuscript
*Linköping kl. f. 10***
- Dmitry Afinogenov*
89 **Hellenistic Jewish texts in George the Monk:
Slavonic Testimonies**
- Alexandra Fiotaki & Marika Lekakou*
99 **The perfective non-past in Modern Greek: a
corpus study**
- Yannis Smarnakis*
119 **Thessaloniki during the Zealots' Revolt
(1342-1350): Power, Political Violence and
the Transformation of the Urban Space**
- David Wills*
149 **"The nobility of the sea and landscape":
John Craxton and Greece**
- 175 **Book Reviews**

Richard Clogg. *Greek to Me: A Memoir of Academic Life*. IB Tauris. 2018, 384 pp., ISBN 9781784539887.

Richard Clogg is one of the great British Hellenists. His works have become standard texts in universities, and have even been set in the Greek education system (that bastion of pedagogical pedantry and scholarly conservatism). Over his career, Clogg has sought to recover the scholar's interest in modern Greece from the 'distorting mirror of antiquity' (p. 12). He prefers to call his field not 'modern Greek history', but 'the modern history of Greece' (p. 106), or altogether 'to dispense with "modern" when talking about Greece' (p. 163–4), which he sees as an injustice imposed by dominance of the Classics. The author's scholarship is marked its broad scope and generality, which he unfairly calls '[o]ne of the problems in my career' (p. 130). He has published on the Greek Enlightenment and the independence movement, the Phanariotes, Greek party politics, and the cultural ambiguity of the Karamanlides. Since 1981, Clogg has been working on an official history of the British Special Operations Executive's (SOE) role in supporting the wartime resistance in Greece. Yet it is possible that Clogg will be remembered less for his own scholarship than for the role he assumed as an observer of academic politics in Britain. Indeed, this memoir grew out a project to write 'a book about what I termed "ethnic" chairs and the "privatisation of knowledge" in the English-speaking world' (p. 267).

Clogg has held academic posts at Edinburgh, King's College in London, and St Antony's in Oxford. By far, his time at King's was the most interesting. When a 'third' university was established in London in the nineteenth century, it gave birth to another centre for gossip and politics, though perhaps of a kind less caustic than at Oxford and Cambridge. The great academic scandal of the 1920s in London was the 'involuntary resignation' of Arnold Toynbee at the hands of wealthy benefactors at King's College (p. 176). Toynbee had been selected as the inaugural holder of the Koraeos Chair, established with Greek money for the maintenance of Byzantine and modern Greek studies in England. The catch was, it turned out, that the price of tenure was giving up academic freedom. Toynbee's critical attitude to the catastrophic Greek campaign

in Asia Minor was a step too far for his financial supporters. The affair remained controversial still sixty years later, when Clogg published his analysis of the material in the archives, which had been kept hidden for decades in the department. In writing *Politics and the Academy: Arnold Toynbee and the Koraes Chair*, Clogg had (in his own words) ‘knitted a sock’ for his career.

The chapter on Toynbee in Clogg’s memoir is—for those who have read *Politics and the Academy*—largely repetitive. But the author does offer one judgment, not present in that earlier book, which it seems the cure of time has made possible. Clogg concludes that—despite the fact Toynbee was probably fair in his assessment of Greek atrocities in Turkey—he was motivated by a ‘mishellenism’ (p. 210), for which ‘[e]ven his mother ... [had] reproached him’ (p. 201). It was one thing for Toynbee to question the ‘civilising mission’ of the Greeks in the East, and another for him to allege, contrary to the evidence, ‘that it was the Greeks rather than the Turks that had set fire to Smyrna’ (p. 198). Clogg devotes several pages to a thorough assassination of the man’s character (pp. 210–6). The author is a fair judge of a man driven by race prejudice and misanthropy.

The fifth chapter, on Clogg’s own troubles at King’s decades after Toynbee, is the most interesting in the book, for its indictment of ugly scholarly squabbles at the college and elsewhere. But Clogg’s interest in hanging out the ‘dirty academic linen’ (p. 175) is not driven by a mere interest in scandal. The real casualty of the Toynbee affair was neither the man himself nor the rich Anglo-Greeks who had torn him down so that the holder of *their* chair would also to be on *their* side (see p. 219). Instead, the sad victim was Greek itself, which would cease to be taught at King’s not so long after it had begun, following the withdrawal of Greek money from the lectureship. Clogg claims that it was not until he and Philip Sherrard had campaigned for its re-endowment in the 1970s that the language was revived (p. 205).

Clogg’s recollections leave one to wonder what it is about Greek studies that seems to produce a boundless quantity of controversy, and a plentiful supply of material for career gossips (think Maurice Bowra and Kenneth Dover). In Clogg’s sixth chapter, ‘Greeks bearing chairs: chairs

bearing Greeks' (p. 251), we find a plausible explanation in that modern Greek studies has never been able to be properly placed. It is variously tacked on as an afterthought to Classics, Middle Eastern studies, and Byzantine history departments. This is an academic manifestation of the very problem of modern Greek identity. Its consequence has been a never-ending territorial war among the characters in Clogg's autobiography. The greatest hatreds have been fostered between Byzantinists and what Clogg calls Greek 'modernists', proving the old cliché that fiercer enemies are made of brothers than strangers. Perhaps fittingly, this memoir does not resist the author's urge to sully the reputation of several well-known Hellenists with whom he has crossed swords during his career.

Nonetheless it would be wrong to think that Clogg was involved only in the internal debates of the academy. His first battles were fought, rather, on the subject of the Greek military junta. In this book, he strikes at the reputation of (supposedly) left-wing characters like Francis Noel-Baker MP, who had once supported the Greek Left during the war, and saw no inconsistency in their later support for the regime of the colonels. Clogg, who recounts his own role as one of the BBC's go-to anti-junta commentators, reminds us that Noel-Baker's affection for Greece was no deeper than an interest in protecting his property on Euboea. Clogg cannot help himself from correcting misspellings in several of Noel-Baker's quotes (p. 73: 'The State's functions remained inactif [sic]', 'The parliamentarism reached to an impass [sic]', p. 81: 'a British ... Lobbiest [sic]'). It seems thus that losing his holiday house was the least of Noel-Baker's worries.

The maintenance of a philhellenic sentiment in Britain remained important for Greece during the junta, as it had always been. In 1967, when the regime sought an author for an English-language history of modern Greece which would not merely exculpate the colonels but praise them, they went to Hugh Trevor-Roper. It was a wise decision, though it did not save his reputation from being trashed two decades later in the Hitler diaries scandal. Clogg seems to have taken great pride in his attacks on the junta's foreign PR campaign. It was also a battle that was fun to fight, precisely because the rhetoric of the regime's defenders was so

vacuous and easy for Clogg to refute, often in spirals of correspondence to major publications like the *Times Literary Supplement*.

Clogg's efforts in this campaign, and elsewhere in his academic life, often won him enemies. He offers a piece of hearsay:

at a dinner party of "philhellenes" in London my name cropped up and I had been dismissed as the person who wrote about Greece as though it were North Vietnam. ... this was clearly intended as an insult, but in fact I found the comment rather flattering. I think it quite appropriate ... not to view [Greece] through rose-tinted, or should that be blue-tinted, philhellenic spectacles... (pp. 284–5).

That Clogg chooses not to refute the 'insult', but to wear it proudly, is evidence of the man's bold conviction, a devotion to scholarship and a distaste for its manipulation. Thus when the regime contacted Clogg with the offer of a donation of Greek books for the library at King's, he did not reject it on the grounds they would be pure propaganda, for the books 'would all be part and parcel of the academic record' (p. 65–6). Though this may seem an admirable choice to put scholarship above politics, it was, rather, an intelligent move to assure the record allowed future scholars to read the original literature of a base and repugnant regime.

The enterprise of so thorough and excellent an autobiography as this demands attention to the places where it is let down. Often Clogg cannot resist the temptation of exhausting the record. Some of his digressions lead the reader into stories which are interesting but only marginally relevant, as when he regrets the prevalence of a myth about Tony Blair's time at Fettes. The slender connection to Clogg—they both went to the same school, though more than a decade apart—leaves the reader to wonder why it matters whether or not Blair's politics were formed by the burning of an effigy of Hugh Gaitskell on Guy Fawkes Night at the school (p. 15–6). When he recounts a rumour from the junta, Clogg tells us that '[p]resumably a search of the newspapers of the time would reveal whether or not this anecdote is true' (p. 44). Clogg professes he does not have 'the time ... to try to verify' it (p. 43), leaving one to wonder why he bothered to put it in at all. There is also a tendency to oversimplify. This is the case when he describes the *Septemvriana* as

‘the beginning of a sad process which effectively doomed the once large Greek minority in Turkey to virtual extinction.’ (p. 18) That must more properly be dated to the exchange of populations in 1922.

These are faults that ought not to have passed the editor’s sieve. But often the book gives the impression of never having been read thoroughly before. It is frequently repetitive, often not only repeating the exposition of a subject or character, but doing so in identical phrasing. There are some simple, but important, lapses of language, as when a Greek word is transliterated in two different ways in the same sentence (Korais/Koraes, p. 36; cf. Euboea/Evia, pp. 52/108). Yet these oversights are less oppressive than the general decision to transliterate every word of Greek, even when a quote or full title is given (e.g. ‘Prosalendis’ tract, *O airetikos didaskalos ypo tou Orthodoxou mathitou elegkhomenos*’: p. 295). One must oppose this choice, which has become a noticeable trend, on both aesthetical and scholarly grounds. It is hard to see how a book, which will be picked up mostly by readers with some Greek, either advances the cause of Greek scholarship, or widens its audience, by cleansing its pages of Greek letters. Nevertheless, the errors here listed are but small slips in an otherwise thrilling account of a fascinating life.

There is an obvious principle about academic politics in the Toynbee affair: ‘that a Koraes professor seeking a quiet life should steer well clear of modern history’ (p. 224). Clogg never took heed of this lesson. For his willingness to speak about the academy and Greece without the distortion of rose-tinted glasses, he has been unjustly labelled a ‘second Lord Elgin’ (p. 300). This certainly caused Clogg great trouble in his own career, but his memoir is all the more interesting for it.

Kyriaco Nikias
University of Adelaide, Australia