

published during the Soviet era) and is translated most adequately (particularly the poems by Tank, Kulašoŭ, Pančanka, Pysin, Baradulin, and Hilevič). But the poetry of the 1920s, the "years of plenty" (p. 20), is very poorly represented with just a dozen poems. Uładzimir Duboŭka, "perhaps greatest of all" (p. 20), is represented by no more than three poems, only one of which appeared in the 1920s ("O Bielaruś . . .," p. 114, one of the best translations of the anthology with fine comments, p. 122). The closest to him is Jazep Pušča, who is represented by only one poem; but it was composed and published in 1961, after his rehabilitation. The first pioneer of the "literary revolution" of the 1920s, Michaś Čarot, is just mentioned in passing (p. 20), and the same applies to Natalla Arsieńnieva (of Western Belorussia, p. 21; note the rather curious remark in parentheses).

The whole of pre-Soviet Belorussian poetry is represented by nine authors (contributing in all only fifty-six poems). Janka Kupała, "generally accepted to be the 'National poet' of Byelorussia" (p. 338), is represented by fifteen poems composed during pre-Soviet times, nine of them composed during his early years in poetry, 1905–8, when the poet had not yet achieved his full maturity. Aleś Harun, the fourth among Belorussian "classics" of poetry (after Kupała, Kołas, and Bahdanovič), is not even mentioned. And the whole of the nineteenth century is represented by only three poets and seven poems (one from the year 1828, six from the 1890s). The best, most adequate translations from Belorussian "classics" are "Soft, Warm Evening," "Snowstorm," "Swifter, Brothers," and "Lavonicha" from Bahdanovič, and "Say, Who Goes There?" and "Young Bielaruś" from Kupała, as well as "I Love" from Bujła.

There are many apt observations and comments in the introduction and in the numerous notes (e.g., on *Taras on Parnassus*, pp. 15–16; on "several levels of interpretation," pp. 19–20; on the Belorussian language in the nineteenth century, p. 25; on "The Weaver Women of Słuck," pp. 92–93), but unfortunately there are just as many misunderstandings and factual errors (e.g., Dunin-Marcinkievič as "novelist," p. 14; the "system" as the "villain" in his *Hapon*, p. 15; Stalin and *Excelsior*, the "names of groups . . . Revival, Vitaism," p. 20; the "ambiguity" in *Young Bielaruś*, p. 89) and many misprints in the transliteration of Belorussian words and proper names (with no errata supplied).

The book can be useful and even enjoyable for general readers. Yet journalists and scholars who have no mastery of Belorussian and who therefore would not be proficient in comparing the translations with the originals should be cautious when using the anthology for quotations and comments.

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DIONYSIOS SOLOMOS. By *M. Byron Raizis*. Twayne's World Authors Series. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972. 158 pp. \$5.50.

KOSTIS PALAMAS. By *Thanasis Maskaleris*. Twayne's World Authors Series. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972. 156 pp. \$5.50.

Judging from the number of books which have been appearing in recent years, Modern Greek studies have finally begun to flourish in the United States. Best proof of this is the fact that scholars are now producing monographs not only on figures such as Seferis, Cavafy, and Kazantzakis, who have been widely known in this country for some time, but also on earlier writers who are not read very

much outside of Greece, but who are indispensable links in the cultural chain leading to the present day. Two such writers are Solomos and Palamas, subjects of recent volumes in Twayne's World Authors Series. It is fitting that these two monographs should have been issued together, for Solomos and Palamas form a pair, and each of the books gains by being read in conjunction with the other. As Mr. Raizis points out, it was left to Palamas, though several generations removed from Solomos, to complete what the "national bard" had begun, namely the establishment of demotic Greek as the only proper vehicle for Modern Greek poetry.

The Twayne monographs are not meant to present new, scholarly contributions to the field, but rather to provide comprehensive introductions primarily for the Greek-less reader. This guideline defines the usefulness of these books and also their limitations. They conveniently treat all of an author's major works in one hundred fifty pages, giving us in addition an outline of his life and a short bibliography. But precisely because of this need to be comprehensive in a short space, they are doomed to be "surveys" rather than intensive investigations of any one work or problem. Furthermore, they must attempt to talk about poetic excellence without quoting even a single line in the original tongue, which of course is a thankless task. When the poet's corpus is huge, as in the case of Palamas, the difficulty is exacerbated further by the need for drastic condensation and excision.

Within these limitations, both authors do their best. They outline the life of their subjects, present précis of the major works, indicate the critical reactions of others over the years, dwell on prior influences both foreign and domestic, and point out crucial ways in which both Solomos and Palamas have affected their successors. Beyond this, each author's particular problem, and thus necessarily his approach, must be somewhat different. Mr. Raizis is dealing with a "national bard," the official "father of Modern Greek poetry" who nevertheless left behind him not a single *completed* poem of major proportions that can unhesitatingly be called first-rate. Raizis must therefore admit and explain the (largely extraliterary) reasons which caused Solomos's astonishing recognition in his own day, while arguing that true literary judgment will confirm the greatness of certain fragments of the larger narrative works, and also of certain brief lyrics. Mr. Maskaleris, on the other hand, is dealing with a poet of prodigious accomplishment and universally recognized genius. His problem was to find organizing principles for this wealth of material, and he emerges with some useful ones: the conflict in Palamas between carnality and spirituality, passion and wisdom; the broadening lyricism which embraced first the self, then the nation, finally all of creation; the search for a new ideology to supersede dogmatic Christianity and to reconcile science with humanistic ideals.

What Solomos and Palamas show us in common is the struggle of a new nation-state to define itself culturally, aesthetically, linguistically, and morally. Like Joyce, they were consciously trying to forge the uncreated conscience of their race; unlike him, they succeeded to a large degree in determining the direction of literary culture for their nation. Greek intellectuals have recognized this for some time; it is good now that English speakers who have been attracted to more recent figures in that literary culture will be able to see the base upon which every subsequent Greek writer—even those temperamentally distant from Solomos or Palamas—must inevitably rest. But neither of these books is essential for the Greek-speaking specialist.

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