Modern Greek Literary Journals: A Sketch*

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THE FRENCH "JOURNAL DES SCAVANS," DATING FROM 1665, IS considered the oldest publication of its kind. However, turning to Greek periodicals during the early decades of the nineteenth century, the distinction between a journal and a newspaper was quite fluid. They shared features in terms of both their contents and format. A sharper distinction became possible as the size of newspapers increased and their coverage came to focus principally on current political affairs, while, at the same time, the size of journals decreased and their contents became equivalent to a potpourri of items of encyclopedic interest. With items selected from similar non-Greek periodicals, subjects covered by Greek journals during that period ranged from agriculture and health to inventions, curiosities from around the world, sayings of famous men and so on.

Journals which initiated publication a century and a half ago were major sources of information and practical knowledge, but also of entertainment for the Greek bourgeois family within the borders of a modern state just taking shape on the map, as well as in diaspora communities outside Greece. The expansion of education and general knowledge and an increase in the number of available publications were associated with a reorientation and the onset of specialized coverage. Research has confirmed the existence, up until 1900, of 450 Greek journals. This number is tripled in 1900. Among these journals, there were at least twenty-five which can be considered as specializing on philological and literary subjects. By that time, and although coverage is not entirely consistent, one can distinguish — besides literary journals — philological in a scholarly sense, educational or pedagogical, philosophical, and historical journals, as well as those focusing on the fine arts or the theater.

* Adapted from the Greek by Yiorgos Chouliaras.
Few of the journals considered as literary dealt exclusively with literature. We consider as literary journals those periodicals for which literature was a principal focus, while at the same time they might deal with other fields, such as philosophy or history. They are journals which publish poems, fiction, plays, literary and general essays, book reviews, as well as contributions on the fine arts or music and related topics. As to what is considered as a journal, the reference is to reviews, magazines, and in general publications which appear periodically, on a monthly, quarterly etc. basis. Within this overall framework, evaluations offered must be accepted as tentative.

When approaching the subject of modern Greek literary journals, one tempting way to classify these journals is on the basis of their titles. Certain words are very prominent in the christening of journals. These words include “logos” and “logotechnia” (i.e., literature), “teche” (i.e., art: with seventeen journals having been counted in this category), “Hellenicos” (with over ten journals), “grammata” (i.e., letters: with sixteen titles) and their derivatives. The term “neo” or “kainourgios” (new or modern) is a very common appellation, referring to either the revival of a publication or the progressive or avant-garde intentions of its founders. Sometimes, however, a charming oxymoron is involved as conservative publications are billed as “new,” with Nea Estia a well-known example. Fields from which the name of journals have been drawn range widely from astronomy to zoology, and include geometry, archaeology, mythology, instruments of orientation, means of transport, geography, plants, terms referring to time, and, of course, the practice of writing itself. The German word “Ausgleiche” is the only foreign word used as the title of a Greek literary journal. Several titles are translations of the titles of similar non-Greek journals or bring to mind the titles of literary works.

“If you wish to write, you should neither edit a journal nor direct a publishing house.” This was Borges’s advice to Biny Casares, and neither of them followed it. Most literary journals in Greece have been edited or directed by writers. Their intention may have been to “offer” to the world the overflow of their learning or to share with others the stages of creation of their work or simply their literary preferences. Through a journal, a circle of people acquire the means of registering their activities, usually very close to the phase of production of creative works. A journal is a collective space, where a new poem will be published or a critical comment will be inserted as an immediate reaction to what is happening at the moment. Moreover, the requirements of a publication schedule may force work to be produced. A book is published much less often and with greater difficulty, indeed creating the impression of something irreversible and fixed. Through a journal
There are also journals which do not reach even 500 issues in circulation. What must be kept in mind is that these numbers are not necessarily insignificant. *Ta Nea Grammata*, a journal which is considered to have influenced seriously modern Greek literature in the years between 1935 and 1945 did not exceed 200 sales per issue. For comparative purposes, one should also consider that in the 1830-1860 period there were about ten philological and literary journals. One hundred years later (1930-1960) there were about thirty-five literary journals while since 1960 and up to today there have been approximately six such journals. Today's increased circulation corresponds to a higher average level of education and standard of living, the formation of a psychology of an "informed consumer" in literary matters, but also the greater access to printing and a rising international interest in Greek literature.

In the past, the appearance and design of literary journals were determined by the personality of the printer and the practical sense of typographical harmony an editor might have. It was their visual criteria that was imposed upon the readers. Older journals used to reproduce images on printing blocks imported from Europe or color lithographs by usually foreign artists for purposes of illustration. As printing techniques advanced, new possibilities were put into effect especially for painters who were associated with the publication of literary journals. There was what can be called an "age of painters," which gave way later on to photography. Today graphic artists are usually responsible for the layout and are, of course, influenced by accepted standards propagated mostly through advertising.

There are journals which can be called strictly "personal," as they were written by a single writer (e.g., the hand-written *Palimpseston* Nikos Kazantzis). Other journals came to be identified with the personality of their editor. (We refer, for example, to Christianopoulos *Diagonatos.* Some have been associated with collectives which shared common views, while others, on the contrary, were forums which hosted the most unrelated contributions. Journals can also be distinguished by how topical they were. From a political perspective, literary journals have represented a full range from the most to the least conservative. There have been very specialized journals, focusing for example, exclusively on poetry (*Heages*), translation (*To Prisma*), or theater (*Theatro*). Annual reviews fall into a separate category. During times of tension, literary journals have made their presence felt. Greece. While in the seven years preceding the dictatorship, one hardly finds four or five literary journals of interest, during the seven-year dictatorship there was a veritable publishing explosion. Among these journals which launched their own publishing line. One must now consider a few of the most characteristic journals in greater detail and within the context of their period. Two clarifications are necessary. In addition to all other difficulties, including very limited research in this field, a principal problem in attempting a sketch of the history of the modern Greek literary journal is the fact that this task amounts to attempting an outline of the entire history of modern Greek literature. The second clarification refers to qualitative distinctions among journals. It is perhaps easy to separate "good" from "bad" or "mediocre" publications. But the better ones could probably not have existed without the context provided by all other journals and within which they distinguished themselves.

*Euterpe,* named after a muse, was the first Greek illustrated journal and it was published every fortnight in Athens between 1847 and 1855. As an encyclopedic family magazine, it followed European, and especially French, prototypes and it was the first journal to abandon the pornorpia character of other publications of that period. *Euterpe* published translations of historical novels (e.g., by Scott or Dumas), along with the work of Greek scholars, such as Paparregopoulos. Its demise came with the publication of *Pandora,* a journal to which many of its contributors moved. *Pandora* had a publishing run of about 1500 issues between 1850 and 1872. Beginning in 1876, and for almost twenty years, *Hestia* was published in Athens every Sunday in 3000 issues. It was associated with important writers and it opened its pages to the younger generation of the 1880s, people like Palamas, Karkavitsas, and Xenopoulos. Its association with the demoticist movement severely cut its circulation and its then editor, the poet Drosinis, was forced to change the journal into an evening paper by the same name, which is still in publication. One of the most important journals being published outside Greece at that time was *Hesperos* (1881-89) in Leipzig. It was a beautifully illustrated journal in which Cavafy published his early poems. At the turn of the century, *Technen,* edited by the main representative of Greek symbolism, K. Hatzopoulos, became associated with a moderate demoticist stand and the translation into Greek of Northern European literary works, as well as Nietzsche. Papadimandis' *Fontissa,* and translations of Dostoevski, Gogol and Hamsun, as well as contributions by Roidis, Sikelianos and others were published in the first published year. Among these journals which launched their own publishing line were *Lexiouda,* edited by D. R. Tangopoulous, made its appearance in 805...
issues over almost thirty years it published the best known writers of
its period. It is the journal which cast the demoticist movement into
the shape of a fixed ideology. As a result, it displayed a negative at-
titude toward poets like Cavafy and Sikellanos. In the meantime, in
1927, and thirty-two years after Hestia had ceased publication as a jour-
nal, Xenopoulos founded Nea Hestia as a fortnightly journal which
continues its publication to this day. This journal, which today is the
notable journals of the interwar period include Hellenika Grammata,
O Kyklos, and Makedonikes Hemeres (1932-39). The latter journal,
which was published in Thessaloniki, cultivated in its pages the fictional

In 1935, George Katsimbalis, also known, thanks to Henry Miller,
as the “Colossus of Marousi,” initiated the publication of the jour-
nal To Nea Grammata, under the direction of the critic Andreas Karan-
donis. This bimonthly journal, which was published for ten years in
Athens, became very popular, having sold copies of a million of what was later
called the “generation of the 30s.” Seferis, Elytis, Enophonopoulos, and
Embeirikos were published in its pages along with older poets, like
Palamas or Sikellanos. The subversive literary journal To 3° Mati also
came out in 1935. Nea Hestia and Nea Grammata continued publication
through the war and the Nazi occupation. Since 1945, and for the
next decade, Angloellenike Epitheorese, edited originally by Katsim-
balis and later by G.P. Savidis, was published, under the auspices of
the British Council. Three other journals came out in 1945. Eleuthe-
Grammata (in publication until 1951) became the journal of left-leaning
writers and intellectuals, from older ones, like Varnalis, to much
younger ones, like Alexandrou and Axioti, as well as Ritsos, Tsirka

Tetradio was published for two years in Athens as the journal of a small
circle of people, including some of the best known names of the genera-
tion of the '30s.

In 1954, the monthly Epitheorese Technes initiated publication, con-

1978 was a fruitful year for literary journals which continue publica-
tion to this day. To Dentro began publication in Athens, with high-
quality contributions in fiction, poetry, and criticism. Hekalemos
made its appearance with a focus on classical texts and carefully prepared
translations. The short-lived Parallak followed the style established by
Tram, as it also happened later with He Lexe, a monthly journal which
publishes interesting contributions.
There are today in Athens about twenty journals with relatively frequent publication and literature as their main focus. The principally literary journals, which publish original and translated literary works, essays, reviews, and related commentaries, are the following, in alphabetical order (in Greek): Aiolika Grammata, Anakyklese, Grammata kai Technes, To Dentro, To Doma, Hekevolos, Euthyne, Kainourgia Epoche, He Lexe, Nea Estia, Nees Tomes, Hodos Panos, Ombrelia, Periodiko, Planodion, Poliokta, Semeioseis, Speira, and Haris. There is a separate category consisting of Vivliophilia, Diavazo, Intheus, and To Tropo with an emphasis on informational aspects. There are also a few political reviews, like Anti, Scholastias, and especially Politis, which often devote their pages to literary and related subjects.

Outside Athens, the largest number of literary journals is published in the following cities, in descending order: Thessaloniki, Ioannina, (En), Rodi, Zakynthos (Periplous), Kerkyra (Porphyra), and Patras (Hydra). Outside Greece, there was a large number of journals in earlier decades, especially in Alexandria, as there are today in Cyprus and elsewhere. There are several English-language journals which deal with Greek literature. Well-known among them in the United States are The Charioteer, The Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora, The Coffeehouse, and the Aegean Review.

The total number of periodicals of all types in Greece today exceeds seven hundred. Among popular magazines those considered to have a large circulation average weekly sales of about 30,000 issues in the Greater Attiki area, which has a total population of nearly four million people.

Therefore, in comparative terms, the circulation of literary journals is not out of proportion. The conditions of cultural intervention through a literary journal have, however, been degraded, following the adoption of the tabloid format by most newspapers and the adoption of pages with “cultural news” in newspapers and in popular magazines, even when they only involve the publication of relevant press releases. There is no way literary journals can compete in terms of commentary on current issues. They can only publish creative works and broader overviews of issues of interest.

The Futuristics of Greek America

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FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS A NUMBER OF CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA, and other scholarly activities and publications have been undertaken by different professional groups and organizations on the general theme of the “Greek American Experience.” I have been asked by my good friend and colleague, Aristote Michopoulos, the Delphi dreamer and dynamic director of Greek Studies at the Hellenic College, and, of course, the organizer of this conference, to present to you “The State of the Union,” to speak, of the Greek American Community. This is not an easy task. It is an honor that I take very seriously, and I hope not to disappoint you. Let me hasten to add that the Greek American Experience for the most part is still in the making. I have been part of this experience as a teacher, scholar, and active participant for the last thirty years. Yet still I do not profess to even know all the questions that confront us as Greek Americans. I do know that what we do or fail to do as individuals or as a community in this process of ethnic renewal will have an impact on the future of the Greek American Community in the 21st century.

There are basically two major approaches to looking at the nature of migrant and ethnic groups. The first is the so called cultural and psychological perspective which stresses social, psychological, and cultural characteristics such as perceptions, attitudes, values, conflicts, and motivations. The second is the “social structural” approach in which ethnic and migrant groups are examined from a wider vantage point, stressing the socio-historical, socio-economic, and political forces that shape migrant and ethnic communities.

From its inception as a new nation state, the United States has been a “nation of nations.” Ethnic and cultural diversity has always existed. What is new now is the re-discovery of this diversity. More specifically, since the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, and 1970s, there has been