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RECEPTION OF THE WORKS OF IVO ANDRIĆ IN GREEK LITERATURE

Abstract. — For a long time modern Greek literature and culture were ignorant of Andrić's work. Chronologically, before his 1961 Nobel prize, only his stories *Most na Žepi* and *Snopići* were translated into Greek. His first capital work to be translated into Greek was the chronicle of Višegrad — *Na Drini ćuprija*. We know of two such translations; one by Kosmas Politis (the pseudonym of Paris Taveloudis), and the other by Konstantin Meranaios, philosophical writer and publicist. In both cases, as well as in the later translation of *Travnička hronika*, translators proceeded from French translations by Georges Luciani and Michel Glouchevitch. Rather poor knowledge of Andrić as a lyric is reduced to the translations of his lyric prose *Ex Ponto* and the poem *Povratak*. These translations into Greek were also done after a French mediator, *Anthologie de la Poésie Yougoslave des XIXe et XXe siècles*, by M. Ibrovac.

Homer's follower in literary expression, Ivo Andrić is a writer of classical education: he graduated from a classical high school, he studied the two classical languages, he studied Hellenic and Roman literature from original sources; »later, he enriched his high-school knowledge with his travels to and long sojourns in these ancient lands«.¹

It is of course a coincidence that his novel *Na Drini ćuprija* (The Bridge Over the Drina) has 24 chapters, as the *Iliad* and *Odysssey* have 24 books each, though Andrić certainly writes in the style of Homer, in medias res. His characters mature, develop and act in a whirlpool of events, on the borderline between east and

¹ M. Budimir, *Andrić i antika*. Ivo Andrić, Institut za teoriju književnosti i umetnosti. Posebna izdanja, knj. L. Beograd 1962; 235.

west, where the Illyrian and the Greek, the Byzantine and Roman, and the Slavic and Osmanli meet in the life of the Bosnian man. Andrić's »epic strength with which he describes the themes and destinies of people in the history of his country« has earned him the attribute *Bosnian Homer*, and furthermore — *Homer of the Balkans*, as he was called by the Munich »Suddeutsche Zeitung« daily.²

I

Modern Greek literature and culture have been ignorant of Andrić's writings for a long time. Forty years had past from the first translation of his lyric prose *Ex Ponto* into Czech (1919), to the publication of the first Greek translation of his short story »Most na Žepi« (Bridge over the Žepa).³ It appeared in the 1954 September issue of the Athenian magazine »New Hearth«, the first among a number of translations of literary works by Yugoslav writers (including, besides Andrić, Branko Ćopić and Mihailo Lalić) under the title »Contemporary Yugoslav Literature«. ⁴ The introductory note said that the works were selected and translated by the writer and journalist, George Pratsikas. Pratsikas also translated Andrić's interview to our magazine »Mladost«, ⁵ entitled »My Vocation and My Art«. ⁶ Signing his name in initials, Pratsikas noted, »In 1958, the youth magazine 'Mladost' published an interview with the writer Ivo Andrić on the following subject: 'How I came to be what I am and why I like my calling?' The reply of the Yugoslav writer, the 1961 Nobel laureate for literature, is of exceptional importance in general«.

Chronologically, before 1961, the short story »Snopići« (Small Bundles) was also translated and published in the magazine »New Epoch«, under the title »Fine Splinter«⁷ (1959). The translator was a certain M. Katramados, who signed his pseudonym Koliás Nisiotis.

² HOMER BALKANA. West German press unanimously approves the awarding of the Nobel prize to Ivo Andrić. By Božidar Dikić. — *Politika*, 29 X 1961; p 19.

³ IBO ANTPITE, "Η γέφυρα της Ζέπα", *Μετάφραση Γιώργου Πράτσινα, Νέα Έστία* 56(1954), τεύχος 652, σελ. 1260—1265.

⁴ Η σύγχρονη γιουγκοσλαβική λογοτεχνία, *Νέα Έστία* 56(1954), τεύχος 652, σελ. 1259—1299.

⁵ MLADOST. A magazine of the people's youth of Yugoslavia, May 20, 1958, p 6.

⁶ IBO ANTPITE, "Το έπάγγελμα μου και η τέχνη μου", *Μετάφραση Γιώργου Πράτσινα. Νέα Έστία* 72(1962), σελ. 1412—3; Κ. Μιτσάκη, *Λογοτεχνικά έργα από τις βαλκανικές χώρες σε νεοελληνική μετάφραση*, Αθήνα 1979, σελ. 23.

⁷ Ίβο Αντριτς, "Καλό δαδί", *Κολιάς Νησιώτης (Μ. Κατραμάδος), Καινούργια Έποχή*, "Ανοιξη 1959, 151—158

II

In the November issue of the »New Hearth«, 1961, editor Petros Charis carried in full Pratsikas's literary note about Andrić. Several months following, Charis recalled, in the same magazine, under the title »Ivo Andrić in Athens«, how it had once again been confirmed that spiritual artists were a nation's best ambassadors. »When the plane landed (on the Athenian airport), an elderly gentleman stepped out; we knew he was nearing his seventies, but we had no idea that he would be so simple and modest, so restrainfully cordial, so much *a man*« — said the article, under the subtitle »Writer and Man«.⁸

III

The first capital work by Andrić to be translated into Greek was the chronicle of Višegrad — *Na Drini ćuprija*. We know of two such translations; one was by Kosmas Politis (the pseudonym of writer Paris Taveloudis), and the other — by Konstantin Meranaios, philosophical writer, translator and publicist. Politis's translation was first published in the Athenian daily »Tachydromos« (Mailman, Courier) on November 20, 1961. Explanations accompanying the translation say that both Politis and Meranaios started from the French translation by Georges Luciani, *Il est un pont sur la Drina* (There is a Bridge Over the Drina).⁹ This decasyllabic translation was literally transposed into the Greek title — *Είναι ένα γεφύρι στον Δρίνο*.¹⁰ A philological and stylistic analysis shows that many places identical in the Greek and French translations departed from the original. More apparent elements of similarity between the French and Greek translations are contained in Luciani's notes accompanying the translation. Namely, not infrequently, Meranaios transposed parts and details from the notes of the French translation into his own context; their purpose being to explain some localisms, toponyms, Turkish terms and other onomastic characteristics employed in the novel. The explanations were invaluable to the Greek translator for a fuller comprehension of the text, though he **did** not transpose them mechanically. Only in one, but very characteristic and illustrative instance Meranaios literally took over Luciani's note; the one concerning the 1903 change of throne in Serbia, and the Young Turk insurrection in the Salonika garrison against

⁸ *Νέα Έστία* 71 (1962), 398—399. There are other details, among them, »This time, at the invitation of the Greek government, Andrić stayed in Athens with the president of the Writers' Association of Yugoslavia, Mr. Surep, from March 2—9, and then left for Egypt. Greek writers received him with respect at the House of Art and Literacy on March 7«, said the Greek author.

⁹ *Il est un pont sur la Drina*. Chronique de Vichegrad Trad. du serbo-croate (et Preface) par Georges Luciani. Paris, Librairie Plon, 1956.

¹⁰ *Έβο Άντριτς, Είναι ένα γεφύρι στον Δρίνο. Το χρονικό του Βίσεγχαντ. Μετάφραση Κ. Α. Μεραναίου. Άθήνα, Έκδόσεις Δ. Δαρμεϊά, χωρίς χρονολογία Έκδοσης.*

Abdülhamid and for a change of regime in Turkey.¹¹ In other instances, Meranaios sought simpler solutions. First, he left out many explanations of numerous Turkish terms — *vaqif*, *efendi*, *mintan*, *muhtar*, *mulazim*, *sevдах* — familiar to the Greek *dimotiki* language, into which the novel was translated. And thus, every departure in the Greek translation from the original text corresponds, almost in detail, to the very good French translation. If, for instance, Luciani divided some passages of the original text into two or even four textual wholes, thus it was in Meranaios's translation.¹² Rarely did the latter break up the French text into smaller wholes, as he did towards the end of the ninth chapter. Andrić's passage at the beginning of the novel, in which he describes in parentheses the bridge over the Rzav as a »simple wooden construction, without beauty, without history«, was inserted in the context of narration and left without parentheses with both Luciani and Meranaios. Next, both translators left out the Turkish term — *tarih* — in the description of the built-in white marble plate with an ornate Turkish inscription engraved in it.

Not infrequently Meranaios carried parts or details from the notes of the French translator. The best example of this also reveals the way in which Andrić's original idea was being elaborated and changed from one translation to the other, both in general and in this specific case when he says: »Često se desi da naiđe gušlar . . .« (Often a gušlar would come by . . .), and sing to the guests in the »drevna mehana« (ancient inn) near the bridge.¹³ Luciani extends this into: »Il arrive souvent que se trouve au bistrot un gušlar . . .«, with the note that a gušlar is a »chanteur populaire qui s'accompagne de la gušla, sorte de violon primitif monocorde«. ¹⁴ Meranaios's translation of these lines is in fact a contamination of Luciani's context of the translation and the part of his explanation referring to the gušle as a kind of monochord violin: „Τυχαίνει καμμιά φορά να βρεθῆ στην ταβέρνα και κανένας 'γκουζλάρης' με τη γκουζλα του το μονοχόρδο βιόλι του . . .“¹⁵

IV

Divergences as regards the original text are also present in the translation of *Travnička hronika* (The Chronicle of Travnik),¹⁶ which Meranaios translated together with Lena Politis, most probably

¹¹ G. Luciani, p 226; K. L. Meranaios, p. 258.

¹² G. Luciani, p 120—121; K. L. Meranaios, pp 139—140.

¹³ Ivo Andrić, *Sabrana dela*, Beograd 1976, knj. 1. *Na Drini ćuprija*, p 230.

¹⁴ G. Luciani, p 193.

¹⁵ K. L. Meranaios, p 221. Cf. M. Stojanović, *U bašti starog dvorca, Zadužbina* 22.

¹⁶ 'Ιβο 'Αντριτς, Το χρονικό του Τράβνικ, Μετάφραση Κ. Λ. Μαραναίου (και Λενάς Πολίτου, εκδόσεις Δ. Δαρμεμ, 'Αθήναι 1963.

through the French mediator Michel Glouchevitch.¹⁷ A comparison and analysis of these translations would not noticeably expand our earlier observations of Meranaios's method of translation. So let us dwell on his preface to this novel. The moreso as this is the only essay by a Greek author we know of so far which covers the entire work of Ivo Andrić. Meranaios wrote essayistically, originally, including many of his own ideas as to the historical moment of the novel and its characters. »In the novels of Ivo Andrić«, writes Meranaios, »we see a people — Bosnian — his own people, acting as any other people should in the given chronological, historical and cultural circumstances. His heroes are humane, and this is where the virtue of the writer lies.«¹⁸

Some ideas from the preface by Claude Avline are, though barely recognizable, present in Meranaios's essay.¹⁹ Let us mention the more frequent ones in the Greek preface; the writer's full attention focuses on human beings, on the ordinary man; the characters that Andrić chose are modest, yet full of dreams, hoping to persevere and live in freedom one day.

Proceeding from the biographical fact that Andrić read Kierkegaard a lot when he was imprisoned by the Austrians as a member of the revolutionary youth (information taken over from Claude Avline), Meranaios, who had also translated works by the Danish philosopher, concluded that Kierkegaard's idea, found in his diary, was permanently carved into the mind of the Serbian writer, »For these reasons I am a poet and my task is to raise the value of things, and to whisper to every individual what might be asked of him . . .«

V

The fact that Andrić was less known as a lyric is decisive for the reception of his meditative opus in Greek literature. Actually, only the translations of his lyric prose *Ex Ponto* are known, and the solitaire poems *Povratak* (Return). Both texts were published in short intervals by the »New Hearth«,²⁰ in the translation of Aris Diktaios. These translations were also done from a French mediator, the *Anthology of Yugoslav Poetry*,²¹ by the Serbian specialist in

¹⁷ Ivo Andrić, *La Chronique de Travnik*. Traduit du serbe par Michel Glouchevitch. Introduction de Claude Avline. Paris, Club Bibliophile de France, 1956.

¹⁸ Cf. *Na stranicama »Travničke hronike«*, Zadužbina 16 (1991). (Translated from the Greek by M. Stojanović); cf. also M. Stojanović, *Ivo Andrić u grčkoj književnosti*, »Delo Ive Andrića u kontekstu evropske književnosti i kulture«, Beograd, 1981; p 909.

¹⁹ Klod Avlin, *Uvod u Travničku hroniku Ive Andrića* (Translated by Z. Ž) Letopis Matice srpske, 1956, knj. 377, pp 317—327.

²⁰ *Néa 'Eortá*, 70(1961), 1452—1453.

²¹ Cf. *Anthologie de la Poesie Yougoslave des XIXe et XXe siecles*. Avec une Introduction et des Notices par Miodrag Ibrovac. Paris 1935; pp 293—296.

Romance languages and translator M. Ibrovac. In addition to a biographical and literary note on Andrić, these are the only three texts in the French translation of Jelisaveta Ibrovac, transposed by the Greek translator in the same order, but without any notes about the writer.

The oldest Athenian daily in French »Le Messenger d'Athènes« (founded in 1873), published in November 1961, in six sequels, excerpts from the diary *Ex Ponto*, in the translation of Jacqueline Prevost. The preface said, »Ivo Andrić won the Nobel prize for literature. It is our pleasure to offer our readers a text by the great Yugoslav writer. The text was published by 'Revue Confluences' in 1944.«²² We thus learn of another French translation, not much noted in the literature about Andrić, from which the Athenian daily carried literally twenty or so selected passages relating to the writer's imprisonment in Austrian jails.

VI

Let us now dwell on Andrić's encounter with Greek writers in Belgrade in fall, 1963. It is interesting to note how the encounter was experienced and noted by the author of the novel *The Land of Aeolis*, Ilias Venezis, penned in his *Travels to Russia, Dalmatia, Switzerland and England*,²³ and published in Athens in 1973, the year of his death. We bring forth several lines. »The last evening in Yugoslavia. In Belgrade«, said Venezis. »Ivo Andrić was waiting for us in the garden of the writers' club, surrounded by elder and younger fellow writers. Dušan Matić, an imposing figure in Yugoslav literature, was also there . . . And Ivo Andrić, the authentic glory of the Yugoslav writers, smiled paternally, and spoke to us softly, commenting about events and figures with immense goodness and kindness; he talked about the foreign writers that stood for the candidature of the Nobel prize; he spoke of a conflict which apparently exists in the Swedish academy as regards priority (between) poetry and prose in our times. He recalled the days of joy and fatigue in Sweden, Greece and Egypt.«²⁴

Yes, for a long time Greek literature and culture were ignorant of Andrić's work, until he was crowned Nobel laureate in 1961. Nonetheless, except the translation and Meranaios's preface to the *Travnička hronika*, no other critical and essayistic works on Andrić's historical prose and its influence on young Greek writers is known. However, this opens another topic, which will become more of interest when the works of our writer, the first Nobel laureate in the Balkans, are translated into Greek directly from Andrić's original text.

²² Messenger d'Athènes, 19—25. November, 1961.

²³ 'Ηλίτας Βενέζης, Περιηγήσεις στη Ρωσία, τη Δαλματία, την Ελβετία, την 'Αγλία. 'Αθήνα 1973, σ. 57—130.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p 129.

РЕЦЕПЦИЈА ДЕЛА ИВЕ АНДРИЋА У ГРЧКОЈ КЊИЖЕВНОСТИ

Резиме

Хомеров следбеник у књижевном изразу, Иво Андрић је писац класичног образовања; отуда он пише хомерски, *in medias res*. Његови ликови стасају, развијају се и делују у вртлогу догађаја, на међи истока и запада, где се укршта илирско и грчко, византијско и римско, словенско и османлијско у животу босанског човека. Због епске снаге којом је описивао људске судбине Андрић је стекао епитет *босански Хомер* и *Хомер Балкана*.

Андрићеве странице у модерној грчкој књижевности и култури дуго су биле неисписане. Хронолошки, пре добијања Нобелове награде 1961. године, преведене су његове приповетке *Мост на Жепи* и *Снопљи*. Прво веће Андрићево дело у грчком преводу јесте вишеградска хроника *На Дрини ћуприја*. Позната су нам два таква превода; један је сачинио Козма Политис (псеудоним књижевника Париса Тавелудиса), а други — Константин Меранеос, филозофски писац и публицист. У оба случаја као и у доцнијем преводу *Травничке хронике* пошло се од француских превода Жоржа Лисијанија и Мишела Глушевића. — Релативно слабо грчко познавање Андрића као лиричара своди се на преводе његове лирске прозе *Ex Ponto* и песме *Повратак*. И ови преводи су потекли са француског посредника *Антологија југословенске поезије* нашег романисте и преводаоца Миодрага Ибровца. Оба текста, готово истовремено, налазимо у атинском часопису *Ново огњиште*, који је и највише допринео потпунијем познавању Андрићевих дела у грчкој књижевности и култури.

И поред тога, осим Меранеосовог предговора *Травничкој хроници*, нису познати други критички и есејистички написи о Андрићевој историјској прози и његовом евентуалном утицају на млађе грчке писце. Али, то је већ тема за себе, која ће постати актуелна тек када се дела нашег Нобеловца буду на грчки језик преводила са изворног Андрићевог текста.

ИСТОРИЯ НАУКИ И ФИЛОСОФИЯ НАУКИ

Вопросы философии науки, ее методологии, истории и философии.

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