

HELLENIC STUDIES

IN CONTRAST TO THE SPLENDID, centuries-old traditions of research on the culture of Ancient Greece (and, to a narrower extent, that of Byzantine Greece) and the teaching of Classical Greek at Polish schools and universities, Modern Greek and the literary and cultural output of Modern Greece have never been a separate subject of academic studies in Poland.¹ Surprising though it may be, neither trading relations with the Greeks, dating back to the Middle Ages, nor the considerable population of Greeks in Lviv, Brześć, Ostróg, Warsaw, and other cities of the *I Rzeczpospolita* (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), with the abundance of Greek-rite churches, schools, and printing houses, prompted the foundation of such studies. Although the great insurrection of the Greeks in 1821 (in which Poles also fought) caused quite a stir in Polish romantic literature (Juliusz Słowacki, Zygmunt Krasiński, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, and other “lesser romanticists”),² it did not arouse interest in Modern Greek literature, as was the case in the West.³ There was but a handful of translations and paraphrases of the songs of the Greek people, popularized in Europe owing to the publications of works by Claude Fauriel,⁴ collected texts by Aleksander

¹ See Oktawiusz Jurewicz, *Neogrecystyka w Polsce*, “Meander” 13 (1958), pp. 81–87.

² See Maria Kalinowska, *Grecja romantyków. Studia nad obrazem Grecji w literaturze romantycznej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 1994.

³ See, e.g., Wincenty Gorzycki, *Walka Grecji o niepodległość w wieku XIX*, Spółka Akcyjna Polska Składnica Pomocy Szkolnych, Warszawa 1922; Tadeusz Sinko, *Udział Polaków w bojach i pracach Hellady*, “Przegląd Współczesny” 42 (1932), pp. 280–281.

⁴ See Claude Fauriel, *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne*, vols. I–II, Firmin Didot père et fils, Paris 1824–1825.

Chodźko⁵ or Józef Dunin Borkowski,⁶ *Lambro* – the Byronic poem by Juliusz Słowacki, the translation of the first stanza of the *Hymn to Liberty* by Dionysios Solomos (Διονύσιος Σολωμός), included by Słowacki in his *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu* [*Travel to the Holy Land from Naples*], and the early novel by Zygmunt Krasiński – *Syn Botzarysa* [*The Son of Botzaris*] – and that was virtually all. Dunin Borkowski's translation of what was probably the first history of Modern Greek literature, written by the popular Phanariote politician, dramatist, and writer, Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos (Ιακωβάκης Ρίζος Νερουλός),⁷ and published in French as early as during the insurrection, remained in manuscript form.⁸ Polish classical philologists rarely raised the issues of Modern Greece. Sporadic studies were published by Seweryn Hammer,⁹ who translated the poem on the adventures of Digenis Akritas (Διγενής Ακρίτας), while Kazimierz Bulas elaborated Poland's first outline of Modern Greek literature.¹⁰

A slight change in the situation was caused by the inflow to Poland, between 1948 and 1956, of political refugees from Greece.¹¹ Although Greek schools were founded for the immigrants' children, and Polish printing houses published special textbooks in Modern Greek for those youngsters, and amateur music bands were established, philological studies were

⁵ See Aleksander Chodźko, *Poezye*, Nowa Drukarnia Pompejusza i Spółki, Poznań 1833 (first edition: Sankt Petersburg 1829).

⁶ See Józef Dunin Borkowski, *Wybór poezji*, ed. Adam Ważyk, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Kraków 1950.

⁷ See Jacovaky Rizo Néroulos, *Cours de littérature grecque moderne*, Abraham Cherbuliez, Genève 1827.

⁸ See Józef Dunin Borkowski, *Dzieje nowo-greckiej literatury*, Biblioteka Ossolińskich, ref. 9534/11, microfilm 1068.

⁹ See Seweryn Hammer, *De rerum naturae sensu apud poetas medii aevii Graeco-barbaros*, "Eos" 22 (1917), pp. 24–26, see also idem, *Neograeca*, "Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Poznańskiego. Sekcja Humanistyczna" 3, Gebethner i Wolff, Poznań 1920.

¹⁰ See Kazimierz Bulas, entry *Literatura nowogrecka*, in *Wielka literatura powszechna*, ed. Stanisław Lam, Wyd. Trzaska, Evert i Michalski, Warszawa 1933, vol. IV, pp. 761–791.

¹¹ See, e.g., Mieczysław Wojecki, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Grecji w Polsce 1948–1975*, Krakowskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Jelenia Góra 1989.

opened at not a single Polish university. Some of them (the University of Wrocław or the Jagiellonian University) organized Modern Greek language classes for merely a short period of time.

At the University of Warsaw there were elective classes in Modern Greek addressed to Classical Philology students. They were taught by Janis Kurtis, who also gave some of his own books to the library of the then Department of Classical Philology.

Our Road to Modern Greece

In the academic year 1974/1975, as a Classical Philology graduate, I started work in the then Department of Classical Philology of the University of Warsaw and, from the very beginning, my main field of research – as I thought at that time – was the literature of Ancient Greece. Two stays at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (1980/1981 and 1984/1985) not only allowed me to learn Modern Greek but, first of all, showed me the literary and cultural output of Modern Greeks. Just like many classical philologists before me who developed a fascination with the great literature of the small nation, I also decided to devote myself to learn and investigate this literature. Above all, however, I yearned to share my knowledge not only with students, but also with Polish readers who knew nothing of the literature of their Greek contemporaries and who would go to Greece to admire the sun and water and jump at the occasion to see the monuments of classical culture, of which they read in textbooks.

Starting in 1985, when I returned from a one-year scholarship obtained from the Greek government in Thessaloniki, I started to hold elective classes on Modern Greek for Classical Philology students, continuing the tradition initiated by Kurtis. At the same time, I worked on the first comprehensive Modern Greek handbook: *Intensywny kurs języka nowogreckiego* [*Intensive Course of Modern Greek*], published by the renowned academic publishing house, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, in 1991.¹²

¹² See Małgorzata Borowska, *Intensywny kurs języka nowogreckiego*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1991.

At the initiative of Jerzy Axer, Classical Philology professor and classical theatre specialist, in 1991, an independent Centre for Studies on the Classical Tradition in Poland and East-Central Europe (OBTA) was founded at the University of Warsaw, the mission of which encompassed not only broad interdisciplinary research on the history of the reception of Classical Antiquity, but also the implementation of experimental teaching programmes. The Centre created a unique chance for the development of Modern Greek Philology in Poland as a separate discipline and for building the studies in this scope from scratch. In 1993, the first laboratory was founded in OBTA, namely, the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies (in Polish: Pracownia Studiów Helleńskich, PSH).



Logo of the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies

Two-Year Postgraduate Hellenic Studies

“The aim of the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies (PSH) is to create Philhellenic milieux, to educate research staff and good translators, and to slowly circulate the masterpieces of Modern Greek literature among readers,” I wrote in the application for the establishment of the Laboratory and, independently of the continuation of the Modern Greek classes for students of the University of Warsaw, I began my fight for the launching in the

Centre of what were pioneer studies on the knowledge of Modern Greece and its language, asking for the help and support of Greek institutions including, in particular, the Greek Ministry of Education and Culture.



Classes with Prof. Małgorzata Borowska, Laboratory of Hellenic Studies, OBTA, Nowy Świat St. 69, 1999. Next to Prof. Borowska: Dr. Iliana Genev-Pouhaleva. Among students (in the second row, second from the left) Przemysław Kordos, today an assistant professor at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales”

Two-Year Postgraduate Hellenic Studies, *Language and Culture of Modern Greece* (12 places) were launched in academic year 1997/1998 and were targeted at all university graduates interested in Modern Greek. Indeed, the studies were built from scratch, as there were no developed models or the slightest base in the form of books or teaching aids (no dictionaries, no grammar books, and just a random few books in Modern Greek). The exceptional character of the language – the oldest living language of Europe, one which gave birth to two virtually independent

forms: the language taught (“katharevousa”) and the language spoken (“demotic”) – added to the difficulty in defining the frames of the curriculum. To realize the difficulties caused by the situation in the practical teaching of Modern Greek at the academic level (and not just in everyday chats), it is enough to mention that in Greece, almost the entire output of the Ancient Greeks was translated first into katharevousa and then, either from Classical Greek or from katharevousa, into demotic – as otherwise it would remain inaccessible to the average reader, not to mention secondary school students. Hence the name of the studies – ‘Hellenic,’ rather than simply ‘Modern Greek.’

Next to the intense teaching of Modern Greek (koine neoellenike [κοινή νεοελληνική]) with the necessary elements of katharevousa, the curriculum from the very beginning encompassed the rudiments of Classical Greek and general information on the history, literature, and culture of both Ancient Greece and Christian Byzantium, without which neither Modern Greek literature nor contemporary Greeks can be understood.

The classes were held in the evenings, twice a week, four hours a day, and included practical Modern Greek classes, introduction to Classical Greek, and lectures and seminars on Greek history and literature from Homer to the present. They were held by experienced lecturers from OBTA and the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of Warsaw, and by qualified Modern Greek lecturers whom we invited for cooperation from wherever possible, trying to build our own staff from nothing. Particularly successful in teaching our students was Iliana Pouhaleva, a graduate in Slavic Studies and Modern Greek Studies at the Sofia University and holder of the scholarship granted by the Józef Mianowski Fund – A Foundation for the Promotion of Science, who finally settled in Cracow and is now on the staff of the University of Silesia. Among our guests who taught us the language and literature of the Modern Greeks were: Paweł Krupka, philologist and diplomat, long-time officer at the Polish Embassy in Athens, where he later defended his doctoral thesis at the Faculty of Philosophy of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; Georgos Theiopoulos (Γιώργος Θεόπουλος), graduate in Economics, pedagogue and entrepreneur; as well as Hana Babincová, graduate in Modern Greek

Philology at the Masaryk University in Brno. The pillar of the Laboratory and the studies was the classical philologist, Karol Pacan, who participated in the courses of Modern Greek, and who, as a scholarship holder, went on to broaden his knowledge of Modern Greek in Greece.



Αίθουσα Παπαφιλίππου – Loukis Papaphilippou Conference Room at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales,” March 25, 2002, OBTA, Nowy Świat St. 69. From the left: Prof. Jerzy Axer, Prof. Małgorzata Borowska, Loukis Papaphilippou, Alekos Michailidis

The small tuition allowed only for partial duplication of teaching materials. Distinguished students had the opportunity to leave for Greece for monthly language courses in Thessaloniki and Athens offered by the State Scholarships Foundation – Idryma Kratikon Ypotrophion (Ίδρυμα Κρατικών Υποτροφιών, ΙΚΥ).

In 2000, diplomas were awarded to the first five graduates, each of whom passed exams in Modern Greek (intermediate level), Classical Greek (elementary level), introduction to the literature of Classical and Byzantine Greece, introduction to the literature and history of Modern Greece (since 1453), and defended their diploma theses (in Polish, with an extensive summary in Modern Greek).

In its short history (1998/1999–2007/2008), our Two-Year Postgraduate Hellenic Studies had several dozen students from different universities – graduates interested in Modern Greece who hailed from such fields as Classical Philology, Modern Philologies, Archaeology, History, Sociology, Philosophy, Theology, and Engineering. The majority were glad to receive a certificate of participation, but there were also some who wrote theses and prepared translations later included in the first volume of the OBTA publishing series “Arcydzieła Literatury Nowogreckiej” [“Masterpieces of Modern Greek Literature”].¹³ Almost all the diploma theses represented the first studies of this kind written in Polish and the only ones to use the literature on the subject written in Modern Greek. Among the first graduates of the Two-Year Postgraduate Hellenic Studies was Przemysław Kordos, student of the Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities of the University of Warsaw (MISH, spec. in Sociology and Ethnography), whose thesis *Mani. Geografia, historia, elementy etnografii* [*The Mani. Geography, History, Elements of Ethnography*] (2000) pointed the direction of his future research interests. As the first alumnus of Modern Greek Philology in Warsaw, he joined the staff of the Hellenic Studies and the circle of Philhellenists.

In this way, the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies (PSH), integrated within the structures of OBTA, added to its role as the coordinator of academic courses of Modern Greek, the function of gathering researchers interested in the issues of Modern Greece and being a centre for the promotion of Greek culture to a wider audience, both at the University and outside its confines. Concurrently, the library of Modern Greek books was steadily

¹³ The list of the volumes published may be found on the Laboratory’s website: <http://www.psh.obta.uw.edu.pl/node/5> (consulted: Oct. 16, 2013).

extended, first owing to private gifts of the still growing circles of our Greek friends and, soon, thanks to the support of such Greek institutions like the Greek Ministry of Education and Culture, the Foundation for Hellenic Culture, and the National Book Centre of Greece (Ελληνικό Κέντρο Βιβλίου, EKEBI). The names of Greek institutions and of Greek (and Polish) private donors are engraved on a marble plaque in the hall of the present-day Faculty of “Artes Liberales,” documenting the support granted – and our efforts to obtain it.

The Modern Greek Specialization for Students

The opening of the Two-Year Postgraduate Hellenic Studies, targeted at graduates, did not interfere with the Modern Greek language classes organized on three levels at OBTA for students of the University of Warsaw. Apart from teaching Modern Greek, we were doing our best to instil in our students an interest in the culture of Modern Greece. Soon, a small dance group was established, named “Phoundakia,” which means “The Pompons” (φούντα – pompon). The group was composed of Modern Greek folk dance enthusiasts, who initially – outrageously – learnt their skills from textbooks alone, which included descriptions of moves and the numbering of steps. Luckily, the first members of “Phoundakia” had the opportunity to develop their skills during summer language courses in Greece and pass them on to others after they returned. There was also a presentation of the first folk shadow theatre in Poland (Karagiozis), which became a historic event. A professional shadow theatre actor does everything on his own – from the figures and the scenography to the manipulation of the actors, dubbing, singing, and special effects – or has one assistant at most. In our amateur group were students of the Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities (MISH), Classical Philology, and Archaeology, and we acted as a team, staging the Polish translation of a short comedy by Antonis Mollas (Αντώνης Μόλλας) *The Lie – Psema* (Ψέμα). The main actor was the then secretary of PSH and a lecturer at our studies – the aforementioned Karol Pacan. The play was ended with a dance by “Phoundakia.” No wonder that the then Ambassador of Greece and a great friend of Poland, His

Excellency Georges Alexandropoulos (Γεώργιος Αλεξανδρόπουλος) who was sitting in the audience, told us, sincerely moved: “I have never seen such a Karagiozis performance nor such Greek dances.”

The interest enjoyed by the classes on Greek language and culture motivated us to create “something more,” namely, to found the Modern Greek specialization. This was possible owing to the PSH’s cooperation with the Faculty of Polish Studies at the University of Warsaw. In the academic year 2001/2002, a three-year Modern Greek specialization was launched in PSH, addressed to the students of the Faculty of Polish Studies. It was later aimed toward becoming undergraduate diploma in Modern Greek Philology. The framework curriculum of the specialization included 180 hours of practical classes in Modern Greek and descriptive grammar with elements of historical grammar for each of the two first years, an obligatory course on Classical Greek, and specialized conversational classes and lectures on the history, literature, and culture of Greece. The students were obliged to pass their oral exam in the canon of literary works by classical authors, translated into Polish, and by Modern Greek authors, in the original. Year three included such obligatory classes as: the Modern Greek proseminar, translation classes, and monograph lectures, within which 30 hours were lectured in Greek. After year three, students had to pass an exam in Modern Greek at least at the intermediate level (B’), although – as it turned out – the best students (after monthly courses in Greece) reached the then highest possible level (Γ’).

The first year of teaching the Modern Greek specialization within the framework of Polish Studies revealed its primary shortcoming: it was accessible only to students of the Faculty of Polish Studies, among whom were students of Classical Philology – for they were the most interested in Modern Greek – but it remained out of reach for archaeologists, historians, and others. We had no choice but to transform the specialization into a separate, independent field of studies: undergraduate studies on Modern Greek Philology, which was all the more important in that all those who were already pursuing the specialization were willing to obtain a diploma in Modern Greek Philology, next to their title in Polish Studies. Thus, in the academic year 2002/2003, acting in cooperation with the Faculty of

Polish Studies and having received the consent of the Senate of the University of Warsaw, we liquidated the specialization, automatically moving the students to a relevant year of undergraduate studies. This is how the new field of studies, Modern Greek Philology, was born at OBTA.

The curriculum was changed substantially. First of all, it was adjusted to the requirements of the minimum curriculum for the philological field as required by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. OBTA, which was rapidly expanding, ensured relevant staff. Students were introduced to the history of the Byzantine Empire by Professor Oktawiusz Jurewicz, classical philologist and expert in Byzantine Studies, a long-time chairman of the Byzantinological Commission at the Committee on Ancient Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences (KNoKA PAN), translator of Anna Komnene and Photius. Students were also taught the history of Greek language by Professor Jurewicz's former student, now Professor Robert A. Sucharski, one of the few specialists on the rare discipline of Mycenaeanology in Poland.

But, most importantly, we finally had our own staff. From the very beginning, Przemysław Kordos cooperated with the PSH. He had defended his doctoral thesis in 2007 and was employed as an assistant professor (contract for an indefinite time). It is difficult to imagine the operation of the PSH, not to mention the existence or development of the Modern Greek Philology, without his energy and enthusiasm. By introducing ethnographic and cultural issues to the curriculum, he gave the studies a unique character and a wider context. This was an invaluable asset to our students, who now had a better starting point to work for their MA titles at Cultural Studies – Mediterranean Civilization on the "Greek path."¹⁴

In 2004, two other PSH students defended their BA theses. They were: Jacek Raszewski (also MA in Philosophy) and Karolina Berezowska (also MA in Applied Linguistics), who undertook to hold language and elective classes. For several years, Karolina Berezowska was a lecturer in contrastive grammar and offered translation seminars. Jacek Raszewski, on

¹⁴ On this field of studies see the paper by Jerzy Styka, *Mediterranean Studies*, p. 125, in the present volume.

the other hand, besides language classes also held seminars devoted to the writings of the period of the insurrection of 1821. In 2005, Konrad Kuczara (also MA in Ukrainian Philology) and Kaja Dybowska (also MA in Classical Philology) joined the ranks of the Modern Greek staff.

We were doing our best to give our students of the upper years the opportunity for contact with interesting guests from Greece: scholars, writers, and journalists. In 2008, we were visited by the eminent poet Georgos Anagnostopoulos (Γεώργος Αναγνωστόπουλος) – the selection of his poems, translated by one of our students, was published by the publishing house Heliodor¹⁵ – and the well-known writer Vassilis Vassilikos (Βασίλης Βασιλικός) – the author of the famous novel entitled *Z*, translated into many languages and filmed by Costa-Gavras (1969).¹⁶

Thanks to the patronage of the Greek Embassy in Warsaw and the unflagging support of the Greek Ministry of Education and Culture, we were guaranteed to have at least one lecturer (native speaker) delegated, fully paid by the Greek side. Obviously, this did not solve all our problems. It should be remembered that, as there had never been such studies in Poland before, there were no Polish academic lecturers with formal education in Modern Greek Philology, either. Our small staff was the reason why the intake to the new studies was limited (15–20 places) and why new students were accepted only every two years.

¹⁵ See Γεώργος Αναγνωστόπουλος, *Επιλογές από κήπον ποιητικό*. *Zbiory z ogrodu poetyckiego*, trans. Paulina Zatorska, Paweł Krupka, in the series “Zbliżenia,” Heliodor, Warszawa 2008. In the very same series supervised by Paweł Krupka other poetic volumes have been published, the ones by Maria Mistrioti (Μαρία Μιστριώτη), Dinos Koumbatis (Ντίνος Κουμπάτης), Nikos Anogis (Νίκος Ανώγης), and Panagiotis Tsoutakos (Παναγιώτης Τσουτάκος), in our students’ translations.

¹⁶ Greek edition: Βασίλης Βασιλικός, *Z*, Θεμέλιο, Αθήνα 1966. For the Polish edition see Vassilis Vassilikos, *Z*, trans. from French Agnieszka Daniłowicz, from Greek into Polish Adam Chomicz, Czytelnik, Warszawa, 1976. For the English edition see: Vassilis Vassilikos, *Z*, trans. Marilyn Calmann, Thunder’s Mouth Pr, 1991.

Modern Greek Philology

In 2003, the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies celebrated its 10th anniversary. The celebrations coincided with the invitation of the representatives of Poland to be guests of honour and to participate in the annual celebration of national holidays in Missolonghi, the Holy City of the Greeks. I had the honour to be among them, along with Jacek Raszewski. We commemorated the tragic and heroic moments of the history of the city with the hosts.

When the great insurrection against the Turks broke out in 1821, Missolonghi, the small fishing town on the banks of a picturesque but malarial bay, was among the first cities to be liberated and became the headquarters of at least one region where the insurrection was raging. In 1822, the defendants of Missolonghi repulsed the onslaught of much more numerous Turkish forces. In this way, as one of the greatest Polish poets of Romanticism wrote, “the nest, where for once, the defenders of liberty resisted forces which were one hundred times as numerous as they were,”¹⁷ gave an example of heroism not only to the then fighting Greeks, but to the whole of Europe. In 1824, Lord Byron died there. In 1826, the Turks once more besieged Missolonghi, which gave shelter to thousands of women and children from the vicinity. After the months-long stubborn resistance, the defenders – who faced the threat of death from starvation – decided to attempt to break the siege on Holy Saturday. As a result of treachery, the attempt ended with the terrible slaughter of the peoples of Missolonghi and the burning of the city. The heroic fight of the defenders became part of the Greek legends on the fights for freedom and Missolonghi has remained a holy place in the memory of the Greeks until this day.¹⁸ In the great Garden of Heroes (heroon), established within the fortifications of the city, monuments were built next to the graves of its defenders commemorating the Philhellenists from various European countries who laid down their lives

¹⁷ Juliusz Słowacki, *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu*, IV 18, in Juliusz Słowacki, *Dzieła*, vol. III, ed. Jerzy Pelc, Zakład im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1949, p. 30.

¹⁸ Officially, Missolonghi was awarded the title of “Holy City” by the Greek government in 1937.

for Greece. Among them are Poles whose symbolic grave is ornamented with the sculpture of an eagle with outstretched wings and the inscription: “For Greece and Poland.” It is a tradition that each year representatives of one of the countries whose citizens are buried in the Garden of Heroes are invited to celebrate the Memorial Day of the defendants of Missolonghi.



Tomb commemorating Polish soldiers in the Garden of Heroes in Missolonghi

In this historical place and exceptional atmosphere, we had the opportunity to present the achievements of our studies and to show how our Laboratory was pursuing the goals we had set at its establishment. After the official part, the mayor of Missolonghi invited us for the evening to a meeting with the participants of the celebrations and residents of the city. The latter watched our presentation with great emotion, surprised that so much is known and so much is being done for Greece in exotic Poland.

The jubilee academic year 2002/2003 was an important chapter of the history of our Laboratory for many a reason. Firstly, it was exceptional for the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies because, appreciating our rapid development and the achievements of the Two-Year Postgraduate Hellenic Studies, the Greek Ministry of Education and Culture assigned to us another Modern Greek lecturer. For personal reasons, Sonia Stampoulidou (Σόνια Σταμπουλίδου) cooperated with us for a short time only, and a year later was replaced by Giorgos Molozis (Γιώργος Μολώζης). Nevertheless, it was at Sonia's initiative that we established contact with the Greek Language Centre (Κέντρο Ελληνικής Γλώσσας, ΚΕΓ) in Thessaloniki, the institution of the Greek Ministry of Education and Culture, and were soon certified as the first (and the only) Examination Centre (Εξεταστικό Κέντρο) in Poland. In May 2004, we organized the first Ellenomatheia exams (Πιστοποιητικό Ελληνομάθειας) – Certificate of Attainment in Modern Greek, and on all three levels. That we were able to get to know the structure of the exam and the requirements, described in detail for each level, was of invaluable aid to us when we worked on our own language syllabi, and contributed to the improvement of Modern Greek teaching at our University.

Moreover, we also hosted outstanding guests. First, we were visited by the chairman of the Société Internationale des Amis de Nikos Kazantzakis (Νίκος Καζαντζάκης), Georgos Stasinakis (Γεώργος Στασινάκης), who travels tirelessly around the world promoting knowledge on the output and thought of the great Cretan writer. Later, our guests included students from the secondary school in Krioneri, near Athens. Finally, owing to our cooperation with the "Dora Stratou" Dance Theatre from Athens (Θέατρο Χορού "Δόρα Στράτου"), we hosted one of its dancers, Giannis Karagiannis (Γιάννης Καραγιάννης), who held dancing workshops, attended by many participants.

In September 2005, the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies organized an academic tour around Greece. The route, prepared by the head of the trip, Przemysław Kordos, led through the Ionian Islands, the Epirus Region, and the Peloponnese to Athens and was documented with more than 17,000 photographs, a travel diary by Kasia Jaworska, along with a video of sev-

eral hours which she recorded. Among the participants of the trip were students of Modern Greek Philology, Classical Philology, Archaeology, and MISH.



Participants in the research tour on a bridge in Zagoria, Epirus, 2005

Photographs taken by the travellers are used as illustrations in subsequent volumes of the “Masterpieces of Modern Greek Literature” series and other publications.

Our Route to Cyprus

Throughout all these years, we were supported by our sponsor and friend, Loukis Papaphilippou (Λουκής Παπαφίλιππου) who visited the Laboratory as often as he could, witnessing our achievements and observing the development of the Two-Year Postgraduate Hellenic Studies. In 2000, I had the

honour to hand him the just-published academic Modern Greek textbook.¹⁹ Together with the earlier Classical Greek manual,²⁰ the book enabled our students to view the Greek language in a diachronic perspective. During his visit in 2002, our guest conducted classes himself, giving us the chance to hear with our own ears the Cypriot dialect.



Prof. Małgorzata Borowska and Loukis Papaphilippou

During the next visit of Papaphilippou, in November 2006, we organized an event which was unique in the entire history of the University of Warsaw, namely, the inauguration of the Loukis Papaphilippou Seat of Advancement in Modern Greek at the University of Warsaw, attended by its founder, the Rector, and the Vice-Rectors. The founder delivered a speech in English, using almost exclusively words with Greek origin,

¹⁹ See Małgorzata Borowska, *Barbajorgos. Książka do nauki języka nowogreckiego*, Wydawnictwo Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 2000.

²⁰ See Małgorzata Borowska, *Mormolyke. Książka do nauki języka starogreckiego*, OBTA–Wydawnictwo Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1996.

followed by a performance of “Phoundakia.” The Seat entailed the position of a lecturer (assistant professor – since 2007) in the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies which, for the first few years, was fully paid by the founder. The position was offered to Przemysław Kordos, the PSH secretary and the co-author of all its successes.

It dawned on us that the issues of Cyprus should find a permanent place in the curriculum of the Modern Greek Philology. At the beginning of the academic year 2007/2008, for the first time we organized a one-semester lecture at the University, open to all, entitled *Introduction to the History, Literature, and Culture of Cyprus*. From the very beginning, the main lecturer has been Przemysław Kordos, the first holder of the Loukis Papaphilippou Seat. The huge interest enjoyed by the lecture made us extend it into a yearly cycle. Soon, Cyprus-related issues became the subject of the diploma theses of our students.

The Close of the Pioneer Years

The end of the academic year 2005/2006 was marked by the farewell to our first Greek lecturer, Ourania Lalioti (Ουρανία Λαλιώτη), whose delegation in Poland was not extended, despite our immense support. She was sent to the East Coast of the United States. Ourania had been building the Hellenic Studies with us for six years. Not only did she teach Modern Greek, but she sang with our students, cooked with them, went on trips, participated in their family lives, and even taught them how to write icons, being herself a graduate in Theology and Icon Writing. She has stayed in touch with her students ever since, knowing more about their professional careers and private lives than we do. In the meantime, she found time to get her MA title at the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, to have her collection of poems published in Athens, and to prepare a showing of her own paintings. The enthusiasm and optimism that Ourania spread around herself was irreplaceable. With her departure we had the feeling that our pioneer years had come to an end.

One year before Ourania left, the Greek Ministry of Education and Culture unexpectedly delegated two lectors to work with us: Maria Lazari-

dou (Μαρία Λαζαρίδου) and Thanasis Dimitriou (Θανάσης Δημητρίου) – a married couple and, a year later (for the first time), a lecturer specialized in academic teaching, Doctor Maria Karabatsa (Μαρία Καραμπάτσα).



Ourania Lalioti

The three lecturers fully satisfied our didactic needs, with their services being available both to the students of Mediterranean Studies and to the students of Classical Philology, interested in Modern Greek. With such a strong staff we believed that, for the first time, we were able to plan further development of the studies, that is, to complement them with two-year MA studies.

Unfortunately, Maria and Thanasis, who had already settled in with us and learnt to identify the problems encountered by Polish-speaking students while learning Modern Greek, were recalled after two years and replaced, for a while, by Giorgos Kapelouzos (Γιώργος Καπελούζος), who did not meet our expectations. It was obvious that Maria Karabatsa was unable to carry on her own huge teaching burdens. Aided by the

then lecturers' curator in charge of our region of Europe (with his seat in Berlin), we were doing our best to bring about the sending of two successors of the recalled couple instead of one. Our detailed reports on the operation of the Laboratory and the achievements of the studies sent year by year to the curator and the Ministry were, as we believed, not without meaning here. In 2008/2009, we received two experienced lecturers, Eleni Ellenopoulou (Ελένη Ελληνόπουλου) and Vlasios Montemarkos (Βλάσιος Μοντεμάρκος), and, again, we could focus on the next stage of development of our studies.

In May 2008, the last students left the Two-Year Postgraduate Hellenic Studies. The closing of this level of education coincided with changes in the enrollment for the first-cycle studies which, starting the academic year 2009/2010, has been organized every year.

Teaching and Research Work

From the very beginning of the existence of the Hellenic Studies, functioning in accordance with the foundation act of OBTA, and later IBI AL, we combined teaching and research work. We invited students – from the second year of undergraduate studies onwards – to participate in all programmes and initiatives organized in the Centre. The main task for our discipline was to elaborate a source base accessible in Polish, with a relevantly extensive commentary and introduction. Contrary to the majority of other modern philologies, Modern Greek Philology, which was a novelty only, had no output. Translations from Modern Greek were not a commonplace – despite the efforts of the few distinguished translators (Nikos Chadzinikolau, Janusz Strasburger, Zygmunt Kubiak) – they were still published rarely and incidentally. Therefore, the above-mentioned series of the “Masterpieces of Modern Greek Literature” was created at OBTA, the aim of which was to present thoroughly selected works of the modern era, ones altogether unknown, and which, in our opinion, deserved popularization just as much as the works by ancient Greek authors. Concurrently, the series became a training ground for students: they had the opportunity to see what they could do as translators of literary texts, acquiring translation

skills via practice, both during seminars or conversation classes and in individual work. A group of students and graduates under my supervision worked on almost all of the ten volumes published so far – more than forty people in total! Owing to the initiative of Doctor Paweł Krupka, some of them established cooperation with the Heliodor publishing house, which published their translations of several volumes of verse by contemporary Greek poets.²¹

OBTA, IBI AL, and now, the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” have implemented numerous team academic projects. Our students and graduates participate in some of them and are successful. Among those who most significantly contributed to the research on Philhellenism in Poland (articles, editorial work) are the students of Modern Greek Philology, the BA degree holders who continue education at the Mediterranean Studies, and the graduates. Translations by our students can also be read in the “Omphalos” journal, published by the Mediterranean Students Club at our Faculty.

Students and graduates participate in the numerous conferences we organize which are devoted to Greece or, in a wider context, to the Balkans. They have delivered presentations and papers, for instance, at meetings of Philhellenism researchers in Poland or, more recently, during the international conference entitled *Cyprus – the History, Literature, and Culture*, held over December 7–8, 2012, under the wings of the Cyprus Embassy, within the scope of Cyprus’ presidency of the Council of the European Union. The holders of scholarships granted by the University of Cyprus in Nicosia used their experiences and shared with us the research which they had carried out there independently.

An important part of the operation of our Hellenic Studies, especially for the shaping and development of social competencies and the activities of our students, was the creation of the philhellenic milieu through the promotion of Modern Greek culture and popularization of knowledge on Modern Greece. Each year, our students participate actively in the Day of European Languages. Moreover, we co-organize lectures and events in

²¹ See n. 15.

cooperation with the Friends of Greece Association. The dancing group “Phoundakia” was reactivated and, in 2011, it was composed of sixteen people (our students, several students of other fields, and even two secondary school students), and was supervised by Doctor Argyro Tsermegas, assistant professor at the Faculty of Geography of the University of Warsaw and expert in Modern Greek folk dances. “Phoundakia” has several dozen performances on its scorecard, including a show at the Archaeological Festival in Biskupin. Furthermore, our permanent cooperation with the “Dora Stratou” Dance Theatre from Athens has borne fruit in the form of the Polish translation, by Joanna Wegner (BA, 2011), of the book written by the head of the Theatre and researcher on Greek dance, Professor Alkis Raptis (Άλκης Ράπτης) – *The World of Greek Dance*.²²

Prospects

In 2012, the first-cycle studies in Modern Greek Philology for the first time ever obtained certification by the Polish Accreditation Committee. At the same time, as a result of the new Act on Higher Education coming into force, we needed to revise all syllabi and adjust them to the new requirements. Luckily, all this, plus the day-to-day functioning of the studies, was (and still is) overseen by our Didactic Secretariat. The work on the elaboration of reports and statements made us redefine our priorities, both in teaching (and its effects) and research. Simultaneously, as a result of the deepening economic crisis in Greece, the Greek Ministry of Education and Culture unexpectedly recalled two out of our three Greek lecturers. We were prepared for such an eventuality and included it in our modified curriculum. Nevertheless, the necessity to ensure the continuity of first-cycle studies made us put off our plans to launch complementary MA studies and reduced the offer of language classes for students of other fields.

Within the nine years Modern Greek Philology has operated, fifty-nine students have obtained the title of Bachelor of Arts. Some of them have

²² See Alkis Raftis, *Świat tańca greckiego*, trans. Joanna Wegner, ed. Przemysław Kordos, Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Grecji–IBI AL UW, Warszawa 2012.

continued their education following the Greek path at the second-cycle Cultural Studies on Mediterranean Civilization and defended MA theses, the subjects of which were the issues of Modern Greece. Most of the students had the chance to attend monthly language courses or one-semester or one-year internships under the Erasmus Programme at Greek or Cypriot universities. During just one academic year, fifteen of our students were staying in Greece simultaneously.

The number of students taking the Certificate of Attainment in Modern Greek exams, known as the *Ellenomatheia* (Πιστοποιητικό Ελληνομάθειας), is growing year by year. Some of them (especially the ones who have completed stays in Greece or Cyprus) successfully take on the highest level six (C2).

Nor have we abandoned our translation or research activity. Just recently, two subsequent volumes of the “Masterpieces of Modern Greek Literature” series were published. The jubilee 10th volume – *Opowieści z wyspy Skiatos* [*Tales from the Isle of Skiathos*] – includes translations of short stories by Alexandros Papadiamantis (Αλέξανδρος Παπαδιαμάντης), elaborated, under my supervision, by seventeen students and five graduates in Modern Greek Philology and Mediterranean Civilization. The other two books published within the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies include articles written on the basis of some already finished and some under-construction diploma theses of our students. The upcoming issue of the new “Colloquia Humanistica” journal will include a poem by the Cretan poet Stephanos Sachlikis (Στέφανος Σαχλίκης, 14th century), translated by five Modern Greek Philology graduates (who were then 2nd- and 3rd-year students).

We do our best to stay in touch with our graduates – Modern Greek Philology BA holders, holders of the MA degree in the second-cycle “Greek path” within the framework of Cultural Studies – Mediterranean Civilization, and other alumni. A vast majority of them graduated in more than one field and use their Modern Greek qualifications as a highly important, yet not the only one asset on the labour market. As mentioned, some of them have either defended their doctoral theses on Modern Greek issues or are preparing such. Some study at foreign universities. Among our graduates are officials of the Embassy of Greece and Cyprus, bank of-

ficials, employees of travel agencies, and various Polish-Greek enterprises or people who established their own translation agencies and language schools. Staying in touch with our graduates and tracing their professional careers is an invaluable source of clues to us, showing how to modify the Modern Greek curriculum without lowering the level of academic liberal arts studies. It also indicates how to prepare our graduates, in the best way possible, to face the challenges of their professional lives.

The Laboratory of Hellenic Studies was also expanded. Professor Maria Kalinowska is the head of the Philhellenic team (its second book presenting the results of further research has just been published²³), and is working on the project: *Sparta in Polish Literature and Culture*. Professor Jolanta Sujecka introduces students to the world of difficult Balkan subjects, opening for us the pages of her aforementioned “Colloquia Humanistica.” Students have the chance to listen to lectures on the history and literature of Ancient Greece held by Professor Jerzy Styka (Head of the Institute of Classical Philology at the Jagiellonian University) and are initiated into the history of Greek language by Professor Robert A. Sucharski. Those who continue education in the field of Mediterranean Civilization indeed have a lot of options to choose from. Additionally, Modern Greek Philology has obtained new, young staff – namely, two of its graduates, people full of enthusiasm and fresh ideas: Doctor Jacek Raszewski (2010) and Doctor Konrad Kuczara (2011).

The library of the Laboratory of Hellenic Studies boasts the biggest collection of Modern Greek (and Cypriot) books in Poland, as well as special collections like, for example, a valuable collection of postcards donated by Halina and Janusz Strasburger.

On the back cover of the “Masterpieces of Modern Greek Literature” series, I explain why the patron of the series is... the Gorgon. Greek people believe that the Gorgon sometimes appears to the crews of ships sailing

²³ See *Filhellenizm w Polsce. Wybrane tematy*, eds. Małgorzata Borowska, Maria Kalinowska, Katarzyna Tomaszuk, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2012. The first one is: *Filhellenizm w Polsce. Rekonesans*, eds. Małgorzata Borowska, Maria Kalinowska, Jarosław Ławski, Katarzyna Tomaszuk, OBTA–Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2007.

across the Mediterranean Sea, asking one question only: “Does he still live and reign?”. One must give a positive answer since, otherwise, the Gorgon will unleash a storm. In Modern Greek legends, the Gorgon, regarded as a siren, was the sister of Alexander the Great, who drank his water of life and threw herself into the sea out of despair, where she has been roaming ever since, immortal, asking about her brother’s fate. In fact, what she is asking about is the fate of the Greek tradition. The answer she will get at Modern Greek Philology of the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” is: “Yes! It lives and reigns!”.