**UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

**FACULTY OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES**

**SUB-FACULTY OF BYZANTINE AND MODERN GREEK**

Information for those coming up to read Modern Greek at Oxford (**beginners and non-beginners**).

Please find below a list of basic publications that will help you prepare in the two months before coming to Oxford. This is just an indicative list, with some suggestions for further literary reading; you can always contact Prof. Papanikolaou for more suggestions or any questions (contact details in the end of this document).

**General interest websites and other resources**

Even though a number of interesting resources on Modern Greek Literature and Culture can still be found on the web (and increasingly so), very few of them are presented in a bilingual format. A Greek state site that often publishes interesting content on culture and is wort a look is <https://www.greeknewsagenda.gr>

A major tool we use as a bibliography aggregator

<https://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/index.html> [it has a bilingual format yet most information it gives is in Greek].

Our department participates in the network Greek Studies Now; you can find some interesting activities, blogs and videos from past events on the network’s dedicated website

<https://greekstudiesnow.org>

And of course, make sure you like the Sub-Faculty’s page on facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/moderngreekstudiesoxford>

**Dictionaries**

We have plenty of dictionaries in Oxford, and certainly all the below; in case you want to buy your own in advance, the note below will be helpful.

Bilingual dictionaries tend to be less comprehensive than Greek-Greek dictionaries. *The Pocket Oxford Greek Dictionary* (English-Greek and Greek-English, 1995) by J.T. Pring is small but fairly accurate. The *Oxford Greek-English Learner's Dictionary* (Greek-English only) by D.N. Stavropoulos is larger and more modern. A large number of Greek-Greek dictionaries are available for advanced speakers; the *Νέο Ελληνικό Λεξικό*  by E. Kriaras (Ekdotiki Athinon, 1995), the *Λεξικό της Νέας ελληνικής γλώσσας*  by G. Babiniotis (Kentro Lexikologias, Athens 1998) and the *Λεξικό της κοινής νέας ελληνικής* (University of Thessaloniki, 1998) are particularly good ones, though be warned that the last two are pretty bulky. The standard dictionary we normally use in courses is the Babiniotis, which has also recently been published in a small, abridged and user-friendly format.

**Grammars**

There are two fairly recent grammars of Modern Greek in English by the same authors, D. Holton, P. Mackridge & I. Philippaki-Warburton, and both published by Routledge: *Greek: an Essential Grammar* *of the Modern Language* (2004), which is suitable for beginners, and *Greek: a Comprehensive Grammar of the Modern Language* (1997, revised 1999), which is a larger reference grammar intended for more advanced students.

**Background reading**

For an introduction to Modern Greek literature, R. Beaton's *An Introduction to Modern Greek Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1994, revised 1999) is **essential**. This is a book you will be using during the course of your degree a lot, so perhaps it may be worth buying your own copy [yet plenty of copies also exist in our library].

For the history of Greece, chiefly during the last two hundred years, *A Concise History of Greece* by R. Clogg (Cambridge University Press) is recommended. Good and more recent introductions to Greek history that we will also be using are *The Edinburgh history of the Greeks: the 20th and 21st centuries*, by Nick Doumanis and Antonis Liakos (Edinburgh University Press, 2023), *Greece: The modern sequel*, by John Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis (Hurst, 2002), and *Modern Greece* by Thomas Gallant (Arnold, 2001). **Roderick Beaton’s *Greece: Biography of a Modern Nation*** (Allen Lane, 2019) is aimed at the general reader and for this reason might be a good idea for summertime background reading.

**Literature**

Before coming to Oxford, you would do well to read some Modern Greek literature in Greek if you are an advanced or bilingual speaker, or in translation if you are a beginner.

Ideal for background reading in translation is the anthology *Modern Greek Writing: An Anthology in English Translation*, edited by David Ricks, Peter Owen Publishers, London, 2003. It includes both prose and poetry.

It would also be a nice idea to start exploring the poetry of George Seferis and C.P.Cavafy (their *Collected Poems* are available in good and accessible English translations – for Cavafy, prefer the bilingual Oxford University Press paperback edition, transl. by Sachperoglou, intro by P.Mackridge, or the editions translated by Daniel Mendelsohn).

The literature papers in your first year will contain a series of 20th c. short stories and poems (to be distributed in class), and a number of novels, novellas and collections of short stories, which are listed below [Greek titles in brackets: please try read in Greek if advanced or bilingual]. You don’t have to read all (or any of) these in advance. But you may perhaps wish to try and check a couple of them before coming to Oxford, for instance the novels by Taktsis and Matesis; the latter is the easiest to find in print.

**C. Taktsis [or Tachtsis], *The Third Wedding* [or, *The Third Wedding Wreath* in another edition] [Κώστας Ταχτσής, *Το τρίτο στεφάνι*]**

S. Doukas, *A Prisoner of War’s Story,* University of Birmingham, 1997 and Aiora Press 2022 [Στρατής Δούκας, *Ιστορία ενός αιχμαλώτου*]

E. Fakinou, *The Seventh Garment* (Serpent's Tail. 1990) [in Greek: *Το Έβδομο Ρούχο*].

**P. Matesis, *The Daughter*, London, Arcadia, 2002 [Παύλος Μάτεσις, *Η μητέρα του σκύλου*]**

**Further background reading**: those of you who would like to develop a better understanding of Modern Greek Literature of the 20th century, could start from some of the following:

N. Kazantzakis, *Zorba the Greek* (Faber) and/or other novels by Kazantzakis

A. Papadiamandis, *The Murderess* (NYRB Classics, 2010) [*Η φόνισα*]

M. Liberaki, *Three Summers* (Penguin, 2021) [*Τα ψάθινα καπέλα*]

R. Galanaki, *Eleni or Nobody* [*Ελένη ή ο Κανένας*]

M. Douka, *Fool's Gold* (Kedros, Athens 1990) [*Η αρχαία σκουριά*]

C. Ikonomou, *Something Will Happen, You’ll See* (Archipelago, 2016)

C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems* (trans. Keeley & Sherrard, Chatto, 1990; or trans. Sachperoglou, OUP, 2007, or by Mendelsohn, Everyman’s Library, 2014) [in Greek, prefer the Savvidis edition – publ. by Ikaros]

G. Seferis, *Complete Poems* (trans. Keeley & Sherrard, Anvil Press, 1995) [or any other edition] [in Greek the one volume Ikaros edition of *Ποιήματα*]

O. Elytis, *Selected Poems* (trans. Keeley & Sherrard, Anvil Press).

P.Bien, K. Van Dyck et al., *A Century of Greek Poetry*, 2004 [bilingual collection of 20th century poetry; very good, but also quite expensive]

The first seven items listed here are novels. The rest is poetry. Again, there is no need to read *all* these books before coming to Oxford. The list is meant as advice to those of you who want to expand your background reading.

Please do not go to extremes to buy these books; some of them are cheaply and easily available in translation (or in used books sites), others will be expensive and out of print: please leave the latter for reading once you are in Oxford.

Remember: Do not hesitate to contact [dimitris.papanikolaou@stx.ox.ac.uk](mailto:dimitris.papanikolaou@stx.ox.ac.uk) if you have any questions about your preparation and the course.

For questions regarding the language course more specifically, you can also address Kostas Skordyles, [kostas.skordyles@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:kostas.skordyles@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk)

Looking forward to meeting you in October.

Dimitris Papanikolaou, July 2023