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How did the Greeks think about Life? *Kalypso*. By Aldo Ferrabino. 12mo. Pp. viii + 448. Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1914. L. 6. *The Greek Tradition*. By J. A. K. Thomson. Crown 8vo. Pp. xiv + 248. London: Allen and Unwin, 1915. 5s.

Frank Granger

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and it is remarkable that the only year in which there was a full moon on 15th Tubi is 41 A.D. (the day that year being December 25), and it is generally agreed that that is the year as shown by the *Acts of the Apostles* in which the Apostles left Jerusalem. We seem to be justified, therefore, in supposing that this Gnostic statement, like many others, was no mere invention or dream, but rests upon some extra-canonical tradition. Further we are tempted to suppose that the time assigned to the Apostles' sojourn in Jerusalem is an echo of the true time from our Lord's Baptism to the Apostles' departure—that is to say, for over eleven years they with their Master ministered to the centre and nucleus of Judaism. The selection of the date for the crowning revelation of the *Pistis Sophia*, 15th Tubi, must again, it might appear, have its foundation in the fact that this was the anniversary of our Lord's Baptism. The date, then, for this will be 24 (perhaps 28) December, 30 A.D., and we may add that the moon was full on the afternoon of December 28.

In the chapter on Iconography one *obiter dictum* of the author's ought perhaps to be challenged. At Akhmin a figure 'possibly that of the Saviour,' 'probably to be attributed to the fourth century,' represents 'a young man with curly hair, beardless,' while 'a bearded

Christ seems to have been another and perhaps later tradition.' If Dr. Kirsopp Lake's contention that the Crucifixion was about 35 A.D. is accepted, it is possible that a bearded Christ is a relic of a true tradition. Similarly, it is perhaps as possible to see an echo of the Canonical *Apocalypse* in 'the father who is above the seven and within the seven' as of the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Books of Ieon* (p. 197).

It is satisfactory to find that the author turns his back on Weingarten's theory that 'no such thing as a monk existed before the year 340,' and recognises the substantial accuracy of the early history of Egyptian Monasticism. Had he lived, he would, perhaps, have worked out a little more thoroughly the chronology of the lives of St. Antony and Pakhôm, but the general drift of what he says is convincing enough. Since he wrote, M. Alphonse Merguen (*Expositor*, April, 1915, pp. 365-378) has been able to give some fresh light in *A New Document on Christian Monasticism in Egypt*.

In one or two places the author's text is apparently suffering from some form of misprint or has been carelessly expressed—p. 24, l. 24; p. 164, l. 17; p. 200, l. 20; but, this apart, the work, as was said in the first instance, is illuminating, interesting, and inspiring.

T. NICKLIN.

HOW DID THE GREEKS THINK ABOUT LIFE?

Kalypso. By ALDO FERRABINO. 12mo. Pp. viii + 448. Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1914. L. 6.

The Greek Tradition. By J. A. K. THOMSON. Crown 8vo. Pp. xiv + 248. London: Allen and Unwin, 1915. 5s.

SIGNOR FERRABINO and Mr. Thomson have set themselves out to find not what we ought to think about the Greeks, but what the Greeks thought about themselves; and by implication they suggest what from the Greek standpoint we ought to think about ourselves. At any rate the Greeks were neither light-hearted, nor had they solved the

riddle of things. In place of primitive simplicity and calm, of that 'ease in Zion' which Matthew Arnold regarded as a characteristic of Hellenism, Goethe found long ago something altogether different. 'From Homer and Polygnotus I every day learn more clearly that in our life here above ground we have, properly speaking, to enact Hell.' For many a Greek, as for the Calvinist, life was a fierce conflict, with a dim but adequate bias towards the good. And so far as he overlooked that bias, Goethe's judgment inclined towards blasphemy. But here as elsewhere the German, who was also a great European,

helps even by his errors to cure us of our provincialism. In comparison with our perplexities the Greek mind strikes us as simple, and Greek art breathes calm over us when we return to it from the barbarian exterior of our modern streets. But the simplicity and the calm are an illusion. They reward a partial victory slowly and painfully won.

It is not altogether by accident, therefore, that Signor Ferrabino, in his penetrating and delightful study of classical myths, has chosen two stories of conflict in which a monster plays a part only to be overcome by the hero. Perseus and Hercules may indeed personify natural forces and come into their legends along the way marked out by the author. But when they are once there, they lose the marks of their origin. And it is at the moment of struggle that the myth culminates; and then it is seized upon by the poet for its dramatic possibilities. The studies which make up *Kalypso* trace with a sure touch the later accumulation of the incidents and details which in each case are used by the poet. In this field the poets 'do not create, but they put together familiar elements' (286). And after the poet comes the story-teller, the novelist, who also use what they find to hand. Signor Ferrabino, therefore, removes the centre of interest in the myth to a much later place than that to which we are accustomed. It is more illuminating to trace the myth as it appears in the literature of Greece and Rome than to accumulate from primeval sources the numerous details which seem to throw light upon the origin of myth. For the investigation of origins, when it leaves the region of verified history, is as little original as poetry. It cannot create: it can only put together. We are left only too often with a problem that admits of many solutions, and with an indeterminate result. Valuable, therefore, as is the work done in seeking the origin of myth, it yields in real importance to such analysis of the manifestations of the mythopoeic faculty as that which Signor Ferrabino gives us in his sixth chapter.

Mr. Thomson, who also has a message, seems to write without knowledge of the book we have been considering, but

he says very much the same kind of thing. 'The ancient poet . . . treated a traditional theme in a conventional style and form, making it in fact the main part of his artistic effort that he should preserve the convention. But he does not merely reproduce, he renovates it.' Hence on both these computations the myth in the poetry, say, of Euripides or of Ovid is probably more living than at any moment in its previous history. When Abdera went mad over the *Andromeda* of Euripides, the heroine once more lived, according to Lucian, in the general remembrance. In like manner the artistic achievement of Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, recognised I am glad to see by Signor Ferrabino, is something more than a mere shaking of dead bones. Ovid brought many a myth to life again, and for him as for Euripides the revived myth was the vehicle of an art palpitating with modernity. To employ the useful distinction of our Italian author, the mythopoeic achievement of Ovid is worlds apart from the mythological analyses of the historians and rationalists. And indeed the efforts of these last are compared in *Kalypso* (206) to the sprinkling of a 'livid' powder over the object. With the help of this distinction, I think, we must go on to change some values. In mythopoeic achievement Ovid stands at the top of the Roman poets, certainly before Virgil and Horace. Through the myth he catches the transformations, the 'metamorphoses' of life, and plays upon them like a musical composer with the repetitions of a fugue. He conforms to the first of the famous six canons of Chinese pictorial art, and traces 'the Life Movement of the Spirit through the Rhythm of Things,' refining away from the myth all that goes beyond the dramatic needs of his story-telling. 'The universe,' says Mr. Thomson, 'treads a measure, and our very blood is rhythmical. Not poetry nor the dance created rhythm; rather the instinct for rhythm created them' (208). 'In the story, the novel, the people,' says Signor Ferrabino, 'appears to condense along with its own hopes its own philosophy of life, because it fixes there . . . the characteristic models of the figures through

which the common lot moves' (289). Rhythm, movement, the dance, such are the formulae for life which recur in the two books before us, as they are recurring in present-day attempts to explain the creations of the painter and sculptor. In other words, so far as the vicissitudes of the individual life present themselves in a form which may be enacted again, to that extent are they the suitable material for the plot of a drama or novel. Hence the critic also must exhibit his author, not isolated on a pedestal, but sharing in some way in the common life, and by the very perfection of his movements, his style and handling of his material, carrying the common life so far as he represents it to a deeper harmony. On these lines Mr. Thomson well interprets Thucydides as loving Athens like a mistress (46), and Herodotus as the perfect explorer (18), Odysseus up to date.

In translation, I suppose, one simply repeats the rhythm in another musical key, and I further suppose, though this is a great concession, that the traditional grammar is a handbook for transpositions of this kind. 'It must be very hard to translate the classics,' says Mr. Thomson—so hard that I can scarcely think of a translation which does not make one regret that translations are necessary. It is no good talking about Fitzgerald and Omar

Khayyam. Anyone who knows something of the original Persian knows that the English version is really a new book. Curiously enough, in the translations which Mr. Thomson offers, he misses, I think, the meaning of the one phrase in the *Odyssey* which suggests the dancing rhythm of things (201). From the fact that he translates *ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠώς* by 'rosy-fingered dawn,' I should suspect him of being secretly inclined to Samuel Butler's view that the *Odyssey* was written by a woman. For a woman to whom I referred the matter told me that she—and other women—admired pink fingers and approved of the traditional rendering. On the other hand, the poets are accustomed to speak of the feet rather than the hands along with the beauty of dawn. In Milton 'the still morn went out with sandals gray.' Sir John Suckling compared the dancing of a lady to the beauty of the sun on Easter Day. Not her hands, but her feet led up to the sun. So the golden sandals of Hermes bear him over land and sea (*Ω* 340). Hence surely *ῥοδοδάκτυλος* means 'rosy-toed.' In the spirit of these passages may I express the hope that Mr. Thomson will still contribute to the rhythmic movement of classical studies?

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THE ANACREONTEA.

The Anacreontea, etc. Translated into English Verse, with Essay, Notes and additional Poems. By J. F. DAVIDSON. 7" x 5". Pp. x + 212. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1914. 4s. 6d. net.

MR. DAVIDSON'S book contains an introductory essay on the life, character and influence of Anacreon, a translation of the *Anacreontea* into English verse, and verse translations of the lyric fragments and epigrams of Anacreon, followed by poems on Anacreon by ancient writers and by the translator, some experiments in Anacreontics, and a few miscellaneous translations. What Mr. Davidson says of Moore's

translation might be said generally of his own, that 'he avails himself of the liberties of paraphrase to a great extent, but he has preserved the spirit of the original in a praiseworthy manner.' He has not, however, sufficiently represented the restraint and cogent simplicity of this original: compare in *Ode VI.* (*Bergk* 41)—

Lovely Venus, beauty's queen,
Bacchus, loved of King and peasant.

with the directness of—

μετὰ τοῦ καλοῦ Λυαίου
καὶ τῆς καλῆς Κυθήρης

He is not so diffuse as Moore, but often