

from P.L. Fermor's *Roumeli*, written in 1966: relating the conversation he had with a train conductor from Smyrna. "I hate the ancient Greeks. We had to learn all about them at school: Plato, Socrates, Pericles, Leonidas, Aristotle, Euripides, Homer....what have they got to do with me? Perhaps we descend from them, perhaps we don't, what does it matter? And who did they descend from? Nobody knows They were Greeks and so are we, that's all we know. I come from Smyrna .. and I may be more Greek than the Greeks in Athens.. for all I know. Who cares? Greece is an idea, that the thing! That's what keeps us together - that, and the language and the country and the Church ...and those old Greeks, our celebrated ancestors, are a nuisance and I'll tell you why. They haunt us. We can never be as great as they were, nobody can. They make us feel guilty. We can't do anything, people think, because of a few old books and temples and lumps of marble. And clever foreigners who know all about the ancient come here expecting to be surrounded by Apollos and gentlemen in helmets and laurel leaves, and what do they see? Me: a small dark fat man with a moustache and eyes like boot buttons."

Some Dates and Vocabulary

"Proto-Greeks" into the Balkans: 2300 BC

Bronze-Age "Mycenaean Greek" in Linear B Script,
texts 1450-1100 BC

Destruction of Bronze-Age Greek kingdoms, Greece
enters a "Dark Age", 1100-900 BC

800-750 BC: Greek Merchants discover and adapt the
Phoenician [Semitic] letters [officially adopted in
current format 401 BC]

700 BC - 300 BC: *Great Age of Ancient Greek Literature:*

Homer

Hesiod

Greek Lyric Poets

Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides

Herodotus and Thucydides

Plato and Aristotle

Spread of Koiné 322 BC - 146 BC

Beginnings of Atticist Movement

and Early DIGLOSSIA: AD 50

Roman Empire becomes Christian: AD 330

Constantinople fall to the Ottoman Turks: AD 1453

Greek War of Independence 1821-1830

Greece enters European Union: 1992

Μάνος Χατζιδάκις, Τα παιδιά του Πειραιά

ἀπ' το παράθυρό μου στέλνω ένα δύο και τρία και
τέσσερα φιλιὰ,
που φτάνουν στο λιμάνι ένα και δύο και τρία και
τέσσερα πουλιά.

Πώς ἤθελα να εἶχα ένα και δύο και τρία και
τέσσερα παιδιά
που σαν θα μεγαλώσουν όλα θα γίνουν λεβέντες
για χάρη του Πειραιά.

Ὅσο κι αν ψάξω, δεν βρίσκω ἄλλο λιμάνι
τρελή να μ' ἔχει κάνει, όσο τον Πειραιά
που όταν βραδιάζει, τραγούδια μ' αραδιάζει
και τις πενιές του αλλάζει, γεμίζει ἀπό παιδιά.

