

ABSTRACT

In 1856 the Greek (Cephalonian) writer and social critic Andreas Laskaratos (1811-1901) published the «Mysteries of Cephalonia», in which he castigated three aspects of contemporary Greek society: family, religious and political life. As a result of the publication he was excommunicated by the Orthodox Church until 1900. In 1865 Laskaratos was contacted by the Danish Court Chaplain in Athens Theodor Hansen (1838-1913), who intended to make a translation of the «Mysteries of Cephalonia» into Danish and suggested to Laskaratos a cooperation on the project. It was the beginning of a life-long friendship. They only met in person once, in the autumn of 1866 on Cephalonia, but corresponded before and after, first in Italian and later in Greek for more than 35 years. The laskaratian part of the correspondence together with some of Hansen's drafts and other relevant material are preserved in the Hansen Archive in the Royal Library of Copenhagen. Of Hansen's letters which must have matched about 120 of Laskaratos and his family, only a few remnants have survived the earthquakes of 1867 and 1953 in Cephalonia. Only a small part of the letters has been published in the Collected Works of Laskaratos.

The basic part of the thesis is to present a philological edition of the correspondence in its original Italian and Greek form. It is hoped that this edition with an introduction will deliver a testimony to the life and the time of Laskaratos, but it is considered equally important to give a picture of Theodor Hansen and of the various actors as they appear in the correspondence.

The Introduction gives a description of the background of Hansen and Laskaratos and the early evolution of their friendship. With the letters as testimony the career of Hansen in Athens is examined, his disappointment with the Royal Court, and the people he became associated with. After the summer of 1865 when his acquaintance with Laskaratos began, they exchanged letters frequently discussing various subjects arising from their daily lives in Athens and Cephalonia. Special attention is given to the attempts of Hansen to establish contact between people who, to Hansen's mind, seemed congenial to Laskaratos and might contribute to lessen the isolation he felt (Emm. Roidis, M. Kalopothakis and N. Lunzi).

The editorial principles are conservative and seek to present a text as close as possible to the original, which respects the various morphological and orthographical idiosyncrasies of Laskaratos well-known from his published texts. The edition is annotated and includes besides a bibliography and an Index nominum two appendices (a publication of Hansen's drafts and a description of the laskaratian parts of the libraries of Hansen and of his fellow traveller Jean Pio).

Keywords: correspondence, cultural relations, Greece, Denmark, Andreas Laskaratos, Theodor Hansen.