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Research Proposal

Love and Death in Solomos and Elytis.

Signs of German Romanticism in their work.

Solomos and Elytis are two of the most significant representatives of two different movements in Greece and their work is a milestone for Modern Greek Literature. As Kriaras mentions, in the poetry which Solomos wrote during his poetic maturity, the reader can find the musicality of Romanticism combined with elements of Classicism. Within tones of epic and tragic poetry, his work reflects influences from Italian and German Romanticism. Elytis, on the other hand, represents Modernism and Surrealism.

This project aims to examine and compare the way in which, under the influence of German Idealism, these poets present the themes of Love and Death, focusing especially on their use of female figures.

More specifically, I will be examining the way that female figures are represented specifically in *Λάμπρος* (Lambros), *Όνειρο* (The dream), *Γυναίκα της Ζάκυνθος* (The Woman of Zakynthos), *Κρητικός* (The Cretan) and *Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* (The Free Besieged) of Solomos, in comparison with *Μαρία Νεφέλη* (Maria Nephelē), *Μαρίνα των βράχων* (Marina of the Rocks) and *Μονόγραμμα* (The monogram) of Elytis.

Elytis reflects that the best way modern poets can overcome what Harold Bloom would call “anxiety of influence” (1973) is not to turn their heads elsewhere, but to approach existing poetry valiantly, testing and getting to know all of its aspect. Only this, according to the poet, is the way they could have a chance in outbidding it at some point. This is the method that he followed himself by studying and investigating Greek literature deeply, and especially distinguishing Solomos among other poets, taking note of his most striking lines and reaching the conclusion that: *Solomos was one out of the five greatest poets that the world has ever seen.*

As mentioned, Solomos was influenced by German Idealism and Romanticism, struggling to adopt, utilize and apply foreign sources and models to Greek poetry. He chose the editions and the translations he preferred very carefully and he either ordered books of German Romanticism in Italian translations or asked his friends who were fluent in German to translate specific pieces of certain works for him.

One of the first scholars to highlight the relation between Solomos and German Romanticism was Polylas, who focused on Schiller and Hegel. Later on, Veloudis, in 1989, continued and widened this research by also mentioning Goethe, Klopstock, the Schlegel brothers, Bürger, Novalis, Fichte, Schelling, among others.

The fact that Elytis embraces the poetic tradition of the past does not make him any less of a Surrealist, though. On the contrary, Elytis reconstructs and remodifies surrealist poetry, incorporating elements and approaches of Romanticism in a variety of themes and topics. Thus, my project is a comparative research, where Elytis as a reader of Solomos and of German Romantics will be examined.

