

From Lincolnshire to Zakynthos; Two Greek Poets in England: Andreas Kalvos and George Seferis

by JOHN E. REXINE

Books and poetry lovers in Louth and district must be kicking themselves that they did not know previously that there was a famous poet and scholar buried as close to their doorsteps at Keddington — but then, neither did anyone else, for no sooner was Andrea Kalvos (or Andrea Joanidis, as his real name was) buried, than he was forgotten by all but his wife and a few immediate friends, all of whom passed to the great beyond several generations ago.

Consider, if you will, the trade that the good people of Keddington may have missed. Can you visualize his Greek admirers visiting his grave at Keddington to pay homage to the National poet of Greece? Who knows, but Keddington might have been one of these flourishing places where "Hot Water, Teas and Minerals" are dispensed from wooden huts to thirsty visitors, while the village story tellers, with a stretch of imagination, might have sat comfortably in some Inn, telling imaginative tales of Kalvo's [sic] life in Louth.

Now the body is to be taken away and local people will not be given any opportunity at all to exploit the fame which had been in their midst. Alas, perhaps if the poet had been given honour during his lifetime, in the county [sic] of his adoption, his neighbours might have profited by his fame, but here we have a new story, of how those who denied a man in his lifetime were themselves denied after his death.

So reads a major article in the *Louth Standard* of Louth, Lincolnshire, under the headline, "Our Unknown Great," in its issue dated March 11, 1939, some forty-one years ago, hinting at a mystery that had long remained unsolved. The body of Andreas Kalvos had lain buried in

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the churchyard of St. Margaret's in Keddington since 1869, and it was to remain there, along with that of his second English wife, until 1960, when another Greek poet, then ambassador to the Court of St. James, would finally make the necessary arrangements to have it brought back to his native island of Zakynthos. The outbreak of the Second World War delayed the transfer for more than two decades, but the mystery of where the author of the *Odes* was during the last seventeen years of his life would finally be solved.

George Seferis, Greece's first Nobel Prize winner, while serving with the Greek government-in-exile, had published an edition of Kalvos's *Lyra*¹ in 1942, with an introduction dated December 21, 1941, from Pretoria (Transvaal, Neo-Alexandrian Editions), in which he early exhibited his interest in and appreciation of this Greek poet of the revolutionary period, whose only poetic work consisted of ten odes published in Geneva in 1824 and ten others in Paris in 1826² — a production that went virtually unnoticed until Greece's famous poet, Kostis Palamas, focused on its significance in 1888. So it was not only the people in Lincolnshire who were unaware of his achievement; the Greeks themselves did not honor him during his lifetime. Very long thereafter, Seferis, who also wrote an essay entitled 'Απορίες διαβάζοντας τόν Κάλβο,³ placed him, along with Dionysios Solomos, Kostis Palamas, and Constantine Cavafy, among the four most important poets of the nineteenth century, the poet of country, freedom, and virtue (*arete*), and one who followed "the middle road" in his use of the Greek language. Seferis saw Kalvos as the Greek poet of the diaspora *par excellence*.

Andreas Kalvos,⁴ a brilliant but strange man, was born in Zakynthos in April of 1792. His father's name was John of Mandouki⁵ and his mother was Andriani Roukani. He was baptized four months after his birth by the priest of St. Nicholas of the Elders. In 1805, his parents were divorced, and the father took Andreas and his younger brother Nicholas to Leghorn, where their father went into business. In

¹ Κάλβου: 'Η λύρα. Μέ Πρόλογο Γιώργου Σεφέρη. 'Εκδόσεις Νεοαλεξανδρινών, 1942.

² By the Guile Fick and Renouard Presses, respectively.

³ See Δοκιμές, Β' 'Εκδοση (Athens: 'Εκδοτικός Οίκος Γ. Φέξη, 1962), pp. 43-44.

⁴ The bibliography on Kalvos is now quite substantial. Especially useful is vol. 68 (September 1960) of *Νέα 'Εστία*, which is totally dedicated to Kalvos. Strongly recommended are the articles by George T. Zoras: "Andreas Kalvos," pp. 3-86; "The Works of Andreas Kalvos," pp. 87-106, and "Andreas Kalvos in the First Reviews," pp. 107-138. Basic too is Nikolaos Tomadakis's "Κριτικά, Βιογραφικά, και βιβλιογραφικά στον Κάλβο," in *Hellenika*, vol. 10 (1937-1938), pp. 19-51.

⁵ There is a brief biography of Kalvos by Spyridon Deviazis in the 1881 edition of 'Η Λύρα 'Ανδρέου Κάλβου και ανέκδοτος ἕμνος 'Αντωνίου Μαρτελάου, published in Zakynthos by the Parnassos Press of Sergios Raftanis in 1881, pp. 9-12, that is much cited.

Italy, Kalvos met his famous countryman Ugo Foscolo in 1813, and became his companion and private secretary, traveling with him to Switzerland and England. Although Foscolo wrote to Michael Ciciliani from Florence in 1813 to get a scholarship from the people of Zakynthos for a five-year period for Kalvos's education, there were no results. Foscolo tells us of two tragedies that Kalvos wrote: *Danaids* and *Theramenes*. In 1816 Foscolo and Kalvos were in London, but, after a quarrel that has never been fully explained but is well documented, the two separated. Kalvos became a private tutor, particularly of Italian, and married an English girl whose name we now know, Maria Theresa Thomas, who died on May 17, 1819,⁶ by whom he had a daughter who did not survive. In a letter from one of his English pupils, Susan Fortune Rideout, we learn that she fell in love with Kalvos after two years of Italian lessons, and, from her letter dated December 2, 1819, that he reciprocated but hesitated to proceed to marriage so soon after the death of his first wife. Susan Rideout writes: ⁷

I have read many times your letter. I have tried to silence my own heart. I have tried to command my own feelings. I have been thankful that the duties of the day were imperious, that I would not delay them, that I could not give myself up to reflexion. Now that I am free, and I have no hesitation in revealing to you every sentiment of my soul. Most truly I sympathize with you, most sincerely I wish I had known her you loved, and most clearly do I see that it is impossible your heart can so soon forget its favorite object, and give its feelings to another. I told you I could forget myself, I prove it now — for never was there a being more severe on the frailties of her own sex, never one who had a higher sense of delicacy and dignity belonging to it — never one who would have so condemned in another the conduct she has been guilty of, herself.

In another letter (number 224), we are told: "I have merely said you were a widower — that your wife was an Englishwoman, and that she survived your marriage only a few months — avoiding all dates."⁸

Later, when the two were close to marriage and Susan's family vetoed the proposed match because Kalvos's economic situation was too fluid, we also learn that, even if they had been married, Kalvos was planning to return to Italy and Greece, at least for a while, and Susan

⁶ Mario Vitti, *Πηγές για τη βιογραφία του Κάλβου* (Ἐπιστολές, 1813-1820), Thessaloniki: *Hellenika*, Supplement 15, 1963, p. 150, note 156 and p. 151, note 186.

⁷ Vitti, *Πηγές*, p. 108, Letter No. 225.

⁸ Vitti, *Πηγές*, p. 107, Letter No. 224.

wanted to go with him. Despite the family's rejection of the marriage, Susan still loved him. She says: ⁹

You cannot doubt my affection for you, but if you doubt my will to conquer it (if right to do so) you do not know me. I am and will be yours most faithfully, but not if any other motive than affection for me influence you; and never, till you can support me as *you* would wish, without too great labour or "too" great sacrifices. It would be my delight and my duty to assist you; your pursuits would, as far as possible, be mine, your pleasures my pleasures, your wishes my rule, your opinions my guide.¹⁰

Kalvos's determination to return to Greece has been romanticized. It is in 1824 that he published his first ten odes under the title, *Lyra*, in Geneva and in 1826 the last ten odes in Paris (they were reprinted in London, Kerkyra, and Athens). He went to Nafplion to participate in the Greek Revolution, but, not finding an appropriate position, returned to Zakynthos. The governor of the Ionian Republic, High Commissioner Lord Guilford, invited him to become a professor of Greek and Italian at the newly established Ionian University. Despite some difficulties, he also served as professor of philosophy and possibly theology, having previously been proclaimed a Doctor of Philosophy by the Ionian faculty. He also simultaneously served as a professor and principal of the Gymnasium, but, when the students applauded his colleague Orioli more than himself, he is said to have resigned in a huff and returned to giving private lessons. Nevertheless, he was in his native island for at least twenty-six years before returning to England in 1852,¹¹ during which time he seems to have vanished into total obscurity. In his introduction to his edition of Kalvos's *Odes*, Seferis, who himself twice served in England ¹² (in the Greek consulate in London from 1931 to 1934 and as ambassador from 1957 to 1962), who saw in Kalvos, I suspect, something of himself in *Xeniteia*,¹³ perhaps even something of his own poly-

⁹ Vittì, Πηγές, p. 111-112, Letter No. 229.

¹⁰ The letters by Susan Fortune Rideout comprise No. 186-No. 244 in Vittì's collection, are found on pp. 87-125, and constitute very interesting material to support the view that, during his first stay in England, Kalvos was popular with and highly attractive and attracted to the opposite sex—a contrast to the later Calvinistic, Puritanical picture of him that emerges from his Corfiot and second English experience.

¹¹ In Corfu, he is represented as highly scholarly, strange, strong-willed, opinionated, and a tough disciplinarian and taskmaster who always wore conservative dark clothing. He is even reported to have painted all of his furniture black! We have no evidence of personal contact between him and Dionysios Solomos.

¹² He first visited London in 1924-25.

¹³ Seferis, Δοκίμης, pp. 170-172.

glot background (French, Greek, English — Kalvos's languages were Italian, Greek, French, and English primarily), may also have seen something of his own struggle to work his own poetry, the tragic loneliness of the creative struggle, certainly something of his own struggle to create from his Hellenic roots, in a natural language that is sensitive to the tradition of the Greek language, a genuinely modern Greek poetry that is, at the same time, fully aware of the European literary heritage¹⁴ but remains truly Greek. Foscolo had told Kalvos to study the classics intensively, and Seferis certainly knew his classics. Seferis wanted to see scholars investigate what he saw as the three periods of Kalvos's life: ¹⁵ Kerkyra and Greece; Italy, Switzerland, and France; England. Seferis also wanted to know whether Kalvos knew Koraeis; what books he read; what authors he loved; and what he did and said about poetry during his long period of silence. To this date, although some of what Seferis asked has been answered, most of his questions remain without a clear response. Kalvos produced a prodigious number of translations and articles, many of which have yet to be located, but, in the words of Seferis, as a poet he died at the age of 34, never to be heard from again.¹⁶

The mystery, of course, remains. More mysterious than his failure to continue to write poetry is the obscurity into which Kalvos fell from age sixty to age seventy-seven, although he was a man who had been extremely vigorous all of his life. Not even the geographical location of his later years was able to be determined until a Cypriot lawyer named A. K. Indianos¹⁷ from Nicosia started investigating. What he discovered was that a London Greek Orthodox priest¹⁸ had actually visited the site of his grave in Keddington in 1938. This enabled Indianos, who was working on a biography of Kalvos, to discover the grave and to publish the location and information that he had recovered. The marriage certificate was located in the Parish of St. Pancras, Middlesex, dated February 5, 1853, recording that Andrew Kalvo married Charlotte Augusta Wadams of St. Mary Stratford, Essex County, in rites conducted by LWT. Dale. The parents (both deceased at the time) were listed as John Kalvos and John Wadams respectively. The bride was twenty years younger than the groom. The inscriptions in St. Margaret's graveyard in Keddington read:

¹⁴ Seferis, *Δοκίμεις*, p. 22. One is reminded of Seferis's famous saying, "There are no virgin births in art [Δέν υπάρχει παρθενογέννηση στη Τέχνη]. The poet must know his own poetic tradition and that of others."

¹⁵ Seferis, *Κάλλου*: *Ἡ Δύρα*, p. 16.

¹⁶ Seferis, *Κάλλου*: *Ἡ Δύρα*, p. 12.

¹⁷ A. Indianos, "The Grave of Kalvos in England," *Νέα Ἑστία*, 68 (1960), pp. 200-205. His original article, entitled "Contribution to the Study of A. Kalvos," appeared in *Νέα Ἑστία*, 24 (September 15, 1938), pp. 1237-1244.

¹⁸ The name of the priest was Archimandrite I. Virvos. See Indianos, "The Grave of Kalvos in England," *Νέα Ἑστία*, 68 (September 1960), p. 203, note 18.

Sacred
 The Memory Charlotte Augusta
 Andrea Kalvo Ph.D.
 (late of Corfu)
 Who Departed This Life
 November 3rd, 1869
 In His 78th Year
 Deeply Beloved and Lamented By His Wife and Friends
 He Is Not Dead But Sleepeth
 He Had Gone But To Rest,
 And Christ Our Lov'd One Keepeth
 Now and Forever Blessed.

(Over Kalvos's grave)

Sacred To
 The Memory Charlotte Augusta
 Widow of Andrea Kalvo Ph.D.
 Who Fell Asleep in Jesus
 June 23rd, 1888
 Aged 76 Years
 There Remaineth Therefore A Rest For the People
 of God.

(Over his wife's grave)

There could be no doubt about whose graves these were, and verification was made by consulting the register of the parish church of Keddington in Lincolnshire for 1869 and 1888. Dr. Kalvos was buried on November 8, 1869, and his widow almost twenty years later on June 27, 1888, according to the rites of the Church of England. Rolt F. Spencer, L.L.D., Vicar of St. Matthews, Marylebone, London, officiated at Kalvos's burial and W. W. Kirby at his wife's.¹⁹

According to the *Louth Standard* (March 11, 1939), an inquiry at the mayor's office (John R. Coney) in the thirties produced no information.²⁰ The Greek Orthodox priest that came to Louth in April 12, 1938, called first upon the president of the Louth Naturalists, Antiquarian and Literary Society, but, because Dr. Walker was not a native, the priest could produce no useful information. He next visited the registrar of births and deaths, a Mr. Goodwin, but was unable to see J. W. White,²¹ the curator of the Louth Museum, who was not at home.

It was originally Indianos who interviewed many people in Louth, hoping to find information for his proposed book. It was a solicitor,

¹⁹ Indianos, *Néa Έστία*, 68, pp. 202-205.

²⁰ Gennadius Library, Seferis Archives, 'Ενόρτητα X, 'Αρ. Φακ. Μ. Σεφέρη 45.

²¹ The Seferis Archives in the Gennadius Library in Athens contains Seferis's correspondence with J. W. White, a copy of White's handwritten report on the Kalvos search, and copies of local newspaper notices on the Kalvos exhumation.

Mr. W. Brewer, who was able to give him a page from a Holy Trinity Church magazine, in which was published the announcement of Kalvos's death.

Indianos also interviewed White (with whom Ambassador Seferis was later to have a correspondence and direct communication, and whom the Greek government was later to honor with the Golden Cross of the Order of the Phoenix), who took him to Holmes Lane to see the house in which Kalvos spent so many years of his life. Indianos was able to acquire the services of a local photographer to take a picture of the house for his use.

In Louth, very few people could be found who could really remember Kalvos since it had been seven decades since his death. A Miss Ethel Sharpley remembered his walking about Louth in a skull cap. She could remember Mrs. Kalvos quite well because her sister attended the Kalvos school, and the poet had personally presented her with a mathematics prize. A Mrs. James Wood, however, who had attended the Kalvos school, could not remember Kalvos at all. A Mr. Smith, a Louth tinner, could remember delivering bread to the Kalvos school as an errand boy for a local baker and recalled that a Greek or Swiss foreigner lived there. (In those days anyone not from Louth was considered a foreigner, even Mrs. Kalvos, who was originally from London). A Miss Goulding told White that Kalvos had written a very fine poem on England which could not be located.

The Reverend H. W. Cholmeley, who was vicar of Keddington at the time, indicated that he had seen several visitors who were interested in Kalvos and had also received a letter from Greece, asking what formalities had to be completed before the body could be exhumed and sent back to Greece. The Reverend Cholmeley advised his correspondents to approach the Greek embassy in London, and have them take the matter up with the Home Office, which would issue an exhumation order, and contact the Church of England to have the necessary arrangements made — as was done. As was already indicated, the Second World War delayed the completion of the process until George Seferis was Greek ambassador to London.

In a letter to George Seferis dated August 23, 1959, from London, A. K. Indianos²² writes that he is endeavoring to continue and complete his investigation concerning the life and work of Kalvos during the period 1816-1822, and he refers Seferis to his article of 1938 in *Nea Estia*. He also calls attention to the fact that a group was going to visit the grave of Kalvos, and he wondered whether Seferis would like to come along. In a subsequent letter dated October 8, 1959, Indianos indicated to Seferis that he had visited the gravesite on September 2, 1959, and was distressed to see that the inscription was worn and that the cross over it had suffered damage. He also reported that he was studying English laws concerned with exhumation and that he was very much disturbed

²² Both letters cited here are in the Seferis archives of the Gennadius Library.

about separating the bones of Kalvos from those of his wife. Again, he indicated that he was working on the acquisition of new material about Kalvos and was preparing an article explaining the linguistic form that his odes took.

A memorandum²³ in the Seferis archives written by A. G. Xydis, First Press Secretary of the Greek embassy in London, describes how he had been charged by the ambassador to review the question of transferring Kalvos's remains to Greece. He was in Louth May 24, 1959, to examine local conditions, the condition of the grave, and whatever local information could be acquired about the poet. With the assistance of the vicar, the Reverend Stanley Hoar, he found the grave near the twelfth century church of Keddington, about three miles from Louth, in an overgrown and apparently untended condition. The letters of the inscription had been so corroded that they could not be made out easily and had to be verified from the church register. This verification provided absolute evidence about the date of Kalvos's death, which had hitherto been disputed. In the rural town of Louth, Xydis met the historian and antiquarian J. K. White, who was also the secretary-treasurer of the Louth Naturalists, Antiquarian and Literary Society, who had instinctively gathered information about Kalvos and his wife. From this emerged the fact that Mrs. Kalvos ran a Ladies Boarding School in a building still preserved on High Holme Road and now serving as a county hospital.

Kalvos's desk was claimed to have survived, and later Seferis reported seeing it himself. Kalvos's library had been sold. It is possible that Kalvos may have met Alfred Lord Tennyson and his brother, who had gone to school in Louth. The secretary recommended that a commemorative plaque be placed on the site of Kalvos's Keddington grave once the coffin was removed and that the Lord Archbishop of Lincoln, Canon Holt, the vicar Stanley Hoar of Keddington, White and members of his society, the mayor of Louth, Professor Jenkins, a Mr. Leatham and other members of the BBC, Mrs. Elli Lambridi, S. A. Sophroniou, Cypriot philologist and student of Kalvos, and a representative of the Anglo-Hellenic Union, be invited to the commemorative ceremonies.

On March 16, 1960, a group of officers and other officials watched workmen exhume the remains of Andreas Kalvos and his wife from the tiny churchyard where he had been buried for ninety-one years. The remains were placed in lead coffins, sealed, and sent to London for dispatch to Athens. Prayers were said over the grave by the Rural Dean Canon F. A. Holt. The priest in charge of St. Margaret's Church, Keddington, Reverend G. S. Hoar, was also present.

On August 14, 1960, a tablet of white Greek marble with a blue lettered inscription was presented to the town of Louth, having been approved previously by St. Margaret's Parochial Council. The inscription was taken from Kalvos's own poetry:

²³ Entitled Μετακομιδή τῶν ὀστέων τοῦ Ἀνδρέου Κάλβου, and dated March 31, 1960.

Ἄς μὴ μοῦ δώσῃ ἡ μοῖρα μου
 εἰς ξένην γῆν τὸν τάφον·
 εἶναι γλυκὺς ὁ θάνατος
 μόνον ὅταν κοιμώμεθα
 εἰς τὴν πατρίδα

During the service, the Dean of Lincoln prayed:

O Father of all, we thank thee for thy servant Andreas Kalvos who lived in this region in days gone by, and whose earthly remains found rest in the cemetery of this church: We thank thee for the beauty of his poetry and for noble thoughts made noble still by his genius. And we pray that through the inspiration and work of poets and all kinds of artists the nations of men may be drawn closer together in sympathy and understanding: through Jesus Christ our Lord.²⁴

After the unveiling by the ambassador, the presiding Dean of Lincoln, Bishop Colin Dunlop, spoke. Finally, Ambassador Seferis's speech followed, and, because it has never been published, I reproduce it here *in toto*:

It is a privilege and, indeed, a great honour for me to be among you this afternoon and to unveil, on behalf of Greece, the inscription which commemorates the life and death, in this country — of Lincolnshire, of the poet Andreas Kalvos and his wife Augusta.

Before I say some few words about the poet, I want to thank all of you for being present at this ceremony and express my heartfelt gratitude to the authorities and all those who have helped us in the performance of this pious duty.

If one had to mention three outstanding names in the

²⁴ Ambassador Seferis was much impressed by the Bishop's prayer (letter from Seferis to the Dean of Lincoln from London, dated August 17, 1960), and cites it on several occasions, notably in his *Ταχυδρόμος* article, which is reproduced in *Νέα Ἑστία*, 68 (September 1960), pp. 355-356, and his diary entry on Kalvos under Sunday evening, August 14, 1960, reproduced in *Δοκιμές*, p. 388. The Bishop wrote to Seferis, in a letter of August 16, 1960:

Your Excellency,

It was a great pleasure and privilege to meet you and Madame Seferiades both at Louth and in Lincoln.

I thought the ceremony on Sunday in Keddington Church was most moving and I greatly look forward to reading your Address which I was too deaf to hear on Sunday.

It was a great delight to show round the Cathedral one who showed much deep interest in and knowledge of the building.

I enclose, as promised, the Dedicatory Prayer which you asked for.

spiritual life of the renascent Greece during the first years of the nineteenth century, certainly one of those three names would be the name of Kalvos. He is a landmark; a beacon showing the coming to maturity of a nation which, after many centuries of an exceptionally hard foreign rule, decides to reconquer against terrific odds its freedom. It is the period of the Greek War of Independence, during which the British nation was to play such an important part. At the outbreak of this war Kalvos was 29: he was born on the island of Zante in 1792.

His life has not been a happy one since childhood. At the age of ten, his father takes him to Italy, away from his native land and his mother, for whom he feels a profound devotion and whom he shall never see again. This bereavement will affect him very deeply; it will mark his work and leave a scar on his character. In Italy, where he is educated, he meets another poet from Zante, Ugo Foscolo, and comes with him to England in 1816.

He lives in London, in Soho. We can imagine him by then as an ardent young man imbued with the ideas of romanticism and emancipation which had spread over Europe by the turn of the century, leading the difficult life of a poor intellectual. In London, he marries and has a daughter, but in a very short time his wife and child die.

We know also that he has given at least two lectures in London at the Argyll Rooms. They are mentioned in the *New Times* of June 10, 1818, and July 5, 1819. According to the newspaper, "the main subject" of the lecture "was to show, that the pronunciation of the existing race of Greeks is the same as was that of their ancestors"; then the article goes on: "Interesting, as such a subject is in itself, it was rendered more so in the present instance, by the circumstance that the lecturer was speaking of the tongue of his own country, and by the well regulated earnestness with which he advocated his opinions. Mr. Kalvos is a very young man and we understand has not been very long in England. The progress he has made in England must have been astonishingly rapid. His style is polished and perspicuous and his delivery elegant and animated. . ."

This information is invaluable to us because our knowledge of Kalvos's life is full of gaps. We do not even have a portrait of his physical appearance. We try to imagine the aspect of the man through his poetry. A forceful, stubborn face with piercing eyes — is the image which is conveyed to me.

In any case, at the moment when he leaves England, in 1821, there is every reason to believe that he had already written the stanzas which have preserved for us his impressions of this country. These are impressions of might, wealth, freedom, and dignity; he says:

Wild and enormous
rush the waters of the sea,
fling and sunder themselves
fiercely on the rocks of Albion.

On the shores of mighty Thames
spills power and glory
and riches uncountable
the Horn of Plenty.

There the Aeolian breeze bore me
There sweet freedom's rays
nourished and comforted me.

The years 1821 to 1826 are the most creative years of our poet. During this period — his early thirties — he publishes, in Geneva and in Paris, his *Odes*, the poems which made his fame.

In 1826, he visits Greece and then settles in the island of Corfu, where he teaches at the Ionian Academy. According to certain information, his character had become sombre and irritable; his friends were few. We do not know the reasons of his sorrow and of his despair. We do not know either why, in 1852, he left Corfu. Then he came for the second time to England, married a lady in London — Augusta — and settled here up to the end of his life. It is reasonable to think that after a stormy and unhappy existence he found in this peaceful country a harbour of calm and concentration.

I felt I ought to give you a short outline of Kalvos's life because, although he is by the resonance of his voice a great Greek, he may be considered, in the same time, as a member of your community. Indeed, for long years he shared the bread of your forefathers, and among them he faced the dreadful light of death. He was a man devoted to the highest ideals and a pure poet. It is admirable to feel, in our days, after so many changes in our ways of feeling, how deep and direct is his perception, how alive and invigorating his poetry remains. And it is moving to consider that the Greek Poet Andreas Kalvos was destined to end his life in this country of a great English poet, in this "Tennyson Country"; that he was to run a school in the town of Louth, where Lord Tennyson was educated. It is a moving symbol of the old links between our two nations.

Now, in this Keddington Church, it is not perhaps out of place to remember Kalvos's line on Byron's death:

As a man I mourn a man
according to nature's order;
tears are not shed in vain
on the grave of the illustrious.

George Seferis described his version of what happened at Kedington in an article entitled "Sto kimitirio tou Kalvou" in *Tachydromos* (September 3, 1960) and reproduced in *Nea Estia* (68, pp. 353-356, September 1960), and in his diary, "Kalvos 1960" (reproduced in *Dhokimes*, Athens, 1962, G. Fexis, pp. 369-389). In this article, he tried to imagine what Kalvos must have been like in this rural setting in Louth, thirty-three miles from Boston, 152 miles northwest of London, with its fifteenth century church with one of the most beautiful spires in England, where John Smith (later of Virginia), Sir John Franklin, and Alfred and his brother Charles Tennyson, had been educated at the local grammar school, and where their poems had been published by a Louth bookseller in 1827. Seferis was curious to know if Lord Byron, to the death of whom Kalvos had dedicated one of his odes, had ever met Kalvos in Louth. (In his response to Seferis's inquiry, J. W. White, in his letter of January 28, 1961, indicates that the chronology makes it unlikely, but what was enticing was the fact that Lord Byron's first and perhaps greatest love, Mary Anne Chaworth, settled in Louth with her squire husband, John Musters, at Manor House, East Gate, Louth, paralled to High Holme, the site of the Kalvoses' home.)

Seferis could not help but wonder:

The *Odes* took me elsewhere; away from this rural town. Did the poet himself even think of them; dedicated as he was to the education of Victorian maidens, cut off from his region, gobbled up completely and more so by this provincial life? Did the sound of his verses satisfy him or did the habit of bitterness cause him to avoid even them? For a moment I remembered Rimbaud in Abyssinia. If some compatriot had encountered him by chance and asked him; "Sir, are you the poet Kalvos?" What would he have answered? But no fellow countryman went to this distant part of England, and the poems of Kalvos, those years, seemed forgotten forever.

A copy of a cable, sent to the Greek ministry of foreign affairs, in the Seferis Archives, dated March 17, 1960, reads as follows:

Two coffins with the bones of Kalvos and his wife are being shipped to Athens with Olympic Airways Flight No. 410 departing London Saturday the 19th.

Seferiades

The cable had been preceded by a telegram to the ministry in Athens (dated August 16, 1960, Protocol No. 1200), announcing that the Greek ambassador Seferiades had, in the name of the Greek government, unveiled the commemorative plaque for Andreas Kalvos at the Kedington Church near Louth with all due pomp and ceremony.

On the nineteenth of March, the coffins arrived exactly on schedule

at Athens.²⁵ At the Athens airport there waited representatives from the Greek ministry of foreign affairs, the Parliament, the ministry of education, the University of Athens, the Academy of Athens, presidents of literary organizations, representatives of the Editors' Union, of Septinsular societies, and others. Not a single notice appeared in the press because the workers of the daily newspapers were on strike. The coffins were reverently placed in the medieval metropolis of St. Eleutherios, next to the modern metropolis, in the church where the patron saint of Zakynthos, Dionysios, had been ordained. A *trisagion* was chanted, and wreaths were laid by representatives of the state and various cultural foundations and organizations. On the fifth of June 1960, the remains of Kalvos and his wife were received with all due pomp and ceremony — governmental and ecclesiastic — in Zakynthos, where they now rest in a mausoleum, side by side with Greece's national poet, Dionysios Solomos. The mausoleum also contains a library, museum, and archives, and is an appropriate place for the poet whose native land at last remembered him and spared no expense in preserving his memory. At last Andreas Kalvos was recognized as a national poet by the Greek state.

The two coffins were placed in the Church of St. Nicholas of Molos, where the people of Zakynthos could pay their respects to their distinguished son and his wife. In the Government House of Zakynthos, Elias Venezis delivered a eulogy, followed by professors George Zoras of the University of Athens and Linos Politis of the University of Thessaloniki, a representative of the British Council, and Marinos Sigourous. The most frequently quoted verses were Kalvos's own:

ᾧ φιλότατῃ πατρίδι,
ὃ θαυμασιὰ νῆσος,
Ζάκυνθε· σὺ μοῦ ἔδωκας
τὴν πνοήν, καὶ
τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος
τὰ χρυσᾶ δῶρα!

Oh most loved country,
oh wonderful island
Zakynthos; you have given me
the breath of life and the golden
gifts of Apollo.

Καὶ σὺ τὸν ὕμνον δέξου·
ἐχθαίρουσιν οἱ Ἀθάνατοι
τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ βροντάουσιν
ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς
τῶν ἀχαρίστων.

You, too, receive the hymn;
the immortals hate the soul
and thunder against the heads
of the ungrateful.

Ποτὲ δὲν σὲ ἐλησιμόνησα
ποτέ—Καὶ ἡ τύχη μ' ἔρριψε
μακρὰ ἀπὸ σέ· μὲ εἶδε
τὸ πέμπτον τοῦ αἰῶνος
εἰς ξένα ἔθνη.

Never have I forgotten you,
Never! It has been my luck
which has cast me
Far from you. One fifth of my
life has seen me
in foreign lands.

²⁵ Although no newspaper account appeared because Greek newspapers were

Kalvos's prayer:

<p>Ἄς μὴ μοῦ δώσῃ ἡ μοῖρα μου εἰς ξένην γῆν τὸν τάφον· εἶναι γλυκὺς ὁ θάνατος μόνον ὅταν κοιμώμεθα εἰς τὴν πατρίδα²⁶</p>	<p>My fate not grant me a tomb in a foreign land Death is sweet only in our own native land.</p>
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at last became a reality, and is permanently inscribed on his tomb in Zakynthos. The poet who has been called the Pindar of modern Greece, and whom Seferis said "is like a person who struggles between existence and nonexistence," finally returned home on June 5, 1960.

on strike, see, however, the account of Petros Haris, "The Return: Andreas Kalvos in Zakynthos" in *Nέα Ἑστία*, 68 (September 1960), pp. 340-342, and Elias Venezis's "Kalvos Returns to Zakynthos," on pp. 335-340 of the same volume.

²⁶ I have reproduced the Greek text from Seferis's edition of Kalvos's poetry. A subject that deserves critical investigation, and to which some clues are provided by Seferis's printed remarks on Kalvos, is why Kalvos generated such interest in the poet Seferis.