

## Cervantes and Greece

The author of Don Quixote, Miguel de Cervantes has a special relationship with Greece, a relationship that surely he will remember all his life. "I will die fighting." The Ottoman Empire would face the Sacred Union, composed of the most powerful Christian kingdoms of southern Europe on October 7, 1571 at Lepanto. An inconspicuous young Spaniard will be among those who will take part in the famous battle. He was dreaming of heroic battles and military exploits, which at that time seemed rather weak. His name was Miguel de Cervantes.

The battle ended with the triumph of Europeans. Cervantes had received two bullets in the chest and another in his left hand, which remained paralyzed until the end of his life. The joy that he fought against the infidels was such huge that he forgot the pain of injuries. The heroism was recognized and he was promoted to a higher rank, and even getting a higher salary ....



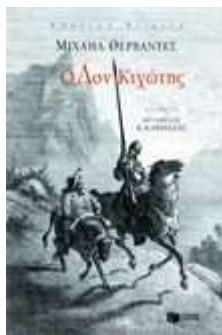
## How Don Quixote spoke Greek

The wanderings of the hero of Cervantes in Greek literature and theater

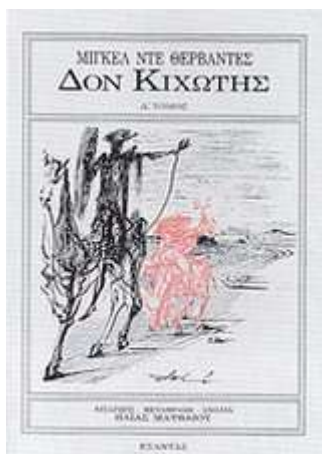


The most popular literary hero and the most imaginative knight of literature met with the Greek language too late. The first project in the Greek translation attempts will be made in the 19th century. Important translations circulating in Modern Greek language are:

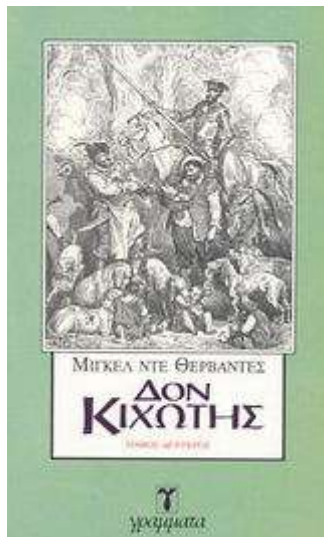
1) Δον Κιχώτης (μετάφραση και πρόλογος Κ. Καρθαίου). Αθήναι: Εκδόσεις Σύγχρονης Λογοτεχνίας. 1954.



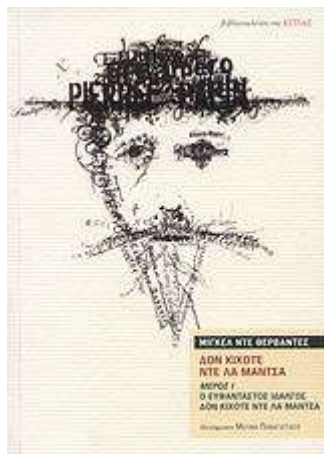
2) Δον Κιχώτης (εισαγωγή, μετάφραση, σχόλια Ηλίας Ματθαίου). Αθήναι: Εξάντας, 1994.



3) Δον Κιχώτης, μετάφραση Δημ. Ρήσος, εκδόσεις Γράμματα, 1997



4) Δον Κιχώτης, Μετάφραση Μελίνα Παναγιωτίδου, Εστία 2009



Don Quixote is certainly considered a symbol of poetic soul and the famous Hidalgo of Cervantes has won in several ways the soul of the Greek poets. His presence at the Greek poetry is much more frequent and much more important than what is believed. "Proportionately larger than in any other European poetry." But "no other foreign literary hero - Faust, Hamlet, Don Juan - not mobilized both the Greek poetic sensitivity". To this conclusion came after research, Samuel, to the study of the wanderings of Don Quixote in Greek literature. Most of the poets are sympathetic or seem fascinated by "the greatness of his divine madness", which makes him appear as a tragic symbol of the ideal search.

"The figure of Cervantes' hero and the events of his history appear very often in the verses of the Greek poets," observes Alexandra Samuel, Assistant Professor of Modern Greek Literature at the University of Cyprus. Samuel has collected 135 poems of 65 poets. Souris, Gr. Ksenopoulos, N. Kazantzakis, St. Ksefloudas, Bost, N. Valaoritis, P. Apostolidis, Av. Kanellis, C. Panos, A. Deligiorgi, Chr. Bouliotis are among those that Cervantes' hero gave them the raw material for their poetic creation.

The first poem with the title of Knight's name is the youthful "Don Kissotos" by **Palamas** in 1880. The poet seems to be possessed by heartbreak and mocks love:

«Κι αν λήη ο έρωτας πως είν απ τους θεούς ο πρώτος  
Δεν είν αλήθεια, Γιώργο μου, πως είνε Δον Κισσώτος;»

**Souris**, later, uses the knight for his own love, by quipping Palamas:

«Κακήν κακώς απέληξεν ο έρωσ μου ο πρώτος.  
Μα και στους άλλους έρωτες υπήρξα Δον - Κισσώτος».

**Kariotakis** also wrote "Don Quixotes" :

Οι Δον Κιχώτες πάνε ομπρός και βλέπουνε ως την άκρη  
του κονταριού που εκρέμασαν σημαία τους την Ιδέα.  
Κοντόφθαλμοι οραματιστές, ένα δεν έχουν δάκρυ  
για να δεχτούν ανθρώπινα κάθε βρισιά χυδαία.

Σκοντάφτουνε στη Λογική και στα ραβδιά των άλλων,  
αστεία δαρμένοι σέρνονται καταμεσής του δρόμου,  
ο Σάντσοσ λέει «δε σ' το 'λεγα;» μα εκείνοι των μεγάλων  
σχεδίων αντάξιοι μένουνε και: «Σάντσο, τ' άλογό μου!»

Έτσι αν το θέλει ο Θερβαντές — εγώ τους είδα, μέσα  
στην μίαν ανάληκτη Ζωή, του Ονείρου τους ιππότες



άναντρα να πεζέψουνε και, με πικρήν ανέσα,  
με μάτια ογρά, τις χίμαιρες ν' απαρνηθούν τις πρώτες.

Τους είδα πίσω να 'ρθουνε —παράφρονες, ωραίοι  
ρηγάδες που επολέμησαν γι' ανύπαρχτο βασίλειο—  
και σαν πορφύρα νιώθοντας χλευαστικιά πως ρέει,  
την ανοιχτή να δείξουνε μάταιη πληγή στον ήλιο!

**Ritsos**, starting from different ideological starting point will criticize the "quixotic" of Kariotakis:

«Εμείς, αγέρωχοι Ποιητές, φαιδρότατοι σοφοί, (...) το κρύο κρανίο μας δέχεται των πάντων τη βροχή και κάθε αδυναμία μας ποζάρει για εξοχότης φιλάρεσκα ντυνόμαστε τρελλών την προσοχή και διαιωνίζεται με μας ο κούφος Δον Κιχώτης».

Also, **K. Ouranis** is inspired by the hero of Cervantes, reflecting the spirit of his own poetry.

#### Δὸν Κιχώτης

Ἀτσάλινος καὶ σοβαρὸς ἀπάνω στ' ἄλογό του  
τὸ ἀχαμνό, τοῦ Θερβαντὲς ὁ ἥρωας περνάει,  
καὶ πίσω του, τὸ στωικὸ γαϊδούρι του καβάλα  
ὁ ἵπποκόμος του ὁ χοντρὸς ἀγάλια ἀκολουθάει.  
Αἰῶνες ποῦ ξεκίνησε κι αἰῶνες ποῦ διαβαίνει  
μὲ σφραγισμένα ἐπίσημα, ἐρμητικὰ τὰ χεῖλια  
καὶ μὲ τὰ μάτια ἐκστατικά, τὸ χέρι στὸ κοντάρι,  
πηγαίνοντας στὰ γαλανὰ τῆς Χίμαιρας βασίλεια...  
Στὸ πέρασμά του ἀπ' τοὺς πλατειοὺς τοῦ κόσμου δρόμους, ὅσοι  
τὸν συντυχαίνουν, γιὰ τρελλὸ τὸν παίρνουν, τὸν κοιτᾶνε,  
τὸν δείχνει ὁ ἓνας τοῦ ἀλλουνοῦ - κι εἰρωνικὰ γελᾶνε  
Ὡ ποιητῆ! παρόμοια στὸ διάβα σου οἱ κοινοὶ  
οἱ ἄνθρωποι χασκαρίζουνε. Ἄσε τους νὰ γελᾶνε:

οἱ Δὸν Κιχώτες πᾶν μπροστὰ κι οἱ Σάντσοι ἀκολουθᾶνε!

**N. Kazantzakis** will see to Don Quixote the symbol of the desire of the human soul "to get in to the dream", the ultimate outcome of which is to complete the man "what God left imperfect in the middle".

While wandering of Don Quixote in poetry was multifaceted, the influence of Cervantes in greek prose was not that huge.

The most successful nickname based on Don Quixote -a mocking nickname- is "Dona Kichotaina", that **G. Ksenopoulos** used in a homonymous satirical article (1898) and attempts to replace the "Psorokostaina". (a word that is used to describe the "poor" Greece)

### Don Quixote in Greek theater

In Greek theater Cervantes' work is important. There are many scenic attempts, even several of our national state scene.

For example:

1. In 1936 at the central scene of the National Theater, directed by Dimitris Rontiris



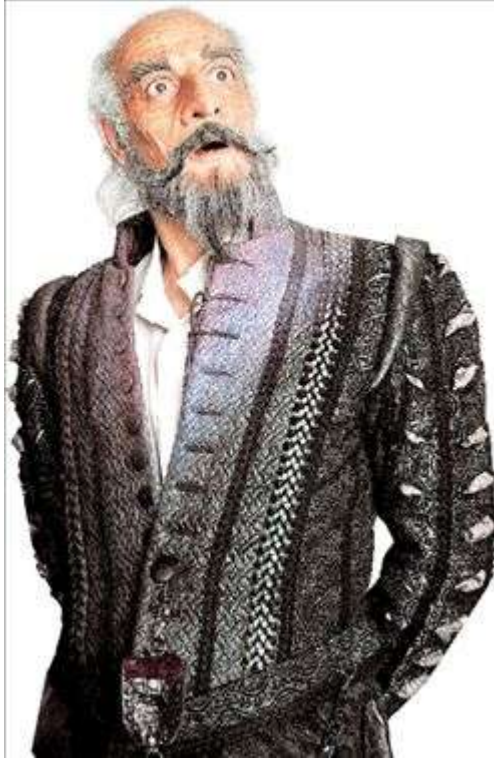
2. In 1972 at the central scene of the National Theater again directed by Takis Mouzenizis and translated by P.Matesis.



3. In 2005 at the National Theater for kids, directed by Stavros Tsakiris



4. In 2009 at the Regional Theater of Kozani, adapted and directed by John Karachisaridis with G. Kimoulis and D. Piatas at the two leading roles



5. In 2014 at the State Theater of Northern Greece, the “Don Quixote” by M. Bulgakof , directed by Giannis Leontaris.





6. In 2015, a theatrical “Don Quixote” for kids by Dimitris Adamis.



7. There are also many theatricals of Don Quixote in shadows theater and puppetry.

