



A Language of Nobel Prize Recognition

Who doesn't recall the names of Nobel laureates George Seferis and Odysseas Elytis? These are the two bright stars, praised by the international community, that shine upon the horizon of the modern Hellenic language. But we wouldn't have had them, if before them and along with them we hadn't had a long line of devoted disciples of the Hellenic language: the magnificent Dionysios Solomos, the authentic Makriyiannis, the lofty Kostis Palamas, the humane Alexandros Papadiamantis, the perceptive Georgios Vizyenos, the razor-sharp Constantine Cavafy, the terrific Nikos Kazantzakis, the luscious Angelos Sikelianos, the reflective Kostas Varnalis, the heroic Yiannis Ritsos, the contemplative Nikos Karouzos, and many others. These have been the true –and sadly, more often than not, unacknowledged– heroes of modern Hellas and to them we owe everlasting respect and honour. For without them we would have never secured our own place amongst the nations of the world.

The Challenges of the Future

Since 1975 the Hellenic language has entered into the tough arena of globalisation. Although more well-equipped than other languages, it still has to struggle in the wake of the overwhelming presence and use of English. The elevation of Demotike to the status of the official language of the Hellenic Republic was a measure in the right direction, for it is only the language of the people that has any chance to stand its ground. To be sure, the future of the Hellenic language depends on our children and grandchildren; on their determination to stand up to the calling of their great linguistic legacy. Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once said that 'the limits of my world are the limits of my language'. Our Hellenic world, our own identity as Hellenes, lies within the words-limits of our language. These are the boundaries within which future generations will have to work with whatever they have, and especially with the possibilities offered through modern digital technologies.

