

In this landscape that Sikelianos has sanctified with his presence and his work, I would like to talk to you about him, starting with the life I shared with him.

When we married, Sikelianos and I settled in a small flat in Aravantinos street, in Athens. We furnished the house with Angelos' furniture, which he asked me to place whichever way I liked. -But once in place, that's where they are going to stay, immovable for ever.

These words made me deeply aware of my responsibilities. How was I to give this little house a style that would reflect the fact it was Sikelianos' home? In his previous home I had seen on the study wall six large photographs of Michelangelo's Sibyls, practically life-size: the Delphic, the Cumaean, the Libyan, the Sicilian, the Erythrean, the Egyptian. In our new home I placed the Delphic Sibyl alone over his bookcase; her five sisters I put in the entrance hall, to answer across to each other and communicate with the sun, as Angelos wrote in his tragedy "the Sybil".

Today I can confess to you that I often saw him stand, tears in his eyes, before the Delphic Sibyl, looking insistently at her for long stretches of time. I do not think it was only because of admiration for the great Artist, her Creator; I believe he was pursuing a secret dialogue with the extatic Priestess concerning his deep sorrow that the Delphic Temple had been silenced and the Delphic Idea -Mother Idea in the twentieth century_ had failed due to the lukewarm attitude and petty politics of the then Government. Failed? Entirely? But had it not gone beyond the horizons of the "Society of Nations" and preceded UNESCO? Had it not presented the need and the possibility of a free cultural Centre that would have fulfilled the one-sided modern demand that preoccupied and is still preoccupying humanity to our day? The Delphic Manifestations as the initial expression of the Spiritual Centre should not be regarded as a sort of tourist event, a modern festival but as the spiritual vehicle opening people's the emotions

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so that they would participate in this mission.

Those who were present in those festivities will remember the overwhelming success of this participation, since apart from the religious and esthetic experience of the ancient greek tragedies, performed in their own sacred grounds, which deeply moved the crowds, the attitude and behaviour of the entire village, the hospitality of the people, the beauty of the peasant homes, the exhibition of the treasures of popular art, up to that time under-valued and neglected, that the public saw admired and honoured, all these pointed to the Delphic Idea being firmly rooted in fertile ground; the civilisation of our race filled the hearts of our own people with pride and that of our foreign guests with admiration.

These are some thoughts that must have crossed his mind in front of the Delphic Prophetess- and also deeper thoughts that belong only to the great Poet- together with memories and emotions engendered by the performances themselves, seen by the elite from home and abroad, but mostly perhaps by the performance given specially for the local people and those of neighbouring villages; he spoke with tears about that day, about the attitude and understanding of these people, who felt that something great and beautiful was happening in front of their eyes, and the women sucked their babies throughout the performance so that they would make no sound to interrupt the Great Word, and they left without trace. They came, he used to say, like a cloud and like a cloud they withdrew again.

This experience was in keeping with Angelos' belief that the simple people are a public so sensitive that they reflect and respond actively to the spectacle offered them. If it is vulgar they respond with vulgarity, but if it is noble they respond nobly.

This is why Angelos chose the highest form of the word in our civilisation, Aeschylus' Tragedies, and recreated them in their own environment. Since our theaters have ceased to be architectural museum pieces

and became for the people public a means of accessing our ancient memory. (~~History~~).

Thus the performances directed with such wisdom by Eva Sikelianos down to the smallest details through her deep knowledge of the ancient world and her admiration of Greek civilisation, left in the heart of the pilgrims an unforgettable religious reverberation.

These memories are interspersed with those of loved ones, like the neighbour or the mild Loukas Arvanitis or Anagnostis Velentzas who was unsurpassed in the flute. It appears he was a proud old man thin and light as mountain Greeks often are, with beautiful hands, he resembled LEONARDO. When one evening Angelos climbed to Anagnostis' house to ask him to play a tune, he found himself unexpectedly before the dead body of his old wife, bedecked with sweet-smelling flowers, apples, quinces and pomegranates, the whole of autumn to accompany her. He told ~~them~~ why he had come, and Anagnostis promised to play some other time. At that moment his daughter Athena, a beautiful woman, who was standing at the door with her hands behind her back and her eyes gazing toward her mother's world, said: -Father, never mind, play today for master Angelos, you can also talk to mother with the flute.

I wanted you to hear these words revealing the nobility of the simple local people, so that they are remembered because they are different from those we now know.

Sikelianos was the first and perhaps the only Poet to approach the roots of the ancient world and of the classical myths and to incarnate them in his life and his work. Thus the Tragedies he started to write in 1932 are given another boost during the war and the resistance movement! First "The Sibyl" in 1940, then "Daedalus in Crete" in 1942, "Christ in Rome" in 1945, Finally "Digenis" and "Asclepius" where the Poet identifies himself with his heroes and his better times.

The central message, which is the same in all the poems of this period is always: Freedom of Thought, Rebirth of Greece, spiritual brotherhood

Justice, Sacrifice of the Leader!

Throughout these years alone and deep inside him and in his work, he maintains the spark of the sacred fire!

The State through various difficulties it never surpassed has not paid its debt to the great Greek Poet, neither during his lifetime nor after his death. The State should at least maintain his house, which was the nucleus of the Delphic Idea, as a monument to the eternal presence of Angelos and Eva.

The Delphic European Centre assures us that with the backing of the Ministry of Culture it will restore the house and next spring will honour their memory.

Our meeting today as an international community represented by select participants honouring the Delphic Idea should be a source of great joy to the souls of Angelos and Eva Sikelianos. With our presence and through our thoughts we continue in a way the task envisioned by our Poet, for the good of this Country and for the wholeness of

the WORLD!

ANNA ANGELOS SIKELIANOS.