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| Poetics and Histories: To What Extent Did C. P. Cavafy Alter Historical Narratives, and for What Artistic Purposes? |

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Date of Submission: 11/01/2016

The poet’s purpose, when he makes use of history, is to discover the poetic – the metaphoric, the representative, the perennial – significance of what happened, not necessarily in the way that it actually happened but in the way that it ought to have happened if its underlying poetic significance were to be revealed[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Alexandrian poet, Constantine Cavafy, divided his poetic *corpus* into three types of poetry: namely philosophical, sensual and historical.[[2]](#footnote-2) This conscious realisation of the historical aspect of his poetry makes Cavafy an interesting poet to study with respect to his relationship with his own personal and cultural genealogy. Cavafy’s collected works are generally held to be 154 poems,[[3]](#footnote-3) and so it would be an imprudent task to analyse the entirety in relation to his historiography;[[4]](#footnote-4) therefore, this essay will focus on three poems and their relevance to the question, namely *Manuel Comnenus* and *The God Abandons Antony* for their emotional responses to history, and *Caesarion* for its insight into the poetics behind Cavafy’s historiography. This essay will seek to generally agree with statement above by Keeley, that Cavafy adapted and altered his historical narratives to seek a new interpretation of truth: an interpretation which is highly subjective, and which rejects the concept of absolute truth in received historical wisdom[[5]](#footnote-5). In his *Poetics*, Aristotle identified a difference between ancient historians and ancient poets, who wrote about history, stating:

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This distinction seems to have some relevance to Cavafy’s own approach to historiography, as he too used historical subject matter to convey a certain meaning or interpretation, and it is difficult to believe that someone so well educated in the classical world would not have been aware of Aristotle,[[7]](#footnote-7) but what is modern about Cavafy, and therefore may not be recognised by Aristotle, is the subjectivity of Cavafy’s narratives, and the way in which they are less moralising examples (as “[ἂν](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=a%29%5Cn&la=greek&can=a%29%5Cn2&prior=oi(=a) [γένοιτο](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=ge%2Fnoito&la=greek&can=ge%2Fnoito0&prior=a)\n)” might imply), and more expressions of the poet’s personal relationship with the past. In this, Cavafy writes as if he were a post-structuralist,[[8]](#footnote-8) employing techniques which would later become synonymous with Foucauldian genealogical history.[[9]](#footnote-9) This is especially interesting because Cavafy was writing over half a century before Foucault and the broader post-structuralist movement, showing that while personal appropriation of history is not a style that was unique to him, he was in many ways a pioneer of the technique, writing in a very futuristic way for his times.

Cavafy’s poetic history seems to focus four key aspects: firstly location and subject matter. The poems show a view of Hellenism which is not focussed on mainland Greece itself, but which rather finds ‘Greekness’ in the Greek boundary states, such as Syria, Greek Egypt and Byzantium.[[10]](#footnote-10) Of these, the focal point is clearly Alexandria, to which roughly half of the historical poems are dedicated;[[11]](#footnote-11) this city was also Cavafy’s home for the majority of his life,[[12]](#footnote-12) and clearly of huge significance to him. The second aspect is the presentation of historical scenes as dramatic plays: many of his poems, such as *Theatre of Sidon (CE 400)* and *The God Abandons Antony* demonstrate the poet’s obsession with theatre, his interest in the *Mimes* of Herodas,[[13]](#footnote-13) and the way in which mimetic theatre could be used to convey a historical narrative in a visually aesthetic way. Certainly there is a powerfully aesthetic element to Cavafy’s work, as the poems often have the effect of evoking an almost physically real mental image, and so become more convincing to a reader than an unbiased history book. Thirdly, Cavafy’s poetry is rich with irony, and in the historical poems, this often translates into a detached poet, evoking a past event, and mourning the catastrophe about to befall its unwitting characters, such as in *Nero’s Deadline*, where the Emperor feels safeguarded against the threat of the age of 73, but the poet is aware of his imminent destruction by Galba, aged 73. Finally, Catsaouni has suggested that Cavafy’s historiography acts as an “idiosyncratic mirror”, which both “reflects” and “deflects” history, creating his unique interpretation of events,[[14]](#footnote-14) rather than as a clear microscope through which objective fact can be analysed. However, this seems incorrect; it appears to be more appropriate to think of Cavafy’s poetry as refracting received history. To maintain Catsaouni’s analogy, his poetic mirror is cracked, and refracts truth and history in new ways, rather than simply reflecting and deflecting. This again demonstrates the complexity of his relationship with history, and how in looking at it, many different interpretations can be drawn.

*Manuel Comnenus* is a poem in which a verifiable event in history (namely the death of the eponymous Byzantine emperor on 20th September 1180)[[15]](#footnote-15) is taken beyond factual boundaries to impart a personal interpretation: that stoic acceptance of fate, and indeed of the power of Christianity are both admirable qualities to which people should strive. The poeticisation of this event is present from the beginning of the poem, where Cavafy characterises the day of Manuel’s death as “μιὰ μέρα μελαγχολικὴ τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου”;[[16]](#footnote-16) by stating that the day is ‘sad’, Cavafy is projecting a personal and subjective opinion onto the history, creating a respectful yet depressing tone which pervades the rest of the poem. The poet has huge regard for Manuel, presenting him as pious and, unusually for one of Cavafy’s historical characters, prescient of his own death. It seems that this reverence may come from Cavafy’s appreciation of the piety of his subject: where normally he affords detailed descriptions to beautiful things,[[17]](#footnote-17) here the focus is on the modesty of the scene, and how it is bereft of excessive wealth. The positive depiction of Manuel as a Christian stoic is partisan in its view on history; in truth it would have been a social expectation for Byzantine emperors to be overtly religious during the twelfth century, and so from the view of a single, objective account, Cavafy’s rendition is overly sympathetic to the individual, but when considered through the prism of Cavafian historiography, it becomes apparent that it was the poet’s personal view that the emperor’s death merited the mourning implied by “μελαγχολικὴ”, and that perhaps his own Christianity informed the belief that those piously humble in death are “εὐτυχισμένοι” (happy).[[18]](#footnote-18) This poem encapsulates the individual emotional relationship between Cavafy and history;[[19]](#footnote-19) rather than simply displaying the sequential events of Manuel’s death,[[20]](#footnote-20) Cavafy captures the mind-set of his character, and immortalises him through use of the present tense when describing him (for example “θυμᾶται”, “προστάζει”, “φορεῖ”, “εὐφραίνεται” and “δείχνει”),[[21]](#footnote-21) while the astrologers are afforded past tenses (ἐφλυαροῦσαν” and “ἔλεγαν”),[[22]](#footnote-22) damning them to being forgotten.

The next poem to be analysed also demonstrates the representation of an emotional moment, which in itself represents the wider historical significance of the scene. In *The God Abandons Antony*, Cavafy openly refers to the historiographical source for the narrative, by using a quotation from Plutarch for its title (“[ἀπολείπειν](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=a%29polei%2Fpein&la=greek&can=a%29polei%2Fpein0&prior=shmei=on) [ὁ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=o%28&la=greek&can=o%280&prior=a)polei/pein) [θεὸς](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=qeo%5Cs&la=greek&can=qeo%5Cs0&prior=o() [Ἀντώνιον](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=*%29antw%2Fnion&la=greek&can=*%29antw%2Fnion0&prior=qeo\s)”),[[23]](#footnote-23); [[24]](#footnote-24) but alters the meaning of the original, using the historical facts to suit his personal view of the event.[[25]](#footnote-25) Even though he is often considered honourable in death,[[26]](#footnote-26) rarely is Antony afforded the level of respect that Cavafy uses in this poem; indeed, in Plutarch’s original version, when the god abandons Antony, it is a precursor of his own death, and is treated as a negative omen. Contrarily, Cavafy uses the moment to evoke intense pathos for the doomed Antony, the vignette is still dark, but not foreboding as Plutarch makes it (the atmosphere in Alexandria is described as “ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ καὶ κατηφείᾳ τῆς πόλεως διὰ φόβον καὶ προσδοκίαν τοῦ μέλλοντος οὔσης”).[[27]](#footnote-27) Rather, Cavafy’s Alexandria is full of “μουσικὲς ἐξαίσιες” and “τὰ ἐξαίσια ὄργανα”,[[28]](#footnote-28) and is an altogether more numinous place, despite the supposed abandonment of the deity. This seems to be, as Keeley has perceived, because whereas in Plutarch, the god is Bacchus, in Cavafy’s retelling of the narrative, the deity has become the city of Alexandria itself.[[29]](#footnote-29) The deification of his home city shows perhaps the reason for which Cavafy chose to adapt this section from Plutarch, and why the major emphasis is not on Antony (his name is never mentioned beyond the title); the poem is often seen as a stoic acceptance of man’s fate,[[30]](#footnote-30) but it seems to me more likely to be a work of poetics: the goddess Alexandria has been seen as a projection of Cavafy’s own view of the city,[[31]](#footnote-31) and has clearly functioned as a muse for his poetry, and therefore it does not seem to untenable a leap to suggest that the fatality with which Antony is faced is simply a reflection of the Muse forsaking Cavafy: essentially writer’s block. This reading shows how Cavafy could make use of his favourite elements of history to mean what he wanted them to mean: indeed Cavafy himself said his poems often took place in the Hellenistic period because “it is more immoral, more free, and permits me to move my characters as I want”,[[32]](#footnote-32) this demonstrates that he was knowingly altering received history when writing his poetry.

The final poem that this essay will examine in detail is *Caesarion*, which is interesting to study both because of its poetics, and because it provides a poem which is not strictly bound to Cavafy’s own historical subdivision,[[33]](#footnote-33) but also has elements of the sensual. More than many of Cavafy’s poems, *Caesarion* provides a psychological, and erotic,[[34]](#footnote-34) journey into Alexandrian history which seems to have a profound effect on the poet.[[35]](#footnote-35) Contrary to Mackridge’s argument, I would suggest that the speaker of this poem is in fact Cavafy himself, because the character seems to match with the self-image which Cavafy presents in his poetry, which adds to the subjectivity of the poem’s version of history.[[36]](#footnote-36) Firstly, this essay will discuss the meta-poetics of *Caesarion*: the speaker is introduced as reading some Ptolemaic inscriptions, presumably in contemporary Alexandria, presenting himself as a sort of antiquarian, researching facts “νὰ ἐξακριβώσω μιὰ ἐποχή”;[[37]](#footnote-37) by the end of the poem, reality and hard fact have disappeared, and Cavafy’s poetic imagination has called forth an apparition of the long-dead Caesarion.[[38]](#footnote-38) Indeed as physical reality fades in the account, so too does poetic formality: the first ten lines rhyme in an ABABCAADEE structure,[[39]](#footnote-39) but as the apparition of Caesarion appears, the poetic rigour, including rhyme scheme and the hitherto consistent use of a first person narrative, disappears, demonstrating a departure from concrete and objective fact, and a move to a more personal and fluid interpretation.[[40]](#footnote-40) Additionally, Cavafy elaborates on his usual predilection for writing about the underdogs of history,[[41]](#footnote-41) by incorporating it into the poetics of *Caesarion*. Within the narrative of the poem, he admits that he would have ended his historical inquiry with the high praises of the Ptolemies, but “μιὰ μνεία μικρή, κι ἀσήμαντη, τοῦ βασιλέως Καισαρίωνος δὲν εἵλκυε τὴν προσοχή μου ἀμέσως”,[[42]](#footnote-42) as if seeking to explain why his poems so often focus on the victims of history, because of the elusiveness of their mentions in official history, and the enigma of how ‘insignificant’ they are; it is as if Cavafy finds a challenge in pursuing these figures, and delights in rescuing the memories of individuals from the corrosive effect of narrow, received history.[[43]](#footnote-43) Cavafy also states that the lack of written information about Caesarion allows him to write about the youth more freely, because he was not constrained by sources, but could improvise and personalise his chosen subjects.[[44]](#footnote-44) In this, Jusdanis has perceived a shift in Cavafy’s portrayal of himself, from an almost Romantic poet, focusing on the art of his work, to a modernist, who uses fact to establish the individual reality of a historical figure.[[45]](#footnote-45) Cavafy ends the poem with another example of using poetics to accompany his narrative historiography, adapting the Homeric word “πολυκοιρανίη” (the rule of many)[[46]](#footnote-46) to an Ancient Greek word used by Plutarch “πολυκαισαρίη” (too many Caesars),[[47]](#footnote-47) and placing it in his modern Greek poem; this shows how Cavafy not only adapted historical stories for his poetry, but also was aware of, and utilised, the progression of his Greek language to add an extra dimension of richness to the history.[[48]](#footnote-48)

This essay will now move on to the narrative of the piece. Between lines 5 and 10, Cavafy seems to mock the illusion of a received history, by reporting it: he derides the way that historians have seen all the individual Ptolemies as the same by using a polyptoton of the adjective “ὅλος”.[[49]](#footnote-49) By suggesting that every Ptolemy shared the same attributes, and not referring to individuals, but rather to an amassed unity, he demonstrated how reductive the historical method can be, stripping away the qualities of the individual for the sake of a group characterisation. This technique also enables Cavafy to later identify Caesarion as an exception to the ‘whole’, whom received history has not depersonalized by assimilating him into its reductive narrative.[[50]](#footnote-50) The group are also afforded unrealistically positive “ἄφθονοι ἔπαινοι” and “κολακεῖες”[[51]](#footnote-51) in the form of a series of adjectives which unite the Ptolemies as a simplistic whole, without individual characteristics or indeed flaws (“λαμπροί, ἔνδοξοι, κραταιοί, ἀγαθοεργοί … σοφοτάτη”),[[52]](#footnote-52) showing one of the problems with the historical tradition as Cavafy saw it: the loss of the individual. The poem then becomes sensual, and even more concentrated on the individual experience of the speaker, as he mentally conjures the erotic image of Caesarion into his modern room, demonstrating how Cavafy’s personalised historiography can break down temporal boundaries, bring the past into present day life of the poet, and impact his emotions.[[53]](#footnote-53) Cavafy evokes the trope of darkness as a plane in which dreams and imaginings can be realised,[[54]](#footnote-54) and as his lamp dies out (the poet specifically states that he allows it to go out, suggesting that he is aware of the hallucinogenic experience the darkness will bring),[[55]](#footnote-55) the hitherto mental image of Caesarion is materialised in Cavafy’s bedroom, indicating the sheer power of history on the poet. The quasi-physical apparition of Caesarion demonstrates the timelessness of Cavafy’s historiography: the boy is “χλωμὸς καὶ κουρασμένος”[[56]](#footnote-56) “ὡς θὰ ἤσουν μὲς στὴν κατακτημένην Ἀλεξάνδρεια",[[57]](#footnote-57) therefore bound to the historical city, and present in the speaker’s bedroom; the poet gives the youth physical form in two time periods,[[58]](#footnote-58) which heightens the irony of the final lines. The Caesarion of the past, despite the exquisite beauty which has been attributed to him,[[59]](#footnote-59) and in stark contrast to the ironic *encomium* of the other Ptolemies, is conjured into the present in the moments before his death, eternally stuck in the instant of “ἐλπίζοντας ἀχόμη νὰ σὲ σπλαχνισθοῦν”[[60]](#footnote-60) (the perpetuity of which is reinforced by the use of the present participle).

In conclusion, Cavafy’s historical poems demonstrate his complex relationship with the past; some commentators have perceived this as being due a dissatisfaction with the present in which he lived,[[61]](#footnote-61) but I think it is more about a personal ambition to right the wrongs of received history, and use his poetry as a fractured mirror to refract and ‘refact’ the past, creating a new narrative from the old,[[62]](#footnote-62) but also as a stage on which he demonstrates the relativity of historical ‘truth’,[[63]](#footnote-63) and identifies the necessary subjectivity of history. Indeed, this essay has frequently called Cavafy’s historiography ‘subjective’, and has compared it to a general ‘objective’ and ‘standardised’ historical tradition, but it is imperative to recognise that historiography is necessarily an interpretation and an individual perception of events, and that true objectivity is impossible, because every historian will have some kind of opinion on their subject matter, and will therefore give it a bias, whether this be Marxist, religious, or simply favouring one party over another. Cavafy’s personalised history is merely a more honest strain, refuting the famous claim of Tacitus that “incorruptam fidem professis neque amore quisquam et sine odio dicendus est”,[[64]](#footnote-64) and forging a new path. Cavafy is rarely provably incorrect,[[65]](#footnote-65) and certainly provides a narrative of historical events, but whether he is a historian or not is the final question this essay will ask. By Aristotle’s definition above, Cavafy is a poet who writes history, and indeed I agree; Cavafy’s aim in his poems is not solely to relay past events, but to provide something new to them: [[66]](#footnote-66) sometimes it is an attempt to define his personal Hellenic genealogy,[[67]](#footnote-67) sometimes history provides a device to speak about his own homosexuality,[[68]](#footnote-68) and sometimes to restore the human experience from the impersonality of the historical tradition.[[69]](#footnote-69) In short, he is writing a post-structuralist critique of Greek history, layering it with his personal response to the past and its cast of characters, and establishing a quasi-Foucauldian genealogy before Foucault was born. This makes him an incredibly interesting poet to study, because he is so ahead of his time in style and technique, and anticipates philosophical and literary movements which had not yet happened. These are but a few of the purposes to which Cavafy put his historical poems, but the overall theme is of blurring the lines between past and present, by using himself as intermediary lens through which ‘truth’ can mean what he wants it to mean.

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Available at: https://www.academia.edu/679231/\_Foucaults\_Genealogy\_  
[Accessed 3 January 2016].

1. A note on reference to the poems in this essay: poems will be referred to simply by the English translation of their title. Any Greek quoted will come from the 2007 edition by Sachperoglou, Hirst and Mackridge, and all English translations will come from the 1998 Keeley and Sherrard edition, unless otherwise specified. Where the translation’s line number differs from the original Greek, the difference will be specified, otherwise reference will be to the Greek.

   Keeley 1996, 100 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mackridge in *Collected Poems: With Parallel Greek Text*, xv [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Ibid*., xv [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The use of this term is debatable, as the majority of the essay seeks to disprove the existence of a consistent objective historiography, but it captures the technical approach to history writing better than words such as ‘history’, and therefore will here be used to stand for ‘the incorporation of various historical narratives into one viewpoint’ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For the purposes of this essay, ‘received history’ is defined as the generally accepted scholarly historical narrative, which professes to be a true account, as communicated by both ancient and modern historians. It is identified as complying with the Tacitean claim “incorruptam fidem professis neque amore quisquam et sine odio dicendus est” ‘it is necessary for those who profess incorruptible truth to speak without any partisanship or hatred’, Tac. *Histories* 1.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Aristot. *Poetics*, 1451a-1451b: “The difference between a historian and poet is not that one writes in prose and the other in verse … The real difference is this, that one tells what happened and the other what might happen” (trans. Fyfe) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A claim that is hard to substantiate, but which seems likely [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. It is too far to claim that Cavafy was a true post-structuralist, but in his historiography, he appears to follow many of their precepts [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For a very clear and concise description and analysis of Foucault’s historical method, see Sembou 2011, with particular attention to pages 1-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Beaton 1999, 94 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Keeley 1996, 78 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. There were only two short periods, both during the poet’s youth, when Cavafy lived outside of Alexandria, namely 1870-1877 and 1882-1885. For a far more detailed analysis of Cavafy’s life, see Liddell 2000, with particular attention to pp 17-61, which focus on his life in and out of Alexandria [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. A widely documented muse of Cavafy’s, see, for example, Catsaouni 1983, 107 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Catsaouni 1983, 106 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See Keeley, E. and Sherrard, P.’s notes in *Collected Poems*, 171 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Cavafy. *Manuel Comnenus*, 2: “one sad September day” [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. A technique coming from his Aesthetic tendencies, see Mackridge in *Collected Poems: With Parallel Greek Text*, xiii [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Cavafy. *Manuel Comnenus*, 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See the apparent dichotomy between the thorough Modernist and the antiquarian as discussed in Bien 1964, 6, and between the “romancer” and the antiquarian at *Ibid*., 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For the idea of ‘scenes’ in Cavafy, see Catsaouni 1983, 113; for his fragmented and non-sequential view of history, see Robinson 1988, 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Cavafy. *Manuel Comnenus*, 7-11: “remembers”, “orders”, “bring”, “delights” and “wears” (my translations, adapted from Sachperoglou in *Collected Poems: With Parallel Greek Text*) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *Ibid*., 4-6: “went on prating” and “kept on talking” (trans. Sachperoglou) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Plut. *Life of Antony*, 75.4: “the god abandons Antony” [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Jusdanis 1987, 136: Cavafy often draws attention to his literary sources [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Capri-Karka 1982, 61: “Cavafy did not merely copy Plutarch but used the historical facts to project his own views” [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Cassius Dio. *Historia Romana*, 51.10.7; Plut. *Life of Antony*¸76.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Plut. *Life of Antony*, 75.3: “the city was quiet and depressed through fear and expectation of what was coming” [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Cavafy. *The God Abandons Antony*, 3 and 18 respectively: “exquisite music” and “exquisite instruments” [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Keeley 1996, 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Mackridge in *Collected Poems: With Parallel Greek Text*, xvii [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Keeley 1996, 40-41 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Capri-Karka 1982, 24 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Indeed Bien has suggested that the subdivisions are useless, as each ‘category’ informs the others and implicitly includes them, Bien 1964, 37 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Capri-Karka 1982, 65 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. *Ibid*., 24 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Mackridge in *Collected Poems: With Parallel Greek Text* 2007, xv: Mackridge suggests that the speaker of the poems is rarely Cavafy, but here I believe that this is false [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Cavafy. *Caesarion*, 1: “to examine an era” (trans. Sachperoglou) [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. *Ibid*., 15-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See Keeley and Sherrard’s notes in *Collected Poems* 1998, 174 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Robinson 1988, 82 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Keeley 1996, 95 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Cavafy. *Caesarion*, 12-14: “a brief insignificant mention of King Caesarion suddenly caught my eye” [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Jusdanis 1987, 92 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Cavafy. *Caesarion*, 16-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Jusdanis 1987, 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Hom. *Iliad*, 2.204 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Plut. *Life of Antony*, 81.2: *n*.*b*. Plutarch uses this word in the same context as Cavafy, of the death of Caesarion [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Barnstone 1977, 57: *n*.*b*. Cavafy’s awareness and use of various forms of Greek from across the language’s historical life is an enormous topic in itself, and this example is but one of many [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Cavafy. *Caesarion*, twice in 6 and once in 10: “all” [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Robinson 1988, 83 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Cavafy. *Caesarion*, 5: “copious praises” and “flatteries” (trans. Sachperoglou) [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. *Ibid*., 6-8 “brilliant, glorious, mighty, benevolent … full of wisdom” [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Robinson 1988, 85 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Cf*. Gothic examples such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* where lovers are able to communicate across space. In *Caesarion*, this is extended to the temporal sphere. Also *cf.* Cavafy. *To Call Up the Shades* [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Cavafy. *Caesarion*, 23-24 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. *Ibid*., 28: “pale and weary” [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. *Ibid*., 26-27 “looking just as you would have in conquered Alexandria” [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Barnstone 1977, 57-58: Barnstone claims that this is a feature of much of modern Greek literature, and is not specific to Cavafy [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Cf*. Robinson 1988, 84: Robinson argues that Caesarion is as much an idealised victim as an idealised lover, and that this is common to all of Cavafy’s eroticised youths: they are losers whom the poet recuperates from time’s corrosive progression [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Cavafy. *Caesarion*, 29: “still hoping they might take pity on you” [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Barnstone 1977, 66; Bien 1964, 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Catsaouni 1983, 106: *cf*. my earlier comments on the inappropriateness of ‘reflection’ to describe Cavafy [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. *Ibid*., 116 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Tac. *Histories*, 1.1: “it is necessary for those who profess incorruptible truth to speak without any partisanship or hatred” [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Keeley 1996, 99 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Mackridge in *Collected Poems: With Parallel Greek Text*: “far from putting history into poetry by rewriting it as verse, Cavafy puts poetry into history” [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Beaton 1999, 94: *cf*. *The Displeasure of the Seleucid*, *Of Demetrius Soter* or *Ionic* [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Capri-Karka 1982, 24: *cf*. *Caesarion* or any of the so called ‘epigram poems’ (*Tomb of the Grammarian Lysias*, *Tomb of Evrion*, *Tomb of Iasis*, *Tomb of Ignatius* and *Tomb of Lanis*) [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Jusdanis 1987, 92: *cf*. *Aristovoulos*, *Manuel Comnenus* or *For Ammonis, Who Died at 29, in 610* [↑](#footnote-ref-69)