

## C.P. Kavafis



Constantine Petrou Photiades Kavafis was the son of Peter-John Ioannou Kavafis and Charicleia Georgaki Photiades. He was born in Alexandria, Egypt on 29 April 1863. His parents were both natives of Constantinople. He was baptized into the Greek Orthodox Church and was the youngest of seven brothers (he had two more elder siblings, a boy and the sole girl, who died in infancy).

Constantine Kavafis spent much of his childhood in England according to a biographical note written by Kavafis himself. Not much is known about the five years that Constantine spent in England, except that he attended school there and that he spent some summer vacations in Dover. We do know that in Alexandria he attended the «Hermes» school, where he made his first close friends, Mike Rallis, John Rhodokanakis and Stephan Skylizzis, that he was borrowing books from public libraries and that he had started drafting his own Historical Dictionary at the age of eighteen.

Kavafis drew his themes from personal experience, along with a deep and wide knowledge of history, especially of the Hellenistic era. Many of his poems are pseudo-historical, or seemingly historical, or accurately but strangely historical.

Almost all of Kavafis's work was in Greek; yet, his poetry remained unrecognized in Greece until after the publication of his first anthology in 1935. He is known for his intelligent use of metaphors, his brilliant use of historical imagery, and his aesthetic and outstanding perfectionism.

In 1932 Kavafis, who was a life-long smoker, first noticed an irritation in his throat, and in June of the same year his doctors in Alexandria diagnosed cancer of the larynx. He traveled to Athens for advanced treatment, which proved ineffectual. He was submitted to a tracheotomy depriving him of the power of speech. The only way to communicate was through a series of written “hospital notes”.

Constantine Kavafis eventually died on April 29, 1933, on the day of his 70th birthday. Since his death, Kavafis's reputation has grown. He is now considered one of the finest and most important modern Greek poets. His poetry is taught at schools in Greece and Cyprus, and in various universities around the world.

We admire Kavafis because of his incredible work that is globally known. His writing style is sophisticated and very mature. During his lifetime Kavafis was an obscure poet, living in relative seclusion and publishing little of his work. One of his biggest accomplishments is that even though most of his work was written in Greek it was translated and appreciated worldwide in many countries.