

PLATON MAVROMOUSTAKOS

Re-unpacking the Patrick and Joan Leigh Fermor Library

This paper is written on the occasion of the first listing of the Patrick and Joan Leigh Fermor Library and aims to disclose its topography.

Anyone lucky enough to visit Patrick Leigh Fermor's house in Kardamyli will register the omnipresence of books. The contents of his library - the creation of the amazingly exuberant spirit that underpinned PLF's adventurous life as well as of his attractive personality - are to be found all over the house. PLF's acknowledged love of books is behind his well-known declaration, *Where a man's eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica is, there shall his heart be also*. There was no specific method of classification. The books are everywhere, as are traces of Paddy's and Joan's full lives. Going through the double door at the monastery-like entrance to the house, you encounter a world of memories, which coexist with the beauty of the landscape and formed the daily lives of those who used to live on the handmade planet that came to ground at Kardamyli.

The books come from different times and places, each having caught PLF's attention in turn. This is no collector's library, but one of a reader. His interest in minor languages lives alongside his love of Shakespeare; his desire to read the classic writers of the past and of Europe in general lives alongside his dedication to learning about the Second World War—not just the events in which he took part but the whole conflict. He was also a devotee of travel writing and a lover of poetry, was fascinated by ancient and modern art, and was curious about the autobiographies and memoirs of both the great and the not so great; he loved literature in general.

All of this is to be found in a library of around 5,000 books, which are spread all over the house in Kardamyli, the components of an idiosyncratic style of topography.