
M.I. FINLEY: A NOTE ON HIS LIFE AND WORK¹

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Abstract. Emily Grace (Emilia L'vovna Kazakevich) wrote two notes about Moses Finley. We have some handwritten drafts and the second (or third) copy of the final draft submitted to the Administration of the Institute. Here we publish a handwritten draft of the earlier (1960) note, as the 1965 note repeats it almost literally. Grace was well acquainted with Finley during their work in various leftist and pro-Soviet organizations in New York in the late 1930s and the first half of the 1940s. Her evidence is therefore quite important.

Keywords: Finley Moses, Grace Emily, ancient Greece

СПРАВКА О БИОГРАФИИ И НАУЧНОЙ РАБОТЕ М.И. ФИНЛИ

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Аннотация. Эмили Грейс (Эмилии Львовне Казакевич) принадлежит авторство двух справок о Мозесе Финли. Сохранились авторские черновики и вторая (или третья) копия белого варианта, представленного руководству института. Публикуется черновой авторский вариант более ранней из них (1960 г.), поскольку справка 1965 г. почти полностью повторяет предыдущую. С Мозесом Финли она была хорошо знакома по работе в различных нью-йоркских левых и про-советских организациях конца 1930-х – первой половины 1940-х годов, поэтому ее свидетельства имеют большую ценность.

Ключевые слова: Финли М., Грейс (Казакевич) Э.Л., древняя Греция

Notes such as the one published here belong to a very peculiar genre of historiography. Its origin lies in the “Khrushchev thaw” period, when Soviet scholars’ contacts with their colleagues abroad were considerably widened. Since 1955 Soviet historians began to participate in the International Congresses of Historical Studies. As a rule, though, Soviet delegations consisted of historians who were either Soviet official bosses or “loyal comrades”. To help them sort out views and opinions of foreign participants, members of the then Institute of History were commissioned to write short notes with biographical data and an objective survey of foreign historians. Such notes were then catalogued and archived. Unlike the historical works of the period, these notes have the advantage of being free from obligatory ideological rhetoric. The Journal of Ancient History

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(Vestnik Drevney Istorii) has in its archive a considerable collection of such notes prepared for the 11th Congress (held in Stockholm in 1960)² and for the 12 Congress (held in Wien in 1965).

Emily Grace (Emilia L'vovna Kazakevich)³ wrote two notes about Moses Finley. We have some handwritten drafts and the second (or third) copy of the final draft submitted to the Administration of the Institute. Here we publish a handwritten draft of the earlier (1960) note, as the 1965 note repeats it almost verbatim. During the Soviet period of her life Emily Grace did not write bibliographical reviews, a fact that makes this text unique in a way. Grace was well acquainted with Finley during their work in various leftist and pro-Soviet organizations in New York in the late 1930s and the first half of the 1940s. (In her letter to the Czech historian Jan Pečírka she calls Finley by his first name.) Her evidence is therefore quite important.

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M.I. Finley

M.I. Finley is a historian specializing in Ancient Greece of pre-Hellenistic periods. He was born in the USA (probably in New York) ca. 1910–1911⁴ and now holds a secure position highly regarded in the Western World, that of a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, England.

Finley began his academic career in the middle of the 1930s as a post-graduate student at Columbia University (New York) under the guidance of W.L. Westermann⁵, who considered Finley his most promising student. It was then that Finley published a work on ancient Greek trade, still cited in literature⁶.

About 1937–1938 Finley joined the C[ommunist] P[arty of the] USA⁷, suspended his academic work and engaged in political activities, first as executive secretary of the so-called Boas Committee (an anti-Nazi organization of scholars and scientists)⁸, and later, during the war, in the Russian War Relief⁹.

Soon after the war Finley resumed his research work, got a teaching position at Rutgers University (New Jersey) and wrote a fundamental work of real importance and excellence, *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens*, New Brunswick, 1952. At that time, however, progressive people began to be persecuted by various governmental committees under the whistle of Senator McCarthy. Finley was summoned by one of those committees, which led to him losing his teaching position at the University¹⁰. Meanwhile, his book was published and was acclaimed in scholarly periodicals.

² On Finley's role in western historians' polemics with "the Eastern Block" in Stockholm see Tomkins 2014.

³ About her life and works see Karpyuk 2016.

⁴ In the 1965 version of the note Grace indicated the precise date: 1912.

⁵ W.L. Westermann was Finley's supervisor and one of E. Grace's supervisors as well. A detailed review of his book was published in the VDI shortly before: Korsunskiy *et al.* 1958.

⁶ Finley 1935.

⁷ This important piece of evidence must be quite reliable: at that period E. Grace was responsible for party membership and dues in one of the CPUSA branches in New York. See further Karpyuk 1916, 143. Cf. Naiden 2014, 244.

⁸ Finley was Executive Secretary of the American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom in 1938–1942. See Tomkins 1913, 19–22.

⁹ As its member, Finley was National Campaign Director in 1942–1946. See Naiden 2014, 246–252.

¹⁰ Finley refused to give evidence to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, or McCarran Committee, in March 1952 and was dismissed from Rutgers University in October 1952. See Schrecker 2013, 62–64, 69–71.

Under “McCarthy’s reign” some American scholars who suffered from the witch-hunt against “the Red” found refuge and continued their research work in socialist countries and in England. Liberal-leaning Cambridge professor A.H.M. Jones took interest in Finley’s fate and talents, and the latter was invited to Cambridge where he became first a temporary lecturer and later a Fellow¹¹.

Finley’s attention is still focused on economic history of Ancient Greece, but in the mid-950s his studies were of tentative and dispersed character. One book¹² (rather popularizing than purely scholarly) and at least one article were dedicated by him to pre-Classical periods (Homeric and Mycenaean Greece). Since the late 1950s and up till now, as far as I know, Finley has been studying the problems of the history of slavery in Ancient Greece¹³. If he concentrates his efforts on this field, one can expect from him another magisterial study¹⁴.

Since he published the above-mentioned book on land relationships in Classical Athens, Finley’s theoretical views have been developing, as it seems, in the critical direction (or “agnostic” at best) as far as Marxism is concerned. This tendency first became quite explicit in his article “Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?” (*Historia*, VIII, 2, 1959) – a question which the author essentially answers positively, while making some general critical remarks concerning “biased” theoretical premises of the Marxist historical research in the field.

My personal impression is that Finley is now in a transitional state of some kind and that our attitude towards him in Stockholm should be cautious but friendly. He might well be affected by careerism. However, Finley undoubtedly remains a most serious scholar, whose work is producing, and can produce in the years to come, many important results.

E. Kazakevich
15 July 1960

М.И. Финли (M.I. Finley)

М.И. Финли – специалист по истории древней Греции доэллинистических периодов, родился в США (кажется, в г. Нью-Йорк) примерно в 1910–1911 гг., теперь занимает прочную и в западном мире весьма почтенную должность «члена колледжа» в Кембриджском университете (Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, England).

Финли начал свою академическую карьеру в середине 30-х гг. как докторант в Колумбийском университете (г. Нью-Йорк) под руководством профессора У.Л. Уэстерманна, который считал Финли наиболее обещающим из своих учеников. Финли и тогда опубликовал работу по древнегреческой торговле, которая все еще цитируется в литературе.

Примерно в 1937–38 гг. Финли, ставши членом КП США, бросил академические занятия и целиком предавался политической работе, сперва в качестве исполнительного секретаря так наз. «Комитета Боаза» (антифашистская организация ученых и научных работников), а затем, во время войны, в обществе помощи Советской армии (Russian War Relief).

¹¹ In 1955 Finley was appointed a lecturer in classics at Cambridge. In 1957 he was elected to a fellowship at Jesus College.

¹² *The World of Odysseus*.

¹³ The following text was crossed out by the editor and was not included in the final draft.

¹⁴ In the note written on 16 February 1965 the following sentence was added: “In 1960 he edited a collection of papers in the same field: *Slavery in Classical Antiquity*”.

Вскоре после войны Финли опять взялся за научную работу, занимал должность преподавателя в университете Рэтгерз (Rutgers) (в шт. Нью-Джерси) и написал капитальный и весьма важный и высококачественный труд «Земля и Кредит в древних Афинах» (Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens, New Brunswick, 1952). Однако, в то время расцвело гонение за прогрессивными людьми со стороны разных правительственных комитетов и комиссий под свистом сен. Маккарти. Одним из этих органов был вызван и Финли, в результате чего он потерял свой преподавательский пост в университете. Между тем, в то же именно время вышла его книга, которая получила очень положительную оценку в специальных журналах.

В годы «царствования Маккарти» ряд американских ученых, ставших жертвами гонения за «красными», нашли убежище и работу по специальности как в социалистических странах, так и в Англии. Либерально настроенный профессор Кембриджского университета Джонз (А.Н.М. Jones) поинтересовался в (sic. – С.К.) судьбе и талантах Финли, и последний был приглашен в Кембридж, сначала на временный пост лектора, а потом уже Финли был назначен на постоянную должность члена колледжа.

Центром внимания у Финли продолжает являться экономическая история древней Греции, но в середине 50-х гг. выпускаемые им работы носили сравнительно пробный, рассредоточенный характер. Одну полупопулярную книгу и во всяком случае одну статью он посвятил доклассическим периодам (гомеровской эпохе и микенской Греции). К концу 50-х гг. и, поскольку мне известно, еще и теперь Финли занимается главным образом проблемами истории рабства в древней Греции. Если он будет целиком сосредотачиваться на этой области, то можно ожидать от него опять-таки капитальный труд.

В теоретическом плане, с тех пор как он выпустил вышеназванную работу по земельным отношениям в классических Афинах, взгляды Финли, по-видимому, развивались в критическом (в лучшем случае «агностическом») направлении по отношению к марксизму. Эта тенденция впервые довольно ясно обнаружилась в статье «Опиралась ли греческая цивилизация на рабском труде» (Historia, VIII, 2, 1959) – вопрос, на который автор отвечает, по существу, в положительном смысле, но вместе с тем он делает ряд общих критических замечаний по поводу «предвзятых» теоретических положений, занятых по данной проблеме в марксистской исторической литературе.

У меня лично впечатление, что Финли находится в каком-то переходном настроении, и что стоит нам придерживаться осторожной, но и мирной позиции по отношению к нему в Стокгольме. Вполне возможно, что он заражен болезнью карьеризма. Но безусловно то, что Финли является и теперь очень и очень серьезным исследователем, работа которого уже сейчас дает и наверняка еще в дальнейшем будет давать многие ценные и для нас результаты.

Э. Казакевич
15/VII/60

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