

**Fluid Books, Fluid Borders**

**Modern Greek and Turkish Book Networks in a Shifting Sea**

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Comparative Literature)  
in the University of Michigan  
2017

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## Acknowledgements

In one sense at least, this project is about books that don't belong: the ways that books exceed our singular ownership and, by *not belonging* to us, facilitate our belonging to communities. As such, it's a great pleasure here to confess that this work too exceeds me in countless ways and is tied to the intellectual and physical labor of many others.

While it's customary in such acknowledgements to save our closest for last, I'd like instead to foreground my partner Giota here in the beginning. Her deep patience, emotional support and, just as importantly, her labor have made this project possible. Without her, you'd be reading neither these acknowledgements nor the pages to which they're appended.

The community in and beyond the University of Michigan, where we first moved in 2010 and that, seven years later, we are now leaving, has shaped this project deeply. Most crucially, it owes much to the patience, time, and intellectual care that Vassilis Lambropoulos has copiously offered since (indeed, even before) I first set foot on campus. He's given me both freedom and focus: a freedom to explore and to build connections on my own and a focus (in something close to the original, ancient sense of that word) to which I might return whenever I needed. The Modern Greek program that he and Artemis Leontis have built here has proven a crucial intellectual home. The other members of my committee, Tatjana Aleksić, Kader Konuk, Artemis Leontis and Karla Mallette have each shaped this project in precise and important ways, through their

readings of drafts and pointed advice, but have also fostered it more generally through years of mentoring, support, and inspiration.

There are others, too, whose time and intellectual labor has been formative. Tina Lupton, whom I met through a seminar in 2011, planted the first seed and has, until today, remained an intellectually (despite departing geographically) indispensable mentor and reader of my work. It's to her that I owe my first acquaintance with Actor-Network Theory and the sociology of literature. To Jeff Knight, whose seminar on Book History I took, I'm indebted for a richer and fuller introduction to the field. To Karla Mallette, Michèle Hannoosh, Pam Ballinger, Megan Holmes, Amr Kamal, Maria Hadjipolycarpou, Harry Kashdan, and Peter Vorissis I'm grateful for their having provided a platform for seven years of continuous dialogue in the field of Mediterranean studies. Yopie Prins, as department chair, has been unflinching in her commitment to building an intellectually vibrant and emotionally supportive comparative community; this last year, as a mentor, she has gifted me as well with timely advice on the framing of my larger project. Gottfried Hagen offered me a year of his precious time reading Turkish literature together early on, alongside Jill Stockwell, a good friend and a great colleague. Harry Kashdan, Etienne Charriere and Ali Bolcakan have likewise offered me, alongside their friendship, thoughtful feedback throughout the project. More recently, Kristin Dickinson has been an important dialogue partner since her arrival in 2015; I'm grateful for her time and friendship. To Evyn Kropf and Pablo Alvarez I owe a great deal for their curatorial work in special collections and the wisdom that they've shared with me. Evyn, in particular, offered me my first gateway drugs into the world of the *majmû'a* and the Turkish commonplace book. Finally, to the staff of the Comparative Literature Department:

Nancy Harris, Paula Frank, Judy Gray, Joe Johnson and Katie Horne. Only god knows how much I owe you all collectively.

Beyond Michigan, this project gained much in its infancy from the close mentorship of Erol Köroğlu and the crucial advice of Sevengül Sönmez during my time in Turkey. More recently, as it's approached its current form, it has gained just as much from dialogues with Evangelia Balta.

I'm grateful to the International Dissertation Research Fellowship, funded by the Mellon Foundation and administered by the Social Science Research Council, which made possible my year of research in Turkey, as well as the Princeton Firestone Library Grant, generously funded by the Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, which made possible my research on Cavafy's collections there. The Jean Monnet Research Fellowship, the Rackham International Research Award, and the Kalliopi Kontou-Filis and Kenneth P. Mathews Fund have each made possible crucial summer research trips to the Aegean. During my time there, I accrued many debts to the staff at the National Library of Greece, the Library of Parliament of Greece, the Modern Greek Studies Archive at Aristotelian University in Thessaloniki, the Ottoman and Turkish Periodical archive at Atatürk Library in İstanbul, the Rare Books Division at Boğaziçi University Library, and the National Library of Turkey in Ankara. Alongside these institutional archives and collections, I'm equally grateful to the individuals who have opened their libraries and homes up to me, over three successive summers: Panagiotis Kousathanas, Giorgos Kallinikidis and Joanne Sitterlet. After all of this research, the stresses of writing the dissertation were eased by the Rackham Pre-Doctoral Fellowship and the Humanities Research Candidacy Fellowship.

Finally, since I've mentioned the *stresses* of writing: many of them derived, it must be said, from the pressures of parenting. Parenting, moreover, with neither family nearby nor financial security. I'm grateful, of course, to my mother for driving a day and a half across the country to lend us her (one and only) car for the long winter months, when we needed an automobile most, as well as to my labor union Graduate Employees Organization #3550, which first proposed and pushed for the partial childcare subsidy that we've relied on for three years now, and for which I also thank the University of Michigan. And I'm grateful, without a doubt, to Orpheus and Sefer, two children whose smiles have added color and texture to my life and will only add more as they grow older, inshallah. But I'm most grateful—and here I've gone and smuggled her into the ending as well—to Giota, for helping day after day to put those smiles on their faces, sometimes in the most difficult of circumstances. If we've made it this far, it's because of her.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation tells the stories of a half dozen Greek and Turkish books that refused to “stay put”: books that, despite their appearance of stability today, moved across multiple media, editions, alphabets, bindings and geographies, taken apart and reassembled in deeply transformative ways during a period of momentous change in the Eastern Mediterranean, roughly 1910 to 1960.

The signal event of this change was the Ottoman Empire’s collapse in 1923, after which the Greek and Turkish nation-states pushed to radically reshape the region through a series of partitions. Book networks too were being reassembled along national lines, a process whose ultimate aim was the production of a fixed national corpus, purified of linguistic and typographic variation. Nonetheless, careful examination suggests that many of the region’s textual networks were anything but stable or pure. The books of my study often blurred the boundaries between production, circulation and consumption, between writer and reader, and, at times, between Greek and Turkish. They behaved in many ways more like pre-modern manuscripts than modern books.

I argue, in fact, that “the book has never been modern”—not even in the twentieth century, when it had supposedly been fixed in place by international copyright, national philology departments and commercial standardization. The narrative of twentieth-century fixity, frequently implicit and occasionally explicit in Book History, derives in part from the field’s Eurocentric origins. In the Greco-Turkish Mediterranean, a different story emerges. Building an innovative bridge between Book History and Mediterranean

studies, I view the Greco-Turkish book as a “middle space”: a semi-fluid medium that, resisting the nation-state’s partitions, continued to be assembled and reassembled by a heterogeneous webwork of hands and materials.

Methodologically, how does one approach such a “middle space”? Adapting Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory and Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of “assemblage,” I treat the book as a network, one whose ongoing assemblage we can spread out across a flat and open plane. Since these assemblages are nested, in something close to a mathematical fractal, I trace similar patterns on several scales, ranging from the typographic to the aesthetic to the geographic. On every scale, I follow the fluid “border-crossings” of books, facilitated by their several handlers.

To conceptualize these crossings, the concept of the *metaphor* is particularly useful. In both ancient and modern Greek, a *metaphora* is an act not only of (1) moving an aesthetic conceit between linguistic symbols (as we use the term in English); but, more fundamentally, of (2) physically moving an object from point A to B. As the books of my study aesthetically moved their handlers, so too did the handlers physically move the books forward in time and space, preserving them only by transformatively transmitting them through a series of hands and forms.

Ultimately, I work my way towards the ideal of the “commons-place” book, which combines the commonplace book with notions of the political commons, asking how a material medium might become the site of collective, un-authorized literary production. The philologist’s role here, I argue, is nothing more or less than the “curation” of this book-network, reassembling both its literary objects and their human handlers in a shared space—one that will allow each actor to speak, to hear and be heard. Through such a

curation, which necessarily invites the agencies of a heterogeneous (and contentious) multiplicity of handlers, we can begin to reassemble the commons.

## Chapter One

### Opening the Book

*Τά ὀνόματα βέβαια μπερδεύονται, γίνεται αὐτό ταχτικά. Καί μένουνε μόνο τά ἔργα. Ποῦ δὲν ζέρεις πιά τίνος ἦταν.*

*The names get mixed up, of course, that happens often. And only the works remain. Works that you don't know any more to whom they belonged.*

– Melpo Axioti, *Τό σπίτι μου*<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Introduction***

This document is a kind of user's guide for taking literary works apart, piece by piece, and putting them back together. Start anywhere you want: the storylines running through a set of poems; the lines of type running across their pages; or the shipping lines running across the sea—for example, from Alexandria to Athens—and transporting such poems between ports. The more layers of a literary work that you peel away and examine, the more difficult it becomes to discern just where the text ends. The materials and meanings contained within its binding(s), you soon realize, are themselves bound up within a dense network reaching outward. Books may move us, but only after—or, even better, *only while*—they themselves are moved through a web of mediators.

Admittedly, many of these mediators remain beyond our field of vision today when we pick up a commercial paperback—say, a copy of C.P. Cavafy's *Poems (Ποιήματα)* or

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<sup>1</sup> Unless noted, Greek, Turkish, and Latin translations are mine. The original-language quotations can be consulted in the appendix. For Greek quotations, I have tried (despite the presence of what I am sure are some typographical errors and/or omissions) to maintain the polytonic, simplified polytonic, and monotonic scripts as used in each publication.

of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's novel *A Mind at Peace (Huzur)*, two works that will feature prominently in the following two chapters. If such codices appear to us as stable objects today, they do so only because habit has led us to “smooth over” (Latour 2013:266) the network of materials and hands moving them forward and sustaining them (albeit at significant strain and cost to several legal, commercial, and social institutions). This is precisely the value I see in breaking these books apart, spreading them out across a flat surface as a mechanic does an engine upon her/his workbench: to trace out the materials, hands, tongues, and geographies assembled within them, making them visible and bringing their attachments to life. In tinkering with and tracing out these components, we might better understand the common stakes we share in their assemblage.

To explore these stakes, this and the following chapters will situate themselves, for the most part, in the twentieth-century Aegean—and, more generally, the Greek- and Turkish-speaking Eastern Mediterranean. From the 1920s onward, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the institutions of the nation-state began to radically reshape the region through a series of partitions, the most violent of which was the Greco-Turkish Population Exchange of 1923, an unprecedented act of state-sponsored ethnic cleansing that uprooted approximately two million people. In spite of such catastrophes, however, the literature that people moved from hand to hand continued to cross several institutional, formal and territorial boundaries. Focusing on the first half of the twentieth century, roughly 1910 to 1960, I carefully parse out, strand by strand, the human and material networks that were shaping and reshaping particular pieces of Greek- and Turkish-language literature within and beyond the Aegean. These pieces range broadly across registers and genres, from highbrow poetry and fiction like Cavafy's *Poems* or

Tanpınar's *A Mind at Peace* to popular testimonial novels to, at the other extreme, singular manuscript codices and commonplace books containing heretofore unknown ballads and long poems. As each of the following chapters will demonstrate, however, if one pays detailed attention to the complicated geographical and material networks through which these poems, novels and ballads were moved, it's often difficult to draw the line between high and low or manuscript and print. Awash in the shifting networks of the region, many works of Greek and Turkish literature were far more fluid than readers might assume. For those of us accustomed, like Benedict Anderson, to thinking of the modern book as "a distinct, self-contained object, exactly reproduced on a large-scale" (1991:34), these works hold many instructive surprises. Even in the twentieth century, when the book had supposedly become a fixed and fully fungible commodity, I argue that a careful tour of the modern Greek and Turkish literary landscape reveals a more complex reality: that the book in fact remained an unbound and fluid field, to be parceled out, packaged and repackaged by a host of human hands, materials, alphabets and geographies. And, just as importantly, to the same degree that these networks of handlers assembled and reassembled their books, so too were they reassembled *by* them. Stated in its broadest terms, this is the argument on which I stake these pages.

This chapter attempts to unfold and lay out that argument in greater detail across three particular fields, in each of which it is bound up, to varying degrees: Book History, Mediterranean studies, and World Literature. What might it mean for each of these fields to understand the twentieth-century book as an open-ended assemblage?

### ***The Book Has Never Been Modern***

The invention of print brought many changes to the book, but it by no means brought fixity. In the decades and centuries following Gutenberg's press, the book remained a fluid object. Adrian Johns, in *The Nature of the Book* (1998), was among the first historians of the book to insist that the stability of early-modern print was a "fiction": not in the sense of a *falsehood*, per se, but that it was something that had to be *made*.<sup>2</sup> And it was made by humans, he argued, not technology. Stability and reliability were not easily and automatically given to the new form of print but had to be earned, arduously and contentiously. "Printed texts," he wrote, "were not intrinsically trustworthy. When they were in fact trusted, it was only as a result of hard work. Fixity was in the eye of the beholder, and its recognition could not be maintained without continuing effort" (36). Not unlike a massive power grid today, early-modern textual stability was sustained only through the social coordination, physical labor and intellectual debate of thousands. When a strand in this network shifted, so too did the text. And if Johns focuses on the first two centuries of print, he nonetheless provides a way forward for later periods. He writes that "the [19<sup>th</sup>-century] steam press and the practice of lithography were as culturally conditioned, and as open to appropriation, as any hand press" (375). Given this, he pointedly asks, "why do modern readers assert the existence of fixity?" (629). Twenty years later, I believe the question still retains its weight.

Granted, some might argue that within these same twenty years, something has changed: readers today live in a textual landscape whose fluidity is an undeniable reality,

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<sup>2</sup> He was writing in the wake of (and against) Elizabeth Eisenstein, who had earlier celebrated the rise of print as a stabilizing force, a radical break from earlier manuscript culture: "Uniformity and synchronization," she wrote, "have become so common since the advent of printing, that we have to remind ourselves repeatedly that they were usually absent in the age of scribes" (1979:16).



with the onset of born-digital works and the digital tools now remediating earlier codices.<sup>3</sup> In a way, however, this only compounds the problem when we look back on the previous century. Andrew Piper, for example, has written:

Books, at least since the nineteenth century, have come to us as ready-made objects [...]. [Digital] data sets [however] are extremely amorphous. They have to be assembled, a process which requires a host of imaginative choices. They feel more like grains of sand in your hands than the sturdy walls of a church. But reading in this way will also make us more aware of the importance of context to reading. Books are amazing at closing themselves, and us, off from the rest of the world. (2013:32)

Piper's larger claim here is spot on: moving between mediums produces transformations both in the contents of those mediums and in their users (i.e., in us). Reading a particular novel in the form of a codex and, conversely, a digital program using Python algorithms will substantially translate—in doubtlessly multiple ways—the contents of the novel, as well as your experience of it. Likewise, I have little doubt that the assemblages of a digital compiler present a difference in scale when compared with those of a physical codex. Nevertheless, when describing such digital fluidity, I'd take care not to overplay its revolutionary difference. I worry, in particular, over the characterization of the modern book with which the excerpt both begins and concludes: that it is a fixed object, one that has necessarily been closed off from the outside, or that closes *us* off. To mention just one example, drawn from the final chapter of my study here, how are we to respond to *Theodora*, a Turkish-language adaptation of a popular Greek-language serial novel (1906) set in Byzantine Constantinople, written by hand in the United States in 1939 on the leaves of a Chinese academic planner, which had been commercially published in Republican Shanghai circa 1936 or 1937, although these leaves have been removed from

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<sup>3</sup> For born-digital media at the end of the twentieth century, see Matt Kirschenbaum (2008). More recently, Kirschenbaum (2017) continues to push the date of digital inscription (and digital literature?) further backwards, reaching as early as the 1960s.

their original binding and incorporated into a new, handmade codex? Take a moment to assemble that sentence in your head. Then look below for a sample of the novel’s body to better visualize the book:

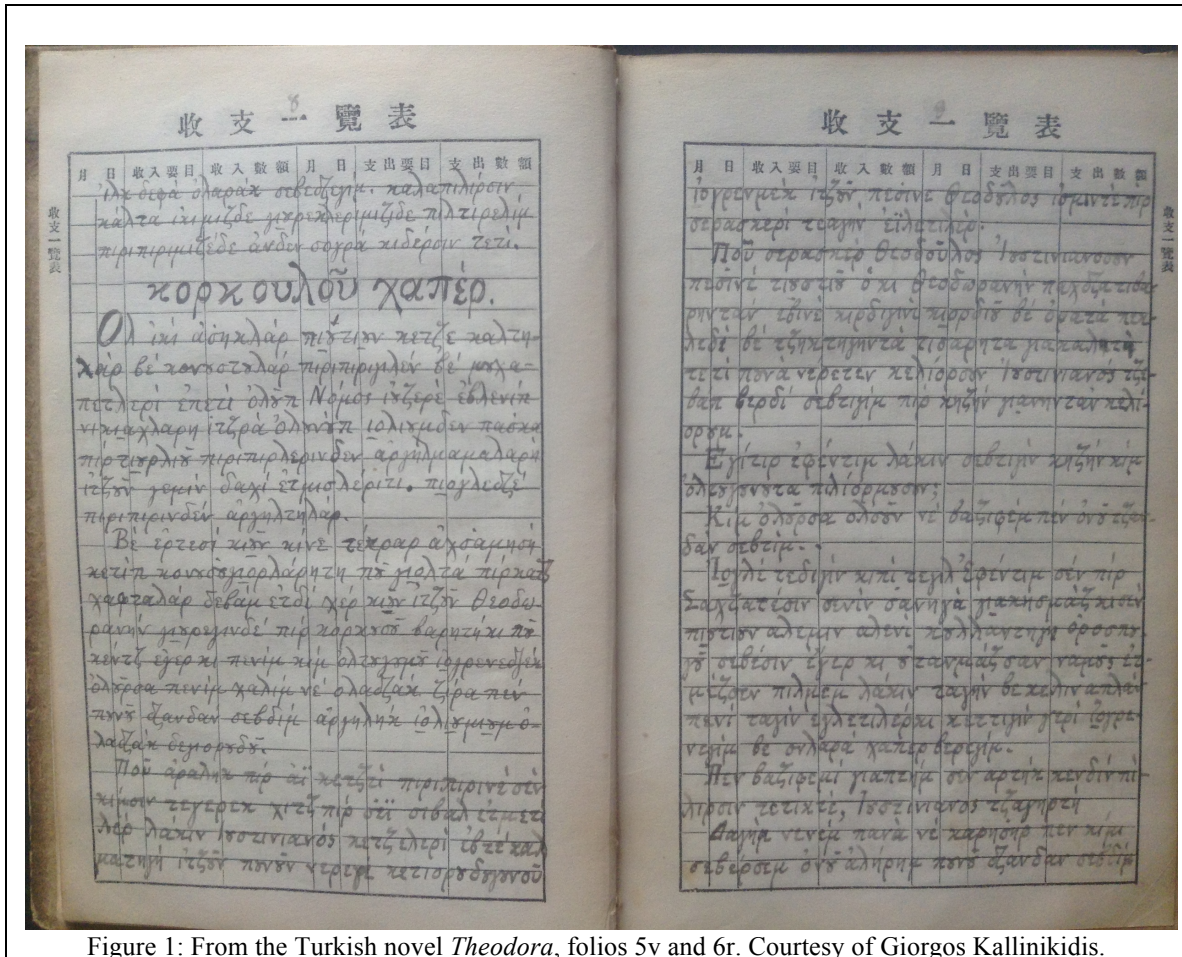


Figure 1: From the Turkish novel *Theodora*, folios 5v and 6r. Courtesy of Giorgos Kallinikidis.

Opening *Theodora*, we don’t “close ourselves off from the rest of the world”; to the contrary, we are forced immediately, through what Jerome McGann has called its bibliographic and linguistic codes (1991:52ff), to traverse and somehow link together multiple, supposedly discreet worlds. Such a book, with its several material, social, and literary networks, is by no means a ready-made object; it had (and has) to be assembled in ways that, while clearly distinct from, are not entirely alien to digital data.

It’s important to note that Piper himself brilliantly details this same fluidity in his

earlier monograph. *Dreaming in Books* (2009) encompasses a wealth of genres, media, and practices—from novels to miscellanies, from editing to translating, and much more—in order to restore to the nineteenth-century codex the complex intermediality and multiformity that, as Piper shows, fueled its rise and spread. But what about the following century? Medievalists, early modernists, and those working on the nineteenth-century have demonstrated again and again the fluidity and variations to which the manuscript and printed book opened itself, evincing a general consensus that it constituted an open-ended and pliable object, one whose material bindings and social bonds frequently shifted.<sup>4</sup> To what must we adduce, therefore, the comparative dearth of scholarship on twentieth-century textual fluidity? True, the twentieth century boasts its fair share of histories of the book, which have recovered a number of transnational networks—particularly those of commerce and state.<sup>5</sup> Careful attention to the rise of large-scale, often global, publishing ventures and the role of international market and state actors and institutions has opened important windows into the life of the twentieth-century book, yet amidst these considerations less space has been afforded to the possible mutability and adaptability of the literary object itself. Perhaps, one might suggest, this is due to the growing web of international copyright agreements (both bilateral treaties and larger conventions such as Berne) that, by 1900, seemed to foreclose most legal forms of unlicensed translation and reprint across many national borders.<sup>6</sup> It's worth noting, however, that such agreements failed to achieve global dominance for much of the

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<sup>4</sup> For a representative sample of book histories that, spanning the medieval period to the nineteenth century, showcase the instability and fluidity of the book, see: Jennifer Summit (2008); Matt Cohen (2010); Jeff Knight (2013); Leah Price (2000) and (2013); Meredith McGill (2003); Andrew Piper (2009).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example: Sarah Brouillette (2007), Caroline Davis (2013); Peter D. McDonald (2009), Elizabeth le Roux (2016); Valerie Holman (2008), John B. Hench (Cornell UP, 2010), and Greg Barnhisel (2015).

<sup>6</sup> For a thorough and thoughtful treatment of existing copyright scholarship, see Meredith McGill (2013).

century (in Turkey, for example, unlicensed translation and adaptation of foreign works remained legally protected until 1952). More importantly, while unlicensed copying is certainly a significant factor in the destabilization of texts, I don't want to reduce the question of textual multiplicity, variation, disassemblage and re-assemblage to "piracy" alone. Unlicensed translation and adaptation will play a noteworthy role at particular moments in chapters three and five, but it's by no means the only (or even primary) force driving textual transformation in my study. Whether copying, compiling, rebinding, revising, reinscribing, editing or otherwise, I explore a wide range of textual practices that medievalists and early modernists would immediately recognize as kindred to their own objects of study. How, then, to address a troubling master narrative, usually implicit but occasionally explicit, in which the fluid pre-modern codex at last succumbed to modernity's commercialized, legalized, and institutionalized fixity?

Indeed, some scholars from earlier periods go so far as to contrast the textual fluidity of their own case studies with the supposed fixity of the twentieth century. Even Adrian Johns, who strenuously denies the teleological narrative of a nineteenth-century industrial-print revolution, one that somehow stabilized the modern text, nonetheless concludes that as the book entered the twentieth century, cultural forces indeed accomplished what technology alone could not: "By the end of the nineteenth century, print and fixity were as firmly conjoined by culture as ever could have been achieved by machinery" (632).<sup>7</sup> Bernard Cerquiglini, in his seminal polemic *In Praise of the Variant*

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<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, Johns' more recent *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* (2009) might seem at first to present a full-frontal attack on notions of twentieth-century fixity, with half a dozen chapters devoted to forms of unlicensed copying over the past hundred years. The crushing majority of these chapters, however, revolve around new media (radio, scientific patents, tape recording, telephony and digital programming), with no space devoted to literary print. In part, this reflects Johns' attempt to align the history of copyright with trademark and patent law. But does this necessitate cutting twentieth-century

(1999 [1989]), has set the date of stabilization even earlier, “from the very end of the eighteenth century” (4). Eye-opening in its other respects—indeed, I consider Cerquiglini a close intellectual ally of my own project—his small volume nonetheless constructs an unhelpful dualism between medieval manuscript culture and modern textuality.

Attributing the modern, stable text to a combination of technology, law, and the institutional ideologies behind nineteenth-century textual criticism,<sup>8</sup> Cerquiglini writes that in the nineteenth century, “when the text gained its almost perfect and immutable reproduction, attested contents, and legal paternity,” it came at last to take “its bearings and [stitch] itself together at one point: the completed version, ready for the press, authenticated and authorized” (34). Both here and elsewhere, Cerquiglini repeats a model of textual fluidity closely aligned with genetic criticism, a model, that is, in which the literary work indeed exists not as an object but as an evolving process—one that is best observed, however, *before* it crosses the threshold dividing the network of manuscripts or typescripts (what genetic criticism calls the *avant-texte*) and the printed book that later emerges from them. In the following pages of this study, I will take issue with this clean division between before and after, *avant* and *après*—and, crucially, the notion that manuscript and print media can be sequentially shunted into the one and the other, respectively.<sup>9</sup> Here, however, it suffices to remark that, in Cerquiglini’s vision, the

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literature out of the account? Literary studies have an important place in this field. See, for example, Joseph Slaughter (2014) or his forthcoming *New Word Orders: Intellectual Property and World Literature*.

<sup>8</sup> Primarily, the rise of Lachmann’s method and the alternatives that later followed it: best-text and copytext editing (see pages 46-82). Each of these methods, in their separate ways, reduced the pluralism, instability and variation of living textual processes and provided instead a single textual approximation. Errata and variation were cordoned off into a “prison-like” critical apparatus, where “a few fragments, splinters, and scraps” could be accessed but “not the *other* of the text. The secret function of the critical apparatus is to dissipate this in silence” (73, emphasis mine).

<sup>9</sup> What Andrew Piper has written of the nineteenth century, I suggest, is true as well for the twentieth: “Rather than conceive [...] manuscriptural work as an *alternative* writerly space to print in the nineteenth

nineteenth and twentieth centuries become a veritable dead zone for the variation that he (rightfully and forcefully) celebrates. And if Meredith McGill's meticulous *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834–1853* (2003), to name but one more example next to Piper, has restored to the nineteenth century a sizeable degree of textual flux, the following century remains understudied and in dubious suspense.

Thankfully, we can cite periodical studies as an important exception. The work of those like Robert Scholes, Sean Latham, Patrick Collier and others has helped to unsettle not only the stability of the materials through which we approach Modernism but its aesthetic and demographic hierarchies.<sup>10</sup> Going “beyond the little magazines” (Ardis and Collier, 2008:8; Scholes and Wulfman 2010:41), the field has turned its attention to how both High Modernism and its much broader popular print milieu ultimately converged and overlapped through economic and social networks. Ephemeral print has a crucial role to play in breaking open the book, and I will return to it repeatedly in the following chapters. Nevertheless, ephemeral print is not the only literary vehicle worth highlighting, nor should it be sealed off from other media. As Lise Jaillant writes, it should strike us as “problematic that ‘print culture’ often refers exclusively to periodicals, while other printed forms are neglected” (2017:2). Despite the insistence of periodical studies in breaking down the walls between high and low ephemeral print, the walls between

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century, [...] I am interested in exploring the ways that handwriting and printed writing were brought into intimate contact with one another, the way these two very different technologies could literally overlap one another in the space of a single book” (2009:128).

<sup>10</sup> Sean Latham and Robert Scholes (2006), Patrick Collier (2006), Ann Ardis and Patrick Collier (2008), and Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman (2010) serve as important markers for the increasingly rich field of Modernist ephemeral print. The Modernist Journals Project, an open-access digital archive (some of whose organizational and technical demands are detailed in *Modernism in the Magazines*), offers an invaluable resource to students of English-language Modernisms.

formats seem largely intact.<sup>11</sup> As the following chapters will demonstrate, we owe better to the twentieth-century book. The literature that I collect within these pages moves back and forth through multiple media (manuscript to print; print to manuscript; composite), multiple bindings (unbound serials, commercial case bindings, through-the-fold stitching, saddle stitching or even single cotter pins), multiple editions, multiple alphabets, multiple human agents (writers, editors, oral witnesses, compilers, readers, translators, and others), and multiple geographical nodes. Through these, I want to take the “joyous excess” of variation, which Cerquiglini located in the pre-modern, and plant it firmly (or, perhaps, “fluidly”) in the twentieth century.

It’s my contention, one that I believe is borne out in the following chapters, that the book has never been modern. I borrow this phrase, with some license, from Bruno Latour, who has argued for almost three decades now that “we have never been modern.” For Latour, modernity is not so much a temporal marker as a kind of state of mind—a particularly confused one. It is, in brief, a “misreading” of the hybridity that inheres within any form of production and circulation and the quasi-objects they generate—twentieth-century literary texts included. Modernity, he writes, “has nothing to do with the invention of humanism, with the emergence of the sciences, with the secularization of society, or with the mechanization of the world. [...] Its originality and its strength come from [...] [the fact] that it renders the work of mediation [...] invisible, unthinkable, unrepresentable” (1993:34). Latour’s modernity has nothing to do with any epochal shift or temporal rift: it can occur (or cease) at any number of points in time and in any number of pockets of the planet. It consists of a series of partitions, such as nature and society,

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<sup>11</sup> Scholes and Wulfman, for example, write, “Unlike the book, which is complete in itself, the periodical is not finished until its run has ended, which means, among other things, that a theory of reading based on the book will not work for the periodical” (45).

representation and reality, and object and subject. I'll return to some of these partitions later but, for the moment, if we narrow our frame to the field of literature, modernity is achieved when one believes that a stable textual object does indeed exist, temporally *after* and hierarchically *above* the messy, hybrid work of textual production and transmission—in a word, mediation.<sup>12</sup> The paradox is clear: the Modern recognizes the impure nature of what s/he calls “avant-textes”—all the materials, non-humans, humans, tongues, alphabets, etc., that mediate the pure textual object that s/he has taken to hand in the bookstore, library, or home—but nonetheless consigns them to a space *before* and *beneath* the text proper. “The moderns, Latour writes, “are explicit about the two tasks. They have to practice the top and the bottom halves” (1993:40). The only thing Latour’s model adds—but this is crucial—“is the relation between those two different sets of practices,” collapsing the top and bottom, the before and after, and indeed the entire spatial and temporal hierarchies onto a flat plane. For my purposes here, this flat plane becomes the mechanic’s workbench upon which we might lay out the several pieces of our book, examining their connections and attachments without imposing on them temporal or spatial hierarchies.

In doing so, we become unmodern. This is not the same as anti-modern, but rather a refusal even to accept the mental divisions and the metaphysical apartheid of the Moderns. Non-modernity exists in the twentieth century just as it did in the twelfth. Look, for example, to Seth Lerer’s study of medieval anthologies. Having analyzed and celebrated the reader-initiated narratives assembled in these codices, he pivots in the final

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<sup>12</sup> Some might also point to a stable text *before* mediation—i.e., an original, authoritative Urtext (I’m grateful to Karla Mallette for her helpful reminder on this point). But, unlike the *after*-text (i.e., the commercial codex), which you can actually hold in your hands, the Urtext is imaginary and can only be approximated through editorial labor. And even when, in post-Gutenberg periods, a kind of Urtext does exist—i.e., what we would more appropriately call an autograph manuscript—editors tend not to use this as their copy-text; instead, they prefer printed editions (see, for example, Gaskell 1985:338-340).



section of his essay to a different timeframe altogether: the age of ~~modern~~ non-modern print. “It is a mistake to equate modernity and print,” he writes; “print culture is a fluid concept keyed to the specific uses, contexts, and conditions of reading and writing” (2003:1260). Lerer develops a concept that he calls “‘medieval’ print culture”—i.e., a print culture that, like medieval codices, embraces fluidity, variation, and appropriation—and concludes by remarking on its vitality in the early twenty-first century. Literary non-modernity, therefore, is not a temporal marker but a recognition of the omnipresence of transformation, disattachment and reattachment, dis-assemblage and re-assemblage that moves the physical text at *every* stage of its life—even as it is consumed. In other words, just as literature transforms *us*, so too do *we* transform it, both mentally and physically. These two movements are not sequential stages but mutual feedback loops that sustain one another. So long as a piece of literature moves us by means of its aesthetic tropes and metaphors, we will continue to move it through a series of material bindings, mediums, and institutions; and depending on how we move it through these materials, its aesthetic tropes and metaphors might come to move us differently in turn.

Indeed, is there any better way to mark this double movement than through the *metaphor* itself? In both ancient and modern Greek, a *metaphora* is an act not only of

- “moving” linguistic symbols through various transformations in our head (as we use the term in English); but also of
- “lugging”—i.e., picking up with our hands and moving—a physical object from point A to B.

Greece today is full of moving trucks with the word *METAPHORS* painted along their side, hauling pots, pans, furniture, bookshelves (and, indeed, books) between homes old and new. A metaphor, then, yes, but a metaphor as both a “transformation” and a

“schlepping.” In a certain sense, my project is just such a truck, just such a two-headed *metaphor*. Combining close reading with Book History and Latour’s Actor-Network Theory—two methodologies that, as will become clear if it is not already, have much to offer one another—I hope not simply to play out the aesthetic and material senses of metaphor alongside one another but to collapse them together.

So, where is this non-modern truck ultimately going? I’ve spoken enough about temporality, but what about space? Keeping geography in mind we might return now with more charity and clarity to those like Cerquiglini and understand what they are really pointing towards: not a globally pervasive textual fixity, but rather a set of practices and beliefs specifically located in influential institutional pockets of northern Europe (and, by the end of the nineteenth century, North America). Raising concerns over these practices, as Cerquiglini does, is important, but we would do well not to inflate them into universals. Over a decade after Dipesh Chakrabarty had provincialized Europe for many of us, Eric Hayot still felt the need to observe of our discipline: “This is how things work: from outside the center, the adjectives and titles are geographically and linguistically specific; from inside, we talk on ideas” (2012:4). The time has come to change this: “Titles like ‘Architecture, Design, and Modern Living’ or ‘Modernism on the Radio,’” Hayot continues, “could probably stand to be rewritten with specific geographic qualifiers (‘Architecture, Design, and Modern Living *in Europe*,’ e.g.)” (ibid). I could not agree more.<sup>13</sup> Particularly in the case of literary print history. Every time we read something akin to “[T]he nineteenth century [...] marked the birth of the modern text” (Cerquiglini, 6), we must ask: “Whose nineteenth century? Whose modernity? Whose text? In what paper factories and printing offices, through which bindings, by

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<sup>13</sup> Although I’d call for even more specificity than “Europe,” given regional differences.

what distribution firms, cargo trains and steamships, through which university departments, editorial norms and reading practices is this particular modern text achieved?”<sup>14</sup> It’s my hypothesis that, as we begin to answer these and other questions, the universality of such terms will shrink not only to “Europe” or even “France” but to specific clusters or pockets of practices within this terrain. In other words, even in much of twentieth-century North America and northern Europe, I suspect that one might find a robustly non-modern textuality.

And this is equally true, of course, beyond the scope of the “West” proper. Nearly two decades after D.F. McKenzie’s pioneering case study of the Maori uses of print in nineteenth-century New Zealand (1999 [1984]),<sup>15</sup> Priya Joshi’s *In Another Country* (2002) developed a fuller working methodology by which to recover the agency of non-Western handlers of print,<sup>16</sup> examining nineteenth-century Indian consumption—but, crucially, consumption understood as *recontextualization*—of British fiction (2002). Isabel Hofmeyr, on the other hand, has followed the transnational metamorphoses of a single text (*Pilgrim’s Progress*) in Africa and Britain, understanding it “to function as a portmanteau text [...][,] an archive in which various intellectual positions could be billeted” (2003:28). At the heart of this body of scholarship, I suggest, lies a push against the directionality of the traditional narrative of global print dissemination, eradicating any notion of origin and destination. Robert Fraser, in his landmark *Book History Through*

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<sup>14</sup> I adapt these questions from Latour (2005:183).

<sup>15</sup> McKenzie’s study was a watershed at the time. Nonetheless, it occasionally lapses into the dichotomy of oral vs. literate (e.g., 113). For a recent re-assessment of this dichotomy, see Cohen (2010:16-17).

<sup>16</sup> Ingeniously, Joshi turns to publisher’s archives to recover the agencies of their readers, arguing that “patterns of reading as consumption [...] make themselves visible, paradoxically within the very data and statistics that apparently eschew them. Despite the fact that Indian readers have left so few textual records of their novelistic consumption, the print archive of nineteenth-century India nonetheless offers revealing glimpses” (27).

*Postcolonial Eyes* (2008), the first large survey of book history in lands once under the shadow of the British Empire, notes that continuity exists alongside innovation, and that print in Africa and South-East Asia “drew on an existing base of skills and mechanical arts that fed and sustained it” (22). Sharing a number of localized narratives and connecting them to broader regional and trans-regional developments, Fraser carefully documents the several agents that instantiated print in each particular tradition, asking, “What or who was acquiring or converting what or whom? Was print annexing Bengali and Setswana, or were Bengali and Setswana annexing print?” (10). A careful analyst of the networks that he traces, Fraser insists not on any single “conversion” or “annexation” but on an intricate web of convergences and divergences: “[W]e are faced with a multivalent process that spirals off in several different directions, and in which many different combinations of orality, literacy and print culture are both possible and recorded” (22).

This final point bears emphasis: oral, manuscript and print media are not three successive stages along a linear progression but tools within a toolbox that might be discovered, developed, used and tinkered with in various orders and combinations. Throughout his study, Fraser emphasizes the Möbius strip along which each of these media might be said to continue its development symbiotically with and through the others. Looking to twentieth-century Africa, for example, he notes that “there is abundant evidence that one of the principal effects of print culture across the twentieth century was to sustain oral memory” (122). The interplay of print and orality—again, not as consecutive stages of a text’s linear journey toward fixity but as two important pieces of a sliding puzzle that is frequently returned to and re-arranged—will play an important role

in my fourth chapter.

Here, however, it's important not to lose sight of the larger question that Joshi, Hofmeyr, Fraser and others lead us to raise: what precisely do area-specific, non-Western histories of the book offer conceptually to a broad, non-specialist audience? Hayot frames this question powerfully: If we are to find "a way of thinking about modern literature that makes the study of the non-West (and a more generally *comparative* literature) necessary," then we must do so "not on the grounds that it's good for you (at the end of the day, no matter how generously articulated, a condescending argument), but on the grounds that not doing so produces bad theories of literature and bad literary history" (2012:7). What, then, is bad about book history if it remains penned within a Gutenberg narrative? The problem with this narrative, as Trish Loughran has written, is that it "overwhelmingly rehearses a passion play about modernization, with a strong emphasis on narratives of liberalization and planetary development that is less postcolonial than what we might call neoliberal: a justification for the world as we know it that absorbs local differences within a totalizing picture of the Gutenberg book's global spread" (2015:49). A sobering indictment, if ever there was one: Global book history as a trickledown effect of the European hand and rotary presses, a massive print homogenization driven by empire and neoliberal market structures. In a very real sense, these structures do exist, and I don't want to ignore their powerful place in global print history or world literature. To the contrary, I want to change that place, by suggesting that an alternative network of assemblage has always existed within and beyond them. As Bruno Latour writes, "when domination is at issue, whatever you do, don't add to it" by universalizing it or turning it into a transcendent force (2013:421). If we want to change

“the world as we know it,” to echo Loughran’s wording, then we might begin by getting to know its multiple networks on more intimate terms. In a certain sense, Book History is already doing this, and the scene is changing quickly on at least a couple fronts. First, as I argued above, Fraser, Hofmeyr, Joshi and others have helped offset the Gutenberg narrative by complicating the directionality of innovation and agency. Secondly, and just as importantly, careful attention to regional networks beyond Europe might allow us to create new centers from old peripheries. In the same year that Robert Fraser’s monograph was published, Sydney Shep argued (in a critical anthology that Fraser himself co-edited) that the age of national book histories was dead. Borrowing from Mary Louise Pratt, Shep developed instead a notion of transnational bibliographic “contact zones” (2008:29), zones that might allow scholars of New Zealand, for example, to track the nineteenth-century paper trade that joined New Zealand to Canton. Using the explicit frame of a regional, entangled history, as Shep argues in a later article, we might better visualize “the inherent mobility and mutability of books” (2015:65). This is crucial: if twentieth-century Book History has mapped, with bracing success, the shifting networks of commercial publishers and geopolitical institutions, Shep’s model would have us extend (or perhaps “narrow”?) this same shifting network to the scale of the codex itself.

In the following chapters, I will set to work to do just this, moving within what I feel to be a particularly promising region: the Aegean sea, immediately before and in the wake of the Ottoman Empire’s collapse. In this space, which was neither strictly Western nor strictly colonial, what might we learn about the twentieth-century literary text? A closer look at the Greek- and Turkish-language networks of the Eastern Mediterranean is not simply (to borrow Hayot’s phrase) “good for you”; it will reveal that at least within

certain literary spaces, the book maintained its mercurial fluidity well into the twentieth century. In short, it will reveal the particular *metaphors*—i.e., the schleppings and the transformations—by which the book continued to have never been modern.

### *Curating the Aegean*

For the most part, with a couple small but important exceptions, the story that I want to tell takes place along the coastlines of the Aegean and into the hinterlands that lie behind them. This is not an easy story to tell, because in many senses the Aegean itself seems to have lost its coherence, partitioned between two states, two continents, two national languages and religions since the early twentieth century, when Greek and Turkish borders took the shape they have today. If my story is going to succeed, it's clear that I will have to tell it, like Gil Hochberg (2007), "in spite of partition." This section, then, asks and attempts to answer the question: How might we re-assemble the Aegean, discovering the larger connectivity and hybridity that was always there?

Nazım Hikmet, among the earliest Turkish-language poets to be translated into Greek, once wrote, "[T]he land speaks neither Greek nor Turkish [/] it speaks the language of the dirt" (2002:98).<sup>17</sup> Yet while I've long admired the sentiment behind these words, which some might understand to index Hikmet's larger turn toward internationalism, they're not quite accurate. Since antiquity this land *has* been made to speak—and I don't mean only through textual representations of the land, on which there

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<sup>17</sup> The phrase concludes Hikmet's brief treatment of the (fictional) refugee Mihail Trastellis, who flees Greece during the German occupation and is now sitting on a Turkish train, traveling toward the Anatolian hinterland.

is a rich and expanding bibliography.<sup>18</sup> Literary representation is a crucial mode of “making the land speak,” and I’ll return to it shortly, but the obverse remains understudied and deserves equal consideration: the ways that the land has also been a *vehicle* (rather than an object) of language. This is particularly true in the Aegean. From inscribed stones that began bearing witness to archaic poetry as early as the eighth century BCE<sup>19</sup> to the vitriol salt (*τὸ καλακάνθιν*), oak gall (*τὸ κικίδι*) and vinegar (*τὸ ὄξος*) of the Byzantines and, later, the flax (*keten*) and soot (*is*) of the Ottomans, which they drew from the soil and pressed into the service of scribal ink,<sup>20</sup> the land and its ecological networks have always been inextricably bound up in the languages and texts that are produced atop them.

The same is true of the sea, as we learn when we continue with the case of ink: specialists reading my list above will doubtlessly already have interjected, *But you’ve forgotten the gum arabic!* Indeed, the secretions of particular acacia trees were a crucial binding agent for both gallnut and soot inks, without which they would simply fail to take hold on the page. That is to say, these secretions are the bond that anchors the ink to a textual home. Yet gum arabic itself had no home in the Aegean. It was invariably imported from across—or, more accurately, *around*<sup>21</sup>—the sea. To give a sense of the larger geography of ink, I’ll quote at length one particularly revealing recipe, copied in the late twelfth century:

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<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Artemis Leontis’ (1996) study of “topology”; Vangelis Calotychos’ (2004) study of cartography (23-59); Aslihan Şenel’s (2013) study of guidebooks; or Constanze Güthenke’s (2008) exploration of the “cognitive mapping” of landscape.

<sup>19</sup> Gregory Nagy (1996:34).

<sup>20</sup> For an anthology of extant Byzantine gallnut ink recipes, see Peter Schreiner and Doris Oltrogge (2011:33-80). For a discussion of Ottoman soot ink production, see M. Uğur Derman (2004: 22).

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of *cabotage* in the Mediterranean, see Fernand Braudel (1976 [1949]:103-108).



If you want to make ink enough for a small pot you have to take a hundred galls, or however many [in proportion] for the amount you want to make. Pick out those that are black, heavy, and bulky and add proportionately the other two ingredients, which is two ounces of vitriol—*Cypriot vitriol is the best [commentary added by the same hand above the line]*—and one ounce of gum arabic. The galls occur in the lands of Byzantium; they do not bring these from Alexandria or from any other country. [...] The good vitriol is brought from Cyprus; it's glassy and yellow. It comes from Adramyttos as well. This vitriol is not too bad. It occurs in other lands of ours too but is not good; the entire soil is retained [e.g., the sulfate is full of impurities]. As for gum, the good stuff is brought from Alexandria. They dry it out there and bring it here hardened. (Schreiner and Oltrogge, 38)

Gum arabic, in other words, came not only from across the sea; it came from across what Henri Pirenne, in his influential *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (1939), called the great partition of the Middle Ages: religion. By the time the Orthodox intellectuals and scribes of Byzantium were writing and transcribing their ink recipes (many of which, like the one above, explicitly called for “Alexandrian gum”), Alexandria and its hinterlands had for centuries been under the political and cultural control of Islamic dynasties, whose merchants monopolized the trafficking of gum arabic in the Horn of Africa.<sup>22</sup> In a certain sense, then, it was Islamic gum that anchored Orthodox ink to the page, an observation that is made explicit in some recipes, which refer to it as “Saracen gum” (*κομμίδι σαρακήνικον*).<sup>23</sup> While the contents of certain texts might envision strict borders that partition and police the political or ethnic other, the physical network of the land and sea itself speaks a different story on those pages. According to this story, Pirenne’s “barrière infranchissable” (1939:151 [1937:121]) becomes instead, to use Sharon Kinoshita’s elegant phrase, “a permeable zone” (2004:169).

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<sup>22</sup> Cyprus too was falling into Latin hands just as the particular recipe above was being transcribed, and Adramyttos would follow suit less than a decade later, meaning that the components of this ink passed through both Muslim *and Catholic* hands before they reached those of the Orthodox.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Schreiner and Oltrogge (54).

What happens when we move from the medieval period to the Aegean of the twentieth century? Some might assume that these ethno-cultural hybrids are tossed into the waste bin. But as I wrote earlier, while one certainly observes a change, it's one of scale, not of kind. Look carefully enough and you'll find that, as Iain Chambers has written, borders remain "both transitory and zones of transit" (2008:5). The Turkish Republic's first (and, for several decades, only) paper factory, for example, was built in İzmit, yet since the pine trees in the region produced too much sap (*Birinci Türk Neşriyat Kongresi* 1939:48), the factory was induced to import cellulose from abroad, to say nothing of the large amounts of paper that it imported in any case, since the factory failed to satisfy the needs of publishers (Felek, 22 March, 1948). The entire aim of this (terribly expensive) factory had been, like so much of the centralized economic planning in Republican Turkey, to seal off production within national borders and create, through an elite managerial network close to the regime, a national bourgeoisie,<sup>24</sup> yet in the particular case of paper at least the ecology of the Aegean refused to play along, belying the Republic's supposed autonomy. In the twentieth-century Aegean, the material production of language and literature remains tied to the soil and the water, in ways that are difficult to contain or pin down, however, within national boundaries.

Of course, texts are not just manufactured objects; they are also articulations of letters and words, which tell their own stories too. What a poem, essay or novel tells us about the land and sea has proven a powerful vehicle, and textual representations of space often extend beyond the page and exert their own pressures on the region. Sometimes, a text will reinforce the same transnational and hybrid interconnectivities of space that I've just traced out in their material production. Representations of this sort might, in the

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<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the fraught creation of a national Turkish bourgeoisie, see Zafer Toprak (1982).

words of Artemis Leontis, project on the land “a spatially expansive, loosely organized union of autonomous, individually coded communities” (82). Certain poems of C.P. Cavafy, for example, like «Ἐπάνοδος ἀπὸ τὴν Ἑλλάδα» (Return from Greece), which we’ll read in the following chapter, might be said to represent the Eastern Mediterranean in just this way. Nevertheless, alongside such representations it’s important not to discount the vast scale and influence of another set of texts—namely, *nationalist* texts—that instead imagine a territory partitioned off from or annexed into another by divisions, enclosures, and exclusions, texts like Yannis Psycharis’ *Τὸ ταξίδι μου* (My Journey) or Sabahattin Eyüboğlu’s “Bizim Anadolu” (Our Anatolia). Crucially, textual imaginations of a decidedly national space have spilled over into very real (and very palpable) national policies of statecraft, growing particularly acute in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Leontis writes that literary topographies of the Aegean “may be *topoi* of the imagination: dream nations, imaginary homelands, cultures of the mind. But they also attach identity to geography. In this sense, they are supremely territorial, firmly grounded in a geopolitical world order” (39). Neither textual map nor physical territory precedes the one or the other; they are links in a single chain that Latour has called the mode of “reference,” which he explains by means of a hiker (in fact, Latour himself) looking back and forth between his map of a mountain and the mountain path on which he’s located. Calibrating the two spaces through a web of objects and institutions, such as compasses, national geography institutes, and trail markings, he slowly brings the two ends (the map and the mountain) into alignment (2013: 70-95). And while Latour’s example of a French hiker enjoying a stroll through the Alpine foothills presents what seems to be a placid ideological void, the picture at the border between Greece and Turkey offers strikingly

clearer stakes. Rather than hiking signs, one finds that into the ground have been planted thousands of land mines<sup>25</sup> and metal poles, linked with barbed razor fences bearing signs that, in what J.L. Austin might call performative text acts, declare the borders of two political states. This is to say nothing of the myriad fences *within* each state, marking off, for example, military installations whose grounds we are forbidden to reproduce by photograph—a kind of military copyright. When reading the geo-graphy of the Aegean, in other words, it's difficult to tell just where the representation ends and the reality begins. This is because, as the mode of “reference” helps us understand, they are both part of the same chain that can be folded or unfolded indefinitely. And while the physical signs that the state plants atop the land are by no means an invention of the twentieth century (or even the past two millennia, as the countless ancient stones engraved with the laws and decrees of city states and empires will attest), the fences, barbs, metal signs with reflective sheeting, landmines, barracks, airplanes, ships, and other paraphernalia of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century Aegean have certainly multiplied their connections and are today so dense a network as to appear as solid walls. In the Aegean, as elsewhere, these quasi-walls have led to territorial disputes, ethnic cleansing, exclusionary policies, and, on more than one occasion, war.

If I have already written against partitions of media and periods, I will also have to address a political partition of a far different scale, one that has cost hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars,<sup>26</sup> a partition that began with the Greek War of

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<sup>25</sup> For a popular treatment of the eleven kilometers of mine fields that Greece maintains along its border with Turkey, and the deaths of undocumented migrants trying to cross them, see Niki Kitsantonis (2009).

<sup>26</sup> The Greek state sinks billions of euros into its defense budget every year (the highest amount, relative to GDP, in the EU) and is a familiar client to foreign weapons manufacturers in both Europe and abroad—primarily the United States. It is, in fact, the largest importer of military-grade weapons on the continent. The central drive of this spending is its unresolved tensions with the Turkish state, which in turn maintains

Independence in the nineteenth century but perhaps might be said to have metastasized and reached its terminal stages with the Greco-Turkish Population Exchange of 1923. This was a brutal political expediency that came at the end of a brutal war and uprooted nearly two million people from their lands—and, in many cases, their languages. Ratified by the Greek and Turkish diplomats at Lausanne, this procedure aimed at deporting the Orthodox Christians of Turkish Anatolia to Greece and, conversely, the Muslims of the Greek state to Turkey.<sup>27</sup> It would remain one of the largest forced resettlements in history until the Indian Partition a quarter century later. My fourth chapter will return to this event in greater detail, but it suffices to say here that the partition continues today. It continues, most strikingly, by claiming the lives of thousands of new refugees and migrants who attempt to cross these borders and are drowned at sea, exploded by landmines, beaten and sexually assaulted by state authorities, or interned and subjected to what Maurizio Albahari describes as “structural boredom” (2015:124).<sup>28</sup> Yet it also continues, more subtly if more pervasively, by claiming the minds of many citizens of the two nation-states, walling them into a particular mentality that Stathis Gourgouris (1996) has productively explored as a kind of national dream-work.

The bibliography on nationalism is immense and I have no intention of treating it

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the second largest military in NATO, dwarfed only by the United States, and foresees approximately the same percentage of its GDP for military expenditures. As for the (deeply conservative) estimate of “hundreds of thousands” of lost lives, with this I gesture towards the total number of military and civilian deaths in the various territorial struggles, skirmishes, and wars between Greece and Turkey starting with the war of 1821.

<sup>27</sup> With the small exceptions of Greeks living in Istanbul and Turks living in western Thrace, each of whom were nonetheless targets of exclusionary policies in the ensuing decades.

<sup>28</sup> This structural boredom, he writes, leads to “resignation, frustration, vandalism, and even self-destruction, including bio-political gestures of protest” such as “ingest[ing] batteries, nails, shampoo, and shattered glass,” or sewing one’s lips shut “using the wires they find inside cigarette lighters” (125).

directly here.<sup>29</sup> Nor do I want to rehearse the major ideological projects of Greek and Turkish nationalists, such as the Grand Idea (*Megali Idea*) driving the foreign policy of the Greek state until 1922 or the “Three-way” (*Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*) Turkish nationalism of Yusuf Akçura and its later elaboration by Ziya Gökalp, topics that scholarship has likewise treated in depth.<sup>30</sup> Instead, I want to turn to the practice of scholarship itself, examining the effect that this nationalist partition has had within the academy. By most scholarly accounts, the Ottoman Empire’s collapse in 1922 and the ensuing Population Exchange was nothing short of catastrophic. Indeed, for comparatist scholars of the Aegean today, nearly all of whom work in earlier periods, it marks the necessary end point of their studies, nothing less than the end of the eastern Mediterranean itself as a larger cultural unit.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, the shockwaves of the Ottoman collapse have, until very recently, even reached backward into much of the literary scholarship on earlier periods, continuing to be felt in the most fundamental operations of scholarly training. Johann Strauss, in what has become a seminal essay, argues that Ottomanist historians of literature working on

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<sup>29</sup> National book histories have been particularly indebted to Benedict Anderson (1991), although his work is not without its limits, which Trish Loughran (2007:5-15) addresses with particular incisiveness. Leah Price has also offered productive criticisms to Anderson’s model, if only in passing (2012: 260-1). Beyond Book History, most debates on nationalism have circled around the genealogies of the nation, as seen in Elie Kedourie (1993 [1960]); Ernest Gellner (1983); Anderson (1991); Eric Hobsbawm (1992); and Anthony Smith (1999). Frantz Fanon (2005 [1961]); Partha Chatterjee (1986 and 1993); and Gregory Jusdanis (2001) invest less in identifying the roots of an otherwise Eurocentric nationalism and examine instead its relation to the colonial condition, Enlightenment discourse and the sense of belatedness.

<sup>30</sup> For comparative treatments of Greek and Turkish nationalism, see Umut Özkırımlı and Spyros Sofos (2008) or Fatma Müge Göçek (2002). For a discussion of the *Megali Idea*, see Özkırımlı and Sofos (104 ff) or Leontis (73ff). For a discussion of Akçura, Gökalp and Turkish nationalism, see Özkırımlı and Sofos (27 ff) or Kader Konuk (2010:57ff).

<sup>31</sup> Karla Mallette (2010) looks to the other side of the Mediterranean to offer an exceptional counter-narrative—one in which Spanish, Italian and Maltese philologists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries turned to Arabic textual traditions to build their own national narratives. In Mallette’s careful reading, the twentieth century is not an end point but a necessary stage in the continuing life of transnational Mediterranean networks. Such a history of modern scholarship, however, would be difficult to reproduce in the eastern Mediterranean, which presents striking differences in temporality, pacing, and scale.

the nineteenth century, despite the fact that they are engaged in the study of a polyglot empire, have been subtly shaped by the modern nation-state. They must expand their scope, he writes, beyond Ottoman-Turkish, Arabic and Persian: “Comprehensive studies in [the field] cannot exclude the writings in Greek, Bulgarian, Armenian and other languages used in the Ottoman Empire” (2003:65). This call has more recently triggered a renaissance in Ottoman literary scholarship, such as the critical anthology *Tanzimat ve Edebiyat: Osmanlı İstanbul’unda Modern Edebi Kültür* (Tanzimat and Literature: Modern Literary Culture in Ottoman Istanbul), edited by Mehmet Fatih Uslu and Fatih Altuğ, or Etienne Charriere’s ambitious monograph project. As I write these words, such works are helping to break apart the largely nationalist narrative of the novel in Turkey,<sup>32</sup> foregrounding the linguistically, religiously and culturally diverse agents who shaped it. Yet their scope remains solidly fixed within the nineteenth century. Strauss himself confesses that the same area-studies mentality that he critiques “may be justified for the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the ethnic and linguistic composition of the Middle East [was] radically transformed. The old multilingualism [did] not exist any longer” (ibid). I could not agree more that the twentieth century witnessed an unprecedented scale of transformations, a scale that perforce includes the “old” multilingualism. I do wonder, however, whether “transformation” must necessarily be equated with “annihilation.”

In any case, the fates that modern Greek and Turkish literature (i.e., post-Ottoman) have met in the academy are especially telling and reflect the assumptions above. While modern Greek literature hovers uneasily between European or Balkan studies—and is in

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<sup>32</sup> The nationalist literary history of Turkish began with Fuad Köprülü (1966 [1923]) and has only begun to be seriously revised over the past ten years. For the traditional nationalist narrative of the nineteenth-century novel in particular, see Ahmet Evin (1983), which only considers the work of Sunni Muslims.

fact usually housed within Classics departments in the United States—modern Turkish literature is invariably shunted into Near Eastern studies, foreclosing the possibility of alternative modes of institutional association.<sup>33</sup> Some past attempts to shake these structures have focused on deconstructions of the literary canon. In the heat of the larger canon wars, Vassilis Lambropoulos, for example, aimed to deconstruct not only the partitions of the Greek canon but, through it, of the nation-state itself. “Critics’ ethnocentric orientation,” he wrote, “guided by political demands for systematic demarcations and defenses of the national identity, has sanctioned only mimetic modes of writing and an obsessive inquisition of the ethnic origins of the literary sign” (1988:20). In other words, canon formation in Greece was both aesthetically and politically bankrupt; in their “quest for purity and autonomy,” the literary critics of Greece had locked themselves out from both formal and political experimentation and it was, in Lambropoulos’ mind, time to pull down some walls. Murat Belge (2008) later mounted a similar attack in Turkey, focusing not on criticism but on literary works themselves. Pinpointing an essentialism (*özcülük*) in the narratives of Turkish-language historical fiction, he deconstructed their supposed historical pasts as projections from the present: “But is the aim [...] of all these novels to explain when and how ‘we’ emerged on the historical scene? [/] No. Generally, it is groups that are at odds with the ‘present and its situation’ who make these journeys back in time and attempt to find an older untainted essence that has been lost or removed, recovering it within its pristine state” (32). Fiction, he argued, invented a “we” that it purified within its constructed historical past. The

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<sup>33</sup> It’s true that Comparative Literature has offered some important escape routes from the nation-state, most notably in Turkish studies, through the work of those like Kader Konuk, Azade Seyhan or Kristin Dickinson. Much of this scholarship turns needed critical attention to the role of Turkish language, literature and culture in Germany or the West more broadly. Alongside such work, however, I think that we also have much to gain from comparative projects that remain “closer to home,” i.e., those that recuperate the twentieth-century eastern Mediterranean itself as a coherent cultural unit.



audience to whom this social construction was addressed was, in turn, purified and re-invented as the selfsame “we.” In the eyes of those like Belge and Lambropoulos, these “forged purities” and “pseudo-autonomies” of fiction and criticism were targets that needed to be obliterated with whatever critical tools necessary. As the latter wrote, the aim of canon deconstruction was “to *undercut* the artistic privileges of literature and the positivistic claims of scholarship [...], to *expose* its guiding principles by stressing their intrinsically political character” (6). The verbs in this sentence, which I’ve italicized for effect, make clear just how carefully such projects had sharpened their critical knives. Indeed, Lambropoulos’s stated goal was nothing less than “abolishing” (6) criticism itself—through critique!

Don’t get me wrong: I share the claustrophobia that such scholars feel within the national canon. Yet if we have the same aims, I want to pursue a different pathway towards their realization. I revisit the “nationalization” narrative of the twentieth-century Aegean to view it not as a discourse that needs to be deconstructed but rather a *literal* construction site, the “build-ing as process” that I mentioned earlier. Inspecting this work site, I aim to highlight and unfold some of the surprisingly unorthodox textual assemblages that emerged from Greek and Turkish literature in this period. This does not mean that I will abandon criticism, which has its place in each of the following chapters.<sup>34</sup> What it does mean, however, is that I understand criticism as but one tool within the scholar’s repertoire and hope to foreground more prominently what Rita Felski has called

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<sup>34</sup> Rita Felski, through whom I’m orienting my sense of critical practice here (and who, in turn, is drawing from Latour), finds fault not with criticism itself but what she calls “critique”: the moment when criticism aims not at opening debate but closing it, insulating the academic in a space above the object of her/his critique. In other words, if “criticism” signals an open call to deliberation and an admission that we are on the same epistemological footing, “critique” has come instead to “signal the critic’s self-reflexive distance from the naive or literal beliefs of others” (2016:221).

an ethics of “curating” literary artifacts. Admittedly, she describes this practice in terms that I would avoid: “The wounded and vulnerable artifacts of history depend on caring for their survival—without which they are in danger of vanishing, like endangered species, never to reappear” (217). On the one hand, I understand the value of such an emphasis; look to any rare book collection, for example, and you soon see that the material restoration of certain kinds of damaged literary artifacts is indeed a vital part of their practice, demanding a set of skills that range from chemistry to book binding. Nevertheless, recuperation and restoration cannot be the *aim* of curators, only one among several *means* toward a more important end: assembling and interpreting works of art for—or even better, *with*—a larger public. This is, in any case, a point that Felski too emphasizes later and I’m sure that she would agree. Rather than approaching literary texts as we would, say, a wounded California condor lying in an abandoned field, we might better view them as lively matters of concern for a large plurality of audiences with whom we can (and must) collaborate.<sup>35</sup> As Felski writes, our aim is “to compose a common world, even if this world can only be built out of many different parts” (221). And if we often think of curations as macro-projects, comprising dozens (if not hundreds, or indeed millions of literary artifacts), the scales are also reversible and collapsible: a single literary work can become a collection or exhibit, with its multiple pieces to be

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<sup>35</sup> Emily Apter (2013) offers an important challenge to scholarship-as-curation. In her reading, scholarship of this sort “conceives of the art work as protectable property. In this scheme, the salvaged text is effectively signed over to the critic who is now, properly speaking, a curator, charged with conserving it and appraising its worth [...] [through] Eurocentric gold standards of excellence and structures of legitimation endorsed by the media (publishing, criticism, prize-granting)” (327). Apter has a point, and she offers a needed and productive criticism: we mustn’t overlook the economies of value that drive some curatorial work. Nonetheless, to imply that all curation tends to this end is to unduly neglect the radical politics of many curators and their projects, which are pushing back against centralized proprietary and aesthetic control. See, for example, the Chamber of Public Secrets, a collective of artists and curators who have written openly on the stakes of collective curating, or—closer to home for scholars of literature—the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), which offers itself as a collectivist, non-commercial alternative to Google Books, spread out across an open, horizontal network.

arranged and displayed and its potentially multiple audiences to be addressed. This, in short, is curating: assembling a work, and through that work assembling an audience that might become its active handlers, and through that work and audience, assembling a world—in my case, the twentieth-century Aegean.

In the Aegean, whose border regimes I've already detailed in brief, the political stakes of “curating literature” are potentially great. While literature is by no means the only medium for bringing together large audiences, it remains a powerful public forum in the region and has the potential for building the common, pluralist world that Felski refers to above. William Connolly's *The Fragility of Things* (2013) helps articulate the political stakes of building such a world and, despite its disciplinary distance, it's worth glancing at here. Identifying various human and non-human “force fields”—ranging from SUV production to bacterial flows and ocean currents—that have been set into dangerous collisions through neoliberal capitalism, he determines that the danger and power of such collisions lie precisely in their unforeseeable contingency. The most promising resistance to neoliberal networks, therefore, is to mimic their own contingency and multiformity, drawing together diverse groups into a pluralistic opposition: “In the place of pursuing a world ethical commonwealth implicitly modeled on the extrapolation of European life [...] a new radical, pluralist assemblage, if it emerges, will consist of alliances between minorities of multiple types who join together to reorient the common life” (137). The key to building such an assembly of groups, as Latour suggests, lies in the “diplomacy” and “eloquence” with which we address the various audiences composing them: “To speak well in the agora [...] is to hope that [our audiences] will nod their heads in approval when we propose a version of their practice that may be totally different from

theirs but at least commensurate with their experience and, if possible, shareable. And above all a version that will allow them to respect, in turn, other modes that they had learned to scorn” (2013:262-3).

When we turn again to the Aegean, we see that this audience will perform include both Greek and Turkish citizens (and non-citizens), those who have grown disenchanted with the national canon, those who were never represented by it and, yes, those who are enamored with it. We must learn to speak to and assemble as many of these readers as we can in a common story. And we’ll do so, I argue, not through deconstructing the literary canons of Greece and Turkey or scattering them to the winds but by arranging, as in an exhibit, the hybrid and multiform pieces that are “hiding in plain sight” within them. To curate such a work, we need to re-imagine how the modern Aegean fits within area studies paradigms. How, in other words, to situate our academic lens so that the sea is no longer partitioned between Europe and the Middle East but functions as its own unit?

I locate my own answer to this question in Mediterranean studies, which for at least two generations has been quietly but carefully building its own common-yet-pluralist world. Most helpful for my own vision is Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea* (2000), which understands the Mediterranean as nothing more (or less) than a dense grid of “microregions” or “micro-ecologies.” They’re a fluid unit of analysis, meant to supplant the more rigid notions of town, territory and route.<sup>36</sup> Taken together, they produce a vision of the sea as a shifting, fragmented and yet paradoxically connected entity whose human agents respond and adapt in parallel to internal and

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<sup>36</sup> Towns, they write, are understood “less as separate and clearly definable entities and more as loci of contact or overlap between different ecologies” (100). Routes, in turn, are replaced by a series of objects, technologies and practices, such as watch towers, seamarks, port monuments, *cabotage*, slave raids, pilgrimage, etc. “There were, in other words, routes within routes—a multitude of them” (140).

external pressures.<sup>37</sup> Horden and Purcell’s landmark volume remains the most powerful lens into the “Mediterranean world” today<sup>38</sup> and might, as I’ll suggest in the following section, have insights to offer into current debates over World Literature.

The problem is that, if we are to take Horden and Purcell at their word, the Mediterranean no longer exists, having “vanished” in the twentieth century:

Historiography *of* the Mediterranean—the type of which Braudel was the greatest exponent—has mostly vanished from the scene. During the twentieth century, the Mediterranean region itself has also to a considerable extent been disintegrated, and the network of its microecologies radically reconfigured, by the involvement of its coastal nations in the credit economies, political alliances, technologies and communications networks of the North and West or the Far East. (3)

The “end of the Mediterranean” is a trope to which they return repeatedly. Even when they locate ongoing microregional patterns in the century in question, they attribute them to a kind of death rattle, “a portrait of Mediterranean society in its terminal phase—the phase, that is, in which history *of* the Mediterranean ceases to be appropriate. Yet these examples also help us look back” (484). But why not look forward as well? What seems to be the case is that, writing under Fukuyama’s shadow in the 1990s, Horden and Purcell were projecting backwards onto the twentieth century (but not earlier) their own ideological atmosphere. More recently, Horden himself has noted as much, writing, “One of the, in retrospect, less clairvoyant dicta in Horden and Purcell’s *Corrupting Sea* is its prediction of ‘the end of the Mediterranean.’ But that really was how it seemed in the

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<sup>37</sup> They also re-assert the importance of human agency, which Braudel’s earlier study had subordinated to geography and ecology. Horden and Purcell by no means discount these latter two—indeed, they lie at the heart of their study—but they understand them as mutually imbricated with a human agency that is again foregrounded: “We envision human perceptions and the actions that arise from them as the major (not the only) ingredient in the creation of microregions” (406).

<sup>38</sup> It continues to inspire critical anthologies across periods and disciplines, such as Husain and Fleming (2007) or Concannon and Mazurek (2016).

early 1990s when the book was being drafted” (2014:3).<sup>39</sup> The Mediterranean’s microregions remain important spaces today, spaces in which we can study in miniature some of the most pressing questions of power, empire, and mobility. And it was thus, I argue, for much of the twentieth century as well.

Another desideratum in Horden and Purcell’s model—indeed, in all the field’s comprehensive studies—is a more focused discussion of literature. Sharon Kinoshita, in the same volume from which I just quoted Purcell, remarks that

neither Fernand Braudel’s *Mediterranean* nor Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea* nor David Abulafia’s *The Great Sea*—has much to say about texts we would call literary and, as a sub-field, Mediterranean Studies has found less purchase in literature than among historians in many sub-disciplines. This belatedness reflects the tenacity in literary studies of the nation—with its ideal, if rarely realized, presumptions about the homogeneity of language, “ethnicity,” and religion—as the default category of analysis. Institutionalized in departments of national literatures or by philological (Romance languages) or area studies (Near Eastern or East Asian languages) groupings, literary studies as currently configured are ill-equipped to explore certain kinds of texts and issues. (314)

Carved up across national language departments and area studies centers, literary studies have, until recently, been unable to envision a truly Mediterranean network. Invoking Deleuze and Guattari, Kinoshita continues: “‘Mediterranean literature,’ then, is a project of reterritorialization. By displacing the nation as the default category of analysis, it brings into view the patchwork of principalities, city-states, and empires—often multilingual, multi-ethnic, or multi-confessional—that comprise the pre- and early modern Mediterranean” (ibid). Yet, here again, we bump into the same question: what of the twentieth century? Kinoshita does indeed see structural similarities among various twentieth-century Mediterranean novels, drawing together Alexandros Papadiamandis, Carlo Levi, Marcel Pagnol, Yaşar Kemal, Amin Maalouf, Abdel Rahman al-Sharqawi,

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<sup>39</sup> On the modern Mediterranean, see also Naor Ben-Yehoyada (2014) and Edmund Burke (2012).

and Mouloud Mammeri: they each wrestle, Kinoshita tells us, with the tension between local tradition and a bureaucratically or colonially imposed modernization. In this sense, then, Kinoshita can go on to write of a “modern Mediterranean literature,” snatched from the death throes of a twentieth-century Mediterranean that itself “loses its purchase as a category of analysis” (325).

The only problem is that these novels don’t really speak to one another, nor do their production and transmission display any linguistic, material, or geographic border crossing. Despite the broad structural similarity between works, twentieth-century literature seems largely turned inward: “Literature became a vehicle articulating national histories, national identities, and national dilemmas, decisively moving away from the text-network paradigm that saw the *Alexander Romance* continuing to circulate in Ottoman lands through the nineteenth century” (324). How to reconcile these two directional pulls in Kinoshita’s account of the region’s twentieth-century literatures? Are they Mediterranean or national? Must we renounce all claims to the hybridization of textual production that were so vital to earlier periods?

No, we don’t; but we do need to look more carefully for it within a quickly shifting landscape. Having earlier discussed the (represented and real) partitions of the Aegean, I can confirm that Kinoshita’s account is dead on. But while I don’t deny its accuracy, my point is that it took (1) a very long time, (2) inestimable resources, and (3) a great many hands to build the region’s national literary systems, and their walls were never entirely solid. As the careful reader follows their gradual construction (and the acts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization that many hands introduced into this construction at several stages) over the century, keeping the above three caveats in mind,

s/he'll discover a far more complicated network than expected. The aim of this study, then, is to curate that network, assembling its pieces in an open exhibition for an audience as pluralistic as the literary artifacts that it contains.

### ***Mediterranean—World—Literature***

If Horden and Purcell flagged the twentieth century as the death of the Mediterranean world, the twin forces pushing them to this verdict were financialization and globalization. Recall from the earlier excerpt that, in their view, the sea had been “disintegrated” and bundled off by “the credit economies, political alliances, technologies and communications networks of the North and West or the Far East.” This was reflected as well in the academy, where the rise of world systems theories had rendered the Mediterranean invisible, lost between abutting regions:

To put it summarily, and in ancient terms, cosmology [“reflecting on the earth as a whole”] has finally prevailed over chorography [“describing particular areas”]. [...] For Neither human nor physical geography, as practised around the turn of the millennium, has much time for the Mediterranean area as a distinctive whole. Until fairly recently, surveys of the region appeared with some regularity. Nowadays, in contrast, the textbooks, the more ambitious synopses of “the natural regions of the globe,” and the newer explorations of cognitive geography have little to say about it. Their typical briefs are either Europe or the Middle East: an old division of labour continues to be observed.  
(19)

While the passage here is concerned explicitly with the field of geography, the ensuing pages note similar turns in anthropology, political science, and economics. Paradoxically, the academy's new cosmological vision tended not to produce a unified earth as its object; instead, it often carved the earth up into what uncannily resembled older, colonial zones. On such a map, the Mediterranean quickly slipped between the cracks. If it was crossed, it was seemingly without any layovers or mediation, and not on a regional but



global scale: by the shipping lines of crude oil, the pipelines of natural gas, or packets of digital data. Observing the academy's global turn at the turn of the new century, Horden and Purcell noted that for many fields the modern Mediterranean constituted "no more than a collection of conduits, a few straight lines on the map." True, more recent scholarship, which does indeed trace the intricate human and material crossings and attachments of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century Mediterranean, should encourage us now, two decades later, to qualify Horden and Purcell's claim substantially.<sup>40</sup> But beyond the specialized field of Mediterranean studies itself, the careful weighing of their two terms—cosmology and chorography—might prove a useful diagnostic for certain disciplines today, among which I count literary studies.

For here too one notices over the same approximate period the emergence of a similar cosmological vision, known to most of us as World Literature. If such a vision is not to repeat the "old division of labor" of colonial enterprises, it's important that we foreground David Damrosch's early and repeated insistence that "even a genuinely global perspective remains a perspective *from somewhere*, and global patterns of the circulation of world literature take shape in their local manifestations" (2003:27).<sup>41</sup> What does this mean? It means that any cosmological map of literature is created and maintained in particular places, institutions and networks, which must be traced out not through cosmology but through an equal and opposite chorography. Without this latter, world

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<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Iain Chambers (2008) or Maurizio Albahari (2015), both cited earlier.

<sup>41</sup> Damrosch repeats this point elsewhere as well, such as his thoughtful response (2014) to Emily Apter's *Against World Literature*. Djelal Kadir's (2004; 2010) insistence on exploring both the subject and object positions of the verb "to world" is likewise a useful heuristic for the same end.

literature evaporates into what Manuel Castells has called the “space of flows,”<sup>42</sup> the seemingly ubiquitous-yet-placeless Anglophone World Literature industry (which I will distinguish from other world literatures by means of capitalization). Emily Apter has condemned this industry for its “entrepreneurial, bulimic drive to anthologize and curricularize the world's cultural resources,” a drive that, by “promoting an ethic of liberal inclusiveness or the formal structures of cultural similitude, often has the collateral effect of blunting political critique” (3; 41). More recently, Aamir Mufti (2016) and Joseph Slaughter (2014) have pushed Apter’s observation even further, underscoring World Literature’s genealogical and structural ties to nothing less than colonialist extraction and the devastating second enclosure movement that has taken its place today.<sup>43</sup>

In both Mufti and Slaughter’s assessments, World Literature constructs a “plane of equivalence” that “establish[es] the *same* manner of being different” (Mufti 77) and converts *literatura*, *adab*, *sāhitya*, *wen* and dozens of other practices into so many “raw materials to be extracted, exploited, accumulated, and privatized” (Slaughter 52). Hayot has called this process one of “geometrization”: a simultaneous universalization of the earth *and* its differentiation into units that are, nonetheless, by the very force of universalization, subject to the same natural and cultural laws (115). Through geometrization, “not just space, but *everything*, became describable, fungible, transactable” (100). In the World Literature industry, these transactions are carried out through a handful of “currency converters”—i.e., seemingly stable, transnational

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<sup>42</sup> See 2010 [1996]:407-459. It’s my conviction that Castells’ farsighted model of global networks is a powerful lens through which to understand world literature(s) and would reward a full-scale extrapolation.

<sup>43</sup> For thoughtful criticisms of the second enclosure movement, see Boyle (2003) and Arewa (2006).

indices—among which the most important remains the “original author” (who of course never died<sup>44</sup>). But while authorship might appear to us today just as universal as the Big Mac,<sup>45</sup> a growing body of scholarship has shown that it bears its own geographic and temporal particularities and that, again, its supposed universal standard derives from European modernity.<sup>46</sup> Of course, it should go without saying that the problem here is not the author as an individual agent, who is in any case a relatively insignificant force in the alignment of global intellectual property regimes.<sup>47</sup> Looking to postcolonial authorship, for example, Sarah Brouillette (2007) and Caroline Davis (2013) have carefully demonstrated this: if authorial brands sometimes function as important linchpins in global literature, the writers themselves often have less power than the material and legal infrastructure amassed around them. The authorial brand, Brouillette writes, “actually masks—and is designed to mask—writers’ larger detachment from the relevant processes of production, distribution, and consumption” (4). To “de-universalize” authorship and find alternatives to the author-centric proprietary regime, our unit of analysis must be not authors but the networks that define them as such—and, crucially, those that define them differently. In other words, not prosopography (or at least not primarily prosopography) but chorography. By recovering the alternative creative, material, and institutional

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<sup>44</sup> For a treatment of Barthes’ “The Death of the Author,” Foucault’s “What is an Author?,” and the ensuing conversations in the field of theory, see Seán Burke (2008 [1998]).

<sup>45</sup> I allude here to *The Economist*’s Big Mac Index, used since 1986 as an informal measure for global currency standards.

<sup>46</sup> For the most well-known genealogy of modern authorship, see Foucault (1980), which has been more recently refined by Roger Chartier (1994:25-60). For other spatial and temporal alternatives to this narrative, see, for example: Bart Ehrman (2012); A.J. Minnis (1984); or Alexander Beecroft (2010).

<sup>47</sup> Meredith McGill writes that “history offers numerous alternatives to tightening control over circulation in the name of the author, a process that was strengthening its grip in the mid-1990s. If authors’ rights were from the start a legal fiction, a tactic used in a struggle between powerful political and economic interests, disclosing the author’s fictive status does not promise to do much to dispel its power” (2013:394).

arrangements within which authorship has been (or might be) transformed into a patchwork of practices, one can begin to unmoor textual production from the neoliberal proprietary codes that seem to hold it in (a placeless) place today.

Mufti, for his part, does acknowledge the historical alternatives to World Literature, writing that the “resurgence of world literature in our times [and, we should add, *place*] [...] is in a strong sense a post-1989 development,” which owes its success to the silencing of earlier, *internationalist* constellations of world literature, such as those of the early Soviet Union (in which unlicensed translation was legally protected) or of post-colonial networks, whether they were part of the non-alignment movement or allied with Soviet or Maoist socialism (91). “As for all the major theories of world literature current today in the core societies of the world system,” he continues, “which are therefore also gaining prestige in many sectors of the global periphery, it is symptomatic that in essence they give an account of world literature as a concept, practice, or structure of the (Euro-American) bourgeois world, without any reference to these concrete historical alternatives and contestations throughout much of the twentieth century” (94). I sympathize with Mufti’s project, and indeed his qualification here (“all the *major* theories”) may have already defused the objection that I am about to raise, but it is nonetheless worth mentioning that there *is* a growing body of scholarship that does indeed push back against the neoliberal proprietary regimes of World Literature, whether through the historical alternatives mentioned by Mufti himself<sup>48</sup> or through contemporary studies bearing direct or indirect affinities to them.

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<sup>48</sup> For treatments of internationalist alternatives, see, for example, Martin Puchner (2005); Hala Halim (2012); Peter Kalliney (2015); Shu-Mei Shih (2016); or Duncan Yoon’s monograph project, “Cold War Africa and China: The Afro-Asian Writers’ Bureau and the Rise of Postcolonial Literature.”

Let me turn in brief to two of these latter—namely, Emily Apter and Rebecca Walkowitz’s recent treatments of translation as a kind of literary collective. Despite (or perhaps by means of) the “untranslatability” that informs much of Apter’s *Against World Literature*,<sup>49</sup> she ultimately celebrates successful translation as an exemplar of “authorized plagiarism,” which “emerges as a form of creative property that belongs fully to no one. [It is] a model of deowned literature” (15). Behind the rhetorical flare of “deowning,” which is preceded a few lines earlier by a quick succession of “sundering,” “dispossessing,” and “orphaning,” Apter’s aim is not to throw literature into a Dickensian orphanage but rather to install it in a kind of commune, protecting the intellectual work of the translator through a “model of unalienated literary labor” (289). In its most radical form, then, Apter’s understanding of translation deterritorializes literature into a commons, which must be tended, expanded and sustained not only by the writer but by the translators that follow.

And if Apter argues that translation “flaunts its derivativeness and proudly wears the lead weight of predication” (281 and 303), Walkowitz’s *Born Translated* (2015) emphasizes instead that translations are innovative and unique—even if they are derived from an “original” other. “Instead of asking about fidelity,” Walkowitz writes, “one might ask about innovation and about the various institutional and aesthetic frameworks that shape the work’s ongoing production” (45). Translations, editions, and even single textual witnesses of a translation or edition bear—or perhaps *are*—the footprints left by a literary work’s several handlers (writers, editors, designers, printers, publishers, readers,

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<sup>49</sup> Apter qualifies the “untranslatable” not as a “pure difference in opposition to the always translatable (rightly suspect as just another non-coeval form of the romantic Absolute, or fetish of the Other, or myth of hermeneutic inaccessibility)” but rather as an “invitation for elaboration” (20; 9). In other words, the untranslatable does not close the discussion but calls out for more; it does not end translation but invites more. The multivalence of the term is something that Walkowitz likewise explores productively (33-34).

translators, et al.), each of whom moves it and transmits it through this “ongoing production.” What is more, these footprints often double back, move in circles, or engage in a kind of confused crab walk as production, circulation, and consumption feed into and reproduce one another. This is crucial and cannot be emphasized enough. Even as I would caution against the presentism that Walkowitz occasionally evinces,<sup>50</sup> her argument is vital for us here in that it forcefully disrupts the linearity of a book’s life, and in doing so it disrupts the presumed relations between authority and creativity, originality and uniqueness. In her reading of Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*, Walkowitz elaborates two modes by which we might understand uniqueness. The first locates uniqueness in originality, according to which “individuals have an ontological existence that defines what they are and what they will be; copies simply inherit that existence. The second model attributes uniqueness not to a prior existence but to social embeddedness and unpredictable futurity” (111). To put it another way, this second model posits uniqueness as an acquired trait, a process that unfolds over time. And while Walkowitz draws her particular analysis from a book about human clones, it applies to the book itself as well: the work of literature “has no ‘deep down’: its meanings are collaborative and comparative and thus affirm, instead of a soul, various networks of production and consumption [...]: all art is a cassette tape, for better or for worse” (112). The implications are clear. If literature has no single origin but is a mix tape that is passed from hand to hand and shared, copied, reproduced, remixed and shared again, it moves in ways that are poorly described (or unrealistically prescribed) by intellectual property regimes.

But *where* precisely does it move? The born-translated work, Walkowitz writes,

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<sup>50</sup> On page 23, for example, she writes that born-translated novels “emphasize new objects of analysis such as the chapter, the page, the edition, the illustration, the script, and the medium” (23). Book historians would argue, however, that these are by no means “new objects of analysis.”

asks readers “to experience the text as a delayed or detoured object: a book that began somewhere else” (30). What is “lost in translation” for Walkowitz is not the originary meaning of a given word or phrase but indeed the entire notion of a singular origin, as works circulate in multiple, transnational circuits. Literary codices, she writes elsewhere, “are no longer imagined to exist in a single literary system but may exist, now and in the future, in several literary systems, through various and uneven practices of world circulation” (2006:528).<sup>51</sup> While I would again resist the presentism lurking in Walkowitz’s “no longer” and “now,” the implications cut to the heart of the debates surrounding world literature: is it possible to re-assemble literature as a collective if we cannot situate that collective in a particular place? Is a chorography of world literature possible without a *chora*?

In a certain sense, this is just another way of articulating the well-known binary of nation-state and globalization. To set the question in such terms is to realize the false choice: on the one hand, the nation is constantly being re-assembled within and re-dispatched across larger networks, as the earlier cases of Turkish paper or the Turkish novel *Theodora* demonstrate. Globalization, on the other hand, has itself always been bound to the institutional machinery of particular places, whether it is a strip of ticker tape in a broker’s office in 1920s Manhattan or the airstrip of a military base in Diego Garcia today.<sup>52</sup> The same is true for literature. Walkowitz’s useful aphorism that books “began somewhere else” is by no means an invitation to renounce the careful analysis of both the “somewhere else” and the “here.” It’s not so much a question of abandoning chorography for cosmology as it is one of shifting the etymon of chorography itself: not

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<sup>51</sup> I’m grateful to Mani (2017:38) for leading me to this article.

<sup>52</sup> See David Vine (2011).

*χώρα* (country) but *χῶρος* (place/space). In other words, not nation-states but regions, and, in the case of literature, the chains of handlers whose *metaphors* (“schleppings and transformations”) move books through and across these regions. Such a model demands a delicate balance, negotiating between the simultaneous needs to be situated and to circulate.

The push and pull of these two needs is particularly clear in the Mediterranean. Most often rendered invisible within the larger “World” of World Literature, the Mediterranean world can help us understand what it means to be a *medium* between multiple *terrae*, a kind of “middle space” or interstice through which one might seek out an alternative to both the nation-state and neoliberal globalization. On the one hand, such a liquid middle space is inimical to a stable, fixed sense of the local. On the other hand, however, it is not to be confused with the placelessness of the neoliberal globe; it hides a more complicated movement of placement, dis-placement, and re-placement. We can trace this movement in the fortunes of the sea’s own name. In most classical texts, *mediterraneus* referred not to the sea but, in fact, to its opposite: the hinterlands most far removed from water. Cicero, for example, venting his rhetorical anger on the corrupt governance of Verres in Sicily, remarks that rather than executing a particular pirate captain, he (Verres) sent him (the pirate) to live in exile among the farmers of Centuripa, an agricultural city deep in the island’s hinterland: *ad homines a piratarum metu et suspicione alienissimos, a nauigando rebusque maritimis remotissimos, ad Centuripinos, homines maxime mediterraneos, summos aratores* (“to men to whom the fear and suspicion of pirates is most alien, to whom seafaring and all things maritime is most remote, i.e., to the people of Centuripa, a people most supremely mediterranean, the



ultimate ploughmen of the soil”) (*In Verrem* 2.5.70). In other words, the ancients understood Mediterranean people as those most removed from and foreign to the sea, those who couldn’t recognize a pirate if he came up and bit them. The term marked a rootedness to the earth, a quality of “being in the middle of the land”—even if, in the case of Centuripa, the land itself (i.e., Sicily) was in the middle of the sea! The sea, in turn, on the relatively rare occasions when it was explicitly conceived as a whole, was known as the “great sea” or the “inner sea,” to which was later added “our sea” during the height of the Roman imperial project (although this term began, in fact, as a regional reference to the Tyrrhenian sea). It was not until the early medieval period, with Isidore of Seville’s entry on the “Mediterranean Sea,” that the Mediterranean was “uprooted” and displaced from land to water.<sup>53</sup> But even so, Isidore’s entry registered an ongoing resistance to the absolute universalization of the sea,

whose first stretch of coast, which washes upon Spain, is called Iberian and Balearic. Then there’s the Gallic sea, which bathes the province of Narbonne. Soon it’s the Ligurian, which is very near the city of Genoa. After this, touching Italy is the Tyrrhenian Sea, which the Greeks call the Ionian, and the Italians the Lower. Then the Sea of Sicily, which goes from Sicily to Crete. And then the Sea of Crete, which extends to Pamphylia and Egypt. [...] Just as the land, while it is one, is in different places called by various names, so too is this sea called by different names by its regions. (Orig. 13.16)

As Isidore grapples with his description of the Great Sea, it becomes clear that, to quote Latour, “the whole is always smaller than its parts.” Whether explicitly or implicitly, the entire lemma, only a portion of which I’ve quoted, insists on the importance and granular difference of the sea’s smaller (but nonetheless translocal) regions, many of them bound up in one another, others straddling different names between shores. Taken together, I want to suggest that Cicero and Isidore stage the tension between an earth-bound

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<sup>53</sup> “The Great Sea is that which flows from the West out of the Ocean [...]. It is also the Mediterranean, because it pours through the middle of the lands all the way to the east.”

rootedness and a liquid medium—a medium that is itself, however, rooted to particular regions, which may blur into one another but resist transcendence into a larger unity. This tension lies at the heart of the Mediterranean world’s literature, whose texts often navigate just such a “middle space” between the nation and the global.

Melpo Axioti, in her novel *To σπίτι μου* (My Home, 1965), written in political exile, described the island of Mykonos in just such terms. “Our land, you see, is not easy to grasp,” one character in the novel tells a visiting Athenian, using a verbal phrase, «να καταλάβει κανείς», that might mean both “to understand” and “to occupy”; “For someone to get to know our land, he’d have to manage to see its people be born and die. That is, to follow two generations of life. Naturally, this is entirely impossible for a foreigner [like you]” (33). Yet it’s nearly as impossible for many of the Mykoniotes as well: the soil is barren and unproductive: “It’s a dry land, rock atop rock, boulders and crags, and they’ve got you surrounded by sea... Where to find the milk to sell your cheese, since you’re hard pressed to find any herds atop the island’s spine. Where to find that little bit of produce that, of course, you can’t eat, you’ve got to sell it, so that it can travel over the sea to the cities [...] – boulders and crags! they eat human bones” (125). As such, the island dispatches not only its cheese and produce over the sea but much of its population,<sup>54</sup> hemorrhaging them like so much blood. Setting out for studies or a living wage, they pull the novel beyond Mykonos into ports like Naples and Alexandria. Yet without exception these same characters return, often in old age (or occasionally in a coffin), to the island of their birth, leaving their names on the facades of buildings, the votives of churches, and upon the pages of unbound letters, diaries, and manuscript and printed books. As the

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<sup>54</sup> In earlier centuries, these were all men but eventually the novel describes the sea crossings of women as well (like Axioti herself, who was forced to move to Athens and work as a seamstress).

epigraph that heads this chapter notes, however, “The names get mixed up, of course, that happens often. And only the works remain. Works that you don’t know any more to whom they belonged” (16). Published in the final days of 1965, Axioti’s *My Home* describes a Mediterranean—and a Mediterranean textual culture—that continued, despite the growing tugs and pulls of globalization witnessed in the final section of the book, to “shift its feet” back and forth in an uneasy middle space. It was a space that saw “locals” setting out for foreign ports and regional “foreigners” (including mainland Greeks and refugees from Turkey) setting foot on local land, even if they failed to take root. A space that mixed up names and pages but curated the larger literary assemblage constituted by them, keeping them bound, like a commonplace book, to *My Home*.

This is not to say that mainstream Greek and Turkish literary networks have always (or even often) remained untouched by the allure of Euro-American globalization. Look, for example, to Leipzig, whose commercial center and university had begun to attract Ottoman Greeks in the final decades of the eighteenth century. These new arrivals were quick to build contacts across the city. By 1821, as the Greek War of Independence began unfolding in the south, it’s therefore no surprise that Leipzig’s university and thriving publishing culture produced what were among the earliest examples of European philhellenic propaganda, essentially a series of pamphlets circulated by German scholars within the university (Güthenke 2008:100), such as Wilhelm Traugott Krug. What might surprise some, however, are the instances wherein this philhellenic network began to spill over into a larger vision of world literary spheres, and the place that Modern Greek literature was supposed to assume within them. The following year, in November of 1822, an anonymous observer remarked in the city’s literary magazine *Literarisches*

*Conversations-Blatt:*

In the coming centuries [a] surge [in book production] will become stronger and richer [...]. For a long time, Europe will have the largest share in the growth of the empire of books. But the literature of North America is already not entirely insignificant [...]. Books are written and published in Asia as well. [But] European literature itself can perhaps expect a significant expansion in the future; because in the old fatherland of classical writings in Attica, as in the rest of Greece, after a successful struggle for freedom, a born-again empire of writing will certainly arise.”<sup>55</sup>

In other words, this text was already annexing Greece—before it had even been created—into a continental alliance that had set itself against both Asia and the Americas in a kind of global print race. The strength of this alliance rested on modern Greece as a literary “empire” in the making—an empire, however, that was resting on its (ancient) laurels. As for ancient Greece, its status as a possible ally or fatherland of modern Europe was, of course, the scholarly invention of Europeans themselves. As Gourgouris has written, “Hellenic civilization *as we know it* was in effect the invention of the ‘Science of Antiquity,’ of Classics. As such, it could have been (and was) endowed with whatever signification the discipline found useful” (134).

The most useful signification for many in Europe was “cultural and linguistic purity” (ibid), a sense that rendered ancient Greece both a hermetically sealed monoculture and a universalized model for Europeans to annex. Wilhelm von Humboldt himself had written less than two decades earlier, “For us, the Greeks step out of the circle of history [...]. We fail entirely to recognize our relationship to them if we dare apply the standards to them that we apply to the rest of world history. [...] [I]n the Greeks alone we find the ideal of that which we ourselves should like to be” (quoted in Gourgouris 123). In texts like those of Humboldt and the anonymous observer in Leipzig,

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<sup>55</sup> “Betrachtungen über Bücher und Büchervermehrung” [Reflections on Books and their Proliferation]. Quoted and translated by B. Venkat Mani (2017:74).

Greece was being sutured to Europe by displacing it from its particular history and geography onto a universalized global plane. Many writers of Greek in the Aegean quickly and problematically internalized this vision, developing what Gourgouris identifies as a simultaneous “nationalist insularity” and “aspiration for universality.” Bound to these two terms, he continues, Greece “has never located itself outside the sphere of Europe” (172).

In a way, my study aims to disprove this last claim—or, perhaps, to affirm it by restating its obverse in the positive: dislocating the “Hellenic” from Greece proper (as Gourgouris himself suggests we do on 174), I demonstrate that the former indeed was located “outside the sphere of Europe.” For if we understand Hellenism as neither a European ideology from the North (like that of Humboldt above) nor a national institution of the Helladic state but instead as a kind of assembly process that was unfolding across the larger eastern Mediterranean, we see that it was far more hybrid and unstable than the other two frames would allow.<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, the tension that Gourgouris identifies here is real and certainly structures much of modern Greek (and indeed Turkish) literature’s response to the Euro-American World Literature industry. By the twentieth century, this form of World Literature had been strengthened by a series of multinational networks that mixed legal, commercial, and academic domains.

In the face of such an industry, the critic Alkis Thrylos wrote in 1927:

Very few modern Greek works have been translated, by close friends of modern Greek letters (all of whom are a great distance from the top in [European] letters), and none of these works has become known to an even relatively wide circle [in Europe]. [...] How coolly did Europe’s intelligentsia receive the translation of Palamas, for example. It passed almost (not to say

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<sup>56</sup> What to make, for example, of the *Alipashiad* (Satha 1870), an epic poem written in the Greek language and Greek alphabet by Haxhi Shehreti, a Muslim Albanian? Or an anonymous Cretan poem singing the birth of the prophet Mohammed in Greek, but in the Arabic script (Hidioglou 1990)?

entirely) unobserved. And yet, when a work deserves international attention, the newspapers, the periodicals and particular studies enthusiastically celebrate its appearance and they spread it immediately to the entire reading public, which is left breathless. (15 Feb. 1927)

Thylos' article was entitled "Greece is Searching for Itself," a search that was tellingly to take place in the newspapers, periodicals and extended studies of Western Europe. Over a century after the anonymous observer in Leipzig had predicted a modern Greek "empire of writing," which was supposed to bolster the ramparts of European empire of letters, a decidedly less imperial Greek literature was still searching for itself, to little avail, in the columns of similar European periodicals to the north. Using language strikingly similar to that of Pascale Casanova's *World Republic of Letters*, Thylos wrote of an interrelated set of hierarchies: those of the translators in Western Europe, preferably with connections to mainstream publishers, periodicals and newspapers (modern Greek literature seemed to have no such translators) and, through these gatekeepers, those of the national literatures seeking a place in the World Literature canon. Kostis Palamas, a poet of Greece whom we'll meet again in the following chapter, had been awarded the equivalent of the national laureate—the Εθνικό Αριστείο—nine years earlier and remained a towering figure in the Helladic literary scene, yet the translations of his selected poems into English and French (by Aristides Phoutrides and Eugène Clément, respectively) largely passed in silence.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, to my knowledge only one review of the English translation by Phoutrides (*Life Immovable*, 1921) was printed in a non-classics journal by a non-Greek, and the only kind words spared here were for the quality of the

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<sup>57</sup> While the translations of Phoutrides (a Greek academic) had been published in the United States, a second collection in English (*Poems*) was released four years later in Britain, in 1925. It's likely that Thylos is referring to this book, which was collaboratively translated by two other Greeks, Theodore Stephanides and Yorgos Katsimbalis. It failed to attract any reviews outside of specialist Classics journals. I've likewise been unable to find any reviews of Clément's translation into French (*Oeuvres choisies*).

paper and the care of the typesetters:

The temptation of the translator is to praise beyond its actual deserts the work which he has translated. The introduction to this work, although a very pleasing record of the translator's acquaintance and friendship with the poet, is hardly convincing as an argument for the discovery of a great world poet. As for the translations, the form of the book, the good print and fine paper give them every advantage; yet the spirit of poetry seems to be lacking [...]. For the author of *Life Immovable* is certainly not more than a minor poet."<sup>58</sup>

Palamas, it would seem, was not a “world poet” (or rather, “World poet”). And Thylyos could not agree more. But, she continued, “confessing that we have no international authors today is not to declare that we cannot acquire them tomorrow.” The final verb here—*acquire* (απο-κτώ)—is explicit: one does not “develop” or “assemble” World Literature but instead buys into an existing proprietary regime (*ιδιο-κτησία*). The question for those whose eyes were turned intently towards such Euro-American properties was how to secure a place at the table. Fahir Onger, a young critic writing on the other side of the sea twenty years later, would set forth a clear program for gaining such a place—in his case, on behalf of Turkish literature.

Before I discuss Onger, however, it's important to note that over the previous century European responses to (Ottoman) Turkish literature had borne one key difference from and one key similarity to those reserved for Greek. First, unlike (ancient) Greek, Turkish shared no part in the perceived origins of Europe itself. To the contrary, it was, as Walter Andrews has suggested, the language of “the great rivals of the West” (2006:4). and was never annexed into narratives of “European literature,” nor was it elevated to a placeless universal plane. Within the emerging geography of European World Literature, it remained part of what the anonymous writer in Leipzig had defined as “Asia” (another partition erected through the Aegean). Secondly, it was generally neglected by a larger

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<sup>58</sup> *Sewannee Review* vol. 29 (1921): 124-6.

European audience beyond specialist circles, ironically suffering the same fate as modern Greek literature, which was of little interest to any Westerners save for a few curious classicists. Even *within* the specialist circles of nineteenth-century orientalists, Turkish literature remained the *bête noire* of the field, often relegated to a tertiary position behind Arabic and Persian letters. This was because, as Victoria Holbrook has written, “by virtue of the essentialist value [European] philology assigned to origin, Turkish, being most distant from [the origin of ‘Islamic culture’], [was] least worthy of study” (1994:16).<sup>59</sup> With some important exceptions, such as Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall’s translation of large portions of Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatnâme* (Book of Travels) into English, published by the Royal Asiatic Society in two volumes over the span of three decades (see Finkel [2015]), Turkish literature remained “invisible” to a larger circle of European readers. The adjective belongs to Andrews, who writes, “I know of no one who argues seriously that Ottoman Turkish poetry is not a neglected literary phenomenon. Outside of Turkey it is so rarely a part of any canonical collection or representation of ‘world’ literature or culture or civilization that it might as well be invisible” (3). The first comprehensive window offered into Turkish poetry was not made available until Elias J. W. Gibb’s *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, published posthumously from 1900 to 1907, which nonetheless denigrated its own subject to the point of calling it difficult, esoteric, and, in any case, since this difficulty and esotericism was derived from its Persian models,

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<sup>59</sup> As a result, “if a Persian or Turkish word was judged Arabic in origin, it was referred to as an Arabic, not a Persian or Turkish, word. If Ottoman theory of literary style, of metaphor, and so on, was judged to have appropriated theory composed in Arabic, it was referred to as a borrowing from Arab rhetoric. If the plot of an Ottoman romance was assumed to share characters and events with an earlier romance composed in Persian [...], the Ottoman plot was said to imitate the Persian” (19).



“unimaginative” (quoted in Holbrook, 19).<sup>60</sup>

Writing just after the Second World War, Onger felt that it was time to change this narrative, and this meant, for him, inserting Turkish literature more forcefully into the global publishing industry. In an article fittingly titled “Culture and Propaganda,” Onger began by defining the second term of his title (the first, he seems to assume, is something we all agree on): “When some random person says ‘Shakespeare’s a genius’ he hasn’t reached this conclusion by studying every single work of Shakespeare; much more likely is that s/he’s taken the idea of some writer that has examined him and repeated it. So, assuring that judgments about certain people are repeated in this way is a kind of propaganda.”<sup>61</sup> After describing a series of organs devoted to the propagation of French literature abroad, ranging from international periodicals to international bookstores (with branches in Istanbul as well) to state ministries, he turns to the situation in Turkey:

Despite the fact that our country has a grand history, when the word Turkey is mentioned, the fact that only a couple important government officials are remembered does not speak to the ignorance of foreigners but to our own indifference to this issue [of our literature]. [/] Until now, we’ve measured our works by comparing them on a national level. Today, in the face of developments, it’s clear that a national standard is insufficient. Even in the midst of the war, some levelheaded people were speaking of an Atlantic culture. The measure for every kind of idea, artwork and literary work today has risen to the global scale.

With his eyes set intently on this global scale, Onger’s long-term goal was the creation of outlets and organs similar to those of France and the United States. Rather than (or perhaps in addition to) the national literary awards that had been in place for a handful of

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<sup>60</sup> Around the same time, back in Leipzig, Georg Jakob (the founder of modern Turkology in Germany) oversaw what would become a 26-volume translation (1904-1929) under the title *Türkische Bibliothek*. It marked Turkish literature’s first foothold in the popular press of a European country. I’m grateful to Kristin Dickinson for bringing to my attention this series, which figures in her own monograph project on Turkish and German translational connectivity.

<sup>61</sup> “Kültür ve Propaganda,” *Sanat ve Edebiyat*, 18 Oct. 1947.

years, Onger suggested that funding translations into English would be more effective: after identifying artists “who are producing work on a global scale,” it was “necessary to sponsor their work” and disseminate it to the “English-speaking world and the global forum.”

Yet immediately in the following paragraph Onger pauses and, “before we let ourselves get carried away by this fantasy,” he invites his readers to “consider our domestic situation for a moment.” Contrary to what one might assume, the national literatures of the Mediterranean were—even at midcentury, when Onger was writing—far from consolidated into solid, adamantine structures. In both Greece and Turkey, centralized distribution networks were incomplete and unreliable, publishers’ production costs were high, disposable incomes were low, and university departments of modern national literature had just recently been staffed. All of this meant that, in Onger’s terms, “the idea of entering into a propaganda campaign on a global scale, with an organized, streamlined and well-funded ministry staff is, for the present, a utopia.” The only way to realize such a dream, he continued, was the “organization” (*organize etmek*) of Turkey’s scattered literary landscape.

The question of how this organization played out on the ground in both Turkey and Greece, and the several actors involved, is part of the story I will tell in the following chapters. Alongside—or, more accurately, before—the propaganda ministries that Onger foresaw in his utopia, he admitted that a more fundamental job awaited scholars, philologists, and publishers: “The work that awaits us now is this: after extensive research, we must gather up all the works of thinkers, writers, and poets and print them as ‘Complete Editions’ [*Külliyat*], as a large series, together with notes and explanations.

We can only understand the wealth of our literature, our ideas and our art when we see these works printed again [in complete editions], when we can possess them on demand.” The job of philologists, Onger implied, was to assemble the scattered flowers of Turkish letters, which were spread across a quickly shifting literary landscape: manuscript codices, commonplace books, printed codices (although many of these were in an alphabet, i.e., Ottoman, that had been illegalized in 1928 and was becoming illegible to many by midcentury), and, perhaps most importantly, ephemeral journals and newspapers, whose lifespan rarely exceeded a year and a half. Since serialized literature and essays brought in a great deal more money than book contracts, it was through this medium that early Turkish literature mostly appeared. These scattered texts all needed, Onger argued, to be brought into a unified whole, quarantined from fluidity and bound up in stable, complete codices. It would not be an easy task to achieve.

Seventy years later, Onger’s vision appears in many ways to have become a reality, with what I admit are its certain core benefits. When I quote a passage of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’s novel *Huzur* in chapter three, for example, I can cite a page from my copy of the book and now be fairly certain that most of you will find an exact duplicate in another copy near you. Yet to suggest that this is the *only* reality available to us, and our only available mode of assembling and handling literary works, is to suck the metaphorical power out of literature itself. It is, in other words, to sever the circuit of the *metaphor*, which, as I’ve argued, *aesthetically* moves and transforms us so that we might *physically* move and transform it (so that it might aesthetically move and transform us in t+1 time and m+1 medium, so that we ... etc.). This is how literature is, quite literally, *carried on* and sustained (but only through transformation) from handler to handler. While the

assembly process and mode of ownership that Onger foresaw—what we might call the coordinated production of a fixed, authorized and nationally codified codex, ready to be uploaded into the World Literature industry—would become stronger and more widely viable as the twentieth century progressed, it was never the sole means of organizing literary networks and the objects that moved and were moved through them. Many of the writers, printers, editors, readers, oral witnesses, translators and binders whose “movements” I trace out in the following chapters traversed, in subtle or striking ways, the partitions of geography, dialect, alphabet, and material mediums that were being erected. Just as importantly, while their textual networks certainly leapt beyond the nation state, they did not evaporate into a seemingly placeless “space of flows” or a geometrized plane of equivalence. Instead, they assembled, shared, borrowed, adapted and transformed literature within what I have been calling the “middle space,” described so lucidly by Axioti above.

### ***Assembly Method***

Before I plunge into my case studies, I need first to close the circle I’ve begun in this chapter and explicitly unpack some of my key words and the method that I understand to lie behind them. I’ll begin with the most fundamental: the literary object, which I’ve described variously as a “book,” a “text,” and a “work.” How does each of these terms differ? Admittedly, the space between them is difficult to measure because, despite the binary oppositions that some literary theorists and historians have erected between the one or the other category, one scholar’s descriptions often bleed into those of another.

Roland Barthes declared that while the “work” (which you can find in bookstores, library catalogues and syllabuses) “is held in the hand, the text is held in language: it

exists only when caught up in a discourse.” (1986 [1971]:57). For Barthes, the text is ultimately an immaterial circuit of signifiers, a kind of linguistic game to be played by the reader. Having lost its heft as a solid, impermeable object, the text is “woven” (Barthes alludes here to the etymology of *text*) in multiple directions, by force of the “stereographic plurality of its signifiers” (60). While he embraces the absolute, anarchic liberation that such a model forecasts, Barthes can’t quite shake the structuralist habits of his youth: working within a binary, he succeeds in making a utopia of the immaterial “text” only by turning the material “work” into a fascistic dystopia. If the text is plural, the work is “monistic” (ibid); if the text is “de-authorized,” the work is “caught up in a process of filiation” (61); if the text is a field of play, the work is “the object of consumption” (62); if the text is pure hedonistic pleasure (*jouissance*), the work is a passive “pleasure of consumption” (63).

Leah Price has written powerfully on this point. Rehabilitating the material “book,” she sets it against the “heroic myth” that “makes textuality the source of interiority, authenticity, and selfhood” (2012:16). Implicitly chiding those like Barthes for their self-enclosed celebration of textual hedonism, she succeeds in “recover[ing] stories that this myth overwrites: stories about women, children, and working-class or non-European men who remained sensitive to the material affordances of books” (ibid). Indeed, despite Barthes’ attacks on what he saw as the bourgeois nature of the work, Price shows that his own celebration of the immaterial text was not without its political blind spots, since “[t]he good reader—himself disembodied and unclassed—forgot what books looked like, weighed, and would fetch on the resale market; he also forgot how books had reached his hands, and through whose, and at what price. [...] [R]eminders of the book's material

attributes got delegated to persons less rich or male or Protestant than oneself” (31). Price clears our vision of such blind spots. Beyond wealthy and well-to-do Victorians, she argues, most users of these objects had not yet “unlearn[ed] how to handle” them as such. Indeed, the last term in that quotation is important and one that should echo earlier uses of the word “handler” in this chapter: it’s from Price that I’ve learned to use the term, which acknowledges a far broader range of creative (and transformative) users of literature than the solitary “reader” whom Barthes celebrates.

And if Price’s material handlers are limited to literature’s post-production phase, Cerquiglini, whom I introduced earlier, extends them into the production phase, focusing on medieval scribes. Rather than reverting to the “text,” however, he mounts an even stronger attack against it, celebrating instead the scribal agencies of reproduction that he gathers under the sign of the “work,” which was “always open and as good as unfinished, invit[ing] intervention, annotation, and commentary” (34). If such a description reminds you of Barthes’ “text” (or at least a material version of its discursive model), Cerquiglini nonetheless insists that these interventions are necessarily “pre-textual” (remember: *avant-texte*), because, he argues, the etymology of *textus* / “woven” marks not an open process of transverse extensions but a closed and finished object: it is, after all, a past participle, with “a connotation of fixity, of structural completeness” (35). There was, he writes, “only one text in the Middle Ages. [...] Attested around 1120, the French word *tiste*, changed then to *texte* (a scholarly word), means ‘the book of the gospels.’ This text was the Bible, the immutable word of God that may, of course, be annotated, but not rewritten. An utterance that is stable and finite, a closed structure” (34-5). This was a literal “religion of the text,” whose later, secular phase Cerquiglini rightly traces to the nineteenth-century textual critics who emerged in Karl Lachmann’s wake.

Each of these approaches is instructive, but so too are the tensions between them. My aim in bringing them together here is not to generate a series of opposed categorical binaries (text vs. work, book vs. text, work vs. text, etc.) but, more productively, a kind of *phase diagram*: taken as a whole, in other words, they mark the movements of literature between something you hold ( $\approx$  solid), something you imagine ( $\approx$  plasma), something you disassemble, take apart or scatter ( $\approx$  gas), or something you transmit ( $\approx$  fluid). Granted, I don't want to get too hung up on perfectly aligning my understanding of literary phases to their correspondent forms in the positive sciences; more important is the idea that literature is *all* of these things. I'm adapting the idea of a phase diagram from Manuel DeLanda, who writes of assemblages (a term that I'll take up shortly) as "*phases*, like the solid and fluid phases of matter. Unlike mutually exclusive binary categories, phases can be transformed into one another, and even coexist as mixtures, like a gel that is a mixture of the solid and liquid phases of different materials" (2016:19).<sup>62</sup> Crucially, the phase diagram shows us that there is no linearity or teleology to these shifts, since time is not an axis: we are constantly moving literature between each of these phases. Just as importantly, none of them is necessarily and universally bound to a particular socioeconomic class or power dynamic. Just as working-class handlers of literature in Victorian Britain treated it as a material object, so too did many of them read it and imagine through it. Understanding literature in this sense, we don't critique Barthes' text for its immateriality; we learn from it and build upon it, by integrating the insights of those like Price and Cerquiglini.

What ties them together, as I've already argued, is the *metaphor*: the idea of movement, of an ongoing process. Barthes too gestures towards this when he insists that

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<sup>62</sup> See also 108-136.

“the Text is experienced only as an activity, a production [*un travail, une production*]” (58). What Howard translates as “activity,” we might more literally render as “work”—but we need to take care lest, in English, we slip from the one meaning of “work” to the other, no longer understanding it as a process but a product. In other words, *work* here is not an artifact (“a work of art”) but labor. This double meaning is perhaps more obvious in architectural work: i.e., *build-ing*. What would it mean to reenvision literature as a *work-ing*? Barthes’ text can help us begin to answer that question, to see, in other words, that literature is ultimately an ongoing and unfolding process, or a set of phases, and that *son mouvement constitutif est la traversée*. Literature is movement, and, as those like Cerquiglini and Price teach us, its movement is spread out across a web of handlers.<sup>63</sup> As such, in this study I will switch between the terms text, work, and book without too much discrimination, letting the surrounding context point to what phase it’s in and where precisely it is located along its network of users.

This leads me, then, to my second set of key terms: network and assemblage. As I wrote early in this chapter, my study draws heavily from Latour’s version of Actor-Network Theory, but it’s important that we understand that his vision of network in turn draws from (or at least is deeply influenced by) Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of assemblage. As Deleuze has famously defined it, an assemblage is “a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them.” (Deleuze and Parnet 2002:69). In other words, an assemblage links up several human and non-human agents who together produce a *work-ing*. Most of these

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<sup>63</sup> Of course, I use Cerquiglini and Price here as a metonymic convenience in place of the large body of scholarship in book history that has treated this topic (see footnote 4 above). We owe the first real model of textual promulgation to Robert Darnton, whose famous definition of the book as a “communication circuit” (1982:67) has more recently been complicated by those like Robert Fraser (see pages 15-16 above).



agents were, before the rise of a given network, entirely unaffiliated and they all remain, even *during* the network, “unfiliated.” By this last word, I mean that they bear no inherent or structural filiation to one another but instead cohere through what Deleuze calls a “symbiosis” and Latour an “attachment,” which might be altered at any given moment through the addition or subtraction of agents. In order to map the assemblage, Deleuze and Guattari spread it out along two axes, each of which has its two segments: on the horizontal axis, one finds what they call “content” and “expression,” which are shorthand for materials and discourses: “On the one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies” (1987:88). On the vertical axis, Deleuze and Guattari chart out the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization: the degree to which the attachments of the horizontal axis become loosened or stabilized.

If all of this sounds too abstract, perhaps we might return to some of the assemblages whose maps I began to sketch in earlier sections. Let’s look again at ink, starting with the gallnuts that give oak gall ink its name. These are apple-sized tumors that slowly grow out from the branches of particular oak trees, but only after roving gall wasps have decided to attach larvae to their surface. In essence the entire structure is meant (by the wasp, at least) to function as an incubator for its offspring. What, then, are these tumors? Flora or fauna? Neither. They’re “contents” in an assemblage, strikingly similar to the model used by Deleuze and Guattari to introduce the concept early on: a wasp pollinating an orchid. “The orchid,” they write, “deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is

nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen” (10). Deterritorialization and reterritorialization are, in short, the process by which something is “unmoored” from its former associations, assembled and reconfigured within a new network of attachments. But if the orchid and wasp of Deleuze and Guattari’s example form a kind of simplified, closed circuit, one in which each “unmoors” the other and connects it to its own network, the trajectory of the oak tree and the gall wasp is slightly more complex. First, it’s not the tree that reproduces itself via the wasp but the wasp via the tree. More important, however, is the fact that in the midst of the larva’s lengthy gestation, another network intercedes: altering the biochemistry of the tree branch, the wasp induces the tumor to generate tannic acid, which in turn induces a series of human hands to dislodge it, sell it, transport it, sell it again, buy it and grind it in a pestle in preparation for the ink, which in turn assembles it into a network stretching from Constantinople to the Horn of Africa. Those picking the oak galls are likely not the same as those selling them, or, in turn, those transporting and reselling them. The medieval ink we are analyzing here was likely produced not by agricultural communes along the lines of today’s Marinaleda but, sadly, a stratified assemblage of serfs, lords, and merchants, whose attachments are configured through other objects (swords, silver, etc.) and discourses (what Deleuze and Guattari call “statements, expressions, the juridical regime of heraldry” [89]). Nonetheless, even a rigid and strictly codified assemblage is prone, along its vertical axis, to moments of small or massive deterritorialization, which might come in the form of a drop in the population of gall wasps, in the loss of Cyprus to the Latins, or in a network of Bogomil heretics denouncing serfdom, taxes, church hierarchies and imperial wars (and perhaps

poised to gain momentum among the subalterns who are picking those gall nuts).<sup>64</sup>

The crucial point, however, is not simply to trace out where and by whom an ink, a paper, a binding, an impression, a manuscript inscription, an edition or a translation is produced within these geographic networks but rather how they come together. B. Venkat Mani has recently developed the rich concept of *bibliomigrancy*, “the physical and virtual migration of literature as books from one part of the world to another,” whose particular trajectories he traces out through the “way station” of libraries and collections (2017:10).<sup>65</sup> What I want to draw attention to, however, are neither the libraries nor the specific geographies, but instead the double motion by which Mani unpacks and expands both ends of his neologism: *biblio* and *migration*. While we might assume that the latter term describes only the movement of the former through a larger geography, Mani notes that the book itself might be the site of transmedial migrations before (or after) it is even bound up into a codex: “*Biblio* may be opened up to acknowledge all kinds of books: written and oral, printed and handwritten, bound and unbound, stationary and portable” (34). This careful definition will help me finally draw together the two main scales from the earlier sections of this chapter: how are the shifts of materials *within* a book connected to and affected by the larger shifts of the networks and regions through which it is moved? This cuts to the heart of my method. While I’ve perhaps toyed implicitly with the question in earlier sections, it’s time to explicitly connect the two scales, book and region. Deleuze and Guattari write:

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<sup>64</sup> See Dimitri Obolensky (1948:137-8; 172-3).

<sup>65</sup> These “way stations” might serve as nodes within imperialist colonial migrations northward, as in the case of Aloys Sprenger, who collected and conveyed over two thousand volumes from India to Berlin (116-121), or, alternatively, within an internationalist and socialist network of editors, scholars and translators, such as those who constituted the GDR’s *Volk und Welt* (199-203). While there is always a political narrative to be gleaned from the bibliomigrations of world literature, this narrative can vary greatly depending on the particular sites that one examines.

There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made. Therefore a book also has no object. As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages [...]. We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed [...]. A book exists only through the outside and on the outside. A book itself is a little machine. (4)

First, some turns of phrase in this passage require care. I don't want the pronouncement that we "will never ask what a book means" to be taken as a repudiation of close reading and literary interpretation. As I've already made clear, these are important tools for me and I'm deeply invested in parsing out the stories that literature can tell us about its own place in a network. But I don't believe that Deleuze and Guattari offer us this phrase in such a spirit of repudiation. This is how I understand them: meaning is not something that arises from a self-contained cosmos of signifiers but is a function that is generated by *both* the "enunciations" and the "contents"—in other words, through the mutuality by which both "what a book talks about" and "how it is made" inform one another.

We've gone over that already, however. What I want to focus on now is the idea of a book's connection to the "outside"—i.e., not simply to materials but to the cultural geographies that supply them. This connection becomes most powerful, I argue, in their passing reference to "intensities." The term is derived from Richard Tolman's (1917) "intensive magnitude" and its corollary "extensive magnitude," introduced to describe how physical properties react during moments of division or multiplication of scale.<sup>66</sup> In essence, an intensity describes a quality, energy or force that retains its power no matter the scale: if you pour a cup of water into two containers, the temperature remains the

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<sup>66</sup> Deleuze (1994 [1968]:223) provides clear examples of the two categories, beginning each pair with an intensity, followed by its appropriate extensity: "force and distance for linear energy, surface tension and surface area for surface energy, pressure and volume for volume energy, height and weight for gravitational energy, temperature and entropy for thermal energy."

same in both (while its volume, an extensive quantity, changes). You can, of course, change the intensity of the water's temperature in one of the containers, but in doing so you introduce an external change into the larger network (i.e., a new agent within the assemblage): heat. And if enough is added, you transform the liquid into gas. In the case of literature, I define intensity as its degree of hybridity or fluidity, i.e., the degree to which it opens itself to the re-articulation and re-assemblage of its several handlers.

What does it mean, then, for a literary work to be a transmitter (and, I would add, a receiver) of intensities? On its most basic level, it suggests that literature will bear roughly the same intensity or mutability at every scale: pages, codices, publishers, distributors, regions.<sup>67</sup> In other words, the book is a node within a larger and smaller set of nested assemblages, shot through by a similar intensity. Its extensities, on the other hand—things like the number of fascicles in a codex, the plotline within a story, the alphabet(s) used to represent it, or the distributor's price—will certainly look different if you shift scales. Constantine Cavafy's *Poems* are likely unintelligible on the micro-scale of a single line of type block or, alternatively, on the macro-scale of the transnational relations between Greek-language periodicals in Egypt and Greece. The extensive qualities of literature shift with each scale (even as they supplement our understanding of the other scales). Yet in the model of a "book assemblage," every scale of a particular network is shot through with a similar intensity, which is to say degree of mutability and multiformity. The more intensity you add, the more mutable and unstable does each scale become. The more you subtract, the more does each scale come to resemble a solid.

DeLanda has called this the "embedded" nature of assemblage networks: the idea that, in

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<sup>67</sup> And if the intensity *doesn't* match up, that means that some new agent—some external source of "heat"—has come in and deterritorialized a segment of the literary work. See my description of chapter five on pages 69-70 for an example.

something resembling a fractal, we can zoom in and out along the macro- and micro-scales, from the Mediterranean sea to a single book within it, observing how each assembles (or, at least, “transmits intensities” within the assemblage of) the other.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, it’s important to emphasize, through Latour, that each actor within each scale of these networks has “the ability [...] to *make* other actors *do* unexpected things” (2005:129). An “actor” here is “anything that makes a difference” in the transmission network: it could be a reader who rearranges and rebinds two different copies of Cavafy’s *Poems* into a single codex (see chapter two); it could be an unbound manuscript, written by a survivor of the Greco-Turkish war (1919-1922), that is destroyed when Nazi munitions bomb the library to which it was donated (September 1943), but not before pieces of it have been cannibalized by another writer and incorporated into the third edition of his own printed book (see chapter four); or, it could be a jazz song whose lyrics are transcribed alongside an Ottoman poem within the pages of a commonplace book in Republican-era Istanbul (see chapter three). Each of these “actors” range in size and scale, from a couplet of verses to a squadron of the Luftwaffe, yet they each “make” the literary work “do” unexpected things, transforming it as they transmit it across the larger field of the Eastern Mediterranean—which, just as importantly, is itself being transformed by the geopolitical partitions and reorganizations slowly being effected by the networks of the nation state and of markets. In this study, then, it’s my argument that we can almost literally read the transformations of the region on the pages of the literary texts as they’re reproduced, transmitted, and transformed over the century. Following the

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<sup>68</sup> “[W]e can bridge the level of individual persons and that of the largest social entities (such as territorial states) through an embedding of assemblages in a succession of micro- and macro-scales” (2005:17).

fate of the Greek- and Turkish-language literary works that I examine, we're also following the fate of the larger region, embedded within them.

Chapters two and three will trace out this fate in detail. In particular, they will chart the processes of textual consolidation that gradually reshaped Aegean literature over the first half of the twentieth century. I frame these processes through the work of two authors who are today respective cornerstones in the national canons of Greece and Turkey: Constantine Cavafy and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar. The end goal of these consolidation projects was the production of stable, standardized, homogenous texts, texts that were purified from typographic and linguistic hybridity and fluidity. But, as I've already written, this homogenization was by no means easy or immediately attainable, due to the Eastern Mediterranean's powerful "middle space," whose contours I've sketched out in previous sections. In chapter two, I use Cavafy to examine the fragmented, polymorphous Greek publishing world of the early twentieth century, with its multiple centers in Alexandria, Athens, and Istanbul, and how this world was, over the course of fifty years, slowly and painfully consolidated on the two scales discussed in the previous paragraphs: geopolitically, as Greek diasporas were destroyed and reconsolidated within the Greek state; and textually, as Cavafy's own fluid and polymorphous texts were likewise consolidated into a multivolume complete edition, at the hands of a philologist named George Savidis. Recovering the early fluidity of Cavafy's collections, which were rendered invisible by Savidis' editions, my goal is to situate them within the analogous fluidity of the larger Greek world, beyond the Helladic state. The third chapter offers a similar model in Turkey, by following the adventures of a serialized novel written by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (*Huzur*, or *A Mind at Peace*) and the

unstable distribution and production networks and readerly practices that shaped and reshaped it. In this chapter, I'm less concerned with mapping out the stabilization of Tanpınar's oeuvre (which occurred at a later date than Cavafy's, in any case) than in considering more fully the possibilities that its early, fluid fate offered for developing an authorless literary system. If Cavafy obsessively micromanaged his texts (though this too had its limits), Tanpınar's texts remained almost completely beyond his immediate control. Chapter three, then, follows the fate of a body of work that was, at least potentially, more open to its handlers and will allow me to develop the concept of a "commons-place" book—combining the commonplace book and the political commons—to describe a potential model for unbound literary networks.

Having mapped out the networks that moved and shaped the Greek texts of Cavafy and the Turkish texts of Tanpınar in chapters two and three, in chapter four I collapse the two languages together into a single Aegean space. I do so, ironically, through literary accounts of the brutal war that precipitated the partition of this space: testimonial fiction of the Greco-Turkish War and Population Exchange (1919-1924), which signaled the definitive end of empire in the Mediterranean. From their initial circulation until today, the testimonials of the Greco-Turkish war and population exchange have enjoyed a significant place among Greek and Turkish readerships and, as they developed in later decades, within both national literary canons, whose aesthetic regimes were deeply invested in traditional realism. Indeed, literary historians in both countries have always spoken of these "eye-witness" testimonials as if they offered readers direct historical access. They are, as one early critic remarked, "a valuable document for the world to learn what happened there in Anatolia [...]. The truth emerges from facts, not from



rhetorical flairs.”<sup>69</sup> I revisit this assessment, comparing the complicated textual history of two key testimonials—Stratis Doukas’s *A Captive’s Story* and Halide Edib’s *Shirt of Flame* (*Ateş’ten Gömlek*). Examining successive editions and their emendations, this chapter will pause over the multiple hands involved in the production and reproduction of these texts—witnesses, interviewers, writers, editors, translators and transcribers—and their role in shaping and reshaping the narratives therein. They were narratives, I argue, that were articulated and embellished only over the course of several decades and editions and, in certain cases, multiple languages: Many “Greek” Orthodox refugees from Turkey spoke Turkish, while many “Turkish” Muslim refugees from Greece spoke Greek. In the case of Doukas’ Greek testimonial, the language of the “Greek” survivor whom he interviewed (and rendered as the text’s narrator) was neither standard Greek nor Turkish; he occupied instead an uneasy and non-standardized “middle space” between the two languages, as evidenced from his surviving manuscripts. This middle space, I argue, must be expanded to the larger textual network of the testimonial genre (as much as the archive allows) if we hope to properly curate its complicated historical truths.

My fifth chapter examines a series of twentieth-century Karamanli codices of fiction. Many non-specialists unfamiliar with the region may have difficulty placing this language. There is a clear reason for this, since it has slipped between the cracks of national partition. Karamanli was/is the Turkish spoken and written by Greek-Orthodox Christians from Cappadocia. The language served the needs of a minority whose literary networks belonged to no national tradition: while their religion and alphabet mirrored those of Greeks, their language was Turkish; or, stated alternatively, while their language

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<sup>69</sup> Michalis Rodas (1932).

was Turkish, its written form, in Greek script, was illegible to much (though not all<sup>70</sup>) of Turkey. Nevertheless, while certainly a minority within the empire they were by no means miniscule, and the Karamanli print networks of the nineteenth century had thrived, producing newsprint, religious materials, and fiction for Anatolia's myriad Turkophone Greek Christians. With the mass deportation of the Karamanli community from Turkey during the Population Exchange (1922-1924), their print apparatus vanished almost overnight, as they were discriminated against and soon excluded from Hellenic publishing networks. But while they were excluded from print, their literature did not evaporate immediately, as witnessed, for example, by *Theodora* (1939), which I've briefly previewed in this chapter. *Theodora* was neither entirely a translation nor an original work: it was adapted and condensed from a Greek serialized novel, translated and transformed into a Turkish manuscript codex (on paper repurposed from Chinese and American sources) by a Karamanli refugee. He quite literally tore the novel away not only from its original medium, but, just as importantly, from its commodity status and its national readership (while retaining their alphabet), inserting it into a new network of materials and handlers. Hybrid books like the Karamanli *Theodora*, I argue, bypassed national print networks and their authorial regimes—not through recourse to the neoliberal global market but, crucially, by reclaiming literature for the commons. They offer us a model of literary production at its greatest “intensity” (in the sense that I've developed here), shooting through every scale of its assemblage.

These, then, are the stories that I want to tell. Some of them are undeniably sad, yet

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<sup>70</sup> For examples of the mutual imbrication of Turkophone Orthodox and Muslim writers and publishers, see Şehnaz Şişmanoğlu Şimşek (2010:109-110), and Johan Strauss (2010), particularly 186-189. For wider speculations, see Laurent Mignon (2014). Nonetheless, beyond these exceptional cases among publishers and writers, widespread literacy of Greek-script Turkish among Muslim and Armenian readers was unlikely.

there are, I hope, many undeniably uplifting stories to be gleaned here, stories suggesting that literature remains an open book—if only we know where and how to look. Mufti writes that notions of the national or local have “never been able to mount an adequate critique of the ‘cosmopolitan,’ global, or universal, since, far from being a space of unmediated autonomy, it has itself been constituted through the processes of the latter.” (52). As I hope this chapter has made clear, I could not agree more. Through a careful chorography of the Greco-Turkish “middle space,” I want to trace out a viable alternative to both these terms, a space wherein, to misquote Axioti, the names get mixed up and only the networks remain. Networks that you don’t know any more to whom they belong.

## Chapter Two

### Disassembling Cavafy's *Poems*

*If what is to be assembled is not first opened up, de-fragmented, and inspected, it cannot be reassembled again.*

- Bruno Latour (2005:250)

#### ***Introduction***

Few would dispute that the poems of Constantine Cavafy now lie near the core of modernism, at least as refracted through its literary and critical anthologies, survey courses, journals and book-length studies. Almost as few of us, however, could pinpoint precisely when or how these poems came to settle there. Over the past century, “without a hammer’s fall, without the sound of builders, without noticing a thing,” as Cavafy himself might have observed, his poetic corpus has slowly but methodically been assembled and enclosed within the inner walls of the Western canon, inspiring countless readings in a series of interlocking fields: modern Greek literature, European modernism, queer theory, translation studies, classical reception, and (post)colonial studies, to name but the most prominent.

By 2013, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the poet’s birth, Cavafy was seemingly everywhere, being re-assembled and circulated through the most unexpected of media. In Athens, you might have found his words on the side of any number of public buses or, having transferred to the metro, you could have shared a train with entire stanzas of his poems, laminated on the backs of the seats and walls. But Cavafy’s circulations were by no

means limited to Athens public transit: in cities as far-flung as Istanbul, Cairo, and New York, through forms as divergent as editorials (written by, among others, Orhan Pamuk), choreographic poems (such as Dimitris Papaioannou's *K.K.*), and musical compositions too numerous to cite here, the poet seems indeed to have become something of a world literature institution.<sup>1</sup>

Crucially, this openness does not so much revolutionize Cavafy's original poetic project as reiterate and augment it: adaptability, as this chapter will discuss, was a constitutive element of the poems when they first appeared in the earliest decades of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the ever-growing intermediality that they have now achieved lies on a scale unimaginable during the poet's lifetime, and far exceeds the bounds of his own books. Indeed, those books themselves have largely become invisible to most readers. If Cavafy's poetic *content* continues to function as the site of hermeneutic multiplicity, his textual *corpus* as a corresponding site remains partially invisible or, at best, a specialized field of limited general interest.

They demand a broader audience, I argue. General readers have assumed a stable textual corpus at their own risk, obscuring a more complex reality—one wherein, to put it bluntly, there *was no* corpus. In its place, Cavafy circulated hundreds of copies of a dozen different, hand-made (and explicitly non-commercial) "collections" whose assemblage was radically fluid, as the Alexandrian I.A. Saregiannis narrates: "Cavafy's bookbindery—let's call it that—was in his house. It was a naked room [...] with assorted stacks of his poems [...]. [H]e'd go in and out of his office and erase and write again the variation [in content and order] that he now preferred. [...] I never imagined that it would

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<sup>1</sup> For several treatments of recent adaptations and receptions of Cavafy's poetry in multiple media, see the special issue of the *Journal of Greek Media and Culture*, curated by Dimitris Papanikolaou and Eleni Papargyriou and devoted specifically to this topic (vol. 1 no. 2, 2015).

be such a huge process to [...] send his *Poems*. But which *Poems*?" (1964:33-34). Even this description fails to do justice to the dizzying fluidity of Cavafy's books. Utilizing multiple bindings, experimenting with alternative orderings of the poems, incorporating two disparate mediums of the page (i.e., print and manuscript), and shifting through multiple imprints and emendations within each collection, Cavafy's books were so open to re-articulation that even each *copy* of each collection was unique, if only through the subtlest of manuscript inscriptions, colophons or binding methods. Thirty years would pass after Cavafy's death—or, to put it another way, over half a century after the circulation of his own first collection—before the philologist George Savidis drew together, in the early 1960s, what we now call the complete edition. Nonetheless, the vast multiplicity of Cavafy's own textual assemblages (to say nothing of the multiple editions circulating today<sup>2</sup>) has continued to daunt attempts at a truly critical or scholarly edition. And let me be clear: this is not necessarily cause for lamentation. While there would be substantial value in the production of a critical edition of Cavafy's poems, our exclusive focus on such an edition—indeed, on the very idea of “an edition” as an appropriate form to host Cavafy's poems—misses a crucial opportunity: not to offer readers a single text, buttressed by a critical apparatus, but rather to grant them access to the multiple texts, bindings and mediums that have been assembled, dispersed, circulated, and reassembled across the century—and, through these corpora, to study the larger, shifting social and material networks of transnational print that crisscrossed the Eastern Mediterranean.

If our goal is indeed to diversify the modernist canon, we may wish to begin by

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<sup>2</sup> Over half a century after Savidis attempted to “nail” Cavafy's *Poems* in place, it's ironic that there are today a large and nebulous number of editions circulating, some of them appearing in the most unexpected and unlikely of forms, ranging from mere reproductions or recombinations of Savidis' editions to unlicensed (“pirated”) or outright bowdlerized editions.

broadening our understanding of the very texts and print environments that constitute the field. Modernism, as Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz have famously written, “reveals itself to be a more global practice once we [...] [realize] that getting to know a work of literature means becoming acquainted with its [multiple] editions and translations [...] conceiv[ing] of it as belonging to more than one moment and more than one place. Literary historians are revealing how attention to continuities or discontinuities of time and space transform our conceptions of what counts as literary production and of the actors, collaborators, and media involved in it” (2008:738). It is this multiplicity of space and time—and the material and social agencies at work within them—that make Cavafy’s textual history such a rich field for engagement.

For the most part, those who have waded into the messy textual history of Cavafy’s poetry have done so with the primary aim of coming out with a singular “Cavafy” in tow.<sup>3</sup> My own aim is quite the opposite; I will instead *disassemble* Cavafy, examining certain crucial constituent parts of his textual corpora and the print worlds in which they took shape, both during his lifetime and after. As is well known, Cavafy never published—indeed, repeatedly rejected the possibility of publishing—a commercial, professionally bound edition in his lifetime, choosing instead to stitch together (by hand) shifting sets of collections. While I will examine the particulars of his publishing practices below, it is worth rehearsing here a few of the larger questions to which these practices give rise and which, in truth, constitute my chapter’s actual focus: Beyond the walls of Cavafy’s own “book bindery,” in what ways might the broader world of Greek

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<sup>3</sup> Hirst’s study (1995) of Cavafy’s handmade “editions” provides a refreshing exception to this rule, preserving and carefully working through the editions’ inherent multiplicities and fluidities. Renata Lavagnini’s edited volume of Cavafy’s incomplete poems likewise constitutes a small but notable exception. Yet both studies focus on the poet’s private atelier, so to speak, cutting themselves off, to greater or lesser degrees, from the broader print world in which his work took shape.

print have influenced or encouraged such a strategy of assemblage and distribution? Secondly, in the years and decades following Cavafy's death, how did subsequent attempts at a complete edition narrate, explain, and justify themselves to later readerships? And, finally, what can such narrations tell us about the shifting human geography of the Eastern Mediterranean? My chapter will argue that Cavafy's texts emerged within a geographically and culturally de-centered network of Greek print, that they not only mirrored this network but that they were operating and shifting under its pressure, and that it was only after the destruction of this transnational network, the dissolution of Greek diasporas, and the consolidation of Greek print within the Greek state, that Cavafy's corpora were, in turn, consolidated into the *Complete Poems*.

While a good deal of ink has been spilled on Cavafy's publishing strategies, to my knowledge no one has yet tried to understand them through the lens of the social, geographical, infrastructural, economic or political tensions of Greek print and publishing, in which they necessarily took shape. Likewise absent remains any sustained critical discussion surrounding the complete editions after Cavafy's death. Just like Cavafy's own original, multiple collections, however, these later works too were in fact the product of particular print ecologies, with their own material and ideological needs that, to a degree, continued to shape and reshape the text at hand. As we try to understand Cavafy, we would do well to engage and understand each of these print worlds, and the social and geopolitical realities therein, from the first decade of the twentieth century until the end of the 1960s. These were, ultimately, the worlds through which his poetry has reached us.

After the creation of the Greek state in 1830, it was soon clear that this tiny



kingdom, which hugged the peninsulas of Attica and the Peloponnese in mainland Greece, remained dwarfed by the larger Greek networks that continued to thrive beyond its borders. Large populations of Greeks were scattered across the Eastern Mediterranean, running from the Balkans deep into Anatolia, and thence down the Levant to Egypt. Over the next century, in an attempt to bring these vast Hellenic diasporas of the Eastern Mediterranean under its territorial, administrative, and ideological control, the Greek state embarked upon an irredentist project of territorial expansion. Known in Greek as the *Grand Idea* (*Μεγάλη Ιδέα*), this policy was ostensibly promulgated in the name of “unredeemed Greeks” (*ο αλότρωτος ελληνισμός*) within Ottoman territories. Yet the relation of these *Hellenic* (i.e., “Greek-like”) communities to their *Helladic* (i.e., “of or belonging to the Greek state”) counterparts was not always clear. Despite the admiration that many, though not all, of them expressed for Greece, diasporic Greeks were nonetheless something more than just Greek citizens—and sometimes not citizens at all. Until the middle of the twentieth century, the “marginality” of the Diasporas had yet to align itself completely with the central narrative of the Greek state.

In her recent engagement with Cavafy, Hala Halim has refashioned this observation in the form of a provocative question, asking, “Is a Hellenophone necessarily a Philhellene?” (2013:60). In other words, must someone who speaks Greek cultivate only feelings of adulation and loyalty to the Greekness of the Greek state—or, she adds, the Hellenism of Western Europe? Through selected readings of Cavafy’s poems and, more prominently, his prose, Halim answers: no, at least not in the case of Cavafy himself, whom she recuperates from both the Greek nationalist and Eurocentric discursive frames that have enclosed his work for decades. Halim situates this recuperation of Cavafy

within a larger project that promises—particularly in its projected companion volume—to recuperate the broader category of “cosmopolitanism.” We might, she argues, productively understand Alexandria’s cosmopolitan network not as a peripheral creation of European colonialism, defined against and turned toward the northern shore, but rather as something that itself turns Europe into a periphery, with a set of coordinates (“Andalusia, the Maghreb, the Syro-Lebanese eastern Mediterranean and Baghdad”) that create their own imagined centers. Halim’s project is ambitious, and effects a long-needed intervention in what has been the subtle colonial framing of Cavafy in the English-speaking world. And if her treatment of his “hybridized Greek textuality” (117) rarely reaches the physical texts themselves, her evocative frame invites us to do so here, turning more explicitly to the textual objects and the hybrid networks that they embody.

This chapter, then, aims to foreground those transnational networks, which literally shaped Cavafy’s poetry in subtle yet important ways. The diasporic nature of these networks is present in both his poems’ themes and in their multiple, shifting material forms: broadsheets, far-flung newspapers and journals, hand-made collections stitched, pinned and glued together by Cavafy himself. It is here that I will rediscover the multiform narrative of Greekness as it was written, circulated, and consumed in the early twentieth century. Despite the pride of place this chapter gives to Cavafy, I have no wish to shore up yet again the category of literary authorship. Indeed, the question I explore in this chapter’s latter half is precisely how (and why) such a canonical position was constructed in the first place. In short, how Cavafy’s *poiēmata* (poems) became APANTA TA POIĒMATA (Complete Poems).

Unavoidably, this question will lead me to the work of George Savidis, the textual

critic who most directly shaped the field of Cavafy studies as it has evolved today. Savidis was the first neither to examine Cavafy's personal archives nor to publish a collected edition of his poems, yet he was crucially the first to apply a systematic philological analysis to those archives, a labor that led to the publishing of a series of new Cavafic poems and editions that advertised themselves as *Complete* (*Άπαντα*). Without overstating the case, one might say that Savidis assembled "Cavafy" as most readers know him today. Working through the by-then-scattered pieces of Cavafy's archive, he created a singular, legible unity out of a multiplicity that had been (and perhaps still is) difficult to decipher. The depth and contours of the field of Cavafy studies today stem directly from Savidis' discoveries and laborious taxonomies.

Nonetheless, the theoretical claims in the service of which Savidis mobilized these sources have today proven deeply problematic.<sup>4</sup> The importance of bibliographic research, he suggested in his groundbreaking *Οι καθαφικές εκδόσεις* (*The Cavafy Editions*, 1966), lies "not only [in] the formation of a critical edition [*φιλολογική έκδοση*] [...], but also [in] the interpretation of the text and the psychological portrait [*ψυχογραφία*] of the author" (21). Let me leave aside for the moment the problem of a critical edition (something to which I will return in greater detail in the second half of this chapter) and look only to Savidis' final goal: "psychological portraiture." It is with this portraiture (which one might more properly classify as biographical criticism) that Savidis analyzed, for example, Cavafy's handwriting (149-150), his age (194), or his publishing practices (197) to draw broader conclusions about the workings of his inner

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony Hirst (2002) has also enumerated several methodological problems in Savidis' textual criticism, documenting the latter's violent interventions in matters of orthography (Savidis replaced some of Cavafy's irregularities in contractions and spelling, supplying instead standardized forms) and his unsatisfactory arrangement of the poems. I'll examine these matters in greater detail in the second half of the chapter.

psyche.<sup>5</sup> This method strikes readers today as theoretically dated (to say nothing of its philological soundness). More fundamentally, it is simply unproductive of the kinds of questions most in need of critical exploration now. Yet rather than setting myself in opposition to Savidis, I seek instead to treat him as a crucial historical agent in the textual development that I am tracing. That is to say, rather than reject his interpretations, we must understand them as part of the larger story that concerns us here: the multiple constructions and reconstructions of Cavafy's poems.

Even so, my study will depart in several crucial ways from the bibliographic and biographic traditions that lie at the foundation of Cavafy studies.<sup>6</sup> Drawing from more recent work in the history of the book, I resist the concept of authorial centrality. Authors are but one agent within a larger social field of print. To be sure, Cavafy in nearly every sense constituted an unparalleled exception to this rule (during his lifetime, he was the author, editor, designer, publisher, binder and, at times, censor of his own work<sup>7</sup>), yet his own agency was always at play within (and informed by) a larger social and material field: the scattered world of early-twentieth-century Greek publishing, with its multiple centers in Alexandria, Athens, Istanbul, Izmir and elsewhere. Moreover, after his death, this authorial agency dissolved into those of archivists, editors, artists and publishers, to name but a few.

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<sup>5</sup> To reach these conclusions, Savidis often resorted to the following rhetorical structure: "Why Cavafy [did A, B, or C] [...] remains an object of conjecture: perhaps because [X, Y, or Z][...]; but the most likely explanation, it seems to me, is that [...]" (for this specific example, see page 129).

<sup>6</sup> Importantly, recent scholarship on the social afterlives of Cavafy's poems has helped reverse this tradition, opening our view to the multiple agencies of their later readers and adapters, what Dimitris Papanikolaou (2014) calls an expanded, collective "Cavafian archive" and Maria Boletsi's current project is productively exploring as a Cavafian "haunting."

<sup>7</sup> Compare with Kastan: "Once one attends to how books are actually produced and reproduced, the fantasy of authorship [...] is apparent [...]. Editors, censors, publishers, designers, printers, binders all interfere with the author's text before it appears as a printed book, and their multiple and often contradictory agencies are necessarily registered in the text's signifying surface" (1999:28).

The first half of this chapter begins before Cavafy's death, retracing what (and where) these poems were in their initial years of circulation. I hope here to "disaggregate" the Cavafy corpus as most readers know it today, planting its many pieces again within their original print ecology.<sup>8</sup> I will wager here the claim that Cavafy's literary production emerged within a period of ongoing economic, social, and geographic disjunction in the world of Greek print—a disjunction that Cavafy's poetry productively engaged. Produced in Egypt and circulated across the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond, Cavafy's original poetic artifacts exceeded the orbit of Greece's national print culture, whose center of gravity supposedly lay in Athens. Through both its themes and textual history, Cavafy's poetry problematized contemporary national narratives of a cohesive or contiguous Greek identity—and, just as importantly, its concomitant textual apparatus: *the complete edition*. Instead, these artifacts embodied what I call a "diasporic poetics"—and I mean this in its most literal sense, for by its very etymology *diaspora* points us back again to the action of a "scattering." As I show in the second half of this chapter, it was only after midcentury, in the wake of the forced population exchange between Greece and Turkey (1923-25), the mass deportations of Greeks from Istanbul (1964), and the economic collapse and "voluntary emigration" of Greeks from Egypt (1956-66), which cumulatively signaled the end of Greek diasporas in the region and their troubled absorption into the Greek state, that a unified corpus and a unified readership of Cavafy finally emerged. The key "bonding agent" between this new readership and their texts was, not coincidentally, the Greek university, which had institutionalized national

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<sup>8</sup> I have learned this term from Meredith McGill, who insists that by "disaggregating the corpus" we "avoid presuming that an author unifies or is unified by his published work. The regional and ephemeral nature of most of the periodicals in which [early American authors] published [...] meant that complete or even coherent bodies of their work were unavailable to readers" (2003:17).

philology departments over the same period. In the 1930s, just as the diasporas began to crumble, the prominent philologist Ioannis Sykoutris began speaking of the need to shore up the scattered texts of modern Greek literature, and to put a stop to “the chaotic accumulation of variations”—what he categorized as a kind of “nomadism” (Sykoutris 1956:434). It was this call for textual consolidation that, a generation later, Savidis took up with his own Cavafy.

### *The Social Lives of Greek Texts*

Starting in the final decade of the nineteenth century, Cavafy’s poems slowly came to ruminate, in increasingly complicated ways, on the social networks that assembled (and were assembled by) Greek writing—the chains of agents that had put together, passed on, and put together again writing in the Greek language as it moved from hand to hand. One sees the first tentative signs of this in 1892, with his unpublished poem «Οἱ Μιμίαμβοὶ τοῦ Ἡρόδου» (The Mimiamboi of Herodas).

Rather than jumping immediately into the poem, I want first to set the stage in the winter of 1889, as Herodas himself, a fellow Alexandrian and a Hellenistic poet of mime verses, was preparing to break his two-thousand-year silence. The discovery of his lost mimiambics, while fragmentary, signaled to certain fin-de-siècle scholars nothing less than a small conceptual revolution. In his first revised edition of the text, William Gunion Rutherford observed with no small zeal, “Some books, many chapters, very many pages [...] will have to be rewritten in the light of the knowledge furnished by the new papyrus” (1891:xvii-xviii; quoted in Will 1973:116-117). Rutherford’s enthusiasm was admittedly hyperbolic, yet Herodas’ mimes indeed challenged customary delineations of “Greek

literature” among most Victorians. Since Western Europe’s rediscovery of classical Greek literature during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, most conceptual maps had fixed Greek between the bounds of Homer and fifth-century Athens. Any Greek worlds subsequent to this geo-temporal *locus amoenus* seemed to vanish, or were pushed to the appendices or footnotes of cultural, literary and political histories. So much so that one nineteenth century historian could write in 1846, “[A]s a whole, the period between 300 B.C. and the absorption of Greece by the Romans is of no interest in itself, and is only so far of value as it helps us to understand the preceding centuries” (George Grote, quoted in Green 2007:xv). At worst, the period was invisible; at best, it was a vessel through which earlier histories passed on their way to contemporary readers.

Huddled between classical Athens and imperial Rome like an unwelcome squatter, the Hellenistic world, with its abstruse linguistic, cultural, economic and political networks, was often written off as decadent, derivative, and thus of lesser value. As D. Graham J. Shipley has observed, Europe’s dismissal of the Hellenistic world lay “deep in the history and political culture of modern nation states, which project[ed] onto Classical Greece the values they wish[ed] to find there” (2006:317). For many readers and scholars in the industrialized states of western and central Europe, these classical values were more or less clear by the end of the nineteenth century: cultural homogeneity and aesthetic purity.<sup>9</sup> Even Walter Headlam, the most insightful early editor of the Herodas manuscript, opined that by the Hellenistic age “the flower [of Greek literature] had bloomed, the harvest had been reaped. [...] Alexandria, with its huge mob of mixed races, its Hellenistic tongue, its passion for shows of tawdry finery [...] was not the place for the

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<sup>9</sup> Martin McKinsey goes so far as to suggest that “it is not so strange that cultivated Victorians [...] should discover their likeness in ancient [classical Attican] Greece, given that this Greece was a cultural phantasm that had in large measure been fashioned in their image” (2010:28).

flowers of Attic wit” (Headlam and Knox 1922:xiv-xv). Such a discourse created a clear dyad: Attic harmony and purity versus Alexandrian hybridity and decadence. Yet as the century entered its final decade, the rediscovery of Herodas’ peculiar voice suggested that the stage was set for change.

This stage, it bears noting, was located for the most part not in Europe but in Cavafy’s Egypt, where the material remains of Herodas’ text itself had come to light. To be precise, in a small valley outside of Delga, a remote town south of the Fayyum that lay outside the westernmost edge of the Nile’s fertile floodplain. As Archibald Sayce, the prominent Assyriologist, Egyptologist, and linguist reported, it was in fact two local Egyptian villagers (*fellahin*) who had unearthed the “splendid Greek tomb,” in which lay a pair of mummies (husband and wife, childless) and their collection of papyri.<sup>10</sup> The mummies themselves may likely have been made of papyri, at least in part: that same year, just north of Delga, the archeologist Flinders Petrie had discovered that the heads and chests of mummies from Ptolemaic Egypt were often covered by “sheets of papyrus glued together, in fact a sort of *papier maché* [...]. Among [those papyri sampled from mummies were] included a portion of Plato’s ‘Phaedo’ and a series of fragments of the ‘Antiope,’ a lost play of Euripides.”<sup>11</sup> As Victorians were now learning, the Hellenistic dead of Egypt quite literally embodied their writing, their fleshly corpora preserved whole by the grace of their textual fragments.

This all changed, of course, the moment that modernity came knocking at their door. As was common, the villagers who’d made the Delga excavation “divided up” their find, literally cutting the papyri (and the mummies) into smaller pieces to multiply the number

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<sup>10</sup> See: “Correspondence: A Fragment of a Lost Greek Poet.” *The Academy*, Oct. 11 1890: 319.

<sup>11</sup> See: “The Discoveries of Ancient Greek Manuscripts in Egypt.” *Manchester Guardian*, 2.17.1891.



of commodities for sale.<sup>12</sup> Assailing such practices, and the laws of the Egyptian state that supposedly “induced” them, Sayce bemoaned, “[The] two mummies [have] now, alas! [...] been torn to fragments. [...] Unhappily, the papyri, like the mummies, have [also] been torn and scattered.”<sup>13</sup> In the aftermath of this scattering, however, Sayce later found one consolation: nearly a year after the original dig, in the autumn of 1890, he chanced upon a single surviving papyrus, largely through the intervention of an American missionary by the name of Alexander.<sup>14</sup> On this papyrus, as Sayce only later learned, were preserved seven of Herodas’ mime plays, more or less intact.

Well, perhaps *less*, as the paleographer Frederic Kenyon confessed when the manuscript had reached him in London, a year later: “For the most part, the papyrus is sound, and the writing clear and in good condition; but in many places, especially towards the end, it has been considerably eaten by worms, and in others the writing has been rubbed,<sup>15</sup> which causes the text of some of the poems to be seriously mutilated” (1891:6). To be sure, the manuscript offered readers a tantalizing window into daily life (or, more accurately, Herodas’ rendering of daily life within the generic confines of mime

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<sup>12</sup> “[P]recious manuscripts” wrote one anonymous report, “are often torn up and retailed piecemeal, with very little chance of the fragments being ever reconstructed” (ibid).

<sup>13</sup> “Letter From Egypt,” in *The Academy*, April 19 1890, p. 273. Sayce concluded this section of his letter with a blithely positivist call to action, speaking in the name of “universal science”: “It is time that the scientific world should raise its voice in protest [...]. The value of the ancient monument consists in its usefulness to science; and, so long as science can discover all it can tell us, it matters little into whose hands it eventually goes.” Although there were exceptions, the majority of these hands were those of curators in the national museums and libraries of Northern Europe, at the end of a long patchwork of hands and arms and bodies stretching from the colonies to their imperial capitals. In effect, the material histories of these manuscripts, and the complex social agencies bound up within them, were being effaced by the “universal sciences” of a British Museum or a Bibliothèque Nationale, until nothing but a village name remained to denote their provenance.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed description of this find, see Sayce’s memoirs (1923:332-334), where he writes of his interaction with both the American missionary and the Egyptian seller.

<sup>15</sup> This rubbing, Sayce wrote elsewhere, resulted from the Egyptian seller’s handling of the papyrus: he had stored it in a pocket of his garment as he rode from market to market, atop his donkey, looking for a buyer. “The consequence,” Sayce writes, “was that a corner of [the papyrus] had been [...] ‘mushed up’” (333).

theater) in the market places, bedrooms, bordellos, temples, courtrooms, schools, and shoe shops turned sex shops of Hellenistic Egypt and Cos. It was a world that, despite the mimiambics' strange archaic language, pulsed with energy. Within Herodas' text, migrants from across the Eastern Mediterranean convened in the streets of Alexandria and insulted one another's dialects, grew jealous of their slaves-turned-lovers, traded tips on sex toys, and gossiped over highbrow art they couldn't understand. Yet as the textual integrity of the papyrus ceded to the lacunae of worms and rubbings, the reader's window grew narrower and narrower. The material history of the text, what editors generally attempted to efface through the comparison of multiple manuscripts, elbowed its way to the fore here, in what was Herodas' sole surviving witness: "Papyrus CXXXV." Reading became not an effortless act of communion with the author but instead a reckoning—not only with lacunae and damaged papyri but, just as importantly, with multiple layers of scriptorial interventions, languages and dialects.<sup>16</sup> Whether the result of worms, fin-de-siècle colonial regimes or Hellenistic scribes, the material properties of the papyrus revealed a complicated social network shaping and reshaping the text.

It was precisely this network that inspired, the following year, an early poem of the young Cavafy—indeed, the first "Hellenistic" poem in what was to become a central thread of his oeuvre. Though he never published the poem, it nonetheless remained in his personal archive up to and beyond his death, carefully preserved and dated (1892). I

quote its beginning and ending:

Οἱ Μιμίαμβοι τοῦ Ἡρώδου

The Mimiamboi Of Herodas

Ἐπὶ αἰώνας μένοντες κρυμμένοι  
ἐντὸς τοῦ σκότους Αἰγυπτίας γῆς

For centuries hidden  
in the darkness of Egyptian earth

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<sup>16</sup> For discussions of the supposed exemplar from which the surviving papyrus was copied, and the mistakes, corrections, and dialectical variations of the (non-Greek) scribe(s) involved, see John Henry Wright (1893:183-186), and Headlam and Knox (1922:lx-lxiv).

μέσω τῆς ἀπελπιστικῆς σιγῆς  
ἔπληττον οἱ μιμίαμβ' οἱ χαριτωμένοι·

ἀλλὰ ἐπέρασαν ἐκεῖν' οἱ χρόνοι,  
ἔφθασαν ἀπὸ τὸν Βορρᾶ σοφοὶ  
ἄνδρες, καὶ τῶν ἰάμβων ἔπαυσ' ἡ ταφή  
κ' ἡ λήθη. Οἱ εὐτράπελοι τῶν τόνοι

μᾶς ἐπανάφεραν τὰς εὐθυμίας  
ἑλληνικῶν οδῶν καὶ ἀγορῶν·  
κ' ἐμβαίνομεν μαζί τῶν εἰς τὸν ζῶηρόν  
βίον μᾶς περιέργου κοινωνίας.—

[...]

Πλὴν πόσα ἔλειψαν ἐκ τῶν παπύρων·  
πόσον συχνὰ τῶν μιαρῶν σηρῶν βορᾶ  
ἔγινεν ἰαμβος λεπτὸς καὶ εἴρων!  
Ὁ ἀτυχῆς Ἡρώδης, καμωμένος  
διὰ τὰ σκώματα καὶ διὰ τὰ φαιδρά,  
τὶ σοβαρὰ μᾶς ἤλθε πληγωμένος!<sup>17</sup>

and, therein, hopeless silence,  
the graceful mimiambi grew bored;

but those years are past,  
from the North have come wise  
men, and the verses' burial is through at last,  
as is their oblivion. Their comic tones

have returned to us the mirth  
of Greek roads and markets;  
and we enter with them the animated  
life of a strange society.—

[...]

Yet how much is missing from the papyri;  
how often did a fine, ironic iambic line  
become the food of foul worms!  
The unfortunate Herodas, made  
for laughing ridicule and jest,  
how seriously wounded he has reached us!

While the subtle irony of Cavafy's mature poetry is absent (perhaps most painfully in the unproblematic "wise men from the North"), the poem warrants attention here. If Cavafy found in Herodas' Egypt an extraordinary society, one whose "lively life" (*ζῶηρός βίος*) drew the reader in, it was a life nonetheless engulfed (quite literally, by the first two stanzas and the last) in the longer, troubled textual history of the papyrus that housed it. In effect, Cavafy's poem gave voice not only to the Hellenistic past but to the material vessel in which it had reached us. In a strange double personification, which invests the entire poem with a subtle tension, both the mimes' content ("Alexandrian society") and their medium (the papyrus) are reanimated, brought before the reader's eyes like players in a theater. Buried in the darkness of the Egyptian earth, much as Cavafy's own poem was to be buried for over half a century in the darkness of his archive, Herodas' papyrus grows bored, is wounded and mutilated, its aesthetic humor now mixed with a material sobriety.

<sup>17</sup> I draw the Greek text here from Dimiroulis' edition (2015:471). My translations of Cavafy's poetry reflect Greek syntax, as best as English allows, perhaps at risk of rendering them less elegant.

Admittedly, the poem brings up the larger socio-material context of the Herodian text only to use it as a marker of absence and loss. As an early example of Cavafy's work, it does little more than mourn the erosion of authorial integrity at the hands of inimical material and social fields. Yet the story of Herodas' papyrus marked, for Cavafy, the beginning of a life-long concern over the materiality of the text and the social histories that it might narrate. In the years ahead, Cavafy returned more and more insistently, with a deeper and more complex sensitivity, to this topic. It's a turn that has largely eluded scholarly attention, much of which tends to focus instead on the interplay of immaterial ideas within the poems. Diskin Clay, for example, wrote, "Cavafy was not a poet to touch the past of Greece with his fingers. [...] He had no inclination for making contact with the marble past of Greece" (2010:274). Clay was not alone; even if inadvertently he was invoking an older tradition in Cavafy reception, one that began at least as early as 1917, when Giorgios Vrisimitzakis remarked, "Regarding the poetry of Cavafy, one can dare say without fear of error: it is all thought" (1917:3). Vrisimitzakis went on immediately to qualify himself: it's a thought brought to life through dramatic staging, set in the streets and palaces and taverns of the eastern Mediterranean and Near East, yet he nevertheless insists, "Cavafy's daring innovation was precisely his attempt to create [...] a poetry of the intellect, which draws its beauty from the ordering [τάξι] of ideas" (4). The touchstones of Cavafy's poems are not, so to speak, stones; they are immaterial thoughts. Even in Cavafy's "sensual" (*αισθαντικά*) poems, for Vrisimitzakis the only things at play are "intellectual impressions" (8).<sup>18</sup> Within such readings, Cavafy's poetry became

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, 8. As a positivist, Vrisimitzakis later turned against Cavafy (or, more accurately, *parts* of Cavafy), condemning his "Byzantinism," "mysticism" and "sterile hedonism," all of which supposedly stood as a wall between Cavafy and "real life." Vristimitzakis wrote in an editorial in 1919: "The greatest deficiency in Cavafy's poetry comes from his inability to feel nature." See *Βωμός* [Altar] no. 10, (March 15), 122.

immaterial, distanced, a crystalization of irony and intellect in which, as later readers would suggest, the poet had enclosed himself, “alienated from living reality, entrenched within abstract thought, in an asylum uncontaminated and deep.”<sup>19</sup>

I don’t mean here to question the trenchant irony, nor the subtlety of thought that structures nearly all Cavafy’s poems. Instead, I want to point to the ways in which his play of irony and idea also drew from the material and social circumstances in which writing found its voice: in an excavated papyrus (“The Mimiamboi of Herodas”); in a Greco-Egyptian gravestone whose inscription, with its strange mixture of Pagan and Christian tropes, has reached us fragmentary (“In the Month of Athyr”); in an old tome of inscriptions taken from a shelf and leafed through (“Caesarion”); in a scroll of Greek epic verse written by a Persian poet for a Pontian king as the Romans storm the gates (“Dareios”). If it’s true, as Clay suggests, that Cavafy does not touch the statue fragments, temple columns and tumbled walls of ancient Greece, I nonetheless maintain that in crucial poems scattered across his four decades of work, he “touches” and engages the material and social conditions of Greek *writing*: both its fragmentation and its continuity—a continuity always contingent, open to change, dependent on the meaning that arises from the specific sites of its assemblage and reassemblage. And by turning to these manuscripts, inscriptions and pages, Cavafy’s poetry encourages us in turn to touch, and to ponder, the material vessel of its own writing, as well as the social worlds through which it moved.

Its journey began in a particular world—a city, in fact—that had been the ancient site

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<sup>19</sup> The observation comes from Takis Barlas, a minor Greek writer born a generation after Cavafy (in *Nea technē* no. 7-10, Oct. 1924, edited by Marios Vaianos, p. 102). Almost a decade later, just a month before Cavafy’s death one could read a similar observation from the young critic Anastasios Drivas: “[Cavafy’s] poems [are] an enclosed space, where the nightmares of the flesh seek in vain to poke through the walls [...]. It conveys only jumbled syllables from the book of life. History is then its only refuge” (“Cavafy without Prejudice,” in *Rythmos* no. 6, March 1933, p. 192).

*par excellence* of textual transcription, preservation, assemblage and interpretation.

Alexandria had been the medium by which archaic and classical Greece were materialized and (recon)textualized onto papyrus, as Peter Bing (1988) first argued. In fact, it was precisely thanks to Hellenistic Egypt's status as a site of transcription that the majority of nineteenth-century classical philologists showed such interest in the excavations there: not so much for Egyptian *texts* as for Egyptian *papyri*, on which the works of "Greece proper" happened to have been preserved.<sup>20</sup> Yet while Egypt was, to a degree, a vessel of transcription, it was one that nonetheless introduced its own hand through a plethora of errata and variations, displaying what the papyrologist E.G. Turner colorfully called "lack of respect for the accurate recording of an author's words" (1968:107).<sup>21</sup> In several of Cavafy's engagements with Hellenistic texts, his poems remind readers that Egypt was not a seamless (which is to say invisible) textual conduit between ancient Greece and modern Europe. The relation that governed classical Athens and Hellenistic Alexandria was not one of original and copy, but something more complex, fraught with subtle stresses and tensions. To use the language of Latour, Alexandria was not an *intermediary* but a *mediator*, transforming as it transcribed.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Frederic Kenyon, for example, in his transcription of Herodas' manuscript, wrote, "'The discoveries of recent years in Egypt have gone far to open up a brighter prospect [of recovering ancient texts], and to raise expectations which, it is much to be hoped, will not be disappointed. [...] [I]t cannot be necessary to do more than allude to [...] [Aristotle's] treatise on the *Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία* [...]. The present discovery [i.e., the Egyptian mime plays] has no claim to an importance equal to this" (1).

<sup>21</sup> For but one example, see the early Ptolemaic papyri of the *Iliad* (discovered the same year as Herodas), and the various alternative lines ("eccentricities") that they preserve. Graeme Bird (2010) suggests that Ptolemaic deviations from the "standard" *Iliad* represent in fact not errata but textual traces of an oral tradition that continued to flourish in the Hellenistic world.

<sup>22</sup> Latour likens intermediaries to "black boxes," which "transport meaning or force without transformation" (2005:39). Mediators, conversely, "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (ibid). In fact, it is precisely these nodes of mediation, as Latour will later argue, that "gather and assemble the collective" (240).

### *Liquid Hellenism*

In 1863, Cavafy was born into this world, bearing not Greek but British citizenship, which his father (an Ottoman subject from Istanbul) had acquired during his long stay in Liverpool. It was here where, like many other Greek merchants, the Cavafy family had opened a trading firm in 1849, specializing in Manchester textiles and Egyptian cotton. In 1855, his father moved to Alexandria, where the business would thrive until his death in 1870, soon after which the family would lose most of its capital in the commodities market. Consequently, Cavafy spent his professional life as a scribe in Egypt's Ministry of Public Works, in the Irrigation's Third Circle (which, despite its Dantean evocations, came not from hell but from an Anglicization of the Ottoman Arabic *dā'ira*: "circle" or "bureau"). Earning a middling income by proofing and copying out official letters in English, Cavafy likely found the work tedious,<sup>23</sup> yet it became a crucial sinecure for the developing poet.

Although he later acquired a Greek passport, Cavafy's relation to the Greek state and its vision of Greekness was and continues to be less than clear.<sup>24</sup> As he once famously announced, "I too am Hellenic—but take note, I am not a Hellene [*hellēn*, i.e., *Greek*], nor am I a Hellenized foreigner [*hellēnizōn*]; I am Hellenic [*hellēnikos*]" (Malanos 1935:56, quoted by Savidis in Cavafy 1963, vol. 1:104). Although the phrase remains open to interpretation, *hellēnikos* (an adjective by which one normally attributes a "Greek quality" to objects, ideas and actions) seems to place Cavafy in a category beyond the organic. It functions, I suggest, as a sort of Bourdieuan *habitus*: not a subject

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<sup>23</sup> Upon retirement at the end of 1921, he reportedly exclaimed, "At last I'm free of this loathsome thing" (Liddell 1974:179).

<sup>24</sup> For a concentrated discussion of this point, see Jeffreys (2005:91-92).

but a subject position, constructed through a number of agencies dispersed across a geocultural field. Semantically capacious, the Hellenic *habitus* stands in explicit contradistinction to the Hellene, the always-already interpellated and bounded subject of the modern Greek state. Born in Alexandria, schooled in England, spending four formative years of his young adulthood in Istanbul, and living out the rest of his life in the city of his birth, Cavafy and his idea of the Hellenic are difficult to place—both geographically and ideologically. As Marios Vaianos once wrote, he was “a man who cannot stay put [literally: *cannot stand in a single place*] [...]. He is so multiform and manifold” (1924a). As I’ll argue in the next section, this slippage and multiformity permeated Cavafy’s poetry on several levels, yet its most obvious effect for readers today lies on the level of content, particularly in the historic monologues. It was here that Cavafy’s “inability to stay put” productively complicated contemporary understandings of Greekness, bringing to the fore its failure to overlap neatly with Hellenism and the tensions that were thus generated in a world of shifting borders, powers, and languages. After all, the word *Hellenism* itself ought morphologically to denote not a cultural state (“Greekness”) but a *process* of acculturation, negotiation and adaption (“becoming Greek”).<sup>25</sup>

As one might expect, Cavafy’s “Hellenic multiformity” has generated a number of scholarly responses, to which I provide a mere summative outline here. Almost two decades after Cavafy’s death, E.M. Forster observed that Cavafy had been “loyal to Greece but for him Greece was not territorial [...]. The civilization he respected was a

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<sup>25</sup> This “-ism” (-ισμός) derives from the verbal form “-izo” (-ίζω), which is affixed to a noun and denotes a process of “transformation into.” *Hellēnismos*, then, should technically mean not Greekness but a process of becoming or converting into Greekness, congruent with the ancient *hellēnizomai* (modern *exellēnizomai*).



bastardy in which the Greek strain prevailed, and into which, age after age, outsiders would push, to modify and be modified” (from *Two Cheers for Democracy*, quoted in Keeley 1995:109-110 and Jeffreys 2005:76). Understandably, early Greek enthusiasts of Cavafy were less apt to speak of a “bastardy,” celebrating what they emphasized instead as his narrative of Greek continuity, or the diverse glories of the “race.”<sup>26</sup> Both readings of Cavafy’s Hellenism however share a single assumed foundation: a pre-existing *Hellene*, even if it may later affix itself to the foreign (or the foreign to it). Johan Gustav Droysen, who had invented the term Hellenism in the previous century, had explicitly argued that the power of Hellenism had lain in its ability to attract, assimilate, and, in turn, be assimilated into the most foreign elements.<sup>27</sup> Yet no matter the end result of these assimilations and assemblages, Hellenism hinged upon an assumed Greek core. Peter Jeffreys thus argues that “the Asian component of Cavafy’s Hellenistic cosmos is nearly always refracted through a Greek prism. To a great extent, Cavafy minimizes what might be termed the ‘Babylonian’ legacy” (99). As a result of this selective framing, populations that lose all but the faintest signs of “Greekness” lose in turn all but the faintest interest for Cavafy’s poetry—whether they be the “dehellenized Greeks” of Magna Graecia or the Alexandrian Muslims alongside whom Cavafy lived (in the case of Cavafy’s servant Mirghani or his cook Ahmed, the cohabitation was almost literal).

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<sup>26</sup> One early reader remarked in 1924 that “within his work, as multiform as it is brief, all of eternal Greece pulses with life across every period, from its height to its decadence. And Cavafy has remained the perfect Greek [*romios*] in his work” (M.G. Petridis, a minor poet, in *Nea technē*, no. 7-10, p. 110). K.Th. Dimaras, the most influential midcentury Helladic scholar, later wrote along similar lines, suggesting that Cavafy “also conceived [...] of Greece in a historical unity [...]. His national stirrings inspired some of his best verses [...] [in which] he expressed his faith in the Race [*Ἔνος*]” (1992:123).

<sup>27</sup> After singlehandedly inventing the period, Droysen went on to celebrate what he saw as its *Mischkultur*, the cross-fertilization of Greek and non-Greek peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond that had emerged in the long wake of Alexander’s campaigns. See *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (1836-1843). A second, revised edition was published near the end of Droysen’s life, in 1877. For a discussion of the two editions, see A.B. Bosworth (2003) and (2006).

Khaled Fahmy, attempting to “sketch a history of modern Alexandria in which those pyjama-clad native Arabs feature, if not centre-stage, then at least more prominently than they have hitherto been allowed to do,” writes that Cavafy’s poetry “finds its most poignant effect in—indeed is predicated upon—his ability to turn away from the city he sees from the window and to create instead a city that belongs either to a Hellenistic [or an inner] world [...]. Only minimally does it belong to the Alexandria he lived in or to the real people who inhabited it” (2004:272; 274).<sup>28</sup>

I readily admit the limitations of Cavafy’s “Greek prism,” yet to thereby dismiss his poems’ complex Hellenism as jingoistic risks overlooking their transformative potential. In the first decades of the twentieth century, as the nature of the state was changing in the Mediterranean, demanding from subjects far more rigid understandings of identity and territoriality, Cavafy’s poems offered a space to complicate both terms. Reassessing Cavafy’s work through the lens of postcolonial studies, Martin McKinsey has recently made a similar claim: the historical poems, he argues, speak to both the violence of centralized cultural systems and, at the same time, the agencies that various subjects along the periphery—from North Africa to Persia—were able to negotiate within and through these cultures. Seen through McKinsey’s hermeneutic window, Cavafy’s poetry “leaves open the question of who is being acculturated by whom [...]. Perhaps this was Cavafy’s way of highlighting the complexity and mutuality of the colonial or diasporic encounter, his way of saying that it goes both ways” (2010:114). Working within a separate conceptual framework—that of Bakhtin’s *heteroglossia*—but concluding with a similar insight, Katerina Karatasou writes that Cavafy’s is “a poetry that does not aim at a

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<sup>28</sup> To be sure, a poem like the unpublished “27 June 1906, 2 p.m.” creates important wrinkles in this argument, yet Fahmy’s general observation is worth considering and perhaps impossible to deny *in toto*.

gentle, pluralistic relativism but sets in motion collisions between its subjects”

(2000:269). It is precisely through these complex “encounters” and subtly violent

“collisions” that the actors of Cavafy’s poems build their *hellēnikoi habitūs*.

### ***Liquid Texts***

Cavafy’s “multiformity” was by no means limited to the theme of Hellenism. This same refusal to “stay put” pervaded nearly every level of his work: from the ideological<sup>29</sup> to the punctuational<sup>30</sup> and linguistic,<sup>31</sup> from the bibliographic (detailed in this section) to the generic. Indeed, Cavafy’s multivalent “slippage” has led today to thriving critical industries centered respectively on an “Erotic Cavafy,” an “Historical Cavafy,” an “Aesthetic Cavafy,” a “Political Cavafy,” or, related to this last, a “Linguistic Cavafy.”

As Vassilis Lambropoulos insightfully remarked as early as the 1980s, “[T]he most surprising aspect of this growing industry is not exactly its large scope but rather its wide

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<sup>29</sup> Cavafy was notoriously tight-lipped, avoiding public pronunciations on most contemporary political developments. To endorse definitive ideological positions or interpretations of certain poems, some scholars have resorted to Cavafy’s supposed “self-commentaries” (viz., those he purportedly put into the hands of Alekos Sengopoulos, those that were “recorded” and later published by G. Lechonitis, or those found in his archive) or the memories of his contemporaries, yet such exercises are dangerous. “Cavafy’s conversations,” writes George Seferis, “can easily mislead; they *have* misled many” (1996:157). Saregiannis likewise asks of Lechonitis, “I wonder whether that dilettante could follow Cavafy’s thought in all its true labyrinths, with its nuances, its hesitations and parentheses, but also with its strategic shifts” (1964:120). For an English perspective, one might look to Bonamy Dobrée, who wrote in 1929 that Cavafy’s conversation was “all implication”: “He may talk of the Alexandrian tram-service, of the Ptolemies, of the use of a certain word in seventeenth-century English: one scarcely knows what it is that one has talked to Mr. Cavafy about” (quoted in Pinchin 1977:78).

<sup>30</sup> Cavafy’s poems occasionally placed commas or full stops within *guillemets* (analogous to American English), though usually, as per Greek standards (borrowed from the French), he placed them outside. See for example the poem «Ev δήμῳ τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας», where one encounters both forms (‘,’ and ‘.’).

<sup>31</sup> Until the political schism of the First World War (and arguably well after it), the central debate of Greek life lay in the “Language Question”: What form would the written language take, the archaized and artificial *Katharevousa* or the “orally based” (yet also artificial) *Dimotiki*? While Cavafy’s poetic output began in *Katharevousa*, his mature work developed a register perhaps closer to *Dimotiki*, but with countless idiosyncrasies and peculiarities that alienated most Demoticists, from Psycharis to Tangopoulos. For Cavafy’s supposed enmity towards both extremes on the Language Question, see Saregiannis (1964:41-42) and Savidis (1966:162-163).

variety. There are as many interpretations of the literary sign Cavafy as critical approaches to it, each one striving for inclusiveness of coverage and exclusiveness of appropriation. The erotic, the political, the didactic, the historical, the symbolist, the mythopoetic and other Cavafys compete for our attention, and for absolute interpretive authority” (1988:183). My own approach makes claims neither to hermeneutic exclusivity nor to critical exhaustiveness; instead, I’m interested in the “inability to stay put” of the Cavafic corpus itself, which has created the space for these interpretive struggles in the first place. Rather than speaking of these various levels as self-contained phenomena, one might productively view them as multiple manifestations of a poetic fluidity and adaptability: one that stretches, for example, from the *thematic* of Hellenism to the *materials*—paper, ink, glue, stitching, pins and paperclips—by which this Hellenism was assembled (or just as often: disassembled, disaggregated, boxed up and kept separate).

To see how these levels inform one another, I turn briefly to what has rightly become one of Cavafy’s most famous examples of Hellenism: «Επάνοδος από την Ελλάδα» (“Return from Greece”). Set in what was perhaps the mid to late Hellenistic period, the poem follows two young sophists as they depart from Athens for their homeland, either in Ptolomaic Egypt or Seleucid Syria. Standing aboard the ship, leaving behind them the Greek peninsula and looking out upon the littoral waters of Asia Minor and Africa, the speaker of the poem addresses his companion:

Ὅστε κοντεύουμε νὰ φθάσουμ', Ἑρμιππε.  
 Μεθαύριο, θαρρῶ· ἔτσ' εἶπε ὁ πλοίαρχος.  
 Τουλάχιστον στήν θάλασσά μας πλέουμε·  
 νερά τῆς Κύπρου, τῆς Συρίας, καί τῆς Αἰγύπτου,  
 ἀγαπημένα τῶν πατρίδων μας νερά.  
 Γιατί ἔτσι σιωπηλός; Ρώτησε τὴν καρδιά σου,  
 ὅσο ποῦ ἀπ' τὴν Ἑλλάδα μακρυνόμεθαι  
 δὲν χαίροσιν καὶ σὺ; Ἀξίζει νὰ γελιούμαστε; —

Well, we're nearly there, Hermippos.  
 In two days' time, I wager; so said the ship's captain.  
 At least we're sailing now in our own sea;  
 waters of Cyprus, Syria, and Egypt,  
 beloved waters of our homelands.  
 Why so silent? Ask your heart:  
 the farther we moved away from Greece  
 were you not gladdened too? Why fool ourselves?—

αὐτὸ δὲν θὰ ἴταν βέβαια ἑλληνοπρεπές.

Ἄς τὴν παραδεχθοῦμε τὴν ἀλήθεια πιά·  
εἴμεθα Ἕλληνες κ' ἐμεῖς — τί ἄλλο εἴμεθα; —  
ἀλλὰ μὲ ἀγάπες καὶ μὲ συγκινήσεις τῆς Ἀσίας,  
ἀλλὰ μὲ ἀγάπες καὶ μὲ συγκινήσεις  
ποῦ κάποτε ξενίζον τὸν Ἑλληνισμό.

Δὲν μᾶς ταιριάζει, Ἑρμιππε, ἐμᾶς τοὺς φιλοσόφους  
νὰ μοιάζουμε σὰν κάτι μικροβασίλεις μας  
(θυμᾶσαι πῶς γελοῦσαμε μὲ δαύτους  
σὰν ἐπισκέπτονταν τὰ σπουδαστήριά μας)  
ποῦ κάτω ἀπ' τὸ ἐξωτερικό τους τὸ ἐπιδεικτικά  
ἑλληνοποιημένο, καὶ (τί λόγος!) μακεδονικό,  
καμιὰ Ἀραβία ξεμυτίζει κάθε τόσο  
καμιὰ Μηδία ποῦ δὲν περιμαζεύεται,  
καὶ μὲ τί κωμικὰ τεχνάσματα οἱ καημένοι  
πασχίζουν νὰ μὴ παρατηρηθεῖ.

Ἄ ὄχι δὲν ταιριάζουμε σ' ἐμᾶς αὐτά.  
Σ' Ἕλληνας σὰν κ' ἐμᾶς δὲν κάνουν τέτοιες  
μικροπρέπειες.  
Τὸ αἷμα τῆς Συρίας καὶ τῆς Αἰγύπτου  
ποῦ ρεῖ μὲς στὲς φλέβες μας νὰ μὴ ντραποῦμε,  
νὰ τὸ τιμήσουμε καὶ νὰ τὸ καυχηθοῦμε.<sup>32</sup>

such a thing would not be Greek.

Let's admit the truth, at last:  
We too are Greek—what else could we be?—  
but with loves and passions born of Asia,  
but with loves and passions  
that prove, at times, abrasive to Greekness.

It's unbecoming of philosophers like us, Hermippos,  
to stoop to the level of our petty kings  
(do you remember how we laughed at them  
when they visited our classrooms):  
beneath the ostentations of their Hellenified  
or (imagine!) Macedonian exteriors,  
a little bit of Arabia would show its face now and then,  
a little bit of Media that they couldn't hold back,  
and with what silly ploys the poor fellows  
strive to keep it under wraps.

Ah, no, such things do not become us.  
For Greeks like us, this pettiness won't do.  
The blood of Syria and Egypt  
that flows within our veins—without shame,  
let us honor it, let us boast of it.

(1914)

Whereas the petty vassal kings of Asia Minor strive—with only limited success—to mask the complex patchwork of their identities, thrusting it behind a supposed official standard of Greek exteriority, the speaker chooses rather to flaunt his “Greco-Asian” alloy. Yet there is another level of oppositions not to be overlooked, one that one might begin to explore in the speaker's silent companion, Hermippos, sulking on the prow of the boat. The latter's silence stands in stark contrast to the former, who quite literally *publishes* (i.e., makes public) his not-quite-Greek Greekness to those around him. In other words, the tension of this poem lies not simply in the tug and pull of “mainland Greek” and “diasporic Greek” identities, but also in the boundaries of the public and the private spheres in which this tug and pull takes place.

It is therefore significant that “Return from Greece” numbers among Cavafy's many “hidden” poems—those he kept within his sizeable archive but never published. The

<sup>32</sup> Dimiroulis (2015:539).

poem itself led a double life, enacting a public performance of diasporic Hellenism—indeed, embracing the publicity of this performance—but doing so beneath the lock and seal of an inviolate privacy. In a sense, then, when viewed as both aesthetic conceit and material object (what Jerome McGann has called, respectively, linguistic and bibliographic codes), “Return from Greece” ultimately leaves these tensions unresolved. While its text embraces the buoyant optimism of the speaker, its medium—a manuscript buried in an archive—reenacts the silence of Hermippos.

This and similar tensions run throughout Cavafy’s publication strategies. While he published individual poems frequently and widely (first in almanacs, later in literary journals, newspapers, and even popular magazines) in Alexandria, Cairo, Athens, Crete, Thessaloniki and elsewhere,<sup>33</sup> he also submitted his poems to local printers for his own uses, which were several: after circulating broadsheets of poems for over a decade (1891-1904), Cavafy printed and assembled in 1904 a thin book of 14 selected poems arranged thematically, followed by a second in 1910, with further poems interspersed. These were printed in masse and bound with two staples to the spine of a cardboard cover. Two years later, in 1912, these books evolved into the final and by far the most intriguing phase of Cavafy’s publications. Here, Cavafy again assembled multiple poems into collections, yet the assemblages now began to bifurcate into two separate types—“chronological” and “thematic”—each one circulating in five successive forms (with varying chains of content) until his death in 1933.

I’ve provided a more detailed analysis of Cavafy’s collections and their networks of

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<sup>33</sup> His first published poems and translations, as Savidis documents (1966:286-7) and Jeffreys points out (2005:2), were in fact produced in Leipzig in 1886, by the literary journal *Hesperos*, which folded the following year.

handlers in another article, to which I would refer my readers,<sup>34</sup> yet it's useful to provide a brief summary of those observations here. The chronological collections gathered all Cavafy's poems—or rather, all his publically recognized poems that fell within a particular (though ever-changing) time frame—into a single space. Numbered according not to page but poem, and bound together with nothing more than a brass cotter pin, they were placed within a quarto sheet (wherein the title “Poems” and the table of contents were written by hand). The pin that “bound” this collection together could easily be undone to facilitate re-arrangement or replacement of particular content. Indeed, such mixing and matching had already preceded the assemblage of the collection: looking to the papers' size and quality, the typeface and colophons, one soon observes that each sheet was the product of a separate publication event (sometimes the two leaves of even a single, long poem derive from separate sources). Moreover, many poems bear additions or corrections in pen. At every level, then—paper, ink, binding, and thematic content—the chronological collections strike one as multiform and eminently provisional, inviting frequent re-assemblage.

The thematic collections, on the other hand, seem to align more closely with our contemporary expectations of a “proper book,” as a glance at a single witness amply demonstrates. Numbers run according to page, not poem. Moreover, the leaves were stitched within a trimmed cardboard cover binding, seemingly indiscernible from a commercial publication.<sup>35</sup> Yet while these material details give one the sense of a more stable, permanent artifact, closer consideration suggests otherwise. First of all, the

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<sup>34</sup> See “Some Assembly Required: Suspending and Extending the Book with Cavafy's Collections” (forthcoming in *Book History*).

<sup>35</sup> These qualities are noted by Savidis (1966:70).

arrangements of the poems themselves subtly shift between collections, as Hirst (1998) has demonstrated—a shift that is most prominent in the fourth thematic collection (1916-1918).<sup>36</sup> As a result, one can argue that the larger thematic narrative that they compose was never stable. The materials of the codices were likewise fluid. The paper sources again differ, sometimes radically. Font sizes shifted from page to page, bearing witness to the craft-like nature of the codices. Similarly, while many poems bear no colophon, thus suggesting that the book is built from a uniform print run, there are nonetheless several others that *do* bear colophons, denoting different print years and/or errata. Most tellingly, a close examination of the binding of the thematic collections reveals that in every copy, various pages have been inserted with “tip-ins” (two single sheets glued to a narrow slip of adhesive paper, which is itself stitched into the spine).<sup>37</sup> These sheets derive from a variety of print events, as their paper quality, pagination, and printed material often bear witness. The Greek-Egyptian historian Athanasios Politis, a contemporary of Cavafy and author of the massive, two-volume *Hellenism and Modern Egypt* (1930), sheds some light on this:

In 1915, a [...] collection of Cavafy’s poems was published, with the simple title *Poems (1907-1915)*.<sup>38</sup> The printer who printed *Nea Zoe* and *Ta Grammata* [the leading Greek-Language literary journals of Alexandria] had printed out about 30 separate copies of the poems that would appear in those periodicals, and he thus provided the opportunity for the constitution of the collection in question.—in which were also included three or four poems composed between 1897 and 1907. (448)

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<sup>36</sup> While Savidis also briefly notes this shift (1966:68), it is only with Hirst that a full account and analysis is provided of the crucial shift in arrangement that this thematic collection orchestrates.

<sup>37</sup> This is also noted by Savidis, *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> This title in fact belonged to Cavafy’s third thematic collection, which only began circulating in 1926. Politis has either mixed up the year or title of the collection.



As it would seem, several of the pages in at least some of Cavafy's thematic collections were in fact offprints given back to him by local periodicals to which he had submitted—in essence, the detritus of an earlier publication event.<sup>39</sup> Despite their outward appearance of book-bound stability, the thematic collections betray quite a different story: a story by which Cavafy “the publisher” practiced a sort of material scavenging and bricolage.

This open nature, in turn, invited readers to intervene within the process of assemblage, particularly in the case of the chronological collections. Readers were, after all, the handlers of an extremely unstable body of text and, to varying degrees, its curators, binders, or even editors. From the incunabular period until the early nineteenth century, most printed works had been sold loose-leaf, to be bound only after purchase by the owner. Such a practice (which had arisen due to the high costs of bindings) encouraged readers to join multiple works together, thereby creating assemblages of potentially interlocking meaning between texts. Jeffrey Todd Knight, in his examination of early modern Shakespearean prints, argues that these “composite volumes, user- and retailer-initiated anthologies” challenge our received notion of the autonomous text (2013:56). Beginning in the later nineteenth century, he continues, curators and librarians began literally to tear apart these reader assemblages and rebind works individually. Such practices, he observes, “go beyond simple preservation; they reify notions of a text's canonicity [...][,] free from the clamor of intertextuality and resubmitted to later readers shorn of its history, ‘for all time.’ [These new bindings] reflect and reinforce notions of stylistic unity, authenticity, and other modern desires that now seem intrinsic to the work” (64-65). Knight's immersive and meticulous study of readers' bindings offers a

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<sup>39</sup> For similar bibliographic observations, see Tsirkas (1971:196). Savidis also demonstrates that a similar “typographic surplus” from an almanac in 1895 had produced one of the broadsheets circulated during Cavafy's first stage of dissemination (1966:29).

powerful analytical tool that might be productively applied to other cultural geographies beyond England. And despite the temporal signposts (e.g., “modern desires” for “stylistic unity” and “authenticity”), Cavafy’s collections demonstrate that even in the twentieth century the book remained, at least in the eastern Mediterranean, an open field, and that notions of unity and authenticity were far from “intrinsic.” Even a cursory survey of special collections reveals that multiple collections of Cavafy’s poems reach us today in different bindings, collated in odd arrangements or re-built by readers, offering us a glimpse into the material afterlives of Cavafy’s original collections. One such book, in the Princeton collection (2006-0926N), houses an interpolation of two collections, rebound together by a reader. Here the fifth and final chronological collection *begins* the book, cutting off abruptly and giving way to earlier poems of the fourth collection, with which the work ends. Such artifacts speak to the ways by which readers continued and co-opted Cavafy’s own practice of shifting and open-ended collections, formulating their own narrative trajectories.

Rather than a liability, however, this logic proved a central strength of Cavafy’s poetic artifacts. As Cavafy wrote in 1922 to Napoleon Lapatiotis, a young Athenian poet, “How can I say anything about the future? [/] Perhaps, suddenly, I’ll want to make a compound partition [*συγκειμένη διαίρεση*] of only historical poems.—If we look at the entire corpus of poems, not divided up into Particular Collections, then with each new poem, the proper arrangement, the one according to theme, would change” (quoted in Savidis 1966:63). The ruptures, disjunctions, and tensions that one witnesses within Cavafy’s poetic narratives of Hellenism extend to the broader material project of constructing—or, rather, indefinitely deferring the construction of—a unified poetic

corpus. Rather than pursue the public project of a mass-produced and widely circulating *Poems*, Cavafy chose instead to embrace the unstable, shifting nature of a semi-public, semi-private publication strategy. It was a strategy that saw him one day mailing off a poem for publication to a literary journal in Macedonia, the next day mailing off a hundred copies of a new poem to the owners of his “chronological collections,” asking them to slip it into their dossiers and attach it to an ever-shifting stack of works,<sup>40</sup> and the third day tucking yet another poem away into his private archive: “NOT FOR PUBLICATION BUT MAY REMAIN HERE.”

### ***Liquid Geographies***

What were Cavafy’s motives for such an extraordinary publication strategy? The question, with its explicit focus on authorial intention, has understandably driven much of the philological and bibliographical research within Cavafy studies. Glafkos Alitherses, publishing his *To πρόβλημα του Καβάφη (The Problem of Cavafy)* just a year after the poet’s death, alleged that the latter “trembled at the thought of seeing his work perceived as a whole by objective observers” (1934:20, quoted in Savidis 1966:203). According to this logic, it was precisely the fear of a congealed material unity, and the rigid hermeneutic code that such a unity would impose upon his poetry, that drove Cavafy into constant rearticulation and revision. Timos Malanos alternately suggested that this material fragmentation had little to do with abstract questions of hermeneutics—rather, it was a simple marketing strategy, by which Cavafy could create “a chatter about his poems [...] the difficulty that one had in acquiring them increased both general curiosity

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<sup>40</sup> In addition, Cavafy regularly asked these same readers to *mail back* older versions of poems he had recently revised, exchanging them for the new edition (see Savidis 1966:100).

and his circle of admirers, while there was a simultaneous production of legend and rumor around the name of the poet” (1957:44). For Malanos, Cavafy’s publishing tactics were part and parcel of his larger struggle, as Bourdieu would say, for symbolic capital within the literary field. Thirdly and perhaps most convincingly, George Savidis later suggested that Cavafy’s strategy was a deliberate attempt at aesthetic independence, his private collections circulating beyond all demands of a market system.<sup>41</sup>

Despite their difference of opinion, what all these interpretations share is a prioritization of Cavafy’s person itself, offering inner psychology as a tool for uncovering the “truth” of the Cavafic *oeuvre*. As Malanos later wrote, his primary goal was “to provide *the keys* to the Cavafy corpus, to show its secrets, to help in every way possible to decode it. For this reason, while writing [my study] I gave particular importance to his life” (198). Stratis Tsirkas, in what later became a very public and increasingly bitter debate with Malanos, accused the latter of several misinterpretations, concluding that Malanos “cannot and does not want to accept that another way of viewing Cavafy and his work exists” (1971:179). While Tsirkas’ skepticism of Malanos’ “hermeneutic primacy” is refreshing, elsewhere he too assumed a similar methodological stance, implying that there is indeed a single “correct” way to read Cavafy’s poetry, one that consistently relies upon biographic data and the recollections of Cavafy’s acquaintances.<sup>42</sup> To his vast credit, Tsirkas also expanded the “biographic” field to take in the larger world of British-

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<sup>41</sup> See Savidis (1966:164-165), and the manuscript that he reproduces there from Cavafy’s archive.

<sup>42</sup> For example, Tsirkas took Malanos to task for suggesting that “Cavafy’s poetry is autobiographic” (39), yet on the very next page Tsirkas wrote, “Cavafy, in a very revealing (if charming) way, told us how we can find him within the twists and turns of historical names and events, how we can hear what he really wants to say.”

occupied Alexandria, with its enduring political and economic tensions,<sup>43</sup> yet his insistence on the recuperation of Cavafy's personal "ideology" remained a central cornerstone of his work.

More recently, Gregory Jusdanis has turned attention back to the texts themselves, exploring the tensions in their aesthetic economy. Within Cavafy's conception of artistic production, Jusdanis argues, there lies a central conflict of definitions: is art a private object or a public commodity? Juxtaposing poems such as «Του μαγαζιού» ("Of the Shop") (1912; 1913) and «Η συνοδεία του Διονύσου» ("The Train of Dionysus") (1903; 1907), Jusdanis convincingly demonstrates that ultimately such a question remains unanswerable within Cavafy's poetry: while they strive continually for aesthetic autonomy, his poems recognize nonetheless the unavoidably public (and commercial) nature of aesthetic consumption—and, hence, production.<sup>44</sup>

Jusdanis' study makes a crucial intervention in what has otherwise been a largely biographic-centered field, yet his focus on poetics can inform my own study only so far. Rather than searching for Cavafy's "publishing motives" within his person or aesthetic practice, I want instead to turn my gaze outward, toward the broader world of Greek-language print in which these publications operated. If Cavafy's tight control of nearly every phase of his production seems on many levels to justify previous scholarship's

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<sup>43</sup> Tsirkas wrote in his first Cavafic study (1958) that he aimed to "remind [readers] of the occasions of certain poems [...]. And by the term 'occasions' I mean the circumstances of the poet's life [*βιοτικές καταστάσεις*], viewed from within the spirit of that period, with its specific political, social and economic conditions" (17). Over the next several hundred pages, he went on to trace the gradual economic decline of the Greek community in Egypt due to British imperialism and Western capital.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Jusdanis' paradigm on page 39: "On the one hand, the role of the audience in aesthetic creation is considered superfluous, if not counterproductive, while on the other, it is seen as an essential factor accounting for the emergence of the current aesthetic. Both positions are active in Cavafy's work, although I should stress that the former is far more dominant, especially in the published poems, while the latter, appearing largely in posthumous texts, in a way subverts the prominence of the first view."

focus on authorial intent, this intent was nonetheless embedded in a larger field. That is to say, Cavafy's poetic practice was not the isolated and autotelic product of a mind "entrenched [...] within an asylum uncontaminated and deep" but a series of tactical trajectories traced along a larger social plane. This becomes clear when one returns to the original media by which Cavafy's poems were produced, assembled, disassembled, and disseminated. Here, one might say with Jerome McGann that "[w]e enter the world of textual versions where intentions are plainly shifting and changing *under the pressure of* various people and circumstances" (1983:62, emphasis mine). The conditions of Greek print, I argue, constitute one such "circumstance." These were conditions that strikingly mirrored and ideally accommodated Cavafy's multiform publishing, constituting the field in which—and the mediums by which—the Cavafic corpora moved, morphed and proliferated.

At the risk of hyperbole, one might say that Greek publishing was in pieces. In the early twentieth century, several "centers" of Greek publishing dotted the Eastern Mediterranean (and, to an increasingly lesser extent, central Europe), a manifestation of the diasporic world that still defined Greek life. To a degree, these centers were bound together by a common alphabet and set of cultural and aesthetic debates—thanks in large part to the leading monthly journals of each city. Yet these bonds were nonetheless shot through by important regional tensions, both economic and geocultural, a point to which I will return in the next section. Here, it's worth emphasizing that beyond the narrow readerships that consumed this medium, there was little hope of unifying the larger masses of Greek readers that were emerging. The creation of a truly mass literary market for a language that was read in various pockets of the Mediterranean, the Black Sea,

continental Europe and beyond seemed unattainable. Even within Athens itself, the supposed heart of Greek publishing, broader readerships proved elusive, at least for books of literature and literary journals. Writing in his travel journal at the turn of the century, Cavafy remarked during his brief stay in Athens:

At 3 p.m. Tsokopoulos [an Athenian journalist, writer, and playwright] visited. He stayed with me until 3:40. For most of the time, we chatted about philology and the massive difficulties that authors face in selling an edition. Tsokopoulos says that it's considered a large success for an edition to see the light of day not with a profit but simply without going into debt. (2002 [1998]:29-30)

Such problems would continue to plague Athenian publishers in the ensuing decades. There was simply no capital, meaning that periodicals were short-lived and book publishers were averse to risk, producing for the most part translations of European fiction (Karaoglou 1991:20). Money was also scarce among consumers. Well into the century, books continued to be relatively costly commodities in Greece. In the 1920s, at the peak of Cavafy's career, one continued to read advertisements in periodicals and newspapers for a "monthly payment plan" for single books, as if buying porcelains.<sup>45</sup>

In his *Cavafy Editions*, Savidis cites the same passage above from Cavafy's diary, ultimately positing the same claim: "Cavafy prints his poems on his own because he has no publisher, and he gives them as gifts to whomever asks them of him because he has the certainty that they wouldn't buy them and the hope that they'll value them more, for being non-commercial" (1966:173). As before, Savidis' insight crucially turns the debate from questions of aesthetics to the market conditions beyond Cavafy's studio, yet rather than stop here I want to return again to the geography of Greek print to address the larger question upon which this insight hinges: *why* was there no mass market, and how might

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<sup>45</sup> For two such offers (from separate booksellers), see *Mousa* vol. 4, no. 37 (1923)(n.p.) and *Nea technē*, no. 7-10 (1924):127.

this speak to Cavafy's diasporic poetics? Although several factors (many of them economic) doubtless came to bear here, an important component of any answer must lie in political geography. So long as the Greek world spilled beyond the bounds of the Greek state on such a vast, spectacular scale, readerships were perforce scattered.

To be sure, earlier market structures had accommodated these scattered Greek readerships well enough—when they were smaller and literacy was more limited. A substantial body of scholarship in the history of the Greek book demonstrates that from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century onward, Venice had served as the central node of Greek printing (with other centers emerging later in central and Eastern Europe and Istanbul). Producing primarily religious books (in particular, liturgical books), printing firms such as those of the Ioulianoi, Glykides, or Saroi shipped them to merchants or agents scattered across multiple continents.<sup>46</sup> Unwilling however to risk capital investment, these firms printed and shipped only on demand, which is to say, upon receiving the requests of the regional merchants and agents themselves (Liata 1977), a process that likely retarded the trafficking of books significantly. In the mid-eighteenth century, in the decades leading up to the Greek Enlightenment, more and more printers began to supplement this weak and unreliable network with a subscription system. The subscription system was in large part targeted at a scattered diasporic network of readers who identified as *φιλόμουσοι* (“friends of the muses”—i.e., highly literate), posting their remittances in advance to fund a book's print run (Heliou 1975:103-104). Given such a readership, this system facilitated a gradual shift in content away from liturgies towards Ancient Greek philosophies, grammars, tragedies, and

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<sup>46</sup> Often, the various agents along this circuit were bound together through familial ties. See Tsirpnalis (1981).



Modern Greek philosophical, scientific and political tracts. Between 1749 and the start of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, more than 140 titles had been circulating by subscription, with approximately 23,000 subscribers scattered across the Greek world.<sup>47</sup>

While such numbers may at first impress, one should bear in mind the large temporal window and the vast breadth of the Greek world in which they fall. Precisely because literacy was relatively limited and the production of print was funded more or less through diasporic remittance, the fact that Greek books were published in Venice, Vienna, Munich, Budapest, Odessa, or Istanbul, for example, presented few problems to their thinly spread network of select and devoted readers. Yet as mass readerships began to emerge at the end of the nineteenth century, this system proved less and less viable for such a scale. Gregorios Xenopoulos, one of the most prolific and popular prose writers of the early twentieth century, characteristically complained in 1906, “The eight millions of Greeks are scattered [διασκορπισμένα] across the ends of the earth, and the means of communication and advertisement are in a most sorry state of deficiency,—even the means of sending money [i.e., for paying a subscription to a literary journal or a book], are deficient, thanks to the primitive state of our postal services” (*Panathēnaia*, no. 141-142, p. 229). Over a decade later, as Cavafy’s poetic production reached its apex, one found similar complaints in the editorials and correspondence of leading Athenian

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<sup>47</sup> See Philippos Heliou’s studies on book subscriptions (1975; 1999). By 1832, two years after the establishment of the Greek state, Heliou shows that there were 23 “key readership centers” whose subscription numbers exceeded 100: eight in Greece; five in the Ionian islands; three in the Ottoman empire; two respectively in the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires; one in Warsaw and one in Livorno. While subscriptions within the Greek state appear relatively low in comparison to the total, Heliou notes that the numbers in fact point to a dramatic increase: before the revolution, fewer than six percent of subscribers were located in the geographic region that would become in 1830 the Kingdom of Greece. In effect, with the influx of diasporic bureaucrats, merchants and intellectuals into the new state, readerships were quickly growing in Attica and the Peloponnese. At the same time, previously dominant diasporic communities were withering while new ones arose: those of central Europe gradually lost their importance while those of the British Empire (particularly in Egypt and Britain) took center stage.

literary journals. Sampling just one issue of *Vomos* (no. 19, 1 August 1919), we read the following: “To M. S. in Chios [Crete] – Yes, we are sending [our issues] to you. But the postal service makes a mess of everything. [...] To D. Mil. In Izmir – It would seem that our letter was lost along the way. [...] To D. Del., V. Ast., V. Ser. – Since [the issues] were lost, we’ll send them again. [...] To Phyl. Nik. P.O. 901 – It would seem that [the issues] were getting lost; we’ll send them again. [...] V.Z. in Irakleio [Crete] – We’re sorry that you did not receive our letter.” As for regional booksellers, it was not unheard of for hidden costs to raise the sales price—even *within* Greece, in one case by 25 %.<sup>48</sup> Spread across a webwork of nations, kingdoms, empires, colonies and protectorates, Greek readers of the early twentieth century could rely upon no unified apparatus for the distribution and consumption of their literature. Admittedly, much was changing in those first decades; by 1920, leading journals were boasting of sales representatives in nearly all the major ports of the Eastern Mediterranean. Yet with so many typographic centers and publications beyond Athens, the decentralization of Greek print remained a fact. How much the more so, indeed, when one turns to daily newsprint.

When compared to Western Europe, the Greek newspaper (i.e. daily print) was late in developing, taking hold only well after the establishment of the Greek state.<sup>49</sup> When it did, however, it was clear that a very different print ecology was taking shape. The newspaper, in contradistinction to the book or journal, was incapable of accommodating a scattered readership. The daily paper, owing to its ephemeral nature (indeed, the Greek

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<sup>48</sup> See *Mousa*, vol. 3, no. 9, pg. 180.

<sup>49</sup> Dimaras writes, “Moreover, we mustn’t forget that for a long time, during a period exceptionally important for the intellectual shaping of our land [τόπος], the only periodicity in publishing that Greeks knew was every fifteen days or weekly, but not daily: the true daily [εφημερίδα] entered our land late, and was slow to occupy the place it holds today[,] [b]oth before and after the Independence War” (2000:226). I note Dimaras’ emphasis on “our land” (i.e., within the borders of the Greek state).

word for newspaper is *ephemeris*—“upon the day”), survived poorly across seas or over continents. If it did survive, it became not a newspaper but an artifact. Its natural environment was the urban center. Until the rise of advanced distribution systems later in the twentieth century, the daily paper remained the foundation of a decisively local (and, for the first time, mass) readership. In this sense, Aristotelis Kourtidis, a poet and pedagogue, pointed at the start of the century to an interesting developmental reversal:

Older books were published with *subscriptions*—that is, from philanthropic contributions. Today’s publishers of monthly journals who make wide-ranging peregrinations among the Greek communities abroad are not a contemporary invention [...]. It was only with her hand stretched out to Europe, Asia, and North Africa that *Pandora* was able to sustain herself.<sup>50</sup> *The Parthenon*, the *National Library*, and the other periodicals [of Athenian publishers] all lived short and fitful lives. The founder of *Estia*, Pavlos Diomidis, lost more than thirty thousand drachmas [...]. [The journal’s next editor] was forced to turn *Estia* into a daily newspaper [in 1894]. [/] The disease is chronic. (*Panathēnaia*, no. 141-142, p. 231)

According to this narrative (which more or less resembles those of more recent book historians like Heliou above), early Greek print markets vitally depended upon the subscriptions and donations of wealthy diasporic circles—whose subscriptions, nonetheless, publishers had to *earn*, sending their “peregrinating” agents along the long and tortuous circuits of central Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea. On the other hand, staying local meant going bankrupt or going daily. And with the rise of localized mass readerships at the turn of the century, more and more print was doing just that. The Greeks of Istanbul, Izmir, Alexandria or elsewhere were turning in larger numbers to their own ephemeral print materials (to say nothing of their own journals and

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<sup>50</sup> *Pandora* was one of the first large success stories in Greek periodicals, running from 1849-1871 as a monthly “family literary journal.”

publishing houses<sup>51</sup>). Day by day, they were cobbling together a variegated, fragmented bouillabaisse of poems, stories, gossip, local news, international events, advertisements, and editorials.<sup>52</sup> The disease was chronic. As Hristos Hristovasilis, a Demotic prose writer and journalist, suggested in the same issue of *Panathēnaia*,

People are turning to the newspaper, which has a little of everything. They enjoy it, they pass the time ... The newspaper killed the book and the journal! The book, which no one can finish between a cigarette and a coffee ... The journal, which only comes out on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the end of the month ... it's sheer boredom compared to the newspaper, which comes out every day, and it gives you the book and the journal in doses. (ibid)

Nonetheless, if local daily print was by far the most economically viable medium, it was not the only one. As I've suggested above, literary connections *did* bind these regional publishing centers together, at least provisionally, thanks to the vital yet fragile medium of the literary journal. Many editors of non-Helladic journals, from Egypt to Istanbul, developed a rhetoric simultaneously local and Panhellenic, each holding his or her own publication up as a beacon of light, its rays reaching far-flung editors and readers across the sea. In *Alexandrinē technē* (*Alexandrian Art*), for example, whose editor Rika Sengopoulou was Cavafy's most outspoken supporter in Egypt, the sentiment was always global. In the journal's first issue, published in December 1926, one reads the following: "ALEXANDRIAN ART sends a warm greeting to Greek writers, artists, and intellectuals. [/] [Our magazine] nurtures but one and only ambition: to contribute in its

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<sup>51</sup> In fact, the works of leading Helladic authors, from Xenopoulos to Kazantzakis, were frequently republished by local firms in Egypt—i.e., rather than importing prints from mainland Greece, Egyptian Greeks chose to print their own (and vice versa).

<sup>52</sup> With its genres stacked atop (yet nonetheless spilling over into) one another, the newspaper presented readers with a categorically promiscuous, ever-changing assemblage of print, not entirely unlike Cavafy's own assemblages. Cavafy famously spurned mass readerships, publishing his oldest, stales poems in newspapers, which functioned as a "screen" for his more daring work, as Saregiannis first observed (a process that mirrored the artistic production described in Cavafy's poem "Of the Shop"). Nonetheless, his original textual corpus, when viewed through a strictly formal lens, shares much with daily print. Like his collections, the newspaper rearranges contents, rearticulates itself, and recirculates continually. Both it and the feuilleton come in doses—just like Cavafy's poems.

own way, and with all its power, to the formation of a purely *Modern Greek Culture* of ours” (vol. 1 no. 1, 1926, p. 21). As a sign of this, the editors astonishingly single out *Eleftheria* (*Freedom*), a journal from Larissa, a small city over 350 kilometers north of Athens, annexed from the Ottomans in 1881. By all appearances, *Alexandrian Art* was part of a thriving interhellenic network that extended from the diasporic margins to the Greek Metropolis, and thence into the most remote corners of the Greek state.<sup>53</sup>

Yet such a network, while immensely important, was more precarious and thinly spread than might at first appear. Much of *Alexandrian Art*'s Panhellenism lay within the rhetorical gestures of the periodical itself, rather than the stability or longevity of any real material network. Observing a strikingly similar phenomenon in late eighteenth-century American print, Trish Loughran has pointed to an “often unnarrated gap between the world of things and the world of words used to describe those things,” which, she emphasizes, “should prove instructive to critics [...] who continue to use local linguistic declarations as unfettered evidence of more general material situations” (2007:17). Some regional printers and publishers of the early American state, she continues, “may have begun to imagine and discuss the potential of an emergent federal market that could connect ‘every corner of this extensive continent,’ but a functional national market zone, or unified field of exchange, had still not materialized [...]. In the end, [a publisher of that period] had the ability to imagine a national periodical but not the means to produce and distribute one profitably” (17-18). Careful attention to the print runs and lifespans of Greek-language literary periodicals in the twentieth-century Mediterranean, I argue, reveals a similar discrepancy between the world of things and the world of words. The

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<sup>53</sup> I choose *Alexandrinē technē* as an indicative example. Similar Panhellenic gestures and inter-periodical discussions can be found in the editorials of most other major Greek-language journals, from *Mousa* to *Makedonika grammata* to *Rythmos*.

large majority of these monthly “little magazines” had miniscule circulations among intellectuals and artists; indeed, most journals survived little more than a handful of months or, less often, years. And of the few that did survive, most went into debt to do so. To be sure, the causes of financial strain were many, such as the regional spike in paper costs following World War I or (for periodicals in the Greek state) the successive raises in the wages of printers in the early 1920s,<sup>54</sup> yet the fundamental problem lay in circulation (Karaoglou 1991:17-37). While evidence of sales numbers has not survived, even the leading journals wrote frequently of chronic problems. *Ta grammata*, the leading Alexandrian journal of its time,<sup>55</sup> published by Cavafy’s friend Stephanos Pargas, complained in 1921 that “our budget is by no means healthy [...]. Our plea for [monetary] contributions remains as always. [...] We print 1,000 copies each time, of which we supply about 700 to our subscribers, the booksellers and the exchange. How many of those are sold? We don’t have solid numbers yet. We can calculate that our subscribers and buyers keep up to 300” (1921:269). Selling less (likely *much* less) than half its tirage, *Ta grammata* nonetheless found cause to celebrate what was an improved performance from earlier years, and perhaps one of the more remarkable success stories among Greek literary journals.<sup>56</sup> As for other, less popular journals, their print runs were lower—likely

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<sup>54</sup> In an editorial of *Vomos*, one of the leading literary journals of Athens at the end of the First World War, one reads the following: “The time is still far away when we’ll be able to recover from the terrible costs of publishing (the price of paper has risen and makes no signs of dropping, and the cost of printing has doubled since we started the publication [i.e. in less than a year])” (no 19, 1 Aug 1919, p 247).

<sup>55</sup> For economy of space I note here only in its bare essentials the well-documented narrative of the rise and fall of Alexandria’s leading Greek-language journals, beginning with *Nea Zoē* in 1904. In 1910, an important core of the journal’s editorial team resigned in disagreement with the decision to reject Varnalis’ socialist poem “Thysia.” The following year, this group (at the heart of which lay Stephanos Pargas), founded the journal *Ta grammata*. After its final closure in 1921, Alexandria remained without a major journal for two years, until the appearance of *Argo* in 1923 and *Alexandrinē Technē* in 1926.

<sup>56</sup> Incidentally, when one compares *Ta grammata*’s print runs with those of most contemporary Athenian journals, one begins to perceive a sort of discursive violence in calling Athens “*the center*” of Greek print.

500 copies—with corresponding drops in sales. *Makedonika grammata* (*Macedonian Letters*), published in Thessaloniki, was one such example. Changing editorial hands for a third time in as many years, the journal complained that “the driving force behind [our] failure must be sought [...] [in] the reading public [...], which accepted each wave of our attempts with indifference. The passive reaction of ‘hoi polloi’ has been the most important reason for the terrible fate of Greek literary journals” (vol. 3 no.1, Jan. 1924:16). If certain Greek journals of the early twentieth century spoke of a network of readers from Alexandria to Athens to Istanbul and further, closer examination proves this network was by no means as deep as it was supposedly wide, nor was it stable or sustainable. This is not to slight what was a massively important medium, nor the interhellenic network (no matter how thin or fragile) that it assembled. I mean instead to suggest that the intellectual, material, and geographic assemblages that these journals embodied as a whole were difficult to construct and even more difficult to maintain, with the constant danger of any given “node” in the larger network coming undone. Greek print networks, as this section’s title suggests, were in flux.

### ***Hellenism Unhinged***

The literary debates that occasionally spilled across the editorials of multiple journals (and, from there, into local newspapers) of Athens, Alexandria, and elsewhere, while indicative of a certain connectivity, simultaneously revealed at times just how decentered Greek identity was. Cavafy’s poetry was particularly instructive in this, tracing out different reception histories in Alexandria and Athens and, as I’ll argue here, demonstrating geographic and cultural disconnects across the sea. In the early months of 1924, Sokratis Lagoudakis, an eccentric doctor and essayist who had recently moved to

Egypt,<sup>57</sup> began to publish *ad hominem* attacks against Cavafy, his poetry, and his circle—publications that sparked in turn reactions from pro-Cavafy Alexandrians, culminating in a violent demonstration against the doctor during his public lecture in March of that year. In hind sight, it was clear that such verbal and physical “collisions” offered Cavafy’s poetry a golden PR opportunity, which soon took the form of an official letter of protest against Lagoudakis and support for Cavafy, signed by Egypt’s leading Greek intellectuals and published in the newspapers of Alexandria that April. At the same time, a separate letter of protest was published in three Athenian newspapers, yet this was largely orchestrated by a single figure: Marios Vaianos, who was also busily preparing a “panegyric issue” of his journal *Nea technē*, devoted to Cavafy. As the feud shifted from a local affair to a transnational sensation, certain tensions came to the surface. Vaianos, born in Egypt, raised in Chios, and now studying in Athens, was a young and adamant proponent of Cavafy whose ferocious insistence on the Alexandrian’s poetry alienated many in the capital.

Kostis Bastias, who would later found and head the important journal *Ellenika grammata* in 1927, devoted an entire column to Vaianos, whom he dubbed a “literary invader” (*φιλολογικός επιδρομέυς*), complaining that Vaianos “lays forth with an onerously straight face his rosy dreams about the renaissance of Greek literature, delivered by means of a decisive and mandatory bath that all Greeks who write will take in the Delta of the Nile” (1924). Other Athenians were less tactful in their attacks.

Dimitris Tangopoulos, the influential and controversial editor of *Noumas*, the oldest

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<sup>57</sup> Lagoudakis moved to Alexandria in 1918 to direct the leper clinic there. He was also a prolific writer, publishing novels, essays, and studies on topics as arcane as «Η παραγωγή ζωής του αυτού είδους εκ σώματος νεκρού» (“The Production of Human Life from a Dead Body”). In 1934, he intentionally infected himself with leprosy as an experiment. He died ten years later. For an extended description of the “Lagoudakis affair” see Moschos (1979:82-91).



Demotic-language journal in Greece, wrote in April of that year (as Vaianos' pro-Cavafy letter was still making its rounds in Athenian newspapers), "The land of the Pharaohs has been shaken by a terribly important matter today: Cavafism. [...] Cavafism also has here, in our city, a few followers. This makes no impression on me, since so many epidemics come to us straight from Egypt" ("Cavafismos," in *Ethnos*, 8 April 1924). While such language was offensive enough, in Tangopoulos' wake came even more caustic reactions, such as the satirical article "Higher Poetry":

On my desk I found a journal issue with the mysterious title "Xevafy" [*Paint-Remover*].<sup>58</sup> I assumed at first that it was a tract with the color samples of Mr. Botsarakos. Wrong. The subtitle was clear: "Panegyric issue in honor of the extraordinary poet!" A wonderful idea, let me tell you. That name is not entirely unknown to me. *Paint-Remover!* ... Of course! He's been creating quite a lot of chatter recently. [...] But the thing is, see, his poetry is entirely unknown! But what does it matter!... In the age of the "Unknown soldier" we can, I think, easily celebrate an unknown poet! [...] All of *Arapiá* [*Αραπιά*]<sup>59</sup> is a-chatter with his talent. Five crocodiles went down to Alexandria on purpose just to see him. And of course I heard them singing most plangently: I want to go to Arabia, baby, I want to grab myself an *Arapis* [*Αράπης*] and ask him where this *Paint-Remover* lives!

Written under the pen-name "Fortunio" by Spyros Melas (a prolific author and important figure in inter-bellum Greek publishing, who would later found with Giorgos Theotokas the journal *Idea*<sup>60</sup>), "Higher Poetry" speaks volumes. Even if one brackets off its racist overtones, the article's spatial logic is telling, with its "unknown poet" from "somewhere down there in Africa." Admittedly, behind some such geographic and ethnic slurs lay a

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<sup>58</sup> The neologism "Xevafy" (*Ξεβάφης*) plays on the verb *xevafo* (*ξεβάφω*), meaning to remove paint, thus transforming Cavafy's name into 'paint remover.' The journal in question is Vaianos' *Nea technē*.

<sup>59</sup> *Arapiá* is a vulgar term vaguely denoting Islamic North Africa and Egypt. Its counterpart *Arapis* (*Αράπης*), is an extremely offensive term that can mean anything from "African Muslim" to "Nigger."

<sup>60</sup> The journal had a short but "loud" life, from 1933 to 34. Karaoglou et al. (2002:392-401) characterize the publication as stridently anti-communist, which is to say anti-international: "*Idea* accepts no class distinctions in Greek society; to the contrary, it projects the unifying significance of 'nation'" (397). In a November 1933 article ("The Revolution of Demoticism," issue no. 11, p. 17 ff), Melas in fact embraced the Italian fascist Giovanni Gentile as a model intellectual.

deeper unease over Cavafy's aesthetic program or sexuality, yet the fact remains that whatever the source of their apprehension, a number of opponents situated their attacks within a discourse of geographic otherness. The year before, for example, the editors of *Orthros* had complained that Cavafy's poems were a "stain" (*κηλίδα*): "of the sort of those poems that subliminally encourage impudence [*αναίσχυντία*]. That is, poems of *Graeculi*" (period 2 no. 1, Sept. 1923, p. 31). This last term dated to the ancient Roman world, a slur that Romans had applied to the seeming waves of Greeks emigrating to Italian shores, hoping to work as petty scholars or tutors there.<sup>61</sup> In short, they were émigrés of Empire, set in motion by the new mobilities (and stark economic realities) of the *Pax Romana*. In calling Cavafy a *Graeculus*, the Athenian journal implicitly located a modern parallel in the British Empire and its Greek émigrés.

While such examples clearly point to an embedded hostility within the Athenian press towards Cavafy's work, it's a well-documented fact that Cavafy had nonetheless begun by the final decade of his life to make important inroads into Greece, thanks in no small part to a core of devoted allies—both young (e.g., Vaianos or Lapathiotis) and old (e.g., Xenopoulos). Yet it's worth noting that at least a small number of these allies reproduced similar geographical divisions in their writing. One anonymous supporter had earlier written against Tangopoulos, suggesting that his attacks on Alexandrian writers like Cavafy stemmed from envy, which "has surfaced recently among quite a few [Athenian] literary types and circles due to the large difference, to their detriment, between Alexandrian youth, educated systematically, with their trends well defined and channeled, and our own Athenian youth who are still drooling and being wiped [...]. The Alexandrian youth have shown us clearly [...] that they want to bring today's modern

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<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Juvenal's *Satires*, 3.58-125.

literature into alignment with the new large intellectual currents of the West” (K.Th.P. 1919). The editors of *Mousa*, in a column unrelated to Cavafy, made an analogous observation on the intellectual poverty of national print in comparison to its diasporic counterparts: “The single and incontrovertible fact is [...] the intellectual sterility of Athens, and at a moment when one sees a measure of more serious fermentation in Istanbul and in Alexandria.” It was, the editors continued, a “deficiency so very detrimental to the Greek name” (vol. 2, 1921, p. 32). Kostas Ouranis, an important poet and essayist of the period, later echoed and intensified this observation, writing that the Alexandrian journals *Nea Zoē* and *Ta grammata* “were truly European journals. They became the mirror of Modern Greek Philology in an age when [Athens’ leading journals such as] *Panathēnaia* had ossified and *Noumas* had outlived itself. [...] They introduced to Greek Letters the disinterested and objective criticism that Athens had no idea how to exercise. Foreign to the routines of Athens, to [its] personal friendships and passions, they set aside personalities in order to analyze works and give new life to ideas” (quoted in Hatzifotis 1971:82). What becomes clear then, both here and in the rhetoric of Cavafy’s opponents (who were by no means few or weak), are the geo-cultural tensions—sometimes subtle, sometimes glaring—that ran through this Panhellenic print network. It was a network of attractions and repulsions, of shifting and complex relations of power (economic, aesthetic, ideological) that my chapter can only gesture towards. To speak of a single center and a periphery is in fact misleading. Rather, one encountered multiple centers of print, each projecting outward its own image of “Hellenism,” an articulation of topical, regional, and international Hellenisms that was subtly reassembled from one journal (or even issue) to the next.

Within Athens, many of Cavafy's opponents were defending what they saw as the national Greek standard—the poetry of Kostis Palamas—from Cavafy's "literary invasion," or the "epidemic" that had washed up from "Arapiá." Palamas himself was not averse to entering the fray, albeit with more measured attacks. While readers today may best remember his dismissal of Cavafy's poetry as mere "reportage" from the ancient world, Palamas also effected more subtle (yet powerful) critiques of the Cavafy corpus elsewhere. Writing in the final days of 1924 (just as Cavafy's name had begun to circulate in earnest in Athens), Palamas turned to the topic of meter and rhythm: "I know no verses more regular and immaculate, for example, than the *dekapentosyllabics* of [Rigas Golfis'] *Hymns*, those that maintain and enrich the grace of our folk songs' verses, those of a Cornaro or a Markoras [...]. What a great difference they present in their handling of our eminently national verse from its insidious unhinging [*ξεκάρφωμα*, literally: 'unpinning,' 'pulling out nails'] in the poems of Cavafy" (1924). While Golfis' poems, according to Palamas, preserve and enrich oral poetry's metrics, cadences and rhythms—which had been "re-baptized" as the national standard just a generation earlier, thereby conjoining the Cretan Renaissance of the sixteenth century to Solomos and, through him, Palamas—Cavafy's poetry, on the other hand, deviously "unhinges" them, which is to say disassembles them. The implications were clear: Cavafy's poetry did not belong in Greece; it was prying out nails (*xekarfoma*) where others were attempting to secure them. With its strange mixed language and lame rhythms, it threatened to break apart the national tradition.

Even certain neutral observers tended toward similar conclusions. The editors of *Makedonika grammata*, who not infrequently published Cavafy's work, nonetheless

wrote in February of 1924, after Cavafy had failed to secure a nomination for Greece's national literary medallion: "[His] work may be important, but it is unknown, a serious reason for [him] to remain beyond the margins of the circle of medal-holders. To win the medal, one's name must have been thoroughly worked [literally, *kneaded*] into the history and tradition of the land [τόπος]" (Feb. 1924, p. 32). Cavafy's poetry, as I hope to have shown, was anything but "kneaded into" the land of Greece: it was detached not just from the supposed rhythms of the national standard but from the geography of Greece itself—a detachment that was manifested in both the poems' content and material form(s). Rather than bind itself to a *topos* or a book spine, Cavafy's poetry had "unhinged" itself. As if to reaffirm this, the editors of *Makedonika grammata* went on to add in the editorial of their following issue, "And how could you justify the awarding of the medal to [an artist] who ha[s] not published an edition of [his] work?" (March 1924, p. 48). How, indeed? Scattered across a series of fluid, unstable media—newsprint, popular magazines, short-lived literary journals, broadsheets pinned together inside a dossier or stitched into a cardboard cover, manuscripts hidden in an archive—Cavafy's polymorphous poetry was entirely unfit for the national medallion.

The unstable nature of Greek print, stemming, at least in part, from the Greek world's dispersion across a vast political geography, had made the unification of any poetic corpus unprofitable. More than unprofitable, however, for Cavafy's poetics it was simultaneously *unproductive* of the fluidity at which his poems seemed to aim. Rather than despairing at its multiple readerships and scattered local markets, his poetry embraced them, cultivating what I've been calling a "diasporic poetics" in both its thematic engagements and its material apparatus. "Greekness," as his poems seemed to

recite in their various locales, periods, and occasions, was most productive when left contingent, open, or “in pieces”: reassembled by the writing (and the reading) of the poetry itself.

I conclude this section with one such poem, “Caesarion.” Not only in its idealized climax but also, if only subtly, in the material props by which it is staged, “Caesarion” enacts much of what I have tried to argue here:

Ἐν μέρει γὰρ νὰ ἐξακριβώσω μία ἐποχή,  
ἐν μέρει καὶ τὴν ὥρα νὰ περάσω,  
τὴν νύχτα χθὲς πῆρα μία συλλογὴ  
ἐπιγραφῶν τῶν Πτολεμαίων νὰ διαβάσω.  
Οἱ ἄφθονοι ἔπαινοι κ’ ἡ κολακεῖες  
εἰς ὄλους μοιάζουν. Ὅλοι εἶναι λαμπροί,  
ἐνδοξοὶ, κραταιοὶ, ἀγαθοεργοί·  
κάθ’ ἐπιχειρήσεις τῶν σοφοτάτη.  
Ἄν πείς γιὰ τὰς γυναῖκες τῆς γενιᾶς, κὶ αὐτές,  
ὄλες ἢ Βερενίκες κ’ ἡ Κλεοπάτρες θαυμαστές.

Ὅταν κατόρθωσα τὴν ἐποχὴ νὰ ἐξακριβώσω  
θάφινα τὸ βιβλίον ἄν μία μνεῖα μικρὴ,  
κὶ ἀσήμαντη, τοῦ βασιλέως Καισαρίωνος  
δὲν εἶλκυε τὴν προσοχὴ μου ἀμέσως.....

Α, νά, ἦρθες σὺ μὲ τὴν ἀόριστη  
γοητεία σου. Στὴν ἱστορία λίγες  
γραμμὲς μονάχα βρίσκονται γιὰ σένα,  
κ’ ἔτσι πῶς ἐλεύθερα σ’ ἔπλασα μὲς στὸν νοῦ μου.  
Σ’ ἔπλασα ὠραῖο κ’ αἰσθηματικό.  
Ἡ τέχνη μου στὸ πρόσωπό σου δίνει  
μίαν ὄνειρῶδη συμπαθητικὴ ἐμορφιά.  
Καὶ τόσο πλήρως σὲ φαντάσθηκα,  
ποῦ χθὲς τὴν νύχτα ἀργά, σὰν ἔσβυνεν  
ἡ λάμπα μου — ἄφισα ἐπίτηδες νὰ σβύνει—  
ἐθάρρεψα ποῦ μπῆκες μὲς στὴν κάμαρά μου,  
μὲ φάνηκε ποῦ ἐμπρός μου στάθηκες· ὡς θὰ ἦσουν  
μὲς στὴν κατακτημένην Ἀλεξάνδρεια,  
χλωμὸς καὶ κουρασμένος, ιδεώδης ἐν τῇ λύπῃ σου,  
ἐλπίζοντας ἀκόμη νὰ σὲ σπλαχνισθοῦν  
οἱ φαῦλοι — ποῦ ψιθύριζαν τὸ «Πολυκαισαρίη».<sup>62</sup>

In part, to clarify a certain period,  
in part, to pass the time,  
last night I picked up a volume  
of inscriptions about the Ptolemies to read.  
The boundless praises and the flatteries  
resemble one another for each ruler. Each one  
of them is brilliant, glorious, mighty, beneficent;  
all their projects full of wisdom.  
As for the women of their line, they too,  
all the Berenices and Cleopatras, are marvelous.

When I managed to clarify the period  
I would have put the book away had not a brief  
insignificant mention of King Caesarion  
suddenly caught my eye.....

And so you came to me, with your vague  
charm. In history only a few  
lines have survived about you,  
and so I fashioned you more freely in my mind.  
I fashioned you handsome and sensitive.  
My art gives your face  
a dreamy, sympathetic beauty.  
And so completely did I imagine you  
that late last night, as my lamp  
went out—I let it go out on purpose—  
it seemed to me you came into my room,  
it seemed to me you stood there in front of me;  
just as you were in conquered Alexandria,  
pale and tired, ideal in your sorrow,  
still hoping they might show you mercy,  
those debased men—who whispered ‘Too many Caesars.’  
(1914, 1918)

Caesarion was the final Greek Ptolemy of Egypt. The son of Cleopatra and Julius Caesar,

<sup>62</sup> From the 1927 impression (printed by Kassimatis and Iona).

he was executed by Octavian upon the latter's entry into Alexandria.<sup>63</sup> A cloistered, coddled youth within the palace of a crumbling kingdom on the south-western edge of a disintegrating Greek political network, Caesarion's life was quickly and quietly snuffed out before it could write itself into the historical records. There remains nothing but a name—and *beneath the name*, as George Seferis might say, *an emptiness*.<sup>64</sup> Yet the gaping lacunae of this history open to Cavafy's poem a space of creative possibilities. The poem uses the fragmentary material and documentary remains of an equally fragmentary "Greece" to assemble not a narrative of state but instead a sort of *ars poetica* on reading and writing. Meaningful engagement with Greek history (and Greekness), the poem suggests, blossoms not in the univocal narrative of nation but in that history's textual gaps and along its geographical margins. It is a history both consumed and—crucially—*produced* by the reader, as s/he drifts off to sleep one night in a distant corner of the Greek world.

The narrator's Greek world indeed seems strangely untouched by the Greek state's ongoing project of territorial expansion: the poem was first written in 1914, just a year after the Balkan Wars, when Greece had annexed off a large swath of Epirus, Macedonia, and Thrace; published in 1918, it began to circulate just a year before the Greek army would occupy the Anatolian hinterland of the Ottoman Empire, setting in motion what would conclude with the Population Exchange in 1923. Yet this poem, like all Cavafy's writing during these tumultuous years, silently eschews the narratives of nation-state. It draws its creative energies instead from the incomplete remains of a peripheral Greek

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<sup>63</sup> As a son of Julius Caesar, Caesarion represented an obvious political threat to Octavian, whose claim to Roman power lay within his legitimacy as the former's legal heir.

<sup>64</sup> See below, pages 135-6.

history, one that had been materialized within a first-century inscription, was later transcribed into a book, and is now in turn transcribed and reassembled in Cavafy's poem "Caesarion"—or rather: Cavafy's *poems* "Caesarion," scattered across multiple drafts and publications. Yes, Cavafy was in pieces. But this is, I have argued, precisely how his work had to be. And to be read.

### ***Finishing Off Cavafy***

On July fourth, 1932, the Athens' *Evening Post* (*Ē vradinē*) published a short satirical poem under the title "Cavaf-arrivals" (*Kav-afixeis*), by Nikos Nikolaidis:

Καλώς μας ήλθες, ποιητά Καβάφη, εις τα φιλόξενα των Αθηνών εδάφη! Βοήθειά σου η Αθηνά—Υγεία κ' είθε, μη σε νικήση η νοσταλγία δια την Αλεξάνδρειαν π' αφήνεις. Ήλθες προσωρινώς. Πολύ να μείνης...	We welcome you, Poet Cavafy, to Athens' hospitality! May Athena cure your cough, and, I pray, ward off your nostalgia for the Alexandria you're leaving behind. You came here temporarily. May you stay for a long time...
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The day before, for the second and last time in his life, Cavafy had set foot upon Greek soil. Diagnosed with terminal throat cancer, he'd come for surgery. And though the specialists ultimately failed to halt the cancer's fast metastasis, they succeeded in the far more symbolic task of destroying his trachea. He returned to Egypt some weeks later permanently mute, having lost his voice in Greece. Within the year—in fact, on the anniversary of his birth—he quietly died in Alexandria. Nor's satirical poem, in spite of its own jocularly, would come to prove prophetic: if Cavafy's textual corpora had only ever come to Athens temporarily (and piecemeal) in life, in the decades after his death they would indeed "stay for a long time." They would do so, as the second half of this chapter will now detail, through the slow, painstaking and painful re-assemblage of both the Greek geography he had known and the texts that had circulated within them.



Two months after Cavafy's death, the Athenian poet and critic Telos Agras published his assessment of the poet's corpus in the journal *Rythmos*, worth quoting at length here:

Allow me to make use of a visual allegory. Atop my desk I have a glass ball, which keeps my papers in place, one of those well-known glass balls, which have on one of their sections a flat surface. So long as one cannot find that flat surface, the ball roles—adrift, exposed, unbalanced—atop the table. But when one finds the flat surface, the ball stands straight, it lays down a base [*βασιζεται*], it does not stir. [...] So that's it: the corresponding side of Cavafy's work has *not been found*. [...] [Cavafy's opponents] insult it. And the work presents only the slightest resistance... Because its base is missing. It exists, however. Someone will find it. The critic will find it. (no. 9, June 1933, p. 230)

In the words of Agras, the Cavafic corpus lay adrift, unable yet to lay down its base. Such a project, he presciently concluded, was now the work of critics. While Agras likely meant literary critics like himself, the first phase of “base-building” was to fall perforce to the textual critic. The first attempt appeared in 1935, brought to print by the Greek-Egyptian Rika Sengopoulou, editor of *Alexandrinē technē*. Consulting with Cavafy's archive, which had been bequeathed to her husband, she assembled in less than two years what was Cavafy's first commercial book. Published in Alexandria by Sengopoulou's journal, the edition was reprinted the same year in Athens by *Ēridanos*, a publishing house whose name, ironically, was drawn from a local geographic marker: the eponymous stream that ran through the center of Athens. Even in the Hellenistic and Roman periods the *Ēridanos* had already become notorious for its filth and stagnancy. During Hadrian's reign, it was decided to cover the stream with clay bricks and turn it into a sewer (a structure still visible today). Callimachus, writing from Egypt, had playfully “said that he would laugh if any [poet] dared write that the virgins of Athens draw clean, clear water from the *Ēridanos*, which even the grazing livestock avoid”

(quoted in Strabo's *Geography*, 9.1.19). Were he still alive, Cavafy may have appreciated the irony of his corpus being bound (both bibliographically and geographically) by the Athenian *Ēridanos*.

Over ten years passed before a reprint appeared in 1948, and again in 1952 and 1958—all of them in Athens (now under the aegis of *Ikaros*). Tellingly, after 1935 Cavafy's words were never printed and assembled again in Egypt.<sup>65</sup> As for Sengopoulou's editorial practices, they omitted earlier published poems as well as Cavafy's wealth of "hidden" poems; moreover, its chronological arrangement, while faithful to Cavafy's chronological dossiers, erased the parallel logic of his thematic collections, a decision that was later reversed, in part, by George Savidis.<sup>66</sup> In any case, my focus lies a generation later, in what I suggest is a far more important moment in the consolidation of Cavafy's textual corpus: Savidis' multi-volume Complete Edition—of both the published (1963, two volumes) and "hidden" (1968) poems (and, much later, the "repudiated" juvenilia). To borrow Agras' term from above, it was within Savidis' editions that the Cavafic "base" was laid.

### ***Consolidating Greece***

To build a context for Savidis' work, I turn first to the larger shifts in the Greek world that preceded it. In 1919, after the capitulation of the Central Powers and the conclusion

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<sup>65</sup> Eugenios Michailidis' massive *Βιβλιογραφία των Ελλήνων Αιγυπτιωτών* [*Bibliography of Greek Egyptians*, 1966] shows no printings of Cavafy's *Poems* after 1935.

<sup>66</sup> As I'll argue below, Savidis' decision did not rectify the problem; it simply reversed its orientation, so to speak. Both cases perform an editorial violence on what was in fact a multiplicity of material forms and assemblages. Be that as it may, Savidis justifiably raised the following criticism of Sengopoulou's edition: "While [Sengopoulou's edition] correctly attributes the poems to each year they were published, it is indifferent as to the order in which they were published within the same year" (Cavafy 1963, vol. 2:130). In effect, the chronology of Sengopoulou's chronological arrangement was imprecise.

of the First World War, Britain, France, Italy and Greece began a coordinated occupation of Anatolia, the heart of the Ottoman Empire. The Greek army, launching its campaign in Izmir, a coastal port city with a substantial Greek diaspora, began to work its way inland, ultimately meeting a massive defeat in 1922. While I'll discuss this conflict and its brutal aftermath in greater detail in chapter four, I need to sketch out its basic narrative here: following the war, Turkey and Greece agreed to the forced exchange of populations, by which the former expelled all remaining traces of its Orthodox population (approximately 1.5 million people) and the latter its Muslim (approximately 500,000 people). By 1925, the evacuations of both populations were complete. With the physical destruction of the Greek World's oldest and largest diasporas (and their troubled absorption into the nation state), Greek borders had begun at last to solidify—or perhaps more accurately, *to ossify*. Greece was slowly drawing “Greekness” and “Greek citizenship” into rigid alignment.

Admittedly, the Orthodox community of Istanbul was excepted from the exchange (and, analogously, the Muslim community of Greek Thrace). Yet even the Greeks who remained in Istanbul faced a very different reality from what had predated the Turkish state. Due to increasing nationalist pressure from both parastate and (if more subtle) state factors, the Greek community of Istanbul declined and dwindled after the pogrom of September 1955. With shrinking numbers that totaled little more than 2,000 in recent census data, the community's once vibrant publishing life also withered (with the occasional help of state censorship<sup>67</sup>). Panayot Abacı (Παναγιώτης Αμπατζής), a violinist in the Istanbul City Orchestra and later head violist in the State Opera and Ballet Orchestra, began publishing what would be the city's last Greek-language literary and art journal *Pyrros* in 1954; it closed in 1962. Around the same time, the Greek Patriarchate's

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<sup>67</sup> See Yılmaz and Doğaner (2007:65-80).

printing press likewise closed. The silence was deafening: until 2012, no Greek-language books or journals were produced in Istanbul.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, the Greek community of Alexandria had also started to unravel. Since their arrival in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Greeks here had been closely-knit and, for the most part, hermetically sealed off from the larger Arab populations among whom they lived. In more ways than one, the nucleus of this community had always been its mercantile exporters and industrialists—among them, Cavafy's own father. They functioned as the economic lifeblood of what was, more or less, a self-sustained micro-economy within the larger British protectorate. In the wake of the flight of wealthy Greek families and their capital, the entire micro-economy began to decay. The final and most forceful blow fell with Nasser's Arab nationalization project between 1956 and 1966. The most numerous and exposed elements of the community—the unemployed, the lower- and middle-class laborers, shop owners and merchants—were forced either to integrate into a larger national economy or to follow the growing waves of emigration.<sup>69</sup> The numbers speak for themselves: in 1949, Alexandria's Greek population was 42,835; just twelve years later in 1961, it had dropped to 20,190; by 1967, it had dropped to approximately 8,000; by the end of the Cold War, there were fewer than 800.<sup>70</sup> This had obvious repercussions on the community's print production, on a similar

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<sup>68</sup> Information from a personal interview with the owners of *Istos*, a bilingual Greek and Turkish publishing firm (specializing in Greek literature) that opened in Istanbul in 2012.

<sup>69</sup> The question of the Greek community's place within Egypt's shifting political and economic landscape had already been posed in the interwar years, and the discussion had reached a pitch by the end of the 1940s. Suggested strategies of integration or flight were by no means uniform, belying the complex web of interests and alliances that made up the Greek-Egyptian community (among which were the Patriarch; the elitist *Koinotita*, which was closely allied to the Greek state; the conservative Greek Chamber of Commerce; and several leftist groups such as the Antifascist Vanguard or the Greek-Egyptian Council of Friendship and Cooperation). For an informative overview of the situation see Gorman (2009).

<sup>70</sup> See Koutsoumis (1992). Cairo's rate of dissolution is comparable, if on a smaller scale.

scale to Istanbul. The bibliographer Eugenios Michailidis, writing in 1965 (just as the community was entering its most precipitous stage of collapse), was still able to boast, “Both the variety and abundance of these [Greek Egyptian] works bear witness in the most positive manner to the large attempt of the Greek Egyptian Intellectual to create a self-sufficient library [i.e., print culture], which enriched the general Greek library with new elements” (10). It’s worth noting that this “self-sufficient library” was largely ignored by mainland Greece and her bibliographers, as Michailidis complained later: “In N. Politis’ classical three-volume bibliographic work ‘Greek Bibliography’ (1909-1932), only minimal details are recorded from the rich bibliography of the Greek Egyptian. We found the same indifference in Politis’ later bibliographic publications from Athens. It is inconceivable how the Greeks of our homeland [i.e., mainland Greece] have not yet been convinced that there exists and has long existed a philological movement in Egypt” (11). Already in the 1930s, bibliographers and book historians in Athens seemed to have turned their back on diasporic publishing. Just three decades later, they would have found little remaining. In the bibliographic lists that follow Michailidis’ celebratory introduction, one notices a sizeable drop in production in the final five years (1961-1965): While printers and publishers had been producing 40 to 60 titles a year from the mid 1920s onward, in 1961 just 28 books were released; in 1962, again 28; in 1963, 23; in 1964, 22; in 1965, just 8. Dinos Koutsoumis, the last editor of *O tachydromos* (Egypt’s oldest Greek-language newspaper), offered the following insight in 1992: “From 1930 to 1950, 487 books of literature (regardless of their quality) were published in Egypt, while from 1966 to 1980 only 15 books were published, most of which one could not call literary. Most of the writers left. The Greek printing operations were sold [...]. The Greek

bookstores closed, nor did Athenian newspapers come to Egypt for months” (1992:14). As if to add a final ironic coda to this story of gradual collapse, Koutsoumis’ newspaper finally closed in 1985 due to the *physical* collapse of the apartment building in which its offices and press had been housed.

The Greek capital too was undergoing changes, in equal and opposite measure. After the end of the Greco-Turkish war and the ensuing Greco-Turkish Population Exchange (1923 until about 1925), Athens and Piraeus were awash in bodies: disembarking and distributing hundreds of thousands of refugees across the nation state, the capital had become a massive site of reassembly. By necessity, it was also revising its national ideology and narrative of Greekness. Since the first years of the Greek state’s existence, as Artemis Leontis has argued, primary among its institutional and ideological projects had been the task of rewriting “the content of the new homeland from the fragments of other milieus such as towns, villages, monasteries [...] decod[ing] them, removing them from their prior contexts and cutting off their relations to each other” (1995:6). After the initial formulation of the *Grand Idea* in 1844, this process of “assembling fragments” began, perhaps subtly at first but over time powerfully and pervasively, to exceed the bounds of the Greek state,<sup>71</sup> yet with the collapse of this project in 1922, Leontis writes that “[p]oets and critics now began feeling the pressing need to reconcile themselves to the idea of a geographically limited state” (89). Many did so, she continues, by evoking the powerful trope of “Hellenism.” Take care, though: this was a different breed of Hellenism from what Cavafy’s poems had grappled with. It was no longer a *process* (of acculturation, of negotiation) but an *institution*: a geographically

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<sup>71</sup> The assemblage of “unredeemed Greece” occurred on several levels and across media: through “mappings” both verbal (e.g. literature like Psycharis’ *My Journey*), visual (e.g., cartographic representations), and institutional (e.g., pamphleteering and community organization by Greek embassies).

specific (though temporally continuous) vessel for “aesthetic nationalism.”

While Leontis has offered powerful tools to examine the ideological and topographical tropes by which this “consolidation” of Hellenism was effected in literature, perhaps less discussed has been the trope of the “corpus”—a term that unites human and textual bodies. I am thinking in particular of its use in the work of Angelos Sikelianos, a major poet of the period. Fusing together the figures of Orpheus and Christ,<sup>72</sup> Sikelianos had crafted a sort of Poet-Martyr-Savior:

[Ξ]αναπάρε τὸ κορμί Σου !

[R]eclaim Your body!

Νά ἢ τρανή, ἢ προαιώνια,  
μυστικὰ θαμμένη Ἐνότητα βαθιά Σου !

Behold the grand, the age-old,  
mystically buried Unity deep within You!

[...]

[...]

Ἵ μυστικὰ κατορθωμένο σῶμα,  
σῶμα τῆς Θυσίας,  
ἀντίδωρο ἄμετρων ψυχῶν,  
Ἐσταυρωμένε Βάκχε·  
ὄ τσακισμένη ἀπὸ τὸ βάρος τῶν τσαμπιῶν  
ἀθάνατη κληρονομιά.

O body mystically fashioned,  
body of Sacrifice,  
Eucharist of countless souls,  
Crucified Bacchus;  
O deathless inheritance  
broken beneath the weight of grape bunches.<sup>73</sup>

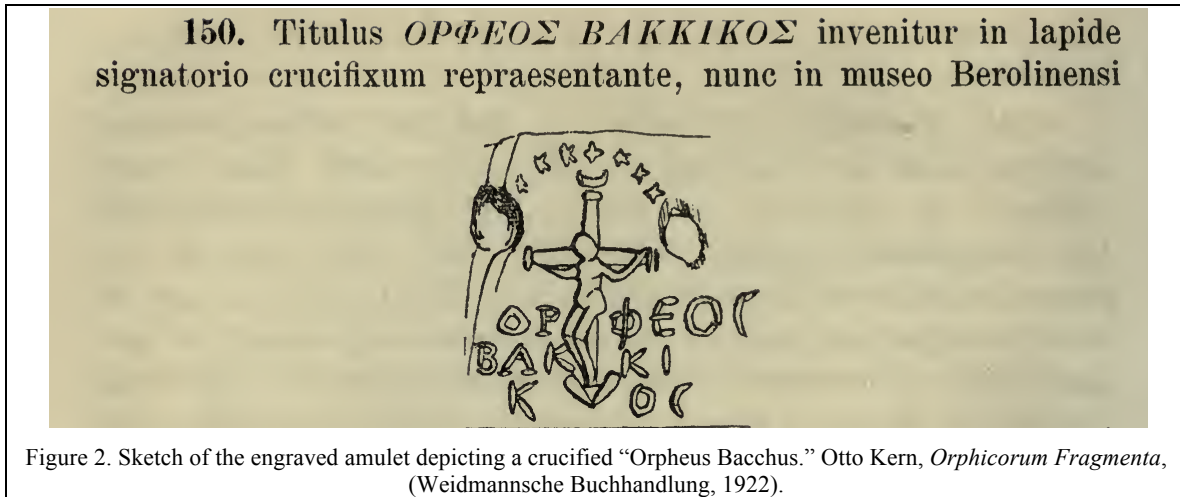
Through the metaphor of the miracle of the Eucharist (the body of Jesus turned to bread), the body of the poet *becomes* the body of his poetry, transubstantiated, multiplied and distributed to countless souls for consumption—and forming through this consumption a broader (indeed, national) community of readers. As Victor Hugo had written, “The multiplication of readers is the multiplication of loaves. On the day Christ discovered this symbol, he foreshadowed the printing press.”<sup>74</sup> Multiplied and divided out through the miracle of print, the poet unifies his community of believers—and through them, he himself is unified again. Certainly, the “miracle” of unified corpora stemmed not just

<sup>72</sup> He was most certainly inspired by the “Crucified Orpheus Bacchus” amulet housed at the Berlin Museum, supposedly from late antiquity (though possibly a forgery). See figure 2 on the following page.

<sup>73</sup> From *Ο πρόλογος στη ζωή* [*The Prologue to Life*], volume 4 (1917). Because this is an extremely rare book I draw the text above from its reprint in Sikelianos’ later anthology (1943:53-54).

<sup>74</sup> Cited in Walter Benjamin (1999:749).

from print itself, nor from the changing print markets of Greece, but it also (crucially for this chapter) owed much to an emerging scholarly apparatus whose central tools were traditional textual criticism and an author-centric philology.



I’ll examine the role of textual criticism in the next section, but let me first return to Sikelianos. Admittedly, the relation between Eucharist and national print would have been difficult to extrapolate from the thick metaphors of the passage above—at least in 1917, when the “Messianic Orpheus” first appeared. More importantly, it appeared in an edition that, though printed and bound commercially, Sikelianos had only circulated privately. In fact, a quarter century passed before the passage was published for a broader public in Sikelianos’ collected anthology *Antidoro (Holy Bread, 1943)*. The elapse of time was important. Piecing together the first unified compendium of his corpus, Sikelianos wrote in the book’s epilogue that this Messianic figure “symbolizes that the body of Poetry, no matter how much it may be divided out, is never, in essence, torn to pieces, but remains always complete in all its parts, just as the dismembered Orpheus is found, in the eyes of his followers, after his dismemberment, to be *whole* again when he



ascends the Cross” (1943:231).<sup>75</sup> Drawing this poetic body together for the first time in 1943, over twenty years after the “collective cross” that Greece had supposedly borne in Asia Minor (and was again bearing with the German occupation), Sikelianos now stamped it with his hermeneutic seal: the solace of poetry’s unity, and its unifying power, binding together not just an edition but a “community of faithful.” That this community stood in for the nation was clear in others of Sikelianos’ poems, perhaps most powerfully in *To Πάσχα των Ελλήνων* (*The Easter of the Greeks*). Here again the motif of Holy Communion is repeated (though, as before, heavily imbued with the rites of the ancient mysteries). This time, however, readers are not just consuming poetry; they are drinking in the entire “fatherland”:

Τι, μὲς στὴν ἄγια δίψα μας ἀπλώθηκε νεφέλη  
 ποὺ ὀλόμελους μὰς πότισεν ὀλύμπιο δροσισμό,  
 κι ἡ πύρη ἀνάβρυσε πηγὴ, κι ἔδωκε ἡ πέτρα μέλι,  
 κι ἄσβηστη ἀγρύπνησε φωτιά στῆς νιότης τὸ βωμό!  
 Ἀκέρια μὲς στὰ στήθη μας μαζώχτηκε ἡ πατρίδα·  
 κ’ ἔργο της, λόγος, ὄνειρο, βαθιά τους ἀντηχεῖ

And then, within our holy thirst a cloud spread out  
 and rained on us Olympian dew, dousing all our limbs,  
 and the burning well boiled up, and the stone gave honey,  
 and the eternal flame kept watch on the altar of youth!  
 Complete was gathered up the fatherland in our chests;  
 and its work, as word, as dream, resounds deep inside us  
 (1943:67 [verses 97-102])

Published serially in the journal *Oi neoi* in 1919, during the first stages of Greece’s occupation of Ottoman Asia Minor, the messianic language in the passage is nearly deafening. At the time, readers may perhaps have understood the poem’s vision of a “complete fatherland, gathered within [their] chests,” as the successful conclusion to the *Grand Idea*. Yet when, in his 1943 epilogue to *Antidoro*, Sikelianos at last explained his theory of the unified and unifying multiplicity of the poetic corpus, the reality of the “Greek fatherland” was strikingly different. And so too of Greek publishing. Although the gradual waning of Greek diasporas in the Mediterranean and the concomitant marginalization of diasporic printing would take another twenty years to run their course,

<sup>75</sup> I owe the discovery of this important passage to Savidis (1963:7).

one saw the first signs of a massive tidal change approaching: a truly, geographically “national” print culture.

Sikelianos was not the only poet working to shore up the fragments of Greek space and corpora. In January 1940, an ascending national poet named George Seferis was busy finishing the final poem of his new collection, a poem entitled “The King of Asinē.” The work takes its readers to the archeological site of Asinē, an ancient city along the eastern coast of Argolis. The excavations, which had been run by a Swedish team of archaeologists between 1922 and 1930, had focused on the entire settlement—the acropolis, the lower town, the Roman bath, the reservoir, and the necropolis, with its several temporal and cultural layers<sup>76</sup>—yet the poem suggests that “for two years now” they had been searching for the Mycenaean king’s royal burial chamber. In essence, Seferis had “expunged” all the material and cultural variations of the archeological site to focus on its perceived originary corpus: the king. (As I’ll show in the next section, this was a poetic practice with a direct analog in the emerging field of Modern Greek philology, which was busily conducting its own selective textual “excavations.”) Given that no mention of such a chamber or search is made in the Swedish team’s detailed summary, it seems likely that these “two years of searching” stand as symbolic reference to Seferis’ own process of writing the poem.<sup>77</sup> He was looking for both the body of the king and a textual body in which to burry him. Were it not for half a line in Homer’s

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<sup>76</sup> See Frödin and Persson (1938).

<sup>77</sup> After two long years of fruitless drafting, Seferis wrote the poem’s sixth and final draft, if one believes his later accounts, in one sitting late at night. He published it first in the journal *Neoellenika grammata* (27 July 1940), then later that year in the collection *Ημερολόγιο καταστροφής* [*Ship’s Logbook*]. It was later included in the second edition of his complete *Poems* (1950), from a later edition of which I quote.

*Iliad*, in fact, Asinē's king would long since have slipped into historical oblivion.<sup>78</sup>

Passing through the walls of the ancient city's acropolis, Seferis runs his hands along the stones, searching for the tomb:

κι ὁ βασιλιάς τῆς Ἀσίνης πού τὸν γυρεύουμε δυὸ χρόνια  
τώρα  
ἄγνωστος λησμονημένος ἀπ' ὅλους κι ἀπὸ τὸν Ὅμηρο  
μόνο μιὰ λέξη στὴν Ἰλιάδα κι ἐκεῖνη ἀβέβαιη  
ριγμένη ἐδῶ σὰν τὴν ἐντάφια χρυσὴ προσωπίδα.  
Τὴν ἄγγιξες, θυμᾶσαι τὸν ἦχο τῆς; κούφιο μέσα στὸ  
φῶς  
σὰν τὸ στεγνὸ πιθάρι στὸ σκαμμένο χῶμα·  
κι ὁ ἴδιος ἦχος μὲς στὴ θάλασσα μὲ τὰ κουπιά μας.  
Ὁ βασιλιάς τῆς Ἀσίνης ἕνα κενὸ κάτω ἀπ' τὴν  
προσωπίδα  
παντοῦ μαζί μας παντοῦ μαζί μας, κάτω ἀπὸ ἕνα  
ὄνομα:  
«Ἀσίνην τε... Ἀσίνην τε...»  
καὶ τὰ παιδιά του ἀγάλματα  
κι οἱ πόθοι του φτερουγίσματα πουλιῶν κι ὁ ἀγέρας  
στὰ διαστήματα τῶν στοχασμῶν του καὶ τὰ καράβια  
του  
ἀραγμένα σ' ἄφαντο λιμάνι ~  
κάτω ἀπ' τὴν προσωπίδα ἕνα κενό [...]   
ἕνα κενὸ παντοῦ μαζί μας [...].

Κι ὁ ποιητὴς ἀργοπορεῖ κοιτάζοντας τὶς πέτρες κι ἀνα-  
ρωτιέται  
ὑπάρχουν ἄραγε  
ἄνάμεσα στὶς χαλασμένες τούτες γραμμὲς τὶς ἀκμὲς τὶς  
αἰχμὲς τὰ κοῖλα καὶ τὶς καμπύλες [...]   
ὑπάρχουν, ἢ κίνηση τοῦ προσώπου τὸ σχῆμα τῆς  
στοργῆς  
ἐκείνων πού λιγότεψαν τόσο παράξενα μὲς στὴ ζωὴ μας  
[...]  
Ὁ ποιητὴς ἕνα κενό.

Ἀσπιδοφόρος ὁ ἥλιος ἀνέβαινε πολεμώντας  
κι ἀπὸ τὸ βάθος τῆς σπηλιᾶς μία νυχτερίδα τρομαγμένη  
χτύπησε πάνω στὸ φῶς σὰν τὴ σαῖτα πάνω στὸ σκουτάρι:  
«Ἀσίνην τε Ἀσίνην τε...». Νὰ ἴταν αὐτὴ ὁ βασιλιάς τῆς  
Ἀσίνης  
πού τὸν γυρεύουμε τόσο προσεχτικὰ σὲ τούτη τὴν ἀκρό-  
πολη  
ἀγγίζοντας κάποτε μὲ τὰ δάχτυλά μας τὴν ὑφὴ του  
πάνω στὶς πέτρες.

and the king of Asinē—two years now we've been  
searching for him—  
unknown, forgotten by all, by Homer too,  
a single word in the *Iliad*, and even that's uncertain,  
a single word, tossed here like the golden foil of the  
burial mask.  
You touched it; remember the sound? Hollow in the  
sunlight  
like the dry clay pot in the pit of the soil;  
and the same sound in the sea, when our oars struck.  
The King of Asinē, an emptiness beneath the mask  
everywhere with us everywhere with us, beneath a  
name:  
“Asinēn te, Asinēn te ...”  
and his children, statues,  
and his passions, the beating of bird's wings, and the  
wind  
passing through the gaps in his thoughts, and his ships  
lined up in an unseen port;  
beneath the mask, an emptiness [...]   
an emptiness everywhere with us [...].

And the poet strays behind, looking at the stones and wond-  
ering  
do they exist, then,  
between these ruined lines these edges these  
edges the hollows and the curves [...]   
do they exist: the movement of the face, the shape of  
the tenderness  
of those who have so strangely dwindled in our life [?]  
[...]  
The poet, an emptiness.

The sun, a shield-bearer, was climbing up to war,  
and from the depth of the cave a bat, frightened,  
struck the light, like an arrow on the shield:  
“Asinēn te, Asinēn te ...” If only that were the king of  
Asinē  
whom we've been searching out so carefully with-  
in this acropolis,  
touching with our fingers, from time to time, his own  
touch on the stones.

(*Poimata*, 185-187)

Caught between the violent sunlight and the ruins of stones and words, the poem is staging a central tension of Seferis' entire *oeuvre*: the ambiguous relation of the modern

<sup>78</sup> *Iliad*, 2.600. While a handful of later sources, such as Pausanias and Strabon, describe the city (or rather its devastation), this single line in the *Iliad* is the only reference we have to its ruler.

Greeks to their several pasts.<sup>79</sup> With their material and textual histories in fragments, with their Anatolian diaspora now swept away like so much dust, what could these past Greeces offer the modern nation? How to assemble from these shards a modern narrative of self? How to recover the living integuments of skin or the curve of a fleeting smile from beneath the empty burial mask, the empty name? It was precisely this emptiness, Seferis suggested, that haunted the modern Greeks.

In the midst of all this “haunting,” however, the questions of the poem slip by unanswered. It’s ultimately less interested in exploring questions than in simply (and mournfully) enunciating them. And this mournful enunciation comes, again and again, through the central figure of the poet. For if this particular historical fragment of Greece has indeed withered away to an emptiness, it’s nonetheless buried in the cenotaph of Seferis himself. In essence, he becomes a cipher—and I deploy this word in both its senses simultaneously: both a *nothing* and a *code*—by means of which readers might insert themselves into History, parsing out the fragmentary texts of the grand Greek narrative. In contradistinction to Cavafy’s more personal exploration of Caesarion’s history, Seferis’ poem (like several others in his oeuvre) begins and concludes with a “we.” Who precisely is this “we”? Most immediately, the pronoun might at first sight seem to gesture towards the Swedish team of archeologists among whom the “poet” was presumably wandering, yet the site had been dormant, and the Swedes gone, for ten years by the time Seferis wrote “The King of Asinē.” Given the thrust of the poem, it seems

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<sup>79</sup> Seferis had used this same motif earlier in his *Mythistorēma* (1935), poem III: “I awoke with this marble head in my hands [/] it exhausts my elbows and I don’t know where to set it down. [/] It was falling into the dream as I was coming out from the dream [/] and thus our life was joined and it will be difficult to part again. [/] I look at its eyes; neither closed nor open [/] I speak to its mouth, which constantly seeks to speak [/] I hold its cheeks, which have passed beyond the skin. [/] I have no more strength; [/] my hands are lost and they approach me [/] severed.” He would continue to visit this same literary topos in his later work as well, such as «Ἐγκωμῆ», from his Cypriot cycle (1955).

that “we” might more productively be read, at least metaphorically, as a larger, national community. Nevertheless, the first person plural ultimately pivots around the central axis of the poet (quite literally, in fact, if one looks to the poem’s spatial layout). Through the poetic ego of Seferis—solemn, mournful, and longing for lost homelands (he was himself from Izmir)—readers come face to face with the national *ego*. Subtly removing Cavafy’s motif of fragmentation from its original contexts of irony, eroticism, personal monologue and cultural plurality, Seferis placed it instead within an Eliot-like dirge of nation. A nation whose foundation lay, as “The King of Asinē” suggested, in the figure of the poet himself, who assembled “ancient monuments and contemporary sorrows” («τ’αρχαία μνημεία και τη σύγχρονη θλίψη») into an aesthetic unity.

Crucially, this unity also informed Seferis’ concept of the book as a material object.

Writing of Cavafy, he observed in 1960,

Cavafy’s temperament is very different from mine. [...] I did not feel any gravitation towards Cavafy. But there was, I think, another reason. Until the days when the first edition of his poems came out in book-form, I had nothing but a very fragmented picture of his work, from sporadic broadsheets, reprints in periodicals, or oral references that circulated most often on the lips of zealous admirers or low imitators [...]. However, he had sent me a bound series of broadsheets “1907-1915” [i.e., the third thematic collection in 1927], if I’m not mistaken, and I sent him a copy of my *Strofi*, when it came out in print [in 1931]. Things didn’t change much [...]. I thought again of Cavafy in May of ’41, when, as a passenger from Crete, I first came face to face with Egypt, in Port Sa’id [...]. The pages that I am publishing here below found their start during those three or four weeks of my first time in Alexandria [...]. Copying the poems of Cavafy out [by hand], as it happened, I wrote a commentary on them, poem by poem, often with a monastic fastidiousness; I wanted to make a book out of that commentary. It was to help me live once more in the land that I missed. (1981:364-368)

While Cavafy had sent Seferis a series of broadsheets, stitched together by hand, the

latter responded with a commercially bound book.<sup>80</sup> It's as if one witnesses here not only an exchange of gifts but a symbolic passing of the torch, as one medium gives way to the next. Ironically, Seferis' book would ultimately remain unread—indeed, unopened—by Cavafy. Today, it has found its way back to Athens, where it was originally published, and is sitting in the personal library of Linos Benakis, its pages still uncut. Yet if Cavafy had resisted the unity and finality of professional editions, Seferis embraced them. As he wrote, it was only years later in Egypt that he drew closer to Cavafy by drawing him *together*, copying him out in preparation for his own commercial collection of Cavafy poems.<sup>81</sup> Returning to Greece after the Second World War, Seferis continued and expanded his own project of drawing Cavafy together, arguing (first in an oral lecture in 1946, revised and printed the following year), that “after a certain moment—which I place around 1910—the Cavafic work must be read and judged not as a series of separate poems but as a single poem in progress” (1981:328). Cavafy, he posited, produced not only a single corpus but in fact a single, evolving poem. Yet as Jusdanis has insightfully observed, Seferis' crucial phrase “‘in progress’ may be misleading [...] since it suggests a teleological development. What takes place [in ‘Cavafy’s “collection” of poetry’], however, is not a progression toward a final goal, such as Keeley's metaphorical city, but the opposite, the refusal of unity” (61). While I agree with Jusdanis' reservation, it's helpful to note that Seferis' words do not so much demonstrate a *misreading* of Cavafy's corpora as offer a helpful midcentury “road marker” or milestone in their ongoing journey after the poet's death. In short, Seferis' interpretation was opening the space for a

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<sup>80</sup> The book Seferis gave Cavafy bore the dedication, “To Mr. C. Cavafy, the Poet, with exceptional honor. George Seferis.” See Michaila Karabini-Iatrou's catalogue of Cavafy's private library (2003:127).

<sup>81</sup> The collection was an anthology of Palamas, Sikelianos, and Cavafy (strange bookfellows indeed), a volume that Seferis had assembled in 1952 for the larger series *The Basic Library*. The project, however, was canceled before completion (see Savidis 1993:vii).

Cavafic corpus that might meet the needs of the postwar Greek world. As for Seferis' commentaries on the poems, he went on to publish them separately in his meticulously collected *Essays* (*Δοκιμές*). Just as he intimated in the final two lines of the larger excerpt above, *Essays* takes the figures, manuscripts, and geographies of a larger, now-lost Greece and binds them together, "making of them a book" and bringing them to mainland Greece for mass consumption.

Much the same could be said of Seferis' own collected poetry. Within his editions and multiple reprints, his readers saw the scattered material remnants of Hellenism articulated in a single, bound collection. And reading this articulation, so too were they collected, the reading public of the Greek nation. Twenty-three years after his first edition of the collected *Poems*, Seferis went on in 1963 (the centennial of Cavafy's birth) to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, further consolidating his poetic work "beneath a name"—a name that was growing less and less empty as time went on. Today, his *Poems* are in their twenty-third edition. The first three of these came out in roughly ten-year cycles (1940, 1950, 1962). After winning the Nobel Prize, his subsequent editions appeared, on average, every 2.3 years. When we look at such a publishing strategy and compare it with Cavafy's, it's clear that makeshift bindings, hidden manuscripts, multiple circulations and continual re-articulation of the scattered corpus (practices on which Cavafy's writing, printing, and publishing had essentially been predicated), were all but unimaginable for Seferis.

I want to clarify however: in reading Seferis' work alongside Cavafy's, my aim is not to construct a transhistoric, dyadic opposition of good and bad poetics or publishing practices. Seferis' books were the artifact of a specific historical moment and ideological

position,<sup>82</sup> at a time of unprecedented territorial, social and institutional transformations in the Hellenic world. I use them here simply to understand the ways that they engaged, reflected or refracted these transformations on their pages or in their bindings. Elsewhere, Seferis himself wrote quite lucidly on the consolidation of Greek space and Greek bodies. Introducing I.A. Saregiannis' book of essays on Cavafy (printed posthumously in 1963 from the former's scattered manuscripts and publications), Seferis confessed:

Now that I call to mind the figure of Saregiannis, I ponder again that in my time most people of letters had emerged from the margins of the Nation; they had been born in the years when Greece was more spacious, before this polarization [sic] of the Greek populations within the borders of the Helladic state, this cramming together that sometimes makes today's youth feel distraught [literally, *constrained*] [...]. The Greeks [*ελληνισμός*] of Asia Minor were uprooted; soon there will be nothing left of the Greeks in Egypt. Soon they'll be arrayed with other Greek archaeologies, together with the polities of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids or with the stone-carved monasteries of Cappadocia. And their Greek populations will have become fodder for hydrocephalic Athens. (Saregiannis 1963:9)

As Seferis knew better than any, the Greek world was literally collapsing, and as it tumbled down into the confines of the Greek state, Seferis' literary production had set itself the task of picking up the pieces, mournfully assembling them into a book—a book “to help [him] live once more in the land that [he] missed.”

### ***Consolidating the Text***

Since the 1930s, textual critics of mainland Greece had also been busily picking up the scattered pieces of Modern Greek literature's textual networks, with their ultimate goal the assemblage of complete editions. The first, largest (and still, today, the most

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<sup>82</sup> Leontis reminds us that this ideological position was more or less reflective of the Helladic bourgeoisie and Cold War liberalism, writing that “Seferis's decision to ignore the [Greek] civil war [1945-1949] was typical of artists and intellectuals who did not have leftist leanings. This was the privilege of the ruling class, to claim a distance from the politics of divisiveness” (1995:140).



unsettled) project that they set themselves was the textual body of Greece's first "national poet": Dionysios Solomos.

Born in Napoleonic Zakynthos, raised in Italian and schooled in Italy, Solomos began (and concluded) his poetic career in that language, only turning to Greek shortly before the start of the Ottoman Greek insurgence of 1821. By the time he reverted to Italian, he had *in toto* published only two Greek poems («Ύμνος εις την Ελευθερίαν» and «Ωδή εις Μοναχίην»), a fragment from a third («Η δέηση της Μαρίας») and a short epigram. Despite the immense popularity the first poem had secured him, most readers beyond his inner circle knew little to nothing of his subsequent projects. After his death in 1857 he left in his wake a scattering of incomplete works, verses and notes.

Immediately, his friend and soon-to-be editor Iakovos Polyas began assembling, comparing and collating the manuscript fragments, embracing an aggressive eclecticism to create a meta-narrative of order and cohesion. Nonetheless, when this edition first circulated in 1859, the reaction in both the Ionian Islands and Greece (which Solomos himself had never visited) was one of unanimous disappointment. The dissatisfaction stemmed, interestingly, not from the fact that Polyas the editor had become silent co-author; to the contrary, the implicit sentiment was that he had not done enough: Solomos remained in fragments. As the poet Valaoritis wrote in a personal letter to Emmanuel Roïdis, the "nation's hopes had been dashed."<sup>83</sup> The reception history of Solomos' poetry saw an important shift a generation later, thanks to Kostis Palamas, yet the Polyadic textual corpus itself remained untouched, seemingly invisible. Not until the mid 1930s did it gain a glaring visibility—indeed, did it become what one might term, with only

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<sup>83</sup> For a summary of the reception of Polyas' edition, see Linos Politis (1995:284-291).

minimal hyperbole, Modern Greek philology’s “holy grail” (or, perhaps more aptly, their “King of Asinē”).

It was no coincidence that precisely during this time, Modern Greek philology was taking its first steps towards institutionalization within the state academic system.<sup>84</sup> These two projects, textual and institutional, were closely bound together. In 1935, N. Tomadakis published the first dissertation of Modern Greek philology in Greece, choosing as his subject Solomos’ publication history and manuscript collection. The Academy of Athens announced that same year (less than ten years after its creation) the foundation of a series of “complete editions” under the titular roof *Library of Modern Greek Literary Authors*. The flagship project for this series was to be the re-assemblage of the Solomic corpus and the production of a “truly” (or, more precisely, “critically”) complete edition. Tomadakis was assigned the task of editing and compiling the work. As was perhaps inevitable, the critical edition never materialized, yet what did materialize (in Athens’ leading literary journals) was nonetheless of great value in itself: a debate between two young scholars—Ioannis Sykoutris and Linos Politis—as to what precisely *was* a critical edition, and how it might be assembled.<sup>85</sup>

Despite their differences, both agreed that the edition should be “complete” (*πλήρης*), whether it contained a single work or a multi-volume set of the author’s entire

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<sup>84</sup> The first chair in Modern Greek Philology was established in 1926 (for Giannis Apostolakis), in the newly founded Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, yet the first dissertation in the field, as I note in the same paragraph above, did not appear until 1935 in Athens.

<sup>85</sup> For the purposes of my chapter, their particular positions matter less than the debate itself, but they are worth noting here: Sykoutris, whose training lay in classical philology, recommended importing and adapting (to the new mediums of modern literature) the classical textual criticism of Western Europe (1956:420-435). Politis rejected the need of a “critical edition” for what were in fact authorial autographs, recommending instead a facsimile (*πανομοιότυπη*) photocopy and print reproduction of the entire extant Solomic manuscript collection (1995:19-57).

*oeuvre*. Yet what precisely did this completeness mean? As Sykoutris wrote, “The unswerving rule of every critical edition is *completeness* [...], the publisher must offer all that bears relation to the work and comes from the poet” (1956:422). “Completeness” ultimately boiled down to the single figure of the author, as envisioned by the editor. What defined the critical edition (and here, as always, Sykoutris was drawing flawlessly from Western models<sup>86</sup>) was the systematic application of a scientific method<sup>87</sup> to produce a text as close to the “original”—that is to say, the author’s ideal text—as possible. Not just for Sykoutris but for all trained textual critics of the time, the critical edition was in effect a textual *nostos* by which the editor lead her or his readers back to (or at least towards) a pristine authorial ideal, hermetically sealed from the “contaminations” of the larger field of textual production and dissemination. Despite their differences in method, textual critics of modern literature ultimately shared a faith in the existence (and primary value) of a supposed authoritative origin, and the ability of the new edition to asymptotically approach it, expunging textual variation and multiplicity. Sykoutris spoke to this later in his article: “The rehabilitation of the text and its cleansing of all changes foreign to the intentions of the author constitute the most central and difficult portion of the critical edition” (428). Housed within a positivist, scientific language, Sykoutris’ tenets seemed at the time unassailable.

It was not until the early 1980s, in both Jerome McGann’s *A Critique of Modern*

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<sup>86</sup> For treatments of Sykoutris, see Constanze Güthenke (2010:121-140) and Artemis Leontis (1990).

<sup>87</sup> The two most common forms are stemmatics and copy-text criticism. Pioneered by the biblical scholar Lachmann, stemmatic textual criticism, as the name implies, creates genealogical stems of textual reproduction, by means of which the critic moves backward toward the (supposed) archetype text, tracing the stem based upon quantitative comparison among hyper-archetypes. Copy-text criticism, which is more commonly practiced today, recognizes that the reproduction of texts only occasionally involved a linear progression from one exemplar to a copy and therefore opts instead to select a single “best text” on which to apply emendations, made in consultation with other extant textual “witnesses.”

*Textual Criticism* and D.F. McKenzie's Panizzi lectures (later collected in *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*), that any concerted theoretical pressure was applied to this foundational assumption. Drawing from his practical work in the field, McGann accused traditional textual criticism of "evacuating" texts of the multiple social and institutional agencies that had in fact produced them. Literary works, he complained, "lose their lives as they gain [their] critical identities [in such editions] [...] by being divorced from the social relationships which gave them their lives (including their 'textual' lives) in the first place" (1983:81). It was precisely the recovery of these social relationships that interested McKenzie, who argued that rather than fetishizing authorial origin, textual critics might just as productively examine the "cultural accretions" of any given text as it proliferates across mediums and editions—i.e., rather than erasing variations as errata, one might engage them as significant sites of cultural production in and of themselves. The traditional philological concept of the book "and of an author's presence within it," McKenzie posited, "represents only one end of a bibliographical spectrum. The counter-tradition of textual transformations, of new forms in new editions for new markets, represents the other. A sociology of texts would comprehend both" (1999:39).

While Greek philology today continues to grapple with many thorny (and important) questions of textual criticism, to my knowledge no analogous theoretical discussion has gained traction among scholars. As for the early philologists of Athens, for obvious reasons they had the opportunity neither to hear nor read McKenzie or McGann's insights. They were in any case busy with other concerns. In the 1930s, the very years that Greek space had begun to contract and solidify, it became clear to the emerging institutions of philology that past Greek texts must likewise be contracted and

solidified, brought together and rebuilt, with their central fundament planted in originary Authorial intent, however that was to be interpreted by the editor. Sykoutris' spatial metaphors were indicative in this sense, suggesting that previous Greek editions and their philological introductions had “resembled [...] the hastily built lean-tos and sheds that are set up [...] without foundations and left to the mercy of the first strong wind. It is time to do away with this nomadism; it is time to build structures permanent and stable” (434). If it was as of yet unclear just how to put an end to “nomadism,” the emerging cadre of philologists nevertheless agreed that such was the goal of their science. Turning first towards one of the primary origins of Modern Greek literature, the poetic corpus of Dionysios Solomos, textual critics aimed to produce an edition both *critical* and *complete*—that is to say, both exclusive and exhaustive. And while the field of Solomic textual criticism lies beyond the scope of my chapter, I've turned here briefly to its origins to better understand what was in fact a much broader institutional project for Helladic Greece. As Sykoutris passionately argued, Solomos was simply a single case of a larger problem.

The young Linos Politis, it bears noting, voiced some initial skepticism. Writing to the journal *Nea grammata* the following year, he suggested that the Academy of Athens ought not to invest time and money in the construction of critical editions as a general rule, for “besides Solomos, Vilaras, perhaps Kalvos (and Rigas? – his interest is mainly historical), I don't see a need for a critical edition of any other literary author” (vol. 2, 1936, p. 344). In the same issue, however, Sykoutris responded:

I offer some names of authors that Politis has omitted: the pre-revolutionary Phanariot poets, whose poems, buried in anonymity, are so interesting from a grammatological perspective and are today scattered in books difficult to track down. Athanasios Christopoulos [...] Gerogios Tertsetis [...] Ioulios Typaldos

[...] Iakovos Polylyas [...] Laskaratos [...]. Then come the Katharevousa poets [...]. Then come Vizyinos, Krystallis, Papadiamandis, whose complete edition has not yet been published, and, when it happens, it must not happen haphazardly or without method. I don't believe that Politis needs more names. (349)

In short, Sykoutris spoke to the dawning realization that Greek philology needed first and foremost to shore up the bibliographically (and, at times, geographically) scattered “national” corpora. Until that moment, the production of complete editions had been the domain of commercial publishers and editors, a practice that had led to variations and textual multiplicity on an as of yet uncalculated scale. Writing elsewhere, Sykoutris predicted that “for the near future [w]e will continue to use the old editions [of Solomos], reprinting them as per the initiative of booksellers [i.e. commercial publishing houses], of which editions each will present a different text with a chaotic accumulation of variations. Booksellers, rather than philologists, likewise compiled nearly all the editions of other dead writers, and no one has yet felt the need to give us [...] their critical editions” (1956:245). Textual multiplicity was endemic, and only the institutional intervention of Greek philology could shore up the pieces, solidify and immobilize them.

A generation later,<sup>88</sup> into just such an atmosphere did George Savidis enter with his Cavafy. The timing was perfect. He had first worked on the Cavafy corpus while studying philology at King's College in the early 1950s, continuing, expanding and deepening his study through the end of the decade and into the 1960s (now in the form of a doctorate dissertation at Aristoteleion University in Thessaloniki, under Linos Politis).

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<sup>88</sup> It is worth noting that by the 1960s, although the debate on how a critical apparatus should function had gained new voices and breadth, its central foundation had only further solidified: a faith in the possibility of unifying textual variation into a singular “original.” Indicative in this sense is Manolis Hatzigiakoumis: “With today's standards a ‘definitive’ edition [of Solomos] is absolutely possible and, by extension, let me emphasize again, obligatory. [...] [W]ith the suggested edition, the work of Solomos will be responsibly and definitively codified [*θα κωδικοποιηθεί*]” (1969:10).

Like the curators of the National Archeological Museum, he was building a national heritage out of Cavafy's "diasporic" papers. After Cavafy's death in 1933, the personal archives that he had meticulously amassed for decades devolved to Alekos Sengopoulos. Lending certain pieces of the archive out to scholars and friends of the deceased poet (Michalis Peridis and Giorgos Papoutsakis), and apparently selling parts of Cavafy's personal library,<sup>89</sup> Sengopoulos unwittingly created yet another level of fragmentation within Cavafy's texts and books, dissolving the singular archive into "archives." Not until Savidis convinced Sengopoulos to open the remaining archival collection to him did the situation begin to change.<sup>90</sup> Consulting and assembling most (though not all) components of the poet's papers in preparation for his dissertation, Savidis simultaneously published his own edition of Cavafy's poems in 1963.

Released on the centennial of Cavafy's birth, the edition signaled a Cavafic renaissance. While Rika Sengopoulou's previous edition had presented itself as "complete" (πλήρης), Savidis introduced several changes and additions that demolished such claims. In both its methods and its scale, Savidis' rendering of Cavafy's *Poems* was revolutionary, definitively drawing together what is today recognized as the Cavafic

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<sup>89</sup> Malanos wrote in 1963 that "if the poet's English-language books have been saved until now, it's thanks simply to the indifference of a well-known English Alexandrian millionaire who, when they [the Sengopouloi] suggested to him 24 years earlier (that is, just six years after the poet's death) to buy the books, he answered by way of his secretary that those books were of no interest to him (the same letter, dated 8.5.39 and a copy of the response dated 12.5.39 are in my archive)" (1964:187). Other books, such as Seferis' *Strofi* mentioned above, were not "saved."

<sup>90</sup> The Cavafy Archive both before Savidis and especially during his ownership has come to constitute a field of academic study in and of itself. It certainly informs my topic here (i.e., the construction of a *Complete Edition*), for as Savidis wrote in 1963, "The whole of the Cavafy Archive must be published as soon as possible. Without this publication, we cannot have a true Complete Edition or a proper biography of the Poet" (1964). The archive remained unpublished to the end of Savidis' life.

poetic corpus.<sup>91</sup> If the poet's body remained in Egypt, continuing its process of decomposition and dissolution beyond the borders of the nation state, the body of his works was now undergoing a reversal in Athens, entering a singular unity it had never known—in fact, had avoided—in his lifetime. It was to Athens that Sengopoulos had moved the archive as he, like so many Greeks, abandoned Egypt.<sup>92</sup> It was in Athens that Savidis produced and published his edition in 1963. And it was in Athens that he later bought the archive from Sengopoulos' widow, from which he'd published in 1968 the "hidden poems." These were not simply happy coincidences. The fact that both Cavafy's contemporary textual corpus and archive were now installed in Greece was a manifestation of the same consolidation—of bodies, geographies, and institutions—that I have been tracing in the pages above. Savidis crucially emphasized the same process years later, while teaching at Harvard: "It is important for me to return to Greece," he'd responded in an interview, "because I am needed there. Obviously, the real center of Modern Greek Studies is Greece."<sup>93</sup> As I hope to have shown, just a generation earlier there was nothing obvious about such a claim. Two generations earlier, during Cavafy's richest years of production, there had been no center at all of Modern Greek studies.

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<sup>91</sup> To be sure, important pieces appeared only later, but again by Savidis' hand or under his tutelage. After the *Hidden Poems* of 1968, Savidis published in 1983 the early poems, those the poet had rejected in his maturity. (In fact, Cavafy had not simply rejected them but attributed them to another writer! As Glafkos Alithersis had written, "In private conversation, C. P. Cavafy denies everything, and accepts that there was another, pre-existing C. Ph. Cavafy [the early form of Cavafy's signature]." See *Nea zoe*, 1924, pg. 488.) As for Cavafy's prose writings, Giorgos Papoutsakis and Mihalis Peridis had produced two collections (respectively, published and unpublished work) on the Cavafy centennial of 1963. Nonetheless, it was only with Mihalis Pieris' complete edition of Cavafy's prose in 2003 that this work too was "shored up."

<sup>92</sup> Giorgos Papoutsakis, who had borrowed and "failed to return" another part of the archive, likewise brought his portion to Athens in emigration. While his holdings disappeared after his death, a portion of them at least were later purchased by ELIA (Greek Literary and Historical Archive). Another portion was already located in the Benaki Museum. In Egypt has remained only a small detritus of objects and books that stock the Greek consulate's museum.

<sup>93</sup> From an interview with the Harvard Crimson, 1977. Quoted in Manuel Savidis (1995:133).



Cavafy's own studies in Hellenism had thrived within this decentered map.

To understand again just how this map had changed, let me return to Savidis' edition of 1963. What precisely were these books? Silently refusing the term critical edition, Savidis called his instead a "popular" edition (*λαϊκή έκδοση*). And in every sense it was just that. Missing was a critical apparatus; the only signs of an editorial presence were in the short introduction and the slim, laconic endnotes, which addressed not textual issues but those of content and interpretation. The only dates provided were those of the first publication of a poem's final form (and even these were provided only in an index, not on the poem's page itself), nor were any references made to earlier published forms of poems. Behind the popular "stage curtain" of his edition, Savidis also made several orthographic interventions. While he wrote that the first volume "faithfully reprints" the poems from their collections,<sup>94</sup> he nonetheless added in a footnote, "With a very few typographical and orthographical modifications" (Cavafy 1963 vol. 1:12). These modifications were in themselves indicative of a general, perceived need to "tidy up," yet there was in fact more occurring behind the scenes. Only forty years later did Anthony Hirst note that Savidis' interventions ran deeper. "Cavafy's quirks of punctuation and accentuation, and his occasional surprising spellings," Hirst wrote, "require no editorial 'correction'; his inconsistencies do not need to be standardized. We can be confident that they were in most cases deliberate and well considered" (2002). Yet on multiple occasions it was precisely these orthographic "quirks" that Savidis emended and hence, as Hirst persuasively demonstrates, erased certain hermeneutic readings made possible by the original orthographic slippage. In effect, Savidis normalized, to a degree, Cavafy's

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<sup>94</sup> But which poems, and which collections? Seeing as each physical copy of each collection was composed of multiple print events, any given artifact might contain particular print eccentricities and or corrections.

“unhinged” orthography and brought it in line with the national standard.

Despite Savidis’ silent handiwork and interventions, his edition evinced in all its pages the stated goal of traditional textual criticism: salvaging, boxing up and packaging original authorial intent. The clearest manifestation of this came in the ordering of the poems. Here, he had effected what was at the time a startling change, replacing the earlier, chronological Cavafy with a two-volume “compromise”: the first volume reproduced the arrangement of Cavafy’s final two “thematic” collections (plus a small chronological aggregation of his earliest poems, those not included in the collections); the second volume, conversely, reproduced the arrangement of his final “chronological” collection, supplementing all the published poems not included in the first volume (i.e., those from 1919 to 1932, together with the posthumously published «Εἰς τὰ περίχωρα τῆς Ἀντιοχείας»). In effect, Savidis addressed the problem of Cavafy’s shifting poetic production by dividing it into two stable volumes.

Even as early as the work’s first printing (before, that is, the release of Cavafy’s “hidden” poems five years later), Savidis made it clear that he aimed at a complete edition. In both volumes, the half-title recto bears the glaring imprint “C.P. Cavafy: COMPLETE EDITION” (*Κ.Π. Καβάφη: ΠΛΗΡΗΣ ΕΚΔΟΣΗ*). It was an edition, Savidis wrote, whose “goal [is] to render the whole of Cavafy’s finished poetic work accessible to as many readers as possible” (11). Cavafy’s long and meticulous process of assembling coherent poetic narratives within the collections—a process that left in its wake multiple material trails—had become a singular, fixed and finished product. By “rendering” the poems thus, the edition necessarily did away with all traces of Cavafy’s multi-form corpora: the journal and newspaper publications (to say nothing of the editorials or

footnotes or reader letters that often introduced or defended or attacked them), his broadsheets, with their various prints and hand-made corrections, their stitches and glue and cotter pins, their ad-hoc bindings and inserts, the overlapping successions of collections and readerships, and the archival mechanisms of the hidden poems. Setting aside the unique (and meaning-ful) material apparatus of Cavafy's multiple "moving parts," Savidis had drawn the poet's several corpora into a single corpus, which was in turn multiplied and bound for the mass Greek readerships of the 1960s and onward. Cavafy's rolling glass ball had been brought to rest.

More recently, Hirst has applied critical pressure to Savidis' ordering of the poems, suggesting that the third section of the first volume, which amasses Cavafy's early poems, necessarily erases Cavafy's first thematic assemblage—the "books" of 1905 and 1910. Instead, Savidis' edition produced "an unwarranted hybrid [...], a sequence that does not correspond exactly to any thematic sequence Cavafy himself envisaged" (2002). While I find Hirst's argument (and, to a degree, the edition he himself later proposes) compelling, it is worth noting that at times he implicitly reproduces the same ideological framework of the "edition," as traditionally understood: the reproduction of authorial intent. My purpose here is otherwise; understanding every edition as an unavoidable reinvention, I do not want so much to locate and "correct" Savidis' interventions as to understand them as the next stage in Cavafy's assemblage, an assemblage that, given the geopolitical shifts described earlier, aimed at consolidation and uniformity in ways that would have been unrecognizable to Cavafy's own collections.

As such, Savidis synthesized or discarded (in either case, practically effacing) not only textual variation but also many of the corpora's material signifiers and their

transformations. The practice had in fact become standard. In their attempt to recover or recreate the definitive words and punctuation of an author, textual critics systematically effaced other non-verbal layers of meaning embedded in their printed text(s). Jerome McGann perceptively observes:

Every literary work that descends to us operates through the deployment of a double helix of perceptual codes: the linguistic codes, on one hand, and the bibliographical codes on the other. We recognize the latter simply by looking at a medieval literary manuscript—or at any of William Blake's equivalent illuminated texts [...]. Or at Emily Dickinson's manuscript books of poetry [...]. That is to say, in these kinds of literary works the distinction between physical medium and conceptual message breaks down completely. [...] Textual and editorial theory has heretofore concerned itself almost exclusively with the linguistic codes. The time has come, however, when we have to take greater theoretical account of the other coding network which operates at the documentary and bibliographical level of literary works. [/] Not that scholars have been unaware of the existence of these bibliographical codes. We have simply neglected to incorporate our knowledge into our theories of text. (1991:77-78)

This last point is worth emphasizing in the present case. Savidis knew the complicated bibliographic codes of the Cavafy corpora better than any of his contemporaries, as his 1966 study brilliantly attests. What I discern as worthy of discussion and debate today lies not in his vast *bibliographic* knowledge but in its application as *textual criticism*. Aligned with the broader institutional goals of Modern Greek philology, which had charged itself with shoring up a national canon from scattered fragments, Savidis' edition created a unified and uniform Cavafy whose complicated social and material textual history was rendered illegible. And in doing so, Savidis simultaneously rendered illegible his own active role as editor in the production of meaning.

Be that as it may, one sensed the changes being effected in Savidis' introduction and its narrative strategies. Precisely because the edition was “popular” (rather than “critical”), its four-page introductory note addressed itself not to a narrow field of

scholars but to a national Greek readership. As such, even if it made no gestures to the textual history of the Cavafic corpus, its rhetoric provided ample evidence of the ideological field that now governed it. As McGann has observed, it was primarily in the introductory pages of such “non-specialist” editions, addressed as they were to mass contemporary readerships, that one found most clearly articulated the following indisputable fact: “contemporary needs call out and define the character of the edition” (1983:101). That is, the textual critic is but one more agent in the continuing story of a work’s historical transformations, adapting it to new social fields and audiences, and if critical editions tended to mask this fact, the narrative gestures of popular editions often revealed quite a lot more. Just as Cavafy’s “corpora” forty years earlier had been informed by and shaped under the pressures of their time and space—transmitting, as I wrote in the previous chapter, their “intensities”—so too was Savidis’ Cavafic corpus (perhaps even more powerfully) shaped under the pressures of its own time and space, and Savidis’ ideological alignments within them. Describing the last day of Cavafy’s life, Savidis began his introduction thus: “Mr. Kostis Petrou Photiadis Cavafy [...] the exiled lord of Greek Letters, closed, in the city of his birth, the seventieth circle of his earthly life and passed on to the circle of eternity: he became, once and for all, Cavafy” (9). There are at least two points worth pausing over here. First, Cavafy’s name has become a central component of the editor’s transformative project; both its multiplicity and mundane triviality have been cut down and crystallized to a trisyllabic trademark. Secondly and more importantly, Savidis introduces a crucial paradox: Cavafy has been “exiled,” yet he nonetheless lives in the city of his birth. He is, in short, both at home and not at home in Alexandria. Though Savidis is perhaps preparing his readers for «H

Πόλις» (“The City”), the first poem of Cavafy’s fourth thematic collection (and hence of Savidis’ volume), the larger implications are clear. Living beyond the margins of the Greek State, Cavafy has been exiled from his true home: the canon of Greek Letters. Reversing the “othering” language of some of the earlier Athenian journals and newspapers, Savidis was now welcoming the exile “home.” This edition, readers were to understand, would convey him there. To see just how, I’ll look to a final passage from the introduction:

[Cavafy] could [...] rest with the clean conscience of a faithful servant [αγαθός δούλος], who had neither hid away his talents nor prostituted them to the cosmopolitan deserts of Alexandria, nor to the Balkan dusts of Athens, but rather he cast them into the most neglected lands of Hellenism, and he watered them and he resurrected them with all his tears and all his blood. (10)

Here too several points of concern bear comment. First, Savidis tacitly omits the fact that Cavafy did indeed “hide” quite a few of his talents. In reality, one of the crucial tensions running throughout Cavafy’s entire poetic production, as I’ve discussed above, is that of the public versus private articulation, the hidden versus published papers—tensions that are henceforth to be silenced or “solved” by the Complete Edition. Secondly, Savidis unexpectedly fills Cavafy’s poetry with *blood and tears*. It is as if Cavafy’s poetics have emptied of their playful irony and filled instead with Seferis’ solemnity. Most importantly, however, Savidis renders Cavafy a “faithful servant” (in fact, more literally a “virtuous slave”) of Hellenism. Whose Hellenism, though? True, the passage recognizes—even flaunts—that Hellenism once extended far beyond the “Balkan backwater” of the Modern Greek state. Nonetheless, by the mid 1960s all that had

effectively remained of Hellenism in the eastern Mediterranean was Greece itself.<sup>95</sup> And, as Leontis has shown, it was a Hellenism that had been transformed from fluid “process” to fixed “Institution.” Readers of Savidis’ introduction would by and large have understood their Cavafy as a “slave” of this second, institutionalized Hellenism. Savidis later made as much clear in a public lecture, arguing that “Cavafy’s victory (in his battle to pass from the drama of the *Ego* to the catharsis of the *We*) becomes the victory also of the Greek conscience, in the years when the *Grand Idea* had shipwrecked and thus deprived the nation of its worldly brace” (quoted in Tsirkas 1971:22). If Cavafy’s poems had once evinced a cautious, skeptical engagement with Hellenism as process, Savidis now swept them up into postwar Helladic politics, making Cavafy a bondservant of Hellenism as Institution. The poet had become a “brace” (*αντιστόλι*: an object that is, by necessity, a singular, unified and dense mass) that was shoring up the nation.

As for the poems themselves, in Savidis’ edition they were now a sort of “textual wing” of the archeological exhibits of which Seferis wrote above. Indeed, like the readers of Seferis’ *Essays*, Savidis’ readers gathered up Cavafy’s scattered Hellenisms and nostalgically consumed them wholesale in a set of sleek, slender and laconic books, not a single page of which bore the traces of (or remarked upon) the poems’ multiple material pasts. The poems’ bibliographic code had been erased and “reset” in the name of a mass, national readership. It was with this logic, then, that Savidis could write, “And nothing certainly would satisfy [Cavafy] more deeply than to know that we would celebrate the one hundred years since his birth, and the thirty years since his death, first and foremost with the first popular edition of his Poems, which also inaugurates the first edition of his

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<sup>95</sup> There would remain, of course, the Greeks of Cyprus, but their literary world was, to a degree at least, both marginalized and colonized by the national canon of the Greek state and its own brand of Hellenism. We need look no further than Seferis’ own Cyprus poems.

Complete Works” (ibid). Cavafy was at last completed. Finished. At least, that is, if you were looking for him in the pages of Savidis.

### ***Cavafy Unbound***

When we talk about Cavafy’s poetry during his lifetime, we often gravitate toward the person of Cavafy himself. It’s not entirely our fault, of course. There’s an entire critical history pulling us in this direction, one that began even during Cavafy’s lifetime but was normalized, as I noted earlier, by the early studies of Alitherses and Malanos. It was finally cemented, I think, by Savidis’ influential bibliographical and philological analysis in 1966. Today, this author-centric approach has grown—and this is an understatement if anything—terribly claustrophobic. Dimitris Kargiotis, in a polemic article strategically published in the final month of the “Year of Cavafy,” asks his readers: “Is there something that remains yet to be said about Cavafy after a century of Cavafology? Is there some aspect of his work that demands further investigation? [...] Everything’s been said about Cavafy, or at least the most important things; and everything that’s been said is surely enough.”<sup>96</sup> In the ensuing pages, Kargiotis constructs a damning catalogue of Modern Greek philology’s sins, built upon the double foundation of “Cavafy” (as a canonized brand name) and his archive (which in fact constituted the private property of the Savidis family from the 1960s until 2013).<sup>97</sup> Kargiotis’ indictments are representative

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<sup>96</sup> *Νέα εστία* no. 1860 (Dec. 2013):743.

<sup>97</sup> Kargiotis writes, “Savidis was the architect of the Greek version of [philology], basing his vision on [...] a series of presuppositions (which have been abandoned elsewhere for some time but are, in many respects, still active here in Greece): among them, the romantic conviction regarding artistic genius and, as a result, the creator as the center of interpretive interest [...] and, in the end, his sanctification, usually after death. [...] Modern Greek philology was reduced to theology, and the philologist to a faithful servant. [...] Neither would Savidis have become ‘G.P. Savidis’ if there had not been C.P. Cavafy, nor would Cavafy have become ‘Cavafy’ if there had not been Savidis. [...] He managed to become master of that which was destined to turn Cavafy into ‘Cavafy’: that which dozens of Modern Greek scholars longed to see and



of the growing dissatisfaction that attends the author-centric approach, which shaped both the field of Cavafy studies and, more generally, Modern Greek philology. If indeed there is something “left to be said” about Cavafy’s poetry—and I would like to believe that there is—then we must be careful to divorce it from the exclusive figure of “Cavafy.”

This is particularly crucial as we continue to await the production of a scholarly edition. How, we might ask ourselves in light of the above, might such an edition host the poems of Cavafy in all their multiplicity? And just as importantly, how might such an edition not simply preserve but indeed embody the same logic of the poems themselves? A printed codex, I feel, might possibly simulate the editions, yet I fear that it would struggle to remain faithful to their spirit. While a digital platform too holds its own possible pitfalls (none greater than the massive demands of coordination and maintenance), the MLA Committee on Scholarly Editions’ 2015 White Paper, “Considering the Scholarly Edition in the Digital Age,” offers hope for an emerging set of best practices. If coordinated properly, a digital format might promise not to bring forth a single text, buttressed by a critical apparatus, but to allow readers to explore, on their own terms, the poems’ multiplicity of forms. This might occur through a coordinated and collaborative digital archive—one that reaches well beyond the “Cavafy archive” to incorporate a broader range of Cavafy’s “collections” and ephemeral print—or, alternatively (or additionally), through a digital edition based on the standards of the Text Encoding Initiative. The 2015 White Paper posits that, using these standards, digital interfaces “can serve as environments for manipulation and exploration of the edition’s textual space and also as environments within which the user can occupy the role of a

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touch; that which spawned Modern Greek positions at universities; that which was the sole guarantor of authorized speech about Cavafy, in short, that which constituted the example of fetishism that characterized and still characterizes Modern Greek philology: The Cavafy Archive” (748-50).

contingent editor, examining less-traveled editorial paths and their interpretive consequences.”<sup>98</sup> Ideally, such an edition of Cavafy’s poems would grant us access to the multiple witnesses, bindings and inscriptions that have been assembled, dispersed, circulated, and reassembled across the century—and, through the larger collaborative archive, to the networks of transnational Greek print that interlaced the Eastern Mediterranean and subtly shaped Cavafy’s poems. Secondly, and finally, such an edition would also reproduce and augment the logic of Cavafy’s own textual assemblages. Inviting readers to “occupy the role of contingent editor,” it would foreground both the textual and geographic flux that I’ve described above, the “intensities” that made Cavafy’s poems so fluid and pliant.

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<sup>98</sup> <https://scholarlyeditions.mla.hcommons.org/2015/09/02/cse-white-paper/>.

## Chapter Three

### A Turkish Commons-Place

*O kadar dağılmışım ki kendim olabilmek için benden başka bir yere kaçmam lazım.*

*It seems I'm so scattered that, in order to be able to become myself, I have to flee somewhere other than myself.*

- Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (2013:214)

#### ***Introduction***

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, whose novel *Huzur* forms the core of this chapter, was known to lose control of himself. He might begin one evening, for example, dining with friends at a tavern and, before the plates had been collected, find himself physically mauling someone at an adjacent table. Such was the case on November 6<sup>th</sup> 1938, when Tanpınar assaulted İsmail Habib, a prominent literary critic. If this small piece of news was soon forgotten with the monumental (and, soon thereafter, monumentalized) death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk four days later, it is worth returning to here. The reason for their fight was simple but revealing: the latter had neglected to include any mention of Tanpınar in his book-length study of modern (i.e., twentieth-century) Turkish literature, *Our New Literature* (1932), which was, incidentally, the *only* book-length study of modern Turkish literature at the time. Tanpınar had failed to make it into the book, as Habib reportedly said to his face, because he had published no book of his own. “I’m a man,” the critic remarked, “who talks about works! If you had any work worthy to pass into book form, it

would be natural to talk about you too!”<sup>1</sup> The ensuing brawl was quickly broken up by the tavern’s staff, yet a few minutes later, when Habib rose from his table and approached Tanpınar (apparently to apologize to Tanpınar’s companions for the tumult), the latter understood this as a provocation and again leapt up in a rage. Panicking, Habib slipped and fell to the floor. At this, Tanpınar pounced on his prey and made short work of what was, sadly, the only person on the planet to have published a book-length study of modern Turkish literature.<sup>2</sup>

Another decade would pass before Tanpınar at last made it into his own book of fiction, publishing his novel *Huzur* (A Mind at Peace) with Remzi in 1949. This was, in fact, the only novel of Tanpınar’s to “pass into book form” during his lifetime. Most of his work circulated instead in serial and ephemeral print, opening itself up to a series of textual assemblages that quickly exceeded Tanpınar’s own control. Just as he had been unable, in 1938, to rein in his temper in the tavern, Tanpınar was likewise unable for the entirety of his career to rein in his textual productions. As I wrote above, he had lost control. Shortly after his death, the philologist Ömer Faruk Akün noted, “Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’s writings are scattered across various journals and newspapers. Just as he did not bother to save the cutouts of his printed writings, he often was unable to remember where some of them had been printed. Sometimes it’s possible to come across them in the most unexpected of places” (quoted in Dirin 2002:152). The “unexpected” adventures of Tanpınar’s essays, novels, short stories and poems are instructive for us here in at least two ways. First, they speak to a larger truth about Turkish literature during the Republican period: it thrived only piecemeal in serialized and ephemeral print, scattering

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<sup>1</sup> “İki edib arasında sert bir münakaşa oldu.” *Cumhuriyet* 7 Nov. 1938.

<sup>2</sup> At Habib’s death in 1954, Tanpınar described his shame at this event (which he cryptically referred to only as “a certain small incident”) and his eventual reconciliation with the former (1969:459).

its texts across an equally scattered print network, as the first half of this chapter will detail. Secondly, by submitting his writing to such a print system, Tanpınar effectively renounced all hope of shoring up his textual corpus, parceling it out and opening it up instead to a series of assemblages that favored proliferation, multiplication, and reformulation. It's precisely this process that links the unlikely couple of Cavafy and Tanpınar, as even a cursory glance at the previous chapter suggests. Yet the two cases are by no means the same. A close and careful comparison reveals a subtle difference between these two textual histories—a difference that marks, moreover, the next stage in my study's narrative: to wit, the degree of authorial control that each exerted over this process. For while Cavafy had embraced the open-ended assemblage as his model for textual promulgation, it was a process that he nonetheless administered closely. True, my research has highlighted the hands of others, such as typesetters and readers, at certain small but crucial junctures of this process, yet their interventions nearly always occur in conjunction with Cavafy or at least within his field of vision. The adventures of Tanpınar's texts, however, demonstrate a significant reduction of authorial control and invite us to consider a decidedly more polyphonic, raucous process of assembly, one that I will call the "commons-place book" in a later section of this chapter.

Some might object: okay, perhaps this was true of his prose, but what about his poetry? On multiple occasions, he wrote of his poems as a space of pure and autonomous aesthetics, a kind of "chasing after oneself" (*şiiirde kendimin peşindeyim*) that radically turned away from the world. In what is now known as his "Letter to a Young Girl from Antalya," he described himself as "a man who ultimately separates [poetry] from the realm of the human [...]. Poetry is more a matter of keeping quiet than of speaking"

(2000:352). Without a doubt, such pronunciations accurately describe Tanpınar's *ideal* of the poet and her/his text, yet it was hardly a reality: his poems emerged not from "silence" but a distinctly social domain in which reverberated several human voices. In the first days of 1959, two years before his death, Tanpınar complained in his diary of a debt amounting to 4,000 liras, writing, "4,000 liras! This means that someone could save me [only] by buying off my debt or my books"; two days later, he continued, "A few financial endeavors. I don't hope anything from any of them. I'm ready to sacrifice even my poems. But who would give the money?" (2013:146). The penultimate verb here is revealing. Within such a logic, publishing became a sacrificial act, whose victim could only be understood as the writer's authoritative text. Tanpınar was not long in making this poetic sacrifice, as one reads from his correspondence with Hüsmettin Bozok, the publisher of Yeditepe. Yet despite his contractual obligations and his obvious need for money, Tanpınar continued to drag his feet. In September of the next year, he wrote to Bozok:

According to our contract, the time for the book release is nearing. And this has me thinking a great deal. I'm now looking at the book with a calm and even eye, which I was given by this chance to rest and remove myself<sup>3</sup> from a series of useless odd jobs for money; if you want the truth, I don't like it, and, what's more, I'm afraid. It seems to me that [...] it isn't complete, with a book-like dignity [*bir kitap haysiyetiyle*]. (quoted in Alptekin 2010:50)

Tanpınar was clearly torn between two competing domains: on the one hand, his idea of autonomous aesthetic production; and, on the other, the realities of Turkey's literary market, which failed to provide writers with even the most basic material foundation to achieve such autonomy. Drawing from this same letter, Tanpınar's assistant Turan

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<sup>3</sup> Tanpınar had received a Rockefeller Grant that year to work in Paris, gathering sources for the second volume of his academic work, a history of Turkish literature. This would remain incomplete.

Alptekin later observed, “It is clear that *Poems* was born from the pressure of economic duress. And for this reason, with the insistence of his return from France, the book was published without a section of poems that he had intended” (2010:53). Lacking an entire section of poems, as well as several prose poems slated for a second volume and a host of orphaned early poems still lost in ephemeral print, Tanpınar’s *Şiirler* could only under the loosest of definitions be understood to have “collected” his poetry together.

Understandably, it was also host to several typographical errors, due perhaps to the typesetters’ negligence but just as likely to Tanpınar’s inscrutable handwriting.<sup>4</sup> Nearly fifteen years after Tanpınar’s death, these missing pieces were incorporated by Mehmet Kaplan into a book titled *Bütün Şiirleri* (Complete Poems), yet many of the typographical errors were repeated, and, according to Alptekin, editorial construction of the book diverged from authorial intentions in both the arrangement of the poems included and the exclusion (whether intentional or in error) of certain stanzas or, in one case, an entire poem (53-54). Even in poetry (what Tanpınar called his “foundation”<sup>5</sup>) his texts remained in pieces, shot through with additions, subtractions, transformations and disjunctions.

Tanpınar’s own biography was likewise shot through by similar disjunctions. Born in 1901, he had spent his youth shuffling from city to city within Turkey as a result of his father’s profession as a judge. While he would eventually settle in the city of his birth, Istanbul, this shuffling continued for much of his early adult life, as he finished his

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<sup>4</sup> Tanpınar continued until his death to use the old Ottoman alphabet in his manuscripts. While this was admittedly a common practice for his generation, Tanpınar’s case was compounded by poor penmanship. Transcribing this idiosyncratic Ottoman script into Latin-based print often proved difficult, particularly as younger printers and editors, lacking the same facility in the old script, entered the field. Alptekin writes of a peculiar prize initiated by the editor in chief of *Yeni İstanbul* (the daily paper that serialized Tanpınar’s novel *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* in 1954), by which the editor who found the most transcription errors won. Yet due to the many “typos with no workable solution [i.e., in which the illegible manuscript was of no help], no one was able to claim the prize” (70).

<sup>5</sup> In his diary, Tanpınar wrote that “poetry is the foundation; the novel provides the fame” (2013:299).

studies as a teacher of literature and moved to Erzurum, Konya, and then Ankara to teach. In 1932, he secured a position in Istanbul, the city where he was to remain until his death. In 1939, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the Tanzimat Reforms, the Ministry of Education created the first university chair for nineteenth-century Turkish literature, in the recently re-organized (1933) Turkish Language and Literature Department at Istanbul University. Until 1939, the department's literature curriculum had terminated with the start of the nineteenth century; in this sense, while the new position failed to address twentieth-century literature, it was nonetheless considered the first chair of "modern" Turkish literature at the university level. Tanpınar gained the appointment.

The financial woes of his career, as demonstrated by his *Poems*, were a prime force in the serialized and ephemeral nature of Tanpınar's print, which consistently evolved across multiple media before reaching its terminal form (usually after his death). Even so, personal finances were not the only factor at play. Focusing less on the particulars of Tanpınar's career and looking instead at the larger systemic structures of Turkish print, the first half of this chapter will argue that the financial insecurity of writers, which was indeed endemic, constituted but a single point within a larger constellation of social, material, cultural, organizational and legal factors that by midcentury, with the publication of *A Mind at Peace*, was still preventing nearly anyone from achieving a "book-like dignity." Unlike Cavafy, whose shifting print assemblages took advantage of the system in which they worked (rather than fighting against it), Tanpınar was deeply torn. While he clearly sought out a form of production and consumption that would centralize textual authority, a sensitive reading of his work suggests that it simultaneously explored (and occasionally exploited) an alternative formation, one in which literature



became not an object to be consolidated or controlled but a kind of common property to be assembled, disassembled, culled and re-assembled by a number of hands. As the second half of this chapter will argue, for such an understanding of literature the dismal “failures” of Turkey’s decentralized print and book networks might also become bright opportunities.

### ***“In A Constant State of Becoming”***

All “opportunities” aside, however, Tanpınar had a very real thirst for textual stability. It was a thirst whose tragic urgency one reads perhaps most intimately in the recently published fragments of his diaries. Writing in 1954, for example, as he struggled to revise and reformulate his serialized novel *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (The Time Regulation Institute) into book form, he bitterly complained, “Everything in my life is incomplete and in pieces [*yarım ve parça parça*]” (116). Returning regularly to this theme, he eventually leveled the blame at the entirety of Turkey: “A few books and a few poems... If only I could say all [my] thoughts before they’re gone [*or, possibly, “before I’m gone”*]! Turkey, you’ve destroyed me!” (311). It was not that Tanpınar had failed to generate his thoughts; the problem was gathering them in print and distributing them in a bound, semi-permanent form to a mass audience. At times, Tanpınar seemed to recognize that the re-assessment and consolidation of his work would likely follow his death. “One day of course they’ll return to me,” he wrote; “but when?” (253). Just as importantly, one might append a second question: “*How* will they return to me?” Tracing briefly the reception history of Tanpınar and tying it to the field of textual criticism (i.e., the physical reconstruction of his texts), this section will answer both those questions.

Tanpınar likely aimed these lines in his journal at the small clique of Turkey's literary intelligentsia, whom he accused of "assassination by silence" in the final decade of his life. Their "silence," as perceived by Tanpınar, was as much political as aesthetic. Reacting against Turkey's increasingly politicized literary climate during the final decade of his life, with the rise and fall of the conservative (and increasingly autocratic) Demokrat Party, Tanpınar later wrote in his diary:

In Turkey, everything's a political struggle. [...] The right doesn't see me as sufficiently 'one of them,' as sufficiently monopolist, as sufficiently ignorant. The left is hostile to me. [...] Those on the right speak only of a Turkish history with its eyes closed, unable to move beyond self-praise learned by rote; they speak only of domestic politics and propaganda. The left says that Turkey does not exist and that there's no need for it to exist; or it says something like that. (291)

Committed as he was to a centralized authorial system, bolstered by a national publishing network and its readership, Tanpınar saw as anathema the left's supposed endorsement of "a Turkey that folds more and more, breaking up a little more each day" (ibid) into an internationalist culture with no center.<sup>6</sup> Tanpınar also lambasted the political right for their multiple failures—in particular, their oversimplification of national culture and their failure to integrate it into the world system. Such a view, he judged, would never allow Turkish literature to flourish abroad; it would never create the necessary networks for exporting authorial brands to Europe and beyond. This was the climate in which Tanpınar saw himself.

Following his death, over the course of the 1960s and 70s, as Marxist-Leninist thought came to dominate literary criticism in Istanbul, at least a few leftists tentatively turned their eyes again to Tanpınar, hoping to wrest him from what had become the

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<sup>6</sup> Actually, most factions of Turkey's left embraced some form of nationalist populism. See footnote 26.

hermeneutic monopoly of the right.<sup>7</sup> At least implicitly, the battle was waged on the level of the material text; the fact that much of his prose writing remained out of print or, when it was finally re-issued, ridden with errors,<sup>8</sup> or that other texts remained lost in ephemeral print, was part and parcel of the hermeneutical debate. İlyas Dirin, for example, writes of certain texts that have been ignored, despite the fact that they appeared in an early, incomplete bibliography (published shortly after Tanpınar's death). At the forefront of these neglected articles, Dirin opines, are

texts that [Tanpınar] wrote after the May 27th Coup of 1960, wherein he adopted the perspective of the [Kemalist] CHP and criticized with a truly heavy language both the Demokrat Party and Adnan Menderes [...]. One has the impression that these texts were ignored for years with the aim of keeping Tanpınar out of the hands of leftists. Ultimately, the fact that some of Tanpınar's known texts, whatever their character may be, have been neglected in this way [...] constitutes an obstacle to our seeing Tanpınar, in our literature, as a whole [*bir bütün olarak*]. (2002:165)<sup>9</sup>

This was the same wholeness and completion of which Tanpınar had written so longingly in his personal diaries and against which, I'll argue below, he took a more complicated stance in his other prose. In any case, fueled, as Dirin shows, by Tanpınar's textual fragmentation, the political tug of war over his legacy continued intermittently until the violent 1980 coup, which decimated Turkey's political left and shattered its intellectual networks. From this point onward, approaches to Tanpınar took yet another turn, distancing themselves from overt political structuralism and adopting a more nuanced

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<sup>7</sup> For a symptomatic early reading of Tanpınar from the right, see H. Birol Emil (1957). For a symptomatic reassessment of Tanpınar from the left, see Selâhattin Hilav (1973). For a leftist reaction *against* Tanpınar during the same period, resituating him as a right-leaning nationalist, see Hilmi Yavuz (1973). For an even later attempt to reconcile and synthesize both Hilav and Yavuz, defining Tanpınar as a neither a crypto-leftist nor a conservative but a "secularist," see Ahmet Oktay (1988).

<sup>8</sup> For complaints of the dozens of typographical or editorial errors (allegedly, 96 of them) in the second edition of *A Mind at Peace*, which, incidentally, was not released until over ten years after Tanpınar's death, see Fethi Naci's article "*Huzur*" (1973:23) and the final page of Hilav (1973).

<sup>9</sup> For a similar discussion, see Alptekin (63-64).

aesthetic program.<sup>10</sup> By the 2000s, Zeynep Bayramoğlu was speaking of a “Tanpınar who is constantly in a state of becoming and who, upon a journey to the depths of his complicated works, always offers a new face for discovery” (2007:32). In effect, she registered an open-ended Tanpınar, one who was by no means de-politicized but certainly unmoored from facile political allegory, turning him into a kind of never-ending construction site.

Other critics, such as Nurdan Gürbilek and Nergis Ertürk, have emphasized that this is due, in large part, to Tanpınar’s own fascination with historical, cultural, and linguistic fragmentation, turning his works into a kind of Republican-era construction site—a site, however, whose own structures are never completed or secured.<sup>11</sup> Using *A Mind at Peace* as its base, my chapter aims to expand the insight of those like Gürbilek and Ertürk to yet another field: textuality. For while the history of Tanpınar’s reception has so richly opened up for us the crises of political economy, of culture and of language that sustain his aesthetic production, still missing is the text itself—i.e., as both a material object and a social process. Here too Tanpınar recognized that there was no stable core. There was, in other words, no central authority strong enough to bind the text together, to police its boundaries and to disseminate it widely. In Republican Turkey, the text too was broken.

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<sup>10</sup> The violence of the 1980 coup is exemplified by its purges and/or mass trials of tens of thousands of leftist elements in secondary education, higher education, and newsprint and publishing. Following this, the state orchestrated a revision of school curricula (see Findley 2010:352ff). The coup forced literary production and criticism to abandon political orthodoxies and search out new, stylistically more complex forms and meanings. For a sample of early readings of Tanpınar within the post-1980 period, see Berna Moran’s detailed studies (1983) of *A Mind at Peace* and *The Time Regulation Institute*.

<sup>11</sup> While Gürbilek ties this “evacuation” primarily to the domain of cultural history, Ertürk’s deconstructionist approach explores the same evacuated core within the field of language—namely, the Turkish Language Reforms and “the *emptiness* of [their] order” (130; emphasis hers).

### ***Piecing Together A Mind at Peace***

*A Mind at Peace* was first printed serially in the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* over approximately four months in 1948. When it appeared again the following year as a bound book, it boasted a series of heavy revisions and additions. Dr. Cahit Tanyol, in his review of the book, concluded somewhat ambiguously, “I can’t know whether Tanpınar’s novel *A Mind at Peace* will be able to secure for itself the profit and peace of mind that it deserves. But Turkish literature has profited greatly” (1949). The ambiguity, of course, lies not in the novel’s contents, which Tanyol praised, but in its ability to survive in Turkey’s larger print ecology, once it had been “released into the wild.” His misgivings were well founded. *A Mind at Peace* failed so spectacularly to secure a profit or unite a readership around itself that a second edition was not published until over twenty years later, long after Tanpınar’s death.<sup>12</sup> And even if certain intellectuals like Tanyol immediately recognized the cultural capital that the book promised for Turkish literature, the truth is that modern Turkish literature itself was an incoherent term in 1949. True, it was under debate in the popular press, yet the low sales of literary works, the existence of only one critical study on twentieth-century Turkish fiction (İsmail Habib’s book from the introduction), and its total absence from the syllabi of schools and universities left “modern Turkish literature” in an institutionally precarious position. Before I begin to integrate the book within this larger network of institutions, however, I want to use this section, first of all, to introduce the work’s plot and themes and, secondly, to let it speak on its own terms about the history of the book in the early Turkish Republic.

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<sup>12</sup> This second edition was published in 1970 by the conservative newspaper *Tercüman*, as part of its series *1001 Temel Eser* (1001 Foundational Works). The series was primarily concerned with assembling a nationalist patchwork of texts documenting or celebrating Turkish culture. Unfortunately, their edition of *A Mind at Peace* was crippled by errors (see footnote 8 above).

The monolectic title of the original translates roughly to *tranquility*. It's a concept towards which the protagonist Mümtaz strives but never attains. Within the work's intricate solar system the term *huzur* ultimately functions, I suggest, as a sense of balance: between self and community; between the inner world of intellect and the outer material world; between composition and dispersion; possession and loss. And, on a more basic level, between love and obsession, as Mümtaz struggles to cope with the loss of his former love Nuran, who has decided to return to her former husband, as we learn in the first section of the book. It's this love and its loss that drive the plot.

In the first of four sections, readers follow Mümtaz as he sets out from the house of his sick cousin İhsan, one autumn morning in 1939, to secure a bedside caregiver and collect the rent from the shopkeeper using his aunt's property. Mümtaz's walk leads him through several interlocked sections of Istanbul, from the impoverished houses of possible caregivers to the property of his aunt, where he overhears the shopkeeper planning to hoard stock for the imminent war and its lucrative black market. Gloomily returning home from the shop later, Mümtaz learns from two acquaintances that his former love, Nuran, has reconciled with her estranged husband. With this, the novel opens into the second and longest section, leaping a year backward to follow the story of Mümtaz and Nuran's love, from their first acquaintance that spring to the long and heady strolls they undertook across the city and the Bosphorus over the summer.

During these walks, each new space opens up for the two lovers a new conversation on the cultural history of the city's Sunni Turkish heritage, which Mümtaz wants to re-imagine—not as it *was* per se, but rather as he needs it to be *now*, a newly constructed mirror that will reflect his own life and that of his society. One sees this, for example, in

Mümtaz's own manuscript, a book within the book, which he is writing on the Ottoman author Şeyh Galib. The manuscript is "scattershot" (*çok gelişi güzel var*), Mümtaz confesses, yet he plans to restructure it. The book's success, he says, depends "on the condition that [...] it explain *us*, us and our surroundings" (185; emphasis mine). Stuck between an antiquarian's love for the Ottoman past and, on the other hand, the need for a new *terkip* (composition, mixture) for the present, Mümtaz and Nuran spend the summer debating how best to assemble this mixture from the physical and intellectual fragments they encounter. Here, readers also encounter Suat, a distant relative of Mümtaz, who fills the role of a Dostoevskian anti-hero, representing the most extreme vision of the Kemalist reforms. With his clear, oversimplified solutions to modernity (discarding the Ottoman cultural heritage, severing social bonds and deifying the individual), Suat serves as the foil of Mümtaz's own confused vision. He carries his position to its most destructive extremes in a long debate during the third section. Oddly enough, this debate takes place in the wake of a traditional Sufi (Mevlevi) ritual that forms the third section's core. The music at the heart of this performance elicits from Tanpınar the most detailed description of the novel, during which Mümtaz feels himself approaching the Divine. Yet the feeling is fleeting. Suat's suicide, at the conclusion of the third section, drives Nuran into despair and away from Mümtaz, signaling the failure not only of Suat's contrived break with the past but also of Mümtaz's attempted synthesis with it.

The fourth and final section returns to the evening of the day with which the novel began, following Mümtaz again through the streets of Istanbul. After obtaining a bottle of pills for İhsan (whose condition has worsened), Mümtaz is accosted by the apparition of Suat. Arguing that Mümtaz will never assemble the complete picture for which he strives,

Suat attempts first by logic and then by force to take him away, i.e., to death. Mümtaz refuses, contending that he has “things to do,” at which point Suat punches him in the head and knocks him to the ground, leaving his face and hands bloodied and the bottle of pills in pieces. When Mümtaz recovers, Suat is gone and the radio in a nearby window announces Germany’s invasion of Poland. Returning to İhsan, Mümtaz learns that the worst of his cousin’s illness has past, yet the good news does little to pull Mümtaz back from the abyss. Unable to collect himself, he collapses on the stairs while the radio and its news continues to haunt the house.

Early readers were already speaking of the novel’s basic struggle as one of assembling pieces into a whole.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, no one yet spoke of *A Mind at Peace* as a synthesis of East and West, a trope that was to become common in later decades<sup>14</sup> and that Berna Moran rejected as misguided. If there was any opposition to speak of, Moran claimed, it was between not European and Ottoman cultures but rather the genuine and the counterfeit, the pure and the imitation—*halis* and *taklit*, respectively (1983:243). Indeed, there is no character in the novel who even attempts to return to or resurrect an Ottoman or “Eastern” culture. As Gürbilek has succinctly quipped, in Tanpınar that “well has dried up.” Nor is there any Western culture in sight. Suat’s mode of thought, which might be misread as representing an absolute turn to Western Modernity, in fact can more accurately be described as the imitation (*taklit*) from Moran’s formulation.

Yet what of Mümtaz? If Suat represents “imitation” (*taklit*), does Mümtaz represent the “pure” (*halis*)? No. In fact, the term itself is misleading and might better be excised

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Sabahattin Eyüboğlu (1950) or, a decade later, Mehmet Kaplan (1962/1965:46).

<sup>14</sup> For example, Selâhattin Hilav’s analysis of Tanpınar (see footnote 7) began with the sentence: “Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar is a writer who brooded over and experienced to its depths the problem of West and East.”



from Moran's otherwise useful model. The word *halis* is used only once in the novel to describe culture, and in a way that is, in fact, quite "mixed": speaking of contemporary (i.e., Republican-era) musicians of classical Turkish music, the narrator writes of "masters like Emin Bey, who in our time have continued the classical arts from their purest [*en halis*] aspect, like an exotic plant that has come to love its [new] soil, or a late-coming spring [...]. In Mümtaz's opinion, these were the aspects in which our old music united with modern sentiment and understanding" (148). While these masters *draw from* the purest aspect of Ottoman music, they do so within a new soil, to which they have adapted. Furthermore, to Mümtaz himself they represent not purity but unity (*birleşmek*), achieved by means of admixture. This unity and totality, I argue, serves as the novel's primary problematic, achieved not through *purity* but through multiform assembly—what the novel indexes as *terkip*.

Crucially, this assemblage appears in much of the novel to be possible only through the agency of authoritative masters, like the musicians in the previous paragraph. It's precisely this individualized mastery that Mümtaz, as an aspiring author with his manuscript on Şeyh Galib, hopes to obtain. Thanks to the aid of Nuran, he nearly succeeds during the second and third sections of the novel, yet through a well-staged irony, we already know that his project has failed, having learned of Nuran's departure in the novel's first section, before we even meet her. And with her departure, Mümtaz too loses his totality. As Mehmet Kaplan wrote, "After he breaks up with Nuran, Mümtaz's complete personhood and world unhinge entirely [*darmadağın olur,* 'literally: 'are entirely scattered']" (1962/1965:31). This unhinging and scattering not only of the authorial self but of its world effectively foreclose any hope of assembling a totality in

the final pages of *A Mind at Peace*. Mümtaz's vision (and authorial ego) remain in pieces, seen clearly as he crumbles upon the stairwell in the work's final lines.

In the absence of the authorial form, the novel occasionally considers another agent of artistic assemblage: the people (*halk*). Toying with collective artistic productions, both written and oral, the novel attempts, from time to time, to gauge whether an aesthetic totality can be pieced together from such codices and songs. The crucial difference here, as I'll detail later in the second half of this chapter, lies in the murky bounds between production and consumption. Within such physical books and oral narratives, the identities of producer and consumer are difficult to disentangle.

Between these two poles, i.e., individual, author-centric networks and anonymous, collective assemblages, lay the terrain on which Turkey itself was being assembled. In the novel, one sees this most clearly in a lengthy political debate with which the third section can be said to open, led primarily by İhsan. In what unfolds as a friendly debate until the arrival of Suat some time later, İhsan poses the question of assemblage clearly: "[W]e must construct a building. What will that building be? Who knows the blueprints of the new Turk? We know only one thing. It must be planted on a series of roots. We must give back to our history its wholeness" (250). I want my readers here to take care lest they misconstrue this "historical wholeness" as "historical purity." İhsan advocates not a return to a pristine, integral past, but rather a kind of salvaging, a careful trawling of the pieces that remain from the ruined ship of the Ottoman past. Gathering up these pieces on dry land, he aims to build a new structure, one that embodies not a pure Eastern culture but an amalgam—a *terkip* (251). At this point, however, it's important to ask: from where will the pieces come? As everyone in the debate agrees, it ought to derive not

from Ottoman court culture but from the *halk*, or people; yet İhsan immediately warns against an unmediated use of this group and its cultural practices. “To what roots will we return? The *halk* and the life of the *halk* are at times a treasure; at other times, however, they are a mirage” (ibid). While advocating an eventual return to the people, he maintains that only the intelligentsia can assemble and enrich what he views as the limited fragments of folk art that remain—and only after that same intelligentsia has assembled *itself*, in the figure of the modern individual (254). Having been given the final word of the debate, İhsan closes with this elitist vision, centered on the intellectual who first authors his or her self and subsequently, by means of this self, his/her people.

Certainly, in this assemblage of selves and peoples there was more at stake than simply authorship. For while literary production was an important component of Republican Turkey’s re-structuring, it was entwined within larger concerns over the national economy’s shifting mode of production, the country’s transit and communication infrastructure, and, through these, the integration of the tens of thousands of villages and small towns and cities that remained in both economic and cultural disconnect. İhsan had in fact begun the discussion by setting the terms of the debate quite clearly: “On the one hand, we’re in the midst of a civilizational and cultural depression; on the other hand, we have a need for economic reform” (246). At the base of both these crises, as becomes clear in the ongoing discussion, was the dispersion of Turkey’s cultural and economic geography. İhsan continued: “[T]he true issue is that we haven’t been able to fit the land and people into our life. We have forty-three thousand villages; a few hundred large towns. Starting from İzmet head inland towards Anatolia, or from Hadımköy towards Thrace. Except for a few economic combines, you’ll see nothing but a continuation of the

old conditions. Our geography is gaping from place to place. We need to begin a strict population policy, a strict production policy” (248). The production policy, he adds, must be one of industrialization. In other words, for İhsan modernization can only be achieved by producing a culture of the masses, which in turn can only be achieved through mass production.<sup>15</sup>

As Benedict Anderson first argued, one of the key technologies of this production—that which most clearly joined the material and intellectual projects of massification—was print. Print was the bridge that would extend, if we use İhsan’s geographical frame, “from İzmet to Anatolia, from Hadımköy to Thrace.” Admittedly, print did not arrive to Turkey with the Republic, but had been shifting the region’s literary terrain since the post-Tanzimat era in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Distancing itself from the traditional Ottoman authorial system (e.g., *Divan*), which had been produced and promulgated within the court, much literature of the late-nineteenth century coalesced instead around new print media. Official patronage waned as “new forms of individual subjectivity and class formation, new media of communication, and new ideas about language and literary genres emerged” (Findley 2010:103).<sup>16</sup> More and more translations from European sources likewise opened new fronts and offset established notions of canon. While recent scholarship has generated a much more complicated understanding of the shifts in media, language, and canonicity that were being negotiated during this period, Tanpınar himself held a particularly damning opinion of post-Tanzimat literary networks. For him, it had managed to distance itself from traditional Ottoman forms and mediums without, however, toppling them or establishing a new center of gravity: “Two

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<sup>15</sup> A dozen years later, in the final year of his life, Tanpınar repeated this position in his diary (2013:257).

<sup>16</sup> See also Findley (1989:175) or, more recently, Zeynep Seviner (2015).

things could have been done: Either the old could have been toppled entirely and the new could have been founded in its place, or the old could be left to itself, to consume itself away, and alongside of it the new époque could be begun. Due to a combination of a lack of resources and a fear of stirring up reactions, those pushing the Tanzimat were forced to choose the second pathway, and suddenly [...] our life was split in two” (2000:41). Such a reading of late-nineteenth-century Ottoman culture, driven as it is by a problematic dichotomy, has been largely discarded by scholars today,<sup>17</sup> yet it’s indicative of the dominant Republican narrative. For Tanpınar in particular, the Tanzimat was a failed revolution that had decentered any sense of a unified canon, pushing writers towards Europe but “without systematization” (*programsız*), “groping in the dark” (*el yordamıyla*) in a way that had bequeathed to his own generation a morass. “The day that Baudelaire died,” Tanpınar remarked, “our Tanzimat writers—Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ziya Paşa—were all in Paris. But none of them talks about him. In any case, what *does* the Tanzimat talk about? They view Europe as a kind of apothecary to swing by and pick up a prescription when your head starts aching: after they’ve taken what they’ve come for, they quickly shut the door” (2000:259-60). Over half a century later, in Tanpınar’s mind, Turkish literature had yet to recover from its headache. It remained, in his estimation, radically decentered. In *A Mind at Peace*, Mümtaz the aspiring author registers this perceived fragmentation in what is largely his only productive contribution to the debate of the third section: “In Turkey today, we couldn’t find five books that all the generations have read” (251). This lack of a unifying canon and, hence, of a center

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<sup>17</sup> Laurent Mignon, for example, critiques Tanpınar’s “cultural essentialism” (*kültürel özcülük*), which, he bemoans, has been “the cause of post-Tanzimat literature being reduced to a problem of ‘East and West’” (2009:134). He also notes that Tanpınar ignored nineteenth-century Istanbul’s polyphony and multicultural nature, which had deeply shaped its textual production. “Istanbul,” Mignon writes, “was a literary environment where the same language was written with different alphabets and different languages were written with the same alphabet, and this reality must be reflected in literary studies” (143).

lies near the heart of Mümtaz's unease throughout the novel.

Turn, for example, to the middle of the first section, where Mümtaz is waiting for us in the used-book sellers market. Here, looking intently at a veritable quagmire of books, his words spill over from one paragraph to the next in a revealing train of thought:

[The books] lay waiting in stacks that were eternally foreign to any sense of order, on shelves, on top of coffee tables or chairs, piled one atop the other on the shop's furniture, as if they were preparing themselves for burial, or as if they were already buried, open for viewing from the place where they'd been lain to rest. And yet the East could nowhere—not even in its grave—remain a pure [*katıksız*] space. Next to these books, lying on makeshift stands [*işportalarında*], like an armful of witnesses to the change taking place inside of us, to our longing for an awakening, to our search for a new self in new climes, were novels with images on their covers, school books, Frankish almanacs with the green of their leather bindings fading, pharmacist formulae. Alongside an old fortune-telling guide there was Mommsen's *History of Rome*; alongside a few remnants of a Payot edition, Karakin Efendi's guide to fishing; there was a book of veterinary science, modern chemistry, the science of prognostication; as if there had been a need to put on display the entire disorder of the human mind here in the market, all these books were crowding together.

When seen in this way, all together, the human was nothing but a strange alloy [*halita*], like the works of some dyspepsia of the soul. Mümtaz knew that this alloy was a hundred years in the making, a hundred years of toiling, of ceaselessly trying to change one's clothes.

In order to be able to take the place of these abridged police novels, these Jules Vernes, these *Arabian Nights*, these *Tûtinâmes*, these *Hayatül hayvans* and *Kenzül havas*, an entire community [*bütün bir cemaat*] had passed a hundred years or more of soul sickness, had toiled, had gone through its birthing pains. (47)

Within such a dizzying passage, it's important first to gain one's bearings. The books mentioned in the first sentence of the first paragraph are stacked up in the shop of a used-book seller, and are set in opposition to the print materials listed immediately thereafter ("Next to these books ..."). There are, in other words, two classes of books here. And even if it is not always easy to demarcate or define them, the second group—the flashy novels, schoolbooks, European almanacs, etc.—marks in more or less unambiguous

terms the categorical chaos of the post-Tanzimat print market.

Yet two questions immediately arise. First, what are the books mentioned *before* these, with which the excerpt opens? Given the reference to the “East” and its failure to remain a “pure” space, I would tend to read these first books as representing earlier, pre-Tanzimat Ottoman materials. This interpretation is further supported by the subject of the very first sentence, which I have bracketed above as “The books” but in fact reads “the profundities of [...] a rich and magical tradition” (*zengin ve [...] büyüğü ananenin hikmetleri*). Rather than describing them as “books,” the novel’s choice of metonymy here is revealing. Immediately before the passage, Tanpınar writes of a spice seller, whose wooden boxes and dusty jars hold contents “in whose powers people had believed for centuries, had looked to them like the sole cure for their life and health’s disappearing harmony” (46). Both these jars and the books of the next sentence are, for Mümtaz, containers of a sort, in whose magical contents an entire culture once believed. By 1939, however, these pre-modern books have lost any categorical principal that might organize them or give them meaning for most Turkish readers. Remember, they are described as stacked with an equally—indeed, *eternally* (*ebediyete kadar*)—chaotic method on every surface of the shop. Moreover, they are openly, if metaphorically, portrayed as dead and buried. Crowding around the reader here like mute and nameless spirits of the underworld, they literally signify nothing.

The second question I would pose, to better orient myself in the market, is whether the post-Tanzimat books are contained *inside* the shops of the booksellers or, as seems much more likely, stacked pell-mell in the street *outside*. The makeshift tables (*işportalar*) on which they lie are reserved not for shop owners but wandering street

vendors. If this second reading is correct, the printed books of the late nineteenth century are literally homeless, sitting in the street. While the classical, pre-modern Ottoman books are dead and buried within the shop, their prodigal children of the post-Tanzimat era are scattered in the street. In Tanpınar's logic, it was a telling fate for post-Tanzimat literature, which had willfully unmoored itself from the Ottoman court.

Sifting through the debris of this passage, one soon realizes that East / West is not an operative criterion here: the passage's final sentences suggest that Turkish producers of the book have, with equal urgency—and equally inconclusively—struggled to take the place not only of European police novels but of the *Arabian Nights*. More importantly for this chapter, neither can the proprietary entities of publisher or author be said to organize these books in any meaningful way. Most of them are anonymous, and the few that bear the names of publishers or authors are foreign editions (German, Swiss/French) that have somehow washed up upon the shores of the Bosphorus. Or, as is possibly the case with the pluralized “Jules Vernes,” some might be translations—what we would today more aptly call *unlicensed adaptations*—by local Ottoman “translators” whose creative agency was much greater than would today be assumed. In short, it is difficult to distinguish foreign and local production in the post-Tanzimat books scattered outside the shop. The single title that appears both to be of local origin and to bear an authorial name is, in fact, the work of an Armenian, Karakin Deveciyan, published in 1915 in Ottoman Turkish. The name of the author, which is glaringly non-Turkish, and the book's title, which holds little of aesthetic value to Tanpınar, offer no aid in his quest for an implicitly ethnic-nationalist literary canon.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Deveciyan's book was translated and expanded into a French edition in 1926, arousing a degree of interest abroad that, ironically, Tanpınar's own novel would wait over half a century longer to achieve.



As Mümtaz's thoughts unfold, he concludes that the only criterion for the pages and bindings here is, in fact, the lack of any criterion, generated by the Tanzimat's reforms and the loss of its authoritative center. Indigestible, the books lie there "like the works of some dyspepsia of the soul." These manuscript and print materials have by now fallen out of circulation; they lie in the market, sloughed off like an old snakeskin. Ultimately, Mümtaz is searching neither for an Eastern nor a Western style (e.g., *divan* or *novel*); neither a manuscript nor a printed codex. Rather than particular forms or mediums, Mümtaz is in search of a centralized organizational rubric by which to link both the books themselves and their readers together, into some meaningful totality. In other words, the *particular* books of this market were clearly marked as catastrophic failures, having failed, in Tanpınar's opinion, to forge a new totality. Yet the book *as a category* also represented the primary site in which this piecemeal totality was again to be reassembled at midcentury. This time, it was to be hoped, with some greater degree of success.

### ***Reading***

Part of what made many of these books so foreign—if not to Mümtaz then to his younger readers—was their script. Eleven years earlier, Atatürk's unilateral decision to forcibly transition the entire print landscape of Turkish (over a span of just three months!<sup>19</sup>) to a Latin-based alphabet had opened for future readers an irreparable breach with the books of the past. Admittedly, some might detect in the 1928 script change the echoes of earlier vernacularizing programs from the late Ottoman period; for decades, stretching back to the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of Ottoman thinkers had

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<sup>19</sup> See Laurent Mignon (2010:15).

acknowledged the Ottoman script's polysemy, proposing various adjustments to the existing alphabet in order to better "capture" spoken Turkish.<sup>20</sup> Yet the Kemalist project went much further than these earlier revisionist proposals. First, it introduced not a modification but a staggering intellectual breach with the past. "Script revolution became," in Çolak Yılmaz's words, "an engine to establish a 'language without history.' It was an act of 'forgetting'" (2004:73). I'll return to this point briefly in the next chapter when discussing editorial practices but more important for us here was a second repercussion: alongside the long-term intellectual breach, the change in script opened a more immediate *material* breach as well, between publishers and their already fragile readerships.

Without overstatement, Turkey's publishers were economically crippled by the shift in script. First, the loss of capital reserves and the need for new expenditures overextended many firms. Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar writes, "With the adoption of the Latin alphabet, the book stocks of the publishers lost their value overnight as they were no longer allowed to sell books in the Ottoman script. [...] Furthermore, publishers and printing presses had to equip themselves with new type-sets and train the type-setters who would start working with the new alphabet" (2008:143). Secondly, many former readers simply stopped purchasing materials in the new script. These two factors, working in tandem, shuttered many publishers and drove those that survived into the arms of the state. Starting in 1928, many publishers survived only through the publication of basic literacy primers and educational materials, which were in large demand and whose primary customer was the state. Beginning in 1935, however, the regime assigned these alphabet primers—and, indeed, most educational materials—to its own publishing

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<sup>20</sup> For a concise discussion of these earlier debates, see Ertürk, 39ff.

operations in Ankara. To keep private publishers afloat, it began to set aside a portion of the Ministry of Culture's budget to purchase a fraction of the print run from many of the new books from each private publishing house; it then distributed these books—as İskit (1939:251) noted, over 96,000 copies of over 750 titles—to public or school libraries across the country. The fund, nearing a cumulative 150,000 liras by the Second World War, amounted to a massive state subsidy.<sup>21</sup> It only ended in 1939, with the state's agreement to let private publishers again print its extensive array of educational curricula and textbooks. Yet in a way, this too amounted to a kind of subsidy—one that grossly overdetermined publishers' priorities.

Less than a year after the change in alphabet, in August 1929, the journalist Zekeriya Sertel took stock of the new landscape in the editorial section of his monthly journal *The Month in Illustration*: “Before [the change in script] there were around ten journals, each one selling 15-20 thousand copies; today none of them is left. Those that continue to be printed have either gone into debt to remain open or have secured assistance from somewhere [viz., the regime]. It used to be that every week a handful of books would be printed [...]. Now only one or two books are printed per month, and those cannot sell. This is why the publishers print nothing but school books” (Aug. 1929, quoted in Akçura 2012:80). I want to take care here to emphasize, as Sertel observed, what was perhaps the most important repercussion of the alphabet reforms: the near omnipresence of the state in publishing, either through subsidies or state-owned publishing houses, and the massive turn towards alphabet primers and textbooks that it induced. After the Second World War, near midcentury, state publishing houses were still producing nearly twice as many books as the largest private house (Hasan Ali Ediz

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<sup>21</sup> Birinci Türk Neşriyat Kongresi (henceforth, “BTNK”), 1939:13.

1947). And, as before, the majority of these were schoolbooks. In short, literacy was the priority, not literature.

There was good reason for this. Ten years after the new alphabet's adoption, the crushing majority of the country remained illiterate. During the debates leading up to the new implementation, some advocates had gone so far as to argue that the Ottoman script was to blame for the country's widespread illiteracy,<sup>22</sup> yet the truth is that the alphabet itself was only one factor (and, as far as literacy is concerned, not a particularly important one) among multiple other factors and relations that structured the decentered nature of Turkey's print network. In this and the following three sections, I'll trace out three major strands of this network, moving in reverse: consumption, distribution, and production. In this section, I want briefly to explore the most pressing structural issue: literacy and reading. In the early summer of 1939, just a few months before Mümtaz encountered the Ottoman texts in the market, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Refik Saydam, stood before a body of printers, publishers, writers and intellectuals, inaugurating Turkey's First Publishing Congress. While it had been organized by Hasan Âli Yücel, the young and newly appointed Minister of Culture,<sup>23</sup> the opening address belonged to the Prime Minister himself. His speech began with a bold—and, this chapter would argue, a boldly premature—claim: “We have brought into being a national literature,” he stated; now, the mission of those assembled there was “to take it to the farthest village, and not just take it there, but to permanently maintain the pleasure of having it read [*okutmak zevkını daimî*

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<sup>22</sup> For this claim, see Çolak 70-71.

<sup>23</sup> Yücel had graduated from the same university and *faculté* as Tanpınar. For the latter's reflections on Yücel after his death, see his diary (2013:328). Yücel is best known today for his institution of the *Tercüme Bürosü* (Translation Bureau) and the *Köy Enstitüleri* (Village Institutes). For the Translation Bureau, see Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar (2008:67-73; 107 ff.) and Kader Konuk (2010:71-74); for the Village Institutes, see Karaömerlioğlu (1998a).

*surette idame etmek]*” (BTNK, 1939:9). When first reading Saydam’s speech, this last phrase caught me off guard. Where one would expect the exhortation “to instill the pleasure of reading,” instead the rather awkward construction above is encountered. The replacement of *okumak* (“to read”) with *okutmak* (“to make someone read”) is richly symbolic of the elitist, top-down methods of the state. Saydam spoke not of instilling and maintaining in the people of Turkey the pleasure of reading, but rather an instructor’s pleasure in *making* (or, at best, *letting*) those people read—in particular, making them read national literature (*bir milli kütüphane*). The paternalism of such a pleasure, which belonged not to the readers but to their instructors, is consistent with the larger history of Kemalist state reforms. Despite the nearly religious language with which state journals and statesmen celebrated the Turkish peasant, their reforms over the first decades of the Republican era had left the majority of rural citizens with little room for local agency.<sup>24</sup>

How did this play out in the state’s attempt to combat illiteracy and create a consumer base for its national canon? During the first census of 1927, national literacy was hovering around ten percent (Öztürk 2004:48). When one excludes the large urban centers from these data, literacy drops another quarter, to around six and a half percent. Clearly, this was a problem that, while not exclusively, was without a doubt predominantly endemic to Turkey’s rural villages, where the crushing majority of the country’s population was located. For the Republican elite, to address the question of literacy meant primarily to build schools in the Anatolian hinterland, yet I argue that so long as the larger labor market and socioeconomic structures in which these schools were

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<sup>24</sup> One sees this, for example, in the “People’s Houses.” Established by the regime in the early 1930s, these houses were intended to function, in M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu’s words, “as places where intellectuals and ordinary people should meet and bridge the gap that had widened between them” (1998b:70), yet it soon became clear that the Kemalist “state and Party were so concerned to control any autonomous and creative activity that local initiative was stifled by bureaucratic pressure” (72).

built continued unchallenged, literacy would show only modest gains. In *A Mind at Peace*, İhsan had insisted on industrialization and urbanization as a kind of panacea to Turkey's cultural woes. Admittedly, such industrialization eventually *did* reshape the cultural landscape of Turkey, yet this change would not begin until after Tanpınar's death and, moreover, would not shift the country's demographic majority until the 1980s. The young Republic was still an overwhelmingly peasant-based society; approximately 80% of its population worked in the agrarian economy (Findley 2010:277), within a semi-feudal socioeconomic structure known as the *ağalık* (large landowner) system, which left little time for literacy or literature. Large landowners distributed plots of land to *ortakçılar* (sharecroppers), whose products the former then sold to larger commercial firms.<sup>25</sup> These were precisely the "old conditions" that, according to İhsan above, had continued until the present (i.e., midcentury). True, there had been attempts at land reform. In 1935 the Ministry of the Interior prepared a Land Settlement Code (Toprak İskân Kanunu), which Atatürk himself endorsed the following year: "I expect [...] the Land Code to reach a result. It's absolutely necessary that every Turkish agricultural family become the owner of the land that it works and by which it survives" (quoted in Sencer 1999:87). The code, however, failed miserably to generate any results due, in Sencer's words, to "poor organization" (ibid). Alongside poor organization, it was also likely that internal tensions within the regime itself derailed these projects. The revolutionary Maoist İbrahim Kaypakkaya wrote that even if certain segments of the landowners later turned against the Kemalist CHP (forming, for example, the conservative Demokrat Party around Adnan Menderes), it was undeniable that "a portion

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<sup>25</sup> For an extended case study of the *ağalık* system in one village, from 1870-1945, see Mehmet Ecevit (1999:84-116).

of the landed elite were, from the very beginning, installed within the Kemalist regime and collaborating with it; their word had sway within the state” (2013:355). Kaypakkaya was alone—even among other leftists of his time<sup>26</sup>—in his condemnation not only of the Ottoman roots of the *ağalık* system but of Republican Kemalism, which he saw as compromised by it. Admittedly, there were multiple factions within the Kemalist state, some of which recognized the need for radical land reforms, yet the party as a whole never crossed the interests of the landed elite in any substantive way. The “Landing the Farmer” (*Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma*) Code of 1945, which had set itself high goals but failed in similar ways to the 1935 code, only reinforces this claim: of the land that was apportioned out, *less than one percent* was redistributed from private property; over 99% of its properties had come from public land, which were often agriculturally unsuitable (*verimi düşük topraklar*) (Sencer 93). This fact alone stands as a real testament to Kaypakkaya’s claim. Despite the presence of some factions with doubtlessly good intentions, in practice the regime was closely aligned with the interests of a semi-feudal landowning class.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> During the left’s most active period, from the 1960s to the 1980 coup, all factions (e.g., Doğan Avcioğlu’s *Yön / Devrim*; Doğu Perinçek’s *Aydınlık*; Mihri Belli’s *Millî Demokratik Devrim* and the splinter militant movements organized by those like Deniz Gezmiş and Mahir Çayan) shared, despite their differences, at least one commonality: they viewed the Kemalist revolution and Turkish nationalism as an important intellectual inheritance. Only İbrahim Kaypakkaya rejected them. For a treatment of the Turkish left during this period, see Şener 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Against this assessment, some might offer the Village Institutes as an important exception. Eventually numbering 21 in total, these largely self-administered schools aimed not only to spread literacy but to build needed infrastructure, such as roads, and to introduce modern agricultural methods to villagers. Yet if they were truly against the interests of the landed gentry, then why did the latter allow their implementation? Indeed, some landowners not only supported the institutes but provisioned them, as M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu notes (1998a:63). The reason was that, again, the state was appropriating land not from the ruling class but from the peasants (62) and that, moreover, a large landowner “would have liked the idea of Village Institutes because education in the institute would lead to the employment of skilled labour on his land” (63). Such was the case on paper, at least. In practice, things played out differently: the schools were literally built, staffed and attended by villagers themselves. Living and working together, the communities eventually created what Karaömerlioğlu has identified as “a sense of collective mentality” wherein “more radical populist ideas, which have historically tended to stress the significance of collective action and

Shortly after the publication of *A Mind at Peace*, Tanpınar was still lamenting that “we [consumers of Turkish literature] are very few in number. You can’t find a national literature with five or six thousand readers. [...] It goes without saying, our literary struggle [*edebiyat davamız*] is, at this point, solely in the hands of our literate. The holder of literature’s life is the masses” (1969:552). A decade after Refik Saydam’s challenge, the question remained: how to create such masses from the peasants of Turkey, bringing literature like *A Mind at Peace* to the furthest villages? And how to create the conditions in which the people of those villages could read it? Unlike Saydam, who had boasted of an already-existing national literature, Tanpınar recognized that it was only when the channels of circulation and consumption had been assembled and consolidated *in toto* could one speak of a national literature.

Tanpınar was not alone in this knowledge. For almost three months in 1949, the daily Istanbul newspaper *Akşam* surveyed a range of writers, publishers and intellectuals, asking them bluntly: “Why Hasn’t Authorship Developed [in Turkey]?” (*Muharrir Neden Yetişmiyor?*). It was perhaps emblematic that the question, which appeared day after day in large, bold typeface, circulated in the streets of Istanbul just as Tanpınar’s *A Mind at Peace* began its own circulation. While I’ll consider several of the responses over the course of this chapter, I want to begin here with Orhan Veli (Kanık), a young poet who had in fact studied under Tanpınar during high school, had later joined the Translation Bureau set up by Yücel’s Ministry of Culture, and had since become a founding member of the *Garip* movement. His response comprehensively summarizes the problem of

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goals, could well have appealed to the Village Institute students” (70). Therefore, while their foundation and spread was originally supported by both the urban and rural elite, the unforeseen development of collectivism and the growing noncompliance of many graduates (*ibid*) eventually led, among other larger geopolitical factors, to the closure of the Institutes. This was, I argue, the ultimate indicator of the regime’s indecisiveness and its inability to oppose landed interests and the social conditions from which they drew their power.



illiteracy, laying bare the superficial nature of the regime's education campaigns, however well-intentioned:

I think that the foremost of reasons is that we are a poor and illiterate nation. Whether a writer can develop depends on her/his writing becoming a commodity, one that costs money and allows the writer to live. Its commodification depends on its ability to find customers. Finding customers depends on the people [*halk*] knowing how to read and write and, moreover, having the money to pay for a book. Knowing how to read and write depends on their families' situation being stable enough to allow them to survive without difficulties—i.e., for them not to be forced to send their children to the fields, to the market, or to the factory. (*Akşam*, 31 Sept. 1949)

In Orhan Veli's opinion, if Turkish literature was to produce a national author in the modern sense, it would first need to produce the means by which that author's work could reach a national market. At the forefront of these means was clearly mass literacy, which in turn depended on the transition to a socioeconomic system that, if it did not remove the exploitative labor relations at its base, at least alleviated them. A system, in short, that would grant even the remotest villagers the material means to attain—and, just as importantly, *the leisure to use*—an intermediate or proficient literacy.

### ***Distributing***

However modest in number, as more of the population gained literacy, another question that had long confronted the state, private publishers, and writers began to take on an equal urgency: how was print material to *reach* these new readers beyond the urban centers of Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara?<sup>28</sup> The truth was that distribution networks were stupendously decentralized, and would remain so up to and beyond midcentury. As Sadri Ertem, a writer and novelist, had complained in an op/ed in 1939, “So long as the matter

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<sup>28</sup> It is important to note that in urban centers too books were failing to reach readers in sufficient numbers. Near midcentury, even Istanbul's biggest booksellers were struggling to break even (Nasuhi Baydar 1947).

of distribution remains unaddressed [...] [our works are] doomed to pass their days in the display cases of printer-publishers, closing their eyes against the sun and drifting to sleep” (quoted in *BTNK* 151). It was not just the small villages and middling towns that remained disconnected from these networks. As one learns from the reports of the Publishing Congress in 1939, even the largest cities in Eastern Turkey, such as Erzincan, Van, and Diyarbakir, had no regional distributing offices for published material (*BTNK* 1939:58). Likewise, the cost of post was exorbitantly high. While older nation-states had greatly reduced the postage fees of books, Turkey’s new state, with its struggling economy and devaluated currency, had no such practice. True, it offered reduced postage prices to newsprint and journals, shipping at just 5 *kuruş* per kilo, but this discount had not been extended to bound books (42-43). Indeed, even ephemeral print, which was supposedly benefitting from state-sponsored reductions in shipping costs, relied more frequently upon intermediated sales from sellers rather than direct subscriptions and thus faced the same patchy networks in its attempts to expand beyond its urban base. To turn again to Orhan Veli—and again to 1949, just as *A Mind at Peace* began circulating—his journal *Yaprak* was forced to suspend its operations, writing to its readers: “We’ll be back with you in a few months. As before, we’ll try to be of use both to you and to the homeland. [...] The biggest problem that we have encountered comes from the faultiness [*bozukluk*] of our distribution organization” (no. 13, 1.11.1949). The financial woes of the journal only continued until his untimely death a year later. As his biographer Yılmaz Taşcıoğlu has noted, Orhan Veli even pawned his overcoat and sold away the paintings of a friend to cover the journal’s growing deficits (2004:32).

Tanpınar’s novel was itself not entirely untouched by the fate of Orhan Veli’s

journal or ephemeral print more generally, if one keeps in mind that *A Mind at Peace* was first serialized in the largest newspaper of the country, *Cumhuriyet*. While I will save for a later section of this chapter discussions of the particularities of serialization and ephemeral print, which were in fact the major medium of literary dissemination and consumption, it's worth discussing here the limited distribution network of even *Cumhuriyet*, the nation's largest newspaper and the first home to Tanpınar's novel. Aysun Köktener, in her history of the paper, confirms that due to limitations in technologies of distribution, the paper was, until the 1950s, very much an *Istanbul* daily, reaching Ankara a day late and, beyond that, as much as a week late. "*Cumhuriyet* too [like other print of the period] was distributed on a national scale," she writes, "by subsidiaries [*bayiler*]. Yet whether the newspapers would be able to reach beyond Istanbul was dependent on the weather conditions and the situation of the rail lines; they encountered several difficulties" (2004:84). Benedict Anderson, attempting to explain the failure of a pan-American nationalist movement in the Spanish colonies, suggests that what was ultimately at fault was the inability of the limited distribution technologies to join the continent's geography (63-4). While the scales of Republican Turkey and the fractured state formations of eighteenth century South America are certainly different, one can draw from Anderson's model a sense of the urgency that distribution bore for the binding of national consciousness and imagine what was at stake for the agents of Turkish nation building when the trains carried *Cumhuriyet* out of Haydarpaşa station each night.

For both ephemeral print and bound books, Turkey's de-centered geography proved to be a dangerous black hole. True, Turkish readers were not spread across the diasporic

seascape that we witnessed in the previous chapter on Greek print, yet the gaping holes in Turkey's distribution networks suggested that there may as well have been an ocean between Istanbul and Erzincan. Given these inadequacies of transportation and coordination, many readerships beyond the reach of Istanbul and Ankara were left to the devices of traveling salesmen, who, as the novelist Peyami Safa reported secondhand from a friend, "buy books from Istanbul, stuff them in their sacks, and travel by foot to the most desolate, disconnected places [in Anatolia] and sell them" (1937). These informal book peddlers, who sold mostly reprints and adaptations of folk adventures, functioned as major suppliers of the villages and towns beyond the official distribution networks of Western Turkey.

On the other hand, among the few regional distributors that did represent the interests of urban publishers, some allegedly embezzled the funds of the books they sold. Yaşar Nabi (Nayır), a writer, poet and, as owner of the literary journal *Varlık*, arguably the most important literary publisher of the Republican era, had touched upon the issue in his 1937 monograph, aptly titled *Edebiyatımızın Büyük Meselerleri* (The Big Issues of Our Literature). Insisting at length on the need for solidarity among Turkey's private publishers and the formation of a coordination committee, he remarked:

It's obvious what an important role distribution plays in book sales in Turkey. Every book, independent of its value, is sold only to the extent that it is distributed. Yet the fact that distribution is not administered by a proper organization, together with the fact that most of those who have assumed the role of subsidiary [*bayilik*] in our provinces and townships have made it a principle to not act honestly, have left our publishers in a very difficult position. To enter into business with one publisher for a time and, having conned it sufficiently, to thenceforth establish a relation with another publisher and, for some time again, to live off its back, is the *modus operandi* of some subsidiaries. (166)

Yaşar Nabi's assessment reveals an important systemic truth: the centers of Turkey's

book culture lacked any oversight over, or often even coordination with, its marginal actors and their agencies. Indeed, the word subsidiary (*bayi*) is perhaps misleading, given the word's official resonance. Many of the agents who'd agreed to stock the books of publishers in smaller towns were in fact grocers or stationers, from whom collecting money was no easy matter (Naki Tezel 1947).

Admittedly, a dozen years had passed between the release of Yaşar Nabi's book (1937) and Tanpınar's (1949). Yet despite the Turkish Publishing Conference of 1939 and its resolutions, little had changed by midcentury. Muvaffak İhsan Garan, a middling novelist who had, however, decades of experience in publishing, complained of the same problems in distribution and circulation in August 1949—again, the months during which Tanpınar's book-bound novel was emerging from Remzi's printing house. His article, ominously titled “Bu Gidişle Türk Edebiyatımız Ölmeğe Mahkûmkdur” (At this rate, Our Turkish Literature is Doomed to Die) and published in the literary journal *Şadırvan*, began with a grim picture of the financial straits in which writers found themselves. Eventually, Garan asked: “Is it just booksellers, i.e., publishers, who are responsible for this situation?” Given its devastating detail, his response is worth quoting at length here:

[A]t the head of our woes lies the organizational deficiency in our country and the faultiness of book distribution. Truly, when we take up this issue as a sort of national struggle, we see in what a tragic [*fecî*] condition, in what tatters [*perişan bir durumda*], Turkish literature and culture are.

In Turkey, one of our biggest social wounds is the condition of the distribution system for printed books and, particularly, the state of subsidiaries in Anatolia. So long as this struggle remains unresolved, there's no worth in genius, in talent, in resolve or sacrifice. In short, our literature is doomed to bankruptcy. Let a masterpiece be written in original Turkish, however big you want, and let it be printed with however brilliant a publisher you want and sold cheaply; again, there will be no use in any of this. Because that masterpiece cannot be distributed within the country. If you trust the rural subsidiaries and send it, you won't get your money.

[...] [U]nfortunately, the large majority of these rural subsidiaries properly

sell only the publications of a few established and rich publishing houses, they only regularly pay the money of these houses. As for the books of all the remaining small publishers, even those of self-published authors, they accept these books as a kind of contractor [*emanet usuliyle*] and sell them splendidly, but they never send the money. Because in this way, they know that [the publishers] will soon go bankrupt and the money will remain with them. [...] Today, hundreds of millions of liras that belong to small and middle-sized publishers and self-published authors lie in the coffers of Anatolian herbalists and grocers who would have you believe they are in the business of bookselling. (1949:10-11)

Garan's language is visceral, outfitted with its "national struggles" and unflinchingly bearing its "wounds" and "death sentences" (in the title of the article). One envisions the inhospitable Anatolian landscapes through which modern Turkish literature physically wandered and, ultimately, was physically scattered. Indeed, Garan's description of that literature as *perişan* is particularly fitting, for the word, of Persian origin, literally means "scattered." And even if one were to fault him for his rhetorical color, the basic conditions he describes are corroborated by others of the period, such as Naki Tezel, cited above. To greater or lesser degrees, they all agreed with Garan's assessment of the national book market and its ongoing tragedy.

The generic category of the tragic (*fecî*), you'll recall, belongs explicitly to Garan. Its use agrees well with the tragic heroism he likewise attributed to the author—e.g., the doomed "genius" of his hypothetical example. Both in the excerpt above and elsewhere, Garan made use of a highly privileging language for the figure of the writer: the "genius," with her/his "masterpiece" and "rare talents." In another article from the popular press a year earlier, writing in support of an author's union, he'd observed, "Today, when butchers, barbers and even cabbies and porters each have their own association, it's terribly tragic that the only ones without such an association are literary writers, which is to say the crème de la crème of this country's talent and genius" (1948). What implicitly

signified the tragic condition of Turkey's national literature for those like Garan was this: not that literate citizens with a bent toward literature in general could not access, share, or indeed shape published works, but that the individuated, independent authorial figure and her or his masterwork were destined to wind up *perişan* (scattered).

### ***Producing***

Such was the state of distribution networks in Turkey, yet what of the production chain? Let's return to the urban centers to take up briefly what must have seemed a more immediate problem to writers like Tanpınar: the economic limitations of production and the effects on writer's contracts. Ironically, whether writers could make a living from their writing depended, to a degree, on the very paper with which they wrote (or, more accurately, with which printers multiplied their writing). Paper, the most basic element of book production, was prohibitively expensive in Republican Turkey. From the Ottoman market, Republican Turkey had inherited a vast dependence on imports, a dependence that by the First World War had saturated nearly all sectors, including book production.<sup>29</sup> Granted, the Ottoman and Arabic paper markets of the Mediterranean had been dominated by European imports for centuries, since at least the 1400s<sup>30</sup>—i.e., long before the Ottoman capitulations in other fields, but the divergent historical timelines of particular commodities mattered little to the Kemalist regime. The new state's most pressing aim, arguably even more so than its cultural reforms, was the creation of

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<sup>29</sup> Crucial were the European trading privileges ("Capitulations"), which granted their firms tax exemptions and diplomatic immunity and that Korkut Boratav has rightly qualified as "semi-colonial" (1988:12-13).

<sup>30</sup> Italian paper producers had begun to make inroads into the Mediterranean market already in the 1300s. In most Islamic markets of the Eastern Mediterranean, European paper dominated by the end of the 1400s; see Zohar Amar (2002) for the example of Syria; or Hanna (2003:86-89) for a discussion of the Cairo market. For a history of the Ottoman Turkish paper market see Ersoy (1963).

domestic fields of production that would minimize its dependence upon Western commodities. To this end, the regime established its own factory just east of Istanbul, along the coast of the Sea of Marmara and, in order to protect it, introduced high tariffs on foreign paper. The results of these actions crippled the book market, as the renowned publisher Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz observed in 1939:

They say that paper is expensive. It's true. Paper is very expensive, and the reason is the factory that's been built in İzmit. When that factory was built, a steep tariff was applied to customs. This factory meets only ten percent of our consumption. Its cost too is too high. That's why paper is costly. [...] Because there's quite a lot of capital investment in it [the factory] that needs to be repaid. Its costs of production are also a little high. There was also a controversy in the selection of the site, due to several inadequacies. For example, one needs crystal clear water and pinewood without resin to produce paper. (*BTNK*, 1939:48)

The factory's production costs were high, and its paper was of sub-standard quality due to a lack of the necessary resources cited in Tokgöz's final sentence. Indeed, one learns elsewhere that the regime was in fact importing at least a portion of the wood and cellulose from abroad, all in order to domestically manufacture its own paper.<sup>31</sup> In any case, as his assessment makes clear, the factory was unsurprisingly incapable of supplying the entire national market. With the state's protectionist policies, however, the factory had, by means of its very existence, raised the costs of foreign paper as well, which in turn raised the costs of book (and ephemeral print) production. A decade later, despite the renovation and expansion of the factory, the cost of paper remained volatile and the quality low. As Tanpınar's *A Mind at Peace* was being serialized in the columns of *Cumhuriyet*, one read just a page later, in the column of Burhan Felek, that "[t]he

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<sup>31</sup> Burhan Felek, whom I quote on this topic immediately below, wrote in the same article, "We're still trying to bring the wood and cellulose from abroad. You can only turn a mill so much with water that you bring by hand from elsewhere." This final sentence applies a traditional expression of futility to the particularly apt case of paper production.



pagination of our newspapers has become as fickle as the fashion of women's skirts. One week, it grows longer, the next week it grows shorter." The cause, he continued, was in İzmit:

The strange thing is that we have a modern paper factory, which we built after spending millions and which, in recent years, we've expanded by, again, spending millions more. This paper factory, because it can't meet the needs of even Turkish newspapers, with their measly print numbers, and because its paper is expensive and of low quality, is a constant target for the complaints of those in the newspaper business. And in return, the regime is busy raising the price of paper and [thereby] curbing the page numbers and print runs of newspapers. If that's the case, then why did we found this factory, why did we sink tens of millions of liras into it? (22.3.1948)

While Felek is concerned exclusively here with the effects of paper costs on newspapers, which were generally a self-sustaining industry, one can, without too much danger of hyperbole, imagine such effects to have reached an even greater scale in the field of book production, which, as mentioned above, had been on government subsidies for much of the 1930s. Over the nine-year period between Tokgöz and Felek's observations, the regional paper market too was entering a period of unprecedented instability, due to the onset of the Second World War. Much of the remaining 90% (to use Tokgöz's estimation) of Turkey's paper needs was coming from the Fascist Axis, whose production, however, had dropped drastically by 1945 for understandable reasons, driving Turkey's book market to record lows (See Ediz 1947).

While it rose from its nadir of 1945, paper continued to be a costly commodity even after the war. It continued, moreover, to be a disproportionately costly commodity for books, and especially *literary* books. Tanpınar himself spoke of this in an interview in 1951, beginning with the broad claim that "our publishers are very weak." This was because, he continued, they "busy themselves with schoolbooks, since they find them

more profitable. The state too takes no notice [of literature]. Indeed, it does not extend its reductions in paper [tariffs] to literary works, as it does to other forms of print. It does so only for ‘Useful Books.’ In any case, that’s what they told me. Useful books... Okay, but who determines this? A book’s journey can change so much” (1969:552). In explaining publishers’ continued preference for educational materials, Tanpınar pointed to the state and its paper policies. As I discussed earlier, the regime had for some time delegated the printing of official textbooks to private publishers. This was no small incentive for major firms to restructure and reprioritize their catalogues, as both writers and some publishers had ruefully observed for decades. Yet Tanpınar points in the excerpt here to something more: with the state’s reduction of paper tariffs for particular categories of usefulness (*faydalık*), it simultaneously lowered the cost of production and therefore further incentivized the preference for both official textbooks and more general educational materials.

In any case, the simple fact was that the costs of production were high, and the returns, for reasons treated in the previous two sections, were staggeringly low. These low returns meant in turn that the money that book contracts secured for writers failed to cover even the basic cost of living. In early May of 1939, just as *A Mind at Peace*’s hero, Mümtaz, was struggling with the loss of Nuran and the dissolution of his book manuscript, the newspaper *Haber* reported on the abject condition of Turkish writers more generally: “It’s no easy matter to write a work. To be able to do this, a person must have peace of mind [*huzur*]—in both a material and intellectual sense. But let’s say we’ve written the work. [...] [I]f it earns us enough money even to help offset the energy put into the work, we should consider ourselves lucky. Today, you can count on your

fingers the number of authors who get even a ten-lira contract for original Turkish-language works” (quoted in *BTNK*, 1939:213). While the math here is hyperbolically low, the general point was echoed elsewhere<sup>32</sup> and is indisputable: writing books in Turkey was not a sustainable profession. One writer complained that they would either have to find a way to secure professional subsidies from the state or “go sell börek [pastries] on the street corner” (*BTNK*, 1939:194). Over a decade later, conditions remained the same, as Tanpınar made clear during an interview from 1953 (which, incidentally, was excluded from both posthumous collections of his essays): “I’ve been unable to base my livelihood [*geçim hesaplarım*] on my literary career. Moreover, I haven’t earned much of anything from literature. It’s true that I earned good money from my serializations. But you could say that I took almost nothing from my books. I gained 100 liras from [my short story collection] *Abdullah Efendi’s Dreams*. [...] I got 500 liras from *Five Cities*, which remains to this day in its first printing, unexhausted” (1953, quoted in Dirin et al.).<sup>33</sup> Within a publishing system where capital was quickly depleted on paper costs and where the turn toward textbooks was viewed not simply as an incentive but a survival strategy, literary production remained a practice of—in the strict sense of the word—non-professionals. Or, if writers insisted on making a profession of their work, the vast majority of them were driven to serialization and ephemeral print.

### ***Ephemeral Print***

We should clarify between two important categories of ephemeral print: mainstream

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<sup>32</sup> Vedat Nedim Tör wrote in 1949 that literature “does not keep its owner [i.e., the writer] alive. Because its market is very narrow, it cannot become an independent profession. This is why even our professional literary writers turn to column writing. The obligation to write a column every day to make a living kills art. It leaves no time for art.”

<sup>33</sup> Consider that the monthly salary of a civil servant at the time was 156 liras (Kabacalı 1981:166).

dailies and monthly journals. The first, daily ephemerals, with their wider readerships and clear if small margins of profit, were recognized by even the most autonomous of writers as the only “green pasture” of Turkish letters. Some, like Yaşar Nabi, held hope that publishers of newsprint would realize the gravity of their role and begin “to directly engage themselves with [the literary] field” (1939:173). Noting that the current best-selling newspaper in the country was that which gave the greatest space to literature, he argued that ephemeral print would assure a profit for both itself and its country by including more of it. The novelist Sabahattin Ali,<sup>34</sup> who leaned much farther to the left than Yaşar Nabi, likewise viewed ephemeral print as a potentially powerful tool, particularly insofar as it might democratize literature and spread its influence beyond elite circles, yet he vociferously warned against the “profit” that Yaşar Nabi had offered as a positive motivation for news publishers. “In countries like ours where the habit of reading books has not yet been born,” he wrote, “the daily newspaper gains a huge importance. It can give birth to new habits and pleasures [*zevkler*] and educate readers in them. But our newspapers do not perform even the smallest modicum of this duty, nor do they want to. They have no other concern than to earn a reputation in this world and the hereafter by following, as good Muslims, the code: *al-kâsib ḥabîbullah*” (2014b:51). This final phrase, drawn from the Hadith and translatable to “he who earns/profits is the beloved of Allah,” had become a staple of late Ottoman merchants and a quintessential trope to describe the emerging Sunni-Turkish bourgeoisie. Tanpınar himself places the sentence in the mouth of the dodgy merchant and speculator of *A Mind at Peace*, as he attempts to

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<sup>34</sup> He was also the co-publisher and editor of *Marco Paşa*, a massively important popular satirical journal that was repeatedly censored and ransacked for its leftist leanings. For a recent treatment of Sabahattin Ali, see the special 2016 issue of *Türkisch-Deutsche Studien Jahrbuch*, under the title *The Transcultural Critic: Sabahattin Ali and Beyond* (edited by Şeyda Ozil, Michael Hofmann, Jens-Peter Laut, Yasemin Dayıoğlu-Yücel, Cornelia Zierau and Kristin Dickinson).

justify his decision to enter the field of commerce: “He’d left the civil service and, in order to follow the hadith *al-Kâsib Habibullah*—yes just for this, to not be disrespectful toward the Prophet’s word, he had entered a life of trafficking” (11). Tanpınar’s irony, while short on subtlety, successfully summarizes the equally tactless avarice of the emerging merchant class. In Sabahattin Ali’s text, however, the phrase is turned specifically toward the merchants of print, implicating the publishers of daily newspapers as philistine and reactionary capitalists, in whom the love of profit is intrinsically at odds with aesthetic pleasures, or their spread to a wider base.

Tanpınar himself had coldly observed in 1936, “To tell the truth, our intellectual life is in the hands of the daily newspapers. This kind of means that our intellectual life is non-existent. [...] Writing novels has not become a profession. For the novel to take shape in a country, this art must provide a living to the one engaged in it. In Turkey, the novel is a branch of newsprint. A novelist, even the most famous, is forced to serialize his/her novel in order to be able to make money” (1969:41). Avoiding both the optimism of Yaşar Nabi and the openly anti-capitalist critique of Sabahattin Ali, Tanpınar approached the matter from another plane entirely: aesthetics. Tanpınar’s own novel is evidence enough that serious literary works found their way into the serializations of mainstream newsprint.<sup>35</sup> At a time when major daily newsprint in Western Europe and North America had largely abandoned serialized novels *altogether*, the fact that what have today become the most canonical works of Republican Turkish literature were serialized in newspapers speaks of the importance of the medium. Yet at what price, Tanpınar asked. In his mind, the pecuniary rewards that daily print offered Turkish writers were heavily outweighed

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<sup>35</sup> One might add, however, the serialized work of other Republican writers, such as Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Peyami Safa, and many more.

by the detrimental effect that such a mode of production bore on their world of ideas and aesthetics. Whether through a daily column or a serialized novel, the newspaper signified for Tanpınar a form of assembly-line production that led to aesthetic fragmentation. In his diary, he succinctly if bitterly summarized this effect on his own writing: “Because the matter of money continually haunts me, I give my work only by parcelling it out” (138).

The second category, little magazines and cultural journals, used different means to achieve what ultimately proved similar ends: fragmentation. For as generously as these journals opened their pages to all forms of literature, so too did their short lives often leave a string of orphans in their trail. These orphans, of course, ranged from non-fiction prose to poetry to entire novels. Oktay Akbal complained that “my novel, which remained incomplete while being serialized due to the closure of the journal, has now been gathering dust in the closet of a famous Istanbul book publisher for a year and a half” (1949). The failure of Akbal’s novel, left unnamed here, to complete its serialization lay not in its own worth but in the journal’s economic deficits. As Yaşar Nabi had noted tersely a dozen years earlier, “Today it’s understood by all that in Turkey the cultural magazine cannot survive” (1937:172). This was due, again, to the lack of a reliable distribution system, which Yaşar Nabi was quick to note on the following page:

In nearly every small city and town there might be one or two readers who would buy a literary journal. The true problem is assuring that the journal is available in that town for these couple of readers. Because subsidiaries pay no attention to journals with these low sales, they neglect to take them into account and as a result the owner of the journal or the general distributor is forced to not send it to places like this and the sales of the literary journal are restricted to only one or two large cities. Even here, again, due to the same indifference [of subsidiaries] it is distributed very poorly.

The literary journal had little chance of survival within such a landscape. And, again, between Yaşar Nabi’s monograph of 1937 and the end of the Republican era, the

conditions remained largely the same. They were the conditions that, as we saw above, had crippled Orhan Veli's journal *Yaprak* between 1949 and 1951. At midcentury, his was by no means an exceptional case. The nationalist poet Behçet Kemal Çağlar began circulating his own journal *Şadırvan* the same year, providing a notably more conservative platform than Orhan Veli but nonetheless meeting the same fate—and sooner. The editorial of the first issue offered a revealing window into the ephemeral landscape:

After *Servet-i Fünun*, *Dergâh*, *Yeni Mecmua*, and *Hayat*, we are now suffering the nostalgic longing for an arts journal that can spread out over the entire country and gain a hold and survive [*tutunabilmek*]. A journal that, with the value judgments it makes, the values it introduces, and the masters whom it allows to speak and write, presents all together in one place [*bir arada meydana koymak*] the artistic understandings of the Turkish intelligentsia and introduces Turkish art to its past and future [...]. From time to time, it's not that such journals have not appeared, entering into circulation with wonderful intentions and a fabulous program. But because of the disorganization of distribution and printing none of them spread as much as needed and survived. They did not have the capital reserves that would allow them the time to introduce themselves and to gather around themselves the lovers of art.  
(1.1.1949)

First, it's important to note that among the four journals cited in the first sentence, only one of them (*Servet-i Fünun*) survived for over a decade, and all of them had become irrelevant long before 1949. *Yeni Mecmua*, while it had lasted an impressive six years (1917-1923), had been defunct for decades; *Dergâh* lasted only two years (1921-1923) and *Hayat* only three or four (1926-1929/30), and both had likewise been out of circulation for a similarly long period. *Servet-i Fünun*, on the other hand, constituted an exceptional case. Coalescing around the figure of Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz (whom we met above in my discussion of paper costs), the journal was the central vehicle for the development of post-Tanzimat literature in the 1890s. Closed in 1901 by Sultan

Abdülhamid II, by the time it reopened at the end of the year, many of its contributors had left. Syed Tanvir Wasti writes, “He had to resort to printing a larger area of coloured photographs within each weekly issue to make use of available space. He also requested his friends who were Mülkiye graduates and had spread all over the Ottoman Empire to encourage their acquaintances to renew their subscriptions” (215:364). Over the ensuing two decades, it encountered similar problems with each new period of political instability. During the Republican period, it continued to circulate and indeed introduced some important writers, yet it folded soon after the death of Tokgöz himself. While I have not found any data on the print runs of *Servet-i Fünun* during the Republican period (in particular, after the alphabet reforms), it seems all but inevitable that its numbers dropped substantially in the 1920s and 30s, and it’s unlikely that its distribution made inroads beyond Turkey’s major urban centers.

By the time that the editorial of *Şadırvan*’s first issue was circulating, it was clear that no journal had managed to “spread out over the entire country and gain a hold” (*bütün memlekete yayılıp tutunabilmek*). Given the failures of so many journals before it, *Şadırvan*’s stated aim was thus noteworthy due, if nothing else, to its quixotic scope: to draw together under one editorial roof (*bir arada meydana koymak*) the entirety of Turkish literature. Receiving financial support from Vatan publishers, it went on in later paragraphs to boast of a rich reserve of capital that would allow it to gather a wide audience. Within less than a year, however, one read a significantly humbler valedictory note from Çağlar in the final issue: “This artistic journal, of which I’ve released 34 issues, without however reaching the majesty that my heart desired for it, is closing today so that the organization that has provided labor and money for its printing and



distribution will not have to endure more losses” (24.11.1949). In Turkey, the journal had no real national ecosystem to support it. Its real purpose was to provide a vehicle for a small, localized audience: cliques of writers themselves. One need look only to Tanpınar himself, who, in his youth, had been greatly influenced by the journal *Dergâh*. “There [in *Dergâh*],” he later wrote, “the foundations of a new literature and language were set” (1969:548). While the journal’s material foundations had dissolved quickly, its effect on Tanpınar’s aesthetic formation proved long lasting. This was the true function of journals: not material survival but the instigation of controversies and movements among Turkey’s microscopic circle of artists. But again, so long as these small communities of writers had neither a healthier book market with which to bind their works together nor the wider readerships by which to be read, the journal remained incapable of shoring up Turkish literature in any real material way. An older Tanpınar, writing nearly three decades after *Dergâh*, registered this clearly: “Young [writers] try to introduce themselves to each other in journals that they circulate among themselves. But these are shots in the dark [*tesadüfî*], or the efforts of a narrow circle. This, in turn, is very far [...] from showing our literature as a whole” (*Akşam* 26.11.1949). Given Tanpınar’s fascination with literary wholeness, the journal symbolized for him a dangerous vehicle of fragmentation.

Turkish literature of the Republican era, in summary, was in pieces just as much if not more so than its Greek counterpart. The depressed economy and the highly tiered social relations that prevented the majority of the population from achieving literate proficiency were only a single unit in a larger galaxy of elements. Distribution networks played an equally important role in shaping the de-centered and scattered topography of

Turkish book culture during the period. Publishers too, struggling to keep afloat within this landscape, and further burdened with rising production costs, could offer only pittance to writers of literature (when they even deigned to give them contracts, that is) amidst a larger turn toward educational materials, spurred by the state. Deprived in this way of a true book market, Turkish women and men of ideas during the Republican era had taken refuge in ephemeral print, primarily the daily newspaper. As Tanpınar aptly summarized in an interview, “Our world of arts is, first of all, scattered, and what’s more, it’s poor” (1969:39). Turkish literature was in pieces.

Such a fact was devastating for many, as I hope has become clear from my discussion. Yet in the construction of a new system—one that would, ideally, collectively improve the conditions of *all* of literature’s handlers—the nationalist and author-centric agenda put forward by many of the voices in this and the previous three sections was not the only possible way forward. If such a vision ultimately became a reality, it did so at the cost of other possibilities, many of which we find latent already in the book culture of the Republican era. In the remainder of this chapter I will work towards tracing out these possibilities, shedding light on some of the creative potential of Turkey’s textual disaggregation.

### ***Reassembling Tanpınar***

In an influential lecture titled “Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Turkish Modernism,” Orhan Pamuk argued that—despite the implicit promise of his lecture’s title—Tanpınar was not, in fact, a Modernist. Instead, he astutely remarked, Tanpınar was something like “a compiler, a collector, a didactic commentator” (1995:41). For Pamuk, these categories

were pejoratively charged; they symbolized a wasted opportunity by which Tanpınar, with all his talent, might have connected Turkish literature to European High Modernism. Yet instead of resembling Proust or Woolf, in Pamuk's eyes Tanpınar looked more like a pre-modern scribe, patching together a "ragbag" of characters and plots and didactic commentary.<sup>36</sup> While it's difficult to disagree entirely with Pamuk's analysis, I'd like to deploy it towards a less disparaging end here, pondering more deeply the acts of compiling and collecting (*derlemek, toplamak*). What happens when we approach the Republican-era text as a "compilation," rather than an authorial artifact? It means, first of all, that even if, as Pamuk rightly insists, Tanpınar occasionally lapses into onerous didacticism, it's never the only or even necessarily predominant voice. Precisely *because* "Tanpınar is a compiler"—or even better, because Tanpınar's texts are compilations—the careful reader finds several voices, narratives, textual vestiges and lines of flight running through his work. This is particularly true when we approach that work not as a disembodied text but as a physical medium, or rather a series of media and formats. The remaining sections of this chapter, then, aim more explicitly to "crack" Tanpınar's novel open and to sift through its pieces. Reading several extended excerpts from Tanpınar's texts, paratexts and contexts, I want to understand them as both a reflection of and an invitation to a particular textual practice, one that lies close to what Michel de Certeau first called "nomadic reading."

Let me try to explain what this last phrase means and how, as I said, it lies near (but needs an extra push from us here to reach) the kind of textual assemblage that I want to trace. Those who read nomadically are, in Certeau's words, "travelers; they move across

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<sup>36</sup> The term "ragbag" (*yamalı bohça*) comes from another text of Pamuk, "Doğu ile Batı Arasındaki Adam" (The Man Between East and West), printed in *Cumhuriyet* (22 Dec. 2001). I'm grateful to Şerife Çağın (2011) for leading me to this article.

lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves” (1984:174). Certeau’s transgressive imagery here is intentional. Reading attains its creative potential, in his understanding, to the degree that it contravenes the authority of the texts’ writers and their institutions—or, alternatively, exploits their *underdeveloped* authority, as the case might have been in Tanpınar’s Turkey. The text’s authority, Certeau wrote, stemmed from “the reproduction of sociocultural relationships within the institution whose officials determined what parts of it should be read [...]. The creativity of the reader grows as the institution that controlled it declines” (172). As the previous sections of this chapter documented, such textual authority had not yet been consolidated in Republican Turkey, producing a space that was rich in potential for the transmigrations of Certeau’s nomadic readers, riding roughshod over the barriers of genres, canons, or disciplines and “despoiling” their riches. But, like most of the quotidian practices that Certeau analyzes in other sections of his book, reading largely fails to build anything with these riches. While he celebrates its creativity, reading remains for him an evanescent “tactic” that leaves no traces (168-9). If writing is an act of “founding its own place,” one that “accumulates, stocks up, resists time by the establishment of a place and multiplies its production through the expansionism of reproduction” (174), reading instead triggers “a withdrawal of the body,” a kind of material homelessness: “Reading frees itself from the soil that determined it. It detaches itself from that soil” (176). As such, he pithily remarks, “reading has no place.”

But reading *does* have a place, just as it can potentially *create* new places—even as

it remains nomadic.<sup>37</sup> To explain myself here, let me turn to Janice Radway's formulation, just a few years after Certeau, of a very similar reading practice, one that doesn't just wander across texts but "fashion[s] narratives, stories, objects and practices from myriad bits and pieces of prior cultural productions" (1988:362). The change here is subtle, but grounded in a shift of metaphors: no longer spatial but material, they frame nomadic reading not as a journey but as a kind of bricolage. This becomes particularly clear if we take care not to lose sight of the verb that fronts the quotation: "fashion." Granted, as I just implied, Radway herself treats this word metaphorically or discursively,<sup>38</sup> but what happens when we entertain it in its literal, physical sense, as I'd like to do for a moment? You can fashion a table out of scrap metal; you can fashion a dress out of "bits and pieces of prior" clothes; but what in the world do you fashion from your reading? Usually, we can let Certeau answer here: nothing. Historically, most readers didn't (and continue not to) write in their books. As Leah Price remarks, "If book history began as a supply-side enterprise focused on publishing and printing, it may be because consumption generates less of the hard evidence that can lift a discipline out of humanistic impressionism into social-scientific rigor" (2012:20). I readily admit that physical traces of readers remain elusive, but more recent scholars, from Price to Matt Cohen or Ellen Gruber Garvey, have generated several workarounds to this problem.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's famous formulation of the nomadic mode includes multiple physical constructions, from the wooden chariots of actual, historical nomads to the stone cathedrals of medieval journeymen. See my fifth and final chapter for more on this.

<sup>38</sup> In the particular text from which this quotation is drawn, Radway is referring to a "discursive" fashioning, drawing heavily from Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) concept of "articulation." Laclau and Mouffe view the sociopolitical as a primarily *discursive* network.

<sup>39</sup> Roger Chartier (1992) was the first historian of the book to respond directly to Michel de Certeau's model. Turning away from the quantitative data of the *Annales* school, he examined the material affordances of the book-as-object (what he called "object studies"). Chartier's approach has more recently been enriched by Price (2012) and Cohen (2010), among others. Cohen goes so far as to break the category

Garvey is perhaps closest to my own concerns here: in her fascinating study of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century reader scrapbooks in the United States, she recovers an entire archive of non-authorial textual assemblage, a window through which one can survey “the lives and thoughts of people who did not respond to their world with their own writing” (2013:4). It’s through methodological breakthroughs like those of Garvey that we understand the limits of Certeau’s nomadic readers—indeed, of the very concept of reader (and writer). For while Garvey’s compilers are not writers of texts, they certainly produce their own textual assemblages. Precisely for this reason, I prefer to speak not of particular categories of users or producers but instead of “textual practices”: processes of generating text through fashioning, assembling, and cobbling, which might be both immaterial and material, and carried out by any number of agents. In other words, practices that collapse neat categories like writer, binder, reader, etc., turning the page not into an apartheid wall but rather a common space used by its several “handlers,” as Price might say.

### ***“That Thing Called Reading Had Changed”***

Despite Tanpinar’s disparaging view of ephemeral print and serialization, the process was not without its own potential opportunities. While it sacrificed its supposed hermetic integrity and wholeness, the serialized novel also gained a vast new social life, placed in intertextual liaisons that allowed for multiple contexts, contours, textures and tones. To parse out the liaisons of the newspaper’s serial—which hosted, after all, far more readers

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of “book” itself open, including indigenous communication systems such as “the trap, the beach, the bowel, the Wampanoag house, the path, and modern Native American museums” (26).

than the subsequent book<sup>40</sup> and was the major medium for literature at the time—I'll return again to Tanpınar's *A Mind at Peace*.

Let's begin in Üsküdar, along the shores of the Bosphorus. Here, at the conclusion of one of Mümtaz and Nuran's first strolls together, as they wait for the ferryboat that will carry them away, they stop in front of a bookseller to browse. Nuran buys a couple newspapers and a novel, captivating the love-struck Mümtaz with the motions of her hands as she pays. Indeed, "captivation" fails to register the level of infatuation; here, in front of the bookseller, the novel's hero and his world are transformed by an all-encompassing love:

The bridge had changed, the bookseller had changed, the act of buying a book had changed, that thing called reading had changed. It was as if he was living in a fairytale world, a world whose living lines and bright colors had brought everything to life, giving everything a meaning that extended to the broadest divine compassion, where every motion trembled toward infinity, like the lights upon a broad and still water. (112)

Clearly, Mümtaz is on the threshold of a new world, one whose bright colors and lively, trembling contours extend to him the hope of wholeness. Outside his head, of course, life goes on. The bookseller nonchalantly gives Nuran her change and she and Mümtaz move away from the stand: "The bookseller gave Nuran her change. [/] After this, Mümtaz, holding everything in his hands—both his own gift and the things that she had bought—walked side by side with Nuran toward the pier" (ibid).

What? Immediately, you look back over the previous sentences and, finding nothing, you ask yourself: *But what's this gift? Where did it come from?* Perhaps it's "Nuran's transformative love," which has already given Mümtaz so much. Yet if that

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<sup>40</sup> Consider that *Cumhuriyet's* daily print run was between 50,000 and 60,000 at the time (see Felek's column from 22.3.1948). Compare this with the print run of *A Mind at Peace*, which was likely between 500 and 1,000—and which, more importantly, remained unexhausted until Tanpınar's death (2013:122).

were the case, why would he need to hold such a gift in his hand? Considering that he's already burdened by at least two newspapers and a novel, he might more handily tuck this love away in his mind or heart. What could he possibly be holding in his hands?

Mümtaz's "own gift" is ultimately an inscrutable mystery.

Or such is the case in the book-bound novel at least. Turning to the serialized novel, one finds another story unfolding. Reading this same passage in the March 24 issue of *Cumhuriyet*, we see that while Nuran was waiting for her change, Mümtaz

took a step toward the books that were lying stacked atop one another on the side. [/] He took a book that had caught his eye right from the start. "These days, it doesn't get read anymore very much, but it's one of the books that I love, I want to give it to you as a gift..." Nuran thanked him. [/] After this, Mümtaz, holding everything in his hands—both his own gift and the things that she had bought—walked side by side with Nuran toward the pier.

While the book remains unnamed and thus little more than an awkward prop (rather than, say, a strategically deployed intertextual link), its symbolic value is clear. Salvaged from amidst a mass of books, whose vertical stacking (*üst üste duran*) alludes to their second-class status, Mümtaz's "own gift" is a textual fragment from a past that has fallen out of fashion. With Nuran as its reader, the book is now set to enter into a new and possibly revolutionizing path of circulation.

Yet something has gone awry. As Mümtaz and his world were remediated a second time, between the summers of 1948 and 1949, transitioning from the *Cumhuriyet* serial to the bound book of Remzi publishers, this textual fragment has itself been fragmented. For while its context—indeed, its very identity as a book—was edited out entirely by Tanpınar, the "gift" itself remains, likely by mere oversight, stalking the pages of *A Mind at Peace* like a silent revenant. True, the novel had become a book, yet in doing so it had simultaneously lost a book, or, at least, lost the context that gave the book meaning.



That context was *Cumhuriyet*. It was a context full of its own kind of magic alchemies, certainly not as deep or divine as those of Nuran's hands, but they nonetheless bore striking similarities. In *Cumhuriyet*, on the bottom of page three, Mümtaz and his story were transformed day by day within a world whose "lines," which apportioned out the columns of the newspaper, moved with similar alacrity in each new edition, and a vast universe of images, photographs, drawings and advertisements that, even if they lacked the "bright colors" of Nuran's love, lacked nothing of its enchanting liveliness—nor its promises of wholeness. As Mümtaz and his text were transformed into serialized print, his narrator could have spoken the same words as above, with the same conviction: "that thing called reading had changed."

Reading in the newspaper was like stepping into a crowded room and socializing. First and foremost, of course, it meant socializing with news. In the case of *A Mind at Peace*, it forced readers into a kind of diachronic comparison between 1938-39 and 1948. For while the novel painted a dark and brooding social tableau of Istanbul on the eve of World War II, the news surrounding the novel was instead chronicling the eve of the Cold War. In this strange juxtaposition, there were both uncanny convergences and striking dissimilarities. When Mümtaz visits the merchant and overhears him speculating on commodities in anticipation of the coming black market, or when he wanders through the poorest streets of Istanbul and chances upon starving beggars, nearby articles of *Cumhuriyet* spoke of a spike in the cost of living, growing poverty, and a sugar shortage that had led to speculation and a black market. As the novel ends, with its uncertain tone on the eve of war, the surrounding articles spoke of the regime's attempts to ration sugar out. The fate of this plan remained equally uncertain at the novel's conclusion. Against

these parallels, which seemed to suggest that little had changed, other news trends signaled an entirely new order from that of 1938-39. The US Marshall Plan and its pending implementation in Greece and Turkey captured columns throughout *A Mind at Peace*'s serialization, as did the civil war in neighboring Greece. Less frequently, certain columns wrote of the nearby Arab-Israeli War. Readers also found, just above the novel's third installment, news of the reinstatement of several "left-leaning" professors, who had been dismissed from their positions (but their earlier courses were now prohibited). Later, curious readers encountered the neologism<sup>41</sup> *gecekondu* ("it was set up overnight"—i.e., *shantytown*), describing a slum in Ankara and its demolition by police. Near the end of the novel's serialization, *Cumhuriyet* hosted a conservative political critique leveled against Sabahattin Ali, published just a month before his murder. These brutal civil wars, this systematic dismissal of university staff for leftist affiliations, and the first tentative signs of rural migration into city centers and the rise of urban slums—all of this would have been unimaginable for Mümtaz and his world in 1938-39. Much was changing in the early months of 1948. Just as Mümtaz sat, in the final episode, with his head in his hands amidst the news of war, entirely uncertain of his future, so too were readers struggling with the uncertain developments in the articles that shifted in and out around him.

Just as important as the news, however, were the advertisements, which served as the economic lifeblood of the newspaper and infiltrated not only every page but nearly every column of every page. Perhaps most immediately relevant for readers of *A Mind at*

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<sup>41</sup> The staff of *Cumhuriyet* had first invented the word a year earlier, in 1947, yet the word and the larger concept it represented were still quite fresh in early 1948. By the 1980s, *gecekondu* had gathered around its four syllables an entire culture, symbolizing Turkey's shifting demographics. It remains today an important word in Turkey's cultural lexicon.

*Peace* were the many advertisements for books. With the exception of some encyclopedias and popular historical monographs, these books were almost exclusively pulp and popular fiction, in which it was often difficult to distinguish domestic work from translation, author from translator. One example read: “*Günah* [Sin] – The new year’s first romance [*aşk ve hissi*] novel, which you’ll read with tears. Cst: 100 Krş. Seval Publishers.” Note that neither an author nor translator is mentioned. Other titles included *The Secret of Lust* [Şehvetin Sırrı], by Nicholas Segur; *Like a Shadow* [Bir Gölge Gibi] (no authorial attribution); *The Majestic Woman: A Big Romance Novel* [Şahane Kadın: Büyük bir Aşk Romanı] (no authorial attribution), etc. Alongside these, other advertisements drew readers’ attention to serial fiction, published in autonomous fascicles that were collected by the reader and bound together, such as *The King of Womanizers: Casanova’s Love Adventures* [Zamparalar Şahı: Kazanova’nın Aşk Maceraları], which advertised itself as follows: “The third issue has come out. Whether by way of its contents or its cover, this is a true masterpiece of debauchery, a marvel that has been translated into 48 languages and turned into five films. Get it and supplement your missing issues” (19 Feb 1948). Immediately followed by the name of a Turkish columnist (Kadircan Kaflı), yet implying likewise that “this ... masterpiece” had been “translated,” the work appeared to be a free adaptation or amalgamation of one or several Western sources (no authority was listed other than Kaflı). Amidst this swarm of pulp fiction, Tanpınar’s own love story was attempting to train its readers in a very different form of textuality: one in which the writer’s name authorizes a text, gives it coherence and wholeness—and, just as importantly, protects it from unlicensed adaptation and transformation. In the pages of *Cumhuriyet*, however, Tanpınar was outnumbered and,

quite literally, outflanked by dozens of books claiming their authority not from an author's name but directly from their titles and the number of adaptations from which they'd been assembled.<sup>42</sup>

Besides pulp fiction, a veritable deluge of other advertisements spoke to the postwar invasion of cheap American commodities, as well as the continued presence of Western European commodities (despite the regime's attempts to domesticate production). From English radios (Markoni; Airmec) to American motors (Hercules), from American razor blades (Nacet-Gillette) to Turkish tanning creams (Krem Nevin), the advertisements luxuriated in large detailed diagrams (e.g., motor parts) or smaller, concentrated images (bikini-clad women lying on their backs). They promised, in their own way, to bear their readers to the same infinite plane of divine happiness that Mümtaz had seen in Nuran's person—a plane of vibrant images and contours that “give everything meaning.” And like Nuran's magical transformation, they too take place within a larger world that was notably less cheerful (to put it gently). Stacked not only atop Tanpınar's *A Mind at Peace* but between news stories of steep rises in the costs of living, the enduring sugar shortages of early summer, the rise of shantytowns, etc., these sprightly advertisements for luxury products carried out a complicated, triangulated dialogue with both the texts around them and the readers who pieced them together. It was a dialogue that registered the same fragmentation of modern culture that *A Mind at Peace* was warily engaging in its own isolated text. Indeed, beneath advertisements like “Nylon Glamour Girl: Glamour Girl Women's Stockings Have arrived,” or “Lion Shop Is Now Displaying Spring Fashions in

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<sup>42</sup> In a more systematic survey of translated paperbacks, Gürçağlar writes that “Unlike translations of canonical works which placed special emphasis on their author and the source text on their covers and title pages, the books published in [popular] series did not feature the name of the author or the translator on the cover. They did not even indicate that the books were translations” (173-4).

All its *Vitrines – Lion: The Shop for Those with Taste*” (*Zevk Sahiplerinin Mağazasıdır*), Mümtaz was walking past similar shops in *A Mind at Peace*, marveling in horror at their mass-produced clothing: “[O]n nearly all sides of the stores, there were hung heaps of clothes, ready-made lifestyles, like self-contained destinies. Take one of us, wear us, and go out the other door a different person!” (57).

When read in its isolated form today, as an autonomous, stand-alone book, Mümtaz’s stroll through the modern display cases of these shops can be interpreted as a rather familiar trope of high modernism, embedding the language of modern consumer culture within its pages but subverting it through an alienating tone. Fair enough. But when one returns to Mümtaz’s original print home in *Cumhuriyet* (where, moreover, most readers would ultimately encounter the novel in Tanpınar’s lifetime) his stroll is no longer a mere stylistic trope; it becomes a raucous multimedial conversation in which consumerism and commodity culture are deified, derided, de-contextualized, re-contextualized and put in dialogue with other discourses and events, all through a kind of Bakhtinian polyphony spread out across the columns of the paper. The readers of the newspaper, who were putting together the many voices of this dialogue—indeed, each reader was assembling a different dialogue according to her/his reading choices—were implicitly asked to stake their own position within the conversation.

Tanpınar himself, as a reader, could not have remained unmoved by the intertextual dialogues that *Cumhuriyet* forced upon his novel. Amidst the truly massive alterations and additions that he made to the novel when preparing it for book-bound publication in 1949, certain small additions echo in strong ways the surrounding texts of the newspaper. For economy of space, I focus here upon the most important: the addition of a new

character, Tevfik Bey's son Yaşar Bey. Before introducing Yaşar, however, I should detail what was by far the most common form of advertisement in *Cumhuriyet* in 1948: pills, vitamins, and syrups. To give a sense of both scale and range, I provide here a partial list of those that appeared (most of them multiple times) over the four months of Tanpınar's serialization: Neogal; Vikodin; Nevrozin; Tural; Gripin; Tablet Küratin; Cholormycetine; Protejin; Dermojen; Santa's Pill; Liniment Sloan's Rheumatism Pill; Fedrinal Tablets; Adatone Capsules; Hepaton Syrup; Winflavex Tablets; Raw Fish Oil Emulsion; Thymo Syrup; Dr. İhsan Sami's Cough Syrup; Robbi Col[d] Cream.

The rhetoric surrounding these pills often overreached itself, promising more than they could deliver, such as "protection" against syphilis and gonorrhea (*Frenge ve Belsoğukluğunun Teminatlı bir Koryucusudur*). The pills, syrups, tablets, creams, emulsions, capsules, vitamins and supplements spoke *en masse* of a new, commodity-driven turn toward the body. While nylons, ties and other forms of modern accoutrement had entered Turkish markets over the previous two generations, doubtlessly changing the relationship of Ottoman and early Turkish citizens to their physical selves, the pills and capsules that had lodged themselves between the columns of *Cumhuriyet* marked a new phase of micro-managing the body. The phenomenon had become so entrenched, in fact, that other forms of advertising parodied or borrowed from it, such as this ad for the national lottery: "It's said that the Americans have discovered a new pill to increase intelligence. The first thing that someone who uses this pill will do is, without a doubt, purchase a **NATIONAL LOTTERY** Ticket" (23.2.1948).

Having emerged from this cacophony of pills, where the advertisements themselves had already taken notice and begun their own metatextual games with one another,

Tanpınar's revised novel of 1949 now hosted the telling figure of Yaşar Bey (156-160). He was, "in a word, a man who kept his eyes always on his body. [...] It could be said that for Yaşar Bey that thing we called a body had lost its wholeness, that in its place he consulted a mass of organs that worked in isolation" (158). For readers today, he brings to mind a tragicomic reversal of Deleuze and Guattari's *Body without Organs*—a kind of *Organs without Body*: A phenomenon, they write, "of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that [...] [imposes] forms, functions, bonds, [and] dominant and hierarchized organizations" (2004:176). For Yaşar at least, the vehicle of this "coagulation" is clear: pills. Yaşar, whose name ironically means "s/he lives," can only be said to live through the mediation of his myriad supplements: "Yaşar Bey fell asleep with pills [...], he opened his appetite with pills, he digested with pills, he stepped out of the house with pills, he made love with pills, he desired with pills" (159-160). He even internalizes the language of the advertisements: "Instead of saying, 'I took vitamin C,' he would say, 'I took a million oranges for just 85 kuruş!'" Indeed, there was a singular power in their language, as Tanpınar notes: "These pills do not simply mark the triumph of contemporary medicine and chemistry. They bear, moreover, an aesthetic—even a *literature*—all their own" (159). Within these 1949 additions of Tanpınar, I argue, the echoes of the myriad pill and vitamin advertisements in *A Mind at Peace*'s first print environment are uncanny. In *Cumhuriyet*, Mümtaz and his readers had been bombarded for months by a veritable hailstorm of pills, syrups, tablets, *comprimés* and more, each one promising to administer its own targeted organ, gland, or bodily function. That this addition arose from Tanpınar's own nomadic reading of the serialized novel within its larger environment seems to me not simply possible but likely. In any case, the tonal

dissonance of these five satirical pages (in what is otherwise a somber novel) points to an intertextual grafting from the world of advertising—one that had only occurred to Tanpınar *after* the adventure of serialization.

Within the bound book of 1949, however, Yaşar and his pills lack the immediacy that they might otherwise have had in *Cumhuriyet*. Having gained its textual integrity in an isolated, supposedly autonomous world of its own, the book-bound novel lost most traces of the unruly intertextuality of its previous, pluralized world. Nevertheless, due to the conditions of Turkish print and of its literary book culture, most readers of the novel within Tanpınar's lifetime would not even set eyes upon its new autonomous form. Instead, they would have encountered Mümtaz and his story, day by day, in *Cumhuriyet*. This newspaper (the largest in Turkey at the time) was a print environment, I have argued here, from whose very fragmentation in tone, topic, and genre arose rich possibilities for dialogue. It was a dialogue, crucially, whose scope and direction depended upon each reader's methods of browsing and assemblage. As *Cumhuriyet* had announced in the front-page editorial of its own first issue, a quarter of a century earlier, "The newspaper is the property not of its owners but of the reader" (7 May 1924).

### ***Literature as Commons: Commonplace Books***

Late in life, Tanpınar toyed with the idea of organizing a periodical of his own. "As the days pass," he wrote in his diary, "the need to put out a journal solidifies more and more. A monthly journal. Every day, a writing on a new topic. [...] My own ideas, my own view, my own poems. Its name: *My World*. After the holiday I'll look into the preconditions for publishing it. 32 pages. From others, I'll only take poems, stand-alone studies or stories; or translations of my choosing could be included. At the head, a text of



mine” (2013:258). If the field of bound books had failed to solidify his name, Tanpınar mused, why not just publish his own journal?

A careful reading of Tanpınar’s deliberations reveals that they pull him in two different directions: on the one hand, all the texts in the journal would revolve like a satellite around the gravitational pull of Tanpınar’s own authorial ego; on the other hand, however, a good deal of those texts would nonetheless belong to *others*, drawn from a multitude of genres. Indeed, despite his emphatic “my own ideas, my own view, my own poems,” the only space that Tanpınar explicitly reserved for his own writing were the leading pages. This was only natural for a journal. Yet it’s worth asking: How did he plan to assemble the poems, studies, stories, and translations of *others* in such a way as to reflect his *own* world? This is not an idle question. To ask how Tanpınar, in his capacity as reader, compiler, and editor, might in fact construct a textual coherence that had otherwise alluded him as an author is, implicitly, to begin to articulate a different kind of story about Turkey’s decentered and scattered print networks: a story not of failure and defeat but of the creative agencies of assemblage that such a world afforded. Over a decade earlier, in *A Mind at Peace*, as I’ll argue in this section, Tanpınar took up this story.

Before turning to the novel, however, I want to note a particular lexeme in my translation of the passage above: for what I rendered as “journal,” Tanpınar chose not the Turkish word *dergi* (which, despite being a Kemalist neologism, had become fairly standard by the 1960s), but rather the older *mecmua*. The *mecmua* (or *majmû‘a*) was derived from the Arabic root جمع, which signifies a gathering or a collection and is productive of, among other things, the Ottoman words *câmi‘* (mosque), *cem‘iyyet*

(organization) and *câm'ia* (community). With its etymological associations, the *mecmua* was lexically hardwired to perform precisely the kind of assemblage that Tanpinar desired, one that brought together both texts and readers into a community.

Yet for someone invested in centralized authorship, the *mecmua* had a tainted past. True, the term had gained the meaning of a commercial periodical by the late nineteenth century, but its primary referent had been (and, arguably, still is) the commonplace book. In other words, the *mecmua* had traditionally been a space not for the author to assemble himself or herself but rather for readers to gather whatever materials they or their community might need. Roger Chartier identifies this un-authorized textual assemblage in pre-modern Europe as well,<sup>43</sup> observing:

Such unadorned small or medium-sized books, written in a cursive hand, were copied by their own readers, who put in them, in no apparent order, texts of quite different sorts in prose and in verse, devotional and technical, documentary and poetic. These compilations, produced by lay people unfamiliar with the traditional institutions of manuscript production and for whom the act of copying was a necessary preliminary to reading, characteristically show no sign of the author-function. (1994:55-56)

As Chartier argues, such books lack the author-function because they blur at least two lines: first, the line between addresser and addressee; and, second, the line dividing discrete works or even genres. And while this practice was largely marginalized (but not extinct) in Europe by the nineteenth century,<sup>44</sup> it remained the primary mode of textual production and consumption in Ottoman Turkey. Selim Kuru has written that depending on the particular reader(s) and their predilections or needs, a *mecmua* might contain

“pieces of poetry, fatwas, recipes for medicine or food, horoscopes, divinations, fortunes,

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<sup>43</sup> Petrucci (1995:1-18) treats even older commonplace books, from the 3rd- to 7th-century Mediterranean.

<sup>44</sup> For a helpful annotated bibliography on (primarily English-language) commonplace books, see Victoria Burke (2013). While the commonplace book flourished in the seventeenth century, and the crushing majority of extant scholarship focuses on this period, Burke observes that the practice “persisted longer into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than has typically been acknowledged” (173).

daily events of varying importance, [...] short collections of stories and jokes, short Masnavis, pieces of the Kanun code, excerpts of larger works—copied out by hand and accumulated within a single binding” (2012:19). Composing their own books, the readers-qua-writers of the *mecmua* confused not only textual unity but also the roles of producer and consumer, owner and borrower.

To literary historians and academics, the *mecmua* was for most of the twentieth century a black sheep, either to be ignored or, if the possibility arose, to be plundered for missing pieces of famous authors that would otherwise have been lost. Representative in this sense is an article on the *mecmua* by Ali Canib from 1927, which I quote at length here:

A European researcher has said, “Verbal accounts [*rivayetler*] are no longer a source of history. The monuments being excavated from beneath the earth are opening their mouths and revealing to us the soundest and most powerful truths about history.” In this article, we must not forget this. The Asian, European and African soils encompassing Turkish history remain, in essence, covered over still. We have no other recourse but to leave this enormous task to the future. What we can do today, however, is research in our libraries. For literary and historical studies, for example, there are in Istanbul a great many of the most unsought-out works. Of these, one portion of the most important are “*mecmû‘as*,” These are works that have been committed to paper by some person or another—sometimes recognized men, literary figures, poets, intellectuals—most often containing various writings, indeed, writings that do not cohere to one another in any way. Without subjecting Istanbul’s libraries to a careful, scientific classification, each of these *mecmû‘as* will be forced to remain an unknown, buried treasure. (103)

The archeological terminology with which Ali Canib begins and ends his discussion of the *mecmua* here is telling. While the fields of Turkish archeology and material history were in their infancy, he offered up the book itself as a surrogate site for excavation. Telling as well was the monumental scale that he adopted, speaking of “monuments” and “treasures” (*abideler*, *hazineler*) to be salvaged from amidst a morass of textual

incoherence (*birbirini tutmazlık*). Rather than the microhistories that would drive many archeological and historical fields in later decades, he was chasing after great men. These were his treasures, as one quickly realizes in the ensuing pages of the article, which provide analyses of nine *mecmuas*, each examination stressing only what can be learned about particular authors, statesmen, or professions. As he writes for the first *mecmua* in his list, its importance derives from the poems of Yunus Emre that it contains: “The printed *divan* of Yunus, who is clearly an extremely important literary figure, is from start to finish incorrect. But in the manuscript copies there are many missing poems. This particular *mecmû’a*, due to its having been written in 940 [≈1534] and in light of its master must be considered an important document and source” (ibid). In other words, while the printed complete edition of Yunus Emre was error-ridden (and, apparently, lacked a critical apparatus to justify its choices or even explain its sources), there existed no extant manuscript with the entirety of his oeuvre; in this light, the *mecmua* in question, which was a luxury item<sup>45</sup> and likely belonged to someone of distinction, offered hope of supplementing the poet’s corpus with newly discovered “treasures.” Likewise, as a relatively early witness, the codex and its poems might provide important data for approximations of the poems’ archetypes. Other examples that Ali Canib included were important, in his mind, due to their owners, who as statesmen, offered their own readerly “authority” to the collections of texts. This was how most historians of literature viewed *mecmuas* over the length of the twentieth century: as fragments, valuable only inasmuch as they shed new light on the authors whose works they’d assembled. As Ali Canib wrote further on, “studying [the *mecmuas*] is quite a difficult task, befitting the popular expression of ‘digging a well with a needle.’ There are hundreds of *mecmuas* in every

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<sup>45</sup> Canib describes it as large, gilt (*müzehheb*), and magnificent.

library. What those books are, what is found inside of them is entirely unknown. For example, within a hundred of pages of nonsense [*mâlâya 'niyyât*] it's always possible to find one or two extraordinarily important lines and with them to shed light on a dark chapter of such and such a period, or to determine the condition or character of a historical figure" (105). It was precisely these "hundreds of pages of nonsense" that constituted for twentieth-century researchers like Ali Canib the worthless dirt that was to be parted, and from which were to be exhumed the historical monuments of a given authority. And what of the reader-owners of these books? Unless famous, they too were of little interest to literary historians. The same held true for the *mecmua* itself, as a genre of its own. Selim Kuru succinctly writes, "the *mecmua* had the value of a mere shell" (*sadece bir kabuk değerindeydi*; 2012:22).<sup>46</sup>

This was an astounding development. Recall Ali Canib's remark that hundreds of such *mecmuas* lay hidden in every library in Turkey (and hundreds more in northern Europe and North America). These books were by no means a rarity. For Ottoman culture they were, by number at least, the most important medium through which written culture was produced, reproduced and consumed.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, while likely diminished in number after the spread of ephemeral print, the commonplace book continued *even into the Republican period*.<sup>48</sup> Given the form's overwhelming numerical importance for so many

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<sup>46</sup> For similar accounts of twentieth-century scholarly indifference toward the *mecmua*, see Jan Schmidt (2012:389) or Yaşar Aydemir (2007:123). This has begun to change only over the past decade. In addition to Schmidt's work, see Derin Terzioğlu (2007), Kerima Filan (2008), and, more generally, the 2012 collection of essays under the title *Mecmûa: Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kırkambarı* (ed. Hatice Aynur et al.).

<sup>47</sup> Jan Schmidt notes that despite the importance of textual culture to Ottomans, the number of autonomous, single-work books that have reached us is relatively small, due in part to costs (2012:386-7). Even a cursory study of Ottoman collection catalogues, however, reveals that *mecmua*, which functioned as a kind of cheap, portable library, were widespread (388).

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Jan Schmidt (2010:169), or my own fifth chapter here.

centuries—including the twentieth—the fact that it had so quickly been forgotten or silenced by specialists is noteworthy. For many, like Ali Canib above, their dismay with the genre derived from its lack of a centralizing authority.

Interestingly enough, it was Tanpınar who, despite his well-documented desire for a modern, author-centric system, broke the silence—and the “shell”—surrounding the *mecmua*. At a time when the commonplace book was becoming invisible to twentieth-century critics, Tanpınar placed it front and center in *A Mind at Peace* and allowed the form to speak for itself. To hear it, we have only to return to the used-book market, where we left Mümtaz some time before. A seller is calling him by name, pulling our hero aside discretely: “‘There are some old *mecmuas* here, if you’re interested ...’ [/] He untied the string and, wiping off the book covers, held them out. Most of the leather covers were crooked, a good deal of them were beginning to crack from behind” (47). Opening the first *mecmua*, he finds:

the poetry of Yunus Emre, copied in a terrible hand, beginning from the first page and running on; yet in the marginalia there were some *gazels* taken from Bâkî, Nef’î, Nâbî and Galip. Towards the end there were, on a few pages, written out in various hands, some recipes with pepper, cardamom, and rhubarb. Above one there was the title, in red ink, Mâcun’i Lokman Hekim [*Luqman’s Paste*]. Another one suggested stuffing clove inside an onion and browning it over fire, making an İksir-i Hayat [*Elixir of Life*]. (49)

First, it’s noteworthy that not only does the book fuse two distinct genres (poetry and recipes) together; even within a single broad genre like poetry, it confuses multiple sub-genres, registers, and authors, stretching from the thirteenth century to the end of the eighteenth. Using the book’s margins and marginalia as a kind of hypertext to link poetic excerpts together, the owner(s), likely untrained in calligraphy and thus of a middling

social position,<sup>49</sup> was/were authoring a webwork of intertextual relations. Bearing textual fragments from copies of copies and amassing a sort of “mix tape,” the codex had achieved a kind of motley totality.

Mümtaz, the aspiring author, is coming to this *mecmua* from a very different understanding of totality and textual authority, grounded in the integral writer-as-author. It’s an authority, however, of which Mümtaz himself is no longer sure. In the final weeks of his relationship with Nuran, before Suat’s suicide, Mümtaz had “completely set his book in order,” and had shouted happily to Nuran, “I finally see the book clearly!” (325). Nuran’s response, however, while intended as a playful jab at her unkempt fiancé, portends the impending collapse of this order: “And I see the empty space in your jacket, where the button should be.” If his vision of the book had at last gained a totality, Mümtaz’s authorial persona nonetheless continued to harbor its “empty spaces.” Following Suat’s suicide, these spaces widened. His mind itself was shattering: “The truly awful thing was the difficulty that he had in following his thoughts” (52), a phenomenon that spreads to the book (332). By the following autumn, readers encounter a broken Mümtaz, one whose own book too has lost its coherence. He has nothing to lose. Having wandered into the book store, he opens these reader-initiated assemblages and traces his way through their strange stories.

And what of Mümtaz’s own readers? Remember that most of them were approaching this *mecmua* through the window of the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper. On the one hand, there were clear differences between the two mediums. Most immediately, there was the Latin-based printed script of the newspaper, through which readers were left to

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<sup>49</sup> Most “mixed *mecmuas*” (i.e., *mecmuas* without a unifying program) belonged, as Derin Terzioğlu notes, to “literati of a more modest sort: low-level bureaucrats, soldiers, and minor sheikhs” (2007:87).

imagine the Arabic-script codex of the *mecmua*, which, twenty years after the reforms, was growing inscrutably foreign to more and more young readers. Yet more important than this, I believe, was the shifting physical agency of those readers: the owners of *mecmuas* did not only choose what fragments they would read; they physically copied them out or, if it was printed material (in some nineteenth and twentieth-century *mecmuas*), they affixed it into their books; they repaired damaged pages, inserted new fascicles or made new bindings when needed. In the case of the newspaper, however, this physical agency has been reduced. For while it was still not uncommon for readers to cut out articles or entire serialized novels and make their own collections, one might assume that the majority of *Cumhuriyet*'s consumers left the physical structure of the newspaper intact. Nonetheless, readers of the serialized *A Mind at Peace* engaged in their own kind of textual miscegenation: through their browsing and desultory reading choices they built connections that, while immaterial, bridged the thin divide between columns, texts and genres. In this sense, they might have felt themselves closer to the *mecmua* form than later readers of the commercial codex.

Unlike the *mecmua* or the newspaper serial, the modern book-form projected the aura of a textual autonomy so powerful that, today at least, it seems to many almost intrinsic to the form. Benedict Anderson, for example, has suggested that the book, unlike textiles or sugar, which can be parceled out in pieces, "is a distinct, self-contained object, exactly reproduced on a large-scale" (34). As Cavafy's editions demonstrated in the previous chapter, Anderson's categorical definition is, at best, inaccurate. One could say, however, that it accurately reflects the *expectations* of most modern readers. For such readers, the *mecmua* presents a radical opportunity to re-imagine the boundaries of the



book. By means of their formal qualities, the *mecmuas* call attention to the layers of mediation—and, hence, the layers of readerly agencies—through which both they themselves and their words have passed. Beneath the eyes of the twentieth- or twenty-first-century reader, these books shift, as Bruno Latour would say, from simply being *vehicles* (“intermediaries”) of knowledge to active *transformers* (“mediators”) of it, shaping it, warping it, helping us understand the malleability and open-ended nature of the book. The *mecmua* allows us, in short, to understand the book as an *assemblage*, with its multiple points of input.

So much for the first codex. Mümtaz sets it down and works his way deeper into the stack of commonplace books. The third *mecmua* that Mümtaz takes up

might have given one the sense that it belonged to a child. Most of the pages were empty. In one spot towards the middle, beneath the title (written in a strange, beginner’s hand) “This is a picture of an ostrich in a tree,” there was a picture that resembled neither ostrich nor tree. On the bottom section there was a design that had been smudged by a streak of ink. There were here certain dates as well. Yet none of the writing made up a coherent whole. Perhaps it was a primer notebook for calligraphy; and likely it would have belonged to an older man learning later on how to read and write. After every line, another, clumsy hand would repeat it several times: “To our guide in Mecca, the water-seller Esseyd Muhammed El-Kasimi Efendi” [...].

A few pages further in, beneath a rather large spreadsheet of expenses, the book recorded, “this is the date of the appointment of the most high benefactor Naşit Beyefendi to the fifth secretariat of the sultan’s private chambers.”

“Appointed by command of the exalted to the fifth secretariat of the palace’s private chambers, our most high benefactor Naşit Beyefendi, for the commencement of his duty this morning, did make his passage to the palace of the exalted, accoutered in the raiment of his office. At once may the majesty of Him on high bestow his graces.” In Mümtaz’s head, all the musical instruments from the period of Sultan Abdülmecid started playing in unison. Further down came a couplet, written in a thick pen by a hand that simply couldn’t manage itself:

*Where is the rose, where is the nightingale?  
The rose’s petals have fallen. (49-50)*

Following this, a convoluted recipe for a potion is provided, upon whose lengthy and laborious completion one might become invisible. This is in turn followed by a verbal incantation that shapes your dreams. The spell was composed of six words, “which didn’t fit any of the languages that [Mümtaz] recognized: Temâgisin, Begeđânin, Yesevâdin, Vegdasin, Nevfena, Gadisin” (51).

The generic confusion has only thickened here. From one page to the next, the book shifts from an alphabet primer to a sketchpad, from a finance spreadsheet to a copybook, from a songbook to, finally, a book of spells. Fittingly, Mümtaz’s reading ends with this final category, which functions as a kind of valedictory to coherence: the six words represent the ultimate collapse of meaning for the reader of modern Turkish. Beneath the symbolism of these words, however, the deeper engine of this collapse is, in my reading, the move away from individual authority. Recall that in the first *mecmua* the recipes that followed the poems had been written “in various hands,” suggesting that the book was in fact the aggregation of multiple owners. Here too, amidst the various passages of the third *mecmua*, it seems an unavoidable conclusion that the book has changed several hands: the child and his/her drawing; the semi-literate man learning to write; later, the copyist gathering up excerpts of a distinctly higher register (used to who knows what ends). As Terziođlu notes, “the ease with which some Ottoman literati could appropriate [the *mecmua*] of others” is one of the most difficult aspects of the genre for modern readers to understand. “This could perhaps be attributed to considerations about the cost of paper, but it also indicates that the later owners did not necessarily regard the [*mecmua*] that came into their hands as the personal testaments of previous owners” (89). The *mecmua* was not a personal witness to the modern individual; instead, it was an ongoing

assemblage to which could be added any number of later hands and pieces. Within such an assemblage, the boundaries not simply of texts but of the self grow porous. Indeed, textuality's entire proprietary system comes undone here.

Leah Price has similarly celebrated the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English anthology for the “liberating potential of the combinatory structure” that governs it (2000:3), yet the liberation offered by anthologies was increasingly bound up in the editorial choices of publishers. By the end of the eighteenth century, as Price notes, certain publishers had nearly cornered the market, leading to “the near-monopoly [of] a few school anthologies [...] [and] allowing large numbers of schoolchildren to share the experience of reading not just the same anthology-pieces but the same anthologies” (2000:67).<sup>50</sup> Within most *mecmuas*, even those dating over a century *after* the anthologies of these British schoolchildren, one finds the potential for a more open method of assemblage, for they not only pulled textual fragments from their authorial corpora but re-assembled them within a network of production and circulation beyond the publishing house and the market. Admittedly, each *mecmua* had its own story and built its own network, and some were certainly private luxury items, serving as a form of symbolic capital for elites, like the first *mecmua* sampled by Ali Canib earlier. But many more were far more mobile and open—open, as Terzioğlu argued, to many hands.

This is crucial and I want to linger over it for a moment. What kind of property regime does the *mecmua* embody? As a category, at least, the *mecmua* has the potential, eschewing both the private and public, to function as a kind of commons. Leading scholars of the commons describe it as the collective creation and use of a resource,

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<sup>50</sup> Barbara Benedict writes that, as the century advanced, readers lost agency, shifting from “a collaborative participant in forging literary culture to that of a recipient of commodified literature” (1996:6).

stressing the importance of the verbs “create” and “use.”<sup>51</sup> It is not so much an object *eo ipso* as a process that *joins* collective labor to an object. The commons, Hardt and Negri write, “is thus in the paradoxical position [of] being a ground or presupposition that is also the result of the process. Our analysis, then, from this point on in our research, should be aimed at not ‘being common’ but ‘making the common’” (123). Just as our collective labor is shaped by the particular object on which it works, so too is that object shaped collectively by our labor. It’s through the ongoing maintenance, transmission, and transformation of this resource that the commons-as-process can be understood. It’s a process, crucially, that may at times intersect with private and public networks but can never be reduced to them.<sup>52</sup> And if political scientists and historians are interested primarily in the commons as a physical space, it’s by no means limited to this. It manifests itself in cultural production as well, such as mixtapes or fan fiction.<sup>53</sup> Writing of the former, Jared Bell argues that “the compact disc becomes an ‘airwave’ or conduit through which forms of music can be blended with journalism, speeches, interviews, and audio clips from any number of sources and then disseminated [...] to support and indeed foment social and political reorganization” (15). Allowing for a radical reassemblage of its own content, he posits, the mixtape in turn might be used to reassemble the social itself.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Massimo de Angelis (2007), Hardt and Negri (2009), Peter Linebaugh (2014).

<sup>52</sup> Hardt and Negri, in their redefinition and re-appropriation of communism (as “commonism”), write that “what the private is to capitalism and what the public is to socialism, the common is to communism” (273).

<sup>53</sup> For mixtapes, see Jared Ball (2011); for fan fiction, see Hellekson and Busse (2014).

<sup>54</sup> Ball cautions against technological determinism: the mixtape has likewise been “colonized” by the music industry as a “corporate-driven, track-listed exclusive prerelease mechanism” (16). We should view the mixtape not as a technological artifact but as a social site, one that must be assembled and protected from incursions.

Despite some important differences, the *mecmua* offers striking parallels to forms of the commons like the mixtape. The differences are clear, both in terms of the material media employed and the contents. Yet when we look at the *mecmua* not as a material object or as a content-based narrative but, instead, as I stressed above, as a *social process*, then it clearly rewires our notions of the literary text in far-reaching ways. It literally tears literature out of its established proprietary model and binds it up instead within a polyphonic and—so long as its networks of assemblage and transmission are maintained—indefinitely expanding collective.

This forecloses, for aspiring authors like Mümtaz, the possibility of consolidating an authoritative narrative of self within the genre. “Rather than relating a tidy and orderly life story,” Snjezana Buzov writes, mixed *mecmua* “represent a useful *form* of writing that serves the various purposes of its owners” (2012:36; emphases mine). In other words, most *mecmuas* do not narrate a story; rather, they narrate a series of “various purposes.” With the help of a sensitive reading—one that attempts neither to “pilfer hidden treasure” from the hundreds of pages of “nonsense” nor to reconstruct an individuated authority—the *mecmua* tells us the story of a different mode of textual being: one that successfully assembles its own totality without, however, consolidation within the individual. Its totality remains happily contaminated and contingent.

Mümtaz’s first reaction, upon his closing of the final book, is one of condescending curiosity. Completely foreign, these books and their “journeys” stand assembled around him like a curio cabinet. As such, initially, he “grew sad that he wouldn’t be able to narrate these strange things to Nuran. Mümtaz had been Nuran’s primary peddler of oddities” (52). Yet after further consideration his appreciation of the commonplace books

deepens. If nothing else, they help him understand the failure of his own model of authorial totality: ““Why am I making fun of these people? As if my troubles are any better than their lives, which were filled with a mass of possibilities for escape.’ But was this really an escape, as he thought? Were they living within the abundance of possibilities that these and similar books narrated?” (ibid). The final probing question with which the passage ends makes an important clarification. Ultimately, these *mecmuas* are not a panacea for the countless problems of individual experience. They are in fact generally indifferent to individual experience, tracing out a series of rhizomatic lines that are much more productively read on the level of the collective.

As such, when opening the *mecmua* we must first clarify to ourselves: within these pages, (1) what *kind* of narrative, and (2) *whose* narrative, are we looking for? To my mind, the *mecmua* offers a narrative that arises primarily from its method of assemblage. How these couplets, songs, and potions have all been gathered up, put together, and occasionally disbanded or rebound; not primarily what they say (although this too is crucial) but more importantly how they relate to one another and to bodies beyond the pages of their textual body. This is closely related to the second question: *whose* narrative is this? For me, the most intriguing biography being narrated belongs neither to the author of a particular text nor even to any single compiler of the codex. Rather, it belongs to the book itself, and the larger creative community that shapes it and is shaped by it. It’s the story of the life of a book: how it has been put together, traded hands, and, as it circulates, fulfilled the needs of a network of readers, writers, and readers-as-writers.

As even Mümtaz admits, it’s a story that bears abundant possibilities.

### *Re-Writing or Re-Righting Turkey?*

As noted above, the *mecmua* continued well into the Republican era. This was *not* a practice that died out overnight following the onset of print or even, much later, the alphabet reforms. Just as importantly, however, it was also a practice that found parallels beyond the *mecmua* itself, spilling over into readers' interactions with other texts and genres. If one judges from the complaints of some authors, many readers in Turkey practiced something akin to the nomadism described by Certeau and Radway: "free-ranging" across literary works, they paid little heed to emerging notions of canon or authority. Cavit Yamaç, a friend of Orhan Veli, observed in 1947:

Many of us read "haphazardly" and "sideways"—something that an English author once recommended. I don't find this English author particularly remiss in recommending reading haphazardly, but in my opinion this is only appropriate for people whose culture is resting atop solid foundations. [...] Rather than "Read haphazardly!" I prefer the slogan "Reading unsystematically and blindly creates a hollow culture!" Especially for those like us [i.e., Turks] who are coming into contact for the first time with world masterpieces in their own language, reading conscientiously and systematically must be our starting point. (1947)

While Yamaç could respect the choice of Northern Europeans to read "haphazardly," his sense of cultural belatedness led him to discourage such a practice among Turkish readers, whom he marshaled to systematize and cement their reading practices. His comments, which were circulated just a few months before Tanpınar's *A Mind at Peace*, shed light on an important backdrop against which the book's adventures would play out (and indeed still do today): the emerging field of world literature, and the role that readers, publishers, and writers were to adopt in building that field in Turkey. Yamaç's article, I argue, articulates a kind of crossroads at which two possible paradigms meet. Was world literature in Turkey to be, like the *mecmua*, a decentered network assembled

“haphazardly” by and for local readers and translators of all levels and registers, or was it to be a systemized (read: *centralized*) structure, one that faithfully translated and consolidated “masterpieces”? While Tanpınar’s *A Mind at Peace* was by no means a translation, nor would it be translated for another seventy years (2008), this crossroads is important for understanding the kinds of textual authority with which the novel was in dialogue. This section will trace out these two paradigms and the murky middle grounds between them through an engagement with copyright reform in Turkey, debates around which were reaching a pitch just as *A Mind at Peace* began circulating in *Cumhuriyet*.

By the start of the twentieth century, over a decade after the implementation of the Berne Convention, licensed transnational literary translation had largely conformed to what Sam Ricketson and Jane C. Ginsburg have described as a binary of haves and have-nots, wherein existed “considerable gulfs between what may be called the ‘producing’ nations—that is, those nations, such as the French, that were net exporters of literary and artistic products—and those nations, such as the Scandinavians, which were ‘users’—that is, net importers—of these products” (2005:61, quoted in Eva Hemmungs Wirtén 2011:88). While Turkey was certainly among the “importers” of this model, for the first half of the twentieth century it occupied a vastly different legal and cultural landscape from that of many others, for the simple reason that the Turkish state refused to recognize any international copyright conventions and maintained almost no bilateral agreements.<sup>55</sup>

Even Turkey’s national copyright laws had been slow in developing. First, it’s important to note that for most of its history, the central aim of Ottoman copyright law was not protection but state oversight. In the nineteenth century, each printer had to

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<sup>55</sup> In 1929 and 1930 the Turkish state signed bilateral trade agreements with France and Germany, respectively, that foresaw the adoption of the standards of the 1914 Berne Convention, but these agreements were not renewed (Şafak Erel 1998:29).



obtain from the Sultan himself an *imtiyaz* or privilege. Books without the state seal were officially prohibited from entering the market (Yarsuvat 1984:37). In 1850, the term “Hakk-ı telif” (which corresponds to copyright but literally means the “right of articulating” or “composing”) was first introduced, yet its legal function remained essentially a means of state control. It foresaw the recognition of copyright only after works had been “inspected,” leading Duygun Yarsuvat to suggest that the law’s function was in fact censorship (38). The first modern legal code of copyright did not appear until 1910. It survived the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and remained in effect until 1952—adopted verbatim by the early Turkish Republic in 1923 and left unchanged for almost three decades.<sup>56</sup> This was the legal copyright code that governed Tanpınar’s *A Mind at Peace*, both in its serialized form and, a year later, in its book-bound form. While it recognized direct plagiarism, in comparison with the Berne Convention it still invested surprisingly little authorial agency within the figure of the writer. Particularly if that writer was a foreigner. Recognizing no foreign authorial rights, the code legalized unlicensed translation and adaptation. The Kemalist regime of early Republican Turkey was committed to translating, transforming and internalizing a vast array of products from Western Europe and North America, ranging from literary to scientific to trade publications. In a globalizing economy, where the intellectual rights of many such products may have been inaccessible to Turkey’s weak currency and its consumers, the state decided to risk international isolation by continuing to legally protect unlicensed translation.

Admittedly, Turkish-language translations of Western literature had begun to circulate in the nineteenth century, yet by the start of World War II immense gaps

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<sup>56</sup> The code is reproduced in an appendix of Diren Çakmak’s study (2014:189-195).

remained. That which publishing houses and writers had translated was without systematic coordination or organization, “selected,” as Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar writes, “in an arbitrary way” (67). The proposed remedy, like so much in Republican Turkey, came in the form of a statist intervention. In 1940 the young minister of Education Hasan-Âli Yücel founded the Translation Bureau, which by 1946 would go on to produce almost 500 translations for a number of series, most importantly the *Dünya Edebiyatından Tercümeleri* and *Okul Klâsikleri*. One of the most important functions of the Translation Bureau was its role in setting a national standard for the new literary canon. Gürçağlar describes it succinctly: “By defining canonicity in terms of the lists it prepared and its translations, the Bureau distinguished high literature from low, or popular literature” (72).

Yet, as the heart of Gürçağlar’s own study demonstrates, if we turn from the Bureau to private publishers in Istanbul, we see that popular literature was thriving, with or without a canon: Western paperbacks were being translated, adapted and transformed by a host of publishers, prospering under Turkey’s protection of unlicensed translation.<sup>57</sup> Many of those producing these translations were not professional writers but what Wai Chee Dimock has called “reproductive readers” of world literature: “reproductive in the sense of rewriting the text, updating it, giving it a new context of action” (2006:16). The “reproductive readers” of midcentury Turkey were performing just this kind of translation with the textual bodies of Europe, conveying them into new contexts and assembling them in new ways. By the end of the Second World War the complaints of Turkish intellectuals had reached a pitch. The translations were not infrequently of

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<sup>57</sup> Gürçağlar provides an insightful overview of popular translations during this period (172-176).

questionable provenance. They could be carried out by anyone, with or without notification (let alone remuneration) of the original copyright holders. As for questions of “faithfulness” to the original text, all was left to the discretion of each translator and their publisher.<sup>58</sup> Muvaffak İhsan Garan, in an article entitled “The Way to Save Our Literature” (“Edebiyatımızın kurtarılması için tutulacak yol”), detailed and condemned these practices in early 1948:

In the quarter century that has passed, thanks to this tolerance for free translation we have certainly gained a great deal. We might mention as an example the National Ministry of Education’s series [...]. Yet [...] there has [also] begun a *dumping*<sup>59</sup> of translation novels in our nation. Since there’s no need to remain faithful to the original works, we’ve often translated them by mashing them up or shriveling them, cutting them up or making them longer. We have no complete or clear idea of world literature. Anyone with a haphazard knowledge of a language, even high school students, sometimes with the help of a dictionary, sometimes just making it up, have sold these translations for dirt cheap and have flooded the market.” (1948)

Garan began by celebrating the state-sponsored translations of the Bureau, which indeed modeled precisely the kind of canonization and consolidation that he saw as necessary for national Turkish authorship as well. But the Bureau’s works were statistically insignificant when compared with popular translations, which held the lion’s share of the market.<sup>60</sup> It was against these latter translations that Garan was reacting. Interestingly, B. Venkat Mani has documented a similar backlash in West Germany, where certain authors protested against an influx (a “storm tide”) of subsidized translations during the first years of the Federal Republic (2017:206-7). This tide differed from the situation in

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<sup>58</sup> Again, Gürçağlar confirms the practices of independent translators and private publishers: “Translations published by private companies [...] are characterised by omissions on various levels, as well as syntactic manipulation. The resulting target texts reduced the novel to its basic narrative elements, foregrounded action and subdued literary style. Furthermore, the translators of these works were involved in acts of editing in order to shape the resulting product according to their target audience” (297).

<sup>59</sup> This English word is used in the original quotation (although written phonetically as “damping”).

<sup>60</sup> See Gürçağlar 163-164.

Garan's Turkey, however, in at least one important respect: it was governed by international copyright accords and remained largely consolidated around the figure of the author. In Turkey of 1948, popular translations were articulating a different kind of assembly logic: one whose aim was not consolidation but rather a kind of indefinite remixing. Gürçağlar too documents this remixing through an extended case study of several translations of *Gulliver's Travels* (one from the Translation Bureau and five from the popular press) between 1927 and 1960, concluding that the popular translations do precisely what Garan described so colorfully as "mashing up or shriveling, cutting up or making longer" (*ezip büzerek, kısaltıp uzatarak tercüme etmek*). This practice was clearly inimical to the textual consolidation at which Garan and others aimed in both foreign translations and Turkish originals. Beyond the text itself, however, there was also the question of the intellectual labor behind it: in Garan's account, the fact that many of the translators were what we might call amateurs led to precariously cheap contracts, which in turn led to dirt-cheap commodities. Indeed, another contemporary reported that translators of popular fiction usually received 15 to 20 liras up front and no portion from the print run (as opposed to writers of original Turkish works, who received a portion that usually amounted to "around 500 or 600 liras").<sup>61</sup> Since nothing was paid to any author (foreign or local) and very little was paid to local translators, the selling price of popular translated fiction was substantially lower than works bearing the name of a Turkish author. Rather than protecting the precarious intellectual labor of these "reproductive readers," however, the emerging rhetoric instead belittled and erased it. As Gürçağlar

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<sup>61</sup> Felek (18 Dec. 1948). His estimations of amounts paid to writers of original Turkish works are consistent with other sources—above, for example, Tanpınar wrote that he'd been paid 500 liras for the single print run of his *Five Cities*. This leads me to conclude that the "15-20 liras" that Felek ascribes to translators are also relatively accurate, even if they seem staggeringly low.

notes, when translation was made visible in public discourses, it was usually done so to disparage the quality (or motives) of the “non-intellectuals” engaged in it (122-124). A growing chorus of Turkish intellectuals and writers argued that popular translation “weeds” (which were selling much better than local literature) were choking out all hope for the development of a national Turkish canon.

I’ll return to this point soon but it’s worth noting first that even in the absence of international translation, the 1910 copyright code inhibited in several other important ways the consolidation of Turkish authorship. First, the code failed to mention the concept of “adaptation,” which meant in practice that a work could easily be modified and republished piecemeal by multiple “authors.”<sup>62</sup> Created in 1910, it also failed to recognize several emerging media, including photography, radio, and film, meaning that as a work was transcribed and remediated across these categories, material and intellectual control was likewise transferred. Admittedly, Section 3 of the code did mention that a writer maintained the rights of a written work that was “transformed” (*ifrağ*) into a theatrical piece. Despite this important (though lone) exception, however, the concept of adaptation is never developed in any categorical sense. Reading from the silences and lacunae of the code, authorship appeared not so much a category as a process.

More broadly, the code also stipulated (in sections 20-24) that for writers to claim protection from copyright infringement, they needed to have on record a *tescil*, or “official registration” with the state, simultaneous with the work’s initial publication—a practice that bore with it a fee, to be paid by the writer. Ernst Hirsch, a German Jew

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<sup>62</sup> See Hirsch (1940:347).

who'd sought refuge in Turkey and was among the country's leading copyright experts, explained the implications: "If the work has been printed but has not been recorded appropriately with a *tescil*, the author cannot, in the judgment of the copyright code, seek out legal protection" (1940:366). Significantly, the Berne Convention had rejected such legal prerequisites and impediments at the end of the previous century. Finally, the legal code assumed that unless a writer's contract with her/his publishing house or newspaper explicitly stated otherwise, the work and all its copyrights were sold in the initial exchange of money.<sup>63</sup> As Garan complained in his 1949 article for *Şadırvan*, this meant in effect that after the first print-run many writers "are in a position of having renounced all rights over their work. They cannot learn how many copies have been printed, and sometimes despite the fact that new printings have been made they have no clue of such developments." For all these reasons, while the code of 1910 certainly introduced the basic conceptual category of author, the language and stipulations in which it was clothed had the practical result of impeding any legal suits from proceeding. In March of 1950, an editorial note in the daily paper *Akşam* complained that "in Turkey, intellectual products unfortunately still number among the most worthless garbage. In this day and age, when laws have been passed carefully safeguarding all the rights of citizens, there are still no rulings protecting the rights of writers against publishers" (11 March).

In fact, the oldest intellectual property ruling in Turkey appears only in a 1953 judicial decision.<sup>64</sup> The year is no coincidence: it follows the Turkish Republic's first post-Ottoman copyright code, adopted on January first, 1952. In other words, for the

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<sup>63</sup> See Şafak Erel (28) or, for a contemporary account, Fahir Onger (1947).

<sup>64</sup> See Gürsel Üstün (1995:7).

entire duration of its life, the 1910 code had failed to accommodate even a single court case. Interestingly, the new legal code had been drafted over a decade earlier by Ernst Hirsch, yet due to conflicting interests within the state apparatus the draft had been shelved.<sup>65</sup> The move to replace the 1910 code did not find a concerted public voice until the fall of 1947, when a group of writers began to publish calls—first in small literary journals, later in large daily papers—for the formation of an Authors’ Confederation. By May of 1948, the group had organized and was proclaiming its goals in the nation’s largest paper. Its first step was to press for the legislation of a new copyright code in accordance with the Berne Convention. The next month, Halide Edib Adivar, the Confederation’s president (whom we’ll meet in greater detail in the following chapter), published an open letter:

It’s a plain fact that for twenty-five years now the “Free Translation” [policy] has brought to Turkey not profit but large losses. In return for helping a few businessmen (which is to say publishers) make more money and live more securely, it has caused our book market to fill with worthless and degenerate novels and faulty, incorrect translations and kept original Turkish works from attracting an audience. Moreover it has motivated many of our young and talented writers to abandon original works and [...] to ply their talents towards adaptations and copies under the name of original works. It’s the principal duty of us all to stop these practices, which are belittling Turkey on the world stage. (*Cumhuriyet*, 16 June 1948)

Halide Edib’s letter, published in the country’s leading newspaper, fell like a bombshell on the public debate. She was the only writer in Turkey to have achieved any real fame abroad, and her words bore a certain weight—and bite! Her goal was clearly not nuance but a forceful and polarizing rhetoric. It was a rhetoric that, in the second half of the excerpt, turned away from publishing and addressed itself, more incisively, to what she felt were “appropriate and inappropriate” forms of writing. She deployed this binary on

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<sup>65</sup> See Hirsch’s memoirs (1985:307).

two levels. First, in passing, she reinforced the standard taxonomy of correct and incorrect translations, i.e., translations that were either degenerate or generative, either worthless or valuable (but for whom?). Secondly, and more importantly, she resorted to the broader, more general binary of “translation versus original work,”<sup>66</sup> developing a clear scale of value. To understand the stakes of this binary, it’s worth paying particular attention to the final sentence of the excerpt. Showing little interest in labor equity or the professional dignity of translator-adaptors, Halide Edib instead plays up the geopolitical tension between national interests and the global forum. By protecting writers (of original Turkish “literature”) and shoring up their authorship, the argument went, the Turkish state and its people would in return gain for the first time a national canon, not only for its own consumption but for export within the field of world literature. As Garan had written in his article earlier that year, “It’s by now undeniable that our literature can rise in stature, gain value, make its voice heard, and find a position for itself on a global and international level, only if Turkey, like all other civilized nations, joins the international copyright agreement” (1948). Bracketing off the professional security of writers and translators across the spectrum, such claims refocused the debate: adaptation and transformation were stigmatized as national degeneration—they were culturally humiliating on the world stage. Singular, stabilized, and state-protected authorship, on the other hand, became the key to the nation’s aesthetic redemption—again, on the same world stage. This stage became particularly clear in Fahir Onger’s forceful argument, which I treated in my first chapter. In a separate article (23 August, 1947), Onger turned his attention specifically to copyright, concluding with a striking analogy that linked literature to national trade policy: “Just as the government implements steep import duties

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<sup>66</sup> This binary had an earlier history, as *Gürçağlar* documents (122).



to protect its national industry, so too must it follow a similar cultural policy to protect its local men [sic] of ideas, art, and literature.”<sup>67</sup> In the eyes of many Turkish intellectuals, unlicensed translations and adaptations had not only glutted the domestic market but had kept Turkish writers from gaining a foothold in foreign markets. Embracing the idea of a modern, Westernized copyright code as a kind of “tariff” policy, they argued that it was time to stop importing and begin exporting.<sup>68</sup> They advocated, in other words, the protection and cultivation of a domestic literary industry through a regimented clampdown on unlicensed adaptation, thereby consolidating both the “work” and its authorship as a singular object, rather than an open process. If Turkey was to generate a domestic literary industry worthy of exports, they argued, it would need to be centered not on readers’ haphazard assemblages, translations or adaptations but on the original work, with its core authorial brands. Such was the argument, in any case.

### *Tanpınar’s Assemblages*

Tanpınar remained skeptical. Despite the fact that the newly organized Writer’s Confederation had arranged a dinner in his honor,<sup>69</sup> he was unconvinced that copyright reform would fundamentally change the print landscape in Turkey. In an interview in the newspaper *Akşam* the following year (just as *A Mind at Peace* began its circulation in book-bound form), he opined: “The question of whether we pass the new Copyright Code

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<sup>67</sup> Onger was not alone in making this analogy. The following year, Oktay Akbal (1948) wrote, “We need to protect the Turkish writer from the world’s most famous works. In the same way that we close our borders to foreign goods, refusing them entry into our country, so too is it necessary, in order to protect the Turkish writer, to prohibit the free translation of foreign works.”

<sup>68</sup> Cavit Yamaç, with whom this section opened, wrote two years later that “UNESCO is preparing its second book exhibition. What did we send to the first one? Who knows! [...] We’re content to let our tobacco, our figs, our grapes and our cotton speak for us [on the world market] [...]. It never occurred to anyone to send even a single book abroad” (“Kitabın Âkıbeti,” in *Şadırvan* 22 Temmuz 1949).

<sup>69</sup> See *Cumhuriyet* 17 Dec. 1948.

demands special attention and study. I can say this, at least: if we agree that, for the foundational books that we actually need, there's no longer any copyright, then one could say that we won't sacrifice too much. But this is not the only impediment to our literature's development. The central problem is that we don't take ourselves seriously" (*Akşam*, 26 Sep. 1949). Tanpınar was uncertain of whether he supported the reformation of the copyright code, but he *was* certain that it was only a small piece of the puzzle. Even if reformed, he argued, the new copyright code would not offer a panacea to those looking to consolidate and centralize Turkey's book and print networks around the figure of the author.

Was this a bad thing? For the most part, Tanpınar answers with a definitive yes. Yet, as I wrote at the front of this chapter, a careful reading reveals that Tanpınar was torn. On the one hand, he was interested in consolidation: forging literature together as a national institution, one whose foundations lay on stable texts and authorial names. It's in just such a sense that I understand his lament that "we don't take ourselves seriously": in other words, we read in an undisciplined way, showing no particular respect to original Turkish works.<sup>70</sup> And by "we," he clearly meant "Turkish readers." Whether through their commonplace books, their unruly reading patterns, or their unlicensed translations and adaptations, the simple truth is that many Turkish readers, reader-compilers, and reader-writers were moving *away from* rather than *towards* textual consolidation. Of course, as the first half of this chapter demonstrated, they were all acting within a larger print system whose several conduits were themselves radically decentralized or scattered. It was, in part, thanks to this field that everyone was able to "take themselves so lightly."

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<sup>70</sup> He returned to this complaint in later interviews as well, writing, "We almost never read ourselves. Not even those closest to the field. [...] The large literate masses don't read the local [Turkish] writer. This means that we're not pleasing to ourselves, we don't like ourselves" (*Varlık*, 1 Dec. 1951).

For Tanpınar, however, it was no laughing matter. To understand this, let me turn again to a commonplace book: in this particular case, from the *Republican* era, assembled by a young contemporary of Tanpınar. Speaking more generally on reading habits in Turkey, he blended a love of literature with a troubling elitism and, ultimately, a shocking racism:

We're pleased without discernment, we discern without thinking, or we become "fans." [...] We don't know how to pick up a work of art and look it over. We don't know how to give ourselves to it. We're always mixing up the most incompatible of things. The other day I saw a commonplace book of poems. A young man had carefully and fastidiously collected and transcribed works that he thought [sic] he loved. What gems were in there! Yahya Kemal, Hâşim, perhaps the best poets of our poetry. What a shame, however, that he'd been filling six sevenths of the book with pathetic, lame poems that had no relation to these poets. Small and stupid satirical poems, pieces beyond ridiculous, you know, like those lyrics of jazz songs. Clearly Yahya Kemal, Hâşim and the fruits of our other poets had fallen by chance into this orchard. [...] This inconsistency, this appearance of loving a series of things without giving oneself entirely to them, this lack of discernment and discrimination is the most pitiful of things. The African takes anything s/he finds, so long as s/he likes it, and hangs it on her/his neck and arms. Likewise, the magpie puts in its nest anything that's shiny and colorful and catches the eye. But [what to say of such a logic] in a commonplace book of poems that we ourselves have put together? (2000:64-65)

When first preparing this excerpt, I considered removing the racist remarks with which it closes. Why offend my readers' eyes, I thought, since the point has already been clearly hammered home with the preceding sentences? Yet this would do a disservice to our understanding not only of Tanpınar's person—and this *is* important—but, perhaps even more importantly, of the deeply problematic roots on which his sense of textual consolidation was built. Make no mistake, these were "roots" in the most Deleuzian sense possible: rigidly hierarchical, arborescent structures. It was precisely for this reason,

moreover, that Tanpınar lambasted and dehumanized<sup>71</sup> the young reader-compiler of the *mecmua*: i.e., for his rootlessness, his nomadic assemblages whose lines of flight jumped from Yahya Kemal on one page to something like popular jazz lyrics on the next. Behind Tanpınar’s lamentation that “we don’t take ourselves seriously” was hiding, at least in part, the accusation that “we don’t assemble ourselves in discrete units, separated clearly by author, genre and register.” It was thanks to readers like this young man, and to amateur and popular translators like those of the previous section, that Turkish literature had failed, in Tanpınar’s eyes, to consolidate and stabilize itself. Without hesitation, I readily admit that this was by far Tanpınar’s most obvious and well-developed view of the literary field.

On the other hand, careful attention to Tanpınar—not as an author but as a reader-qua-writer—affords a second vantage point, one through which an alternative understanding of literature emerges: literature not as a consolidated, air-tight institution but an open aggregation, a borderless space that was constantly being cobbled together piecemeal and across which Tanpınar too occasionally wandered. In other words, when we catch glimpses of Tanpınar within *this* literary field, we find a reader-qua-writer who also toyed with and explored the same kinds of nomadic practices that, in interviews, he had denigrated. I already shared one glimpse of this Tanpınar, in *A Mind at Peace*, through Mümtaz’s muted amazement at the commonplace books and their “abundance of possibilities.” But there are other examples as well, such as Tanpınar’s reading habits. Despite official interviews in which he belittled readers who dared to place Yahya Kemal alongside jazz lyrics, Tanpınar himself frequently weaved between the classics and

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<sup>71</sup> In addition to implicitly comparing him to a Magpie, Tanpınar also wrote of him explicitly as “a kind of hundred-headed creature, made by every possible defect and balance disorder in the human soul” (ibid).

popular fiction. From Turan Alptekin we learn that Tanpınar's nickname among friends was "Al Capone," not for bootlegging alcohol or infiltrating İstanbul's political machine but for the cheap crime fiction that he religiously read every day (2001:20-21).

Tanpınar's own diary confirms this. During his 1953 trip to France, he wrote with some trepidation, "Today, I made a frightful calculation: 17 French books of crime fiction, 8 English books of crime fiction. It's as if I came to Paris to buy crime fiction" (2013:103). If I might use Tanpınar's own phrase from above, he failed "to take himself seriously" in at least two senses: not only did he prefer to read foreign writers, he preferred—horror of horrors!—to read their pulp fiction.<sup>72</sup> Some might dismiss Tanpınar's reading habits here as irrelevant. I would agree, in the larger sense that Tanpınar's personality bears little on close readings or interpretations of his novels and poems. However, if we've taken as our object of study a close reading not of the novel but of the larger literary field in which it was assembled and circulated (we have); if the practices of readers constitute a component of that field (they do); and if Tanpınar himself marshaled a series of claims about those readers (he did), then I feel that it's important to recover some of the lesser-known practices of Tanpınar himself as a reader. In *A Mind at Peace*, İhsan complained that "most of us read as if we're going on a trip, as if we're escaping from ourselves. That's the issue" (90). But Tanpınar's own practices show that, really, it *wasn't* an issue. It was a way of life. A mode of reading that, regardless of the puritanical guilt he may have felt, clearly gave him great pleasure.

These undisciplined assemblages weren't just about pleasure, though: they also bore

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<sup>72</sup> Ironically, this preference drew him close to Cavafy. I.A. Saregiannis writes that Cavafy "followed contemporary fiction with curiosity, but quite vaguely, it seems to me; he had no interest in the details but wanted to know what was happening around him ... When, after his throat surgery and having lost his voice, he was in the hospital of the Red Cross, I asked him if he wanted any books to read. On a sheet of paper, he wrote to me: 'Only detective novels' and underlined the 'only' twice" (35-37).

on aesthetic creation. This becomes particularly clear when we try to understand the murky middle ground that conjoined Tanpınar’s reading with his writing. For in ways not entirely unlike the reader-compilers of commonplace books or the reader-translators of popular fiction, Tanpınar was also cobbling together certain pieces of his own writing with and through the fragments of others. More specifically, he adapted and incorporated pieces of French verse into his own work—particularly his poems. In the introduction to this chapter, I wrote briefly of the editors and printers whose influence had found their way into Tanpınar’s poems, yet these were not the only ones there. In 1949, the journalist Ali Rauf Akan wrote,

Blazing a trail means nothing to us. [...] Ever since the Tanzimat period, in our country the works that are said to have blazed a trail are imitations. Translate Ahmet Haşim into French and the French symbolists appear. [...] In the West, someone like Valery comes along, and then fifteen or twenty years later you look and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar has adapted one of his poems, and I mean that he’s translated his verses word for word and put his own signature underneath it! When I said this to a colleague of mine five or six years earlier s/he was shocked. I read the French and the Turkish lines to her/him and the next day s/he published both in a column that s/he had in a morning paper. It stirred up quite a lot of gossip. (1949)

It’s difficult to gauge just what lines of verse Akan means here. Perhaps he’s referring to Valery’s « Le bois amical » (The friendly wood) and Tanpınar’s “Hatırlama” (Remembrance). The premise, tone and imagery of the two poems bear systemic affinities and reward a closer examination, yet for brevity I point here only to a single couplet in each, beginning with Valery:

Nous partagions ce fruit de féeries  
La lune, amicale aux insensés.

We shared this fruit of fairies:  
The moon, friendly to fools.

And here is Tanpınar:

Bir masal meyvası gibi paylaştık  
Mehtabı kırılmış dal uçlarından.

We shared, like a fairytale fruit,  
The moon, from the edges of the broken boughs.

This example is not my own discovery; it was made by Erdoğan Alkan and published in 2005. Moreover, Valéry’s couplet was by no means the only example. As Alkan writes, “When it comes to filching from French poets, Tanpınar feels right at home” (2005:493). Examining works by Nerval, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Mallarmé, Alkan compares them to verses, stanzas, poems, and short stories of Tanpınar and makes damning accusations against the latter.<sup>73</sup> Granted, some of Alkan’s arguments are less convincing than others, yet as they pile up page after page, example after example, it’s impossible to dismiss them en masse. What *is* possible, however, is an analysis with more generosity. Rather than simply listing out what amounts to a series of indictments, as Alkan has done, I’d like to try to make some sense of Tanpınar’s practices on their own terms. To do so, it might be helpful to differentiate between at least a couple forms of “carrying over” in which he engages. First, in certain cases, Tanpınar more or less transposes directly from the French verses, such as the first stanza of Baudelaire’s « L’irréparable »:

Pouvons-nous étouffer le vieux, le long Remords,	Can we suffocate old, enduring Remorse,
Qui vit, s'agite et se tortille	That lives, writhes and wriggles
Et se nourrit de nous comme le ver des morts,	And feeds upon us as the worm upon the dead,
Comme du chêne la chenille?	As the grub upon the oak?
Pouvons-nous étouffer l'implacable Remords?	Can we suffocate implacable Remorse?

Here is Tanpınar:

Bu azap ta hilkatten beri bizimle ve bizde	Since creation this remorse is with us, and within us
Geçinir, kurt nasıl ölüyle, tırtıl [m]eşeyle	It subsists. As the worm feeds on the dead, the grub
Beslenirse biz de öyle besleriz onu.	On the [oak], so too are we its fodder.

Tanpınar’s verses come from a fragment that Mehmet Kaplan included in the posthumous *Complete Poems* (1976:144). While transcribing them from the former’s manuscripts, however, Kaplan misread what must have been Tanpınar’s “meşeyle” (*on the oak*) and printed the line instead as “neşeyle” (*on joy*). It’s only thanks to Alkan’s keen eye—and

<sup>73</sup> Elsewhere, Alkan speaks of Tanpınar’s actions as “siphoning off and appropriating” (*emip kendine mal etmek*, pg. 488) and as “pillaging” (*yağmalamak*, pg. 493). In total, Alkan’s analysis spans pages 487-506.

Baudelaire's earlier French verses—that we can reconstruct a better sense of Tanpınar's intentions. Here, Tanpınar the reader was poaching Baudelaire's words and carrying them over, as writer, into his language.

Such cases of extended, direct poaching are in the minority. More frequently, Tanpınar appears to have been inspired by the particular setting, word cluster, or phrase of a French poem; latching onto this poem's phrase or setting, he commences to build a larger structure of his own atop it. Look, for example, to Verlaine's « Après trois ans » (After three years) and Tanpınar's "Her Şey Yerli Yerinde" (Everything's in its place).

I'll sample the first two verses of each here:

Ayant poussé la porte étroite qui chancelle, Je me suis promené dans le petit jardin Qu'éclairait doucement le soleil du matin, Pailletant chaque fleur d'une humide étincelle.	Having pushed the narrow, tottering gate, I walked into the small garden Which the morning sun was illuminating softly, Each flower shining with a humid glint.
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Rien n'a changé. J'ai tout revu : l'humble tonnelle De vigne folle avec les chaises de rotin... Le jet d'eau fait toujours son murmure argentin Et le vieux tremble sa plainte sempiternelle.	Nothing's changed. I see it all again: The humble arbor with its mad vine, and the rattan chairs... The water jet still makes its silvery murmur And the old aspen its eternal groan.
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And here is Tanpınar (like Alkan, I'll draw from the poem's first version, published in *Ülkü*):

Her şey yerli yerinde: havuz başında servi Bir dolap gıcırdıyor uzaklarda durmadan Eşya aksetmiş gibi tılsımlı bir uykudan Sarmaşıklar ve böcek sesleri sarmış evi.	Everything's in its place; the cypress by the poolside In the distance a cupboard keeps on creaking, As if objects were an echo of some spellbound sleep, Vines and insects' voices wrap around the house.
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Her şey yerli yerinde; masa, sürahi, çardak Serpilen aydınlıkta dalların arasından Büyülenmiş bir ceylan gibi bakıyor zaman Sessizlik dökülüyor bir yerde yaprak yaprak.	Everything's in its place; the table, the glass and the arbor, Time, like a dazed gazelle, is gazing out From the light that's scattered in the boughs While silence is spilling out somewhere, leaf by leaf.
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In both poems, the speaker walks into the garden of an old house s/he<sup>74</sup> once lived in, only to discover that “nothing's changed” / “everything's in its place.” This phrase of Verlaine, *rien n'a changé*, when taken together with the poem's premise and scenery,

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<sup>74</sup> The gender of the speaker is clear in Verlaine's French; it remains ambiguous in Tanpınar's Turkish.



appears to have inspired Tanpınar, who set to work to build a model that would both mirror and productively distort Verlaine’s. Let me start with the mirroring. Take a look, for example, at the rhyme schemes of the French and Turkish verses: although I’ve foregone rhyme in my translations, even a cursory glance at the original poems reveals that both employ the same pattern (ABBA). More importantly, as I’ve already noted, the two poems’ larger setting and premise (a speaker walking into an old garden) are identical, with the key phrase “nothing’s changed” / “everything’s in its place” anchoring both. Beyond this, one finds correspondences in certain spatial arrangements, like a tree next to a pool of water, and certain key words, like the French and Turkish equivalents of “arbor” and “vine.” But Tanpınar isn’t simply copying Verlaine; he’s remixing and reassembling him to build something different, digging deeper into the motifs of “time,” “memory,” and “objects as mnemonic devices”—intensified in subsequent stanzas.

They are intensified, specifically, through an exploration of the dream of a former romantic partner—a dream, however, that’s inextricably woven into the objects of

*Verlaine’s* garden:

<p>Belki rüyalarıdır bu taze açmış güller,          Bu yumuşak aydınlık dalların tepesinde,          Bitmeyen aşk türküsü kumruların sesinde,          Rüyası ömrümüzün çünkü eşyaya siner.</p>	<p>Maybe they’re your dreams, these freshly opened roses          This soft light on tips of the boughs,          The endless love song in the voices of the doves,          Because our life’s dream premeates the object.</p>
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What began in Tanpınar’s first stanza as an off-hand observation (“As if objects were an echo of some spellbound sleep”) is repeated more emphatically and clearly here in the final line of the fourth stanza: immaterial dreams, the line tells us, invade and infuse themselves into the material objects around us. Indeed, it now becomes clear that this dream lies at the heart of the poem and has flooded the entire garden. But who is doing the invading, infusing, and flooding here, and into whose objects? It seems all but certain

to me that Tanpınar was infusing his own dreamwork into what—in a standard proprietary system of authorship—we would call the objects of Verlaine: that garden and its vines, arbors, and flowers, its pools of running water and trees, the play of sounds and of light,<sup>75</sup> and, above all, the sense that all of these things are right where they should be (*rien n'a changé*). Tanpınar the reader wandered into this French poetic space and, like the “transladaptations” of popular pulp fiction from Europe, took various pieces of it with him as he left, reassembling them and building even more into them. In other words, even if all these things are “in their place,” they’ve only reached this place through a series of displacements, replacements and repositioning that span two poems and languages. And there was nothing wrong with this—certainly not legally: published in 1944, “Everything’s in its place” was operating within a copyright code that implicitly encouraged such practices. But the poem emerges from more than a mere legal loophole, of course. It stands today as witness to an entire alternative literary paradigm, not one of authorized texts versus “translation weeds” but rather an open field of literature-as-assemblage.

For this reason, while I find Alkan’s several discoveries indispensable, his tone and meanness of spirit<sup>76</sup> detract from what might otherwise have become a fruitful analysis. Rather than condemning Tanpınar’s practices as plagiarism or his poetry as derivative, I want to understand both as a subtle manifestation of the *other* Tanpınar that I’ve been exploring here—not the one who lamented the fragmentation of the Turkish literary system, but the one who wandered productively across it; not the one who longed for the

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<sup>75</sup> Look back to Verlaine’s first stanza and you’ll see that his *éclairer doucement* (to light softly) has become, here in Tanpınar’s fourth stanza, *yumuşak aydınlık* (soft light).

<sup>76</sup> It’s a meanness of spirit that, ironically, Tanpınar likewise employs while he berates the young man and his commonplace book above.

consolidation and strict policing of the authorial text, but the one who used textual disaggregation to toy with new combinations, revisions and extensions. As the inscription to this chapter intimated, Tanpınar had scattered himself to such a degree that it was only by seeking out textual others that he could continue to create, assembling their pieces. At several points across his reading and writing practices, Tanpınar was patching together strange and beautiful assemblages from a range of other sources, spanning French symbolists to Agatha Christie—and, indeed, the *mecmua*: while the aesthetic register of Tanpınar’s patchworks are likely more familiar to many of my readers, their *process* was not unlike the commonplace books that Mümtaz gazed at in *A Mind at Peace*, or the cheap pulp-fiction-adaptations that appeared alongside it in the pages of *Cumhuriyet*. Indeed, in material hosts like the newspaper or commonplace book, Tanpınar’s own assemblages were being wrested from his grip and bound up into new networks of meaning. As Wai Chee Dimock writes, “This sort of threading [of texts] [...] requires the gathering of many hands, none of which has exclusive say over the civil society that issues from their commingling” (2006:17). And if Dimock calls this weaving a “civil society”—“an NGO of sorts, [...] operating on a scale both too small and too large to be fully policed by the nation-state” (8)—I have instead chosen the concept of the commons (or “commons-place”), thereby demarcating a more anarchic space, one that certainly builds connections but that, most of the time, lacks the internal hierarchies of an NGO. Whatever we call such a threading of texts and hands, however, more important than the nomenclature is the resulting picture that emerges. It’s a picture, I’ve argued, in which we see the possibility for a different kind of literature: a tangled, raucous, and occasionally contentious literature whose proprietary system was literally dissolved into a plurality. A

literature, in short, whose texts were no longer objects to be owned and consolidated but open processes to be claimed and reclaimed by their multiple handlers.

## Chapter Four

### Testifying in the Assembly

*Our ancestors teach us that no one makes history alone.*

- Rigoberta Menchú<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Introduction***

In the late months of 1943, as the German occupation of Greece neared its darkest nadir, the prominent literary critic I.M. Panagiotopoulos was preparing the second volume of his essays for publication, under the general title *Uneasy Years* (*Ανήσυχια χρόνια*). After nearly three decades of war, the upheaval of millions of refugees and the collapse of several regimes, the book's title seemed fitting. "[T]he days we have lived through have their own particularity," Panagiotopoulos wrote, and as a consequence "the novelist, like a historian of the life that surrounds him, must transfer them onto his pages" (1943:28). There was, he argued, an urgent need to chronicle, document, and store away the epoch that had passed, to "transfer" it onto paper—and thence, it was assumed, into the communal memory of a national readership. The medium of this transmission, Panagiotopoulos insisted, was literature, and it was to be carried out expressly through the hand (and individual experience) of the author.

This chapter will take issue with such a claim, yet it's important first to follow its logic closely to understand why. The argument was not simply a fluke, nor a whim of Panagiotopoulos himself. Surveying the field of literary production since the 1920s, he

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted and translated in Damrosch (2003:252).

located Greek prose's central strength in autobiography. Much of this literature, he admitted, was weak and underdeveloped, incapable of "encompassing the greater whole, [...] of expressing collective ideals, of studying the age, of looking at the historical moment with the composure that so often befits the art of the novel writer, as an objective art" (26). Yet those works that succeeded, he claimed, did so precisely because they captured "the meaning and atmosphere of [the author's] epoch" (38). What was needed was an author who, by virtue of her or his objectivity, might give voice, through individual experience, to a collective history.

On the other side of the Aegean, in Turkey, one could read strikingly similar observations from İsmail Habib, whom you'll remember from the first page of the previous chapter as Tanpınar's unfortunate target in the tavern. As I noted there, İsmail Habib was the first literary scholar of the Turkish Republic to treat contemporary, post-Ottoman literature. Admittedly, he did not describe the same systemic, general pattern set forth in Panagiotopoulos' book. After all, Turkish literary criticism was only just now taking its first tentative steps—Fuad Köprülü had published the first formative study of Turkish literature only in 1921, a work whose final pages ended in the *nineteenth* century—and had not yet developed a vocabulary to assess the generic trends of twentieth-century Turkish prose. Nonetheless, in describing the first modern Turkish novels to emerge from the Independence War of 1919-1922—the western front of which is also known as the Greco-Turkish War—İsmail Habib's targeted commentary left little doubt that literature was being enlisted to bear witness to the historical moment. Writing of Halide Edib, who had herself participated in the Greco-Turkish War, İsmail Habib argued that "whether treating the Turkism movement, the victories of the National

Struggle, or the tragedies of the [British and Greek] occupation, her works stem from the fact that she has not only an individual but a collective conscience” (1932:327), or, as he wrote earlier, she had “the ability to feel the communal pulse within her own pulse” (326). The greatest boon of her novels, İsmail Habib continued, lay in “the sections devoted to detail, to life, to [real] events. These are pieces of immediate [*doğrudan doğruya*] realism. The novelist has taken all of them from the life that she herself lived” (342). In his analysis of Edib’s fiction, İsmail Habib isolates and elevates the lived experience of the author, which has been directly (*doğrudan doğruya*) transferred to the pages we read. It is, moreover, an experience lived not only by the individual author but by the entire national community, a connection that is naturalized through the language of physical bodily functions (“our pulse” is in “her pulse”). Across the region, literature was being called upon to make a living testimony of the immediate national past, broadcasting to readers a voice in which could be felt the pulse of an entire people.

If nineteenth-century Europe had embraced the historical novel as a tool of national *Bildung*, twentieth-century Greek and Turkish literature were busily inventing their own mode of national historiography, what has come to be called the testimonial.<sup>2</sup> The rhetorical tropes that separate the two genres are worth pausing over. While many historical novels—perhaps most famously, Scott’s *Waverley* series—had embedded a distant past within the material artifacts of their fictional present (e.g., old letters, books, or journals, rediscovered and carefully compiled by the editorial figure of the novel), testimonial fiction, conversely, was said by its reviewers and readers to gesture toward an immediate and unmediated past, a past so im-mediate it was nearly present, thanks to the

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<sup>2</sup> Certainly, alongside the new genre of testimonial, more traditional historical fiction also continued to thrive in the region—particularly in Turkey (see Halim Kara, 2012:11-56).

direct experience of the witness-narrator. Testimonial fiction did not reconstruct history: it was itself living history, provided by a living “I” embedded at the frontlines. Such was the rhetoric, in any case, employed by authors and critics of testimonial works. Yet to take such rhetoric at its word is to risk overlooking the fascinating collision, collusion and/or contestation of several agents—witnesses, transcribers, writers, editors and others—each of whom has left a trace within the testimonial’s text(s). To understand the genre’s historical truth, this chapter will argue that we must treat testimonials not as disembodied discourses but as material networks—through which a historical truth is indeed articulated but, crucially, that truth is neither “authoritative” nor “authentic” (terms that I’ll unpack in the next section); a careful examination of its several moving parts suggests that it is instead heavily mediated and always contingent. This does not make it any less powerful. To the contrary, to understand the testimonial as such—to recover, in other words, the several hands through which it has passed before reaching ours—is to recognize its true collective potential.

The two testimonials that I examine, *Ἡ ἱστορία ἐνὸς αἰχμαλώτου* (A captive’s story) and *Ateşten Gömlek* (Shirt of Flame), one written in Greek and the other in Turkish (although traces of the linguistic other are quietly integrated into both), revolve around an especially definitive moment in the modern Aegean: the Greco-Turkish War and subsequent Population Exchange. As I have briefly argued in previous chapters but will detail more thoroughly here, these events were formative in the reconfiguration of the region. As millions of bodies were displaced and borders were replaced, on both sides of the sea there quickly arose a perceived need, among critics, for a kind of “documentary bedrock” in which to solidify the national narrative. To achieve this bedrock, the critical



reception and shaping of testimonial tended to cement together the narrating “I” and the phantasmagoric “we” of the nation for whom it spoke.

Be that as it may, testimonials, like all documentary objects, were not *ex nihilo* creations but carefully crafted artifacts, which were, moreover, *re*-crafted in subtle ways by their several curators in the years and decades following their initial publication. There was, in other words, a real, if limited, “textual community” of hands producing and reproducing the testimonial genre, one that was, however, eclipsed by the much larger community of the nation, who came to be the implicit subject of Greek and Turkish testimonials once they had been “monumentalized” and calcified through their critical reception.

This chapter, then, attempts to “decalcify” these texts, to break them down into their constituent parts, to view them not as monuments or finished products but as polyphonic and diachronic processes—processes that leave in their wake a material trail that can be followed and pieced back together. In assembling these pieces, I want to restore the multiple hands and voices bound up in these testimonials and the mutual responsibility they bear to one another and to us. We might understand this mutual responsibility as a cor-respondence, each answering to the other. If readers and critics like I.M. Panagiotopoulos and İsmail Habib had isolated the word “truth” in the phrase “truth-telling,” turning it into an objective and monumental force, I argue that we can do it better justice by careful consideration of the second term—the telling—as an ongoing and contingent chain of communication, one that can occasionally bring together the most unexpected of actors.

### *Un-auth-orized Truths*

While this “correspondence” of hands and voices can be uncovered in every testimonial, one sees the clearest example in the genre’s most common form: the oral narrative of an illiterate, semi-literate, or aliterate witness, related to and “reproduced” by a writer. This form has led some scholars, such as George Yúdice and John Beverley, to defend testimonial as a truly emancipatory platform, perhaps the only form that rejects in practice the bourgeois conventions of printed prose literature. The testimonial, Yúdice writes, is “a part of the struggle for hegemony [...] the practical aesthetics of community-building” (1996:57). And as Beverley emphasizes, this collective supposedly effaces the author, who is replaced with a stenographer of sorts:

Testimonio involves a sort of erasure of the function, and thus also of the textual presence, of the ‘author,’ which by contrast is so central in all major forms of bourgeois writing since the Renaissance, so much so that our very notions of literature and the literary are bound up with notions of the author, or, at least, of an authorial intention. In Miguel Barnet’s phrase, the author has been replaced in testimonio by the function of a ‘compiler’ (*compilador*) or ‘activator’ (*gestante*), somewhat on the model of the film producer. There seems implicit in this situation both a challenge and an alternative to the patriarchal and elitist function the author plays in class and sexually and racially divided societies: in particular, a relief from the figure of the ‘great writer’ or writer as cultural hero that is so much a part of the ideology of literary modernism. (2004:35)

While I agree that the testimonial (and particularly the Latin American *testimonio*) can challenge the patriarchal and elitist function of the author, my chapter will apply some pressure to the larger claim that it in fact “erases” this function, or that it replaces “authorship,” as Yúdice implies, with “authenticity.”<sup>3</sup> To make such a claim is to misunderstand the genre’s dominant textual economy, which does not so much *replace*

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<sup>3</sup> Testimonial, he writes, is “an *authentic* narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgency of a situation” (1996:44, emphasis mine).

authority with authenticity as exploits their co-mingling. The question that I feel deserves consideration is how we might “unauthorize” the genre entirely—without, however, delegitimizing the truth that it tells.

In the *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Giorgio Agamben defines authorship in testimonial as “constitutively fractured; it has no other consistency than disjunction and dislocation” (151).<sup>4</sup> Agamben traces this dislocation to the Latin root *auctor*, from which he derives *author*. Briefly laying out the three categories signified by the *auctor* in classical Rome—representative, vendor, and witness—he writes that essential in each case “is the idea of a relationship between two subjects in which one acts as the *auctor* for the other” (149); as such, testimony is “always an act of an ‘author’” insofar as it necessitates a mutuality and a responsibility between subjects: “As is well known, the classical world is not acquainted with creation *ex nihilo*; for the ancients every act of creation always implies something else, either unformed matter or incomplete Being, which is to be completed or ‘made to grow.’ Every creator is always a co-creator, every author a co-author. The act of the *auctor* completes the act of an incapable person” (150). This is a crucial insight and cannot be overemphasized: even in cases where there is no transmission between a separate witness and writer, Agamben argues that the testimonial always arises from and reaches us through co-authorship. At the heart of the *auctor* lies a kind of promise: the term, together with its derivative *auctoritas*, served a primarily legal function in classical Latin, turning the *auctor* into a guarantor and, by extension, *auctoritas* into a guarantee.

But we can, I think, complicate Agamben’s etymology a little. If he stops his

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<sup>4</sup> For Agamben, this dislocation derives from the categorical breach between the two victims of the Holocaust: those who survived and those who “touched bottom”—the so-called “Muselmänner.” I’m less concerned here with Agamben’s use of the “Muselmann” and the Nazi death camps than with his inventive exploration of the author function itself, built upon its Latin root *auctor*. As such, I focus not on the relationship between those who survived and those who touched bottom (i.e., the human and inhuman) but between witness and writer, which Agamben does not treat.

analysis in the golden age of Republican Rome, the term nonetheless continued to evolve. To justify the author's function, medieval scholars traced the word's root not only to the Latin *augere*, but also, quite frequently, to the Greek *ἀθεντία* (*authentia*), or, more accurately, its adjectival form *ἀθεντικός* (*authentikos*).<sup>5</sup> This etymology can be seen, for example, in Simon de Tournai (twelfth century), who, when referencing the Aristotelian concept of the *primum movens*, declared, "But when one is speaking about God, 'motion' does not premise an *action*, a word that comes from *agere* [to drive, to set in motion], but rather an *autoritas*, which comes from *authenticus*" (cited in Chenu, 1927:85). Beyond this, the connection between *auctor* and *authentikos* may have owed its popularity to Ugucione da Pisa's thirteenth-century *Magnae Derivationes*, which was the seminal etymological dictionary for medieval Europe. The lexicon defined *auctor*, on its second folio, as "an *authenticus* or *autorizabilis* person, that is, a person of authority, whom it is necessary to believe."<sup>6</sup> Throughout the medieval period, the two concepts amplified each other in this circular definition. And while the etymological link between "author" and "authentic" was later discredited in the early modern period, the long history of co-existence between *auctoritas* and *authentia* has—both literally and semantically—left its traces in the author.

First, the literal trace is easy enough to identify in the shift from the "ct" of *auctor* to the "t" and "th" of *auteur*, *author*, etc. This small but important modification in orthography (produced by both scribes and grammarians) was already apparent at least as early as the twelfth century, as seen in the quotations from Simon de Tournai and

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<sup>5</sup> It's worth noting that already in late antiquity, as seen in Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae*, the etymology of the Latin *auctor* was being tied to the Greek *authentia*. See Chenu (1927:86).

<sup>6</sup> *Derivationes*, Firenze : Accademia della Crusca, 2000. I'm grateful to Jan Ziolkowski (2009:430) for leading me to this source.

Uguccio of Pisa above. As Jan Ziolkowski has remarked, those “who were enshrined in the canon of school authors were sometimes designated as *autores*, spelled on purpose without the *c*, a term seen as encapsulating orthographically and etymologically the quality of authenticity” (2009:433). By the 1500s, this etymologically suggestive variation had been further entrenched in vernacular English, which used with growing frequency an “h” alongside the “t.” As the OED suggests, this “th” form reflects “the frequent association of the word, in French as well as English and other European languages, with classical Latin *authenticus*, its etymon Hellenistic Greek *ἀθηντικός*, and related words.” In quite a literal sense, therefore, one might argue that while the etymological correlation between the authorial and the authentic was long ago dismissed, the latter remains visibly grafted on and encased within the former.

This entails, I suggest, more than just a pedantic exercise in orthography. There is an important conceptual core within the Greek *authentia* that, while lacking in the Latin *auctoritas* and *auctor*, deeply informs our understanding of the author and the authoritative text. Derived from *αὐτός* and *ἀνύτω* (self + achieve), *authentia* signified an absolute force, i.e., one that was bound to no external sources. This self-originary aspect of the word was crucial, as witnessed for example in the noun *ἀθέντης* (*authentēs*), which was the earliest lexeme of the word family. Ironically, it had the primary meaning of a “perpetrator,” i.e., one who commits a negative action (primarily murder) on the basis of his or her own will.<sup>7</sup> It was this self and its internally derived will that connected the murderer to its later derivations, *authentia* and *authentikos*.

These latter were invented only centuries later. As a Roman-era invention,

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Herodotos 1.117.

*authenticia* survives primarily in references to the monotheistic, singular God,<sup>8</sup> or, soon thereafter, to the emperor and imperial institutions. Its adjectival form, *authentikos*, bore two meanings. First, it denoted that which holds “narrative” *authenticia*, i.e., exclusive reports or texts that were neither derived from nor bound to other reports or texts.<sup>9</sup> Early Eastern Christian scholars too did not shy away from applying the term to the specific narrative of the scriptures. Clement of Alexandria, though he uses *authenticia* instead of its adjective, demonstrates the concept clearly when writing of the “scriptures [τὰς γραφὰς], which we have come to believe are authoritative [κυρίας] by showing them to be from an omnipotent *authenticia* [ἐξ ἀθηντείας παντοκρατορικῆς]” (*Stromata* 4.1.2.2). The scriptures were authoritative, in other words, because they were based on an authentic—which is to say a single, irreducible and originary—source, one that certainly conditioned other texts but that was, itself, unconditioned by them.

Secondly, in situations unrelated to narratives or texts, *authentikos* signified that which is in a position of unbound, independent power. Asking why the Christian God had taken on a human form to save a debased humanity, when this same divinity could have done so from above, “impassively” (*ἐν ἀπαθείᾳ διαμεῖναι*), Gregory of Nyssa writes in his *Oratio Catechetica*, “For, he who by will constituted everything, who made exist that which did not exist by the sole force of willing it, why then did he not also pull the human out from the enemy’s power and lead him to his original condition, by means of an *authentikē* and divine power?” (15). The passage demonstrates that, again, *authenticia* is not merely “authority” but, in a more precise sense, an impassive power that remains

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<sup>8</sup> One reads, for example, in Basil of Caesaria’s *Against Eunomios*, a description of Paul’s conversion: “The Holy Spirit set him [Paul] apart, enjoying as it does *authenticia* over nature” (5.300).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Cicero (*Epistulae ad Atticum* 9.14 and 10.9). For later Greek-language texts from the first to fourth century ACE, see Liddell and Scott’s entry on the word.

above and untouched by that which it produces (in this case, the human). It is removed, unique, and self-originary.

Whether speaking of texts or of beings, both were deemed “authentic” by their exclusive, isolated and individualized status. And, as such, the word bore witness to its most basic etymological meaning: an internalized and autonomous source of power. One can have power; one can, indeed, have authority. Yet if it is not absolute—in the literal sense of “unbound” to any externals—such authority cannot be *authenticia*.<sup>10</sup>

The *autos* or “self” that lay coiled at the root of *authenticia* and *authentikos*, as I suggested, is an etymon and concept that was lacking in Agamben’s *auctor*, which indeed had been predicated upon a mutuality. Yet as classical Rome, which constitutes his exclusive focus, gave way first to empire and then to monotheism, *auctoritas* and *authenticia* became more and more difficult to separate. There is a danger, therefore, that in attributing the testimonial to an author—or, at the other extreme, in calling it “authentic” by virtue of its oral witness—we open the door not to Agamben’s (correct, I think) sense of collective creation and mutual responsibility but instead a notion of the witness as an individual and autonomous source of truth. To understand this, we need only extend Agamben’s analysis beyond the classical age, as I’ve done here. Cicero’s *auctor* is not our *author*. Despite the constellations of hands producing and reproducing the testimonial, if we frame those texts as authoritative or authentic, we’re in danger of relinquishing them to the individual and indivisible *autos* that lies at the heart of both terms. Rather than celebrating either the witness or the writer as the authoritative or

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<sup>10</sup> Look, for example, to Clement of Alexandria again, writing this time of the pagans, “who heard the voice of the lord, whether it be his *authentikē* voice or his voice acting through the apostles” (*Stromata* 6.6.47.3). The writings of the apostles were among the most powerful scriptural authorities in the church, yet they were not “authentic.” For such a power could belong only to a single, autonomous source.

authentic source of a text, I would suggest that we retire both terms; instead, I want to explore the multinodal and contingent network of actors through which, within which, and alongside of which the text is shaped, reshaped, and transmitted.

### ***The Greco-Turkish War and Population Exchange***

Writing in his diary during his military service in the Greco-Turkish War, a common soldier named Christos Karagiannis made repeated references to acts of violence against civilian populations, both Muslim and Christian.<sup>11</sup> “Our superior officer ... makes the rounds continually throughout the city, encouraging us, saying we’ll destroy the infidels. Likewise, he gives us the right to do whatever we please. Indeed, some soldiers have started doing many horrible things as reprisals .... Some soldiers do what the Turks do to our Greeks. An eye for an eye” (1976:134). As one might guess from this passage, the Greco-Turkish conflict of 1919-1922 has until recently been a difficult historical and ideological field to traverse, with balanced scholarship emerging only in the past twenty years.<sup>12</sup> Hostilities had in fact begun earlier, during and in the wake of the First Balkan War of 1912, when the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian states (and the Christian guerillas allied with each) attacked Ottoman Macedonia. During this war, civilian populations were often the target of violence, from isolated executions to the razing of entire villages, leading to a surge of Muslim refugees into Istanbul and Anatolia from the Balkans. This traumatic event led, in turn, to the national radicalization of the ruling Ottoman regime, the *CUP*, which had deposed Sultan Abdul Hamid with an interfaith coalition promising

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<sup>11</sup> To provide the historical context of the war and population exchange, I draw this section (revised and shortened) from my article in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* (2014).

<sup>12</sup> See for example Arı (1995); Hirschon (ed.) (2003); Özsoy (2003); Mazower (2004); Clark (2006); Tsitselikis (ed.) (2006); Kostopoulos (2007).



a new Ottoman era.<sup>13</sup> Despite these promises, the nationalist radicalization of the regime was quick and brutal, leading to a series of policies against its own minority populations, which reached a height during the First World War. Developments worsened even further with the National Greek Army's occupation of Izmir in 1919, soon expanding to the surrounding areas of Asia Minor and concluding three years later with the army's irregular retreat as Kemalist forces pushed westward. These three years saw the looting of Muslim villages, the perpetration of physical and sexual violence against local Muslim populations, and several mass executions. Tassos Kostopoulos summarizes the situation thus: "Throughout the war, the disarmament of the Muslim villagers and the pursuit of guerillas took the form of ... threats, beatings, travel restrictions, the taking of captives, mock executions ... [and] in extreme cases the destruction of entire villages or towns" (2007:103). On the other side, armed Muslims did much the same to local Christian populations of Anatolia, continuing and escalating atrocities that had already begun in the First World War.

The violence culminated in the final days of the conflict: as the Greek Army retreated in disarray towards the sea, it burned countless Muslim villages and towns to the ground: over 100,000 buildings were destroyed in a matter of days. As for human victims, only unofficial, individual reports are available, yet the number is likely in the tens of thousands (McCarthy 1995:279-283). Indeed, in just one large town outside of Mersin that had been razed by Greek soldiers, over 30,000 local Muslims were reportedly

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<sup>13</sup> In fact, the CUP was already building the groundwork for ethnic Turkish hegemony within its inner ranks well before the Balkan Wars. Despite its public claims to pan-Ottomanism, confidential correspondence addressed to the Muslim members of the CUP's upper echelon wrote as early as 1897 that "our aim is great union. For that reason you may allow Christians to become members of the Committee. But do not give the secret numbers of the Committee correspondence to them! Only show them the published materials of the committee" (quoted in Gökçek 2002:49-50). In the wake of the Balkan Wars, these veiled tendencies towards Turkish exceptionalism became open and structural platforms of the party. See, for example, Carter Findley's *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity*, pages 201-205; 226-231.

unaccounted for in the immediate aftermath (ibid). After the final withdrawal of the Greek army, Kemalist forces entered the huge port city of Izmir, which had been the headquarters of the Greek occupation forces and was, moreover, home to an immense population of Ottoman minorities (Greek Orthodox Christians, Armenians, Sephardic Jews, and Levantines). Less than five days after the Turkish entry into the city, the entire Greek and Armenian quarters were burned down, possibly by forces under Nureddin Pasha, the commander of the First Army.<sup>14</sup> The Muslim and Jewish quarters remained untouched. Conservative estimates on the number of Greek and Armenian civilian deaths in Izmir during the flames and looting exceed 10,000.<sup>15</sup>

Ultimately, both states agreed to the compulsory evacuation of their minority populations: roughly 1.5 million Greek Orthodox citizens of the former Ottoman Empire and half a million Muslim citizens from Greece were “exchanged,” having been marched to the sea and crammed into squalid ships that took several days to reach their destination

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<sup>14</sup> Nureddin Pasha had already brutally suppressed the Koçgiri uprising in the east a year earlier. Following this, he had designed and overseen the mass deportations of the Pontic Greeks from the Black Sea coast on a death march into the interior (after executing hundreds). Taner Akçam writes, “According to the official tally, some 11,181 Greeks were murdered in 1921 by the Central Army under the command of Nurettin Paşa” (2006:323). For his brutality, the National Assembly in fact relieved Nureddin Pasha from his position and put him on trial, which was however annulled by Mustafa Kemal. Having been saved from the courts, Nureddin Pasha was soon to return as well to his post as commander of the First Army, with which he entered Izmir in 1922. While the origins of the fire remain unclear, Nureddin Pasha’s past history of brutality against minority populations and his position as commander of the First Army, which had been the effective police force within Izmir for some days when the fire was set, bear consideration. The journalist Falih Rıfkı Atay, who had traveled to Izmir during the entrance of Kemalist forces and witnessed the burning of the city some days later, wrote: “Were the responsible parties for the fire only Armenian arsonists, as was told to us at the time? There were many as well saying that Nureddin Pasha, the commander of the army, was highly adept in this business” (1961:212).

<sup>15</sup> Biray Kulluoğlu Kırılı’s estimate of 100,000 casualties (2005:31) serves as the other, likely hyperbolic bookend. In general, many presentations and interpretations of demographic losses and wartime deaths, whether by witnesses or academics, have been subject to allegations of bias, such as George Horton (1926) or Heath Lowry (1988). Justin McCarthy’s painstaking aggregation of data provides a detailed and likely reliable picture of the deaths and violence inflicted against the Muslim population by the Greek forces, though his accompanying discussion of Greek casualties betrays some unsettling bias (1995:255-332). For a balanced discussion of available data—and a warning of the danger of the “numbers game”—see Kostopoulos (2007:135-149). For the purposes of this chapter, in any case, the data themselves are of less importance than the larger narrative of nationalist destruction and, ultimately, ethnic cleansing (the culmination of which was the Population Exchange itself) *perpetrated by both states*.

across the Aegean. It was, at the time, one of the largest forced resettlements in history.

“Resettlement,” however, was often an empty term: all too frequently, refugees were “settled” into nothing more than tents. This was due primarily to limited state resources in both Greece and Turkey, yet it is worth noting that frequently the housing and resources that had been set aside for refugees were illegally appropriated by locals, before the “exchanged” refugees had even arrived. Even five years later, by the end of the 1920s, the situation had improved little. In 1928, Thessaloniki, a major “resettlement” destination in northern Greece, still housed a vast network of metal shacks, clay huts and tents at the edge of the city proper, around the train station—what locals called the *τενεκέ-μαχαλάς* (tin neighborhood)—where thousands of displaced refugees from Asia Minor spent the rainy Macedonian winters in miserable, abject cold (Mazower 2004:365-370).

By all objective accounts, it was a disastrous mishandling of the situation on the part of the Greek state, which had failed to house, feed, and integrate its newly exchanged people. Yet objective accounts were soon stifled out. Within a generation, the history of these displaced refugees was mobilized by nationalist discourses in Greek historiography, which created a narrative of homogenous historical loss, one that ultimately served the purpose of binding individual to nation, and nation to state. “Viewed in *retrospect*,” Penelope Papailias writes, the traumatic ordeals of the refugees paradoxically became “instrumental to national redemption” (2005:94, italics in the original). Borrowing heavily from the story of the Christian Passion, the discourse of suffering and redemption proved a powerful historiographic tool, even in foreign-language scholarship, such as follows: “But Greece, as on all occasions, bore her cross bravely. She gathered in her

children, [...] receiving them—a million or more—within the existing Greek homeland. No nation has achieved so much as Greece on this occasion” (Dakin 1972:268). Due to its ideological weight, this ordeal has remained a central locus in the national memory, narrated and re-narrated through a series of key histories, memoirs, testimonials, and novels.

In Turkey, however, the population exchange met the opposite fate, buried beneath a semi-official silence since the founding of the Republic in 1923. Instead, historical production focused its gaze upon the war itself, and the ultimate victory of the national army. In the wake of their victory, Kemalist loyalists quickly consolidated state power around a single-party system and within months began to implement a wave of institutional revolutions. Just as importantly, state entities such as the *Türk Dil Kurumu* (Turkish Language Foundation) and *Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Turkish History Foundation), as well as the vast state publishing industry assured the state a central role in the linguistic, ideological, and material underpinnings of public discourse and national memory. These institutions paved the way for the secular Kemalist narrative that would dominate both historiography and literary production for decades to come. It was in every sense *year zero* of the modern Turkish narrative, in which the central motifs became victory, ethnic unity, and progress.

Within this official rhetoric of victory, mass renewal, and homogenization, stories of trauma and social difference among the Muslim refugees streaming in from Greece failed to gain access to the major media forms. While countless novels, memoirs, testimonials, histories, songs, and films over the next half century celebrated the victors of the war, the hundreds of thousands of refugees exchanged from Greece found virtually

no audience for their narratives.<sup>16</sup> As one old man confessed in an interview in 1995, “It’s been over seventy years since we came here... [Until today] not a single soul once came to ask us, “How are you, what ails you?” (Yalçın 1998:234). Indeed, as Aslı Iğsız has written, Yalçın himself was taken to court by state authorities for “Insulting Turkishness” with his book (2008:457). Within such an atmosphere, the testimonials that found their way to print in Turkey until the end of the Cold War were almost without exception those of war heroes. Nonetheless, despite the drastically different tone between the testimonial fiction in Greek and Turkish—the one mournful, the other celebratory—in both languages these printed books displayed, as I’ve suggested above, a strikingly similar faith in the singular *authenticity* and broad representative nature of their authorial voice. The testimonial was understood, in other words, to house a uniform and univocal narrative—one into which readers were quickly drawn and which, by the time they closed the book, they had come to recognize as their own narrative as well.

### ***“A Simple, Sweet Monody”***

In 1929, a small Greek book under the title *Ιστορία ἐνὸς αἰχμαλώτου* (*A Captive’s Story*) was printed in Athens by the publisher Chrysostomos Giannaris. As the author Stratis Doukas admitted, the 75-page novella’s plot was simple and straightforward, narrated with equally simple and straightforward language: during the destruction of Izmir in 1922, a Greek Orthodox Christian from Anatolia, named Nikolas Kozakoglou, is separated from his parents and imprisoned by Turkish soldiers. Along with thousands of

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<sup>16</sup> For a single exception, see Sabahattin Ali’s short story “Çirkince” (2014:93-106). Published in 1947, the work documents the continued difficulties of Muslim refugees from Greece, their economic exploitation at the hands of local industrialists and large landowners, and the state’s ongoing mismanagement (see in particular pages 104-106). Sabahattin Ali’s stories undermined the official Kemalist narrative of untroubled progress and ethnic unity.

other young Orthodox men, he is humiliated, beaten, and marched deep into the Anatolian interior in brutal “work brigades” (*amele taburları*, a relic from the first World War and the Ottoman army). Escaping one night, the narrator and a friend spend many days wandering through the desolate countryside, where entire villages (including their own) lie in waste. Nearing starvation, they decide to assume Muslim identities and enter Turkish society, seeking some means to make their way to the sea and secure a passage to Greece. They separate, each going his own way, to avoid betraying one another through a slip of the tongue. Months later, however, the narrator will hear of his friend’s death by lynching, when he failed to perform his ablutions correctly in the Mosque, thereby revealing his Orthodox identity. The rest of the novella follows the adventures of the narrator, metamorphosed now into “Behçet,” a Macedonian *Muhacir* (i.e., a Muslim refugee from the Balkan Wars), working as a shepherd for a local landholder named Hacı Mehmet, who treats him with respect and, eventually, paternal love. Indeed, Hacı Mehmet feels such a strong attachment to the narrator that he comes to offer his niece in marriage.

This marriage proposal triggers the dramatic crisis of the narrative, the proverbial point of no return for the narrator in his identity games. Though this is never stated outright, the proposal clearly portends “contamination,” among the earliest instances of a generic trope that Vangelis Calotychos has shown to lie at the heart of most Greek-language narratives of Turkey and Asia Minor. Synthesizing a series of texts from multiple media (both novel and film), Calotychos writes that “it is precisely at the moment when the protagonist is given the opportunity to marry into prosperity that he is obliged to defiantly resist and keep intact the integrities of family, race, country, and

identity” (2013:151). The operative word in Calotychos’ formula, I posit, is *integrity*, i.e., the quality of being “untouched” (*in+tangere*). Beneath the metamorphoses of the narrator there seems to lie an integral, uncontaminated core, never stated but implicitly understood by readers. Within the logic of the text, therefore, the central threat of the marriage proposal is not one of sexual contamination but rather that it might expose and dangerously augment an inconvenient fact: that identity is always already contaminated and “touched” by others. In building a series of social—and now, potentially familial—ties, the fictional figure of Behçet is quickly becoming a true social being, networked into a larger field of friendships and kinship alliances with their real connections and bonds. For *A Captive’s Story* and its readers, the existence of more than one point of contact signals a dangerous anomaly. As Calotychos writes, “In Doukas’s novel, the Greek reinstates himself because he understands the limits of ‘passing’ as the Other: he remains able to distinguish between sameness and difference” (131). In the penultimate section of this chapter, I’ll return to this point; focusing on language, I’ll demonstrate that “sameness and difference” are more difficult to determine than Doukas’ story would have us believe. The strange figure of Nikolas-Behçet, whom the captive embodied during his time in Anatolia, continued to “transgress limits” behind the scenes of Doukas’ printed book in Greece.

Here, however, I suggest that Calotychos perfectly captures the internal logic of the printed book’s narrative: it raises the specter of national taboo in order to conduct its hero back into the fold. After the marriage proposal, Behçet claims that before he can wed he must first travel to Bursa to find his own sister and bring her back. Through Hacı Mehmet’s interventions, he obtains identity papers and sets out—not for Bursa but Izmir,

where he boards a ship and disembarks at Mytilene. Here, after much disbelief on the part of the Greek authorities, the narrator slowly begins his second transformation, from “Behçet” to “Nikolas” again.

The story ends here, and at the author’s behest, Nikolas places his signature in the final line of the book: “When he finished [his story], I told him: Sign your name. And he wrote. *Nikolaos Kozakoglou.*”

It’s important to note, however, that up until this point the first-person voice of the book has belonged not to the author Stratis Doukas—the “I” of the quotation above—but to the captive himself, whose real name was in fact Nikolas K-*a*-zakoglou, with an “a.”<sup>17</sup> After some sixty pages of Nikolas’ narrative voice, the intrusion of the author here in the final line is startling—an intrusion that forces, moreover, a third assumed identity onto the captive: neither Nikolas Kazakoglou nor Behçet Süleymanoğlu but Nikolas *K*ozakoglou—the literary invention of Doukas. Whose story is this, then? In his short prologue, Doukas had perhaps anticipated similar reader reactions, writing:

This story is the product of a night I spent in a village of Captives [i.e., refugees from Turkey]. It was a simple and sweet monody that dominated, because everything was silent and for this reason today as well it would be unbecoming to attach a prologue to this story. If however I’ve decided at last to add a few words here, it’s in order to make clear [my] goal in offering, under my name, this beautiful folk flower of speech [*Logos*] to the public.

Let me pause over the complicated rhetorical framework of this passage. We are told that the story is “the product” of a single night that the author spent in a refugee village; we are not, however, informed precisely whose story it is, nor how (or in what language) it was narrated, recorded, and reproduced. Instead, Doukas’ introduction uses metaphor to

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<sup>17</sup> This was an alteration that Stratis Doukas inexplicably made in the book’s second edition in 1932, never reverting back to Nikolas’ real name. Likewise, he gave the Turkish landowner the name “Hacı Mehmet” in the story, while the real landowner who had saved Nikolas was named Ali.



transform the story into a song—a “monody,” i.e., a solo piece sung by one voice only—that dominates an environment otherwise sunk in silence. Positioning himself as nothing more than a recording device, Doukas seems to accede creative agency to the narrator Nikolas. This was the limited window that readers had into the history of this text’s production for nearly half a century.

Yet is it really so simple? Drawing our attention to the parallel between narrator and author, Dimitris Tziovas has remarked that the latter “pretends to be a phonograph just as his hero pretends to be Muslim” (1999 np). Tziovas further claims that the narrative does not represent a faithful recording but rather a reworking and reformulation at the hands of the author, “who Hellenizes [εξελληνίζει] and cleans the spoken word of the Turkophone protagonist.” While I take issue with Tziovas’ uncomplicated categorization of the witness as a Turkophone, it’s important to stress that his larger observation was groundbreaking. Doukas had indeed recreated his own version of the narrator’s identity game, this time played out not in Asia Minor but in the pages of a book. He donned the mask of the witness and, through a series of remediations that I’ll detail in the penultimate section of this chapter, “fabricated” a folk-like authenticity. It was a mask from which Doukas-as-author emerged only at the novel’s final moment—in fact, its final sentence, as quoted above. This gesture by Doukas, I argue, forms a striking parallel to the narrator’s own final metamorphosis only a few pages earlier, after escaping his betrothal. In other words, just as the narrator eventually leaves his forged identity behind, reverting to “Nikolas,” so too does the author set aside his mask in the final sentence, tacitly reminding readers of his mediating presence throughout the book. Juxtaposed with this authorial intervention, the introductory note’s apparent cession of creative agency to

the refugee Nikolas left an unresolved tension planted in the text. Who indeed was speaking here? Who was writing and re-writing?

Following the book's initial release critics ignored or dismissed this tension (as well as the general implications of the book's introduction), choosing without exception to celebrate Doukas' artistry as the true creative force of the text. Giorgos Vafopoulos, an important critic in northern Greece, wrote in 1929 that Doukas had offered "his talents in the service of a new genre [i.e., *testimonial*] that was unknown to us. Is this just a narrative? Something more. It is a wondrous model of language and style. Because, despite the cooperation of the hero [i.e., Nikolas Kazakoglou], the form belongs exclusively to the author. From beginning to end one perceives the hand of the artist, which invisibly carves out the riverbed in which run the simple and crystal clear water of this folk narrative" (*Makedonia*, 26 Oct. 1929). The form, Vafopoulos insisted, "belongs" to Doukas (as did all the intellectual rights of the book, for that matter), for it was his hand and pen that had shaped the spoken word into its written form, directing its flow.

Fotos Politis, the influential stage director and critic, went even further:

This story—a true story—is narrated by Mr. Doukas. And he writes it as if he himself experienced it.... I don't believe that Nikolaos Kazakoglou sat down and dictated, word for word, his odyssey to Mr. Doukas. He told it to him once. And Mr. Doukas, because he had the craving [*πόθος*] to enter the soul of the one narrating the events, which is the main sign of a deeper culture, ... later wrote this story with the very soul of Kazakoglou .... And how could he [Nikolas] not sign the story in the end, since he saw himself pure and untouched within it there. (*Eleutheron Vima*, 5 May 1929)

In Politis' understanding, the author had in fact entered the soul of Kazakoglou and made it speak. Bearing the signs of a deeper culture—and although Politis does not intend the phrase in this way, one might easily enough misconstrue this "deeper culture" as synonymous with "written culture"—bearing this deeper culture within himself, the

author came to claim the story's truth as his own. Doukas "became" Kazakoglou (or "Kozakoglou" in all subsequent editions), assuming a mask so lifelike that in fact the real Nikolas had no choice but to sign the document before his eyes. It was a document, as all critics agreed, that "pulsed with life."<sup>18</sup> Strangely, the more that *it's* life pulsed, the fainter Kazakoglou's own pulse seemed to most readers. Indeed, at least one important critic, Photis Kontoglou, implicitly doubted whether Kazakoglou even had the power to read the document, calling him an "illiterate man" (*αγράμματος άνθρωπος*; see *Hellinika grammata*, 4 April 1929). Such assessments were echoed in later, foreign-language reviews of the work as it was translated across Europe, as seen for example in Karl Erik Lagerlöf's article on the Swedish translation: "[Nikolas Kazakoglou] told his story to Stratis Doukas in 1928. It's clear that the former [i.e., Nikolas] was used in general terms only as an intermediary. Many, clearly unrelated small details, give an intense impression of authenticity" (*Gothenburg Shipping News*, 19 June 1967).<sup>19</sup> As one can begin to sense from these brief excerpts, the text's reception only added to the tension noted above. Struggling to develop a vocabulary and critical frame for the never-before-seen genre of testimonial, critics had constructed an acute paradox: on the one hand, they reduced the agency of the witness-narrator to nothing more than the inert "primary materials" of an oral culture; they then went on to praise the author-artist for his skill in honing and reshaping these "materials." On the other hand, however, the very vocabulary used to describe and laud such artistry reached back again to the original, unmediated world of

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<sup>18</sup> The explicit metaphor of "pulse" (a term that, as I noted above in the first section of this chapter, İsmail Habib also used in Turkish to describe Halide Edib's testimonial fiction) comes from Fotos Giofyllis: "Life is pulsing within this book" (*Protoporia*, June/July 1929). Similar metaphors abound in others' reviews.

<sup>19</sup> Translated from a Greek translation of the review, held in Doukas' personal archive, housed at the Modern Greek Studies Archive, in the Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (*Αρχείο Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας Τομέα ΜΝΕΣ Α.Π.Θ.*).

the witness and his narrative: “bare and unrefined language” that was “pulsing with life,” indicative of an “authentic” folk voice.

Even more paradoxically, as the author figure gained a monopolistic hold upon the text and its production, to many readers it seemed that within his solitary voice was hiding the collective experience of millions. In the book’s pages, it was argued, we read not just a single man’s adventures but an entire nation’s. Writing after the release of the third edition in 1959, the preeminent national literary critic Dimitris Raftopoulos crystallized this line of thought:

The hero [Kozakoglou] is so simple that he attains an absolute resemblance with that great hero: the *anonymous*. (I’ve italicized this word to note that such a type of hero is easily recognizable in daily life ... and, hence, with such heroes—even just a few or just one—is created a *literature of the masses* ...). (1959:71)

“Anonymized” into the symbolic order, the book’s narrator sublimates the experience of the nation’s masses. All this, thanks to the genius of the “author,” who

mounted the narrative of the illiterate but lively Nikolas Kozakoglou before him, as a sculptor positions a model.... Ultimately, the sculpture, inscribed upon the hard stone, turned out more perfect than the perishable original.... [The author] found the strength to erase every egoistic trace of his philological self, [yet] by reaching the higher plane of self-effacement, he did just the opposite of efface himself” (72).

In other words, by forging an anonymous story of the masses, a story hardened and permanent, Doukas had simultaneously immortalized his own name. And it was only through this name, whom critics like Raftopoulos had more or less deified upon the page, that the book’s message was nationalized and codified. Having gained a single authorial voice, the testimonial now spoke for the entire nation.

### ***Product or Process?***

In the penultimate section of my chapter, I'll provide a closer textual history of *A Captive's Story's* complicated textual production, applying pressure to the “national-monument” frame developed by those like Raftopoulos above. Yet in order to build the counter-model to this frame (a counter-model that I have briefly delineated in the introductory section above), I turn first to the other edge of the Aegean, looking to Halide Edib's *Ateşten Gömlek (Shirt of Flame)*, the earliest, and arguably most famous, Turkish-language work of “testimonial fiction” from the war.

Edib's oeuvre occupies a prominent position in the Turkish canon, even more so than that of Stratis Doukas, whose other works are virtually unknown to non-specialists, despite the wild success that *A Captive's Story* has achieved. Edib was a prolific writer, whose novels explored a range of fields, from the domestic and social themes of her early work to the explicitly nationalist ideology of her later novels (most notably, *Shirt of Flame*) and, finally, the complex socio-political urban tableaux of her final period. While she was not the first female to publish fiction in Turkish, her international distinction as a public intellectual was unprecedented for Ottoman women. And if some scholars have come to question the problematic gender norms embedded in much of her creative writing,<sup>20</sup> one cannot dispute that, beyond her fiction, Edib pushed for—and sacrificed

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<sup>20</sup> While representations of gender fall outside the focus of my investigation here, they bear an undeniable importance for many studies of Edib's work and life. Comparing Halide Edib to Atatürk's wife Afet İnan, Ayşe Durakbaşa writes, “From my point of view, Afet İnan is the Turkish Republic's ... faithful girl. Halide Edib, however, could be seen as the Republic's mutinous girl,” who rose up against the Republic's state feminism, wherein “the Kemalist woman was forced to operate within an image created by males” (2000:142;119). On the other hand, Durakbaşa largely limits her analysis to Edib's public figure and non-fiction writings. Deniz Kandiyoti was among the first and most powerful voices to demonstrate the gendered limits in Edib's creative writing, which she characterized as demonstrative “of the terms under which women could be accepted into public life in republican Turkey: as asexual and devoid of their essential femaleness. ... [Her novels] confirm the power of the original Islamic paradigm and the difficulties of breaking out of it” (1988:46). And even if Hülya Adak has helpfully recuperated Edib's early novels, arguing that within these one can find possible examples of women with fully developed independent

much on behalf of—substantive policies like women’s suffrage, to say nothing of her earlier commitments to educational reforms and her brave public position against the Armenian deportations during the First World War.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, a decade later it was precisely her political positions on the democratization of the Republic that led her to an open critique of the totalitarianism of the Kemalist regime; this clash led, in 1925, to self-imposed exile, from which her public image never entirely recovered within Turkey’s mainstream media and statist historiography. Paradoxically, however, as she was written out of the official state history over the ensuing decades, her novel *Shirt of Flame* remained a cornerstone of the national literary canon, still taught to tens of thousands of secondary-school students across Turkey—just as *A Captive’s Story* is taught in secondary schools across Greece. In a certain sense, therefore, one might argue that at least within the nationalist structure of secondary education in Greece and Turkey, the *auctoritas* of both Doukas and Edib have been eclipsed by the more deeply entrenched *authentia* of their testimonials.

Like Doukas’ work, *Ateşten Gömlek* has been enshrined as a first-hand testimonial of the war. Written by Edib just days after returning from the front line and released

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subjectivity, Adak must nonetheless phrase this as only an exceptional “possibility”: “In Halide Edib’s early novels, there exist exceptional examples that create the possibility of answering positively [*olumlu cevap verme ihtimali yaratacak*] the question [of whether women with individual aims, desires and feelings could exist]” (Adak 2004a:166). Despite these conditional exceptions, the norm, it is implied, achieves little gender complexity. This is true, for example, in *Shirt of Flame*, where the female protagonist Ayşe largely cedes her subjectivity and agency to become a symbol of nationalist redemption, to be fought over amongst the male protagonists. In Erdağ Gökner’s gentle phrasing, the novel’s gender representations are “compliant and compromised” (2013:54). In both this novel and elsewhere, the discursive limitations of Edib’s feminism are clear, nor can they be entirely attributed to her historical moment, as seen when one sets her fiction alongside that of her contemporaries on the left. After joining the communist party, for example, Suat Derviş rejected her early work and, starting with *Olan Şeylerin Romanı*, embraced a more complex socialist feminism that openly condemned gender oppression and tied it to the capitalist order.

<sup>21</sup> Hülya Adak notes that even before her first novel had been published, Edib was writing articles for “the emancipation of women and equal education for women, which provoked harsh criticism from the opposition” (2004b:vii). For her public speech against the Armenian Deportations, see Edib (2004:386-388).

before the war's conclusion, *Shirt of Flame* reads like a heated, hastily written chronicle. This haste is conveyed primarily by the plot and pacing but also, in part, by the language, which generally favors one- or two-clause sentences to more complex forms. These elements have functioned for many readers as a marker of immediacy and authenticity—an interpretation that was encouraged by Edib herself, as I'll detail below. Written in the heat of the moment, *Shirt of Flame*'s haste signals a potent directness. Importantly, it also implies an inevitably heightened tendency toward error or omission; as a result, the testimonial text invites further mediation in the form of revisions, emendations, or additions during its various transmissions—whether by the author, later editors, or others.

In any case, the feeling of haste in *Shirt of Flame* is further encouraged by the text's supposed material form: a journal kept by the fictional narrator, Peyami, who is feverishly scribbling out a sort of last will and testament as he awaits brain surgery in a military hospital, after a wound to the head and the loss of both legs in the battle of Sakarya. Peyami had spent his youth as a pampered, Westernized Istanbul aristocrat. Capitalizing on his knowledge of foreign languages, he went on to serve as a civil servant in the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. His only contact with the world of action comes via his camaraderie with his distant relative Cemal and friend Ihsan, two young officers in the military academy. Following the Greek occupation of Izmir, Cemal's sister Ayshe flees that city, having witnessed the murder of her young son and husband (and having been wounded herself) by Greek soldiers. In Istanbul, her impassioned rhetoric against the occupation and in support of resistance, together with her strange beauty, draws both Ihsan and Peyami into a love triangle and, eventually, the national resistance movement, set against the backdrop of the chaotic civil wars raging in Anatolia. They all flee

Istanbul for the Anatolian interior, joining first irregular guerilla forces and, later, the Kemalist army. The remainder of the novel follows Peyami's transformation from Westernized dandy to nationalist Turk, driven by his feverish, maniacal fixation (i.e., his "shirt of flame") on Ayshe, who comes to symbolize not only Izmir but the larger national renaissance. Both İhsan and Peyami vow to win her love through an act of heroism on the field of battle, pledging to be the first to set foot in Izmir and liberate the city.

The implicit paradox, however, remains unspoken and unexplored throughout Peyami's journal: the liberation of a city is by necessity a collective enterprise, not a footrace between individual contestants. And despite his obsession with battlefield action, Peyami spends most of the war engaged instead in grueling, behind-the-scenes collective labor: serving within the translation and intelligence bureau, his days pass amidst print material, ink and paper. Ayshe, in the meantime, writes letters to him from a field hospital, describing the war's physical costs, while İhsan sees action on the front. In the final months of the war, both İhsan and Ayshe are killed in the battle of Sakarya. Peyami, having heard of his friends' death and throwing himself at last into direct combat, is gravely wounded and transferred to the hospital from which he begins writing his testament in a fever, eventually dying during surgery. After his death, the novel's one-page epilogue details a conversation between the surgeons, who verify that Peyami in fact had no friends named İhsan or Ayshe, nor was there an officer or nurse by that name in any unit:

— And so?

— It was all an effect from the bullet in his brain.

The two doctors, after a very long medical debate over Peyami, who had died while the bullet was being removed from his brain, applied a harsh Latin name



to his *Shirt of Flame*. (2007:245)

With this, the novel abruptly ends. I'll return to these unexpected (and, frankly, jarring) final lines below, yet it's worth noting first that throughout the book's publishing history, readers often turned a blind eye to the ending and its shocking implications. Instead, they emphasized the work's supposedly direct, testimonial nature, which was planted firmly in the authorial "I" of one of Turkey's most famous writers at the time (who had, moreover, been serving at the front).

In the introductory section, I gestured briefly to İsmail Habib's early assessment of the novel in what was the first systemic survey of post-Ottoman Turkish fiction, yet even before İsmail Habib—indeed, *before the novel's release*—it was already being touted as a national monument. The editors of the newspaper *İkdam*, where Edib's manuscript was first serialized, devoted a front-page ad to the work a day before it commenced, praising it as an "exhilarating chronicle":

Tomorrow we'll begin serializing the national novel written by our prized writer Ms. Halide Edib under the name "Shirt of Flame," which she has dedicated to the army of Sakarya. This novel, which we do not doubt is one of the strongest of the great writer, is also an exhilarating chronicle of the national tragedies that have befallen us since the Armistice. [/] Those who sorrow over the fact that the epic of the Anatolian struggle has not yet been written will see all their needs for excitement satisfied in this work. [/] Ms. Halide Edib's (Shirt of Flame) is a sublime monument erected before the literary world in the name of the Anatolian martyrs and veterans. (5.5.1922)

For the editors of *İkdam*, Edib's novel was both an "epic" (*destan*) and "chronicle" (*tarihçe*) of the immediate past and present. The choice of the two generic categories is worth a brief consideration. It seems likely that the editors were using the term *destan* as a calque for the *epic* or *épopée* of the West, with its popular, figurative meaning of "a series of events worthy to form the subject of an epic" that emerged in the wake of

Romanticism.<sup>22</sup> Be that as it may, the Turkish word also has its own local genealogy whose continued resonance should be emphasized. The genre of *destan* (or *dâstân*) was a medieval popular ballad or long-poem of Persianate origin, which blended oral storytelling with a textual apparatus. Julia Rubanovich (2012) has argued that although originally oral, by the 11th century most *dâstâns* were composed (in the word's literal sense: *put together*) in writing. Given their popular audience, however, these texts were still written primarily for live performance by professional storytellers. The writers of *dâstâns* self-identified not as authors but as compilers (Rubanovich, 661-662; compare also with Beverley's notion of the testimonial writer as a *compilador*), viewing their texts as open projects, certainly embedded in a semi-permanent textuality but nonetheless intimately tied to the oral performance. Rubanovich writes, "The authors of *dâstâns* were conscious of creating an independent entity, a book [...]. At the same time, although influenced by the rhetoric of the written word, *dâstân* authors were not affected by the idea of textual fixity and did not cherish individual authorship. [...] [One writer], for example, encourages his colleagues to introduce changes and improvements into it, if they find it necessary" (665).<sup>23</sup> Within the Ottoman Empire, this genre survived into the twentieth century, through both the *mecmuas* that I treated in the previous chapter and cheap printed chapbooks, such as that of *Köroğlu*, an anonymous medieval Anatolian *destan*, which was still circulating among the professional storytellers in Istanbul and

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<sup>22</sup> This definition comes from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which provides two usage examples from the 19th century. The eighth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* likewise writes that *l'épopée* signifies, by extension, "une suite de faits historiques qui, par leur caractère héroïque, rappellent les récits merveilleux des poètes."

<sup>23</sup> Rubanovich means Muhammad-i Bîghamî, writer of the *Fîrûzshâh-nâma*, whom she has quoted earlier: "The aim of putting this tale together is that the name of the humble one [i. e., Bîghamî himself] would endure amongst the people of speech [*ahl-i sukhan*, likely a reference to the professional storytellers], and, God willing, [the story] will be received [favorably] by the brothers; and if there is any flaw in it, they shall generously correct it and magnanimously pardon the humble one."

elsewhere. To call *Shirt of Flame* a *destan*, therefore, is to locate it within a culture of anonymous, collective narration. Yet to tie it simultaneously to the more elite genre of chronicle, I argue, is to bind it to a regime of author-centric historiography. This was a regime, moreover, that was clear from the very first sentence, which bore the name of “our prized writer” (*güzîde muharremiz*) Halide Edib. Indeed, in the final sentence, the editors liken the novel to an actual, physical monument. With one foot in the realm of the monumentalized author, and another in that of a textual (and textually unstable) collective, the novel was entering a precarious duality.

Nevertheless, this duality remained invisible in critical reactions to the novel, which prioritized and further cemented the author’s hand as the formative force. What’s more, popular critics celebrated in growing numbers the novel’s supposed testimonial immediacy. The influential literary critic Fethi Naci, in a summary of twentieth-century Turkish literature, wrote of the work: “Most novels whose subject is the Liberation War have been written based upon the research of those who did not experience it. Halide Edib Adivar however is an author who participated in the war; who lived the war with all its pain and sorrow and in 1922, still in the midst of her experiences [*sıcağı sıcağına*], wrote *Shirt of Flame*. *Shirt of Flame* is Halide Edib’s testimonial; its success and strength come from this testimonial” (2009:xviii). Written “in the midst of her experiences,” Naci tells us, the novel is inseparable from them. Indeed, his original phrase, *sıcağı sıcağına*, might just as easily be translated as “striking while the iron is hot.” Those experiences, like a branding iron, have been seared into the pages we read. The eminent novelist Selim İleri has more recently reinforced this rhetoric. In his afterword to the novel’s most recent edition, he avers that the work—careful: not its writer, but the *work* itself—functions as

an internal, firsthand witness (“*içten tanıktır*”) to the war. Azade Seyhan has likewise remarked that “it is the documentary and journalistic aspects of the novel ... that lend the story its enduring power. ... [T]his novel succeeds not only in terms of journalistic observation but also as a poetic biography of a nation” (2008:53; 55). That is to say, not only does Edib’s novel “bypass literature” for the documentary, but in doing so, Seyhan argues, it simultaneously collapses the individual and the collective into one.

There is much in the plot that corroborates this rhetoric, paralleling Halide Edib’s own lived experience over the final two years of the conflict. In 1920, she had escaped English-occupied Istanbul, where she was in danger of arrest for her public speeches against the occupation, and passed into the Anatolian interior, serving first as director, reporter and writer of the Anatolian Agency, later as an interim nurse (June 1921), and finally (August 1921 to the end of the war) as an enlisted soldier behind the front lines, where she worked in intelligence and translation (particularly, the translation of foreign-language print material circulating in Turkey). Withdrawing from her work that final year and removing herself to Ankara, she began writing the novel the summer before the front was broken. It appeared in the Istanbul paper *İkdam* as a daily serial from June to August 1922. It’s not unlikely that these close parallels between fact and fiction, lived life and written text, encouraged the novel’s first urban readers to treat the work as an immediate window into the distant, confused events in Anatolia.

In an interview with Ruşen Eşref Üneydin a year before the war, Edib had already claimed for her novels a similarly immediate power. They were, she said, as direct and unmediated as her spoken word—if not more so:

- [While writing] I don’t search at all [for words]. I write more easily than I speak.

- Of course, afterwards, you look it over and you correct it, right? You give a final, definite form to your words and sentences!
- I read my writing very little, I correct it very little; as for the smoothest pieces of my writing, like the love stories, I don't look over them even once.<sup>24</sup> (1918:173)

With a certain pride, Edib claimed to give little time or thought to the editing of her work. What's done is done, what's once been written is as good as printed and in my readers' hands, she seemed to say. Moreover, she claimed that after the passion of writing had subsided,<sup>25</sup> and once the manuscript had been sent to the printer, her finished works became useless to the author herself, left behind like frozen monuments of a past life: "From the moment that I write and finish my works, in my view they have no value. Because once that spiritual passion within me materializes [in the form of a book] it has lost its significance. Like a snake that sheds its skin, I don't look at my previous [work]. I really want to remain foreign to them. Quite a large portion of my writings have, in this way, been lost [to me]" (177). Strangely, Edib claimed to "lose" those pieces of writing that had been published. Her inner passion, once materialized on the printed page, was cemented and immobilized. She thenceforth abandoned it to her readers without ever looking back. Conversely, her current work took on the guise of a living, breathing entity. Foregoing the labor of editing and revision, Edib treated her writing much like the spoken word: immediate, irreversible and fleeting. Paradoxically, however, it *didn't* flee; it was printed, bound and circulated, reprinted and re-circulated. And in never returning to her

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<sup>24</sup> In his written summary of the interview, Ünaydın responded to this confession as follows: "Miss Halide has no concern to give us, her readers, chic, pretty sentences, sentences that have finished putting on their makeup and fixed their clothes! She too, like Hamid, is among those that consider whatever they've written as done and finished; Given her inadequacy with words [*kelimeler özüründe*], she's not about to go carving diamonds." This complaint, that Edib's desertion of her editorial duties led to sloppy, broken sentences, would be repeated by subsequent critics.

<sup>25</sup> While writing, she claimed like Peyami himself to enter into a sort of fever: "I so love the thing that I'm writing that from start to finish, the work becomes in me, in my soul, a passionate fever" (175).

past writing, Edib was not abandoning it solely to readers, but to editors, printers, publishers and anthologists, who may have had proved less reluctant to edit the text than Edib. To get a sense of this, we need look no further than the novel's first edition, serialized in the paper *İkdam*. Seeing as the paper was produced in occupied Istanbul, it was not infrequent that sentences or even entire paragraphs were censored by the Ottoman and British authorities:

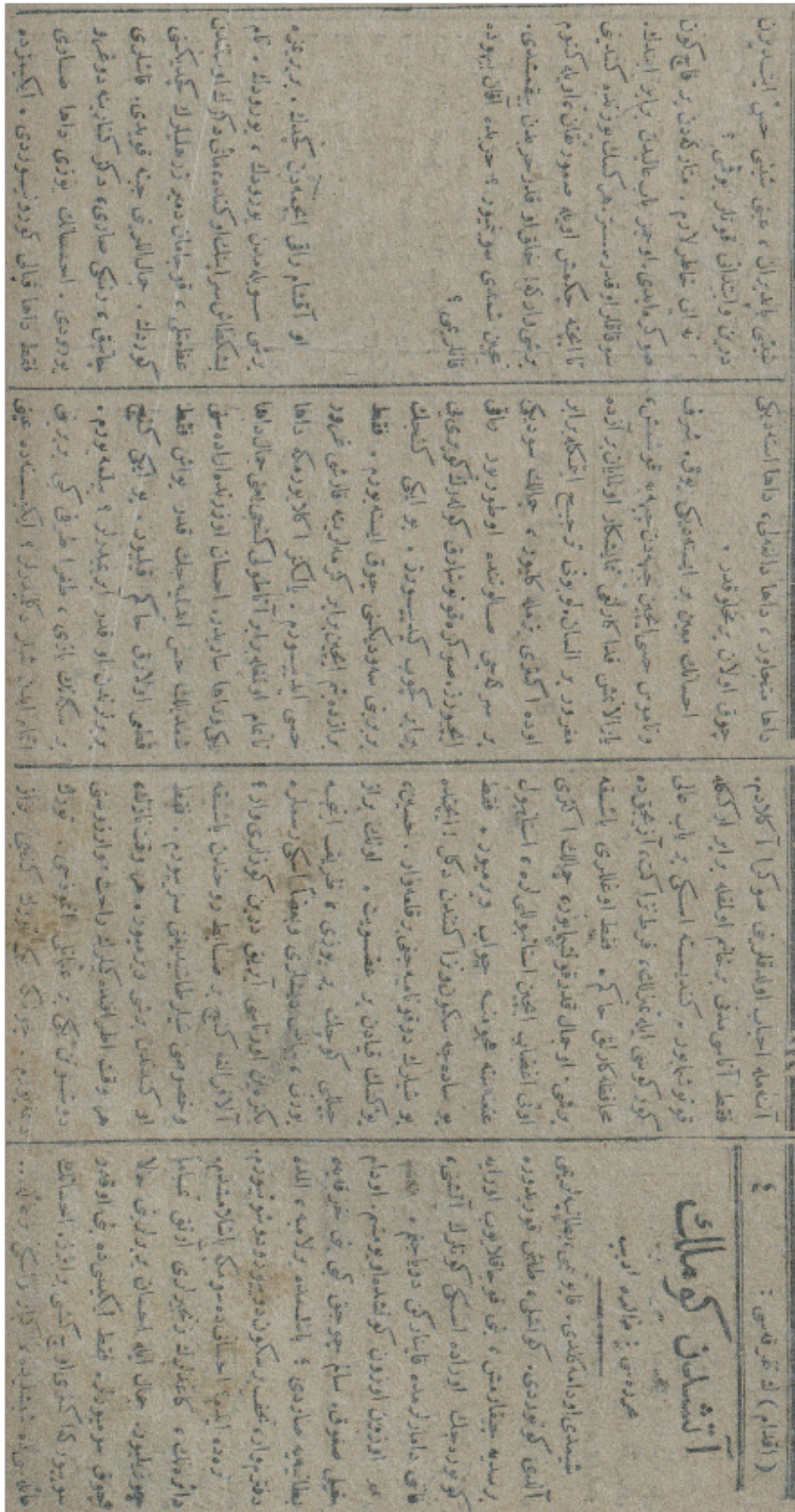


Figure 2. The fourth installment of *Ateşten Gömlek*'s serialization in the newspaper *İkdam*. Courtesy of the Atatürk Library's Ephemeral Print Collection, İstanbul, Turkey.

Notice the large gap in the final (i.e., topmost) column, indicative of censorship. The lines immediately above the censored space read:

Halk o kadar harbden bıkmışdı. Niçin sevinmiyor? Harbde akan bîhûde kanları mı?"

*The people had grown so tired of war. Why aren't they happy [now that the Armistice has been signed]? Is it their blood, spilled in vain during the war that saddens them?*

Compare this to the same passage in the bound book, page 23, published a year later (after the British occupation had been dissolved), provided on the following page.

نه ابي خاطر لادم. متار که دن بر قاچ کون ص و کره او چز باب عالی دن  
برابر ایندک. سوقاقلر او قدر سه سه سه، هر کسک یوزنده کن دینی  
تا ایچنه چکمش او یله ص-مورتقان، او یله کتوم برشی وار که!  
خاق او قدر حرب دن بیقه شدی. نیچین شیمدی سه-وینمور؟  
حربده آقان بیوده قانلری می؟ یوقسه متار کنگ اسه تانبولده  
قاریش دیر اجنی، صاچه جنی داخلی چیر کفی، ده شیلدک اسکی،  
قوش یارالک آقید اجنی جراحی می دوشونمور؟

Figure 3. Courtesy of Boğaziçi University Library's Rare Books Collection, İstanbul, Turkey.

As we see here, the passage quoted above in fact continues as follows:

yoksa Mütârekenin İstanbulda karışdıracağı, saçacağı dâhilî çîrkefi,  
deşilecek eski, kokmuş yaraların akıdacağı cerâhati mi düşünüyor?

*Or are they thinking of the inner filth that the Armistice is going to  
mix up and spread across İstanbul, the puss that is to spill from old,  
fetid wounds, about to be re-opened?*

The sentence, missing from the serial, luridly attacks the post-war British occupation, and was removed by state censors. Similar redactions are present throughout the serialized edition.

The question then arises: why would Halide Edib, who was herself in Ankara, choose to serialize the work in occupied İstanbul, surrendering it to the scissors of the censors? Her primary motive must, of course, have been *İkdam*'s massive tirage and the promise of reaching the city's vast readerships, but was this the only way to reach them? Some might be tempted to imagine that beyond the city obtained a general material dearth of print. Admittedly, the output of Anatolian print was comparatively smaller than that of İstanbul, yet to conclude that it had no circulation would in fact do a disservice to



the region's more complicated wartime print ecology. It was an ecology in which a small but vastly important minority of anti-imperialist print material was in fact circulating in *Greek*—a fact to which Edib's own novel briefly alludes. Incredibly, this Greek newspaper, which I'll detail in the next session, is the only reference within *Shirt of Flame* to the vast and multiform anti-imperialist print circulating in Anatolia. As I'll argue, Edib's choice to bypass the geographically dispersed print networks of Anatolia for the centralized but censored newsprint of occupied Istanbul likely reflected a desire for both a mainstream audience and textual fixity. First, however, I need to better trace out the complex and at times surprisingly multilingual landscape of anti-war print in the region.

### ***Antiwar Print Networks***

In the early stages of the conflict, central Anatolia's main newspaper and printing apparatus<sup>26</sup> was *Öğüd*, which was produced in Konya. Bowing to British pressure, the Italian authorities to whom Konya had devolved made a half-hearted raid on the printing house,<sup>27</sup> yet they simultaneously sent word the previous day to the editor in chief, allowing the printers to load a small pedal press and three boxes of typeset onto a car and relocate—not to another house but to a saint's shrine (!) outside the city (Önder 1986:8-9). The next day, the main press was seized by the Italians. Working clandestinely with the most primitive means, the staff now changed the paper's name to *Nasihât* (meaning more or less the same thing as “öğüd”: *admonition*) but maintained the same issue

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<sup>26</sup> Feridun Kandemir, the paper's editor in chief, recalled later, “Since the sole printing press in Ankara, Vilâyet Matbaası, was often incapable of meeting needs, in this way *Öğüd* sometimes became the National Movement's sole print vehicle in central Anatolia” (quoted in Akçura, 59).

<sup>27</sup> According to Mehmet Önder, the Italians were wary of provoking Konya's population through overly aggressive or oppressive interventions, but eventually caved in to English pressure (1986:8).

numbering. As Mehmet Önder writes, “[B]ecause its press was pedal-operated, the publication’s length had shrunk. The paper was of poor quality. Packaging paper, sometimes white, sometimes yellow or green, which had been gathered from the halva stores in the market, was trimmed and used as newspaper” (14).<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, despite the lack of paper and the inadequate hand press that produced it, the paper remained wildly popular. After the Italians were forced to evacuate the press in Konya, *Nasihât* returned there and reverted to *Öğüt*. By the summer of 1921, its press had relocated to Ankara, whose material resources allowed newsprint (such as *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*) to reach a tirage of 2,000 to 3,000 copies. When we consider that Edib was writing *Shirt of Flame* in Ankara, which was deeply integrated into this print network (as opposed to the front, from which she had withdrawn to write the manuscript), her choice to neglect Anatolian print for Istanbul becomes all the more striking. One might, of course, logically suggest that works published in Ankara were cut off from Istanbul’s readers. Yet, while it is true that materials published in Istanbul were clearly more accessible to that city’s readers, *Öğüt* too quickly made inroads to and established a clandestine circulation within the imperial capital (Önder 24). To meet the large demand of this new reading public, as the editor in chief recalled, “sometimes we worked the press twenty-four hours nonstop—we ourselves [the staff writers too]—turning it with our hand breathlessly, bathed in blood, sweat and tears” (quoted in Önder 24). Moreover, as the struggle wore on, it was joined by other titles, printed in other centers of Anatolia; and despite their outdated materials and means of production (e.g., presses from the Hamidian era; primitive mimeographs; ink made from soot and flaxseed oil), many of them reached a tirage of several hundreds (see Akçura, 62-64). If Edib had wanted to broadcast an

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<sup>28</sup> I’m grateful to Akçura (2012) for leading me to this source.

“Anatolian destan” in the true sense of the word, an important first step would have been to serialize the work simultaneously in as many Anatolian newspapers as possible, to be read aloud and improvised in coffee shops and squares across the country.<sup>29</sup>

Though the idea is admittedly farfetched, Edib’s “destan” could also have conceivably been translated and serialized in an underground Greek press. Virtually unknown outside of specialist research today, a small number of Greek-language presses were also producing materials in opposition to the occupying Greek army. Working from within occupied Istanbul, Ahmet Hilali, a Cretan Muslim whose first language was Greek, translated Turkish anti-imperialist texts into Greek. Not only this, but he entered into contact with a local Greek-language press—again, within Istanbul—and arranged for the printing of his manuscripts. During each print run, he edited the proof before passing them along to be smuggled to Ankara. These texts, addressed directly to Greek conscripts, were then dropped by plane onto Greek positions. Hilali’s colleague Ahmet Cemaleddin Saraçoğlu (who playfully calls Hilali *kardaşum*, a distinctly Greek-like form of the Turkish *kardeşim*, or “my brother”), writing of him after the war, closes with a pointed question: “I wonder whether those who make fun of [Ahmet Hilali’s] glaring Cretan accent are aware of the incalculable service, at risk of his life, that this Turkish newsman, who may speak Turkish a little tortuously but writes it very cleanly, rendered to the national struggle, all thanks to his language knowledge [i.e., his first language, Greek]” (2009:165).

Despite Hilali’s bravery, it would nonetheless be wrong to single him out in what was clearly a larger network—one that reached, in fact, to Athens. For in addition to his

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<sup>29</sup> The oral performance of printed fiction is, in fact, represented within the novel itself, when a group of enlisted drivers gather around one of their own, who reads aloud from Xavier de Montepin (1923:198-9).

translations from Turkish, Hilali also excerpted texts from the Athenian newspaper *Ριζοσπάστης* (*Rizospastis*, i.e., Radical), a radical socialist periodical that by 1920 had adopted an openly antiwar position. As early as October 1919, in fact, its editor Yannis Petsopoulos was already calling for the Greek state to abrogate martial law and its asphyxiating censorship regime, writing that “the war [ἐμπόλεμος κατάστασις] has, for Greece, long since come to an end. The [...] Turkish question is not among those that Greece can solve through arms” (6 October 1919; cited in Carabott 1992:106). The paper’s antiwar position grew more pronounced over the following two years (by war’s end, Petsopoulos had been imprisoned *thirteen* times for the antiwar contents of his publication). Not only did the paper bravely stand up against the Western colonialism that lay at the heart of the war; it soon came to openly criticize Greek irredentism and the entire ideology of the *Megali Idea*, revealing it to be a screen for state-sponsored bourgeois imperialism. On New Year’s Day of 1921, for example, the paper “celebrated” the fact that the Greek Army had advanced to the Baghdad railway:

Yesterday’s announcement from the war department makes known that a wing of the Greek forces reached the Baghdad railway. It should by no means stop here, Mr. Rallis!<sup>30</sup> It should keep moving forward. To ... Baghdad! Such is the mandate of the glorious history of the Greek nation. There is also some embittered Greek guy there, whom we have a national obligation to liberate! (“Towards Baghdad”; cited in Benlisoy 2014:40)

Two weeks later, the journal continued its satire, writing that the Prime Minister “seeks a measure for the annexation of Baghdad to the Kingdom of Greece, on the grounds that one enslaved Greek family has been residing there since the dawn of time” (15 Jan. 1921). The newspaper’s bravery and clarity of vision were remarkable, particularly when compared with the Socialist Labor Party of Greece (SEKE, the precursor to the KKE) and

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<sup>30</sup> Demetrios Rallis, prime minister at the time.

the relative silence it maintained until almost the final phase of the war, as Philip Carabott (1992) has convincingly documented. The party's lethargy regarding the war was, in part, indicative of the strength of Greek nationalism and irredentism, in which much of the supposedly internationalist left seemed complicit; but the party's silence also stemmed, in part, from what Carabott describes as "the organizational difficulties that SEKE was facing due to the government's campaign of terror and intimidation. Leading members were imprisoned or exiled and militant trade unionists ruthlessly crushed [...] the party as a whole was left in the hands of 'bourgeois intellectuals,'" for whom Greek irredentism was an old habit that died hard (1992:113). Ironically, the entire party leadership was imprisoned and charged with treason in July 1922—not for anything the party itself had undertaken but for articles printed in *Rizospastis* (Carabott, 115). In every sense, therefore, it was not the political organ of the Greek left *per se* but rather its print apparatus, and the decentered, local strikes and protests that this print helped coordinate, which served as the true anti-war engine in Greece. Supposedly a mere mouthpiece of the party, print had in fact left the party behind and moved into the vanguard.

Already in 1919 the Greek Army in Asia Minor had proscribed the newspaper and was strictly policing its circulation among soldiers at the front. The excerpts of *Rizospastis*, edited and reprinted by Ahmet Hilali, therefore gained an immediate importance. Yet this was not the only Greek press in Turkey. Conscripted soldiers themselves at the front made weekly "trench newspapers," twenty or so in number, which they reproduced by passing manuscript or typescript through a mimeograph. They were then circulated within the particular corps in which they had been produced, serving as a medium for gossip, satire and complaints. To be sure, censorship was omnipresent at the

front and the “trench newspapers,” if they meant to survive, necessarily maintained a relatively apolitical stance, though some did veer too far to the left and were quickly censored—and their editors were court-martialed. K. Th. Papalexandrou writes that the newspapers “were undoubtedly released only after the approval and oversight of the corps command [...]. In one or two [of the issues in my archive] I found traces of censorship: lines redacted with a black Chinese ink. As my colleague Mr. Malavetas told me, it also happened that editors of the ‘trench newspapers’ were court-martialled” (1929:225). One such case was Malavetas’ own co-editor, Giorgis Nikolis, who produced *Φούντα* (Tuft). Having grown up in poverty, Nikolis had early embraced Marxist revolution and used the trench paper as a means, as much as was possible under the oversight of his commanders, to spread antiwar sentiment.<sup>31</sup>

Of greater importance to the antiwar movement, however, were the more directly internationalist pamphlets and papers of embedded Greek communists, unaffiliated with (and far more committed to the antiwar movement than) the SEKE. As Kostis Kastritis writes, these communists “defended the Leninist line of revolutionary defeatism against ‘our own’ country ... [and] the conversion of the [imperialist] war into civil war” (n.d., 71). They had infiltrated the army itself, both among the rank and file soldiers at the front (such as Nikolis) and at key telegraph operation centers (such as Pantelis Pouliopoulos, who later splintered off to found the Greek Trotskyite movement). These decentralized cells<sup>32</sup> of resistance used their positions “to enlighten the soldiers as to the true nature of

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<sup>31</sup> One biographical dictionary from the 1930s writes that “the armed members of the Communist Union brought a mimeograph to the front, with which they reproduce[d] and distribute[d] to soldiers an antiwar periodical, the *Founda* (Tuft) of the now-deceased G. Nikolis” (*Koinoniologikon kai politikon lexikon*, 1934:355).

<sup>32</sup> Carabott and Kastritis make mention of a “Central Executive Committee,” but Foti Benlisoy argues instead that “[a]ntiwar activity was usually the work of multiple groups in different units, independent from

the war and to distribute anti-war material to the front [...] contain[ing] vitriolic attacks against the bourgeoisie [...] and the imperialist nature of the campaign and prepar[ing] the people for the imminent ‘revolution’” (Carabott, 110). In addition to their own materials, communists also smuggled from Greece and distributed illicit copies of *Rizospastis* and the even more radical *Φωνή του εργατή* (The worker’s voice) from Thessaloniki, printed by a united front of Orthodox and Jewish trade unionists.<sup>33</sup> Historian Mete Tuncay has recognized the immense contribution of these leftists, writing:

Today, it’s an unassailable truth that one of the actual reasons for the defeat of the Greek army[, composed mainly] of the proletariat, was the propaganda that our Greek communist friends, within the army, made against the war. This propaganda had a huge effect [...]. Be certain, my Turkish comrades, that these Greek communists, who were neither Turkish nor Muslim, benefited Turkish workers and the poor much more than the Turkish and Muslim bourgeoisie politicians, black marketeers and military contractors, who made the poor eat mud instead of bread, filling their coffers. (1982:191-191; quoted in Benlisoy, 2014:25)

The material that these conscripted communists circulated ranged from printed pamphlets to journals to newsprint,<sup>34</sup> much of it produced not in Greece but in the occupied territories of Asia Minor. One such case was the *Κόκκινος Φρουρός* (Red Guard),

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each other, and the communication between these groups, due to the pressures of the command echelon, was limited. Therefore it seems impossible to speak of a functioning executive mechanism, a central committee in the real sense of the word” (2014:33).

<sup>33</sup> Thessaloniki was, in general, home to a vibrant antiwar, internationalist Left, as witnessed, for example, during the May Day demonstrations of 1921, which took a massive, antiwar turn despite their prohibition by police. Agis Stinas describes the scene thus in his memoirs: “The police and the military command took emergency measures to prevent the worker demonstrations. Despite these measures [e.g., arresting the entire leadership cadre in advance], meetings and protests accumulate in various neighborhoods of the city, red flags are waving in the air, voices are shouting: *Down with War! Brotherhood of all peoples beyond borders and nations!* They shake the entire city. There are clashes with the mounted police in Kule Kafe [a neighborhood in the largely Turkish upper city], in Çınar [a public park near the harbor], in the Jewish neighborhoods and, most important of all: an expedition of Greek soldiers for Asia Minor refuses to board onto the ships. They revolt, they tear the pictures of the King, join and unite with the workers as brothers. That same day, martial law is declared in the city” (1977:53).

<sup>34</sup> Carabott cites several communist periodicals clandestinely printed and circulated in Izmir or elsewhere in Asia Minor, such as *Κόκκινος Φαντάρος* (The Red Soldier) or *Έρυθρός Φρουρός* (Red Army).

produced illegally in Izmir by communists embedded within the telegraph corps (they reproduced the paper clandestinely through the corps' own mimeograph). The conscripted communists within the corps were not alone; they were in direct contact with and assisted by both the Greek (*Rum*) and Turkish socialists of Izmir (Kastritis 68). The caustic anti-imperialist print of the communists proved extremely effective. Considering that many of the conscripted Greek soldiers had been mobilized and at war since 1912, it reached a highly receptive audience, leading to a series of "strikes" at the front and a growing wave of desertions, which precipitated the general collapse of the front. One officer in the censorship bureau complained of the widespread effectiveness of "a certain [Communist] booklet circulating among the conscripts [which] was full of [...] seemingly reasonable but anti-nationalist exhortations," such as, "What do you expect in this inhospitable country of Afyon, where there's no trace of Hellenism? Think of your fatherless family. Turn your rifles not against the Turk, who is defending his hearth, but against him who has been coercing you to fight for ten years now."<sup>35</sup> The print landscape of Anatolia, almost to the same degree as the physical landscape upon which it was superimposed, was a complex battleground—one where the alphabet and language of any given press or mimeograph by no means determined the political alignment of its impressions.

Within *Shirt of Flame*, readers are given too little sense of the wealth and variety of print circulating in and between Anatolia and Istanbul. This is odd, to say the least, given the fact that Peyami's job for much of the novel is precisely that of a "pen-pusher"

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<sup>35</sup> Georgios Spyridonos (1955:224; cited in Carabott 112). Carabott rightly cautions his readers, however, that such outright calls for insurrection were likely rare, and that most propaganda, after its harsh critiques of the imperialist war, encouraged not rebellion but pacifist resistance. More recently, Benlisoy has argued similarly, writing that "the communist antiwar movement usually did not take the form of an open and massive action [*eylemlik*] against the war. The communists were a small minority among the soldiers and their activities were limited to education and propaganda" (27).



intelligence analyst in Anatolia, sifting through print material behind the front. Indeed, Peyami makes a passing reference to the Greek-language paper *Rizospastis*, writing that he habitually spent his daylight hours working on it (197), yet the reference is immediately dropped and left uncontextualized. The entire network that I've sketched out above, reaching from the printing press of *Rizospastis* in Athens to the Greek mimeographs of embedded communists in Izmir, lies condensed within a single word within the novel. Striving for an act of individual heroism that will win the love of Ayshe, Peyami scorns the semi-anonymous, collective (and polyglot) labor that lies behind the production, the reading, analysis, and reproduction or translation of this print material, rarely deigning to write of the work in his testament.

If the Greek communists whose antiwar print and agitation proved so crucial to Turkish victory have, today, been entirely forgotten by the Turkish state, the primary cause of such amnesia can be understood easily enough by a glance at Peyami's testimonial, where collectivist socialism is excised and replaced with populist nationalism and the cult of the hero. Moreover, I suggest that we can see this paradigm not only in the book's plot but also in its textual history. By serializing the novel in a large paper of occupied Istanbul, Edib chose mainstream media and its urban readers over the multiple, liberated presses of Anatolia. Like Peyami's narrative within the novel, the story of Edib's initial publishing choices tends towards the same goal: centralization over decentralization; homogenization over pluralization. These choices bespoke, in short, an authorial strategy that aimed to retain a hold upon the text's reproduction and stability.

### *Textual Pluralities in Shirt of Flame*

Nonetheless, I posit that another reading might possibly be parsed out within the pages of *Shirt of Flame*. For the careful reader, the novel points again and again to the mediations and remediations in which its own production is imbricated: from the lead in Peyami's brain to the lead (or ink) and paper in his hands—and, implicitly, the printed text in our own hands. True, the presence of these material “mediums” is only confirmed in the novel's final, devastating page, but this is by no means the first time that the reader is told of them. Peyami repeatedly questions the cohesion and reliability of his own, individual voice. His doubts begin to surface as early as the first chapter:

What did the doctor say? The bullet in my head is giving me illusions. “We'll take it out!” I say. He looks solemnly at the arms of his white shirt. How many months has it been since they cut off my legs? The bottom half of my bed is ridiculously empty. Is it the fear that, if the bullet comes out, my head too will empty out that keeps them from removing it? Who knows. Perhaps they don't dare lay a finger on the bullet so as not to take out all those [“people” or “things”] in my head and leave me all alone. ... Everything that I've experienced [literally: “everything that has passed from my head”] is true. Though perhaps some of it is not; but what's the harm in that? (1923:10)

The bullet, functioning both literally and figuratively as a cork, secures and shores up Peyami's entire cosmos within his head. Confined to the stifling limits of this “I,” however, Peyami's world has likely become corrupted by brain fever. The passage deftly plays “inside” against “outside,” individual against collective, yet something seems to gnaw away at these binaries from within. In the wake of Peyami's initial pragmatism, the succeeding sentences and their rising wave of doubt suggest that the shared experiences of Peyami and his comrades are but so many phantasms of the former's febrile “I.”

Having begun the process of remediating these (already mediated) experiences onto

paper, in the final two sentences of the excerpt Peyami both asserts and immediately retracts their factual correctness, concluding with the question: what's the harm of this indeterminacy? And if the question seems irreverently rhetorical here, he'll return to it with greater sobriety in later portions of the testament, searching out an answer in growing desperation. From time to time in his narrative, Peyami pauses, revisiting his manuscript notes or his memory in the increasingly dim hope of uniting the multiple threads. Returning again to his writing, not as writer but as reader, he admits, "I tried to read my last notes. At first I couldn't understand a thing, but slowly a lukewarm memory awoke" (1923:101). The text itself appears foreign, awaking only tepid memories after the reader's extended engagement. At another point, Peyami uses his manuscript as a metaphor of memory work, suggesting that "in my story [...] there's a burnt page" (1923:158)—a lacuna that often seems in danger of expanding, of burning or corrupting even more pages. In the face of this possibility he can only write, "I don't want to believe such a thing, for then I must doubt the other things, even myself" (ibid). This self is slowly unraveling into an uneasy plurality, as the early excerpt above had already foreshadowed. Preparing for the final section of his narrative, Peyami writes,

That thing called "I" is composed of a number of people in my head and their remembrances. The more I narrate these, the more my head empties out and I slowly bring myself to its end. [...] I'm looking at my notes today. Between the revolution and the battle of Sakarya there are a good many events, but I've only got breath enough for the final act. All the days before this are an interlude [literally, "between the curtains"]. ... I'm looking at my life story and it seems more like an opera than a story. (1923:169)

Much of Peyami's story remains behind curtains. And what we do see is performed piecemeal by a multitude of actors, the sum of whom composes the "I" that in turn composes the pages. But rather than gaining flesh and blood, the actors of the "I" remain

mere phantoms, as Peyami often fears. The testimonial “I” is not borne up by its collective, national “we”; rather, the national “we” is sinking down into a quickly deteriorating “I.” Ultimately, it dies and cedes the opera stage to the two surgeons, whose dialogue is in fact the only one within the book to take place in real time, beyond the margins of the testament.

This returns us, then, to the question of the ending. How are we to understand its powerful reversal? Recently, Erdağ Göknaç has written that by casting Ihsan and Ayshe, the novel’s romantic leads, as figments of Peyami’s imagination, their symbolic union in the story “leads to the possibility of an imagined community. This is a union that must be imagined actively [...] it is an act of creation. In other words, Peyami’s duty does not end on the battlefield, but also includes a struggle of intellect, imagination, and authorship in the construction of the national self/subject” (2013:44). Göknaç’s interpretation is powerful and ingenious; it neatly balances the novel’s internal economy, which has seemingly just been upended. That Peyami has imagined all of this, Göknaç convincingly argues, should not trouble us: it’s a model of the national imagining that all readers are invited now to conduct. This reading has several virtues, not the least of which is its diffusion of the narrative tensions that build throughout the text. It allows us, in other words, to read the novel as a uniform, unproblematic endorsement of the nation state—something that Halide Edib herself, after all, may have quite likely intended. On the other hand, however, Azade Seyhan observes that “it makes sense to read the ending more as a literary ploy in the romance or Romantic tradition than as an expression of the author’s intention” (55). Between these two readings, my own would ask us to recognize what is ultimately a multidirectional text, tied not only to the generic tropes that Seyhan

notes but also to different interpretations, whose well-orchestrated foreshadowing throughout the text, as I've documented, pulls the reader simultaneously toward different conclusions. I readily acknowledge *Shirt of Flame*'s deeply problematic position vis-à-vis the nation state, as Gökner argues, yet I don't want to lose sight of the novel's unresolved tensions and their potentially productive value. Rather than disarming the conclusion's reversal, or ascribing it to a Romantic ploy, it's possible with equal hermeneutic soundness to understand it as a kind of "de-authorization" of the testimonial. The careful reader witnesses here both the collapse of the testimonial's claim to unmediated authenticity and, just as importantly, the death of the singular narrative center and the supposedly unproblematic symmetry between its "I" and "we."

Having lost this authoritative center, readers are left, on the one hand, with an immediate, fiery material that, as İnci Enginün has written, is "truly experienced" (*gerçekten yaşanılmış*, 1978:204) and, on the other hand, a series of intermediary "mediums" that reassemble, reprocess and convey that experience, from the bullet and fever in Peyami's brain to the doctors who diagnose it, from the pen and paper in his hands to the printed book that readers hold in theirs. And, implicitly, between these two poles I would add the multiple hands that, following Peyami's death, hypothetically recover his manuscript and remediate it. None of this renders that "true experience" false; it just turns it into a different kind of collective experience, one that belongs not to an entire nation but to a specific network of hands and materials.

Crucially, as I noted above, Peyami does little justice throughout the novel to the intricacy and complexity of the mediums and readers, writers and translators with whom he works, viewing them not as living assemblages but as walls that bar him from the

individual heroism toward which he strives. From one chapter to the next, he repeatedly complains of the “bundles of yellow paper in [his] office” (*dairemin sarı kâğıt tomarları*), which impede him from direct action, a situation that changes little with his metamorphosis from Ottoman civil servant to Turkish revolutionary. Writing of his appointment to the Kemalist defense ministry and his ongoing work as a “pen-pusher,” he complains of the “[p]aper, paper, paper. [...] There’s a thick curtain between real life and me; and behind that curtain are [those at the warfront]” (162). It is both metaphorically and literally the physical paper, through which Peyami “makes his living,” that renders impossible the life of action of which he dreams. His attempts to write of this life, and of the war, prove a constant frustration. So much the more so for his first readers, who were even further distanced by the “thick curtain” of Istanbul newsprint, which was indiscreetly passed through the hands of state censors before it reached publication each day.

And while later editions (and their readers) escaped the censor’s scissors, they did not escape the pens of editors, who, over successive decades, implemented a series of subtle though important alterations. The most obvious (but not the only) change in the second edition of 1937 was, of course, that of the alphabet, shifting from Ottoman script to the new script, derived from Latin. The novel’s third edition, which coincided with its eighth printing and was published in 1968, after Edib’s death, was drastically revised by its editor, Baha Dürder. Aside from a slew of typographical and morphological errors unintentionally introduced into the text, most likely by the printer, all vocabulary deemed excessively “non-Turkish” (i.e., Arabic or Persian) was replaced with Turkish equivalents—which were, however, only “rough equivalents.” The narrator’s voice was

thus nationalized and Turkified; and, in the process, blunted and distorted.

This was, in fact, common editorial practice during the period and marked, moreover, the effects of the final and most destructive phase of the Turkish Language Reforms. The Reforms had begun in 1928 with the script revolution, i.e., the prohibition of the Ottoman script and the transition to the Latinized alphabet, which I briefly treated in the previous chapter. But they did not end here; they continued from the level of the alphabet to the word. With the radicalized agenda of the First Language Congress of 1932, the regime finalized its declaration of war against what Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) himself identified as “the yoke of foreign languages” (Ertürk 2011:95). Embarking on a project of purification, both the regime and the central committee of the Language Congress set about “collecting words” from “ordinary people.” Despite its emphasis on the recuperation of the people’s language, the project’s collection process was, unsurprisingly, regimented through language committees in every province, “comprising top officials and regional leaders” (Çolak 80). The result was the *Osmanlıcadan Türkçeye Söz Karşılıkları: Tarama Dergisi* (The Scouring Journal: Word Equivalents from Ottoman to Turkish). The journal functioned as a kind of ad-hoc thesaurus, by which some 7,000 words of Arabic and Persian origin were sentenced to death by drowning in a deluge of 30,000 purist Turkish words, aligned in what were often arbitrary categories. And it bears noting that the “death” was hardly metaphorical, as newspapers had been forbidden to use Arabic or Persian words for which substitutes had been supplied (81). The excesses of the project did not take long to reveal themselves, and the speed and depth of the reforms were diminished after 1935 (82-83). Yet they were never reversed. And as editors in subsequent decades returned to Ottoman or early Republican texts,

preparing them as Latinized “reprints,” they often effected their own purification of the text at hand.

But Edib’s novel was not simply shedding Persian and Arabic words. In both the 1937 and 1968 editions, editorial changes reached deeper, effecting basic semantic (and ideological) alterations.<sup>36</sup> Already in 1937, the word “Greek” vanished from the text, now replaced with a vague “enemy.” For example, where the 1923 edition had printed, “Nurse Ayshe, won’t we throw those Greek bastards out together!” (*Haydi bakalum Hemşire ‘Âyşe, bu Yunan keratalarını beraber atmayacak mıyuz!*), the 1937 edition now printed instead “those enemy bastards” (*düşman keratalarını*). Similar “enemies” could now be found throughout the text, in spaces once occupied by “Greeks.”

Who made the emendations? Halide Edib had been in exile since 1926, and was not present during the printing of the 1937 edition. Falling out of favor with the Kemalist regime, first over its betrayal of women’s suffrage and, later, its growing dictatorial tendencies, Edib had fled for England in the wake of the *Takrir-i Sükûn kanunu*. This law, raising the specter of reactionary Islam as its justification, granted authoritarian rule to Atatürk’s party, which in fact became the only party after the forced closure of the newly organized opposition (of which Edib’s husband was a founding member<sup>37</sup>). For the duration of Atatürk’s life, Edib remained abroad, continuing her career (now primarily in English) in England and then France, with lecture trips to the United States and India.

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<sup>36</sup> Halide Edib’s Latinized text appeared quite early in the Republican period, yet the editorial alterations that it hosted, with their clear ideological intent, would later become common practice. Yusuf Hakan Erdem has observed that both “excisions” and “insertions” (in addition to unintentional misreadings of the Ottoman script) were to become common practice in later decades, when editors began transcribing and translating foundational historical texts (2008:25-60).

<sup>37</sup> Edib herself, in a newspaper interview, dispelled rumors that she was involved in the party, claiming that she was “a supporter of no party that did not recognize women’s right to vote,” thereby critiquing not only Atatürk’s ruling party but the limited vision of the opposition, which had refused to endorse universal suffrage (see *Cumhuriyet* 22 October, 1924; cited in Çalışlar 2010:313).



She returned to Turkish-language publications only in 1935, near the end of Atatürk's life, when she translated her English-language novel *The Clown's Daughter* into Turkish (as *Sinekli Bakkal*), which was serialized in Turkey and published in book-bound form the following year. It became a large success. Indeed, it was likely the success of this novel, which had followed over half a decade of silence in Turkey, that instigated the reprint of *Shirt of Flame* the following year (1937). It was printed by the schoolteacher-turned-publisher Ahmet Halit Yaşaroğlu, most of whose products had been, up until this point, alphabet primers, children's books, magazines, and poetry. How did Ahmet Halit come upon Edib's novel? Did he base his edition upon a revised manuscript or the 1923 printed edition? Who made the emendations, removing, among other things, all Greeks from the text? To what extent, and at which point in the publishing process, did Edib herself have a hand? Given the fact that she was both (1) in communication with Turkish publishers for *Sinekli Bakkal* and (2) demonstrated similar revisionary tendencies in other texts (as I'll discuss in the next section), it seems likely that Edib made the emendations, subsequently mailing off the manuscript to Turkey, where it was transcribed into the new script. Nonetheless, in the absence of definitive evidence the answers to these questions—by no means idle, when one takes into account that they pertain to the novel's first Latin-alphabet edition, which went on to constitute a pseudo-*Urtext* for subsequent editions—remain for the moment unanswered, if not unanswerable.<sup>38</sup>

Whoever made the changes, however, they reflect a broader trend in the early Kemalist regime: they were in accordance with the regime's official attempts at reconciliation with Greece, whitewashing or silencing historical differences—rather than

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<sup>38</sup> Edib's personal papers have not been collected in a single archive; surviving pieces of them are scattered across several collections. I hope that among them will some day be found answers to these questions.

openly discussing them in any substantial, objective way.<sup>39</sup> The policy, however, was largely abandoned in the 1950s, when Cyprus became an increasingly contentious point of debate. By 1968, almost five years after Halide Edib's death, Greco-Turkish tensions were immense. It seems likely, therefore, that if the editor and publishers of the third edition (who were, in any case, happily erasing Arabic and Persian words in hope of Turkifying Peyami's voice) had bothered to consult the first edition of 1923, they would have gladly reverted back to the "Greek bastards" patiently waiting there in the Ottoman script. The fact that the changes of the second edition remained in place, buried now beneath a slew of new emendations, suggests that each editor simply consulted the novel's previous printing without digging further, into its deeper textual strata. In any case, the central point I mean to make is this: decade by decade, the novel was being subtly rewritten by a chain of hands, from writer to editor to publisher and even printer.

In 2007, as if sensing a looming abyss at the end of this chain, the publisher Can Yayınları produced a new edition that aimed to put a halt to the text's transformations. After at least sixty years of successive editorial interventions, the latest *Shirt of Flame* announced its return to textual roots. In a brief editorial introductory note, The Ottoman literary historian Mehmet Kalpaklı remarked,

Due to the techniques of newsprint and publishing of the period, there appeared within these first impressions [of 1922 and 1923] quite a few typographical errors. ... Up until recently, editions with the new script [derived from Latin] and simplified language have continued the errors of the editions in the old [Ottoman] script, and they've added more of their own to these errors and excisions. ... Starting from their first impression, we have attempted to free Halide Edib Adıvar's texts, presented again to readers, from these errors and, at the same time, to protect the author's unique language and style.

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<sup>39</sup> These attempts at reconciliation, it bears noting, were repeatedly undercut by official and unofficial measures that continued to discriminate against minorities. For a comparative history of the discriminatory policies that both the Greek and Turkish states have implemented against their minority populations, see Özkırımlı and Sofos' *Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey* (2008).

For this reason we did not simplify the language. (2011:13)

Given the realities of textual production, which nearly always enlist a multitude of hands, Kalpaklı's use of the first-person plural is refreshing. More importantly, the new edition closely mirrors that of 1923 and provides readers a salutary—indeed, critically needed—approximation of the text's early state. I want only to register two important reservations here. First, due to the strong possibility that Halide Edib had a hand in the production of the 1937 edition and, hence, deliberately excised, among other things, the word "Greek," it becomes equally likely that, by returning to the 1923 edition, the editor(s) transgress their own theoretical framework of "final authorial intention." But perhaps the editorial choices reflect something else: an attempt to obviate Edib's own final intentions and return instead to the text's imagined origin. Yet the new edition's approximated return to 1923 simultaneously erases for readers the entire print ecology within which the text moved, grew, and shed or accrued words and meaning for decades. In effect, it de-historicizes *Shirt of Flame* again, albeit in a different way (choosing a different historical moment to isolate) than earlier editions. For while the 2007 edition abounds in footnotes on every page, these notes are devoted solely to the translation of outdated vocabulary; they provide no signs of the textual variations that have occurred between 1923 and 2007. In short, this edition effects the ultimate coup de etat of the editorial regime, as discussed in chapter two: it erases the presence of the editor, who despite this reduced visibility has crafted an exquisite textual artifact in its own right, one that extricates the text from its diachronic print ecology to meet the needs of a new moment.

For the time being, to approximate this diachronic process, students of *Shirt of Flame* are left with no recourse but the consultation of multiple editions. Yet as I have

argued here, they might reach similar conclusions from a sensitive close reading of Peyami's own story and its decomposing "I." Indeed, it's this aspect of the novel, my chapter argues, that renders it so important for readerships today. When one reads this testimonial—this "'internal' witness" ("*içten*" *tanık*), as Selim İleri has written—within the larger context of its evolving textual history, the novel's final scene makes perfect sense; it seems, in fact, eerily prophetic. Peyami's death and the sudden foregrounding of his notebook open the manuscript up to a larger series of hands, belying the narrative integrity (*in + tangere*) of the authorial "I" and helping its readers to look for a broader network of handlers. The further we extend this network, I hope to have shown, so too do we strengthen the historical truth of the testimonial genre. We make it thicker, denser, and more complex. It becomes not a "sweet and simple monody" but a political assembly for *everyone*—embedded communists, Cretan Muslims, nationalist editors, exiled writers—to gather and to make their voices heard.

Recent critics of Turkish nationalism and the Kemalist project have often dismissed *Shirt of Flame* as a mouthpiece of the emerging state's rhetoric.<sup>40</sup> Taking into account the novel's overt message of nationalist triumph and its subordination of females to patriarchal symbolism, I grant that such interpretations do and will continue to carry much weight. Nonetheless, when we read the novel with an eye towards its complex material and textual history, we hear it speaking quite candidly of the "testimonial paradox" that I've been wrestling with here. It reminds one, in other words, that the imagined, national collectives embodied by the "I" *in* the book rarely correspond to the smaller though crucial collectives *of* the book, who shape and reshape it.

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<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Göknaç's incisive article, cited above.

### *Hands in the Fire*

The great service that *Shirt of Flame* renders its perceptive readers, therefore, is to train them for similar testimonials and memoirs that followed in the wake of the war. In fact, we might use it to approach the textual history of Halide Edib's own personal memoirs—particularly the second volume, which was first serialized (in English) in 1928 in the journal *Asia* under the title *My Share in the Turkish Ordeal* and, later the same year, published in book-bound form with the slightly modified title *The Turkish Ordeal: Being the Further Memoirs of Halide Edib*. Written and published during her exile, the memoir was the vehicle by which she sought to wrest control of the national Turkish narrative from Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), whose thirty-six-and-a-half-hour speech (*Nutuk*) had already begun to standardize the historical narrative within a Kemalist mold. Given at his party's second congress in 1927, Mustafa Kemal's speech was prepared, printed, and published over the next several months in Istanbul (and Austria), translated into several European languages, and soon canonized as the authoritative historical template for all narratives of the war and the early republican period.<sup>41</sup> Hülya Adak has argued that *Nutuk* produced a narrative “I” with a “prophet-like calling to rescue the nation [...]. The transcendent, unchanging self of *Nutuk* is prior to and above history and does not undergo linear historical development” (2003:515). In short, it embodied the *autos of authentia*.

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<sup>41</sup> The bulk of the book (in two volumes) was printed by Matbaa-ı Ahmed İhsan, with an unheard-of tirage of 100,000, each copy being individually numbered (the first 2,000 were limited-edition luxury copies, prepared by Matbaa-ı Ebüzziya). The maps and charts, however, were printed in Vienna. The publishing and the costs of printing were undertaken by the Turkish Aeronautical Society. This printing was based upon the manuscript that Atatürk himself had read at the conference, yet it bore a slew of emendations, elisions, and markings; likewise, several pieces of the manuscript were in another hand, apparently dictated (see *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 33, p. 278). More importantly, less than a year after the speech Turkey introduced its new Latin-based script, proscribing the Ottoman. *Nutuk* was not reprinted until 1934, when the political climate had begun to change substantially, and the text began to undergo a series of “revisions,” which were further accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s, when the book's language was “simplified.” History's template itself was changing (see Erdem 2008:50-59).

Much of the speech was used as a platform to condemn those who had since fallen out of favor with the regime. It's no coincidence, therefore, that within a year of *Nutuk* Halide Edib published the second volume of her own memoirs. Centered on the war, this volume also offered several extended passages alleging and criticizing the illiberalism, opportunism and autocratic leanings of Mustafa Kemal (see in particular pages 182-190). Unlike *Nutuk*, however, Edib's memoir, written directly in English, had as its primary audience not the Turkish people but the world stage.

Edib was testifying before an international audience, speaking on behalf of Anatolia itself. Through repeated rhetorical gestures that seem to suspend her individual authority, she often cedes discursive agency to the masses (Adak 519). I wonder, however, whether these suspensions of authority extend beyond the rhetorical gestures of the narrative itself. It seems dubious to me that the book as a whole embraces collective textual authority. True, the book's "I" is quickly caught up in the tumult of the masses: it's an "I" that ceases, as Edib writes, "to exist as an individual; I worked, wrote and lived as a unit of that magnificent national madness" (1928:23). The "I" speaks multiple times before massive crowds ("a sea of faces"; "a human sea"), where "thousands of [eyes], glistening, [were] shooting their message and their desire" up at it (27). Seemingly channeling this collective desire, the "I" becomes "nothing more than a sensitive medium which was articulating the wordless message of the Day" (31). These were not Edib's words, we are made to understand; they were the words of the nation. It was an "I," moreover, which the narrative voice sometimes "broke in two," with one Edib writing and the other, like a player on stage, converted into the third-person.<sup>42</sup> Looking at her speaking-self from the

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<sup>42</sup> Adak, borrowing from James Olney, calls this technique a "plethoric" I.

position of the more distanced writing-self, Edib narrated, “I believe that the Halide of [the] Sultan Ahmed [rally, at which she gave her most famous speech,] is not the ordinary, everyday Halide. The humblest sometimes can be the incarnation of some great ideal and of some great nation. That particular Halide was very much alive, palpating with the message of Turkish hearts, a message which prophesied the great tragedy of the coming years” (ibid). Yet despite Edib’s clear desire to counteract the autocratic “I” of Mustafa Kemal’s *Nutuk*, deploying what appears to be a well-intentioned “I-we” nexus,<sup>43</sup> the “I” of this equation overpowers the purported “we” on behalf of whom it speaks. Ultimately, it’s the “I” that comes away to write the manuscript, concluding, “And my story comes back to the first person again, for that unnatural detachment which had created a dual personality was no more” (33-34).

Despite their divergent narrative goals, Edib and Atatürk’s narrative *positions* occasionally converge, offering an “I” that stands apart, above a mobilized “sea of faces,” giving a single voice to a decidedly nationalist “prophecy.” Within her memoir, the sacred nation overshadows with an almost relentless glow any sense of an internationalist collective. This is particularly clear in the book’s initial two chapters on the Armistice, abounding in several generalized references to “the insolence of the Greeks and the Armenians.” The Greek and Armenian communities of Istanbul remain in these chapters monolithic ethnic and textual entities, whose admittedly appalling malice is, with two brief exceptions, unqualified and universal.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> This nexus can be seen even in the titles of both the serialized and book-bound editions, where her personal “share” and her personal “memoirs” are tied to the “national ordeal.”

<sup>44</sup> The two exceptions are an inspector and a local group of mothers. More generally, the malice of the Greeks and Armenians is also left un-contextualized within the larger frame of Greek, Armenian, and Turkish nationalisms. The atrocities resulting from these three nationalisms (often state-sponsored) stretched back at least to the Greek insurrection in the early nineteenth century and culminated with the

Interestingly, decades later Edib's attacks against minorities would become much more nuanced and mitigated—or, more often, they were simply excised and left out—when the Turkish “version” of Edib's memoir (*The Turk's Trial by Fire*) was published. Perhaps by 1960, the date of the Turkish edition's first printing, Edib had gained a fuller appreciation of the various atrocities carried out not only by the Greek army against Muslims but also by armed Muslims (whether militias like those under Topal Osman or national troops like those under Nureddin Pasha) against local Christian populations. Yet rather than giving space to a more accurate assessment, she chose silence. When writing of the Greek army's occupation of Izmir, for example, whose first day was marked by the murder of many Turkish notables and officers at the wharf (who, unarmed, had been bayoneted by Greek soldiers), she appended the following footnote to the Turkish edition: “While writing *The Turkish Ordeal* twenty or so years earlier in England, I had lingered much longer over various parts of the tragedies [of the Izmir occupation]. In the Turkish edition, I find it proper to cut short those events, whether carried out by us or by them. Because I believe that peace and security in the Near East depends on Turkish and Greek friendship. Indeed, this was the opinion of General Mustafa Kemal as well” (2007:35).<sup>45</sup> If she had (very rightly) railed against the atrocities of the Greek army in

1928, by 1960 she seemed to have “made her peace” with them. Yet her vision of peace

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Hamidian massacres, the Balkan Wars and the First World War. No mention of Turkish atrocities or the repressive policies of the Ottoman state is made within Edib's text. Without this context, non-specialist Anglophone readers of Edib encounter an ahistorical Greek and Armenian malice, made all the more vicious for its inexplicable, seemingly *ex nihilo* nature. For a brief, comparative history of the emergence of ethnic nationalisms within the Ottoman empire, see Gökçek (2002).

<sup>45</sup> This stunning silence of Edib in 1960 flies in the face of her 1928 edition, which had at least gestured towards the need of an objective historical assessment: “I believe that a dispassionate and unprejudiced study of the human tragedy involved in massacres and atrocities is necessary in the Near East” (1928:307). Comparing this statement with the one above, from 1960, gives the reader a sense of just how much has changed between the two editions: rather than dispassionate study (the Turkish version tells us), we need excision and redaction.



derived from a redaction and silencing of—rather than an objective reckoning with—what was in fact a complicated, polyphonic historical record. Just as importantly, her peace likewise maintained an enduring faith in the categories of “us” and “them,” which remained (despite her sincere call for Greco-Turkish friendship) distinct national units. This was true of both the English and Turkish editions. The communities that she addresses are invariably those of national bodies and nations. Unable or unwilling to embrace any real semblance of leftist internationalism or collectivism, Edib remained throughout her career locked within a vocabulary of the bourgeois nation-state.

Some will surely object to what is, I admit, an unremittingly critical reading of Edib’s memoir. They might, for example, point out that, unlike Peyami in *Shirt of Flame*, Edib devotes an entire paragraph to the Greek paper *Rizospastis*, remarking, “Our Greek translator in the Second Section translated articles from ‘Risos Pastis’ [!]”<sup>46</sup> the Greek labor paper in those days, which made the Greek as an individual rather attractive to me. Whatever their faults were in Athens, at least there were individuals who saw that the Greek war in Asia Minor was a clumsy and criminal waste of human beings” (300). Here, Edib praises the antiwar position espoused by *Rizospastis*, yet she does so while simultaneously disarming its collective power, cementing it, again, within the language of the *individual*, who is neatly packaged within his own ethnic identity. For Edib,

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<sup>46</sup> Edib had similarly mangled her transcription of *rizospastis* earlier, in both the serialized and first edition of *Shirt of Flame*, where we read ریزوس پاستیس (*rizos pastis*), with its terminal-form *sin*, rather than the monolectical ریزوسپاستیس. Yet there is a subtle difference between Edib’s Ottoman and English gaffes. Five years later, in her English-language memoirs, the corruption of the word has inexplicably grown worse: *rizos* has now become *risos*. It seems unlikely that the error would have derived from the printer. Far more likely is the explanation that Edib’s command of Greek, which she purportedly learned as a child, was oral rather than written, or that it was not as strong as generally assumed. This second explanation seems the likelier: elsewhere in her memoir, one finds similar mistakes in the transcription of even the simplest Greek expressions, such as *adio* (*avtio*, “goodbye”), which she strangely writes as *adioses*—an error that is not simply visual; orally, too, it grates upon the ears.

*Rizospastis* stands not as an example of an internationalist anti-imperialist network, reaching from Athens to Ankara, nor even, in narrower terms, the collective product of a Greek antiwar movement, but of the isolated, ethnically determined “individual.” Edib’s traditionally liberal worldview obscured the economic engine of the war and, indeed, the resulting ethnocentrism to which she applied her progressive criticism.<sup>47</sup>

As I begin to close my analysis of Edib’s memoirs, however, let me return to the question of textual agency. I’ve already noted that her Turkish “edition” of 1960, published at the end of her life, had softened and excised nearly all her earlier rhetorical attacks against Greeks and Armenians. This was not all, however. As others such as Ayşe Durakbaşa, Hülya Adak and Erdağ Gökner have remarked, Edib’s Turkish memoirs also gutted and removed all critiques of Atatürk, excising entire paragraphs and sections. In a brief introductory note, Edib hoped to preemptively diffuse the critiques of any possible readers who may have come across the English-language memoirs thirty years earlier, suggesting that the Turkish text was not a “translation.” Just what it *was*, or how it was produced, she does not tell us. Nevertheless, she continued, “despite the fact that some of their sections are shorter, some of them longer, [the English and Turkish editions] are essentially the same” (13). This was true only to the extent that we agree with Edib on what the “essence” of a text is, and where it lies. As most readers today would argue,

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<sup>47</sup> We see this clearly throughout Edib’s career. For example, in her response to the Istanbul Pogrom of 6-7 September 1955, Edib threw the blame not on the state but on the rioters themselves, whom she saw as an unorganized mob of the underclass, which had overpowered a weak and inexperienced state (!): “[Our leaders] failed to realize that Democracy today cannot be an administration ruled by the mob, and thus they failed to take the necessary precautions to prevent such an event, or they simply had insufficient experience” (*Yeni İstanbul*, 19 September 1955). Such a position, despite Edib’s sympathy for the victims of the attacks, nonetheless betrayed a deep and abiding faith in the agents of the Turkish nation-state. Yet this was not all; Edib went on: “The first striking factor in the 1-6 September tragedy is hostility to wealth [*sermaye düşmanlığı*] [...] While wealth is very useful and essential, I find it necessary that those who possess wealth should stay away from ostentation, exhibiting a simpler lifestyle closer to the people.” Such a declaration is deeply problematic—if for no other reason than the fact that Edib is implicitly critiquing Greek, Armenian and Jewish victims for attracting violence to themselves through brazen affectation.

there were clearly some essential elements missing from the memoir's second manifestation.

Let's be clear: there were obvious external pressures beyond the writer's atelier, silently nudging her towards self-censorship. One has only to consider the ideological breadth of Kemalism and its deep institutional strength within both the Turkish state and commercial print—particularly during the Cold War. Within such a climate, acts of self-censorship like Edib's were unavoidable for any “author” whose work was produced and circulated within the mainstream media. Be that as it may, a closer examination of Edib's Turkish-language memoir reveals more at play than mere self-censorship. The Turkish text was also riddled with errors, broken sentences and sections that had been rendered contextually incomprehensible. Compare, for example, the section detailing the Greek paper *Rizospastis*—first in the 1928 English edition, then in the 1960 Turkish edition:

Our Greek translator in the Second Section translated articles from ‘Risos Pastis’ the Greek labor paper in those days, which made the Greek as an individual rather attractive to me. Whatever their faults were in Athens, at least there were individuals who saw that the Greek war in Asia Minor was a clumsy and criminal waste of human beings.

Yunanca mütercimimiz bir Türktü. Her gün Yunanlıların *Risos Pasttis* adlı günlük gazetelerinden tercüme yapardı. Her hâlde Atina’da bu Anadolu savaşının insan hayatına karşı bir kıtal olduğunu anlayanlar vardı.

[Our Greek translator was a Turk. Every day he made translations from the Greeks’ daily paper *Risos Pasttis*. There were likely those in Athens who understood that this Anatolian conflict was a war against human life.]

While Edib was known for her hasty writing and sloppy editing, the amount of damage done to this passage's context and detail is difficult to explain by editing alone. First, the Turkish-language text reassures its readers that the translator was a Turk, lest they have any doubts, a detail missing from the English text. But this is not all. Not only has *Risos*

*Pastis* been even further corrupted to *Pasttis*, but entirely omitted here is the fact that the publication was socialist and, by extension, internationalist and anti-imperialist in its scope. Edib's positive endorsement of the paper has likewise disappeared, and key adjectives are dropped throughout the passage. The reader of the Turkish text must struggle to piece together why a vague reference to a "daily paper" in Athens leads Edib to believe that some in Greece have come to the understanding ascribed to them in the final sentence.

Yusuf Hakan Erdem trenchantly writes, "There are such passages in *The Turk's Trial by Fire* that awake the serious suspicion that Halide is not alone, that another hand has entered the text" (2008:194). To ground his claim, Erdem lists other examples of orthographic and factual imprecisions, such as a reference to Edib's own acquaintance Câmî Baykut, whom the 1928 English text correctly sends to Rome as Turkey's first ambassador there ("Soon after this Jami Bey was sent to Rome as our first representative there"), while the 1960 Turkish text sends him instead to Russia ("Bundan biraz sonra Cami bey Rusya'ya ilk mümessilimiz olarak gitti"). It seems highly unlikely that Edib would have made such an error, particularly as she would have had the English text before her—if for nothing else than to consult it—while producing the Turkish manuscript. How, then, are we to explain the latter's many "vagaries"?

Erdem's insightful intuition—i.e., that another hand must have been hiding within the text—was confirmed in 2002. In an interview published in the newspaper *Hürriyet* with the foreboding title "Halide Edip Exploited Me for 13 Years," the translator, critic, writer and publisher Vedat Günyol<sup>48</sup> admitted that he had served not only as Edib's

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<sup>48</sup> He had taught French at a Village Institute in the early 1940s, later joining Hasan Âli's translation bureau, where he translated three French novels (see Gürçağlar 2008:20, 78, 80).

secretary but as her co-translator or co-author:

Yes, when [Halide and her husband] returned to Turkey I met with them and I became their secretary. Halide Edip and I did the translation of *The Turk's Trial by Fire* together, from the English. She dictated it and I wrote. Whenever she'd get ill, she'd say to me, "Vedat, you go and do the translation, bring it to me afterward," then I'd do the translation that time, and she'd correct it. The book's original version was [*The*] *Turkish Ordeal*. But she didn't incorporate into the Turkish edition the parts that she'd written against Atatürk in the English edition. That is, she herself censored those sections. When we finished, I printed *The Turk's Trial by Fire* at Yeni Ufuklar. When printing it, I couldn't say "translated by Halide Edip and Vedat Günyol" of course. [/] She would have killed me for this. She was very authoritarian. [...] After my father, the person I loved most was Adnan Bey [Halide Edib's husband]. After his death I continued helping Halide. We did translations together. One day because she felt ill she lay down, and she said to me, "Vedat, look there's a small parcel in the cabinet over there, give it to me." I opened the cabinet, brought the parcel onto the bed and, keeping in mind that she was ill, started untying the knot for her. Then she slapped my hand with a *whop!* This move of hers so deeply offended me. Inside the parcel was a fountain pen that Adnan Bey had left to me. "This," she said, "is yours." But I'd been so hurt that I went out and left without taking the pen. We didn't see each other for two months and then, well, Halide died. (20 April, 2002)<sup>49</sup>

It's hard to avoid the symbolic weight of this pen, a gift that is rescinded with a resounding "whop!" before it has even been offered. Vedat's hand, struck down by Edib's, was essential in both the rudimentary, day-to-day affairs of her household<sup>50</sup> and in the "higher-order" production of the texts themselves. He functioned at times as amanuensis,<sup>51</sup> at times as translator, and at times as editor or even writer. Yet it was

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<sup>49</sup> I'm grateful to Erdem, whose chapter led me to this article.

<sup>50</sup> Indeed, he claims to have functioned at least temporarily as her coal porter, after Edib had purportedly fired her domestic servants and thrown them out of the house. Günyol asserts, "For thirteen years she used me, she exploited me. 'Vedat, come immediately, the coal has arrived, get to work! Vedat, come...' What's going on? She's chased off the domestic servant[s], so I have to be there. The next day Adnan Bey complains, saying, 'Look, how ungrateful [our domestic servants] are, they didn't even say goodbye.' I said to him, 'Oh for goodness sake, sir, Miss Halide chased them away shouting and screaming.'"

<sup>51</sup> This might possibly explain why Russia (*Rusya*) has been confused with Rome (*Roma*) in the example of Câmi Bey's ambassadorial mission. Günyol likely misheard Edib's *oral* translation of the English text and recorded it thus. Given Edib's subpar editorial skills, to which she herself had confessed, the error (like so many others) would then have passed without notice.

simultaneously a hand that, if it dared overreach the narrow bounds prescribed to it and claim some portion of the textual authority in which it had collaborated, was instantly punished.

Let me be clear, however: my aim is not a character assassination of Halide Edib. What I have been trying to demonstrate are the multiple human hands (as well as temporal and ideological frames) through which Halide Edib's texts passed, and the stark difference between the largely phantasmagoric collective *within* the text and the real, though largely invisible, collective beyond it, shaping and reshaping it. The collaborative, open nature of these texts has long been suppressed by Edib's own authorial name, which she fought hard to legitimate and institutionalize.<sup>52</sup> Yet as I've tried to argue, her testimonial novel *Shirt of Flame* was already warning us as early as 1922 to look beyond the *authenticia* of the "I." Peyami's isolated, slowly unraveling narrative voice, speaking from within a medium that had obviously reached its readers through a series of mediations, hinted ever so slightly at the complexities of textual production. Attentive readers, looking beyond the national collectives *in* the book could perhaps begin to imagine what I've been calling the collectives *of* the book, who had always been (and had never stopped) reforming and revising it.

### **A Captive's Story's Stories**

With an eye towards the recovery of this "collective *of* the book," I'd like to return finally to *A Captive's Story*, starting with an important detail: its meager language and its

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<sup>52</sup> Recall from the previous chapter that Edib was the president of the Turkish Writer's Association in the late 1940s and, as its president, became the most vocal critic of Turkey's first copyright regime, which gave significantly fewer legal protections to writers while leaving translation free and unregulated. See, in particular, her open letter, quoted in excerpt on page 243.

distanced and fragmentary narrative. While readers today can still pick up on this “meagerness,” it was actually much stronger in the first edition, as several reviews noted. Kontoglou, for example, had praised its “austere style [ύφος], absolved of all ornament” (*Hellinika grammata*, 4 April 1929), while Elias Venezis (who himself had been a captive after the war) worried that Doukas’ text was *too* austere, “for the narrative, in quite a few places, is so bare and dry that, while we have the events it’s not possible to follow the man, the living, pulsing man beneath the pressure of those events” (*Tachydromos tis Mytilinis*, June 14 1929). For Venezis, at least, the meagerness of the text’s narrative style seemed at certain points to have entirely excised the human element from the text.

While this narrative thinness has, to a degree, remained until today, something was changing as the story moved through later editions—particularly the third edition of 1958. First, as Angela Kastrinaki has demonstrated in her comparative close reading of the two editions (1999:165-168), the third edition heightened, by means of a handful of isolated and subtle emendations, the nationalist element of the testimonial, priming readers and critics in turn to further strengthen their own framing of the text as a national monument—something we’ve already seen in Raftopoulos’ review of the third edition in 1959. Besides the subtle, ideological alterations of single words or phrases here and there, however, the third edition also significantly “thickened” the narrative at key junctures throughout the book. Entire new episodes blossomed up from between the cracks, some as small as a sentence, some filling paragraphs or even pages, but all of them enriching the narrative and drawing the human element out. Venezis’ complaints seemed to have been heard. One saw this as early as the first page, in fact, when a contingent of soldiers

now bursts into the barracks where the captives have been locked for the evening; they beat them indiscriminately with clubs and with boots and finally take a handful of men out to be executed. The episode continues with the appearance of a sympathetic Muslim scribe next door whose advice proves vital for the captive to avoid selection during the ensuing nights of beatings and executions. All this material—just one example among several others—was new to the third edition. It begs therefore the question: where did such episodes come from? How did Doukas come to incorporate them into the book?

In an interview two years before his death, in 1981, Doukas observed that “it was difficult for [critics] to understand the alchemy from which *A Captive’s Story* emerged. Many worked [on it]. It’s not just my work. It is a work of the people [*laos*]. Hand in hand I worked with the people” (quoted in Kechagia-Lypourli 2005:124). At first glance, Doukas might seem here only to repeat the claims he’d put forth over half a century earlier in his introduction to the first edition. Yet a closer reading reveals an important shift in rhetoric: rather than a single voice or a “solo song,” Doukas was now writing of “alchemies” and collaborations. Why, though, did he fault the critical establishment for failing to understand these collaborations? After all, Doukas himself had kept them in absolute obscurity since the first edition’s publication in 1929. His original, three-paragraph introduction had done little to enlighten readers, and even this was removed in the fifth edition of 1969, never to appear again.

Only in 1976, in an article fittingly titled “How the Captive was Written” («Πώς γράφτηκε ο αιχμάλωτος»), did Doukas at last afford readers a clearer window into the book’s textual history. Due to its importance, I quote the article at length:

At the end of my first tour (September-December 1928), I’d come upon some refugee villages in the countryside around Katerini. In my notes, I write: “... it



rains, rains, rains; just a little more and I'll be in the town; I need to finish well. I'm near the end, but also an important point, of my mission; I'm going to speak about people in deep pain and sorrow. May God be with me and help me."

I stop my notes here and go down to the coffeehouse in the refugee village of Stoupi (Spi), to see its people and to hear their pain. The shop is full ... The latch on the door bangs and someone enters [...]. And then everyone with one voice: "Here's a guy who pretended to be a Turk to escape." A Turk to escape? I perk my ears like a military horse that hears the bugle. I ready myself to hear the unheard of. But he, a bashful oriental, grows red, he sits down in a corner and doesn't speak. Soon, with the ouzo, with the conversation, he warmed up. And he started his history; Turkophone, like all of them, but a [talented] oriental narrator. It seemed to me like he was playing a violin solo. All of us, giving him our full attention, grew quiet. After he'd made it half way through, I saw that I needed to keep this story; and I started my notes again. I'd finally found [*literally: "taken"*] his rhythm. Like a Turkophone, he put the verbs at the end. "Good, I said, he is." That foreign and paratactic syntax with the several conjunctive "and"s brought to mind the style of the Old Testament; in a tense tumult that was sharpened by my haste [to keep up my writing with his speaking], I maintained, removed, [or] modified his words and their somewhat corrupted rhythm, bringing it closer to the classically epic word [*logos*] and rhythm. [...]

[The next morning] I asked him and he wrote out, in Turkish, a letter to Hacı Mehmet [i.e., Ali Bey], superb in its folk-like generosity, where, after he had told him that the Behçet whom he had once employed was a Greek and that he is now in his new homeland, and he thanks him [Ali Bey] for the kindness that he showed him, he finishes, "those who know this world, understand that all these things are the work of God." (I have a copy of the letter both in Turkish and translated).

As I left the village and headed for Katerini, I felt as if I were holding in my hand a piece of gold. In a moment I felt a giant hand patting me kindly on the back as if God himself were bestowing on me a consolation and a support for all the subsequent days of my life. I passed Christmas in Kitros and for New Year's Eve I returned to Thessaloniki. I sat down immediately and wrote my story by dictation in a week. (*[Editors' Note:] As Mr. Doukas informed us, in order to maintain the quality of the spoken word in the text, he did not write the story himself, but rather he dictated it to his cousin Andreas Hatzidimitriou, using his notes [from Kazakoglou's oral story] as his raw material...*)[...] . The following year, setting out on my second tour [...] I passed by Spi again and brought copies of the book, which had by then been printed, to Nikolas and his comrade.<sup>53</sup> As Nikolas read it he smiled, in both pleasure and wonder that it was written unchanged just as he had told it to me. [...] On my way out, I left enough blank paper for Nikolas to write his story himself; he sat and wrote it and brought it to me some years later in Athens. It

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<sup>53</sup> I.e., the other captive who had (in the novel) been lynched. In reality, this man too had escaped. The lynching was an invention of Doukas.

must have been 1933-1934 [...]. But he couldn't manage it as well in writing as in his spoken narrative; the best pieces were those he'd copied word for word from the book; nonetheless he added some episodes, which I used in my third edition. I donated Nikolas' manuscript to the library of Corfu. I hope it's still there. [...]

I won't attempt further analysis of the intentions and successes of my *Story*. I hope, together with its friends, that it will survive. (*Tomes*, no. 6, Nov. 1976)

Again, the question arises: whose story is this? Throughout the article, Doukas himself can't quite make up his mind. The entire purpose of his "tour" in 1928 was to travel northern Greece in search of textual materials. He was in these villages to "speak about [για] people in deep pain and sorrow." What I've translated here as "about," however, could also mean "for"; that is, Doukas was setting himself the task of speaking both *about* and *on behalf of* others. The duality is reflected moreover in the article's title—"How the captive was written"—which subtly confuses the human (captive) and the book (*Captive*), which came to rewrite and replace him. Indeed, the word "captive" is neither capitalized nor italicized in the title ("STRATIS DOUKAS: How the captive was written"), meaning that it should, in typographical terms, refer to the human rather than the book. The human captive was literally being assimilated into writing.

Just as suggestive, however, is the likelihood that the article's title was not Doukas' own, but rather that of Tasos Korfis, the editor of the *Tomes* issue (which was, in fact, a special issue dedicated to Doukas). The original manuscript, written in Doukas' hand, was titled instead «Το ιστορικό της ιστορίας ενός αιχμαλώτου» (The story of a captive's story). What does this mean? If Doukas had superseded the captive by remediating him, Korfis too was superseding Doukas in the subsequent remediation from manuscript to print. While this might seem a trifling detail, it indexes the multiple creative agencies that had a hand in shaping and framing Doukas' texts. For if Doukas had wanted, with his

own title, to frame the article as a kind of chronicle of the book *eo ipso*, the editorial title turned it instead into an ironic, almost Saussurian reflection on the process by which the *Captive* overwrote the captive.

Returning to the article itself, this duality of writing and overwriting becomes immediately clear in the ensuing scene inside the coffeehouse. While taking notes from Kazakoglou's oral story, Doukas tells us that he eventually *took* his rhythm, a verb choice that already begins to suggest a "transfer of property." As if to justify himself, Doukas immediately adds that the spoken rhythm of Kazakoglou was, in any case, "somewhat corrupted" (*κάπως παραφθαρμένος*), and that only Doukas's written intervention (which at times left Kazakoglou's words in place, at other times removed them, and at other times modified them) could restore its classical form.

Just as importantly, Doukas was "overwriting" not only Kazakoglou's voice; his own voice too was fair game. Look again to the top of the excerpt. Doukas begins by quoting from his travel journal of 1928, which he'd taken with him during his wanderings through Macedonia. Yet the "quotation" printed in 1976 diverges in small but suggestive ways from the actual manuscript passage of his journal, written almost half a century earlier:

ὁ καιρός βρέχει, βρέχει, βρέχει· λίγο ακόμα & θάμαι στην πολιτεία· πρέπει [sic] να τελειώσω [sic] γρήγορα & καλά· είμαι πρὸς τὸ τέλος αλλά & σ' ἕνα σπουδαῖο μέρος του ταξιδιοῦ μου.

The weather's raining, raining, raining; a little more & I'll be in the town; I nede [sic] to finish fast & well; I'm near the end, but also an important point, of my trip.<sup>54</sup>

In the 1928 manuscript, we read of a generic, open-ended "trip," which needed to be brought to completion not only "well" but "fast"; in the printed article of 1976, this trip gave way to a "mission," one that was to be brought only to a successful conclusion,

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<sup>54</sup>From the Modern Greek Studies Archive, in the Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies at Aristotle University.

without reference to any time constraints or haste. These alterations are admittedly small, yet I insist on their importance. As the passage moved between its mediums (and temporal settings), Doukas' initially hurried tour was metamorphosed into a teleological and timeless mission. Interestingly, the last phrase of the manuscript passage quoted above, *του ταξιδιού μου* (of my trip), was written in pencil. It seems likely that indeed Doukas was writing with such haste in December 1928 that he had originally jotted down only, "I'm near the end, but also an important point." Some time thereafter, perhaps the next day when reviewing his notes, or perhaps months later when back in Thessaloniki, he had thought to add "of my trip," only to again remove it decades later in his article and replace it with "of my mission." In telling us the story of "how the captive was written," therefore, Doukas was not simply revisiting his own manuscript notes and memories but silently revising and reshaping them. His revisions cemented those notes within a graver, more studied language, one that invested the project with the aura of a "calling."

It was a calling that often seemed to belong explicitly to Doukas; not to Kazakoglou. Returning to the lengthy excerpt from the article, one sees that there were specific material interests lurking behind this calling. The next day, while leaving the village, Doukas wrote of the "gold" he had acquired, which would offer him "support" for the rest of his life. Both here and in his descriptions of the emendations that he brought to bear on Kazakoglou's voice, therefore, the article reinforces the arguments of earlier critics: that this story ultimately belongs to Doukas. Indeed, in the final line he says as much himself, referring to it as "my *Story*."

Be that as it may, other details in the article complicate this interpretation: first, Doukas paradoxically suggests that the first edition reproduced Kazakoglou's narrative

“unchanged” (*απαράλλαχτα*), a preposterous claim when taken literally, yet it unsettles the question of narrative agency. More importantly, Doukas introduces yet another intermediary into the process of textual production: his cousin, who functions as amanuensis. In effect, Doukas appears to have treated his notes from Kazakoglou’s oral story as a sort of rudimentary stage script, donning not only the textual mask of Nikolas Kozakoglou but, crucially, his *oral* mask as well, playing the part of the storyteller. In turn, he asked his cousin to play the part of “Stratis Doukas” and write his speech down, introducing a second layer and a third human hand of transcription from orality to writing.

And what of Nikolas himself? The article reveals several startling details. First, it seems to confirm, as readers had already assumed, that he was Turkophone. How else, after all, could he have “played the Turk” for over a year? Doukas attempts to prove this using Kazakoglou’s oral syntax, with its verbs placed at the end of sentences. Doukas’ observation is, in general terms, correct, yet it deserves a caveat here. Greek syntax is extremely flexible: since the language is heavily inflected, word order is of less importance for unpacking meaning. Even in the case of longer, more complex sentences, it’s possible, though less accustomed, to place verbs in the ultimate position:

- Στη Σμύρνη, για να πάρω ένα βαπόρι πήγα
- *To Izmir, to take a steamship, I went*

Or even:

- Στη Σμύρνη, ένα βαπόρι για να πάρω πήγα
- *To Izmir, a steamship to take, I went*

Admittedly, such syntactical arrangements, which mirror standard Turkish, markedly diverge from the habitual word order of daily, spoken Greek. It strikes the ear as musical, or official newspaper speech. No matter the case, however, it is both grammatically and

semantically flawless. Moreover, I use the particular sentence merely as a hypothetical example; we have no evidence of how Kazakoglou himself spoke with Doukas. The single example that Doukas provides—*good, I said, he is*—sounds strange in both Greek and Turkish. While the Greek phrase that Doukas writes (*Καλός, είπα, είναι*) is awkward, the Turkish equivalent (*iyi, dedim, dir*) is simply incorrect. Even looser translations, such as *iyi, dedim, adam[dir]*, strike one as awkward. Both Greek and Turkish would form this sentence in the same way: «καλός είναι, είπα» and “iyi adam[dir], dedim.” This instance is likely an invention of Doukas rather than an actual utterance of Kazakoglou. Doukas is not only taking words out of his mouth; he is putting words in.

Rather than qualifying Kazakoglou as “Turkophone”—a trope that scholars, even those as sharp as Dimitris Tziouvas (as we saw above) have uncritically repeated since Doukas’ article in 1976—one might more productively describe him as bilingual. Or, even more accurately, I propose the term *interlingual*, thereby alluding to Kazakoglou’s precarious position *between* the two languages. As I’ll demonstrate shortly, Kazakoglou appears to have never felt himself at home in the standardized form of either Turkish or Greek. But to call him an “oriental narrator” or Turkophone, as Doukas does, obscures at least one important detail: his narration to Doukas *was in Greek*.<sup>55</sup> He clearly knew both languages.

More importantly, we learn from Doukas’ article above that Kazakoglou was by no means “illiterate,” as critics had long assumed. He was able not only to read Stratis Doukas’ novel after its publication but to write a Turkish letter (and its translation for

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<sup>55</sup> In the lengthy excerpt above, Doukas remarks on the fact (evidently due to its strangeness) that Kazakoglou placed his verbs at the end of his sentences. If Kazakoglou had been speaking in Turkish, this would have been standard practice and thus would not have warranted any remark. The fact that Doukas muses over it here is clear indication that the conversation was in Greek.

Doukas), as well as an entire Greek manuscript narrating his adventures. Unfortunately, Doukas rejected this last piece of writing as weak—at least in comparison to Kazakoglou’s supposed oral narrative abilities. Nonetheless, it was apparently strong enough for Doukas to plagiarize pieces of it, cannibalizing the manuscript for his own needs. As readers now learned, *it was Kazakoglou’s manuscript* that had provided the numerous episodes inserted into the third edition in 1958. The “thickening” of the narrative structure was a direct result of Kazakoglou’s *writing*. Crucially, therefore, the remediations of the witness’s story by no means proceeded linearly from the oral interview to the printed book but moved back and forth and between agents and media: in other words, the supposedly illiterate witness at times took up the pen and wrote—at great length, in fact—while the writer, at other times, set down his pen and passed over into orality. These moments of intermediality occurred without linear progression or hierarchy, as the oral and the written and the printed fed upon each other in a complicated circuit.

Once Doukas had finished with Kazakoglou’s manuscript, he passed it along to the library of Corfu. Why Corfu? While I cannot guess at Doukas’ motives, it’s certain that the manuscript itself is now lost. The library was destroyed in 1943 when Nazi Germany bombed the island, following the collapse of fascist Italy (which had occupied Corfu in 1941). Seeing as the manuscript is not listed in the current library’s holdings, and that following my explicit request staff were still unable to locate anything, it seems unlikely that the manuscript survived the German bombing (a conclusion that Kechagia-Lypourli reaches as well). It’s ironic that Nikolas’ written voice, which had been ignored for so long by the national literary establishment of Greece (insisting on his “illiteracy”), was

almost entirely silenced by German munitions during the occupation. Nonetheless, there are a few important surviving witnesses to Kazakoglou’s written literacy. In particular: his letters to Ali Bey—one in Ottoman Turkish and one in Turkish with the Greek script—in addition to a short letter (in Greek) that he later sent to Doukas. They have all been preserved by the fastidious care of the staff at the Modern Greek Studies Archive, in the Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies at Aristotle University.

What these letters suggest, to varying degrees, is that Kazakoglou did not entirely “belong” to any of their languages, as his usage constantly confounds “sameness and difference” (to use the terms of Calotychos from above) in an intriguing indeterminacy. Employing a mixture of formal and informal codes, betraying several orthographic and syntactic deviations from standard norms, the letters house the remnants of a voice that belongs to no national tradition. It’s a voice, in any case, inaccessible within the printed copies of *A Captive’s Story*. I transcribe and translate the two “Turkish” letters below—one in Ottoman script, one in Greek script:

[1 Ottoman Turkish]<sup>56</sup>

Efendim ve Ağam Âli Bey,  
Kemâl Paşanın İzmirde indi[ğ]i senesi yanınıza çoban gelen Velî isminde ve sonñra Süleymân oğlu Bekset Çirkince karyesinden Kazakoğlu Niko isminde rum idi. Sizin yanınızdan kız kardaşımı almak için Bursaya kaçdığımda İstanbul vâsıtasıyla Yunanistana geçmeye fikir ediyor idim ve de İzmirde indi[ğ]imde İstanbula gitmek için bir İngiliz vapuruna girdim vapur da Midilli adasına geldi[ğ]inde çaresini buldum. Oraya indim. Pederimi vâlidemi ve umum familiyamı buldum.

Âli Bey, Allah çok çok ömürler versin senin baña karşı rum olduğumu bilmiyerek fakat her bir insâna karşı iyi vizdânın olduğunu öğrendim ve de çok şeyler geçirdim ve de bir gün oldu bütün familiyamı gördük onun içü[n] tarâfınızdan çok memnûn kalarak gece ve gündüz isminizi söyleyerek sağlığınıza duaçıyım. Tarâfınızdan çok memnûn kalarak size bu mektûbu yazıyorum. Sizin de benim tarâfımdan memnûniyetliğiniz var ise idi elimden baña karşılığını yazasınız şunki ben sizi pederim yerine dutuyorum

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<sup>56</sup> I thank Gottfried Hagen for his crucial help in deciphering Kazakoglou’s difficult handwriting. Highlighted marks indicate orthographic or semantic peculiarities in Kazakoglou’s spelling or use of certain words (many of which are lost in the transliteration but which I’ve tried to reflect in my translation).



My Lord and Master Ali Bey,

The year that Kemal Pasha entered Izmir, the shepherd who came to you first by the name of Veli and afterwards Behset son of Süleyman, was a Greek by the name of Nikos Kazakoglou from the village of Çirkince. When I left you to get my sister in Bursa I was scheming to pass to Greece by means of Istanbul and when I entered Izmir I got on an English steamship for Istanbul and when the steamship came to the island of Mytilene I found my solution. I got off there. I found my father my mother and my toatal family.

Ali Bey, may Allah give much life [to you,] in your dealings with me, not knowing that I was Greek, but in your dealings with every person I learned that you have a good soul and I experienced many things and one day at last we [i.e., "I"] finally saw my family [and] for that reason, being very thankful for you, I praiy for your helth day and night, saying your name. Being very thankful for you I am writing this letter to you. If you have thankfulness too for me [and] for the work I did [as your shepherd] write a response to me [bec]ause I consider you like my father

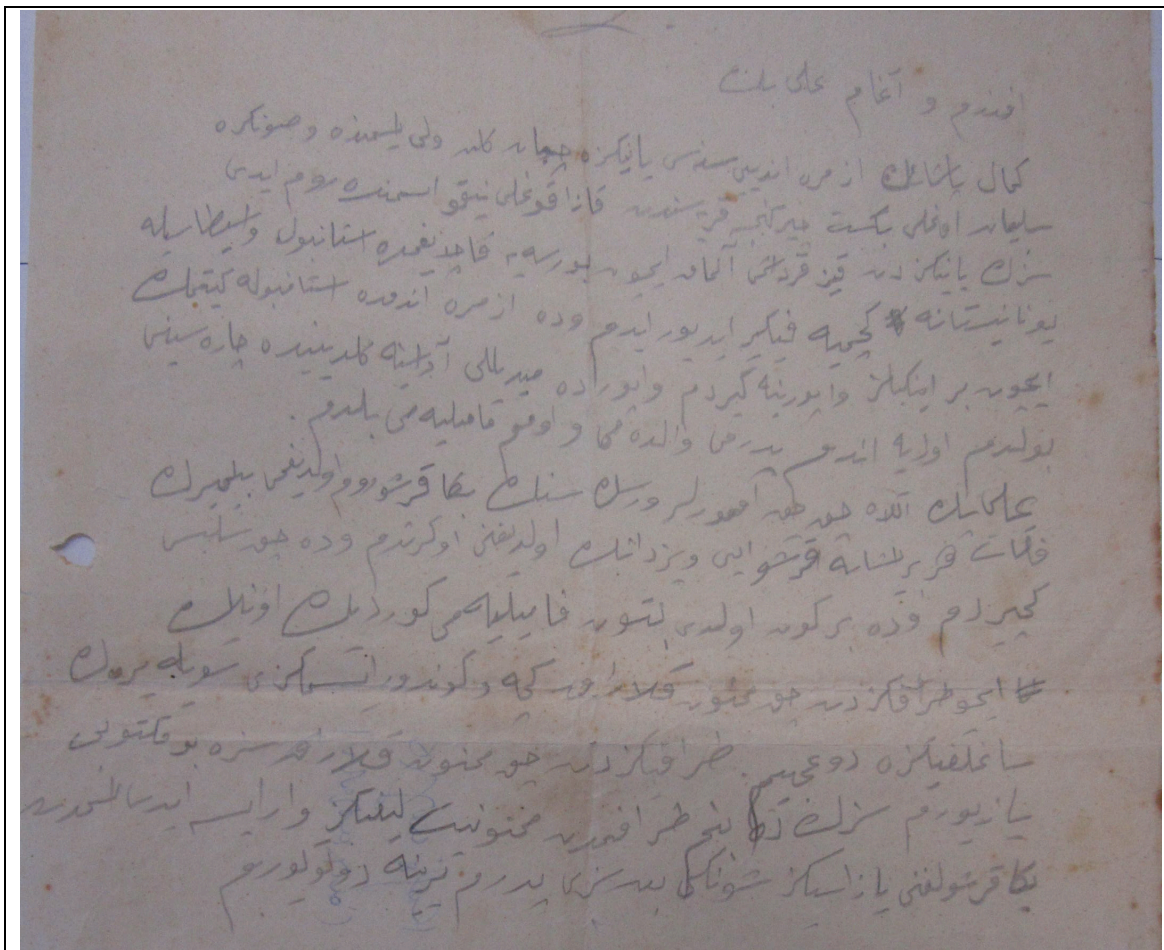


Figure 5. Nikolaos Kazakoglou's letter to Ali Bey (Turkish in the Ottoman alphabet). Courtesy of the Modern Greek Studies Archive, in the Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies at Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Σεβκιλί ~~testümü~~ αγάμ Αλή-βέη

Μαχσούς σελάμ ιντέριμ. Χαλινί Χατιρινί σορούπ σουβάλ εντέριμ σέντα μπενί σουρατζάκ ολούρσαν σούκιουρ μπασιμίζ σελαμέτ-τιρ. Κεμαλίν ισχάλ ιτιγί σενε ~~γανης~~ συζτεκι μπουλουναν τσομπαν βελιτιρ. σόνρα αλτιγίμ νοφούς Μπεχτσέτ ογλου Σουϊλεμαντιρ. Ονου μπιλεσιν χριστιάν τσιρκιντζέ κιοουντέι Νίκο Καζάκογλου ισμιντα μπουνου μπίλεσιν σενίν γιανιντάν κατσιτζαγίμ [okunaksız] ντιγέν[?] μπαχανά εττιγι[μ] άτζαμπα ιζμιρέ μη[?] τσαρεσινι μπουλουπτα γκεσμιγέ Ιουνανιστανά βε μπασιμί κουρταρμαγά. Άμα Αλάχ εμουρλερ βερσίν σανά εττιγίν ελιγέ καρσί[,] βιζτανιν ιτσούν τσανιμιζί κουρταρντίμ. Τσοκ εχλιγέ αντάμμισιν νασίλ μπενί σενίν γιανιντέ κέν σοϊλεμ ιθίν ουρουμλάρ ιτσούν χεμντέ ταστικλεριμ. οϊλε αντάμ ολτουγουνά ιτσούντεν εκμεγιντέν οργεντίμ σενίν βιζτανί ολτουγουνου—

Αλή Μπέη νε απαλούμ που κοτουλουκ κεντινι κιμ μπιλίρσε Αλαχτάν-τιρ. Μπιζιμ ντιγί που κισμέτ-τιρ. Αργιτζα σελάμ εντέρτιμ κεντινέ βε φαμιλινά βε, πεντερίν βε βαλιντινά βεντε ουμούμ μπενί μπιλέν ντοστλαρά. μπεν σιζτέν μεμνούν καλιόμ σίζτε μπεντέν μεμνούν καλιόρσινιζ, ιστερσενιζ καρσιλιγινί γιορλάρσινιζ.<sup>57</sup>

Sevgili ~~testum~~ agam Ali-vey

Mahsus selam iderim. Halini hatırını sorup suval ederim sen da beni sorucak olursan şükür başımız selamet-tir. Kemal işhal [işgal] itiği sene ~~yanı~~syzdeki bulunan çoban Velidir. Sonra altığım nüfus Behçet oğlu Süleymandır. Onu bilesin hristiyan Çirkince köyünde Niko Kazakoğlu isminde bunu bilesin senin yanından kaçacağım [okunaksız] diyen[?] bahana ettiği [ettim?] atzaba izmire mi[?] çaresini buluptan [bulup da?] gesmiye İounanistana ve başımı kurtarmaya. Ama Allah emürler versin sana ettiğin eliye karşı viztanının için canımızı [canımı] kurtardım. Çok ehliye adammışsın nasıl beni senin yaninde iken söylem [söyler?] idin urumlar için[,] hem de tastiklerim öyle adam oltuğuna[,] içünden ekmeğinden öğrendim senin vizdanî oltuğunu— Ali Bei ne apalum pu kötülük kendini kim bilirse Allahtan-dır. Bizim diği pu kismet-tir. Aryıca selam ederim kendine ve familina ve pederin ve validina ve de umum beni bilen dostlara. Ben sizten memnun kaliom sizte benten memnun kaliorsınız, isterseniz karşılığını yorlarsınız.

My dear ~~friend~~ lord Ali Bey

I send particular greetings. I ask and enquire after your health and if you too ask about me thank heavens I'm in good health. This is the shepherd Veli who was with you the year that Kemal occupied [Izmir]. [Or, according to] the identity papers I got afterward, son of Behçet Süleyman. Know this it is Niko Kazakoglou in the Christian village of Çirkince.[.][*This sentence is difficult to decipher:*] Know this [illegible] [I went] to Izmir, where I'd perhaps made an excuse saying I need to leave you, to find a way out and pass over to Greece and save myself. But may Allah give much life to you for the goodness you showed [me] I saved our [*i.e.*, 'my'] soul for [*i.e.*, 'because of'] your good conscience. You are a very worth[y] man, when I was with you how you would speak to me for [*i.e.* 'about'] the Greeks and also [I give] my verifications that you were such a man[,] from your [drink?] and from your bread I learned that you are well-conscienced— Ali Bey what can we do[,] this evil [*i.e.*, the war], whoever knows himself [will realize] it's from Allah. It's not ours, it's fate's. I give particular greetings to yourself and to your family and to your father and mother and also to all my friends who know me. I am thankful for you[,] you too are thankful for me, if you want send me a reply.

<sup>57</sup> The uncontrolled handwriting of this letter has made it difficult to decipher some words and, at one point, a larger sentence; I welcome the corrections or suggestions of others.

February 1825  
Dear Ali Bey,  
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst. and to thank you for the information it contains. I am sorry to hear that you are still in the same state of health. I hope that you will soon be able to return to your country. I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
Nikolaos Kazakoglou

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst. and to thank you for the information it contains. I am sorry to hear that you are still in the same state of health. I hope that you will soon be able to return to your country. I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
Nikolaos Kazakoglou

Figure 6. Nikolaos Kazakoglou's letter to Ali Bey (Turkish in the Greek alphabet). Courtesy of the Modern Greek Studies Archive, in the Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies at Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece.

What can we say of these two epistles? Like Kazakoglou himself, their indeterminacy rendered them incompatible with Greek and Turkish grammatology. The Greek-script epistle, while it bore the national alphabet of Greece, was unintelligible to most of that country's citizens. As for the letter in Ottoman Turkish, it was written in December 1928, less than a month after the Turkish state itself had abandoned the Arabic script, rendering the document equally illegible to most Turkish citizens today. In short, the pen of Kazakoglou<sup>58</sup> was doomed to fall between the cracks of both Greek and Turkish Letters and their publishing industries.

A close reading of the letters themselves demonstrates at least two prominent points. First, those who characterize Kazakoglou as “Turkophone” might do well to consider the many irregularities of his Turkish. In the very first sentence of his Ottoman-script epistle, he writes “indiği senesi,” applying a possessive suffix where standard Turkish would have none. Remarkably, when writing his Greek-script letter, he instead chose the standard “işgal ettiği sene,” suggesting that at least occasionally his Greek-script idiom was in fact closer to standard Turkish than his Ottoman script. Continuing in the Ottoman epistle, we see that he also makes multiple orthographic errors when rendering Arabic words, such as *vâsiṭa*, *‘umūm*, or *du‘ā’*. This was understandable, if we assume that most Anatolian Orthodox Christians had little access or exposure to Arabic in their schooling. More interestingly, however, in the final sentence Kazakoglou reduplicates the ending of *memnuniyet* (“satisfaction,” which I have translated somewhat

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<sup>58</sup> As opposed to the voice of “Kozakoglou” (Doukas’ narrative persona), which is now approaching its fiftieth printing and, by my rough estimates, well over two million copies. In 1999, Dimitris Tziouvas wrote that “over the last two decades it is by now solidifying as a national heirloom. [...] From 1980 to today it has been reprinted over 20 times, an impressive number if we think of the seven [single-print] editions that occurred over the previous 50 years” (np).

freely as “thankfulness”) by adding the Turkish suffix *-lık*<sup>59</sup> to the Arabic suffix *-iyet*, both of which produce the same meaning. This generates, in effect, something like “satisfactionness.”

Most crucially, however, Kazakoglou writes his Turkish name as *Bekset* rather than *Behçet*—i.e., using a *kef-sin* rather than the standard *he-çim*. He makes a similar choice later, when he renders the word *vicdan* (*conscience*) as *vizdan*, choosing a *ze* (ز) rather than a *cim* (چ). These two unorthodox spellings, which would certainly puzzle a Turkish reader, would give little pause to a Greek. In truth, they represent the way a monolingual Greek speaker would pronounce the words. The Greek language does not employ the sounds “dj” (as in *Jack*) or “ch” (as in *chore*), representing these sounds instead as “dz” and “ts”—precisely how Kazakoglou has done in his Ottoman-script letter. In short, despite the fact that the alphabet and language were perfectly equipped to produce the words “Behçet” and “vicdan,” Kazakoglou strangely wrote them instead as would a monolingual Greek from Greece. One might posit that the dialect of Turkish spoken within Kazakoglou’s village did not represent the “dj” and “ch” sounds as elsewhere in Anatolia, yet such a hypothesis seems untenable. At nearly every other point in the letter, Kazakoglou represents “dj” and “ch” with standard Ottoman *cim* (چ) and *çim* (چ): *gece*, *duacı*, *kaçmak*, *çoban*, *Çirkince*, etc. This suggests that *Bekset* and *vizdan* were not the rule but rather the exception. My point, however, is precisely this: Kazakoglou was poised somewhere between the two languages, never committing himself to the standard rules of either. At times, the choices of his Greek-script epistle are more “Turkish” than his epistle in official Ottoman. Similarly, at other times the choices of his Ottoman epistle seem oddly “Greek.”

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<sup>59</sup> This *-lık*, however, has been represented with a “kaf” (ق), which alters the word’s vowel harmony.

This linguistic “nomadism” was likely a result of the educational policies of his village’s school, which had been built by the Izmir-based organization “Omios” in 1885.<sup>60</sup> Despite the fact that the residents of Çirkince—the name of his village, which was Orthodox Christian—had for generations spoken Turkish, the Bishop of the metropole who oversaw education had set as his primary goal the eradication of that language and its replacement with Greek (ibid). Allied with this policy, the urban, Greek-speaking philanthropists who built the school and the staff who ran it hired a *παιδονόμος* (a class monitor), who “saw to it that the prohibition [of speaking Turkish] was enforced” (ibid). In other words, it was not enough for the school administration to conduct all lessons in Greek; they paid a Greek-speaking adult to monitor the students’ conversations and to slap them on the wrist as often as was necessary if they spoke Turkish. Such policies were not exceptional to Çirkince; they could be found across Greek Orthodox Anatolia and were indicative of the nationalist bent that education had taken in the final decades of the empire. Evangelia Balta writes, “Education, and indeed a Greek education, as well as the learning of the Greek language by the Turcophones, were perceived as tantamount to progress and civilization. [...] Consequently, in the give and take, the Turcophone Rum became—because it was demanded of them—recipients, and only recipients, of Greek, that is Hellenophone, education, the ultimate aim of which was their ‘Hellenization’” (2010:55-56). Given his age, Nikolas Kazakoglou was doubtlessly among the children raised within this short-lived system: speaking Turkish at home and within his village but policed and punished for speaking it in school, he grew up in a linguistic no man’s land. Wandering between scripts and official standards, Kazakoglou’s

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<sup>60</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Hellenic World* (<http://asiaminor.ehw.gr/Forms/fLemmaBody.aspx?lemmaid=4843>). By the start of the twentieth century, the single school had grown to three (boys’, girls’, and a pre-school).

documents spoke to a fascinating confluence of dialects, languages, and written training—a confluence that was, however, doomed to near oblivion by both national languages and their literatures in the coming decades.

Secondly, and lastly, if we turn to the contents of the epistles, we soon realize that they are not literal translations of each other but rather two separate documents, each with its own points of rhetorical emphasis. For example, the Ottoman letter tells us that Nikolas' Turkish name was Süleyman oğlu Behçet (i.e., Behçet, son of Süleyman), yet the Greek script tells us just the opposite: Behçet oğlu Süleyman (i.e., Süleyman, son of Behçet). In both letters, we also learn that Kazakoglou went not only by the name Behçet (or Süleyman) but also, at some point, by “Veli”—a strange detail that Doukas had elided in his own story. It seems, indeed, as if Ali Bey first hired a man named “Veli” who later claimed to be called “Behçet” (or Süleyman), only to reveal years later that he was in fact called “Niko.” One cannot avoid the impression here that Kazakoglou himself has lost track of his several personas, and can no longer accurately position a “true” self within them.

Generally, the two texts are written in a stilted, largely unsuccessful imitation of official formality. This icy, clunky language is disrupted only at isolated points in the epistles, when the writer offers short, condensed bursts of emotional energy. Of particular interest, however, is the fact that these brief moments of touching intimacy or informality occur at different moments and in different ways in each of the two letters. In the Greek script, we see that Kazakoglou had first begun his letter by addressing Ali Bey as “my friend” (*dostum*), yet he later crossed this out and reverted to the more formal “my lord” (*ağam*). At the start of the final paragraph, however, he breaks off his previous thought (a

break that is in fact represented with a long dash “—”) and suddenly begins a disarmingly intimate direct address to Ali Bey: “Ali Bey, what can we do[,] this evil, whoever knows himself [will realize] it’s from Allah. It’s not ours, it’s fate’s” (*Αλή Μπέη νε απαλούμ που κοτουλουκ κεντινι κιμ μπιλίρσε Αλαχτάν-τιρ. Μπιζιμ ντιγί που κισμέτ-τιρ*). In a gesture that extends beyond the two men’s personal history, Kazakoglou seems to be opening here a reconciliatory window for all the populations of the entire region. The evil unleashed on so many civilians, he seems to say, was not their own doing; it was the work of fate. This was, moreover, the sentence that had so captivated Stratis Doukas, as he wrote above in his 1976 article.

Such a gesture, however, is missing in the Ottoman-script epistle. Here, Kazakoglou transitioned directly from his praise of Ali Bey’s personal generosity to the greetings he extended to family and friends. Nonetheless, the most touching moment of this document—and, crucially, a moment that is missing from the Greek script—comes in the final line, as Kazakoglou confesses to Ali Bey, “I consider you like my father” (*ben sizi pederim yerine dutuyorum*). More literally: *I hold you in the place of my father*. Having waded through this strange, idiosyncratic letter, with its several irregularities and its overall poor script, the reader stumbles upon the final words like an oasis, a moment of sharp emotional clarity that brings the entire story into focus. Indeed, returning to Calotychos’ reading of Doukas’ novel from the earlier section of this chapter, one sees now in this final sentence that despite the failed marriage to Ali Bey’s niece, the bond between the refugee and his protector remained solidly in place, at least as witnessed here in Kazakoglou’s own letter. Setting Ali Bey in the place of his father, Kazakoglou eloquently demonstrates how the past friendships—indeed *familial bonds*—of Veli and



Behçet or Süleyman continued to “touch” Nikolas, despite any claims to a supposed “integrity.” Both in its linguistic structures and its contents, Kazakoglou’s writing was a space of confluence and cross-contamination.

### *Curating Truth’s Tellings*

Let me conclude with a final clarification: my intent is not to romanticize or deify Kazakoglou as the “lost voice of the original witness.” As my study of *Shirt of Flame* suggested earlier, such an “original voice” is often inaccessible and never very helpful in understanding a text’s complicated journeys. Instead, what I want to show is this: Kazakoglou’s strangely pluralistic voice, which arose from a dense sociopolitical web and was likewise spread across a dense web of media (oral speech, personal letters, and a book-length manuscript narrative), when read alongside Doukas’s own strangely pluralistic interventions—to say nothing of his cousin, his publisher, the ensuing editions’ successive visual artists, or others—illustrate the confluence of multiple creative forces that convey, transmit and transform the printed testimonial. Kazakoglou’s letters are but a small sample of the multiple voices and perspectives that have been unduly silenced by the standard testimonial discourse of the literary canon and its print apparatus. If his texts have attained a prominence here, it’s by virtue of their survival in the archive. My analysis of Kazakoglou and his materials should be viewed, therefore, not as a return to an origin but rather as a model methodology of “tracing out connections” that, ideally, should extend to a number of actors and materials, however faint their traces in the archive today.

As I argued in the introduction to this chapter, the problem can be framed in terms

of the authentic and authorial, whose etymological, conceptual and practical fixation on the originary “self” (*αὐτός*) has immense implications for the genre of textual truth-telling. The *authenticia* of the text, which at times seems to replace and at other times to co-exist alongside the textual author, has served to further atomize the narrative self. But look closer at the ongoing process and its material traces—how the testimonial is crafted and recrafted—and you find a different story. It’s a story that ties together the most unexpected of actors: from Greek-speaking communists in Izmir to a Turkish writer in Ankara circa 1922; from a refugee in Macedonia circa 1928 to a visual artist in Athens circa 1977:

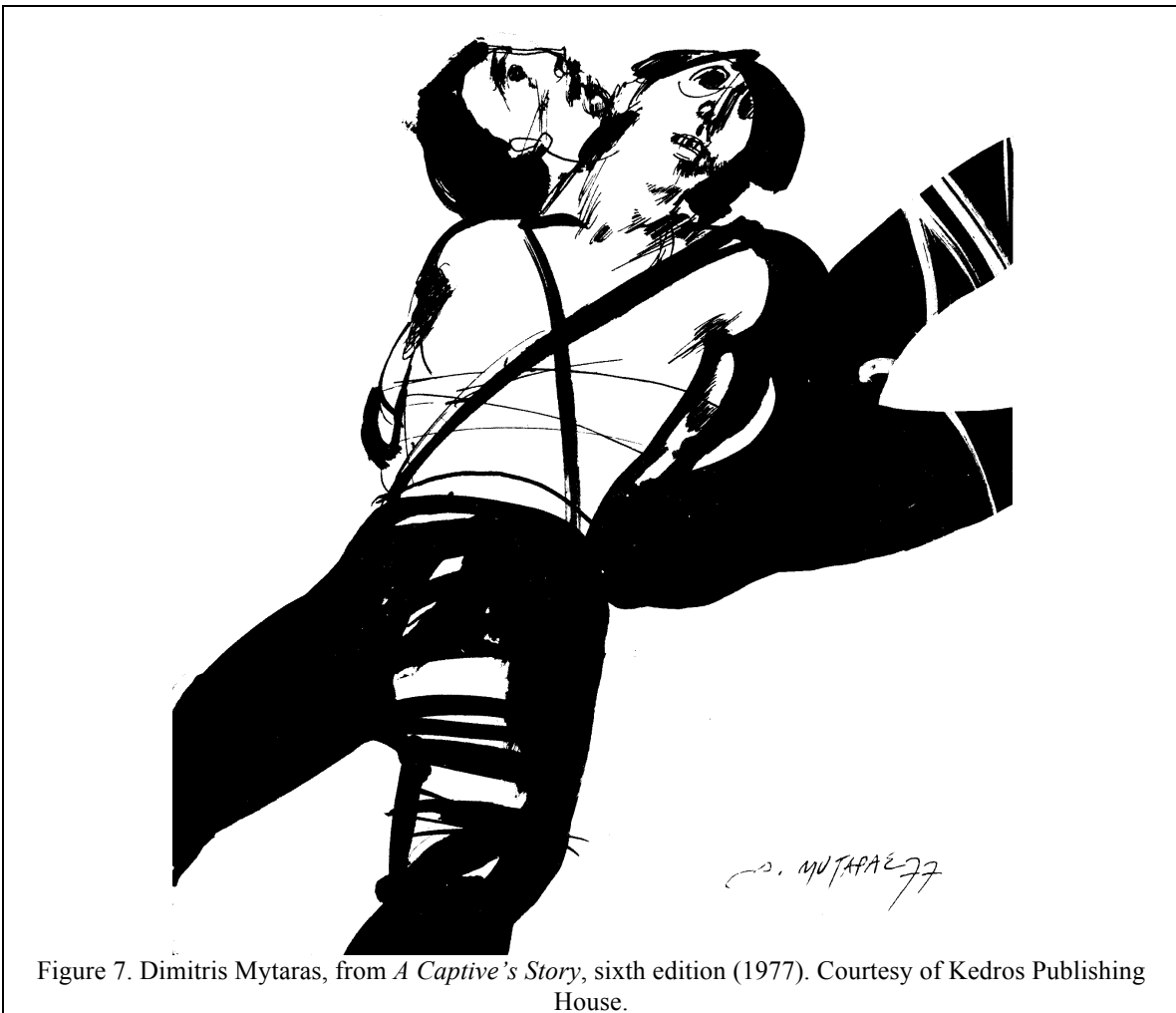


Figure 7. Dimitris Mytaras, from *A Captive's Story*, sixth edition (1977). Courtesy of Kedros Publishing House.

Although certainly in a different sense than Dimitris Mytaras' haunting image here—one among many included in the sixth edition of *A Captive's Story*—all of these actors were bound up together in a collective chain.

The philologist's job, therefore, ought not to be to single out and canonize any single voice, whether it's labeled as "authentic" or "authoritative," but rather to recover the trace of each within and beyond the page, to recover likewise the spaces of multiplicity, collaboration, tension, divergence, and struggle that play out as the text evolves and changes. By monumentalizing the testimonial text, many twentieth-century Greek and Turkish critics privileged truth as an end product over the more complex ground of "truth-telling." Yet rather than pursuing the other extreme and *deconstructing* the genre's claim to truth, I've tried here to *re-construct* that truth through a careful examination of its telling. My aim is not to critique, in any absolute sense, the testimonial and the very real historical truths that it articulates; instead, I want to better curate them. This begins, I have argued, by understanding the testimonial as an assembly of voices and of hands. By pluralizing the agents within this assembly, it's my hope that we might also begin to pluralize the national histories in whose shadows they often operate.