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Research Article

THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF PHILOLOGY AND POETICS
IN THE CREATION OF THE MEDIAEVAL EURASIAN KOINÉ

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ABSTRACT

Philological methods of analysis are not only perfectly congruous with reflections of a poetic order, but especially in the comprehension of a mediaeval epic tale, western or eastern. Philology practised as the art of unveiling images behind sounds and forms, figures and structures, communicates poetically, thus significantly the polyphonic import of the mediaeval epic tale. To defend this philological-poetics experience this paper compares the Turkic *Dede Korkut Kitabı* with the Armenian *David of Sassoun*, the poetic structures of the Tamil *Periya Puranam*, the iconic singularity of the Chinese *Ji Bu Ma Zhen* (Ji Bu Insulting the Enemy) and the Byzantine *Digenis Akritas* set within an Anatolian sub-koiné landscape with the *Book of Dede Korkut* and *David of Sassoun*. Homage has been rendered to three philologists whose philological training and academic works led them to the most extraordinary poetic works of art: F. Nietzsche, P.P. Pasolini and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Keywords: Alterity, Creative imagination, Epic tales, Mediaeval Eurasian Koiné, Philology of the future, Poetics.

CREATIVE IMAGINATION

For over the past thirty-five years of voyaging and research, I have endeavored to reactualize the medieval epic tales of Eurasia: *La Chanson de Roland*, *Beowulf*, *El Cid*, *Scandinavian Sagas*, *Dede Korkut Kitabı*, *David of Sassoun*, *Periyapuranam*, *Ji Bu Ma Zhen*, *Tain Bo Cuailngy*, *Digenis Akritas* and *The Song of Igor*. Having extracted certain imagery-laden theories and figures from the aforementioned medieval epic tales, I hope to evoke both researchers' and laypeople's interest and curiosity in understanding and appreciating them. To comprehend a text and take pleasure in it means to be "moved or aroused by it" (Coomaraswamy, 1977: 13-70). It entails exposing oneself to delve into the Other's Otherness that shapes the text or the collection of discourses constituting a text, thereby infusing life into it. To penetrate this Otherness of the Other requires a rhythmic respiratory exercise, an inhalation and exhalation in sync with the Other. This exercise engages the researcher outwardly while simultaneously drawing the Other inward. This shared endeavor finds its vehicle in the inseparability of Philology and Poetics; its intuition and reasoning are rooted in *Creative Imagination*.

Certainly, there is no doubt that Philology corresponds to Poetics just as Poetics corresponds to Philology, with Friedrich Nietzsche, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and J.R.R. Tolkien as 'companion travelers' on this journey. The intellectual and spiritual evolution of these companions attests to this inseparable unity. It is not solely due to astute or keen awareness, but more significantly, it results from a complete subjective immersion into the Otherness of the Other, into the Text. This is not conceived as some *Ur-Text* or mere literature, but rather as the soil from which life originates. F. Nietzsche, P.P. Pasolini, and J.R.R. Tolkien transcended the confines of language to delve into the Discourses of the Voices emerging from that soil. They penetrated and temporarily took refuge there, until the Philologist's Love of Language, Discourse, the signifier, and, consequently, Humanity, blossomed into a philosophy of Life. This transformation extended to philosophy, poetry, cinema, or narrative imagery. Nietzsche 'became' the Philosopher-Poet, Pasolini 'became' the Poet-Cinematographer, and Tolkien 'became' the Storyteller-Poet. They truly embodied their roles, turning raw Matter into Images, into Figures. This is not just a matter of style, unless one defines style as the creation of a distinctive lifestyle. It's a lifestyle that situates the subject-speaker as both an actor and a spectator of life. Didn't F. Nietzsche write:

"Philologie nämlich ist jene ehrwürdige kunst, welche von ihrem Verehrer vor allem eins heischt, beiseite gehn, sich zeit lassen, still werden, langsam werden-, als eine Goldschmiedekunst und-kennerschaft des Wortes, die lauter feine vorsichtige Arbeit abzutun hat und nicht erreicht, wenn sie es nicht lento erreicht".

"For philology is a venerable art which demands of its votaries one thing above all: to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow- it is a goldsmith's art and connoisseurship of the word which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it lento".

In lieu of lifestyle perhaps Road or Way may be preferable; that is, a method in its Hellenic import: 'μέθοδος'. A method, therefore, of direct or spontaneous *experientia interna* (inner experience) – not a vicarious one – enabled Nietzsche, Pasolini, and Tolkien to harvest the fruits cultivated by a

particular soil. Whether they were narrative, poetic, or pictorial in nature, these fruits were understood and cherished by them due to being genuinely moved or aroused. This genuine response allowed them to reactualize these fruits through the lenses of philosophy, poetry, storytelling, and cinema, all with a philological approach.

To comprehend, derive pleasure from, and be emotionally stirred by words – in essence, to employ the signifier through Discourse – because of its fragmentary emergence, achieved through effort, from the depths of human intellectual and spiritual substance. The gradual weaving together of these fragments into images, and their eventual coalescence into a harmonized, coherent narrative or figure, exemplifies how this Discourse captures the instinctive and intuitive *Creative Imagination* of the explorer. As they work diligently to reunite the myriad pans d'images surging forth from the depths of the Unknown, from the Other's Otherness. This act of reuniting is creation itself – the labor and the pains of trial and error that empower the explorer to once again consolidate into that primordial Whole using their *Creative Imagination*. In the face of insurmountable obstacles, philology causes this latent Whole to resurface, while poetics endeavors to re-present it as faithfully as it was initially manifested.

To implement this re-creation as a practical, everyday approach to life necessitates coming into contact with the soil from which a particular Text originated. This requires immersing oneself in the visions, emotions, sounds, and fragrances of its embryonic beginnings and its unfolding growth. It also requires, and possibly most importantly, a presence of the Philologist-Poet's mind, heart, and spirit. This presence doesn't blur the lines between the Past and the Present; instead, it contracts them into a dual composition, echoing Saint Augustine's "... *praesens de praeteritis* ..." – the notion that "the past is always present". Here, "present" doesn't signify a time category but a spatial "Presence". Indeed, it is within this contraction and its cultural landscape – the Soil and its Memory – that the Philologist-Poet must dwell, akin to an archaeologist who persists in excavating until those *pans d'images* are unearthed. Then, similar to the Bard-Poet of the Middle Ages, they embark on the task of collecting and reassembling these fractured images until they once again coalesce into that unified whole.

The *Creative Imagination* of the Philologist-Poet aligns with the Text in a manner akin to being the wellspring or source of creation, as *Creative Imagination* flows from our *Fons Vitae*. An etymological journey traces the evolution of words. A translation (*translatio*) gives rise to that *mise en miroir*, that alterity which exposes the Otherness of the Other just as it reveals the explorer's own gaze¹. An *Imitatio*² begets a tone, a variation, a modulation, an inflection of the Text, not solely mirroring it like a reflection but also generating (in the sense of Humboldt's *erzeugen*, meaning "to engender") its various angles as if these angles were numerous rays of refracted and deflected light, thus producing a multitude of polymorphic forms: pictorial, theatrical, cinematographic, novelistic, poetic, and musical. Creative Imagination renders feasible the *Unitas Multiplex*, casting light on Heraclitus' "πάντα ῥά οὐα" – the "Flux of Time" (Fragment 47)³.

¹ See Plato's, *The First Alcibiade*. "So if an eye is going to see itself, musn't it not look into an eye, and in particular into that region of the visual apparatus which happens to contain the virtue of an eye, namely, sight?" Translation by Nicholas Denyer (132 C-133 C).

² From Aristotle's *Physics* 'μίμησις' (mimisis). 'Μίμησις' is not a perfect, true copy of an original, such as Plato characterized and postulated it, but reveals the analogical qualities of the original, analogies which permit variations, interpretations, and stimulation of the intelligence and the emotions, be they of the artist's or the spectator's.

³ *Héraclite*, translation Jean Brun, Paris, Seghers, 1965, 139.

However, *Creative Imagination* doesn't evoke perception or reception in isolation; rather, it hinges on the Philologist-Poet's encounter with Otherness. This entails immersing oneself in the ontic landscape of the Other, delving deep into the realms of Otherness as projected from the Text. A complete exposure. A comprehensive immersion. The subject-speaker lays bare the voice and form of the Other.

Indeed, deeply immersed in the whirlpool of language, Discourse, and the intermingling cultural forces that gave rise to the epic tales of my *Medieval Eurasian Koiné*, the explorer rekindles those binding energies once more, in the present moment. Consequently, the reformation of a *Medieval Eurasian Koiné* between 1986 and 2020 occurs—one that had, in fact, thrived since the Middle Ages.

THE DAWN OF THE EURASIAN KOINÉ

Twelve years of teaching, studying, and traveling in Türkiye and Armenia have brought me into contact with the Turkish and Armenian languages, as well as with the Turkic *Dede Korkut Kitabı* (The Book of Dede Korkut) and the Armenian *David of Sassoun* (*Sasownci Dawit Uuunılgħ Ğaułıhə*) – two medieval gems of the utmost quality. The *Dede Korkut Kitabı* exists in two versions: the Dresden version, containing all twelve legends, and the Vatican version, comprising six. Formerly housed in the Vatican Library, the latter version was handed over to the Azerbaijani government, along with sixty other Turkic medieval manuscripts from the Vatican Secret Archives, in 2011. Concerning *David of Sassoun*, there are over fifty versions (totaling 2500 pages!), with the oldest being the 1886 Anatolian version. Both works were nurtured on the Anatolian soil, thereby sharing similar discursive features. However, the challenge arose as to how to resound this distant yet ever-present voice or voices.

The texts had to be approached in both their medieval and modern forms. For this nuanced and demanding yet immensely rewarding endeavor, Turkish and Armenian had to be acquired. However, beyond this evident apprenticeship, their medieval Discourse needed to be navigated, achieved through metaphrasis or the method of *Translatio*. This method allows texts to converge, engaging in a dialogue with one another through an alternating interplay of intertextual alterity. It's a versatile medieval technique practiced by translators who converted Hebrew into Ladino in medieval Spain, as well as by Christian monks in scriptoriums across Germanic countries. In these regions, they translated biblical Latin into Northern-Germanic vernaculars. This method was rekindled by various German philologists, intellectuals, and poets from Romantic Germany during their pursuit of a *Grundton* (fundamental tone) in their translations, including figures like Goethe, Hölderlin, Rudolf Pannwitz, and others. Their practice and expertise formed the bedrock of *Bildung*, signifying a movement of forms, a journey towards the Other, an encounter with alterity within the uncharted realms of Otherness.

The outcomes of comparing the Turkic and Armenian medieval epic tales were astonishing, not only due to analogies but also due to stark contrasts. The *Book of Dede Korkut*, which contains twelve stories, spans geographically and sociologically from eighth-century Mongolia to fourteenth-century Anatolia. As you move from one legend to the next, if they are read in sequence, the Turkic nomadic Shamanist culture gradually transforms into a sedentarized or urbanized Islamic civilization. Conversely, *David of Sassoun* presents a four-generation genealogical portrayal of

the adventures and misadventures, both exogamic and endogamic, of a royal family. These events are primarily situated in and around a delimited region between Lake Sevan and Lake Van. Both epics were recited before the aristocracy and within the peasant villages of Eastern Anatolia before their various written versions were uncovered in libraries or in private hands.

Several of the legends in the *Book of Dede Korkut* also feature exogamic themes, wherein the heroes marry or defend Christian princesses. In the third legend, Bamsı Beyrek, the mightiest of the Oghuz warriors, marries a Christian girl who aided him in escaping from his prison tower, forsaking his Oghuz fiancée. Kan Turalı, in the sixth legend, weds a Christian princess. In the *Book of David of Sassoun*, Meherr the Great, the son of the eldest of the four royal brothers, Sanasar, is raised by his uncle Vargo and Vargo's spouse, Ismil Khatun, of Arabic origin. David, the third son, though married to an Armenian princess, falls in love with the Arab princess Tchemechkik. Both epic tales poeticize the joys and challenges of these exogamic relationships.

Tepegöz, the cyclops (legend eight), was born from the tumultuous union of a woodlands fairy and an Oghuz shepherd. His sorrowful life was divided between an Oghuz upbringing and a rugged, remote existence in the mountains. It's worth noting that Tepegöz's exceptional childhood strength while growing up in the Oghuz camp remarkably parallels the youthful David's experiences in Egypt. Furthermore, the "Oghuz Tepegöz" can be compared with the Armenian white-haired Tapagöz. Zoological references in both texts are imbued with symbolic and traditional significance. Horses, whether the knight's faithful companion Poulain Djali, the magical horse with quasi-human attributes belonging to the Sassoun royal family, or in the *Book of Dede Korkut*, Bamsı Beyrek's quasi-magical horse, hold particular importance. Wolves play intriguing historical and legendary roles within our tales. Böri, the grey wolf, guides the Oghuz people out of the treacherous Mongolian mountains, pursued by their adversaries as they journey westward into nationhood. This is expressed as "men senge başlap yolnu körgürgür men, tep tedı" (Ergin, 1936: verses 217-222) – "I shall show the path to your army," it (the wolf) says. In *David of Sassoun*, Gregory the Illuminator, the founder of the Armenian religion, cures the pagan king Trdat the Third of his lycanthropy, thus dispelling the king's "werewolfism" and subsequently paving the way for his conversion to Christianity. In the Armenian text, we also find negative connotations associated with the wolf. The Arab armies are likened to wolves that will devour the lamb of God (Armenia). On the other hand, on the battlefield, David howls like a wolf where refers to /gil/, meaning wolf. Dogs, ravens, and fierce lions all play significant thematic and structural roles, while fantastic creatures are also interwoven within the thematic and symbolic fabric of the plots. This is because White Demons, genies, fairies, cyclopes, and dragons emerge and blend in a peculiar world suspended between Reality and the Fantastic. These compositional techniques and Figures suggest a shared storytelling reservoir within a confined geographical area, rather than parallel developments. The jinnīs or demons featured in our poems certainly originate from the realm of Oriental literature in Asia Minor, especially *afrits*, as found in the *Tales of a Thousand and One Nights*. Heroes are often equated with dragons: "Ādemiler evreni Delü Dumrul ..." (legend five). In legend two, Kan Turalı and Karaçak the Shepherd are likened to dragon-killers: "Yidi başlu ejderhaya yetüp vardum," meaning "Kan caught the seven-headed dragon." Sanasar, the first of the royal line of kings in David of Sassoun, is a dragon-slayer. Two words for "dragon" are encountered in the *Book of Dede Korkut*: "evren," of Turkic origin, and "ejderha," of Persian origin. The latter is also the etymon found in *David of Sassoun* as /ažgaha'.

The execution of medieval epic poetry indeed serves as a key unifying element among all Anatolian peoples. Investigating word borrowing through linguistic interactions underscores semantic polysemy and inter-community exchanges. The *Legends of Dede Korkut* encompass etyma from Mongolian, Persian, Arab, and Old Turkic roots, while the word reservoirs of *David of Sassoun* are also composed of Persian and Arabic words. Words of Turkic origin are also present in *David of Sassoun*. The shared etyma of Persian origin bind both tales etymologically, given that both cultures were significantly impacted by the Persian language.

Over time, the Turkic nomads (Seljuks) gradually settled in Anatolia, adopting a more sedentarized lifestyle as a result of contact with the Armenian population. Their interactions in the public sphere undeniably form the foundation of Turkic and Armenian medieval social relations, which can be assessed through the study and comparison of the *Book of Dede Korkut* and *David of Sassoun*.

With that being said, the aforementioned literary themes and linguistic exchanges not only yielded intriguing findings upon reviewing the Texts but also led to analogies found in their medieval stone-cutting cultures. Indeed, the art of constructing medieval places of worship followed similar patterns by borrowing from sources like the Persians or the Armenians. For instance, the alternating prose and poetic elements in both tales *spatially* correspond to the crenulated ramparts of medieval castles or fortresses, or to the two-toned stone patterns on the walls of churches or mosques. Simultaneously, they offer an alternative perspective of both the exterior and interior, preventing the homogenization of material and the monochromatic amalgamation of stones. Within this alternation of space lies the psyche of the medieval mindset: a dynamic interaction involving the Other between the spaces of spoken words and silence, whether in a recited epic tale or in the emergence of a place of worship. Bas-reliefs do not only *ornate* or *adorn* a church or a mosque, but *narrate* and *recite* stories of that church or mosque in a form both pedagogical and pleasurable to the eye. Likewise, figures of speech do not only *ornate* or *adorn* a narration but *emit* and *assert* the wisdom that created or made emerge the narration as a companion to enlighten and delight.

Thus, *Dede Korkut Kitabı* and *David of Sassoun*, through their cognate literary themes, historical convergences, and analogous medieval Discourse, blend seamlessly within the framework of the *European Medieval Koiné*. This is the case despite the fact that the Turkish language doesn't belong to the Indo-European family. This circumstance adds weight to the conviction that gradually gained importance: Must a koiné necessarily pertain to a “common tongue,” or could it be perceived as a “common discourse”? This very notion, later substantiated during my years of work and study in India and China, illuminated the third composition (*Dede Korkut and David of Sassoun*) of the *Mediaeval Eurasian Koiné* (1993).

ARCHITECTURE AND RESONANCE

As I journeyed eastward, the practice of alterity as a means of connecting with the Other emerged, perhaps not as a definitive guide in shaping the *Mediaeval Eurasian Koiné*, but rather as a companion on the road. However, this underlying force or *élan* hadn't yet fully entered my consciousness. It was during my five-year stay in Tamil Nadu, India, that the inseparability of Philology and Poetics became evident. The underlying *élan* revealed itself to be none other than the manifestation of the Art of *Creative Imagination*, whose projected imagery and forms began to

harmonize perfectly with the paths and roads I traversed throughout the subcontinent. Simultaneously, these resonated with the journeys undertaken across the numerous pages of the *Periya Puranam* - பெ ா ி ய பு ர ண ண ம் -, where “*Periya*” (பெ ா ி ய) signifies “great,” and “*Puranam*” (பு ர ண ண ம்) means “legend.” This text is among the most treasured medieval gems, distinguished by its exquisite crafting and luminous brilliance.

This monument can be compared to the தீபம் மரம்/ti:pammaram/, that tree (மரம்) whose phosphorescent (தீபம்) leaves illuminate the darkened groves and forests of Southern India. It is what the Hindus of North India call the *Jyoti Vriksha* ज्योति वृक्ष, the “Tree of Light”. The *Periya Puranam* illuminated the path toward understanding the indissolubility of Philology and Poetics, and it convinced me of the unquestionable existence of a Eurasian koiné.

The philologist cannot help but be overwhelmed by the history, culture, and lore of Tamil Nadu, by the Tamil scriptures, and by the archaeological and theological forms that envelop him. The polysemy of Tamil words as presented in the *Periya Puranam* revealed an entirely new range of thoughts, visions, and figures that inhabited my inner world. This spectrum astonishingly resonated with the Indian reality I experienced while living in India and embarking on numerous journeys across South India and the Himalayas, both in major cities and villages. This marvelous array of forms evoked the emotions that I poured into my research and writings.

Now, if the archaeological parallelism continued to generate astonishing analogies with the writing of the *Periya Puranam*, consider the proliferation of images and their arrangement along the outer friezes of Sivaite temples, known as “*koyil*” (கோய்), or clustered atop the towering “entrance-gates” of those colossal temples, the “*gopurams*” (கோபுரம்). This proliferation and clustering strangely mirror the plethoric clusters of images found in the Tamil tradition of adjective/noun coupling, in the association of theological and worldly concepts through metaphor and simile, and in the extensive collection of etyma whose polysemic value reaches dizzying heights.

Indeed, the Otherness of India unfurled with astonishing amplitude, and the *Periya Puranam* served as its guiding force. The risk resided within the unfathomable depths of this intricate connection, in the boundless expansion of spiraling subterranean root-networks, in rhizomes bulging up from dark, swelling soils, in the dull blue-green ponds and tanks, and in the fantastic chromatic ranges of fragrant shrubs and flowers bursting into vibrant bloom. The most surreal and intricate configurations of Indian flora, fauna, and human figures seemed to mirror the similar intricacies and complexities of the Tamil system of ligature, syntax, and polysemy—its morph-clustering and paronomasia—that constituted the very linguistic and narrative texture of the *Periya Puranam*. Emerging from the nominal forms that swarm within the sixty-three legends are adjectives with the most diverse ramifications: epithets, participles, noun/adjective complements, and reduplications. A noun without an accompanying adjective is akin to a person without clothing:

“Hence in poetry every noun is furnished with an adjective, and if the adjective happens to be a phrase, the noun within that phrase is provided with an epithet, till the whole poem looks like the entrance-tower (gopuram) of our temples, studded with decorations.”

The agglutinative nature of the Tamil language cultivates the intensity of image-clustering through

the pairing of noun/adjective binary groups. These clusters of images burst forth for the public (or the reader) and spread across the strophes vertically and transversally, much like climbing ivy or hanging wisteria with shades of purple and blue, intertwining in and out of groves and arbors. The delirium of such intensive vegetal, animal, and scriptural growth appears boundless. Yet, this boundlessness illuminates the merging of Philology and Poetics. Indeed, the architecture and resonance of the *Periya Puranam* readily compare to this intense, rhizomatic Movement of India's frenzied biological production, whose multiplication seems endless and whose circular nature, like the ever-spinning Wheel of Life, is immeasurable. Is it a coincidence that the opening word of the epic tale, “உலகம்” /ulakam/ meaning “world,” also concludes the sixty-third legend? How many voices recited that ever-spinning Wheel? How many styluses engraved those recited words upon its vegetal texture—the *olia* leaves—(ஒலிய) before its academic publication in 1943, even though the first complete annotated edition appeared in Madras in 1870, prepared by Mahalinga Iyer?

In the rubric “Harmony of Antithetical Values” of my work *Periya Puranam ou l'Éternel Moyen Age* (1995), I analyze the intricate and interwoven architectural cadence of the Tamil *viruttam* (விருத்தம்) – the strophe or quatrain – and the *cīr* (சீர்) – the hemistich. This analysis delves into interpreting the poetic tension created by the alliteration and assonance within their anaphoric rhyming schemes. These schemes form the syntagms and paradigms of both aural and visual direct meanings. *Viruttams* and *cīrs* are literary figures molded by sound, which convey the imagery of the recited words to the audience. Reception is immediate.

It is the harmonious accord of alliteration and assonance – that poetic tension – that eradicates the mirage of duality and creates a eurhythmic architecture, as alliteration and assonance possess opposing aural values. Similarly, the reconciliation of hypotaxis and parataxis is achieved because they represent opposing syntagmatic structures. As is well-known, if there is no tension between contraries, energy will not be generated.

The Tamil *viruttam* is a compound of *cīrs*, with units of self-contained images composing a theme. For example, in the first *viruttam* of the legend of Sambanda Moorti (Book VI, legend I), it can be noted that the initial *cīrs* of each verse of the stanza audibly create a paradigmatic image of something “unchanging” or of what “remains”:

சிர்மன்னு /cīrmanṇu/
கார்மன்னு /kārmanṇu/
நார்மன்னு /nārmanṇu/
பார்மன்னு /pāmanṇu/

The word மன்னு/manṇu/ is repeated four times in the second lexeme of the *cīr*, forming a paradigm, theme, or leitmotif of “unchanging”. But what is unchanging? It is the four incipit words to which “unchanging” has been yoked that bring forth the repetition of the leitmotif: சிர் “beauty, greatness”, hence “unchanging greatness”, கார் “hues, tones”, “unchanging hues/tones”, நார் “love”, “unchanging love”, and பார் “earth/soil” “unchanging earth/soil”. The paradigm cast in its

syntagmatic verse-form communicates this devotional wisdom:

First Verse

சிரம்னனு செ ல்வக குடிமல்கு சிற்ப்வி னே ந்குங்

“Unchanging greatness of those eminent subjects of wealthy Pantiya”.

Second Verse

காரம்ன்று செ ன்னிக் கதிர் மாமணி மாட வை ப்பு

“Unchanging hues of glimmering great gems atop palaces great”.

Third Verse

நாரம்ன்று சிந்தை ப் பலநற்றுறை மாந்தர் பே ாற்றும்

“Unchanging love of the people of good domains and thoughts who praise it.”

Fourth Verse

பார்மன்று தெ ான்மை ப் புகழ்பூண்டது பாண்டி நாடு

“Unchanging earth from which its ancient town in the land of Pantiya rises gloriously”.

The leitmotif “unchanging” or “immutable” forms a theological thread that qualifies the values of the land of Pantiya: its *greatness*, *hues* (of gems and palaces), love, and of course, the *soil* of this grand town. The repeated lexeme ritualizes these values because they cannot be separated from God-Siva's creation of them for the good people of Pantiya. The “vertical” weaving of unchanging or immutability links man to his Creator, while the “transversal” extension of it in verse-form depicts man's existence issued from this divine verticality. Over 75% of the viruttams of the *Periya Puranam* follow this “theological thread,” whose plenary inspiration is drawn from God-Siva and the gleemen of Tamil Nadu, those recitors of poetry. Here is another example taken from the legend of Saint Tirunavukkarasar (Book V, legend I, viruttam 141), wherein the bard-poet builds his paradigmatic leitmotif, his vertical communion with God-Siva through the repetition of the lexeme *வண்ணம்/vaṇṇam*/, the second lexeme of each *cīr*, and which means in all its polysemic *élan*: “melody, harmony, colour, form, figure, beauty” The viruttam shall be reproduced in its entirety:

“இவ்வண்ணம் பே ால வெ வை னப்பல மாக்க ள ியம்பி டே யத்த
மெ ய்வண்ண நீற்றெ ளி மே வுங் குழாங்கள் விரவிச்செ ல்ல
வவ்வண்ண நண்ணிய வன்பரும் வந்தெ ய்தி யம்பவளச்
செ வ்வண்ணர் க ளோயிற் றிருவரீட் டரனத்தை ச் சே ர்ந் தனரே”

The paradigm of the lexeme “வண்ண(ம்)” projects the leitmotif of “sacredness”; that is, it represents the nature or color of Siva, which by polysemic extension represents the temple and the Holy Ash of His devotees. Thus, the paradigm figure could be interpreted as:

“This colour ...

Colour of the Sacred Ash ...

This colour ...

Red-coloured temple ...”

The rest of the *viruttam* could read:

- ... praised (Siva's colour) like so many people
- ... of the company of devotees (those of the Sacred Ash) with whom He advances
- ... whose Siva-blaze is like coral (again Siva's colour)
- ... at Tiruveeratar in which all gather (in the Red-coloured temple)⁴.

The colour-scheme forms a circular pattern by which the colour source -Siva- not only *inspires* colour but *expires* it to all His devotees, *expires* it within His sacred abode (the temple). Siva's *inspiration* prompts praise, the effects of which -ashes and temples- are due to His *expiration*.

One last example will suffice. In Saint Kannappa's legend, *viruttam* 124, the bard-poet has forged his paradigm on the word மிசை /micai/, which means "on, upon, on top of" in the incipit *cīr* of each verse. So we read: தை ல மிசை... on top of His head (Siva's) மடல மிசை... on top of the mountain (Siva's abode) சிலை மிசை... atop the bow (Thinnan-Kannappa's) இல மிசை... atop the leaf (Thinnan-Kannappa's from which has been placed ambrosian food for God-Siva).⁵

The paradigmatic interpretation could then be: Siva's head, His mountain, Thinnan's bow and his leaf-dish for Siva are all of equal height, understood as value. If the poetic reconciled tension of alliteration and assonance spontaneously forms aural comprehension, so too does asyndeton (hypotaxis) and parataxis on syntagmatic or transversal levels. The transversality of mediaeval Tamil verse unfolds by alternating *cīrs* and caesuras, constructing small *isles of meaning* separated by *seas of silence*. It is within these *seas of silence* that bardic and public communion is achieved, that bardic and Divine Communion, too, is accomplished. The pattern is extremely complex: All *cīrs* appear to be hypotaxed either audibly or significantly, and thus no "real" space, silence, or sea actually exists. This "illusion" arises due to the absence of relative pronouns, coordinating, or subordinating conjunctions in the Tamil language, thus signifying that fundamentally, the *cīrs* are linked by parataxic devices; that the silence is "filled in" either with a linking letter (acoustic level) or a lexeme that has been cleaved and separated (significant level). In other words, one may say that each *cīr* stands solitary, unmixed with the others as distinct units of sound and imagery, juxtaposed to one another like so many tiny isles of an archipelago.

⁴ The parentheses are put by the Author.

⁵ The parentheses are put by the Author.

And so it must be because without silence or caesura, the verse would become a mass of noisy nonsense. It is the seas that link the isles of an archipelago. Similarly, the silences within a verse, for hypotaxis and parataxis are not antagonistic but rather complementary in the playful alternation between “*cīr*” and “silence,” since their binding force is both of divine and worldly inspiration. A verse from the legend of Saint Manalikancharar (Book III, legend V) will illustrate the syntagmatic or transversal complementariness:

“பிறந்தபெருமகிழ்ச்சியினைற்பெருபூதூர் களிசிறப்பச்”

The first *cīr* ends in a consonant-vowel “ரு” /ru/ and the second begins with the consonant-vowel “ம” /ma/. The caesuras that breathe life into the verse, and hence signification, are, however, grammatically linked: the noun மகி “joy” (second *cīr*) is qualified by the epithet பெரு “joy” (first *cīr*). There is no rhythmical justification to separate an adjective from the noun it qualifies.

The mute “ற்” /r/ ends the second *cīr* whilst the allograph “ெ” of the consonant-vowel “ப” /pa/ begins the third. The *pulli* (dot over the consonants indicating consonantal value) does rhythmically open a silence that can be qualified as a caesura.

The third *cīr* terminates with the consonant “ ” /r/, last letter of the word ஊ /ūr/ “town”, and the fourth *cīr* begins with the consonant-vowel “க” /ka/ of the word களி /kali/ “joy”. The *pulli* over the “ர்” /r/ indicates muteness, thus an acoustic and grammatical pause. However, the two lexemes of this last *cīr* கள and சிறப்பு “generated”, join the third *cīr*, for this “joy” and “generated” qualify, in a possessive complement locution, the “great ancient town” பெருபூதூர். The joy generated “of the great ancient town” could be an interpretation, my “of” filling in the silence-space. In conclusion, the four *cīr*-verse forms two grammatically hypotaxical couplets divided into two hemstitches, the caesura falling after the second *cīr*. Another example of parataxical and hypotaxical alternation is read in this verse from Saint Ammaiyar of Karaikal (Book V, legend IV). The verse has been taken at random:

“டங்களுடிக் கரும்புதல்வி யரதவிற்றனத்தன்” (*viruttam* 12).

As in the majority of the verses of the sixty-three legends, the rhythm contains four *cīrs*. The first and second *cīrs* are acoustically linked by the “*consonant of liaison*” “க்” /k/, which serves as an aural technique to avoid a hiatus. This technique may be called *geminated hypotaxis*. Moreover, these two *cīrs* are significantly bound: “The sole கரும் female child புதல்வி of their தங்கள் household குடி”. Between the second and third *cīrs*, there is a caesura, and the last two *cīrs* are acoustically linked by the bi-graphism of the mute consonant “ற்” /r/ and the consonant-vowel “ற” /ra/, creating another *geminated hypotaxis*, all the more so since the combination of two “ற்ற” transforms the liquid phoneme into a trill /tr/. And like the first *cīr* couplet, this couplet, too, forms its own self-contained meaning: “due to this (for this reason) ஆதவினை ல் Thanattan

தனத்தன்”. The two hemistiches juxtaposed may be interpreted as “since the female child was the only one of the family, Thanattan ...” One final example of the parataxic/hypotaxic rhythmical scheme will suffice. The verse is from Saint Yenati's legend (Book III, legend II):

“வெ ஞ்சினவாட் டயுமிழ் விரக் கழல்கவிப்ப” (viruttam 26).

The first two *cīrs*, வாள் /va/ “sword,” have had their final lateral retroflex “ள” /l/ transformed into the cacuminal “ட்” due to the collision with the initial lexeme of the second *cīr*, “த” /ti/ “fire.” The combination of these forms the consonant “த்” /ta/ and the long closed vowel “ஈ” /ī/. This collision has caused the emergence of the same consonant “ட்,” even though neither the final nor the initial letters of these consonants are lexemes. The transformation is a pure acoustic one that facilitates the linking of two *cīrs* whose meanings are self-contained but should also be coupled to form a hemistich: “The boiling (சின) cruel (வெ ஞ்) sword (வாள்) spat (உமிழ்) fire (த)”. The relative pronoun “that fills in” the silence-space combines two separate objects that share the same metaphorical image: “a hot, boiling sword// spitting fire”. Both images symbolically represent the dragon.

Between the second and third *cīrs*, a caesura falls: there is neither acoustic linkage between the consonant-vowel “ழ,” the past marker of the verb “to spit” உமிழ், and the consonant-vowel “&” /i/ of the lexeme வீரவான் “hero”. Nor is there a grammatical linkage; the second hemistich lauds the “hero-anklets” (வீரக் கழல்) that resound (கலிப்ப). Finally, between the third and fourth *cīrs*, the acoustic linkage is effected by *geminated hypotaxis*, with the stop “க்” /k/ acting as a linking letter of the consonant-vowel “க” /ka/, the initial sound of the word “anklet”. As can be seen, the verse is a composition of two *cīr*-couplets, bound at both acoustic and significant levels, cleaved by a caesura after the second *cīr*. The two *cīr*-couplets are paratactic, and the *cīr*-couplets themselves are hypotactic. The Tamil bard-poets of the Periya Puranam recited their verses according to this eurhythmic architecture because parataxis and hypotaxis are of opposing rhythmic cadences, and because alliteration and assonance are of opposing aural pitches. Both compose the melodic curve of the *cīrs* that aurally organize each verse of the Tamil *viruttam* to transmit meaning spontaneously to the public.

THE ICONIC LANDSCAPE

The perfect amalgamation of Philology and Poetics, which is so conspicuous to me now, found its permanent perspective in the iconic landscape of the Chinese language, its art, and architecture; in the Chinese wont of punctiliousness and flexibility, of blitheness and demureness. Eight years of working at universities, studying Chinese and the Chinese mediaeval epic tale Ji Bu Ma Zhen “季布罵陣” Ji Bu Insulting the Enemy (camp), and voyaging throughout the extraordinary landscapes of the Republic of China brought me ever closer to the realization of the Mediaeval Eurasian Koinê. If China opens one's eyes to an iconic world, and Ji Bu Ma Zhen ensures the firm, objective reality of a Eurasian Koinê, the Chinese epic poem also opens them to the iconogram, or to the more traditionally known sinogram, which shall be described shortly.

Who is Ji Bu (季布)? He was a historical figure of the Han Dynasty, a gallant knight devoted to his Emperor-Lord, Xiang Yu. However, due to his insulting 罵 (mà) words towards the rival and future Emperor, Liu Bang, and after Xiang Yu's assassination, Ji Bu became a knight-errant tracked like an animal by Liu Bang's henchmen until he surrendered himself and was royally pardoned by the Emperor. Therefore, Ji Bu would serve devotedly under his rule.

These events were recorded by Sima Qian in his “*Biography of Historical Persons and Ancient Dynasties*.” However, during the Tang period (VIIth-Xth), the historical events metamorphosed into the most poetic of forms through ceaseless recitation, which extended the twenty prosaic lines of Sima Qian's account to 320 verses. These verses were divided into two hemistiches, each with seven iconograms, totaling 4,475. A dry historical account of a doughty Chinese knight transformed into a marvelous epic tale. How did this transformation come to be?

If the contents of *Ji Bu Ma Zhen* are of Han origin, the execution of its recitation is of a Buddhist Indian stamp. The Buddhist monks who had been evangelizing Western China, crossing over the Himalayas into the Taklamakan Desert and the passes of Pakistan from Afghanistan, developed story-telling techniques to narrate the events of the Buddha's life as they occurred in Northern India (the Jātakas). These hearty monks thus introduced an Art of story-telling of Northern Indian tradition into Confucian and Taoist China. The Buddhist Art of story-telling is called *biānwén* “变文” or “ambulant, itinerant literature,” and it prevailed not only because its cogent doxology converted the masses of Chinese but also because it appealed to the Chinese eye. Truly, the techniques of the *bianwen* made the gallant world of Ji Bu, his deeds and misdeeds, his friends and foes, visual through a deft, artful melding of the aural and the visual. While the bard-poets recited their tales, other artists held up panels of wood upon which the strands of the threaded words of the heroes appeared in painted gestures, bright and bold before the astonished eyes of the public, which concurrently illuminated the oral word. The recited word metamorphosed into an animated weft of phantasmagoric miniatures. The *bianwen* avers to be a most singular method of Chinese (Oriental) medieval story-telling.

The oral/aural-iconic narration by Chinese Buddhist story-tellers certainly sustains that Philology is like Poetics, as Poetics is like Philology, and that their indissolubility had always been a feature of ancient lore. But with the modern obsession of segregating the parts from the Whole to analyze them more meticulously, more “vertically,” of rending matter from its primal holism to organize alveolate cells which not only divorce the constituents from the Whole but from one another, Philology (the love of words) and Poetics (the expression of this love) little by little, like a watershed, separated.

The awareness of this happy fusion, thanks to the oral/aural-iconic traditional execution of mediaeval tales in China, then led me to comprehend the sinogram itself. It is neither a pictogram nor an image. It is an impression. Not a scriptural representation of the object itself represented, but the impression of that object that our senses have integrated and/or assimilated. And indeed, the process of memorisation of so many iconograms depends on this mental and corporal impression. The object no longer stands “outside” our vision, but “inside” our conscious or mental vista. This impression can be compared to the veneration of an icon which impresses the image of Christ, the Saints, or the Virgin Mary in our minds and bodies, incorporating them within from without. It is

not the material image itself that is venerated (wood, paint, veneer) but what the image symbolically presents to the devotee, then impresses upon his or her spirit, body, and soul. Hence, in imagining the iconogram, it depicts both an aural and iconic nature, forging a meaning that is aurally and visually transmitted spontaneously to the public. The iconogram is that very vehicle of direct comprehension because it is neither a sign nor a symbol; it is the indissolubility of sound and sight, the ear and the eye when enunciated in narrative form, be it aural or scriptural. It may just be the most dynamic aural/iconic *signifier*! The Philologist-Poet may even venture to say that the assiduous reading of the mediaeval Chinese epic tale, *Ji Bu Ma Zhen*, transcends the historical events themselves and anagogically elevates them into a higher realm. This may appear fortuitous to some readers; however, the indivisibility of the iconogram, that is, its quiddity, relates to the indivisibility of our world, of the Act of creation. For this reason, the iconogram composes a Whole with its minute components, with each and every stroke of an ink brush or pen, each producing an image that transcends itself because it composes the Whole. Here are a few examples to illustrate the argument.

The iconogram encloses within its designated perimeter one or several of the eight fundamental strokes of Chinese scriptural graphism, a graphism admittedly simplified since Mao Zetung opted for a more democratic pedagogy, but nevertheless image-filled enough to convey the demonstration. The strokes are: the horizontal and vertical, the curve to the left and to the right, those that begin at the top and descend downwards, those strokes that are written from left to right, the inner strokes written before the outer ones, the tripods in the order of the middle, left, and right, the enclosures filled in before being closed, and finally the dot or single stroke. The hierarchy is essential because it draws scriptural inspiration from what is essential in Chinese thinking and expression of that thinking – stability, equilibrium, and continuity. The eight fundamental strokes create the harmony of the iconogram, as this harmony conforms to the harmony of the Universe.

The writing of an iconogram fits into this cosmic-worldly harmony and thus becomes an icon of this harmonious union by presenting it acoustically and scripturally. For example, the iconogram for a garden is “园” “yuán”. Each stroke builds an image composed of an ensemble of images which, when fully realized, depicts the iconogram in its Wholeness. We begin by tracing the enclosure of the garden because all gardens in China contain the elements they enclose, and thus we must not enclose the garden grounds before each element has been properly set within them. The doors are delineated first as “门” “mén”, which allow us to step into the garden and place a “man's head” “元” within them, representing what is fundamental to the domestication of the wildness of Nature through the use of man's intelligence and labor, with man being the supreme architect of the mundane world.

Likewise the iconogram for “country” “国” “guó” that can be interpreted in the same material-iconic light. The doors are erected “门”⁶ delimiting territory that belongs to the royalty, for indeed within those doors sits the “emperor” “王” “wáng”, and whose ancient depiction also meant an axe since the bronze axe was the symbol of royal power. We also see within those swinging doors the iconogram for “earth” or “soil” “土” “tǔ”, over which the iconogram for a “palace” is “宫” “gōng”, and this rather simple construction contains some interesting components to interpret.

⁶ Traditionally the “doors” “門” were depicted as a much more visually constructed realization of the “swinging doors” of Chinese architecture.

We must begin our reconstruction of the palace with the roof-component “亠” upon which the stroke of its “gable” or “eave” is observed, as it is the gable or eave that gives a palace or house its prestige. Then the two stories are added “呂”, the lower serving as the Hall of Reception, it being the larger. Now if we were to envision the iconogram laid out lengthwise, the image of a temple would lie before us, such as the model of the Big Bell Temple displayed in the entrance hall of that temple in Beijing.

A last illustration will suffice: “画” “huà” “picture, painting, to draw a picture”. We have a coordinated series of images of a finely tilled “field” “田” “tián” drawn inside a “frame” “口”. One may even come to say that the “framed field” represents a “still-life” painting.

Aside from this “iconic vision,” at a morphological level, the doubling of an iconogram intensifies the image: “大大” “dà dà” “enormously, plenty of,” as if the reduplication augmented the quantity. For indeed, “man” “人” “rén,” when tripled, increases to “zhōng” “众,” “crowd, mass.” One “mouth” “口” “kǒu,” when tripled, broadens into “品” “pǐn,” “products, consumer articles.” A tree “木” “mù” becomes “woods” when doubled “林” “lín,” and when tripled “森” “sēn,” thickens into “forest, myriads of, multitudinous.”

It must be mentioned that these examples have not taken into account the iconic “keys” or “部首” “bùshǒu”, the iconic headers atop, to the left or under the main element of the iconogram, and whose iconicity presents objects such as “drops of water” “冫” (to the left) or “fire” “灬” (at the bottom), “herbs or grass” “艹” (atop the main element), a “walking man” “辵”, the “horns of an animal” “丩”, a “mutton” or a “sheep” “羊”. Now, if we combine two icon-keys, for example, two “water” icon-keys “冫” and “长” “shuǎng”, the union produces solidification: “冰” “bīng” “ice”. Such linguistic iconicity has far-reaching expressive narrative horizons, of which *Ji Bu Ma Zhen* and its bard-poet transmitters (詞人 “cì rén”) play such illuminating roles.

Furthermore, this rare image-manufacturing and clustering also functions at a paradigmatic level. Paradigm is understood in Hjelmslev's interpretation, which opposes syntagma, qualifying analogous or synonymous elements at a point of a chain or syntagm. In other words, one iconic element is placed upon the other in a paradigmatic configuration: “山” “shān” when placed upon a “rock” “石” “shí” portrays a “crag, cliff” “岩” “yán”. The perpendicular accretion of the “mouth” icon “口”, the “horse” “马” “mǎ”, and “force” “力” “lì” composes this remarkable iconogram “驾” “jià”, which signifies “to harness (a horse), to plow (with a horse), to draw a cart (with a horse)”.

Iconograms or morphemic image-clusterings, whether they are single paradigmatic compositions or strings of them syntagmatically strung, constitute a veritable summit in my Philological-Poetics method of interpreting and reactualizing a Text. Envisaging the aura of a Text as if the iconogram were the epiphany of five thousand years of Chinese thought.

Regarding my translation of the Chinese poem into French and English, metaphrasis, the Art of *Translatio*, proved to be the soundest method for exploiting the iconic world of *Ji Bu Ma Zhen*. To capture this plethora of iconicity, I resorted to phonesthemes, repetition of hemistiches and

reduplication, cognate forms, assonance and alliteration, suffix massing, extended metaphors and similes, archaisms, and polysemic wordplay or paronomasia. This recreative experimentation certainly imposed itself on the English and French languages, but is there any other means of expression when in communion with the Other in the Lands of Otherness?

In conclusion, the myriad explorations of China in the company of *Ji Bu Ma Zhen* (Ji Bu Insulting the Enemy) drew me ever closer to the Otherness of the Other, a Movement that expanded and highlighted ever more transversally the *Mediaeval Eurasian KoinĒ*.

ALTERITY AND MARGINALITY

After this Chinese adventure, I returned to teach and study in Istanbul, where I began to explore the analogous historical, linguistic, and compositional features of *Dede Korkut*, *David of Sassoun*, and *Digenis Akritas*, the twin-blooded Byzantine warrior whose father was a Muslim Arab and mother was a Greek princess. It was these three pillars of medieval lore in Anatolia that highlighted my research in Türkiye and inspired the third volume of the Anatolian triad: *Digenis Akritas: l'épopée anatolienne sous les signes de la Marginalité et de l'Altérité* (2009), thus establishing an Anatolian sub-koinĒ. This volume pays homage to the bards and warriors of such distinctive cultural backgrounds.

Digenis, as his name infers, is of “two races” “Δίγενοϋς”, literally “born of two races”, Arab by father and Greek by mother. This dual ontological and existential legacy raised an interesting question:

Unlike all the other doughtiest of the *Eurasian KoinĒ*, Digenis never fought for the Byzantine Emperor or for his own nation. Digenis battled against Greeks, Arabs, lions, and an Amazon to assert his independence and to craft his own code of chivalry. Whether saving women in distress or battling those who crossed his path in search of iniquity, these “personal” values were forged by an independent will of iron. Such values are uncommon among jingoistic warriors like Roland, Ji Bu, Cu Chulainn, and Siegfried. They can only be understood if the philologist focuses on Digenis' ontic makeup and concentrates on his existence lived out on Christian and Islamic territory. He claimed both as his own, not out of religious or political allegiance, but based on an inheritable claim that ontologically offered him a connection to both “sides” of his Self. Digenis practiced what is now called Alterity.

This conscious and willful practice became possible only when the Greek/Arab-blooded warrior ignored the gold and glitter of Constantinople to err freely among the weird lithic configurations of Cappadocia, in the guise of the self-exiled. His “μίξις,” the “union of heterogeneous elements” or “mixity,” bestowed upon him an irreplaceable legacy in fulfilling his epic destiny. Digenis willingly marginalized himself from the Seat of Power, and through those strange arid lands vibrating with a myriad of nations and tribes, led a life of wayfaring, combat, *Wanderlust*, and song. Eight *récits* or chants laud his wanderings, two of which he chants for us himself. Eight chants also form the substance of my work on *Digenis Akritas*. Eight experiences in the Art of Philology-Poetics, including two long poems and a short play. The first chant opens with a poem, cast in a cadence of the ABAB rhyme scheme, at the Sumela Monastery near Trabzon (Trebizond), where the discovery

of the manuscript of *Digenis Akritas* sets the stage for the intertwining of History and legend. A dramatic weaving that foretells the crepuscular events to come.

The rhythmic discovery of Digenis' heralded deeds and misdeeds, engraved on parchment and in the hearts of the black-cowled monks of Sumela, lays open the path for the *salto vitale* into the Cappadocia of Byzantium, into the fantastic world of the Knight-Errant, Turkic-Armenian Encounters, bardic storytelling techniques, voyages upon the waters of the Upper Euphrates, and through the rupestral monastic-filled Valley of Ihlara.

Chant VII, entitled *A Conversation Amongst Effendi*, dramatizes the contents of the poem while theatricalizing a sixteenth or seventeenth-century Ottoman *manière d'être*, staged in a garden of perfume-scented arbors, set to the delightful notes of fountains. There, five gentlemen of very different backgrounds and of the most refined tastes and intellectual acumen—an Armenian, Arab, Ottoman, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox Greek—ardently discuss the grand attributes of the *Digenis Akritas* manuscript, haggle over the purchase of the inestimable tome, cradled in the overly protective hands of the Armenian collector of manuscripts. The arch, even mischievous exchanges amongst the *effendi* (gentlemen), their spirited banter, sprightly wit, and repartee, represent the complicated relationships between the five nations of the Ottoman Empire as they sit in stately poise in those deliciously refreshing rose and tulip gardens. The drama is not exactly a paradox of this complexity but a humorous regal bound into Ottoman and Byzantine propinquity. The contents of *Digenis Akritas* are discussed at length, each garden denizen opining through the prism of his national culture, which betokens, and this goes without saying, his prejudicial upbringing.

The eighth and last chant, titled *La Grande Idée*, ostentatiously mocks the Greek dream of reconquering Türkiye, with Digenis as its galloping, dreamlike champion. Strophic in structure and Persian in scheme (AABA), the Byzantine hero battles doggedly through a concatenation of “personal” exploits before seeking sanctuary in his palatial abode within the snug bosom of Eudokia, his beloved. However, he is beset by remorse and compunction for not succoring his comrades in arms, who were butchered by the Turkish soldiers on the blood-soaked plains of Anatolia.

Indeed, “καταστροφή” (catastrophe), the last word of the poem, summarizes the smashing of a Byzantine-Greek dream that began with the tragic Battle of Manzikert (Malazgirt) against the Seljuks in 1071 and ended pathetically at Sakarya against the future Republican Turks in 1921. To express it in musical terms, the *Grande Idée* is rhythmically accompanied by a cadence of *scherzos*, facetiousness, whimsical wit, and a soupçon of biting sarcasm.

Besides the narrative derision and poetic shades of the *Grande Idée*, an alchemical experiment in amalgamating the Persian *rubaiyat* pattern with a Greek-Turkish event was undertaken with the intention of exercising poetic alterity, analogous to Digenis'. This alterity strikes so cogently because it remains unblighted by authority, convention, or formality.

The world, or the lands of Otherness, presumes a frontier at whose brink the Encounter is effected. The brink of this frontier can be of two sorts: ontological, as in Digenis' case, and existential, as in his case, too. Is he not Digenis “of the border,” galloping upon the frontier between Arab Muslim and Byzantine Christian, on the border of Christian and Muslim territory? To dwell on the borders of sundry cultures draws an ontological frontier, fundamental for the warrior to reconcile the

irreconcilable, articulate the inarticulate. An oscillating frontier over whose edge danger lurks: integration or assimilation of the Other? Rejection or extermination? Renegade or apostate? Is an existential harmony at all possible if the ontic frontier posits insoluble problems? What identity to adapt? What stand to take? What conviction to espouse when an existential choice must be made? Or must a choice be made at all? In Digenis' mind, his choice was his own because he respected both distinct origins, because he kept aloof from proscriptive, bigoted authority, from ethnic vanity, from the snares of tribal honor. The free spirit is the one who roams freely, ontologically and existentially, not "free to choose," but free to accept his Alterity as the very roots of human existence, an Alterity bestowed upon all living beings. It is this Alterity that had fashioned medieval Eurasia, as it is fashioning anew today's Eurasia.

CONCLUSION: THE ART OF ALTERITY

To sum up, my *Mediaeval Eurasian Koinē* is an existential experience lived out within a geographically multicultural unified landscape whose underlying fundamental values since the Middle Ages have been a polyphonic, multiform transversal fresco of both diverging and converging linguistic and iconographic forms, narrative or poetic structures, religious or cultural beliefs and aspirations—those which Eurasia still retains today but must be defended against the prescriptive monolithic globalizing forces of economic, political, and cultural uniformity. A uniformity that lauds relativism, syncretism, and master-race superiority in the name of so-called political, economic, social, and cultural well-being.

It behooves the Philologist-Poet to defend this extraordinary ontological and existential polyphony. Alterity should become second nature to him or her, which, by doing so, decenters him or herself temporarily, allowing the Other transitory passage, existential penetration, prompting or arousing an exchange of co-opted values—however ephemeral, however risky the penetration, the "breach of the ego," the disruption of the commodious groove.

The alloy of Philology-Poetics has carved out the Mediaeval Eurasian Koinē amongst the Eurasian nations, which I have allowed passage or 'a breach of the ego' in various degrees of intensity. This Method has not been practiced capriciously. The shaping of the Koinē - and concomitantly of my Self - has borne me along a flux that has fashioned a *modus vivendi*. A *modus vivendi* whose geographical and spiritual adventure has forged the *Mediaeval Eurasian Koinē*. An adventure accompanied by the three philologists of the future: F. Nietzsche, P.P. Pasolini and J.R.R. Tolkien, who certainly practised the Art of Alterity.

For they reached out to recapture the heroic spirit housed within their hearts and minds. Heroic in the sense of creative transformation, whose voices, divine or demonic, goaded them to contract their egos so as to coalesce their Selves with the Other's. Voices, too, which concurrently shielded them from the total effacement of their egos. That voice or voices are trustees, guardians, friends, and road companions beckoning to accomplish the Road's behest by the Other.

The Friulano that Pasolini so cherished and narrated as a form of Otherness acted as a vehicle that reached out to that Other, longing to be touched and recognized in a post-war Italy under construction, fragmented by a convulsion of reactionary conservatism, lingering nostalgic Fascist

factions, rampant consumerism, and shameful compromise. He founded the “Academiuta di Lengua furlana” in 1945 and proclaimed about the Friulano language: *in cui il Potere, fascista e democristiano, non comunica*, (a language) *with which fascist and Christian-democratic Power does not communicate* (author’s translation). He composed about fifteen poems in Friulano and translated Garcia Lorca and Juan Ramón Jimenez into Friulano. Pitting himself within these conflictual vectors, laying himself bare through his uncompromising writings and cinema, Pasolini philologically reached deep into the rich Tradition of Italy’s past and poetically expressed it through words and images, as he defended the diminishing “minorities” under the crushing and brutal wheel of the “majority”. His philological precision retraced the degeneration of polyphonic and morphic values with lyrical, poetic verve: *una poesia impegnata e civile, a poetry engaged and civilized*. He rekindled Gramsci’s minatory ashes with ardent verses, ashes that once had been the flames of “know thyself” as a product of a historical process. And there, within the still smoldering ashen matter, Italy would be able to retrace that historical process and, by doing so, reverse the degenerate ordination, unbeknownst to the common man:

“Me ne vado, ti lascio nelle sera che, benchè triste, così dolce scende per noi viventi, con la luce cerea”.

“I am departing, I shall leave you in the evening, that albeit sad, descends so softly upon us the living, with ashen light” (author’s translation).

Pasolini gave a narrative voice to the Roman proletarian argot and dialect in his novels: nouns designated pitiful but proud figures, adjectives chiseled out tormented and twisted faces, verbs agitated neurotic movements, and generated contorted, desperate acts. Giotto’s imagery burst onto Pasolini’s screen (*Decameron*) like so many smothered cries in the desert of consumerism, mocked Alterity, ugly social uniformity, cultural mediocrity, and banality. Did not dialects, jargon, and argot forge national languages (Martineau, 1979: 99-126)? Did and do they not nourish the national spirit and thus the language of a whole people? Why then have they been shamelessly proscribed, ostracized, and censured in the name of national or global interests?

Philology enabled Pasolini to assemble and reconstruct disparate political, cultural and poetic elements into a sound and coherent poetic and political discourse. As Pasolini never separated poetics from politics, neither did he ever separate Philology from Poetics. Massimo Sannelli puts it nicely when evoking Pasolini’s philological method:

“... ; che coordina fatti anche lontani, che mette insieme i pezzi disorganizzati e frammenti di un intero coerente quadro politico, che ristabilisce la logica là dove sembrano regnare l'arbitrarietà, la follia e il mister”. For “... la filologia è la capacità di collegare li frammenti” (Philologia Pauli).

Pasolini’s Philological-Poetics’ *modus vivendi* narrated another story of Italy, pieced together (*collegare*) with the shards (*frammenti*) or disorganized fragments (*pezzi disorganizzati*) of splintered lives, willfully broken asunder by the concentration of capital and its inevitable results: the concentration of politics, culture and art. Pasolini defied national priorities, leapt into the Other both in body and spirit, erred from one zone of Otherness to another, linguistic zones and mythological lands from which he never returned. The triumph of the universal over the particular,

the sign over Discourse, of concept over reality gave proof to the terrible truth that a person's existential value has no bearing in a world where the "noxious" parts, the "unwholesome" singularities are excised from the Whole, the Whole (the dominant ideology) being superior to its parts:

"Bisogna bruciare per arrivare Consumati all'ultimo fuoco. (Poesia con Letterature: 1951-52).
"One needs to burn so as to arrive consumed at the ultimate fire" (author's translation).

Friedrich Nietzsche, too, practised a Philological-Poetics *modus vivendi*, never abandoning it as Stefan Zweig had so erroneously assumed. His transformation of Greek, Latin and German texts at university into a Philosophy of Life, exposed as such in his early works, then the release from university and the joyful errance in the lands of the Other: the Other-Troubadour, the Other-Dancer, the Other-Shadow, the Other-Psychologist, the Other-Nomad, the Other-Socrates and the Other-Zarathustra gave birth to his later poetic and philosophical creations. There is no rupture in these works, only a strong flowing creative and transformative continuum that a Philological-Poetics *modus vivendi* could have impressed upon his readers that could only have drawn its inspiration from the lands of Otherness. Unknown and dangerous lands indeed that Nietzsche traversed with such impassioned outbursts that the Other, gripping the ever-questing Nietzsche so tightly within, no other outlet seemed possible, his Self totally absorbed in the eternal blissful oblivion in those lands of the Other, out of which the Wanderer and his Shadow never returned. Perhaps like Socrates, he revelled in the drinking of hemlock because his will to transform pettiness into nobleness, niggardliness into magnanimity, parochialism into generosity was tastier than the bitter liquors of ideology (anti-semitism) that he substituted for his *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*:

*"Seit ich des Suchens müde ward, Erlernte ich das Finden.
Seit mir ein Wind hielt Widerpart.*

Segl' ich mit allen Winden" (Mein Glück: *The Gay Science*).

(My Happiness) "Since I grew tired of the chase/ And search, I learned to find/ And since the wind blows in my face,/I sail with every wind" (Translation).

As to J.R.R. Tolkien, his love of Anglo-Saxon, and more precisely, of *Beowulf*, his passion for the scriptural forms of Nordic alphabets (runes, oghams) led him to recreate the "lost worlds" of doughty dragons, marshy monsters, entombed treasures and human fellowship, where logos and reason have small roles to play. His world is one of images and vast vistas, of the signifier. Tolkien's philological passion for *Beowulf* engendered his recreation of a supposed earlier version of the Anglo-Saxon poem: *Sellic Spell*, a title which has been taken from verse 2,109 in *Beowulf*: "*sō □ ond sārlic/hwīlum syllic spell*", "*true and sorrowful/a wonderful tale*", which generously demonstrated the power of his *creative imagination*, one that navigated throughout the interstices of Oxford academia, Beowulfian readings, flights of fancies upon the golden wings of hoary tongues, dark legends, meady ballads. Like Pasolini, Tolkien sought out the particularities of dwindling, forlorn or extant dialects so as to breathe life into their archaic forms, to resonate their ancient accents. Tolkien's philological pursuits drew him ever closer, ever deeper to and into the twilight zones of Legend and History, of the living voice and the scriptural, of the Sense of the Past. As his son, Christopher has written:

“the philological detail exists to clarify the meaning and intention of that poet”
(Tolkien, 2014).

Namely, the poet of *Beowulf*! For Tolkien, *Beowulf* is the vision that ushers one into a History interlude with the marvellous, the wondrous, and the vast horizons of Imagination:

“The whole thing (Beowulf) is sombre, tragic, sinister, and curiously real. The “treasure” is not just some lucky wealth that will enable the finder to have a good time or marry the princess. It is laden with history, leading back into the dark heathen ages beyond the memory of song, but not beyond the reach of imagination” (Tolkien, 2014).

Indeed, these three adventurers of languages are a cheerful trio, whose laughter rings forth because behind each word lies a love of Humanity, of Life: *Hwæt!* “Listen” to the first word of the Beowulfian poem.

*“Grendel came forth in the dead of night; the moon in his eyes shone glassy bright, as over the moors he strode in might, until he came to Heorot.
Dark lay the dale, the windows shone, by the wall he lurked and listened long,
and he cursed their laughter and cursed their song and the twanging harps of Heorot”*
(*The Lay of Beowulf*, J.R.R. Tolkien: stanza 1, page 417).

The cheerful, dancing Nietzsche, the flamboyant, impetuous Pasolini, the joyous, out-going Tolkien experimented an Art of living by their questing, by their melding Philology and Poetics. There is no doubt that they achieved their Quests so splendidly...

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