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A story of two Shores: Transnational Memory and Ottoman Legacy in Modern Greek Novels

Abstract: The article focuses on the representations of the Ottoman imperial legacy, characterised by both intense contact and conflict, in Modern Greek novels. It examines the questions of memory, identity and otherness in Dido Sotiriou's biographical novel *Farewell Anatolia* and Soloup's graphic novel *Aivali.* Different levels of memory are confronted in literary and hybrid texts pertaining to the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire between the end of the First World War and the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923).

Introduction

The Mediterranean has a long history of intense contacts, conflicts and cross-cultural exchanges as a result of "profound and sustained ethno-religious diversity" and political-economic competition from late Antiquity into the early modern times (Catlos 2014, 375). With three quarters of the Mediterranean coastline under its control at its apogee (Greene 2014, 92), the Ottoman Empire was a diverse, multi-ethnic Mediterranean empire, stretching along the coasts of modern-day Albania, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Cyprus, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria. Despite its decline from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Empire remained until its demise in 1922, an important power in the Eastern Mediterranean where both its capital, Istanbul, and the major trading hub of Smyrna/Izmir were located. In the late Ottoman period, a culture of intense collaboration developed, "[accommodating] differences between cultural, ethnic, or religious communities that happened to occupy the same street, neighbourhood, village, or rural environ" (Doumanis 2013, 1), termed *intercommunality* by the historian N. Doumanis. Following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the newly formed or expanded nations would often adopt radical and violent strategies, aiming at homogenizing the populations to fit the national model of one people, one territory, one religion, one language and one culture (Eriksen 2002, 108). These strategies have had a major impact on the politics of memory, fostering acute competitiveness and tension, and on the salience of intergenerational traumatic memory associated with exile and massacres (Basset 2010, 35). The fragile identities that reflect the heterogeneity of populations have been countered with exclusionary na-

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110775136-004

tional narratives highlighting the common destiny of the nation and its homogeneous character (Crivello 2016, 180). Discrepancies between official narratives and (sub)narratives from marginalized or traumatized groups have been breeding antagonism both on a national and on a regional level (Crivello 2010, 14–15).

In this article we will delve into the representations of different levels and types of memories pertaining to the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire in two Modern Greek novels (one traditional and one hybrid). Our analysis will explore the relationship between narrative, genre, time and memory. The elements that suggest connectivity (such as language, intertextuality and intermediality) both on a local scale (such as the Greek and Turkish shores of the Aegean Sea where the narratives take place) and on the scale of the Mediterranean, will also be studied.

1 Genres, forms and temporalities

Dido Sotiriou's *Farewell Anatolia*[1] was first published in Greek in 1962 and has been translated in many languages. The story is set in early twentieth-century Smyrna (Izmir) and in the village of Kirkintzés (Şirince in Turkish). It describes an ethno-religiously diverse society sharing customs and languages under a common ruler in a form of symbiosis that is both "antagonistic" and "collaborative" (Boyadjian 2018, 9). WWI, the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922 and the Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey stipulated by the Treaty of Lausanne, brought an end to the imperial symbiosis. A journalist and political activist born in Aydın in 1909, Sotiriou was inspired from the personal account of a Turkish-speaking Anatolian Greek refugee who witnessed the events. Soloup, whose real name is Antònis Nikolòpoulos, is a graphic novelist and political scientist born in 1966 in Athens, Greece. His 2014 graphic novel *Aivali* translated in English as well as in French and in Turkish[2], deals with the consequences of the Exchange of Populations in 1923. Although both works are comparable from a thematic viewpoint,

1 The title of the novel in Greek is *Ματωμένα Χώματα [Bloodied Earth]*.

2 In Turkish, the original title was maintained: *Aivali*, as the name of the city is pronounced in Greek (Greek name of the ancient town: Kydonìes [City of Quinces]) and not *Ayvalık* as in Turkish, even though the Turkish name *Ayvalık* appears in the qualifying subtitle *Dört Yazar, Üç Kuşak, İki Yaka, Bir Ayvalık [Four writers, Three generations, Two shores, One Ayvalık*]. The graphic novel was published in 2016 by the independent publisher founded by members of the Greek community (Rum) of Istanbul Istos (Istos yayın), specializing in Greek, Turkish and bilingual publications that pertain to the history and culture of the Greek and Armenian communities of Turkey and to the history and life of the region, predating the foundation of the Turkish state.

their significant differences in genre, perspective and narrative techniques, influenced by genealogical differences and by the general socio-political context, cast light on the development, instrumentalization and use of narratives of the past.

Perceived as the paradigm of modernity and cultural advancement of the West, the novel gradually replaced most of the traditional narrative forms and genres in the Eastern Mediterranean, facilitating a shift towards national literatures (Kinoshita 2014, 324). Sophisticated character analysis and detailed descriptions not only of places and people but also of "a whole era in terms that rival the effects of history" (Monroe 1965, 6) captivate and engage a mass audience (Pasco 2004, 382) and may trigger a deep emotional response in readers through the representation and the interpretation of the past, especially in the case of novels that deal with historical events. The autobiographical and historical novel was quickly favoured by Greek novelists in the 1930s, allowing them to cultivate the national myth surrounding the rise and fall of Hellenism in Asia Minor (Beaton 1996, 180).

The relationship between autobiographical and historical fiction and memory in Sotiriou's *Farewell Anatolia* bears the seal of the reinvented Greek identity as an "equilibrium between modernity and tradition, Europeanness and Greekness" (Tziovas 2011, 311). It reflects the fruitful period of intense aesthetic and social insightfulness, inaugurated by writers in the thirties, but is also marked by the political engagements of the post-war generation (Moullas 2002, 340–341), associated with the rise of Communism in Greece, WWII and the trauma of Civil War. *Farewell Anatolia* is a biographical novel, based on the real story of the narrator, Manolis Axiotis, reimagined through the eyes of the writer, Dido Sotiriou, but also presumably backed up by other sources such as articles, history books, and archives which support the author's claims to historicity[3]. A comparison of Sotiriou's novel with the narrator's autobiographies[4] reveals discrepancies that couldn't be solely attributed to fictionalization for the sake of the development and strengthening of the plot. *Farewell Anatolia* draws its strength from the "close but unaffirmed

3 "In order to write Farewell Anatolia, I read dozens of history books, both Greek and foreign, I researched in archives, newspapers." [Για να γράψω τα Ματωμένα Χώματα διάβασα δεκάδες ιστορικά βιβλία, ελληνικά και ξένα, ανασκάλεψα αρχεία, εφημερίδες]. Raftopoulos, Dimitris. "Μια συζήτηση με τη Διδώ Σωτηρίου". *Επιθεώρηση Τέχνης*, 16.92 (1962): 156.

4 Manolis Axiotis, the protagonist-narrator of *Farewell Anatolia*, published two different autobiographies following the tremendous success of Sotiriou's novel: *Bertheméno Kouvari* [Entangled] (1965) and *Enoména Valkània* [United Balkans] (1976) edited in one volume in 2016 by a Greek editor (Ekdoseis Balta). The motivation behind these publications is unclear; however, the often-opposing viewpoints adopted by Axiotis and Sotiriou indicate that Axiotis might have been dissatisfied with Sotiriou's deviations from his narrative.

identification" (Blowers 2000, 105) between autobiographical or biographical novels and their factual counterparts (biographies and autobiographies). Statements made in the paratext of Sotiriou's novel concerning the reliability of the narrator and the writer's own commitment to the truth and objectiveness as a journalist[5], anchor the narrative to historical facts and real-life events. They allow for the blurring of limits between fact and fiction and for factual readings and interpretations, which in turn reinforce the narrative's capacity to alter the ways that the past is remembered.

Farewell Anatolia was published in 1962 at a time when Greece was profoundly devastated by the Civil War, the Pogrom of the Greek community of Istanbul in 1955 and by the crisis in Cyprus which had just started to revive tensions between Turkey and Greece (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010, 131). During the fifties and the early sixties, the Right would largely monopolize political power and promote conservative ideas, especially during the mandate of Field Marshall Alexandros Papagos (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010, 127). Given the political climate, Sotiriou took into consideration the moral, political and social implications of her time and produced an overall more polished version of the facts stated by Axiotis. Although she remained loyal to her egalitarian and humanitarian vision that allowed her to promote anti-imperialism, blaming Western politics instead of the Turkish people for the uprooting of the Greeks, she didn't completely dismantle the official narrative that depicts the Turks as perpetrators and the Greeks as victims. The downplaying of the protagonist's relationship with a Turkish girl and the overemphasizing of a minor Greek female character are such examples of deviations from Axiotis's narrative that confirm Turkish stereotypes. Although Axiotis presents his relationship with the Turkish girl as very committed and significant and regrets abandoning her while pregnant, in *Farewell Anatolia* the relationship is depicted as purely sexual, with the Turkish girl compelling Axiotis to sin. The antithesis between the purity of the Greek girl that Axiotis intends to marry, and the Turkish girl's sinfulness, serves as a moral dilemma that the protagonist must face and as a plot device that enhances the story, while confirming the Manichean national narrative that opposes the immorality of the Turk to the purity of the Greek.

On the other hand, Soloup's storytelling is more nuanced and complex both in terms of the different media that are mobilized to tell the story (or rather *stories*), but also in terms of the structure of the story itself. The graphic novel, whose literary merits have been disputed by more traditional categorizations of narratives and fiction, has recently caught the attention of literary scholars. The advent of cul-

5 Sotiriou had worked as a journalist for decades before she published her first book of prose *The Dead Await*, in 1959.

tural studies was followed by a shift of comparatism towards interart and intermedia comparison: the idea of language or text is no longer restricted to verbal or linguistic elements but subordinated to the idea of medium (Baetens and Martínez 2015). The graphic novel's challenging ways of conveying spatiality and temporality combines text and image in a non-synchronous manner, producing a non-inear narrative which compels the readers to go back-and-forth in search of meaning and to fully engage themselves in the interpretation of the narrative, "fostering a kind of interpretative intimacy" (Chute 2008, 460). In the case of non-fiction works such as *Aivali*, the ability of the visual and verbal narrative to "spatially juxtapose (and overlay) past and present and future moments on the page" (Chute 2008, 453) but also to provide "double-coded narratives and semantics" (Chute 2008, 459) by juxtaposing what is said verbally and what is depicted visually, allows for an unconventional experience of time and space, challenging the reader's unilateral perspective of historical events. Due to the ability of the medium to constantly impose or suggest movement, readers are subject to different perspectives as they shift between texts, pages and frames and move through time and space.

Benefiting from the medium's ability, *Aivali* invites readers to examine solid, stable, essentialist visions of identity, memory and space and most precisely the nationalist narrative opposing Greeks and Turks, as well as to grasp the complex role of the Aegean Sea and its archipelago, which forms both a boundary between the two countries and the two peoples but also a transitional space that allows for travelling and communication. Juxtaposing the past to the present, the narrative swarms with images and texts of the crossing of the Aegean by Cretan-Turkish and Ottoman Greek characters in the early twentieth century, reflecting the intense mobility in the area but also the uprooting resulting from the exchange of populations. It also depicts the effects of history on the present, as the author crosses the Aegean to discover his origins, travelling back and forth from the Turkish coast to the island of Lesvos. Soloup stresses the importance of Lesvos as a foothold for the exploration of the "other side" but also as *lieu de mémoire*[6] of the expulsion of the Ottoman Greeks from Asia Minor. He highlights the island's memorial heritage by explaining that the two opposing shores of the Aegean (Lesvos and Ayvalık) are forever connected in the collective memory, as the coastal town in Lesvos where the refugees settled after their expulsion was named after the ancient Greek name of Ayvalık.

6 A *lieu de mémoire* is defined by Pierre Nora as "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community." Nora, Pierre. "Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire". *Representations*, 26 (1989): 7–24.

The interaction between text and image allows for very descriptive and nuanced representations of the Aegean as a dividing and connecting sea. Mehmet, the descendant of Turkish-Cretan refugees and the writer, a descendant of Greek refugees from Çeşme, discuss cordially about patriotism from each one's national perspective. Their cordiality and mutual identification with a long-lost pre-national past when they used to experience *intercommunality*, as opposed to their more recent, mutually exclusionary national narratives that force them to consider each other as enemies, are visually and verbally articulated by the two characters engaging in witty repartee while facing one another, one at the port of Nées Kydonies in Lesvos and the other at the port of Ayvalık (Ancient Kydonies), separated by the Aegean Sea:

> Και τώρα κοιτάμε τη Μικρά Ασία και λέμε 'Τι γυρεύουν οι Τουρκαλάδες στα λιμάνια μας'. Κι εμείς 'Είντα γυρεύουνε στο κάτω-κάτω οι Γιουνάνηδες από την Anatolou μας' [And now we are looking at Asia Minor and say: 'What are those *Turkalades*[7] doing at our ports'. And we say, 'After all, what are those *Yunanides* looking for in our Anadolu?"] (Soloup 2014, 366)

2 Intertextuality and intermediality

The differences in genre and temporalities observed in the works studied above mirror, to a certain extent, the relationship of each text or medium with other texts or media, defined as intertextuality and intermediality. Both Sotiriou's and Soloup's works allude to other texts (or media) and bear witness to the circulation, "absorption and transformation" (Kristeva 1969, 85) of texts from both sides of the Aegean and beyond. However, the nature of these relations varies from one text to another but also within the same text.

Sotiriou's representations of Anatolia reveal the writer's devotion to the myth of Asia Minor, introduced by the first generation of Anatolian Greek writers[8], and

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7 Τουρκαλάδες/ Γιουνάνηδες [Turkalades/Yunanides]: 'Turkalades' is a pejorative term for 'Turks' in Greek. 'Yunanides' is a transcription in Greek of the national epithet 'Yunan/Yunanlar' ('Ionian(s)', which acquired the meaning of 'inhabitants of Greece, Greeks' in Turkish). Although inoffensive in Turkish precisely because it is the Turkish equivalent of the term 'Greek', the term 'Yunan/Yunanides' could be perceived as offensive by Greeks when used untranslated in Greek (instead of Greeks – Έλληνες); more so in the context of the graphic novel where the two characters are presented in opposition.

8 A group of writers (Fotis Kontoglou, Ilias Venezis, Stratis Myrivilis, Stratis Doukas) hailing from Asia Minor, and forming the "Aeolian School" which was very active from the late twenties to the sixties, contributed to the shaping of modern national myths pertaining to the expulsion of Anatolian Greeks from Asia Minor (Beaton 1996, 180).

to its expansion. Her descriptions of Anatolia are divided between exoticism "a desired elsewhere, which is nostalgically imagined as [...] temporally remote" (Berghahn 2019, 36) and cosmopolitanism, cultivating nostalgia for the Ottoman *Belle Époque*, the period of coexistence preceding World War I, during which the Christian minorities dominated Ottoman social life (Georgelin 2002). Sotiriou's gaze reflects the strong attachment of Greeks to Asia Minor, but also their desire to dissociate collectively from the East, revealing the ambivalence of a country that was seeking to cement its place in the West (Koliopoulos and Veremis 98) while still cultivating emotional idealism for the East following the military defeat in Asia Minor. Linguistic variation (see infra: *Language and Connectivity*) and intertextual references that underline the circulation of texts and myths from the East to the West contribute to forging Sotiriou's narrative of a charming, multi-ethnic but also Christian-dominated, turn-of-the-century Ottoman Empire.

The occasional appearance of frame stories highlights the narrative's nostalgic exoticism. A frame story involving the singer with the most exquisite voice in the East named Ogdontakis, who is framed by a heartbroken Muslim lady and has to sing all day and all night to escape execution, draws a parallel with Shahrazad's storytelling talent that saved her from death in *One Thousand and One Nights.* By introducing the pattern of fate and destiny inside a frame story, Sotiriou pays homage to the Arab art of storytelling and to the intermingling of different literary traditions of the once "Mediterranean Empire" (Greene 2014, 91). This frame story introduces an intermedial and intercultural reference, as the lyrics from the song that saved Ogdontakis's life, *Aman Memo*, are quoted by Axiotis: "Aman Memo, [ufak Memo], şeker Memo, sevdalı Memo" (Sotiriou 2008, 61). This song is a typical example of intense contacts between different ethno-religious groups in the Ottoman Empire and of the cultural transfers that made Ottoman music famous on both sides of the Aegean Sea and abroad, following the transatlantic migration of Ottoman Christians. *Aman Memo* features in a collection of Greek popular music introduced in Greece by refugees from Asia Minor[9]. The Turkish-Greek version of the song included in this collection was recorded by the Smyrniot Greek Kostas Nouros and the Imbriot Stelios Berberis. Another recording of this song by the Armenian Minas Effendi and The Oriental Orchestra was available in the American catalogue of Columbia Records as "Turkish music" in the 1920s (Graziosi 2018, 152). As is the case with many popular rhythms circulating in Anatolia and the Middle East, the exact origin of *Aman Memo* is uncertain. It is casually labelled as a Smyrniot Greek, Armenian, Turkish folk or Ottoman song (Trag-

9 The collection bears the title: *Rebetika: A journey through popular Greek Urban Songs Period A: (1850–1960).*

aki 2007, 68; Graziosi 2018, 151). The rhythm of the song, *curcuna,* has Eastern Anatolian and Northern Iraqi origins but was incorporated in Ottoman music in the nineteenth century (Ekinci 2017, 57).

Aivali is divided in three parts, whose titles are based on types of music or musical compositions. The story begins with a part named *Zeybekiko* that forms the backbone of the story, exposing the motivations behind the work and symbolizing the hybrid identity of the author who is divided between the inherited memory of Anatolia and his love for his birthplace. Considered nowadays as one of the national dances of Greece, Zeybekiko is in fact part of Ottoman café music traditions (Pennanen 2004, 10). The author symbolically reflects on common cultural traditions that were subsequently appropriated by different countries of the Balkans (Pennanen 2004, 1) and whose origins are still a cause of dispute. The third part represents the "voices" of the exchange and is named after the *Fugue,* a type of musical composition alluding both to the variety of voices that helped shape the collective memory of the Exchange and to the notion of "fleeing" (*fugere* in Latin), thus to the exchange itself.

The greatest part of the book consists of adaptations of well-known Greek novels but also some unknown, such as Ahmet Yorulmaz's *Savaşın Çocukları* [*Children of War*]. Intermediality puts different voices of the exchange into dialogue, such as the ones that helped shape the national narrative and those that are less known in Greece or that represent the perspective of the Other, such as Yorulmaz's, in order to contest the nationalist exclusionary narrative. Intermediality in Soloup's work also provides us with insight about the effect of literature on our ways of connecting with the past and interacting with space. Soloup's juxtaposition of adaptations from different national literary backgrounds suggests a multidirectional and transnational perspective: Gazing back at the imperial configurations of identity, *Aivali* openly questions the essentialism of polished, unified and Manichean narratives in a post-imperial context. Soloup's cross-referencing of different literary works of Turkish and Greek literature marks a vaster transnational approach that takes into consideration the complex web of interactions and constant movement in the Aegean Sea. It also reintroduces the Ottoman cultural heritage as a category of analysis in literature and in graphics novels, corresponding to "a project of re-territorialization" (Kinoshita 2014, 314), a shift from national literatures to transnational literatures and narratives.

Soloup's intermediality underlines the third generation's dependence on imagination, assemblage and collage of fragments of stories not only transmitted through generations (post-memory, see infra) but also "borrowed" or experienced through the media and scattered in different sites of remembrance in order to grasp the past. Soloup uses graphics and other media such as photography (of the refugees, of how the places looked like in the past) and music to conceptualize

his own role as a third-generation descendant of the exchanged populations: to "recover what [he] can and gaps of an "unremembered past" (Bayer 2010, 125) that cannot be represented but through a reimagined version of the past, a fabricated image, i. e., a reproduction of reality entirely created by man, in order to replace the emptiness. Painting and graphics are opposed to photography because photography's objectivity, the reproduction of the originating object through a non-living agent (the lens, *objectif* in French), allows only for a limited number of misrepresentations of reality (Bazin and Gray 1960, 7). The intervention of painting and graphics can counterbalance the authoritative, archival aspect of "having-been-there" (Barthes 1977, 44) of photography for third-generation writers by insinuating that what was once there or might have been there, has been forgotten and is thus impossible to authenticate or confirm. Soloup's intermediality aims at alternative ways of remembering that focus less on the power of witnessing or on the archive as proof or the historicity of the event and more on ethical ways to preserve the heritage of the exchange and reconcile with the past.

In the last part of the book, Soloup features as the main character of the narrative alongside the Anatolian Greek writer Fotis Kontoglou. Soloup doesn't simply adapt Kontoglou's short story in the graphic novel form but is depicted as the reader of Kontoglou's story. As a character in his own graphic novel, Soloup is shown using Kontoglou's narrative as a compass to discover the history of the place he is visiting, authenticating the narrative while visiting and experiencing the place described in the short story. He is interacting with the text and with the writer, who is seen replying to his questions while narrating the story. By staging a dialogue between the writer and himself, Soloup conveys the intimacy and complicity developed between Soloup as a reader and as an artist and Kontoglou as a writer. *Aivali* is thus no longer limited to intertextual references but adopts a metaliterary approach, providing the readers with insight and transparency about the author's motivations and about the creative process behind *Aivali.*

3 Ethics of memory

Although an ethical commitment to the preservation of memory is explicit in both works, the meaning attached to it differs in both cases. The first part of Sotiriou's book focuses on the marginalized memory of the common past shared by Turks and Rums[10], preceding Turkey's entry in WWI and the deployment of Western po-

10 Rum/Romios (Ρωμιός) from medieval Greek Ρωμαῖος – Roman: until the Fall of Constantinople, an inhabitant of the Eastern Roman Empire. During Ottoman rule the term described an Orthodox

litical interests in the region that led to growing enmity between the two ethno-religious groups. The narrator's long-term friendship with a Turkish boy and the mutual respect and friendship between Rums and Turks are described. Breaking bread together, exchanging goods, giving and receiving hospitality were parts of everyday life in Anatolia regardless of people's origins. Peaceful coexistence and cases of religious syncretism are also mentioned, although the references to the latter often betray feelings of superiority towards Islam and the Turks, who are depicted as secretly endorsing some Christian traditions such as praying to Christian saints for better health, acknowledging their effectiveness.

When Manolis Axiotis crosses paths with deported or impoverished Armenians, Sotiriou's narrative shifts from a unique perspective of the events and considers other traumatic memories, namely the memory of the Armenian genocide, reminding the reader once again that the Ottoman Empire was a multi-ethnic society and that other communities also suffered violence during WWI. However, violence towards Turks is hardly ever mentioned or is counterbalanced by violence towards Greeks. For instance, in the ending of the novel Axiotis is remorseful for previously killing a Turkish guerrilla fighter but considers that his crime pales in comparison to the carnage of his people. Sotiriou's historical and biographical approach and her choice of the Greek witness as the narrator who only gives an account of the past, undermine the novel's ability to adopt a more lucid and detached approach to the events, unlike the following generations of writers and artists. Although her book aims at reconciliation between the Turkish and the Greek people[11] by highlighting their common imperial heritage and by accusing those responsible for the tragedy –who according to her, are not Turks but Western imperialists– it doesn't quite venture to the conflictual memory of the Other, the Turk.

Conversely, Soloup's narrative exemplifies the metabolization of the experience through time and under the effect of post-memory defined as "the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to – the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up". (Hirsch 2012, 5). Photography is an essential aspect of post-memory, functioning as a relic, as an archive of the past for the second generation that relies on oral narratives and pictures to remember the past (Hirsch 2012, 36–40). Photographs of people and places are indeed present in Soloup's work but mixed with other media and supported by the

Christian of the Empire. Nowadays a Rum is either a member of the Greek Orthodox minority of Turkey or a descendant of the Orthodox Christian Ottoman citizens that left their homeland during or after WWI.

11 Sotiriou received the Abdi İpekçi Peace and Friendship Prize in 1983.

imaginative and creative power of graphics. The reason for this choice is obvious, as a century has elapsed since the events and many of the documents, pictures and even the stories have been lost in time. Next to an array of black-and-white, fading pictures of refugees, Soloup, the third-generation survivor describes: [φωνές που] με τον καιρό λησμονιούνται, χάνονται και αυτές. Συναντιούνται μ 'εκείνες που δεν μαθεύτηκαν ποτέ [voices that become forgotten with time and also vanish. They join the ones that were never heard.] (Soloup 2014, 37).

Soloup's approach to memory is multileveled, multidirectional and transnational, allowing for several viewpoints to emerge through a narrative that traces multiple trajectories (both spatial and memorial) in the Eastern Mediterranean and associates different fragments of stories spanning over three generations of survivors. In an online radio programme, Soloup defended his approach to the subject through his attachment to the Ottoman past and the communality of trauma as an outcome of intense contact and conflict:

> I am Greek, I have this culture. [...] At the same time ... we are Rum, *Romios*, and we are feeling that Anatolia, Asia Minor is another place for our souls, for our origins. [...] We ordinary people from two sides, the Greeks and the Turks, we have the same stories [...] In a word, we are the victims. We have the same stories and the same feelings about the war and the trauma. (Lepeska 2019)

Images of water and travelling from one shore to another symbolize the double identity of the descendants of the exchanged populations and the flow of stories and memories between the two shores of the Aegean. The images of water and travelling reveal how the memory of the "xerizomòs" has been transplanted on both lands: the Cretan-Turkish memory transplanted in Aivali and the Greek memory of Aivali transplanted in Greece. The phrase "two shores" in the subtitle of the book indicates duality and reciprocity which is in turn reflected in images and narratives of travelling, describing the flow of memories across cultures, facilitated by the sea. The Aegean Sea is the vector of this flowing memory, as both countries share the memory of the exchange of populations, whose "inherent transcultural nature" transcends the national memory culture. (Erll 2017).

The transcultural nature of memory and identity is depicted through situations such as the dialog between Mehmet and Soloup. The flowing, transnational memory of imperial coexistence and the violent rupture caused by the exchange, clash with the nationalist discourse of linear and unitary memory. Marginalized narratives as remnants of the pre-national memory and identity persist to this day, troubling and destabilizing the heirs of the exchange but also allowing them to establish connections with one another and with their lost homelands. During a discussion pertaining to the duty of every people to defend their country, Mehmet claims that:

> Ο καθείς αγαπά την πατρίδα του και τον τόπο των παππούδω του. Σε μας μόνο, στσοι μπάσταρδους τση Λοζάνης, ετούτηνα η αγάπη είναι πιο μπερδεμένη. [We all love our countries and the lands of our grandfathers. But for us, the bastards of Lausanne, this love is more complicated.] (Soloup 2014, 390)

The choice of the word "bastards" is in contrast with what was previously discussed by the two characters and with their visual symbolisms in the previous pages: as the two characters ponder about their duty to defend their countries they are visually represented as faceless twin figures in opaque black and white against a background of opaque white and black respectively, mirroring and at the same time confronting each other and brandishing knives. This representation, in par with the definition of a solid and uniform memory culture of the events and the places calibrated by the national perspective, is opposed to the shared past of the Anatolian peoples, represented as figures mirroring each other. As Soloup points out, the Turks still distinguish between Greeks and Rums:

> Για τους Τούρκους 'Τιουνάν' είναι οι Έλληνες απέναντι, που ήρθαν το 1919 για να χαλάσουν τη χώρα. Ενώ 'Ρουμ', οι Ρωμιοί ήταν οι γείτονές τους. Ίδιες οι καταιγίδες, ίδιο το ψωμί. [For the Turks, *Yunan* are the Greeks on the other side, that came in 1919 to destroy the country. Whereas *Rum*, Romioì, were their neighbours. Same troubles, same bread.] (Soloup 2014, 356)

Centuries of coexistence in a vast empire inhabited by different ethnoreligious groups and the experience of displacement and settlement in a different country have also forged what Astrid Erll defines as "mnemonic relationality" and "travelling memory" (Erll, 2017). As the exchanged people of Lausanne are divided between the country and the social context that they left behind and the new country, so is their memory. Soloup's work, with its persistent references to "bastard" identities, the representation of movement, border-crossing and travelling across the Aegean Sea and the constant mixing and collaging of different stories and media (photography, drawing, literature) reveals that the memory of the exchange of populations transcends the barriers of the nation; it is transnational and transcultural, meaning that it is made up of complex networks of relations, spaces and cultural references that mirror continuous human and cultural interactions and the complexity of the hybrid identities in question.

The transcultural nature of memory also becomes apparent in the excerpt of Yorulmaz's novel adapted by Soloup. The narrator, a Turkish-Cretan man who goes by the hypocorism of Hassanakis, a portmanteau of the Muslim name Hassan and

the Greek suffix *-akis*[12] meaning "little", reveals the tragic irony behind the history of the Cretan village of Kandanos, stating that many Cretan-Turks died during the siege of the village by Cretan-Greek revolutionaries in 1897, while only forty-four years later its Greek inhabitants were massacred by the Nazis. The memory of national-socialism which affected all of Europe and beyond, the Cretan-Turkish memory and the Greek memory meet, or are rather superimposed, in this place which acts as a palimpsest, marked by the overlapping of different and conflictual memories "resulting in a complex web of historical markers that point to [its] continuing heterogeneous life" (Huyssen 2003, 81). Yorulmaz's juxtaposition of memories that could be qualified as *multidirectional,* meaning that they are subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and comparison (Rothberg 2009, 3), acts as proof of human and cultural interactions that take place in, but also largely surpass the Eastern Mediterranean, aiming at bringing different memories and experiences into a productive dialogue that allows for a better understanding of these events and for the development of a new sense of solidarity (Rothberg 2009, 5). Soloup's ethical approach to memory and his multidirectional approach, aiming at developing a sense of solidarity but also educating people against violence and discrimination, compels him to delve into the more recent past (reports of human rights violations in detention camps in Guantanamo) but also into the Holocaust (concentration camps) to draw comparisons and examples of the consequences of forgetting and repeating the wrong deeds of the past.

4 Language and connectivity

Language is perhaps one aspect of Sotiriou's novel where the manifestation of connectivity seems more obvious and conspicuously deliberate. Sotiriou was born in Aydın but moved to Smyrna with her family as a child. Travellers' accounts from the late Ottoman period confirm the interpenetration of ethnic groups and languages even in smaller cities like Aydın, which was less cosmopolitan and more attached to Ottoman social habits (Georgelin 2005, 113). In Smyrna, several languages were spoken simultaneously by the different ethnoreligious groups that inhabited the city since ancient times, producing the Smyrna dialect which reflected linguistic coexistence and hybridity. The need for a common language for the development of commerce in the Mediterranean, on which Smyrna excelled as a major hub of trade routes from Anatolia, created the *lingua franca,* a "pidginized

12 The suffix *-akis* is also a typical ending of Greek Cretan family names. Thus, the ending -akis conveys both an affectionate manner to refer to Hassan in Greek but also his Cretan identity.

Romance, with the occasional word lifted from Arabic, Turkish or Greek" (Mallette 2014, 341), which was also spoken in Smyrna. The city's Western Christian population, the Levantines, contributed greatly to the Smyrna dialect, as well as the merchants and diplomats from Italy, Spain and France but also from Britain. The dialect was influenced greatly from Turkish, but also from several Greek dialects, local or not, as Greeks from the mainland and from the islands migrated or traded in Asia Minor (Tzitzilis 2000, 20).

Farewell Anatolia bears the traces of this continuous interpenetration of languages. Sotiriou uses a very vivid and expressive demotic Greek language, enriched with many elements from the Greek dialect of Smyrna. This linguistic variant adds to the exoticist character of the text but also adds to the verisimilitude of the narrative. However, the narrator was a Turkish-speaking Rum farmer with very limited access to education. His use of the Greek language might have been satisfactory but couldn't possibly correspond to the discreetly sophisticated dialectal variant of Greek used by Sotiriou. It would be thoroughly justified to say that the language of *Farewell Anatolia*, which is an essential aspect of the charm of the novel, stems from creative reconstruction of a peasant's idiolect and the writer's own linguistic experience as a Rum hailing from the bourgeoisie of Smyrna. The Greek readers are submerged in the cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism of Smyrna through a form of Greek that is comprehensive to the readers but at the same time slightly unfamiliar, containing a multitude of words ("*βεγγέρα /veghera (party), "τσαρσί /çarşı (market)," "ρεσπέρης /rençper (farmer)," "κάντια* /candy" *"τσιτσιμπίρια* /ginger beer" to cite just a few), expressions and constructions highly representative of the dialects spoken in and around Smyrna.

Soloup's dynamic patchwork of narratives from both sides of the Aegean contains solid proof of linguistic interpenetration and connectivity. As the graphic novel includes several literary "voices" from the region, pronounced language connectivity can be easily observed. Aside from a few exceptions, most of Soloup's own narrative is written in standard Modern Greek which is – naturally – also influenced by other languages of the Mediterranean and beyond. The literary adaptations in *Aivali* contain original text from Greek writers such as Ilias Venezis and Fotis Kontoglou, both native Anatolian Greeks who integrated elements of Asia Minor dialects in their literature as a way to preserve the memory of the languages spoken on the Anatolian coasts before 1923. In their texts, Turkish loans such as *ρουμάνι (orman)*, *μπαξέδες (bahçe)*, *γιαταγάνι (yatağan)*, *ταμπάκης (tabak)* and *γιάγουμα (yağma)*, appear alongside vocabulary from Romance languages such as: *ονόρε (onore)*, *κοντραμπατζής (contrebandier)* and *αριβάρω (arrivare).* The presence of Ancient Greek and Medieval Greek vocabulary, the later alluding to the strong Byzantine influence in the dialect, compose the rich fabric of the dialects of Asia Minor. However, aside from Asia Minor dialects, the text showcases the his-

tory of the Cretan dialect. Soloup begins and ends his book with references to Crete: firstly, alluding to his search for belonging in Crete, secondly with the adaptation of Cretan-Turk's Yorulmaz's novel and lastly when he meets a third-generation Cretan-Turk while searching for traces of Greek presence in Cunda, Turkey. References to the practice of the Cretan idiom reinforce the salience of movement and connectivity in the Mediterranean region, literature and memory. The Venetian and Ottoman heritage of Crete and its insularity "derived both by interconnectivity and isolation" (Kouremenos 2018, 1) are manifest in the language which contains several elements from Italian and Turkish but also managed to preserve an impressive Ancient and Medieval Greek vocabulary. Coexistence of Greek Orthodox and Muslim populations in Crete for several centuries, combined with insularity created the factors for the development of a strong Cretan identity reflected on the exclusive use of the Cretan dialect, regardless of the religion of Cretans. When Cretan-Turks left Crete during the exchange of populations, they continued to practise their language on the other side of the Aegean, creating language enclaves (Ioannidou et al 2019). This phenomenon is depicted in *Aivali* through the third-generation Cretan-Turk Mehmet who inherited the language as a quintessential element of his Cretan identity, that he naturally uses to communicate with Soloup. Soloup maintained the original language throughout the dialogue in order to bring out this specificity that draws them closer together, as they are both heirs to an imperial past when connectivity and coexistence were the rule.

5 Conclusion

Both works refer to the Ottoman society and configuration of identity, revealing cultural encounters and cultural transfers in the Mediterranean and beyond, as well as strong cultural bonds between peoples that traded and lived in the Ottoman Empire. However, the discrepancies in the representation of the memory of coexistence and connectivity observed, can be attributed to different choices in terms of genre, medium and storytelling techniques and to generational differences between the writers, which are essential for the understanding of the approaches adopted. Sotiriou's adaptation of a single eyewitness's account in the form of a novel contributes to the static representation of the Other, whereas memory representation accommodates to the national myth of the Christian dominance in Asia Minor, further nourishing it. Soloup's work on the other hand proves that the auspicious political climate combined with the elapse of time can have a significant effect on the representation of memory. Narratives that variate in viewpoint and provide the Other with agency, combined with the plasticity of the medium and its capacity to represent the plurality of experiences, allows for a more ethical

approach to memory, aiming at mutual recognition of cultural affiliations and reconciliation in the present. In Soloup's work the Ottoman legacy and memory is liberated from the shackles and torments of exclusive national narratives in order to build bridges between the affected communities and beyond the confines of the Aegean.

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