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LEGISLATING IN MODERN GREEK
FOR RESIDENTS OF WALLACHIA:
ATHANASSIOS CHRISTOPOULOS AND THE LANGUAGE
OF KARATZAS'S *NOMOTHESIA* (1817/8)*

When Athanassios Christopoulos (1772-1849) left his native town of Castoria in northern Greece and moved to the area of the then Romanian principalities along with his family around the end of 1770s, he could not imagine that he was to become a highly regarded scholarly figure and a respected man of law in the areas of Moldavia and Wallachia for a number of years. Christopoulos was first educated at the Principal Academy, Bucharest, and then studied Medicine and Law as well as other sciences at the Universities of Buda and Padova. As a typical figure of the Enlightenment, he was competent in many literary and scientific fields. As soon as he returned to the principalities, he became a tutor of Alexandros Mourouzis's sons and a member of the courts in Iasi, Moldavia, at the same time writing a play and his aeolodoric grammar (1805), in order to prove that his grammatical theories could apply to theatre. When prince Mourouzis went to Constantinople, Christopoulos followed him; there he had the opportunity to study various writers in depth and to compose his lyric poems, which were published in 1811 in Vienna, under the title *Lyrica*. Once more, Christopoulos tried to show that his linguistic ideas, as expressed in his 1805 grammar, offered a solid basis for the writing of poetry in Greek¹. In this sense, Christo-

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1. See George Andreiomenos - Chrysoula Karantzi, "The function of the dialectal verbs in *Lyrica* of Athanassios Christopoulos", *Παγρασός*, vol. M' (1998), pp. 344-346.

poulos's arguments parallel those of Yianis Vilaras, who printed in 1814 his *Romeiki Glossa*, where his radical grammatical views were accompanied by a number of poems and other texts, to confirm the validity of his linguistic theory.

In the last months of 1812, Christopoulos went back to Wallachia, accompanying Ioannis Karatzas, the new prince of the area. Karatzas appointed him a judge in a court which adjudicated in cases between citizens of Wallachia and foreigners, while he invited the Macedonian scholar to participate in the principal council of the area. From then on, Christopoulos was to dedicate himself to legal and administrative matters of the then Romanian principalities, serving as a judge or a public servant under different princes.

The most important task that Christopoulos undertook during Karatzas's administration was the writing of a manual codifying the laws of Wallachia. This was because the judges and the lawyers of the area used to solve their cases by recourse to various Roman and Byzantine laws, which led them to different verdicts for the same type of transgressions. On October 2nd 1816, the prince ordered Athanasios Christopoulos and Nestor Krajevsku (along with Constantine and Ionitza Balatseanu) to compile a legal code for the residents of Wallachia, *περιλαμβάνοντος πλήρως άπάσας τας ύποθέσεις, τας άποφάσεις τόν λαόν, ώστε ούτε οί δικασται να συναντώσι δυσκολίας εις τας άποφάσεις αυτών, ούτε οί έχοντες τας ύποθέσεις να καταδυναστεύωνται εις την άπονομήν της δικαιοσύνης εξ αιτίας συσκοτισμού και έλλείψεως των νόμων*². Parts of Christopoulos's first codification were considered to be quite liberal and to favour the lower classes of the population; at the same time privileges for ordinary people were abolished, while other parts, which were favourable to the nobles and the upper class, remained. *Ο δέ Χριστόπουλος, και αυτός μὴν ανεχόμενος να δειχθῇ κατώτερος κατά την ανεξικακίαν και γενναιότητα του γενναίου ήγεμόνος, ανέλαβε πάλε τὸ έργον άπαρχῆς κ' έδωκε πάλε εις αυτό τὸ παρόν του σχῆμα και μικρόν μέγεθος, αλλά περιεκτικόν και πλήρες ως πρός τας τότε ανάγκας του τύπου*³. The committee which was appointed to go through the draft of this code went into repeated meetings to check and

2. D. B. Oikonomidis, «Τὸ ἐν Μολδοβλαχία νομικὸν έργον τοῦ ᾽Αθανασίου Χριστοπούλου», *Ἑλληνική Δημιουργία*, n. 100 (1952), p. 427; cf. Florin Marinescu, «Ο Φαναριώτης Ἰωάννης Γ. Καρατζᾶς, ήγεμόνας τῆς Βλαχίας», *Τὰ ᾽Αθηναϊκά*, n. 102 (1998), p. 74.

3. Nikolaos Koritzas, *᾽Αθανασίου Χριστοπούλου, Ἑλληνικά άρχαιολογήματα*, Athens 1853, p. λβ'.

discuss controversial points in it. After almost one year of discussions, on June 9th 1818, this committee sent a letter to Ioannis Karatzas informing him that the manual had been completed and was ready for printing⁴. The *Nomothesia* was finally printed in Greek (Vienna, 1818) and in Romanian (Bucharest, 1818)⁵. A first publication of this *Code* (Vienna, 1817) has been located by Thomas Papadopoulos⁶ in the Vatopedion Monastery Library, at Mount Athos, but I have not been able to gain access to it; accordingly, I studied the copy of the 1818 publication held in the Greek Parliament's Library, which has the same format and number of pages as the 1817 edition.

According to Nikolaos Koritzas⁷, Christopoulos wrote his essay *Politika Sofismata* about the same time, under the influence of the Sophists', and Aristotle's and Machiavelli's philosophical and political ideas (Leandros Vranoussis, though, places its writing between the years 1808-1812)⁸. Despite the fact that several of the views expressed in this essay may sound extreme and rather conservative as compared to the revolutionary and democratic movements of the time as well as to the liberal spirit of the Enlightenment, one can see many linguistic similarities with his other writings.

The language of Karatzas's *Nomothesia* has not been thoroughly examined so far to establish who was its ghost-writer. There is some evidence however (including some letters of Ioannis Karatzas addressed to Christopoulos, a number of direct references by Koritzas, etc.) that Christopoulos himself wrote the text of this manual. A poem of 50 verses in praise of Ioannis Karatzas, the then prince of Wallachia and patron of the poet, was printed in *Nomothesia* together with an introductory note for the readers, a short preface written by the prince and the laws

4. See D. B. Oikonomidis, *op. cit.*, p. 428 and Nestor Camariano, *Athanasios Christopoulos. Sa vie, son œuvre littéraire et ses rapports avec la culture roumaine*, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies 1981, p. 33.

5. The latest description of these two publications in 'Αθανάσιος Χριστόπουλος, *Ποιήματα*, edited by George Andreiomenos, Athens: Idryma Costa kai Elenis Ourani 2001, pp. 33, 521-522.

6. See Thomas Papadopoulos, 'Ελληνική Βιβλιογραφία (1544-1863). Προσθήκες - Συμπληρώσεις, Athens: E.L.I.A. 1992, p. 30 and Thomas Papadopoulos, *Βιβλιοθήκες 'Αγίου Όρους. Παλαιά ελληνικά έντυπα*, Athens 2000, p. 289.

7. *Op. cit.*, p. λη'.

8. See Leandros Vranoussis, «Ένα έγχειρίδιο φαναριώτικου μακιαβελισμού», *Επετηρίς του Μεσαιωνικού 'Αρχείου* (τῆς 'Ακαδημίας 'Αθηνών), vol. 10 (1960), p. 10.

in six parts; this poem has been attributed to Christopoulos, who had already dedicated another extensive poem to the same prince, in 1813⁹.

However, the book circulated bearing the name of the prince in its title and it became widely known as the *Code* or the *Nomothesia* by Ioannis Georgios Karatzas. I would not hesitate to claim that this *Code*, in its latest form, was written by Athanassios Christopoulos. Going through the pages of the 1818 edition, one will recognise a large number of linguistic forms used by the poet in his 1805 aeolodoric drama as well as in his *Lyrica* and *Politika Sofismata*. Some of them are very characteristic of Christopoulos's literary idiolect. Let me give some examples to verify this point: he makes use of the following words (always with the same meaning) in all published and written works of his up to 1818: ἀγνώριστος (: unknown), ἀδιόριστος (: non-defined), ἄλογος (: unreasonable), ἀντάμωση (: encounter, meeting), ἀντιδιαφέρομαι (: disagree), ἀντίκρυ and ἀντικρυ (: opposite), ἀπαντῶ (: meet), ἀποκρίνομαι (: respond, correspond), ἄσειστος (: stable), ἄσπρα (: silver coins), βιάζω and βιάζομαι (: force), γένομαι (: become), γράμμα (: letter), ὁ δεῖνα (: somebody), διορίζω and διορίζομαι (: define, order, appoint), δύο (: two), ἐγκαλεστής (: complainant), ἐδικόν του (: one's own), ἕνα τόσον (: a certain amount), ἔτσι (: thus), ἦτε (: or), ἰατρεία (: cure), ἴσα (: even, straight), ἰσάζω (: direct), κἄνεις (: someone), κἄντ ε... κἄντε (: either ... or), κατζίβελοι (: serfs, slaves), κοινῶς (: altogether), κρίνω (: try), κρίσις (: trial), κριτήριο (: law-court), κριτής (: judge), μερασμός (: share), ξετίμησις (: esteem), ξετιμῶ (: estimate, value), ὀγλίγωρα (: speedily), ὀλιγοστεύω (: be lacking), ὅπου (: wherein), παιδαγωγία (: paedagogia), παιδί (: child), παντάπασι (: completely), παρασταίνω (: pretend to be), παρόησιδιάζομαι (: appear), προικιμαῖον (: dowry-agreement), σικόνω (: build a house, withdraw money out of an account), σπήτι (: house), στέρω and στέργομαι (: accept, agree), στρέφω (: give something back to somebody), συνορίτης (: neighbor), σύντροφος (: partner), σῶω (: drag), τεχνίτρα (: craftswoman), ὑπήκοον (: citizens, subjects), ὑποθέεται (: take place), φιλιώνομαι (: reconcile), φρενητικός (: mad), φυλακώνομαι (: be a prisoner), χρεία (: need), χάρισμα (: gift, offer), χρόνος (: year). The number of such words rises considerably, if we take into account many non-literary words used in the writings of Christopoulos at the time.

Athanassios Christopoulos was one of the most fervent demoticists of the Greek Enlightenment. This would explain the purely demotic

9. See 'Αθανάσιος Χριστόπουλος, *Ποιήματα*, *op. cit.*, pp. 401-406, 507-508.

basis of the text of *Nomothesia*. The vast majority of the words that he uses belong to the register of *demotiki* of the time in this particular area. One has to bear in mind that the Phanariots, and those who were speaking in Greek in these areas, made use of a language with many demotic elements which were in common use in other parts of the then Greek-speaking world as well. This is what Christopoulos himself claims in a letter he addressed to his friend Athanassios Psalidas, almost simultaneously with the circulation of his *Lyrica* in 1811: 'Εγὼ παρατηρῶ, ὅτι ἡ Πολίτικη γλῶσσα δὲν διαφέρει τίποτε κατὰ κλίσιν καὶ σύνταξιν ἀπὸ τὴν δική μας τὴν Ἡπειρώτικην, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν Μοραϊτικὴν, ἐκτὸς μόνον κατὰ μερικὰς λέξεις. [Τὰ Λυρικά μου] εἶναι γραμμένα μὲ τὴν κοινὴν Πολίτικην γλῶσσα, τὴν λεγόμενὴν Φαναριώτικην, καὶ παρατήρησε πόσο διαφέρουν τὰ Πολίτικα ἀπὸ τὰ δικὰ μας¹⁰. At the same time, he stated that ἡ πάγκοινη τῆς Ἑλλάδος γλῶσσα, τῆς Μακεδονίας δηλ. Ἡπείρου, Θεσσαλίας, Ἑπτανήσου, Πελοποννήσου καὶ ἄλλων μερῶν, δύναται καὶ αὐτὴ νὰ ἔχῃ γραμματικὴν καὶ συντομώτερον, καὶ πολὺ ὁμαλώτερον ἀπὸ τὴν ἄττικὴν¹¹. Christopoulos was one of the first 19th century Greek scholars to organise his grammatical views in a systematic way, claiming that the Greek language of his time should be considered as the natural continuation of the aeolic and doric dialects, a belief which was shown to be erroneous by other linguists, especially by Georgios N. Chatzidakis, some years later¹².

Christopoulos stayed close to some of his 1805 grammatical formulations, even in 1816-1818, judging from the text of Karatzas's *Nomothesia*. Some cases are very characteristic. For example, the vast majority of the participles he uses in this text bear the endings -ό/όντας (more than 70 instances) as well as -μένος, η, ο (many fewer occurrences), a

10. See Const. Ath. Diamantis, «Ἐξ ἀνέκδοτοι ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ ποιητοῦ Ἀθανασίου Χριστοπούλου», *Σήμερα*, vol. B' (1961), p. 19.

11. Nikolaos Korintzas, *op. cit.*, p. σγ'.

12. See Georgios N. Chatzidakis, *Σύντομος ἱστορία τῆς ἐλληνικῆς γλώσσης*, Athens 1915, p. 412; cf. A. E. Megas, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Γλωσσικοῦ Ζητήματος. Μέρος Β'. Αἰῶνες γλωσσικῶν συζητήσεων (1750-1926)*, Athens 1927, pp. 73-96, Eirini Kalitzopoulou-Papageorgiou, *Ἡ αἰολοδωρικὴ θεωρία. Συμβολὴ στὴν ἱστορία τῆς ἐλληνικῆς γλώσσας*, Athens 1991 (unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the University of Athens), Georgios Bambiniotis, *Συνοπτικὴ ἱστορία τῆς ἐλληνικῆς γλώσσας. Μὲ εἰσαγωγὴ στὴν ἱστοριοσυγκριτικὴ γλωσσολογία*, Athens ³1998, *Ἱστορία τῆς ἐλληνικῆς γλώσσας*, edited by M. Z. Kopidakis, Athens: E.L.I.A. 1999.

preference which is clearly demonstrated in his 1805 grammar¹³. Although he seems to prefer the use of adverbs in -ως, he does not hesitate to write *ἀπόλυτα* or *κρυφᾶ*¹⁴. Furthermore, nouns in -της, accented in the penultimate syllable, are stressed in the genitive plural in the way suggested in his aeolodoric grammar¹⁵ (*συνορίτων, παραβάτων, παρακαταθέτων, παραχαράκτων, συγκοφάντων*). Even though the purpose was scholarly, in a number of occurrences (more than 15 in total) Christopoulos used elision, a phenomenon which is partly described in his grammatical treatise¹⁶. Likewise, the syntactic idiosyncrasies of *Nomothesia* correspond to the views of Christopoulos as expressed in his 1805 grammar as well as in his other writings of the time. For instance, he overuses the accusative¹⁷ instead of the genitive or the combination *εις*+accusative, where the dative would be used in older forms of Greek (more than 85 occurrences); one has to bear in mind that this structural idiosyncrasy can be found widely among the Greek speakers of northern Greece or of Constantinopolitan origins, even today.

As has already been pointed out, the vast majority of Christopoulos's words in Karatzas's *Code* are forms of the vernacular of this time. Christopoulos continued to create lexical items (especially nouns of masculine and neuter genders) in the way he described in his grammar¹⁸: *ἀνταλλάκτης, ἀτιμαστής, γεννήματα, γραψίματα, δανείσμα, ἐμπόδισμα, ἐπιτρόπισσα, ἡλίκισσα, καταπάτημα, κνήγημα, μειρασμός, μειραστής, νεροζυγιστής, νοίκιασμα, ὀλιγόστενσις, παρακάλεσις, πάροσιμο, πωλήματα, συμφωνητής, τεχνίτρα, φυλακτήης, χάρισμα, χαριστής* are some of the most characteristic examples. He also attempts to create legal terms out of colloquial words of Greek or Romanian origins; he thus writes *αἰρετοκρασία, βάδος, ἐξισάζω, ἐξοφλίζω, ζαγάζια, καμίνι, κλακκάσης, κουρδαιτούρα, κρισολογία, λεγατάριος, λεγατεύω, λεγάτον, νοικάτωρας, ξεξημιώνω, ξεσκαβώνω, ξετιμημένον, ξεφυλακώνω, δκνα, πακαλικόν, πλαστογράφω, πόλιτζα, πολιτζοχάρτι, πολυκαιρινός, στάροστας, συγγενεδομαι, συμφωνοχάρτι, συντροφία, σούρης, φυλακώνομαι* and others. He uses very few formal expressions (I counted

13. See Athanssios Christopoulos, *Γραμματική τῆς αἰολοδωρικῆς, ἥτοι τῆς ὁμιλουμένης τωρινῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων γλώσσας*, Vienna 1805, pp. 58, 92-107, 117.

14. See *ibid.*, p. 134.

15. See *ibid.*, p. 70.

16. See *ibid.*, p. 26.

17. See *ibid.*, chiefly pp. 147-164.

18. See *ibid.*, pp. 117-130.

less than 20 occurrences in more than 132 pages), while occasionally he employs phrases of the everyday language in his formulation of laws; he thus writes *πέσουν εις τὰς χεῖρας μας* — *ἐλεύθερος εἶν' ὁ γείτων* *νὰ βλέπη* *εις τὴν ἀδὴν τοῦ γείτονος* — *ἂν πωλήσῃ ποιμνὴν μολυσμένην, καὶ τὸ μόλυσμα κολλήσῃ ἄλλα πρόβατα* — *νὰ τρέχουν αἱ συμφωνίαι* *καθὼς ἐσυμφωνήσαν* — *τρέχουν τὰ χρῆμ' αὐτῶν τὸ διάφορον* — *χωρίζω* (get a divorce) — *κἀνένας σύντροφος δὲν ἤμπορεῖ νὰ σικώσῃ ἀπὸ τὴν συντροφίαν τὸ κεφάλαιον τοῦ μεριδίου του* — *ὅταν ὁ ἕνας τῶν συντρόφων διορισθῇ εἰς πολιτικὴν ὑπηρεσίαν* — *ἔχουν προσδιορισμένον ἀπὸ διαθήκην, ἢ κριτήριον, τὸ τί, καὶ τί, ὁ καθένας νὰ ἐπιτροπεύῃ* — *νὰ μὴ χρεωστῇ νὰ δίδει λογαριασμὸν* — *ὅταν ὁ ἀνῆλικος ἢ οἱ ἀνῆλικοι πατήσουν τὸν εἰκοστὸν πέμπτου χρόνον τῆς ἡλικίας τους* — *σύρω εἰς δίκην* — *ἡ συντροφία τοῦ συντρόφου εἰς τὸν κληρονόμον δὲν διαβαίνει* — *καὶ ὁ ἄλλος ἐλεύθερα νὰ κατασκευάζῃ τὴν λίμνην, καὶ νὰ τὴν χαίρεται μόνος του* and others. In any case, even in such a "formal text", Christopoulos does not forget his skills as a versifier when he writes *Αἱ γυναῖκες μαρτυροῦν, ὅπου ἄνδρες δὲν χωροῦν*.

Christopoulos believed in the value of the everyday use of language and he was ready at any moment to adjust his grammatical views accordingly. It is very interesting that he decided to introduce demotic forms of his time into a legal text, as he did with his poetical and philosophical writings prior to 1818. One may say that Christopoulos's attempt to employ dialectal elements in lyric poetry and in his "technical writings" corresponds to the demands of the demoticists of his time for the cultivation and enrichment of modern Greek. His employment of the alleged aeolodoric features is one of the major characteristics of his style.

It is also important to note that prince Ioannis Karatzas did not hesitate not only to employ Greek (along with Romanian) for his legal Code, as other princes had done before him¹⁹, but he accepted that these laws should be manifested in plain modern Greek. This shows his ardent interest that laws be understood by as many as possible. This also demonstrates that modern Greek was a kind of *lingua franca* for this area as well as that the Phanariot princes considered their native language

19. See Florin Marinescu, *op. cit.*, p. 80: «Ἡ "Νομοθεσία" τοῦ Καρατζᾶ ὑπῆρξε τὸ τέταρτο μεγάλο ἔργο, συλλογὴ νομοθετικῶν διατάξεων, ποὺ κυκλοφόρησε στὶς Παραδουνάβιες ἡγεμονίες. Προηγήθησαν: Τὸ Νομικὸν Πρόχειρον τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Φωτεινοπούλου ('Ελληνικά, Βουκουρέστι 1765), τὸ Συνταγματικὸν Νομικὸν τοῦ 'Αλ. Ὑψηλάντη ('Ελληνικά καὶ Ρουμανικά, Βουκουρέστι 1780) στὴ Βλαχία καὶ ὁ Πολιτικὸς Κώδιξ τοῦ Σκαρλάτου Καλλιμάχη ('Ελληνικά, Ἰάσι 1816-1817) στὴ Μολδαβία».

appropriate for such administrative issues. The use of modern Greek in such texts can also be connected to the presence of many Greeks in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia at that time. As Pan. I. Zepos claims, *ἐξ ἀπόψεως οὕτω τοῦ ἐν αὐταῖς ἰσχύοντος δικαίου, αἱ παρὰ τὸν Δούναβιν ἡγεμονίαι ἐξεβυσσαντινίσθησαν ὁλοσχερῶς καθ' ὥρισμένην περιόδον τῆς ἱστορίας των*²⁰. Ioannis Karatzas and Athanassios Christopoulos contributed to it. Yet the linguistic form they employed was not to prevail in legal texts for many years to come...*

20. Pan. I. Zepos, *Μιχαὴλ Φωτεινοπούλου Νομικὸν Πρόχειρον* (Βουκουρέστιον 1765), Athens 1959, p. 10.

* Στὸ Παράρτημα (Appendix) ποὺ ἀκολουθεῖ παρατίθενται ὅσες λέξεις ἡ φράσεις παρουσιάζουν ἐνδιαφέρον σὲ συνάρτηση μὲ τὴν ἐν γένει γλωσσικὴ κατάσταση τῆς ἐποχῆς· οἱ ἀριθμοὶ παραπέμπουν σὲ σελίδες τῆς ἐκδοσης τῆς Νομοθεσίας στὰ 1818.

APPENDIX

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