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Between the Barbarians and the Empire:  
Mapping Routes Toward the Nomadic Text<sup>1</sup>

Travel text can be considered a nomadic text by definition, since its writing involves the move to another place. This paper tries to capture the nomadic identity of the travel text in terms of this movement, which in the paradigm presented here relates to the conception of the barbarians and the empire and concludes in defining the nomadic text in terms of its generic identity. The paper is based on a travel text by the Modern Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957), which is traversed by the presence of another Modern Greek writer, the poet C. P. Cavafy (1863-1933). The encounter of the two writers is studied within the framework of the discourse on diaspora and center or the global and the local, a discussion which addresses the identities of the barbarians and the empire. More specifically, the paper attends to the political discourse on the barbarians and the empire in the past and the present, and watches how the text in its corporeal materialism operates between these identities while fixing its generic identity. In focusing on the structure of the travel text, the discussion eventually shows how this body of a migrant subject can be understood as a nomad, particularly as a glocal nomad.<sup>2</sup>

The travel text studied here is an article that forms part of Kazantzakis' travelogue on Italy-Egypt-Sinai-Jerusalem-Cyprus-Morias (i.e. the Peloponnese). It should be noted that, although Kazantzakis enjoys an international recognition based on his novels, he has also produced important work in the field of travel writing and in a period that spans decades (approximately since 1907 and until 1939, if we don't take into account his persistent recurrence to travel narratives in his last, autobiographical novel *Report to Greco* published after his death in 1957). His corpus of travel writing includes a number of articles where Kazantzakis recorded his impressions of the countries he visited as a correspondent for several periodicals and newspapers. He later gathered these articles in volumes entitled *Travelling* followed by the name of the country he was visiting. The article studied in this paper, which was later incorporated in the book entitled *Travelling. Italy-Egypt-Sinai-Jerusalem-Cyprus-Morias*, was written during his visit to Egypt in 1927 and is entitled "The intellectual movement in Egypt. The Alexandrian poet Cavafy. One of the last flowers of a civilization" (newspaper *Eleftheros Logos*, 15 April 1927).

The article focuses on the visit N. Kazantzakis paid to C. P. Cavafy, defining the space of an encounter as a particular space within the broader space of journey. Cavafy and

Kazantzakis are two Modern Greek writers who are still today recognized internationally. Kazantzakis travelled to Egypt as a journalist sent by his newspaper to record his impressions of the country. His visit to Cavafy in Alexandria formed part of this journey. Twenty years younger than Cavafy, Kazantzakis was widely accepted as a travel writer, but not as a novelist, since he had not yet written his major novels, the novels of his maturity. Cavafy on the other side had already established a high reputation as a poet. During this visit Kazantzakis visualizes Cavafy in strong relation to his poem “Waiting for the barbarians”, although Cavafy had already moved past this poem and into the mature phase of his writing. Quoting the poem has a lot to contribute to the understanding of Kazantzakis’ perception of Cavafy:

### **Waiting for the barbarians**

What are we waiting for, assembled in the forum?

The barbarians are due here today.

Why isn’t anything happening in the senate?

Why are the senators sitting there without legislating?

Because the barbarians are coming today

What laws can the senators make now?

Once the barbarians are here, they’ll do the legislating.

Why did our emperor get up so early,  
and why is he sitting at the city’s main gate,  
on his throne, in state, wearing the crown?

Because the barbarians are coming today  
and the emperor is waiting to receive their leader.

He has even prepared a scroll to give him,  
replete with titles, with imposing names.

Why have our two consuls and praetors come out today  
wearing their embroidered, their scarlet togas?  
Why have they put on bracelets with so many amethysts,  
and rings sparkling with magnificent emeralds?  
Why are they carrying elegant canes  
beautifully worked in silver and gold?

Because the barbarians are coming today  
and things like that dazzle the barbarians.

Why don't our distinguished orators come forward as usual  
to make their speeches, say what they have to say?

Because the barbarians are coming today  
and they're bored by rhetoric and public speaking.

Why this sudden restlessness, this confusion?  
(How serious people's faces have become.)  
Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,  
everyone going home so lost in thought?

Because night has fallen and the barbarians have not come.  
And some who have just returned from the border say  
there are no barbarians any longer.

And now what's going to happen to us without barbarians?  
They were, those people, a kind of solution.

(Cavafy, 1992: 18)

C. P. Cavafy introduces his barbarians to the public in 1904. Twenty three years later Kazantzakis will confront in Alexandria the anticipation of the barbarians at Cavafy's house, on Cavafy's face. While watching Cavafy, Kazantzakis visualizes him looking out of his window waiting for the barbarians to appear. Cavafy's attitude resembles the behaviour of the empire in the eyes of Kazantzakis, who grafts Cavafy in the circle of decadence, recognizing in him features that Cavafy's poem recognized in the people of the empire. "He is holding a scroll with eulogies in subtle, copperplate writing", Kazantzakis says, "he is dressed festively, make up carefully applied and waits. But the barbarians don't come and he sighs around night, quietly, and smiles ironically for his naive soul that hopes" (Kazantzakis, 2004: 78). For him Cavafy gathers "all the typical features of an exquisite man of decadence" (Kazantzakis, 2004: 78-9). The word "decadence" here is not reduced to the timeless, a-historical concept we are used to nowadays, but specifies its use in the context of the "decadent" movement, the literary and artistic movement which expounded on the subject of decay in the late nineteenth century. We'll come back to the encounter of the two writers in the last part of this paper, after we have reviewed how Cavafy's poem was read in the context of decadence or in other perspectives, and as a conclusion of the discussion about the barbarians, the nomads or the migrants on the one hand and the empire on the other.

### ***Conceptualizing the barbarians and the empire in “Waiting for the barbarians”***

Cavafy's poem has been read primarily in its affinity to aestheticism or the “decadent” movement of the late nineteenth century. From this standpoint the juxtaposition of the barbarians and the empire becomes a recurrent theme, where the paradigms of P. Verlaine and St. Mallarmé prevail, a characteristic example being the poem “Langueur”<sup>3</sup> by P. Verlaine (1883). The empire awaits the barbarians and gets disappointed when they don't come. When conquest is anticipated as redemption or when the thematic of conquest shifts from signifying a painful experience to signifying an expectation, this change in semantics conveys the sense of a progressing loss of strength that defines “decadence”. A state of decrepitude is seen to diffuse in civilization, which crystallizes a favorite form in the representation of an empire in its death throes. This debilitation brings out the sense of decadence and shows as a dominant theme in the decadent thematics the fall of the empire and the imminence of the barbarians. Critics like T. Agras, T. Malanos and R. Poggioli, who view Cavafy's poem in this perspective, are listed in the detailed review of the approaches to Cavafy's poem by D. Tziovas (Tziovas, 1986: 165).

Another hermeneutical way presented by Tziovas is the “stress on the universality of the symbolic barbarians”, an approach that reads in the barbarians the “expectations for redemptive changes in life and a mixture of fear and uncertainty along with a relief and a hopeful vision”. This approach is seen to reveal the “human and universal directions” of the poem, since the barbarians represent “a way out of the imprisonment and perplexity” also suggested in a number of similar poems like “Walls” and “The City” (Tziovas, 1986: 163).

In his reading of the poem, Tziovas removes the text from its literary context and places it in the political and philosophical context of European history. Taking into consideration four comments on the poem coming either directly from Cavafy or from his personal contacts, he emphasizes the focus of the poem on civilization, its current state and future. The two notes coming from Cavafy himself are both unpublished. The first one, in English, establishes contact with Renan's theory, in which the recurrence of the barbarians is recognized as a possibility (Cavafy, 1987: 131). In his other unpublished note Cavafy argues that “the society reaches a certain level of affluence, of civilization and unease at which point, in desperation over the situation for which it can find no improvement that would be a compromise with its usual life-style, it decides to introduce radical changes: to sacrifice, to change, to turn back, to simplify. (These are the “Barbarians”).” (Savvidis, 1991; translated in Tziovas, 1986: 165).

The representation of the barbarians as the return to the primitive state of civilization will also come as a speculation in two close readings of Cavafy's poetry by P. Petridis

and T. Malanos. Petridis suggests that Cavafy must have conceived the poem in great disillusionment, thinking that civilization had failed to provide happiness, and concludes that “this colossal organization called civilization is so perfect, its tentacles embrace the planet so tightly that any attempt to avoid it and return to a primitive life would be futile” (Petridis, 1909: 204-5 and Tziovas, 1986: 163). Malanos also recognizes the preoccupation of the poem with civilization that has subdued humanity, a situation from which there seems to be no return, a preoccupation he relates to Nietzsche’s theory of eternal recurrence based on his discussion with Cavafy (Malanos, 1957: 299-300 and Tziovas, 1986: 164).

Tziovas recurs to Nietzsche’s theory in his own reading of Cavafy’s poem. He starts in noticing that Cavafy’s attitude towards the drama of European civilization seems to resemble Nietzsche’s view of history as a cyclical process, but continues in pointing out that Nietzsche’s conception of history is not exclusively cyclical, because the “new barbarism would be different from the original one since the people would enjoy freedom and power which their ancestors never enjoyed before” (Tziovas, 1986: 173-4). Tziovas concludes that Cavafy evokes Nietzsche in “Waiting for the Barbarians”, because he rejects the cyclical conception of history and goes beyond Good and Evil, since, in denying the existence of the barbarians, he surpasses the distinction between the noble and the barbaric, which at a moral level take the form of good and evil (Tziovas, 1986: 175).

This reference to Nietzsche forms only part of Tziovas’ approach, which details on the European history of ideas mapping itineraries from Gibbon and his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788) as Cavafy’s intertext, to Hegel, Condorcet, Turgot and their eurocentric attitude followed by Arnold, Burckhardt, Nordau, Nietzsche, Bergson and Durkheim to name some of the theorists taken into consideration. The main idea is a shift in attitude between the political philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is argued that, while in the eighteenth century “the idea of the Noble Savage was at its peak”, “during the nineteenth century the enthusiasm for the exotic savages gave way to the idea of racial inequality and inferiority” (Tziovas, 1986: 169). The paradox noted by Tziovas in the political theory of the nineteenth century is that on the one hand “the barbarism plays the role of the comparative “other” [...] and on the other hand it represents a potential source of its rejuvenation” (Tziovas, 1986: 169). In conclusion, the anticipation of the “other” is read as the central idea around which Cavafy’s poem revolves in underlining the opposition of the “other” to the “same” as the “necessity for every culture to invent its contrasting image to build up a fictive solution to find a soothing remedy to its anxiety” (Tziovas, 1986: 176-7).

Without challenging the previous approaches but rather extending their scope, the present paper would suggest a different perspective in approaching Cavafy’s poem, a

perspective that escapes abstractive representations of the barbarians as the essential other and transcends the binary logic of the juxtaposition between two opposite poles, such as good and evil or sameness and otherness. This paper reads in Cavafy's poem the specific encounter of *the barbarians and the empire*, two elements which are not reduced to abstract entities such as the self and the other that become functional either at the cultural or at the existential level, but which interlock on a form of coexistence that abolishes the vertical bipolarity. In this perspective the two elements do not form a binary but a continuum; they are not juxtaposed as the opposite poles of a binary, but are inseparable in their interconnection that forms a particular unity, a unity that might be understood as the "rhizome" proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, i.e. an "assemblage" of intensities or a "multiplicity" formed by intensities that spread into one another deconstructing the sense of dichotomy or dualism (Deleuze–F. Guattari, 2004: 4).

The basic conception of the empire and the barbarians visualizes intensities that intertwine in their encounter. Cavafy's poem provides a view of this encounter as the empire goes outside leaving its hearth and home with its people leaving their homes to fill the streets and the squares and its emperor moving out to the border of the city. In reaching out for the barbarians, the empire moves away from its center, it loses its center; it "deterritorializes", to use another term by Deleuze–Guattari (Deleuze–Guattari, 2004: 11). "Deterritorialization" is not just a spatial issue, but a determinant of the whole attitude of the empire. The empire "deterritorializes" in terms of space, but also in terms of taste, in terms of aesthetics. The consuls and the praetors, the imperial representatives, exaggerate with the clothes ("scarlet togas") and the jewelry they are wearing ("amethysts", "magnificent emeralds", "elegant canes in silver and gold") because these things "dazzle the barbarians", not because they constitute the empire's aesthetics. When the empire concedes to the aesthetics of the barbarians, it relinquishes its distinct features or "deterritorializes", changes in nature and therefore meets the requirement to enter a multiplicity. On the other hand, mapping the reverse movement towards the empire, the barbarians "reterritorialize" (Deleuze–Guattari, 2004: 11) in appropriating the empire's ways, its organization and its aesthetics. The image of the barbarians legislating entails their participation in a procedure distinct from their mode of governing or organizing societies and suggests a concession, a loss of center, a change in nature like the one implemented by the empire.

It might be argued here, since the voice of the barbarians is not heard, that the empire has appropriated their voice and therefore the concessions made by the barbarians are mediated through the empire's expectation. The hegemonic role of the empire has been read in its approach to the barbarians. In this framework it has been suggested that the empire appropriates attitudes of the barbarians, so as to verify its sovereignty over them,

and allows them access to its organization through legislation, so as to legitimize them, eliminate their heterogeneity and consequently absorb them (Metaxas, 2003: 52-3). It should be noted, however, that, while the barbarians and the empire move towards each other and achieve interconnection, they still preserve their heterogeneity and distinct identity. They remain heterogeneous intensities that function as a pair. And that's the meaning of the "rhizome": a multiplicity formed by heterogeneous intensities that avoid homogenization, although one continues into the other.

An example of the rhizome is provided by Deleuze–Guattari in the paradigm of the orchid and the wasp:

The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome.

(Deleuze–Guattari, 2004: 11)

It is explained that, although the orchid might be thought to imitate the wasp reproducing its image through mimesis, this can be true only as "a parallelism between two strata such that a plant organization on one imitates an animal organization on the other". But what is really happening is "neither imitation nor resemblance"; it is a "capture of code", an "increase in valence", "a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp" (Deleuze–Guattari, 2004: 11). The rhizome can be better understood in its conceptualization as a "map and not a tracing", since "the orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome" (Deleuze–Guattari, 2004: 13).

After that, we can conceptualize the barbarians and the empire in Cavafy's poem as the map of a rhizome. We could seek a relation between the flight of the wasp and the movement of the barbarians, but what is most important in this rhizome is that, contrary to the orchid which is not reproducing the tracing of the wasp, the empire enriches the connections charted in the rhizome in reproducing the movement of the barbarians. In this sense, when the empire appropriates modes of the barbarians and deterritorializes in terms of space and aesthetics, it reproduces their flight, the flight of a wasp; it tries to capture their code. A becoming-barbarian of the empire is in process along with a becoming-imperial of the barbarian. This approach that reads beyond allegations of degradation or subjugation might also include the reterritorialization of the disembodied, unvoiced barbarians in the mode of the empire, a movement that tends to reproduce the tracing of the empire and capture its code.

Contrary to the binary that operates on a vertical level in contrasting two different poles, the rhizome operates on a horizontal level in relaying intensities that attach to each other in lateral connections. According to Deleuze–Guattari "binary logic is the



spiritual reality of the root-tree”, and this logic seems to contradict nature where “roots are taproots with a more multiple, lateral and circular system of ramification rather than a dichotomous one”. The rhizome represents the natural reality of the taproot “with its pivotal spine and surrounding leaves”, a spiritual reality endlessly developing “the law of the One that becomes two” (Deleuze–Guattari, 2004: 5). Rhizome as a multiplicity or a conjunction of heterogeneities “constitutes an assemblage” specifically a “machinic assemblage”. The understanding of the rhizome as a machine faces two sides: the first one “faces the strata which doubtless make it a kind of organism or signifying totality”, while the second one faces a body without organs, which is continually dismantling the organism (Deleuze–Guattari, 2004: 4).

The conception of the rhizome as a machine proves extremely helpful in conceptualizing how the empire and the barbarians operate as the two sides of a machinic assemblage. The empire represents the organism, whereas the barbarians represent the body without organs that dismantles the organism. In their theory of nomadology Deleuze and Guattari use the specific terms “State apparatus” for the organism and “war machine” for the body without organs. The State apparatus is characterized by interiority and is organized on a basis of institutions, regulations and codes. The war machine is “external to the apparatus” and proceeds by territorializing and deterritorializing space, which is to “make the outside a territory in space; consolidate that territory by the construction of a second, adjacent territory; deterritorialize the enemy by shattering his territory from within; deterritorialize oneself by renouncing, by going elsewhere” (Deleuze–Guattari, 1986: 4).

Based on these definitions, it seems obvious in Cavafy’s poem that the empire as an organized system of laws and regulations represents the State apparatus, while the barbarians as an organization of diverse nature -a social body without institutional organs- represents the war machine. The empire is an organism of arborescent type, since it tends to centralize and structure around central organs of power such as the emperor, the senators, the consuls, the praetors, the orators. The barbarians on the other hand “fulfill functions of insertion or situation, such as bordering, encircling, shattering” (Deleuze–Guattari, 1986: 3) and are more like a taproot. Not lacking organization, they show a lack of discipline that conceptualizes an “extrinsic power” (Deleuze–Guattari, 1986: 6) and prevents central organization around distinct organs of authority; in essence they constitute an eccentric formation.

The barbarian taproot might spread beside the imperial tree or become confused with it performing acts of attachment, insertion or situation, establishing a root-tree formation or a rhizome. One thing that can be noted in Cavafy’s poem, however, is that the centrality of the empire seems to deconstruct, as its organs deterritorialize, decentralize and spread

apart. The emperor performs an act of bordering when he leaves the palace and moves to the border of the city; the orators leave the podium and the center of their activity, the organized speech; the senators withdraw from the act of legislation, therefore annul a vital organ of the empire. In a way, the empire behaves like an organism which has lost its center and forfeited its distinct organs; it behaves like a body without organs. Following the loss of its structural discipline, the empire fulfills functions that adopt practices of the barbarians, like insertion in the alien territory and appropriation of alien modes, which are more likely to identify with the war machine than the State apparatus. Therefore Cavafy's poem might suggest the subversive connection of the empire to the war machine. In any way, the fact remains that two diverse intensities, two heterogeneous mechanisms intertwine in the formation of a machinic assemblage -of a rhizome.

***The barbarian, the nomad, the migrant or diaspora and citizenship:  
Cavafy, Kazantzakis and the Text***

The fact that the war machine is realized more completely in the "barbaric" assemblages of nomadic warriors than in the "savage" assemblages of primitive societies (Deleuze-Guattari, 1986: 14) relates largely to the conception of the nomadic subject. The barbarians are the nomads that spread at the periphery of the empire and engage in action from this perimeter. Both the barbarians, as the "extrinsic power" that constitutes a "counter-State mechanism", and the empire, as the centralized power that constitutes the State apparatus, have been attributed a new meaning in the context of today's globalized era. M. Hardt and A. Negri make a breakthrough in the conception of the empire, which they contextualize in "the irresistible and irreversible globalization of economic and cultural exchanges" and conceptualize as "a new logic and structure of rule-in short, a new form of sovereignty", "a global order that has emerged along with the global market and global circuits of production". According to this theory, "empire is the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world" (Hardt-Negri, 2000: xi).

The construction of "this new global form of sovereignty" (Hardt-Negri, 2000: xii), the new global order termed empire, entails a new understanding of the barbarian or the nomad. Based on the recent socio-political and economic events along with the rising awareness that this modern global sovereignty transforms its conception through the collapse of national sovereignty, one is tempted to further Hardt and Negri's theory into Deleuze and Guattari's theory, joining them in a multiplicity and reading the empire as the sovereign global power striated by the barbarian hordes -state authorities of failed economic status that are called upon concession of their powers to the global sovereign

power. In a contemporary version of “Waiting for the barbarians” and under this light, the barbarians might represent the people of the poorly organized, disorderly states that verge on the empire, the well organized economic and social global order.

According to Hardt and Negri, the new race of barbarians, the new nomad horde arises to invade or evacuate the empire. The surge of the new barbarians comprises along with the “flight from the so called Third World”, “flows of political refugees and transfers of intellectual labor power, in addition to the massive movements of the agricultural, manufacturing, and service proletariat” (Hardt–Negri, 2000: 213). The “migratory movements” and the “mobility of labor power” constitute major forces in the “enormous population transfers” (Hardt–Negri, 2000: 213) which conceptualize the new barbarian waves, and this is where this paper focuses in reading Kazantzakis’ movement towards Cavafy.

The migratory movement as a distinct feature of the barbarians grafts them in the circle of nomadism, equating the barbaric identity with the nomadic or migrant identity and defining the barbarian as the nomadic or the migrant subject. These waves of migration, the flows of migrating populations that verge on the empire form linings of heterogeneity which “striae” the otherwise “smooth” space of the empire, to use Deleuze–Guattari’s terms (Deleuze–Guattari, 1986: 18). Diasporas are the heterogeneous zones that striae the empire, structuring a multiplicity in which diverse intensities interconnect and establish rhizomatic relations. The issue of diaspora as the embodiment of the migratory movement is defined in close relation to the issue of citizenship, issues that are both of great importance in reading Kazantzakis’ visit to Cavafy.

Charting a trajectory from Athens to Alexandria, the encounter of the two writers defines the intellectual labor movement of the journalist Kazantzakis as a transition from the Greek homeland to the Greek diaspora. This movement from core to diaspora poses the issue of center and periphery or global and local, as it narrates the meeting of a Greek inside diaspora, Cavafy, and a Greek outside the diaspora, Kazantzakis. Cavafy belongs to a particular circle of Greek diaspora, the circle of Alexandria in Egypt, where he developed his poetic activity. Displaced from their point of origin, the Cavafy family founded the Greek Community of Alexandria, as Cavafy himself discloses in his “Genealogy” (Cavafy, 1948: 622). The interrelation of displacement, deterritorialization and diaspora is presented paradigmatically in Cavafy’s genealogy. In stressing the prominent place his family held in the Greek diaspora of Egypt, Cavafy reveals consciousness of his diasporic identity; moreover, he reveals that he appropriates his identity in terms of his diasporic condition and poses the question of his relation to the community of the Greek diaspora in Egypt along with the issue of citizenship.

Cavafy embraces the Greek diaspora in Egypt in his note on “Hellenism and contemporary Egypt”, for instance, in which he recognizes that the Greek population in his contemporary Egypt forms an important part of the race (Cavafy, 2003: 151). In another note, he centers on a specific circle inside the circle of the Greek community, its literary core. Expressing content with the literary production of the Greeks in Egypt, he assesses positively its gradual increase, although he recognizes that it spans a short period of time, but he still feels that this intellectual life might grow stronger in closer contact with the “big center, Athens” (Cavafy, 2003: 152). This statement clearly shows that Cavafy perceives Athens as the center of Hellenism or Modern Greek literature in particular, and the Hellenic diaspora or diasporic literature of Egypt as the periphery that spreads at the outskirts of the center. The juxtaposition of periphery and center transliterates, in Deleuze-Guattari’s or Hardt-Negri’s vocabulary, the juxtaposition of the barbarian/nomad/immigrant and the empire. In this sense, Cavafy captures the sight of himself as a nomad in the outskirts of the *imperium* called Modern Greek literature, a perception we’ll review through Kazantzakis’ point of view.

Cavafy’s self representation as the nomadic subject that borders on the imperial literature is completed with his self representation as the nomadic subject in a diaspora that borders on the prevailing Arabic community. In the same note in which Cavafy addresses his nomadic relation to Modern Greek literature, he also addresses his relation to the Egyptian literature which he fosters, and encourages communication between the Greek writers in Egypt and their Arabic speaking colleagues. Cavafy points out the diasporic yet indigenous identity of the Greek writers in Egypt who are not passing by, but are raised and settled, if not born, there. Moreover, those of them who speak Arabic might prove, according to Cavafy, particularly useful in bringing the Arabic literature of Egypt to its Greek population (Cavafy, 2003: 152). In another note, he informs us that he is always eager to read the work of the Egyptian poet Ahmed Rassim, which he does in French, but voices his belief that equal merit must be met in the literature written in Arabic by the particular poet (Cavafy, 2003: 150). As for the writings regarding Hellenism in Alexandria –where the Greek population was the largest among all the cities in Egypt–, Cavafy advises that they should bring out the particular traits of Hellenic identity always bearing, however, the awareness of their creation in an environment not exclusively Hellenic (Cavafy, 2003: 152). Cavafy’s comment declares the realization of the particular traits of a diaspora in its broader cultural context. When he contextualizes the diasporic particularities in a wider cultural background, Cavafy in essence proposes their intercultural diffusion or creates a multiplicity in the sense of the taproot presented earlier. The conjunction structured in Cavafy’s note joins diaspora, homeland and host country in a multiplicity. In this multiple unity the Hellenic diaspora attaches both to the Greek homeland and the local Egyptian

community, bringing together intensities which interact in a continuum extending from the homeland to the host country.

This conjunction of interrelating intensities or connections that are being established among home, diaspora and host country addresses the issue of global and local and might be seen to coalesce into what R. Robertson has termed glocal. The circumstance of globalization in which Robertson has formulated his theory is of course entirely different from Cavafy's age, but the "simultaneity and interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local or –in more abstract vein– the universal and the particular" that Robertson suggests (Robertson, 1995: 30) makes also its point in Cavafy's case. Transcending the global-local division, Robertson maintains that "globalization has involved the reconstruction, in a sense the production, of home, community and locality", a position leading to the conclusion that the local is not understood as the counterpoint of the global, but as an aspect of globalization which might be substituted by the more valid term glocalization<sup>4</sup> (Robertson, 1995: 30). The concept of glocalization escapes the polarity between global homogenization and heterogenization and concentrates on the ways "in which homogenizing and heterogenizing tendencies are mutually implicative" or on attempts "to combine homogeneity with heterogeneity and universalism with particularism" (Robertson, 1995: 27). Since the precursor of glocalization is recognized by Robertson in the "beginning of international exhibitions in the mid-nineteenth century, involving the internationally organized display of particular national "glories" and achievements" (Robertson, 1992: 36), I think the close temporal vicinity with Cavafy's age might update a retrospective look at how Cavafy administers a simultaneous attraction to particularity and universality.

We have seen how Cavafy's diaspora borders simultaneously on a center that defines his origin and a center that defines the dominant local culture. How these parallel relations intertwine can be viewed on a temporal-spatial landmark, the city of Alexandria. Alexandria is the key point around which Cavafy's consciousness of citizenship is formed. Cavafy is the citizen of Alexandria. In his "Genealogy", where he dates the connection of his family to Alexandria long before 1845, around 1800 (Cavafy, 1948: 622), it is evident how he cherishes this city that was meant to assume the character of a milestone in his life and his poetry. Through the conception of this city Cavafy's citizenship forms a conjunction, another multiplicity of joined intensities.

The representation of Alexandria unfolds intensities as levels of citizenship which interrelate in Cavafy's perception. The first intensity embodies the Alexandria of Cavafy's present, the Alexandria he resides, an Alexandria where the Arabic element prevails. E. Keeley recognizes on the surface of Alexandria "the literal city", the "almost exclusively Arabic" city (Keeley, 1996: 1, 5). Earlier in this paper we have heard Cavafy's note voice

his strong affiliation to the Arabic locality and his encouragement for close contact between the diasporic and the local community. In the first place or in its “literal” phase Alexandria brings dominant representations of the local. Locality here does not define citizenship though, since Cavafy is not a citizen of Egypt; he is a citizen of the British Empire, since Egypt formed part of the British Empire at the specific period of time.

The communication between local community and diaspora already brings connotations of an opening from the local to the global, but the definite move from local to global can be seen in the conception of Alexandria as the city of a contemporary empire, the British Empire. This second intensity embodies the imperial aspect of Alexandria in its synchronic dimension. So far we have seen Cavafy as the migrant/ diasporic/ barbarian subject, an issue related also to his identity as the citizen of an empire. In his “Genealogy”, Cavafy records that his father and consequently the family held dual citizenship: Greek and British (Cavafy, 1948: 627). In 1885, however, Cavafy will relinquish his British citizenship in face of “the joint British and Ottoman rule that was imposed in Egypt.”<sup>5</sup> His identity as a citizen of the British Empire has been emphasized by Stratis Tsirkas, another writer from the Greek diaspora of Egypt, who read Cavafy politically. In this framework he proposed an intriguing, subversive reading of “Waiting for the barbarians”, which might add an interesting contribution to the record of readings proposed earlier for the specific poem, although it should always be taken into consideration that Tsirkas “tries to fabricate a “political” Cavafy whose work is defined by coordinates both of the world political scene and the Greek community of Alexandria” (Chryssanthopoulos, 2010: 186).

Tsirkas gives a detailed record of the approaches to Cavafy’s poem –which were also presented at the beginning of this paper–, but deconstructs approaches based on theories like Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence, and interprets the notes left by Cavafy himself or by Cavafy’s personal contacts on the basis of a political understanding. Distinguishing differences between the handwritten and the published form of the poem, Tsirkas argues that although the poem was published in 1904, it was written between 1899 and 1900. What inspired Cavafy to write the poem was, according to Tsirkas, the defeat of Mahdism to the British Empire in Sudan (Tsirkas, 1973: 321-346 and 1980: 48-54). The battle of Omdurman (1898) reaching the peak of this confrontation was registered in the French speaking press of Alexandria (*Phare d’ Alexandrie*) as the victory of “civilization against barbarism”, which is quoted by Tsirkas from a newspaper article ending in “there are no barbarians any more”, a phrase that most clearly echoes in Cavafy’s verse (Tsirkas, 1980: 50). Based on this evidence, Tsirkas is convinced that Cavafy wrote the poem under the impact of these events and reads the “dramatic disappearance of the barbarians in the poem” as the “sudden collapse of Mahdism” (Tsirkas, 1980: 53). Resorting to narratives of the period, especially an article published in the *Egyptian Gazette* (1898) under the title

“What we are to do in Sudan” (Tsirkas, 1980: 51), he gives the full picture of the political situation and the tension among Mahdi’s supporters, the British Empire and the diasporas in Egypt (Greek, French and so forth). The title recalls –or foretells– the rhetoric in “Waiting for the barbarians” (what are to do without barbarians) along with the coming of people from the borders, whose narratives were announcing the imminent invasion of Mahdi’s army in Egypt, a prospect that was either accompanied by hope or fear (Tsirkas, 1973: 337).

If Tsirkas’ approach to “Waiting for the barbarians” refers to the realistic, synchronic aspect of the empire, Kazantzakis’ approach to Cavafy appeals to the “metaphoric” (Keeley, 1996: 13), diachronic aspect of the empire engaging in the third intensity that revolves around Cavafy’s citizenship and Alexandria. Coming back to the encounter of Kazantzakis and Cavafy, we are reminded that Kazantzakis’ view attributes to Cavafy features of the decadent, over-refined empire; he is represented as “holding a scroll with eulogies in subtle, copperplate writing” (Kazantzakis, 2004: 78), just like the eminent members of the state or, to go by Deleuze and Guattari’s vocabulary, just like the distinct organs of the tree-root state-apparatus would do; he is dressed in festive, luxurious clothes with make up on his face and waits for the barbarians like a typical citizen of the empire would do. Though we have seen Cavafy as a citizen of the British Empire holding a citizenship of the present, Kazantzakis now claims for him an imperial citizenship of the past.

To access the conception of citizenship at this level one should take into consideration that Kazantzakis addresses Cavafy as “one of the last flowers of a civilization”, “the most exceptional personality in Egypt”, “a brave soul that slowly, pathetically, without power or deprived of courage is saying goodbye to the Alexandria it loses” (Kazantzakis, 1969: 78-9). It has been noted that Cavafy speaks of a world in crisis and that underneath his personal poetry a layer of collective, historical problems is always present (Meraklis, 1985: 62). This world that heads to its end might refer to the Hellenic world in Alexandria, which reached its peak during the Hellenistic era, but was meant to be displaced after Cavafy’s death. As a representative of the last phase of Hellenism in Alexandria, Cavafy vests his poetry with the retrospective glance that restores a vital connection to its imperial Hellenistic past and embodies in his presence in Alexandria an experience in the Hellenistic Empire or “the great new Hellenic world” (“In the Year 200 B.C.”), to use his own words. Based on this approach, we can understand that the “metaphoric” city validates Cavafy’s citizenship in the poetic empire built around the city of Alexandria with Cavafy holding a citizenship of the past this time. We can also recognize how perceptive E. Keeley is in his suggestion that Cavafy’s devotion to Hellenistic Greece which was structured around Alexandria designates a more mature approach to metaphor (Keeley, 1996: 35).

As the third metaphoric intensity concludes on the conjunction related to Cavafy's citizenship, it seems obvious that, while Cavafy stresses the diasporic / migrant element in his identity, Kazantzakis stresses the imperial element in his view of Cavafy. In Kazantzakis' eyes Cavafy represents the empire. Whether he recognizes features of the empire in Cavafy or if he is writing them on him, he faces in Cavafy the imperial representative. In this perspective their encounter narrates the confrontation of two archetypes: the imperial representative and the nomad. In Cavafy's paradigm we have shown how the "new barbarian" of Hardt and Negri conceptualizes the migrant subject. Kazantzakis' paradigm shows how the "new barbarian" of Hardt and Negri conceptualizes the mobility of the intellectual labor force.

Hardt and Negri notice that in the era of globalization laboring practices tend to become all the more dependent on the extensive use of computers; in this sense "interactive and cybernetic machines become a new prosthesis integrated into our bodies and minds and a lens through which to redefine our bodies and minds themselves" (Hardt–Negri, 2000: 291). Kazantzakis is not going to Alexandria on vacation; he is travelling there as the correspondent of a newspaper -he is a worker. In his case journey means work, and transition might be understood as the mobility of intellectual labor power. In his capacity as a journalist Kazantzakis appropriates the identity of the new barbarian, who enters the empire to confront the imperial representative and record his experience as a view of the empire. He therefore becomes a nomad, a person that moves to another place, a body that undergoes this experience of transition carrying his belongings with him. The belongings of this nomad, the prosthesis integrated into his body or the extension of his body, is the corpus of his writing. Leaving Greece to go to Egypt, Kazantzakis is bringing his text with him. And his text this time is not fiction or poetry; it is travel writing that articulates an entirely different type of speech. Travel writing adopts the rational, objective, journalistic trope, while fiction and poetry are rich in tropes that frequently resist rational understanding.

Treating the literal/figurative divide Nietzsche, who has been a teacher to Kazantzakis through his works, conceptualizes the "rhetoricity of language" –to use de Man's term (De Man, 1979: 110) – as a moving army, a series of tropes that move like an army:

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred and embellished and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins

(Nietzsche, 2000: 56).



Nietzsche represents the function of the rhetorical tropes as the action of a moving army, an army which hasn't been worn out or drained of sensuous force, but attacks by surprise and conquers the unsuspecting listeners; an army of barbarians or nomads maybe. These barbarians or nomads that are called metaphors, metonymies and anthropomorphisms march in the text as the powerful value that will intensify, bring back illusion or transpose from literal to figurative.

When Kazantzakis is leaving Greece to go to Egypt, he is also leaving behind fiction or poetry and its figurative language in taking along travelogue, a literal text. All these nomads, his army of literary tropes, his barbarians are left behind. Kazantzakis enters Egypt without his barbarians. He is a lonely nomad heading to meet the representative of the empire. And his text, travelogue, is a lonely text devoid of the possibility to use figures of speech; it is a nomad that rushes to catch sight of the empire, to seize the empire. At the sight of the Empire, however, this loner too, this lonely text becomes nomadic in the sense Deleuze and Guattari would use the term: it lays its roots beside the imperial root-tree and forms a multiplicity with it.

What this paper suggests by initiating the term nomadic text is not another definition of the travel text; it is the definition of a text which deterritorializes from its locality or the space of its generic citizenship to reterritorialize in generic globality, in a space of diasporic citizenship. Kazantzakis' text is territorialized in the travel genre, which can be defined as its locality, and within its local context the travelogue accommodates a literal and rational articulation. A typically and politically correct travelogue would be expected to inform the reader about Cavafy's *realia*, his life, events, his surroundings, his house, the interior, the neighbourhood, but instead Kazantzakis' travelogue accommodates Cavafy's poetry or, to be more precise, reproduces Cavafy's poetry.

Kazantzakis is structuring a travel text which, instead of presenting places and objects, it represents other texts; it reads other texts -Cavafy's texts. Kazantzakis' text generically defined by rationalism and minimalistic rhetoric becomes a nomad, a little barbarian approaching the imperial poetic text, which indulges in the luxury of figurative speech. As the nomadic travel text approaches the imperial poetic text to read or interpret, it deconstructs the idea of the critical text as a metalanguage in the Foucauldian sense and transforms reading into writing, since, instead of reading poetry, it is writing poetry within the travel genre.

When Kazantzakis describes Cavafy, he uses the exact phrases and pictures from Cavafy's poem: he is holding a scroll with eulogies just like the emperor in the poem; he is dressed in luxurious, festive clothes just like the consuls and praetors, and he is waiting for the barbarians just like the people of the empire. Kazantzakis reproduces even the evocative atmosphere of the poem. It is evident that the travel text echoes the poem in

the rhetoric employed at the representation of Cavafy. The similar technique is employed when Kazantzakis views Cavafy saying goodbye to Alexandria, using the exact rhetoric of the poem “The God abandons Anthony”. The travel text reformulates the poetic text or the poetic text striates the travel text, while the nomadic and the imperial text intertwine on the construction of a multiplicity. At the very moment that the travel text adopts the rhetoric of the poem, it undergoes a process of becoming poetry itself and therefore it does not present poetry; it represents poetry.

In the same sense Kazantzakis’ travel text is not presenting Cavafy; it is representing Cavafy. When Kazantzakis views Cavafy, he recognizes in him signs of the empire; he reads in him and through him his poem “Waiting for the barbarians”. Kazantzakis does not see Cavafy; he reads him. Furthermore he reads him as a protagonist in his own poem. This approach of Kazantzakis detaches Cavafy from reality and places him in his own poetry as the leading hero; it transforms him into a fictional persona. In using this fictional strategy the travel text forfeits its rational character in favour of a fictional character. The presence of the imperial representative Cavafy draws from within the nomad journalist Kazantzakis the literary writer and poet.

Kazantzakis’ body, leaving the local text of Greece to move to the global text of the multicultural empire –of the past or the present does not seem to matter–, participates in the nomadic identity. Paradigmatically and crossing the boundaries between body and text, his text also participates in the nomadic identity and becomes the nomadic text, as it moves among travel genre, poetry and fiction. This travel text offers the paradigm of a nomadic text because it deterritorializes from the generic space of travel genre and reterritorializes in the generic space of poetry and fiction. This function of the text defines a diasporic move that seeks citizenship between the center and the outskirts of the genre, and finally obtains it on the transition from the generic locality to the generic globality, as it establishes the identity of the global text.

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## NOTES

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**2** The point has been argued in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 29 (2011).

**3** Je suis l'Empire à la fin de la décadence,  
Qui regarde passer les grands Barbares blancs  
En composant des acrostiches indolents  
D'un style d'or où la langueur du soleil danse.

L'âme seulette a mal au cœur d'un ennui dense,  
Là-bas on dit qu'il est de longs combats sanglants.

Ô n'y pouvoir, étant si faible aux vœux si lents,  
Ô n'y vouloir fleurir un peu cette existence!

Ô n'y vouloir, ô n'y pouvoir mourir un peu!  
Ah! tout est bu! Bathylle, as-tu fini de rire?  
Ah! tout est bu, tout est mangé! Plus rien à dire!

Seul, un poème un peu niais qu'on jette au feu,  
Seul, un esclave un peu coureur qui vous néglige,  
Seul, un ennui d'on ne sait quoi qui vous afflige!  
(Verlaine, 1884: 104)

**4** "According to *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words*, the term "glocal" and the process noun "glocalization" are "formed by telescoping *global* and *local* to make a blend". Also according to the *Dictionary* that idea has been "modelled on Japanese dochakuka (deriving from dochaku

"living on one's own land"), originally the agricultural principle of adapting one's own farming techniques to local conditions, but also adopted in Japanese business for *global localization*, a global outlook adapted to local conditions" (emphasis in original). More specifically the terms "glocal" and "glocalization" became aspects of business jargon during the 1980s, but their major locus of origin was in fact Japan, a country which has for a very long time strongly cultivated the spatio-cultural significance of Japan itself and where the general issue of the relationship between the particular and the universal has historically received almost obsessive attention. By now it has become, again in the words of *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words* "one of the main marketing buzzwords of the beginning of the nineties". (Robertson, 1995: 28).

"Global capitalism both promotes and is conditioned by cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity. The production and consolidation of difference and variety is an essential ingredient of contemporary capitalism, which is, in any case, increasingly involved with a growing variety of *micro*-markets (national-cultural, racial and ethnic; general; social-stratificational; and so on). At the same time micro-marketing takes place within the contexts of increasingly universal-global economic practices. [...] We must thus recognize directly "real world" attempts to bring the global, in the sense of the macroscopic aspect of contemporary life, into conjunction with the local, in the sense of the microscopic side of life in the late twentieth century" (Robertson, 1992: 173).

**5** A detailed biographical note of Cavafy by M. Savvidis can be encountered at the official website of the Cavafy Archive [<http://www.cavafy.com/companion/bio.asp>].

## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

ΑΡΑΜΠΑΤΖΙΔΟΥ ΛΕΝΑ: Ανάμεσα στους Βαρβάρους και την Αυτοκρατορία: Χαρτογραφώντας διαδρομές προς την κατεύθυνση του νομαδικού κείμενου.

Η εργασία διαρθρώνεται γύρω από δύο κομβικά σημεία, ορίζοντας αυτό που ονομάζει «νομαδικό κείμενο» και προτείνοντας μια καινούρια ερμηνευτική προοπτική για το *«Περιμένοντας τους βαρβάρους»* του Καβάφη. Τα δυο εγχειρήματα εξελίσσονται παράλληλα και μέσα στο πλαίσιο που θέτει το ταξιδιωτικό κείμενο του Νίκου Καζαντζάκη για την επίσκεψή του στον Κ. Π. Καβάφη στην Αλεξάνδρεια. Η μελέτη εκκινεί από την προσέγγιση του Καβάφη, όπως την επιχειρεί ο Καζαντζάκης μέσω της πρόσληψης του *«Περιμένοντας τους βαρβάρους»*, αναδιατάσσοντας αναγνωρίσιμους συσχετισμούς στον κειμενικό χώρο, για να προχωρήσει στην αναθεώρηση της αναγνωστικής προοπτικής με μια ερμηνευτική πρόταση που διαλέγεται με έννοιες της κοινωνικοπολιτικής συγχρονίας. Νευραλγικής σημασίας στη νέα ερμηνευτική θεώρηση είναι οι έννοιες της αυτοκρατορίας και των βαρβάρων ή νομάδων, οι οποίες εξετάζονται σε διάλογο με τις θεωρίες των Deleuze - Guattari και Hardt - Negri, για να καταδείξουν την πολλαπλή λειτουργικότητα του καβαφικού κειμένου, που ανανεώνει το υλικό του μέσα από καινούργιες σημασιολογικές αναδιπλώσεις. Η αντιπαράθεση της αυτοκρατορίας και των βαρβάρων εξετάζεται καταρχάς στο πλαίσιο της θεματικής και κατά δεύτερο λόγο στο πλαίσιο της ρητορικής. Η θεματική εξέταση διαστέλλει την πραγμάτευση ομοιογένειας-ετερογένειας, αναγνωρίζοντας στη σχέση αυτοκρατορίας και βαρβάρων μια επικοινωνία «ριζωματικής» υφής, η σημειολογία της οποίας αναπτύσσεται παραδειγματικά μέσα από την έννοια του «ριζώματος», που εισήγαγαν οι Deleuze-Guattari αντιστικτικά προς την έννοια του διπόλου. Μέσα από τη συζήτηση της ιδιοσυστασίας της αυτοκρατορίας και των βαρβάρων ως νομαδικών κοινοτήτων, η νομαδικότητα κατοχυρώνεται ως στοιχείο θεματικής, για να αναδειχθεί σε δεσπόζουσα πολιτικής κατά το διάλογο με τη θεωρία των Hardt - Negri, η οποία τροφοδοτείται από τη συγκυρία της παγκοσμιοποίησης, όπως και η θεωρία του R. Robertson για την «παγκοσμιοεντοπιότητα» (Glocalization). Η αλληλοσύνδεση αυτών των θεωρήσεων σε σχέση επανατροφοδότησης με την καβαφική ποιητική δεν αντιπαρέχεται το θέμα της υπηκοότητας σε παρόντα ή παρελθόντα χρόνο, αλλά επιτείνει το συνδυασμό του με το θέμα της μετάβασης, της μετανάστευσης ή της εντοπιότητας και την παισίωσή του στην κυριολεκτική ή μεταφορική πραγματικότητα της Αλεξάνδρειας. Η έκβαση του επιχειρήματος εμπεδώνει τη δυναμική της νομαδικότητας ως στοιχείου θεματικής, αλλά και την αγωγή της από στοιχείο θεματικής σε στοιχείο ρητορικής με την πραγματοποίηση διαβάσεων από τη σωματική αναπαράσταση στην κειμενική ταυτότητα του νομαδικού υποκειμένου. Ο νομάδας, ο οποίος έχει ήδη παρουσιαστεί στη διάρκεια της εργασίας ως ποιητικό ή πολιτικό – πάντως σωματικό – υποκείμενο, δηλώνει τώρα την παρουσία του ως κειμενικό υποκείμενο διασχίζοντας τα σύνορα σώματος και κειμένου. Η καταληκτική πραγμάτευση της νομαδικότητας αφορά ανακατατάξεις στην κειμενικότητα με χωρικές επικαλύψεις ταξιδιωτικής γραφής και ποίησης και στην πραγματικότητα διαχειρίζεται τη γενετική υπόσταση λόγου και είδους. Η διερεύνηση της καθαρότητας και μίξης των γενών λόγου και των λογοτεχνικών ειδών δίνει τις κατευθύνσεις στην προβληματική του νομαδικού κειμένου, της οποίας ο καίριος λόγος εκφέρεται πάντα ως ζήτημα υπηκοότητας και οικουμενικής προοπτικής.