REVISITING THE NAMES.
KORAIS' POLITICAL CRATYLISM

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In this article I set out to explore some aspects of Korais' engagement with language reform as a political enterprise. To do so, I try to contextualize relevant ideas of his in the broader intellectual framework of the Enlightenment, as concerns ideas about language, political ideas and their intertwinement, and to trace them in his pre- and post-revolutionary production. I attempt to solve a series of puzzles that arise successively, as one tries to unwind the threads of his intellectual constitution with regard to his aims and purposes. In that framework, I endeavor to clarify some of his theses on the relationship of (a) language, thought and morals, and (b) language, nature, and culture, which I attempt to show were: (i) based on mainstream empiricist Enlightenment ideas; and (ii) driven by and subservient to a program of political emancipation of a community which, as it happened, evolved into a modern nation.

Keywords: Korais, Cratylism, Enlightenment, language reform.

1. SETTING THE SCENE

Isolating quotes from Korais' writings may turn out to be a perilous enterprise. Passages such as the following appear bizarre, not to say unsound, at least to an early 21st-century linguist's eyes:

(1) Inappropriateness (άτοπα) of language easily engenders inappropriateness of reasoning, and these again become generators of inappropriateness of [social] behavior (διαγωγής). Whosoever has learned to be inappropriate in one is not long in transferring inappropriateness to others too; hence the disturbance of morals is mostly simultaneous with the disturbance of language, as experience in all nations has shown. (Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 105)

(2) [T]he first inventors (ευρεταί) of the words coined them, driven often not by wisdom but by the very nature of things; thereafter, ample time and the passions of men made these [words] signify something different than they initially did, or even signify nothing at all. (Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 509).

What do these two quotes have in common? I'm going to argue that they may have something – and moreover something *meaningful* – beyond their repugnance to an ahistorical modern linguist – or at least tothe one I used to be. I'm going to start from the second quote, which has attracted the attention of both a literary

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scholar and a historical linguist. This will be an attempt at re-contextualization, and consequently an exercise in the history of ideas.

In his doctoral dissertation, Miltos Pechlivanos approaches the issue of what seems to be an utterly Cratylistic statement by Korais, from a Foucaultian point of view: there is a quest for transparency, in order to make visible things obscured under the cover of words, and this, according to Pechlivanos, drives the Koraic enterprise of language "correction". Moreover, in this enterprise there should be a point where the dipole of *θέσει* and *φύσει*, interpretation in terms of law as a positing force on the one hand, and interpretation in terms of nature on the other, converge, or at least work in complementarity.[1] I think there is a fruitful insight here as to the driving force of Koraic language "correction", though my approach will not be a Foucaultian one, as I will try clarify in what follows.

So from, Peter Mackridge's recent benchmark essay on the Greek Language Controversy, here comesa quote relevant to both my initial source quotes, and indeed encompassing them:

> "Korais is not an Atticist. Although in practice he used Greek words in their modern meanings, he urged his readers to trace words back to their original meanings, which were closer to 'the nature of things'. Whenever the meaning of a word in Modern Greek differs from its ancient meaning (e.g. καλός /kalós/, Ancient Greek 'beautiful', Modern Greek 'good'), Korais describes the modern meaning as a *Katachrisis* [misuse/abuse]. Where the form has changed since ancient times (e.g. εξηλόνω /eksilóno/; *sic*: the Modern Greek form is actually /ksilóno/ [dismantle; unstitch], from the ancient εξηλόω), the Modern Greek form is a *diafthorá* [corruption]. Whereas the Ancient Greek ending of a word is 'genuine', the Modern Greek ending (if it is different) is 'barbarous'. The moral overtones of these labels are obvious: linguistic 'corruption', as we have seen, accompanies the 'distortion' of moral character'" (Mackridge 2009: 116).[2]

Several questions arise here. First one has to distinguish between the issue of lexical semantics on the one hand and the issue of grammar (including syntax) on the other; admittedly, both are of interest to Korais. But, as I will argue, they are not equally connected to alleged moral corruption; as Korais puts it on behalf of the Stoics [:] "the lack of definition of *words* engenders the unsettledness of ideas, and this again [engenders] the unsettledness of deeds".[3] This is not to say that issues of morphology and syntax are not relevant to the exercise of thought and judgment, as

[1] Pechlivanos 1999: 193–202.

[2] As Mackridge remarks, Korais thought that "because of their enslavement to foreign rulers, the Modern Greeks were incapable of thinking *and thus* of speaking properly; the correction of language would, however, lead to correction of both thought and behavior" (Mackridge, *ibid*, p. 109). There seems to be a problem here in the cause and effect relation, further complicating the issue I set out to explore.

[3] Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 486, note.

conceived in the broader Enlightenment; onthe contrary, there is a syntactic aspect e.g. to Condillac's concept of "liaison des idées": the relationship amongideas is supposed (among other things) to be a matter of syntax.[4] Also, historically, the conflict over word order which raged in the 18th century is in principle a question of core syntax – though the debates ultimately center on issues aesthetic and political.[5] But Korais is careful not to take sides in the debate over word order as far as Greek, both Modern and Ancient, are concerned.[6] Indeed, his interest in syntax proves to be minimal. Moreover, for the bulk of morphology and the quasi-totality of syntax Korais allows himself to accept the status quo of the vernacular, though often expressing discomfort.

When Korais speaks of "syntax", he is mostly thinking about matters of either *Logic* or *Rhetoric*: "Syntactic incorrectness (ασυνταξία) of language always accompanies syntactic incorrectness of concepts (ασυνταξία των εννοιών); because whoever gets used to disdaining the rules of Grammar will rapidly also disdain the rules of Logic".[7]There is nothing exceptional about this claim by Korais in the time it was made; indeed it is but a restatement of a basic thesis of Condillac, a piece of 18th-century philosophical orthodoxy, still an orthodoxy in early 19th-century *milieus Idéologistes*. According to Condillac's *Logique*, « tout l'art de raisonner se réduit à l'art de *bien* parler » ; therefore, « notre manière de raisonner ne peut se corriger qu'en corrigeant le langage ».[8] Indeed, as he puts it in his *Grammaire*, « L'art de parler n'est donc que l'art de penser et l'art de raisonner, qui se développe à mesure que les langues se perfectionnent, et il devient l'art d'écrire, lorsqu' il acquiert toute l'exactitude et toute la précision dont il est susceptible »[9]. What is of more interest is Korais'*triple* relation of language, reasoning, *and morals*. I will argue that this has nothing to do with the *formal* structure of language and reasoning, whatever the relationship between them,[delete] as conceived in the Enlightenment. Instead, it has everything to do with the *content* of language and reasoning. That is to say it has to do with precise significances; and full meanings are primarily borne by content *words*. Therefore, my interest will center on issues of the lexicon. Notably, Korais' claim in quote (2) is about *words*; moreover, it is in many respects weaker than the following, made by Condillac:

[4] « Les idées se lient avec les signes; et ce n'est par ce moyen … qu'elles se lient entre elles » (Condillac 1803 [1746], v. 1, p. 9). This is a crucial idea for his concept of « analyse »; see *ibid*. p, 114–5; Condillac 1803 [1775]: 4; Condillac 1780: 19, 38, 42.

[5] Ricken 1994, chap. 9 ; cf. Kalokerinos 2014: 467–470.

[6] See his unique, cursory and evasive mention of "inversions" in Ancient and Modern Greek in his 1803 *Mémoire* (Korais 1803: 57).

[7] (Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 126); for "synthesis" as both sentence and text arrangement, see Korais 1984/1883 (1807: Improvised Reflections on Rhetoric).

[8] Condillac 1780 : 107 & 148; « la grammaire, l'idéologie, et la logique, ne sont qu'une et la même chose » (Destutt de Tracy 2001 [1801] : 302.

[9] Condillac 1803 [1775]: xxxvii; echoed in Korais: "the practice of rhetoric becomes at the same time an instrument for perfecting language" (Korais 1984/1833 [1807]: 233). Here, Korais' "rhetoric" is an « art d'écrire » *for a public*.

"Les hommes qui ont fait des *langues*, ont … été guides par la nature, c'est-à-dire par les besoins qui sont une suite de notre conformation".[10] This is a strong claim on the genesis of language *structure*, one of which no echo is found in Korais' work.

Focusing then on the lexical-semantical issue in Mackridge's quote, I propose we first consider the double meaning of the term 'Katachresis', to which Mackridge appeals: as Korais is fully aware, *Katachresis* points both to a rhetorical figure, a variant of metaphor, and to the notion of abuse; "abuse of words" is a much debated issue, indeed a commonplace of 17th and 18th century debates, at least from Hobbes' political writings and Locke's *Essay* onwards; only the second meaning bears an utterly moral connotation. As for Mackridge's example, *καλός*, Korais appears not to complain about the word's semantic shift. In the first place, the semantic drift from Ancient to Modern Greek is motivated by a metaphorical use cautioned by Socrates' authority, and has its origin in a frequent "confusion" of *καλός* with *αγαθός* already noted in ancient times, exemplified also by Aristophanes;[11] moreover, Ancient Greek *το καλόν* "was often associated and came to function as synonymous with the *just* (*το Δίκαιον*)".[12] Secondly, the stabilization of "the significance of *καλόν* instead of *αγαθόν* (bon)" is of considerable vintage, being attested in the ecclesiastical Koine;[13] and as Mackridge acknowledges, in the passage immediately preceding the above quote, "[Korais] urges that words derived from Ancient Greek should be used as far as possible as they were used by Hellenic authors and poets; this means ancient Greek authors in general, not only those of the Classical period, but those of the Hellenistic and imperial Roman periods too: Korais was not an Atticist" (Mackridge, *ibid*). Nevertheless, Korais does not accord equal value to authors and poets over so long a time span, nor even to those of the same period: interestingly, works by some of them may be perfect in Attic style, but void of content. Contrary to what quote (1) predisposes the reader to believe, perfect text arrangement (including *syntax*) may go together with perverse thinking and bad/corrupted morals.[14] As a matter of fact, Korais becomes more cautious vis-à-vis the authors, the further removed they are from classical times. But of course classical times are not the beginning of language: the "inventors of words" are obviously to be found in a more remote past; a past also of classical times.

[10] Condillac 1803 [1775]: 71.

[11] Korais 1829: 169 & 171.

[12] Korais 1990 [1825]: 322, with reference to Platonic *Gorgias*; in (ancient) Greek, *καλόνγενέσθαι* can refer not only to the body but also to the soul, "since the very virtue of the rational animal was named by them [i.e. the Ancients] *Τοκαλόν*" (*ibid*); "Our present tongue has restricted the significance of *τοκαλόν*, to the beauty of the soul. One who possesses corporeal beauty is named not *Καλός* but *Εύμορφος*" (*ibid*, in note).

[13] Korais 1832: 214–5.

[14] Thus, for example, "in Longus we find the perspicuous of expression, the literal, the Attic… but he lacks the most important: mind (νουν) and judgment (κρίσιν)" (Korais 1984/1833 [1804]: 10; cf. *ibid*, p. 12, [1809]: 249).

So my question becomes twofold. Given his intellectual environment: (a) could Korais be a Cratylist?; (b) if so, is he an ordinary Cratylist – or for that matter a Cratylist at all?

2. CRATYLISM AND ETYMOLOGY

The answer to the first part of the question is affirmative; revived Cratylism is in line with thepredominant empiricism of the late Enlightenment to which Korais belongs. Despite hostility to Aristotle in the new Baconian-Cartesian age of the 17th century, the doctrine of the conventionality of the sign is defended by the otherwise anti-Aristotelian Port-Royal thinkers, and also by Locke, the founder of modern empiricism and an attentive reader of the Port-Royal *Grammar* and *Logic*. In both Port-Royal and Locke, the arbitrariness of the sign is also invested with a moral – and ultimately political- overtone, namely the exercise of man's free will, even though exercising it might sometimes be risky, as we will see.[15] Thus, there is no *necessary* connection between empiricism and Cratylism.[16]

Oddly enough, the empiricist Locke's defense of the conventionality of the sign is countered by the rationalist Leibniz, who advances an argument for a sensationalist origin for speech.[17] Leibniz is praised by Korais in the *Improptu Thoughts* of 1812 (Prolegomena to Plutarch's *Vitae* – part one) for his –a philosopher's- engagement with etymology; but Korais does not comment on the manner of this engagement; he simply underlines the fact that Leibniz did not consider etymology a subject unworthy of philosophical scrutiny.[18] In the course of the 18th century, Condillac, who aims both at emphasizing the role of language in the constitution of thought as introduced by Locke in Modernity, and at radicalizing Locke's empiricism, shifts from the arbitrariness of the sign to a Cratylism-friendly notion of «signes institutionels», in line with his conception of

[15] Arnauld & Nicole 1992 [1662]: 86 (I.xiv); Arnold & Lancelot 2010 [1660]: 93–4 (II.xx); Locke [2]2004 [[5]1706]: 363 (III.ii.1), 366 (III.iii.8); cf. Guyer 1995, Kalokerinos 2011: 24–25, 30; Kalokerinos 2014: 414–427.

[16] In the *Encyclopédie* (art. « Etymologie »), Turgot combines comfortably strong empiricism with unabashed conventionalism: « Les mots n'ont point avec ce qu'ils expriment un rapport nécessaire; ce n'est pas même en vertu d'une convention formelle & fixée invariablement entre les hommes, que certains sons réveillent dans notre esprit certaines idées. Cette liaison est l'effet d'une habitude formée dans l'enfance à force d'entendre répéter les mêmes sons dans des circonstances à-peu-près semblables: elle s'établit dans l'esprit des peuples, sans qu'ils y pensent; elle peut s'effacer par l'effet d'une autre habitude qui se formera aussi sourdement & par les mêmes moyens » (*Encyclopédie*, 1756, vol. 6, p. 98a).

[17] « Il y a quelque chose de naturel dans l'origine des mots, qui marque un rapport entre les choses et mouvements des organes de la voix » Leibniz 1990 [1703/1765] : 220 (III. ii.1) ; for historical-philosophical interpretation of Leibniz's Cratylism, see Gennete 1976: 59–70, Rutherford 1995: 240–3, Pektas 2005 ; cf. Kalokerinos 2011: 34–36.

[18] Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 497.

cognition as «sensation transformée».[19] In the second half of the 18th century, there is aplethora of writings in Philosophical Grammar advocating a gradualistic formation of language as the alleged instrument of thought extracted from the senses.[20] Moreover, the Ideologues, followers of Condillac's doctrines, head in the same direction under the leadership of Destutt de Tracy.[21]

Korais' intellectual adherence to the *Idéologues* has been questioned by Panayotis Kondylis, who argues that he limits himself to the commonplaces of the Enlightenment rather than to particular polemical doctrines.[22] Given that philosophical late 18th century commonplaces are empiricist, I think this is right: Korais does stick to moderate (mostly, Lockean) empiricist commonplaces; furthermore, it is part of his mature strategy to do so. After 1800, he retreats from ambitions of doing *prima philosophia* (with a single notable exception, to be discussed below). So one important question to answer concerns the intended readership of his Prolegomena: the question of his writing intention. To this I shall return. But whatever the answer, it still holds that Korais lives in an intellectual milieu dominated by the Ideologues, the most prominent of whom were active not only in philosophy but also in politics.[23]

Be that as it may, I think we can safely conclude that, generally speaking, a late 18th and early 19th century European scholar *could* have been a Cratylist. So, to answer question (a), Korais could have been a Cratylist. But with regard to question (b), as I will now try to show, he was *not* one, at least not in the main sense of the term as presented above; ordinary Cratylism, or indeed any in-depth philosophical discussion of the origin of language, is beside the point for Korais. Yet there is good reason for him to have adhered to a strictly circumscribed and highly political version of Cratylism. What follows will lend support to Alkis Angelou's statement that "the center of Korais' thought is purely political", endorsing, moreover, Paschalis Kitromilides' appraisal of Korais as "the keenest political mind of the Greek Enlightenment". More specifically, as K. Th. Dimaras put it, "some words, some concepts constitute the basic weft of Korais' writing

[19] Condillac 1803 [1775]: 79–82; cf. Ricken 1994: 101–110; Kalokerinos 2011: 33, 37–38; Kalokerinos 2014: 442–4.

[20] Prominent among them, the much read Desbrosses 1765, who argues strongly for the pre-reflective ("involuntary"), "natural", causal ("mechanic"), non-arbitrary establishment of words in the "langue primitive": "Les termes *onomatopées* sont en très-grand nombre, tous originaux & primitifs, tous faisant partie de la langue primitive naturelle" (p. 253). Desbrosses quotes approvingly from Plato's Cratylus (in **L**atin): "Quandam nominum proprietatem ex rebus ipsis inn[u]atam esse" (p. 261); his praise of Leibniz, in the following page, is much more substantial than that by Korais.

[21] « Condillac est, je crois, le premier qui ait observé et prouvé que sans signes nous ne pourrions presque pas comparer nos idées simples, ni analyser nos idées composées » (Destutt de Tracy 2004 [1801]: 272).

[22] Kondylis [3]2008: 201–221.

[23] Gusdorf 1978: 285ff; Kitromilides 2013: 269, 277 (= Kitromilides 1996: 395, 407); cf. Dimaras [5]1989: 337–8.

production. Perhaps *justice*, above all; *freedom*; *virtue*".[24] Korais' endeavor to reform language was a political enterprise.

The question of the arbitrariness of the sign was not something foreign to the Greek readership in the early 18th century; in the sequel to an article published in the Vienna-based magazine *Ermiso Logios* under the grandiloquent title "Universal History of Arts and Sciences" we read that language "consists of arbitrary (προαιρετικών), conventional (κατάσυνθήκην), often totally unsubstantial and non-existent signs", though as the last qualification predisposes the reader, this is a characteristic of the untrustworthiness of language; and so the clause concludes: "which [signs] are the source of almost every fallacy (πλάνης) and hinder clear vision (θεωρίαν) and thought". "In the beginning", so the passage continues, "it was completely imperfect and almost nothing but an audible expression of feeling or an imitation of the voice of those animals which man associated with (συνανεστρέφετο)"; either way, language is bad, although the passage opens with an old cliché of Rhetoric praising language as "the first invention" of man which "established civil societies, gave laws and brought everything good and useful the human soul has known for social life". All this is confused enough.[25]

Korais repeatedly castigates the low quality of papers published in the magazine and urges contributors to translate rather than write *de novo* on subjects extensively dealt with in European scholarship.[26] He himself, when tackling in passing the question of the "first *creators* (δημιουργούς) of language", does not indulge in Cratylism: he speculates that discreteness, rather than anything else, of the nearly adjacent letters *o* and *n* (ν) may lie at the origin of *ναι* and *ου*.[27] This fanciful conjecture sounds less far-fetched if we consider the difficulty scholars before or even on the eve of historical linguistics had in sharply distinguishing between letters and sounds.[28] But what is of more interest here to us is the clearly pro-arbitrariness stance of Korais. Elsewhere, etymologizing the Modern Greek word *φτενόν* (slim), Korais traces it back to Ancient Greek *πτηνόν* (bird), "because it is in the nature of slim things to fly, that is to easily move up from the earth, by a very small blowing of wind".[29] The temptation to invoke onomatopoeia here is

[24] Angelou 1988: 201; Kitromilides 2013: 189 (= Kitromilides 1996: 271) ; Dimaras 1996 [1963]: 128; "Korais prepares an entire system of cultural and political education for the modern Greeks" (Dimaras [5]1989: 108); "language reform, far from being an issue of external forms and grammatical typicalities, touched on the very substance of the issue of moral education as a condition of national revival" (Kitromilides 2013: 271 = Kitromilides 1996: 399).

[25] *Ermis o Logios*, 1811, p. 169 (1/6/1811).

[26] Korais 1984/1833 [1814]: 563–5; "Transfusion" of knowledge (*μετακένωσις*) is one of the main topics of the 1814 *Improvised Reflections*, earlier found in correspondence: "transmission of these accomplished sciences resembles true transfusion (αληθινόνμετακένωμα)" (Korais 1979: 157, letter to Chios School Governors, of 4/11/1811).

[27] Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 132.

[28] Robins [4]1997: 198–9; nevertheless, Korais exhibits a rather acute awareness of phonology in an early draft of Modern Greek grammar, remained unfinished and unpublished (Korais 1888).

[29] Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 145.

notably resisted. Nevertheless, this further step is taken in his private correspondence, when it comes to the Latin *pluma* (wing), where he cautiously alludes to "a single one among the Moderns" who etymologizes ("by conjecture") the word from the Greek φλύω, and eventually evokes"the wave-like nature of the motion". On this basis, Korais goes on to conjecture that the sound complex /fl/ may recall "the fundamental idea of swift flow or motion", as suggested by Adelung in his Cratylist *Mithridates*.[30] But this happens only once, and cautiously so. Neither in the *Improvised Reflections* of 1812, written at around the same time he addresses this private letter to his friend Alexandros Vasiliou, nor in etymologies proposed in tentative lexical entries inserted in earlier *Improvised Reflections*, nor in the extensive 'Lexical Material' published towards the end of his life in his *Ἀτακτα,* does Korais undertake etymological enquiry beyond classical and occasionally Homeric Greek (as well as in various foreign languages). No traces of Cratylism are to befound in these enquiries. On the other hand, Korais explicitly denies Greek writers the title of "first inventors of words": they were *users* of already existing words;[31] they were civilized people, furthering civilization themselves, "born of savages".[32] Moreover, Korais wisely avoids adopting Adelung's extravagant conjecture on the origin of human language in Chinese.[33] For that matter, he equally wisely remains mute on the widespread hypothesis of a *Scythic* origin for extant European languages, including Greek, of which (in its eventual Scytho-Celtic version) Leibniz is a proponent.[34] What is more, he regularly prefixes the designation "Scythic" to the "Turkish nation", as a morally derogatory one, meaning "barbaric" and "ruthless".[35] Having such an excellent command of the literature, Korais is obviously careful in selecting his topics with regard to his strategic aims.

[30] Korais 1979: 172 (letter to Alexandros Vasiliou, of 19/1/1812); /fl/ is also Desbrosses' favourite onomatopoeic sound complex; see Desbrosses, *ibid*. 257–265.

[31] Korais 1982: 52–3 (letter to Iakovos Rotas, of 14/10/1817)

[32] Korais ["Pantazis"] 1819: 26; cf. Korais 1984/1833 [1814]: 566.

[33] Metcalf 2013, chap. 11.

[34] According to Leibniz, among extant European languages, „die Deutche Sprache vor vielen anderen dem Ursprung sich zu nähern scheint" and archaic German „über das Alter aller griechischen und lateinishen Bücher hinaußteigt" (Leibniz 2000 [1697]: 74–6 & 72 [50] & [46]); evidently, this is a discussion which Korais does not even consider entering into when writing for his fellow Greeks, or even, for that matter, whenaddressing a French or non-exclusively-German Europeanreadership. There is one mention of the "possibility" of a common Scythic origin for both the Persians and the Germans, in Korais' private correspondence (Korais 1979: 297; letter to A. Vasiliou, before 27/11/1805).

[35] Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 185–6, 190 (in note: "Scythic stupidity"), [1810]: 388 (in note: "uneducated" Scyths), [1814]: 485 (the latter allusion, taken as a hint against the clergy, caused Korais some troubles with the Patriarchate, as attested in a letter to him by Michael Vasiliou, of 29/7/1815; Korais 1979: 423]. This derogatory stance may also be taken as an additional indication of the Scythic hypothesis having lost currency by the early 19th century. Most probably, Korais' "Scyths" are the ones alluded to in the abbé Barthelemy's *New Anacharsis* (see Korais ["Pantazis"] 1819: 98).

Now, what was the situation of the Koraic "first inventors of words"? In the 1810 *Improvised Reflections*, Korais gave his fellow Greeks a brief didactic exposition of "mankind's infancy" and subsequent exit from the state of nature: "In the beginning men had very obscure ideas of even the basic necessities in life, or none at all. Much time and long experience taught them little by little how to feed themselves, how to dress, how to settle permanently, how to speak with one another, how to associate … It took man hundreds of years … to bring his poor and amorphous language into a state to express his basic needs unhindered, and more, to raise it to such a state of perfection as we see in the writings of our immortal ancestors". People in today's state of progress who behave as if they were in mankind's infancy are foolish (μωροί); and so they "mumble a barbarous language or a language similar to that of the first inhabitants of the earth".[36] The spirit of the passage does not align with the idea that still appears as a viable interpretation of quote (2), i.e. of true natural *significances* in primitive times that were subsequently distorted by the passions and even reduced to nothing; nor does the characterization of "ancient times", given in the 1828 Prolegomena to the Theodore Prodromus poems, as "the times of mindlessness and infancy of the human kind."[37]Some years earlier, "the infancy of nations" had been characterized as the period when "imagination reigns more than rational thought";[38] imagination, then, was prey to the passions, much in line with Condillac's account of the emergence of language and reason.[39]

Yet in the 1812 *Improvised Reflections*and elsewhere, Korais does not set his sights on the ultimate archaeology of human language;[40] his aim is to unearth the allegedly *real* meanings of *some* words found under the pen of the glorious ancestors of the Modern Greeks – and these are somehow to be proven the *natural* ones. This describes our puzzle anew. As Korais puts it a few pages earlier, "We must investigate what each of those [words] signified to our ancestors, what it ended up signifying to us, and what its main significance is, compared with the analogous words of the enlightened nations. This inquiry Epictetus calls the *Following of Names* (Παρακολούθησιν των Ονομάτων), and he distinguishes it from the mere *use* of them, which, according to him, is nothing but speaking without knowing what one says, dealing with words as they come one after another to one's tongue, denuded of ideas, or dressed with irrational and beastly ideas".[41]

[36] Korais 1984/1833 [1810]: 403 & 404. It is noteworthy that those living like nomad *Scyths* are considered among the *μωροί*, and the *Chinese* among those having an "infant language" (*ibid*).

[37] Korais 1995: 176.

[38] Korais 1984/1833 [1814]: 567.

[39] Condillac 1803 [1756], 1984 [1754].

[40] More broadly, such genealogies are attempted more as thought experiments than as historical sketches, as convincingly argued by Aarsleff 1983: 158–165.

[41] Korais 1984/1833 [1812] 497; 'mere use' echoes the "*usage sans raison*" of Port-Royal; I shall return to this issue in what follows.

A dark picture emerges from the 1812 *Improvised Reflections*: there are people who do not know what they are talking about; worse still, there are people among his fellow Greeks who have no words for some things, and so stare at them "like a beast staring at its fodder, without knowing what it [its fodder] is".[42] This is in line with another empiricist Enlightenment commonplace: People need words to anchor ideas of things in their minds; and the more complex ideas are, the more in need of words they are – in order to keep their parts together in the mind, as Locke had already suggested.[43] Moreover, words are handles in the hand of the intellect's attention, focusing understanding on discrete parts of reality – an idea rooted in Condillac's thought, and elaborated by the leading Ideologist Destutt de Tracy, who was an acquaintance of Korais.[44] But in reality, and as far as material things such as plants are concerned, the latter problem appears less dramatic to Korais: following the influential book by Göttingen scholar Johann David Michaelis (1762), which he extensively quotes in the 1812 *Improvised Reflections*, Korais acknowledges that, in the main, country folk speaking the same language in different places simply prove to have different words for the same things.[45] So the problem becomes one of regulating communication, if there is a reason, or an aim, for a unified community. Still, our problem remains to extractmeaning from the claim that etymology is somehow related to the real meaning of (some) words; and that one has to be aware of it if one is to have clear and distinct ideas, i.e. to know what one is talking about.

Common places about the value of etymology are exemplified in passages such as the following, extracted from a work by Court de Gebelin, still widely read in the early 19th century:[46] « l'étymologie, nous ramenant … à l'origine des mots, nous remettant dans l'état primitif, dans l'état où se trouvaient leurs *inventeurs*, … devient une description vive et exacte des choses désignés par ces mots ; on voit qu'elles furent faites pour elles, qu'on ne pouvaient mieux choisir : notre esprit saisit ces rapports, notre raison les approuve, et on retient sans peine ces mots qui étaient un poids accablant lorsqu'on s'en occupait machinalement ».[47]

[42] *Ibid*, p. 500.

[43] Locke [2]2004 [[5]1706]: 425–7 (III.ix.4–7).

[44] « [N]os idées composées, c'est-à-dire toutes nos idées, excepté la simple sensation, n'ont d'autre soutien, d'autre lien qui unisse leurs éléments que le signe qui les exprime et qui les fixe dans notre mémoire », Destutt de Tracy 2004 [1801]: 273. Korais follows the work of Tracy, whose editorial program for the newfangled *Ecoles Centrales* of the French Consulat is implicitly echoed as an object of emulation for the education of the Greeks (see Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 178 and cf. Goetz 1993: 19); Korais' somewhat distant personal relationship with Tracy is attested in his *Correspondence* (Korais 1966: 412; 1983: 330).

[45] Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 499. Earlier in the same text, Korais quotes Michaelis on the topic of words needed for things material to be anchored in the human mind; *ibid*. p. 492–3.

[46] This is the very same *Γιβελίνος* mentioned by Dionysios Solomos in his *Dialogue* (1824); Dimaras (1982: 136) is wrong on the obsolesce of Gibelin's work, since it reappears over and again, e.g. in 1816, edited by Lanjuinais.

[47] Court de Gébelin 1816 [1776] : 32.

Despite such enthusiastic statements about etymology, there was by no means general consensus during the Enlightenment that etymology constituted a foolproof instrument in the investigation of things signified by words. In his prize-winning book, Michaelis often resorts to etymology, but also warns that "this source of truths may become a source of errors" when it comes to "real definitions" (the old standing *definitiones rerum*): in etymology "truths and errors come mixed with one another"; "What I see in each etymology, is that this or that nation has thought this or that way; do you want to know if it has thought well or badly? This calls for a separate investigation, which has nothing in common with etymology".[48] Eventually, Michaelis castigates "fureur étymologique".[49] Korais is well aware of Michaelis' work since he quotes it repeatedly and extensively in his 1812 *Improvised Reflections*. As a matter of fact, the conception of language as a democracy (δημοκρατικόν πράγμα), elaborated by Korais as early 1804 in the Letter to Alexandros Vasiliou,[50] echoes - though only implicitly so - Michaelis' characterization of language as a "democratic state".[51]

All the same, in the 1805 *Improvised Reflections*, Korais provides the "true significance" of the word νόστιμος (delicious), tracing it back to its etymology: ancient Greek νόστος means homeland; νόστιμον ήμαρ means the day of return to the homeland. So, concludes Korais, "by νόστιμον βρώμα (delicious food) both they [the Ancients] and we [Modern Greeks] mean, without us [Moderns] knowing it for the most part, food so pleasurable to the taste as the day of return to his homeland is pleasurable is to the emigrant".[52] Korais has recourse to metaphorical drift during diachronic semantic change in order to explain the actual meaning of a word, and reduces the new literal meaning to its etymological origin; "initial" is conflated with "true". This, as already explained by Michaelis, is patently wrong. Korais himself – again in line with influential thinkers such as Turgot – acknowledges that "Metonymies and schematic significances (τροπι καί σημασίαι) in general in languages are so distant from the main significances (κύριας σημασίας), so utterly strange, that they preclude any inquiry into or detection procedure of the sequence of ideas by the succession of which they have passed

[48] Michaelis 1762: 29 ; As a consequence, « il n'est pas nécessaire d'extirper les Etymologies erronées, parcequ'on ne doit jamais conclure de l'étymologie à la réalité », *ibid*, p. 147. An equally sober opinion, and moreover one that is impressively rigorous in epistemology, is held by Turgot (Turgot, *ibid*.).

[49] Michaelis 1762: 118. Overall, the *Encyclopédie* and proponents of "nouvelle philosophie" such as Voltaire, but also more traditional scholars such as Fréret exhibit distrust towards "étymologisme" (Droixhe 2002: 237–240).

[50] The Letter prefaces in epistolary form the 'Precursor' of Korais' 'Hellenic Library', consisting in a two volume edition of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*.

[51] Korais 1984/1833 [1804]: 49–52 ; « Le langage est un Etat Démocratique » (Michaelis 1762: 148).

[52] Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 163.

from the first to the last significance".[53] Obviously, the "value of the word" does not hang upon the possibility and effectiveness of etymology – at least not in general. Notably though, the Koraic discussion about νόστιμος points towards a word whose meaning may be of particular interest: 'homeland' (πατρίς). So the underlying question, the real issue of interest to Korais, may rather be what *homeland* is.

3. WORDS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST

Here we approach the core of Korais quest: the words of interest to him are Locke's *moral words*. The question of moral words is at the center of a heated debate as old as Modernity; one entwined with and indeed motivated by political concerns. Thus for Thomas Hobbes, admittedly, "[t]he most noble and profitable invention of all other was that of speech, consisting of names and appellations and their connexions, whereby men register their thoughts, recall them when they are past, and also declare them one to another for mutual utility and conversation, without which there had been amongst men, neither communication, nor society, nor contract, nor peace, no more than amongst lions bears, and wolves".[54] But, unfortunately, passions may defeat reason, so as to induce men to speak "having in mind no images or conceptions in their minds answering to the words they speak". Moreover, if men *do* conceive something, it is a matter of fact that they get "diversified by passion",[55] and "though the nature of what we conceive be the same, yet the diversity of our reception of it, in respect of different constitutions of body and prejudices of opinion, gives everything a tincture of our different passions".[56] As a result, "scarce two men [will agree] what is to be called *good* and what *evil*; what *liberality*, what *prodigality*; what *valour*, what *temerity*";[57] "for one man call the *wisdom*, what another called *fear*; and one *cruelty*, what another *justice*".[58] Under such circumstances, "it is but an abuse of speech to grieve [an enemy] with the tongue, *unless it be one whom we are obliged to govern*; and then

[53] Korais 1979: 150–1; and Turgot: « Toutes sortes de tropes & de métaphores détournent la signification des mots; le sens figuré fait oublier peu-à-peu le sens propre, & devient quelquefois à son tour le fondement d'une nouvelle figure; ensorte qu'à la longue le mot ne conserve plus aucun rapport avec sa premiere signification » ; « la variété des métaphores entées les unes sur les autres, a produit des bisarreries peut – être plus grandes, & propres à justifier par conséquent des *étymologies* aussi éloignées par rapport au sens, que les autres le sont par rapport au son. Il faut donc avoüer que tout a pû se changer en tout, & qu'on n'a droit de regarder aucune supposition étymologique comme absolument impossible » (Turgot, *ibid*, p. 99b & 102a).

[54] Hobbes 1994 [1651]: 16.

[55] Hobbes 1994 [1640]: 39; cf. the role of the passions in Korais' quote (2).

[56] Hobbes 1994 [1651]: 21.

[57] Hobbes 1994 [1640], *ibid*.

[58] Hobbes 1994 [1651]: 22

it is not to grieve, but to correct and amend".[59] Hobbes is the finest theoretician of absolute sovereignty in Modernity, as we know.

In the troubled circumstances of 17th century Civil War England that are relevant to Hobbes' thought, political concerns and scientific aims converge in demands for language correction. "In Wars … [language] receiv'd many fantastical terms, which were introduct'd by our *Religious Sects*" observes Thomas Sprat, the Royal Society's 'historian'; this remark reinforces the request "to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness when men deliver'd so many things, almost in an equal number of words".[60] For Locke, a member of the Society, "moral words [*honour*, *faith*, *grace*, *religion*, *church*, etc.] are, in most men's mouths, bare sounds";[61] even if moral words *do* mean something to their users "[t]hough the names *glory* and *gratitude* be the same in every man's mouth, through a whole country, yet the complex collective idea, which everyone thinks on, or intends by that name, is apparently different in men using the same language".[62] Moral words are the most liable to language abuse; here the "imperfections" of language are the more patent. But there is a remedy: "…were the imperfections of language, as an instrument of knowledge, more th[o]roughly weighed, a great many of the controversies that make such a noise in the world, would themselves cease; and the way of knowledge, and, perhaps, *peace* too, lie a great deal opener than it does".[63] Indeed, "[p]ropriety of speech, is that which gives our thoughts entrance into other men's minds with great ease and advantage: and therefore deserves some part of our care and study, especially in the names of moral words".[64] So for the crucial word *justice*: "If one, who makes his complex idea of justice, to be the treatment of the person or goods of another, as is according to law, hath not a clear and distinct idea what *law* is, which makes a part of his complex idea of justice, 'tis plain, his idea of justice itself, will be confused and imperfect".[65]

In the *Essay*, Locke is "bold to think, that *morality is capable of demonstration*", and thus "*definition is the only way, whereby the precise meaning of moral words can be known*".[66] Of course, liberal Locke, who sides with the winners in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution, does not hand over the power of definitions to a Sovereign not himself bound by the terms of the social contract, as does Hobbes, his political rival; the right to self-expression, a corollary of his doctrine of the use of language in society, nevertheless comes with a moral duty to be clear

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 17
[60] Sprat as quoted by Declerq 1999: 663, 662.
[61] Locke [2]2004 [[5]1706]: 428 (III.ix.9)
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 427–8 (III.ix.8)
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 435 (III.ix.21)
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 457 (III.xi.10)
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 456 (III.xi.9); cf. p. 460 (III.xi.17)
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 459, 460 (III.xi.16)

and explicit.[67] To do so, and since words are "no man's private possession, but the common measure of commerce and communication", people "*must* also take care to *apply their words*, as near as may be, *to such ideas as common use has annexed to them*."[68] This worry is echoed and amplified by Korais: language is "one of the most inalienable possessions of the nation" in which "all members of the nation participate with so to say democratic equality"; departure from "common use" which leads to loss of perspicuity is characterized as a "tyrannical" attitude of the speaker vis-à-vis his audience.[69] According to Locke, without loosening or breaking the social bond, people should enquire into "moral knowledge"; "therefore the negligence and perverseness of mankind, cannot be excused, if their discourses in morality be not much more clear, than those in natural philosophy".[70] This deeply political claim is conceived by Locke as an exercise in language reform.

Thus, from Locke's point of view, the relation of words to 'ideas' is arbitrary, but much more crucial is the also semiotic relation of ideas to things they are ideas of. To cut a long story short, as I understand it, and beyond Locke's wording, what is as stake here is the proper way of conceiving the relationship between reality and the will. Up to a point, theoretical reason mediates the representation of volition-independent external reality through the given of the senses to the human mind: primary qualities are rooted in the world and are supposedly represented undistorted in the human mind; secondary qualities are rooted in the human constitution as ways of the senses towards the representation of things in the human mind; complex ideas of things are representations of bundles of primary and secondary qualities. People may err in the representation of things and it is a matter of science to get it right; Baconian-Newtonian science has a duty to push back the interference of the will so as to unveil volition-independent external reality. What is left, then, is the realm of moral things. Here, there is no way to evade human volition, since morality without will is inconceivable. Still, objectivity in things moral may be preserved through the notion of *rational* will. So the question may come down to the relation between reason and freedom. Since language is not a matter of a single man, but a matter of man-in-community, the question of reason is also a communal question, and so is the question of freedom.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 424 (III.ix.2), 438–9 (III.x.4–5); cf. Arnauld & Nicole 1992 [1662]: 86 (I.xiv). A century after Locke's *Essay*, the right to self-expression will be included as a natural, inalienable human right in the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizens* (art. XI).

[68] Locke [2]2004 [[5]1706]: 457 (III.xi.11).

[69] (Korais 1984/1833 [1804]: 49, 50). Indeed, as early as 1788, a few months before settling in Paris, he writes from Montpellier to his friend Dimitrios Lotos in Smyrna: "It would, of course, be desirable to regulate our common dialect following strictly the rules of the ancient [one], but since this is impossible we should approach it, as far as custom (ἔθος) allows; and custom allows only what does not depart much from the common hearing and from perspicuity, that is**,** one should speak not only wisely but also perspicuously" (Korais 1964: 94–5, letter of 15/1/1788).

[70] Locke [2]2004 [[5]1706]: 460 (III.xi.17)

This is a broad notional-intellectual frame, inescapable even for the Koraic enterprise, which should be assessed on the basis of it: "Grammar is indivisible from Logic", a branch of Philosophy; the aim of Philosophy is "correction not only of the mind but also of the will of man"; the "bond" between Grammar and Logic is tighter in "wise nations" and so is instrumental to their (collective) "happiness" (ευδαιμονία);[71] the discourse (i.e. the rhetorical practice) of those who "aim to become saviors of their nation" should be "an image (εικών) of thoughts of a free soul".[72]

Words of the utmost concern to 17th and 18th century thinkers bear on ideas about things moral. Moreover, they are of the utmost concern to them because moral things include and indeed culminate in things political – *res publicae*. In these discussions, the old distinction between *res* and *verba* is on all occasions scrupulously respected. And, on more than one occasion, Korais emphasizes that his concern is not about 'small words' (λεξείδια) and 'small phrases' (φρασίδια).[73] Understandably, he emphasizes that his etymological "hunt" is not one for words (λεξιθηρία) but one for things (πραγμάτων θήρα).[74]

In his 1812 *Improvised Reflections*, Korais is crucially interested in words which "the great Aristotle" etymologizes in his "*moral and political* writings" in order to "reveal the true ideas of things".[75] This investigation may reveal that words "encompass a complete definition of things", about which one can "move people towards affection or aversion, by explaining to them what they daily utter without understanding. No language is devoid of such words, whether few or many. And this should not be seen as a paradox; the first inventors of words often coined them guided not by wisdom, but by the very nature of things".[76]

So, this is Korais true concern, and this is why "when it comes to a barbarian or barbarized nation, the inquiry into words becomes even more necessary". To get ideas right, a barbarized nation such as the Greek one has to "unlearn" the perverted words; for "on these significances often hangs the happiness or unhappiness (ευδαιμονία ή κακοδαιμονία) of people; for this difference people call

[71] Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 178.

[72] Korais 1984/1833 [1807]: 231.

[73] Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 154–5, 168, [1809]: 346; cf. Korais 1990 [1824]: 130. Conservative Kodrikas, Korais' political rival, got the real point of the linguistic controversy right, as Alexis Politis has pointed out; see Politis 2007: 474, Kodrikas 1998 [1818]: γ΄, νγ΄.

[74] Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 512. Behind this statement by Korais lies a bitter controversy unfolding in *Logios Ermis* magazine; though not being named, Korais and Vasiliou are accused by Anthimos Gazis, the magazine's editor, of dwelling on barren linguistic matters in times when Greeks are more in need of real world knowledge: "What use is to us this hunt for words and these dry words without things" (Gazis, in *Ermis o Logios*, v. 2, p. 30 [15/1/1812]; cf. *Ermis o Logios*, v. 1, p. 88 [15/3/1811]; also Korais' correspondence with A. Vasiliou, from 8/6/1811 to 19/3/1812, in Korais 1979, esp. p. 172, 183).

[75] Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 508–9.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 509.

often what is just (δίκαιον) unjust (άδικον) … enter into war with one another … In ignorance of the true meaning of freedom entire nations also ignore its use and come to its pitiful deprivation, turning from men into laughable slaves (ανδράποδα)".[77]

Korais' worry about moral words persists and manifests itself again in his Prolegomena to Aristotle's *Politics*, which he rushed through the press on the outbreak of the Greek Revolution (1821): "If we examine whence discords in nations are born, we will not find but the ignorance of some words, which everyday everyone has in his mouth, but which very few have taken the trouble to learn the true meaning and significance of. Who does not utter the nouns *Happiness* (Ευδαιμονία), *Virtue*, *Laws*, *Freedom*? But of those uttering them, how many also know the things signified! And yet, the misfortunes of all nations have stemmed from ignorance of them".[78]On the very day the book came out (8/11/1821), Korais wrote to his Vienna-based associate Iakovos Rotas: "It would be very beneficial to get this book known by our people now that the time has come for them to constitute a polity (πολίτευμα)".[79] From the beginning of the Greek Revolution, Korais expresses confidence over its outcome, and focuses on the conditions of establishing and maintaining the new polity.[80]His utmost concern is establishing justice, "the mother of peace" so as to guard the country "from civil wars which are much more adverse to liberty than external [wars]".[81] From the very beginning of the Revolution, Greeks must prove "that we are not unworthy of freedom … that we didn't free ourselves from the iniquity of the foreigners but to freely behave lawlessly [among ourselves]".[82]

Back in 1812, Korais was confronted by a similar situation of popular ignorance: Ordinary people, most of his fellow Greeks, did not know what they were talking about when discussing *justice*, *virtue*, *freedom*, *wisdom*, or *sanctity*. They got them wrong. The real meaning of *moral* words coming to their tongue evaded them; their speech was empty. But empty or not, speech is an activity, and like every activity, it has its own consequences. People who do not know what they are talking about may do so in private or in public. If they are deprived of public speech they still may be an audience of public speech, one they do not understand. These are mostly the "populace" (όχλος), clapping hands without understanding the speeches of those entitled to public speech, mostly members of the clergy, the Greek *anti-philosophes* (opponents of the Enlightenment) and pseudo-philosophes

[77] *Ibid*, p. 495.

[78] Korais 1988 [1821]: 692.

[79] Korais 1982: 312.

[80] See e.g. Korais 1982: 287–93 (letter to revolutionary leader Demetrios Ypsilantis, of 20/6/1821).

[81] Korais 1988 [1821]: 744–5; cf. the similar concerns of Hobbes, Sprat, and Locke, above.

[82] [Korais] ^{2}1821: 19. I think that the immediacy of adopting this stance lends support to Paschalis Kitromilides' view that Korais should be considered a*liberal* nationalist, not a nationalist *tout court*; above all, Korais is a proponent of liberal constitutionalism (Kitromilides 2010).

(rivals *in* the Enlightenment).[83] Speech, here, has to be interpreted broadly, so as to include writing; though most of the "populace" are illiterate, they may still become audience of texts read aloud. In either case they are manipulated by "tyrannical" speakers; moreover, speech by enlightened speakers doesn't reach them. So, the underlying problem appears to be *truthful* and *successful public speech*; in other words, what is at stake are the conditions necessary for the constitution of a public sphere for the Modern Greeks. The public sphere already exists in the "enlightened nations of Europe" to which, along with their own ancestors, Modern Greeks should revert. Ancient Greeks and Modern Europeans have two things in common, both of which Modern Greeks lack: culture and freedom. Indeed, these two things are profoundly related, since there is no culture without freedom. Loss of freedom engenders a descent into barbarity. Conversely, regaining culture, putting oneself in the path of progress, may be a precondition for regaining freedom. Only in freedom is culture "perfected". According to Korais, Modern Greeks have set themselves on the path to enlightenment in the past fifty years or so. Still, they lack an operative public sphere and even its prerequisite: public opinion; creating public opinion in the way of establishing a public sphere would function as a lever for changing the status quo of sovereignty. In the unpredictable course of historical events, it turned out that political and national sovereignty would entwine.

4. KORAIS' POLITICAL CRATYLISM

In the 1821 Prolegomena to Aristotle's Politics, Korais defines freedom as "man's liberty to do unhindered not what he wants, but what is allowed by law".[84] This definition echoes Locke's "*where there is no Law, there is no Freedom* … Freedom is not, as we are told, *A Liberty for every man to do what he lists* … But a *Liberty* to dispose and order, as he lists, his Person, Actions, Possessions, and his whole Property, within the Allowance of those Laws under which he is; and therein not to be subject to the arbitrary Will of another, but freely follow his own".[85] But who determines the law? For that matter, what is the law? Just another clue from Locke: The law "prescribes no farther than is for the general Good of those under that Law".[86] The outcome of these reflections will be codified in the French declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizens, as the natural, inalienable right to Political Liberty.[87]

[83] Gazis should be counted among the latter, and even more so the archaist Neofytos Doukas, against whose *Τερψιθέα* Vasiliou, advised by Korais, is writing a poignant reply at that very same moment; "clapping hands", Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 503; and bowing, *ibid*, p. 514 (n.).

[84] Korais 1988 [1821]: 700.

[85] Locke 1988 [1690]: 306 (§57); Locke's foundational thoughts on human freedom are expressed in the *Essay* (II.xxi.47ff. – see Chappell 2007: 141–8, cf. Ayers 1991, v. 2, chap. 15).

[86] Locke1988 [1690]: 305 (§57).

[87] "Political Liberty consists in the power of doing what-ever does not injure another. The exercise of natural rights of every man, has no other limits than those which are necessary to secure to

Given all the above, the key to our puzzle is provided in what comes immediately after quote (2); the question is about what is Just (τοΔίκαιον), "whose word still subsists in everyone's mouth, although the thing is found in very many souls", as etymologized by Aristotle in his *Ethica Nicomachia*, from the adverb *δίχα*, "which means in two separate equal or analogous parts"; Korais quotes Aristotle: «Τοάδικον, άνισονον, ΙΣΑΖΕΙΝ πειράταιο δικαστής … Και καλούσιν ένιοι [τους δικαστάς] μεσιδίους, ως εάν του μέσου τύχωσι, του δικαίου τευξόμενοι. ΜΕΣΟΝ άρα τι το δίκαιον, είπερ και ο δικαστής ο δε δικαστής επινισοί … ». [Hence the unjust being here the unequal, the judge endeavors to equalize it … indeed in some places judges are called mediators-, for they think that if they get the mean they will get what is just. Thus the just is a sort of mean, inasmuch as the judge is a medium between the litigants. Now the judge restores equality …].[88] This is an etymology, Korais continues, that "suffices to explain the nature of Just" and to teach that without justice no "civil society" can stand. The true significance of *just* is of the utmost importance, since, in Aristotle's words, "justice encompasses all virtues"[89] and (in Korais' paraphrase and elaboration) "only the just man is completely virtuous; since only he is a social animal, as created by nature, i.e. capable of associating with his fellow beings with friendship and equality unknown to the beasts; in a word, the only one capable of receiving and maintaining the law".[90] In a note attached to the end of this passage Korais provides the etymology of law: from verb νέμω, meaning *divide*, *distribute* (μοιράζω); thus νόμος means *distribution* (μοιρασία).

In the 1812 *Improvised Reflections*, Korais cites Epictetus: «Αρχή παιδεύσεως ητων ονομάτων επίσκεψις» [The beginning of learning is the investigation of names];[91] when in the course of the Greek Revolution he reverts to Epictetus, editing his *Diatribes* – written by his pupil Arrian-, he uses the following quotation from Epictetus as a motto to both volumes: "The law, and nothing else, is everything to me" [Ονόμος μοι πάντα εστί, και άλλο ουδέν].[92] In the last text he publishes in his life, Korais recalls Epictetus' investigation (or, visiting) of the names: *Αρχή παιδεύσεως των ονομάτων επίσκεψις*, and in immediate conjunction, *από των ονομάτων τα καθήκοντα έστι ευρίσκειν*: from names are *duties* to be found.[93] Korais is eager to (re)introduce the word *καθήκοντα* together with the concept of (public) duties into (Modern) Greek; duties are an aspect of justice.

every *other* man the free exercise of the same rights; and these limits are determinable only by the law" (Art. IV, as translated by Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, 1791).

[88] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.4., trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934).

[89] Here Korais quotes extensively from the Nicomachean Ethics; almost the same quotes in the Prolegomena to Marcus Aurelius (Korais 1988 [1816]: 402–3); cf. Korais 1979: 517, Korais 1982: 4.

[90] Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 510–1.

[91] Korais 1833/1984 [1812]: 495; cf. in correspondence about the same time, Korais 1979: 163, 173 (letters to A. Vasiliou, of 15/12/1811, 19/1/1811).

[92] Korais 1990 [1827a]: 532; [1827b]: 600.

[93] Korais 1832 : ιδ'.

Justice is paramount because all virtues of social life are rooted in it; and, after the Revolution, because the good governance of the state under formation depends on it. Thus it is paramount to gain an idea of it that is not only clear and distinct but also indisputable, which in the realm of things moral comes down to capturing the thing itself. It is therefore paramount for justice to be objective; and there is nothing more objective than nature. So justice has itself to be discovered to be rooted in nature. This is what I propose to call *Korais' political Cratylism*: not a putative resemblance, a causal or motivational connection between the sound of thing and its concept via phonology; rather, bearing in mind Locke's thesis that ideas are *signs* of things, political Cratylism should be perceived as the thesis that the shape and complexion of the idea comes from (is inherited by) the *thing itself*, which as a matter of fact is a *moral* thing. *Formally*, from Locke's point of view – as from that of every nominalist –, this sort of Cratylism is rather trivial; but it is not *substantially* so. Because, practically, by adopting this stance, Korais offers his fellow Greeks a vulgarized secular version of *Natural Law* as the foundation of justice, one that is both eclectic and kept to a common denominator at a level approachable by his intended readership.

It has to be underlined that although Korais usually backs his statements up with classical Greek authorities, his overall stance is resolutely modern. According to Korais, science, and for that matter the much hoped and strived for education of his fellow Greeks, culminates in *Political Science*.[94] His attitude towards the overall heritage in Political Science is best summarized in his Prolegomena to Aristotle's *Politic*s. In Korais' view, this work still contains "many very notable lessons, which have been of great profit to the modern political writers, as attested by their works when compared to Aristotle's Politics. Had they not been saved, a great deal of time would have elapsed before the appearance in Europe, of Baudin, Grotius, Pufendorf, Locke, Montesquieu, Mably, Rousseau, not to mention the numerous philosophers still living as their heirs".[95] Prominent thinkers of Natural Law appear among the modern "philosophers" mentioned; notably also, no mention of Hobbes is made here.

Among contemporary philosophers not mentioned by Korais are Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham. Indeed, Aristotle's etymology of *δίκαιον* is first evoked by Korais in his translator's notes to Beccaria's *Dei Delitti e delle Peni*, issued in Greek in 1802. The particular note is attached to the formulation of Beccaria's pioneering version of the principle of utility, stating that the action of "a multitude of people" should be considered "with this goal, the maximal happiness distributed (διαμοιρασμένην) to the greatest number of people";[96] in his note, Korais first puts forward the etymology of *νόμος* from verb *νέμω* (divide,

[94] Korais 1984/1833 [1807]: 367 ; 1982: 289 (letter to D. Ypsilantis, of 20/6/1821).

[95] Korais 1988 [1821]: 607.

[96] Beccaria 1802: 2 (= 1823: 2). Actually, Beccaria writes "nel questo punto di vista" (from that point of view), not "to this end" (*εις αυτόν τον σκοπόν*, as Korais translates); Beccaria 1780: 2.

distribute, since "the law distributes justly to all citizens the benefits of civil society"), and then the etymology of δίκαιον, concluding eventually that "just (δίκαιον), lawful (νόμιμον) and equal (ίσον) are three words synonymous and equipotent".[97]

Though no mention of Bentham is made in Korais' first edition of Beccaria, by the second (1823) edition the English philosopher is lauded as "famous", and accorded a prominent position in both the Prolegomena and the additions to the notes.[98] Korais appears enthusiastic about the man, with whom he entered into correspondence.[99] As the utilitarian *par excellence*, Bentham reveres Beccaria.[100] Korais' ownallegiance to utilitarianism is summarized in his Prolegomena to Aristotle's *Politics*: "good legislation should aim at the utility of the greater number; because what is beneficial to them does not do injustice to any of the lesser number".[101]

But now a new puzzle arises: Given Bentham's radical opposition to Natural Law theory,[102] how can Korais adhere both to Benthamite utilitarianism *and* to Natural Law theory? Does Korais' eclecticism end up in contradiction? In exploring this question, the following two points are to be taken into account:

(a) In general, utilitarianism is not incompatible with Natural Law theory; utility can be the *goal* of legislation, while natural rights serve as the *standard* of it.[103]
(b) Despite aiming at a strong version of utilitarianism that is incompatible with Natural Law Theory, Bentham in particular is not a methodological

[97] Korais, *Translator's Notes* in Beccaria 1802: 201–2 (= Beccaria 1823: 176–7); "equality in law mainly means equality in distribution (Korais 1988 [1821]: 694, note 1)

[98] Bentham is referenced eleven times in Korais' 1823 edition of Beccaria; "famous Bentham": Korais, *Prolegomena* to Beccaria 1823: να΄ (= Korais 1995: 79).

[99] Korais 1983: 156–8 (Bentham to Korais, of 12/8/1824); Kitromilides 1985.

[100] For Bentham's allegiance to Beccaria, see Israel 2012: 338–9; Rosen 2006: 551, 557.

[101] Korais 1988 [1821]: 712–3. A few lines below, Korais states that "nobility and wealth … never managed to confound the laws of nature, nor to render unequal two people equal by nature" (*ibid*, p. 713); a few pages earlier, Korais expresses a more specific Benthamite convinction stating that people have sacrificed a "small part" of their state-of-nature "unbounded freedom" in order to live in peace "in civil societies"; then he approvingly quotes: "La justice est fille de la nécessité et mère de la paix. Bentham, *Trait[é] de Législat[ion]*, tom. II, pag. 327" (*ibid*, p. 702). The following is also indicative of Korais' broader utilitarian persuasion: "What benefits (ωφελεί) the whole of civil society, is what is of interest to each of its members taken separately; and this interest is none other than what is just (δίκαιον). Therefore, the just (δίκαιον) is the right measure and criterion of pleasure" (Korais 1990 [1822]: 40).

[102] Bentham fiercely attacks natural law theory in his 1795 *Nonsense Upon Stilts,* a relentless critique of the French 1791 Declaration of Rights ("Natural rights is simple nonsense, rhetorical nonsense, nonsense upon stilts", Bentham 2011: 328). Notably –and relevant to our discussion –, this "criticism is verbal: true – but what else can it be? Words – words without a meaning – or with a meaning too flatly false to be maintained be any body, are the staff [this tabernacle of the laws of nature] is made of" (Bentham, *ibid*, p. 322).

[103] Smith 2012; cf. Rawls 2007: 175, on Locke and Hume.

> legal positivist, as convincingly argued by Philip Shofield.[104] Indeed, like most naturalists, he is an empiricist, and so a nominalist. Not being a methodological legal positivist, he does not sever the link between law and morality; being an empiricist, he adheres to a psychological naturalness of morality; moreover, he claims universality for the principle of utility: the universality of reason.[105]

Given that Korais aims not at an in-depth theoretical examination of the concepts of law and rights, (a) and (b) are enough for him to both promote Natural Law theory and adhere to utilitarianism, being friendly even to Bentham's doctrines, insofar as he does not follow him in his foundational critique of Natural Law theory. Indeed, in a note in the second edition of Beccaria (1823) closely following the one where he appeals to Aristotle's etymology, Korais explicitly follows Bentham in his critique of all three social contract theorists, condemning the idea of contract as a historical fiction, but sidesteps Bentham's theoretical counterarguments from utility, which are at the same time arguments about the establishment of government *in general* ;[106] Korais then moves on to embrace a fourth type of social contract, an allegedly real one, based on *representative* government endowed with division of powers. All subsequent references to Bentham are even more theoretically innocuous.

[104] Shofield 2011 [2003], esp. p. 449–50; "Substantive legal positivism is the view that that there is no necessary connection between morality and the content of law. Methodological legal positivism is the view that legal theory can and should offer a normatively neutral description of a particular social phenomenon, namely law" (*ibid*, p. 444).

[105] "For Bentham, the principle of utility was true just because it rested on a factual or naturalistic foundation" (Shofield, *ibid*, p. 427; cf. p. 442); "psychology and morality, and thus fact and value, were conceptually linked by their relation to the perceptions of pleasure and pain" (*ibid.*, p. 438); universality, *ibid.*, p. 446–7.

[106] Korais references Bentham's *Traité de législation civile et pénale* (v. 1, pp. 116–20 & 131), where Bentham tacitly follows Hume's *Of the Original Contract* (1748, in Hume 2006: 452–473). According to Hume, the "artificial virtue" of justice, as a moral virtue, is based on "a natural instinct" (Hume, *Of the Original Contract*, *ibid*, p. 466–7; as Hume has already made clear in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, "Tho' the rules of justice be *artificial*, they are not *arbitrary*. Nor is the expression improper to call them *laws of nature*; if by *natural* we understand what is common to any species, or even if we confine it to be inseparable from the species" – Hume 2000 [1739]: 311 (3.2.1.19); cf. Rawls 2007: 177–184). Hume is generally considered as an early utilitarian (Rosen 2003, chap. 3); yet, "in substance, Hume was in agreement with the popular natural law systems of morals" (Haakonssen ^{2}2009: 360–1). In Korais' simplified version of the Hume-Bentham account, the priority of tacit (de re) compactover contested explicit (and therefore conscious) contract is silenced; indeed Korais refers to the need of people "to invent new bonds and pacts (συνθήκας)" (Korais, *Translator's Notes* in Beccaria 1802: 206 (=Beccaria 1823: 181), and in a 1823 addition these pacts are characterized as "convened" (ομολογημένες – 1823, *ibid*). Nevertheless, in his 1821 *Prolegomena to Aristotle's* Politics, he again takes sides against social contract theories, indicating that "almost all polities are born more from necessary chances and circumstances than from the choice and advice of philosopher legislators" (Korais 1990 [1821]: 685). These are relatively minor inconsistencies, which do not compromise Korais' political argument.

To Korais' mind the principle of utility is compatible with some Natural Law theory, since his etymological backing of the former is followed in his notes to Beccaria by his furthering the Italian's definition of justice with an evocation of the "law of nature" as conceived by Epicurus,[107] a precursor of utilitarianism rather that an early Natural Right philosopher.[108] But Korais' emphasis on distribution and equality are obviously alien to the core of utilitarian theories of justice.[109] On the other hand, his Natural Law Theory is a purely "dispositional" one, as we will see in the solution of our next puzzle. The naturalness of the term δίκαιον appears be problematic in view of the description of man in the state of nature that Korais offers in the 1810 *Improvised Reflections*, which is rather Hobbesian: "Man in the state of nature differs the least from beasts, or to say the truth, is even more beastly than them; because apart from the teeth and nails of beasts, man has a weapon more powerful, the mind (τοννουν). Nothing can tame him but civil society, when guided by philosophy it posits laws such that so as to cover the strong and the weak equally from the injustices of the one to the other".[110] This thought persists in Korais' writings, and is epitomized in the 1820 Prolegomena to the third Book of the Iliad: "Nature leads the savage to deceit, after experience has taught him that violence does not suffice; and deceit becomes man's first step to civilization": deceit appears as the first exercise of the mind – possibly an echo of Rousseau's Second Discourse,[111] and even more directly of the *pravitas* (malice) Pufendorf attributes to the human soul. But eventually it has to give way in the face of Pufendorf's *socialitas*, the *fundamentum legis naturalis*.[112] In Korais own words, deceit and violence are "useless" for life in community; "the only firm basis, the only indissoluble bond of society and cohabitation of people is justice, that is, the political situation in which one has no need either of deceit or of violence to live".[113]

The apparent contradiction as to the naturalness of justice in Korais' writings on the state of nature is resolved in his 1819 *Improvised Diatribe*, when in personal polemical circumstances,[114] he for once reverts to 'primary' philosophical thinking.

[107] Korais, *Translator's Notes* in Beccaria 1802: 209 (= Beccaria 1823: 185).

[108] Bloch 1987 [1961], chap. 5; Long 1977; Rosen 2003, chap. 2.

[109] Rawls 2007: 176–7.

[110] Korais 1833 [1810]: 396.

[111] Rousseau 1992 [1754]: 168–9, 180, 221; Korais' Rousseauism(s) have been highlighted by Paschalis Kitromilides (Kitromilides 1984; cf. Kalokerinos 2015).

[112] Dufour 1991: 569.

[113] Korais 1999 [1820]: 103, 104.

[114] Korais is counterattacking Kodrikas who has launched a massive offence against him in his *Study of the Common Greek Dialect* (Kodrikas 1818); see Korais ["Pantazis"] 1819: 1–36; *Logios Ermis*, 1819: 96–8, 408–560, 571–84; Kodrika's three pamphlets (*To the editors of Logios Ermis*, *To persons familiar* (*Προς τους οικείους*), *and again to persons familiar* (*Και αύθις προς τους οικείους*), 1816–8).

The *Diatribe* is an eristic defense of the primacy of Natural Law over positive right.[115]

In the *Diatribe* Korais accepts the relativity of sense-based secondary qualities as treated by Democritus, but pronounces it irrelevant to matters moral and political; here, the "criterion of truth" is not the "dark judgment of the senses" but reason itself, as pointed out by Empedocles. Furthermore, and now following Heraclitus, reason (ορθός λόγος) is to be conceived as "κοινός λόγος (le sens commun)", since it is common to all people by nature.[116] This, reason as common sense, is at once theoretical and practical reason: here Korais looks back to Marcus Aurelius, whose *Ταειςεαυτόν* he published in 1816: *έστι δε το λογικόν αύθις και πολιτικόν* (the rational is at the same time political).[117] As Korais explains in his Prolegomena to Marcus Aurelius, "The virtuous man guards his nature because he is social… The worker of wickedness (κακίας) tears himself apart from human nature and reverts to the order of beasts, because he is no longer social".[118] Eventually reason (ορθός λόγος) and justice (as well as irrationality and injustice) amount to the same thing, since "the only rational (λογικός) and wise (φρόνιμος) man is the just (δίκαιος) one".[119]

Man may slip "against nature" from society into bestiality, but the very first days of society itself were not idyllic; Korais imputes much "bloodshed" to the "primitives", whose societies were "brigandish". Nevertheless –and here comes the solution to the puzzle-, man's being rational from the very beginning entails that "*in his soul are found germs of Natural Law, even before he captures the concept of civil justice*".[120] Since these germs bear reason as common sense -*in nuce*, literally- as defined above, they will naturally flourish in society; civilization is the natural outcome of human nature. Therefore, doing right and doing wrong are to be judged on the basis of Natural Law, not of self-standing civil law; because "This Natural Law is the true criterion, the only canon of rectitude or wryness of civil laws (των πολιτικών νόμων); the more they [civil laws] accord to it [Natural Law], the more can the nation boast that it is well-governed (ευνομείται), i.e. governed by

[115] Kitromilides 2013: 278–80 (= Kitromilides 1996: 409–12). "Natural law theorists affirm that immoral law is not law; that is, they believe that the ontological status of laws is determined by their relation to morality … Legal positivists, on the other hand, insist that law is law independently of whether or not it is moral" (Zaibert & Smith 2007: 158); to be more accurate, a further distinction between "substantive" and "methodological" legal positivists is also in order (see above, note 104).

[116] Korais ["Pantazis"] 1819: 36–7; therefore, according to Kondylis, Korais' dualist stance proves his non-alignment with the radical empiricism of the Idéologues (Kondylis, *ibid*, p. 209–10). Nevertheless, Korais stays in line with the moderate empiricism of Locke, who seeks an "analogy between ethics and mathematics" (Ayers 1991, v. 2, p. 187); the same is even true of Korais' forwarding the abstract notion of equality, which is central to the thinking of a "purer" empiricist such as Condillac (see above).

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 98 (note of p. 36). Notably, Epicurus is absent from the 1819 *Diatribe*.

[118] Korais 1988 [1816]: 400.

[119] *Ibid*., p. 404; cf. in Beccaria (1823) Prolegomena (p. 87): "the law is nothing but the so much praised reason (ορθός λόγος)"; the expression of this belief persists to the end of his days: Korais 1984: 269 (letter to A. Omirolis, of 1/7/1832).

[120] Korais ["Pantazis"] 1819: 42.

just laws (νόμους δικαίους), and hope for peace among the citizens, from which are born the generosity of spirit (γενναιότης των φρονημάτων), the strengthening of the rational powers of the soul, indispensable for perfecting the arts and sciences and for the subsequent glory of the nation".[121] No less than language, justice is *art*, then, since it appears full-blown in civilization;[122] art is an outgrowth of nature – in the normal course of (historical) events.

Korais stands against the "corruptive" doctrine of the primacy of positive law as a relativistic one, and therefore a doctrine entailing skepticism, which he vehemently imputes to Kodrikas, his conservative rival, ironically calling him "a pure skeptic philosopher";[123] Natural Law is universal – though the "sophist Hobbes", Locke's political rival, got it wrong.[124] This pro-Natural-Law position implies that Korais retracts from a relativistic stance previously adopted in his 1800 Prolegomena to Hippocrates, in which the extensive first part is entitled *De l'influence du climat sur l'homme*.[125] Eventually, in his dialogical 1826 Prolegomena to Lycurgus' *Against Leocrates*, in reply to one's character's question about the influence of the climate on legislation, the protagonist contends that it may impact civil laws regulating activities that may differ depending on the country's geography. But the variability of "climate" is totally irrelevant to "constitutional laws", i.e. to "the foundations, laid before any other law, of the political edifice [and which] having as their purpose the number and constitution of authorities, and the preservation of freedom, suit every climate, since there is almost no nation, inhabiting whatever climate, impervious to freedom."[126]

People in the state of nature may name things moral "without wisdom", point to them without knowing them: political Cratylism is a *moral externalism*; people may unbeknownst to them name the most basic and precious thing moral,

[121] *Ibid.*, p. 43. Note also the claim for "peace among the citizens", persistent from Locke to Korais.

[122] "Do you want, dear brothers, to become really honest, and surpass the glory and happiness of your ancestors? Study the *art of justice*" (Korais 1983: 256, Letter "to the Civil and Military Authorities in Nafplion", of 2/8/1825); see also note 106, above; "the artificer of morality works on living humans [who are] moved by many and various passions (Korais 1990 [1822]: 18); the "good man" is "a good *artificer of virtue*" (*ibid*, p. 28). This is not the place to tackle this issue, which concerns the empiricist connection between nature, art and *habit* in Korais' thought.

[123] Korais ["Pantazis"] 1819: 34; also Korais 1979 : 425–6.

[124] Korais ["Pantazis"] 1819: 42 & 103 (note).

[125] Kalokerinos 2015.

[126] Korais 1990 [1826]: 430; "number and constitution of authorities" alludes to the tripartite division of state power, defended by Montesquieu in his *Esprit des Lois*, but realized paradigmatically in the USA, whose constitution Korais urges the revolutionary Greeks to adopt (*ibid*. 401); "almost" in "almost no nation", I take to be a hedging, one among the many traces of French writing habits in Korais' texts[repetition]. As such, Iam inclined to considering it an "usage sans raison", a λεξείδιον without πράγμα: "almost" is lacking in an appeal to adopt the basics of USA polity with a similar pledge against "climatic" legal relativism in a private letter to Greek official A. Mavrokordatos: "For [civil laws] to be just, they must agree with natural laws, or rather be a development of them, capable of being adjusted*to all nations*, since they all have the same nature" (Korais 1983: 35, letter of 4/7/1823; cf. *ibid*, p. 192, to the same, of 12/2/1825).

τοδίκαιον, from which all other virtues derive and on which they depend. These men are set on the way towards civil society, civilization, as the germ of nature grows inside them.[127] This is the natural way, but there is no strict determinism in its course. People – and civilized people- may become morally corrupt, and revert to barbarism. This is a course against nature, but a possible one, and one attested historically: it happened to the Greeks. Of course, moral corruption is the cause of linguistic corruption; moral corruption is reflected in linguistic corruption – according to the concept of language in the Enlightenment-, and indeed consolidates it, since people's minds lose contact with moral things.

Outside of that frame, "correction" of language is pure nonsense-talk, in Korais' own words, in the retrospective Prolegomena of his *Atakta*, as late as 1832. The causal sequence of the procedure is reflected in the temporal procedure, of course. "Do you wish to correct the young man's language? Above all, edify his morals (τα ήθη του)"; do so by cultivating reason (ΟΡΘΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΝ) which is identical to the reason of justice (ΛΟΓΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗΣ). "Do you wish to teach him how to speak properly? Teach him first to deliberate (συλλογίζεται) properly". Proper deliberation requires that the germs of the sources of human misfortune be eradicated, these being the love of power (φιλαρχία), love of profit (φιλοκερδία) and lust (φιληδονία). These catastrophic passions have to give way to "the love of equality and justice".[128] So we have the beginnings of an interpretation of quote (1).

"[Since] the barbarization of language, by distorting the true meanings of words, also ends up distorting morals, it follows that the correction of it [i.e. language] also corrects the morals of a nation and renders them milder"; moral words such as *Virtue*, *Justice*, *Wisdom*, *Sanctity* have different meanings in the mind of the uneducated from those in the mind of the "enlightened". Therefore, "it will be to the benefit of the nation... to explain their true production and exact meaning to the populace".[129] The point is that a nation (or a critical portion thereof) has to have clear and distinct ideas, which amounts to mastering the right definitions of some critical moral words. Barbarization of language happens when the critical concepts are blurred or lost. Consequently, thinking becomes seriously handicapped, and so does public communication; then the *nation* no longer knows what it is talking about anymore. Since this is a question of moral ideas, corruption in morals follows corruption of language so conceived. To reverse this situation, one has to correct language (so conceived). Indeed, correction of language (so conceived) amounts to correction of both thought and morals. So correction of

[127] Nor is this an original idea; something similar was popularized in the mid-18th century by Voltaire: « Il est donc prouvé que la nature seule nous inspire des idées utiles qui precedent toutes nos réflexions. Il en est de même dans la morale. Nous avons tous deux sentiments qui sont le fondement de la société: la commisération et la justice » (Voltaire 1831 [1756]: 53) ; on "natural" commiseration, see also Korais ["Pantazis"] 1819: 38–9.

[128] Korais 1832: ιβ΄-ιγ΄ (= Korais 1995 : 430–1).

[129] Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 504.

language, thought and morals come in the same process, at the same time (*εν ταυτώ*).[130]

This is why "the teaching of the [Ancient] Greek language presupposes things, and does not engage with words but insofar as they contribute to the judgment of things".[131] When this isnot the case, when the teacher is bound by the state power not to teach "the thinking of the friends of freedom" (i.e. the classics), then "the thing ends up in words and phrases" and though the pupils may "compose without solecisms and barbarisms", "their heads will remain forever solecistic and barbaric".[132]

In the gradual course against nature from civilization to barbarism, by contempt of natural law as realized in just lawful society, people "revert to the state of nature, or rather become even wilder than the people of nature"; these neo-barbarians have most of the attributes of Rousseau's civilized men (although Rousseau is not mentioned in the otherwise very Rousseauish continuation of this passage).[133]

Political Cratylism as moral externalism is then a linguistic solution to the requirement for moral objectivity, which may again serve as a powerful argument in debates about things moral and political. Here, Korais appears to be following Grotius and Locke – two of his distinguished "political philosophers"–, though arguably not Pufendorf.[134] His is a strong objectivism: morality is objective, rooted in nature, and reason is unitary at its root: intellectual (theoretical) and moral (practical) from the beginning. This monadic vision comes, though, from a dualist point of view; but arguably Korais, speaking to his fellow Greeks, is not interested in the ultimate philosophical consequences of his argument.[135] His aim is to convincingly promote a politically oriented conception of justice, instrumental to his plan for a community which he still perceives, on the eve of receiving news of the Greek Revolution, as "still in moral transition, preparatory to the political one".[136] So, we are led to discuss the content of Aristotle's etymology of το δίκαιον as endorsed by Korais.

[130] Korais 1984/1833 [1809]: 345; [1814]: 549.

[131] Korais 1999 [1817]: 70.

[132] Korais ["Pantazidis"] 1831: 27; cf. *ibid*, p. 46–7.

[133] Korais 1984/1833 [1810]: 397; Rousseau 1992 [1754]: 254–5. Of course, Korais' Hobbesian conception of *homme de la nature* doesn't align with Rousseau's *noble sauvage*, nor does his praise of agriculture, connected to law and property (see below) align with Rousseau's insight of the establishment of (land) property as a source of inequality.

[134] For Grotius, see Tuck 1991: 504–5; for Locke, see Rawls 112, 120; for Pufendorf foreshadowing Kant, see Dufour 1991: [564]. Arguably, Korais proves unabashedly hostile to contemporary German thought, from Kant to Romanticism; on Kant, see Korais 1966: 313–4; on Romanticism, Korais 1829: κζ'-κη΄.

[135] Even so, dualism is not a theoretical necessity for establishing this argument. In the 1800 Prolegomena to Hippocrates, Korais adopts a relativistic stance, arguing against Hume, who emphasizes the commonness of human nature without denying his monistic empiricism (Hume *Of National Characters* (1748), in Hume 2006: 205–6, 219–220, see Kalokerinos 2015: 307).

[136] Korais, 1982: 282 (letter to A. Kontostavlos, of 17/3/1821). As documented by Alexis Politis, Korais thought that the Revolution was premature; Politis 2007; cf. Kalokerinos 2015. I will come back to this issue shortly.

There is a twofold emphasis here: the primary one is on the notion of equality; the secondary one is on the notion of 'middleness'. Equality is a reasonable ground on which to unite theoretical and practical reason, since it is an exercise in the intellectual ability of comparison, much praised by Condillac and his heirs as the prerequisite for judgment.[137] But this matters the least to Korais, who goes straight to the political implications of the concept of justice for "civil society". Equality as fairness is of the essence of Natural Law: as Montequieu puts it, quoted in Korais' 1819 *Diatribe* "il faut donc avouer des rapports d'équité antérieurs à la loi positive".[138]To Korais, 'equality' means *equality before the law* (ισονομία), as it does to Locke. Elsewhere, he is at great pains to explain that physical inequality (in abilities both physical and intellectual) is regulated by equality before the law for the benefit of the division of labor and social mobility, and so for the benefit of the common good, thusconsolidating civil society;[139] this kind of inequality is "legal" (νόμιμος ανισότητα).[140] On the other hand, the ability of fair judgment is best exercised by those who stand in the (social) middle, David Hume's "middling class", the *μέση τάξις* of Κοραής. From its vantage point, the middling class is best suited to arbiter, "as real mediators", the whole body politic.[141] And this brings us to what immediately follows on in the 1812 text dwelling with the etymology of Right: "Let us now also examine our contemporary language and see whether we may find some treasure of it hidden in a word. If it proves difficult to teach those not knowing the Ancient language of the Greeks the true concept of right via its derivation from *δίχα*, there is another way to make them understand it with the word most known to them, *Ισασμός* (equaling), that is, agreement, pact, from [verb] *Ισάζω* (to equal) which is derived from *Ίσος* (equal)". This is known to all, "literate and illiterate alike", adds Korais; by applying the law, a judge implements equaling.[142]

Good arbitrage means compromise. Compromise is being fair, since it is an expression of equality, as the Modern Greek word ισασμός shows in its etymology; in his lexical material, issued in 1832,Korais presents *ισάζομαι* ("in vulgar, *σιάνομαι*") as "having the same metaphorical significance" as vernacular *συμβάζομαι* (to compromise), to which he also addsthe French synonyms *convenir*, *s'accorder*

[137] Condillac, 1803 (v. 1) [1746]: 99–100; 1780: 18–19; 1803 [1775]: lxxxix–xc, 88. Unfortunately, it can be equally an exercise in inequality, since comparison presupposes distinction: This very ability of the intellect, i.e. distinction entailing discrimination, is turned against moral fairness by the subversive Rousseau (Rousseau 1992 [1754]: 219, 251–2; cf. Kalokerinos 2014: 444–5).

[138] Korais, 1819: 95 (note, = Montesquieu 1979 [1748]: 124 (I.i)); in the same note, reference without quotations to *Voltaire's Dictionnaire Philosophique* (entry *Loi naturelle*) and to Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks*.

[139] Korais, Prolegomena to Beccaria 1823: πστ΄ (= Korais 1995: 114).

[140] Korais 1988 [1821]: 712; cf. Korais 1990 [1822]: 80; also, "just [or, fair] inequality" (δικαία ανισότης), *ibid*, p. 57.

[141] Korais 1988 [1821]: 743; Hume *Of Refinement in the Arts* (1752), in Hume 2006: 281; cf. Kalokerinos 2015: 340–1.

[142] Korais 1984/1833 [1812]: 511–2; this linguistic discovery is briefly reported in an addition to the note in Beccaria from which the mention of Aristotle's etymology originates (Beccaria 1802: 201–3), in the work's second edition (Beccaria 1823: 177).

and *s'arranger*.[143] Interestingly, in the 1812 Improptu Thoughts, in looking to the vernacular, Korais arrives at a vindication of his linguistic stance; the Atticists / archaists are wrong in "exiling" the word as "barbarous": first there is a verb, *ισάζειν*, found in Aristotle and this suffices to legitimize the analogical (i.e. rational) derivation of the noun; no anomaly, often an indication of succumbing to irrational passion, and therefore a possible factor for reverting into barbarism, is found here. Secondly, and more importantly, by "exiling" *ισασμός* the Atticists deprive the "philosopher" of the opportunity to teach morals to laymen: teaching the love of justice. But so do the vernacularists, by adopting the popular word *σιασμός* instead of *ισασμός*: in so doing they obscure the etymological transparency of the word, and thus occlude the vision to its content which hangs on *ίσος* (equal). *Ισασμός*, if not an Ancient Greek word (but nevertheless a legitimate derivative from Ancient Greek) is a useful word to keep in the present-day tongue, since it preserves transparency towards *ίσον*, the most basic attribute of justice. So, concludes Korais, his method of language correction, adopting the middle way between archaism and vernacularism after juxtaposing (collating) Ancient and Modern Greek is of real moral-political value. Then, confidently, and almost triumphantly, he can go on to assert: "Such an inquiry in / into language is not a hunt for words, but a real hunt for things".

5. DEFECTS OF THE ANCIENTS

The reason why Aristotle was able to unveil the thing of justice under the cover of the word, according to Korais' narrative, is that he lived in a society which, although in decline, still retained the sense and the memory of well-governed polity; moreover, Aristotle appears as inscribed in a tradition of philosophers the most prominent of whom, Socrates, spent the early days of his life in the heyday of the Athenian Republic. Even then, as Korais is well aware, not all Athenians were just, nor was their polity free of shameful decisions and acts.[144] All the more so their ancestors, the Ancients' Ancients making their first steps in civilization, Greeks of the heroic age, who probably still prevalently combined violence with malice (see above); They had a very defective concept of virtue, univocally attached to the skill of war;[145] in Aristotle's own words, as quoted by Korais, the "ancient laws were simple and barbarian".[146] They were unable to attain

[143] Korais 1832 (vol. 2): 566–7, entry "συμβάζομαι"; "The syn[nonyms] *Ισάζω*, *Ισάζομαι* (vulg. *Σιάνω*, *Σιάνομαι*) have the same metaphorical meanings; *Ίσον* has here to be understood as a synonym of *Δίκαιον*. Therefore, by saying that two people in dispute *ισάσθησαν* [lit. have been equaled] we mean that each of them has received the right (δίκαιον) equal and owed to him, and thus they have compromised and become friends (εσυμβάσθησαν και εφιλιώθησαν)" (*ibid*, p. 567).

[144] E.g. Korais 1988 [1821]: 673–4.

[145] *Ibid.*, p. 666–7.

[146] Korais, 1995 [1829]: 246–7 ; "simple" (απλούς) means "simplistic", i.e. devoid of the complexity due to the exercise of reason in civilization; cf. "we are not in a transition from savagery

the right concept: "virtue (αρετή) is the love of and care for the common interest, and nothing else";[147] virtue is the natural propensity to put justice into practice; it is a property of the citizen, the one who "directs his deeds to the common rather than to his proper interest and partakes in the pleasures and pains of his fellow citizens in proportional equality"; such a citizen is endowed with Marcus Aurelius' common sense, for which Korais adopts his neology, *κοινονοημοσύνη*,[148] as instrumental for rendering the *esprit public* of the Moderns in (Modern) Greek.[149]

Again, this is not to say that the whole concept of justice, instrumental to the present state of civilization – and also to Korais' vision for a Greek polity-, is to be found even in the wisdom of the classical Athenians. Aristotle had a fair conception of justice, and was right in looking for the core of the concept of δίκαιον in etymology to unveil its foundation in equality. But Korais has to bitterly concede what many Modern political thinkers have already pointed out: "That even Aristotle, philosopher par excellence, has erred in believing that there exist people born by nature to be slaves, becomes apparent in the beginning of his *Politics*; and that there was no shortage of Greeks believing with their brains that slaves did not even have brains, we learn from the same".[150]

True, speaking to his fellow Greeks about matters political, Korais on every occasion evokes the authority of the venerable Ancients; he also defends Aristotle, who in the eyes of "enlightened Europe" bears many of the foibles of scholasticism,[151] fallen into disrepute since 17th century, but concedes that even in ethical and political matters Aristotle's "method" was "inferior" to that of the Moderns.[152] In the Battle of the Ancients and the Moderns Korais resolutely sides with the Moderns; all the more so in matters political.

Evidently, also in things natural the Ancient's Knowledge proves to be "much less perfect" to that of the Moderns. Inquiring into the names of e.g. fish in antiquity and collating them with names in the extant language is useful but only

to civilization like our ancestors' ancient ancestors" (Korais 1984/1833 [1814]: 566); "the Greeks were foolish, or rather raiders of others' possessions" (Korais 1984/1833 [1804]: 21, referring to the Greeks during the Trojan War as recounted in Homer).

[147] Korais 1988 [1821]: 695.

[148] *Ibid.*, p. 699; cf. p. 713. *Κοινονοημοσύνη*, in Korais 1988 [1816]: 421 (note). Earlier on, Shaftesbury, citing Marcus Aurelius, Horace, Juvenal and Seneca on *sensus communis*, transposes *common sense* to political philosophy, "to signify sense of public weal and of the common interest, love of the community or society, natural affection, humanity, obligingness, or that sort of civility which rises from a just sense of the common rights of mankind, and the natural equality there is among those of the same species" (Shaftesbury 1999 [1711]: 48).

[149] Korais 1979: 430 (letter to A. Vasiliou, of 3/10/1825); in this passage Korais considers the rendition in Modern Greek of *opinion publique* and settles for *κοινήυπόληψις*, as proposed by his correspondent.

[150] Korais 1988 [1821]: 66). Among his contemporary French political thinkers who highlight this by know intolerable attitude of the Greeks are Condorcet (2005 [1791]), and recently Benjamin Constant (1997 [1819]; see Kalokerinos 2015: 496–8) – but none is mentioned in his *Politics* Prolegomena; on Aristotle on "natural slavery" see now Taylor 1995: 254–7, Williams 1993: 111–129.

[151] E.g. Korais 1833 [1805]: 193.

[152] Korais 1990 [1822] : 36.

up to a point. Indeed, one should not have high expectations of learning the thing from its name, and real progress in knowledge is being accomplished by modern science. Any linguistic findings have to be weighted up against the criteria of ichthyology, "according to the method of the Moderns".[153] Here begins the "real scientific theory of nature"; in the Ancients, natural history was "in its infancy".[154] Obviously, Korais' view accords with Michaelis' estimation of both the scope and reach of etymology.

Moreover, according to Korais made-up story, Socrates was the one who realized the impasse his contemporaries had reached in philosophizing about things natural without observation and experiment –the Baconian prerequisites of natural science- and moved them towards reflection about things moral and political, i.e. towards political science.[155] This relocation of interest was all the more urgent because of the incipient moral decline of his fellow citizens, which was, despite Socrates' endeavor, eventually to lead to the collapse of their republic and the loss of their freedom.[156] Socrates' teaching of *ισόνομοςδικαιοσύνη* ultimately proved useless to his fellow citizens; but it proved of great profit to today's "enlightened people" – as much as it could to the Modern Greeks, now in the process of being enlightened.[157]

According to Korais, the union of moral and political science into a comprehensive "art of life" (βιωτική) was also the aim of Marcus Aurelius. But this was unattainable by the Ancients due to two main hindrances, one moral and the other technological one. The moral deficiency was "prejudice" (πρόληψις) regarding the naturalness of slavery,[158] which obscured the idea of justice. The acceptance and practice of slavery were indeed morally lethal to them, for two reasons: first, "even the most tame of all, the Athenians … fed injustice into their own souls. Surrounded by slaves as they were, how could they not become despots?" In some sense paralleling Hegel, Korais concludes: "it is the hallmark of slavery to corrupt the despot and the slave together";[159] second, as a consequence of the first, their relation with their property, a natural right according to Locke, was defective: what they possessed was not what one "hath mixed with his *Labour*".[160] Korais is very insistent on individual labor, as a factor both of sociality and self-government (αυτεξούσιον);[161] as such it guarantees freedom and allows

[153] Korais 1988 [1816]: 202–3.
[154] *Ibid.*, p. 213–4.
[155] Korais 1988 [1921]: 661–3.
[156] *Ibid.*; also Korais 1990 [1825]: 298–300.
[157] Korais 1990 [1825]: 332.
[158] Korais 1988 [1821]: 666; cf. "the prejudice of inequality", *ibid.*, p. 682.
[159] *Ibid.*, p. 671; cf. Korais 1990 [1822]: 169 (the latter, for Montesquieu's *servitude politique*). On Hegel's dialectic of master and slave, in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), see Kojève 1980 [1969/1947], chap. 2. Korais implicitly reverses Aristotle's argument that master and slave are "types of human being who cannot do without each other" (Taylor 1995: 254; Aristotle's *Politics*, 1252a26–27).
[160] Locke 1988 [1690]: 288 (§27).
[161] Korais 1988 [1821]: 671, 719, 742; 1990 [1822]: 42–44; [1824]: 170, 231; 1988/1833 [1809]: 349; cf. 1982: 375, 1984: 234.

entrance into the realm of justice. Ultimately, "one of the reasons, and the most drastic one, for the destruction of the free polities of Greece was that they could not live without slaves".[162]

The technological disadvantage hindering the Ancients, as regards moral and political progress, was lack of typography. "Where do we find so much freedom as to unite Moral and Political [Science]? In no nation of old is it found, nor could it have been found before the invention of printing. This godly invention was absolutely necessary for the perfection of the rational part of our soul".[163] Korais is here thinking of books, of course; but, more crucially, he is thinking of newspapers. Morality is invested in technology: the right to freedom of expression is realized in the freedom of the press. Moreover, this is presented as a necessary condition for freedom *tout court*: "Freedom without freedom of the press is a vacuous noun, not a thing".[164]

Typography is the technological precondition for the constitution of public opinion in the way of constituting a public sphere. Newspapers address -and claim to express- public opinion. But freedom ultimately is an institutional question, a question of law, as we have seen. On the other hand, in the course of the Revolution, Korais, having stated that "printing has enlightened, freed, improved the nations", claims that the journalist addresses "the whole nation".[165]

From the above arise two further questions: (a) What is the relation between public opinion and legislation? And, (b) What is the relation between public opinion and "the whole nation"?

As we will see in the next paragraph, Korais answer to (a) is that public opinion is the *ultimate* source of legislation, and his answer to (b) is that public opinion should ideally coincide with "the whole nation". Therefore, the whole nation is the ultimate source of legislation. This is Korais solution to the problem of sovereignty: the solution is representative democracy. Here is Korais quoting Jeremy Bentham (in English): "had the Athenians representative bodies? Had they … the art of typography? When the Athenians were cruel and unjust, were the Dionysius's and the Artaxerxes's less so? …"[166] Direct democracy is an imperfect polity, but the only democracy possible without the communication technology of the Moderns. In Korais' own words, the "parliamentary system is an invention of the Moderns".[167]

[162] Korais 1933 [1822]: 11.

[163] Korais, 1990 [1822]: 33; cf. Korais 1988 [1821]: 675–8.

[164] Korais ["Pantazidis"] 1830: 18.

[165] Korais 1990 [1825]: 348, 349; also after the Revolution: "The patriotic (φιλόπατρις) journalist writes for the whole nation" (Letter to journal editor Em. Antoniadis, opponent of Governor Kapodistrias, of 20/1/1831, in Korais 1984: 213).

[166] Korais *Prolegomena* to Beccaria 1823: μ΄ (= Korais 1995: 68).

[167] Korais 1988 [1821]: 708–9; cf. *ibid*, p 707, note; Korais 1990 [1822]: 72.

6. PROSPECTS FOR THE MODERNS: BOURGEOIS SOCIETY AND INCLUSIVE POLITY

Even so, the Ancients had the freedom and justice possible in their times. What is more, they had a *homeland* (πατρίδα): "Our ancestors truly had a homeland because they had a self-legislating (αυτόνομον) and equitable (ισόνομον) polity, and the land of anyone's birth was then considered both his place (τόπος) and his homeland (πατρίς), since it was part of the homeland common to the nation, i.e. of the common homeland of all … *Πόλις*, *Πολιτεία*, *Πατρίς*, are three synonymous words. The true homeland of everyone enjoying civil rights is the place where it enjoys them, even if he dwells at the antipodes of his birthplace".[168] As the Revolution progresses, Korais intensifies his 'revisiting of the names'. In the dialogical Prolegomena to Plutarch's "*Politics*", discussion about homeland began by questioning whether one's local birthplace should be considered a "homeland";[169] Korais is well aware of the products of the intense activity in moral word definitions, raging in the second half of the French 18th century,[170] and concomitant with the rise of "public opinion" in Old Régime France, the "tribunal" where *philosophes* and *anti-philosophes* come and expound their political arguments.[171] The *Encyclopédie*, which began publication in 1751, is the most impressive workshop of this activity. In its pages, under the entry for *Patrie*, Korais reads: « l'amour de la patrie … est l'amour des lois et le bonheur de l'état, amour singulièrement affecté aux démocraties; c'est une vertu politique, par laquelle on renonce à soi-même, en préférant l'intérêt public au sien propre ; … il ne peut y avoir de patrie dans des États qui sont asservis. Ainsi ceux qui vivent sous le despotisme oriental, où on ne connait d'autre loi que la volonté du souverain, … ceux-là … n'ont point de patrie, et n'en connaissent pas même le mot, qui est la véritable expression du bonheur ».[172]

[168] Korais, 1990 [1824]: 150.

[169] In his *Correspondence*, local birthplace is referred to as *μερική πατρίς*, in contradistinction to *κοινή ημών πατρίς*; Korais 1983: 3, 133, 209, 218, letters to and from national (and Korais') benefactor, G. Rizaris, of years 1823–5.

[170] Ricken 1994, chap. 12; cf. Kalokerinos 2014: 490–1.

[171] Baker 1990: 167–199. Here is Korais quoting from a personal letter from Thomas Jefferson: "Freedom of the Press … this formidable censor of the public functionaries, by arraigning them at *the tribunal of public opinion*, produces reform peaceably, which otherwise be done by revolution. It is also the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and improving him as a rational, moral and social being" (in Korais 1990 [1824]: 214 = Korais 1983: 91, letter of 31/10/1823).

[172] *Encyclopédie*, v. 12, p. 178b (1765); entry written by Chevalier de Jaucourt. In the first days of the Terror, Korais writes to his friend Chardon de la Rochette, in very personal tone: «vous ne serez pas surpris si je préfère garder ma qualité d'étranger, et d'être marqué par ce signe de réprobation, savoir d'un *homme sans patrie*, plutôt que d'adopter aucune contrée d'Europe pour ma patrie … je croirois trahir ma véritable patrie si je consentois jamais à m'appeler citoyen d'une autre contrée amie de ceux qui l'oppriment, fût-elle aussi libre qu'on pourroit l'être dans l'état de la nature.

In the Koraic dialogue one character wonders "whether what is named *Πατρίς* is a figment, a creature of the imagination"; and the second points out that "ignorance of the significance of names comes mostly from their abuse (κατάχρησιν)"; after the first character enters into the speech about the ancestors' πατρίς quoted above, he comes to the conclusion that "*We do not yet have a homeland ... we are fighting to acquire or regain one*".[173] Pre-revolutionary (Modern) Greeks had a bare name in their mouths; they didn't know what they were talking about. Korais strives to make the revolted Greeks conceive the real thing behind the name, so as to direct their action to making it actual. If they were to regain their homeland, they would be effecting a kind of *νόστος*. But in reality, they would rather acquire a homeland, since they have a new tongue, loaded with names of things moral and political some of which allegedly carry with them the germ of nature; still more bear the latent significances of a glorious civilized ancestry to be perfected by the wisdom of the Moderns.

The names game is purposeful but also has limits: Korais could not even imagine the revolutionary struggle of the Greeks as *νόστιμον*; that would be too far from common use to be acceptable or even intelligible. Actually, it would be ridiculous. Νόστιμος is a world of frequent use in Korais' *Correspondence*. On no occasion is it used in the basic-literal Modern Greek sense, since food is not among the main concerns of the *philosophe*; just as *savory/delicious* and *délicieux*, *νόστιμος* means *pleasant*, *funny* and *witty*. This extant sense of the word will prove more relevant to the continuation of our inquiry into Korais political-linguistic quest to empower a Modern Greek public sphere capable of underpinning a polity, first prospective, and then -after the outbreak of the Greek Revolution- under construction in circumstances mutable and fragile.

« N'est-ce pas délicieux ? » is the question rounding Korais' account of how as a youg man he listened to his Amsterdam educator in Logic min. Adrian Buurt pronouncing an ancient saying in way Erasmic Greek, and how his ears experienced "furious delight" (οργισμένην ηδονήν), as recounted to his friend, collaborator, financer and asset-manager Alexandros Vasiliou (alias Alexandre Basili).[174] As Korais explains in a note in the 1812 Prolegomena to Hierocles' *Asteia* "the tropic word νόστιμος is a synonym to αστείος, from a food metaphor, which moderate addition of salt (άλατος) renders tasty …By contrast, the adjectives *άνοστον* (tasteless) and ανάλατον (unsalted, bland) are used for anyone whose words and deeds provoke disgust".[175] The determinant *αστείοι* as applied to *άνθρωποι* is given a German synonym: *Witzig*.[176] As we are told in the same Prolegomena, "The [Ancient] Greeks in general, and all the more so Athenians,

Non, mon ami, *il n'y a plus de patrie pour moi*. Je suis citoyen du monde …» (Korais 1964: 345, letter of July 1793; cf. Kalokerinos 2015: 330).

[173] Korais, 1990 [1824]: 149–151.

[174] Korais 1966: 257 (Letter of 12/4/1805).

[175] Korais 1988 [1812]: 158, note.

[176] *Ibid.*, p. 154, note.

were, due to their intelligence and education, witty people. The wittiness of nations is always proportional to their tameness, which is born and fed by education";[177] obviously, *ηαστειότης*, an aesthetic value, is a political virtue: "Real wit takes place but among people free, equal before the law, and enlightened".[178]

Some years earlier, Korais attempted a negative determination of *αστειότης*; in the 1805 *Improvised Reflections*, the verb *αστειεύομαι* (be witty) is set in opposition to *βωμολοχώ* (be boorish). Having again recourse to etymology, Korais highlights the root of the word: *άστυ* – the city; *αστειότης* is a bourgeois attribute. It is proper to people, "born and bred in a city, where customs (ήθη) are more elegant and tame than those of the peasants";[179] witty people are rather members of the upper part of the third estate, to put it in terms of French sociology:[180] they are the "well-educated people", who also set the aesthetic standards of society, the standard of taste. On the other side are those who lack education and have no access to *αστειότης*: these are the rustic boors who are reduced to practicing buffoonery (βωμολοχία);[181] the cultivated bourgeois are both rational and pleasant; the uncultured peasants (and also the lumpen people of the cities, Korais' water bearers and wood-carriers) are both irrational and repellent; and so in both their sayings and their deeds.

Nevertheless, as we have seen, in the 1812 *Prolegomena to Hierocles* Korais attributes *αστειότητα* to (whole) *nations*. Do peasants and the lumpen city dwellers *count* in the body of the nation? Evidently, in the Koraic inter-text, the question will come down to the conception of the body politic. Of course, before the Greek Revolution, this is a literally imagined entity, a prospective one. When the Revolution breaks out, it becomes an entity under formation; now the stakes are high, a question of collective life or death.

These questions bring us back to the dark side of the 1812 Prolegomena, considering Korais' intended readership:[182] "For whom among the unlearned are we writing? Certainly not for the vulgar populace, those who are ignorant of our very existence".[183] Yet "we" do write also for people, among the literate, who are "simplest";[184] not only for the educated ones (though hardly anyone is considered by Korais as *well* educated), but also for those who can barely read and obviously, in most cases, "do not know what they are talking about" (indeed this applies also

[177] *Ibid*., p. 150.

[178] "Real wit has no place but among free and enlightened people, equal before the law " (p. 160); "Tyranny is the most unlaughing thing in the world; if it does laugh, its sardonic laughter, like lightning foreshadowing a strong whirlwind, presages some pernicious disaster" (p. 159).

[179] *Ibid.*, p. 154

[180] See below, note 199.

[181] Korais 1833 [1805]: 169–172; also Korais 1988 [1812]: 154–5.

[182] I'm not going to tackle here the question of the Korais overall intended readership, which is not a single one, if we somehow unify readership by mother tongue. Specifically, I'll not being considering the foreign readership, Korais' *αλλογενείς*; only his *ομογενείς* will be considered here.

[183] Korais 1833 [1804]: 51

[184] Korais 1833 [1809]: 324.

to those better educated, but still badly so). Even those men (and women) who had just crossed the threshold of literacy were obviously but a small fraction of the Greek-speaking population; again, more numerous among the merchants of the diaspora than among the inhabitants of territories under Ottoman rule. Of the latter, above all, many belong to the "populace". These are the people presented in the 1812 Prolegomena as those without words for things, who clap their hands without understanding; deprived of the exercise of reason, they slip into "usage sans raison" – not witty at all.

But at the same time, in the last decade before the Greek Revolution, Korais provides a narrative on *Bildung* as a process of pre-formation of citizens in view of a republican polity. As a matter of fact, these are the years when his project in the educational triangle in the eastern Aegean (modern schools for the Greeks in Chios, Kydoniae, and Smyrna)[185] advanced and bore fruits. The process of *Bildung* to which Korais aspires is epitomized in the metamorphosis of Papatrechas, the principal character in his Prolegomena to the Iliad, written and published during this decade (1811-1820). Papatrechas is presented as the most evil of persons in the beginning of his life; being so unworthy, both violent and malicious, he becomes a priest in the small village of Volissos, in what Korais regarded as his native island of Chios. As a priest, he reads the Gospels so rapidly that he earns his nickname: "speedy-priest" (Papatrechas). Neither he nor his flock understand what is being read. Literally, the orator doesn't know what he is talking about – neither does his congregation:[186] all this is literally gibberish (βαττολογία).[187] Papatrechas excels in vacuous *oratio*, substantiating Hobbes' fears: *oratio* takes the place of *ratio*, in people who recite "their *paternoster*" without understanding, by blind habit.[188] But as Papatrechas becomes acculturated under the influence of the writer's character, coming to acquaint himself with the fountain of the classical authors, he casts off his vicious habits, and become a rational moral person. Now passionate about printing –indeed, obsessed by it-, he dedicates himself to the service of education, and what is more, the education of the poorest and most deprived, and thus most superstitious and irrational, in order to contribute to the renaissance of the nation.[189]

[185] Lappas 2007.

[186] Remember: "the mere use of [words] … is nothing but speaking without knowing what one says, dealing with words as they come one after another to one's tongue, denuded of ideas, or dressed with irrational and beastly ideas" (Korais 1833 [1812]: 497).

[187] Incomprehensibility is not due to speedy reading; rather the reverse is true: "Who among us, priest or layman, dares to boast that he fully understands the translation of the Septuagint? Nevertheless it has become a reading inseparable from every Mass. Recitation of words unknown is gibberish, resembling the magic recantations that not even the cantor has to understand, because their miraculous power is believed to rest in their mere utterance" (Korais, [signing I.K.], in *Ermis o Logios*, v. 10, p. 653 (issue of 21/11/1820) = Korais 1982: 260). Voltaire's *sauvages* gather regularly « dans une espèce de grange pour célébrer des cérémonies où ils ne comprennent rien, écoutant un homme vêtu autrement qu'eux et qu'ils n'entendent point » (Voltaire 1831 [1756] : 46).

[188] Hobbes 1994 [1640]: 39 (V).

[189] Michalis Paschalis remarks that the composition of the commentary to the Homeric text by Korais was likewise "designed to turn young students of (ancient) Greek into thinking people" (Paschalis 2010: 122).

Speaking in consort with Papatrechas, the writer's character concludes: "the most poisonous fruit of the lack of education is paralysis of reason, so as to be unable to distinguish right (just, δίκαιον) from wrong (unjust, άδικον)".[190]

In this process of transformation, "his ridiculous whim, a relic of old habit, has been tempered with attic salt"; at the end of the process, his preaching, "was often in few words, seasoned with the salt of his wit".[191] Korais describes Socrates too as *αστείον*; he was also a saint, since sanctity, in Korais' revisiting of the names, is not a religious virtue. If one is to be respected and venerated as a saint that should be for one's righteous life, useful to others in society. Korais promotes a secular concept of sanctity, as opposed to the monastic ideal of departure from the social world, which also serves as a piece of ideology of submission to political tyranny in view of celestial rewards, as promoted by the official structure of the Greek clergy.[192]

After the outbreak of the Revolution, Korais observes that in the times of submission "words were empty" - «ταλόγιαήτανψιλά»; the members of the clergy, corrupted in morals and religion, along with the laymen, "had nothing else to do, the poor men (οιτα λαίπωροι) but speak, because the tyranny left them their tongue alone (επειδή την γλώσσαν μόνην των αφήκενη τυραννία)."[193] Language is corrupted not because of the fact of change (since change is natural to language, as Korais asserts),[194] but because its moral words have been emptied of content, due to the speakers' deprivation of freedom, submission to slavery, and consequent corruption of reason and morals. And Korais concludes: "Here is the time now to put [words] into action … Now is the time for them [clergymen] to correct themselves and us [laymen] by their example. Freedom no longer gives us any excuse".[195]

At the same (revolutionary) time, while pursuing his long lasting critique of the 2nd estate, Korais intensifies his preemptive attack against the 1st estate.[196] The tread of this critique is to be found again in the philosophes intellectually fuelling the collapse of the French Old Régime.[197] Korais is alarmed by the possibility that titles of nobility will be resurrected in the yet to be established polity. When he comes to know that an official of the revolutionary administration uses the title of "prince" he addresses him in correspondence as "citizen"; this is the noblest title,

[190] Korais 1999 [1817]: 67.

[191] *Ibid*, p. 49, 70.

[192] Socrates was a "saint" (Korais 1966: 270). Korais' 'linguistic' critique is also pointed towards miracles, a common topic of rational criticism of the Enlightenment, e.g. by Hume (2000 [1739]: 74–81 (1.3.9); 2007 (1777): 79–95(X)) and Voltaire (1831 [1756]: 185–191 (XXXIII); 1994 [1764]: 396–402); here Korais is again following Michaelis; cf. Pechlivanos 1999: 196.

[193] Korais 1982: 375, (Letter to Chiots of 12/10/1822).

[194] E.g. Korais 1984/1833 [1804]: 46 ; [1805]: 121.

[195] Korais 1982, *loc. cit*.

[196] E.g. Korais 1990 [1822]: 49; 1933 [1822]: 22–3. Probably the only benefit of the Ottoman Rule to the Greeks was their "leveling", be it to the lowest level: no more Byzantine princes, no more ridiculous title-bearers, though some Greeks received titles from the conquerors to rule the Hegemonies on their behalf; they were Phanariotes, whose potential role in the new Greek polity Korais feared the most; see e.g. Korais 1990 [1822]: 55–6.

[197] Ricken 1994: 169–173.

the one that is due to all members of the polity; all should enjoy "equality in names" (ισωνυμία).[198]

Thus, the 3rd estate should rule. As abbé Siéyès tried at the beginning of the French Revolution, the 3rd estate should come to coincide with the "whole nation". This was, of course, a political claim which proved far from self-evident in the course of the Revolution: the 3rd estate was not a compact social entity; Siéyès claimed power for the (upper) «classes disponibles» within the 3rd Estate and attempted to make them coincide with «opinion commune».[199] Even so, the peasants were left out, with further painful complications for the successive revolutionary leaders (and the people). As it turned out, the bottom line -and the persistent main aporia of the Revolution- was how to deal with the twin question of representation and sovereignty, as Korais had come to know too well. His solution to the problem leaned towards the American paradigm.

From their inception, the *Improvised Reflections* are thoughts about language *and education*. And from the start, Korais laments the education of the Greeks, which is blamed not only for inefficiency, but also for pointlessness and moreover for intellectual and hence moral corruption of the students.[200] In the 1812 Improptu Thoughts, where he insists on the value of revisiting the names to cure the ignorance of the many, Korais alludes to the concept of *ορθήδόξα* (right opinion) for these laymen: it is enough for people to have the right ideas (να δοξάζη ορθά), even if they cannot enter into extensive rational argumentation. This would be a moral know-how (practical knowledge) without much know-that (well-founded theoretical knowledge), a rather instrumentalist conception inspired from Plato.[201] People have to be persuaded without being convinced, to recall a statement by Rousseau in the formation of the general will.[202] They would form habits that accord to and subserve reason which would remain external to their consciousness. This is obviously problematic, since the status of reason in it is uncertain: it has to emanate from a well-controlled rational will. As a matter of fact, people may get fooled by demagogues, and one has to fight against their reason being obscured. To do so one has to strengthen their humanity, and education is the only way to do so. As Korais observes, there is a Greek word for people-cheaters (λαοπλάνοι) but no word for human-cheaters (*ανθρωποπλάνοι):[203] there is an inherent contradiction in being human, in the full sense of the word, and being fooled: *άνθρωποι* become those in whom the natural germ of Natural law has been cultivated, and flourished. But, people cannot partake in the art of justice without partaking to the art of

[198] Korais 1983: 99, letter to Mavrokordatos; *ibid.*, p. 33.

[199] Siéyès 1988 [^{3}1789], esp. p. 53 & 68; Kalokerinos 2014: 479–485.

[200] E.g. Korais 1984/1833 [1805]: 167–8; [1809]: 318, 321, 352–3.

[201] Korais 1984/1833 [1809]: 343, 354, 356; [1810]: 393, 395.

[202] « [L]e Législateur ne pouvant employer ni la force ni le raisonnement, c'est une nécessité qu'il recoure à une autorité d'un autre ordre, qui puisse entraîner sans violence et persuader sans convaincre » Rousseau 1964 [1762]: 205 (II.vii) ; cf. Kalokerinos 2014: 447–8; *know-how* and *know-that*, following G. Ryle 1949.

[203] Korais 1999 [1817]: 64.

language – language is an art, according to Condillac, as we have seen; this simply means that language is a tool for acquiring rational consciousness, or so the empiricist Enlightenment thinks.

The concept and claim of *ορθή δόξα* recedes in Korais' later writings, where he puts forward the scheme of dual breed and education consisting of "education of the heart" and "education of the spirit", the former being a precondition of the latter.[204] This also rests upon the empiricist foundation of the philosophy of education in his time. Eventually, as Korais comes to acknowledge, the sons of craftsmen, merchants and peasants, those born to uneducated people, nevertheless possess *common sense* – obviously, as defined in his 1919 *Improvised Diatribe*.[205] In the meantime his Papatrechas has devoted himself to the education of peasants and their sons.[206] In his notes to the first edition of Beccaria (1802), Korais already claimed that "the first inventors of agriculture were also the inventors of laws";[207] lawful society comes as a solution to the problem of management of wealth production, on the basis of which trade and industry come to appearance and growth. This is emphatically advanced in the 1822 Prolegomena to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics,[208] where agriculture is presented as the cornerstone of the polity under formation.[209]

In the last installment of the Iliad Prolegomena (1820), the aim advertised by Korais is to expand knowledge to "common people" by printing and schooling, "until many are taught, and knowledge is increased" («έως διδαχθώσι πολλοί, και πληθυνθή η γνώσις»).[210] Two years later – one after the outbreak of the Revolution –, he urges his Chiot compatriots to organize education so that no-one in town or country remains illiterate, and so everyone can read the "homeland's civil laws".[211] Moreover, from the first formation of the new political authority, the aim turns to *general public* education: "in the present state of Greece", he writes in 1824, "the most needed secretary of state is one for common education (Ministre de l'instruction publique)"; the offices of education and justice can be assumed by the same person.[212] "It is necessary to the spread education to the whole nation"; in this letter to President of the Executive G. Kountouriotis, of the following year, Korais argues that "the human rights have been proved" during that century, but wonders "what idea of liberty" may uneducated people have; "consider this [fighting illiteracy] as a war against tyranny". In this way "common people" (κοινός λαός)

[204] Korais 1990 [1824]: 163–4, 168, 229; also in correspondence, Korais 1983: 164, 186 (letters to Z. Vlastos, of 7/11/1824), and to I. Rotas , of 3/2/1825).

[205] Korais ["Pantazidis"] 1831: 68.

[206] Korais 1999 [1820]: 135, 146.

[207] Korais, *Translator's Notes* in Beccaria 1802: 204 (= Beccaria 1823: 179).

[208] Korais 1990 [1822]: 24–5; this is a classical Enlightenment account of economic growth, as seen e.g. in Hume's *Essays* II.i–vii (Hume 2006).

[209] Korais 1990 [1822]: 78–9; cf. Kitromilides 2013: 281–2 (= Kitromilides 1996: 413–4).

[210] Daniel 2:4, as quoted by Korais in Korais 1999 [1820]: 121.

[211] Korais 1982: 352 (letter to Chiots, of 7/5/1822).

[212] Korais 1990 [1824]: 166.

will turn into "philosophers, if philosophy … is the knowledge of what interests the happiness of people".[213]

During the Greek Revolution Korais unfolds his "liberal constitutionalism",[214] inspired by the American paradigm. Thus, in 1824 he urges to "convert the populace into people, as Angloamericans did, by propagating education in the whole nation, and enlightening their reason by newspapers".[215] Being and remaining "populace" is a matter of political injustice, a result of long-lasting bowing to the oligarchic;[216] "such are the fruits of the absolute power: to pervert the morals of those who suffer the power".[217]And Korais quotes American John Bristed, in French: « Nous n'avons ni noblesse ni populace, nous sommes réellement un people souverain ».[218]

As Korais put it in his 1821 Prolegomena to Aristotle's Politics, "in order to be worthy of its name, the Law has to be legislated by the whole *polis*"; it has to be the expression of "the common will", Rousseau's *volonté générale*.[219] Korais evokes Rousseau but then parts ways from him: laws directly established by the citizens do not deserve their name; the capacity of legislation should be reserved for deputies elected "by all citizens". Moreover, the representatives should come from the "middle class", the one which is the most receptive of reason.[220] The middle class should rule by authentically expressing the "whole nation"; since the middle class ideally embodies full-blown reason, there should be ways of connecting to the rest of the nation: (a) through the press, so as to obtain consent; (b) through education, so as to cultivate and sustain the rationality required by the readers of the press who are also the voters. As a result, the whole nation should *understand* the law, voluntarily *submit* to the law, and indirectly *give* (itself) the law. Ultimately, "the law [will be] the common opinion of citizens",[221] and "all people should be citizens".[222] In that way, "legitimate popular sovereignty" would be achieved, and then an all-inclusive public opinion would be reached, which would be the ultimate source of legislation.[223] Hence, popular sovereignty would be

[213] Korais 1982: 194, 19 (Letter of 12/2/1825). "[Education] is real only when it is proportionally distributed (μοιρασμένη) to the whole nation, since only then can it protect the nation from slavery" (Korais 1983: 166; letter to Z. Vlastos, of 7/11/1825.

[214] Kitromilides 2010: 221.

[215] Korais 1990 [1824]: 217; cf. ibid. 193; cf. Korais ["Pantazidis"] (1831: 3): "day by day, the press is converting populaces into people"; here Korais alludes to the role of the press in the 1830 change of state in France.

[216] Korais 1984: 233 (letter to journalist A. Polizoidis, after 18/5/1831).

[217] [Τοιούτοι είναι οι καρποί της απολύτου εξουσίας, να διαστρέφη τα ήθη των υποφερόντων την εξουσίαν] Korais ["Pantazidis"] 1831: 10.

[218] Korais 1990 [1826]: 447.

[219] Korais 1988 [1821]: 702, 703.

220 *Ibid.*, p. 703, 705–6, 707.

[221] Korais 1984: 231 (letter to Polyzoidis).

[222] Korais ["Pantazidis"] 1831: 69.

[223] It is noteworthy that in order to amend the constitution Korais suggests that the relevant will of the common opinion (i.e. the general will) should be manifested though the Press, as a first necessary step to further institutional procedures; Korais 1933 [1822]: 82–3.

established. Popular sovereignty (λαϊκή κυριαρχία) is the only legitimate political situation, exclaims Korais, seeing the prospect of a republican Hellenic state ruined by the advent of a "tyrant", governor Kapodistrias.[224]

Korais aspired to a polity characterized by self-rule (αυτονομία), good governance (ευνομία) and equality before the law (ισονομία); these go together with the equal capability for self-expression (ισηγορία), obtained through the freedom of the press, and equality of status, all being citizens, and called so, no less and no more (ισωνυμία). Here the names game names holds good: a political purpose of the highest importance is well served. Ultimately, Korais' constitutional liberalism aimed at an all-inclusive polity without compromising the ideals of bourgeois society, political and aesthetic. Everyone should be enabled (i.e. given the means and a chance) to partake in the values (and the habits) of bourgeois society, including its moderate *délices*.

In the last (1814) Improptu Thoughts Korais exhorts the clergy not to treat their flock as "true beasts".[225] From the early years of the 19th century to the end of his life he thought of himself as having striven to bestow the condition of humanity on his fellow Greeks. When in his very last days, he saw a king being prepared for the young state, he lamented the decision "to send us without asking us (as the beasts are not asked about the selection of their shepherd) an eighteen year old kinglet"; "they imposed him on us as the landlord imposes an ostler on his horse, without asking it about the selection of the ostler".[226] 'Horse' is *άλογον* in Greek: without reason.

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[224] Korais ["Pantazidis"] 1830: 4; the governor "should submit to the common will of the people which is the sole true LAW" Korais ["Pantazidis"] 1831: 4.

[225] Korais 1984/833 [1814]: 557.

[226] Korais, 1984: 252, 255 (letter to A. Kontostavlos, of 19/3/1832).

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