This essay attempts to show how the classical approach that examines relations between source and target text in translation may prove to be only a basic one. Indeed, many different texts related or not to the original, may play a fundamental role in shaping the final product of a translation. Therefore, the consideration of a net of associations between a rich hypotext and a final hypertext leads to a more complex study of the translation process, the analysis of which is not merely reduced to the description of the traditional operations of addition, suppression or substitution, but is enriched with the recovering of intertextual references. Furthermore, the notion of transtextuality, seen as the amount of texts involved in this process, helps to give a broader understanding of translation as a practice capable of including and preserving some traces of preceding texts. The Greek version of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* written by the poet Giorgos Seferis, firstly edited in 1936, represents a useful case study that can help to clarify how different texts from other languages may influence the translation of a literary work.

**Keywords:** Intertextuality, transtextuality, translation, hypertext, Seferis, T.S. Eliot

In this paper, I intend to examine how many different texts can participate in shaping the final text of a translation during the translation process, and how this phenomenon may be better framed considering the definition of *transtextuality*. Taking as a reference the translation of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) by Giorgos Seferis under the title *Η Έρημη Χώρα* (1936), I attempt to explain how the Greek poet used many other texts in order to reproduce the *inter/transtextual* quotations and allusions in the poem. In order to show some examples of *transtextuality* in Seferis’s translation, I will analyse in detail some texts, which constitute the *hypotext* of *The Waste Land*, in relation to the *hypertext*, that is the poem itself translated into Greek.

What is the difference between *intertextuality* and *transtextuality*? *Intertextuality* in translation is the totality of the connections that the sender or the receiver of a text establishes with other texts, thus creating a relation of coherence or reference (Delisle 1999). If in a passage there are allusions to the Bible, these can be reproduced in translation. According to this definition, it is clear that different texts can converge into a translation, even without being
immediately recognisable, as the reader usually considers only the text he has in front of him, unaware of the literary connections with other texts.

As shown by Hendrick Van Gorp (1978), the concept of *intertextuality* roots into J. Mukarovsky’s and J.N. Tynjanov’s theories, as well as in Julia Kristeva’s assumption of a text that derives from the transformation of another text (1978:102). Van Gorp deals with *intertextuality* from the point of view of *metatextuality*, that is by taking into account the four operations of ancient rhetoric: addition (*adiecutio*), suppression (*detractio*), substitution (*immutatio*), permutation (*transmutatio*), to which he also adds a fifth and a sixth form, namely repetition and allusion. Repetition, also defined as “identical transformation” by Kristeva (1974:345) includes the quotation, i.e. “the reproduction of a prototextual element in another text, the metatext”, while allusion is also defined as “indirect transformation” (Van Gorp 1978:107).

The translated text and the original can be also considered according to the *transtextual* relations established between the *hypotext* and the *hypertext* that, according to Gérard Genette’s definition (1982:14), is every text that derives from a preceding one through direct or indirect transformation (imitation). This categorisation is useful, in the sense that it may better help to understand the value of *transtextuality* in translation. More specifically, the concept of *transtextuality* emphasises the relation between various texts, thus incorporating the notion of *intertextuality* that is represented by the quotation, the “literal presence of a text into another one” (Genette 1979:87).

During the translation process, and the transference of meaning from the Source Text to the Target Text, different *hypotexts* can participate in shaping the final *hypertext*, that is the translation, so that many and diverse literary systems that can furnish a potential contribution to a translation, thus enriching it with superimpositions of references. From this point of view, a translation can preserve a sort of ‘memory’ of other texts through transformation, as explained by Asbjørn Gronstad (2002:239): “[p]reserving memory by transforming it, intertextuality likewise lays text upon text and meaning upon meaning in an infinite chain of new permutations and constellations”. Gronstad’s point of view is also framed into Mikhail Iampolski’s more poetic definition of ‘Tiresian reading’ (Iampolski 1998), as the mythical figure of the old man who could feel the synchronicity of past and present events suggests the idea of a sort of intertextual memory.

A clear explanation of this last definition can be found in Patrick O’Neill’s book *Polyglot Joyce* (2005), where all the translations of Joyce’s works are
considered as a single macrotext connected to the originals according to three basic models: the prototextual, the metatextual, and the macrotextual model (O’Neill 2005: 8).

In the prototextual, or unitary, model, the author is the unique authority of the text; translation has a secondary importance, as it tends to be as faithful as possible to the original. In the metatextual, or pluralist, model, the authority resides in the interaction between individual texts and individual readers (Ibid: 10). Finally, in the macrotextual, or holistic, model, “all the possible translations combine with their original to constitute a new but ultimately inaccessible ‘original’ —authority centred in the polyglot text.” (Ibid). The kind of reading required by the macrotextual model is called transtextual reading.

Which is therefore the difference between intertextuality and transtextuality? While an intertextual reading concerns relationships “between any or two or more texts,” a transtextual reading considers the relationship between a text and all its translations. Therefore, while the former “explores relationships between different texts,” the latter explores associations between texts that are at once “different and the same” (Ibid). Though different texts, they all are translations of the same original.

In this way, O’Neill pushes forward Genette’s affirmation that transtextuality includes intertextuality, stating that the concept embraces also multilingual and translingual aspects, as it involves all translations of a single original, that all together create an entire macrotext. On the whole, the main concern of O’Neill’s analysis is the fact that, differently from the prototextual model, which considers translation as a process of loss, and from the metatextual model, which sees it as a process of negotiation, the transtextual model considers translation as a process of “textual extension” so that even evident errors of translation, seen in a larger macrotextual context, are indicative of a work that is always in progress (Ibid: 12).

Trying to analyse the importance of intertextual references in translation, Dorothea Martens (2007) questions whether a translator is capable to recognise echoes from other texts and to render them in his translation. Taking as a case study some English versions of Virgil’s Aeneid, she finds out that only few translators care about translating intertextuality (2007:15).

On the other hand however, even assuming that the translator does not choose to translate the double meaning of the quotations, one can still con-
sider the macrotext of all Virgil’s translations thus privileging a transtextual kind of reading, which sees translation as a process of extension of the source text. As a result, the two definitions of intertextuality and transtextuality, though strictly related to each other, point at separate concepts, as each one relates to a different aspect of translation. While an intertextual approach aims at recognising the double meaning of references and allusions, a transtextual one takes into account all the translated texts of a specific work (including the original) as part of a dynamic macrotext that continues to grow, creating every time a new hypertext.

In what follows, I will demonstrate how literary texts, including translations, may contribute in shaping the final translation/hypertext, thus giving the possibility of a transtextual reading that includes the macrosystem of preceding texts. Furthermore, I will analyse the way in which the hypertext can help or influence the translator in the redaction of the target text. How can a text, which is not the original source text, play a fundamental role in the translation process?

In fact, the issue of transtextuality in translation may be further complicated in the case of the translation of a text that contains many intertextual quotations and allusions, as in T.S. Eliot’s poem The Waste Land. When Mario Praz (1965) translates it in Italian, he directly quotes from Dante’s Inferno (III, 55-7), “Ch’io non avrei mai creduto che morte tanta n’avesse disfatta,” in order to keep the quotation of line 63, “I had never thought death had undone so many”. He does not translate in the literal sense of the word, but he uses directly the Italian original reference. Consequently, it makes sense to wonder what happens if this line is translated into Greek and not into Italian. If the translator wants to reproduce the reference of the original, s/he can behave in different ways. For example, s/he can transfer the original line from Dante’s text in Italian like Praz did, or s/he can quote from a Greek translation of the Inferno. In the former case, there will be a clear example of intertextuality, as the translator has rendered evident the double reference of the line; in the latter, one of transtextuality, because while we read the translation of an important work of English Modernism, we read simultaneously a Greek translation of Dante’s masterpiece.

Trying to reproduce the polyphonic effect of Eliot’s writing, Seferis also attempted to provide a transtextual translation, as he probably used many other texts as a reference to translate the various allusions and quotations of the poem. In order to explain Seferis’ method, I will take into account some Greek
translations of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, a French translation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, the Greek version of the Bible, and Pierre Leyris’s French translation (1947) of *The Waste Land*, trying to emphasise the significant role played by these texts in shaping Seferis’s translation.

*The Waste Land* contains quotations from W. Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, a work symbolically related to other literary works, such as the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, as well as texts of the religious tradition. Line 48 of Eliot’s poem, “Those are pearls that were his eyes”, for example, refers to Ariel’s song in *The Tempest*, where the spirit sings to Ferdinand the “sea change” of his father Alonso, king of Naples:

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Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
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(*The Tempest*, I, ii)

There are also other quotations in *The Waste Land* from *The Tempest* (I, 2), and these are lines 192, “And on the king my brother’s wreck” and 257, “This music crept by me upon the waters”, which recall the words of Ferdinand listening to Ariel’s song. In the section of the notes of the second edition of his translation (1949), Seferis translates for the Greek readers the quotations that refer to the song of Ariel (1) and to the words of Ferdinand (2) respectively:

1) Πέντε οργιές βαθιά κοίτεται ο πατέρας μου
από τα κόκαλα του έγιναν κοράλλια,
να, τα μαργαριτάρια τα μάτια του ...

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes

2) ... καθισμένος σ’ ένα ακρογιάλι,
κλαίγοντας πάλι του βασιλιά πατέρα μου το ναυάγιο...

(Sefteris, 1949: 94, 99)

[...] Sitting on a bank,
Weeping again the King my father’s wrack (*The Tempest*, I, ii)
Seferis possessed two Greek versions of Shakespeare’s play published before the first edition of Η Ἐρημη Χώρα, and he probably used them to write his translation. The first one, Η τρικυμία [The Tempest], was written by Iakovos Polyelas and was published in Corfu in 1855. The second one, Η Τρικυμία, Τραγωδία σε 5 πράξεις [The Tempest Tragedy in Five Acts], was written by Konstantinos Theotokis, and was published in Athens in 1930. By reading Polyelas’s translation of Ariel’s song, one can observe the close resemblance with Seferis’s translation of the same lines of the notes in The Waste Land:

Εις πολύ βάθος κοίτεται το σώμα του πατρός σου.
Κοράλια είναι τα κόκκαλα, τα μάτια μαργαρίταις.
Κάθε φθαρτό της φύσης του μέσα το κύμα παίρνει
Ξένη μορφή πολύτιμη; [...]  

[In great deepness the body of your father lies;  
Bones are corals, the eyes pearls;  
Every corruptible thing of nature, into the waves, takes  
An unknown, precious form;]

Theotokis’s translation is also chronologically nearer to Seferis’s one of 1936. Therefore, the possibility that Seferis used it as a reference in order to write the translation of the quotations in the section of the notes of his book is not so remote, as it is even more similar to the one written by Seferis:

Κοίτεται ο κύρις σου βαθειά  
Pέντε οργιές μες στα νερά  

[Your master deeply lies  
Five fathoms into the waters]

From a lexical and rhythmical point of view, Seferis’s version of the quotation, “Πέντε οργιές βαθιά κοίτεται ο πατέρας μου‖, is very near to Theotokis’s translation of the same line. Moreover, we note the common use of the verb “κοίτεται,” he lies, which had been employed by Polyelas (“Εις πολύ βάθος κοίτεται το σώμα του πατρός σου‖) as well. It can be surmised that the examples above indicate a possible intertextual relation between Seferis’s translation and two older Greek translations of The Tempest.

Has Seferis’s method of using Shakespeare’s Greek versions realised the preservation of memory pointed out by Gronstad (2002:239)? We note for ex-

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ample that the word κοίτεται was also used in the successive two editions of Seferis’s Η Έρημη Χώρα (1949; 1965), thus maintaining the intertextual connection to Polylas’s and Theotokis’s Τρικυμία. However, the edition of Η Έρημη Χώρα of 1973, edited by G.P. Savvidis, presents the word κείτεται instead of κοίτεται.

This change is probably due to the concern of using a more standard language. However, trying to modify the text so that it could be “unified” to the Modern Greek Grammar of Manolis Triandafillidis, Savvidis removed, consciously or not, the intertextual link with Polylas’s and Theotokis’s translation of The Tempest.

Another quotation from Shakespeare is also line 172 of The Waste Land, “Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night”. In Eliot’s poem, the words of farewell belong to a character of the English popular classes. Actually, these are also Ophelia’s words in Hamlet, after she had learned about her father’s death:

I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i’ the cold ground. My brother shall know it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night (Hamlet, IV, v).

In the notes of the second edition of Η Έρημη Χώρα, the Greek poet translates the words of Ophelia:

«Όλα θα παν καλά, ελπίζω. Χρειάζεται υπομονή. Αλλά δεν μπορώ να βαστάξω τα δάκρυα όταν στοχάζω πως θα τον βάλουν στο κρύο χώμα. Ο αδερφός μου θα το μάθει: λοιπόν σας ευχαριστώ για τις καλές σας συμβουλές. Ε! το αμάξι μου! Καληνύχτα κυρίες· καληνύχτα γλυκείες μου κυρίες· καληνύχτα, καληνύχτα» (Seferis 1949b: 98).

2. In the prologue to the definitive edition of Seferis’s translation (1973), Savvidis also declares that he based his revisions according to Seferis’s suggestions.


4. Since 1941, The Grammar of Modern Greek by Manolis Triandafillidis has been the official grammar of Modern Greek.

Seferis owned a French edition of Shakespeare’s play, translated by Jules Derocquigny, and he probably used it to translate the passage of Ophelia’s exit. This is the passage in the French translation:

J’espère que tout sera pour le mieux. Il faut de la résignation, mais je ne puis me tenir de pleurer en pensant qu’on va le coucher dans la froide terre. Mon frère le saura et je vous remercie bien de votre bon conseil. Ça, mon carrosse! Bonsoir, mesdames; bonsoir, mes bonnes dames; bonsoir, bonsoir.

In all probability, this translation played a role in modelling the one Seferis wrote for his notes of the second edition. This can be surmised by the use of the impersonal verb “χρειάζεται”, according to the French impersonal expression “il faut”, the clause “όταν στοχάζομαι”, that resembles the French translation “en pensant”, as well as the translation of “Come, my coach” in “Ε! το αμάξι μου”, that again recalls Derocquiquy’s version, “Ça, mon carrosse!” The use of the possessive pronoun in the Greek translation “γλυκείες μου κυρίες” seems also an imitation of the French text, “bonsoir, mes dames.” This demonstrates that Seferis presumably used the French text to write his translation of the passage from Hamlet.

The consideration of the various editions of a translation and the analysis of the intertextual relations between the various texts through time evidences other aspects of transtextuality. The case of the revision of Seferis’ translation, which took place thirteen years after the first edition, proves to be useful to our purpose.

One of the particularities that come out from Seferis’s revision is that several references to the Bible come from the Septuagint version. For example, the translation of line 182, “By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept”, which refers to Psalm CXXXVII-1, is “Κοντά στα νερά του Λεμάν κάθισα κι ἐκλαψα” in the first edition. However, in the second version of the translation of 1949, Seferis changes the form “Κοντά στα νερά” in the more erudite “Επί των υδάτων” in analogy with the original text of the Greek Bible.6 Another such use is that which refers to lines 308-9, “O Lord Thou pluckest me out / O Lord Thou pluckest”, of The Waste Land. Here also, the Greek poet changes his first translation introducing a word used in the Bible. Therefore, the choice of using “εξέσπασά με” in the second edition instead of “με ξερίζωσες”, you uprooted me, of the first edition, is another example of Seferis’ use of intertextuality, as the second version is a quotation from Amos (IV, 11): “και εγένε-
σθε ως δαυλός εξεσπασμένος εκ πυρός” (You were like a burning stick taken from the fire).

The last example clearly shows how Seferis’s use of *transtextuality* is far from being only marginal, as the translation gains in complexity and linguistic richness through the various editions. The use of linguistic forms taken from the Bible written in *Koine*, the popular variety of Greek employed for the translation of the Septuagint version of Alexandria between the third and the first century B.C., proves that Seferis managed to reproduce the polyphonic effect of the original, which continuously combines low and high registers.

Moreover, there is still another text that probably played a decisive role in Seferis’s choice of the words. It is Takis Papatsonis’s translation of Eliot’s poem, *O Ερημότοπος* (1933: 198-9). Here one can also observe Seferis’s intertextual use of Papatsonis’s version, who translates *waters* in line 182 as ὑδάτα (“Παρά τα ύδατα του Λεμάν εκάθισα και έκλαυσα”), instead of νερά, and lines 308-10 as “Ὥ Κύριε, και με ξερρίζωσες μακρυά / Ὥ Κύριε, με ξερρίζωσες / που φλεγόμουν.”! Thus, Seferis’s version preserves the ‘memory’ of both the Greek Bible and Papatsonis’s *O Ερημότοπος* (1933).

As already observed, while translating *The Waste Land*, Seferis was also interested in two French translations of Eliot’s poem, namely *La terre mise à nu* by Jean de Menasce (1926) and *La terre vaine* by Pierre Leyris (1947). He knew about the existence of the two translations but, while there is still no complete evidence of the role played by De Menasce’s text in shaping his translation, he did adopt Leyris’s one, as he affirms in the introduction to the notes to the Greek second edition of *Η Έρημη Χώρα* (Seferis 1949:88). Leyris’s translation also contributed to some linguistic changes in the second edition, and helped to clarify the meaning of parts of Eliot’s poem.7

This last aspect is evident, for example, in line 4 of the poem, “Dull roots with spring rain”. This line is translated “Ρίζες οκνές με τη βροχή της άνοιξης” in the first edition, while in the second one it becomes “Με τη βροχή της άνοιξης ρίζες οκνές”. The same syntactic inversion of the object “ρίζες οκνές” is also present in Leyris’s version, “Par les pluies du printemps les racines inertes.”

7. M. Paschalis (2004: 1764) has also sustained this hypothesis.
Similarly, line 51, “Here is the man with three staves, and here the wheel,” presents a lexical substitution: “ο άνθρωπος με τα τρία κοντάρια” in the first edition, and “ο άνθρωπος με τα τρία μπαστούνια” in the second one, where the word “μπαστούνι” has a phonetic resemblance with Leyris’s text, “l’homme au triple bâton.”

Furthermore, Leyris’s translation helps Seferis clarify the meaning of Eliot’s poem. In “A Game of Chess”, the second section of the poem, for example, there is such evidence, as line 94, “Huge sea-wood fed with copper”, is translated “Πελώριο δάσος πελαγίσιο φορτωμένο μπρούντζο” in the first edition. Probably, Seferis imitates Papatsonis (1933), who translates “πελώρια δάση των βυθών της θάλασσας.” Differently from Papatsonis however, Leyris does not imagine a forest in the abyss of the sea, as he translates the word “woods” as “bûches” [trunks, logs], “D’énormes bûches de bois d’épave clouté de cuivre”, giving more the idea of a decayed world, or maybe of a shipwreck, than that of a luxuriant vegetation under the sea. This line therefore, in the Greek edition of 1949 becomes “Πελώρια ξύλα πελαγίσια ταγισμένα μπακίρι,” which is more similar to the French version.

In this paper, I have shown how texts that are apparently extraneous to each other do participate in shaping a new translation in many ways. The use of the various quotations in Eliot’s original, mirrored in the translation, permits to reflect on the value of trans/intertextuality, importance of which in poetry and translation was well exploited by Seferis, who, far from directly translating from the original, tried to reproduce intertextual links with other texts. He could create a sort of net of literary works, all bounded together by his references, quotations, and imitations. As a result, Seferis’s translation does keep the memory of other texts, realising the kind of “preservation of memory” introduced at the beginning of this paper.

This is the main characteristic of a transtextual approach to translation, which does not consider the source and target text only, but takes into account many other texts. The analysis of a translation does not concentrate exclusively on the TT text and the ST in order to observe the adjunctions, suppressions, or modifications, but it takes into account all the translations related to the original, as well as other texts apparently extraneous to the translation processes.
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