

imperfections, afford an insight into the process of evolution towards a composite literary form in the vernacular in the late Middle Ages. By examining the *process*, rather than by continuing to debate the relative 'authenticity' of rival *texts*, we may hope to learn more, not just about the growth of literature in the medieval Greek vernacular, but also perhaps about the corresponding and often contemporary developments in Europe and the Middle East.

Appendix

Core material in 'The Lay of the Emir'

Where more or less common lines can be identified, I have given them in the left-hand column as they appear in the E version (S. Alexiou 1990), with the corresponding lines of G (Mavrogordato 1956) on the right. Where no certain trace of the core can be discerned in the language of the corresponding passages, I have given in English the sense as it can be extrapolated from the two versions. Dots indicate gaps which cannot be filled from the extant texts. Square brackets in the connecting narrative indicate that only the broad gist of a passage is recoverable.

• • •

E1 «Κρότοι καὶ κτύποι καὶ
ἀπειλαὶ μὴ σέ καταπτοήσουν,
E2 μὴ φοβηθῇς τὸν θάνατον
παρὰ μητρὸς κατάραν·

G1.134 «Μὴ ὄλως», λέγων,
«ἀδελφέ, φωναὶ καταπτοήσουν,
G1.135 μὴ κρότοι δειλιάσωσι,
πληγαὶ σε ἐκφοβήσουν,
G1.138 νεότητος μὴ φείσαι σὺ
παρὰ μητρὸς κατάραν,

and put your trust in God' (E8, G1.140). The Emir then rode out to battle, imposing in appearance [and connected in some way with the sun's rays (E16, G1.163)].

E17 Κοντάριν ἐμαλάκιζε,
βένετον, χρυσωμένον.

G1.164 κοντάριν ἐμαλάκιζεν
βένετον, χρυσωμένον·

One of the Saracen retainers warned the Emir that his opponent would not be defeated easily (E21–7, G1.155–60), [perhaps including the warning:

E29 «Αὐτὸς σκυλὶ Ρωμαῖος ἔν',
μὴ σέ κακοδοικήσῃ»

G1.189 ὁ δὲ Ρωμαῖος δεινός
ἐστι, μὴ σέ κακοδοικήσῃ·

E32 Εὐθὺς ἐκαβαλίκευσαν, 'ς τὸν
κάμπον κατεβαίνουν·

G1.172 παρευθὺς ἐπελάλησεν, εἰς
τὸν κάμπον ἐξῆλθε

E38 οἱ κάμποι φόβον εἶχασιν
καὶ τὰ βουνιὰ ἀηδονοῦσαν,

G1.180 Τὰ ὄρη ἀντιδόνησαν, οἱ
βουνοὶ βροντὰς εἶχον,

E40 τὸ αἷμαν ἐκατέρεεν εἰς τὰ
σκαλόλουργα των

G1.181 τὸ αἷμα δὲ κατέρρεε τὴν
γῆν ἐκείνην ὀλην,

The watching Saracens once more intervened with advice (E46–51, G1.184–9), and the Emir conceded:

E55 «Νὰ ζῆς, καλὲ νεώτερε,
ἐδικόν σου ἔναι τὸ νίκος».

G1.196 «Παῦσαι, καλὲ νεώτερε,
σὸν γὰρ ἔστι τὸ νίκος·

And so the single combat ended, and Constantine returned to his brothers (E56–7, G1.198–204). The brothers all together then addressed the Emir:

E59 «?Ὡ ἀμιρά, πρωταμιρά καὶ
πρώτε τῆς Συρίας,
E60 ὦ ἀμιρά, δοῦλε Θεοῦ,
πλήρωσον ὡς μὰς εἶπες,
E61 καὶ δεῖξε μὰς τὸ ἀδελφιν
μὰς νὰ χαροῦν οἱ ψυχές μὰς».

cf. G1.100 «'Αμιρά, δοῦλε τοῦ
Θεοῦ καὶ πρώτε τῆς Συρίας
G1.206 «Δός, ἀμιρά, τὴν
ἀδελφήν, καθὼς ἡμῖν ὑπέσχον,

E62 Καὶ τότε πάλιν ὁ ἀμιράς
μαϊνόμενος [corr. Kalonaros:
ψευδόμενος] τοὺς λέγει:

G1.208 'Ο ἀμιράς δὲ πρὸς
αὐτοὺς οὐκ ἀληθεύων ἔφη·

E63 «'Εβγάτε εἰς τὰ φουσάτα
μου, γυρεύσετε τὰς τέντας

G1.209 «Σφραγίδα λάβετε ἐμὴν,
γυρεύσατε τὰς τένδας,

and if you find your sister you can take her and go' (E64, G1.210–11). As they went,

E67 Σαρακηνὸν ὑπάντησαν
ἀπέξωθεν τῆς τέντας

G1.216 Καὶ καθ' ὁδὸν Σαρακηνῷ
ἀγροίκῳ συναντῶσιν,

who said to them, 'If you're looking for a Roman girl:

E71 διέλθατε τὸ ἐπανώφορον,
<εὐρήσητε> ρυάκιν·
E72 χθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσφάξαμεν
ἡδονικὰ κοράσια,
E73 διότι οὐδὲν ἠθέλασιν ὥσαν
τὰς ἐλαλοῦμαν·

G1.223 «Διέλθετε εἰς τὸ
ὑπαύχενον, εὐρήσετε ρυάκιν·
G1.224 χθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσφάξαμεν
εὐγενικὰς ὥραιας,
G1.225 διότι οὐκ ἐπέιθοντο εἰς
ἃ ταῖς ἐλαλοῦμεν·

The brothers followed these directions.

E79 Ἐκεῖ ἦῤραν τὰ κοράσια εἰς
τὸ αἷμαν κυλισμένα:
E80 τῶν μὲν αἱ χεῖρες ἔλειπον,
ἄλλων οἱ κεφαλές των,

G1.227 πολλὰς σφαμμένας
εὗρηκαν εἰς τὸ αἷμα
βαπτισμένας,
G1.228 ὦν μὲν αἱ χεῖρες
ἔλειπον, κρανία τε καὶ πόδες,

They tried to identify their sister without success, because:

E87 ὅτι συζουλισμένες ἦν καὶ
εἰς τὸ αἷμαν κυλισμένες.

cf. G1.227 πολλὰς σφαμμένες
εὗρηκαν εἰς τὸ αἷμα
βαπτισμένες,

They put earth upon their heads and began to lament their sister's death:

E91 «Κὺρ Ἦλιε, τί νὰ ποιήσωμεν
τὸ ἀδελφὸν μας νὰ εὐροῦμεν,
E94 Κὺρ Ἦλιε, τί μᾶς ἔποιε
καὶ ἐκακοδοίκεςές μας;

G1.253 Ἦλιε, τί ἐφθόνησας τὸ
ῥαῖον μας ἀδελφὸν,
G1.254 ἀδίκως ἐθανάτωσας, δι'
οὐ ἀντέλαμπέ σου!»

The brothers buried the girls in a common grave (E123–5, G1.255–8),

E126 καὶ ἐστράφησαν ἔς τὸν
ἀμῖρὰν μετὰ κακῆς καρδίας.

G1.257 καὶ θρηνοῦντες ὑπέστρε-
φον πρὸς ἀμῖρὰν εὐθέως

They said to him:

E129 «ὦ ἀμῖρά, πρωταμῖρά, καὶ
σκύλε τῆς Συρίας·

cf. G1.100 «Ἀμῖρᾶ, δοῦλε τοῦ
θεοῦ καὶ πρῶτε τῆς Συρίας

Give us back our sister or we'll kill [E: you/ G: ourselves]. For answer the Emir asked them about their lineage. They named their parents' families and claimed a large number of fighting kinsmen. Their father had been in exile at the time of the Emir's raid. The Emir replied:

E145 «Πατὴρ μας ἦτον Ἀαρὼν
καὶ θεῖος μας ὁ Καροήλης,
E149 Ἐμὲν ποτὲ οὐκ ἐπήντησε
στρατηγὸς ἢ τοπάρχης.

G1.285 Ἀμβρων ὑπῆρχε μου
παπποῦς, θεῖος μου ὁ Καρόης.
G1.297 Ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἀντεστάθησαν
στρατηγοί, οὐ φουσάτα,

but now I've been defeated by a girl's beauty. And so,

E162 ἂν ἔν' καὶ καταδέχεσθε νὰ
μ' ἔχετε γαμπρό σας,
E163 ἐγὼ ἔχω καὶ τὸ ἀδελφὸν σας
καὶ ὥς δι' αὐτὴν μὴ λυπᾶσθε.
E164 Καὶ τοῦτο ὁμνῶ καὶ λέγω
σας μὰ τὸν <καλὸν> προφήτην,
E166 οὔτε φίλημαν μ' ἔδωκεν,
οὔτε μιλιάν τῆς εἶπα.
E169 Ὑπᾶτε εἰς τὴν τέντα μου
τὸ ἀδελφὸν σας νὰ εὐρήτε.
E177 καὶ γίνομαι καὶ Χριστιανὸς
καὶ μετὰ σᾶς νὰ ἔλθω».

G1.304 εἰ οὐκ ἀπαξιῶνετε τοῦ
ἔχειν με γαμβρόν σας,
cf. G2.97 λάβε καὶ τὴν Ρωμάισσαν,
εἰ δι' αὐτὴν λυπῆσαι.
G1.307 Καὶ μάθετε τὸ βέβαιον,
μὰ τὸν μέγαν προφήτην,
G1.308 οὔτε φίλημα μ' ἔδωκεν
οὔτε τινὰ λαλίαν.
G1.309 Δεῦτε οὖν εἰς τὴν τέντα
μου ἴδετε ἦν ζητεῖτε».
G1.306 νὰ γένωμαι Χριστιανὸς
στραφεὶς εἰς Ρωμανίαν.

The brothers went and found their sister in a well-furnished tent. They said to her:

E189 «Ἐγείρου, ἡ βεργόλικος,
γλυκύν μας τὸ ἀδελφὸν·

G1.323 καὶ «Ζῆς», ἔλεγον,
«ἀδελφή, ζῆς, ψυχὴ καὶ καρδιά.

and then embraced her.

E195 οἱ μὲν φιλοῦν τὰ χεῖλη
τῆς, οἱ ἄλλοι τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς
τῆς.

cf. G1.204 οἱ μὲν φιλοῦν τὰς
χεῖρας του, ἄλλοι τὴν κεφαλὴν
του.

So they all returned amid great rejoicing to Romania:

E213 καὶ ἐδάρτε ἦν ἐξακουστὸν
εἰς ἅπασαν τὸν κόσμον

G1.335 Καὶ ἀκουστὸν ἐγένετο
εἰς τὸν σύμπαντα κόσμον,

that a beautiful girl could defeat a whole army. After the consummation of the marriage,

E219 ἔτεκαν παῖδα θαυμαστὸν,
τὸν Διγενὴν Ἀκρίτην,

G2.48 καὶ ἔτεκε τὸν Διγενῆ
Βασίλειον Ἀκρίτην·

But then the Emir received a letter.

E226 ἔπεψε ἡ μάνα του χαρτὶν
ἀπέσω ἀπὸ Συρίας,
E227 <χαρτὶν τοὺς> θρήνους
γέμοντα, ὄνειδισμοὺς καὶ
θλίψεις:
E228 «Τέκνον μου ποθεινότατον,
ψυχὴ μου, ἀναπνοή μου,

G2.50 Ἡ δὲ μήτηρ τοῦ ἀμῖρᾶ
γραφὴν ἀπὸ Συρίας
G2.51 θρήνου μεστήν
ἐξέπεμψεν, ὄνειδισμοῦ καὶ ψόγου·
G2.53 ὦ τέκνον ποθεινότατον,
πῶς μητρὸς ἐπελάθου;

you've put out the light of my eyes, and shamed our family. Don't you remember the deeds of your [E: grandfather/ G: father]:

E255 πόσους Ρωμαίους ἔσφαξεν,
πόσους δούλους ἐπήρην;
E256 Τὰς φυλακὰς ἐγέμισεν
ἄρχοντας τῶν Ρωμαίων.
E258 Τὸ Κόνιον ἐκούρσευσεν
μέχρι καὶ εἰς τὸ Ἀμόρι,
E261 Καὶ ὁ ἀδελφός μου, ὁ θεῖος
σου, ὁ Μουρστασίτ, ἐπήγεν,

G2.61 ὅσους Ρωμαίους ἔσφαξε,
πόσους ἔφερε δούλους;
G2.62 οὐκ ἐγέμισε φυλακὰς
στρατηγῶν καὶ τοπάρχων;
cf. G1.295 τὸ Ἀμόριν δὲ
καταλαβὼν ἄχρι τοῦ Ἰκονίου)
G2.75 Ὁ ἀδελφός μου, ὁ θεῖος
σου, ὁ Μουρσῆς ὁ Καρόης

• • •

And now you've destroyed everything for the sake of a pork-eater. But if you want my blessing,

E275 αὐτου φαρία σὲ ἔστειλα
ἐπιλεκτά, δρομαῖα
E279-80 Τὸν βάδεον
καβαλῖκευσε καὶ βάλε τὸ λουρίκιν
E281 καὶ οἱ φάρες ἂν σὲ
ἀκολουθοῦν, ἐσὲν κανεῖς οὐ
φθάνει.

If you like you can even bring the Roman girl (E282-3; G2.97). Otherwise:

E286 τὰ τέκνα σου νὰ σφάξουσιν
καὶ ἐμέναν θέλουν πνίξει.
and your wives will be embraced by others (E287, G2.87-8). You will also have
my curse' (E291, G2.98).

Messengers brought the mother's letter and camped at a place called Chalkopettrin/ Lakkopetra. The messengers urged the Emir to go with them under cover of moonlight. But he was much moved by the letter and went straight to his wife in her κουβούκλιν. He said to her:

E307 «Ἡ μήτηρ μου μὲ
ἀπέστειλεν γράμματα ἀπὸ Συρίας
G2.127 ἀλλὰ μητρός ἀπέλαβον
γραφὴν ἀπὸ Συρίας

• • •

E318 Καὶ ὁ ὑστερός τῆς ἀδελφὸς
᾿ς τὸν ὕπνον του <τὸ> εἶδεν.
G2.136 ὁ γὰρ ὑστερος ἀδελφὸς
τῆς κόρης ὄναρ εἶδεν.

and he told his brother his dream about an eagle/falcon pursuing a dove into their sister's κουβούκλιν.

E326 Καὶ τότε ὁ πρῶτος ἀδελφὸς
οὕτως ἀπιλογᾶται:
E327 «Φαίνεται, ἀδέλφια, οἱ
γέρακες ἄνδρες ἀρπάκτες ἔνι
G2.147 Τότε ὁ πρῶτος ἀδελφὸς
τὸ ὄραμα συγκρίνει.
G2.148 «Ἰέρακες, ὡς λέγουσιν,
ἄνδρες ἄρπαγες εἶναι,

the eagle/falcon is our brother-in-law and the dove is our sister.' So the brothers went straight to the encampment and confronted the messengers from Syria, saying:

E335 «Καλῶς τὰ παλληκάρια μας,
γεράκια τοῦ γαμπροῦ μας»
G2.156 «Καλῶς ἤλθετε»,
λέγοντες, «ἄγουροι τοῦ γαμπροῦ
μας»

why camp here and not come to the house?' Then they went to the Emir and threatened him, saying:

E346 Τὴν ἀδελφήν μας ἄφισ την, G2.168 τὴν ἀδελφήν μας ἔασον,
τὸν παῖδα σου ἀπαρνήσου τὸ τέκνον σου ἀρνήσου,

take what belongs to you and go back where you came from.' The Emir was appalled, and began to reproach his wife: '[E: Is this how Christians keep their oaths? G: Is this your love for me?]:

E355 Καὶ οὐδὲν θυμᾶσαι ἀπὸ
ἀρχῆς τὸ τί ἔπαθα δι' ἐσέναν;
G2.187 Οὐ μνημονεύεις ἐξ
ἀρχῆς τί μετὰ σοῦ ἐποίουν;
I took you as a slave:

E357 καὶ ἐσύ ἔχεις ἐμέναν τώρα
δοῦλον
G2.189 δούλην σε ἔχειν ἤθελον,
μᾶλλον εἶχες με δοῦλον.

Now your brothers are determined to kill me.

E367 Πάντως ἂν σύρω τὸ σπαθὶν
καὶ σφάξω τὸν ἑαυτὸν μου,
G2.196 πάντως νὰ σύρω τὸ
σπαθὶν καὶ σφάξω ἑμαυτὸν μου
the nobles of Romania will reproach you.'

• • •

The girl movingly protested her innocence, and then went to her brothers. 'Why do you attack the Emir who has done you no wrong?' she said to them. 'He is so upset:

E395 καὶ <ὡς> ἀπὸ τῆς θλίψεως
θέλει χαθῇ ἀπ' τὸν κόσμον.
cf. G2.218 τὸ γὰρ πολὺ τῆς
θλίψεως γεννᾷ παραφροσύνην,

After all, he gave up his faith and his family for me, and

E399 εἰς Ῥωμανίαν ἐξέβηκεν διὰ
ἐμέν καὶ σᾶς τοὺς πέντε
E404 Καὶ ἐσεῖς πῶς ἐφυλάξατε
κατάραν τῆς μητρός σας,
E406 Θανεῖν οὐκ ἐφοβήθητε διὰ
τὴν μητρός κατάραν».
cf. G2.3 εἰς Ῥωμανίαν ὑπέστρεφε
διὰ τὴν ποθητὴν του.
G2.228 ἀρτίως δέ, φοβούμενος
κατάραν τῆς μητρός του,
G2.231 Καὶ πῶς ὑμεῖς,
φειδόμενοι κατάρας τῆς μητρός
μας,

The brothers were moved by this speech. 'You are our life and soul,' they said to her. 'If your husband wants to go,

E411 νὰ ἰδῇ καὶ τὴν μητέρα
του καὶ πάλιν νὰ διαγείρη,
cf. G2.184 καὶ καθ' ὁδοῦ
συγχαίρεσθαι καὶ πάλιν
ὑποστρέψαι.

he has our blessing.' So they all returned to the Emir, and asked his pardon. The Emir swore to be faithful to his wife and child, and preparations were made for his departure. Before leaving he went in to his wife:

E468 τὰ δάκρυα του ἐκατέβαιναν G2.267 καὶ δάκρυα ἐκίνησαν ὡς
ὡς ὄμβροι τοῦ Μαΐου ὄμβρος ἐκ καρδίας,

and he sighed loudly. 'Give me your ring as a keepsake while I'm gone,' he asked her. She complied, and adjured him to be faithful to her on his journey. The two embraced, the Emir mounted his horse, and all the girl's relations accompanied him on the first stage of his journey.

As he started out, the Emir said to his retainers:

E487 ... «'Αγοῦροι, G3.22 «'Αγοῦροι, δυναμώνεσθε·
ἐνδυναμοῦσθε· φάρια μὴ κατοκνεῖτε,
E490 Βροχάς, χειμῶνας, παγετοὺς G3.24 βροχάς, χιόνας,
πάντες ἀγωνισθῆτε παγετοὺς ἀντ' οὐδενὸς ἡγείσθε,

so that I can return quickly.' And with these words the Emir finally set out (E494, G3.47).

As they went he told stories of his former exploits to his retainers. They came upon a lion devouring a deer/heifer. The Emir spoke proudly to the animal, then killed it and asked his retainers to send its [hide], teeth and claws as a gift to his son, Digenes Akrites.

E527 Καὶ ὥσάν ἀπεσώσασιν εἰς G3.111 Ὅτε δὲ ἐπλησίασαν εἰς
τοῦ Ραχὲ τὸ κάστρον, τὸ Ραχὰβ τὸ κάστρον,

they camped outside and his mother and his relatives came out to greet the Emir, saying:

E539 Τέκνον μου πολυπόθητον, G3.132 «ᾧ τέκνον μου
E540 ὀμμάτια μου, καρδία μου, γλυκύτατον, φῶς τῶν ἐμῶν
τὸ φῶς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μου, ὀμμάτων

• • •

[The Emir persuaded his mother and their retainers to return with him to Romania and convert to Christianity.] On his return he embraced his wife (E583, G3.279–81) and baptized all his people who had accompanied him (E608, G3.329–33).

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Digenes Akrites and the Old Spanish Epics

David Hook

'A spirit of adventurous enterprise; a willingness to go through any hardship or danger to accomplish an object [...] Independence of thought and action [...] – a description neatly fitting the medieval epic hero – in fact describes the American frontiersman,¹ but it usefully reminds us that common characteristics may arise from similar situations in widely different locations and historical circumstances. To bring material from the American West into a discussion of *Digenes Akrites* and the Old Spanish epic has, of course, eminently respectable precedents. Michael Jeffreys has described Digenes Akrites himself as 'a spectacular cowboy dealing on his own with whole gangs of robbers, most of them Christians, not Arabs' (M. Jeffreys 1978: 6), and a similar juxtaposition of East and West is made in David Ricks's introduction to *Byzantine Heroic Poetry* (Ricks 1990: 12). Angus MacKay has drawn heavily upon American frontier studies in his own work on the history of the frontiers of medieval Spain (MacKay 1976; 1977). The great exponent of the frontier hypothesis in American historiography, Frederick Jackson Turner, himself reminds us that 'The West, at bottom, is a form of society rather than an area' (Turner 1947: 205). For the historian, of course, the study of frontier situations has an established methodology (e.g., Turner 1947; Billington 1966; 1967; Ridge and Billington 1969; Bartlett and MacKay 1992); for literary scholars, who often have to draw upon the conclusions of historians, things are more complicated, since we are dealing with literary recreations of frontier events and circumstances, which may reflect the passage of those realities through the kind of variable filters which, in the case of the American frontier experience, are successively represented by pulp fiction and, more spectacularly, Hollywood. Such filters are, naturally, influenced by factors specific to their own periods and genres (Smith 1950; Ricks 1990: 12). After all, 130 years – and the Vietnam war – separate Baird's western backwoodsmen from Clint Eastwood, and at least a century separates the historical Cid, who died in 1099, from his literary presentation in the extant *Cantar* (or *Poema*) *de Mio Cid* (PMC). My comparison of the Old

¹ Robert Baird, *View of the Valley of the Mississippi*. Philadelphia, 1834, cited in Ridge and Billington 1969: 100–3.

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New Approaches to Byzantine Heroic Poetry

edited by

Roderick Beaton and David Ricks



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Editors' Preface

Called variously the 'Byzantine epic', the 'epic of Modern Greece', an 'epic-romance' and a 'romance', the poem of *Digenes Akrites* has, since its rediscovery towards the end of the nineteenth century, exerted a tenacious hold on the imagination of scholars from a wide range of disciplines and from many countries of the world, as well of writers and public figures in Greece. There are many reasons for this, not least among them the prestige accorded to 'national epics' in the nineteenth century and for some time afterwards. Another must surely be the work's uniqueness: there is nothing quite like *Digenes Akrites* in either Byzantine or Modern Greek literature, however these overlapping fields are defined, and this uniqueness is not confined to its problematic place in the literary 'canon' and in literary history. As historical testimony, in its complex relationship to later oral song and to older myth and story-telling, *Digenes Akrites* again has no close parallels of comparable length in Byzantine or Modern Greek culture. Whether as a literary text, a historical source, or a manifestation of an oral popular culture, *Digenes Akrites* remains, more than a century after its rediscovery, persistently enigmatic.

It is in the nature of scholarly activity that most of us who have approached the phenomenon of *Digenes Akrites* have done so from the perspective of our own academic discipline. The very range of the questions that have been asked of this text in the past is one of the reasons why it continues to exercise such a fascination today; but it has rarely been possible, since the heady days of Stilpon Kyriakidis and Henri Grégoire, for scholars working within different disciplines to work closely together, to compare approaches and assumptions. The published work of each is of course available to all, but it remains a fact that historians are more comfortable working with the questions and answers of other historians, philologists with those of other philologists, and so too with anthropologists and folklorists. This is not to deny that akritic scholarship has been interdisciplinary in the past. But it is precisely where the enquiry becomes interdisciplinary, where the specialist, whatever his starting point, has to venture over the academic borderland into another's 'field', that the problems surrounding *Digenes Akrites* take on an added, and important, dimension. It is