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Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu: Translating a Latvian War Folk Song into Modern Greek (on the Occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the Greek Revolution)

Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu: latviešu kara tautasdziesmas atdzejošana mūsdienu grieķu valodā (saistībā ar Grieķu revolūcijas 200. gadadienu)

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Summary   Although Modern Greek literary translations from lesser-used languages do appear from time to time, Greek translatology does not pay much attention to such language pairs. Starting from ethnomusicologists' assumption that the Baltic (especially Lithuanian and Latvian) folk music tradition is musically and thematically related to that of the Balkans, this article case-studies a poetic Modern Greek translation that I made of the Latvian folk song *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu*. In 2021, when I translated it, Greece was celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Greek Revolution, and the song in fact resembled various Modern Greek revolutionary folk songs in remarkable aspects. After a brief introduction to various aspects of Balto-Balkan cultural relations and the identity of this particular song, I retrospectively reflect upon my translation process in poetic, linguistic, translational and pragmatic terms, in an attempt to highlight one more instance when the domestication vs. foreignization dichotomy is virtually neutralized and contributes to a Greek-Baltic cultural dialogue.

Kopsavilkums   Lai gan jaungrieķu literārie tulkojumi no retāk lietotām valodām parādās laiku pa laikam, grieķu tulkojumzinātne parasti nepievērš lielu uzmanību šādiem valodu pāriem. Izejot no etnomuzikologu pieņēmuma, ka baltu (īpaši lietuviešu un latviešu) tautas mūzikas tradīcija ir muzikāli un tematiski tuva Balkānu tradīcijai, šajā rakstā ir aplūkots latviešu tautasdziesmas *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* tulkojums jaungrieķu valodā. 2021. gadā, kad es to atdzejoju, Grieķija svinēja Grieķu revolūcijas 200. gadadienu, un dziesma daudzējādā ziņā patiešām atgādināja vairākas jaungrieķu revolucionārās tautasdziesmas. Pēc īsa ievada dažādos Baltijas un Balkānu kultūras sakaru aspektos un konkrētās dziesmas identitātē es retrospektīvi aplūkoju tulkošanas procesu poētikas, lingvistikas, tulkošanas un pragmatikas aspektā, mēģinot izcelt vēl vienu gadījumu, kad dihotomija starp pielāgošanu un svešādošanu ir praktiski izlīdzināta un veicina Grieķijas un Baltijas kultūras dialogu.

In the last years, Greece has witnessed an increasing translation activity regarding contemporary Baltic poetry. Some examples are: *Anthologia neōn Letonōn poiītōn*[1]*/ Jauno latviešu dzejnieku antoloģija* (An Anthology of Young Latvian Poets, 2019, compiled by Artis Ostups, a researcher at the University of Latvia Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, translated by Stergia Kavvalou, and prefaced by the Latvian poet Anna Auziņa; *Anthologia Esthonikīs poiīsīs: "Ap' ton amilīto kairo"* (An anthology of Estonian poetry: "From times untold", 2018), compiled and translated by Magdalīnī Thōma; *Efta Lithouanoi poiītes ston 21o aiōna* (Seven Lithuanian Poets in the 21st Century, 2018), translated by Sōtīrīs Souliōtīs and edited by the Lithuanian writer and translator Dalia Staponkutė. However, no Greek translatological study has so far analyzed Latvian or Lithuanian as source languages in literary translation. Very few Greek scholars study Lithuanian and/or Latvian, a fact that affirms what Peter Arkadiev, Axel Holvoet and Björn Wiemer said when warning against underresearching the Baltic languages as "not exotic enough from a global perspective [..] and too exotic on a European background" (Arkadiev et al. 2015: 1). Baltic folk music is similarly underresearched in Greece; one notable exception is Fōfō Logothetī's early study on Lithuanian folk music (1941).

However, folk music traditions of the Baltic region – such as the drone, the isochrony, the multipart singing or the so-called *Schwebungs-Diaphonie* – present remarkable similarities with Balkan folk music (see Zemcovskij 1983; Brambats 1983 cited in Boiko 1994; Vyčinienė 2002 and 2012; Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė 2018; West 1975: 8–9, 12–13 cited in Psychogiou 2019: 534; Velička 2024). Both regions have the same type of bagpipes (see Sarrīs 2007: 81–86) and various zithers. Todorova (2000: 161–162) recalls that the 16th century traveller Reinhold Lubenau had found Balkan and Baltic women very similar. Linguistic similarities between the two regions have also been perceived by non-specialists for centuries, to such extent that the 16th century physician and writer Jodocus Willichius claimed that Old Prussian, a Baltic language with no current native speakers, was "corrupted Greek" (Dini 2014), while some linguists accept – or, at least, do not reject – the possibility of a closer connection between Baltic and ancient Thracian languages of the Balkans (Duridanov 1969 et al.; cf. also Schmid 1992: 213–214, 221; Holst 2009: 66; Krimpas 2022: 85–91).

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1   Modern Greek script is transliterated according to ELOT 743:2001. Accents are omitted in Greek personal names and bibliographical entries.

Working hypothesis and methodology   The above-mentioned translatological 'gap' justifies, I believe, the retrospection-oriented methodology underlying this case-study, actually an instance of delayed introspective translation process research (cf. Koster 2000: 17–19, 31; Hansen 2013: 88–90; Gabryś-Barker 2009: 32–33) of my own poetic[2] Modern Greek translation of the Latvian folk song *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* [A Mom is Asking Her Dear Son], which shows structural and thematic similarity with various Greek folk songs. I argue that retrospective research of the translations process of similar Baltic folk songs into Modern Greek can be an interesting, bridge-building task where, in cases such as the one discussed here, the contrast between domestication and foreignization is virtually neutralized (cf. Ajtony 2017; Gray 2020) by stylistic and thematic affinities. Given that (at least to my knowledge) no other Modern Greek translations of Latvian folk songs exist yet, I am compelled to case-study a translation of my own – while being aware of the 'traps' inherent in such research (Hansen 2013: 90; Gabryś-Barker 2009: 34). However, my intention here is neither to define my individual translation style or strategies (cf. Hansen 1997; Gough 2023), nor to provide a tool for language teaching (cf. Gabryś-Barker 2009), nor to delve into the deep cognitive mechanisms involved in the translation process (cf. Hvelplund 2019), or, least of all, to judge my own translation as good or not. Instead, I use this kind of translation process research in order to illustrate how straightforward a poetic translation can be when the source and target cultures share stylistic, dramatic and pragmatic features so far ignored in the relevant literature.

My choice to translate the particular Latvian folk song *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* into Modern Greek[3] was not accidental: the year I first translated the poem, 2021, marked the 200th anniversary of the Greek Revolution whereby the Greeks managed to throw off the Ottoman yoke. What inspired me was precisely the theme of the song, comparable to the theme of many Modern Greek revolutionary folk songs, such as *Mána sou léō de mporṓ* (Mom, I'm Telling You I Cannot [take it anymore]) (Table 1) and falling within the narratives of the long-standing struggles of Europe against the Ottomans. In Ivars Šteinbergs's words, "the choice to translate a certain

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2   By *poetic translation* I mean one that aims at producing a target text (TT) that is a poem itself (cf. Šteinbergs 2022: 154, who notes that "*[t]o translate a poem means to write a new poem in the target language*"; italics in the original), whereas *poetry translation* is a more generic term used even when the TT is not necessarily a poem. Most works, however, use *poetry translation* for both cases.

3   My first poetic rendering of the song appeared in the poetry magazine *3ī Chilietia* (3rd Millenium), issue Nr. 87, January-February-March 2021 (p. 50). The version that appears here is improved in terms of meaning, rhyme and lexical coherence.

text can be viewed as a form of political activism" (Šteinbergs 2022: 54); I would add that the choice of the language pair can also be politically activistic, and this is true in my case when translating this particular folk song from this particular source language (SL) into this particular target language (TL). I want to emphasize a neglected cultural connection between two regions of Europe that, to various degrees, keep paying attention to aspects of tradition and folklore as identity markers.

The methodology here applied is as follows: first, the reader is presented with the original or source text (ST) in Latvian along with a literal translation into Modern Greek, which serves as a starting point for the final, poetic target text (TT). Second, the song's recording history and poetic features are discussed, and its rough thematic comparison with a Modern Greek folk song is attempted. Third, the extra-linguistic (pragmatic) context of the song is explored; and fourth, the reader is presented with a poetic Modern Greek translation of the song and a detailed, step-by-step retrospective analysis of the translation process by accounting for the choices made in poetic, translatological, linguistic and pragmatic terms, with some final considerations as a conclusion.

A 'raw' translation of the ST into Modern Greek

The original (Latvian) text of the song *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* is as follows:[4]

1. Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu:
Kam pucēji kumeliņ'?
2. Kam pucēji kumeliņu,
kam mauc zelta gredzentiņ'?
3. Vai tu jās' pie tautu meitas,
tautu meitu bildināt,
4. tautu meitu bildināti,
uz nākošu rudentiņ'?

5. Māmiņ, tautās vis nejāšu,
bet uz citu tālu viet',
6. bet uz citu tālu vietu,
tāli, tāli svešumā.
7. Jāšu es uz turku zemi,
tur ar turkiem izkauties.

A literal Modern Greek translation of the ST is the following:[5]

(1) Latvian

Mām-iņ-'	*vaicā-Ø*	*sav'*	*dēl-iņ-u:*	*Kam*	*pucēj-i*	*kumel-iņ-'?*
mom-DIM-NOM.SG	ask-3PRES.SG	own-ACC.SG	son-DIM-ACC.SG	what-for	polish-2PAST.SG	colt-DIM-ACC.SG

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4   This is a version provided by a folklore informant Ansis Bergmanis (see below and Annex). In some recordings the first verse (and title) is *Māmiņ' vaicāj' sav' dēliņu*, where *vaicāj'* is a past tense form instead of the present tense *vaicā*.

5   For space economy, grammatical gender is not given in the glossing, unless relevant.

(1a) Modern Greek

Man-oúl-a   rōtá-ei   to   gió-ka-Ø   tīs: Giatí gyalíz-eis   to   poular-áki?
mom-DIM-NOM.SG ask-3PRES.SG the.ACC.SG son-DIM-ACC.SG her.POSS why polish-2PRES.SG the.ACC.SG colt-DIM.ACC.SG
'A mom is asking her dear son: Why are you polishing (i.e. grooming) [your] dear colt?'

(2) Latvian

Ka-m   pucēj-i   kumel-iņ-u,   kam   mauc   zelt-a   gredzent-iņ-'?
why   groom/brush-PAST.2SG   colt-DIM-ACC.SG   why   put.PRES.2SG   gold-GEN.SG ring-DIM-ACC.SG

(2a) Modern Greek

Gia-tí   gyalíz-eis   to   poular-áki,   gia-tí   forá-s   chrysó   dachtylid-áki?
why   polish-PRES.2SG the.ACC.SG colt-DIM.ACC.SG   why   put-PRES.2SG   golden.ACC.SG   ring-DIM.ACC.SG
'Why are you polishing (i.e. grooming) [your] nice colt, why are you putting on a lovely golden ring?'

(3) Latvian

Vai   tu   jā-s-'   pie   taut-u   meita-s,   taut-u   meit-u   bildinā-t,
Q   you   ride-FUT-2SG   to   folk-GEN.PL   daughter-GEN.SG   folk-GEN.PL   daughter.ACC.SG   ask.in.marriage-INF

(3a) Modern Greek

Mípōs tha pa-s   s-tīn   kórī   tous, tīn   kórī   tous na   zītí-s-eis
Q   FUT go.PFV-2SG to.the.ACC.SG daughter.ACC.SG their the.ACC.SG daughter.ACC.SG. their SBJV ask-PFV.2SG

se gámo-Ø,
in marriage-ACC.SG
'Will you ride to their daughter, to ask their daughter in marriage,'

(4) Latvian

taut-u   meit-u   bildinā-ti,   uz nāk-oš-u   rudent-iņ-'?
folk-GEN.PL   daughter-ACC.SG ask.in.marriage-INF on come-PTCP-ACC.SING autumn-DIM-ACC.SG

(4a) Modern Greek

tīn kórī   tous na   zītí-s-eis   se gámo,   to   erchómeno   fthinopōr-áki?
the daughter.ACC.SG their SBJV ask-PFV.2SG in marriage the.ACC.SG come-PTCP-ACC.SING autumn-DIM.ACC.SG
'to ask their daughter in marriage, in the coming autumn?'

(5) Latvian

Mām-iņ-,   taut-ās   vis   ne-jā-š-u,   bet uz cit-u   tāl-u   viet-',
mom-DIM-VOC.SG folk-LOC.PL at.all.NEG NEG-ride-FUT-1SG but to another-ACC.SG distant-ACC.SG place-ACC.SG

(5a) Modern Greek

Man-oúl-a,   s' aut-oús   de tha pá-ō,   ma s' állo-Ø,   makrinó-Ø   tópo-Ø,
mom-DIM-NOM/VOC.SG to they-ACC.PL NEG FUT go.PFV-1SG but to other-ACC.SG distant-ACC.SG place-ACC.SG
'Mom, I will no way ride to them, but to another, distant place,'

(6) Latvian

bet uz cit-u   tāl-u   viet-u,   tāl-i,   tāl-i   svešum-ā.

but to another-ACC.SG distant-ACC.SG place-ACC.SG far.away-ADV far.away-ADV foreign.land-LOC.SG

(6a) Modern Greek

ma s' állo-Ø,   makrinó-Ø tópo-Ø,   péra,   péra   s-tīn   xenitiá.

but to other-ACC.SG distant-ACC.SG place-ACC.SG, far.away, far.away to.the.ACC.SG foreign.land.ACC.SG

'but to another, distant place, far away, far away to a foreign land.'

(7) Latvian

Jā-š-u   es uz turk-u   zem-i,   tur ar turk-iem   iz-kau-t-ies.

Ride-FUT-1SG I   to Turk-GEN.PL land-ACC.SG there with Turk-INSTR.PL out-beat-INF-REFL

(7a) Modern Greek

Tha pá-ō   'gố s-tōn   Toúrk-ōn   tī   gī,   ekeí me tous   Toúrk-ous na

FUT go.PFV-1SG I   to.the.GEN.PL Turk-GEN.PL the.ACC.SG land.ACC.SG there with the.ACC.PL Turk-ACC.PL SUBJV

chtypī-th-ố.

beat-REFL.PFV.1SG

'I will ride to the Turks' land, there to fight against the Turks.'

This 'raw' Modern Greek translation is an attempt to render as literally as possible each line of the ST, and acquaints the reader with its semantic content. However, as will be shown below, almost all the poetic features of the Latvian ST are also found in Modern Greek folk poetry, a fact that justifies an attempt to reproduce as many ST features as possible in the Modern Greek TT.

History of the song's recording

The research of Latvian folk music tradition began in the late 1860s (Boiko 1994: 47), but its relations with non-Baltic regions of Europe are less studied. Like most folk songs, *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* falls under the genre of 'impersonal folk poetry', i.e. it is authored by an unknown composer and lyricist; unknown are also the exact place and date of composition.[6] The first recording of this song, included in *Latviešu folkloras krātuves digitālais arhīvs* (The Digital Archive of the Latvian Folklore Repository) with item number 1968, 4612 and archive code 003072, was made on tape in the Īle parish of Auce municipality by the *18. zinātniskā ekspedīcija Aucē un Dobeles rajonā 1964. gadā*[7] (The 18th scientific expedition to Auce and the [rest of] Dobele district [in the south-western part

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6   On the history and dating of Latvian folk songs see, e.g., Zeiferts (1923).

7   https://garamantas.lv/lv/collection/887930/18-zinatniska-ekspedicija-Auce-un-Dobeles-rajona

Latvia] in 1964). The informant who made the song known to that expedition was Ansis Bergmanis,[8] a native of Ēdole who had been taught the song by a distant relative named Jānis Anuža.[9] Early-2000s arrangements of the song are included in the work of contemporary Latvian folk and ethnic music bands, such as the award-winning *Auļi* (Gallops),[10] as well as *Vilkači* (Werewolves)[11] and *Vilki* (Wolves).[12]

Poetic features of the song

The song *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* consists of seven lines, each sung twice. The first half of each couplet is a repetition of the immediately preceding half, i.e. the poem displays isometric parallelism.[13] Line 1 rhymes with line 2; however, given that traditional Latvian music, including war songs,[14] is generally non-rhyming,[15] this rhyme could be unintentional and due to the eventual use of diminutives at the end of the respective lines. Nevertheless, in any event, this does not mean that it is not worth trying to reproduce the eventually rhyming elements in the TT; quite the contrary, given that rhyme makes the TT resemble more with the vast majority of Greek folk songs, which do use rhyme. In terms of rhythm and metre, the verse is a trochaic fifteen-syllable one (trochaic tetrametre), i.e.:

$$— \cup \mid — \cup \mid — \cup \mid — \cup \mid — \cup \mid — \cup \mid — \cup \mid —$$

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8   This recording is available at *Garamantas.lv: Latviešu folkloras krātuves digitālais arhīvs*, https://media.garamantas.lv/files/audio/003001-004000/003072.mp3 (see Annex).

9   Bergmanis (1964).

10   This arrangement is on YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhscFFPzR-8 (Accessed 8.03.2024)

11   This arrangement is on YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XajbKFT9NAg (Accessed 8.03.2024)

12   This arrangement is on YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0vdtsLCNh0 (Accessed 29.03.2024).

13   On the term 'isometric parallelism' (in Greek: *isometrikós parallīlismós*), denoting the pattern where the second hemistich of the verse repeats the meaning of its first hemistich, see e.g. Baud-Bovi (1973).

14   See, e.g., the Latvian war songs included in Beitāne (2008: 33–259), where rhyming is only occasional and mostly due to line repetitions or individual word repetitions across lines.

15   See, e.g., Muktupāvels (1998: 67, 69).

In Modern Greek folk poetry the fifteen-syllable verse (*dekapentasýllavos*) is likewise very common, but as a rule the rhythm is iambic, rarely trochaic. However, in parts of Greece and adjacent Greek-speaking areas (e.g. Pogoni in Albania) the trochaic fifteen-syllable rhythm is extremely common. The rhythm similarity becomes clear if one compares, e.g., the first two lines of a Modern Greek folk song from Pogoni, *Ti kakó 'kama o kaïménos*,[16] with the first two lines of *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu*:

(8) Modern Greek
Ti kakó 'kamₐ o kₐīménos kai me len óloi foniₐ́ (x2)
— ʊ |— ʊ |—   ʊ |— ʊ |— ʊ |— ʊ|—ʊ |—
(9) Modern Greek
Mīna skótōsa kanéna, mīna fílīsa kamiₐ́? (x2)
— ʊ |—   ʊ |— ʊ |—ʊ |— ʊ |—ʊ|— ʊ |—

Semantically glossed version:

Ti	*kakó*	*'kam-a o*	*kaïmén-os*	*kai me*	*le-n*	*ól-oi*	*foniá-Ø?* (x2)
What	crime	make-AOR.1SG	the poor-NOM.SG	and I.ACC	call.PRE-3PL	all-NOM.PL	murderer-ACC.SG

'What crime have I committed that everyone calls me a murderer?'

Mīna	*skótō-s-a*	*kanéna-Ø,*	*mīna*	*fílī-s-a*	*ka-miá?* (x2)
Q	kill-AOR.1SG	anyone-M.ACC.SG	Q	kiss-AOR.1SG	any-one.F.ACC.SG

'I wonder, have I killed anybody, have I kissed any lady?'

(1) Latvian
Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu: Kam pucēji kumeliņ'? (x2)
— ʊ |—ʊ |—ʊ |—ʊ |—   ʊ |—ʊ |—ʊ |—
(2) Latvian
Kam pucēji kumeliņu, kam mauc zelta gredzentiņ'? (x2)
 —   ʊ |—ʊ|—ʊ |—ʊ |—   ʊ |— ʊ |— ʊ |—

The language of this Latvian folk song exhibits clear poetic elements, e.g., the many elisions (marked with an apostrophe) that serve the metre, namely: *Māmiņ'* for *Māmiņa* (Nom. sg. of the fem. noun *māmiņa* 'mummy'), *sav'* for *savu* (Acc. sg. of the 3rd person masc. poss. pronoun *savs* '[his/her] own', which always agrees in gender with

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16   Note that in Greek folk songs word stress does not always coincide with rhythmic stress, as well as that a vowel is often pronounced as one syllable with the preceding vowel, even across word boundaries, e.g. '*kamₐ o* [aŏ] *kₐīmén-os* [aĭ]. Moreover, the music genre and the way of singing may mask the verse structure similarities between the two songs. An impressive interpretation of this Greek folk song, by Giōrgos Chaligiannīs, is on YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DgMb_oNe-w (Accessed 8.03.2024).

the possessed), *kumeliṇ'* for *kumeliṇu* (Acc. sg. of the masc. noun *kumeliṇš* 'little colt', as the horse (*zirgs*) is oftentimes called in Latvian folk poetry), *gredzentiṇ'* for *gredzentiṇu* (Acc. sg. of the masc. noun *gredzentiṇš* 'little ring'), *rudentiṇ'* for *rudentiṇu* (Acc. sg. of the masc. noun *rudentiṇš* 'little autumn'), *jās'* for *jāsi* (future tense, 2 pers. sg. 'you will ride'), *viet'* for *vietu* (Acc. sg. of the fem. noun *vieta* 'place'); the use of many poetic and archaic forms of words and expressions, e.g. *tautu meita* 'a maid from another region and/or from another clan' (lit.: 'the folks' daughter') which I render simply as *tīn kórī tous* 'their daughter' to avoid a wording unintelligible to a Modern Greek speaker) for *meitene* 'girl'; *kumeliṇš* 'little colt' for *zirgs* 'horse' (see previous paragraph); *bildināti* (with archaic infinitive suffix -*ti*) for *bildināt* 'to propose, ask in marriage'; the use of numerous diminutives, marked with the suffix -*iṇš* (masc.) / -*iṇa* (fem.): *māmiṇa* (< *māma* 'mom, mother', nowadays usually *mamma*), *kumeliṇš* (< *kumeļš* 'colt'), *gredzentiṇš* (< *gredzens* 'ring; wedding ring'), *rudentiṇš* (< *rudens* 'autumn'), *dēliṇš* (< *dēls* 'son'). At the syntactic level, at least one instance of marked poetic syntax is present, namely the subject–verb inversion of the last stanza, *Jāšu es* 'I will ride (*lit.* 'ride will I')' instead of standard *Es jāšu* 'I will ride'.

The theme of the song is warlike, not uncommon for Latvian folk songs (Zeiferts 1923). Its plot involves a dialogue between mother and son, while the horse, the potential bride, and the Turks are mentioned (in this sequence) as third persons. The mother asks her son why he is preparing and grooming his horse. This is followed by a question that misses the target,[17] an expressive and dramatic means that is common in both Baltic and Balkan folk songs and contributes to a build-up of tension, as it slows down the dénouement. In this case, the mother wonders if her son is preparing to propose to his beloved one in order to get married the coming autumn. The son replies that he will not go to ask his beloved one in marriage, but to ride to the distant lands of the Turks in order to fight them. As mentioned above, it is precisely this topos that prompted me to translate this song at that particular time period. The theme and plot – especially in the last three lines – are roughly comparable e.g. to the Greek revolutionary folk song *Mána sou léō de mporő* (Table 1):

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[17] In Modern Greek this traditional expressive and dramatic device is called an *ástocho erőtīma* '*lit.* a question that misses the target', i.e. one that is intended already beforehand to elicit a negative answer from the other participant(s), who will later on give the correct answer as the solution to the "riddle".

Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu (LV)	*Mána sou léō de mporṓ* (GR)	*Mána sou léō de mporṓ* (EN)
[..] "−Mommy, I will not go to them, but to another distant place, but to another distant place, far away, far away, in a foreign land. I will ride to the Turks' land, there to fight against the Turks."	*Mána sou léō de mporṓ* *tous Toúrkous na doulévō* *Tha párō to ntouféki mou,* *na pá' na gínō kléftīs,* *na katoikī́sō sta vouná* *kai stis kontorachoúles.* *[..]* *Na xaskīthṓ ston pólemo,* *na ríchnō sto sīmádi,* *to giatagáni na mporṓ,* *sa gklítsa na to paízō,* *na sfáxō Toúrkous san tragiá,* *mpéīdes san kriária.*	Mommy, I'm telling you I cannot take it to be a slave of the Turks; I will take my rifle, I'm going to become a *klepht*, to dwell on the mountains and on the low ridges; [..] To practice war, to aim and shoot, to learn how to handle the yatagan like a shepherd's stick, to slay Turks like billygoats, *beys* like rams.

Table 1. Rough thematic comparison of the folk songs *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* and *Mána sou léō de mporṓ*

At least three elements thematically link these two folk songs: the son's dialogue with his mother, the son's intention to leave her, and the son's intention to fight the Turks. But although the figure of the mother and/or the woman in Greek folk poetry has been thoroughly researched in an intra-Greek perspective (e.g. Natsoulīs 1992; Chatzīlia 2004), no reference is ever made to their wider Eastern European context. The same is true of Greek studies addressing the possibility of allusions to a partially matriarchal society in Greek folk songs (e.g. Malevitsīs 1999), which fail to discuss these considerations in a wider Eastern European context – despite relevant reports on matriarchical features in parts of Eastern Europe (e.g. Gasparini 1973; Gjelstad 2020).

Dating the song
(and choosing the TT language version)

Any translation of texts that reflect diachronic or synchronic cultural individualities calls for some historical and/or cultural research. In this connection, Joanna Gough has correctly underlined that "[r]esearch activities, whether acquiring background information about the topic, checking the exact meaning of the source word or phrase in context or looking for an equivalent in the target language, constitute an important part of the translation process" (Gough 2023: 2). A legitimate question in connection with the ST under discussion would be, therefore, the following: When and how could the Latvians have come into contact with the Ottomans, since Latvia was never part of the Ottoman Empire?

Trying to answer this question, a combination of linguistic and historical data is warranted. From a linguistic point of view, it is relevant that the verb *pucēt* used in the text of the song points to a date at least as recent as the 18th century.[18] This matches with the chronology of most Latvian war songs, including those narrating about battles against the Ottomans, whose beginnings are placed exactly in the 18th century (Beitāne 2008: 261). From a historical point of view, we do know that following the Russian conquest of Latvia (beginning in 1710 with the conquest of Riga by the forces of Russian Emperor Peter the Great), many Latvian peasants were drafted as soldiers to fight for Russia (and sometimes even became officers) against various enemies of the Russians, including the Ottomans,[19] which suggests that at least the text of the song, or at least this version[20] of the text (if not the song as a whole) dates somewhere between the beginning of the 18th and the end of the 19th century. Namely, between the fourth and the tenth Russo-Turkish war, most probably during the latter (1877–1878), when recruitment of Latvians into the Russian army reached its peak (cf. Beitāne 2008: 13–14). In general "it is almost impossible to define the connection of the war songs with certain historical events" (Beitāne 2008: 261), but if such inferences are correct about the song under discussion, then the Modern Greek language version most adequate for the TT could be one that attempts to reproduce at least some traits of the 18th–19th century vernaculars, as they are known through Modern Greek folk songs.

A poetic translation of
Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu into Modern Greek

The strategy that I have chosen to render the Latvian folk song *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* into Modern Greek is seeking to preserve: (a) first and foremost, the theme (dialogue between mother and son, preparation for war against the Turks); (b) the main morphological elements (fifteen-syllable trochaic rhythm, isometric parallelism, dialogical

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18   Cf. Ernstsone (1999: 136).

19   See more in Jēkabsons (2022: 145–151). Cf. also Zeiferts (1923): "*Atnākuši krievu valdības laiki, kad, kara klausībā iedodoties, saka, ka ņem krievus, aiziet krievos. Starp ienaidniekiem, ar kuriem ved karu, nu parādās tādas tautas kā turki un franči.*" ["Then the days of the Russian rule had come when, as one entered (i.e. was drafted into) the military service, it was described as *being taken [for] the Russians, going away [in]to the Russians*. Among the enemies, with whom one wages war, now appear such peoples as the Turks and French."]

20   Presuming that more versions have existed. One with *vaicāj'* instead of *vaicā* has already been mentioned above; however, this is its only difference from the version under discussion.

structure, the question that misses the target, answer to the question as the solution of the "riddle"); (c) the existing analogies of poetic linguistic peculiarities (elisions, literary words, poetic licence); and (d) the metre, often by means of *balancing equivalence*[21] whenever the exact meaning of particular words or phrases did not fit in the metre, without the poem's overall meaning being in any way compromised. The possibilities of preserving virtually all features of the poem are offered, at least in this particular case, by the Baltic-Balkan cultural, literary and linguistic affinities.

The "raw" translation featured above can only serve as a draft, as it lacks most of the poetic means of expression found in the ST and thus also lacks its emotional charge – an aspect of particular importance for the perception of the song, which might allude to the brave liberation struggles of the European countries against the Ottoman yoke. In order to reproduce the expressive means of the original as faithfully as possible in the TT, I made the following modifications to the draft: (a) reworded the first two lines so that they rhyme between themselves (even if rhyme is unintentional in the ST); (b) reworded all the remaining lines so that they reproduce the metre of the original; (c) sought to preserve the semantic content at the line level, whenever it was not possible to preserve it at the word level; (d) tried not to lose essential information from the individual lines, whenever some loss was inevitable; (e) chose a language variant that employs many colloquial and poetic elements of Standard Modern Greek (e.g. elision, poetic vocabulary, poetic morphology, poetic syntax) with the intention to imitate both the language of the original, whenever the common Indo-European heritage of the two languages allowed for this, and the language variant found in most Modern Greek folk songs; and (f) ensured that any expressive losses due to necessarily 'unfaithful' translation choices (e.g. ones due to the lack of a formal equivalent) were compensated by other expressive means within the same line.

A problem concerning the number of syllables in each line arose from the extensive use of diminutives (and thus words with more syllables) in the original, thus impeding the reproduction of metre and rhythm. As shown above (instances 1–7 and 1a–7a), the semantically translated Modern Greek text has more syllables than the original Latvian text, so the removal of diminutive suffixes in the TT was a practical idea to reduce the number of syllables, whenever appropriate, without losing essential information. On the basis of the poetic translation strategy outlined above, the following TT was produced (instances 1–7 and 1b–7b):

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21   I have proposed this term to denote an equivalent rendering that compensates in a subsequent TT segment for a loss of ST information in a previous TT segment (see Krimpas 2017: 59–61).

1. Mána rótage to gio tīs:
Ti stolízeis to farí?
2. To farí ti to stolízeis,
ti forás véra chrysí?
3. Mīn travás péra stīn kórī,
na tīn kámeis taíri sou,
4. Taíri sou na tīne kámeis,
t' állo to chinópōro?

5. Mána, den travő stīn kórī,
món' se tópo makrinó;
6. gi' állo tópo xekināō,
péra kei stīn xeniteiá.
7. Stōn Tourkőn ta mérī páō,
kai m' autoús na chtypīthő.

(1) Latvian

Mām-iņ-'	*vaicā-Ø*	*sav-'*	*dēl-iņ-u:*	*Kam*	*pucēj-i*	*kumel-iņ-'?*
mom-DIM-NOM.SG	ask-3PRES.SG	own-ACC.SG	son-DIM-ACC.SG	what-for	groom-2PAST.SG	colt-DIM-ACC.SG

(1b) Modern Greek

Mána	*rőt-ag-e*	*to*	*gio-Ø*	*tīs:*	*Ti*	*stolíz-eis*	*to farí?*
Mom.NOM.SG	ask-IMPF-3SG	the.ACC.SG	son-ACC.SG	her.POSS	why	polish-2PRES	the riding.horse

(GR > EN) 'A mom was asking her son: Why are you polishing (i.e. grooming) [your] dear colt?'

(2) Latvian

Ka-m	*pucēj-i*	*kumel-iņ-u,*	*kam*	*mauc*	*zelt-a*	*gredzent-iņ-'?*
what-for	groom-PAST.2SG	colt-DIM-ACC.SG	what-for	put.PRES.2SG	gold-GEN.SG	ring-DIM-ACC.SG

(2b) Modern Greek

To	*farí*	*ti*	*to*	*stolíz-eis,*	*ti*	*forá-s*	*véra*	*chrysí?*
The.ACC.SG	riding.horse	why	it.OBJ	ornate-2PRES	why	put.on-2PRES	wedding.ring-ACC.SG	golden.ACC.SG

(GR > EN) 'The horse why are you ornating, why are you putting on a golden[22] [wedding] ring?'

(3) Latvian

Vai	*tu*	*jā-s-'*	*pie*	*taut-u*	*meita-s,*	*taut-u*	*meit-u*	*bildinā-t,*
Q	you	ride-FUT-2SG	to	folk-GEN.PL	daughter-GEN.SG	folk-GEN.PL	daughter.ACC.SG	ask.in.marriage-INF

(3b) Modern Greek

Mīn	*travá-s*	*péra*	*s-tīn*	*kórī,*	*na*	*tīn*	*kám-eis*	*taíri*	*sou,*
Q	go-2PRS	over.there	to.the.ACC.SG	daughter	SBJV	her.OBJ	make.PFV-2SG	match.ACC.SG	your

(GR > EN) '[I wonder if] you ride over to their daughter, to ask her in marriage,'

(4) Latvian

taut-u	*meit-u*	*bildinā-ti,*	*uz*	*nāk-oš-u*	*rudent-iņ-'?*
folk-GEN.PL	daughter-ACC.SG	ask.in.marriage-INF	on	come-PTCP-ACC.SING	autumn-DIM-ACC.SG

(4b) Modern Greek

Taíri	*sou*	*na*	*tīne*	*kám-eis,*	*t'*	*állo*	*to*	*chinópōro?*
match.ACC.SG	your.GEN.SG	SBJV	her.OBJ	make.PFV-2SG	the.ACC.SG	other.ACC.SG	the.ACC.SG	autumn.ACC.SG

(GR > EN) 'to ask her in marriage, in the coming autumn?'

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22   On the importance of silver and gold in Latvian folk songs see, e.g. Zeiferts (1923): "*Sudrabā un zeltā mirdz liela daļa tautas dziesmu pasaules.*" ["Much of the folk song world shines in silver and gold."]

(5) Latvian

Mām-iņ,   taut-ās   vis   ne-jā-š-u,   bet uz cit-u   tāl-u   viet-',

mom-DIM-VOC.SG folk-LOC.PL at.all.NEG NEG-ride-FUT-1SG but   to   another-ACC.SG distant-ACC.SG place-ACC.SG

(5b) Modern Greek

Mána, den trav-ố s-tīn   kórī,   món' se tópo-Ø   makrinó-Ø;

mom   NEG go-1PRES to-the.ACC.SG daughter.ACC.SG, but   to place.ACC.SG distant.ACC.SG

(GR > EN) '— Mom, I don't go to the daughter, but to a distant place,'

(6) Latvian

bet uz cit-u   tāl-u   viet-u,   tāl-i,   tāl-i   svešum-ā.

but to another-ACC.SG distant-ACC.SG place-ACC.SG far.away-ADV far.away-ADV foreign.land-LOC.SG

(6b) Modern Greek

gi' állo   tópo-Ø   xekiná-ō,   péra kei s-tīn   xeniteiá.

for another.ACC.SG place.ACC.SG depart –1PRES over   there to.the.ACC.SG foreign.land.ACC.SG

(GR > EN) 'I depart for another place, far away to the foreign land'

(7) Latvian

Jā-š-u   es uz turk-u   zem-i,   tur ar turk-iem   iz-kau-t-ies.

Ride-FUT-1SG I   to   Turk-GEN.PL   land-ACC.SG there with Turk-INSTR.PL out-beat-INF-REFL

(7b) Modern Greek

S-tōn   Tourkốn   ta   mérī   pá-ō,   kai m' aut-oús na   chtypī-th-ố.

to.of.the.GEN.PL Turk.GEN.PL the.ACC.PL place.ACC.PL go-1PRES and with them-ACC.PL SUBJV beat-REFL.PFV.1SG

(GR > EN) 'I'm going to the Turks' land, there to fight against them.'

Accounting for the translation choices in the first line

First hemistich:

    ST diminutive suffixes were not reproduced in the TT, while the ST present-tense verb (*vaicā* 'asks') was rendered in *paratatikós* (roughly imperfect or past continuous) tense in the TT (*rốtage* 'he/she asked; was asking').[23]

Second hemistich:

    Kam? 'why, wherefor[e], to what purpose?' was translated by *Ti?* 'what?; coll. & poet.* why, wherefor[e], to what purpose?' (rather than the standard *Giatí?* 'why, wherefor[e], to what purpose?') in order to avoid superfluous syllables in the line and, at the same time, to reproduce the non-standard and poetic linguistic effect of the original (where the archaic *kam* instead of standard Latvian *kāpēc* 'why' is used).

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23   Among the *paratatikós* forms available in Standard Modern Greek for the verb *rōtáō* 'to ask', I chose the more colloquial (in southern Greece) 3rd person singular form ending in *-age* (rather than *-oúse*, preferred in all registers in northern Greece), which also preserves the intonation that characterizes the trochaic rhythm (— ᴗ | —).

pucēji 'you were polishing (i.e. grooming)' (past tense of *pucēt* 'to polish; dress up; array') was translated by *stolízeis* 'you are dressing [sb.] up' (present tense of *stolízō* 'to ornate; to decorate; to dress [sb.] up'), given that *gyalízeis* 'you are polishing' (present tense of *gyalízō* 'to polish'), a semantically formal equivalent of *pucēt*, is not normally used with animate direct objects (as are horses); by contrast, *stolízō* can be used with both inanimate and animate objects and, even if it has a more intense meaning than *pucēt*, it rather enhances connotations of a rider who is preparing for something important. The present instead of the past was used in order to preserve the stress-conditioned metre and rhythm of the TT, given that past forms such as *stólizes* 'you were dressing [sb.] up' or *gyálizes* 'you were polishing' are stressed on the antepenultimate.

The poetic word *kumeliņš* 'horse; *lit.* little colt' (*kumeliņ'*, elided form of *kumeliņu*, Acc. sg.) was rendered as *farí* 'poet.; war/riding horse', which also rhymes with the last word of the next line (*chrysí* 'golden', fem.); besides, since *farí* apart from a riding horse also denotes a war horse, this choice also enhances the lexical coherence of the TT, foreshadowing the battle mentioned in the last line of the song (see below). The fact that the mother does not yet know about her son's plans is of no importance here, since one can assume that she uses the word *farí* in the meaning of 'riding horse'. The equally poetic *áti* 'horse' was ruled out from the start, as it has one syllable less than it was necessary, and hence it would have to be supplemented with another syllable, e.g. via a possessive pronoun; this would lengthen the odds for a subsequent rhyming vs. meaning imbalance. The standard *álogo* 'horse', although syllable-wise possible within the line in question (since the definite article would phonetically merge with it: *to álogo > t' álogo* 'the horse'), would be linguistically too neutral to render the poetic *kumeliņš* and would increase the risk for a subsequent rhyming vs. meaning imbalance. Admittedly, *farí* is not an optimal solution either, for two reasons. First, it is not a diminutive, which means that it lacks the affectionate content of *kumeliņš* (however, one could argue that it does look like a diminutive, as it ends in *-í*, cf. *tragí* 'buckling goat', *gatí* 'kitten' etc.); second, it is an Arabic loanword which – at least for etymology-aware readers – could sound incompatible with the central idea of the song, which is precisely about the expulsion of the Muslim Ottomans from Christian Europe.[24] But, at least from my viewpoint, the technical advantages of this choice seem to outscore the implicit meta-linguistic issues that, after all, would only concern rather few readers.

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24   Cf. the Modern Greek song *Kemal* (alias *O mythos tou Sevach* 'The Myth of Sinbad'; lyrics by Nikos Gatsos, music by Manos Hadjidakis, orchestration by Tasos Karakatsanīs), where *farí* is used in a Middle Eastern/Muslim-oriented context: "*Me dyo gérikes kamíles, m' éna kókkino farí, stou parádeisou tis pýles o profítīs kartereí*" ['With two old camels, with a red horse, at the gates of heaven the prophet is waiting.']

Accounting for the translation choices in the second line

First hemistich:

On metric grounds (given the 'return' of the *-u* ending in the initially elided *kumeliņu*) the verb and the object appear in inverted order in the TT (otherwise an extra syllable – e.g. of a possessive pronoun – would have been necessary), which also called for insertion of the atonic personal object pronoun *to* (clitic doubling), normally required in non-learned register when a definite object precedes the verb.

Second hemistich:

The formal difference between the syntax of ST and TT is due to the fact that Modern Greek, unlike Latvian, uses an adjective or prepositional phrase to express an attribute denoting the material something is made or consists of (despite that Greek does share the genitive case with Latvian). However, both *chrysó dachtylidáki* 'golden little-ring' and *dachtylidáki apó chrysáfi/chrysó 'lit.* little-ring out-of-gold' would lead to superfluous syllables in the line and, what is more, they would neither rhyme with the preceding line nor reproduce the metre or rhythm of the original. Thus, after removing (as in the previous line) the diminutive suffix, and given that the 'golden ring' of the original is in fact a 'wedding ring' (Greek uses *dachtylídi* for 'ring' and *véra* for 'wedding ring', while *gredzens* has both meanings), the rendering *véra chrysí̱ 'lit.* wedding-ring golden = golden wedding-ring', with the adjective following the noun (as happens very often in Modern Greek poetry depending on metre, rhyme, and/or emphasis), was finally chosen as the best possible, as it both rhymes with the previous line and reproduces the metre and rhythm of the ST. At the same time, it enhances the coherence of the TT by foreshadowing the marriage proposal discussed in the next two lines. After all, even if the son did not wear a wedding ring, but just a ring of whatever kind, the mother thought it was a wedding ring, otherwise she would probably have not ask him whether he was going to visit a girl and to ask her in marriage. What is more, the rhyme *farí ~ chrysí̱* reflects also the vowel /i/ of the last syllable of the first two lines of the original, thus contributing to a closer sound effect between ST and TT.

Accounting for the translation choices in the third line

First hemistich:

Modern Greek, unlike Latvian, does not normally use an interrogative particle in yes/no questions. However, after all lexical options were taken into account in the TT, the song's metre and rhythm could not afford to dispose with the syllable of the Latvian *vai* particle. Thus the colloquial interrogative particle *mī̱* (or its allomorph *mīn* before vowels or voiceless stops) was used in the TT, being very common in Modern

Greek folk poetry and despite being somewhat more marked than *vai* in terms of emphasis (i.e. it is closer to 'I wonder if') and register. Its standard synonym *mípōs*, although equally adequate in metric terms provided that the monosyllabic *pas* 'you go' would be used to translate *tu jās'* 'you ride', would be of too learned a register to be used in a folk song context.

Modern (unlike Ancient) Greek does not distinguish between going on foot and riding; this is why *tu jās'* (elided version of *tu jāsi*) 'you will ride' was rendered with *travás* '*lit.* you pull; *coll. & poet.* you go' (a similar semantic shift is seen in Norwegian *å dra* 'to pull; go; leave; travel' or in Latvian *vilkties* 'to move/walk (slowly); *lit.* to pull oneself; be pulled'). What is more, the TT verb is in the present tense, as the future cannot be used after the interrogative *mīn* (and, after all, one would then end up with superfluous syllables). At the same time, the sentence subject represented by the pronoun *tu* 'you' was not reproduced in the TT, as it would lead to more syllables (since *travás* has more syllables than the elided *jās'*). After all, despite the fact that both Modern Greek and Latvian are pro-drop languages, the ST subject pronoun was necessary in this case, because *jās'* after the elision could be confused with the 3rd person (sg. and pl.) form *jās*, while in Modern Greek, which allows for no elision in the 2nd person singular, such a confusion would be impossible.

The preposition *pie* 'at' (much like Latin *apud*) has no formal counterpart in Modern Greek; therefore it was translated by the adverb *péra* 'over [there]; far [away]', which here implies going to other people's places.

Second hemistich:

Since it was not possible to render *tautu* (gen. pl. of *tauta* 'folk; nation') in the set phrase *tautu meita* '*lit.* the folks' daughter; *poet.* 'a maid from another place and/or another family,' it was left untranslated, while the *meita* element was rendered as *kórī* 'daughter'. In this case, the possessive *tous* 'their', which was inserted in the literal translation (3a above) to compensate for the non-translation of *tautu*, could not be used as it would produce one superfluous syllable. However, the insertion of *péra* 'over there' compensates, to some degree, for the non-translation of *tautu*, as it suggests that the daughter (*meita*) is indeed in another place and/or another family.

The verb *bildināt* 'to propose; to ask in marriage,' which has no single-word equivalent in Modern Greek, had to be rendered periphrastically. Instead of the unmarked *zītáō se gámo* 'to ask in marriage', the poetic expression *káno (kápoion/-a) taíri mou* 'to mate (with someone) in marriage; *lit.* to make one's own match (of someone)' was used – and, moreover, its dialectal/poetic perfective aspect (*na tīn*) *kámeis* (instead of *káneis*) *taíri sou* '(that) you mate (with her) in marriage'. As to the repetition of *meita* in the ST, the polysyllabic expressions available in the TT would leave no room for lexical repetition either in the third or in the fourth line. However,

the use of the object pronoun (*tīn* 'her', acc.) restores lexical cohesion, merely changing the cohesion strategy from repetition to reference.

Accounting for the translation choices in the fourth line

First hemistich:

Besides the repetition of the translation choices made in the second hemistich of the preceding line, the verb and the predicative (*taíri* 'match; mate' and *kámeis* '[that] you make') appear in inverted order so as to preserve the metre and rhythm of the original, which requires an extra syllable (cf. *bildināti* vs. *bildināt*). This extra syllable is supplied by the colloquial and poetic morphophonological -*e* added to the personal pronoun (*tīn* > *tīne* 'her', acc.).

Second hemistich:

The adjectival participle *nākošu* (Acc. sg. of *nākošs*, masc. 'coming; next' was rendered as *t' állo* 'the other; *coll.* the next' rather than as to *erchómeno* 'the coming; the next', the latter being too formal for a Greek folk song). Most importantly, *t' állo* has fewer syllables and leaves space for the next word, i.e. *chinópōro* '*poet.* autumn' = *fthinópōro*, without diverging from the metre and rhythm of the original. I opted for *chinópōro*, as the learned consonant cluster /fθ/ of *fthinópōro*[25] would be stylistically inadequate for a folk song. Moreover, this poetic word compensates for the poetic impression achieved in the ST by the diminutive suffix (*rudentiņ'* 'little autumn').

A slight rhyme loss arises from the fact that, unlike what happens (even if unintentionally) in the respective lines of the ST, the word *chinópōro* does not rhyme with the words *farí* and *chrysí* in the first and second lines respectively. But, given that the third line intervenes, which in the original does not rhyme either with the two preceding lines or with the next line, this loss is not felt, at least when one sings the Modern Greek lines. After all, this is compensated for in the sixth and seventh lines where, contrary to the original, *xekináō* 'I depart' rhymes with *páō* 'I go'.

Accounting for the translation choices in the fifth line

First hemistich:

The choices made in the previous line of TT were repeated (for the sake of lexical coherence, metre and rhythm) with a simple inversion of verb and adverbial determiner (*den travố stīn kórī* 'I do not ride to the daughter' vs. *tautās [..] nejāšu* 'To the folks I will not ride'), while *tautās* itself (Loc. pl. of *tauta* 'folk; nation'), here used with

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25   Cf. Thumb (1974[1901]: 19).

a meaning that cannot be translated by a single word into Modern Greek (cf. *tautu meita* in the previous line, itself lexically cohesive with the following *tautās* via lexical repetition), was again rendered synecdochically by *kórī* 'daughter,' since the son's negative answer refers precisely to the mother's previous question. Thus the lexical cohesion via repetition is retained (cf. *kórī [..] kórī* with *tautu [..] tautās*), preemptively compensating for the impossibility of metrically reproducing the repetitions *bet [..] bet* 'but [..] but' and *tāli, tāli* 'far away, far away' appearing in the next line (see below).

Second hemistich:

The conjunction *bet* 'but' was rendered with the poetic *món'* (*poet.* = *móno* 'only; but'), although the colloquial (and much more used) *ma* would raise neither metrical nor stylistic issues. However, the option of *món'*, used almost exclusively in Greek folk songs of the late Ottoman period, aimed at restoring throughout the TT the poetic-language effect that had to be neutralized in earlier lines due to the non-translation of the many diminutive suffixes featuring in the ST. Moreover, the adjective *citu* (Acc. sg. masc./fem. of *cits/cita* '[an]other') was not translated, as it would lead to superfluous syllables. However, the meaning was not affected since, when the son said that he was going to a distant place, that place was self-evidently *another* one, rather than the one where he stood when talking to his mother.

Accounting for the translation choices in the sixth line

First hemistich:

To avoid superfluous syllables, the conjunction of the fifth line is not repeated in the sixth line of the TT, contrary to what happens in the ST. Despite the expressive importance of such repetitions in folk poetry, this choice was a last resort that, in any case, did not lead to information loss but 'merely' lessened grammatical cohesion with the previous line (see above).

Second hemistich:

In addition, contrary to what happens in the previous line, the non-translated item here is not the adjective *citu*, but the adjective *tālu* (Acc. sg. masc./fem. of *tāls/tāla* 'distant, remote') – in order to avoid superfluous syllables and rhythm issues. However, no information is lost here either, since the "other place" has already been described as being *distant* in the previous line (*tópo makrinó* '*lit.* place distant'). Furthermore, it was not possible to reproduce the repetition of the adverb (*tāli, tāli* 'far away, far away'), as this would lead to superfluous syllables and rhythm issues. Thus, the emphasis was conveyed not by repetition, but by addition of the adverb *'keí* (elided form of *ekeí* 'there'; *péra kei* 'yonder; over there').

Accounting for the translation choices in the seventh line

First hemistich:

The verb and the adverb appear in inverted order (*Stōn Tourkṓn ta mérī páō* 'To the Turks' land I go' vs. *Jāšu es uz turku zemi* 'Ride will I to the Turks' land') in order for *páō* 'I go' to rhyme with the first half of the previous line (*xekináō* 'I depart') and to compensate for the fact that the fourth line does not anymore rhyme with the first and second lines. This choice prevented the reproduction of the subject pronoun (*es* 'I'). If it were rendered, the line would have taken the form *Stōn Tourkṓn páō 'gṓ ta mérī* (where *'gṓ < egṓ* 'I'), perhaps with a slightly reduced effect of the hero's self-confidence, but restoring the previously lost (even if unintentional) rhyme.

The word *zemi* (Acc. sg. of fem. noun *zeme* 'earth; soil; land; country') was rendered, for metrical reasons, as *mérī* 'parts; places' instead of *gī* 'earth; soil; land'.

The plural genitive *Tourkṓn* (instead of *Toúrkōn*) was used for rhythmic reasons and to enhance the folk-song-language effect, since this morphologically 'incorrect', last-syllable stressed genitive,[26] originating from poetic licence, has been used in various Modern Greek folk songs – e.g. in the revolutionary folk song *Tīs Lénōs tou Mpótsarī* (On Botsaris' [sister] Leno).

Second hemistich:

Again on metrical and rhythmic grounds, the adverb *tur* 'there' was not translated in the TT, as the meaning 'there' is already present in the second hemistich of the sixth line (*'keí < ekeí* 'there; yonder'). Meanwhile, in terms of lexical consistency, the cohesion achieved through repetition (*uz turku [zemi]* 'to the Turks'; *ar turkiem* 'with the Turks') is achieved in the TT through reference (*stōn Tourkṓn [..] m' autoús* 'to the Turks' [..] with them'), in order to avoid superfluous syllables and to retain the rhythm. Admittedly, however, the assonance between *tur* and *turku/turkiem* that is present in the ST is lost in the TT.

Finally, the inherited similarity between SL and TL enabled the accurate reproduction of not only the meaning, but also the connotations and morphology of the ST verb, since both *izkauties* and *chtypīthṓ* (perfective aspect of *chtypiémai* 'to fight, combat) literally mean 'to beat each other', and hence also 'to fight, combat', while both are morphologically passive and semantically reciprocal. If the conventional *polemī́sō* (perfective aspect of *polemáō* 'to wage war; to fight, combat') had been used, such connotations could not have been reproduced in the TT.

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26   The genitive plural ending of masculine nouns in *-os* (such as *Tourkos* 'a Turk') is unstressed in standard Modern Greek.

Discussion   The translation glossed in instances 1b–7b closely resembles Modern Greek folk songs, both in terms of theme and plot, as well as in terms of language and poetic form. At first glance, this could be described as domestication in Lawrence Venuti's terms (Venuti 1995: 15, 19–20). But, in order to apply such dichotomy as domesticating vs. foreignizing translation, one should first define the *domestic* and the *foreign* (see Ajtony 2917: 97), since in most translations there is interplay between the two (Ajtony 2017: 103–104; Gray 2020: 93–94). However, if the source culture and the target culture share stylistic (e.g. in identic poetic forms) and pragmatic characteristics (e.g. comparable historical experiences), at times also reinforced by genetic and/or typological linguistic affinities (Ajtony 2017: 101–102), the dichotomy virtually loses its meaning, because what is "foreign" is already "domestic". In other words: when translating this Latvian song into Modern Greek, I was constantly feeling that the Latvian ST was "guiding" me towards acceptable choices, as it was constantly reminding me of well-known expressive and dramatic devices in my own language and culture. Certain "foreign" features already looked "domestic", and this is why, by means of 'foreignizing' a translation (i.e. imitating features of the ST), the TT was at the same time being "domesticated". Cultural competence, which is just as important as translation competence in order to attempt the linguistic processing of a poetic translation (Veckrācis 2019: 251), in this particular case is exhausted in a timely identification of the aforementioned affinities and a thorough understanding of the equivalence between the SL and the TL poetic and linguistic expressive and dramatic devices. Virtually, I applied a genuinely domesticating translation only when rendering the idiom *tautu meita* (instances 3–5, 3a–5a and 3b–5b).

    Basically I attempted to meet the evaluation criteria set for poetic translations (see e.g. Connolly 1997: 44–45; Kokolīs 2001: 16–17; Veckrācis 2019: 251), so that the TT could function as fully as possible like the original in terms of: (a) artistic features; (b) retention of the dramatic and linguistic means of expression of the original; (c) avoiding linguistic errors with only minor, justified semantic and/or stylistic deviations from the original, all of which are compensated for in surrounding lines; (d) retention, to the extent possible, of both explicit and implicit pragmatic information[27]; (e) creation of a self-standing poem in the TL in a poetic idiom that imitates native poetic idioms. I have tried, as Cees Koster (2000: 167–204) defines it, to take into account the text worlds, the semantic-pragmatic skeleton and its methodological function, as well as the prosody (poetic form, stanzaic segmentation, rhythm and metre etc.) and the rhetorical means.

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27   On explicit and implicit pragmatic information/content see e.g. Volkova (2017: 380, 392, 415).

The mere existence of criteria such as the above-mentioned implies that it would be simplistic to see poetry translation (and, in particular, poetic translation) as a loss and distortion by definition, since its success consists in preserving the poet's vision and in manipulating the TL elements in such a way that the TT becomes "alive" (Veckrācis 2019: 251). For the translator of poetry the original is the experience, while the poetic act itself is the translation process, which is why any poetry anthology that does not also include translated poems is incomplete (Vagenas 1986: 68–69). After all, "we need to continuously improve our understanding of how translators interact with information, how they use resources that contain this information, and, more broadly, how they carry out research for translation" (Gough 2023: 1–2).

Conclusion

The pragmatic, linguistic and translational factors taken into account to produce a poetic Modern Greek translation of a Latvian folk song suggest, in my opinion, that sometimes poetic translation in the specific language pair can, at least in certain textual genres, in a way essentially neutralize the dichotomy between foreignization and domestication, as explained above. I hope that the poetic translation discussed above might stimulate the interest of Greek-speaking translatologists in translations of less known (at least in Greece) poetic traditions such as those of the Baltic. Moreover, lengthy as it may be, a detailed retrospection or in the best case even synchronous description of the translation steps and strategies in such text genres and language pairs can contribute to the teaching of literary translation (especially that of poetry) and give an insight into a self-conscious translator's mind. After all, translatological studies involving lesser-used language pairs can contribute to the forging of closer relations among the communities of their speakers. The example of Greeks and Latvians (and Balkan and Baltic peoples in general), who in addition are political allies in Western international organizations, suggests that at least in Europe we must stop talking about "brotherless" nations[28] and instead reflect on ourselves through the perspective of others[29]. This is a preliminary step for acknowledging that regional European identities are just

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28   I here allude a popular – and, of course, false – Greek viewpoint that Greeks are an *éthnos anádelfo(n)* 'a brotherless nation' within Europe, as if a "brotherless" uniqueness (not to say isolationism) was something to brag about. About the impact of this myth on Modern Greek literature's readability abroad see, e.g., Perantōnakīs (2023). For a psychoanalytic approach to this myth see, e.g., Gavriilidis (2008).

29   Cf. Muehlhoff & Lewis (2011: 213); Nastevičs (2021: 111).

versions of a wider European culture. According to Balode (2013: 168 cited in Šteinbergs 2022: 148), members of the so-called Latvian school of poetry translation "write poetry themselves and study foreign languages" – characteristics not so prominent in the Modern Greek school of poetry translation, but ones I attempted to take advantage of when translating *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu* into my mother tongue.

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Annex. Sheet music (with lyrics) of the song *Māmiņ' vaicā sav' dēliņu.*

Source: *Garamantas.lv: Latviešu folkloras krātuves digitālais arhīvs*[30]

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30   This particular sheet music illustrates the first recording of the song in 1964 (Bergmanis 1964). Music file: https://media.garamantas.lv/files/audio/003001-004000/003072.mp3