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'To Say the Same Thing in Different Words': Politics and Poetics in Late Victorian Translation from Modern Greek

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Abstract

Against a backdrop of Victorian academic gender politics, the woman warrior from War of Independence folk songs emerged in British women's writings. After a close reading of a translation by Elizabeth Edmonds, Modern Greek is reviewed as a contender for the New Woman's Classics.

Key Words: Modern Greek Studies, Translation, British women writers, Gender politics

> "Well, we have beaten you now thoroughly with our new phalanx of Amazons," cried the master of Trinity, "you have heard of the honours gained here lately by a mere girl, although, to be sure, I must own that she came out best in the classics."
>
> "I have no interest nor any curiosity whatever in respect to your female phalanx. If you reckon upon that you will sustain a crushing defeat."
>
> "But, I tell you, this girl's papers were a perfect revelation as to a woman's powers."
>
> "Pshaw! At what sacrifice?"
>
> "Sacrifice?"
>
> "Yes. I venture to say that she wears spectacles, is sallow, and – "
>
> "And what?"
>
> "Forgive me, friend, round-shouldered." (Edmonds, 1888: 3)

This discussion between two male academics opens the two-volume novel *Mary Myles.* The book deals with the post-Cambridge life of the eponymous heroine, a lady Classicist. Mary Myles is an excellent scholar, we are told, condemned to the life of a governess. While it is lushly written and the plot in many places verges on the ridiculous (by the end, Miss Myles has accumulated multiple marriage proposals), the gender politics at play beneath its apparently frivolous surface set the scene for this essay. The novel's heroine was loosely based on Agnata Ramsay, who was placed alone in the first class degrees for Cambridge Classics in 1887.[2] Although Edmonds presents these women as exotic and offers

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[2] Ramsay subsequently married the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge in 1888. She became something of a celebrity: '*Punch* marked her supremacy with a famous cartoon in which Mr Punch ushered a gowned female into a first-class railway compartment labelled Ladies Only with the text 'Honour to Agnata Frances Ramsay' (2 July 1887).' Delamont: 2011

them up for ridicule, we should not allow this to distract us from the persistent whisper beyond the text, that her work has more to say about the native politics of women's education. Despite giving voice to the opinions expressed by the male academics, there is little doubt that Edmonds had her tongue firmly in her cheek. Perhaps the derision exhibited by the dons seems ludicrous to a modern reader, but Margaret Homans, in her study of language and female experience in nineteenth century women's writing, attests similar male attitudes to women's education:

[T]he nineteenth-century view […] [was] that too much reading (to say nothing of writing) would unfit women for their proper duties, because, on the assumption that there is a finite quantity of bodily energy, the increased demand for blood by the brain during an adolescent girl's education would divert nourishment from the reproductive organs. (p. 160)

For the male academics in *Mary Myles*, women compromised their physical beauty by intellectual endeavour. That they are said to be 'sallow' and 'round-shouldered' suggests a sickliness; the Homans extract expresses this as a lack of fertility brought on by the pursuit of academia. The 'Amazons' are mocked by the male academics, their achievements belittled; their education has been bought at the cost of their femininity. While the 'Amazon' title is complimentary in that it suggests prowess in one area of life, an implicitly unflattering undertone of otherworldly size or vitality indicates that it is meant sarcastically. Nevertheless, Edmonds speaks of female classicists in their own vocabulary, as a 'phalanx of Amazons'. Both these words are Classical terms, one from the realm of myth, the other firmly based in historical fact. The *OED* defines 'phalanx' as: '(*Ancient Greek Hist.*) a line or array of battle; *spec.* a body of heavy-armed infantry drawn up in close order, with shields touching and long spears overlapping. Now also more widely: any compact body of troops, police, etc.' Amazons were female warriors. The Ancient Greeks gave the etymology as ἀ – (privative alpha) – μαζὸς, literally 'without a breast', as the women were reputed to have removed their right breasts to free up their bow-arm. This is probably a spurious etymology, but it has persisted, perhaps because of the enduring fascination with the mythological women's shocking brutality and sacrifice for military success – a success which cost them their femininity. Edmonds's awkward juxtaposition emphasises the unique character of these women, lending them an elevated mythological status, in Cambridge at least. It is worth introducing Anna Swanwick (1813 – 1899) here to try to decipher this way of thinking. Swanwick worked on (ancient) Greek translation, was involved in women's education and the Suffrage movement. Swanwick stated in an address to the students at Bedford College that she 'often longed to assume the costume of a boy in order to learn Latin, Greek and Mathematics, which were then regarded as essential to a liberal education for boys but were not thought of for girls' (Bruce, 1903: pp. 19 – 20). Swanwick offers this as a playful way of explaining the difference in children's education. However, in the course of this discussion, I will demonstrate that this cross-dressing in a different context offered a tacit form of engagement in gender politics.

Modern Greek faced similar opposition in academic circles. A review of the Constantinides grammar *Neo-Hellenica* demonstrates the fierce criticism it faced.

Ancient Greek has the greatest of literatures; Modern Greek literature is assuredly not yet on a level with the literature of America. […] We have no love for modern newspaper Greek and the Modern Greek of novels. It is an ugly compromise, in which the vocabulary is to a great extent classical, while the grammar is on the model of modern languages, and the style is rich in *clichés*, or stereotyped phrases. But what are the Greeks to do? (1892: 84)

The language is an 'ugly compromise': it is not hard to see why women gravitated towards an academic subject attracting such a negative press; already pariahs in academe, the adoption of the fellow outcast modern Greek was the logical next step. If we revisit the Amazons of the opening extract, I suggest that we should read the translator herself through the ανδρειωμένη λυγερή, the trope of the female warrior – the Amazon codified within the text. Classical Greece's academic inaccessibility brought about women's involvement with Modern Greece, which, in turn, played a part in the creation of Modern Greek as an academic discipline. I propose that, far from keeping the 'double allegiance to the foreign text and the domestic culture,' (Venuti, 1998: p. 11) these women promulgated their political views through their adoption of Modern Greece. The English transmitters of the ανδρειωμένη λυγερή manipulate the Greek folk heroine to satisfy their own political agenda

Besides novels and translations, Edmonds also wrote extensively on Greek life and folklore. She was actively engaged in the British magazine culture, and was sufficiently well-known to the general public for Oscar Wilde to review her translations in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and to publish her work during his time as editor of the magazine *The Woman's World.* Edmonds's career can only be pieced together through the remains of her correspondence and the footnotes in her texts. She was in her late fifties in 1880 when she first went to Greece for health reasons, and from then until ten years before her death (in 1907), she worked steadily to produce thirty or so publications of work on Greece and Greek themes. But it was translation, both literal and figurative, which allowed women to construct Modern Greece as an intellectually independent space. Such a space enabled women to enact a liberty unimaginable in Britain; as a consequence of this appropriation, much of the Modern Greek scholarship in late Victorian Britain is feminine.

In 1885, Florence McPherson published a collection of Modern Greek folk poems translated into English. Her book is well-presented, carefully cites the original sources, as well as being a beautiful object in itself; the paper is handmade and the book is pocket-sized. Henry Fanshawe Tozer's review is highly complimentary, and he identifies the value of such a volume in view of the paucity of translations from Modern Greek poetry.

Hitherto, notwithstanding a few scattered translations, the poetry of Modern Greece has been a sealed book to most Englishmen, partly owing to the difficulties that the popular language, which is the language of poetry, presents to the scholar, and partly, perhaps, because the works themselves have found their way but little into England, and, in the case of the some of the earlier poets, are difficult to procure. (Tozer, 1884: p. 324)

McPherson's choice of poetry is revealing. The title page is peppered with references to klephts, battle songs, pallikars and death songs. Unfamiliar words are glossed, and the reference for the Greek original of each poem is provided. When compared with Edmonds's later, lengthier volume, McPherson's is clearly the more scholarly. Nothing else about McPherson can be traced, save three glancing references: the first, in a note on translation in one of the early issues of the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (1889); the second, in the dedication to Elizabeth Edmonds's *Greek Lays, Idylls, Legends &tc.* (1886) 'To Miss Florence McPherson,' it reads, 'in warm appreciation, and with the esteem which kindred sympathies inspire, this little volume is inscribed.' The third is more surprising; McPherson is briefly acknowledged in the correspondence section of the *Δέλτιον Ἑστία* for 1889. McPherson had demonstrated her awareness of *Ἑστία* in her poetry collection, but an awareness of a foreign periodical is somewhat different from writing in the foreign language for book enquiries. A later author, Isobel Armstrong, dedicates her book *Two Roving Englishwomen in Greece* 'To Mrs Edmonds, who has pleaded the cause of the Greek people in song, biography and romance.'

In this period, Modern Greek poetry, especially folk poetry, became attractive to a circle of women in Britain. This had previously been the domain of male scholars, as demonstrated by scholarly collections of Modern Greek poetry such as Fauriel (1824), Passow (1860), Haxthausen (1935, collected from 1814), and Kind's (1861). Yet these women, by publishing their writing in a cheaper form – in magazines and journals – opened modern Greece up to an entirely new audience.

Let us site this sudden interest in its political context. In Britain, 1866 saw J. S. Mill presenting the petition on women's suffrage to Parliament; the national movement started in earnest in 1872. Women were eventually granted the right to vote in 1918, but only if they were over 30, and only then if they were householders, married to householders, or had a university degree. The last condition is important, especially given the struggle at the time for women's rights to education. Only through marriage or education – specifically through the attainment of a university degree – was a woman qualified to vote. In Greece, 1866 brought the Cretan Insurrection, an important step in the rejection of the Ottoman rule. This created quite a stir in Britain, as it tapped into the philhellenic feeling still remaining from the Greek War of Independence of the 1820s.

Edmonds's first published efforts as a commentator on Modern Greece met with harsh criticism. A reminder of the Brontë sisters' and George Eliot's titular posturings, the gender-ambiguous authorial styling 'E. M. Edmonds' used for *Fair Athens* did nothing to discourage the reader from (at least initially) assuming that the author was male. The reviews were not kind:

> Fair Athens […] may be described as a pleasant book on a pleasant subject. Its deficiencies, indeed, are numerous, and appear on the surface. There are bad mistakes of names such as the Byma of the Pnyx and Tachiarchus for 'Taxiarchus', the name of St. Michael. (Anon. 1881: 36)

The discovery that the author was a woman prompted further indignation on the reviewer's part: '[i]f the authoress had given a direct intimation of her sex, instead of leaving it to be inferred from her narrative, these errors would be more readily overlooked by the reader.' The implication is that different standards were in place for men and women. These slips are linguistic ('byma' for 'bema'), and the insinuation is that a woman could not be expected to achieve perfection as a linguist. Moreover, they are mistakes no student of *Classical* Greek would have made, a fact which I believe contributed to Edmonds's movement towards Modern Greek.[3] In the *Westminster Review*, the book is given similarly short shrift: '*Fair Athens* is little more than a tourist's note-book. Mr. Edmonds should be more careful in transcribing classical Greek. 'Byma' (for Bema) and 'Jupiter Olympus' are two out of a good many small mistakes.' (Anon. 1882: 549) Here, though, they are 'small mistakes', rather than 'errors' and 'Mr' Edmonds is given a rap on the knuckles and advised to take more care. While neither review is glowing in its approval, the differing attitudes brought about by assumptions about the author's sex are apparent.

With this unfortunate episode of critical wrath behind her, Edmonds turned to translation. Lefevere (1995: p. 14) suggests that, for a translation to exist, we must presuppose several facts, each contingent upon issues of authority. This idea of authority is crucial, as it was precisely that which Edmonds, as a woman, was lacking.

[3] The reviewer does reserve some (albeit faint) praise for Edmonds, stating that her slips 'do not much interfere with the real merit of her book. This consists in the careful account she has given of the life of the Modern Greek people.'

Translation involves expertise. [...] Translation also involves commission: a person in authority orders the translation to be made. There are, of course, many instances in which the translator 'auto-commissions' his or her own translation, simply because s/he 'falls' for a text. In this case, the problem of 'commission' or at least 'acceptance' of the translation by a publisher is only deferred to the next stage in the process. Translation fills a need: the audience will now be able to read the text again, and the person in authority will have enabled the audience to do so.

We cannot know now if Edmonds commissioned her own translations, or if her knowledge of Modern Greek identified her as a possible translator. However, it is certain that as the list of her publications grew, so did her authority. On the basis of the reviews of *Fair Athens*, it seems unlikely that there was further demand for her travel writings. It was instead through her translations that Edmonds became an 'authority on Modern Greek' and Greece, with her articles in journals cementing this reputation. If we glance back to the Tozer review of McPherson's book, it becomes evident that there was a need, one which Edmonds was ably equipped to fill. Although she nowhere mentions having returned to Greece after her initial visit, Edmonds clearly remained in close contact with her Greek acquaintances and had continued access to Greek newspapers and contemporary literature elsewhere she mentions corresponding with Vizyinos and Drosinis.[4] She translated works by Palamas, Karkavitsas and Xenopoulos before they became the literary establishment. Her translation work does not only deal with literature published up to and including 1881 (when she left Athens) but is consistent with the contemporary literary scene in Greece. She displays this continued familiarity in her regular contributions to *The Academy* (a London daily newspaper), for which she wrote book reviews and the obituaries of Greek literary figures and men of note.

I offer for comparison the linguistic hierarchies Lefevere evokes when discussing better known translators. He discusses the example of Edward Fitzgerald, who had translated the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

Fitzgerald writes to his friend E.B. Cowell: 'it is an amusement for me to take what liberties I like with the Persians who (as I think) are not Poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little Art to shape them.' (Fitzgerald, 1972, VI: p. xvi) *Traductio* is a matter of the relative weight two cultures carry in the mind of the translator: obviously, Fitzgerald would never have taken the same liberties with a Greek or Roman author […] *[T]raductio* can […] be used by translators as individual members of a culture, who are dissatisfied with certain features of it, and want to usurp the authority of texts belonging to another, 'authoritative' culture, to attack those features, defying both experts and those in authority with a certain degree of impunity. (Lefevere, 1995: p. 19)

While we now balk at Fitzgerald's bald approach to translation, Lefevere's explanation of the *traductio* principle reveals the driving force behind it; 'the relative weight two cultures carry in the mind of the translator.' His belief that the translator would not have taken the same liberties with a Greek or Roman author implies that attitudes towards languages and their cultures affected the production of the translation; perhaps Fitzgerald would have met with opposition had he so freely translated something more canonical. However, the fact that he was working from Persian narrowed the field of those able to offer criticism. It also demonstrates that attitudes to less familiar languages, like Persian, or Modern Greek, were not yet set in stone. It is precisely this we witness in Edmonds's work. If we recall the *Saturday Review's* comments, this weighting towards Classical Greek is not an isolated phenomenon.

[4] Edmonds mentions her correspondence with Vizyinos in her introduction to *Greek Lays*, as well as in her obituary of him. Whilst commenting on the spelling of his name, she notes, 'Now generally written Vizyenos; but I retain the form which the poet used in his first letter to me, which was in the English language.'

Lefevere's putative experts though, were all too real for Edmonds. Modern Greece was, in Britain, locked in constant conflict and competition with Classical Greece as we have seen. Lefevere's definition of *traductio* as a cultural critique, though, lies at the heart of Edmonds's translation work. While it was not the authority of the translated culture she wished to assume, but the protection offered by others' ignorance of it, Edmonds produced her translations secure in the knowledge that for her reviewers, Modern Greek offered but a holiday from the Classics.

Edmonds, in the opening pages of *Fair Athens,* boldly announces the purpose of her stay as being 'not only for the purpose of health, but also to combine with that endeavor the cultivation of the modern language' (1881: p. 74). This contrasts sharply with a traveller she would encounter.

Our party this time including […] a young lady, who had travelled much, and seen so much, that nothing seemed able to interest her, but who, nevertheless, felt that there were certain things expected to be done and seen by travellers, and therefore the unpleasant duty of fulfilling these requisitions must be got over somehow. Although quite young, she had lived in Germany, Sweden, Italy and Spain, and had acquired the languages of these countries. She had come to reside in Athens for the purpose of studying Greek, but only, she observed, "to say the same things in different words." (1881: 258)

The young lady's comment about language acquisition is telling; that Edmonds reports it somewhat ironically – her inclusion of 'but only' and the embedding the young lady's own words – suggests that Edmonds saw this young woman as missing the point entirely. Edmonds chose not to name this young lady; perhaps implying that she felt her description was not complimentary. This is an odd idea of language learning, and we feel sure that Edmonds would disagree with a definition of translation as 'saying the same things in different words.'

Travelling alone was seen as hazardous, as suggested by the various responses Edmonds received to her wanderings. *Fair Athens* deals not only with Edmonds's response to the city, but also with the city's reaction to her. After her breakfast, Edmonds describes first venturing into the city; 'declining a guide, to the evident surprise of the porter, I stepped forth to wander alone through the streets of Athens' (Edmonds, 1881: p. 5). She again emphasises her status as lone woman in Megara, there only briefly separated from her party. Still, her appearance creates a stir, 'a foreigner – a woman – and alone' (1881: 204). Similar responses to women travellers in Greece are in evidence in Armstrong's *Two Roving Englishwomen in Greece*: '[o]n my friend (Edith Payne) and I announcing of our intention of starting off by ourselves to Greece, the general opinion seemed to be that we were going out to be murdered' (vi). Women were still seen as fragile, deserving of protection. The reason for the allure of the fearless woman warrior began to develop.

The treatment of the ανδρειωμένη[5] phenomenon in its Greek folk song incarnation has been discussed by Constantinides, who classifies the occurrences of the theme into three categories. Whereas Constantinides rejects possible feminist readings of the myth, preferring to see it as 'a variation of that great theme, the war between the sexes' (Constantinides, 1983: p. 71), I shall argue that the British heroines in translation merit discussion as a feminist emblem. Paradoxically, both the femininity and the masculine courage of the female warrior are implicit in the term. There is a tension between the obvious femininity of λυγερή, and ανδρειωμένη, which cannot help but suggest the noun άντρας, because of its derivation from ανδρειώνω. Although the woman warrior fulfils a characteristically male role, she highlights her own femininity through so doing; the similarities only serve to heighten the sense of difference.

[5] Literally 'valorous maiden', ανδρειωμένη λυγερή is the term applied to female warriors since Politis.

Translation as cross-dressing is a common metaphor, but given the fascination Edmonds and her contemporaries exhibit, I believe a fresh approach is justified. Translation granted women a form of intermediate voice, a gender-ambiguous space between male author and the female translator. The figure of the woman assuming man's dress for physical combat became the adopted persona of the female translator publishing against the tide of male Classical scholarship. A translator actively transfers, carries across, aspects of the primary culture to the secondary, or receiving culture. Susanne Stark, whose book *Behind Inverted Commas* discusses female translators of German literature, notes that, 'female translators were neither mute nor transparent, but fully aware of their mediating role. For they themselves chose the texts they wished to make known in their own country, connected their name with them and to a certain extent recreated them, thereby following their own taste' (Stark, 1999: p. 56). I suggest that Edmonds' adoption of this motif was entirely knowing.

Edmonds addresses the subject of female warriors three times, in 1885, 1892 and 1894.[6] First, in her edited translation of Kostis Palamas' poem 'Τα νιάτα της γιαγιάς,' which she translates as 'Our Grandmother's Girlhood.' A woman living as a man appears in prose in her 1892 translation of Karkavitsas' story 'ο Κρυφός Καημός' which she titles 'Chrysanthos' and finally in her own fictional writing, *Amygdala: A Tale of the Greek Revolution* (1894). To start with a brief description of the narrative, in all three cases the soldier women actively participate in the War of Independence; there is a romantic interest in a fellow soldier, which is problematic, given the nature of the disguise. The accounts have roughly the same outline: the young girl combats her father's disappointment at her sex by taking part in the conflict herself. The Karkavitsas translation deviates in that the father is so disillusioned at the birth of another female child that he chooses to bring her up as a boy. I will offer a close reading of Edmonds's treatment of the Karkavitsas short story in the context of her work.

Irene in Edmonds's *Amygdala* expresses her dissatisfaction with her powerlessness as a woman. She has been disturbed while declaiming 'the trumpet call of the martyred patriot, Rhegas of Velustino [sic]'[7] by the British philhellene Gerard Lowe. Questioned about her education, Irene replies that she is fond of reading, but has no books. Home-educated by her father, she states that she has her "Horologion – that is all – but perhaps some day I may have a few. I am always looking forward to 'some day'" (1894: p. 72). But for the reference to the Horologion, Irene could easily be a Victorian girl eager for education, stealing her brother's Ancient Greek books. Irene then confesses to Gerard that she was upset by their earlier discussion.

> '[I was] obliged to come to this quiet spot and outpour myself. I dare not do so except very, very seldom, as it makes me so unhappy [...] because I am only a woman, and may not go and fight for my country's freedom. When I think of this I am unhappy, and then my loom stands still, and I weep alone in the silence of the night.' (73)

Lowe tries to console her with little effect; 'it is man's part to fight, and woman's to crown the victors.' To which Irene replies, 'Ah! is it man's part to fight and die, and woman's to stand still and look on with wringing hands and breaking heart?' (1894: p. 73). If we read this

[6] The female warrior became something of a literary trope in British women's writing in this period. Isabella Mayo's *Daughter of the Klephts, or, a Girl of Modern Greece* (1896) features a cross-dressing heroine. Lucy Garnett's 1899 article *Greek Matrons and Maids* features two photographs of female warriors.

[7] Edmonds wrote the first biography of him in English. *Rhigas Pheraios: the protomartyr of Greek independence, a biographical sketch,* (London, Longmans: 1890).

against the extract from *Mary Myles*, we can see that the woman's educational impotence, a recurrent theme of Edmonds's writing, has here been conflated with the inability to fight for political liberty.

In the 1880s, Karkavitsas was a regular in the literary periodical *Εστία*; later his promise would be crystallized by his success in the 1898 short story competition in the same magazine. His writing from the 1880s, however, was informed by his travels whilst in the army. During this period he performed a dual service, finding time to gather folk tales and noting down customs which would later add local colour to his writing. As we have seen, Edmonds was always alert to new trends in Greek writing, and it is likely that Karkavitsas would have caught her eye. One story to find its way, eventually, into his collection *Παλιές Αγάπες* was a vignette of village life during the War of Independence. Far from the rural idyll usually described in the early years of the Greek short story, though, in 'Ο Κρυφὸς Καημός', Karkavitsas details the behaviour of a father haunted by his lack of sons. With the Morea on the brink of war, his drunken response to the birth of another daughter is unorthodox, 'Μὰ δὲν πειράζει˙ εἶπε [...] Ἐγώ θὰ τὸ κάμω σερνικό. Θὰ γένη καλύτερο ἀπὸ σερνικό' (Karkavitsas, 1900: p.38). The statement that the girl child will become 'καλύτερο ἀπὸ σερνικὸ' is fulfilled, in a practical sense at least. The father, unnamed in the story, takes it upon himself to provide the education necessary for the girl child to play the part of the man. 'Μόλις μεγάλωσα λίγο, μοῦ φόρεσε ἀντρίκια καὶ μ᾽ ἔλεγε Χρύσαντο ἀπὸ Χρυσῆ ποὺ ἦταν τ᾽ ὄνομά μου' (ibid. 38). That this is just that – a part – is evident from the inclusion of the given name 'Chryse' as well as the name used in daily life, Chrsyanthos. This gives the narrative voice a layered effect; the reader receives the account at several removes, as if through a series of masks.

The section of the narrative concerned with the child's youth has an uneasy close with the father's wish for his child, 'θέλω να περνᾶς τὸ βόλι ἀπ᾽ τὸ δαχτυλίδι˙' (Karkavitsas, 1900: p38). This conveys the father's high expectations for his child, but also evokes a sense of danger with the introduction of the martial image. The proverbial difficulty of shooting through a ring does not bode well for Chryse's success in living as a man. 'Ἀπὸ μικρὴ μὲ ἔμαθε στ᾽ ἄρματα. Μέρα-νύχτα μὲ δασκάλευε νὰ παίζω τὸ σπαθί, νὰ λυγίζω τὸ κορμί, νὰ ρίχνω στὸ σημάδι.' (Karkavitsas, 1900: p.38) The anthropological value of the narrative is overshadowed by the stirrings of the War of Independence. The story takes on a more sinister tone, as we realize that Chrysanthos' father's whim serves an altogether darker purpose.

On the eve of battle, from his own deathbed, the father of the story prepares Chryse for battle, 'Σύρε μὲ τὴν εὐχή μου, λέει. Ξέρεις, δὲν εἶσαι γυναίκα, εἶσαι ἄντρας· πρέπει νὰ εἶσαι ἄντρας! Πέφτε ἄφοβα στὴ φωτιά· σκότωνε ὅσους ἄπιστους μπορεῖς. Ὁ παπᾶ Δημήτρης λέει, ὅσους περσότερους σκοτώνεις, τόσα κρίματα συγχωριῶνται.' (38) The remark, 'δὲν εἶσαι γυναίκα, εἶσαι ἄντρας· πρέπει νὰ εἶσαι ἄντρας!' echoes the same insistent belief that the girl child will become better than a boy. On Chryse's birth, her father's self-persuasive rhetoric, 'θὰ γένη καλύτερο ἀπὸ σερνικὸ' aims to flash something of his devil-may-care attitude, but instead it betrays his uncertainty over the ethics of his decision. Facing death, the doubts resurface; his statement 'πρέπει νὰ εἶσαι ἄντρας!' carries the dual force of an imperative as well as containing the suggestion of a desperate exhortation. Chryse must be a man in the sense of having courage in the face of battle, but she also needs to demonstrate her ability in her adopted gender in order to validate her father's decision.

The masking technique we saw earlier in the narrative is again evident in the moment of Chryse's separation from her family. Her reaction to her departure promptis the first outward expression of dissatisfaction with her given gender. This conflict produced by the enforced gender adoption is made evident through the grouping of Chryse's response with that of her mother and sisters; '[η] μάννα μου και τα κορίτσια παράμερα κρυφόκλαιγαν. Εγώ

ήθελα να κρατηθώ, μα τα έρμα μάτια μου ψιχάλιζαν' (Karkatvitsas, 1900: p. 38). The layering effect here demonstrates the internal conflict between the learnt and instinctive behaviour; Chryse wants to hold herself together, but her nature predominates. The women 'κρυφόκλαιγαν', and Chryse joins them as her eyes drizzle. Karkavitsas' use of 'ψιχαλίζω' rather than the less poetic 'κλαίω' imposes another level of separation between Chryse and the women, as if by refusing to use a cognate of 'κλαίω', Chryse has not succumbed entirely to femininity. But 'ψιχαλίζω' is an unusual word, more commonly used for weather; its use here lends a naturalistic tone to the passage. Chryse's holding back tears is suggestive of her trying to fight a more elemental force. This prompts what could be described as an out-of-body experience; ''Εβλεπα τα στρωσίδια το κρεβατίου, τον αργαλείο, την ανέμη, τ' άλλα του σωθέματα και πίστευα πως ήταν δικά μου εργόχειρα. Ἐβλεπα τις γυναίκες και κάτι μέσα μου μ' έσπρωχνε να τρέξω, να τυλιχτώ στα φουστάνια τους φυλαχτό να τα βάλω στην τρέλλα του πατέρα μου' (Karkavitsas, 1900: p.39). In this scene, Karkavitsas allows his heroine to speak. Until this point in the narrative, Chryse had detailed her upbringing without including her response to it. This passage marks a distinct shift; the narrative becomes more personal. Chryse's sudden attraction to the paraphernalia of womanhood at the very moment of her initiation as a man strips away a layer of the narrative to reveal the feminine voice behind the bravado. Chryse's eagerness to wrap herself in the women's skirts suggests that for her, femininity would offer a refuge from the world of men. The departure marks something of a breakdown and reassessment of her life so far; she admits to seeing it as her father's τρέλλα. Yet, at the crucial moment, she does not deny him, but indulges his madness.

From this point on, the narrative assumes a more militaristic tone. Karkavitsas roots the plot firmly in historical and geographical detail, providing us with a rough date, (᾽Ανήμερα τοῦ Βαγγελισμοῦ) and setting (Gastouni). Chryse and the reader are horrified by the behaviour of the Greek soldiers, who quickly turn to looting. Chryse's first engagement in conflict is undercut by her fainting fit. Here, the tone of the narrative shifts once more, when she is rescued by a male soldier, Dimos, with whom she develops a close friendship. This proves problematic, as the relationship makes Chryse long for a less complex interaction with Dimos. Chryse describes the danger and hardship changing her, but laments that she was unable to change her sex.

> Ἄχ, τὸ κακοθήλυκο! Τὸ κακοθήλυκο! Τί νὰ κάμουν τ᾽ἄρματα καὶ τὰ φορέματα; Τί νὰ κάμη τὸ θέλημα τοῦ γονιοῦ; «Θέλω νὰ εἶσαι ἄντρας!» Ἔ καλά! Καὶ γὼ τό ἠθελα· μὰ πῶς; Ποῦ θὰ βρεθῆ ἡ ἀσημόβεργα τῆς μάγισσας ν᾽ἀλλάξη τὴ γυναίκεια φύση, ὅπως ἀλλάζει σὲ κάρβουνα τοὺς θησαυροὺς στὰ παραμύθια; (Karkavitsas, 1900: p. 41)

Here, Karkavitsas twists the narrative. What had previously been a folk tale offering an unusual take on the War of Independence morphs into an alternative love story. The futility of Chryse's father's wish for her is realised in the moment she comes to appreciate what it is to be a woman. For a second time, we are granted Chryse's reaction to her father's decision, 'Ἔ καλά! Καὶ γὼ τό ἠθελα· μὰ πῶς;' In a neat subversion of the paradigm, Chryse seeks to use her adoptive gender as a refuge, not from the unwelcome attention of the invading army, but from her reaction to the friendship of a fellow soldier. Chryse's wish for a magic wand, 'ν᾽ἀλλάξη τὴ γυναίκεια φύση, ὅπως [...] στὰ παραμύθια' lends the story an air of verisimilitude. As the story begins to verge on the fantastic, or perhaps parabolic, Karkavitsas ensures that, through Chryse's appeal for the magical intervention common to mythological tales of gender transformation, he dissociates the story from these narrative modes. He roots the tale in reality through his character's self-awareness. Chryse is painfully

conscious of her narrative stasis, unwillingly trapped in a role which she has not herself created.

The account continues in this way, with Chryse unable to voice her love for Dimos. After a brief passage documenting the military progress and strategy, there is an episode with oddly biblical resonances. Dimos likens Chryse to a woman, but her response contains explicit references to the Fall. 'Ξύπνησε μέσα μου τὸ φίδι! Τὰ λόγια του ἀνάδεψαν στὰ φυλλοκάρδια μου τὸν ἁμαρτωλὸ σπόρο τῆς Εὔας [...] Σήκωσα τὰ μάτια νὰ τὸν ἰδῶ, καὶ τὰ χείλη του, τὰ κόκκινα χείλη του, μὲ τραβοῦσαν στὴν Κόλαση' (Karkavitsas, 1900: p. 42). These references to 'τὸ φίδι', 'τὸν αμαρτωλὸ σπόρο τῆς Εὔας' and 'Κόλαση' make it clear that Chryse, despite her outer appearance, identified herself with the original woman, Eve. But whereas Eve was supposedly fashioned from Adam's rib, Chryse herself was fashioned into Adam from Eve.

The narrative ends somewhat unsatisfactorily. After Chryse's confession to the dying Dimos that she is a woman, the perspective and time-fram shift. Chryse assumes narration with a rather perfunctory tone and, on answering her own question as to whether Dimos had heard her, she states: 'Ποιὸς ξέρει; Μὰ τί φταίω καὶ γώ; Ἄλλοι ἦταν οἱ καιροὶ καὶ κεῖνο ποὺ ἔχτιζε ἡ ἀγάπη γρήγορα τὸ χάλαε ἡ καταδρομή. Γιὰ τοῦτο καὶ γὼ δὲν πάτησα τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατέρα μου. Ἔγινα κ'ἔμεινα ἄντρας' (44). The narrative feels deflated, the voice sounds disappointed, almost defensive. Perhaps here Chryse provides an answer to the question in every reader's mind, namely, 'why did she not react to her father's plan differently?' The answer, inasmuch as it comes, 'Ἔγινα κ' ἔμεινα ἄντρας', is answer enough, as if brooking no argument. The implicit ambiguity of 'I became a man and stayed a man' leaves the reader to determine whether we judge that Chryse became a man through her engagement in battle, or that she became a man because of her feelings for Dimos.

As we have seen, there was much in the story which would have appealed to Edmonds. The complex relationship between father and daughter, the War of Independence setting and the tension between the different feminine roles were all familiar ground for Edmonds. As it happens, the story *had* caught Edmonds's eye. Her translation appeared in 1892 in the magazine *Eastern and Western Review*, with substantial differences from the original. The earlier date suggests that Edmonds had obtained a copy of the story before it was collected; given that Karkavitsas' version did not appear in the *Παλιές Αγάπες* collection until 1900, we can either assume that Karkavitsas substantially revised 'ο Κρυφὸς Καημὸς' before publication, and therefore Edmonds was working from a different text, or that the revisions and excisions came from Edmonds herself. However, in a way, the origin of these textual inconsistencies are irrelevant, because Karkavitsas thought it right to excise them. It is nice to think that Edmonds, who had had no qualms about fiercely editing the poems for inclusion in *Greek Lays and Idylls*, exercised her red pen with much the same rigour in her treatment of Karkavitsas.

Edmonds's version has a scene-setting preamble, absent from the Greek as it stands in the post 1900 version (1892: p. 235):

> At no time were some peculiar characteristics of my countrymen more observable than upon the 17th of May, 1884. Shopkeepers, husbandmen, tailors and all kinds of craftsmen were to be seen following an old man, clad in fustanella, whilst they laughed and stared at him in the most impertinent manner.

By the precise dating, the narrator lulls the reader to suspect that we are not in the realms of fiction, but that he is speaking from autopsy. This frames the narrative, which enters the

familiar text of the 1900 edition only after some three hundred words of introduction. The introduction of a second narrator, presumably a visitor to the area being described, confuses the reader. The inclusion of the visitor adds little to the story; the Chinese box effect is already inherent in the story through the character of Chryse/Chrysanthos. The presence of the statement, '"Look, that is Chrysanthos of Trajano, a woman dressed in a man's clothes. You must get her to tell you about it, and write it down"'(Edmonds, 1892: p. 235), does little to enhance the narrative flow. It feels clumsy, and lessens the dramatic effect of the father's eccentric reaction to Chryse's birth.

The narrator shores up the tale against criticism, 'Indeed, I soon found out for myself, as well as from my friend's assurance, that this *old man* was in truth a woman, because his voice had the clear, silvery tones only heard in a woman' (Edmonds, 1892: p. 235). However, this is not entirely successful; because it is couched in an after-the-fact setting, the account's potency is diminished. Instead of hearing the account at first hand, it is filtered to the reader through the first narrator.

> The next morning, however, I was able to accomplish what I desired. I found the *old man* in a *café* smoking his nargili. He was not so apathetic as on the preceding day, but seemed to be thoughtful and somewhat depressed, as he recalled former painful memories.

The following is a truthful version of what he told me. (Edmonds, 1892: p. 235)

This is an odd touch; rather than having our curiosity piqued by a mystery, the dark ending is understood from the outset through the references to Chryse's mood and 'painful memories.' Yet this framing device is not reemployed at the end of the account; the narrative closes with a rather purple passage, absent from the 1900 Greek edition.

> You who live in freedom look now with indifference upon us who bought it for you with our blood. I wait only for the hour when I can leave this wretched world and see my Demos again. For, where he is, we shall never more be parted. (240)

Elsewhere, too, the tone of the translation is markedly different from the Greek, the ethnographic detail of the original is absent, Edmonds is playing a more light-hearted game than Karkavitsas. The inclusions overstate what is implicit in the Greek, weakening the force of the narrative. As well as overdone explanations for the animosity between Turks and Greeks, and simplification of the Biblical imagery in Chryse's near betrayal of her gender, Edmonds's narrative contains significant differences in Chryse's response to leaving home.

> My father had rheumatism, and could not leave his bed. He called me to him, girded on my sword himself, and put my gun into my hand: 'Go, with my blessing,' he said, 'Thou know'st thou art no woman, thou art a man – thou shalt be a man! So now go with open eyes into fire and slaughter; kill as many unbelievers as thou canst, for pappas Demetri himself told me that the more thou shalt slay, the more sins shall be forgiven thee.'
>
> My mother and sisters stood in a corner weeping silently.
> This did not distress me – I felt as though I was going to a wedding
> (Edmonds, 1892: p. 237).

The lengthy passage describing Chryse's wish to hide in her mother's skirts and feeling pulled towards the trappings of womanhood is notably absent. Instead, Chryse is excited: 'as though [I] was going to a wedding.' Edmonds's heroine is hardly paralyzed by trepidation, exactly the opposite: she longs for the transformation to be complete. The drizzling tears of the Greek do not make it across to the English. While the Greek Chrysanthos feels a final moment of doubt and starts to question her upbringing, the English Chrysanthos views the arming scene as a rite of passage, but in exclusively feminine terms. Despite being raised as a male child, she still feels as though 'going to a wedding.' The departure for battle is seen as the pinnacle of her life as a man; more than an initiation, it represents her wedding to the new gender. The father's response, too, has been modified; his brusque intervention, 'πήδησε ἀπὸ τὸ στρῶμα του, μ' ἔσπρωξε στὴν πόρτα καὶ μὲ φίλησε' (Edmonds, 1892: p. 39), becomes 'My father got out of bed with difficulty, and went with me to the door, when he kissed me.' This alters the tone of the father's parting words, 'Σὰ φύγουν οἱ Τοῦρκοι ἀπὸ τὸ Μωριά, τότε νὰ γυρίσης καὶ σύ' (Edmonds, 1892: 39), which are mitigated in the English through the father struggling to bid farewell to Chryse, rather than leaping out of bed to push her, ensuring she leaves.

Of all the discrepancies between the two texts, it is this central passage which is the most remarkable. Edmonds was doing something more sophisticated than merely translating the text. The heroine herself is translated – the English no longer corresponds to the Greek original. If we follow Lotbinière-Harwood's reading of gender as socially-constructed by dress codes, value systems and symbolic order, we see how far Edmonds removes her heroine from the Karkavitsan original.

The expression 'rewriting in the feminine' alludes to two registers of translation: from source language (or SL) to target language (or TL), and from masculine to feminine. In my discussions of translation examples, I've specified the sex of the writer being translated, of the translator, and of the person being written about, as a way of foregrounding the issue of gender, which must be addressed when discussing translation. Sex is biological: human beings and most animates are physiologically female or male. Gender is socially constructed: it refers to the learned socio-sexual roles, dress codes, value systems, symbolic order, imposed on individuals by the dominant culture according to our birth sex.

If we apply de Lotbinière-Harwood's method, Edmonds, the female translator has translated the narrative from a male author from the SL to the TL, while the text itself describes a socially constructed man, whose sex is female. The female child has been socially conditioned by her father to act as a man. This makes Edmonds' manipulation of the original in her translation even more telling.

Here, Edmonds is not 'saying the same thing in different words', as one might expect of a translation. The English translation assumes an agency of its own. The translated Chrysanthos is eager for engagement in conflict, harking back to Edmonds's own Irene in *Amygdala*, angry at the political impotence society has dictated. British women, and female academics, met with mockery. Truly fish out of water, they were drawn to an emergent discipline and helped to shape it into their imagined likeness. Over the nine years in which Edmonds was occupied with this topic, I believe that her appropriation and development of this figure, as well as her dialogue with Greek literature through translation, enabled her to write a form of liberty unimaginable for a woman of her status. The 'phalanx of Amazons' from the opening extract sits alongside Swanwick's imagined boy's costume and Edmonds's girlish warriors as tacit expressions of resistance. Edmonds's work was influential in building the British conception of modern Greece. Through the study of Modern Greek women moved towards forming an academic space of their own, ultimately resulting in the creation of Oxford's Bywater–Sotheby Chair for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies and Cambridge's

Lewis-Gibson Readership in Modern Greek, both founded by women. Modern Greek offered a New Classics for the New Woman.

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