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**The first Modern Greek translation of Catullus' poems by
Gustave Laffon, in: thersites 8 (2018), 1-33.**

KEYWORDS

Catullus, Lesbia, Laffon, Latin, reception, translation.

ABSTRACT

The reception of Catullus has a long history in Western Europe, with numerous critical editions, translations and commentaries covering his work. In Greece during the 19th century, however, there were only a few, selective translations of Catullus' poems. Gustave Laffon (1835-1906), a Franco-Cypriot poet, wrote in Modern Greek and translated a number of French authors into Greek, as well as a few Latin poems. In this paper, I will cover Laffon's five Modern Greek translations of Catullus' poems for Lesbia in verse (published after his death, in his *Apanta* from 1915). I will do this from a threefold perspective: by identifying the prototypes of these poems; by analysing some of his translation techniques, language and style; and finally by seeking out the readership of these translations.

RESUME

La réception de Catulle a une longue histoire en Europe occidentale. De nombreuses éditions critiques, traductions et commentaires de son œuvre ont été publiés. Au XIX^e siècle, en Grèce, on compte peu de traductions de quelques poèmes de Catulle. Gustave Laffon (1835-1906) était un poète franco-chypriote qui écrivait en grec moderne et qui traduisit différents auteurs français en grec, de même que quelques poèmes issus de la poésie lyrique et élégiaque latine. Dans cet article, on étudie ses cinq traductions en vers et en grec moderne



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des poèmes de Catulle pour Lesbie, traductions publiées après sa mort dans *Apanta* paru en 1915. On révèle avant tout les prototypes des poèmes ; on analyse ensuite certaines des techniques de traduction de Laffon, sa langue et son style. Enfin, on s'efforce d'identifier le lectorat de ses traductions.

1. Introduction: the reception of Catullus in 19th century Greece

THE RECEPTION of Catullus in Europe is a subject that has been prolifically studied by several scholars.¹ In his speech from 965, a studious bishop of Verona named Ratherius is the first to mention reading Catullus' work.² From the Renaissance until the Baroque period, Catullus was widely read and studied. The first Humanists (15th-17th century) imitated his style.³ In Italy, Petrarch, Ariosto (*Orlando Furioso*), Tasso (*Gerusalemme Liberata*), Castiglione (*Cortegiano*) and the Neo-Latin poets Sannzaro, Marullus, Pontano were all impacted by the works of Catullus. In France, Catullus' influence is evident in the writings of Rabelais, Montaigne, Marot, Lamartine and Ronsard, as well as the poets of the Plejade.⁴ In Germany, Opitz, Logau, Herder, Schiller and Goethe echoed Catullus' poems, as did Skelton, Jonson, Milton and Byron in England.⁵ There were also many translations and commentaries on Catullus during the Renaissance.⁶ In the field of art (painting, music), Catullus has been a profound inspiration for numerous artists.⁷ Furthermore, Catullus is also present in the curriculum of secondary schools across Europe.⁸

However, it seems that Catullus was not a popular poet in Greece, as can be seen from the relatively small number of Greek translations of his work in comparison to, for example, Ovid.⁹ In the mid-19th century, three books were published that featured translations of certain poems by Catullus. Within Greek literary journals of the 19th century, there were also a few translations of Catullus' poems. I will provide a short overview of these below.

¹ A first draft of this paper was presented at the 15th Symposium of Classical Studies, Department of Philology, Division of Classics, University of Ioannina (31 May 2018). I wish to express my gratitude to the Faculty members for their insightful feedback.

² Cf. Patr. Lat. 136. 752 Migne: '*Catullum numquam antea lectum*'. For the manuscript tradition and the transmission of Catullus' text, see Hale (1908) 233-256; Butrica (2007) 13-34.

³ See Gaisser (1993); Tromaras (2001) 50-54; Gaisser (2007) 439-460; Arkins (2007) 461-478; Stead (2015).

⁴ See Goold (1989) 5; Tromaras (2001) 51.

⁵ See Tromaras (2001) 50-53.

⁶ See Gaisser (1992) 197-292; Braden (1979) 199-224; de Luca (2016) 329-342.

⁷ See Goold (1989) 16-18; von Albrecht (1992) 285-287; Tromaras (2001) 52; Gaisser (2002) 372-385.

⁸ See Ancona/Hallett (2007) 481-502; Garrison (2007) 503-519; Vandiver (2007) 523-541.

⁹ For Greek translations of Ovid, see Karathanassis (1979) 97-103; Nikitas (1998) 1005-1019; A. Michalopoulos (2002-3) 360-372; A. Michalopoulos (2003) 359-374; Nikitas (2012) 103-142; Ch. Michalopoulos (2015) 299-313.

Eythymios Castorchis (1810-1889),¹⁰ Professor of Latin at the University of Athens (founded in 1837), published an anthology of Catullus' and Tibullus' poems in 1850, followed by a translation of some of the latter in *katharevousa* (a mixture of Ancient and Modern Greek, the official language of the Greek curriculum and State at that time). As stated on the book cover, the text comes from the Karl Lachmann edition (1829 for Catullus and 1835 for Tibullus); he also notes that he added some of their translations in verse, to be read by the students of Philology at the Faculty of Philosophy.¹¹ The Catullus poems selected are 1-4, 8-12, 31, 44 and 62-67.¹² It should be noted that Castorchis only includes Greek translations of the poems 4, 20, 62, 65 and 66, not all the poems. A rather interesting sidenote is that the translations are not his own; the translations of poems 4 and 20 are the work of Joseph Justus Scaliger (in his work *Poemata omnia*, probably in Heidelberg in 1574),¹³ who translated them into ancient Greek, in elegiac verse.¹⁴ The translation of Catullus' epithalamium is by Florens Christianus, who translated it into Greek, entitled *Κ. Ούαλερίου Κατούλλου Ἐπιθαλάμιον* (Paris 1587).¹⁵ The translation of poem 65 is by Bonaventura Vulcanius (in approximately 1590),¹⁶ who also translated it into Greek.¹⁷ Finally, the translation of Catullus' 66 comes from Philippos Ioannou, who – as noted by Castorchis – intended to publish it along with poems of his own, as well as several Greek translations of Roman poets in verse, shortly after.¹⁸

Indeed, Philippos Ioannou (1796 or 1800-1880), Professor of Philosophy at the University of Athens, published a collection entitled *Φιλολογικά Πάρεργα* in 1865.¹⁹ In 1874 he produced a second, revised edition of this

¹⁰ For Castorchis, see Anonymous (1937) 20-21.

¹¹ Castorchis' entire book is available in digitized form in 'Google books' (link of the book: <https://books.google.gr/books?id=Dw4-AAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> (last accessed 2 March 2018)).

¹² See Castorchis (1850) 18-39 for Catullus' text and 41-46 for the Greek translations.

¹³ See Botley (2014) 482 and 488.

¹⁴ See Castorchis (1850) 41. For Scaliger's translations, see Gaisser (1992) 215; Botley (2014) 482 and 488.

¹⁵ See Castorchis (1850) 42; Gaisser (1992) 215.

¹⁶ See van Dam (2014) 64.

¹⁷ See Castorchis (1850) 44. For Bonaventura as a scholar and poet, see van Dam (2010) 47-68, especially 63-64.

¹⁸ See Castorchis (1850) 44.

¹⁹ See A. Michalopoulos (2015) 287-297.

work.²⁰ In terms of Latin literature, the book features a selection of several authors and genres, including translations and commentaries of Tacitus' *Germania*, the first five books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a translation of Ovid's *Heroides* 1 and 7, Vergil's *Eclogues* 5, 7 and 8, a translation and commentary of Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*, and a translation and commentary of poems 64 and 66 from Catullus.²¹ The translations are his own and are written in elegiac verse in *kathareuoussa*. The translations and commentaries of these selected Latin texts were evidently composed by Ioannou to be studied by the students of Philology at the University of Athens.

Christophoros Philitas (1787-1867),²² Professor of Greek Philology at the University of Athens, translated poems 65 and 66 of Catullus in 1865.²³ This brief book (only 24 pages) includes a short introduction (2 pages), Philitas' translations of the two Catullus poems in *kathareuoussa* and in verse (elegiacs), and a corresponding commentary. Indicative of the connection between these three books (by Castorchis, Ioannou and Philitas) is Philitas' footnote, in which he mentions the existing Greek translations of poems 64 and 65 by Catullus (Scaliger, Bonaventura and Ioannou, among others). He notes that – as seen above – Castorchis included in his book the translation of Berenice's lock (Catullus 66) by Ioannou, adding that this translation (with some alterations) was included within the journal *Ἐφημερίς τῶν φιλομαθῶν* of 13 February 1861.²⁴

In sum, the three Greek books on Catullus all share common features: a) they were all written by professors of the University of Athens; b) they were read by students of the Department of Philology, *ergo* Catullus was included

²⁰ The two editions of Ioannou's book exist in digitized form on the 'Anemi', the website of the University of Crete library (link of the 1st edition: http://anemi.lib.uoc.gr/php/pdf_pager.php?rec=/metadata/d/0/3/metadata-247-0000081.tkl&do=78389.pdf&lang=el&page-no=1&pagestart=1&width=373.44%20pts&height=609.6%20pts&maxpage=448. Link of the 2nd edition: http://anemi.lib.uoc.gr/php/pdf_pager.php?rec=/metadata/4/8/d/metadata-264-0000343.tkl&do=182232.pdf&lang=el&page-no=1&pagestart=1&width=328.8%20pts&height=558.72%20pts&maxpage=691). (last accessed 2 March 2018).

²¹ See A. Michalopoulos (2015) 289-290.

²² For Philitas, see Katsiardi-Hering (1982) 9-42; Katsigiannis (2017) 635-660.

²³ The entire book by Philitas exists in digitized form in 'Google books' (link of the book: <http://books.google.gr/books?id=m5JWAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=el#v=onepage&q&f=false>). (last accessed 2 March 2018).

²⁴ Philitas (1865) 3-4, footnote 8.

in their curriculum;²⁵ c) they were written in *katharevousa*, the official language of the Greek educational system; and d) they were all in verse (in Greek prosody, not Modern Greek dynamic metrics). In other words, Castorchis' statement,²⁶ the language, and the brief commentaries on the books all indicate that they were manuals or study guides used for a course on Catullus' poems, or on Latin lyric and elegiac poetry.

Regarding the Greek literary journals of the 19th century, Alexandros Moraitidis published his translation of Catullus' 66 in *katharevousa*, as well as in verse form (in Greek prosody) in 1873,²⁷ while in 1874, in his article entitled 'The Swan of Verona' (= "Ο κύκνος τῆς Βερόνης"), Constantinos Xenos included his own translations of four poems by Catullus (66, 70, 85 and 107) in *katharevousa* and in prosaic form.²⁸ An anonymous author (with the acronym P. M.), in an 1880 article entitled 'About one elegy by Catullus' (= 'Περὶ μίας ἐλεγείας του Κατούλλου'), cited an ancient Greek translation of Catullus' 3 in verse by the French scholar Monnoye, while also adding his own translation in *katharevousa* and in prose at the end of his article.²⁹ In the case of the Greek literary journals of the period, translations of Catullus were evidently all in *katharevousa*, and two of them in prose.

We can thus deduce that until Laffon's translations of Catullus, all Greek translations of the Roman poet were in *katharevousa*, and most of them in verse – in Greek prosody, not in the Modern Greek metre, which is based on the dynamic tones of the Modern Greek language. This translation practice (i.e. using Greek language and Greek metre) pertains to the authors/translators of the Old (or the First) Athenian School movement (1830-1880).³⁰ The most prominent representative of their translation theory was

²⁵ As proven by the curriculum of 1836, Catullus was taught in the last class of Greek High Schools; see Zioga (2015) 29.

²⁶ See above, 4, footnote 18.

²⁷ In the journal *Παρθενών* 3.29 (1873) 189-91.

²⁸ In the journal *Βύρων* 1.1 (1874) 59-63.

²⁹ In the journal *Σωκράτης* 2.7 (1880) 97-100.

³⁰ In late 19th century Greece, two literary movements dominated; the first is the Old (or the First Athenian) School, which represented Greek Romanticism and was conservative in terms of their choice of poetic language, supporting the use of Ancient Greek or *katharevousa*. The second was the Heptanesian School, i.e. the literary production of the Ionian Islands, a more progressive movement in terms of the content of the poems and prose (e.g. the texts reflected the ideas of the European Enlightenment, many poems were similar to Arca-

Alexandros Rizos Ragkavis (1809-1892),³¹ who claimed that translation was not a creative process, but merely a photographic representation of a text. This explains the assertion that, in the case of ancient poems (Greek or Latin), the language-instrument of the translation should be conservative (hence, *katharevousa*) and the metre should be the same as in the ancient era (i.e. using prosody and no tones).³² It seems that all these Greek translations of Catullus (rendered by Athenians and published in Athens) abide by the translation theory of the Old Athenian School, aiming only to familiarise their readership with Roman Antiquity and one of its greatest poets.

2. Gustave Laffon and his translations of Catullus' poems

Gustave Laffon (1835-1906), a Franco-Cypriot poet, wrote in Greek, translated many French authors into Greek, as well as rendering the *Hymn to Liberty* by Dionysios Solomos into French. The son of French doctor and Consul Adolphe Laffon, Gustave followed in his father's footsteps and pursued a career as a diplomat.³³ He was appointed in Piraeus, Adrianople and Valparaiso, but spent most of his life in Cyprus.³⁴ Being multilingual, (he spoke French, English, Ancient Greek, Latin, Modern Greek, Turkish and perhaps Spanish), he published his poems in various newspapers as well as the periodical press, while three editions of his work were reported during his lifetime.³⁵ A posthumous edition of his complete works (*Apanta*), edited

dian poetry, among others) and the use of Modern Greek (*the demotic language*). The conflict between these two Schools was held within the wider context of the so-called 'the Greek language question' (= 'το γλωσσικό ζήτημα'), one of the most important topics concerning the Greek State, education and society during that period and beyond. For 'the Greek language question', see Beaton (1996) 296-346. For the Old Athenian School, see indicatively Dimaras (1982); Moullas (1993); Vagenas (2000) 256-257. For the Heptanesian School, see Pylarinos (2003).

³¹ For Ragkavis, see Mparkoula (2008).

³² See Garantoudis (1998) 483-484; Garantoudis (2000) 28-74; Garantoudis (2015) 85-94; Garantoudis (2016) 19-39.

³³ For Laffon's life and works, see Milliex (1973) 221-236; Masson (1992) 123; Ioannou (2008) 46-47; Demetriou (2012) 300-301.

³⁴ Demetriou (2012) 301.

³⁵ See Milliex (1973) 234-235. Certain poems by Laffon (among them the translations of Catullus), published in Modern Greek literary journals after his death, are available in digitised

by his wife's brother in 1915, is available today.³⁶ The fact that Laffon lived most of his life during the 19th century likely suggests that the majority of his poems and translations were produced (and published for the first time in literary journals or leaflets) during that century.

Unfortunately, there is neither preface nor introduction to Laffon's *Apanta*, where the poet could have given us information about his reasons for translating those particular Latin poems, a declaration of his translation practice, a possible dedicatee for them, or the edition of the prototype that he followed. The three editions of Catullus' text available in Laffon's time were those by Schwabe,³⁷ Ellis³⁸ and Baehrens.³⁹ The truth is that Laffon's translations – which are highly 'free' – do not allow us to identify which of these editions he followed.⁴⁰

The translations of Roman poets are contained within twelve pages,⁴¹ where Laffon translates five love poems from Catullus,⁴² two from Tibullus⁴³ and one from Propertius.⁴⁴ He cites the identity of the poets in French (Catulle, Tibulle, Propertius) in parentheses under the title of each poem (these titles are his own);⁴⁵ I do not believe that Laffon's translations of Latin poems come from their French translations. The similarity of their language, style and metrics to the prototype poems prove that Laffon translated them from the Latin original. Furthermore, I believe that if Laffon had translated from the French, he would have stated it (for example in the title of the poems, in a footnote, etc.), as he did with his other translations (e.g. of poems by Alfred de Musset, Louis Ratisbonne and Évariste de Parvy).⁴⁶ Laffon also used no quotations (e.g. Tib. 1.2, Prop. 1.16 and others).

form on the website 'Pleias' of the University of Patras (link: <http://pleias.lis.upatras.gr/index.php/index/search/results?query=%CE%9B%CE%B1%CF%86%CF%86%2A&search-Field=&searchPage=1#results>). (last accessed 3 March 2018).

³⁶ The book exists in digitized form on the website 'Digital Platform of Cypriot Library' (link: <http://www.cyprusdigitallibrary.org.cy/items/show/260>). (last accessed 3 March 2018).

³⁷ Schwabe (1866).

³⁸ Ellis (1867).

³⁹ Baehrens (1878).

⁴⁰ It is for this reason that I decided to also follow the three editions; however, the Latin text comes from Baehrens' edition.

⁴¹ Laffon (1915) 117-128.

⁴² Laffon (1915) 117-121.

⁴³ Laffon (1915) 121-126. The poems of Tibullus are 1.1 and 1.2.

⁴⁴ Laffon (1915) 126-128. The poem of Propertius is 1.19.

⁴⁵ See Laffon (1915) 121: 'Εἰς τὴν Γλαύκη' (Tibulle), and 126: 'Εἰς τὴν Κυνηθίαν' (Propertius).

⁴⁶ See Laffon (1915) 131, 141 and 142, respectively.

In the contents table of Laffon's *Apanta* there is a section entitled 'Free translations of several poems of Latin and other European poets'.⁴⁷ The title provides a clue to Laffon's translation practice; rather than following the *ad verbum* translation theory, he produced a free (*ad sensum*), literary (artistic) translation.⁴⁸

In the following subsections, I will study each translation of Catullus separately, citing Laffon's text and the Latin poems below it. I include the translations of Laffon and Catullus in the footnotes.⁴⁹ I also identify the prototypes of each poem (as in some cases this is not so clear) and make some remarks regarding the language and style of his translation.

2a. Τὸ ἀηδονάκι (*The little nightingale*) - Laffon, *Apanta*: 117

Χάριτες, ἔρωτες, θρηνεῖτε· Ἄπέθανε τ' ἀηδονάκι	
Τῆς Ἐρατοῦς μου τὸ γλυκό, Ποῦ τῶχε γιὰ παρηγοριά της	
Καὶ καθημέρα τὴ ξυπνοῦσε	5
Μ' ἕνα σκοπὸ μελωδικό!	
Ἀγάπη πλειότερη δὲν ἔχει Οὔτε λαχτάρα μιὰ μητέρα	
Γιὰ τὸ παιδί της στὴν καρδιά· Εἶχε τὸ στῆθος της φωλιά του	10
Κ' ἐδῶ κ' ἐκεῖ ἐσυχοπέτα, Σὰν νὰ πηδοῦσε σὲ κλαδιά!	
Σὲ σκοτεινὸ ταξεῖδι 'πάγει Καὶ λένε πῶς κανεὶς ἐκεῖθεν	
Στὸν κόσμον δὲν γυρίζει πιά·	15
Κατηραμένος νάσαι Ἴαιδη, Ὅποῦ ρουφᾶς καὶ καταπίνεις	
Τὸ πᾶν ὄσον ἄβυσσος βαθειά. Μοῦ ἄρπαξες τὸ ἀηδόνι, Τ' ἀγαπημένο μου πουλάκι·	20

⁴⁷ Laffon (1915) 229. He translated poems of Alfred de Musset, Louis Ratisbonne, Évariste de Parny and Pierre-Jean de Béranger, among others.

⁴⁸ See below, 11-12.

⁴⁹ The translations of Catullus' poems are by Goold (1989). The English translations of Laffon's poems are my own.

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Δίκαια ἀχόρταγο σὲ λέν·
Ἄσπλαγχνε, ἔγινες αἰτία
Τῆς Μαριγῶς μου τὰ ματάκια
Τώρα ἠμερόνυχτα νά κλαῖν.⁵⁰
*Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque,
et quantum est hominum venustiorum:
passer mortuus est meae puellae,
passer, deliciae meae puellae,
quem plus illa oculis suis amabat. 5
nam mellitus erat suamque norat
ipsam tam bene quam puella matrem,
nec sese a gremio illius movebat,
sed circumsiliens modo huc modo illuc
ad solam dominam usque pipiabat. 10
qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum
illuc, unde negant redire quemquam.
at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae
Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis:
tam bellum mihi passerem abstulistis 15
o factum male! o miselle passer!
tua nunc opera meae puellae
flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.⁵¹*

⁵⁰ ‘Graces, Cupids, mourn; | the sweet little nightingale of | my Erato is dead, | the bird that was /a solace to her, | and woke her up every day | with a melodic tune! | No more love has | a mother or longing | for her child in her heart. | The bird had her breast as its nest, | and was flying frequently here and there, | as it was jumping in branches! | It went on a dark journey, | to a place from where | people say that no one returns. | Hades, be cursed! | You suck and swallow | everything like a deep abyss. | You grabbed the nightingale from me, | my beloved little bird; | People justly call you insatiable; | you cruel one became the reason | why my Marigo’s little eyes are now crying every day and night’.

⁵¹ Cat. 3: ‘Mourn, you Venuses and Cupids, | and all the lovers that there are! | My sweetheart’s sparrow is dead, | the sparrow that was my sweetheart’s pet, | that she loved more than her own eyes: | for it was honey-sweet, and knew its | mistress as well as a girl knows her own mother, | nor would it stir from her lap, | yet hopping about, now here, now there, | would ever chirp for its mistress alone. | yet now it travels along a darkling path | to a place from which they say no one returns. | A curse upon you, accursed darkness | of Orcus, that consumes all pretty things: | such a pretty sparrow you have robbed me of. | Ah cruel event, that through your doing, | hapless sparrow, my sweetheart’s eyes | are red and swollen with weeping!’.

Obviously, this is a translation of Cat. 3, the poem about the death of Lesbia's *passer* (*Fletus passeris Lesbiae*), a bird that is considered to be a sparrow or a blue thrush, which Laffon translates as a little nightingale.⁵² We must remember that the titles of Catullus' poems are not his own, but rather originate from several of Catullus' manuscripts from the 14th century (such as G, R and O).⁵³ By using the word nightingale in his title, the translator hints at a connection with the Ancient Greek (Sappho, frg. 136 Lobel-Page) and Hellenistic poetry (Theocritus, *Idyll* 15.120-122), as the nightingale holds an essential role in their poetics.⁵⁴ We can note that the Modern Greek translation is more extensive (24 verses) than the prototype (18 verses) due to the fact that Laffon translates a synthetic language into an analytical one. Furthermore, Laffon creates four stanzas of six verses, transforming the prosodic Phalaecean hendecasyllable of Catullus into dynamic Modern Greek iambics; more specifically, Laffon's stanzas consist of four iambic paroxytone verses of nine syllables (the first, second, fourth and fifth verse of each stanza) and two iambic oxytone verses of eight syllables each (the third and sixth verse of each stanza, i.e. in the middle and at the end of it). These verses rhyme.

Regarding the content of the translation, Laffon translates *ad verbum* the first verse (1: '*Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque*' into 'Χάριτες, ἔρωτες, θρηνηῖτε' = 'Graces, Cupids, mourn'). After that, he renders the meaning of the Latin poem freely (according to the *ad sensum* theory). As is well known, the *ad sensum* practice, first seen with Cicero,⁵⁵ was the most widespread translation theory among humanist scholars and beyond.⁵⁶ As we will see, Laffon not only renders the meaning of Catullus' poems; he also produces a so-called 'poetical translation', a term created by Iakovos Polylyas (1825-1896),⁵⁷ a leading figure of the Heptanesian School movement during

⁵² See *OLD*, s.v. 'passer', 1a and 1b.

⁵³ See Hale (1908) 233-256.

⁵⁴ Cf. Callimachus epigram XXXIV G-P (*A.P.* 7.80). See Chandler (1934) 78-84; Steiner (2007) 177-208.

⁵⁵ Cic. opt. gen. 14.1

⁵⁶ Vaiopoulos (2007) 47 and 54-56; Vaiopoulos (2010) 109-112 and 116-117; Haan (2016) 85-109.

⁵⁷ Polylyas was a famous prose writer, poet, scholar and the first editor of the work of the Greek national poet, Dionysios Solomos. For his work, see Valetas (1950).

the 19th century.⁵⁸ In an introductory note to his Greek translation of Tibullus' 1.3, Polyas made his declaration regarding the translation of poems.⁵⁹ According to him, this process should be a creative, rather than a mechanical function. A 'poetical translation' should thus be a prototype for a subject that is already known.⁶⁰ In this text, Polyas also states that he believes in rendering Latin metre into Modern Greek metrics, and not Ancient Greek, as Ragkavis (and the Old Athenian School) proposed.⁶¹

Laffon's translations of Catullus' poems are in Modern Greek and Modern Greek verse (as Polyas declared), as in the majority of his literature and translations Laffon followed the Greek literary generation of the 1880s (or the movement of the New Athenian School) and its core theories,⁶² i.e. a reaction to the exaggerations of Athenian Romanticism (or the Old Athenian School) and the use of Modern Greek (*the demotic language*) in poetry.⁶³

We do not know whether Laffon's creative translations of Catullus' poems constitute a unique phenomenon. We have an English translation of 1795 in verse by an anonymous author; this work is also a creative translation of Catullus' poems, as is proven by a number of English verses that do not coincide with the Latin prototype.⁶⁴ For example, in its English version the 8th poem of Catullus has 36 verses, almost the same number as Laffon's version (42 verses). In 1837 Ch. Héguin de Guerle translated Catullus' poems, in prosaic form, into French.⁶⁵ Eugène Rostand produced an artistic translation in verse in 1882, but followed the prototype more strictly.⁶⁶ In Italian, Raffaele Pastore translated Catullus faithfully, as well as Tibullus

⁵⁸ For the Heptanesian School, see above 6-7, footnote 30.

⁵⁹ This text is entitled 'Poetical translation' ('Ποιητική Μετάφρασις') and was published together with Polyas' translation of Tibullus' 1.3 in the literary journal of *Estia* 1 (1891) 148. It is impressive that Polyas chose to declare his translation manifesto, placing it before his own translation of a Latin poem. It seems that the scholars of the Heptanesian School were especially interested in Latin literature (cf. Lorentzos Mavilis' translations of passages of *Aeneid*, Nikolaos Kogevinas's translations of poems of Tibullus, Antonios Matesis' translation of Plautus' *Hecyra*, and others). For translations of Greek and Roman literature by Heptanesian scholars, see Mpoumpoulides (1963-1964) 492-540.

⁶⁰ Garantoudis (1998) 482.

⁶¹ See above, 6-7.

⁶² See Demetriou (2012) 301. For the New Athenian School, see Karvelis (2003) 27-36.

⁶³ See above, 6-7.

⁶⁴ Anonymous (1795).

⁶⁵ Guerle (1837).

⁶⁶ Rostand (1882).

and Propertius, within a volume from 1853.⁶⁷ I believe that Gustave Laffon, as an educated (*doctus poeta*) and multilingual poet and scholar, must have read and studied the European translations of Catullus from his own era. However, he managed to produce a unique Modern Greek version of the Roman poet and to offer fine examples of a creative reception process.

Laffon often omits entire phrases from the prototype (2: '*et quantum est hominum venustiorum*', 5: '*quem plus illa oculis suis amabat*', 6: '*nam mellitus erat suamque norat*', 10: '*ad solam dominam usque pipiabat*', 16: '*o factum male! o miselle passer!*'). However, he also adds phrases of his own inspiration (4-6: 'Ποῦ τῶχε γιά παρηγοριά της | Καὶ καθημέρα τὴ ξυπνοῦσε | Μ' ἔνα σκοπὸ μελωδικό!' = 'the bird that was a solace to her, | and woke her up every day | with a melodic tune!', 12: 'Σὰν νὰ πηδοῦσε σὲ κλαδιά!' = 'as if jumping on branches!', 21: 'Δίκαια ἀχόρταγο σὲ λέν' = 'People justly call you insatiable'). In one case, Laffon recreates the meaning of Catullus' poem, but adds an extra tone of exaggeration, a feature of Romanticism that influenced him from at least the beginning of his poetic career.⁶⁸ He thus translates the Catullean '*at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae / Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis*' (13-14) into 'Κατηραμένος νᾶσαι Ἄϊδη | Ὅποῦ ρουφῶς καὶ καταπίνεις | Τὸ πᾶν ᾿σάν ἄβυσσος βαθειά' (16-18) (= 'Hades, be cursed! | You suck and swallow | everything like a deep abyss'), where he translates the verb '*devoratis*' with a 'translation pair in parataxis'⁶⁹ ('ρουφῶς καὶ καταπίνεις'), while also adding a simile into his phrase ('σάν ἄβυσσος βαθειά'), possibly derived from Catullus' 68.⁷⁰ In translating the phrase '*suumque norat / ipsam tam bene quam puella matrem*' (6-7) as 'Ἀγάπη πλειότερη δὲν ἔχει | Οὔτε λαχτάρα μιὰ μητέρα | Γιὰ τὸ παιδί της στὴν καρδιά' (7-9) (= 'no more love has | a mother or longing | for her child in her heart'), he slightly changes the meaning of the prototype, as Catullus refers to the special bond between mother and daughter, while Laffon speaks of the profound affection that a mother feels for her children. Finally, in two cases Laffon replaces the noun *puella* with two proper nouns. He translates the '*deliciae meae puellae*' (4) into 'Τῆς Ἐρατοῦς μου τὸ γλυκό' (3) (= 'the sweet little nightingale of | my Erato') adding a reference to poetics, as Erato was the Muse of lyrical poetry and

⁶⁷ Pastore (1853).

⁶⁸ See Demetriou (2012) 301.

⁶⁹ See Kopanos (1974) 19-34.

⁷⁰ Cf. Cat. 68.108: '*aestus in abruptum detulerat barathrum*' and 117: '*sed tuus altus amor barathro fuit altior illo*'.

patroness of love; he thus signifies the genre of Catullus' poem (lyrical love poetry). At the end of the poem, Laffon surprises us by changing the ' *tua nunc opera meae puellae / flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli*' (17-18) into 'Τῆς Μαριγῶς μου τὰ ματάκια | Τώρα ἑμερόνυχτα νὰ κλαῖν' (23-24) (= 'my Marigo's little eyes | now are crying every day and night) changing the Catullan *puella* to 'Μαριγῶ', a name belonging to the Modern Greek vernacular (common for poor village girls).⁷¹ The *communis opinio* during the 19th century was that Lesbia (probably the *puella* of Cat. 3) was identified with Clodia Metelli, as Apuleius noted.⁷² We do not know if the name Marigo referred to an existing person, i.e. Laffon's beloved (in contrast to Catullus, Laffon does not explicitly say she is his girlfriend). Furthermore, Laffon keeps the name Lesbia in the other poems. It seems that Marigo was a favourite name of Laffon's, as he used it five times in his poetry.⁷³ Presumably, by using this name the translator aims to parody the great Clodia, presenting her as a common girl from the 19th century Greek countryside.

2b. Πρὸς τὴν Λεσβίαν (To Lesbia) - Laffon, *Apanta*: 118

Ἄς ἀγαποῦμε ὅσο ζοῦμε,
 Κι' ἄφες τοὺς γέρους, ὦ Λεσβία,
 Τοὺς φθονεροὺς νὰ φλυαροῦν·
 Ὁ ἥλιος πάει καὶ γυρίζει,
 Ἄλλὰ τὰ νειᾶτα μας ἴσ' ἀν φύγουν 5
 Νὰ ἔλθουν πίσω δὲν μποροῦν.
 Δὸς μου λοιπὸν χίλια φιλάκια,
 Καὶ πάλιν ἄλλαις δυὸ χιλιάδες,
 Πάνω ἴστα χεῖλη, ἴστον λαμό,
 Καὶ ἄλλαις ἑκατὸν ἀμέσως· 10
 Ἦσυχα πιά νὰ μᾶς ἀφήσουν,
 Ἰσαν χάσουν τὸν λογαριασμό.
 Ἄν μ' ἐρωτήσης ὅμως πόσα
 Θέλω κ' ἐγὼ γιὰ νὰ χορτάσω

⁷¹ Cf. the poem is entitled 'Μαριγῶ' in the poetic collection for children of the Modern Greek author Papantoniou (1920) 26.

⁷² Apul. apol. 10: 'Eadem igitur opera accuset C. Catullum, quod Lesbiam pro Clodia nominarit'. Today, some critics express doubts about the identification of Lesbia as this particular Clodia (was she one of her sisters?). See Skinner (1983) 273-287; Mulroy (2002) xii-xiii; Skinner (2011) 121-144.

⁷³ Laffon (1915) 29, 31, 118, 152 (twice in the same poem).

Καὶ νὰ σοῦ πῶ 'φῶς μου, ἀρκεῖ.' 15
Μέτρα τὴν ἄμμο τῆς θαλάσσης,
Μέτρα τ' ἀστέρια ποῦ μᾶς φέγγουν,
Ἄν ξέρῃς ἀριθμητικῆ.⁷⁴

*Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!
soles occidere et redire possunt:
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux, 5
nox est perpetua una dormienda.
da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,
deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum.
dein, cum milia multa fecerimus, 10
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.*

and

*Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes
tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque.
quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae
lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis
oraclum Iovis inter aestuosi 5
et Batti veteris sacrum sepulcrum;
aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox,
furtivos hominum vident amores:
tam te basia multa basiare
vesano satis et super Catullo est, 10*

⁷⁴ 'Let us love, for as long as we live | and let the envious old men, Lesbia, | babble. | The sun goes and returns | yet if our youth is lost | back it cannot come. | So give me one thousand kisses | and two thousand more | on the lips, on the neck | and immediately another hundred kisses. | When they lose count of the kisses | in peace we shall be left | yet if you ask me | how many kisses I want | in order to be satisfied | and tell you 'My love, there are enough' | please, count the sand of the sea, | count the stars that lighten us | if you know arithmetic'.

*quae nec pernumerare curiosi
possint nec mala fascinare lingua.*⁷⁵

As we can see, Laffon is mainly translating the 5th poem of Catullus (*Ad Lesbiam*). However, at the end he adds a stanza that does not belong to this poem, which is in fact an abstract of the 7th poem, also addressed to Lesbia (*Ad Lesbiam*). Laffon creates three stanzas with the same metrics and rhyme as his previous poem.⁷⁶ It must be noted that in poems 5 and 7, Catullus uses the kiss motif (*basia* poems), a unifying feature that made it possible for Laffon to combine them in his translation.⁷⁷

Laffon renders the general meaning of the Latin poem, not its exact phrasing. For example, he translates verses 2-3: ‘*rumoresque senum severiorum | omnes unius aestimemus assis!*’ into ‘Κι’ ἄφες τοὺς γέρους, ὦ Λεσβία, | Τοὺς φθονερούς νὰ φλυαροῦν’ (= ‘and let the envious old men, Lesbia, | babble’) transforming the noun ‘*rumores*’ into a verb ‘νὰ φλυαροῦν’, and translating the phrase ‘*omnes unius aestimemus assis*’, which is widely regarded as proverbial,⁷⁸ into an imperative (‘Κι’ ἄφες’). Furthermore, verses 5-6: ‘*nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux, / nox est perpetua una dormienda*’, in which Catullus writes that all of human life is brief, are translated by Laffon thus: ‘Ἀλλὰ τὰ νεῖατα μας ’σὰν φύγουν | Νὰ ἔλθουν ’πίσω δὲν μποροῦν’ (‘if our youth is lost | back it cannot come’). In this way, the translator limits the statement to the youth of a human being. Laffon translates verses 7-9, where Catullus describes the number of kisses that he craves from Lesbia, (‘*da mi basia mille, deinde centum, / dein mille altera, dein secunda centum | deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum*’),

⁷⁵ Cat. 5: ‘Let us live, my Lesbia, and love, | and value at one penny all | the talk of stern old men. | Suns can set and rise again: | we, when once our brief light has set, | must sleep one never-ending night. | Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred, | then a second thousand, then a second hundred, | then yet another thousand, then a hundred. | Then, when we have made up many thousands, | we will wreck the count, lest we know it | or any devil have power to cast an evil eye upon us | when he knows the total of our kisses’ and Cat. 7: ‘You ask, Lesbia, how many kisses | of you are enough and to spare for me. | As great the number of the sands of Libya | to be found in silphium-bearing Cyrene | between Jove’s torrid oracle and the sacred tomb of legendary Battus; | or as many the stars which in the silence of night | behold the stealthy loves of mankind: | so many kisses to kiss you with | would be enough and to spare for love-crazed Catullus, | too many for the inquisitive to be able to count | or bewitch with their evil tongues’.

⁷⁶ See above, 11. Catullus does the same.

⁷⁷ See Tesoriero (2006) 10-18.

⁷⁸ See Pratt (1956) 99-100; Pack (1956) 47-51; Scott (2006) 95-110.

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Ἰπές μου νὰ κάμης τί μπορεῖς; 15
Κατόπι της μὴ τρέχης πλέον
Καὶ ἀπὸ μέσα σου, καρδιά μου,
Βγάλ' τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς σκληρῆς...
Ἢαῖρε λοιπόν, Λεσβία, χαῖρε.
Ἰβρίσκομαι ἤδη γλυτωμένος 20
ἸΑπ' τὸν βαρὺ σου τὸ ζυγὸ,
Δὲν θὰ μὲ ἴδῃς νὰ κλαίω,
Τὴν ἄσπλαγχνην τὴν ὠμορφιά σου
Δὲν θὰ μὲ ἴδῃς νὰ κυνηγῶ.
Μὰ ἐσύ, ἄπιστη, θὰ κλάψης. 25
ἸΣὰν μείνης ἔρημο τρυγόνι
Μές τῆς νυκτὸς τῆ σιωπῆ,
Καὶ δὲν θὰ ἔχῃς πιά κοντά σου
ἸΆλλον κανένα τὴν ἀγάπη
Ποῦχα γιὰ ἴσένα νὰ σοῦ πῆ. 30
ἸΆλλά τί λέγω; Εἶναι πλάνη
Τῆς καυμένης μου καρδίας,
Εἶν' ὄνειρον ἀπατηλό.
Γρήγορα, φεῦ! θὰ μὲ ξεχάσης
Κι' ἄλλος τὸ μάτι σου θὰ βλέπη 35
Συγκινημένο καὶ θολό!
ἸΆς ἠξενερα ἴστὸν νοῦ ποιὸν ἔχεις·
Σὲ ποιαῖς τὰ κάλλη σου θὰ δεῖξης,
Σὲ ποιαῖς ἀχόρταγαις ματιαῖς!
Ποιονοῦ τὰ χεῖλη θὰ φιλήσης. 40
ἸΆχ, ποιὸς τῆς ζήλειας σου θὰ νοιώσῃ
Ταῖς φοβεραῖς δαγκαματιαῖς!⁸¹

⁸¹ 'My heart, leave this madness | and try to forget | this fickle woman, who denied you; | golden and sweet days | shone for you once | and you drank kisses of love. | Remember then, with what joy, you ran to meet her, | in any place she wished | Oh! Back then she gave you promptly | whatever you asked her | without any shame! | yet since she does not want you anymore, | since your friendship she refuses | tell me, what can you do? | Do not run behind her anymore | and, my heart, pull out of you | the form of this cruel woman... | So, goodbye, Lesbia, goodbye. | Now I am released from your heavy yoke. | You shall not see me crying anymore, | you shall not see me chasing your cruel beauty. | yet you, unfaithful, you shall cry. | When you are alone like a turtle dove | in the silence of the night, | and you will not have anyone near you | to speak to you for my love. | yet what do I say? It is a fallacy | of my poor heart, | it is false dream. | Alas! Soon you shall forget me | and someone else will

*Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire,
et quod vides perisse perditum ducas.
fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,
cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat
amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla. 5
ibi illa multa cum iocosa fiebant,
quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat,
fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.
nunc iam illa non vult: tu quoque impotens noli,
nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive, 10
sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura.
vale puella, iam Catullus obdurat,
nec te requiret nec rogabit invitam.
at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.
scelestas, vae te, quae tibi manet vita? 15
quis nunc te adibit? cui videberis bella?
quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?
quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?
at tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.⁸²*

Here, Laffon translates the 8th poem of Catullus (*Ad se ipsum*). In fact, he does not translate, but rather paraphrases it. This is proven by the number of Laffon's verses (42) compared to those of Catullus (19). Laffon creates seven stanzas, replacing Catullus' choliambic with the same metrics and rhyme as the previous poems.⁸³

see your eye | moved and hazy! | I wish I knew who in your mind you have! | In what insatiable glances | you shall show your beauty! | Whose lips you will kiss. | Alas, who will feel | the terrible bites of your jealousy!

⁸² Cat. 8: 'Poor Catullus, you must stop being silly, | and count as lost what you see is lost. | Once the sun shone bright for you, | when you would go whither your sweetheart led, | she you loved as no woman will ever be loved again. | Then there took place those many jolly scenes | which you desired nor did your sweetheart not desire. | Truly the sun shone bright for you. | Now she desires no more: do you too, weakling, not desire; | and do not chase her who flees, nor live in unhappiness, | but harden your heart, endure, and stand fast. | Goodbye, sweetheart. Catullus now stands fast: | he will not look for you or court you against your will. | yet you will be sorry when you are not courted at all. | Wretch, pity on you! What life lies in store for you! | Who will come to you now? Who will think you pretty? | Whom will you love now? Whose will people say you are? | Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite? | but you, Catullus, be resolute and stand fast'.

⁸³ See above, 11.

First, we can again see that Laffon does not include Catullus' name, which is mentioned three times in the Latin prototype (1: '*Miser Catulle*', 12: '*Catullus obdura!*', 19: '*at tu, Catulle*'). The first stanza highlights the liberty with which Laffon renders the meaning: Laffon replaces an infinitive (1: '*ineptire*') with a noun from colloquial Modern Greek (1: 'ταῖς λωλάδαῖς' = 'madness'), and a secondary clause (2: '*quod vides perisse*') with an adjective (2: 'Τὴν ἄστατη' = 'this fickle woman'). In the case of the repeated phrase from verses 3 and 8 ('*fulsere quondam/vere candidi tibi soles*'), we can see that Laffon translates the first and omits the second. In the translation of the first, he creates a 'translation pair in parataxis'⁸⁴ (3: '*candidi*' into 5: "Μέραῖς χρυσαῖς καὶ ζαχαρένιαῖς" = 'golden and sweet days'), adding a phrase of his own (6: 'Καὶ ἦπιες ἔρωτος φιλιὰ' = 'and you drank kisses of love'). There are many additions in the translation of this poem (7: 'Μὲ τὶ χαρά, θυμήσου τότε' = 'Remember then, with what joy', 12: 'Καὶ δὲν τὸ εἶχεν ἐντροπή!' = 'without any shame!', 14: 'Ἀφοῦ δὲν δέχεται φιλιὰ' = 'since your friendship she refuses', 18: 'Βγάλ' τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς σκληρῆς' = 'pull out of you | the form of this cruel woman', etc.) to the point where Laffon's text liberates itself from the prototype, and it seems that we are hearing only the voice of the Franco-Cypriot poet. For example, verses 14-15: '*at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla | scelestas, vae te, quae tibi manet vita?*' are replaced by a whole new stanza (25-30 of Laffon's text), with a simile of a deserted turtle dove during the night. Laffon's verses 31-36 are entirely his own creation. The question of 16: '*quis nunc te adibit?*' is translated in 37: "Ἄς ἦξευρα 'στὸν νοῦ ποῖόν ἔχεις" (= 'I wish I knew who in your mind you have!'), a phrase that does not carry the same meaning as the prototype. The questions of verse 17 ('*quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?*') are not translated by Laffon, while verse 18 ('*quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?*') is translated into three lines, 40-42: 'Ποιονοῦ τὰ χεῖλη θὰ φιλήσης. | Ἄχ, ποιὸς τῆς ζήλειας σου θὰ νοιώση | Ταῖς φοβεραῖς δαγκαματιαῖς!' (= 'Whose lips you will kiss. | Alas, who will feel | the terrible bites of your jealousy!'). The phrase '*cui labella mordebis*' is translated more descriptively (41-42: "Ἄχ, ποιὸς τῆς ζήλειας σου θὰ νοιώση | Ταῖς φοβεραῖς δαγκαματιαῖς!'). Finally, the last verse of Catullus is not translated.

⁸⁴ See above, 13.

2d. *Κρυφὸ ἀγκάθι (Secret thorn) – Laffon, Apanta: 120*

Ἐκατὸ φοραῖς μ' ὠρκίσθης
Πῶς τὰ κάλλη σου κανέννας
Δὲν θὰ ᾄδῃ τὰ ἀνθηρά,
Μὰ τοὺς ὄρκους σου τοὺς γράφεις
Πάνω στὰ πτερὰ τοῦ Νότου 5
Κ' εἰς τρεχάμενα νερά.
Ποτὲ ἄνδρας εἰς τὸν κόσμο
Δὲν ἀγάπησε γυναῖκα
Ὅπως σ' ἀγαποῦσα ἴγώ,
Καὶ σὺ πταίεις, ἐὰν τώρα 10
Τὸν φευγᾶτο ἔρωτά μου
Τοῦ κακοῦ τὸν κυνηγῶ.
Ἄχ! τί λέγω; ἡ ἀγάπη
Μέσ' τὰ στήθη μου ἀκόμη
Χύνει φλόγα τρομερή· 15
Μὰ τί μοῦ ἴκαμες δὲν ξέρω,
Ἡ καρδιά μου στάζει αἷμα
Καὶ νὰ γιάνη δὲν μπορεῖ!⁸⁵

*Nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle
quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat.
dicit: sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti,
in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua.*

and

*Nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam
vere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea est.
nulla fides ullo fuit umquam foedere tanta,
quanta in amore tuo ex parte reperta mea est.*

and/or

*Odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.
nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.*

⁸⁵ 'A hundred times you swore to me | that no one |your flourishing beauty shall see | yet
you write your vows | on the south wind wings | and in running water. | In the whole world
never a man | did love a woman | as I loved you, | and it is your fault, if now | I am chasing
in vain | my leaving love. | Alas! What am I saying? My love | to my chest still pours terrible
flame; | I know not what you did to me, | my heart drips blood | and cannot be cured!'

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and/or
[...] *tenuis sub artus*
flamma demanat [...] ⁸⁶

As we see, Laffon creates a cento of poems 70, 87 and 85 from Catullus (or verses 9-10 of 51). Here the translator changes the metrics, as he has four iambic paroxytone verses with eight syllables each (the first, second, fourth and fifth verse of each stanza) and two iambic oxytone verses each with seven syllables (the third and sixth verse of each stanza, i.e. in the middle and at the end). These verses rhyme.

In this composition too, Laffon composes a new poem, which is independent of the prototype. For the entire poem, Laffon changes the third person of the addressee to the second person. His first stanza is substantially different to Catullus' 70. The translator does not render the meaning of verses 1-2, 'Nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle | quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat), as he actually writes different verses, 1-3 = "Ἐκατὸ φοραῖς μ' ὠρκίσθης | Πῶς τὰ κάλλη σου κανένας | Δὲν θὰ ᾿δῆ τὰ ἀνθηρὰ" = 'A hundred times you swore to me | that no one | your flourishing beauty shall see'). Laffon's verses 4-6 match those of Catullus' 70.3-4, with the difference that what is attributed to women in general in the Latin prototype (3: 'mulier'), is now attributed only to Lesbia (4: 'τούς ὄρκους σου' = 'your vows'). In the second stanza, Laffon renders half of Catullus' meaning (7-9), changing the passive voice to active, thus emphasising the role of a man in loving a woman. Verses 10-12, however, belong to Laffon (= 'Καὶ σὺ παταίεις, ἐὰν τῶρα | Τὸν φευγᾶτο ἔρωτά μου | Τοῦ κακοῦ τὸν κυνηγῶ' = 'and it is your fault, if now | I am chasing in vain | my leaving love'); these neither reflect the meaning of the prototype nor the importance of the terms *fides* and *foedus* in the Catullan verses.⁸⁷ Finally, Laffon's last stanza (very loosely) reflects the meaning of two Catullan distiches: a) epigram 85 or b)

⁸⁶ Cat. 70: 'The woman I love says there is no one she would rather wed | than me, not though Jupiter himself should apply. | So she says; but what a woman says to an eager lover | should be written on the wind and running water', Cat. 87: 'No woman can truly say that she has been loved | as much as my Lesbia has been loved by me. | No faithfulness in any contract ever proved so great | as that which was found on my side in my love for you', Cat. 85: 'I hate and love. Perhaps you ask how I can do this? | I know not, but I feel it so, and I am in agony', and Cat. 51.9-10: 'a subtle flame | courses through my limbs'.

⁸⁷ See Henry (1950) 63-65; McGushin (1967) 85-93.

verses 9-10 of the poem 51. If Laffon's final stanza is Catullus' 85, then the Catullean 'Odi et amo' is described by almost three verses (13-15 = 'ή αγάπη | Μέσ' τὰ στήθη μου ἀκόμη | Χύνει φλόγα τρομερή' = 'Alas! What am I saying? My love | to my chest still pours terrible flame'), and the second verse by three additional ones (16-18 = Μὰ τὶ μοῦ 'καμες δὲν ξέρω, | Ἡ καρδιά μου στάζει αἷμα | Καὶ νὰ γιάνη δὲν μπορεῖ!' = 'I know not what you did to me, | my heart drips blood | and cannot be cured!'). The same is true if we consider that the Modern Greek stanza is a free translation of poem 51. However, imitating Catullus, Laffon uses many verbs in his translation (six verbs instead of Catullus' eight).⁸⁸

2e. Εἰς τὴν Λεσβίαν (To Lesbia) – Laffon, *Apanta*: 121

Εὐτυχίαν Θεοῦ νοιώθει
Κι' ἴσως πλειότερο ἀκόμα,
Ὅποιος κάθηται σιμά σου
Καὶ σ' ἀκούει νὰ μιλάς·
ὦ Λεσβία, ἴσως σὲ βλέπω 5
Μοῦ θολόνουνε τὰ μάτια
Καὶ γλυκειὰ μὲ πιάνει μέθη,
Ὅταν μου χαμογελάς.
Ναί, ὁ ἔρωσ, ποῦ μὲ θέλγει
Καὶ κοντὰ σου μὲ σκλαβώνει, 10
Ἔχει ἄλλοτε, τὸ ξεύρω,
Καταστρέψει βασιλεῖς·
Κράτη καὶ λαοὶ μεγάλοι
Ἐξ αἰτίας του χαθῆκαν,
Τὸ γνωρίζω· πλὴν μ' ἀρέσει 15
Νὰ σ' ἀκούω νὰ μιλής.⁸⁹

*Ille mi par esse deo videtur,
ille, si fas est, superare divos,*

⁸⁸ Tromaras (2001) 581.

⁸⁹ 'He feels blessed by God | and maybe a greater happiness, | anyone who sits next to you | and listens to your voice; | Oh! Lesbia, when I see you | my eyes become hazy | and I have a sweet drunkenness, | when you are smiling to me. | Yes, I admit it, the love that enchants me | and captures me in your bonds, | has ruined in the past | – I know it – kings. | Countries and peoples | were lost because of love, | I know it; but I like | to hear you speak'.

Vasileios Pappas

*qui sedens adversus identidem te
spectat et audit
dulce ridentem, misero quod omnis* 5
*eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi
<vocis in ore,>
lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
flamma demanat, sonitu suo* 10
*tintinant aures gemina, teguntur
lumina nocte.
otium, Catulle, tibi molestum est:
otio exsultas nimiumque gestis:
otium et reges prius et beatas* 15
*perdidit urbes.*⁹⁰

Laffon now translates Catullus 51, which is actually a translation of Sappho's ode 'Φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν / ἔμμεν' ὄνηρ...' (frg. 31 L.-P.).⁹¹ This is the only poem where Laffon maintains the same number of verses (16). Imitating Sappho's metrical system, Laffon transforms Catullus' four Sapphic stanzas into a continuous poem with twelve iambic paroxytone verses with eight syllables (1-3, 5-7, 9-11, 13-16) and four iambic oxytone verses with seven syllables each (4, 8, 12, 16), which rhyme between themselves.

In the first four verses, Laffon once again translates Catullus using the *ad sensum* theory, with minor differences; in 1-2, Catullus believes that the man sitting opposite Lesbia appears to him to be equal to a god, or even to surpass the gods. For Laffon, however, this man feels the blessing of God, or something even greater than a blessing. The translator Christianises the poem and does not render the simile to gods into Modern Greek apparently considering this a blasphemy against God. Verses 5-12 are rendered very

⁹⁰ Cat. 51: 'He seems to me the equal of a god, | he seems, if that may be, the god's superior, | who sits face to face with you and again and again | watches and hears you | sweetly laughing, an experience which robs me | poor wretch, of all my senses; for the moment I set | eyes on you, Lesbia, there remains not a whisper | of voice on my lips, | but my tongue is paralysed, a subtle flame | courses through my limbs, with sound self-caused | my two ears ring, and my eyes are | covered in darkness. | Idleness, Catullus, is your trouble; | idleness is what delights you and moves you to passion; | idleness has proved ere now the ruin of kings and | prosperous cities'.

⁹¹ See Tromaras (2001) 390.

loosely with only four verses; this is especially true of verses 9-12, where Laffon has only two (6-7: 'Μοῦ θολόνουνε τὰ μάτια | Καὶ γλυκειὰ μὲ πιάνει μέθη' = 'my eyes become hazy | and I have a sweet drunkenness'). The name of the Roman poet is once again omitted (13). Nevertheless, Laffon perhaps self-consciously comments on his knowledge of Catullus' poem, by twice repeating 'I know it' (11: 'τὸ ξέρω' and 15: 'Τὸ γνωρίζω'). In the last stanza of Catullus (13-16), Laffon replaces the word *otium* (= idleness) with ἔρωσ (=love), a term that is substantially different and does not reflect the exact meaning of the Latin word.⁹² Laffon is more descriptive of the negative effects of *otium*/ἔρωσ (15-16 in Catullus' poem and 11-14 in Laffon's translation). At the end of his translation, Laffon adds one and a half verses that do not exist in the prototype (15-16: 'πλὴν μ' ἀρέσει | Νὰ σ' ἀκούω νὰ μιλήῃς' = 'I like | to hear you speak'), creating a form of circular composition for the poem (4: 'Καὶ σ' ἀκούει νὰ μιλήῃς').

3. Conclusions

Following this examination, we may deduce the following:

- a. Laffon's translation is free and not *ad verbum* to the prototype, as he states in the title of his *Apanta* section entitled 'Free Translations of several poems of Latin and other European poets'.⁹³
- b. He often combines several poems from Catullus, making a cento of them.⁹⁴
- c. He often both omits and adds phrases of his own inspiration, creating new Modern Greek poems, which are rendered independently of the Latin prototype.⁹⁵
- d. He omits the name of the Roman poet and presents himself as the *persona loquens*, i.e. the unfortunate poet-lover.⁹⁶
- e. He does not translate several pagan features from Catullus' poetry, likely aiming to conceal the connection between Catullus and Callimachus and to change the environment of the text in order to Christianise it.

⁹² For *otium*, see André (1966).

⁹³ See above, 9.

⁹⁴ See above, 16 and 22.

⁹⁵ See above, 9-25.

⁹⁶ See above, 17, 20 and 25.

- f. In some cases, he uses words from the colloquial Modern Greek language (λωλάδαις, Μαριγώ), a practice revealing that Laffon wanted the poems to be read by a wide readership.⁹⁷ For this reason, he uses the Modern Greek language and not *katharevousa*, unlike the previous Greek translators of Catullus.⁹⁸ Simultaneously, the revelation of the identity of the Roman poets in French (Catulle, Tibulle, Propertius) likely indicates that Laffon's translations were also addressed to an (at least somewhat) educated readership.

In sum, Laffon mainly paraphrases rather than translates the poems of Catullus. We could say that his work is derived from Catullan poetry, but he also creates new Modern Greek poems that are addressed to a wider Greek readership, with the aim of bringing them pleasure. Laffon did not simply produce a free and poetical (as Polyas stated) translation of Catullus' poems, however, but rather a creative translation, while simultaneously creating new Modern Greek poetry. The language and style of Laffon's translations of Catullus' poems are the same as that he used in his own prototype poems. It seems that Laffon's translations of Catullus' poems did not have a great impact, however – the only information concerning their reception is a reprint in the literary journal *Μπουκέτο* (= *Bouquet*) in 1930, in volume 7, number 323.⁹⁹ Their reappearance there likely had something to do with the principal purpose of the journal, which 'aimed to offer pleasure and entertainment to its readership and was addressed to the whole [Greek] family'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ See above, 14 and 20.

⁹⁸ See above, 4-7.

⁹⁹ *Μπουκέτο* was a literary journal at the beginnings of the 20th century (1924-1946). For further information, see the link: <http://pleias.lis.upatras.gr/index.php/mpouketo> from the website 'Pleias' of the University of Patras (last accessed 12/11/2018).

¹⁰⁰ 'Είχε ως στόχο να τέρψει και να ψυχαγωγήσει το κοινό και απευθυνόταν σε ολόκληρη την οικογένεια' (from the link above).

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