

Literary transfers and cross-cultural exchanges in the Greek speaking world at the turn of the 20th century: the verse translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by A.S. Kasdaglis (1908)

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The literary career of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the Greek speaking world has been rather unsuccessful compared with the poet's vast popularity in Western Europe. The landmark of Ovid's travel from the Latin speaking West to the Greek speaking East is beyond doubt the translation of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Heroides* by the thirteenth century monk and scholar Maximus Planudes during the Palaeologan Renaissance.¹ The translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by A.S. Kasdaglis appears in 1908 and it is rather unfortunate that it has not received so far any scholarly attention. In this paper I will examine the language and methodology of Kasdaglis' translation, as well as his views on the nature and purpose of a translation in general. Finally, I will try to evaluate his translation of Ovid's epic within the wider context of the so-called 'Greek language question' («γλωσσικό ζήτημα»), which was at the very epicentre of the socio-political and cultural agenda of Greece at the turn of the 20th century.²

Before I start with Kasdaglis' translation, it would be useful to make an overview of Ovid's popularity among Greek speaking translators. Based on the surviving evidence we can discern two main strands in Greek translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* between Planudes and Kasdaglis.³ During the seventeenth and eighteenth century we have translations in the vernacular, while in the nineteenth and twentieth century the vast majority of translators use the katharevousa. The only exception to this rule is the translation of the first five books of the *Metamorphoses* by Philippos Ioannou (1874) who used ancient Greek in ancient dactylic hexameters.⁴ The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early beginnings of the twentieth century saw a real surge in the production of translations of Ovid's epic either in whole or in parts.⁵ All these translations were published in Athens, with the exception of Livadas (1908) which was published on the island of Corfu. Their main objective was educational, so far as we can tell from the prologues of these books. In some cases their

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¹ For the translation of the *Heroides* by Planudes see A.N. Michalopoulos 2002-3, *idem* 2003.

² For a useful overview of the 'language question' see Beaton 1996, 369-449.

³ For titles and comprehensive discussion of these translations see the excellent paper by Nikitas 2012, esp.103-113.

⁴ Philippos Ioannou translated also Ovid's *Heroides* 1 and 7. For a detailed discussion of this translation see A.N. Michalopoulos, "Translating and interpreting Ovid's *Heroides* in 19th century Greece: Philippos Ioannou and his *Φιλολογικά Πάρεργα*" in the same volume.

⁵ See Nikitas 2012, 104-105.

educational intent is even stated in the book title.⁶ This is quite understandable given the importance of Latin for both the Secondary and the Higher Education of that time in Greece. In addition, some of the translators were teachers themselves. Kofiniotis and Vythoylkas taught in High Schools, and Livadas was Professor of Latin at the University of Athens. The educational character of these translations accounts perhaps for the translators' predilection for prose and more importantly their use of katharevousa, which was the formal language of the educational system.

Modern Greek translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* during the seventeenth and eighteenth century are in the vernacular and include the work of Makolas (1686),⁷ Daponte (c.1737-1750)⁸ and Vlantis (1798).⁹ All three of them are in prose, but their format is far from what we could call a translation today. Only Vlantis, a headmaster at the Flanginian School of Venice, offers a translation of the whole work. His translation is organised in *Myths* (*Μύθος*) each of which is preceded by a short *Summary* (*Υπόθεση*) followed by an *Allegorical Explanation* (*Αλληγορία*).¹⁰ Makolas' and Daponte' work are more or less anthologies, the first one containing twelve stories, and the second one forty seven stories from the *Metamorphoses*. The accuracy of these translations is questionable with Vlantis' translation being the most complete. Daponte, on the other hand, offers a second-hand translation, since he is not translating directly from Latin but rather from an Italian translation. In any case, these early prose translations should be praised for two reasons; firstly, for the fervent desire of the translators to introduce such renowned works of Western literature as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to the Greek public. In Makolas' own words: «τὸ δεδοξασμένον καὶ πεφημισμένον γένος τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὴν σήμερον εὐρίσκεται εἰς μεγάλην ἔνδειαν ἀπὸ τοιαῦτα βιβλία ὠφέλιμα».¹¹ His target is clear: the benefit of his readers. He repeatedly refers to his work as «ὠφέλιμον» or even «ὠφελιμοτάτη[v] βίβλο[v]».¹² Secondly, these attempts stand out for the modernization of the Ovidian text through the translators' choice of the vernacular. In all of them there are minor or major departures from the original, alterations, subtractions or even additions; however, through the careful choice of vocabulary, the use of popular idioms and modern language they manage to offer a lively translation which appealed to the reader of that time.

⁶ For details see Nikitas 2012, 107 n.15.

⁷ For a detailed examination of Makolas' (1686) translation see Nikitas 2012, 112-140.

⁸ Daponte's translation still remains unpublished. See Kechagioglou 1986.

⁹ See Karathanassis 1979.

¹⁰ For a detailed examination of Vlantis' translation see Nikitas 1998.

¹¹ Quoted in Nikitas 2012, 127-128.

¹² See Nikitas 2012, 127 n.102.

It is within this line of literary production that Kasdaglis' work appears in 1908. In the book's colophon we read that the book was printed by G. Tenios (Γ. Τηνιός) Press in Alexandria.¹³ George Tenios, the son-in-law of the great Alexandrian Anastasios Vitalis, was a very well-known publisher,¹⁴ the heart and soul of the newspaper «Ταχυδρόμος», which was until very recently the biggest and most important Greek newspaper of Alexandria.¹⁵ The publication of this translation in Alexandria, outside Greece, comes as a surprise, since all the above mentioned translations in katharevousa were published in Athens. Even more unusual is the translator's choice of verse instead of prose.

The book, which is 575 pages long, is entitled: ΟΒΙΔΙΟΥ / ΜΕΤΑΜΟΡΦΩΣΕΩΝ / ΒΙΒΛΙΑ ΠΕΝΤΕΚΑΙΔΕΚΑ / ΕΜΜΕΤΡΩΣ / ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΔΑ ΜΕΤΕΝΕΝΗΓΜΕΝΑ ΦΩΝΗΝ / ΥΠΟ / ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Σ. ΚΑΣΔΑΓΛΗ / ΤΟΥ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΩΣ // ΕΝ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΙΓΥΠΤΟΥ / 1908. All necessary information regarding the subject matter (translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), the format of the translation (verse), the language (katharevousa), the name of the translator (A.S. Kasdaglis), the translator's origin (Alexandrian), the place (Alexandria) and the time (1908) of publication is given on the title page. The structure of the book is the following:

I. A dedication to King George I of Greece (p.θ').¹⁶

II. A dedicatory letter also addressed to King George I (pp. ια'-ιγ'). In this letter Kasdaglis makes a flashback to the glorious Greek past up from classical Athens to the fall of Byzantium and the refuge offered by the Medici to the Greek Muses. His choice of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is justified on the work's impact on pictorial arts during the Renaissance, since the poem serves as a gallery of the Greek mythical and historical times.¹⁷ Kasdaglis also mentions the royal permission granted to him during his meeting with King George in Paris.¹⁸ Finally, he repeats once again his choice of the katharevousa for his verse translation.¹⁹

III. The prologue (ΠΡΟΛΟΓΟΜΕΝΑ, pp.ιζ'-λβ'), where the translator offers general information about Ovid and his work, but also discusses issues of great importance, like for

¹³ Kasdaglis (1908) 575: «ΕΚ ΤΗΣ / ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΙΝΗΣ ΤΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΙΑΣ / Γ. ΤΗΝΙΟΥ».

¹⁴ His press was established in 1890 and it was located on the Aegyptian Post Road (Οδός Αιγυπτιακού Ταχυδρομείου) in Alexandria.

¹⁵ A book by Tenios Publishers can also be found in Cavafy's library: Αποστολίδης, Β (1906). *Γλωσσικαί μελέται ἐξ ἀφορμῆς τῶν ἀκαδημεικῶν ἀναγνωσμάτων τοῦ κ. Γ.Ν. Χατζηδάκι. Ἡ σήμερον λαλουμένη καί αἱ σχέσεις αὐτῆς πρὸς τὴν Ἀρχαίαν*. Ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ, Τυπογραφεῖον «Ταχυδρόμου» Γ. Τηνιού.

¹⁶ Τῆι ΑΥΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΕΙΟΤΗΤΙ/ΓΕΩΡΓΙΩι Α. / ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙ ΤΩΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ // Η ΕΜΜΕΤΡΟΣ ΑΥΤΗ ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΔΑ ΦΩΝΗΝ / ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΙΣ / ΤΩΝ ΤΟΥ / ΟΒΙΔΙΟΥ ΜΕΤΑΜΟΡΦΩΣΕΩΝ // ΥΨΗΛΗι ΣΥΝΕΝΑΙΣΕΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΕΙΟΤΗΤΟΣ / ΤΑΠΕΙΝΩΣ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΣΕΒΑΣΤΩΣ / ΑΝΑΤΙΘΕΤΑΙ

¹⁷ Kasdaglis 1908, ιβ'-ιγ': «τὴν μεγίστην δύναμιν ἐξήσκησαν αἱ τοῦ Ὀβιδίου Μεταμορφώσεις, ἡ μεγάλη τοῦ Αὐγουσταίου αἰῶνος κυκλικὴ ἐποποιία, ἐν ἧπερ ὁ κόσμος τῶν μυθικῶν καὶ ἡρωικῶν χρόνων τῆς λαμπρᾶς ἡμῶν ἀρχαιότητος ὡς ἐν θαυμασίᾳ πινακοθήκῃ ἐξεικονίζεται.»

¹⁸ Kasdaglis 1908, ιγ': «καθ' ἣν εὐμενῆ ἄδειαν ὑψηλῆ Αὐτῆς συναινέσει ἐν Γαλλίᾳ ἔλαβον.»

¹⁹ Kasdaglis 1908, ιγ': «εἰς τὴν καθαρὰν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν ἐμμέτρως ἐπαναδούς».

example the necessity for a new translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, his principles of translation and so on, which will be examined in detail.

IV. The translation proper (pp.1-516), which follows the organization of the original Latin text in fifteen books. A short, one-page summary of its content (ΥΠΟΘΕΣΙΣ) precedes each book.

V. *Indices* (ΠΙΝΑΚΕΣ, pp. 517-536): i) an *Index nominum* (ΠΕΡΙΕΧΟΜΕΝΩΝ ΠΙΝΑΞ ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΙΚΟΣ, pp. 517-536), and ii) a *Table of Contents per book* (ΠΙΝΑΞ ΠΕΡΙΕΧΟΜΕΝΩΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΒΙΒΛΙΑ, pp.537-544).

VI. The *Epilogue* (ΕΠΙΛΕΓΟΜΕΝΑ, pp.545-562), a kind of critical Appendix which from a theoretical point of view is equally important with the Prologue.

VII. A *Comparative Table of the lines of the translation with the lines of the original* (ΠΑΡΑΒΟΛΗ / ΤΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΟΤΥΠΟΥ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΥ ΤΩΝ ΜΕΤΑΜΟΡΦΩΣΕΩΝ / ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΕΩΣ, p.536).

VIII. *Corrigenda* (ΗΜΑΡΤΗΜΕΝΩΝ ΔΙΟΡΘΩΣΕΙΣ, pp.564-570).

IX. A *Bibliography* of Kasdaglis' works (ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Σ. ΚΑΣΔΑΓΛΗ / ΕΡΓΑ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΚΑ, pp.571-573). The bibliography is divided in: i) Translations (ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΕΙΣ (1872-1880)), ii) Verse translations of epics (ΕΠΩΝ ΕΜΜΕΤΡΟΙ ΜΕΘΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑΙ (1881-1907), iii) Verse translations of Greek poets and writers (ΕΜΜΕΤΡΟΙ ΜΕΘΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑΙ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ ΠΟΙΗΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΛΟΓΟΓΡΑΦΩΝ (1890-1908), iv) Poetry (ΠΟΙΗΣΕΙΣ (1876-1905), v) Other writings (ΣΥΓΓΡΑΦΑΙ).

a) Bibliographical and grammatological background

The reader is struck by Kasdaglis' sound knowledge of Latin grammar. Ovid's biographical data is impressive for its accuracy and thoroughness.²⁰ What is more impressive is his choice to translate and incorporate to his prologue big chunks of text from the prologues to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of the eighteenth century French poet and translator Ange-François Fariau de Saint-Ange (1747-1810)²¹ and the nineteenth century French literary critic Désiré Nisard (1806-1888).²² He also cites from Daniel Heinsius' work *De tragoediae constitutione*

²⁰ His only mistakes are the attribution of the *Nux*, the *Consolatio ad Liviam*, and the *Halieuticon* to Ovid and the inclusion of the *Medicamina faciei* to Ovid's exilic production (Kasdaglis 1908, ιθ').

²¹ De Saint Ange was Ovid's systematic translator. A list of his Ovidian translations is the following: i) The *Metamorphoses* Books 1, 2, 3, with introduction, notes and discussion of cases of artistic and literary reception (1785), ii) The *Metamorphoses* Books 5 (,6) (1787-1789), iii) The *Ars amatoria*, with notes (1807), iv) The *Metamorphoses*, in four volumes, new and revised edition, with notes, decorated with engravings (1808), v) The *Fasti* (1809), vi) The *Remedia amoris*, followed by the *Heroides* and a choice of Ovidian elegies with notes (1811).

²² It is very likely that Kasdaglis is translating from Nisard's 1869 translation entitled: *Ovide. Oeuvres completes; avec la traduction en français publiées sous la direction de M. Nisard.*

and from the Latin Grammarology of de la Harpe.²³ This is not because Kasdaglis could not have provided the relevant information by his own, but this kind of citation serves him largely as valid proof, a show-off, of his being aware of the international debate about Ovid's literary merit. In his attempt to validate his critical inquiry Kasdaglis supplements his translation of a classical text with a translation of modern scholarship on that classical text. This is a first, albeit implicit, indication that for Kasdaglis translation is a useful means of learning. His selections from critical writings is not random; on the very contrary, all his citations interlock nicely with each other and with his own remarks. Thus, he manages to offer a dense theoretical text, in flowing narrative whose multiplicity of critical voices provides the reader with well-rounded information.

Kasdaglis' bibliographical knowledge of Ovidian translations in most European languages is equally impressive. His learnedness and thoroughness become evident in the extensive list of illustrated editions of Ovid in French²⁴ and English²⁵ dating from 1484 to 1784. Another set of bibliographical information comprises editions of isolated episodes or myths, especially in English from 1547 to 1830,²⁶ as well as paraphrases or parodies of the Ovidian text, mainly in French. Kasdaglis is also aware of editions (prose or verse) in Italian, Spanish, German, Flemish, Danish, Swedish, Russian and Polish (a real treat for bibliographers of the fifteenth century onwards!).²⁷ Whether the above is first –or second-hand– information cannot be deciphered with certainty. However, we are struck by Kasdaglis' reference to his persistence in getting hold of a copy of Maximus Planudes' translation of the *Metamorphoses*, which was published in Paris in 1822. He claims it took took him a good five years to get hold of a copy while visiting London and Paris.²⁸ However, despite his awareness of foreign translations, he does not seem to be equally informed of the relevant Greek production. He knows Planudes, Vlantis and Ioannou, but he does not say anything about prose translations of the eighteenth century or any of the translations in the katharevousa mentioned above.

It is clear that we are dealing with a learned translator, who does not aim at providing merely a good translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. A translation, even a good one, seems to be not good enough for Kasdaglis. Instead, he complements his translation with critical remarks which resound with the philological methodology and literary criticism of his time.

²³ Entitled: *Lycée ou cours de littérature ancienne et moderne*.

²⁴ Kasdaglis 1908, 549-551.

²⁵ Kasdaglis 1908, 551.

²⁶ Kasdaglis 1908, 552.

²⁷ Kasdaglis 1908, 553.

²⁸ Kasdaglis 1908, λ': «ἡμεῖς δ' αὐτοὶ παρὰ πολλοῖς ἐν τε Λονδίῳ καὶ Παρισίοις ζητήσαντες ἀντίτυπον, μετὰ πενταετείς ἐρεῦνας εὔρομεν αὐτό.»

His acute criticism and sound judgement can be seen in a short passage from the Prologue which serves as a bridge-passage between his citations from de Saint-Ange and Nisard.²⁹ There, Kasdaglis rightly comments on Ovid's transitional place in the history of Latin literature, caught as he is between the Augustan era and the early Imperial times. He notes: «Καὶ αἱ μὲν πλεῖστοι τῶν συγγραφῶν τῆς Λατινικῆς Γραμματολογίας οὐ παραδέχονται τὸν Ὀβίδιον ἐκ τῶν πρώτων τοῦ Αὐγουσταίου αἰῶνος ποιητῶν· κατατάσσουσι δὲ αὐτὸν ἔνθα παρέρχεται μὲν ἡ ἀκμή, ἄρχεται δὲ ἡ παρακμὴ τῆς Λατινικῆς ποιήσεως».³⁰ Nevertheless, the poet's intermediary position does not harm the quality of his work.³¹ Kasdaglis' attention to literary periodisation is quite modern, in that the transitional character of Ovid's work between two eras has long gone rather unnoticed until fairly recently. Kasdaglis does not hesitate even to admit Ovid's flaws, which he considers as testimony to the poet's greatness.³² Free from prejudice and with remarkable neutrality he backs up his views with examples of flawed narratives in Ovid,³³ Homer and Milton.

b) The language and principles of the translation, the purpose of the translation and the need for new translations

Kasdaglis is more than willing to share with his readers the linguistic and metrical choices of his translation, his methodology, the need for new translations, above all the purpose of his work. With regard to the language of his translation, Kasdaglis right from the very beginning (on the title page) states that he has translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in verse («ΕΜΜΕΤΡΩΣ», p. ε') using the katharevousa («ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΔΑ...ΦΩΝΗΝ», p. ε'). The same claim is repeated almost identically in the dedication of the book to King George («Η ΕΜΜΕΤΡΟΣ ΑΥΤΗ ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΔΑ ΦΩΝΗΝ / ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΙΣ», p. θ') and in the dedicatory letter («εις τὴν καθαρὰν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν ἐμμέτρως ἐπαναδούς»)³⁴ The final section of his Prologue is essentially a *defensio* of his linguistic and metrical choices.³⁵ Kasdaglis defends the katharevousa («τὴν καθαρὰν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν») as opposed to the ancient Greek («τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν, ὡς ἀποκαλεῖ τὴν ἀρχαίαν τῶν Ἑλλήνων φωνὴν ὁ

²⁹ Kasdaglis 1908, κε'.

³⁰ Kasdaglis 1908, κε'.

³¹ Kasdaglis 1908, κε': «Ἀλλὰ καὶ οὕτως ὁ Ὀβίδιος μοναδικὴν κατέχει θέσιν ἐν τῇ ποιήσει· καθ' ἡμᾶς δὲ οὐδενὶ ποιητῇ τῆς κλασσικῆς ἀρχαιότητος δύναται νὰ παραβληθῇ· ἀλλ' εἴτε κρείττων εἴτε ἥττων τυγχάνει οἰοδῆποτε ἢ Ἑλληνας ἢ Ῥωμαίους ποιητοῦ, πάντοτε μοναδικὸς καὶ ἀπαραμίλλος ἵσταται κατὰ τε τὰ πλεονεκτήματα καὶ τὰ μειονεκτήματα αὐτοῦ».

³² Kasdaglis 1908, κε': «Ἀλλὰ τίς ποιητῆς, ὅσῳ μέγας καὶ ἂν τυγχάνη, κέκτηται πλεονεκτήματα ἄνευ μειονεκτημάτων;»

³³ For example Kasdaglis finds Apollo's persuasion speech to Daphne in Book 1 rather naïve and boring.

³⁴ Kasdaglis 1908, λ': «εις τὴν καθαρὰν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν ἐμμέτρως μεθερμηνεῖα».

³⁵ Kasdaglis 1908, λα'-λβ'.

Ἡρόδοτος»³⁶ on various historic and aesthetic grounds. The katharevousa, so he claims, might have failed to maintain the ‘unobtrusive purity’ of ancient Greek, however, given the current cultural frailty of the Greeks, it is a most appropriate choice in that it manages at least to preserve the ‘ancestral virtue’.³⁷ After having been cleansed (it is called ‘katharevousa’ after all!) from foreign linguistic admixtures it has kept the linguistic and expressive wealth of the past intact.³⁸ In addition, this is the language which is more understandable by all those who study Greek letters.³⁹ Most importantly, this language is the genuine descendant of the Greek glorious past, a guarantor of the uninterrupted continuity of the Greek nation from antiquity to the present days.⁴⁰

With respect to metrics, Kasdaglis notes that he systematically avoided the accent on the fifth foot and maintained it only where the text allowed.⁴¹ By keeping as close as possible to the grammar and style of the Latin original he is struggling to render in modern Greek what he calls «τὴν εὐροίαν τῶν ἐπῶν», the flow of words, combined with «τοῦ λόγου τὴν εὐμέλειαν», the ‘melody of the speech’.⁴² Hence, he refrains from any excessive use of verbal ornamentation⁴³ and he carefully avoids syncope and elision.⁴⁴ His use of ancient and obsolete words is also sparse.⁴⁵

Intrinsically related with the question of language are Kasdaglis’ views about the purpose of his translation (every translation as a matter of fact), which is none other than the benefit of the readers («ἢ... τοῖς πολλοῖς προσγενομένη ὠφέλεια».⁴⁶ For Kasdaglis, this is the main, if not the only, criterion against which every translation should be judged. To support his thesis he offers a concise, but sound, critique of the 1865 translation of the first five books of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* by the Greek scholar and Professor of Philosophy at the

³⁶ Kasdaglis 1908, λα’.

³⁷ Kasdaglis 1908, λα’-λβ’: «Αὕτη τὴν προγονικὴν ἀρετὴν διασώσασα, κατὰ τοσοῦτον μόνον ἡμῖν τοῖς μεταγενεστέροις εὐδοκοῦσα χαρίζεται, ἐφ’ ὅσον ἡ ἡμέτερα πρὸς τὰ ὑψηλότερα πτήσις ἀσθενῆς ἐν γε τῷ παρόντι τυγχάνουσα, ἀδυνατεῖ πρὸς τὸ πλήρες κάλλος τῆς σεμνῆς ἐκείνης νὰ ἐξαρθῇ ἀγνόητος».

³⁸ Kasdaglis 1908, λα’: «αὕτη, οὐχὶ ὡς τινες διατείνονται βαθμηδὸν τὰ ξένα καὶ ὀθνεῖα ἀποβάλλουσα, ἀλλ’ ἀπαρχῆς αὐτὴ ἅπαντα τὸν ἀρχαῖον πλοῦτον τῆς τε λέξεως καὶ φράσεως διατηρήσασα».

³⁹ Kasdaglis 1908, λα’: «ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν ὁπωσοῦν παιδείας τυχόντων καταληπτὴ, προσφορώτατον μὲν τοῖς περὶ τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ Γράμματα ἀσχολουμένοις ἑαυτὴν παρέχει λόγου ἰδίωμα».

⁴⁰ Kasdaglis 1908, λα’: «εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν φωνὴν, ἣτις ἐκ τῆς μητρὸς Ἑλλάδος τὸ εὐκλεῆς γένος ἔλκουσα, Ἑλληνίς τὴν καταγωγὴν καὶ τυγχάνει καὶ προσήκει νὰ λέγηται ... ἐναργέστατον δ’ ἅμα τῆς ἐνδόξου ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν ἀρχαίαν φυλὴν συναφείας ἐνδείκνυται πίστωμα».

⁴¹ Kasdaglis 1908, λβ’: «μόνον δ’ ἐνθα κρείττονα κάλλη ἐπέτρεπον».

⁴² Kasdaglis 1908, λβ’.

⁴³ Kasdaglis 1908, λβ’: «συνειδότες ὅτι ἐν ποιήματι οὕτω μακρῶ τὸ τῆς λέξεως φορτικὸν τυγχάνει τῶν γνωρισμάτων τὸ κάκιστον».

⁴⁴ Kasdaglis 1908, λβ’: «ὥστε μηδεμία συγκοπὴ ν’ ἀκρωτηριάζη τοῦ λόγου τὴν εὐμέλειαν, μηδεμία δὲ ὅλου τοῦ ἔπους ρηματικὴ κατάληξις συντεμνομένη νὰ μεταβάλλῃ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς φωνῆς τὸ εὐφογγον εἰς τοῦ βαρβάρου οὐνισμοῦ τὸ ρινόφθογγον σχῆμα».

⁴⁵ Kasdaglis 1908, λβ’: «τῆς τε χρήσεως τῶν ἀχρηστων καὶ ἀπηρχαιομένων τύπων καὶ λέξεων ἀπέστημεν».

⁴⁶ Kasdaglis 1908, κζ’.

University of Athens Philippos Ioannou.⁴⁷ Kasdaglis starts his criticism by openly acknowledging Ioannou's learnedness.⁴⁸ Then follows an excerpt from the *Prolegomena* of the translation, where Ioannou exposes his principles. Kasdaglis finds no fault in following the middle road, i.e. to keep close to the original, but also to diverge freely when the word-by-word translation yields a difficult text.⁴⁹ In fact, he admits to the artistic excellence of the produced work calling it: «ὄντως ἀγλαὸν δὲ μνημεῖον μαθήσεως ἅμα καὶ ἀκαταβλήτου ὑπομονῆς». What receives the fervent arrows of his polemic is Ioannou's choice to translate in ancient Greek («εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα φωνήν») and to use ancient Greek hexameters. Kasdaglis is more, if not exclusively, preoccupied with the potential usefulness of the translation and less with its craftsmanship. He wonders: «ἀλλὰ τίς ἢ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῖς πολλοῖς προσγενομένη ὠφέλεια;». The answer to the above question is given indirectly through the ingenious association of Ovid's translation by Ioannou with the translation of Vergil's *Aeneid* by Evgenios Voulgaris.⁵⁰ Ioannou seems to have followed the example set by Voulgaris in producing an archaic (in language, metre and tone) translation. Kasdaglis effectively applies the criticism of Voulgaris' translation by Demetrios Thereianos, who was the biographer of Adamantios Koraes, to the translation by Ioannou.⁵¹ In view of the close similarity of the two texts, the negative assessment of the chronologically earlier work casts a bleak shadow on the most recent one. Hence, their shared 'qualities' are now regarded as reasons for rejection.

The metrical competence of the two translators is unquestionable,⁵² even though the use of ancient Greek hexameter is considered to be pointless.⁵³ However, the touchstone of a good translation is the benefit of its readers (*ὠφέλεια*) and this is where both Voulgaris and Ioannou fall short. Their translations, in spite of their formalistic and metrical perfection, fail

⁴⁷ For the complete title of this translation see Nikitas 2012, 108 n.16. A second revised and enlarged edition of this translation (together with other translations of Latin texts and his original poetry in ancient Greek) was reissued in 1874. Kasdaglis must have read this second judging from his reference to 1874 (p. κζ'). It seems very likely that Ioannou did not manage to complete the translation of the whole work. Or at least, if his translation of books 6-15 was ever done, it has not been discovered yet.

⁴⁸ Kasdaglis 1908, κστ': «Καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος Φίλιππος Ἰωάννου, δεινὸς μὲν καὶ ἔξοχος Ἑλληνιστῆς, κράτιστος δὲ τῆς ἀρχαίας μετρικῆς καὶ τῆς πάλαι Ἑλλάδος φωνῆς μύστης».

⁴⁹ Kasdaglis 1908, κζ': «μέσην δὲ τινα ὁδὸν προειλόμην βαδίσαι, οὐκ ἐν πάσι (sic) τῇ τοῦ κειμένου προσισχύμενος λέξει, ἐν δ' ἐκείνοις αὐτῆς ἀφιστάμενος ἔνθα ἢ κατὰ ρῆμα μεθερμηνεῖα τραχεῖα ἂν ἐγένετο ἢ δυσνόητος λίαν».

⁵⁰ Kasdaglis 1908, κστ': «αὐτὸς τὴν δόξαν Εὐγενίου τοῦ Βουλγάρεως τοῦ μεταφραστοῦ τῆς Αἰνειάδος, ζηλώσας, καὶ εἰς τὰ αὐτὰ Ὀμηρικὰ μέτρα ἀψάμενος τῆς μεταφράσεως τῆς Ὀβιδιανῆς ἐποποιίας».

⁵¹ Kasdaglis 1908, κζ'- κη'.

⁵² Cf. Thereianos' comments for Voulgaris (*via* Kasdaglis): «τὸ κατόρθωμα τοῦ κλεινοῦ ἱεράρχου μέγα μὲν παραδεχόμενος» (p. κζ'), «τὴν περὶ τὸ τεχνουργεῖν ἡρωϊκοὺς ἑξαμέτρους ἀξιοθαύμαστον εὐχέρειαν» (p. κζ'), «σπανίαν δεξιότητα περὶ τὴν κατασκευὴν ἑξαμέτρων ἐπῶν» (p. κη'). Also cf. Kasdaglis's comments for Ioannou: «κράτιστος δὲ τῆς ἀρχαίας μετρικῆς» (p. κστ'), «τὴν περὶ τὰ ἀρχαία μέτρα θαυμαστήν αὐτοῦ εὐχέρειαν» (p. κζ').

⁵³ Kasdaglis 1908, κη': «τὸ ἄσκοπον τῆς εἰς ἡρωϊκὰ Ὀμηρικὰ μέτρα μεθερμηνείας».

to preserve the liveliness of the original Latin text, in general the ‘sacred fire’ of poetic inspiration.⁵⁴ What is more, their awkward idiom combined with extreme archaism ultimately make them even more incomprehensible than the Homeric epics themselves.⁵⁵ On such grounds, both translations are rejected for not having any benefit for their readers.⁵⁶ Their communicative purpose is annulled and they constitute merely an: «ἀνωφελὲς ὄλωσ τοῖς φιλολογοῦσιν ἔδρασμα πρὸς γεῦσιν,⁵⁷ (...) ὅπερ κονιορτοῦ ἴσως καταπλέων ἀπόκειται νῦν ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις». ⁵⁸ Closer to Kasdaglis’ taste stands Planudes for his choice to use a language which is neither ancient nor vernacular. Planudes offers a tasteful translation whose only shortcoming is the fact that it has been composed in what Kasdaglis calls «τὸν παρηκμακότα Ἑλληνα πεζὸν λόγον τῆς ιδ. ἑκατονταετηρίδος».⁵⁹

Thereianos, whose criticism Kasdaglis employs, is mentioned in the text as the biographer of Koraes. Such emphasis is not fortuitous. I contend that Kasdaglis through this ingenious substitution of Thereianos’ critique for his own critique manages to implicitly associate himself with Koraes, who, like himself, was also an adamant advocate of the classical past so far as it would be beneficiary for his readers. Their common interest in the benefit of the reader and the potential usefulness of the past for the present further strengthen the link between Kasdaglis and Koraes. In this light, Kasdaglis’ choice of the katharevousa could be explained as a direct influence of Koraes, who after all was the theoretical advocate of linguistic purism.

Kasdaglis proves to be quite modern also in his views on the accuracy of the translation. His main concern is to give a text which can (and should) be read on its own. Hence, he is willing to make all necessary modifications in order to adapt the meaning of the original Latin text to suit the needs of the language of the translation.⁶⁰ Aware of the concise character of Latin he does not hesitate even to add lines to the text of his translation so as to

⁵⁴ Kasdaglis 1908, κθ’: «ἡ σύντομος περὶ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν προσοχὴ πρὸς μόνην τὴν τοῦ κειμένου κατανόησιν συγκεντρωμένη, μικρᾶν ἢ οὐδεμίαν ποιεῖ αἰσθησιν τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐκείνου πυρός, ὅπερ ἐν τῇ ποιήσει, οὐ μόνον ὡς πρῶτον αἴτιον τὴν ζωὴν ἐμφυσᾷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς αἰτιατὸν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δημιουργικῇ αὐτοῦ ιδιότητι ἐκτοξευόμενον πλήττει τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ τὸν πρὸς τὰ ἔπη ἐνθουσιασμὸν ἐμποιεῖ τῷ ἀναγιγνώσκοντι».

⁵⁵ Kasdaglis 1908, κη’-κθ’: «καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν Ὀμηρικῶν ἐπῶν πολλαχοῦ δυσχερέστερα καὶ δυσνοητότερα τυγχάνουσι».

⁵⁶ Kasdaglis 1908, κθ’: «Οὕτω τὰ εἰς ἀρχαῖον ἰδίωμα μεθερμηνευμένα ἔπη τυγχάνουσι μὲν *θαυμαστά φιλολογικὰ* μνημεῖα, ἀλλ’ ἢ ἐξ αὐτῶν ὠφέλεια ἐλαχίστη ἐλέγχεται, παραβαλλομένη πρὸς τοὺς γιγαντιαίους πόνους, οὓς ἢ τοιαύτη μεθερμηνεῖα συνεπάγεται». Also cf. Kasdaglis 1908, κη’: «κρίμα δὲ μόνον ὅτι ἡ δεξιότης αὕτη κατηναλώθη ἀφόρως εἰς ἔργον, ἐξ οὗ οὔτε τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ οὔτε τὰ Λατινικὰ ἐμεγαλύνθησαν γράμματα».

⁵⁷ Kasdaglis 1908, κζ’.

⁵⁸ Kasdaglis 1908, κη’.

⁵⁹ Kasdaglis 1908, κθ’.

⁶⁰ Kasdaglis 1908, λ’: «ἐποιήσαμεν τὴν τῶν Μεταμορφώσεων μετάφρασιν, ποῦ μὲν πιστὴν, ἔνθα ἢ πιστὴ ἀποδόσις ἐναρμονίως πρὸς τὰ ἡμέτερα ἔπη διέκειτο, ποῦ δ’ ἐλευθέραν, ἔνθα ἢ τῆς ἀποδόσεως δύναμις ἀνεπαρκῆς τυγχάνουσα ὡς δεομένη ἀναπτύξεως καὶ ποιητικῆς διακοσμῆσεως».

facilitate the readers' comprehension. As he himself remarks, the 11.993 hexameters of the Latin original become 18.861 fifteen syllables in the modern Greek translation.⁶¹ In Ovid's account of the death of Achilles (Ov. *Met.* 12.976-985), for example, Kasdaglis adds a line to praise Homer!⁶² His comment is symptomatic of his views: «Ἄλλ' ὑπὸ καλλιτεχνικὴν ἔποψιν, πάσης ἐμμέτρου μεταφράσεως αἶ τε ἀρεταὶ καὶ κακίαι καταφαίνονται οὐχὶ ἐκ τῆς παραβολῆς τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τῶν στίχων, ἀλλὰ κυρίως ἐκ τῆς ἐντυπώσεως, ἣν ἐμποιεῖ τῶ ἀναγιγνώσκοντι ἢ τοῦ μεθρημνηνευμένου κειμένου ἀνάγνωσις». In addition, Kasdaglis proves to be extremely confident about the modern Greek language. In the *Epilegomena*, he proudly celebrates the superiority of the Greek language compared with the other European languages, which in his view fall short in transferring the poetic ingenuity of Ovid.⁶³

Another very important aspect of Kasdaglis' translation theory is the independence and uniqueness of the translation. Every translation is a finished product which should stand on its own right irrespectively to its original. The original belongs to Ovid, but the translation belongs to the translator. Kasdaglis' belief in the independence of the translation is intertwined with his belief in the beneficial role of the translation, as we have seen it above. The translator in order to be successful should go round the danger of producing a text so closely depended on the original that it would be inaccessible to the modern reader. In his own words: «Τὰ τοῦ Ὀβιδίου ἔπη ἐκείνου ἀναφαίρετα κτήματα τυγχάνουσιν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον κείμενον, ἀεὶ μὲν τοῦ Ὀβιδίου ἔπος κατὰ τὴν πλοκὴν καὶ τὴν οἰκονομίαν ἀθάνατον παραμένει τοῦ Ἀύγουσταίου ποιητοῦ κατόρθωμα, ἀλλ' ὅμως κατὰ ταύτη τὴν ἀπόδοσιν καὶ τὴν περὶ τὰ ἔπη καὶ τὰ μέτρα κατασκευὴν, ἡμέτερον πάντως ἐμμέτρου μεθρημνηείας δοκίμιον τοῖς περὶ τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ Γράμματα ἀσχολουμένοις προσφέρομεν».⁶⁴ To the independence of the translation Kasdaglis also adds the uniqueness of each translation. Every translation is unique, because the phrasing and metrics are unique to each translator. If this was not the case, then there would be no need for new translations; one (and only) translation would be enough.⁶⁵

In his *Prolegomena* Kasdaglis also answers back to the criticism he received, when he revealed his decision to translate Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.⁶⁶ First, he argues for the rarity of

⁶¹ Kasdaglis 1908, λβ'.

⁶² Kasdaglis 1908, 557.

⁶³ Kasdaglis 1908, 555: «Ἄλλ' αἶ μὲν Εὐρωπαϊκαὶ γλῶσσαι πτωχαὶ τυγχάνουσαι ἀσθενῆ ὄπλα τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις παρέχουσι ... ἢ γλῶσσα ἢ Ἑλληνικὴ κέκτηται τὴν μαγικὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐξαιρεῖν καὶ μεγαλοποιεῖν πᾶν τὸ ὑπ' αὐτῆς υἰοθετούμενον».

⁶⁴ Kasdaglis 1908, λβ'.

⁶⁵ Kasdaglis 1908, λα': «ἂν δὲ ἐξ ἐκάστης μεταφράσεως ἔλειπεν ἢ σφραγίς τοῦ μεταφράσαντος, μία καὶ μόνη μετάφρασις ἐκάστου ἀριστουργήματος θὰ ἐπὶρκει».

⁶⁶ Kasdaglis 1908, λ'.

the only edition of the Planudean translation (published at Paris in 1822 by Jean François Boissonade de Fontarabie) which took him, as we saw above, a good five years to get hold of. In his defense he even cites from this correspondence with important scholarly and literary figures of his time, like Alexandros Rizos Ragkavis, who was based in Berlin at the time, and the Professor at the University of Athens Theagenis Livadas. Both of them sound enthusiastic about the project and prompt him to pursue his endeavour at any rate. Indeed, Ragkavis considers the proliferation of projects like this one at hand «ἐθνικόν κέρδος».⁶⁷

A final comment concerns Kasdaglis' reference to the particular purpose of his translation. As he notes in the closing of his *Epilegomena* the purpose of his work is twofold: «κύριον σκοπὸν ἔσχομεν οὐ μόνον τὴν ἐν ἔπεσι καλλιιεργίαν τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἑλληνίδος φωνῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως τοῦ ἔπους ἀναφυομένην περὶ τὰ καλὰ ἔφεσιν».⁶⁸ Firstly, we have the exploration of the expressive capacity of the katharevousa in verse; secondly, we have the reader's benefit, with special emphasis on morality. The usefulness of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* can be multiple, Kasdaglis contends. For artists and writers, the work is a goldmine of stories and themes. He informs us that he has already drawn from Ovid's work the subject of two of his tragedies (*Προκρίς*, *Πανδιονίδες*).⁶⁹ Moreover, the *Metamorphoses* stand out for their narratological virtues. Finally, the work can also be of value to those interested in Greek literature, since Ovid's use of Greek sources has been extensive.

At the turn of the twentieth century Kasdaglis comes along the line of a series of Greek translators showing great interest in Ovid and his work. During that time the dispute between the demoticists and the purists remained still unsettled. It was only few years ago that the turmoil caused by this dispute cost human lives.⁷⁰ Based in Alexandria, far from Athens and the frenzy fanatics of both sides, exposed to the newest critical trends in Europe Kasdaglis offers a very important translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which deserves a far better place in the history of Ovidian reception in Greece. It is my contention that the purpose of his titillating amalgam of katharevousa with the fifteen-syllables is twofold. On the one hand, this is Kasdaglis' own take on the modernization of the Ovidian text for Greek readers. On the other hand, the combination of the archaic katharevousa with the fifteen-syllables, the metre of the Greek folk songs, seems to be a compromise between the two linguistic strands of the demotic and the katharevousa. Perhaps it is not haphazard that around the beginning of

⁶⁷ Kasdaglis 1908, λ'.

⁶⁸ Kasdaglis 1908, 561.

⁶⁹ Kasdaglis 1908, 562.

⁷⁰ I am referring to the so-called «Ευαγγελικά» (8 November 1901) and the «Ορεστιακά» (6-9 November 1903).

the twentieth century the democisists turned to Greek folk songs for the true, unpretentious and unspoiled expression of the Greek people.⁷¹ In this light, the translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Kasdaglis becomes a bold poetic experiment which aims primarily at overcoming the on-going ideological and aesthetic disputes about language of the time.

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⁷¹ The demoticists saw in the Greek folk songs the spontaneous and genuine expression of the Greek people. For their use of folk songs as a weapon in their struggle with the established archaism see Tziouvas 1986, 228-245.