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THE LOCALIZATION OF ORTHODOX SPIRITUAL SONGS: FINNISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE LYRICS

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There is one simple spiritual song in Finnish that recounts a child's prayer for the family: "O Lord, help and have mercy for my parents, brothers and sisters, and the people close to me."¹ It has the same melody as another, Russian, song, which instead depicts the events of the Resurrection of Christ, starting with "Христос воскрес из мертвых, смертию смерть поправ" ("Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death").² The correspondence of the melodies can be explained by the fact that the Russian song has been used as a source for the Finnish song, but the lyrics have been changed from the Resurrection theme to a prayer for the family. In another example, an Estonian Christmas song describes the Nativity with the Theotokos, the angels, the shepherds, the ass and the ox, repeating at the end of each stanza: "Rejoice, O blessed Mary who gave birth to the Saviour of this world."³ In its Finnish version, the lyrics continue to focus on the birth of Christ, yet the chorus related to Theotokos has been omitted.⁴ Why is this so?

BACKGROUND

After the Russian Revolution and Finland's independence in 1917, the local Orthodox Church lost its connection to its Mother Church in Russia. The

1 *Vaeltajan lauluja, kokoelma yksiäänisiä hengellisiä lauluja*, toim. Erkki Piironen (Kuopio, 1951). Song number 35, "Herra, auta, armahda".

2 *Слово Жизни, В духовных стихах избранных и положенных на ноты для простаго Народа* (Санкт-Петербург, 1912), 57-60. The songs in this collection are not enumerated, so the reference is to page numbers.

3 *Waimulikud laulud, psalmid ehk waimulikud kantad, wiisidega. Koolis ja kodu*. Kokku korjanud ja wene keele järede kirjutanud Andrei Ramul (Tallinn, 1896), 67-68. Song number 39, "Kuldne telt".

4 *Vaeltajan lauluja*, 41. Song number 49, "Sinun syntymästä, Kristus Jumala".

status of the Orthodox Church in Finland was confirmed by the Finnish government in 1918, and in the following years, Orthodoxy faced pressure from Finnish society to look and sound “more Finnish.” Nationalist tendencies and anti-Russian mentality had already emerged in Finland in the nineteenth century as a part of broader European national movements. The Russian-associated, though ethnically varied Orthodox population faced prejudice and pressure that was channelled through nationalist ideas and the general atmosphere of the young Finnish state.⁵ In essence, the effort to make the Orthodox Church look Finnish meant that Orthodoxy should not appear as Russian.⁶ According to Miika Tervonen, the idea of a monocultural Finland was a political project strengthened by demographic and institutional changes.⁷

In the 1920s, “Finnish” expression began to be vigorously sought after in the fields of language, concepts, liturgical practices and church music, as well as in the case of ecclesiastical symbols.⁸ According to Pekka Metso and Jenni Hakkarainen, the pressure to adjust the Church to resemble Lutheranism was not exaggerated. This can be seen in the speeches presented at the fraternal assemblies of clergy. In the southeastern parts of the country, Karelia, where the Orthodox presence was especially strong, education, healthcare, and economics were less advanced than in the rest of the country. With regard to religion, knowledge of the fundamentals of faith was often poor among the Orthodox, and they were, according to Orthodox clergy, vulnerable to “sectarian preachers.”

In this context, the Finnish Orthodox Church developed the genre of spiritual songs especially in the 1920s and 1930s. The first songs were distributed as attachments between the pages of the church periodical *Aamun Koitto*.⁹ Maria Takala-Roszczenko estimates that, as a magazine of the official missionary organization of the Church, the Brotherhood of SS Sergius and Herman of Valaam, *Aamun Koitto* most likely communicated views that were also accepted by the official representatives of the Church.¹⁰ As substitutes for Lutheran hymns, commonly sung at Orthodox events, the Orthodox spiritual songs came to be very useful. Also members of the clergy supported singing them.¹¹

5 Pekka Metso and Jenni Hakkarainen, “New Hymns for Ancient Tradition: National, Pedagogical and Apologetic Motivations of the First Finnish Orthodox Spiritual Songbook (1939),” *Acta Musicologica* 92, no. 2 (2020):5.

6 Katariina Husso, *Ikkunoita ikonien ja kirkkoesineiden historiaan; Suomen autonomisen ortodoksisen kirkon esineellinen kulttuuriperintö 1920-1980-luvuilla* (Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys, 2011), 32–35.

7 Miika Tervonen, “Historiankirjoitus ja myytti yhden kulttuurin Suomesta,” in *Kotiseutu ja kansakunta. Miten suomalaista historiaa on rakennettu*. Historiallinen arkisto 142. Eds. Pirjo Markkola, Hanna Snellman & Ann-Catrin Östman. (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2014), 140.

8 Pekka Metso, “Omasanainen ortodoksihenkinen rukouskirja”: Kreikkalaiskatolisen koulun hartauskirjan (1938) synty ja sisältö,” in *Filosofina historiassa: Juhlakirja professori Matti Kotirannan täyttäessä 60 vuotta 9.11.2018*, toim. Teuvo Teuvo Laitila and Ilkka Huhta. *Studia Missiologica et occumenia Fennica*. (Tampere, 2018), 187.

9 E.g., *Aamun Koitto* 13-14/1928, the Christmas number of 1930 and the Easter number of 1934.

10 Maria Takala-Roszczenko, “Nationalization of the Orthodox Liturgy in the Orthodox Church of Finland,” *Review of Ecumenical Studies* 9, no. 2 (2017): 155.

11 Metso and Hakkarainen, “New hymns,” 5.

In 1939, a collection of 200 liturgical songs and 41 spiritual songs called *Kreikkalauskatolinen hengellinen laulukirja* ("The Greek Catholic [meaning the Orthodox] Spiritual Songbook") was published.¹² In 1941, Archbishop Herman published a collection of 27 songs called *Hengellisiä lauluja* ("Spiritual Songs").¹³ Further in 1944, Hieromonk Paul published *Ortodoksinen laulukirja* ("Orthodox Chant Book"), which also included 16 spiritual songs.¹⁴ All of the songs from these earlier collections were later included in the *Vaeltajan lauluja* ("The Pilgrim's Songs") collection and complemented with new songs created in the 1940s. This book, containing one hundred songs, was published for the first time in 1951, and it has appeared in four later editions¹⁵ since then.

In the late twentieth century, the *Vaeltajan lauluja* collection of spiritual songs received criticism that stemmed from the question of whether the songs represented Orthodoxy well enough. The melodies of the songs have been evaluated as sounding quite Lutheran. Most criticism has been aimed at the lyrics of the songs. The lyrics of these spiritual – paraliturgical – songs were freely composed or translated from existing sources by a wide variety of people. This criticism provides even more reason to explore the process of modification that was involved in the making of Finnish spiritual songs.

THE AIM, THE CONCEPT AND EARLIER RESEARCH

The aim of this paper is to clarify the following questions: How were these songs written or adapted into Finnish? What kind of changes took place in the process of localization? What can be seen behind these changes? What kind of criteria seem to have guided the compilers of the songs?

For exploring localization, I use the definition by Monique M. Ingalls, Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg, and Zoe C. Sherinian who suggest musical localization as "the process whereby Christian communities take a variety of musical practices – some considered 'indigenous,' some 'foreign,' some shared across spatial and cultural divides; some linked to past practice, some innovative – and make them locally meaningful and useful in the construction of Christian beliefs, theology, practice and identity."¹⁶ The localization of spiritual songs in Finnish Orthodox practice can be viewed as an example of such process.

How has this research topic been approached in the past? Katariina Husso has analysed the problematic concept of "Finnish Orthodox identity" in her dissertation *Ikkunoita ikonien ja kirkkoesineiden tutkimiseen* concerning Finnish Orthodox material heritage in the 1920s-1980s.¹⁷ Maria Takala-Roszczenko has explored the nationalization of Orthodox Church in

12 *Kreikkalauskatolinen hengellinen laulukirja* (Kuopio: STK, 1939). Other editions of this song book were published in 1941 and 1943. See also Metso and Hakkarainen, "New Hymns," 3.

13 *Hengellisiä lauluja, Kokoelma "Aamun Koiton" liitteinä vuosina 1928-1932 julkaistuja lauluja* (Jyväskylä: PSHV, 1941).

14 *Ortodoksinen laulukirja*. toim. pappismunkki Paavali Paavali (Helsinki: Ortodoksinen Veljestö, 1944).

15 *Vaeltajan lauluja*. Other editions were published in 1955, 1959, 1977, and 1995.

16 Monique M. Ingalls, Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg & Zoe C. Sherinian, *Making Congregational Music Local in Christian Communities Worldwide* (Abingdon – New York: Routledge, 2018), 3.

17 Husso, *Ikkunoita ikonien ja kirkkoesineiden historiaan*.

Finland, its reflections and effects on Orthodox liturgical culture, especially the discourse promoting the nationalization of the Church.¹⁸ This literature sheds light on the atmosphere and discussion that were prevalent during the first half of the twentieth century in the Finnish Orthodox Church. The context also provides explanations for the changes made in the process of localizing spiritual songs in Finnish practice. Pekka Metso has studied the publication called *Kreikkalaiskatolinen koulun hartauskirja* ("Greek Catholic Devotional Book for Schools") that mainly contained freely composed poetic prayers by various authors. He sees the book of "prayers in one's own words" as a product of the time in which "new expressions" were welcomed in the atmosphere of Finnicization.¹⁹ The processes behind the Orthodox spiritual songs have been explored by Metso together with the present author in the article "New songs for an ancient tradition: National, pedagogical, and apologetic motivations of the first Finnish Orthodox Spiritual Songbook (1939)."²⁰ However, the lyrics of the songs have not, until now, been the focus of research.

ACTIVE MODIFICATION OF THE ORIGINAL SONGS INTO FINNISH

Most of the spiritual songs before the *Vaeltajan lauluja* collection did not have a Finnish origin. Instead, they were adopted and translated from other collections, such as the Russian *Slovo Zhizni* (1912), and the Estonian *Waimulikud laulud* (1896), arranged by Andrei Ramul. The adaptation from foreign collections into Finnish involved both melodies and lyrics. Here, I will focus on songs from the aforementioned Russian and Estonian collections. The relationship between the two collections has not yet been explored. It may be that both derive at least part of their repertory from a Russian collection called *Lepta*.²¹ The index of the Finnish *Vaeltajan lauluja* collection mentions the origin of seventeen song melodies and one text as being from the Russian collection *Slovo Zhizni*, and ten song melodies as being from the Estonian collection by Ramul. After comparing the melodies, I was able to verify that there are actually eleven melodies borrowed from the Russian collection, and ten melodies from the Estonian collection.

Yet, when it comes to the themes of the song texts, my analysis revealed many fewer similarities. Only a few songs in *Vaeltajan lauluja* were copied and translated from the original texts without prominent changes: seven songs from the Estonian collection *Waimulikud laulud* and two songs from the Russian collection *Slovo Zhizni*. So what happened when these songs were translated into Finnish? It turns out that in many cases the original content was significantly modified. From the point of view of localization, the way in which the modification were done is most revealing.

18 Maria Takala-Roszczenko, "The Nationalization of Liturgy in the Orthodox Church of Finland in the 1920s-30s," *Review of Ecumenical Studies* 9, no. 2 (2017): 154-172. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/ress-2017-0012>.

19 Metso, "Omasanainen ortodoksienkin rukouskirja."

20 Metso and Hakkarainen, "New hymns."

21 Хоровыя духоўна-нравственныя песнопення заімаваныя з «Лепта» і «Вторая Лепта», изданныхъ Алтайской миссией. Издания второе. (Москва, 1899.)

Table 1 shows the comparison between the original Russian or Estonian song themes with the Finnish ones, pointing out where the lyrics have been modified or changed altogether.²²

TABLE 1: CHANGED SONG THEMES

The song (its theme), original source and song / page number AR= Adrei Ramul's <i>Waimulikud laulud</i> , SZh= Слово жизни	The song in <i>Vaeltajan lauluja</i> (its theme) and song number	Content of modification
1. <i>Sion makab, kurjus winub</i> (The story of the Resurrection) AR 8	<i>Tornistansa iltakellot</i> (The bells of Christmas) 47 (& the applied song 48)	Theme changed: Resurrection → Christmas
2. <i>Kuldne telt</i> (Christmas, with praise of the Theotokos) AR 39	<i>Sinun syntymästäs</i> (Christmas) 49	Reference to Theotokos removed
3. <i>Rõõmusta end täna</i> (Request for the intercession of Theotokos) AR 4	<i>Kristus syntyi, kiittäkää</i> (Christmas) 52	Theme changed: Theotokos → Christmas
4. <i>Оружие христианина</i> (The Christian's weapon, the Cross) SZh p. 34	<i>Jeesus, Sulle kaivatulle</i> (Sin and grace) 2	New content
5. <i>Райская птичка</i> (The story of a young hermit) SZh p. 84	<i>Murhe raskas peitä</i> (anxiety, consolation from God) 14	Theme changed: hermit → anxiety and consolation
6. <i>Снит Сион</i> (The story of the Resurrection) SZh p. 55	<i>Kuulen kirkonkellon kumun</i> (Peace in the afterlife) 30	Theme changed: Resurrection → peace in the afterlife (no reference to the Resurrection)
7. <i>Христос Воскрес</i> (Resurrection), SZh p. 57 and with the same melody: <i>Похвала Богородице</i> (Praise of the Theotokos), SZh p. 66	<i>Herra, auta, armahda</i> 35 (A child's intercession for the family)	Theme changed: Resurrection → family, or: Theotokos → family

22 The translations from Finnish to English are by the author. Originally, the translations into Finnish have been made by Maria Takala-Roszczenko (from Russian) and Fr Madis Palli (from Estonian).

8. <i>Желание христианина</i> SZh p. 11 (Sin, grace)	<i>Sinun armosti turvissa</i> 39 (God's grace)	Some new content
9. <i>Пред иконой родительским благословением</i> SZh p. 68 (Saint Nicholas)	<i>Maa lepää rauhaan vaipuneena</i> 50 (Christmas)	Theme changed: Saint Nicholas → Christmas
10. <i>Воскресный день</i> SZh p. 62 (Resurrection)	<i>On taivas pilven peitossa</i> 61 (Storm and distress)	Theme changed: Resur- rection → storm and distress
11. <i>Молитвенное чувство христианина</i> SZh p. 23 (Request for grace)	<i>Torninsa kirkkomme kunnahalla</i> 72 (Eternal truth)	Theme changed: Request for grace → eternal truth
12. <i>Песнь Трезвенников</i> SZh p. 94 (The fight for sobriety)	<i>Pyhä kirkkomme</i> 77 (The Holy (Orthodox) Church)	Theme changed: the fight for sobriety → the Holy Church
13. <i>Давно пора тебе трудиться</i> SZh p. 29 (Awakening of the soul)	<i>Valamo, saari ihmehinen</i> 87 (The history of Valaam mo- nastery)	Theme changed: awake- ning of the soul → the history of Valaam mo- nastery

As we can see, a few songs with the theme of the Resurrection, both from the Estonian and the Russian collection, were given a new theme in the Finnish adaptation (Table 1, numbers 1, 7 and 10). The Christmas theme could replace the content involving the Theotokos (number 3), or the references to the Theotokos could be removed entirely (number 2). The melody for the Finnish adaptation of song number 7, now relating the child's prayer, may have been taken either from a song dedicated to the Resurrection, or to the Theotokos. One song dedicated to Saint Nicholas was transformed into a Christmas-themed song (number 9).

In song number 12 (Table 1), originally a Russian song promoting sobriety, the theme has been changed to a depiction of the Holy (Orthodox) Church. This can be considered a very innovative choice from Hieromonk Paul (later Archbishop Paul of Finland, 1914–1988), who was its author.

The song number 13 (Table 1), a Finnish song praising the monastery of Valaam, "Valamo, saari ihmehinen," has a completely different theme in the Russian collection *Слово жизни*. In the latter, the song focuses on the awakening of the soul. *Vaeltajan lauluja* has retained the melody used in *Слово жизни* while adapting lyrics into Finnish from another source and noting *Слово жизни* as its reference. The Russian original version of the song

on Valaam exists elsewhere – “О дивный остров Валаам” (“O wondrous island of Valaam”), with the lyrics compiled by Monk Peter. Yet this song is not included in *Слово жизни*.

In particular, the song theme changes from the Theotokos or Saint Nicholas to some other theme, such as Christmas, raise the question as to whether mentioning the Theotokos or other saints was considered “too Orthodox” at the time of Finnicization.

Maria Takala-Roszczenko’s article reveals critical argumentation regarding the Theotokos and the saints in a discussion about Orthodox worship life in the magazine *Aamun Koitto* in 1918. The contributing writer criticized the “ceremonialism” of the Orthodox Church:

If there will be only an endless amount of those Old Testament ceremonies, a great number of mechanically read and many times repeated prayer-readings, gospels and epistles made unclear by the half-chanting manner of reading, *unbiblical doctrines on saints, the Virgin Mary*, etc., and if it believes and makes others believe in the prayers for the living as well as for the dead, conducted there for money, then this Church is no longer up to date, and as such it has no future in this Finland that is now being built here on the principles of freedom.²³

The writer seemed to perceive all such action as “spiritually empty.” As Takala-Roszczenko’s analysis shows, the argumentation relies on numerous references to the Bible (particularly the New Testament) as the sole authority in the Church, as opposed to Tradition. The cult of the saints, and of the Virgin Mary, are suspicious because they appear as “unbiblical” – it should be Jesus Christ alone on whom the Church bases its existence. Ceremonies and rituals are regarded as remnants of the Old Testament, also judged as obsolete at the dawn of the brave new national order.²⁴ Although no such arguments were presented when the *Vaeltajan lauluja* collection was compiled, being much later, towards the 1950s, it might be suggested that the changes made to the song texts reflected a similar kind of tendency as was articulated by the critical writer in *Aamun Koitto* in 1918.

The changes in themes are analogous to what the Finnish spiritual songs have been criticized for: *they depart from the themes that are traditionally emphasized in Orthodoxy*. For example, the removal of references to the Resurrection must be seen as indicative of a conscious change of emphasis. The thematic section named “The Cross and Easter” is limited, containing only seven songs. These mainly feature the events of Good Friday, the Passion of Christ, and Golgotha. Resurrection is mentioned in the concluding stanza of four songs.²⁵ Compared to the liturgical context, in which the Easter troparion, for example, is repeated over and over again, these songs represent a very different picture of Orthodox Easter.

23 A.N. O:v, “Onko kreik.-katol. kirkolla Suomessa olemassa mitään tulevaisuutta?” *Aamun Koitto* 14 (1918), 113; Takala-Roszczenko, “The Nationalization,” 158 (emphasis mine).

24 Maria Takala-Roszczenko, “The Nationalization,” 158.

25 *Vaeltajan lauluja*, 46–50.

On the other hand, it could be suggested that by emphasizing the feast of Christmas, and placing a reduced emphasis on the role of the Theotokos, or the saints, the translators or lyricists of these songs intentionally turned away from the characteristic features of the Orthodox faith and embraced Western Christian themes – especially as they created these songs during the time when the Finnish Orthodox Church was expected to look as “Finnish” as possible, while the idea of Finnishness was very much based on the Lutheran church culture. Christmas, for example, has a major role among church feasts in the Finnish Lutheran tradition.

Spiritual songs could be adapted to reflect the local context, because, unlike liturgical chants, they were not controlled by the idea of canonicity. There were attempts to modify the liturgical chant texts, too, during this period. In the early 1920s, Iivo Härkönen, a Karelian novelist, introduced the idea of rewriting the liturgical hymns into “more singable” songs with end-rhymes, not understanding that certain traditions, such as the highly conservative hymnographical legacy of Eastern Christianity, could not be changed as one wished.²⁶ Among the spiritual songs, in the section of “The Cross and Easter”, there are two songs by Iivo Härkönen – one written by him, another translated from Estonian. Neither of the songs mentions the Resurrection, only the Cross.²⁷

THE SONGS ADOPTED WITHOUT CHANGES

Besides the songs whose themes seem to have been modified the better to suit the local context, there are also songs that have preserved the original song lyrics in the translation. In the following table, I have listed the songs that have been adapted from the Estonian or Russian origin without changing the theme.

TABLE 2: MAINTAINED SONG THEMES

The original song and the song / page number AR= Adrei Ramul's <i>Waimulikud laulud</i> , SZh= Слово жизни	The song in <i>Vaeltajan lauluja</i> and the song number	Theme
1. <i>Коль славен наш Господь в Сионе</i> AR 38	<i>Ken kielin voisi kuvaella</i> 1	Praising the Lord and His glory
2. <i>О, вечный знак (Крест)</i> SZh p. 27	<i>Kuin merkki taivaan voiman rauhan</i> 60	The power and the importance of the Holy Cross for Christians

26 Maria Takala-Roszczenko, “Kirjailija Iivo Härkönen ja unelma ortodoksisesta virsilaulusta,” *Sananjalka* 63 (2022): 234–263. <https://doi.org/10.30673/sja.103094>.

27 *Vaeltajan lauluja* 48–49, songs nos 60 and 61.

3. <i>Родная Церковь</i> SZh p. 76	<i>Oi Isäin Kirkko, pyhä Äiti</i> 78	The Church, its importance and power for Christians
4. <i>Kui armas on So hooneb mull'</i> AR 29	<i>Oi Herra, huonees kauneus</i> 24	The beauty of the Lord's room (temple); people's longing for God. The good part of those who live in the Lord's temple.
5. <i>Kus see kaunis lill on jäenud</i> AR 22	<i>Minne kukka kaunis joutui</i> 65	Depicting the end of temporal life with allegories
6. <i>So kotta tahan astuda</i> AR 28	<i>Sun huoneeseesi, Jumala</i> 75	God's guidance, avoiding cravings and temptations
7. <i>Helde, Ema Neitsi</i> AR 35	<i>Puhtain Neitsyt</i> 96	Prayer to the Theotokos
8. <i>Ma õnnetu ja patu ori</i> AR 18	<i>Ma onneton ja synnin orja</i> 9	Human shortcoming, sin and temptations, the dirt of the heart, the request of becoming cleansed by God; the importance of the Holy Communion ("The table of Grace")
9. <i>Aeg kätte tulnud tõusta unest</i> AR 16	<i>Nyt synninunestasi nouse</i> 11	The awakening of the soul from the sleep of sin (containing some drastic examples)

The first song in the table, the famous "Kol slaven" ("How great is the Lord in Sion") by Dmitry Bortnyansky, is marked as having been adopted from Andrei Ramul's collection, although its Finnish translation had been published already in 1909²⁸. The translator was one of the key figures in the translation of Orthodox liturgical texts into Finnish, Fr Sergei Okulov (1853–1940).

The second and the third song in Table 2 are also of Russian origin, adopted from *Слово жизни*. They stress the importance of the Holy Cross and of Holy Church. The song "О, вечный знак (Крест)," in Finnish, "Kuin merkki taivaan voiman rauhan," depicts human sorrow (in the first and second stanza) and states that the Cross provides safety, a protective wall and a shield against lusts, "suppressing life's pain".²⁹

28 *Kirkkoveisuja rukousetkissä ja avioliiton vihkimisessä*. Pyh. Sergein ja Hermanin Veljeskunnan toimituksia LXXXIV. Jyväskylä, 1909, back cover. The Finnish translation consists of two first stanzas, whereas the Russian original comprises four stanzas.

29 *Vaeltajan lauluja*, 48–49. V. Verlok is mentioned as the author of the song. The Finnish translator is "I. H.," i.e., Iivo Härkönen.

EXAMPLE 1

Song 60	English translation
1. Kuin merkki taivaan voiman, rauhan On pyhä risti kuoloton Kuin viitta elon uuden lauhan Se hautakummun päällä on	1. A sign of heaven's power, peace, Is the holy Cross immortal It is like a cloak of new, tranquil life Covering the burial mound.
2. Soi kelle mielen vihaa täyden, Sen heille pilkaks, nurjaks teet, Mut minä elon myrskyn käyden Sun luokses ohjaan askelet.	2. Who has been given a mind full of hatred You make it their mockery, their misery, But I, passing the storms of life Guide my steps towards You.
3. Kuin kilpeä sua, risti kannan, Sä elon tuskan vaimennus; Sä kirkastaja taivaanrannan, Sydämen, sielun virvoitus.	Like a shield I carry You, O Cross, You who suppress life's pain; Brighten the horizon, Revive the heart and the soul.
4. Sä anteeksannon, armon kuva, Sua kiittää sydän värjyvä, Sun lunastukseen alistuva Oon elon viime hetkellä.	4. You are an image of forgiveness, mercy, To You gives thanks the trembling heart, Surrendering to Your redemption I will be at the last moment of my life.
5. Oi rauhantuojia, eloon uuteen Kun siirryn illan ruskossa, Suo nukahtaa mun ikuisuuteen Sun pyhän ristin juurella.	5. O bringer of peace, to the new life When I move in the dying of the day, Let me fall asleep in eternity At the foot of Your Holy Cross.

The fourth song in the table, of Estonian origin, "Kui armas on So hooneb mull' ("Oi Herra, huonees kauneus"), paraphrases verses from psalm 84. The Finnish poet Aari Surakka (1909–1990) translated this song from Estonian to Finnish.³⁰ The psalm describes: "Certainly spending just one day in your temple court is better than spending a thousand elsewhere. I would rather stand at the entrance to the temple of my God than live in the tents of the wicked."³¹ The spiritual song (in both languages) adds to the psalm text the mention of the guilty pleasure: "I would not trade for a thousand days / In the craze of the world / And for a moment of sinful joy / In vain lust / The blessing which was brought / By one day in Your temple, / You, Lord of the earth and heaven."³² The reference to "the wicked" is amplified by describing the sinful joy and lust provided by the wordly world.

The fifth song in the table "Kus see kaunis lill on jäenud," in Finnish, "Minne kukka kaunis joutui," depicts the end of the temporal life (death) with linguistic images.³³ There is some sadness and longing in this song. The sixth song in the table, "So kotta tahan astuda," in Finnish, "Sun huoneeseesi, Jumala," emphasizes the importance of following God's guidance, avoiding passions and temptations.³⁴ The seventh song, "Helde Ema Neitsi" or "Puhtain Neitsyt", is a prayer for the Theotokos. This time

30 The Finnish version consists of five stanzas instead of the original four in Ramul's collection.

31 Psalm 84:10, New English Translation, www.biblegateway.com.

32 *Vaeltajan lauluja*, 24. The citation is from the fourth stanza.

33 It seems that the song was literally adapted from Estonian, with five stanzas in both Estonian and Finnish versions.

34 The Finnish version has reduced the number of stanzas from six to five.

the theme of the Theotokos has been retained in the Finnish adaptation.³⁵ The Theotokos is asked to help the human in their weakness.

The *Vaeltajan lauluja* collection contains altogether one hundred spiritual songs, which may be divided roughly into three main themes: 1) the theme of sorrow (pain), 2) the theme of longing for grace and becoming nearer to God, with God's help, and 3) the awakening of the soul from the sin. The third subject may also be extended to cover repentance and awareness of sin or temptation, i.e., vigilance of the soul. There are 33 songs that fall under the first theme, 27 songs under the second and 39 songs under the third theme.

The songs number 8–9 (Table 2) exemplify these typical themes in the collection: the theme of longing for grace and becoming nearer to God, while the third song also touches upon the awakening of the soul from sin.³⁶ The eighth song in the table, “Ma õnnetu ja patu ori” (“Ma onneton ja synnin orja”), brings out, on one hand, human sinfulness, impurity, and temptations leading to lust; on the other hand, it emphasizes the importance of Holy Communion for its healing and cleansing effect. The ninth song, “Aeg kätte tulnud tõusta unest” (“Nyt synninunestasi nouse”), emphasizes the importance of the awakening of the soul so that the human being might become clean from sins, evil, lust and temptations. The song contains some rather drastic expressions describing the fate of the human being should he or she remain passive in spiritual life.

EXAMPLE 2

Song number 9 ³⁷	English translation
1. Ma onneton ja synnin orja Nyt seison, Herra, edessäs. On sielun' saastainen ja kurja, Ja sydän täynnä himoja. Mutt' tahtonen myös minäkin Sun Armopöytäas astua.	1. Miserable and a slave of sin I now stand, O Lord, before You. My soul is filthy and wretched, And my heart full of desires. Yet I also want To enter Your Table of Mercy.
2. Sun ruumiis ja Sun veres olkoot Ain elämäni ruokana. Ma tartuin kiinni synnin verkkoon, Mutt' armos tulkoon osaksein. Se syntini pois ottakoon Ja minut luokses kutsukoon.	2. May Your Body and Your Blood Always be the food of my life. I was caught in the web of sin Yet let Your grace be my part. May it take away my sins And call me to You.
3. Ma olen kyllä pahaa tehnyt, Mutt' Jeesus mua paranna. Tee otolliseksi myös minut, Ett' kiitollisin mielin ma Sua, isieni Jumala, Ain uskaltaisin ylistää.	3. I have done bad things, Yet, Jesus, heal me. Make me worthy so that With a grateful heart You, the God of my fathers, I would always dare to praise.

35 The number of stanzas in the Finnish translation is six, while the original consists of seven stanzas.

36 The Finnish translator has drastically reduced the number of stanzas in both songs into three, while the Estonian original versions contain seven (the eighth song) and nine (the ninth song) stanzas.

37 *Vaeltajan lauluja*, 11–12.

The three stanzas of Finnish song are based on stanzas the first, second and sixth of the original song “Ma õnnetu ja patu ori” in the Estonian origin (Ramul’s collection). The original song contains a total of seven verses.³⁸

While the topics of repentance, awakening from sin, and the vigilance of the soul lie at the core of Christian life, the manner of depicting the sinful state of man in these songs is specific, emphasizing the slavery of the sin, which directs, without the repentance or conversion, to death.

EXAMPLE 3

Song no. 11	English translation
1. Nyt synninunestasi nouse ja ollos sielun’ valvova. Ah, nopein siivin aika rientää. Niin pian saapuu kuolema.	1. Now arise from your sinful sleep And be awake, O my soul! Ah, with fast wings time flies And so swiftly comes death.
2. “Nyt synninunestasi nouse”, Niin enkelisi vaikertaa. On synnin riemu turha haave, Se pian piikit kasvattaa.	2. “Now arise from your bed of sin,” Your angel is crying. The joy of sin is a vain dream, I will soon grow thorns.
3. Pois heitä luotasi jo saasta Ja kuule Isän kutsua! Nöyrille Hällä onpi armo, Hän tahtoo sua valaista.	3. Now throw away the filth And hear the Father’s call! He has mercy for the humble, He wants to enlighten you.

In the Estonian origin, “Aeg kätte tõusta unest”, the expressions are similar, even stronger.³⁹

EXAMPLE 4

Song 16 (AR) in Estonian	English translation
<i>3rd stanza (i.e. 2nd stanza in Finnish)</i> Sa makab, aga kaitsija Ingel So juures walab pisaraid; Sa uinud hooletuse süngil, Surm ootab nii kui saaki sind	You sleep, yet your Guardian Angel Sheds tears next to you; You sleep in carelessness, Death is waiting to capture you.
<i>5th stanza (i.e. 3rd stanza in Finnish)</i> Hing, jäta maha patu sõbrus, Patt, nagu madu närib sind; ning waata, kui suur valu põrgus Neid ootab, kes on pattu teind.	O soul, forsake sin as your friend It bites you like a snake; and see how great is the pain in hell for those who have sinned.

The original Estonian song has a total of nine stanzas. The other stanzas contain the same theme. The recurrence of the theme raises the question why it was so central to Orthodox spiritual songs of Estonian origin and, further, adapted to Finnish.

One possible reason could be suggested in the prominent role of Protestantism in both Estonian and Finnish societies. In their attempts to

38 *Waimulikud laulud*, 30–31.

39 *Waimulikud*, 27–28. Madis Palli has translated the lyrics from Estonian to Finnish, from which the Finnish translation has been made.

create a characteristically local Orthodox culture, the Orthodox minorities in these two countries may have sought themes and expressions typical of the dominant confession. For example, according to the Finnish researcher Eeva-Liisa Bastman, who has investigated Finnish Lutheran hymn poetry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the idea of awakening from the state of sin, as if from death, into new life and a living faith, was at the very core of the Lutheran spiritual movement called Pietism.⁴⁰ The paralysed and sense-numbing effect of sin is described as a sleeping or death-like condition, to which man falls. A person who has been sleeping in sin is unable to observe invisible, immaterial reality, because he or she is bound into material and transient reality. Sin is not only bad evil deeds, but it is also a passive failure and general indifference for God and spiritual things.⁴¹

It could be suggested that the frequent emphasis on sin and the generally gloomy tone of the Orthodox spiritual song texts reflects similar ideas that permeated Lutheran spirituality in Finnish society.

CONCLUSION

When the Estonian or Russian spiritual songs were translated and modified into the Finnish language, certain significant changes took place as the songs were intentionally transformed. The most characteristic changes involved the removal or reduction of the themes concerning the Resurrection, the Theotokos, and certain saints such as Saint Nicholas. It could be suggested that by emphasizing the feast of Christmas and giving less emphasis to the role of the Theotokos or the saints, the translators or lyricists of these songs intentionally turned away from the characteristic features of the Orthodox faith and embraced Western Christian themes – especially as they created these songs during the time when the Finnish Orthodox Church was expected to look as “Finnish” as possible, while the idea of Finnishness was very much based on the Lutheran church culture. Christmas, for example, is a feast very much emphasized in the Lutheran Church.

On the other hand, the songs that remained more or less unchanged in the adaptation process portray themes that could be seen as close to Protestant church culture, especially the spiritual awakening movement known as Pietism. More research is needed as to why the Pietistic influence would be felt in the Orthodox spiritual songs. All in all, the modified content as well as the directly adopted songs may be perceived as indications of the localization of Orthodox spiritual songs in the interwar period during which Orthodox church culture was expected to reflect “Finnish” ideals.

40 Eeva-Liisa Bastman, *Poetiikka ja pietismi 1700- ja 1800-luvun suomalaisessa virsirunoudessa* (Helsingin yliopisto, 2017), 164.

41 Bastman, *Poetiikka ja pietismi*, 169.

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