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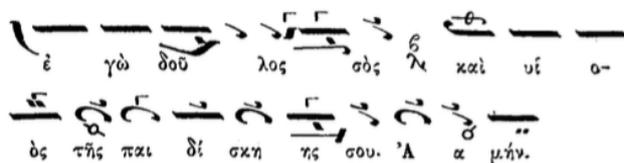
Objects and concepts of musical nationalism in 19th century Greece

The turn of the 20th century found Greece speeding towards a European future. Far from a general observation on political and economic ties between Greece and other European states (notably England, Germany, and France), the move from East- to- West had been solidified in a series of educational, cultural, and economic policies that ensured that the citizens of Greece would eventually come to regard themselves an indispensable part of the Western world, with a strong awareness of their Hellenic cultural heritage, and leaving their Balkan/Ottoman past behind. Among the many examples of this gradual move from Empire to independent Nation State, and East to West stands the case study of the spread of western European art-music (commonly referred to as ‘classical music’) to the expanding 19th century Greek state. Mainly through cultural institutions (notably the Theatre of Athens with its strong policy favouring the Italian Melodrama), a dominant ideology supporting western entertainment, and later on educational institutions like the Conservatory of Athens (inaugurated in 1873), European art-music disseminated visions and versions of Europe in a multicultural Balkan country with very intimate ties to the traditional musical reality of the East. Furthermore, the close musical ties of the traditional Byzantine chant to Eastern musical tradition, created an interesting clash between two dominant ideologies; the political conviction of a Hellenic Greece belonging with Europe, and a Greek- Orthodox Greece proud of its eastern heritage. The present paper will demonstrate the importance of these conflicting dominant ideologies in the construction of Greek-European identity during the last decades of the 19th century, through the illustration of the symbolic function of a *Collection of National Songs*, notated in Byzantine notation and published in Athens in 1880, while contextualizing it within the cultural and political environment of the turn of the century.

Keywords: Greek-European identity, 19th century, music, nationalism

In 1875, a lengthy collection of translations won a silver medal at the *Olympia* competition in Athens. Though, in theory, the word ‘transnotation’ would be more appropriate, such term does not exist in musicology. ‘Transcription’ is perhaps the closest musical term for what music teacher Antonios Sigalas was awarded the medal for. Yet, the deeper semiological significance of Sigalas’ work brings it well into the realm of linguistics, and thus ‘translation’ will be used interchangeably with ‘transcription’. In 1875 Antonios Sigalas’ lengthy *Collection of National Songs* consisting of songs, hymns, art- music, and other genres of Greek, European and

Russian music, translated/transcribed in Byzantine notation won a silver medal at the *Olympia* state competition in Athens.¹



Example 1: Byzantine notation with Greek text underneath²

Five years later, in 1880, this book of transcriptions was published after the recommendation of the Awarding Committee, while the Parliament subsidized the publication, and the Ministry of Ecclesiastic Affairs and Public Education assisted the subscription of patrons.³ In many senses this publication was the material manifestation of one of the most significant 19th century Greek musical debates, in search of a solid Greek musical identity after the cultural ‘invasion’ of Europe into the country and nation earlier in the century. The most intriguing chapter in this award-winning piece of national cultural appropriation must definitely be the chapter that transcribed European and Ionian tunes into Byzantine notation [pp. 249-290]. This kind of heteroglossia achieved to materialize national indoctrination quite uniquely: sixteen different genres, four hundred songs, were concealed under a notational system that bore merely a symbolic function, since it was legible only to the very few initiated in this special notation, and did not assist the preservation of songs as was the editor’s ethnomusicological claim. The layman who would have chosen to buy this publication would probably do it out of a sense of national musical particularity, since functionally the book was completely pointless. Even if someone was familiar with Byzantine notation, reading European or Greek traditional music from such score would- again- rather be a symbolic act or statement.

The difference between function and national symbolism is even more apparent if we take into consideration that Sigalas’ attempt at transcribing popular and folk music in Byzantine notation was neither the first nor the last. His time saw at least three more similar publications in 1882, 1892, and 1896, all with multiple republications, and all

¹ Σιγάλας, Α. 1880. Συλλογή Εθνικών Ασμάτων περιέχουσα τετρακόσια άσματα τονσθέντα υπο του εκ Θήρας μουσικοδιδασκάλου Αντωνίου Ν. Σιγάλα. Αθήνα. Τυπογραφείο Χ.Ν. Φιλαδέλφειας [Sigalas, Α. 1880. A Collection of National Songs Containing four hundred songs edited by the music teacher Antonios N. Sigalas. Athens: Ch. N Filadelfeos Printers.] Motsenigos Archive of Modern Greek music, 450/1970, National Library of Greece [Athens]

² Byzantine notation, as demonstrated in Example 1, is radically different to western notation, both in function and form. The Byzantine chant is the music of the liturgical rite of the Christian Roman Empire of the East, and as a notational system it was developed from the 7th to the 14th centuries. The notation provides with precise pitch indication, but the signs do not signify set tonal relations- like western notation- but rather the melodic movement of the singers’ voice. See: Saddington, St. 1988. The Norton/Grove Concise Encyclopedia of Music. Entry “Byzantine riet, Music of the”, pp. 120-121; Kennedy, M. 1985. The Oxford Dictionary of Music. Entry “Neum(e)s” pp. 499; Excerpt of score: Sigalas, Α. 1880. A Collection of National Songs Containing four hundred songs edited by the music teacher Antonios N. Sigalas. p. 4

³ Sigalas, Α. 1880. A Collection of National Songs. p. 6

more or less equally symbolic.⁴ Earlier in the century, in Istanbul- or eternally ‘Constantinople’ in Greek national imagination- another four similar publications appeared with the auspices of the Patriarchate in 1830, 1843, 1848 and 1872. For practical reasons the comparative will examine Sigalas’ publication in contrast to the earliest known suchlike publication from Constantinople, *Euterpe*, and a short mention will be made to the 1872 publication, since it’s contemporary to Sigalas’ publication, yet somewhat different in approach.⁵ When *Euterpe* was published in 1830, its rationale and function was of a very different nature to Sigalas’ *Collection*. At this point, we should immediately note two very fundamental differences between the two publications that play a central role in the two different approaches. Firstly, there is the matter of time. *Euterpe* (1830) was published exactly when the Greek nation-state was being created, and therefore matters of national continuity had not reached the musical level yet, and with much more fundamental historical and practical problems in pressing need of clarification.⁶ Secondly, there is the matter of geographical placement. *Euterpe* was published in Istanbul, seat of the Patriarchate, addressing an audience that could utilize it somehow, while the city itself was- at the time and would forever remain- part of the Ottoman Empire and outside the borders of the single-nation Greek state. It was, therefore, a publication that in terms of both time and place did not immediately feed into Greek 19th century nationalism, and had a functional aspect.⁷

When it comes to content, *Euterpe* took a very specific line in terms of narrative -in direct connection to its temporal and spatial context, as explained earlier. In the introduction of the publication, the editors explained the hardships of attempting to transcribe folk traditional music, and put to paper an art that was based on vocal embellishments, microtonal chromatic, diatonic, and harmonic modulations, and delicate tempo variations.⁸ Byzantine notational system is a neumatic [from the Greek *neuma* ‘gesture’ or ‘sign’] notational system that is not based on set tonal relations between the musical symbols -the function of notes in western notation. Pitch indication is precise and is provided at the beginning of each piece along with the musical mode of the work, and the notation- comprising of a variety of signs- corresponds to its rhythmic and dynamic vocabulary, as well as the motions of the conductors’ hand.⁹ What the editor of *Euterpe* attempted to do in 1830 was to record traditional music by imitating all the delicate movements and intonations of the

⁴ The publications in reference are: Σακελλαρίδης, Ι. 1882. Μούσα. Αθήνα [Sakelaridis, I. 1882. Muse. Athens]; Βλάχος, Χρ. 1892/1894 Μουσικά Σκαριφήματα. 2 τόμοι. Αθήνα [Vlachos, Chr. 1892/1894. Musical Schemata. 2 volumes. Athens]; Τσικνόπουλος, Ανδ. 1896/1905/1906. Δημόδη Άσματα. 3 τόμοι. Αθήνα [Tsiknopoulos, And. 1896/1905/1906. Folk Songs. Athens]; For some more information see: Ρωμανού Κ. 2006. Έντεχνη Ελληνική Μουσική στους Νεότερους Χρόνους. Αθήνα: Κουλτούρα. σελ. 126-127 [Romanou, K. 2006. Greek Art-Music in the Modern Era. Athens: Kouloura Publishing. pp. 126-127]

⁵ Fokeas, Th., Vyzantios, St. 1830. Book called Euterpe, containing a collection of modern and pleasant secular songs, and with an addition in the end of some Romeic songs in Ottoman and European verse. Galata: Kastor Printers [Φωκαεύς Θ., Βυζάντιος, Στ. 1830. Βίβλος καλούμενη Ευτέρπη, Περιέχουσα συλλογήν εκ των νεωτέρων και ηδυτέρων εξωτερικών μελών, με προσθήκην εν τω τέλει και τινών ρωμαϊκών τραγουδιών εις μέλος οθωμανικών και ευρωπαϊκών. Γαλατάς: Τυπογραφία Κάστορος] Motsenigos Archive of Modern Greek music, 388/1970, National Library of Greece [Athens]

⁶ For example racial or cultural continuity, language, the relationship of the nation-state with the Greek Diaspora, the relationship with the Patriarchate etc.

⁷ The same applies for the rest of the publications from Constantinople. Euterpe is used here as an example because it is the earliest.

⁸ Fokeas, Th., Vyzantios, St. 1830. Book called Euterpe. First page of the foreword (unnumbered in the original)

⁹ See: Saddle, St. 1988. The Norton/Grove Concise Encyclopedia of Music. Entry: Byzantine rite, Music of the. (pp.120-121), Entry: Ekphonic notation (p. 234); Kennedy, M. 1985. The Oxford Dictionary of Music. Entry: Byzantine Music p. 116), Entry: Neum(e)s (p. 499)

interpretational styles in detail, while the scores themselves could be sang in their transliterated Greek text by someone who could read the notation.

In contrast to *Euterpe*-and the *Compilation* for that matter-, Sigalas' medalled collection of transcriptions was very obvious in its dysfunctional nature. The editor literally translated various melodies of diverse origins, and on top of that he did not provide with the original titles or any specific indication about the origin of the verse.¹⁵ For the traditional Greek songs Sigalas specified in his introduction that partly the rationale of his personal preoccupation with collecting these songs was to preserve the lyrics, so at least for this set of songs we can be confident about their originality and trace them.¹⁶ Some of the hymns and patriotic songs have survived until today as well, and the verse is still recognizable, yet the correspondence between music and word in the European, Ionian, and Russian ones is not known.¹⁷ Example 3 demonstrates the reconstruction of one of Sigalas' transcribed pieces back in western notation.¹⁸ It is literally impossible to recognise the original pieces of music Sigalas transcribed in Byzantine notation, no less because the original adjustment of the score unavoidably altered some of its melodic and harmonic characteristics. Transcribing it back to western notation has undoubtedly caused even more deviations because of the individual choices the contemporary musicologist had to make in order to bring the music back [tonal setting, differences in temperament, microtonal differences between the two notational systems etc], and the complete lack of any sort of key to the editor's original choices in transcription.¹⁹

Moreover, since Sigalas did not provide the title of the separate pieces, their region of origin, or any indication as to whether the lyrics of the specific section are the original ones, the pieces have to be considered completely detached from their original context, content, and meaning. Even as an effort to preserve music, choosing a monophonic notational system, like the Byzantine one, is bad practice since only the melodic line is presented, let alone the fact that by not naming the pieces and their origin Sigalas did not preserve any information of ethnomusicological value. If the collection's function had been musical, the contained pieces would have probably been considered borrowed musical material, or some sort of variations on an original theme.²⁰ Yet, since Sigalas stated explicitly that his work was intended to be a collection of songs merely transcribed in Byzantine notation in an attempt to 'collect' and preserve national music, the fruit of his labour is a musically grotesque anthology of dismembered musics. On top of the minimal functional value of reading western or

¹⁵ Please refer to Appendix for a detailed list of the contained genres. See p. xxxx here

¹⁶ Sigalas, A.1880. A Collection of National Songs. p. ε' [5]

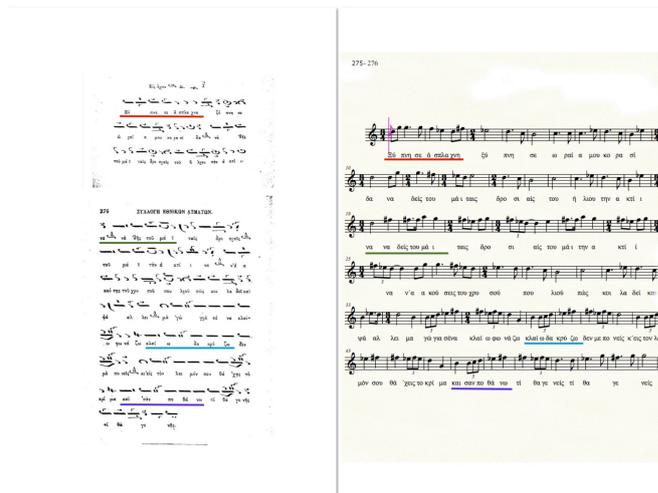
¹⁷ For the purposes of this thesis only the European and Ionian sections have been commissioned to be transcribed back to western notation, and merely out of curiosity. Due to the impressive length of the publication [521 pages of scores in Byzantine notation] it would take years for a researcher to transcribe it back to western notation and analyze the correspondence between music and lyrics.

¹⁸ Transcription in western notation by Dimitra Leleki, graduate of the Department of Music Science and Art, University of Macedonia, Greece. Commissioned for the present thesis, not published or peer-reviewed.

¹⁹ Leleki maintains that a perfect note-to-note transcription is possible if the transcriber is extremely careful, yet the microtonal differences due to the equal-tempered nature of western notation in contrast to the mean-toned temperament of the Byzantine chant are unavoidable. Unfortunately, Sigalas has not left any description of his transcribing technique, therefore the quality of his work is here considered trustworthy because of the embracement of the Collection by the *Ecclesiastic Musical Association of Athens*. From personal correspondence with the transcriber on the preferred technical approach to the transcription. 04 January 2016

²⁰ Musical borrowing in music is a compositional technique that employs older musical material intentionally or unintentionally to create new compositions, either as homage to the older work, comment, or development into a new musical idea. See: J. Peter Burkholder, 'Borrowing', in Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52918pg1>> (accessed 20 February 2016).

traditional Greek music in Byzantine notation, even the trained in the specific notational tradition would potentially find themselves interpreting an incoherent distorted version of an unrecognizable original, which would not create any sort of intellectual or aesthetic musical pleasure other than the awareness of reciting ‘national’ music- or indeed nationalism itself. As for the noble attempt to preserve Greek music at a time when the Greeks were increasingly projecting national identity through the collection of folk songs, while realising that the Europeans had been interested in collecting Greek traditional music since the late 18th century, it appears as if his choice of nation over functional notation cancelled his effort.²¹



Example 3: pages 275-276 [left side] present a complete piece from Sigalas’ original *Collection*, with the corresponding modern transcription [right side]. Coloured lines have been added to assist the correspondence between the two scores.

In terms of lyrics, and always taking into consideration that a connection between original and transcribed music is borderline impossible and thus no secure assumptions can be made about origin, the content is usually some sort of hymn to a deity, love song, or lamentation that could belong to any sort of folk or art-music western tradition (German lieder, Ionian-Italianate cantata, European or Ionian folk/traditional music, a versed symphony etc) depending on the editor’s individual taste and influences. For the rest of the pieces, lyrics demonstrate a wide range of themes, stretching from pagan hymns to forest deities, pious Christian prayers to God,

²¹ The earliest modern methodical reproduction of a Greek song by a European traveler is included in P.A. Guys’ 1771 *Voyage littéraire de la Grèce, ou lettres sur les Grecs anciens et modernes, avec un parallèle de leurs moeurs*, published in Paris in two volumes. Alexis Politis maintains that, even though earlier mentions to Greek traditional songs have existed since the Middle Ages, it is the methodical reproduction of lyrics in this specific publication that renders it more significant than a mere reference to song out of curiosity. From then on, Greek songs appeared in a multitude of European folkloric studies all over Europe. Politis considers Claude Fauriel’s 1824 *Chants Populaires de la Grèce moderne* as the first official collection of traditional Greek songs, connected with the editor’s philhellenism, liberalism, and before similar efforts had been made for the transcription of French folk songs. The first Greek attempt to collect Greek folk songs was a collection by Antonios Manousos, published in 1850 in Corfù, followed shortly by another two in 1852 by Michalis Lelekos, and historian Spyridon Zambelios in Athens. See: Politis, A. 1999. (2nd ed.) *The discovery of Greek folk songs*. p. 68, 289-290; Politis, A. 2009 (3rd ed.) *Romantic Years: Ideologies and Attitudes in 1830-1880 Greece*. p. 51 [Πολίτης, Α. 1999. [β’ έκδοση] Η Ανακάλυψη των Ελληνικών δημοτικών τραγουδιών: Προϋποθέσεις, προσπάθειες και η δημιουργία της πρώτης συλλογής. σελ. 68, 289-290; Πολίτης, Α. 2009. [Γ’ Έκδοση] Ρομαντικά Χρόνια: Ιδεολογίες και Νοοτροπίες στην Ελλάδα του 1830-1880. σελ. 51]

bucolic love songs, and Revolutionary anthems. Sigalas unfortunately failed to create a piece of score that would expand and enrich musical experience, or assist the preservation of traditional Greek music. Indeed, by the first decades of the 20th century his work's glow started fading, along with the rest of similar collections, it was compared to its contemporaneous European ones (notably Bourgault-Ducoudray's 1876 *Trente mélodies populaires de Grèce et d'Orient*) and was found inadequate at best. The music newspaper *Formigx* noted in 1902 that singing the music out of Sigalas' 1880 edition would be particularly challenging even after extensive study, due to the rhythmic particularities of the notation.²² A little more damning, the music newspaper *Musical Review* of 1921 would remark, "When it comes to Greek collections [of traditional music], they should all be burnt. Luckily, most of them are transcribed in Byzantine notation and so no one reads them. All these editions bearing the pompous titles "collection of national songs" by the late Antonios Sigalas and others [...] should be thrown to Hell".²³ Possibly verging on the over-dramatic, the author was making an important distinction that had remained obscure in the fervour of the late 19th century debate; embedding Byzantine music to linear national history was one thing, but connecting folk to Byzantine music merely by transcribing the first in the musical language of the second was another.

Nevertheless, in tune to the national(ist) cultural influences of his time, by transliterating the various genres of his *Collection* Sigalas managed- in his failure to create a methodologically accurate collection of folk songs- to produce a powerful symbolic object. He homogenized notation in a distinctively and exclusively Greek musical 'text', regardless of content and uneligible to most. In this way, he managed to create a powerful conceptual musical map of Hellenism that encompassed all its inherent dissimilarities, obliterated local variations, and even neutralised the radically different concepts of 'European' and 'Ionian' western music, by appropriating, dismembering, and absorbing their 'otherness' [secular function, notation, polyphonic nature, verse]. Antonios Sigalas was medalled in 1875 for creating history's most successful meta-language of nationalism. And it was generally very well received by the Church and state.

Naturally, the work had been created to be embraced by Church and state. In contrast to its intellectual ancestor- *Euterpe*- that was Ottoman in spirit, and made reference to the 'Romeic' ethnic group within the Empire, Sigalas' *Collection* was clearly addressing the fully developed nation-state.²⁴ Moreover, what is of importance at this instance is that in the history of the evolution of terms, while in the 16th and 17th centuries the term 'ethnic' was used for the music of non-Greek ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire, by the 19th- and until the beginning of the 20th- 'ethnic' music denoted the Eastern Byzantine Church music.²⁵ At the same time, it remains very important to note that even the notion of 'Folk' songs was not yet specialised in Greece, as it was in Europe. Among Sigalas' four hundred songs, only sixty have been identified to be Greek 'folk' songs, with the rest belonging to the wider genre of

²² Peristeris, D. (1902) On the transcription of folk melodies. *Formigx*, issue n. 11, March 1902, p. 2 [Περιστέρης, Δ. (1902) Περί του πώς κανονιστέον δημώδεις μελωδίας. *Φόρμιγξ*, Αρ. τευχ. 11, Μάρτιος 1902, σελ. 2]

²³ Orpheus (1921) Our Folk Songs. *Musical Review*, issue n. 1, October 1921, p. 7 [Ορφεύς (1921) Τα δημοτικά μας τραγούδια. Αρ. τευχ. 1, Οκτώβριος 1921, σελ. 7]

²⁴ The title of the publication refers to 'Romeic' songs, indicating that it is still addressing the ethnic group in its Ottoman rather than national Greek/Hellenic existence. Fokeas, Th., Vyzantios, St. 1830. Book called *Euterpe*.

²⁵ Always in contrast to what was termed 'exoteric' music, which denoted folk, traditional, and popular music. See: Romanou, K. 2006. Greek art-music in the modern era. p. 24, 106

Greek songs, by modern standards.²⁶ And while *Euterpe* promised to try and simplify the Arabian-Persian-Turkish text by transliterating it into Greek, thus making it accessible to speakers of the Greek ‘dialect’, the *Collection* made it constantly explicit that its purpose was to expand and enrich Greek national secular music.²⁷ The Advisory Committee- whose function was to evaluate the publication, and indicate whether it was worth a medal- acknowledged this intention by recognizing it as ‘a piece of work of national importance’, and also one that would contribute in the moulding and development of the ‘fallen from its previously glorious state’ national music.²⁸

Grand words for a truly impressive piece of arduous work that would make the Committee advise the Awarding Body to honour the entry with a silver medal.²⁹ Incidentally, the institution invited to advise on the artistic value of the work had been the *Ecclesiastical Musical Society of Athens*, which was at the time fighting at the forefront of the forty year-old Greek musical debate, whose part and outcome was the publications under review here.³⁰ The great 19th century Greek debate on the past, present, future, position and function, of Byzantine church music, inside and out of Greece, and its relation to European music.

The force that brought the debate right at the heart of the Greek nation-state, Athens, was neither divine intention, nor divine inspiration. Though strictly connected to personal taste, it was nevertheless political dominance that enforced the introduction of harmonised Byzantine chant in the capital. With the accession of the Danish King George I to the throne (1863), it was not long after that his Queen arrived from Russia (1867). The Greek press seem to have received their new Queen with a sense of hope for an alliance with Russia- another claimant to Byzantine heritage- and relief for her Eastern-Orthodox religion.³¹ The 16-year-old Queen settled in Greece and was immediately involved in philanthropy, became a patron of the arts, supported institutions for the education of women, and- naturally- attended the Orthodox Mass.³² Therefore, what was seen as a blessing for the many, gradually turned into a musical problem for the few, since the young Queen quickly started getting bored.

In church.

During Mass.

²⁶ Romanou makes this remark without specifying whether the songs have been identified through their notation or their lyrics, and does not provide with any reference as to whom has already studied the correspondence between originals and transcription. See: Romanou, K. 1996. A journey through National Music 1901-1912: Greek Music Journals as a source of research on modern Greek music. Vol. I p. 173

²⁷ See : Fokeas, Th., Vyzantios, St. 1830. Book called *Euterpe*. First page of the foreword (unnumbered in the original); Sigalas, A.1880. A Collection of National Songs. p. ζ’ [7]

²⁸ Sigalas, A.1880. A Collection of National Songs. Foreword pp. θ’-ι’ [9-10]

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ At the same time the *Society* had already encouraged and would continue to encourage the creation of a significant number of other similar publications of transcribed folk and traditional music, while they also curated their presentations. See Romanou, K. 2006. Greek art-music in the modern era. p. 126.

³¹ See for example issue n. 2286 (23 Oct 1867) of the newspaper *Aeon*, where the newspaper is devoting a lengthy column to arguing about the importance of Faith and religion for the preservation of the Greek ethnic group and language in the centuries, and rejoice about Olga belonging to the Eastern-Orthodox dogma. See: *Aeon* (1867) The marriage of the King of the Greeks. *Aeon*, 27 October 1867, p. 1 [Αιών (1867) Οι γάμοι του Βασιλέως των Ελλήνων. *Αιών*, 27 Οκτωβρίου 1867, σελ. 1]

³² For Queen Olga’s wide range of activities in opening hospitals, schools, and supporting women’s education since her early years in Greece see: Karolou, I. 1934. Olga the Queen of the Greeks 22 August 1851- 19 June 1926. pp. 46-48, 59, 70-72, 81-82 [Καρολίου, Ι. 1934. Ολγα η βασίλισσα των Ελλήνων 22 Αυγούστου 1851- 19 Ιουνίου 1926. σελ. 46-48, 59, 70-72, 81-82.

In contrast to her predecessor, Queen Amalia, who had rejoiced at the introduction of the melodrama as a cure to her evening boredom, Queen Olga's musical problem were the monotonous chants at the Cathedral. Raised within the Eastern Orthodox Russian Church with its polyphonic chant, she invited in 1870 the famous choral conductor Alexandros Katakouzinis from Odessa to train the choir of the palace chapel, a task he achieved within a short period of time.³³ Not much later, and encouraged by his success at the palace chapel, Katakouzinis attempted to introduce polyphonic Mass in the Cathedral of Athens, where Queen Olga was obliged to attend Mass during national celebrations, public holidays, and other formal state events.³⁴ The introduction was delayed until 1875, when the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece issued a permission for polyphonic Mass to be performed at the Cathedral during national and royal celebrations, overturning an adjudication of the same year that was condemning it, and was threatening with strict disciplinary action against the practice.³⁵ In fact, between 1870 and 1875 the Church of Greece issued a series of condemning decisions against polyphony, while acknowledging that the chant was in need of reformation by 'scientifically trained' music scholars. And indeed, the decision that allowed polyphony in the Cathedral in 1875 was specifying that this concession was being made until the Byzantine chant was improved.³⁶ The turn-of-the-century music newspaper *Formigx* would report later that in 1860 the Synod had considered the introduction of polyphony in church due to the popularity of the practice among the members of the Diaspora, who upon visiting Athens would prefer attending mass at the Russian chapel. Yet, the newspaper reported, their proposal was rejected by the Ministry of Ecclesiastic Affairs, on the grounds of defending tradition.³⁷ The Royal intervention of 1875 must have played a decisive role in the final permission of polyphony in the Cathedral, which in turn affected the structure of the debate that broke out in the musical circles of Athens at the time. It is striking, though completely understandable, that no mention to the Queen and her influence upon the matter is made in any monograph of the time, and the debate is structured according to the tone and style of the one that had broken out fifty years earlier- a theoretical discussion on the traditional function and form of the chant. What is increasingly visible in this musical story is that the strong ties between Church and State obstructed both Institutions from devising independent long-term cultural policies concerning music, while constantly creating conflicting policies on issues of dogma, education, and culture.

The late 19th century debate on the matter follows a specific pattern that, unable to comment or criticize the specific contemporaneous caprice that imposed harmonized music in the Cathedral- Κορολεβα-, reproduced the usual method of discussing societal and cultural issues without specifically referencing the political forces behind them; by constructing legitimacy through reference and connection to the past. In this instance, the legitimacy came in the form of discussing the multiple historical roots of the debate, and it was especially convenient since it corresponded to the comforting narrative of an ever-continuous linear stream of Greek music and culture. Therefore

³³ Philopoulos, G. 1990. Introduction to Greek polyphonic church music. p. 94-95

³⁴ *ibid.* p. 95-96

³⁵ Romanou, K. 1996. A journey through National Music 1901-1912: Greek Music Journals as a source of research on modern Greek music. Vol. I p.245. [Ρωμανου, Κ. 1996. Εθνικής Μουσικής Περιήγησις 1901-1912: Ελληνικά Μουσικά Περιοδικά ως πηγή έρευνας της ιστορίας της Νεοελληνικής μουσικής. Τόμος Α' σελ. 245]

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ Byzantida of Constantinople (1902), 'Church Music', [newspaper] *Formigx*, 28 August 1902, p. 1-2. [Βυζαντιδα Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1902), 'Εκκλησιαστική Μουσική', *Φόρμιγξ*, 28 Αυγούστου 1902, σελ. 1-2]

structurally, as proof of erudition and loyalty to the tradition and values of Byzantine music, all participants in the debate consistently started their monographs, or speeches, or articles by historicizing the music, and referencing its value for the Greek ethnic group since time immemorial- actually very memorial, as usually it would be a lengthy reference to ancient Greek philosophy, or the theatre, or Homer's contemporaries. In this way, an issue that concerned the secular and ecclesiastic, present and future of the art became a historicized relic condemned to serve the past, while in the process of evolution.

In all its noble intentions, the most unfortunate historical allegory of the whole debate has possibly been the one devised by Dimitrios Vernardakis in his 1876 *Impromptu speech on our church music*.³⁸ "When the King of the Persians, Xerxes, campaigned against the Greeks", started Vernardakis' speech, "the city [of Athens] was empty, for the Athenians had been convinced [...] by Themistocles to abandon it, dispersing here and there in Attica." Only a few stayed back and, after constructing a wooden wall, they defended the Acropolis. Shortly after, Vernardakis' narrative concluded, they were overpowered and chose to fall to their own death.³⁹ Upon first examination the specific parable is possibly one of the strangest the noble (former) professor of History could have chosen to illustrate his argument. If these specific defenders of the Acropolis won a place in Herodotus' history, it was because they misinterpreted the Oracle's instructions to flee the city, and they perished while Themistocles won over the Persians triumphantly.⁴⁰ Of course Vernardakis was merely making a point about the defence of the last stronghold of traditional monophonic Byzantine music by a few devoted heroes who could see the end approaching and yet resisted, but he could have chosen any other ancient Greek saga- maybe Leonidas I with his three-hundred Spartans, from the same story. Yet, that would have deprived his allegory of a particularly important symbolism, ever strong, ever effective. The foolish superstitious heroic Athenians fell protecting the Acropolis and following their example the last defenders of traditional Byzantine music were about to fall defending hopelessly an equally important asset of classical Hellenism: the Orthodox Greek Church, here under musical threat by the "fiery rivers of European culture", as he eloquently phrased it.⁴¹ One way or another, classical Hellenism and Orthodoxy were continuously connected through the most surreal examples, in this case with Eastern music acting as a defender of Hellenic values- whose sound remains a mystery even to the present.

Very much in tune with 19th century Greek national history, the backbone of the traditionalist argumentative line, and a position they would hold sacred, was that by preserving Byzantine music unaltered they were respecting and preserving the connection with ancient Greek music and a 'pure' Greek culture. In their attempt to raise Byzantine music history to the status of an integral part of the broader national Greek history, the various writers produced an interesting linear reading of the importance of music for the Greeks throughout the centuries. Music, exactly like

³⁸ Written, orated, and later published on a commission for the four-year anniversary of the creation of the *Ecclesiastical Musical Society of Athens* in 1875. See: Vernardakis, D. 1876. *Impromptu speech on our church music*. Trieste: Austro-Hungarian Loid Press. [Βερναδάκης, Δ. 1876. Λόγος Αυτοσχέδιος περί της καθ' ημάς εκκλησιαστικής μουσικής. Τεργέστη: Τύποις του Αυστροουγγρικού Λόυδ] Copy held at the National Library of Greece [Athens].

³⁹ *ibid.* pp. 3-4

⁴⁰ Godley, A.D [trans]. 1921. Herodotus. Vol. IV, Books VIII-IX, §§51-53, pp. 47-51

⁴¹ Vernardakis, D. 1876. *Impromptu speech on our church music*. p. 4

language, is indicative of the state of a nation's civilisation, Archimandrite Therianos claimed in 1875, and before the Greeks had a chance to resolve their ongoing debate on the state of their language the great debate between the supporters of Eastern Church music and European music broke out.⁴² Nationalisms' grip on music suddenly tightened and Byzantine church music was raised to the status of the ethnic 'musical idiom' of the Greeks, while 'European music' remained the foreign language that threatened its purity. A year earlier, Panayotis Koupitoris, member and later president of the *Ecclesiastical Musical Society of Athens*, was calling for a collective scholarly effort that would prove decisively the historic connection of Byzantine to ancient Greek music, through the thorough study of documents held at the Patriarchate, Greece, and Europe.⁴³

In combination to attaching Byzantine music to the core of Greek national history, the traditionalists enforced their arguments by attempting to alienate European music from its own connection to classical antiquity. The approach, strongly adhering to the logic of propaganda since the debate was very far from a scholarly musicological exchange, contrasted the civic function of music in ancient Greek society and philosophy, to the contemporaneous function of European art-music. Music in the olden centuries was "the cornerstone of the Greek ethnic group's education", and everyone could play music, while modern music was merely a means of entertainment- many times morally corruptive-, and was performed by specially educated musicians. And while for the ancients music and word were intimately connected, "Beethoven, Mozart, Weber, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi are not poets but mainly musicians", Therianos would insist.⁴⁴ Despite the unfair, populist, demagogic, and unsustainable comparison between ancient Greek and modern European music, Therianos' approach reveals one of the most fundamental 19th century Greek fears, and one that Koupitoris had already outlined explicitly in his own speech, revealing the importance of national ideology for the development of the arts and society.

"But, some [Europeans] claim, that modern Greek music little resembles modern European music. But this minimal resemblance has occurred, we respond, because European music has changed significantly in the past two centuries through the development of instrumental harmony. Because this harmony of modern European music is the outcome of the modern times and a pleasant embellishment to the music, and it is to be studied deeply, whether it can be applied to modern Greek music [...] Because, **if modern Greek music became the same with European, first of all it would be rendered modern and not as ancient as the Greek nation, and moreover it would denote a western, European heritage which is wrong.**"⁴⁵

⁴² Therianos, E. 1875. On the music of the Greeks and especially [the music of] the church. Trieste: Austro-Hungarian Loid Press. P. 3-4 [Θεριανός, Ε. 1875. Περί της μουσικής των Ελλήνων και ιδίως της εκκλησιαστικής. Τεργέστη: Τύποις του Αυστροουγγρικού Λόυδ. Σελ. 3-4] Copy held at the Municipal Library of Thessaloniki

⁴³ Koupitoris, P. 1876. A Panegyric on our Church Music. Athens: Philokallia Publishing. pp. 7-8 [Θεριανός, Π. 1876. Λόγος Πανηγυρικός περί της καθ'ημάς Εκκλησιαστικής Μουσικής. Αθήνα: Εκ του τυπογραφείου Φιλοκαλίας, σελ. 7-8]

⁴⁴ Therianos, E. 1875. On the music of the Greeks and especially [the music of] the church. pp. 9-12

⁴⁵ Koupitoris, P. 1876. A Panegyric on our Church Music. Athens: Philokallia Publishing. pp. 21-22

In this modern Greek musical *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, the moderns never stood a chance since, as seen earlier, Greek national narrative draw its modern legitimacy from the linear intellectual connection to the Ancients. The quintessential music of the Greeks could never evolve to something resembling anything ‘European’ because that would give it a distinctively modern existence, aesthetically detached from the imagined music of the Antiquity, and thus independent of its treasured connection to Ancient Greece- ever uniform, ever without local variants, ever exclusively Hellenic. To complement this connection, and always keeping in mind that according to 19th century Greek national history the Hellenic spirit was preserved and delivered to the modern world through the Byzantine Empire, any sort of western heritage that would justify polyphony in Byzantine music was dismissed as wrong. Western European civilization had indeed emerged from Hellenism, yet Hellenism had since found refuge in the East, securing a distinctive sense of particularity for the Greeks, who could denounce any of the two identities (Eastern or Western) at will, according to the specific needs of each individual debate. As for the implications of such thinking for a music looking towards any future, it secured its habitation within a cultural conservatism intimately connected with issues of fundamental national identity.

In the moderate and revisionist camps of the debate, national identity was equally prominent, yet narratives of ‘progress’ and ‘science’ took the lead in this fight for a calculated musical change. Departing from the solid basis of a strong Eastern musical tradition, and recognizing that the multicultural Byzantine landscape inevitably influenced the ‘purity’ of the music, the moderates mostly argued for the development of musical education. Change was considered a long-term project, and in the case of music, it would have to be extremely careful to take music forward without surrendering any of its ethnic and traditional characteristics, and autonomy. When Panagiotis Gritsanis published his 1870 *On the issue of the music of the Greek Church*, for example, his argument developed in a linear manner that departed from physiology and nature (the larynx as a natural monophonic musical instrument), to human agency over musical development, and argued for a ‘scientific’ approach to the development of music by scholars of the University of Athens. Music, he maintained, had reached through human assistance its ‘natural’ potential, and while ten centuries earlier it was ‘poor’, ‘simple’, monotonous, and insignificant, modern European music had managed to reach a high standard and did not classify merely as an ‘art’ anymore, but as a ‘science’ as well.⁴⁶

In this developed European musical environment, the natural development of Byzantine music had been arrested after the Ottoman enslavement and, Gritsanis continued, there was no reason to preserve it at this inherited ‘incomplete’ state. Moreover, the argument went, by continuing its ‘development’ there was a chance to cleanse it from all foreign musical influences.⁴⁷ Similarly, Nikolaos Anastasiou would argue in 1881 that the Eastern Orthodox Church had elected monophonic liturgical music after the ancient Greek tradition, because it was more serious, solemn, and

⁴⁶ Gritsanis, P. 1870. *On the issue of the music of the Greek Church*. Naples: Gaetano Nobile Press pp. 5-8 [Γρίτσανης, Π. 1870. Περὶ τῆς μουσικῆς τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ζήτημα. Ἐν Νεαπόλει: Ἐκ τῆς Τυπογραφίας Καίετανου Νοβίλε. σελ. 5-8]

⁴⁷ In this case Gritsanis is referring to Arab-Eastern influences. *Ibid.* pp. 9-15

mournful.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, both writers, in an attempt to give their arguments a historical-scientific undertone at a time when musicology was not an independent discipline, made a crucial mistake of narrative that concealed a large part of the persistent issues the Greeks had with their musical, and national identity. The matter of polyphony in the chant has been historicized to exist since the early centuries of polyphony in Western music (10th- 11th century). Contrary to both Gritsanis and Anastasiou's arguments, modern history of music holds that it was neither 15th century Ottomans, nor ancient Greek aesthetics on music that obstructed the course of polyphony in the Eastern chant. Rather, for reasons of dogma in the beginning, and later on because of the political enmity between the Eastern and Western churches, the Byzantines reacted against the Church of Rome by blocking western cultural influences (in this case the trend of polyphony).⁴⁹ In their haste to renounce the Ottomans as the destructive force for Greek-Byzantine culture and in tune to a national history that blamed them for a uniform four hundred years of national misery, the Greeks on both sides of the debate made a crucial mistake of narrative: a large part of the inheritance (musical or not) the modern Greeks had elected to accept from the Byzantines had been a deep sense of suspicion against the West.

Unfortunate or not, and since the whole structure of the issue was far from a sober erudite discussion on the past and future of the art, this raw association of music with science, which offered the moderates and revisionists a fresh argument in support of reforming the chant, is the intellectual child of a wider late 19th century connection of music aesthetics to scientific thought. While the early 19th century saw the philosophy of music examining it mainly as an emotional force with transcendental characteristics, the scientific turn of the second half of the century brought with it a scientific prism of approaching the philosophy of music, as obvious in the works of authors on music in Germany, England and France.⁵⁰ In accordance, the traditionalist camp had also developed its own set of scientific arguments to argue against the harmonization of the chant, yet insisting on the value of the past rather than an elusive potential in the future. Before the emergence of modern musicology that would peacefully recognize that all musics hold an equal status under the sun, and at a time when European ethnomusicological taxonomy was itself treating non-western musics with hostility, their scientific evidence would usually consist of a point-to-point attempt to prove that structurally Byzantine music was more elaborate and complex than western art-music. The argument would usually conclude that, due to its complexity, the chant could not be harmonised without surrendering crucial structural, rhythmic, and aesthetic characteristics.⁵¹ Whether the Greek turn to scientific argumentation was influenced by the wider European turn, or just the outcome of a separate need rooted in the same scientific turn has not yet been

⁴⁸ Anastasiou, N. 1881. *The Patriarchate and Greek Church Music*. p. 6-7 [Αναστασίου, Ν. 1881. Το Οικουμενικόν Πατριαρχείον και η Ελληνική Εκκλησιαστική Μουσική. Αθήνα. σελ. 6-7]

⁴⁹ Phevos Anogianakis, Greek musician and music critic made this observation in his chapter of the Greek edition of Karl Nef's *History of Music*, published in Greek. Anogianakis' chapter on Greek music regrettably does not exist in any of the English editions. See: Nef, K. [translated, edited, and with additions by Phevos Anogianakis]. 1956. *History of Music*. Athens: Papyrus. p. 547 [Nef, K. (μετάφραση- προσθήκες-επιμέλεια Φοίβου Ανωγειανάκη) 1956. *Ιστορία της Μουσικής*. Αθήνα: Πάπυρος, σελ. 547]

⁵⁰ Bujic, B. 1988. *Music in European thought 1851-1912*. pp. 1-2

⁵¹ A set of arguments used in all the traditionalist works examined before. See: Vernardakis, D. 1876. *Impromptu speech on our church music*. Trieste: Austro-Hungarian Loid Press; Therianos, E. 1875. *On the music of the Greeks and especially [the music of] the church*. Trieste: Austro-Hungarian Loid Press; Koupitoris, P. 1876. *A Panegyric on our Church Music*. Athens: Philokallia Publishing.

established, but the synchronicity in the emergence of the ‘scientific’ aspect of music in the debate about the future of Greek church-music is suspicious in the least.

With the matter lingering, and harmonised Byzantine chant spreading despite the strong opposition by the Church of Greece and the Patriarchate, as seen earlier, the moderates’ discourse on the vitality of long-term solutions rather than spasmodic radical action- to either direction- persisted. The spread of the melodrama and vaudeville in secular entertainment, and more profoundly the creation of the Conservatory of Athens [1872], became issues that affected deeply the moderates, a set of people who were fighting to see their music taking a modern form, more popular, and with properly trained musicians, in a landscape that stubbornly favoured and financed European entertainment, and trained musicians in the western tradition. In unison with the traditionalists, the revisionists and moderates were regarding the Europeanization of Greek society with suspicion, and even though more accepting of western music, they also employed a particularly poignant vocabulary to describe their bitterness.

“[...] Music, neglected and under attack [...] by half-educated, monkey-like imitators, is lying like a decomposing corpse, and might disappear in some time, under the evil smirk of these monkey-like imitators of Western practices”, wrote Ioannis Th. Sakellaridis in 1880, in the introduction of his concise monograph on the theoretical and practical teaching of Byzantine music.⁵² Contextualized, his bitterness against what he regarded as ‘western imitation’ had a very specific source, connected to both education as well as public discourse. Regardless of the best efforts of the members of the *Ecclesiastical Musical Society of Athens* to support and promote Byzantine music, the music teachers at the Conservatory of Athens insisted that the chant was merely the surviving ‘debris’ of Hebrew music that little resemblance bore with ancient Greek music anymore. And while heavily subsidised by the State and supported by the people, these teachers had not yet achieved to enrich national music with Greek melodramas, produce Greek musicians, or promote the scientific study of music, he claimed.⁵³ His argument was unfair in the least, and the whole disagreement between Conservatory and *Ecclesiastical Musical Society* resembled mere bickering, since only a few years earlier, in 1877, the Conservatory of Athens had managed to stage the first performances of melodrama with Greek singers, while it hosted regular instrumental and vocal concerts.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, and more to the point, in expressing his indignation against the Conservatory’s claim about the influence of Hebrew music upon the Chant, Sakellaridis resorted to a comfortable and comforting reading of national history to dismiss their scornful remark. These teachers were ignorant, he claimed, and they were equally ignorant in regards to national history.⁵⁵ Without providing with further commentary upon this remark, the subtext was very clear, and one that appeared more or less in most writings in defence of the Chant; a basic knowledge of Greek national history could indicate that, since Nation had assimilated lesser cultures, absorbed their cultural particularities, and thus re-emerged preserved, Nation’s national music had

⁵² Sakellaridis, I. 1880. A collection of useful texts on Church music. p. θ’ (9) [Σακελλαριδης, I. 1880. Χρηστομάθεια Εκκλησιαστικής μουσικής. σελ. θ’ (9)] Moutsenigos Archive of Modern Greek music, 438/1970, National Library of Greece [Athens]

⁵³ *ibid.* p. ι (10)

⁵⁴ Baroutas, K. 1992 Musical Life in Athens in the 19th century. p. 30

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

survived dominantly Greek by the same token. The employment of national history to justify ethnomusicological claims was at this instance a form of resistance in part of the Greeks, who saw the Europeans increasingly challenging their musical (and wider historical) connection to the ancients by ascribing Greek traditional music to Balkan-Ottoman heritage, before the emergence of systematic Greek ethnomusicology at the turn of the century. Sakellaridis, a church choir trainer himself, would lose his position at the church of St. Irene in Athens in 1886, after continuing to teach polyphonic chant, and for including little girls in the choir. He, nevertheless, maintained his position at the church of St. George Karytsi and another three schools, where he continued the practice much to the dismay of members of the clergy.⁵⁶

The arrival of Queen Olga in Athens in 1867 brought to life and dispersed among society a debate that had remained a dormant issue of dogma in the Greek-speaking world since its mid-19th century emergence in Vienna. The wide debate on the reformation and position of the Byzantine chant, though not original for the Church and musician was collectively expressed in the language of nationalism, and thus produced new outcomes for music, Church and nation. Both traditionalists and moderates/reformers resorted to the dominant for their time narratives of an uninterrupted continuity in Greek music, to find musical legitimacy in national history, and support in this way either the need to defend tradition or develop what they projected as the nation's musical idiom. Both sides employed arguments of a need for a 'scientific' turn in the study of music, either to decisively prove that by nature the chant couldn't be altered, or to push for the harmonization of the music after the Western paradigm.

To a great degree, at the core of the story stood the stitched 19th century reading of Greek history as that of a nation that descended from the Hellenes, and had survived to the modern period through the Byzantines. This double reading of national history through an Eastern or Western lens, and with the stress on either depending upon personal convictions and beliefs, affected the musical matter deeply. With actual ancient Greek music forever lost, the Chant radically Eastern and affected by the multicultural environment of the thousand-year Empire that nurtured it, the increasing hostility of Western ethnomusicologists, and the lack of organized education for Byzantine music, the arguments on both sides remained dogmatic, possessive, and inconclusive.

The practice itself, favoured by popular demand and Royal insistence continued uninterrupted until 1912, and from then on re-emerged and receded according to temporal cultural preference, rather than solid and decisive cultural policy by either State or Church. Meanwhile, this vile intrusion of 'European' culture into Greek-Orthodox reality at this instance by Greek-Orthodox means- the Diaspora- resulted in an interesting clash between cultural practice in Greece and Europe and resulted in the construction of multiple versions of what it meant to be 'Greek' and what it's relationship to 'European', 'Orthodox', and both.

⁵⁶ Romanou, K. 2006. Greek art-music in the modern era. pp. 245-246

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