

II Historical Overview

Transcription, Parasimantiki and Tonisma

The act of transcribing secular music using the notation of the *psaltic* art, unfolded over a period of around four centuries. During that period, the method and the volume of the transcriptions reveal a trend of continuous evolution and growth. Tracing back to prehistoric times, it is observed that, from ancient times, the Greek musical civilisation, within the prevailing atmosphere of the organisation and shaping of academic thought and artistic creation, realised the need for the development of a system of music notation¹. The process of representing music with a written method has been variously named in the past. The term “*parasimantiki*” is mentioned for the first time by Aristoxenus, a leading author in the field of harmonic theory of antiquity, who also defines its meaning², while it was adopted a few centuries later by K. Psachos in order to name the music notation of the *psaltic* art. In contemporary academic circles, the notating of music, especially in regard to folk songs, is commonly referred to as “transcription”. Transcription means the notating of a melody at a time later than the melody’s composition and encompasses the notion of treasuring and preservation, of study and sometimes of the recording of a travel souvenir. Such transcriptions were made by European travellers, during the period of Turkish rule, and also by later researchers and scholars of folk music traditions (Hapsoulas 1997, Aksoy 2003). In the written tradition of the *psaltic* art, the term “*tonisma*” is often found³ which is no-

¹ From the rich bibliography on the topic of ancient Greek music, the following works in particular are noted here: S. Michaelidis, *Εγκυκλοπαιδεία της Αρχαίας Ελληνικής Μουσικής*, in the entries “Αλύπιος” (pp. 29-30), “Λείψανα ἑλληνικῆς μουσικῆς” (pp. 181-187) and “Παρασημαντική” (pp. 242-244); S. Psaroudakis, “Ancient Hellenic Music Notation”, in W. Feldman, M. Guettat, K. Kalaitzides (ed.), *Music in the Mediterranean*, Volume I *History*, “En Chordais”, Project MediMuses in the context of European Union programme Euromed Heritage II. Thessaloniki 2005, pp. 275-284. Of particular interest is the study of Pöhlman & West (2001) on the sixty one ancient Greek music scores known today from the 5th c. BC through to the 3rd – 4th c. AD, where the originals are presented (critical edition and photographic samples), along with commentary and attempts at their transcription into staff notation. A noteworthy piece of information from K. Romanou is that G. Pachtikos had published *Αρχαία Ἑλληνικά Μελωδία* in Constantinople, which includes seven of the surviving ancient Greek melodies, transcribed into Byzantine notation (*Εθνικὴς Μουσικὴς Περιήγησις 1901-1912, Ἑλληνικά μουσικά περιοδικά ως πηγὴ ἔρευνας τῆς ιστορίας τῆς νεοελληνικῆς μουσικῆς*, Athens 1996, p. 25).

² Aristoxenus, *Ἀρμονικὰ Στοιχεῖα*, II, 39, 6, “The notation of melodies” (“Τὸ παρασημαίνεσθαι τὰ μέλη”) and further below (39, 15) “because notation is not the end of the harmonic science” (“οὐ γὰρ τὸ πέρας τῆς ἁρμονικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἐστὶν ἡ παρασημαντικὴ”).

³ The term is found very commonly in secular music manuscripts and also in printed editions. See for example: Vlachopoulos, S., I. 1848; Sigalas, Antonios 1880; Keyvelis 1872:172, where it says: “Beste of Hânende Zachariás transcribed by Efstratios G. Papadopoulos”. Many such examples can be found in the above-mentioned source.

tionally different from “transcription” and is connected with the core of the notational system of the *psaltic* art which are the accents (*tonoi*) and the neumes (*pneumata*) of the Greek alphabet – the prosodies which were introduced by Aristophanis Byzantios in the 3rd c. BC Alexandria (Stathis 2005:290). In any case, music teachers used *tonisma* and transcribed or notated melodies and songs in *parasimantiki*, keeping in mind the functionality of the music scores. They were concerned more with the performance practice and less with the monumentalisation and preservation of the music itself, treating their material as a living tradition. This observation must also be taken into consideration in this work, whenever the terms “transcription”, “*tonisma*” and “*parasimantiki*” are used.

15th – 16th c.: From Kratemata To Transcriptions Of Secular Music

One of the first questions that must be asked concerns the origins and emergence of secular music within the corpus of the written tradition of ecclesiastical music. A study of source materials indicates the beginnings of this phenomenon occurred in the Palaiologan period, which has been aptly described as the “Byzantine Renaissance”. The 14th century resulted in an extended period of flourishing activity in the arts and literature within the politically and geographically diminishing Byzantine Empire⁴. In particular, with regard to Byzantine chant, a great blossoming and peak can be observed in all aspects of the art: specifically in the appearance of extended musical genres with particularly sophisticated melodies, the systematisation of notation, and the great number of codices produced (Stathis 1979:74-75).

“It is precisely the era in which great composers and teachers, who definitively shaped Byzantine music and created the corresponding great Byzantine music tradition, lived” (Chatziakoumis 1980:24).

One of the new genres that appear in this period are the *kratemata*. The term “*kratemata*”, as it is seen in the majority of music manuscripts is used to denote the melodic compositions “in which the text consists of non-lexical syllables like: *terirem, terere, tititi, tototo* and even *tenena, anane, anena* etc.”⁵. According to G. T. Stathis, the *kratemata*:

⁴ “It was a period when a crumbling administration, directed by an inept and short-sighted government and centred in a city whose population was rapidly diminishing, vainly attempted to ward off increasing impoverishment and the steady loss of territory. ... In strange contrast with the political decline, the intellectual life of Byzantium never shone so brilliantly as in those tow sad centuries.” St. Runciman, *The Last Byzantine Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press 1970, pp. 1-2. See also, G. Ostrogorsky, *Ιστορία τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ κράτους*, Athens 1978, Vol. 3 Chapter 8, “The decline and fall of the Byzantine Empire (1282-1453)”, pp. 155-277 [title of the first publication: *Geschichte des Byzantinischen Staates*, Munich 1963].

⁵ Anastasiou 2005:68. This doctoral dissertation is the most comprehensive study with regard to all aspects of the topic.

“are the connecting link between ecclesiastical and secular music. ... and it is precisely the *kratemata* that are indeed an open doorway, evidently, through which secular-eastern music passed its influences onto Byzantine music”⁶.

In the *kratemata*, the first traces of incorporation, imitation and notation of secular melodies is observed. They often bear the names of musical instruments, (such as *anakaras*, *viola*, *zamara*, *kinira*, *mouschali*, *nai*, *syrix*, *psaltira*) descriptions of ethnic or cultural origins, (such as *persikon* (*Persian*), *atzemikon*, *tatarikon*, *is-mailitikon* (*Ismaili*) and *voulgarikon* (*Bulgarian*)) as well as names of musical forms (such as *nagmes me to pestrefi* (Nağme with the *peşrev*) and *tasnif* (*tasnîf*)). The main characteristic of *kratemata* is their “instrumental nature”, where the melody unfolds without the constraints of poetic text. Consequently, this resulted in great freedom for the composer. Gregorios G. Anastasiou finds that:

“this freedom... was unquestionably a demand of the times... The opportunities for expression which the *kratemata* offered, generated at the same time the conditions for their genesis, their adoption and their dissemination” (Anastasiou 2005:85).

And so, the composers of *kratemata* were frequently and variously inspired by the sounds of musical instruments or by the melodies and musical forms of secular music. It is a clear trend that is manifested throughout the duration of the 14th and 15th centuries also surviving quite a bit later, as it will be seen below.

By tracing the evolution over time of the phenomenon – that is, the appearance of oriental secular music in the sources of ecclesiastical manuscripts – through the manuscripts that survive until this day, the following findings can be ascertained: the *kratemata* of the 14th and 15th centuries provide evidence of the influence of secular music and they do not have, at first glance at least, a particular form⁷. These pieces either record or incorporate and adopt elements from Romaic or other ethnicities’ secular music. Later in the 15th century, there exist clearer examples of secular music such as the *Persikon* (*Persian*), *echos* IV, *Ar yi yi a to go go gor ri gi* in NLG 2401, 122v which has Persian words, and primarily in the 16th century:

- The first dated notated Greek folk song *Χαίρεσθε κάμποι, χαίρεσθε* that is placed with a Persian Music Section *Yelleyelleli... gjaleleli...* in a manuscript from 1562 (Ivion 1189, 120r-127r).
- The “Persian *tasnif* of Apoulkater *Ab yarim, eteroud ritleri tina tillilir*” (Leimonos 259, 184r-185v) in 1572.
- Georgios Therianos’s composition “Περὶ τοῦ θανάτου ὅταν ἡ ψυχὴ φοβῇτε τὸν ἀποχωρισμὸν τοῦ σώματος” (Olympiotissis 168, 12v-13v).
- and the untitled study *Dir tarou dilli terella*, with syllables in Persian or Ottoman (Megistis Lavras E4, ff. 244r-245v).

⁶ Stathis 1979:116-117 and Anastasiou 2005:409, 445-460, “Οἱ θύραθεν ἐπιδράσεις στὸ μέλος τῶν κρατημάτων”.

⁷ An analytical approach to the study of form of the *kratemata* is given by Anastasiou 2005:409-460.

17th C.: The First Collections of Secular Music

An increasing tendency in terms of the appearance and dispersal of both traditional and art music in the codices of ecclesiastical music is observed for the first time in the manuscript output of the 17th century. Art music compositions are transmitted with incomplete information with regard to their identity; that is, with *makam*, *usûl* and composer details absent. Their titles are accompanied by descriptions which point to the corresponding names of the *kratemata*, such as “ethnikon”, meaning “secular”, “nay” and “atzemikon”. Worth noting is the common inclusion in the collections of works of unclassified genre belonging to the composer Theophanis Karykis *Anene... Dostoum gelela...* with descriptions such as those mentioned above. The distinctive feature of this century is the surfacing of a new element: the first collections of secular music, which at the time were of short length and not yet self-contained. The first of them, in the manuscript of Ivron 1203b with thirteen traditional songs and the second in Gritsanis 8 with content of art music origins.

18th C.: The Peak Period of Activity

From the middle of the 18th century and later, a great qualitative and quantitative difference can be observed in the appearance of secular music within ecclesiastical music codices. In the manuscripts that were written throughout the 18th century, folk songs are missing altogether. Interest therefore turns to art music, either that which flourished in the Ottoman court or that of the Phanariot circles. The first self-contained music collections appear in the middle of the 18th century; for example: Gritsanis 3, LKP (dossier) 60 & 137 and RAL 927. They were whole anthologies of secular music, some with few, others with many pieces, and most importantly, containing the works of Petros Peloponnesios.

In addition, an increase in the loose folios of secular music within ecclesiastical manuscripts, primarily contained within *Papadikes* and *Anthologies*, can be seen. For the first time the *makam*, the *usûl* and often the genre are indicated clearly, giving a complete identity to each piece. The aforementioned descriptive markings seem to be innovations of Petros in his four autographed collections⁸. At the end of the 18th century examples are found of *makam* and genre indications on the Ivron codex 1038, examples of *makam* indications on Gennadius 725, *makams* and *usûls* in RAL 653, and LKP 19/173 of Petros Byzantios, and in many others. The phenomenon of attributing pieces to their composers, which appeared gradually in the manuscripts of the 16th century, increases in the mid-

⁸ See more in the chapter titled “The Sources”.

dle of the 18th century and later. Frequently, the name of the composer is given on the pieces themselves and not rarely, in the vocal compositions the poet is mentioned as well. In the third quarter of the 18th century a new genre is seen to appear, the Phanariot song, which gradually occupies a central role in the preferences of the scribes, resulting in a great number – most likely the greatest – of source material concerning the notation of Phanariot songs.

The main contributor to this qualitative differentiation, who, in essence generated a paradigm in secular music collections, is Petros Peloponnesios – with his most significant innovations: self-complete collections, complete identifying details on the compositions, and the founding of the genre of Phanariot songs. In conclusion, the 18th century signifies the peak of the phenomenon, that is, the transcription of secular music within the manuscript tradition of the *psaltic* art, thus revealing the main occupation and familiarisation of post-Byzantine music teachers with secular music; a familiarisation which gradually evolved into a deep knowledge. This conclusion is supported by the first theoretical treatises, written in the beginning and the middle of the 18th century by Panagiotis Chalatzoğlu and Kyrillos Marmarinos respectively, which attempt the first comparative presentation of ecclesiastical and Arabo-Persian music.

19th C.: The First Printed Publications

At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the *Anthologies*, that is, the collections, of secular music increase notably in number, while the occurrence of scattered folios of secular music within the codices of purely ecclesiastical music (for example: *Papadikes*, *Anthologies*, *Sticheraria*, *Heirmologia*, *Doxastaria* and *Mathemataria*) becomes rare. In this period Nikeforos Kantouniaries and Gregorios Protopsaltis are the dominating figures in terms of the volume and quality of their work and their compositional output. Moreover, the first transcriptions of secular music into the *New Method* of notation were created by Gregorios.

With the dissemination of the printing press, the tendency towards the notation of secular music into Byzantine *parasimantiki* was documented relatively early on in the newspaper *Ἐφημερίς* (*Ephimeris*), which was published in Vienna between 1791 and 1797 by the brothers Markides Pouliou⁹. More specifically in issue no. 41, dated 22nd May 1797, p. 482, a song by Nikeforos Kantouniaries, *Τὶ περιφορὰ*

⁹ See. L. Vranousis 1995:291-295, 615-617 where relevant comments and transcriptions into the new musical notation can be found by G. T. Stathis. It is worth noting that this particular volume is exceptionally rich in source materials, information and comprehensive documentation with regards to the 18th century.

ἀθλία, was published in the *Old Method* notation¹⁰. L. Vranousis states: “it is the first time that printed Byzantine music appears in a Greek publication”¹¹.

Sometime later and immediately following the publishing of the first printed book of ecclesiastical music in 1820¹², the first printed anthology of secular music also appeared. It was called *Εὐτέρπη* (*Euterpe*), a title that refers to the corresponding manuscript collections and the *acrostics* that can be found within them¹³. Following this, a significant number of printed music collections appear, up until the beginning of the 20th century, which in essence continue the tradition of notating secular music with the use of Byzantine *parasimantiki*. The manuscript traditions of secular compositions determined the way in which the contents were organized in the printed music collections: the songs and instrumental compositions are classified based on the *echos* or *makam*; usually the name of the composer is mentioned, while more rarely some biographical details, the *usûl* and often the corresponding *echos* – *makam* are added. In song compositions the first verse is given along with the musical passage and the remaining verses appear as text only. Transcriptions of folk songs are frequently contained in the material of musical periodicals, which circulated in Istanbul and in Athens in the first two decades of the 20th century.¹⁴

¹⁰ As it will be seen below, the song is contained in many musical manuscript collections.

¹¹ Vranousis, 1995, p. 295, where Vranousis characterizes the publication as “a new achievement in printing, which for the first time was seen by musicophiles of the era, and which the publishers of *Ἐφημερίς*, presenting it with understandable pride, were certain to repeat”. The sudden arrest of the publishers by the Austrian police as “accomplices” of Rigas Pheraios [translator’s note: Rigas Pheraios was a prominent writer and revolutionary of the times; heralded as a national hero by the Greek independence movement] was the reason for the discontinuation of the newspaper (last page no. 99, printed Friday 11/22 December 1797), and so it would seem no other opportunities existed for the publication of notated songs.

¹² *Νέον Αναστασιματάριον*, [...] published [...] (by) Petros of Ephesus, [...] In [...] Bucharest [...] 1820.

¹³ On the topic of acrostics see also p. 247 in the chapter “Genres of Secular music” Here the titles of the musical and non-musical printed collections are mentioned as examples. *Πανδώρα* (Constantinople 1846), *Καλλιόπη* (Athens 1847), *Ωραία Μελπομένη* (Constantinople 1849), *Ἡ Τερψιχόρη* (Athens 1853). Names of ancient origins were fashionable amongst the Greek populations of Asia Minor in Constantinople during the 18th century. For the printed collections of secular music see more in the following works: Bardakçi 1993, Behar 2005:245-268, Smanis 2011. A complete bibliography is given by G. Chatzitheodorou in his work *Βιβλιογραφία τῆς βυζαντινῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς μουσικῆς, περίοδος Α’ (1820-1899)*, Patristic Institute for Patristic Studies, Thessaloniki 1998, pp. 251-262, also worth noting is the bibliography in Ihsanoğlu 2003:166-170.

¹⁴ See as an example the material in the journal *Αἴεα*, vol. 5 (1902), Constantinople; *Φόρμιγξ*, Athens, 1901-1912 (with some intermediate interruptions in publication); *Ἐθνική Μούσα*, Athens 1909-1910; *Μουσική*, Constantinople 1912-1915; *Νέα Φόρμιγξ*, Athens 1921-1922. Synoptic catalogues of the contents of musical periodicals is given by K. Romanou 1996.

From the above, it can be deduced that the use of Byzantine *parasimantiki* for the notation of secular melodies is a trend that first appeared during the 15th century, virtually simultaneously with the consolidation of the notational system. Along the way it evolved into a practice, which, despite its variations and changes, continues essentially uninterrupted to this day¹⁵.

¹⁵ The chronological boundary of the materials under examination in this work is the third decade of the 19th century. That said, in the years following and up until the middle of the 20th century numerous significant transcriptions appear. The works of K. Psachos and S. Karas deserve mention here, of which only a small proportion have been published and remain largely inaccessible to those interested to this day. Unfortunately leading research centres in Greece ignored, if not underestimated, the great and living written tradition of *parasimantiki*, choosing, for decades instead, a totally inappropriate and unscientific methodology of notating traditional Greek music, that of writing in staff notation; completely unable to convey the finer intervallic nuances and inventing terms such as “the *mode* of Re” and “of Do”. See for example the Academy of Athens publication *Ελληνικά Δημοτικά Τραγούδια, vol.3 (Music selection)*, by G. K. Spiridakis and S. D. Peristeris, Athens, 1968.

