

## The Last Cafe-Aman Performer\*

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The study of modern Greek music can no longer ignore the early history of the international recording industry. The collection and production of world music by the major international record companies offers critical information missing from current studies on Greek music. The history of the international recording industry unintentionally documents Greek musical forms and transformations more precisely than current writing on this musical tradition. These existing non-Greek studies also provide a chronology and the wider social context for Greek music, which is not yet part of the existing literature.

In order to assess the complex documentation available on the international record industry, and the information relative to Greek music since 1900, three thematic areas will be presented. First, the basic documentation from the international recording industry that attests to the systematic collection of Greek music. Next, as a case study, to understand how closely these wider events are reflected in the life and career of one especially notable Greek musician, I will examine the recording career of Yiorgos (Theologinis) Katsaros. Finally, to demonstrate that the study of modern Greek music must be examined within the wider context of modern music history I will review folklore and ethnomusicological arguments that discuss created traditions within certain world musics.

\* I would like to thank Yiorgos Katsaros for all the help he has provided me over the years. All the oral history interviews I have collected with Yiorgos Katsaros are held at Indiana University (Bloomington) Archives of Traditional Music (hereafter ATM) under ATL number 89-049-C/F. I must also thank Neni Panourgia for reading over early drafts of this essay. Dr. Panourgia's own writings on Greek music (and especially the creation of *rebetika*) inform much of my own thinking. While this essay builds on my series of articles on Katsaros I must also acknowledge my debt to Pamela J. Dorn-Sezgin on the history of commercial recordings in Turkey.



*The International Music Industry*<sup>1</sup>

In the early years of this century, cylinders and 78rpm record discs were the cutting edge technologies in sound recording. Their influence and distribution were not limited to Europe and North America, but rather, took place on a world-wide scale. The phonograph was invented in 1877, and only twenty odd years later, anyone in the Ottoman Empire could order their gramophones from a London-based company.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1890s all the major international record companies were using the techniques in the production of foreign language products they had pioneered earlier in the century with the successful innovation of target-marketing in the sales of old time and race records. "All companies used the same business strategies . . . they manufactured both recordings (discs, cylinders) and record-playing equipment (gramophones, phonographs), and tried to market them worldwide."<sup>3</sup>

From our perspective in history the music documented on these cylinders and records is the principle artistic legacy of these companies. Yet preserving rare, and at times, obscure musical traditions was far from the original intent. "Recordings of the smallest group were not made in the hopes of large record sales, but to help the sale of gramophones, which were manufactured by the same companies."<sup>4</sup> By 1907 the largest companies had divided the world between them "(V)ictor got the Americas, China, Japan, and the Philippines, while

<sup>1</sup>This chronology is now possible not simply because of the published literature but also the growth in archival holdings. The ATM, British Institute of Recorded Sound (hereafter BIRS), the University of Utah, the University of California at Los Angeles and the Balch Institute can now provide the researcher a vast selection of commercial records, sheet music, oral history interviews with senior generation musicians and other relevant documentation. The ATM holdings are the most extensive in terms of commercial recordings with well over 1,000 78rpm records.

Other collections specifically on Yiorgos Katsaros are to be found at the Florida Office of Folklife, the Tarpon Springs Cultural Center, the University of Utah, and the BIRS Greek record holdings.

<sup>2</sup>Ali Jihad Racy, "Record Industry and Egyptian Traditional Music, 1904-1932," *Ethnomusicology*, 20/1 (1976) p. 23; Steve Frangos "The Many Traditions of Greek Music," *Greek American*, March 23, 1991-April 6, 1991; Ali Jihad Racy, "The Impact of Commercial Recording on the Musical Life of Egypt 1904-1932," *Essays in Arts and Sciences*, 6 (1977) pp. 58-94.

<sup>3</sup>Pekka Gronow, "The Record Industry Comes to the Orient," *Ethnomusicology*, 25/2 (1981) p. 252.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 276.

Gramophone got the rest of the world."<sup>5</sup> Commercial companies even before 1907 had sent engineers around the world to record virtually every musical tradition on the planet.

The record companies relied on native middle-men who acted as talent scouts. These men were often local merchants who spoke European languages and were familiar with their region's musicians and musical preferences.<sup>6</sup> Economic motives – never aesthetic judgments – propelled these early commercial recordings. As Gronow emphasizes: "the record industry did not set out to change musical traditions. It recorded whatever it thought could be sold, seeking its artists from the opera houses as well as the music halls . . . But the artists had to be professionals in their own fields, performing in the urban centers where the industry operated."<sup>7</sup>

As far as traditional Greek and Anatolian musical recordings are concerned we find that "(T)he Gramophone company of England sent an engineer, W. Sinkler Darby, to Constantinople in July 1900. The company sponsored further visits in 1903, 1904 (twice), 1905, 1907, and 1911. Another expedition is known to have stopped in Smyrna in 1910. Records made on these trips served the company well. Not only were they available in Greece and Turkey, but the best were routinely reissued on Victor in the United States, forming the bulk of the company's Greek catalogs."<sup>8</sup>

To gain some perspective on what all these field trips generated, in terms of Greek and Anatolian music, between 1900 and 1910 the Gramophone Company collected 1,925 recordings in Constantinople and Smyrna alone.<sup>9</sup> To fully appreciate the success of these early Ottoman recordings we should note that these Anatolian recordings were the third largest in overall production in a list of sixteen locations in Asia and North Africa. The resounding significance of this number is all the more noteworthy when we realize that the first and second place areas of field collections were the entire sub-continent of India with 4,410 recordings and the whole Far East with 4,265 recordings.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 254.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.; Racy, Record Industry.

<sup>7</sup>Gronow, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Richard Keith Spottswood, "Do You Sell Italians?" *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly*, 15 (1979) p. 255.

<sup>9</sup>Gronow, p. 255.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.



With so much invested in these field recordings it is not surprising that the record companies actively sought to advertise their newly acquired music inventory. Numerous foreign language catalogs were issued and sent around the world. In the early 1900s record catalogs were published in a host of languages and then target-marketed to immigrant groups throughout North America.<sup>11</sup> The efforts of these companies to educate the public and inform them as to which foreign music traditions were available was not limited solely to the newly arriving American immigrants but to the American-born retailer as well.

The following hypothetical scenario is taken from the May 1918 issue of the *Voice of Victor*, a commercial record publication expressly issued to record store owners. This particular feature story is entitled "The Buyer of Foreign Records."

To the live Victor Dealer . . . (are) . . . offered . . . opportunities in starting a foreign record department. Many Dealers, no doubt, have felt they would like to get some of the foreign business, but have been a bit hesitant, fearing the complexities which might arise.

A careful analysis of the subject clarified conditions materially. It is not so hard as it seems. You ask how to proceed? It is really easy if you but take a little time to work out the details.

Tony Andrianopoulos shyly enters your store, hat in hand, and asks if you have some Greek records. Of course you have none, and in the past have simply told him so and turned away from him. He slinked out of your store. You soon forgot the whole incident. Now, had you invited Tony into your office, inquired from him about how many Greeks, for instance, lived in your city, and put it to him squarely if he thought it would be profitable for you to carry Greek records, you might sit up surprised that you had wasted some wonderful opportunities."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The over fifty Albanian, Greek, Syrian and Turkish record catalogs in various ATM collections provide a comparative base for future research. To give some sense of the time frame involved the oldest Greek catalog in the ATM collection is the 1911 Columbia Record Company catalog while the oldest full page advertisement for Greek records is in *Eastern and Western Review* (Boston) 2/8 (January 1910): p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> Spottswood, p. 220.

While Gramophone eventually secured primacy of market share in musical traditions hailing from the Balkans and Anatolia it was far from the only company issuing such recordings. Greek, Balkan, and Turkish records were systematically produced from approximately 1902 through the 1930s by a host of different international record companies. To cite only a few of the most important we should note Odeon, International Zonophone which became Bluementhal Freres (and later, International Talking Machine and Odeon-Bluementhal), and finally Victor which after 1929, and the merger with Radio Corporation of America, became RCA Victor.

In the whirl of international mergers and buy-outs even the Gramophone company eventually merged with His Master's Voice. As the labels themselves indicate such early recordings (while field collected in places like Smyrna, Constantinople, and Thessaloniki) were ultimately pressed and mass-produced in factories located in Austria, Germany, France, and/or Switzerland.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Greek Commercial Recordings 1896-1965*

The broad historical sequence of Greek commercial recordings is no longer in doubt. The first documented commercial records of Greek music were made in New York City in 1896. From at least 1902

<sup>13</sup> The history of academic musical field recordings of Balkan and Anatolian music traditions has yet to be determined. We do know that at essentially the exact same time that commercial recordings were being made in Constantinople and Smyrna European musicologists were also documenting music traditions throughout the Balkans and Western Anatolia.

For the moment only the most basic of information on these first field recordings is available. Existing references report that individuals such as P. Kretschmer recorded three discs on the Greek island of Mitilini in 1901, Felix Von Luschan in 1901-1902 recorded a number of cylinders in Turkey, music is known to have been recorded in Albania in 1903, an unspecified number of cylinders was collected in the Balkans between 1905-1910, and Bela Vikar (at some time) before 1911 recorded five cylinders in Constantinople. See Frank J. Gillis, "The Incunabula of Instantaneous Ethnomusicological Sound Recordings, 1890-1910: A Preliminary List," in J. Kassler and J. Stubington (eds.) *Problems and Solutions: Occasional Essays in Musicology Presented to Alice M. Moyle* (Sydney, 1984) pp. 322-55. Not all traditional Ottoman music was recorded where one would expect. Perhaps the most famous example is that of Benjamin Ives Gilman recording Ottoman (perhaps Egyptian) musicians in 1893 at the Columbian Exposition (Racy 1977; Frangos 1991). Obviously to arrive at a full historical and aesthetic understanding of Balkan and Anatolian music at the turn of the century the commercial records and the academic field recordings must be compared.



recordings were made simultaneously in Western Anatolia and North America. From 1900 until approximately 1922 commercial field recordings in Constantinople and Smyrna were actively collected and regularly released.

From 1916-1917 until the end of World War II the Greek recording industry in North America ultimately produced such an extensive series of recordings that by 1940 "Greek" music was fifth in the nation's overall ethnic music production.<sup>14</sup> This at a time when the United States Bureau of the Census counted only 273,520 Greeks, making them the thirteenth largest ethnic group in the country. It is generally accepted that the musical competition between Mme. Coula (Antonopoulou) and Marika Papagika (which began in 1916-1917) prompted this unexpected surge in Greek record sales.

Greek music and musicians followed and were influenced by the *diaspora*. "By the 1920s there were many Greek emigrants, from both the mainland and the islands, in the Congo and Abyssinia and especially in the Egyptian cities of Alexandria, Suez, Port Said, Zagazid, and Ismailia. The majority, however, settled in such cities as New York, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Wherever they settled, these immigrants established strong Greek communities, zealously guarding and perpetuating their religion, language, social customs, and especially their regional folk music and dances. By 1920 each community had several coffee-houses and at least one cafe-aman, where one could hear (and dance to) live Greek music."<sup>15</sup>

In 1925, Marika's, the first highly fashionable cafe-aman in New York City, opened in a one-story walk-up at 34th street between 7th and 8th Avenues. The owner was the top-selling commercial record

<sup>14</sup> Perkka Gronow, "Ethnic Recordings: An Introduction," *Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage*, Washington, D.C., 1982, p. 23. Just for the sake of clarity while the sales of Greek records is recognized as fifth in total production that number is an academic assumption. It is documented that Greek records were fifth in sales for Columbia Records. For RCA Victor they were in fact thirteenth in documented sales. The assumption is that the approximately 200 recordings on the RCA Victor Orthophonic label – for which no public documents exist – can be added to the existing RCA Victor figure which then places their Greek category into that company's fifth place standing as well (Gronow 1982; Smith 1991). While national figures are based on the joint Columbia and RCA Victor sales more exacting research must be conducted in Greek music produced in North America.

<sup>15</sup> Soterios (Sam) Chianis, "Survival of Greek Folk Music in New York," *New York Folklore*, 24/3-4 (1988) p. 682.

vocalist Marika Papagika. John K. Gianaros, one of the few remaining senior generation musicians, recalls this club as catering to a wide array of ethnic groups, Arabs, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Yugoslavians, and even Turks.<sup>16</sup>

In 1926 the opening of commercial recording studios in Athens met with sustained success. Record production in the United States was such that by 1940 over 1,000 records were issued with Greek materials.<sup>17</sup> This figure does not include Greek records imported to North America.

After 1945 until 1965 a post-war economy in North America, along with a number of other factors, led to a renaissance in Greek and Balkan music recorded in North America. Having learned the lessons of target-marketing from the international companies, a vast number of small record companies began to appear that were even more tightly focused in terms of musical styles and specialized niche market appeal.

Complicating this entire chronology is the 1930-1932 RCA Victor sponsored field trip to Greece of music executive Tetos Demetriades.<sup>18</sup> Released only in North America under RCA Victor as the Standard Orthophonic label the approximately 200 recordings document an incredible array of musicians, vocalists, and musical styles. Demetriades' unique field collection was produced at a highly critical moment. The post-1922 exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey led to a situation where whole genres of music were outlawed by both countries. Demetriades' commercial venture unintentionally amassed the single greatest collection of traditional urban and folk Greek and Western Anatolian music recorded during this era.

The very success of Orthophonic is simultaneously a commentary on that regrettably ignored facet of the international commercial record industry, the status of imported records. As already noted the pattern

<sup>16</sup> Frangos.

<sup>17</sup> Gronow, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Chianis, p. 42. Chianis' statement that Demetriades had a "two year stay (1930-1932)" to gather his field collections can now be more precisely dated. Spottswood's discography notes that Demetriades (who was an extremely active vocalist) recorded Rempetiko (sic) (Night Blues) and Oh! Baby sometime in March 1930 and did not resume recording until January 15, 1932 (c.f. Richard Keith Spottswood, *Ethnic Music on Record, A Discography of Ethnic Recordings Produced in the United States, 1893-1942* [Urbana, 1990] 3/1159.)



of the international music companies was established long before the arrival of one immigrant from anywhere in the Balkans, Greece, or Western Anatolia. As we have already noted once immigrants from any ethnic group arrived in sufficient numbers to constitute a buying market the companies would begin to record or import music traditional to that group.

The first waves of immigrants arriving from the Balkans and Anatolia were predominately men with new found money and a nostalgic taste for homeland traditions. At the moment no discography or other publicly available tabulation exists that documents the full array of Greek, Balkan, and Anatolian records imported to North America. It is important to stress that the target-marketing strategies of the international record companies were not limited to the urban centers of North America but reached literally anywhere on the planet.<sup>19</sup> The strong traditions of music and dance from the Balkans and Anatolia were showcased by consummate musicians who could adapt to the new demands of performance on commercial records and were willing to travel the world to perform.

#### *A Life in Brief*

Yiorgos (Theologinis) Katsaros (1888- ) emigrated to the United States in 1913 from his home village of Aghia Marina on the island of Amorgos. Katsaros was soon playing regularly in the Greek clubs along 8th Avenue in New York City. As Katsaros recalled he learned of the outbreak of the First World War just as he was stepping off the train in San Francisco.

During the years of the First World War and into the 1920s Katsaros followed the touring patterns typical of Greek and Balkan performers of this era. Katsaros traveled a seasonal route throughout the Western United States performing and composing traditional Greek music. By 1919 Katsaros began wintering in Tarpon Springs, Florida where he was assured both a relaxing season and a full schedule of performances. Due to his growing popularity by 1928 Katsaros began recording for

<sup>19</sup>The circulation of Greek music produced in North America back to the nation state of Greece or elsewhere in the world is generally recognized but little understood. For the moment the array of 78rpm records (and long-playing albums) of Greek music produced in North America housed at the BIRS serves as the only known publicly available collection of such records outside the United States (Morris 1980: 91-114).

the Victor Talking Machine Company at their main studios, then located in Camden, New Jersey.<sup>20</sup>

Given Victor Talking Machine Company's promotional efforts and their target-marketing to Greek markets around the world Katsaros began to tour to Greek colonies and wealthy individuals literally around the world sometime in the 1930s. Yiorgos Katsaros was neither the first nor the last traditional Greek musician to travel in such worldwide circuits. Mme. Coula (Antonopoulou) and Marika Papagika are both known to have traveled back and forth between North America and Greek colonies in Egypt. Other performers could be named.

Paradoxically while producing one hit song after another Katsaros (for reasons that he now never remarks upon) experienced considerable trouble in the recording studio. And here we have the unsolved mystery behind Yiorgos Katsaros' recording career. Record company documentation reports that while acknowledged far and wide as an extremely popular musician Katsaros' studio recordings were often rejected and not released. Very often record companies would only release two of Katsaros' songs (e.g. one record) a year. Yet at the same time these same company documents also provide the evidence for Katsaros' ongoing commercial popularity. As a case in point Katsaros' songs were often simultaneously released on both a ten inch record and a 45rpm record. Then, again without explanation, after 1938 Katsaros no longer recorded for any of the large international companies.

Such was Katsaros' enduring popularity that he continued to record with one company or another, such as Grecophon and Metropolitan, until the late 1950s. During the Second World War and for sometime thereafter, Katsaros centered himself primarily around Boston, except for the winter months in Florida. Curiously this era was also one of general decline for the type of music Katsaros played. While remaining a major name in the field Katsaros began to appear on record more often as the composer and backup artist rather than the lead performer.

The overall decline of performance venues led to Katsaros' semi-retirement to Tarpon Springs, Florida. Even during this period Katsaros

<sup>20</sup>Katsaros has long asserted that he first began to record for commercial record companies in 1919 (Frangos 1991; Smith 1991). While this may yet prove to be the case Richard K. Spottswood's discographic research with original company documents reports 1928 as the first year Katsaros recorded.



was regarded with considerable admiration and was periodically called upon to perform. Since the 1960s Yiorgos Katsaros has performed (and now with the advance of great old age) appears each year as the honored senior musician at the Tarpon Springs Epiphany Celebration.

In North America where Katsaros established his career, during the 1960s through the early 1980s he was virtually forgotten. Yet in Greece during this exact same period Yiorgos Katsaros' most notable songs appeared on one anthology of re-released music after another. It is not surprising then that in 1988 renewed interest by music scholars in Greece led eventually to the reissuing of a special two-record re-release album. At this same time Katsaros was invited to Greece where he received numerous awards, appeared on a special Greek national radio program devoted to his life and career, and at various public performances hosted in his honor.

Since 1988 the recognition Katsaros has received has not been limited to Greece. In North America various academic articles, numerous newspaper accounts, and an array of appearances on Greek-American television and radio shows have only increased awareness of his considerable role in the history of modern Greek music. The interest in Katsaros' career continues apace with another compilation of his original 78rpm recordings issued only last year under the title *Dervisaki*.

Yiorgos Katsaros' renewed fame continues to see expression in totally unexpected media. A photograph of Katsaros, guitar in hand, appears on the title page of the Greek Americans volume of Benchmark Books Cultures of America series.<sup>21</sup> Given that this series is aimed at a juvenile high school audience the person and accomplishments of Yiorgos Katsaros are being presented to the current generation of American school children as the very epitome of "a beloved . . . composer and performer of taverna music."<sup>22</sup>

### *Three Songs, One Tradition*

Yiorgos Katsaros' compositions provide an especially fine vehicle for the study of modern Greek music. It is not that Katsaros does not receive recognition as a noted musician and composer, only that his full range of themes is ignored. Morris' observation is typical of this

<sup>21</sup> David Phillips and Steven Ferry, *Greek Americans* (New York, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

general pattern. "Georgios Katsaros exercises a peculiar fascinations over scholars of Greek urban music, not only because of his highly idiosyncratic and engaging vocal and instrumental style but also the breath of his repertoire, which embraces hashish songs . . . and Italian-style kantades."<sup>23</sup>

As we shall see the selective responses to Katsaros' full range of musical themes parallels the general neglect of the activities of the international recording industry. In 1934 Katsaros only recorded two songs *Me Tis Tsepes Adeianes* and *Pajames* (Columbia 56345-F A/B). Both songs became colossal hit-selling records.

The lyrics to *Me Tis Tsepes Adeianes* have especially interested scholars:

*Ti tha kanoume, re fili sti katastasin afti,*  
What are we to do, my friends with a catastrophe like this,  
*pou hamenoi pame oli edo stin Ameriki.*  
we are lost altogether here in America.

*Opou ftoheia ehi pesei kai den vriskoume doulia*  
Where poverty has befallen us all and we can't find jobs.  
*kai ta eksoda den vganoun kai travoume symfora.*  
and we can't meet our expenses and we're suffering.

*Pos thimamai tis emeris pou ehame ta tallira,*  
How we recall the days when we had the dollars,  
*pou trogame britzoles kai tora trome lahana.*  
when we'd eat steak and now we eat greens.

*Pou pigainame stous gamous kai fovazame taxi,*  
When we went to weddings and we'd call for a taxi,  
*tora pame me ta podia m' ekso eis tin eksohi.*  
now we go by foot when we go out to the country.

*Pou pigainame sto teatro kai fonazame taxi,*  
When we went to the theatre and we'd call for the taxi,  
*tora pame me ta podia m' ekso eis tin eksohi.*  
now we go by foot when we go out to the country.

<sup>23</sup> Roderick Conway Morris, "Greek Café Music with a Listing of Recordings," *Recorded Sound*, 80 (July, 1981) pp. 89-90.



*Me ta moutra kremasmena me tis tsepes adeianes,*  
 With our faces hanging with our pockets empty  
*perpatoume mes' stous dromos ma me skepsis, silloges.*  
 we walk in the streets in deep thought and reflection.

*Me ta moutra kremasmena me tis tsepes adeianes,*  
 With our faces hanging with our pockets empty,  
*perpatoume mes' stous dromos Hoover ti mas ekanes;*  
 we walk in the streets Hoover what have you done to us?

In "Rebetika in the United States Before World War II" Ole Smith asserts that "(T)his song is a purely American product in text and music. It reflects the Depression experience, and there are no particular Greek values and norms in the song. It would probably be difficult to understand for Greeks living in Greece. We see here on a small scale the adaptation to American standards, values, and culture."<sup>24</sup>

While the definition and precise parameters of the *rebetika* as a distinct musical genre remains a matter of debate, all possible definitions concur that such compositions are ultimately "songs of the people."<sup>25</sup> Logically, then, why are Katsaros' best selling records, that focus directly on the everyday experiences of the Greeks in North America, not really *rebetika*? It is also ahistorical to assume that Greeks, in the 1930s, whether they were living in the rural countryside or in the urban area never heard of the American Great Depression. Katsaros often wrote of the troubles and lives of Greeks in North America. That scholars today omit these songs from consideration, focusing instead on Katsaros' hashish songs and *kantades*, does not lessen their initial impact or their lasting historical significance.

To cite only one other example of Katsaros' ability to identify and express in song the experiences of his Greek-American audience we can turn to his 1935 recording *Mana Mou Eimai Fthisikos* (Mother I Have Consumption) (Columbia 56358-F B). It has long been recognized that the 1890 to 1922 Greek immigrant generation's greatest initial fears as general laborers were mutilation on the job and

<sup>24</sup> Ole J. Smith, "Rebetika in the United States Before World War II," ed. Dan Georgakas and Charles C. Moskos, *New Directions in Greek American Studies*, (New York, 1991) p. 148.

<sup>25</sup> Katherine Butterworth and Sara Schneider (eds.) *Rebetika: Songs from the Old Greek Underworld*, (Athens, 1975); Gail Holst, *Road to Rembetika*, (Athens, 1976); Stathis Gauntlett, "Rebetiko Tragoudi as a Generic Term," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 8 (1982-1983).

tuberculosis. It is important to note that as Yiorgos Katsaros sings this song he continually coughs between verses. A point of some interest to Greek speakers is the fact that Katsaros also plays with the words *fthisikos* i.e. consumption, and the word for spitting, i.e. *ftisikos*.

*Mana mou eimai fthisikos, mana mou eho ftisi,*  
 Mother, I am consumptive, mother I've got  
 consumption.

*Fila ton allo mou adelfo mana na mi' kolisi*  
 Take care of my other brother mother so he doesn't  
 catch it.

*S' arahniasmeno spilaio tha' pa' na katoikiso*  
 In a cobwebbed cave I will go and live

*Osotou na' lthei e stigmi mana na xepsihiso*  
 Until the moment comes, mother, to die

*Poles manades klapsane as klapsei ki'e diki mou*  
 Many mothers have cried let mine cry too

*Stis Arizonas ta vouna as thapsei to kormi mou.*  
 In the mountains of Arizona let her bury my body.

Is this a *laiko* song or a *ksenitia* song? Certainly in 1935 this was not a Greek-American song. The majority of Greeks thought their work in America was only a temporary sojourn. Demographically half of all Greeks who emigrated to North America returned to Greece. In point of fact Greeks were fourth among all ethnic groups who left the United States to return to their country of origin.

Aside from repatriation, a recognized phenomenon of the entire *diaspora* experience is the temporary return trip back to one's family and home village or town. An as yet unexplored feature of the Greek-American experience is the exceptionally high number of individuals and newly established families who returned to Greece in the 1930s. Today, these trips are often recalled as a time of indecision. Many Greeks who fully intended on returning permanently to Greece, for whatever reasons, ultimately did not and so made the trip back to America. Others who only went to visit stayed on for an extended period.

Many experienced a strange sense of double and even triple alienation. An often heard remark from the senior generation of immigrants is that they never considered themselves true Americans. Yet



once they returned to Greece they soon realized they had also become something other than simply Greeks. For others who made the trip back to the United States the feeling of never really belonging fully to either Greek or American society came as a deep and lasting realization.

It seems reasonable then, that in 1935, *Mana Mou Eimai Fthisikos* was a *ksenitia* song and not one that designated one's identity as a Greek living permanently in America. In keeping with the *ksenitia* songs of the hard life away from family and home most of the anti-immigration reports seen in Greece during this period focused on the dangerous work conditions and the poor health care Greek's were subjected to on a daily basis. *Mana Mou Eimai Fthisikos* was another tremendously popular record.

Another reason to discuss repatriation and temporary return trips in the 1900-1930s era is that the common Greek whether in the countryside or in an urban setting did not simply hear or read about Greeks in America. Given the overall demographics involved it would have proved extremely difficult not to speak directly to or at the very least know of someone who had gone to America. The interpretive evaluation of any Yiorgos Katsaros song must be informed by both American immigrant history as well as the history of the Greek *diaspora*.

While after August 12, 1938 Yiorgos Katsaros never recorded again for either the Columbia or RCA Victor companies his recording career was far from over. Katsaros was yet to record many songs in the hashish and *kantades* vein now praised by scholars. But Katsaros was also to record top-selling songs that have enduring historical import that do not fall into easily defined categories. One such song is *Saltadori* (Those Who Jump) which was recorded in 1945 (Standard Records F-9025 A).

I'm not afraid of jail, of beating, of the stick, vre'  
What I got scared of was the kommantatur.<sup>26</sup>

When the Germans go by they put on all airs,  
I jump up on their cars and steal everything from them.

I'll jump up and jump up, vre' and I'll break even again.

<sup>26</sup> Kommantatur is the German word for the building where the German army headquarters was located in a Greek town during the occupation.

Gasoline and petrol we are after,  
because it brings us a lot of money and we have a good time.

I'll jump up and I'll jump up and I'll smoke my pipe,  
I'll jump up and I'll jump up and I'll smoke my pipe.

They're jealous they don't want to see me well-dressed,  
they want to see me broke and then they'll be happy.

I'll jump up and I'll jump up and I'll smoke my pipe.

Given the current definitions of *rebetika* and *ksenitia* songs what is the precise musical genre for *Saltadori*? And how do we properly refer to a Greek composer writing about events in Greece while living in far off Boston?

### Created Traditions

Musical traditions can serve contemporary political purposes that the original musicians and their audience could not have possibly anticipated. The political factors are diverse. The final downfall of the Ottoman Empire between 1911 and 1922 initially curtailed, then stopped, all export of records from anywhere in the Balkans or Anatolia. The dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War was only the political not the final cultural outcome.

Every Balkan nation state following the war sought to completely disavow any connection to the Ottoman past. Among the cultural manifestations this ideologically inspired position took was the total and systematic eradication of anything Ottoman: architectural sites (including mosques and grave yards), language, place-names, written script, music genres, dances, etc.

The Balkan political and cultural leaders deemed these actions crucial to their very survival as distinct sovereign nations. Politically dependent on the Great Powers the Balkan statesmen realized that cultural forms often determined the geo-political boundaries agreed upon at Versailles. All major political figures of the region believed *realpolitik* conditions following the First World War meant not simply political change but cultural transformations.

In Greece, the cultural sanctions on music were rigorously enforced. Recording studios did not make their appearance in Athens until the mid-1920s. By the late 1920s government restrictions completely



excluded certain musical genres from being recorded commercially. Entire musical genres such as the *smyrnaika* (or as it developed in the underworld of Athens at this time into the form known as *rebetika*) were actively targeted for suppression.

All this is generally well understood in modern Greek studies. What is not so readily recognized is that other Balkan countries, including Turkey, posed their own sanctions on these musical traditions for exactly the same reasons – they were foreign to an idealized form. Yet, by whatever name, this matrix of popular music persisted in the region.

Another pan-Balkan aesthetic phenomenon is that beginning in the 1970s these suppressed musical forms were both re-discovered and once again labeled as distinctly unique. This is the case with a number of national-specific genres such as *rebetika*, *neo-klezmir*, *gazino* (Turkish 'music hall'), and other Balkan and Anatolian music traditions. The re-release in North America of music on 78rpm records from 1900-1965 that document these once pan-Ottoman genres as the cultural property of one or another group has only extended the wider argument.

This renewed interest into these common pan-Balkan/Anatolian music genres could well serve scholars of modern Greek music by helping to situate the tradition(s) they study into the wider scheme of world history and research. Debates in American folklore over the ongoing influence of scholars in the transformations of 'hillbilly' into 'country' music mirrors many of the same alterations and created traditions of *rebetika*, *neo-klezmir*, and *gazino*.<sup>27</sup> The collection and production of world music by the major international record companies along with the unique legacy of Orthophonic records attests not only to time-honored Greek-specific musical genres but also to the shared music traditions of the Balkans and Western Anatolia. Greek recorded music and the recollections of musicians in North America provide a rich but largely unexplored field of study for this wider nexus of traditions that were systematically eliminated or severely suppressed.

Yiorgos Katsaros' description of the various instrumentalists, dancers, and singers that he routinely toured with is especially instructive in noting the performative setting that help to perpetuate these outlawed traditions in North America:

<sup>27</sup> Neil V. Rosenberg, "Collecting Our Thoughts," *Journal of American Folklore*, 104/411 (1991) pp. 92-102; Mark Slobin, "The Neo-Klezmer Movement and Euro-American Musical Revivalism," *Journal of American Folklore*, 97/383 (1984) pp. 98-104.

By the time I came to the United States (1913) I found in every city: San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Boston, New York over fifty, sixty bands . . . in every city! . . . (D)uring those early years there were eleven or twelve cabarets in every city. Greek musicians and dancers, Armenians, Turkish girls, Egyptian all playing at the same clubs.

We'd play Turkish music. We'd play Armenian music, Greek music, everything. And those musicians they had to be experienced! Oh, yes, because not only Greeks went to those clubs. Syrians, Armenians, and Turks came to those clubs. In my *compania* I had to be careful to have an oud player to sing a little Turkish and then another fella to sing a little Arabic for the Syrian customers.

See that's the reason I had to have six sometimes seven musicians with me. You had to have them! I had to have a cymbalon player, a clarinetist, a violinist, me on guitar, and an oud player just to play for the different customers (Katsaros 2B ATL 89-049-C/F).

While this specific quote focuses exclusively on the conditions in major cities, Katsaros reports (as do other senior generation musicians) report that these same mixed *companias* were also necessary in small towns and rural areas. Such recollections (along with the existence of commercial records) illustrate that no substantial change in the attention of musicians devoted to pleasing their audiences took place in North America. In the Aegean and Adriatic seaports of the Balkans and Anatolia the population was mixed and the musicians had to perform to an ever changing audience. In North America, given the relative demographics between Balkan and Anatolian immigrants and the general American population, having a mixed ensemble insured that all the varying musical genres could be supplied regardless of the musical preferences of that evening's audience.

Yiorgos Katsaros' career clearly documents the power of the international record companies in the movement of traditional musics around the world. Further the full range of Katsaros' compositions also attest to the role of music in speaking of the Greek collective experiences in America as they were experienced from the 1900s to the 1960s. Only by incorporating the history of the international record



industry with the specific activities of traditional Greek musicians and promoters can we ever hope to learn the actual history of Greek music since the 1890s.

## The Religious Encounter Between Orthodox Christianity and Islam as Represented by the Neomartyrs and their Judges\*

NOMIKOS MICHAEL VAPORIS<sup>‡</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

Contemporary historians of the history of the Orthodox Church identify Neomartyrs as those Orthodox Christian men, women, and teenagers of Albanian, Bulgarian, Georgian, Greek, Rumanian, Russian, Serbian, Syrian, and Ukrainian heritage who found themselves during the Muslim Ottoman hegemony (thirteenth to the twentieth century) in a situation which required them to choose between conversion to the Muslim faith to preserve their lives, or suffer torture

*\*This preliminary study of the Neomartyrs, based almost exclusively on the hagiographical texts, is dedicated to friends and colleagues: Professor Evie Zachariades Holmberg, Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology; Professor Harry J. Psomiades of Queens College; The Very Reverend George Karahalios, Provost of Hellenic College and Holy Cross; The Very Reverend Professor Demetrios J. Constantelos of Stockton State College; The Very Reverend Father Constantine J. Raptis of Las Vegas, Nevada; The Very Reverend Father Ilia S. Katre, Pastor of St. John the Baptist, Las Vegas and Vicar General of the Albanian Diocese of the United States; The Very Reverend Anthony Tomaras and his Presbytera Dr. Sophronia Tomaras; and Professor Alexander and Gloria Avtgis of Watertown, Mass. I am also grateful to Professors Speros Vryonis, Jr. and Harry J. Psomiades for their helpful comments.*

*‡Father Vaporis fell asleep in the Lord while this paper was in an advanced stage of preparation. He did not personally review the final version.*