

Folk Vocal Techniques of *Pontos* and *Epirus*
in Modern Greece: a Study in Reflexive
Musical Ethnography

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Abstract of Thesis

In this thesis I examine the vocal techniques employed by performers of contemporary Greek Pontic and Epirotic traditional music. Combining fieldwork analysis with personal experience, I have been able to demonstrate the underlying cognitive and physiological processes that inform these techniques. While anatomical considerations constitute a central focus of this analysis, I offer at the same time an appraisal of vocal bimusicality. The latter issue arises from my own particular perspectives, understandings and personal experience in diverse musical worlds. The objectives of this research are: a) to identify current vocal techniques in Pontic and Epirotic styles, paying special attention to the exceptional use of the larynx and the articulation/projection of vocalized sounds; b) to bridge the gap between theory and practice in studies of voice and vocal production; and c) to demonstrate how personal experience is relevant to ethnographic research in vocal music.

In introducing the research field, chapter I of this study reflects on my role as a native researcher-performer and outlines my choice of case studies. The following chapter reviews the *Cantometrics* project and considers its relevance to Greek folk song. In addition, other scholarly literature pertinent to the present analysis is surveyed, while there is also consideration of fundamental anatomical and physiological issues. Chapters III and IV focus on the central points of analysis in the thesis with special emphasis on the vocal production of the Pontic and Epirotic styles. Employing verbatim quotations from: a) five co-workers in the Pontic style and b) five co-workers and one polyphonic group in the Epirotic style, I analyze the vocal production of these two Greek musical genres as currently performed. The main conclusions of the research refer to techniques such as: a) the movable larynx, b) the extensive use of the soft palate and upper chest area, c) the widening of the mouth, and d) the dropping of the jaw, which are equally discussed in detail. In the same vein, an analogy is drawn between the vocal production and the size of the musical intervals used in both traditions.

Chapter V deals with my own learning processes in Greek folk culture and also in the two aspects of my musicality: the Pontic and Western operatic. Here I endeavour to locate myself among my co-workers and also to provide an 'insider's' view on the subject of bimusicality. I also comment upon the effect that ensues when moving from the Pontic to the operatic vocal style, that is to say, the consequences of changing musical systems and musical environments. The final chapter summarizes the findings of this monograph whose practice-based research is also accompanied by a DVD containing performances by co-workers and by audio examples. In these ways, I attempt to bridge the 'gap' between theory and practice in those aspects of vocal production that stem from an aural/oral musical tradition.

List of DVD examples

No.1 Hrysanthos Theodorides

In this example Theodorides sings one of his most famous songs, *Τακά'τ* (Taka't, Courage), accompanied by Theodoros Eleftheriou on the Pontic lyra. The song refers to poor wretched people whose courage abandons them as time passes. In the aftermath of Hrysanthos' death (31-3-2005), this song has become an exemplar and point of reference for all other Pontic co-workers (Examples 1-5) in this thesis.

No.2 Stathis Nikolaides

In this example Nikolaides sings two samples: Taka't ('Courage') and *Αναστορώ τα παλαιά* (Anastoro ta palea, 'I recall the old times'). The latter was also re-arranged (on the basis of an older setting) by Hrysanthos and is one of the most celebrated Pontic songs. It refers to the places in Pontos which were involuntarily abandoned after 1922. The singer is accompanied by his son-in-law, Giorgos Lelekides, playing the Pontic lyra.

No. 3 Alexis Parharides

In this example Parharides sings Taka't and a *Μακρύ καϊτέν* (Makry Kayten, 'long melody') unaccompanied. He learned Makry Kayten as a child from the village elders who referred to the piece as 'Divine Melody'.

No. 4 Theodoros Eleftheriou

In this example Eleftheriou sings Taka't while he is also playing the Pontic lyra. It is a characteristic example of how the lyra and voice ornamentations are interconnected.

No. 5 Elias Petropoulos

In this example Petropoulos sings Taka't and also a *Καϊτέν* (Kayten, 'melody'). Again, there is the perceptively strong link between the ornamentations of the lyra and those of the voice.

No.6 Polyphonic group of Aetopetra

In this example the multi-voiced ensemble sings two polyphonic and one heterophonic song from Epirus as taught to them by Vaggelis Kotsou (next DVD example). The first polyphonic piece, called *Αλησμονώ και χαίρομαι* (Alismono kai hairomai, 'I forget and I rejoice') and is a song dedicated to those who left their homeland. The second, *Στης Δερόπολης τον κάμπο* (Stis Deropolis ton kambo, 'In Deropolis' field') is a heroic song. And the heterophonic example, *Αυτά τα μάτια Δήμο'μ* (Afta ta matia Dimo'm, 'Those eyes my Dimos') is a love song.

No. 7 Vaggelis Kotsou

In this example Kotsou as soloist, sings one of his favourite songs. This love song is entitled *Τι κακό έκανα ο καημένος και με λεν όλοι φονιά* (Ti kako ekana o kaimenos kai me len oloi fonia, ‘What have I done that all consider me a murderer’).

No. 8 Vaggelis and Anthoula Kotsou

In this example Vaggelis and Anthoula open with one of Epirus’ most famous polyphonic songs: *Alismono kai hairomai*. The second, *Σηκωθείτε ολίγο ολίγο* (Sikotheite oligo oligo, ‘Arise slowly and carefully’) used to be sung at the close of any social occasion (usually weddings). The third song, *Γιάννη μου το μαντήλι σου* (Gianni mou to mantili sou, ‘John’s Handkerchief’) is another song dedicated to those who left their homeland.

No. 9a) and b) Drossos Koutsokostas

In this example Koutsokostas gives a characteristic performance of both Epirotic and the so-called Greek Anatolian vocal styles. The first, *Αϊντε ηπήρ’ ο Μαρτής δώδεκα* (Ainten ipire o martis dodeka, ‘It is already 12 March’) is a pastoral sung by the Sarakatsani. The second sample, *Το πονεμένο στήθος μου* (To ponemeno stithos mou, ‘My hurting chest’) is a love song from Asia Minor.

No. 10 Nestoras Katsigiannopoulos

In this example Katsigiannopoulos sings a historic song about Greece’s war of Independence (1821) which is called *Να κάνω τα βουνά να κλαιν* (Na kano ta vouna na klain, ‘If I could make the mountains cry’).

No. 11 Antonis Kiritsis

In this example Antonis sings the monophonic version of *Alismono kai hairomai* in addition to *Μάυρα μου χελιδόνια* (Maura mou helidonia, ‘My black swallows’), which is also dedicated to those who left their homeland.

No. 12 Konstantinos Tsachouridis

This example identifies significant moments in my own musical learning process. These are live performances from an open-air concert when I was 11 years old and a recording which was made at my home in Veria, Greece.

No. 13 Hrysanthos Theodorides

This audio example is used for the performance analysis at the end of chapter III. Recorded in 1986, it is an old Kayten.

No. 14 Antonis Kiritsis

This audio example (recorded in 1996) called *Μαριόλα*, ‘Mariola’ is used for the performance analysis at the end of chapter IV.

INTRODUCTION

My wish to conduct research at doctoral level on the performance practice of Greek folk vocal music stems from a set of personal circumstances and musical experiences. The voice has always been my main musical 'instrument', and in spite of my ability to play the piano, the guitar, and percussion, those two fleshy membranes (vocal folds) captured my interest since I became aware of myself. The absence of a detailed study of the vocal music which nurtured me and the need to document my own personal involvement in the song tradition of my ancestors have inspired me to carry out the present research.

In the year 2003, having finished my MMus degree in Ethnomusicology, I entertained the idea of completing a PhD in Performance Practice. Considering myself more a performer than a theoretician, such an idea seemed altogether congenial. The major impediment, however, was that I hailed from a traditional musical background where the repertory was ill-suited to the systematically-engendered categories of academic musicology. This realization became even more apparent when I saw that almost all other performance practice PhD students had been cradled in Western art music.

This left me with the option of ethnomusicology, a field which embraces rigorous academic applications together with the essential analytical apparatus for the kind of intellectual inquiry I had in mind. Paradigms of ethnomusicological research related to the present study include such names as Baily (1995), Johnson (1984), Rice (1994), and Zemp (1987, 1990). In the broader field of ethnomusicology, scholarship in vocal performance analysis remains limited. The main focus tends to concentrate on 'social concerns', leaving performance practice studies (especially those which

deal with vocal production) to develop independently. Not that vocal performance practice is void of social context; such a view is in my opinion erroneous. It is my concern, therefore, to achieve a more equitable balance between the ‘social concern’ of ethnomusicology and the informed analysis of vocal performance practice. Within these parameters I offer this study in reflexive musical ethnography with its focus on the execution of the vocal performance practice of two Greek folk music genres.

It is the achievements of performance practice that constantly remodel the limitations of music-making and also performance practice itself. The gradual increase in performing standards also carry a parallel action in terms of investigation and exegesis; for instance, the desire to extend the musical possibilities of their instruments has led performers to add extra strings or even to reconstruct the ‘body’ of the instrument.¹ Similarly, the vocal demands of a tenor’s tessitura range higher than ever before, a circumstance that engenders new techniques in terms of vocal production.

With regard to anatomical production and vocal techniques folk song has remained neglected by scholars. While there is commendable aesthetic comment between social groups and epochs, the study of folk song as a source for vocal technique production is relatively unknown. If an operatic singer can sing without an amplification system in a large hall, why then do we not investigate the more extraordinary ability of certain folk singers to communicate from one mountain top to another? How, in physiological terms, is this achieved?² And if a coloratura soprano is capable of representing Offenbach’s mechanical doll ‘Olympia’ then why do we not observe how some folk singers can imitate the flow of water?

¹ A characteristic example is that of Hiotis (1920-1970), a Greek *bouzouki* virtuoso who in the 1940s added an extra double string in order to extend the range of the instrument.

² An example of this kind of vocal technique can be found in Zemp’s film: ‘Yootzing and Yodelling’ and ‘Head voice, Chest voice’ (1987).

Whereas a common denominator exists between the terms ‘song style’ and ‘singing style’, in this study ‘song style’ refers to *what* is sung and ‘singing style’ to *how* the music is sung. As the analytical part of this thesis employs anatomical language, instead of ‘singing style’ I will use the synonymous ‘vocal style’ which embraces such anatomical considerations. Because my chief concern here lies in the actual production of voice in specific Greek folk musical idioms, I will hereafter use the term ‘folk vocal style’ with respect to the action of singing.

My account attempts to reveal and analyse vocal techniques derived from current Greek folk vocal production with a specific focus on the practical side of the performance. Two widely-performed folk vocal styles are examined: the Pontic and the Epirotic. The methodology adopted here follows the ethnomusicological pathway of ethnographic research shared with personal experience in the performance practice of these two vocal styles. The question of vocal bi-musicality between Western and Pontic music plays also a significant part in this thesis as recorded in the reflections and personal experiences in chapter V.

One of the main concerns here is to bridge the gap between descriptive methods used to explore vocal performances on the one hand, and the inner musical experiences we have during the action of singing on the other. Thus, the present text is a tri-faceted interpretation which lies between personal experience (subjectivity), the ‘folk view’, which employs the analytical tools of the discipline of ethnomusicology (objectivity) and vocal articulation. In my opinion, this research is of benefit, not because of new theoretical knowledge or of my enthusiasm for the voice as a musical instrument or of my innovations in the area of the Greek folk voice – interpretations can always be changed, surpassed or even disputed – rather, it is the virtues of current practical experience and actual performance practice that reinforce

my arguments in this project. Ideas, folk views, academic references, scholarly standpoints and scientific analyses are all considered in relation to actual performance practice, which thus becomes of itself a living history.

Acknowledgements

Writing a thesis can often be compared with an isolated and lonely journey; however, my experience with this present document seemed like a long live performance: creative, social, and not without its unavoidable ‘sound problems’ and challenges, as it unfolds before a demanding audience. I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank those who have contributed to the research towards realization of this project. First among them is Marina Lady Marks, chairman of the Michael Marks Charitable Trust, who not only funded this initiative, but also shared from the outset my desire to complete these investigations.

Working in the field, I have drawn upon the expertise, time and knowledge of a number of celebrated musicians and singers whose willingness, patience and collaboration have been more than valuable to this research. I am particularly indebted to my co-workers: Hrysanthos Theodorides, Stathis Nikolaides, Alexis Parharides, Theodoros Eleftheriou, Elias Petropoulos, Drossos Koutsokostas, Antonis Kiritsis, Nestoras Katsigianopoulos, Vaggelis and Anthoula Kotsou and the polyphonic group of Aetopetra. I am also grateful to those anonymous sensitive followers of the Greek traditional music whose stimulating comments have contributed to the final outcome of this thesis. Many thanks to Vasilios Raptis and Elias Plastiras who guided me to a number of audio recordings, books, websites, venues and persons.

I am extremely grateful to Dr Stephen Cottrell who introduced and directed me to the world of academia. He provided me with advice from Prologue to Epilogue and his astonishing organizing abilities brought this project to fruition. Also, without the unflagging help of Dr Dimitri Conomos this text could not have been written. I

owe special thanks to my vocal tutors Diana Stuart and Norman Beedie who introduced me to the world of Western classical voice and to Jeffrey Talbot who assisted me in extending my vocal abilities. Also, to my beloved friend Dr Anastasios Gaitanidis whose convivial company included hours of philosophical discussions and feedback, elements of which lie embedded in this text.

In a thesis based on intellectual reflection, personal experience and musical performance practice, pride of place goes to those who initiated me into the world of Greek folk voice. From early childhood they unstintingly proffered both material and emotional resources. My parents, Stavros and Roula, not only encouraged me in musical studies but also cultivated my aesthetic sensitivity to the tradition that I love and serve.

Finally, two names remain who have contributed in their own way to the fulfilment of this thesis. My brother, Makouli, whose resonance of the Pontic lyra has always moved my heart and whose childish enthusiasm will never 'grow up'. I owe much of my vocal 'sound' to him since we were brought up 'musically' and our eagerness to perform has constituted a mutual influence. If Makouli's bow were an oar, he would have sailed the Atlantic twice! Finally, my dear Glykeria, whose patience and love for this thesis have formed my diathesis at the most difficult times of this five-year endeavour.

Chapter I

Fieldwork and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall consider both the nature of the scholarship and of certain ethnomusicological issues that relate to the proper understanding of the matters developed in the ensuing chapters. As researcher and musician, it is appropriate that I begin by defining the concept ‘native ethnomusicologist’; for, as matters stand, I am both the subject (writer) and object (native performer) of this monograph. ‘Working in the field’ will include the means by which the actual fieldwork is affected. I shall also outline certain particular aspects of the case studies I have chosen, as well as some concerns of the text presentation in order to provide a holistic view of the forthcoming material.

1.2 The Native Ethnomusicologist

The investigation of a broad spectrum of performance practices requires widely-focussed research. Moreover it is essential to adopt a methodology that is concomitant with the analytical path that one chooses to pursue. For this reason, scholars such as Hood (1971) and Nettl (2005:184-196) have offered diverse and noteworthy information about the kind of work that has to be completed during fieldwork. In so doing they have allocated a range of appropriate suggestions and rules for such an initiative.

Working 'in the field', has traditionally embraced a form in which the researcher, as outsider, spends a specific and, for the most part, fixed amount of time among a particular group of people in order to gather data for a subsequent analysis. In Nettl's words this is 'the most common kind of field trip [...] which has as its goal the making of a general sampling of a community's musical culture' (1964:66). For many years this dimension of anthropology was defined by the exoticism of its subject matter and by the 'distance' in terms of culture and geography that separated the researcher from the group under investigation. Examples of such ethnographies include Rice's (1994) work on Bulgarian music, Baily's (1988) research on Afghan music, as well as Baud-Bovy's study of Greek traditional songs – a study extending over the first eight decades of the 20th century. Although one could argue the merits of each case and of their different approaches, all constitute examples of Western scholars who have worked in distant places, sampling a foreign community's musical culture.

The aspiration of adventurous musicologists to explore unknown or unfamiliar ways of social interaction within a given group of people engendered the so-called 'classical' ethnography. In its early years, this study was qualified by epithets, latterly eschewed, such as 'exotic'; a term which best described a society evaluated by the standards of the West. In recent years, perceptions of a globalized international community have changed the scope and aims of such studies. Scholars are now required to possess high expertise, technological knowledge, different research approaches, and more sophisticated analytical skills. Even from the 1980s, Geertz could proclaim that 'we are all natives now' (Geertz 1983, in Peirano 1998:106).³

³ See also Geertz (1979a) and Pian (1992).

Tangential to these overall changes, the aim of having the researcher as empathetic ‘native’ is of a particular relevance in the present context. Seeger (1987) in his paper, ‘Do We Need to Remodel Ethnomusicology?’ raises a number of questions regarding the form and concept of the discipline in relation to ‘Merriam’s model’ (1964) of ethnomusicology. Identifying myself incontrovertibly as ‘native ethnomusicologist’ has significantly influenced the way in which I have approached and developed my thesis and its postulates.

The label ‘native ethnomusicologist’⁴ describes one who studies the particular group of people to which he or she belongs. Examples, in the field of Greek traditional music, would include names such as Dragoumis⁵, Peristeris⁶, Anoyanakis (1979), Samiou and Aidonides,⁷ and others who dedicated their lives to the study of Hellenic folk song. Their contribution to the Greek folk music may on the surface be perceived important mostly in terms of collecting and gathering material, but they have also established a large field for subsequent anthropological and ethnomusicological analyses. At the wider scholarly level, writers such as Jackson (1987) and Okely (1983) have offered significant insight into so-called ‘anthropology at home’, thereby contributing a different dimension to modern ethnography. Okely’s research on British traveller-gypsies, for example, provides valuable information about ‘native’ anthropological research, a pioneer exploration for her day.

⁴ See Chiener (2002) and Chaney (2001)

⁵ Markos Dragoumis’ academic interests have focused on the Byzantine tradition (1966a, b) and Greek folk music (1975, 1976, 1977 and 1979-80). His knowledge exhibits a facility of both Western art and the Byzantine musical systems and his work in the Greek folk song discography is considered to be one of the most significant.

⁶ One of the most important scholars in Greek folk song. His publications include song collections from Epirus and Moria (1950), Dropoli-northern Epirus (1958), as well as musical studies on the tempo and rhythm of Greek native songs (1976) together with instrumental studies on instruments such as the bag-pipe music of the Greek Islands (1961).

⁷ Both have significantly contributed to the collection, preservation and promotion of Greek folk song. They dedicated their entire lives to this endeavour and produced numerous recordings. As singers they covered a large part of Greece and their private archives include some of the rarest and most valuable recordings.

Gourlay (1978), in his paper 'Towards a Reassessment of the Ethnomusicologist's Role in Research' argues that 'classical' ethnography treats the concept of the investigator-ethnomusicologist as 'neutral' or even as a presumed 'missing' element from the actual research; in this way, ethnographic results are assumed to be objective. Arguments of this sort, however, ignore the plethora of social constraints that the ethnomusicologist experiences in his own learning process, which subsequently affect the final outcome of a research study.

In a similar vein, Nettl asserts that 'objectivity, avoidance of value judgements based on the investigator's own cultural background and acceptance of music as part of cultures are essential' (1964:11). He disregards the fact that subjective elements are somewhat inevitable in ethnography; any analysis requires interpretation and ethnographic results are hermeneutic by nature. To be overly critical at this point would be unfair since Nettl's statement was written more than half a century ago and even he would probably think differently nowadays finding such kind of objectivity as anachronistic.

In that ethnomusicologists are subjects investigating cultural phenomena, conventionally external to themselves, they nevertheless frequently raise the vital question of 'subject-object relationship' (Gourlay, 1978:3). Inevitably, subjectivity and objectivity are cardinal concerns for the 'native' researcher who must weigh his/her findings between those two challenging variables. Values of traditional anthropological distinctions such as the 'emic' (insider's perspective) and the 'etic' (outsider's perspective)⁸ may seem to collapse when confronted by the situation of a 'native' researcher. The latter renders the above distinctions not only invalid but also absolute at a certain level of analysis. It is the researcher himself who somehow

⁸ On the Emic/Etic distinction, see Harris (1976) and Feleppa (1986).

creates a kind of schizophrenia as he elucidates, mentally, those distinctions and makes them co-exist harmoniously.

The inevitable challenges expected from this insider/outsider duality might further be augmented when the native researcher himself is also a performer of the musical genre under examination. The present project constitutes such a case and it is well worth noting that research conditions in which the native is both performer and researcher mitigate the gap between insider and outsider, since the same person could be the subject or object of investigation. Only during fieldwork is the gap significantly reduced, at least until the point of writing when subjectivity has to be exercised with great care. It would be unrealistic to imagine a performance in which the scholar/artist exercises total self-effacement. This diagnosis is obvious as soon as we consider the aforementioned plethora of 'social constraints' implied in human condition and the fact that they cannot be eliminated but only minimized.

The native researcher, as performer,⁹ enjoys certain advantages such as language familiarity, common physical gestures, knowledge of customs, verbal and facial expressions, conventions, easy access to informants, an innate awareness of how the music functions, establishing viable parameters of artistic evaluation, and so on. The disadvantages, though fewer, are nonetheless significant. Owing to their innate nature, they are more difficult to assess and eliminate. Familiarity, for example, can breed existential prejudice and a clouding of objectivity.

The evaluator has inherent expectations, based on his own experience of the genre, of how pieces 'should' be rendered. Here, precisely, is where I see two significant challenges for the native ethnomusicologist. First, to cultivate the ability to isolate personal views and assumptions; and secondly, the tendency *not* to ask certain

⁹ See also Koning (1980).

questions either because of one's dogmatic orientation or because the common culture precludes a cognitive approach to the very formulation of such questions. Fully aware of these tendencies, I count myself, in so far as this research is concerned, to be a native researcher-performer since my experience of Greek folk song has undoubtedly been the primary and most powerful motivation for its undertaking.

1.3 Working 'in the field'

Aside from the accrued experience and knowledge I have gained from a lifetime familiarity with the traditional Greek vocal repertoires, I can with satisfaction say that my intensive and extensive fieldwork for this thesis was successively undertaken between 2004 and 2007. I was, moreover, able to gather additional material during the Christmas and Easter vacations of those same years. At the outset I needed to decide how to store my data, which comprised musical performances, interviews, and narration. For a study concerned with vocal styles and its techniques, it seemed appropriate to employ audio-visual recording equipment. With it, I would be able to observe different movements of the singers in the course of a performance (such as the use of the upper chest, the raising of the shoulders, the jaw dropping and so on). I chose a SONY HI8 digital camcorder and a Panasonic Mini DV camcorder (with tripod). Having used a handycam as a recording tool in earlier fieldwork on *rebetiko* venues (*ρεμπετάδικα*, *rebetadika*) in London, I was convinced that this would be the ideal device for my field research.

For those reluctant to perform before a camera, I employed a Mini Disk recorder with built in microphone; a digital photo camera was also useful for capturing moments and pictures. Notwithstanding these items of sophisticated

technology, I soon discovered that pen and notebook continued to hold a position of exclusivity. Much valuable discourse was spontaneously conducted in taverns, restaurants, domestic celebrations, and even in a car: moments when machinery would disrupt the intimacy that initiated the conversation. Unlike the camera, pen and paper record through the exercise of memory, while sustaining the immediacy of the exchange.

As a performer myself, I wanted to make accurate recordings in order to provide meticulous paradigms of certain vocal techniques which would shape my thesis with clarity and distinction. In time, I realized that, of equal importance, are human communication and vocal sound perception. In terms of fieldwork, this meant that I should summon up my inner skill in order to detect untold and frequently ignored actions that are vital for the full story to be divulged. In that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, I, as researcher and native performer, struggled to operate at two independent, and occasionally, contradictory levels; an exemplar situation of the native ethnomusicologist's schizophrenia. Thus, subjective memories and experiences of 'being there', in the field, were vital in terms of gathering data and also constructing the ethnographic text.

Being a Greek musician writing about Greek music, inevitably influences the final outcome. I am aware, however, that this material should be handled with perspicacity and sobriety. As Cottrell asserts: 'It is one thing to have a musician tell you directly what they believe they do (which itself may be quite different from what they actually do) and quite another thing to have information relayed, inevitably filtered and edited by a third party' (2004:19-20). Additionally, one should take into consideration that ethnography and its narration moves from prologue to epilogue in a

continuing process of interpretation, definition and translation of fieldwork experiences.

On this point, the native researcher can provide a useful contribution. But even an insider is subject to the normal exigencies associated with transferring fieldwork data into textual form. In order to temper my subjectivity and establish my thesis as academically viable in terms of technical analysis, I arranged to collaborate with my vocal tutors, Diana Stuart, Norman Beedie and Jeffrey Talbot. Their experience and knowledge in recognizing vocal production have contributed significantly to my own understanding of this kind of analysis. As such, I would also have a professional outsider's opinion to counterbalance my own positions which, in turn, would inform the conclusions that I reach.

Each and every 'field' of research is unique, and while subjectivity on both sides (observer and observed) is taken for granted, I nevertheless deem this present fieldwork as a momentous experience. It represents an approach that I always wished to take, not only as a singer but also for other aspects of my musical life; for instance, I was fortunate enough to conduct the last interview of the celebrated singer Hrysanthos Theodorides whose voice and biography captivated my interest since childhood. As an active singer I already have established contacts with important contributors to the Greek folk song repertory and, moreover, have easy access to a variety of informants. With such advantages, I eschewed the need to spend time familiarizing myself with people and places; I could head directly to the point of conducting interviews.

Working *in situ* has its own peculiarities and specific problems. I often wanted to remove myself from the persona of performer and allow the researcher in me to

take over, but my co-workers¹⁰ barraged me with questions and obstacles: ‘Do you actually want to discuss such rubbish?’ or ‘Do you believe that this is going to make you a better singer?’ or ‘Leave it for another time’ or ‘Why do you want to explain theoretically such [vocal] techniques, after all music is sound?’. On occasion, I encountered people who alleged to have specific knowledge but refused to offer it on the pretext that such revelations would detract from the authenticity or originality of what had been handed down to them from the older generations. For instance, when I first met Nestoras Katsigiannopoulos (one of my co-workers for this thesis), he sang a traditional song (unknown to me) from his village in the presence of myself and two others. When I interviewed him one week later, however, he refused to sing the same tune asserting that: ‘When my grandfather had sung this to someone like you, the latter straight away recorded the piece with foreign instruments and also changed the melodic line, so I promised [my grandfather] that I would never sing such songs to the younger folk; let them go to the *πανηγύρια* (panygiria, local feasts) to hear them’.¹¹

1.4 Choice of Case Studies and Presentation of Text

Before embarking on this research project I did not consider that my initial plans and thoughts were especially ambitious. It soon became clear, however, that in dealing with folk voices and especially with their modes of production, I would need to limit my inquiry to particular case studies. Although focusing upon the role of the

¹⁰ By the term ‘co-workers’ I imply all those whose ‘voices’ are heard in the text. I worked together with these singers *in situ* while examining their vocal techniques and their method of employment.

¹¹ Interview with Nestoras Katsigianopoulos, 29/7/2004. Original quote: ‘Όταν ο παππούς μου τραγούδησε αυτό σε έναν άλλον σαν εσένα, αυτός αμέσως το ηχογράφησε με άσχετα όργανα αλλάζοντας τη μελωδία. Έτσι του υποσχέθηκα πως δεν θα ξανατραγουδήσω τέτοια τραγούδια στους νέους. Ας πάνε στα πανηγύρια να ακούσουν.’

individual in a given society¹² is a relatively recent approach in ethnomusicology, I strongly believe that the biographies of personalities who may be considered ‘musical paradigms’ of a given tradition should be exposed. More often than not they determine to a significant degree the mainstream of musical life. This point is exemplified in Danielson’s book (1997) ‘The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kalthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century’, where the author focuses upon Kalthum’s vita both from written texts and oral testimonies. Particular concentration is given to her role ‘as an exceptional individual in expressive culture’ (1997:9).¹³

It is important for ethnomusicologists to appreciate that in analysing a folk music performing genre, anonymity does not always guarantee subjectivity or prevailing beliefs with unbiased accuracy; rather, it generalizes the topic through stereotypical and wide-ranging notions. ‘Focusing in’ on eponymous individuals who constitute important musical exemplars of traditional Greek music making may offer a more valid understanding of performance practice and also of the function of music in an individual’s life. The crucial choice of case studies used in this thesis comprises a penetrating yet questionable part of my analysis, for it appears that I am attempting to distil an entire vocal style from the evidence of a few co-workers. On the other hand, I would argue that in certain circumstances the range of musical experience possessed by one person is of immense interest within the parameters of this present study.

Discovering the degree to which music is produced and experienced by individuals is of primary importance in this research. I have equally been interested in investigating what were the conditions under which singers developed their vocal techniques while the scrutiny of biographical matter could readily provide valuable information about the place of music in someone’s life. In terms of vocal

¹² For more information please refer to Nettl (Bruno), 1983:172-183.

¹³ See also Currey (1999) and Reynolds (Autumn 1998/ Winter 1999).

performance, individuality might imply subjectivity, which again returns us to a trope of my initial predicament in questioning how subjective or objective can someone be in exploring case studies of a particular individual performance aesthetic. It is of great importance, however, to realize that exploring vocal techniques without a specific ‘object’ (singer) to analyze is rather idealistic; this is because singing includes many invisible actions of the human body which need to be observed during actual practice.

Nettl has observed that: ‘In order to explore the study of the individual in ethnomusicological fieldwork we want to look at three selected approaches: biography, personal repertory and personal performance practice’ (2005:173). This statement provides the framework for the case studies analyzed herein. Moreover, the decision to examine Greek folk vocal styles through the medium of particular case studies was equally shaped by my understanding, as a singer, that vocal observations are clear and crystallized only through particular performances.

The singers of this project are not isolated; they all know each other and in many cases have worked together during their respective musical careers. One ought not to deduce that the sample constitutes a narrow range of musicianship. For the most part, the co-workers belong to different generations, each has his/her own distinctive vocal style, one or other may or may not accompany himself on traditional instruments and the reason behind their career choice may also differ. Their inherent diversity will also become clearer in later chapters. Finally, even if opinions vary, the examined vocal techniques between the co-workers in each style (Pontic and Epirotic) vary ‘in degree’ and not ‘in kind’ as Anna Johnson asserts in a similar study (1984:45).

Twenty-one professional singers, numerous musicians and other admirers of both the Pontic and Epirotic musical traditions participated in my fieldwork for this project. Each and every one contributed in some way to the final outcome of this

research. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I have reported the views of certain persons, each related for a specific reason. Thus, the choice of my co-workers in this project was based on three chief criteria: a) discography and current performance practice, b) technical knowledge of the actual vocal production, and c) position of authority amongst the Pontic and Epirotic musical scene (by which I mean old or new generation singers, academics or non academics, and, in one case, a renowned singer). Additionally, recordings of about 250 hours of both vocal styles were listened to in order to broaden the spectrum of the repertory for the purposes of analysis. These recordings contributed to my improved understanding of the vocal styles and were instrumental in my decisions about the repertory for my final recital.

Writing an ethnographic work such as this has the potential to be problematic, especially if the author ignores certain parameters of the presentation of the text. Scholars like Marcus and Cushman have pointed out the significance of how fieldwork data should be represented textually ‘as objective discourse about subjects among whom research was conducted’ (1982:25). Rice’s (1994) work on Bulgarian music is particularly relevant here, not only because of the nature of the research but also because he clearly rehabilitates personal experience in ethnography, especially in the form of interaction with others. The dialogic approach he takes by inserting verbatim quotations within his own explanation is justified by his desire ‘to keep alive the sense of dialogue and discourse’ (1994:11) and also reflects his own experience of the learning process.

In spite of not being a native researcher-performer, Rice’s way of presenting his research comprises in a textual sense a paradigm for this research. Although he characterizes the structure of his text as ‘an experiment designed to illustrate a possible approach to ethnomusicological analysis’ (1994:9), Sugarman comments on

it by pointing out that: ‘Hermeneutic theory, with its emphasis on dialectical processes and unmediated sensate responses to one’s environment, would seem to foreground the fluidity, complexity, and even ineffability of musical “experience”, and Rice’s account largely succeeds in capturing those qualities’ (1996:341).

With respect to the present textual record, my initial thought was to preserve the anonymity of my co-workers throughout, as this would keep at bay possible misunderstandings from those who did not want to mention their name and, also, avoid problems in case of a possible publication. This point was of great importance for myself since my interaction and collaboration with the co-workers continues until today. As mentioned above, all co-workers agreed to be eponymous; as such the text becomes alive with immediacy, specificity, and a greater sense of validity.

Since it was impracticable to cite all experiences and data gained during the fieldwork, I made two decisions in the hope that they would allow me to include as much information as possible. First I chose to provide the most informative verbatim quotations from the interviews and discussions, accompanied by footnotes in the original language; secondly, to incorporate my own voice as a native performer, not only separately¹⁴ but also in the body of the analysis.

In the first instance, I was determined to ignore my own subjective experiences and solely demonstrate the findings of my fieldwork, supplemented by further evidence from pertinent literature and therefore attaching more validity to my claims. The provision of quotations in the original language also enhanced the credibility and originality of the given information. In the second instance, I allocated myself in the text as another co-worker by referring to my own experiences as well as to my own performance practice. In so doing, I added a further dimension to the narrative.

¹⁴ See chapter V, ‘Personal Experience’.

To counter any association of egocentricity or authoritarianism in my writing, I would suggest that it was important for me to deal with the ambiguity of being simultaneously both observer and observed. On the other hand a thesis in 'performance practice' implies that the author presents himself neither as observer nor observed, but rather as one more co-worker in the tradition. I view this approach as scientifically advantageous as it broadens parameters, clarifies such as concepts as 'bi-musicality' and uniquely introduces the reactions of an insider.

Regardless of whether quotations arise or not from the 'real' time of fieldwork, these are all lived experiences which contribute effectively to the comprehensibility of the text. Furthermore, I incorporate verbatim quotations within my analysis. To do so achieves two things: on the one hand, it keeps alive a sense of discourse in the text and, on the other hand, it allows the voices of my co-workers to become part of this thesis. A significant consequence of these circumstances is that I often feel impelled to write in the first person, not least, as a native researcher but as a native performer whose performance practice parallels that of the co-workers.

Citing Mary Louise Pratt, Rice emphasizes two writing styles 'the personal narrative' and 'the authoritative', concluding that despite the grammatical and rhetorical differences, personal experience in certain ethnographies are 'the starting point for the interpretation of meaning' (1994:10). This tactic where the 'researcher' interacts with the 'text' may also offer corollaries 'that are not limited to those given by so-called informants' (Rice, 1994:11) and even if the textualization process covers the dialogue that occurred in the field, the author's voice may help the reader to keep alive the sense of dialogue between reader and author.

Furthermore, by positioning myself in the ethnographic text, the reader is in a position to share my contemplations about folk vocal techniques and their

understanding rather than evaluating the approach of this present research as egocentric. As a native performer, I would also like to state that quoting verbalized and visual extracts from my fieldwork operates like a skeleton. For in this way, my observations start to build up, revealing 'at which points my experience resonates with theirs and at other times demonstrating the tensions that must inevitably inhere between the different perspectives of individuals engaged within the same cultural field' (Cottrell, 2004:26).

Chapter II

Points of Departure

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I set out to establish the foundation of my analysis in both the aforementioned Greek vocal styles. This is accomplished by a critique of the *Cantometrics* project and its categorization of Greek folk song. Subsequently, I comment on certain related projects and the academic context of the present study. In this way I also aim to define the ‘terrain’ of my analysis in the later chapters, since not all related projects follow the same methodology or areas of interpretation. Finally, I shall provide the essential terminology of some anatomical and physiological matters which are accompanied by some pertinent visual material (photos, pictures and diagrams) designed for singers.

2.2 Greek folk song and the *Cantometrics* project

Over the last few decades there has been a growing interest in the traditional music of Greece and the range of scholarly studies have demonstrated a variety of approaches. So far, most endeavours by Greek and foreign scholars have focused on the methodical collection, transcription and publication of Greek folk music as well as on organology. Investigations into the history of the study of Greek folk song most likely began with certain independent studies by foreign travellers of the 19th century.

The systematic gathering of musical material, however, can be dated to between the end of 19th century and beginning of the 20th century.¹⁵

Within the international spectrum of ethnomusicology, numerous research projects on folk song have been initiated from a variety of perspectives. The genre has chiefly been understood as changeable phenomenon, in view of the fact that the songs were transmitted orally, transcribed at a specific moment in its history, analyzed within its socio-cultural context, and evaluated as the result of a more broadly-based profile of musical activities. While organological studies on traditional musical instruments tend to multiply, analogous study on the most commonly used instrument, the human voice, is quite rare. Indeed, our knowledge of voice production in Eastern cultures is very limited, unlike the Western vocal style, which has been amply examined and documented. In the light of this, I aspire to make this project a paradigm for the study of folk vocal production around the world, making due acknowledgement of previous work undertaken in this area.

Cantometrics (1962) is perhaps one of the most fundamental and ambitious projects of folk song study. Alan Lomax and his colleagues undertook a large intercultural study in an attempt to describe the general features of accompanied and unaccompanied song performance. They gathered ten samples from almost four hundred contexts; as Feld (1984) asserts (p. 384), the relatively small number of samples was justified by the fact that performance models in each society, being highly standardized, precluded the need to amass a vast number of examples. On the other hand, Driver points out that ‘no explicit method is given for choosing these relatively small samples of songs from the many recorded for some societies. Apparently this was done impressionistically’. (1970: 57)

¹⁵ For more information on Greek research projects, see Appendix II.

Of critical importance was the question: which ten samples were to be considered as 'representative' for research purposes? Feld raises a pertinent issue: 'How can I maintain the integrity of patterns discoverable in large bodies of data when the Cantometrics system seems to sacrifice so much significant data in order to objectify a "core pattern"?' (1984:385). Although *Cantometrics* produced a stylistic world map and substantiated, in part, the initial premise that 'song style symbolizes and reinforces certain important aspects of social structure in all cultures' (Alan Lomax, 1968: vii), Feld's research on Kaluli society contradicts Lomax's findings on the three patterns of social organization in vocal groups: interlock, overlap and alteration.¹⁶ He asserts that: 'no one of these three characterizations predominates', all three characterizations are 'equally salient' (1984:392). Moreover, and concomitant with Feld's findings, Lomax's unison (in singing) in societies of low techno-economic standard, such as Kaluli, does not exist.

Of Lomax's ten categories in worldwide song style, he views Greece as belonging to two categories: Category VIII, 'EURASIAN' and Category IX, 'OLD EUROPEAN'. The 'Eurasian' category is characterized by monophonic-soloist singing while 'old European' consists of choral and collective singing (either polyphonic or heterophonic); thus, Greek folk song was correctly perceived as being monophonic (Eurasian) and polyphonic (Old European). However, Greece was mistakenly divided into South (Eurasian) and North (Old European) since such a geographical dichotomy would prove to be too general and naïve in chapters III and IV.

¹⁶ Lomax used the term 'interlock' for indicating the social organization of musical groups with a uniformity of vocal parts, common among non-complex forest societies; 'overlap' for larger societies and a more complex organization in musical production, and 'alteration' for those complex societies that provide a clear distinction and division between singing parts.

What follows comprises Lomax's account of the most important elements in the vocal style of each category. Thus, 'Eurasian' is characterized by:

Singing in solo, by unblended unison, by instruments used for accompanying songs or for dance tunes. The tone of these instruments very often corresponds to the voice quality, which is ordinarily high-pitched, often harsh and strident, delivered from a tight throat with great vocal tension, frequently with an effect of being pitched or strangled. The expression of the singer's face is rigidly controlled or sad, often agonized. The singing tone – so frequently soprano or falsetto in character, even for male singers – is suitable for the representation of long and highly decorated melodic line, where variation is achieved by the addition of rapid quavers, glottal stops and the like. The prevailing mood of the music is tragic, melancholy, nostalgic or sweet sad, or else, in dance tunes, characterized by frenetic gaiety and a rather aggressive release of energy. Control and individualism are the key descriptive terms here (Lomax, 1959:936).

In the 'Old European' category the findings of *Cantometrics* reveal that:

Singing and dancing are basically choral and cooperative. The voice is produced from a relaxed throat and the facial expression is lively and animated, or at least relaxed. (Even the solo singers of Central Europe use a deeper pitch than Eurasian singers; their voices are richer in overtones and their throats and facial expression less tense). Old European tunes tend to be comparatively simple and unornamented. Blended unison is normal and many forms of polyphony exist. The favoured singing pitch is lower than Eurasian area; voices are generally rounder, richer in timbre, fuller; a liquid or yodelling tone is sometimes found and bass and contralto voices, rarely used in musical Eurasia, are extremely common here. The mood of the music, while often affected by long contact with the Eurasian style and therefore tragic in tone, seldom expresses the degree of agony or frustration found in the folk music of that area. Often, in fact, it is

joyous, tenderly sensuous, and noble. Sexual contact does not destroy the woman's position (Lomax, 1959:936,937).

Research projects of the *Cantometrics* kind usually invite controversy: the validity of approach and the significance of the evidence for future research were raised as points of disagreement. In attempting to correlate singing styles and social patterns, Lomax and his fourteen collaborators (supported by Columbia University and the Institute of Mental Health) gathered, over a five-year period, approximately ten samples from 233 different cultures. From these data they created a coding system of thirty-seven variables grouped into 56 ethnic units.¹⁷ This was one of the largest projects undertaken in the field of ethnomusicology and one of the first cross-cultural studies for a poorly documented discipline, namely: the tradition of folk song performance and its connection with social patterns.

Inevitably, many findings from the *Cantometrics* experiment as well as its methodological approaches were criticized; Driver, for example, considered it erroneous to adjust all the cultures examined to the 'Procrustean bed of Murdock's general culture areas' (1970: 58), while Downey, in his review of *Cantometrics*, points out that:

...we have reason to believe that there was extensive collaboration with ethnologists on some of the samples, but in those instances when the musicians on the staff had to make decisions without field knowledge of a specific musical practice, language, or conditions under which the recording was made, the possibility of error was great' (1970: 64).

More to the point, it was apparent that the equivocal division of the samples among the styles of performance practice submitted had 'little concern that all performance styles known to a culture were represented proportionally' (*ibid*). In spite of the 'weak points' that Downey identified, however he ends his review by stating that: 'the

¹⁷ See George P. Murdock, *Ethnographic atlas* (1967).

Cantometrics project has given us a system of discovering correlations between musical behaviour and cultural patterns. In spite of the criticism directed toward various aspects of the system it is certain to stimulate research in new directions for musicologists' (1970: 67).

Henry disapproves of the findings of *Cantometrics* in North India and suggests that his conclusions in such a geographical region jeopardize the validity of the entire project (*Cantometrics*). Based on his extensive fieldwork in Eastern Pradesh and Western Bihar (India), Henry's findings stand apart from Lomax. He writes that: 'the characterization of Indian folk music (in *Cantometrics* terms) exaggerates the importance of the "bardic" solo style and de-emphasizes the importance of the widespread group style' (1976: 49).

Henry's appraisal also extends to levels of ethos and demagoguery. He points out that: 'Lomax dangerously assumes that the song session is polity in microcosm; the monopolization of communication space by the singer is thus seen as a signature or extension of centralized political authority' (1976: 51). Henry's review ends with a caustic corollary about *Cantometrics*: 'To assert that song style is the inevitable result of productive arrangements, apart from being economically deterministic, imputes an overly monolithic, undifferentiated quality to culture and social culture' (1976: 64). It is clear, therefore, that reservations ought to be taken in consideration before one attempts to apply the findings of *Cantometrics*.

Cantometrics offers only basic points of departure in the present study because a) I examine individuals, not groups, b) the methodology which has been adopted in this project contains audio-visual observation¹⁸ and c) although the coding book of *Cantometrics* identifies thirteen categories based on aural results, none includes an

¹⁸ The data of *Cantometrics* are based on observations made 'by ear' (not visual material) and therefore they comprise basic, but nevertheless doubtful information at the level of vocal analysis (Lomax, 1968: 142).

anatomical analysis of vocal production and no investigation has been taken that combines performance practice and vocal technique. Finally, even if Lomax's findings remain questionable in a number of different perspectives, the *Cantometrics* project must be recognized as a valuable reference point in the field of comparative studies. Very few scholars have undertaken research projects so immense and as such this endeavour ought to be viewed as a historic achievement from many points of view.

2.3 Academic context and related projects

This section aims to define the 'terrain' of the analyses in the following chapters. When referring to the related research projects, I shall make a brief evaluation of their areas of examination insofar as these deal with issues raised in the present study. During my MMus research in ethnomusicology, I encountered Hugo Zemp's films (1987) 'Yooltzing and Yodelling', 'Head Voice, Chest Voice' and the important 'The Song of Harmonics' (1990), all of which inspired me in my practical and academic work. The author's conclusions included some remarkable acoustical and physiological details about vocal production.

'The Song of Harmonics' provided valuable information on the advantages of using radiographs and also demonstrated explicitly the basic requirements to perform a singing style involving two different voices from one singer. This is one of a number of projects which deals with physiological analysis, such as how to use the tongue in order to create two sections in the mouth cavity, and an unprecedentedly unique approach to folk vocal sounds. By making these films, Zemp demonstrated that audio-visual material is appropriate for the investigation of vocal techniques and

in Yoshihiko's words: 'Zemp has made full use of the emerging potential for film in musicological research (1994:388). As a result of this, the present document is accompanied by a DVD in which vocal techniques of the styles under investigation are demonstrated by my co-workers.

Zemp's project and the present research, however, differ in their presentation, despite the fact that both deal exclusively with vocal production in folk genres. Zemp's ethnographic film essentially aspires to visualize music structure and performance style while mine is a reflexive, hermeneutic, musical ethnography aimed at disclosing folk vocal techniques and how they are employed by singers. Although focused more on vocal observation than actual performance practice, Zemp's films provided me with an initial approach to examine folk vocal genres that both intrigues readers and sustains credibility for academics.

In similar fashion, Anna Johnson's paper (1984) 'Voice Physiology and Ethnomusicology: Physiological and Acoustical Studies of the Swedish Herding Song' offers significant information about acoustics as well as vocal techniques. By employing mainly voice technology tools (such as radiographs) for her findings, Johnson provides crucial parameters of vocal production such as the measurement of the opening of the jaw in addition to accurate graphic transcriptions of melismatic singing. The singing, however, had to be performed in specially equipped laboratories which, of course, distanced the music from its usual performance environs. For this reason alone validity of the results might be disputed.

The present project gathers its information about vocal techniques from performers *in situ*, not in a laboratory. This is not to say that technology is unable to provide useful data, but it does so in such way that the experiment operates at another

dimension: through the computer software's virtual reality.¹⁹ The findings here are, on the contrary, founded on observations and folk attitudes via the media of audio-visual analysis and individual testimonies. As such, my methodology eschews all analyses in the laboratory.

Take, for example, the dropping of the jaw. In Johnson's paper this action, examined through a radiograph, carries certain implications both for the realization of the results achieved and for the subject of analysis. In a laboratory the acoustics of confined space is inappropriate for exercising this technique. Inevitably, the conclusions reached will be notably different when compared with an outdoor performance. Secondly, radiograph requires the use of X-rays for its findings and, therefore, the singer will each time be subjected to a certain amount of radiation. Regarding this approach as unsuitable for my analysis, I chose to focus my examination on the techniques of the singing action occurred in current performance practice rather than enumerating or presenting graphs of the vocal results.

I found that Messner's research on 'The Two-part Vocal Style on Baluan Island Manus Province, Papua New Guinea' (1981) and Hatton's paper 'Performance Practice of Northern Plains Pow-Wow Singing Groups' (1974) proved to be relevant to my inquiry. Messner's paper includes long, verbatim quotes from fieldwork interviews that reveal some magical beliefs. The author concludes his study by providing technological observations of acoustical results, such as the partial tone spectrum, and by revealing the aesthetic antithesis of vocal perception between a Westerner's ear and those of the indigenous performers.

¹⁹ Although no software analysis of voice can, yet, inform us on 'how' a vocal sound is sung, a post-doctorate level of this research should provide important acoustic results of the vocal genres under investigation (through voice technology tools) for a variety of reasons (pedagogical, didactic and so forth).

Finally, the author ends this article by reporting on an important correlation between Baluan's traditional two-part vocal style and the multi-part singing practices in Southern Europe: 'The similarities and congruencies are recognizable in the psychoacoustical peculiarities, aural aesthetics (for example, what is consonance and dissonance within the traditional codex of aesthetics), as well as in sound-analytical results and names for the different parts' (1981:444-445). Thus, on the one hand this offered me one of the very few references with a recognizable degree of similarity to my Epirotic folk vocal polyphony (southern Europe) and, on the other hand, it has made clear to me that what we call the 'accidental ear' (outsider) might perceive vocal results that differ from those of a tradition (insider).

Hatton's paper is divided into three sections, the second of which refers to actual performance practice. Here the author provides seven different criteria for comparing various performance practices. Two of them deal exclusively with 'vocal qualities' and 'group sound' respectively. Using neither voice technology tools nor verbatim quotations Hatton's findings are weighted more towards personal observation. Notwithstanding its subjectivity, this approach has provided me with useful information in my own text. He also furnishes practical information by distinguishing between different categories of folk vocal polyphony based on the geographic area to which they belong. These distinctions were helpful to my understanding of the differences between Epirotic polyphony and its Albanian counterpart (see Chapter IV).

Rice's paper on 'Understanding Three-part Singing in Bulgaria: The Interplay of Theory and Experience' (1988) together with his book on Bulgarian music 'May it Fill your Soul' (1994) have served as significant sources of inspiration for this thesis, particularly for the manner in which the author has presented his findings. Although

Rice is neither a native researcher nor a native performer, his presentation of the material was exemplary for locating folk views in ethnographic writing of the kind noted above. Uniquely, Rice has captured the fieldwork experience and kept alive a sense of dialogue throughout his work, features which I have also adopted in my own documentation.

Rycroft's study (1967) on Nguni vocal polyphony has also been very useful in that it deals exclusively with folk polyphony, one of the two main folk vocal styles dealt with here. Rycroft provides landmark information about the relationship between solo and choral parts, and by providing transcriptions of the music, he has captured all voice parts, entrances, overlapping phrases, stops and repetitions. Rycroft's morphological analysis pays no regard to actual performance practice or vocal production. It nevertheless opens up a valid approach to introducing folk polyphony and provides a comprehensive understanding of each voice part; applications which have influenced the conclusions drawn at the end of chapter IV.

Finally, Baud-Bovy's article (2005)²⁰ on the 'Songs of Northern Epirus and Pontos' proved to be invaluable and has shaped this thesis in many of its aspects. In this publication, titled 'Essay for the Greek Folk Song', Baud Bovy (the father of Greek ethnomusicology) actually reviews some fundamental questions put by himself and other scholars with respect to the Greek folk song. He gives emphasis to the interaction between ancient Greek and neo Greek music, he likens Greek ecclesiastical (sacred) and secular music as 'two faces of the same coin', and he differentiates the musical structure between the Greek islands and mainland.

Although, Baud-Bovy's article on the songs of Epirus and Pontos deals mainly with poetic rhythm, he is able to embrace the two poles of the Hellenic world before

²⁰ The first edition was in 1984; it was the last publication by Samuel Baud-Bovy while he was alive.

1922. At that time, the author highlights the mutual relationships between Greek-Albanian (Epirus) and also Greek-Turkish (Pontos) musical cultures, while he emphasizes the diversity and highly influential musical expressions occurred, under similar historic and political circumstances, in these two regions. In Liavas' words: 'This essay can provide -succinctly but with great density- a holistic image of the Greek musical civilization. He [Baud-Bovy] recapitulates his own researches and resources, he reconstructs his corollaries, and proves the fact that the smooth evolution of the Greek language and music has never been stopped' (My translation, 2006:14).

What truly inspired me in this essay is an enquiry raised by Baud-Bovy himself: 'Although, I have tried to study text and music as an inseparable concept in Greek folk song, I could not examine either the relationship between Greek vocalisation and the way a Greek singer produces the voice nor the projection of the notes in terms of achieving the desired vocal result [...] this [essay] is nothing else but a starting point, which can only be justified if new discourses and systematized researches are provoked' (*ibid*). Thus, I see this thesis as a partial fulfilment of this last quotation; future researches might include analyses not only in terms of performance practice but also in terms of language-vocal production, description of sound characteristics (through voice technology tools) and educational approaches.

Finally, given that my family's origins include both these regions (Pontos and Epirus), their respective musical styles have informed not only the product of this research but, most importantly, my own musical world. Both styles are currently heard in Greece and my choice for examining each was virtually unavoidable. No detailed study deals exclusively with 'how' Pontic and Epirotic vocal techniques are utilized in actual performance practice. Moreover, when sporadic quotations are

referred to, the content is more cultivated within scholars' argumentation rather than in exegesis. Their popularity, notwithstanding, these and perhaps other pioneering investigations have the dubious status of 'isolated examples' in folk voice postulations; hence, my long-standing desire to complete an exhaustive study on the manner in which Pontians and Epirotes produce vocal sounds.

2.4 Anatomy and physiology of the singing voice

Any definition of voice beyond the anatomical level risks of being subjective and inaccurate. For this reason, the term 'voice' in this thesis will refer to the vocal sound produced by the vocal instrument as an object of analysis. Briefly put, voice here is synonymous with the vocalised sounds produced by singers, which implies that such sounds, aside from morphological differences, are also determined by the way the vocal instrument is used. I propose to deal with specific aspects of analysing the vocal instrument which will help to focus and visualize on certain of its parts as found extensively in the styles under investigation.

As such, the anatomical elements of the human voice will be investigated and, as a necessary corollary, some anatomical description of voice physiology will be given. The clarifications set forth serve not only to make the findings of my research cogent but also to produce an image of the vocal instrument. This will significantly aid all readers and singers to visualize the internal adjustments that need to be made for a particular vocal nuance. At this point I would like to clarify that, apart from certain exceptions, all vocal terminology used in this research project is borrowed from the world of Western art music whose contribution in the literature of vocal production is both significant and enormous. In the same vein, some parts of my

analysis will also be done in a comparative way to Western art singing in order to demonstrate the differences between the vocal production of the styles under investigation and the matching part of the well-documented vocal style of Western art music.

The human voice is capable of producing a great many sounds because an actuating force, or pressure, is brought against a vibrator. This occurs by means of the primary ingredients: air in the lungs, the vocal folds in the larynx and the articulators (mouth cavity, nasal cavity, lips, tongue and so on). The physiology of the voice comprises a combination of all these elements. In that sense, we could say that the voice possesses the basic elements common to musical instruments that produce different sounds, namely: an activating force (the air from the lungs), a vibrator (the vocal folds), and a resonator, (the vocal tract, that is the mouth and nasal cavities).

Although singing sounds may be understood as voiced sounds, the distinction between the two is that the former are sounds which operate in sonic events that differ from speech sounds. These 'different' sonic events are conventionally called notes or tones in the action of singing. Individual characteristics of the vocal instrument such as vocal tract dimensions, the shape of the pharyngeal tract or mechanical characteristics of the vocal folds such as length, thickness-amplitude, viscosity, and others are factors 'determined by anatomical conformation' (Reid, 1965:14). Such factors are also responsible for generating a unique personal voice timbre and, therefore, the vocal potential of an individual, apart from the actual use of the vocal instrument, is limited to its own anatomical capacities.

Differences in vocal expression exist not only between individuals but also between groups of people who live in the same geographical area and who share the same language and socio-cultural ideas. This is obvious once we realize the

significant differences between a variety of vocal genres, such as Indian folk, Irish, Caucasian, Persian, Arabic, Mongolic, and so forth. Certainly folk voices have their own particular qualities which consist of a response to a variety of combinations of the parts of the vocal instrument and it is precisely the nature of these responses that is of immediate interest here.

Given that breathing follows the same procedure in all human beings it is rather the way we shape our sounds that gives a distinctive dimension. Thus, it is necessary to understand the functioning entity of the different parts of the vocal instrument. For such purposes, I will use the term ‘anatomy’ for the construction of the vocal instrument and ‘physiology’ for its function. Hence, the vocal instrument consists of three main mechanisms: breathing, vibration and articulation (Illustration 1 and 2).²¹

The breathing mechanism’s main organs are the lungs: spongy structures within the rib cage. The most important function of the respiratory tract is to enable oxygen to be absorbed from the atmosphere. Such action is achieved by expanding the lungs in the thorax (inhalation) and also pushing the abdominal muscles covered by the diaphragm in order to blow the air out (exhalation). Small cavities in these spongy structures of lungs are known as bronchi; these are also joined to the trachea which terminates at the so-called Adam’s apple (Illustration 3). The Adam’s apple or the thyroid cartilage hosts the two vocal folds which are nothing else but muscles shaped as folds and covered by mucous membranes (62 in number).²²

²¹ It should be noted here that what follows is, for the purposes of this thesis, only a brief description of voice anatomy and physiology. Readers eager to learn more about the subject should refer to the work of Leon Thurman and Graham Welch (2000), Johan Sundberg (1987), Reid (1995) and Miller (1996) whose contributions to this field are highly significant.

²² The length of a newborn infant’s vocal folds are about 3mm long and grow to about 9mm to 13mm in females and 15mm to 20mm in males.

The larynx or ‘voicebox’ (Adam’s apple) consists of two major cartilages: the ring shaped cricoid (at the top of trachea) and the thyroid. On the top edge of the cricoid are the arytenoids, to which are attached the vocal folds. These muscles open and close the vocal folds during breathing and phonation, always leaving a gap between the two folds, called the glottis. The action of bringing together the vocal folds is called adduction while the opposite is called abduction.

While the primary scope of this action is to permit air to enter the lungs, the vocal folds (as well as the epiglottis) protect the lungs so as to avoid any entry of water, food or whatsoever liquid. The muscles of the larynx are named according to the cartilage to which they are attached. Perhaps, the most interesting muscle for singers is the thyroarytenoid muscle, known also as the vocalis. The function of this muscle is to form the body of each vocal fold; the shorter and thicker the vocal folds the lower the pitch they produce. The shape of the larynx box is a rather narrow, short tube about one to two centimetres in length.²³ This tube is located at the lower part of a much wider and longer tube, the pharynx (Illustration 4a); the latter extends to the two nostrils, forming the nasal cavity, while at its base is the epiglottis. The tongue, which is composed of a number of muscles (indeed one of the strongest muscles of the human body), goes well below the upper tip of the epiglottis and originates in the hyoid bone.

The mouth cavity includes the teeth, tongue, lips and the moving of the jaw; the ceiling of the mouth cavity is called the palate and is distinguished by a hard palate (front) and a soft palate (back). The soft palate, or *velum*, is important for vocalists as it is moveable and guides the air coming from the vocal folds, channelling it to the nasal cavity, mouth cavity or both (Illustration 4b); it also constitutes a

²³ For more information, see Tom Harris 1998:34-48.

significant part in the ensuing analysis since its use in both Pontic and Epirotic vocal styles is considered to be fundamental. The combination of the pharynx and the mouth, known as the vocal tract, is the main articulator of voiced sounds.

Thus, three mechanisms are involved in the production of voiced sounds and each of them has a particular function. Once the air has been inhaled into the lungs it moves up from the lungs to the trachea, through the vocal folds (housed in the larynx) which vibrate and create the sound in the way that a balloon creates sounds when its opening is stretched apart. But this is only the beginning: 'For each cycle of vocal fold vibration, one air pulse is generated' (Sundberg, 1987:7) and as the airstream passes through the vocal folds, suction is created. This causes the vocal folds to re-open and leave another airstream to pass through. In this way, the airflow is 'sliced' into a series of small air waves. This cycle continues until the air supply is exhausted.

In this manner the vocal folds vibrate and the so-called *Bernoulli* force or *Bernoulli Effect*²⁴ is activated. In creating such a vibration, a tone is generated which possesses a certain frequency; the scale of numbers used for measuring the frequency, according to Hertz's scale, is equal to the vibration frequency of the vocal folds. Thus, sustaining a middle C means that our "vocal folds collide and open 260 times per second' (Welch, 2000:322) and, therefore, the frequency is 260 Hertz. The ability of the larynx to rise and lower is of great importance in my following analyses since extensive use of the larynx considered to be fundamental in vocal production of the Pontic and Epirotic vocal styles.

The ability of the vocal tract to shape and transmit sounds is highly variable. Depending on the frequency of the particular tone to be transferred and, of course, the

²⁴ Bernoulli, a Swiss physicist of the eighteenth century, described in physical terms that a force is activated when an object prevents a flowing substance such as air from streaming freely so that waves of the stream can travel longer. Actually, this is not so innovative a discovery as many scientists in the past dealt with such problems. It could, however, be seen as a different manifestation.

use of the vocal tract together with its anatomical features, each voice timbre is different. The frequencies travelling in the vocal tract are called formant frequencies²⁵ and are determined by the adjustment of the articulators such as the lips, the jaw opening, the tongue shape, the soft palate, and so forth. In this way the vocal tract enhance certain values in the final sonic result. As soon as the position of these articulators changes the final sonic result also changes. Thus, while the pitch is determined by the vibration frequency of the vocal folds, the formant frequencies depend on the articulation only.

From this brief description of the anatomy and physiology of voice, of singular relevance to this research are the vibration and articulation mechanisms whose manipulation will be the subject of examination in the Greek traditional vocal genres of Pontos and Epirus. Before continuing further, I would like to clarify certain terms used by singers and which also occur below in this thesis. Although not all belong to standard musical nomenclature, these terms and their definitions are useful in creating appropriate images which help to visualize and stimulate the vocal mechanism in a variety of vocal actions:

- *Good support* means an open and high chest, but with widened and dropped shoulders. This provides ample control of the air emitted by the lungs.
- Singing *backwards* or *frontwards* implies that the focal point in the mouth cavity is either in the soft palate (back) or in the hard palate (front). Thus, ‘backwards’ sensation is associated with space at the back of the mouth, usually with a slightly raised larynx while ‘frontwards’ sensation is associated with the front of the mouth usually producing a nasal sound.
- *vocal flexibility* refers to the velocity of the movements of larynx and uvula.

²⁵ Formant frequencies are different from the voice source frequencies. The latter is the one generated above the vocal folds, and, before articulated in the vocal tract.

- *Melisma*, (plural, *melismata*) is the technique of embellishing a single syllable of text with a group of notes. Music sung in this style is referred to as *melismatic*, as opposed to *syllabic*, where each syllable of the text is matched to a single note.
- *Breakings* (of the voice), is a direct translation from the Greek word (*spasimata*) and, by using such term, singers indicate the way *melismata* are ornamented and delivered. It again refers to a single syllable and should not be confused with the Western art notion of the 'break' of the voice or the so-called *passaggio*.
- *Subglottic* (or *Subglottal*) *pressure* is the air impounded in the position of the larynx below the vocal folds as it emerges from the lungs.
- *Free singing* implies a relaxed vocalization maintained by keeping the larynx in its rest position, using the diaphragm for breathing, and keeping a steady airflow throughout the whole range of the voice. It is also a common terminology used among operatic singers and vocal coaches.
- *Pitch* refers to the tonal height of the human voice.
- *Timbre* refers to the characteristic quality of sound that distinguishes one voice from another or one vowel sound from another; it is determined by the harmonics (overtones) of a given sound.

Pontic Vocal Style

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am particularly concerned with the vocal techniques of Pontic singing. I will begin with a historical introduction about the Pontic Greeks and then provide information on my principal co-workers in this examination. I include certain biographical elements as well as descriptions of fieldwork in order to paint a fuller picture of each individual whose performance practice and musical abilities have influenced the musical mainstream of the Pontic vocal tradition.

There follow the anatomical and physiological issues which form a central point of the analysis. The information here is drawn in part from my own performance practice. This investigation aims to provide a holistic view of *how* Pontic Greeks sing their music, paying less attention to *what* is sung. From a singer's perspective it will include: vocal observations regarding pitch, articulation, breathing mechanism, use of the larynx and mask, and various mannerisms of the vocal tract. Furthermore, the special relationship that is cultivated between the vocalist and the audience will also form a part of this study since it influences the vocal projection.

3.2 The Pontic Greeks

Pontos,²⁶ a region located on the south Black Sea coast, is today in northern Turkey (Illustration 5 and 6). The Greek presence in this region goes back to classical antiquity when is mythologically connected with the stories of the *Symplegades* (Clashing rocks) and of Jason with his Argonauts. Chronologically speaking, these tales stem from the Bronze Age where Greek seafarers who conquered the Aegean Sea advanced further to the straits of the Bosphorus and the Black Sea.²⁷

From that time and until the beginning of the 20th century Greeks had a continuous presence in this region. The First World War, however, heralded a very complicated political situation for the Pontic Greeks; it resulted in their involuntary and forced migration to Greece as dictated in the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923.²⁸ The National Geographic Journal (1925) referred to this migration as the ‘largest ever exchange of populations in the history of mankind’.²⁹ The number of Pontic Greeks now living in the modern Greek state is above 1.2 million. There are over 350,000 in North America and around 300,000 in Australia. Another 250,000 have made their home in Germany and other parts of Europe and about 700,000 are in the former Soviet Union (Russia, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kazakstan).³⁰

Lying at a critical geographical junction between West and East, Greece has experienced the ebb and flow of two cultural currents, a phenomenon that has allowed her to assimilate creatively diverse influences. My grandfather, a fine lyra player and

²⁶ From the time of Homer, the word ‘Pontos’ (Greek: Πόντος) has meant ‘open sea’, the broad and restless sea. For many ancient authors, the term ‘Pontos’ was identified with *Axenus* (Greek: Άξενος) meaning ‘inhospitable Pontos’, the stormy dark coloured Black Sea.

²⁷ For more information on the first Greek colonies in Black Sea area, see Petropoulos (2005).

²⁸ For more information on the genocide of the Greeks of Pontos, see Fotiadis (2002).

²⁹ For further information see National Geographic Journal (1925) and National Geographic Journal of Greece (2007).

³⁰ These numbers have been provided by Professor Kostas Fotiadis (Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki), a historian who specialises in Asia Minor and Pontic history.

singer,³¹ was among those expelled from Pontos in 1922. He was the musician in our family and as my father affirms: ‘he gave you musical genes’. Since Pontic music is the prevailing style in my home environment, my preference to engage in its research is more than obvious. In a typical Pontic Greek family, singing is a widely spread phenomenon that involves young and elderly. I cannot recall a time when I did not hear Pontic music in my childhood.

While Pontic Greeks are not considered to be a separate ethnic group in Greece today (they are Hellenic citizens, not counted as refugees) they nonetheless feel themselves to be exiled from their homeland, Pontos. As much as possible they maintain and nurture their Pontic culture. My grandfather used to say to me that: ‘Coming to mother Greece was for us like going to the moon. It was sacred, but also painful as we left behind houses, friends, families and lands’. Pontic Greeks, both in Greece and abroad, try to keep alive their dialect,³² customs, dances and music as they are collectively, these facets of their culture which preserve the memories of homeland and history, throughout the generations. It is not an exaggeration to claim that music and dance are the strongest of the ties.

In Greece and beyond, there are many conservatories that teach traditional musical instruments (such as the Greek lute, violin, oud, canun, clarinet and others), and among the most popular classes are those for the Pontic lyra. More than 250 Pontic folk dance groups are active in Greece and in the Diaspora. Young people (Pontic and non-Pontic) learn the steps to the accompaniment of the Pontic lyra and

³¹ The Pontic lyra is the dominant musical instrument of the Pontic Greeks. It is a bottle-shaped fiddle with three strings tuned in fourths (B-E-A). For more information see Mathaios Tsahourides (2007, PhD Thesis) and (2002).

³² The Pontic dialect both morphologically and structurally has its roots in ancient Greek in addition to some loan words from Turkish. It also remains the closest dialect in modern Greece to the language of the ancient Greeks. For more information see Melanofrides (1910), Topharas (1932), Papadopoulos (1958), and Economides (1958).

vocal music from an early age and beyond my own immediate family environment: this is how I became even more familiar with Pontic culture.

One particular facet of Pontic cultural expression is the open-air festivals that take place every year, both in Greece and abroad, and are organized by local Pontic associations. On these occasions, one encounters Pontic singing, lyra playing, dance, theatrical performances in the Pontic dialect, books with traditional recipes, historiographies, CDs and DVDs of Pontic music, and so forth. Attendance at these festivities is remarkably high; families from all over the world come to experience at first hand their ancestral 'tradition'.

Pontic music, intrinsically complex, demands high skill on the part of the performer. The best players and singers are those who begin their education in it at an early stage. At the risk of generalisation, I would suggest that Byzantine³³ and Pontic music stem from a common origin. Their chief difference lies in the purpose that each serves. All my principal co-workers and interviewers referred to Byzantine music as the 'root' of all Greek traditional music. It may equally be asserted that Pontic singing is to some extent a syncretic vocal tradition that has been influenced by other similar vocal genres in Greece and even the Middle East. Historical issues aside, the question to be addressed here is: what is there in Pontic singing that sets it apart from Cretan, Epirotic, or Aegean vocal styles? The answer may well be found in the actual process of vocalizing in each repertory. Insofar as the Pontic vocal style is concerned, clarification will be made in the chapters below.

³³ By the term 'Byzantine music' I mean current Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical chant.

3.3 Co-workers

The co-workers presented here, and whose voices will be heard in due course, include: 1) a celebrated singer from the past; 2) today's most acclaimed vocalist; 3) a highly promising young Pontic singer; 4) a lyra player and singer; and 5) an academic and a Byzantine chanter who also plays the lyra and sings Pontic repertory. Since all five co-workers have had the opportunity to collaborate with each other on a number of occasions, they constitute a network of informants. The advantage of this corroboration was that I was in the favourable position of investigating the techniques of prominent singers.

Moreover, on the basis of the data accumulated, I was able to trace the movement of the tradition through the generations. Ultimately, my purpose in interviewing the players/singers was to determine the degree to which the voice is used to imitate the sound of the Pontic lyra. During my fieldwork, I encountered very few female Pontic singers and lyra players. Far from implying gender discrimination,³⁴ female musicians are greatly admired and enthusiastically received by their communities and their audiences. In view of the fact that Pontic society is rigidly patriarchal, the relatively small number of female musicians is to be expected.

Hrysanthos Theodorides (Illustration 7, DVD example 1)

Born in *Oivónη* (Inoi), a small village of Kozani (Northern Greece), in 1934, Hrysanthos belonged to the first generation that grew up in Greece following the

³⁴ For more information on gender issues in the Greek folk context, see Cowan (1990) and Dubisch (1986).

expulsion of his parents from Pontos, the ‘homeland’ ³⁵as he called it. Raised in a deeply rural environment, he pointed out to me: ‘I remember that when I used to go to the spring to bring some water, song was my only companion; I used to raise the funnel and sing through it’.³⁶ His involvement with the Pontic vocal style was from an early age and he learned it through oral tradition. In later life, Hrysanthos developed a legendary reputation among his immediate colleagues and even throughout the entire Pontic Diaspora. Such reputation stemmed from highly accomplished performances and numerous productions of LPs and CDs with unknown (for that time) Pontic traditional music. He possessed a vast repertory of Pontic songs as well as in-depth knowledge about the inherited tradition that he loved and served.

After the death of his father, in 1949, during the civil war in Greece, Hrysanthos moved to Athens with his family where he became involved with radio programmes. He fostered his beloved Pontic tradition until 1958 when the programmes were terminated. In 1959 he moved to Thessalonika and continued to produce radio programmes but, at the same time, his bent for singing began to be recognized and this in due course became his main profession. It presaged a significant career in the Pontic musical scene and, as mentioned, Hrysanthos made an enormous number of recordings, some of which are considered as monumental in the Pontic discography. His live takes from the clubs where he worked as a young professional singer are still well known and can be found (tapes and CDs) in most Pontic families even though no recording company has ever published them.

Hrysanthos died on the 30 March 2005. Considering his distaste for cameras, I feel extremely fortunate in having conducted, possibly, his last personal interview,

³⁵ Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: Η πατρίδα μας.

³⁶ Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: Θυμάμαι όταν πήγαινα στην πηγή να φέρω νερό, το τραγούδι ήταν η μόνη συντροφιά μου. Συνήθως έπαιρνα το χωνί και τραγουδούσα με αυτό.

just three months before he passed away. Tributes to him from all over the Pontic world (Greece, Boston, Melbourne, Munich) attested to the importance of his musical personality.³⁷

Of all fieldwork conducted for this research, I would like to devote some paragraphs to Hrysanthos' interview. It was New Year's Eve 2004 when I went to meet him with Theodoros Eleutheriou who had collaborated with the singer for four years, as lyra player. En route by car to Thessalonika to meet him, Theodoros phoned him to confirm our appointment. He was in a kafeneio³⁸ that he frequented in order to indulge in what was customary on the day before 1 January: gambling. His first words were: 'Let's leave this for another day' (this would have been our third aborted interview with him!). Theodoros pleaded with him to remain where he was until we arrived. Eventually, we found him in a gloomy place filled with tobacco smoke, and surrounded by his friends: all in their early 70s.

Upon being introduced, Hrysanthos recognized my surname; he had had a high regard and respect for my grandfather, whom he called *Makon o Tsiachourts*, ('Matthaios Tsahourides' in the Pontic dialect). It was difficult to divine whether or not he was really interested in this interview, but out of curiosity he agreed to talk to us. This was obviously good news, but we immediately needed to find a quiet place in this bustling city, largely unknown to me. Theodoros who was a teacher of Western traditional harmony at the local municipal conservatory, had an ingenious idea of accommodating us there.

³⁶ The Greek copyright company AEPI made referred to Hrysanthos as 'the "nightingale" of Pontos, the great interpreter of traditional songs, Hrysanthos, left his last breath on Wednesday, 30/3/2005, in Thessaloniki, at the age of 72 years. He was born in [...]' (AEPI newspaper, 2005, Vol.,8). A prominent Pontic website noted that: 'The patriarch of Pontos has left us' (<http://www.trapezounta.com>, March and April of 2005).

³⁸ Old style coffee shop, mostly for men. Greek: *καφενείο*.

Within a few minutes I was ready to begin this interview in a place where we could hear each other clearly and discuss various aspects of his life and his singing style. Although I was more than willing to spend a lengthy period with Hrysanthos, our entire interview lasted about 45 minutes. The main reason for this was that this eminent performer was unable to explain in appropriate terminology his vocal technique. His knowledge was purely empirical; his vocal style was a part of his natural performance aesthetic and, moreover, the purpose of such detailed vocal analysis was clearly somewhat irrelevant to him. Ultimately most of my information about his actual vocal technique was derived from the informal conversations in the car and in a restaurant where we went after the interview.

Stathis Nikolaides (Illustration 8, DVD example 2)

Born in 1958, Stathis Nikolaides is presently the most renowned of Pontic singers. His father originated from a region of Pontos known as Matsouka and his mother from Kotyora also in Pontos. In 1917 they moved to Sohumi (Georgia) being obliged to leave their homeland in order to escape the ethnic cleansing initiated by the Turks against all foreign minorities (Armenians, Kurds, Jews, Turkmens and Greeks).³⁹ In 1949 they were expelled one more, this time because of the German-Russian war, to Kazakhstan where Stathis, his two brothers and one sister were born.

He reminisced to me: ‘While everybody in the school spoke Russian I found great difficulty to adapt myself to this environment, for I did not know the language. All of my interests were far distant from Russian cultural life.’⁴⁰ In 1966 the entire

³⁹ For more information, see Fotiades (2002).

⁴⁰ Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Ενώ όλοι στο σχολείο μιλούσαν Ρώσικα εγώ είχα δυσκολίες να προσαρμοστώ σε αυτό το περιβάλλον. Όλα μου τα ενδιαφέροντα ήταν μακριά από την ρώσικη κουλτούρα.

family moved to Athens, where they started life anew: in those times our life was hard. My family was feeling the pain of having left behind all of our belongings and savings. So we decided that mother Greece could be our only solution'.⁴¹

From the age of 8, Stathis had exhibited a great interest in music, taking his first musical steps playing the bouzouki and the accordion. This phase lasted only a few months. His father, a Pontic lyra player and singer, encouraged him to take an interest in the music of his ancestral home. At the age of ten he was already an accomplished singer and by nineteen he had produced his first recording, *Οι κεμεντζετσήδες* (oi kementzetsides, the Pontic lyra players). As he explained to me: 'I learned to sing at *μωχαπέτεα* (mohapetia, 'revelries') which was an everyday occurrence in those years. In this environment I learned many songs, dance and trapeze tunes and, I learned how to play the [Pontic] lyra'.⁴²

Aside from singing Stathis is also a competent lyra player although he declines from promoting himself as such. 'I wanted to learn a musical instrument in order to improve my singing' he explained. 'I felt that this could be the only way to do it'.⁴³ Stathis' dedication to promoting Pontic music is manifest in all his recordings and collaborations with other musicians. In 1991, he recorded an album with my brother, Matthaios Tsahourides (who also plays the Pontic lyra), and since that time our relationship with him has remained close. Stathis is also an admirer of Hrysanthos.

He has also collaborated with Stelios Kazantzides (probably the most illustrious singer of modern times in Greece, also from Pontos), to record a Pontic

⁴¹ Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Εκείνους τους καιρούς η ζωή μας ήταν δύσκολη και η οικογένειά μου είχε ήδη νιώσει τον πόνο του να αφήνεις πίσω σου όλα τα υπάρχοντά σου. Έτσι αποφασίσαμε πως η μητέρα Ελλάδα θα ήταν η μόνη μας λύση.

⁴² Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Έμαθα να τραγουδάω από τα μωχαπέτεα τα οποία ήταν καθημερινό φαινόμενο. Υπό αυτές τις συνθήκες έμαθα πολλά τραγούδια, επιτραπέζια και χορευτικά και επίσης πως να παίζω λύρα.

⁴³ Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Ήθελα να μάθω ένα μουσικό όργανο για να βελτιώσω το τραγούδι μου, ένιωθα πως μόνο έτσι μπορούσα να το κάνω.

album, entitled *Συναπάντημα* (Sunapanteman, ‘the gathering’).⁴⁴ As a result, Stathis’ popularity dramatically increased, making him probably one of the most sought-after singers in the world of Pontic music. He also collaborated with Hrysanthos in the music hall *Αυλαία* (Avlaia, ‘the scene’), in Thessaloniki, and operates (both as singer and owner) one of the largest night clubs of Pontic and Greek Anatolian music in Thessaloniki, *Mithrio*. My fieldwork with him took place in June 2005, at his summer home in Nea Kallikratia, Halkidiki (North Greece).

Alexis Parharidis (Illustration 9, DVD example 3)

Alexis’s parents came from the village of Kapikyoi in the district of Matsouka near the city of Trebizon, itself the largest city in Pontos. He was born in Kozani (northern Greece) in 1971 and from 1989 he lives in Thessaloniki. Presently, he lives in the urban area of Nikopoli where most of our fieldwork took place. His first musical experiences came through his parents, both of whom were fine singers. At home the Pontic dialect was spoken; Alexis is one of those young Pontic artists who can converse in this dialect. Additionally, he is one of the most promising Pontic song writers, composing both lyrics and music.

In his own words, he had a *megalo meraki* (a ‘great desire and love’) to learn Pontic songs and so attended the gatherings of the elderly in his mother’s village, Alonakia, in the prefecture of Kozani. Through imitation and observation, combined with a natural musical talent, Alexis learned Pontic songs from an early age. There was a moment in his life when he felt that Pontic music took over all his interests as a young boy. As he pointed out to me:

⁴⁴ It should be noted that ‘Synapanteman’ became golden, in terms of sales, for first time in the history of Pontic records

When I was 16 years old I went with my parents to the *panygiri* of Soumela⁴⁵ where all night and at every single table there were lyra performers playing and singing. At dawn, Dimitris Piperides, a lyra player and friend, called me to play some Pontic songs. Suddenly, I saw people coming around us crying. I did not actually understand what was happening. We stopped playing after some hours and our table became more and more populated. It was there that I felt Pontic singing could do more for me than I could ever imagine. I will never forget my feelings on that day.⁴⁶

Before he moved to Thessaloniki in 1989 for studies, Alexis had already worked for two years as a professional Pontic singer, still under twenty. In Thessaloniki he soon realized that studies were not so important. Upon receiving an offer at a Pontic club in Athens he abandoned studies for life as a singer. In 1990 he returned to Thessaloniki to work in a famous Pontic night club called *Kseniteas* and in the following years he collaborated with almost all known Pontic artists, including Hrysanthos and Stathis Nikolaides.

Alexis has also made five CDs and on many occasions has collaborated and recorded with other musicians, both Pontic and non-Pontic. Alexis' musical life has very much been affected by his meeting with Hrysanthos who influenced his singing style and repertory. This encounter occurred at the home of a mutual friend; as explained to me:

I had never seen Hrysanthos before; I only used to listen to him on cassettes and live recordings. There was no media promotion for Pontic music, therefore I did not know what Hrysanthos looked like until then. I was sitting in the kitchen of that house when he came in; I was speechless. He asked me: 'Is it you, the little one, who sings so well?' I then replied: 'Yes, uncle', and because I called him 'uncle' and not 'sir'

⁴⁵ Soumela: a religious emblem for Pontic people worldwide. The name derives from the Monastery of Soumela in Pontos where a holy icon of the Virgin Mary had been buried during the Greek-Turkish tensions (for more see Fotiades 2002, 2004). After two decades and further to governmental negotiations the icon was dug up and brought first to Athens and then to the Soumela Mountain which is in the prefecture of Veria, my hometown. Every 15 August people from all over Greece and Pontics from all corners of the world come to pay their tribute to the 'Holy Virgin of Pontos' and to celebrate this event with a variety of cultural activities. More than 100,000 people come every August to visit Soumela.

⁴⁶ Interview with Alexis Parharides, 27/8/2007. Original quote: 'όταν ήμουν 16 χρονών πήγαμε στο πανηγύρι της Σουμελά με τους γονείς μου όπου όλη νύχτα και σε κάθε τραπέζι υπήρχε λύρα και τραγούδι. Το χάραμα ο Δημήτρης Πιπερίδης που είναι λυράρης και φίλος μου είπε να παίξουμε κάποια τραγουδάκια. Ξαφνικά είδα πολλούς να έρχονται γύρω μας, να μας ακούνε και να κλαίνε. Δεν μπορούσα να καταλάβω τι ακριβώς γινότανε, σταματήσαμε να παίξουμε μετά από ώρες ενώ το τραπέζι μας γινόταν ολοένα και μεγαλύτερο. Εκεί ένιωσα ότι το ποντιακό τραγούδι μπορούσε να κάνει για μένα κάτι παραπάνω από ότι νόμιζα. Ποτέ δεν θα ξεχάσω τι ένιωσα εκείνη τη μέρα.'

he liked me from the first moment. He was a really simple man; he did not indulge in airs and graces, not even in his professional life. He then asked me to sing something and it was then that I felt my voice had really abandoned me. I just could not sing in front of a man whose voice made people in my village cry; this echoed in my head each time I attempted to sing. So, I said that I want to leave immediately and after that he treated me as a son.⁴⁷

Alexis had also the privilege to live with Hrysanthos for one year (when Hrysanthos lived in Athens, having no residence in Thessaloniki). After this experience he was convinced that Hrysanthos was ‘the greatest school’ for all Pontic singers and a ‘Godsend’ artist for all Pontians. Alexis, as a new generation artist, is well-known in Pontic society in Greece; he sings extensively in local feasts and concerts throughout Greece and the Pontic Diaspora.

Theodoros Eleftheriou (Illustration 10, DVD example 4)

Theodoros was born in 1964 in Veria and is both a singer and a lyra player. Between the ages of eight and fifteen he was involved with Western classical music after which the traditional repertory replaced his engagement with the Philharmonic Orchestra of the Municipal Conservatory of Veria. As he told me: ‘I used to go to the [Pontic] club to attend dance lessons as dance was my passion. I then discovered traditional music’.⁴⁸ He learnt the Pontic lyra at the age of fourteen. There were no teachers at hand, so he acquired his knowledge of the instrument from the folk dance

⁴⁷ Interview with Alexis Parharides, 27/8/2007. Original quote: ‘Ποτέ δεν είχα δει τον Χρυσάνθο πριν. Μόνο τον άκουγα σε κασέτες και ζωντανές ηχογραφήσεις. Δεν υπήρχαν μέσα προώθησης γύρω από την ποντιακή μουσική σκηνή και έτσι δεν ύξερα καν πως μοιάζει ο Χρυσάνθος μέχρι τότε. Καθόμουν στην κουζίνα του σπιτιού όταν μπήκε μέσα. Έμεινα άφωνος. Με ρώτησε: “εσύ είσαι ο μικρός που τραγουδάει καλά;” Και του απάντησα “ναι θείο” και επειδή τον είπα “θείο” και όχι “κύριε” με συμπάθησε από την πρώτη στιγμή. Ήταν πραγματικά απλός άνθρωπος, δεν του άρεζαν οι επισημότητες ούτε στην επαγγελματική του ζωή. Τότε μου ζήτησε να τραγουδήσω κάτι και ένιωσα πραγματικά πως η φωνή μου με εγκατέλειψε. Απλά δεν μπορούσα να τραγουδήσω μπροστά σε έναν άνθρωπο του οποίου η φωνή έκανε όλο το χωριό μου να κλαίει και αντηχούσε στο κεφάλι μου κάθε φορά που τραγουδούσα. Έτσι είπα ότι θέλω να φύγω αμέσως αλλά μετά με πλησίασε σαν πατέρας μου.

⁴⁸ Interview with Theodoros Eleftheriou, 3/8/2005. Original quote: Συνήθιζα να πηγαίνω στη Λέσχη για να μάθω ποντιακά μιας και ο χορός ήταν το πάθος μου. Εκεί ανακάλυψα τη παραδοσιακή μουσική.

groups at which lyra players tended to repeat the same tunes. Unable to record or to remember the entire tune, he would memorise the main motive and then run quickly back to his home to play it on his lyra:

I did not have the opportunity to record these melodies, so I was obliged to commit to memory at least the main tunes of the dances. I then ran to the roof level of my home in order to play the tunes on the [Pontic] lyra. When my father bought me my first tape recorder I felt I was the luckiest person on earth. It is sufficient to tell you that within one year I ruined three cassette players simply through overuse.⁴⁹

Theodoros has made a number of recordings both as singer and lyra accompanist to some of the most acclaimed singers in the Pontic world. He collaborated for seven years with Stathis Nikolaides and for four years with Hrysanthos. My discussions with him proved to be useful not only in terms of his knowledge and experience also in revealing many unknown details about the aforementioned two co-workers and his collaboration with them. Being both a singer and a lyra player significantly contributes to my assertions that voice in Pontic singing partially imitates the sound of the lyra. My fieldwork with Theodoros involved more hours than with any other co-worker or interviewer and our meetings generally took place in my home. In this congenial atmosphere he was clearly willing to discuss and offer his best to answering my questions. His opinions on Pontic music are highly respected by many experts. He

⁴⁹ Interview with Theodoros Eleftheriou, 3/8/2005. Original quote: δεν είχα τη δυνατότητα να μαγνητοφωνήσω αυτούς τους σκοπούς έτσι έπρεπε από μόνος μου να θυμηθώ τουλάχιστον τις κύριες μελωδίες των χορών. Μετά, έτρεχα πίσω στη οροφή του σπιτιού μου για να τις παίξω στην λύρα. Όταν ο μπαμπάς μου αγόρασε το πρώτο μαγνητόφωνο, ένιωσα ο πιο τυχερός άνθρωπος του κόσμου. Είναι αρκετό να σου πω ότι μέσα σε έναν χρόνο χάλασα τρία τέτοια από την πολύ χρήση.

is one of the few Pontic musicians who, without scholarly qualifications, makes academic presentations based on his experience of this music.⁵⁰

Elias Petropoulos (Illustration 11, DVD example 5).

Although a Byzantine chanter and a Pontic lyra player and singer, Elias' reputation stems more from his educational background. He is an archaeologist and lecturer in Ancient History (his special area is the Black Sea) at the Democritus University of Thrace (northern Greece). He is fluent in nine languages, comes from a Pontic family, and was brought up in Alexandroupolis (near the Greek-Turkish border). His relationship with the Pontic music derives from his family: 'It was through my grandmother and the old people of my village that I heard and learned the Pontic dialect and the songs, all from an unbroken oral tradition'.⁵¹ His approach to performance can be partly derived from a valuable musical publication in which he participated, *Ανέβζυγος αροθυμία* (*Anevzigos arothimia*, 'Inexhaustible Longing').⁵²

My contact with Elias was through my brother's friendship with him and our interview took place in one of his visits to London during March 2007. Elias holds that Hrysanthos and Hrysanthos only is the 'ultimate and most authentic traditional Pontic singer'.⁵³ Their relationship was close; on many occasions Elias had played the lyra for Hrysanthos and they had also sung together. As a church chanter Elias is well acquainted with the Byzantine repertory and with Greek traditional music in general.

⁵⁰ One of the most important papers he has given was in a one-day conference (25-5-2002) at the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, entitled: 'The Role of Pontic Music in the Forming of our Psychological World'.

⁵¹ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 30/3/2007. Original quote: Άκουγα μόνο την γιαγιά μου και τους παλιούς του χωριού και έτσι έμαθα την ποντιακή διάλεκτο και τα τραγούδια από μια αδιάσπαστη προφορική παράδοση.

⁵² This is a pack which consists of six audio CDs and a leaflet bearing important information about Pontos. It was published by the Federation of Pontic Associations of Southern Greece in 2004.

⁵³ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 30/3/2007. Original quote: Ο πλέον ικανός και παραδοσιακός πόντιος τραγουδιστής.

His Pontic singing style remains unchanged from the time that he learned it: ‘It was never my intention to sing other styles as do many professional Pontic singers; I always performed traditional singing in the pure Pontic dialect so I perform it as I learned it. I do not like the neo-Pontic songs’.⁵⁴ Performing songs in the microtonally-based modes is one of his strengths while his singing technique stems from his two main musical influences: Hrysanthos and neo-Byzantine chant. During our fieldwork, Elias pointed out the strong relationship that exists between Byzantine and Pontic music: ‘Pontic music is the offspring of Byzantine music and as such both styles share more similarities than differences’.⁵⁵

3.4 Analysis of vocal production

Pitch in Pontic singing is usually set above the speaking range of the singers, that is to say, in the so-called ‘head voice’.⁵⁶ There are many factors which might impose high registered singing; some of the most important are: a) the tuning of the instruments, b) the physical environment in which the music is performed, c) the absence of artificial sound amplification, and d) the nature of the lyrics (love, humour, pain). The exclusive use of head voice requires singers to adjust certain positions of their vocal instrument in order to achieve the desired performing style.

⁵⁴ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 22/3/2007. Original quote: ‘Δεν είχα ποτέ μου σκοπό να τραγουδήσω άλλα στυλ όπως πολλοί πόντιοι τραγουδιστές επαγγελματίες κάνουν. Πάντα μου άρεζε το παραδοσιακό τραγούδι με την κάθε αυτού ποντιακή διάλεκτο, να το τραγουδάω έτσι όπως το έμαθα. Δεν μου αρέσουν τα νεο-ποντιακά τραγούδια’.

⁵⁵ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 22/3/2007. Original quote: ‘Η ποντιακή μουσική είναι παιδί της Βυζαντινής και επομένως τα δυο αυτά στυλ έχουν πιο πολλές ομοιότητες παρά διαφορές’.

⁵⁶ ‘Head voice’ is a commonly used term in vocal music. Although the term varies widely within vocal pedagogical circles and no consistent definition has been still agreed, ‘head voice’, in the present document, refers to the falsetto register. Also, the present document makes use of the term ‘modal’ in contrast to falsetto. For more see Miller (1993), Clippinger (1917) and Stark (2003).

High registered vocalisation and, subsequently, the high tonality of a piece are qualities found in all of Hrysanthos' and also Alexis' performances (DVD example 1 and 3). Hrysanthos' voice is pure tenor 'sitting' comfortably on high B4 and C4 peaking at top A4 flat, above the high C5 of an Italian tenor.⁵⁷ With his high-registered voice Hrysanthos earned a unique reputation for his tessitura. Alexis also has a light tenor voice but not with Hrysanthos' range. Singing at this pitch demands high breathing support. As Hrysanthos pointed out: 'without solid support [breathing] you will sound as if you are "dying out" at the ends of phrases'.⁵⁸

In addition, Hrysanthos explained: 'I sing from my stomach. When I feel that I run out of air, through pressure in my thorax, I create space in order to finish my phrases without sounding that I run out of breath. I borrowed this technique from the zourna players'⁵⁹ (see DVD Example 1). In receiving this answer I realised that, according to Miller, Hrysanthos' breath management could fall into the two categories of: '1) those that consist of downward and outward lower abdominal distension [use of stomach] and 2) those that consist of inward and upward [thoracic space] abdominal and epigastric movement' (1997: xxi).⁶⁰ I could argue here that in terms of

⁵⁷ Gathering information about Hrysanthos, I discovered that he is beardless. This may seem to be an irrelevant observation but in fact it is significant. According to Thurman, the hormones of the body play a significant role in forming the vocal instrument as they affect the 'dimensional configuration of the body and its parts, such as the respiratory system, the larynx and its vocal folds and the vocal tract' (2000:61). His being beardless suggests that Hrysanthos has fewer masculine hormones than the average male, which leads to a number of consequences for the body as a whole. One of these is that the vocal range is higher than a normal male person. In a similar vein, *castrati* singers were castrated in order to diminish the masculine hormones of the body and subsequently to enable singers to produce, biologically, higher notes.

⁵⁸ Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: Εάν δεν έχεις καλή υποστήριξη θα ακούγεται σα να σου βγαίνει η ψυχή στις καταλήξεις.

⁵⁹ Interview with Hrysanthos Theodoridis. Original quote: 'Τραγουδάω με το στομάχι, και όταν αισθάνομαι ότι τελειώνει ο αέρας, δια της πίεσης του θώρακος, δημιουργώ χώρο έτσι ώστε να τελειώσω την φράση μου χωρίς να ακούγομαι ότι δεν έχω άλλη ανάσα'.

⁶⁰ Miller (1997) makes use of these two general categories in order, for him, to distinguish the northern (English and German) from the southern (French and Italian) national schools of singing.

breathing technique, Pontic singing is closer to the Italian school with its *appoggiato* technique,⁶¹ which creates an excessive glottal resistance to airflow.

I would, however, add that the creation of the thoracic space (upper chest area), as indicated by Hrysanthos, reminds us more of the German school of singing which advocates high airflow and slack vocal-fold response. It is also noteworthy that ‘thoracic space’ creation was taken from the zourna players who, apparently, make use of the well-known (among wind players) circular breathing technique.⁶² By imitating the thoracic movement of the zourna players, Hrysanthos (see DVD Example 1, seconds: 0:30-0:31, 1:15-1:16, and 2:00) adopted this movement realizing that it offered him greater capacity in terms of breath management during the final seconds of a melodic line.

Stathis’ singing (DVD example 2) reveals a high-registered baritone voice. He asserts that: ‘Because of the lyra’s tuning,⁶³ the singer has to ensure that his singing voice can reach a high G or A if you are tuned A-E-B. Thus, you are obliged to follow the music and also to discover your own way of reaching such high notes’.⁶⁴ Stathis is well known for being able to sing long phrases and this is due to the fact that makes extensive use of his diaphragm without raising his shoulders (refer to DVD Example 2): ‘This came naturally through years of practising. In this way I can sing in a more

⁶¹ The technique of *appoggio* is achieved through a well-maintained chest posture that is associated with diaphragmatic breathing. It is also well-combined with the frontal facial area of projection. Thus, the two areas of activity in *appoggio* technique are diaphragmatic (epigastric) breathing and facial forward projection. Furthermore, in the Italian school, these two areas of voice placement and breath control are never separated and are considered to be one action. For further information see Miller 1997:78-79.

⁶² Circular breathing is a technique used by players of some aerophones in order to maintain a continuous tone without interruption. This technique is accomplished by breathing in through the nose and, at the same time, breathing out through the mouth (using the air stored in the cheeks). During this action the upper chest area is extensively used. For more see Spring (2006) and Gingras (1990).

⁶³ Pontic musicians name the strings of the lyra in reverse order (that is from the highest to the lowest pitch). According to this, the lyra is tuned in perfect fourths: A-E-B (the descending fifths ‘A-E-B’ are equivalent to the ascending fourths ‘B-E-A’) or B-F#-C#, creating two fundamental, conjunct tetrachords for this modal music.

⁶⁴ Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21-7-2005. Original quote: Από το κούρδισμα της λύρας ο τραγουδιστής πρέπει να κάνει τη φωνή να βγει στο ψηλό Σολ ή Λα εάν είσαι κουρδισμένος Λα-Μι-Σι.

relaxed position and also for many hours'.⁶⁵ In a similar vein, Alexis noted that: 'even after seven hours of singing it is the use of diaphragm that saves your voice'.⁶⁶

Theodoros' (DVD example 4) and Elias' (DVD example 5) performances exhibit bass-baritone voices. In each case, the use of the throat area is greater than the stomach. Technically, this arises from the avoidance of employing the diaphragm as the main part of the breathing mechanism; additionally, there is greater use of the upper chest area and more tension found in the throat area. Taking into account the noticeable difference in the breathing mechanisms between Stathis and Theodoros or Alexis and Elias, the last informed me: 'This is how I learned it from the old people in the village. I cannot give an explanation for it, I was just trying to imitate their sounds and their way of singing, I did not want to change it so I kept it as I found it. Although some more modern singers tend to employ other techniques, what counts is the final sound'.⁶⁷

Based on my own performance practice, use of the diaphragm can provide more air supply as well as more control during exhalation. However, it is important to realize that use of the upper chest area in Elias' and Theodoros' breathing technique encourages consequent employment of a movable larynx (discussed below) and, therefore, the resulting tense throat⁶⁸ allows for characteristic vocal ornamentations in this style. Comparing all five co-workers in terms of pitch and breathing technique, we can see that Hrysanthos is the only singer who makes simultaneous use of both the

⁶⁵ Interview with Stathis Nikolaidis, 21-7-2005. Original quote: Αυτό μου βγήκε φυσικά μετά από χρόνια στο τραγούδι. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο μπορώ να τραγουδώ πιο ξεκούραστα και για πιο πολλές ώρες.

⁶⁶ Interview with Alexis Parharides, 27/8/2007. Original quote: 'Ακόμα και μετά από 7 ώρες τραγούδι το διάφραγμα είναι εκείνο που σώζει την φωνή σου'.

⁶⁷ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 22/3/2007. Original quote: Έτσι το 'μαθα από τους παλιούς του χωριού, δεν μπορώ να το εξηγήσω, απλά προσπαθούσα να μιμηθώ τον ήχο και τον τρόπο που τραγούδαγαν, δεν ήθελα να το αλλάξω και έτσι το κράτησα όπως το βρήκα. Αν και ορισμένοι μοντέρνοι τραγουδιστές τείνουν να χρησιμοποιήσουν άλλες τεχνικές, αυτό που μετράει είναι το τελικό αποτέλεσμα.

⁶⁸ The term 'tense throat', here, refers to the singer whose throat is shut tight and he/she is trying to force air in. The purpose of such throat condition is the execution of Pontic vocal ornamentations.

thorax and the diaphragm while the rest cultivate the use of only one of them. In these terms, Hrysanthos promoted an ideal Pontic performance which enable him: a) to control his breathing (through the diaphragm) and b) to allow vocal breakings (through the upper chest area) as will be shown below. This is also the crucial point that differentiated Hrysanthos from the rest of the Pontic singers and made his performances sound unique.

Theodoros and Elias admit that their vocalizations are very much influenced by their lyra playing. The latter acknowledged: ‘Although I first sing and then play the tune, after a few weeks I realize that I tend to imitate the lyra’s ornamentations in some parts of the piece’.⁶⁹ Similarly Stathis points out that: ‘The lyra’s embellishments are extremely important for singing. This is why singers who spend long periods of time with lyra players find themselves to be “bound” by virtue the sounds they produce’.⁷⁰ Specifically, the voice’s imitation of the lyra is in fact the breakings taken from lyra’s ornamentations. Given that vocal flexibility can imitate the dexterity of the hands, singers not only imitate the ornamentations of the lyra but also find a new ‘terrain’ for extensive embellishment. Thus, for some singers, to imitate the ornaments of the lyra is an important factor in the formation of vocal breakings.

From an anatomical perspective, when the voice sings in a high range the vocal folds can be stretched to a full length changing their amplitude and pitch because of the folds’ elasticity and flexibility. Reflecting upon my performance practice of breakings as well as my co-workers’ breakings, it has come to my

⁶⁹ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 22/3/2007. Original quote: Αν και πρώτα τραγουδάω και μετά παίζω τον σκοπό, ύστερα από λίγες εβδομάδες πιάνω τον εαυτό μου να μιμούμαι τη λύρα σε κάποια σημεία.

⁷⁰ Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Ο ήχος της λύρας είναι πολύ σημαντικός για τους τραγουδιστές και για αυτό τραγουδιστές που είναι καιρό με λυράρηδες είναι δεμένοι ηχητικά.

attention that they raise and lower the larynx with considerable speed. This manipulation of the larynx, not only evokes expressive emotion but also demands from the singers precision in terms of pitch. In the Pontic vocal style, movement of the larynx is essential, particularly for the production of breakings and those ornamentations which provide some of the most characteristic aspects of this style. As Hrysanthos confirms: ‘Moving the larynx you can create what we call “breakings” of the voice’.⁷¹ Moreover, the use of a moveable larynx can create remarkable vocal effects in terms of ornamentation and melismatic singing, and thus becomes a quintessential component of the performance aesthetic.

However, Hrysanthos observed: ‘This is not the only way to do them [breakings]. What I do is to make the uvula of my throat smaller so that I can move it very fast; in this way I can perform whichever breakings I want’.⁷² Similarly, Alexis notes that: ‘When moving back and down to the soft palate the “breakings” [of the voice] become much easier’.⁷³ I was very curious to find out, first, how it is possible to reduce the size of one’s uvula and make it vibrate faster and, second, why use of the soft palate could facilitate the performance of vocal breakings.

Reflecting on my own performance practice, working with my vocal tutors, and searching pertinent literature, I discovered that the correct terminology of this action of the uvula⁷⁴ is not to make it smaller but to lift it up. Doing so creates more space (in the nasopharynx) for the air coming from the larynx, and by moving the soft

⁷¹ Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: με την κίνηση του λάρυγγα μπορείς να δημιουργήσεις τα λεγόμενα σπασίματα.

⁷² Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: Αυτός δεν είναι ο μόνος τρόπος να το κάνεις. Το τι κάνω πολλές φορές, μικραίνω την σταφυλή μέσα στο λαιμό μου και έτσι την κουνώ πολύ γρήγορα. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο μπορώ να κάνω ό,τι σπάσιμο θέλω.

⁷³ Interview with Alexis Parharides, 27/8/2007. Original quote: ‘Όταν “πηγαίνω” πίσω και κάτω στην σταφυλή τα “σπασίματα” γίνονται πού πιο εύκολα.’

⁷⁴ The term ‘uvula’ (its name comes from the Latin word for ‘grape’, *uva*) refers to the small piece of soft tissue that can be seen dangling down from the soft palate (at the rear of the mouth cavity). It has its own little muscle that helps it stiffen and change shape. Many singers credit the uvula with letting them produce a vibrato, a wavy up-and-down sound; for more see Watson (2002). Here, we see a different use of uvula by Hrysanthos who employs it in terms of producing Pontic melismata.

palate swiftly the singer can actually manipulate the air in the way one wishes to shape it. Consequently, the final vocal sound is formed by shifting the uvula and moving the soft palate; both are placed in the back area of the mouth cavity which is also very influential on the final vocal effect (Illustration 12). By lifting the uvula and the resultant creation of ‘more space’, this practice again approximates the Italian ‘open throat’ (*gola aperta*) technique which concerns sensations of openness in the nasopharynx. This remains, however, the same practice up to the point where vocal breakings in Pontic music take place.

Watching Hrysanthos’ performance carefully one can notice that during the breakings the vocal sound alters between the modal and the falsetto voices (DVD Example 1, seconds: 0:40-0:41, 1:25-1:26, 1:34-1:35, 2:10, 2:18). This is probably one of the most difficult techniques to acquire; to control such fast changes, of this kind, demands many years of practice as well as considerable vocal effort. Such modal and falsetto changes of the voice are also found in other sorts of Greek traditional singing but not at this speed. In Pontic music, as currently rendered, the technique is used by many singers. Hrysanthos was probably the first to introduce this effect, which he was able to master for the performance of vocal ornamentation. It is also the most characteristic aspect of his technique and most imitated by other singers.

Inspecting this alteration between the modal and falsetto voices, I was able to conclude that the technique is created by the interval leap of the perfect 5th or minor 6th or, on occasion, even the major 6th. That is to say, the note to be ornamented is followed by an abrupt, short note at one of the above intervals sung in falsetto voice (similar to an *acciaccatura* in Western art singing). This alteration has to be accomplished within less than half a second, making it extremely difficult to perform. Theodoros points out that: “This sort of breaking the voice is not the sole

characteristic of the Greek Anatolian vocal style nor does it bestow identity. But without doubt, it is commonly accepted and is widely used'.⁷⁵ Similarly, Stathis points out that: 'Although I used this technique quite a lot in the past, I now feel that I should only use it in certain places. I do not really like it'.⁷⁶ However, this kind of vocal ornamentation is an important element in Pontic singers' technique and it is also very frequently found in the contemporary performance practice of the style.

Although the vocal technique of 'alteration' between modal and falsetto voices uses the movable larynx and the soft palate, a further observation can be made with regard to articulation. This has to do with the 'focal point' of the voice, that is, the time and space where the vocal sound is focused in the vocal instrument before being projected. This focal point in Pontic singing is more likely to be found at the rear or centre part of the mouth cavity, as it results from extensive use of the soft palate. The vocal projection emerges from a 'backwards' position, and, as ornamented vowels are always sustained, this is usually achieved also by taking 'backwards' the back part of the tongue.

Consequently, the vowel sound is 'concentrated' on the soft palate as well as 'bringing it' into the nasal cavity.⁷⁷ Moreover, the front part of the mouth cavity could also act as an important focal point. This is achieved when breakings do *not* proceed from the soft palate but rather straight from a movable larynx. In this case the voice is brought forward, creating a less dark timbre. Positions of this kind are used in ornamentations that include breakings but exclude quarter tones. Thus,

⁷⁵ Interview with Theodoros Eleftheriou, 3-8-2005. Original quote: Αυτό το σπάσιμο δεν είναι και το πιο χαρακτηριστικό γνώρισμα του Ελληνο-Ανατολικού τραγουδιού, ούτε του δίνει ταυτότητα. Αλλά χωρίς αμφιβολία είναι αποδεκτό και χρησιμοποιείται ευρέως.

⁷⁶ Interview with Stathis Nikolaidis, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Αν και την χρησιμοποιούσα αρκετά στο παρελθόν, τώρα νιώθω πως πρέπει να την βάζω μόνο σε λίγα μέρη, δεν μου πολυ αρέσει.

⁷⁷ Use of the nasal cavity might have developed from Byzantine music; as Leonidas Afendoulis, a Byzantine chanter and a performer of Greek traditional music, points out: 'The nasal sound helps to improve the enhancement of the voice' (personal interview, 2/5/2003). By the term enhancement he means the richness of the sound which is usually found in the harmonics produced by a voice. Original quote: Ο ρινικός ήχος βοηθά στο να εμπλουτίσουμε τον όγκο της φωνής.

correspondence between sung music and vocal technique could be reasonably drawn here, since the presence or lack of quarter tones in the melodic line can define the focal point of the singer. Being more specific, moving the focal point of the voice backwards may encourage a more accurate performance of quarter tones, since smaller intervals require particular care in performance. In this sense it would seem altogether unfeasible that an operatic singer (who usually employs a forward projection) could perform Pontic music (backward projection) and, respectively, a Pontic singer could perform operatic arias.

Additionally, Alexis points out that: ‘I feel the breakings of my voice coming from backwards to the centre of my mouth in a circular movement. There, it is easier to sing them’.⁷⁸ Moreover, this sort of vocal production is believed to give an individual character to the singer. This last point is also exemplified in Hrysanthos’s words: ‘I first sing for myself and then for the rest. To begin with I must satisfy myself’.⁷⁹ Thus, from the perspective of articulation, it is believed that bringing the sound ‘backwards’ projects a more personal sound of the performer. This position, from the performer’s point of view, acts as a symbolic action and I strongly believe that without such crucial and characteristic vocal adjustments a vocal performance is in danger of being rejected by a Pontic audience. Moreover, the accepted range of the folk voice does not employ the highest notes of one’s range, as in classical singing. Even singers with extensive tessitura, such as Hrysanthos and Stathis testify: ‘I

⁷⁸ Interview with Alexis Parharides, 27/8/2007. Original quote: ‘Αισθάνομαι τα “σπασίματα” της φωνής μου να έρχονται από πίσω και μέχρι το κέντρο του στόματός μου σε κυκλική κίνηση. Εκεί είναι πιο εύκολα να τα πω’.

⁷⁹ Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: Πρώτα τραγουδώ για μένα και μετά για τους άλλους. Αρχικά πρέπει να ικανοποιήσω τον εαυτό μου.

always leave one or one and a half spare tones above the tonality I usually sing; this helps me to express myself without screeching'.⁸⁰

Folk performances at local feasts may include more than five hours of constant singing, which is obviously tiring. In response to my questions about stamina to all respondents: 'I never tire when I sing. If I became tired it means that I do not feel what I am singing and therefore my soul cannot govern my singing!'⁸¹ 'Tired? Of course not, singing is my life, I live my music, and if someone interrupts me, I feel lost and have to ask the lyra player to tell me where I stopped. This shows how absorbed I am in my performance',⁸² 'Although I sometimes feel tired after three days of singing morning and night; it is the music itself that helps me to overcome this condition',⁸³ 'No! I cannot explain it... singing Pontic songs is like receiving energy. I never became tired; I can do this all night'.⁸⁴ The audience acts as a catalyst for the singer's inner world: 'The criterion of the audience is infallible; all of us depend on it'.⁸⁵ Finally, Elias points out that: 'I learned to sing from the audience of my village and consequently they play the most important role when I sing.'⁸⁶

The mutual relationship that exists between audience and singer is directly developed through the vocal instrument. The voice, with its unique charisma to

⁸⁰ Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: Πάντα αφήνω έναν ή ενάμιση τόνο πάνω από την τονικότητα που συνήθως τραγουδάω, έτσι μπορώ και εκφράζομαι δίχως να τσιρίζω.

⁸¹ Interview with Theodoros Eleftheriou, 3-8-2005. Original quote: ποτέ δεν κουράζομαι όταν τραγουδώ και αν κουραστώ, σημαίνει πως δε νιώθω αυτό που τραγουδώ και έτσι η ψυχή μου δεν μπορεί να επιβληθεί του τραγουδιού.

⁸² Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: κουρασμένος; φυσικά όχι, το τραγούδι είναι η ζωή μου, ζω τη μουσική και αν κάποιος με διακόψει, νιώθω χαμένος και πρέπει να ρωτήσω τον λυράρη για να μου πει που σταμάτησα. Τόσο πολυ αφοσιώνομαι!

⁸³ Interview with Stathis Nikolaidis, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Αν και νιώθω κουρασμένος μετά από τρεις μέρες τραγούδι μέρα νύχτα, η μουσική από μόνη της με βοηθά να ξεπεράζω αυτήν την κατάσταση.

⁸⁴ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 22/3/2007. Original quote: Όχι! Δεν μπορώ να το εξηγήσω... τραγουδώντας ποντιακά είναι σαν να παίρνεις ενέργεια, ποτέ δεν κουράζομαι μπορώ να το κάνω όλη νύχτα.

⁸⁵ Interview with Stathis Nikolaidis, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Το κριτήριο του κόσμου είναι αλάνθαστο και όλοι μας στηριζόμαστε εκεί.

⁸⁶ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 22/3/2007. Original quote: Έμαθα να τραγουδώ από το κοινό του χωριού μου και επομένως παίζουν τον πιο σημαντικό ρόλο όταν τραγουδάω.

combine speech and music, transmits emotions and messages in the most direct way. That transmission is not necessarily linguistic; it can also arise from the manner in which one articulates a sound or a tune. Many songs in the Pontic vocal style begin with a free style of vocalization based on old tunes. ‘By starting with a *makry kayten* [a type of vocal improvisation based on a lament] my audience and I enter the right mood for this music which is essentially painful, nostalgic and sweetly melancholic’.⁸⁷

Stathis also observes: ‘It, moreover, depends on the listeners whether I sing well or badly, since I follow their emotions. Even when I am physically tired after two or three days of singing from eleven at night to five in the morning, it is the response of the audience that makes me feel that I had not sung at all’.⁸⁸ Theodoros also notes that: ‘For those of us who are preoccupied with this music professionally, the audience constitutes the only factor that can take your emotional state from “I must” to “I want to” sing’.⁸⁹

Beyond the audience–performer relationship,⁹⁰ an important step toward a more precise approach in understanding the singer’s perspective and techniques centres on the physical behaviour of the singer and the observations that they give rise to. Music and bodily movement⁹¹ are closely related, especially in the world of voice where all singers are, perhaps subconsciously, aware of such actions. I shall here

⁸⁷ Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Αρχίζοντας με έναν μακρύν καϊτέ μας βάζει –εμένα και το κοινό μου- στην σωστή διάθεση της μουσικής που είναι κυρίως πονεμένη, νοσταλγική και γλυκο-μελανχολική.

⁸⁸ Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Επίσης εξαρτάται από αυτούς που με ακούν εάν τραγουδάω καλά ή κακά μιας και ακολουθώ την διαθεσή τους. Ακόμα και αν είμαι κουρασμένος μετά από δύο ή τρεις μέρες τραγούδι από τις 11 έως τις 5 το πρωί, το κοινό είναι αυτό που με κλανει να νιώσω οτι δεν έχω τραγουδήσει καν.

⁸⁹ Interview with Theodoros Eleftheriou, 3/8/2005. Original quote: Για εμάς που ασχολούμαστε επαγγελματικά με αυτήν την μουσική, το κοινό είναι ο μόνος παράγοντας που μπορεί να μεταφέρει την διαθεσή σου από το ‘πρέπει’ στο ‘θέλω’ να τραγουδήσω.

⁹⁰ See also Casey, Rosenberg, Wareham (1972)

⁹¹ Although my scope is not to provide a detailed list, the following papers on musical structure and body movements might serve as paradigms: J. Baily 1995, 1978-77-76, Bell Yung, 1984:505-517, and Susan McClary – Robert Walser, 1994:75-84.

consider a specific physical expression related to the production of Pontic vocal sounds. This occurs during actual performance; it is not a dance movement but an ergonomic action employed by the singer to enhance vocal performance.

This movement consists of an abrupt ‘twitch’ of the upper chest area as it goes backwards (DVD Examples 3, seconds: 0:14-0:16, 0:45-0:47, 1:17, 2:17-2:19, Example 5: 0:39, 1:14, 2:31-2:32, 4:00). During this ‘twitch’, the singers tend to move their whole upper body backwards since they believe; this can create an alternative form of vibration in the melodic line. This movement has nothing to do with specific parts of the vocal instrument but is rather an attempt to exert the whole vocal tract to achieve strong emphasis in terms of melody and the strong accentuation of words or syllables.

This sound-modifying gesture is commonly seen in almost all performers of Pontic music. Hrysanthos argues that: ‘Through the pressure of the thorax I can renew my breath and produce a different accent to the lyrics’.⁹² Raising the upper chest area at the end of exhalation provides better control of the air and enables the singer to finish his/her phrase, avoiding the threat of ‘dying out’. Stathis states that: ‘By this movement (the twitch of the upper chest area) the old singers used to emphasize the words and give better rhythm to the tune’.⁹³ This claim is valid (as also experienced in my own performance practice) since the twitch of the upper chest area occurs on the strong beat of the rhythm and thus gives a sense of vocal, percussive accentuation. It is a technique normally found in table songs and in other forms of non-rhythmic songs (such as dirges, or improvisations).

⁹² Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31/12/2004. Original quote: Δια την πίεση του θώρακος μπορώ να ανανεώνω την αναπνοή μου και να δώσω έναν άλλο τονισμό στα στιχάκια.

⁹³ Interview with Stathis Nikolaides, 21/7/2005. Original quote: Με αυτήν την κίνηση οι παλιοί μπορούσαν να δώσουν έμφαση στα στιχάκια και ρυθμό στο σκοπό.

3.5 Towards the conclusions

At this point I wish to summarize the techniques characteristic of the Pontic vocal style through a detailed performance analysis of DVD example 13, itself an actual audio sample. Entitled *Μακρύ Καϊτέν* (Makry kayten, ‘Long tune’), this is considered to be one of the most venerable recordings in Pontic discography. It was recorded in 1986 and is sung by Hrysanthos accompanied by Kostakis Petrides on the Pontic lyra. The name of the album is ‘Hrysanthos sings Matsouka’.⁹⁴ This song itself is a lament not for a person but for the homeland, Pontos, and for all places that were unwillingly abandoned after 1922.

The tonality of the song is D (Ἦχος πρώτος, Mode I, in the Byzantine musical system akin to the late medieval Dorian mode in Gregorian chant) and the melody reaches high A, (the present sample does not contain this high A). What is characteristic in this song is that the tonic centre of the vocal line is based on the note F, the third tone above the mode’s fundamental. D occurs in passing until the lyra’s final instrumental section which brings the melody that brings the melody back to mode’s home note.

The lyrics of the present sample could be seen as a beatitude to all those who are fortunate enough to be born and die on the same land. It is a song that depicts the tragic loss experienced by the first Pontic generation who left Pontos as a result of the disastrous events in 1922. This song is a contrafactum since the melody was played in Pontos and the lyrics themselves added later after 1922. Here is the extract I have chosen for the present performance analysis:

⁹⁴ Matsouka is a region in Pontos, located south of Trabzon.

Και να ‘σαν εκείνον π’ αποθάν

(Kie na san ekeinon p’ apothan)

Και στον τόπον ντε γεννέθεν εί

(kai son topon de yennethen, hey)

Και που κ’ εφέκεν τα χώματα ‘τ

(kai pou ki efeken ta xomatat)

αι πουλίμ κι ξενιτεύτεν εί.

(hay poulim ki ekseniteften, hey)

Blessed is the one who dies

on the land where he was born

but did not leave his soil

oh my dear! Or be estranged.

According to the timescale indicated on the DVD these are the divisions in seconds:

0:00 – 0:06 Title of chapter 13

0:07 – 0:31 Instrumental section on the Pontic lyra. Apart from introducing the main theme of the melody, the purpose of this section is to introduce the mode of the piece and its intervallic formulations. Voice and lyra perform the same quarter tones, resulting in a homogeneous texture.

0:32 – 0:47 Hrysanthos introduces the first vocal line employing a moveable larynx. At the beginning the vocal sound is focused more in the front part of the mouth cavity since the sung vowel is ‘i’; however, in the 38th second he moves back to the soft palate on the vowel ‘a’ in order to achieve quicker breakings.

0:47 – 0:50 Instrumental response to the voice.

0:51 – 0:54 The so-called ‘modal-falsetto’ technique on the vowel ‘e’.

0:55 – 1:02 In this section the singer changes to the moveable larynx while in the final second he renders the final syllable in such a manner as to depict the painful message of the lyrics.

1:03 – 1:14 Instrumental section.

1:15 – 1:18 Modal-falsetto technique on the vowel ‘e’.

1:19 – 1:24 A long note, characteristic of how he moves from the vowel ‘e’, performed in modal-falsetto technique, to ‘o’ where Hrysnathos focuses on the soft palate. This allows for more precision and pace to the following series of breakings.

1:25 – 1:29 Modal-falsetto technique on the vowel ‘o’.

1:30 – 1:31 Instrumental response on the lyra.

1:32 – 1:41 Moveable larynx by widening the mouth cavity.

1:42 – 1:47 Modal-falsetto technique followed by the moveable larynx at the end of the vocal line.

1:48 – 2:02 Instrumental section culminating in the coda. Characteristic is the manner in which the lyra ends the piece with a double string note at 1:53 that includes the home note and the fifth above.

3.6 Conclusions

The Pontic vocal style is a monophonic tradition of singing that encourages solo performance and a dialogic relationship between audience and singer/player. The use of a relatively high vocal register is to be heard in almost all songs and singers. As such, settings in high tessitura are the most popular and well-known in this style. High-register singing creates significant vocal demands in terms of breathing and articulation. Although Hrysanthos' and Stathis' breathing technique encourages use of the diaphragm, others discourage such practice. The ideal Pontic performance in terms of breathing technique is to be found in Hrysanthos' singing where an extensive use of both the diaphragm and the upper chest area occurs. Imitation of the Pontic lyra's ornaments is deemed to be a crucial factor in vocal production vis-à-vis pitch and ornamentation. Although the tuning of the lyra is not absolute but adjustable in the singer's voice the preference for the upper-register is widely evident from the co-workers and from numerous recordings in my possession.

Singers tend to produce breakings in line with the sounds of the lyra and this is achieved by using a movable larynx, an essential device in the vocal production of this style. The employment of a movable larynx creates a variety of affects such as vocal tensions and a tightened throat, giving the impression of strangulation. A movable larynx allows for the creation of breakings which conventionally alternate between modal and falsetto voices. Ornamentation of this kind demands considerable vocal effort in terms of pitch accuracy and velocity; moreover it cultivates in the larynx a remarkable flexibility. This technique differs from to the classical Western approach to vocalization where the larynx is kept in its rest position.

A movable larynx also influences articulation in the voice, since it encourages use of the soft palate as a focal point. Subsequently, the sound is projected from a 'backwards' position in order to achieve better control over quarter tones. In this way singers also tend to feel that their voiced sounds are more personal and expressive. The use of soft palate is of great importance for the precise performance of the quarter tones found in Pontic music since the given flexibility of this vocal organ enable singers to deliver these tiny intervals with reassurance and accuracy.

The upper chest area is 'twitched' backwards largely for two reasons: first, to give emphasis on the strong beat of the music, and second, to provide alternative accentuation to the song text. This movement is frequently encountered in table or other non-rhythmic songs, where the lyra is the only accompanying instrument. Here, the voice is used to produce 'percussive' nuances to the melody. The relationship that is cultivated between audience and performer is felt to be crucial in Pontic singing. In summary, Pontic singers pay particular attention to the accurate rendition of intervals, ornamentation and 'mood' of the music.

Chapter IV

Epirotic vocal style

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall consider the vocal style of Epirus, an area located in north-Western Greece (Illustration 13). This vocal style is common to singers on both sides of the Greek-Albanian border in the form of folk polyphony, antiphony and monophony. The analysis, again focused on vocal production and performance practice, will concentrate mainly on the polyphonic and monophonic species, since antiphony uses exactly the same techniques. As mentioned above, the objective here is not simply to gather folk songs but rather to examine their vocal execution.

I shall begin with a broad consideration of Epirus and then suggest how polyphony is to be understood within the Greek folk context of this region. After introducing my main co-workers I shall turn to a discussion of the distinctions between folk polyphony, antiphony and monophony. This in turn will lead to a presentation on Epirus and its polyphonic song by means of a description of the different functions of Epirotic polyphonic and monophonic vocal styles. Each is characterised by certain distinctive vocal techniques.

4.2 Epirus and Folk Vocal Polyphony

For many centuries Epirus has been a north-Western Greek borderland. Throughout its long history this territory, now part of the modern Greek state, witnessed the rise and fall of numerous civilizations: ancient Greek, Roman,

Byzantine and Ottoman. Its main urban centre is the historic city of *Ιωάννινα* (Ioannina), but the region also includes a great number of villages, perhaps over one hundred. An operation similar to that of 1922 in Asia Minor was implemented when in 1944 Greeks from southern Albania were moved to modern Epirus and Albanians from Epirus to southern Albania.⁹⁵

According to Samuel Baud-Bovy: ‘Had there been proper studies of the music of both sides, this cruel action would never have taken place’.⁹⁶ His point was that the similarities between these two music cultures are so overwhelmingly greater than their differences.⁹⁷ Owing to its topography, the Epirotic land was difficult to cultivate and inhabitants were obliged either to migrate or to start their own business of stock breeding. For this reason, most of their folk songs either relate to migration or extol nature. Aside from Epirus, folk polyphony can be heard in certain songs from Thessaly (the Greek midlands), to a lesser degree among the Greek Vlachs, and sporadically in the counties of Kastoria and Grevena (both located in Northern Greece).⁹⁸

One of my first contacts relative to my fieldwork in Epirotic folk polyphony was a company of young people from Athens whose passion for their village, Aetopetra, was overwhelmingly manifest from the first moment. Nikos Zekis, my first contact in the group, informed me that: ‘Everything is connected to the village. There we learnt the polyphonic songs and our dances. We all desire to maintain connections with our village; we feel that we belong there. We only live in Athens for

⁹⁵ The people who lived in Epirus before the exchange of 1944 were called *Tsamides* while *Liapides* was the name given to those Greeks who lived in the southern part of Albania.

⁹⁶ From the folklore magazine, *Apeiros* 1998:32 (the original, in French, was translated into Greek by the ethnomusicologist L. Liavas).

⁹⁷ For further information on Albanian song, see Sugarman (1989).

⁹⁸ One could argue that the polyphony heard in the Ionian Islands could be considered as ‘folk’, although this is debatable, since this polyphony was created under Italian influence; nonetheless, it is seen as indigenous music by the locals.

financial reasons. So we always find an excuse to visit the village. There every family has their own patron saint. So we make every effort to celebrate each name day or feast simply to go there! Although the village is a six hour drive from Athens, we quite often take the journey even if only for a few hours, and then come back.’⁹⁹

The folk music of Epirus continues as a vibrant tradition embedded within a specific geographical area. In terms of folk polyphony, performance practice and performance history the repertory seems to be exclusive. Instrumental music is also well attested in Epirus but the most ‘authentic’ music for the Epirotes (especially those in the far north) is the purely vocal. Divided according to function, the repertory ranges from mournful laments to love songs, and from table¹⁰⁰ to dance songs. Poetic themes generally refer: a) to those who have left their homeland and migrated for financial reasons, and b) to the natural, physical, historical and social circle of life.

For the Epirotes, the term ‘polyphony’ usually means the synchronized and simultaneous outflow of three or more different voices. This contrasts with the prevailing Western notion of the term ‘polyphony’ where is oftenly equated with tonic/dominant ‘functional’ harmony. A Western-trained scholar might well describe Epirotic ‘polyphony’ as ‘heterophony’, which, by definition, is a ‘form’ of polyphony in which (a) there is a simultaneous execution of different melodic events; and (b) some of the melodic lines are frequently improvisatory.¹⁰¹ In the Greek folk context, it is neo-Byzantine music that exhibits ambiguity vis-à-vis the boundaries between

⁹⁹ Interview with the polyphonic group of *Aetopetra*, 8/11/2006. Original quote by Nikos Zekis: ‘τα πάντα είναι γύρω από το χωριό, μάθαμε τα πολυφωνικά και τους χορούς γιατί θέλαμε να είμαστε κοντά στο χωριό, νιώθουμε πως ανήκομε εκεί και ότι ζούμε εδώ για οικονομικούς λόγους. Πάντα βρίσκουμε δικαιολογίες για να πάμε στο χωριό. Κάθε οικογένεια σε αυτά τα μέρη είχε και τον δικό της Άγιο και εμείς προσπαθούμε να γιορτάσουμε κάθε έναν από αυτούς μόνο και μόνο για να πηγαίνουμε! Αν και το χωριό είναι τουλάχιστον 6 ώρες δρόμο από εδώ συχνά πηγαίνουμε για μόνο λίγες ώρες και επιστρέφουμε’ (Athens, 8/11/2006).

¹⁰⁰ Or as it is known: *της τάβλας*, *tis tavlas*.

¹⁰¹ For further information, see Harvard Dictionary of Music, Bruno Nettl (1956) and Irene Markoff (1975:137,138).

monophony and polyphony since the *ison* (drone) together with the leading voice are generally considered to be a monophonic vocal action.

Elias, a church chanter, points out that: ‘The *ison* [drone] cannot be considered to be an independent voice since it exists only below the main melody; therefore I cannot call this polyphony although others might do so’.¹⁰² On another occasion he affirmed that: ‘Byzantine music is monophonic’¹⁰³ – a remark also based on the fact that the characteristic drone is felt to be merely a buttress for the leading voice and exists to maintain the modality. It could be said, therefore, that the *ison* ‘completes’ the monodic leading voice. In this sense, the Byzantine vocal style is monophonic by some. Others, however, insist that the very existence of a two simultaneous voices produces polyphony in the Western understanding.

There are many diverse opinions about the origin of the drone in Byzantine music¹⁰⁴ and in Epirotic folk polyphony. Lambros Liavas, a Greek ethnomusicologist, asserts that Byzantine music has ‘undoubtedly influenced’ Epirotic folk polyphony in terms of its melodic line and the presence of the drone (1998:19), while Kostas Lolis (2006:46), a native researcher in this genre, suggests that the drone might not have existed in the oldest folk Epirotic polyphony but was added later, under the influence of Byzantine chant. He bases this claim on the fact that there are still vocal songs with

¹⁰² Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 2/5/2003. Original quote: Το Ίσον δεν είναι κάτι το ανεξάρτητο σαν φωνή αλλά υπάρχει μόνο κάτω από την κύρια μελωδία, επομένως δεν μπορώ το πω αυτό πολυφωνία αν και ορισμένοι άλλοι μπορεί να το λεν.

¹⁰³ Interview with Elias Petropoulos, 22/3/2007. Original quote: Η Βυζαντινή μουσική είναι μονοφωνική.

¹⁰⁴ The earliest notification of the drone in Byzantine music seems to have been made in 1584 by the German traveller Martin Crusius (see Levy, 1980:561). This, of course, does not mean that drone practice began at that time; it must have begun earlier than this. Conomos, in his article ‘Experimental Polyphony, “according to the... Latins” in Late Byzantine Psalmody’ (1982) takes the matter even before the 16th century by introducing Greek figures (like Ioannes Plousiadenos and the *lambadarios* Manuel Gazes) who, influenced by Western polyphony, also introduced polyphonic chants into the Byzantine rite. In a personal communication with Prof. Conomos, he pointed out that it is significant that in the musical treatise by Manuel Chrysaphes (written in July, 1458 and deals exhaustively with the eight modes and their *phthorai*) there is no mention whatsoever of the use of the drone-ison. If the *ison* existed at all, it would most certainly have been mentioned by him in this text on the theory of the Art of Chanting (edition 1985). Thus, it is likely that the *ison* appeared in the late 15th or early 16th century.

no drone at all.¹⁰⁵ There is, therefore, little evidence either way and the matter is open to speculation.

Voices in folk polyphony are blended in such a way as to produce ‘homogeneous sound-shapes’ (Emsheimer, 1964: 44). Unification in the sound production of Epirotic folk polyphony (and presumably in other kinds of folk polyphony) reaches a point where it is impossible to separate one voice from another. This observation is based on the fact that each voice (apart from that which leads) relies on the existence of the neighbouring voice so that, together, they produce an interactive vocal result. Whenever I attempt to distinguish the voices I have great difficulty, as do my colleagues.

There are three main kinds of folk singing style in Epirus: monophonic, antiphonal (or responsorial) and polyphonic. The monophonic style is sung *a capella* or it may be accompanied by instruments, while the antiphonal is based on a ‘call and response’ exchange. The result is a type of a responsorial singing where a group of voices alternately replies to the lead singer by repeating his main vocal line – not strictly in unison (homophony) but with variation in the vocal line. The polyphonic style is the most complicated of all because of its three, or sometimes four, different vocal lines sounding at the same time. In both the polyphonic and antiphonal styles the vocal technique of the leading voice is very similar, and for this reason, I will, in this chapter, dwell only on four-voiced polyphony.

As already indicated, polyphonic song in Epirus involves a vocal multi-part organization of three or more non-identical melodic lines which aim to achieve an optimally balanced sound. Included are: a) the main melody, b) the drone and c) the overlapping phrases (explained below). All voices (minimum 3 people) employ vocal

¹⁰⁵ Another assumption by Lolis (2006) about the drone element in folk polyphony is that it could have been aroused in imitation of the sound of bag-pipe in Epirus.

techniques which combine different skills and give rise to relatively complex forms of folk polyphony. The musical setting itself is strophic in form and is usually sung by at least three singers, although this number can vary depending on the occasion. While male singers predominate in such contexts, this does not imply the exclusion of female or mixed groups.

This kind of polyphony is mostly found in regions near the Greek-Albanian border, such as *Δρόπολη*, Dropoli, *Λάκκας Πωγωνίου*, Lakkas Pogoniou, the villages of *Κόνιτσα*, Konitsa, and in the greater area of *Πωγώνι*, Pogoni (around 36 villages, see map). Each of these regions has developed its own form of folk polyphony through shared songs that differ essentially in terms of pronunciation and small variations of melody. Thus, one can encounter many local idioms such as the *Δροπολίτικο* (dropolitiko, from *Dropoli*), *Κτισματιώτικο* (ktismatitiko, from the village *Κτίσματα*, Ktismata), and *Παρακαλαμιώτικο* (parakalamiotiko, from *Παρακάλαμος*, Parakalamos). The vocal techniques examined in this chapter are concerned with the polyphonic songs of Ktismata since my co-workers originate from this village.

Pantelis Makos relates that: ‘We could not sing with the others. We, alone, made our own way. The way in which the *Politsani* sing polyphonic songs, the *Dervitsani* or *Hlomo* do not. And we speak about nearby villages, very close, only one hour away from each other. In fact, we always talk about travelling on foot’.¹⁰⁶ Although typical disparities involve linguistic idioms, tempo or melody, the vocal techniques employed are clearly identical with those of the entire area of Epirotic polyphony.

¹⁰⁶ Published interview by Labridis (1998:25). Original quote: ‘Όπως το τραγουδάει η Πολύτσανη, δεν το τραγουδάει η Δερβιτσάνη ή το Χλωμό. Και μιλάμε για χωριά που είναι πολύ κοντά, μια ώρα δρόμο –και μεις μιλάμε πάντα με τα πόδια.

Each singer is given a title according to his or her role in the ensemble. Because the leading voice is that which *παίρνει* (assumes) the tune its singer is known as the ‘*παρτής*’ (*partis*, ‘the one who assumes the melody’). The second voice normally responds to the *partis*’ main melody and is called *γυριστής* (*gyristis*) or *σακιστής* (*tsakistis*) (‘the one who “turns” or “cracks” the melody’). The rest of the group sustains a drone and are appropriate called *ισοκράτες* (*isokrates*, ‘drone holders’).

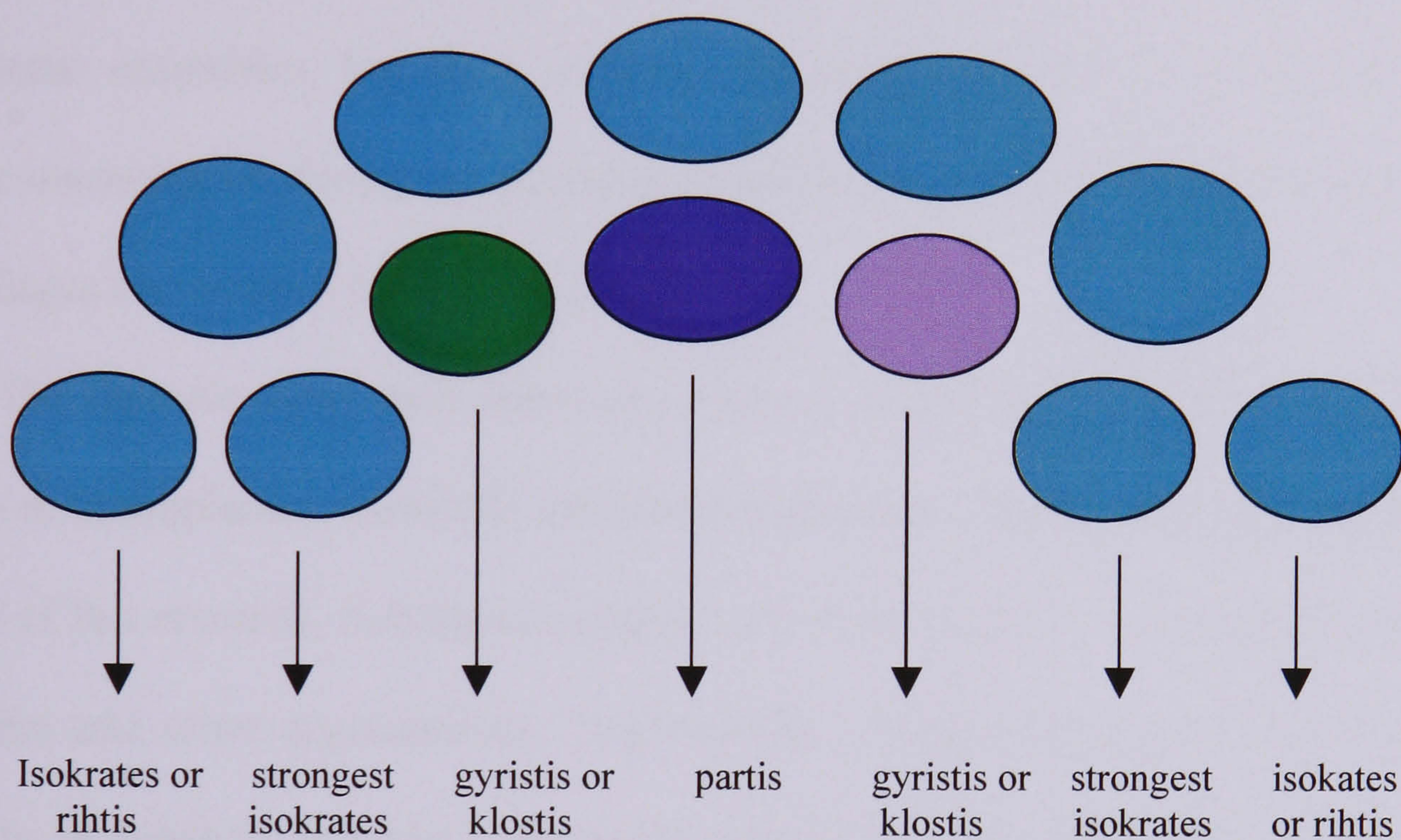
In this arrangement one very often encounters a functionary named the *κλώστης* (*klostis*, ‘the one who “threads” the melody’) in order to liken this voice to the movement of the fingers that thread cotton through a needle. Less frequently, we meet the *ρίχτης* (*rihtis*), the singer who *ρίχνει* (*rihni*, ‘throws’) the tune, usually at the interval of a perfect fourth below the home note of the piece. Since the vocal line is of limited range (only two notes), the *rihtis*’ part is usually sung by one of the drone holders. This group formation can be modified only with respect to the *gyristis* whose role may be assumed by the *klostis*; thus, of the ‘usurper’ the locals say, *θα πάει κλωστό* (it will go to the *klosto*, if there is a part for the *klostis*) or *θα πάει με γύρισμα* (it will go with a *gyrisma*, if there is a part for the *gyristis*). Rarely do the roles of *gyristis* and *klostis* occur in the same group.

This arrangement can be found in both male and female groups. In the case of a mixed group, however, the *partis* is usually female, the *gyristis* or *klostis* is male (though many believe that female voices could better take the role of *klostis*, because of their naturally high range) and the *isokrates* could be either male or female. There is no specific proportion between male and female singers in these groups apart from the aforementioned fact that in a mixed group the leading voice is usually female. In all other cases the gender composition of the group depends on the occasion. The

position of the singers is also very important for achieving a satisfying polyphonic rendition. Vaggelis Kotsou provided the following information:

In the centre we have the main singer, the *partis*, who places the *gyristis* or *klostis* either to his right or left hand side. Beside them we have the strongest droners and by this I mean those most able to keep the tonality. All are placed in a semi-circle. Occasionally we have a droner at the end of the first line of the semi-circle who also takes the role of *rihtis*.¹⁰⁷

The following diagram, schematically, represents this description:



It must be noted that such arrangements of the singers is designed to face an audience; normally in a *καφενείο* (*kafenio*, 'coffee shop') or in venues where the sense of a full circle rather than a semi-circle is normally created. There is no specific maximum number of people that might be involved in a polyphonic song, although the minimum number is usually three.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou, 18/4/2007. Original quote: Στο κέντρο έχουμε τον πρώτο τραγουδιστή, τον παρτή, ο οποίος επίσης αποφασίζει την θέση του γυριστή ή κλώστη είτε στα δεξιά του είτε στα αριστερά του. Δίπλα σε αυτούς έχουμε τους πιο δυνατούς ισοκράτες και με αυτό εννοώ τους πιο σταθερούς στην τονικότητα. Όλοι είναι σε σχήμα ημικυκλίου. Κάποιες φορές έχουμε έναν ισοκράτη στη γωνία της πρώτης γραμμής του ημικυκλίου ο οποίος είναι παίρνει και το ρόλο του ρίχτη.

4.3 Co-workers

I faced considerable difficulties in assembling polyphonic groups for the purpose of interviews. The singers are scattered and only gather together on special occasions. My investigations led to the fact that there are probably no more than eight to ten organized polyphonic groups in Greece while near the Albanian border (see map) there could be at least a further six to eight organized, Greek-speaking polyphonic groups.¹⁰⁸ By referring to ‘organized’ groups I do not necessarily mean professional ensembles, but more informal gatherings created either by the local village community or, during summertime especially, the influx of people returning to their villages on vacation from the large cities.

The Epirotic vocal style, however, is not confined only to polyphonic singing but also to monophonic. Certainly individual performers were vitally involved in the conduct of this research. Polyphonic singing nowadays tends to be organized more in folk clubs and other organizations. Traditionally, polyphonic groups were formed, randomly, at *kafeneia*, or under a venerable plane tree in the village square during the harvest. It was generally a social event, one of many village activities, religious ceremonies or local customs. Female singers constitute a significant proportion in the Epirotic polyphony while this is reduced when it comes to the monophonic style.

I especially sought young people who were engaged in musical performance in order to undertake comparative research with older practitioners. There is a pragmatic element in this approach: on one hand the older generation with its greater experience, and, on the other, the younger generation that perpetuates the vocal tradition transmitted to them. Of primary interest for this research, however, are the

¹⁰⁸ For a more systematic listing of Greek polyphonic groups near the Greek-Albanian borders, see Kostas Lolis, 2006, ‘The Epirote Polyphonic Song’ (pp. 65-80).

current vocal techniques in Epirotic polyphony; therefore both old and young co-workers have contributed to the findings.

I also worked with two categories of co-workers in order to gain a holistic view of the field: (i) those that specialize exclusively in polyphonic singing; and (ii) those that confine themselves to the monophonic forms. This is not to suggest that the co-workers are incapable of singing both kinds of Epirotic song, but in their recordings and after years of experience I have been led to believe that for the purposes of focus, this distinction is justified. Thus, my findings have been based on investigations involving one group with two individual cases of polyphonic singers, and three individuals of the monophonic tradition.

Polyphonic group from Aetopetra (Illustration 14, DVD example 6).

My first contact with Aetopetra's polyphonic vocal group was made through a friend, Nikos Zekis, who once lived and studied in London. He originally comes from *Aetopetra* village but now lives in Athens. His passion for Epirotic polyphony led him and his companions (also from the same village) to set up an amateur polyphonic group in Greece's capital: 'We felt that polyphonic singing is part of our identity and for this reason we called a professional and traditional singer, to teach us a few things. This is how we started'.¹⁰⁹ Nikos and I had had discussions on previous occasions about Epirotes, their polyphony and the manner in which they sing and dance in this

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Aetopetra's group, 8/11/2006. Original quote: Νιώθαμε πως το πολυφωνικό είναι μέρος της ταυτότητας μας και για αυτό καλέσαμε έναν επαγγελματία να μας διδάξει λίγα πράγματα. Έτσι κάπως ξεκινήσαμε.

region of Greece, but my first meeting with the group was on the 8 November 2006 in Galatsi, Athens.¹¹⁰

They assemble at least once a week to sing and learn new pieces. The gatherings take place in an extremely friendly environment; this was evident from the first moment I met the group. The combination of a good sense of humour, food and drink, gives the impression that this is a real family. As they said to me: ‘We have a really good time together, we enjoy [polyphonic singing]. Jokes, poking fun, village tales, eating and drinking are all part of our coming together.’¹¹¹

Impressive was the group’s commitment to and enthusiasm for polyphonic singing. In spite of the fact that they had not grown up in Aetopetra, and that their everyday activities in Athens finished around 9 pm, they eagerly looked forward to the moment when they would convene to sing and engage in village talk. The same were also chief organizers of local feasts at Aetopetra and took responsibility for arranging the annual *panygiri*. Performing as a group, they spend the year in committed preparation for performances at the village.

Vaggelis Kotsou (Illustration 15, DVD example 7)

Vaggelis, born in Athens, in 1958, is a fourth generation singer in the Epirotic polyphonic tradition, a genre that he learned from his family – especially his mother, Anthoula Kotsou, and his grandfather, Spyros Matsias. ‘My mother is considered to be a highly accomplished singer in polyphonic song by many scholars and my grandfather was ‘The Singer’. I can never forget that even just before he died, he was

¹¹⁰ The group regularly consists of around six people though sometimes other friends might join in. In the text I refer to this assemble simply as the ‘group from Aetopetra’.

¹¹¹ Interview with Aetopetra’s group, 8/11/2006. Original quote: Περνάμε ειλικρινά ωραία, το διασκεδάζουμε. Αστεία, σάτιρα, ιστορίες από το χωριό, φαγητό και πιτό είναι πάντα μέρος των συναντήσεων μας.

still singing!’¹¹² Vaggelis’ family is from the village Ktismata in the region of Pogoni, not far from the Albanian frontier, an area renowned for its polyphonic singing.

He is a professional teacher of Greek folk song and his years of performing have made him one of the most respected singers and champions of Greek folk polyphony. He also studied Western classical music at local conservatories where he cultivated his lyric tenor voice. Whatever he has learned about Greek folk song has come from within his family environment. Vaggelis directs his own polyphonic group which performs worldwide and has produced recordings in Greece, France and America. By virtue of his musical education he is able explain aspects of polyphony in technical terms; a fact which has contributed substantially to my understanding of this repertory and its vocal production.

His group has also collaborated on stage with other polyphonic ensembles from Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia, and southern Italy, in concerts that he conceived, organized and produced in Athens. My own fieldwork was conducted in Athens, and Vaggelis’ willingness to contribute to this research was obvious right from our first telephone conversations. He guided me to rare recordings while our discussions on vocal polyphony straddled many hours.

Anthoula Kotsou (Illustration 16a, DVD example 8)

Anthoula Kotsou, Vaggelis’ mother (Illustration 16b), was born in Ktismata (in the county of Pogoni, Epirus) in 1935, a village considered to be in the heartland of Epirotic polyphony. At ten years of age, during the Greek civil war, she moved with her family to Ioannina and then to Athens where her father’s first cousin resided.

¹¹² Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou: 18/4/2007. Original quote: Η μητέρα μου θεωρείται κορυφαία στο πολυφωνικό τραγούδι από πολλούς μελετητές και ο παππούς ήταν ‘ο τραγουδιστής’... δεν μπορώ να ξεχάσω το ότι προτού να πεθάνει τραγουδούσε!

Owing to difficult circumstances she remained in Athens where she was adopted by her aunts, yet every summer she returned to the village and to her parents. It was there that she learned to sing polyphonic songs from her father, Spyros Matsias.

As she pointed out to me: ‘My father was the best singer in the village and a very good man. He was always singing. I remembered once when he sang for a wedding all by himself, on unaccompanied [...]. At 87 he sang like a bird. A half hour before his death he asked that we sing:

Lucky are the mountains, lucky are the fields; they do not wait for death and Charon does not know them; but they look forward to the Spring and wait for Summer to come.

She continued: ‘How, then, could I not learn the polyphonic style?’¹¹³ Anthoula has participated as a soloist in many recordings in Greece and abroad. Folklorists such as Domna Samiou, and scholars such as Labros Liavas consider Anthoula to be a ‘living history’ of the polyphonic song. It is said that she knows almost the entire repertory of Epirotic polyphony and she is seen as someone who values tradition in her everyday life, and is very loyal to the legacy of her forefathers.

My discussions with her also took place in Athens. Since my earlier interview with Vaggelis lasted a whole evening, we arranged to call his mother the following morning, in order to sing some polyphonic songs together and also to acquire information about her method of learning and performing in this tradition. What struck me during the interview was how mother and son, in singing together, ‘teased’ each other with little twists and turns of the melody. Although Anthoula refused to perform either as *gyristis* or *klostis*, as *partis* she took over the phrases of Vaggelis’

¹¹³ Interview with Anthoula Kotsou, 19/4/2007. Original quote: Ο πατέρας μου ήταν ο καλύτερος τραγουδιστής και ένας πολύ καλός άνθρωπος, τραγουδούσε πάντα, θυμάμαι μια φορά που είχε κάνει έναν γάμο μόνος του μόνο με την φωνή... 87 χρονών και τραγουδούσε σαν πουλί, μισή ώρα προτού πεθάνει μου είπε να τραγουδήσουμε: καλότυχα είν’ τα βουνά, καλότυχοι είν’ οι κάμποι, που Θάνατο δε καρτετούν και Χάρο δε παντεύουν, που καρτερούν την Άνοιξη να ‘ρθει το καλοκαίρι!... έτσι πως μπορούσα να μην μάθω το πολυφωνικό;

line, making him laugh at her vocal ability to combine both roles. Anthoula was clearly playing the role of a strict Epirote mother who wanted to control every aspect of her son's life; she was even making complaints about Vaggelis' hair cut: 'how are you like that, you became a monk'.¹¹⁴

Drossos Koutsokostas (Illustration 17, DVD example 9a and b)

Drossos, a professional singer of Greek traditional music, specializes in the monophonic vocal style of Epirus. Born in 1966, in Thessaloniki, his family is of Sarakatsani¹¹⁵ and Pontic origins. As such, he proved to be an ideal co-worker for this thesis. Drossos is a scholar of Byzantine chant and a co-founder of the *En Chordais* conservatory of Thessaloniki, one of the most accomplished academic institutions within the field of Byzantine and Greek traditional music.

Drossos' performances are very popular and he has been invited abroad many times to perform the repertoires in which he specializes. He has collaborated with some of the most respected traditional singers in Greece as well as in the Middle East. He sings tenor and has numerous voice students who work with him in Greek traditional music. Although not a Pontic singer, Drossos has learned to execute the Greek Anatolian vocal style from Asia Minor (this uses similar techniques to the Pontic style) and also Epirotic song.

My fieldwork with Drossos has allowed me to appreciate the vocal changes that take place when comparing the repertoires of Epirus and Asia Minor. One of Drossos' ambitions is to teach singing in an open air school as he believes that the

¹¹⁴ Interview with Anthoula Kotsou, 19/4/2007. Original quote: 'Μωρέ πώς είσαι έτσι, καλόγερος έγινες'.

¹¹⁵ For more information on the nomads of Sarakatsani please refer to John Campbell, 1964, 'Honour, Family and Patronage'. Sarakatsani use what I here call the 'Epirote vocal style' in their traditional songs and therefore their music is part of this analysis.

voice changes form when exercised in such environment. He explained that: ‘This is what our grandfathers used to do. They did not have concert halls but sung either in their homes or in the open air. We have also inherited these techniques and this is why I want to teach voice out in the open.’¹¹⁶

Although I heard Drossos’ performances in recordings and at *En Chordais*, my first personal contact with him was in England where he was engaged in a series of recordings for the MediMuses¹¹⁷ project which took place at London’s Hellenic Centre. Subsequently, I met and interviewed him often at his home. My engagement with him extended from 2005 till 2007. Drossos demonstrated considerable interest in my thesis; he also pointed out the fact that: ‘We are so many singers, but none has attempted to explain “how” we sing and not only “what” we sing’.¹¹⁸

Nestoras Katsigianopoulos (Illustration 18, DVD example 10)

Nestoras is from Daskio, an isolated village located at the Pieria Mountains of central Macedonia in the prefecture of Imathia, where my hometown, Veria, is the main city. He was born in 1954 and his main occupation is as a builder. I discovered his capabilities and his interest in the Epirotic vocal style while he was working at the church, in my village, Mikri Santa. When I first heard his voice I thought it was on a neighbour’s radio. It struck me that this kind of music, unknown to our Pontic village, must be a performance by someone from other parts. Following the sound of his voice

¹¹⁶ Interview with Drossos Koutsokostas, 17/4/2007. Original quote: ‘Αυτό έκαναν και οι παππούδες μας, δεν είχαν θέατρα. Τραγουδούσαν ή στο σπίτι ή έξω. Για αυτό κληρονομήσαμε και τέτοιες τεχνικές και για αυτό θέλω να διδάξω έξω’.

¹¹⁷ The MediMuses Project was part of a European Union Heritage programme aimed at studying the performance practice of folk voices from Mediterranean countries. With regard to my fieldwork with Drossos, the three day conference (24 to 26/2/2005) in London offered me a shot of eight hours of vocal performances of which Drossos’ formed a major part.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Drossos Koutsokostas, 12/9/2005. Original quote: ‘Είμαστε τόσοι τραγουδιστές και κανείς μας δεν προσπάθησε να κάνει κάτι παρόμοιο για το πώς τραγουδάμε και όχι για το τι τραγουδάμε’.

I spotted Nestoras among the other builders (who were silently listening to their colleague). I moved towards him and when I introduced myself he recognized my surname, as do the older generation of neighbouring villages.¹¹⁹ Despite his initial hesitation, he agreed to the first interview which took place at my home in Veria, on 29 July 2004

Nestoras learned to sing in the Epirotic vocal style by oral transmission. He has never had lessons either in Western classical or in Byzantine chant; neither has he sung in concerts. When I questioned him about this, he replied: ‘I never wanted to sing for others; singing is very personal to me, I sing whenever I want to and whatever mood I am in to. As such, my singing would be of no interest to others’.¹²⁰ The places where he would normally sing are at work (while building) and in his garden, in the village of Daskio. Nestoras’ voice is in the range of a bass-baritone. He was seldom interested in answering my questions and I had to work hard to get any information from him. This was not because he was reluctant to help, but because he is an instinctive singer who had difficulty in articulating his singing technique or methodology.

Antonis Kiritsis (Illustration 19, DVD example 11)

The last co-worker was Antonis Kiritsis. At present he is one of the most lauded traditional singers in the Epirotic style. He has collaborated with many important folk clarinet players, amongst them Petroloukas Halkias, a legendary clarinettist of the Epirotic tradition. Antonis is from a village in the Greek Midlands

¹¹⁹ Mikri Santa, my village, is located on the opposite mountain to Daskio, Nestoras’ village.

¹²⁰ Interview with Nestoras Katsigiannopoulos, 29/7/2004. Original quote: ‘Ποτέ δεν ήθελα να τραγουδάω για τους άλλους. Το τραγούδι είναι πολύ προσωπικό για μένα γιατί τραγουδάω όταν και ότι νιώθω. Έτσι το τραγούδι δεν θα είχε ενδιαφέρον για κανέναν’.

called Koskina in the county of Karditsa, which borders Epirus. His father who was a teacher and Byzantine chanter gave him his first musical lessons. Singing beside his father from an early age at weddings and baptisms, Antonis was initiated into Greek traditional music and Byzantine chant.

After finishing school he moved to Athens to study Greek plainchant professionally. Antonis also acknowledges a significant connection between sacred song and Greek folk music: ‘Byzantine music is similar to Greek traditional music. The modes, the rhythms and the character of the music are in general terms very close.’¹²¹ Following his military service he decided that because singing was his one and only passion, he would endeavour to make a career out of it. This required considerable effort in terms of building up a folk song repertory from each region in Greece. As he pointed out: ‘I was lucky enough to work with very good instrumentalists, mainly clarinet players. They are usually very good singers with an enormous repertory; so, beside them, I learned many things, very many things.’¹²²

Antonis is a lyric tenor and his discography includes many LPs, CDs and live recordings. He is one of the few Greek folk artists who has worked with artists from other countries, such as India and Africa.¹²³ He has also performed Epirotic music in many international music festivals (for example WOMAD and WOMAX), and in the Greek Diaspora festivities. His collaboration with the clarinettist Petroloukas Halkias began 25 years ago, and they are considered to be one of the most successful duets in the traditional musical scene of modern Greece.

¹²¹ Interview with Antonis Kiritsis, 19/4/2007. Original quote: Η Βυζαντινή μουσική είναι παρόμοια με την ελληνική παραδοσιακή μουσική. Οι δρόμοι, οι ρυθμοί και ο μουσικός χαρακτήρας είναι σε γενικές γραμμές πολύ πολύ παρόμοια.

¹²² Interview with Antotnis Kiritsis, 19/4/2007. Original quote: Ήμουν αρκετά τυχερός να δουλέψω με πολύ καλούς οργανοπαίχτες, κυρίως κλαρινίστες. Είναι συνήθως πολύ καλοί τραγουδιστές με τεράστιο ρεπερτόριο. Έτσι δίπλα σε αυτούς έμαθα πολλά πράγματα, πολλά πράγματα.

¹²³ His CD, titled ‘Greeks and Indians’ (1998) has been widely praised by scholars, performers and academics as a unique work in terms of an intercultural level of music collaboration.

4.4 Analysis of vocal production

The role of the *Partis* in polyphony and monophonic singing

The *partis* is considered to be the leading voice of an Epirotic polyphonic group; he must be in full possession of a song since the other singers rely on this vocal line. Vaggelis indicates that: ‘He is the one who starts the song and therefore introduces the tune’s modality and rhythm’.¹²⁴ Not usually, the rhythm may change during the course of a piece. All singers follow and extemporise on the *partis*’ melodic line, especially at the openings and the codas. The *partis* never sings in unison with any other voice in the group. Rather he is considered to be the lead singer who introduces the ‘spiritual essence’ of the composition.

The *partis* invariably begins the song in a recitative-like declamation.¹²⁵ This could occupy the entire first verse (see DVD Example 6, seconds: 0:09-0:15, 0:42-0:48, 1:15-1:22, Example 8, seconds: 0:08-0:13, 0:38-0:44) a half of it, or merely the first syllable (see DVD Example 8, seconds: 6:17-6:19, 6:49-6:51, 7:22-7:24, 7:53-7:55, 8:24-8:26) or a few of the opening syllables. He then breaks off this vocal preamble (or *πάρσιμο* [parsimo, ‘taking’])¹²⁶ allowing the *rihtis*’ (if there is one - this depends on the song) and all voices together to begin the song (see DVD Example 6, seconds: 0:09-0:19, 0:42-0:52, 1:15-1:26). What is interesting in this vocal genre is that no song commences tutti. As a leading voice, the *partis* is normally an experienced singer. Nevertheless, his melodic range covers no more than a perfect fifth.

¹²⁴ Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou, 18/4/2007. Original quote: αυτός αρχίζει το κομμάτι και άρα εισάγει την τονικότητα της μελωδίας και τον ρυθμό.

¹²⁵ Such beginning could imply the use of another role called *προλογιστής* (*prologistis*, ‘the one who introduces the song’) but we usually find that this introductory musical phrase is sung by the *partis*.

¹²⁶ See also Appendix II.

The *partis*' initial recitative-like introduction (see Appendix I) tends to be more accelerated than that of the song, which begins at a regular pace once all the voices sing together. As for the role of the *partis*, a difference may be observed between the north-Epirotic (south of Albania) and the *Pogoni* style. According to Vaggellis: 'The practice of having the *partis* introduce the entire first verse is to be seen only in the north, but even here not in all songs. In *Pogoni*, he introduces only the first syllables' (Kotsou, 1998:20).

Epirotic polyphony is formed from a unique pentatonic scale which eschews the semitone (such as G-A-C-D-E). Within these parameters the *partis* is automatically obliged to sing larger intervals than the ones performed in Pontic singing. That inevitably involves 'wider' vocal progressions between the notes. In observing my co-workers' performances it has come to my attention that the distance (*ambitus*) of a *partis* melody is limited to a fourth or perfect fifth. The intervals, however, of the pentatonic scale require accurate pitch movements; any inaccuracy could immediately ruin the polyphony.

The pitch range normally chosen for this repertory is related to the speaking ambit of a *partis*' voice, an observation also raised by Kostas Lolis: 'In every case the melodies are developed within the middle register of the human voice' (2006:37). However, Anthoula recalls that: 'The older singers used to sing higher than us; I remember my father singing high without becoming tired, I found that very hard. Vaggelis is now like him.'¹²⁷ Accurate as this may be, I would argue that the chosen tonality of a piece is always subject to the people who participate in this musical action. Thus, for a mixed group (male and female) it is the *partis*' responsibility to adjust the key according to the vocal abilities of the group; the same would apply if

¹²⁷ Interview with Anthoula Kotsou, 19/4/2007. Original quote: Οι παλιοί τραγουδούσαν ψηλότερα από εμάς. Θυμάμαι τον μπαμπά μου που τραγουδούσε ψηλά και δεν κουραζόταν, ο Βαγγέλης είναι τώρα σαν και αυτόν.

the group is only male or only female. Generally, the chosen pitch in this collective singing action is lower than that found in Pontic music.

Customarily, almost everyone who sits around the *partis* joins in as *ισοκράτες* [*isokrates*, ‘drone holders’ (discussed below in this chapter)], the least demanding role in terms of the vocal skills required. In this way, the ‘audience’ becomes a part of the actual performance, a practice that summons not only collective musical action but also collective social action. All follow the flow of the *partis* so that ‘the song can be heard as clearly as a ‘bell’ (‘να ακούγεται καμπάνα’, *Na akougetai kambana*), using a familiar adage. Most of the recordings indicate a baritone vocal ambit for the male singers and an alto or mezzo-soprano range for the females. The tenor voice is preferred for the *partis*’ role since it offers greater clarity and colour, appropriate for the main tune. Of course, being a tenor or soprano does not necessarily mean that high-register singing is expected.

Articulation and vocal projection also differ from those for the Pontic style. The *partis* regularly ‘spreads out’ his voice rather broadly, by which I mean the he widens his mouth in order to achieve more volume. He does this by relaxing his throat and opening his mouth in order to create greater space in the mouth cavity and also by maintaining a continuous ‘air’ flow (see DVD Example 7). This technique does not normally prevail in the Pontic style where singers tend to sing with a tense throat. The only occasion when a Pontic singer might ‘widen’ his mouth is in the case of some breakings occurred in the head register; this point is indicated in Alexis’ performance (see DVD, Example 3, seconds: 1:20-1:21, 2:04-2:05).

By widening his mouth, the leading voice in the polyphony can maximize the volume of his voice. This is not surprising since the *partis* has to be heard over the other singers who follow his melodic line. Anthoula confirms this point when she

says: ‘Being the leading voice in the group, you have to sing loudly with your mouth wide open’.¹²⁸ When exaggerated, the ‘open mouth’ technique provokes a level of ‘shouting’ position with a pronounced dropping of the jaw. I observed this with Vaggelis and Anthoula Kotsou during our fieldwork (DVD example 7 and 8). In occidental terms, operatic singers would describe this jaw dropping as putting tension onto the throat. In order to avoid tautness of this kind, operatic singers tend to use the resonators in the mask for volume by lifting the facial muscles.

This vocal action (mouth widening with a dropped jaw) is always accompanied by high subglottic pressure, which must be strong enough to produce the desired acoustic effect and to support the long phrases which are to be sung without a break, especially in the preamble. Tension is gathered in the mask area and Vaggelis Kotsou asserts: ‘I feel the voice coming out from the centre of my head just above the nose’.¹²⁹ Many other singers of this genre place tension in the stomach and abdominal muscles, a technique that offers better control over breath exhalation. Here the larynx is relatively calm when compared with that in the Pontic style, although it may be raised in some instances.

In that the *partis* usually employs ‘open-mouth’ projection of the voice, this has some further consequences. First, it creates more space at the back of the mouth cavity and therefore allows air to be projected faster by releasing more air waves. Second, it changes the singer’s focal point which is now transferred to the mask and to the hard palate thereby creating a frontward singing position. Such focal point also has an effect on the breakings of both Epirotic and Pontic styles. By maintaining the focal point in the soft palate, Pontic singers are able to perform their breakings with

¹²⁸ Interview with Anthoula Kotsou, 19/4/2007. Original quote: Σαν κύρια φωνή της ομάδας πρέπει να τραγουδάς δυνατά, με ανοιχτό το στόμα.

¹²⁹ Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou, 18/4/2007. Original quote: Νιώθω την φωνή να βγαίνει έξω από το κέντρο του κεφαλιού μου, μόλις πάνω από την μύτη μου.

increased speed. At the same time, they comfortably sing the quarter tones of their modal scales. With respect to Epirotic singing, the *partis* is able to produce prolonged notes with greater clarity and to render certain distinctive breakings with less demanding speed.

In addition, the extensive use of the jaw also contributes to the execution of breakings in Epirotic polyphonic song; whereas in the Pontic style, breakings are rendered using the soft palate and larynx. The vocal line of the *partis* is always syllabic, but there are occasional breakings in some phrases. In striving for a collective, homogeneous vocal effect, the *partis* avoids singing embellished and individualistic vocal lines. His sensitivities turn to the timbre of the voice than to producing ornamentations.

The strophic form of the songs, their recitative-like character and the repeated leaps in the *partis*' line collectively run the risk of producing a somewhat monotonous vocalisation. To a large degree this is avoided by the vitality and breakings of the other voices. Not to be ignored is the fact that polyphonic singing in this northern region generally involves a large number of ad hoc participants who cheerfully join the performance and take pleasure in becoming involved in this action. As a result, the musical themes, their structure, tempo and the 'laconic' impulse (Lolis, 2006:37) of the *partis* need to be comprehensible to all participants who themselves come from heterogeneous backgrounds.

For the leading voice in Epirus' monophonic singing style technical details are more complex. Here, the performer alternates between three main vocal applications: articulation, projection and the technique of breaking. Although articulation is produced by the normal mouth position (not an open mouth technique), the singer still 'widens' the sound by spreading out the voice when using the middle range of his

voice. Again, as in Pontic vocal production, all co-workers for this chapter emphasised the fact that the older singers used to sing higher than singers in the following generations. The presence of amplifying systems has led to a lowering of tonality since there is no need to sing loudly in order to be heard. Voice projection is straight forward in terms of volume, but in terms of timbre, the voice displays a variety of mannerisms, especially when it tries to imitate the sounds of nature,¹³⁰ and particularly in the technique of breaking.

Nestoras Katsigianopoulos is enthusiastic about vocal imitation of the sounds of a forest; he finds it most inspiring. He points out that: ‘I began to sing from the age of twelve. I had to quit primary school in order to go and tend my father’s sheep. This is when I felt that song was my only companion. But what to sing? After repeating a few songs that I could remember from the village, I began to produce my own lyrics and to sing with the sheep, trees, springs, weather and everything else.’¹³¹

The association made by Drossos between the environment and music making in this style includes an intriguing metaphoric parallel since he likens these breakings to the shape of a circle. During our interview he pointed out to me that ‘the circle is an important shape for Greeks. This is obvious from almost all aspects of our life: the way we once built our villages, the way we sit down and sing the polyphonic songs, the way we dance, even the Dance of Isaiah¹³² makes a strong connection with this

¹³⁰ Nature and people in this corner of Greece are connected to the degree that Eirini Stathi, in her comments about the film ‘Epirus of Theodoros Aggelopoulos’, likens the people of Epirus to the ‘natural extension of the landscape’ (1998:51).

¹³¹ Interview with Nestoras Katsigianopoulos, 29/7/2004. Original quote: Άρχισα να τραγουδώ στα δώδεκα μου. Έπρεπε να σταματήσω το δημοτικό και να πάω να βοσκήσω τα πρόβατα του πατέρα’μ. Εκεί το τραγούδι ήταν η μόνη συντροφιά, αλλά τι να τραγουδήσεις; μετά από λίγα τραγούδια που θυμόμουν απ’ το χωριό έβαζα δικά μου λόγια και τραγουδούσα με τα πρόβατα, τα δέντρα, το νερό, τον καιρό και δε συμμαζεύεται!

¹³² According to the Orthodox marriage ritual the couple makes three circles around a table bearing their wedding crowns. This is known as the Dance of Isaiah, as recorded in the Prophecy of Isaiah who also danced for joy, see Isaiah 7:14-15.

shape. I recall my grandfather's description of his *konaki*,¹³³ which is again a circular living space. Looking closer at these breakings we see that they are no more than a cycle of repeated notes (see DVD Example 9a, seconds: 0:13-0:16, 0:26-0:28, 0:31-0:33, 0:50-0:52, 1:57-1:59, 2:09-2:11). The way we perform them is also a 'rounded' way of breaking the voice; not abruptly. This is a curve, not an angle'.¹³⁴

Antonis claims that these 'circular' breakings¹³⁵ (see Appendix I) are usually produced by the full use of the throat: 'You cannot sing these breakings with your stomach; you must use your throat if you want them to be sufficiently fast'.¹³⁶ This partially justifies the required tension in the throat, which substitutes use of the abdominal muscles and diaphragm and encourages the use of the larynx in order to perform rapid breakings. Antonis is known for using the throat in this way (see DVD Example 11, seconds: 0:19-0:22, 0:49-0:51, 1:16-1:18, 1:32-1:35, 1:49-1:50, 2:04-2:06, 2:20-2:21).

In terms of vocal projection, Drossos claims that: 'In the Epirotic style the sound is somewhat harsh and uncultivated because we do not devote as much importance to the intervals as in the Greco-Anatolian style'.¹³⁷ This suggests that musical intervals influence the actual performance of the voice; a statement that will be closer examined in chapter V (see also DVD Example 9a and b). Epirotic singing

¹³³ *Konaki* is called the hut of the *sarakatsaneous* which has the shape of a perfect circle. Sarakatsani are Greek nomads; for more information see Campbell (1964).

¹³⁴ Interview with Drossos Koutsokostas, 12/9/2005. Original quote: Ο κύκλος είναι σημαντικό σχήμα για τους Έλληνες και αυτό είναι φανερό σε πολλά πράγματα τα της ζωής μας: ο τρόπος που χτίζαμε τα χωριά μας, ο τρόπος που καθόμαστε να τραγουδήσουμε πολυφωνικό, ο τρόπος που χορεύουμε ακόμα και ο χορός του Ησαΐα δηλώνουν πολλά για αυτό το σχήμα. Να... θυμάμαι τον πατέρα μου που μου έλεγε για το κονάκι που είναι ένας κύκλος μέσα στον οποίο ζεις. Αν δούμε καλύτερα αυτά τα σπασίματα θα δούμε ότι πρόκειται για έναν κύκλο επαναλαμβανόμενων φθόγγων. Ο τρόπος που τα λέμε είναι επίσης κυκλικός και όχι απότομος. Είναι καμπύλη όχι γωνία!

¹³⁵ By the term 'circular breakings' I mean the repeated notes sung during melismata, which create the sense of a 'circle' to the singer. For instance: D-C-D-E-D-C-D-E-D-C-D-E.

¹³⁶ Interview with Antonis Kiritsis, 19/4/2007. Original quote: δεν μπορείς να τραγουδήσεις αυτά τα σπασίματα με το στομάχι. Πρέπει να χρησιμοποιήσεις τον λαιμό σου εάν θες να είσαι αρκετά γρήγορος.

¹³⁷ Interview with Drossos Koutsokostas, 12/9/2005. Original quote: Στο Ηπειρώτικο τραγούδι έχουμε έναν πιο ακαλλιέργητο ήχο γιατί δεν δίνουμε τόση σημασία στα διαστήματα όπως στο έλληνο-ανατολικό στύλ.

is further characterised by frequent glissando passages, which sound more like a sigh than a musical phrase. These glissandi are subject to the poetic themes of the lyrics; moreover, they are not sung on the words but on specific vowels such as ‘oh’ or ‘ah’. These might be interpreted as expressing loneliness and nostalgia for those who migrated. Antonis points out that: ‘many songs are dedicated to those who departed from Epirus and left behind their families; this is why our songs are *κλασιάρικα* (*klapsiarika*, ‘painful songs’).¹³⁸ Such glissandi usually are located at the end of a musical phrase, but occasionally even within the phrase.

One of the most important species of song in Epirus is the lament. Since this region lost much of its population through migration and war, the lament has come into its own as a significant form of musical expression. Nestoras points out: ‘It is not for nothing that even our weddings begin with a lament. It may seem bizarre, but it is meant to refer to those who are absent [dead relatives] from the marriage. Then we move on to joyful pieces and finally we close the occasion with yet another lament.’¹³⁹ Drossos suggests that: ‘Of all monophonic species, the Epirotic lament is the most represented’,¹⁴⁰ while Kiritsis considers this genre as ‘the most difficult to sing!’¹⁴¹ since it contains rapid breakings, extensive use of the throat and expressive emotion (DVD example 14).

The Epirotic lament is indeed a ‘terrain’ upon which a variety of vocal abilities are located. The singer must be able to perform fast circular breakings as well to improvise both lyrics and music. I was quite taken aback when Kiritsis had a phone

¹³⁸ Interview with Antonis Kiritsis, 19/4/2007. Original quote: Σχεδόν τα μισά τραγούδια είναι για αυτούς φύγαν και άφησαν πίσω τις οικογένειες τους. Για αυτό τα τραγούδια μας είναι κλασιάρικα.

¹³⁹ Interview with Nestoras Katsigianopoulos, 29/7/2004. Original quote: Δεν είναι τυχαίο ότι ακόμα και στους γάμους ξεκινάμε με μοιρολόι. Μπορεί να φαίνεται περίεργο αλλά είναι μια αναφορά σε αυτούς που λείπουν από τον γάμο της οικογένειας, μετά πάμε στη χαρά και τέλος κλείνουμε τον γάμο με μοιρολόι πάλι.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Drossos Koutsokostas, 17/4/2007. Original quote: [Το μοιρολόι] είναι από τις πιο σολιστικές μουσικές φόρμες στην Ήπειρο.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Antonis Kiritsis, 19/4/2007. Original quote: Είναι το πιο δύσκολο για να τραγουδηθεί.

call during our interview: a mother wanted him and his group to sing dirges at her son's funeral. 'It was his wish', she said. Kiritsis seemed to be used to such requests, but, as he explained: 'This requires a lot of inner strength and dedication from us because singing laments is not an easy task, not an easy task all'.¹⁴²

The role of the *gyristis* and the *klostis* in Epirotic polyphony

The role of the *gyristis*, generally sung by men, demands a flexible voice in order to perform the breakings; perhaps, the most flexible in the polyphony of Epirus. This voice usually enters after the *partis* ends his/her preamble. The vocal range of the *gyristis* is somewhat restricted; it moves solely between the tonic, the leading note and on occasion, a perfect fourth below the tonic. Unique for the part of the *gyristis* is that at the middle and end of each verse it cadences on the leading note or a fourth below, rather than the tonic.

In addition another voice with the same function is to be found in this context: the *klostis*. The *klostis* probably has the most prominent voice in the polyphonic songs of Epirus. His part demands significant vocal effort and imagination as the singer must embellish the *partis*' melody in an original way, by combining unique vocal breakings without losing the polyphony of the team. As such, the *klostis* must be extremely accurate in his vocal movements, and this is why his part is conventionally sung by experienced singers who know the modal vocabulary, the specific polyphonic style, and are capable of performing complicated vocal embellishments. These unique melodic gestures are based on the intervals tonic-dominant, tonic-minor seventh and tonic-major sixth.

¹⁴² Interview with Antonis Kiritsis, 19/4/2007, Original quote: Απαιτεί πολύ ενέργεια και αφοσίωση από εμάς γιατί το να μοιρολογείς δεν είναι εύκολο πράγμα, καθόλου εύκολο!!!

The main difference between the *gyristis* and *klostis* is that the latter makes extensive use of the falsetto voice during the breakings and that usually occurs above the tonic of the piece. The *gyristis*, however, makes seldom use of falsetto voice and moves mainly below the tonic of the piece. The sung melodies of both the *klostis* and *gyristis* bear little relationship with the lyrics of the song because the soloist is confined to singing vowels such as ‘a’ or ‘o’. Thanasis Moraitis provides an interesting metaphor: ‘On the technique of the *klostis* and of the *partis* we can detect the imitation of *gaida* (bagpipe) playing’ (2004:49). In performing these movements, the *klostis* tries to create a ‘harmony’ on the main melody rather than a separate vocal line; the same occurs with the *gyristis*.

The performance practice of the *gyristis* and the *klostis* is highly distinctive within Epirotic polyphony. Vaggelis argues that its specific vocal contribution reveals a ‘folk Epirotic counterpoint as they sing on the main melody [the *partis*’ line] creating the harmony’.¹⁴³ The voice of the *gyristis* or *tsakistis* (synonym) is heard when the *partis* completes his preamble. The *gyristis*’ first line, usually a vocalisation on the vowel ‘o’ or ‘och’, signals the entry of the remaining singers. At this point polyphonic progression is initiated. The *gyristis*’ opening phrase sounds like a painful sigh, as if sharing the anguish of the *partis*’ introductory strain. He then embellishes the song or, in the local jargon, ‘cracks’ the melody, without a stop, until the end of each verse (DVD Examples 8 and 6).

The *gyristis*’ vocal line is not demanding in terms of its intervals or tessitura since the range is usually lower than that of the *partis*. The *gyristis*’ part is known for its unusual medial and final cadences in the successive stanzas. At the coda the soloist rests on the leading note as opposed to the tonic, which is the home note of the other

¹⁴³ Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou, 18/4/2007. Original quote: Είναι μια καθαρά παραδοσιακή Ηπειρώτικη αντίστιξη μιας και τραγουδούν πάνω στην μελωδία δημιουργώντας την αρμονία.

singers.¹⁴⁴ He does this by stopping abruptly (see DVD Example 8, seconds: 0:36, 1:07, 2:39, 3:38, 6:48, 7:20), an effect called ‘cutting’ or ‘creasing’ (in the singers’ *argot*). Vaggelis explains that: ‘Cutting is made by stopping the voice from the lungs, and not simply by closing your mouth. If you have powerful lungs and a good larynx then you can sing traditional songs’.¹⁴⁵

The *gyristis*’ part is highly demanding in that, below the moving notes of the *partis*, he embellishes these same notes with accentuated flourishes, formed by complex rhythmic improvisations. Although he typically dwells on two notes (tonic and leading notes) he may also reach a fourth down to the tonic. He crosses such intervals with great command in terms of tempo and also ‘harmony’. It could well be argued that it is the *gyristis* who creates the polyphony since the *partis* has the main melody and the *isokrates* merely holds the low drone. Vital to the formation of the polyphony, the *gyristis* uses his jaw in a special manner in order to execute the intervallic leaps *tempo presto* (cf. Vaggelis’ technique in DVD Example 8).

This manipulation of the jaw could be compared with the moveable larynx observed in Pontic singing; both techniques support the production of breakings, each in its own aesthetic context. Jaw-dropping is undoubtedly the most common of the vocal techniques for breakings as sung by the *gyristis* in the polyphonic tradition. It allows for dynamic crescendos which are essential if the *gyristis* is to be heard over the notes. Aside from increasing volume, the *gyristis* is able, by jaw-dropping, to make his voice dart about quickly within its limited range. In this way he can render with impressive agility the characteristic breakings that define his role within the

¹⁴⁴ Peristeris, one of the most important of the earlier researchers of Greek traditional music opines that different accentuation in the endings of the syllables may eliminate these cadences. For him the existence of cadences is dependent upon accentuation of lyrics.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou, 18/4/2007. Original quote: Κάνεις το κόψιμο σταματώντας τη φωνή από τα πνευμόνια και όχι απλά κλείνοντας το στόμα. Εάν έχεις δυνατά πνευμόνια και καλό λαρύγγι μπορείς να τραγουδήσεις παραδοσιακά κομμάτια.

polyphony. This is also one of the main technical differences between monophony and polyphony in Epirus; namely, in the Epirotic monophonic tradition, preference is given to laryngeal techniques than the dropping of the jaw.

The greater his musical imagination is the more effective can the *gyristis* perform his artistic tasks. Vaggelis states that: ‘This is in fact the only role where improvisation is required; hence, the *gyristis* must be an experienced and gifted singer’.¹⁴⁶ Apart from his standard intervallic movements, the *gyristis*’ melodic line is not otherwise constrained and its accrued extemporisation is proportionate to the performer’s instinctive vocal and technical abilities: ‘Elsewhere we may find greatly enriched vocal lines [for the *gyristis*] but this depends on his personal capabilities’ (Lolis, 2006:38).

Here, improvisation is not affected by changes in the quality of the vocal sound but rather by the singer’s choice to supplement his pitch vocabulary to include movements of the major second or even the minor third above the fundamental. In other words, the term ‘improvisation’ carries the sense of the singer’s ability to elaborate: a) harmony, in that the selection of the intervallic steps will have diverse repercussions on the polyphony, and b) rhythm, because the *gyristis* or *klostis* can innovate and influence the tempo or metre of the group either by division or extension. Consequently, he is a function of exclusivity. His enhanced vocal abilities reflect the soloist’s musical status.

The manner in which a relationship is formed between the *partis* and the *gyristis* or *klostis* during a live performance is a lesson in itself. According to Anthoula: ‘Once we have all begun the song, the *gyristis* takes over as if he were

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou, 18/4/2007. Original quote: Αυτός είναι πραγματικά ο μόνος ρόλος που χρειάζεται αυτοσχεδιασμό και για αυτό γυριστής μπορεί μόνο να είναι ένας έμπειρος και ταλαντούχος τραγουδιστής.

competing with the *partis*'.¹⁴⁷ The *gyristis* accomplishes this by creating a counter melody – not by imitating the melody of the *partis*. The vocal demands on the *gyristis* augment as he produces breakings in the low register of his voice. Both the *gyristis* and *klostis* eschew semitones in order to maintain the pentatonic-based Epirotic polyphony. On occasion, they boost the speed of the breakings while at the same time stabilizing the tempo and the level of embellishment in their vocal line.

The co-ordination of the *partis* and the *gyristis* or *klostis* is also affected by simultaneous gesture and ocular engagement: 'You look into my eyes, to know when I am to come in, when to go back, and when to recapitulate [the song]. With the eyes! Do you understand?' (Labridis, 1998:25).¹⁴⁸ In reality, therefore, no two performances of the same piece are ever identical. Each song is its own composition 'in the making' because of the 'vocal correlation'. A correspondence has to be established between the singers in order to achieve the most favourable conditions for homogeneous vocal projection.

The role of the *klostis* is equivalent to that of the *gyristis*. In substituting the *gyristis* he seldom performs the same song. Vaggelis points out that: 'Once more it is the *klostis* who affects the polyphony by alternating between the tonic and leading note. This time, however, he sings a minor seventh above the tonic'¹⁴⁹ (that is to say an octave above the major second of the *gyristis*' cadence). Many scholars and performers interpret these leaps and steps as depictions of distress; yet the *klostis* often sings melodies set to lyrics that have nothing to do with sorrow or inner pain.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Anthoula Kotsou, 19/4/2007. Original quote: 'Όταν έχουμε όλοι μας ξεκινήσει το τραγούδι ο γυριστής το παίρνει λες κι ανταγωνίζεται τον παρτή.'

¹⁴⁸ Original quote in Greek: 'θα κοίταζες εμένα στα μάτια πού θα μπω, τότε θα το γυρίσω, τότε θα κάνω τη στροφή. Με τα μάτια. Κατάλαβες;'

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou, 18/4/2007. Original quote: 'Ο κλώστης είναι πάλι αυτός που παράγει τη πολυφωνία χρησιμοποιώντας τα διαστήματα της τονικής και της υποτονικής αλλά αυτήν τη φορά τραγουδώντας μια εβδόμη μικρή πάνω από την τονική.'


The *klostis* can be either male or female voices, and in either case the head voice or falsetto is used. Liavas has compared these ‘idiomatic breakings sung in false voice’ (1998:18) with the Tyrolese ‘yodler’ singing style. Baud-Bovy, on the other hand, has likened these vocalizations to the movement of the ‘hand which keeps the spindle and spins’ (Liavas, 1998:34). Use of this register identifies to the locals that the song is *κλωστό* (‘klosto’ from the word *klostis*) or *λαλιά* (lalia, ‘loud voice’). Falsetto singing is used only for the upper minor seventh, not the tonic. The singer must make precise alterations between the modal and false voices.

In middle range, the upper minor seventh can be sung using one’s chest voice. The *klostis*, however, characteristically sings falsetto. Certainly, this requires less vocal effort than normal high-register singing, but it may well be that the function of falsetto singing might be intended to enrich the entire ensemble’s middle range and to avoid any indication of monotony. And even if the song is pitched high, falsetto singing can give the effect of coloratura-like singing to ornament the melody and add a striking vocal timbre to the group’s performance.

The *klostis* might trope his melody by adding, on occasion, notes at the minor third, perfect fifth, or rarely, the major sixth. The endings of each musical phrase are usually on the seventh or the tonic and the *klostis* may be seen as the one who maintains the tempo in accordance with the *partis*’ opening melody. There is no rule that determines whether the song includes a *klostis* or a *gyristis*. Nikos Zekis from the Aetopetra group informed me that: ‘We can decide either for the *klosto* or the *gyrisma*, there is no regulation about this. It depends on how we learnt it; [...] also,

there are certain songs that are compatible more with the voice that suits the *klostis* or *gyristis*. This at least, is what we believe because this is how we were taught'.¹⁵⁰

The roles of the *isokrates* (drone holders) and the *rihtis*

The *ison*, one of the radical neumes in Byzantine musical notation, represents a repeated note; the word 'ison' (Greek: *ἴσον*, drone) originally only referred to the graphic sign , which instructs the chanter to sing the same pitch as the previous note. Sometime in the late 16th or early 17th century the meaning of 'ison' was changed to mean a prolonged holding sound (or drone) under the plainchant.¹⁵¹ In Wellesz's words: 'All the time the tone remains on the same level, the Ison is sung' (1962:288-89). The bourdon or drone can be found in many musical genres around the globe; its role in Epirotic polyphony is to 'fill in' or 'support' the main melody and is considered to be a vital part of every singing group (see Appendix I and DVD Example 6).

Because the part of the *rihtis* is very brief he is often chosen from among the *isokrates*. The musical contribution of the *rihtis* is made at the end of the *partis*' preamble where he intones, legato, the note a perfect fourth below the tonic (see Appendix I and DVD Example 6, seconds: 0:15-0:17, 0:49-0:50, 1:22-1:24, 1:56-1:58). In so doing, he creates a feeling of 'casting' (*rhino*= 'cast') the tonality of the piece. This melodic gesture is followed by a break before the singers continue with the next phrase. Vaggelis adds that: 'This void resembles a pause wherein every

¹⁵⁰ Interview with the polyphonic group of *Aetopetra*, 8/11/2006. Original quote: Μπορούμε να το πούμε είτε κλωστό είτε με γύρισμα, δεν υπάρχει κανόνας για αυτό. Εξαρτάται πως το μάθαμε... επίσης υπάρχουν ορισμένα τραγούδια ο κλώστης ή ο γυριστής τους πάει περισσότερο ή τουλάχιστον έτσι νομίζουμε μιας και τα μάθαμε έτσι.

¹⁵¹ Today ison-singing tends to resemble a basso continuo.

participant considers the forthcoming phrase to be sung'.¹⁵² This same point was confirmed by Dimitris, a member of the polyphonic group of Aetopetra: 'It is [a short silence] placed there to make space for the others and prepare for the ensuing polyphony'.¹⁵³ The *rihtis* is not featured in all songs; not uncommonly, his vocal exclamation is sung by the *klostis* (singing a perfect fifth above the tonic), or even by the *partis* (at the minor third above the tonic).

Conventionally, the *rihtis* performs sedately and in a slow tempo. His long glissando once again carries associations of painful sorrow. The soloist is placed in the centre of the ensemble beside the *partis* and the *gyristis* or *klostis*. The only vocal demand imposed on him, beyond the largo pace, is, as before, accuracy in performing the leap of the descending fourth. This requires aptitude in vocal stability and pitch control. In some rare instances the *rihtis* has been known to use a vibrato technique in order to embellish his brief line.

On occasion, when the *partis* concludes a phrase, the *rihtis* may introduce a breaking, thereby bringing the line back to the tonic by means of a long glissando. It is still debated whether the *rihtis* should be considered as a separate performer or as a drone holder who adds occasional breakings and idiomatic glissando phrases. Lolis suggests that 'without excluding other explanations, it is our impression that the *rihtis*' vocal line with all its influences and contemporary functions, was elicited from the drone holders' line' (2006:42).

The *isokrates* should be understood as a group of singers who hold the fundamental note of the scale and follow the flow of the composition. Using a local expression, the Epirotes refer to this function as *gemisia* ('filling') or *kambana*

¹⁵² Interview with Vaggelis Kotsou, 18/4/2007. Original quote: Αυτό το κενό είναι σαν μια παύση όπου όλοι οι ρόλοι μπορούν να αναλογιστούν την επόμενη φράση που θα τραγουδήσουν

¹⁵³ Interview with the polyphonic group of Aetopetra, 8/11/2006. Original quote: Είναι τοποθετημένο εκεί για να δώσει χώρο να ετοιμαστούν οι άλλοι για την πολυφωνία.

(‘bell’). Essentially, there are two ways of performing the *ison*: a) when the *isokrates* sing nasally throughout the whole piece, usually on the vowels ‘a’ or ‘e’ or ‘i’ (depending on the last vowel of the lyrics), b) as a syllabic *ison*, where the *isokrates* sing the lyrics of the song on the drone note but following all the dynamics, rests and note values in the main melody. The *isokrates* begin singing once the *partis*, *gyristis*, *klostis* or *rihtis* have ended their assigned melodic phrases.

On the surface it may appear that the part of the *isokrates* is somewhat simple to perform. At the same time these singers are required to provide a rich sound, perhaps the most important factor of homogeneity in Epirotic polyphony. Chiefly, however, they are faced with the highly responsible musical task of maintaining a single and steady note over a long period. Any minute tonal digression could destroy the polyphony and with it, the entire performance. If these conditions are not satisfied, it is said that the song ‘does not ring’; it ‘dies out’. Occasionally when things go badly, performances have been stopped for rectification.

At first, when I considered isolating the *partis* and *gyristis* voices from the *isokrates* in order to concentrate on the individual melodic lines, I received a negative reaction from all members in the group of Aetopetra: ‘Polyphony is sung collectively; we cannot perform the song that way’.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, a proper positioning of the singers is very important in this kind of singing both for acoustic and physical reasons. It is crucial for the leading voice to be heard above the collective sound of the ensemble. Furthermore, if the location of a singer distracts the direct ocular and acoustic contact with the others, this can ruin performance homogeneity. Consequently, proper eye contact and accurate acoustical ‘access’ by all voices in the group are deemed to be fundamental for the success of a performance.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with the polyphonic group of Aetopetra, 8/11/2006. Original quote: Η πολυφωνία είναι ομαδική, δεν μπορούμε να το πούμε έτσι.

4.5 Towards the conclusion

Since the roles within the polyphony have been described and listened to DVD examples six, seven, and eight, this section is a summary of the techniques found in the Epirotic monophonic style. DVD Example 14 is an audio sample of an Epirotic monophonic lament. It is a rare recording which has never been marketed by a recording company and it includes *Μαριόλα*, *Mariola*, one of the most well-known laments in this kind of traditional repertory. This live recording, which was made in the Netherlands in 1996, is preserved in the personal archives of Antonis and it was kindly given to me for the purposes of this research project. The lament, sung by Antonis himself, is accompanied by the clarinetist Petroloukas Halkias, a living legend of Epirotic traditional music.

Mariola is set in the familiar non-semitonal pentatonic scale in Epirus and in the present sample it is performed on G (G-A-C-D-E). It is usually sung ametrically, as are all laments and dirges in the Greek tradition; its breakings are improvised in accordance with the singer's disposition. All informants in my research consider *Mariola* to be one of the most difficult of songs to perform. The lyrics relate to a mythical dialogue between the singer and the deceased *Mariola*, who is believed to have been a real person. The singer calls for *Mariola* to come out from her grave to be seen by the sun and the moon. *Mariola* replies that she is powerless to arise. This lament has been popularised in numerous performances and by a variety of singers. Not uncommonly it is sung at the beginning and at the end of Epirotic musical events. The following has been selected for performance analysis:

Όρε σήκω Μαργιόλα από τη γη

Arise Mariola, from the earth

(ore siko Mariola apo ti yi)

Κι από το μαύρο χώμα, Μαργιόλα μου

And from the black soil, my Mariola

(ki apo to mavro homa, Mariola mou)

The timescale on the DVD indicates the following divisions in seconds:

0:00 – 0:07 Title of Chapter, example 14.

0:08 – 0:11 Instrumental section.

0:12 – 0:18 Kiritsis immediately introduces what is the most characteristic Epirotic vocal ornamentation, the ‘repeated circular notes’. Here, the first collection of repeated notes is: D-C-D-E.

0:19 – 0:30 A long glissando phrase that covers all notes in the pentatonic scale from D to G. The phrase ends with repeated circular breakings.

0:30 – 0:33 Instrumental drone as the clarinet extemporises on pentatonic intervallic movements.

0:34 – 0:40 Repeated circular breakings on the vowel ‘o’. The singer’s voice is centred more in the nasal than the mouth cavity.

0:41 – 0:58 Antonis changes to the vowel ‘i’ while the sound continues to resonate in the nasal cavity together with repeated circular breakings. This is followed by a long glissando whose notes underscore the sorrowful mood of the piece.

0:59 – 1:01 Instrumental drone.

1:02 – 1:21 Further marked use of the nasal cavity, repeated circular breakings over the notes of the scale, and a glissando which occasionally halts on certain passing notes foreign to the scale.

1:22 – 1:43 Softer singing, creating an air of bereavement as the singer addresses the deceased Mariola.

1:44 – 1:58 An exclamation to the deceased. Her name is uttered on the note C sharp which is foreign to the scale.

4.6 Conclusions

Fundamental to Epirotic polyphonic singing is the combined involvement of the *partis*, the *gyristis*, the *klostis*, and the *isokrates*; there also some short roles such as the *rihtis* and the *prologistis*. Mostly a group would consist of at least three performers although there is no specific maximum number of people (It might vary from three to ten, twenty or thirty in a village). In terms of musical hierarchy these are: *partis* (leading voice), the *gyristis* or the *klostis* (improvisers who effect the polyphony), and the *isokrates*. With respect to the modality of polyphonic songs in Epirus, it is the pentatonic scale that is principally used. This is built up of the intervals of the major second and minor third and excludes all semitones: G-A-C-D-E.

The polyphony, usually triphonic, begins once the *partis* has completed a preamble. The latter devotes considerable attention to clarity in the timbre of his voice and the breakings. He does this by employing an open-mouth technique which occasionally reaches the 'shouting' position of the mouth. The throat is relatively relaxed while the jaw-dropping is used in order to create the breakings. In addition, this role requires a less demanding flexibility of the larynx than that found in Pontic singing and the focal point (as perceived by the singers) is to be found in the hard palate (front in the mouth cavity). The *partis* introduces the main tune and the tonality of the song by employing *forte* singing of a simple vocal line with a few ornaments. He leads the other singers but his melodic range spans no more than a fifth while his part resembles recitative or declamation.

The *gyristis* sings the most demanding music, replete with breakings and rapid vocal movements. He accomplishes these by employing jaw-dropping which is the chief articulator of breakings in his singing action. He typically ends each phrase on the leading note thereby creating an unusual cadence. His vocal movements twist and

turn around the tonic while his vocal range is usually lower than that of the *partis*. Entering later than *partis*, his melodic lines may be understood as contrapuntal to the main tune. His function can be substituted by the *klostis*, whose idiomatic falsetto singing introduces the interval of the minor seventh above the tonic. Moreover, the rhythmic organization of his part is more complicated than that of the *partis* and the effect is reminiscent of yodelling. The existence of the falsetto in this role is for avoiding any monotonous sonic results. The rhythmic organization of his lines is less complicated when compared with that of the *gyristis*.

The *rihtis*' musical contribution is confined to a short musical descent of a fourth below the tonic, projecting this musical phrase from a backward position, while the *prologistis* substitutes the *partis* in the preamble. The *isokrates* are those responsible for maintaining a stable tonic by means of a drone and for making the song sound homogeneous, and clarified – 'like a bell'. They exhibit a nasal quality in their performances.

In monophonic singing, the vocal production in Epirus is less tense in the throat and the pitch is lower than in Pontic music. The focal point of the soloist's voice in Epirus is set back into the soft palate as well as in the nasal cavity. The tempo of Epirotic monophony is slow and the falsetto voice is rarely used. In Epirus, falsetto singing is used to embellish the polyphony and forms a definitive function of musical significance while in Pontic singing the falsetto is used as a passing vocal nuance in order to create breakings. Epirus' most demanding monophonic genre is the lament which requires great vocal and emotional effort from singers. The breakings follow a circular repeated pattern and are projected from a backward position while long glissandi indicate the painful character of the music. The velocity of the circular repeated breakings is augmented.

‘Personal experience’

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I draw for the most part on my own experience as a vocalist *vis-à-vis* learning processes and vocal production, particularly inasmuch as these relate to the articulation of the vocal sound and to the concept of bi-musicality.¹⁵⁵ I begin with a personal account of how I learned to sing during my childhood and draw an analogy between the ‘means’ of vocal articulation and the learning process. I then consider certain of the bi-musical aspects of my singing world. The focal point here is the movement between Western classical and Pontic vocal techniques, what consequences this might have for a performer and, indeed, how influential is that movement on the performance practice of both styles.

In that there is a particular role that is played by the writer in both the research and the ethnographic text arising from it, I feel it necessary to interpose particulars in my life that relate to my own engagement with Greek folk music. And this for two important reasons: a) since personal experience is an important element in this thesis I consider it essential to relate indicative and formative aspects of my background, and b) to identify myself as one further source of information in this research and to allow others to evaluate the contexts of my assertions.

Born in Veria, a small town in northern Greece, I began singing Greek traditional music from early childhood. Coming from a musical family, I soon appreciated the vital influences of my father and his father (both Pontic lyra players and singers) on

¹⁵⁵ The original spelling of the term was introduced by Hood with a hyphen (bi-musicality). However, later papers such as Cottrell (2007) have tended to eliminate this hyphen (as happened with ethnomusicology).

my own formation as a musician. Even now I experience much pleasure and joy when I listen to old cassette recordings, from my father's personal archive, of myself and my brother (aged eight and nine respectively) singing in Pontic with great gusto (see DVD Example 12). More than anything else it was my family's enthusiasm for music-making that instilled in me the urge and enthusiasm to become involved with the vocal and instrumental repertoires of the Pontians. My father continues to complain somewhat sepulchrally, 'Our house, now without music since you went to London, is like a cemetery!'

In an environment such as this it was inevitable that music should become my life. At age nine, I enrolled at the local conservatory where I received lessons in piano and theory. These included *solfege* (sight singing), *dictée* (musical dictation) and later, harmony. Although I pleased my teachers by achieving commendable grades, I remain uncertain as to whether this was a wise decision. At the conservatory I experienced some confusion between Greek traditional and Western 'classical' repertoires; this is an important matter which I discuss in greater detail below.

At the same time I undertook lessons in Byzantine chant, a species of monophony whose execution requires a markedly different approach to that of Western art music. Although my engagement with this music resulted in a certain amount of respect from among my teachers, the traditional repertory received much admiration from my classmates. Thus, while I felt that Western classical music was the 'right' kind of music to be learned, Greek sacred and secular folk music actually 'belonged' to us. This was paramount in my parents' thinking: 'If you want to be an educated musician you have to go to the conservatory'. Aside from this phrase they never commented on Greek traditional music or its learning processes; of course they

respected it highly, but not being ‘official’, indigenous music could never offer me a ‘proper’ job later in life.

At secondary school I was responsible for the music at all celebrations. In our small hometown there were no music teachers at the state schools, but these occasions provided me with the opportunity to perform before an audience from a very early age, familiarizing myself with what folk musicians colloquially name the *πατάρι* (patari, ‘stage’). Apart from these events I was constantly involved in local feasts called *πανηγύρια* (panigirya) which normally occur on a saint’s name day. At such events I gained substantial experience in terms of repertory and performance of Greek traditional music.

My efforts to absorb Greek folk music were rewarded in 1996 when I won first prize in a Pan-Hellenic competition in traditional singing. In fact I was asked to choose between classical and folk performance. But in spite of my extensive education in the Western style I decided, without a second thought, on folk music performance. Shortly thereafter I was awarded a scholarship from the Holy Diocese of Veria to continue music studies in London.

The transition from a provincial education and lifestyle to the sophistication and charged pace of England’s capital was not easy for me. It was not only the unfamiliarly high performing standards but I also felt that I would never be able to immerse myself in the music that I loved. Moreover, who in London would understand the music I was most impelled to perform? To my great surprise and pleasure I discovered that in this multi-cultured megapolis there were abundant opportunities and audiences for every kind of music. As a result I kept myself preoccupied throughout my university years participating in various events that

included Greek, Byzantine, classical and folk, master classes, musicals and recording sessions.

I remember the first lesson I had with my vocal tutor; she perceived a folk musicality in me and subsequently influenced my musicianship to a great degree. One of the first things she told me was that the voice should not be trained before the age of sixteen or seventeen, as this coincides with the ‘change’ of the male voice and it could be dangerous for damaging the vocal folds. This struck me as peculiar as I had used my voice extensively since the age of eight. Today I feel rather lucky for not having damaged my voice.

Although I completed my *solfege* studies in Veria with distinction, it was only after my arrival in London that I discovered a new passion in my life: classical singing. I worked hard to acquire the right vocal technique and a proper ‘classical’ sound to my voice, which encompasses a three-octave range. I became fascinated by the idea that behind a vocal sound there is a whole hidden mechanism and by the fact that one should acquire a so-called ‘image of the body’ in order to visualize what happens inside us when we sing.

Having become conscious of this vocal mechanism, I turned much of my academic attention to its exploration while at the same time drifting into a freelance musical career, parallel with my studies. At certain times and for purely financial reasons I was compelled to work in the Greek night clubs of London. On the one hand this provided me experience in stage performance while on the other I was obliged to sing every night to people from a variety of backgrounds. In the early part of the evening (up till 2 o’clock in the morning) the audience comprised doctors, students,

lawyers and families from the Greek London community. Later, however, gamblers¹⁵⁶ and even what I took to be criminals came to listen to Greek music. Further biographical details would be redundant, but I would like to note a few points in order to revert to the ethnomusicological perspective of my thesis.

The first is that I come from a musical family from my father's side; my paternal grandfather was an immigrant from the region of Pontos and an accomplished performer of Pontic music, while my mother's origin is half *βλάχα* (Vlach)¹⁵⁷ and half 'Dopia' (local)¹⁵⁸. The second point is that growing up in a family with two different Greek musical backgrounds made a significant impact on my musical preferences. Although I am in a position to perform both styles of singing (Epirotic and Pontic) I consider myself more as a Greek Anatolian vocalist, as I grew up in a Pontic family. The third and final point is that learning Greek traditional music from an unbroken oral tradition and studying Western art music in a conservatory required different cognitive approaches which can only be characterized as bi-musical, a point to which I shall return below.

¹⁵⁶ They were easily recognised since they asked for songs which refer to gambling (no one else would order such songs).

¹⁵⁷ The Vlachs are an ethnic group spread around Balkans. One part of this group resident in Greece for the past two centuries, has established a strong community. Today, the Vlachs consider themselves to be Greeks, having their own customs and music. They are part of modern Greek history in that they fought for Greece's independence and contributed significantly to the growth of the economy.

¹⁵⁸ The term 'dopia' (Greek: *ντόπια*) originates from the word 'entopios' (Greek: *εντόπιος*) which means the 'indigenous' or 'native'. In the case of my mother, 'dopia' refers to her Greek Macedonian origin.

5.2 Learning to sing Pontic music – a personal account

Recollecting...

I was at our little home (two rooms, and one outdoor toilet) in Mikri Santa¹⁵⁹ (Illustration 20), a small village near my hometown, Veria, in northern Greece. We used to go there every summer for at least two months; my father would say: ‘Here are our roots’. All the inhabitants (five to ten permanent residents during the winter and around 150-200 during the summer) are of Pontic origin and our family (on my father’s side) eventually settled there after the move from Pontos, in the Black Sea region. Without a constant supply of water, all families went to the spring of *χουρσιτίνα* (Hoursitina) in the middle of the village.

If my home and family in Veria (we lived with my Pontic grandparents in a semi-detached house) created a quite influential environment for the development of my folk musicality, my village, Mikri Santa, provided me with major exposure to the musical world of Pontos. There are at least two Pontic lyra players and three or four singers in each family of the village. Inevitably there is extensive music making within this small Pontic Greek community. In my family the main musician was my grandfather, Makos Tsahourides (1917-1990), who sang and played the Pontic lyra as well. My father is also a singer and lyra player but since the death of his father he has stopped playing. He connected the sound of the lyra so much with his father that he declared playing the lyra without his father would be like ‘drinking water when you are not thirsty’.

No matter what the daily activity, it would be accompanied by music. For example, the distance between my home and the spring of Hourshitina was no more

¹⁵⁹ All inhabitants of Mikri Santa, ‘Little Santa’, originated from the area of Santa (in Pontos) and so the name was given in memory of the homeland.

than fifty metres, yet within this space at least three radio stations of Pontic music were loudly broadcasting from three different homes (including ours, of course). When Uncle Alkis¹⁶⁰ brought food supplies from Veria and all of us eagerly waited for him to give us a lift while he delivered the supplies, and music played an essential role in our entertaining drives. At the only tavern of the village people played and sang Pontic music, reinforcing themselves periodically with *τσίπουρο* (tsipouro, a Greek traditional spirit, like ouzo).

On many occasions we would go to Uncle Yiankoulis' house, also frequented by another uncle, Panoulis, and my grandfather. I remember vividly when my brother and I first started learning to play and sing Pontic music; we were very careful not to make any mistakes. If a slip occurred, the music had to stop and be repeated until our 'judges' heard the 'right' sound as inherited from their grandfathers and uncles. They would exclaim 'No, no, no! This is not the way Hrysanthos sings it', or 'You only have to listen Hrysanthos and Gogos' (the latter a celebrated lyra player) and other similar sentiments.

Sometimes they were pleased with our progress but at other times they were quite severe. We were warned not to listen to any 'neo-Pontic' versions of songs because they were void of the flavour of the old kind'. As musicians themselves, they would interrupt our performances in order to play or sing the 'right' tune. We were advised to pay attention only to the melody and to some dynamics for guidance; the rest should be completed by listening to Hrysanthos and Gogos.

For the traditional musical vocabulary that I was attempting to cultivate, singing in choirs as well as in small groups was of equal importance. It is difficult to

¹⁶⁰ Uncle Alkis was the personification of 'willingness to help'. He took care of all the greenery in the village; he was carried water, food, and any all sorts of supplies for every family. His lorry was used as a watering can for the trees. And he did these things freely. As he said: 'It is just because I love this place'.

estimate accurately the number of traditional choirs that exist today in Greece, but I imagine it to be in the hundreds. The first choir I joined (together with my family) was that of the Euxeinos Leshi (*χορωδία της Ευξεινίου Λέσχης*, the Euxeinos Association Choir), which was based in Veria; it promoted purely Pontic songs. The repertory was chosen carefully: only traditional melodies were permitted. The choir (sung in monody) consisted of about fifty members, almost all of them of Pontic origin. The lyrics were in the Pontic dialect and the music was performed by five to eight Pontic lyra players and one *νταούλι* (daouli, a large double headed drum) player.

We appeared frequently in festivals and local celebrations and I was fortunate enough to have a solo part, accompanied by my brother, at the end of each performance. The choir was established and conducted by a professional Pontic singer (Kostas Karapanagiotides) who also was responsible for promoting the particular outlook of the choir. This choir still exists and is one of many cultural activities sponsored by the Association; others include folk dance groups, teaching the Pontic lyra, radio station programmes, publications, exhibitions and so forth.

I was ten years old when we joined the choir and in that environment I became familiar with Pontic music and also expanded my repertory. Socializing with other choristers meant communicating in the Pontic dialect and learning about famous Pontic musicians, historians, actors, artists and other famous personalities. It was important to know something of the history of Pontos and why our grandfathers left their homeland in Black Sea region. Rehearsing Pontic songs with this choir was an education in itself. I learned, for example, to differentiate between amateur and professional levels of performance: the music we sang was less ornamented than the professional styles I was used to from recordings.

In time, I learned to discern minor variations in the performance of some songs I already knew. This is what introduced me to the world of traditional music and its inherent quality of renewal and change through oral transmission. In time, I discovered ways of transforming the skeleton of the music without depreciating its Pontic style. In addition I also began to experiment with improvisation, learning its diverse underlying principles. In terms of vocal production, I observed many practices that my uncles used, such as glottal stops, certain ‘breakings’ in the voice, the characteristic Pontic vocal timbre and varied accentuation in the vocal line according to the tempo of the music.

Analyzing...

A natural corollary of my musical development as a young singer was to replicate the vocal timbre of the experienced singers. Their so-called ‘colour of the voice’ had been echoing in my ears since early childhood and it was only natural that I would attempt, albeit unconsciously, to imitate the same; this was a priority. Vocal timbre partially defines the ‘identity’ of a vocal style or the characteristic vocal sound of a style; the production of such timbres depends mainly on the construction of the vocal folds, the air pressure from the lungs and the articulation of the laryngeal sounds which takes place in the mask. Vocal timbres are thus replicated by singers in a given tradition and there is hence a strong correlation between vocal articulation (which is the technical ‘means’ of replicating vocal timbres) and learning processes.

Thus, an analogy between learning processes and vocal articulation can be drawn; and this also implies that vocal timbres are capable of being decoded since they are distinguished, learned and performed by singers. I would argue that choosing voice timbre is an orthodox way of conceptualizing musical sounds, but as a singer, I

do not actually believe that vocal timbres can be decoded to the degree that they could be transcribed and subsequently performed. Singers 'do not have this kind of command over articulation' (Sundberg, 1987:95).

Understanding such sounds has been central to the work of ethnomusicologists. For instance, in Willoughby's 2000 article, *The Sound of Han: P'ansori, Timbre and a Korean Ethos of Pain and Suffering*, the author argues that the vocal timbre found in the Korean vocal genre of *P'ansori*¹⁶¹ depicts pain, suffering, grief and melancholy. Using views from singers and listeners, such as taxi drivers, the author correlates the sentiment of *Han* (pain, suffering and resentment) with its 'harsh' or 'rough' vocal quality.

Although this article does not deal with the vocal techniques of *Han*, it provides useful information about the correlation between vocal timbre and the learning process. Referring to an extract from a Korean movie where a singer attempts to hand down to his daughter the musical tradition of *Han*,¹⁶² the author captures the learning process of such 'painful sounds' and argues that these sounds can be performed correctly only if the singer 'learns what true suffering is' (2000:21).

From a different perspective, Cottrell argues that 'all those who subscribe to a particular musical tradition develop an ability to make timbral judgements on the musical sounds of that tradition, however subconsciously such abilities may be exercised' (2004:47). Although Cottrell deals more with instrumental timbre he suggests that self-conception and timbral judgements are interconnected in the learning process of a musician.

¹⁶¹ *P'ansori* is a Korean dramatic art form in which a singer accompanied by a drum (puk), sings and narrates an epic story. Although today only five pieces are normally performed, there were about twelve pieces during the 19th century. The duration of a piece may last from two to eight hours and the singing that takes place is considered to be demanding not only in terms of duration but also of vocal effort. For more information, see: Jang (2001), Pihl (1994) and also Bo-hyong (1973, 1978).

¹⁶² See also Jang (2001).

Fales in her 2002 paper *The Paradox of Timbre* provides three characteristics of timbre that are valuable for the present analysis: a) timbre is ‘*a link to the external world*’ in containing the descriptive clues important for source identification and for deciphering aspects of the terrain between the source and the listener’, b) timbre ‘functions as *perceptualization’s primary instrument* in accomplishing its various objects’ and c) timbre is ‘a parameter of music that we experience phenomenally, but without *informational consciousness*’. However, the same author argues that although even gifted musicians might not understand scientifically the different facets of timbre they are able to use it successfully in order to make use of particular ‘sounds or combination of sounds’ which ‘carry a power that others do not’ (2002:91).

In an aurally inherited musical culture such as that from Pontos, an insider-performer’s analysis makes possible an understanding of how musicians conceptualize folk sounds within their social environment (family, village, and neighbourhood). Musical sounds in a given group are revealed to people by other people’s performances and this is what I experienced from the elders of my family (such as Uncle Panoulis, my grandfather, and so on). How my grandfather learned to sing Pontic songs or play the Pontic lyra was never spoken about, either to me or to my father. However, the agonizing ‘adventure’ of how he migrated from the land of Pontos to metropolitan Thessaloniki had echoed in my ears from childhood, reiterated through numerous stories where Pontic songs were always the focal point.

My grandfather’s engagement with this type of music, at the professional level, brought him close to some of the most famous Pontic singers, such as Hrysanthos. As such, it resulted in an extraordinary opportunity to learn about Pontic songs and it exposed all of my family to direct contact with Pontic music, since all gatherings took place in our home. This is how, unconsciously, I began to acquire

information about vocal timbre in Pontic singing. My grandfather still acts as a figure that connects me with Pontic music; in the same way that my father, Uncle Yankoulis, Panoulis and others were chief among those from whom I elicited, and continue to elicit, important facts about Pontic music. The central question, however, is: how did I come to my own conception of vocal sounds appropriate to the Pontic tradition?

I came to know my grandfather in his late sixties. Because both of my parents worked for a living, my brother and I were mainly brought up in my grandparents' house. As a result, we met their friends, learned their customs, heard the Pontic dialect, and of course listened to Pontic music. Whenever my *pappous* (grandfather) sang, played the lyra or wrote down some new lyrics, we came close to listen or occasionally to write down the lyrics for him (his vision and general health had significantly been declined at that time). During this period of my life I listened nearly every day to Pontic songs and I could sing some of them from memory.

As for myself and my brother, this activity was a kind of game. When my parents returned home and collected us from next door, we proudly sang to them the tunes we had learned. Later on I realized that these activities were more than random events, rather, as my parents still believe 'an early exposure to music [that] can make you a real musician'. We used to enjoy arguing about performances from an early age, imitating of course our parents whose judgements on singers, lyra players, authenticity, preservation of the tradition and other similar topics were serious themes for debate at home and in the *ταβέρνα* (tavern). Judging folk voices was also widely exercised; people used to comment on stylistic authenticity and how 'true was the vocal style they were listening to.

In fact, what they were judging, beyond the linguistic element, was the timbre of the voice, that is to say, the sound characteristics of the voice, which are

determined through use of the vocal instrument. Although very few possessed any anatomical vocabulary to describe these sound characteristics, they were understood by most of us through terms such as ‘bright’, ‘full-bodied’, ‘light’, ‘lyrical’, ‘flexible’, ‘pure’, ‘tense’, ‘warm’, ‘rich’, ‘firm’, ‘aggressive’, and so forth. Of course, behind such everyday terms lie more complex biomechanical processes.

When vocal sounds are produced by singers, hundreds of pressure waves per second pass through the vocal folds. ‘Any complex harmonic vibratory motion produces complex sound pressure waves that include a F_0 [fundamental frequency] and an array of overtones’ (Thurman and Welch, 2000, vol. II, pp. 410). The frequencies that are produced by the vocal folds, before they have travelled through the vocal tract, are known in voice science as voice source spectra.¹⁶³ Beyond that, it is the articulators of the vocal tract which ‘shape’ the sound pressure waves coming from the larynx during phonation. This is achieved by means of the articulators: tongue, lips, jaw, teeth, nasal and mouth cavities and soft palate.

Thus, as the ‘shape of the vocal tract is changed its acoustic properties [are] altered’ (Howard, 1998:330). The parts of the vocal tract that can be moved or articulated during vocal production are the tongue, jaw, lips and the soft palate (or velum). Those frequencies transferred by the vocal tract are called formant frequencies and are quite different in characteristics from the voice source spectra. From a technical point of view it is impossible for a singer to try to move one articulator while all others stay constant. As mentioned above there is no such kind of command over articulation. Therefore, if we think that we move one articulator this probably means that all others might change position or stay unchanged, making

¹⁶³ For more information, refer to Thurman and Welch, 2000 (‘Bodymind and Voice’, Vol. II, chapter 10) and also to Sundberg, 1987 (‘The Science of the Singing Voice’, chapters IV and V).

extremely complicated the process of examining scientifically (in a laboratory) articulation and its parameters.

In order to proceed with this argument I will again resort to my own experience. When I began my involvement with Pontic singing I also started to make judgements. After fifteen years of involvement with Greek traditional music I realize that my judgements of vocal performances and performers were pronounced in order for me to find my own particular vocal 'sound' in this tradition. This could be done by examining other people's vocal sounds until I arrived at a desired level of my own performance. Through social interaction with musicians I replicated a vocal quality adapted to the standards I perceived from the society of which I was a part.

I remember a time when I disliked Hrysanthos' singing. To my mind, he overused the falsetto technique. This is not part of our tradition, I thought, and together with his 'notorious' personality, I found his entire contribution to the tradition relatively insignificant. It was only after I learned to perform this technique that I discovered Hrysanthos' sound masterful in command and 'pure' in traditional terms. His flexibility in the so-called 'breakings' of the voice motivated me to develop my own voice by imitating him; in this way, I developed both my listening skills and my vocal production. Forming one's own sound in folk musical genres is not an easy task, since one must adapt oneself to a musical genre and learn how to perform it. Although there is no standard sound quality that should be followed, I would argue that this sort of sound quality is essentially caught rather than taught.

Thus, one is left alone to discover through one's own acoustic analysis and practice not only one's musical tradition but also those things which will help one to understand that tradition better. With regard to the singer's state, I shall now examine more closely the 'movement' between Greek folk music and Western classical music.

What changes in terms of voice, mind and other influential factors are central to the ensuing analysis, which begins by describing a personal musical experience. What follows should not be construed as a comprehensive description of bimusical changes in vocal performances in general, but rather an indication of the most significant features between these two disparate styles.

5.3 Voice and bimusicality

Recollecting...

December 2001. I was a soloist with Goldsmiths' Sinfonia and Chorus, performing music by Sir John Tavener. The rehearsals took place at Goldsmiths College, over an academic. The composer requested the soloist to be located in a high corner of the concert hall. The vocal line was not very demanding (apart from two prolonged top F sharps) but required long phrasing and energy so that the audience would understand the text. At that time I encountered other Greeks in the department who were part of the choir, but they were not aware of my background in traditional music. Ultimately, the concert was a success, according to the conductor, but I had to leave the hall immediately in order to travel to North London, where I earned an income singing at a Greek nightclub to pay my way as an undergraduate.

It was a hard job. We began singing at 11 pm and the earliest we finished was four in the morning. Although, today, such places are very rare in Greece, for those who had left their country in the 1940s or 50s these venues reminded them of their childhood. They could feel free to enjoy themselves and to socialize. The main comfort I derived was the opportunity for me to sing some of the traditional repertory that I had grown up with. This helped me withdraw, at least mentally, from the

nightclub situation itself. Ironically, I, too, realized that the music I grew up with is strongly connected to my own childhood memories and these were strong enough to transfer my mental state many years back

On this particular Friday night, and to my considerable surprise, I saw all my friends from the choir entering the club where I was singing. If this was a nice surprise for me, for them it was rather a shock! When I finished my programme and sat with them, all I did was to answer their questions about how I could possibly manage two such diverse vocal activities on the same night. My response was spontaneous and instinctive: 'I usually get a dose of cultural adrenaline when I enter this place'. This is not without a grain of truth.

Analyzing...

Several decades have now passed since the influential article on bimusicality by Mantle Hood (1960) appeared in scholarship as a 'source of inspiration' (Baily 2001:85). Academic approaches inspired by the topic of bimusicality have recently enjoyed a certain resurgence of popularity in the field. Scholars such as Baily (2001), Davies (1994), Titon (1995), Cottrell (2007), to mention only a few, have shown an interest in expanding Hood's initial notion of bimusicality.

In their quite different ways they have raised significant issues on the 'distance between [the] two kinds of music' (Baily, 2001:86) and have also posed questions such as 'is this musical phenomenon [bimusicality]... a fixed part of the [Afro-Latin] idiosyncrasy? Or is it momentary coexistence of two musical cultures – like the overlapping of two ceramic sequences as one fades out and another takes hold?' (Davies, 1994:146). Hood points out that: 'the basic study and training which develops musicality is known by several names: musicianship, fundamentals of

music, *solfeggio*.' (1960:55) He also supports the fact that one should look for a cognitive understanding of the musical structure and performance (upon which a culture is based) in order to comprehend properly a musical culture. The last aspect requires 'rigid training since childhood' (*ibid*) in order to acquire the essential aesthetics of the chosen cultures subsequently characterized as bimusical.

The term 'learning to perform as a research tool' [Baily (2001)] takes us back beyond the 1960s. Scholars such as A.M. Jones (1934) asserted that in order to understand African rhythm one should join African bands and learn to perform their rhythmic patterns. Baily critiques Hood's paper by arguing that: 'Hood did not advocate learning to perform as a technique to be employed in ethnomusicological fieldwork. His argument was simply that training in basic musicianship is fundamental to any kind of musical scholarship' (2001:85).

In his paper 'Bi-musicality as Metaphor' (1995), Titon points out that 'learning to perform' forces interesting results that we do not only notice but we also experience; in other words we become part of the event. Both Titon's and Baily's arguments and methodology offer skills and provide an understanding of the music making of another culture. It is commonly agreed that, as a performer, one has an insider's view of the essential elements of a musical culture.

Inverting Hood's argument Judith Becker argues that, although 'Mantle Hood felt that the best way to understand another music system is to learn to perform it' something which he had done with his students in ethnomusicology, 'early on it became apparent that to play the music of another culture was only to glimpse the tip of the iceberg as far as understanding another culture is concerned' (Becker, 1983:84).

In addition she asks:

Doesn't 'bi-musicality' extend to associative values as well as 'musical notes'? For those of us attempting to direct Gamelan ensembles in this country [North America],

we are compromised no matter which alternative we choose. Our students are not Javanese, our culture is not Javanese and although we play Javanese music on Javanese instruments, the meaning and ethos of the music must necessarily be very different here. The concept of bi-musicality has led us initially to a greater appreciation of Gamelan music as music, subsequently to a greater appreciation and understanding of Javanese culture, and ultimately to a kind of loss of faith in 'bi-musicality' as a practical aim for most American students (Becker, 1983:85).

Davies (1994) interestingly distinguishes the individual from the collective level of bimusicality as a cultural phenomenon. By referring to the example of Yemenite Jewish women,¹⁶⁴ she proves that 'musicalities' may vary in number from individual to collective levels. Thus, apart from the bimusicality between African and European traditions which is vividly found during church ceremonies in a collective level of the society she witnessed that:

I have observed certain men singing the Salve Regina in a most Hispanic style (antiphonal, modal, melismatic, tense vocal production, and high, even falsetto, register). They then turn around and play the drums, singing in a very different, Afro-American style (with African influenced membranophones and idiophones; rhythms of marked beat with a polyrhythmic integration of instrument and voices; call-and-response form; largely diatonic scales; and relaxed vocal production in medium or even low range) (Davies, 1994: 157).

The Yemenite example provides a direct link with the present study. By exploring the skills needed and insights that arise when moving from one vocal style to another, I hope to give an insider's approach to the understanding of vocal bimusicality and also provide a model in reflexive musical ethnography for similar research in the future. I am quite aware of the fact that I have undertaken two different patterns of musical education since my childhood, in that Greece is one of many countries which clearly borders both Western and eastern musical worlds;¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ These present a mono-musical group in a bi-musical culture.

¹⁶⁵ This is not to imply that bimusicality in Greece is a unique phenomenon. Countries such as Mexico, Iran, and China, to mention only a few, might also be included, perhaps in a different perspective; thus, one could perceive such a concept as a widespread phenomenon.

The extensive use of quarter tones in Pontic music and their absence in most of the Western art repertory could draw many inferences, though this chapter will only deal with the impact on vocal production. It is a fact that most highly skilled musicians in Greece are well-trained in both musical systems (Western art and Greek folk) because flexibility between these repertoires is commended and appreciated by other musicians, producers and recording companies. There have also been several efforts to institutionalize folk music in the manner of Western art music; a professional musician is likely to be competent in both styles. Yet, while this versatility is frequently met in instrumentalists it is rarely found in vocalists.

To move from one vocal style to another entails a change in the diverse vocal mannerisms that characterize a style. These changes are best examined not only at the technical level of vocal production but also in conjunction with other factors that influence vocal techniques. Obviously these are closely bound up with aspects of musical cognition, but what is of particular interest here are those changes which exclusively influence the vocal decisions of a singer. That is to say, the collective adjustments of the vocal tract that are required to produce the correct sound and style appropriate to the performance context.

Although the Epirotic vocal style constitutes a significant part of this thesis it does not form a part of my own enculturation in the way that Pontic style does; for this reason I will not refer to it in the remaining section of this chapter. Thus, as a singer myself, I see two main categories as providing the most basic sources of vocal differences between Western classical and Pontic music styles: A) change in the musical system, and B) change of environment.

A) Change in the musical system

By ‘Change in the Musical System’ I shall refer to the intervallic relationship¹⁶⁶ found in Pontic and also Western art music. The actual scales used in Pontic and Western art musical systems (at least for the most part) employ the same number of notes (twelve to the octave) although the intervals between them differ. Subsequently, intervallic changes between the notes demand either different instruments or certain adjustments to instruments that will enable instrumentalists to pitch such intervals; in the same way, singers must also adjust their vocal production in order to perform these sonic events with precision.

Changes of this nature provoke a variety of consequences in terms of repertory, playing techniques, aesthetics, music-making, organology and so on; however, it is because of my own engagement with voice that this project that will have as its focus the vocal production of those diatonic (Western) and microtonic (Pontic) scales and modes respectively.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the Phrygian mode comprises a commonly used musical complex in different Greek musical contexts. It is known as *Plagios Protos Phrygios* (one of the eight modes in the Byzantine musical system) among Byzantine chanters and Greek folk musicians. It consists of 72 quarter tones (12 quarter tones equate to a tone and six to a semitone) and the intervallic divisions between the notes include intervals smaller than a semitone, the so-called quarter tones.¹⁶⁸

In contrast, the Phrygian mode (a term originating in Ancient Greek musical theory) used in Western art music consists of tempered intervals of tone and semitone

¹⁶⁶ By ‘intervallic relationship’ I refer to the extent of the ‘distance’ between two successive notes – not intervals such as the major second, the minor third, the perfect fifth and so forth.

¹⁶⁷ A ‘scale’ is a series of eight notes in tempered intervals (tone-semitone) while ‘mode’ is a collection of characteristic and conventional musical formulas.

¹⁶⁸ For more information on the division of the octave refer to Zonis (1973).

from E to E (all white keys on the piano). This differentiation of ‘size’ in intervals created a significant difficulty in my own performance practice since more precision is required in quarter tones. Greek musicians refer to such notes (quarter tones) as ‘an about note’¹⁶⁹ or ‘notes in the cracks’¹⁷⁰ because such notes are supposedly found in the cracks between the keys of the piano keyboard. When I began Byzantine chant lessons at the age of 14, I was first confronted by its theory. I actually learnt to sing quarter tones by replicating my teachers and also by singing Pontic music. When I needed to be corrected, I relied on imitative processes; I was told: ‘listen [to them] and sing’.

In the Pythagorean sense intervals mean ‘distance’, and for a singer the ‘size’ of the distance between one note and the next requires different positions of the vocal tract for its execution. The breakings of the voice that use quarter tones in Pontic music also require considerable skill to sing with accuracy, clarity and distinction. This is because intervals smaller than a semitone compel the singer to establish different focal points enabling him to perform them. Given also that Pontic singing demands a flexible focal point in the vocal tract, singers naturally tend to find the easiest and most effortless way to perform such lines. Speed is decisive in such vocal techniques; Pontic singing requires velocity in its breakings and so the vocalist is bound to find a flexible focal point which will enable him to sing quickly and accurately.

By contrast, the major and minor intervals of Western art music are larger and correspondingly, they require a larger ‘space’ in the vocal instrument which has to adapt itself in order to maximize the precision and clarification of movements between the intervals. Although one might argue that small intervallic differences of

¹⁶⁹ Νότα στο περίπου.

¹⁷⁰ Νότες στις χαραμάδες.

this type might not require markedly different techniques, it is both the great speed and the existence of the breakings in quarter tones that give rise to such techniques. In my own performances I perceive these changes to be focused in the areas of a) the mask (mouth and nasal cavity) and b) the larynx.

‘Moving’ the focal point forward or backward in the mouth cavity constitutes the first significant difference between Pontic and Western art vocalization. By ‘focal point’ I mean the moment (time) and place (space) where vocal energy, which comes from the larynx, remains in the mouth or nasal cavity before the sound is projected. Thus, singing operatic music, for example, presupposes the forward projection of the sound by using as a focal point (as perceived) of vocal energy the front part of the hard palate (illustration 12). The uvula in this case is raised up since this offers more space at the back of the throat and therefore more air can reinforce the sung melody. How far forward or backward one moves the uvula actually depends on which vowel is being emitted; for instance, the vowel ‘i’ probably demands a fully forward position while the ‘o’ remains a little further back, but still remaining in the hard palate.

By way of contrast, singing quarter tones focuses on the soft palate and this means taking the sound backwards. Using this method I find it easier to sing quarter tones in that the command I have over the quarter tones is firmer and more controlled. The leaps can be more accurately articulated from the ‘backward’ position rather than the ‘forward’ where the soft palate is much more flexible, and by moving it upwards and downwards breakings are easily created. This point was reinforced in the interview with Drossos Koutsokostas, who asserted that: ‘singing from the back makes it easier perform quarter tones with precision’.¹⁷¹ Reversing these different focal points of vocal projection by way of experiment would make it extremely

¹⁷¹ Interview with Drossos Koutsokostas, 12/9/2005. Original quote: Τραγουδώντας από πίσω είναι πιο εύκολο να πεις τα μόρια με ακρίβεια.

difficult to perform quarter tones using one's operatic technique, and next to impossible to sing the operatic repertory by taking the sound backwards.

Changing the focal point in the mouth cavity, however, is not the only difference I encounter when I sing Pontic or classical music. The larynx also plays an important role since, in the case of Pontic singing, it moves considerably while in Western art music it is meant to remain in its normal position. This is a critical point as the different positions of the larynx can be taken as indicative of the different cognitive positions adopted when singing in Western art and Pontic styles of singing. Occidental concepts of vocal production, particularly in operatic voices, combine the low larynx position with an expanded pharynx. This brings the vocal sound forward, and establishes what is considered to be 'right' or 'proper' for the timbre of voice and for the optimum condition of the vocal tract (see Sundberg, 1987:84). Thus, when performing Western vocal music, I retain the larynx in lower than the rest position and thereby produce what is known as an operatic or trained style singing.

The moveable larynx in Pontic singing occurs in conjunction with the movement of the uvula, which also moves up and down during breakings, allowing for greater capacity to sing the idiomatic intervals and ornamentations. Moreover, to produce the breakings using only the larynx could soon be exhausting since this creates excessive throat tension. The only way to avoid this is by employing the uvula which, in combination with the rear focal point (soft palate), shares the tension and allows one to produce ornaments with less vocal effort. Moreover, speed in breakings, is not only considered essential in Pontic music but also constitutes one of the main criteria for evaluating such music: the faster the breakings are, the better a performance is considered to be.

Whenever I attempted to sing opera or lieder using Pontic technique, my voice sounded strained and highly tense. This is because using a movable larynx changes the timbre of the voice, producing a light colour, instead of the heavy fully-bodied sound typical of the operatic singing style, which subsequently stems from a lowering larynx. Classical singers would also argue that by taking ‘back’ the sound closes the throat, something considered to be inappropriate: an amateurish mistake. Of course, this ‘open throat’ technique is essential in Western classical singing to enable the singer to reach high notes, and to achieve a different quality of sound, which does not exist in Pontic singing.

This is the essence of the polarization of two different performance aesthetics: on the one hand classical singers pay particular attention to the voice’s timbre and clarity, producing a rich and warm vocal sound, while on the other hand Pontic singers concentrate more on ornamenting the vocal line. It is the absence of a fixed, composed, notated melody that gives freedom to Pontic singers for a personal and occasionally improvised approach to the performance of a song. On the one hand, Pontic singers ornament and improvise while on the other classical singers strive to be faithful to the composer’s dynamics and melodic indications in notation.

The Greek songs by Ravel (*Chansons Populaires Grecques*) written in 1904-6, provide an interesting example for the present discussion. Although Ravel was inspired by folk tunes of the Dodecanese (not a Pontic repertory), I use these songs as a parallel in order to demonstrate certain changes in the vocal production. I also base this choice on the fact that the vocal production used in the Pontic style is very similar to that remainder which is called the Hellenism of East (this includes all of Asia Minor, Thrace and the islands of eastern Aegean Sea). I already knew the ‘original’ version of these songs, but when I began to study Ravel’s version with my vocal tutor

I noted two important vocal features which made me rethink the performance aesthetics of each style. The first was that I sound somewhat sharp on certain notes and second, I was instinctively 'moving backwards' in my vocal production. When accompanied by piano I realized that my quarter tone technique would sound out of tune, unpleasant, and stylistically irrelevant.

Moreover, I needed to change how I moved from one note to another and this for two reasons: a) because traditional singing requires an exaggerated glissando technique, and b) because I needed to stop all habitual breakings of the voice. In this way one automatically produces another version of the piece but with concentration on the colour of the vocal sound. This is not to imply that short glissandos are not used by classical singers, especially for expressive effects. The difference in Pontic music is one of emphasis. The Pontic glissando technique is more exaggerated and much more an important part of the performance aesthetic, in that it signifies pain, sweetness, melancholy, love and so forth.

The general absence of improvised breakings in Western classical singing is also a vital factor in terms of vocal production and interpretation. Producing breakings in folk styles requires a particular use of the larynx; classical singing involves the use of the larynx in its rest position in order to produce a 'rounded' and full sound. Any attempt to sing Greek folk music in this way would restrict the speed of the breakings; it would also sound stylistically inappropriate since this is not the expected vocal sound. With regard to Ravel's piece, his removal of the glissando phrases and breakings in the melodic line obviously moves the rendition in a new direction. Realizations such as these appear to be rather obvious now but they were novel when I first encountered them.

It required great personal effort on my part to sing a traditional eastern melody in the Western art style. The change from one musical vocabulary to the other was effected not only by changing my technique but also by relocating familiar melodies into a new context. It was an environment that required altogether different techniques and unprecedented expectations from my vocal tutor. My familiarity with the ‘original’ version of these songs before encountering Ravel’s settings was, in fact, the biggest obstacle to learning them in this new context.

The vocal range of Pontic and classical music is significantly different. Much of the Pontic repertory in Greece is sung in the high range of the voice¹⁷² without excluding entirely the low tessitura. One can detect the use of falsetto voice through the vocal ‘breakings’ used in Pontic style. Such ‘breakings’, which involve alterations between modal and falsetto voice, might, for example, indicate the presence of an untrained voice in Western classical singing. Moreover, Western classical singers are encouraged to bridge their *passagio* by smooth transitions of the voice, using one quality across the whole vocal range. For the Pontic tradition, however, the use of falsetto, as explained in Chapter III, would be part of a highly controlled vocal effort and therefore a highly admired performance.

Differences between Pontic and Western operatic vocal styles are significant, and naturally each musical system is underpinned by a notation which developed to aid performance practice. I conceive the distinction between Pontic and Western classical singing by visualizing two axes, or might I say, by generating two cognitive spaces: one horizontal and the other vertical. The former applies to the Pontic tradition which concentrates on linear melody. The latter is the Western classical case where conventional harmony is represented vertically in numerous staves. Such

¹⁷² This of course depends on the natural range of each voice. For instance, Hrysanthos’ speaking range is much higher than Theodoros’ because of their individual physiology and range of their voices.

images may arise from the notation of each style. On one side Byzantine linear notation and Pontic traditional music (which is occasionally notated in the Byzantine graphic linear notation) and on the other side Western classical vocal music, which is usually notated either in a four voice stave (for choral singing) or in a single stave (for solo singing) accompanied by instruments.

B) Change of environment

Greek folk music is traditionally performed in the open air or in venues such as houses and *kafeneia* (old-style coffee shops). As such, there are two notable parameters: a) the actual performance location may vary from the back yard of a dwelling to a simple room or an open-air theatre – either involves a change in the natural acoustic environment, and b) the frequent use of amplification systems which also results in a change in the actual vocal production and sound perception. Both aspects are crucial for the analyses of musical genres worldwide, since the environment in which music is performed is affected by technical, aesthetic and acoustic factors. Western classical music is generally performed in closed areas such as theatres and concert halls, normally without any amplification system. If required amplification is used as discreetly as possible in order to avoid any interference in the actual performance.

Conventionally, Greek and other folk music traditions were never performed within a closed space, and this may in fact explain the fundamental differences between the above two parameters. The notion of an organized concert of pure Pontic

music was deemed untraditional by my co-workers,¹⁷³ all of whom referred to the ‘modern way of life’ and the need for musicians to compete in the music business. Hrysanthos, moreover, pointed out that ‘traditional [Pontic] music can only be heard as table songs with small groups of companions’.¹⁷⁴

Consider vocalisation in the open air and observe the difference when walls are placed around the singer. Sound waves produced by a vocalist usually ‘travel out at a uniform velocity in all directions’ (Taylor, 1965:136) and the intensity of the sound falls off as the distance from the sound source (voice in this case) increases. The strength of these sound waves depends very much on the adjustable resonance properties of the vocal tract which has an enormous capacity for altering the impact. According to Benade, ‘For every doubling of frequency there is a doubling of sound pressure in the room, provided the source strength is kept constant’ (1976:370).

If, however, a surface is erected beside the sound source, reflected waves will be added to the initial velocity thereby increasing the volume. Moreover, the nature of the surface significantly reflects or absorbs the sounds.¹⁷⁵ The presence of a ceiling will raise the sound level rapidly and with the creation of a cube-shaped room the singer can be heard with minimal vocal effort. On the other hand, singing in the open-air creates problems for a Greek folk singer whose obvious concern is to be heard by others, whether musicians or listeners.

Open air singing thus obliges the human resonators to open up and spread out the vocal sound, thereby increasing volume. But Western classical performances,

¹⁷³ Even at weddings, baptisms or local festivities, where music is an important part of the ceremony and a crowd is involved, what we might call an ‘audience’ does not exist in the sense that ‘people go to listen to some music’. Music is more functional: either chant at the religious services or entertainment for the families and friends. It is not perceived as an unconnected value but as an artistic form which accompanies and lends distinction to such activities.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Hrysanthos Theodorides, 31-12-2004. Original quote: ‘Παραδοσιακή μουσική βρίσκουμε μόνο στα επιτραπέζια με μικρές παρέες’.

¹⁷⁵ For more information on the reflection of sound and room acoustics, see Benade (1976) and Drew (1935).

which usually take place in concert halls or theatres, employ techniques based on the acoustics of a closed performance space. When the accompaniment is a full orchestra, however, classical singers are also obliged to alter their vocal projection. The solo voice, when pitted against sixty or more instruments (as in the opening song of ‘Das Lied von der Erde’ by Gustav Mahler) is confronted by serious acoustical problems, as is the audience.

In confronting these conditions, classical singers create sounds that can be heard over the full orchestra *tutti*: human resonators amplify the vocal sound reaching a level of 2,400-3,800Hz (Howard, 1998) where the voice can penetrate the dense orchestra sound wall.¹⁷⁶ (Future research might also involve voice technology tools in order to demonstrate the acoustical aspects of both Pontic and Epirotic singing. The results would be valuable for pedagogical purposes in the learning processes of these two styles). In terms of actual vocal production the difference between Western classical and Pontic singers comes down to two particular activities: a) use of the larynx and b) use of the mask (nasal and mouth cavity).

In operatic singing, I tend to articulate the sound more into the mouth cavity than into the nasal cavity as this provides greater clarity and higher harmonics. The final vocal result is higher in volume and ‘clearer’ in timbre than in my Pontic singing. On the other hand, when I sing Pontic music I always employ a moveable larynx and articulate the sound more into the nasal than into the mouth cavity. In this case, the only features that enable my voice to be heard in an open-air environment are the high tonalities which I use for the Pontic songs: these automatically render the singing louder.

¹⁷⁶ For further information, see Sundberg (2001).

It is only recently that Pontic and other folk performers in Greece have begun to organize concerts in large venues and open-air festivals. As a consequence this has led to a demand for amplification systems in order for the singers to be heard over a crowd of (sometimes) thousands of people. The principal reason for using amplified sound systems arises from the fact that voice is relatively weak for producing a large enough 'disturbance' in the air. Even if I were to force my Pontic singing with greater than normal vocal effort, I doubt if the final result could be heard by a crowd of three hundred people. Taylor states explicitly that: 'What is required is the equivalent of a lever system to change the high-force-low-amplitude movement into low-force-high-amplitude movement' (1965:68).

Amplification also produces a series of other changes in vocal production of Pontic song: a) the breathing support is diminished; b) the tonalities of the songs tend to be lower than normal – as a consequence the high-registered character of Pontic music is in danger of being lost; c) the use of falsetto technique is reduced while the employment of various effects such as reverb or echo, tend also to distort the singing. All of these limitations are present in almost every outdoor performance. For these reasons the ideal Pontic performance (from the point of view of the Pontic Greeks) would be in small venues without electronic amplification.

In Western art music amplification systems are rarely used except in large opera houses and concert halls where the microphones are usually hidden in the floor, in the stage settings or even in the clothes of the singers. The orchestra may sometimes be amplified through direction microphones but even then the volume tends to be at acoustic level. In this environment there are few possibilities for interfering with the actual vocal technique which tends to remain consistent in all circumstances. Briefly put, although my operatic singing voice remains intact,

unimpeded by any amplification, my Pontic singing is affected by amplifiers that cause a number of adjustments in my normal vocal technique.

Chapter VI

Conclusions

This is a tri-faceted study. My aim has been: a) to examine vocal performance techniques as currently practised by singers in two widely-performed Greek folk vocal styles: the Pontic and the Epirotic; b) to reveal an insider's appraisal of vocal bimusicality; and c) to bridge the 'gap' between theory and practice in studies of vocal production. The necessary research was mainly conducted (i) 'in the field', (ii) by reflecting on personal experience, and (iii) through ethnomusicological/vocal analyses. The methodology for this ethnography consisted largely on the attitudes of co-workers towards Pontic and Epirotic singing. The categories and criteria subjected to analysis mirror the artistic conventions of the informants and also resonate with academic approaches in terms of performance practice. It is my hope that the present document will be a source of new information for Pontic and Epirotic singers and a departure point of interest-stimulation for non-Pontic and non-Epirotic singers and musicians.

Specific areas for analyzing vocal sounds were chosen with anatomy in mind. As shown in Chapter II, the data are designed and analyzed in a manner comprehensible to singers. They include the three mechanisms of the voice as treated by authors of Western classical voice studies: breathing, vibration and articulation. The crucial question of what distinguishes Greek folk song performance from Western classical singing is primarily exposed in the third mechanism, vocal articulation. Most Pontic and Epirotic singers tend to acquire this skill from the older generation, a common process in folk education all over the world.

Although the folk vocal music of Pontos and Epirus involve learning processes in performance practice that differ from the Western art tradition, I trust that these analyses will contribute significant theoretical knowledge to this field. By combining personal experience with scholarly research I provide additional validity to the arguments presented in this thesis and clarify how the vocal techniques are applied. I realise that by incorporating my own experience and by including my own voice in the composition of this work will likely influence the final outcome. Accordingly, I have attempted to introduce this ‘individuality’ as transparently as possible.

In Chapter I, therefore, I discuss my fieldwork and the methodology adopted. The role of the native performer-researcher, the choice of case studies, and the presentation of the text are considered in order to make clear my position on the matters raised. To these ends, I have, at the outset of this research, attempted to clarify my position by using pertinent scholarly material to demonstrate that conditions of research such as these are capable of providing valuable conclusions, especially in the field of musical performance practice.

Chapter II inaugurates the vocal analyses of the Pontic and Epirotic folk vocal style with reference to the *Cantometrics* project and its categorization of Greek folk song. Here, I draw attention to the distinction between Greek folk vocal monophony and polyphony while also reviewing the validity on the one hand of the *Cantometrics* findings and its importance in terms of research and on the other, the academic approach to folk song. In reviewing similar projects, I define my approach of analysis in this monograph. Additionally, I indicate those aspects of vocal production which are later examined in my analyses. In particular, I offer both anatomical and physiological explanations as to the manner in which vocal sounds are produced in

order to visualize the changes taking place within the vocal instrument once a specific vocal technique is applied.

The picture of the Pontic vocal style that emerges in Chapter III may be summarized under two main headings: a) modality and charged ornamentation b) monophony and heterogeneity. Pontic singing is modal and highly ornate; its modal construction and the ‘voice breakings’ are prevailing features in the melodic lines. It is also monophonic since it comprises only solo singing, and heterogeneous in that: 1) the vocal line incorporates improvised breakings of the voice, thereby making each performance unique and unrepeatable; 2) the orally transmitted nature of the species allows other musical elements to influence the actual vocal performance; 3) it adapts to new cultural demands: something that was proven after 1922 (the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey) when Pontic Greeks left their ‘homeland’ (the land of Pontos) and came to the ‘motherland’, Greece.

Epirotic folk vocal polyphony may be summarized under three headings: a) collective; b) homogeneous and c) interdependent. Epirotic singing is collective in that it is not only considered to be an artistic but also a social form of interaction within a given society. It is also homogeneous in that: i) all renditions of the tune follow a standardized vocal line throughout the song; ii) only minimal improvisation is employed, except for the vocalizations of the *gyristis* or *klostis* and, moreover, melodic resources are highly constrained (repeated phrases and predictable variations); and iii) vocal timbre is consistent in every performance by each role-singer so that the characteristic sound is immediately recognized by Epirotes and non-Epirotes alike. Ultimately, the Epirotic vocal style is interdependent since no single voice can be performed separately. Whenever one voice errs the entire song must begin all over again.

A significant outcome of this investigation is the fact that Pontic and Epirotic vocal styles are very much influenced, and finally formed from, the size of the interval from one note to the next. It is the intervallic ‘space’ that determines the way that the vocal instrument reacts in order to achieve precision. ‘What’ we sing is therefore to be considered as an important factor in the creation of ‘how’ we sing, giving rise to different categories of vocalizations in Greek (and not only Greek) folk music. Furthermore, a decisive factor in the formulation of this hypothesis is the time the singer takes to sing the two successive notes that make up the intervallic distance. Whereas Pontic interpretation requires rapid changes between notes and quick ornamentation, the Epirotic style is characterized by slower vocal movements over larger intervals and fewer vocal decorations.

In Chapter III I also demonstrate that the soloist’s imitation of the characteristic idiomatic figures of the Pontic lyra significantly influences the overall vocal technique. Typically, the moveable larynx and soft palate duplicates the movement of the finger tips of the lyra player. By contrast, the instrumental music of Epirus is mainly influenced by the folk vocal polyphony which itself has never been affected by instrumental changes.

Pitch is also important in forming the vocal techniques in the songs of Pontos and Epirus. The higher the notes, the more intense the throat tension appears to be, thereby requiring extensive use of falsetto by singers in either tradition. While the Epirotes tend to sing the notes clearly and unbrokenly in their falsetto, the Pontians usually apply breakings thereby altering the sonic effect between modal and falsetto. Thus, the main elements of Pontic vocal style could be summarized as follows:

- High registered singing with a corresponding preference for high registered voices
- Use of a moveable larynx in order to create breakings

- executing breakings by means of the soft palate, lifting the uvula, and alteration of modal and falsetto voice, thereby resulting in occasional unstable intervals of the fifths and major or minor sixths
- the focal point is located at the back of the mouth cavity (soft palate) where the singer has a better command over his execution of quarter tones
- a favourable singer-audience relationship is crucial in order to form an appropriate psychological diathesis for the singer who responds according to the reaction of the listeners
- singers tend to employ the movement of an abrupt 'twitch' where the upper body (mainly upper chest area) assists in producing different accents according to the tempo and lyrics
- vocal breakings are heavily influenced by the Pontic lyra's trills, tremolos, and glissandi; the voice imitates the instrument's idiomatic sounds.

Chapter IV deals with the Epirotic vocal style where a brief introduction on Epirus makes references to folk vocal polyphony in general. There follows a close examination of the polyphonic song of Epirus in which the functions of the soloists are explained. The monophonic singing of Epirus, also prominent, is not excluded from this discussion. For example, I make association between the leading voice of the polyphonic singing (*partis*) and the monophonic performances: vocal analyses are to be found in the same sub-chapter.

The standard functionaries in Epirotic folk vocal polyphony are: the *Partis*, the *Gyristis*, the *Klostis*, the *Isokrates*, the *Rihtis* and, more rarely, the *Prologistis*. The *Partis* has the dominant role in this genre. He introduces the main melody upon which all others base their melodic lines. The roles of the *gyristis* and the *klostis* are distinguished by their contribution to the polyphony. In both cases they create a 'contrapuntal' melodic line against *Partis*' and as such are considered to be the real harmony-makers in the entire team. These roles are highly demanding in that as they are required to improvise rhythmically and harmonically which they do by employing

the jaw (in the case of the *Gyristis*) and the falsetto voice (the *Klostis*). Their range is limited as it straddles only the tonic, leading note and, exceptionally, the fourth below the tonic. The *Gyristis* is also known for ending each verse on the leading note while the *Partis* makes a final on the tonic. Characteristic is the fact that both the *Gyristis* and the *Klostis* sing only in vowels embellishing the polyphony of the team.

The main concern of the *Isokrates* (drone holders) is to keep the entire ensemble together. They sing the *ison* which is normally the tonic of the piece. It is meant to remain unmoving, stable and is sung nasally. If the *Isokrates* fail in their task of keeping the team together, the song is stopped and begins again. Although it may appear to be easy, holding the tonic of the piece firmly and unshiftingly over a long period of time is actually a vocal challenge.

Indeed, the very act of co-ordinated group unity is acknowledged to be one of the most difficult features in Epirotic folk polyphony. Especially exacting is having the choir maintain consistency and homogeneity in harmony, rhythm, and tempo, as if the piece were sung ‘from one mouth,’ as my co-workers explained. The *Rihtis* has a brief role in this complex. He introduces a glissando phrase between the song’s declaimed preamble as rendered by the *Partis* or *Prologistis*. This vocal phrase acts first as a breathing space for the entire team and, secondly, as an expression of painful memories, or grief, or daily toil, or sadness or nostalgia. The main aspects of the Epirotic polyphonic vocal style may be summarised as follows:

- use of the middle range of voice, although in older days the tessitura was higher
- use of a recitative-style to introduce the opening musical phrase
- use of the pentatonic (non-semitonal) scale
- polyphony appears to be less ornamented (than Pontic monophony) and therefore a less flexible larynx is needed
- use of the jaw for breakings

- an expansion or 'spreading out' the voice in order to achieve greater volume and colour in the rendition

- a 'shouting position' of the mouth to create more space in the mouth's cavity and to liberate the voice

With monophony, the singers also 'expand' the voice which gives the impression of a somewhat 'unprocessed' vocalisation while their breakings tend to employ both the jaw and the soft palate. The style is soloistic and the flexibility of the larynx is less than that in Pontic singing. The actual notes of the breakings in Epirotic monophony create a circle of repeated notes which is also one of the most characteristic idioms of this genre. It is also believed that the most demanding monophonic singing in Epirus is the lament or dirge.

Chapter V refers to my personal experience as a folk and Western classical singer. Its approach is comparative (between Pontic and operatic singing) and aims to explain aspects of the experiences and inner world of a bimusical singer. Being a bimusical artist who here provides pertinent autobiographical elements, I identify myself as one additional co-worker for this research project on vocal performance practices of operatic and Pontic styles. As such, mine is a 'schizophrenic' approach: I analyze myself through a mixture of recollection and investigation. In this way, I attempt to elucidate the researcher's point of view in detailing folk sounds.

Drawing an analogy between vocal timbre and vocal articulation, I have focused attention on the way I learned to reproduce folk sounds during my childhood. My conclusion was that while vocal timbre is hard to transcribe, its value and performance through imitation is well attested and attributed to the singers of Pontic tradition. Moreover, timbre is equally perceived as one of the factors that define the self-conception of a singer and a path by which they find their optimum desired vocal sound. As a vocalist, I perceived two main categories of change when moving from

one to another style: a) change in musical system; and b) change in environment. Using these parameters it is my attention to provide an insider's view by pointing out the precision in producing the exact vocal pitch and the environment of a vocal performance. By observing the intervallic relationships that occur in the scales of Pontic and Western classical singing, I show how singers employ different kinds of vocalization to accommodate tonal movements.

Pontic and Epirotic singing as practised by past and present generations of Greek singers has lately achieved remarkable popularity. Young artists, keen to become engaged with traditional songs, play a central role in the evolving formulation and sustaining of the styles. Born into a musical family, I am uniquely involved in preserving orally transmitted musical traditions in Greece. Engagement in this research has made me aware of some of the most important issues connected with the vocal techniques of Pontos, Epirus and Western art music. I believe that I have introduced new and significant perspectives in understanding the evolution and the ethos of these exceptionally beautiful repertoires. More than anything else, through this scholarly investigation I have found ways of improving my performance skills. As a corollary, my enthusiasm and passion for this music has increased a hundredfold.

Finally, having acquired an appreciation of both hitherto unexamined techniques in Pontic and Epirotic vocal styles, and the fully documented studies of Western song, I have come to understand new dimensions in approaching the form and structure of Greek folk song. It gives me much satisfaction to know that the music which has permanently imprinted itself in my life's journey will be accessible to a wide circle of readers. May my investigations constitute incentives for similar 'hands-on' research in this inexhaustible field of musical expression.

Appendix I

A) This transcription is a 'skeleton' melody of the song *Αλησμόνω και χαίρομαι* (Alismono kai hairomai, 'I forget and I rejoice'). The *partis* in the preamble (bars 1-5) is usually a man while in bar 7 (when polyphony starts) the role of *partis* is taken by a woman. One can also see the range and intervals of the *gyristis* within the polyphony. The role of *rihtis* can be also observed during his exclamation phrase in bars 5 and 6; after that, he joins the *isokrates* (bar 7 onwards).

Alismono ke herome

1

PARTIS
Oh a li smo no ke_ he ro me thi_ miou me_ ke li pou me a li

RIHTIS
Ah oh o oh a li *gliss.*

GYRISTIS
a

ISOKRATES
a li

8

PARTIS
smo_ no_ ke he ro_ me e

RIHTIS
smo no ke he ro me e

GYRISTIS
o o o e o o

ISOKRATES
smo no ke he ro me e

B) This transcription represents some breakings of the voice which create an imaginable ‘circle’ of notes which is repeated (DVD Example 14). Although Mariola is a highly improvised lament (for both the singer and clarinettist) and this creates significant difficulties in transcribing this sort of performance, the following transcription offers an informative depiction of the notes sung during these breakings which create a feeling of ‘circle’ to the performer. These are indicated by the slurs; so we have: D-C-D-E, D-C-D-E, D-C-D-E or C-B-C-D, C-B-C-D, C-B-C-D.

Voice

O re si ko

Appendix II

Studying the vocal production of Greek Folk Song has been a prime interest in this project. Although this project did not have as its objective the collection of musical material with regard to ‘what’ people sing but ‘how’ they sing, I considered it desirable to provide a brief account of certain important sources of collections, transcriptions, private and public anthologies as well as some internet sources. These categories of publication have also contributed to the final outcome of this thesis. Aside from the remarks of my co-workers and the specific musical tradition under study, I have integrated within my text elements from the following sources:

A. *EYTEPIIH* (‘EFTERPE’, 1830 by X. Xartofulakos) and *ΠΑΝΔΩΡΑ* (‘PANDORA’, Constantinople, ed. I, 1843 and ed. II, 1846, by Theodore P. Fakaeos).

These are two monumental publications of Greek art and folk music transcribed in Byzantine graphic notation.

B. Publications by Fauriel (1824, transl. 1956 by D. Xatziemmanouel), L.A. Baurgault-Ducoudray (1876), A. Sigalas (1880), E. Stamatiades (1880), P. Aravadinou (1880), Hubert Perno (1903), G. Pahtikou (1905), N. Politis (1914, 1920), K. Psahos (1910, 1911, 1923 and 1930), M. Merlie (1931), B. Bouvier (1960), S. Baud-Bovy (1935, 1938, 1956, 1972 and 1984), D. Petropoulos (1959) and C. Peristeris (1950, 1957). All are important resources for the Greek folk musical genre.

C. Recent publications, such as *Τα τραγούδια της Ζμύρνης* (1997, ‘Songs of Izmir’) by G. Kostantzios; ‘Greek folk songs in Byzantine and European notation’ (1997) by G. Kakoulides; *Ρωμιοί συνθέτες της Πόλης (17^{ος}-20^{ος} αιώνας)* (1998, ‘Greek composers in Constantinople, 17th-20th centuries’) by C. Tsiamoulis and P. Erevnides; and ‘Greek traditional instruments’ (ed. II, 1991) by Foivos Anoyanakis.

D. Also important is the vast musical archive preserved on the Holy Mount of Athos.¹⁷⁷

E. Collections made by performers and scholars such as Kiriakides, Imellou, Mazaraki, Politis, Markou, Dragoumis, Karras, Aidonides, Samiou, and so forth.¹⁷⁸

Although these collections were crucial for saving and preserving the Greek traditional musical genre, it had the effect of de-emphasizing the study of a more theoretical and practical approach to Greek ethnomusicology which lacked thematic renovation. Beyond some individual papers, such as those by Tsagala (1981), Politis (1975:287-293) and Kiourtsakis (1983:46-61), it was Samuel Baud-Bovy (1935, 1938, 1956, 1972 and 1984) who established the discipline of ethnomusicology in Greece with his exploration of Greek folk music within its socio-cultural context. More specifically, it was through fieldwork methodology (which began after 1930) that initiated rigorous academic criteria for exploring Greek Folk genre.

F. The aforementioned diverse studies inevitably led to the creation of musical archives and research centres. According to Panikos G. Georgoudis (2004), there are three main archive centres in Greece: first, the *Κέντρο Ερεύνης Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας* (Research Centre for Greek Folklore) founded in 1918. From 1927 it became a part of the Academy of Athens. It holds a large amount of Greek and Cypriot recordings and it also publishes the scientific periodical 'Laografia' (*laography* = folklore) begun by N. Politis in 1909. Secondly, the *Αρχείο μουσικής Λαογραφίας του κέντρου Μικρασιατικών σπουδών* (The Centre for Asia Minor Studies, <http://www.mla.gr>)

¹⁷⁷ According to the Byzantinist Christodoulos Halaris more than 250,000 Byzantine and secular musical manuscripts are to be found in the libraries of Mount Athos. For instance, we could refer to the 17th century musical manuscripts at the monastery of Iviron and MS 1428 at the monastery of Vatopedi, known as *Μελπωμένη* (*Melpomeni*).

¹⁷⁸ The number of studies in Greek Folk Song is very long; for this reason I recommend readers to Merlie (1935), Dounia (1949), Academy of Athens (1968, page η' - ια'), S. Baud-Bovy (1984) and Kiriakidou-Nestoros (1978b:69-85) where detailed approaches to the subject can be found.

founded in 1930 as the *Σύλλογος για την συλλογή ελληνικών δημοτικών τραγουδιών* (Association for Collection of Greek folk songs).

This centre possesses a vast amount of recordings and transcriptions which has been used by scholars, researchers and composers (such as N. Skalkotas). The Centre has also published many papers in the field of ethnomusicology. Thirdly, the *Πελοποννησιακό Λαογραφικό Ίδρυμα* (The Peloponnesian Institute of Folklore) which has published some of the most well-known articles in Greek ethnomusicology, including S. Baud-Bovy (1984), and has also produced significant discographic material. Fourthly, the *Σύλλογος προς διάδοση της ελληνικής εθνικής μουσικής* (The Association for the Promotion of Greek Ethnic Music) founded by Simon Karras has published important audio CDs and LPs of Greek folk music.

G. Recent efforts have been undertaken to create an on-line music archive of Greek Folk Music. That includes the website of the Athens Music Hall (*Μέγαρο Μουσικής*, ‘Megaron Mousikis’) at <http://www.mmb.org.gr> and the University of Cyprus (through the E.P.E. research programme) at <http://ucy.ac.cy/research/ethno>. Finally, <http://www.polyphonic.gr> is a website on folk polyphony in Greece organized by *Απειρος* (‘Apeiros’), an urban-based non-profit company.

Final recital

One of the most exciting aspects in the process of completing this practice-based project is undoubtedly the final recital and its preparation, which constitute the major component of this examination process. My eagerness to demonstrate the techniques I have expounded in the written text combines with my passionate interest in performing the music with which I grew up. Although I have given numerous similar concerts, this one is more meaningful in that it must reflect all the techniques I have analyzed in my text in order to reinforce the validity of the thesis as a whole.

Working on the thesis, I realized that the programme for the final recital should also follow a specific 'flow', similar to that in the text. Hence, the first half will be devoted to Pontic music while the second half to Epirotic music. Accordingly, the pieces have been carefully chosen either from the DVD Examples or from the wider repertory of Pontos and Epirus in order to offer the essential 'terrain' for performing and developing the vocal techniques of either style. This recital will also be accompanied by programme notes which outline both the poetic themes and provide general information of the recital's concept.

Given that talking between pieces in a performance is a kind of 'vocal consumption' for the singer, I have decided to minimize involvement here by having other participants provide instrumental sections. In this way I can prepare myself for the following piece, and relax my voice without depriving the audience of useful information. The programme notes will include the lyrics in the original language, their translation into English, and a transliteration into Latin letters of the words for following during the performance.

Finally, since this thesis on many occasions makes comparative remarks with Western art music, this concert will also include two Greek songs from the

Westernized Ionian folk song repertory. Although this style is not specifically alluded to in my overall analyses, nor was it a part of my fieldwork, it seemed appropriate to include these pieces in order to illustrate the vocal movements when shifting from mainland Greek folk to the Western classical vocal style. The Ionian tradition has been selected for two main reasons: a) it is the nearest Greek folk vocal style to Western art singing having been influenced by Italianate singing, and b) I have intentionally steered away from the standard classical operatic repertory at this recital (even though I have performed in this genre) because I feel that this would openly clash with the examples of Pontic and Epirotic singing that make up the remainder of my musical performance.

Programme

Pontic repertory (First half)

1. Anastoro ta palea ('I recall the old times') is a time-honoured tune; the lyrics, added by Hrysanthos in the middle of the 20th century, recall the beautiful landscapes of Pontos which were unwillingly abandoned after the exchange of populations in 1922, an event commonly known as the 'Asia Minor Catastrophe'. One of the most distinguished songs in the Pontic repertory, it is the Phrygian mode (approximating the Byzantine First Plagal Mode), and non-rhythmic, being based on the improvisatory skills of the soloist who rightly depicts in meterless sound the melancholic and nostalgic subject matter of the lyrics. Voice ornamentation is vital to the song's interpretation. The Pontic *lyra* player simply follows the singer's melodic line.

2. Aetents eparapetanen ('An eagle was flying'), a historic and heroic song dedicated to an unknown soldier, whose narrative depicts the tragic loss of heroes at war. It is based on the Pontic tradition of the 'Akritic' song cycles which stem from the Byzantine – Arab conflicts that continued from the 7th to the early 11th century. These events provided the context for a new kind of Byzantine heroic poetry written in vernacular Greek. The Akrites of Byzantium were at this time a military class responsible for safeguarding the frontier regions of the empire from enemies and freebooting adventurers who operated in the borderlands. This song is in 5/8, a rhythm also known as *Tik* dance. Its mode is the Byzantine Second Plagal.

3. Imera'm ('My Imera') is a nostalgic song which extols Imera, a beautiful region in Pontos with rock-formed houses and a stone castle. It is sung in a 9/8 rhythm and is one of the first songs I learned (aged 14) with the 'Traditional Choir' of the *Euxeinos Leschi* in my hometown of Veria. The song also refers wistfully to aspects of love: the poet craves to see once more the house with the flower garden of his beloved. The song is in 9/8; its mode is the Phrygian (Byzantine First Plagal).

4. Asin Togian erhoume ('I come from Tonya') is a lively song in 7/8 rhythm (2+2+3). The lyrics refer to a young man who is passionately in love with a 'lass'. Endowed with determined love and equipped with a knife in his belt, he seeks to fulfil love. The music is in the Phrygian mode, common in Pontic music. This is the only musical item in this performance recital that consists of two verses and two choruses, which is a more contemporary arrangement. Other Pontic songs typically are in strophic form.

5. Instrumental improvisation on the Pontic lyra, the prominent musical instrument of the Greeks of Pontos.

6. Afe kori ('Leave, O daughter') is a well-known wedding song. Greek wedding songs are often sad and melancholic in character since the girl must leave her home and family. The lyrics indicate both family loss and the creation of a new family:

Leave, O daughter, your mother and make another mother,

Leave, O daughter, your father and make another father,

Leave, O daughter, your brothers and make other brothers.

This song is written in the Byzantine First Plagal (Phrygian mode) and demonstrates a close relationship between the Pontic and Byzantine traditions in that the *ison* (the drone) forms the tonal centre that provides both harmonic and melodic accompaniment. Its rhythm is irregular and the singer establishes the tempo during the performance.

7. Hamomilon ('The little apple tree') is a love song in 9/8 rhythm and in the Byzantine Second Plagal Mode. The lyrics refer to a little apple tree which is asked to explain why its branches are so withered. It replies that, beneath its branches, it witnessed a love oath which has now been broken. The singer, together with the Pontic *lyra* player, present the 'melancholic character' of the poetry with emotional expression in their music performance. This is achieved by extended vocal melodic lines accompanied by the long bowing phrases of the lyra. Of equal interest here is that the tonality of the piece, combined with the high poetry, invites the performers to explore a range of musical possibilities in the rendition. It is this freedom of interpretation that makes the repertory unique and engaging every time it is performed.

8. Taka't ('Courage'), a song composed by Hrysanthos Theodorides (music and lyrics), in 3/4 time. It refers to poor, wretched people whose courage, over time, has abandoned them. This is one of the most prominent songs in the Pontic repertory and constitutes a reference point for all Pontic co-workers in this thesis (following Hrysanthos' death). Hrysanthos wrote this song for himself 'metaphorically': he refers to his courage to live even though his life is ending; but Destiny, here personified, does not let him pass away entirely. Rather Destiny determines that Hrysanthos shall live on so that he can entertain and bring joy to the people through the sound of his voice to the accompaniment of the Pontic lyra.

9. Lament for the fall of Constantinople, a historic song which depicts the tragic loss to mankind of the fall of Constantinople. It is in 9/8 rhythm and in the Byzantine Second Plagal Mode. The poetic theme refers to the St John Chrysostom (5th century) who, from the heavens, mourns at this catastrophic event while being consoled by the singer. The poem concludes with the positive promise and wish that in spite of this catastrophe, the City's glory will shine once again. The mode is Byzantine Second Plagal.

Epirotic repertory (Second half)

1. Ti kako ekana o kaymenos kai me len oloi fonia ('What have I done that all consider me a murderer'), a love song. It can be found in polyphonic as well as monophonic form; here it is performed *a capella*. Its rhythm is asymmetrical and improvisatory while the character of the piece is somewhat sweetly melancholic. The lyrics include rhetoric questions: the singer wonders about the source of his love and

whether his adoration for a foreigner is a mistake. This song is one of only several (polyphonic) that can be performed to the accompaniment of an Epirotic orchestra (clarinet, violin, lute, and def) and one of the first I learned in this genre. Singing an *acapella* song, I make an suggestive link between the two halves of this recital. There is a tonal change from the modality of the Pontic repertory to Epirotic pentatonicism. Moreover, it provides an introduction to the significance of the *partis*' vocal techniques in this repertory (see chapter IV).

2. Stis deropolis ton kampo ('In Deropoli's field'). A heroic song that makes reference to a mythical dialogue between a brave man and his horse. The latter asks the man to rise up while he replies that, being heavily wounded, he is unable to get on to his feet. This piece is sung polyphonically and includes the roles of *partis*, *gyristis*, *rihtis* and *isokrates*. As in all Epirotic polyphonic songs, its tempo depends on the *partis*' preamble and on the 'vocal flow' of the group. In this song I will sing the part of the *partis* for half the piece and then that of the *gyristis* in order to demonstrate the vocal techniques characteristic of each.

3. Sikothite oligo-oligo ('Arise slowly and carefully'). A polyphonic song conventionally sung at the close of any social function, usually a wedding. Because wedding parties in northern Epirus can involve many hours of walking from one village to another, the moment of departure is usually decided with this song. The process could take some time since some of the more experienced singers would improvise lyrics about the hospitality they have received and the difficulty of the decision to set off on foot. Its tonal basis is the Epirotic pentatonic scale.

4. Pikrodafni ('Oleander'). One of the most popular Epirotic songs in Greece and the Diaspora. It is in 2/4 time and its poetic theme is based on a man's dream as he sleeps under the blossoms of an oleander. There, he dreams of his beloved who is now preparing to marry his rival, while he is invited to be the best man. There are many versions of this piece as it is one of the most frequently performed by Greek folk bands. The purely vocal polyphonic version is considered to be the 'original'. Its mood is sad and the pentatonic character of the music is pervasive. I will sing the *gyristis*' part which is considered to be the most improvisatory of all roles in Epirotic polyphony.

5. Auta ta matia Dimo'm ('Those eyes my Dimos'). A love song performed monophonically although on occasion a *gyristis*' line can be added depending on the singer's imagination and ability. Whether or not the *gyristis* will perform at all will be decided spontaneously, on the stage, since eye contact in Epirotic multi-voiced singing is crucial on such occasions for the homogeneity and uniformity of rhythm in the piece. The song itself is characterized by long glissandi and a cheerful diathesis.

6. Aleksandra ('Alexandra') refers to a woman (named Alexandra) who stands depressed, melancholic and crying. It is one of the most beautiful and artistic monophonic songs from Epirus. The vocal line demands both larynx flexibility and 'beauty' during the breakings and ornamentations which entirely depend on the singer's ability to improvise. It is considered to be one of the most difficult songs in the Epirotic repertory, especially when it is sung at 5/4 slow tempo (as here). Folk singers have produced different versions of 'Alexandra', each time with different ornaments and vocal breakings. As examples of refashioning the performing

standards of the vocal line, 'Alexandra' and the next song, 'Mariola', constitute two of the most difficult Epirotic monophonic pieces in terms of performance practice.

7. Mariola ('Mariola') is one of the most prominent laments in Epirus. Mariola is believed to be a real person from Veltista (in Grevena, north-central Greece). The composer of the song was an exceptional violinist at the royal court of Ali Pasha. The theme refers to a mythical dialogue between the singer and the deceased Mariola who is summoned to rise from her grave and look at the August moon. It is usually sung in the 'G-based' Epirotic pentatonic scale (G-A-C-D-E) and is asymmetrical. Improvisation and circular repeated breakings of the voice dominate in the singer's line. He expected to give a painful yet lively rendition of the musical setting. The musical instruments here are entirely accompanimental.

8. Mpaino mes t' ampeli ('I enter the vineyard'). A celebrated and lively dance song, known as *Berati*. It is encountered in Epirus and in other parts of the Greek Midlands and can be found in many rhythmic versions. It is usually danced in pairs. The rhythmic variation for this performance is 7/8 (3+2+2) while the melody is set to the Epirotic pentatonic form. The subject matter refers to the old way of living in rural Greece. More specifically, it refers to the work during the period of winemaking. The song is from the monophonic repertory, but there is usually an instrumental accompaniment. Both musicians and dancers agree that this is an enjoyable piece to perform.

9. To kaykaki ('The small sailboat') is a love song from the Ionian tradition. The lyrics of the song are written by Andreas Laskaratos while the music is arranged by Nikos Tsilifis. As most of the Ionian folk tunes (known as the Greek serenades) the

melody is set to a major key (in this case F major) while the rhythm is in slow 3/4. The poetic theme draws a metaphor of the small sailboat which is lost in a sea of love without any sign of land. What is interesting in the Ionian folk music is the fact that, occasionally, composer and poet are eponymous. Moreover, the folk vocal style in this region of Greece is undoubtedly related to the Italian school of singing. The tempered scales (major and minor) of Western art music are manifest as well as the use of Western harmony.

10. I proti mas nyhta ('Our first night') is a love song and one of the most renowned tunes. The music was composed in the middle of 20th century by a celebrated composer-pianist, Dimitri-Mimis Plessas (from the Ionian island of Zakinthos) while the lyrics were written by Kostas Pretenteris. It is usually sung in D Major and its rhythm is in 4/4. This song constitutes an ideal exemplar which demonstrates the close musical relationship between Italy (operatic vocal style) and Ionian Islands (folk vocal style) since it is oftely sung in both Greek and Italian. In a similar vein, some tunes of Epirus and Pontos can be found in both Greek-Albanian and Greek-Turkish languages, respectively.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1) Simple demonstration of the physiology of voice: the three mechanisms

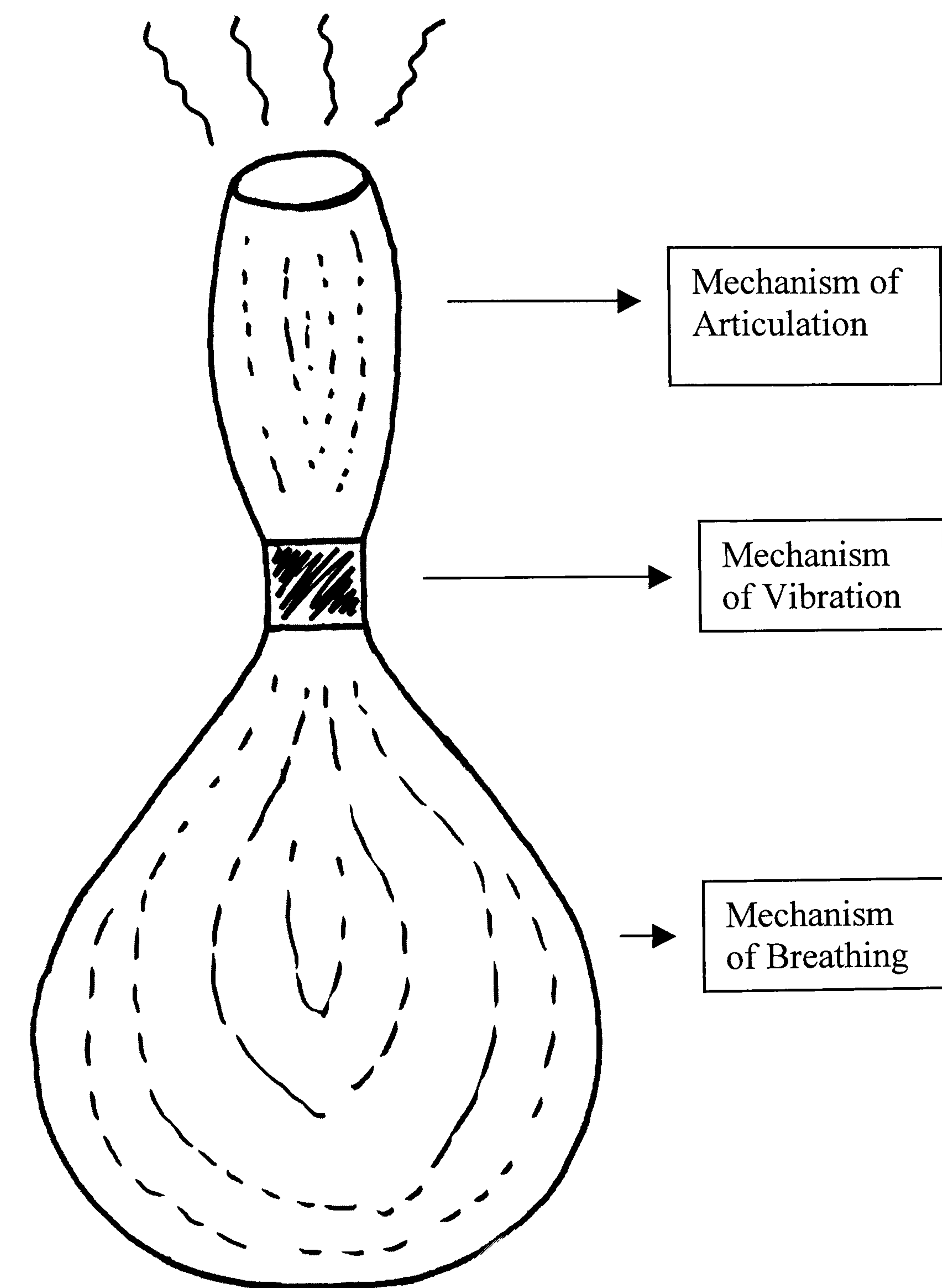


Illustration 2) vocal instrument of the human body

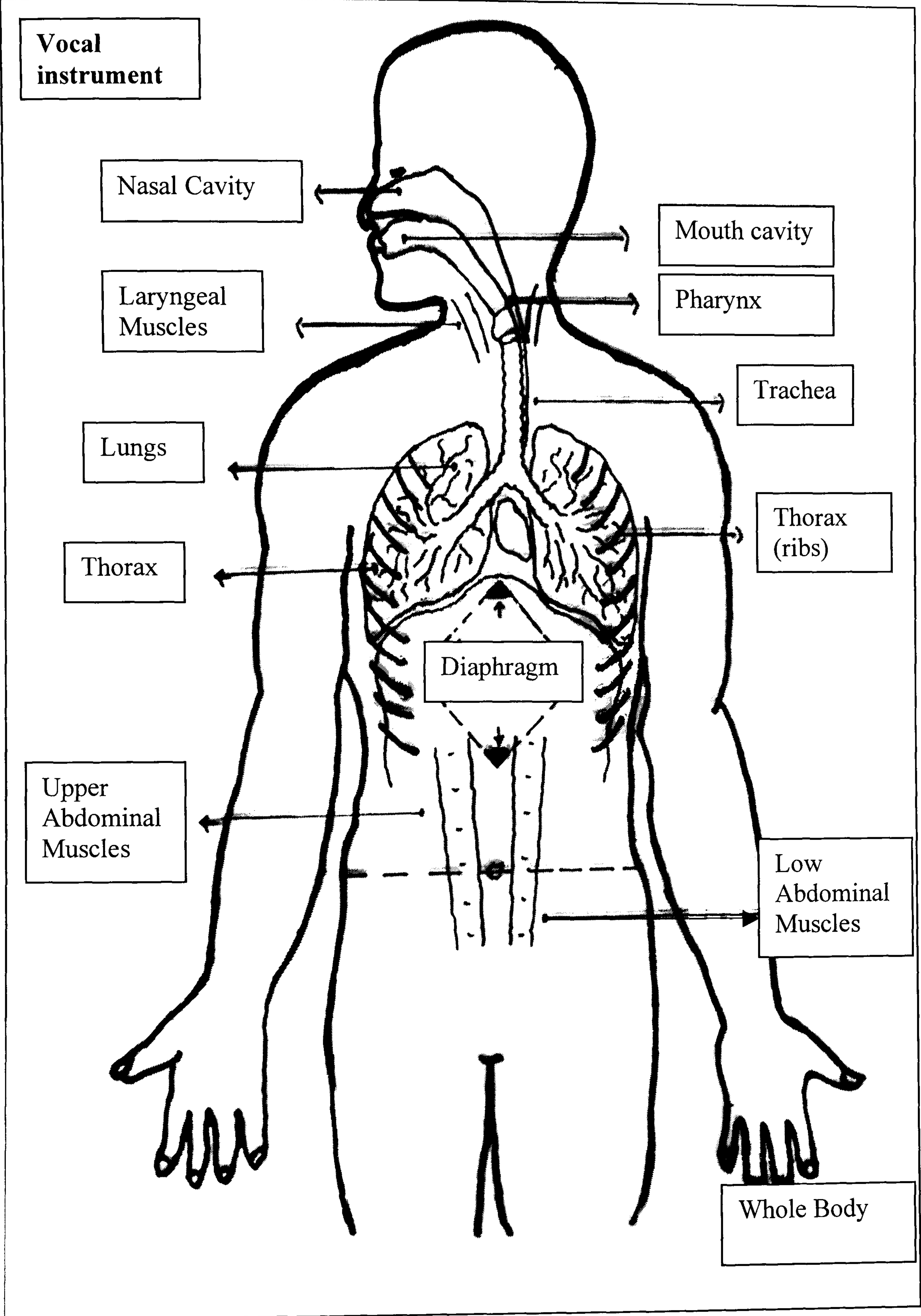


Illustration 3) Location of the larynx

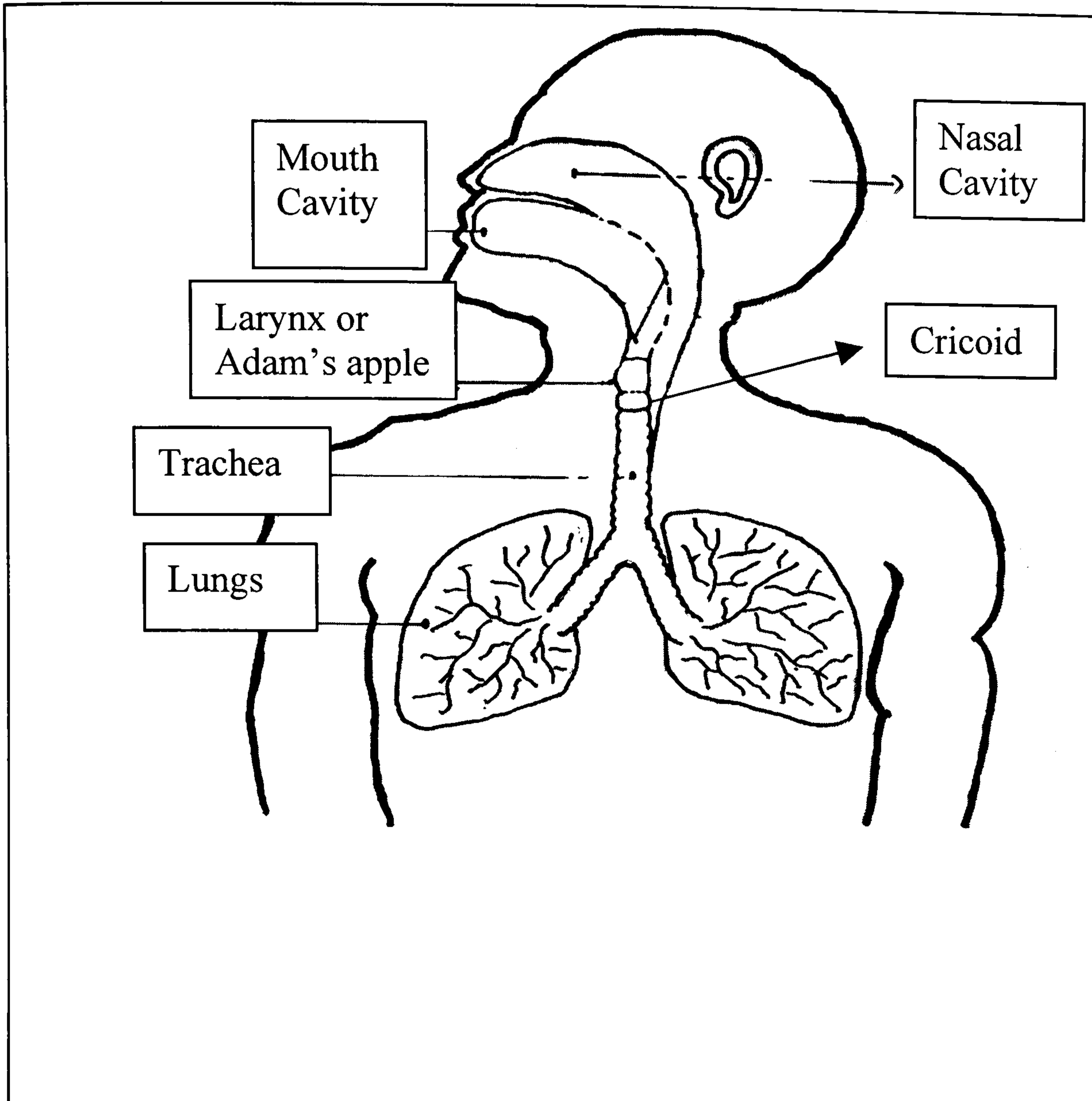


Illustration 4a) Pharynx and the upper vocal instrument

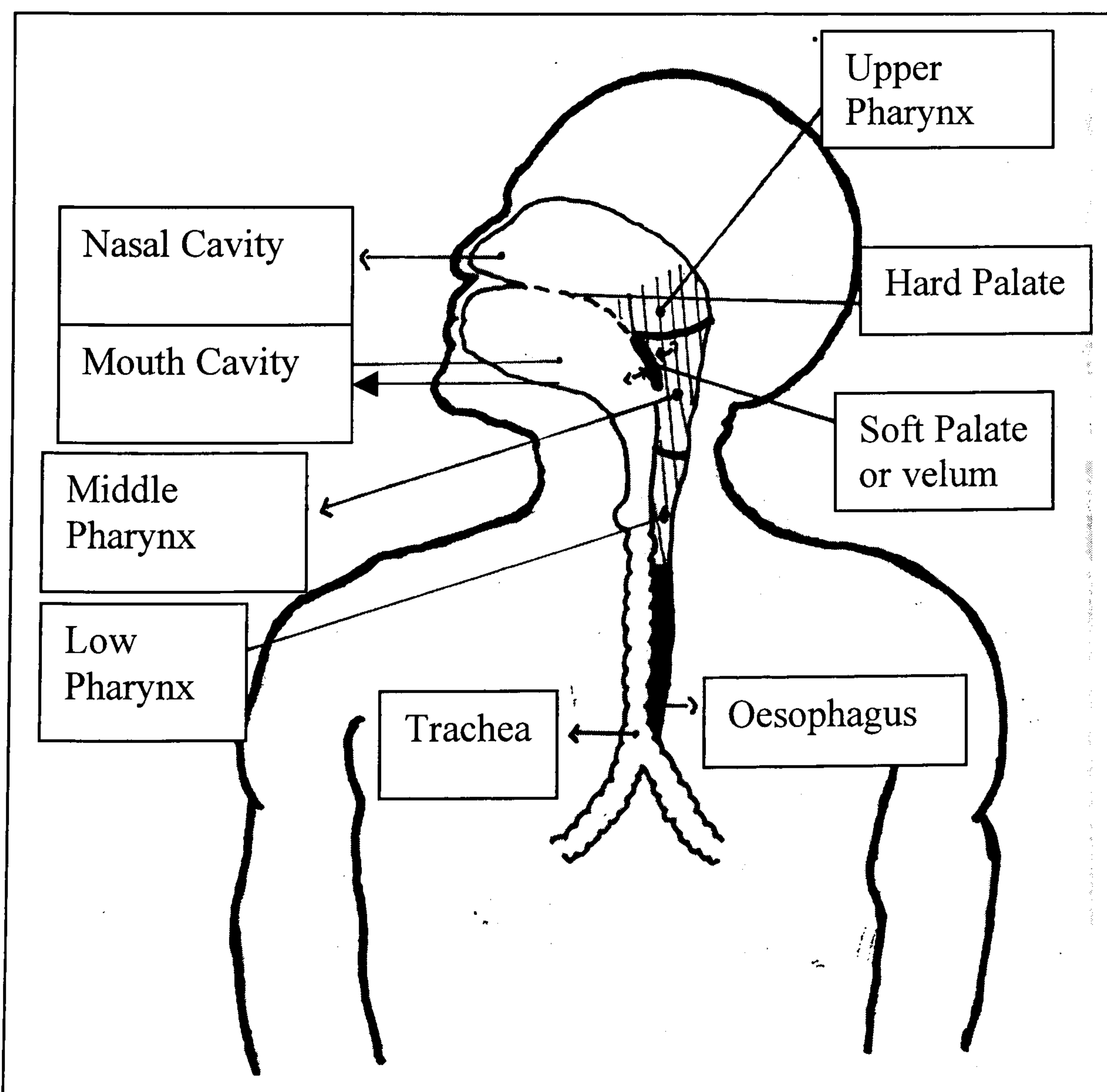


Illustration 4b) Different use of the velum: directing the air to the nasal or mouth cavity; or to both of them.

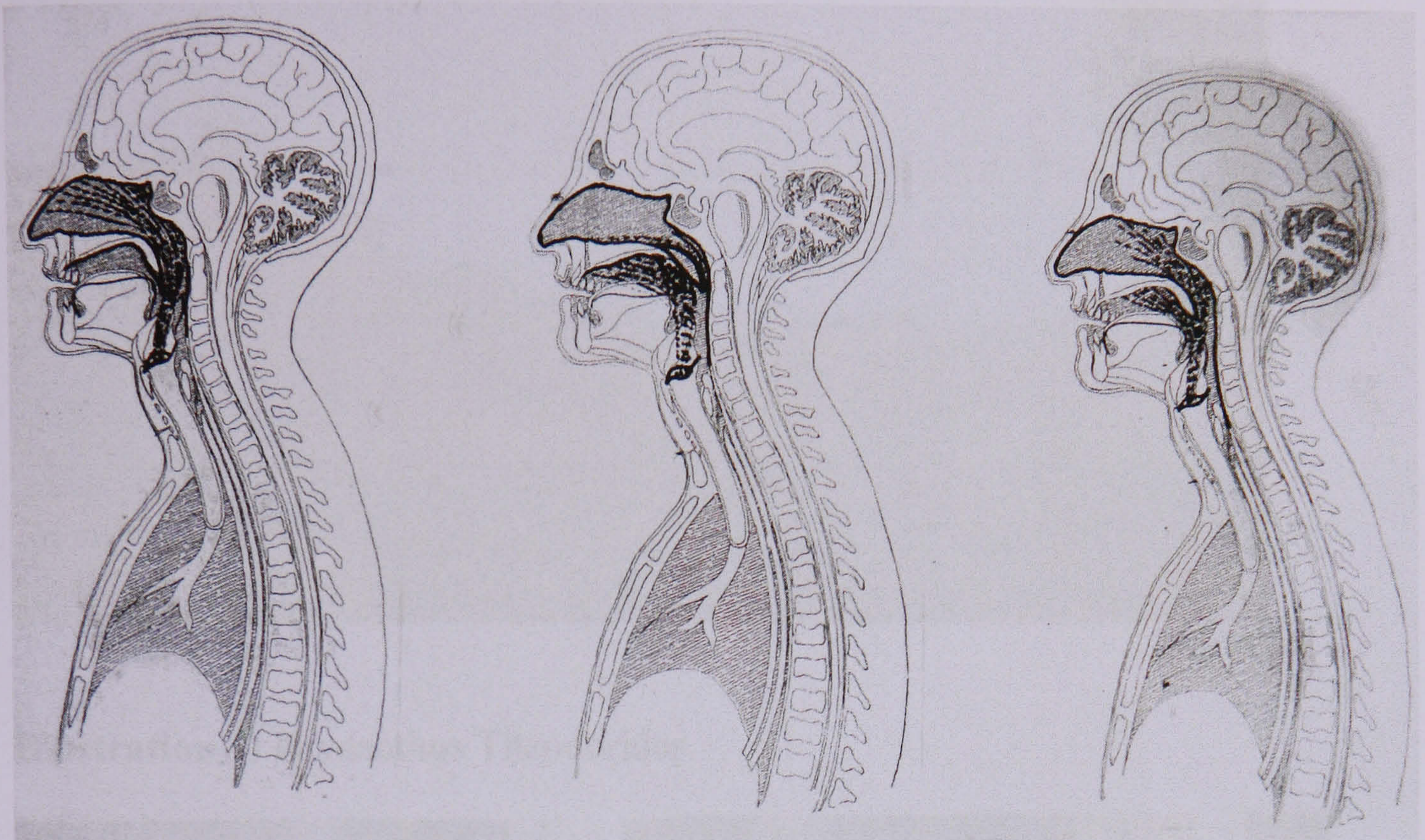


Illustration 5) Political map: location of the region of Pontos

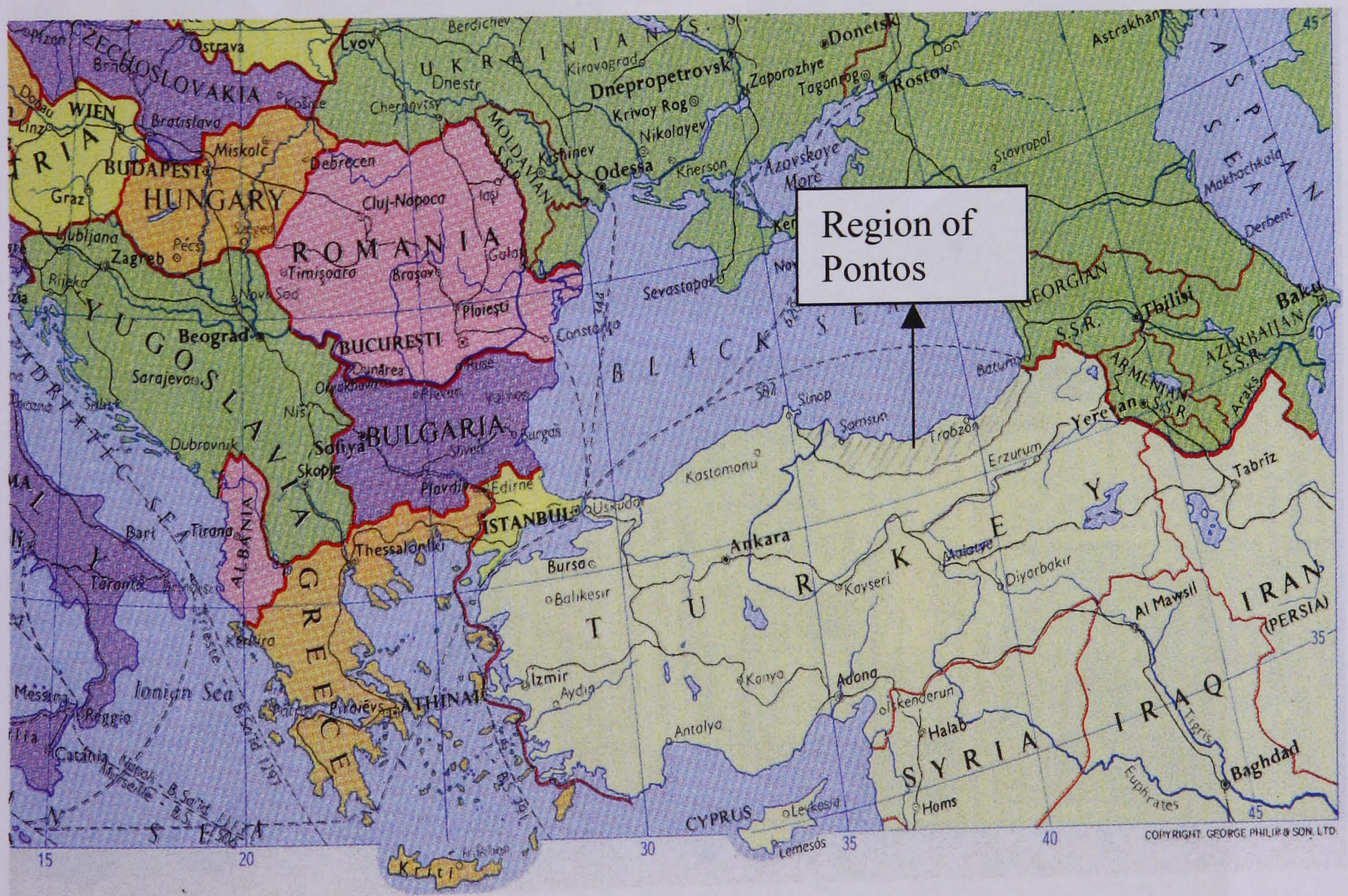


Illustration 6) Map of the region of Pontos.

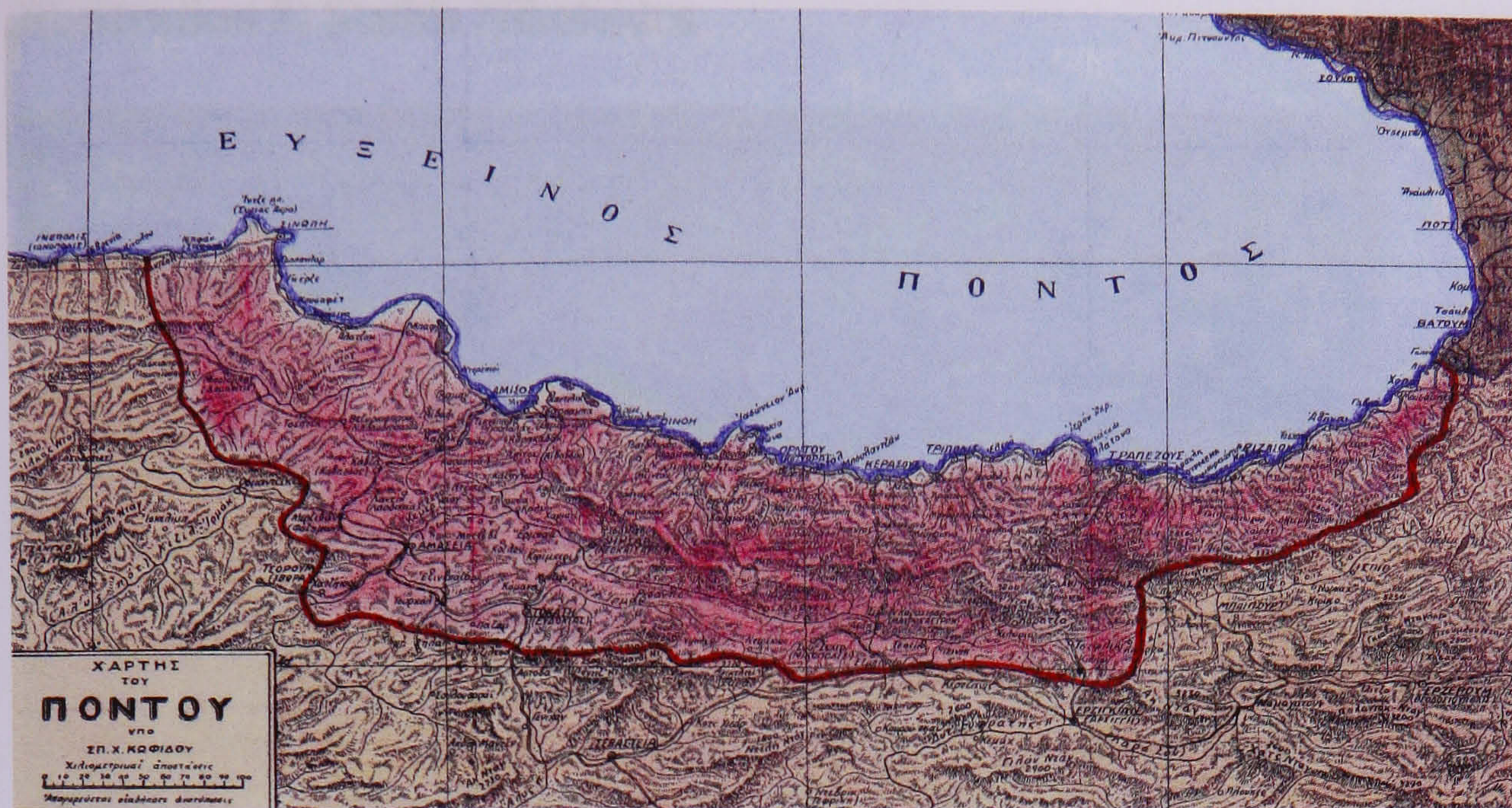


Illustration 7) Hrysanthos Theodorides



Illustration 8) Stathis Nikolaides



Illustration 9) Alexis Parharides

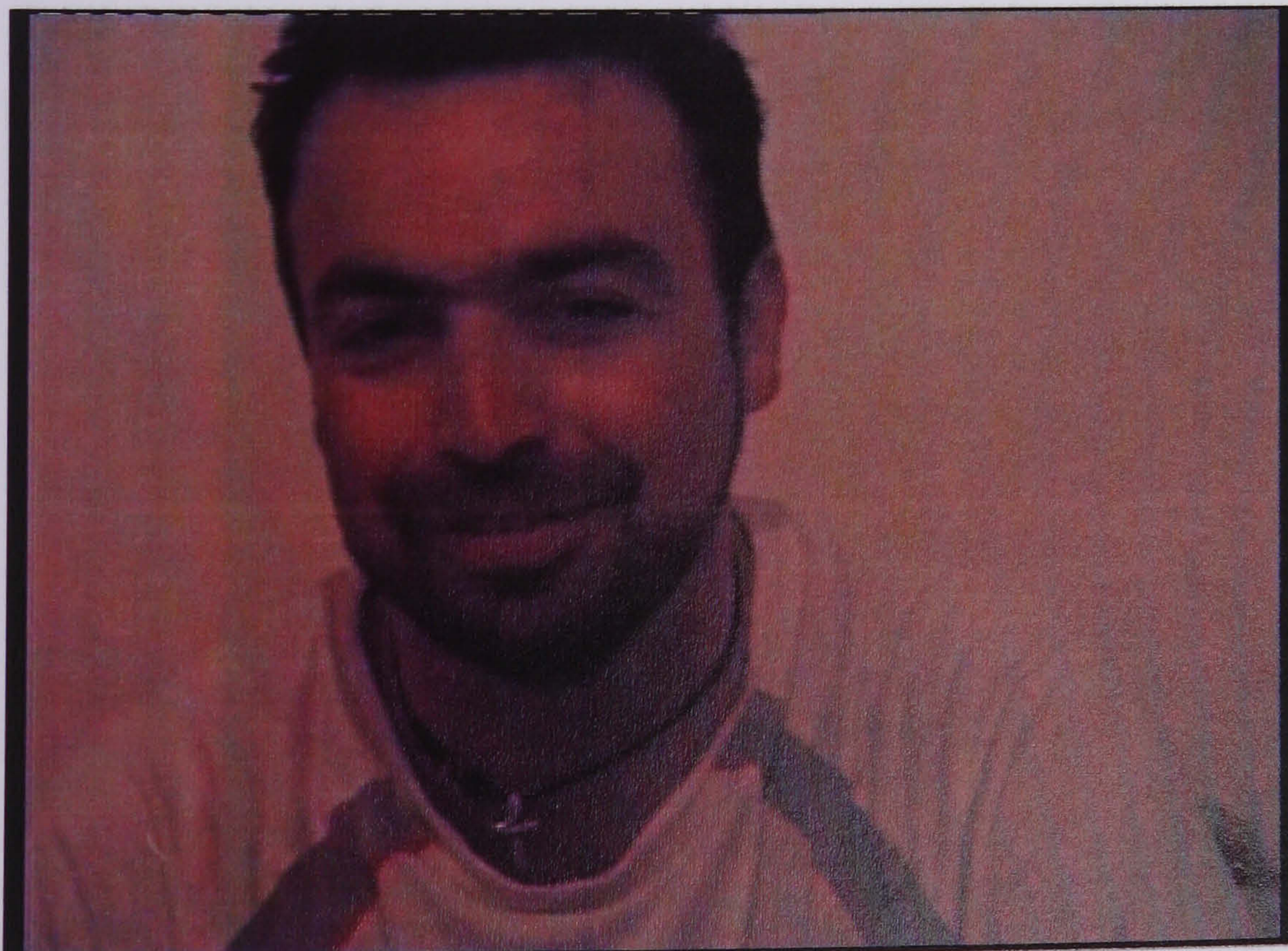


Illustration 10) Theodoros Eleftheriou



11) Elias Petropoulos



Illustration 12) Use of soft palate and uvula

These 5 photos are taken within 1 second. In such tiny period of time I captured myself singing high-registered Pontic melismas using as focal point the soft palate. In photos 3, 4 and 5 one can see the lifting of the uvula during the modal voice-falsetto technique of melismas.

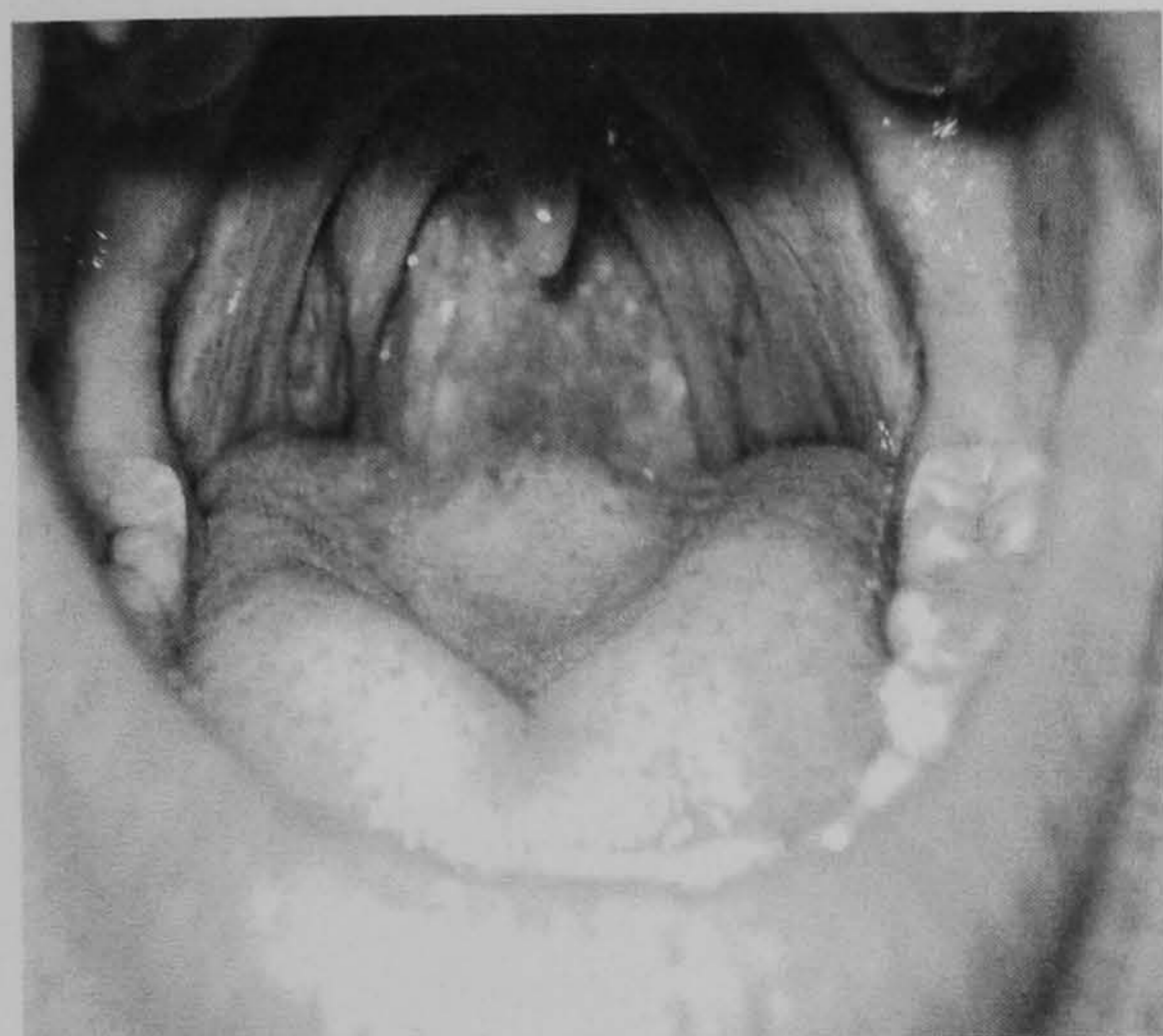


Photo 1



Photo 2

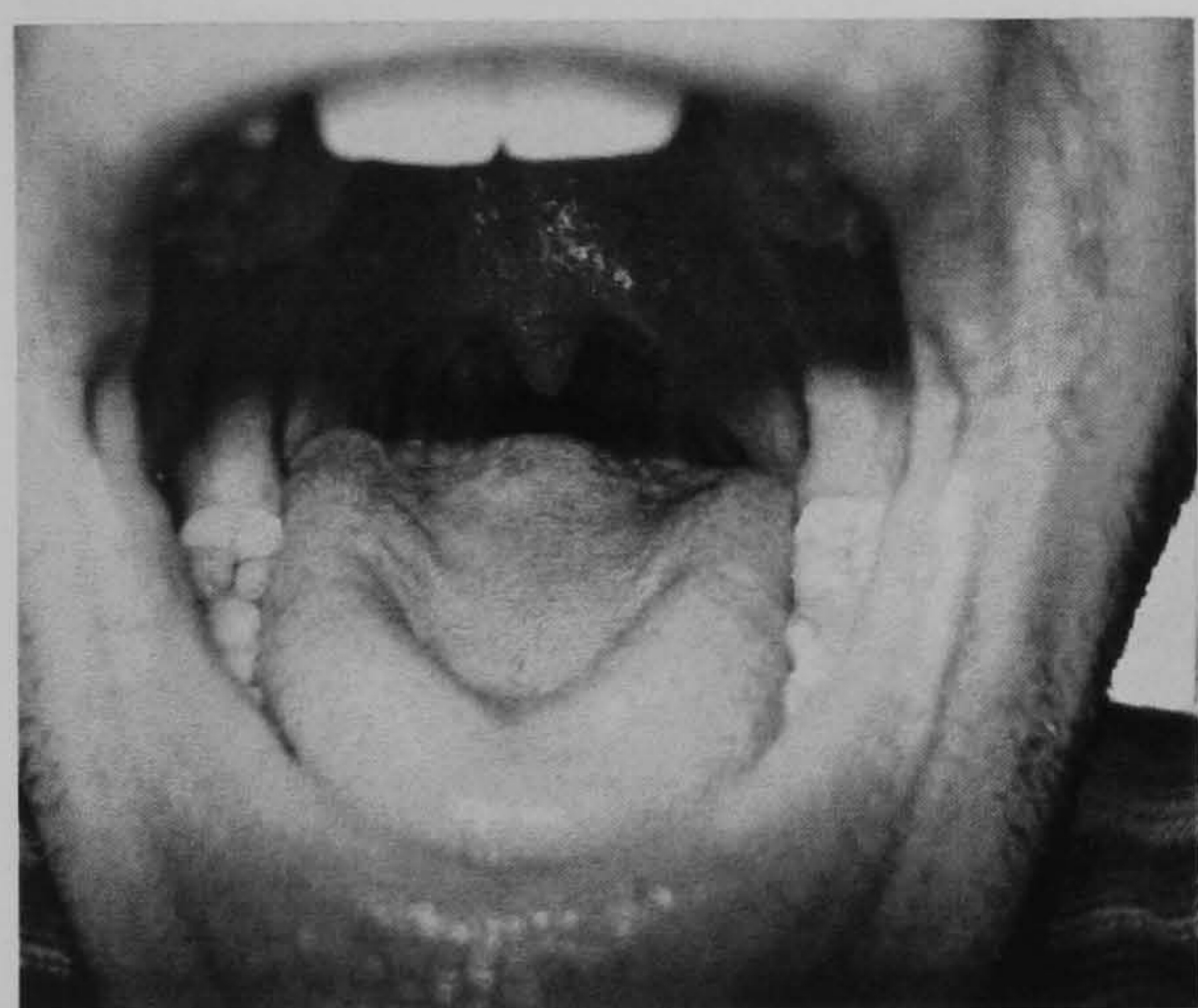


Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

Illustration 13) Epirus



Illustration 14) polyphonic group of Aetopetra



Illustration 15) Vaggelis Kotsou



Illustration 16a) Anthoula Kotsou



Illustration 16b) Anthoula and Vaggelis Kotsou



Illustration 17) Drossos Koutsokostas



Illustration 18) Nestoras Katsigiannopoulos



Illustration 19) Antonis Kiritsis



Illustration 20) My village: Mikri Santa

