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Lost Voices and Singing Texts: Reconstructing the Cultural Past of Ioannina During the First Half of the 1870s

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## Lost Voices and Singing Texts: Reconstructing the Cultural Past of Ioannina During the First Half of the 1870s

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**Abstract:** Conducting fieldwork in the ethnomusicological past, among other things may consist of coping with a wide variety of textual records, such as newspapers, magazines, public or private archives and so on. Especially, as far as newspapers and magazines of any kind are concerned, historical awareness is of great importance, for instance when the understanding of the relevant political and cultural mentalité of the writers, is a critical determinant of one's ability to fully comprehend and make use of the possible findings, or -sometimes- even the lack of them. Quite often, the hardest part is when trying to "decrypt", analyze and reconstruct the narration of a person whose Self emerges only through his corresponding writings. This is the case with Jonah (aka Konstantínos Aravantinós), writer of the satirical calendar of Ioannina, Karavida, during 1873-1874. Following the above paradigm, it is evident that a historical ethnomusicological research of this kind has to deal with a two-fold methodological challenge: thoroughly creating a virtual historical space in which specially customized text analysis skills can provide the ability to reach out closer to voices and sounds of the past. The latter, is a problematic leading to research theories and methodologies offered by relevant scientific fields.

**Keywords:** historical ethnomusicology, microhistory, satire, 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman Empire.

The annual satirical magazine *Karavida* (December 1873, December 1874) is a historical record of crucial importance for the ottoman Ioannina (Yanya) of early 1870s. The city consisted of three major communities: Christian, Muslim and Jewish, the former being numerically significantly superior to the others, while Greek was the main language spoken all around Epirus region. In particular, at a local level, *Karavida* highlights aspects of the economic, political, social and generally the cultural urban character and the relevant entertainment patterns within a specific time focus, emphasizing the Greek Orthodox community. In this sense, it also provides an understanding of particular aspects of the everyday life and mentalité of the city's inhabitants, and especially the role of its leading members. Ultimately, through rigorous research,

important information emerges regarding the musical timeliness, through which aspects of acceptance or rejection of wider European influences -in relation to individuals and social strata not necessarily of different educational and economic profile- are also revealed. Also, through *Karavidas'* extensive reference to the shows of a Bohemian café chantant named "Pafsilipon", there are emerging aspects of the economic and cultural network of the western provinces of the European ottoman territory, its extensions in the southeastern Mediterranean and Europe, as well as the role that Athens, the Greek capital, respectively played. More specifically, the female café chantant group is, among other details, thoroughly described in terms of its members, repertory and role as a cultural mediator, concerning their emerging "educational" role according to contemporary European dance practices.

*Karavidas'* editorial team consisted of Konstantínos Aravantinós, Mánthos Oikonómou and Dimítrios Melírrytos. Among them, Aravantinós (Ioannina, 1846 – Athens, 1911) was practically the sole writer of the magazine under the pseudonym of *Jonah* (Ιωνάς).

Aravantinós belonged to a generation of European educated scholars around the age of 30, whose modernist ideas were contrary to the conservative, entrenched local power structures, to which all kinds of western cultural influences constituted a diversion from traditional customs and value-foundations. In this context, he essentially denies and satirizes the "official" uptake version of the city's everyday life, positing an alternative historical narrative on the time between the two issues of *Karavida*, through which he also questions the moral "validity" of people and institutions he is opposed to. His narrative is based on the aforementioned extensive report on the café chantan "Pafsilipon", in which he presents them as part of the corresponding clientele.

Overall, the symbolic and iconoclastic discourse of Jonah highlights, among other things, two basic elements. The one relates to a mapping of the urban social geography, and the second to the detection of the scholarly, western-rooted cultural formation of the author himself. Through the latter, aspects of local culture and especially music are revealed, along with multiple direct or indirect references to Greek literature, religious and popular tradition and with European musical and theatrical works of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with an emphasis on Carlo Goldoni.

As it is already evident, a historical reconstruction of Ioannina's cultural past through a satirical magazines' discourse, confronts numerous epistemological challenges and concerns. What follows is a brief account of the theoretical and methodological reflections pertaining to the terms and conditions that form a recent publication on the above content.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kítsios, Giorgos (Γεώργιος Κίτσιος), 'Το ους ημών το ξεκουρδισμένο...' - Αστική πολιτισμική συγκρότηση και ψυχαγωγία μέσα από την έντυπη σάτιρα (Ιωάννινα, αρχές δεκαετίας 1870) ['Our

In general, uestions that arise from research practices onto the musicological past, have diachronically occupied ethnomusicological thought. The emergence of Historical Ethnomusicology, as a research framework of special interest, demonstrated both the ever-increasing interest in the field of History, as well as the resulting need for a relevant theoretical and methodological systematization. Besides, as Chapsoúlas states, Ethnomusicology is basically a "historical science".

The fine line between past and present constitutes the research field of Historical Ethnomusicology, where complex issues of self- and hetero-identification combined with complex meanings and innumerable intertwined or not historical moments and individuals, confronts the researcher with a series of challenges, both in terms of interpretation and analysis, as well as in ethnographic representation. For all these reasons and in conjunction with the role of the researcher himself, Bohlman notes that the "ethnomusicological past" is not one but many.<sup>4</sup>

Ethnomusicologistportraying the views of Bielawski,<sup>5</sup> quotes five types of historical research: a) direct history of local communities, b) mythical past and tradition, c) complete history of a given culture, d) history of humanity and evolutionary stages and e) music (origin) anthropogenesis. Essentially, Alan Merriam's views on historical cultural reconstruction<sup>6</sup> were later set in the same context. One of the most distinct characteristics of the above categories, is an escalating shift of the research focus around time and geography. In the context of a narrower space-time scale, microhistory is also one of the trends of Historical Ethnomusicology.<sup>7</sup>Of course, the methodological challenges are various, depending on each separate case.

detuned ear...' – Urban cultural formation and entertainment through printed satire (Ioannina, early 1870s')] (Athens: Nísos, 2018).

Indicative paradigms of recent micro-historic ethnomusicological approaches are the studies of: Morgan James Luker, "The Managers, the Managed, and the Unmanageable: Negotiating Values at the Buenos

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The most recent, complete account on the relevant trends is presented in: Jonathan McCollum and David G. Hebert, *Theory and Method in Historical Ethnomusicology* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Chapsoúlas, Anastásios (Χαψούλας, Αναστάσιος), Εθνομουσικολογία: Ιστοριογραφικές και εθνογραφικές διαστάσεις [Ethnomusicology: Historiographical and ethnographical aspects] (Athens: Nísos, 2010), 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Philip V. Bohlman, "Fieldwork in the ethnomusicological past," in *Shadows in the field: new perspectives for fieldwork in ethnomusicology*, eds. Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), ch. 8, pp. 139–162: 139-142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ruth M. Stone, *Theory for ethnomusicology* (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), Ludwik Bielawski, "History in Ethnomusicology," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 17 (1958): 8–15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 277-302.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Jonathan McCollum and David G. Hebert, *Theory and Method in Historical Ethnomusicology* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 135-136; Stone, *Theory for ethnomusicology*, 178; Trevor Herbert, "Social History and Music History," in *The Cultural Study of Music*, eds. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middletton (London: Routledge, 2003), 146–156.

For example, this particular study features certain additional characteristics. It is geographically focused on a particular city and a short period of time. It is based on the narration of a magazine, while simultaneously attempting to identify elements of everyday life and mentalité through both predominant individuals and broader social strata, with an emphasis on the Greek Orthodox community. At the same time, an attempt is made to extend the radius of local cultural phenomena on a wider geographical and historical scale.

Similar theoretical and methodological concerns and recriminations concerning the importance of *micro*- or *macro*-historical research, in other words of microhistory against the "big picture", have gone a long way, in an interdisciplinary level.

Despite the significant rise of interest around microhistory during the last decades,<sup>9</sup> opinions on its priority over large-scale approaches, differ significantly. Indicatively, according to Chadarevian, the microhistorical approach or the so-called microstudies, are not only an antipode to the "big picture", but rather, through the reconstruction of complex contextual meanings, they serve a broader connection to wider structures.<sup>10</sup>

On the contrary, Armitage<sup>11</sup> argues that, in the context of an Intellectual History, the French school of *Annalistes* view<sup>12</sup> on the methodological priority of major historical periods (*longue durèe*), is a trend rapidly gaining ground against the micro-historical

Aires International Music Fair," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 19, no. 1 (2010): 89–113; Sheryl Kaskowitz, *God bless America: the surprising history of an iconic song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jonathan Ritter, "The 'voice of the victims': Testimonial songs in rural Ayacucho," in *Art from a fractured past. Memory and truth telling in post shining path Peru*, ed. Cynthia Milton 9 (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 217-253; Gunnar Ternhag, "Personal Songbooks - Neglected but Informative Sources in Ethnomusicological Research," in *Historical Sources of Ethnomusicology in Contemporary Debate* 11, eds. Susanne Ziegler, Ingrid Åkesson, Gerda Lechleitner, and Susana Sardo, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 144-155. It is also characteristic that during the 21st meeting of the *Study Group on Historical Sources of Traditional Music* of *International Council for Traditional Music* (ICTM) in Paris (March 9-13, 2016), there was a session especially dedicated to Microhistory, featuring the speeches of Shai Burstyn, "Music Documentation informing Cultural History: The Song 'BaGalil'" and Marie-France Mifune, "Retrospective listening of an oral tradition sound archive".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> An example of such an approach is Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> An analytical presentation of the historical evolution, multiple approaches and potentials of the certain field of historical focus is included in *What is Microhistory? Theory and practice*, by Magnússon and Szijártó (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Soraya de Chadarevian, "Microstudies versus big picture accounts?" *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science - Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 40, no. 1 (2009): 13–19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> David Armitage, "What's the Big Idea? Intellectual History and the Longue Durée," *History of European Ideas* 38 (2012): 493–507.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> For example, André Burguièr, *The Annales School: An Intellectual History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), offers an overall presentation of the Annales School.

perception. Tomich, on the other hand, tried to combine those opposing views;<sup>13</sup> having observed that the primary Italian *microhistoria* of Carlo Ginzburg (1939-), Giovanni Levi (1939-), Edoardo Grendi (1932-) and Carlo Poni (1927-) was opposed to the views of Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) and the Annalistes, and having acknowledged the dynamics and potential of the micro-historical approach, he suggests that the latter could contribute to an, according to Zeuske, "world history from the perspective of the individual".<sup>14</sup>

In a broader aspect, Gaddis, referring to the example of Mandelbrots' fractal geometry principles, argues that historians have always wavered between these two approaches, because as in Nature, a self-similarity is observed throughout the observation scale (macrostructurally, microstructurally or even intermediately), while at the same time the complexity or simplicity of structures often remains the same.<sup>15</sup> However, as Brewer notes, "social and cultural history unite in the micro-processes of everyday life".<sup>16</sup>

According to Bohlman, the study of music in everyday life, places it in contexts independent from "large" historical events, allowing for a different, imaginative narrative form, towards a study of *mentalité*.<sup>17</sup> There, he also refers to the observation of *Annalistes* that the archives offered for a reconstruction of the everyday past are in various forms but nonetheless plentiful and concludes that "what distinguishes the everyday is how specific events stand out against the fabric of community life, thereby creating a subaltern historical dynamic."<sup>18</sup>

The focus on everyday life was also a characteristic of the German micro-historical school of *Alltagsgeschichte*,<sup>19</sup> that flourished during the 1980s. Considering the terms and conditions for the renegotiation of historical research in the cases of Central and Eastern European Soviet regimes, Apor considers that a similar theoretical approach offers itself as a particularly useful interpretative tool, because it provides access not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Dale Tomich, "The Order of Historical Time: The Longue Durée and Micro-History," *Almanack* 2 (2011), 52–65: 62, 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Michael Zeuske, Sklaven und Sklaverei in den Welten des Atlantiks: 1400 - 1940 . Umrisse, Anfänge, Akteure, Vergleichsfelder und Bibliographien. Sklaverei und Postemanzipation (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2006), 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History. How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81-84; , Benoît Mandelbrot, *The Fractal Geometry of Nature* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1983).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> John Brewer, "Microhistory and the Histories of Everday Life," *Cultural and Social History* 7 no. 1 (2010), 87–109: 97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Bohlman, "Fieldwork in the ethnomusicological past," 150.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> An example of a similar approach is Mark Slobins', *Subcultural sounds: micromusics of the West* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Alf Lüdtkes', *The History of everyday life: reconstructing historical experiences and ways of life* (Princeton University Press, 1995), is a characteristic representative example.

only to pragmatic aspects of the past, but to a reconstruction of "entire systems of historical experiences" comprising individual interests as well as wider social experiential conditions.<sup>20</sup>

In the case of the Ottoman Ioannina of 1870's the relevant challenges are multiplied, as the concepts of Everyday and mentalité cannot be addressed uniformly and inseparably, as a consequence of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural diversity of the urban fabric. Moreover, the political, economic and social conditions, in conjunction with the religious, social class and educational stratification, require constant awareness in both an interpretive and analytical level, as far as any generalization attempt in historical and geographical perspective is concerned.<sup>21</sup>

Since this study's starting point is the narrative of a magazine, it is important to clarify some aspects related to both the special features of this particular kind of Press, and the modes of reading and analysis in a macrostructural and microstructural level. Initially, however, it is important to note the role of the satirical genre of *Karavida*.

Satire and humor as historical memory media, is a research field of particular interest. Jill Twark, in her article "Approaching History as Cultural Memory Through Humor, Satire, Comics and Graphic Novels",<sup>22</sup> notes that according to recent research<sup>23</sup> it was found that people more effectively remember a word, phrase or picture if perceived as humorous. On another level, it is observed that in cases where the proximity of multiple ethnic groups engenders jokes portraying the diversity of related expectations and the so-called "corrective" satire,<sup>24</sup> racism and fear of the Other are alleviated. Twark also adds that the adoption of a humorous or satirical stance by some artists and writers, provides access to alternative aspects of the current reality and highlights neglected or deliberately omitted situations by government or mass media discourse.

Finally, facing satire as a primary source creation, she examines the ways in which the corresponding annotation of historical events produces memories that fill in the gaps of the historical narrative of other sources. Although her research focuses on publications of various chronological origins, it is already clear that the above

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Péter Apor, "The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships," *East Central Europe* 34–35, nos. 1–2 (2008), 185–218: 188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> In the context of a postcolonial cultural geographical approach, Sharp (2009, 57-64) also denotes the importance of the relations between topography and community power confrontation, referring to the theoretical work of Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977), over the *Panopticon*, a prison building designed by Jeremy Bentham in 1785. See also Brunon-Ernst 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Contemporary European History 26, no. 1 (2017), 175–187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> See Kieth A. Carlson, "The impact of humor on memory: Is the humor effect about humor?" *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research* 24, no. 1 (2011): 21–41, as quoted by Twark.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Quoted in: Henri Bergson, "Laughter," in *Comedy*, ed. Wylie Sypher (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), 59-190: 71-73.

observations highlight an important aspect of the historical value of *Karavida*, as a source form of directly proportional characteristics.

In the introduction of her book, *The Language of Magazines*, Linda Mcloughlin notes:

Magazines have their own particular ethos and ideologies but they can also reflect and construct cultural values. In order for the texts to work they must draw on the readers' knowledge of language.<sup>25</sup>

In line with the above statement, referring to the specific characteristics of the local Press, Meraklis points out that it is an "almost ideal" research area, in which, albeit selectively, all social activities are recorded. Moreover, citing Lippman, he argues that the above condition is based on the fact that "the readers wish to read about themselves". 27

The basic interpretation and analysis axes of magazines' language are related to a combination of many parameters. Indicatively, considering that their texts are actually monologues, as the author and the reader are virtually at a distance during the authoring procedure, the relations between them, as well as the corresponding position of the researcher, altogether constitute a grid of complex interpretative perspectives. Additionally, the identity of the author and the resulting creation of subjective views, which are addressed to a broad, heterogeneous readership, are factors directly related to the parallel construction of an identity of *the ideal reader*. The latter, in turn, becomes the recipient of a discourse based on given knowledge of the readers' thoughts, behavior and preferences, a process overall described as *synthetic personalization*.<sup>28</sup>

Considering McLoughlins'<sup>29</sup> introductory approach as a starting point, the juxtaposition of the relevant arguments in a macrostructural and microstructural level, is briefly encoded on the basis of specific characteristics relating to *Karavida*, as in her work, the author draws examples from the contemporary Press.

Generally, the magazine is geographically and culturally focused on the residents' interests and timeliness of Ioannina.<sup>30</sup> In this sense, the name *Karavida* (i.e. crayfish), in addition to other symbols, subconsciously correlates any local civilian, regardless of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Linda McLoughlin, *The Language of Magazines* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), xii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Michális G. Meraklís (Μιχάλης Γ. Μερακλής), "Πρόλογος" [Preface], in H ταυτότητα της περιφέρειας στο μεσοπόλεμο: το παράδειγμα της Hπείρου [The identity of the region in the interwar period: the paradigm of Epirus], ed. Evangelos Avdikos, 9-10. (Athens: Kardamítsa, 1993), 9-10: 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> W. Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 209.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> McLoughlin, *The Language of Magazines*, 67- 80. For an analytical discussion of the above term, McLoughlin quotes Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (Harlow: Longman, 1989).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> The Language of Magazines, 1-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Corresponsively, McLoughlin, op. cit., 4, uses the term *culture specific*.

origin and religion, with the well-known habitat of the adjacent lake Pamvotis. Considering the fact that Greek was the dominant language, the above ascertainments, in conjunction with the whole content, strengthen the conjecture that the magazine was addressed to the total of the multicultural urban readership of both sexes.<sup>31</sup> Overall, the social criticism of the magazine, the admonitions made and the ideological conflicts described, relate to the power structures and the deriving management of economic and social matters, particularly of the Greek Orthodox community; naturally it also takes into account the self-interest aspect concerning the conflict between Aravantinós' father, Panagiótis, and certain scholars of the city.<sup>32</sup>

In a microstructural level, some of the most distinct linguistic characteristics of magazines, as set out by McLoughlin, are *polysemy*, the use of idiomatic phrases and *intertextuality*.<sup>33</sup> All the above are also present in *Karavidas'* discourse. Especially intertextuality, is a narrative form of great potential in an interpretive level. Indicatively, many quoted, paraphrased or indirect texts inserted, sometimes refer to newspapers from Athens, Constantinople and Trieste, in other occasions they reveal texts, speeches, debates and opinions of others, while in quite a few instances they are associated with references to literature, theater and music.

The challenge of combining all those theoretical and methodological problematics cited so far on a single historical narrative, should be coupled with the realization that "different modalities render the voices of the past audible in different ways". Moreover, in a broader context, as subjectively constructed experiential outcomes, ethnographic "truths" can only be partial ones. Ultimately, the integrity of a historical narrative does not rely on the "conformity" within a given labyrinthine of rules, rather on the level of a convincingly documented questioning and the creation of new arguments and new dialog frameworks within the scientific community.

This study essentially stands for an experimental attempt towards the detection of alternative aspects of the cultural past, setting as a reference point the context of the cultural and particularly the musically related recreational urban character of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> An according addressing of the readership is contained in the first issue of *Karavida* (1873, 1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Konstantínos Th. Pétsios (Κωνσταντίνος Θ. Πέτσιος), Μορφές δημοσιότητας στην πόλη των Ιωαννίνων κατά τον ύστερο 19ο αιώνα [Forms of publicity in the city of Ioannina in the late 19th century] (Ioannina, 2006), 85-86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> McLoughlin, The Language of Magazines, 22-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Bohlman, "Fieldwork in the ethnomusicological past," 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> See James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," in *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 1-26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> See Karl Signell, "Mediterranean Musicians in America: Tales We Tell, Recordings, 78s," *Ethnomusicology on Line* 3 (1997), accessed May 25, 2019: <a href="https://www.umbc.edu/eol/3/index.html">https://www.umbc.edu/eol/3/index.html</a>

Ioannina. The example of *Karavida*, practically represents a motive for a closer look to the terms and conditions that shaped the cultural profile of a city, whose history during the 19<sup>th</sup> century is in need of deeper insights. The geographical expansion of similar studies can contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of musical trends as well as their popularity and influence, that the great journeys of melodies, dances and entertainment concepts, brought forth to a wider social level. Historical ethnomusicological research has much to offer in this direction, following the evolution of technology and the growing availability of sources, under the light of their thorough critical approach.

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