

CHAPTER 27

A rebetic roundup: people, songs, words, and whatnot

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The broad scope of this volume encourages me to set down here a miscellany of (often digressive) scholarly as well as personal contributions pertaining to “rebetika”. I put the latter word temporarily in quotation marks because of its ambiguity and the problematic assumptions which go with its usage, as I shall indicate. I admit from the outset, however, that the term is not only too well entrenched, but is also too useful as a general category for it to be abandoned (cf. Bülent Aksoy in this volume).

“Rebetika”, with some rebuttals

Today the adjective “rebetika”, as used by the majority of Greeks, refers to urban Greek music of the earlier half of the 20th century, and is associated with lyrics reflecting lower class culture – drugs, thugs, drink, pimps, prisons, poverty, illness, alienation and thwarted love – although the wide range of the genre makes it describable as an urban popular music, with a *déclassé* aspect. Indeed, its songs, which are for the most part based on several fixed dance rhythms, played an important role in the Greater Athenian recording and nightclub scene from shortly after the 1922 Asia Minor Catastrophe well into the 1950s and to some extent later. The term “rebetika” has, to shifting degrees, been applied to two successive but overlapping chronological varieties. The first, from ca. 1923 to 1937, is characterised by musical styles, instruments, and vocal techniques continuing, or much influenced by, those of the Greeks of Turkey, chiefly of Smyrna and Constantinople, and including material of Turkish origin. The second, from the early 1930s into the 1950s, while thematically and choreographically related to the first, featured the bouzouki, an earthier singing style, and an increasingly Greco-European profile.

Despite the unquestionable lower-class allusions of the genre(s) under discussion, some misconceptions must be corrected. I shall proceed from the views projected by a recent film, “My Rembetika Blues”, and the promotional text for the Mississippi Records reissue of Markos Vamvakaris songs, “Death is Bitter”.

The film, originating as an “educational documentary resource”, is directed by an Australian, Mary Zournazi, whose ancestors, as she stresses, were Asia Minor Greeks, and indeed the importance of Asia Minor to rebetika is noted in the film by Gail Holst-Warhaft, a pioneer in bringing awareness of rebetika to an English-speaking audience. Zournazi says at the outset that she first became aware of rebetika via the 1983 film “Rembetiko”, whose opening scene, with bouzoukis on stage in pre-Catastrophe Smyrna, is the first of various anachronisms of the latter film, whose director Costas Ferris, despite his non-expertise as to the musical genre, is one of Zournazi’s primary consultants. The beginning of this very personal film’s trailer (to which I refer here for its influence on popular conceptions) has Prof. Zournazi walking through a graffiti-ridden slum, with Prof. Holst-Warhaft remarking on the “tough” nature of the songs; the theme of the gritty origin serves as a point of departure for the film.

[While as a personal emotional-aesthetic expression Zournazi’s title “My Rebetiko Blues” is immune from criticism, the widely found cliché comparison of rebetika with Blues blurs the difference between two disparate phenomena. While both are associated with lower-class communities, they differ as to the circumstances of their commercial recording, sociological differences as reflected in the emphases of their lyrics, and obviously in their music, rebetika having a varied background of modes and otherwise

having broad melodic possibilities, vs. the Blues, with its two basic melodic types, whose scales are not found in traditional rebetika. In my opinion, the late Stelios Vamvakaris' experiments in trying to bridge the two genres seem forced, and in fact bring out the disparity of the two genres.]

The promo for the Vamvakaris reissue, under the assonant heading "Heavy entrancing transmission", notes Asia Minor and the Catastrophe in passing, and states, "Poetic, mournful, and bitter, rebetika music was born in the hash dens (tekas) of Mediterranean ports, and its verses whispered in Greek prisons before spilling out to the greater population in the 1930s, propelled by a series of remarkable recordings by Markos Vamvakaris Markos ... sang heady, drugged out songs of love, pain, and yearning at brothels, bars and hash dens in the port of Piraeus." This particular selection, which goes against the actual interesting breadth of Markos' early compositions, was motivated at least in part by the commercial appeal to the romanticism of the contemporary younger bourgeoisie who find the "tough" and antinomian image of an older lower class (in actuality, manual working class) somehow attractive, a phenomenon which perpetuates a certain limited view of rebetika.

Similar emphases concerning rebetika abound on the Internet. The actual situation was rather as follows: The many popular commercial recordings made in Smyrna, Constantinople, Thessaloniki, and Athens before the period 1922-1923 (i.e. the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the population exchange between Turkey and Greece), barely mentioned the criminal world. With the Catastrophe, refugees from Asia Minor included a good number of educated, musically literate, highly skilled, and entrepreneurial musicians, who, with a few Mainland musicians, formed a clique which came to dominate the Athenian recording industry, the latter becoming more productive with the new technology (1926-1927) of the electric recording process. The clique composed for and performed on commercial recordings *en masse* with song themes inter alia about drugs, criminality, poverty etc., aimed for the lower class, which had become vastly expanded by the Asia Minor refugees, although many of the recordings were bought by the middle class. Some of the songs drew on melodies and lyrics of lower-class urban folklore, but are for the most part original compositions. The clique also began recording for a pan-Greek audience, including songs with Mainland rural dance rhythms and allusions. The recording companies excluded the bouzouki as too vulgar, although discs with lyrics about narcotics, knife-wielders, thieves, prostitutes, etc. were, for commercial reasons, encouraged (cf. S. Gauntlett, "Mammon and the Greek Oriental Muse: Rebetika as a Marketing Construct", 2005, esp. pp.189-92), as long as they were accompanied by violin, santouri, oud, kanonaki, guitar, mandolin, etc., but not bouzouki, which was considered too vulgar by the upper echelons of the record companies

It was in 1932, due to the popularity of a bouzouki recording made in the US by Jack Gregory (Ioannis Halikias), that the Smyrna-born multi-instrumentalist Spyros Peristeris, and the below-discussed lyricist Minos Matsas, both recording directors, again for commercial reasons, arranged for Markos Vamvakaris, who had performed on bouzouki in hashish dens, to record with his previously excluded instrument, which event began a new epoch in rebetika, with the bouzouki songs of Delias, Go(n)gos, Genitsaris, Papaïoannou, Hatzichristos, Keromitis, Zouridakis, and most importantly the polished and widely appealing songs of Tsitsanis, all in the Pre-War period, to which I am mainly limiting myself (thus omitting an account of the flowering of bouzouki music, spearheaded by Tsitsanis after the War). After the debut of Markos Vamvakaris, he, like many of his associates and peers, continued under the direction of Peristeris, accompanied by various polished Asia Minor instrumentalists, and in addition to their own compositions they were given songs to sing, written e.g. by Minos Matsas for Markos' striking "Rixe Tsiggana ta Hartia" [Gypsy, Throw the Cards], among others (the very prolific lyricist Matsas, a Jew from Preveza, after surviving the Occupation in the home of Giannis Papaïoannou, built on his experience in the recording industry to become a magnate in that industry, founding the company Minos Matsas and Son; see Nikos Ordoulidis on Matsas in this volume). After a few years of musical interaction between the Asia Minor style and the Piraeus-centred bouzouki music, in 1936/7, under

the dictatorship of Metaxas, the Asia Minor style, together with all lyrics referring to drugs and criminality, was prohibited as unpatriotic. The Asia Minor style, with its lush and delicate arrangements, easterly instrumentation, and virtuoso *amanédhes* (whereby it approaches an art music) never recovered. Apart from the Metaxas censorship, the songs by the Asia Minor clique may be said to have been becoming increasingly commercial in feel, and cliché as to both lyrics and melodies, so that the gradual rise of bouzouki music, with its fresher sound and social scope, was a welcome phenomenon.

The foregoing historical overview (and data I shall present below) shows that it is erroneous to view the Athens-recorded rebetika as directly sprung from the dives, prisons, and streets, like Athena flung from the head of Zeus. It is concomitantly misleading to stress the meaner side of rebetika, a music which produced sophisticated songs of humour, charm, and sympathetic consolation for a population continuously traumatised by poverty and war. For a critical discussion, addressing a variety of views, on the putative “underworld” component of rebetika and related sociological issues, see D. Kotouza, “Music is the Crime that Contains All Others (On the History of Rebetiko)”, *Muse* 3/1 (2010), which focuses on the period of Markos and later; see also S. Gauntlett, “Rebetiko Tragoudi as a Generic Term”, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 8 (1982-3), 77-101, *passim*.

The above remarks pertain to rebetika in Asia Minor and Greece, as attested on recordings. In the United States, however, there were some remarkable recordings from before the Smyrna Catastrophe with very clear underworld terminology and allusions. Some are easily accessible via YouTube, e.g. Marika Papagika’s 1919 “To Koutsavaki” and her 1920 “O Koumpouras ap’ tin Vathi”, and Kyria Koula’s 1920 “Baghlamades” (cf. Giorgos Vidalis’ later Athenian recording by that name). For Koula (Kyriakoula Antonopoulou), see Markos Dragoumis’ article in this volume, and the online article “Sta Ihna tis Kyrias Koulas”, which mentions relevant work by Dragoumis, and notes Koula’s “To Zeibekiko ton Hasisopoton” as the earliest recorded allusion to hashish-smoking. R. Spottswood’s *Ethnic Music on Record* lists for Mme. Coula (= Koula) the intriguing titles (some noted by Dragoumis) as “To Vlamaki—Zeibekiko” (on the flip side of “Baghlamades”), and perhaps from earlier in the same period “Koutsavaki” and “Alaniari me Fonazoun”. Relevant American recordings of the late 1920s clearly in the category of traditional rebetika were recorded e.g. by the underappreciated Angeliki Karagianni, and by G. Ioannidis (whose collaboration on “Touti i Batsi Pou rthan Tora” with bouzoukist M. Karapiperis is very noteworthy). The foregoing American discs are the closest one comes to transmissions of old folkloric rebetika.

In 1927 in Chicago, Epaminondas Asimakopoulos, accompanied by members of Gus Papagikas’ ensemble, recorded an old hashish zeibekiko, “Dervisades”, whose melody he used for his 1935 Chicago recording with the Cretan lyra of Harilaos Piperakis, “To Ouest” [The West]. In its lyrics it is an original and thoroughly Greek-American rebetiko, in effect a vignette tour of the narrator’s gambling experiences in cities of the Western US, with a darkly cautionary finale in “the South”, i.e. in Tarpon Springs, Florida (for the style of transcription, see below):

*Vre, ke sto Sáuth i sfungarádhes
hásane polús parádhes,
Vre, tus tilíksane sta zárya
ah, ke tus fághan’ ta sfungárya—
Vre, pézan’ me yomáto zári
ke dhen pérnane habári*

In effect:

‘Hey, in “the South” they dive for sponges,
into the deep each diver plunges.
A lot of money those guys lost there,
it was a loaded die they tossed there.
Hey, to their dice they wrapped them up there,

and then the sponges lapped them up there.
 Hey, from that place one's heard no more, no,
 Nor is there news from that South shore, no.'

In New York in 1948, Marko Melkon (Alemshirian), accompanied by a *café aman*-style ensemble, recorded a version "Sakramento-Boston-Nea Yorki" with variant lyrics, and locale moving from the West to the East Coast. Melkon's last stanza, with variation of Asimakopoulos-Piperakis' next-to-last stanza, shows the integration of English:

Pígha ya na páro tséntsi
ke 'figha me horís séntsi (M.M.)
dhen m' afíkan úte séntsi (A.-P.)

'I went to *take a chance*
 and I left *with-out* a cent'. (M.M.)
 they didn't leave me even a cent'. (A.-P.)

These American examples parallel the process of development of older rebetic songs.

(I add that broad pastiche-adaptations of the two American songs were recorded in Belgian French (2019) and English (2020) by the Brussels-based rebetiko group The Kosmokrators.)

A ramble: rebetis and rebetiko

Although I am marginally a "rebetologist", my central discipline is as an etymologist, historical linguistics being my chief academic activity. It is from this perspective, with the aid of some "rebetological" data, that I shall address the history of the terms *rebétis* and *rebétiko* / *rebétika*.

A preliminary notice: I use the transcription *rebétika* as representing the pronunciation used by most Greeks, as against the often encountered "rembetika"; in Greek spelling, μπ (*mp*) is necessary to indicate the sound /b/, and in this instance the μ (*m*) is silent, but wrongly present as a frequent transcription into Latin letters.

The matter is part of a greater problem of transcribing Modern Greek. In the rest of this article, I shall have to be inconsistent, using for names of persons and titles of songs a transcription more in line (and online) with what Greeks usually use, which is based on the non-phonetic Greek spelling; for transcribing individual words and song texts, I shall use a more phonetic transcription, which many Greek readers may find odd, but will readily understand. It will also later make the metrics of the original poetry of the *amanédhes* more accessible.

For at least the last fifty years, the assumption has been that *rebétiko* (plural *rebétika*) is an adjectival derivation from the noun *rebétis*, referring to a member of the underclass Greek urban communities, an assumption which I'll show is not to be taken for granted, although it seems obvious. These words must be addressed within the context of two problems: (1) As Hugo Strötbaum has observed, the earliest attestations of the term *rebetiko* occur on the labels of two Constantinopolitan recordings from between 1910 and 1913. The first is called "Tiki Tiki Tak", recorded by Giagkos (Yangos) Psamatianos on the Favorite label, and the second "Aponia [Heartlessness], Estudiantina Grèque" on the Orfeon label. Both are love songs, respectively jolly and sentimental, neither has anything of the air of the lower class, and neither is melodically or rhythmically reminiscent of later songs pertaining to that class (apart from the irrelevant fact that "Tiki Tiki Tak" remained popular enough for Markos Vamvakaris to record a late "cover" of it). (2) None of the songs recorded before the early 1930s mention *rebétis*, although we find such common endonymic terms for a member of lower class society as *mángas*, *mórtis*, *alánis*, *vlámis*, *dervísis* (which have feminine forms), *kutsavákis*, *asíkis*, *serétis*, etc.

Remembering that Prof. Stathis Gauntlett had mentioned these and/or similar issues, I asked him to remind me where he had done so, and he referred me to his 1982/3 article (mentioned at the end of my preceding section), p. 85 (to whose data I shall return below). However, by way of an updating, Prof. Gauntlett kindly sent me two links, whose copious data (and remarks in the thread) provide me with the material on whose basis I shall give my own solution.

<https://sarantakos.wordpress.com/2013/12/11/rembeta/#comments>

<https://dytistonniptiron.wordpress.com/2013/07/02/rabita-rebat-rebyata/>

Cf. also the online article by Ed Emery, “The Problem of the Etymology of ‘Rebetis’ and ‘Rebetika’”.

Three frequently encountered etymological theories discussed in the preceding links may now be critically evaluated:

(1) Alleged Pre-Modern Turkish *rebet asker* is not attested, cf. Gauntlett 1981/2, p. 89); Emery, “Problem”, conclusion, alludes to a supposed Arabic “ribat askari”, which, with a more precise transcription, may mean (if it exists) ‘a military *ribāt*, a *ribāt* of the army’, but not ‘a soldier of the *ribāt*’; it is very doubtful that the alleged Turkish *rebet asker* transcribes anything Arabic.

(2) Phonological reasons also rule out an origin in Greek *rébelos* ‘a rebel’ (from Venetian). [I had first heard this etymology in college ca. 1960 from Greek friends with leftist leanings, who introduced me to New York’s Greek Town and its many bouzouki nightclubs, where I heard Papaïoannou and eventually Tsitsanis, who on an off-night with few patrons, gave me in effect a private concert.]

(3) Arabic *ribat* > *rebétis*, for which Emery, “Problems”, devoted an elaborately intricate article, deserves special examination. Emery honestly admits, “I can provide no direct etymological link, bringing this word into the Greek”, and later, “I say once again that I have no direct etymological evidence for the transition of ‘ribat’ into the Greek language as a potential origin of the term ‘rebetis’” After both statements Emery expresses his belief that there is, however, sufficient circumstantial evidence at least provisionally to go forth toward future exploration of such an etymology.

This theory is exceedingly problematic on phonological grounds: The stressed (i.e. foregrounded and salient) *ā* of *ribāt*, before the final tense alveolar (“emphatic”) consonant transcribed by underpointed *t* (phonemically different from dental *t*), is like a lengthened *a* pronounced somewhere between the American and British pronunciation of the vowel of *hot*; a change of such a vowel to Greek *é* is unprecedented. Different is the problem of Greek [sandúki] vis-à-vis Turkish *santuk*, in both of which the vowel *a* is unstressed. The Greek word may be directly from Albanian *səntuk* (in which *ə* is a weak “schwa” vowel) ‘a chest in which garments and bedclothes are stored; in any event, the Greek is associable with Gr. [sendóni] ‘bedsheet’.) Apart from the phonic problem, other difficulties of Emery’s thesis will be shown in a review of his idea:

Emery operates with the three meanings of Arab. *ribāt*: 1) ‘a secure, fortified place’ (from the consonantal root *r-b-t* ‘to tie up, to make secure’), then ‘fortified border outpost’, and 2) ‘Sufi/dervish monastery’ and 3) ‘inn, caravansery’. First focusing on 2), Emery notes that the *rebétes* referred to themselves as “dervishes” and their hashish dens as *teké*-s, the latter from Turkish *tekke* ‘dervish lodge or dervish monastery’. I note here that it is likely that the Greek usage is inseparable from Turkish *esrar tekke* ‘tekke of secrets’ = ‘hashish den’ (see below). Moreover, the context of hashish smoking points to Bektashi dervishes, who, before their expulsion by Atatürk and relocation in Albania, were numerous in Turkey and known for their ritual use of hashish. Now, among Bektashis and all other dervish/Sufi orders in Turkey the religious lodge was known as a *tekke* (cf. Alb. *teqe*) or sometimes (depending on the group) *dergah* or *zaviye*, but NOT **ribat*. While one can speak of

militant dervishes of *ribāt*-s in various sectors of the Islamic Arab world, one cannot do so for Turkey, the Greeks' model for Islamic institutions, and propose, as Emery does, the Arabic term as the source of Greek *rebétis* in that “the quality of 'rebetis' includes poverty, basic human decency, a philosophical self-view, and a willingness to resort to armed action.”

However, in diametrical contrast to this ideal view of *rebétis*, Emery, gives an opposite view of the *rebétis*, drawing for comparison on an account of the “low life characters” who were denizens of the Mediterranean inns and caravanseries (*ribāt/riba*)[†]: “poor people, sociopaths, homeless people, sexual reprobates, abusers of women and layabouts”, and remarks “Add song, dance, drinks, and smokes and you have a close approximation of the ‘rebetes’”. Emery justifies the radically disparate approaches to the etymology by referring to the “ambivalent characterisation of the ‘rebetis’”.

A problem with both approaches is that Emery, who refers to Arab. *murābiṭ* as someone associated with a *ribāt*, gives no account of how the noun *ribāt* and its putative Turkish outcome *ribat*, designating a structure, would yield *rebétis* as an adjective for someone or something characterising such a structure). An awareness of such a derivative process is implicit in the Greek adjectival suffix *-iko* in Emery's suggestion that the “musical culture prevailing” in a *ribāt* might have been, grosso modo, “ribaatikō” [thus pointing to *rebétiko*].

In between his antipodal explanations Emery brings in one more, which is in fact based on another Arabic form of the root *r-b-ṭ* ‘to be connected, secure, coherent, solid’, i.e. *rābiṭa*, manifest in Turkish words for ‘cohesion, regularity’, whence colloquially ‘being OK, good, reliable’, whereby, Emery suggests, *rebétis* would be ‘a regular, proper, OK sort of person’. Here again, *pace* Emery, there is the problem of the vowels, and further, the Turkish lack of an unsuffixed form, and what would be semantic vagueness in semantic transmission, especially for a special Greek sociological designation.

Finally, as we shall see, *rebétis* and *rebétiko* are attested in Greek only considerably later as evidence for *rebéta* ‘lower-class neighborhood’. Given the poor attestation of *ribat* in Turkish in any sense, I would seek the etymology of Greek *rebét-* elsewhere.

The most fruitful direction for our linguistic quest is to proceed from Ancient Greek PEMB- (*rhemb-*, Mod. Gr. *remv-*) ‘to wander’, which gives *re(m)b-* (with-μπ-) in various Late and Modern Greek verbs and nouns referring to loafing, laziness, relaxed enjoyment, etc.; see Gauntlett 1982: p. 90, fn. 51. With the base *rebet-* itself is the word *rebéta* found in several literary attestations from 1871 onward as an argot term in Smyrna and Constantinople for ‘a lower-class neighborhood populated by criminals’ (from ‘unruly place’, as still used in 1895 by N. Georgiadis for the festivals [*pane(gh)iria*] in Silivri). It is interesting that when in 1918 the Constantinopolitan N. Sofron, writing sketches of everyday life in his city, took as a nom de plume Rebétos derived from *rebéta* in its older usage, and not from *rebétis*, which shows that the latter form was not yet common. For *rebétis*, the first occurrence (date unclear to me) seems to be in Nikolaos G. Politis’ serial ethnographic volumes called *Paradoseis*, in which a character named Giannis the *Rebétis* figures, although nothing informative is said of him, and, as we shall see, *rebétis* is not found again until 1923.

As K. Vlisidis (in the first article linked above) shows, *littérateurs* pseudonymously published in Athens in the period 1904-1907 various poems declaredly in the style of the lower-class types *vlámis* and *kutsaváki(s)* (one wonders whether *café aman-s* may have had an intermediating role in this phenomenon). More noteworthy yet for our quest is Vlisidis’ detailed documentation that the same literary tendency is found in publications of Smyrna from the period 1911-1913, with pseudonymous authors penning similar poems (or “songs”) with titles or pseudonyms referring to *vlámidhes*, *kutsavákia*, *mórtidhes*, *asikidhes*, etc.

Most importantly, in 1912, four such compositions were published as “*rebétiko*”, “*rebétiko traghúdhī*”, or being “from *rebétika traghúdhia*”. [According to a draft article by Hugo Strötbaum which he very recently kindly shared with me, “Stelios (Stellakis) Perpiniadhis (1899-1977) claims to have read an article written by K. Faltaïts in a Greek newspaper while in Smyrna. Stellakis lived in Constantinople from 1906 to 1918 (Chatzidhoulis, Torp)”. On Faltaïts, see below.] The 1912 date is absolutely significant, since it coincides with the first occurrences of “*rebetiko*” on discs, as shall be further discussed below. Vlisidis next provides a poem of the foregoing variety by an author with the pen-name “Smyrnios” in an Athenian publication of 1923; the poem is entitled “*O Rebétis Prósfighas*” [The Refugee *Rebétis*]. Here, then, is a clear attestation of *rebétis*, considerably earlier than the occurrence in Markos’ 1933 song “O Harmánis”, and preceding Petros Pikros’ 1925 literary prose mention of *rebéta* (fem.) for ‘*démimondaine*’ or the like. Thus, Vlisidis gives us earlier attestations of both *rebétiko* and *rebétis* than had been thought. Finally, Vlisidis continues with further examples of the lower-class based literary genre of poetry from Athenian publications of 1928-1933, including popular magazines with a number of such compositions, among which was a *hasiklidhiko* (song with lyrics referring to hashish) reminiscent of recorded songs in that genre from the same period. In fact, these literary compositions were contemporaneous with the acme of Athenian recordings of the Asia Minor school, which invites an investigation of the interaction between “*rebetika*” and literature. More broadly, Vlisidis’ material confirms the challenge to assumptions that the relevant recorded songs drew from wholly “closeted” sources, and points to broader public awareness of and audience for the material than has been assumed.

There remains the question of the newly emerged earliest literary occurrence of “*rebetiko*” as connected with this designation on the record labels, and the relationship of *rebétis* to both, which gets us back to our linguistic inquiry. Vlisidis’ material indeed disproves the idea that the term “*rebetiko*” on record labels was (as proposed by Panos Savvopoulos) just an invention on the part of the recording companies. As Vlisidis indicates, the record labels from 1912-1913 bearing the characterisation “*rebétiko*” drew on a word which was current at the time. However, Vlisidis’ further proposal, that the literary material which calls itself *rebétiko/a* was reflected by these discs is problematic. The underclass nature of the diction, as well as the thematics of the four poems which are called “*rebétiko / rebétika*”, differ dramatically from what we find for the two 1912/13 light love songs called “*rebétiko*” on the record labels, and also from the many subsequent recordings bearing that epithet on the label.

As a collector I was struck by the characterisation “*rebétiko*” on some Athenian recordings of the late 1920s, both purely romantic love songs: 1) G. Vidalis’ “Ta Kommēna Mallia” [Your Cut Hair] on Odeon, whose romanticism includes address to a “*bayadera*”, a term based on E. Kálman’s Viennese operetta of 1920, and a melody in what qualifies as *tsifte-telli* rhythm; the song was also recorded in the same period in New York by Marika Papagika, from whom we also have simultaneously the same melody with different lyrics, “*Psarades*”, which reports an innocent purchase of seafood from fishermen. [Although the Papagika recording is not called “*rebetiko*”, the latter appellation occurs, e.g. in her 1928 recording of “*Fotia kai Niata*” [Fire and Youth], performed in art-song style with no underclass reference, and stemming from an operetta by Th. Sakellaridis; similarly, earlier recordings of hers are labeled “*rebetiko*”]; 2) The Arapakis-Ogdontakis collaboration “*Neo Melahrino*” [Young Brunette], in an uncharacteristic rhythm for the period, which today may be called a kind of slow *hasapiko*.

Gauntlett 1982, pp. 83-84, referring to the term *rebétiko* on labels pressed during the second and third decades of the 20th century, notes, “The epithet appears in parentheses after the title of the song”, and then gives examples of the great diversity of music in the period before the 1930s and concludes, “The songs which it designated have very little in common thematically, stylistically, or musically.” The great range of this diversity is documented in greater detail by Gauntlett 2005, pp. *183-5, who summarises (p. *186), “a preliminary examination of the early industrial usage of ‘*rebetika*’ leads to the

conclusion that it served as a generic flag of convenience, a hold-all term for use in cases where other generic terms did not obviously fit.”

We now have enough material to offer a solution to the problem of the term *rebétiko*. A linguistic approach would also involve distinguishing between and then reconciling the various usages of what are in fact complexly related words, *rebéta*, *rebétiko*, and *rebétis*. As a mannerism first used literarily in 1912, *rebétiko* would be an adjectival invention, ‘pertaining to the *rebéta*’, i.e. ‘that which belongs to the underclass realm’. From popular magazines of the period (cf. Vlisidis), it would have been noticed by Greeks involved in the recording industry, who however took it to be derived from the verb *re(m)bo* etc. referring to rambles, indolent or relaxed enjoyment, the word thereby providing for the categorisation of discs a trendy-sounding designation of miscellaneous light songs, such as we find in “Aponia” and “Tiki Tiki Tak”. Toward the mid-1920s, however, with the emergence of *rebétis* for a member of a lower-class subculture, music pertaining to the latter world began to enter the miscellaneous industrial category, explaining the diverse and contradictory range of recordings labeled “*rebétiko*”.

This now calls for an account of the origin of *rebétis*. Politis’ obscure attestation of *rebétis* may reflect a temporary neologism based on one hand on *rebéta* (cf. Georgiadis’ 1918 *rebétos*) and on the other hand constituting a regular derivation with *-étis* from the verb root *ré(m)b-*, see Gauntlett 1982, pp. 90- 91 for parallels; note however that such a derivation is not “undermined” by nouns with *-étis* yielding adjectives with *-etikós* vs. the accentuation of *rebétiko*, which precedes, and is NOT derived from *rebétis*. For the formation of the more conclusive 1923 attestation of *rebétis* by “Smyrniós”, one has, alongside a deverbal explanation of *rebétis*, the possibility of a “back-formation” from *rebétiko* ‘pertaining to the underclass realm’. Given the 1923 attestation of *rebétis* and its continuation by Markos in his 1933 “O Harmanis” [The drug-deprived one], Pikros’ 1925 mention of *rebéta* as in effect the feminine equivalent of *rebétis* seems suspicious; one would rather expect *rebétisa* (cf. *ghóis* [Anc. Gr. *gōēs*] ‘sorcerer’: *ghóisa* ‘sorceress’ continuing the ancient fem. suffix *-issa*), which is found canonically in our songs. Given that *rebétis* itself was still only marginally attested, perhaps Pikros had misunderstood a phrase with the probably already obsolescent *rebéta* ‘lower-class milieu’, taking the latter as its female personification, or, in a context referring to a group of people, he misinterpreted *rebétes* as a plural of *rebéta* rather than of *rebétis*.

The above etymological discussion should be supplemented by observations on the social associations of the word *rebétis*. It is clear that for Markos Vamvakaris, as seen from his 1933 “O Harmanis” (with lyrics ‘...in this false world a *dervísis* I shall diea *rebétis* I shall die’) and from his 1937 “Oli i Rebetes tou Dounia [All the *Rebétes* in the World] (which had a great role in popularising the word), *rebétis* was for him an absolutely positive in-group term, but there is evidence that this positive connotation was not necessarily found among others. Stellakis Perpiniadis, a highly professional singer of rebetika, expressed at least an ambiguous valuation of the terms *rebétis* and *rebétiko*; see Gauntlett 1982 p. 84 fn. 33 with p. 83, fn. 27. Mihalis Genitsaris, who was sociologically closer to the roots of the music under discussion, was vociferously negative about these words: “A rebetis was a rake, a wretch, the lowest man of all. An idler, he doesn’t go to work.... Hatzidakis and Theodorakis ... called our songs rebetika to suggest dirt, while in reality they were genuine popular songs” (quoted by Kotouza 2015, p. 2).

A very interesting but ignored early attestation of the word occurs in the 1934 “*H NTANTA*” (Greek spelling, = *I Dadá*) [The Nanny] sung by G. Papasideris with lyrics credited to a K. Roumeliotis. The song’s hapless protagonist, in pursuing a governess, reports,

Tin kernó ena serbéli / ya na mi me pí rebéli
‘I treat her to a sherbet so she wouldn’t call me a *rebétis*’.

Evidently here *rebétis* amounts to a someone down-and-out or a slacker. It happens that the lyricist “K. Roumeliotis” was in reality the Smyrna-born Kostas Faltaits, who had a PhD in Law but whose activity was in fact as a remarkably prolific journalist, war

correspondent, and ethnologist, who had begun studying the Greek underclass and its culture in 1915. In 1929 he published, in the popular Athenian magazine *Bouketo* (which had been a venue for rebetic-style poetry by literati) published topically arranged rebetic songs he had gathered, and in 1930 became himself a lyricist-composer of rebetika as well as light songs (“Hawaiian”, fox-trots, tangos, dhimotiká).

Again in 1934, by the same “K. Roumeliotis”, a zeïbekiko “O Rebétis” was recorded, with fine accompaniment on guitar by K. Skarvelis and on violin by Semsis-Salonikios. The song, with its clever rhymes, portrays the *rebétis* as wandering day and night to the taverna, being treated and treating others to drinks, smoking hashish on credit, and at the end of the day, collapsing behind the Medrese (an echo of Asia Minor). Interesting is the slang wording of the penultimate verses:

*O rebétis ine mángas
ke pedhí merkladán
ke apéhi parasángas
ap’ t’ aghórya dingidan*

‘The *rebétis* is a *mángas*
and a fine (thing of a) lad,
and stays many a mile away
from all those boys who’re gay.’

Here *merakladán*, via *meraklís*, derives formally from Turkish *merakladan* ‘out of curiosity or interest’, and *dingidán* = *dingidángas* ‘effeminate, homosexual, *ding-dong’.

The phrase “The *rebétis* is a *mángas*” and the virtually didactic nature of the description point to the relative novelty of the term. Here Faltaïts’ more focal view of the *rebétis*, again without condemnation, amounts to ‘a loafer’.

In general, Faltaïts’ work as the pioneering rebetologist deserves closer investigation. His activity once more broadens our understanding of the scope of awareness of the musical phenomenon under investigation.

The history of “I Dadá” is itself noteworthy. It began as a “shepherd song”, “Tounte Tounte”, in an operetta, “Psihokori” [Psychokori, Psichokori], first presented in Smyrna in 1903, and the earliest two recordings of the song were made in Constantinople in 1904 and again in 1906. I have lectured on the second recording, showing it was the basis of a 1912 Yiddish recording with the same arrangement, made at Warsaw (but not, as I had thought, part of a Yiddish operetta of that period). The lecture (in whose discussion I was joined by colleagues) treats the history of the melody and provides further examples in Greek, Yiddish, and Vlach material, with the Papisideris recording as finale.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=288NR5dkJXY>

[Hugo Strötbaum has just alerted me to the relevant recent publication of Ilias D. Barounis, “*Ē Gennēsē tou Rempétikou*” (*I Ghénisi tu Rebétiku*).]

The Vargas-Varkaris-Vamvakaris Variations

To return to the formation of *rebétis*: It is possible that the suffixation of *rebétis* was supported by a traditional underclass word of the same semantic field, *serétis*. ‘tough guy, of Turkish origin. The most memorable illustration of this rhyme calls for some background. In 1938 the Spanish film “Carmen de la Triana” featured the chanteuse Imperio Argentina singing “Antonio Vargas Heredia”. A Greek version of the song was recorded the next year by Danaï (Stratigopoulou), a popular European-style singer, whose only (and very tangential) connection with rebetika was her singing in Kostas Bezos’ “Hawaiian” novelty White Birds ensemble (on which see my next section). Eventually she became an academic in Chile and a friend of Pablo Neruda. Her version of “Antonio Vargas Heredia” corresponded in melody and style to Imperio Argentina’s, but the

arrangement for Danaï's recording had a guitar phrase which was not in the Spanish original, a fact which to which I here call attention because it was *that phrase alone* which Spyros Peristeris repeated on guitar in a 1939 hasapiko with lyrics by Minos Matsas (here under the pseudonym of Pipitsa Ikononou). Although otherwise melodically different from the song sung by Imperio Argentina (and Danaï), the Peristeris-Matsas collaboration was the subject of an unsuccessful lawsuit. Markos, to whom the composers presented the song, made it very popular. Its title, Matsas' brilliant pun on "Antonio Vargas Heredia", was "Antonis o Varkaris o Seretis" [Antonis the Boatman the Tough Guy]. It was "covered" in 1939 by Stellakis Perpiniadis, and in the same year, Markos and Stratos Pagioumtzis recorded a sort of sequel, "I Karmen stin Athina", with the opening rhyme of *stin Athina* ['in Athens'] and Imperio *Argentina*, in which Argentina/Carmen comes for the protagonist's inheritance, and finds him still alive in his boat, having faked his death, whereas the previous Peristeris-Matsas song had him, having become a bullfighter, laid low by 'the heartless bull' and leaving Carmen a widow. The same melody, again with lyrics by Matsas and under the direction of Peristeris, was used for an anti-Mussolini song, the 1941 Vamvakaris-Hatzichristos bouzouki collaboration "To Oneiro tou Benito" [Benito's Dream].

The first song begins:

*O Antónis o varkáris o serétis
épapse na zí rebétis,
théli plúsya ke palátya,
ke tis Kármén ta dhyo mátya”;*

i.e. Antonis ... the *serétis* stopped living as a *rebétis* (and wanted riches and as prize, lovely Carmen's eyes).

The two Antónis songs illustrate the light and playful aspects of *rebétika* (the versatility of which is also shown by "Benito's Dream").

In conclusion, I propose that in "O Antonis" the rhyming *serétis* 'tough guy' and *rebétis* recapitulated what may have been the final motivation for the suffix in *rebétis*; cf. below as parallel, *theraklís*, *meraklís*, *zeibeklís*: *hasiklís*. And here ends our etymological ramble on *rebétis* and *rebétiko*.

A brief memorial

One painful aspect for me of listening to old rebetika is the thought that some of its most truly remarkable professional musicians died under the harsh conditions of the Nazi Occupation of Greece in 1941-1945. I name them alphabetically:

Kostas Bezos, who died at age 37 of tuberculosis. A journalist, actor, and cartoonist, he recorded prolifically as two opposite musical personas, each featuring his excellent abilities as guitarist. As Kostas Bezos, he led an often zany and always inventive "Hawaiian" group, The White Birds [Ta Aspra Poulia]. As A. Kostis, he sang and played absolutely authentic-sounding "hardcore" rebetika, of his own composition. He died at 37 of tuberculosis. Anestos Delias, Smyrna-born singer, bouzoukist, and composer, member of the seminal "Famous Quartet of Piraeus" with Markos Vamvakaris, Stratos Pagioumtzis, and Giorgos Batis, and an important musician in his own right, died at age 32 of starvation after a long struggle with heroin addiction. Antonis Diamantidis "Dalgas", one of Europe's greatest voices, accomplished in *uti* (oud) and then guitar, was a foremost proponent of the Asia Minor style, and later sang the European-style songs of Attik (Kleon Triantafyllou, who himself committed suicide via sedative overdose during the Occupation after being beaten by a German soldier). Dalgas, famed for his upbeat personality, went into a depression due to the Occupation, which led to his death at age 52 or 53. Giovan/Yovan/Iovan-Tsaous (born Ioannis (E)i(n)tzeridis) was famed for his amazing accompaniment of Asia Minor-style songs in Piraeus on three unusual plucked instruments which he had specially made for him. Before leaving Turkey he had played in the Sultan's court. He died at age 49 with his lyricist wife, Ekaterini Harmoutzi, after

they ate gunpowder-contaminated bread which they found on a boat. Kosta(ntino)s Faltaïts, journalist, pioneering rebetologist, and composer of rebetika (inter alia; see above), died at age 53 of hunger and other afflictions after brave patriotic exertions. Giorgos Kavouras played santouri, violin, and guitar, but was famed for his beautiful vocal renditions of rebetic songs, especially those of Skarvelis; he somehow died at age 34. He is commemorated in the Bithikotsis-Vamvakaris collaboration “O Kavouras”. Vangelis Papazoglou, who was already a professional musician performing alongside, e.g., Dragatsis, Peristeris, and Tountas in Smyrna, came in 1922 to the greater Athens area, where he was an instrumentalist (mandolin, banjo, guitar, violin) and composer of some of the most memorable rebetic songs. In 1937, in protest against the censorship of Metaxas, he gave up his professional musical career. He became mortally ill under the German occupation, which he vehemently despised, and died in Nikaia at age 47. Kostas Skarvelis (“Pastourmas”, apparently from his fondness of the spiced cured beef called *pasti/urmá*) was a master guitarist and song-writer; he succumbed to starvation. The Smyrna-born Panagiotis Tountas, the inestimably important musician, composer and recording director, a foremost figure in rebetika, died of tuberculosis in Athens at age 56.

The only consolation for their untimely deaths is how much joy their brief lives brought and still bring to the world.

On Elvira Kakki

I am supplying here a very brief musical memoir of Elvira Kakki, for several reasons: (1) Over the many years since I was first struck by her voice, in the earlier course of my collecting rebetika, on what turns out to be Tsitsanis’ second disc, I was curious to know who she was (as I now know, I theoretically could have met her, since we were both living in the San Francisco area). Rather recently, through some coincidences and after some research, I was able to contact Rina Benmayor, Elvira Kakki’s niece, Emil Kakkis, and Nora Rouso, Elvira Kakki’s grandchildren, to whom I am very grateful for interesting and informative exchanges concerning Elvira. (2) Elvira Kakki’s period of recording (1936-1937) coincided with and marks the final transition from the Asia Minor style to the new kind of music pioneered by Tsitsanis; (3) She was an excellent singer; and (4) Elvira Kakki’s biography adds another dimension to our conception of the personal lives of those who contributed to rebetika.

Born Elvira Benmayor in 1900 in Kavala (Greek eastern Macedonia) to a Sephardic family. Her father’s side was from Corfu. Her mother’s maternal side was from Kavala and Thessaloniki, and her mother’s paternal side was from Serres, Drama, and Kavala. In 1919 she married another Sephardic Jew, Emil(ios) Kakkis. In nearby Drama the couple for some 20 years were at the centre of the city’s cultural scene, having been responsible for the electrification of the city (Emilios in Thessaloniki had installed electricity and bells in the White Tower there), and building and running two motion picture theatres which served as concert venues and musical conservatoires as well. Emilios died at the beginning of the Axis Occupation. The couple’s two older children served in the resistance movement, while Elvira and her two younger children went into hiding on the island of Skiathos. After the War she eventually emigrated to the United States, joining three of her children already there. She died in Mountain View, California in 1987.

Elvira seems only once to have mentioned her recordings to her family, when she remarked briefly that she had recorded with Tsitsanis, although it seems that her family thought she was joking. She was known, however, to love music, and particularly opera. In her discography she seems to have been confused with Elvira de Hidalgo, who was Maria Callas’ opera teacher and was at the Athens Conservatoire of Music in 1936 (apparently the year of Kakki’s recordings), and had recorded one Greek song, “Barba Yanni(s) Kanata” under her name in 1934. It is possible that Elvira de Hidalgo was wrongly credited as Elvira Kakki on at least one recording, as was perhaps another singer as well. Three recordings assuredly by Kakki are solidly rebetika and superbly performed. From consideration of the matrix numbers, Nikos Ordoulidis (who supports, on independent grounds, the fact of confusion as to the attribution of the singing), the three songs (1936-1937) are “Pikros einai (ine) o Ponos mou” (with Vassilis Tsitsanis), a

“Neva Manes” (“Pira Pia Apofasi se ena Vouno na Ziso”), and “Megala mou Matia” (melodically based on the Smyrnaic “Tha Spaso Koupes”). The last two songs have lyrics by Minos Matsas and violin accompaniment by Semsis-Salonikios; all three songs were under the direction of Spyros Peristeris, who also plays piano on the first. The three songs may be heard via this link (scroll down to the bottom of the linked page to find the player):

<https://rebetiko.sealabs.net/display.php?string=Κάκκη%20Ελβ>

I see belatedly that the late devoted rebetologist and graphic artist Charles Howard, in 2009, using data provided him by Elvira’s son Frederic Kakkis, had begun to address the facts of the relevant recordings. May our remembrance of Elvira and Emilios Kakkis and the departed members of their family, as well as of Charlie Howard, be a blessing.

In addition to the above-mentioned members of the Benmayor-Kakkis family, I thank Laura Kakis Serper, and, in connection with the beginning of my recent quest, my acquaintances Judith Berlowitz and Judith Cohen for helping get me in touch with their Sephardic ethnomusicological colleague Rina Benmayor. Thanks also to Dimitra Chatzidimitriou, who supplied details of Emilios Kakkis’ career.

Etymological orientations: origins of words in the *hasiklídhika*

The account of the history of the terms in the *hasiklídhika*, i.e. the rebetic songs pertaining to hashish and its culture, like other argot vocabularies, is both interesting and intricate. In addition to borrowing from the expected sources, Greek and Turkish, important words came directly from Arabic. Words from all three languages often underwent hybridisation and other variation. For ‘hashish’ we have Greek *mávro* and *mavráki* ‘the black stuff’. For ‘joint’ we have *tsighar(i)liki*, formed within Greek from *tsighára* ‘cigarette’ plus *-liki* from the Turkish noun suffix *-lik*; contrast the independent Turkish *sigaralik* ‘cigarette holder’. Greek *hasisi* is obviously from Turkish *hasiş* ‘hashish’, itself from Arabic *khasīsh* ‘dried grass or herb’. What requires explanation is the obviously related Greek *hasiklis* ‘hashish user’, very frequent in the songs, which are accordingly called *hasiklídhika*. Why not *hasislis*? The form can be explained via haplological elimination of the second *-s-* and the influence of associable words like *theriaklis* ‘opium addict’, *meraklis* ‘bon vivant, aficionado, enthusiast’ (from Turkish ‘curious, interested’) and, formed in Greek from the same Turkish adjectival suffix, *zeybeklis* ‘skilled at the Zeybek-dance, i.e. at the zeibekiko’, in all of which the *-k-* belongs to the base. Cf. The Babiniotis Dictionary s.v. *hasiklis*). Typically of the multilinguistic sources of argot vocabularies, we find alongside native Greek words (such as *mávro* ‘the black stuff’ = ‘hashish’) a great many words from Turkish (e.g. *teké* ‘hashish den’ from Turkish *tekke* ‘a dervish or Sufi lodge’).

There are some words frequent in *hasiklídhika* pertaining to hashish whose origin has been unknown (no etymology is given for *mastúris* etc. and *harmánis* in The Babiniotis Dictionary, and *damira* does not occur there). The usual word for ‘hemp-intoxicated, stoned’ in the rebetika is *mastúris*, with which belong *mastúra* ‘hemp intoxication, hemp high’ and its synonym (with Turkish noun suffixation) *masturliki*, and with quasi-Turkish vowel harmony) *masturlúki*, cf. the verbs *masturóno*, *masturyázo* ‘get high on hemp’. I see the source as Arabic *mastūl* ‘high on hashish, hashish user’, attested in medieval Arabic poetry, including that of the rogue underclass (the Banū Sāsān), and surviving in Modern Arabic, whence it is known in Israeli Hebrew. C.E. Bosworth, in his study of the Banū Sāsān, the medieval lower-class Arabic subculture, rightly derived the word from an Arabic root *s-t-l* ‘to (be) blind’; cf. in Markos Vamvakaris’ song “O Markos Mathitis” [Markos the Student], *apó tin mastúra mu dhen évlepa na ghráfo* ‘from my hemp-high I couldn’t see to write’. The change of /l/ to /r/ in Greek is known e.g. from *íltha* > *írtha* ‘I came’, *adhelfós* > *adherfós* ‘brother’, etc.

More perplexing is *damira* ‘hashish’. It is common in *hasiklídhika* and is even the title of a song by Dalgas, with lyrics overlapping with Vidalis’ “To Hasis”. Derivation from Arabic *ḍamīr(a)* ‘secret’ would have as parallel Turkish *esrar* ‘hashish, marijuana, secret’

(Arabic *asrār* ‘secrets’), whence *esrar tekke* ‘hashish den’. That there was a degree of secrecy with regard to use of hashish is attested in at least one Classical Arabic text, discussed by Franz Rosenthal, *The Herb: Hashish Versus Medieval Muslim Society*.

Next *harmánis*, ‘having been deprived of hashish’, as in Markos Vamvakaris’ early recording, “O Harmanis” (“Harmánis ime ap’ to prof’”, ‘I’ve had no hashish-fix since morning’). Turkish does have *harman*, which (in addition to the better known words for ‘threshing floor, harvest, mixture’, from Persian) is given by Redhouse’s *Turkish-English Dictionary* as slang, ‘feeling low from want of narcotics’, but the further origin is not obvious. In form, *harman* points to an Arabic origin, and although both H. Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, and the compendious dictionary of Classical Arabic, E. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, do not have *xarmān* (*kharmān*), an Internet search shows that the word is found e.g. in Hadramawt and Palestinian Arabic in the general meaning ‘a craving’. More relevantly, the 2013 PhD. dissertation by Dr Tatevik Martirosian, *Raketten van amber, een etymologisch onderzoek van Egyptisch Drugs Slang* (Univ. Amsterdam, 2013), 37 has *xarmān* ‘heel erg verlangend naar drugs’ (‘having a strong craving for drugs’). I had first met this word when I was supervisor of the PhD. dissertation of Susan Slyomowics. In the resultant book, *The Merchant of Art, An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic in Performance* (1987), Note 826, on a context in which a protagonist, who claims to be *xarmān* after a long journey, requests that coffee be made for him, Prof. Slyomowics remarks that her poet-performer informant defines *xarmān* as *milaxbat*, ‘confused’. Slyomowics goes on to say that *xarmān* is generally used for cigarette craving, cites Redhouse s.v. *harman* (above), and mentions me as pointing out Greek *harmánis* in connection with craving for hemp intoxication after a period of withdrawal. In fact, Slyomowics’ informant’s definition provides a valuable clue to the inner-Arabic etymology of the word, which I notice only now. Wehr’s Dictionary, under the root *x-r-m* (whose simplest form means ‘to pierce’ etc.) gives for the VIIth Form (in effect a passive) the meanings ‘to be disarranged, unsettled, disorganised; come to an end, peter out’, from which comes the noun *inxirām* ‘unsettlement, disorganisation, derangement’. I therefore suggest that *xarmān* meant originally ‘feeling confused etc. from a deprivation of something to which one has become accustomed’ whence the application to hashish-deprivation retained in Turkish, and the Greek usage.

In illustration of the lexical exchange between Greek and the Arab world with regard to the hashish culture (Greeks having been for centuries exporters of hashish to the Arab world, and having long been a major part of the population of Alexandria). I note that Greek *narghilés* ‘hookah’, via the definite accusative *ton narghilé*, became the more common *arghilé* (cf. Eng. *an adder* from *a nadder* etc.); thus Southern Levantine Arabic *arg(h)īle*. The Greek word is from Turkish *nargile* ‘hookah’, from Persian *nārgīle* with the same meaning, and this from *nārgīl* ‘coconut’, which had been used as the base of the device.

On the *amané*, its history, and a dozen or so translations

The *amané* (nominative singular. *amanés*, plural *amanédhes*) is a characteristic feature of the Asia Minor style of rebetika, and is discussed broadly in Gail Holst-Warhaft’s first essay for this volume. Here I shall offer a closer look at the genre and its history. The *amanédhes* are metrical rhyming couplets and quatrains sung slowly with artistic plaintive vocal effects, exclamations, and repetition of phrases. The *amanédhes* should be divided into two categories: (1) Alla Turca *amanédhes*, which are improvisations in Turkish *makam*-s (“modes”), and (2) Alla Greca *amanédhes* whose melodies are fixed, but performed with some degree of improvisation, similarly to flamenco forms. While the exclamations in (2) are limited to extended *aman* (Turkish, amounting to ‘good Lord’, ‘mercy’, etc.), *ah* and *oh* (with velar *h*), (1) also involves, as part of the Turkish inheritance, the utterances *yar* (*ey*) ‘O friend’, *meddet* (*ey*) ‘oh mercy!’ and *gönül* ‘oh heart, oh soul!’; all these exclamations are inserted in performance outside of the metrical frame and lyrics of the song. The types of (2) are designated by reference to neighbourhoods of Smyrna (Bournovalio, Tabahaniotiko) and Constantinople (Galata), ad hoc designations (Tzivaeri, from *dzivaéri mu* ‘my jewel’, obligatory as exclamation after

the first line), and musical designations (Minore, Matzore (Ital. *maggiore*), Si Be Mol, Fa Matzore). These frequently had codas of waltzes, Romanian and Italianate tunes, etc.

The Minore was brought to Smyrna early in the 20th century from Romania by the violinist Giannis Alexiou (Giovanikas), and is based on a Romanian lautar stereotyping of the *makam* Nihavent (cf. the central section of Tanburi Cemil Bey's Romanian-based Nihavent Sirto). From ca. 1905 the Minore added a tango/habanera melody, and was called the "Smyrniikos Manes" (for *manés* see below); the association of the tango with whorehouses (which must have been known to seamen) explains why the combined melody was used by the Constantinopolitan Giagkos (= Yangos) Psamatialis for his novelty "Bordello" series (discussed below). The same tango is found in Dalgas' "Manes Kallinihtias" and "Manes tis Avgis". The Tzivaeri Manes may also have been among the Romanian lautar melodies which Giovanikas brought with him, for he accompanied G. Tsanakas in a 1910 performance; cf. Romica Puceanu with Toni Iordache, "Tinerete, tinerete". Paul Gifford has posted online a 1938 US recording of Nicolas Matthey and His Gypsy Orchestra performing "Țața Marița", which Aydin Chaloupka correctly compared with the Bournovalio Manes; the rhythmic background of Matthey's recording points to a lautar origin. It is musically plausible that the Tabahaniotikos Manes and the Matzore (Maggiore) Manes similarly had a lautar origin. The playing of the violinist Giannis Dragatsis (Ogdontakis), who was born in Smyrna in 1886 and went to Athens in 1923, attests (especially in his performances with Dimitris Arapakis, santouri) the influence of lautari in early 20th century Smyrna.

The term *amané* is associated with the genre's characteristic exclamation *aman* or *aman ey*. However, against the common and well-entrenched assumption, which seems based on the obvious, the deeper origin of the term *amané* is not *aman (ey)*, although the latter exclamations had a secondary role in shaping the term. The old Greek record labels of Smyrna, Constantinople, and Athens (from ca. 1905 until the prohibition of the genre in 1936) have the term as *mané(s)* and not *amané(s)*; and e.g. in the lyrics of Arapakis' 1931 version of "O Memetis" we find *me dérti légho ton mané* 'with pathos I say/sing the *mané*'.

I see the origin of our term in Turkish *mani* (or *mâni*), a sung quatrain which, in addition to the rural genre by that name, is also an urban form. According to the Turkish online article "Mani – Güzel Sanatlar Genel Müdürlüğü", the urban *mani* developed within the folklore of Istanbul, and was sung especially in musical cafés and similar venues, and gradually became an artistic form of specialists. It was particularly performed in the *makam-s* *uşşak*, *hüzam*, *karcığar*, and *hüseyni*. I note that among the dozen performers remembered by the author, journalist, composer and lyricist of Classical Turkish music, Ahmet Rasim Bey (1865-1932), there are obvious Armenian names (Onnik; Manici ['*mani*-master'] Garabet; and Aliksan, son of the poet Serkis; an apparent reference to an Iranian (Acem Ismail), as well as Greek names (Hiristo = Hristos; and Andon = Antonis).

A number of examples of Istanbul *mani-s* begin with the words *Adam aman* (O human, *aman*!). This detail is particularly interesting, because the Greek Galata Manes, the only *manés* named from a district in Istanbul/Constantinople, obligatorily begins with *Adam aman* (cf. the mention of cafés of Çeşme Meydan at Galata ca. 1901 in connection with Istanbul Mani-s beginning with *Adam aman*, in the online article by Abdulkadir Emeksiz, "İstanbul Mâniler, Ninnileri ve Atasözleri"). This brings up the question of whether the Istanbul *Mani* was more a fixed melody than the *gazel*, where improvisation of the *makam* is important, and which is the Turkish equivalent of the Greek Alla Turca *mané-s* the latter being sometimes designated in Greek *gazeli* apparently for the less basic *makam-s*. It is relevant that among the non-Alla Turca *manédhes* only the Galata has in the background a tsifte-telli (*çifte-telli*) beat, like many Alla Turca *manédhes* and Turkish *gazel-s*. Clearly these matters deserve the joint examination by Greek and Turkish researchers.

[On the Turkish term *mani*, see pp. 9-10 in Risto Pekka Pennanen, "The Nationalization of Ottoman Popular Music in Greece", *Ethnomusicology* 48/1 (2004), pp. 1-25, a superb

and important article which should be read in full. On p. 10, Pennanen writes: “It has been estimated that around 1900 there must have been thousands of mani singers in Constantinople. A typical Constantinople mani begins with the words ‘adam aman’ (‘mercy, man’) In the Greek-language repertoire the mani ‘Adam aman’ is also known as ‘Galata manes’ after the Galata district of Constantinople with its musical cafés and taverns.”

In the course of his remarks, Pennanen (p. 10) refers to the Rounder CD 1051 (Masters of Turkish Music I), Selection 14. The original disc is Zonophone X-103063, recorded in Istanbul in 1905 by Gülistan. The label bears the title “Mané avec zourna” (and in Ottoman script “Mani zurna ile”). The label image and entire performance are accessible online under the (inaccurate) tag “Gülistan-Gazel, zurna ile – 1905”. The melody is indeed the prototype of the Galata Manes.

Pennanen (p. 10) is correct in indicating that etymologically, Turkish *mani* became Greek *mané-*, which in turn gave *amané-* under the influence of the interjection *aman!*, which occurs routinely in filling out lines in the gazel and mané genres. However, apart from etymology, Greek *mané-* only rarely can be equated with Turkish *mani*, and not at all in the instances of the non-Alla-Turca manedhes of Smyrna, which at least predominantly have Romanian origins (see above), so that Pennanen is not accurate (p. 10) in attributing to the *mani* genre the ‘Smyrneiko Minore’, ‘Tzivaeri’, and ‘Tabahaniotiko’, “frequently recorded ... in Ottoman-Greek repertoire”.]

Below I have selected examples which illustrate, inter alia, the thematic range of (*a*)*manédhes*. Again I have chosen to offer translation in metre and rhyme, in order to give a sense of the poetic esthetics of the material, and for the challenge of it. Rhyme in the Greek is relatively easy, since in general it is the suffixes which rhyme. Thus in (6) the Greek rhyme is on the past participle *-s-méni* in *dhikasméni* ‘adjudged’ and *marasméni* ‘withered’, or in (9), which I rendered as a rhymed quatrain, the Greek rhyme is on the 3rd pers. pl. verbal ending *-úne* in *aghapúne* ‘they love’ and *misúne* ‘they hate’; obviously in English it is entire words, or sequences thereof, which must be found for rhyming, while the syntax should not be forced. Occasionally in translation I favour, of two rhyming possibilities, the one less close to the Greek original; so in (2), for the Greek ‘[I always flee the fire] but its flame burns me’ I could have had ‘... but I get burned by its flame’; however, I chose instead ‘but I get burned just the same’ for rhyme with ‘...blame’. Here context and tone outweighed literality. I have kept very close overall equivalences in the meaning, avoiding instances where forcing a rhyme in translation would add to or subtract from or otherwise modify the tenor of the poem.

The latter issue arose, among very many other instances, from Haralambos Panagis’ “Hetzaz Manes” (Athens, 1933), whose transcribed Greek text and literal translation are as follows:

Tétya plighí pu ého ‘ghó .
íne meghálo derti—
Yatrós íne o thánatos
ton karteró na élthi.

Literally,

‘Such a wound as I have
is a great grief/pain;
The doctor is death –
I wait for him/it to come.’

Passing over the fact that each of my two putative translations has a more precise rhyme than the original, in which the educated pronunciation *élthi* is preferred over the everyday *érthi* as rhyme for *dérti*, here were my alternatives as to a translation:

‘There’s but one healer for my pain
– he’s one who has no rival;

That only one is Doctor Death —
I wait for his arrival.'

Or:

'A wound like mine
is such a mighty grief;
Death's the cure —
I wait for his/its relief.'

My first version magnifies the MD while minimising the malady; my second version treats the dolor more gravely, but the doctor is somewhat diminished. Although both versions have parallels in other *(a)manédhes*, I decided against entering either alternative in the series below, all the more since the idea is more interestingly represented in (1) below.

Most of the Greek originals of the selections below can be heard on YouTube (YT); a number also are found on the CD I edited, *Greek-Oriental Rebetika* (GOR); the Greek text of (9) is based on Tasos Shorelis (Skhorelis, *Rebetiki Anthologia* (1977) (TS), 164).

1. GIOUZEL SABAH MANES (Giorgos Papasideris, Athens 1929). GOR # 18.

Pés mu, vre Háre, na harís
to mávro su skotádhi,
San apothán', o pónos mu
tha yatrefí ston Ádhi?

'Tell me, Charon (be in cheer,
there in your dark domain),
Will at last there be a cure
in Hades for my pain?'

The ancient mythical underworldly Charon (*Khárōn*) survives as *Háros* in Modern Greek folklore, including rebetika. In our text, the formulaic pun *Hare, na harís* 'Haros, may you enjoy' recapitulates the ancient play on the name and the verb root *khar* 'to be happy' seen e.g. in Aristophanes, *Frogs* 108, where Charon is greeted "*Khaîr' ō Khárōn*" (3x), 'Cheers, O Charon!'

2. GAZELI MOUSTAAR (Giorgos Papasideris, Athens 1934). GOR # 4.

Pant' apofévgho tin fotyá
ma i flógha tis me kéi,
Se pyón na paraponeftó,
pu i tíhi mu ta ftéi?

'I always try to I flee the fire
but get burned just the same;
To whom can I complain of it,
when I've my luck to blame?'

3. SMYRNAÏĪKOS MINORE (Petros Zounara(ki)s, Constantinople, 1909). YT.

Thélo na ghínis fthisikyá
ma óhi na pethánis
Ya na perno na s' arotó
"Pos íse?" ke "Ti kánis?".

'I'd like for you to get TB,
but I don't wish for you to die,
So I can ask you "How ya be?"
and "You OK?" when I go by.'

In rebétika, tuberculosis is frequently mentioned as the chief representative of fatal illness.

4. SABAH MANES (Stratos Pagioumtzis, Athens 1934). GOR # 4.

*Aníksete ta mnímata,
ta kókala skorpíste –
Ton plúsion ap' ton ftohón
na dhíte ke ghnoríste'.*

'Open up the graves,
and dig up the bones:
the poor, the rich,
Can you tell which is which?'

The verse is reminiscent of what seems already to have been a topos cited in an Akkadian text of ca. 1000 BCE, *The Dialogue of Pessimism*. The relevant section was rendered by the late poet Joseph Brodsky (*New York Review of Books*, Nov. 10, 1987, where the original language is wrongly identified as Sumerian):

"Get up and stroll across ancient ruins,
scan the skulls of simple folk and noble –
which of them was a villain, and which a benefactor?"

5. GAZELI NEVA SABAH (Rita Abatzi, Athens 1934). GOR # 13.

*Prépi na skéftete kanís
tin óra tu thanátu –
Otán tha bí stin mávri ghís
ke svínì t' ónomá tu.*

'Everyone must stop and think
of how the hour of death grows near:
Into the deep black earth he'll sink;
his name will disappear.'

"The black earth" is associated with death already in Homer. Furthermore, in the Archaic Greek world view, people live on through future mention of their names, their *kléos* (*'being heard of' = '(abiding) glory').

6. NEVA HETZAZ MANES (Marika Kanaropoulou, Athens 1933). GOR # 8.

*Os póte pyá i tíhi mu
tha m' éhi dhikasméni
Na sérnume stin ksenityá
san fílo marasméni?*

'How much longer will my fate
condemn me to such grief –
To drag along through alien lands
like a withered leaf?'

Here "alien lands" renders the abstraction *ksenityá*, a key concept in rebetika, referring both to foreign countries and the alienated state and feelings involved in emigration there.

7. MANES TIS AVGIS ('Mané of Dawn') (Antonis Dalgas, Athens 1928).

*Ós ke t' astéria t' uranú
ke 'kína ta fovúme,
Na mí mas martirósune
tin óra pu milúme.*

'The very stars of heaven,
it's even them I fear,

Lest in this hour they witness
that we are speaking here.'

The same lyrics occur in a "Sousta Manes" of Dalgas.

8. TZIVAERI MANES (Giorgos Tsanakas, Smyrna 1910). YT.

*Otán thimithó to téri mu
ótí makrá mu méni
mavrós kapnós san sínefo
ap' tin kardhyá mu vghéni.*

'When I remember my dear mate,
how far we live apart –
It's then a black smoke, like a cloud,
arises from my heart.'

9. TABAHANIOTIKOS MANES (Lefteris Menemenlis, Smyrna pre-WW I?). TS 164.

*San eftihí o ánthropos,
óli ton aghapúne;
Se myá mikrí tu simforá,
óli ton misúne*

'As long as someone's fortune's bright,
everyone adores him,
But with his slightest hint of plight,
everyone deplores him.'

10. HETZAZ NEVA MANES (Haralambos Panagis, Athens 1933). GOR # 15.

*Dhen mú 'mine pléon zoí
ston dunyá na zíso,
Ke lígho-lígho fthírome
óste na ksepsihíso.*

'No life is left for me;
in this world my time is past,
As bit by bit I wear away,
until I breathe my last.'

11. STAMBOUL OUSAK MANES (Roza Eskenazi, Athens ca. 1932). YT.

*'Ópios m' akúí ke traghudhó
Léi hará pos ého
Ma 'ghó 'hó stin kardhúla mu
pikrés, kaymús, ke trého.*

'Whoever hears me when I sing
says, "Ah, how you have joy and fun!"
But I, here in my own poor heart,
have pain and longing, and I run.'

12. HIOTIKOS MANES (Yangos Psamatialis, Constantinople ca. 1910). GOR # 21.

*An ímuna ki an ímuna
ghíros tu fustanyú su,
Tha éskiva na évlepa
tin trípa tu munyú su.*

'If I were and if I were
the hem of your skirt,

I'd stoop to see that what?
The hole of your twat'.

The latter text is reportedly a juvenile humorous folk-couplet, known in various regions of the Greek world. Psamatialis has it as a *ballos* (called a 'Manés from Chios').

I have tried in my rendering to supply an equivalent for the punning device of the Greek: the phrase *imuna ki* 'I were and-', repeated in performance, encrypting *munáki*, diminutive of *muni*, the vulgar word for 'vulva, vagina', which occurs overtly in the genitive form *munyú* of the last line. The song is one of a series (of which three sides are known to me) of recordings by Psamatialis (= Psamatianos, Psomathianos etc.) of ca. 1910, called "Bordello" (Greek *Bordhélo*), of which two sides, each consisting of a Minore Manes with tango (the tune mentioned above), are designated as "Smyrneíko manes (Smyrneicos Manes)", see *Greek-Oriental Rebetika*, booklet pp. 17-20, with label photograph on p. 18). These recordings, with their obscene lyrics, should not be seen as evidence for the "rough" nature of what was much later called "rebetika", but rather as novelty songs put forth by Psamatialis; their profanities have no parallels in the discography. According to my late friend Dino Pappas (remembered by Hank Bradley in this volume), whose long-living Constantinopolitan mother knew Psamatialis personally, the latter was given to all manner of joking, which she regarded as reflecting a characteristic of the Greeks of her native city.

Discs and discoveries

As with other pursuits, I have found that the search for 78 rpm rebetika records and the data they provide brings about a field of marvelous coincidences. I shall now give two especially memorable examples.

I think it was in 1982 that I visited the late important rebetologist-collector Spyros Papaïoannou in his Athens apartment. During our first meeting, he expressed an interest in the famed Turkish singer Hafız Burhan's recording of "Her Yer Karanlık" [Darkness Everywhere].

Here I must digress. I was well acquainted with the song, also called "Makber" [The Grave], a lament for the death of a child, because I had the Burhan disc in Berkeley, and I had reissued the shorter of Dalgas' two recordings of the melody, with Greek lyrics on another sad theme, "O Ponos tis Xenitias". I probably also knew the excellent New York recordings of the song in Turkish by Achilleas Poulos and by Roza Eskenazi, although it may have been later that I heard the beautiful Judeo-Spanish New York rendition "Lagrimas Vertereí" by Victoria Hazan. I had, shortly before my visit to Spyros Papaïoannou, seen the disc of Marika "Politissa" Frantzeskopoulou's Greek version, entitled *Er Gier Karanlik* (with label logo of a woman looking at her face in a hand-mirror), in a small shoe factory on the outskirts of Monastiraki. The shoemaker, Nikos Rafeletos, now long departed, also showed me a disc (Odeon? Orfeon?) which Dalgas recorded when still in Istanbul, but being suspicious of me or too busy, Mr Rafeletos played neither record. The clearest reissue of the Frantzeskopoulou recording is the title track on Mississippi Record's "All Parts Dark", = the very literal translation of the opening Greek phrase *Óla ta méri skotiná* [Darkness everywhere]. The recording is also online as a posting by Georgios K. Michalakakis, with interesting and meticulous graphic analyses of the sound and comparisons with the old phrasing of Greek Orthodox chant. While I shall not comment on the opinions in that posting which do not pertain immediately to Frantzeskopoulou, I agree that, among many excellent woman singers of her period and style on disc, she was the greatest. I take this opportunity to add that she was the only singer amid her peers whose *Aráþika* have genuine Arabic-style vocal coloration.

Back to my visit with Spyros Papaïoannou. I recall that I told him, in the course of our conversation, that I knew the record he was seeking. The next day I returned to Monastiraki, and I entered a little record shop in the area. I asked the owner, in Greek, if he had 78s, and he pointed to a bin which turned out to have some American recordings –

Tommy or Jimmy Dorsey, and maybe even a beat-up copy of that bane of collectors, Bing Crosby's "White Christmas", and the like. I asked, "Is that all you have?", and the owner nodded, "that's it". I looked at him and found myself saying, "About twenty years ago, before I became a collector, on a little street not far from here, there was a one-chair barber, with American LPs of banjo etc. in the back, and going up the side walls were Greek 78s in plastic containers" The storekeeper said either "*EGHÓ ime o kuréas*" or "*O kuréas im' EGHÓ* ('I'M the barber'); THAT was the time you should have bought."

He locks up the shop (it was about closing time anyway), shows me out the door, and unlocks and rolls up a corrugated metal sheet, revealing some shelves with some 78s and tells me to have a look. I see a recording of Roza's "To Gri-gri", which I put aside (I had a cleaner copy in Berkeley, but still ...), and a beautiful copy of Hafız Burhan's "Her Yer Karanlık". I show him the 2 discs, he charges me a pittance, we thank one another, and off I go to find a pay phone. I call Spyro, tell him I have something for him, may I come by? He asks where I am, and he sends his wife to pick me up.

Back at his apartment, I hand him the Burhan. He looks at the recording, I think his jaw really dropped – at least his eyes went wide, and he says: "I know every street and alley and store in Athens which could have old discs, and I've looked for this one for years, and in a day's time you, this American chap (*esí o Amerikanákis*), bring it to me. Where did you find it?" I, not being able to resist being the master of mystery, say, "It doesn't matter, Spyro mu— you wanted it, and now you have it."

In return, he gave me a 10" disc on the Cairo Setrak Mechian "Lion" label – dark blue and white, with a golden lion. Both sides featured as singer a Chrysa Vavdyla; the songs were each, I knew, recorded by several Asia Minor singers in Athens in the late '20s, "Omologies" and "Mangiko" ("Skerstopetahto"). Having had an earlier obtained (by trade with a collector, the late Pete Poulos of Missoula, Montana) Setrak Mechian recording(10½", red and black label showing two rampant lions heraldically flanking a disc) of a "Syrtos Smyrnéikos" and "Syrtos Ballos" by a clarinetist with the Egypto-Greek name Ivraïmáki (*sic*), I was happy to have a disc by a Cairene or Alexandrian Greek chanteuse, all the more since I was especially interested in recordings of "Mangiko" (see below), one of which, by Dalgas, had been brought to me from Belgium by an ethnomusicologist and scholar of opera, Riccardo La Spina (I had craved an old version ever since I heard the song as rendered by Glykeria in the background of breakfast in a touristic hotel near Syntagma; providentially hearing that was worth my brief stay in that dispiriting place). It turned out that the Smyrna-born Vavdyla recorded a number of songs in Athens in the early 1930s, and my "Lion" disc was probably among those records notoriously pirated by Mechian.

How I obtained two of my rarest 78s: I refer to two ca. 1910 Favorite Psamatialis discs mentioned in the preceding section as together containing three sides designated "Bordello"; the fourth side is a doina called "kleftiko" by a "Pantelonas" who may have been Yankos Psamatialis' accordionist brother Vasilis. Several years ago I was offered \$350.00 for each of the two discs (and have recently been offered more); they may be uniquely preserved copies. I found them as follows: Ca. the late 1970s I was told by a fellow collector about a place in the San Francisco East Bay Area which had 78s. It was a small factory, redolent of varnish, wood, and glue, devoted to reconditioning and/or making furniture, and located in a failing minor industrial area near defunct railroad tracks close to the Bay Area Rapid Transit stop for Fruitvale, a district largely inhabited by poor Mexican-Americans. The proprietor (whose wife, it turned out, was a waitress at the International House of Pancakes next to my dwelling) indeed sold 78s, as did his partner of sorts, who had a locksmith concession on the premises. They brought out some uncommon early Kyria Koula discs, as well as the two Favorites, charging for the latter two 50 cents each. I had the locksmith duplicate a key to my home, for which he charged me a dollar. His key didn't work, but I had no complaints about the two Favorite discs, which cost as much.

Before concluding this section, I take the opportunity to note that as a collector in the US I found 78 rpm rebetika in many second-hand stores and middle-class Greek-American homes, which indicates the popularity of the genre in this country. My probably excessive asides in the foregoing are due to my wish to convey the experience of a collector of rebetika in the days before Internet sales, and before old Greek discs could be heard via YouTube, and when reissues, then on LP, were still few, and when via often intrinsically interesting peregrinations one could get all manner of fascinating discs for hardly any money and often with memorable human exchanges, and synchronicities to add to the sense of wonder.

Hasidica and hasiclidica

In mentioning above my interest in “Mangiko”, I refer to my long ago noticing (and calling attention to, in reissue liner notes) its close relationship to the Yiddish song “Yoshke Fort Avek”, which musicologically is much at home among Yiddish melodic types. An original aspect of my research on Greek music has in fact been the demonstration of melodic connections between Greek music, including rebetika, and the klezmer/Yiddish repertory, including hasidic tunes (cf. Nikos Ordoulidis’ marvelously rich paper in this volume), explained by long contact between Greek and Jewish professional musicians in Phanariot Eastern Europe, particularly in Moldavo-Wallachia, where Greeks and Jews played in the same ensembles under the Ottoman guild system; in Odessa, where there was a Greek and a Jewish underworld, and where Yiddish/klezmer music predominated in high and low social contexts; and in Constantinople, which had a large Eastern Ashkenazic presence (alongside the more numerous Sephardic Jews), and where indeed are even attested, as I have found, two klezmer (i.e. Eastern Ashkenazic instrumental) groups which performed Greek and Jewish music on Constantinopolitan discs of the period 1908-1911.

Here is a lecture I gave in the summer of 2022 focusing on some Yiddish origins of rebetic tunes (my “last decades [of the Phanariots]” was a lapse from “last centuries”):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0LOVCPbRe8>

Next, a lecture I prepared in 2014 to be played at Ed Emery’s Hydra event of that year. My focus was on my finding in Istanbul the earliest (1906) recording of the melody of “Ta Paidia tis Aminas” (the opening tune of Ferris’ film “Rembetiko”) and its klezmer-derived flip side, and comparisons of both with klezmer examples:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqg-Zqp6LLo>

[I have recently discovered two Constantinopolitan klezmer performances of the melody, one by Orchestre Goldberg (1909) and the other by Orchestre Orfeon 1911. For both discographic and choreographic considerations, I now regard the melody as being of Jewish origin.]

Fictions and depictions

My final contribution here consists of old cartoon fantasies of mine inspired by my pursuits of old rebetic discs. All resemblance to real people and places is completely incidental. Two cartoons are of “Rozeska Nazli” and “Rita Atzabi”, whose surnames I derive resp. from Turkish ‘coquettish, coy, delicate’ and ‘what a wonder!’ I add that Rozeska Nazli was called by her youthful Sephardic detractors “La Roza Espinase” (‘The Rose Pricks Herself’), or “La Roza Espinoza” (‘The Thorny Rose’), both in allusion to the Judeo-Spanish folksong “La Roza Enflorese”. Both drawings originated from “found objects”, as described below. The next two cartoons, “The Maniac Manedzis” and “Kleph Pussycattleherder”, proceed from otherwise useless puns.



Fig 1: *Rozeska Nazli*, M. Schwartz

The cartoon of *Rozeska Nazli* is drawn upon an orientalist book illustration of an Egyptian lady with her child servants, and a male attendant rowing them; I superimposed my drawing of *Rozeska*'s face, gave her a rose, updated the servants, and supplied pines and moonlight, in accordance with the 1936 "Apopse An Thelis" ("Tonight, If You Want"), the Semsis–Tomboulis Greek adaptation of the Turkish romantic song "Bu Gece Çamlarda Kalsak Ne Olur", composed by the Armenian Kanuni Artaki Candan and the Jewish lyricist Avram Naum. The Greek lyrics end with 'Tonight, if you want, all (apóψε an thélis óla) things will happen'. The rower, now a disgruntled suitor, complains "When she said 'Tonight ... all', I didn't think she meant all her kids!"

The caption of "Rita the Eyebrows" [below] was obtained by photocopying a page of a story I found upon rereading an old Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine (my father and I had enjoyed Hitchcock's TV presentations. and I would occasionally buy the magazine to share with him). I made two horizontal cuts and two vertical cuts by scissor, and I extracted the text, which I put into a scroll border and drew the illustrative cartoon.

I have long had no memory of the author, title, or plot of the story in the original context from which I extracted my caption. The cartoon story invites some lyrics as to its conclusion (for which, as for the lyrics accompanying the third cartoon, I offer approximate translations):

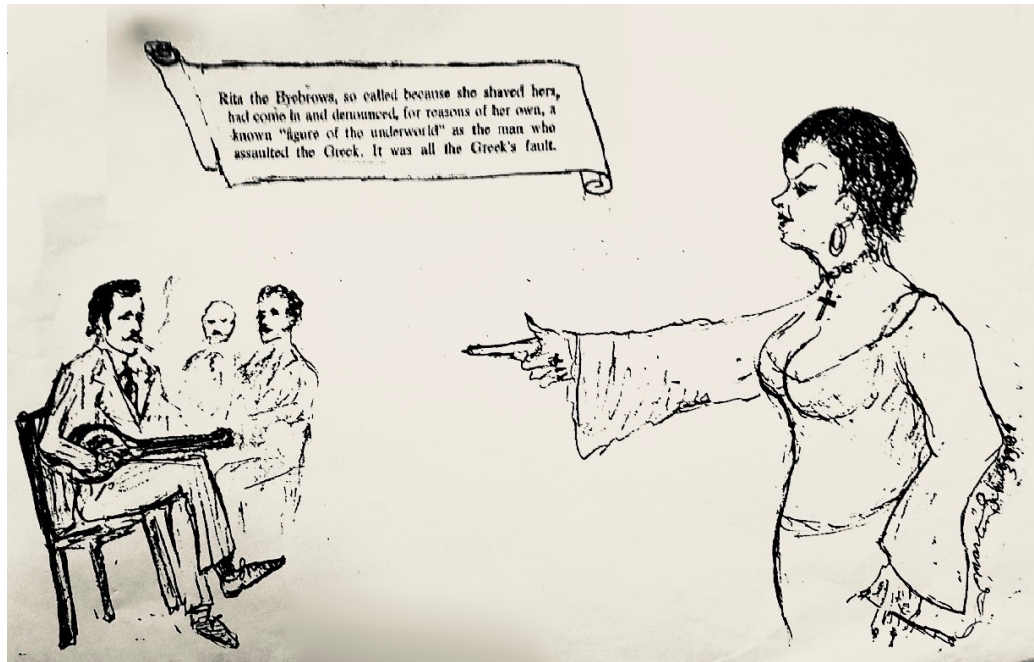


Fig. 2: Rita Atzabi (Rita the Eyebrows), M. Schwartz

*Bíke i Ríta sto kutúki
nátos o mángas me buzúki.
“Pápse, manga, aftín ti musikí,
edhó ine o bátsos, ke ‘sí pás filakí.”*

‘Playing his bouzouki, with some buddies sat the lout;
down in the taverna, Rita points him out.
“Enough of all your playing, time for it to stop:
off to jail for you now, and now here’s the cop.”’



Fig. 3: Maniac Manedzís. M. Schwartz

“Maniac Manedzís” (“O Manedhomanís”) shows a demented Greek who at evening would dress up as a muezzin or “hódzas”, ascend a turreted tower, and sing amateurish *amanédhes*. Judging from a single example, his *amanédhes* even used the exclamations as part of the metrical text and for actual end-rhymes. Some may claim that the mania of the “muezzin” and its cartoon itself were brought about by the famous imagistically

poignant 1947 Stamoulis–Vasiliadis–Haskil collaboration “Bir Allah”, or its heavy-duty memorable “cover” by Giannis Papaioannou. In fact, when the drawing was made in 1984, the cartoonist did not know the song “Bir Allah”; the song did not “inspire” the cartoon, but only last month did the song “conspire” with the cartoon to produce the pseudo-*hodza*’s amané:

*San vghéno ‘ghó, amán, ston minaré
o ‘ghó, amán, amán, arghá san surupóni,
meddedé, ahh, vr’amán, yavriim yaré
me htipán, amán amán, ahh ke vahh, i póni.*

‘When I go out upon the minaret,
late, in the gloom of evening,
Oo, with rue, and man-oh-man, regret,
I’m smitten by such grieving!’



Fig. 4: *The Kleph Pussycattleherder*. M. Schwartz

Finally, “The Kleph Pussycattleherder”. While it is not “rebetic” in theme, it serves to repeat the fact that the composers of *rebétika* also produced rural-style songs, including themes of shepherds and klephts, as well as comic songs.

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