

## **12. Tropes and modes: terminological problems in Modern Greek in historical musicology**

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### **SUMMARY**

Some problems of terminology in Modern Greek concerning music history are demonstrated, especially for music before 1700, with examples from the categories musical genres and forms, musical instruments and musical termini technici. Basic material for the study is the vocabulary of seven books on Western music history in Modern Greek, published between 1917 and 1995.

## **Μουσικο-τροπίες: προβλήματα ορολογίας στα νέα ελληνικά στην ιστορική μουσικολογία**

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### **ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ**

Επιδεικνύονται μερικά προβλήματα της νεοελληνικής ορολογίας στο πεδίο της ιστορίας της μουσικής, ειδικά για την μουσική πριν από το 1700, με παραδείγματα από τις κατηγορίες: Μουσικά είδη και μορφές, μουσικά όργανα, και μουσικά termini technici. Βασικό υλικό της μελέτης είναι το λεξιλόγιο επτά βιβλίων για την ιστορία της Δυτικής μουσικής, τα οποία δημοσιεύτηκαν μεταξύ του 1917 και του 1995.

### **1 Introduction**

Speaking or writing with precision about music and especially music history in Modern Greek is not always easy, because Western musical terminology has developed slowly since the Middle Ages and thus is not always consistent, and furthermore because part of this terminology, which is still developing, had to be adopted and adapted in Modern Greek, due to the growing musical life and interest in music history in Greece, roughly within the last hundred years. This adaptation has been undertaken by individuals, mainly translators of Western works on music history, in the beginning often without any mutual coordination or consideration. A look on the specialized vocabulary of several older and newer works on

the history of Western music in Modern Greek is revealing in this respect. In this study I will try to give an impression of some terminological problems, considering the specialized vocabulary of the histories of music in Greek, mostly translations, by Koestlin (1917, first ed. 1908, with German original), Landormy (1931, with French original), Dufourcq (1947, after French edition 1942), Nef (1985, first ed. 1958, after German and French editions of 1945 and 1948 respectively), Vuillermoz (1979-80, after French ed. 1976), Headington (1993, after English ed. 1974), Γιάννου (1994), and Michels (1994-1995, after German ed. 1991). These works are designated for conservatory students and amateurs, so they are not exceedingly specialized, with the exception of Γιάννου, which has been written for University students of music. The first three works are out of print, whereas the others are still available.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the vocabulary, I refer to three categories: nomenclature of musical genres and forms, names of musical instruments and certain musical termini technici.

## **2 Musical terminology in Modern Greek**

### **2.1 Music of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century**

Musical life in Greece of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, flourishing especially in the Ionian Islands and expanding to Athens, the Greek capital since 1833, was strongly influenced by Italy. So it is not astonishing that a great deal of Greek musical terminology which has been in general use from that time consists of direct borrowings from Italian, e. g. for musical forms and genres like the sonata (σονάτα), the opera (όπερα,) and the “re-imported” symphony (συμφωνία), notwithstanding some exceptions from French, as the suite (σουίτα) and its dances, as a rule in Italianate form.<sup>2</sup> (European music of the eighteenth century, by the way, was under Italian and French influence, thus we find many internationalisms from Italian or French in musical terminology). The same holds, to a certain degree, for the names of the classical instruments. Sometimes there are minor changes, e. g. the violin is βιολί, It. violino,

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<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, at present there exist two general dictionaries of music in Modern Greek:

- Εγκυκλοπαίδεια παγκόσμιας μουσικής. 8 Τόμοι. Αθήνα: Αλκυων, 1993. Μετάφραση του: Enciclopedia Bompiani. Musica. Milano: Gruppo Fabbri, Bompiani, 1985.

- Κένεντι, Μάικλ [Michael Kennedy]: Το μουσικό λεξικό της Οξφόρδης. 3 τόμοι. Αθήνα: Γιαλλελη, χ.Χ. [μετά το 1989].

The latter is preferable because it adds the original English terms in brackets and gives in the majority of cases Greek terms which are in use, whereas the first is often creative when a dictionary should not be, giving, e.g. ακύρωση for (probably) cassation.

<sup>2</sup> For the suite, see Raftopoulos/ Gartzopoulos (2001).

the trombone τρομπόνι, It. trombone, and the clarinet κλαρινέτο or κλαρίνο, the latter preferable for the clarinet used in folk music since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For many instruments, however, additionally there exist genuine Greek names from the older written Modern Greek (καθαρεύουσα), like horn (κόρνο / κέρας), sometimes directly taken over from a – different, of course - ancient Greek instrument, e. g. violoncello (βιολοντσέλο / βάρβιτος). Many names bear a characterizing addition, as, e. g., flute (φλάουτο / πλαγιάυλος), oboe (όμποε / οξύαυλος), but there exist also new creations, as piano (πιάνο / κλειδοκύμβαλο) or double bass (κοντραμπάσο / βαθύχορδο). Some terms for musical forms have been translated into καθαρεύουσα, too, as, for instance, fugue (φούγκα /φυγή). For most concepts in music theory denominations are Greek: not only – of course - harmony (αρμονία), but also counterpoint (αντίστιξη)<sup>3</sup>, imitation (μίμηση), chord (συγχορδία), major/minor (μείζονα / ελάσσονα, but also Italian ματζόρε/ μινόρε) and so on.

In the cases just described, only occasionally we find ambiguities in the form of synonyms - the additional names in καθαρεύουσα and some single other cases (φλικόρνο/ φλύγκελχορν for flugelhorn, from Italian and German, respectively). The term συμφωνία for symphony and harmonic consonance is an example for the relatively rare homonyms.

## 2.2 Music before 1700

### 2.2.1 Musical forms and genres

If we want to talk about more special musical phenomena, and especially from before 1700, things are getting more complicated, though, as for the musical genres and forms, names are usually taken over from their language of origin, as a rule written with Greek characters and in Hellenized form, hence often with different orthographic versions (madrigal: μαδριγάλι, μαντριγάλι, ballet: μπαλλέττο/ μπαλέτο). Sometimes we find a combination of Greek and Latin characters, and some authors prefer writing specialized names in Latin characters throughout. So we have, e. g., aria da capo (Dufourcq, with the explanation “επαναλαμβανόμενη άρια”), άρια da capo (Landormy, Michels) and άρια ντα κάπο (Nef). Occasionally, a term is taken over into Greek in the form of the language of the original book, e.g. in Dufourcq, βαριασιόν instead of παραλλαγή, now in general use, and ριτουρνέλ instead of ριτορνέλλο (part of the Baroque aria and concerto).

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<sup>3</sup> Only in Dufourcq we find κοντραπούντο, whereas Koestlin has αντίσημον. - In citing termini from the seven books which served as a basis for this paper, in most cases I will renounce from referring to pages.

But not all authors/ translators apply this principle throughout. Especially the translator of Koestlin (1917), the oldest book considered here, shows much imagination in creating true Greek nomenclature: for madrigal, e. g., he uses βουκολικόν μέλος or ποιμενικόν άσμα, with the etymology mandra = ποιμήν (flock), gal = άσμα (song in καθαρεύουσα). Motet is rendered as αποφθεγματικόν άσμα, from απόφθεγμα = motto, sentence, villanella as αγοραϊόν άσμα, and fugue as κλιμακωτόν μέλος. Fortunately, he always initially adds the original (German) term in brackets. The Renaissance pastorale appears in Koestlin as ειδύλλιο, in Landormy as βουκολικό, whereas newer books prefer the original term. But in more recent books, too, terms for certain musical genres are partly or wholly rendered in Greek: αυλικό μπαλέτο /μπαλλέτο or μπαλέτο της αυλής (Landormy) for ballet de cour, for instance, is unequivocal, but νυχτερινό (in Vuillermoz) could be nocturno or serenade – which latter should be βραδινό, but this term is already occupied and means dinner. Κωμική όπερα (comic opera) is often used not only as a broader generic term, but also for more specific genres, French opera comique, Italian opera buffa, German komische Oper of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and sometimes even for operetta. The traditional Greek term for opera, μελόδραμα, collides with the far more specific German Melodram (music and spoken dialogue synchronously). Thus, taking over the latter term directly into Greek (as in Michels: μελόδραμα or μονόδραμα) is slightly confusing. Guillaume de Machaut's ελεγείες (only in Landormy), on the other hand, cause some guesswork until one realizes that the translator means Machaut's lais.

As for different types of song, there is also some confusion. Sometimes, any type of song is referred to as τραγούδι, no matter whether it is French air (Baroque solo song and dance tunes), chanson, Tenorlied (polyphonic song types before 1600, French and German, respectively), or the German Lied from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, for solo voice and keyboard accompaniment (ακκομπανιαμέντο, συνοδεία, υπόκρουση), with hints for the accurate meaning only from context. Of course, to a certain degree this is due to the fact that most of the books, as mentioned above, are written for amateurs. Nevertheless in most of the books considered here we find at least some efforts in distinguishing between different types, e. g. αυλικό τραγούδι and λιντ/λίηντ (Dufuorcq),.

### 2.2.2 Musical instruments

In the names given in Greek to older musical instruments, divergences are often caused by the fact that many of them have different names in different languages, which are transferred into Greek depending on the language of the translated text. In addition, as we have seen yet for the names of genres, it is of course possible, instead of taking a name

directly into Greek, to construct an analogous term with Greek origin. The catalogue of instruments given by Claudio Monteverdi in his “Orfeo”, 1609, one of the earliest operas, and its renderings in Landormy (p. 83) and Koestlin (p.206) are instructive in this respect.

Koestlin	Landormy	Monteverdi <sup>4</sup>	Glover
2 κλειδοκύμβαλα	2 βαρυκύμβαλα	2 gravicembali	2 harpsichords
2 βιολόνια	2 κοντραβάσσα της βιόλας	2 contrabassi de Viola	2 double basses
10 βιόλα (da braccio)	10 βιόλες-μπράτσο	10 Viole da braccio	5-part strings: violins (I+II), violas (I+II) violoncellos
1 διπλή άρπα	1 διπλή άρπα	1 Arpa doppia	1 double harp
2 μικρά βιολιά (alla francese)	2 μικρά βιολιά	2 Violoni piccolo alla Francese	2 small solo violins
2 μεγάλοι κιθάροι (chitarrone)	2 κιθαρόνια	2 Chitaroni	2 chitarroni
2 ξύλινα όργανα	2 ξύλινα όργανα	2 Organi di Legno	2 organs
2 βιολόνια των γονάτων	3 μπάσσα	3 bassi da gamba	3 viols (viole da gamba)
4 βυκάναι	4 τρομπόνια	4 Tromboni	4 trombones
1 περιφοριτό όργανο (regal)	1 όργανον ρεγάλε	1 Regale	1 regal
2 κερατίνας	2 κορνέττα	2 Cornetti	2 cornettos
1 αυλίσκος (alla vigesima secunda)	1 φλαουτίνο	1 Flautino alla Vigesima seconda	1 recorder
1 πλαγίαυλος, 3 σάλπιγγες μετά πνιγέως	1 κλαρίνο 3 τρόμπες υπόκουφες	1 Clarino con 3 trombe sordine	4 trumpets, one in high register, three with sordine (damper)

(The last column has been added according to the explanations in Glover (1986)).

In the following, I will list some examples of older instruments which are mentioned in most of the considered books, from different groups of instruments, in order to illustrate variants and differences in terminology for the above mentioned reasons. The books are referred to in chronological order.

<sup>4</sup> According to the facsimile of the 1609 edition of Monteverdi's Orfeo, Monteverdi (1998).

### Chordophones:

- *plucked, of the lute type (lute, theorbo, chitarra, archlute):*

μεγάλη κιθάρα (Koestlin, for E. de Cavalieri's archiliuto), λαούτο, θεόρβη, κιθαρόνη (Landormy), λαούτο, τεόρμπ (Dufourcq), λαούτο, θεόρβη (Nef, ), λαούτο, θεόρβη, κιταρόνε, αρχιλαούτο (Michels).

- *bowed (viol / viola da gamba; medieval fiddle / vielle / Geige):*

βιόλες (Landormy, for viols), βιόλα ντα γκάμπα (Nef, Vuillermoz, Michels) βιέλ(λ)α (Landormy, Dufourcq, Vuillermoz, Headington, Michels).

- *with keyboard (harpsichord /it. cembalo/fr. Clavecin; virginal; spinet/spinetto/epinette; clavichord):*

κλαβικόμβαλο / κλαβεσέν; κλαβιχόρδιον (Landormy), κλαβισέμπαλουμ, βίρτζιναλ, επινέτ (Dufourcq), κλαβεσέν, βιρτζινάλι, σπινέτο (Nef), τσέμπαλο, βιργινάλι, σπινέττα, κλαβικόρντ (Vuillermoz), τσέμπαλο / αρπίχορδο/ κλαβεσέν, βιργινάλι, κλαβίχορδο / κλειδόχορδο (Headington), τσέμπαλο, virginal, σπινέτο (Γιάννου), βίρτζιναλ / παρθένιο, σπινέττο, κλαβίχορδο (Michels).

A special case which is worth mentioning is the hurdy-gurdy, a chordophone of medieval origin in which a wheel underneath the strings, turned by means of a handle, plays the role of the bow. Its many names in different languages (fr. vielle a roue, chifonie, ger. Drehleier, Radleier, it. lyra tedesca, ghironda, sambuca, rotate, lat. symphonia, and, for its bigger version, organistrum)<sup>5</sup> are rendered in Greek like this: βιέλλα (Nef), βιέλλα με ρόδα / σιφονί (Dufourcq), βιέλλα με χερούλι / βιέλλα με τροχό / σιφονία (Vuillermoz), βιέλα με ρόδα / οργανίστρο (Headington), οργανίστρο (Γιάννου), βιέλλα με τροχό / οργανίστρο (Michels).

### Aerophones:<sup>6</sup>

- *with reeds (shawm/bombarde, crumhorn/fr. cromorne, pipes, chalumeau):*

οξύαυλος (Landormy, for shawm, homonym with oboe, as in French hautbois),μπομπάρντ, κρομόρν, κορνεμύζ/γκάϊδα, σαλυμώ (Dufourcq), βομβάρδα, κρομόρνη, άσκαυλος, κάλαμος (Nef),μπομπάρδα, κρομόρνα, μουζέττα/άσκαυλος (Vuillermoz), σαλυμό(!)/οξύαυλος, κρομόρνη, άσκαυλος (Headington),μπομπάρδα, κρομόρνη, άσκαυλος (Γιάννου), σαλμέλη/ζουρνάς/βομβάρδη, κρομόρνη, άσκαυλος/γκάϊντα/μουζέττα, chalumeau (Michels).

- *other (cornetto/ger. Zink; recorder/fr. flute douce or flute a bec / ger. Blockfloete; flute/ fr.*

<sup>5</sup> see, e.g., Baines/Bowles/Green (2001)

<sup>6</sup> The list in Koestlin, p.150, with renaissance wind instruments (κάλαμοι, σύριγγες, βαρύαυλοι, ευθύαυλοι, πλαγίαυλοι, σάλπιγγες, κέρατα, κερατίνας) cannot be decoded with certainty without consulting the German original. Probably, κάλαμος means shawm and κερατίνα is cornetto.

*flute allemande or flute traversiere*):

Ξύλινο κόρνο, αυλός με στόμιον / γλυκίαυλος, γερμανικός αυλός (Landormy). Κορνέτο, φλάουτο με ράμφος, πλάγιο φλάουτο (Dufourcq). Κορνέτο, ευθύαυλος με ράμφος, πλαγίαυλος (Nef). Κορνέτο, φλάουτο με τάπα / αυλός με ράμφος, (Vuillermoz). Κορνέτα παλιά, φλάουτο με ράμφος/φλογέρα, φλάουτο (Headington). Κορνέτο, φλάουτο με τάπα / φλάουτο με ράμφος, πλαγίαυλος/φλογέρα (Γιάννου). Κορνέτο, φλάουτο με ράμφος, φλάουτο/πλαγίαυλος (Michels).

As expected, we observe most terminological differences with instruments that have entirely different names in several European languages, in some of them more than one, as, e. g., the recorder, in the last of the above groups.

### 2.2.3. Some musical termini technici

From the vast field of termini technici for ancient music I will confine myself on some special cases in medieval music.

In Western liturgical monophony, known as Gregorian chant or plainchant (Dufourcq, Headington: ισόρρυθμο μέλος, Vuillermoz: κάντο πλάνο, new construction from cantus planus and it. Canto piano, as the translator remarks, Γιάννου: cantus planus and χορικό, from ger. Choral), melodies are organized according to the eight church modes or tones, that is, eight different scales, each with characteristic melodic formulae. All sources render these as εκκλησιαστικοί τρόποι, as translation of the Latin modus. Γιάννου has in addition τόνοι. The word tropus, from Greek via Latin, on the other hand means in plainchant a musical and/or textual addition to an existing piece, and is rendered as τρόπος, too, which causes confusion, especially because the word τρόπος is present also in Greek everyday language with several different meanings. But the case is not ending here.

In French polyphony of the Notre Dame School, about 1200, part of the vocal genres of organum (όργανον/όργανουμ) and discantus (in Greek literature mostly rendered in Roman characters)<sup>7</sup> move in certain rhythmic patterns, the so-called rhythmic modes (lat.modi, Greek in all sources which mention them: ρυθμικοί τρόποι).

In the first case (the scales), there is a strong analogy to the Byzantine Oktoechos, but none of the translators/authors dares to use ήχος (tone) for the Western modes, which would be suitable and convenient, apart from the fact that in earlier medieval theory we read about four(!) tropi, each of them with an authentic and a plagal version, and each of them with a

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<sup>7</sup> But Koestlin: διάψαλμα, Landormy: διαφωνία, which, however, in general means dissonance.

melodic intonation formula with text “noneane” or similar, like the απήχημα of the Byzantine modes. On the contrary, Landormy (I, p. 23) mentions οκτώ τρόποι of the Byzantine Church –obviously translating “modes” instead of using the appropriate Greek term.

In other cases, too, Greek ecclesiastical vocabulary would be very suitable for parallel phenomena in Western medieval church music, starting with the canticles, which usually are rendered too general as ύμνοι - in fact they are the biblical ωδές, but choosing this term will bring difficulties in the rendering of the baroque odes -, and ending with the hours of the office (ακολουθία των ωρών). Here, usually vespers are correctly translated with εσπερινός, but for the other hours Γιάννου (p.123) is the only one to mention the Eastern analogues.

### 3. Epilogue

The examples given here will be sufficient, I hope, to show that terminology of music history in Modern Greek is rich - but not unambiguous. One of the many problems is the use of terms with Greek origin in other European languages which are re-imported and often clash with Greek translation of other Western terms, a case probably not foreign to other disciplines. Within the last decennia, however, a tendency of unification and precision can be observed, autochthon Greek terms, beautiful and often fanciful, are giving way to the international ones. Still there is still much to be done, especially if we should want to join some day the important polyglot dictionary of musical terminology, up to now in seven languages.<sup>8</sup> Greek should be the eighth.

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<sup>8</sup> Terminorum musicae index (1980).

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### **Ίρμγκαρτ Λερχ-Καλαβρυτινού**

Τμήμα Μουσικών Σπουδών  
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