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Space as an ark and ghetto or as a field of action and social change?

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Abstract

Space was always considered as the prominent *topos* of classification of both the similar and the diverse (i.e. working houses, high class neighbourhoods, prisons, special schools, psychiatric clinics, asylums). Space has a formative power. Through space one can recognize the ways social relations are built and maintained. Space is closely related with knowledge and power. Space is analyzed through different approaches and sciences: representations of space (social constructions), spatial practices (perceptions) and the lived space (architecture, human geography). In this paper, we present data gathered through an ethnographic study which was carried through from January 2012 to December 2013. We drew our research tools from an array of tools used in the fields of geography, architecture, history and education and we utilised Soja's construct (1989) of socio-spatial dialectic. The study aimed at decoding Roma space in a multilateral way using several areas of space-interest (commonly used spaces, ways of housing construction, centres, home-school distance). We reflect upon ex parte categories which exist up to now and define Roma space as ghetto space, recognizing the role society plays in reproducing dominance and order. We attemptto view Roma space through their need to rupture the "normalised" space and create new meanings for space and social relations. We use image-based data so that Roma voices for space are heard.

Keywords: space, Roma, education

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Ο χώρος ως κιβωτός και γκέτο ή ως πεδίο δράσης και κοινωνικής αλλαγής;

Γιώτα Καραγιάννη & Φωτεινή Κουγιουμτζάκη

Περίληψη

Ο χώρος θεωρούνταν πάντα ως ο κατεξοχήν τόπος ταξινόμησης τόσο της ομοιότητας όσο και της ετερότητας (π.χ. εργατικές κατοικίες, γειτονιές ανώτερης τάξης, φυλακές, ειδικά σχολεία, ψυχιατρικές κλινικές, άσυλα). Ο χώρος έχει διαμορφωτική δύναμη. Μέσα σε αυτόν μπορεί κανείς να αναγνωρίσει τους τρόπους με τους οποίους χτίζονται και διατηρούνται οι κοινωνικές σχέσεις. Ο χώρος είναι στενά συνδεδεμένος με τη γνώση και τη δύναμη. Αναλύεται μέσα από διαφορετικές προσεγγίσεις και επιστήμες: αναπαραστάσεις του χώρου (κοινωνικές κατασκευές), χωρικές πρακτικές (αντιλήψεις) και του βιωμένου χώρου (αρχιτεκτονική, ανθρωπογεωγραφία). Σε αυτή την εργασία, παρουσιάζουμε δεδομένα που συλλέχθηκαν μέσω μιας εθνογραφικής μελέτης που διεξήχθη από τον Ιανουάριο του 2012 έως τον Δεκέμβριο του 2013. Αντλήσαμε τα ερευνητικά μας εργαλεία από μια σειρά εργαλείων που χρησιμοποιούνται στους τομείς της γεωγραφίας, της αρχιτεκτονικής, της ιστορίας και της εκπαίδευσης και χρησιμοποιήσαμε την κατασκευή της κοινωνικο-χωρικής διαλεκτικής του Soja (1989). Η μελέτη στόχευσε στην αποκωδικοποίηση του χώρου των Ρομά με πολυμερή τρόπο χρησιμοποιώντας διάφορους τομείς χωροενδιαφέροντος (κοινώς χρησιμοποιούμενοι χώροι, τρόποι κατασκευής κατοικιών, κέντρα, απόσταση σπιτιού-σχολείου). Αναλογιζόμαστε τις ex parte κατηγορίες που υπάρχουν μέχρι σήμερα και ορίζουμε τον χώρο των Ρομά ως χώρο γκέτο, αναγνωρίζοντας τον ρόλο που διαδραματίζει η κοινωνία στην αναπαραγωγή της κυριαρχίας και της τάξης. Επιχειρούμε να δούμε τον χώρο των Ρομά μέσα από την ανάγκη τους να διαρρήξουν τον «κανονικοποιημένο» χώρο και να δημιουργήσουν νέα νοήματα για τον χώρο και τις κοινωνικές σχέσεις. Χρησιμοποιούμε δεδομένα που βασίζονται σε εικόνες, ώστε να ακούγονται οι φωνές των Ρομά για χώρο.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: χώρος, Ρομά, εκπαίδευση

Introduction

This study does not deal with space as a Euclidean concept in terms of siting, classifying and naming (types of residence, sewage system, water supply system, road network, distances, school premises). Neither does it treat space as a measurable and neutral geometric surface. This study rather treats space and Roma through the concept of a socio-spatial dialectic (Soja 1989).

Space, namely *oikos* (the Greek word for dwelling/house) and its mapping, are not conceived here as an independent condition/variable. Space determines and affects to a great extent the conception of social time, co-existence in common space, common understandings and social symbolisms.

As stated by Giannakopoulos & Giannitsiotis (2010: 15-16), "spatial thinking allows us to examine the materiality of social relations, namely, to examine the particular spatial locations where materially constituted, social relations are maintained and power becomes a means of imposition, negotiation and resistance."

During the last decades, various sociological and pedagogical studies have shown that societies often identify the different lifestyles (such as those of an insane, of a sick, of a crippled, of a criminal or of a gypsy) with forms of social behaviour attributed to these persons and the groups they belong to, thus erecting "walls" in a symbolic and literal manner by means of spatial dimensions. Groups like the above are thought to be at the margins of the society or even out of its boundaries. Using topographical metaphors to describe social exclusion, is indicative of the conceptually productive power of space and of the fact that space itself supplies evocative metaphors for crystallizing the nature of society and social experience (c.f. Bourdieu, 1999, in Gulson & Symes 2007).

Moreover, according to Foucault space plays a major role in the recognition and exploration of the schema *knowledge/power*. Space has always been the crucial field in which the relation between classificatory identification (social housing structures, middle/upper class districts) and classificatory heterogeneity is regulated (institutions, prisons, psychiatric clinics, poorhouses, asylums). In the past these "walls" were visible and they produced and reproduced fear by means of the "enchanting impact of exception and the impact of punished deviance" (Stavridis, 2010: 254). Therefore, the perception of space is closely associated with the location where the social condition interacts; it also suggests how social relations of production coexist in space and how they are inscribed and reproduced and finally dictate a system of discrimination and resistances. As Massey argues (1993), space is a product of social relations which are most likely conflicting and unequal. Those introductory remarks pose a political questioning about space.

Space and Roma

Within the above theoretical context, the analysis that follows in this paper was produced within the framework of a European Union Program entitled "Education of Roma children in the Regions of Central, Western and Eastern Macedonia, and Thrace"[1]. Our field of operation included approximately 4000 Roma and non-Roma children, 102 schools, as well as 26 settlements and 14 camps (Mitakidou et al., 2015). In Greece, Roma are not formally identified as a minority group: they are considered Greek citizens. However, there are no accurate demographic statistics on their numbers. They can only be identified on the basis of their concentration in certain areas and their lifestyle as a "Roma" community (Mitakidou et al., 2015).

The living conditions of Roma vary. The majority live in settlements composed of built houses or less steady prefabricated constructions, mostly in distinct areas within a city or town. A smaller number of them lives in camps with makeshift constructions or tents or even more wretched living conditions, usually at the edge of cities or towns. Further, some Roma families live in neighbourhoods and home comparable to typical mainstream standards (Mitakidou et al., 2015).

Pict. 1: Dendropotamos (western edge of Thessaloniki, in the urban area)

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[1] *Scientific Responsible:* Prof. Evangelia *Tressou,* Assistant Scientific Responsible: *Prof.* Soula *Mitakidou.*

From the beginning of our involvement with the coordination of the above-mentioned program which focused on the education of Roma children, we had to locate the educational process in its socio-political context. Its nature inevitably and directly links the program to the critical issues of poverty, inequality, social exclusion and human rights, at both local and national level. The educational scene is just a reflection of the larger picture of marginalization and exclusion that characterizes Roma life in Greece as well as in other European countries. We believe that space, boundaries and frontiers are powerful agents in defining social relations within and between different social groups.

Based on the above theoretical assumptions on space and our standpoint on education, we mapped living conditions, population and school space. Part of the mapping process is presented in this paper. Before proceeding to on-site mapping, we considered the institutionalised practices and the available published material in order to prepare this study.

We obtained the official urban typology classifying the types of settlements/camps and residences from the published data of the Public Corporation for Urban Development and Housing, DE.PO.S., (1999)[2] on confronting the immediate housing problems of Greek Gypsies[3]. This classification based on the official urban development plan, is regarded as an objectively existing "scene" which nevertheless is differentiated from the thought process and course of action for humans. So, eight types of housing are being outlined: the three first types as well as the eighth type describe the camps, the fourth and the fifth type include the households located within the urban fabric, the sixth type contains the prefabricated houses provided by the Ministry for the Environment, and the seventh, the organised housing units provided by the Workers' Housing Organisation (OEK).

We may cite below the related typology:

Type 1: Pure settlement in a permanent location mostly with impromptu sheds for permanent or seasonal use.

Type 2: Pure settlement in a location transferred in a wider area for use on a permanent or seasonal basis.

Type 3: Mixed settlement, with the mixture of houses with impromptu sheds, usually for permanent use.

Type 4: Neighbourhood mostly with houses, for permanent use, often in deprived areas located within the urban fabric.

Type 5: Conventional houses or flats dispersed within the urban fabric.

Type 6: Prefabricated houses. New settlements including solely or mostly prefabricated small houses provided by the Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works.

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[2] Public Corporation for Urban Development and Housing (1999). Study of a Program on confronting the immediate housing problems of the Greek Roma, Athens.
[3] Gypsies was the official term used to describe Roma population in Greece, during the '90s.

Type 7: Organised residential area. This type refers only to the new-built area in Sophades, constructed by the Workers' Housing Organisation to accommodate Gypsies who owned land in the old settlement.

Type 8: Mixed settlement of prefabricated houses. This type refers to a residual settlement where prefabricated houses are mixed with houses or impromptu structures (shacks, sheds, etc.). Prefabricated houses can also be found in mixed settlements (type 3), but in a small percentage of the total envelopes.

It is interesting to note that the institutional neutral language of the above typology objectifies the space situation for the Roma population and legalizes a specific professional discourse such as the one of engineers.

Despite the current discourse on communities open to the "other" and the academic "overproduction of otherness", the approach to otherness is strictly based on classifications that each country endorses and their behavioural consequences. The aforementioned official typology shows that otherness stands on the threshold and is found in ghettos, or, as stated by Stavridis (2010), in *heterotopias*. Stavridis specified this model of spatiality as "city of enclaves": "An enclave is just a space to seclude otherness, either in the form of a sentence (ghetto) or a privileged seclusion (protected areas) [...]" (Stavridis 2010: 258). Gated spaces, ghettos, are treated as threatening the order, as embankments weakening social identification, endangering social reproduction. For the collective unconscious these spaces represent the risk of dis-order and non-compliance.[4]
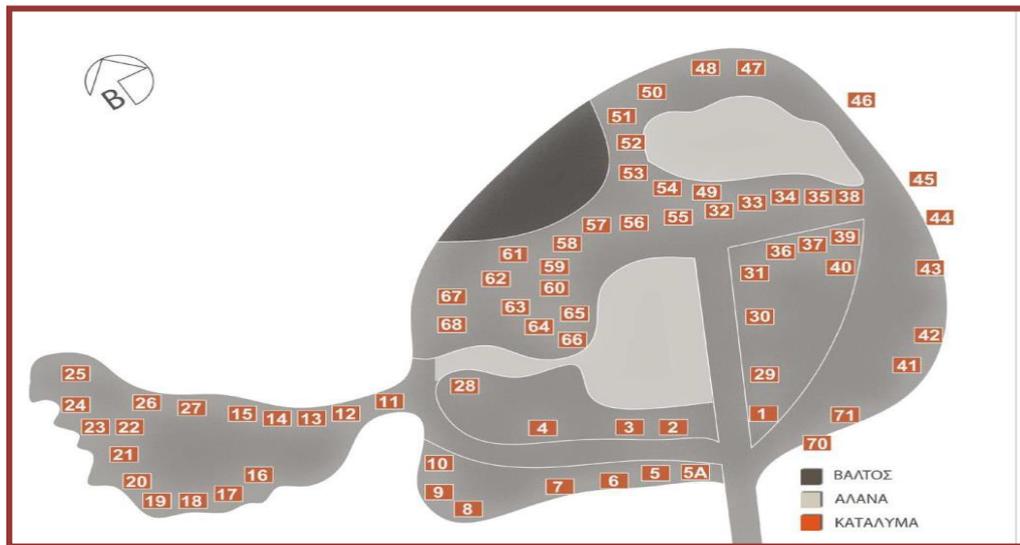
Pict. 2: Peraia. Map of the camp at the eastern edge of Thermaikos gulf, out of the urban tissue – an enclave example

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[4] See related articles on the demolition of buildings and dwellings [in Greek]: Chalandri, http://www.tanea.gr/news/greece/article/5164416/antidraseis-gia-thn-katedafish-toy-kataylismoy-twn-roma-sto-xalandri/, Riganokampos and Makrigiannis in Patras Municipality, https://athens.indymedia.org/post/1498742/, Kladisos, Chania Municipality www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/11_annual_diakriseis and Paliampela in Vasilika, Salamina http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/katedafiseis-aythaireton-mono-gia-roma-sti-salamina after complaints by the citizens that these areas have become a source of contamination and criminality.

In terms of the socio-dialectic approach, we propose two different ways of examining space and Roma. In our first attempt, we try to take into consideration a sociological approach concerning the positioning of "occasional" populations and in the second we attempt to examine the relation of space-poverty and habitation.

The systematic marginalisation of Roma groups and their spatial confinement have been common practices for many decades so far. Commenting on the socio-spatial correlation, Tsoukalas (2010: 67-68) refers to the case of "occasional" population hosted in the so far principally homogeneous spaces without being visible,

> […] even if they are "there", they don't "live" there and they may "be" nowhere. […] Visible but also invisible, *perioikoi*, *apoikoi* (emigrants), *metics* or even inappropriate homeless, wandering transients and *anoikoi* (roofless) without a status and a place in the sun. (Tsoukalas, 2010: 67-68).

Based on this sociological anthropological view, we attempt to position habitation of the Roma of Northern Greece as follows:

a) *PERI-OIKOI* (compound word, by the Greek prefix *peri-* meaning "around" and *oikos*denoting "dwelling"/residence): as being on the borderlines-thresholds of the cities, close to rivers, industrial areas or dumps,

b) *AN-OIKOI* (compound word, with the Greekprefix *a-*which denotes "absence of" as its first element): as dwelling in districts not recognised by the local authorities,

c) *AP-OIKOI* (compound word, having as a second element the Greek prefix *apo-*meaning "from" to suggest "moving from one site to another"): as being moved in designated settlements.

Secondly, in terms of space-poverty and habitation we may recognise three categories of Roma habitation that exist in Northern Greece (Regions of Central, Western and Eastern Macedonia, and Thrace): camps, impoverished settlements and designated neighbourhoods. Those are identified as follows:

1) deprived camps: those of Peraia, Katerini, Ypsomata, Ptolemaida, Ergochori and Trifylopazaro in Veroia,

2) impoverished settlements (ghettos),

   a) impoverished settlements (ghettos), where the inhabitants are Christians or other unspecified and not formally recognised religions: those of Kimmeria, Evlalo, Topeiro, Pontismeno and Irakleia in Serres, and

   b) impoverished Muslim settlements (ghettos): those of Aratos, Alan Kougiou and Drosero,

3) designated neighbourhoods: those of Dendropotamos, Alexandroupoli and Alexandreia.
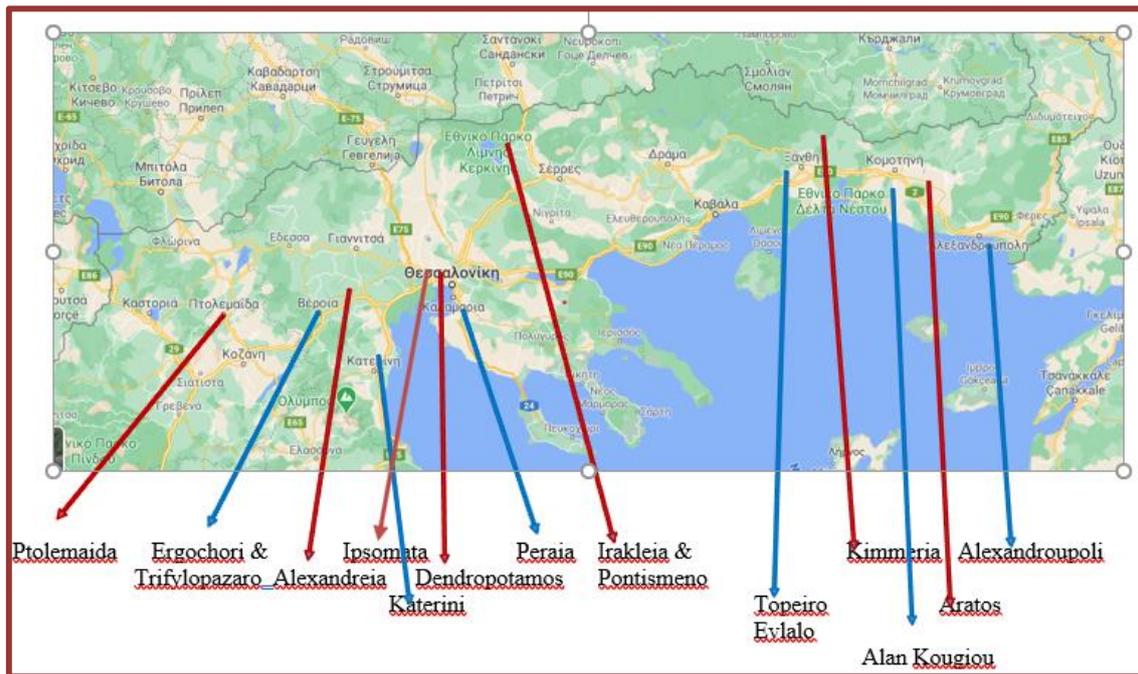
Pict. 3: Map of Northern Greece, with the camps, impoverished settlements and designated neighbourhoods

Both the above cited categorizations of Roma habitation in the Northern Greece regions of Western, Central and Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, show the ways space is used to produce and reproduce particular power relationships between groups in society, sustaining and reproducing existing differences and inequalities.

We may formulate a hypothesis here: If space and otherness are related through statutory solidarity, then this relation is critical in social terms -by examining space we understand more about otherness.

As observed in our research data and, also, suggested by the bibliography, Roma residential areas are related to the lack of access to education, health services, employment and culture. Diseases and low life expectancy are closely interrelated with the spaces they live in (Mitakidou et al., 2009). Space hinders the development of common understandings and determines the development of social myths. Space cannot be examined separately from time, which is also a socially constructed concept differently conceptualised by the Roma.

More specifically, it could be maintained that Roma are not equipped with shared coordinates in common space and social time. This has a strong impact on their registration at school, school attendance and dropout. In particular, the time factor plays a different role in defining, for instance, their relation to school: What time do we go to school? How long do we stay at school? How many days per week do we go to school? How much do we need to learn at school?). Conceptualization of time also varies when defining their relation to work, as temporary job opportunities are almost the only options they have for

work, which in effect suggests that life circles follow work circles. Time is also shaping their relation to money/income: the instability of their economic situation does not allow for long term life plans. Money comes, covers immediate and pressing accumulated needs and leaves no margin for provision for future planning. Moreover, time is understood as consisting of important periods and transitions in their lifespan –i.e. adulthood-childhood and their relationship– which identifies with that of traditional, pre-modern societies, where children at a very early age used to merge into the world of adults (Aries, 1960). Finally, time differs in terms of life expectancy and length of lifespan, as it is observed that Roma live less than the average non-Roma population (Mitakidou et al., 2016: 44) .
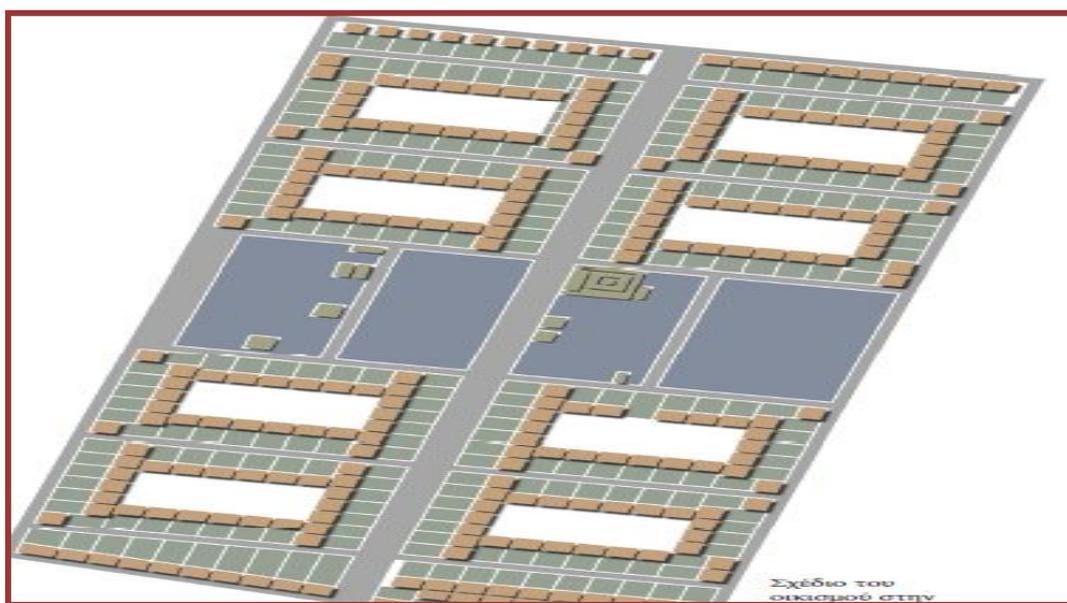
Pict. 4: Aghia Sophia: the initial sketch of the settlement, previously a military camp

The above-mentioned parameters, namely the connection between spatial living conditions, family environment and school performance, have been examined in detail in terms of the population groups being excluded[5] for decades. Several years ago, Tsiakalos (1995) urged the State to s*tart a housing programme for Roma as* their living conditions constituted a social and political scandal which could not be mitigated by "well-intentioned" attempts acting in their interests in other social fields, as education.

In fact, the spatial exclusion of Roma has been built up by the government's institutionalised practices, which are implemented dynamically. Nonetheless, individuals and groups have also contributed to these practices and, in this respect, the spatial development by the urban planning authorities hinges on the economic, political, social and cultural correlations; it does not rest on one factor only.

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[5]See the studies of G. Tsiakalos, D. Kogkidou& E. Tressou for this population group during the ΄90s.

Pict. 5: An image of a dwelling in the Peraia camp.

The way the aforementioned social and cultural correlations are presented in public discourse, reinforces the argument that Roma have chosen their localities and living conditions themselves. This may even seem reasonable to the majority (non-Roma population) since the facts are invariably distorted. For instance, the right to life, health services, education and culture have been disconnected by social justice and became an issue of personal choice, independent from the physical survival needs and the ideological and political contexts. Those mutations are not innocent at all. They are problems that cease to be matters pertaining to the society as a whole and become individualised issues.

From this point of view, the person is set responsible for his/her adjustment, relief, health and education. The most noticeable "retrogression" nowadays has been the integrity of the ideological individualization (Tsoukalas, 2010): the person with disability and his/her personal tragedy, the abused woman, the Roma, the single-parent family, the cancer patient, the drug addict, the unemployed, to name a few. This distinction between identities leads to overproduction of otherness. Thus, all problems pertaining to the person become moralistic, legal, medical issues and their solution requires experts from the related fields. These experts treat danger by means of individualized short interventions and logic of instrumentality.

As aptly stated by Tsoukalas (2010: 91),

> in post-solidarity ...societies... the individual does not socialise as part of a wider and specific integrated entity, within which he/she is supposed to understand the class, ideological and occupational position applying to him/her [...] This individual is produced and reproduced as a free, denuded and self-governing competitive person required to fulfil himself/herself through the recognition by the market of his/her own personal productive utility, resilience, employability and capability.

The reference to otherness is always made by illustrating specific personal problems and at the same time devaluing all organised collectivities. The argument for the individual choice, supposedly made by Roma, reflects the moto "Divide space – conquer the subjects". Classification as a means of control represents, above all, a spatial arrangement, distinct positions in space and society. Space and topology interpret and analyse society and human life as an instrument, while inscribing on agents their positions, attitudes and actions. Bourdieu (1999) states that space turns into a field of social education, giving social significance to agents and imposing behaviours depending on gender, culture or class. So, the living conditions of Roma are not a matter of individual choice or univocally political decisions, but also a matter of social and cultural formation.

We need tools, so that space ceases to be an ark, prison-ghetto of otherness and, instead, so that it can be transformed into a dynamic field of action.

The power of socio-space: an example.

In deprived camps and impoverished settlements, living conditions, extreme poverty and environmental deprivation create the myth of social threat in terms of causing diseases and criminality. In Northern Greece, Roma population has no or limited access to public social services because of spatial distance. This absence of access leads to lack of official documents, information, health and healthcare, school attendance and literacy. However, based on our experience from the program, the parents of Roma children are willing to transport their children into school locations (i.e. Peraia)[6]. On the contrary, in designated neighbourhoods (i.e. Alexandria), Roma have better accessand less distance from public social services, therefore, the level of documentation and information is higher. Nevertheless, they are less willing to transport their children to school and the dropout rate is higher.

Pict. 6: On the left a dwelling in the Peraia camp and on the right a Roma house in Alexandria.

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[6] See below, in the next subsection, the interpretation of this phenomenon.

One would expect that, in better living conditions, education would have been more valued and the proportion of dropouts would have been much lower. It seems that in this case, the two communities (Roma and non-Roma parents, students and teachers) sustain strong perceptions and attitudes on the value of education deepening separation. So, while there seems to be a crack on the "wall" between the two communities (Roma and non-Roma residents) as a result of accessibility and proximity, ultimately the "wall" becomes more concrete through the rejection of education. Space in terms of proximity, therefore, provides the possibility to overcome obstacles and boundaries, it is a necessary precondition however not enough; unless it is transformed into a social space which would cultivate social relationships and interactions based on equity, exchanges of values and traditions, and awareness of the other, through conscious human action, there will be always new forms of ghettos in common spaces.
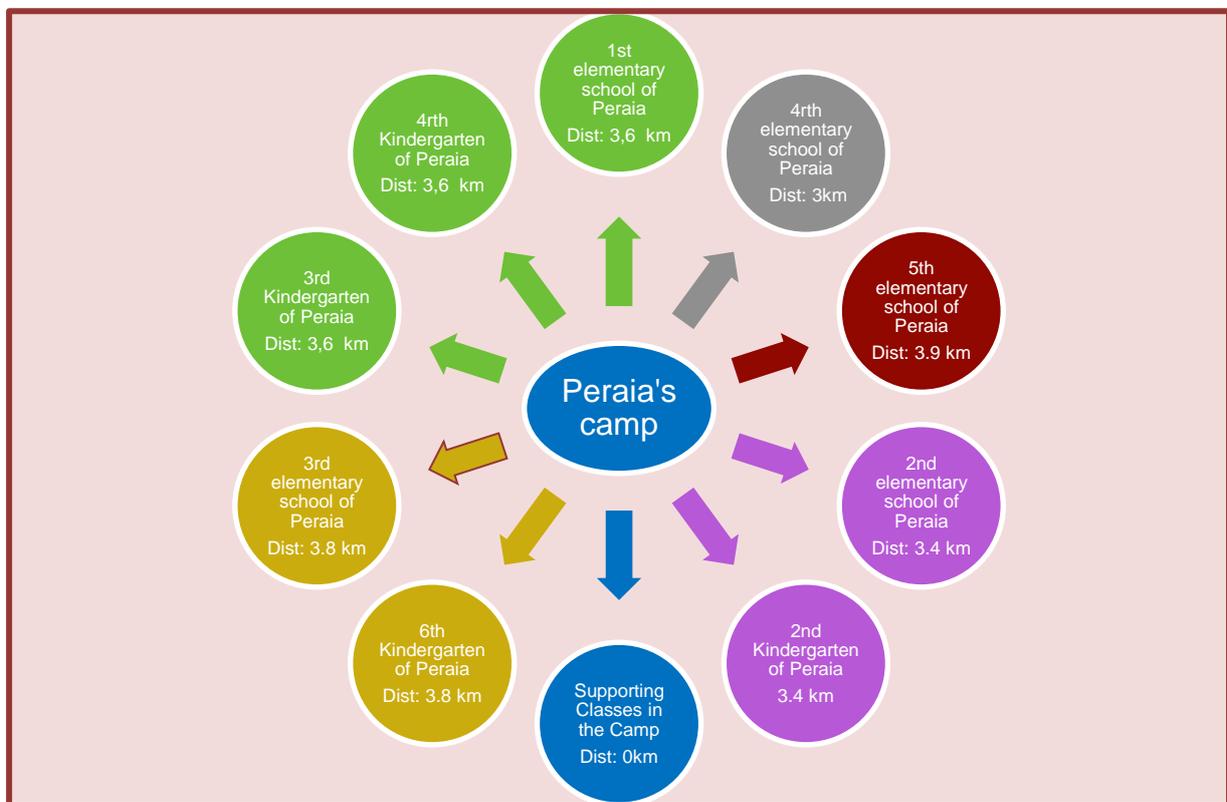
Pict. 7: camp-schools distance in kms of Peraia camp

Indicative of the power of the socio-space and power relations in the Greek educational system in general, is the creation of separate classes within the same school for disabled children, Roma children, migrant and refugee children. In terms of social time, Roma and refugee children attend school only after regular school hours, so as not to be in touch with other students. So, while the common space of a school is regarded as a place of coexistence, interactions and cultivation of social relations, ultimately it transforms into a natural continuation of the enclosed social spaces of the previous decades regarding

specific student populations (school of Roma children, school of the repatriated, special education settings).

Not our place/space their place/space.

The power of socio space as well as of conscious human action is also obvious when it comes to the relationships between Roma population and researchers. As obvious from the above, we see education as an institution that influences and it is influenced by its context. Ignorance or negligence of context specifics may jeopardize the research as well as the results and may affect the factual representation of the Roma community. Meanings are embedded in contexts and, if attentive to them, contexts contribute to the understanding and interpretation of research field.

So far, previous Programs on the education of Roma children focused exclusively on school locations without paying any attention to the socio-dialectical dimension of space, while also researchers did not try to cultivate reciprocity which is a key point in this process. Reciprocity involves the needs, aspiration and expectations of both participants and researchers as much as it involves mutual respect for both parties' rights.

Reciprocity has been the crucial feature that the Program "Education of Roma children in the Regions of Central, Western and Eastern Macedonia, and Thrace" has been based upon. So, with this research we aim to reconsider the way we perceive otherness and its relation to space. This is why we show, through Google maps, the settlements/camps and localities, their urban designs, residence surveys and construction techniques building materials, distance in kilometres from the municipalities and schools, community or public buildings, free spaces between residences and their utilization, number of residents, age of the children, condition of the networks, years of existence of the communities in a specific locality. All these data have been collected by a multi-disciplinary team on-site stay in the field. Overall, they were drawn from thirteen areas in Northern Greece (see more details http://peroma.web.auth.gr/peroma/en/). The purpose of this mapping has been to reveal all the data regarding the living conditions of the Roma population, since the related data have been fragmented so far and without reference to the rest of the community. Moreover, we have tried to interpret and understand the way people's need for survival is not identified in this case with the perceived smooth identifiable system.

At the same time, the mapping created on open space for a continuing interaction with the Roma community, which involved not just issues on children's education but regarded the whole family system as well as the social relations inside and outside the community. Through this interaction -very difficult at times- social relationships have been established between the researchers and the community. This kind of experience proves that cultural differences are not actually problems. They are rather starting points for discussion and negotiation. As *Westernised* researchers, even alert and sensitized, we had to abandon seeing things in a monolithic way in favor of a pluralistic perspective.

We exercised our power and mediated between Roma and public or other authorities so as to provide solutions to some serious problems the community was facing (e.g. disinsectisation,, pestilence, waste bins, more school buses).In a sense, we tried to give voice to these silenced people, even in an indirect way. Arrangements like the aforementioned ones, regarding issues on emergent living conditions, redirected the initial form of the relationships towards a new understanding: researchers are not anymore those 'outsiders' who just impose schooling into their children and who are indifferent to their way of living, their life-style and their experiences as a community. This mutual understanding and consciousness made possible for the Roma parents of the camps to pay more value into their children's education and to provide researchers with all possible assistance towards this goal.

Real access to this sensitive research site was a slow and difficult process. There was a need for constant negotiation with Roma communities under study. We must also emphasize at this point that the process became even more complex as relationships created held a dual promise: a promise that the data would not be an end in itself but would be used for the improvement of the quality of life as well as a promise that after research, action would follow.

If the notions of equality and human emancipation are at all meaningful nowadays, it is necessary to interpret how the need to survive causes a major rupture in the alleged orderly identity system in space, its habitation, time and its understandings, or as stated by Wallerstein (1999: 148):

> Those who are strong –strong politically, economically, socially– have the option of aggressive hostility toward the weak or magnanimous comprehension of "difference". In either case, they remain privileged.

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Short CVs

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Σύντομα Βιογραφικά

Η **Γιώτα Καραγιάννη** είναι Αναπληρώτρια Καθηγήτρια στο Παιδαγωγικό Τμήμα Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης. Διδάσκει σε προπτυχιακό και μεταπτυχιακό επίπεδο, καθώς και σε προγράμματα επιμόρφωσης εκπαιδευτικών. Έχει επίσης διδάξει στο Πανεπιστήμιο του Birmingham και της Κύπρου. Το ερευνητικό της έργο και οι δημοσιεύσεις της εστιάζονται σε ζητήματα αναπηρίας, κοινωνικής δικαιοσύνης και εκπαιδευτική πολιτική για τους/τις περιθωριοποιημένους μαθητές/τριες. *Έχει συμμετάσχει σε χρηματοδοτούμενα, Ερευνητικά και Επιμορφωτικά Προγράμματα και έχει δημοσιεύσει άρθρα και κεφάλαια σε βιβλία.*

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Schools as thresholds within prison heterotopias: perspectives on a "poetics" of prison education

Maria G. Kokolaki, Georgia Papastavrinidou, Athena-Anna Christopoulou

Abstract

In this article we view prison schools as thresholds, liminal spatiotemporal entities within prison heterotopias that aim at facilitating the reentry of incarcerated young offenders into society in several ways, but mainly through providing them with a sense of community by creating social bonds, helping them to establish new identity and status. Thresholds, although they insinuate separation, regulated access and marker of boundary with otherness, at the same time they symbolize passage, movement across borders in time and space, potential opening to the future, flow of people and ideas and the conciliation with otherness. In this sense, thresholds embody the prospect of change and reaffirmation of status and can be powerful drivers of change. We initiate from Goffman's understanding of prison as a total institution, characterized by the "mortification of the self" as far as personal and social identity is concerned, since inmates are "defaced" and submitted to a stigmatized status. Moreover, we take into account Foucault's conceptualization of the prison heterotopia as a space of enclosure symbolising otherness in space, time and socio-cultural status. Finally, utilising the concept of liminality as articulated by Turner and based on our contact with Greek prison schools for young male offenders, we will try to present the dynamics and poetics of prison education and examine the critical role of school in the prison context as a spatiotemporal threshold and as transformative anti-structure opposed to such a highly structured and controlled space/time of enclosure.

Key words: prison schools for young male offenders, thresholds, poetics.

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Τα σχολεία ως κατώφλια εντός της ετεροτοπίας των φυλακών: προοπτικές για μια «ποιητική» της εκπαίδευσης στις φυλακές

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Περίληψη

Σε αυτό το άρθρο εξετάζουμε τα σχολεία φυλακών ως κατώφλια, οριακές χωροχρονικές οντότητες εντός της ετεροτοπίας των φυλακών που στοχεύουν στη διευκόλυνση της επανένταξης των φυλακισμένων νεαρών παραβατών στην κοινωνία με διάφορους τρόπους, αλλά κυρίως μέσω της παροχής μιας αίσθησης κοινότητας με τη δημιουργία κοινωνικών δεσμών, βοηθώντας τους να δημιουργήσουν νέα ταυτότητα και στάτους. Τα «κατώφλια», αν και υπονοούν διαχωρισμό, ρυθμιζόμενη πρόσβαση και σημείο συνοριακό με την ετερότητα, ταυτόχρονα συμβολίζουν το πέρασμα, τη μετακίνηση πέρα από τα σύνορα στον χώρο και τον χρόνο, το δυνητικό άνοιγμα στο μέλλον, τη ροή ανθρώπων και ιδεών και τη συμφιλίωση με την ετερότητα. Υπό αυτή την έννοια, τα «κατώφλια» ενσωματώνουν την προοπτική της αλλαγής και της επαναβεβαίωσης του κύρους και μπορούν να αποτελέσουν ισχυρούς οδηγούς προς την αλλαγή. Ως αφετηρία χρησιμοποιούμε την αντίληψη του Goffman για τη φυλακή ως έναν ολοκληρωτικό θεσμό, που χαρακτηρίζεται από τη «θανάτωση του εαυτού» όσον αφορά την προσωπική και κοινωνική ταυτότητα, καθώς οι κρατούμενοι «αποπροσωποποιούνται» και υποβάλλονται σε καθεστώς στιγματισμού. Επιπλέον, λαμβάνουμε υπόψη την αντίληψη του Φουκώ για την ετεροτοπία της φυλακής ως χώρο εγκλεισμού που συμβολίζει την ετερότητα στον χώρο, τον χρόνο και το κοινωνικο-πολιτισμικό στάτους. Τέλος, αξιοποιώντας την έννοια της οριακότητας όπως διατυπώθηκαν από τον Turner και με βάση την επαφή μας με τα σχολεία των καταστημάτων κράτησης για νεαρούς παραβάτες, θα παρουσιάσουμε τη δυναμική και την ποιητική της εκπαίδευσης στις φυλακές και θα εξετάσουμε τον κρίσιμο ρόλο του σχολείου στο πλαίσιο της φυλακής ως χωροχρονικό κατώφλι και ως μετασχηματιστική αντι-δομή σε αντίθεση με έναν αυστηρά δομημένο και ελεγχόμενο χώρο/χρόνο εγκλεισμού.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: σχολεία καταστημάτων κράτησης νέων, κατώφλια, ποιητική.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the role of schools that function in the detention units for young male offenders in Greece. In the year 2015-2016 there existed four such units (*EKKN*)[1] and one juvenile reform school, all of which situated in the central part of Greece (three in Volos, one in Corinth and one in Attica).

Prison schools can be defined as physical structures within the space of detention facilities and aim at providing education equivalent to the other school forms outside prison and at facilitating the reentry of incarcerated young offenders into society in several ways, but mainly helping them to re-establish relations with the outside world.

In Greece, the framework of the operation of schools inside detention facilities for minors and young men falls within a number of legal provisions that aim at protecting the rights of the incarcerated. The catholic right to education is recognized and protected by the Greek Constitution[2] (Art. 16, par. 4). Moreover, the legal recognition of the right to education for the minors and young offenders is ensured through articles of the Penitentiary Code (Law 2776/1999) which was revised partly in 2019 and 2020 and extensively in 2022[3] and through international and European conventions and recommendations as we shall further see.

However, apart from formal institutional provisions, we have identified an absence of systematic research for mapping the educational reality and the needs of the specific structures (i.e. prison schools for young/juvenile male offenders). Relevant research in Greece is fragmentary both in terms of the subject matter and in terms of focus on the specific schools. Such research could contribute to the documentation of the educational needs and challenges faced in those structures as well as to the formulation of in-depth views and proposals concerning the provision of further support to prison education in general and to the provision of education for the young prisoners, in particular.

During the school year 2015-2016 we had the chance to visit all school units of the detention facilities for young male offenders as members of the scientific committee of a Conference that took place in Volos in 2016[4] and focused on the challenges faced by prison education in the context of the Greek educational system and the prospects of prison schools (either the formal units operating in detention facilities for juveniles or the schools of "second chance" operating in some prisons for adults).

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[1] With Law 4985/2022 *EKKN* (Special detention units for young male offenders) were renamed as *EΣKN* (Special correctional units for young male offenders).

[2] As revised by the parliamentary resolution of November 25, 2019 of the IXth Revisionary Parliament (Article 16 was not revised).

[3] The Greek Penitentiary Code was partly revised in 2019 with Law 4596, in 2020 with Law 4760 and more radically and broadly in 2022 with Law 4985.

[4] The Conference "The Education of Young Offenders: Experiences, Problems and Perspectives" was organised in Volos (22-24/1/2016) by the Institute of Educational Policy, the Supreme Court Prosecutor's Office, EPANODOS (Center for the Reintegration of Released Prisoners), the University of Thessaly's Pedagogical Departments, the Greek Ombudsman for Children's Rights and the Greek branch of the European Prison Education Association (EPEA Hellas). More information available at the Greek Ministry's of Education website [https://www.minedu.gov.gr/aei-9/nomothesia-aei/1202-categories-2021/genikes-katigories-21/ekdiloseis/ekdiloseis-synedria/17348-18-01-16].

Moreover, we were members of a research group which, in this context, undertook research through two online questionnaires on the needs and expectations of the teachers and headmasters of the schools within detention facilities for young male offenders, in order to map the educational needs and everyday challenges of those structures (cf. Kokolaki et al., 2016). The response to the research was encouraging[5] and its initial results were presented at that Conference.

Considering the ambiguity and fragmented knowledge about the operation of the existing prison schools for juveniles and young offenders in Greece, we will initially present the principles of prison education for the young. Based on our experience, our contact with those schools in various occasions and in the context of our research and knowledge of the situation, we will further concentrate on the topography and status of those schools as observed in the school year 2015-2016. We will give emphasis to their character as a kind of transformative and dynamic threshold, symbolically and physically being betwixt and between two diverging worlds, the prison and the society outside, in order to account for the dynamics and "poetics" of prison education and the critical role of the school presence in the detention facility context.[6] Is there an actual potential in those schools? What is that they may offer to the young offenders?

Prison education for young male offenders in Greece

At this early point we should present the fundamental principles which relate to the status of prison education in Greece within the European context. With regard to the issue of education in the detention facilities for young offenders, international organisations' decrees or conventions and recommendations, such as the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted in 1977, the Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules) adopted in 1985 or the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules) adopted in 1990, record the importance and imperative of the provision of education, vocational training, psychological support, counseling and medical assistance that aim at supporting the young offenders, enhancing the sense of self-respect and respect for the fundamental human rights and promoting their future reintegration to society.

In the latter, it is stated that:

"38. Every juvenile of compulsory school age has the right to education suited to his or her needs and abilities and designed to prepare him or her for return to society. Such education should be provided outside the detention facility in community schools wherever possible and, in any case, by qualified teachers through programmes integrated with the education system of the country so that, after release, juveniles may continue their education without difficulty [...] 39. Juveniles above compulsory school age who wish to continue their

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[5]As far as the questionnaires for the teachers were concerned, we received a return rate of approximately 67%. In the case of the headmasters the return rate was 100%.

[6] We presented some initial thoughts concerning issues of topography and the hybrid status of those schools in the conference Purposeful Agency and Governance: A Bridgeable Gap (15-17 June 2016). See Pardo and Prato's Conference Report (2016: 93).

education should be permitted and encouraged to do so, and every effort should be made to provide them with access to appropriate educational programmes. […] 42. Every juvenile should have the right to receive vocational training in occupations likely to prepare him or her for future employment". (United Nations, 1990).

Moreover, in the Havana Rules specific reference is also made to the operation of a library (rule 41) and to the contribution of physical education and sports as well as of the recreation and creative activities to the physical and mental health of young prisoners (rule 47).

Those principles are followed by the Recommendations of the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe[7]. In particular, in the Recommendation (87)20 the Council of Ministers, bearing in mind that "the penal system for minors should continue to be characterised by its objective of education and social integration", advises the member states "to provide both education and vocational training for young prisoners, preferably in conjunction with the community, or any other measure which may assist reinsertion in society". In addition, Recommendation (89)12 highlights the contribution of education to order and security within detention facilities and to humanizing prisons, improving prisoners living conditions and facilitating their reintegration into the community. Based on the principle of the equality of opportunities and given the fact that a high percentage of the offenders had very limited or even negative prior educational experiences, all the prisoners are entitled to educational support such as formal learning, vocational education, creative and cultural activities, sports, social education and library facilities.

As far as the principle of equality of opportunities in education is concerned, in the Recommendations (89)12 it is also stated that "2. Education for prisoners should be like the education provided for similar age-groups in the outside world, and the range of learning opportunities for prisoners should be as wide as possible". In line with the aforementioned rule, rule 28 of the Recommendation Rec (2006)2 suggests the provision of education to all prisoners and puts particular emphasis on the educational needs of young prisoners, those of foreign origin and the disabled. Moreover, in rule 35.2, the access to compulsory education is recommended for detained children. It is also recognized that prison education should "be integrated with the educational and vocational training system of the country" (rule 28.7), in order to facilitate the continuation of the studies of the prisoners after their release.

However, as it was demonstrated in a survey of 2011 (Costelloe et al., 2012: 15-16 & 33), in the EU countries there are nor a uniform attitude nor homogeneous legislative initiatives towards providing prison education and training to all prisoners. Thus, in some countries the legal obligation often does not extend to all prisoners, but only in specific groups, such as the juveniles (which is also the case for Greece). Accordingly, in the large majority of EU countries -including Greece- less than a quarter of the adult prisoners participate in educational activities (Hawley et al., 2013: 5).

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[7] Recommendations no R(87) 20 of 1987, No R(89) 12 of 1989 and Rec (2006)2.

In the aforementioned survey (Costelloe et al., 2012: 17) three main types of education offered in European prisons were identified: a) general education, covering subjects like mathematics, science, languages, b) vocational education/training for providing inmates with professional skills and competences for their rehabilitation and c) non formal learning, mostly related to vocational training, arts and crafts (however not linked to certification).

Within the above framework, in Greece, prison education of the aforementioned types is provided either in the special detention units for juveniles or in the general detention units (for adults). Up to 2018, in detention facilities for juveniles there existed school units of formal type (primary and secondary schools), while in the general detention units there were either schools of lifelong education (schools of second chance)[8] or of private tutorials for the needs of specific inmates[9]. Moreover, the Prison Council in each facility was responsible for organising programmes of vocational character for the inmates or classes of post-secondary character. At this point, we may mention that the art. 31 of Law 4521/2018 was a further step towards the recognition of and responding to the particular educational needs of the detention facilities by establishing educational counselors and providing the potential of founding educational units of all types within each facility according to its needs. This was reaffirmed in Law 4985/2022, art. 35 (substituting art. 35 of the 1999 Penitentiary Code).

The Greek Penitentiary Code (Law 2776/1999, Art. 4, par. 1)[10] specifically mentions: "the execution of the sentence does not restrict any other right of the detainees apart from personal freedom". Moreover, young detainees are considered juveniles of both genders from 15 to 21 years by power of Law 4985/2022 (art. 13)[11] and are usually detained in special separate detention units. In this context, education of both general and vocational character must be provided and, as this law (Art. 35) also recommends, primary education of the young offenders is obligatory and there must be an additional provision for vocational training and apprenticeship programmes by the Prison Council. So, in every special detention facility for young male offenders, there should be the provision at least of a primary school. As far as young female offenders are concerned, although there is one detention facility for women, where young are kept with older women, there was no formal education provided until 2016[12].

Furthermore, the school units that are hosted in the detention facilities for young males provide education that is considered equal to the other schools outside prison, thus the qualifications those schools offer are also considered equivalent to the other Greek schools of the same grade and type.

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[8] Schools of second chance (*Σχολεία Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας - ΣΔΕ*) offer adults lower secondary education, which is completed in a two-year course and their degree corresponds to this offered by the lower High Schools (Γυμνάσια). See Dimitrouli and Rigoutsou (2017).

[9] See Law 4368/2016, Ch. C., art. 26 on *Compensatory Education*.

[10] Article 4 has not been revised.

[11] With the Law 4985/2023, art. 13 –which revised art. 12 of the 1999 Penitentiary Code– the minimum age criterion changed from 13 to 15. The name of the facilities was modified to "Correctional Facilities for Young Detainees." Young detainees may remain within those facilities up to 25th year of age, to complete their studies, under strict presuppositions.

[12] In 2017 a primary school was initiated by the Minister of Education at the detention facility for women of Elaiona Thebes (http://www.minedu.gov.gr/news/26857-13-02-17-egkainia-dimotikoy-sxoleiou-stis-gynaikeies-fylakes-eleona-thivon, accessed on 8/9/2017).

However, for the protection of the inmates and their privacy, in the titles of those schools there must be made no reference to and possible connection with the prison in accordance with the Greek Penitentiary Code and international texts[13].

A landmark related to the composition and density of the population in the Special Juvenile Detention Facilities was 2014, when a separate detention facility for adolescents of 15-18 years was founded[14]. This facility received detainees of this age group from the other prisons. Moreover, the reformation of 2010 and of 2015[15] in prison legislation about underage offenders changed significantly the consistency of the prison population (mainly in number) since underage offenders that were thereafter incarcerated were over 15 years old if they had committed severe crimes.

Topography, particularities and ambiguities of prison formal schooling in Greece.

However, as relevant bibliography indicates, although the benefits of education in the prison context for both the inmates and the society are recognized, there is considerable complexity and ambiguity as far as this issue is concerned (Muñoz, 2009: 5).
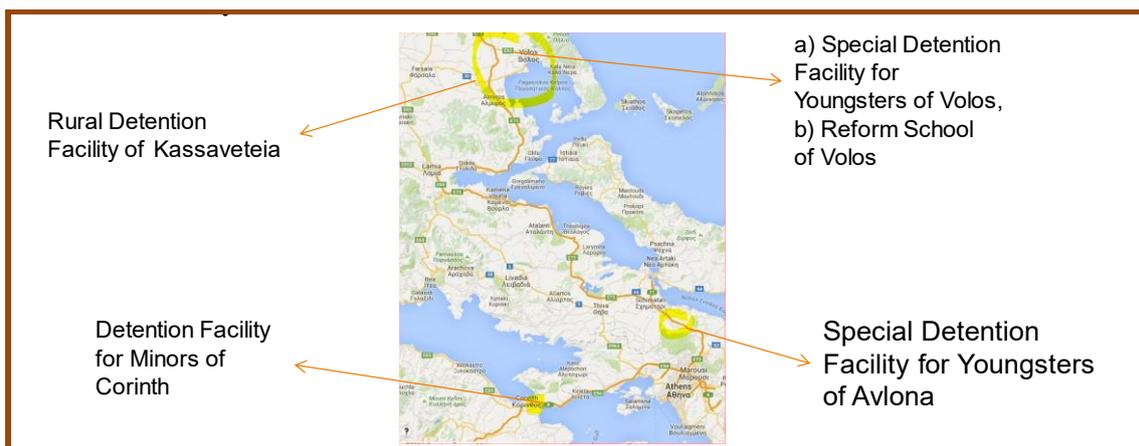
Pict. 1. Detention Facilities for young male offenders in Greece (2016).

It is more than obvious that challenges faced by prison education and training differ from those faced by education outside prison (Hawley et al., 2013), since their pre-conditions and context are differentiated. The core issue is that prison education takes place in the context of a detention facility. Muñoz (2009: 4-5) emphasises that, although human rights –education being one of them– "are not relinquished upon imprisonment", people in detention are "a marginalized group that faces endemic violations of its right to education". So, regardless of the penal system, the issue of prison education is composite in its essence, as it faces endemic problems because of the prison environment which is

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[13] See the Havana Rules: "*40. Diplomas or educational certificates awarded to juveniles while in detention should not indicate in any way that the juvenile has been institutionalized*".
[14] This happened by effect of a Decision of the Minister of Justice (n. 90467/22-10-2013).
[15] Art. 2 & 3 of the Law 3860/2010; Art. 7 of the Law 4322/2015.

"inherently hostile to its liberating potential" (ibid). Moreover, prison education depends on the formal governmental correctional and educational policies that may dictate the type of education that can be provided and, thus, encourage or discourage the operation of education units within prison contexts.

Other issues that may influence the provision of education in the prison context relate to the availability of resources, the administration structure and the existence of infrastructure which also relate to the prison occupancy (Hawley et al., 2013: 5). Nowadays, in the European Union, the percentage of countries that suffer from prison overcrowding is rising. In Greece, for instance, the percentage of prison occupancy recorded in 2010 was 129.6% and there was a rising prison population trend of 59% from 1992 to 2007 (Costelloe et al., 2012: 9). At the same time, the composition of prison population in the European Union is becoming more and more diverse, especially as far as the population of foreign-born prisoners is concerned. Greece is mentioned amongst those countries, where the percentage of foreigners is very high, of 40% (Hawley et al., 2013:5).

Particularities of prison education stem also from the fact that the majority of the incarcerated has not received proper education, had low basic skills or had negative prior educational experience and even dropped out of school for a variety of reasons (Hawley et al., 2013: 12).

Moreover, school presence in a prison is often ambiguously confronted in the broader political and socio-cultural contexts and, thus, either challenged as unsafe and an imminent danger or seen as promising, emancipating and powerful. This ambiguity is connected to the nature of prison understood as an institution of control, authority and punishment. It is therefore related to people's perceptions about crime, deviance, punishment and reform. Accordingly, some believe that prison education is a waste of resources and, if existent, must be focused on the reformation of the deviant.

However, it is also a fact that often schooling in the prison context acquires a great importance for both society and the incarcerated. Specifically, it is widely accepted that multiple benefits may stem from the provision of prison education (Giordmaina, 2013; Hawley et al., 2013). Those are mainly attributed to the future reintegration of prisoners into society and their job rehabilitation on release. Other expected benefits relate to the reduction of crime, the reintegration into educational contexts, the amelioration of the quality of life in prison and the reduction of the negative effects of incarceration on the individual. Schooling is extremely important as far as the juvenile are concerned, especially as a means of socialization, of reconstruction of their identity and preparation for their re-entry to society. Thus, often, prison education is pictured as positive.

In order to explore further this ambiguity, we will be based on our observations concerning the topography and the status of administration as well as the educational programmes that were implemented in the schools inside detention facilities for young male offenders in Greece during the school year 2015-2016 and try to articulate some initial thoughts and reflections about the potential of those schools.

An important issue concerning the function and the attributes of the aforementioned schools is the place where they are situated and the layout of the space they occupy. As we have already stated, in Greece there are five special detention facilities for juveniles and young male offenders and they all have school units offering formal education. As we already mentioned, there is one detention facility for juveniles in Corinth which had just initiated when we started our research, responding to the need of separating minors from young offenders: in 2015 it had a primary school, a Junior High school and the first grade of Lyceum. When this facility opened, it had more than 40 students, while in the school year 2015-2016, following the 2015 reformation concerning underage offenders, it had only 10 students. The biggest school structure is this of Avlona within a detention facility for young male offenders is one of the older units (operating since 1998) and the only one that has a fully operating (however not independently functioning) Lyceum. It has also a primary school and a junior high school.

Three more school units operate in the broader area of Volos. Primary and lower secondary education units exist in the open agricultural facility for young male offenders of Kassaveteia, in the detention facility of Volos and in the juvenile reform school of Volos for young children and juveniles (8-18 years old). We will further use a codification for those schools as S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5 facilities.

Attendance in those schools during the school year 2015-2016 varied and it was influenced mainly by the legislative provision and the level of law enforcement, as happened with S1 and the S3 where the prisoners were underage, so attendance was 100%. In the other facilities this percentage was lower and was influenced mainly by the lack of space and motivation for the inmates. This percentage was considerably lower in detention facilities for adults where the so-called "schools of second chance" operate, as also pointed out in our discussions with the schools' personnel.

The limitation of space in combination with the strict timetable and framework of the prison and the heterogeneity of the student population in terms of country of origin, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and learning needs, often result in considerable differentiation of the working hours and the subjects of the curriculum that are covered. In the results of the research that we presented in the 2016 Volos conference (Kokolaki et al., 2016), the deviations mentioned by directors and teaching staff were the divergence from the formal curriculum mainly by limiting the subjects covered, the reduction of teaching periods/time, the co-teaching and the decrease of content in teaching subjects. However, most of the variations concern the management of the content of teaching and adaptations of the teaching methods and materials used to respond to the educational needs of the students.

Moreover, as far as the layout of each school is concerned, this mainly depends on the character of the detention facility. Thus, the school premises might either be inside the prison main facility or in a different building. So, in those facilities that are considered open, like the S3 and the S5, school spaces are characterized by openness and no bars. In the S3 case, the school is situated in a building outside the prison. The premises are a big events hall, which for the needs of the school is divided by three moving panels, to form the classrooms. So, this space does not remind at all the physical space of prison/space

of enclosure. In a similar (but not the same) logic, the classrooms in the school S5 are situated in the outer part of the main building with doors facing the front courtyard. However, in this case, there is the sense of enclosure, since the whole premises are encircled by a fence and there are locks and bars.

In other schools that occupy spaces inside the detention facility there is an obvious tendency for higher control. So, in the structure of S4, the classrooms were four former cells, inside the facility, separated by bars from the rest of the prison. In S1 school the classrooms were inside the prison, in a big room which is also used as an events hall and for the school purposes is divided into two by a folding door. In the S2 prison we saw a quite different arrangement. The school is separate from the main prison with a private yet small courtyard. The Primary and the Secondary school occupy different floors and there are also a computer lab and multipurpose rooms. In every classroom there are whiteboards.

However, even in this facility, the controversial character of a school in a prison is evident. There are bars in the prison corridors that lead to the entrance of the courtyard, in the existing outer windows and in the front door. The classes that have outer windows (with bars) are facing the internal schoolyard. There are high walls with welded wires in the front internal small schoolyard. The classrooms, the principal's office and all other spaces are separate, however, for safety and surveillance reasons, the classes have big windows to the internal corridor, in the logic of panopticism (Foucault, 1995: 201-205), to achieve greater control and supervision. So, this school premises is a space that might seem to function in the logic of a distinct, autonomous organization, as there is a clear demarcation between the space of the school and the detention facility, nevertheless, there is the sense of restriction and the abolition of privacy that reminds to the students where they stand. As one teacher stresses: "*Each classroom has a window with heavy bars, which functions as a restriction and reminds to the students that they operate within a restrictive environment of enclosure and surveillance within the prison.*"

Pict. 2. View from a school window to the internal yard (picture from a 2016 reportage of newsbeast.gr on the detention facility of Avlona).

In all cases, however, there is a clear demarcation of the space destined for the prison school, which aims at differentiating between the space of the prison and the school as a distinct place, where diverse activities take place. In the words of a teacher "*The school space differs from prison space. This*

causes children to respect school." This also denotes that there is a change in the nature of control and power relations and insinuates even the school's chance for autonomy.

These "in between" spaces and statuses are evident also in the way those schools are managed. There is an ambiguity in the control and management of the aforementioned school units, as they oscillate between two Ministries: Ministry of Education and its local directorates as far as the educational part is concerned and on Ministry of Justice[16] for the penitentiary part as well as for counseling and educational activities mainly of vocational character. The lack of a central, focused and systematic educational and administrative support to these units by the Ministry of Education had further consequences on the function of schools and needs further study[17].

There is another particularity in the administration of all schools but the S2 units[18] that makes them be at the borderline, as they operate as part of a local school in the area, outside the detention facility. The aforementioned administrative arrangement bears consequences for the operation of the schools, since it practically means that the headmaster is not situated in the prison school and has no immediate contact with the environment of the prison or –most importantly- with the students (as pointed out by one headmaster). For this issue to be solved, usually, the assistant Principal (or alternatively one teacher) of the local school outside is set as responsible (Head) for the school in prison. Moreover, in this type of arrangement, the teachers that work in the facility belong to the area's school. This practically means that the area's school is given priority when issues of covering teaching positions arise, so usually the needs of the prison school are put on hold and are not immediately covered.

Subsequently, the schools operate having a formal internal structure (headmaster and teachers) that responds to and works with the local educational authorities (the education directorate for the administration and the counselors for the educational guidance). On the other hand, they respond also to the prison's authorities (the director, the warden and the prison's council), the public prosecutors and the social services. This overlapping of control and responsibilities creates additional difficulties for the framework of the prison schools and often makes them far more rigid, authoritative and austere than the schools outside. Moreover, the prison school's administration becomes more centralized and person-centered, as dependent on and driven by the headmaster, which as noted by one headmaster might work for the short-term but proves negative longtermly.

We may mention here characteristic answers to a question about the influence of the function, security issues and restrictions of the detention facilities on the headmasters' work. So, in the words of headmasters:

Headmaster 1: "*Many times, negatively. The situation is normalized when there is cooperation with the prison administration. Otherwise, the difficulties are great. Perhaps in a new Penitentiary code all*

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[16] From 2019 prisons are under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Civil Protection.
[17] We may mention here the initiatives of the Greek Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice in an attempt to address administration issues (2017-2018).
[18] Only the S2 units (primary and secondary) are independent and have their own Principals.

parts' responsibilities will be delimited so that the operation of the school does not depend only on the good will of those responsible."

Headmaster 2: "*Sometimes those issues influence my work as catalysts and often are damaging. The invocation of those issues, you know, functions at times like a nuclear bomb at the hands of prison directors and wardens as in this way all failures, pathogenicities and weaknesses of the custodian system are "settled*."

Furthermore, in a trial to cover the multiple needs of their students, most prison schools implement programmes or side activities. We might mention a great number of such creative activities related to sports, robotics, music, dancing and theater groups, cultural programmes, health and environmental education. Some schools also participate in European programmes (cf. Hawley et al. 2013). So, in the prison school space the inmates are also allowed to engage in various creative activities like their peers outside prison do. Those activities very often receive great publicity and they are also listed in the schools' websites. Great publicity is also given to the participation of the students in various competitions (e.g. of the Greek Mathematical Society) and to their learning progress and success (e.g. participation in the national examinations and admission of students to higher education institutions).

Pict.3. Participating in a Christmas feast inside a prison school (2015)
(Source: https://dipe.kor.sch.gr/2015/05/25/xristougenniatiki-giorti-ekkn-korinthou/)

At the same time, schools operate respecting safety and function issues of the prison in which they are situated. Very often, however, safety rules influence the process of teaching and learning. Examples of such difficulties are the many prohibitions in materials used in teaching, which in some cases are extreme (e.g. the use of paint for painting) and may extend even in the curriculum, where some learning subjects are abolished (e.g. technology, as tools are needed that are considered dangerous). Control is also evident in the use of the computers and the internet in schools,[19] which is allowed in class under the strict supervision of the teachers. However, schools possess their websites.

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[19] Indicative was the recent difficulty of providing prison education due to the restrictions and lockdown because of the pandemic: online schooling was not an option because of the restrictions in the internet use. One of the schools piloted distance-education by making a TV channel on which recorded lessons were broadcast.

Pict. 4. The website of Avlona secondary school in sch.gr (http://gym-par-avlon.att.sch.gr/)

Side activities prove to be necessary, as they have the potential to contribute positively to students' experiences and connect them to the world outside. These activities also involve the opening of the school to the prison environment and the rest of the inmates, functioning as an incentive and as a transformative force of attitudes, expectations and roles. Furthermore, they contribute to the opening of the prison school to society, mainly by allowing prisoners to participate in a variety of activities that often demand cooperation with the outside world (other schools or organisations) and then allowing them to present their work to a wider public, mainly of their families and visitors. As far as the educational impact is concerned, those activities support the learning process, strengthen communication between teachers and students, offer prospects to the inmates for reintegration into school life and society and help improve the school climate. They also contribute to the development and strengthening of personality by enhancing self-confidence, self-esteem and social skills as well as changing attitudes and behavior of the inmates.

Moreover, in this way, a framework which encourages creative and participatory learning – effective enough for addressing and challenging the issue of enclosure– is conditioned and provided. This framework also encourages entertainment, cooperation and creative use of the idle time of prison and provides motivation through encouragement and positive experiences in relation to the reintegration and expectations of students for the future.

At this point, it is very important to consider the perceived role and contribution of the school in the prison context. Our contact mainly with the teachers at the schools provided us with the impression that the schools function for the young inmates as a kind of symbolic threshold. The school is viewed as a space in between two worlds, where young prisoners are allowed to a prolonged contact with people coming from the outside, namely their teachers. Although teachers form part of another formal entity (i.e. the school), they are not equaled to the prison personnel by the students. Moreover, since the students spend lot of their time in the school and their teachers spend lot of time with them, obviously more time than they are allowed to spend with their families, this creates bonds between teachers and students and potentially turns teachers to confidants and informal mediators.

Thus, although, very often, the incarcerated choose to go to school because of the bonus in their penalty, this choice might be also related to other motives: their need to escape from their dark and

monotonous life of imprisonment or be close to people that are connected with the world outside prison or even in their projection for their future reintegration in the society and their effort to ameliorate their position and augment their future choices when liberated.

Pict. 5. The external wall of a detention facility painted on the inside by students-inmates as featuring in the webpage of the school (Source: http://gym-par-avlon.att.sch.gr/)

Teachers, in this line of thought, parallel themselves to "the bond" or "the link" to the world outside prison since they act as important agents in this process. They function as mediators, facilitators or even "translators" and informal counselors. Teachers also are usually influenced in important ways, as their involvement in the situation becomes longer and deeper. From outsiders and distanced observers of the "other" they view themselves as becoming gradually transformed to being involved and accept the role of a mediator and a reflexive agent. However, agency for them may either be perceived as reform or be in the logic of empowerment.

This, obviously, helps the inmates-students to develop special bonds with the teaching staff, a sense of respect for the school as well as a feeling of security and sense of freedom. So, as pointed to us, the school, the teaching staff and the headmasters represent another aspect of formality and receive high esteem, respect and trust by the inmates-students. In this way the inmates-students may feel –as indicated in the teachers' answers– "*closer to society*", or that "*the outside world has not alienated nor forgotten them*" and "*still cares for them*" and that "*they are not completely cut off from the world.*"

Concluding remarks: the potentiality of prison schools as thresholds

The aforementioned spatial, administrative and educational particulars led us reflect on whether we could picture prison schools as passages, as thresholds to the outside world, both in the physical sense and the symbolic.

Individuals experience transitions and changes in their lifetime as they pass from one culturally recognized phase of life to the other, as they move "from one social status to another" (Leach, 1976: 77) and experience "alternating exposure to structure and communitas and to states and transitions" (Turner, 1977a: 97). According to Deleuze (1992: 3) "The individual never ceases passing from one closed

environment to another, each having its own laws: first, the family; then the school […]; then the barracks […]; then the factory; from time to time the hospital; possibly the prison, the preeminent instance of the enclosed environment". Moreover, Turner viewed society as a process "in which any living, relatively well-bonded human group alternates between fixed and… floating worlds" (Turner, 1977a: vi).

This lifelong process could be visualized as being structured on spatiotemporal passages, crossing boundaries, while moving from one arrangement to the other. Foucault (1986: 24) defined those arrangements that intersect with the others and contest them either as utopias which are "unreal" spaces or as heterotopias "real" and "effective" places that, although being part of the social order, they constitute "counter-sites". In considering space as a system of separation and differentiation, where power is exercised and performed, heterotopias could be identified as "the places of the other outside the generalized disciplinary order" (Stavrides, 2010: 105-106). At the same time, those arrangements initiate a different sense of time ('heterochrony'/'heterochronism'), out of the ordinary and contrary to the normal or "traditional" time of society (Foucault, 1986: 26).

Turner, for describing these in-between transitional spaces, employs the word "limen", meaning "threshold", from Van Gennep's second of three stages in rites of passage and views it as: "a no-man's-land betwixt and between the structural past and the structural future as anticipated by the society's normative control of biological development. It is ritualized in many ways, but very often symbols expressive of ambiguous identity are found cross culturally" (Turner 1986: 41). So, liminality is a condition of "no-place" and "no-time" (Turner, 1979: 150) and is characterised by the construction of transitory identities.

Liminal entities (liminars/passengers), being at a transitional limbo phase, "are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (Turner, 1977a: 95). They are ambiguous and indeterminate, as they find themselves in a cultural realm that has "few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (ibid: 94).

Accordingly, thresholds or passages are spatiotemporal arrangements and at the same time experiences, where "initiands" undergo rites of passage in a process of change and transformation: the suspension of the previous status/identity takes place, whilst there exists anticipation of transition or preparation for a new status/identity. In this, we may identify the ontological nexus of "space, time and being" conceptualised as the essential qualities of the physical world of "spatiality, temporality and social being" (Soja, 1989: 25). Moreover, this process might be considered as initiation to otherness thus heterotopias can be considered as "passages towards otherness" (Stavrides, 2010: 112).

According to Douglas (2001: 96) people in marginal state or in transition are "somehow left out in the patterning of society" and become "placeless" and ambiguous. As such they tend to be considered as unclean, polluting and dangerous. However, we may find in liminality positive and active qualities (Turner 1986: 41). In this liminal space-time, the one excluded from the social order is incorporated in

another reality where one experiences feelings of comradeship and belonging, as opposed to the hierarchical structure of the relations of the everyday. This alternate structure, Turner's communitas is understood through its "juxtaposition to, or hybridization with, aspects of social structure" (Turner, 1977a: 127) and it holds "potentiality". Liminality is developed in between past and future states and as such it carries the dynamics of the prospect of change and re- integration and possesses also pedagogical qualities (Turner, 1977a: 105). It can further be described "as a fructile chaos, a storehouse of possibilities, not a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structures, a gestation process, a fetation of modes appropriate to postliminal existence" (Turner, 1986: 42).

In this line of thought, both prisons and schools can be viewed as thresholds, heterotopic structures that have the power to juxtapose with others and create an alternate arrangement of space/time, either as an illusion or as a real space/time which contrasts –by its structure– our world. This presupposes a mechanism of closure and opening which makes heterotopias inaccessible and ensures segregation, while it also makes them penetrable and accessible (Foucault, 1986: 26).

Schooling holds liminal characteristics in the sense of being a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, of a different place and of a different context other than the familiar house environment and has often been paralleled to a rite of passage (McLaren, 1986: 24).

Prisons according to Foucault (1986: 25) are heterotopias of deviation/deviance as they are occupied by people with behavior that deviates from the norm or current standard. Furthermore, prisons belong to the so-called "total institutions" which are characterised by Goffman (1961: 12) as "social hybrids, part residential community part formal organisations". Their "encompassing or total character" is often symbolically consummated in the physical barriers posed to social interaction such as high walls and bars (ibid: 4).

Upon entry to such an institution a "stripping process" takes place which brings about a symbolic "mortification of the self" as far individual and social identity are concerned, since inmates are deprived of their personal items, become "defaced" and submitted to a stigmatised status (ibid: 20). This stripping process insinuates a symbolic cut off from the outside world, from the previous status of the person and of the normal flow of life/time. Moreover, "a leveling process" (ibid: 119) also takes place by power of which inmates are homogenised. As also Turner (1979: 149) observes, "Liminars are stripped of status and authority, removed from a social structure maintained and sanctioned by power and force, and leveled to a homogeneous social state through discipline and ordeal". In this way "signs of preliminal status are destroyed and signs of liminal non-status applied" (ibid: 19).

Moreover, according to Becker (1963) the inmates are turned into outsiders for the society, as they are in a ritualistic sense cast out of the normal life of a group and secluded. In this heterotopic space/time social timelessness (time out of time), physical separation (place out of place), dissolution of the social bonds and ambiguity are experienced by the inmates. They are viewed as "the Other", the deviant, the marginal, the dangerous.

During our contact with the Greek prison schools, this distinction between the inside and the outside was evident in expressions that were used by teachers and headmasters for describing the situation of imprisonment. Society was pictured as the "outside", "the world out there" or the "outside of the walls," synonymous to freedom and autonomy. On the contrary, prison was viewed as the "inside", the "enclosure", synonymous with the absence of autonomy and initiatives, with routine, systematic control and total submission of the prisoners.

Moreover, expressions like "the normal kids of their age", the "normal school", "sane" were used to refer to the educational reality outside the prison as opposed to the "deviant", to "children that lost their path" or to "outcasts from the school, because they did not fit" that were selected when referring to the inmates.

Prison schools were symbolically pictured in teachers' and headmasters' discourse mostly in positive terms as "an oasis", "a window", "a space of freedom", "a connecting bond to society or the world outside", "a space of proximity with society", "a point of contact with the outside world", "a (brief) escape in time", "a way out", "a breath of freedom", "a second chance", "a chance for utilising the dead/lost/idle time in prison", "an opportunity to gain the lost time", "a transition from one status to the other", "an important pillar of social reintegration" and "a step towards" or "an incentive to change".

However, transitions, as being nor one state nor the next, imply danger, which may stem from our inability to determine the outcome for both the individual and the society. This transitional and controversial character is further observed in the form of agency which is selected and developed by teachers (this of reform or empowerment).

In the bipolar oppositions, inside/outside, normal/deviant-outcast, familiar/strange-different, neglect/care, positive/negative, the prison school is visualized as an "arrangement in between", a threshold between the past and the future states, between former and new identities, which also holds the power of transformation. In this context, there is discerned an obvious potential of multiple metamorphosis: at school "inmates are turned into classmates", "teachers are turned into mediators and facilitators", the whole process of teaching and learning becomes a creative, transforming and liberating experience for both the inmates and the teachers.

Indicative of the above point it is the connection one teacher drew between the actual and the symbolic movement-transition that takes place in context of prison schools: **"***The everyday route of the students from their cells to the school stands for the transition from the status of the inmate-prisoner to the status of a learner-free citizen.***"**

Although thresholds insinuate separation, regulated access and marker of boundary with otherness, at the same time they mark transition in time, space and status, they indicate and effect comparisons, they symbolize potential opening to the future, flow of people and ideas and the conciliation with otherness. In this sense, thresholds embody the prospect of change and reaffirmation of status and as such they can be powerful drivers of change. Leach (1965) pictures transition and the

change that it brings about in a vivid metaphor as a symbolic death of the actor in the world of departure and its rebirth in the other world. Turner (2009: 95) also notices that often liminality is paralleled to "death, to being in a womb".

Pict. 6. A student's drawing from Avlona school, featuring in the programme of the 2016 conference of Volos.

Accordingly, heterotopias are not only "other" places, but heterogeneous spaces of sites and relations (Soja 1989: 17) that encapsulate, create, reinforce or even contest "otherness" in a symbolic nexus of time, space and social relations. In this context, in their life course, people become attached to many spaces of inclusion, seclusion and exclusion, where control is exercised, integrated and opposed. However, people are not just drifting in the stream of life or just conforming to circumstance or to rules imposed on them. People make decisions and develop new strategies lifelong as they enter different phases of life and at the same time different environments of enclosure.

Understanding prison schools as thresholds implies that a kind of suspension of the previous state takes place and at the same time there is the anticipation of the new. Those arrangements are not simply spatiotemporal passages where structure is substituted by anti-structure, where the order is contested only to be later re-constructed, or, where otherness is negotiated. They are dynamic and transformative passages between two diverging structures, the prison heterotopia and the society. They embody the prospect of change and affect change, as inmates have the chance to contest their attributed status/identities and built new ones. Accordingly, Turner (1977: 68) locates the "essence of liminality" "in its release from normal constraints, making possible the deconstruction of the "uninteresting" constructions of common sense, the "meaningfulness of ordinary life," … into cultural units which may then be reconstructed in novel ways […]."

So, in viewing the dynamics of prison education as transformative in the sense of a social poetics, we should accept that a process of negotiation, resignification and active creation of meaning takes place when contesting with otherness, deconstructing and reconstructing and finally transforming relations and identities. However, whatever the potential of education for young prisoners or the courageous efforts and achievements in Greece might be, we cannot overlook the fact that in a country in crisis, prison education suffers in many ways, not only from lack of resources but also from lack of special

focus and targeted interventions as far as the whole framework, curricula, teaching materials, professional development of the teaching staff with regular educational support and training for teachers.

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Σύντομα Βιογραφικά

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"Medieval Traditions Reconquered and Reclaimed": Folklore and Folksong as Ideological Tools against Ethnocentrism and Alt-Right Ideologies in Black Metal

Athanasios Barmpalexis

Abstract

This article, based on ethnographic research, discusses the creation of an album that belongs to the musical subcategory of medieval black metal. The creator of the album, Christos G., re-imagines, recreates, and presents medieval peasant traditions of resistance and revolt in his *Mystras* project, but through the perspective of the rebels and not through the official descriptions of the events as written by medieval authorities who belonged to the victorious sides. To achieve this, the artist referred to folklore and traditional song; he wanted to illustrate that, if these two are used within an accurate historical context, they highlight a completely different picture of medieval times than the one usually depicted in black metal, where a white, homogeneous, and noble medieval Europe is constantly portrayed as part of ethnocentric ideologies and reactionary agendas. Folklore and traditional song become ideological "weapons" in Mystras that symbolise that just as the peasants of medieval times revolted against injustice and oppression, so should the artists and audience exclude and eliminate far-right ideologies from black metal.

Key words: Middle Ages, black metal, ethnocentrism, traditions of resistance, folk hero, folksong, cultural dynamics, interpretation in song, reconstruction/reimagination

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«Μεσαιωνικές παραδόσεις επανακυριεύονται και ανακτώνται»: Η λαογραφία και το λαϊκό τραγούδι ως ιδεολογικά εργαλεία ενάντια στον εθνοκεντρισμό και τις ακροδεξιές ιδεολογίες στο black metal

Αθανάσιος Μπαρμπαλέξης

Περίληψη

Το συγκεκριμένο άρθρο, βασισμένο σε εθνογραφική έρευνα, πραγματεύεται τη δημιουργία ενός δίσκου που ανήκει στη μουσική υποκατηγορία του μεσαιωνικού black metal. Ο δημιουργός του δίσκου, Χρήστος Γ., αποφάσισε στον πρώτο του δίσκο του με το πρότζεκτ *Μυστράς* να επαναφανταστεί, να αναδημιουργήσει, και να παρουσιάσει μεσαιωνικές επαναστατικές παραδόσεις χωρικών, αλλά μέσω του πρίσματος των επαναστατών και όχι μέσω των επισήμων περιγραφών των γεγονότων οι οποίες είναι γραμμένες από τις μεσαιωνικές αρχές που ανήκαν στις νικητήριες πλευρές. Για να το επιτύχει αυτό, ο καλλιτέχνης ανέτρεξε στη λαογραφία και το παραδοσιακό τραγούδι. Θέλησε με αυτόν τον τρόπο να προβάλει ότι, αν αυτά τα δύο χρησιμοποιηθούν ιστορικά πλαισιωμένα, αναδεικνύουν μια εντελώς διαφορετική εικόνα της μεσαιωνικής Ευρώπης από αυτήν που προβάλλεται γενικότερα στο χώρο του black metal ως μιας λευκής, ομογενούς και ευγενούς εποχής, που έχει ως σκοπό την προώθηση εθνοκεντρικών ιδεολογιών. Στο δίσκο η λαογραφία και το παραδοσιακό τραγούδι γίνονται ιδεολογικά «όπλα» που συμβολίζουν ότι όπως οι χωρικοί των μεσαιωνικών χρόνων επαναστάτησαν ενάντια στην αδικία και την καταπίεση, έτσι οφείλουν οι καλλιτέχνες και το κοινό να αποκλείσει και να εξαλείψει αυτές τις ακροδεξιές αντιλήψεις από το black metal.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Μεσαίωνας, black metal, εθνοκεντρισμός, παραδόσεις αντίστασης, λαϊκοί ήρωες, παραδοσιακό τραγούδι, πολιτισμικές δυναμικές, ερμηνεία στο τραγούδι, ανάπλαση/επαναδημιουργία

Introduction

Since its conception, extreme heavy metal music subgenre, black metal, has become interconnected with evil and controversy. It is not only the image, the sound, the onstage theatrics, or the lyrics that have given such a reputation to black metal, but also a series of events related to crime, bigotry, and, as to be discussed in this article, nationalistic ideologies. Just as the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries proto-folklorists used folklore to underpin national identity and promote ethnocentrism (Kyriakidou-Nestoros, 2007: 22–33), several black metal artists, especially within the medieval black metal sub-subgenre, reimagined past traditions to promote white supremacy, Eurocentrism, and racism. However, there has been a steadily growing bloc of outspoken antifascist black metal artists that have stood against these tendencies. Among those that have been particularly vocal is Athenian black metal artist, Christos D.[1] Christos in his recent 2020 album "Castles Conquered and Reclaimed" under the project name *Mystras* decided to approach Middle Ages in an entirely opposed way to their stereotypical depiction of the period in medieval black metal as a Eurocentric time of valiant nobles and fearless crusaders that were racially homogeneous. Instead, Christos concentrated on giving voice to the people who had long suffered from the oppression imposed by medieval nobility and feudalism.

Middle Ages were a period in human history "when people from relatively low [and diverse, I would add] stations in life became aware of their own power and importance", willing to sacrifice their lives for the ideal of a better living (Basdeo, 2018: ii). Nonetheless, these early modern insurgencies for social justice and equality were doomed to fail, as they were instigated by "primitive rebels", as Hobsbawm refers to them (Hobsbawm, 1959). Their fights and struggles, however, became foretellers for future similar initiatives and still act as inspirations for others (Guillorel and Hopkin, 2017: 33), as in the case of Christos. In "Castles…" peasant revolts become a symbol urging for a drastic change within the scene that Christos has been part of since his adolescence. To achieve this, the artist re-envisions, reimagines, and recreates nine songs (among them four covers of early- and late modern traditional songs) that address medieval "traditions of resistance"[2] through the perspective of the common folk who have decided to oppose injustice and oppression. Christos also actively applies folklore (Bronner, 1998: 23), as he enriches his creations with elements from local folk traditions. In his album, "old slogans, old sobriquets, old threats, and challenges" (Guillorel & Hopkin, 2017: 33) are revisited and are given a revived symbolic meaning, while the traditional with the new creatively co-exist and supplement each other.

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[1] Christos asked me to not include his surname in the article for anonymity purposes.

[2] I use the term "traditions of resistance" the same way Guillorel, Hopkin, and Pooley do in the edited book *Rhythms of Revolt: European Traditions and Memories of Social Conflict in Oral Culture* (2017) to emphasise the fact that folk traditions should be regarded as valuable as official written documents for a comprehensive and balanced reconstruction of the past.

In the article thus I will explore how folklore and folksong are used in Christos's album as mechanisms to restore a much-craved balance within a music scene that has been dominated by racism and nationalism since its emergence. Based on two recorded discussions I had with the artist in mid-November 2020, I will focus on how he reimagined some medieval traditions of resistance in song, and how these songs were enriched with folkloric aspects. Moreover, I will examine the recreation process of the traditional songs in the album, focusing on the significant role of the triptych "text, process, and creativity" in song traditions, (Åkesson, 2006: 9) as well as on the interaction between the traditional and the contemporary in music. I will examine all these aspects within the frame of some of the most important notions in contemporary Folkloristics such as individual interpretation, recontextualisation, and cultural dynamics in all aspects of human expression**.** However, before discussing the emergence of folklore and folksong and its presence in contemporary rock and metal music as outcome of the nineteen-sixties' "Folk Revival" movement, I find it important to provide the reader with some key information regarding heavy metal as a music style, and its place in the contemporary music world.

Heavy Metal: Rock music's heavier "cousin"

Heavy metal, also known among its fans' circles simply as "metal", is a rock music subgenre. Having emerged in the early seventies, heavy metal has its roots in the nineteen-fifties' blues and the sixties' psychedelic and early hard rock scenes. The typical metal sound is based upon heavy-sounding guitars, bass guitars, and drums, while the strong distortion in the sound of the electric guitar, the fast overall pacing, the density of the bass guitar, and the guitar solos are some of the key features that set metal apart from other rock music subgenres. *AllMusic*, the largest online music database writes about metal: "Of the myriad forms of rock and roll, heavy metal is the most extreme in intensity, masculinity and theatricality".[3]

The forefathers of the heavy metal scene are Black Sabbath from Birmingham, United Kingdom. The six albums that they released in the early to mid-seventies are considered milestones in heavy music, influencing all artists that have since decided to play the heavy metal musical style. The four band members produced a sound that was unique: they expanded the blues influences that were to be found in early hard rock bands, such as Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple, by adding extra pace, a thicker production, a colossal/heavy sound, and distortion, combining it with lyrics inspired by the occult, esotericism, and horror (Irwin, 2012). Following on the steps of Black Sabbath, the, also British, bands, Judas Priest and Iron Maiden further evolved the metal musical style in the late seventies. They reduced, or in some cases even eliminated, the blues or psychedelic rock influences, and, instead, emphasised on instrumental and vocal aggression and virtuosity, while their lyrics drew inspiration from other areas of interest as well, such as literature, history, social issues, and personal experience narratives. The

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[3] https://www.allmusic.com/subgenre/heavy-metal-ma0000002721 (retrieved 19 May 2022).

resulting sound, known as the "new wave of British heavy metal", eventually became the first nationwide metal movement that had reached mainstream audiences (Walser, 1993: 6).

Within the next two decades, metal would sonically evolve and experiment further; as a result of this dynamic situation, numerous substyles would emerge. Many of these newly-found metal subgenres, among them glam metal (the musical outcome of the blending of the seventies' glam rock scene, as created by David Bowie and T-Rex, with heavy guitar riffs) and thrash metal [a speedier combination of the "new wave of British heavy metal" sound with hardcore punk, with Metallica being the most known representative of the subgenre, (Walser 1993: 14)] would become commercially extremely successful (Christe, 2003: 79). However, other subgenres would adopt an even extremer lyrical, visual, and musical approach that was "destined" for the underground. The two most important extreme underground metal subgenres are death metal and black metal. The former is based on a highly distorted sound as a result of guitar downtuning that is combined with deep, aggressive growls for vocals, and violence-, politics-, and science fiction-related lyrics (Purcell, 2003), while the latter – the misanthropic, "demonic" sounding black metal – will be discussed in detail later in the text.

To date, several other metal sub-substyles and sounds have emerged, expanding heavy metal music even further.

Folk Song and Rock Music: Folk Revival, Maintenance, and Experimentation

Since the emergence of the "Folk Revival" movement in the mid-twentieth century, folklore and traditional song have increasingly played a vital role in contemporary rock music. The nineteen-forties folk music revival with the emergence of folk singers such as Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger had a massive impact on later generations. The movement had made artists such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, the Byrds, or Fairport Convention aware of the existence of countless folk tunes within and outwith their cultures, offering "a new sense of nature and value of an integral part of their cultural heritage" (Georges & Jones, 1995: 82). These aforementioned artists belonged to a generation of folksingers or "singers of folksongs" who merged folksong with rock and pop aesthetics to create a new kind of artistry that also brought folksong to the masses (Botkin, 1967). This trend continued over in the next decades, where the social aspect of music and the songs' messages have been particularly emphasised (MacKinnon, 1993).

Folklore and folk music have since become omnipresent components in the underground subgenres of rock music, punk and metal. The "folk punk" scene, for example, fuses punk rock pace, attitude, and working-class-related themes with folksongs and traditional instruments such as the fiddle, bagpipes, banjo, or the tin whistle (Haas, 2013). Similarly, folklore has emerged in the heavy metal scene. In the early nineteen-nineties, the Irish Cruachan and the British Skyclad fused traditional music instruments and lyrics on local myths and legends into their music, thus creating a new metal subgenre, "folk metal" (de Keppler, 2007: 39). Countless bands followed this pattern; among them, the "viking" metal bands Enslaved and Amon Amarth, who revisit Old Norse traditions in their music while carrying

axes, swords, and horns onstage (de Keppler, 2007: 30–2, 38), the Finnish Amorphis who draw inspiration in their lyrics from the nineteenth-century Finnish folk epic, *Kalevala* (Lönnrot, 1989), or the, once again, Finnish Korpiklaani and Finntroll who fuse metal music with hummpa, shamanic drums, the traditional Sámi singing style of *yoik,* and lyrics about trolls and native spirits (de Keppler, 2007: 42).

This blending of folklore and metal music has particularly become popular within the black metal scene. In the next section, I will therefore discuss the relationship between the two, as well as all the controversies that have taken place within the scene since its emergence.

Black Metal and Folklore: Eurocentrism, Nationalism, and the Recent Efforts for a Drastic Change

Taking its name from the 1982 *Black Metal* album by the British band Venom, black metal received extra attention in the early nineties with the emergence of bands from Norway (most notably Mayhem, Emperor, and Darkthrone) that formed what is now known as the "second wave" of black metal (Skadiang, 2017: 15). These bands not only altered drastically the sound and imagery of black metal – Venom's speedier/thrash metal playing style was replaced by extremely distorted guitars, lo-fi production, tremolo pickings, shrieking vocals, "blast beat drumming", and cacophonous soundscapes, while "corpse paint", a black and white makeup style, was extensively used, making the artists appear corpse-like (Freeborn 2010: 82; Olson 2008: 9) – but also associated the scene with notoriety and crime: Murders, church arsons, and nationalistic tendencies turned black metal into the most controversial extreme metal subgenre (Moynihan & Søderlind, 2003). And while the culprits for the murders and arsons were eventually captured and imprisoned, the nationalistic ideologies have been perpetuated to this day.

Norwegian black metal bands typically tended to take an apolitical stance both in their lyrical content and their public standpoints, claiming that politics had no place into their scene; however, most musicians "flirted" with neo-Nazism behind the scenes (Olson, 2008: 103). It was Varg Vikernes, one of the artists imprisoned for murder and arson (he brutally murdered his bandmate in Mayhem, Euronymous), the first who openly admitted his nationalistic ideologies (Olson, 2008: 101). However, Vikernes with his own band, Burzum, instead of creating a type of music that would sound ferocious, misanthropic, or demonic as in any typical black metal album, incorporated gentler, ambient soundscapes and folk music elements into his creations (in fact, Vikernes's later albums are closer to neo-folk rather than black metal) (Spracklen, 2014: 194). Moreover, the lyrical content for his albums was entirely based on fantasy medieval worlds and Norse mythology and did not reflect his extreme ideologies at any point (Von Helden, 2017: 35, 179).

Vikernes's approach inspired several artists with similar political inclinations (Olson, 2008: 80). Local mythologies, mystical places, and fantasy worlds, as well as fictional ones – especially Tolkien's

lore – became the thematic focus of these bands, while black metal ferocity was fused with folk music traditions, clean vocals, acoustical passages, and atmospheric melodies, connecting, therefore, musically the past with the present, and creating a mystical and also glorified version of the distant past (Olson, 2008: 72). These bands used this revisited ancestral past for their own agendas: the past became "a very simple explanation" to propagate for nationalism and racism, while organised religions, other races, and the contemporary way of living became the "scapegoat" both in their music and overall attitude (Moynihan & Søderlind, 2003: 195–204).

Such extreme and controversial inclinations were eventually met with criticism within the scene, with various artists distancing themselves from such ideologies. This trend first appeared within the American black metal scene in the late 2000s; several American artists blended Nordic black metal's sound with themes that were rooted in eco-spirituality and eco-feminism, producing an artistic outcome that was unattached to any Eurocentric context (Olson, 2008: 92–3, 100). It was, however, American black metal band *Panopticon* and the 2012 album, "Kentucky"[4] that was the first that fully embraced folklore as an ideological means to stand against the dominance of nationalistic affiliations within black metal. Austin Lunn, the artist behind Panopticon and a Kentucky native, revisited both lyrically and musically the early-twentieth century mineworkers' strikes against mine-owners and state in Kentucky and West Virginia, while also expressing his own environmental concerns. Lunn also blended black metal ferocity and atmospheres with bluegrass music – banjos, fiddles, and pedal steel guitars were used throughout the album – while the artist also covered two popular American protest folksongs, "Which Side Are You On?" and "Come All Ye Coal Miners", as made famous worldwide by folksingers Woody Guthrie and Sarah Ogan Gunning respectively (Peel, 2018).

Similar to Panopticon's initiatives have since been put forward by other black metal bands, but none has incorporated folklore and folksong as much as Christos has in Mystras. In the next section of the article, I will examine Christos's "Castles…" album in close detail, focusing on the background of the creation, the original songs on medieval traditions of resistance that he has reimagined as well as and the folklore applied, used as tools advocating for the need for a drastic change within black metal.

"Giving Voice to the Common Folk": The *Mystras* Project, its Background, and the Folklore-related Themes in the Original Songs

Known in the black metal circles with the pseudonym "Ayloss", a common practice in black metal (Olson, 2008: 15), Christos has been part of the Greek and international black metal since his adolescence. While studying Music at the University, Christos started working on his own project, *Spectral Lore*. Since its conception, Christos has released five well-received by the black metal

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[4] https://thetruepanopticon.bandcamp.com/album/kentucky <retrieved 11 January 2022>.

community and critics full-length albums, while also collaborating with several other bands and artists.[5] Christos in Spectral Lore plays an atmospheric, ambient style of black metal, while lyrically and thematically discusses matters such as the cosmos, nature, and philosophy. Christos, however, began feeling increasingly concerned and frustrated with the dominating presence of nationalistic and ethnocentric attitudes within the scene he has been part of for so long. He has been extremely vocal in social media, constantly criticising and condemning this phenomenon; however, he decided that he also needed a "political version of Spectral Lore",[6] where he would be able to externalise artistically his frustration and concerns. He eventually resorted to medieval folklore and protest song to create an anti-fascist medieval black metal project under the name *Mystras* that is "against empire and aristocracy".[7] However, before examining Christos's creation in more detail, a few words need to be written on medieval black metal.

Medieval black metal refers to the black metal subgenre that combines traditional instruments and acoustical passages reminiscent of medieval music with the lo-fi production, eerie vibes, and epically aggressive soundscapes of black metal; moreover, the albums' aesthetics and artworks are usually distorted depictions of derelict castles and mystic forests, bringing therefore images of the distant past to one's mind. However, medieval black metal artists tend to reimagine medieval times through fictional and popular literature, or even movies and video games, instead of the accuracy of studied sources. In their music they also promote, as mentioned earlier, the idea of an ethnically homogeneous, valiant, noble, and mystical medieval Europe (Barratt-Peacock and Hagen, 2019). These portrayals of medieval times, however, have long been debunked by historical research; instead, it has been proved that medieval and early modern communities were in fact ethnically, racially, or religiously diverse (Heng, 2018; Bruce, 2019: xix).

Christos's decision to create a medieval black metal album was a conscious one: it was not only because medieval black metal has been the one metal subgenre that has been particularly associated with nationalism and racism, but he also wanted to point out that medieval times, and in extension traditions, are not "*inherently nationalistic*";[8] instead, they have been propagated as such by artists with "sketchy" agendas. Contrary thus to the typical ahistorical approach of the Middle Ages in medieval black metal, Christos leans on historical facts and (oral) traditions of resistance as passed from generation to generation in his album. He pays tribute to the early modern European lower classes that united and stood valiantly against injustice and oppression as outcomes of their prolonged suffering due to severe taxation, social inequity, feudal vassalage, as well as famine and plague (Graus, 2008). These movements might have been ill-fated, as the rebels lacked financial resources as well as training and

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[5] https://spectrallore.bandcamp.com/ <retrieved 19 May 2022>.

[6] Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 17 November 2020.

[7] https://spectrallore.bandcamp.com/album/castles-conquered-and-reclaimed <retrieved 19 May 2022>.

[8] Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 17 November 2020.

organisation in warfare (Bøgh et al., 1989), however, they were and still are perceived by later generations as symbolisation for the need for a radical change through fight and struggle (Guillorel and Hopkin, 2017: 9), which is what Christos urges for the black metal scene.

In 2020, Christos composed the music and wrote the lyrics for five original songs where he reimagined medieval traditions of resistance, while he also covered two medieval protest folksongs, a medieval Christian chant, and another protest folksong from the late modern Ottoman Empire era that served the cause behind his message. He included all these nine compositions into his album "Castles Conquered and Reclaimed", released by the label *I, Voidhanger* in summer 2020. This would have been his first release that would promote the need for a symbolic "*rebellion*" in medieval black metal: "*Absolutely, absolutely [laughing] this is my intention. Clearly, I wanted to create it [the project] for this purpose*", while he also explained why this is the right time for such projects in black metal:

> *This project would not have made sense in the nineteen-nineties, the time when these aesthetics and agendas were still in their infantile stage. It would not have drawn enough attention. It might have been regarded as another black metal album that deals with the medieval period. I might have even been treated [by the insiders of the scene] as the weirdo who tends to write about peasant revolts.*[9]

It would also make perfect sense that a project that relies so much upon folk traditions of resistance would also require a name closely associated in collective memory with medieval times, with a central role in an ill-fated peasant rebellion, and rich in folklore. That name was, as already mentioned, "Mystras".

The castle-town of Mystras, a fortified Byzantine town on Mount Taygetos, located in the region of Lakonia, Peloponnese, in Southern Greece, near the ancient city of Sparta, was the capital of the Despotate of the Morea in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. During the period of the revolt, it was ruled by the Palaeologue dynasty, the last rulers of the Byzantine Empire. Mystras experienced a prolonged period of cultural and economic prosperity right before the fall of the Empire (Runciman, 2010), considered to be "an amalgam of western mythology and unknown history, out-of-the-ordinary spiritual visions, and some of the most important Eastern legends of the Orthodox religion" (Koumartzis, 2017: 278). The castle-town of Mystras was eventually abandoned in the mid-nineteenth century, right before the construction of the modern city of Sparta.

Mystras is closely connected to "The Morea Revolt of 1453-4". The movement was instigated by the Arvanites (Greeks of Albanian descent) residents of the region against the rule of brothers, and also Sultan's vassals, Thomas and Demetrios Palaeologue. Shortly after the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in May 1453, thirty thousand Arvanites, later joined by as many Greeks, frustrated by the financial insecurity they felt due to severe taxation, rose against the two despots, and marched towards the castle of Mystras. The Palaeologue brothers asked for military help, and Omar, the son of the Turk

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[9] Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 17 November 2020.

governor of the region of Thessaly, came to their aid in late 1453. He scored several victories against the rebels, also securing the release of his brother, Ahmed, who had been imprisoned since 1446. However, the rebellion continued, which caused the interference of Turahan Bey, the Thessaly governor himself. Bey and his forces sacked several rebel fortresses in the autumn of 1454, forcing the rebels to retreat and dissolve. The Palaeologue brothers continued to rule, while taxation was reinstated at the same levels as earlier (Cheetham, 1981: 217–8).

Christos addresses the rebellion in the song "Storm the Walls of Mystras". In the song, Christos (re)imagines and (re)creates lyrically the part of story where the rebel troops approach the castle-town and are ready to invade in order to reclaim the castle from the aristocrats, which will signify for them the end of the oppressive Byzantine rule ("*All Empires Fall/ The end of Byzantium is near*"). The song is enriched with local folklore references: First, the alliance of the diverse ethnically and linguistically populations of the Arvanites and the Greeks is particularly emphasised ("*Join my Albanian brothers and sisters/ With whom we share no language/ But the shackles that we must break*"). Second, the song itself is a homodiegetic narrative song, a quite common feature in folk song (Toelken, 1986: 152), as it tells a story in the first-person, while the narrator, probably one of the leaders, plays an active role in the (Nicholls, 2007). Christos's decision to use the first-person narration technique can be interpreted as an attempt to reconstruct the emic, an essential feature in oral tradition and folksong, and "as important for making sense of early modern rebellions as the etic categories imposed by subsequent researchers", as Hopkin and Guillorel note (2017: 33); And third, the song is heavily distilled with the element of the supernatural, another popular motif in traditional song (Shields, 1992/1993). I will discuss this component of the song in more detail.

Christos refers twice to the supernatural in the song. In the first stanza Christos implies a still-existent local belief among the rebels in the naiads, the mythological group of minor female deities (nymphs) that dwelled around bodies of freshwater (Burkert, III, 1985: 174) found amidst Arcadian mists[10] ("*Traversing the mists of Arcadia/ While the wind carries them far away/ Whispers of the Neiads*"). Furthermore, the fifth stanza starts with the verse: "*I, pagan son of the forest!*" – referring probably to the rebels' Greek leader – which is a line that once again hints at Christos's idea that pre-Christian beliefs were still traceable among the populations of Peloponnese in the mid-fifteenth century, when the Morea Revolt took place. This inclusion of non-Christian beliefs in the song was particularly discussed with Christos:

Christos:

I wanted to add a mythological context [to the song]; to add stories, creatures that locals used to believe in.

Sakis Barmpalexis:

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[10] Theresa Bane names the belief in the presence of at least five naiads in pre-Christian Arcadia– Myrtoessa, Neda, Anthracia, Hagno, and Anchirhoe – who, according to Greek mythology, nursed Zeus when he was an infant (Bane, 2013: 241).

So, you personally believe that the residents of Morea still believed in the naiads in 1453?

Christos:
Absolutely. [I believe that] they at least believed in some [of these traditions]. There's no chance that they did not believe in any. […] It took Christianity many, many years to establish itself. But surely, I cannot deny that Christianity was powerful in Byzantium. However, I do believe that in all places that Christianity eventually dominated, there were still remnants of the pre-existing traditions. These [traditions] either intermixed with, and became part of Christianity, or went underground and became part of "alternate" customs, rituals, or stories…[11]

Christos is correct with his suggestions in the above excerpt: pre-Christian beliefs and traditions were severely persecuted, especially during the early-Byzantine-Empire years, forcing any followers of these belief systems to practice secretly (MacMullen, 1986: 4). Moreover, there are indeed indications that such beliefs actually survived until the late-fifteenth century in Peloponnese. For instance, in the *Peribleptos* monastery in the castle-town of Mystras, there is an anaglyph, dating back to the fourteenth century, that depicts Alexander the Great ascending to the heavens (Κουμαρτζής, 2017: 291–3). Alexander might neither be an ancient Greek deity nor a mythical hero to concretely justify any co-existence of the old with the new religion, however, he still represents a Greek cultural period that had been severely persecuted by the Byzantine authorities. The possibility of a co-existence of pre-Christian folk beliefs alongside official religion is, however, more evidently suggested in the work and teachings of one of the most renowned residents of Mystras, Georgius Gemistus Pletho, who died in 1452, shortly before the Morea Revolt. In his book *Nómōn Syngraphḗ*, or simply the *Nómoi*, discovered posthumously in 1460, Pletho, a well-respected scholar throughout Europe, overtly advocates for an overall rejection of the Christian belief system, prompting people to immediately return to the worship of the Olympian deities, Platonian philosophy, and Zoroastrian wisdom (Hanegraaff, 2012: 29–32, 38–41).

Christos, who also supports, as seen earlier, the above idea, attempts to also reimagine and reconstruct the folk belief system of the rebels alongside the revolt's events themselves. He approaches it the same way Leonardo Primiano argues regarding all forms of folk religious expressions: "as contestation to forms of power" (Primiano, 2012: 386). The non-Christian beliefs of the revolting peasants become a contesting mechanism expressing the dichotomy between folk traditions and the power of Byzantine nobility. They also become contesting mechanisms against ethnocentrism in black metal: Christos's reference to water nymphs and mists signifies his intention to clearly point out that mystical lands and local deities should not be exclusively connected to stories of kings and knights, as typically portrayed in medieval black metal, but can also be associated with the diverse medieval folk populations.

All these reimagination processes in "Storm the Walls…" also display what scholars in modern Folkloristics have long emphasised when it comes to artistic performance: that creative ability is

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[11] Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 17 November 2020.

interconnected with individual interpretation and that a folklore item and its meaning are always dependent on the performer's own experiences, taste, preferences, or biases (Georges & Jones, 1995: 275), as manifested in Christos's reconstruction of the events.

While there is nothing noteworthy folklore-wise in the other Byzantine-period related original song, "The Zealots of Thessaloniki" (Christos's emic re-envision of the uprising of the medieval Thessalonica residents in 1342 against the local government), the other original piece of the album, "The Murder of Wat Tyler", is worth of a closer examination. The song deals with the most chronicled medieval revolt, the 1381 English "Peasants' Revolt", focusing on one of its leaders, Wat Tyler. Christos reimagines the events through the view of the revolt's leader. I will here introduce the main events of the revolt.

In the late fourteenth century, English lower classes had grown frustrated with the decimation of the population due to Black Death, severe taxation, and the consumption of the nation's wealth for the funding of the "Hundred Years War" against France; eventually they uprose against the then fourteen-year-old King Richard II and his aristocracy. Adequately organised and equipped, and led by Tyler, several thousand rebels from both the lower and middle classes from the English countryside marched towards London demanding redress. Little is known about their leader though. According to some sources Tyler was a war veteran who had killed a tax collector that attempted to improperly touch Tyler's underage daughter – the murder is however attributed to a John Tiler in some sources (Dobson, 1970: 199–204). When the rebels met with the king, they demanded freedom from vassalage, permission to sell in markets, and a pardon for any offence they had committed during the revolt. Their demands however were overruled, and Tyler was brutally murdered by William Walworth, the Lord Mayor of London, for being disrespectful to the King (Dobson, 1970: 207). The rebels, stunned by the murder of their leader, retreated; however, they were hunted down. Many of them were killed, while the other rebel leaders were imprisoned and later executed.

Tyler's actions during the revolt made him posthumously a "folk legend". At first, Wat Tyler was not particularly celebrated in ballad tradition as other English folk heroes – Robin Hood, Arthur, or King Alfred, for instance. However, he gradually became "an inspiration for radical authors", "a man before his time" for revolutionaries, and a "divisive figure" for conservatists and moralists, while his figure appeared constantly in culture at times of turmoil, whether it is the British society or beyond (Basdeo, 2018: i–xiii). While modern representations of Tyler tend not to be entirely accurate, as in most folk representations (Basdeo, 2018: 1), the meaning of, and the message behind Tyler's deeds have become a source of inspiration promoting a constant fight for "collective consciousness" and "collective action" (Rollison, 2010). Tyler is portrayed in a similar context in Christos's song: he is a timeless folk symbol that represents the downtrodden and oppressed. Christos portrays Tyler as such in the first stanza ("*To those that have been degraded/ Written off the books that chronicle/ The passing of time and the greatness of mankind/ Yet gave all their blood and bone/ Wat Tyler represents them*").

Christos in the song reconstructs once again the emic; he uses it as a tool to reveal "how [the] events were conceived of at the time" (Guillorel and Hopkin, 2017: 33) through the perspective of the rebels and not through the account of the official records of the time, as written by the winners. In contrast however, to the rebels' leader in "Storm the Walls of Mystras", who is portrayed as a "pagan son of the forest" (supernatural elements applied to folk heroes is a common motif in folk song, see Shields, 1992/1993) Tyler does not possess any supernatural elements. Stylistically though, unlike "Storm the Walls…", "…Wat Tyler" is very reminiscent of the ballad structure: not only is it a lengthy (it consists of twelve stanzas of three, four, or five verses) narrative song telling a certain story, it also, and most importantly, does what David Buchan has pointed out regarding ballads: it focuses on human relationships, giving them as importance in the narration as the historical events (Buchan, 1982: 168).

A comparison between Christos's take on the Wat Tyler's story and the first proper ballad (whose tune, however, is not survived) on the deeds of Tyler and the other rebel leaders – first found in *The Garland of Delight* in 1612 (Lamson, 1939: 120) and later re-published in *Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative* by Thomas Evans in 1777 (Vol. 2: 311–4) with the title "The Rebellion of Wat Tyler, Jack Straw and Others Against King Richard the Second" – would reveal similarities as well as substantial differences: for instance, both songs are lengthy (even though the ballad shares more details), they both attempt to reconstruct the emic through the perspective of the rebels, while there is a total lack of the supernatural in both creations. However, while, on the one hand, Christos celebrates the effort by the peasants to seek justice against oppression, even though it was ill-fated, the anonymous ballad creator is more sympathetic towards the authorities and the "noble" king, and less towards the rebels, who he calls "villains". Moreover, the two creators have a different interpretation of the aftermath of the events. While on the one hand, Christos states that "*the Crown started to crack and crumble*" in the song's last stanza, on the other hand, the anonymous creator(s) of the ballad speak of a period of "*joyful peace*". As historians, however, note, the truth is closer to Christos's representation: King Richard's reign went through constant turmoil until his death in captivity in 1400 after being overthrown by Henry IV. This turmoil was not a result of the Peasants' Revolt though, but Richard's own weak ruling strategies (Gillespie & Goodman 1997). It does need to be noted here, however, that the Peasants' Revolt did yield benefits for the lower classes; historians note that serfdom started to decline immediately after the end of the events under the threat of similar future revolts, while poll tax was never again imposed (Tuck, 1987). The decision of the anonymous ballad creator to describe the years after the revolt as joyfully peaceful, is once again an outcome of individual interpretation and/or even a testimony of how the events were orally transmitted and interpreted in collective memory.

"The Murder of Wat Tyler" is preceded by, and interconnected with, a cover of the medieval English folksong "The Cutty Wren". The song covers in the album will be discussed in the next section of the article, starting with the examination of the aforementioned song.

The Remaking of Traditional Songs: Stability, Change, and Originality

As briefly mentioned in the introduction of the article, Christos's approach of the folksongs he has covered for "Castles…" are indicative signs of the contemporary artistic trend to approach and, at the same time experiment with, folksongs (Livingston, 1999). Specifically, Christos has kept in all four folksong covers "*ninety-five percent of the traditional melodies*", as he told me, while has also added traditional instruments in the orchestration, and a non-professional, organic approach while recording the songs. Any other musical approach would have turned the songs into something "*post-modern*", according to him, altering the concept entirely.[12] However, while Christos attempted to stay as close possible to the melodies, at the same time he also decided to completely omit any lyrics from the songs, forcing the songs to go through a simultaneous recreating and reshaping process according to Åkesson's three-concept model in contemporary folk music (Åkesson, 2006: 7).[13] According to the model, Christos decided to stay close to the source and imitate the music with minor changes (recreation), while he consciously changed its form by omitting the lyrics (reshaping). Stathis Damianakos wrote about this interaction between the new and old in any revitalising effort in folklore:

> Folk tradition provides only the structures, the general framework of a creation that always restarts, and the adoption of an external element corresponds to the birth of a new cultural event. […] The [folk] performer does not copy what he has heard, he does not 'perform', but each time he achieves a new, original (re)creation (Damianakos, 1987: 31).

Christos shares the same opinion with Damianakos: while he initially felt an inner artistic and aesthetic need to imitate the songs entirely, he eventually decided that the birth of "a new cultural event" through the conscious "adoption of an external element" (the omission of the lyrics) would serve his cause better stylistically.

Nonetheless, one might wonder: does not the idea of omitting the lyrics from a song "shed" the song's – ideological, in this case – message? Christos has a different perspective on the matter: as these songs are part of a project within a specific socio-political context and a certain aesthetic, the listener can proactively do his or her own research on the meaning of the songs and discover their socio-cultural background. He wanted thus to prompt his listeners to become active users and appliers of folklore, as he (and I, as a matter of fact) did.

As mentioned above, the first folksong cover in the album is the English medieval protest folksong "The Cutty Wren"; the song serves as an introductory acoustic interlude that leads to the black metal ferocity of "…Wat Tyler". It lasts two minutes, while the core melody, as played by Christos, is accompanied with a fiddle. The artist first heard the song through the 1988 cover by the English rock band *Chumbawamba* and though the 1962 version of the song by the folk revival band *Ian Campbell*

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[12] Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 19 November 2020.

[13] In her model, Åkesson suggests that there actually are three different categories of revitalisation of a folksong in contemporary music: They can be re-created, re-shaped/transformed, or renewed/innovated. She also points out that these categories are very "often concurrent and overlapping attitudes and approaches to traditional material and styles, and different levels of stability and change" (2006: 1).

Folk Group. Christos's musical approach is closer to the former; however, he enriches the a-cappella version of the band with instrumentation.

"The Cutty Wren" is the Number 236 entry in the *The Roud Folksong Index*;[14] its first written version was published in proto-folklorist's David Herd's *Scots Songs* collection in 1776 (vol. 2, 210–1). The song in Herd's collection consists of eight four-lined stanzas and is under the title "Will Ze Go to the Wood?". It describes a gang of boys that begin a trip to the local woods to kill a wren, bring it back home, and later feast with its parts. The song is a typical example of the significant role of repetition in folksong, as the lines "*Will Ze Go to the Wood?*", "*What to Do There?*", and "*To Slay the Wren*" as well as the protagonists' names (*Fozie Mozie*, *Johnie Rednozie*, and *Foslin'ene*) are repeatedly sung (Nicolaisen, 1978). An almost identical, but with a more refined language, version of the song with the title "The Hunting of the Wren" is to be found in a later Herd folksong collection as published by Hans Hecht (1904: 200).

As with all folksongs, "The Cutty Wren" went through several alterations throughout the ages; the protagonists' names changed, the lyrics gradually added, or omitted, details, the variants adopted a more Standard-English language, while in Orkney the song evolved into a lullaby with the title "The Bethren Three" (Gosset, 1915: 119). Moreover, since the late-nineteenth century its tune has started to resemble another popular British folksong, "Green Bushes" (Palmer, 1979: 188–9). The tradition of "killing the wren" can be found in ritual to this day. For instance, in contemporary Ireland on St. Stephen's Day (26 December) – also known as "Wren Day" – young males disguise themselves as animals and hunt a symbolical "wren". When "caught", they place it on a pole, carrying it around the town, while also acting mischievously (Muller, 1996/1997: 140-5).

Naturally, the meaning of the song altered over time. Earlier interpretations of the song followed J.G. Frazer's idea of all folklore items being survivals of past traditions (Frazer, 1906–15; 1936). According to those interpretations, the slaughter of the wren – the "king of all birds" in several European folk traditions (Muller, 1996/1997: 131) – refers symbolically to the annual sacrifice of the "Year King" that will bring prosperity and crop fertility (Atwood Lawrence, 1997). However, more contemporary approaches argue that the song is actually a protest song. The wren in European folklore symbolises evil and dishonour, using its manipulative abilities and cunningness to deceive the other forest animals to become their king and eventually their tyrant (Muller, 1996/1997: 136–9). Therefore, notions began to spring that suggested that the wren in the song in fact symbolises aristocracy that needed to be "sacrificed". The first who made this association was English folksinger and folksong collector, A.L. Lloyd, in mid-twentieth century.

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[14] The *Roud Song Index* is a database of more than twenty-five thousand folksongs as collected by librarian Steven Roud. It can be found on the online "Vaughan Williams Memorial Library of the English Folk Song and Dance Society" (https://www.vwml.org/vwml-help-2/).

Lloyd, who was particularly influenced by Marxist ideas, suggested the idea of "The Cutty Wren" being a protest song in his book *The Singing Englishman* (1944). Lloyd argued that peasantry and labouring classes were the actual forebearers and gatekeepers of the English language in late medieval and early modern Britain – as French was the language of aristocracy – while folksong became a mechanism of the common folk not only to sing about their living environment and everyday lives but to also demonstrate their frustrations. Anti-authority songs began to spread, according to Lloyd, among them "The Cutty Wren". He wrote about the song and its symbolisation:

> In "the Cutty Wren" it would seem the tyrant wren had become a symbol for baronial property, preparations for whose seizure and redistribution to the poor was such a formidable task, to be carried out in great secrecy (Lloyd, 1944).

As Hopkin and Guillorel note, since its conception, "of all oral traditional genres, song is perhaps the most important to the creation and maintenance of social groups that wish to contest the powers that be", while it never shied "away from social conflict" (2017: 4, 10), a notion that aligns with Lloyd's interpretation of the song. The idea of the wren as a symbol for tyranny, authority, and unjust rule that needs to be killed and to be fed to the poor has since been established in music, turning the folksong into an anti-authority song. Following the path created by Lloyd, the majority of the contemporary versions of the song, Christos's included, include the song in albums which promote thematically the need for action: for instance, "The Cutty Wren" is part of the 1988 Chumbawamba album "English Rebel Songs 1381–1984" and the 1962 Ian Campbell Folk Group album "The Times They Are a-Changin'".

A very similar to "The Cutty Wren" background is to be found in the next folksong that Christos covered, "Ai Vist Lo Lop" (meaning "I saw the Wolf" in English). A song of Occitan[15] origins, "Ai Vist Lo Lop" is thought of being created in the thirteenth century (Laforte, 1981: 158). The song that consists of two six-lined stanzas, describes the gathering of a wolf, a fox, and a hare in the woods, where they dance and celebrate around a tree and a bush. The element of repetition is strong in this song as well, as the line "*Ai Vist lo Lop, lo Rainard, la Lèbre*" is repeated four times in the song. Variants of the same song, but with the title "J'ai Vu Le Loup", have also been collected from the southern-central Massif Central French region; in these variants the hare is however, frequently replaced by a weasel (Martel and Saisset, 2016: 240). It also needs to be noted that the song in some regions became a children's song (Vernus, 2004: 165), which might explain the reason why both its tune and lyrics remained so stable over time (lyrical stability is a very common feature in all children's songs, see Toelken, 1986: 149).

Little research has taken place regarding the song's meaning; however, the assumption that "Ai Vist Lo Lop" is in fact a protest song is the result of the second stanza of the song. I will here present the stanza, alongside its English translation:

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[15] Occitania is a southwestern French region from Monaco in the East to Bordeaux in the West, and Limoges in the North to the borders with Spain in the South, where the Occitan language was historically spoken alongside the official one. The Occitan language is also to be found in some parts of southwestern Italy and in Andorra (Lafont, 1971: 11).

Aquí trimam tota l'annada	*Here we slave away all the year round*
Per se ganhar quauquei sòus	*So we can earn a few coins*
Rèn que dins una mesada	*And just in a month's time*
Ai vist lo lop, lo rainal, la lèbre	*I saw the wolf, the fox, the hare,*
Nos i fotèm tot pel cuol	*There is nothing left*
Ai vist lo lèbre, lo rainal, lo lop.	*I saw the hare, the fox, the wolf.*

The anonymous creators of the song portray themselves in the first two lines of the second stanza as slaves with minor incomes who, according to the next four lines, are obliged to give all their earnings in a month's time to the three animals until nothing is left. It is this depiction that made artists such as Christos to assume that the three animals of the song might covertly represent the French medieval authorities collecting the entire income of poor peasants as tax. This interpretation of the song is also mentioned in the online Folksong Archival Library "Mama Lisa's World".[16] According to these interpretations, the lines in the second stanza symbolise the social divide between the rich and the poor, and the need to fight against "*medieval capitalism*", as Christos refers to the feudal system.[17]

Finally, Christos's approach musically is very similar to "The Cutty Wren": the song is a two-minute-long acoustic instrumental, while the core melody played by Christos is accompanied with a tin whistle and a daire – a Greek traditional type of percussion.

The interlude "O Tsakitzis" is a cover of the Greek-Turkish folksong tradition on the life of a renowned late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century social bandit, Tsakitzis. Born Tsakitzi Mehmet Efes, Tsakitzis was a Zeybek captain;[18] his and his gang's deeds made him a folk hero among both the Greek and Turkish populations of Asia Minor, Eastern Rumelia, Istanbul, and later in Greece (Yasar, 1994). Known as the "Anatolian Robin Hood" in folk narrative and memory, Tsakitzis and his gang, just as the world-famous English folk legend, robbed the rich distributing the loot to the poor, while also using it to help underprivileged girls get married, or for public works (Korovinis, 2005). His notoriety and his deeds not only inspired numerous folksongs but had also reached mainland Greece long before the refugees from Asia Minor in the early nineteen-twenties, bringing along with them their traditions. There is a Greek folksong, for instance, dating from the late-nineteenth century, wishing that Tsakitzis would come to Greece to mete social justice: "*Tsakitzi, did you not get bored in the villages of Smyrna? Why don't you come to Greece, to help orphans get married?*"[19] (Stathakopoulos, 2015).

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[16] "Ai vist lo lop, lo rainard, la lèbre – Occitanie" in *Mama Lisa's World en Français. Culture Enfantine et Internationale*.

[17] Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 19 November 2020.

[18] Zeybeks were a group of illegally armed Islamised Greeks in the mountainous territories of western Anatolia (Δραγούμης, 1984: 58).

[19] Translated from Greek into English.

One might correctly remark that "O Tsakitizis" is a subsequent to the medieval period folk tradition; however, there were specific reasons behind Christos's decision to include it into his project. Not only was it a folksong and a story that his friend Viktoria knew well – Viktoria also plays the yayli tambur, a Turkish long-neck lute, in the song – but it also perfectly served Christos's message. Tsakitzis is a personification of social justice and anti-authoritarian attitude, while his deeds were sung and narrated by both Turkish and Greeks regardless of their religious, or ethnic backgrounds. In the album thus the folk hero Tsakitzis transcends ethnocentric boundaries, and instead, personifies the need for a united cause against aristocracy. Graham Seal notes regarding this phenomenon: "[social bandits] represent a struggle against a power greater than themselves and those who support them", while the stories and songs on their actions "continue to shape the attitudes and actions of later individuals who, for whatever reason, willfully defy the forces of authority" (Seal, 2011:10). Tsakitzis becomes a metaphorical symbol in "Castles…", representing the need for unity and action that "willfully defy" the reactionary forces that have dominated black metal.

"Contre Dolour" is an anomaly. While all other songs in Christos's project are either folksong covers or original songs that reimagine and recreate the emic in traditions of resistance, "Contre Dolour" is a Christian chant that belongs to the Cypriot Cycle of the "O Antiphons": thus a "high court" song. The "O Antiphons" are short chants, of unknown origins (Cabaniss, 1947), of the canticle of Mary that are sung in evening services in the last seven days leading up to Christmas (Hiley, 1993: 99-100). The Cypriot cycle of the antiphons is thought of being created during the French occupation of the island, thus somewhere between 1189 and 1492, while the only source for the repertory can be found in the *Turin Codex J.II.9*, where it is known as the "Cypriot-French" Codex (Data and Lucca, 1999).

Here raises the question: why did Christos decide to cover a song belonging to the repertory of one of the European authorities that medieval common folk had grown frustrated with, and not a song created by the anonymous folk itself?

As mentioned earlier, the song first appeared in Cypriot music during the three-hundred-year period of occupation of Cyprus under French rule. And while it is being said that the co-existence of the French rulers with the Cypriot nobility was a rather harmonious one that also led to the blending of many imported Roman Catholic traditions with Orthodox Byzantine ones – as seen with "Contre Dolour" –, it was still a "occupier and occupied" situation for the lower Cypriot classes (Coureas, 2021). Nicholas Coureas confirms this by noting that the Latin immigrants in Cyprus were the ones receiving the best-paid jobs, eventually becoming the society's middle class, while the presence of the feudal system was particularly strong on the island, making the king and lords wealthier than their counterparts in Jerusalem or France. Coureas adds also that this financial growth and prosperity reinforced the demand for even cheaper labour and sometimes slavery (Coureas, 2005). A social uprising took place in 1426–27 that was triggered by the political turmoil caused by the Mameluke invasion and the resulting

capture of the king, however, historians consider this uprising more as a series of spontaneous riots rather than an organised peasant revolt (Nicolaou-Konnari, 2005).

The answer therefore to the question regarding "Contre Dolour's" place in the project is once again related to the significance of artistic interpretation and innovation in song. "Contre Dolour" might not be a protest folksong per se, it personifies though, according to the artist, the occupation of the island by foreign rulers and the hardships it brought to the lower classes, and in extension the imposing of foreign traditions. The song has therefore undergone a "recontextualisation" process in the album, where "it is not the individual who is recreative, reshaping/transformative, or renewing/innovative, but the relationship or attitude [of the artist] to tradition" (Åkesson, 2006:10). Christos presents the song as a symbol of the oppression that French rule brought to the local Cypriot lower classes.

Christos even attempted to "traditionalise" the song for the purposes of his project. He applied the technique of "counterpoint", the art of combining different melodies alongside the core melody, also known as polyphony (Laitz, 2008, 96). While "counterpoint" is a technique that was developed during the Renaissance and the Baroque periods within the classical music tradition (Mann and Edmunds 1965), it can also be found within folk music under the name "round" (MacDonald and Jaeger, 2006: 15). "Round" is the simplest "counterpoint" form, where three or more voices/melodies follow the same musical line at different times creating a perpetual harmony in song (Johnson, et al 2001).

Christos applied the technique of "round" in "Contre Dolour". He simplified the three core melodic lines of the song that harmonise with each other, but in a rather looser structure as opposed to the rigidness in early modern Baroque music where a melody needs to be imitated intactly (Buelow, 2004). Christos's instrumentation is also accompanied by a flute played by his friend Stelios. As Christos points out, he wanted to recreate the song that originates from "literary" music within a folk music context, manifesting thus the idea of the constant interaction between the traditional and the formal in music (Toelken, 1986: 149).

Can, therefore, Christos's recreation of medieval songs in a black metal album be considered medieval music? Christos thinks so; however, he points out that medieval black metal is merely one successor of the genre. He said: "*This needs attention! There are many successors, of course, but once you are tagged as [medieval metal], then automatically you are part of this succession*".[20] Christos sees medieval black metal as part of the dynamic processes in music, confirming therefore the notion in contemporary Folkloristics of the ever-evolving nature of culture and tradition (Toelken, 1979).

The album also includes two more songs: the first song in the album titled "Castles Conquered and Reclaimed" and its concluding one, "Wrath and Glory". They are not, however, discussed in this article as the songs simply introduce and "wrap up" the album's message respectively.

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[20] Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 17 November 2020.

Conclusion/Discussion

The ever-increasing levels of both in-print and sound publication has made archival material, including historical sources and traditional song, accessible to an expanding number of contemporary professional musicians. This professionalisation by musicians who have "a pre-knowledge of several genres and style […] clears the ground for more elaborated kinds of reshaping" in music traditions, as manifested in this article (Åkesson, 2006: 13–4). In "Castles…" Christos reimagines medieval traditions of resistance through the rebels' standpoint: he combines traditional song with ferocious black metal and applies folklore elements throughout his creation in a symbolical effort to "conquer and reclaim" his beloved black scene from the nationalistic ideologies and racist behaviours that have dominated the scene since its emergence in the early nineteen-nineties.

When it comes to his application of folklore, Christos decided to enhance the revived traditions with local folk belief systems, supernatural elements, folk heroes, while he also attempted to reconstruct the emic in the songs by making the rebels the actual protagonists of the events as in folk traditions. He also covered two medieval folksongs considered contemporarily to be protest songs, a late modern folksong on a social bandit that was loved by the common folk of both Greece and Turkey, while he also attempted to "traditionalise" a "high court" song by changing both its meaning (in the album it symbolises foreign occupation and oppression) and orchestration.

Christos uses folklore in the album as a recreated, without losing any of its imagination, ideological weapon with which he attempts to (re)approach past events and review them through the perspective of class struggle and the perpetuated relationships that are related to collective behaviours and ideas. As Éva Guillorel and David Hopkin point out,

> stories of rebellion and lost entitlements would raise very powerful emotions. Being presented with an incontrovertible narrative of injustice in the past would all but force one to seek justice in the present. (Guillorel & Hopkin, 2017: 15; also 23)

Tamara Livingston adds to this argument; she writes that revisited traditions are "shaped by the social, political, and economic circumstances which motivate revivalists to take action in the first place" and that the tradition that is chosen to be revisited is very often the result of an inner desire to distinguish a subgroup from a dominant group (1999: 68), as manifested in this article: Christos clearly attempts to communicate that not everyone in black metal endorses reactionary ideologies, and that there are "healthy" minds and voices within the scene that in fact want to reverse this situation. Christos hopes that the traditions of resistance that he has decided to revive will indeed raise "powerful emotions" to the audience of the album and will lead them to eventually reverse the "injustice" that alt-right ideologies have brought to the scene.

Folklore in "Castles…" is also a transcendent force. Unlike thus the dominant attitude in black metal where folklore is a-historically weaponised to promote Eurocentrism and racial homogeneity in medieval times, folklore in Christos's project adopts a trans-national and a trans-regional character, as

it should (Hopkin, 2010). The songs, the tales, and the events that he reimagines transcend borders and become traditions that can inspire anyone regardless of their ethnic, educational, occupational, or gender background (Guillorel & Hopkin, 2017: 20–1).

There are a few more aspects of the album regarding folklore and its place in the contemporary world that also need to be discussed.

First, the significance of the interaction between technology, printed documents, and folk traditions is particularly evident in the project. What "Castles…" manifests is that any contemporary recreating effort of folklore largely "depends on the existence of a prepared ground" (Guillorel & Hopkin, 2017: 2), and that in the contemporary context, where learning a tradition most frequently comes through either digital or written sources, the reanimation of the deeds of a folk hero or a folk tradition is a lot easier and historically accurate process "if there are already traditions in circulation concerning them" (Guillorel & Hopkin, 2017: 27) Nonetheless, contemporary creators, such as Christos, who have decided to reimagine the emic in earlier folk traditions give oral traditions and folk commemorative narrative as much importance as historical accounts for their reviving efforts. Such creators "have learnt to 'read against the grain'" of official records, which were largely, if not exclusively, written by the authorities – thus the winning sides –, attempting to discover what actually happened in these events beyond the prejudice and ignorance of those records (Hopkin, 2010: 5). Richard Dorson, who largely advocated for the need to include folklore as a supplementary tool in the account, reconstruction, and interpretation of historical events in Historical Studies, noted that folklore can not only "illustrate the veracity of tradition" but also "enable the historian […] separate fiction from fact" by cross-examining sources, concluding that a researcher, as Christos became for his project, "can find history alive in the field [of folklore] as well as entombed in the library" (Dorson, 1971: 132, 134, 138, 140, 144).

And second, the project as a whole is an excellent example of how traditional music and folksong constantly change and evolve. As manifested in "Castles…", the traditional songs have been both recreated by keeping almost intact the core melody, and reshaped by omitting the songs' lyrics. The "typical condition of folksong is one of flux", while these new attitudes towards song are always interconnected with the artists' "responses to time, place, rhetoric, and performance", as Toelken reminds us (Toelken, 1986: 147–8), and as found in Mystras. Music, David Atkinson argues, goes through a constant process where "a canon of texts that provides a cultural identity for its practitioners" continually changes to meet the requirements of the present (Atkinson, 2004: 149), while Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin do not see music as "a non-bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts", but rather as "a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present though making reference to the past" (1984: 287), which is exactly how traditional music and folksong are interpreted and treated in the album.

Since our discussion in late 2020, Christos has released another album as Mystras, titled "Empires Vanquished and Dismantled", where he has expanded his anti-authoritarian vision and message by also including anti-imperialistic traditions of resistance alongside anti-aristocratic ones. He, once again, covered four medieval period songs, among them the popular Arabic folksong "Ah Ya Zein", as well as composing a song based entirely on the melody of the German folksong "Ach Meiden du Vil Sende Pein". His plan is to keep releasing albums based on medieval folklore and song traditions, until his message that black metal needs to be conquered and reclaimed from any nationalistic ideologies and racist behaviours reaches a wider audience. He compares his mission to the Arthurian knights' quest for the Holy Grail, giving thus a medieval-related connection to his argument: "*I'd like to think that each of us can actually do something important in our lives, that we matter, and that our actions have significance*".[21] Maybe in the future Arthurian lore also becomes the subject of Mystras and it is the common folk who actually find the grail and not Galahad, being praised for their glory and honour just as the valiant Arthurian knight is. Such reversal of attitudes and interpretations, however, are long needed in black metal regardless.

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Fieldwork

Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 17 November 2020.
Recorded Interview with Christos G., Athens, 19 November 2020

Short CV

Athanasios Barmpalexis holds a Ph.D. in Ethnology (and Folklore) from the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom. His doctoral thesis was on "western" forms of contemporary shamanism and vernacular healing, focusing on shamanic healers residing and practising in the wider area of North-East Scotland. He currently is an Honorary Research Fellow and a Visiting Lecturer at the Elphinstone Institute, where he gives lectures on Mythological Theories and Vernacular Medicine. His current research interests range from Celtic mythologies and local legends and folk music elements in contemporary subgenres of extreme metal music to traditions of resistance, folk medicine and vernacular healing, and traditional witchcraft.

Σύντομο Βιογραφικό

Ο Αθανάσιος Μπαρμπαλέξης έχει λάβει το διδακτορικό του δίπλωμα στην Εθνολογία και τη Λαογραφία από το Elphinstone Institute του Πανεπιστημίου του Αμπερντίν, στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο. Η διδακτορική του διατριβή πραγματευόταν δυτικές μορφές σύγχρονου σαμανισμού και παραδοσιακής θεραπείας, εξετάζοντας συγκεκριμένα θεραπευτές σαμανισμού που ζουν και προσφέρουν τις υπηρεσίες τους στη Βορειοανατολική Σκωτία. Αυτήν την περίοδο είναι Ομότιμος Ερευνητής και Επισκέπτης Λέκτορας στο Elphinstone Institute, όπου διδάσκει Θεωρίες Μυθολογίας και Λαϊκή Ιατρική. Τα τωρινά ερευνητικά του ενδιαφέροντα κυμαίνονται από τοπικούς Κέλτικους μύθους και θρύλους και παραδοσιακά και λαογραφικά στοιχεία στο σύγχρονο ακραίο ήχο της μέταλ μουσικής σε παραδόσεις αντίστασης, λαϊκή ιατρική και παραδοσιακές μορφές θεραπείας, και παραδοσιακή μαγεία.

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ΒΙΒΛΙΟΚΡΙΣΙΕΣ -ΒΙΒΛΙΟΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΕΙΣ

BOOK REVIEWS-PRESENTATIONS

Ε.Π. Αλεξάκης. Το εθνογραφικό Ημερολόγιο των Νησιών: Κύθηρα-Κρήτη (2000-2006). Αθήνα. 2019. σελ. 288.

Γεώργιος Ν. Αικατερινίδης

Αξιολογότατα στοιχεία εξειδικευμένης έρευνας με επιτόπιες μεταβάσεις στην Κρήτη το 2003 και το 2006 προσφέρει στην επιστήμη με «**Το εθνογραφικό Ημερολόγιο των νησιών: Κύθηρα και Κρήτη**» ο δρ Ελευθέριος Π. Αλεξάκης, δυναμικό επιστημονικό στέλεχος του Κέντρου Λαογραφίας της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών (νυν τ. Δ/ντής Ερευνών), ιδρυτικό μέλος και επί σειράν ετών πρόεδρος της "Ελληνικής Εταιρίας Εθνολογίας" (περιοδικό της: "Εθνολογία"), με πλουσιότατο πολυσχιδές στγγραφικό έργο σε Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων και Ημερίδων, επιστημονικά περιοδικά κ.α., καθώς και με αυτοτελείς εκδόσεις (10+4 άλλα "Ημερολόγια").

Οι έρευνές του, ιδίοις εξόδοις, στην Κρήτη έγιναν με έναυσμα δύο Συνέδρια στα Χανιά, τοπικό το 2003 και διεθνές (Κρητολογικό) το 2006 με θέματα ιδιαιτέρου ενδιαφέροντος για τον Αλεξάκη, κυρίως όσον αφορά την οργάνωση του χώρου και μάλιστα του κτηνοτροφικού, με τη συναφή οικονομία, παράλληλα με τη δομή και οργάνωση της οικογένειας, τον οικιστικό ιστό, το λαϊκό δίκαιο, καθώς και ετυμολογικές αναζητήσεις επωνύμων και τοπωνυμίων και ό, τι άλλο στοιχείο χρήσιμο για λαογραφική ή εθνολογική μελέτη, με αξιοποίηση πρωτογενούς αυθεντικού υλικού.

Το "**Ημερολόγιο**" (αυτοέκδοση, Αθήνα 2019, σελ. 288), με μορφή οδοιπορικού, χαρακτηρίζεται από τυπικές και λεπτομερείς καταγραφές με την καθημερινή δραστηριότητα του Αλεξάκη, τα δρομολόγια σε χωριά και οικισμούς, τις συνεντεύξεις του με ανάλογη συμμετοχική παρατήρηση, ένα "Ημερολόγιο", γενικότερα, καταγραμμένο στον παρόντα χρόνο με εντυπωσιακό προγραμματισμό: «*Το μεσημέρι κατέγραφα τα συμβάντα και έκανα ανασκόπηση των πληροφοριών που συγκέντρωνα το πρωί. Το ίδιο γινόταν και το βράδυ. Έτσι υπάρχει μια αμεσότητα, που δείχνει και την ψυχολογική κατάσταση για την πρόοδο της έρευνας που φαίνεται σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις στη μορφή του γραπτού*».

Ιδιαίτερη θέση στις συνεντεύξεις του έχουν τα σόια (σόγια), η γενιά, ενός ατόμου με κάποια ειδοποιό, όπως φαίνεται, διάκριση των όρων, εννοώντας με το σόι τους πατρόθεν προγόνους και με τη γενιά τους εκ μητρός ("είσαι απο ψηλή γενιά και από μεγάλο σόι", λέγει μια μαντινάδα κάνοντας σαφή τη διάκριση): «*Πήρα και το γενεαλογικό δέντρο του, το οποίο είχε μεγάλο βάθος, μέχρι τον προπάππου, αλλά και έκταση. Ήξερε και θυμόταν και τους απογόνους εκ θηλυγονίας, με ισχυρή μνήμη, εμφανώς αμφιπλευρική... Έχουμε χρήση ονομάτων από τη μητέρα που δίνουν μια περισσότερο αμφιπλευρική-αμφιγραμμική τάση στην καταγωγή και στη συγγένεια. Βέβαια, όταν αυτό συνδέεται με γυναίκες που έχουν*

αδελφούς, έχει ιδιαίτερο βάρος...». Στο πλαίσιο των ενδιαφερόντων του εντάσσονται και κάποιες αξιοπρόσεχτες ανθρωπολογικές παρατηρήσεις: «*Είχε στο πρόσωπό του πολλά αρχαϊκά στοιχεία, π.χ. Μάτια βαθιά στις κόγχες και οσφρυακά τόξα προέχοντα...».*

Αυτή εδώ η δημοσιογραφική παρουσίαση του "Ημερολογίου" λιτή και σύντομη, πιστεύω οτι προβάλλει τη διαχρονική αξία του αποθησαυρισμένου σ' αυτό υλικού, αποτελώντας βιβλιογραφική πηγή για πλειάδα περί Κρήτης μελετών, και μάλιστα μελλοντικά, λειτουργώντας, τρόπον τινά, όπως τα παλαιά οδοιπορικά κείμενα με τις πολύτιμες σήμερα πληροφορίες τους, έστω και αν αυτές δεν έχουν την εγκυρότητα της γραφής Αλεξάκη, στον οποίο -εκλεκτό συνάδελφο και εγκάρδιο φίλο- ευχόμαστε εναργέστατη πάντοτε επιστημονική δραστηριότητα.

Σύντομο Βιογραφικό Σημείωμα

Ο **Γιώργος Αικατερινίδης** γεννήθηκε στο Ηράκλειο το 1936. Είναι πτυχιούχος της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών και Διδάκτωρ Φιλοσοφίας του Πανεπιστημίου Ιωαννίνων. Πραγματοποίησε πληθώρα επιτόπιων ερευνών και αποθησαύρισε πλουσιότατο λαογραφικό υλικό, ιδιαίτερα στη Θράκη, τη Μακεδονία και την Κρήτη. Κατέλαβε τη θέση του Διευθυντή Ερευνών του Κέντρου Ερεύνης Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών. Αναγορεύθηκε Επίτιμος Διδάκτωρ Φιλοσοφικών και Κοινωνικών Σπουδών του Πανεπιστημίου Κρήτης.

Short CV

George Ekaterinidis was born in Heraklion in 1936. He is a graduate of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Athens and a Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Ioannina. He carried out numerous field investigations and stored rich folklore material, especially in Thrace, Macedonia and Crete. He held the position of Research Director of the Research Center of Greek Folklore of the Academy of Athens. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Philosophy and Social Studies from the University of Crete.

ΒΙΓΚΛΑΣ ΚΑΤΕΛΗΣ, *Ο Μεγαλομάρτυς Γεώργιος και το Μοτίβο της Δρακοντοκτονίας. Θεολογική και Λαογραφική Μελέτη.* **Άνω Τελεία, Αθήνα 2021, σελ. 158, χωρίς εικόνες εντός κειμένου, παραρτήματα, βιβλιογραφία. ISBN 978-618-85435-6-0.**

Μαρία Κουμαριανού

Το πρόσφατο ενδιαφέρον λόγω της πανδημίας για τις λαϊκές αφηγήσεις ως προς τους βίους και κυρίως τα θαύματα των αγίων προκαλεί μια σειρά ερωτημάτων για τη θέση και τη λειτουργία της επίσημης εκκλησιαστικής ιστορίας. Αν και τα επίσημα αγιολόγια και συναξάρια αποτελούν τη μοναδική αποδεκτή πηγή γνώσης για τη βιογραφία των αγίων, η συλλογή μαρτυριών, θρύλων και παραδόσεων, και η εξέτασή τους έκαναν τους ιστορικούς θεολόγους, όπως ο Κατελής Βίγκλας, να στρέψουν την προσοχή τους σε ένα νέο αντικείμενο που σχετίζεται με το λαϊκό λόγο και την αφηγηματικότητα και το ρόλο που διαδραματίζουν ως προς τη συλλογική λαϊκή πίστη. Για τον λόγο αυτό, τις περισσότερες φορές το ενδιαφέρον στρέφεται λιγότερο προς την αξιοπιστία των αφηγήσεων και περισσότερο προς τη διαδικασία πρόσληψης και τη λειτουργία τους.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό κινείται το εξαιρετικά ενδιαφέρον πόνημα του Κατελή Βίγκλα το οποίο επικεντρώνεται στη μορφή του Αγίου Γεωργίου μέσα από ένα πλήθος οπτικών. Ο συγγραφέας ενδιαφέρεται να αντιπαραβάλει την επιστημονική αλήθεια που στηρίζεται σε αρχειακό υλικό, ιστορικά στοιχεία και γεγονότα με αυτό που αποτελεί μέρος της λαϊκής αφήγησης, της αναπαράστασης στο εκάστοτε παρόν αυτού που εκλαμβάνεται ως αληθές. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, το βιβλίο διαρθρώνεται, εκτός από την Εισαγωγή, σε τρία κεφάλαια με υποενότητες, ενώ συνοδεύεται από παραρτήματα και ενδεικτική βιβλιογραφία.

Στην Εισαγωγή (σελ. 11-19) ο Βίγκλας παρουσιάζει το θέμα και τη διάρθρωση του βιβλίου του και προσφέρει στον αναγνώστη ακροθιγώς κάποια σημεία προς σκέψη, τα οποία παρουσιάζει στη συνέχεια του βιβλίου. Το πρώτο σημείο είναι η αλήθεια περί του προσώπου του Αγίου Γεωργίου. Όπως αναφέρει και ο ίδιος «Ο Άγιος Γεώργιος παραμένει ένα μυστηριώδες πρόσωπο […] εφόσον η ιστορική ταυτότητά του δεν μπορεί να ανιχνευθεί μετά βεβαιότητας» (σελ. 11). Το δεύτερο σημείο σχετίζεται με τους διωγμούς κατά των χριστιανών, τον αμφιλεγόμενο αριθμό των μαρτύρων και σε κάποια σημεία με την ένταση (σελ. 11) των διώξεων αυτών. Όπως λέει και ο ίδιος ο συγγραφέας το ανά χείρας βιβλίο «δεν προσφέρει οριστικές απαντήσεις στα θέματα αυτά», αλλά –προσθέτω- παραπέμπει επιλεκτική βιβλιογραφία ώστε ο αναγνώστης να έχει πρόσβαση και σε άλλου είδους πηγές. Ένα τρίτο σημείο το οποίο αποτελεί αξιολογική κρίση του ίδιους του συγγραφέα είναι η κατά τη γνώμη του «σημαντική

συνεισφορά του βιβλίου» στην «εκτενή εξέταση «των δράκων και της δρακοντοκτονίας» σε παγκόσμιο και διαχρονικό επίπεδο, πάντα σε συσχετισμό με τον Άγιο Γεώργιο (σελ. 15).

Το πρώτο μέρος τιτλοφορείται «Οι Ρωμαϊκοί Διωγμοί κατά των Χριστιανών» (σελ. 20-44) και χωρίζεται σε δυο κεφάλαια σχετικά με την εμφάνιση του Χριστιανισμού και τις πρώτες διώξεις το πρώτο, ενώ στο δεύτερο δίνεται έμφαση στο Μεγάλο Διωγμό επί Διοκλητιανού. Ο Κατελής Βίγκλας εστιάζει την παρουσίαση του ιστορικού πλαισίου της εποχής σε δυο σημεία. Κατά πρώτον, τη σταθερότητα που προσέφερε στους πολίτες της η Ρωμαϊκή αυτοκρατορία μέσα από δυο λατρείες, αυτή των εφεστίων θεών και στη συνέχεια τη λατρεία του αυτοκράτορα ως θεού επί της γης. Κατά δεύτερον, την αδυναμία των συγκεκριμένων θεών να ικανοποιήσουν τις ανάγκες της φιλοσοφικής σκέψης στα υπαρξιακά και οντολογικά ερωτήματα που έθετε. Ο Χριστιανισμός εμφανίζεται λοιπόν ως μια νέα μαρτυρία που έρχεται να καλύψει το κενό της φιλοσοφίας, προτείνοντας μιαν άλλη εμπειρική προσέγγιση και καθιστώντας ένα ιστορικό πρόσωπο -τον Ιησού Χριστό- ως μια βιωμένη εμπειρία του θείου. Ο συγγραφέας αναλύει ενδελεχώς το πώς η νέα θρησκεία έθετε σε κίνδυνο «την αρμόζουσα αρμονική σχέση ανάμεσα σε θεούς και ανθρώπους» με αποτέλεσμα την «οργή των θεών, στην καλή θέληση των οποίων βασιζόταν η ευημερία του κράτους» (σελ. 31). Σημαντικό στοιχείο που παρατίθεται είναι η εμπεριστατωμένη βιβλιογραφική τεκμηρίωση σύμφωνα με την οποία δεν υπήρχε αυτοκρατορικό διάταγμα με τη μορφή «γενικού νόμου» που να θέτει τον Χριστιανισμό υπό διωγμό (σελ. 31) πολλώ μάλλον, η όποια καταγγελία υπό τη μορφή μήνυσης έπρεπε να είναι επώνυμη για να ληφθεί υπόψη.

Το δεύτερο κεφάλαιο αναφέρεται στην άκαιρη και άστοχη -σύμφωνα με τα λόγια του συγγραφέα- σφοδρότητα του Μεγάλου Διωγμού στα χρόνια του Αυτοκράτορα Διοκλητιανού (284-305), ο οποίος υπό το πρόσχημα της ανασυγκρότησης του κράτους προσπάθησε να εκβάλει όλα τα στοιχεία που απειλούσαν την σταθερότητά του. Σε αυτή τη χρονική συγκυρία εμφανίστηκε και ο Άγιος Γεώργιος ως ανακεφαλαίωση και επιτομή του εθελοντικού μαρτυρίου και του ενεργού ζήλου με μόνο σκοπό το δικαίωμα στην ελευθερία της σκέψης και της θρησκευτικής λατρείας.

Το δεύτερο μέρος με τον τίτλο «Ο βίος και το μαρτύριο του Αγίου Γεωργίου» (σελ. 45-94) περιλαμβάνει δέκα κεφάλαια τα οποία πραγματεύονται ιστορικές και άλλες πηγές του μαρτυρίου του Μεγαλομάρτυρα, βιογραφικά στοιχεία από το συναξάρι του, καθώς και τον θεολογικό, ηθικό και ανθρωπολογικό αντίκτυπο του μαρτυρίου του. Τα τελευταία κεφάλαια ασχολούνται με τις αγιογραφικές απεικονίσεις του αγίου, την παρουσία του στις λαογραφικές παραδόσεις του χριστιανικού εν γένει χώρου, καθώς και με τον ομώνυμο πατριαρχικό ναό στο Φανάρι.

Χάριν της επιστημονικής και αντικειμενικής αλήθειας, ο Κατελής Βίγκλας δεν διστάζει να παραπέμψει έργα ιστορικών και αρχειακό υλικό (Decretum Gelasianum) (σελ. 45) τα οποία τεκμαίρουν την αντιφατικότητα των μαρτυρίων γύρω από το πρόσωπό του Αγίου Γεωργίου. Ιδιαίτερη μνεία δίδεται στην ετυμολογία του ονόματός του (Γεώργιος> το γεώργιον > το γόνιμο και «ευγεώργητο» (καλλιεργήσιμο) ως προς τις αρετές χωράφι), για να καταδειχτεί ότι το μαρτύριο ήταν η φυσική κατάληψη μιας πορείας γήινου αγώνα. Παράλληλα, μεγάλη έμφαση δίνεται στο λεπτομερές συναξάρι

του αγίου το οποίο παρουσιάζει όλο το εύρος των βασανιστηρίων στα οποία υποβλήθηκε. Τα μαρτύρια αυτά καταδεικνύουν την απτή και υπερβολική επίδειξη ισχύος εκ μέρους της εξουσίας. Για τον μάρτυρα συνιστούν έμπρακτη απόδειξη υπομονής και σταθερότητας πίστης. Για δε τους διώκτες, η στάση του Αγίου και η θαυματουργή ιαματική παρέμβαση του Θεού προκαλούν την αμφισβήτηση της παλιάς θρησκείας και τη μεταστροφή πολλών από αυτούς στο Χριστιανισμό. Η κορύφωση αυτών των αφηγήσεων είναι η τιμωρία των ασεβών και η επάνοδος τους μέσω μιας θαυματουργής παρέμβασης στην αληθινή πίστη. Πλήθος λαών και χωρών έχουν ως προστάτη τους τον Άγιο Γεώργιο, ενώ οι αγιογραφικές παραλλαγές αντικατοπτρίζουν τα αποδιδόμενα σε αυτόν θαύματα, ενώ ο λαμπρός εορτασμός του συνδέεται με εαρινά ποιμενικά δρώμενα και προστασία από το Κακό.

Το τρίτο μέρος ασχολείται με την «Ερμηνεία των δρακών και της δρακοντοκτονίας» (σελ. 95-134). Ξεκινώντας από τη λεπτομερή διήγηση της απελευθέρωσης της κόρης του βασιλιά Σέλβιου από το δράκο, ο συγγραφέας αναφέρεται στο μοτίβο της δρακοντοκτονίας μέσα από προφορικές παραδόσεις σε όλο σχεδόν τον κόσμο. Η προσέγγιση του Βίγκλα είναι διαχρονική, διατοπική και διαθρησκειακή, εκκινώντας από τους δράκους –ερπετά της Κινέζικης παράδοσης μέχρι τα πτερωτά ερπετά της θρησκείας των Μάγια και των Αζτέκων και τον φιδόμορφο θεό Άποφι της αρχαίας Αιγύπτου. Δεν παραλείπονται βεβαίως αναφορές στην αρχαία ελληνική μυθολογία, στην ρωμαϊκή γραμματεία και τη χριστιανική θρησκεία.

Στον «Επίλογο» (σελ. 131-134) ο Κατελής Βίγκλας αναπτύσσει αυτό που κατά τη γνώμη μου αποτελεί και το σημαντικότερο στοιχείο του βιβλίου: την αναζήτηση της αλήθειας, όχι μόνο με επιστημονικά κριτήρια αλλά κυρίως με οντολογικά. Όπως εξηγεί και ο ίδιος υπάρχουν πολλές αλήθειες οι οποίες αλληλοσυγκρούονται, όπως η αλήθεια της εξουσίας, όταν αυτή η τελευταία παράγει ένα μοντέλο ερμηνείας και διακυβέρνησης του Κόσμου, και κυρίως όταν έρχεται σε αντιπαράθεση με την υπεράσπιση της «πνευματικής και υπαρξιακής αλήθειας» (σελ.132) από την πλευρά του μάρτυρα, και με την αναζήτηση της οντολογικής αλήθειας μιας ζωής που επιμένει να αντιστέκεται στη δίνη της καθημερινότητας και προτάσσει έναντι την ανάβλεψη του «θεϊκού φωτός άνωθεν» (σελ. 133).

Το βιβλίο κλείνει με δυο παραρτήματα (σελ. 135-144) που αφορούν, το πρώτο στον Άγιο Συμεών τον Μεταφραστή, ο οποίος συγκέντρωσε σε ένα τεράστιο *Μηνολόγιο* παλαιότερες αφηγήσεις για τους βίους των αγίων τις οποίες επεξεργάστηκε γλωσσικά, και το δεύτερο στη μυθική πάλη του Διγενή Ακρίτα με τον δράκο από το χειρόγραφο της Grottaferrata (1300), ένα κείμενο με έντονα δραματικά στοιχεία και ιπποτικό πνεύμα. Τέλος αναφέρουμε την πλούσια βιβλιογραφία (σελ. 145-134) με την οποία τελειώνει το πόνημα.

Ως κατακλείδα, θα έλεγα πως στόχος του βιβλίου, εκτός από την πολύ εμπεριστατωμένη ιστορική και θρησκευτική προσέγγιση, είναι να παρουσιάσει ένα τρόπο ερμηνείας των γεγονότων και των αφηγήσεων, καθώς και έναν τρόπο ζωής και σκέψης όπως αυτός βιώνεται μέσα από μια συγκεκριμένη αντίληψη για την υπαρκτική Αλήθεια!

Σύντομο Βιογραφικό Σημείωμα

Η Μαρία Κουμαριανού είναι κάτοχος διδακτορικού διπλώματος στη Γαλλική Φιλολογία από το Πανεπιστήμιο Lyon II της Γαλλίας και δεύτερου διδακτορικού διπλώματος στην Ανθρωπολογία του Αστικού Χώρου από το Εθνικό Μετσόβιο Πολυτεχνείο, Τμήμα Αρχιτεκτόνων Μηχανικών. Είναι επίσης κάτοχος πτυχίου Μετάφρασης και μεταπτυχιακών τίτλων στη Γαλλική Λογοτεχνία, στην Ανθρωπολογία και στη Θεολογία. Είναι συγγραφέας πολλών βιβλίων και άρθρων σχετικά με τη μετάφραση, την Εθνολογία, την Ιστορία, την Αφρικανική Λογοτεχνία. Συντάκτρια και Κριτής σε πολλά επιστημονικά περιοδικά, έχει διδάξει σε πολλά Πανεπιστήμια της Ελλάδας και του εξωτερικού. Υπηρετεί σε θέση Ειδικού Εκπαιδευτικού Προσωπικού στο Διδασκαλείο Ξένων Γλωσσών του ΕΚΠΑ.

Short CV

Maria Koumarianou holds a PhD in French Literature from the University Lyon II, France και a second PhD in Anthropology of Urban Space from the National Technical University of Athens, Department of Architecture. She also holds a BA in Translation and three MA degrees: in French Literature, in Anthropology and in Theology. She is the author of many books and articles concerning Translation, Ethnology, History, African Literature. Editor and reviewer in many scientific magazines, she has taught in many universities in Greece and abroad. Currently she is adjunct teaching staff of Department of Foreign Languages at the Kapodistrian University of Athens.

ΚΑΤΣΕΛΛΗ ΡΗΝΑ, *Πέλαπαϊς. Πρώτος χρόνος λειτουργίας του εγκλωβισμένου σχολείου 1974-75. Μελέτη.* **Λαογραφικός Όμιλος Κερύνειας 2020, σελ. 80, βιβλιογραφία, εικόνες εντός κειμένου. ISBN 978-9963-2450-2-4.**

Μαρία Κουμαριανού

Η προφορική ιστορία σχετίζεται με την αναθεώρηση και την αξιοποίηση άλλων πηγών πέρα από το αρχειακό υλικό. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, οι προφορικές μαρτυρίες δεν συνδέονται αποκλειστικά και μόνο με τα μεγάλα ιστορικά γεγονότα αλλά με τη διάσωση εμπειριών και τη μελέτη της ζωής κοινωνικών ομάδων μέσα από το διάλογο του ερευνητή με τον πληροφορητή. Ένα τέτοιο είδος υλικού διασώζει τις φωνές όσων ο λόγος αποσιωπάται από τα επίσημα έγγραφα.

Η προφορική ιστορία συλλέγει αφηγήσεις της ζωής των αφανών ηρώων, οι οποίες προϋποθέτουν την ύπαρξη μνήμης, από την οποία αντλούν το υλικό τους. Πρόκειται για μια ενεργό μνήμη της οποίας οι μηχανισμοί λειτουργούν ως στρατηγική επιβίωσης των ατόμων, στηρίζοντας την προσπάθεια τους να ταξινομήσουν τις αναμνήσεις τους προκειμένου να μπορέσουν να διαχειριστούν τις εμπειρίες τους. Ο λόγος συγκροτείται με τη συμβολή όχι μόνο της μνήμης αλλά και της λήθης, της αποσιώπησης ή της απώθησης. Οι καταθέσεις είναι πολύτιμες γιατί τα άτομα θυμούνται και ανασυγκροτούν το παρελθόν τους ως μέλη μιας κοινωνικής ομάδας καθώς η περιρρέουσα ιστορία διεισδύει στο ατομικό βίωμα.

Σε αυτή την κατηγορία της προφορικής μαρτυρίας – κατάθεσης ψυχής ανήκει και το βιβλίο της Ρήνας Κατσελλή. Παράλληλα εντάσσεται στο γενικότερο πλαίσιο εκδοτικής δραστηριότητας τόσο της ίδιας της συγγραφέως όσο και του Λαογραφικού Ομίλου Κερύνειας για τη διάσωση «της ιστορίας, των εθίμων και της συνεισφοράς αξιόλογων ανθρώπων της περιοχής», όπως αναφέρεται στο jacket flap του εξωφύλλου. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, το βιβλίο διαρθρώνεται, εκτός από την Εισαγωγή, σε τρία κεφάλαια με υποενότητες, ενώ συνοδεύεται από ενδεικτική βιβλιογραφία και πλούσιο φωτογραφικό υλικό.

Στην *Εισαγωγή* (σελ. 9-11) η συγγραφέας αναφέρεται στην αφορμή συγγραφής του συγκεκριμένου βιβλίου μετά από παρότρυνση προσφύγων και πρώην εγκλωβισμένων κατοίκων του χωριού Πέλαπαϊς με διττό σκοπό: Καταρχάς για να διασωθεί στη μνήμη αυτή η πολύτιμη πτυχή της εκπαιδευτικής ιστορίας του κατεχόμενου σήμερα χωριού, και δεύτερον, για να μην λησμονηθεί η συνεισφορά όλων εκείνων που εθελοντικά συνεισέφεραν με τον ένα ή τον άλλο τρόπο στη λειτουργία του σχολείου. Στη συνέχεια η συγγραφέας μας εξηγεί πως το υλικό που θα παρουσιάσει προέρχεται από μεγάλο αριθμό προφορικών μαρτυριών οι οποίες συμβάλλουν στην «αντικειμενική» αποτύπωση των γεγονότων αφού διασταυρώνονται και αλληλεπικαλύπτονται. Είναι σημαντικό να αναφερθεί για τον μελλοντικό αναγνώστη ότι το Δημοτικό σχολείο και το γυμνάσιο στο Πέλαπαϊς λειτούργησε συνολικά για δυο έτη από τον Σεπτέμβριο του 1974 έως τον Μάιο του 1976, καθώς οι λιγοστοί εγκλωβισμένοι κάτοικοι αναγκάστηκαν τελικά να εγκαταλείψουν το χωριό τους υπό την πίεση των κατοχικών αρχών.

Το βιβλίο της Κατσελλή ασχολείται αποκλειστικά με τον πρώτο χρόνο λειτουργίας του, καθώς για τον δεύτερο χρόνο ήδη κυκλοφορεί μια μελέτη που αναφέρεται στη βιβλιογραφία.

Το πρώτο κεφάλαιο με τίτλο *Πέλαπαϊς. Πρώτος χρόνος λειτουργίας του εγκλωβισμένου σχολείου 1974-75* (σελ. 13-34) αναφέρεται στην τοποθεσία και την ιστορία του χωριού και κυρίως του Αββαείου από το οποίο το χωριό πήρε το όνομά του. Το Αββαείο του οποίου η εκκλησία είναι αφιερωμένη στην Παναγία της Ασπροφορούσα ήταν και είναι μέχρι σήμερα ο κύριος πόλος έλξης των τουριστών και των ξένων οι οποίοι μαγεύτηκαν παράλληλα και από το φυσικό περιβάλλον και για το λόγο αυτό αγόρασαν σπίτια στο χωριό. Στη συνέχεια, η Ρήνα Κατσελλή περιγράφει τις δύσκολες συνθήκες που ακολούθησαν την τουρκική εισβολή του Ιουλίου 1974 και κυρίως τη δεύτερη εισβολή της 14ης Αυγούστου 1974, τον αποκλεισμό των κατοίκων εντός των ορίων του χωριού και την πολύτιμη βοήθεια και προστασία του Ερυθρού Σταυρού που τους προμήθευε τρόφιμα και διεκπεραίωνε την αλληλογραφία με τις ελεύθερες περιοχές. Καθώς προχωρεί η αφήγηση των μαρτυριών, κλιμακώνονται και τα δεινά των κατοίκων με την παρουσία του τουρκικού στρατού εντός του χωριού, τη σύλληψη των ανδρών από 18- 60 ετών και την μεταγωγή τους για τρεις μήνες σε στρατόπεδο στην Τουρκία, την απομάκρυνση του σώματος Φιλανδών των Ηνωμένων Εθνών, την έλλειψη νερού και τροφής για πολλές μέρες, τον κατ'οίκον περιορισμό, τις συνεχιζόμενες πιέσεις για να εγκαταλείψουν τα σπίτια τους, κλπ. Παράλληλα όμως η συγγραφέας εκθειάζει σε μια πρώτη αναφορά τον ευεργετικό ρόλο κάποιων ανθρώπων που με κίνδυνο της ζωής τους περνούσαν στις ελεύθερες περιοχές, καθώς είχαν ξένα διαβατήρια, για να ενημερώσουν για την κατάσταση στο κατεχόμενο χωριό και να διακινήσουν την αλληλογραφία με τους συγγενείς στις ελεύθερες περιοχές. Μέσα από αυτή την πολύ συγκινητική διήγηση, η Κατσελλή δεν ξεχνά να εγκωμιάσει την παρηγοριά που έδινε στους εγκλωβισμένους η λειτουργία της εκκλησίας κάθε Κυριακή.

Το τελευταίο μέρος του πρώτου κεφαλαίου είναι αφιερωμένο στην ίδρυση και τη λειτουργία του σχολείου. Σύμφωνα με τις μαρτυρίες ήταν το αποτέλεσμα της ευτυχούς συγκυρίας ύπαρξης στο χωριό κάποιων εκπαιδευτικών που εγκλωβίστηκαν εκεί. Η Κατσελλή περιγράφει με γλαφυρό τρόπο τα διαβήματα τόσο προς τις κυπριακές αρχές για να επιτρέψουν τη λειτουργία του σχολείου όσο και προς τις κυπριακές αρχές για να αποστείλουν το απαραίτητο υλικό. Δεν ξεχνά να αναφερθεί σε εκείνα τα άτομα τα οποία, έχοντας ξένη υπηκοότητα, μπορούσαν να περάσουν στις ελεύθερες περιοχές και να προβούν στις απαραίτητες ενέργειες στο Υπουργείο Παιδείας. Στη συνέχεια περιγράφονται λεπτομέρειες από τη σχολική ζωή: το ωράριο λειτουργίας δημοτικού και γυμνασίου, τα μαθήματα που επιτρεπόταν να διδάσκονται, ο αριθμός των μαθητών, τα χωριά καταγωγής τους, τα ονόματα όσων ανελάμβαναν συγκεκριμένα μαθήματα και τάξεις, οι περιορισμένες πολιτιστικές τους δραστηριότητες, οι μικρές εκδρομές στα όρια του χωριού, κλπ. Στο σημείο αυτό η συγγραφέας τονίζει πως εκτός από τις τρεις εκπαιδευτικούς, όλοι οι υπόλοιποι προσέφεραν τη βοήθειά τους εθελοντικά και οι οποίοι είτε ήταν ακόμα μαθητές του εξαταξίου Γυμνασίου Κερύνειας είτε μόλις είχαν τελειώσει το σχολείο. Όπως τονίζει η συγγραφέας, αυτοί οι νέοι και οι νέες αποδείχτηκαν άξιοι εθελοντές δάσκαλοι, γιατί «έδιναν την ψυχή τους για να μορφώσουν αυτά τα παιδιά». Το πρώτο μέρος τελειώνει με τη σταδιακή

υποχώρηση κάποιων εθελοντών λόγω προσωπικής ανάγκης και πιέσεων, και τον εμπλουτισμό του «εκπαιδευτικού» προσωπικού με τη μεταφορά άλλων προσφύγων από την Κερύνεια.

Το δεύτερο κεφάλαιο με τίτλο *Μαρτυρίες* (σελ. 35-56) παρουσιάζει τις προφορικές μαρτυρίες των «πρωταγωνιστών» αυτού του εγχειρήματος. Αυτό είναι κατά τη γνώμη μου και το πιο συγκινητικό τμήμα του βιβλίου, καθώς η προσωπική μαρτυρία έρχεται να επιβεβαιώσει, να διασαφηνίσει και να διαλευκάνει πτυχές των γεγονότων. Ιδιαίτερη εντύπωση κάνει το γεγονός ότι όλοι οι εν ζωή αφηγητές θυμούνται με δημοσιογραφική ακρίβεια το τι ακριβώς συνέβη, ενώ οι μαρτυρίες τους καλύπτουν τα κενά και της απορίες που μπορεί να δημιουργηθούν στον αναγνώστη. Όλοι ανεξαίρετος αναφέρονται στη συνεισφορά των υπολοίπων, στις δυσκολίες που συνάντησαν, τους φόβους και τις αγωνίες τους από τη στιγμή της σύλληψης της ιδέας λειτουργίας του σχολείου μέχρι τη στιγμή που αναγκάστηκαν να εγκαταλείψουν το χωριό. Τα προφίλ τους είναι ανάμεικτα: Εκπαιδευτικός, ιερέας, εθελόντρια νοσοκόμος, εγκλωβισμένη ξένη υπήκοος. Οι περισσότεροι από αυτούς είναι εν ζωή και αφήνουν να διαφανεί μέσα από τη ρέουσα γλώσσα τους η αδιόρατη πίκρα του πρόσφυγα που γνωρίζει ότι είναι «ξένος στον τόπο του».

Το τρίτο κεφάλαιο του βιβλίου έχει τον τίτλο *Βιογραφικά* (σελ. 57-76). Το μισό μέρος αποτελούν οι βιογραφίες των εθελοντών δασκάλων, ενώ το άλλο μισό από τις πολύ συγκινητικές φωτογραφίες που συνηθίζονται στο τέλος κάθε σχολικής χρονιάς με τους εκπαιδευτικούς και τους μαθητές κάθε τάξης. Το πρώτο μέρος του κεφαλαίου περιλαμβάνει δεκατέσσερις βιογραφίες, ξεκινώντας από τον τότε βοηθό ιερέα και δάσκαλο, τους και τις αποφοίτους του εξαταξίου Γυμνασίου Κερύνειας οι οποίοι προσφέρθηκαν να διδάσκουν τις μικρότερες τάξεις. Το βιογραφικό τους αναφέρεται όχι μόνο στην προσφορά τους στους εγκλωβισμένους μαθητές, στην αναγκαστική τους απέλαση προς τις ελεύθερες περιοχές, αλλά και στην πορεία τους μέχρι σήμερα. Οι περισσότεροι έφυγαν από εκεί τον Ιούνιο του 1976 μαζί με τα τελευταία παιδιά. Το βιβλίο τελειώνει με τη *Βιβλιογραφία* (σελ. 77-78) που αναφέρεται τόσο στην περιοχή του Πέλαπαϊς όσο και στη γενικότερη ιστορία της Κύπρου.

Η γλώσσα της Κατσελλή είναι γλαφυρή και ρέουσα, εύκολη και ευχάριστη τόσο για ανάγνωση όσο και για περαιτέρω έρευνα. Προσωπικά θα ήθελα να τονίσω δυο σημεία που μου έκαναν εντύπωση. Το πρώτο είναι το πώς οι άνθρωποι αντιμετωπίζουν τις αντιξοότητες τις ζωής και πώς προσαρμόζουν ανάλογα τη ζωή τους για να επιβιώσουν. Το δεύτερο είναι η εκτεταμένη χρήση από τη Ρήνα Κατσελλή σχεδόν σε όλα τα βιβλία της προφορικής ιστορίας ως εργαλείο διαπραγμάτευσης ζητημάτων. Στην περίπτωσή της η προφορική ιστορία δεν έρχεται να εξακριβώσει ή να διαψεύσει τις επίσημες πηγές αλλά να προσφέρει μια εναλλακτική αφήγηση και ερμηνεία για το παρελθόν.

Σύντομο Βιογραφικό Σημείωμα

Η Μαρία Κουμαριανού είναι κάτοχος διδακτορικού διπλώματος στη Γαλλική Φιλολογία από το Πανεπιστήμιο Lyon II της Γαλλίας και δεύτερου διδακτορικού διπλώματος στην Ανθρωπολογία του Αστικού Χώρου από το Εθνικό Μετσόβιο Πολυτεχνείο, Τμήμα Αρχιτεκτόνων Μηχανικών. Είναι επίσης κάτοχος πτυχίου Μετάφρασης και μεταπτυχιακών τίτλων στη Γαλλική Λογοτεχνία, στην Ανθρωπολογία και στη Θεολογία. Είναι συγγραφέας πολλών βιβλίων και άρθρων σχετικά με τη μετάφραση, την Εθνολογία, την Ιστορία, την Αφρικανική Λογοτεχνία. Συντάκτρια και Κριτής σε πολλά επιστημονικά περιοδικά, έχει διδάξει σε πολλά Πανεπιστήμια της Ελλάδας και του εξωτερικού. Υπηρετεί σε θέση Ειδικού Εκπαιδευτικού Προσωπικού στο Διδασκαλείο Ξένων Γλωσσών του ΕΚΠΑ.

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Short CV

Maria Koumarianou holds a PhD in French Literature from the University Lyon II, France και a second PhD in Anthropology of Urban Space from the National Technical University of Athens, Department of Architecture. She also holds a BA in Translation and three MA degrees: in French Literature, in Anthropology and in Theology. She is the author of many books and articles concerning Translation, Ethnology, History, African Literature. Editor and reviewer in many scientific magazines, she has taught in many universities in Greece and abroad. Currently she is adjunct teaching staff of Department of Foreign Languages at the Kapodistrian University of Athens.

ΣΗΜΕΙΩΜΑ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΣΥΓΓΡΑΦΕΙΣ

Η *Εθνολογία on line* είναι ένα ηλεκτρονικό, ανοιχτό επιστημονικό περιοδικό με κριτές, που εκδίδεται διαδικτυακά από την Ελληνική Εταιρεία Εθνολογίας, παράλληλα με το έντυπο περιοδικό *Εθνολογία*. Από το 2019 εκδίδεται σε δύο τεύχη ετησίως.

Η *Εθνολογία on line* δημοσιεύει πρωτότυπες μελέτες στην επιστήμη της ανθρωπολογίας και της εθνολογίας, καθώς και σε συναφή πεδία. Επιπλέον, αποβλέπει στην προώθηση νέων ερευνών, καθώς και στη διερεύνηση νέων θεματικών και στο άνοιγμα των σπουδών αυτών στο ευρύτερο κοινό.

Η *Εθνολογία on line* δέχεται συμβολές από τα μέλη της Ελληνικής Εταιρείας Εθνολογίας, αλλά και από νέους επιστήμονες/ερευνητές και δόκιμους συγγραφείς μη μέλη της Εταιρείας. **Δημοσιεύει σε τρεις γλώσσες: Ελληνικά, Αγγλικά, Γαλλικά.**

Οι δημοσιευόμενες εργασίες πρέπει να έχουν, απαραίτητα, θεωρητική και μεθοδολογική υποδομή καθώς και ευρύτερη προοπτική. Τα προς δημοσίευση άρθρα δεν πρέπει να έχουν υποβληθεί για δημοσίευση ή να έχουν δημοσιευθεί αλλού. Οι δημοσιευόμενες εργασίες υπογράφονται από τους συγγραφείς τους, οι οποίοι έχουν και την ευθύνη σε ό,τι αφορά το περιεχόμενό τους. Ανώνυμες ή ψευδώνυμες μελέτες, βιβλιοκρισίες ή ανάλογα κείμενα δεν δημοσιεύονται.

Τα κείμενα υποβάλλονται ηλεκτρονικά, **σε αρχείο Word (.doc ή .docx),** στο **societyforethnology@yahoo.com** ή στο **alexethn@otenet.gr** με την ένδειξη «Εργασία για το ηλεκτρονικό περιοδικό Εθνολογία on line». Επίσης, αποστέλλονται δύο έντυπα αντίτυπα στη διεύθυνση: Ελληνική Εταιρεία Εθνολογίας (υπόψη Ελευθ. Αλεξάκη), Ερεσσού 43, 10681, Αθήνα.

Η μέγιστη έκταση άρθρου είναι 14.000 λέξεις (για το κείμενο, τις υποσημειώσεις και τη βιβλιογραφία). Ο τίτλος του κειμένου και το ονοματεπώνυμο του συγγραφέα γράφονται στην ελληνική και στην αγγλική ή γαλλική γλώσσα. Κάθε άρθρο συνοδεύεται από: α) μία περίληψη με μέγιστη έκταση 250 λέξεις, στην ελληνική και στην αγγλική ή γαλλική γλώσσα β) έως 10 λέξεις-κλειδιά στην ελληνική και στην αγγλική ή γαλλική γλώσσα, γ) ένα σύντομο βιογραφικό σημείωμα στην ελληνική και στην αγγλική ή γαλλική γλώσσα (έως 200 λέξεις).

Το έγγραφο θα πρέπει να έχει διαστάσεις Α4, με γραμματοσειρά Times New Roman. Τα περιθώρια πρέπει να είναι: επάνω 2,5 εκ., και κάτω 3 εκ., αριστερά και δεξιά 2,5 εκ. Η εσοχή των παραγράφων, καθώς και οι εσοχές (αριστερή και δεξιά) των παραθεμάτων θα πρέπει να είναι 1εκ. Δεν μπαίνει εσοχή στην πρώτη παράγραφο μετά τον τίτλο ενότητας ή υποενότητας. Στο σώμα του κειμένου πρέπει να χρησιμοποιείται μέγεθος γραμματοσειράς 11στ., με πλήρη στοίχιση και 1,5 διάστιχο. Οι βιβλιογραφικές αναφορές έχουν μονό διάστιχο, με προεξοχή 1εκ. (χωρίς εσοχή στην πρώτη γραμμή κάθε αναφοράς και με μια εσοχή 1εκ. στις υπόλοιπες γραμμές). Οι υποσημειώσεις έχουν μονό διάστιχο, με γραμματοσειρά μεγέθους 9στ. και πρέπει να χρησιμοποιούνται με φειδώ. <u>Δεν μπαίνουν σημειώσεις τέλους.</u> Οι επικεφαλίδες των ενοτήτων γράφονται με γραμματοσειρά μεγέθους 12στ. και έντονα γράμματα, ενώ των υποενοτήτων 12στ. και πλάγια γράμματα (*χωρίς αυτόματη αρίθμηση ή εσοχή*).

Στην πρώτη σελίδα, μπαίνει ο τίτλος του κειμένου, με γραμματοσειρά μεγέθους 14στ. και έντονα γράμματα, με στοίχιση στο κέντρο και μονό διάστιχο στα ελληνικά και αγγλικά ή γαλλικά. Ακολουθεί το ονοματεπώνυμο του συγγραφέα με έντονα γράμματα, με στοίχιση στο κέντρο και γραμματοσειρά

12στ. και έντονα γράμματα, στα ελληνικά και αγγλικά ή γαλλικά. Στη συνέχεια, μπαίνει η περίληψη και οι λέξεις κλειδιά με γραμματοσειρά 10στ. και πλήρη στοίχιση στα ελληνικά και αγγλικά ή γαλλικά. Όλες οι σελίδες πρέπει να φέρουν αρίθμηση κάτω δεξιά.

Ιδιαίτερες μορφοποιήσεις, όπως αυτόματη αρίθμηση, προσθήκη διαστήματος μετά/πριν από παράγραφο ή αυτόματη αλλαγή παραγράφου, καλό είναι να αποφεύγονται. Επίσης, οι σύνδεσμοι που, ενδεχομένως, παρατίθενται (στη βιβλιογραφία ή αλλού στο κείμενο) πρέπει να είναι απενεργοποιημένοι.

Φωτογραφικό υλικό ή χάρτες και διαγράμματα πρέπει να επισυνάπτονται ως ξεχωριστά αρχεία.

Για τις παραπομπές και τη βιβλιογραφία χρησιμοποιούμε το σύστημα παραπομπών Harvard. Ενδεικτικά:

Α) Ενδοκειμενική παραπομπή
[…] (Αλεξάκης, 2006: 50) ή σύμφωνα με τον Αλεξάκη (2006: 50)

Β) Αναφορά στη βιβλιογραφία/λίστα βιβλιογραφικών αναφορών

Αλεξάκης, Ε. (2006). *Ταυτότητες και ετερότητες. Σύμβολα, συγγένεια, κοινότητα στην Ελλάδα-Βαλκάνια.* Αθήνα: Δωδώνη.
Dalton, G. 1969. Theoretical Issues in Economic Anthropology. *Current Anthropology*, 10 (1): 63-102.
Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods. Στο N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (επιμ.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, σσ. 509-535.

Κείμενα που υποβάλλονται και δεν συμμορφώνονται με τις οδηγίες ή δεν εμπίπτουν στους σκοπούς του περιοδικού δεν θα εξετάζονται.

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Dalton, G. 1969. Theoretical Issues in Economic Anthropology. *Current Anthropology*, 10 (1): 63-102.

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