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Worship and Liturgy in the Greek Orthodox Community of Constantinople/Istanbul in the Nineteenth Century [1]

Introduction:

The following paper grew out of my recent research interest in forms of religiosity and worship, and the making of pious and moral agents in the urban and educated segments of the Greek Orthodox populations in nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. It is primarily an exercise of reading a mid-nineteenth-century text that criticized the present church services and ecclesiastical order in Greek Orthodox churches and of situating this text within the broader concerns that this community was facing. But beyond that, using the case of the Greek Orthodox community of Ottoman Istanbul, I want to bring up certain issues relevant to the societies of nineteenth-century Western Europe. Among these are cultural choices, the status of music with respect to materialism and spirituality, the relationship of certain social classes to religious music and others that were relevant to those societies under the impact of various historical processes induced by capitalism and modernity. The reader might wonder why a paper that is on worship and liturgy talks predominantly and almost exclusively on music. The honest and simple answer is that the current paper stands somewhere between my previous research on the musical discourse in the Greek Orthodox community of Istanbul in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and my recent research. The second reason for music's prominence is that the text that I am examining has remarkably abundant and vivid references to music, which actually confirms

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my own hunch that music was the most prominent template in nineteenth-century Ottoman Greek community on which almost every sort of cultural, social, and ideological dilemmas was inscribed. So, some of the themes that will run through the paper will be the modern Greek identity, and its complex relationship with the West and the East, the intra-communal rivalries between different segments of the Stambuliote Greek Orthodox society, the relationship between middle-class identity and musical discourse, and the idea of a community embedded in ritual and music. At the same time, the whole paper can be read as background to the issue of the ecclesiastical music reform which was heatedly debated throughout the nineteenth century, not only by Stanbuliote Greeks alone but also by Greeks who lived in the various major cities of Europe.

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A fifty-two page tract published by a Greek journalist in 1860 in Istanbul was full of complaints about various aspects of the on-going worship and liturgy in Greek Orthodox churches. Among other interesting statements, it also contained the following lines:

In most of today's churches, one sees that the choir leaders or the cantors, illiterate men, coarse by occupation either a fisherman or a grocer, who do not have the slightest knowledge or an idea about the ecclesiastical music which is supposed to elevate the soul from the ground to the sky and incite in it that divine and holy grandeur and fill it with ineffable emotion, often descend to a savorless and ungraceful melody with the most unmusical and tuneless of voices.[2]

Ioannis M. Raptarhis, the author of this quote, was a Greek journalist born and raised in Istanbul. Raptarhis wrote his tract entitled *The truth is bitter: the decline of the divine interior adornment of today's holy churches in contrast to their increased exterior luxury and magnificence,* soon after the Metropolitan of Kyzikus Joachim was elected as patriarch, the head of the 'Rum millet'

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[2] Raptarhis, I. M. *Πικρά η αλήθεια: ή Η κατ' αντίθεσιν της οσημέραι εν τοις ιεροίς ναοίς αυξανομένης εξωτερικής πολυτελείας και μεγαλοπρεπείας, ελάττωσις του θείου εσωτερικού διακόσμου*, Constantinople: ο Vizas, 1860, 18.

which comprised the Greek Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. The reform period known as the *Tanzimat,* which began in 1839, was marked by the attempt at creating equal citizens before the law and establishing novel principles of government over the subjects of the empire. It foresaw their modernization and secularization within the framework of the notion of *millet* which was to be both a traditional religious and modern political entity. One general consequence of the Ottoman reforms which were more emphatically declared in the Reform Edict of 1856 (*Islahat Fermani*) was that in all Muslim, and non-Muslim groups, the clergy lost its privileged place in the management of communal issues, while the participation of the lay groups in the administration of the *millets* was institutionalized. In addition to these legal-administrative changes, the middle-classes of the Christian Orthodox groups became socially empowered also due to their increased financial and trade relations with European economies, and the rise of modern professions.[3]

Joachim II came to the patriarchal throne with the support of a Constantinopolitan merchants'/bankers' faction, including prominently Georgios Zarifis and Christakis Zografos. These bankers sought to create a new political ground where they could enhance their own interests in the schemes for the redistribution of political power. Although Raptarhis' tract might suggest that with his anonymous attacks at those who decorated their parish churches lavishly and engaged in business and profiteering - for such statements were abundant in his tract – he might be aiming at discrediting or challenging the increasing power of the wealthy Galata and Pera elite, I do not have any concrete evidence that his political or personal interests conflicted with those of the Greek financial elite in Constantinople.

[3] See Haris Exertzoglu, "The cultural uses of consumption: Negotiating class, gender, and nation in the Ottoman urban centers during the 19th century," *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 35 (2003), pp.77-101, 78.

The following information, however, seems important. The nineteenth-century Greek scholar and archivist of the Patriarchate, Manuel Gedeon cites Raptarhis within a group of satirists who conspired with the Metropolitan of Arta Sofronios and with some influential members of the community in order to dethrone Joachim.[4] The fact that *The truth is bitter* might be an essay written in a spirit of opposition to the power holders of the community does not diminish its significance and value as a source which, not only provides us with insight into the wider context of the issue of liturgical music reform but also instigates novel and fruitful questions that can be answered only with an interdisciplinary approach to the topic such as has been missing until now.

Let me open a parenthesis on the ecclesiastical music debate, before moving on to the core topics of this paper. The issue of ecclesiastical music, that is whether the music of the Greek Orthodox Church would have to be westernized in order to comply with the aesthetic conventions that were imposed by European art, had begun to occupy the nineteenth-century Greek literati long before Raptarhis' rebuke concerning the ecclesiastical choirs in Istanbul.[5] Already from the 1840s onwards but increasingly after the 1870s, numerous treatises and pamphlets were published in various European cities which devoted their pages to the historical development of church music and the explanation of its tone system. These polemical or scholarly essays were produced in places with significant wealthy and educated Greek populations such as Vienna, Trieste, London, Paris, Marseille, Odessa, Naples, Athens, and

[4] M. Gedeon, *Aposimiomata Chronographou*, Athens, 1932, 63.

[5] *Λόγος Περί Εκκλησιαστικής Μουσικής Συντέθεις υπό Ναθαναήλ Ιωάννου Ευβόεως εφημερίου της εν Μασσαλία Ελληνικής Ορθόδοξου Εκκλησίας*(Speech about the Ecclesiastical Music composed by Nathanail Ioannis of Euboea priest of the Greek Orthodox Church in Marseille), Ermoupoli Syros, 1858.

Ermoupoli. Their authors were not only church cantors, but also lay musicians, members of the learned elite of any profession, music connoiseurs, and politicians.

Conceptions of the East: Music and orientalism

In the first three decades following independence, the Church in Greece, which had severed its ties with the Patriarchate of Constantinople under Ottoman rule, found itself persecuted and oppressed by the state.[6] As its institutions were subjected to the government machine, the Greek Church's prestige was endangered, as a result of which its rite and liturgy came under criticism. In his controversial novel *Pope Joan*, Emmanuil Roidis condemned the liturgical art of the Eastern Orthodox Church. In the following quote, he designated aesthetic preference for the 'beautiful', which he equated with the art of the Western Church, as the determinant of genuine piety:

> If the Madonna of Raphael would appear in our churches or if suddenly the holy melodies of Rossini or Mozart would echo, I think the eyes and the ears of the real orthodox would turn to these; the ones who prefer the gloomy and nasal Byzantine singing deserve to be called schismatics.[7]

In the press and literature of the following decades, cantors, i.e. *ieropsaltes*, in Roidis' terms the gloomy and nasal singers would emblematically be represented as the clients of the coffeehouses in which music accompanied by oriental instruments was played, e.g. the so called *café-aman* song that had recently been popularized by Smyrniote musicians in the Eastern Mediterranean.[8] The elitist reactions to this coffeehouse music with reference to its moral effects remind us of

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[6] David Ricks, "*In partibus infidelium*: Alexandros Papadiamantis and Orthodox disenchantment with the Greek state," in *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)*, ed. by R. Beaton & D. Ricks, Ashgate, 2009, 249-57.
[7] Emmanuel Roidis, *Η Πάπισσα Ιωάννα*, [1866], prepared by Alkis Aggelou, Athens: Estias, 1993, 195.
[8] Th. Hatzipantazis, *Της Ασιάτιδος μούσης ερασταί(To the Lovers of the Asian Muse)*, Athens,1986.

criticisms of musical genres like *rebetika* and *arabesk* in Greece and modern Turkey respectively, in the twentieth century. To say the least, cantors received their share from the orientalist representations of the music that they engaged. One can even argue that in the discourse on music that prevailed in the nineteenth century, cantors as a generic group came to be characterized with ignorance, egoism, and lack of refined musical taste. For example, an influential Greek banker in Istanbul who was actively supporting the project of music reform accused the cantors of being ignorant and arbitrary in their execution of liturgical music, and of causing the congregation to leave the church.[9]

In Greece, the West/East dilemma underlined a tension between the ethnic and the religious foundations of the national identity, denoted as Hellenic vs. Romeic models by Michael Herzfeld, and was effective in the way "national" music was conceptualized.[10] Although the tension was gradually resolved between the two traditions which constitute the modern Greek identity, the advocates of the classicist strand of cultural nationalism continued to designate the ecclesiastical music – which was also referred to as Byzantine music - as a "barbarian medley"[11] of foreign, meaning Ottoman/ Arabic influences. Other negative representations of the traditional church music concerned the auditory experience of sound. According to some, the existing execution of the psalmody lacked musical quality; it was cacophonic, dissonant, and even due to

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[9] Dimitrios Paspallis, "To those concerned with the rectification and improvement of our ecclesiastical music", *Neologos*, 18/30 October 1879. See in Panagiotis G. Kiltzanidis (of Proussa), *Διατριβαί περί της Ελληνικής Εκκλησιαστικής Μουσικής (Treatises about the Greek ecclesiastical music),* Constantinople: Anatolikos Astir, 1879.

[10] Michael Herzfeld, *Ours once more*: *folklore, ideology and the making of modern Greece*, New York: Pella, 1986; also see Merih Erol, "Music and the Nation in Greek and Turkish Contexts (19th – early 20th c.): A paradigm of cultural transfers", *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 47 (2011) 2: 165-75.

[11] In 1874, the Athenian journalist Isidoros Skilitzis wrote that the Byzantine music was no more than "a barbarian medley of Jewish, Arabian, and Turkish loans". See Th. Hatzipantazis, *Tis Asiatidos*, 38-39.

associations with the East, effeminate. [12] As mentioned, the stereotype of nasal singing (*rinofonia*) was a frequent trope in the contemporary discrediting images of church chanting. This negative aesthetic judgment certainly had to do with a reaction to what was considered Asian or Turkish influence.

By the eighteenth century, the traditionally court-sponsored music, (I would refer to it as Ottoman secular music without attributing dominance to any ethnic group), had undergone considerable cross-fertilization of idioms from the religious musics of the local Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The exchange or influence was mutual. It might be worthwhile to think about the following questions: Which type of social background and musical training did a cantor of one of the Greek Orthodox churches in Istanbul typically have in the nineteenth century? Can we assume that many of them were exposed to or learned the popular lay music of their times? Biographies of many cantors and the existence of the worldly song books published by them indicate that Greek Orthodox (*Rum*) cantors who practiced the contemporary secular music were not the exception. In the terminology of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Greek-speaking musicians, the lay music that prevailed in the urban space of the Ottoman Empire was designated as the "external" music (*exoteriki mousiki*).13 I will not attempt here at tracing the genealogy of the distinction or at speculating whether the term meant 'profane' – harking back to the old use of *exoterikos* meaning '*exo tis ekklisias*' ('outside the church') -- or simply 'foreign', however, it is worth noting that secular music was defined as "external", as opposed to ecclesiastical music which was possibly conceptualized as "internal". As well as publishing numerous song collections, *Rum* cantors also wrote treatises to explain *exoteriki*

[12] Paspallis, "To those concerned…"
[13] See Merih Erol, ""External" Music in Constantinople", *Encyclopedia of the Hellenic World: Constantinople*, http://constantinople.ehw.gr

mousiki in terms of ecclesiastical music.[14] Music instruction and repertoire transmission took place generally at the houses of the musicians, dervish lodges, and coffeehouses where music making and learning crossed ethnic and confessional borders.[15] For example, in the 1850s, Ioannis Zografos the first cantor in the church of Hagia Kyriaki in Kontoskali, originally from a town in Cappadocia, narrated how he learned the art of *exoteriki mousiki* through an arduous process by attending lessons at the house of a *hanende* (Arabic word for 'singer').[16] The limited music literacy among cantors might have to do with the fact that many of them were part of these networks of secular repertoire transmission where the learning method was based on memory.

Literacy, music notation, and tradition

If I am not over-reading my source, the reference to 'illiterate' cantors in the Greek journalist's treatise indicates that music literacy did not prevail absolutely among cantors and that learning by hearing was not an exception. Until the late nineteenth century, the lay music was still largely learned by a system called mesk, beating the rhythmic pattern as a mnemonic tool. The plea of Raptarhis for standardization and professional chanting education was doomed to fail without the use of notation in instruction. In fact, the psalmody of the Christian Church had been recorded for centuries. An important rupture in the modern history of church music was the introduction of a new notation system in 1814 by the so-called Three Teachers, said to have been invented by Archimandrite Chrysanthos. This innovation which was based on the main principle of western notation (one syllable corresponding to one tone), as claimed by a twentieth-century musicologist, was largely a result of the democratic impulses of the French Revolution. It made

[14] *Ermineia*, 1843.
[15] Cem Behar, *Aşk Olmayınca Meşk Olmaz. Geleneksel Osmanlı/Türk Müziğinde Öğretim ve İntikal* (There is no meşk without love. Instruction and transmission in the traditional Ottoman/Turkish Music), Yapı Kredi Yayınevi, Istanbul, 1998,43- 52.
[16] Ioannis Zografos, *Mousikon Apanthisma. I Mecmua-i Makamat*, Constantinople: Thaddaios Tividzsian, 1856, γ'.

the learning process notably easier. However, it began to be challenged in the following decades because of its elimination of the nuances which could be captured in the previous *exegematic* notation. Hence, the writing of music was central to the debates on liturgical music reform because it was seen as the only remedy for the irreversible process of loss of an imagined authentic and pure melody. Related to this, a very frequent motif in the musical discourse was the corruption (*diafthora*) or decline (*parakmi*) of music basically drawing upon the idea that Hellenism suffered a cultural decline under Ottoman rule. As a result of this notion of decline, much of what we see in nineteenth-century Constantinople, under the 'movement' for the reform of ecclesiastical music, is an attempt to recover the music of the pre-1453, i.e. the medieval Byzantine psalmody.

I will close this broad subject of notation and ecclesiastical music heritage by giving an example from the correspondence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. A letter sent by the Patriarchate to the Metropolitan of Amaseia Sofronios in 1870 notified the Metropolitan that a Greek Orthodox family in Sinopi had a manuscript book in membrane, dated to the 11th century, which contained ancient music lessons of the Byzantine period written in the musical notation which was then in use.[17] The Metropolitan was asked to persuade the family to deliver the book to the Patriarchate for its investigation by expert musicians, with the idea that the ancient music notation used in the book could be useful for the restoration of the *hyphos* ("style") of the ecclesiastical music. This is, indeed, a very telling attitude that shows how music was central to the historic identity of the Greek Orthodox community of Istanbul. With this 'coda' on musical past and identity, I would like to turn your attention to questions related to the "material" aspects of liturgical art.

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[17] Archives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Correspondence, Codex A' 41 no. 1497, 1 April 1870.

Material-spiritual distinction, religious art, and professionalism

As mentioned before, our Greek journalist's satire criticized the lavish decoration of the church buildings which he saw as a trade-off situation where there was a compromise between the extravagant material equipment of the churches and the spirituality of the divine services. The numerous references in the text to unthrifty spending regarding the adornment of the churches can, of course, be interpreted as being within existing discourses that advised frugality to the middle classes characterizing luxury as a social malaise detrimental to the integrity of the community.[18] My contention is that the particular discourse that we see here has implications further than simply being an attack on conspicuous consumption; it reveals a particular value system, and a hierarchical order which bridges and separates at the same time the domains of the sacred and the profane, and furthermore has crucial bearings on conceptions of religious art.

In the nineteenth century, cantors employed in the Greek Orthodox community churches received monthly salaries from lay communal institutions. In addition to their salary, they got their share from the money that was collected by passing trays during the service. As good and skilled cantors pleased the congregation who showed their satisfaction by leaving material reward, the church committees had an interest in employing good cantors. This situation, however, created a paradox related to the cantor's role in the liturgy. The modern bourgeois notion of distinct spirituality and materiality expected him to elevate the soul to the heavens by almost mediating between the world and the divine. But the cantor awaited material gain from the money collected during the service. The following excerpt attests vividly to the disapproval

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[18] In 1865, at the inauguration of the girls' school Hagia Photeini in Smyrna, the directress of the school Sappho Leontis reproached women's disposition to luxury equating it to pride, the primal sin. See *Peri polyteleias Logos* by S. Leontiados on 14 March 1865, Amaltheia, Smyrna. Also see Exertzoglu, "The cultural uses of consumption".

of practices which allowed the mixing of these two distinctly envisioned realms and especially the infusion of the spiritual by the material:

> […] the degenerate and rooted habit of passing money trays during the divine worship which detaches the attention of the Christian, adulterates the grandeur of the divine worship, calls the soul back to the matter, fills the temple of God with tumult and noise and instead of a prayer house, turns it into the workplace of bankers and money changers and the den of the boiled wheat sellers' transactions! How wretched are we, who mix the material with the immaterial, the earthly with the skies, in order words, who, in every inversion roll towards the material. [19]

As far as the symbolic representations of money and the moral evaluation of monetary and commercial exchanges in different societies are concerned, Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch have suggested that instead of searching for the meanings of money, rather we should consider the meanings of whole transactional orders.[20] Based on a set of ethnographical studies, they identified a tendency regarding the relationship between the two transactional orders, or as they also called, the two cycles of exchange, namely the short-term individualistic transactions and the long-term restorative cycles. They argued that a wide range of societies made "some ideological space within which individual acquisition is a legitimate and even laudable goal" since the maintenance of the long-term order is dependent on individual short-term acquisitive endeavors; but that "such activities are consigned to a separate sphere which is ideologically articulated with, and subordinated to, a sphere of activity concerned with the long-term reproduction"[21]. In the Greek journalist's lament, the hierarchy between the two spheres has by far been subverted to the point that, in Parry and Bloch's terms, the individual involvement in the short-term cycle became an end in itself, and that some individuals diverted "the resources of the

[19] Raptarhis, *Truth is Bitter,* p. 44.
[20] Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, "Introduction: money and the morality of exchange," in *Money and the morality of exchange*, ed. by J. Parry & M. Bloch, Cambridge University Press, 1989, 1-32, 23.
[21] Bloch and Parry, "Introduction", 26.

long-term cycle for their own short-term transactions". In other words, the source of uneasiness was that, as the reference to boiled wheat which, in Eastern Orthodox tradition, is brought to church for memorial services indicates, the goods that were necessary for the rituals and ceremonies associated with the maintenance of the cosmic order were produced and traded, not fundamentally for the reproduction of the larger cycle but for individual pursuit of material gain. We should also remember the two contradictory discourses about money and monetary exchange that are contained in the Western intellectual tradition, one of which condemns money and trade and sees it as the source of all evil, and the other which sees the happiness and prosperity of society as founded on the individual pursuit of monetary self-gain.[22] These two different discourses reflect the radical divorce between the two cycles in the Western thought. It is certainly worthwhile to trace both the residues of these discourses and the divide between the short-term and the long-terms orders – or as I phrased as the material vs. spiritual realms -- in the Greek community and in the broader Ottoman society. It is not hard to imagine that both strands of discourses were being represented, and that even the same persons evoked the two different discourses in different contexts, and in various ways of argumentations. It may be more fruitful, however, to consider the timing of the appearance of such discourses in the Ottoman society at large. The composition of the satirical tract that I have been examining falls right in the aftermath of the Crimean War which was a major landmark for rapid urban growth, and the expansion of trade and consumption which turned the attention of many Ottoman men of letters to money, trade, and the moral perils of excessive consumption.

The modern bourgeois distinction between the spiritual and material orders is closely connected to the question of professionalism in church chanting as an attempt to exclude those,

[22] Bloch and Parry, "Introduction", 2-3.

whom people like Raptarhis saw ineligible for engaging in spiritual music on the ground of their bodily labor or commercial enterprise with which they earned their living. In Europe, the social status of church musicians was often determined by the extra-musical activities that they engaged in order to improve their income. For instance, in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Lutheran Germany, church organists were also schoolmasters, and sometimes they even held posts in legal bureaucracy and municipalities which enhanced their prestige. Occasionally, however, they were also innkeepers and merchants dealing in alcoholic beverages which made them lose certain privileges and exemptions, and were prohibited by regulations from earning additional income by such means.[23] In the case of the nineteenth-century Greek community of Istanbul, I have not come across any evidence of cantors occupying church posts other than musical (e.g. legal or secretarial posts), neither have I encountered a cantor who was at the same time a school master. We can assume that much of their additional income if any came from music-based activities, such as music instruction and training of choirs at community schools, and music publishing.

The professionalization of the chanting practice, which was part of the debates on the ecclesiastical music reform would impose a standard and rigorous musical education to those who wanted to become cantors. It implied, however, that chanting would become a main income source for some and would be offered by them as a service. Professionally-trained chanting could be bought and sold according to the logic of the market. To put it simply, the demand and supply of skilled and specialized service in a religious art meant a transaction which undermined the spiritual-material antithesis that was so dear to the modern bourgeois self. As a full-fledged

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[23] Arnfried Edler, "The Social Status of Organists in Lutheran Germany from the 16th through the 19th Century," in *The Social Status of the Professional Musician from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century* ed. by Walter Salmen, New York: Pendragon Press, 1983, 63-93, see 79-81.

case of professionalism in church chanting, I want to give the example of the Greek community in London which employed in 1849 in their Church of the Saviour's choir four Italian professional singers.[24] In the case of the Greek merchant families in London, as also with the Hellenic diaspora communities elsewhere in Europe, their choices both for professional cantors (or singers) and for polyphonic church music, tell us a lot about the connections between music, bourgeois identity, and ethnic prestige.

The professionalization of ecclesiastical chanting and the commodification of the cantor's service are enmeshed with questions of the cantor's appointment procedure by the communal decision-making bodies and his daily social relationships with other parishioners. Regarding the social dynamics of the church choirs, the correspondence between Evstratios G. Papadopoulos, the first cantor of the church of Panagia in Beyoglu (Pera) and the chairman of the Central Board of the Greek Orthodox community of Pera in the 1890s, shows that the senior and experienced cantor functioned as an intermediary between the Central Board and the junior cantors in matters of, e.g. recommendation of a new cantor for a vacant position, junior cantors' demands for salary increase, and the announcement to the Central Board of their quitting their posts due to illness.[25] Numerous letters that mention cantors in the community archives indicate that cantors, whose major income normally came from chanting, had the status of communal employees similar to school teachers, priests, deacons, and servants in the community's buildings. Regarding his daily social environment, the cantor was one of the parishioners. All this evidence implies not a sharp definition of locus or work as one would want from a full professional. Community archives witness that parishioners used informal petitioning mechanisms to recommend or support a

[24] Giannis Filopoulos, *Polyphonic Ecclesiastical Music in the Greek Community of London*, Athens: Parousia, 1997, 25.
[25] Archives of the Greek Orthodox community of Stavrodromi (Beyoglu), Correspondence of the Central Board, 26 December 1893, 22 December 1896, 16 April 1900.

particular candidate for a vacant position in a church or to prevent the dismissal of a church employee such as a priest or a cantor. For example, in September 1911, twenty parishioners, having heard that one of the cantors of the Church of Hagios Konstantinos in Pera was about to be dismissed, addressed a petition to the Central Board to express their support for the cantor whom they said they knew well and appreciated very much.[26] What we see here is an organic in-group relation that binds the cantor with his congregation, which is very different from a detached, "more spiritual" professionalism in which paradoxically, the money nexus is more significant, though more easily hidden. Returning back to the issue of the remuneration of cantors, perhaps there was the expectation that professionalism in chanting would bring forth more impersonal and abstract methods of payment unlike the overtly materialistic, lower-class, and tasteless passing of the money trays.

Music, taste, and identity

Music seems to have a peculiar power to mark difference because, unlike other arts, it has been tightly associated with spirituality and profoundness. The twentieth-century sociologist Pierre Bourdieu denoted the aesthetic disposition as "a distinctive expression of a privileged position in social space".[27] In his diagram of markers of difference, he did not neglect music as a cultural property which called for particular attention from middle-class fractions.[28] Bourdieu claimed that for the bourgeois world which conceptualized his relationship to the people in the mode of the relationship between the soul and the body, to be "insensible to music", represented an

[26] Meropi Anastassiadi-Dumont, "Modes of Popular Intervention in the Ottoman *Millet* System: The Greeks of Istanbul in the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," in *Popular Protest and Popular Participation in the Ottoman Empire* ed. by E. Gara, M.E. Kabadayi, Ch. K. Neumann, Istanbul: Bilgi, 2011, 75-85, 80. (Source: Archive of Gr-Orth. Community of Stavrodormio, Correspondence: 23 September 1911).

[27] Pierre Bourdieu, "The aesthetic sense as the sense of distinction", in *The Consumer Society Reader* ed. by J.B. Schor and D.B. Holt, New York, 2000, 205-211, 205.

[28] Bourdieu, 209.

especially shameful materialist crudeness.[29] This spirit-matter distinction and the way it overlapped with the bourgeois self-perception with respect to the working classes, seems to be reflected in, what Simon Gunn articulated as "an increasing emphasis on the division between mental culture and manual labor in representations of the social order", where what characterized the middle class was mental standing. [30]

In the second half of the nineteenth century, culture, education, and musical taste comprised a package which constituted the social identity of the Greek Orthodox middle-classes in which professionals came to hold a significant position. In our Greek journalist's understanding, aesthetic dispositions were bound up with a certain notion of culture and education that cultivated one with the ability to experience 'refined' feelings. According to the Concise Dictionary of the Greek Language published by Skarlatos Vyzantios in 1839, the general meaning of the word "*amousos*", which Raptarhis used for the cantors of his day – let us remember he also used the word '*aggrammatos*' (illiterate) - is 'someone who is insensible to fine arts', while its narrower meaning is 'a person inexperienced in music and poetry'.[31]

For Raptarhis whose ideas about the arts and their moralizing effect on human and the society seem to be a blend of both the old concept of *paideia* that underlined a social and cultural distinction in late Antiquity and the modern European constructions of civilized/moral behavior, 'going out of key' was emblematic of the disruption of natural and social order. This becomes most obvious in a passage where he writes about the *canonarchs*. He mentions these assisting cantors who are mostly boys before the age of puberty as undisciplined children without means

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[29] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. ??
[30] Simon Gunn, "Translating Bourdieu: cultural capital and the English middle class in historical perspective", *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 56 1 (2005), 49-64, 53.
[31] Skarlatos D. Vyzantios, *Lexikon epitomon tis Ellinikis Glossis*, Athens: Andreas Koromilas, 1839, 62.

who are prone to bring forth chaos, which seems to be a venue for him to pour out criticism against the poor strata of the society. Apart from this, it is an excuse, again, to attack an "organic" family-based means of passing on musical and religious tradition. He wrote:

> If this anomalous sound was joined by the tuneless assistance of the so-called *canonarchs*, children mostly drawn from the most inferior ranks of the folk; if they added their off-key howls to that turbulence, imagine that Babylonian mixture…

This attitude requires the overview of a broader context. In nineteenth-century England, the reform of the church choirs was seen necessary not only regarding the decline in musical aesthetic but also in light of a social problem that concerned the education and disciplining of the choristers. According to a professor of music at Oxford, writing in the early 19th century, the chorister boys were selected from the lowest reaches of the society, they were "badly schooled, badly cared for in morals and religion, snubbed, despised, slighted and eventually sent forth into the world with no adequate provision for their maintenance". This must be seen against the backdrop of an increasing public anxiety about poor children which began to haunt the middle classes in Europe starting from the mid-nineteenth century. In Greek fiction of the time, as Maria Korasidou noted in her seminal work, the children of the street were often pictured as noisy, cruel and inhuman troublemakers typically torturing animals.[32] Not surprisingly, in the 1850s, Athens saw the inauguration of three institutions for the care of the children without family. In 1855 'Amaleio Orfanotrofeio', in 1856 'Orfanotrofeio ton agorion Hatzikosta', in 1859 the 'Dimotiko Brefokomio' were opened. In the Ottoman Empire, too, sometime in the 1860s, systematic and institutional initiatives began to be taken towards the "solution" of the problem of

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[32] Maria Korasidou, *Οι Άθλιοι των Αθηνών και οι θεραπευτές τους. Φτώχεια και φιλανθρωπία στην ελληνική πρωτεύουσα τον 19ο αιώνα (The Miserable of Athens)*, Athens, 1995, 103.

orphans, destitute and abandoned children. According to the pedagogical understanding of the time, the socialization of the poor children could be achieved through their ethical upbringing which depended on submission and discipline.[33] Hence, in addition to professional training, and sometimes as professional training, the curriculum of the orphanages included a disciplined instruction of musical instruments, mostly wind instruments.[34]

Thus one can safely argue that the nineteenth-century Greek Orthodox middle-classes saw music as a moral project to educate the people, especially people who lived at the margins of the society. As I have shown, this was in line with the idea which was then popular in contemporary Europe according to which music was an instigator of moral reform and social improvement. As much as music made a distinction between the members of the different social classes; aesthetic disposition and feeling which was instigated by music cemented the community through worship and ritual.

Music, ritual, feeling, and community

Anthropologist Ruth Finnegan has noted music's potential for group-aggregating experience which mainly derives from the possibility of an imaginative involvement where, especially in certain rituals the living come in contact with the dead.[35] Similarly, Roger Scruton had observed an implied idea of a community which is present both in aesthetic experience - despite its subjective nature – and in religious experience, in which ritual, with its timeless quality, affirms the community as something permanent, absolved from death and decay. He wrote: "In religious

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[33] Korasidou, *The Miserable of Athens*, 107.
[34] Maria Barbaki, "'Music companies', wind orchestras in late 19th century Athens", *Polyphonia,* 6 Spring 2005.
[35] Ruth Finnegan, "Music, Experience, and the Anthropology of Emotion," in *The Cultural Study of Music. A critical introduction,* ed. by M. Clayton, T. Herbert, and R. Middleton, Routledge, 2003, 181-192, 187. I would like to thank Margaret Kenna for bringing this article to my attention.

experience, too, there is an implied but partly absent community: for religious rite implicates not only the living, but the dead and the unborn".[36] Hence, the fear of decline in the aesthetic conventions of a community, or its "high culture" as the philosopher wrote, is integrally connected to the fear about the fate of the social order.[37] In the prologue of *New Psalms of Resurrection Mass* (*Νέον Αναστασιματάριον*) published in 1866, the Constantinopolitan cantor Panagiotis Kiltzanidis (who was originally from Bursa) evoked the memory of the ancestors and lamented that the Christian Orthodox of his day had lost their fervor for the ritual. In his view, this was due to the innovations that were inserted into the ecclesiastical chant:

> Do the joyful chants of *Resurrection* chanted in the churches every Sunday move us or rejoice us like our Fathers who wrote and composed them? It is sad that a stone-like insensibility (*anesthesia*) toward the exultant and joyful chants took hold of us and the service has become heavy like a burden that we carry out of obligation, and many are grumbling. The reason for this evil is, we lost the meaning and the soul of the divine hymns, and without understanding the salvational power of the truths in them, we cannot feel the emotion and the delight that comes from understanding. Second, due to ignorance we lost the musical aesthetic and inserted verses and *these*s arbitrarily and corrupted the purity of the ecclesiastical melody […].[38]

It may come as a surprise that religious experience was seen by contemporaries not so much as mystical inner state but as consciously constructed through a contemplation of the mysteries of creation. In his criticism of the priests and the congregation, our Greek journalist emphasized feelings as dispositions to experience certain states such as one's feeling awe before the Sublime. Priests, being the leaders of the people, had to show external signs of reverence as an example of

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[36] Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 461.
[37] Plato's formulation "The ways of poetry and music do not change anywhere without a change in the most important laws of the city," (Plato, *Republic*, 4.424c) was often referred to by the educated Greek literati in the nineteenth century.
[38] Panagiotis G. Kiltzanidis (of Proussa), *Νέον Αναστασιματάριον* (New Psalms of Resurrection Mass), (Constantinople: S. Ignatiadis, 1866), pp.γ'-δ'. See Merih Erol, *Cultural Identifications of the Greek Orthodox Elite of Constantinople: Discourse on Music in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, unpublished Ph.D diss. Bogazici University, Istanbul, 2009, p.92.

reverence and contrition for the congregation. To elaborate more on this point, I would like to mention another rather interesting essay written by our satirist. Raptarhis published a treatise on astronomy in serialized form in his tri-monthly periodical *Heptalofos* (Seven Hills) in 1862, and then separately as a book in 1864. In *The Starlit Sky or The Handbook of Practical Astronomy*, he aimed at educating the people by popularizing scientific knowledge.[39] This was a time when popular science journals began to flourish in the empire.[40] In his serial essay, he did not pose science against religion, rather combined the two in the way in which he called his audience for belief in the Divine Will and the experience of divinity through contemplating God's great works. On the eve of the scientific revolution, before the emergence of competing epistemologies, music was an intellectual and philosophical concern shared by numerous fields with diverse enquiries.[41] Religious and scientific investigations into the nature of things went hand in hand in Protestant countries of Europe and resulted in the emergence of mutually influential theories of knowledge across related branches of philosophy such as arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy. As cogently observed by Linda Phyllis Austern, in early modern Europe where the new science based on observation and experiment gained ground at the expense of occult worldview, and the Reformation had disenchanted the ancient evidence of miracles, curiosity for rarities and the concept of natural wonders became part of a powerful

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[39] I. M. Raptarchis, *Ο Έναστρος Ουρανός ήτοι Εγχειρίδιον Πρακτικής Αστρονομίας (The Starlit Sky or The Handbook of Practical Astronomy),* Constantinople: Eptalofou, 1864.
[40] Sukru Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, Princeton University Press, 2008, 94. See also Theodore Kritikos, "Science and religion in Greece at the end of the nineteenth century,"*Historein* vol.1, Athens, 1999.
[41] See Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Tis Nature's Voice': music, natural philosophy and the hidden world in seventeenth-century England," in *Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. by Suzannah Clark and Alexander Rehding, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 30-67.

cultural discourse.[42] This theological-intellectual impulse continued into the nineteenth century when, for instance, religiosity and astronomy were closely linked; the "marvels" of the universe were contemplated as a further elevating dimension of God's work as creator. Building on these connections in the wider European picture, I would argue that the Greek journalist Raptarhis' "project" was the same both in his satirical tract where he reproached the insensibility of the priests, cantors and the church-goers towards the Divine, "insensibility towards the mysterious Sublime before one's eyes"[43], and in his astronomy treatise where he started each chapter with citations from the Psalms and wrote pages-long eulogistic explanations of the grandness of the universe and the motions of the celestial bodies calling his audience to confirm belief and feel awe before the greatness of God. Thus, for him the encounter of the Christian with God and his creations, first and foremost, was as an emotional experience. Liturgical music was vital for this experience as a facilitator to that effect, bringing tears into one's eyes. The ideals of Christian ascetic piety assigned an important place to tears. As brilliantly observed by Peter Brown, the desert tradition envisaged the tears of the perfected monk as the displacement of fluidity from the lower parts to the eyes. In his profound expression, "the damp humors would be released in an upsurge of spiritualized sensuality, associated with Christ's supreme gift of tears." [44]

Since music's primary effect on the body was to delight the senses, its relationship to nature and art, both of which intersected in music, was rather complex. Furthermore, the conventions regarding devotional music developed under the impact of the specific understandings of the relationship between nature and art, as hierarchical, competing, or completing each other. The Church set normative guidelines with respect to religious chanting in

[42] Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Tis Nature's Voice'", 51.
[43] Raptarhis, *Truth is bitter*, p. 18: "*αναισθησία πρός το πρό οφθαλμών μυστηριώδες μεγαλείον*".
[44] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, 238.

its early history. The nineteenth-century debates on Greek ecclesiastical music often referred to these ancient rules about how a cantor was supposed to chant and even supposed to feel while chanting. The *Typikon* – which is in ecclesiastical terminology, the book containing the directions governing how a liturgical service is to be celebrated - edited and published by the first cantor of the Great Church Konstantinos Vyzantios in 1838 cited the well-known 75th canon of the sixth Oecumenical Synod which took place in Constantinople in 680 AD.[45] This canon was addressed "to those who attend church with the purpose of chanting". Vyzantios, not only cited the canon itself, but also quoted the interpretation of the canon by the 18th-century monk Nicodemus Hagioritis in the footnote: "The chanting, or psalmody that is done in churches is in the nature of begging God to be appeased for our sins. Whoever begs and prayerfully supplicates must have a humble and contrite manner: but to cry out manifests a manner that is audacious and irreverent…" **[46]**

To conclude, in many contexts, cantors were reminded of the ethics of singing during the divine services by citing explicitly the relevant church canons which prescribed the norms of chanting. The general level of criticism of the existing execution of the liturgical art, however, pointed to the egoism and the arbitrariness of the cantors who, in order to show off their ability and skill, raised their voices ridiculously to high pitches.[47] These critics used a sarcastic rhetoric which put the emphasis on the fact that such cantors transgressed the boundary between the divine and the lay, by behaving like singers who wished to show their artistic talents.

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[45] Konstantinos Protopsaltis tis Megalis Ekklisias, *Τυπικόν Εκκλησιαστικόν κατά το ύφος της του Χριστού Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας* (*The Ecclesiastical Typikon according to the Hyphos of the Great Church of Christ),* Constantinople: Ignatiadi Brothers, 1838, 3.
[46] Konstantinos Protopsaltis tis Megalis Ekklisias, *Τυπικόν*, fn., 3. The English translation has been cited from http://www.psalticnotes.com/articles/theoria/mic/75th.html.
[47] Raptarhis, p. 18. «Η αμάθεια μεμηγμένη μετά του εγωϊσμού και της αναισθησίας ...»