MODERN GREEK HEROIC ORAL POETRY

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MODERN GREEK HEROIC ORAL POETRY
FROM CYPRUS, SALONIKA, EPIRUS, CRETE, AND PELOPONNESUS

THE ABDUCTION OF DIGENES' BRIDE
THE DEATH OF DIGENES
LENE BOTZARIS
THE CROW AND THE BATTLE OF VALTETZI
THE SONG OF DASKALOYIANNES
EROTOKRITOS
WHAT AILS THE MOUNTAINS OF CRETE

MODERN GREEK HEROIC ORAL POETRY / FOLKWAYS FE 4468

MODERN GREEK HEROIC ORAL POETRY

RECORDED BY JAMES A. NOTOPOULOS

Ethnic Folkways Library Album #FE 4468

MODERN GREEK HEROIC ORAL POETRY

AND ITS RELEVANCE TO HOMER, THE ORAL POET.

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The recordings in this album,[1] as well as in the first two of the series (P 454 and 467) were made in 1952-1953, with the aid of a Guggenheim Fellowship and the American Philosophical Society, in the Greek villages of the mainland, the islands, and Cyprus. In these villages the writer was privileged to see heroic oral poetry in the making and to feel more sensitively the epic and tragic sense of life as it is expressed in epic poetry. Heroic songs cannot be completely understood if detached from the way of life which gave them birth. A heroic poem is not merely a text. It consists of three things: the tradition which created it; the singer who recreates the tradition in a recitation; and the audience which hears it. The Greek village is a society completely traditional and formulaic in all its activities. The peasant is born in a formulaic tradition of attitudes, beliefs, expressions whose roots go back ultimately to classical Greece and immediately to Byzantium which, inheriting the classical tradition, moulded it, along with other historical influences, to make modern Greece. The formulaic tradition involves both act and expression. The economic and social life of the peasant consists of a series of formulaic actions strongly rooted in the past. Song too expresses the basic moods of life through formulaic diction and traditional melodies. Song is not mere entertainment as in modern society. It has a diverse number of functions to perform such as to lull the child to sleep, to ease the toil with rhythmic song, to introduce the young into society and mate them in marriage through song and dance; to mould the young men in the ideals of the epic society; to refresh the villager from his toil in church fairs and saints' days, finally to escort the living to death through the lament (moiroloyi).

In the life of the village the heroic poem occupies the position of honor. The vicissitudes of modern Greek history have fostered a strong epic tradition. From the days of Byzantium until recent times Greece has had to fight for survival and this struggle has resulted in a continuous tradition of heroic song. These songs, oral in character, play an important role in the Greek village. They not only embody the history of the people, for the best history of modern Greece is their folksongs, but they have instructed the generations in the modern counterpart of the Homeric aretê, leventyá, the gallant attitude toward life. As will be seen in the recordings these songs are sung with great feeling and move the people. Until recent times, when modern civilization is eroding the oral character of village life, these folksongs constituted, along with the church, the sole education of the villager. They embodied the basic moods of life and the traditional wisdom of experience.

The singers of these songs are mostly illiterate shepherds, or farmers who learnt the art of singing heroic tales from their fathers. With some exceptions in Crete and Cyprus there are few professional oral bards making a living out of the recitation of heroic songs. These are mostly confined to some blind men who continue the oral tradition of Demodocus, the blind bard in the Odyssey, and of the blind bards who created the klephtic ballads. Some travelling bands of gypsy musicians, mostly in Yannina and Athens, have incorporated klephtic ballads as part of their repertory. The absence of professional bards accounts for the shortening of once longer poems and the decline of the art of ornamentation (see below). With some exceptions, such as klephtic ballads which are instrumentally adapted to the dance, the heroic poems are sung solo to basic melodies. The occasions of recitation are the many opportunities offered by the church for religious holidays and festivals, the many rounds of weddings, baptisms, and that indefinable mood for joyous expression in sheer living which the Greeks call by that unique word, kephi.

HOMER AND MODERN GREEK HEROIC ORAL POETRY

The heroic poems recorded in our field trips are of value not only because they mirror modern Greece but also because they constitute one of the sources for the illumination of the Homeric epics. The reason for this is the newly awakened realization that the Homeric epics were not the products of writing but were created orally. The scholar responsible for this new frontier of Homeric studies is the late Milman Parry of Harvard. Parry has laid Homeric studies on a new foundation by his epoch-making thesis, L'Épithète Traditionelle dans Homère, (Paris, 1928), in which he showed the role of the formula in easy verse-making.

The formula, a ready-made group of words, is connected with the metrical necessities of easy oral verse-making. Homer's verse is the hexameter:

– ∪∪| – ∪∪| – ∪∪| – ∪∪| – ∪∪| – –|

It consists of dactyls (– ∪ ∪) and spondees (– –) which are metrically interchangeable rhythmic units of song-speech. There is a pause (caesura) in the third foot to rest the singer momentarily. [2] In improvising orally the singer (aoidos) cannot stop the flow of narration to devise, as is possible in writing, new, fresh, original metrical phrases to fill in the hexameter line. He therefore has need of metrical phrases or cliches, already shaped by a long tradition of oral epic poetry, to fill a part of a line or the entire line. For example, when the singer of heroic tales wants to express the thought, "it was morning", he has already shaped for him by tradition the line:

ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς

"And when the early-born, rose-fingered Dawn appeared." When he wants to express the thought, "so-and-so answered", he links two formulae to fill the line. The first part, corresponding to "then answered him (her)"

τὸν δ' ἠμείβετ' ἔπειτα,

is linked to a flexible system of noun-adjective combinations, corresponding to "so-and-so", which fill out the portion of the line:

πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς

the much-enduring noble Odysseus

ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς

the swift-footed noble Achilles

βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη

the ox-eyed lady Hera

θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.

the owl-eyed goddess Athena.

This is but one of the many systems of formulae with which Homer fills his verse. The adjective in these phrases is ornamental or poetic to us but to Homer it is a metrically necessary filler which usually has no dramatic relevance to the context. The function of these systems of formulae is to rest the singer momentarily so that he can think out the phrasing of the next verse. Quite often chunks of verse passages are repeated in their entirety thus giving the poet something resembling to metrical "coasting" These formulae in Homer are so many and pervasive that it has been estimated that there are 25,000-26,000 repetitions in the 27,853 verses of the Homeric poems. The memorizing of this vast body of traditional formulae in the context of hearing songs constitutes the oral vocabulary of the epic.

Associated with formulae is another traditional element in oral heroic poetry, the type-scene, which is a formulaic description of the day-to-day actions of the epic society. These actions recur constantly in the movement of life; each time they recur they are told with many of the same formulae. Most striking of the type-scenes in Homer are scenes of arrival, of sacrificing, eating, journeys by land or sea, arming, dressing, sleeping, hesitation before decision, oath, etc. As each of these actions comes up in the story it is told in more or less the same way.

The oral poet's mastery of traditional formulae and type-scenes must be associated with the larger traditional oral units of themes which tell a story instead of describing a type-scene within a story. His repertory includes themes of quarrel between highly-strung epic warriors (we hear of eleven such themes in our Greek epic sources), the theme of a hero returning from war to a faithful wife; the recognition theme by means of tokens (which in the Odyssey is combined with the return theme); duels, raids for plunder, stories of the gods, magical themes from folklore, such as those found in the Odyssey; visits to the dead, aristeia, which are feats of heroes, repeated with but a change of name and place generation after generation.

In working with these formulaic elements of the oral tradition a poet uses the technique of "ornamentation" whose mastery is the criterion which differentiates a good from a poor oral poet. As Parry describes it, "Where Homer must have differed from the ordinary singer of his day, was in his being able to tell the action more fully. A highly developed oral poetry differs from one which is less developed because its singers have a more ample art. The song which has only a few hundred verses in the hut of some hard-working tiller of the soil, whose time for such sport is short, will run into thousands of verses when sung before some noble by a singer who, raised among men with great leisure for talk and song, has had time to become fully practised in a highly developed art. The difference between such long and short versions of the same song lies in what the singers call 'adornment'." Homer created his long poems because he was a master of ornamentation and architectural arrangement of traditional oral material. He is, in fact, an oral virtuoso. He chose a central theme in the Iliad, the wrath of Achilles, and expanded it into a major story which is filled with other themes and type-scenes. These are given adequate expression, but in such proportion and arrangement that they do not obscure the main theme.

Homer, living in the eighth century, has learned his art from a rich oral tradition; he has grasped all the richness of that tradition which is the result of at least six hundred years of epic story singing that goes back to the Mycenaean courts where bards sang the deeds of Mycenaean heroes. He listened to many songs and stored away in his memory a rich oral vocabulary of formulae, type-scenes, and themes and through the mastery of ornamentation told the stories in their fulness. Such is the oral art practised by Demodocus in the Odyssey who is really Homer's self-portrait.

The technique of oral verse-making in the modern Greek tradition of heroic poetry is, genius apart, the same. The singers whom I recorded had at their disposal a traditional diction which enabled them to fill the fifteen syllable line which has a caesura in the eighth syllable. Like the Homeric caesura, it rests the singer momentarily. The average number of syllables in the Homeric hexameter is 15.7 which is very close to the fifteen syllable metre. This results in a long rhythmically undulating line easily adapted to telling a story. The modern Greek oral bard, like Homer, fills his lines with formulae extending to an entire line, such as:

τριῶ μερῶ περπατησιὰ μιὰ νύχτα
νὰ τὴν χάμῃ

three days' walk, to walk it in one night.

τζαὶ βάλλει μιὰφ φωνὴμ μιτσιὰν
τζαὶ μιὰφ φωνὴμ μεάλη

and he utters a cry small and a cry loud.

Moreover, he has formulae which fill in the line up to the caesura in the eighth syllable and formulae which fill in the line after the caesura, such as:

ἕνας κοντὸς κοντοῦτσικος, πὄχει
ὄμορφη γυναῖκα

a short, short man who has a beautiful wife.

ἐποὔλησε τὰ σπίτια του,
τ'ἀμπελοχώραφά του

He sold his houses, his vineyards and his fields.

As in Homer, the majority of the noun-adjective formulae occur after the caesura. The formulae of seven syllables fall into noun-adjective groups forming a large system, such as:

a. Ὥρα καλὴ Σαρακηνέ, φῶς στοὺς
ἀντρεικωμένους

Good be the hour, o Saracen, light of the brave.

Τζαὶ ὥρα καλή σου, Κωνσταντά,
φῶς στοὺς ἀντρεικωμένους

Good be the hour, o Konstanda, light of the brave.

Γειά σου, γειά σου, Σαρατζηνέ,
φῶς στοὺς ἀντρεικωμένους

Health, health to you, O Saracen, light of the brave.

b. Ἀκοῦς, ἀκοῦς, Ἀκρίτα μου, τζαὶ
ἄξιο μου παλληκάρι,

Hear, hear, my Akritas, and worthy pallikar (hero).

Ἀ Κωνσταντά, ἀ Κωνσταντά,
τζ'ἄξιο μ'παλληκάρι

O Konstanda, o Konstanda, and worthy pallikar.

Ὁ Κωνσταντὰς ἕν' λεοντοφὰς καὶ
ἄξιον παλληκάρι.

Konstandas is a lion-eater, and a worthy pallikar.

Ὁ Κωνσταντὰς μᾶς ἔστειλε, τὸ
μορφο παλληκάρι

Konstandas has sent us, the handsome pallikar.

Many of the formulae are actually very similar to the Homeric, as may be seen in the following comparative examples:

a. τὸν δ'ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων

then answered him the ruler Agamemnon.

τότες ἀπηλοήθηκε κι ὁ γνωστικὸς Καλέργης

then answered him the knowing Kaleryes.

b. ὡς φάτο, γήθησεν δὲ βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης

thus he spoke, and the loud-voiced Diomedes rejoiced.

τζαὶ ποὺ τ'ἄκουσε Διεννής, πολλὲς χαρὲς παθθαίνει

And when Digenes heard it he rejoiced greatly.

c. ὣς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ'ἄρα τοῦ μάλα μὲν κλύον ἠδ'ἐπίθοντο

thus he spoke, and they readily heard and obeyed him.

καθὼς τοῦ εἶπεν ἔκαμεν, καθὼς τοῦ παραντζέλλει.

he did as he said, as he commanded.

d. μάστιξεν δ'ἵππους, τὼ δ'οὐκ ἀέκοντε πετέσθην

he smote the horses, and they willingly flew.

δίνει βιτσιὰ τοῦ μαύρου του καὶ πάει σαράντα μίλλια.

he lashes his black charger and it goes forty miles.

This list could be extended to similarities in speaking horses who mourn their masters, to scenes of welcoming a guest, scenes describing the wealth of a house or room, to the repetitive question and answer technique, boasting of lineage, etc. These similarities are not due to any influence from the Homeric epics but rather to the fact that oral literatures evolve cognate formulae, motifs, type-scenes and themes. (Cf. M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry, London, 1952).

Many of these formulae in Greek poetry are old, some of them going back to the Middle Ages. As in Homer, it is a diction composed of mixed dialects which entered the Greek language with the conquest of Greece by the Franks, the Venetians and the Turks. In improvising orally the modern Greek bard, as observed in the recordings, adjusts the formulae to a basic melody. By storing in his memory the formulae heard in his traditional songs he is able to sing the older tales himself, even to create new ones. In composing new poems on events of World War II it was observed that new poems were created merely by adapting the traditional formulae to the familiar melody. Sometimes whole songs were transferred from one person or event to another with but a change of name or new weapons.

Like the Homeric bard, our singers had acquired from their oral tradition certain type scenes. An analysis of the type-scenes of the Akritan cycle in Cyprus shows a wide variety of them. Among the most prominent are introductory formulae which set the scene of the poem such as raiding, princes feasting; trials of strength in lifting or in leaping; going to a father or mother for their blessing before an undertaking; scenes of oaths, riding a horse with fantastic speed; prayers to God for the magical appearance of an army which the hero fights single-handed; scenes of marriage negotiations, accepted or rejected; conversation between the hero and his horse or a bird; the fashioning of prodigious armor, etc. Such type-scenes which reflect the epic life on the frontiers of the Byzantine empire are so pervasive that entire poems consist of a reticulation of such scenes. Many of the poems repeat the same type-scene, as many as five times in a single room consisting of ninety lines. These scenes, however, are shorter than the Homeric type-scenes, for the poet is not the master of ornamentation that Homer is. How completely the poet is dependent on his tradition is seen in several poems where a Queen greets a girl with the formula with which one hero greets another, offering her the food and drink worthy of heroes.

Finally, our singers worked with traditional themes as the core of their poems. The theme in its origin seems to be stories which have a permanent place in the hearts of men who crave to hear the story retold. These themes are also joined by others which are the creation of myth-making imagination, where the supernatural fuses the planes of man and divinity, the human and the magic. All these themes of diverse origin enter into the traditional repertory of the poet and become the stuff of his poetry. The Akritan cycle shows upon analysis about 40 themes. When an index is made of the themes of the Balkan peoples. ancient and modern Greece,

the epics of the Russians, Turks, Arabs, we shall be in a better position to tell how common to all heroic poetry these themes are. Already we observe some remarkably tangent themes between ancient and modern Greek poetry. The recognition theme of the Odyssey is a favorite in the Akritan cycle and in folksongs. The popular theme of the wrestling between Digenes and Charos, Death, is similar to Herakles' wrestling with Death in the Alcestis of Euripides. The duel and the ensuing recognition scene between father and son in the Akritan poems is the same as that between Odysseus and Telegonus, Sohrab and Rustum. The wielding of exceptional weapons, the Hermes theme about the prodigious feats of an infant; the speaking horses, the Amazon theme, the Orpheus theme, all appear in modern Greek poetry. Just how they got there is a moot question. Some claim that Byzantium inherited these themes from the classical world and passed them on to the folksong. In part this is true but it is more probable that many of these themes never died out in oral poetry and re-emerge in Greek folklore. The longevity of survival of these traditional themes gives us grounds for belief that many of the themes of the Homeric epic were inherited from the Mycenaean epic tradition.

We best see the technique of ornamentation in comparing the Cretan epic, The Song of Daskaloyiannes, with other Cretan poems in our collections. It is the masterpiece of Cretan heroic poetry by virtue of its rich technique of ornamentation. The absence of heroic poems longer than a thousand lines, the length of Daskaloyiannes, prevents us from observing more accurately the role of ornamentation in contemporary Greek heroic poetry. The excellence among the variants of versions of a few hundred lines lies not in the length but in the ability of the singer to fit his formulae closer to the cinematic and dramatic actions of the epic life.

Such is the value of modern Greek Heroic Poetry in the study of comparative oral literature. In the case of Homer it substantiates through correspondence the essential features of his oral technique and gives us a standard of reference for evaluating the Homeric excellence. The oral poets of Greece and those of Yugoslavia recorded by Parry and Lord, [3] though a far cry from the genius of Homer, offer us badly needed facts in our recent awareness of Homer as an oral poet. These singers of tales will loom larger in Homeric studies if for no other reason than the fact that, genius apart, the singing of tales rests on the same elements of oral composition, ancient or modern.

THE AKRITAN ORAL CYCLE

The heroic way of life reflected in the epic is forged in the crucible of wars. The Achaean warriors performed their feats in numerous raids, feuds, adventures overseas of which we have mention in the sagas of the Homeric and the Cyclic epics. From these sagas Homer ultimately created his epics, coming as he does at the end of a long epic tradition in the eighth century. We find the same factors at work in the creation of the Akritan cycle. This cycle was the result of wars in the frontier provinces of the Byzantine Empire, in the provinces of Pontus and Cappadocia. In these provinces were stationed troops known as "akrites," frontiersmen, who defended the empire against raids from the Saracens. We have an interesting ikonography of these warriors not only in manuscript illuminations but also on Byzantine pottery from Corinth, dated in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They wear the "fustanella," the kilt, even as the later klephts. The feats of these "akrites" became the themes of heroic poems. Bishop Arethas of Caesarea (860-932) refers to oral bards singing songs about the fates of these frontiersmen. Thus these bards, the counterpart of those who sang in Mycenaean courts, composed songs in honor of frontier generals like Melissos, Doukas, Andronikos, Porphyres, Constantine, at whose courts these songs were probably sung. The Akritan cycle, inbued with real epic spirit and a semblance of certain qualities of Homer, is the origin of modern Greek heroic poetry. These ballads outgrew historical verisimilitude at an indeterminate period and emerged as epic ballads filled with the marvels of myth-making.

The central hero of this cycle is Digenes Akritas who, as his name signifies, was the son of an Arab emir who abducted the daughter of a Byzantine prince and after reconciliation marries her and becomes a Christian. The cycle does not deal with the entire history of the hero as is the case with the long literary versions of Digenes Akritas, which were written later on the basis of the oral ballads. The cycle deals with discrete episodes such as the childhood feats of the hero; his loves, the abduction of his wife, his adventures with the Saracens. In this cycle Digenes emerges with the youthful bravery of Achilles, the prodigious strength of Herakles, and the

glory of Alexander. His feats are superhuman; his club, as it assails the Saracens, resounds like lightning; his fist shatters rocks. When he conquers everyone in sight there is only Charos, that spectacular knight of Death who plays an important role in modern Greek folklore. After a terrific wrestling match with Charos on "the marble threshing floor", Digenes lies a-dying. He narrates his feats to his companions and then takes his wife in an embrace of death with him to Hades. The death of Digenes has become the most far-flung theme in the Akritan cycle. Besides Digenes, the names of other Akritan heroes appear in the cycle, such as Porphyres, Andronikos, Constantine, Theophylaktos and others. The feats of Digenes became in time something more than the heroic poetry of the dim past. Digenes became the symbol of the Greek race in its struggle with the Turks and he has become for the Greeks throughout their struggles a potent national myth with an inspiring mystique of national destiny. His feats are still sung by the refugees from Pontus who came to Greece in 1922 with the exchange of minority populations, by Cretan mountaineers who each imagines himself a Digenes, and in long narrative poems of modern Cypriot rhapsodes (poietarides). The fame of Akritas spread from Greece to the neighboring peoples of the Russians, Bulgarians, Albanians, and particularly the Serbs whose cycle about their hero Marko Kraljevic contains many themes from the Akritan cycle. Versions of the cycle have been collected in all parts of Greece, but mostly from the islands of Cyprus, the Dodecanese, Crete, even Corsica where the songs were carried by Greek refugees in the seventeenth century. The Akritan cycle, as has been noted, is very formulaic, excessively so, swiftly paced in narrative, and dramatic. For the prosody and the music of the Akritan songs the reader is referred to the important book by S. Baud-Bovy, La Chanson Populaire Grecque du Dodecanese (Paris, 1939).

THE KLEPHTIC BALLADS

When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453 and Greece was enslaved the feats of the Byzantine frontier heroes were replaced by those of a group of guerrilla mountaineer warriors known as klephts and armatoli. Their epic way of life, their heroic deaths became the subject of the klephtic ballads. For the proper understanding of the origin of these ballads we must go to the role the mountains play in all wars that took place in Greece. The mountains of Greece, which constitute eighty per cent of the mainland, produced the mountaineer warrior, fast and mobile in guerrilla warfare, highly individualistic, schooled in danger, imbued with Homeric qualities. After the fall of Constantinople there followed oppression, resistance, revolts. Many took to the mountains in Central Greece, Epirus and Macedonia where they harrased the Turks. They were called klephts, robbers, from their preoccupation. These klephts were difficult to deal with so the Turks resorted to a compromise which took the form of an official recognition of an armed militia known as armatoli (armed men) whose duty it was to serve as a security force for certain districts called armatolik, guarding mountain passes, collecting taxes, and fighting off the raids of the klephts. The organization of these armatoli, which was also that of the klephts, consisted of a leader known as kapetanios and his men known as pallikaria, gallant lads. However, the power of the armatoli was never secure either from their fellow Christians or from their Turkish masters. Many were killed or ousted from their command through treachery or surprise. The armatolik was a prize and the objective of the klepht was to become so powerful that the Turks would assign him an armatolik or reinstate him in the command from which he was ousted. The rise in power of the armatoli gradually led to the curbing of their power by Ali Pasha (1741-1822) who pursued a policy of cajolement, treachery, and intrigue. The suppression of the armatoli correspondingly increased the number and power of the klephts and those who survived eventually became the liberators of their country in the War of Independence (1821-1830). The almost successful policy of Ali Pasha in exterminating the armatoli and klephts inspired the oral bards of klephtic ballads to sing of their exploits and lament their death. The klephts impressed European travellers and, with the publication by Fauriel of the first klephtic ballads in 1824, poets like Goethe and European scholars who found in folklore a new genre of literature. The klephts became an epic type, a fit theme for heroic poetry. Their way of life created by the ideal of leventyá, manly grace of body and epic spirit; their arms, costume, their feeling intensely the beauty of life and nature because they lived precariously, all these combined to capture the imagination of the people. To this day the klephtic ballads are sung in Roumeli, Epirus, Macedonia, Thessaly and Peloponnesus with

great feeling.

There are four main periods of the klephtic ballads. The first emerges in the seventeenth century and reaches its heighth in the eighteenth century. This was the golden age of the klephtic ballads represented in Fauriel's collection of 1824. It was in this period that the technique, the theme, the basic melodies were created; Fauriel's critique and analysis of these ballads is still unsurpassed. The heroes of these ballads were the first and second generations of families bloodily dealt with by force and betrayed by friend and foe alike, heroes like Christos Miliones, Androutsos, Katsandonis, the families of Kontoyiannes, Boukouvalas, the fearless Souliots living in the crags of Epirus and defying their implacable foe, Ali Pasha with epic courage. These heroes display the qualities which gave epic poetry its splendor--that "combination of rare dangers and rich chances, of indescribable terrors and bewildering hopes, in which, amid the crumbling of external protection, a man had to stand or fall by what he was really worth, by his fighting power, his courage." The second period of the ballads coincides with the War of Independence (1821-1830). The leading figures in this war, many of them sprung from the older klephts, replace the old heroes in the ballads often with but a change of name and place. The Kolokotrones and Zacharyas cycle of Morea are characteristic of the second period in which the poems often assume a more historical character on account of the larger movements of regular troops, sieges, and battles. The third period of the ballad commences with the accession of King Otto in 1833 and continues to the end of the nineteenth century. Many of the veterans of the War of Independence, themselves products of the klephtic life, were unable to adapt themselves to the changed conditions resulting from the creation of the Greek Kingdom. Resentful of foreign monarchy, European ways of life, feeling a lack of appreciation for their services to the Greek cause, they turned to brigandage in the mountains. These bandits became sort of Robin Hoods in the imagination of the people who did not differentiate them from the older klephts, for the bandits wore the same clothes, arms, and preserved the basic attitudes of the klephts. The oral poets continued to sing of them in the traditional moulds of the older ballads. The last period of the ballads coincides with the many wars that Greece fought in the twentieth century. Commencing with the war of 1897, the Macedonian movement of 1904-05, the Balkan Wars (1912-13), World War I, the Asia Minor Expedition (1919-22), World War II, and concluding with the war against the Communists (1946-49), almost forty per cent of the first half of the twentieth century was spent on wars. The villages where the tradition of the klephtic ballads was still strong created new ballads about figures and events in these wars. A considerable number of these new ballads were recorded in 1953.

The klephtic ballad emerged from the older tradition of the Akritan ballads from which it borrowed its metre, formulaic typology and many of its stock themes. Yet we find significant changes. The Akritan poem is a narrative sung to a regular basic melody which is content to accompany the words. Such is the case with the Cretan and the Serbo-Croatian heroic poems. Both in the text and melody the klephtic ballad partakes of the epic and the lyric. In it we have a heightening of emotional effect through the more lyrical character of the music which is filled with ornamentation, repetition of syllables, heaping up of vocalisations, factors which often tend to obscure the text. Yet it is this musical character of the ballads that makes them popular and gives them a more interesting character in the repertory of Greek heroic songs.

The klephtic ballads fall into two main categories, songs of the table (klephtika tes tavlas) which, as the phrase indicates are sung solo recitative around the table heaped with food and wine. An interesting feature of this class of ballads is the melody which undergoes a sort of enjambment for the strophe of music embraces one and a half lines of verse, a feature occuring in no other heroic poetry where the cadence of the melody and the verse coincide. At these feasts the singer and his audience relived with the klephts their love of life, of nature intensified by the life of danger. They purged their emotions through songs which, like the laments, express the sadness of life. The second category of klephtic ballads are those of the dance which played an important part in the life of the villager today. The melodies of these ballads, accompanied by instruments, are dances such as the syrtos, kalamatianos, tsamikos. The ballads of the table are sometimes accompanied by instruments. In the time of the War of Independence we hear of

blind bards who accompanied themselves on the lyra, a stringed instrument which survives today in the islands. Today bands of gypsy musicians, mostly from Epirus, have taken over the instrumental accompaniment and have introduced some changes in the music of the ballads, such as avoiding monotony through instrumental interludes, interpolations of oriental chromatizations, refining the melodies through variations in the cadence and marked ornamentation. In the instrumental music the moaning clarinet plays the melody while the violin and the laouto (a stringed instrument) are used more for accompaniment. For the prosody and music of the klephtic ballads the reader is referred to the basic work of S. Baud-Bovy, Etudes sur la Chanson Cleftique (Athens, 1958).

Yet the text of the klephtic ballads, particularly the texts in Fauriel, give us a heroic poem which has a character all its own. The text relates a heroic action but not in the linear narrative fashion of the traditional heroic poem. Its diction is formulaic, as may be readily seen in the fact that the same verses are found in different ballads. The most pervasive characteristic of the ballad is the formulaic prologue in which usually a bird, or mountains, or people speak in dialogue and tell us something about the hero and the circumstances. The technique is that of the Homeric medias res. By means of this formulaic beginning the poet tries to raise the hero into a higher atmosphere of tragic feeling by giving the animate or inanimate world a soul, a voice which acts as the chorus of a Greek tragedy. The dramatic style of the ballad is achieved in several ways. First, by the use of dialogue or question and answer technique which, as in Homer, makes the heroic poem dramatic. Secondly, by the diction, which is simple, free from the emotional reaction of the speaker to the event. The ballad stays with the stark facts which are selected for their dramatic relevance and have little to do with linear chronology. Like Homer, the singer of the ballad is concerned with the swift movement of life which is achieved by stripping the noun of all ornamentation except that which organically arises from the very nature of things. Raciness is also achieved by the repetition of the same verb or by a number of related verbs. The verb is the life of this genre of poetry. The objective of the ballad is to select some person and invest him with the epic and tragic sense of life. This is achieved with the technique of oral poetry, aided of course by emotion intensified by the music. In its dramatic sense and in the remarkably successful presentation of the epic and tragic sense of life the klephtic ballad is close to the heart of the Homeric epics.

The composers of these ballads were illiterate, often blind, bards who sang their songs from village to village or in the church fairs (panegyria) where glendi, merry-making, followed the religious service for several days. At these fairs the bards would sing their ballads; the villagers who heard them would bring them back to their own villages and there the songs would be moulded with variations and passed on to their oral journeys. Variants of the same ballads show that the song is subject to variations in the text and in the music so that we cannot expect an archetype. The role of these bards in the life of the people may be seen in the traditional greeting by women to a woman who had given birth to a son: "May he live to become an armatolos or capetanios and have a song made about him." Many of the singers composed their songs in the camps of the klephts whose exploits they praised. Not infrequently the composers were renowned warriors like Makriyiannes and Kolokotrones who relaxed with singing heroic songs even as Achilles in his tent. [4]

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE POEMS OF CRETE AND CYPRUS

In contrast to the Akritan cycle which is mythopoeic we have another group of poems which are more historical and narrative in character. These poems deal with historical events like sieges, capture of cities, revolts which left a deep impression on the people. Among the oldest in this class are The Siege of Adrianople (1361), The Capture of Constantinople (1453) which must have once been longer than the short versions in which we have them. Of the longer historical poems those of Crete are the most numerous and important. The reason for this is to be found in the numerous revolts in the island against the Turks. In the interval of 1770 and 1897 there were at least ten major uprisings followed by death and suffering. These revolts are the theme of the Cretan heroic poems which glorify the strongly ingrained Cretan ideal of gallant living and gallant dying. Imbued with the same code of honor as we find in Homer these picturesque warriors, who still survive in the mountain villages of Sfakia and Psilorites, inspired the Cretan bards to compose long

narrative poems. These poems extend from the revolt of Daskaloyiannes in 1770 to the German Airborne Invasion and Occupation of the island in World War II.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Crete enjoyed a literary golden age which was influenced by Venetian literature and the native folklore tradition. This written literature was snuffed out by the capture of the island by the Turks in 1645-1669, an event which inspired the long literary epic of Bouniales, The Capture of Crete (1681) composed in the folk dialect. However, the oral tradition of historical poems continued. The historical poems composed by illiterate bards to commemorate the ensuing revolts retained the basic structure of these older historical poems--the formulaic prologue, followed by the narration of the event in chronological manner, and concluded by an epilogue which gives us information about the bard. The historical poems, commencing with the Song of Daskaloyiannes in 1786, continue the oral tradition with increasing degree of formulaic texture. They are composed in the rhymed couplet which was introduced into Greek poetry from the West in the fifteenth century. Hence these poems are called rimes (rhymes) and their poets rimadore (rhyme-makers).

The heroic poems of Crete begin with a convential prologue in which the poet, like Homer, asks for inspiration, or he begins with an address to nature, trees, flowers, birds lamenting. The prologue, which enlists the attention of the listeners, usually contains the date of the event. Then the poet describes the event and the heroic death of the leader and the participants in the revolt. He selects an heroic act or a revolt involving a series of heroic acts and narrates them cinematically, stripping away all complexities that underlie the event, reducing characterization to mere action or to a few noun-adjective formulae. The poet moves the story in linear fashion following history or biography as a model. He relieves the monotony of the narrative through short dramatic speeches and traditional similes which are used for metrical convenience. The Cretan poet, because he is subject to history, witnessed or participated in by himself and his audience, avoids the marvellous and the improbable, though occasionally we find the speaking horses and birds. If any dramatic quality be in the poems it is due mostly to the events themselves rather than to the poet himself, though the exception is the bard Barba-Pantselyo who composed The Song of Daskaloyiannes, the masterpiece of Cretan heroic poetry. Often Cretan poems turn out, like the klephtic ballads, to be a lament (moiroloyi) and we find imbedded in them passages which are actually formulaic laments sung over the dead by women. Often the poet interpolates his own moral judgment about the events. The technique of these poems is formulaic; we have the usual formulaic patterns which characterize the fifteen syllable meter, though rhyme-formulae constitute a major part of the facility of the Cretan bard to improvise. The poems are sung to a basic narrative melody which extends over the entire distich.

We find less anonymity in Cretan poems. Usually a short biography of the bard is found in many of the epilogues of the poems, giving us their name and village. These singers were often blind, sometimes warriors themselves, who were trained in the oral tradition of improvising couplets (mantinades) which are still a favorite pastime and gifted accomplishment of most Cretans today. We have a masterful description of the Cretan bard in the epilogue of the Song of Daskaloyiannes which describes the bard dictating orally his poem to a scribe. The bards today are confined to a small group of older men, [5] usually farmers, shepherds, or cheese makers, who matured in the older traditions of song sing their songs around the tavla, the table. The tradition has survived in sufficient strength to inspire the composition of oral narrative poems on World War II.

In addition to the historical rimes we have another category of heroic poems which are very popular in the mountain villages of western Crete. These are the rizitika, sometimes called songs of the tavla, named from the fact that they are popular in villages rooted in the rizes, the roots of the Lefka Ore, (White Mountains). Recent musicological studies of Baud-Bovy show that their musical strophe is prosodically related to that in the klephtic ballads, which also are the source of many of their formulae. They are composed in the traditional fifteen syllable line, are rather short (6-12 verses), and are sung around the tavla after the feast. One side of the table sings a phrase which is then repeated by the men on the other side. The melodies are many and the singers never achieve unison for each man sings in his own pitch and in such a way

that his own voice is not lost in the group singing. These songs are raucous to the Western ear but are full of the gusty vitality of the Cretan mountaineers. The themes are old heroic events which have left an impression on the people, love themes, popular folk motifs, allegorical poems, songs about old Cretan captains who crossed over to Greece to take part in the kingdom's wars Concluding each rizitiko and disconnected with the theme is an improvised couplet or mantinada. These songs constitute a vital part of the Cretan heroic poems.

The tradition of the long narrative poem survives still with vigor in Cyprus. Outside of the Akritan, these narrative poems of Cyprus are not heroic in character. Their themes are tragic deaths, suicides, love affairs, accidents, murders, and lives of saints, miracles. It may be readily seen that many of these themes are properly those of tabloid newspapers. These poems are composed and recited from village to village or in the city squares by a professional group of itinerant poets called poietarides who in their origin go back to the tradition of Akritan poems but with this difference: they extend their repertory to non-heroic themes. These poets, who are trained in facile improvisation through improvised verse contents, called tsatismata (cf. the amoebean contests in Theocritus and Virgil), sell the poems after an oral recitation in printed pamphlets to the villagers. The older tradition of poietarides composed these poems in the illiterate oral tradition but the newer ones represent a stage where the oral is mixed with the literary style.

SIDE I, Band 1:

THE ABDUCTION OF DIGENES' BRIDE.

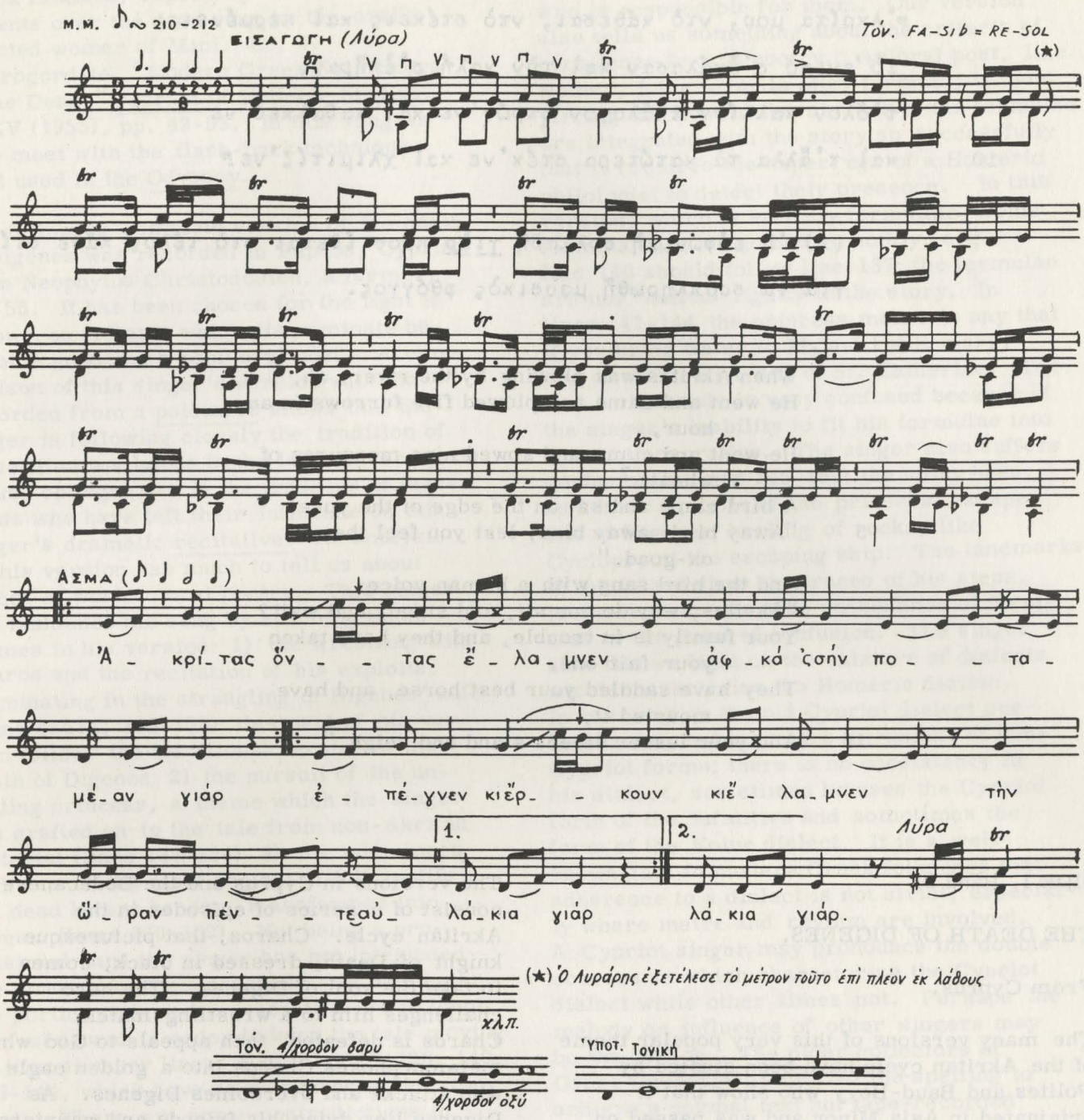
From Salonika

The abduction of Digenes' bride by the Saracens, one of the oldest themes in the Akritan cycle, has been collected in all parts of Greece. There are two main types to which the versions belong. The versions from Cyprus and the Dodecanese, which ultimately derive from Pontus and Cappadocia, tell how the hero after a long stay abroad, either because he is fighting wars, or is on a long journey, or because he is a prisoner, learns in a magical way, usually a speaking horse, that his wife is about to be married to another. Mounting his fabulous charger he arrives in time to prevent the marriage. The wife, like Penelope in the Odyssey, asks for tokens. Upon the telling of tokens, known only by husband and wife, there is a happy reunion. This oldest of themes, the faithful wife, the suitors, the appearance of the husband and the tokens, is not derived from Homer. Rather it is a traditional theme of folklore used by Homer and reemerging independently in the Akritan cycle. I recorded a variant of this theme in Cyprus where it is sung on the second day after the marriage as an exhortation to fidelity.

The second type of the theme comes from Pontus, of which the following excerpt is a variant. It tells of Digenes who at work is informed by a magically speaking bird (cf. Odyssey XIX, 545) that his house has been pillaged and his wife abducted. The hero goes to his stables and asks his horses which of them is capable of overtaking the enemy. Only his old fabled charger is capable because of his love for his mistress. With magical speed he overtakes the enemy, defeats his army. His wife, imprisoned in a castle, senses the approach of her husband through the neighing of the faithful charger and is then restored to her husband.

This recorded version is sung by a Pontus Greek in Salonika, Herakles Tsakalides, age 38. He sings each verse twice to a basic melody. The version is introduced and accompanied by the Pontus lyre (for a description and picture of this instrument see Ethnic Folkways Album P 454, p. 6). The lyre rests the singer at intervals with passages which come from the dance, a feature also seen in the instrumental music of the klephtic ballads. The dialect of the song is that of Pontus (cf. R. M. Dawkins, Modern Greek in Asia Minor, Cambridge, 1916). The text is a variant of one printed in full in P. Kalonaros, Digenes Akritas (Athens, 1941), II, pp. 237-239.

Ἀκρίτας ὄντας ἔλαμνεν.



(★) Ὁ Λυράρης ἐξετέλεσε τὸ μέτρον τοῦτο ἐπὶ πλέον ἐκ λάθους

Ἀκρίτας ὄντας ἔλαμνεν ἀφκὰ 's σὴν ποταμέαν,γιάρ,(1)
ἐπέγνεν κι ἔρθεν κι ἔλαμνεν τὴν ὥραν πέντ'αὐλάκια,
Ἐπέγνεν κι ἔρθεν κι ἔσπερνεν ἐννέα κότια σπόρον,
Ἔρθεν πουλὶν κι ἐκόνεψεν 's σῆ ζυγονί'τὴν ἄκραν·
»'Οπίσ', πουλίν, ὀπίσ', πουλίν, μὴ τρῶς τὴ βουκεντρέαν».

Καὶ τὸ πουλὶν κελάηδησεν ἀνθρώπινον λαλίαν:
"Ἀκρίτα μου, ντὸ κάθεσαι, ντὸ στέκεις καὶ περμένεις;
Τὸ 'ενικό σ' ἐχάλασαν καὶ τὴν καλή σ' ἐπῆραν,
τ' ὅλον καλλίον τ' ἄλογον στρών'νε καὶ καβαλκεύ'νε
καὶ τ' ἄλλα τὰ κατώτερα στέκ'νε καὶ χλιμιτίζ'νε."

(1) Ἡ εὐφωνικὴ συλλαβὴ γιὰρ προστίθεται στὸ τέλος κάθε στίχου, γιὰ νὰ συμπληρωθῆ μουσικὸς φθόγγος.

When Akritas was plowing by the river, ah, [6]
He went and came and plowed five furrows in an hour,
He went and came and sowed nine measures of wheat. [7]
A bird came and sat on the edge of the yoke.
"Away bird, away bird, lest you feel the ox-goad."
And the bird sang with a human voice:
"Akritas, why do you sit, and stand, and wait?
Your family is in trouble, and they have taken your fair one,
They have saddled your best horse, and have mounted it,
And your lesser steeds stand and neigh."

SIDE I, Band 2:

THE DEATH OF DIGENES.

From Cyprus.

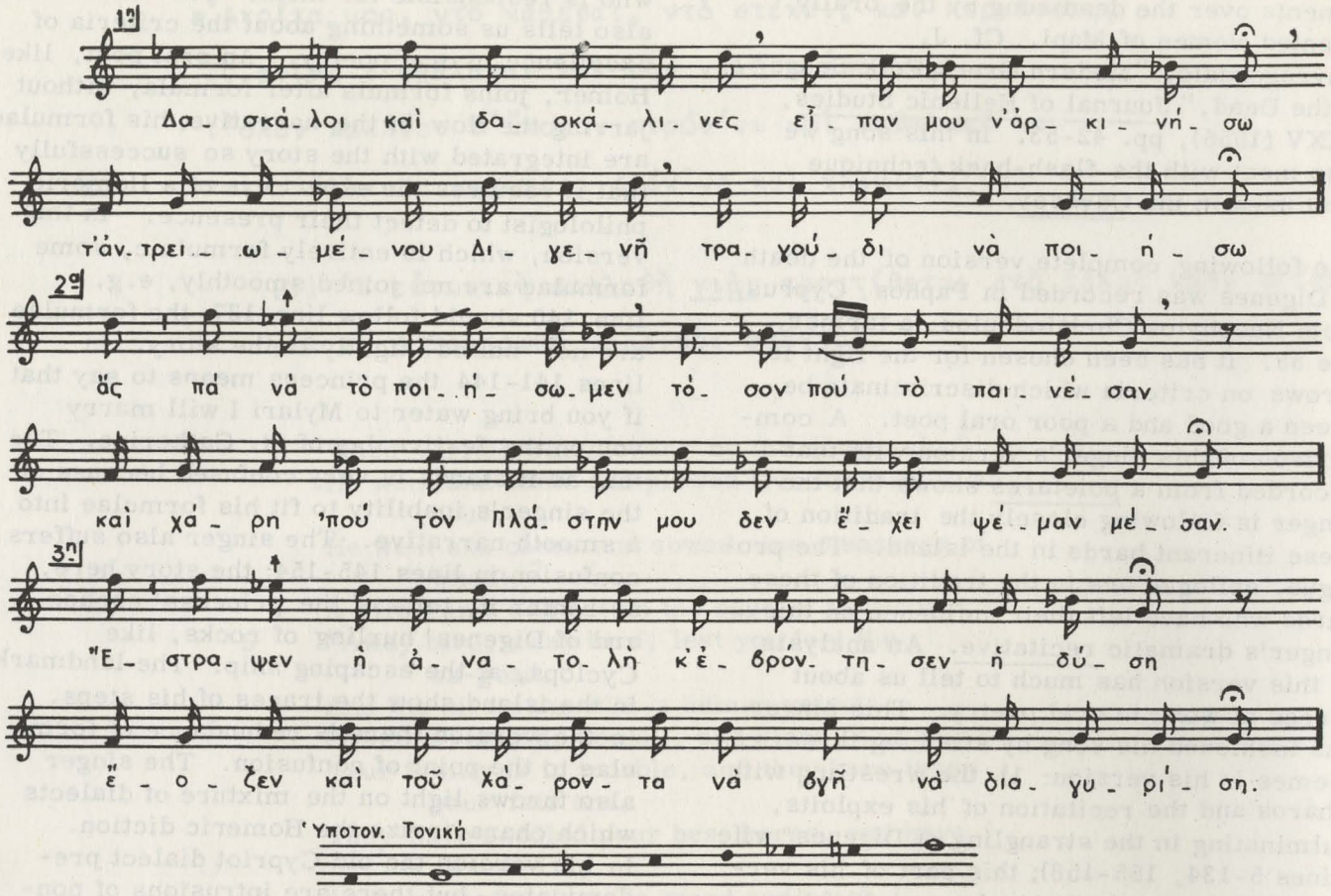
The many versions of this very popular theme of the Akritan cycle have been studied by Polites and Baud-Bovy who show that it originated in Asia Minor and was passed on to Cyprus, then to Rhodes, and Crete, all of which show parochial characteristics. The longest versions come from Cyprus and show the oral technique in an excessively formulaic character; in the Dodecanese the versions become shorter, more dramatic; in Crete the short lyrical versions of Digenes' death take on the epic character of the Cretan mountaineers; in them Digenes becomes a superhuman titan who strides from cliff to cliff, hurls huge rocks, still called today in various parts of Crete "the rocks of Digenes," he surpasses deer and mountain goats in speed. Even Charos dares not wrestle with him but wounds him in a stealthy ambush.

The versions in Cyprus and the Dodecanese consist of a series of episodes in the Akritan cycle. Charos, that picturesque knight of Death, dressed in black, comes to take the soul of Digenes. The hero challenges him to a wrestling-match. Charos is defeated, then appeals to God who metamorphoses Charos into a golden eagle who attacks and overcomes Digenes. As Digenes lies dying his friends and warriors hesitatingly approach. Like the dying Heracles in Sophocles' Trachinaean Women, he uses this occasion to narrate his exploits. He dies after having strangled his wife in an embrace. Several elements in this story are worthy of note for comparison with Homer. In Homer a hero meets his death not at the hands of a mortal but a divinity who uses a mortal as an instrument; so here too Digenes meets his death at the hands of God who uses Charos to deprive heroes of their souls. The visit of death is shaped in the heroic manner. Charos, of whom we have a parallel in Euripides' Alcestis, where Herakles wrestles with

Death, is an important figure in modern Greek folklore, especially in folktales and laments over the dead sung by the orally talented women of Mani. Cf. J. Mavrogordato, "Modern Greek Folk-Songs of the Dead," Journal of Hellenic Studies, LXXV (1955), pp. 42-53. In this song we also meet with the flash-back technique first used in the Odyssey.

The following complete version of the death of Digenes was recorded in Paphos, Cyprus, from Neophytos Christodoulou, a farmer, age 55. It has been chosen for the light it throws on criteria which discriminate between a good and a poor oral poet. A comparison of this singer's version with that recorded from a poietares shows that the singer is following closely the tradition of these itinerant bards in the island. The prologue, epilogue are in the tradition of these bards who have left their influence on this singer's dramatic recitative. An analysis of this version has much to tell us about forces at work in oral poetry. This singer has fashioned his song by stitching three themes in his version: 1) the wrestling with Charos and the recitation of his exploits, culminating in the strangling of Digenes' wife (lines 5-134, 155-158); this part of his version follows the traditional version of the death of Digenes; 2) the pursuit of the unwilling princess, a theme which the singer has grafted on to the tale from non-Akritan material (lines 137-154); 3) the tale closes with one of the most ancient of folk motifs - the dead lovers become transformed into trees. (lines 160-162). Not being a professional bard the singer has not integrated the three themes successfully. In particular, the portion occupied in lines 137-154 is inept, confused, and in order to keep the tale moving he inserts many lines, e.g. 87, 127-128, 140, 143-144, which have no relevance to the story at all. There are some contradictions in the version of which the singer is unaware but which show up in the printed text. It shows that contradictions, contrary to the belief of older Homeric scholars, are part of oral poetry; it is the singer, not later editors, who is responsible for them. Our version also tells us something about the criteria of excellence in oral poetry. An oral poet, like Homer, joins formula after formula, without jarring the flow of the narrative; his formulae are integrated with the story so successfully that it requires the expert eye of a Homeric philologist to detect their presence. In this version, which is entirely formulaic, some formulae are not joined smoothly, e.g. line 140 should follow line 137; the formulae are not "nailed" tightly to the story. In lines 141-144 the princess means to say that if you bring water to Mylari I will marry you on the festive day of St. Catherine. The text as it stands is very confused because of the singer's inability to fit his formulae into a smooth narrative. The singer also suffers confusion in lines 145-154; the story here, as I infer it, tells of the princess' escape and of Digenes' hurling of rocks, like Cyclops, at the escaping ship. The landmarks in the island show the traces of his steps. In the version there is redundance of formulae to the point of confusion. The singer also throws light on the mixture of dialects which characterize the Homeric diction. In his version the old Cypriot dialect predominates, but there are intrusions of non-Cypriot forms; there is no consistency in his dialect, sometimes he uses the Cypriot form of the infinitive and sometimes the form of the Koine dialect. It is a well-known fact in modern Greek folksongs that adherence to a dialect is not strict, especially where metre and rhythm are involved. A Cypriot singer may pronounce the double consonants which characterize the Cypriot dialect while other times not. Perhaps the melody or influence of other singers may be the reason. The older collectors of Greek folksongs simplified the spelling to achieve a normal text but tape-recorded versions are making us more aware of mixed linguistic phenomena as we find in the Homeric poems.

Ὁ Διγενῆς καὶ ὁ Χάρος.



Δασκάλοι καὶ δασκάλινες εἶπαν μου ν'ἀρνινήσω,
τ'ἀντρειωμένου Διενῆ τραγούδι νὰ ποιήσω.
'Ας πὰ νὰ τὸ ποιήσωμεν, τόσον πού τὸ παινέσαν
καὶ χάρη 'πού τὸν πλάστην μου δὲν ἔχει ψέμαν μέσαν.

Ἔστραψεν ἡ ἀνατολὴ καὶ βρόντησεν ἡ δύση,
ἔοξεν καὶ τοῦ Χάροντα νὰ βγῆ νὰ διαγυρίση
καὶ νὰ γυρίσην τὸν ντουνιὰν 'π'ἀνατολὴν ὡς δύσιν
ἕναν-ἕναν μὲ τὸ 'υρίν, ἕναν νὰ μὲν ἀφήση,
νὰ μείνη ὁ τόπος γ-ἔρημος σὰν ἕναν παρακλήσιν
νὰ κάμη καὶ ὁ πλάστης μου τότες δικαίαν κρίσιν
ἁμαρτωλὸς καὶ δίκαιος τότε θὲ νὰ χουρίση.

Ἔφτασεν εἰς τὰ σπίδκια τοῦ κύριου Διενάκιν,
ποὺ δὲν εἶχε μέσ'στὸν ντουνιὰν τέτοιον παλληκαράκιν.

-Ὥρα καλή σου, Διενή, φῶς στοὺς ἀντρειωμένους,
15 ποὺ βρίσνεσαι στὸ σπίτι σου μ'ἀνθρώπους προκομμένους.
-Καλῶς μᾶς ἤῦρες, κόπιασε, νὰ φᾶμεν καὶ νὰ πιοῦμεν,
νὰ στέκουν κι οἱ φιλίες μας ὅσον καιρὸν ἐζοῦμεν·
νὰ φᾶμεν τ'ἄγριν τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τὸ ἁφτὸν περδίκιν
καὶ νὰ ρωτᾶς ποιὸς εἶμαι γιὼ δὰ μέσ'στὸ Κατιλίκιν·
20 νὰ φᾶμεν ἀρκοκεράμιον, ποὺ τρῶν ἀντρειωμένοι,
νὰ πιοῦμεν καὶ γλυκὺν κρασίν, ποὺ πίνουν φουμισμένοι
καὶ μὲ τὴν εὐωδίαν τους βρίσκουνται μεθυσμένοι.
-Γνωρίζω σε πολλὰ καλά, εἶσαι τὲ Διενάκιν,
ποὺ δὲν ἔχει μέσ'στὸν ντουνιὰν τέτοιον παλληκαράκιν.
25 Ἤρθα μὲ τὴ διαταὴ νὰ πάρω τὴν ψυχή σου
ἀπὸ τὸν Ἐπουράνιον κι ἐὲθ θέλω τὸ φαΐ σου.
-Ἔχω μεγάλο στοίχημαν νὰ δώσης καὶ νὰ πάρη,
νὰ βγοῦμε, νὰ παλιῶσωμεν κι ἅπου νικήση, ἂς πάρη.
-Δὲν μ'ἔστειλεν ὁ Πλάστης μου, στοιχήματα νὰ βάζω,
30 γιὰ ὄχι γι ἄλλον τίποτες μόνον ψυχὲς νὰ βγάλλω.
-Θέλεις νὰ πάρης τὴν ψυχὴν μὰ δὲν τζ'εἶμ'ἄνθρωπός σου,
ἔλα, πάρε τη, Χάροντα, ἄλλαξε τὲ σκοπό σου.

Δίχως παιγνίδια καὶ χαρές, σὰν ποὺ νὰ εἶχα φέσταν,
κατὰ ποὺ συφωνήσασι, ἐβγῆκαν στὴν παλαίστραν.
35 Ἅμα κι ἐπισκαλίσασιν, ἐδῶσαν κι ἐπιαστῆκαν,
ἐχώστησαν χαμαὶ στὴν γῆν καὶ δὲν ἐβγῆκαν.
Γράφουν το τὰ βιβλία μας, δὲν εἶναι παραμύθι,
στὰ τρία ἡμερόνυχτα ὁ Χάρος ἐβαρήθη.
Ἀλαβροπιάσ'με, Διενή, νὰ σέ ἀλαβροπιάσω,
40 πέντε λεπτὰ διάστημαν, ἄφες με καὶ νὰ πνάσω.
Ἀλαβροπιάνν'ὁ Διενὴς καὶ δίχτοπιάνν'ὁ Χάρος
ἔβκαλαν αὐλακὲς χαμαί, νὰ πάρ'ἡ γῆ τὸ βάρος.
Κεῖ πού 'πιανεν ὁ Χάροντας, τὰ γαίματα πηδοῦσαν,
κεῖ πού 'πιανεν ὁ Διενής, τὰ κόκκαλα ἐλειοῦσαν.
45 Ἐνόμιζεν ὁ Χάροντας νὰ δώση καὶ νὰ πάρη,
θωρεῖς τον μέσ'στὰ πόδκια του χαμαὶ μαλλιὰ κουάρι.

Ἐδίχλησε στὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ὄρθιος ἐστάθη:
Ἔλα, Θεε μου, κι ἔπαρ'τον τοῦτον ποὺ μ'ἀντιστάθη.
Ὅποιος δοξάζει τὸν Θεόν, ἔν'ἡ δουλειά του ράστι.
Ἤρτεν του ἡ διαταγὴ 'ποὺ πάνω 'ποὺ τὸν Πλάστη:
νὰ γίνης ἕνας ἀετὸς χρυσὸς στὴν κεφαλήν του,
νὰ ξύνης μὲ τὰ νύχια σου, νὰ πάρης τὴν ψυχήν του.
Ἐγίνηνεν ἕνας ἀετὸς, ὁλόχρυσος παστέλλι.
Ἐγὼ κι 'ἐν ἐφταίω τίποτες, ἀφέντης μου μὲ στέλλει.
Ἐγύρισεν ὁ Διενῆς, γιὰ νὰ τοῦ ἀπαντήση,
ὅ,τι ἔρτη 'ποὺ τὸν Πλάστη μου, καλῶς νὰ μᾶς ὁρίση
Ὁ λόγος δὲν ἐτέλειωσεν,ἡ ξήησή τους ποὺ 'χαν,
Ὁ Διενὴς ψυχομαχεῖ καὶ στρώννουν του τὰ ροῦχα
μὲ σίδερὰ παπλώματα, μὲ σίδερὰ κρεββάτια·
τὰ σίδερα τσακίζει τα καὶ κάμνει τα κομμάτια.
Π'ἀππεξωθιὸν του στέκασι τρακόσια παλληκάρια
καὶ δὲν εἶχασιν ἄδειαν καὶ στέκασιν ἀλάργκα.
Θέλουν νὰ μποῦσιν, νὰ τὸν δοῦν, ἀλλὰ ἀκροφοοῦνται,
ὁ Διενὴς ψυχομαχεῖ καὶ τὰ παλάτια σειοῦνται.
Εἶπαν του τὸ πὼς ἔρκουνται γειτόνοι νὰ τὸν δοῦσι
καὶ περιμένουν ἄδειαν 'πόξω καὶ χαρτεροῦσι.
Πέστε τους τοὺς γειτόνους μου, νὰ 'ρθουσι νὰ μὲ δοῦσιν
κι ἐκεῖνος ποὺ 'μουν δὲν εἶμαι, νὰ μὲ μὲ φοβηθοῦσιν.
Ἐπρόσταξε ν'ἀνοίξουσι, θὥρει,χαρὰ στὴ σόρταν!
κεῖνος μὲ τὴν γεναῖκαν του ἀνοίασιν τὴν πόρτα.
Ἅμα 'γριώση ἡ θάλασσα, τότες 'πὸ σοῦλλα βκάλλει,
χίλιες ψυχὲς ἂν ἔρκουντον, δὲν τὴν ἀννοῖαν ἄλλοι.
Ἐπῆεν ἡ γεναίκα του καὶ τράβηξεν τὸν σόρτη,
κουντᾶ τὴν πόρταν κι ἄνοιξεν, πέφτει χαμαὶ καὶ φύρτει.
Ἕναν μικρὸν μικροδτσικον καὶ χαμηλοβρακᾶτον
βάλλει τὴδ δύναμιν ἐμπρός, μπαίνει καὶ χαιρετᾶ τον:
-Ὥρα καλή σου, Διενή, παρηγορήσου νάκκον,
ἐλπίζομεν νὰ σηκωθῆς, 'ἐν κεῖσαι μέσ'στὸν λάκκον.
-Ἐλᾶτε χίλιοι ἀπὸ 'μπρὸς καὶ δυὸ χιλιάδες πίσω,
πῶχω τὸν νοῦν στὴν κεφαλήν, προτοῦ νὰ ξεψυχήσω.

Ψηλῶστε τὴν κουτάλαν μου, νὰ δῆτε τὸν καμό μου,
πὼς τρέχει αἷμαν καθαρὸν 'πού μέσα στὸν λαιμό μου.
Πάνω στὴν κεφαλοβλλαν του ψουμόμυλ'ἐγυρίζαν
καὶ πάνου στὴν ραχοβλλαν του ζευκάργια ζευγαρίζαν.
καὶ μέσα στὰ ρουθοβνια του φόραοι ἐσταλίζαν
καὶ μέσ'στὰ νύχια τῶν χερκῶ περδίτσια κακουρίζαν·
ὡς καὶ τὰ ἑρπετὰ τῆς γῆς κοντὰ δὲν ἐκοντέβκαν
καὶ μέσ'στὰ χειροπάλαμα σκύλλοι ἐλαγουδέβκαν.

'Επρόσταξε νὰ βάλλουσι τραπέζιν νὰ δειπνίσουν,
νὰ μὲ φύσουσι γρήγορα, νὰ τόνε ξενυχτίσουν.
Τρῶσιν καὶ πίνουσιν τώρα καὶ τὸν συχνορωτοῦσιν
πάνω στὲς ἀνδρειότες του καὶ τὸν παρηγοροῦσιν.
"Τρῶτε καὶ πίνετ'ἄρχοντες, καὶ νὰ σᾶς ἐξηγοῦμαι,
ἠγρύπνησα καὶ χάλασα τόσον πού δὲν κοιμοῦμαι.
Κάτω στὲς ἄκρες τῶν ἀκρῶν τῆς τέλειωσης τοῦ κόσμου
ἐγύρισά τα κι εἶδα τα μόνος καὶ μονιχός μου.
"Ηταν τ'ἀγκάθιν πλιθιμον καὶ τὸ τριβόλιν πῆχυν
καὶ ποιὸς τολμᾶ νὰ μπῆ κοντὰ καὶ ποιὸς νὰ τοῦ συντύχῃ!
"Εδωσέν του ὁ Πλάστης μου ἐτοῦτου μίαν χάριν
ἦταν ὁ κεφαλάκανθος, ὁ γιὸς τοῦ καβαλλάρη
ἐβάσταν εἰς τὸ χέριν του χίλιες λίτρες κοντάρι
καὶ πῶς τὸ βάστα μνιὰ φορὰ δὲν εἶδεν τὸ χαπάριν.
Εἶδεν ἀνθρώπους ἄγριους, γεναῖκες ἄλλες τόσες
ἐννιὰ χαράκια γέμωσεν ὅλο μοῦττες καὶ γλῶσσες.
Ν'ἀκούσετε τὰ πάθη του πού'παθεν οἱ βρεθόντες,
οἱ μοῦττες ἐν'τοὺς δράκοντες, οἱ γλῶσσες ἐν'τοὺς λιόντες.
Σηκώνεσαι 'πού τὸ πρωΐν καὶ 'ἐν εἰξεύρεις πού ἦσουν
οἱ βρύσες ἐσταθήκασι καὶ 'ἐν εἶχαν νὰ ποτίσουν.
Εἰς τὸν 'Αβράδην ποταμὸν εἶχεν ὡραίαν βρύσιν
κι ἐδίψασεν ὁ μαῦρος του, νὰ πᾶ νὰ τὸν ποτίσῃ.
Βλέπει τον ὁ Σαρακηνὸς κι'ἐν καὶ νὰ καϊλίσῃ
'ἐν ἐκαΐλιζεν,πουλὶν κεῖ μέσα νὰ πατήσῃ.
Σαρακηνὸς ἔν'δράκοντας καὶ ἀπὸ τοὺς μεγάλους

ἀλλὰ πολλοὺς τὸ ἔμαθα κι ἀπὸ καλοὺς δασκάλους.
Στέκεται συλλογίζεται πῶς θὰ τὸ χαιρετίσῃ!
-Ὥρα καλή, Σαρακηνέ, ἔχει νερὸν ἡ βρύσῃ;
-Τριάντα χρόνια μέσα δά, κύριε Διενάκι,
μήτε πουλὶν ἤπιε νερόν, μήτε θιλϊονάκι.
-Τραβήχτου, βρὲ Σαρακηνέ, τὸν μαῦρον νὰ ποτίσω
κι ἔν'κασπαχάνεκι ποὺ 'ρτα κι ἔν'νὰ σοῦ τὲς ταΐσω·
ἂν ἔν'καὶ μὲ τὸ κέφι μου, ἔν'καὶ νὰ καϊλίσω,
σήμερον ἔν'νὰ σκοτωθῶ, τὸ γαΐμα μου νὰ χύσω.
Γυρίζει τὸ κοντάριν του, κεῖνον τὸ παινεμένον,
ὅσον νὰ πιῇ ὁ μαῦρος του, ἔχει τον σκοτωμένον.
Ξαναδιπλάζει τ' ἄλλη μνιὰ μέσα στὶς δυὸ κουτάλες,
καβαλλικᾶ τοῦ μαύρου του κι ἐπάτησεν τὲς σκάλες.
Ε! πόσοι κατεβαίνουσι ἔτσ'ἄδικα στὸν Ἅδη
διαβάτες ἐγλεντοῦσασι σὲ πράσινο λειβάδι.
Ἂν ἔζησεν ὁ Σαρακηνὸς ἐν κι ἔκαμνε χαΐριν
ἀπὸ τὸν κρότον τῆς ξυλιᾶς ἐρράη τὸ ποτήριν.
Κάπου 'στραπή, κάπου βροντή, κάπου χαλάζι ρίβκει,
τὸ χιόνι στὰ ψηλὰ βουνὰ ποτέ του καὶ δὲ λείβκει.
Μήτε στραπή, μήτε βροντή, μήτε καιρὸς γεμώνει,
'ἐν' κονταρκὰ τοῦ Διενῆ καὶ κάποιονε σκοτώννει.
'Ανάμεσαν δυὸ ποταμοὺς εἶχεν τὴν κατοικίαν,
ἔγινεν ἑκατὸ χρονῶ, νομίζω, ἡλικίαν.
'Κόμα ὁ ἕνας ποταμὸς 'νομάζεται Μυλάρι
εἶχεν καὶ μίαν ρῆαινα κι ἤθελεν νὰ τὴν πάρῃ.
'Η ρῆαινα 'ἐν τὸν ἤθελεν, εὕρισκὲν του αἰτίες
ἀππέσω ἄλλους ποταμοὺς λέγουν τους Διενῆες.
'Εὰν τὸ φέρῃς τὸ νερὸν κι ἔρτῃ εἰς τὸ Μυλάρι,
ἐσυφωνήσασιν κι οἱ δυὸ ἄντραν της νὰ τὸν πάρῃ.
Τὸ μαναστήριν τοῦ Σινᾶ 'Αγίαν Κατερίναν,
ποὺ ἔρχεται ἡ μέρα της μέσ'στὸ Νεόμβρῃ μῆναν.
"Αμα καὶ φάτσησεν «νερόν", κι ἄκουσεν ἡ κυρία,
ἐπῆεν νὰ βαρκαριστῆ κι ἀφῆκεν του ἐγείαν.
Ἂν καταγυρέψετε, ἂν μὲ ρωτᾶτε μένα,

στέκουν καὶ τὰ πετραδλακα κόμη μαρτυρημένα.
Ἔππεσεν ἐξοπίσω της πῶς ἤ̓ν νὰ τήνε φτάση,
κεῖνοι ἐβαρκαρίσαν τη, τραβοῦν κουπιὰ καὶ πᾶσι.
Ἕναν καγιὰν τῆς ἔσυρεν, εἶναι βουλιὲς δικές του
φαίνονται ὡς τὴ σήμερον πάνω οἱ δαχτυλιές του.
Ἔππεσεν ἐξοπίσω της πῶς ἤ̓ν νὰ τήνε φτάση,
κεῖνοι ἐβαρκαρίσαν την, τραβοῦν κουπὶ καὶ πᾶσι.
Ἦρτεν ἡ ὥρα ἡ καλή, πού ̓ταν νὰ ξεψυχήση,
ἐπῆεν ἡ γεναίκα του πῶς ἤ̓ν νὰ τὸν φιλήση.
Ἤ̓ν νὰ τοὺς πάρη καὶ τοὺς δυὸ ὁ Χάρος ἔν̓μεσίτης,
σφίγγει την μέσ̓στ̓ἀγκάλια του καὶ βγῆκεν ἡ ψυχὴ της.

Ἐμέναν ἔν̓ἡ τέχνη μου, ὅ,τι ἀκούσω γράφω,
ἐπῆραν τους καὶ θάψαν τους τοὺς δύο σ̓ἕναν τάφο.
Βλαστᾶ ἡ κόρη λεμονιὰ κι ὁ πεῦκος κυπαρίσσι
μακάριν νὰ ̓βρη εὑρετὴν ὅποιος τοὺς μακαρίση.

Schoolmasters and schoolmistresses have told me to begin,
To sing the song of Digenes the brave.
Let us start the song which they have praised so much,
And, thanks to my Creator, it has not a lie in it.
There was lightning in the East and thunder in the West,
And Charos thought it best to venture forth, to travel,
And sweep through the world, from East to West,
And each one in turn, leave not a one,
And the earth become deserted like a remote chapel,
So that my Creator then may make his just Judgment
And separate the sinner from the just.

He came to the mansions of Master Digenes,
Never in the world such a brave lad.
"Good be the hour, Digenes, light of the brave,
To find you at home with such worthy men."
"Welcome, enter, to eat and drink
And make our friendship last as long as we live;
Let us feast on the game - the hare and the roasted partridge,
And ask me who I am, here at Katileke. [8]
Let us eat the food, the food of the brave
And drink the sweet wine, the wine for the famous,
Whose savor makes men drunk."
"I know you full well, you are Digenes,
The world has never such a brave lad.
I have come with orders to take your soul
From the Lord on high, and do not want your food."
"I lay a great wager - to give and take blows,
To go forth and wrestle, and winner take all."
"My Creator has not sent me to wager,
Not at all, merely to take souls away."
"You wish to take my soul, but I am not your man,
Come, and get it, Charos, change your tune."
Without games or joys, as at a feast,
As they had agreed, they go to the wrestling ground.
As soon as their hands touched, they gripped.
They stood their ground and did not budge. [9]
Our books write it - it is not an idle tale -
In three days and nights Charos was smitten.
"Grip me gently, Digenes, and I will grip you gently,
Five minutes rest give me for breath."
Digenes grips him gently and Charos grips him tight
They wore tracks below, so that the earth receive the weight.

Where Charos grips, the blood leaps,
Where Digenes grips, the bones melt.
Charos thought of give and take
But lo, see him in a heap at Digenes' feet.
He turns his eyes to Heaven and stands up:
"Come, Lord, and take this opponent,
Whoever glorifies the Lord, his task is light."
To him the Lord sends down his command:
"Become a golden eagle on his head,
Dig in with your nails, and take his soul."
He became an eagle, all golden like a honeyed-cake.
"It is not my fault, the Lord sends me."
Digenes turns to reply:
"What comes from the Lord, come it for good,"
The words had not finished, the conversation ended,
Digenes lies dying and they lay out his clothes,
On iron coverlets, on an iron bed.
He shatters the iron into bits.
Outside his door stand his three hundred brave lads,
They had not leave to enter, and stand apart.
They wish to enter, to see him, but are afraid.
Digenes lies dying and the palace quakes.
They told him the neighbors have come to see him
And wait outside for leave to enter.
"Tell my neighbors to come and see me.
I am not he who was, to cause them fear."
He orders them to enter - lo, as luck would have it,
He and his wife were opening the door.
As when the sea rages, and spews forth all,
Then even if a thousand souls come, they could not open the door.
His wife went and drew the bolt
Near the door he opened he falls and faints.
A short lad, with breeches short,
Pushes forth with might, enters and greets him.
"Greetings, Digenes, console yourself a little,
We hope that you will rise - you are not yet in the grave."
"Come a thousand from the front, and two thousand from the rear,
While I am in my senses, before I die.
Raise my shoulders, and see my woes,
How the pure blood runs in my throat."
Over his head a thousand wind-mills turned
Over his back a team of oxen plowed,
And in his nostrils mares were stabled,
And in the nails of his fingers partridges cooed,
- Even as the crawling creatures of the earth drew not near -
And in his palms the hounds were chasing hares.
He orders the table to be set for feasting,
For them not to depart, but spend the night with him.
Now they eat and drink and frequently ask
Of his feats and console him.
"Eat and drink, my lords, and I will tell you,
I am sleepless, so ill I cannot sleep.
Down by the ends of the earth, the limits of the world
I wandered and saw them all by myself.
The thorn was a palm thick, the weeds a cubit,"
And who dares to draw near and who to meet him!
The Lord gave him a special grace,
He was the crown of the acanthus, the son of the rider,
He held in his hand a spear weighing a thousand pounds
And felt it not a bit.
He saw savage men and as many other women,
And he filled nine pails with noses and tongues,
Hear the woes of those who were found there,
The noses are of dragons, and the tongues of lions.
You waken in the morning and know not where you are.
The springs dried up and had no water,
By the Euphrates river there was a beautiful fountain,
His black steed thirsted and he went to water him,
The Saracen sees him and fears to speak to him,
And no bird in its fear dared to linger there.
The Saracen was a dragon and this I have learned
From the many and the great, even the good teachers.
He stands and thinks how to greet him.
"Greetings, Saracen, has the fountain water?"
"Thirty years here, Sir Digenes,
Nor bird has drunk water here, nor swallow."
"Move, Saracen, to water my black steed,
It is for your stubbornness I have come to hit you blows.
To dare is my mood -
To die today, to shed my blood."
He turns his spear, his spear of fame,
And while his black steed drinks, he slays him.
And smites him again between the shoulders.
He mounts his steed and treads the miles.

(Alas, how many travellers in Hades, to no avail, think
These two were making merry in a green meadow.)[10]
Had the Saracen lived and was not successful
From the sound of the blow the cup would have been shattered.
Somewhere there is lightning, somewhere thunder, somewhere there is hail,
The snow on the high mountains never melts.
It is not lightning, nor thunder, nor is the weather murky,
It is the blow of Digenes, and he is slaying someone.
He had a dwelling amid two rivers,
And lived, I believe, to be a hundred.
Still one of the rivers is called Mylari.
He also loved a princess and wished to marry her,[11]
The princess did not love him and found excuses
- Outside they call the other rivers by the name of Digenes -
"If you bring the water to Mylari"
The two agreed to marry.
- The monastery of Sina, St. Catherine,
Whose festive day falls on the middle of November -
When he ordered water to drink, and the lady heard it
She fled in a boat and was rid of him.
If you inquire, if you ask me
The stones of the fields still stand as witness.
The stone fell behind her as it was about to reach her.
They embarked her, they rowed and sped on.
He threw a great rock, and the traces of his steps are his.
Even today the marks of his fingers show.
The stone fell behind her as it was about to reach her.
They embarked her, they row and go.
The fair hour came, when he was about to die,
His wife went to kiss him,
And Charos as the middle man takes the two.
For Digenes embraces her so tightly in his arms she dies.
My art is to write what I hear
They took them and buried the two in one grave.
The girl grows into a lemon tree, the poplar into a cypress.[12]
May he who blesses them find a treasure.

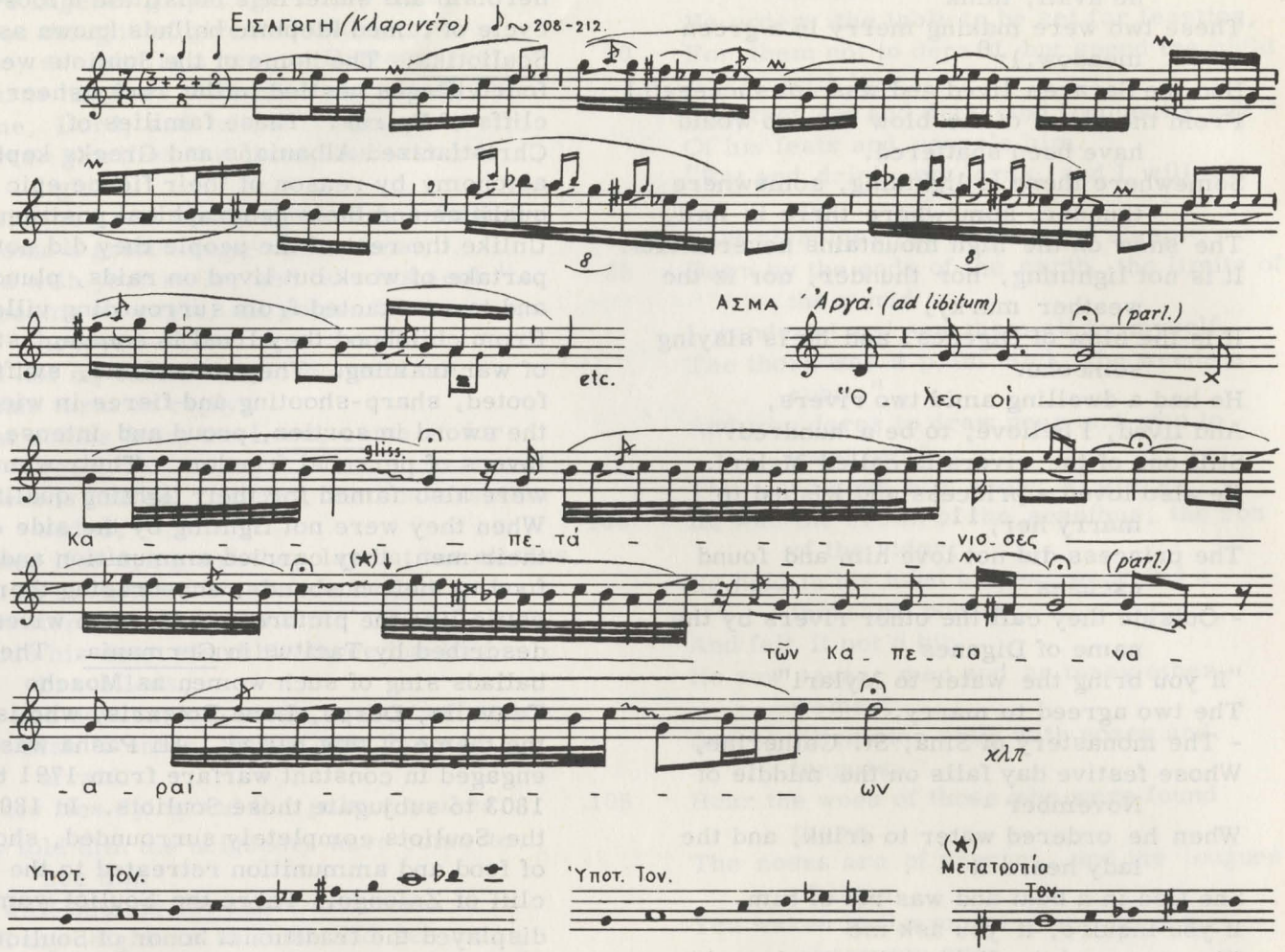
SIDE II, Band 1:

LENE BOTZARIS. Klephtic. Epirus.

The breed of men and women, known as the Souliots, their epic way of life, their heroism and sufferings constitute a loose cycle of famed klephtic ballads known as Souliotika. The home of the Souliots were four villages nestled in the rocky sheer cliffs of Epirus. These families of Christianized Albanians and Greeks kept their autonomy by reason of their fierce epic qualities and their geographical position. Unlike the rest of the people they did not partake of work but lived on raids, plunder and taxes exacted from surrounding villages. From childhood they lived in constant state of war training. They were lithe, swift-footed, sharp-shooting and fierce in wielding the sword in sorties, proud and intense lovers of personal freedom. Their women were also famed for their fighting qualities. When they were not fighting by the side of their men, they carried ammunition and food to their husbands, encouraging them in battle like the picturesque German wives described by Tacitus in Germania. The ballads sing of such women as Moscho Tzavella, Despo, Lene Botzaris, who is the theme of this ballad. Ali Pasha was engaged in constant warfare from 1791 to 1803 to subjugate these Souliots. In 1803 the Souliots completely surrounded, short of food and ammunition retreated to the cliff of Zalongo. There the Souliot women, displayed the traditional honor of Souliot women by dancing and leaping one by one over the cliff. The few Souliot survivors received amnesty from Ali Pasha to leave Souli. One of the columns was treacherously attacked near the monastery of Seltzo by the Achelous river. There our Souliot heroine fought bravely and to escape the enslavement by the Turks leaped and drowned in the river. She belonged to the great family of Botzaris of whom Marko is far-famed in the ballads. (See ballad in Album P 454, pp. 12-13)

This ballad, as recorded from a gypsy band of musicians in Yiannina of Epirus, emphasizes the melody at the expense of the text as may be seen by comparing the text with an older version in Polites' anthology of Greek folk-songs. (Eklogai Apo Ta Ellenika Tragoudia, Athens, 1932, No. 7) The basic details of the heroic situation have faded and only the fame of the heroine remains. The ornamentation of the epic text gives way to that of the melody. This is not uncommon in the later stages of the folksong.

Τῆς Ἑλένης Μπότσαρη.



Ὄλες οἱ καπετάνισσες τῶν καπεταναραίων,
ὅλες πάησαν προσκύνησαν στ''Αλῆ πασᾶ τὴν πόρτα·
κι αὐτή 'ν-ἡ Λέν'τοῦ Μπότσιαρη δὲν θέλ'νὰ προσκυνήση.
Μὴ νὰ μὲ ἰδῆς νὰ προσκυνῶ καὶ χέρια νὰ φιλήσω·
ἐγὼ εἰμ'ἡ Λέν'τοῦ Μπότσιαρη καὶ ἡ γ-άδερφὴ τοῦ Νώτη,
σέρνω φυσέκια στὴν ποδιὰ

All the wives of the captains
All went and bowed at the door of Ali Pasha,
But she, Lene, the wife of Botzaris, does not wish to bow.
"May I never be seen to bow and kiss the hands.
I am Lene, the wife of Botzaris, and the sister of Notis,
I carry bullets on my skirt" ....

SIDE II, Band 2:

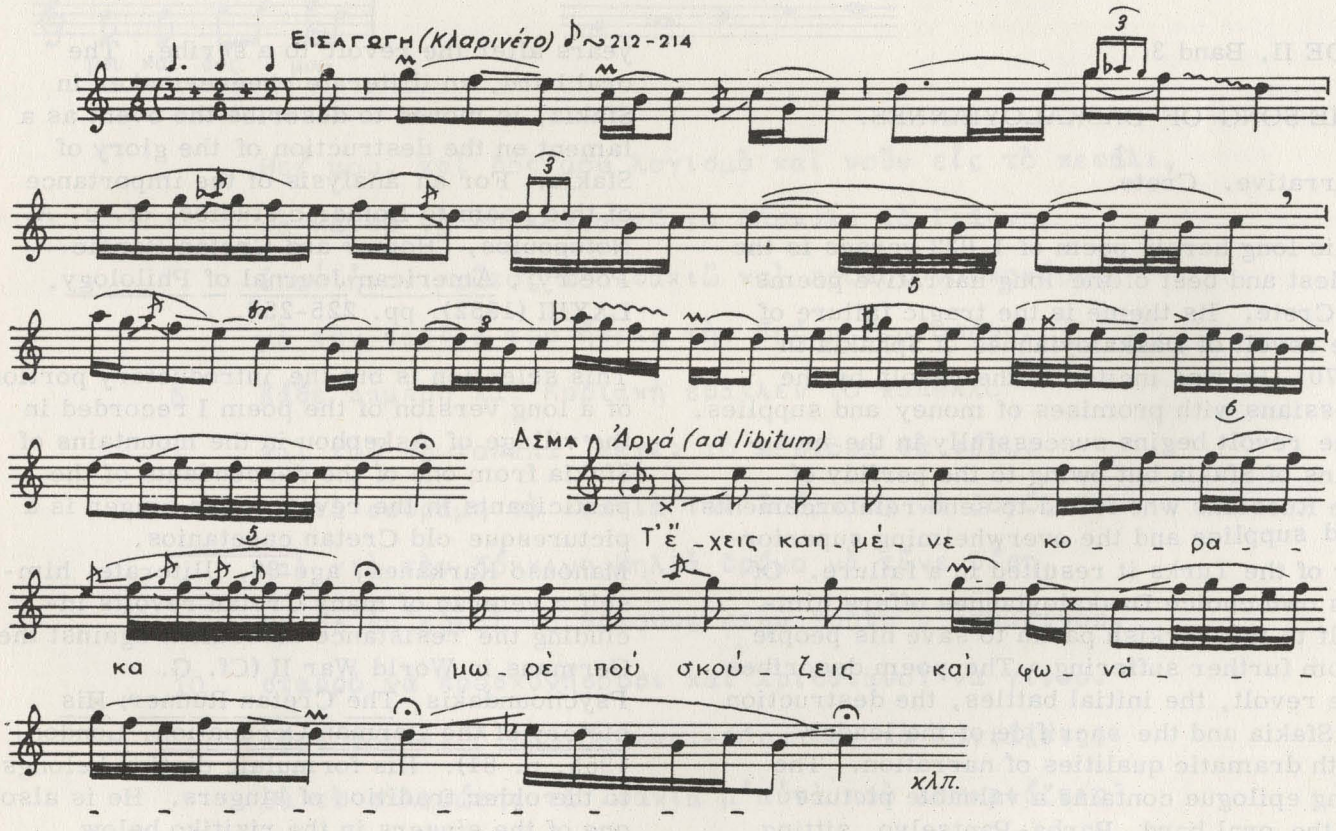
THE CROW AND THE BATTLE OF VALTETZI (1821).

Klephtic. Peloponnesus.

This is a klephtic ballad from a cycle centered on Kolokotrones (1770-1843), the general of the Greek forces in Peloponnesus during the War of Independence. Descended from a famous klepht family Kolokotrones rose to be the central figure in the War. A picturesque figure, wearing a helmet and shining gear, which is the theme of one of the ballads, possessed of a loud Homeric voice which he used with effect in battle, he contributed to the victory by his cunning daring, his ability to organize and hold together into an army the various local bands, and to inspire them to victory. This ballad tells of his victory in the battle of Valtetzi, May 12-13, 1821, in which he inflicted great losses on the Turks.

This ballad was recorded in Stringou, Arcadia, a village near Valtetzi. The singer, Nikos Stamatopoulos, a farmer age 45, sang this ballad for me on two occasions, once in solo recitative, and the other accompanied by instruments. The two versions differ in text, a phenomenon common in oral literature. The singer begins with a commonplace motif in the ballads, the address to a bird to which he then links details of a battle. The bird motif can serve any heroic action, as we actually observe in many versions of klephtic songs which begin with this formula.

Μάχη στὰ Τρίκορφα καὶ στὸ Βαλτέτσι.



Τί ἔχεις, καημένε κόρακα, ποὺ σκοῦζεις καὶ φωνάζεις;
Νὰ μὴ διψᾶς γιὰ αἵματα, γιὰ τουρκικα κεφάλια;
Πέρασ'ἀπὸ τὰ Τρίκορφα, 'πὸ πέρ'ἀπ'τὸ Βαλτέτσι
καὶ κεῖ θὰ βρῆς τὰ αἵματα, τὰ τούρκικα κεφάλια.
Κολοκοτρώνης πέρασε μὲ ὅλο του τ'ἀσκέρι
καὶ κεῖ τοὺς ἐπετσόκοψε.....

"What ails you, hapless crow, that you caw and
cry out?
Do you thirst for blood, for Turkish heads?
Pass by Trikorfa, beyond Valtetzi
And there you will find blood, and Turkish
heads.
Kolokotrones passed with all his army
And there he mangled them"....

SIDE II, Band 3:

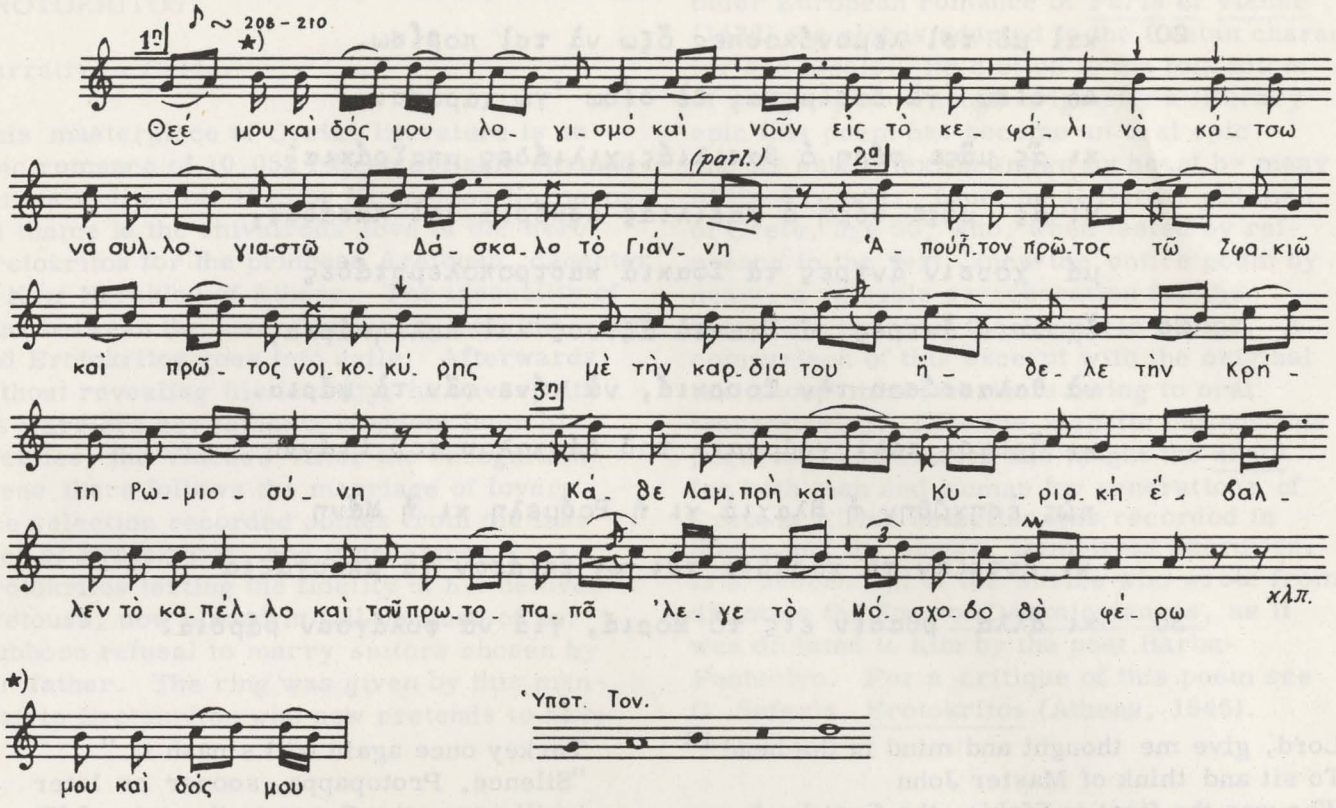
THE SONG OF DASKALOYIANNES.

Narrative. Crete

This long heroic poem of 1,032 verses is the oldest and best of the long narrative poems of Crete. Its theme is the tragic failure of the revolt of Daskaloyiannes of Sphakia in 1770. He was incited to the revolt by the Russians with promises of money and supplies. The revolt begins successfully in the mountains of Sfakia but owing to the perfidy of the Russians who failed to send reinforcements and supplies and the overwhelming superiority of the Turks it resulted in a failure. Of his own choice Daskaloyiannes offers himself to the Turkish pasha to save his people from further suffering. The poem describes the revolt, the initial battles, the destruction of Sfakia and the sacrifice of the leader with dramatic qualities of narration. The long epilogue contains a valuable picture of the oral bard, Barba-Pantselyo, sitting under a tree and dictating the poem sixteen years after the revolt to a scribe. The oral bard, an illiterate cheese-maker in Sfakia, is moved to describe the event as a lament on the destruction of the glory of Sfakia. For an analysis of the importance of this poem to Homeric studies, cf. J. A. Notopoulos, "Homer and Cretan Heroic Poetry", American Journal of Philology, LXXIII (1952), pp. 225-250.

This selection is but the introductory portion of a long version of the poem I recorded in the village of Askephou in the mountains of Sfakia from one of the descendants of the participants in the revolt. The singer is a picturesque old Cretan capetanios, Manouso Karkanes, age 88, illiterate, himself a veteran of many Cretan revolts including the resistance movement against the Germans in World War II (Cf. G. Psychoundakis, The Cretan Runner; His history of the German Occupation, London, 1955, p. 81). His formulaic diction belongs to the older tradition of singers. He is also one of the singers in the rizitiko below (band 5).

Τοῦ Δασκαλογιάννη τὸ τραγούδι.



Θεέ μου, καὶ δός μου λογισμὸ καὶ νοῦν εἰς τὸ κεφάλι,
νὰ κάτσω νὰ συλλογιαστῶ τὸ δάσκαλο τὸ Γιάννη,
ἀπού ἦτον πρῶτος τῶ Σφακιῶ καὶ πρῶτος νοικοκύρης,
μὲ τὴν καρδιά του ἤθελε τὴν Κρήτη Ρωμιοσύνη.
Κάθε Λαμπρὴ καὶ Κυριακὴ ἔβαλλεν τὸ καπέλλο
καὶ τοῦ Πρωτοπαπᾶ 'λεγε: τὸ Μόσκοβο θὰ φέρω,
νὰ τὰ συδράμη τὰ Σφακιὰ τσὶ Τούρκους νὰ ζυγώξουν
καὶ γιὰ τὴν Κόκκινη Μηλιὰ δρόμο νὰ τῶνε δώση.
Κι ὅσ'ἀπ'αὐτοὶ τὸ θέλουνε στὴν Κρήτη ν'ἀπομείνου,
σταυρὸ νὰ προσκυνήσουσι καὶ Χριστιανοὶ νὰ γίνου.
Λέει του κι ὁ Πρωτόπαπας:-Δάσκαλε, τὰ λογιάζεις;
θὰ τὰ σκλαβώσης τὰ Σφακιὰ μ'αὐτὰ ποὺ λογαριάζεις·
κι ὥστε νὰ'ρθοῦ τὰ κάτεργα κι ὁ Μόσκοβος νὰ φτάξη,
δὲ θά 'χη σπίτι ὁ Σφακιανὸς εἰς τὰ Σφακιὰ νὰ κάτση·
κι ἂν ἦτο γιὰ νὰ φτάξουνε στὴ Γαῦδο γιὰ νὰ φτάξου,
πάλι ἐμπρόκανε ἡ Τουρκιὰ γιὰ νὰ τά 'χη ρημάξου.
-Σώπαινε σύ, Πρωτόπαπα, μὰ ὕστερα γ-ἤ πρῶτας

ἐγὼ θὰ πάω τὸ σταυρὸ εἰς τῶ Χανιῶ τὴν πόρτα
κι ἐγὼ θὰ πάω τὸ σταυρὸ στὴν πόρτα νὰ κολλήσω
καὶ μὲ τσὶ λεμονόκουπες ὄξω νὰ τσὶ πορίσω.
Δὲ δίδω 'γὼ δοσίματα, δὲ δίδω 'γὼ χαράτσια
κι ἂς μᾶσε φέρη ὁ βασιλιάς, χιλιάδες μπαϊράκια·
κι ἂς μᾶσε φέρη ὁ βασιλιὰς ἀσκέρια καὶ πασάδες,
μά 'χουσιν ἄντρες τὰ Σφακιὰ καστροπολεμητάδες·
ἔχουσιν ἄντρες τά Σφακιὰ ἄξιους καὶ παλληκάρια,
νὰ θαλασσώσου τὴν Τουρκιά, νὰ τήνε φᾶν τὰ ψάρια.
κι ἤρθασι πάλι γράμματα τοῦ δάσκαλου τοῦ Γιάννη
πὼς ἐσηκώθην ἡ Βλαχιὰ κι ἡ Ρούμελη κι ἡ Μάνη
κι ἔφταξαν τὰ καράβια τσι κι ἐπιάσαν τὰ μπουγάζια
κι ἄλλά 'ρθασιν εἰς τὸ Μοριά, γιὰ νὰ φυλάγουν βάρδια.

Lord, give me thought and mind in the head [13]
To sit and think of Master John
Who was the first in Sfakia, the first lord,
And with all his heart wished Crete to be Greek.
Every Easter and Sunday he put on his hat [14]
And said to Protopappas, "The Moscovite I'll bring
To help Sfakia and chase the Turks
Along the way to Kokkine Melia.
And all those who wish to stay in Crete
The Cross should worship and Christians become."
And Protopappas replied, "Master, what is in your mind?
The thoughts you think will enslave Sfakia
And until the ships arrive and the Moscovite come
No Sfakian will have a home to live in.
And if the fleet should chance to reach Gavdos [15]
Turkey once again will smash it."
"Silence, Protopappa, sooner or later
I will carry the Cross to the gate of Khania
I will carry the Cross and fix it in the gate
And with lemon rinds I will chase them out.
I will not give tribute or pay the tax
Let the Sultan bring against us thousands of battle flags,
Let the Sultan bring against us armies and pashas,
Sfakia has men, castle-wreckers,
Sfakia has worthy and gallant warriors,
To throw Turkey in the sea as a feast to the fish. [16]
And letters came again to Master John
That Vlahia is in revolt, and Roumele and Mani,
Their ships have arrived and seized the straits
And others have reached Morea to keep a watch.

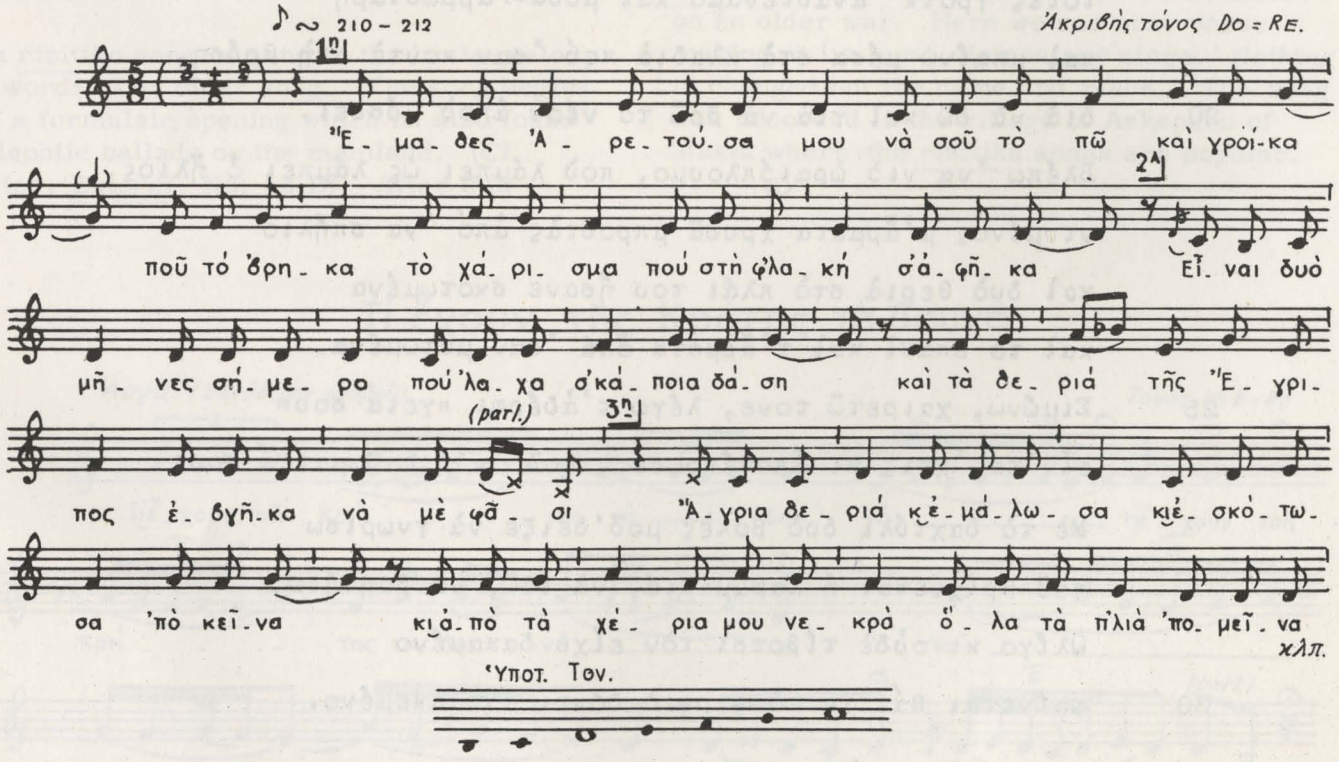
SIDE II, Band 4:

EROTOKRITOS

Narrative. Crete.

This masterpiece of Cretan literature is an epic romance of 10,052 fifteen syllable rhymed verses written ca 1645 by Vitzentzos Kornaros. Its theme is the chivalrous love of the hero Erotokritos for the princess Aretousa, daughter of King Herakles of Athens. The inequality of rank between the lovers prevents their marriage and Erotokritos goes into exile. Afterwards, without revealing his identity, he saves with his warriors her father's kingdom from his enemies, the Vlachs. After the recognition scene there follows the marriage of lovers. The selection recorded comes from the last book of Erotokritos, and it describes Erotokritos testing the fidelity of his beloved Aretousa, now placed in jail because of her stubborn refusal to marry suitors chosen by her father. The ring was given by this princess to Erotokritos who now pretends to have received it from the dead hero in the manner described in this excerpt. Though based on an older European romance of Paris et Vienne (1432) the plot is adapted to the Cretan character and ideals. Its diction is the folk idiom of the people. Though originally a literary epic this poem has become an oral epic and its entire text is known by heart by many of the Cretans. I met an illiterate old man of Crete, age 90, who, when tested by reference to the text, knew the entire poem by heart, a valuable corroboration for the rhapsodic phase of the Homeric poems. A comparison of this excerpt with the original text shows minor variants owing to oral transmission. Like the klephtic ballads this poem has entertained and taught the aretê for both man and woman for generations of Cretans. This selection was recorded in Sfakia and the singer, Demetrios Skordiles, is a descendant of the scribe who wrote from dictation the Song of Daskaloyiannes, as it was dictated to him by the poet Barba-Pantselyo. For a critique of this poem see G. Seferis, Erotokritos (Athens, 1946).

Ἐρωτόκριτος (Ἀπόσπασμα)



Ἔμαθες, Ἀρετοῦσα μου, νὰ σοῦ τὸ πῶ καὶ γροίκα
ποῦ τό 'βρηκα τὸ χάρισμα ποὺ στὴ φ'λακὴ σ'ἀφῆκα.
Εἶναι δυὸ μῆνες σήμερο πού 'λαχα σ'κάποια δάση
καὶ τὰ θεριὰ τῆς Ἔγριπος ἐβγῆκα νὰ μὲ φᾶσι.
Ἄγρια θεριὰ κ' ἐμάλωσα κἰ ἐσκότωσα 'πὸ κεῖνα
κι ἀπὸ τὰ χέρια μου νεκρὰ ὅλα τὰ π'λιὰ 'πομεῖνα.
Μὲ κίνδυνον ἐγλύτωσα κι ὅσ'ὥραν ἐπολέμου
νὰ λυτρωθῶ ἀπὸ πάνω τως δὲν τό 'λπιζα ποτέ μου
Μὰ βοὐηθησε τὸ ριζικό, τ' ἄστρη μ'ἐλυπηθῆκα
κι ἀλάβωτο κι ἀπλήγωτο κι ἀβάφτιστο μ'ἀφῆκα.
Δίψα μεγάλη ἐγροίκησα στὸν πόλεμον ἐκεῖνο,
γυρεύοντας νὰ πιῶ νερὸ σώσοντας ἕναν πρίνο'
κι ἐκεῖ ποὺ ξεκουράζομου κουτσουναράκι ἐχτύπα
σιμώνω, βρίχνω τὸ νερὸ στοῦ χαρακιοῦ τὴν τρύπα
κι ἤπια το κι ἐδροσίστηκα κι ἐπέρασέ μου ἡ δίψα,
μὰ τότες ἄλλα βάσανα ἀκόμης δὲν ἐλεῖψα.
Ἔκατσα ν'ἀποκοιμηθῶ κοντὰ στὸ κουτσουνάρι
τότες γροικ' ἀναστεναμὸ καὶ μύσσος ἀρρωστάρη
καὶ μπαίνω μέσα στὰ κλαδιὰ πού 'σαν κοντὰ στὴ βρύση,
διὰ νὰ δῶ καὶ γιὰ νὰ βρῶ τὸ νέον ἀποὺ μύσσει.
Βλέπω 'να νιὸ ὡραιόπλουμο, ποὺ λάμπει ὡς λάμπει ὁ ἥλιος,
ντυμένος μ'ἄρματα χρυσᾶ μπροστὰς ἀπό 'να σπήλιο
καὶ δυὸ θεριὰ στὸ πλάι του ἤσανε σκοτωμένα
καὶ τὸ σπαθὶ καὶ τ'ἄρματα ὅλά 'σαν ματωμένα.
Σιμώνω, χαιρετῶ τονε, λέγω τ'ἀδέρφι «γειά σου»
εἶν'τά 'χεις κι ἀπονέκρωσες, ποῦ 'ν'ἡ λαβωματιά σου;
Μὲ τὸ δαχτύλι δυὸ βολὲς μοῦ'δειξε νὰ γνωρίσω
ποῦ βρίχνεται ἡ λαβωματιά, νὰ ἰδῶ, νὰ βοηθήσω.
Ὀλίγο κι οὐδὲ τίβοτσι τὸν εἶχε δακαμένο
φαίνεται θά 'χε τὸ θεργιὸ δόντι φαρμακεμένο..

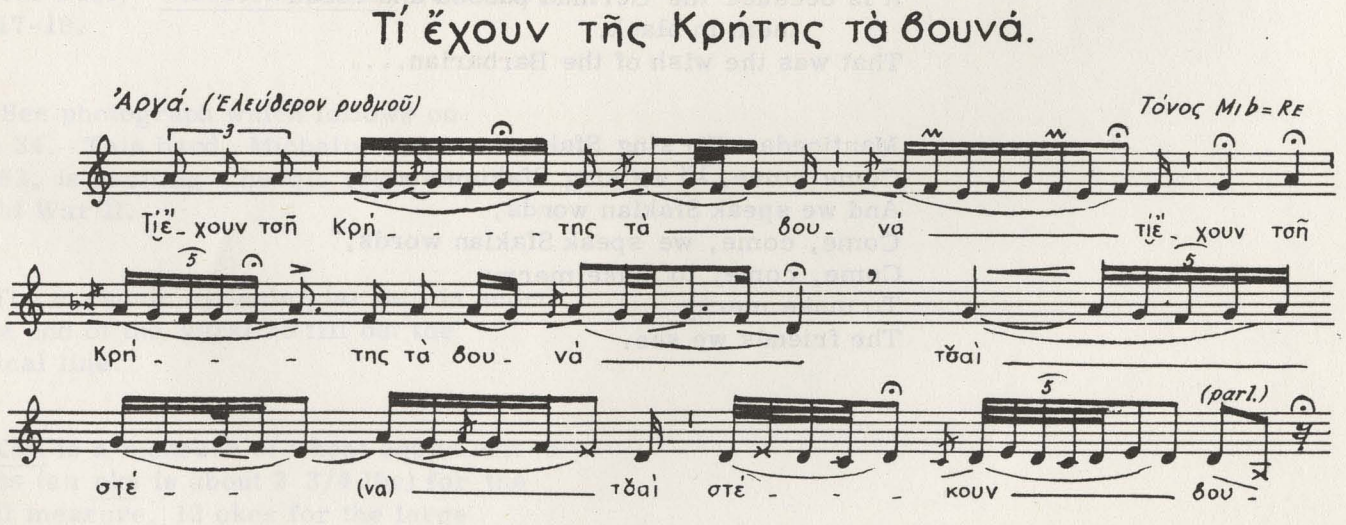
Do you know, my Aretousa - listen while I tell -
Where I found the ring I left you in the prison?
Two months ago, this very day, I found myself in a forest
And the beasts of Egripos [17] came out to devour me.
I fought wild beasts, and slew them
And with my hands I killed all the birds.
I barely survived and all the time I fought
To save myself from them, I had no hopes.
But fortune helped and the stars took pity on me.
And I survived unwounded and untouched.
I grew very thirsty in that battle,
Seeking to find water I barely reached a pine
And where I rested a fountain gurgled.
I drew near, and found the water in the opening of the rock.
I drank and was cooled and my thirst was gone
But then my sorrows did not end.
I sat to sleep near the fountain,
Then I heard the groans and moans of a sick man.
I entered through the branches near the fountain
To see a youth in beautiful array, bright as the sun,
Clad in golden armor in front of a cave.
And by his side two wild beasts lay dead,
His sword and all his armor smeared with blood.
I drew near, I greet him with brotherly words,
"What ails you, so close to death, where is your wound?"
Twice with his ring he showed me
Where the wound was, to see, to help.
The bite was small, scarcely to be seen.
It seems that the beast had a poisoned tooth.

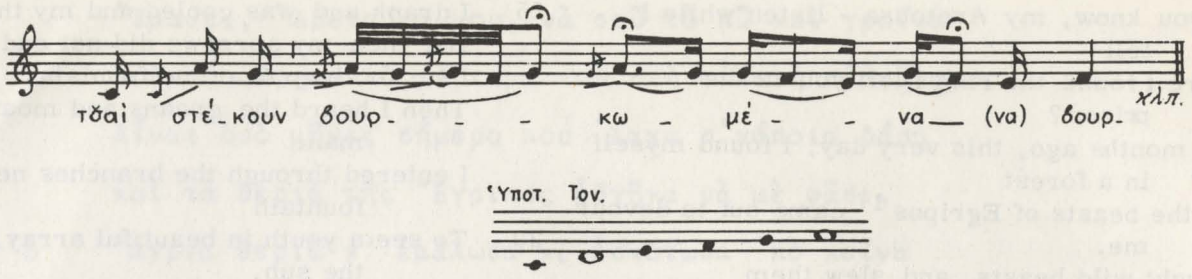
SIDE II, Band 5:

WHAT AILS THE MOUNTAINS OF CRETE.

Rizitiko. Crete.

This rizitiko song is sung to the basic melody and words of an older song. The song begins with a formulaic opening which is also found in klephtic ballads on the mainland. (Cf Polites, Eklogai, No. 53 B). After this opening there follows the circumstances of World War II. The men in the village of Askephou felt the urge to express something about the recent war events and the only way they could do it was to follow an older model on an older war. Here we see oral verse-making at its most elementary stage. Nothing is changed but the name and place. The song was recorded in the village of Askephou of Sfakia where the rizitika songs are popular.





Τί ἔχουν τσῆ Κρήτης τὰ βουνὰ τὰι στέκουν βουρκωμένα;
Μηδὲ βοριὰς τὰ πλάκωσε, νότος δὲν τὰ πετρώνει,
μὰ πέρασεν ὁ Γερμανὸς τὰι μαυροφόρεσέν τα.
Τί τό 'θελεν ὁ βάρβαρος.....

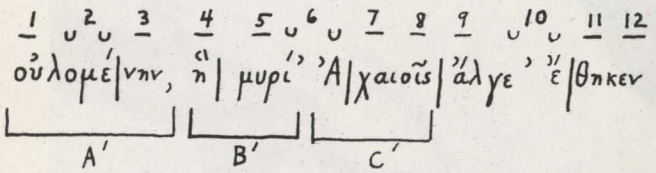
Γύρισμα: Σφακιανὰ τραγουδοῦμενε
ἔλα,ἔλα, Σφακιανὰ τραγουδοῦμενε
καὶ Σφακιανὰ μιλοῦμε
ἔλα, ἔλα, καὶ Σφακιανὰ μιλοῦμε·
ἔλα,ἔλα, γιὰ νὰ διασκεδάζωμε,
γιὰ νὰ διασκεδάζωμε
τεὶ φίλους ποὺ θωροῦμε.

What ails the mountains of Crete that stand
so lowering?
Neither the North wind blasts them, nor the
South wind freezes them;
It is because the German passed and robed
them in black,
That was the wish of the Barbarian....

Mantinada: We sing Sfakian songs,
Come come, [18] we sing Sfakian songs,
And we speak Sfakian words,
Come, come, we speak Sfakian words,
Come, come, to make merry,
To make merry
The friends we see.

1. I am indebted for the musical transcription of the texts in this album to Professor Spiros Peristeres, and for the dialect transcription of them to Dr. Demetrios Petropoulos, both members of the Folklore Archives of the Academy of Athens. The translation aims at grasping the physiognomy of the oral style, hence it is very literal and as stark as the text permits.

2. This is an extremely simplified account of the metrics of Homer. The hexameter is composed of short cola which are usually marked off by word-ends, called caesurae (A^1, B^1, C^1). The most common caesurae are found at positions 3, 5-1/2, and 8. The second line of the Iliad may serve as the basic, fundamental norm of the colometric organization of the Greek hexameter:



Cf. H. N. Porter, "The Early Greek Hexameter," Yale Classical Studies XII (1951), pp. 3-63.

3. Serbocroatian Heroic Songs, collected by Milman Parry, edited by Albert Bates Lord, Volume I (Cambridge and Belgrade, 1954).

4. Cf. J. A. Notopoulos, "The Warrior as an Oral Poet," Classical Weekly 46 (1952), pp. 17-19.

5. See photograph which follows on page 34. This bard, Michalis Polychronakes, age 83, is reciting a heroic poem about World War II.

6. The euphonic syllable yiar (ah) is added at the end of the verse to fill out the musical line.

7. Koti is a measure of wheat equivalent to 6 okes (an oke is about 2 3/4 lbs) for the small measure, 12 okes for the large measure.

8. This is an unknown place name.

9. This verse is metrically deficient in the Greek.

10. After the slaying of the Saracen the singer adds, by way of a side remark, this thought.

11. For the confusion in lines 135-154 see introduction.

12. He probably meant to say that from the grave of the girl there grew a lemon tree, from the grave of Digenes a cypress.

13. As in Homer, emotions and mental perceptions are located in specific parts of the body.

14. Being a rich merchant Daskaloyiannes wore a European hat in contrast to the tasseled kerchief worn by Cretans.

15. An island off the south coast of Crete.

16. Cf. Homer's "to be a spoil for dogs and all manner of birds," Iliad, I, 4-5.

17. The later name of Euboea.

18. Ela, ela is an expletive which helps to fill out the line and gives the improvising singer a pause to think of the next words.

THE CRETAN ORAL BARD,
MICHALIS POLYCHRONAKES,
AGE 83, RECITING AN
EPIC OF HIS OWN COMPOSITION
ON A THEME OF WORLD WAR
TWO.

GENERAL EDITOR, HAROLD COURLANDER
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