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Renegotiating ritual performance: the role of Greek musicians in dervish ceremonials during the Ottoman era**Abstract:**

This article explores the interaction between Greek musicians and Turkish whirling dervishes during the late-Ottoman Empire (18th-19th centuries). The Mevlevi order, in particular, used to employ ethnic musicians to accompany *sema* performances, where the whirling dervishes reached a state of trance. These events were held on Fridays and other Muslim holidays, and were accessible to the public, including women and children. This order, founded in the 13th century by Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, was more tolerant towards other religions as well as towards the use of music and dance in religious ceremonies. Mevlevi dervishes seem to have encouraged a close cooperation with Greek musicians, on the basis of the latter's mastery of musical notation, since Ottoman music was passed down by rote. One of the 18th-century Greeks, in particular, Petros of Peloponnese (southern Greece), is registered in dervish documents and monuments as "master of music" and *hirciz* (thief), a symbolic name, denoting the (wo)man who deprives evil from its power. According to contemporary sources, Petros managed to rescue the reputation of Turkish musicians in Istanbul, threatened by their Persian colleagues, by cooperating with dervishes. At his funeral, a group of dervishes followed the procession, and danced for him upon his grave, where they finally placed their sacred instrument (the *ney* flute). His name was eventually registered in their *libre d'or*, and engraved in a grave of a dervish lodge, a privilege granted to a selected few. This article will attempt to approach this case study from the perspective of performance theory, according to recent theoretical models.

Key words:

performance theory, greek musicians, turkish whirling dervishes

Introduction

The relations of the Ottoman Greeks with the Muslim monastic orders, so-called dervishes, go back to medieval times. One of the most important orders was the Mevlevi dervishes, who belonged to the Sunni (the orthodox) branch of Islam (the other being the Shiite one). The Mevlevi order was founded in the 13th century by Mevlana Celaleddin, so-called Rum-i or Greek (eastern-Roman). This suffix should be attributed to the fact that Mevlana was brought up in Konya (Byzantine Ikonion), the capital of the Seljuk state, where the sultans were called Rum Seljuk, being on friendly

terms with Christians¹. Sultan Kaykhusraw (1192-1211), for example, married a Christian lady², whilst sultan Alaeddin (1219-37) had been exiled in Istanbul (the Byzantine capital) for eleven years, during which time he studied the Christian faith³. Izeddin (1211-1220), one of Alaeddin's grandchildren from a Christian mother, in particular, is said to have adopted the Christian religion, which he bequeathed to his successors.

In this environment of religious osmosis, Mevlana conceived the idea of uniting all known religions through a common philosophical principle. Following other Muslim mystics of his time, so-called Sufis, he believed in one God, which, nevertheless, was conceived and interpreted in different ways by every culture. This idea can be epitomized in an old Muslim story under the exotic title “angur-uzum-inab-stafil”⁴. Four travelers, a Persian, a Turk, an Arab, and a Greek, were arguing over the spending of a single piece of money, which was all that they had among them. The Persian insisted they buy an *angur*, the Turk an *uzum*”, the Arab an *inab*”, and the Greek a *stafil*. At that point, another passenger, a linguist in profession, advised them to give him the coin, upon the promise that he would satisfy the desires of all of them. Then, he went to the shop of a fruit seller and bought four small bunches of grapes. Each of the four travelers recognized his favorite fruit, and realized that the disharmony had been due to his faulty understanding of the language of the other. According to the interpretation, the travelers are “the ordinary people of the world”, and “the linguist is the Sufi. People know that they want something, because there is an inner need existing in them. They may give it different names, but it is the same thing”.

In the same spirit, Mevlana, throughout his life, treated the Christians with tolerance, while accepting Jesus as a prophet, according to the Quran. He must also have had a fair knowledge of the Greek language, since he used Greek words in a poem of his that was written in Persian (the official literary language of Muslims at the time). According to a local tradition common to Greeks and Turks, he was on friendly terms with the Greek monks of St. Chariton Monastery, situated close to his lodge in Konya, due to a miracle whereby Mevlana's son was rescued from the cliff by an old man identified as the Christian Saint. According to the same story, every

¹See İsmail Çiftçioğlu & Ahmet Uysal, “The Nature of Relations between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Asia Minor during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries”, *History Studies*, Volume 3/3 (2011), pp. 97-112.

² He married a daughter of Manuel Maurozomes, son of Theodore Maurozomes and of an illegitimate daughter of the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos. Manuel Maurozomes fought on behalf of Kaykhusraw in 1205 and 1206.

³ See Scott Redford, “The Alaeddin Mosque in Konya Reconsidered”, *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 51 (1/2) (1991), pp. 54–74.

⁴ In Idries Shah, *The Sufis*, Jonathan Cape, London 1964, pp. 21-22.

year Mevlana's followers used to bring candle oil to this place in order to commemorate this event, and they prayed in the mosque within the monastery for a night every year⁵. On the other hand, some Muslims happened to convert to Christianity, such as Şems-i Tebrizî (1184-1247), who was baptised and took Holy Communion on his deathbed, whereby he was proclaimed a saint⁶.

Since then, quite a few Greeks of Asia Minor are documented to have been related to the Mevlevi sect, particularly during the period of Ottoman occupation (1453-1821). Mevlevi dervishes held regular performances in their convents, where they danced to the sound of Oriental music until they reached a state of trance, which was a sign of their union to God. Their dance was a rotation around their axis, which symbolised the rotation of the planets around the sun. However, the role of the accompanying musicians in their ceremonies was not always definable, since some of them were non Muslims and mere professionals, whereas others were reported to have been converted (albeit in secret).

A case in point

One of the Greeks, who is reported to have had relations with the Dervishes, was Petros of Peloponnese, a prolific composer and gifted cantor of the middle-18th century⁷. He was born in Kollines village (then of Laconia county, south-eastern Greece), and was brought up in a family of poor stock-farmers. When he was still young, he was spotted by a Greek merchant from Izmir (Gr. Smyrna), who noticed his early music inclination, and offered to take him along. In Izmir⁸, a cosmopolitan Ottoman port with a strong Greek community, Petros spent some years under the famous Greek cantor, Archdeacon Theodosios of Chios⁹. In 1764, he was already in Istanbul serving the Patriarchate as Assistant to the Precentor, and in 1770, he was elevated to the post of Chorister, where he remained until his death

⁵ See F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, vol. II, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1929, pp. 373-4.

⁶ See Mohamed el-Fers, *Mevlânâ*, Jan Mets Publishers, Amsterdam 1993.

⁷ The following account is based on my own research in his birthplace, the village of Kollines, in the autumn of 1997. See J. Plemmenos, *Ottoman Minority Musics: The Case of 18th-century Greek Phanariots*, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing 2010, pp. 81-7. Another source mentions as Petros' birthplace the Goranoi village near Sparta, not far from Kollines. See M. K. Hadjiyakoumes, *Cheirographa Ecclesiastikes mousikes 1453-1820* (Manuscripts of Church Music 1453-1820), Athens 1980, p. 95, fn. 249.

⁸ For the Greek presence in Izmir, see the account of the English traveller, R. Pocke (1745, p. 37).

⁹ Hadjiyakoumes 1980, p. 95, fn. 249

by plague in 1778¹⁰. In Greek music history, Petros is considered as the most important composer of church music in pre-revolutionary Greece, his works being still performed in religious services of the Christian Orthodox rite.

Apart from sacred music, Petros is the composer of some hundred secular songs with Greek text in Ottoman *makam* and *usul*, preserved in a number of manuscripts. These are love songs, their melody being written down in Byzantine notation, also used in church music. Petros is also mentioned by European sources, as, for example, by the French music historian, F. J. Fetis, who relates that he initiated the Interpreter to the Prussian Embassy in Istanbul, A. Murat, into Ottoman music theory¹¹. Several anecdotes handed down to us by 19th-century Greek writers suggest that Petros had intimate relations with the Dervish musicians of the Mevlevi sect. The Mevlevi Dervishes employed musicians from outside their lodges for their performances during which they themselves danced. Petros refers to the Dervishes in one of his love songs, but this may be taken as a metaphor (the heartbroken lover who resolves to become a dervish).

Petros may have come across the dervishes from his years in Izmir, where a sizable community of Greek Laconians had settled from the 13th century. These Greeks occupied the village of Sille, between Izmir and Konya (but closer to the latter), one of the few villages where the Greek language was spoken until 1922, when a population exchange between Greece and Turkey took place (following the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922). The reason for this peaceful coexistence was the aforementioned miracle witnessed by Mevlana at the nearby Christian monastery of St. Chariton (nowadays *AkMonastir* or White Monastery). Mevlana constructed a small mosque inside the monastery, and assigned to the Greek villagers the task of cleaning his own tomb. He also asked the Turks to respect the Greeks, a wish which was secured by several firmans from the Sultan.

It cannot be accidental that Sille has given its name to a series of ceremonial dances, most of which are danced by two persons facing each other. The central place occupied by dance in dervish ceremonies may have influenced the local tradition, although this remains to be proven. Yet, these dances are performed by both sexes, and there is a dance executed exclusively by women. Another dance is danced by men only, facing each other and carrying short swords. There is also another dance by women carrying wooden spoons (*koutalia*), and called after them. Unfortunately it is unknown what those dances represent, and the refugees of Sille could not

¹⁰ Patrinelis 1972, p. 163

¹¹ "[Murat] lié avec l'abbé Toderini [an Italian priest who wrote a treatise on Ottoman music] et avec Pierre Lampadario, premier chantre de l'eglise grecque a Constantinople, il fut initié par eux a la connaissance de la théorie de la musique turque". See F. J. Fetis, *Histoire générale de la musique*, vol. II, 1869, p. 262, fn. 1.

give more information about the meaning of the women dances and the movement of their hands, nor could they explain the men's sword dance.

The data

The most impressive story of Petros' relation with the Dervishes is recounted by the most authoritative Greek source of the 19th century¹², who was taken up by 20th-century Greek authors¹³:

“Three *hanendes*¹⁴ from Persia arrived at Istanbul, bringing with them a newly written composition, which they intended to perform in honour of the Sultan on the day of *Bayram*¹⁵. This caused a stir amongst both the court musicians and the whole body of musicians in Constantinople. In the end, they decided to consult Petros as to what to do. He then advised them to do as follows: the three Persian musicians were invited by the Dervishes of the Pera *tekke*¹⁶ to a banquet; the Dervishes were divided into three groups, according to their rank, and appeared at the banquet one after the other in succession. Each group kindly asked the musicians to sing for them from their repertoire along with their new composition. Meanwhile, Petros was secretly hidden in a suitable place, recording the new song on each occasion. He then arranged it as an instrumental piece for a *tambur*. Later on, Petros was seen coming to the banquet, as if he were a new arrival. All the fellow Dervishes greeted him with the words „hoca geliyor” (the master is coming), and they soon introduced him to the musicians as an outstanding musician. As soon as the new compo-

¹² See G. I. Papadopoulos, *Symbolai eis ten historian tes par' hemin ecclesiastikes mousikes kai hoi apo ton Apostolicon chronon akhri ton hemeron hemon akmasantes epifhanesteroi melodoi, hymnographoi, mousikoi, kai mousikodidascaloi* (Contributions to the History of our own Church Music and the most Prominent Composers prospered from the Apostolic Times till our Days), Athens 1890, pp. 320-21.

¹³ Most recently F. A. Oikonomou, *Byzantine Ecclesiastike mousike kai psalmodia:*

Historicomusicologike melete (Byzantine Church Music and Psalmody: An Historical and Musicological Study) I, Aigio 1992, pp. 100-3 (Greek), and B. Aksoy, *Avrupali Gezinlerin Gozuyle Osmanllarda Musiki* (Music in the Ottomans through the Eyes of European Gentlemen), Istanbul 1994, pp. 146-48 (Turkish).

¹⁴ *Hanende* is the Persian word for singer (Redhouse Turkish-English Lexicon 1968, p. 447).

¹⁵ Religious feast-day following the fast month of *Ramazan*, the ninth month of the Moslem year.

¹⁶ Dervish lodge.

sition had been performed once more in front of him, Petros became serious and observed that the song happened to be one of his compositions, and, undoubtedly, one of his pupils in Arabia or Persia might have taught them the song; to which, the Persian musicians reacted fiercely defending their position. Then, Petros took the arranged song out of his pocket, and played it on a *tambur*. An argument flared up between them, during which, one of the musicians, being aware of the Greeks' use of notation, realised what had happened and smashed Petros' *tambur*, whilst another one attempted to murder him. The Dervishes, then, taking advantage of these events, tied the Persians up hand and foot, and, after they had mocked them, imprisoned them in the *tekke*. After a short time, the Persian musicians were expelled from Istanbul as charlatans. Through this, the esteem and fame of the Constantinopolitan musicians got out, and the name of Petros was registered in the holy books of the Dervishes”.

We should bear in mind that the animosity between the Turkish and Persian musicians may be attributed to the different version of Islam each group professed: the Ottomans followed the traditional Sunni faith, whereas the Persians the Shiite one. We should also place the above incident in the historical context of Turkish-Persian relations, which were far from harmonious¹⁷. The Ottomans had been in conflict with the Persian Safavid dynasty since the early 16th century, followed by a century of border confrontation. Although in 1639 the two empires signed a treaty that recognized Iraq in Ottoman control, the struggle between the two empires had persisted until the 18th century. The first half of the 18th century saw no less than three Iranian wars (1723-5, 1732-6, 1743-46), followed, nevertheless, by a long period of peace (1747-68)¹⁸. The imprisonment and expulsion of the Persian musicians may be compared to the fate of Iranian merchants on Ottoman soil from the 16th century onwards. Quite often the importation of Iranian silk was prohibited, those silks already on territory were confiscated, and importing merchants were imprisoned¹⁹. Sometimes, Iranian traders were suspected of being sheiks of the Safavid order in disguise, and hence were not given access.

However, towards mid-18th century, shah Nadir (1736-47) inaugurated a new religious policy that favoured Sunnism as a mean of undermining

¹⁷ See Ernest Tucker, “The Peace Negotiations of 1736: A conceptual turning point in Ottoman-Iranian relations”, *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, vol. 20 (Spring 1996), pp. 16-37.

¹⁸ See Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991, pp. 238-247.

¹⁹ See Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World around it*, I.B. Tauris, London 2006, pp. 138-140.

the power of the Shiite religious clergy. The story with dervishes occurred during the reign of the next shah Karim Khan, who reigned in Iran between 1750 and 1779, and is the founder of the Zand Dynasty. He never styled himself as shah or king, but instead used the title *Vakil e-Ra'aayaa* (Representative of the People). To this day, he has a reputation as one of the most just and able rulers in Iranian history. A wealth of tales and anecdotes portray Karim Khan as a compassionate ruler, genuinely concerned with the welfare of his subjects²⁰. The Persian musicians, therefore, may have come to Istanbul as “ambassadors” of good will, to dispel mutual fear of distrust.

The fact that Petros’ ethnic identity (a Christian Greek) did not deter the dervishes as well as the sultan to accept him as their instrument should be attributed to other historical circumstances that favoured members of ethnic minorities. In 1740 a rebellion broke out in Istanbul by militants, who had gained power against the sultan since the Patrona rebellion of 1730²¹. However, in the 1740 rebellion the Sultan armed the non-Muslim guilds to assist him in suppressing the rebellion, something they finally achieved. The rebellion was suppressed by the aid of the trade unions, many of whom were Christians and Jews. In return, the ethnic communities were to prosper in the latter part of the eighteenth century, albeit with the favour of the Sultan.

Another indirect evidence of Petros’ association with the dervishes comes from the following amusing anecdote²²:

“One day, the Sultan set out from his palace in Istanbul, and went to the mosque in Balik Pazar (Yeni Cami), where he dined and spent his night at the mosque’s pavilion. By chance, that very evening, Petros went to pay a visit to the Turkish *muezzin*²³ of the mosque, by whom he was invited to stay for dinner. During the dinner, they spoke of the *selak* (recitation) melody which was executed on a certain *makam*; Petros undertook to chant it on a *makam* in the early morning, though not over the rooftops of the minaret. The *muezzin*, instead, to benefit from his art, and putting aside any religious prejudices, obliged him to chant the new melody on the minaret. After doing this, Petros went away to the Phanar (the Greek Patriarchate). The following morning, the Sultan wanted to know who the composer of

²⁰ See John Malcolm, *The History of Persia*, vol. II, London 1829, pp. 78-9.

²¹ See Robert W. Olson, “The Ottoman Empire in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century and the Fragmentation of Tradition: Relations of the Nationalities (Millet), Guilds (Esnaf) and the Sultan, 1740-1768”, *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 17, Issue 1/4 (1976 - 1977), pp. 72-77.

²² Quoted in Papadopoulos 1890, p. 322.

²³ Mosque official who gives the call to prayer.

the new *selak* melody was After getting the news, he got very angry, and ordered two public prosecutors to go to the Greek Patriarchate to inform the Patriarch of the incident, then arrest the trespasser, and prepare him for a trial. During much of the interrogation, Petros remained silent and pretended to be mentally deranged, by looking around and observing the dimensions of the courtroom. Suddenly, he opened his mouth, and, uttering the following words “what a nice place for someone to play with walnuts”, he jumped into the middle of the courtroom, and took from his pocket some walnuts, with which he began to play whilst prattling and insulting those trying to stop him. At this sight, everybody present said: *vay, zavallı, yazık divane olmus* (that is, “alas, poor him, what a pity, he went crazy”)²⁴. So, the court decided to send him to the national psychiatric asylum at Egri-Kapi, where he remained for forty days; then, he was released to go back to take up his duties”.

The same Greek source maintains that during his sojourn in the asylum, Petros composed one of his masterpieces of church music, which he called “cherry-ish”, for he wrote it using the cherry juice that was provided for him to drink, after he was refused a pen and ink.

The sultan mentioned in the same story was Mustafa III, an energetic and perceptive ruler, who ruled between 1757 and 1774, and sought to modernize the army and state machinery along the lines of the European Powers. Thus, he recruited foreign generals to reform the infantry and artillery, but he also founded Academies for Mathematics, Navigation and the Sciences. He was well educated and talented, and an excellent poet, his poetry being written under the pseudonym of Djikhangir. He was very religious, and merciful and kind hearted. Mustafa rebuilt almost the whole of Istanbul after a disastrous earthquake, and erected the Fatih Cami (Mosque of the Conqueror) and the Eyub Sultan Mosque.

Petros’ relations with the Dervishes do not seem to have ended with the incidents of the Persian musicians and the muezzin. When Petros died, the Dervishes gathered from all the lodges of Istanbul, and asked permission from the Greek Patriarch, as a sign of respect to the late master, to play on their flutes for him during the procession. The patriarch replied thus: “I empathise with your great sorrow caused by the death of the late master; so, I don’t mean to reject your request, but, in order not to offend the Sublime Porte, I beg all of you to follow the procession in silence, and pay your respects on the grave”. The dervishes accepted the kind words of the patriarch, and followed the funeral until the Egri kapi Orthodox ceme-

²⁴ Papadopoulos gives both the Greek and Turkish version (in Greek transliteration).

tery. As soon as the corpse was buried, one of the Great Dervishes descended to the grave and, holding, like a flaming candle, a *ney* in his hands, said tearfully in Turkish: “Oh, late master, will you accept from your orphaned pupils this last offer, in order to accompany your hymns with the angels in Paradise”. And, after he had placed the instrument in the deceased’s bosom, he returned full of tears²⁵.

A piece of indirect evidence also confirms the validity of the anecdotes: there was an inscription of Petros’ name preserved until the Great War on a tomb of the Dervish lodge in Galata district, Istanbul²⁶. The Galata tekke (*mevlevihane*) was founded in 1491 by an Ottoman grandee from the palace of Sultan Beyazit II. The tekke’s first sheikh (leader) was Muhammed Semaî Sultan Divanî, a descendant of Mevlâna Jelaleddin Rumî. The building was burned in 1765, but was restored in 1796 and was extensively restored during the 19th and the 20th centuries. Next to famous sheikhs, a number of foreign converts are also buried there, such as Kumbaracıbaşı Ahmet Paşa, better known as Claude Alexandre, Comte de Bonneval (1675-1747), a French nobleman who entered the sultan’s service as a bombardier general, and Ibrahim Müteferrika (1674-1745), an ethnic Hungarian Unitarian from Transylvania who established the first moveable printing press in the Ottoman Empire in the 1720s. Therefore, the mere fact that Petros’ name has survived suggests that it was considered important by the Dervishes.

A theoretical framework

Petros’ interaction with the dervishes (as well as the official Muslim bureaucracy) may be placed in the context of modern performance theories. For the purpose of this study, a point of departure will be Richard Schechner’s theory regarding the process of performance from ritual to theatre and back²⁷. Schechner claims that ritual and theatre are two facets of performance that are not mutually exclusive, since elements of the one are to be found in the other. Moreover, when they overlap, they give birth to theatrical or ceremonial masterpieces (as happened in the classical age, the Elizabethan period, and modern drama). In this light, the Dervish performance may be called a ceremony, since, albeit ritual in essence, it con-

²⁵ Papadopoulos 1890, p. 323.

²⁶ The graves of some of the *tekke*’s poets and musicians were contained in two wooden appendages in the entrance of the lodge, which were demolished around 1941, the tombs being relocated. See Raymond Lifchez, “The Lodges of Istanbul”, *The Dervish lodge: architecture, art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*, R. Lifchez (ed.), University of California Press, 1992, p. 106.

²⁷ See Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (revised and expanded edition), Routledge Classics, London and New York 2003, pp. 112-169.

tained theatrical elements. It is reminded that Dervish performances were open to the public, regardless of religious or ethnic origin. So, it seems that the public acted as spectators in a theatre rather than participants in a ritual. On the other hand, the Dervish performance cannot be said to be a theatrical performance as such, since it involved faith and immersion of the participants in the action.

Thus, this sort of performance can be thought to occupy a middle ground between ritual and theatre, a space known in other cultures too (mostly in modern times), under the name of ceremonial performance²⁸. Yet, in the context of Petros' interaction with the Dervishes, this sort of performance seems to undergo certain stages of transformation, which can be summarised as a process from ritual to theatre and back. In the first episode with the expulsion of the Persian musicians, Petros seems to have functioned as an actor, impersonating a) the "great master" of the dervishes, and b) the author of the Persian composition, neither of which was his real identity. In this sense, the dervish ceremonial of offering dinner to the Persians, and listening to their work, was transformed into a parody and a cheat. The poor Persian musicians became the reluctant spectators in their own drama, orchestrated by the dervishes and Petros.

The "theatricality" of Petros' performance can be gauged by the architecture and the character of the interior of the *tekke*. The interior of the dervish lodges was divided into two main parts, the courtyard, also called kitchen, and the cells. In the former, the novices were trained, hence the term "kitchen", metaphorically referring to spiritual preparation (there was also another proper kitchen for food). Yet, the dervishes responsible for the kitchen, i.e. the cook and cauldron master, were also the masters of the novices. The courtyard was considered a sacred place, because it was there that the morning gathering of the dervishes took place, after the prayers in the mosque. Dervishes, headed by the sheikh, after kissing the ground, sat down in silence, their head bowed down. After they were offered bread and coffee, they began their meditation (*murakabe*), by putting their hands on their thighs. After a short prayer, they kissed the ground and went away²⁹.

It was not only the courtyard, but also the dining room that has been appropriated by Petros. The supper (*sumat*) was part of the Mevlevi ritual, and served only at noon, except Friday, when it was offered in the evening too. After the signal, the dervishes entered the kitchen (other than the metaphorical one) in hierarchical order and ate on a sofa. The sheikh opened the supper, by drinking water and dipping a piece of bread in the salt. After they had finished, they ate salt, and the sheikh offered a prayers of thanks. After-

²⁸ See, for example, Jill Drayson Sweet, "Ritual and Theatre in Tewa Ceremonial Performances", *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (May, 1983), pp. 253-269.

²⁹ See Raymond Lifchez, "The Lodges of Istanbul", 1992, p. 112.

wards, they sat on their seats and rinsed their hands in a bowl of water brought for them by the novices. They ended with coffee, and withdrew, after the signal of the sheikh. The only part of the lodge accessible to the public was the place where the dervishes performed their *sema* or dance ceremony (*semahane*), and is situated opposite the entrance. These performances took place on Fridays or other holidays of Mevlevi traditions.

In the second incident with the muezzin, Petros is the protagonist in two sorts of performance: a musical one, at the top of the minaret as a reciter, and social one, in the court during his trial. In middle-eastern tradition, recitation is seen as an act of devotion, the reciter's skill being considered greater than the singer's, because he performed within the stricter limitations imposed by the text³⁰. The reason behind the muezzin's invitation to Petros can be understood by the fact that the recitation should be new every time with no imitation or memorization. The art of melodic improvisation was then the mark of a performer's talent, and still remains an essential element of recitation. At the same time, there is still some resistance to the forces which encourage musicality in recitation, for it is recognized that this very musicality may undermine the proper intent of recitation by transforming the act of devotion into mere musical entertainment.

Petros' behaviour in the courtroom may, at a first glance, be taken as an attempt to deceive the judges, but, if considered in the context of his Dervish-related background, it can be given a new meaning. This is indicated by an anecdote about the great medieval Dervish-master Bayazid³¹. When a man came to Bayazid and asked for a remedy for his selfishness, the master gave him the following advice: "Fill a nose-bag full of walnuts and go to the market place. There cry out, 'A walnut for every boy who slaps me!' Then make your way to the court where the doctors of law are in session". On hearing of this instruction, the man was disappointed, and asked for another remedy, but the master answered that "this is the only method". This may simply be a coincidence, but one cannot overlook the common themes (the walnut playing and the courtroom), which suggest that Petros might have followed the "only method" for self-humiliation. Moreover, the fact that he appeared at court with a pocket full of walnuts suggests that he had prepared for his "walnut-show".

The practical aspect of Petros's performance at court was, of course, to save himself and (possibly) the muezzin, who might have been considered his "accomplice" (although this is not included in the story). In this light, his performance can be seen as a continuation and an accentuation of his

³⁰ See Kristina Nelson, "Reciter and Listener: Some Factors Shaping the Mujawwad Style of Qur'anic Reciting", *Ethnomusicology*, vol. 26, No. 1 (1982), pp. 41-7.

³¹ Quoted in Idries Shah, *The Sufis*, Jonathan Cape, London 1964, pp. 151-52.

previous one with the Persians in terms of deceit, albeit before a new audience. Again, the spectators gather without their will (although it is the judge's job to gather and give justice), to witness (this time) Petros' drama. A trial may be not a performance per se, but has theatrical (as well as ritual) elements in terms of distribution of roles, and obedience to a protocol. Yet, the theatrical elements seem to supersede the ritualistic ones, since Petros acts on his own (unless advised to do so by the muezzin), and out of context (be that the Patriarchate or the dervish lodge).

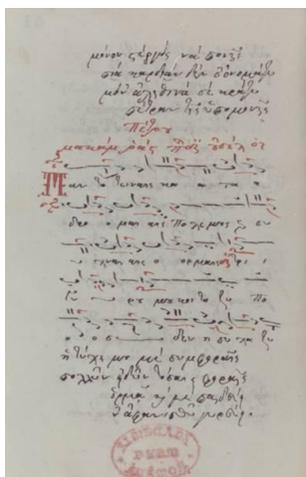
With regard to the third incident at Petros' funeral, things seem to come back to where they began: the deceased may be the protagonist for the last time in his life) but cannot act. The dervishes, for their part, are not acting, in the sense of impersonating a character, but just doing, being themselves, and performing their rites. In this sense, their performance comes closer to a ritual, which may not involve dancing (as happens in their ceremonies) but music (playing the flute). They might have danced for him, had they had the opportunity or license from the Greek Patriarch. Furthermore, their performance on Petros' grave becomes "ritualised", as being the outcome of their own choice – they gather on their own will and almost spontaneously, as soon as they get the news of Petros' death. So, Petros' interaction with the dervishes comes to a final close: from a theatrical performance in the dervish lodge and the court to a ceremonial on his grave.

The same incidents raise the issue of minority influence on a majority, a phenomenon studied in the context of social psychology. The impact is considered to be "a direct function of the strength, immediacy and number of people" between the opposing groups. Greeks were an ethnic minority in the Ottoman Empire, who had gained power from the late 17th century (by assuming the posts of dragoman and the prince of the Romanian lands), shared the same land with their overlords (the Turks), and in some places outnumbered them (since they had existed prior to them). Petros, in particular, may be taken as belonging to neither the majority nor the minority, but to a third category classified as independent. In this situation, a single individual may feel social influence from two perspectives: a) as the lone recipient of forces generated by the other group members, in which case the total impact he experiences should be a function of the majority's impact minus that of the minority, and b) as a member of either the majority or the minority, the total impact he experiences being a function of the other subgroup's impact divided by that of his own subgroup³².

³² Sharon Wolf & Bibb Latané, "Conformity, Innovation and the Psychological Law", in Serge Moscovici, Gabriel Mugny, Eddy van Avermaet, *Perspectives on minority influence*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 210-13.



Petros of Peloponnesus (1730-1778), miniature, Musical Anthology, Ms
Θ178, f. 2v, 1815, Great Lavra Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece.



One of Petros' secular songs on *makam Rast* and *usul Sofyan*, Ms. Gr. 784, c.
1815, Romanian Academy, Bucharest.

Džon G. Plemenos

Ponovno utvrđivanje ritualne izvedbe: uloga grčkih muzičara u derviškim ceremonijalima u otomanskom periodu

Ovaj članak istražuje interakciju između grčkih muzičara i turskih vrtećih derviša u periodu poznog Osmanskog carstva (XVIII-XIX vek). Red mevlevija je posebno bio sklon da upošljava muzičare različitog etničkog porekla da prate izvođenje *sema*, gde vrteći derviši dostižu stanje transa. Ovi događaji su se odvijali petkom ili o drugim muslimanskim praznicima i bili su dostupni za javnost, uključujući žene i decu. Ovaj red, koji je u XIII veku osnovao Mevlana Dželaludin Rumi je bio tolerantniji prema drugim religijama kao i prema upotrebi muzike i plesa u religijskim ceremonijama. Čini se da su mevlevijski derviši podsticali blisku saradnju sa grčkim muzičarima, zbog toga što su Grci dobro vladali notnim sistemom, dok se otomanska muzika generacijama prenosila i savladavala po sluhu. Jedan Grk iz XVIII veka, Petros sa Peloponeza (jug Grčke), posebno je zabeležen u derviškim dokumentima i spomenicima kao „muzički maestro” i *hirsiz* (lopov), simboličko ime koje označava ženu ili muškarca koji imaju sposobnost da zlo liše moći. Prema modernim izvorima, Petros je saradnjom sa dervišima, uspeo da sačuva reputaciju turskih muzičara u Istanbulu od njihovih persijskih kolega. Na njegovoj sahrani, grupa derviša je pratila procesiju i plesala za njega na njegovom grobu, gde su konačno položili svoj sveti instrument (frula *nej*). Njegovo je ime naposletku upisano u njihovu zlatnu knjigu i ugravirano na grobu derviške kuće (tekije), što je privilegija koju je imalo malo odabranih ljudi. Ovaj članak će pokušati da pristupi studijama ovog slučaja iz perspektive teorije performansa, prema novim teorijskim modelima.

Ključne reči: teorija performansa, grčki muzičari, turski vrteći derviši