

CHAPTER 16

Heroin, cocaine and morphine in rebetiko song

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In the text that follows an attempt is made to present the rebetiko songs in which heroin, cocaine and morphine are mentioned.

Rebetiko song, a rather vague term, sometimes broad and sometimes limited, depending on the optic that is adopted, can be characterised as the popular song of the urban centres of Greece but also of the cities where Greeks lived overseas, such as Smyrna, Constantinople, Alexandria etc, as well as the big cities of the United States where Greek immigrants lived.

Rebetiko is also popular song of which a large part, mainly pre-war, is based on the musical modes [*dhromoi*] of Ionia, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. More generally, we might call it “Eastern” music to distinguish it from “Western” or “European” tonal music. In terms of style, one can distinguish between the Asia Minor Smyrna style, whose characteristic instruments are violin, santouri, qanun, etc, and the Piraeus style, with bouzouki, baglama and guitar. This classification is not absolute, but it demarcates the main trends in popular music in the first half of the twentieth century.

One characteristic of Greek popular song in this period is the frequent description of events and situations of the time, and of everyday life. One could say that popular song is the history of Greece written in another way. There are plenty of songs to confirm this, as in the following examples:

- “Miss Greece” – 1929 – P. Vaïdirli – For the institution of beauty contests that were starting then.
- “The crisis” – 1934 – K. Roukounas – On the occasion of the global economic crisis of 1929-32.
- “On our hero Jim Londos” – 1934 – About a famous wrestler of Greek origin.
- “We lost Venizelos” – 1936 – S. Pantelidis, K. Karipis – For the death of Venizelos.
- “50 Voronoff” – 1933 – G. Kamvysi – About the Russian doctor S. Voronoff and his experiments on sexual rejuvenation.
- “You came, our king” – 1935 – M. Vamvakaris – For the return of George II.
- “The bomb” – 1946 – K. Roukounas – On the occasion of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- “The flood” – 1935 – M. Vamvakaris – For the flood of 1935 in Athens–Piraeus.

And of course, there are dozens of songs that refer to cities, to districts of Athens and Piraeus, to particular kinds of jobs, to phenomena such as migration, poverty, etc.

In the Greek discography of 78 rpm records, from the first decade of the century to 1960, about 12,500 rebetika songs are recorded. About 400 of these songs relate to illegal substances, mainly hashish. From my research so far I have identified 13 that mention or refer to *preza* [“pinch”] – heroin, cocaine or morphine. There is another song by Minos

Matsas, “Koutsavaki”, recorded in 1935, where cocaine is mentioned. Because I do not have complete data, I am not including it in this presentation. It should be noted that similar songs can also be found in European-style Greek music, the total number of which is close to 100, most of them about hashish but also a small number about *preza*.

The word “*preza*” [heroin/cocaine] has an Italian root and defines quantity; it is a “pinch”, and indicates the amount of powder that one can hold between index finger and thumb (a pinch of salt, pepper, etc). In the interwar years and later, in Greece, the word *preza* referred to some substance that was taken through the nose. This was because many used snuff, which was used in a similar way. In some of the songs presented below, there is an ambiguity as to what particular substance is meant by *preza*. It is likely that the songwriters themselves did not have direct knowledge of the subject, or that they were simply reproducing the myths and the mystery that surrounded certain substances in the minds of the population at large.

Addiction, a phenomenon with many causal factors, has a deeply social character and its origin in Greece dates back to the first decades of the twentieth century. One-sided approaches to addiction, when they are not intentional, are due to a large extent to the dehistoricisation of the phenomenon, and to ignorance or omissions regarding its development over time. “Narcotics” did not appear suddenly, as some kind of “scourge”. They have existed in different forms for thousands of years. Under specific social-cultural conditions they became a vehicle of dependence. The non-understanding of the dynamics of the phenomenon often results in legal or medical (psychiatric) explanations of addiction, and legal- or medical-based proposals for dealing with it.

Popular art, and in our case rebetiko song, is one of the few reliable sources that we have for guiding us through the past and the evolution of drug dependence in Greece. It should be noted that perhaps we have the privilege to be the only country that has such a large number of folk songs about substances, a resource that unfortunately has not been accorded sufficient attention.

Researchers have proposed that rebetiko was a unifying song. Indeed, its sounds were familiar to the ear of the majority of Greeks. Rebetiko could be sung by many people together in company, so it was a collective process and thus by extension it had a unifying character. Rebetiko, even though it was developed in dark periods of Greek history (World War I, the Asia Minor disaster, the Metaxas dictatorship, World War II, the Civil War) never worked divisively among the Greek people. There are countless examples that confirm this. Despite the fact that the songwriters had their own points of view on things, here too rebetiko worked as a unifying force, and it has repeatedly been suggested that it helped in the easing of tensions, especially during the Civil War. Ultimately, rebetiko was not just a unifying song, it was song for everyone, because its creators did not write it just for themselves and their environment. Rebetiko song was addressed to the great majority of Greeks inside and outside Greece.

Perhaps this was the reason that rebetiko was (directly or indirectly) persecuted, slandered and distorted. Characterisations such as: “Turkish”, “oriental”, “marginal”, “of the Lumpen”, “of the sub-proletariat”, “of the prison”, “of the hashish smokers”, “of the criminals”, “of the outcasts”, “of the uneducated”, “of the underworld”, “of the *daïdhes*”, “depressing”, “defeatist”, “pessimistic”, etc. were used regularly, not necessarily maliciously, by many sides. This form of popular song – the rebetiko – was perhaps one of the defence mechanisms of the people against the efforts made to divide and lock them into opposing camps. The universality of the rebetiko is an additional guarantee of the reliability of the information that it provides for us.

Closing this brief introduction, one more important element should be taken into account, and that is the imposition of censorship by the Metaxas dictatorship in 1937. Unfortunately, this measure transformed various elements of rebetiko, as regards lyrics and music, and of course it deprives us of valuable information we might otherwise have

had. If one considers that the great recording activity in Greece began with the establishment of the Columbia record production plant in Rizoupoli in 1931 and the recording of bouzouki songs in 1932, it was in the five years 1931-36 that there was the possibility of free expression for the creators of rebetiko. The songs presented below are precisely from that period.

In what follows I present the texts of twelve songs, together with discographic details, information regarding songs and performers, and general observations about the social and historical context.

SONG No. 1: **O NIKOKΛAKIAS** – 1933

by Vangelis Papazoglou; performed by Stelios (Stellakis) Perpiniadis

Μάγκες τρέχανε στην πιάτσα .
Κι έκαναν πολλά στραπάτσα.
Βάρεσαν το Νικοκλάκια
Το δειλό το κοχλαράκια

Λένε πως ο Νικοκλάκιας
Πριν να γίνει κοχλαράκιας.
Ήτανε κι αυτός μαγγιώρος
Τουφατζής και κασαδόρος

Σ' έφαγαν ρε Νικοκλάκια
Μήτσος, Κώτσος τα τσιράκια
Γιατί σου 'δειχναν τη πίτα
Και σου κρύβαν τη μανίτα

Αχ, ρε Νικολή,
Φίλε μερακλή.
Που σε βάρεσαν οι μάγκες.
Για να κάνουν ματσαράγγες.

Γειά σου Στελλάκη

NIKOKLAKIAS

The *manghes* turned up in the market.
And they created havoc.
They killed Nikoklakia,
The wretched *kochlarakias*

They say that Nikoklakias
Before he became a *kochlarakias*
Was also a *magioros*
and a *toufatzis* and a *kasadoros*.

They ate you, Nikoklakias
Mitsos, Kotsos, the stooges,
Because they showed you the *pitta*
And they hid from you the *manita*

Ah, Nikoli,
Good-times friend.
The *manghes* killed you.
They were up to their dirty tricks.

Clip: <https://youtu.be/3Eso2TQBbDk>

Vangelis Papazoglou was born in Durbali, Smyrna in 1896 or 1897 and died of tuberculosis in Kokkinia in 1943. In the period 1933-36 he recorded 23 songs in his name in 36 performances, as well as 5 *amanadhes*. It should be noted that in this period it was not a common phenomenon to re-issue songs, which indicates that Papazoglou had a special presence in popular song.

His work is characterised by unique and original melodies. In terms of subject matter, it deals with particular aspects of social life with sensitivity, subtlety and humour. Without expressing fixed opinions, he allows the listeners to take the message as they wish. The following songs are indicative of his subject matter.

“Οι λαχανάδες” [The thieves] (1934), about pickpockets.

“Καλόγρια” [The nun] (1936), about the decision to take the monastic life.

“Σαν εγύριζ' απ' την Πύλο” [When I came back from Pylos] (1936),
about being in prison.

“Το παιδί του δρόμου” [The street kid], about a street kid.

“Αν ήμουν άνδρας” [If I was a man] (1933), with reference to female homosexuality.

Papazoglou, a sensitive and proud man, publicly refused to have his songs checked by “uneducated” censors. Thus, from 1937 onwards, none of his dozens of songs (at least 70) were recorded in his name. With the German invasion of Greece in 1941 he left the stage. He didn't want to be having fun while his homeland was under foreign occupation. In this way Papazoglou mourned the enslavement of his country to the Germans.

Stelios (Stellakis) Perpiniadis (Tinos 1899 – Athens 1977) is one of the greatest popular singers of this period, who collaborated with all the well-known songwriters before and after the war. He himself wrote music and played the guitar. In his discography he had about 400 songs, a remarkable number.

In “O Nikoklakias” [above] Papazoglou describes an incident featuring an addict (Nikoklakias is a diminutive of Nikos, emotionally charged with regret; he could have said “poor Nikolakis”). Kostos and Mitsos the *tsirakia* killed the addict in question. The song does not mention the reasons that caused the murder; rather it focuses on the result of Nikoklakias's addiction and the bad situation he had fallen into because of it.

Nikoklakias was a *kochlarakias* (from *kochliarios*, the spoon used by drug addicts who inject drugs). Before becoming addicted he was a *magioros* (Latin root – master, maestro, great), a *toufatzis* (*toufa* meaning prison – someone who had been in prison and knew how to face difficulties – we should bear in mind the mythology that surrounded people who had been in prison), and a *kasadoros* (a safecracker, a job that requires skill, dexterity, etc.). But now, as a drug addict, he is a weak person. He does not have the strength to deal with difficult situations. He also doesn't have the acumen to pick up on the “*manita*” (trick) that the two stooges were using to kill him. (“The *pitta* and the *manita*” is an expression analogous to the cheese and the lentil – “He saw the cheese but did not see the lentil”.) Nikoklakias seems to be accepted as a *toufatzis* and safebreaker, but not as a drug addict. In the refrain he is referred to not as Nikoklakias but as Nikoli, a diminutive that expresses sympathy.

SONG No. 2: Ο ΛΑΘΡΕΜΠΙΟΡΑΣ – Zeibekiko – 1935

by Vangelis Papazoglou – performed by Stelios Perpiniadis

Τα κονομούσα έξυπνα και πάντοτε στη ζούλα.
Γιατ' ήμουν λαθρέμπορος και τα πουλούσα ούλα

Τί όμορφα που πέρναγα, με 'κείνο το μαυράκι.
Μα η πρέζα μου τα πότισε, τα σωθικά φαρμάκι

Για είκοσι γραμμάρια, που μ' έκαναν πιαστό.
Μ' ένα χρονάκι μ' έστειλαν, στην Αίγινα σκαστό.

Και σα να μη καλάρεσε, στον πρόεδρο το φίλο.
Μου 'χει και παραθέρισμα, στην Πύλο.

Γειά σου Στελλάκη!
Γειά σου Μαργαρώνη με τις πενιές σου!

THE SMUGGLER

I did plenty of smart stuff, and always on the quiet.
Because I was a smuggler, and I sold all kinds of things

What a great time I had with that black stuff [hashish].
But the heroin sowed poison in my guts.

For twenty grams, which got me caught.
For a year they sent me to shitty Aegina prison.

And as if that wasn't enough, our friend the judge
Also gave me a six-month vacation in Pylos.

Yiasou, Stellakis!
Yiasou, Margaroni with your good picking!

Clip: https://youtu.be/3Np_v7EfTNs

In this song we have the self-presentation of a smuggler. He talks about his activity before he became addicted, as well as how much fun he was having with “the black stuff”, unlike what he’s doing now: “But heroin filled my innards with poison”. He then describes the persecution he now faces due to drug trafficking. And here the effects of using heroin are demonstrated. As in “Nikoklakias”, the songwriter tries to act as a deterrent to the use of “hard” drugs. The role of the hashish smuggler and user seems to be acceptable, but not the role of the addict or the heroin smuggler. After all, not only in Greece but throughout the eastern Mediterranean smugglers were respected and admired by the common people, since they supplied them with cheap basic necessities, such as food and clothing.

The situation described in the song is not so pleasant. So the creator makes sure to lighten the mood in the last stanza, dealing with the whole matter jokingly. The six-month imprisonment in Pylos, imposed by the judge, is called a “vacation” (*paratherisma*).

SONG No. 3: **ΤΟ ΠΑΡΑΠΟΝΟ ΤΟΥ ΝΤΕΡΒΙΣΗ** – Zeibekiko – 1935

by Stelios Perpiniadis – performed by Stelios Perpiniadis

Ο αργιλές, το τουμπεκί, η πρέζα, το χασίσι.
Με κάναν και βαρέθηκα την τωρινή μου ζήση.

Ο αργιλές ειν’ βάσανο, το τουμπεκί μαράζι.
Η πρέζα τρώει λεβεντιές, το μαύρο σε χτικιάζει.

Γειά σου αγόρι μου Στελλάκη !

’Οποιος φουμάρει στην αρχή το ’χει για ασικλήκι.
Μα σα(ν) ριζώσει στη(ν) καρδιά, γίνεται θεριακλήκι.

Και θεριακλής σαν θα γενεί αρχίζει να πρεζάρει.
Γιατί μ’ αυτή του φαίνεται, πώς πιο καλά γουστάρει.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE DERVISH

The *narghile*, the *toubeki*, the heroin, the hashish.
They made me so that I'm tired of my current life.

The *narghile* is a suffering, the *toubeki* is disease.
The heroin eats proud men, the black takes you over.

Yiasou, Stellakis my boy!

Anyone who smokes at the beginning is just a dope-smoker.
But once it takes root in his heart, he becomes a monster.

And when he becomes a *theriaklis*, he starts on the heroin.
Because with heroin it seems to him that life has a better taste.

Clip: <https://youtu.be/CFBA2UpFLKc>

This song is officially credited as the creation of Stelios Perpiniadis. But we know that it

was written by Vangelis Papazoglou, who gave it to Perpiniadis. This also happened with other songwriters, who often gave songs to their collaborators, mainly to singers or to friends and relatives, as a sign of love and appreciation or for other reasons. This was also done to give people a small income by collecting the writer's share of the royalties.

In this song, the creator, in the first person, first expresses his tiredness that arises from the use of substances. “I’ve done it and I’m tired of my current life”, and indirectly the desire to break away from it. A similar expression can be found in the songs of “O xemangas” (1935), where the singer states in the first person “I’m tired of the *narghile*, I’m tired of the black”, and in “Kalogria”, “I’m tired of the world anymore”, “The complaint of the dervish” and “The *xemangas*” are the only rebetiko songs that have a directly deterrent position – the first against all illegal substances and the second against hashish (the *xemangas* is one who stops living like a *mangas*, the ex-mangas).

Papazoglou's songs “O Nikoklakias”, “O lathremboras”, “The complaint of the dervish”, “O xemangas” and “Manghes mou komfortouste” have a common element: the aggression expressed among the suffering populations of the city in the interwar period. This aggression (what others call “deviant behaviour”), which stems from the misery they live in, is sometimes directed internally at themselves, with addiction to legal and illegal substances, or gambling, and sometimes externally towards their surroundings, with behaviours characterised as *seretiliki*, *belaliki*, *zoriliki* etc.

Papazoglou, a sensitive man, suffers from what he sees around him, and he expresses it in his songs, without admonishing, threatening, moralising or teaching. Without taking on the role of a father, he speaks through his songs like a friend.

But let's get back to “The complaint of the dervish”. The songwriter, in the second stanza, refers to the substances and their effects on humans, noting of course the case of death that comes from the “pinch”, “The *preza* eats strong men”. He then gives his own explanation of how one arrives at the use of *preza*. Putting the social aspect aside, he tells us that anyone who smokes hashish, in the beginning, considers it a sign of levity, “*asiklikli*” (since among a large circle of people the use of hashish is acceptable). “But if it takes root in the heart”, that is, if it becomes emotional involvement, then he “becomes a monster”. In other words, people become dependent. If someone becomes dependent on hashish, then they start using *preza*, because “it seems to them” that they will have a better time – implying that in reality it is not so, and that in fact they will not have a better time. This may be a simplistic explanation of addiction, but it contains important elements such as the difference between use and addiction, emotional involvement, the transition to “hard” substances.

If we judge by the standards of the time, and bearing in mind the existing bibliography, it is remarkable that a popular songwriter deals with a subject that several of his contemporaries, including experts, did not. It should be noted that Papazoglou had no connection with illegal substances himself, and this in itself is indicative of his awareness and ability to listen.

SONG No. 4: ΗΡΩΪΝΗ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΥΡΑΚΙ – Karsilamas – 1935

by Sotiris Gavala (Memetis) – performed by Stelios Perpiniadis

Να ξεφύγω δεν μπορούσα
σαν εγύριζ' απ' την Προύσσα.
Με καρφώσανε δυο μπράβοι
Και με πιάσαν στο καράβι.
Είχα ράψει στο σακκάκι
Δυο σακκούλες με μαυράκι.
Και στα κούφια μου τακούνια
Ηρωΐνη ως τα μπούνια.

Θα ανάβαν οι λουλάδες
κλάφτε τώρα δερβισάδες.
Θα γινότανε γιαγκίνι
Με μαυράκι κι ηρωΐνη.

Ε, ρε το' χω κάνει τάμα
να μισέψω κι άλλο πράγμα
Γειά σου Προύσσα παινεμένη
και στον κόσμο ξακουσμένη.

HEROIN AND HASHISH

I couldn't escape it
On my way back from Broussa.
I was nailed by two bravos
And they caught me on the boat.

I had sewn into my jacket
Two little bags of hashish.
And in my hollow heels
I had heroine packed to the full.

That would have lit their *narghiledhes*
Cry now, you dervishes.
There would have been a *yahgini* [burning-up]
With hashish and heroin.

Oh, hey, I'd made a vow
To hate any another thing.
Yiasou, Broussa, exalted
And famous in the world.

Clip: <https://youtu.be/nJcoNM6KkSY>

Sotiris Gavalas [Smyrna, 1890/95 d. after 1950]. Composer-musician with about 15 songs in his discography.

This is the only song in which heroin is mentioned also in the title. We note that there is a mood of defiance, especially towards the prosecuting authorities and that this is probably where the song itself is directed.

An interesting point is the parallel use of two substances. This was not customary, and this not so much for pharmacological reasons as for reasons of needs, and the general culture of the user. Heroin users generally used hashish when there was a lack of the former, while the hashish user clearly has a negative attitude towards heroin and the heroin addict. So what has happened?

We know that during the period 1932-36 there was a strong trend – it could even be called a fashion – to write songs of this style, mainly with reference to hashish. It is clear that these songs were successful both on stage and on the record label. Which means that there was a financial benefit for the creator, from the royalties when performed and from the sales of the records (the income from the records was almost always small).

Sotiris Gavalas, following this trend, puts heroin both in the song and in its title. This gives the impression that he created a song that refers to hashish and the persecutions of the authorities – as mentioned above, there are quite a few songs in this style – and he adds the word heroin four times in the verses and the title.

The song is characterised by exaggeration and a degree of naivety. The smuggler seems not to be aiming for profit, but to provoke the authorities. Thus he puts both substances together, both of them illegal. The scale of his “trafficking” is limited to the heroin that fits in the hollow heels of his shoes and the “two bags of black” that he sews into his jacket. This appears to be the only rebetiko song that is positively disposed to “hard” substances.

Taking into account the exaggeration, the casual tone, and the fast, happy rhythm of the song (*karsilamas*), we can discern a satirical mood, which may have been the songwriter’s intention. Unfortunately we have no information on how the public received the 78 rpm record when it was released in 1935.

Nevertheless, whatever the motivations of Gavalas in writing this song, it comes down to us as the first recording dealing with heroin in the Greek discography. It is a reflection of a reality, a phenomenon that had begun to develop in the urban centres of Greece since the beginning of the century and that experienced an upsurge in the interwar years.

SONG No. 5: ΠΕΝΤΕ ΜΑΓΚΕΣ ΣΤΟΝ ΠΕΡΑΙΑ – Hasapiko – 1935

by Yiovan Tsaous – Antonis Kalyvopoulos

Πέντε μάγκες του Περαία, πέρναγαν απ' τον τεκέ.
Ενας ειπ' απ' την παρέα, πα' να πιούμε ν' αργιλέ.
Μπήκαν μέσα, να φουμάρουν φώναξαν τον τεκετζή.
Φτιαξ' εν' αργιλέ αφράτο, με Περσίας τουμπεκί.

Γειά σου Αντωνάκη μου Λεβέντη !

Δύο τάληρα του δίνεις, τρία θα πληρώσουμε.
Αν η γκλάβα θα γεμίσει, θα σε προτιμήσουμε.
Φούμαραν και ήταν τζούρα φώναξαν τον τεκετζή.
Δεν κατάλαβαν μαστούρα, ήταν σκέτο τουμπεκί.

Γειά σου Γιαβάν Τσαούς !

Έτσι νόμιζες πώς έχεις τίποτα κορτάκηδες.
Ούτε πιτσιρίκια έχεις, μήτε και πρεζάκηδες.
Πάν(ω) εκεί στου Κουνελάκη, έχω ζούλα ν' αργιλέ,
Πάμε μάγκες να τον πιούμε να μην πάμε στον τεκέ.

Αν μας κλείσουν τους τεκέδες Πειραιά, Κρεμμυδαρού,
Τότε πια θα κουβαλάω στη σπηλιά την κουρελού.

FIVE MANGHES FROM PIRAEUS

Five *manghes* from Piraeus were passing by the *tekke*.
One of the group said, let's smoke a *narghile*.
So they went inside, they called the bar tender for a smoke.
Make it a *narghile* with fragrant stuff, with Persian *toubeki*.

Yiasou, my Antonaki, *leventis*!

You paid two thalers for it, we shall pay you three.
If it's a good hit, we will favour you.
They smoked, but then they called over the bar tender.
He hadn't understood at all, it was just pure tobacco.

Yiasou, Yiovan Tsaous

You thought you had some *kortakidhes* here..
But you're not dealing with kids here, or junkies.
Over there in Kounelaki, I've got a *narghile* hidden.
Let's go guys, let's smoke it, so we don't have to go to the *tekke*.

If they close the *tekkedhes* of Piraeus and Kremidharou,
No longer will I have to carry the rag-rug to the cave.

[Kounelaki: a hill in Drapetsona; Kremidharou: in Drapetsona; *toubeki*: tobacco for the *narghile*]

Clip: <https://youtu.be/ecED5Q9gnrU>

This song referring to the use of hashish. Five *manghes* go to the *tekke* for a smoke. The *teketzis* (bar tender) offers them a *narghile* that contains not hashish but just pure tobacco (*toubeki*). They tell him that he can't fool them, and that he is wrong if he thinks that they are “*kortakidhes*” (womanisers) or “kids” (who do not know hashish). Nor are they of

course “*prezakidhes*” (junkies, where anyone can sell them anything as heroin and they accept it and use it regardless of the quality of the substance). Finally, the song refers to the legislative decisions to close the brothels. Thus, on the one hand the counterfeiting of the *teketzidhes*, on the other the persecutions, force them to make use of their own means, far from the city, in some cave. Here they definitely talk in derogatory terms about the *prezakidhes*, a term which was derogatory to the point of being insulting.

If the creators of rebetiko express with their songs what they and ordinary people lived every day, Yiovan Tsaous can be considered one of the most reliable exponents of reality, inasmuch as he himself had no discographical or artistic-economic reasons to adapt to the currents or trends of the time.

Yiannis Eitzridhis (Kastamoni, Pontos 1893 – Kokkinia 1942), a tailor by profession, never worked in Greece as a professional musician. Only 12 songs are to be found in his discography, all recorded before the imposition of censorship by Metaxas.

The amateur singer Antonis Kalyvopoulos (Smirna 1902 – Athens 1959), a machinist by profession, had a similar path, with 6 songs on his discography, all by Yiovan Tsaous.

SONG No. 6: ΕΓΩ ΘΕΛΩ ΠΡΙΓΚΙΠΕΣΣΑ – Hasapiko – 1935

by Panayiotis Toundas – performed by Stelios Perpiniadis

Στην Ελλάδα δεν μπορώ, μια γυναίκα για να βρω
έχει όμορφες πολλές, μα είναι μάνα μου φτωχές
Εγώ θέλω πριγκιπέσα από το Μαρόκο μέσα
να ‘χει λίρα με ουρά, να γυναίκα μια φορά

Πέρσι πέρασ’ αποδώ κι έψαχνε να βρει γαμπρό
χωρίς να το ξέρω εγώ, μάνα μου να σε χαρώ
Με είδε κάτω στον Πειραιά, στου Τζελέπη με παρέα
κι από τότε μ’ αγαπά και μου στέλνει και λεφτά

Θα με κάνει βασιλιά, πέρα εκεί στην αραπιά
Κι όλα της θα τα ‘χω εγώ, μάνα μου να σε χαρώ
Δεκαοχτώ βαγόνια λίρες, κοκαΐνες και νταμίρες
κάθε είδους αργιλέ, με διαμάντι όλο ντουμπλέ

Θα μου πάρει μπαγλαμά, φίλντισι και μάλαμα
Κι ότι άλλο θέλω εγώ, μάνα μου να σε χαρώ
Πεντακόσιοι ντερβισάδες θα μας φτιάνουν τους λουλάδες
να φουμάrouμε γλυκά, στο χρυσό μας τον οντά

I WANT A PRINCESS FROM MOROCCO

In Greece I can’t find myself a wife.
There are plenty of beautiful women, but, mother, they’re all poor.
I want a princess from Morocco
Who’s got plenty of money – now there’s a wife!

She was round these parts last year, looking for a husband
Without knowing it, mother may I enjoy you [colloquial expression]
She saw me down in Piraeus, in Celebi Street with company
And from that moment she’s been in love with me and sends me money.

She will make me king, down there in Arabia
And I shall have everything, mother may I enjoy you.
Eighteen wagons of gold sovereigns, cocaine and *damira* [hashish]
And every kind of *narghile*, all trimmed with diamonds.

She will bring me a baglama of silver and gold,
And anything else that I want, mother may I enjoy you.
Five hundred dervishes will prepare us the hash pipes
So that we can smoke nice and relaxed in our *oda* [chamber].

Panagiotis Toundas (Smyrna 1886 – Athens 1942), a famous musician with 300 songs in his discography. From 1924 he was director of the Greek branch of Odeon, and from 1931 to 1940 he was the director of Columbia Records.

This is a song where the songwriter fantasises. An escapist song with an intense exoticism. There are several songs, including postwar ones, that move in this climate. It is the well-known fairy tale with the little prince, only in our case she becomes a princess.

Piraeus was the centre of concentration of immigrants and refugees, and it was characterised by poverty, destitution and insecurity. That is where the prospective king of Morocco hangs out, as he says in the fifth stanza. With exaggeration and bitter humour he makes light of his poverty and privations, or makes a joke of them. “Cocaine” and “*damira*” are mentioned as a sign of wealth and luxury, along with gold sovereigns, diamonds, etc. It is also known that the cocaine was considered the substance of choice among the rich and the aristocracy.

SONG No. 7: **FERTE PREZA (NA PREZARO)** – Kalamatiano – 1933

by Panayiotis Toundas – performed by Stelios Perpiniadis

Μη μ' αρωτάτε βλάμηδες
γιατί όλο συλλογιέμαι.
Καραγιαγκίνι μεσ' την καρδιά,
έχω και τυραννιέμαι.

Αχ φέρτε πρέζα να πρεζάρω.
Και χασίσι να φουμάρω.
Μ' έχει λωλό το Ερηνάκι.
Με το μουςμουλί γοβάκι.
Βρε του μιλάω δε μου ξηγιέται.

Σκάει απ' τα γέλια κι όλο κουνιέται.
Φέρτε πρέζα να πρεζάρω.
Και χασίσι να φουμάρω.

Ο μερακλής ο άνθρωπος
πονεί μα δεν το λέγει.
Κι αν τραγουδά, ρε ψεύτη ντουινιά,
μέσα η καρδιά του κλαίει.

- Γειά σου Ναύτη !

BRING ME HEROIN

Don't ask me questions, guys
Because I've a lot on my mind.
I have *karayagini* [fire] in my heart,
And I am in torment.

Ach, bring heroin so's I can score,
And hashish to smoke.

The *erinaki* is crazy about me.
Him with the waistcoat.
Hey, I'm talking to him, He doesn't reply.
He bursts out laughing, shaking all over.

Ach, bring heroin so's I can score,
And hashish to smoke.

The *meraklis*
Is in pain, but he doesn't say so.
And if he sings, oh deceitful world,
Inside his heart is crying.

Yiasou, Sailor!

A first-person song of unrequited love, by Panayiotis Toundas. In the heart he has not only *yaghini* (burning, fire), but *karayaghini*. The “*kara*” is a superlative indicating intensity.

Once again we have the simultaneous use of hashish and heroin, as in the song “Heroin and hashish”.

There is some exaggeration in the song, giving the impression that the hero is seeking to

blackmail the person who is unresponsive to love. In place of “I shall die” we have “I shall perish, shall bring an end to life”. And then “Bring me heroin, and hashish to smoke”.

Perhaps he is again partially satirising the situation to lighten the mood. However, the fact that Toundas chooses this specific title indicates that he wants to challenge the listener.

In this song the singer appears not as a user of heroin, but as a person desiring or threatening to use it. The song was recorded twice more in 1934, with some changes in the lyrics and with female singers.

SONG No. 8: ΟΥΖΟ, ΜΟΡΦΙΝΗ ΚΑΙ ΧΑΣΙΣ – Zeibekiko – 1933

by “Tsamas” – performed by Rosa Eskenazi

Ούζο, μορφίνη και χασίς, αμάν, αμάν, ήπια για να ξεχάσω.
Μα δεν κατόρθωσα η φτώχεια, κοντεύω να τα χάσω.

Τι μάγια μου ’κανες, αμάν, αμάν και μ’ έχεις ξετρελλάνει.
Μέχρι φιλής μου τα ’φαγες κι ακόμα δε σε φτάνει.

Αφού μιαν άλλη αγαπάς, αμάν, αμάν, τι θέλεις πια μ’ εμένα.
Ούτε δεκάρα τσακιστή, δεν έχω πιά για σένα.

Ηύρα παιδάκι τζέντελμανη, αμάν, αμάν, να μ’ αγαπάει στ’ αλήθεια.
Είναι εργάτης ξακουστός κι έχει καρδιά στα στήθεια.

Ωωπα αχ! ’Αντε να ζήσουν τ’ αγόρια !

OUZO, MORPHINE AND HASHISH

Ouzo, morphine and hashish, *aman, aman*, I took them to forget.
But I couldn’t handle the poverty; I’m about to lose it.

What spell have you put on me, *aman, aman*, you’ve driven me crazy.
You’ve eaten all I had and you still haven’t had enough.

Since you love another woman, *aman, aman*,
what do you want with me any more?
Not a penny do I have any longer for you.

I’ve found a young boy, a true gentleman, *aman, aman*, to love me truly.
He is well-known as a worker, and he has a heart in his chest.

Oopa, aach...! Long live the lads!

Clip: <https://youtu.be/EbQwMz1FMgA>

Roza Eskenazi: (Istanbul 1883 – Athens 1980), a singer with an unrivalled tally of approximately 600 songs in her discography, written by all the great songwriters of the time.

The heroine of the song describes her crazy love for someone who not only does not respond but also takes advantage of her.

In order to forget, she drank (in the past) ouzo, and used morphine and hashish, but without achieving the desired effect of oblivion. Let’s not forget that morphine is used as a medicine in cases of great pain. Finally she finds a way out in the relationship she had

entered into; this new person is an honest worker and has true feelings.

The song is by “Tsamas” (a pseudonym of Minos Matsas), and is the only one in which morphine is mentioned. As in Toundas’ “Ferte preza”, a borderline situation of love and passion is described, but here there is a solution and the song ends optimistically.

The impression left on the listener is, on the one hand, the romantic and emotional impasse, and on the other the answer / solution found in the world of work which is sincere, emotional, hardworking – implying of course that her original unresponsive lover does not belong to this category of people or this social stratum and does not possess these traits.

It should be noted that there are quite a few songs among the rebetika that are positively aimed at the working class.

SONG No. 9: ΓΙΑΤΙ ΦΟΥΜΑΡΩ ΚΟΚΑΪΝΗ – 1932

by Panayiotis Toundas – performed by Roza Eskenazi

Πού ειν’ εκείνα μου τα κάλλη.
Πού είναι η τόση μ’ εμορφιά.
Στην Αθήνα δε είχ(ε) άλλη.
Τέτοια λεβεντιά.

Ήμουν κούκλα, ναι στ’ αλήθεια.
Με μεγάλη αρχοντιά.
Δε(ν) σας λέω παραμύθια.
Τρέλλανα ντουνιά.

Μα μ’ έμπλεξ’ ένας μόρτης
Αχ ένας μάγκας πρώτης.
Μου πήρε ό,τι είχα και μ’ αφήνει

Μου πήρε την καρδιά μου.
Τα νειάτα τα λεφτά μου
Κι απ’ τον καημό
φουμάρω κοκαΐνη.

Μ’ αγαπούσαν αφεντάδες
Νέοι, γέροι και παιδιά.

Κια ολ’ οι πρώτοι κουβαρντάδες.
Μεσ’ την αγορά.

Αχ, τι όμορφα περνούσα
Με τραγούδια και κρασί,
Κάθε μέρα εγλεντούσα
Τι ζωή χρυσή!

Και τώρα η καϋμένη.
Γυρίζω μαραμένη.
Γιατ(ι) ο σεβντάς του μάγκα
δεν μ’ αφήνει.
Με τρέλλανε ο μόρτης
Ο κοκαΐνοπότης
Γι’ αυτό κι εγώ φουμάρω
Κοκαΐνη.

Αχ ανάθεμά σε κοκαΐνη
που μ’ έφαγες τη φτωχεία!

WHY I SMOKE COCAINE

Where is my beauty?
Where is all my loveliness?
There was no other such *leventia*
In Athens.

I was a doll, yes, really.
With great nobility.
I’m not telling you fairy tales.
People used to go crazy for me.

But a *mortis* got hold of me
Ach, a mangas of the first order.
He took everything I had
And he left me

He stole my heart.
My youth and my money
And in my grief
I’m smoking cocaine.

I’ve been loved by gentlemen,
By young and old and kids alike
And all the big-spenders
In the market.

Oh, what a good time I had
With songs and wine,
Every day was a party day.
What a golden life!

And now, poor me,.
I go around, burned out.
Because my *sevdas* for the mangas
Won't leave me.

The cocaine-taker,
And that's the reason why
I smoke cocaine too.

The *mortis* was driving me crazy,

Oh damn you cocaine for eating
me into poverty!

This is the first song chronologically to mention cocaine. A woman, apparently a prostitute (“loved by all”), tells of the good life she had until she fell in love with a cocaine user and started using cocaine for herself, with painful results. As in Papazoglou’s “The smuggler”, the user’s good life before using cocaine is emphasised. We also have a topic that we still encounter today, the relationship between prostitution and psychoactive substances, and vice versa. The addict traces the causes of her addiction to her love for a cocaine addict who seduced her and is now leaving her. Thus a third party is considered to be at fault, to whom the “problem” is transferred. In describing her dead-end misery she asks the listener to pity her and excuse her. Even if not literally true, the song is very close to the mindset and attitudes that addiction creates.

SONG No. 10: CONVERSATION WITH CHARON – Zeibekiko – 1936

by Panayiotis Toundas – performed by Kostas Roukounas

Charon was greeted by five-six hashish smokers
And they asked him how the *meraklidhes* spend their time in Hades.

Tell us, Charon, in your black darkness,
Do the lads have hashish, do they have *louladhes* in Hades?

Tell us, do they have baglamas and bouzoukis to party,
Do they have *tekkedhes*, do they have a *tsardhi*, to go for a smoke?

Tell us if they have chicks, and girlfriends
To make up their *narghiledhes*, *douzeni* to smoke?

Tell us, Charon, what are the lads doing?
Do they find *damira*, do they have *louladhes*, do they have dope?

Take two drams of *brusalio* and five of fragrant dope
And give our brothers down there a smoke.

And those who were stabbed and went to Hades,
Tell us, were they healed or did they melt into the darkness?

And those who went crazy from *karasevda* and died
Tell us, did the *dalgas* hit them, or do they still love?

Tell us what the poor *prezakidhes* are doing too?
Take this bit of cocaine and give it to them.

Kostas Roukounas, a singer, musician and composer (Samos 1904–84) with 180 songs until 1960.

The song is a dialogue with Charon the ferryman, a theme that can also be found in folk songs. The hashish smokers ask him about their friends, who are in Hades, they even give him two drams of *brousalio* (hashish) and five drams of scented (hashish) as greetings. Then they ask him about the ones who have been stabbed, and those who died of *karasevda* [black melancholy]. Finally, not by chance, they ask him how the “poor junkies” are doing, and give him a little cocaine as a present for them.

This song too refers to hashish users among others, with a social, perhaps even moral, hierarchy in relation to the rest of the inhabitants. The last place is occupied by the “*prezakidhes*” (junkies), who are described as “poor”, but not financially of course. In short we have the opinion of hashish users, but not only them, regarding heroin addicts. They place them apparently at the bottom of the social pyramid, but at the same time they pity them. Thematically and musically (*zeibekiko*) it is a special song. It is no coincidence that it was reinstated in the discography in the 1960s and later, with its lyrics changed due to censorship.

SONG No. 11: **EIMAI ΠΠΕΖΑΚΙΑΣ** – Tsiftetelli – 1935

by N. Delta and S. Psyrioti – performed by Roza Eskenazi

Από το βράδυ ως το πρωϊ.
Με πρέζα στέκω στη ζωή.
Κι όλο τον κόσμο κατακτώ.
Την άσπρη σκόνη σα ρουφώ.

Όλος ο κόσμος είναι θύμα μου,
Σαν έχω πρέζα και ρουφάω.
Κι οι πολιτςμάνοι όταν θα με δουν,
Μελάνι αμολάω.

Σαν μαστουρωθείς.
Γίνεσαι ευθύς.
Βασιλιάς, δικτάτορας.
Θεός και κοςμοκράτορας.

Πρέζα όταν πιεις.
Ρε θα ευφρανθείς.

Κι όλα πια στον κόσμο
ρόδινα θε να τα δεις.

Ωχ, θα πρεζάρω αδερφέ μου,
μέχρι Ανάσταση.

Δική μου είναι η Ελλάς.
Και στη κατάντια της γελάς.
Της λείπει το ένα της ποδάρι.
Ρε και το παίζανε στο ζάρι.

Εγώ θα είμαι ρε διχτάτορας
Κι ο κόσμος στάχτη, αχ, ας γίνει
Ο ένας θα μ' ανάβει το λουλά
κι ο άλλος θα το σβήνει.
Ρόζα μου για σένα έγνα
πρεζάκιας... Ωχ Εωχ !

I'M A JUNKIE

From night to morning.
With cocaine I make my stand in life.
And I conquer the whole world.
When I sniff the white powder.

The whole world is my victim,
When I have my dose and I snort it.
And the policemen when they see me,
I hide myself away.

When you get stoned.
You become straight away
King, and dictator,
And God, and ruler of the world.

When you take a dose,
Hey, you'll be happy.

And now everything in the world looks rosy.

Oh, I'll get stoned, my brother,
until the Resurrection.

Greece is all mine.
And you laugh at her troubles.
She's missing one of her legs.
Oh, they gambled it away at dice.

I shall be a dictator
And let the whole world turn to ashes
One person will light the *loula* for me
and the other will extinguish it.

My Rosa, it was for you that I became
a junkie.... *Och, oooch!*

This is one of the few songs written at the time that refers to the Asia Minor disaster and its social effects. It is a song with a strong political character and marked sarcasm.

The authors of the song – N. Deltas and S. Psyriotis (pseudonyms: real names Emilios Savvidis and Sosos Ioannidis) were composers of European-style music. Their position in the artistic scene of Greece and the subject of the song may be the reason why they signed with pseudonyms. During this period, under the prevailing ideology, it was not

acceptable for “Europeanist” authors to write songs similar to popular “oriental” authors.

So Greece is missing one of her legs, i.e. Asia Minor, because it was gambled away at dice. *Preza* (without specifying whether heroin or cocaine) was the means of escape from the misery that the Asia Minor refugees and, by extension, the rest of the Greeks lived and still live: the calamity that had befallen them, the pain, the fatigue, the despair, the anger, the unanswered why, the indescribable, the weakness felt by the powerless, the inability to cry, the inability even to mourn. All these were contained in the song. Its creators, in order to avoid and to survive what had happened, look for support to the realm of fantasy, a way of seeing everything as rosy.

Essentially it describes the mental situation in which the refugees found themselves, and through exaggeration poses a challenge to the politicians. Exaggeration characterises the entire song, as seen in expressions such as “I conquer the world”, “The world is my victim”, “You become a king, dictator, god and ruler of the world”, “Greece is mine”, “Let the world become ashes”.

The Asia Minor refugees and the addicts had many points in common, in terms of life experiences: the loss of the parental home and land; the playing with death, and death itself; the borderline situations; the circumvention of principles, rules, limits, values; deprivation. Their harsh treatment by society and the state. They had these points in common, even if they had different starting points.

And here we find the parallel use of hashish and *preza*, which strengthens the opinion that the song is addressing not substances and addiction but the political, social and mental state of the refugees.

Despite the fact that the song is political, it gives important information about the area of dependence, and of course the shock confession “with cocaine I make my stand in life”.

This is one of the most tragic songs in the rebetiko repertoire. In the 1980s it was brought back by younger artists, but with changes in the lyrics due to censorship.

SONG No. 12: **Ο ΠΡΕΖΑΚΙΑΣ** – Hasapiko – 1935

by Yiovan Tsaous – Antonis Kalyvopoulos

Γεια σου Γιοβάν Τσαούς με την πεννιά σου!

Είμαι πρεζάκας μάθε το, μα όπου και αν πάω.
Όλοι φύγε με λένουνε, νομίζουν θα τους φάγω.

Με βλέπουν και σιχαίνονται, μα 'γω δούρα δεν δίνω.
Την πρέζα μόνο να τραβώ και ότι θέλει ας γίνω.

Μεσ' το βαγόνι κάθομαι, για σπίτι δεν θυμούμαι.
Κι ένα τσουβάλι βρώμικο, το στρώνω και κοιμούμαι.

Τα ρούχα μου ελειώσανε, φάνηκε το κορμί μου.
Η πρέζα με φαρμάκωσε τελείως τη ζωή μου.

Χαρμάνης όταν κάθομαι, πώς σκέφτομαι την πείνα,
σα μαστουρώσω βρε παιδιά, δική μου είν' η Αθήνα.

Σαν αποθάνω φίλε μου, έρχετ' Αστυνομία.
Με κάρο σκουπιδιάρικο και κάνει την κηδεία.

– Γεια σου Αντώνη μου δερβίση!

THE JUNKIE

Yiasou, Yiovan Tsaous with your picking!

I'm a junkie, know that, but everywhere I go
Everyone tells me to go away, they think I will eat them.

They see me and hate me, but I don't give a damn.
Just let me take my dose and let it be whatever it wants.

I sit in the wagon, I don't remember home.
And a dirty sack, I lay it down and sleep.

My clothes are shredded, my body is exposed.
The drug has completely poisoned my life.

When I sit *harmanis*, how I think of hunger,
But when I'm stoned, guys, Athens is all mine.

When I die, my friend, the police will come
With a garbage cart to do my funeral.

Yiasou, Antonis, my dervish!

We know from various sources that in the interwar years addicts found refuge in train wagons at the Piraeus railway station. The situation was described in a text written by an unknown drug addict and published by K. Varnalis in his book *Alithinoi anthropoi* (p. 215, Kedros, Athens, 1978). Exactly the same situation is described in Yiovan Tsaous's "Prezakias". Tsaous lived opposite the railway station. His wife, who witnessed every day the poverty, misery and death of these people, wrote the lyrics of the song. Without exaggeration and with an objective eye she depicts the sad life of a drug addict.

The "junkie" describes the way he is treated by society. He then describes his external appearance and living conditions, and goes on to describe his state of being under the influence of drugs. Finally he describes his death and funeral. Although the song uses the "I", it does not suggest first-person narration. It is a realistic description of the drug addict from the outside. "Prezakias" is a unique song in terms of its subject, as well as its music.

SONG No. 13: Ο ΠΟΝΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΠΕΖΑΚΙΑ – Hasapiko – 1935

by Anestis Delias – performed by Anestis Delias

Απ' τον καιρό που άρχισα
την πρέζα να φουμάρω.
Ο κόσμος μ' απαρνήθηκε,
δε ξέρω τι να κάνω.

Γεια σου μαγκίτη μου Ανέστο!

Απ' τη μυτιά που τράβαγα
άρχισα και βελόνι.
Και το κορμί μου άρχισε
σιγά σιγά να λειώνει.

Όπου σταθώ κι όπου βρεθώ
ο κόσμος με πειράζει.
Και η ψυχή μου δεν κρατά
πρέζα να με φωνάζει

Αχ! Μ' έφαγες πρέζα.

Τίποτε δε μ' απόμεινε
στο κόσμο για να κάνω.
Αφού η πρέζα μ' έκανε
στους δρόμους να πεθάνω.

THE PAIN OF THE JUNKIE

Ever since
I started smoking cocaine
The world has turned its back on me,
I don't know what to do.

Wherever I stand and wherever I am,
People give me a hard time.
And my soul can't stand it
When they call me junkie

Yiasou, my mangas Anesti!

From putting it up the the nose,
I started on the needle too.
And my body slowly
Began to melt.

Ach, heroin, you ate me up.

There was nothing left
In the world for me to do.
Since the heroin left me
To die on the streets.

Anestis Delias (Smyrna 1912 – Athens 1944), with nine songs in his discography between 1935-36, is the only one of the popular creators, musicians and singers who was addicted to heroin. This was also the cause of his death. He had benefited from the “therapeutic” methods of the Metaxas dictatorship – he was imprisoned as a result of his use of heroin, and exiled to the island of Ios. (During the period 1938-41 Ios was a place of exile for drug addicts.) According to the testimony of his friends, Delias was introduced to heroin by a friend of his who worked in the brothels of Vourla. The same sources inform us that Delias was not a drug addict when he wrote the song, and they are probably correct. But looking at the lyrics and comparing them to the other songs presented here, we find that this song comes very close to the expressions, the mentality and the state of mind of heroin addicts. In writing these verses Delias shows that he is very close to that reality.

More generally, the sense of social deprivation can also be found in others of his songs, such as “Soura kai mastoura” (1935), and “Ton andra sou kai emena” (1936). Another element that chimes with the sense of deprivation is the rhythm of most of his songs (fast *zeibekika* and *hasapika*). His singing has an urgency, giving the impression that he wants to get them out quickly in one breath.

The narration is in first person. In the first stanza, he tells us that his problems started from the time he started using it, implying that things weren't like that before. He does not immediately mention the attitude of society and the impasse it is in, a very important point.

In the second stanza, he comes back to the treatment he has from society and the mental pain he suffers (in contrast to G. Tsalous's “Prezakia” who says “I don't give you anything”). The third stanza refers to the addicts' favourite, if not unique, conversation about substances and use and secondly to his body that feels something is happening, something is changing negatively: themes that are also common today among drug addicts. In the fourth stanza, the confinement and impasse in which the narrator has found himself is repeated and culminates in the impending death that he essentially wants to exorcise.

Overall, the song leaves the impression that the addict is seeking the listener's sympathy.

CONCLUSIONS

Recapitulating, we can arrive at some initial findings and observations.

Judging by the number of songs that reference “hard” addictive substances, we can assume that the phenomenon was not particularly widespread in the popular strata at this time. From the three cases of addiction encountered in the songs we see that these were people who, even before becoming addicted, were on the social fringes and on the borders of illegality (the smuggler, the burglar and the prostitute).

We find evidence of exclusion and isolation of addicts from society, as well as bad behaviour towards them, but there are also instances of sympathy. We also find a clear differentiation between users of hashish and users of “hard” substances. The former are largely socially acceptable, unlike the latter. The attitude of hashish users towards drug addicts is of interest. For addicts, the designations “weak-minded”, “poor”, “burned-out” and “wretched” are used.

In most of the songs, the negative position towards the “hard” substances (and in one case towards all substances) is evident. There is a preventive stance, showing the negative results of addiction, and the suggestion of a need for change of lifestyle. “Hard” substances are mentioned in terms that overstate the intensity and magnitude of emotional difficulties. There is also social separateness, indifference, the escape from social reality and the passage into the realm of fantasy. Substances are mentioned as a provocation in the face of society and the authorities, while cocaine is indicated in one case as a sign of wealth.

In all the songs we have the element of social deprivation. We also encounter attempts to offer explanations for addiction and some of its characteristics. For instance: the mental pain, fatigue and impasse of the addict; the search for the causes of addiction in factors outside of the addict himself; the addict's direct or indirect request for sympathy and empathy from the listener; the false image that the addict has of the substances and of himself; the tendencies towards self-destruction; and of course the chilling confession that the substance is a means of survival. In five songs death is mentioned explicitly, and the effects of drugs on the body are also described graphically (“my body was poisoned” etc).

We have descriptions of the living environments of addicts, as well as their clothing, habits and behaviours, and references to ways of trafficking or dealing drugs and the actions of the police. Several songs show methods of drug usage (smoking, sniffing, injection), states of influence and withdrawal, as well as the parallel use of hashish and *preza*.

Of the 13 songs we examined, it is noteworthy that only three mention *preza* exclusively. The remaining ten mention *preza* together with other legal or illegal substances.

Apart from the reasons we have already set out, namely exaggeration, ignorance and provocation, the parallel mention of different substances perhaps shows the relationship that exists between them and the way this was registered in popular consciousness. Also, out of the 13 songs, at least 5 do not deal with or aim to demonstrate addiction, *preza* or the addict. They just mention them as secondary.

Epilogue

In the course of the twentieth century there were many great changes in society, in politics, in science and technology, in culture, in the family, etc. These changes were followed, or sometimes preceded, by substance use and dependence. Nowadays, in the era of the new order of things, new synthetic substances are making their appearance. Significant numbers of young people are using them, and alongside the older substances they establish a new culture of psychoactive substance use. The rebetika songs that we have presented in combination with the literature of the time, the reports of the prosecutorial and judicial authorities, and the journalistic and literary texts of this period, can contribute to a closer understanding of the phenomenon of dependence. An understanding that is necessary for the interpretation of the past and the present, as well as the prediction of the future.

Translated and abridged: Ed Emery

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