

CHAPTER 22

Research on Rebetika: Some methodological problems and issues

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For a considerable number of years, rebetika has been a very popular and much discussed music, not only in Greece but also among foreigners who have become interested in Greek popular music through the commercial successes of modern composers who have been inspired by traditional musical styles. One might mention here the names of Theodorakis and Hatzidakis. In Greece there are by now many professional as well as amateur groups performing rebetika songs in a more or less derivative fashion, but one should at least note that the music they try to play is not the tourist “bouzouki” so often identified with Greek popular music. On the contrary, these groups have been inspired by the original performers from the classic period which have been made known to the public by an impressive number of reissues. LP reissues are enjoying a notable commercial success to judge from the number of records released by the companies.

Since few people seriously interested in rebetika from the classic period can afford to purchase the original 78s – even if these rare records can be found – a word should be said at the outset about reissues of rebetika and the reissue policy of the companies. These questions are basic to my arguments, and the following discussion is almost exclusively based on what is currently available of older recordings. Besides, the reissue situation is also to a great extent indicative of the general state of rebetika studies.

The reissues differ very much in quality. Some are excellent from a technical point of view, having been engineered by experts in the field like John R. T. Davies who has worked wonders with the old copies brought to life on the magnificent LP *Αυθεντικά τραγούδια ηχογραφημένα στη Σύμρνη πριν απο το 1922* (Αδελφοί Φαληρέα 14). Since almost all reissues have been made from existing copies and not from the original masters, it is inescapable that quality varies. Some reissues are abominable even in cases where clean copies are known to exist.¹ But all of them are highly defective in discographical information. I have only come across one single reissue that gives the original master- and catalog-number (Folklyric 9033, see on this below). Dates are usually lacking or very imprecise. The worst examples are the many reissues by Kostas Hatzidoulis where one as a rule never finds any useful information.² The various CBS reissues, the LPs produced by the Falireas Bros. and the “Center for the Study of Rebetika” are a little better,³ but not even the astonishingly well produced Papaz-oglou set gives the indispensable information about the originals.⁴

The best reissue so far by Hatzidoulis is the Stellakis Perpiniadis *Autobiography* (EMIAA 2J056-70259) where information about accompaniments seems based on Perpiniadis’ own archives or memory. Alas, some of the information given is demonstrably wrong, as anyone with two ears can hear.⁵ It is very deplorable but rather indicative of the situation in Greece that the best reissue so far has been made by a small dedicated American company that obviously knows its business, and the LP has been edited by a competent scholar, Professor Martin Schwartz (*Greek Oriental. Smyrnic Rebetic Songs and Dances. The Golden Years 1927-1937*, Folk-lyric 9033). Nothing issued in Greece can compare with this LP. On the contrary, scholars who believe what they are told on covers produced in Greece will do so at their peril. For a particular gross example of negligence and stupidity I refer to the LP *Τα πρώτα ρεμπέτικα 1901-1913* on Greek CBS 53753.⁶

Until very recently reissues as a rule were anthological and very unsystematic. The

situation is a little better today though there has been only one attempt at a complete reissue of the total production of an artist. The reissue programme begun a few years ago of a complete series of Tsitsanis seems to have stopped after vol. 6 and only part of his prewar career has been covered until now.⁷ Apart from this we only have a few comprehensive reissues of major artists which though far from complete are very much better than the commercially oriented anthologies.⁸ To complain that no reissue so far has been organised chronologically, not even the unfinished Tsitsanis series, is perhaps to ask for too much in this situation.⁹

Though treated in this way in Greece by the companies, it is evident today that rebetika is a recognised art form. The old prejudices have not been overcome altogether, and some reservations do still exist. However, the often bitter and misinformed polemics can seldom be found. It is therefore very disappointing but hardly unexpected to find that parallel to the reissue situation, very little in the way of scholarly research has been done, either in Greece or elsewhere. Instead we find a lot of journalist and amateurish writing, sometimes even with scholarly pretensions – not to mention decidedly pseudo-scholarly offerings to a public that cannot in most cases see the difference.

In the present paper I would like to discuss some of the major problems in the literature on rebetika, and try to outline areas where we badly need work to be done. I emphasize that I am not competent to discuss strictly musicological problems, nor cover adequately the choreutical aspects though I am aware that my discussion thereby becomes somewhat one-sided. If we compare the status of research on rebetika to that of a research field similar in many aspects such as North American blues, one cannot but wonder why so little has been done on the most fundamental aspects. To take the most spectacular desideratum, a reliable discography, we can state that while blues discographies now have reached a very high standard,¹⁰ there is absolutely nothing to be found on rebetika. We do not even have elementary listings of records. This means that indispensable information is lacking; recording dates are unknown, and published statements and information about individual recordings differ to an exasperating high degree. We do not know who played on the records except for the artist featured on the label. We are left to guess.

As far as the songs go, we seem to be better off. There exist at least two sizeable anthologies by Ilias Petropoulos and by Tasos Schorelis.¹¹ However, there is nothing to be proud of, for the simple reason that neither of these collections are reliable. The transcriptions of the texts are replete with errors of every imaginable kind: missing words or lines, whole stanzas left out – or added, to say nothing of variations in wording and smaller details. This situation is made worse because of the fact that many people use these anthologies as if they could be trusted. The result is that the errors are being spread around. Some of these errors have even misled conscientious scholars.

Perhaps the situation can be summed up by stressing that by now we have only one scholarly book on rebetika, Stathis Gauntlett's dissertation¹² and a few good and well researched papers and articles. Gail Holst's well-known book from 1975 was a pioneer effort which took up the field from scratch, so to speak. If it today would seem to be less satisfactory it nonetheless drew attention to a fascinating world and inspired much of the later interest in the field.¹⁴

However, in the present paper I will concentrate on another influential writer whose approach is interesting but as far as I can see, methodologically misguided and dangerous. Stathis Damianakos has written a large-scale sociological study of rebetika, and several minor articles from the same point of view.¹⁴ I will take his work as a starting point because the pitfalls in our field can be most effectively illustrated there, and the problems, as well as directions for future research most clearly brought out. A recently published book on the sociological history of rebetika eminently proves my basic point that this field

has an intrinsic interest for the Greek public, and that a warning against facile approaches should be given. Maria Konstantinidou's Italian doctoral dissertation has now been translated into Greek and published by a well-known Greek bookseller, although it should never have been published, given the amount of incredible and naive statements that it contains, together with wholesale copying from previous writers. The title of the book is a misnomer, and not much of it deals with rebetika nor with Greek realities.¹⁵

Damianakos' work is a different proposition. He has done some serious research and though his methods are questionable and his results therefore highly problematic, one must admit that his ideas for all their abstract character merit discussion. I concentrate on the formulation of his theses as propounded in his 1971 paper on rebetika, since this text nicely sums up his main theories, the more so since it has recently been reissued in a Greek translation and created a certain interest. One must suppose that he still regards it as representative of his views.

The basic thesis in this paper is that the development of rebetika can be divided into three periods: pre-1922, 1922-1940 and 1940-1953, and that these periods relate in some way to the development of Greek society. Parallel with the formation of the Greek working-class, the rebetika develops towards a more class-conscious ideology, from the subproletarian to a proletarian outlook. Damianakos even goes so far as to call the 1940-1953 period the *εργατική φάση*.

Let us take this point of periodisation first. There can be no doubt, or at least I will assume it a priori, that any popular art form has a definite relation to social realities. The rebetika songs do give expression to the views of certain strata in Greek society. Nor can it be doubted that the ideology expressed in these songs changes from the earliest known phases to the post-war period. The problem is how and why, and whether this development has anything to do with a corresponding development of the Greek working class. I do not think that our evidence allows any conclusions to be drawn at present. We need much more detailed work on the development of Greek society in the interwar period, about basic socio-economic facts, about the culture of the lower classes in Greek urban centers during these years, about the formation of societal structures after the Asia Minor catastrophe, and not the least about the development of the urban industrial proletariat, the existence of which may well be doubted until late into the 1950s and early 1960s.

But we also need to establish the basic chronological foundations for the development and history of the rebetika with much more solid and incontrovertible evidence than we seem to possess at present. To be more precise I will give a telling example. Damianakos quotes as evidence for the pre-1922 ideology the recording of Yannis Dragatsis' *Μανώλης Χασικλής* which he quotes from Petropoulos' anthology (p. 251) as a record from "1920 (?)". Petropoulos' dating of this particular record is a very unfortunate guess. The recordings of this song by Yiorgos Vidalis (reissued on the LP *Ρεμπέτικη ιστορία 4*)¹⁶ and Sofroniou (reissued on *Απαγορευμένα ρεμπέτικα 2*)¹⁷ are both of them electrically recorded and thus later than 1925. The exact date is not known but Schorelis in his Anthology 2,36 gives 1932 as the date of Sofroniou's recording; he gives no evidence but says that the performance was issued on Parlophone BIEM 101080. This, of course, is ridiculous. The digits BIEM have nothing to do with the master-number or the catalog number. The number 101080 seems to be the master-number (which nobody would use in this way to denote the record) and would locate the recording with absolute certainty if we had the necessary information about Parlophone master-numbers. The catalog-number which is not given by Schorelis (B21597) seems to point to a date in late 1933, though the record is still not in the Parlophone 1934 catalog. I have no evidence about Vidalis' record but I am certain that it is contemporary with that of Sofroniou. Schorelis' gaffe is not very unusual in publications on rebetika. Even a competent researcher like Gauntlett sometimes shows that he has not fully realised these discographical niceties, e.g., what is the difference

between master- and catalog-number. On p. 92, n. 162, he quotes Jack Gregory's (alias G. Halkias') *Το μυστήριο* on Col. 206583 – which is the US master-number, and no discographer would ever quote a record in that way. To return to the main point: the recording cannot be regarded as evidence for pre-1922 rebetika.

On the fundamental question of chronology in the anthologies, I quite agree with Gauntlett's sharp criticism. Neither Petropoulos nor Schorelis can be trusted. But Gauntlett himself has fallen victim to one of Petropoulos' insidious inaccuracies, a fact which shows the dangers involved in constructing the history of rebetika on the basis of available anthologies. He says (p. 47, n. 11) that the song *Όσοι γίνουν πρωθυπουργοί* (which was issued on Parl. B21869 under the title *Ο Μάρκος πρωθυπουργός*), printed in Petropoulos 366 must be later than April 1936 because of the references to the deaths of Kondylis, Demertzis and Venizelos, and not to either 1934 or 1935. Obviously Gauntlett never heard the actual recording by Markos Vamvakaris, for he would then have realised that the stanza referring to the deceased prime ministers is not on the record – which can only be dated from its appearance in Parlophone's August 1936 catalog. It is quite uncertain from where Petropoulos got this stanza, and in the enlarged edition he only says that it is not in the recorded version. In the earlier edition used by Gauntlett there was no such warning. The song can be heard on the LP *Αφιέρωμα στο Μάρκο Βαμβακάρη* (Margo 8252) compiled by Hatzidouli without any discographical details.

It is damaging to his work that Damianakos nowhere so much as questions the dates given by Petropoulos. It is as if this problem never dawned upon him. This is indeed remarkable, especially for the earliest period where one might have expected that the argument would have depended on a precise dating of the songs, whether they are pre- or post-1922. Damianakos does not even realize the equally basic question about when recording began in Greece, or whether we can date recordings at all. He is by no means the worst sinner. However, when so much depends on a correct dating one might have expected more methodological prudence. Damianakos 133f quotes Petropoulos 276 for the date 1922 in the case of Gavalas' song *Ηρωίνη και μαυράκι* which is being adduced as evidence for a pre-1922 outlook though the performance by Stellakis Perpiniadis (on Col. DG6126, cf. Gauntlett 257) is from 1936. This confusion clearly shows the need to have reliable discographies from which history can be constructed. There is, unfortunately, no short cut.

Apart from erroneous dating there are other serious objections to Damianakos' methods. The classification proposed by him overlooks a number of facts which any attempt at socio-historical analysis has to take into account: 1) We have no recorded evidence of rebetika in Greece before 1925. In fact, we do not, as far as I am aware, have any recordings at all to show what pre-1922 rebetika was like. We have pre-1922 recordings from Asia Minor, though their relevance should be proved at first;¹⁸ 2) The main recording activity in Greece began in 1925 and from then there is a steadily growing flow of recordings of cafe-aman and rebetika. However, until 1933 only musicians playing in the cafe-aman style were recorded; the bouzouki rebetika first appear with Markos Vamvakaris and Yiorgos Batis in 1933-1934; 3) The imposition of censorship in 1936-1937 provokes a fundamental change of themes in the recording songs which are our only evidence. References to the underworld and to drugs disappear.

Thus I think that the whole periodisation is completely mistaken. We have to construct a new one on the lines suggested by Gauntlett's meticulous work, on the development of the record industry and the historical facts. More detailed investigation of the effects of the censorship is sorely needed. Gauntlett (p. 100) does not state his reasons for putting August 1936 as the *terminus ante* for underworld songs. Actually, according to Stellakis Perpiniadis,¹⁹ the ban became effective at the beginning of 1937, though the law A.N. 45/1936 was introduced at the end of August 1936. It is obvious that by 1937, most titles alluding to drugs had disappeared from company catalogs. Still Yiovan Tsaous' *Πέντε*

μάγκες on Col. DG6192 (reissued on LP *Απαγορευμένα ρεμπετικά 2*) appears in the 1937 Columbia catalog. Gauntlett (p. 342) says that this was the highest numbered underworld song in the catalogs, but we find Toundas' *Κουβέντες στη φυλακή* on Col. DG6217 in the 1937 catalog.

A preferable periodisation would be a system similar to that proposed by Gauntlett who recognizes the fundamental change in 1936-1937, and moreover distinguishes between the two basic styles as evidenced on the records, the cafe-aman style (dominated by the accompaniment of violin, guitar and santouri) and bouzouki style. We can follow the cafe-aman style since 1910 (from the earliest Asia Minor recordings); the other begins its documented life in Greece in 1933. Gauntlett has also shown the difference in outlook between the songs of the two styles – a subject completely overlooked by Damianakos.²⁰

There is, however, a much more difficult problem to consider. The data of Damianakos which have justly been criticised by Gauntlett for being impressionistic at best, are misleading about a much more serious problem. Damianakos has not considered the fundamental question that the number of songs with underworld themes, for example, is only partially indicative of ideological importance. What may be more indicative of ideological trends is the popularity of the songs. We need to know much more about which songs were popular in terms of sales, and which were not.

A kind of Top Twenty listing would be much more telling about the ideological tendencies in the songs and in the public than the number of songs. Also it is far more indicative that some songs came out on several different recordings at the same time by different artists. For example, Papazoglou's song *Λαχανάδες* came out in 1934 on at least four different records²¹ by Roukounas and Katina Homatianou (both on Parlophone), by Rosa Eskenazi on HMV, and by Stellakis on Columbia. Competition between the companies may explain part of this; but the main thing is surely that the song must have been extremely popular, and thus more indicative of dominant taste than a larger number of individual though less popular songs. As it is, we cannot be certain whether Papazoglou's hit in fact was a hit or what sale it enjoyed. There is, however, a tantalising document that may help us further. Schorelis (3, 78) reproduces the account of royalties paid to Papazoglou in the third quarter of 1934. From this account it appears that Stellakis' recording on Columbia DG 6041 of *Λαχανάδες/Μπαμπέσα* sold 580 copies in that period, the one with Eskenazi on HMV A02141 sold 332, while the two on Parlophone 169 and 174 copies, the latter probably the recording by Roukounas on Parlophone B21765 c/w *Μαρίκα Χασικλού*. This document is revealing in another respect for it shows that *Παπατζής* was not recorded in 1935 as it is claimed in the liner notes to the Papazoglou set on ACBA 1132/33, since Papazoglou received royalties for it in 1934. It also shows that *Μπαμπέσα* was issued and probably also recorded in 1934, not in 1935 as Hatzidoulis (*Ρεμπ. ιστ.* 49 n. 13) says.

Apart from illustrating thus the widespread confusion about recording dates, the material gives us a unique glimpse of the actual sales of records by one of the most prolific and popular composers of the period. In this connection it is also worth pointing out that Papazoglou had other songs recorded more than once. The song *Μπαμπέσα*, as we have seen, is a case in point. Apart from the two recordings by Stellakis on Col. DG6041 and by Eskenazi on HMV A02141, it was also recorded by Sofia Karivali on Odeon GA1808. Stellakis in Hatzidoulis' *Ρεμπ. ιστ.* 18 implies that this was a greater success than any of Papazoglou's other songs, but the 1934 list does not bear this out. Similarly, *Βάλε με στην αγκαλιά σου* was recorded by Stellakis and issued on Col. DG6033 c/w *Αγιοθαδωρίτσα*, by Eskenazi on HMV A02206, by Roukounas on Parlophone and finally by Marika Kanaropoulou on Parlophone (?); this last one is extremely rare, and I only know it from the LP reissue on the Papazoglou set ACBA 1132/33. What we would want to know in order to evaluate these data on the number and sales of the recordings, is the normal sales numbers of new recordings. It is interesting that this 1934 list mentions a record from

1933, *Ναργυλές/Νικοκλάκας* (on Col. DG494)²² which was sold, at the time covered by the account, in 132 copies. It seems, however, from the Stellakis autobiography in Hatzidoulis, that Papazoglou's sales were the biggest of the time; Stellakis claims that no other could dream of such sales, and that only Tsitsanis, Bayanderas and Papaioannou later matched Papazoglou's sales success. It is evident that there is a field here for further research. Gauntlett (74 n. 84) mentions that in 1927, 800,000 records were the total volume of records sold in Greece. But since we know nothing about how many of these were rebetika, the number has no great relevance. Papaioannou²³ claimed that his own *Φαληριώτισσα* issued in 1936 on Odeon (LP reissue on Margophone 9102) sold enough copies during the first month on the market to give him royalties amounting to 44,000 dr. which translated into copies seems to be around 12,500 copies sold. This was by his own admission a quite exceptional sale for the period.²⁴

At any rate it should be possible to throw further light on this part of rebetika history, and I think that these data are much more significant than numbers of songs on a given theme. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that the success of a given song may not be easy to explain. The history of popular music presents us with strange records which quite unexpectedly became hits. Connoisseurs of R & B records will think of a particularly revolting hit by Bobby Marchan from 1960 about a man who kills his girlfriend and her lover, delivered in slow narrative dwelling on the details of the murder.²⁵

Whatever one may think of the significance of Damianakos' data, it is plain that they are built on very slippery ground. No one knows whether Petropoulos' anthology can be considered a fair and representative selection. Until we have a complete collection of rebetika songs recorded, we had better let all statistics alone. Any researcher who has worked with the Petropoulos anthology will know that it is by no means complete. The dangers inherent in analysis on Damianakos' principles can be seen from his findings that while the theme of love seems almost absent from the earliest songs, some 45 percent of the songs from the "classic" period have love as their subject matter. If this were true it would certainly be interesting and would point to a completely different world outlook in the post-1922 songs as compared with the songs from the early period. The figure, however, is very misleading for two reasons. The early material is doubtful and far from representative even if we could be sure how to define it. Second, the songs about drugs and the underworld disappear after 1936-1937, leaving love songs a free field. On the other hand, we should be wary in stating too categorically apparent effects of the censorship. Gauntlett (101) speaks of a decline of the number of compositions recorded, which may be true, but one would surely like to see this claim documented. The reason for a decline may just be that the songs from the Metaxas era were not interesting for the collectors of the anthologies. As far as I know, no one has tried to determine the volume of recording activity in the period. Thus Gauntlett's analysis of rebetika from the Metaxas period may well be equally one-sided and simplified. In this connection I would also point out that a prolific singer of love songs like G. Kavouras cannot be dated wholly to the Metaxas period. This artist did also record in the previous period; a good example of an aspect of his work not documented in the 3 LP set²⁶ is the Papazoglou composition *Το παιδί του δρόμου* which has been reissued on the previously mentioned set ACBA 1132/33. He also recorded another drug song, *Ξεμάγκας* which I have not heard and only know from a reference in Hatzidoulis' Tsitsanis book (p. 224, n.9). I do also have doubts whether a song like *Μην κλαις* (no. C53 in Gauntlett's collection of samples) about a murder for reasons of family honor could really have been accepted by the censorship. This song does not seem to be strictly in line with the moral principles of the "Third Hellenic Civilisation":

Μην κλαις, μη χύνεις δάκρυα, μη σπάζεις και χτυπιέσαι
μανούλα μου, δεν φταίω 'γω, και μη με καταριέσαι.

Η αδερφή μου ήθελε για να με ξεφτιλίσει,
γι' αυτό, γλυκιά μανούλα μου, δεν έπρεπε να ζήσει.

Ήταν κακούργα κι άτιμη ψεύτρα και μας γελούσε,
και μες στο σίτι έφερνε κάποιονε και μιλούσε.

Όταν την είδα, μάνα μου, μαράθηκα σαν φύλλο,
αγκαλιασμένη ήτανε μ'ένα δικό μου φίλο.

Τη βάρεσα μες στην καρδιά, κακιά ήταν η ώρα,
και τώρα κλαίω, μάνα μου, κι εγώ σε ζένη χώρα.²⁷

The fact that most of the songs on the three LP Kavouras set, as well as those published by Gauntlett, are safely within accepted morality may be significant for the chronology, but I have an uneasy feeling that the drug songs were not seen fit to include in the set. The early date, by the way, for the song printed above seems now corroborated; the record is in the December 1935 Supplementary catalog, on Parl. B21846.

That love songs seem to be absent from the pre-1922 repertoire in Petropoulos may have more to do with the predilections of the collector and with the ground covered.²⁸ There are several songs from Asia Minor that can only be classified as love songs but they may not have been known to Petropoulos, or alternatively he may not have found them interesting or relevant. Much of his pre-1922 material are songs which he came to know in prison, and I do not think that one can wholly exclude the possibility that songs were collected to prove or to suggest that rebetika originated in the lower strata of Greek society. On the question of thematic changes, Damianakos also finds that the post-war period rejects the subproletarian ideology and tends to express a proletarian, working class outlook. The few traces of references to narcotics and the underworld are said to be insignificant relics of the prewar period. Unfortunately, Damianakos has overlooked the fact that the censorship reintroduced after the war effectively stopped such songs dealing with underworld themes from being recorded. It is highly indicative that such songs as Tsitsanis' *Δροσούλα* (available on Hatzidoulis' collection *Αφιέρωμα στο Βασίλη Τσιτσάνη*, Margo 8221) were recorded in 1946 but prohibited shortly afterwards. This song and a few others that came out after recording had been resumed following a pause during 1941-1945 and before the censorship had been reactivated, is wholly within the pre-Metaxas ideology and style, and one can find a very significant number of echoes and formulae from traditional drug songs in Tsitsanis' composition. As far as I can see, the public for such songs existed as much in 1946 (due to the relative freedom for drug addicts during the German Occupation) as it did in 1936. To deny this on the basis of the few songs that were recorded and released in 1946 gives a completely false impression. Therefore, I cannot agree with Gauntlett (187) who says that the underworld disappeared in 1945. Why, then, did the very market-conscious Tsitsanis in 1946 record a song of this type, if the public for it had vanished?

Furthermore, the proletarian tendency is much overstated, to say the least, and it is to my mind extremely difficult to accept Damianakos' claim that this tendency is the most important factor to emerge. To be quite frank, this is wishful thinking among Leftists who have now at long last come to terms with rebetika. I do, however, agree with Damianakos that there is a new feeling in rebetika composed during the Civil War and after, but it is one of deep depression, insecurity and total hopelessness, a veiled reaction to the shattered hopes for a better world created during Resistance and Liberation. I hope to return to this at a later occasion, but I would strongly protest here against any theory that tries to force post-war rebetika into a proletarian strait-jacket. There is only one song in the whole

material that differs from what can be found in the pre-war songs, Tsitsanis' *Οι φάμπρικες* (which is available on several reissues). Moreover, even this song will not very easily lend itself to Damianakos' proletarian theories, being a rather romantic picture of the life of industrial workers. This is all. The other songs mentioned by Damianakos can all of them be closely paralleled. For instance, Keromytis' song *Το πορτοφόλι* does not differ in outlook from pre-war songs against wealth. Working-class proudness can equally well be found in Kavouras' *Αφού μου λες πως μ' αγαπάς* (for the text see Gauntlett C58). And for the appearance of the people in a 1946 recording by Stratos Payoutmzis, one can refer to Markos Vamvakaris' pre-war *Όσοι γίνουν πρωθυπουργοί*.²⁹ What we need is analysis on a much more secure foundation: complete and correct editions of the texts from the original recordings and a precise chronology, based on discographical information. Until then, socio-historical interpretation will be at best impressionistic guesswork, or abstract theorizing.

Most of this paper has been concerned with criticism. I will make no apology for this, for I find that one of the main reasons why we are still at the very beginning of a scholarly investigation of the whole field, which should have started long ago when the older musicians were still alive, is that important information has been withheld for commercial reasons or bungled out of sheer ignorance. Writers on rebetika are still too much concerned with the paraphernalia, the small-talk and petty intrigues, and mostly have no idea of how to go about collecting useful and reliable information (or if they have, they tend to keep it to themselves). I do not wish to reduce rebetika to tedious scholasticism after all, rebetika is love, sorrow, dance, music and sheer fun – but to treat artists and their art in a responsible and meaningful way.'

NOTES

1. Compare for instance the difference in sound quality between the two reissues of Kavouras' *Τσάκα τσούκα σπάστα* (Parl. B21918) on *Ρεμπέτικη ιστορία* 4 (with the title *Μη παραπονιέσαι*) and on the Kavouras 3 LP set Margo 8262. Part of the problem must be that owners of excellent or near-mint copies are unwilling to loan records for reissue purposes. And of course some companies are not prepared to pay for better quality.
2. In the present paper I shall have occasion to mention the 6 LP set *Ρεμπέτικη ιστορία* (REGAL 14C034-70364, 70365, 70366, 70378, 70379 and 70380) very often. This series must not be confused with Hatzidoulis' book *Ρεμπέτικη ιστορία* (Αθήνα, Νεφέλη n.d.) which contains important autobiographical material on some artists. I should also mention the series *Οι μεγάλοι του ρεμπέτικου* 1-19 (on Margo).
3. Especially the reissues of U.S. recordings which I intend to deal with elsewhere. The important reissue of Yiorgos Batis (ACBA 1131) is very disappointing in this respect; there is absolutely no information (but some errors) on the sleeve.
4. I refer to this set on ACBA 1132/33 very often. One would guess that part of the problem is due to copyright; some of these reissues are undoubtedly bootlegs. I presume that the U.S. recordings are still owned by Victor and Columbia and not public domain.
5. The booklet accompanying the LP gives for the track *Εγώ θέλω πριγκιπέσσα* the names of Yiovan Tsaous, K. Skarvelis, (Yiannis) Davos and D. Arapakis, directed by the composer Panayiotis Toundas. It is not stated which instruments the musicians play, and one can only hear two instruments, Yiovan Tsaous' saz and a guitar. What were the others doing?
6. In the liner notes to this LP Tasos Schorelis claims to give the exact recording dates as they have been given on the label of the original recordings. What he reproduces, not without some error in copying, are the dates of the patent registered. Thus one can identify the tracks claimed to have been recorded on January 21, 1913, as having been taken from pre-1925 Columbia originals.

7. Βασίλης Τσιτσάνης, *Για πάντα* 1-6 (HMV 034-4010261, 4010271, 401042-1, 401043-1, 401044-1. Since 1986 the series seems to have been discontinued. It is to be hoped that it will be resumed.

8. There is a good 4 LP set of Joanna Georgakopoulou's recordings on what will surely be a discographer's nightmare, on three different labels. Columbia has initiated a series of reissues which unfortunately seems to be just as unsystematic as previous efforts (*Ο μουσικός θησαυρός της Columbia*).

9. I have been unable to find out on what principles (if any) the Tsitsanis series has been organised. Dimitrios Ranios in the uninformative sleeve notes claims that the reissue will be systematical. It is very interesting that from vol. 3, the liner notes give the month and the year of the recordings. This obviously means that the companies know the dates, but it escapes me why we are not given the exact date. Unverified rumors have circulated that the archives of the companies have been destroyed; it would seem that there are other reasons for the reluctance of the companies to open their files to researchers.

10. I am not suggesting any functional similarity as has often been done. This problem would in any case require an in-depth analysis; but I think it is fair to compare the two fields both of which have been neglected as being unworthy of serious attention and marked by social stigma. The classical blues discographies are John Godrich & Robert M. W. Dixon, *Blues and Gospel Records 1902-1942* (London, 1969) and Mike Leadbitter & Neil Slaven, *Blues Records 1943-1966* (New York, 1968).

11. Ηλίας Πετρόπουλος, *Ρεμπέτικα τραγούδια* ² (Αθήνα, 1974). A much enlarged and revised edition came out in 1979 but it has not yet been widely used in the literature. Gauntlett used the 1968 (= 1974) edition to which I also refer for the reader's convenience. Τάσος Σχορέλης, *Ρεμπετική ανθολογία Α. 'Α. 'Α.* (Αθήνα, Πλέθρον, 1977) is differently organised and has interesting historical and biographical material on the artists.

12. *Rebetika. Carmina Graeciae Recentioris. A Contribution to the Definition of the Term and the Genre rebetiko tragoudi through Detailed Analysis of its Verses and of the Evolution of its Performance* (Athens: Denise Harvey, 1985). Notwithstanding this monstrous title, the book is easily read; it gives an astounding amount of sober information and its texts are in the main reliable. Gauntlett gives perhaps a too clinical view of the rebetika and has not managed to liberate himself from the requirements of the academic dissertation. A revision in a more handy format would be welcome.

13. *Road to Rembetiko* (Athens: Denise Harvey, 1975). The Greek translation contains a lot of interesting excerpts from the post-war Greek discussion of the rebetika.

14. *Κοινωνολογία του ρεμπέτικου* (Αθήνα, 1976). In the following I particularly refer to his paper first published in French in 1971 and now in his collection of essays *Παράδοση ανταρσίας και λαϊκός πολιτισμός* (Αθήνα, Πλέθρον, 1987) where his other relevant papers can be found.

15. *Κοινωνολογική ιστορία του ρεμπέτικου* (Θεσσαλονίκη, Μπαρμπουνάκης, 1987). Nothing published after 1979 is referred to. Texts and comments have been lifted wholesale from other people's books without credit. The section Αμανέδες has been taken from Dragoumis. Her performance in Greek history is both woefully inadequate (see for instance on the Civil War, p. 78). Her knowledge about rebetika can be fathomed from her making Dragatsis and Ogdontakis into two persons, not to mention the story about Halkias' records and the people at Columbia. There is only one possible explanation of how and why this book came to be printed: to make easy profit from the public interest in serious sociological analysis of rebetika. The entry in the bibliography on Vamvakaris' biography shows that the author does not know what "copyright" means. It comes as no surprise.

16. When quoting the series of records I usually add "LP" in order not to confuse it with Hatzidoulis' book referred to above (n. 2). The LP cover gives no information about the date of Vidalis' recording.

17. Another interesting but unscholarly produced series. The 3 LPs issued (at least until now) contain extremely rare material, edited by D. Ranios. The uninformative sleeve notes would suggest that in spite of the obvious commercial intent of this series, Ranios is at pains to apologize and to explain why these songs about drugs are interesting today; as it is well-known, Greek narcotics law does not distinguish between different drugs, and even private use of hashish is severely punished. Thus companies have to be very careful when trying to cash in on public interest in drug songs. Again nothing is said about the original recordings, some of which are American.

18. That there is a connection is evident from the fact that the wonderful LP of Asia Minor recordings on the Falireas Bros. Αφ. 14 *Αυθεντικά τραγούδια ηχογραφημένα στη Σμύρνη και στην Πόλη πριν απο το 1922* features early examples of the work of artists later active in Greece, e.g. Lefteris Menemenlis and Vidalis.

19. *Ρεμπέτικη ιστορία* 30. It also needs closer investigation of which songs were subject to the ban, especially since the first song to be banned was the relatively harmless Βαρβάρα by Toundas, recorded by Stellakis Perpiniadis.

20. I would also refer to a forthcoming paper on these problems by Suzanne Aulin and Peter Vejleskov who have made a detailed study of the early drug songs.

21. Hatzidouulis in his book on Rosa Eskenazi (*Αυτά που θυμάμαι* – which is rather a misnomer, since the old lady does not seem to remember very well – p. 88) says that there were five recordings and that the fifth version was by Marika Kanaropoulou.

22. Hatzidouulis gives two different numbers both of which are impossible; he does not seem to know what is relevant and what is not when quoting catalog- and masternumbers. For instance, he often quotes totally irrelevant numbers from modern 45 and 33 microgroove issues. In his book *Ρεμπέτικη ιστορία* the letter “G” which was used by some companies to indicate Greek records, more often than not has become “b”; in the Tsitsanis autobiography which repeats the same comments, the letter has become a capital “B”. In note 18 in *Ρεμπέτικη ιστορία* 52 he says that *Ο Νικοκλάκας* was issued on Col. b829 while in note 15 *Αργιλές* is claimed to have been issued on Col. W 697-A 494. Neither of these numbers can denote Columbia Greek series nor be masternumbers. Some Greek masters were denoted “WG”; due to our ignorance about Columbia’s system I cannot solve this problem without access to the original record.

23. *Ντόμπα και σταράτα. Αυτοβιογραφία* 40 with note 4 (p. 50f). Also, this excellent testimony to the life of one of the most likeable rebetika veterans was edited by Hatzidouulis.

24. I do not think one can get much help from the companies about the actual sales, but the individual musicians and copyright holders might be able to supply some of the necessary information.

25. Bobby Marchan, "There Is Something on Your Mind" (Fire 1022). The text is printed in Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the Cities* (London: Souvenir Press, 1971) 213-14. When this record was issued in June 1960 it climbed to no. 22 in *Billboard*'s R & B Chart.

26. Margo 8260-8262 edited by Anestis Kavouras with finer notes by Panayiotis Kounadis. Apart from these LPs Kavouras is not well represented in the reissues. There are a few further tracks by him on *Απαγορευμένα ρεμπετικά 2, Σεέετης είμαι χασικλής* and on LP *Ρεμπέτικη ιστορία 1, Ο ζωντανός ο χωρισμός*, apart from the title mentioned in the text.

27. This transcription made by our rebetika study group at the Dept. of Modern Greek and Balkan Studies, University of Copenhagen, is part of a larger project on rebetika before 1940, and is, moreover, at variance with Gauntlett C53 and Schorelis 3,24 – both of which are wrong.

28. Gauntlett has also made this point, which I find valid and important.

29. See Damianakos, p. 144. On p. 150 he has to quote a song from 1959 to find evidence for the proletarian outlook in post-war rebetika.

30. I would like to thank Gail Holst, Lisbet Torp, Markos Dragoumis, Helen Papanikolas and Panayiotis Kounadis for help, discussion and criticism on several points. They cannot, of course, be held responsible for the views advocated in the above. I have also had the advantage of presenting earlier versions of the paper in Copenhagen, Harvard and Queens College, New York.