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Modern Laments in Northwestern Greece, Their Importance in Social and Musical Life and the "Making" of Oral Tradition

ABSTRACT
Having as a starting point a typical phrase -"all our songs once were laments"- repeated to the researcher during fieldwork, this study aims to explore the multiple ways in which lament practices become part of other musical practices in community life or change their functionalities and how they contribute to music making. Though the meaning of this typical phrase seems to be inexplicable, nonetheless as a general feeling it is shared by most of the people in the field. Starting from the Epirot instrumental 'moiroloi', extensive field research reveals that many vocal practices considered by former researchers to be imitations of instrumental musical practices, are in fact, definite lament vocal practices-cries, embodied and reformed in different ways in other musical contexts and serving in this way different social purposes. Furthermore, multiple functionalities of lament practices in social life reveal their transformations into songs and the ways they contribute to music making in oral tradition while at the same time confirming the flexibility of the border between lament and song established by previous researchers.

KEYWORDS
Lament practices
Death rituals
Moiroloi
Musical speech
Lament-song
Symbolic meaning
Collective memory

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The first attempts[1] to document Greek folk songs in texts by both Greeks and foreigners included references to, or descriptions of, lament practices. Claude Fauriel, in his book on Greek folk songs, describes the lament of a woman in Metsovo (Fauriel, 1824; Padiotis, 1988: 114-115)[2]. At the very beginning of the 20th century, Wace and Thompson described a funeral in the village of *Samarina* (Wace-Thompson, 1989: 124-126), noting the co-existence of both Greek and Vlach languages[3]. On the island of Chios, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the first documentation of Greek-speaking lament melodies, by Hubert Pernot and Paul de Flem, appeared complete with musical transcriptions (Pernot & deFlem, 2006: 174-189).

Lament practices in Greece can still be found (though with much difficulty), mainly among the older generation. They are heard very rarely at funerals today. Nonetheless, they have been preserved in Greece and in Eastern Europe more than in Western Europe, not least because the relative leniency of the Orthodox Church towards pagan traditions aided their survival (Tolbert, 1990: 80), whatever the fears and reactions might be[4]. The relative leniency of the Church is given symbolic expression in certain oral traditions among women attributing a special meaning to their lament practices: "The Virgin Mary herself ordered the women to cry for her Son. You women please cry for my Son…. The Virgin Mary lamented for the first time

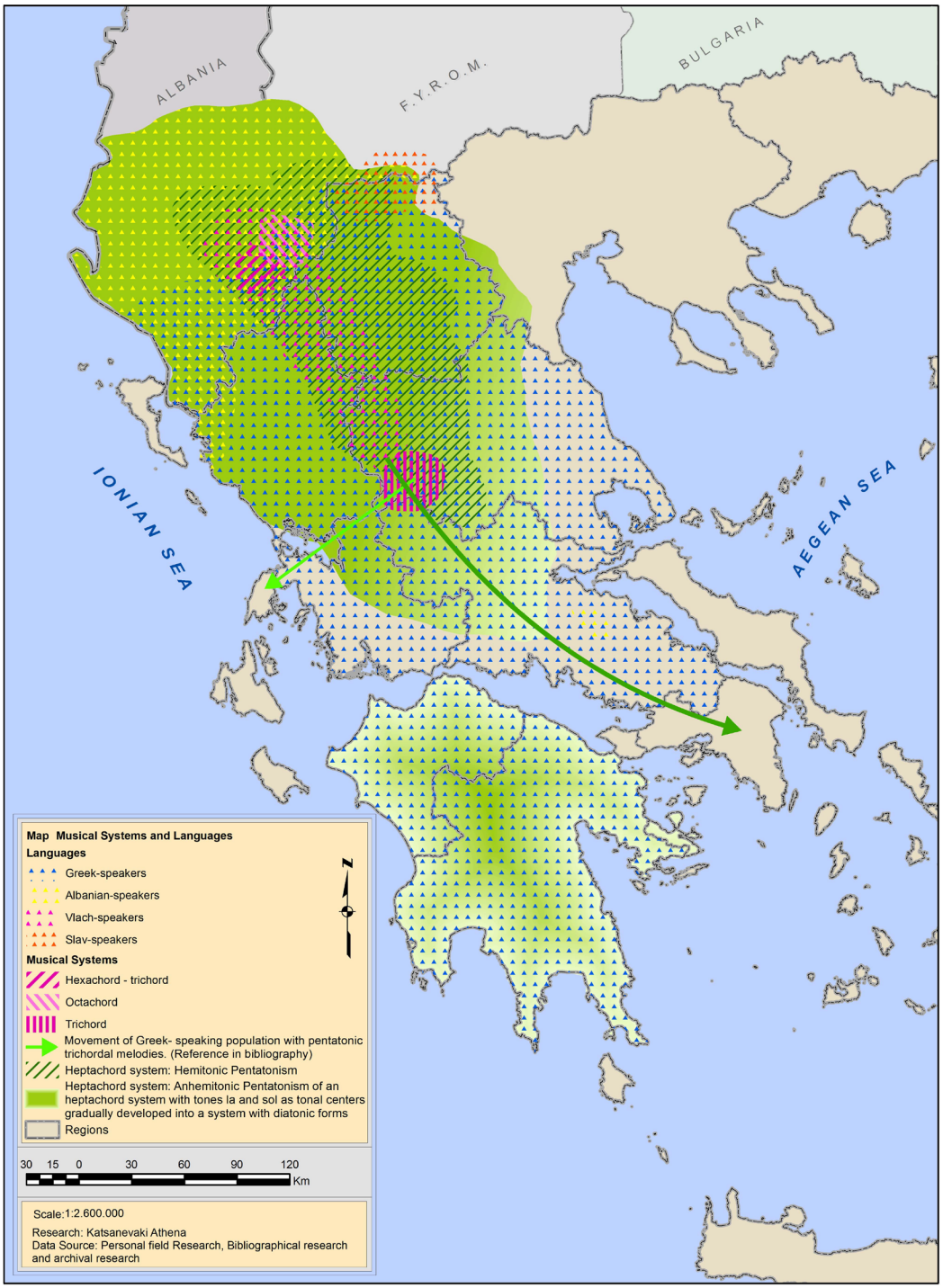
[1] This chapter is a based on fieldwork that has been presented on various occasions (see Katsanevaki, 1991; 1998-1999; 2006; 2009; 2011; 1998-2014). Research (in the years 1990-2014) took place in small-scale communities (of about 200) and in towns, with reference to the vocal music of the Pindus Mountain-range and the surrounding areas. The result was a compilation of more than 320 sung laments originating from almost 84 villages, most of them in Greek but also in Vlach (an eastern Romance language) and in the local Southern Slav dialect of Greek Macedonia. Fieldwork considered each community as a unique locus in order to perform comparative work (see Szirmai, 1967: 315) in related cultural areas within a network developed through my personal relationships with the locals. For a summary of the results considering the musical systems, languages, cries and melodies see the maps at the end of this chapter. Musical examples 3, 9, 14, 19 are representative melodies of the musical data compiled in the three different languages of the area. They all follow the same musical system and the same rules for music making (**Map 1.** The musical systems and languages).

[2] In the years 1994-1995, during my field research in Metsovo, I documented laments (*botsi* in Vlach): there is one fixed melody upon which the text is improvised in fixed verses (for the musical transcription and texts, Katsanevaki, 1998 Part B: 497-503).

[3] I confirmed this during my field research.

[4] See Lysaght, 1997: 67-68 for the restrictions to lamenting imposed in Ireland by the Catholic Church.

for her Son Jesus Christ" (comment during an interview in *Kotyli – Grammos Mountain*). Similar notions are found in the text of the *Lament of the Virgin Mary*: "You My Mother don't kill yourself, because all mothers will kill themselves, but instead console yourself, so that all mothers will do the same" (sung in the village of *Chorygos*).



In the map, only concrete linguistic areas are defined
It is possible to note smaller linguistic areas with different languages in some of the areas.

Map 1. The musical systems and languages

The emotional dimension of lament practices is apparent in earlier descriptions of funerals (Fauriel, 1824: 82)[5]. For the women I interviewed it was usually hard to sing even a few verses of a lament. The women would refuse to sing them out of context[6]. In any case, if their children were at home or if it was the time of a village feast or a wedding, they believed that lamenting would destroy the festive mood of the occasion. And if an ailing husband was at home, to sing a lament would be to tempt fate. The symbolic meaning of the laments is so closely linked to death, that to these women, it seemed all but inevitable that a performance of laments might actually cause a death (see also in De la Breteque, 2010: 10). Laments would also remind them of the suffering they had experienced in the past. This, in fact, reveals the special functionality and power of lament practices, their capacity to release the suppressed psychological and physical pain affecting the inner balance of those individuals in the community, who have suffered the feeling of deprivation death brings. Lament practices are so powerful that they can revive the feeling of deprivation and threaten the psychological balance again, so that in most cases attempts to record a lament would be interrupted either by me or by the performers themselves.

Nonetheless, there is also a common feeling among the local people in Western Greece, especially in the area around Pindus (namely Epirus, Western Macedonia and Thessaly), that somehow other songs, and vocal music more generally, are related to lament practices. This general idea was summarized in one typical phrase repeated to me during my field-research "*Ola ta tragoudia mas itan moiroloia*" [All our songs were once laments][7]. Unable to understand the hidden meaning of these

[5] Fauriel makes definite comments on the laments in Greece regarding the improvisation of the text, the existence of definite poetic metre and melodic pattern in each area of Greece, and of "very high-pitched", "sharp" musical tones at the end of the melodies (see the hie! phenomenon). He reports the importance of lamenting as an honour to the dead documenting that women practiced outside in the lands or the mountains to "compose" laments making appropriate texts in order to be ready in case of death (Fauriel, 1824: 79-81).

[6] In one or two cases when the women I interviewed were semi-professional (meaning that they were recognized by the community for their capacity to perform the laments in the funerals) I did not have any difficulty in recording and their reactions were positive and represented their capacity and responsibility with comments like that "You know to how many people I have said farewell??" (i.e. in *Krokos Kozanis*).

[7] In other areas there are similar notions as in the case of Asia Minor and the *amanedes* (Gail Holst-Warhaft, Amanes: The Legacy of the Oriental Mother, Section "The Amanes"). See also

words, I wondered if perhaps they originated from comments related to the striking effect of instrumental pieces known as '*moiroloia*' (laments), performed by clarinet players from Epirus at local festivals. After many years in the field, I came to realize that the phrase was true in a deeper sense, as an explanation and interpretation of the importance and the multitude of transformed functions of lament practices in community life:

Specific musical phenomena, together with the mobility of both melodies and texts as they are transferred from one social function to another, offer concrete evidence for this thesis, which on the face of it might seem a little naïve.

Previous Research and the Purpose of This Research

Lament practices in Greece have long been a focus for the social and textual analysis of formal and improvised texts[8]. Though most research has focused on the social dimension, and on textual analysis in a social context, certain researchers have made comments that reveal the need for a more systematic approach to the musical dimension of lament practices. Danforth makes an initial comment about the surface melodic similarity between lament and song melodies, but without further musical analysis (Danforth, 2004: 157). Herzfeld's work reflects the necessity to research the musical context of lament practices (Herzfeld, 1981: 51-52). He finds small hints in

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in the same work about relationships between laments and lullabies (op.cit), (though I didn't have such hints in my area of research). Texts and songs that refer to the Fall of Cities equally participate to the probable relation of laments to songs, especially the *Amanedes*, (Gail Holst Warhaft, 2016*:* 252-269).

[8] The texts of the Greek laments were a major topic of philological research (Kassis, 1979, 1980, 1981; Tsouderos, 1976), with the most important contribution by Guy Saunier, who comments on the lament texts and offers a detailed description of the ritual context in Greece (Cuy Saunier, 1999). Apart from the work by Margaret Alexiou (based on social context, text and historical analysis), one of the most important works that gives information to many aspects of this paper but in a textual, historical, and a context analysis is the work of Gail Holst-Warhaft who also points on the dangers of a site-specific work in anthropology (Gail Holst-Warhaft, 1992: 32-33). Many conclusions of her work as well as of the anthropological analysis of previous researchers are supported by the musical analysis in this paper. Other anthropological studies include Lalioti's dissertation (Lalioti, 1993) and the work of Psychogiou (Psychogiou, 1998). There were other contributions with a focus on specific social dimensions, such as Seremetakis 1990: 505, 507; Caraveli, 1980: 138; Caraveli, 1982: 140, 154; Herzfeld, 1993: 243-244. Loring Danforth's work "The death rituals in rural Greece", is a detailed description of the ritual in a village close to Mount Olympus, with an analysis of the social context. About the melodies of the laments of *Asterousia* in Crete see Rassidakis-Spohr (1990), and Kouri (1994) for a Maniot lament melody.

literature about the musical and textual similarities between lament and song, but no information that might indicate "how far rural Greeks themselves consciously perceive any kind of connection between stylistic resemblance and ritual meaning". He concludes that "if one could similarly show that Greek villagers made explicit reference to musical parallels between wedding songs and *miroloia* when discussing actual events in their own communities, the nature of the analogy between the two genres would become more accessible" (Herzfeld, 1981: 51-52). Since such explicit comments are not part of any spontaneous dialogue or discussion among local people, it seems that Herzfeld's point might have more relevance in the case of the kind of indirect information I was given ('all our songs once were laments'). Hertzfeld's and Danforth's brief comments on the musical relationship between laments and songs can be verified by detailed documentation and analysis of local musical genres in a wide range of communities, and this was the first aim of my research.

In this, my aims coincided with those of Auerbach (1983-1984, and 1987). Auerbach refers to women's social transition from childhood to womanhood as a passage from carefree singing to laments, which embody the experience of pain and grief to the extent that it becomes a way of life. She mentions that in many cases women who have experienced both styles can change the style of melody and arrange the text in such a way as to pass from one style to the other in order to express the difference of mood they want to present properly. Actually, this study was the first to refer to the musical characteristics of the laments of '*Kalochori*' and to discuss their links to a social function.

Concerning the flexibility of the boundary between lament and song, she focuses on song → lament (Auerbach, 1983-1984: 175-189, 209-228, 280-302) and not lament → song. However in this paper I suggest that, while the process song → lament is attested in the synchronic dimension and its analysis, the alternative process – lament → song is revealed over a much longer historical period attested in the extended network of melodies in related communities. I explained how this reveals the historical dimension of the melodies in Katsanevaki, 2012: 154-155; 1998-2014: 427-431).

Lament practices are thus presented as a major factor in musical creativity. When a song becomes a lament, it is usually about the text. When a lament becomes a song, the melody is involved too, because it serves very special symbolism in the course of a ritual. Music making in the case of lament practices is distinctive and carries its unique symbolism with it. It is also an aim of this paper to give some insight into how psychological impulses (related to human needs and survival strategies) become the main motive for the 'making' of laments, and in the end how they (the laments) are transferred into songs, and (less often), special song melodies into laments thus contributing to 'music making'. Therefore, this paper will focus mainly on musical form leaving some space for local witness and I hope to show how extended quantitative documentation of melodies supports the results of the anthropological qualitative research presented by previous researchers in Greece or elsewhere and that quantitative and qualitative research, if conducted carefully can share their results.

Some Concerns on the Methodology

My research in Northwestern Greece (see footnote 1) lasted 25 years and is still in progress. I decided to be involved with this area because it was almost completely unexplored. My research did not focus on laments exclusively but laments were part of a wider research project. My research was mainly quantitative, in the sense that my main purpose after my first encounter with the people and the culture (musical or not) in 1990, was to locate the local repertory and to document vocal styles and melodies in an area which suffered intensive depopulation after World War II and the Civil war, as well as an intensive urbanization. But any quantitative fieldwork is somehow qualitative, and vice versa. As Giorgi says, "good research design follows the sense of the investigation and should not automatically state in an a priori way, what strategies must be used" (Giorgi, 2005: 80). Throughout the process of documentation of the vocal repertoire and the information corresponding with each recording, I had spontaneous discussions with my interviewees, during which comments revealed messages, concepts, symbolisms or functionalities, which I evaluated within the progress of fieldwork in the same or related communities. These discussions were not all recorded, so I mention them in a more general way, as a personal experience in the field, or (in this paper) refer to the most

characteristic of them. The laments or the other melodies in the musical transcriptions were recorded in the field (but not in their context, as it is not usually found today) in places where the women would feel comfortable to sing or lament or expose their personal experiences (at home or elsewhere). But this doesn't significantly change the musical result. Their experience with these songs or laments is so bound up with the context they belonged to, that the difficulty is not so much to ensure their consistency with the same musical form as it is performed during the rituals, but to persuade them to sing or to lament out of context. When they decide to do it, they follow the same path as they used to. Nonetheless, when I had the possibility to document in the course of a performance, I would do it. But for ethical reasons, in the case of laments, though I could have done it twice, I avoided it. I always felt that it would be an intervention and an intrusion into their personal lives if I tried to record them at their most vulnerable moments. I felt that it would be appropriating their most precious inner feelings by bringing them under public scrutiny. So I preferred to record memorial services instead of funereal ones.

I also don't refer to extended local witness regarding information about the musical parallels among the songs and the laments or other musical characteristics. I don't document extended interviews, but short indirect comments or statements given many times during the recordings or (more often) during spontaneous communication. It is a risk for an interviewer to ask the interviewees definite questions about specific musical characteristics. Regarding the musical characteristics they might either give very general or even misleading information. Very definite questions might bring about wrong answers. For example, the interlocutors can confirm that two songs with similar melodies are 'absolutely' or 'very' different, just because one of them is sung in the neighboring community with which they wish to be separate for various even antagonistic reasons. So, I decided to rely on long-lasting personal experience and documentation, as well as on the spontaneous comments of the women.

Slide Practices and Human Speech Related to Lament Practices. 'Tumbling Strains' and Cries (the 'hie!' and the 'lele!')

When describing in words the characteristics of this musical culture, one might focus on the flexible line of melody and the frequent use of upwards or downwards *glissandi*. There is also a tendency to produce more intensive descending *glissandi* at the end of the melodic phrases (Auerbach, 1983-1984: 104). These descending *glissandi* have been considered universal practices, and were called by Sachs "tumbling strains" (op.cit and Sachs, 1962: 49-54)[9].

Their importance for my analysis is their possible relationship with emotive speech, as recent research on music acoustics, music psychology, and history suggests that the "human voice is well suited to producing *portamento,* and that *portamento* is strongly related to emotional inflections in speech prosody, in that the voice often inflects spoken words to modulate it with an emotional meaning" (Schubert and Wolfe, 2013: 1-2, 5, 7).

At the same time, the frequent occurrence of cries (hie! and lele!) in the melodies of the region, while serving the funeral context as modes of weeping, also relates lament practices and songs to forms of emotive speech, and may help explain local information on the transfer of function from lament melodies and musical emotion into song.

[9] These phenomena, believed by the *Kulturkreis* theories to be "an archaic surviving layer of European (and possibly Universal) folklore", were not accepted as such by scholars in France, Britain and North America (Sorce-Keller, 2013: 1). Nonetheless, "no-one yet has proved the *Kulturkreis* approach to be wrong so far", and "whether we look at them from a diffusionist (monogenetic) or on the contrary, a polygenetic outlook, it does not ultimately make any substantial difference, as both would lead us to believe that such widespread cultural traits go back to a past, prior to recorded history" (Sorce-Keller, 2013: 1). These practices are also found in Europe (Demo, 1981; Elshekova, 1981; Georgescu, 1981) and in Northern Albania (see in Leotsakos, 1985: 36, for the *maje kraje*-pastoral cries and in Kondi, 2006: 195-288 for the *Gjama*-male lament). They might be the starting point for the *glissando*-practice in Northern Epirus (Southern Albania) and in Western Greece (Katsanevaki, 1998 Part A: 40-55). The persistence and functional flexibility of these practices can be explained in the words of Puchner Walter: "Folk culture as a constant ideological system with great continuity capacity has no crisis of identity, but integrates every new stimulus in the co-ordination system of its tradition, transforming the stimulus and giving it a new social functionality" (Puchner, 1986: 1).

The Hie! **Phenomenon and the Classification of its Functionality and Transformations in Musical and Social Contexts**

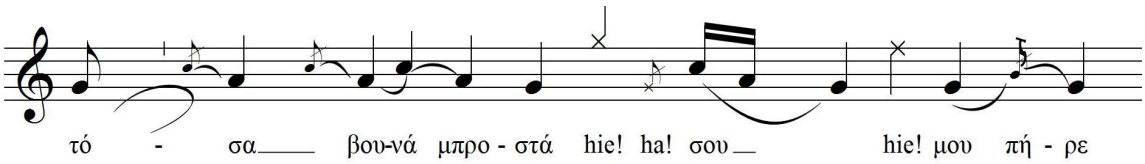
In the female vocal repertory of Thessaly, Baud-Bovy observed for the first time (Baud-Bovy, 1984: 49) "a high hie!, which is sung on the 7th or the octave of the tonic". Baud-Bovy didn't relate this directly to lament practices but rather to practices found in present-day South-Western Bulgaria, attested to by Timothy Rice (Rice, 1977: v, 82, ex.29)[10]. Further fieldwork (Katsanevaki, 1998 Part A: 58) revealed that the *hie!* Attested to by Baud-Bovywas specific in form, different musically from other cries, and strongly related to lament practices in Epirus and Western Macedonia in Greece (and Southern Albania). In these areas we can find the most characteristic function of the *hie!* as a form of weeping in the Greek-speaking laments of the area of *Kalama*s (Epirus) (CD Liavas, Lambros & Nitsiakos Vasilis, track 21) and in Northern Epirus (**Video 1.** Vlach speaking lament, and **Map 2.** The hie! phenomenon)

[10] Laios refers to this practice regarding instrumental *moiroloi (lament)* without connecting it to the vocal lament practices (I did so in Katsanevaki, 1998: 54).He related it to instrumental *gaida* (bagpipe) practices (Laios, 2001: 59). Thus, although he refers to a general affiliation of the instrumental *moiroloi* to vocal laments (Laios, 2001: 4, 59, 60), he does not relate this practice specifically to lament practices (Laios, 2001: 55, 58, 59), also arguing that "not much previous work (on music) has been looked upon" (Laios, 2001: 3). In 2003, Lolis related this practice to vocal laments (Lolis, 2003: 52; 2006: 39).Tole also referred to this practice found in the polyphony of Southern Albania (Northern Epirus) as a practice reflecting lament practices (Tole 2012: 66-67). Androulaki attributes a special symbolism to this exclamation (Androulaki, 2003).
This practice however should not be compared with other practices in the polyphonic texture. For example the voice of *Richtis* which changes the pitch to a smaller range is introduced (according to the witness of the singers I recorded with EckehardPistrick in *Kosovitsa* (in Southern Albania next to the Greek border) and *Agia Marina* (close to the village of *Ktismata*) in July 2007, when the group of singers comes to a good mood *(kefi)* and wishes to complete the texture of the polyphony. This voice introduces the disjunctive tone in a pentatonic heptachord system developing the whole musical texture to the pentatonic octachord system (see also Katsanevaki 1998-2014 Part A: 443-444).

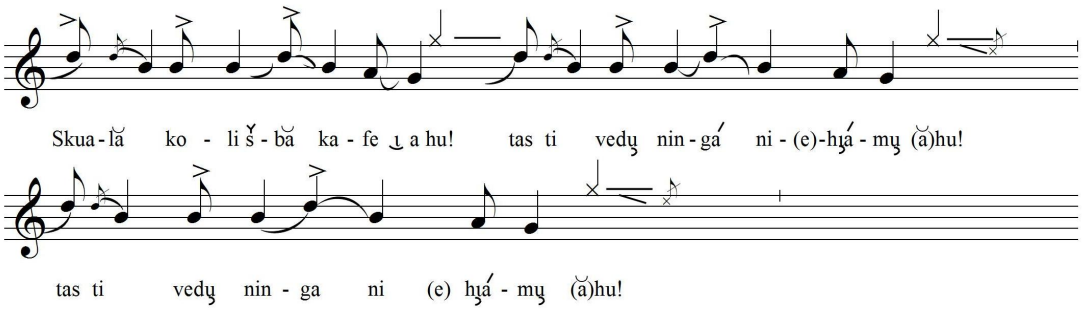
Map 2. The hie! phenomenon

Considering the musical characteristics of the *hie!*, I documented the following changes of functionality of the *hie!* in musical forms, from a lament practice to a musically decorative practice. It appears:

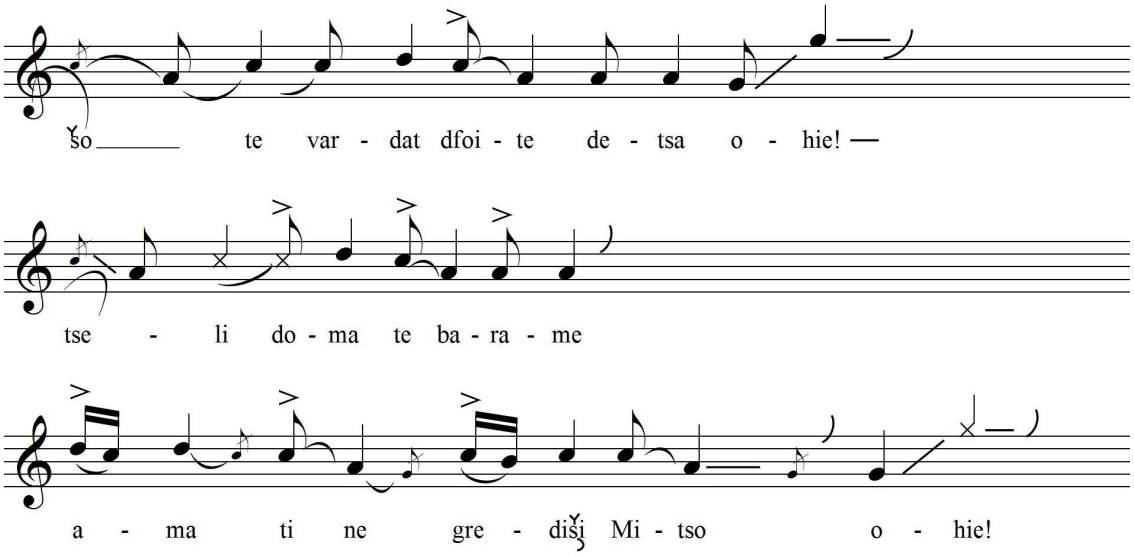
1. as a cry in lament practices in Epirus and Western Macedonia, *either* sung a seventh above the tonic (mus.ex.1, 2 , 3), in which case it is performed in the manner of a formal 'weeping' in the funeral context (Video 1), *or* sung on the subtonic an octave lower (mus. ex.4), in which case it is also performed as a formal 'weeping' in a funeral context but presenting a mood of sustained grieving than (as in the case of the upper 7th) an explosion of uncontrolled, high-pitched weeping (Video 1).



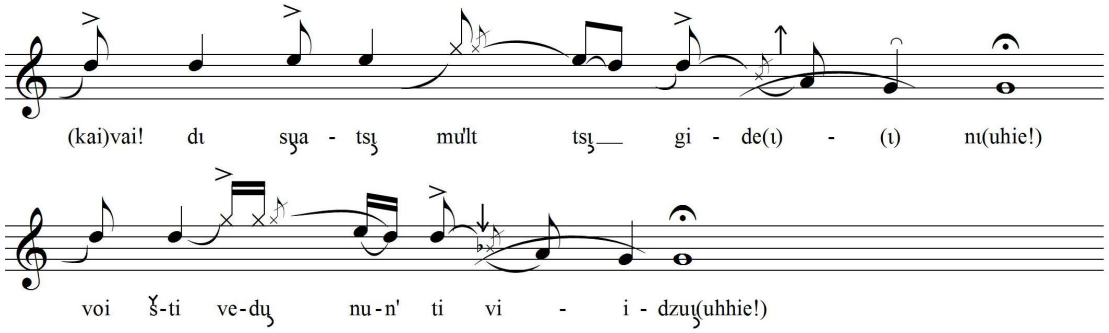
Mus. ex. 1



Mus. ex. 2



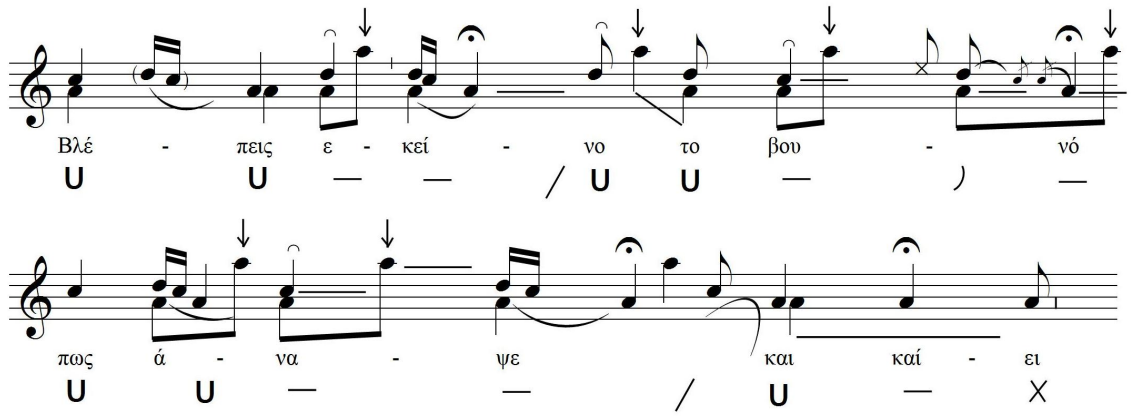
Mus. ex. 3



Mus. ex. 4

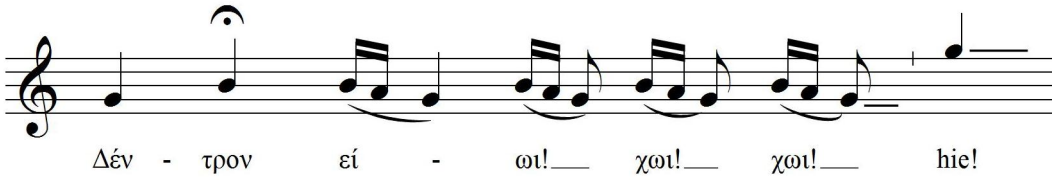
2. as a repeated upward leap of a seventh in a specific voice in female harvest songs in Epirus, emphasizing the change of meter and revealing an intermediate stage of social and musical transformation (mus.ex.5.). In this case the sorrowful texts of the songs sung by the women during their work in the fields support a probable direct

relation to earlier laments that served the women's need to 'confess' their sorrowful feelings about the deceased or themselves.

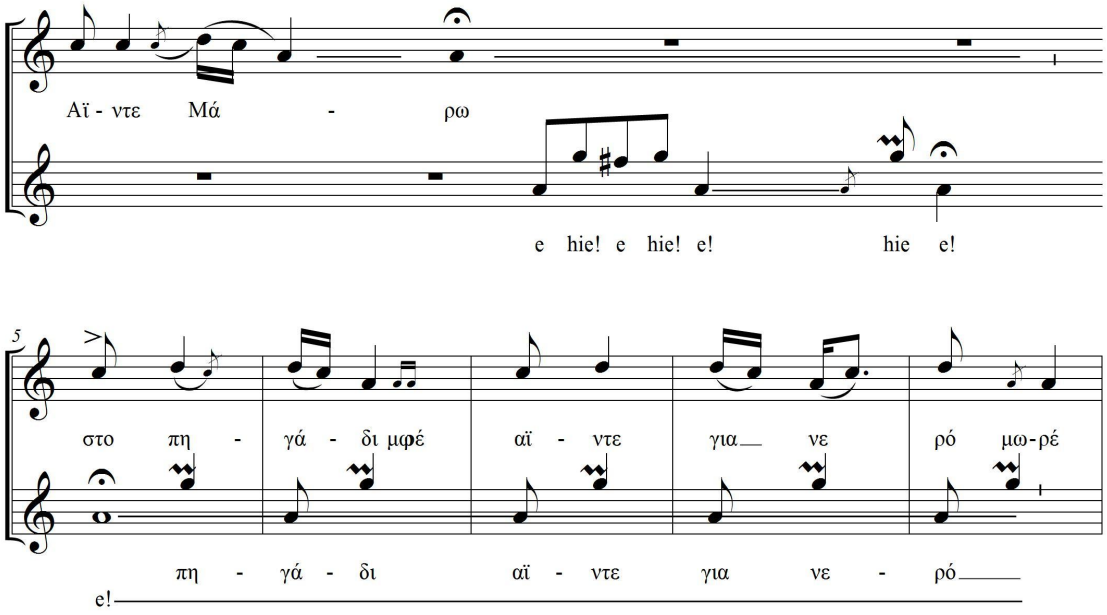


Mus. ex. 5

It also appears as a musically ornamental practice in one of the voices (*lalia)* in the structure of some multi-part songs, keeping its pitch a seventh above the tonic (mus.ex.6-7 musical transcriptions). In this case the weeping form of the cry is radically altered rhythmically and becomes integral to the musical structure. It loses its initial functionality while keeping the more generalized mood of sorrow.

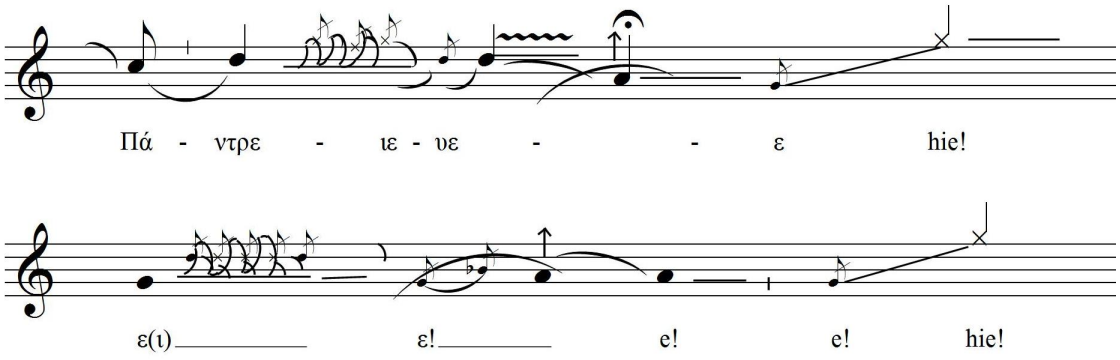


Mus. ex. 6



Mus. ex. 7

3. as an ornamental cry in the melodies of women's ritual songs likewise sung outdoors on the mountains during the feast of the Saint John the Baptist (mus.ex.8.), or as a ritual cry at the end of the melodic phrases of female Easter dance songs.



Mus. ex. 8

4. as a melodic ornament in the instrumental 'moiroloi' of Western Greece.

It is then possible to classify the musical examples (regarding musical context the *hie!* cries and the lyrics) into five categories:

1) Improvisational lament with informal cries (hie! weeping) →

2) Formal Lament (with a fixed melody) → Song with hie! →

3) Song with hie! (with social resonances and lyrics from the Lament) →

4) Ritual song with hie! as integral to the musical form

5) hie! as part of the instrumental 'moiroloi' (leap of a 7th upwards).

This classification reveals stages of transformation of this practice from a formal weeping lament, an emotional cry, into a musical practice in other song genres. It follows a process of functional musical change of an emotional cry into a formal musical characteristic.

The function of *hie!,* and also of *lele!* as lament practices appears to have a historical trail as well, as similar phenomena are found in Greek antiquity[11].

Furthermore, research has revealed similar practices related to ritual wailing in other parts of the world[12].

Words and Music

Feld and Fox refer to the lament genre in general as "stylizing sung-spoken intersections". With few exceptions, "…lament is the most prominent and widespread discourse genre where one can comparatively study stylized progressions moving back and forth on all continua relating the speaking and

[11]1) *Ιωή* (Lidell-Scott citation; Nimas, 2001: 147; Alexiou, 1974: 81-82), 2) *ωή! (oi!)* (Lidell-Scott citation), *elelehie! Ελελευ*!. See for the *lele*! In Katsanevaki, 1998 Part B Vol. I: 67. For the hie! The zafeiris ritual and the *kommos* (see Alexiou, 1974: 80-82). For funeral laments in Greek, Roman and Mediterranean Antiquity see De Martino, 2000: 178-192, 237, 275-282. Another cry found in antiquity which starts with different syllables but ends again to a hie! is the exclamation *Ototototoi! Ototyzo* (Verb) *Οτοτύζω (Οτοτοτοι),* a dramatic cry, a kind of *Thrinos,* Liddell-Scott, *οτοτύζω και οτοτοῖ.*
About the *lele!* see also (Gartzonikas, 1971: 27 Liddell-Scott, *ελελίζω*; Katsanevaki, 1998 Part B Vol I: 67). See also for its contemporary functionality in the Balkans and the Europe in Alexandru, (1980: 55), Petrovic, Montenegro: 602; Katsanevaki *op. cit.*; Georgescu (1981: 122); Deutsch (1975: 652), Katsanevaki (1998 Part A: 49). Also for Armenia see Amy de la Bretèque (2010), as *heylele!,* video 083. It is also found among the Tswana people in South Africa (information by Alvin Petersen). It appears as a form a sorrowful emotional exclamation in other genre of songs like wedding and betrothal songs in Greece (Katsanevaki, 1998 Part B: ex.88). As "o leleoi!" in Southern Albania (Kondi, 2012: 133).

[12] For Ahime! in Southern Italy and Romania as oi! De Martino (2000: 116, 118-119). For the ritual wailing of American Indians, see in Urban (1988). For falsetto practices as ritual wailings in the Karelian lament, Tolbert (1990: 90), in the Hawaiian laments, Kaeppler (2013: 1-2). In the *dawawa* practice in Shavante, Graham (1987: 88). It is also found in Chinese Shadow Theater (information by Liliang Tang).

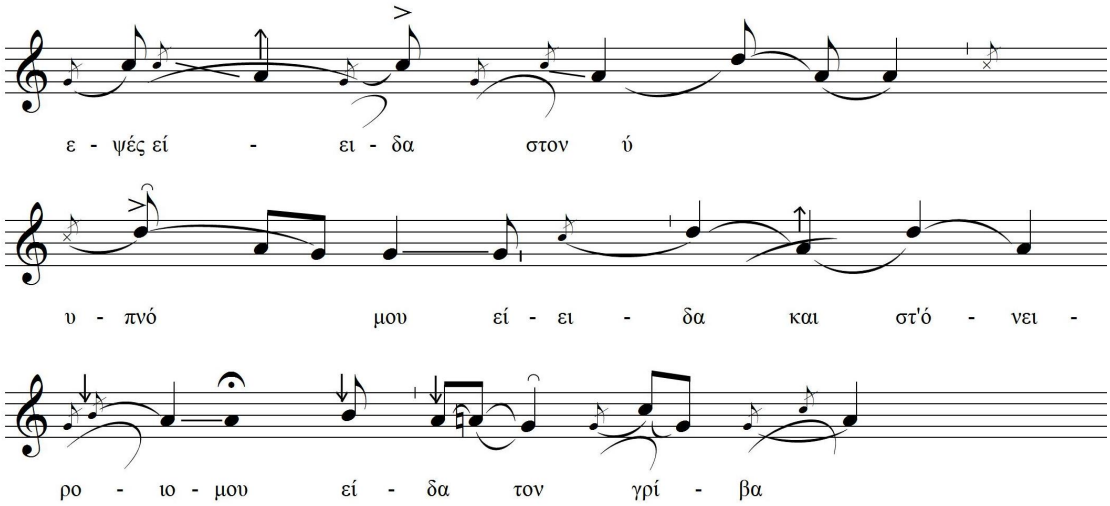
singing voice" (Feld & Fox, 1994: 39). Having already presented the importance of *glissandi* in the melodies of Northwestern Greece and their possible relation to speech, I will make an initial hypothesis that this is also true for Western Greece (with the Pindus Mountains as a central point).

There is one difficulty encountered by everybody who listens to the lament and song melodies of Western Greece (Greek-speaking, Vlach-speaking or the older Slav-speaking layer): how to recognize the differences between the melodies of different songs, and between laments and songs. As they are constructed from repetitive melodic formulas, with the predominance of *glissandi* as a basic component of these formulas, the difference between laments and songs as well as the difference between various songs lies in fact in the ordering of these formulas and their variants rather than in a completely different musical process. To 'compose' these melodies means to know how to combine the formulas with the text. An analysis of the melodies of the songs and of how they are combined with the text reveals that there was an important norm governing the process, which I describe as 'the rule of the accented syllable' (footnote 13).

What challenged my own listening experience was the constant ascents and descents of the melody within the intervals of a perfect fourth or a perfect fifth, progressions which are quite difficult for the voice to perform so frequently. These intervals coincided with the succession of accented and unaccented syllables, with the voice sliding upwards a perfect fifth on the accented syllables of the words and subsequently of the verse, while descending on the unaccented one back to the central tone[13]. The practice was important, as it revealed the basic process of lament → song: these formulas appeared in their clearest form in the laments (mus.ex.9) while they became more varied and ornamented in a way that obscured their basic form in other genres of songs. The formulas revealed both the concept of music making within this musical system and also the fact that this rule was indeed presented in its clearest form in the laments of the area. It seemed that the rest of

[13] A relevant rule found in ancient Greek practices (the *logodes melos*) was called "*musical accent*" "*mousikos tonismos*" (Katsanevaki, 1998 Part A: 55-65): the *okseia* accent was performed almost a fifth over the normal speech sound in a speech context, leaving plenty of room to speculate that these melodic formulas in contemporary practice are based on the same notion as they "describe" the accent of speech.

the songs consisted of an improvised combination and ornamentation of the basic lament word-melody formulas[14].



Mus. ex. 9

Subsequently, these lament word-melody formulas revealed that sound is closely related to speech, when it becomes a direct vehicle for personal confession: "it is quite rare to hear *Yezidis* narrate traumatic events without melodized speech" (De la Bretèque, 2012: 143). This might be true for many oral traditions. The suggestion is that organized sounds that aim at expressing deep feelings, especially those linked to personal or collective memory, are usually closely associated with speech. Among the *Yezidis*, for example, the season for those rituals associated with pain and lament and with 'melodized speech' is the part of the year marked by absence and migration (*transhumanse*) (De la Bretèque, 2010: 99-100, 104-106). In Western Greece the lament practices offer the women a medium to talk with the deceased as though he had never died. This can happen anywhere: in the cemetery, at the loom, in the mountains or at an actual funeral. In this way the lament speech-sound reveals what cannot be revealed in any other way, and thus keeps memory alive.

Nonetheless, the ways of 'making' a speech-sound differ from place to place and from oral tradition to oral tradition. Furthermore, as memory is a community quest the lament speech-sound can serve this quest, changing its functionality to become

[14] The text of these lament melodies is based on fixed verses. In most cases, it is a fixed text but there is an improvised text in certain cases in a funeral context.

initially a formal-lament, then a lament-song and finally a 'song'. Steven Feld has documented that among the *Kaluli* people weeping becomes "sung weeping" and finally a "wept song" (Feld, 1990: 33), while Antony Seeger notes that "the traditional crying (as distinct from non-melodic sobbing) performed regularly by only a few older women during my stay was somewhat similar in form to a *shout* song" (Seeger, 1987: 75). In Northwestern Greece certain historical songs, wedding songs, or other lament-songs share their melodies with funeral laments of adjoining communities or regions (Katsanevaki, 1998 Part B: 50), but in a more elaborate form.

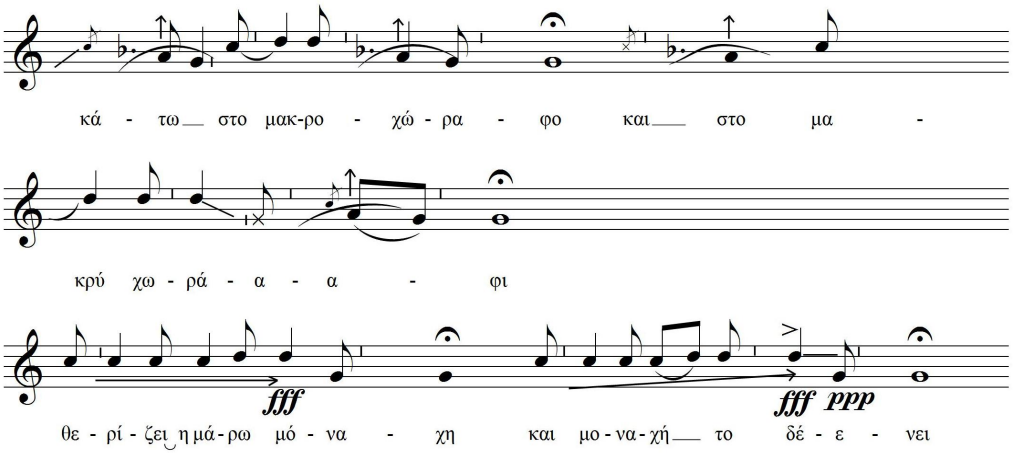
The Social Dimension of the Lament-Song in Terms of Localities

Transforming a Lament 'Echós' into a Song 'Echós'

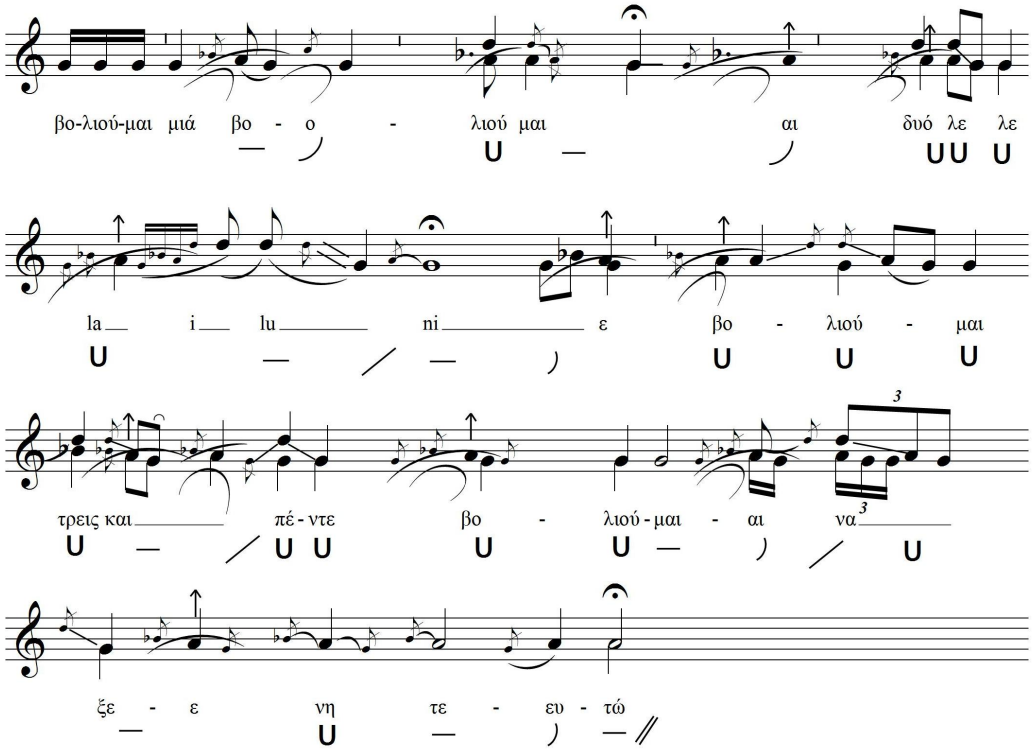
I heard the word '*echós'* used in the area of Grevena in Western Macedonia in Greece (Katsanevaki, 1991: 354-355). By this word (which means 'echo' or 'sound', but is also directly related to the term '*échos*' found in Byzantine music as a rough equivalent of 'mode'), the locals usually mean the many musical melodic patterns that are used for specific genres of songs. '*Den ton peires kala ton echo toy*' [You did not make the sound well] means that one woman tells the other that she started the song on a wrong *echós* (wrong melodic pattern), singing for example the Easter dance as a lament. Thus, laments in a village have their own '*echós*', while Easter dance songs have another. Moreover, the same word ('*ichólu*') is also used by Vlachs right up to the Northern Epirus region (information from field research). Auerbach attested the same word '*Ichos*' in the adjoining area of Konitsa in Epirus (Auerbach, 1983-1984: 97). According to Auerbach, each custom is characterized either by one specific, or a number of characteristic, '*echós*' melodic patterns.

After many years of fieldwork in the Pindus area and its surroundings, I realized that, while in the same village a special *'echós'* sung during a ritual does not usually change its functionality (meaning that it won't be used for example for both laments and other ritual songs), it can change from village to village or from region to region. However, it should be noted that two of the '*echós*' of the Eastern female ritual dances in Eastern Pindus, some characteristic wedding '*echós'*, and the characteristic lament '*echós*' melodic pattern of each area, have not changed functionality keeping their function as such in most villages of the wider area.

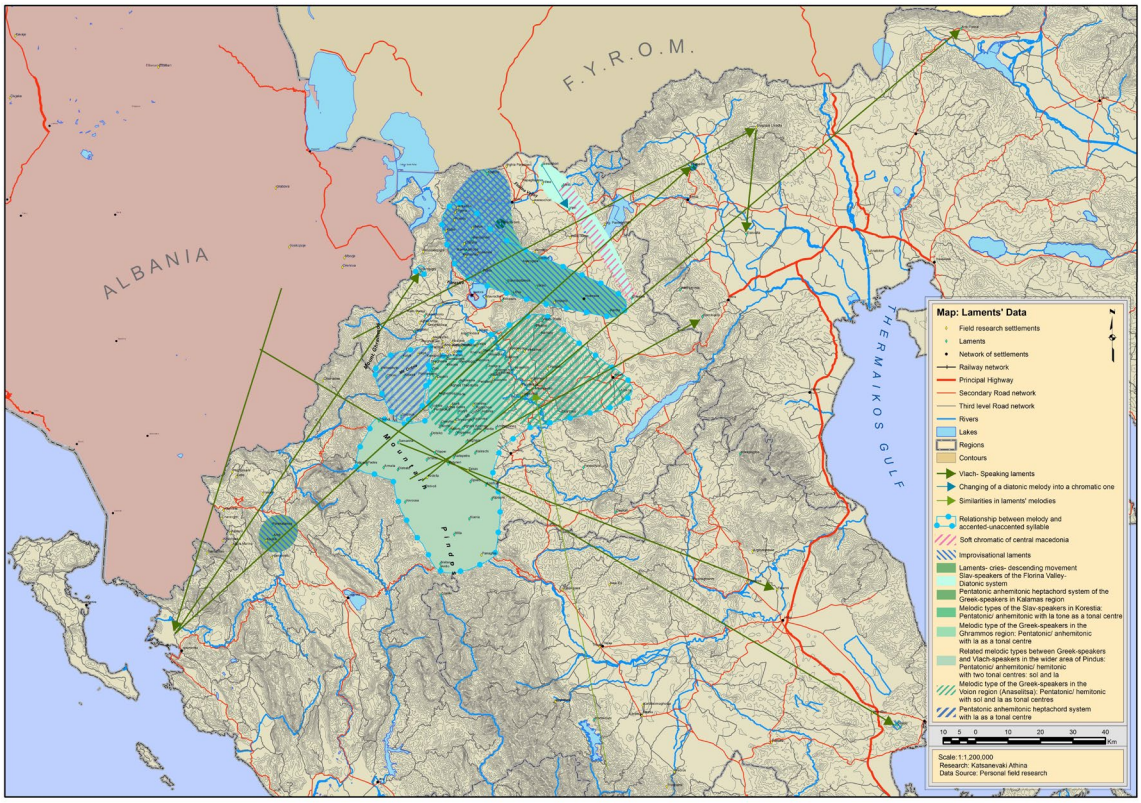
I documented several such lament-*echós*: the *Voion* lament-*echós* melodic pattern (mus.ex.9), the *Grammos echós* melodic pattern (Video 2, mus.ex.10), and several *echós (iholu)* melodic patterns found among Vlach speakers (Video 1, mus.ex.11). Similarly, there is the characteristic melody-*echós* (*blaš* in the Slav-speaking dialect) of the Slav-speaking laments in the relevant area (mus.ex.3. and Video 3) (**Map 3.** Laments' Data).



Mus. ex. 10



Mus. ex. 11

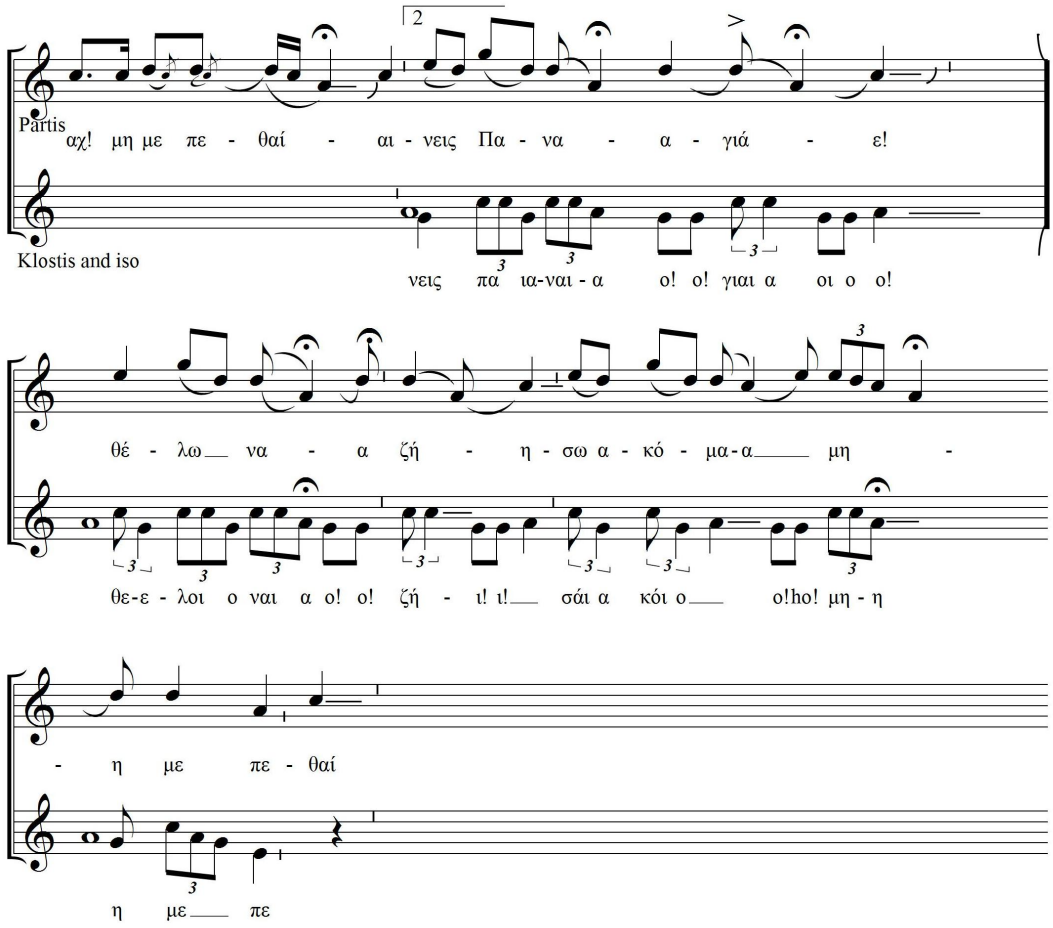


Map 3. Laments' Data

If we find a transformation of a lament '*echós*' from one village into a song in another village, the melody is altered while keeping its basic melodic structure. This demonstrates that functional changes in the lament-melodies happen under special circumstances and that the process for any other customary '*echós*' to change functionality is shorter and easier than that of a lament becoming a song. Subsequently, the transformations of lament melodies into songs that we present here must have been very carefully decided over time. After these melodic patterns have become songs there is always much more mobility and it is easier to change their functionality again in order to attach them to a different genre of songs (e.g. a harvest song into a mule driver's song).

In certain cases, I located transformations of a lament-melody (*echós)* into the melody of a female song with a polyphonic texture in a related area, as in mus.ex.5. An inexperienced listener would hardly be able to recognize in this long and slow melody of a harvest song from the area of *Kalamas* the hidden basic melodic pattern of the lament-*echós* sung by the Greek-speaking women of *Grevena* on the other side of the Pindus Mountain, where the melody presents its basic structure based on the

subtonic instead of the tonic (mus.ex.9). Eventually the melody of *Kalamas* becomes even more elaborate in the case of the male polyphonic lament-song repertoire of *Pogoniani* ("*Don't let me die Oh! Virgin Mary*") a bit further to the North (mus.ex.12). The lament melody of *Grevena* also appears in a heterophonic texture in a wedding song for the leaving of the bride in the village of *Samarina.* Although for many, such phenomena might suggest diffusion, this is not exactly the case. Rather, they suggest a common population around the area, which having a common basis, made its regional interchanges with its cultural decisions and variations resulting in a rich mosaic of variations related to each other.

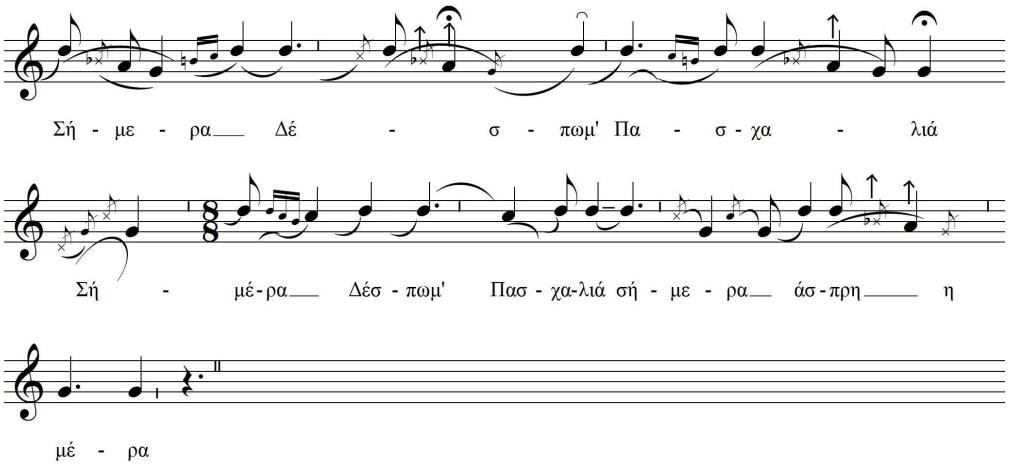


Mus. ex. 12

Transforming a text lament into a song lament

Usually the quickest way to transform a lament into a song is to change the functionality of a text lament into a song text. To my surprise, during fieldwork I often saw that on Easter Day, when the resurrection of the Dead is celebrated, the

women in the regions around Pindus Mountains danced their female Easter dances accompanied by texts with a lament content. In many cases (as for example in the villages of the *Voion* and *Grevena* regions), when I interviewed the women, I asked them whether it would be possible to sing a text in two different ways: with a lament echós and/or with an Easter dance echós. In many cases the texts shifted from one ritual category to the other with only the melody changing. It is noteworthy that this information came from the women themselves and that such Easter songs were familiar (both text and melody) in numerous villages: the characteristic Easter song *Today my Despo is Easter Day* (mus.ex.13) is sung in numerous villages (probably more than one hundred) with the same melody and the same text. Its transformation into an Easter dance song must have been an extremely long process in time, considering its spatial progress. It preceded the introduction of instruments in the villages, which is a relatively recent process (see below). And though I was told by a man in the village of *Spilion* in the *Grevena* region that this song was 'composed' in honour of a young woman called *Despo,* who died during World War II, I would be at best naïve to believe that it was after the World War II that this melody spread around the hundreds of villages where it is still sung, and where I repeatedly managed to document it. Nonetheless, I should take into consideration and accept the most important message in his argument: that it was collective memory, including the need to honour the dead during the great events in the history of community and to reanimate its deceased members, that supported the transfer of lament musical speech and the lament texts to the category of Easter dance songs.



Mus. ex. 13

This process was developed later in the case of the instrumental *moiroloi*. The instrumental *moiroloi* (lament) as a male social activity, just as the funeral *moiroloi* as a female social activity, is analyzed in Dellaporte (2008). The male outdoor activities in the *glendi*, especially the need to commemorate the absent members – whether deceased or not– is analysed as a motive to transform musical lament forms into musical song forms in the course of dances accompanied by instrumental music.

However, the process of transformation of musical lament forms into musical song forms as well as into lament texts and melodies in the course of the dance predates the introduction of the instruments to these communities, as I suggested above. The introduction of these lament musical forms and of the *hie!* in female ritual dances is also prevalent, and it was active before the socialization of the relationship of the instrumentalists and the male population of the villages (this developed during the local feasts of the patron saints in the communities of Epirus and the rest of the area). The concept of lamenting using instrumental *moiroloi* for those who have left, as mentioned by Dellaporte (2008: 58-59), might be one further motive for men to express forms of ritual pain at local feasts, but the process had started long before that, with the transformation of the laments into ritual songs for purposes of collective memory.

It is collective memory, then, and the need to honour absent members of the community that shaped many lament texts as well as introducing the relevant melodic concept in the ritual dance songs sung on Easter Sunday. It also explains the need to 'celebrate' Death, as Firth has demonstrated about the *Tikopia*.

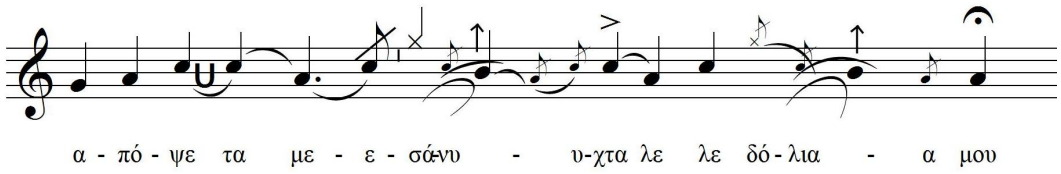
The Song with a text lament and melody in a different spatial context.

The embodiment of the *hie!* lament practice and the lament melodies in different social contexts and with different functions can be found in terms of localities in several ways. Thus, in the Greek-speaking village of *Mesolongos* (*Voion* Region, Western Macedonia, Greece), on the Feast of Saint John women walked out of the village and climbed onto a high rock, called '*Paliokastro*' (The Old Castle). This rock was indeed once a fortified position, as attested by archaeological research in the area. When the women reached the top of it, they performed their female dances,

and as they climbed down they passed by a valley with a river. There they sung a Greek–speaking lament-song:

> I never believed, River, that you would bring so much water
>
> And now how did you bring **hie**! a great sea
>
> you brought trees you brought branches **hie**! uprooted trees
>
> you bring apple trees which bear sweet apples **hie**! it was full of apples
>
> and at the top of it **hie**! there were two brothers embracing each other tightly.
>
> Are you holding on tight my little brother?

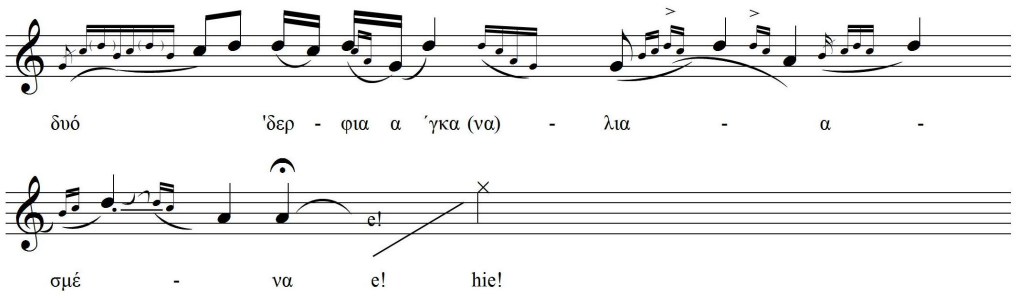
The melody of this Greek song is very close to the melody of Greek-speaking laments from the Vlach speakers of Pindus, (mus.ex.14), see also mus.ex.11.



Mus. ex. 14

The *hie!* is not found in the pure lament melodies of this area. However, the song of *Mesolongos* combines the text and melody of the laments, the *hie!* lament practice and the text of a lament, which has become the text of a formal song. Additionally the justification for the presence of the *hie!* cry given to me by the old woman who sang this song was very simple, though linked to the surrounding nature:

"We used to turn and cry out (to the river) hie!" (mus.ex.15)



Mus. ex. 15

The *hie!* lament cry, though pre-existing, is given a special meaning according to the social function of the day, the spatial setting and the textual meaning of the lyrics. In all probability, the memory context of the oral history of the surrounding villages (though unknown) is traced and embodied in the habit of climbing up to and dancing on the 'Old Castle' and related to the characteristic lament character of the song.

The therapeutic dimension in lament practices as a means of transformation from lament to song.

Usually laments are not performed publicly beyond their functional context. This makes them extremely difficult to document at (László, 1989: 405-407). It is important for the researcher, then, to use her/his own psychological powers in such a way as to help the informant to come closer to her/him and to be able to 'confess' the lament melodies to the researcher in the way she would do it to the deceased:

"I didn't go to the cemetery today so I will sing them to you…" '*Aunt*' *Agoro* in the Village of *Kotili* in Mt. *Grammos* said to me before entrusting me with her laments

(Katsanevaki, 2009, see lament by 'Aunt' Agoro in mus.ex.10).

Scholars have previously described the dialogue with the deceased as a protest against the subservient female position in the Greek villages (Caraveli, 1982: 138), or more generally, against women's destiny (Herzfeld, 1993: 251)[15]. However, one might consider it rather as an expression of a confident feeling that the deceased, being between two worlds (the spiritual and the human), is able to understand and participate in the suffering of the living, and especially of those whom he loved (Katsanevaki, 2009)[16]. Thus, laments can function as music therapy further

[15] The concept of protest should not be considered as gender-focused. Indeed, it has been argued that lament practices function as a more general means of protest against present pain and loss in order to restore the future: "It is itself a fight a choice to remain in the battle of hope versus despair" (Anastasi, 2005: 311).

[16] Tolbert, quoting Urban, refers to three domains, which highlight the semiotic function of the lament and are present in the Karelian lament: the presence of a characteristic musical line with culturally specific stylistic norms, the presence of cross-culturally intelligible icons of crying, and the presence of a dialogic form without the presence of an actual addressee (Tolbert, 1990: 86). All are also present in lament practices in Greece. The third one (the presence of a dialogic form without the presence of an actual addressee) is related to the functionality of the laments as a dialogue and vehicle for communication with the deceased.

supported by the participation of the body and the voice (singing), both of which follow the repetitive rhythmic or melodic (Katsanevaki, 2009) motifs or cries (*hie*) that are important characteristics of the melodies of several '*echós*' of laments in Western Greece. The repetitive motifs function both as a challenge to, and/or as a basis for, the poetical expressive creativity performed in lament practices. This was revealed in the composition technique described by a lamenter in *Areti* in *Kalamas* (interview in July 2017 in *Areti* in *Kalamas* region, fieldwork by Katsanevaki-Pistrick)

These possibilities relate lament practices to music therapy[17]. Repetitive motifs in the melodies, combined with fixed body movements, aim at the release of the inner feelings concentrated and embodied because of pain, thus mediating between the bereaved and her/his pain. This function is actually implied in Caraveli's studies in a slightly different way when she refers to the texts of the laments (Caraveli, 1980: 155). The norm to improvise a text on fixed verses while based on repetitive melodic and rhythmic motives in the context of a funeral can perform a kind of musical healing through creative and expressive practices that combined with the simultaneous movement of the body, create an organized framework that gives form to the uncontrolled release of pain.

The therapeutic function of lamenting is revealed in the following discussion I had with 'Aunt' Chrysoula in *Pentalofos*. She told me that she secretly followed her mother-in-law in order to see how she was lamenting in the cemetery. She described the intense rhythmical movements of her body to left and right in a bent and concentrated position, following the rhythmic patterns of the lament (see also in Video 2 the 'fixed body movements', or, as they have been described by Seremetakis, "Iconographies of the body" (Seremetakis, 1990: 507; Katsanevaki, 2009; see also in Tolbert, 1990: 98-99 and Kaeppler, 2013: 3; Plancke, 2015: 100, 110 "stylized bodily

[17] Music therapy is invaluable for health rehabilitation (Gouk, 2000: 171-195), which is confirmed by the results of certain clinical surveys (Gallagher 2011). For the therapeutic purpose of the laments on the island of *Chios,* see Akiougiounoglou-Christou 2014. Lalioti referred to "The necessity of mourning", in Crete (Lalioti, 1993: 25-26), and Auerbach to the "The necessity of lamenting" (Auerbach, 1983-1984: 190). See De Martino, 2000: 43, "La crisi del cordoglio", 42-48, "Di alcuneteoripsicologiche del cordoglio", 48-54). James Wilce's *Crying Shame* (2008), deals in detail with the therapeutic aspects of the lament. "…lament has the power to……facilitate, working through pain" (Plancke, 2015: 110).

features"). The short repetitive motifs, which usually construct the lament melodies, challenge the painful memories and the hidden painful experiences to come out and thus help the participants to be released from them (Katsanevaki, 2009 see also in Racy, 1986: 34).

At the end, 'Aunt' Chrysoula concluded:

"Don't record them. I don't like them!".....

……

"Do you feel relieved "Aunt"?" I asked her.

"Yes! I do!"

Mus. ex. 16 (audio)

This short dialogue suggests that lament practices function as a means of releasing suppressed feelings thus making a catharsis available (Bourke, 1988: 289). But also, that releasing suppressed feelings might be frustrating, in the sense that the lamenter might be seriously hurt by the process. In two different Slav-speaking communities in *Ptolemaida*, two women, when I asked about their feelings about laments, replied that when the lament has finished they have a terrible headache.

The fact that the lament releases suppressed feelings was apparent in the case of a Vlach-speaking woman whom I asked to perform a lament in the cemetery on the day of the memorial services. Her daughter had been killed in an accident, so I hesitated for almost 10 years before asking her to perform a lament. On this occasion she agreed to sing in the cemetery, located some way from the village, but for her sister-in-law, not for her daughter. However, as she started the lament she changed the improvised verse into a lament for her daughter. The motifs, cries and the musical process reminded her of her deeper wound. She improvised for a while, but then I asked her to stop (Video 1).

Lament practices are performed in community life during the funeral process or elsewhere individually[18] or in a group thus having the possibility to change their

[18] Lalioti, 1993: 20, quoting Tsouderos (1976) also in Kölbl (2011). See also a special case study in Gall 2013. Nyssen has also attested that *sut* laments are recalled by women as they

functionality (see Kölbl, 2011). In most cases their purpose is to be released from pain: Maria Georgeli, one of the singers in *Metsovo,* remembered the older women singing laments on the loom: "If you have a pain..," she added at the end implying that if you have a pain you 'say' laments (see in Herzfeld, 1981: 48-49 '*leo moiroloia*') everywhere.

Pain is expressed, negotiated, and exchanged among the various members of the community, and especially of the women (see also in Briggs, 1993[19]) as happened at a funeral I attended in a village of Voion: the women stood out of the room, where the deceased was lying, as a solid group, singing the laments in the *echós* of *Voion*, while the friends and relatives went into the room to say *farewell* to the deceased. As he was a young unmarried man, he was dressed as a groom, while his relationship with the dance, the *glendia* (local feasts) and the local instrumentalists was honoured with the performance of instrumental tunes over his grave during the burial. While the funeral is transformed into a wedding, on the other hand, the wedding can equally be transformed into a funeral, so the moiroloi can be equally performed in the course of a wedding to lament the bride.

The outcome of the lament is the recuperation of the wounded persona and the relationships with community. In this way lament practices become a means of social healing, and serve life in all circumstances[20]. "The lament must develop power to be effective […] In addition, the lamenter must be sensitive to the social context, and as the ritual leader of the wedding or the funeral, *must orchestrate the collective expression of sorrow*" (Tolbert, 1990: 97) (emphasis by author). I was told many times that when the bride left her home, the farewell ritual songs performed by the women brought tears. "We cried! We were weeping for the bride! She was getting married She wept and we all wept!". The women were usually surprised while commenting on their own experiences, thus accepting the paradoxically divergent experience of lamenting the bride in their patrilineal societies.

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express individual pain. But although they become a hybrid genre between lament and song they are never performed publicly (Nyssen, 2010: 19).

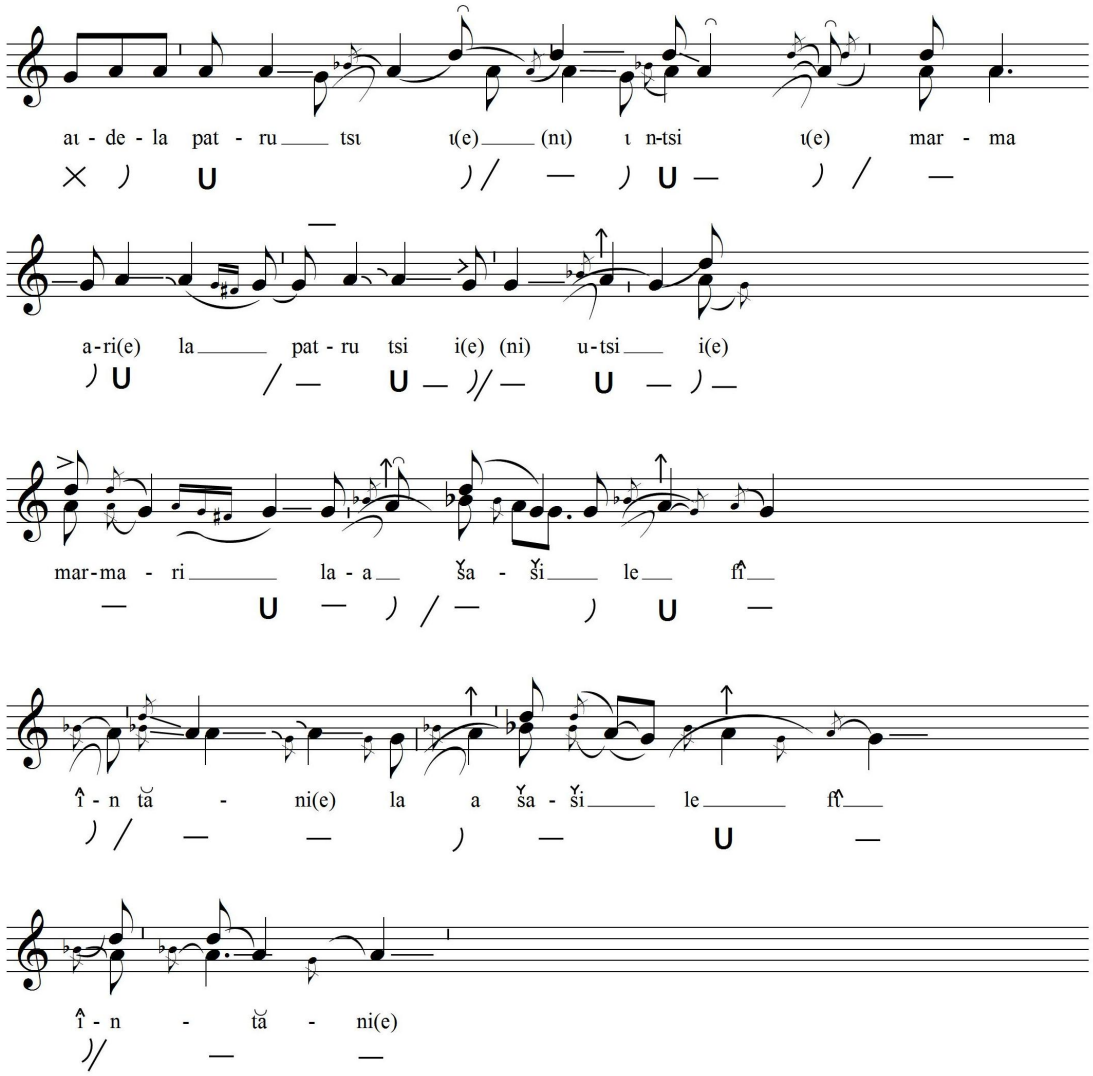
[19] The collective meaning of the lament practices is described by Briggs in comments made by his interlocutors about the importance of women's singing together "we cry very close to one another" Briggs, 1993: 935-936).

[20] Certain musical styles can function as healing laments in certain groups (see the example of *Emo* music in Anastasi, 2005).

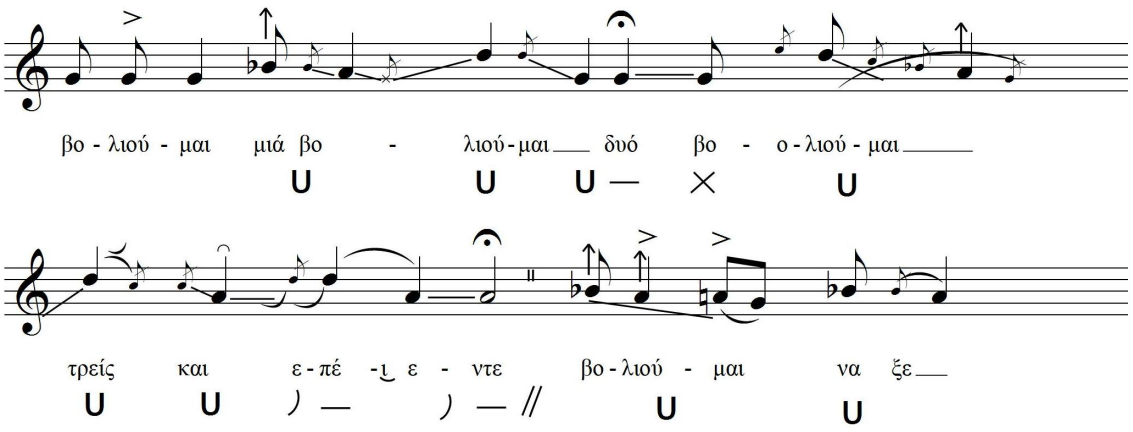
Lament, supporting collective memory, healing social wounds and reordering relationships (Gillespie & Hoenigman, 2013: 7) by means of music, symbolic activities, movement and text, plays a central social role in the community and thus shares its functionalities with other genres of songs. The sound world of songs can function as a means of establishing, validating, and at times concealing forms of identity (Katsanevaki, 1998 Part B: 33-34, 37, 39, 55-56; Porter, 2013: 1 and in Bowan, 2013), while supporting memory. Many songs can be former laments and every lament can project its functionality to become a song.

A 'technique of reversal' in musical contexts or a protest against human fate? Celebrating Death; weeping at a Wedding.

There are other social dimensions that can help account for the transformation of laments into songs. One is the "technique of reversal" described by Caraveli (1982: 140, 143) in her textual analysis. By producing a dramatic contrast between the textual meaning and the social context, more emphasis is placed on the dramatic process enacted by the lamenter or singer. It is important to note that such a technique permits the transformation of a lament into a song, as attested in the analysis of the Vlach-speaking heterophonic song 'La patru tsintsi marmari' (mus.ex.17). As a text, this is a pure lament sung at the weddings when the bride is leaving her house, and on a melodic pattern (*echós*) that is a more fixed version of the lament *echós* of the Greek-speaking villages nearby (mus.ex.18).



Mus. ex. 17



Mus. ex. 18

The transformation of the lament into a wedding song reveals a technique which uses contrast to emphasize the pain experienced by the participants in the wedding because of the departure of the bride and her separation from her family. In this way, the constant variability of human fate and life (*tragedy*) is emphasized, and moreover, this contrast marks the end of the circle of the girlhood of the bride and her passage into womanhood in her personal life–circle: even a happy event, then, is marked by a feeling of separation (Katsanevaki, 2006, 2009). This technique uses contrast to support the transformation of the lament into song in order to serve a new social purpose.

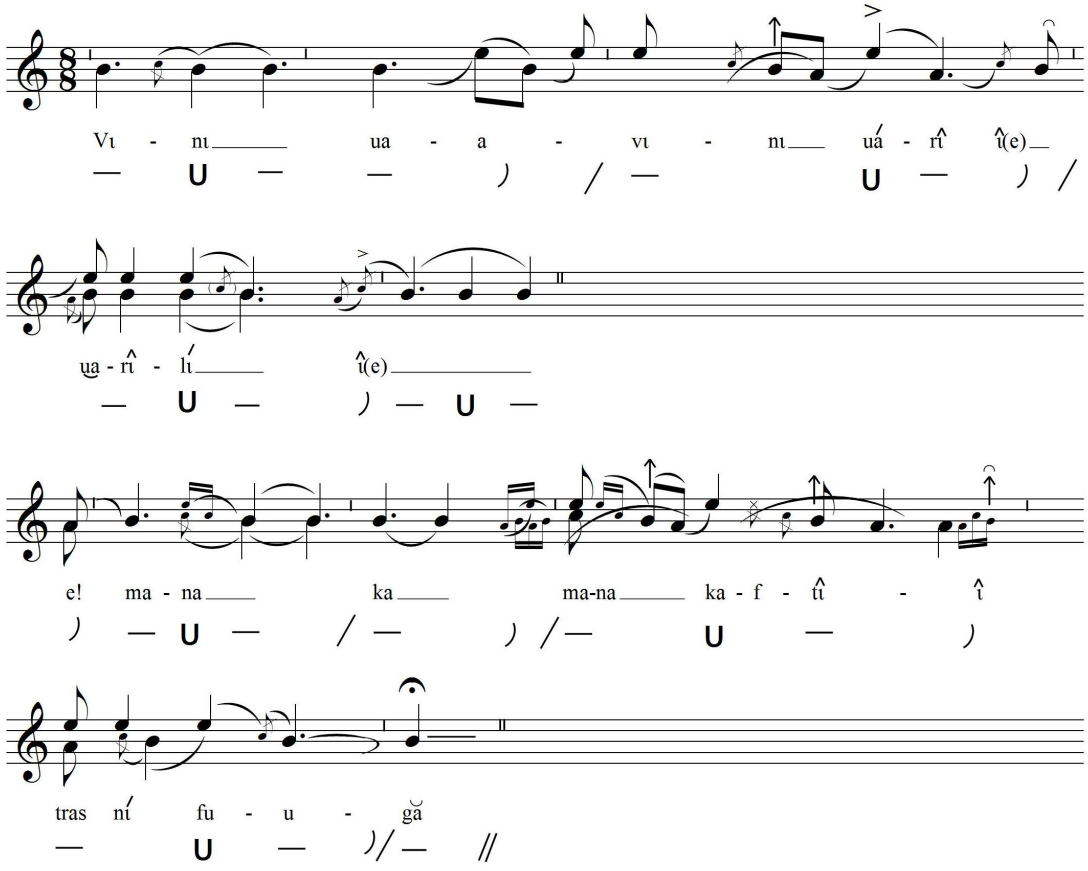
Laments that marked the passage of the deceased to the Underworld (Psychogiou, 1998; Van Gennep, 1960) in many cases functioned as a means of marking other 'passages' in the life-cycle, such as the 'exodus' of the bride from girlhood to her womanhood[21] or the departure of an emigrant (Lalioti, 1993: 51). Thus, they had the possibility to function as songs in another social context, carrying with them all their musical characteristics and thus introducing those characteristics to new genres of songs[22]. They were nonetheless more appropriate than any other ritual songs to

[21] Loring Danforth has referred to the connection between death and marriage (Danforth, 1982: 71-115; Laios, 2001: 2-3; Lalioti, 1993: 51; Yuk-Ying Ho, 2005: 57-58, and the previous works of Blake, 1978, and McLaren, 2000). See Frazer (2013: 144-145, 156), for contemporary processes where laments are set to topical narratives about disasters or where narratives and songs about disasters become part of a wedding context.

[22] The concept of *Absence* is the main motive and inner power of both rituals of migration (in Greek *ksenitia* in Albanian, *kurbet*) and death (in Greek: *paitheno*, in Albanian *vdekja*). It is also responsible for the change of function of certain laments into songs (see for a detailed analysis Pistrick, 2012: 197-244) and the function of migration songs as a *hybrid*-category (Pistrick, 2012: 240-244). The concept of *absence* and *forgetting* in a Greek lament-song text is transformed into *forgetting* called *Alismoniá (alismonó*- I forget-) or *Alimoniá* (a place the singers were unable to determine), meaning the place where everything is forgotten (see in Katsanevaki, 1998 Part B mus.ex.30, see Saunier, 1999: 111-115, for the notion of '*Lismonia*' [forgetting] and its spatial meaning). Moreover, certain genres of songs in Greece, for example the texts of migration songs, relate to death and injustice in a way that makes possible the passage of a text from the one genre to the other (for the concept of death in the migration songs of Greece, see Saunier, 2004: 250-253). The connection of migration with the notion of *Adikia* (injustice) is a consequence of the equation of migration with death (see *op. cit.* 1983; 2004: 196-198). For the custom of the bereaved women exchanging texts between the two genres of songs (migration songs and laments) in Greek folk song, see Saunier (1979: 225-226). The common denominator in both death and migration is loss. As Feld and Fox emphasize, "Mortuary activities thus involve expressive and physical actions to remove the presence of death while inventing the tone of the deceased memory projection in the future. Performed acts of remembering *oppose the imagined horror of forgetting"* (Feld & Fox, 1994: 40).

fulfill the 'task' of 'crying' for the bride. Thus, the most important moment of transition in a woman's life – her wedding – is marked by weeping. In those patrilineal societies where the bride had to move to her husband's family, this moment would be marked by weeping as a moment of caesura in the life of the young girl because she was uprooted from her paternal family: "My mother, don't let my flowers wither" (song from *Kalloni*).

At the same moment, the farewell for the Dead is enacted by a lament with a rhythmical pattern, suitable for a procession, but also for a dance: In the village of *Samarina,* 'when they lift the deceased to bring him to the cemetery' they perform a lament that has the same rhythmic pattern as the female Easter Syrtos dances of the wider area (mus.ex.19). Additionally, a similar melody with the same rhythmic pattern is sung in *Mesolongos* as a lament when they go to the cemetery on the third day after the burial to lament the deceased. The same rhythmic pattern with a similar chromatic melody is also sung when the bride leaves her house. The same rhythm is used then for three reasons: to say farewell to the dead, to say farewell to the bride, and to dance on Easter day. Although we encounter not a straightforward dance, but a procession here, it is the same rhythm and the same idea of the steps of the dance that joins these two practices. As Firth puts it for the *Tikopia*, "the idea of such funeral dances is a kind of farewell to the dead person and they come under the general head of makofakamāvae- dances of parting." (Firth, 1990: 59).

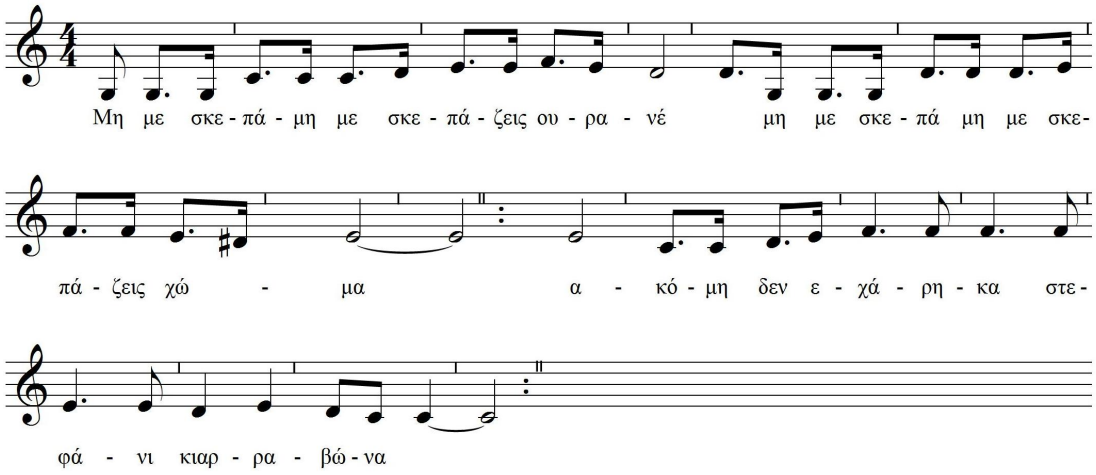


Mus. ex. 19

In an attempt to explain the paradox of the *Tikopia* dancing for the dead, Firth suggests that "it certainly illustrates not so much an antithesis between tension and release in a situation of great emotional strain as the complex intermingling of these elements in behavior. I think this has relevance for a more general theory of personal and social reaction to death." (Firth, 1990: 59-60).

Such a reaction results in some even more important phenomena in Western Greece. For exactly the same reason, the women in Metsovo 'celebrate' a death by singing a joyful (urban in the context of the little town of Metsovo) melody from the Ionian islands very different in character and style from the rest of the pentatonic songs of the area in order to weep for an unmarried youngster (maybe from the Ionian islands), who died. By 'celebrating' the Death with this joyful melody ('on the foam of the sea', which they turned into 'don't cover me, sky!' mus.ex.20), a dramatic

contrast is created: we might explain it as a practice that "emphasizes the signified by making a contrast between the signifiers" (Katsanevaki, 2006).



Mus. ex. 20

In this case the signifiers are the death of the young person, expressed in the change of text and the joyful melody. The signified is the *tragedy* created by the contrast of Youth and Death. Though in any other case such a melody would be considered completely inappropriate for a funeral (as a celebratory, and as a foreign melody), in the case of a funeral of a young unmarried man this joyful melody served its key purpose, which was to emphasize the *drama.* This purpose is of some antiquity in the Pindus area, but the medium (the melody from the Ionian Islands) is new. However, for purposes of contrast it was introduced to this, the most crucial, expression of a shared community life: the funeral.

In the case of the lament which becomes a wedding song, the signified – the contrast of the happy event with the leaving and separation of the bride – is emphasized by the contrast of the signifiers: the wedding and the lament melody and text (commemorating at the same time the unknown deceased woman).

In both cases the practice is common and 'old' (as was the melody introduced from the Ionian Islands, according to the women of Metsovo…), but in each case the medium is completely different (a song introduced from another area and a lament).

Nonetheless they continue to serve the 'old' purpose: to protest[23] and react against Death or any other form of separation.

Conclusion

Lament practices in Northwestern Greece, and elsewhere are a channel of social memory and a mode of establishing a sense of community for the individual. Thus, they serve two important purposes in community life: maintaining strong relationships among the community members and preserving social memory within the community. Both are major factors in strategies of survival over time.

I have presented here a complex network of transformations of laments into songs, relating these transformations to ritual cries, musical structure, the nonsense syllables of the exclamations, the mobility of the melodies and musical characteristics, all in terms of social functionality and spatial context as well as therapeutic function.

There are certain types of ritual cries that present their most characteristic functionality in certain forms of laments in Western Greece, as well as Northern Epirus in Southern Albania. While in the form of pure songs they look like decorative inexplicable ritual cries, their presence in the lament practices reveals a certain functional logic that explains their appearance in the rest of the repertory.

This change of functionality is further supported by the transformation of different types of lament melodies into songs as presented in the chapters of this article.

When it comes to the texts, there are similar reasons to believe that many songs were former laments: certain song texts trace strong similarities (they are actually identified) with certain laments or their narratives which reveal a former lament functionality.

The structure of the melodies as a musical system is also based on the words and especially on the word-accent. This composition practice is much clearer in the melodies of the laments of the area and suggests that it is based on a functional role of the music of the area which is fulfilled in the best way in the case of the laments:

[23] Regarding the protest as a characteristic strategy of the Greek *moirologistra* see in Gail Holst-Warhaft's *Dangerous Voices*: 41.

in other words it supports the direct verbal expression of the individual, which is even more necessary in the case of the lament practices.

The mobility of the lament melodies is also supported by the therapeutic functionality of the lament practices: their power to heal wounds, diverts their initial functionality and permits their performance on other occasions individually or in a group. The power of the laments also lies in their ability to become vehicles for social memory, protest against human fate and death itself, as well as against separation and social wounds. This ability encourages the swiftness of their functionality and the possibility of transferring their musical or other characteristics into different categories of songs, or else, to extend their composition norms into other functionalities of music in social life.

Thus, while in certain cases songs have been transformed into laments, in reality, it is the opposite direction that has been more representative of the long-term process of transformation. The transmuting of lament, a fundamental element of music making in oral traditions, into song, leaves plenty of room to consider pain and grief as major motifs in music creativity.

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LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES
(Audio Field Recordings and/or Musical Transcriptions)

0. Interview with the women in the village of *Kotili* on Mount *Grammos* (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

1 Greek –speaking lament from *Parakalamos* in the *Kalamas* region of *Epirus* (field recording: Katsanevaki A.-Pistrick E.)

2. Vlach –speaking lament from *Ieropigi* in the *Kastoria* region, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

3. Slav –speaking lament from the village of *Tichio* in the *Kastoria* Region, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

4. Vlach speaking lament from Northern Epirus Vlachs from *Thesprotia* in *Epirus* field recording: Katsanevaki A.).

5. Greek speaking harvest song from *Kouklioi* in the *Kalamas* region of *Epirus*. (field research: Katsanevaki A.-Pistrick E. Old recording made by the singers in the past and kindly offered).

6 – 7. Greek speaking polyphonic song from *Kosovitsa* and *Pogoniani* in Northern Epirus (see in Lolis, 2006, audios and mus.ex.22, p.120 and mus.ex.36, p.140) Musical transcriptions by Katsanevaki A. taking into consideration the musical transcriptions by Kostas Lolis.

8. Greek speaking song for the *Saint John's Day* from the village of *Rodia* in the *Grevena* Region, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

9. Greek speaking Lament of the *Voion* melodic pattern from the village of *Kyparissi* in the *Grevena* region (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

10. Greek speaking lament by *Agoro Gilkou – Kotili* Village on *Mount Grammos*, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

11. Greek speaking lament from the Vlach village of *Samarina* in the *Pindus* area, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

12. Greek speaking polyphonic table song from the village of *Pogoniani* in the *Pogoni* Region in *Northern Epirus* in Greece (field recording by Katsanevaki A. and Pistrick E.).

13. Today my Despo is the Easter Day. Easter female dance recorded in the village of *Mesologgos* in Western Macedonia in Greece region of *Voion* (field-recording: Katsanevaki A.)

14. Greek speaking lament from the Vlach village of *Perivoli* in the *Grevena* Region, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

15. Greek speaking song from the village of *Messologos* in the *Voion* region, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

16. Interview and Greek speaking lament of the *Voion* region by *Aunt Chrisoula* in the village of *Pentalofos* in the *Voion* region of Western Macedonia in Greece, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

17. Vlach speaking wedding song from the village of *Samarina* in *Pindus* (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

18. Greek speaking lament from the village of *Kalloni* in the *Grevena* Region in Western Macedonia in Greece, (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

19. Vlach speaking lament from the village of *Samarina* in the *Grevena* region (field recording: Katsanevaki A.)

20. Greek speaking song from the *Ionian Islands* with a lament text (composed and sung by the women in *Metsovo* in *Pindus*) sung as a lament in the funerals for a deceased young unmarried man (field recording: Katsanevaki A.).