



## Music as a Method of Cultural Expression "An Assessment of Anatolians Living in Greece

### *Kültürel İfade Yöntemi Olarak Müzik "Yunanistan'da Yaşayan Anadoluğulluların Müzik Kültürlerinin Değerlendirilmesi"*

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### Öz

Bu çalışma, 1923 Türk-Yunan Nüfus Mübadelesi sonrasında Yunanistan'a yerleştirilen Türkçe konuşan Anadolu Rumların müzikal ve kültürel sürekliliklerini incelemektedir. Araştırma, bu toplulukların Anadolu müzik miraslarını kolektif hafıza ve kimlik inşası süreçleri içinde nasıl koruduklarını, dönüştürdüklerini ve yeniden yorumladıklarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada nitel bir etnomüzikolojik yöntem benimsenmiştir. 2018-2025 yılları arasında özellikle Yanya, Batı Makedonya ve Doğu Trakya bölgelerinde yürütülen saha çalışmaları kapsamında derinlemesine görüşmeler, katılımcı gözlemler ve canlı müzik kayıtları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu ampirik veriler, literatür taraması ve tarihî müzik kaynaklarının (örneğin Mousikon Apanthisma, 1856-1873) incelenmesiyle desteklenmiştir. Böylece hem alan verileri hem de belgesel kaynaklar aracılığıyla mübadil toplulukların müziksel hafızası bütüncül bir biçimde değerlendirilmiştir. Kuramsal çerçeve, Stuart Hall'un kültürel kimlik kuramı, Homi Bhabha'nın "üçüncü mekân" kavramı ve Berry'nin kültürleşme modeli üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Bu yaklaşımlar doğrultusunda müzik, hem direnişin sembolik alanı hem de hafızanın taşıyıcısı olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bulgular, genç kuşakların gündelik yaşamda Yunanca'yı baskın olarak kullanmalarına karşın, Türkçenin şarkılar, ritüeller ve toplu etkinlikler aracılığıyla hâlâ bir hafıza dili olarak varlığını sürdürdüğünü göstermektedir. Anadolu ile Yunanistan arasında kuşaklararası bir köprü kurmakta; politik sınırları aşan bir duygusal coğrafyayı yaşatmaktadır. Bu durum, Anadolu mirasının Yunanistan'da donmuş bir

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kültürel kalıntı olarak değil, yerinden edilme, hafıza ve kültürel meleziğin şekillendirdiği canlı bir ses manzarası olarak sürdürdüğünü ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göç, Kültürel kimlik, Hafıza, Müzik, Türkçe konuşan Anadolu Rumları.

### Abstract

This study investigates the musical and cultural continuities among Turkish-speaking Anatolian Greeks who were resettled in Greece following the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange. It aims to understand how these displaced communities have preserved, transformed, and reinterpreted their Anatolian musical heritage as part of their collective memory and identity reconstruction processes. The research adopts a qualitative ethnomusicological methodology, combining fieldwork, oral history, and archival analysis. Field studies conducted between 2018 and 2025 in more than seventy villages—particularly in Ioannina, Western Macedonia, and Eastern Thrace—include in-depth interviews, participant observations, and live musical recordings. These empirical materials are complemented by an extensive literature review of historical sources, musical manuscripts, and previous scholarship on migration, identity, and cultural hybridity. The theoretical framework draws on Stuart Hall’s cultural identity theory, Homi Bhabha’s concept of the “third space”, and Berry’s acculturation model, situating music as both a medium of resistance and a repository of memory. Analysis of early musical publications such as *Mousikon Apanthisma* (1856–1873) reveals that Turkish-speaking communities historically maintained a hybrid repertoire encompassing Turkish, Greek, and Byzantine elements. Findings demonstrate that music functions as a transgenerational mechanism of cultural continuity: while younger generations predominantly use Greek in daily life, Turkish persists through song, ritual, and communal gatherings. This sustained musical bilingualism reflects an enduring emotional geography connecting Anatolia and Greece. Ultimately, the study concludes that the legacy of Anatolian culture survives in Greece as a living soundscape—an evolving synthesis of displacement, memory, and hybridity rather than a static remnant of the past.

**Keywords:** Migration, Cultural Identity, Memory, Music, Turkish-speaking Anatolian Greeks.

### Introduction

Migration is not merely a spatial relocation; it constitutes a reconfiguration of cultural codes, collective memory, and symbolic relations for individuals and communities. In this process, communities attempt to transport their cultural heritage -language, rituals, music- hile facing the expectations, pressures, and norms of the new environment. Music plays a double role: as a medium of expression and as a field of resistance. In studying migrant cultures, music offers a central analytical axis. Stuart Hall’s diaspora and identity theory challenges the notion of identity as a fixed essence. Hall argues that identity is constructed through the interplay of past connections and present positioning, continuously rearticulated over time (Hall, 1990). This perspective is illuminating when analyzing identity ruptures among migrant communities, who often feel “neither here nor there.” Homi Bhabha’s “third space” theory further deepens this insight: migrant communities do not fall entirely within the old or the new culture, but inhabit an intermediate “third space” where identities are negotiated, hybridities emerge, and cultural boundaries blur (Bhabha, 1994). In the context of the population exchange, Anatolian-origin Turkish-speaking Rum (Greek Orthodox) communities confront both their Ottoman/Anatolian musical legacies and the cultural norms of Greek society; in doing so, their musical repertoire, modes of singing, and instrumental choices often carry traces of third-space negotiation.

Berry’s acculturation framework (1997) positions migrant individuals and groups along two axes: the maintenance of heritage culture and the relationship with the host culture. Migrants may adopt strategies of assimilation, separation, integration, or marginalization. In a forced migration context like the population exchange, the balance between preserving one’s musical traditions and adapting to the host musical environment becomes especially fraught. Complementary to this de Haas’s aspirations-capabilities model critiques overly simplistic

push-pull paradigms, emphasizing that migration decisions depend not only on desire (aspiration) but also on the capacity to move (capabilities) (de Haas, 2021). In state-orchestrated migrations such as the 1923 exchange, individual agency is constrained; this limitation also constrains cultural continuity and the capacity to preserve musical practices.

The notion of cultural bereavement (Bhugra, 2005) captures how migrants may experience grief over the loss of social structures, rituals, and symbolic worlds. Music can serve both as the language of loss and as a coping mechanism: pre-migration songs, lullabies, and folk melodies often carry communities' memory load, and their revival or re-performance can act as a form of resistance and re-construction. Mehmet Söylemez's field data on Turkish-speaking Rum migrants show that the Turkish lullaby and rhyme tradition continues among some migrants, though intergenerational transmission weakens over time. His findings illustrate that musical and linguistic practices are at once resistance sites and rupture zones (Söylemez, 2021).

These theoretical models (Hall, Bhabha, Berry, de Haas, Bhugra) admit a synthetic reading: Anatolian-origin Turkish-speaking Rum musical repertoires are simultaneously sites of identity (re)construction, cultural bereavement expression, resistance arenas, and hybrid musical experimentations. The following hypotheses guide our analysis:

1. The musical repertoire of Turkish-speaking Anatolian Rum communities expresses strategies of resisting cultural loss and reanimating suppressed memory.
2. That repertoire negotiates a dual demand: preserving heritage (resistance) and adapting to Greek musical ecology (hybridity).
3. Institutional conditions, spatial constraints, and intergenerational transmission dynamics critically shape how resistance and hybridity balance out.

In the research I conducted in 2024-2025 among descendant communities in Western Macedonia and Eastern Thrace, I collected oral interviews, performed recording sessions of traditional lullabies and local folk tunes, and documented the surviving Turkish-language repertoire. These field data -though preliminary- corroborate tendencies of linguistic attrition, hybrid melodic borrowing, and selective preservation of "resistance songs." Against this empirical backdrop, the following sections present: (a) the historical context and migration trajectories; (b) surviving repertoire and musical practices; (c) musical analysis of example songs; (d) interpretive discussion of identity, resistance, and hybridity strategies in performance.

The population exchange between Turkey and Greece, which took place in the early 20th century, specifically in 1923, was a significant event in the history of both countries. Under the terms of the treaty, around 1.5 million Greeks living in Turkey were forcibly relocated to Greece, while approximately 500,000 Turks living in Greece were forcibly relocated to Turkey. After the Exchange Agreement was signed, many preparations had to be made in the country where the immigrants would go so that they could be moved to the other side and settled in a healthy way (Ari, 2023:73). The exchange aimed to create ethnically homogeneous nation-states and to resolve ongoing ethnic and religious tensions in the region. The population

exchange had profound and lasting consequences for both countries. It led to the uprooting and displacement of millions of people, causing immense human suffering and loss. Many of those affected faced challenges in resettling in their new countries, including economic hardship, social integration issues, and loss of cultural heritage. Despite the initial aim of promoting peace and stability, the population exchange also left a legacy of bitterness and unresolved grievances between Turkey and Greece, which have persisted to some extent to this day. However, it's also worth noting that efforts have been made in recent years to improve relations and promote reconciliation between the two countries.

## 1. Exile

The Turkish-Greek Population Exchange had a significant impact on the music culture of both countries. The forced migration and resettlement of Greek and Turkish populations resulted in the exchange of cultural traditions, including music. Turkish and Greek music, previously influenced by their respective cultures, began to blend and evolve as a result of the population exchange.



**Picture 1:** Greek Refugees from Anatolia (Library of Congress, 1925).

Within migrant communities, memory operates as both a resource and a battlefield. The Turkish-speaking Rum migrants carried with them musical memories of Anatolia—lullabies, folk tunes, rhymes that served as mnemonic anchors in the face of dislocation. These repertoires were not static relics but living practices, subject to adaptation, forgetting, and negotiation with the new environment. Identity, in this context, is mediated through musical practice: singing a Turkish lullaby in a new land, even if the language is not fully understood by newer generations,

asserts a claim to continuity. At the same time, as younger generations adopt Greek, the Turkish-language songs risk being sidelined or reinterpreted. Some tunes may be preserved in melodic form but stripped of Turkish lyrics, thereby entering the third-space of cross-linguistic hybrid performance. Resistance strategies manifest in specific musical behaviors: insisting on teaching old lullabies in the home, organizing community gatherings where Turkish-language songs are sung, resisting the erasure of Turkish repertoire from the communal memory. At the same time, hybridity appears in borrowings: incorporating Greek harmonic progressions into Anatolian melodies, using Greek instruments to perform Turkish songs, or singing bilingual versions of folk tunes.

Fieldwork observations reveal that in some villages, elders still awake at evening gatherings to sing Turkish lullabies with grandchildren; yet the children often respond in Greek or ask what each word means. In other contexts, local folkloric ensembles include one Turkish-language piece as a gesture to ancestral roots, sandwiched among Greek songs. This points to the negotiated balance: the migrant community is neither wholly Turkish nor wholly Greek in musical identity, but occupies a third-space of hybrid belonging. The Turkish-Greek Population Exchange had a profound impact on the music culture of both countries. The forced migration and resettlement of populations resulted in the exchange of cultural traditions, including music. This blending of musical traditions led to the emergence of new genres, styles, and musical instruments that incorporated elements from both Turkish and Greek food and music (Alpan, 2013: 231). As a result, the music culture of both countries became enriched and diversified, reflecting the shared heritage and cultural exchange between Turkish and Greek populations. The Turkish-Greek Population Exchange had a profound impact on the music culture of both countries. It led to the blending and evolution of musical traditions, the emergence of new genres and styles, the preservation of cultural heritage, increased exposure and awareness of each other's music, and collaboration among musicians. The Turkish-Greek Population Exchange influenced the music cultures of both countries, leading to the blending and evolution of musical traditions, the emergence of new genres and styles, and the preservation of cultural heritage. The forced migration and resettlement of populations during the Turkish-Greek Population Exchange resulted in a rich exchange of cultural traditions, including music. This exchange had a significant impact on the music culture of both countries, leading to the blending and evolution of musical traditions, the emergence of new genres and styles, and the preservation of cultural heritage. From a migration culture perspective, migrant communities face a series of challenges that shape their social organization and cultural continuity. These can be categorized as follows:

### **Spatial rupture and reorganization:**

Migration disrupts the established social and spatial bonds of communities. Migrants must reconstruct social networks, community structures, and a sense of "home" in new environments. This reconstruction process entails *practices of remembering and reconfiguring* (Assmann, 2011).

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### **Cultural transmission and intergenerational rupture:**

The first generation often maintains a strong link to the inherited culture, while subsequent generations experience cultural discontinuity due to linguistic shift, education systems, and assimilation pressures (Berry, 1997). This process leads to cultural loss, selective remembrance, and transformation.

### **Identity crises and belonging:**

Migrants frequently experience identity dualities belonging neither entirely to their homeland nor fully integrating into the host culture. As Hall (1990) notes, identity becomes a question of positioning rather than essence, a constant negotiation of “who we are” and “where we belong.”

### **Assimilation pressures and exclusion:**

Dominant host cultures may impose assimilation norms, leading to marginalization and cultural suppression. Migrant communities thus face social exclusion, linguistic barriers, and reduced agency in cultural expression (Bhugra, 2005).

### **Cultural resistance strategies:**

To counteract such pressures, migrants develop symbolic resistance mechanisms: maintaining linguistic practices, performing traditional rituals, preserving musical repertoires, and founding cultural associations. These practices embody a form of *collective resilience* (Söylemez, 2021).

### **Hybridization and adaptation:**

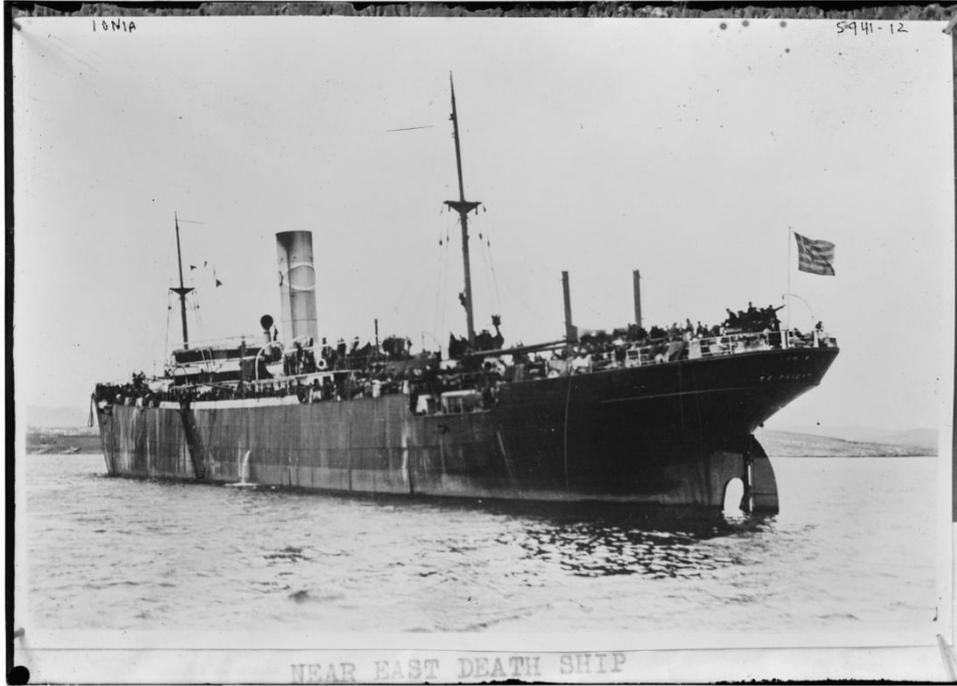
In Bhabha’s (1994) terms, migrants engage in processes of cultural hybridity—borrowing, reinterpreting, and recombining elements from both origin and host cultures. This hybridity reveals cultural fluidity and flexible identity strategies.

### **Cultural memory and musical continuity:**

Music acts as a vessel for collective memory, a symbolic space where emotional and historical ties persist (Stokes, 1994). Through songs, lullabies, and oral repertoires, displaced communities sustain affective connections to their lost homelands.

Within this theoretical and cultural framework, examining the musical cultures of migrants after the 1923 population exchange becomes particularly insightful. The exchange represents not only a political event but a deeply emotional and cultural rupture that demanded creative strategies of survival, adaptation, and remembrance.

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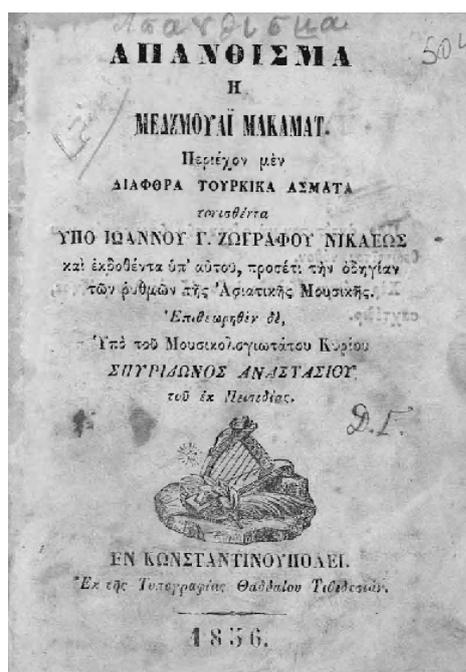


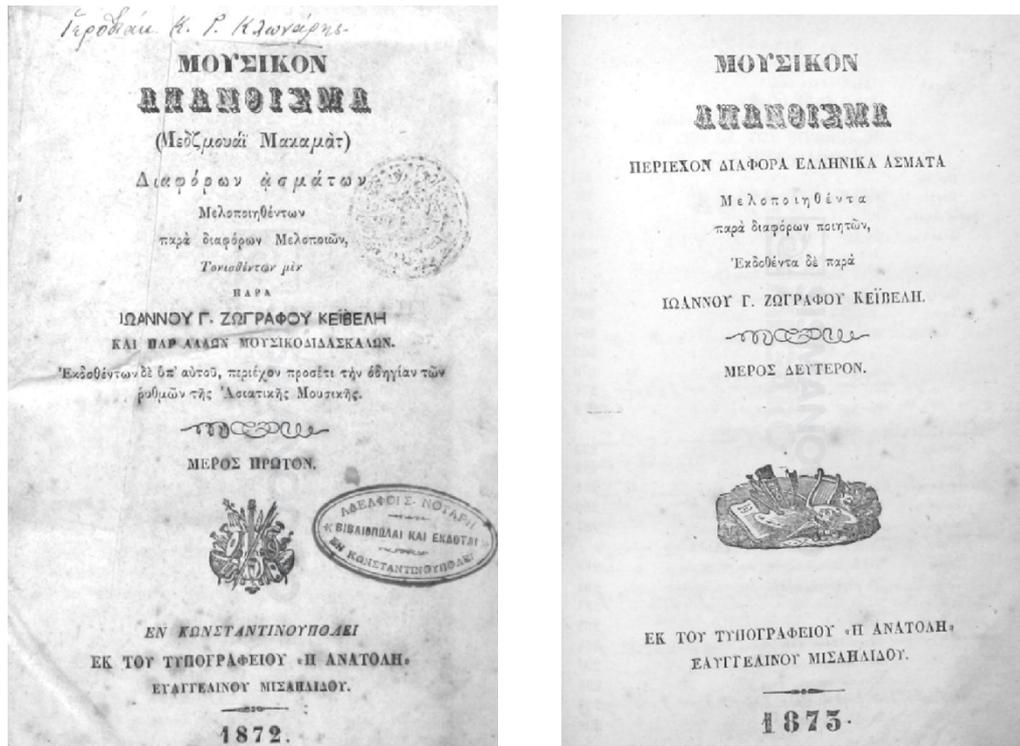
**Picture 2:** The IONIA ship, one of the ships on which the immigrants were carried, was called the "death ship" by the refugees due to the high death rate on the ship (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs, 2023).

## 2. Determinations Regarding the Musical Culture of Anatolian Greeks Before the Population Exchange

The Karamanlis and other Greek refugees from Anatolia who generally record the repertoire they use, have a rich variety of books related to music, among the some of the works, Greek songs and folk songs, as well as a wide range of Turkish repertoires. Karamanlis, who have mastered a very wide Turkish repertoire, have published theory books, note magazines and lyric magazines using their Turkish and Greek letters. Greeks produced almost all types of works in Turkish writing using Greek letters. Sometimes this is a work of literature, sometimes a history book, and sometimes a book about music (Şimşek, 2018). In these magazines, works from both folk and classical music were sometimes notated in Byzantine musical script, and sometimes only their lyrics were recorded. In the majority of city-based magazines, works that were popular at the time the magazines were published, as well as historically important works of the Turkish Art Music repertoire, were recorded. Murat Bardakçı said about these magazines published in Byzantine notation: "Turkish music pieces written in Byzantine notation were published for these groups affiliated with the Fener Church and other Greek Orthodox people. Phanariots, Karamanids and other Greek Orthodox people living in various regions of the Empire who were familiar with Turkish tunes and everyone who had a half-Greek connection used to perform their music with this point in the past" (Bardakçı, 1993:11). Byzantine notation was used by musicians of Greek origin in the Ottoman Empire to write Turkish music works. stated that it was used. Cem Behar, in his article touching on Karamanli musical sources, on the music of Turkish-speaking Central Anatolian Christians, said: "We counted 23 Karamanli

language publications containing musical elements (lyrics and/or notes). These are just catalogued publications... Of these 23 publications, only 10 contain sheet music, the others contain only song titles and lyrics.” (Behar, 1994). and conveyed information about the contents of these sources regarding music. “Among the notated works, some contain very little Turkish text and notation, while others, such as *Evterpi* (1830:234-243), give a large place to Turkish texts and “contain some songs with European tunes”. *Lesbia Sapho* (1870) also includes numerous Greek hymns and songs and a short Turkish section taken from *Pandora-II* (1846). Both editions (1856 and 1872) only contain Turkish parts, but the *Edvar* section was inspired by *Haşim Bey*” (Behar, 1994: 42). Note magazine called *Mousikon Apanthisma* (Μουσικον Απανθισμα) (Ζωγράφος Γ. Ιωάννης, Κείβελης) (Zografu, 1856) works in various forms, modes and some music forms were notated. The works have forms such as “Şarkı”, “Beste”, “Nakış”, “Gazel” and “Kâr”. This work was examined by Mustafa Kılıçarslan in terms of its language. However, the Byzantine musical script in which the works were notated has still not been transferred to the system used today. Although the author's name is the same in the 1873 edition of *Mousikon Apanthisma*, no Turkish work could be identified. In the 1873 edition, unlike other editions, no information was given about musical theory. This edition is actually a repertoire book and consists of Greek songs. As in the other two copies, a Byzantine musical script was used as the musical script. The maqams of some of the recorded works are indicated. The maqams identified in this copy are Mahur, Hicaz, Rahatülervah and Ferahnak maqams. Apart from this copy, two more works named (Μουσικόν απάνθισμα) are in the Sakulidis Collection of Sismanoglio Megaro's Library. However, unlike the other copies, the author of these works is Dimitri Kifiotis (Κυφιώτης Γ. Δημήτριος), (Söylemez, 2019).





Picture 3: “Mousikon Apanthisma” Images of the 1856, 1872 and 1873 editions of the book.

One of the important sources in the context of folk music of Turkish-speaking Greeks in the Ottoman Empire is the folk song lyrics compiled by Stavros Stavridis. Of course, the findings show that the Turkish oral memory of the Greeks in Anatolia is of great importance. Thanks to this magazine, we can see important clues about the musical culture of Greeks of Anatolian origin living in Istanbul. Unfortunately, we don't have much information about Stavridis. We get the most valid information about Stavridis from Evangelia Balta and Ari Çokona, who studied his work and printed it in accordance with today's Turkish.

### 3. Turkish Memory in Greece After the Population Exchange

After this migration movement, an important, although undesirable, cultural relationship was born between the two countries. For example, immigrants who migrated from Turkey to Greece carried the Turkish verbal memory inherited from their ancestors to Greece, while immigrants who migrated to Turkey from Greece carried a considerable Greek memory to Turkey. One of the important parts of this carried memory was undoubtedly musical memory. Greek immigrants, who had a musical culture very similar to their Muslim neighbours when they lived in Turkey, continued this memory they carried from Anatolia in their new homeland. In fact, the musical repertoires created by immigrant societies mostly resemble each other. In this repertoire, which can be described as pre-migration and post-migration, it emerges in certain situations specific to each migrating society. In this context, if we look at the musical memory in Greece, it appears as follows.

- a) Turkish and Greek songs and folk songs known before migration.
- b) Folk songs that describe what happened after the news of migration came.

c) Folk songs that describe the difficulties experienced in the new homeland after migration and are mostly critical.

d) Popular songs and folk songs in Turkish and Greek learned after migration.

e) Turkish and Greek hymns.

f) Turkish and Greek children's play songs.

While refugees quickly formed associations to keep their culture alive in their new homeland, they tried to organize special events so as not to forget this migration process. “Orthodox Greek immigrants who immigrated from Turkey to Greece carried out various activities to protect their culture, art and folkloric values in the years after their migration, and organized themselves by establishing associations and foundations; We see them established in culture and arts centres, research institutes and museums” (Yılmaz, 2023: 137). This can be considered one of the main reasons why the music culture remains alive. Determinations made on Turkish verbal memory and instruments of Anatolian origin after field studies will be included in this section. Neokeseria (Νεοκαισάρεια) is located approximately 10 km from the city center of Ioannina (Ιωάννινα). It is the village with the largest Turkish-speaking population, together with the village of Bafra (μπαφρα), located next to it in the region known as Anatoli. In the village founded by people coming from Cappadocia and its surroundings, the vast majority are still immigrants from Kayseri, Karacaören and Zille. Not all immigrants in the village refer to themselves as Greek or Karamanli. During the population exchange in 1924, a few Armenian families immigrated with the Greeks. The Demircioglu family, who live dispersedly in Bafra and Neokeseria villages, is one of these families. The interviewee, Hristos Demircioglu, introduced himself as Armenian. He also added that neither his grandfather nor his father knew any language other than Turkish. He said that they learned Greek after the exchange, his grandfather died without learning any of it, and his father died having learned to speak very little Greek. Unlike most exchange villages in Greece, Neokeseria is not an old village. The elders of the village stated that this village’s location was above a swamp. The first immigrants in the village started to live in tents and later continued to live in small standard 2-room houses. Today, there are almost no houses of this type left in the village. Since most of the villagers went to work in Germany and other European countries, they had new houses built instead of these houses.

Turkish is still actively spoken in this village today. Most second and third generation immigrants in the village still speak Turkish today. They continue to use whatever their ancestors brought from Anatolia by naming them in Turkish and without translating the names of these objects or dishes into Greek. When we first arrived at the village, it was seen that all the dishes prepared by the village association president Anastasia Papazoglu and the village elders had the same names as they are called in Anatolia. Anastasia Tolia, one of the elders of the village, said that the first people who came to the village suffered a lot. He said that the biggest problem of the village, which is a swamp at the bottom, is that there is no water and that the local Greeks do not treat them well. She always said that her ancestors always spoke Turkish when describing

their daily lives. When talking about traditions, the most striking traditional element is waiting for the fortieth of the dead and giving them food. This cooking stage is almost the same as the process in a Turkish village in Anatolia. The food culture of the village is almost the same as Kayseri cuisine. Manti, dolma, kete, kashik dokmesi, and bulgur are dishes made from it (Söylemez, 2019: 106-107).



**Picture 4:** With the residents of Neokeseria village.

The first thing that attracted attention in the village was the presence of Turkish words in the majority of surnames. For example, the surname of the family that built the fountain of the church is "Soylemezoglou". In addition, surnames such as "Yagmouroglou", "Bodosoglou", "Navrouzoglou" "Demircioglou" are among the surnames said by the elders of the village. Some families have made changes in their Turkish surnames over time, for example, it was stated by the village elders that the surname "Karagozluoglou" was changed to its Greek equivalent, "Mavromatidis" (Μαυροματιδής). Even though the fourth and fifth generations do not know Turkish, they mostly understand it when they hear Turkish. All the elders interviewed in the village, and even their exchanged grandchildren, most of whom were in their thirties and forties, asked for English equivalents of the words they heard from their elders. The collective meetings held in the village took place in the meeting places of the village church and generally on Thursdays. Women gather on the evening before the Friday, and plan various events, or if there is one, they organize a collective event on Thursday evening. During the communication, it was said that today was preferred because it was the day when the elders of the village came together. The first compilation work took the form of an introduction. Mostly elderly people trying to get to know the other people. While they were trying to get to know it, they also examined the "cura" we had with us during the research and said how much the sounds produced by this instrument matched the folk songs sung by their ancestors. In the first compilation study, six folk songs were sung, four in full and two in half.

The folk song that attracted the most attention during the study was the song sung as "Ey Gaziler Yol Göründü". The people who sang the most Turkish songs in the village were Anastasia Tolia (b.1941), Stavroula Karadoniou

(b.1938) and Sofronia Kapasoli (b.1950). Other names interviewed are Anastasia Papazoglou (b.1964), the daughter of Nikola Papazoglou, who used to be one of the people who knew the most Turkish folk songs in the village. He could not be contacted because his father passed away about a year before I left. Anastasia Papazoglou shared the voice recordings she made before her father's death. Thanks to these recordings, some folk songs that were unknown in most villages could be recorded. In addition, since Papazoglou was the president of the village association, he became a very important person in terms of communication with other villagers. The two most important names in the tradition of singing Turkish oral folk songs in the village are Nicolas Papazoglou and Mihail Anastasiou. These two people died before the study began. During the compilation work in the village, almost everyone who sang folk songs stated that Niko would sing this folk song best. Or they stated that this is Niko's folk song and that they were hesitant to sing it because they could not sing it as beautifully as him. All records of Papazoglu were given by his daughter, Anastasia Papazoglu (b.1964), who was also the president of the Neakeseria village association. Anastasia Papazoglou received records from her father, as well as from the elders in the village, during and before her father's lifetime. These recordings were later digitized by his brother Teo Papazoglou. Since the old women in the village unfortunately cannot fully remember most of the folk songs, these records have become much more important for the study. This study conducted in Neokeseria or other villages has shown us how alive the Anatolian identity actually is. It is especially important that older women's Turkish relationships continue even today due to their traditional family lives. One of the most important reasons for this cultural bond with Turkish is undoubtedly musical memory. The most important indicator of this is the existence of an active Turkish musical memory in field studies and the fact that they still sing the folk songs they inherited from the memories of their ancestors on some special commemorations, rituals and days (Söylemez, 2019: 114).

### Conclusion

The 1923 Greco–Turkish population exchange, a political act that forcibly displaced nearly two million people across the Aegean, remains one of the most significant demographic and cultural transformations of the twentieth century. As Muslim Turks were resettled in Anatolia and Orthodox Christians were relocated to Greece, entire communities carried not only their possessions but also their languages, songs, and memories. Among these displaced groups were Turkish-speaking Anatolian Greeks—people who, though Christian by religion, spoke Turkish as their mother tongue and had been deeply embedded in the social and cultural landscape of Anatolia for centuries. This study, based on extensive ethnomusicological fieldwork conducted in more than seventy villages throughout Greece, particularly in the regions of Yanya (Ioannina) and Neokesaria, sought to document and analyze the living heritage of these Turkish-speaking *mübadil* (exchange migrants). The field research revealed that Turkish continues to be spoken in various degrees across generations, often within domestic, intimate, or communal contexts. Even when Greek has become the dominant public language, Turkish still resonates through song—preserving the affective and mnemonic connection to the Anatolian homeland.

Through interviews, participatory observation, and direct musical recordings, it became clear that this oral tradition has not merely survived but adapted to changing cultural

circumstances. The repertoire of Turkish-speaking communities extends far beyond traditional folk songs (*türkü*). Many individuals, especially of the second and third generations, perform and remember fragments of Turkish *sanat müziği* (art music) and even Turkish popular songs from the 1960s onward. These musical traces, transmitted through radio broadcasts, cassette culture, and now digital media, show how the auditory memory of Anatolia has continuously reinvented itself across temporal and technological boundaries.

For example, in several villages of the Yanya region, elderly informants recalled listening to Turkish radio stations in the mid-twentieth century, singing along to Zeki Müren, Müzeyyen Senar, or even early arabesk performers. Today, younger community members access Turkish music through social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify—engaging in a new kind of transnational listening that reaffirms, albeit unconsciously, their linguistic and emotional ties to a Turkish-speaking world. This interaction between inherited oral memory and mediated popular culture demonstrates that cultural continuity does not rely solely on formal transmission but also on the everyday acts of listening, sharing, and digital participation.

Despite this cultural persistence, the community's self-identification has evolved considerably. When the first generation arrived in Greece, they often referred to themselves as “Anatolian Greeks” (*Anatoliotés Romioi*), emphasizing their place of origin. Over time, this designation gave way to “Mikroasiates” (Μικρασιάτες), reflecting both assimilation into the Greek national narrative and a conscious distancing from their Anatolian past. Nevertheless, the Turkish language and its musical forms remain as powerful mnemonic signifiers—resisting complete linguistic and cultural assimilation.

The songs collected during this research convey recurring themes of longing (*gurbet*), exile, divine will, and separation. Their melodic structures often mirror the modal systems (*makams*) of Anatolian Turkish music, while their performance contexts—weddings, commemorations, and informal gatherings—serve as living spaces of memory. These sonic continuities reveal that, while political borders have divided territories, they have not severed the emotional geography of shared culture.

Furthermore, the fieldwork uncovered parallel linguistic phenomena among other groups: Turkish-speaking Armenians, Albanians, and even individuals of African descent residing in the same regions. This underscores that “Turkish-speaking identity” in post-exchange Greece is not an ethnic label but a multi-layered linguistic and cultural reality—a residue of the Ottoman ecumene that once embraced plural voices and hybrid traditions.

This study thus contributes to the understanding of how displaced communities negotiate belonging through sound. Music, in this context, acts as both an archive and an agent—a repository of collective memory and a dynamic force of cultural transformation. The persistence of Turkish song in Greece illuminates how language, melody, and emotion intertwine to sustain a diasporic identity that is at once rooted and reinvented.

For future research, several directions emerge. Interdisciplinary approaches combining ethnomusicology, linguistic anthropology, and media studies could further reveal how hybrid identities are articulated across generations. Comparative studies between Turkish-speaking and Greek-speaking *mübadil* groups may clarify the differential trajectories of assimilation and memory retention. Additionally, documenting how new media platforms mediate cultural memory—especially among younger descendants—will be crucial for understanding the evolving relationship between heritage and modernity. Establishing a digital archive of recordings, photographs, and oral testimonies would also serve both scholarly and community purposes, preserving this intangible heritage for future generations.

Ultimately, the findings affirm that the legacy of Anatolia within Greece is not confined to history books or museum collections—it reverberates in song, speech, and sentiment. The voices of Turkish-speaking Greeks remind us that culture travels with people, transforming yet enduring. Through their music, these communities continue to weave a living bridge between Anatolia and Greece, between memory and modernity, ensuring that the echoes of their past remain audibly present in the soundscape of the Aegean.

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