Naming the Baby: Music and boundaries in Zoupanochoria

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Abstract

The article focuses on the local music and dance of Zoupanochoria, a cluster of villages lying on the boundaries of the different geographic areas of the Greek parts of Epirus and Macedonia. Identifying music with either side of the boundary results in contestations over locals' identity and sparks dispute over symbolic belonging to distinct musical traditions and their geographic origin. The research shows that musicians blend elements (tunes, rhythms, instrumentation) of both music traditions. Based on the repertoires performed in two community festivities, the article relates their different structure and organization with alternative expressions of belonging and shows the resolution of dispute and discontent that the local dance *Lotzia* provides. This border situation resonates metaphorically with the Greek tradition to name the newborn baby after one of the grandparents, thus signifying bonds with the family. However, highlighting bonds with a specific part of the family can engender disputes. This metaphor can be applied to many forms of community solidarity-building in Greece and the wider Balkans, as the one examined here.

Key-words: Music, Community belonging, Borderlands, Zoupanochoria, Traditions and locality.

In 2016 we authors met in Konitsa Summer School and embarked on our first fieldwork project. We crossed the Pindus mountain range while driving from Konitsa to Pentalofos, located in the neighboring geographic region. ‘... We have just left Epirus and entered Western Macedonia’ our supervisor said. ‘Can you tell the difference?’ he asked us. The landscape unfolded the same before our eyes: the vegetation, the rocks, the road curves. Yet the very question, highlighting the transition to another area which was on the other side of the mountain, shifted our attention toward identifying any differences. Acknowledgement of a specific landmark evoked a difference between the places it separated.

This article contributes to the discussion of borders in two ways. First, we examine how borders produce difference and how this difference is traced upon music traditions. We must note that while Zoupanochoria is not located on the international border, yet the violent establishment of the latter throughout the 20th century, and the consequent people’s movements, inform current perceptions of the physical and administrative boundaries and increase the gravity of symbolic boundaries between communities. Second, we show how music not only articulates boundary identities, but also serves in creating a common point of reference, facilitating belonging.

The dispute over the identity of the two sides of the boundary, either Epirus or Macedonia, reminded us of another common dispute that sparks from naming the newborn baby in Greece. It is typical to name the newborn baby after one of the grandparents, thus honoring him/her and signifying bonds with that part of the family, suggesting a continuity of the family across the generations. While this happens, the dispute usually sparks over which part of the family should be honored. In our case, we employ the ‘naming the baby’ practice as a metaphor to narrate the significance of naming the local music after either side of the boundary. Thus, we can consider as ‘families’ the areas of Epirus and Macedonia, while the residents of the local community are those manifesting with their musical cultures their belonging to either of the ‘families’. As we will show in this research, the dispute will be solved by the tune of a dance that has the same name of the central square of Pentalofos, the major village of Zoupanochoria.

Pentalofos and the cluster of Zoupanochoria

Pentalofos is located in an area that can be seen as a place ‘on the borders’. Although no visible sign suggests the existence of any border, Epirus and Western Macedonia are distinct administratively, and each aligns with their respective geographic areas. In fact, the geographic areas of Epirus and Macedonia extend beyond the northern borders of the Greek nation-state, becoming territories of the nation-states of Albania and North Macedonia respectively. The division of the geographic areas is the outcome of World Wars I and II and has been marked with violence and local populations’ forced movement. While our field site is not located on the international borders, but rather on an internal boundary, yet the perceptions of this (geographic and/or administrative) boundary are embedded in the historic and political processes that defined the constitution of the international borders, thus transferring in a way the ‘external’ border within national territory (see Donnan and Wilson 1994).

Pentalofos is still called by locals *Zoupan*, a name that dates back into time, in a way constituting a continuity of the place through time. The name *Zoupan* is of Slavic origin (see Moustakas 2015), and indicates the head of a unit,² therefore evoking certain hierarchies. After all, Pentalofos has always been the major village of the particular cluster of villages, identified in local historiography as *Zoupania* or *Zoupanochoria*, incorporating in the name of the major village the Greek word for villages, *choria* (see Antoniadou 2015, 66).³

This area was annexed to the Greek State in the beginning of the 20th century. Until then it was part of the Ottoman Empire, as was the rest of Northern Greece. The name of the province in the Ottoman era was *Anaselitsa*, which probably derives from *Seltsa* – the local name of the village Eratyra. *Anaselitsa* was used until 1927, when the renaming of the so-called ‘New Areas’ was enforced by law.⁴ When annexed to the Greek State, the area comprised 91 villages. Nowadays, the area comprises 79 villages due to desolation or administrative allocation to neighboring prefectures (Grevena and Kastoria). The term *Kastanochoria* is also employed to identify the villages where chestnut trees (*kastana* is the Greek word for ‘chestnuts’) thrive and to indicate the ones where no refugees from Minor Asia/ Pontus were relocated after the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922). As Antoniadou (2015, 2) notes, local historiographers further employ these names to suggest their perceived contribution of the villages to the Macedonian Struggle. In 1995 the name *Ano kai Kato Voio* was introduced by *Etaireia Meleton Ano Voios* (Research Association of *Ano Voios*) to refer to the broader area. Thus, they used Mount Voios as a landmark distinguishing between the villages that are located ‘up’ and ‘underneath’ it, suggesting perceived differentiations of each part in terms of demographics, and thus introducing a hegemonic discourse (Antoniadou 2015, 2, 34).

Despite the asymmetries that the name *Zoupanochoria* evokes – and recognizing that existing asymmetries are further intensified by local perspectives of ‘whom’/ ‘what’ constitutes ‘us’ and ‘others’ – we chose the name *Zoupanochoria* to refer to our field site, as it is still used by locals and evokes a sense of unity, especially compared to the other names employed.

Apart from the multicultural demographics, migration to other places and consequently a large diaspora have been integral part of the history of the place. Migration was driven by the harsh living conditions that forced men to move massively to other areas ‘of Greece’ and ‘of the world’ as all our interlocutors boasted, as their migrant compatriots have been famous stonemasons. The following anecdote that a couple of interlocutors mentioned is indicative of their perspective:

Someone from Pentalofos was discussing with a Bishop. At some point, the Bishop asks the person from Pentalofos:

‘My child, who built the world?’

‘People from Pentalofos.’

‘Are you sure? Didn’t Anyone [implying God] help them?’

‘Well, there were a couple of people from *Ntolos* by their side.’

This anecdote highlights the locals’ understandings of their impact on ‘the world’, and consequently their relationship with it: people from Pentalofos ‘built the world’. After all, locals have been historically famous stonemasons and their skills were sought across the Ottoman Empire, contributing further to the identification of the area as *Mastorochoria*

(meaning the villages of the stonemasons). This anecdote indicates the residents' of Pentalofos acknowledgement of the residents of Ntolos,⁵ though resonating with asymmetrical relations between the two villages as shaped throughout the years. More specifically, while Pentalofos has been the capital of the cluster of Zoupanochoria, Ntolos has been the nearby village – so close that it may be seen with the naked eye. In fact, we initially mistook it for a separate neighborhood of the village. Some families of the residents of Ntolos used to be primarily musicians of allegedly Roma origins, as locals told us. While living outside Pentalofos, they had established their special position within its public life,⁶ as they were professional musicians and without them, no festivity could occur. As one of our interlocutors characteristically argued, musicians 'looked at the feet of dancers and knew how to dance the people',⁷ suggesting that they played local music as well as they knew the residents' preferences.

Migration has also been driven by the devastating consequences of wars, and especially Civil War that followed World War II (see Carabott 2005, 54; Mazower 2000; Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012). Finally, in the recent years, mobility has occurred as part of the general internal migration in Greece from rural areas to the cities (Hastaoglou et al. 1987).

Entering the field

We conducted participant observation and semi-structured interviews in two local festivities. The research aimed to study the music identified by our interlocutors as *tis periochis* (meaning 'of the area', local), as well as how locals referred to music traditions to articulate feelings of belonging.

Focusing on the members of our team as "consequential social actors" (Boellstorff et al. 2012, 65), we could reveal our different relations with the field. For two of us, this could be regarded as fieldwork at home (Stock and Chiener 2008); Katerina and Chrysi are both from the wider area of Greek Macedonia, and they were considerably familiar with the local musical traditions. This was not the case for Joseane and Marko, who do not speak Greek, and have never visited the place before. This meant that Katerina and Chrysi found themselves in the contested position of researchers and mediators between the rest of the research group and the interviewees. Furthermore, they translated the interviewees' discourses to English – which, despite being none of the members' mother language, is the only common one among us – and the experience of the field consequently evoked Rabinow's notion of "double agency" (1977, 117). Some of us were already familiar with different theories and approaches to fieldwork research; however, this project was the first fieldwork experience for most of us.

In writing this article, we navigated through our ethnographic recordings and locals' narrations to examine how borders and boundaries shaped the places we visited and the people who lived there, as articulated in their discourses about 'their' music. Moreover, we examined how locals crossed borders and boundaries through the tunes performed in the events we attended, and how they experienced and described this music in relation to their sense of belonging.

The residents of Zoupanochoria were familiar with students of Konitsa Summer School visiting the area for fieldwork research activities. Many locals welcomed us, due to the

longstanding relationship between the Summer School and the villages. Rather characteristically, the local mayor announced our presence at the *choros*. Our affiliation marked our presence in the field, as well as the interactions with our interlocutors.

The many elements that defined our relationship with the field represent a crucial part of the “partial truths” (Clifford 1986) we will put in writing here.

Music, dances and discussions echoing community

Music, dance and festivals, as public expressive cultural practices, function as a site of people’s collective identities articulation that are deeply embedded in social group contexts (Turino 2008). They allow people to sing and dance together, thus, to evoke shared forms of cultural knowledge. Furthermore, they foster feelings of belonging, and they allow people to perform and demonstrate the particularities of their community: what is *theirs*, what is *other*, what has changed. After all, public expressive cultural practices occur within specific time and space within given communities who instil their collective experience and aesthetics into them. Therefore, incorporating all these elements that enable communities to identify themselves, they allow communities to emerge as entities. The rules that need to be followed in terms of music (songs and tunes), the atmosphere, the revellers’ expected behaviors, the use of space, so that a collective festivity expresses the community, evoke Caraveli’s phrase “the symbolic village” (1985), wherein the community constructs itself by participating in the performative activities that constitute a collective festivity. As Kavouras has shown (1992), the articulation of collective identities in the community festivities lies at the intersections of what is considered shared and what is differentiated. Differentiations due to cultural change may spark feelings of alienation, and thus senses of non-belonging. Nonetheless, differentiations are part of how the community experiences itself through engaging in its collective festivities (Kavouras, 1992, 188-190).

What is shared among the community members transcends the texts of the cultural practices, as may be seen in the dance movements and song lyrics (or even in the lack of them) (see Caraveli, 1982). Dance as a means of non-verbal communication resonates with the social contexts in which it occurs, manifesting “social integration” as well as “individuality” (Loutzaki 1997, 229). While being a collective activity, dance brings into action the relations (gendered, social etc.) between the community members. In other words, dance performance allows people to express cultural pieces of knowledge, understand rules and values, and identify group relations and individual negotiations (see Cowan 1990). On the other hand, the meanings of the songs lie in the lyrics but also in the notions evoked through the “performance style, social usage, individual personality of the performer, community world view and local history, [...] the long tradition shaping the conventions” (Caraveli 1982, 130). Consequently, the contexts within which festivities occur matter, as they define the meanings produced. More specifically, they may foster differentiation between a participatory community-led performative practice (feast, dance etc.), and an official celebration where the community is invited to attend (eventually) a representation of their culture.

While music and dance occur in place – eventually informed by it given the embedded meanings and their central role in community life – they also provide the means to construct

and understand places (see Hudson 2006, 627). As Stokes argues, “the *places*⁸ constructed through music involve notions of difference and social boundary” (1994, 3). This happens because music does not merely reflect given social formations. On the contrary, the qualities that define its perceived particularity allow people to locate music and consequently construct specific places, distinguishing them from others.

Music and dance in Zoupanochoria exemplify an interesting case of place-making, as Zoupanochoria is located on a boundary, thus, exactly where ‘us’ and ‘them’ take shape and gain social importance signifying and creating difference (see Migdal 2004; Wilson & Donnan 2012). Considering that in Zoupanochoria sedentary people have coexisted and come to revel together in the community festivities with people on the move (migrants, diaspora etc.), it is interesting to see how music and dance facilitate feelings of belonging.

Small (1998) locates the meaning of music in the relations that frame it and are articulated within it. In order to emphasize the active agency that engaging with music involves, Small suggests the term “musicking”, indicating that music transforms into new directions the broader social relationships that at the same time the music reflects (Small 1998, 13). Participants in musicking relate with each other and shape their actions, infusing them with their own social experiences. At the same time, the in-between interactions when musicking may suggest new forms of relations. Consequently, when people engage with musicking, whether listening, dancing, playing, or discussing music, their actions do not simply reflect cultural and social identities, but also provide the means by which they are constructed, and make sense of the place where these activities occur (Stokes 1994).

The word *choros* (meaning ‘dance’) is used to identify the annual community festivity in general, manifesting the crucial role of dancing in the events that celebrate the community life, the community as an entity. While at *choros* food and wine are prepared and offered by the community – thus resembling a feast in broader terms – the event is identified as dance. Emphasis on dance indicates the activity privileged by locals. The massive participation of permanent residents, residents of neighboring villages, and people of the diaspora highlight the importance of *choros* in community life.

Musical elements and belonging to Epirus or Macedonia

As musical elements, we consider the scales utilized to construct the tune, the tempo, the rhythmic patterns (as exemplified by specific dances, each of which has a unique rhythmic motion and dancing movement inextricably interrelated with the rhythm), the timbre and the instrumentation used. Moreover, lyrics of the songs are considered since a song comprises lyrics and tune.

It makes sense to begin with the scales, being the system organizing the intervals between the notes, thus shaping the particularity of each tune. Pentatonic scales were noticeable in the tunes performed on both occasions we attended. The pentatonic system is typical of Epirotic music, either instrumental or vocal. The melodic elaborations to the basic melody of this tune are named by locals *girismata*. Performed by the clarinetists in both events, they are a characteristic example of the Epirotic tradition. Pentatonic scales were noticeable to the song performed acapella by *Voiaki Estia Thessalonikis*, an association of diaspora of the broader

area around the mount Voio, that reside in Thessaloniki.⁹ We should note here that the only songs with lyrics we heard were the ones performed by this group.

As far as the timbre and instrumentation are concerned, brass instruments along with clarinet and ntaouli¹⁰ defined the sound of this music. These brass instruments spread in Greece between the 19th and 20th centuries, along with army bands (Montsenigos 1958). However, they were included in the music of the area only after 1950-1960s (right after the end of the Civil War). Our interlocutors highlighted not only how local music has been differentiated throughout the years, but they further acknowledged locals' mobility as a decisive factor of shaping what is identified as local music. As a resident of Avgerinos told us, for instance, 'until the 1960s we had violin, ntefi¹¹ and clarinet. The brass instruments came later. We grew up listening to such music. Young people listen to other stuff, too. Our music has influences from the region of Macedonia, due to our moving back and forth as stonemasons'.

At the *choros* in Dafni, the band consisted of two ntaouli-players (one of whom was the leader-musician) a clarinetist, two trumpetists, a trombonist and an accordionist, following the conventions of a typical Western Macedonian ensemble (Karakalpakidis 2009, 41). The band that performed at the celebration in Pentalofos consisted of the first (leader-musician) and second clarinetist, a trumpeter, two percussionists and a keyboardist. While the timbre was similar on both occasions, we noted the difference between the double instruments (trumpets on the first occasion, and clarinets on the second), as trumpets are typical of the Macedonian tradition, while clarinets are typical of the Epirotic. With the exception of the leading role of the clarinetist, we cannot argue that what is nowadays considered as a typical Epirotic ensemble bears any similarities with what is considered as a typical Macedonian ensemble. The introduction of the brass instruments in the mid-20th century established a major differentiation. This was not the case in the past, when both ensembles would have comprised clarinet, violin and laouto.¹²

On both occasions, the repertory comprised instrumental dances. However, as our interlocutors argued, the tunes performed used to have lyrics, which nobody sings anymore. In fact, *Voiaki Estia Thessalonikis* made an exception to this, performing acapella two songs – the only ones that we heard during our fieldwork. Our interlocutors remarked on the absence or presence of lyrics, usually blaming musicians' 'ignorance', as 'they are not from here'. In this way, they differentiated local community from musicians who performed at the local celebrations. Furthermore, they indicated as a source of local (musical) knowledge, 'being from' what is considered as 'local area'. Moreover, they suggested senses of discontinuity in what constituted local musical expression.

The absence of lyrics urged some to identify with the Epirotic tradition. As one interviewee said characteristically: 'I feel like [I am] an Epirot. [I mean that I am from the towns of] Premeti or Leskovik, because their songs have lyrics, while the Macedonian songs don't have lyrics, and I like singing'. It is interesting to notice that both towns of Premeti and Leskovik are within Albanian territory. In this way, our interlocutor evokes the broader geographic area of Epirus before the making of the modern nation-states, resonating with the history of locals' mobility across the area during the Ottoman Empire, now divided by state borders (see Hristov 2012; Howell 2017; Sefer, Yildiz, and Kabadayi 2021).

Other interlocutors explained the absence of lyrics as indicative of the Macedonian tradition. As an interviewee told us, 'Macedonian songs don't have lyrics because it was

forbidden for them [Macedonian people] to speak their language. They could speak and sing freely only during the era of Resistance'.¹³ Here, our interviewee illuminates a silenced aspect of the local musical traditions, linked to the nation-state strategies to constitute cultural otherness throughout the historical processes of border-making in the area (Danforth 1995; Karakasidou 1997; Tziovas 2003). These strategies are echoed in the local cultural practices as informed by individual and collective memory and identity negotiation (Todorova 2004; Rombou-Levidi 2016; Rombou-Levidi 2018). As other interlocutors highlighted, the particular tunes (e.g. *Lytos Florinas*, *Aloniatikos Florinas*, *Enteka*, *Tsourapia* and others) were not 'local' (of Zoupanochoria). They were rather typical of the traditions of neighboring areas of the (Greek) Western Macedonia. As our interlocutors argued, these tunes were performed because musicians were living in these areas, and because the events were also joined by the diaspora residing in areas of Greek Macedonia, thus familiar with the repertoires there.

For the local residents who were originally from the neighboring area of Epirus, the lack of lyrics constituted a reason for feeling the radical difference from the tradition they feel to belong. As an interviewee argued, the lack of lyrics signified a fundamental differentiation from what he considered as typical Epirotic: 'We don't dance without a singer [in Epirus]! How is it even possible to dance without a singer?'. Consequently, he felt 'other' and not encouraged to revel in the local community's *choros* or any other festivity that involved dancing. The lack of lyrics led him to abstain from collective manifestations of the community. Moreover, the absence of lyrics fostered feelings of alienation even among locals who were not originally from Epirus. As our interlocutor at the local cultural association told us, the absence of lyrics was due to 'losing our culture, because we don't sing. We forgot the lyrics. If a generation forgets the lyrics, the tradition is lost'. According to him, the lack of lyrics was a sign of 'forgetting' and 'losing'. This marked significant cracks in the cultural sense of discontinuity throughout time (see Kavouras 1992, 188). His words further highlight the crucial role of each generation for keeping an oral tradition alive.

Musicians, while acknowledging the elements of both Macedonian and Epirotic musical traditions, highlighted the distinctive local 'color'. By that, they stressed the unique character of the local musical variations that distinguish the local music from either side of the boundary and the respective musical tradition. Moreover, they declined their ownership over what they performed, although their performance constituted its uniqueness. Instead, they argued that they were merely reproducing the music made by their grandparents. In other words, they were holding the threads of tradition, retaining the distinct color of the place, of their 'home'.

This perspective of some musicians sharply contradicted the dissatisfaction experienced by some revelers with the music performed. Dissatisfaction was due to musical elements of other areas thought to prevail over their 'own' style and character. In those narratives, the 'color' of the music performed was typical of other villages, *other* areas, other cultures. The infusion of local music with 'other' color undermined the authenticity of the music performed. Considering that 'local' is a "relative term – a matter of degree, not kind" (Finnegan 2018, 487), alteration in the 'degree' of locality resulted in no longer identifying the music performed as 'their' (local) music, but rather as 'other'. Consequently, they could not enjoy the dance. Musicians were held responsible for this alienation, who, being from other (neighboring) areas imported their own *other* music/culture.

Choros and Dance: Performing narrations of place, identity and belonging

As shown previously, mobility has been at the core of the locals' social life. In this section, we will show how boundary identities, as well as migration across these boundaries, are expressed at *choros*.

Musicians marked the launch of each event performing tunes connected with the topic of departure of the beloved ones from their homes to *xenitia* (as any foreign place is generally identified). They began the *choros* in Dafni performing a *Noumpet(i)*, a tune in slow tempo, that enables the clarinetist (lead player) to demonstrate his technique in improvising melodies.¹⁴ *Noumpet(i)* signified the end of *choros*, too. This tune was dedicated to the *xenitemenous* (those who were in *xenitia*, migrants), turning their absence from the home's community life into sonic presence (see Kavouras 1990; Pistrick 2015, 42). Musicians launched the celebration at Pentalofos performing *Nyfiatikos*, a tune used to signify the bride's departure from her home to the wedding place and signified her departure from her family home to her new home. On both occasions, migration and departure were central.

Despite the common themes that marked each festivity, musicians engaged with the audience in very different ways, suggesting different structures for the events. In Dafni, musicians passed before all tables placed symmetrically around the central square. They stopped before each table, appropriating the tune of *Noumpeti* to please the people sitting, requesting a gratuity, and engaging the audience.

On the other hand, musicians in Pentalofos did not engage with the audience at the launch of the event. They performed *Nyfiatikos* to accompany the entrance of the dancing groups of Rodiani¹⁵, and the cultural associations *Syndesmos Grammaton kai Technon Kozanis* and *Voiaki Estia Thessalonikis*. Groups outside Zoupanochoria danced the most popular tune in the area along with *Lotzia* – as our interlocutors always emphasized – while the audience was seated.

In Dafni, musicians performed *Leonidas/Papagiorgos*, after the *Noumpeti*. As an interlocutor told us, this tune is 'always played after a *Noumpeti* and is common in Epirus and here. While we shift it into *Ntram'stino*¹⁶, they shift it into *Pogonisios*.' This shift made audible that while in the repertoires performed at *choros* there are shared patterns between Epirus and Zoupanochoria, there are also particularities which must also sound, marking different senses of locality. *Nyfiatikos* was performed afterwards, and musicians shifted the tune into *Ntram'stino*, highlighting locality.

The abundance of tunes associated with migration (such as to *tragoudi tou xenitemenou* translated as 'the migrant's song') was remarkable. Moreover, the welcoming and participatory character of *choros* is indicated by many tunes that were 'other' to what was regarded as constituting local culture (e.g. Pontiac tunes, and a modern pop hit). The performances changed according to the preferences of the revelers, including those from nearby villages or young people from the diaspora. Despite the abundance of elements suggesting 'otherness' in the repertoire performed, our interlocutors felt that 'their music' was performed. Locals also identified as part of the local repertoire the tunes that are common in many other areas of Greece (e.g. *syrtos*), refusing to relate them with either side of the boundary.

The influence of Vlach nomadic herders in the area was also audible in the repertory of both occasions, by performing the respective dance. Although our interlocutors in both places suggested the otherness of this 'Vlach tune' to their local culture, they also welcomed it, as these peoples periodically lived together for centuries.

In Pentalofos, musicians performed *Nyfiatikos* to accompany the entrance of *Voiaki Estia Thessalonikis* in the central square where the celebration took place. However, as our interlocutor at this festivity and people sitting around us remarked, dancers' clothes were typical of nearby villages (Avgerinos, Dafni and Polykastano) rather than Pentalofos, suggesting this way bonds among the villages comprising the cluster, as well as differentiation from what should be typical of Pentalofos. *Nyfiatikos* was followed by dances common in Western Macedonia and a *tsamikos* dance, 'common in Konitsa and here,' as our interlocutor told us, to be followed by more dances shared with Western Macedonia (e.g. *Lytos Florinas*, *Aloniatikos Florinas*, *Enteka*, *Tsourapia* etc.).

At some point dancers stopped and sang: '*Me touto to potiraki thelo na pio pentexi/ Ki an methyso krata me mechri na fexei*' ['With this little glass I'd like to drink five-six shots/ And if I get drunk, keep me until it's dawn'].¹⁷ This was the first song we heard during our fieldwork. A slow, nearly static, dance followed it. It was so slow that by the time music ended, the dancers had not completed a full circle. The next dance, although at a faster tempo, was still slow, further reinforcing the sense of affiliation with Epirus. Musicians moved from the edge of the square into the center of the circle of the dancers and moved along with them. Our interlocutor explained that this is a gesture that honors the dances, and is typical of the local tradition 'that comes from Epirus... It's not typical of Macedonian tradition'. The rest of the repertory comprised dances common in the entire area of Greek Macedonia. This resonated with the local narrative, that elements of other origin thrive in the local music, as the outcome of the extensive mobility of local builders to other areas; their return 'home' resulted in enriching local culture with elements of the cultures of the places where they had been. The abundance of Macedonian dances further resonated with the fact that a considerable part of the local diaspora has been living in urban centers of Greek Macedonia, thus they are familiar with the tunes there. This perspective was further supported by the fact that none of the dancing groups was local.

We can argue that in Dafni the repertory reinforced a sense of locality while implying existing relations between Epirus and Macedonia. That was not the case in Pentalofos, though, where the repertory reinforced a sense of the coexistence of Epirotic and Macedonian tradition. In the case of Pentalofos, the tunes suggesting locality were *Nyfiatikos*, which launched the celebration, and *Sygekath'sto*, another prominent local dance.

The different structure of the repertories of each festivity seems to be related to the different contexts framing them. *Choros* in Dafni occurs annually, thus it has a prominent position in the social life of the residents, the diaspora, and the broader region. Consequently, participants inform the repertory. However, the celebration in Pentalofos was organized by the local authorities, the Church, and the Cultural Association to honor the 200 years since the patron saint's church was constructed. Consequently, it was an official event, held for an exceptional occasion. In this context, each distinct tradition of the boundary area shaping the local musical culture, should be acknowledged, marking the respective affiliations. The different role local community had in organizing each festivity was further noticed at people's

participation in dance. While at *choros* in Dafni, people joined a dancing circle at the sound of the first dancing tunes, at the celebration in Pentalofos people danced after the end of the celebration, as musicians kept performing.

Traditions and locality in the *Lotzia*

In Zoupanochoria Epirotic and Macedonian elements structured the repertoires performed in the festivities we attended, displaying boundary feelings of belonging. As one of our interlocutors argued, suggesting a merging of the distinct traditions, ‘actually, our music is epirotic songs played at a faster tempo, because of the different instrumentation’. Despite the possible common patterns across the boundaries that constitute locality, our interlocutor stressed that they are merged in a unique way typical of the local area. This merging suggests the existence of a particular culture; thus, it affirms the existence of a unique collectivity (see Manos 2005, 131), that although bearing similarities with the ones across the boundary, still it is understood as distinct.

We witnessed this cultural blending at *choros* in Dafni, when a *tsamikos* dance was performed. *Tsamikos* is typical of Epirus and Zoupanochoria. Variations in tempo signify the location of the performance. More specifically, in Dafni, the clarinetist led the tune embellishing the melody with solos, while the trumpets were playing standard continuous rhythmic-melodic patterns. While these patterns are typical of Epirotic music, in Epirus they should be performed on *laouto* and violin, the instruments typically comprising an Epirotic ensemble. Furthermore, in Dafni, *tsamikos* was performed at a faster tempo compared to the typical Epirotic ones, confirming what our interlocutor in Avgerinos argued.

Another case that demonstrated the sonic construction of locality was the shift into the local tune of *Ntram'stino* of many dances common in Dafni and elsewhere. This shift marked the ending of the performance of the tune and allowed the dancers to manifest locality. This practice suggests appropriation of tunes danced in Zoupanochoria and elsewhere. The addition of the unquestionably local tune of *Ntram'stino* can be seen as a ‘sonic signature’. Apart from bearing the name of the particular village, this tune was cherished by our interlocutors for its ‘heavy’ character, that resonated with Epirotic tradition too.

The cases discussed above illustrate different ways in which the Epirotic and Macedonian traditions coexisted (e.g. instrumentation, tempo, structure of the repertoire etc.) as well as how they were locally appropriated (e.g. shift to *Ntram'stino*, tempo). However, the tune that all our interlocutors unquestionably identified as solely ‘theirs’, as ‘typically local’, was *Lotzia*. *Lotzia* is named after the central square of Pentalofos. All the festivities that celebrate community, such as *choros*, weddings, official celebrations, have been held at *lotzia*. *Lotzia* (the dance) comprises two parts. The first and most extended one is slow and the latter, which signifies the coming end, is faster. Each part is danced differently. The movements to the first part are slow, to be followed by faster ones in the second part. Seven-beat metric structure bridges the different tempo. Occasionally dancers leave the dancing circle to dance the second part of the dance in pairs facing each other and moving freely, similarly to *Antikrystos*, a dance common in various areas in Greece.

In terms of musical elements, *Lotzia* brings together slow tempos, typical of the Epirotic tradition, with faster ones, typical of the Macedonian tradition. Therefore, elements typical of either tradition coexist in this tune, complementing each other in a way that is not traced elsewhere but for Zoupanochoria. The historical-political processes that have produced the external (international) borders of Epirus and Macedonia have affected the meanings infusing the elements of cultural and musical production even within national territory. Consequently, we can say that the musical arrangements of *Lotzia* provide a sense of locality that ensures distance from the troubles border-making has caused and gives comfort within the uniqueness of the 'place'. Although locality is produced at the intersections of external and internal forces, "the styles people privilege in the construction of local identities are precisely those seen to have historic links to the locality" (Reily and Brucher 2018a, 7-8). Alternatively, we can say that the border crumbled in the boundary area, shaping a unique sense of locality, a unique sense of the place.

While in our interviews and discussions, we heard disappointment at the differentiations to the local 'color', as it was argued that the variations were inappropriate for a festivity that was supposed to celebrate community, this was not the case when people talked to us about *Lotzia*. All our interlocutors were satisfied with the performance of this dance. Given that the lack of lyrics led some of our interlocutors to argue that they feel closer to Epirotic tradition, it is interesting to note that *Lotzia*, a dance identified unanimously as 'theirs', does not have lyrics. Considering that "locality often appears subsumed within the notion of belonging" (Lovell 1998, 4), a process that is saturated with emotion, and the capacity of music to generate "strong feelings of attachment to locality by generating feelings of connectedness" (Reily and Brucher 2018b, 90), we conclude that *Lotzia* plays a central role in establishing an undoubtable sense of community cohesion. Successful performance of the *Lotzia* could not be compromised by the subtle shades of local 'color', as it has been the sonic emblem of the community.

Conclusion

In this paper we focused on music and dance as experienced in public festivities in the boundary area of Zoupanochoria. Throughout the discussion of our ethnographic recordings and locals' narratives, we showed how the shadow that the borders cast as realized in musical performance shape perceptions of music and self, suggesting competitive feelings of belonging. We further showed how music facilitates common points of reference across borders, including shared belonging in the border community. The particular elements of music (e.g. rhythm, tempo, instrumentation) may suggest alternative belongings to either side of the boundary. However, the ways in which musicians appropriate them in order to fit with the local musical norms reinforce the sense of local identity. These appropriations, as exemplified in minor but significant differentiations (e.g. tempo), constitute the so-called local 'color'. Consequently, while the contributing parts across the boundaries were traceable, at the same time they were surpassed, proposing a unique local identity.

Nonetheless, the performance of music and dance in the festivities we attended lies at the intersections of what is considered as traditionally 'local' (see 'color'), and what is considered

‘other’. Here, migratory movements, as part of the local history and identity, seemed to explain and even accommodate what was considered ‘otherness’. Migration not only informed local repertory as a theme, but also contested border-divisions as historically shaped. To that end, it is no surprise that locals put dance, *choros*, at the core of the community’s collective festivity. As a non-verbal embodied performance, dance allowed revelers to enjoy themselves and feel that they belong together. Feelings of shared belonging were particularly fostered by *Lotzia*, the local dance.

‘*Lotzia* is our dance, you will never hear this tune elsewhere’: these phrases concluded most of our dialogues, solving identity disputes and seeking musical evidence to prove belonging to either area and respective musical culture. If ‘families’ were Epirus and Macedonia, with their distinct musical cultures, and the residents of the villages were the members of the ‘families’, the dispute was solved at *Lotzia*, when the community danced collectively at the central square.

Notes

¹ This article is the outcome of a project conceived in the context of Konitsa Summer School 2016, carrying out short-term fieldwork (07/29-08/02) in villages of Zoupanochoria, in the boundary area of Epirus/Western Macedonia (Greece). The authors attended the Summer School as students; at the moment we are writing this article, we have developed different backgrounds in Anthropology, Ethnomusicology, Classical Studies and Oral History. The fieldwork was jointly done by the authors; we conducted 11 interviews with permanent residents, members of the diaspora, and musicians in the villages Avgerinos, Dafni, Pentalofos. Informal discussions in the context of participant observation enriched our understanding. The authors thank Dr. Paris Potiropoulos for his valuable supervision and support, and Ariadni Antoniadou for her guidance and valuable insights into the area. We also thank the reviewers and editors for their feedback and comments. Last and most we thank our interlocutors. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of our research supervisors linked to the Konitsa Summer School.

² For a broader discussion around the social dimensions of the term in areas of the Balkans see Smiljanić (2007).

³ The cluster comprises nine villages: Zoupan- Pentalofos, Konstantsiko-Avgerinos, Libohovo-Dilofos, Moirali-Chrysavgi, Krimini, Moirasani-Morfi, Svoliani-Agia Sotira, Mager- Dasyllio, Borsia-Koryfi.

⁴ Law ΦΕΚ179/30-8-1927. See: www.eetaa.gr/metaboles/fek/1927/fek_179a_1927.pdf

⁵ Ntolos was renamed as Vythos. In this article, we employ the name Ntolos, as this is still used by locals.

⁶ Although focusing on a nearby area, Theodosiou's ethnographic research into 'gypsy musicians' (as they are locally identified) on the Greek-Albanian border social and cultural position and complexities (2011) may be enlightening. For a broader scope of Roma musicians around the Balkans see Silverman (2012).

⁷ We have transferred this phrase into English, exactly as our interlocutor said it, to underscore the strong connection between musicians and locals as understood at dancing. This phrase suggests that the objective of musicians was not just to motivate people to dance, to 'make them dance', but rather 'dance them', suggesting a very specific relation that challenges the wider social asymmetries between locals and musicians that have been previously addressed. Musicians had in-depth knowledge of the local 'color' and individual preferences to 'dance' the local dancers. On the other hand, local dancers' enjoyment was dependent upon musicians' ability to perform appropriately meeting their expectations.

⁸ Emphasis in original.

⁹ *Voiaki Estia Thessalonikis* was founded in 1958 and 'aims at the cultivation and spread of tradition (dance, songs, culture)' of the area of Voio. As traditional ensembles of this area they recognize 'brass bands of Western Macedonia.' They have performed in Greek and international folklore festivals (VETh 2020, online).

¹⁰ Ntaouli is a percussion instrument.

¹¹ Ntefi is a percussion instrument.

¹² Laouto is a long-neck fretted instrument of the lute family of instruments.

¹³ People's resistance against the Nazi occupation forces in Greece during World War II.

¹⁴ Professional musicians of the local tradition used to be exclusively men – as it has been common widely in folk music – who were learning to play the instrument as students of an already established professional musician, trying to copy his special technique (see Bohlman 1988). This gendered division of music labor has been subsiding recently, as we were told, as a famous trumpet player of the area is a woman who performs 'even at dances and feasts. It didn't use to be so.' (interview in Dafni, 07/30/2016). Moreover, some of the current professional musicians may learn to play their instrument in more formal contexts (e.g. at conservatories), and appropriate their technique to the particularities of the local repertoires.

¹⁵ Village in the prefecture of Kozani.

¹⁶ Named after the old name of the village Dafni, *Ntram'sta*. The same tune was also mentioned as *Ntolianiatiko*, named after the village Ntolos.

¹⁷ Translation by Chrysi Kyratsou.

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