

The MELOS discographic documentation platform: The Vassilis Tsitsanis Collection of Recordings

Overview

This article explores the MELOS project, a collaborative initiative dedicated to the documentation and digital management of historical Greek music recordings. Developed as part of the “Research–Create–Innovate” program, the project integrates collections from multiple institutions into a unified, open-source platform using the ReasonableGraph system. The study focuses on the Vassilis Tsitsanis Collection, highlighting the complexities of cataloguing and analyzing Greek urban folk-popular music. By structuring metadata based on a hierarchical ontology and employing interdisciplinary methodologies, the platform enhances access to discographic material while addressing longstanding gaps in research. The article underscores the significance of commercial recordings as musicological sources, advocating for an expanded, scientifically grounded approach to their study and preservation.

This article examines the research initiative titled “MELOS” (Greek Music Audiovisual Collections, Μ.Ε.Λ.Ο.Σ. – Μουσικές Ελληνικές Οπτικοακουστικές Συλλογές). This collaborative project, funded by Greece and the European Union, is part of the national program “Research–Create–Innovate.” Teams from three university departments and two private companies participated in the initiative. Three of these institutions participated along with their music collections, which included: a) the “Friends of Music Society,” associated with the Music Library of Greece “Lilian Voudouri,” which contributed the “Mikis Theodorakis Archive”; b) the Department of Music Science and Art at the University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, which contributed the “Greek Archive of Double Bass”; and c) the Department of Music Studies—Music Documentation Laboratory (EPSETEM) at the University of Ioannina, which contributed the “Vassilis Tsitsanis Collection of Recordings.”

Through this project, AltSol developed an open-source music cultural management platform called “ReasonableGraph,” which incorporates a specialized Music Ontology based on internationally recognized conceptual models such as FRBR. The data and metadata from these collections form an interconnected and open repository of knowledge, potentially constituting a state archive of musical entities. This archive includes approximately 10,500 unique musical entities, such as musical works, recordings, individuals, institutions, events, and more.

The University of Ioannina team focused on the commercial recordings of Vassilis Tsitsanis, one of Greece's most prolific urban folk-popular (λαϊκή μουσική, *laikí mousikí*, folk-popular music) songwriters, who recorded over 550 original pieces between 1936 and 1983. The team included five members: George Kokkonis, musicologist and Associate Professor at the Department of Music Studies, served as the Principal Investigator; Nikos Ordoulidis, Spilios Kounas, and George Evangelou, all musicologists; and Nikos Dionysopoulos, a researcher.

The field of historical recordings

Once underestimated, commercial recordings are now recognised for their invaluable information and their potential to contribute to a variety of fields (cf. Gronow 2014; Gayraud 2019; Rodríguez & Stanović 2023). They contain encoded information with multi-layered implications, spanning performance, technology, and the historical-social context. Both the recordings themselves and a discography constructed with a robust methodology contribute significantly to understanding not only the object itself—the sonic product—but also the environment in which it was created. The field of historical recordings is closely linked to the broader domain of musicology. While the principles of archival science and library science apply, the cultural implications of discography, and even more so its musicological dimensions, require the adaptation of traditional methodological models for its cataloging. This is especially true today, given the countless possibilities offered by technologies for representing and networking information. In other words, and despite advancements in discographic research, it often lacks a holistic, multidisciplinary approach (cf. Pennanen 2005; Butler et al 2006; Trezise 2009; Cope et al 2019).

Regarding oral folk-popular musics, the challenges are numerous and complex. Due to various factors, locating sources and documenting material becomes particularly difficult, and often impossible. Consequently, the primary texts of these creations are frequently hard to find, altered, or lacking essential accompanying information.

Urban folk-popular genres of the Greek world have become popular subjects of study, in Greece and elsewhere. For a variety of reasons and through different approaches, many researchers turn to the realm of historical recordings in search of reliable discographic documentation. However, the overwhelming majority of the literature highlights a significant knowledge gap, which constitutes the primary obstacle in these studies: the lack of formal, scientifically documented archives of historical recordings (for some examples, see Morris 1981; Beaton 1980; Smith 1989 and 1991; Manuel 1990; Torp 1993; Pennanen 1995; Gauntlett 2001; Kokkonis 2009; Ordoulidis 2012; Fabbri 2016; Kounas 2019; Evangelou 2024).

The analysis of a recording involves both the recorded sound—its acoustic dimension—and its documentation; both approaches have multifaceted implications. Indicatively, the information contained in recordings may pertain to the following:

- The key figures involved, such as musicians, producers, sound engineers, and even listeners
- The recording technology, sound engineering techniques, and the production technology of the medium
- The performance practices of the musicians

- Instrument making and craftsmanship
- Instrumentation and orchestration
- Musical analysis, for example on modality, rhythmology, performance styles, techniques and more
- The historical context, including the history of the locations
- The cultural networks
- The repertoire used and its popularity, with implications for marketing and the economy of the era (music industry).

Vassilis Tsitsanis (1915–1984)

Vasilis Tsitsanis was born and raised in Trikala, in central Greece. His father hailed from Ioannina in north-western Greece, while his mother was from the nearby network of villages known as Zagori or Zagorochoria. Tsitsanis was exposed to various expressions of folk-popular repertoire: he himself recounted that his father played folk songs. Additionally, Trikala hosted venues with live music, known as *café aman* and *café chantant*. Sources indicate that troupes and Karagiozis shadow puppet performers, often accompanied by live music, also passed through the area. Undoubtedly, Trikala served as a key hub within a broad cultural network.¹

From the outset of his career in Athens, Tsitsanis performed consistently on stage, from approximately 1935 until the end of his life. Based on his interviews,² Tsitsanis appeared to recognize and place great importance on the value system governing the artist-audience relationship. When he moved to Athens, Spyros Peristeris—a prominent figure in the urban folk-popular music scene and recording industry, and a leading force at the Odeon-Parlophone label pair—had already begun capitalizing on the bouzouki, shaping a recording landscape centered around the instrument. A massive increase in bouzouki recordings began in Greece in 1933 with Markos Vamvakaris. With Tsitsanis's recordings starting in 1936, the first bouzouki school was effectively established, and the instrument subsequently assumed a leading role in urban folk-popular song: it became central and defined aesthetic developments. The virtuosity that Tsitsanis had already cultivated and continued to develop was crucial, as it contributed to the instrument gaining a distinct aesthetic identity.

The first recordings of Piraeus-style rebetiko, centered around the bouzouki and produced at the Columbia factory, were directed by Peristeris, as evidenced by historical record labels. Peristeris also directed Tsitsanis's early works. However, Tsitsanis soon took over the direction of his compositions and those of other prominent artists. Tsitsanis stands as a pivotal figure in the record industry, as prior to his arrival, most repertoire and stylistic decisions came primarily from musicians who came from musical traditions outside Athens—such as Panagiotis Tountas, Spyros Peristeris, Dimitris Semsis, and Kostas Skarvelis—who brought with them the experiences and musical realities of their respective regions (Ottoman Constantinople—today Istanbul— and Smyrna—Izmir—, Thessaloniki and so on). Tsitsanis's presence and the leadership role he assumed marked a turning point, as the perspectives of Trikala and Athens now gained prominence.³

The structure of the recording ontology

We designed our platform (<https://epsetem.project.uoi.gr/?lang=en>) based on three main levels: a) the work; b) the performance(s) or expression(s) of the work, meaning its recording(s); and c) the manifestation(s) of the recording(s) of the work,⁴ referring to the release of the recording in the market.⁵

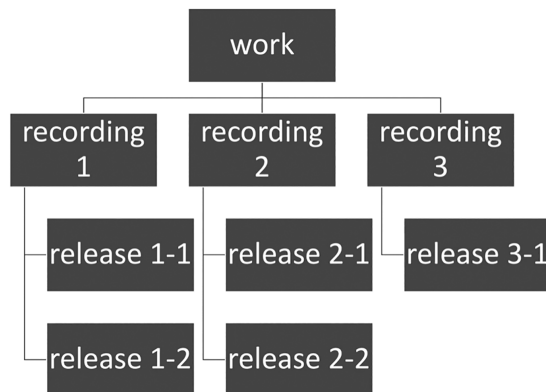


Figure 1. A diagram representing the relationships among the three main concepts of a recorded musical creation on the MELOS platform

Figure 1 represents the relationships among the three main concepts of a recorded musical creation on the MELOS platform. We can conceptualize this as a pyramid, starting at the top with the work and descending to the various recordings and manifestations—a hierarchical relationship between these three entities. In other words, on our platform, recordings are linked to a specific work, while manifestations, meaning the releases of the recordings, are linked to the recordings. **Figure 2** is an example of the hierarchical relation between the three levels, as it appears on the MELOS platform.

The platform supports multilingual content, as well as it can be customized in any way, as regards its design. This is an interconnected community of information entities. The digital platform works in both Greek and English. Worth mentioning also is the crucial filter tool. A user may ask whatever he or she wants from the platform, for example to show recordings made in 1937, in Athens, by a specific singer, based on a specific rhythm/dance etc.

The Tsitsanis collection of recordings

Initially, it is worth noting that Tsitsanis's recording career has previously been the focus of numerous publications, most of which include discographic lists of his recordings. Judging by the number of such publications, Tsitsanis is by far the most popular composer of Greece's urban folk-popular song tradition, with the most books and articles dedicated to his life and work. Additionally, some publications addressing Greek historical recordings in general list his recordings, either comprehensively or focusing on a specific period or theme (e.g., Maniatis 2006).

Default
Graph

Musical work

Tsitsanis, Vassilis (1915-1984) [Composer]. Ta dialekhtá paidiá

Entity type:

Work (Individual)

Work language:

Greek

Composer:

Tsitsanis, Vassilis (1915-1984)

Record origin:

central

Recordings

Ta dialehta paidia / Νίνου, Μαρίκα [1951]

- ↳ [CD] 50 χρόνια Βασίλης Τσιτσάνης
- ↳ [CD] Βασίλης Τσιτσάνης - Η ζωή μου, το έργο μου
- ↳ [78 rpm record] Columbia (GR) DG 6913 [A': Τα διαλεχτά παιδιά (Β. Τσιτσάνη) / Μ. Νίνου, Πρ. Τσαουσάκης, Σπ. Ευσταθίου] - [B': Το θύμα (Β. Τσιτσάνη) / Πρ. Τσαουσάκης, Μ. Νίνου]

Oi leventes / Gavalas, Panos [1962]

- ↳ [45 rpm record] Μεγάλες επιτυχίες του Τσιτσάνη Νο 3

Ta dialehta paidia (Imaste alania) / Tsitsanis, Vasilis [1973]

- ↳ [CD] Δυο νύχτες στου Τσιτσάνη

I Maritsa - Imaste alania / Chrisafi, Anna [1995]

- ↳ [CD] I Anna Chrisafi tragoudaei Tsitsani

Figure 2. An example of the hierarchical relation between the three levels, as it appears on the MELOS platform.

Tsitsanis's recordings can be categorized as follows:

- Recordings made by him
- Recordings of his compositions made without his participation, either with or without his consent, during his lifetime or posthumously. Some of these recordings were made and produced abroad, though the majority were recorded and produced in Greece.

Notably, given the continuous re-recordings of his songs, this number steadily increases.

The MELOS platform includes recordings from both categories. The cataloging process began with the Greek Music Archive (GMA) of the Music Documentation Laboratory, which was initially part of the Department of Folk and Traditional Music at the Technological Educational Institute of Epirus and is now part of the Department of Music Studies at the University of Ioannina. All recordings from the GMA, primarily sourced from the CDs in its collection, were catalogued into the MELOS platform. A particularly significant contribution came from the Kounadis Family Archive and the Kounadis Archive

Virtual Museum (<https://vmrebetiko.gr/en/d-home-en/>), which graciously provided digital images of all the labels from the historical original 78, 45, and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm records of Tsitsanis in its possession. This collaboration, part of a formal agreement between the two parties, highlights the importance of crowdsourcing, particularly in projects of this nature. In such endeavors, the collector community of historical records played a critical role in preserving these rare and unique historical artifacts (for more on crowdsourcing, see Kokkonis et al. 2024).

We estimate that the unique recordings of Tsitsanis's compositions, both in Greece and abroad, certainly exceed 3,000. When one also considers the large number of reissues of older recordings, the resulting figure becomes remarkably high. This brings to light the lack of an official state archive for recordings. Given the absence of organized archives of Greek-interest recordings abroad, the challenges of creating a comprehensive catalog become evident—not only for Tsitsanis's work but also for Greek-language recordings in general.

Approximately 1,000 recordings were entered into our digital platform. All original recordings of each piece are included in this number. Cataloguing the discography of a composer and performer in the realm of popular music, in our case the Greek *laiko* song (λαϊκό τραγούδι, folk-popular song), presented formidable challenges. This complexity arises not only from the limited information available on the record labels but also from the dearth of bibliographical sources analyzing popular music. Consequently, apart from the label information, scientific research becomes imperative, often following ethnographic research methodologies that encompass interviews, discussions, meticulous observations, and material analysis (cf Brady 1999).

The work

In the first level of the ontologies on the platform, as previously mentioned, we encounter the “work.” In this ontology, we refer to a piece by Tsitsanis that had not yet been recorded. That is, it was either still in his mind, in the experimental phase, or already in his repertoire but it had not yet been captured in any medium.

The fields that one may encounter on the card for a work include the title of the work, written in its original language, which here is Greek, and below it, in another language if desired. We have chosen to write all titles in transliterated form, using the Latin alphabet and placing accents where they appear in the original Greek language. Then follows the language of the work's lyrics, the composer, an alternative title as observed on record labels for that particular work's recordings, and the collection to which the work belongs. As one observes, the composer's name is a clickable element, meaning it constitutes an independent entity within the platform. This applies to many other elements across different fields, such as the names of musicians, singers, record companies, cities, and more.

When accessing a person's profile card (**Figure 3a** and **3b**), in addition to the data entered by the University of Ioannina team, one will notice that the individual is linked to external pages where possible. For instance, if the person is registered in databases such as Wikidata or VIAF (Virtual International Authority File), a connection to these resources is established. The platform has the capability to retrieve information from these external pages. Below the primary information, there is a biographical note—an outcome of the team's research work—along with the available bibliography related to that individual. In certain specific cases, particularly for singers, the results of the research conducted by

the team at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki are also included. Utilizing tools from computational musicology, the team performed measurements on various vocal parameters and included corresponding graphs in their profiles (cf Kaliakatsos et al 2024; Zacharakis & Cambouropoulos 2024; Zacharakis et al 2024). Below these graphs, works are grouped according to the roles assigned to the individual on the platform. For example, in the case of Tsitsanis, one can see the pieces where he is listed as a composer, followed by his roles as orchestra conductor, singer, and so on.

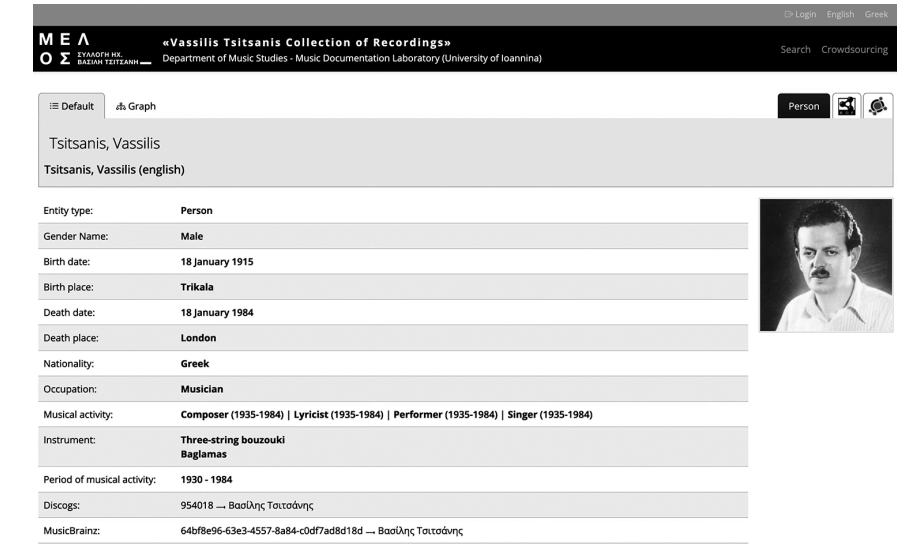


Figure 3a. The biography card of Vassilis Tsitsanis, as it appears on the MELOS platform.

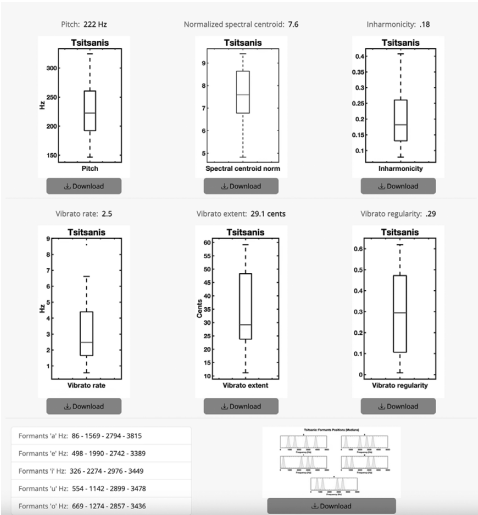


Figure 3b. The card includes measurements on various vocal parameters.

Returning to the card we were discussing, that of the work, below it, its recordings are listed (See Figure 2). Beneath each recording, indented, one can see the media through which these recordings were released to the market, that is, the manifestations of the recordings. Next to both the title of the recordings listed under the work and the title of the manifestations, we have placed a defining characteristic to make them understandable within the list. In other words, next to the title of the recordings, we include the name of the singer (if it is a song) and the recording

year in parentheses. Similarly, next to the title of the manifestations, one might see details such as disc codes, that is, the release code, etc. Metadata such as key, mode, and tempo have not been included in the “work” section, as these elements—particularly in the context of popular music—are attributes of specific recordings rather than intrinsic to the work as a conceptual entity. While in Western scholarly music traditions, key and modality are integral to the identity of a composition (e.g., J.S. Bach’s “Harpisichord Concerto in D minor” or Chopin’s “Nocturne in C# minor”), in popular music, these features are more fluid, with many musical characteristics often differing significantly between recordings.

The performance–expression–recording

Selecting one of the titles listed under “recordings” will take the user to the page of that particular recording (**Figure 4a**). Again, we see the title of the recording, along with the leading singer and in brackets the year it was recorded or released. As we described before, this is so that a user can quickly figure out from the results page at the beginning, which recording they are viewing, before choosing to go into its tab. Below this is the entity type (here expression), the content type (here recording), the composer, the title transliterated in the Latin alphabet, the language of the recording and whether it is a studio or live recording.

Then comes the place where the recording was made and the date of the recording or release. The date is one of the most critical issues in documenting Greek historical recordings (see analytically Ordoulidis 2012, chapter 3). The recording dates for most of the initial recordings featuring Tsitsanis, as well as many of his second recordings for the same pieces, were established as of 2012.⁶ For more recent recordings, however, we relied on what are considered the most reliable sources today (Maniatis 2013; Chatziantoniou 2013; Dragoumanos 2014; <https://www.discogs.com/>). A significant issue regarding the dates of more recent recordings was the lack of clarity in some of the available sources as to whether the dates provided referred to the recording session itself or to the release of the record to the public. Beyond documentation sources, release dates are also inferred from the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm releases themselves, which often list the year in the inserts or on the back cover. The problem of dating newer recordings perhaps reflects the particular focus that was placed on “gramophone” (or “phonograph”) recordings by collectors and later by musicologists, leaving the discography of 45 rpm records relatively neglected.

Then follows the title of the recording company and the label under which the song was recorded, as well as the matrix number and the license number. The recording companies are also autonomous entities within the platform, with their own informational cards. The matrix and record codes are primarily sourced from record labels or the liner notes of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm records. The license number is a specific code found on record labels after 1937, following the imposition of censorship by the Greek dictatorial regime of that period.

The next field is the director of the orchestra. This information is derived both from the record label itself and from the accounting books of the recording company (for the accounting books of Greek Columbia see Ordoulidis 2012, 72–74). Then follow the names of the singers involved, with a note specifying whether they are the first, second, or third voice, etc. Below are the names of the musicians who participated in the recording and the instruments they played. Again, these elements are autonomous entities in the platform, allowing users to click on them and navigate to their respective cards to access detailed information. The names of the musicians participating in the recordings were sourced from Columbia’s accounting books, for the recordings where these were available. Additionally, some 78 and 45 rpm record labels occasionally listed the name of a prominent soloist, making

the label itself a source for musician identification in certain cases. Names were also inferred by the team members through logical assumptions: for example, by recognizing a guitarist's distinctive style across multiple documented recordings, we could reasonably attribute the same musician to other recordings lacking explicit references. Further, names were drawn from modern releases, especially the liner notes of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm records and CDs. When it was impossible to document the musicians' names through any of these means, only the instruments heard in the recording were noted instead. This approach filled a critical gap in research, providing a comprehensive overview of the instrumental setup and recorded orchestrations. This data could potentially lead to insights about performance practices and the orchestras that played at entertainment venues.

Subsequent fields include the duration of the recording, followed by a note indicating if there is a *taksim* in the recording—a term describing an improvisation—and the duration of the *taksim* is also noted.⁷

Below follows the musical analysis section (**Figure 4b**), comprising the most intricate musicological metadata related to the recording's musical analysis. This includes, first and foremost, the tonality and the *dromos*/mode.⁸ The latter is an autonomous element that has been the subject of specialized research by Spilios Kounas, a member of the team. The mode cards feature a general analysis of each mode, employing examples from Tsitsanis's recorded repertoire. In the "melodic material" field, the material's behaviors are thoroughly detailed. In the "harmony" field (**Figure 4c**), musical transcriptions were uploaded, illustrating the piece's structure, such as sections like the intro, chorus, etc., and the rhythmic pattern, with the corresponding chords noted on the respective beats.

On the right side is the rhythm sub-tab (**Figure 4d**), where one can see the time signature, the tempo, the pattern description and the associated dance. Next to it, we see musical transcriptions of the rhythmic groups and rhythmic patterns. Just below that, we have additional graphs extracted by Aristotle's team, concerning the tempo variation of the piece throughout the entire recording. Although there are several studies analyzing time signature, measure, and rhythmic patterns in folk-popular musics, studies about tempo and especially about the concept of tempo stability are limited. Furthermore, there are few studies regarding the organization and development of rhythm and tempo in either a studio recording or a live performance. However, the need to study tempo in musical performance arises because it seems to largely determine the aesthetics of the musical performances, all the more so in folk-popular music where music performance is often linked to dance performance, such as in the case of the Greek styles in question here. The tools of ethno/musicology, however, are limited, and mainly concern a conventional metronome's indication determining the global tempo in beats per minute. This is traditionally limited to a mere indication at the beginning of a musical transcription or of a section. However, the metronome markings related to global tempo are usually indicative and not analytical. In other words, global tempo neither reflects the entire development of a performance, nor relates to tempo fluctuations (that is, local tempo) that may be associated with morphological structures and harmonic tensions. These are elements that also determine the overall aesthetics of a performance. It is understood that by using computational tools, we can monitor local tempo more precisely.

Continuing to scroll through the recording tab, we provide the audio as an embedded player from YouTube, along with the lyrics, presented in both Greek and transliterated forms (**Figure 4c**). Just below the audio of the recording, we see the field that includes the commercial releases of that recording, that is, its manifestations, which forms the third axis in our concept pyramid.

MELOS

ΕΡΕΥΝΗΤΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΗΣ

«VASSILIS TSITSANIS COLLECTION OF RECORDINGS»

Department of Music Studies - Music Documentation Laboratory (University of Ioannina)

Search Crowdsourcing Acoustic terms

Default Graph

Performance - Recording

Ta dialekhtá paidiá / Ninou, Marika (1922-1957) [1951]

Ta dialekhtá paidiá (english)

Entity type: Expression

Content type: Recording

Composer: Tsitsanis, Vassilis (1915-1984)

Recording language: Greek

Recording type: Studio

Place of recording: Athens

Date of recording: 09 June 1951

Record company: Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd.

Record label: Columbia (Greece)

Matrix number: CG 2828

License number: 1536-8223

Orchestra director: Tsitsanis, Vassilis (1915-1984)

Singer: Ninou, Marika (1922-1957) [1st voice] | Tsaousakis, Prodromos (1919-1979) [2nd voice] | Eustathiou, Spyros [3rd voice]

Musician: Tsitsanis, Vassilis (1915-1984) [Three-string bouzouki] | Eustathiou, Spyros [Three-string bouzouki] | Athanasiou, Anestis (1912-1984) [Baglamas] | Margaroni, Evangelia [Piano] | Hrysinis, Stelios [Folk guitar]

Recording duration: 03' 19"

Taksim: no

Tonality: E major

Dromos/mode: Matzore (Mode)

Figure 4a (above). An example of a Recordings card, as it appears on the MELOS platform.
Figure 4b (below) .An example of the musical analysis section.

Melodic material

Harmony-Form

Rhythm

Form	Degree	Motivic unit	Modal context	Comment
Intro	I	Major	Matzore	
		Major		low register V
Theme A	I	Major	Matzore	
		Major		low register V
Theme B	I	Major	Matzore	

Computational Extraction (explanation of audio terms)

Average Pitch Chroma:
Download

Pitch-Chroma Time Series:
Download

Comments:
The bar plot shows the time-averaged chromagram values normalized to unity. The CSV files contain the numerical data used to generate the bar plot and chromagram. The peaks of the chromagram and bar plots correspond to the most prominent notes being played or sung. In most cases, the most prominent peak in the bar plots corresponds to the tonic of the most prominent dromos/mode. In other cases, it may also correspond to the fifth and, less frequently, to the third of the mode (or modes). Note also that, due to the harmonization of folk-popular modes, the chromagram and bar plots may exhibit peaks on the second and (natural) seventh modes.

Bar Plot

Chromagram

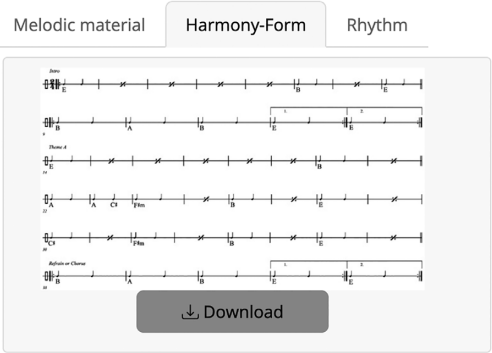
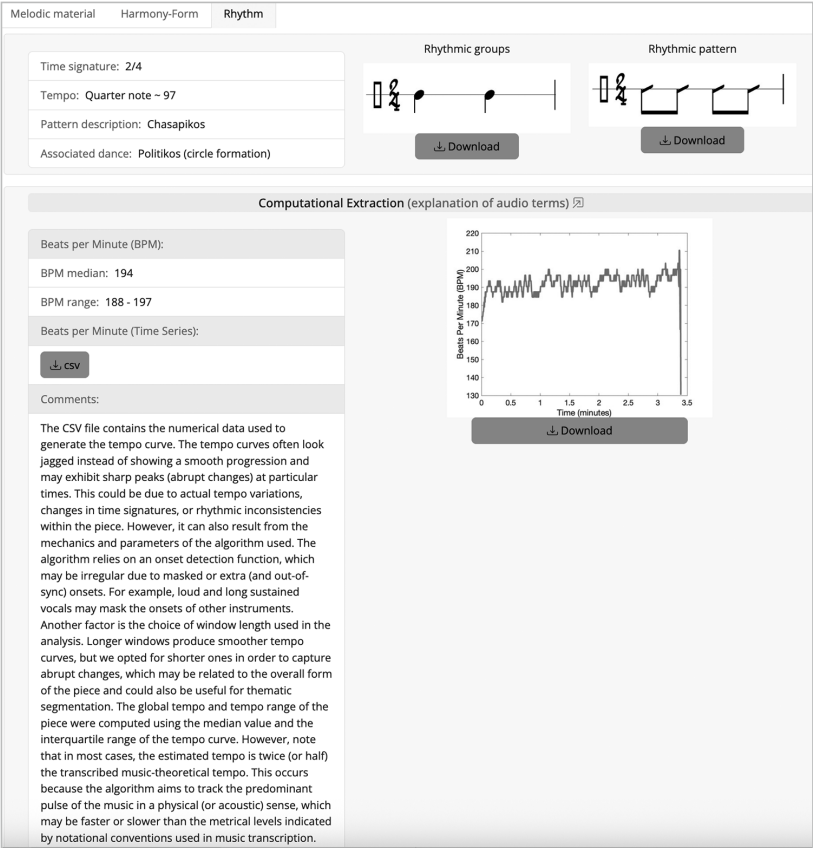


Figure 4c (above). The “harmony” field, musical transcriptions were uploaded, illustrating the piece’s structure. **Figure 4d (below).** The rhythm sub-tab, where one can see the time signature, the tempo, the pattern description and the associated dance.



Video:

Imaste Alania (Ta Dialekhta Pedia) (Re...
Watch Later
Share

MAPIKA NINOY
τα μεγάλα νομίσματα

Watch on YouTube

Lyrics transliterated:

Imaste alania, dialekhta paidia mesa stin platsa
kai den tin tromazoun i fourtoúnes ti dikí pas rátsa

Ti ta thes, ti ta thes pánta étsi in' i zoi
tha yelás i tha klais vrádi kai prói

Káthe mas peráki yínetai tragoudí kai to léme
kai mes sta strapátsa máthame poté mas na min kláíme

Ti ta thes, ti ta thes pánta étsi in' i zoi
tha yelás i tha klais vrádi kai prói

Ki an stin kinonía mas khtipoun allipita i mpóres
méssa sto tragoudí févgoune haroúmenes i óres

Ti ta thes, ti ta thes pánta étsi in' i zoi
tha yelás i tha klais vrádi kai prói

Manifestation of Recording:
Columbia (GR) DG 6913 [A': Ta dialekhta paidia (V. Tsitsanis) / M. Ninou, Pr. Tsaousakis, Sp. Efsthathiou) - B': To thima (V. Tsitsanis) / Pr. Tsaousakis, M. Ninou
50 hronia Vasilis Tsitsanis
Vasilis Tsitsanis - I zoi mou, to ergo mou

Work of recording:
Tsitsanis, Vassilis (1915-1984) [Composer]. Ta dialekhta paidia

Record origin:
University of Ioannina

Figure 4e. The “recording” card, as it appears on the MELOS platform.

The manifestation

Selecting a manifestation takes us to its card, where one can initially see the record labels or the covers and the inserts of that release (see **Figure 5**). Among other things, the MELOS research project also aims at crowdsourcing practices, involving people relevant to the field, such as collectors. This is facilitated by the “Crowdsourcing” button, which can be seen on the home page, allowing users to send any information or suggestions to the research team. As mentioned before, towards crowdsourcing, the contribution of the Kounadis Archive and of Leonardos and Panagiotis Kounadis, who provided us with digital images of the labels of the vast majority of Vassilis Tsitsanis’ historical records, was crucial. The fields that follow relate to the type of manifestation, that is, whether it is a release on a 78 or 45 rpm record, the language of the release, and the issue number. This is followed by the number of physical media and the place of release. Finally, we have the title of the company and the recordings that this particular release includes.

The methodological approaches, the presentation of findings, and the overall structure of this repository were grounded in interdisciplinarity and propose a modern, innovative model for cataloguing and documenting historical recordings. In the repository of the “Vassilis Tsitsanis Collection of Recordings,” besides inputting the standard data, the research team concentrated on managing metadata derived both from direct listening (such as modal, harmonic, and rhythmic structuring) and from primary and secondary sources (for instance, biographies of key figures). The platform’s structural design facilitates easy access to information and the organic connection between data and metadata. At the same time,

Figure 5. The “manifestation” card, as it appears on the MELOS platform.

the search filters allow for specialized customizations and queries. Users can tailor their searches based on their personal research needs, creating “journeys” that may begin with people, traverse the sounds of recordings, incorporate geographic locations, and culminate in musicological analyses of the musical realizations themselves. The research team’s future goals include enriching the collection with the complete set of recordings of ‘Tsitsanis’ works and developing similar discographic collections. These could focus on specific individuals, such as artist discographies, or broader repertoire categorizations, for example, ethnic repertoires from specific regions. Undoubtedly, such an analytical and well-documented organization of historical recordings will significantly contribute to filling critical knowledge gaps, with highly positive effects across a range of research fields.

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Endnotes

- 1 Regarding music activity in Trikala see Klíafa (2003).
- 2 For a list of Tsitsanis' interviews see Ordoulidis (2021).
- 3 For texts related to Tsitsanis's biography see Chatzidoulis (1980); Anastasiou 1995; Klíafa 1996; Alexiou 2001 & 2003; Christianopoulos 2002.
- 4 With the term "manifestation" we follow the library studies bibliography: IFLA, "Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR)" https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/frbr/frbr_2008.pdf (accessed November 27, 2024); Library of Congress, "FRBR: Fundamental Concepts" https://www.loc.gov/catworkshop/RDA%20training%20materials/LC%20RDA%20Training/FRBR_Module%201_Overview/FRBRFundamentals_20120809_student.pdf (accessed November 27, 2024); and Joudrey et al (2015).
- 5 Here, one of the most fundamental issues in what is referred to in English as "popular music" clearly arises: the relationship—or lack thereof—between the work and its recording, especially since the work has not

- previously assumed any tangible form (cf Gayraud 2019).
- 6 See the accompanying database in Ordoulidis (2012), available at: <https://www.tsitsanis-database.com/>.
 - 7 For a more analytical approach to the taksim see Nettl and Riddle (1973); Feldman (1993); Akkoç (2002: 285-286); Kounas (2010: chapter 1.5).
 - 8 The term “laïkos dromos” (folk-popular mode) refers to a musical entity, functioning as an empirical theoretical system employed by Greek musicians in folk-popular genres to describe a mode—dromos (literally “road”)—as it is termed in Greek. Regarding the laïkoi dromoi (plural of laïkos and dromos), which as entities are part of a broader network interacting with other “residents” of this unique musical “ecumene,” see: Beaton (1980), Manuel (1990), Pennanen (1997, 1999, and 2004), Kounas (2010 and 2019), Sinopoulos (2010), Ordoulidis (2011 and 2012: chapters 4 and 5), Mystakidis (2013), Andrikos (2018), Evangelou (2024). Most of the names of the dromoi derive from the theoretical system developed by musician-scholars of the Ottoman court, known as the makam system. Other names are borrowed from Western traditions, such as Minore and Matzore, while certain modes are named after places, such as Pireotikos.

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