

POPULAR MUSIC OF THE GREEK WORLD



Edited by
Eleni Kallimopoulou and Panagiotis C. Poulos



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8 | THE POETICS OF THE LITTLE FINGER: MOTOR STRUCTURES OF THE GREEK BOUZOUKI IN PRINT AND PRACTICE SINCE THE 1960S

RISTO PEKKA PENNANEN

After a long break, I recently found myself revisiting the tactility of the Greek *bouzouki*—a subject which has tickled my fancy since the early 1990s. My previous study on the motor structures of the three- and four-course *bouzouki* was primarily concerned with the developments until the late 1960s (Pennanen 1999, 171–83; 2009), but in this paper I shift the analytical focus further towards our time. Here, I will specifically address how *bouzouki* methods and sheet music editions represent the left- and right-hand technique from the 1960s to the 2010s and, on the other hand, how contemporary professional musicians organise their motor patterns for the three- and four-course *bouzouki*—occasionally combining the principles of the two layouts. The central issues of this article are the process of modernisation and the impact of the guitar on the *bouzouki* methods and the left-hand technique. By modernisation I refer to a view, according to which Western elements are means of continuing the tradition rather than changing it. Furthermore, I will observe the gradual shift of *bouzouki* methods from etic to emic approaches.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic with its travel restrictions in 2020, the sources were restricted to my already existing personal collections of *bouzouki* method books, sheet music editions and field recordings. Although the pandemic precluded a new fieldwork period in Athens, contrary to my intensive research period in the 1990s, collecting data on *bouzouki* playing techniques was possible by way of YouTube videos. Such sources do have their limitations as no interviews nor comparative material by each musician were available. In this case, an unexpected emphasis on YouTube videos by Greek-Australian professional *bouzouki* players emerged which, however, does not hinder analyses of the playing techniques.

In the tactile analyses below, I use two terms for the basic left-hand motor structures. In horizontal playing along one string, the note positions are in one dimension, i.e. in linear array. This traditional technique of long-necked lutes requires motor patterns with relatively difficult ascending and descending sequences of left-hand movements; the control of such patterns usually requires visual information (see Baily 1977, 310–1; 1985, 252–3; Stokes 1992, 72–3). Contrastingly, in vertical playing across the strings, the note positions are in two dimensions in tiered array. As notes can be covered from a few hand positions, using finger movements, the technique of crossing strings requires fewer position changes than horizontal playing. Thus, tactile structures require less memorising and visual information and less advanced technical ability and control of hand movements than using only one course for the melody (cf. Baily 1985, 252–3; Stokes 1992, 73).

Two forms of the Greek *bouzouki* exist. The older, three-course instrument—initially associated with the urban popular music culture of *rebetika*—has the modern standard string length of 680 mm, with exceptions, and its standard tuning is $dd'-aa-d'd'$. The left-hand motor structures for this instrument consist of position changes through hand movements, and one of the instrument's most celebrated virtuosos was Vasilis Tsitsanis (1915–84). Vangelis Trigas (b. 1960), Grigoris Vasilas (b. 1969) and Nikos Tatasopoulos (b. 1973) are among the current top masters of the instrument. The four-course *bouzouki*, which was introduced in 1956 with the standard string length of 670 mm, is tuned in $cc'-ff'-aa-d'd'$ (Pennanen 1999, 142). Although a tone lower, the intervallic relations are the same as in the four top strings of the guitar ($d-g-b-e'$), and, in principle, notes can be covered from a few hand positions by using finger movements. As finger movements are faster and more accurate than hand movements, the technique of crossing the strings enables the easy execution of fast passages. The first innovator and master of this *bouzouki* variant was Manolis Hiotis (1921–70), originally a great virtuoso of the three-course instrument and the steel-string guitar, and also reputedly, but never recorded, of the violin and the *outi* lute (Pennanen 2014). Panagiotis Stergiou (b. 1962) and Manolis Karandinis (b. 1966) are some of the most famous four-course virtuosos of today.

In his influential and notoriously unreliable anthology of *rebetika* lyrics and biographies, Tasos Shorelis (1981, 177) claimed that Hiotis was the first *bouzouki* player to develop a four-finger left-hand technique, and this pervasive notion has found its way to numerous articles in popular vein (see e.g. Papistas 2002).

Presumably Shorelis based his claim on Hiotis's masterful use of the steel-string guitar; in reality, nevertheless, Hiotis played melodies on the *bouzouki* and guitar using three fingers.¹ Additionally, according to another view, the guitar-like tuning and vertical playing across the strings require the use of the fourth finger (Grifas 2016, 19–20). Professional guitarists of folk and basically pentatonic popular styles, such as the blues, often use only three fingers for melodic playing, however, while many chord shapes require the fourth finger (Walser 1992, 268). Given this, the probable source for the four-finger *bouzouki* technique is the classical guitar. Like any other modern Western classical instrumental technique, the technique of the classical guitar aims at motor structures minimising the consumption of kinetic energy; Max Weber (1921, 93) regards this principle as an example of rationality in Western music.²

Problems of *bouzouki* sheet music and methods, and timbre

Inconsistencies and errors have been common characteristics of *bouzouki* methods and sheet music editions especially before the 1990s. As for early editions of *bouzouki* songs, they were practically always copied from piano arrangements, and such versions never describe the music of the original recording. The frequent deformations of the piano arrangements—drastically simplified *bouzouki* sections and the harmony voice often as the principal vocal line—often found their way to the *bouzouki* editions. The situation has not completely changed in our time. Take, for example, the anthology *12 laika tragoudia yia bouzouki* by Yiorgos Palias which provides a showcase of inconsistently written time signatures. While one of the pieces in *zeibekiko* rhythm is accurately in 9/4 and two of them misleadingly in 9/8 time, “Iliovasilemata” by Hiotis is written in the combination of bars in 4/4+2/4+3/4 time (Palias 1996a, 12–3).³ All twelve arrangements lack *bouzouki* fingerings, and they seem to derive from piano sheet music. In “Moiazeis ki esi san thalassa” by Hiotis, Palias has added a few *bouzouki* passages to the piano version, but an important accidental is missing in the vocal section (ibid., 26–7). I will analyse a transcription and two performances of the *bouzouki* section of this song below.

¹ For a rare use of the fourth finger in melodic playing by Hiotis, see the *bouzouki* introduction for “I thlipsi” (Loup Garou 2009, 0:00–0:07).

² For an ethnomusicological perspective on the guitar, see Bennett and Dawe 2001.

³ The other *zeibekika* are “S' anazito sti Saloniki” (9/4) by Marios Tokas, “Synnefiasmeni kyriaki” (9/8) by Vasilis Tsitsanis and “Ston angelon ta bouzoukia” (9/8) by Hristos Nikolopoulos.

Whereas the early *bouzouki* methods usually provided finger numbering exclusively for scales in fretboard diagrams and staves, simultaneously completely ignoring the right hand, Dimitris Boukouvalas (1985a) introduced the convention of indicating fingerings and plectrum directions systematically in the fashion of classical guitar sheet music. One can say without exaggeration that the early *bouzouki* method books before the mid-1980s were outsiders' etic interpretations of the instrument. Possibly the authors intended to raise the cultural status of the *bouzouki* through offering a more solemn and Western repertoire than the traditional one. Thus, methods for the classical guitar have served as models for *bouzouki* tuition books, which bear little relation to the performing practice and standard repertoire. Gradually, however, method books have become increasingly emic in approach and contents, bouzouki virtuoso Vangelis Trigas's (2009a, 2009b, 2017a, 2017b) separate series with DVD-ROMs for the three- and four-course layout and the ambitious method for the three-course instrument by Pavlos Pafranidis (2020) forming the state of the art. Having said that, Yiorgos Avlonitis's (2011) bilingual, guitar-influenced collection of four-finger dexterity exercises for the four-course *bouzouki*, often in rare keys, unusual combinations of plectrum directions and sometimes even using the bass clef, point to a vastly different, purely Western classical tradition of instrumental technique.

The first method under examination is *The Golden Book of Bouzouki* for the four-course instrument by Stavros G. Palias, a teacher at the National Conservatory in Athens, which was probably published in 1973 (Greek National Library 2020). Surprisingly, the method was still in print in late 2020 (see eNakas Music Store 2020). The book is bilingual in Greek and English which suggests aiming not exclusively at the domestic market; possibly the publisher had particularly the Greek-American market in mind.⁴ The style and contents of the method suggest that the author was a classical guitarist and that the *bouzouki* method was based on his classical guitar method (see Palias n.d.). Thus, Palias begins by teaching the student to read Western notation, after which he offers exercises transposing the same exercise upwards to various positions and keys for pages on end (Palias 1973?, 112–39). Noteworthy, all exercises utilise standardised alternating downstrokes and upstrokes of the plectrum which is not axiomatic in *bouzouki* music. Most key signatures and many positions are superfluous

⁴ Other bilingual *bouzouki* methods are Kanakaris 1969, 1970, 1973 (four-course); Raptakis 1979 (three- and four-course); Mitsopoulos 1983 (four-course); Boukouvalas 1985a, 1985b (four-course); Koutis 1985 (three-course), Payiatis 1993 and Pafranidis 2020 (three-course).

for a *bouzouki* player. Take, for example, Western scales with high number of sharps and flats, or a study beginning on the 16th fret of the fourth string course (ibid., 127). This approach seems to derive from methods for the classical guitar, and maybe Palias filled the pages with exercises without any reference to the *bouzouki* performing practice to achieve a higher monetary reward for the method through a larger number of pages.

The classical practice of presenting the full range of major and minor scales with key signatures up to seven sharps or flats in repeated octaves has sometimes extended to *bouzouki* methods with an essentially emic approach. For instance, Thanasis Polykandriotis's method book presents *dromos* scales in several keys, including the very rarely used B major and C minor (Polykandriotis 1999, 74, 78, 81, 86, 90, 91, 95, 98). This Western classical concept of a plurality of possible tonics certainly stems from the author's background. Initially trained in classical guitar, virtuoso four-course player, pedagogue and composer Polykandriotis (b. 1948) has performed Greek popular music in night clubs and recording studios and, on the other hand, classical virtuoso pieces with symphony orchestras in concert halls and even composed a *bouzouki* concerto, which he premiered in 1996 (Polykandriotis, n.d.).

A wide variety of keys is basically unnecessary because of the performing practice; the older styles of *bouzouki* music, especially, favour only a few main keys. Firstly, to achieve the archaic droning sound, revivalist musicians may play the old repertoire mostly in D. Secondly, professional players of the principal accompanying instrument, the steel-string acoustic guitar, do not use the *capo tasto*, and therefore they would, in some keys, must use the tiring *barré* technique of stopping all strings at the same point by holding the index finger across them. That said, taking open and *barré* chords in turns is often possible. Thirdly, guitarists prefer keys which allow the use of unstopped strings in low-octave doubling of the melody; keys such as Db or Ab would unnecessarily complicate the fingerings for the passages.

The concept of keys in Western classical music has occasionally influenced the sheet music editions of *bouzouki* music. Consider the transcriptions of the original recordings of the Apostolos Hatzihristos (1904–59) songs “Aliti m' eipes mia vradia” (properly “To paraono tou aliti”) from 1939 and “Nyhtopouli” and “Katinoula mou” (properly “I Katinoula”) from 1940 (reissued on Hatzihristos 2011, A10, A21, B12) and their arrangement for the piano, the electric organ and the guitar by Garifallia Bardi-Hatzihristou (1992, 21–3, 16–20), a classically trained pianist and a relative of the

composer. Similarly as in several other of Apostolos Hatzihristos's recordings, the three songs are not in the standard pitch ($a' = 440$ Hz); "To paraponno tou aliti" is close to Ab and "Nyhtopouli" is close to Gb, whereas "I Katinoula" is close to Db. Bardi-Hatzihristou has written her arrangements in the respective keys of Ab, Gb and Db, which raises a question about the purpose of the transcriptions. The musicians on the recordings certainly did not play the pieces on instruments tuned in standard pitch; the sounds of unstopped strings reveal that they tuned the *bouzouki* and guitar roughly a semitone lower than normal. Since the timbres do not differ from those on recordings from other sessions by the same musicians, the revolving speed of the record cutter must have been the standard 78 rpm. (cf. Pennanen 2005, 91). Consequently, to present the original tactility of the string instruments, the transcriptions should be, respectively, in A, G and D. The fact that Yiorgos Palias (1996b, 12–3) has based his almost unplayable sheet music of "Aliti m' eipes mia vradia" in Ab for the *bouzouki* on Bardi-Hatzihristou's transcription reveals the effect of the piano arrangement on *bouzouki* literature. Obviously, Palias is a pianist rather than a *bouzouki* player and his knowledge of the characteristics of string instruments is limited. Furthermore, number has been more important than quality in the apparently economically profitable production of *rebetika* and *bouzouki* sheet music, albeit the situation has changed in the 2000s.⁵

Let us examine another bilingual four-course *bouzouki* method, namely *Practical Method for Bouzouki* by a M. Mitsopoulos, of whom nothing is known. Unusually enough, the method carries the year of publication—1983—which nonetheless looks questionable as the style, contents and graphic look of the method are more reminiscent of the 1960s rather than of the 1980s. Conceivably the work was finished much earlier than published; the possible delay may have been due to the cultural policies of the Greek military junta (1967–74) (see Kallimopoulou 2009, 17–8; Papaeti 2015). Remarkably, *Practical Method for Bouzouki* was still readily available in late 2020 (see eNakas Music Store 2020).

A telling example of the problems in the method is its only non-Western scale, which Mitsopoulos (1983, 43) calls "Scale Byzantine in fa on the 12th position." The intervallic structure of the scale resembles those of *dromos* Hitzaskiar in the *rebetika* tradition and *makam* Hicazkâr in Ottoman traditions (see Pennanen 1999, 108–9).

⁵ See, for example, the anthologies for the *bouzouki* with fingerings by Manolis Mihalakis (2012a) and Trigas (2017c), who both are professional *bouzouki* players and pedagogues.

The author provides “Scale Byzantine” with preferred fingerings and bases a plain, awkward melody on it (Figure 1). Interestingly, several errors occur in indicating the string courses, and one fret number is incorrect, and the fingering of the melody does not follow the scale fingering. To crown it all, the music example ends on the F major chord, whereas the chord symbol Fa– below the staff stands for F minor. One may indeed wonder how reliable the book is and whether one can take it at face value.

The note positions of the example are in tiered array; fingering problems appear especially in the finger span of five frets on the second course (Figure 2). In the upward passages of the musical example, Mitsopoulos shifts the fourth finger on the second course, but in the descending ones he uses the fourth and second fingers—and on one occasion, the fourth and second ones. Furthermore, the shift of the first finger on the same course could be avoided by using the third finger instead. Contrary to Mitsopoulos, the traditional four-course *bouzouki* player would shift the third finger or use the second and third finger, thus avoiding using the fourth finger. All things considered, in actual melodic playing with ornaments, the musician would probably prefer using the two top courses and several positions rather than all courses and only one position. The most common ornamentation consists of the traditional long-necked lute *legato* effects hammer and pull and their combination and the Western-influenced trill and *glissando* (or, rather, *portamento*).

Figure 1. “Scale Byzantine in fa on the 12th position” with fingerings and an example melody (Mitsopoulos 1983, 43). The corrections in red above the scale are by RPP.

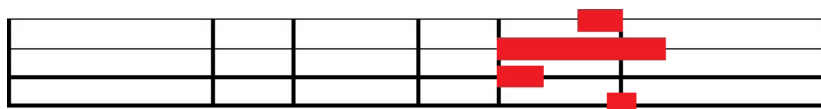


Figure 2. Fretboard diagram presenting the frets used for “Scale Byzantine in fa.” Here, as in Figures 4 and 5, the horizontal lines symbolise the string courses, while the vertical ones, from left to right, are frets number 0, 5, 7, 10, 12 and 15.

Although the inconsistencies undermine the scheme, Mitsopoulos’s basic idea is to reduce motor structures into finger movements. Therefore, the model fingering tries to imitate main consideration of the left-hand position of the classical guitar technique to spread the four fingers for obtaining maximum reach. Along with the inconsistencies, another weakness of the fingering is the essential disparity between the stringing of the guitar and the four-course *bouzouki*. The classical guitar maintains a reasonably uniform timbre between the three unwound treble and three wound bass strings, whereas the four-course *bouzouki*, due to the octave pairs of the two lower strings courses, does not. Therefore, *bouzouki* musicians usually avoid abrupt switches between unison and octave courses—i.e. vertical tactility—which distinctly changes the tonal quality of sound.

To solve the timbral problem, some four-course players have removed the octave doubles, classically trained virtuoso Haris Lemonopoulos (1923–75) as the most celebrated example (see Gardounis 2019, Petropoulos 1979, 523, 527, 589). Another example is Mihalis Paouris (b. 1989), a contemporary jazz guitar and *bouzouki* virtuoso, whose four-finger *bouzouki* jazz technique is remarkably close to that of the tenor guitar in the so-called Chicago tuning (d–g–b–e’).⁶ For modern jazz pieces, he sometimes removes the octave doubles of the *bouzouki* (e.g. Michael Paouris Official 2014). When performing older Greek *bouzouki* pieces on standard stringing, Paouris, however, utilises mostly horizontal tactility, traditional ornamentation and a moderate use of the fourth finger (see Michael Paouris Official 2018).

The principle of maintaining the timbre prevails in most lutes with unison and octave double courses, such as the Portuguese guitars *guitarra portuguesa*, *viola amarantina* and *viola braguesa*, the Brazilian *viola caipira* and the Cuban *cuatro*; the musicians tend to avoid crossings between the two kinds of courses in a musical

⁶ The Chicago tuning is identical with the four top strings of the standard six-string guitar.

phrase. Many such lutes have a re-entrant tuning in which successive courses are tuned not to successively higher pitches but to a pattern of rising and falling intervals.

In Greek double-course lutes, the octave doubles are on the treble side of the course, and therefore the brightness of the octave effect is not as pronounced as in the other string order. That said, Greek lute players usually share the same approach to unison and octave double courses with their Portuguese, South American and Caribbean colleagues. Take, for example, the *steriano laouto* of the Greek mainland and the Cretan *laouto*, which are re-entrant four-course instruments with the first course in unison and the three others in octave pairs (see Anoyanakis 1976, 210–54; Papastavrou 2010, 31–43). Avoiding crossing the strings from the first course to the others in a musical phrase, their melodic playing is in linear array (see Papadakis 2019). However, the use of the octave double courses in tiered array is possible because the timbre between the courses does not change significantly. A notable exception is the *steriano laouto* virtuoso Hristos Zotos (b. 1937) who may purposely mix distinct timbres (Papastavrou 2010, 77).

As the four-course *bouzouki* is often considered a completely Westernised guitar-like instrument, it may be surprising that one advantage of the layout stems from non-Western music. Namely, the repetition of a unison-course phrase as an octave-course phrase an octave lower produces an appealing timbral contrast, which is effective in the instrumental sections of vocal pieces, instrumental pieces and *taximi* improvisations in flowing rhythm. This echo effect is common in Middle Eastern music (see Nettl and Riddle 1973, 26; al-Faruqi 1985, 69). Other fruitful contexts—again with Middle Eastern or Orientalist overtones—are riff-based *tsiftetelli* (“belly dance”) pieces with or without a section in flowing rhythm.

Three- and four-course tactility

While the pre-1956 *bouzouki* repertoire was composed for the three-course *bouzouki*, four-course musicians—initially nearly all of them three-course players—had to play those pieces on their new instrument. Consequently, the three-course tactility influenced the four-course tactility, but, simultaneously, new four-course tactile structures emerged. Those structures in turn influenced especially the revivalist three-course musicians. The following analysis illustrates the reciprocal influence of the two *bouzouki* layouts.

Figure 3 contains two versions of the first section of the classic three-course virtuoso piece “Ta oraia tou Tsitsani” by Vasilis Tsitsanis from 1948. The first transcribed three-course version is from Athenian professional three-course *bouzouki* player Nikos Kralis (b. 1960), who first plays it in a horizontal three-finger style akin to that of Tsitsanis. The notes are situated in linear array on two top courses, resulting in technically demanding ascending sequences of left-hand movements through the alteration of the first and second finger especially in bar 5. Kralis demonstrates his remarkable control of the left hand by playing the descent in bar 6 by using the first finger on three successive notes. When repeating the section, Kralis utilises an alternative, apparently modern manner of transferring the end descent to the third course (Figure 4).⁷ Justifying the timbral change, the switch to the third course takes place in the beginning of the phrase; this change of motor structure is an example of modernisation in the three-course *bouzouki* technique. The two diagrams in Figure 4 show the used the fret areas in the section and its repeat.

As an example of a four-course tactility, the lower stave and tablature of Figure 3 contain the arrangement by Dimitris Boukouvalas. The version is based on the placement of notes into tiered array and on finger movements rather than position changes; there is little need to move the hand at all (Figure 5, upper diagram). Indeed, the arrangement takes the minimisation of kinetic energy to the extreme in the same guitar-influenced manner as Mitsopoulos in Figure 2. Boukouvalas has accomplished this by the extensive use of the fourth finger and by transposing the end descent up an octave. From the traditional three-course point of view the result is not satisfactory because the fingering drops down to the third course several times abruptly in phrases and causes sudden changes of the timbre. Therefore, very few practising four-course *bouzouki* musicians would prefer such a fingering, and although some of them may utilise the octave transposition of the end descent, many of them tend to follow the principles of the traditional three-course tactility (Figure 5, lower diagram). They consider the conventions of the older *bouzouki* technique and timbre, thus sacrificing some advantages of the vertical tactility and the systematic use of the fourth finger.

The first diagram in Figure 5 shows Boukouvalas’s use of the fingerboard in the piece, whereas the diagram below it demonstrates the fingerboard area for imitating three-course horizontal tactility. Moreover, several other possibilities combining the

⁷ See also Fotis Vergopoulos’s (b. 1988) fingerings in “Ta oraia tou Tsitsani” (Vergopoulos 2012, 0:01–0:10).

two approaches exist. Because four-course virtuosos often master also the three-course layout, such hybrids can be spontaneous.

To sum up, Hiotis and most contemporary professional three-and four-course *bouzouki* musicians use three left-hand fingers independently in the manner, which John Baily (1995, 23–4) terms as a “3-finger 3-component” mode of operation. In contrast to this tradition, the classical-guitar influenced modern technique can be seen as a “4-finger 4-component” mode of operation, which requires the complete independence of movement for the fourth finger. As compared to the next, technically extremely demanding arrangement, Boukouvalas’s fingerings are moderate instances of the latter mode of operation.

5

Figure 3. The first section of “Ta oraia tou Tsitsani” by Vasilis Tsitsanis. The first stave and the two three-course tablatures are transcribed from the playing of Nikos Kralis (1994), while the second stave and the four-course tablature are from the arrangement by Dimitris Boukouvalas (n.d., 15).

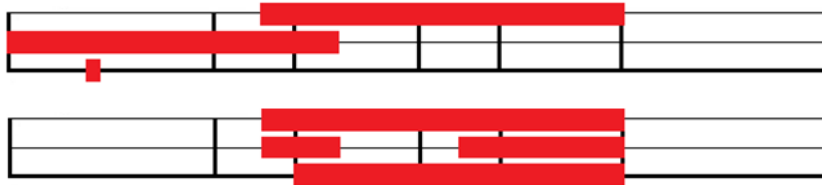


Figure 4. Three-course fretboard diagrams presenting the fret areas, which Nikos Kralis uses for the first section of “Ta oraia tou Tsitsani.” The upper diagram is for the first time, while the lower diagram is for the repeat.

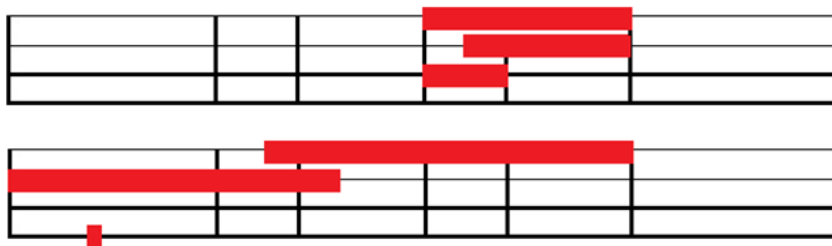


Figure 5. Four-course fretboard diagrams presenting the fret areas for the first section of “Ta oraia tou Tsitsani.” The upper diagram is for Boukouvalas’s arrangement, while the lower diagram shows how a four-course player can utilise three-course tactility.

The adventures of the fourth finger

The *bouzouki* solo section for the Hiotis song “Moiazeis ki esi san thalassa” from 1960 offers an example *par excellence* of change in the playing technique of the instrument (see XorisNicknameGR 2010). Consider, firstly, Manolis Mihalakis’s (2007) edition of the piece which provides *bouzouki* fingerings, plectrum directions and a tablature (Figure 6). Since the transcription is in G minor, Mihalakis has transcribed the solo *bouzouki* section from the second Hiotis recording of the piece from 1961.⁸

⁸ Hiotis made two studio recordings of the song, first with Trio Bel Canto in D minor in 1960 (Columbia SCDG 2761) and subsequently with Mairi Linda in G minor in 1961 (Columbia SCDG 2846).

Figure 6. The beginning of the *bouzouki* section of the Hiotis song “Moiazeis ki esi san thalassa” as transcribed by Manolis Mihalakis (2007). The upper tablature with fingerings and plectrum directions is by Mihalakis, while the lower one is from the playing of Vangelis Avramakis (2015).

Targeted to intermediate to advanced students of the *bouzouki*, the transcription is a considerably simplified rendition of Hiotis’s original recordings, however. In general, the means of the standard Western notation system very rarely express a piece of music exactly, and the limitations of notation are evident especially in folk, popular and non-Western musics. Mihalakis has not therefore created a descriptive transcription; 12/8 time is written in 4/4 time, and the *bouzouki* part lacks, for example, the *fermata* ending the upbeat bar and several slides. The transcription is simplified probably to avoid excessive complexity, and, as in all secondarily memory-based music, the actual performance of the piece in Hiotis’s style would require listening to the original recordings.⁹ Mihalakis’s own live rendition of the piece does follow the fingerings and plectrum directions of his edition, but, on the other hand, Mihalakis holds the last note of the upbeat bar, thus executing the missing *fermata* (see PERAN 2020, 1:19–1:22).

The most striking feature of Mihalakis’s fingerings is the performance of the fast, challenging trill on the third and fourth finger which deviates considerably from the traditional *bouzouki* technique. In my opinion, this modernised 4-finger 4-component mode of operation in such a difficult ornament seems to stem from the

⁹ In the modern world, the traditional primarily memory-based transmission of performance practice from master to student has often switched to the secondarily memory-based transmission, which means learning from recordings (cf. secondary orality in Ong 1982, 136). “Memory-based” is my translation of the Finnish term “muistinvarainen,” which is more accurate in that the conventional “oral.”

technique of the classical guitar, and Mihalakis's biography indeed supports this hypothesis. Three- and four-course *bouzouki* virtuoso Manolis Mihalakis (b. 1960 in Kavala) began playing his main instrument the age of nine in Australia, and already at the age of sixteen he was playing there professionally with celebrated *bouzouki* master Nikos Karanikolas (1929–2003). Simultaneously, he continued his studies in classical guitar and Western music theory at the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music (now the Sydney Conservatorium of Music) in Sydney. After remigrating in Greece in the mid-1980s, Mihalakis has been working as a performing musician and teacher of the *bouzouki* family instruments and guitar, and he has published several *bouzouki* methods with supplementary CDs and editions of *bouzouki* songs and instrumentals (Mihalakis 2012b). Mihalakis's classical guitar studies are obvious especially in his unaccompanied *bouzouki* performances; delicate dynamics, the use of the plectrum and two right-hand fingers for plucking a chord and harmonics are not traditional but, rather, modernising devices and techniques of the instrument (see Katsifis 2019, 0:13–0:14, 1:30–1:36).

Although Mihalakis does not write down the *fermata* indicating the prolongation of the last note of the first bar, it is essential for the original recording and Mihalakis's own live rendition. Contrary to Hiotis, Mihalakis favours alternating downstrokes and upstrokes for fast and exact playing, downstrokes falling normally on the stressed beats and upstrokes on the unstressed ones. In Hiotis's recordings, the first bar is without accompaniment, and thus the prolonged last note signals the end of the pickup bar and the entry of the rest of the instruments. The same applies to Mihalakis's live rendition.

No filmed performance with Hiotis playing the piece seems to exist, but one can still try to reconstruct the motor structures. Here, the performance by Greek-Australian professional four-course *bouzouki* player Vangelis Avramakis (2015) lends itself as a source; Avramakis uses three left-hand fingers, and his right-hand technique is close to that of Hiotis. He opens and therefore ends the upbeat phrase with a downstroke, thus creating a strong accent on the *fermata* note, executes a short break, and begins the next bar with an accented downstroke (Figure 6). Such deviations from the standard series of alternating downstrokes and upstrokes were typical of Hiotis. Especially in triplets and sextolets, Hiotis, like other traditional *bouzouki* players, used the technique of glide or sweep strokes by executing the triplet not as a down-up-down movement but playing down-down-up or alternatively up-down-down

(Papazolomondos 2017, 70). The modern, standardised series of plectrum movements may facilitate the executions of certain passages but, on the other hand, they may easily affect the accentuation of phrases. To my knowledge, no *bouzouki* methods teach the irregular motor structures of the plectrum.

Conclusion

Since the fall of the military junta, the cultural status of *rebetika* has risen slowly but inevitably, beginning with the state funeral of Vasilis Tsitsanis in 1984 and culminating in 2017 when UNESCO inscribed it on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Furthermore, in the system of state secondary schools specialising in music, which was introduced in 1988, some curricula include *bouzouki* courses, while some other, more conservative music schools still prefer the long-necked *tambouras* lute with an alleged lineage from Byzantium. Concurrently, classical guitar studies at a conservatoire do not exclude professionalism in the *bouzouki* and *vice versa*. Learning the *bouzouki* techniques and repertoire from modern, relatively emic methods books and sheet music with fingerings is no longer a peculiar idea. However, audio recordings, intimate acoustic live performances, YouTube videos, television programmes and private lessons will undoubtedly constitute essential sources for learners. Because of the secondarily memory-based character of popular music, most *bouzouki* professionals are unlikely to have learnt their skills from method books, which have been and are still being published for beginner and intermediate *bouzouki* players. Obviously, such an activity constitutes a lucrative business.

The motor structures of traditional *bouzouki* playing do not try to minimise kinetic energy which was Weber's ideal; they rather aim at achieving a flow of uniform tone colour with proper ornamentation. These factors often limit the use of vertical playing across the strings as the overuse of vertical tactility produces aesthetically unsatisfying, diffuse timbre (see Pennanen 1999, 179). Therefore, the classical-guitar influenced "4-finger 4-component" mode of operation is usually an example of modernisation in *bouzouki* technique; it does not change the musical style. However, since the independent use of the fourth finger requires considerable practice without appreciable advantages, the traditional "3-finger 3-component" tactility will prevail as the main mode of *bouzouki* playing. Moreover, the reciprocal technical influence of

the two *bouzouki* layouts will remain absent exclusively in the purist scene of the rebetika revival. By the same token, standard series of alternating downstrokes and upstrokes may replace the traditional non-standard right-hand motor structures among musicians with straightforward approaches.

One can thus see how the development of *bouzouki* technique is intertwined with the development of Greek music and society. The study of the evolution of techniques in other instruments—for instance, the various forms of the *laouto*, or the *lyra*, or even the *klarino*—with a similar perspective may be instructive.

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Discography

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