

## Polyphonic Singing in Epirus

The polyphonic singing in Epirus is a special and totally unique cultural phenomenon in Greece and it's strongly connected with the Greek music tradition. L. Liavas (1998) points out that it is "one of the most popular musical forms, not only in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, but also the global collection of folk singing." K. Lolis says that the term "pluralism" means a specific musical notation which is developed horizontally or a "confrontation" of two or more melodic lines. It was formed as an artistic musical system in Western Europe during the Middle Ages and it was highly developed during the Renaissance and Baroque.

It was embraced by classical and romantic composers and today it is considered a special musical culture thanks to the great artistic power, the beauty and the dignity of artworks of Palestrina, Lasso, Bach and many other great masters of the long and multifaceted music history. But according to the ordinary people of Epirus, "pluralism" or "polyphonic song" neither means nor imitate this music system. However, it means a unique and original music tradition, which stems from very deep musical roots, since very ancient times. (Lolis, 2006). Kanellatou (2010) reports that when a song is considered polyphonic, this probably means that there are at least two different vocal roles. The most complete picture of pluralism in Epirus is achieved with the presence of at least three different vocal roles. The roles that appear in the Greek polyphonic songs in Epirus are: "partis", "girstis", "klostis", "isokratis", "rihtis" and "prologistis" (Lolis 2006 Kanellatou 2010).

The common elements of polyphonic songs with similar populations in the rest of Greece, which include the same tropical and melodic structure and morphological development, integrate the polyphonic singing in a joint singing tradition.

Meanwhile, the uniqueness of the expressive power of the songs, as well as the combination of the ancient and the modern structure, makes polyphonic singing part of the rare forms of vocal singing in Greece. The peculiarities observed in these songs are highlighted by several scholars but there's no scientific proof that could shed light on the temporal shape and evolution of pluralism in geographic regions where it grows. A. Lavdas (1967) noted that "in Epirus and especially in Pogoni there are preserved songs that are characteristic by multiple musical lines, an extremely rare and maybe unique phenomenon in Greek Folk Music and worthy of deeper study. "

The polyphonic singing is found in a geographical area which is located between Ionian coast, near Filiates until Konitsa and the Kalama River, and the Greek-Albanian border and it has also

been identified with the region of Pogoni, an area divided between Greece and Albania (Nitsiakos 2002). K. Lolis specifies the geographical area where the polyphonic singing grows, including the villages of northern Epirus. He says that Pogoni is located among both sides of the Greek-Albanian border to the foothills of Mourganas, the whole area of the upper and lower Deropolis and the Root of Argirokastra, the areas of Vourkos and Theologos as well as the Greek-speaking villages of Himara. In the villages of Konitsa, especially those bordering with Pogoni, we can hear bold polyphonic sounds. He records the villages, where the phenomenon of pluralism is found. Therefore he notes that the polyphonic singing is developed in the region of the province of Pogoni, in villages of Northern Epirus, Argirokastra, Upper and Lower Episkopi, Upper and Lower Lesinitza, Vavouri, Vodrista, Vrioni, Glina, Gorantzi, Grapsi, Dervitsiani, Dibri, Karoki, Kosovitsa, Longos, Bouliarates, Pepeli, Polytsani, Sopiki, Sotira, Teriachates, Tsiatista, Tsaoussi, Tserkovitsa, Tsouka, Finiki, Himara, Hlomo, as well as in Deropoli, Pogoni, Vouthrito, Drimades, Polytsani, Bentsa, Episkopi. In Greece it is found in villages of the northwestern part of Ioannina, Dolo, Ktismata, Parakalamos, Pogoniani, in the villages Bourgana, in Vavouri, Lias, Tsamantas and Povla but also in Konitsa, in the northern part of Ioannina like Plikati (double-language pluralism), (Lolis 2006).

K. Lolis, in his extensive musicological study of the polyphonic singing, he shows personal recorded collections from the region of Epirus and specifically the villages: Argirokastra, Upper and Lower Episkopi, Upper and Lower Lesinitza, Vavouri, Vodrista, Vrioni, Glina, Gorantzi, Grapsi, Dervitsiani, Dibri, Karoki, Kosovitsa, Ktismata, Lia, Longos, Bouliarates, Parakalamos, Pepeli, Polytsani, Pogoniani, Sopiki, Sotira, Teriachates, Tsiatista, Tsaoussi, Tserkovitsa, Tsouka, Finiki, Himara, and Hlomo. At times they have been published several recordings of polyphonic songs that reveal the rich local culture of Ktismata, Dolos, Mourgana, Parakalamos, etc.