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THE CASE OF THE ANGELS. THE RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH BY CLASSICAL SCHOLAR JOHN CUTHBERT LAWSON (1874-1919) ON MODERN GREEK CULTURE

SUMMARY: In my paper I focus on the well-known John Cuthbert Lawson's study about Modern Greek folklore (1910) and I venture to verify if it may be regarded as a reliable source of information about Greek folk beliefs. I base my argument on the eschatological remarks Lawson made concerning the personification of Death – Charos and his relationship to the Christian Angels. Confronting Lawson's views and his source material with other similar demotic songs, mainly from the collections he had had access to, I try to show in what way the older collections of folk-songs might have distorted or falsified the eschatological images of Charos and the Angels, and what he overlooked while analyzing the sources. I also shed some light on possible influences of Byzantine orthodoxy on Modern Greek folk tradition to which Greek demotic songs belong.

KEYWORDS: Modern Greek literature, Modern Greek folk poetry, demotic songs, Modern Greek folklore, folk eschatology, personification of Death, Byzantine eschatology, Byzantine orthodoxy, reception of Antiquity, John Cuthbert Lawson, angels in Byzantium

A discussion about continuity or discontinuity of Greek tradition from various points of view and according to different schools has been the subject of research at least since the late eighteenth century,

just before the birth of the Greek state, when it became strongly ideologized by "romantic" philhellenic movement and generally was a result of nineteenth century nationalist theories.[1] The debate whether Modern Greek culture in some of its manifestations is a natural descendant of its ancient predecessor or not does not seem to have ceased today, although it definitely lost its vigour and generally in recent scholarship is regarded as unconstructive (Tziovas 2014: 9). The most recent approaches to the problem, especially made by Alexiou, accentuate a rather cyclical than linear aspect of time and its relation to the understanding of what Greek culture is in modern times and thus broaden the research perspective trying to embrace language, myth and metaphor present not only in written texts but in ritual manifestations of folk culture (Alexiou 1974; Alexiou 2002a).[2] Together with the change of attitude to the question of whether the "survivalism" of ancient culture should be examined synchronically or diachronically, including the transitional phases of Byzantine and Ottoman periods that left indelible traces on Greek culture, there occurred a sort of rehabilitation of the studies written mainly at the end of nineteenth and in the beginning of twentieth century. We should remember that the scholars with classical education faced the question rather "romantically", in accordance with the ideological tendencies of their times.

One of the books that has been an inexhaustible source of information for over a hundred years concerning the supposed continuity of ancient Greece in its modern counterpart is a memorable study by a young classical scholar John Cuthbert Lawson (1874-1919), Fellow and Lecturer in Pembroke College in Cambridge, entitled *Modern Greek folklore and ancient Greek religion: A study in survivals* (Lawson 1910).[3]

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[1] Vryonis (1978: 237-256) gives a convincing survey of the theories. See also Alexiou 2002a: 8-16. As for the role folk studies played in Greece in the shaping of Greek national identity see Politis A. 2011: 241-262.

[2] There is no way here to enumerate all the valuable studies devoted to the "continuity problem", however it seems important to remind here the most significant of them, relevant to our paper, such as a classic study by Herzfeld (1982) or the most recent volume of essays by Tziovas (2014).

[3] Other well-known and memorable studies by English visitors in Greece during the nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century include: Geldart 1884; Rodd 1892;

As the author writes in the preface to his book, he spent two years in Greece (1898-1900) thanks to the Craven Fund that financed his stay and work that he undertook in order to gather the information for his research on the customs of modern Greece (Lawson 1910: vii). But the real purpose he aimed to achieve was not the ethnographic collection of data during the fieldwork but – as he states with undisguised pride – the first attempt ever made to show modern Greek folklore as a significant and essential vehicle for the exploration of the continuity of Ancient Greek religion (Lawson 1910: x).

The same year when Lawson's book was published, it was reviewed in *The Classical Review* by the then influential classical scholar Jane Ellen Harrison (1850-1928) (Harrison 1910: 181-183) who did not conceal her admiration for his work but simultaneously reproached him for neglecting and rejecting the comparative method and not showing the modern Greek folklore in broader perspective in comparison with other primitive tribal initiation ceremonies (Harrison 1910: 183). Another critical insight into Lawson's book is offered by the review written the same year by H. J. Rose who accused the author of being "childish" in interpreting the religious passages from ancient writers that he had no knowledge about at all (Rose 1910: 529-532). On the other hand, Rose admits that the ethnographic data gathered by Lawson is valuable indeed and his remarks about the contemporary beliefs of Modern Greeks deserve credit.

Two years later a Professor of Harvard University, Clifford Herschel Moore (1866-1931) later author of the classic study on Greek religion (Moore 1916) and translator of Tacitus' *Historiae*, reviewed Lawson's book, paying attention to the richness of the content concerning the Greek folklore as well as to the author's lack of knowledge of the contemporary studies on Greek religion that could support his, in many cases doubtful, theses (Moore 1912: 108-111). According to Moore, one should also treat with caution the accounts used by Lawson due to the fact that the respondent's oral accounts are not always trustworthy (Moore 1912: 111). However, the most critical review was published the same year by George L. Hamilton who explicitly reproached Lawson for his unacceptable ignorance of both comparative

Abbot 1903.

religions and folklore studies and complete lack of knowledge of the broader European context of the tales and folk stories he deals with in his book (Hamilton 1912: 87-90).[4] Later reviews such as, for instance, Johannes Th. Kakridis' detailed analysis of some passages in Lawson's book that are oversimplified or misleading (Kakridis 1969: 495-499), or a short review by Américo Paredes (1965: 356) generally share the opinion that although in many cases his study is obviously out of date, one must not deny his ability to show universal beliefs and practices.

The person most critical both to the question of diachronic survivalism of Hellenic culture and the person who sought every possible source that could explain modern tales via ancient myths was professor of Greek at the University of Oxford, archeologist and folklorist, Director of the British School at Athens, Richard M. Dawkins (1871-1955). One of the most influential neohellenist scholars whose works,[5] thanks to his research accuracy and thorough documentation of the sources, are invariably admired in modern scholarship (Alexiou 2002a: 218), strongly stressed the necessity to see Greek folktales in terms of a synchronic system where every element is meaningful for the community that is an addressee of a story (Mackridge 2009: 56; Tziovas 2014: 26, n. 5). Instead of tracing back modern folklore to ancient Greek culture, he preferred the comparative method and sought to juxtapose Greek folksongs with their counterparts in other contemporary cultures (Mackridge 2009: 56).[6]

[4] For instance, he observes that Lawson does not know either the then well-known collection of folk tales by Hahn (1864), or Dyer's study about Greek religion (Dyer 1891), that could support some of his theses and place them in their relevant context.

[5] The most influential are: Dawkins 1916, the result of three visits to Cappadocia (1909, 1910, 1911) just before the Balkan wars begun, and Dawkins 1953.

[6] In a letter to Hasluck, Dawkins writes that Lawson "does not possess an imaginative mind. It's odd that such an unsuitable person got hold of such a subject" (Dawkins to Hasluck, 2 Feb. 1919). The quote is from Mackridge 2009: 56. However, later he seems to have softened his stance against Lawson. For instance, in the James Frazer Memorial Lecture given at Oxford on 5th May in 1924, although he does not agree with Lawson's opinion about the vampires, he shares his views on eschatology of Greek dirges. Besides, he also shares some of Lawson's views about the continuity of ancient Greek concepts about the afterlife of an individual. See Dawkins 1942: 134-136.

Since Lawson's study in spite of the lapse of time and change of approaches is regarded, among others by Alexiou in her influential monograph (Alexiou 2002a: 455, n. 24), as a still reliable source of information about Greek folk beliefs, in the present paper I venture to verify this statement. Based on the eschatological remarks Lawson made concerning the personification of Death in Greek tradition and specifically the relationship between the pagan Charos/Death and the Christian Angels I will try to establish to what degree his account may be up-to-date and the information he conveys on the subject is up-to-date or if it should be disregarded. Thus, confronting Lawson's views and his source material with other similar demotic songs, mainly from the collections he had had access to, I shall try to show in what way the older collections of folk-songs he used might have distorted or falsified the eschatological images of Charos and the Angels, and what he overlooked while analyzing the sources. On that occasion, I hope to shed also some light on the problem that in my opinion is rather neglected by researchers of Greek demotic poetry, namely to possible influences of Byzantine orthodoxy on Modern Greek folk tradition to which Greek demotic songs belong.

It also seems useful to pay some attention to the sources of Greek demotic songs Lawson used to illustrate his theses about Modern Greek eschatology. He cites, among other things, the collections of Passow (1860) and Schmidt (1877), as well as mentions the works of the founder of Greek folk studies, Nikolaos Politis (1852-1921), whose first Greek collection of songs he could not have known for obvious reasons.[7] It is also worth remembering that at that time other collections of Greek songs in translation into European languages

[7] The first edition of the well-known collection was published in 1914. Interestingly, when publishing his collection Politis used the method of textual criticism that he borrowed from the classical studies. Moreover, in contradistinction to European folklore studies of that time, Greek folksongs were treated mostly as "written text" and their oral performance was neglected. See especially Alexiou 1984: 7-10.

were already plentiful enough both in England[8] and in France[9] and Germany or Austria.[10]

However, what is extremely interesting and – as I suppose – has not attracted proper interest so far, in spite of Lawson' s peculiar attitude to folk elements and his tendency to link every similar element with ancient Greek sources, is the fact that he is fully aware of the "double-faith" patterns of Greek folk beliefs based, on the one hand, on Christian elements as the legacy of Byzantine church and, on the other, on Hellenic sources of ancient origin (Bzinkowski 2011: 104-105).[11] As he notices, with a sort of perplexity, peasants seem not to bother and easily identify both sides of their beliefs.[12]

Undoubtedly, Lawson is right in his general supposition that Modern Greek Charos (Χάρος, Χάροντας) is only partly what Charon used to be in classical times,[13] namely the carrier of the dead to the

[8] A detailed list and comparison of the nineteenth-century European collections of Greek folk songs was made by Ibrovac (1966: 153-248) and if one would like to check any relevant information I strongly recommend his thorough study. As for the Greek collections and their relationship to European sources, see Politis A. 2011: 277-283, 325-334. For a short survey of collections see also Beaton 1986: 115-117. Here I mention merely some of the English collections Lawson might have known and could have had access to. Apart from the translation of Claude Fauriel's collection by Sherridan (Fauriel 1825), collections by Garnett (1888) and by Abbot (1900) were already available.

[9] The most important are these by Marcellus 1851; Lévy 1860; and especially by Legrand 1874. See Ibrovac 1966: 187-188.

[10] The most influential, as it seems, was the anthology by Karl Theodor Kind that had four editions (1835, 1844, 1849). In the last one published in 1861 (*Anthologie neugriechischer Volkslieder*) Kind used the earlier collections and excerpted some songs from them: among others from Passow, 1860; Zampelios 1852; Tomasseo 1842. See Ibrovac 1966: 212-213.

[11] See also Dawkins 1942.

[12] Lawson (1910: 53, 101) even suggests that Charos is – though rarely – called άγιος (saint). I have not found so far any confirmation of his statement either in collections of demotic songs or in the studies devoted to the subject. Thus, I omit this remark in my analysis.

[13] The whole chapter about Charos, see Lawson 1910: 98-117. Abbot (1903: 205-207), who mentions Charos only in the context of funeral rites, is also aware of the complexity of a division of his duties and unclear origins.

"Homeric"-looking Underworld,[14] although, as it should be stressed, he is by no means "the ferryman" but rather a "psychopompos", as documented elsewhere (Lawson 1910: 98).[15] Generally, in accordance with the method he chose and the goal he aimed to attain, Lawson regards Charos simply as "an ancient deity" (Lawson 1910: 98). The speculation whether the name of the modern personification of death in Greek tradition is indirectly rooted in the name of the ancient ferryman, Charon, does not engage him so much. He limits himself just to a statement that the origins of this modern deity are taken for granted and the case does not need more elucidation (Lawson 1910: 98). This is a significant way of treating the researched material by the scholar who seems to have chosen the shortest path to reach the confirmation of his theses that some manifestations of Modern Greek folk customs are an indirect continuity of the ancient rituals and beliefs that survived on Hellenic ground in spite of the domination of Christianity. It is worth noticing, because it reveals the core of his methodology: to see ancient features in everything that seems similar but to omit the differences and, more importantly, not to take into account the transitional stages of a development of a researched feature. However, let us remind that it was nothing uncommon for nineteenth century European scholars, for whom Greek folklore was interesting provided that it could be linked to the classical past and possibly explain ancient Greek mythology or religion (Alexiou 1984: 9).

Moreover, the case of Charos touches upon the question of the credibility of the accounts that gave Lawson the proof material for his research. As he states, the interlocutors asked about the personified death showed "neither superstitious awe nor fear" (Alexiou 1984: 9), which demonstrates that he did not take into account the fact obvious for all ethnographers and researchers working on the spot. Firstly, the respondents' attitude to strangers does not allow them to speak openly, especially when the question is a ritualized taboo of a village or a traditional society, and that is exactly in the case of death as it is a "border

[14] As for the Modern Greek Underworld and its relation to Ancient Greek Hades see my recent paper: Bzinkowski 2011. See also Dawkins 1942: 143-145.

[15] The outline of his role as a *psychopompos* see, among others, my paper: Bzinkowski 2009.

situation". Secondly, the informants just do not want to show they are superstitious or backward (Alexiou 1984: 12-13). On the other hand, the respondent, in order to show himself and the story in better light, may embroider it to make it more attractive or simply provide information that is expected (Alexiou 1984: 11). It could also happen, which Abbot suspects in a book that Lawson had known, that the informant simply did not remember exactly the story or the song he cited and thus changed its contents (Abbot 1903: 206).

Thus, the knowledge that Lawson gathered investigating the inhabitants of Greek villages must be treated very cautiously and attempting to reconstruct the folk beliefs basing mainly on the accounts he refers to would be quite risky. Besides, it was not the main aim of the scholar who – as I have already mentioned – attempted to show the relics of Ancient Greek religion by shedding some light (though in some cases rather obscuring than illuminating) on the possible reminiscences or traces of its manifestations in folk customs and beliefs.

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CHAROS AND THE ANGELS

Lawson suggests that in some cases Charos, who "is conceived to be a free agent responsible to none or merely a minister of the supreme God" (Lawson 1910: 101), is accompanied in his duties by God's assistants, the Angels.[16] Their duty in the version of the demotic song mentioned by him and taken in turn from Passow's collection, is to

[16] It would be a difficult task, as I suppose, to find an equivalent image for instance in Byzantine texts. Byzantium had never developed a coherent and universally accepted system of the spiritual existence of the Angels. Besides, it also had never rejected more Biblical ideas and more ancient concepts about them. Apart from pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's *Celestial hierarchy*, who distinguished nine orders of the angels according to Neoplatonic concepts, there is no other Byzantine treatise dealing thoroughly with the problem of angelology. See Meyendorff 1979: 136. What is striking in Dionysius's system is that those who are in direct contact with humanity are angels and archangels who are at the bottom of the angelic hierarchy, whereas in Byzantium the case of Archangel Michael indicates that the folk beliefs in him were rooted rather in pagan and Jewish concept than in theologians' treatises. See Peers 2001: 5-6 – a remarkable, hitherto most comprehensive study of Byzantine angelology.

take care of children during the journey to Hades. Interestingly, the motif comes from a very popular song that we come across in almost every part of Greece (Dawkins 1942: 136), "Charos and the Shepherd" or "The Young Brave and Charos" (Ο Χάρος και ο Τσοπάνης, Του Λεβέντη και του Χάρου) that corresponds to different versions of the song belonging to the *acritic cycle*, "Digenis and Charos" (Ο Διγενής και ο Χάρος).[17] The plot of the short story goes like this: a young man comes down a mountain slope and heads back home and suddenly sees Charos approaching (in some versions riding a horse) with a sword in his hands. The dialogue between a young man and Death independently of a version has some common characteristics: Charos' declaration that he had come to seize his soul, his resistance, fight with Charos (usually on the marble threshing floor) and the shepherd's surrender. In some versions there is also a pleading of the shepherd so that Charos does not take him because of his wife, his children and his flocks.

Interestingly, in Passow's version, after the fight that was in a sort of a scheme of "wrestling with Charos" (χαροπάλεμα), the shepherd that had surrendered, ordered Charos to take him to his tent: δείξε μου την τέντα σου να πάγω μοναχός μου ("and show me your tent so that I go by myself").[18] Charos' answer gives no hope and rather aims to make the shepherd realize his situation:

Να δγης εσύ την τέντα μου, ο τρομιασμός σε πιάνει,
Οπώχω τα μικρά παιδιά που φέρνουνε τ'οι Αγγέλοι

[17] Mostly, the heroic medieval songs were not disseminated in mainland Greece. However, the versions of the songs with a motif of wrestling of a young brave (λεβέντης) or a shepherd (τσοπάνης, βοσκός) with Death/Charos are the traces of the "charopalema" motif of Digenis Akritas. They were adapted to new reality, namely to the agricultural society. See Politis A. 2011: 75-76. Lawson (1910: 104) knows a Cypriot version of such a song from Sakellarios' collection. For more on different versions of the motif see Anagnostopoulos 1984: 119-120. The comparative and cultural analysis especially see Saunier 1972 and also Stathis 2004: 771-784. Saunier (1999: 537) also includes in this group a third category: "A bet between Yannis and the Sun" (Στοίχημα Γιάννη και Ήλιου), which, according to him, is a different form of the motif of wrestling with Death.

[18] Saunier (1982: 301-302) convincingly suggests that it is a strictly military term and he directs attention to the historical background of the motif. It is striking that Dawkins (1942: 136) misinterprets this passage and writes that the conquered in the struggle with Death "must dwell in Charos' tent". In the cited fragment it is obviously the shepherd's will to go there.

When you see my tent, you will be filled with dismay,
Just there I have the little children the ones that the Angels bring me.
(Passow, nr 427, p. 303-304)[19]

Interestingly, let me underline it clearly, the parallel examples do not exist in demotic songs (at least I have not found so far any other similar ones), which means that the image of the Angels helping Charos in his duties by taking children may be something extremely incidental or there must be another explanation of the appearance of the motif.[20] There is no such mention in Fauriel's collection, although it contains a version of the song "The Shepherd and Charos" (Fauriel 1824-1825: II, 90-93).[21] Neither do we come across it in the collection

[19] We find the same fragment in an almost unaltered version in Kind's collection, nr IX (Ο Χάρος και ο τσοπάνης), p. 76: Να ιδής εσύ την τέντα μου, ο τρομασμός σε πιάνει / Οπώχω τα μικρά παιδιά που φέρνουνε τ' οι Αγγέλοι.

[20] Stathis (2004: 776), basing on Θρησκευτική και Ηθική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια (12 volumes, edited by A. Martinos), refers to that: "The angels take the souls of small children and they bring them to Charos" (οι Άγγελοι παίρνουν τις ψυχές των αθώων παιδιών και τις φέρνουν στο Χάρο). Due to the fact that I had no access to Stathis' source, it is impossible for me to verify his statement. However, I realize that such a conviction may be rooted in folk orthodox beliefs and the problem needs definitely a separate research procedure. There are also some accounts in Psychogiou that may confirm the eschatological connection between the angels and children in folk tradition. Psychogiou 2008: 303, according to Eleni Psychogiou, age 80, illiterate: Τα μικρά παιδιά, άμα πεθαίνουνε αβάφτηγα, ούτε τα διαβάζουνε ούτε το θάβανε μέσ' στην εκκλησία [στο νεκροταφείο]. Τα βαφτισμένα τα θάβουνε με πολλά λουλούδια και τα λένε «οι άγγελοι του θεού» ("When little children die unbaptized, they are not read out nor buried in church [in the graveyard]. The children that are baptized, they bury with a lot of flowers and they call them "the angels of God"). Psychogiou 2008: 319, according to Anna Rozaki, age 55, literate: όταν είναι [ο νεκρός] μικρό παιδάκι, μέχρι 10-12 χρονών, φτιάχνομε κουλουράκια σε σχήμα γ που τα λέμε «λαζάρους» και τα μοιράζομε και λέμε «οι αγγέλοι να του τα πάνε» ("When a small child [that dies], around 10-12 years of age, we make bagels in the shape of the letter gamma, we distribute them and we say «may the angels bring them to him»").

[21] Almost the same version is contained in Abbot's collection. Another collection Lawson might have read, namely the well-known anthology by Legrand (1874) contains only a few songs about Charos and the Underworld that do not contribute at all to our issue. Interestingly, both Abbot and Legrand abundantly drew from earlier collections of folk songs but they never made reference to them. See Politis A. 2011: 266. Only in the anthology of Kind (1861) we come across another mention of the angels, though – I daresay – even more obscure and rather unusual in demotic songs. In a variation of a well-known song about Charos-the builder who builds the orchard (garden)

by Iatridis (1859) known and cited by Lawson in which a variant of the story appears under the title: Ότι ουδέν αδάμαστον απέναντι του αδυσωπήτου θανάτου (Τραγώδι παλαιότατον) (Iatridis 1859: 16-18) nor in Chasiotis, who mentions two variants of the song (Chasiotis 1866: 167-168[)].

Besides, in the collection of Passow there are other songs centered around the motif of "Death and the Shepherd", but the Angels do not appear. Instead, in the case of our fragment and its parallel versions, we have to do with a strictly formulaic language: the second part of a verse is replaced by different elements while the first one stays (almost) unchanged. Let us cite some examples of the above-mentioned formula to see the oral technique of composition:

Μωρέ αν δγης την τέντα μου, όλος ανατρομάξεις.

You fool, if you see my tent, you will be wholly scared.
(Passow, nr 428, p. 305 [the last verse of the song])

Να πας κ' ιδής την τέντα μου θέλεις να συντ΄ομάξεις
Διατ΄είν' απόξω π΄άσινη και μέσα μαυ΄ομένη.

When you go and see my tent you will be scared
Because from the outside it is green, from the inside black.
(Passow, nr 432, p. 308)

Πάμε να δεις την τέντα μου να στραβοκατινίσης.
Απόξ΄ έχω τα κόκκινα και μές΄έχω τα μαύρα.

Let' s go, so that you see my tent and doubt.
Outside I have red colours and inside the black ones.
(Passow, nr 433, p. 308; Kind, nr VII [Ο Ζάχος και ο Χάρος], p. 72)

from the dead bodies, in the first part, that is rather impossible to connect to the second one with the well-known motif, there is a phrase that seems to be obviously an intrusion: μα εκείνος ήτον άγγελος με ταις χρυσαίς φτερούγαις ("But he was the angel with the golden wings"). See Kind 1861: 68, song V (Το περιβόλι του Χάρου). It cannot be easily determined whether it is about Charos identified here with The Angel of Death or if it comes from another song not related to that one at all. As for the motif of Charos building the garden see Stathis 2004: 801-806.

We come across an interesting variation of the same formula in the collection that Lawson knows and cites several times, namely in folk songs from the island Chios by Kanellakis (1890). In the Chiotic version of the song about Charos and the Shepherd (In Kanellakis: Τσόμπανης και Χάρων, nr 78, pp. 108-109) we do not find the cited formula but there is another curious trace of Christian beliefs interweaving with the folk paganism. When after the fight Charos at last seized the shepherd's soul, he asked if he "had stolen any lambs or had eaten goats" (έκλεψες αρνιά; τσοπάν΄, ήφαγες ΄γίδια). After the shepherd's negative answer his soul "was put on the scales and he went out justified" (Σ την ζυγαριάν τον έβαλαν και ήβγεν δικηωμένος). Such a mixture of eschatological motives coming from two mutually exclusive worlds we find extremely rarely. The netherworld of modern Greek demotic songs is generally "morally neutral" and there is no division of the dead according to their life's deeds.[22]

However, we come across the above-mentioned formula[23] in another song in Kanellakis' collection, entitled "Charon" which tells the story of three brothers building the tower in order to avoid Death/Charos, who unfortunately takes notice of them. Although they invite him to drink and eat with them – the motif frequently occurring in different variations throughout Greece – he stands to fight with Konstandis in a "charopalema". The conquered Konstandis asks Charos to show him his place so that he could go alone there. He receives the following answer:

Να δης εμόν το μέρος μου τρομάρα θα σε πιάση,
΄που ΄ν΄ από μέσα σκοτεινό τσ' από 'ξω ΄ραχνιασμένο
με των αντρών της τσεφαλαίς το ΄χω εγώ χτισμένο
με των κοπέλλων τα μαλλιά το έχω ΄σκεπασμένο.

As soon as you see my place, you will be scared,
because inside it is dark, outside cobwebbed
and I built it from men's heads
and covered it with girls' hair.
(Kanellakis, nr 35, p. 46)

[22] I have already referred to it elsewhere: Bzinkowski 2011.

[23] Interestingly, the cited formula appears very rarely in later versions of the song in twentieth century collections as if it was regarded as a fragment coming from another narrative.

Another variation of the motif we encounter in the collection of folk-songs from Asia Minor by Lagarde (1886).[24] In the song coming from Cappadocia, the motif of *charopalema* differs in the character of Charos, who here is astonishingly "sensible and better educated" (φρόνιμος και κάλλιο παιδευμένος). Akritas as in other versions wants to go to Charos' tent alone, but he is warned by him[25]:

Αν σε δείξω την τέντα μου, πολύ θενά τρομάξεις,
ως κλώθει ολοπράσινα και μέσα ροχιασμένα,
ως κλώθουν τα τεντώματα, παλληκαριού βραχιόνια.
(Lagarde, nr 22, p. 26)

If I show you my tent, you will be very scared,
because around it is totally green from outside but inside it is cobwebbed,
because the arms of the young brave are stretched all around.[26]

It seems to me that the presence of the Angels in Passow's collection mentioned in the first example as an illustration of Lawson's suggestion could be explained in two ways. We should remind the reader indeed that Passow cites the song at second hand for he uses the older popular collection of the Greek songs by an Italian linguist of Dalmatian origin, Niccolò Tommaseo (1802-1874), *Canti popolari italiani, corsi, illirici, greci* (Tommaseo 1842).[27]

[24] The song is cited by Saunier in his collection of *moirologia* (Saunier 1999: 540).

[25] There are many variants of the song as well as of the formula. See Politis, *Akritika*, 247.

[26] Due to the doubts about the meaning that arises with the last line, I decided to paraphrase it.

[27] More on Tomasseo's collection, his sources of Greek songs, see Ibrovac 1966: 231-232. As we know, some of the informants of Tomasseo were scholars and they purposely changed the songs they presented to Tomasseo to make them more elegant or more – in their opinion – proper. Very interesting is the example of one of the *kleftic songs* alluding to the time before the war of independence cited by Fauriel (t. 1, Του Κίτσου, p. 119) who had noted it from an anonymous informant. Because it was in prose, Fauriel gave it only in his French translation. However, a slightly later teacher of The Flanginian School in Venice, Anthimos Mazarakis, changed Fauriel's prose translation into verses and transmitted it as a genuine song to Tomasseo, who published it in his collection. See Politis A. 2011: 183.

Based on the comparison of the above-mentioned verses with parallel examples from similar songs, we could assume that the phrase as a part of a formula could have been introduced by a singer who presented the song to Tomasseo in order to satisfy the collector with a slight but significant reference to Christianity and he replaced the phrase with "the Angels". Of course, I realize the lack of firm basis for such a supposition and thus I propose the second possibility. Tomasseo himself might have replaced the phrase he had heard and made it more "Christian" in the way that instead of cruel and merciless Charos he introduced the Angels, but only in one context – the one of carrying the children to the Underworld. Let us underline the fact that is neglected by other scholars commenting on Charos' presence in demotic songs. For, as it turns out, Tomasseo is fully aware of the possibility that the mention of the Angels may be a sort of intrusion and, according to him, no matter what the reality is, it is a good reason for rejoicing.[28]

Thus, Lawson's remark that was a starting point for asking a question about the validity of the syncretistic connection between Charos and the Angels gains another dimension. Although Lawson had the possibility to collect the material on the spot, he chose among others the Passow's collection that in turn was based on the texts published – let us say – in a scholarly manner. It is now well-known that Passow had the tendency to conflate some variants of the songs in order to – just like the classical philologists, the editors of ancient texts used to – create the established model text of a given song based on all accessible versions (Beaton 2004: 10, 203; Politis A. 2011: 256-257). Besides, as it turns out, most of the collections of folk songs that were published in the nineteenth century were not the reproductions of oral performances

[28] Let me cite the passage from Tomasseo's collection to show more accurately my supposition: "L' imagine degli Angeli rallegra Il luogo dell' ultima notte. Non so se sia verso intruso; ma toccarlo non oso: che mostra il confondersi delle cristiane tradizioni con le pagane, e quelle più liete. – Dicono il Cristianesimo malinconico! Il Cristianesimo trae gioia dal dolore; il Paganesimo dolore da gioia. L' uno dice: godiamo alla disperata, chè il dolore è inevitabile; l' altro dice: speriamo gioie sempre maggiori dell' inevitabil dolore" (Tomasseo 1842: 303). It is known that some of the "folk" songs in the Tomasseo's collection were provided to him by the national Greek poet Dionysios Solomos, who never visited the Greek mainland and was rather interested in the creation of the national Greek literature than the folk poetry itself. See Beaton 2004: 8-9.

at all but the work of a scholarly mind organizing and readjusting the text material (Beaton 2004: 203).[29] Thus, naturally we must treat with great suspicion also Lawson's remarks about the Angels in the company of Charos based on the cited folksongs.[30]

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CHAROS AND ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

Interesting, though at first sight striking, is the information Lawson gives about Archangel Michael who, according to him, in some cases acts as a counterpart of Charos and plays the role of a *psychopompos* taking the souls to the Underworld (Lawson 1910: 101)[31] Unfortunately, the scholar who regards the Archangel as a natural Christian continuation of ancient Hermes *psychopompos* (Lawson 1910: 45)[32] does not reveal where he had drawn his information from nor does he give any example of a folk song or folk tale that could possibly illustrate that phenomenon. His main interest lies in juxtaposing the above-mentioned *charopalema* motif with a motif of "struggling with

[29] As Beaton (2004: 6-7) strongly underlines, neither Werner von Haxthausen (1780-1842), the author of the collection of Greek songs (in print 1935) and Claude Fauriel had never visited Greece and drew information from the educated informants coming from the Greek diaspora, many of them close friends of the collectors. To see how the romantic movement together with Greek nationalism affected the publishing of folk songs both in Greece and abroad, see the whole Introduction chapter in Beaton 2004: 1-12.

[30] Interestingly, in one of the accounts in Psychogiou we come across such a company of Charos and the Angels. Syncretism of the image is explained by Psychogiou as a possible result of the sex of the narrator, who in this case is a man. Psychogiou 2008: 343, according to Theophanis Papoutsis, age 74, shepherd: Αχ ο Χάρος κάνει μια χαρά – αχ μωρέ μια χαρά/ μαζί με τους αγγέλους ("Oh, Charos has a good time, together with the angels").

[31] It seems that Dawkins (1942: 135-136) had not noticed this remark since he writes that "Of the archangel we lose sight entirely; his place is taken by Charos". However, later he adds "it is hard to say who the conductor of the dead is, Charos or the angel".

[32] He gives an example of a relic of ancient beliefs in the Maina village, where, according to him, people tell the story about the archangel with a sword passing at the mouth of the caves of Taenarus, exactly the same place, where Heracles was supposed to come out with Cerberus.

an angel" which, according to Schmidt's study that he cites several times (Schmidt 1871: 230), is reflected in the phraseology of Modern Greek,[33] so as a consequence he puts Archangel Michael aside.

As it turns out, Lawson is generally right in his remark about the presence of the Archangel. He indeed acts like Charos,[34] but – let me underline it – it happens only in some specific cases (Anagnostopoulos 1984: 122-127). What is yet more important, I doubt if, as Lawson states (Lawson 1910: 101) he leads the souls to the Underworld.[35] Therefore, in my opinion, he is not interchangeable, as Lawson postulated, with Charos in all his duties as one would like him to be.[36] The folk songs in which his name appears exclude such a possibility what I shall try to prove subsequently.

[33] There are many terms describing the struggle with the angels such as: αγγελοσκιάζουμαι, αγγελομαχώ, αγγελοκρίνομαι, αγγελοκριτηρεύομαι. See Anagnostopoulos 1984: 120f.; Dawkins 1942: 135. I referred to them also in my paper: Bzinkowski 2009: 28.

[34] Dawkins (1942: 136) reminds that in some folk songs we can find a reflection of the pictures of Michael we could see in church, where he is dressed in bright garments and is equipped like a Roman soldier. Charos, similarly is sometimes, not frequently, presented as a shining warrior.

[35] In Psychogiou 2008 we find an interesting account about the angel in the Underworld. Psychogiou 2008: 338, according to Makri Aleksandra, age 80, illiterate: Λένε ότι πήγε μια φορά η Παναΐτσα με τον άγγελο στον Άδη, να ιδεί τσι ψυχούλες και τσι είδε να βασανίζονται και ρώτησε τον άγγελο και της είπε ο άγγελος τις αμαρτίες ("They say, once upon a time the Mother of God together with the angel went to Hades to see the souls and saw that they are being tormented and asked the angel and he told her about the sins"). As it turns out, there are countless sources of the story about the visit of the Virgin Mary in the otherworld that survived in Greek, Ethiopic, Syriac, Arabic, Latin, Irish, Georgian, Armenian, Slavonic and Romanian languages that confirm the extraordinary popularity of Mary's katabasis. See Baun 2007: 16, 97-98. About the plot and the structure of the story see Lambakis 1982: 46-49. Dawkins (1942: 133) mentions he had found an unpublished sixteenth or seventeenth century manuscript from the Marcian library at Venice with a unique Cretan version written in Latin characters of the *Apocalypse of the Virgin* containing many unusual motifs of the narrative.

[36] Herzfeld (1982: 96) for example cites a Cypriot scholar Loukas, who regards the Modern Greek Charos and the Archangel Michael as the same person with the same responsibilities. In the Escorial manuscript of Digenis Akritas, a dying hero is scared seeing "The Angel of fire, descending from heavens" (Άγγελο πυρός, από ουρανού επελθόντα) and he cries to his wife: "Can you see, my dear, the angel who wants to take me?" (Βλέπεις, καλή, τον άγγελο οπού με θέλει πάρει;). The fragment of the Escorial version (verses 1765-1771) I cite from Stathis 2004: 775.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to develop the subject of the presence of Archangel Michael – the patron saint of Byzantine emperors appearing on coins together with them – in Byzantine as well in orthodox art, where he manifests himself in thousands of icons and is an object of the greatest worship,[37] which confirms that that he must have been important for all the believers of the orthodox church and thus naturally could have also permeated into the folk beliefs.

Instead, firstly let me notice that during the Byzantine era Archangel Michael had already been confused and identified with Death/Charos (Angold 2000: 445). In the late Byzantine period there are many paintings depicting the deceased accompanied by Archangel Michael, who had been regarded as the "escort of souls" (Krueger 2006: 125)[38] in the early Christian tradition that we can find in the third century apocryphal "Apocalypse of Paul".[39] Numerous apocalypses from early as well as late Antiquity confirm that the cult of Archangel Michael was extremely popular in Byzantium (Baun 2007: 205; Peers 2001: 157f. [chapter V: *Apprehending the Archangel Michael*]). Thus, there is no

[37] Very interesting in eschatological context is a miraculous icon of the Archangel Michael on Lesvos known as Archangel Michael of Mantamados. He is called also "Arab" (Αράπης, Αραπέλλι) due to his black face and is presented rather as a hermaphrodite, which, according to Psychogiou, could indicate his strong connection to his chthonic character as a psychopompos and relate also to androgynous "Black Earth" (Μαυρηγή) whom a dead (irrelevantly man or woman) symbolically marries. See Psychogiou 2008: 48.

[38] As it turns out there were even popular shrines of Archangel Michael (Krueger 2006: 91). The cult of Archangel Michael was also very widespread at Chonae, resulting in the popular tales of the miracle the archangel made at the shrine of his name there, dating back to the eighth century. See Peers 2001: 157f. It is also significant that generally the cult of the angels that flourished especially during the early Church became a problem for the Church because it was based mainly on a syncretistic belief coming from Jewish and pagan traditions. See Peers 2001: 8.

[39] Known also as *Visio Pauli* or *Visio Sancti Pauli* (ed. Tischendorf 1866). It presents the vision of heaven and hell saw by Paul the Apostle. See Baun 2007: 205-206. The relevant fragment of the "Apocalypse of Paul": "Let it [the soul] be delivered therefore unto Michael the angel of the covenant, and let him lead it into the paradise of rejoicing that it become fellow-heir with all the saints" (Paul 14, 43). "The Apocryphal New Testament", M.R. James (Trans. and Notes), Oxford 1924. Accessible on: http://wesley.nnu.edu/sermons-essays-books/noncanonical-literature/noncanonical-literature-apocryphal-nt-apocalypse/apocalypse-of-paul-summary/ (12.02.2015). About the plot as well as the characteristics of the story see Lambakis 1982: 43-44.

need to think, as Alexiou writes basing on Moravcsik (1931: 45-61), that the hypothetical fusion might have originated in vernacular poetry of the late Byzantine period (Alexiou 2002a: 216, n. 7). Until now some people say, as Danforth notices, that forty days after death, when the soul, after wandering about and visiting the people and places from its life, is presented by Charos to Archangel Michael (The Angel of the Lord) who eventually takes it to heaven (στους ουρανούς) (Danforth 1982: 45).[40]

The traces of confusion of Charos with Archangel could be also seen in the songs belonging to the *acritic* cycle, especially connected with different versions of the song "Death of Digenis" (Ο Θάνατος του Διγενή) (Anagnostopoulos 1984: 122), which Lawson fully realizes and in that case, what is rather unusual for him, gives his sources in the footnote (Lawson 1910: 104, n. 4).[41] The collections which he references contain a lot of interesting traces of the confusion of Christian motives with the pagan folk tradition. Both sources known to Lawson, Sakellarios (1891) as well as Politis (1909), provide examples of the coexistence of Christian elements artfully interwoven in the fibre of the demotic songs (Sakellarios 1891; Politis N. 1909).

The biblical image of Archangel Michael with a sword in one hand and the scale in another, very common in Byzantine iconography, has mingled with a folk personification of Death (Anagnostopoulos 1984: 125). In *acritic* songs, that are regarded as the oldest preserved examples of the demotic songs,[42] it seems that the subsequent fusion had not yet taken place. Let us see the example from Politis' collection which makes the issue of the responsibility for man's souls even more

[40] See also Angold 2000: 455-456. In ethnographic accounts the angel appears when someone is about to die soon. Psychogiou 2008: 307, according to Pigi Angelopoulou, age 72, illiterate: Όταν είναι κανένας να πεθάνει, κάπως αλλάζει, κάτι βλέπει, βλέπουνε τον άγγελό τους. ("When someone is about to die, he somehow changes, sees something, they see their angel"). The belief that in the moment of death the soul is taken by the angels and in particular by the Archangel Michael is, according to Dawkins (1942: 135), a common folk belief.

[41] Lawson (1910: 102) also notices that even Charos was Christianized and the fact influenced also his character and made him more compassionate and in some cases even reluctant to fulfill God's orders.

[42] According to the recent research both the category of the songs and their medieval origins were questioned. See Politis A. 2011: 55.

obscure. Digenis tells on his death bed a story about his adventures and brave deeds:

Ποττέ μου δεν εδείλιασα ωσάν αυτήν την ώραν,
που δα το Χάρον εγδυμνό, τολ Λιον αρματωμένο,
τομ Μιχαήλ αρκάγγελο τριά σπαθιά τζωσμένο.
το ένα ναι για τους φτωχούς, τάλλο για τους αρκόντους,
το τρίτον το φαρμακερό για μας τους αντρειωμένους.

I never feared like I do at that moment,
when I saw naked Charos, armed Elijah,
Archangel Michael belted with three swords:
the one for the poor, the other for the nobles,
the third, the poisoned one for the brave.
(Politis, *Akritika*, nr 8, p. 223; Saunier 1999, nr 5β, p. 550)

Or in another song with the same motif of Digenis speaking before he dies:

Κ΄εκεί δεν εφοβήθηκα σαν τούτηνε την ώρα,
που είδα το Χάρο ζωντανό, το Χάρο καβαλλάρη,
που είδα τον αρχιστράτηγο με το σπαθί στο χέρι.

I never feared like in that moment,
when I saw Charos alive, Charos the rider,
when I saw the archistrategos with a sword in hand.
(Politis, *Akritika*, nr 14, p. 227; Saunier 1999, nr 7α, p. 552)

In Sakellarios' collection we come across another interesting, yet slightly different, example in the song entitled "The Alphabet Song of Charos" (Άσμα το Αλφάβητον του Χάρου):

Άρχοντες αδροικήσετε τ' αλφάβητον του Χάρου,
όταν ο Χάρος κη άθρωπος στέκουν και διαποντάρουν,
τον Μιχαήλ αρχάγγελον έχομεν σ' ταις δουλειαίς μας,
και την θεότην του 'δωκέν να παίρνη ταις ψυχαίς μας.

You noble ones, you have heard the alphabet of Charos,
when Charos and a man stand and wrestle,
we have Archangel Michael for our affairs,

and it was given to him a theoti[43]*[by God], so that he would take our souls.*
(Sakellarios, nr 7, p. 29)

The aforementioned fragments clearly show the well-known phenomenon of syncretic beliefs and convictions manifest in the popular tradition of village societies. Folk imagination absorbed many elements not only from ancient, pre-Christian rituals and traditions, as we can see as one of the key-concepts in Lawson's book. It has also assimilated different concepts coming from different epochs and places and thus used to create from time to time images not exactly adherent or, one could say, not easily definable.

In the cited fragments we have different *psychopompoi*: Charos, Archangel Michael (called also "Archistrategos") (Baun 2007: 97, 391f.)[44] and even Saint Elijah (here: Λιος).[45] However, the question of

[43] Politis (1909:2001), commenting on the word in the version of the song from Cyprus, is not sure what θεότη actually means: αγνωώ αν η λέξις έχει την έννοιαν εικόνος ή άλλου θείου πράγματος ("I don't know if the word has the meaning *an image* or any other divine thing").

[44] According to Jewish apocalyptic writings, including the Revelation, the archangels Michael and Gabriel are ranked just as "chief captains" of celestial armies, which seems to be the main source of their presence in the Byzantine liturgy. See Meyendorff 1979: 136. It stands in striking opposition to the concept of Pseudo Dionysius', where the archangels are the second rank from the bottom in the hierarchy of nine ranks. See Peers 2001: 4-5.

[45] Politis (1909: 190, 223) explains that in some regions of Greece Λιος is used as a diminutive of Εμμανουήλ, Μανώλης and probably it is an allusion to the prophet Elijah. According to Anagnostopoulos, it is certainly the Prophet Elijah who was taken to Heaven armoured (αρματωμένος). It is worth noticing also the strong connection between the prophet Elijah and *Ilios* (the Sun) due to the similarity of two words (Ηλίας – Ήλιος) that manifests in popular beliefs and is reflected in folk imagery. As for the connection between them in folk traditions see Politis 1882: 45-54. The local tradition of Kerkyra also features Saint Spyridon who, according to Anagnostopoulos (1984: 123) acts like Charos (Chasiotis 1866: 177-178, nr 12). However, it seems to me that in this case the identification is rather impossible and it is due to a completely different context. In the song from Chasiotis' collection the day of Saint Spyridon is approaching and thus a mother tries to plead with the saint, promising him some gifts if her beloved sons could be alive. She blames Saint Spyridon for taking her child and regrets that instead of him there come birds, swallows, but he never comes back. In other versions Charos' duties could be executed even by Saint Nicolas. See Anagnostopoulos 1984: 122-123. Politis (1909: 190) notices that the Saints as *psychopompoi* are rather unknown besides Asia

the correspondence between the persons mentioned above is not so easily tangible and I am not quite convinced – I daresay – if it is relevant at all. The core of the first fragment comes from the story that has countless variants throughout Greece about Digenis that is dying (Ο Διγενής ψυχομαχεί). If we look closer at the language and the imagery of the cited fragment we will notice a formulaic expression[46] containing a tripartite enumeration (Χάρον – Λιον – Μιχαήλ) that corresponds in turn to the three swords of Michael that are assigned to each sort of the dead. We encounter the same situation in the next cited example, where a trio appears: Charos alive – Charos the rider – the Archangel with the sword.

The tripartite division into persons is thus an element of the expression characteristic for oral tradition of composing the songs. I do not say definitely that it is meaningless but I try to cast some doubt on attempts at identifying what was sung (or written) and what is or was believed. I do not see in the cited fragment any signs of "cooperation" of the *psychopompoi* as some commentators suggest (Anagnostopoulos 1984: 122). Neither could we see the presence of Michael or Elijah as a substitution or replacement of Charos (Anagnostopoulos 1984: 123). The only conclusion that is visible more clearly after examining the language of the fragment is that we have to do here with a process of "identification" or "fusion", using Alexiou's phraseology she used to describe in reference to Modern Greek Charos (Alexiou 1978: 224-225).

As a matter of a fact it is nothing else than what is called "the rule of three equivalents",[47] the characteristic element of the morphology of Greek demotic songs that consists in expressing the same meaning in

Minor. Undoubtedly, the presence of the Saints executing Charos' duties needs a separate study and has not been, as far as I know, treated with accuracy and due attention by the scholars dealing with the subject of folk eschatology.

[46] As for the formulas and their role in Greek folk songs see especially Beaton 2004: 35-57.

[47] I use the term after Kosegian 2010: 33 (ο νόμος των τριών ισοδυνάμων). She argues that we find the motif of three equivalents already in Homeric Hymns, giving an example of the Hymn to Demeter (13-14), where the following speak in turn: the sky, the earth and the sea, the three elements of the whole and thus the universe. See Kosegian 2010: 35.

three different ways (Kosegian 2010: 33-36),[48] and more specifically introducing the main person as the third one and thus underlining his superiority over the others. In folk songs this triadic scheme that we can come across also in the fables, as Alexis Politis notices (Politis A. 2011: 153), may be also used to stress "the third, the best one" element of a whole (Kosegian 2010: 43), but it may also indicate the general, symbolic usage of the number three, which is commonly used in different contexts of the folk songs (Kosegian 2010: 56-59).

Transferring these observations into the interpretation of the first two fragments cited above, we could say that Digenis sees Death that is polymorphous or, to put it more precisely, he sees the equivalent ways in which Death could appear in front of him – on the one hand unknown, enigmatic and all-embracing, on the other in the religious masks he could imagine and identify with Charos.

However, the third fragment, cited from Sakellarios' collection, diverts our attention in another direction. Here, Archangel Michael turns out to be the one who has the scale in his hands while a man fights with Death/Charos. He is the one that eventually takes our soul to heaven or not. As we read in subsequent part of the same song in Sakellarios' that is a sort of a confession as well as a pleading:

Ω Μιχαήλ αρχάγγελε και πρώτε των αγγέλων
'που χαίρεσαι κη αγάλλεσαι μετά των αρχαγγέλων.
Ω Μιχαήλ αρχάγγελε, πρόφθασε εις εμένα,
και παραστάσου 'ς την ψυχήν γλυκά ταπεινωμένα.
Ω Μιχαήλ αρχάγγελος γράφει τα κρίματά σου,
κη όντας σε πάρη 'ς τον κριτήν φέρνει τα ομπροστά του.
(Sakellarios, nr 7, p. 31-32).

Oh, Michael the Archangel and chief of the angels
who rejoice and enjoy together with the archangels.

[48] Chara Kosegian cites a very figurative example of such a technique in the well-known song Της Λυγερής και του Χάρου. A girl whose soul Charos is going to take, asks him to let her rejoice in the summer and see the ones who will come back from abroad. Apparently she speaks about three different persons: her mother's son-in-law, her mother-in-law's son and her sister-in-law's brother – in reality about her husband. (Να 'ρτει της μάνας ο 'αμπρος, της πεθεριάς μου ο υιος/ Της αντραδέρφης μ' αερφός κ' εμέναν ο καλός μου!) (Kosegian 2010: 36).

Oh, Michael the Archangel, come near to me,
and stand by my soul mildly and humbly.
Oh, Michael the Archangel writes down your sins,
and when he takes you to the judge, he has them in front of him.

The confirmation of such a picture of Archangel Michael as a judge of the sins, of the one who holds the scale on which the human errors are being weighed, we can find also in other demotic songs from different collections.[49] I shall cite a fragment of the "Song for Good Friday" (Άσμα Μεγάλης Παρασκευής) coming from the book that Lawson was supposed to know, which, however, is not clear because he does not refer it to, namely "The History of the Athenians" (Ιστορία των Αθηναίων) by Dimitrios Kambouroglou (1889: 237)[50]:

κ' ο Μιχαήλ αρχάγγελος ο φοβερός και μέγας
όπου ζυγιάζει της ψυχαίς αμαρτωλαίς και δίκηαις.
And Michael the Archangel terrifying and great
he who weighs the souls of sinners and fair ones.

The Christian element of differentiating the souls according to man's life deeds and as a consequence allotting the soul to heaven or elsewhere has permeated into the almost entirely pagan eschatology of Modern Greek folk songs in which, as I have already mentioned, the Underworld is "neutral" like in ancient Homeric poems. However, such cases are very incidental and occur rarely in demotic songs together with other "Christianized" pagan ideas of mostly ancient origin.[51]

Thus, once more trying to verify Lawson's knowledge about Modern Greek folklore that he included in his memorable book, we observe

[49] Anagnostopoulos (1984: 124) gives interesting examples of such a motif.

[50] Anagnostopoulos (1984: 124) cites the same fragment from the later three-volume edition (Αθήναι 1959).

[51] To the best of my knowledge, so far there is no up-to-date study that would cover the question of the presence of Christian beliefs in folk tradition of Modern Greece. An interesting and until now the best, as I suppose, approach has been made by Anagnostopoulos in his doctoral dissertation, especially in chapter 10 entitled Η Κόλαση, ο Παράδεισος και η Μέλλουσα Κρίση (The Hell, The Paradise and The Last Judgement). (Anagnostopoulos 1984: 320-347). The most recent and thorough study concerning the syncretism of Christianity and pagan folk elements see Psychogiou 2008, especially 233-287 (chapter V).

the same tendency and the same method, that I would call a "unification of the similar, ignoring the differences, underlining the ancient origins". Although, as the mentions of books cited by him prove, he must have had access to contemporary collections and studies, his way of treating and examining the analyzed material is rather negligent. The scholar cites the songs at second hand without critical insight into what he had read or heard during his field research. Along with the seemingly authentic accounts of the peasants he wrote down during his stay in Greece, his remarks reveal a somehow "romantic" folkloristic approach to popular religion (Hartnup 2004: 8) and a philhellenic spirit that predisposes him to see all around him the ancient deities. It is by no means surprising if we take into account the stereotypical image of Greece most of the West Europeans had through centuries.

The case of the appearance of the Angels among other elements of folk eschatology could constitute a good illustration of Lawson and his contemporaries' attitude to Modern Greek tradition that is interesting provided that it comprises reminiscences of ancient predecessors. Moreover, the above-mentioned of the Angels and Archangel Michael also shows clearly the ambiguous attitude towards Byzantine legacy and a rather reluctant view of the Medieval Empire that dominated over that thousand years in the Greek world. Edward Gibbon's well-known contempt of the Byzantines and their culture had influenced the European minds for more than a century and it is by no means surprising that classically educated John Cutberth Lawson must have shared the same stereotypical opinion of the somewhat obscure Christianity of the Greeks. As a consequence, presenting the Christian elements appearing in Greek folklore he oversimplifies them and does not pay a due attention to their relationship to popular beliefs deeply rooted among others in Byzantine iconography.[52] As for the examples he uses to illustrate his thesis about the continuity of Ancient Greek tradition, as

[52] Moore (1912: 109) suggests that Lawson is generally right in his supposition that Christianity in the popular religion only applied some elements to the existent ones and modified some of the features belonging to the pagan religion. However, it seems more justifiable to share Hartnup's opinion that in fact, just like other researchers of Lawson's time, he did not attempt to trace and research the practices of the intervening periods from the conversion to Christianity until the end of the Ottoman Empire. See Hartnup 2004: 8.

I tried to show, the scholar lacks the critical and comparative view of the sources, even to ones that were accessible to him and that he cites.

It would be risky to attempt to understand the Modern Greek folk beliefs and traditions and their relation to antiquity basing entirely on Lawson's study. Though its value still today is unquestionable and after a century it may be a point of reference and a valuable source of ethnographic data, we must not forget about the time it was written and about the general, stereotypical view of the West intellectuals concerning the existence of Modern Greece in European thought. How could they have comprehended the place where Nymphs are still dancing with the satyrs and the Angels help ancient Greek Charon whom the Almighty ordered to take up disagreeable duties and lead all the souls to the somber Hades…?

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