

CARMELO SICILIANO

GREEK FOLK MUSIC

An Anthology of Tunes

VOLUME 2



FILELLENIA

Carmelo Siciliano, *Greek Folk Music: An Anthology of Tunes*, Greek Folk Music series vol. 2, Filellenia, Acireale 2025

ISBN: 9788894415797

Copyright © Carmelo Siciliano 2025. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the author, except for brief quotations used in reviews or scholarly works. For further information or permissions, please contact:

info@carmelodiciliano.com
www.carmelodiciliano.com

Created with the support of FILELLENIA Cultural Association — *Center for Studies, Documentation, and Education on Greek Music, Dance, and Traditions*

Made with L^AT_EX by Carmelo Siciliano



Scan the QR code to register your copy of the book and subscribe to the author's newsletter, or visit the website:
www.carmelodiciliano.com

Contents

Introduction	5
1 <i>Bournovalios sirtos</i>	13
2 <i>Limneiko zeibekiko</i>	22
3 <i>Pasoumaki</i>	27
4 <i>Mantra</i>	36
5 <i>Politikos sirtos</i>	41
6 <i>Antikristos</i>	48
7 <i>Kimoliatiki sousta</i>	53
8 <i>Chasapia</i>	62
9 <i>Mantili kalamatiano</i>	67
10 <i>Vari aidiniko zeibekiko</i>	76
11 <i>Balos Kefalonias</i>	81
12 <i>Partalo</i>	84
13 <i>Tetartos antrikos karsilamas</i>	89
14 <i>Bournovalis sirtos</i>	98
15 <i>Geragotikos sirtos</i>	102
16 <i>Palios karsilamas</i>	106
17 <i>Sigkathistos</i>	110
18 <i>Patrounino</i>	115
19 <i>Sirtos dodekanisiakos</i>	124
20 <i>Baintouska</i>	128

Introduction

This second volume continues the exploration of the rich and multifaceted world of Greek folk music, offering a new selection of traditional tunes from various regions of Greece. As with the first volume, the aim is to provide musicians, researchers, and enthusiasts with transcriptions that strike a balance between scholarly rigor and practical usability. Each piece is carefully prepared to support both performance and study, enabling readers to engage deeply with the living traditions of this vibrant musical heritage.

Transcription Criteria

Transcribing Greek music—as with most forms of traditional music—is a challenging task that often requires difficult decisions. Every choice involves a compromise between faithfulness to the original recording and the readability of the sheet music, and therefore its practical usefulness.

Greek folk music is essentially heterophonic: voices and instruments follow similar, though not identical, melodic lines. In instrumental music especially, melodic variations depend not only on the type of instrument used, but also on its tuning (in fourths, fifths, etc.), its distinctive techniques, and of course, the performer's individual skill.

Just as a spoken language can sound different from one speaker to another, it is nearly impossible in Greece to find two musicians playing the same melody in exactly the same way. Even a single musician will often render the same musical phrase with one or more variations.

All the pieces in this anthology have been transcribed to help the reader study and practice traditional Greek music. The transcriptions follow the recordings as closely as possible, though they do not include every ornament or spontaneous variation. The result is a didactic score that conveys the essence of each melody, rather than a pedantic reproduction.

Discographic Reference

The transcriptions are based on specific recordings, whose details are provided in the introduction to each piece. The tracks can be listened to by scanning the QR codes included with each transcription, or by visiting the website: www.carmelosiciliano.com, on the dedicated page for the volume *Greek Folk Music: An Anthology of Tunes*.

The Four Types of Transcription

Each piece is accompanied by one or more transcriptions. The "modal" transcription is the most accurate. It is intended for musicians familiar with the modal systems of Greek music and Ottoman classical music, along with their respective theoretical frameworks. Since Greeks and Turks use different reference tonics for their modal system, two modal transcriptions are provided: one with *rast* on C, following Greek convention, and another with *rast* on G, according to Ottoman practice.

The "equal-tempered" transcription is an adaptation of the corresponding modal transcription to the Western equal-tempered system, following the Greek theory of *dromi*. It uses the same tonic as the Greek modal transcription. Only one equal-tempered transcription is provided when its tonic matches that of the reference recording; otherwise, an additional transcription is included, transposed to the tonic used in the recording. In cases where a piece does not follow a discernible modal logic, only the equal-tempered transcription is provided.

Musical Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used, both in the introductory text and in the transcriptions:

- **D.C. (Da Capo)**: an instruction meaning «from the head» or «from the beginning». It tells the performer to go back to the beginning of the piece and continue playing from there. It may be followed by indications such as "2x", "3x", etc., which specify that the *Da Capo* should be executed two times, three times, and so on;
- **Coda**: literally meaning «tail» in Italian, a *Coda* is a concluding passage that brings the piece to an end. It is often marked with a special symbol and follows a specific instruction, like *D.C. al Coda*;
- **D.C. al Coda (Da Capo al Coda)**: this means «go back to the beginning, and when you reach the sign, jump to the *Coda*». It directs the performer to return to the beginning of the piece, continue playing until reaching the *To Coda* marking, and then skip ahead to the *Coda* section;
- **Fine**: this indicates the end of the piece. When a performer is instructed to return to an earlier point (e.g., with *D.C.*), they stop at *Fine* rather than continuing to the very end of the score;
- **D.C. al Fine (Da Capo al Fine)**: «go back to the beginning and play until the word *Fine*». This tells the performer to repeat from the beginning and conclude the performance when they reach the *Fine* marking.

Key Signature

The key signatures of the modal transcriptions follow the logic of the respective modal systems, i.e. Greek (*rast* = C) and Ottoman classical (*rast* = G). The equal-tempered transcriptions follow modal logic (with appropriate accidentals) only in the version that retains the corresponding tonic of the Greek modal system. Transpositions to match the tonic used in the recording do not include a key signature; instead, accidentals are written as needed, measure by measure. Finally, pieces that do not follow modal logic, but are instead tonal, use standard key signatures corresponding to their respective keys.

Chords

The modal transcriptions do not include chord symbols for accompaniment. The equal-tempered transcriptions provide chord symbols to accompany the melody. It should be noted, however, that even when major or minor chords are indicated, Greek folk music often favors dyads formed by the root and the fifth. For example:

- C → C5 (C + G, without E)
- Cm → C5 (C + G, without E♭)

Chords in parentheses are optional or represent a possible alternative to the suggested ones. In any case, all chords should be understood as suggestions rather than strict prescriptions, as even within the same reference recording, harmonic accompaniments may vary.

Special Typographical Conventions

Notes printed in a smaller font size than the surrounding ones are intended as micro-variations. Their execution is optional and left to the performer's discretion. For example, the following excerpt:



can be performed either as:



or as:



Ornaments

I have deliberately avoided exhaustively notating every ornament, as in Greek music ornamentation is not only free and spontaneous, but also closely tied to the instrument being played, its tuning, and the overall character of the piece. However, I have included those ornaments I deemed essential for a convincing rendering of the melodic line. By way of example, the ornaments should be interpreted as follows:

The image displays 13 musical examples (a) through (m) illustrating various ornaments in Greek music notation. Each example is written on a single staff in treble clef. Examples a) and b) show simple melodic phrases with a fermata. Examples c) through m) show more complex ornaments, including triplets, sixteenth-note runs, and specific melodic patterns with various ornaments like trills and grace notes. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'DEMO' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

Transliteration of Greek Terms

α	<i>a</i>
αι	<i>ai</i>
αυ	<i>e</i>
αι	<i>ai</i>
αυ	<i>af</i> (preceded by a voiceless consonant); <i>av</i> (preceded by a voiced consonant or by a vowel)
β	<i>v</i>
γ	<i>g</i>
γγ	<i>gg</i>
γκ	<i>gk</i>
δ	<i>d</i>
ε	<i>e</i>
ει	<i>i</i>
ευ	<i>ef</i> (preceded by a voiceless consonant); <i>ev</i> (preceded by a voiced consonant or by a vowel)
ζ	<i>z</i>
η	<i>i</i>
θ	<i>th</i>
ι, ῑ	<i>i</i>
κ	<i>k</i>
λ	<i>l</i>
μ	<i>m</i>
μπ	<i>b</i>
ν	<i>n</i>
ντ	<i>d</i> (at the beginning of a word, or within a word when preceded by a consonant); <i>nt</i> (within a word when preceded by a vowel)
ξ	<i>x</i>
ο	<i>o</i>
οη	<i>oi</i>
οι	<i>i</i>
ου	<i>ou</i>
π	<i>p</i>
ρ	<i>r</i>
σ, ς	<i>s</i>
τ	<i>t</i>
τζ	<i>tz</i>
τσ, τς	<i>ts</i>
υ	<i>i</i>
φ	<i>f</i>
χ	<i>ch</i>
ψ	<i>ps</i>
ω	<i>o</i>

GREEK FOLK MUSIC

VOLUME 2

DEMO

1

Bournovalios sirtos

Name: *Bournovalios sirtos* | Μπουρνοβαλιός σιρτός, «*Sirtos* from Bournova¹». *Sirtos* is a dance featuring smooth, flowing movements, typically performed in a circle.



Origin: Bournova (Asia Minor).

¹ Bournova is a district of modern-day İzmir (formerly Smyrna).

Discography: *Μπουρνοβαλιό σιρτό*, from the CD *Βιολί* edited by P. Tabouris, Ελληνικά μουσικά όργανα series n. 5, FM Records, Athens 1995, track n. 13.

Meter: 4/4.

Structure: measures 1-62, 1-48, 63-72.

Transcriptions:

- Modal transcription, Greek notation (*rast=C*), page 14;
- Modal transcription, Ottoman notation (*rast=G*), page 16;
- Equal-tempered transcription (D), page 18;
- Equal-tempered transcription (B), page 20.

Bournovalios sirtos

Modal transcription (*rast=C*)

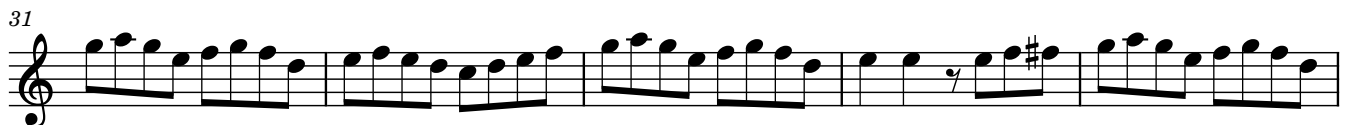
Bournova



Bournovalios sirtos

Modal transcription (*rast*=G)

Bournova



Bournovalios sirtos

Equal-tempered transcription (D)

Bournova

Dm Dm Dm Dm Dm Dm

7 Dm G C Dm Dm

12 G C Dm Dm Dm

17 C Fm C Dm C

22 Dm F F F F

27 F F C Dm F

32 F F F F F

Greek Folk Music • 2

Step into the vibrant world of *Greek Folk Music* with this unique anthology—an essential resource for musicians, educators, and enthusiasts eager to explore one of the Mediterranean’s most expressive musical traditions. This second volume in the *Greek Folk Music* series includes:

- **20 TUNES** from diverse regions of both mainland and insular Greece, including areas within and outside modern-day Greece and Cyprus: *Bournovalios sirtos* (Bournova), *Limneiko zeibekiko* (Constantinople), *Pasoumaki* (Leros), *Mantra* (Cyprus), *Politikos sirtos* (Amorgos), *Antikristos* (Ikonio), *Kimoliatiki sousta* (Kimos), *Chasapia* (East Thrace), *Mantili kalamatiano* (Peloponnese), *Vari aidiniko zeibekiko* (Constantinople), *Balos Kefalonias* (Kefalonia), *Partalo* (Pylaia), *Tetartos antrikos karsilamas* (Cyprus), *Bournovalis sirtos* (Chios), *Geragotikos sirtos* (Lesbos), *Palios karsilamas* (Lesbos), *Sigkathistos* (Thrace), *Patrounino* (Almopia), *Sirtos dodekanisiakos* (Dodecanese), *Baintouska* (East Thrace);

- **MULTIPLE TRANSCRIPTIONS** using modal and/or equal-tempered notation, to accommodate a range of study and performance needs; whether you play an equal-tempered or non-equal-tempered instrument, this collection offers clear, adaptable transcriptions with accompaniment chords where appropriate;

- **QR CODES** providing direct links for listening on your smartphone or tablet.

CARMELO SICILIANO was born in Catania, Italy, in 1980. For years, he has devoted himself to studying, researching, and promoting his lifelong passion: the traditional culture of Greece. A musician, educator, and cultural music disseminator, he is the founder and president of the FILELLENIA Cultural Association — *Center for Studies, Documentation, and Education on Greek Music, Dance, and Traditions*. He is also the author of several works, including: *Listening to Greece: A Journey Through Music and Traditions* (2019); *The Greek Songs of Niccolò Tommaseo: Musical Parallels in Contemporary Greece* (2021); *Songs of Greece: With Greek Text, Translation, and Notes* (2022); *The Theory of Rebetiko: From the Makams of Asia Minor to the Dromi of Piraeus* (2025).

Visit the website: www.carmelosiciliano.com



Created with the support of:
FILELLENIA Cultural Association
*Center for Studies, Documentation, and Education
on Greek Music, Dance, and Traditions*

