

Anastasia Siopsi
Ionian University

*Musical settings of Dionyssios Solomos's (1798-1857) poetry: Philosophical, aesthetic and ideological considerations on the hermeneutics of his poetry as interpreted in art music of Modern Greece.*¹

Introduction

Ionian composers have set to music Dionyssios Solomos's poetry, contributing thus by means of their art to spreading his work not only in the Ionian islands but also in other parts of Greece.

This essay attempts to outline the history of setting to music Dionyssios Solomos' poetry in the Ionian islands by art music composers, starting with Nikolaos Halikiopoulos Mantzaros (Νικόλαος Χαλικιόπουλος Μάντζαρος), and focusing on Mantzaros' students (Francesco Domenigini (Φραγκίσκο Δομενεγίνη), Spyridon Xyndas (Σπυρίδωνα Ξύνδα), Rafaele Parisini (Ραφαήλ Παριζίνι) and Pavlos Carrer (Πάυλο Καρρέρ)); at the same time, it questions these developments in relation to a wider cultural frame regarding reception of Solomos's poetry. Similar questions are formed, subsequently, for twentieth-century composers in an attempt to create a wider spectrum of ideas concerning the ways that music and Solomos's poetry are united into a whole.

As far as I know, this is the first attempt in Greek music scholarship, to explore such questions as mentioned above (apart from the musical settings of Mantzaros for

¹ A Greek version of this text was presented as a paper at the conference entitled "SOLOMOS-MANTZAROS-POLYLAS", Etaireia Kerkyraikon Spoudon (Society of Corfiot Studies), 10-12 November 2006 (forthcoming publication of the annuals by the Society of Corfiot Studies); also, it has been published in the philological journal *To Καταφύγιο* (A Six-month Literature and Social Report by Epsilon publishing House), issue 1, Athens 2007, 67-75. The English version of this text was presented as a paper at the international Symposium by MGSA (Modern Greek Studies Association), University of Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., 18-20 October 2007.

which more research has been performed by other Greek scholars and, therefore, I offer only an overview of Mantzaros's contribution in this respect).

Dionyssios Solomos's poetry set to music by nineteenth-century Ionian composers

Dionyssios Solomos is one of the poets in demand by Greek composers up to our days. According to a recently published catalogue of Greek composers' settings into music Greek poetry, by Litsa Lembesi (Λίτσα Λεμπέση), Konstantinos Kavafis is first in the list of preference (more than a hundred and fourteen works are mentioned); Kostis Palamas is the next one (more than one hundred and six works are referred to) and the third one is Dionyssios Solomos.² In total, more than seventy settings of his poetry into music, by nineteenth- and twentieth-century Greek composers of different compositional and aesthetic backgrounds, have been mentioned in this catalogue. There are various points of view which one can adapt for the whole issue of setting to music Solomos's poetry; without doubt, they can illustrate the many layers of hermeneutics concerning the complex relations between music and Solomos' poetic prose.

Ionian composers have created the ground of a musical tradition related to Solomos's poetry.

Composers from Zakynthos –Francesco Domenegini (Φραγκίσκος Δομενεγίνης), Pavlos Carrer (Παύλος Καρρέρ) and Ioannis Tsakasianos (Ιωάννης Τσακασιάνος)-, from Kefalonia –George Lampiris (Γιώργος Λαμπίρης)-, from Corfu –Spyridon Xyndas (Σπύρος Ξύνδας)- and others, more or less known, have set to music Solomos's poetry which was sung all over the Ionian islands.

Nikolaos Halikiopoulos Mantzaros (1795-1872), composer, theorist and teacher of most Ionian composers, was a close friend of Solomos since 1828, the year that the poet moved to Corfu. As we all know, Mantzaros set to music Solomos' "*Hymn to Liberty*" and 24 bars from it became the national anthem of Greece.³ Even earlier,

² See Kostios, Apostolos. "Eisagogi" [Introduction], in *Mousiki Ergografia Ellines Sinthetes-Ellines Poiites* [Music Work-Catalogue. Greek Composers-Greek Poets], auth. Litsa Lempesi, Athens: Publications Papagrigoriou-Nakas, 2005. 7-17.

³ Mantzaros composed successive settings of Solomos' *Hymn to Liberty* for male chorus and piano.

Mantzaros composed music for “*The poisoned maid*” («Φαρμακωμένη») (around 1830). The composer, in general, has set to music many poems of Solomos: fragments from “*Lambros*” («Στην κορφή της θάλασσας πατώντας», «Ομοίως τα αγγελοῦδια», «Φωνούλα με πίκρα με κράζει»), “*The young blonde*” («Ξανθούλα»), “*Ode to Petrarchis*” («Ωδή στον Πετράρχη»), an extended fragment from the “*Ode to Lord Byron*”, the “*Dream*” (“*Όνειρο*”) –not found-, “*The Destruction of Psara*” –not found-, and “*Porphyras*”. Mantzaros believed that Solomos’s poetic language was very musical, been created by an essential musical spirit. Solomos and Mantzaros frequently exchanged ideas on the relation of music and poetry and were influenced from each other in forming their aesthetic views.⁴

Francesco Domenegini (Φραγκίσκος Δομενεγίνης, Zakynthos, 1807/9-1874), was an intellectual, a radical politician, a painter and a remarkable composer. He began his music studies in Italy (Siena) and advanced them in Corfu with Mantzaros. He set into music a few of Solomos’ poems. Unfortunately, his works are lost.⁵ In general, he was inspired by ideas of national liberation and took action as a radical member of the Greek parliament, as a press commentator against foreign control in Greece and in support of National Restoration, ideas which are also expressed in his works, for example in his two operas “*Markos Mpotsaris*” («Μάρκο Μπότσαρη») and “*Despo, the Heroine of Souli*” («Δέσπω, η Ηρωίς του Σουλίου»). Thus, it is fairly possible that Solomos was a source of inspiration for Domenegini since the poet, mainly during the period 1823-33, is influenced by national ideas due to the war of Greek Independence of that time.

Spyridon Xyndas (Σπυρίδων Ξύνδας, Corfu 1812 or 1814-Athens 1896) is one of the important representatives of the Ionian school of music. He is known up to our days mainly as the composer of the opera entitled *Parliamentary Candidate* (*Υποψήφιος Βουλευτής*) (the first Greek opera with a Greek libretto). Apart from a

⁴ See views on this matter in Haris Xanthoudakis’s paper at the conference entitled “SOLOMOS-MANTZAROS-POLYLAS”, Etaireia Kerkyraikon Spoudon (Society of Corfiot Studies), 10-12 November 2006 (forthcoming publication of the annuals by the Society of Corfiot Studies). See also Haris Xanthoudakis, Kostas Kardamis ed. *Nikolaos Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros* (Corfu, 2003). See, finally, Kostas Kardamis, *Nikolaos Halikiopoulos Mantzaros: “Enotita mesa stin pollaplotita”* [Nikolaos Halikiopoulos Mantzaros: “Unity within Variety”], Corfu: Society of Corfiot Studies, 2008.

⁵ See Takis Kalogeropoulos, “Domeneginis Fragiskos-Lamprinos”, in *Leksiko tis Ellinikis Mousikis* [Dictionary of Greek Music], vol.2, Athens: Publications Gialleli, 1998, 111-112.

composer, he was a virtuoso guitarist and a baritone. He is the oldest of Mantzaros' important students and studied with him for eighteen years. Xyndas was also a close friend of Dionyssios Solomos; together with Mantzaros, he was the most important composer of that era who set music for his poetry. It is important to mention that, during the last year of his life, in 1896, already settled in Athens since 1888, impoverished and blind, gave his last concert as a guitarist in front of empty seats, and sang farewell to 'art and life' with the "*Hymn to Liberty*" written by his beloved friends Solomos and Mantzaros.⁶

As expected, due to his personal relation with Solomos, Xyndas has set to music a few of his poems. His "*Twelve Greek Songs*" («Δώδεκα άσματα ελληνικά») (for 1, 2 and 3 voices and piano), dedicated to Othonas, include Solomos' "*Sunrise*" («Αυγούλα») (n.1) and "*The young blonde*" («Ξανθούλα») (n.8). Among his songs for voice and piano, is included Solomos' "*The poor soul sat sighing*" («Η άθλια ψυχή, καθήμενη») -paraphrase of the Shakespearean "*Song of willow*" («Τραγουδιού της ιτιάς»), Othello, Act IV, scene 4, 39-50)- and "*The Father's Grave*" («Ο πατρικός τάφος») («Προς τον Κύριον Γεώργιο Δε Ρώσση» by Solomos).

Rafaele Parisini (Ραφαήλ Παριζίνι, of Italian origin, 1820-1875) was a cello player, conductor and educator. He was also a distinguished philhellenic person with an important contribution in Greek art music. He moved to Corfu in 1840, where he completed his music studies with Nikolaos Mantzaros. In 1843 he moved to Athens while keeping correspondence with Mantzaros (from 1858 to 1861).

Greek themes were a constant means of inspiration for Parisini; examples are his songs of *Militia* (Εθνοφυλακή) and, especially, his "*Arcadion*" («Αρκάδιον»)⁷. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that in 1863 he chose to set into music Solomos' "*Destruction of Psara*" («Καταστροφή των Ψαρών»). However, according to what we know so far about Parisini's work, this is the only poem of Solomos that he set into music.

Pavlos Carrer (Πάυλος Καρρέρ, Zakynthos, 1829-1896) was a distinguished 19th-century Ionian composer, a very important art music composer in Greece, and

⁶ See Kalogeropoulos, "Ksindas Spiridon", *ibid.*, vol.4, 434-436/

⁷ "Arkadion": a symphonic poem divided in seven parts-scenes; in 1873 it was awarded with the Golden Metallion in the International Exhibition of Paris.

one of the most productive artists among his contemporary colleagues. Moreover, he is one of the very few Ionian composers whose largest part of work has been survived up to our days, although an equally important amount of it was lost during the destructive earthquakes of Ionian islands in 1953. It has to be mentioned, however, that many of his works have been preserved due to the fact that they were published in other countries, mostly in Italy. The composer undertook his first courses on music in Zakynthos (1846-47) and possibly, according to the musicologist George Leotsakos, he continued them with Manzaros in Corfu in 1848.⁸

Among his known works are included his songs on Solomos's poetry, for example "*The young blonde*" («*Η Ξανθούλα*»), for a choir of four male voices and mandolines (μαντολινάτα) and "*The poisoned maid*" («*Η Φαρμακωμένη*») (Solomos 1826), also for a choir of four male voices and mandolines (μαντολινάτα).⁹ These two works have no date; this is also the case with the well known song "*Who is the maid that is going down*" («*Ποια είν' εκείνη που κατεβαίνει*»), for two tenors, baritone and mantolines (μαντολινάτα). Carrer has written two works for voice (soprano) and piano based on Solomos's poetry, the song "*The flower and the sunrise*" («*Ο Ανθός και η Αυγούλα*»), written in 1859, and the song "*Tell me my love, do you remember*" («*Πες μου, θυμάσαι αγάπη μου*») which has no date. His song "*The flower and the sunrise*" («*Ο Ανθός και η Αυγούλα*»), according to the composer, is part of a collection of Greek melodies that he composed, which includes the well-known "*Old Demos*" («*Γέρο Δήμο*»), "*The lament of Saradaras*" («*Το μοιρολόι του Σαραντάρρα*»), "*The flowers*" («*Τα άνθη*»), and others.

It is worthy mentioning that Carrer has made a few first sketches of an opera, entitled "*Lambros*", which he never finished. We do not know when he occupied

⁸ See George Leotsakos, "Ellinikes sintheseis gia foni kai piano: neoteris himenaios poiiseos kai mousikis [Greek compositions for voice and piano: modern Himenaios of poetry and music], in *Antis gia Oneiro. Erga Ellinon Sintheton 19ou kai 20ou aiona* [Instead of a Dream. Works of Greek Composers of 19th and 20th century], 12 CD of the Cultural Olympics, Athens: Ministry of Culture, 2004, 216-224/

⁹ According to musicologist George Leotsakos, two of those compositions were preserved in a very rare recording of ODEON, discovered by Nikos Lountzis, who reissued the recording B' of the collection of CDs entitled *Paulos Karrer: Mousiki gia saloni kai mpalkoni* [Pavlos Carrer: music for 'saloni' and 'balkony'] (publication of the Friends of Solomos Museum and of Distinguished citizens of Zakythos, Athens, 1995). (See George Leotsakos, *Paulos Karrer: Apomnimoneumata kai Ergografia* [Pavlos Carrer. Memoirs and Catalogue of Works], Athens: Benaki Museum and Department of Music of Ionian University, 2003, 225-26.)

himself with this opera since there are no draft sketches preserved and the composer himself does not refer to this opera in his “*Memoirs*”. However, other secondary sources of that time can enlighten us in this respect; according to the historian Spiridonas De-Viazis (Σπυρίδωνας Δε Βιάζης), in a biography of a librettist named Elisabetios Martinengos (Ελισαβέτιος Μαρτινέγκος), written in 1887, Martinengos wrote the libretto of the first act of this opera and gave it to Carrer to set it to music; the libretto was based, as he reports, on the homonymous unfinished work of Solomos.¹⁰ There are other reports, however, which are in accordance to musicologist Leotsakos’s opinion, and which claim that the libretto is for Lambros Katsonis (Λάμπρος Κατσώνης).¹¹ Unfortunately, we do not have enough evidence, at least for the time being, to support any of these suggestions.

George Lampiris (Γεώργιος Λαμπίρης, Argostoli 1833-Athens 1889) is a distinguished 19th-century composer. He settled down in Corfu, after he graduated from high school, where he studied music with Mantzaros for two years. He also studied in Napoli, in Italy. Since 1867 he moved to Athens. Lampiris supported throughout his life the idea of producing “national music” in Greece.

In his biographies, there is only one lyric song, for voice and piano, based on Solomos’s poem “*The first of May*” («*Η πρωτομαγιά*»).

Finally, **Ioannis Tsakasianos** (Ιωάννης Τσακασιάνος, 1853-1908), was a composer from Zakynthos. He was also a poet, a satirical writer, a singer and a songwriter with a special inclination to writing serenades (καντάδες). He set to music numerous poems which he himself sang. His works include a composition for Solomos’s the “*Destruction of Psara*” («*Καταστροφή των Ψαρών*»). The premiere took place in Athens’ Syntagma, on 20/1/1876, by the 10th Regiment’s Band, but it did not have a successful reception.¹²

On the union of music and poetry

¹⁰ Spyridon De Viazis, “Elisavetios Martinegkos”, *Zakynthian journal Poitikos Anthon*, 1887; see, also, Spyridon De Viazis, “To theatron kai oi melodramatikoi poiitai en Eptaniso [The theatre and the melodramatic poets in the Ionian islands], *Poikili Stoa* 1899, 483-489.

¹¹ See Leotsakos, 2003, 216-219.

¹² See Kalogeropoulos, «Tsakasianos Ioannis», in *To Leksiko tis Ellinikis Mousikis* [The Dictionary of Greek Music], vol. 6, 193-94.

The familiarity with, and the preference of, Solomos' certain works to be set to music by the 19th-century Ionian composers, is due, at a large extent, to Manzaros since all of them were, more or less, his students. Xyndas, moreover, belonged to the immediate social environment of the poet himself.

The tendency of the 19th-century Ionian composers towards writing serenades (Ionian kantada –καντάδα-) and incorporating folk song in various ways in their works¹³, matches with Solomos' period of 1818-1823 and not only; during this period, the poet wrote his first Greek «*experimental verses (γυμνάσματα)*» in his attempt to create substantial bonds with the local tradition in poetry, that is, the folk song, the Ionian serenade, or kantada, and the Ionian satire. This is evident in the metrical and rhythm forms of Solomos' poetry, that is, in his settling into the short forms of verses of urban poetry, on the one hand, and into the standard forms of Greek folk songs, that is, the iambic 15-syllable verse, on the other.¹⁴ The musicality of the poems is enriched even more due to Solomos' music education. The poet was a wonderful guitarist and a good singer, especially of serenades.¹⁵ It makes sense, therefore, that the poems that were set into music by the 19th-century Ionian composers belonged to this period of Solomos' creativity (for example, the “*Little Flower Maid*” («*Ανθούλα*», 1818), “*The young blonde*” («*Ξανθούλα*»), “*The Unrecognisable*” («*Αγνώριστη*») and the “*Little soul*” («*Ψυχούλα*», 1821-22).

¹³ The Ionian composers are ahead from the other composers of the mainland of Greece as far as it concerns the incorporation of folk song in art music, since the earliest example of “national school”, so to speak, is written by Iosif Liberaris and was entitled *Xyprnima tou klefti* [The Awakening of the Klepht], (1847). Also, Ionian composers, apart from the themes they use for many works, they not only refer to the Ionian folk song but also to the folk song of the mainland of Greece. Thus, several kinds of music, especially vocal ones (for example, opera and works for voice and piano), have undoubtedly folkloric elements which comprise a part of these works but are not incorporated into the musical language, starting with Spyridon Xyndas (1810-1896), and Pavlos Carrer (1829-1896) and ending with Dionysios Lavrangas (1860-1941), Georgios Lampelet (1875-1945) and Napoleon Lambelet (1864-1932), Lavrentios Camilieris (1878-1956, with his masterpiece *I Xenoula*), and, especially, Spyridon-Filiskos Samaras (1821-1917, with songs such as *I Exomologissis* [The Confession], *Manna ke Yos* [Mother and son] and so forth, which moreover had an amazing positive reception at the interwar era. (See, in more detail, Georgios Leotsakos, “Eisagogiko simeion [Introductory notes]”, in *Luchnos ipo ton Modion* [Light under a bushel] (*Erga Ellinon Sintheton gia Piano, 1847-1908* [Piano Works by Greek Composers, 1847-1908]), 10-36, 28, 30; see, also, Leotsakos “Liveraris or Liberalis Iosif”, *ibid.*, 39-46, 44-45)

¹⁴ For Solomos' style of the period 1818-23, see Eratosthenis G. Kapsomenos, *Dionysios Solomos: o vios, to ergo, I poiitiki tou* [Dionysios Solomos: his life, his work, his poetics], (Athens: Foundation of the Greek Parliament for Parliamentarism and Democracy, 2005), 32.

¹⁵ For Solomos' musical abilities see Kalogeropoulos, “Solomos Dionysios”, *The Dictionary of Greek Music*, vol. 5, 445.

Another important characteristic of the 19th-century Ionian composers, is their support of the Greek people's quest for national liberation; such quest, as I mentioned earlier, is also embraced by Solomos, mainly in his next period of creativity (1823-33), during which the poet is influenced by national ideas due to the war of Greek Independence of that time. This is why, composers like Raffaele Parisini and Ioannis Tsakasianos choose to set into music the "Destruction of Psara" («Καταστροφή των Ψαρών», 1825).

An important observation derived from the selection of certain works of Solomos' poetry by the 19th-century Ionian composers is that none of them, apart from Mantzaros, has set into music poetry of Solomos' late period of creativity (I am referring mainly to "The Cretan" («Κρητικός», 1833-34), "The Free Besieged" («Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι», 1834-47) and "Porphyras" («Πόρφυρας», 1847-1849). According to the sources I have selected so far, in 19th century, only Mantzaros has set "Porphyras" into music; it is only in the next century that Greek composers wrote music for fragments from "The Free Besieged" («Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι», 1834-47) and "The Cretan" («Κρητικός», 1833-34).

According to my opinion, the orientation of 19th-century composers, apart from Mantzaros, into the early work of Solomos is not a coincidence. It is related to linguistic, formal, aesthetic and philosophical quests of the poet which, in his later period of creativity, do not correspond with the ones of the Ionian composers of that time.

To start with the linguistic quest, Solomos' transition to maturity means transition from a diverse tongue, which characterizes his youth's satires, to an absolute, or unified, one, which characterizes his mature poetry; from Italian prose to Greek folk poetry; subsequently, from a poetry addressed to a world-wide reading audience to that addressed only to Greek readers embodying, thus, a 'national' essence. It is possible that, in nineteenth century, the language that the Ionian residents were familiar with was *heteroglossia* (ετερογλωσσία), the incorporation of various languages, especially the Italian, whereas *monoglossia* (μονογλωσσία), that simple and clear Greek voice which we can trace in Solomos' mature poetry, was not spoken by the diverse urban society of the Ionian islands.

The mature poetry of Solomos is being set to music in the twentieth century, when Greek language has been developed as distinct from the other languages; therefore, it is easier for Greek composers of that era to read and apprehend the language of Solomos' mature poetry (1833-1854).

Regarding the formal and aesthetic quests of the poet, a reason for 19th-century composers' reluctance to write music for his mature poetry might be related to its fragmentary character. Quite a few interpretations, for example those of Stephanos Rozanis (Στέφανος Ροζάνης, 1985)¹⁶, Vasilis Lampropoulos (Βασίλης Λαμπρόπουλος, 1999)¹⁷ and Georgios Veloudis (Γιώργος Βελούδης, 1988, 1989, 2000)¹⁸, consider this –fragmentary- form as romantic. They argue that the style of writing is that of an *intentionally* unfinished, or semi-finished, poem. Such romantic poetic forms correspond to the theory of “fragment”, which is of German origin, a theory which the 19th-century Ionian composers were not familiar with, in the same way that they did not know the relevant compositional practices of romantic German composers, for example, of Robert Schumann (1810-1856).¹⁹ Perhaps, Mantzaros is an exception to this rule.

Eratosthenis Kapsomenos interprets the aesthetics of Solomos' mature poetry as related to modernism; he refers to Solomos' perception of poetry as an unending/perpetual re-creation, something which distances the poet from his era while brings his aesthetic quests closer to pioneering movements of the twentieth

¹⁶ Stephanos Rozanis, *I aisthiti tou apospasmatos. Mia kritiki proseggisi ston “Lampro” tou Solomou* [The aesthetics of the fragment: A critical approach to Solomos's “Lampros”], Athens: Foundation Goulandri-Horn, 1985.

¹⁷ Vasilis Lampropoulos, “To imiteles os katadiki: I poiitiki tou romantikou apospasmatos stous *Eleftherous Poliorkimenous* tou Solomou [The semi-finished as a condemnation: The poetics of the romantic fragment in Solomos's “*The Free Besieged*”], in *Eisagogi stin poiisi tou Solomou. Epilogi kritikon keimenon* [Introduction to Solomos's poetry. A selection of commentary texts], Herakleion, P.E.K., 1999.

¹⁸ Georgios Veloudis: (1) “To romantiko ‘apospasma’ sto Solomo [The romantic fragment in Solomos], *TO VIMA*, 17 July 1988, 48. (2) *Dionyssios Solomos: Romantiki poiisi kai poiitiki –Oi germanikes piges* [Dionysios Solomos: Romantic poetry and poetics –The German sources], Athens: Gnosi, 1989 and (3) *Kritika sto Solomo* [Commentary on Solomos], Athens: Dodoni, 2000.

¹⁹ A very important original source for the romantic ideas on the notion of ‘fragment’ is Friedrich Schlegel's, *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe*, ed. Hans Eichner, Munich: Schöningh, 1959-1987. For the notion of ‘fragment’ in relation to music of Robert Schumann, see Anastasia Siopsi, “To romantiko ergo gia piano [The romantic piano works]”, in *I Mousiki stin Europi tou Dekatou Enatou Aiona* [Music in the nineteenth-century Europe], Athens: Tipothito-Georgios Dardanos publishing house, 2005, 101-116: 106-107.

century. It is worthy mentioning, that Solomos himself relates his aesthetics, perceived as developed around the problem of the relation between poetry and music, with the compositional practice of fugue; in other words, he explores the ways that the compositional principles of fugue could be transcended in a poetic composition. Such an aesthetic view, closer to modernism rather than romanticism, creates formal bonds with a compositional practice –that of writing a fugue- which was marginalized by the dominant tendencies of 19th-century music.²⁰ Therefore, any perception of Solomos’ mature poetry as a “*semiosis*” («σημαίνουσας πρακτικής»)²¹, can hardly relate it with a 19th-century music tradition, according to which a composition is understood as a finished total work.

Thus, formal and aesthetic characteristics of Solomos’ mature poetry, either interpreted as romantic or as modernist ones, do not correspond to compositional practices of the 19th-century Ionian composers; this is a very important reason, in my view, for the reluctance of them to set *this* poetry into music.

Another important reason, in my opinion, has to do with the philosophical quests of the poet. Solomos, in his late period of life, becomes familiarized with theories of German romanticism and Hegelian philosophy, and this helped him to conceptualize in his work the notion of ‘Sublime’, which enriched with a more philosophical and universalizing notion of ‘Weltanschauung’ his mature works. Similar philosophical quests of German orientation are not been developed by Ionian composers of 19th century; Mantzaros is the only exception to this rule.

The twentieth century

²⁰ The principles of fugue could be structurally transferred from musical to poetical work at two levels: the first one is the sound of the verses; the poet has the ability to create subtle “sound modulations” or change the “tonality” in order to create a different sense of sound and rhythm. (See Kapsomenos: 82) The second level is the creation of new total compositions and each of them ...could –according to the spirit of fugue- slide into deviatory contextual directions, creating thus symmetrical alternative but not identical “readings” of the work. (Ibid.: 83)

²¹ That is, as a field in which the poet develops an inexhaustible creative practice, not a normative one but a “rolling” one, moving from one expressive or combining possibility to another, from one compositional elaboration to another. (See, *ibid.*: 82)

In the twentieth century, Ionian composers like Theodoros Spathis (Θεόδωρος Σπάθης, 1884-1943)²², Gerasimos Robotis (Γεράσιμος Ρομποτής, Lixouri 1903-Corfu 1987)²³, Dionysios Visvardis (Διονύσιος Βισβάρδης, Zakynthos, 1910-1999)²⁴, Alekos Xenos (Αλέκος Ξένος, Zakynthos 1912-Athens 1995)²⁵, Victor Carousatos (Βίκτωρ Καρουσάτος, Argostoli, 1926)²⁶, and also composers of the next generation, for example Timotheos Arvanitakis (Τιμόθεος Αρβανιτάκης, Zakynthos 1947-)²⁷, and Konstantinos Agouridis (Κωνσταντίνος Αγουριδής, Corfu 1962)²⁸, composed music for Solomos' works.

Moreover, Gerasimos Robotis, in 1926, and Alekos Xenos, in 1967 (premiere of his work in 1999), have set into music parts of “*The Free Besieged*” («*Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι*») which belongs to the mature poetry of Solomos. Fragments of the same poem have been set to music by composers from other parts of Greece, such as Manolis Kalomiris (Μανόλης Καλομοίρης), Solon Mihailidis (Σόλων Μιχαηλίδης), Joseph Benakis (Ιωσήφ Μπενάκης), Stathis Ulkeroglou (Στάθης Ουλκέρογλου), Georgios Sahinidis (Γεώργιος Σαχινίδης), and Georgios Tsagaris (Γεώργιος Τσαγκάρης); each of them attempts, from a different formal and aesthetic perspective, to write music for this unsurpassable work of Solomos.

It would be an interesting research topic, although it falls beyond the scope of this essay, to analyze the perspectives that the 20th-century composers choose in order to

²² Theodoros Spathis: Son of a composer from Keffalonia (born in Paris). His works for Solomos's poetry include the song *De m'agapas* [You don't love me] (for voice and piano) and the opera *Lampros me ti thigetera tou* [Lampros with his daughter] (after Solomos's poem *Lampros*, 1829).

²³ The settings of Solomos's poetry into music by Gerasimos Robotis are as follows: *Ek ton 'Eleutheron Poliorkimenon* [From 'The Free Besieged'] (1926) and *I psychoula* [The little soul] (1953) for a three-part female choir.

²⁴ Dionysios Visvardis has composed a variety of works, inspired mostly by the folk song. In a way, we can trace in his work characteristics which are related to the notions of 'Greekness' and 'classicism'. His settings of Solomos's poetry include one of his first works, *Xanthoula* [The young blonde] (1952) and *Galini* [Peace] (n.d.).

²⁵ Alekos Xenos is known as 'the composer of the national resistance'. His settings for Solomos's poetry include a cantata for orchestra, mixed choir and a narrator, entitled *Eleutheroi Poliorkimenoι* [The Free Besieged] (1967, premiere with the orchestra and choir of ERT, March 1999), and the song *Anoixi* [Spring] for voice and piano.

²⁶ Victor Carousatos's compositional style is influenced by his Ionian origins and is characterized by emotionalism and innocence of expression. His works include *To oneiro* [The Dream] (choir, piano accompaniment, the satiric poem of Solomos is dated at 1829).

²⁷ Timotheos Arvanitakis moved to Zakynthos in 1994, where he established the Music School of Zakynthos. He set music for fragments of Solomos's *Eleutheroi Poliorkimenoι* [The Free Besieged].

²⁸ The only known work of Solomos that was set into poetry by Konstantinos Agouridis is the *Protochronia* [The New Year's Day] (1995) (satyric), for soprano and piano.

blend their music with Solomos' mature poetry. A first observation, however, is that for "*The Free Besieged*", composers of the so-called *National School of Music*, like Kalomiris and, at a certain extent, Mihailidis²⁹ – wrote music in order to underline the epic dimension of the work and, thus, to emphasize on the symbolic layer of the notion of "national" whereas they underestimated, or misread, its lyric quality.³⁰ Certainly, Solomos, at the period that he was writing this work, which lasted more than twenty years, studied in depth the folk song and became influenced by its standard forms (*iambic* -15-syllable verse) and, also, by the ideas expressed in "*kleftiko*" folk song (*κλέφτικο τραγούδι*).³¹ The most important idea derived from it (that it is worthless living without freedom³²) can be perceived as a first level of hermeneutics of "*The Free Besieged*", which alone can inspire and orient the aesthetic and semantic quests of a composer.

From the other two works of Solomos' mature period, according to the sources available to me so far, only "*The Cretan*" (*«Κρητικός»*) has been set to music by the composer and professor of Ionian University, Haris Xanthoudakis. His symphonic poem "*The Cretan*", for soprano and orchestra, is therefore the only attempt so far to put into music a fragment of this important work of Solomos. According to the composer's observations, having himself embraced, ten years ago, the principles of the post-modern movement, he felt that he could attempt to depict in music the layers

²⁹ Solon Mihailidis can be considered as belonging to the style of the Greek National School of Music since he showed a special preference to the 'modes' of ancient Greek and Byzantine music. It is important to mention that he set into music for choir Solomos's *Hymnos eis tin eleftherian* [Hymn to Liberty] (1962) and this work became the national anthem of Cyprus. (See Kalogeropoulos, "Mihailidis Mih. Solon", *To Leksiko tis Ellinikis Mousikis [The Dictionary of Greek Music]*, vol.4, 143-45: 144)

³⁰ According to Linos Politis, the *Free Besieged* are fragments, lyric microcosms with their own autonomous structure and internal causality. (See Linos Politis, "Ta cheirografa tou Solomou [The manuscripts of Solomos]", *Giro ston Solomo: Meletes kai arthra (1938-1982)* [About Solomos: Studies and Articles (1938-1982)]: 254-55; quoted in Dimitris Tziovas, "I proslipsi tou Solomou: Ethiniki poiisi kai to zitima tou lirismou" [The reception of Solomos: National poetry and the matter of lyricism], in *Apo ton Lirismo ston Monternismo* [From Lyricism to Modernism], Athens: Nefeli Publishing House, 2005, 23-75.) Nevertheless, the lyric character of this work is confirmed by the intentions of Solomos himself not to go further and unit the small lyrical pieces into a whole narrative composition. In other words, Solomos here presents himself as mastering pure lyricism, without being interested in the creation of an integrated epic work. According to Nasos Vagenas, *The Free Besieged* is a work with an epic-tragic context articulated with a lyric style. (See Nasos Vagenas, "To epitugma tou Solomou [The accomplishment of Solomos]", *To Vima*, 13 December 1998)

³¹ See Kapsomenos: 37.

³² Or else, the experience of "*romeikos kaimos*" [Greek grief].

of meanings of Solomos' work. Xanthoudakis attempts to transcend into music the Cretan atmosphere of this highly important work, by following closely the form of the verses, the context and the sensitivity of the text.³³ Thus, this is a case, in which a composer uses the tools of a musical practice which might be more related to the far-reaching aesthetic and stylistic quests of the mature Solomos.³⁴

I would like, with this last example, to conclude my brief report of settings to music of Solomos' works by Greek composers, being aware that the questions that were formed were more than the answers to be given, hoping however that these first research findings will be followed by a more substantial dialogue with the issue of the union of Solomos' poetry and music into a whole.

³³ See Haris Xanthoudakis, *Kritikos* gia ipsiphono kai orchistra, se poiisi D. Solomou [‘The Cretan’ for soprano and orchestra, after D. Solomos’s homonymous poem]”, in *Ellinikes Mousikes Giortes. Deuteros Kiklos. Sinaulies kai Sinedrio* [Greek Music Festival. Second Cycle. Concerts and a Conference], 5-13 May 2006, Athens: State Orchestra of Athens publication, 2006: 29.

³⁴ According to Dimitris Tziouvas, *The Cretan* is the best example to articulate tension between the national and the individual, the narrative and the lyric. (See Dimitris Tziouvas, “Antitheseis kai dillimata stin poiisi tou Solomou [Contradictions and Dilemmas in Solomos’s poetry], *To Vima*, 21 February 1999, B12.)