Musical Receptions of Greek Antiquity

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From the Romantic Era to Modernism

Edited by

Katerina Levidou, Katy Romanou and George Vlastos

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book explores various aspects of the reception of Greek antiquity in music in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The impact of Greek antiquity on modern culture is hardly uncharted territory; yet, at the same time, the ways in which ancient Greek culture and history have inspired the modern world seem limitless. The wide diversity of musical receptions of the ancient Greek past came to the fore particularly at the conference that gave rise to the present volume of essays, titled 'Revisiting the Past, Recasting the Present: The Reception of Greek Antiquity in Music, 19th Century to the Present'; it was held in Athens, Greece, in July 2011, and was co-organised by the Study Group for Russian and Eastern European Music of the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies, the Greek musicological journal *Polyphonia* and the Hellenic Music Centre. Topics discussed at that event ranged from some 'usual suspects', like Berlioz and Ravel, to less obvious fields, such as Byzantine and TV music. The present volume presents a selection of some articles that build on papers delivered at that conference, focusing mostly on the repertory of Western art music over the previous two centuries.

Greek antiquity has proved an inexhaustible source of inspiration throughout the history of music, endowing composers with a plethora of themes from its mythology and its literary traditions. At the same time, it has appealed to composers through its cultural products: drama, poetry, philosophy, and to some extent the music itself, notably through creative misunderstandings of its modal practice. The impact of Greek antiquity on music might be most readily associated with a period extending roughly from the Middle Ages through to the Enlightenment, marked by a widespread interest in classical civilisation, which played a decisive role in the formation of modern European culture. The beginning of the nineteenth century, which frames the period under scrutiny in this volume, inaugurated a new phase in Western perceptions of Greek antiquity. This phase was shaped by various historical, ideological and artistic factors, not least the advent of Romanticism, which drastically reframed the classical legacy through its emphasis on vernacular topics. Such factors included the intensification of philhellenism in the wake of the Greek struggle for independence, which was reflected particularly in the arts and literature; radical developments in archaeology, philology and the study of ancient history, which both enhanced contemporaneous knowledge and understanding

of Greek antiquity and strengthened artists' attraction to the period; and the evocation of Greece through narratives of national self-determination. The twentieth century looked at the classical past with a fresh eye, whether via modernism's search for the universal, post-modernism's more conflicted attitude to tradition and to pedigreed narratives of canonicity, or post-colonialism's critique of myths about national identity and origins. Thus, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, encompassing extensive historical, social, political and cultural developments, are most inviting case studies of musical receptions of Greek antiquity.

Over the last few years the way such changes were reflected in music has attracted increasing scholarly interest. However, there exists little systematic and interdisciplinary work on some significant aspects of the reception of Greek antiquity in music, most notably on repertories at the margins of the Western European art musical tradition. Moreover, the impact of Greek antiquity on musical genres other than the opera has yet to be considered in the depth it merits. A major aim of this book, therefore, has been to offer a more comprehensive interdisciplinary examination of music's interaction with Greek antiquity since the nineteenth century than has been attempted so far, and to analyse its connotations and repercussions. The volume sheds light on a number of hitherto underexplored – in the context of the reception of Greek antiquity – case studies from the European musical tradition, and revisits and reassesses a few well-known instances, such as Erik Satie's notorious *Socrate*. Through scrutiny of a wide range of cases that extend from the romantic period to experimentations of the second half of the twentieth century, the volume illuminates how the engagement with and interpretation of elements of ancient Greek culture in and through music reflect the specific historical, cultural and social contexts in which they took place. In analysing the multiple ways in which Greek antiquity inspired European music since the nineteenth century, the volume takes advantage of current interdisciplinary developments in musicology, as well as research on reception across various fields: musicology, Slavic studies, modern Greek studies, Classics, and film studies. At the same time, it responds to the recent scholarly boom in the study of Russian and Eastern European music by focusing particular attention on Russian and Eastern European music's association with Greek antiquity, a question that certainly invites more extensive investigation. While not excluding opera, the volume addresses the aforementioned themes by covering a wide variety of subjects within Western European art music, Russian and Eastern European (including Greek) art music, film music, and music for Greek drama throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The reception of the ancient Greek world has not been homogeneous across the centuries and the geographical areas under consideration. This book explores the complex set of processes through which ancient Greek culture has been approached, (re-)discovered and (re-)interpreted in and through music during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in quite diverse historical, social, political and cultural contexts. Encompassing a variety of case studies, it concentrates on specific mechanisms by means of which musical receptions of Greek antiquity were performed across time and space, and elucidates the purposes they served. Hence, the volume's twelve chapters are organised in four thematic parts, which reflect contemporary musicological concerns: a) the ways in which identities are constructed and negotiated; b) transitions and diversions in music history; c) nostalgia and restoration of the past; and d) music's interaction with other arts. The boundaries between these parts are by no means impenetrable; yet, although certain chapters touch on issues that fall under more than one of the volume's parts, their specific categorisation reflects their primary perspective on mechanisms of reception. Our authors analyse not only how certain compositional approaches served the mechanisms in question, but also, and more significantly, explore the underlying aesthetic, ideological, cultural and political connotations of such artistic choices. The essays, therefore, shed light on music's connection with broader historical and cultural contexts, aspiring to decode the particular relationships between composers, receiving audiences (artists, critics, listeners), their times and Greek antiquity.

The first part, entitled 'Constructing and Negotiating Identities', focuses on ways in which ancient Greek culture served processes of construction, expression and negotiation of identities (social, gender, national and cultural). Three chapters unearth and illuminate such processes with reference to quite diverse (geographically, historically and culturally) case studies.

Covering the full historical span under consideration in the volume, Marina Frolova-Walker's chapter (entitled 'Inventing Ancestry, Imagining Antiquity: Classical Greece in Russian Music') elucidates Russia's ambivalent attitude towards ancient Greek culture in view of the nation's volatility as to ideas of self-determination. Frolova-Walker examines the ways in which Russia's ambivalence towards ancient Greece is reflected in a number of musical works throughout the long nineteenth and the twentieth century; she also analyses the connotations of musical manifestations of Russia's classical interests, with special emphasis on their role in constructing and negotiating national identity.

In her chapter entitled 'From Mythology to Social Politics: Goethe's *Proserpina* with Music by Carl Eberwein', Lorraine Byrne Bodley investigates the way the ancient Greek myth of Persephone became in Goethe's hands a medium for voicing contemporaneous difficulties surrounding feminine identity in early nineteenth-century Germany, and examines the social and political subtexts of such questions. Goethe's melodrama *Proserpina* exploits the past in a fashion that exposes and comments on the historical reality of the present, particularly the social revisions desired by many women at that time. As for Eberwein's music, the selfless striving of the young composer to satisfy the poet's intentions is everywhere apparent in the score and it is the nearest thing we have to a 'composition by Goethe'.

Kostas Chardas explores modes of Greek national self-definition through musical receptions of Greek antiquity in his chapter 'On Common Ground? Greek Antiquity and Twentieth-Century Greek Music'. Drawing on Dimitris Tziovas's work on the literary reception of Greek antiquity, Chardas focuses on two distinct perceptions of the ancient Greek past: on one hand as an organic entity, a conception that emphasises the belief in the nation's continuity across the centuries; on the other hand as an archetype, which involves the inherent capacity to be reactivated, transformed and recreated by being exploited in artistic terms. Both notions are detectable in the work of numerous Greek composers throughout the twentieth century, whose recourse to their ancient Greek heritage was intertwined with questions of 'authenticity' and 'purity'.

The second part ('Transitions and Diversions') explores ways in which various receptions of Greek antiquity have served shifts and breaches in narratives of music history. Processes of deviation from existing practices as well as mechanisms of transition (as manifested in nineteenth- and twentieth-century French and Eastern European music) are brought to the fore and analysed with regard to both music history per se and reception processes more generally.

Paulo de Castro ('Nikolay Tcherepnin's *Narcisse* and the Aesthetic Promise of Self-Presence') focuses on Tcherepnin's reading of the Narcissus myth, discussing the ballet's creation and its 1911 staging in Paris. He illustrates elements that render Tcherepnin's ballet an exemplar of *fin-de-siècle* aesthetics. *Narcisse* failed to receive an enthusiastic contemporaneous reception, a failure that could be attributed, to a certain extent, to its transitory (in various senses) nature. Castro highlights how Tcherepnin's peculiar reception of the Narcissus myth effected a move away from a romantic towards a modern subjectivity, whose fragility and illusory autonomy are brought to the fore by the myth.

In '*Socrate* in Context: Satie's "Humble Homage" to the Past', George Vlastos offers new insight into the French composer's emblematic work. Satie's *Socrate* has been considered by most scholars as a catalyst of French neoclassicism during the interwar period, marking a shift in French appropriations of ancient Greek subjects. Vlastos questions this viewpoint through close reading and reassessment of some of *Socrate*'s technical and aesthetic aspects. Through musical and aesthetic analysis, as well as by means of historical and ideological contextualisation, he highlights features that critically link *Socrate* with former receptions, thus bringing to the fore its previously disregarded transitional nature.

In this part's final chapter, Jim Samson ('What Makes a Hero? Szymanowski, Enescu and the Classical Plot') discusses two major operas based on Greek classical Drama: Karol Szymanowski's *Król Roger* and George Enescu's *Oedipe*. By considering these works together, Samson shows first that the models of humanism embraced by both composers motivated a shift from plot to ethos, and argues that the resulting parallels – redefining what makes a hero – are largely a matter of what Stephen Lovell has called 'cohort thinking', in other words, 'generational thinking' (with regards to the generation of the 1880s). Samson also demonstrates that the two operas breach the classical plot in the manner of a strictly connected antithesis. Using terms of reference established by Nick Lowe, Samson suggests that Szymanowski maintains the 'game structure' while changing the 'move structure' of Euripides, while Enescu maintains the 'move structure' while changing the 'game structure' of Sophocles. In each case the humanist message depends on the breach, and therefore on the power of the norm. Samson interprets this convergence partly in relation to an archetype of emerging modernisms in East Central and South East Europe.

The volume's third part ('Nostalgia and Restoration') explores musical manifestations of nostalgia and efforts to restore a perceived glorious past in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Both nostalgia and a yearning to restore the past spring from disenchantment with the present and idealisation of the past; yet, they are by no means always interlinked. Indeed, nostalgic veneration of the past – often intertwined with the notions of origin, tradition and universality, as well as with the states of melancholia, exile and a sense of loss – does not necessarily involve its revival; instead it could invite its reimagining and reinvention. Moreover, restoration might be instigated by scholarly investigations, leading to cerebral historicism devoid of emotional expressions. This section's three case studies shed light on diverse appropriations of the idealised ancient

Greek past that sought to critique and, at the same time, revitalise the present.

In 'German Gymnasium, and Germinal Greek: Heinrich Bellermann's Stage Music for Three Tragedies by Sophocles', Gesine Schröder focuses on the stage music Heinrich Bellermann wrote during the second half of the nineteenth century for Sophocles' *Ajax*, *Oedipus the King*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*. Schröder pursues three lines of enquiry relating to Bellermann's effort to restore elements of Greek antiquity: 1) identification of the prehistory and compositional prerequisites of Bellermann's stage music; 2) examination of Bellermann's drawing on historical studies; and 3) aesthetic study of Bellermann's undertakings in the context of musical 'Cecilianism' in Berlin.

In '*Nostos* through the West and *Nostos* through the East. Readings of Ancient Greek Music in Early Twentieth-Century Constantinople and Athens', Katy Romanou illustrates how Greeks in the first decades of the twentieth century accommodated the nostalgia for the glorious ancestry to the music culture they considered appropriate to be called Greek 'national'. Two contrasting theories circulating at the time are compared: one that considered ancient Greek culture as it had been interpreted during its assimilation and study in the West; the other maintained that ancient Greek culture had been naturally fused with Persian, Arab, Byzantine and Ottoman cultures. Central figures in this narration are Kōnstantinos Psachos and Geōrgios Pachtikos. Educated in Constantinople, Psachos came to Athens and presented his ideas on the continuity of Greek tradition, on the basis of the Eastern quality of ancient Greek music. Pachtikos, educated in Athens, went to Constantinople and exposed his ideas on the continuity of Greek tradition, on the basis of the Western quality of ancient Greek music.

Eva Mantzourani ('The Odysseus Myth Revisited: Exile and Homecoming in the Life and Music of Nikos Skalkottas') uses the metaphor of the *Odyssey* and the themes of exile, nostalgia and return as exegetical devices for a reading of the life and compositional processes employed by the Greek composer Nikos Skalkottas, with particular reference to his orchestral Overture, *The Return of Ulysses*. Mantzourani argues that Skalkottas – first an exile to Berlin and subsequently an inner exile, after his return to Greece in the mid-1930s – identified himself with the mythical figure of Odysseus (an interpretation invited not only by references to Odysseus in some of Skalkottas's own writings, but also by analogies between his life and Homer's *Odyssey*). This identification, according to Mantzourani, was subsequently represented in certain aspects of his music.

Finally, the volume's fourth part, entitled 'In Dialogue with Other Arts', explores the intersection of musical receptions of Greek antiquity with literary and cinematic genres. Three chapters illuminate cases of what could be described as double receptions of Greek antiquity: namely, musical receptions that have been mediated through receptions (either consecutively or concurrently) by different art forms, in particular poetry, the novel and film.

Philip Bullock ('"An Era of Eros": Hellenic Lyricism in the Early Twentieth-Century Russian Art-Song') outlines the shape of Russian interest in Greek antiquity around the turn of the twentieth century, linking developments in the field of poetry with those in music. He suggests ways in which the classical influence played a significant role in the evolution of the song as a genre in the two decades either side of the Bolshevik Revolution, concentrating on settings of Viacheslav Ivanov's translations of Sappho (1914) and of Mikhail Kuzmin's *Songs of Alexandria* (1905–1908). Bullock analyses musical settings of these poems (by Kuzmin himself, by Anatoly Aleksandrov, and, in the case of Ivanov's texts, by Arthur Lourié) which are, in many ways, as important as their literary content. While illuminating contemporaneous aesthetic and intellectual trends, these songs may also be read in the context of the development of same-sex eroticism in Russian culture.

Katerina Levidou's chapter 'A Dionysiac Angel: Nietzschean Elements in Prokofiev's *Ognennii angel*' offers an aesthetic analysis of Prokofiev's opera *The Fiery Angel* that brings to the fore references to Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* and Schopenhauer's neo-Platonic views on music. Levidou analyses the novel on which the opera was based – a homonymous *roman à clef* by the leading Symbolist poet and writer Valerii Briusov – and examines Prokofiev's adaptation of it, concentrating on the interaction among the vital, for both works, Nietzschean figures of Socrates, Apollo and Dionysus.

The volume concludes with Stella Voskaridou Economou's chapter 'A Musical Way to Myth: The Role of Music in Cinematic Receptions of Greek Tragedy'. Voskaridou Economou focuses on musical contexts in films based on Greek tragedies, demonstrating and explaining the ways in which music participates in the articulation of the narratives and determines the formulation of classical receptions. The theoretical ideas of Roland Barthes regarding the concept of myth as a form of communication and as a (second order) semiological system are employed. Voskaridou Economou analyses examples from a number of movies of various aesthetic and cinematographic approaches, more specifically Michael Cacoyannis's trilogy (*Electra* (1962), *The Trojan Women* (1971) and

Iphigenia (1977)), Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Oedipus rex* (1967) and *Medea* (1969) and Tony Harrison's *Prometheus* (1998).

We are grateful to the J. F. Costopoulos Foundation for the invaluable financial support it provided to the conference from which this volume of essays sprang, and to *Music & Letters* for awarding a grant for the same purpose. We are also thankful to Jim Samson and Philip Bullock for readily offering advice and help on various issues while organising the conference and preparing this volume of essays.

—The editors

NOTE TO THE READER

The transliteration system used in this book is the ALA–LC system of Romanisation. However, renderings of those names that appear in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* have been retained, particularly as they have been transliterated in the second edition (Macmillan: London, 2001) – apart from names that do appear in the second edition, but no specific entry exists for that figure. When quoting from texts in English, though, the original spelling of names has been preserved. Therefore, in the bibliography and footnotes some names appear in multiple forms, since different transliteration systems have been used by various editors. Moreover, renderings of some artists' names (other than musicians) that have become firmly established in English literature (for instance Michael Cacoyannis, Constantine Cavafy, Odysseus Elytis, Nikos Kazantzakis, George Seferis) have been retained.

Unless otherwise indicated, translations of quotations and titles are by the authors. In the body of the text, both the original text and the translation are provided for quotations. As far as titles are concerned, translations are given for all languages except for French and German. Work titles appear as in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (second edition, 2001); those that are not included in *The New Grove* have been transliterated and translated by the authors.

Finally, the following abbreviations have been employed:

n.d. = date not indicated
n.p.n. = page number(s) not indicated

PART I:

CONSTRUCTING AND NEGOTIATING IDENTITIES

Inventing Ancestry, Imagining Antiquity: Classical Greece in Russian Music

Marina Frolova-Walker

Allow me to begin with a personal reflection. At school, my introduction to the study of history began the moment I set foot in the classroom, a shrine to the ongoing archaeological dig in the Pontic Olbia, the remains of the ancient Greek city founded in the seventh century BC and situated in the Crimea. The walls were covered with photographs of the discoveries at Olbia, telling each new pupil that this was the kind of thing that justified the study of history. Our history teacher was deeply committed: she took off every summer to work at the dig as a volunteer, even persuading a good many of her older pupils to join her in the work. It was not long before I too was initiated, at the age of ten, to the web of ideas that made it thrilling and mysterious that ancient Greece should once have extended into the territory of my Soviet Russian homeland. As it happened, I never joined my teacher at Olbia itself, but I went to the Crimea some years later on a related pilgrimage, to the house of the Symbolist poet and painter Maksimilian Voloshin (1877–1932). He forsook his life in Europe to move back to the Crimea, onto which he projected his primevalist fantasies, looking back to the Greeks and beyond, to the Cimmerian settlers of the peninsula, and to the geological eons that had shaped the strange volcanic landscape. Since then, Crimea has become a disputed territory, having been given to the Soviet Republic of Ukraine during the 1950s, and then re-acquired by Russia in the 2010s, together with its Greek and Scythian treasures.

This is my starting point: the idea that in the absence of a substantial territorial or linguistic connection to ancient Greece, or indeed Rome, Russia's reception of antiquity was inevitably fitful, unstable, wishful, and fraught. And so, if we look for references to Greek antiquity in Russian music, no great masterpiece immediately springs to mind. We might think of Taneyev's opera *Oresteia* (1894), which was undoubtedly an imposing work, but its eccentricities left it childless – no other composer used it as a model. Conceptually, it was ahead of its time, and musically, it was rather

old-fashioned. We might also think of Skryabin's *Prometheus* (1910), but its connection to antiquity is tenuous, since its Greek myth is heavily mediated through the ideas of Nietzsche and Wagner. Then again, we might turn to Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* (1927), *Apollon musagète* (1928), and *Perséphone* (1934), where the desire to resurrect something of Greek antiquity was conscious and deliberate; but although they were composed by a Russian, they fall outside any currents in Russian music, and fit, instead, within the neoclassicism of 1920s and '30s Parisian culture. So none of these major Greek works by Russian composers found a place within the mainstream of Russian music, and failed to leave any impression on standard notions of Russian identity in music. Even so, if we take Russian culture as a whole, rather than concentrating on music in isolation, we find they are all symptomatic of Russia's uneasy relationship with ancient Greece.

But another possibility springs to mind. Does Russia not have a link with Greek antiquity through its contacts with Byzantium? This, surely, offers us more solid ground.[1] The poet Nikolai Gumilev (1886–1921) referred to this in 1910:

> Ведь через Византию мы, русские, наследуем красоту Эллады, как французы наследуют ее через Рим.[2]
>
> We, Russians, inherit Hellenic beauty via Byzantium, just as the French inherit it via Rome.

The reference to France here is by no means random, as we shall see a little later. The philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev (1874–1948) also confirmed the Byzantine connection:

> [С]лавянская раса приняла в свою плоть и кровь преемственность культуры греческой и византийской.[3]

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[1] In fact, Byzantium served, on certain occasions, as the connecting point between modern Greece itself and Greek antiquity, as Katy Romanou demonstrates in her chapter.

[2] This quotation is from Gumilev's 1923 review of Sergei Solov′ev's poetry, see Nikolai Gumilev, *Pis'ma o russkoi poezii (sbornik statey)* (Letters on Russian Poetry: Collection of Essays), ed. G. M. Fridlender and R. D. Timenchik (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1990), 64.

[3] N. A. Berdiaev, *Smysl tvorchestva: Opyt opravdaniia cheloveka* (The Meaning of Art: Towards a Justification of Mankind) (Moscow: AST, 2007) (first pub. 1916), 178.

> The Slav race accepted into their flesh and blood the continuity with Greek and Byzantine culture.

And so did many other Russian writers. But there was still a catch, on cultural rather than historical grounds. The Byzantine connection gave rise to a thriving Russian culture of iconographic art, and it may have exerted an influence on the early development of Orthodox church music, but these aspects of Russian culture marked Russia out as distinct from the West, as a society marginal to the narrative sweep of European civilisation. In this sense, even the most beautiful of Russian icons served as a reminder that Russian art never participated in the Renaissance that transformed Western painting, sculpture, architecture and literature. For Russia, the Greek connection manifested itself in religion, whereas for the West, it was manifest in humanistic culture. The centuries of Byzantine culture had little effect on Western development, allowing Western artists to reach back directly to pre-Christian antiquity. As a result, some Russian writers preferred to sweep the Byzantine connection to the side. As the poet Osip Mandel′shtam (1891–1938) put it:

> По целому ряду исторических условий, живые силы эллинской культуры, уступив Запад латинским влияниям, и не надолго загощиваясь в бездетной Византии, устремились в лоно русской речи, сообщив ей самобытную тайну эллинистического мировоззрения, тайну свободного воплощения, и поэтому русский язык стал именно звучащей и говорящей плотью.[4]
>
> Due to a whole range of historical conditions, the live forces of Hellenic culture left the West to languish in Latin influence and only briefly visited childless Byzantium. But these forces streamed into the bosom of Russian speech, imparting the original mystery of the Hellenistic world-vision, the mystery of free embodiment. This is why the Russian language became a sounding and speaking flesh.

'Latinised' for Mandel′shtam signified a falling away from the grandeur of Greek culture, which damned the West. And at the same time, Russia's parental link with Byzantium was disowned. He claimed instead that Russian language was 'Hellenistic' in its essence, because it named real, embodied things instead of becoming entangled in abstractions and metaphors. As his argument continues, it becomes clear that he has adopted

[4] Osip Mandel′shtam, 'O prirode slova' (On the Nature of the Word; 1922), *Stikhotvoreniia. Proza* (Verse. Prose), ed. M. L. Gasparov (Moscow: Ripol Klassik, 2001), 429.

such strange claims in order to attack the Russian Symbolists, who, he claimed, had corrupted the fleshy, tangible essence of Russian through their convoluted, artificial, and vague poetry and prose. Still, there is no sign that he lacked belief in his argument. And indeed, he was far from alone in questioning Russia's Byzantine inheritance. The philosopher Vladimir Solov′ev (1853–1900), a little earlier, had claimed that Byzantium had perverted Christianity, and Russia's connection with the former empire was a matter for shame rather than pride.[5] The extent to which Byzantium was Hellenistic in its culture remains a highly contentious matter among historians today.

Orthodox Christianity itself was blamed for Russia's perennial problem: its outsider status in Europe, and its backwardness, not only in technology but all fields of learning and scholarship. The regimes of Western Christianity had felt secure enough to allow the translation and diffusion of many key texts from Greek and Roman paganism (often thanks to the prior work of Arab scholars). They had also put the surviving material artifacts of antiquity on display and allowed their adoption as models for leading artists. Russian Christianity, by contrast, not only lacked the vases and statues, but also the texts and their ideas. Western scholars have searched and failed to find evidence for Russia's claim to have inherited Greek culture through Byzantium.[6] Remarkably, not even the works of Greek patristic theology were translated into medieval Russia, let alone classical philosophical texts.[7] One of the scholars thus concluded, that the complete absence of any discourse around great classical texts meant that medieval Russia had simply 'failed to develop an intellectual tradition'.[8] There were some Byzantine religious texts in circulation, but these were

[5] Vladimir Solov′ev, 'Vizantizm i Rossiia' (Byzantinism and Russia), *Sobranie sochinenii v 9 tomakh* (Collected Edition in 9 vols.), v (St Petersburg: Prosveshchenie, 1873–1890).

[6] See, for example, Francis J. Thomson, 'The Distorted Mediaeval Russian Perception of Classical Antiquity: The Causes and the Consequences', in Andries Welkenhuysen, Herman Braet, and Werner Verbeke (eds.), *Mediaeval Antiquity* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), 303–364.

[7] V. M. Zhivov, B. A. Uspenskii, 'Metamorfozy antichnogo iazychestva v istorii russkoi kul′tury XVII–XVIII vekov' (Metamorphoses of Antique Paganism in the History of Russian Culture during the 17th and 18th Centuries), *Antichnost′ v kul′ture i iskusstve posleduiushchikh vekov: Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii* (Antiquity in the Culture of Subsequent Ages: Conference Proceedings) (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1984), 211, also Thomson, 'The Distorted Mediaeval Russian Perception of Classical Antiquity', 306.

[8] Thomson, 'The Distorted Mediaeval Russian Perception of Classical Antiquity', 348.

mystical in character, and thus provided no foundations for the development of reasoning and argument within Russian Christianity. Many later Russian writers concurred, some deploring the fact, others boasting of it. Russian culture did benefit from the services of several Greek religious scholars, for example, Maximus the Greek in the early sixteenth century, who helped translate and correct important religious texts, or the brothers Joannicus and Sophronius Likhud, born in the Greek island of Cephalonia, who opened the first Russian higher education establishment in 1687, in Moscow, under the name of Hellenic-Greek Academy. Characteristically, however, the efforts of Maximus and the Likhud brothers brought charges of heresy upon them and they all endured monastic imprisonment. Rationalism, Latinisation, and Westernisation in general were more often than not considered too dangerous for the Russian social order to assimilate.

There are various historical anecdotes surrounding early Russian encounters with Greek paganism. One tells of sixteenth-century ambassadors to the Vatican who were scandalised by the nude statuary on display, and still worse, many of these represented pagan deities. They demanded that the shameful idols be covered.[9] Peter the Great, as befitted his reputation as a Westerniser, had some of these scandalous statues transported to Russia. During his travels within Russia, Peter installed himself in a house in Voronezh, and to mark his royal presence, he placed Greek statues at the doorway. He then invited the city's bishop, Mitrofan, to meet him there. Because of the statues, Mitrofan refused to enter the building, whereupon Peter threatened to have him put to death. Mitrofan preferred to risk life rather than soul, and called Peter's bluff. In the end, Peter decided it would be less troublesome to have the statues removed for a while, and his audience with the bishop went ahead.[10]

These brushes with religious fundamentalism notwithstanding, the unprecedented power of Peter the Great's state finally legitimised the use of Greek and Roman cultural artifacts and symbols in Russia, and they were put in the service of the Empire. The eighteenth century, the age of Peter and Catherine, proved to be the first great flowering of antiquity on the Russian soil: mostly Roman for Peter, mostly Greek for Catherine. Significantly, the first major Russian-language poets, Mikhail Lomonosov (1711–1765) and Vasilii Trediakovskii (1703–1768), graduated from the same Hellenic-Greek Academy we have already encountered, although by this stage it was known as the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy. Both these poets studied ancient Greek, and were able to use their knowledge to in-

[9] From Antonio Possevino, in Zhivov and Uspenskii, 'Metamorfozy antichnogo iazychestva v istorii russkoi kul′tur XVII–XVIII vekov', 214.
[10] Ibid. 216.

fuse their poetry with mythological references. This set its stamp on Russian poetry for a time, and would-be poets had to indulge in classical name-dropping to separate their writing from ordinary language. Soon, they were on first name terms with the Muses:

Не Пинд ли под ногами зрю?
Я слышу чистых сестр музыку!
Пермесским жаром я горю,
Теку поспешно к оных лику.
Врачебной дали мне воды:
Испей и все забудю труды;
Умой росой Кастальской очи,
Чрез степь и горы взор простри
И дух свой к тем странам впери,
Где всходит день по темной ночи.

Do I see Pindus down below me?
I hear the pristine sisters' songs!
With flame Permessian I burn,
I strive in haste toward their visage.
They've given me the healing water:
Drink, and forget your every toil;
Rinse out your eyes with dew Castalian.
Beyond steppes and mountains cast your gaze,
Direct your soul toward those lands
Where morning breaks upon dark night.

(Mikhail Lomonosov, *An Ode in Blessed Memory of Her Majesty the Empress Anna Ivanovna on the Victory over the Turks and Tatars and the Taking of Khotin*, 1739).[11]

Classical mythology also appeared on the stage at the Russian Imperial court, in the form of Italian *opera seria*, which attained great prestige there. Whether in poetry or in music, during the eighteenth century the line of cultural heritage running from ancient Greece to Russia evidently passed through Rome and the Italian Renaissance. Such were the plain facts. But Catherine the Great, Empress of All the Russias and a large chunk of Asia, was not a member of the reality-based community. She

[11] *From the Ends to the Beginning: A Bilingual Anthology of Russian Verse*, ed. by Ilya Kulik and Andres Wachtel, Northwestern University <http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/ode_to_anna.htm>, accessed 15 March 2013.

intended to act and create her own realities, and among these was a fantastical Greek project that involved the defeat and overthrow of the Ottoman Empire at the hands of Russia. If this had succeeded, Russia (or rather, Catherine) would perhaps have become the richest and most powerful state in Europe. This, no doubt, was incentive enough, but Catherine also toyed with the idea that such a victory would allow her to recreate Greek culture, not in the form of another second-hand European Renaissance, but a new rise of Athens under the protection of Russian military might. Voltaire even involved himself in this cultural window-dressing for Catherine's plans of imperial expansion. In 1770 he wrote to her that:

> Те, кто желают неудач Вашему Величеству, будут посрамлены. И отчего желать Вам неудач, тогда, когда Вы отмщаете Европу. Ясно, что это люди, которые не хотят, чтобы разговаривали по-гречески, ибо когда вы станете сувереном Константинополя, вы сразу же создадите греческую академию изящных искусств. В вашу честь напишут «Катериниады», Зевксы и Фидии покроют землю Вашими изображениями, падение Оттоманской империи будет прославлено по-гречески; Афины станут одной из ваших столиц, греческий язык станет всеобщим, все негоцианты Эгейского моря будут просить греческие паспорта у Вашего Величества.[12]
>
> Those, who wish failure to Your Majesty, will be shamed. And why wish failure to you, when you are avenging Europe [against the Turks]? It is obvious that such persons don't wish to have Greek being spoken, for when you become the sovereign of Constantinople, you will immediately create the Greek academy of fine arts. In your honour, Cateriniads will be composed, the new Zeuxis and Phidias will cover the earth with your likenesses, and the fall of the Ottoman Empire will be glorified in Greek; Athens will become one of your capitals, the Greek language will become universal, and all the merchants of the Aegean Sea will ask for Greek passports from Your Majesty.

In response to such flattery, Catherine sent Voltaire a gift, a coat in the Greek style, but stitched together from the finest Siberian furs.[13] In the end, of course, the Ottoman and Russian armies were too evenly matched, and both empires lasted another century and a half.

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[12] Voltaire's letter to Catherine of 14 September 1770 in Andrei Zorin, 'Russkaia oda kontsa 1760-kh–nachala 1770-kh godov, Vol′ter i "grecheskii proekt" Ekateriny II' (The Russian Ode of the Late 1760s and Early 1770s: Voltaire and Catherine II's 'Greek project'), *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 24 (1997) <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/1997/24/zorin.html>, accessed 30 January 2013.
[13] Ibid.

For my first musical stop I have therefore chosen the piece that embodies Catherine's imperial fantasy, the piece in which music, drama and the visual arts work together to represent both Greek antiquity and the Westernisation of Russia in a remarkable synthesis. This is an operatic extravaganza entitled *The Early Reign of Oleg* (*Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega*, 1790), whose libretto was written by Catherine herself,[14] while the music was supplied by several court composers, both Russian and foreign.[15] This historical concoction, set in a pre-Ottoman fictitious past, includes several founding myths beginning with the establishment of Moscow and ending with Tsar Oleg's defeat of Byzantium. The music of Oleg's wedding scene (Act III) includes Russian local colour in the shape of the newly-popular folk style. The opera's imposing finale, however, was written in a supposedly ancient Greek style, as Oleg, at the invitation of the defeated Byzantine Emperor Leon, watches Act III of Euripides' *Alcestis*. The Greek original is here endowed with a new allegorical meaning: the grieving Admetus represents the defeated Leon, who reluctantly but hospitably entertains the visiting Heracles, who stands for Oleg. Having enjoyed the play, Oleg symbolises his ownership of Constantinople by nailing his shield to the doors of the Hippodrome.

While the music for the folk-style wedding scene was entrusted to the Russian composer Vasily Pashkevich (*c.*1742–1797), the scene from Euripides went to Giuseppe Sarti (1729–1802), an Italian opera composer who had arrived at Catherine's court in 1784 (he remained there until 1801). While Pashkevich entertained the audience with his renditions of songful folk ritual, Sarti made an even greater effort in compiling *couleur locale* devices for his representation of Greek tragedy.[16] He prefaced his contribution with a lengthy statement on why he wrote the music in the way he did.

> Явление из Еврипида, по месту и свойству своему, должно быть представлено во вкусе древнем Греческом, а потому и музыка должна

[14] Originally, this was a play written by Catherine in 1786 (bearing the subtitle: 'An Imitation of Shakespeare without Following the Ordinary Theatrical Rules') and published the next year in the almanac *Russian Theatre or a Complete Collection of Russian Theatrical Works*. See Larissa Kirillina, 'In modo antico...', *Die Tonkunst*, 7/1 (2013), 53.

[15] A scan of the 1791 edition of the vocal score of *Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega*, including the preface, can be found on the website of the Russian State Library <http://elibrary.rsl.ru/?menu=s410/elibrary/elibrary4454/elibrary44545054/elibrary445450545055/&lang=ru>, accessed 15 February 2013.

[16] The Italian composer Carlo Canobbio (1741–1822) also contributed to this opera.

быть в том же вкусе; вследствие чего и сочинил я музыку совершенно Греческую относительно к пению, сопроводя оную однако по образу нынешней Армонии, чтоб инструменты не затмевали пения; ибо *столповая музыка*, каковая употреблялась у Греков, несносна была бы слуху во времена наши.

Аристотель пишет, что Лира и Тибия отделялись иногда несколько от голоса, хотя однако скоро опять соединялись с оным, дабы не противно слуху было взаимное их удаление; а потому и сделанное мною сопровождение, несколько от пения отделяющееся, почесть можно позволенным.

Должно думать, что Греческая *декламация* была положена на нотах, поелику сопровождаема была Лирою при повествовании; Тибия сопровождала пение хоров.

Но я не осмелился положить на ноты речей Ираклия и Адмета, во-первых потому что не известны мне ни силы, ни качество голосов Актеров, для представления сих лиц назначенных; во-вторых, потому что такая новость весьма была бы трудна для исполнения во время отсутствия сочинителя оной. Старался я однако сопроводить сии речи краткими выходками арфы со скрыпкою без смычка, для изображения, сколько возможно ближе, древней Лиры, которую в подобных случаях употребляли. […]

Хор, помещенный в разговоре, есть некоторый род *Речитатива*, размером своим однако отменный характер от него имеющий. Написан он в способе *Миксолидийском*. Ибо способ сей присвоен был к хорам Греческой Трагедии.

Сопровождающая оный флейта изображает Тибию, которую древле употребляли. […]

Усмотрев в подлиннике […], что стихи во второй *Антистрофе* имеют совсем другую меру, чем строфы предыдущие, нашел я, что не можно было бы петь оную одним напевом […], и для того сочинил для *Антистроф* особливую и разнообразную музыку. […]

Господин Сичкарев переложил оные в стихи, точно такое число стоп имеющие, сколько надобно, и без рифмы, ибо у Греков оной не было.

1-я строфа заключает в себе два изображения. Одно состоит *в похвале дома щедростию и гостеприимством славного,* другая *в описании пришествия в дом сей Аполлона, где, будучи пастухом, наполнял он долины звуком пастушей Армонии.*

И для той и другой картины употребил я способ Дорический, но дал оному однако различные выражения, ибо по содержанию слов напев сей есть Пеан.

Сей мужественный и сильный способ, будучи важнее и благороднее прочих, служил предпочтительно к прославлению богов. […]

Желая, чтоб хор исполнен был рвением и восторгом при изречении сих обетов, сделал я некоторое подражание Дифирамбу, для изображения которого избрал я *способ Фригийский*. Хор сей кончил я Акордом на слове *век*. Ибо в столетие Олегово в Цареграде и в Риме Акорды стали уже известны, и оными украшали последнюю ноту песни.[17]

The scene from Euripides, according to its place and character, has to be represented in an ancient Greek manner, and the music must do likewise. This is why I composed music that is entirely Greek with regard to the vocal material; the accompaniments, however, I composed in accordance with the Harmony of today, so that instruments do not overshadow the singing, since our ears would find the '*stolp* music'[18] of the Greeks quite intolerable.

Aristotle writes that the lyre and the tibia sometimes played separately from the voice, but would soon rejoin it so that the ear did not resent their separation; my accompaniments, which are also separated somewhat from the vocal line, can for this reason be considered acceptable [Sarti provides a reference to Aristotle here].

We must conclude that Greek declamation was set to music, because it was accompanied by the lyre during narration; the tibia accompanied the choruses.

But I did not dare set the speeches of Heracles and Admetus to music, firstly, because I don't know the force and quality of voice of the actors appointed to play these roles, and second, because such innovatory writing would be too difficult to perform in the absence of the composer. However, I attempted to accompany these speeches with short passages scored for harp together with pizzicato violins for the most accurate representation of the ancient lyre, which was used in similar situations. […]

[17] Preface to the 1791 edition of *Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega*, 3–5 (see n. 15).
[18] Sarti uses the Russian word *stolpovoe*, meaning 'neumatic'; the term was normally applied to the older layer of chant repertoire in Russian Orthodox liturgy. The term as it appears here in Sarti seems to refer merely to the monophonic nature of ancient Greek music.

> The Chorus within the dialogue is a kind of recitative, which, however, differs from ours in its metre. It is written in the Mixolydian mode, since this was the mode of the choruses in Greek tragedy.[19]
>
> The flute accompanying the Chorus represents the tibia, which was used by the Ancients [Sarti provides another reference]. […]
>
> Having noticed in the original […] that the verses of the second antistrophe are written in a completely different metre from the preceding ones […] I set anti-strophes to music that was new and quite different. […]
>
> Mr Sichkarev versified them [the strophes and antistrophes], using the same number of *stopï* [feet, i.e. elements of a poetic metre], but without rhyme, which the Greeks did not employ.
>
> The first strophe contains two images: one is a eulogy to a household famed for its generous hospitality, the other describes the arrival here of Apollo, who, as a shepherd, filled the valleys with the sounds of pastoral Harmony.
>
> For both images, I used the Dorian mode, but gave different characters to each, for the content identifies the melody as a Paean.
>
> This masculine and strong mode, being more solemn and noble than the others, mainly served for the glorification of the gods. […]
>
> Wishing that the [final] Chorus would be full of enthusiasm and delight when these promises are uttered, I created an imitation of a Dithyramb, for which I chose the Phrygian mode. I ended this Chorus on a chord supporting the word *vek* [age]. For in Oleg's era, chords became known both in Constantinople and in Rome, and they were used to decorate the last note of a song.

Both the music and the commentary are of extraordinary interest, and full of the contradictory claims that have accompanied musical representations of ancient Greece through the centuries. One is the claim of authenticity. Sarti claims he can prove that his representations are correct, and supplies detailed references to classical authors. Through archaeology and textual scholarship, he attempts a faithful reconstruction, emphasising the same-

[19] Sarti's understanding of modes was very different from ours; see Larissa Kirillina, 'In modo antico: The "Alceste" Scene in the *Early Reign of Oleg*', *Die Tonkunst*, 7/1 (2013), 53–67, and Bella Brover-Lubovsky, 'The "Greek Project" of Catherine the Great and Giuseppe Sarti', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 32/1 (2013), 28–61.

ness and continuity of culture. At the same time, he needs to modernise the music if it is to be acceptable to modern ears – here he concedes the distance between his culture and ancient Greece. The reconstruction proves to be a reinvention, a stylisation suitable to modern tastes. Apart from the time of Euripides and the time of Catherine, there is a third time present in the score, the time of Oleg, which is brought forth by the mention of the only deviation from unison choral writing that Sarti uses at the very end – the final triumphant A-major chord. This addition of the third point in time creates the sense of a long, continuous history in general, and of music history in particular.

Sarti, of course, was not a Russian composer. A scene from Euripides is his gift to Russian music, because it is highly unlikely that any Russian composer at the time would have had the knowledge, or indeed the audacity, to claim an authoritative understanding of classical sources (the first Russian musical scholar to do so was Aleksandr Kastal′sky (1856–1926), a century later). But let us not forget that this fruit of Western learned culture was designed to serve the needs of a Russian monarch – Catherine probably imagined herself watching Euripides in Constantinople, not as a guest, but as the owner of Greek culture. Sarti created this dream experience for her and unwrapped it in St Petersburg in 1790, just as her armies were winning another successful campaign against the Ottoman Empire (in the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–1792).

The artistic elaboration of Catherine's Greek project thus initiated the trend of 'imagining antiquity', to which we will return a little later. We shall see that most Russian attempts to recreate the music of Greek antiquity share the same preoccupations as Sarti's *Oleg*: unusual metres, declamatory style, the use of modes, the scoring (with emphasis on harps and flutes), and at the most general level, the project of writing music for a kind of utopian theatre. Perhaps just one further element would emerge in the course of the nineteenth century with particular prominence, and that was dance.

But I would also like to propose that Catherine's Greek project laid the groundwork for another much more enduring Russian cultural project, namely the idea that folksong and sacred music gave access to ancestral values that lay so deep in the past as to be inaccessible to ordinary historical study.[20] This, in turn, led to the idea that this ancestral inheritance

[20] This idea was not exclusive to Russia: the French music theorist Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray (1840–1910) believed that ancient Greek music survived in the folk traditions of modern Greece. See Jim Samson, *Music in the Balkans* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 228. A modern exploration of such connections can be found in Romanou's chapter.

could form the basis for a new Russian music that could develop as an independent and original art, rather than as a mere offshoot of Western music. It is hardly a coincidence that the first claims about the Greek provenance of Russian folk culture were made precisely at this time, in the late 1780s and '90s. At first, interestingly, it fell largely to foreigners to make these claims, which reflected certain European presumptions about Russia's position on the political map. It would not be too far-fetched to suggest that Herder, too, makes his remarks on the Greek-Russian connection in light of Russia's posturing as a European defender of the Balkan nations from the Turks.[21]

Another much quoted source is Matthew Guthrie (1743–1807), a Scottish naval doctor in St Petersburg, who was also a keen musician, and published the thesis *Dissertations sur les antiquités de Russie* of 1788 (it was translated into French for the purposes of publication in St Petersburg).[22] Guthrie points out the similarity between some Greek folk rituals and songs and their Russian counterparts. One of his examples is 'Klidona', a fortune-telling ritual young girls perform to guess the identity of their future husband. In Greece, this is practiced as a midsummer ritual, while in Russia it appears during Advent. He proceeds in this manner, making comparisons whose significance may be questioned, but which at least have a concrete basis in observation rather than in armchair speculation. It was only when he turned to a still more ancient possibility that he indulged in guesswork, suggesting that the connection between Russian and Greek culture was not primarily direct, but stemmed from a common parentage in Persian culture. Guthrie's conclusions on the Greek ancestry of Russian songs were quoted and endorsed in the substantial introductory essay to the first ever collection of Russian folksongs by Nikolai Lvov (1753–1803) and Ivan Prach (*c.*1750–1818), which came out in 1790.[23] But by the time the second edition was going to press in 1806, a new theo-

[21] 'The church language of the *Russian* nation is for the most part Greek' – Herder (*Treatise on the Origin of Language*, 1772). Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. Michael N. Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 119.

[22] A copy of Matthew Guthrie's *Dissertations sur les antiquités de Russie, traduites sur son ouvrage Anglais* (Saint-Petersbourg, 1795) can be found in the British Library. More on Guthrie in Anthony Cross, '*By the Banks of the Neva': Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 147–152.

[23] *A Collection of Russian Folk Songs by Nikolai Lvov and Ivan Prach*, ed. by Malcolm Hamrick Brown with an introduction by Margarita Mazo (Russian Music Studies, 13; Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), 79.