

# Nikolaos Mantzaros and the Emergence of a Greek Composer

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# Nikolaos Mantzaros and the Emergence of a Greek Composer

(Durrell Studies 5)

By

Konstantinos Kardamis

Translated by Vera Konidari and Richard Pine

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Frontispiece: Corfu Town in the 1860s



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**A facsimile of Mantzaros' signature is used as a colophon at the end of each chapter.**

## FOREWORD BY THE SERIES EDITOR

The Durrell Library of Corfu is delighted and, indeed, honoured, to sponsor the appearance in English of Konstantinos Kardamis's biography of Nikolaos Mantzaros. Dr Kardamis is, without doubt, the pre-eminent authority on the life and work of Mantzaros, and the leading scholarly authority on many aspects of nineteenth-century music in Corfu and Greece.

The significance of Mantzaros's position, as a musician (composer, teacher and facilitator), as an aristocrat whose position connected him with the elite of Corfiot society, and as a public servant in the administration of the Ionian Islands, has been established by Dr Kardamis during decades of painstaking research. Mantzaros's relationship with leading figures of the British protectorate of the Ionian Islands, his fostering of the emergent genre of Ionian classical composition and its influence on the development of music in the fledgling state of Greece, and his very special connection with Dionyssios Solomos and Petros Vrailas Armenis become recognised through this research.

The transition during Mantzaros's lifetime, from Venetian administration to French occupation, to the British protectorate and eventually *enosis* (union) of the Ionian Islands with the state of Greece, was of massive importance to Corfiot society and its cultural life. Mantzaros's role as a public servant, his relationship by marriage with some of the leading families and cultural actors of the time, his intimate association with the family of the Lord High Commissioner Sir Frederick Adam, in addition to his lifetime's devotion to the craft of composition, make him a central figure in the history of his native Corfu and of modern Greece.

It is striking not only that so many of the "illustrious" names of Corfiot society at the turn of the nineteenth century, who figure in this biography, were associated with the Mantzaros family but that they remain vibrant presences in Corfiot cultural and social history today – not least because so many of them are commemorated in street names. Yet Mantzaros himself was instrumental in encouraging the emergence in musical life of the "bourgeoisie" (as Dr Kardamis refers to them), in this way creating a more "classless" society in musical terms.

And yet, as Dr Kardamis makes clear in "Chapter Seven: Postlude", so much of Mantzaros's personal life – and, indeed, his work – has been lost and perhaps awaits rediscovery.

This study brings to life a figure often obscured by his own reputation - “pedestallisation” - as the author of the Greek national anthem, both as a human being and as a player of far more significance in composition and pedagogy than has hitherto been understood. Hegel, whose concept of the Sublime permeated Mantzaros’s later work, said in his lectures on Aesthetics: “Music is lyrically true, of the utmost simplicity, it is the simple, terse, deeply felt poem which most stimulates the composer’s imagination”,<sup>1</sup> thus underlining the attention which, as Dr Kardamis eloquently demonstrates, Mantzaros paid to the setting of poetry, thereby especially evoking the rhythm of the Greek language.

This is a work of truly exciting scholarship.

— Richard Pine  
Director, Durrell Library of Corfu  
Series Editor, “Durrell Studies”

### A note on the translation

This book is partially based on Konstantinos Kardamis’ *Νικόλαος Χαλικιόπουλος Μάντζαρος* published by Fagotto Books, Athens in 2015. At our request the author adapted and updated parts of this volume for the purposes of translation. In order to respect the author’s own literary style, and the Hellenic spirit in which he expresses himself, it has been necessary to make an initial *literal* translation from Greek to English, which also observes the academic parameters of musicology. This literal translation was undertaken by Vera Konidari. A second version, intended to make the text more accessible to the general anglophone readership, aiming for colloquial facility and yet remaining faithful to the writer’s original style, was made by Richard Pine, in conjunction with both Vera Konidari and the author himself. We are confident that the book as it now stands is a true representation of Konstantinos Kardamis’s intentions in presenting to the English-speaking world an original and ground-breaking introduction to the life, work and times of Nikolaos Mantzaros.

[BI] in the text beside the first occurrence of an individual name indicates an inclusion in the **Biographical Index** in the Appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> I think also of Sidney Lanier (1842-1881): “Music is Love in search of a word” (in his poem “The Symphony”).

## INTRODUCTION

Nikolaos Halikiopoulos Mantzaros (1795-1872) is widely known as the composer of Greece's national anthem. Actually this musical setting, based on the poetry of his lifelong friend Dionyssios Solomos (1798-1857), is only the initial part of an 1830 composition that extends to twenty-four parts using all the 158 stanzas of the poem *Hymn to Liberty* (written in 1823 and published in 1825). Nonetheless, it was just the two initial stanzas of this setting that, being already recognised from the 1830s as the informal anthem of the Ionian Islands, was officially adopted in the summer of 1865 as the national anthem of Greece by the new king, George I. Until the 1990s this was the conventional view of the Corfu-born composer and - apart from the national anthem, some piano overtures (posthumously arranged for wind band or, more recently, for the "Nikolaos Mantzaros" Chamber Wind Ensemble) and a couple of popular songs - little more was known regarding Mantzaros's compositional work. However, the widest gap in our knowledge of Mantzaros relates to his actual life and the aesthetic views of his maturity. The latter offered new "keys" in order to understand, not only the composer's mature work, but also the post-1830s poetry of Solomos himself.

Up to the 1990s Mantzaros had been considered for decades as the earliest composer of Greek descent who followed the prototypes of what today is called the "western musical canon". At about the same time this view proved to be inaccurate: the discovery of the compositional activities of the Cretans Frangiskos Leondatitis and Frangiskos De Laudis in mid-sixteenth-century Venice and those of Laurentios Manes in early sixteenth-century Ragusa (today's Dubrovnik) showed that the creative musical verve within the western canon among the Greeks had made its presence felt much earlier than the time of Mantzaros. Nonetheless, it is beyond doubt that the nineteenth-century composer from Corfu constitutes an important part of a musical chain in the Greek music world that actually began in the mid-fifteenth century and continues up to our own times. Moreover, Mantzaros contributed decisively in the field of music instruction, succeeding in the dissemination of music education to a previously unprecedented number of people within the Greek world and offering the opportunity to wider social strata to learn music on an organised basis. This resulted in the emergence of both an impressive number of composers in the nineteenth-century Ionian

Islands and a dynamic that is still felt and heard.

Despite the two centuries that separate Mantzaros and his sixteenth-century forebears, there are also several things in common. The most important of them was the sense of cosmopolitanism and hybridity that characterised the main mercantile and administrative centres of the south-east Mediterranean, a fact that, despite the unavoidable military and social tensions, offered a wealth of cultural exchanges and from a certain point onwards facilitated the interaction between people of different origins, social status, religions and rites. The main cities of Crete (under Venetian administration until 1669, and thereafter under Ottoman control) and of the Ionian Islands, Ragusa and Venice were among these places. And if to these cities those of Cyprus (under Venetian administration until 1571) are added, it is obvious that the expansion of Venice to the East offered to the Greek world cultural opportunities that were not that obvious in the areas under Ottoman rule.

Although Venetian rule in Corfu ended two years after Mantzaros' birth, Venetian and Italian influences were still present in the Ionian Islands long after 1797. In this respect Mantzaros is a fine example of the hybridity that characterised the Ionian Islands' urban centres and those people that were born there in the late eighteenth century. Mantzaros was the offspring of a noble Greek family of the Orthodox rite, but his mother's family came from Zara (today's Zadar in Croatia, then a Venetian outpost). He also lived in a society in which Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians and Jews interacted on a daily basis, as well as in a city of which Greeks (both indigenous and from the mainland), Italians, British, French, Maltese and other people constituted the mosaic of its inhabitants. Mantzaros was born in 1795 as a Venetian subject, but when he was two he briefly became a, very young indeed, *citoyen* of the French Republic. From 1800 he successively had been educated as a citizen of the Ionian, "Heptanese" or "Septinsular" Republic (1800-1807), learned music as a subject of the French Empire (1807-1814), begun his adult life and lived his maturity as a citizen of the Ionian State (the "United States of the Ionian Islands") under a British Protectorate (1815-1864) and when he died he had been a subject of the Kingdom of Greece for the past eight years. At the same time he experienced the tumultuous Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic period and the rise of nationalisms, as well as the social and cultural changes that came as a result. Under such circumstances and experiences he formulated in the end a moderate political and creative stance, in which cosmopolitanism and hybridity found a unifying focal point in the idea of Greekness, initially as part of the identity of his homeland and subsequently within the aspirations for "Classical Greece" caused by the formulation of a Greek State on the

neighbouring mainland. In other words, he experienced the cultural reorientation of the Ionian islands from the shared cultural space between the Ionian and Adriatic Sea and Italy towards the “new national” horizon as it was expressed by the Greek Kingdom’s ideological motivation. This is a very brief description of the main temporal and social framework, within which this book will move.

What is however remarkably unexpected is that we do not know that much about Mantzaros’ everyday life; details such as his reported obsession with order, his habit of remaining standing while writing, his preference for chocolates, his admiration of, and care for, his good friends, the family’s financial problems or his love for his children are almost the only compensations offered by his extant correspondence or the numerous posthumous biographical (and usually hagiographical) sketches. An even more remarkable detail is the fact that Mantzaros (similar to Solomos) never visited the Kingdom of Greece, despite the fact that a significant part of his work was connected with the idea of Greece’s liberation and the formulation of its national self-consciousness, and that the composer had direct connections with both King Otto of Greece and his successor, King George I.

However, Solomos, unlikely Mantzaros, had a more privileged posthumous fortune, mainly because of his emblematic position within modern Greek literature and the long and detailed research of generations of philologists. Actually Solomos had several things in common with Mantzaros; both of them were of noble descent, had a profound education in Italian and never considered themselves as professional, respectively, poet and composer. Solomos, however, was an illegitimate, but recognised, child of Count Nikolaos Solomos from Zakynthos and continued his studies in Italy from 1808, initially in the Lyceum of Cremona, and then in the Law School of Pavia’s University. It was there that he came in contact with Italian neoclassical poetry and some of its representatives. In 1818 Solomos returned to Zakynthos where he gradually faced problems regarding his father’s property caused until 1831 by his brother, Dimitrios, and from 1833 by the claims on it by his step-brother. The latter eventually led to a long legal dispute that was brought to an end in 1838. This dispute allegedly caused Solomos’s social isolation and alcoholism, but also affected his poetical productivity. However, by the end of his life Solomos had created a number of works that played a central (if not canonical) role in the formulation of modern Greek Literature, quite apart from his earlier creation of poems in the Italian language, underlining in this way his hybridity also in terms of language. Solomos, unlike Mantzaros, was also lucky enough to evade “pedestallisation”, namely his unilateral connection with the *Hymn to Liberty*, a work belonging to the early years of his use of the Greek

language, evoked by the insistence of the Messolonghi-born politician, diplomat and writer Spyridon Trikoupis (1788-1873) in 1822 (at the beginning of the Greek Revolution). If not anything else, Solomos's period of maturity (1833-1857), being full of romantic *topoi*, philosophical references and original contributions to literature, caught the attention of scholars from the nineteenth century onwards.

To the contrary, regarding Mantzaros it should be stated that for almost two centuries after his birth the composer of the Greek national anthem proved to have been a totally unknown figure for both his compatriots and the scholars. This was reflected not only in the gradually expanding research since 1995 (the bicentenary of Mantzaros's birth) on the composer's life, era and works, but also in the changing attitudes regarding his evaluation in the respective entries of the 1980 and the 2001 editions of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. The turning point towards this re-assessment was an 1987 article published by the pioneer music critic and musicologist Giorgos Leotsakos [BI], who made clear that Mantzaros was a lot more than just "the composer of the national anthem". This dynamic passed to Prof. Haris Xanthoudakis and the researchers of the Music Department of the Ionian University (beginning in 1995 with a concert directed by Byron Fidetis performing some early, and newly edited, previously unknown compositions by Mantzaros). Since 2000 the Department's Hellenic Music Research Laboratory has been engaged in the project (publishing, among others, in 2006 Mantzaros' 1815 concert arias edited by Irmgard Lerch-Kalavrytinou, and in 2005 the only recording, to date, of his early vocal works with orchestra accompaniment).

Given all the above, this book attempts to offer a succinct, but hopefully accurate and multifaceted, study of a Corfu-born Greek composer who experienced one of the most interesting eras of the Western world's history and connects people and activities related, not only to music, but also to politics, philosophy and literature. It also attempts to concentrate the highpoints of a collective research of the past twenty-five years, being at the same time a homage to the 150 years since the composer's death.



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— Konstantinos Kardamis  
Corfu, August 2021

## A CHRONOLOGY OF THE IONIAN ISLANDS AND GREECE (1797-1898) AND SOME NOTES ON THE ITALIAN UNIFICATION

**1797:** June 28: a combined Venetian and Republican French flotilla reaches Corfu. General Gentili officially proclaims the abolition of the oligarchic Republic of Venice and of the privileges of the nobility. This marks the official end of the long Venetian rule, which for Corfu began in 1386. In the following weeks similar proclamations are taking place in other Ionian islands, Lefkada, Cefalonia and Zakynthos. The Venetian *Libro d'Oro*, recording the names of the local nobility, is burned. In November of the same year the Ionian Islands are annexed to the French Republic. In May 1798 a governmental printing house is established, which, among others, publishes the *Marseillaise* in Greek verses by the Greek patriot Rigas Velestinlis (executed in Belgrade by the Ottomans in June 1798).

**1799:** March 5: after a siege of four months the Republican French surrender Corfu to the Russian admiral Fyodor Ushakov, commander of a joint Russo-Ottoman fleet that began invading the Ionian Islands in October 1798.

**1800-1807:** Ionian Islands are recognised by Russia and the Ottoman Porte as the Septinsular or Heptanese (Ionian) Republic (Repubblica Settinsulare), constituting thus the first Greek state in the modern era. The privileges of the nobility are restituted, but the insistence of the middle classes, as well as the rural population, to participate in the Republic's government is dynamic. The Republic's three Constitutions (1800, 1803, 1806) are indicative of the political and social agitations. Policies are developed regarding diplomacy, commerce, public instruction, and the economy. Russia exerts control through its plenipotentiary, count Georgios Motsenigos from Zakynthos. In 1802 a Medical Society is established. In December of 1803 the mountainous outpost of Souli on the Greek mainland, opposite Corfu, is conquered by the troops of Ali Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Yannina, and several Souliotes find refuge in Corfu offering their services as irregular militia.

**1807:** August 8: General Berthier arrives in Corfu and proclaims the Ionian Islands to be possessions of the French Empire under Napoleon Bonaparte. The Senate retains its governmental role under the control of an

Imperial Commissioner. Several plans are instituted regarding instruction, public safety, public building, agrarian development; a scientific institution with the name “Académie Ionienne” and a School of Fine Arts are established. Nonetheless since 1809 the southern Ionian Islands, beginning with Zakynthos, come gradually under British occupation. In 1810 Corfu itself came under naval blockade.

**1814:** In May the British begin the siege of Corfu. The news of Bonaparte’s abdication and the armistice a month earlier did not reach the French in Corfu and, despite the relevant information given by the British, the garrison insisted on waiting for official orders on the matter. On 23 June the French officially surrendered Corfu to General Campbell. In September in Odessa the “Filiki Etairia” [The Society of Friends] is established, being a secret patriotic society that paved the way in terms of ideology, finance and provisions for the war of Greek Independence.

**1815:** November 5: The Ionian Islands are recognised by the Treaty of Paris as an independent state under the immediate protection of the British crown, represented in the islands by a Lord High Commissioner. The United States of the Ionian Islands begin their political existence.

The post-Napoleonic period finds the Italian peninsula comprising of the following states: the Kingdom of Sardinia (Savoy, Piedmont, Sardinia), the Duchies of Modena, Lucca and Parma, the Grand-duchy of Tuscany, the Papal States, the Kingdom of Naples and the Republic of San Marino. Venice and Lombardy are under Austrian rule. Nonetheless, the idea of Italian unification under one independent state has already been expressed. Temporarily successful risings in 1820 and 1831 further affirm this stance, which is going to take a decisive nationalistic turn from the 1840s. The whole movement is principally led by Giuseppe Mazzini (the founder of the patriotic organisation “Giovine Italia” [Young Italy]) and Giuseppe Garibaldi.

**1816:** Sir Thomas Maitland is appointed as the first Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. The Most Serene Grand Orient of Greece is founded in Corfu, being the earliest independent masonic governing body in modern Greece and concentrating in its ranks people from earlier lodges of the Ionian Islands belonging to other constitutions. With direct connections to Britain, it will remain active until the late 1850s.

**1817:** In March a new Constitutional Charter is being voted under close British inspection. The Lord High Commissioner controls and approves all the issues of the state. The public affairs of the States come under the responsibility of a Senate (executive authority, consisting of six Senators) and a Parliament (legislative body, consisting of 40 Legislators, eleven of whom are in effect appointed by the Lord High Commissioner). The latter

also appoints a Primary Council, which, among others, chooses the candidates for the elections. The military command remains the responsibility of Great Britain. Main administrative posts are eventually held by British appointees. However, for the next decades, and despite great political suspiciousness and tensions, a long process to co-ordinate the Ionian State to the post-Napoleonic, but mainly British, models begins in regard to the economy, agrarian issues, education, industrial development, public safety, legislation, the judicial system, roads network, and public infrastructure such as water supplies.

**1818:** George, the Prince Regent (later King George IV), founds The Order of St Michael and St George, a chivalric order initially awarded to those holding high command in the Ionian Islands and Malta; CMG: Companion; KCMG: Knight Commander; GCMG: Knight Grand Cross.

**1819:** Agrarian insurrections in Lefkada and refusal in Zakynthos of the civilians to be disarmed. The city of Parga, an Ionian outpost on the mainland since the end of Venetian rule, is ceded by Maitland to Ali Pasha of Yannina. Establishment of the Ionian Bible Society. A local committee of the “Filiki Etaireia” is established in Zakynthos.

**1821:** In February the Greek Revolution (the War of Independence) erupts in the Peloponnese. In April the Ionian State adopts a neutral stance towards the Revolution, forbidding any support on the part of the Ionian population for the events on the Greek mainland, but at the same time maintaining a pro-Ottoman stance. However, the Ionians manage to support the Revolution by practical means. Zakynthos becomes the centre of the Ionians’ immediate response to the Revolution: already from 1819 the legendary “Filiki Etaireia”, the patriotic secret society, had been a very active presence among the Ionian Islands. Volunteers from Cefalonia and Zakynthos fight on the Greek mainland.

**1822:** In Yannina Ali Pasha is killed by Ottoman troops, since he was considered as a major danger to the Sultan’s authority in the region. The “National Convention” in Epidauros (in the Peloponnese) votes the first Constitutional Charter of Greece. The massacre of tens of thousands of Greeks by the Ottomans in Chios (in the Aegean Sea) becomes one of the highpoints in the European philhellenic movement.

**1823:** A new “National Convention” in Astros (Peloponnese) votes a new, augmented and more detailed, Constitutional Charter. The Astros Convention is also characterised by the tension between the aspirations of the local primates and the military authority, thus creating grounds for a civil war between Greeks which took place parallel to the war against the Ottomans and, eventually, for the formation of the “English”, “French” and “Russian” parties within the Greek political system. In March Sir Thomas

Maitland receives orders from London to treat the Greek ships as vessels of a nation under war, a stance that constitutes an official recognition by Britain of the Greek Revolution.

**1824:** In January Sir Frederick Adam is appointed as Lord High Commissioner and, given a political reorientation of the British government towards the Greek Revolution, he adopts a discreetly pro-Hellenic stance. November: Ionian University (widely known today as the Ionian Academy) commences its official activities under the rectorship of Frederick North, fifth Earl of Guilford (1766-1827). In Zakynthos the triumvirate Dionyssios Romas, Panagiotis Stefanou and Konstantinos Dragonas formulate the Zakynthos Committee that succeeds in supporting and regulating important issues of logistics, financial support, diplomacy and intelligence of the Revolution. In the following years the Committee plays a decisive role in crucial matters of the Greek struggle.

**1825:** An Egyptian expeditionary force under the command of Ibrahim Pasha invades the Peloponnese, causing insuperable problems to the Greeks. Sir Frederick Adam forwards to the British Government a petition signed by several important figures of the Greek Revolution, in which they seek the support of the Crown for the Greek cause. The so-called Act of Submission is eventually rejected by the British Prime Minister, George Canning.

**1826:** The emblematic and strategic city of Messolongi in the opening of the Gulf of Patras is seized by Ottoman troops after a one-year siege, causing a wave of support in Europe for the Greek cause.

**1827:** In Troizina (in the Peloponnese) a new “National Convention” takes place and another Constitutional Charter is voted. During the same Convention the Corfu-born Count Ioannis Kapodistrias, a former Foreign Minister of the Russian Czar, is elected as the first Governor of the Greek State. On 20 October the joint flotilla of Britain, France and Russia destroys the Turco-Egyptian fleet at Navarino (in the south-west of the Peloponnese), creating thus a decisive turning point in favour of the Greek cause.

**1828:** A French expeditionary force reaches the Peloponnese in order to support the expulsion of the Egyptian forces. Ioannis Kapodistrias arrives in Greece as the first Governor of the Greek State. He will be assassinated in 1831.

**1830:** The Protocol of London is signed by Britain, France and Russia (the so called “Great Powers”), according to which the independence of Greece is officially recognised.

**1832:** After the assassination of Kapodistrias, Prince Otto, the second son of King Ludwig I of Bavaria, is elected by the “Great Powers” as the King of Greece. The Ionian Islands become one of the main refuges for the

Italian patriots who leave their homeland after the unsuccessful patriotic movements in the Italian peninsula. In the autumn Sir George Nugent is appointed High Commissioner and until the end of his office in 1835 a shift towards a liberal stance and the support of the Ionians' ethnicity is obvious in every way (including the establishment of a museum). Among others Nugent grants amnesty to those Ionians who have participated in the Greek Revolution and returns their confiscated properties.

**1833:** The Ionian Parliament begins its sessions with the majority of its legislators belonging to the liberal nobility and intelligentsia. The sessions turn out to be quite eventful, foretelling many similar developments in the years until 1864 between the liberal members of the Parliament and the British-controlled Senate.

**1834:** Athens becomes the capital of the Kingdom of Greece (succeeding Nafplion).

**1836:** Foundation of the Corfu Reading Society.

**1839:** The import of Greek newspapers in the Ionian Islands is banned due to their stance against the Ionian government. Foundation of the Ionian College, the Ionian Islands' second-level educational institution.

**1840:** The liberal Andreas Moustoxidis travels to London in order to submit a report regarding the situation in the Ionian Islands and the negative attitude of the Lord High Commissioner Sir Howard Douglas. The issue of the Ionian Islands gradually becomes an issue of British domestic politics. In the spring the Ionian Bank and the Corfu Stock Exchange are founded.

**1841:** The Ionian Legislative Code is introduced.

**1843:** In Athens the city's garrison and civilians, reportedly supported by the British, turn King Otto's absolute monarchy into a parliamentary democracy and a Constitutional Charter is voted.

**1844:** The official expression, by the Greek prime minister in Athens, of Greek irredentism in the form of the "Megali Idea" [Great Idea], aiming to embrace all ethnic Greeks not already included in the fledgling Greek state, provides the Ionian Islands with an additional focal point in their nationalist endeavours.

**1845:** Establishment in Corfu of the Society of the Friends of Knowledge.

**1848:** The year of the "Springtime of the Peoples" all over Europe. In spring, censorship is abolished and freedom of press is granted to the Ionian Islands, as well as a broadening of the electoral body, as a result of initiatives by the Lord High Commissioner, Sir John Seaton. Until that time there was only one newspaper in the State, the governmental *Gazzetta degli Stati Uniti delle Isole Jonie*. Several newspapers began to be published in the following months, supporting the viewpoints of the three political

groups that also made their presence officially; the “Protectionists”, the “Moderate Liberals” and the “Radical Unionists” (“Rhizospastes”). In September an insurrection erupts in Cefalonia and another one in August 1849, both cause the dynamic intervention of the British Army. The uprising in 1849 is particularly marked by violence, executions and the rigid stance of the new Lord High Commissioner, Henry George Ward.

**1849:** More Italian political refugees find shelter in the Ionian Islands after the collapse of the respective patriotic movements in their homeland in the previous year, during which constitutional and patriotic risings took place in Naples, Sicily, Tuscany, Piedmont, Romagna, Milan, Venice and Rome. The rising in Rome was suppressed by a French expeditionary force in July 1849, which also restored the authority of Pope Pius IX.

**1850:** The elections of March are the most free elections since the States’ foundation and result in a Parliament in which the Moderate Liberals have the majority. Demetrios Solomos, the brother of the poet Dionyssios Solomos, is appointed President of the Ionian Senate. On December 12 the Radicals introduce a resolution regarding the unification of the Ionian Islands with the Kingdom of Greece (*enosis*). This initiative presents for the first time the issue of union at such a political level. Several members of the Radicals are sent into exile.

**1851:** Establishment of the Corfu Chamber of Commerce.

**1852:** The already tense political environment within the Parliament and between the Parliament and the Senate reaches a new highpoint in the sessions of the new legislative body that resulted after the January elections. The reforms proposed by Ward are not accepted. More members of the Radicals are exiled. Greek is officially sanctioned as the official language of the Ionian administration and the courts of justice in accordance with Article 4 of the 1817 Constitution, which finally is fully activated after 35 years.

**1853:** The outbreak of the Crimean War not only focusses Ionian attention on the conduct of the war but also causes severe issues regarding food supply, which are added to an already problematic agricultural production. Within these conditions Ionians participate in the insurrection that takes place in the Ottoman part of the Greek mainland in 1854 and in the same year a naval blockade of Athens and Piraeus by the British and the French imposes Greek neutrality in relation to the Crimean War.

**1856:** In Italy a National Society is founded with the aim of uniting the Italian peninsula under the Sardinian monarchy, which in 1855 had joined the Crimean War allied with the British and the French.

**1858:** George Bowen, the chief secretary of the government, has already proposed the annexation of the Ionian Islands to the Kingdom of Greece,

apart from Corfu and Paxos, which will constitute a British colony. The revealing of this proposal in 1858 meets severe opposition both in the Ionian Islands and in London, and causes the commencement of an already existing discussion on Britain's contradictions regarding its policy in the Ionian Islands.

**1859:** William Ewart Gladstone assumes for a brief period the post of Lord High Commissioner, in order to assess the political landscape. He encounters in Cefalonia and in Zakynthos dynamic demonstrations supporting the union to the Kingdom of Greece. Gladstone proposes a series of reforms that are voted down for different reasons by both the Protectorate's supporters and the Radicals. Envoys of the Garibaldists (Italian nationalists) contact members of the Radicals, and the Ionian issue becomes part of a larger, but relatively short-lived, liberal movement within the Balkans. In Italy, Austria provokes war with Sardinia, revolutions erupt in Tuscany, Modena, Parma and the Papal States. The Austrians are defeated by the French in Lombardy, which is annexed to Piedmont.

**1860:** Establishment in Corfu of the Ionian Society for the Advancement of the Sciences, Grammatology and the Arts.

The French Emperor Napoleon III agrees to the annexation to the Kingdom of Sardinia of several Italian states, a decision which, backed by certain parallel military interventions (in which Giuseppe Garibaldi is the protagonist), eventually leads to the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy under the Sardinian monarch Vittorio Emmanuelle II (17 March 1861).

**1862:** King Otto of Greece abdicates after a public revolt.

**1863:** The change in the geopolitical importance of the Ionian Islands and the need to ensure the election of a new King of Greece favoured by the United Kingdom, persuades Queen Victoria to permit the annexation of the Ionian Islands to the Kingdom of Greece. A treaty is signed between the Great Powers, Denmark (the homeland of the new King of Greece, George I) and the Kingdom of Greece. In October the Ionian Parliament approves the annexation. Substantial parts of Corfu's fortifications are demolished as a result of the treaty of annexation, which ensures the state of neutrality conferred on Corfu and Paxos.

**1864:** June 2 (21 May, according to the Julian calendar): the British troops leave the Ionian Islands and the Lord High Commissioner, Sir Henry Knight Storks, hands over the sovereignty and the administration of the United States of the Ionian Islands to the delegates of the Kingdom of Greece. June 6: King George I of Greece arrives to Corfu. A few weeks later, 84 newly elected legislators from the Ionian Islands participate in the revisionary assembly of the Greek Parliament concerning the formation of a new Constitutional Charter for the Kingdom of Greece.



**1865:** As part of the integration of the Ionian State to the Kingdom of Greece the Ionian Academy, the Ionian College and other educational institutions are abolished.

**1866:** In Crete a revolution erupts against Ottoman rule, which is eventually brutally suppressed, despite direct and indirect support from Greece.

Venice is annexed to the Kingdom of Italy.

**1867:** The long-standing agrarian issue regarding the rehabilitation of landless peasantry reaches a peak and a relevant law is voted by the Greek Parliament. Nonetheless, the issue will practically remain unsolved until the interwar period.

**1870:** The Ottoman Sultan recognises the independence of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church from the authority of the Constantinople Patriarchate, a fact that eventually facilitates the background for Slavic irredentism in the Balkans.

Rome is annexed to the Kingdom of Italy and becomes its capital, and next year the independence of Vatican City is affirmed.

**1875:** King George of Greece agrees to the parliamentary principle that the party that has the majority in the Parliament may form a government.

**1878:** The treaty of San Stefano (a suburb of Constantinople) consolidates Slavic autonomy in the Balkans, a fact that alarms the Greek side. Britain takes over the administration of Cyprus.

**1881:** Thessaly and the region of Arta are annexed to the Kingdom of Greece.

**1893:** The Kingdom of Greece is in a state of bankruptcy.

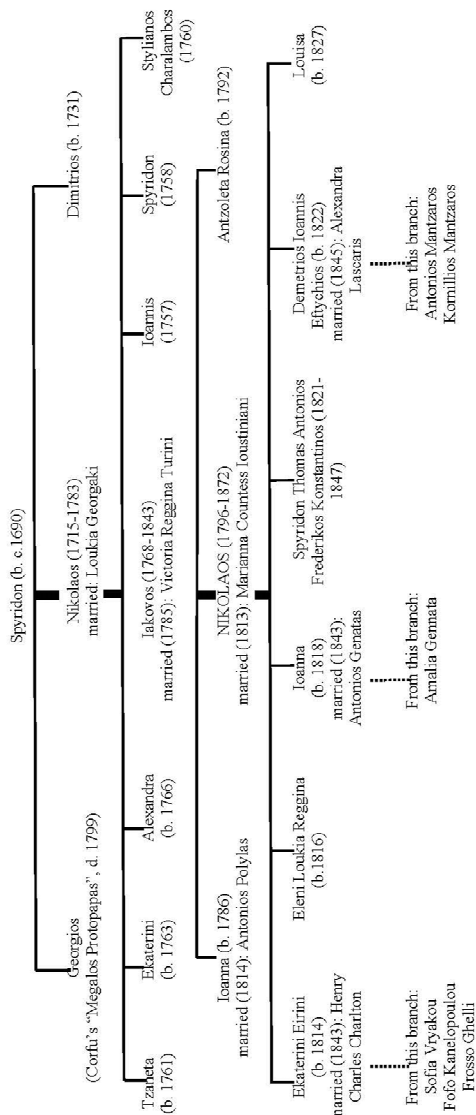
**1896:** The first Olympic Games in the modern era are organised in Athens.

**1897:** War between Greece and the Ottomans ends with the defeat of the Greeks. An international financial control is imposed on Athens.

**1898:** Crete is recognised as an autonomous state, while Britain, France, Italy and Russia retain a military presence. Prince George of Greece is appointed as the High Commissioner of the Cretan State.

# THE MANTZAROS FAMILY TREE

(The composer's direct branch in bold line)



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE EARLY PERIOD (1795-1826)

#### **The family and music environment of a Corfiot gentleman**

##### **The composer's family**

Nikolaos Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros was born on 6 November 1795 (26 October, according to the Julian calendar),<sup>1</sup> almost two years before the end of the island's Venetian administration. He was the only son of Iakovos Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros (1768-1843), one of Corfu's most controversial personalities during the transitional period between the end of the Venetian presence and the first decades of the British Protectorate (1815-1864). The composer's father was a member of the Chalikiopoulos family, one of the most important noble families of the island, whose prominence was inscribed in the *Libro d'Oro* (the "Golden Book" recording the nobility recognised by Venice) as early as 1490 [Fig. 1]. The Chalikiopoulos family's holding of important properties in many parts of rural Corfu (including Gastouri and Kavalouri) ranked them as one of the island's wealthiest, a fact which allowed the family to have an influence in the control of local affairs. Hence, during the Venetian period, members of the Chalikiopoulos family often held posts in the island's government and administration. Indeed, the brother of the composer's grandfather, Georgios Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros (1720-1799), was the last person to hold the position of "Megalos Protopapas" (literally, "Major Head Priest", an Orthodox priest elected by his fellow clergy to undertake the functions of an archbishop). In time and through marriage, or other blood relations, various branches of the Chalikiopoulos family came into being, one of which was "Mantzaros". The Chalikiopoulos family's connection with other noble families further extended its social influence. Regarding the second part of the composer's family surname, "Mantzaros", which applied

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<sup>1</sup> The Ionian Islands used in their administration, until their annexation to the Kingdom of Greece, the Gregorian Calendar (the Orthodox Church, however, used the Julian Calendar). Greece adopted the Gregorian Calendar in 1923.



1. Chalikiopoulos heraldic shield [General State Archives - Corfu Archives]

The Chalikiopoulos family was one of the most prominent families of Corfu, with its members having positions in administration, education and the Orthodox church. Their properties, estates and financial strength at the beginning of nineteenth century were still considerable.

to the whole branch, various interpretations have been given. According to a family tradition recorded by the composer's great-grandchild, Fofa Kanellopoulou, the "Mantzaros" name is a nickname, because, due to the loss of their fortune, the composer's ancestors were called "Manzaro", from the Italian *manzo* (beef), because they ate too much and thus dissipated their fortune. As a sign of their capacity to over-spend, it was said "they could eat a whole ox in a day".

This fact, though, is not confirmed by the sources. The name "Mantzaros" appears in the composer's family surname with increasing frequency from at least 1740, while the first financial hardships of the family, in the form of increasing borrowing and loss of their rural properties, are found only from 1820 onward. At that time, though, "Mantzaros" had already been established and would finally prevail over "Chalikiopoulos" in the following years. However, we are not able to define exactly the origins of "Mantzaros". The family tradition, however convenient and honest as it seems, cannot be sufficiently substantiated. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude the possibility that the family had been related at some time to a person named "Manzaro", especially considering that the surname is still extant in Italy, most frequently located in the Milan area.

Besides, Nikolaos Mantzaros faced, especially after the 1830s, as the head of the Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros branch, many financial hardships that were inherited from his father Iakovos. The documented dissipation of the family funds and the undermining of the family's financial status seem to be due to this Corfiot lawyer, who, even though in 1827 he was still included among the richest Corfiot landowners, couldn't understand or come to terms with the social changes taking place in post-Napoleonic European society, nor could he resist his personal weaknesses. The same mismanagement, though, can be seen in the case of his son, with serious consequences for his work and his family.

Nonetheless, the sense of security, due to his family's influence with the local authority, must have been specially cultivated by the composer's father. Iakovos Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros was the youngest son of Nikolaos Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros, whose name was given to the composer, and the only one of his three male children to receive a university education. After the composer's grandfather died in 1783, the leadership of this branch of the family must have been taken over by his uncle (the future Megalos Protopapas, Georgios). In 1803, following Georgios' death in 1799, the Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros branch was constituted as follows: Iakovos' second uncle Dimitrios Chalikiopoulos (born in 1731) was the head of the family, and the line continued with his three brothers (Nikolaos' sons and Dimitrios' nephews) Ioannis (born in 1757), Spyridon (born in 1758) and

Dr. Iakovos. The branch was completed with Iakovos' son Nikolaos, who of course was, in 1803, the composer aged eight [see Family Tree].

In 1803, however, the thirty-five-year-old Iakovos was already an important personality in the political affairs of Corfu. Although he was younger than the family's other adult male members, he had started having an active part in the family's social advancement and, quite possibly because of his education and his status, took over informally the leadership of this branch of the family, as in 1803 his uncle Dimitrios was over seventy.

Iakovos had studied law in Italy, possibly at the University of Padova, where he was awarded a doctorate, a title by which he would be known for the rest of his life. After his return from Italy, Iakovos practiced law and during the late Venetian period he was appointed to public positions appropriate to his legal background, while in parallel he developed into a formidable orator. His relation with the local administration must have been another reason contributing to his status as the main representative of the Chalikiopoulos Mantzaros branch. In 1785, Iakovos married his lifelong partner, Reggina Victoria Turini, daughter of Giorgio Turini from Zara (today's Zadar in Croatia, but then still a Venetian outpost). Nikolaos, was (according to the known facts) the third child of the Corfiot lawyer's family, coming after his two sisters, Ioanna (1786) and Angioleta Rosina (1792).

When the French Republicans appeared in Corfu in 1797,<sup>2</sup> following their defeat of Venice and with the consequent demise of the aristocratic regime, Iakovos, though he initially preferred to remain inactive, was proposed for various judicial posts, since even at this critical juncture he continued to have indirect contacts with those in power. Besides, although the old aristocracy in this specific era was in turmoil, they were the only ones still having locally the experience and knowledge necessary for the administrative support of the new regime. It is said that on the arrival of the French general Gentili in 1797, Iakovos' uncle, the Protopapas, had presented the general with a copy of Homer's *Odyssey*, saying "May this book teach you to understand and esteem our people".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For a broad and profound presentation and discussion of this period, see Arvanitakis, Dimitris. *Η αγωγή του πολίτη. Η γαλλική παρουσία στο Ιόνιο (1797-1799) και το έθνος των Ελλήνων* [The citizen's instruction. French presence in the Ionian Sea (1797-1799) and the nation of the Greeks], (Ηράκλειο: Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Ermanno Lunzi, *Storia delle Isole Jonie sotto il regimento dei Repubblicani Francesi*, p. 89.