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*CANTARE ALLA GRECA CON CITERE E VIOLINI: WESTERN MUSICAL
TRANSFERS AND LOCALISATIONS IN EARLY MODERN CRETE*

INTRODUCTION: SECULAR GREEK NOISES

During the early seventeenth century, the monastery of St Francis in Candia (now Heraklion), a Venetian colony at the time, was not renowned for being a quiet place. According to an investigation commissioned by the archbishop of Crete, Luca Stella, seculars often lived in the building, annoying the friars by singing and playing music until late at night. The friar Ambrogio Falier declared:

Nel convento di San Francesco si osserva poco il silencio in ogni loco et tempo, poiché infra 4 hore di note, con quelli secolari che s'alogiano in convento, i quali sono delinquenti, non si fa altro che cantar alla greca con citere, violini; et con questi vano anco fra Theofilo Querini et fra Clemente Canale. Et il guardiano vi è stato ancora duo tre volte, non per sonare, ma solamente per cantare.¹

Music historians are well acquainted with such accounts. Reports referring to loud performances disturbing the silence of sacred spaces are indeed countless. However, the provenance and context of the quoted document – a Catholic monastery in early modern Crete – raise some interesting questions. What does the expression ‘cantare alla greca’ mean? Does it refer to singing in a Greek style or just singing in Greek? Were the Italian friars singing in Greek or were they just accompanying the singers

1 ‘In the monastery of St Francis, silence is scarcely observed at every time and in every place, since [the friars] do nothing else but sing *alla greca* with *citere* and *violini* until midnight with the seculars living in the convent, who are scoundrels. They include fra Theofilo Querini and fra Clemente Canale. Even the guardian has joined them two or three times, not to play an instrument but just to sing’, Archivio della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda, Visite e Collegi, vol. 5, f. 331r, 1 September 1625, see Nikolaos Panagiōtakēs, ‘Martyrías gia tē mousikí stīn Kriti katá tīn Venetokratía’, *Thesaurismata* 20 (1990), pp. 9–169, at 140. My translation.

on their instruments? Was the practice of performing Greek songs on *violini* and *citere* – instruments that we traditionally associate with Western musical practices – customary in the local music-making or rather an unusual exception?

Definitive conclusions regarding these issues are beyond the scope of this article, but I will present new perspectives on the musical and cultural encounters that occurred in Crete during the Venetian dominion. The case of the monastery of St Francis represents just one of the many traces emerging from my research into the hybrid soundworld of early modern Crete. In this article, I will offer some preliminary reflections on the transfer and localisation of Western music in Crete, while examining a selection of case studies from archive and literary sources. Before discussing this and other case studies further, I will introduce the historical and social background to my investigation: the island of Crete under the Venetian domination, or Venetocracy. I will focus especially on the early modern history of the island (1453–1669), as most representative of the phenomena of transfer and localisation that I intend to scrutinise.

Then, I will present a selection of documents, taken from a vast array of sources (e.g. archive sources, literary and historical works) that concern the presence of Western music in Crete. I will consider mostly secular music and musical practices that testify to the complex relationship between the Venetian rulers and the native population. The secular sphere has been less considered by historians and musicologists to date, but I argue that it also represents a remarkable opportunity to discuss the Cretan soundworld, moving beyond the perspective offered by official, ecclesiastic institutions. Focusing on the everyday and vernacular sphere will offer a more comprehensive understanding of how Cretans received and localised the musical values imported from Venice and, more broadly, how the Venetian presence affected the local society.

CRETE DURING THE VENETOCRACY

The Venetians acquired Crete from Boniface of Monserrato in 1204, but they only established military control of the island in 1211, after expelling the Genoese pirates who had abusively occupied it.² The Most Serene Republic controlled Crete for more than four centuries, until 1669, when it surrendered the island to the Ottoman

2 The Venetocracy (in Greek: *Βενετοκρατία*, *Venetokratia*) has received substantial and growing interest from scholars of different disciplines. For a comprehensive reference list, see *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete*, ed. David Holton, Cambridge 1991; Sally McKee, *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity*, Philadelphia 2000; *I Greci Durante La Venetocrazia*, eds. Chryssa Maltèzou, Angeliki Tzavara, Despina Vlassi, Venice 2009; Siriol Davies, Jack L. Davis, *Between Venice and Istanbul: Colonial Landscapes in Early Modern Greece*, Princeton 2007; Joëlle Dalégre, *Venise en Crète*, Paris 2019; Theodora Psychoyoyou, 'Latin Musical Practices in the Greek Isles: Mapping Early Modern Confessional Plurality in the Eastern Mediterranean', in: *Seachanges: Music in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds, 1550–1800*, ed. Kate van Orden, Florence 2021, pp. 69–106.

army, after a siege lasting forty years. Until then, Crete had represented a pivot of the Republic's maritime power, and its possession gave Venice military and commercial control of the eastern Mediterranean. Crete was certainly the most important Venetian colony, to the extent that, as stated in a sixteenth-century document, it was considered as 'the other Venice in the East' (*alia civitas venetiarum ad levantem*).³

However, the Republic struggled to maintain political stability and to control the native population. In fact, for the first three centuries, the Venetian history of Crete was characterised by continuous turmoil, in that the colonisers had to face frequent, violent riots by the Cretans, which aimed to destabilise the foreign hegemony.⁴ Furthermore, although constituting the ruling part of society, Latin Christians, mostly Venetian aristocrats, represented only a minority.⁵ After centuries of coexistence with the local Cretans, the Venetian community went through a process of Hellenisation, influencing its religious and linguistic identity.

In a report from Crete dating from the last decades of the sixteenth century, the *Provveditore Generale* Giacomo Foscarini declared:

Delli nobili Veneti adunque molti sono che non tengono conto della nobiltà, [...] non conservano altro che il cognome et il poco feudo, che per le divisioni et subdivisioni egli è rimasto. Hanno del tutto persa la cognitione della lingua italiana et non curandosi in alcuna villa o territorio di quell'isola officiar alla latina [...] son costretti, stando in villa, o non intervenir mai ad alcun divino officio ovvero alle chiese greche, battezar i figliuoli, far li sponsalitij, et sepelir li morti secondo il rito et costume greco; et questi sono Venieri, Barbarigi, Morosini, Boni, Foscarini famiglie in tutto greche [...].⁶

From the earliest period of its dominion on the island, Venice tried to repress the Greek rite, to prevent any political influence from the Orthodox Church and the Eastern Roman emperor. Nonetheless, as we can see from Foscarini's statement, any attempt to prevent or contain the spread of the Orthodox faith among the Venetian settlers ultimately failed. In the main cities, the Italian and Latin languages and the Western rite were certainly customary for the Venetian institutions and the ruling

3 The document is published in François Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du Senat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, 3 vols., Paris 1958–61, mm. 205–206, no. 2994. For further comment on this document and a social and political overview, see Chrysa Maltèzou, 'The Historical and Social Context', in: *Literature and Society*, pp. 17–48.

4 See S. McKee, *Uncommon Dominion*.

5 See Spiros Spanàkis, 'Í thriskeutikó-ekklisiastikí katástasí stin Kríti ton XVI aióna', *Chrētika Chronika* 21 (1969), pp. 134–152.

6 'Among the noble Venetians, many are those who have no memory of their noble descent [...] who preserve nothing but their surname and their few remaining fiefs. They have completely forgotten the Italian language and, since there is no possibility of hearing mass according to the Latin rite in any of the island's villages, [...] they are obliged, while staying in their village to baptise their children, to marry and to bury their dead in accordance with the Orthodox rite and Greek customs. And these are the Venieri, Barbarigi, Morosini, Boni, Foscarini – families in all respects Greek [...]. Italian text from Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, MS It. VII, 631a, f. 56r, quoted in *ibid.*, English translation from C. Maltèzou, 'The Historical and Social Context', pp. 33–34.

aristocracy. Yet the urban ‘middle and low classes’, and possibly part of the Cretan aristocracy, were certainly bilingual, if not exclusively Greek native speakers. Therefore, the presence of Venetian culture involved the grafting of the Italian language, arts and literature into a world that, for the entire duration of the Western sovereignty, remained mostly Greek.⁷

EARLY MODERN CRETAN SOCIETY

While a certain degree of social instability characterised the entire duration of the Venetocracy – especially in rural and mountainous regions – at the beginning of the modern period, a new multicultural society gradually emerged in the main urban centres of Candia, Hania, Sithia and Rethymnon. Starting from the fifteenth century, Crete enjoyed an extraordinary cultural heyday, known as the Cretan Renaissance.⁸ At first glance, the idea of a Greek Renaissance may seem paradoxical. Being a former territory of the Eastern Roman Empire, the island did not experience the same cultural discontinuity with classical antiquity as Italy and Western Europe did. As a matter of fact, the label Renaissance is commonly used to describe a period of artistic flourishing that not only overlaps with the contemporary Italian cultural movement but hinges on the prolific transfer and recreation of works and ideas imported from Western Europe. Scholars conventionally consider the literary production of this period to be representative of the inception of modern Greek national literature. Indeed, from the fifteenth century onward, Crete hosted an important production of literary works in Greek, especially tragedies, comedies, pastoral plays,⁹ historiographical works and romances.¹⁰

In parallel, visual art flourished too, especially the icon painting tradition of the so-called Cretan School. From the mid-sixteenth century, the liturgical icon was the first mode of artistic expression to reflect the results of enduring contacts with

7 C. Maltèzou, ‘The Historical and Social Context’, *Literature and Society*, passim.

8 The most relevant complete survey on this topic in English is *Literature and Society*, ed. D. Holton. See also Stéfanos Kaklamànēs, ‘Cretan Literature (Mid 14th–17th Century)’, in: *Greece: Books and Writers*, Athens 2001, pp. 35–51; Michel Lassithiotakis, *Littérature et culture de la Crète vénitienne*, Paris 2010. Cristiano Luciani (*Manierismo cretese: ricerche su Andrea e Vincenzo Cornaro*, Rome 2005) defines this period as Cretan Mannerism.

9 On this subject, see Walter Puchner, ‘Tragedy’, in: *Literature and Society*, pp. 129–158; Rosemary Bancroft-Marcus, ‘The Pastoral Mode’, in: *Literature and Society*, pp. 79–102; Alfred Vincent, ‘Comedy’, in: *Literature and Society*, pp. 103–128; Gōgō Varzeliōtē, *Kritikī kōmōdia kai kathīmerinī zōī. Schēsi skinikīs eikōnas kai koinōnias sto venetokratoumeno Chándak*, Venice 2011.

10 To mention only a few cases, the Cretan playwright Georgios Chortatzēs modelled his tragedy *Erofilī* on Battista Giraldi Cinzio’s *Orbecche*, while Ioannis Andreas Troilos’s *King Rodholinos* borrows the main plot of Torquato Tasso’s *Il Re Torrismondo*. Moreover, the episode featuring Armida and Rinaldo from Tasso’s main work, *La Gerusalemme liberata*, was also repurposed by Chortatzēs as a theatrical intermedio in *Erofilī*. For a general survey, see Arnold Van Geemert, ‘Literary Antecedents’, in: *Literature and Society*, pp. 49–78.

Italian visual art. Many of the most famous painters of the period, such as Michaël Damaskēnòs, Geōrghios Klòntzas, and Kostantīnos and Emmanuél Tzànes, mingled the traditional iconographical features of the Eastern tradition with architectonic and decorative elements typical of Italian and European Renaissance art.¹¹ This was the fertile ground where Doménikos Theotokópoulos, or El Greco, received his formation and started his career as an icon painter in Crete, before moving to Venice, Rome and then Spain.¹²

However, as David Holton has pointed out, early modern Cretan culture was not just a passive import of Western (mostly Italian) models, ‘but the result of an extraordinary cross-fertilisation of cultures that took place in a society that, by the sixteenth century, had developed a homogenous character of its own, neither Greek, nor Italian, but Cretan’.¹³ Although originally imported, if not imposed, by the Venetian administration, the presence of an Italianate cultural capital on the island went through a centuries-long process of localisation, which laid the foundations for a new distinct Cretan society.

Music was also a fundamental component of that process, but it has not received comparable attention thus far. Except for the crucial archive research led by Nikòlaos Panagiōtākēs,¹⁴ scholars have focused mostly on the Eastern Christian musical tradition and its contact with the Latin liturgy.¹⁵ With few exceptions, the impact of Western secular music on the Cretan population still represents an unexplored field of research. Today, only a few documents are edited and available, and extensive research into all archive, historical, visual and literary sources has yet to be carried out.

11 Manolēs Chatzēdākēs, *Etudes sur la peinture postbyzantine*, London 1976; Anastasia Drandaki, *The Origins of El Greco: Icon Painting in Venetian Crete*, New York 2009; eadem, ‘Piety, Politics, and Art in Fifteenth-Century Venetian Crete’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 71 (2017), pp. 367–406.

12 Nikolaos Panagiōtākēs, *El Greco: The Cretan Years*, transl. John C. Davis, Farnham 2009.

13 David Holton, ‘The Cretan Renaissance’, in: *Literature and Society*, pp. 1–16, at 15.

14 Nikolaos Panagiōtākēs, ‘Martyries gia tī mousikī stīn Kríti katá tīn Venetokratía’, *Thesaurismata* 20 (1990), pp. 9–169; idem, *Ī paidéia kai ĩ mousikī stīn Kríti katá tīn venetokratía*, Hērakleion 1990; idem, *Fragkískos Leontarītis. Kritikós mousikosynthētis tou dékatoú éktou aióna. Martyries gia tī zōi kai to érgo tou*, Venice 1990.

15 Flora Kritikou, ‘Compositions of “Credo”: Influences of Latin Settings on the Respective Byzantine Ones of Cretan origin (16th–17th Cent.)’, in: *Cantus Planus. Study Group of the International Musicological Society, Papers Read at the 16th Meeting (Vienna, Austria, 2011)*, eds. Christian Troelsgård, et al., Vienna 2012, pp. 210–217; eadem, ‘Byzantine Compositions Entitled “Dysikon” (Western) and “Fragikon” (Frankish)’, *Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music* 3 (2018), pp. 191–199; Flora Kritikou, Fañch Thoraval, ‘The Sui Generis Cretan Chant (16th–17th c.): A Case Study on the Settings by Venediktos Episkopopoulos’, *Series Musicologica Balcanica* 1 (2021), pp. 2–18; Eftachios Makris, ‘“Musica greca”, “psaltikī tōn Latínōn” kai to cheirógrafo tīs Platytéras stīn Kérkyra’, in: *Thémata Ellinikís Mousikís I. Praktiká imerídas tīs 3Iīs Augoústou 2013*, ed. Panagiōtēs Skoufēs, Kardamyli 2017, pp. 47–80; T. Psychoyou, ‘Latin Musical Practices’.

MUSIC IN THE VENETIAN INSTITUTIONS

The introduction of Western musical instruments had a significant impact on the Cretan population from the very beginning of the Venetocracy. The Venetians took great advantage of their musical tradition as a means to convey their sovereignty. As demonstrated by both Panagiōtākēs and Aspasia Papadākē,¹⁶ a consistent number of native Cretans constituted the wind ensemble of the Duca di Candia – the most important political authority, representing the Doge. Many of the *piffari* players had Greek names, and they were possibly also Greek Orthodox (see Table 1).

Table 1. Partial list of the Duca di Candia's *piffari*¹⁷

Date of employment	Name of the instrumentalist	Name of the predecessor
16.9.1578	Antonio Malachia	Janni Malachia
17.2.1580	Manoli Malachia	Frangia Malachia
8.11.1581	Polo Piga	Manoli Malachia
1.1.1582	Giana Malachia	Giorgi Malachia
4.2.1583	Manoli Dafnomili	Polo Piga
3.10.1584	Zorzi Mangafuri	Zuanne Malachia
1.9.1586	Antonio Malachia	Zuanne Malachia
1.9.1586	Janni Malachia	Antonio Malachia
[...]	[...]	[...]
26.7.1637	Zorzi Galata	Giorgachi Prezuvale
17.2.1640	Frangia Galata	Zorzi Galata

Choosing natives to accompany the duke in major civic and religious events could seem risky given the island's social and political instability. However, due to economic and political reasons, the Venetian authorities might have preferred to train local musicians instead of importing instrumentalists from Italy. Moreover, to convince the local population to attend the most important official state events, it could have served as a means of political control.

According to notarial deeds preserved in the *Notai di Candia* repository, held at the State Archive in Venice, both Venetian and Cretan families used to hire professional Italian instrumentalists as music teachers.¹⁸ While for noble or wealthy people music represented much-prized domestic entertainment, the lower classes faced considerable economic difficulty in securing a solid musical education for their children. In the document quoted below, for instance, a Cretan barber from Candia, Alexios Malachias, hires the Italian trumpeter Benvenuto to teach his son Michael (Michalis) to play the trumpet and the flute.

16 N. Panagiōtākēs, 'Martyries'; idem, *Ī paideía*; Aspasia Papadākē, *Cerimonie religiose e laiche nell'isola di Creta durante il dominio veneziane*, Spoleto 2005.

17 From A. Papadākē, *Cerimonie*, p. 200

18 N. Panagiōtākēs, 'Ī paideía', especially documents nn. 22, 28 and 41.

[XIII Octobris 1506]

Ego Alexius Malachias, tonsor, quondam Demetrii, habitator burgi Candide, [quia a] tibi magistro Bevenuto, filio Lucae, trombete, hic presenti et assentienti, quia affirmo tecum, dicto magistro Bevenuto, Michaelem, filium meum, quem docere habeas et tenearis arte trombete et fauti prout scis et potes, stando in domo tecum die noctuque usque per totum tempus quo hic steterit presens clarissimus dominus duca; [...]

Testes. Ser Paulus Contareno, protopsalta; magister Manusius Thologiti.¹⁹

Quite reasonably, Malachias did not hire Benvenuto to provide his son with a pleasant distraction, but rather to grant him specific music training in wind instruments such as trumpets and *piffari*. In this case, the barber Alexios assumed that an instrumental training could offer his son a coveted professional career as a civic musician, with a stable income. As shown in Table 1, at least seven musicians of the Malachias family served as *piffari* between 1578 and 1586. The young Michalis was possibly the first in a long line of civic musicians.

Besides institutional secular music, the establishment and dissemination of the Latin rite were also of primary concern to the Republic. Despite Western Christians representing a minority, each of the main Cretan cities had many churches and religious institutions, most of them with an organ, and in some cases a *schola* for the training of young singers. In archive documents, the presence of an organ in the churches of Candia is attested as early as the fifteenth century, at least in the cathedral of Saint Titus and the mendicant monasteries of Saint Francis and Saint Peter – the latter belonging to the Dominican order.²⁰ Every Latin religious institution certainly cultivated plainchant, and there is only indirect reference testifying to polyphonic practices. At St Titus', the Cretan musician Francesco Londaritis (1518–c.1572) was trained as both a singer and a composer. Londaritis enjoyed an international career and worked at St Mark's in Venice and in the cappella of Albrecht V of Bavaria.²¹ He also published traditional Western polyphonic compositions, such as motets, villanelle and madrigals.²² This shows that Londaritis's

19 'I, Alexios Malachias, barber, son of Demetrius, a citizen of Candia, assert that you, master Benvenuto, son of Luca, trumpeter – who is here present and agrees – will teach the art of the trumpet and flute, as far as you know and can, to my son Michael, while he [Michael] will stay at your house, night and day, as long as the current Duca remains in charge. After the Duca's departure, my son should return home. [...] Witnesses, Ser Paulus Contareno, protopsalta, master Manusius Thologiti'. Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Notai di Candia*, b. 177 Michele Mellino, f. 53r. 13 October 1506, see N. Panagiōtākēs, 'Ἰ παιδεία', p. 62.

20 Ibid. Due to its importance, the Duca di Candia's church of Saint Mark would also have had an organ.

21 N. Panagiōtākēs, *Fragkiskos Leontaritis*.

22 Leondaritis published two books of motets (*Modulationum sex vocum quae vulgo motecta vocantur, liber primus*, Venice: Rampazetto 1564, RISM A/I L 2807, and *Modulationum quinque vocum quae vulgo motecta vocantur, liber primus*, Venice: Gardano 1566, RISM A/I L 2808), while his masses, madrigals and villanelle are scattered in different printed and manuscripts anthologies. For a complete list of the extant sources, see N. Panagiōtākēs, *Fragkiskos Leontaritis*, pp. 201–228, and *Dytikí mousikí stí Venetokratoùmeni Elláda*, ed. Pýrros Bamichas, Athens 2017.

training at Saint Titus' included not only plainchant and organ but also Western polyphony.²³

Although he was nicknamed 'il Greco' by his contemporaries, Leondaritis's musical career was no different from that of any other Italian or European composer of his time, except for the fact that he received his training in Candia. Londaritis's case testifies not only to an established polyphonic tradition in the main Venetian churches in Crete, but also that Latin musical practice remained unaffected by the soundworld of the majority of the Greek Orthodox population.

Although scholars have pinpointed elements of Western musical contamination in the Greek rite,²⁴ no traces have yet been found of a significant hybridisation of musical practice within the Latin rite with the Eastern *Psaltica* tradition. Indeed, clues pointing to the contamination of Latin liturgical music with the Eastern tradition are harder to find inasmuch as Western polyphony represented the soundmark of Venetian hegemonic power in Crete.

Since the early stages of the Venetocracy, the Orthodox authorities, priests and singers were invited, if not compelled, to participate in the major civic and religious festivities, alongside the Roman clergy. Especially in the wake of the 1571 Ottoman conquest of Cyprus, Venetian institutions became more tolerant of Greek liturgical practices. In fact, as the Ottoman threat became increasingly ominous, Venetians started seeking a more peaceful, religious coexistence with the Cretans, in order to avoid upsetting the majority of the locals. Therefore, the streets of the main Cretan cities often resounded with multilingual and multifaith processions used as a public display of social cohesion, but also as a demonstration of obedience to the main authority.²⁵

SECULAR POLYPHONIES AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The introduction of Western polyphony on the island had an impact well beyond liturgical life. As early as the fourteenth century, the Greek poet Stéfanos Sachlíkēs (1330–c.1391) provides us with one of the first references to polyphonic practices in Crete. In a long poem he composed while in prison, he describes his jailor having dinner and singing with some friends:

Κι ἐκεῖνοι εἰς μίαν ἤρχιζαν να τρώγουν καί να πίνουν,
Να τραγοδοῦν λατινικά και να με μπισκαντάρου.²⁶

23 We have little information about another musical figure from Crete (or of Cretan descent), the composer Francesco de Laudis, who wrote at least two villanelle in RISM B/I 1565¹2 and two five-part madrigals in RISM B/I 1575¹1; see N. Panagiōtākēs, *Fragkiskos Leontarītīs*, and *Dytikí mousikí stī Venekratoúmeni Elláda*.

24 See n. 15.

25 A. Papadákē, *Cerimonie*.

26 'They came to eat and drink / And to sing in Latin a discantus' (literarily: to 'discant' me), text from Arnold Van Geemert, 'Ο Stéfanos Sachlíkēs kai ī epochí tou', *Thesaurismata* 17 (1980), pp. 36–130, at 47. My translation.

Despite its brevity, this excerpt testifies not only to the presence of informal polyphonic practices but also to the author being acquainted with precise musical terminology. Moreover, it should be noted that in late medieval and early modern Greek, the word ‘Latinikà’ not only referred strictly to the Latin language, but it carried the broader meaning of ‘non-Greek’, like the word ‘frango’, which referred to any person of Western origin (Italian, French, German, etc.). Clearly, at this stage, polyphony was perceived as something foreign, as it was labelled ‘Latin’ and therefore alien to the local culture. Sachlikēs’s description may reflect the stark contrast between Cretan and Venetians, epitomised by the 1363 revolt of Saint Titus, a bloody and unsuccessful attempt by the local aristocracy to make the island an independent state. Things would change only a century later, when a more hybrid society and culture arose and Cretans start localising Western music, making it part of their own culture.

Documents dating from the sixteenth century and later suggest that Western polyphony had become by then an accepted, if not customary, practice among the Cretans. Composing or singing polyphony with Greek texts is quite often found in historical and literary sources of the time. For instance, as Panagiōtākēs shows, a polyphonic performance is mentioned in the anonymous *Lament of the Poor Falido*.

Καί μέ το τραγούδι πρώτας
ἄλλο ἀμπάσο τραγουδῶντας.²⁷

According to Panagiōtākēs interpretation of this excerpt, the expression ‘alto a basso’ (high-to-low) represents a clear loanword describing counterpoint. Linguistic borrowing, as I will show later, recurs very often in Cretan documents to describe objects, ideas, and practices introduced by the Venetians.

Reference to polyphony is indeed commonly found in many historical and literary works. Another significant example is provided by the Veneto-Cretan administrator Zuanne (Ioannis) Papadopoli. In his written memoirs, entitled *L’Occio, The Time of Leisure*, he describes the performance of songs and madrigals on the occasion of a solemn funeral.

Dopo la di lui morte erano seguite gran canzone e madrigali sopra in quella morte de Giovanantonio Muazzo in greco et italiano.²⁸

Papadopoli’s account is quite detailed, as it mentions specific Western genres, such as the madrigal, which, as he states, was performed in Greek, and by Cretan singers. Although no sources of multivocal works in Greek by Cretan composers have yet been found,²⁹ convincing evidence of the polyphonic setting of Greek texts can be found in local theatrical output of the late sixteenth century.

27 ‘and singing this song high-to-low’ (alto to bass), see N. Panagiōtākēs, ‘Martyries’. My translation.

28 ‘After the demise of Zan Antonio Muazzo, there were numerous songs and madrigals on his death in Italian and in Greek’, text and translation from Zuanne Papadopoli, *L’Occio = Time of Leisure*, ed. and transl. Alfred Vincent, Venice 2007, p. 78.

29 The practice of extemporary or written contrafacta should also have been quite common at the time, although, to my knowledge, it is not yet clearly documented.

Mostly inspired by contemporary Italian theatre, Cretan playwrights wrote a significant number of tragedies, comedies, pastorals, and *intermedi* in Greek, surviving only in manuscript sources. The sources of the Cretan *intermedi* are of great musical interest, as they preserve the original stage directions, relating to the first performances. These stage directions consist mostly of paratexts prescribing the actors' movements, alongside the dances and music to be performed during each scene. One prime example is that of the *intermedi* for the tragedy *Erofile*, written by the Rethymnian author Georgios Chortatzēs. The first *intermedio*, based on Torquato Tasso's *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, describes a musical entertainment that Armida prepares for Rinaldo. At her command, maidens enter the scene and dance before the paladin.

Εἰς τοῦτο φέρνουσι οἱ Κορασίδες μορεσκάντο μια καδέγλα και καθίζει, και ξαρματώνουντο και βάνουσί-ντου μια φωρεσά λασίβα και μια τζόγια εἰς τη κεφάλη και στολιζούντονε, κι ὅλα μορεσκάντο, και μέσα ᾽ς τοῦτο γρικούνται ἀπὸ μέσα ἀπὸυ τη σένα σονάρε και τούτα τα τραγούδια.³⁰

During the dance, a choir sings what is very likely to be a polyphonic song, if not a madrigal. Notably, the author of the stage directions employs a specific musical vocabulary, based mostly on Italian loanwords such as *morescando* (μορεσκάντο) and *sonare* (σονάρε). Although usually referring to *moresca* battle dances, in this case the verb *morescare* assumes the general sense of dancing, as it is performed by Armida's maidens.³¹

Similarly, the word *sonare* is a direct linguistic borrowing from the same Italian word, as it describes an instrumental performance. This expression can be found usually in Cretan texts of the time. In the aforementioned *Lament of the Poor Falido*, the similar loanword *sonadorous* – meaning 'instrumentalists' – appears alongside a detailed list of Western instruments in Greek.

Μέρα νύκτα σοναδόρους στα καντούνια και τούς φόρους,
τζίτερες, βιολιά, λαγοῦτα, ἄρπες, μπάσα καί φιαοῦτα,
κλαδοτζίμπανα, τρουμπέτες.³²

I suggest that the choice of this very Italian loanword implies a more complex meaning. The word *sonare* may be used to allude specifically to Italianate instru-

30 'Here the Maidens, dancing [in the Greek original: *morescando*, μορεσκάντο], bring him a chair and he sits down, and they take off his armour and dress him in a frivolous costume, put a garland on his head and adorn him, all the while dancing, and in the meantime, instrumental music [*sonare*, σονάρε] is heard behind the scenes and these songs are sung', Interlude II, text and translation from Georgios Chortatzēs, *Plays of the Veneto-Cretan Renaissance*, vol. 1, *Texts and Translations*, ed. and transl. Rosemary Bancroft-Marcus, Oxford 2015, p. 146.

31 The word *morescare* may assume different meanings in the same text – and possibly in the whole tradition of Cretan incidental music. For instance, in Interlude III, *morescando* refers to a real dance battle, and it is performed by two male impersonators, mimicking a battle with two wild beasts, see G. Chortatzēs, *Plays of the Veneto-Cretan Renaissance*, pp. 534–535.

32 'Night and day the musicians [*sonadorous*], in the corners and the squares, / play citterns, violins, lutes, harps, bass viols and flutes, / harpsichords and trumpets', see also N. Panagiōtākēs, 'Martyries'. My translation.

mental music, possibly played with Western instruments.³³ The use of this specific loanword provides significant hints about not only the kind of music performed but also the extent to which the Cretans assimilated Italian music into their everyday life. Certainly, there are not enough clues for us to understand either what kind of instrumental music or polyphony – e.g. imitative or homorhythmic – was used in this context or whether, and if so how, the Greek language and versification affected Western canonical compositional strategies. However, documents of this kind reveal that Cretan Greeks accustomed to Western polyphony and instrumental practice – be it composed or improvised – were more the rule than the exception.

A HYBRID SOUNDWORLD

Greek polyphonic singing is not the only documented instance of the localisation of Italian musical practices in Crete. A vast array of sources show that, at least in the last century of the Venetocracy, Italians and Greeks shared common hybridised musical practices. At the start of this article, I presented a document relating to an investigation that describes how both Italians and Greeks used to mingle and sing together – perhaps in both languages – in a Latin sacred space, such as the Franciscan monastery of Candia. The same official enquiry was also extended to other religious institutions present on the island, such as the Dominican monastery of Saint Peter in Candia. Many of the Dominican friars at Saint Peter's reported that their institution hosted secular and multilingual 'profanations', more often than one might expect. On 14 March 1626, Friar Andrea of Sithia asserted:

Dico bene che vi è poca obediencia in alcuni et particolarmente nella gioventù, cioè il padre fra Bene[de]tto Bertolini, lettore, fra Christofalo del Sole, fra Pietro Martire, Fra Dioniso da Venetia, sacerdoti, et anco fra Bernardin Corner e fra Marco Salamon, giovani novici [...] In refettorio o tempo della tavola si osserva il silentio, [...] ma in altro tempo, nel dormitorio et nelle stantie, non si osserva totalmente d'alcuni, come dal padre sudetto Bertolini, poiché nella sua stantia in ogni tempo si sona di citere et violini, apicordi et liuti, con cantare et strepitare, con intervento ancora di secolari, seguitato anco dai sopradetti fratti, suoi seguaci.³⁴

33 In early modern Greek, the act of playing an instrument is commonly expressed with the word *chtipao* (χτυπώ), to touch or to hurt – similar to the Italian *toccare*. See e.g. the excerpt from Vitsentzos Kornaros's *Erotokritos*, quoted below.

34 'I say that there is little obedience, and especially among the younger ones, that is, the reader father Bene[de]tto Bertolini, and the priests fra Christofalo del Sole, fra Pietro Martire, Fra Dioniso da Venetia, and the young novices fra Bernardin Corner and fra Marco Salamon [...]. In the refectory or during the meals, silence is observed, but at other times of the day, in the dormitory and the rooms, some [friars] do not observe [silence] at all, such as said father Bertolini, since in his room, citterns and violins, harpsichords and lutes are played all the time, with singing and much noise, and the participation of seculars as well, together with the said friars, his followers'. Archivio della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda, Visite e Collegi, vol. 5, f. 294v–295r, see N. Panagiōtākēs, 'Martyries'. My translation and emphases.

His statement is confirmed a few days later by friar Andrea Gregus, who reports that Bertolini used to teach music also to Greek seculars:

E nella cella del padre Bertolini si radunano a tutte l'hore li sopranominati padri et ivi si mangia et si beve disregulatamente con chiassi et strepiti, sonando et cantando et strepitando, con disturbo e scandalo delli remanenti padri [...] nella qual camera tiene scola d'insegnar musica a secolari, greci e latini.³⁵

According to his fellow brothers, the young friar Benedetto Bertolini was responsible for the scandalous musical scenes at the monastery. Not only did he organise lively musical entertainment – involving both friars and seculars until late at night — but he also used his cell as a music classroom. Notably, his students included not only friars and Italian seculars, but also Greeks, who possibly learned to play every sort of instrument and joined him in joyful, though illicit, musical soirées. These documents confirm that at least part of the Greek population had several opportunities to learn musical practices and instruments – such as Western polyphony, harpsichord, violin, etc. – imported by the Venetian colonists. What is more, they prove that Cretans practised Western music not only on official occasions or lofty cultural events but in their everyday life, as well.

Evidence to that effect can be found in the aforementioned memoirs by Zuanne Papadopoli. In another passage of *L'Occio*, Papadopoli states that both noble and middle-class men hired barbers to play music on summer nights:

Linstate, in quelli eccessivi caldi, li gentiluomin et altri comodi a meza e una hora di notte sortivano dalle loro case squasi nudi con la camisa sola [...], seguitando le musiche con instromenti d'ogni sorte, cioè manicordio, liuto, violin, basso, flauto, cittera o chitarra. Ne facevano spesa di sorte, perché i sonadori erano tuti barbieri comodi, che volentieri ancora per loro spasso andavano così uniti et in concerto con un puto o puta che cantavano a uso di quel paese et in grecho et delle volte italliano, caminando per le contra sino, delle volte, duo o una hora di farsi giorno.³⁶

Papadopoli relates that the barbers used to employ youngsters from country villages to sing popular tunes, mostly in Greek, and sometimes also in Italian. At the

35 'The said friars gather all the time at father Bertolini's cell. There, they eat and play immoderately, making noise and commotion, playing, singing and making a din, causing bother and scandal to the other friars. [...] in this room, [Bertolini] teaches music to seculars, both Greek and Latin'. Archivio della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda, Visite e Collegi, vol. 5, f. 307, see N. Panagiōtākēs, 'Martyriēs'. My translation and emphases.

36 'During the hot summer, gentlemen and other wealthy people used to go outside their homes almost naked, dressed just with a shirt [...] at one hour and a half after night, playing music with instruments of every kind, that is, clavichord, lute, violin, bass, flute, cittern or guitar. They used to spend a lot of money on music, since the musicians were all wealthy barbers, which enjoyed playing all together with a boy or girl that sang according to the custom of that country, in Greek, and sometimes in Italian, while wondering around the countryside until the second or first hour of the day'. Text and translation from Z. Papadopoli, *L'Occio = Time of Leisure*, p. 102.

time, the aristocracy and the middle class inhabiting the island could be both Venetian or native; in the latter case, they could be descendants or old Italian settlers, as well as of Greek origins. All of them, however, seemed to share similar musical interests, without any regard for the language in which the music was performed.

According to all the documents quoted above, Greek and Italian songs and music were often performed at the same time and in the same space, without raising any surprise or scandal. Also, the friars' complaints concerned only the noise of musical activities happening in the monastery; they never referred to the presence of natives – or at least that was not openly opposed.

ITALIAN MUSIC WITH GREEK WORDS

Latin and Italian sources seem altogether vaguer when describing the music of the 'others', that is, the native Cretans. Documents and literary works in Greek, meanwhile, especially those dating from the late stages of the Venetocracy, are characterised by a more accurate, albeit peculiar, vocabulary. Furthermore, they provide us with precious information about how the local society perceived, discussed and even made use of Western music.

Another significant case of the transfer and localisation of musical ideas, values and vocabulary from the Italian world into Cretan society concerns a literary work different from those described thus far: the chivalric romance *Erotokritos*.³⁷ As I have argued elsewhere,³⁸ this romance offers a significant clue to the role played by Italianate literary music in Veneto-Cretan society. It was written around 1590–1610 by the Hellenised Venetian nobleman Vitsentzos Kornaros.³⁹ Kornaros was a prominent member of the Accademia degli Stravaganti of Candia, an important agent in the promotion of Italian culture as a means of social distinction and propaganda.⁴⁰

This romance, set in an imaginary ancient Greece, narrates the story of *Erotokritos*, an archetypal Renaissance man: a young knight, scholar and musician who, after many endeavours, eventually marries the daughter of the king of Athens. *Erotokritos*, being himself a sovereign-to-be, embodies the ethical models of

37 Due to the primary importance of this work, its related scholarship is too vast to be summarised here. I refer English readers to David Holton (ed.), *Erotokritos. Studies in Modern Greek*, Bristol 1991, and Vitsentzos Kornaros, *Erotokritos*, transl. Gavin Betts, Stathis Gauntlett, Thanasis Spilias, Melbourne 2004.

38 Alexandros Maria Hatzikiriakos, 'A Maniera Greca: Vitsentzos Kornaros's *Erotokritos* and the Localisation of Western Music in Early Modern Crete', *Il Saggiatore Musicale* 27 (2021), pp. 147–173.

39 On Kornaros's biography, see Nikòlaos Panagiōtākēs, *O poiētīs tou Erōtokritou kai alla venetokritiká meletimata*, Hērakleion 1989, and D. Holton, *Erotokritos*.

40 On the Stravagantis and other academies, see: Nikòlaos Panagiōtākēs, Alfred Vincent, 'Néa stoicheía gia tìn Akadímia tòn Stravaganti', *Thesaurismata* 7 (1980), pp. 52–81; Giorgio Pilidis, 'Fuori dal comun sentiero. L'Accademia degli Stravaganti di Candia: innesto socio-culturale italiano', in: *I Greci Durante la Venetocrazia*, pp. 675–687; Bancroft-Marcus's introductory materials in G. Chortätzēs, *Plays of the Veneto-Cretan Renaissance*; Rosemary Bancroft-Marcus, 'Literary Cryptograms and the Cretan Academies', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 36 (1983), pp. 47–76.

aristocracy and high society. In a way, this makes the romance a veiled treatise of conduct. Erotokritos's identity is closely bound to the symbolism of the Western instrument he plays, that is, the lute, mentioned in the text as *λαγούτο*, a loanword from the Venetian *laùto*.

In this case, the importance of the object goes well beyond linguistic considerations, as the lute is clearly used as a humanistic symbol. This is made clear by the description of Erotokritos's serenades, or nocturnal music, described in the first part of the romance:

Κι όντεν η νύκτα η δροσερή κάθ' άνθρωπο αναπέύγει
 και κάθε ζο να κοιμηθεί τόπο να βρει γυρεύγει
 ήπαιρνεν το λαγούτο του, κ' εσιγανοπορπάτει,
 κ' εκτύπα το γλυκιά-γλυκιά ανάδια στο Παλάτι.
 Ήτον η χέρα ζάχαρη, φωνή είχε σαν τ' αηδόνι·
 κάθε καρδιά, να του γροικά, κλαίγει κι αναδακρυώνει.
 Ήλεγεν κι ανεθίβανεν της Ερωτιάς τα Πάθη,
 και πως σ' Αγάπη εμπέρδεσεν, κ' ενύγη κ' εμαράθη.
 Κάθε καρδιά ανελάμπανεν, αν ήτο σαν το χιόνι,
 σ' έτοια γλυκότατη φωνή κοντά να τση σιμώνει·
 εμέρωνε όλα τ' άγρια, τα δυνατά απαλαίναν,
 στο νουν τ' ανθρώπου ό,τι ήλεγε, με λύπηση επομέναν·
 εμίλειε παραπόνεσες που τσι καρδιές εσφάζα.⁴¹

His sweet singing possesses conspicuous supernatural properties, capable of softening the temperaments of animals and even altering the physical state of ice and marble – all features that allude to the myth of Orpheus. Like the mythical hero, Erotokritos's sweet voice moves his listeners to tears (l. 394), sparks feeling in frozen hearts (l. 396), stirs the inanimate (l. 342) and, most importantly, tames wild beasts. As recently discussed by Tim Shephard, in Italian Renaissance art and literature,⁴²

41 'When the cool night gave rest to every mortal
 and every beast sought to find a place to sleep,
 he took his lute, went out silently
 and plucked it very sweetly opposite the palace.
 His hand was as sugar. He had a voice like the nightingale.
 On hearing him every heart sobbed and wept.
 He recounted and told of the suffering of passion:
 how he was entangled in love, and how he languished and withered.
 At such an exceedingly sweet voice every heart,
 even if it was like snow, was kindled when it came near.
 He tamed everything wild. What was hard grew soft.
 What he sang lingered sadly in one's mind.
 The complaints he uttered devastated hearts,
 split marble, and made ice boil'.

Greek text from Vitsentzos Kornaros, *Erotokritos*, ed. Stylianos Alexiou, Athens 2008. English translation from Kornaros, *Erotokritos*.

42 Tim Shephard, 'Orpheus the Orator', in: *Music in the Art of the Renaissance, 1420–1540*, eds. Tim Shephard, Sanna Raninen, Serenella Sessini, Laura Steřănescu, London–Turnhout 2020, pp. 171–189.

the myth of the musical and poetical powers of Orpheus was consistently associated with the persuasive rhetoric of virtuous government. Commonly placed in parallel with Amphion, another mythological musician, Orpheus represents a pivotal example of the ethical and political power of music, as he can usher in civilisation and generate civic harmony with just the sound of his instrument and voice. Orpheus' ability to tame wild beasts and enlighten savages was interpreted by humanists as a symbol of good governance, making him a classic model for sovereigns.⁴³ As a member of an Italian *accademia* in Crete, Kornaros was well acquainted with this symbology, and, I argue, his portrayal of Erotokritos as Orpheus was clearly intended to convey models of conduct and courtly behaviour.⁴⁴

Kornaros, together with the Stravaganti and other Cretan academies, represented fundamental cultural agencies of the Venetian Republic.⁴⁵ The use of the local language constituted an effective vehicle for spreading Italian values and Venetian propaganda among the Greek-speaking population – especially, but not only, the Hellenised Veneto-Cretan nobility.⁴⁶ In this sense, *Erotokritos*, and the musical aesthetic and ideologies it contains, played a fundamental role in conveying a local identity and a strong sense of belonging to a shared culture, grounded on Italian values. His immediate audience was possibly a part of the population that may have had limited access to the Italian language spoken in Venetian institutions. As I have shown above, Kornaros's agenda was not dissimilar from that of the authors of the Cretan plays. In both cases, the Greek language is used as a means of transmitting Italian words, ideas and musical values to the local Hellenophone or Hellenised population.

CONCLUSIONS

The Venetian colonisation had an enormous impact on Cretan society, not only its hierarchical structures and its linguistic and religious identities, but also its complex soundworld. That cultural contact consisted of fruitful transfer and exchanges, as well as social clashes and friction. Analysing the musical and sonic traces of early modern Crete represents a unique opportunity to understand the social changes that characterised the complex encounters between the Venetian maritime power and a society of the eastern Mediterranean – a geographic area that has not always been considered part of the Western world but rather labelled as Byzantine otherness.⁴⁷

43 Don Harrán, 'Orpheus as Poet, Musician, and Educator', in: *Essays on Italian Music in the Cinquecento*, ed. Richard Charteris, Sydney 1990.

44 A.M. Hatzikiriakos, 'A Maniera Greca'.

45 G. Pilidis, 'Fuori dal comun sentiero'; R. Bancroft-Marcus, 'Literary Cryptograms'.

46 Ibid.

47 David Irving, 'Ancient Greeks, World Music, and Early Modern Constructions of Western European Identity', in: *Studies on a Global History of Music: A Balzan Musicology Project*, ed. Reinhard Strohm, Abingdon 2018, pp. 21–41.

Musical encounters that took place on the island during the Venetocracy reflect the unstable and dynamic relationship between the Republic and natives Cretans. To date, little information has been retrieved concerning Cretan reception of Western music during the early stage of Venetian domination. It seems to portray an understandable reticence toward the cultural practices of the foreign power. Although this scenario partially matches a historical period characterised by violent struggles and instability, further research is still required. Over subsequent centuries, however, as I have demonstrated, Western music was progressively assimilated by the local society and made part of its own cultural expression. As for the duke's *piffari* music, it was used by Venetian institutions as a powerful instrument for the representation of power. At the same time, for many of the locals, it also represented an opportunity for elevating their social status. Similarly, although a constitutive element of the Latin rite and Italianate music of the upper classes, polyphony was eventually localised by the Cretans and perhaps divested of its political meanings, as is testified by the lively theatrical and musical tradition. The capacity for mingling and hybridising Venetian and local elements was a distinguishing feature of the local culture, and it eventually allowed for the development of 'a homogenous character of its own, neither Greek, nor Italian, but Cretan'.⁴⁸

As I have demonstrated, music is a prime example of this dialectic process. However, the cases and analyses I have presented here cannot yet provide answers to some of the pivotal questions that arise from this research. To what extent did this hybridisation process affect the secular musical style? How much did it concern the majority of the Greek population, especially the Cretans living outside the urban centres? To what degree has that multicultural musical tradition survived today? More importantly, how does this affect present-day perceptions of Cretan – and Greek in general – identity? These phenomena urgently require further and extensive investigation, which is, however, no easy task. Scholars in this field must deal with many challenges, such as an objective scarcity of primarily musical sources. Early modern Cretan society has provided us with a rich variety of historical, literary and visual documents, which, however, are mostly limited to the urban and often Italian-speaking society. In fact, except for liturgical sources, the musical practices of the majority of the local population are still difficult to *listen to*. In the last century, ethnomusicologists have led painstaking research in this field,⁴⁹ mostly focusing on the remnants of local oral traditions, which still preserve notable traces of the island's complex past. The musical and auditory history of the Venetian colonisation of Crete has yet to be reconstructed, and a pivotal further milestone would be represented by a pioneering

48 David Holton, 'The Cretan Renaissance', in: *Literature and Society*, pp. 1–16, at 15.

49 Roberto Leydi, Tullia Magrini, *Musica popolare a Creta*, Milan 1983; Tullia Magrini, *Forme della musica vocale e strumentale a Creta*, Milan 1985; eadem, 'Manhood and Music in Western Crete: Contemplating Death', *Ethnomusicology* 44 (2000) no. 3), pp. 429–459.

investigation of the sonic and musical dialectic that occurred between the Venetian urban society and the rural world.

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CANTARE ALLA GRECA CON CITERE E VIOLINI: TRANSFERE I LOKALNE ADAPTACJE
MUZYKI ZACHODU NA WCZESNONOWOŻYTNEJ KRECIE

W późnym średniowieczu i wczesnej nowożytności Kreta była najważniejszą kolonią wenecką, umożliwiającą Republice niemal nieograniczoną kontrolę handlową i wojskową nad wschodnią częścią Morza Śródziemnego. Na podstawie źródeł archiwalnych i innych dokumentów, artykuł ten omawia rolę, jaką odgrywała muzyka jako środek kontroli społecznej i kulturowej nad rdzenną ludnością kretańską.

Po krótkim wprowadzeniu do historii weneckiej dominacji na Krecie oraz omówieniu jej wpływu na lokalną literaturę i sztuki wizualne, autor przedstawia obecność zachodniej muzyki

w związanych z Wenecją instytucjach świeckich i religijnych. Już bardzo wczesnie Republika zaczęła zatrudniać Kreteńczyków jako muzyków miejskich (głównie trębaczy i *piffari*). Dla mieszkańców stabilne zatrudnienie w lokalnej instytucji muzycznej stanowiło szansę na zarobek i awans społeczny; dla Wenecji było natomiast środkiem kontroli politycznej i kulturalnej. Muzyka była również ważnym elementem życia instytucji religijnych, co dokumentują źródła archiwalne. Główne kościoły i klasztory na wyspie posiadały instrumenty i śpiewaków oraz zapewniały kształcenie katolickiego kleru i muzyków.

W dalszej części artykułu omówiono rozpowszechnienie zachodnich świeckich praktyk instrumentalnych i polifonicznych w głównych miastach kretańskich, odwołując się do przykładów ze źródeł literackich XV i XVI w., które poświadczają obecność utworów polifonicznych w języku greckim, takich jak madrygały i muzyka okolicznościowa. Ostatnim przykładem jest romans rycerski *Erotokritos*, zawierający odniesienia do zachodniej symboliki muzycznej: do mitu o Orfeuszu jako doskonałym retorze i władcy oraz do lutni reprezentującej harmonię społeczną. *Erotokritos*, napisany przez zhellenizowanego weneckiego szlachcica, reprezentuje najbardziej oczywisty przypadek wykorzystania elementów muzycznych do pro-weneckiej propagandy.

Przekład z j. angielskiego Paweł Gancarczyk

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