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From the end of September to mid-December, 1977, as a member of the Research Group for the Mediterranean at Hitotsubashi University I stayed on Naxos and Syros, two of the Cyclades Islands in the South Aegean Sea. One of my purposes in visiting these islands was to collect Greek folk songs there. Owing to the world-famous hospitality of the Greek people I succeeded in recording on tape a considerable number of songs of various genres, of which lullabies will be published here.

Naxos is the largest of the Cyclades Islands with about 14,000 inhabitants (1971). Young men of this island have long been accustomed to leave home to work in Asia Minor in former days, in Athens and other countries throughout the world nowadays: the agriculture and stock-breeding of Naxos cannot afford to support the whole population. The tourist industry, at present making remarkable progress in the port town Chora, as it is called by Naxiotes, may change this pattern somewhat.

Syros, on the other hand, though much smaller in size and population, is equipped with prospering ship-building yards and other manufacturing factories which attract young workers from outside the island. Syros forms a striking contrast to Naxos in religion, too, with Catholics accounting for about half of all the islanders, while less than five percent of the population are Catholic and all the rest Greek Orthodox on Naxos. The differences between the two islands, belonging to the same nomos (prefecture), reveals itself in the temperament of the inhabitants as well as in their oral tradition.

In modern Greek a lullaby is called nanourisma or nanarisma (pl. -rismata). The word is believed to have come from na-na, the sound used to lull a baby to sleep. The singers of nanourismata whom I recorded on Naxos and Syros were:

A. Margarita Moustaki, female, 56, Filoti — a mountain village of Naxos, recorded on October 29, 1977.

B. Rodathi Cheroubim, female, 59, Moni — also a mountain village of Naxos, recorded on November 2.

C. Sofia Fragkiskou, female, 82, Apeiranthos — a village near the above-mentioned Filoti, recorded on November 4.
D. Sofia (surname unascertained), female, 82, Ano Syros — suburb of Ermoupolis the principal town of all the Cyclades, Syros, recorded on November 11.

E. Name unascertained, female, about 45, Catholic (?), Ano Syros, recorded on November 11.

F. A. Maragkos, male, about 45, Catholic, Ermoupolis, recorded on November 11.

Because some of the lullabies these people sang for me display some overlapping in phrases and words, I will begin by giving the full texts of the songs sung by A, B and F: these songs seem to be the most typical.

(A) Margarita or Rita, as she is called by all the villagers, old and young, was born and married in Filoti, and is an Orthodox. She has brought up four children, two sons and two daughters. She runs a coffee-house in the centre of the village with her husband Costa and is a talented singer with a wide repertoire of folk songs and tales.

I Κοιμήσου, πού νά σε χαρώ, καί νά σε δῶ μεγάλο, καί νά σε δῶ τῆς παντρείας, κυ'άκομα πιό μεγάλο.

II "Ελα, ύπνε, καί πάρε το, καί γλυκά ἀποκοίμησέ το.

III 'Ο ύπνος θρέφει τά μωρά, κυ'ό κάμπος τά βοσκάδια, καί μένα τό παιδάκι μου, τό θρέψουνε τά χάδια.

IV Νάνι νάνι νάνι νάνι, κυ' ὁπού τό πονεῖ νά γιάνει.

V Κοιμάται τό παιδάκι μου, κ'έγώ τό νανούρίζω, καί τήν κούνια του κονω, καί τό γλυκοκοιμίζω.

(II) "Ελα, ύπνε, καί πάρε το, καί γλυκά ἀποκοίμησέ το.

VI "Υπνε μου, ἔπαρε μου το, κυ'ἀμε το στά πρεβόλλα, καί τήν ποδία του γέμισε τριαντάφυλλα καί ρόδα.

VII Τά ρόδα νά 'ν τής μάνας του, τά μήλα τοῦ μπαμπά του, καί τ'ἀσπρα τριαντάφυλλα νά εἶναι τής νονάς του.

VIII "Ελα, ύπνε, ἀγαλι-ἀγάλι στοῦ παιδιοῦ μου τό κεφάλι. "Ελα, ύπνε, ἀγκαίασέ το καί γλυκά ἀποκοίμησε το.

IX Κοιμήσου καί παράγγειλα στήν Πόλη τά πρωικά σου,
Sleep, that I may delight in you, that I may see you grow up and marry.

Come, Hypnos, take this baby and lull her to sleep.

Sleep nourishes babies and a field feeds sheep. My child grows bigger with each caress.

Hushaby, may your pain heal, if any.

My child is going to sleep and I sing a lullaby, tenderly rocking the cradle to make her sleep.

Rodathi who sang the next song for me is an Orthodox, too. With her old husband Georgios she keeps a souvenir shop for foreign tourists, who seldom visit her small village even in the tourist season, because it is situated off the main route. The couple have no children, but Rodathi told me that she sang lullabies for the children of the others.

"Ὑπνε ποῦ παίρνεις τά παιδιά κι' γειά τά μεγαλώνει, κ' ἡ Παναγιά κι' ὁ Χριστός τά καλοξημερώνει.

"Ελα, ὑπνε, πάρε το, και στὴν Πόλη πήγαλνε το. Πήγαλνε το στοὺς μπαζέδες νά μαζεύει μενεύδες.
I O Hypnos, take and nourish children. May the Holy Virgin and Christ favor them with many happy days!

II Come, Hypnos, take the baby to the City to gather violets in the gardens.

(F) A. Maragkos has a pitta shop in a back street of Ermoupolis. Pitta is a sort of grilled pie with stuffing of roast meat, onion, tomato and so on. According to his wife he often sang the following lullaby to their only daughter, who is now a junior-high girl. He is not unconscious of his own sweet voice and when he gave a performance for me at this shop, customers had to wait forming a long queue. He is a Catholic.

I Δύο στό πλαϊ, σύ στή μέσον, τή γωή μας ἔχεις φέξει, ναὶ μωρό μου, ναὶ χρυσό μου, ναὶ γλυκό, γλυκό μου.

II Ἡ μαμά σάν σέ κοιτάξει, ο μαμπάς τήνε θαυμάζει, ναὶ μωρό μου, ναὶ γλυκό μου, ναὶ μικρό, μικρό μου.

III Ποῦ σέ ἔφερε νά ζήσεις, τή χαρά νά μᾶς χαρίσεις, ναὶ μικρό μου, ναὶ γλυκό μου, ναὶ χρυσό, χρυσό μου.

I May baby, who is lying here between your parents, has brought light to our life. O my baby, my gold and sweet!

II Your mama and papa are gazing at you in raptures. O my baby, my little child!

III Who is it that brought you to life and gave us joy! O my baby, my sweet and gold!

Comparison of these texts makes clear how the words overlap: for example, A-VI is similar to B-II.

The lullaby recorded in Apeiranthos (C) consists of four stanzas which resemble B-I, A-III, B-I and A-VI respectively. The second and third stanzas of the one collected in Ano Syros (D) correspond to A-IX and A-V, only the first being rather unique running as follows:

I Ἑλα, ύπνε μου, πάρε το καὶ ἄργησέ μου το.
Σάν μοῦ τό φέρεις, ύπνε μου, φέρε το μέ τή γειά του,
φέρε το μέ τά γέλια του καὶ μέ τήν ῥνόμορφιά του.

I Come, Hypnos, take this baby now. And bring her back later sound and
(E), also recorded in Ano Syros, has five stanzas, of which the second, third and fifth are almost identical to A-VI, A-IX and B-I respectively, while the first and fourth are distinct to a certain degree from other lullabies:

I Νάνι νάνι νάνι νανά του.
"Ελα, ύπνε, καὶ πάρε το καὶ ὑποῦ θές να τὸ ὑπάγεις,
κη ἄντε το ἐδῶ, κη ἄντε το ἐκεί, κη ἄντε το στοὺς μπαξέδες.

IV Παναγιά μου κι’ "Αγια Ελένη, ὑμορφό θέλω να μου γένει.

I Hushaby, hushaby. Come, Hypnos, take my baby where you like. You may take her to and fro, or to the gardens.

IV May the Holy Virgin and St. Helena make my baby pretty.

As may be seen from the above, (F) is completely different and, as it were, isolated from others. It seems not to belong to the folk song genre in the strictest sense of the word.

It seems to me that none of the lullabies A–E is a single song. Rather, each stanza is independent, at least as far as the words are concerned. Singers choose any one or more stanzas in accordance with the circumstances. For example, a woman who happened to be present at the recording of lullaby (D) in Ano Syros explained that the first stanza (D-I) was to be sung to sick babies and the second (D-II = A-IX) to girls exclusively. Stanzas such as A-II, A-IV or E-IV, judging from their shortness, may be defined as refrains.

The present writer noted that, although songs A–E have much in common from the viewpoint of the texts, their tunes are very different from each other: the same song is often sung to the different tunes. This appears to be true not only of lullabies, but also of kotsakia distiches and moirologia lamentations for the dead, which are exceedingly popular among the islanders of Cyclades. One might go so far as to say that every island or village or even every singer has a favorite tune and, the situation permitting, any song may be sung to this tune. The first few bars of the melodies of all the lullabies are shown below in musical notation.
The lullaby has a happy history in the folkloristic study of Greece. When Nicolaos Polites, father of Greek folklore, compiled his classic "Eklogai apo ta tragoudia tou ellenikou laou" (Anthology of Greek Folk Songs) in 1914, he assigned a special chapter to the lullaby, acknowledging it as an independent genre of the folk song. His model has become an honorable tradition. It may be said that every collection of Greek folk songs without exception treats this most tiny and lovely kind of song as a grown-up group.

In 1953 a special collection of lullabies compiled by F. Saregiannes was published. Although it contains 84 Greek lullabies chosen from diverse sources, beginning with academic collections and ending with periodical publications, no lullabies gathered in Naxos or Syros can be found there. To my knowledge, Naxiote and Syrian lullabies are recorded only in the following books:

1. G. Zevgoles, "To synchrono laiko tragoudistenApeiranthos tes Naxou" (The Modern Popular Song in Apeiranthos of Naxos), Athens, 1937, p.13. The text runs as follows:

I Νάνι, τοῦ ρήγα τό παιδί, τοῦ βασιλιά τό ʹγγονι
πού τόχει ἡ βασίλισσα χρυσὸ σταυρό κι ἀμώνει.

II Νάνι ντου, πόπαργγειλα στήν Πολή τά προικιά ντου
στό Γαλατά τά ροῦχα ντου καὶ τά διαμαντικά ντου.

III Νάνι ντου, πόπαργγειλα παπούτσα στό τξαγγάρη
νά τοῦ τά κάμη κόκκινα καὶ μέ μαργαριτάρι.

IV 'Ὁ νῦνος θρέφει τά μωρά κι ἥ ἕιά τά μεγαλώνει
καὶ ὁ Χριστός καὶ ἡ Παναία τών χαρίζει χρόνοι.

It is worth while to note that the words are not like those of any of the songs that I collected.

(No. 2)
Nάνι τοῦ Ρήγα τὸ παιδί, τοῦ βασιλιά τὸ γ'γ'νυ
α, ἀχ ποὺ τὸ ἤχει ἡ βασιλισσα χρυσό σταυρό κι ἀμόνει.
"Ὑπε, ποὺ παίρνεις τὰ μωρά, ἔπαρε τὸ καὶ τοῦτο
ἐὼ μικρό σοῦ τὸ ὅδωςα, "μεγάλο φέρε μοῦ το.
"Επαρέ τὸ μου, ὑπε μου, καὶ φέρε μοὺ τὸ πάλι,
νά τὸ χαρή ἡ μάννα του καὶ νά τὸ ὅδη μεγάλη.
"Επαρέ μου το, ὑπε μου, κι ἀμο το στὰ περβάλλα
καὶ ἐμωσε τὸν κόρφο ντου τριαντάφυλλα καὶ ρόδα.
"Μερές πολλές σοῦ τραγουδώ μά σο ὅλο γκρινιάζεις,
δέν ἔχεις τὴν καλογνωμια της φαμελίας ποῦ μοίαζεις.
Κοιμήσου, χαδεμένο μου, καὶ κάμε νάνι, νάνι,
πού θε νά βγαίνωμε μαζί τ'ἀπόγεμα σεργιάνι.
Κοιμήσου, χαδεμένο μου, καὶ κάμε τραλαλά σου,
γιέ μου, πού νά σε χαίρουνται ἡ μάννα κι ὁ μπαμπάς σου.
"Ο θείος ἀπ' τὴν ξενιτεία πολλά φιλιά σοῦ στέλνει,
μεγάλος δτινα 'ένης μαζί του θά σε παίρνει.

(No. 3)
Κοιμαται καὶ χαρίζω του τή Χιό με τή μαστίχα
καὶ τὴν Κωσταντίνοπολη με ὅλα τῆς τὰ σπίτια.
Νάνι, νάνι, νάνι, νάνι
ἐλα, ὑπε, νά τό πάρεις.
"Ως πότε στέκουν τά βουνά κι ὁ Ζάς με τό Φανάρι,
νά στέκεται κι ἁφέντης σας νά σάσε μαίτζάρει.
Νάνι, νάνι, νάνι, νάνι
κι ὅπου τό πονεῖ νά γιάνει.
Νάνι τοῦ Ρήγα τὸ παιδί, τοῦ βασιλιά τὸ γ'γ'νυ
ποῦ τὸ ἤχει ἡ βασιλισσα χρυσό σταυρό κι ἀμόνει.
Νάνι, νάνι, τὸ μωρό μου,
νάνι, νάνι, τὸ χρυσό μου.

Some stanzas of these songs correspond perfectly with those of Zevgoles' texts above. It is very interesting that the third stanza of No. 3 goes "May the Lord keep and preserve you, as long as Zeus and Fanari stand." Zeus and Fanari
are the highest mountains on Naxos, the former 1008 meters and the latter 883 meters above sea level, looking down upon the village from the south and the west. No other song shows such local reference. At the same time it is worthy of remark that the fourth stanza of the second song is quite analogous to A-IV, i.e. a part of the lullaby sung by Margarita Moustaki.


Frye's translation is as follows: “Sleep, you who take the little ones, come, take this one, too. Very small I give him to you, bring him back to me big - big as a tall mountain, straight as a cypress tree, and may his branches spread from east to west”.

The tune of this lullaby is very similar to that of the above-mentioned (D), recorded by me on the same island.

Generally speaking it cannot be said that the Cyclades lullabies have any striking distinction from those of other regions of Greece contained in F. Saregiannes’ and other collections. We may, however, discern certain hints of the history of the Aegean Sea in the recurring motif of ordering clothes and jewellery from Venice, while the dowry is ordered from “the City”, i.e. Constantinople (A-IX, D-II, E-III). The Cyclades Islands were under the reign of the Venetians for more than three centuries, from the time of Marco Sanudo, a Venetian aristocrat and the Duce's nephew, who conquered Naxos and built his castle there in the beginning of the 13th century.

On the other hand, there is no slight danger that the mass communication media such as radio and television may be now rapidly weathering and fading the local color of the oral tradition pertaining to every region of the country, of course, including the Cyclades Islands.

Notes

(2) F. Saregiannes, “Nanourismata, tachtarismata, paichnidakia”, Athens, 1953.