

Cypriot Voices

(Kypraia Foni- St' agnarka ton tzeron...)

Voices” is the name given in Cyprus to various old melodies on which various couplets . mainly of an erotic nature, are sung. Costas Ioannides, in his introduction to the publication “Cypriot Demotic Songs” of the Centre for Scientific Research, mentions that the “voices” are remnants of the ancient Greek “modes” (Lydian, Frygian, Dorian etc”, which the Byzantines re-named as “sounds”.

In Cyprus, these melodies, containing elements from the Byzantine “sounds” and by extension from the ancient Greek “modes”, which in turn had borrowed and adapted ideas from the civilisations of other peoples of the East according to Greek philosophy and temperament, were named “voices”. Something similar to these “voices” are the Indian “ragas” and the Arab “magamat”. Each “voice” derives its name from the geographical region of Cyprus from which it originated.

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Michalis Terlikkas