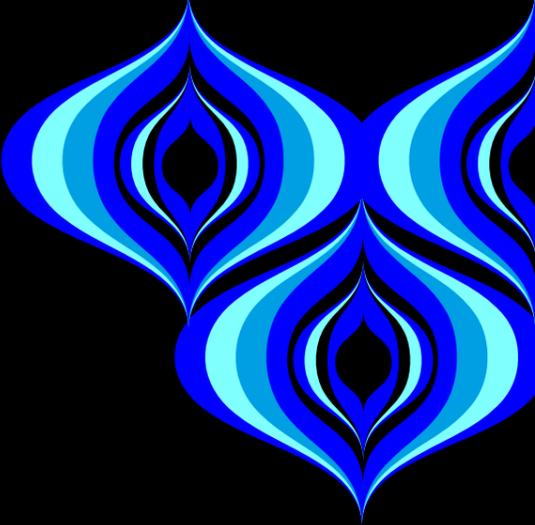
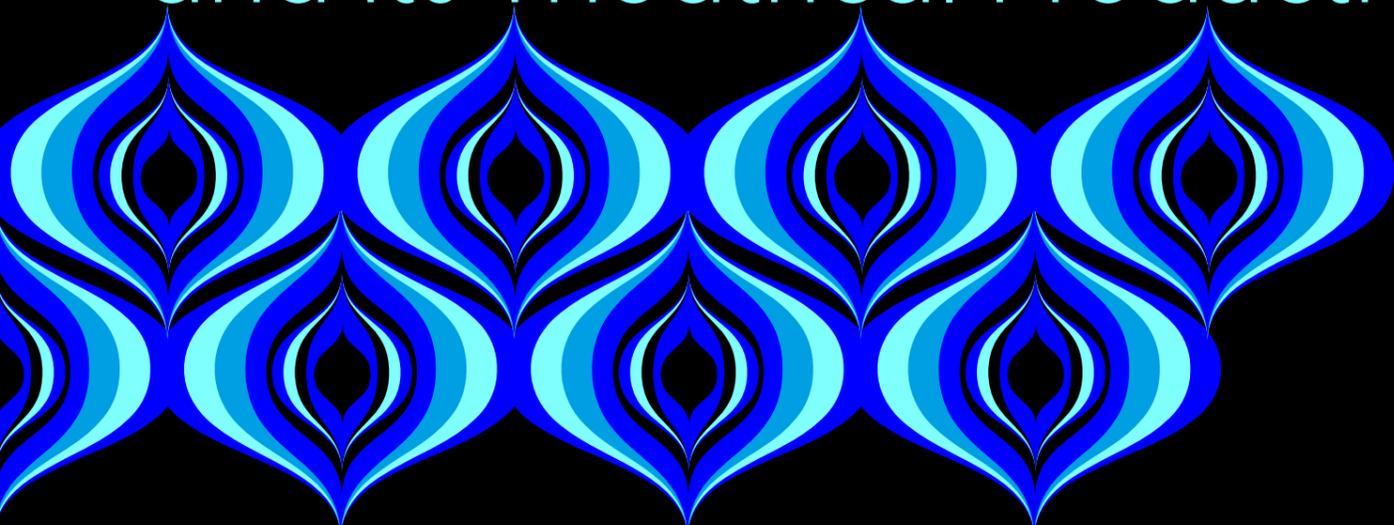


Defying Space and Time Through Language



The Case of Kozani's Carnival, its Songs,
and its Theatrical Productions in Kozani Greek



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Summary

This article studies two festive occasions taking place in Kozani, a city in northern Greece: firstly its carnival rituals and secondly some theatrical plays, both carried out entirely in the local dialect. In order to examine the relationship between language and performance, this article proposes an analysis in three parts. The first section shall rapidly outline the city's linguistic history with regard to national politics, the second shall describe the use of the dialect in the carnival rituals of the *fanos*, and the third shall study a historically-themed play performed in Kozani Greek.

Résumé

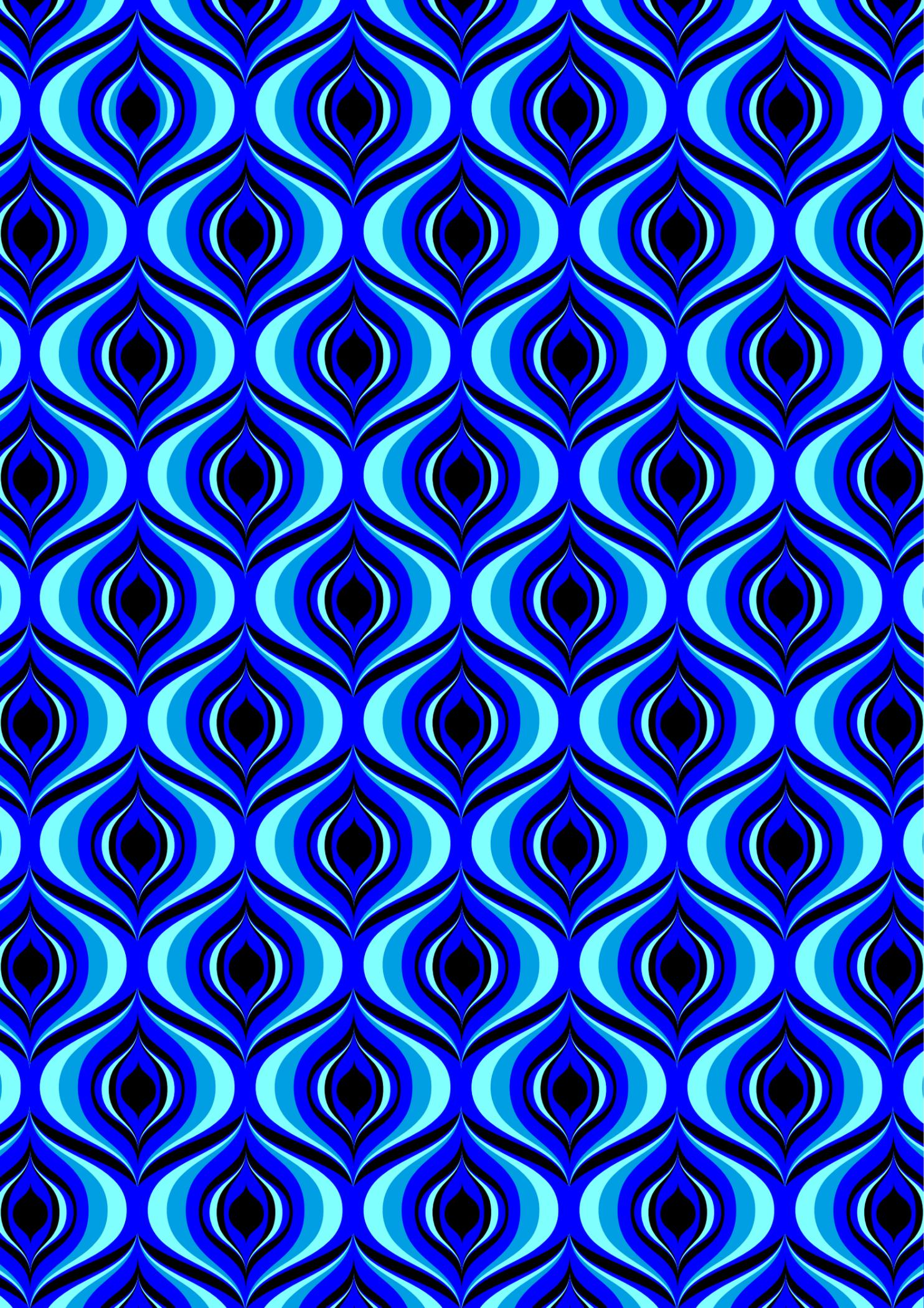
Ce travail se donne comme objet d'étude deux temporalités festives qui ont lieu à Kozani, une ville au nord de la Grèce. Plus spécifiquement, il s'agit de son carnaval populaire et d'une série de pièces théâtrales qui se déroulent entièrement en dialecte local. Afin d'examiner le rapport entre langue et représentation, nous proposons une analyse en trois parties, dont la première présentera l'histoire linguistique de la ville, la deuxième décrira l'usage du dialecte pendant le rituel carnavalesque du *fanos*, et la troisième analysera une pièce théâtrale de thème historique jouée en dialecte.

KEYWORDS

Greece, theatre, carnival, dialect, performance

MOTS-CLÉS

Grèce, théâtre, carnaval, dialecte, représentation



'Some Like it Unlighted': A Short One-Act Play Satirising the Smoking Ban, Performed in Kozani Greek¹

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The calendar reads February 24th 2020. In most parts of northern Greece it's a chilly evening, yet the central square of Kozani, the biggest city in the region of Western Macedonia, is filled with people. Amongst them are TV crews, YouTubers, aspiring documentarians, and spectators eager to capture the short one-act play about to begin, their smartphones and cameras ready. In the middle of the square lies a simple construction that will function as the performance's set. A sign reading *I Taverna t' Koutioul'*,² or Koutioul's Tavern in English (Figure 5), indicates that the action will be situated inside and outside of a tavern. The tavern's name is written in the way it would be pronounced in the local dialect, Kozani Greek, as suggested by the elision in both the definite article *tou*, which becomes *t'*, and the name *Koutiouli* (in Genitive), which becomes *Koutioul'* (Dinas 2005i: 44-46).

A narrator welcomes the audience to the one-act play entitled *Some Like it Unlighted* (original title: *Merikí tu protimún svistò*; my translation) as the characters appear smoking outside the tavern, shivering due to low temperatures.

This could have been a play about modern Greece, depicting how the harsh realities brought on by the financial crisis have been experienced by the population of a provincial northern city like Kozani. However, certain elements prepare the audience for the comic spectacle that's about to begin such as the characters' fancy costumes that include old blankets worn as capes, wigs in fluorescent colours, clown hats, and head boppers. At the same time, the characters' constant back-and-forth movement in and out of the tavern, accompanied by exaggerated grimaces and silly walks, adds to the merry atmosphere. However, the single most important reason why one would expect to watch a comic spectacle is to be found on the date: it's carnival season in Kozani, a few days before all celebrations are called off due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and both visitors and locals are well aware of the celebrations' explicitly satirical character.

Some Like it Unlighted does not disappoint. The narrator describes in the local dialect the characters' angry reaction to the smoking ban, which officially came into effect in 2010 but has only been strictly implemented all over Greece since 2019 (Helena Smith 2019: para 3 of 10). The characters' constant need for nicotine is stressed through the expression '*tranón gailé*', which translates to 'huge despair' (Dinas 2005ii: 512 and 111). Meanwhile their opinion of the lawmakers who introduced the ban is described with the curse '*na ksipatuthún*', 'to buzz off' (Dinas 2005ii: 368). When the narrator pronounces the curse all of the characters do an insulting gesture, known throughout Greece as the *moutza* (Stavropoulos 1988: 565) which consists in extending an open palm to someone's face, and exclaim '*Oú*', an interjection indicating disdain (Figure 7). The audience breaks into laughter.

Ultimately, the characters come up with a scheme that will allow them to continue smoking inside Koutioul's Tavern: they pretend to be holding rehearsals for a musical production in which all the heroes are smokers. This leads to a series of face-offs with a police officer during which the characters insult and mock the policeman in Kozani Greek. It is worth noting that the officer's T-shirt bears the logo of PASOK, one of the two parties that dominated the Greek political scene from the 1980s until the early 2010s (Clogg 2015: 240-274), adding another layer of satire to the comic short play.³ As Dinas points out, a native speaker of Kozani Greek is usually heavily involved emotionally with a phrase's content, whether they act as the sender or the receiver of a message (Dinas 2005i: 173). This observation could explain the continuous use of yells, interjections, and obscene gestures by the characters of *Some Like it Unlighted*.

3. Jokes about PASOK have been popular on the internet since the fall from grace of the party in the early 2010s. Such jokes include memes that compare the 'good old times', when PASOK was in power, with the rather difficult financial situation of today.



Figure 1
The fanos Lakkous t' Maggan'



Figure 2
Traditional uniforms

Some Like it Unlighted ends in cheers and the production team bows to the public, inviting everyone back to their district, *Ai-Dimitris*. A festive fire is going to be lit there and carnival songs in Kozani Greek are set to be performed around it. This is the ritual of the *fanos* (Dinas 2005ii: 544), one of the key elements of the city's carnival (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 30). The word *fanos* indicates both the festive fires lit in the same specific spots every year during carnival season in different parts of the city and also the cultural associations responsible for organising this *fanos* ritual in their district. As the troupe leaves the central square dancing, traditional orchestral music is performed by the local philharmonic orchestra, Pandora, setting the tone of what is to come. We shall follow them shortly.

Singing About Taxes and Throwing Yoghurt at Politicians: Presenting The Objectives, Field Work, and Methodology of this Study

The starting point of this paper is the unanimous use of Kozani Greek, a dialect not widely spoken by Kozani's population, known as Kozanites, nowadays (Dinas 2005i: 34), every year during carnival season. Like most carnivals in Greece, Kozani's carnival is a moveable feast that takes place at the end of winter, most often in late February or early March. The festivities start on *Tsiknopémpti* (Smoky Thursday) and last for eleven days, ending on *Kathara Deftera* (Clean Monday), which is the first day of Lent (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 15). At their core is the

ritual of the *fanos*, namely the performance of the city's carnival songs around a festive fire. Throughout the eleven days that separate *Tsiknopémpti* from the beginning of Lent, another *fanos* is lit each evening in a different spot. On the last day of the carnival, known as *Traní Apukrá* in the Kozani dialect and translating as 'Big Carnival', all the *fanoi* are lit simultaneously. Contrary to other regions in Greece that refer to carnival season as *karnaváli* or *Apókries*, the latter being plural, Kozanites have adopted the dialectal term *Apukrá* (Dinas 2005ii: 59) that is always employed as a singular noun. All these terms have the same meaning as the Latin-derived *carnival*, indicating abstention from the consumption of meat.

Unlike other carnivals in Greece, like those taking place in Patras and Xanthi, which have incorporated contemporary elements into their festivities, Kozani's retains the ritual of the *fanos* at the core of its festivities, along with the use of the Kozani dialect. While the Patras and Xanthi carnivals are featured on the Greek National Tourism Organisation's official site, 'Visit Greece', the Kozani carnival is nowhere to be found.⁴ However, the event still attracts a significant number of visitors, which is vital for the local economy.⁵ In 2017, Kozani's local authorities launched the website *Kozanítiki Apokriá* (Kozani's Carnival), dedicated to the city's festivities (OAPN 2020). The site has the festival programme updated every year and features informative texts by the writer and playwright Matina Tsikritzi-Momtsiou. The application *Apokria GO!* was also released alongside this website, assisting visitors to navigate the maps of the city and find the location of each *fanos* (OAPN 2020).

4. More specifically, while 'Visit Greece' has dedicated stand-alone articles to both Patras' and Xanthi's carnivals (Visit Greece 2000 b and c), Kozani's carnival is not even mentioned in the more general article 'Carnival in Greece' (Visit Greece 2000a).

5. Although large-scale statistical research concerning carnival and tourism all over Greece is still to be undertaken, local and national newspapers have reported a major arrival of tourists in Kozani in the past few years during carnival season, reflected in the fully booked local hotels (Ziaba 2018 and Proinos Logos 2017).



Figure 3
The fanos Lakkous t' Maggan's headquarters

At first glance, Kozani's carnival may seem a rather closed space due to the extensive use of the Kozani dialect in its festivities. The dialect forms part of the ritual performance of songs around the festive fires and the theatrical productions staged both inside theatres and in open spaces, like *Some Like it Unlighted*. It also characterises the grand parade that takes place on the eve of the Lent. While local politicians, journalists, and an important part of the population use Modern Greek in their everyday lives, they switch to the exclusive use of the dialect during the carnival period. As a result, an external observer could argue that this rather 'traditional' carnival is an out of touch caricature of past customs. In order to argue in contrast that the Kozani carnival keeps up with current affairs, often by providing a satirical view, I follow Jane K. Cowan's observations in her study of the Sohos Carnival in Thessaloniki, another occasion that is considered to preserve a generations-old character. Cowan stresses the importance of studying folklore not merely in historical terms nor through the opposition between an event and its interpretation by scientific literature but rather through its dialectic relation to contemporary affairs as they are expressed on a local level (Cowan 1988: 246-247).

This insight holds true in relation to Kozani's carnival which, regardless of its century-old character, maintains a satirical outlook on current affairs. This can be spotted in the grand parade's floats, each year inspired by another ongoing hot topic, and in the theatrical plays' themes. Satire is also evident in the performance of some newly composed carnival songs such as the song *E9* which parodies the strict tax policy introduced by the Greek government after the financial crisis (Lakkas 2010: 150-151). Such satirical expressions often adopt a local perspective. Besides the smoking ban evoked in *Some Like it Unlighted*, plays performed during carnival season in 2019 and in 2020 parodied the downfall of the Public Power Corporation, DEI,⁶ the local authorities' inaction towards the city's rapidly growing stray-dog population, and the campaigns for the 2019 local elections.⁷

In 2012, during the grand parade, participants with the float of the *fanos Lakkous t' Maggan*' threw yoghurt at politicians attending (Pontiki 2012: para 1 of 5). Such gestures are common during carnival, often deemed a 'world upside down' by academic research (Burke 1978: 188) where both satire and scatological elements are welcome. The yoghurt-throwing act specifically should be interpreted within the context of the financial crisis of 2008 that inspired many literary texts, artistic interventions, and theoretical analyses (Lakka, Papadopoulos 2020: 566). The connection of the festivities in Kozani to current affairs demonstrates, amongst other things, that Kozani Greek is still undergoing the process of *mutability* (de Saussure 2016: 163), being shaped by its satire of present-day issues. For instance, the aforementioned newly composed carnival song *E9* gets its title from the term used to describe tax declaration in Greece, which becomes *dialectised* and is pronounced like 'épsilun iniá' instead of the Modern Greek pronunciation 'épsilon eniá' (Lakkas 2010: 150-151).

Kozani Greek is also used in some theatrical plays performed outside carnival season, whose themes are usually inspired by the city's history.

← 6. DEI coal power plants situated outside of Kozani are currently shutting down due to the process of decarbonisation introduced by the E.U..

← 7. For each of the events described, one can mention the following plays as respective examples: a) *Kozani, 2146: Sosti t' Sk'rka* (Kozani, 2146: Save Sk'rka), staged in 2019 during carnival season, saw the characters of a dystopian future, presented in a comical way, dedicate a religious ceremony to the no longer functioning DEI (Proinos Logos 2019c), b) *Archisan ta organa* (Time to Face the Music) performed by the *fanos* Aï-Dimitris in Kozani's central square during carnival season in 2019, parodied the candidates' campaigns for the local elections and satirised the local authorities' ignoring of stray dogs (Proinos Logos 2019a), and c) *I Tsitsiúla Dímarchos* (Mayor Tsitsiula), staged in 2019 during carnival season, was centred around the classic character Tsitsiula's decision to run for mayor. Tsitsiula, an old lady who only speaks in the dialect and has to deal with the rapid evolution of the modern world, is the *alter ego* of playwright Manolis Markopoulos, who, every year, stages another play to share Tsitsiula's new adventures, always connected to current affairs (Proinos Logos 2019b).



Figure 4
A lead singer



Figure 5
The *fanos Ai-Dimitris'* one-act play performed at the central square

One such play, Matina Tsikritzi-Momtsiou's *Daiáda* (Patience) (Dinas 2005ii: 343), staged in April 2019, was centred around the Nazis occupying the city in 1941, and the locals' reactions, including their hurrying to save the library's treasures. In an interview that I conducted with Tsikritzi-Momtsiou in September 2020,⁸ she argued that, while the play could have been performed during carnival season 'because there are some comical elements' (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2020), she 'felt like it would also be a bit out of context' (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2020). When the curtains fell and she saw people crying in the audience, she wondered whether 'it could have been performed amidst the carnival's phallic atmosphere' (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2020), deciding that 'after all, it's not the carnival's role to make people contemplate things' (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2020). An older example of a play performed in the Kozani dialect outside carnival season is Giorgos Pafilis' *Tu Nu* (The

Letter N), which was staged in May 2011 (City of Kozani 2011: para 1 of 4) and depicted the launch of the city's water supply network in the late 1930s, while the country was governed by the dictator Ioannis Metaxas (Clogg 2015: 164).

8. In both interviews conducted for this study, all protective measures against the spread of COVID-19 were taken.

Whilst Kozani Greek has been the subject of a small number of research works, most notably in dialectology and lexicography (Dinas 2005i: 30-32), its use in regard to performance has not yet been thoroughly examined. Studies focusing on the use of other Greek dialects⁹ in performance have failed to inspire such an analysis of Kozani Greek. This article aspires to undertake this task, with the hope of setting the tone for future publications on the matter. In order to study the

9. See, for instance, Patricia Fann's work on the Pontic theatre (Fann 1991 & 2002). In addition, Cretan Greek has been studied thoroughly in regard to the works of Nikos Kazantzakis, one of the most important Greek authors of the twentieth century, who famously used idioms from his native Cretan Greek in his own literary works and translations (Bien 1972: 28), often in regard to the construction of 'manhood' (Herzfeld 1985).

relationship between language and performance with regard to the Kozani dialect, I will examine how Kozani Greek is used in the carnival rituals and in Tsikritzi-Momtsiou's *Patience*.

Throughout this study, I used raw material that I filmed myself during carnival season in 2019 and 2020 in Kozani, as well as some photographs of the *fanos* ritual taken in 2013.¹⁰ The film footage includes the performance of carnival songs around the festive fire (Figures 6 and 8) and a part of *Some Like it Unlighted* (Figure 7). For the citation of carnival songs, I consulted Theodoros Lakkas' 2010 anthology *Ivgati agoria m' stou chouro* (Go Dance, my Boys), which is the most complete collection of the songs to date. The song *Iléfthira* (Freely), written in 2020, is cited on its own. When it comes to the theatrical play *Patience*, Matina Tsikritzi-Momtsiou kindly allowed me access to its final version (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019). Finally, I conducted two interviews in September 2020, one with Theodoros Lakkas concerning carnival rituals (Lakkas 2020) and another with Matina Tsikritzi-Momtsiou about *Patience* (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2020). These interviews provided me with valuable information on how people who actively participate in the organisation and realisation of the festivities interpret their performative character in regard to the use of language.

10. All material was filmed before the cancellation of 2020 carnival festivities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 6
Performance of a song in the *fanos Pigadi tou Kirmario*



Figure 7
The *fanos Ai-Dimitris*' one-act play performed at the central square

Kozani Greek at Home, Modern Greek or *Katharevousa* at School: What Kozani's Linguistic History Can Tell Us About its Carnival

Before examining the use of Kozani Greek in carnival rituals and in theatrical productions, I will provide a short outline of the city's history, intended to render the social and political context that shaped the dialect more accessible to the reader. After being under Ottoman Rule for four centuries, from 1453 up to 1830 (Clogg 2015: 405-406), Greece achieved its current geographical composition in 1947, with its northern part being incorporated into the Greek state after the First Balkan War in 1912-1913 (Clogg 2015: 119). The Greek Army entered Kozani on 11 October 1912, marking the city's official integration into the Greek State (Papakonstantinou 1992: 400). Issues regarding national identity emerged throughout Modern Greece's history, including the conflict between two varieties of Greek, *katharevousa*, literally meaning 'purifying language', and Demotic Greek (Mackridge 2004), which led to a long period of 'diglossia' or bilingualism (Herzfeld 2016: 20).

In addition to the primary 'language question', smaller debates emerged concerning regional dialects, frequently marking the behaviors of entire populations. For example, Riki van Boeschoten (2006: 348) examined the case of Slav-speaking villages in the region of Florina, whose

inhabitants were forced to adopt Modern Greek as their primary spoken language. Up until 1974, the year that marked the start of the period of the *Metapolitefsi* (Clogg 2015: 232) when Demotic Greek became the official language of education and administration (Mackridge 1985: 10), *katharevousa* and Demotic Greek alternated in the educational system (Mackridge 1985: 9-10). In regions like Kozani, this situation only contributed to a particular type of bilingualism or even trilingualism if a person experienced a change of official language during their school years, with children speaking Kozani Greek at home yet having to learn Demotic Greek or *katharevousa* at school, with no consideration of the dialect by the Greek state whatsoever.

Herzfeld notes how language has often functioned as a means to a 'social, political, and economic exclusion' in Greece (2016: 20) and introduces the term 'disemia', which 'contextualizes [language] as part of a semiotic continuum that includes silence, gesture, music, and the built environment, and economic, civic, and social values' (*ibid*: 20). The mindset associated with Kozani Greek may be considered to be quite particular, linked to irony, humour, and sarcasm (Dinas 2005i: 174). This emerges throughout both carnival festivities and theatrical productions in Kozani Greek, thus stressing the city's own disemia, not unrelated to the Greek state's forging of a national identity throughout the twentieth century.

A case of disemia is also to be found in the city's literary scene, which emerged during Ottoman Rule when Kozani experienced a period of economic, scientific, cultural, and literary growth in the eighteenth century (Papakonstantinou 1992: 43-50). At the time, local writers like Megdanis, Sakellarios, Perdikaris, Sakellariou, and Lassanis wrote in an erudite form of Modern Greek, completely distinct from the local dialect (Papakonstantinou 1992: 50-60). The city's liberation in 1912 contributed to the creation of a local intelligentsia whose works were written in either Demotic Greek or *katharevousa*. Panagiotis Lioufis,

Stavros Theodosiadis, and Konstantinos Tsitselikis were amongst these writers, with the occasional appearance of the Kozani dialect functioning as an indicator of a character's background. In the second half of the twentieth century, literary works in Kozani Greek started to appear with Nassis Alevras, Zenon Pitenis, and Leonidas Papasiopis, carving the way for a sometimes comical social realism depicted in the dialect. Nowadays, there are a number of local writers who cultivate the genre, amongst them Stratos Eliadelis, Theodora Kouziaki, Lazaros Kouziakis, Theodoros Lakkas, and Anna Repana.

A Ritual Space: the Performance of Carnival Songs in Kozani Greek Around the Festive Fire

The origins of Kozani's carnival have steered passionate debates amongst locals with some arguing that the rituals derive from the ancient Dionysian mysteries and others tracing them back into Byzantine festivals (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 62-63). Even though it would be impossible to make the case for either of these hypotheses with certainty, the rituals do share a series of similarities with mysteries dedicated to the cult of Dionysus, including their execution in specific spots at night (Burkert 1985: 601), and their expressions of sexuality (Burkert 1985: 605). The consumption of wine is also central to Kozani's carnival. Multiple elements within the rituals suggest their century-old origins, the most important of which concerns their relation to nature. Taking place before the start of spring, the festivities strongly evoke the ideas of death and resurrection, which are also major themes in the Greek folk song

tradition (Saunier 2001: 24). Rituals to secure nature's annual renaissance existed throughout the ancient world and often included brutal practices as in the case of the Babylonian king who was stripped of his title, humiliated, and crowned again during New Year's celebrations (Burkert 1985: 472). Kozani's carnival rituals propose an inversion of hierarchy as well, with satire replacing violence.

Under Ottoman Rule, carnival festivities in Kozani were organised after New Year's Day, until two masked brothers got into a fight, and killed each other (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 25). Tsitselikis wrote a fictionalised version of this tragic event (Tsitselikis 2020: 288-298). Ultimately, the Turkish authorities allowed Kozanites to celebrate before Lent (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 27), while the carnival's modern-day form was shaped after the 1970s (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 32-34). The carnival's inclusion in the local government's annual budget contributed to the introduction of new events, including the rally of the 'Sourd Games', a fun competition for children (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 44), theatrical productions in the Kozani dialect (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 46), and the enrichment of the grand parade (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 51).

On the evening of their district's celebrations, members of each *fanos* dance their way to the central square, accompanied by the local philharmonic orchestra, Pandora, that performs orchestral songs of the region, most notably *Endeka*, 'Eleven' (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 93-94; my translation).¹¹ Once there, they either sing one or two songs, or perform a short play, such as *Some Like it Unlighted*, before heading back to their district, inviting everyone to join them. The ritual can now begin: the festive fire is lit by a ritual torch, pre-placed at the centre of the circle to be formed (Figure 1), and the lead singer of the *fanos*, usually a man (Figure 4), sings the first verse of the song *Go Dance, my Boys* (Lakkas 2010: 32), inviting everyone to join the dance.¹²

¹¹. Pandora has been an essential part of the city's carnival festivities since the 1950s (Tani 2018: 145-146).

Gradually, a human circle is formed, with most members of the *fanos* standing out due to the fact that they are dressed up in traditional uniforms. These outfits are composed of an all-black ensemble composed of woolen shirts and trousers with a red woolen belt and a wooden crook, *glitsa*, for men and of long dresses with vests and necklaces worn under long coats for women (Figure 2). Since members of the *fanoi* visit one another's festivities, sometimes it happens that a lead singer is invited to sing one or two songs when visiting another district. In this case they wear everyday clothes since it is the *fanos* celebrating whose members need to stand out from the crowd (Figure 6).

← 12. This particular song originates from the corpus of Greek folk songs (Lakkas 2020). Researching the many existing variants of folk songs in different regions of Greece, Saunier stresses the important contribution of the singer, who has the power to bring a song closer to the needs of their audience, even though their authority is often questioned (Saunier 2001: 24).

All the *fanoi* follow a specific order in the songs' performance. First are sung the *kleftika*, a category dedicated to episodes from the 1821 Greek Revolution and, in particular, to the historical activity of the *klefts* (Herzfeld 1982: 61-62). Theodoros Lakkas (2020) notes that most of the *kleftika* are 'variations of Greek folk songs'. Immediately after come the love songs, followed by the satirical songs, which make up the largest category and are most often inspired by real incidents that took place in Kozani. The last category contains the *maskarlitka*, namely the 'obscene' songs (Dinas 2005ii: 280), which are usually performed after midnight.

The performance of these songs is very specific, as is their order, and successful communication between the singer and the audience is crucial for their message, be it satirical or explicitly obscene, to be heard. Since all songs are sung in Kozani Greek, a dialect many visitors are unfamiliar with, it is the movements of members of the *fanos* that allow for the lyrics to be properly understood. Sometimes they may interact with the visitors, perhaps showing them a song's particular choreography

or teasing them, while at other times small non-verbal theatrical acts will bring the lyrics of a song to life. I shall provide three examples of such acts in order to demonstrate how successful communication is carried out and how the carnival's satirical spirit is expressed. The first concerns a satirical love song, *I Shall Arrange a Marriage for You, My Daughter* (Lakkas 2010: 95-96; my translation), the second a satirical song, *I Passed From Where They Grow Broad Beans* (Lakkas 2010: 92-94; my translation), and the third the performance of some sexually explicit songs. As a general rule, the lead singer sings a verse that is repeated by both the members of the *fanos* and the audience, in two alternating motions, one including moving ahead and the other staying still and clapping. This repetitive motion accompanies all the songs, with certain exceptions. All songs are sung *a capella*.

I Shall Arrange a Marriage for You, My Daughter is a dialogue between a mother and daughter around marriage. Arranged marriages were common for young women when they came of age in Kozani, like elsewhere in Greece, up until the first years of the *Metapolitefsi*. The dowry prohibition in 1983 and the Greek feminist movement contributed to the gradual decay of the phenomenon (Clogg 2015: 251). The song is ideally sung by two people, who play the characters of the mother and the daughter respectively, or alternatively solely by the lead singer with a performance recreating the lyrics near the centre of the human circle. The mother presents to her daughter a list of potential suitors through their occupations and it is the other members' duty to show to the audience, through movement, what these occupations are. '*Bakaláki*' is the grocery store owner, so some members pretend to buy invisible stuff, while another writes down the sum and scratches their head, making the audience laugh and deem them not good enough for the bride to be. The character of the daughter theatrically pushes them away, while singing in the dialect '*No, my mother, I don't want him; I shall fall down and die*' (original: '*Óchi, mána m', den tun thélu, péftu kátu ki pithénu*'),

Lakkas 2010: 95; my translation). While the verbs in the first person would be pronounced with an [o] at their end, in the dialect it becomes an [u], hence turning ‘*péfto*’, meaning ‘I fall’, into ‘*péftu*’, and ‘*pethéno*’, meaning ‘I die’, into ‘*pithénu*’, [e] also becoming [i], due to vowel raising constructions observed in Kozani Greek (Dinas 2005i: 42-43). The character of the bride to be goes on to reject the following two suitors: ‘*barberáki*’, the barber, who is pushed away by the participants’ wooden crooks or *glitses* while pretending to cut a visitor’s hair and ‘*raftáki*’, the tailor, who is just taking measures for a dress when the daughter screams that he spends the entire night ‘eating flies’, ‘*míyis háfti*’, both words here also pronounced with vowel raising (Lakkas 2010: 96). At the end of the song, the daughter chooses the shepherd, ‘*giubanáki*’, because he is the most sexually active of them all. Members of the *fanos* who have worn bridal dresses over their traditional uniforms then lift them up so that the crowd can clearly see the plastic phalluses around their waists.

While the audience continues to engage in the ‘staying still and clapping’ and ‘moving ahead’ choreography during the performance of *I Shall Arrange a Marriage for You, My Daughter*, the next song requires another form of engagement. The lead singer brandishes their *glitsa* and starts singing:

Perasa ap' ta Bugdanià
ída póspirnan kukià
Éétsja já ta éspirnan
Bugdaniótsis ta kukià

I passed from where they grow broad beans,
 saw them seeding broad beans,
 like this they seeded them,
 the women of Bougdania.
 (Lakkas 2010: 92; my translation)

The dialectal phrase ‘*éétsja já*’ (Dinas 2005i: 74-75), meaning ‘like this’, is sung many times, each introducing a different action that the lead singer demonstrates to the people dancing in the circle in order for them to repeat along with the lyrics. The members’ wooden crooks, *glitses*, are essential in the representation of the actions described in the song to show how the women of Bougdania ‘*skálgan*’, ‘dug’, ‘*pótzan*’, ‘watered’, and ‘*mázunan*’, ‘picked up’, their broad bean crop (Lakkas 2010: 92-93). Even though all verbs are pronounced in Kozani Greek, as manifest in the vowel raising in ‘*mázunan*’ and the elision in ‘*skálgan*’ and ‘*pótzan*’, they are the same as in Modern Greek. Through the gestures and the lyrics that the spectators have to repeat, we learn that the women of Bougdania hulled, winnowed, sifted, baked, and ate their broad beans. For the final gesture the lead singer sits in a squat and makes an extremely pained expression. The crowd imitates them, waiting for the last action to be described, some amongst them already giggling. ‘Like that, they defecated them’, sings the lead singer with a sigh (Lakkas 2010: 94; my translation), and the crowd bursts into laughter. As Theodoros Lakkas notes, ‘it is the way the songs are performed that makes them intelligible’ (Lakkas 2020).

The third performance (Figure 8) that I will examine is made up of a medley of three different songs, combined together, and adapted to the needs of the audience. If one observes Figure 8, they will see how the *fanos*’ singers decide that they will address an obscene verse to women in the crowd, first to me, then to another woman. The verse sung to me is also adapted to the situation: the original one is ‘*ki isís pu mas tiráti, ta arhídia mas na fáti*’ (and all you, looking at us, eat our balls) (Lakkas 2010: 142; my translation), the verbs being sung in the second plural person. In my footage, the verb ‘*tiráte*’, a dialectal verb meaning ‘look’ (Dinas 2005ii: 502), which would be ‘*tirás*’ in the second singular person, becomes ‘*travás*’, a Modern Greek verb meaning ‘to film’ among other things, hence keeping the metrical rhythm but being adjusted to the situation, in a way that will provoke the crowd’s laughter.



Figure 8
Sexually explicit song in the *fanos Pigadi tou Kirmario*

Likewise, afterwards, one of the singers stands in front of another woman, and sings to her ‘*námun pláka stin avlí su na mi katurái tu mní su*’, which translates to ‘I wish I were a flagstone in your garden, so that your cunt would piss on me’ (Lakkas 2010: 142; my translation), while the other members of the *fanos* dance aggressively around the fire. The carnival’s explicitly satirical character is to be found in the themes of the *maskarlítka* songs, which often represent priests who have taken a chastity oath as men leading an exhaustive sex life. In the footage of Figure 8, the lead singer describes the sexual advice given to him by the ‘priest who eats ribs’, who encouraged them ‘to fuck them all’. As if the use of the dialect and the festive occasion facilitate the expression of sexuality and the construction of what Bakhtin calls ‘the grotesque body’ (1970: 36) — namely the abundant, essentially material body linked to the earth and to lower body functions — *maskarlítka* are only sung in Kozani Greek and, like all the other songs, only during carnival season.

Within this ritual, ephemeral space, every social and political structure, including the respected figure of the priest, is prone to satire, expressing the carnival’s mechanisms that overthrow all hierarchy. However, this ‘world upside down’, whose circular formation many members of the *fanos* are assigned to keep intact during the performance of their songs through yells, interjections like ‘*Oú*’, and brandishing their wooden crooks (Figure 1), only exists for a few minutes at a time since the songs are not performed non-stop. During intervals, the orchestra, Pandora, that follows every *fanos* back to their district on the night of their celebration, plays orchestral pieces accompanied by specific choreographies. One of them, known as *Pigeons*, sees the crowd imitate pigeons, lying on their knees, and jumping up each time the tune gets more lively. Most of the *fanoi* also have headquarters, which are usually near the spot where the *fanos* is lit, where visitors are welcome to try local delicacies and drink wine (Figure 3). At the same time, kiosks with free wine and cheese pies, *kichia*, are provided by the local authorities (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 74).

As the third example shows, songs are not recited by heart, but can be slightly altered in order to adjust to their audience. This element explains the ritual’s persistence throughout the years since it stresses the festivities’ ability to adapt to the specific needs of each occasion. At the same time, this flexibility shows that Kozani Greek is still undergoing the process of evolution like every spoken language. In the case of the carnival songs, this evolution takes the form of more Modern Greek words being inserted into the dialect, such as the word ‘*travás*’ in the third example above. The more recently a song is composed, the more frequent this phenomenon is. In the song *Iléfthira* (Freely), written in 2020, we find the word ‘*filu*’, meaning ‘gender’, rendered dialectical via vowel raising. In Modern Greek, this same word is ‘*filo*’. The ritual of the *fanos* ends after the performance of the *maskarlítka* when the sacred fire is put out by the urine of the male members of each *fanos* (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2000: 67). Thus participants bid goodbye to the carnival’s *grotesque body* until the next year and welcome the period of Lent.

Patience: Between History and Language

Matina Tsikritzi-Momtsiou’s *Patience* is a theatrical play in five acts which attempts to reconstruct a period of Kozani’s history, namely the spring of 1941 when the Axis Occupation of Greece began (1941-1944, Clogg 2015: 410-411). Performed almost entirely in Kozani Greek, the play was staged in April 2019 to critical acclaim. As I will demonstrate now, *Patience*, despite its historical theme, remained quite contemporary in its criticism of war, corruption, and the patriarchy, therefore using the dialect in order to reflect upon structures that have affected the lives of the entire population. Writing the play, Tsikritzi-Momtsiou was fully aware that she needed to use the dialect in a way that would



Figure 9
Sexually explicit song in the *fanos Pigadi tou Kirmario*

lead to successful communication, noting that ‘the dialect, like all languages, is a living organism, always changing, always in motion’. Thus she decided not to attempt to recreate the way people would speak in 1941 but rather use the dialect’s contemporary form in order to make the play fully comprehensible to the audience. According to Tsikritzi-Momtsiou, ‘the most important thing is successful communication’ (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2020).

The play’s action opens in contemporary Kozani when a group of tourists arrive to the city and meet an elderly man, Thodoros, who plays cards with his friends at a local café. Thodoros speaks to them exclusively in the dialect but they are able to understand him. Their communication, however, is not always successful. For example, when the character of Amaryllis tells him her name, the old man thinks she is called ‘*Maroulis*’, ‘lettuce-like’ (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 4). Thus, the comic element, ever-present in the dialectal theatre in Kozani, seems to characterise the beginning of the play. When the character of Thodoros starts narrating the story of his family, returning back to his childhood, the scene is transformed: the chairs and tables are taken away, the set of an old house appears, and characters dressed in 1940s fashion enter the stage, while radio broadcasts about the Greek Army’s successes on the Albanian front are heard (Clogg 2015: 168).

As the Nazis are ready to invade Greece, Annika, Thodoros’ mother, is ready to marry her daughter, Peristera, off to a wealthy family, even though she is in love with Nikolas. They all speak entirely in the dialect but certain terms are pronounced in Modern Greek. For example, Annika refers to the line of defence planned by the dictator Metaxas as ‘*i gramí Metaxá*’, instead of dialectising it into ‘*i gramí Mitaxá*’. The scene depicts the reality of arranged marriages, satirised in the carnival song *I Shall Arrange a Marriage For You, My Daughter* that I have already discussed. Peristera, unwilling to marry the man her mother has picked

for her, says that she wanted to become a teacher, ‘*na yénu daskála háliva*’, a phrase in which the term ‘*daskála*’, which means ‘teacher’, is not dialectised, hence showing the educational system’s influence on the dialect. She also argues that ‘things change’, ‘*alázn ta práymata*’, foreshadowing, in a way, the feminist movement’s action in Greece, which pressed for changes introduced in the Marriage Law of 1983 (Clogg 2015: 251).

The father of the family, Takis, is shown to share a friendship with the character of Stavros, the only real historical figure to appear in the play, corresponding to the writer and journalist Stavros Theodosiadis (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2020). Through this relationship the audience is informed of the librarian’s plan to protect the local library’s treasures from the Nazis by hiding some of them in a church’s crypt long considered to be haunted by the ‘*stxó t’ Ai-Lázar*’, the ‘ghost of Saint-Lazarus’ church’ (Papakonstantinou 1999: 64). While Stavros is shown to master both Demotic Greek and the *katharevousa*, he speaks in Kozani Greek with Kozanites, saying ‘*paénu st’ vivliothík*’, ‘I go to the library’, instead of ‘*piyéno sti vivliothíki*’, using both elision and vowel raising in his speech. The librarian, Nikos Delialis, does not appear as a character in the play, a choice Tsikritzi-Momtsiou explains by arguing that she ‘wanted to reflect upon the legend-like connotations of a real event’, before noting that, ‘after all, every civilisation needs its legends’ (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2020). While Stavros explains to Takis the plan to hide the rare manuscripts from the Nazis, a family of Serb refugees arrives, to whom they offer food and fresh water, evoking the present-day refugee crisis in Europe and the importance of solidarity.

The performance’s tone changes dramatically after many Kozanites leave their homes behind in order to go to the countryside for a few days out of fear that the Nazis will bomb the city. In reality a Luftwaffe air attack took place on 10 April 1941 (Papakonstantinou 1999:

56), destroying many buildings including the City Hall's second floor (Papakonstantinou 1999: 64). On stage, under the sounds of the bombing and with images of destroyed buildings projected in the background, the characters appear walking with whatever they could take with them, their clothes gradually appearing dirtier, their faces growing more worn out. Cries and desperate phrases in Kozani Greek are heard such as *'pán ta spítxa mas'* (we lost our houses) or *'aílí pxí apómnan písu'* (alas, those who stayed behind) (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 23). A woman is killed by a bomb onstage. Her children kneel beside her, urging her to wake up, telling her that they have to flee the city, to no use. The central characters return to find their house ruined by the air attack. This is the first time that the word *'daiáda'*, the play's title, is heard. This word will be heard again when Annika's elder sons return from the Albanian front, one of them severely wounded. *'Daiáda'* expresses the tragedy of war, thus stressing the play's strong antiwar message.

Another contemporary issue showcased throughout the performance is that of the way that patriarchy shatters women's wants and ambitions. This is explored through the arch of Peristera's character who was forced to drop out of her education. Her mother, Annika, criticises her for acting *'man isi pídi'* (as if you were a boy). It is worth noting that the word *'pídi'*, which means 'child' in Modern Greek, is used in Kozani Greek to describe boys alone (Dinas 2005ii: 403), demonstrating the way patriarchal structures have persisted within the language. As the action progresses, Peristera grows more and more confident in herself, a change manifested through her movements and her tone: she speaks more loudly, her voice being clear and stable, and she expresses her feelings. After the bombing when her fiancé's family breaks off the arranged engagement due to her lack of *'náxti'* (dowry) (Dinas 2005ii: 335), Peristera shows her relief, declaring that she would not marry this man even if her family dragged her all the way to the church (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 45). Thus the theme of arranged marriages, almost

always taking place at the expense of women's freedom of choice, re-emerges, recalling today's reality which, even though quite different from the one Peristera experiences, still sees women being harassed within the patriarchy. When Nikolas finally comes to ask for her hand, Peristera tells her parents that all she ever wished for was to live with a person able to understand her feelings and who would let her be (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 50). While her speech does not manage to convince her family, her wounded brother intervenes in the dispute, talking about how the hardships of war have thrown them all inside a dark hole — *'más érksan s' éna lákkou'* (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 50) — and how his sister and Nikolas' example is that of people ready to climb their way up towards the sun (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 50). A Platonic-inspired metaphor thus evokes struggles that continue today concerning the need for equality, peace, and knowledge. Following this the family agrees to the union. At this point, the audience usually stands up, crying and applauding.

The final scene takes the action back to modern-day Kozani, the tables and chairs reappearing on stage. Thodoros cheerfully describes how Peristera ended up being an elected representative at the local council and how Nikolas 'handed out ballots', *'mírazin psifuðéltia'* (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 52), hinting that none of them managed to get any closer to the symbolic sun, but rather settled for money and glory. The play ends when Thodoros' grandson, Thodoris, comes looking for him and urges him to get back home for lunch by saying in English 'Let's go' (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 55). His grandfather asks him to repeat the phrase in Kozani Greek and the boy joyfully says *'vzn'*, an interjection with the same meaning as 'Let's go'. The old man comments: 'That's right! *Vzn!* Some things change, okay, but we can't transform them entirely' (Tsikritzi-Momtsiou 2019: 55; my translation). The curtains drop as they walk offstage, to the crowd's applause.

Conclusion

This article has studied two cultural performances carried out entirely in Kozani's local dialect with a dual aim: firstly, to introduce the city's carnival rituals and theatrical productions as a phenomenon worthy of observation and analysis in contemporary scholarship dedicated to performance and language, and, secondly, to explain the Kozanites' need to use the dialect during the two quite specific occasions of the carnival season and plays staged in Kozani Greek. In order to successfully meet the two objectives of this study, I have examined both occasions through the detailed observation and analysis of examples with regard to the use of the dialect.

Throughout carnival season, Kozani Greek is used in all of the festivities. The close examination of the short one-act play *Some Like it Unlighted* and the way that carnival song lyrics are adjusted to the needs of the moment, as well as consideration of the fact that new songs are being written, reveals a strong two-way relation between the carnival festivities and the current social and political landscape. Furthermore, it underlines the fact that Kozani Greek, even though not widely spoken by the local population, is still undergoing the evolutionary process of every language by being constantly transformed through its speakers' choices.

Analysis of Matina Tsikritzi-Momtsiou's *Patience* exhibits analogous findings, with the dialect functioning as a means to a present-day criticism of the patriarchy and to carry a message in favour of peace and solidarity. The characters' family stories and struggles during a period so dark as the one of the Axis Occupation are viewed through the narration of Thodoros, an old man remembering his childhood, therefore bringing forth the contemporary use of the dialect by older generations.

However, the play's success, as well as its final scene, seem to confirm the same fact that was observed in the carnival rituals, namely that Kozani Greek is still evolving.

As both these examples demonstrate, performance seems to justify the use of the dialect. For a region whose bilingualism was never taken into account by the government in its implementation of educational reforms and constant efforts to construct a national identity, the linguistic prejudice often expressed against Kozani Greek (Lakka 2018) seems to be put on hold during these performative occasions when the dialect is allowed to dominate cultural and social life. In such moments, Kozani Greek seems to be employed in order to defy time and space, leaving behind homogenous national narratives that have repressed dialects and rather stressing its own worldview that is both humorous and contemplative.

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