

Foties & Pergamos
Notes by Joe Graziosi
For Beth Bahia Cohen's Greek Ensemble Class
January 2021

FOTIES

Just to try and set the record straight: this is not a tune originally from or of Mytilini, nor is it a tune from Erythraia (West Asia Minor) as others assert. The accompanying dance is a choreography by a specific dance teacher who at the time was working in Lesbos. "Foties" seems to have been an old urban laiko tune that struck a chord with some older generation musicians in Ayiaassos who heard it from a traveling band and adopted it. It was known as "Yiftissa Tsingana" (which translates roughly as Gypsy Gypsy). According to the violinist Charilaos Rodinos of Ayiaassos, prior to 1940 there was a club called Kipos (Garden) that featured such traveling bands; once such played this tune and the rest is history. The gym teacher Paraschos Liakatos, much later, was looking for a tune to accompany this dance he had in mind and hearing this tune played occasionally by older musicians adopted it for his own purposes. It seems evident to me that Liakatos at some point must've seen a performance by a Turkish dance troupe of the wedding dance Cayda Cira from the Harput (Elazig) region of eastern Anatolia and adapted it to make his "Foties." This dance and tune as Foties became quite popular in the folk troupe and folk teacher workshop circuit in Greece with everyone assuming that it was a Mytilini traditional dance. When Mytilini people themselves began to question that assertion, the story began circulating that it was indeed a made-up dance, but it was done in honor of the great Smyrna fire of 1922, which is also bogus. I have tried to identify with some recorded examples of the original melody but have as yet to find anything called Yiftissa Tsingana that resembles this piece. The source of most of the above info is an article by the sandouri player Dimitris Kofteros in the magazine *Paradosi Ke Techni* (Tradition and Art), vol. 23 DOLT 1995. Kofteros had interviewed the older violinist Harilaos Rodinos of Ayiaassos. The theory regarding the Turkish dance Cayda Cira is my own.

The sandouri player, Kostas Zafiriou "Kazino," also from Ayiaassos, says the same in the following interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3a4gSbcyYM&t=108s>

For those of you more interested in the dance as such than the music here is Cayda Cira (which has likely undergone some choreographer's intervention at some time):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0z1RD85jmSA&t=151s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2ixeCSK-0Y>

Foties

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryIUjQ-8OEk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qPJSYbYnHM>

presented as a dance of Erythraia (Cesme peninsula of Asia Minor)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzwdSDqz2MU>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvgluK4xF_4

PERGAMOS

A great melody and song. I just love Ogdondakis instrumental version Melemenio, which is not on YT with the exception of my shorter edition in the compilation from 12 years ago.

danced in northern Chios

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuN84Qer3Nk>

early recording with Greek lyrics: "Andoule" Melemenio with Andonis Dalgas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZJDEvz88Tg>

c 1920 NYC with Kyria Koula in Greek

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qSofUn2lsM>

c 1926 with Achilleas Poulos NYC in Turkish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRmhvrg7fBA>

late 40s? with Marko Melkon (Alemsharian) NYC in both Greek and Turkish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo4T27OGbQ8>

Kostas Roukounas (in his later years)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M61NO7b87cM>

the recently deceased Solon Lekas of Mytilini sings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntYWBCnTRhc>

from Plomari, Mytilini (musically a bit lacking in energy)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6G3Oi_proE0