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**Scientific announcement:**

**The popular musicians and the companies of Naoussa**  
**1870-1970**

**Christos Zaliou**  
**Teacher of Physical Education**  
**Naoussa**

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## **Introduction**

### **Aim of the survey**

Zournades are the domineering musical instruments in the field of traditional music in Naoussa for the last four decades. Moreover, in the record library, as far as Naoussa is concerned, the only records with traditional tunes that can be found all use zournades as their musical instrument. Records with songs or music played by any other musical instrument do not exist. Therefore, a plausible belief that this is the musical tradition of Naoussa is created.

The aim of this survey was to accumulate evidence and prove that during the period 1870-1970 the popular musicians of Naoussa were using string and copper wind musical instruments. Furthermore, the aim was to draw information with ethnographic and sociological interest, as well as to find information concerning the melodies and the dances of that period. For at least a hundred years there was a popular music tradition, which, for reasons we are going to analyse, was lost, and little by little from the 1960s onwards its place was taken by zournades.

### **Project method**

The method of personal recorded interviews was used for the survey. The people from whom the information came along with the photographic material:

- a. Are elderly.
- b. They have an immediate relation to the object of the survey, that is they are musicians or close relatives of the musicians being under survey.
- c. Because of their status they have a direct connection to the information we are searching for.

The main problems, which came up during the survey were the non-existence of relevant bibliography, since no one had made a survey on that issue before and furthermore it was difficult to locate the right people for the drawing of information. Many of the people who were useful for the survey were not even known to me (musicians etc), and their identification was made through old photographs. Many of the protagonists were dead and the tracking down of their children was very difficult (some of them were not living in Naoussa and when the relatives were only daughters they had undertaken their husbands' surnames and that made it difficult to locate them).

## **1. Social and economic background**

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Naoussa was a town of Macedonia still occupied by the Turks. Its population was 12,000 inhabitants. 10,500 of its population were Greek and 1,500 were Turks.

From the mid 1900s and mostly after 1860 Naoussa produces a considerable amount of agricultural, stock-raising, small and big industry products, which are transported to other places (like Thessaloniki, the rest of Greece and abroad). The economy of the town was very flourishing and in constant mobility. That is why Naoussa became during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century “the most developed urban centre of Macedonia,” as it is characterised by the historian K. Moschov.<sup>1</sup>

The development of small industry and of commerce through the exports of various goods (like sayakis [thick woolen fabric used for the making of the villagers’ capes] both in southern Greece and the Balkans, products of sericulture in Thessaloniki and dairy products and wines in Egypt, etc) resulted to the improvement of the economy of the town in the mid 1900s continuing on to the first decade of the next century. It is very characteristic the fact that the immigration current started just after 1900. Until then the immigrants of Naoussa were mostly traders who founded remarkable commercial houses in other places outside Naoussa.

From the mid 1900s a pulsating middle class is formed in Naoussa, which introduces ways of living and aesthetic models from Thessaloniki and the big European urban centres. Especially during the mid-war years the European type of entertainment is dominant in the social life of Naoussa.

## 2. The popular musicians of Naoussa

### The family of Atsis<sup>2</sup>

Thanasis Atsis came to Naoussa with his brother from Bitolia (today is called Monastiri) in the mid 1900s when he was 20-22 years old. Their nationality was unquestionably Greek. They left from their village when some Turk was lost and they were accused of being responsible for his loss. That resulted in the killing of their father by the Turks and also in their being chased down. Thanasis and his brother came chased to Naoussa and they worked at orchards and vineyards. Little by little they bought their own orchards. But they loved music as well. Thanasis played the violin and his brother the outi. After finishing work in their fields the brothers used to approach groups of people of Naoussa asking them to play music for them and amuse them.

A match-making between Thanasis and a girl from Naoussa whose father's name was Palias was made. Dimitris (1864-1952) and a younger child, Giorgos were born from their marriage. Thanasis taught his children music but because he was illiterate, his longing for his children was to learn how to read and write. He wanted Dimitris to become a teacher but to his great sorrow Dimitris merely finished primary school. But he was very good at music and he became a terrific musician. He played the clarino (clarinet).



Photo 1: This is a photograph from the carnival of 1919. The musicians who can be seen are: Dimitris Atsis (clarinet), Philotas Atsis (trombone) and Gogas Atsis (bass drum).

Giorgos worked as a tailor of European clothes and he also played the best cornet in Naoussa, but he died very young.

Dimitris and his brother Giorgos lost their mother at an early age. After some years their father remarried to a woman from Emporio of Ptolemaida, or Chailaria as it was called then.

Thanasis had two more children from his second marriage, a girl, Maria and a boy, Christodoulos (1896-1958). Maria became a teacher according to her father's wish, whereas Christodoulos did not manage to learn how to read and write, but he became a very good musician. He played the violin superbly and he also played the trombone. Thanasis Plakas, from the town of Trikala of Thessaly, was playing the clarinet in the music company of Christodoulos and at the same time he was related to Christodoulos since he married

Christodoulos' sister and became his brother-in-law. Thanasis Plakas and his wife did not have any children and they were staying in the same house with the family of Christodoulos.



Photo 2: The photograph is taken in Naoussa on 10/09/1944. The musicians who can be seen from left to right are: Antonis Veligdenis (soprano saxophone), Thanasis Plakas (clarinet), Nikolas Atsis (trombone), unknown (trombone), Christodoulos Atsis (trombone), Euripides Pazarentzis (bass drum), Dimitris G. Atsis (drums).

Dimitris Atsis learnt how to play the clarinet when he was 18 years old, that is in 1882. As his grandson Dimitris (born 1933) narrates, Dimitris Atsis learnt to play the clarinet from his father and because his father could not find any musical instruments in the area, he bought him a clarinet from Thessaloniki, from someone called Dimitriou, who brought musical instruments from Czechoslovakia.

Dimitris concentrated his efforts so as all his children could learn how to play music and form a music company, because people at that time wanted music bands to play at their weddings and their feasts. So, when they did not have to work in the fields, they played music at weddings. Music was their second job.

The family of Atsis played the following musical instruments: Thanasis Atsis played the violin (born around 1840), his younger brother played the outi, Dimitris Atsis (1864-1952) played the clarinet, his younger brother Giorgos<sup>3</sup> played the cornet. Christodoulos Atsis (1896-1958) played the violin and the trombone, the first son of Dimitris Atsis, Nikolas (1895) played the trombone very well, his second son, Thanasis (1897-1972) played the cornet, his third son, Gogas (1904-1995) played the trumpet and the youngest son Philotas (1910-1942) played the trombone and he was a very renowned trombone player in Naoussa.

Thanasis Atsis was an excellent musician at “prima vista”<sup>4</sup>. He served his time in the military music band, which went to Asia Minor with the Greek army in 1919. When Thanasis came back from Asia Minor (after 1922) he left from Naoussa and went to work as a professional musician with bands in Athens and Thessaloniki. When after some years he returned to Naoussa he joined a music band that played music at the music halls of Naoussa of that time. In the meanwhile he worked with musicians from Thessaloniki but also from Naoussa like with Kostas Balias (violin), Antonis Veligdenis (saxophone), Stavros Veligdenis (trombone)

and many others. Thanasis' son tells us that his father learnt the theory of music from a "mathematician"<sup>5</sup>.



Photo 3: Taken in Saint Nicholas depicting the tribe of the owners of taverns, cafés and music halls during Ascention Day in 1953-54. The musicians who can be seen are: Thanasis Antos (tabor), Thanasis Atsis (trumpet), Stavros Veligdenis (trombone) and probably Vaggelis from Florina (clarinet).

When Dimitris Atsis stopped playing music, his son Gogas along with his younger brother Philotas continued to play (the first one the cornet and the second the trombone), but they did not have a clarinet, which was much needed at wedding receptions. Before their father stopped playing music, he had taught someone to play the clarinet. That was Gogas Tsiafkas. Therefore, the two brothers worked with Tsiafkas who played the clarinet. After the Second World War Tsiafkas went to play with another company (group) and the Atsis brothers took Alexis Katsanos in their company, who knew how to play the clarinet and they started playing at wedding receptions again.



Photo 4: Taken at Saint John the Baptist's monastery outside Naoussa at the beginning of 1950s. The musicians who can be seen are: Stavros Pazarentzis (bass drum), Giorgos Tsiafkas (clarinet), Dimitris Pazarentzis (Stavros' father, bass drum), Dimitris Yannoulis or Touskas (trombone), Giannis Siagos (clarinet), Thanasis Antos (standing, in the blue suit).

Thanasis Atsis got married to the sister of his fellow musician Antonis Veligdenis, to Evlambia and he had 5 children. His first son, Giorgos (1929-1949) played the violin very well and he worked with his father Thanasis and later on with Marinos Vasileiadis in Veroia.

Thanasis' second son, Dimitris or Mimis (born 1931) started playing music with his father in 1941-42 as a jazz band player. In 1950 he served his term in the military music band of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division in Veroia. Thanasis' third son, Lambis did not learn to play music and neither did his fourth son, Giannis.

Dimitris Ath. Atsis tells us about the period 1941-1944, “one of the favourite pieces of music of the people was “chor-chor Agas”<sup>6</sup>. We also loved this piece very much, it was our soul and every time we were playing it we asked the people to be quiet. During the German occupation we mostly played Greek light operas, Italian and German as well. A favourite piece of that time was “Vaftistikos”, many people asked us to play it.”

Giorgos Atsis (Gogas) played the trumpet. He was a trumpet player in the military music band in Veroia during his serving time. During the 1920s and 1930s Dimitris Atsis and his children had the best musical instruments in the whole area. They had a drum with plates that were partly made of silver and the skin of the drum was made of fish skin. The copper musical instruments were made in Czechoslovakia.

Dimitris Atsis died in 1952 at the age of 88. His brother Giorgis (we do not know the date of his birth) had died young at the age of 30-35.

### **The family of Veligdenis**

Antonis Veligdenis (1899-1959) was the son of the cattle dealer Giannis Veligdenis who had 6 children with his wife Maria, two boys and four girls. Antonis was his first son and he became an excellent musician (he played the clarinet and the saxophone) and he had a very good theoretical grounding. When he was young he served time in the military music band. He played in the same band for many years along with his brother-in-law, Thanasis Atsis and during the period 1936-1940 he was chief musician in the two bands of Naoussa, “Athina” and “Eriolan”.

Giannis Veligdenis’ second son, Stavros (1919) played the trombone very well and cooperated with his brother’s band when they went to play mostly at weddings. During the 1950s Antonis Veligdenis’s son, Giannis (1935) played in his father’s band where he played the accordion.

### **The family of Katsanos**

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the brothers Grigoris and Nikolas Katsanos came to Naoussa from Katsanochoria of Epirus. Because of their descent they took the name Katsanos, which means street vendor. The two brothers worked with lime, their profession was lime-kiln workers but they also loved music. Grigoris played the violin and Nikolas the clarinet.

Grigoris was an excellent musician in a way of playing that was called “a la tourka” (like the Turkish). Moreover, he rendered the Turkish melodies terrifically and that is why many Turks living in Naoussa invited him to play in their feasts and festivities.

Grigoris Katsanos had 7 children, 4 boys and 3 girls. Only the youngest of his children, Alexandros (1904-1978) was occupied with music. Alexis followed his father’s occupation and worked with lime and parallel to that he worked as a musician.

Alexis Katsanos learnt to play music from his father at first. But he was self-taught in many musical instruments as well. In this way he learnt to play the clarinet and the trombone and also the outi, the mandolin and best of all, the violin. Depending on the situation he played the musical instrument that the company needed. For indoor feasts he played the outi or the violin, whereas at weddings he played the cornet at first and then the clarinet.





Photo 5: Taken during a feast in Saint Nicholas of Naoussa in the 1950s. Christos Yannoulis plays the trombone, Thanasis Atsis plays the trumpet and Alexis Katsanos plays the clarinet.

Alexis served his time in the military music band in Veroia where he played the cornet.

Alexis Katsanos worked with all the popular musicians of Naoussa playing either the clarinet or the violin. He did not belong to a permanent company. Both the Atsis family and the musicians from Saint George asked him to play with them. He played music until the 1960s. By the end of the decade he did not play music professionally but mostly with a group of friends or in a feast.

Alexandros Katsanos was married to Smaro Griva, whose origin was from Asia Minor and had two sons, Dimitris and Polykarpos. Not one of them worked as a professional musician.

Alexandros's son, Dimitris (born 1932) narrates: "My father didn't have money very often. The most characteristic thing is that he had never had a bow for his violin! The lime-kiln workers had their furnaces up in the mountain. When a horse with a beautiful long tail passed from there, he took a pair of scissors and cut the horse's tail to make the bow he did not have with its hair. The musical instruments my father kept at home were: a violin, a clarinet, a cornet and a trombone. He sold the cornet and the trombone and kept the violin and the clarinet. He took his musical instruments to Thessaloniki when they needed repairing, as other musicians of Naoussa also did."

### **Kostas Stefos or Balias (1904-1968, violin)**

Kostas Stefos or Balias was born in Naoussa in 1904 and died in 1968. His parents were Giorgos Stefos and Stergiani. His father, Giorgos was a teacher and a chanter in the church of the Transfiguration in Naoussa. From what people say he had also been to Fanari to study music. Giorgos Stefos had a boy, Kostas and two girls.

Eleni, Kostas Balias' daughter (born 1945) tells us: "My grandfather Giorgos and an uncle of my father who lived in the same house both played music. That uncle played the mandolin, the violin and the guitar and he was the one who taught my father music, mandolin and theory of music." After the mandolin Kostas Balias passed on to the violin, which he played professionally later on. Before the Second World War he worked as a musician in Naoussa,

but the jobs were rare during that period and that is why he occasionally went to Thessaloniki and Athens to find a job. In the mid 1930s he was in Athens.

Kostas Baliás had a girl from his first marriage. From his second marriage in 1938 to Steriani Zacharaki he had two children, Eleni (1945) and Christos (1948). None of his children played music professionally. In 1946 the Baliás family was once again in Athens, where Kostas worked as a musician. At around 1950 they all moved from Athens to Thessaloniki. Kostas Baliás worked very often with Antonis Veligdenis (saxophone), with Thanasis Atsis (cornet) as well as with musicians who came from Thessaloniki. At that time many famous singers, men and women, came to Naoussa from Thessaloniki and Athens. Kostas Baliás hosted some of them many times in his house. Besides working as a professional musician Baliás was also a tailor.

Baliás contributed a lot to the creation of the Conservatory of Naoussa in 1952. He gave violin lessons there, too. He gave music lessons in Naoussa but also in Thessaloniki where he moved with his family.

### **Dimosthenis Gougouras (1880-1935)**

The real surname of Dimosthenis Gougouras was Giannopoulos. Gougouras was a nickname, which prevailed later and became a surname. He came from Naoussa. He played the violin very well and everybody who knew him remember him as a peculiar person who played music only for his own entertainment and to entertain his friends without ever being paid.

Dimosthenis was a saddle-maker. He made saddles for animals. His workshop was in the cellar underneath his house. But he also owned some fields and he worked there, too.

According to his daughter Marianthi he was a self-taught musician and he played the violin “a la tourka”. He played the violin very well and all the wealthy people of Naoussa invited him to their feasts. He usually played with another peculiar violinist, Nikolas Gianniotis.

Dimosthenis Gougouras and his wife Fanoula Makouli, who came from Edessa, had 8 children. None of Dimosthenis’ children played music professionally.

Dimosthenis went to Athens in 1930 after an invitation from Mrs Melpo Merlier. The Archive of Folklore Music, the director of which was Mrs Merlier recorded him in music pieces for solo violin. One of these music pieces circulated lately in the CD 527 136-2 PolyGram “Folklore Songs from the Collection of Melpo Merlier”.

## **Musicians from the quarter of Saint George**

### **The family of Tsiáfkas**

Dimitris Tsiáfkas whose origin was from Asia Minor was a musician and he mostly played the bass drum and the drum. He had four children with his wife Soultana and they all became musicians. Giorgos or Gogas (1900-1958) played the clarinet superbly, Vassilis played the

accordion and the cornet, Alekos played the trombone and Grigoris (1924-1961) played the bass drum and jazz.



Photo 6: Taken at the fête of Saint John the Baptist outside Naoussa in 1950. The musicians who play are: Alekos Tsiafkas (trombone), Nikos Dimitrias or Tsilimbias (clarinet), Thanasis Antos (bass drum). The way in which the popular musicians played the percussion instruments can be seen in the photograph. It was called “jazz”. The jazz band player had the bass drum with a plate and a drum in front of him.

Besides working with his brothers, Gogas worked with other musicians as well, like Antonis Veligdenis, Nikolas Atsis, Christodoulos Atsis, Thomas Vrouftis, Dimitris Giannoulis or Touskas, Christos Giannoulis (brother of Dimitris). Gogas Tsiafkas had 4 girls and a boy but none of his children played music professionally.

Grigoris Tsiafkas worked as a musician but he also worked in the fields. He cut wood for the fireplace with his chainsaw at houses, too. Grigoris played music with his brothers, with Giannis Siagos, who was his wife’s brother, with Dimitris Giannoulis and with other musicians as well.

Dimitris Giannoulis or Touskas (1906-1980) played the trombone just like his brother Christos Giannoulis. They often worked with Thomas Vrouftis, who played the trombone, too. Dimitris Giannoulis was a cart driver by profession, he had a horse and a cart and he carried goods.

### **The family of Sianos**

Giorgos and Kalliopi Sianos had four children, two boys and two girls. Both their boys learnt to play music. The elder son, Giannis (1915-1997), played the clarinet, the soprano saxophone and the cornet. Giannis worked as a musician but he worked in the fields, too.

Giannis Siagos’ brother, Vassilis Sianos (1920-1984) played the cornet and the trombone and he was one of the pioneers who worked for the establishment of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Naoussa. He served in the military music band during his military service. Giannis Siagos played in his brother’s company but he also played with Nikos Dimitrias or Tsilimbias. Vassilis was working in Lanara’s mill factory as a weaver and he worked as a musician, too. Giannis Siagos worked with Antonis Veligdenis (saxophone), with Atsis, with Thanasis Antos (jazz), with Giannoulis Touskas (trombone), with Christos Foudoulis (clarinet, who

came from Lefkadia of Naoussa), and with Euripides Pazarentzis (jazz). Stavros Dimkos played the bass drum many times in Giannis Siagos' company. Stavros Dimkos lived in Naoussa but he came from Edessa.

### **The family of Antos**

The family of Antos consisted of three brothers who worked exclusively as musicians. The eldest brother, Alekos (born (1902) played the trombone, then came Antonis (born 1903) who played the violin and the last one was Thanasis (1920-1972) who played the bass drum and jazz. Thanasis Antos contributed along with many other people to the establishment of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Naoussa in 1958.

### **The family of Aliatsis**

Christodoulos Aliatsis (1918-1980) had his origins in Edessa. He played the tabor in Giannis Siagos' company. He had two children who both became musicians. His older son, Nikos (born 1938) plays the bass drum and jazz and he has mostly worked with musicians from Veroia. Christodoulos Aliatsis' younger son, Aggelos (born 1946) plays the trombone and he has worked in earlier years with musicians such as Giannis Siagos, Thanasis Garyfallos (trombone), Vassilis Sianos, etc. Nowadays he continues to play music and he also works with much younger musicians.

### **The families of Gadides – Kouvaklis from Stenimachos of Naoussa**

The company from Stenimachos of Naoussa was formed by: Thodoros Gadides (1886-1949, harmonica), Lambros Kouvaklis (violin) and Mitsos Kouvaklis (lute). In 1918 Todoros Gadides got married in Stenimachos of Eastern Romylia to the sister of the Kouvaklis brothers and from 1921 onwards he started working with them by playing the harmonica.

In 1924 they left from Stenimachos of Eastern Romylia and settled in Choropani of Naoussa, which was later renamed to Stenimachos. Their company played at engagements and weddings in Naoussa from 1925 to 1947, as well as at country clubs of the time such as Sarifi's. Lambros died in 1934 and his place in the violin was taken by the youngest of the Kouvaklis' brothers, Stefos.

Mitsos Kouvaklis stopped playing music in 1940 and from 1942 onwards his place in the company was taken by Thodoros Gadides' son, Giannis (born 1927) who played the lute and later on the harmonica. The musicians of the company had empirical knowledge of music. The Kouvaklis' brothers learnt to play music from their father who played the lute, whereas Thodoros Gadides played the shepherd's flute at first and later on he learnt to play the harmonica. Giannis Gadides started by playing the harmonica and from 1950 onwards he played the accordion professionally in many bands both in Naoussa and Veroia.

### 3. The musical instruments

It is known that in Naoussa from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the musical instruments that the popular musicians played at weddings and in various festivities were the violin, the outi or lute, the daire and some time later the clarinet. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards companies were formed within the urban society of Naoussa, which used wind instruments such as the cornet or the trumpet, the trombone, the clarinet and the bass drum with a plate. The same musicians who played the above musical instruments also used other musical instruments when they played indoors, like the violin, the clarinet, the outi, the lute and some time later the harmonica and the accordion.



Photo 7 : Taken at a wedding in Stenimachos of Eastern Romylia in 1922-23. The musicians who play are: Thodoros Gadides (harmonica), Lambros Kouvaklis (violin), Mitsos Kouvaklis (lute). In 1924 the company came and settled in Choropani of Naoussa, which later on was renamed to Stenimachos of Naoussa.

At weddings, which took place in Naoussa, the musical instruments, which were used in open spaces (for example, during the transportation of the bride's dowry or when they went to take the bride for the wedding), were the clarinet, trombones, cornets, trumpets and the bass drum. On the other hand, the musical instruments which were used indoors (like during the wedding reception which was given on the first floor of the house), were the violin, the clarinet, the outi, the lute, the daire and later on the accordion and the jazz (that is the bass drum with a plate and a drum which were used like the drums) were put in. The same bass drum (with a plate) was also used by the bands of central Macedonia in the 1900s.

The trombone which was used in Naoussa was always that with the keys on it. The "a tiro" was never used because it was not suited to traditional music. Whereas the musicians of Naoussa also played the violin, there is no evidence that the violin was used with the copper musical instruments as well. The violin accompanied by the outi, the lute and later on the accordion was used for the wedding reception which was given on the first floor of the house after the couple had got married.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the only companies that played music at weddings taking place within the society of Naoussa were those which used copper musical instruments

or those which used the violin, the clarinet, the outi and the daires. Zournades (a kind of a clarinet) were not used at weddings because the people of Naoussa thought they were inferior musical instruments and they used them only during the carnival days or at feasts which took place in the countryside, like at Saint Nicholas, or at Saint John the Baptist's monastery outside Naoussa, or at Panagiopoula and Ypapanti.

At the villages around Naoussa, where people were poorer and among other things the wedding reception was given outdoors, that is in the yard of the house, the musical instruments which prevailed were zournades and the bag-pipes.

It is remarkable that during the mid-war years the harmonica and later on the accordion became one of the main musical instruments of the company.

During carnival days Naoussa became an attraction and a place of meeting for musicians who played every piece of popular musical instrument. The feasts which took place during the two weeks that the carnival lasted were known to all central Macedonia and during this period musicians from Florina, Kozani, Gidas, Goumenissa, Edessa, Irakleia Serron and Aridaia poured in Naoussa.

The trombone, the trumpet and the cornet were used by the companies in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their massive use by the popular musicians coincided to the use of the copper musical instruments by the philharmonic orchestras of the scholastic and music-loving societies which were formed in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in all central and western Macedonia. In Naoussa there were two philharmonic orchestras in 1904<sup>7</sup>. The first one was that of the "Poupoulou's" and the second one was of "Evangelismos". In Veroia in 1904 there was a philharmonic orchestra called "Melissa"<sup>8</sup>. In Thessaloniki there was a philharmonic orchestra of a society called "Orfeus"<sup>9</sup>. In Kozani there was a philharmonic orchestra of the Educational Society called "Pandora"<sup>10</sup>. In Edessa there was also a philharmonic orchestra<sup>12</sup>.

Moreover, the military music bands of the Greek army used the same musical instruments to those which were used by the philharmonic orchestras of the various societies.

Especially after 1912 many of our popular musicians served their time in military music bands, where they acquired some rudimentary knowledge of the theory of music that they later used in the playing of popular music.

From 1900 onwards, because of the existence of philharmonic orchestras, there were in the broader area of Naoussa-Veroia-Thessaloniki many excellent music teachers who primarily worked as conductors of the philharmonic orchestras but also many of them gave private lessons to children who wanted to learn how to play music. On one hand, some children learnt to play music in the philharmonic orchestras, and on the other hand, they learnt to play music with the music teachers who taught them privately. Thus, the result was that popular musicians who played in music halls and at weddings, like Thanasis Atsis, Antonis Veligdenis, Kostas Stefos or Balias, had also a very good knowledge of the theory of music.

Of course, the majority of our popular musicians learnt how to play music from their parents, from some empirical musician or they were self-taught.

The "balance" of zournades was played at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century mostly by Turks or Turkish-gypsy musicians, who came from Veroia, like Tzamalís, Isinkas and others. The

“balance” consisted of two zournades, a fair player and a pass player as well as a tabor. At the beginning of the century in Naoussa there was only one local musician, Dimitris Vogiatzis or Mitros Chaivanos, who played the zourna only during the carnival days for the “Boules”<sup>12</sup>. When the carnival days were over he put the zourna in its place and he took it out the next carnival days.

#### **4. The dances**

In the music halls and at dancing parties before the Second World War the musicians played pieces from operas or light operas, fox-trot, quadrilles, tango, waltz and other melodies<sup>13</sup> of the time. They played traditional songs or songs of Naoussa only when someone asked them to. At weddings they played traditional melodies and dances.

The most popular dances of Naoussa are included in the carnival custom of “Boules” and I will only refer to them by name. In this project I am going to refer only to some dances which were danced at weddings, but they have become obsolete for many years. The dances that the popular musicians played were: Syrto-Moustabeikos, Melikes, Nizamikos, Makrynitsa, Sarantapente, Tsamikos, Papadia, Sotiris, Davelis, Patinada, slow Chasapikos and quick Chasapikos. Furthermore, the musicians included in their repertoire melodies from Epirus, Thessaly and Asia Minor. Dances which have been forgotten for many years are:

##### **Sygathistos**

It was a dance which was danced at weddings. During the wedding reception the first dance was Sygathistos, which was danced by the godfather along with the godmother (best man-maid of honour) or the Crossfathers and the Crossmothers, who were relative couples of the newlyweds and were helping in the wedding preparations. Sygathistos was danced with the couples standing opposite one another with a scarf in their hands. It was a dance in a 9/8 rhythm, a slow and serious dance. After that dance the other dances of the wedding reception followed. This dance has not been danced in Naoussa for several years, because it used to be the dance of the traditional wedding, which has now become extinct.

##### **Xechoristos-Antikristos**

Xechoristos was danced in Naoussa since long ago as a dispersed dance, free in space without holding hands. Men and women danced it at weddings and it was very much danced during the carnival days. The dancers move freely, improvising, onwards, backwards, on the side and their hands also move freely. Its rhythm is 9/8.

##### **Ovraikos**

It is a dance which was danced at weddings at the beginning of the century. Unfortunately neither the music nor the steps of the dance have survived.

## 5. The companies

The company<sup>14</sup> in Naoussa in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century consisted of the violin, the outi or the lute, the daireas and some time later the clarinet was added, too.



Photo 8 : The company of Gadides-Kouvaklis at a feast in Stenimachos of Naoussa in 1933-34. The musicians who play are: Thodoros Gadides (harmonica), a violin player from Veroia (immigrant from Asia Minor) and Mitsos Kouvaklis (lute).

In the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the companies consisted of one or two clarinets, one or two trombones, one or two cornets and one bass drum with a plate. The number of the musical instruments which were used depended on the needs of each occasion. In a rich wedding like the one in the photograph No 19 below, which took place in 1911, we can see that the company consists of three trombones, two cornets, a clarinet and a bass drum.



Photo 9 : The wedding of Paschalis Ioannos and Kalliopi Mougris which took place in Naoussa in 1911<sup>15</sup>.

The musical instruments of the company were all advanced and made abroad, usually in Italy or Czechoslovakia. The musicians of Naoussa bought their musical instruments from the nearby city of Thessaloniki<sup>16</sup>. Many times they bought used musical instruments from the philharmonic orchestras which were established in Naoussa, as well as in nearby Veroia, from



the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The philharmonic orchestras of Naoussa and Veroia bought their musical instruments by ordering them straight from Italy or Czechoslovakia.

The musicians in the companies usually played more than one musical instrument so as to adjust to the occasion and the needs of the company. In this way they could play wind musical instruments (trombone, cornet, clarinet) when they played outdoors and string musical instruments (violin, outi) when they played indoors.



Photo 10: The marriage of Thomas Samaras and Evlambia Fasoulas in Naoussa on 12/04/1912.

The companies of Naoussa were usually named after the oldest musician of the company or after the best musician of the company around whom the group was formed. Therefore, we have the company of Dimitris Atsis, of Christodoulos Atsis, of Thanasis Atsis and Antonis Veligdenis, of Giannis Siagos, of Gogas Tsiafkas, of the Katsanos brothers, of Tsilimbias, etc.

In Atsis-Veligdenis' band all the musicians knew many things about the theory of music and that is why they played in music halls where the best singers, men and women, of the time from Athens and Thessaloniki sang. In the other companies there were also musicians who were not totally empirical, because they had served in the military music band and they had acquired elementary knowledge of the theory of music. For example, Gogas Atsis, Vassilis Sianos, Thanasis Antos, Alexis Katsanos, Dimitris Ath. Atsis, etc belong to the above category of musicians.

### **Which were the companies that played in Naoussa**

#### **The company of Dimitros Atsis**

The musicians who played in this company were: Dimitros Atsis (clarinet), Nikolas Atsis (trombone), Gogas Atsis (trumpet), Filotas Atsis (trombone), Kostas Helios (bass drum), Alexis Katsanos (clarinet-violin).

#### **The company of Christodoulos Atsis**

The musicians who played in this company were: Christodoulos Atsis (violin-trombone), Thanasis Plakas (clarinet), Giorgis Atsis (trumpet), Euripides Pazarentzis (bass drum).

#### **The company of Thanasis Atsis-Antonis Veligdenis**

The musicians who played in this company were: Thanasis Atsis (cornet), Antonis Veligdenis (saxophone-clarinet), Kostas Stefos or Balias (violin), Stavros Veligdenis (trombone), Thanasis Antos (jazz).

#### **The company of Gogas Tsiafkas**

The musicians who played in this company were: Gogas Tsiafkas (clarinet), Vassilis Tsiafkas (cornet-accordion), Alekos Tsiafkas (trombone), Golis Tsiafkas (bass drum), Dimitris Pazarentzis (bass drum).

#### **The company of Nikos Tsilimbias**

The musicians who played in this company were: Nikos Dimitrias or Tsilimbias (clarinet), Vassilis Sianos (cornet-trombone), Vaggelis Karvouniaris (bass drum), Dimitris Giannoulis (trombone).

#### **The company of Giannis Siagos**

The musicians who played in this company were: Giannis Siaggos (clarinet), Dimitris Giannoulis or Touskas (trombone), Christos Giannoulis (trombone), Thomas Vrouftis (trombone), Thomas' son, Stavros Vrouftsis (trombone), Vaggelis Karvouniaris (percussion), Christos Foudoulis (clarinet).

#### **The company of the Katsanos' brothers**

The musicians who played in this company were: Grigoris Katsanos (violin), Nikolas Katsanos (clarinet), Alexis Katsanos (cornet-violin).

Of course all the above musicians worked occasionally with one another in various formations depending on the needs of the job.

## 6. Conclusions

1. From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we have the creation of a pulsating middle-class in Naoussa, which introduces ways of living and aesthetic models from Thessaloniki and the big European urban centres. Especially during the mid-war years the European type of entertainment prevails in the social life of the town. At the dancing parties which are organised, the prevailing dances are the fox-trot, the quadrilles, the waltz, the tango and other European dances. Musical theatre companies that play operas and light operas often visit Naoussa. Many popular musicians incorporate to their repertoire romances and marches from operas<sup>17</sup> or from light operas even when they play at wedding receptions.
2. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the popular musicians were using string musical instruments (violin, outi, lute and daires). In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the copper wind musical instruments were widely spread (trumpet, cornet, trombone), which along with the clarinet, the accordion and the bass drum were the musical instruments of the company that were used when they played in open spaces.
3. Several musicians played more than one musical instrument. They played different musical instruments indoors and different musical instruments outdoors.
4. The people of Naoussa never used zournades at weddings, because they thought they were inferior musical instruments and they believed it was derogatory to use them at weddings. Zournades were played by Turkish gypsy musicians (like Isinkas, Tzamalís and Giaous) at religious festivals, at feasts in the countryside and mostly during carnival days.
5. There is an immediate relationship between the companies, the Greek military music bands and the philharmonic orchestras of the scholastic and music-loving societies, which were established at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
6. Most of the musicians had other jobs and that is why playing music was a second job for them.
7. From the 1970s onwards the copper musical instruments in Naoussa became rare, they almost disappeared. There are many reasons for that phenomenon. Firstly, the old musicians started passing away and there was no one to take their place. Secondly, the children of most of the musicians did not follow their fathers' profession and that had as a result the disruption of the music sequence we had met in previous decades. Finally, the ways of living changed, the traditional wedding started to vanish from Naoussa, which followed the models of the big urban centres.
8. The traditional way of entertainment, like religious festivals, the excursions and the feasts in the country decline little-by-little and their place is taken by the clubs and the bouzouki music halls, which spring up everywhere with an amazingly fast rhythm. The radio and television invade rapidly into every home and they make music very accessible in everyday basis.
9. During the 1970s whereas on one hand we give up our traditions in order to follow the modern way of living, on the other hand, we have a turning towards folklore. In every county town of Greece cultural societies are formed with folklore dance groups. Moreover, the traditional outfits of each region start being surveyed along with the traditional music. All this started as an effort to preserve cultural tradition and later on it continued as an effort to project each region through this tradition. During this period the traditional copper musical instruments have almost become extinct in Naoussa and zournades start to prevail. Zournas was the musical instrument which always accompanied the carnival custom of "Boules" in Naoussa. The most famous musicians of Naoussa were in former years Dimitris Vogiatzis

(Chaivanos) and in latter years Stavros Pazarentzis (1931-2000) and Vaggelis Psathas (born 1936). Several folklore dance groups are formed in Naoussa (Lykeio Ellinidon, Boules, Pysos, Vlachoi), which need musicians for their performances not only in Greece but also abroad. In this way, zournas, because it is being used along with the folklore dance groups manages to survive nowadays.

## NOTES

1. Achilles F. Goulas, "Naoussa in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century", pg 55, Thessaloniki 1999.
2. Information concerning the music family of Atsis was published in an article by Mr Christos Zalios in the magazine "Art and Tradition", volume 80, pg 12-13.
3. Unfortunately there are no records in the registry office of Naoussa about certain musicians, because they were destroyed in 1949 when all the records of Naoussa were burnt down. That is why the only information we have about some of the musicians either comes from their relatives or there is no information at all about the date they were born.
4. Prima Vista = performance of a piece of music without previously studying it.
5. According to Dimitris Atsis the old musicians called "Mathematician" that musician who knew how to play music with notes, who had a knowledge of the theory of music.
6. It is a music theme from the light opera "Leplepitzis Chor-Chor Agas" by the Armenian musician Dichran Tsochatzian, which was first presented in Athens in 1883. (Thodoros Chatzipantazis, "The Operetta", Athens 1981, pg 58-62) According to the musician Dimitris Ath. Atsis that music theme was a favourite one even until the 1940s.
7. Christos Zalios, "Philharmonic Society of Naoussa", Naoussa 2005.
8. Christodoulos Emm. Anastasios, "The History of Veroia", March 1960.
9. Newspaper "Nea Alitheia", Saturday 03/09/1911.
10. Educational society of Kozani "Pandora", 1903.
11. Newspaper "Nea Alitheia", Saturday 10/02/1911.
12. "Boules" in the carnival dance act of Naoussa are called all the members of the "Boulouki" (group) who take part in the act. The group consists of men who wear Greek kilts with masks on their faces and of a woman figure with a mask on her face, which is always impersonated by men. The custom has a strictly prearranged ritual, which has its origin in ancient Greece.
13. Newspaper "ASTIR of Veroia", 18/01/1933 and Wednesday 21/02/1934.
14. The company is a co-operation, a group consisting of various people who play music. The word company is not Greek, it is Italian (compagnia) and it was used at the same time with the musical instruments that its members started using. The word "company" emphasises the most important characteristic of the band, which is the collaboration of the musicians who belong to the group and mostly stresses the musical and economical relationship that connects them together. (Despoina Mazarakis, "The Popular Clarinet in Greece", pg 21, Athens 1959.
15. The photographs No 19 and No 20 are taken from the archive of Eugenia Zalios-Basiakoulis.
16. Dimitris G. Atsis, Giorgos Siagos and Dimitris Katsanos all give such information. Moreover, they used to take their musical instruments to craftsmen at Thessaloniki any time they needed repairing.
17. Aggelos Valtadoros, who is the founder of the Conservatory of Naoussa, mentions in his book "Reminiscence" that during the mid-war years the march of "the boasting bride", which the musicians played on her way from her house to the church was a piece from an opera.

## SOURCES

Information through personal interviews (recorded) as well as photographs were given from:

	NAME	TIME OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF BIRTH
1.	Aggelos Christ. Aliatsis	05/10/2005	1946
2.	Nikos Christ. Aliatsis	05/10/2005	1938
3.	Anastasia Athan. Antos	28/10/2005	1946
4.	Irene Atsis-Zarkadas (daughter of Christodoulos Atsis)	20/10/2004	1936
5.	Dimitris Athan. Atsis	26/05/2004	1931
6.	Dimitris Georg. Atsis	10/11/2003	1932
7.	Stratos Vardagiannides	01/07/2004	1923
8.	Giannis Ant. Veligdenis	16/05/2002	1935
9.	Giannis Gadides	30/04/2006	1927
10.	Maria Gougoura	05/01/2006	1922
11.	Sotiris Karabatakis	05/11/2005	1913
12.	Dimitris Alex. Katsanos	02/12/2005	1932
13.	Giannis Kosmarikos (grandson of Dimitris Gougouras)	12/01/2006	1942
14.	Panos Kourmoulis	19/01/2006	1928
15.	Menelaos Mirtsios	20/07/2004	1934
16.	Spyros Biliouris	20/10/2005	1938
17.	Tryphon St. Pazarentzis	28/10/2005	1958
18.	Giannis Provatenos	03/07/2004	1914
19.	Giannis Samaras	17/03/2006	1938
20.	Giorgos Ioan. Siagos	06/11/2005	1952
21.	Eleni Stefos (Balias)	14/01/2006	1945
22.	Thomas Tenedios	17/01/2006	1927
23.	Nikolaos Tsepouras	17/10/2004	1916
24.	Eudoxia Tsiafkas-Giannoulis (daughter of Grigoris Tsiafkas)	02/10/2005	1949
25.	Dimitris Georg. Tsiafkas	02/10/2005	1947
26.	Georgios Christodoulou	17/10/2004	1925
27.	Alekos Chonos	15/01/2004	1911
28.	Vaggelis Psathas	05/11/2003	1936
29.	Nikolas Bliatkas	1974	1896

**Note:** Besides the main interview that I had taken from each one of the above-mentioned people, whenever a new piece of information came up, I met many of them again so as to be able to cross-reference it.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. Aggelos Dim. Valtadoros, "Reminiscence", Naoussa April 1996
2. Achilles F. Goutas, "Naoussa in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century", Thessaloniki 1999
3. Newspaper "ASTIR of Veroia", 18/01/1933, 21/ 02/ 1934
4. Newspaper "Nea Alitheia", Saturday 10/02/1911
5. Newspaper "Nea Alitheia", Saturday 03/09/1911
6. Christos Zalios, magazine "Art and Tradition", volume 80, pg 12-13
7. Crhistos Zalios, "Philharmonic Society of Naoussa", Naoussa 2005
8. Despoina Mazarakis, "The Popular Clarinet in Greece", Athens 1959
9. Efstathios I. Stouggianakis, "History of the Town of Naoussa", Edessa 1924
10. Thodoros Chatzipantazis, "The Operetta", Athens 1981, pg 58-62
11. Anastasios Emm. Christodoulou, "The History of Veroia", March 1960

### Numbered captions of photographs

1. Photo 1: This is a photograph from the carnival of 1919. The musicians who can be seen are: Dimitris Atsis (clarinet), Philotas Atsis (trombone) and Gogas Atsis (bass drum).
2. Photo 2: The photograph is taken in Naoussa on 10/09/1944. The musicians who can be seen from left to right are: Antonis Veligdenis (soprano saxophone), Thanasis Plakas (clarinet), Nikolas Atsis (trombone), unknown (trombone), Christodoulos Atsis (trombone), Euripides Pazarentzis (bass drum), Dimitris G. Atsis (drums).
3. Photo 3: Taken in Saint Nikolas depicting the tribe of the owners of taverns, cafés and music halls during Ascension Day in 1953-54. The musicians who can be seen are: Thanasis Antos (tabor), Thanasis Atsis (trumpet), Stavros Veligdenis (trombone) and probably Vaggelis from Florina (clarinet).
4. Photo 4: Taken at Saint John the Bapti st's monastery outside Naoussa at the beginning of 1950s. The musicians who can be seen are: Stavros Pazarentzis (bass drum), Giorgos Tsiafkas (clarinet), Dimitris Pazarentzis (Stavros' father, bass drum), Dimitris Yannoulis or Touskas (trombone), Giannis Siagos (clarinet), Thanasis Antos (standing in the blue suit).
5. Photo 5: Taken during a feast in Saint Nikolas of Naoussa in the 1950s. Christos Yannoulis plays the trombone, Thanasis Atsis plays the trumpet and Alexis Katsanos plays the clarinet.
6. Photo 6: Taken at the fête of Saint John the Baptist outside Naoussa in 1950. The musicians who play are: Alekos Tsiafkas (trombone), Nikos Dimitrias or Tsilimbias (clarinet), Thanasis Antos (bass drum). The way in which the popular musicians played the percussions instruments can be seen in the photograph. It was called "jazz". The jazz band player had the bass drum with a plate and a drum in front of him.
7. Photo 7: Taken at a wedding in Stenimachos of Eastern Romylia in 1922-23. The musicians who play are: Thodoros Gadides (harmonica), Lambros Kouvaklis (violin), Mitsos Kouvaklis (lute). In 1924 the company came and settled in Choropani of Naoussa, which later on was renamed to Stenimachos of Naoussa.
8. Photo 8: The company of Gadides-Kouvaklis at a feast in Stenimachos of Naoussa in 1933-34. The musicians who play are: Thodoros Gadides (harmonica), a violin player from Veroia (immigrant from Asia Minor) and Mitsos Kouvaklis (lute).
9. Photo 9: The wedding of Paschalis Ioannos and Kalliopi Mougris which took place in Naoussa in 1911<sup>15</sup>.
10. Photo 10: The marriage of Thomas Samaras and Evlambia Fasoulas in Naoussa on 12/04/1912.



**Christos Zalios**

Christos Zalios is born in Naoussa in 1962. He studied Physical Education at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and he graduated in 1984 with honours. He is a teacher of Physical Education in the 2<sup>nd</sup> High-school of Naoussa. He is married and he is the father of two girls. He is much interested in the research of folklore music and folklore dances. He is the author of the book “Philharmonic Society of Naoussa”. He has published several articles about folklore issues in the magazine of DOLT “Art and Tradition”, in the newspaper “Laos” of Veroia, in the newspapers “Foni tis Naoussas” and “Neoi Kairoi” of Naoussa. He is a member of the International Council of Dance (CID).

His address is:

Christos Zalios  
3 Makedonikou Agona Street  
592 00 Naoussa, Imathia  
Greece  
Tel. No.: 2332 0 23367  
Email : [zalchrist@gmail.com](mailto:zalchrist@gmail.com) και [chrzalios@yahoo.gr](mailto:chrzalios@yahoo.gr)