

**‘Read by ear’: literature and sound technologies during the Greek Long Sixties**  
**Anna-Maria Sichani**

Drawing on the recent (new) materialist turn within contemporary literary studies, this paper aims to provide a critical study on the introduction of sound technologies in the Greek literary field during the Sixties (1958-1974), by pondering the intersections among technological progress, mass culture, media devices, agents, and procedures in the literary activity. Inaugurating an interdisciplinary approach between media history and Greek literary studies, and based on extensive archival research and on hitherto unexplored cross-domain primary sources, my analysis will investigate how almost-hidden parameters in the literary history, such as sound technologies, enrich the literary activity with new material substrates, establish new forms of literacy and constitute innovative discursive networks, beyond the printed word.

Serialized novel readings over the airwaves, specialised radio-directing techniques (‘Cinemaphone’), adaptations, abridgements and dramatizations of literature flourished on many specialised radio programs during the Sixties, in the midst of the golden age of the Greek Broadcasting. At the same time, the introduction and adoption of the (7-inch) 45 rpm record format by the entire newly-established Greek record industry, as a smaller, more durable and higher-fidelity record standard, allow a series of experiments with sound-recording technology in distributing verse. While record albums and marketing labels (‘Dionysos’) with poetry readings by Elytis, Seferis and of Cavafy’s works are introduced as a spin-off activity of publishing houses like *Ikaros*, these great-sounding products of authorial voices, alongside the recordings of poems set to popular music, influence the popularity of Greek literature –both in Greece and abroad– while epitomizing the decline of modernist divide between high and popular culture. Few years later, within a society accustomed to numerous media formats and well-trained in listening, cultural resistance to the Colonels’ regime (1967-1974) was –among others– ‘sonorous’: what ends the deafening silence of the majority of intellectuals is Seferis’ declaration against the Junta’s regime (28 March 1969). That was a self-recorded and radio transmitted message, while a plethora of oral readings and poetry happenings succeed to remediate the censored words.

Ultimately, my paper aims to further explore how sound technologies force a widespread interest in the Greek public sphere towards the oral and the aural modes of perception, echoing their current international awareness towards the material and technological aspects of communication, including issues of secondary orality and new media ecologies, as discussed by Marshall McLuhan and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Challenging conventional ways of thinking about the reading experience and its agents, these cultural technologies remodel the very conditions of literary communication, and accelerate the modernisation of the literary circuit as well as the commodification of its processes.