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THE ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF THE *MEDITERRANEAN* IN MUSIC IN CROATIA

The paper discusses the historic, geographic and social dimension of the concept of the Mediterranean in the musical culture of the Croats. In Croatia, the concept of Mediterranean in musical culture — and in general — is largely linked geographically with southern Croatia (the narrow coastal strip and island region) and with the neighbouring Mediterranean countries (Italy and Greece). The term Mediterranean is associated mainly with expression of both popular music and traditional music, but does not coincide with state borders, indicating the importance of continuity in contacts at all levels of communication.

Keywords: the Mediterranean, ethnomusicology, *klapa* singing

What is considered *Mediterranean* in Croatia, in which the musical culture of the Mediterranean as a whole is not sufficiently known? Is the *Mediterranean* in music an integral part of the regional or national cultural identity of the Croats? What are the musical images of *Mediterranean* among Croats? My attempt here will be to examine the term *Mediterranean* in the music of the Croats as an integral part of their Mediterranean cultural identity — if we agree that something culturally common exists on such a global level. Thus, the historic, geographic and social dimension of the Mediterranean in general will be discussed through the question of the Mediterranean in music in Croatia.

The notion of the Mediterranean Basin as a unique "culture area" in the works of Anglo-American social and cultural anthropologists has been current for almost half of this century, while ethnomusicologists or, rather, music anthropologists, focused their studies on music in Mediterranean cultures at the beginning of the 1990s (Magrini 1993 and in this volume).

We could say that interests and priorities in research and the concept of ethnomusicology in Croatia developed parallelly with current mainstream ethnomusicological interests which I assume also to have coincided with the ethnomusicological interests in neighbouring Mediterranean countries. During the 1970s, the research widened from the traditional documentary methods of folk music research¹ to subjects like "continuity and change of tradition" (Marošević 1995:47), "the process of acculturation and transformation of musical and dance phenomenon" (Bezić 1998:23). The theory of communication and contextual folklore studies, together with anthropologically oriented ethnomusicology, influenced Croatian ethnomusicology during the 1980s (Marošević 1995:46-49), while during the 1990s "the paradigm of any music in any context became legitimate but also the individualization of conceptions, approaches and research themes" (Ceribašić 1998:53). The ruling political situation during the 1990s, manifested through various changing power relations, the process of disintegration and unification of new countries and especially the war in this part of Europe, singled out the theme of music and power in the context of war (Pettan 1998) and made pertinent themes such as the role of music in the construction of identity.

Before the mid-1990s, the relationship between music-making in Croatia and the Mediterranean was not researched in the work of Croatian ethnomusicologists. There appears to have been no perceived need for systematic comparative research with the musical identities of other Mediterranean countries.² The first article on the Mediterranean identity was written by S. Pettan under the title "The Croats and the Question of Their Mediterranean Musical Identity" (1997). In his article, Pettan concludes that "A Mediterranean musical identity is just one of the

¹ Croatian scholars broadly accepted the principal division of Croatia put forward by the ethnologist M. Gavazzi (1940). He divided Croatia into four ethnographic zones/cultural areas: the Pannonian, Sub-Alpine, Dinaric and Adriatic zones, where the latter term corresponds roughly to our term Mediterranean. Gavazzi's classification was also used indirectly by ethnomusicologists involved in research into Croatia's traditional music (e.g. Jerko Bezić) and dance (e.g. Ivan Ivančan). On the basis of research of tone relations in Croatia, Jerko Bezić (1974:168) differentiated 6 folk music regions:

1. Istria and the Gulf of Quarnero
2. The Dinaric region (Dalmatian Zagora, the north-western Zadar islands and the northern Zadar coastal region, Lika, Kordun, and Banija)
3. Dalmatia (the islands and the narrow coastal strip north from Zadar)
4. Slavonia and Baranja,
5. Međimurje and Upper Podravina,
6. North-western Croatia (Croatian Zagorje, Turopolje, Upper Posavina, Moslavina, Bilogora, Žumberak and Gorski kotar).

² Although they did not work on comparison of the music-making and music identity of Croatia and its neighbouring Mediterranean countries, Croatian scholars did do research into the relationship between music-making and regional identity. This concentrated particularly on the immediate Dalmatian region (Buble 1988; Povržanović 1989; Milin-Čurin 1995) which by its geographical and cultural position is undoubtedly "the most Mediterranean" part of Croatia.

regionally-based options found among the people who consider themselves Croats. It is strongly emphasized among those who inhabit or (at least) originate in the Adriatic zone." Pettan also concludes that "power relations play an important role in the search for the Mediterranean musical identity of the Croats who live under different circumstances within Croatia and abroad".

With the rise of the new state of Croatia — at the beginning of the 1990s — there was a need for re/defining national identity. Mediterranean identity grew from a typically regionally-based identity to an important factor in the formation of the national identity of today's Croats. Most of the Croats see their identity rather as part of Mediterranean identity — Adriatic — or Central European identity — sub-Alpine, Pannonian — than as Balkan identity — Dinaric. In order to strengthen this argument they are inclined to point to a number of issues that differentiate them from their Serbian neighbours to the East, the East to them having an absolutely negative connotation. Music is one of the values which people compare. The first reaction to the music of the Serbs — after the 1990s war — was a complete negation, their music not being listened to at all. The result of that has been that even today, almost four years after the end of the war, their music, particularly their new-composed folk music known as *turbo folk*, is never broadcast on Croatian TV and radio stations. On the other hand, there are more and more privately-owned places of entertainment — restaurants, disco clubs with groups and female *cajka*-singers — where this type of music can be heard. Some singers of entertainment music, e.g. Siniša Vuco, from Split in Dalmatia, have recently been applying the Serbian music style, which has led to their boycott in the broadcast media.

Although Mediterranean identity is regarded as having positive connotation, there are some instances in which construction of national identity clearly develops at the expense of some other regional identities. The best example of this is the promotion of the *tamburica*, the instruments from the pearl-shaped plucked lute family which spread throughout Croatia, as a national folk instrument. At the same time, the *mandolin*, an equivalent instrument played primarily in the Adriatic zone, does not have the same treatment. During the recent war, the *tamburica* was a symbol of resistance (Bonifačić 1998:131-150). Numerous *tamburica* ensembles were founded, recordings were made, and there was intensive radio and TV promotion. As part of official cultural policy, *tamburica* music was also introduced at all levels of the school system — from primary to university level — in public schools and in music schools. Conversely, the introduction to schools of *mandolin* music has been on hold for years (Buble 1994:340). Speaking with colleagues from the music school in Split, I learned that students of the school do, nonetheless, play the *mandolin*, even though no official school programme exists for it. At the end of the school year they are given a

diploma for playing the *tamburica* even though the majority of them have never even held the instrument.

The historical dimension

I have started with the historical dimension of music-making in Mediterranean Croatia for several reasons. The Mediterranean was the heart of the old world and its long history influenced all aspects of life. Historical processes allowed various cultures and civilizations to come into direct contact and to influence each other. Mediterranean societies were in a position to absorb and adopt various influences, from the local and regional to global aspects, incorporating and modifying them into their own structures.

The Croats migrated to the territory of their present homeland around the 7th century AD and settled on the ruins of Greek and Roman civilization, adopting the influences of the local inhabitants. According to Gavazzi (1928:120) "...when settled on Adriatic coast, the Croats were introduced to a great part of the Mediterranean elements which they absorbed by personal contact with the Romanized inhabitants or those with Roman heritage, who with time became Croatized". For example, one can see traces of the old Roman *Saturnalia* custom and remnants of the selection of local leaders or princes in the *biranje kralja* [electing the King] custom (Gavazzi 1928:122; Lozica 1997:46). The *biranje kralja* custom is still in function, especially at Carnival time (Lozica 1997). Some events have been transferred to summer terms, thus functioning as part of the programmes offered to tourists. The major events of this type are those on the island of Veli Iž in the Zadar area and on the island of Korčula. Electing the king on Korčula is closely connected with the *kumpanija* groups — associations which nurture the sword-dance tradition (Ivančan 1967; Lozica 1997). This custom is also known among Croats who migrated during the Middle Ages from the Dalmatian coast and its hinterland to the Molise region in Italy. As they exist today, these customs have changed their function. In the past they were part of ritual — of the way of life — while today they are largely tourist attractions through which the inhabitants of these small townships can also express their local identity. They also provide an opportunity for many of the people who originate from these localities and live elsewhere now — in other towns, states or on other continents — to come together and participate in the customs and revive their sense of belonging to the place of their roots.

One of the examples of musical practice of pre-Slavic culture is a type of bagpipe — a single-reed instrument, a double chanter but without drone pipe — called the *diple* or *mišnice (mih)*. This type of instrument is widely found along the Croatian coast, in the hinterland and on the islands, but also throughout the Mediterranean region: on the North African coast (Tunis), in the Middle East and on the Greek islands and Sardinia (Gavazzi

1928:120). Today, the *diple* is played extensively in the Dalmatian hinterland and on the islands (Pag, Rab), in Istra and Gulf of Quarnero (the islands of Krk, Cres, Lošinj) and there are records of revitalization of the instruments in Pupnat on the island of Korčula, and in Putnikovići on the Pelješac peninsula. Although the *diple* instruments were in function among the farm labourers who lived in the cities and worked small holdings on their outskirts — the *težaci*³ — and among villagers on the coast and most of the islands, urban Dalmatians would probably not identify with the *diple* as a symbol of their Mediterranean-ness.

This conclusion leads me to the opposite aspect of the historical dimension and that is the present in the music-making of the Croatian Mediterranean. What is it that is considered and accepted currently by the Croats as being *Mediterranean*, especially among those who consider themselves to be *Mediterraneans*? One can see rapid changes in way of living and in cultural contacts among and within the Mediterranean nations. In the past, the way of life — especially in urban communities — and cultural contacts took place in the Mediterranean cities as relatively closed living communities. In general, the sense of belonging to a nation or a state did not exist. The organization of life in this century is based on the nation/state relations which usually do not coincide with the imagined borders of the Mediterranean (Lopašić 1994:vii). These processes caused the gradual blending of local traditions into the regional and even further afield, in this way broadening the borders of the Mediterranean. A good example is provided by *klapa* singing⁴ which had been part of local tradition originating in small Dalmatian centres in the middle of the 19th century. During the 1960s, with mass media support and the airing of the festival of Dalmatian Klapa Singing Groups held in Omiš, *klapa* singing became a synonym for regional Dalmatian singing. The next step was the growth in the popularity of this manner of singing in the various regions of Croatia — particularly in Istria, the Gulf of Quarnero and Zagreb — and among Croats living abroad — in Australia, Canada, the United States of America, and western Europe — under the name *dalmatinsko klapsko pjevanje* [Dalmatian *klapa* singing]. Because of the characteristics of this singing style — vivacity, major mode, texts about love, serenading style — and its typical tourism associations with the sun, wine and women, the term *Dalmatian* could readily be replaced with the term *Mediterranean*, as these are the attributes by which Dalmatia is considered as being Mediterranean. This fact leads on to the claim that Dalmatia really is the symbol of the Mediterranean to the average Croat.

³ Until recently, the population of the towns and townships on the Adriatic coast was made up of gentle-folk, craftsmen, merchants and farm labourers called *težaci* who made a living tilling the soil around the township. Urbanisation and the changes in the way of life gradually lead to the disappearance of this latter group.

⁴ *Klapa singing* is a traditional way of singing in Dalmatia: a *capella*, homophonic, in groups of 4 to 8 men who sing in 3 or 4 parts (Čaleta 1997).

In the field of entertainment/popular music, singers from the Mediterranean part of Croatia hold a leading place on the Croatian popular music scene in both number and popularity. This started with the festivals of popular music in the 1960s, modeled on the famous San Remo festival of Italian *canzone*, and continued with the founding of many well-known or lesser-known festivals of popular music whose output formed a large part of the music broadcast by radio stations throughout the country, and their increasingly popular presentation in TV video clips. Songs from the Split festival — the focal festival of popular music in the Dalmatian region — because of their motifs, melodies and texts in Dalmatian dialect and certain music characteristics, some of which they shared with *klapa* songs, while others were close in style to the Italian *canzone* or Greek popular music — were experienced as symbols of Mediterranean identity. One should also mention one of the trends in the music of the 1990s which became extremely popular throughout Croatia. This was the popular music style called the *ča-wave* in which the Mediterranean aura was evident — primarily in the texts sung in the regional Istrian chakavian dialect. It has found devotees among proponents of rock, pop, jazz and, more recently, ethno or world music styles, such as Alan Vitasović, Livio Morosin, Franci Blašković, Dario Marušić, the Gustafi group, Šajeta, Tamara Obrovac...

At the present time, therefore, characteristics of the Mediterranean in music can be identified in traditional music phenomena which exist largely in the form of folklore or folklorism, as well as in contemporary popular music phenomena. Songs from the pop music festivals are readily accepted, particularly by the Dalmatian *klapa* ensembles which often include adaptations in the *klapa style* of popular compositions in their performances.

The geographical dimension

The question of Mediterranean borders is still a current one: Where is the beginning and the end of Mediterranean? Is *Mediterranean-ness* stronger around the imagined borders? Who is on the other side of imagined borders? Do the northern and southern borders of the Mediterranean correspond to the migratory paths of the Sephardic Jews? These questions vary from nation to nation and from person to person.

In general, the borders of Mediterranean culture do not correspond with national or state borders. In Croatia, the area covers approximately one third of the territory. The concept of the Mediterranean in Croatia is largely linked geographically with southern Croatia — the narrow coastal strip and the islands region — and with a few neighbouring Mediterranean countries — Italy and Greece.

We can find an answer to the question of Mediterranean borders in an old saying passed on from generation to generation around the

Mediterranean. The old saying from Dalmatia says: the Mediterranean (Dalmatia) is where olive trees grow! I heard this maxim many times while walking with my late grandfather around our village's olive groves, situated on natural-climatic border. P. Matvejević (1987:19) considered this saying to be a gem of old Arab wisdom. The olive tree is indeed closely related to the Mediterranean, both historically and geographically. It is a symbol of well-being and its branch is an emblem of peace, a food and a spice, a salve and a blessing at the end of the road (Matvejević 1987:64). According to Gavazzi (1928:119), technology for production of olive oil — which includes the way the olives are picked, ground and pressed, and how the olive oil is stored — has been known all over the Mediterranean region from times far in the past. Unfortunately, new technology has led to the disappearance of the entire repertoire of the working songs associated with this process.

In the most general sense, people from the North — in Europe — usually identify the Mediterranean with the term South. The situation is the same in Croatia; for people from Međimurje or Slavonia, the image of the Mediterranean conjures up the people of Dalmatia and their cultural and musical features or, to a lesser extent, people from the Northern Littoral or Istria (in the northern Adriatic). Borders are more recognizable and accented at the regional rather than national level. Due to direct contacts, regional borders are not images or symbols but reality and the way of life. People from the Dalmatian hinterland (Zagora) are called *morlaci* [Morlacchs] or *vlaji* [Vlachs of Wallachs]. They in return call coastal people *boduli* [from the Italian Venetian dialect *bodolo*, meaning islander or insular]. *Vlaji* and *boduli* differ in both their way of life and their music-making. Although both groups consider themselves to be Dalmatians, the intensity of their feeling of belonging to Dalmatia differs somewhat in reality. The coastal Dalmatian (a *bodul*) is exclusive in his feeling of belonging to the Mediterranean (Dalmatia) and in no way considers his nearest neighbour (a *vlaj*) to be a Mediterranean similar to himself.

The geographical dimension could be elaborated on the personal level, too. My personal experience is a good example of an answer to this question. My mother was born in an old coastal town — inhabited by *boduli* — while my father was born and raised in a hinterland village — where *vlaji* lived. Although his village is only several miles as the crow flies from the sea, all the customs as well as the music differ from what is found on the coast. I consider both my inherited music traditions to be part of my Mediterranean identity. The impact of their diversity has broadened my Mediterranean borders.

The social dimension

The crucial issue from the social point of view is the contact among cultures. There are broader contacts among regional and national cultures, and more limited contacts among cities and villages at the local or regional level.

The question of contacts among cultures on the Mediterranean, their volume and significance, has been discussed above. Throughout history, there have been many examples of contacts imposed and influences exerted by force. Over the last ten centuries, for example, parts of the Croatian coast and its hinterland have at various time been occupied and ruled by Byzantium, the Venetian Republic, the Ottoman Empire, Napoleon's French Republic, the Austrian Monarchy and Italy. Despite this, dances such as the French *kvadriła* [quadrilla] or the Austrian *šotić* [schottische, or Scottish polka] are still danced by Dalmatian dancers as part of their own heritage.

On the other hand, it seems that there is no special interest among Mediterraneans to learn about neighbouring countries. As P. Matvejević wrote in his *Mediterranean Breviary* (1987:103) (in translation):

Not even the closest of Mediterranean neighbours have any knowledge about each other, or even show any special interest in learning more.

Material proof of the cultural contacts can be found by tracing the common musical instruments. One of the typical Mediterranean instruments in Croatia is the *mandolin*, associated with Italy from where it was probably introduced to Dalmatia. The other instrument associated with Italy is the button accordion known by the name *Trieština* [from Trieste, the major Italian port situated at the northern tip of the Adriatic sea]. Since the *Trieština* is an instrument typical to Alpine and Central European regions, it obviously came from northern, and not Mediterranean, Italy. However, in Mediterranean Croatia it is seen more or less as a typically Mediterranean instrument, introduced as a substitute for older folk instruments such as the *lijerica* [the Dalmatian lyre] and the *mišnjice* [bag-pipes]. The other country associated with the term Mediterranean is Greece. Most Croats would define the sound of the *bouzuki* as being Mediterranean. It was promoted in Croatia during the 1970s and 1980s through popular music, particularly by the Split festival of popular music. At that time, the *bouzuki* was a regular festival orchestra instrument. The playing of this popular instrument is not common practice among Croatian musicians. On the other hand, the *lijerica*, southern Dalmatia's most popular instrument, found on many islands before *Trieština*, can be traced all the way to the Greek islands, where on Crete they call it *lira*. This instrument has symbolic status in the Dalmatian region and is in no way associated with Greece. Although the Croats integrate particular elements of music and music-making from their neighbouring nations, knowledge about the music of neighbouring nations and the image of their musical identity is rather sparse, without any specific knowledge of regional or local styles of the musical culture of those countries.

One of the principle lines of contact on a local/regional and regional/national level in Croatia is the North/South relation, in which the South is the symbol of Mediterranean. The example that I would like to discuss is the relation between the hinterland (North) and coastal strip (South) in the region of Dalmatia, the most southerly part of Croatia.

The music tradition of the coastal and island area is represented by a specific way of formal male group singing called *klapa* singing (Čaleta 1997:127-145). It belongs to the new strata of musical tradition. The characteristic of this musical style is tempered homophonic four-part singing in the major mode. The movement in parallel thirds is its most recognizable feature. The singing style is cultivated, varies from open to *sotto voce* singing, and the texts are mostly about love. The main influence on *klapa* singing came from church singing and neighbouring western and central European cultures, especially from the male coral singing tradition of Northern Italy. Although it started as an exclusively male tradition, the popularity of female groups of similar character has been growing recently.

The musical tradition of the Dalmatian hinterland still exists through a variety of vocal forms such as *rera*, *ganga*, *oja-noja*, *vojkavica*, *ustresalica* and *orzenje*. The most recognizable features are the intervals of major and minor seconds, usually untempered, given in a variety of polyphonic forms. This style of singing is common throughout the mountain regions of the Balkans. In general, the smaller groups of two to three singers are informal, performing at local feasts and patron saint day celebrations (*dernek*). The singing — typical for both men and women — is open, guttural, and in high registers.

Centuries of close geographical and cultural contacts with the coastal towns did not change the main features of the musical traditions of the Dalmatian hinterland. Despite the obvious differences, these traditions appeared closer to each other than to the traditions which were further away geographically, such as those of Međimurje or Slavonia, for example. Are there any common features among these geographically proximate musical traditions? Newer strata of musical traditions in the Dalmatian hinterland tend towards singing in thirds, which is a feature typical for the coastal strip. Bezić (1967-1968:175-275) noticed this phenomenon in the late 1960s. Beside the singing in thirds, influence coming from the north introduce a singing style with fifth endings [called singing *na bas* — on the bass]. Therefore, the singing style of the Dalmatian hinterland is subordinate to the influence of the styles with more popular and positive connotations. At the same time, people living on the coast did not accept their way of singing. S. Pettan (1997) explains this by the fact "while migrating from the Dinaric to either Panonian or Adriatic zone (and not vice versa) people think they are moving from worse to better. The Panonian and Adriatic soundscapes appear to them to be more refined, more modern, and more Western in comparison to their own heritage. As a result, parallelly with the growth of tourism along the coast, one can predict further "Mediterranization" of Croatia. This "Mediterranization" will certainly emphasize Western values, at the expense of Croatia's Eastern cultural traits, here synonymous with the Dinaric heritage." There are two elements in the *Mediterranisation* that Pettan mentioned: migrations North/South or village/city migrations, and tourism. There are a few more elements that I consider integral parts of the phenomenon of *Mediterranisation*: music festivals, popular music, discographic production, radio and television broadcasting.⁵

At present, the music-making of the Croatian Mediterranean is showing a tendency to spread the positive connotation of Mediterranean identity among the Croats. *Mediterranisation* is the term we use for the

⁵ At the moment, the most popular way to present a new recording of pop music is by means of the video clip. It is interesting that there is a stereotyped approach to songs which have a Mediterranean atmosphere. There are always shots of the sea, with mandatory showing of typical Mediterranean stone houses, small boats, fishing nets and fish...

phenomenon of the wide dissemination of *Mediterranean* influence into areas with different and even converse musical characteristics.

Conclusion

Elaboration of examples of music-making in (Mediterranean) Croatia through historical, geographical and social dimensions give some of the answers related the complexity of the term *Mediterranean*. Firstly, we can conclude that the term is used primarily as an expression of popular music and also of folklore or folklorism. The second dimension, the geographical, cannot be clearly defined. This dimension does not coincide with state borders and shows a tendency to be widely spread. The social dimension points out the importance and continuity of contacts on the global, national, regional and, largely, local levels. Contacts are more intensive within the national and regional framework than in relation to other Mediterranean countries, with which the relationship is not an open one, their music traditions being relatively unknown. The coastal strip, because of its history, way of life and traffic and transportation associates directly with the Mediterranean. However, there are differences here, too. The Southern Adriatic — Dalmatia — seems to be regarded as the most Mediterranean symbol among the Croats. How is this reflected in music phenomena? There are no music phenomena which exist exclusively as symbols of the Mediterranean. If one were obliged to select a single one of them as being most representative of the Mediterranean as far as the Croats are concerned, it would definitely be *klapa singing* — a coming together of the traditional and the popular with a positive tendency of spreading outside the imagined borders of the Mediterranean.

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ETNOMUZIKOLOŠKI PRISTUP POJMU *MEDITERANSKOG* U GLAZBI U HRVATSKOJ

SAŽETAK

Na temelju glazbenih obilježja i različitih elemenata koji utječu na glazbovanje na jugu Hrvatske, autor raspravlja o povijesnoj, zemljopisnoj i društvenoj dimenziji pojma *mediteransko* u glazbenoj kulturi Hrvata. Što se u Hrvatskoj, u kojoj se doista nedovoljno poznaje glazbena kultura Mediterana u cjelini, smatra mediteranskim?

Pojam *mediteransko* u glazbenoj se kulturi (ali i općenito) u Hrvatskoj uglavnom zemljopisno vezuje za jug Hrvatske (usko priobalno i otočko područje) te susjedne mediteranske zemlje (Italiju i Grčku). Sam sadržaj pojma obuhvaća tek pojedine elemente glazbe susjednih zemalja na kojima se gradi predodžba o njihovu glazbenom identitetu, bez jasnijeg razlikovanja regionalnih, stilskih i ostalih značajki glazbe tih zemalja. Jednako se može reći i za druge standardne asocijacije vezane uz pojam mediteranskoga identiteta, kao što su more, mandolina, gitara, pjesma i vino. Folklorna glazba priobalnog područja dijelom je pod glazbenim utjecajima susjedne Italije, dok su u popularnoj glazbi (na festivalima zabavne glazbe) zamjetni i utjecaji grčkog melosa.

Zaključak je teksta da u Hrvatskoj ne postoji nijedna glazbena pojava koja bi postojala isključivo kao simbol mediteranstva. Kad bi se pak trebalo odlučiti za najmediteranskiju glazbenu pojavu u Hrvata, onda bi to svakako bilo klapsko pjevanje — spoj tradicionalnog i popularnog s pozitivnom tendencijom širenja izvan zamišljenih granica Mediterana.

Ključne riječi: Mediteran, etnomuzikologija, klapa