GREECE
THE SOUL OF CRETE
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Ideon Cave on Mount Ida, known as Psiloritis in Crete, where legend has it that Zeus grew up being nursed by wild animals.

- Psarantonis Xylouris represents the musical soul of Crete
- Together with his brother Nikos he was one of the voices of dissent to the regime of the colonels
- Taking his cue, all of the family's descendants have become musicians
- Their music and place of origin are intimately connected to the figure of Zeus
- The rhythm of the *rizitiko* music also fascinated Vinicio Capossela, who played with them

Labis Xylouris, Psarantonis' son and brother to Psaragiorgis, playing the laouto and singing with friends at the family's famous bar, which was their grandfather's, in Anogeia.

The Mount Ida range known as Psiloritis in Crete.

The faithful lighting a candle in the chapel inside the cave where St John the Hermit is said to have lived and died, located on the path between the monasteries of Governétou and Katholiko.

Greece. A view of the ruins of Katholiko Monastery, probably the oldest on the island, founded in the XIth century and abandoned over 300 years ago because of frequent pirate raids.

Psarantonis and the music of myth

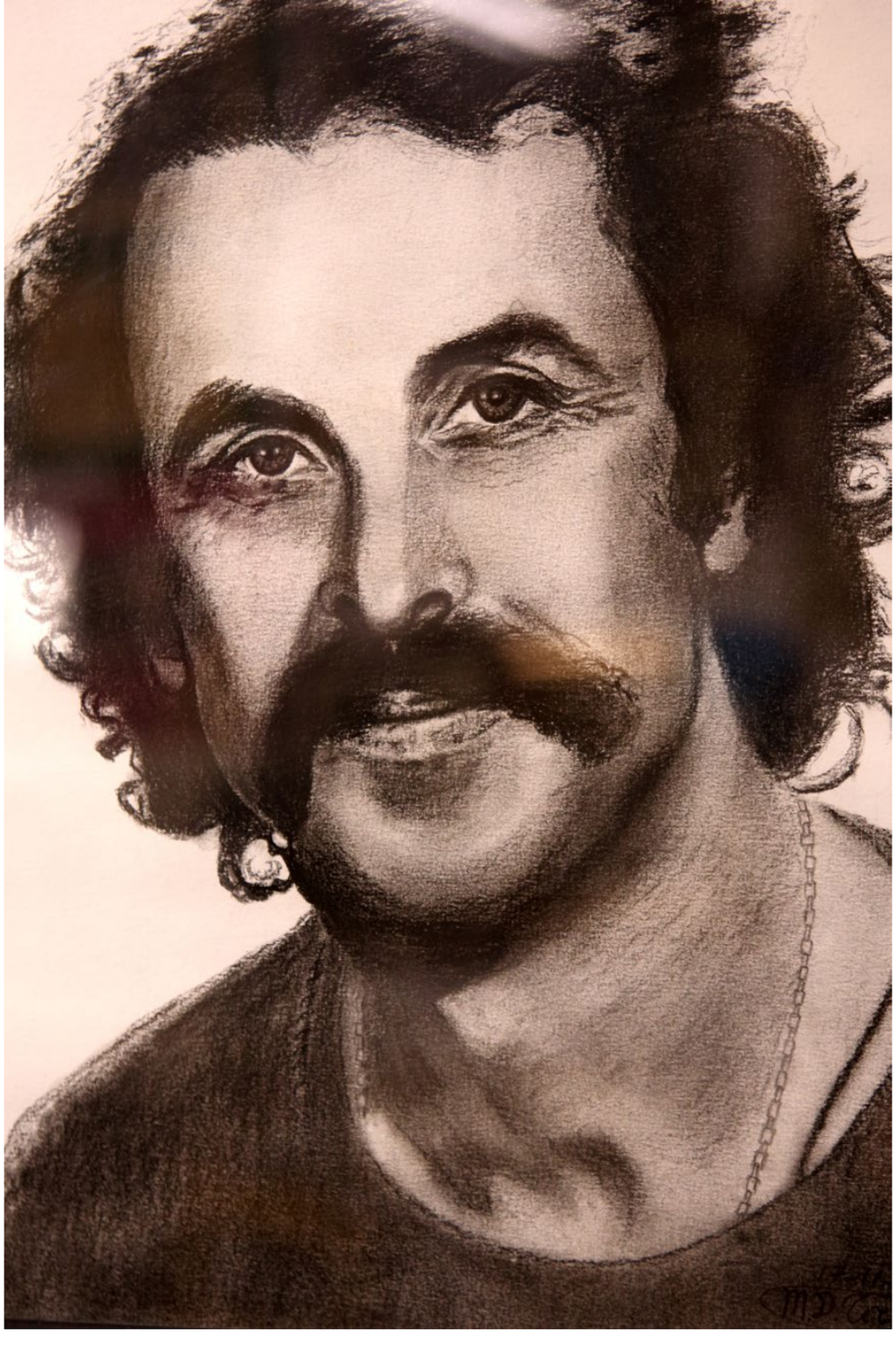
Psarantonis plays and sings with closed eyes. And dreams. The snowy profiles of Psiloritis, Zeus in the guise of a shepherd, and the taverns in the shade of the mulberry trees of Anogeia. Like a royal eagle proudly in the sky of Crete, the sharp sound of the lyra and its primeval voice forcefully lift the shepherds' gaze from the ground, intent as they were on watching their flocks graze the grass, bring out the wrinkles on the faces of widows who for decades have been weaving the impossible canvas of Penelope, and make the feet of the elderly – dressed in the ancient Cretan way, with high boots, black shirts, trousers, and nets on their heads – move in time. Then the silence falls and Antonis Xylouris reopens his little blue raptor eyes. His spirit has already flown beyond the stars, to return to Olympus, from where he certainly comes.

Antonis Xylouris, together with his brother Nikos, who died in 1980 at the age of 44, one of the principal voices of dissent towards the regime of the colonels, is the head of a family of musicians from Crete, now in its 3rd generation. Natives of the village of Anogeia, at the foot of Psiloritis, that very Mount Ida inside of which the legend of Zeus nursed by the she-goat was born, the Xylouris family represents the incarnation of the *rizitiko*, the "roots" of the traditional music of Crete, an ancient rhythm played on the lyra and lute. This music even managed to capture the attention of Vinicio Capossela, who has gone on to play with Psarantonis and his children numerous times.

Giorgos Xylouris, also known as Psaragiorgis (Psarantonis' son), playing the laouto in his studio in Archanes, near Heraklion.

The plateau near Ideon Cave, on Mount Ida, known as Psiloritis in Crete, where legend has it that Zeus grew up being nursed by wild animals.

Shepherds from Anogeia milking their sheep on the plateau near Ideon Cave, on Mount Ida, known as Psiloritis in Crete, where legend has it that Zeus grew up being nursed by wild animals.



A portrait of Nikos Xylouris, Psarantonis' brother, who died in 1980 at the age of 44. Together with his brother he was one of the strongest exponents of *ritzitko* music and a fierce opponent of the regime of the colonels.

Antonis Xylouris, also called Psarantonis, head of the family, playing the Cretan lyra in his home in Gazi, near Heraklion.

The plateau near Ideon Cave, on Mount Ida, known as Psiloritis in Crete, where legend has it that Zeus grew up being nursed by wild animals.

One of Anogia's taverns where *rizitiko* music is often played.

Manolis Stagakis, luthier of Rethymno, in his workshop making a Cretan lyra.

A herd of sheep on the plateau near Ideon Cave, on Mount Ida, known as Psiloritis in Crete, where legend has it that Zeus grew up being nursed by wild animals.

Nikos (standing) and Antonis (seated) Xylouris, grandsons of Psarantonis and Psaragiorgis' sons, playing the Cretan lyra and laouto in their house in Archanes, near Heraklion.

Ideon Cave on Mount Ida, known as Psiloritis in Crete, where legend has it that Zeus grew up being nursed by wild animals.

Labis Xylouris, Psarantonis' son and brother to Psaragiorgis, playing the laouto at the family's famous bar, which was their grandfather's, in Anogeia.

Inhabitants of Anogeia at one of the many taverns where ritziko music is played.

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