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Urban Heterophony and the Mediation of Place*

Al-ṣalatu khayrun min al-nawm. “Prayer is better than sleep,” declared the Sunni Muslim *adhan*, or call to prayer, in its first iteration of the day.¹ As the call pealed into the still air on a chilly March morning in Macedonia, I stirred, trying to shake off a night of fitful sleep and regain my bearings. A few feet away from me lay a Bektashi dervish—a Sufi Muslim—sleeping soundly and even snoring gently. Still a week before the vernal equinox, the day dawned slowly, almost begrudgingly. Like a chorus behind a soloist, several other nearby *müezzins* were simultaneously reciting their call as well, with a more ornate and refined style. Their faint backdrop of acoustic piety offered gentle counterpoint to the abruptness of the (very) local call—the soloist, as it were—which lacked many of the expected vocal inflections and embellishments. Instead, due to proximity, I found my ear drawn to the traces of mechanism and amplification, the uncanny experience of being too close to the loudspeaker to simply hear it as a voice.

Occasionally, taking the role of auroral collaborators, roosters would pipe in too with their crowing, serving as a reminder that this *tekke*, on the outskirts of the city Tetovo, was marginal in many ways: geographically, theologically, politically and acoustically.

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¹ As much as possible, in rendering Islamic terminology, I have chosen the most common spelling/transliteration (e.g., *sheikh*, *tekke*, *adhan*) in current academic practice without necessarily trying to convey local variant spellings. Since the groups described in this paper natively speak Albanian, Turkish, and/or various Slavic languages (e.g., Bosnian, Macedonian), no single spelling holds across all groups, making a full accounting of all three variants quite cumbersome. For this same reason, I have used the more widespread spelling “Kosovo” (rather than the Albanian spelling, “Kosova”), but for city names I have tried to adopt the most widespread spelling within a given country (e.g., “Gjakovë” in Kosovo, but “Tetovo” in Macedonia). In the case of text transliterated from Arabic, I have included diacritic markings to clarify spellings.

The tekke is part of a larger complex, which in 2002 was occupied by Sunnis, who appropriated several buildings in the complex—according to the Bektashis there, with the threat of violence during a broader Albanian insurgency in Macedonia. One of the buildings, the Sunnis argued, was originally a mosque and had been improperly transformed into a Sufi ritual space since. Seizing this building, these Sunnis turned an ornate chimney into a quadrasonic minaret, adding loudspeakers (as is customary) to broadcast the call to prayer through the city. The call, however, sounds not just devotion but also contestation, highlighting differences between Sunnis, for whom the ritual *salat* prayers are obligatory, and Bektashis, whose “heterodox” (i.e., non-Sunni) practices are more fluid and internal.² Indeed, since the dervishes and Sunnis tend to avoid one another within the tekke complex, this sounding of difference becomes a primary medium of interactivity (or lack thereof). This particular morning, the counterpoint of the highly public calls of the adhan (including those in the distance), with the implicitly resistant snores of the dervish, created a rich locus of sonic activity and meaning, one that produced and reiterated social difference, if only for that ephemeral moment.

This articulation of cultural and other social difference through sound typifies the kind of urban heterophony I explore in this paper. While my ethnographic work here focuses on Sufism in the former Yugoslavia—Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and especially Kosovo—my broader aim is to pose larger theoretical questions that still vex ethnomusicology, including (perhaps especially) urban ethnomusicology.³ Central among these questions is an ontological one: what is (or should be) the object of study in ethnomusicology? And by extension, is that object of study the same for “urban ethnomusicology” as

² “I pray continually throughout the day,” said the dervish who maintains the tekke. “Why should I interrupt that five times a day to walk over and pray with others?” This comment, while uttered with more than a hint of ironic humor, highlights this internal sense of religious devotion, especially in contrast with the more public manifestations of such devotion in local Sunni practices. For a general overview of Bektashi practice and belief, cf.: J. K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, Hartford 1937; A. Haas, *Die Bektāši: Riten und Mysterien eines islamischen Ordens*, Berlin 1988; S. Faroqi, *Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolien: vom späten fünfzehnten Jahrhundert bis 1826*, Vienna 1981 and F. Trix, *The Sufi Journey of Baba Rexheb*, Philadelphia 2009. For an overview of the adhan and its sonic aspects in more “orthodox” Sunni and Shii traditions, cf. M. Sells, *Approaching the Qur’an: The Early Revelations*, Ashland 2007 (pp. 61–171) and D. Behrens-Abouseif, *The Minarets of Cairo*, London 2010.

³ While my discussion here is limited to a handful of particular Sufi groups in this region, several studies have provided general overviews in the past two decades, coinciding with the breakup of Yugoslavia and reopening of Albania. Cf. D. Čehajić, *Derviški redovi u jugoslovenskim zemljama* [Dervish Orders in Yugoslavian Lands], Sarajevo 1986; N. Clayer, *L’Albanie, pays des derviches: les ordres mystiques musulmans en Albanie à l’époque post-ottomane, 1912–1967* [Albania, Land of Dervishes: Mystical Muslim Orders in Albania in the Post-Ottoman Period, 1912–1967], Berlin 1990; A. Popović, *Les derviches balkaniques hier et aujourd’hui* [The Balkan Dervishes Yesterday and Today], Istanbul 1994.

a particular subdiscipline? Various entanglements of music and culture have been proposed in answer to the former question, but I would argue that urban ethnomusicology inherently points to a number of shortcomings in many of these formulations, precisely because of the kinds of sonic interactions I've described above. In short, cities create dense acoustic environments in which music can hardly be disentangled from the world around it, let alone reduced to a singular, satisfactory object-of-study or definition. In the age of sound's mechanical reproduction, any notion of "the work" is tenuous at best, if not mediated into oblivion.⁴ I touch on these larger questions throughout the paper, but narrow my focus at present to the sonic life of cities: How does a city sound? How and when do we hear it, whether as scholars, residents, musicians or others? What kinds of mediation impinge on or facilitate such hearing? What are the stakes in listening to, describing and interpreting a city's sonic life (or lives)? I take as axiomatic John Blacking's definition of music as "humanly organized sound"⁵ and for now defer the question of distinctions between music and sound, rather focusing on the humanness—and by extension, the differences in humanness—reflected by and generated in urban sound.

As suggested by my questions above, my central argument here is that cities themselves sound; that is, people have organized and built cities in such a way to facilitate certain kinds of sound practice which then take on a momentum and life of their own. Some of these manifest human agency in obvious ways: a street musician, public protestors singing together, an outdoor orchestral concert, a live performer at a nightclub with open doors. Other instantiations of sound are embedded more deeply into the city itself, obscuring human agency through a kind of sedimentation or mediation: church bells ringing or mosques calling believers to prayer, a subway train slowing to a stop with chimes to warn of opening and closing doors, the sonic menagerie of an urban zoo, or even the architecture of a music conservatory or concert hall. All of these sounds are still organized by humans, and in most cases were designed by humans to produce a specific kind of sound. They are, however, largely mediated (through a variety of technologies and architectures), and these sounds in turn mediate our understanding of place.⁶ I present here not only examples of such phenomena (again, in the context of Balkan Sufism) but also a set of theoretical perspectives and methodologies that seem especially well suited to urban ethnomusicology:

⁴ Although less concerned with the adhan than other forms of public sounding, Charles Hirschkind's work on Cairo's "ethical soundscape" poses many similar questions about a very different Muslim urban space (Ch. Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*, New York 2006, especially pp. 1–31).

⁵ J. Blacking, *How Musical is Man?*, Seattle 1973, p. 10.

⁶ In this regard, my interests here align quite closely with Steven Feld's in his discussion of "acoustemologies" (S. Feld, "Waterfalls of Songs: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea", in: *Senses of Place*, eds. S. Feld, K. H. Basso, Santa Fe 1996, pp. 91–136), discussed briefly below.

first, documentary sound studies, or the combination of critical approaches to research about sound along with audio(visual) documentary practice; second, media archaeology and the exploration of the city-as- archive; and third, sonic navigations and audiovisual *flânerie*. This augmented toolkit for ethnography facilitates a decentering of urban ethnomusicology away from traditional studies of music-making in/as culture, drawing attention instead to the rich margins of sound production, where even traditional practices such as religious rites resist easy categorization as “music.” Or in other words, ethnography becomes better attuned to the differences embedded and embodied in urban heterophony.

Documentary Sound Studies: The Acoustic Inscription of Space

A central focus of my research on Balkan Sufism has been the celebration of Nevruz (often called Sultan Nevruz), a holy day commemorating the birth of Hazreti Ali, the son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad and a central figure in Shīʿa Islam. The day also corresponds with the beginning of spring and in places like Iran is an explicit acknowledgment of *nowruz*, literally a new day. Many Balkan Sufi orders, or *tarikats*, hold a special *zīkr*, a ceremony in which dervishes communally recite various names and attributes of Allah and sing religious songs, culminating in a variety of ecstatic practices ranging from group spinning to self-mortification. Each order has its own traditional practice for structuring the ceremony, but in all cases the *zīkr* is an acoustically rich, highly complex ritual. For example, a small group of *zakirs*, or designated musicians, are typically tasked with singing (or more properly, reciting) *ilahi* hymns, whether in a regular *zīkr* or on Nevruz. For the most part, other dervishes in the ceremony are responsible for the aforementioned recitation of Allah’s names, much of which takes place simultaneously with the *zakirs*’ singing. In addition, certain portions of the ceremony are recited by an individual, often in a call-and-response style with other dervishes. These various sonic layers interact contrapuntally, sometimes with clearly aligning rhythms, other times polymetrically, resulting in a rich heterogeneity of vocalization.

The arrangement of these two main groups and designated individual reciters—often the sheikh or a special guest—during the course of regular, weekly *zīkr*s creates a distinct set of soundspaces, in which each new configuration enlivens the ceremonial space in slightly different ways. Fittingly, this space is typically called the *semahane*, literally the place for (sacred) listening.⁷ So, for

⁷ According to Brahimi and Kokaj, “The place where the *zīkr* ceremony is held is called *semahane* by all the *tarikats*. They typically have an octagonal shape, though many are almost round” (S. S. S. Brahimi, J. O. Kokaj, *Në Dritën e Ehlī Bejtīt [On the Path of the Ahl al-Bayt]*, Nosit, Prishtina 2002, p. 119). They then go on to describe a typical layout, including the

example, the Halveti tekke in Prizren starts with most dervishes kneeling in concentric semicircles around the sheikh, while the zakir musicians are off to one side. Later the main body of dervishes stands and forms actual concentric circles around the sheikh, who leads the chanting of Allah's names while also stomping or clapping rhythmic pulses; the zakir dervishes stand but remain in place. Then finally, at the end of the ceremony, the larger group of dervishes divides into two lines, kneeling and facing each other a few meters apart. The zakirs then fill in the space between these two rows. This shifting set of relationships creates a very different sense of space and physicality; or as Heidegger might describe it, the degree of sonic "nearness" between these various groups is constantly changing, and in so doing, the semahane hall, this place for listening, resonates in very different ways.⁸ This set of physical, acoustic space is of course layered on top of a complex web of power relationships that play a central role in the day-to-day operations of the order itself.

Significantly, for the holiday Sultan Nevruz, many orders use amplification for the sheikh and singing zakirs. (Some zakirs play drums and cymbals as well, which are not amplified). The result is a very different soundspace in which the fixity and prominence of loudspeakers remaps the soundspace and removes much of the sonic nuance and mobility generated through a regular zikr. These microphones further amplify (literally) the hierarchy of the order and of their vocal practices, as the sheikh and select zakirs have microphones, while rank-and-file chanting dervishes do not. This mediation of power and sound is audible, not only as increased loudness, but again, as the mechanized flatness attendant in simple amplification systems—not to mention a whole host of sounds that were presumably not intended to be amplified, such as coughs, microphone feedback, brusushing against clothing, spoken instructions between the sheikh and certain individuals, and so on.⁹

sacred and mystical implications of the space. It bears mention that the root "sema," meaning audition and hearing, especially in sacred contexts, is the same measuring stick used by orthodox Sunnis legalists in determining the legitimacy of music, discussed below.

⁸ In his essay "The Thing" (*Das Ding*) Heidegger contrasts between a technology-driven elimination of distance, or *Entfernung*, and actual physical proximity, or *Nähe* (M. Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* [Lectures and Essays], Pfullingen 1954, p. 167ff.). This distinction seems useful here precisely because the introduction of amplified technologies (as described in this section) enacts a recalibration of physical space, intended to reduce the acoustic "distance" between every listener and the person being miked. But the net outcome is a remapping of physical space that fundamentally alters (if not obliterates) the delicate oscillations of nearness in the dervishes ritual movements themselves.

⁹ The significance of such sounds, these unintended acoustic consequences of amplification, is difficult to evaluate with certainty. On the one hand, they heighten the acoustic hierarchy in that space—not only is the voice of the sheikh or imam or other guest made more important, so too is the entire acoustic presence of their bodies. On the other hand, these amplified byproducts also introduce (or at least draw greater attention to) a new set of acoustic competition between authorized voices and what might be termed "noise," the unwanted sounds of

At Sultan Nevruz in 2011, two particular acoustic interactions at the Kadi-ri tekke in Gjakova, Kosovo, brought together these various strands of sound, space, authority and amplification—and extended them beyond the confines of the tekke building itself and into the city more broadly. A huge group of people turned out for the zikr, such that the main semahane hall was packed. As described above, several zakirs had microphones to amplify their singing of ilahis, while other dervishes did not. Dozens of spectators crowded in behind the dervishes and sheikhs, several of whom were visiting as honored guests from nearby cities—a network I discuss below. With such a large group, the hall became quite warm and eventually instructions were circulated to open the windows of the semahane for some fresh, cool evening air. But this tekke, as with most in Kosovo, sits in a highly populated area. Indeed, just next to the tekke sits a bar—a better-known landmark often used to help first-time attendees navigate to the tekke. On this particular Sunday evening, a rock band happened to be playing live, apparently covering popular songs. On multiple occasions as the zikr ceremony drew to a quiet pause, those near the windows (i.e., on the margins of the semahane hall) could hear this music fairly clearly.

The bass in particular carried into the semahane, sounding at one point like “Sweet Home Alabama.” Those on the margins perceived and were clearly disturbed (at least intermittently) by this rupturing of the sanctuary space; but those in the middle of the hall apparently never noticed, despite the stir among those along the periphery in deciding whether to endure stifling heat or the acoustic spillage of a local cover band.

Toward the end of the ceremony, a very different kind of rupture took place: the electricity went out. Such an occurrence is extremely commonplace in Kosovo and has been since the war for independence from Serbia (then still Yugoslavia).¹⁰ This infrastructure difficulty has a striking impact on the sound of Kosovar cities more generally, as one can hear power outages by virtue of the hum (or roar, depending on proximity) of generators that starts up in chorus

the room. In any case, no one I spoke with had noticed or seemed to care especially—clearly the intended acoustics of these amplified ceremonies carried to listeners and participants alike.

¹⁰ For a brief overview of this issue, cf. A. Xharra, “Power Cuts Plague Kosovo”, *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 2005, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/power-cuts-plague-kosovo> and L. Friedman, *U.S. on Both Sides of New Battle Over Assistance to ‘Ugly’ Coal-Fired Power Plant*, “The New York Times”, 11.07.2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2011/07/11/11climatewire-us-on-both-sides-of-new-battle-over-assistan-96428.html> (accessed online: 14.07.2015). Although power shortages have been a continuous problem since the conflicts of the late 1990s, Kosovo’s declaration of independence from Serbia (February 2008) reignited this issue along ethnic and sociopolitical lines. For my purposes here, the critical issue is simply that power shortages/outages are a regular part of life in Kosovo (cf. N. Sinani, A. Demi, *Energy Projects in Kosovo*. Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development et al., 2011, <http://institutigap.org/repository/docs/EnergyProjectsinKosovo.pdf>) and that they have meaningful consequences in societal structures and interactions.

immediately thereafter. More generally, it serves as a constant reminder of the political ecology of the region, an abiding concern for any electricity-dependent event (like this amplified religious ceremony). As the power went out, a subtle but clearly audible recalibration of the sound-space in the tekke took place. Suddenly the overt sonic hegemony of the zakirs—by dint of amplification—was gone, and so the entire group of dervishes began to adjust to the sounds of the other participating groups. A different acoustic balance settled over the room for a few minutes, with a spatial result similar to that described above with Halveti dervishes in Prizren—a clear sense of acoustic nearness, and a dialogic counterpoint between those dervishes chanting names of Allah and the zakirs singing ilahis or playing percussion.

Besides this sonic readjustment, visual adjustments also came into play. In particular, with the lights out, candles and other handheld light sources began to be distributed immediately. The illumination by candlelight similarly reconfigured the visual space of the tekke—in particular, it drew attention to a tinted window in the back of the semahane. On the other side, women spectators could suddenly be seen, lit by the candles they too were holding, offering a gentle reminder of the gender divisions that add yet another layer of authority and inclusion (or lack thereof). Thus this rupture of electricity was indeed a rupture of sensation and power on multiple levels: sound and sight were both recalibrated in the absence of technologies that extended the sonic authority of some participants relative to others, whether along insitutional or gender lines.

My analysis so far has focused on margins, sonic and otherwise. Traditional ethnomusicology would, most likely, focus on the zakir dervishes. After all, they both play percussion and sing ilahis—activities ripe for traditional musical analysis, to be sure. But the ritual itself is driven in equal measure by the larger aggregate of dervishes who chant divine names. As mentioned above, the very name of the ceremony, *zikir*, suggests that this recited act of remembrance is *the* ceremony, its core substance. Furthermore, the variety of vocal timbres employed by the chanting dervishes are diverse and performatively compelling, especially in moments of “*kalbi*” *zikir*, or *zikir* of the heart, when they heavily aspirate a given divine name, often reformulating it’s rhythm and accentuation. But Sufism, as part of Islam more generally, faces an ontological crisis here too: is this music? The debate over music in Islamic contexts goes beyond the scope of this paper, but for my purposes here, suffice it to say that the religious propriety of music has long been questioned in Islam—raising the question, naturally, of what constitutes music, a theological debate Kristina Nelson calls “the *sama*’ polemic”¹¹. And here, vocal recitation (and typically percussion)

¹¹ K. Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur’an*, Austin 1985, pp. 32-51. For further treatment of this issue within the context of Sufism and the “legalist” Islamic tradition, cf. also A. Gribetz, *The samā Controversy: Sufi vs. Legalist*, “*Studia Islamica*” 74, 1991, pp. 43–61.

have generally been understood as something different from singing in other contexts, as well as instrumental musics.¹² A highly developed vocabulary has thus emerged (and continues to be used) in Bosnian, Albanian and Turkish, in which a müezzín or *hafiz* (Qur'anic reciter) does not “sing,” but instead “reads” or “recites”—a rhetorical element found throughout the text of the Qur'an, especially in the famous opening of the 96th sura (“Recite!,” *iqrā*), as well as in the word “Qur'an” itself, meaning a reading or recitation.¹³ In other words, Muslim vocal practices are already marginal to music, and thus inherently resist inclusion in music studies. Granted, many branches in Sufism have much more inclusive attitudes toward music (e.g., the Mevlevi *ayin* or South Asian *qawwali*). But sound and music have a complicated relationship in Islam, thus requiring different approaches for their study.

To that end, I propose a warmer embrace by ethnomusicologists, especially those working in urban areas, of the emergent field of sound studies. In particular, the basic premise of sound studies—that sound, and not just music, can serve as a stable and rich object of study—seems fruitful in cases such as these Sufi rituals, which sit at the margins of music studies. More specifically, questions of the voice, of amplification, of vocal and instrumental timbre, of intersections between architecture and sound, of recitation and speaking as sonic matter, of presence and nearness, of “desirability” of sound and “noise,” of body movement and breathing, of theologies of sacral uttering, of materialities of sound production and resonance, and many others can and should be addressed, and indeed may be understood as priorities in sound studies. Furthermore, while these issues certainly have relevance in a variety of contexts, they are particularly pressing in cities, where increased density of people and sonically rich activity (whether “music” or otherwise) all but assures a confluence of sound that merits study.

If sound studies itself sets a theoretical agenda while posing such questions as these, visual anthropology offers a compelling set of techniques with which to begin exploring such sound phenomena. Visual anthropology radically reorients the discourses of representation by introduction technologies of inscription that are not reducible to text. In other words, by using photography, film and video, visual anthropologists have offered new modes and media of

¹² Cf. L. L. al-Fārūqī, *Islam and Art*, Islamabad 1985, pp. 175–209; S. H. Nasr, *Islam and Music: The Legal and Spiritual Dimensions*, in: *Enchanting Powers: Music in the World's Religions*, ed. L. Sullivan, Cambridge 1997, pp. 219–234.

¹³ As Michael Sells writes: “The first auditory revelation is believed to have been the Qur'anic words (Sura 96): ‘Recite in the name of your lord who created...’ The term *Qur'ān*, given to the revelations Muhammad would convey, is related to the Arabic word for ‘recite.’ It might be translated as the Recitation” (M. Sells, op. cit., p. 5). For more on “*qur'ān*” as recitation within the Qur'anic text itself, cf. W. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*, Cambridge 1987, p. 90ff. For more on the 96th sura, cf. F. Esack, *The Qur'an: A User's Guide*, Oxford 2005, pp. 39–41.

representation. Of course, like writing, these come with their own baggage—for example, the tendency to privilege the aesthetic over the representational. But by furthering the “crisis of representation” in anthropology, visual anthropologists have helped pose critical questions that have many analogies for the sound- and music-worlds ethnomusicologists inhabit.

Bringing these two threads together, I have suggested here the need for documentary sound studies, or an approach to sound-based phenomena that seeks not only to rethink current notions of music-making, but also to question the usefulness of prevailing modes of inscription/documentation and dissemination. (Of course, the irony of typing such a sentence is not lost on me.) Composers and recordists like Luc Ferrari, Steven Feld, Francisco López and collectives like the World Soundscape Project have already broken considerable ground here.¹⁴ Like observational documentary filmmaking such an approach demands a balance between ethnographic and aesthetic concerns, but also offers the possibility of enhancing representation, especially in urban settings where the delination between “music” and other sounds, as in the ritual described above, is not especially clear. Here, because recording equipment can readily document a wider swath of sonic activity than academic prose can describe, a reader/listener is empowered to decide what material is most important and what is peripheral.¹⁵ And yet, while some might consider such a practice-inflected approach to ethnography dehumanizing or surveillant, it could also be seen as an extension of bi-musicality and participant observation, where modes of practice serve to supplement the reified (and often misleading) sphere of interviews and silent observations. And of course in the ever-increasing contexts (especially in urban settings) where the ethnographer is

¹⁴ Among many other recordings, cf. L. Ferrari, *Loeuvre électronique*. GRM Ina G 6017/6026, 2009, S. *Voices of the Rainforest*. Rykodisc 10173 1991 and *The Time of Bells, Vol. 1*. VoxLox 104, 2004, F. López, *Through the Looking-Glass*. Kairos 0012872KAI 2009, and World Soundscape Project, *The Vancouver Soundscape*. Sonic Research Studio, Simon Fraser University, No. 51974, 1974.

¹⁵ Friedrich Kittler describes such a process in relation to early phonography: “Media technology could not proceed in a more exact fashion. Thanks to the phonograph, science is for the first time in possession of a machine that records noises regardless of so-called meaning. Written protocols were always unintentional selections of meaning” (F. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz, Stanford 1999, p. 85). For Kittler, the development of such meaning-free documentation was far from meaningless; indeed, it played a decisive role in experimental psychiatry and psychology, allowing a psychiatrist to document broadly and, in the words of Freud, “make use of everything he is told for the purposes of interpretation...without substituting a censorship of his own for the selection that the patient has foregone (F. Kittler, op. cit., p. 88). In this case, however, my concern is less with giving the researcher special access to information, but rather with ensuring that an eventual listener will have access not only to the documented sonic text—the kinds of acoustic events ethnomusicologists have reduced to transcriptions for years—but also to sonic context, to the marginal soundings or heterophony that are so central to urban acoustic spaces, in particular.

one of many documentarians, documentation can become participatory and even collaborative.

Indeed, as the following section elaborates, in an age of smartphones and handheld digital recorders, ethnographers are also able—and perhaps intellectually responsible—to consider the growing archive of documentary material accumulating ever more rapidly.

Media Archaeology: Excavating Urban Sound

The burgeoning field of media archaeology stands as a second locus for new entanglements for urban ethnomusicologists. As with any discipline or academic approach, a precise definition of “media archaeology” proves elusive, though the subtitle of Siegfried Zielinski’s book of the same name suggests a move “toward the deep time of hearing and seeing by technical means” (*Zur Tiefenzeit des technischen Hörens und Sehens*). Or in other words, the intent is to engage in a Foucaultian-style archaeology, delving into the deeper historical strata found in archives and embedded in recordings of various kinds with the aim of interrogation the vagaries of media reproduction, or technologically-enabled hearing and seeing, which then supplement the more general discursive practices that attracted Foucault’s attention in the first place in works like *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

How might ethnomusicology, and especially urban ethnomusicology, benefit from such an archaeological turn? Most fundamentally, such a turn signals a heightened awareness of the past, but not solely in the sense of re-engaging with history as part of ethnographic practice, as scholars like Kay Shelemay and Philip Bohlman, among many others¹⁶, have shown in their work. Instead, archaeology calls for a critical re-engagement with the archive as a domicile of both the “sequential” and “jussive” orders, the “commencement” and the “commandment,” as Derrida famously describes it.¹⁷ In other words, the archive

¹⁶ Cf. K. Shelemay, ‘Historical Ethnomusicology’: *Reconstructing Falasha Liturgical History*, “Ethnomusicology” 1980, 24/2, pp. 233–258 and K. Shelemay, *Music, Ritual and Falasha History*, East Lansing 1986; P. Bolman, *Jewish Music and Modernity*, New York 2006; S. Blum, P. Bohlman, D. Neuman (eds.), *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History*, Urbana 1991. This more recent discourse on “historical ethnomusicology,” distilled by Shelemay as “synchronic study [used] for illuminating the historical continuum from which it emerged” (K. Shelemay, op. cit., p. 233), unsurprisingly grows out of a longer-standing debate within American ethnomusicology about the intersections of ethnography and historiography, as seen in: B. Nettl, *Historical Aspects of Ethnomusicology*, “American Anthropologist” 1958, 60/3, pp. 518–532.

¹⁷ J. Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, translated by Eric Prenowitz, Chicago 1996, p. 1.

functions not only as a point of chronological departure, but also a site for re-examining the norms of intellectual engagement and discourse.

Ethnomusicology as a discipline, of course, has deep roots in precisely such archival ground: the earliest archival collections of comparative musicology (in Europe) and salvage ethnology (in the U.S.) were bound up with projects of large-scale collection and “armchair analysis” that, while productive in their own right, inadequately accounted for context or authority. In other words, the foundation of the ethnomusicological (meta)archive is from the outset shot through with both sequential and jussive privilege.¹⁸

But technology in the 20th century has been a wild, woolly thing. And its dramatic spread has changed ethnomusicology considerably, not to mention music-making more generally, and media archaeology offers useful tools for unpacking these developments. A brief set of examples of Rufa'i dervishes in the cities of Skopje, Macedonia, and Prizren, Kosovo, illustrate the potential value of media archaeological practices. In 1951, a leading Macedonian filmmaker, Aco Petrovski, made the film *Derviši*, a 10-minute documentary depicting a zikr during Ramadan in 1951 (released 1955), held in the Rufa'i tekke in Skopje. Some 40 years later, the Belgian filmmaker Dirk Dumon would document the same tekke as part of his film *I am a Sufi, I am a Muslim* (television 1994, released 1996).¹⁹ The historical significance of Petrovski's film merits attention in its own right, given his place in the development of Macedonian cinema, but for present purposes, I would point out his long-term narrative strategy: he begins with shots of the city of Skopje, especially the mosques in the old town. He then narrows his focus to the Rufa'i tekke, where he follows dervishes gathering for a religious holiday. He narrates the zikr, which culminates not only in the dervishes' ecstatic singing and chanting but also their self-mortification. And from there, he turns once again (briefly) to the broader cityscape around. Dumon's film follows an almost identical pathway: from the city-at-large to the Sunni mosques of the old town, and then to the tekke with a very similar depiction of ceremonies.

This contextualization certainly gives a visual flavor of Skopje—one of the richest sites of multicultural encounter in Europe.²⁰ And yet it simultaneously

¹⁸ Music scholars and anthropologists have grown increasingly aware of this complicated relationship with archives and begun to reassess them (both as archives and as “the archive”) in a more critical way, from perspectives of disciplinary development (A. Seeger, *The Role of Sound Archives in Ethnomusicology Today*, “Ethnomusicology” 1986, 30/2, pp. 261–276; E. Brady, *A Spiral Way: How the Phonograph Changed Ethnography*, Jackson 1999), ethics and ownership (A. Seeger, *Ethnomusicologists, Archives, Professional Organizations, and the Shifting Ethics of Intellectual Property*, “Yearbook for Traditional Music” 1996, 28, pp. 87–105).

¹⁹ D. Dumon, *I Am a Sufi, I Am a Muslim*, Princeton 1996 and A. Petrovski, *Derviši*, Skopje 1955.

²⁰ While this longstanding multiculturalism in Skopje is fairly evident to any visitor, it has been emphasized more emphatically in recent years in scholarship on language, culture, and

marginalizes Sufism as a form of Islam that is somehow less legitimate, less orthodox than its better-known Sunni counterparts. The decision to depict the violent piercing ritual creates a sense of spectacle and (relatively) instant gratification, compared to the process of sitting through several hours of other singing and chanting leading up to this climax, such that these moments of ecstatic violence come about like a slow boil rather than the jarring puncture they appear to be in these films. Of course, a 10-minute film has obvious constraints,²¹ and again, both films give a meaningful portrait of Skopje Rufa'is in short order. But questions of ethnographic authority haunt both endeavors, not only because Sufism had such a marginal status in the Yugoslav period, not being officially recognized), but also because of the fragility of religious existence in the region more generally over the past two decades. Both films neglect to show the ritual of *muhabbet*, or affectionate conversation, that precedes and follows the *zikr*—arguably of equal importance as a site of ethical training, theological discussion and fellowship. Here Rufa'i and other branches of Sufism show themselves to be peaceful, contemplative forms of worship with strong intellectual underpinnings, not just a “howling” attraction.

Staying within the Rufa'i order, but moving into Kosovo, the usefulness of critical engagement with media archives continues. During the Yugoslav years, the center for coordinating various Sufis groups throughout the country (or *meshihat*) was based at the Rufa'i tekke in Prizren, for decades under the direction of Shejh Xhemali Shehu, and now his son Shejh Adrihusejn Shehu. In 1973, recordist Bernard Mauguin, who had previously recorded Mevlevi dervishes in Turkey (recording 1964, released 1968) made an audio recording of a *zikr* ceremony in Prizren for distribution with UNESCO.²²

The album cover included a number of photographs, suggesting the difficulty of adhering to an audio-only format in such a visually rich environment. But by limiting himself to audio recording, Mauguin (or whoever made decisions for this album) is suddenly operating in a realm of documentary sound—not

identity politics in: J. Pettifer (ed.), *The New Macedonian Question*, New York 1999, B. A. Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia*, Boulder 2003, Hamzaoglu 2010 and V. Friedman, *The Balkan Languages and Balkan Linguistics*, “Annual Review of Anthropology” 2011, 40, pp. 275–291.

²¹ As one Sufi sheikh I spoke to explained, “Anything that happens at a tekke can be viewed by others, it can be recorded, and so on. The problem is of course that these things are always edited. It changes the meaning of things we say and what we do.” While this comment was not made in regards to this particular film, it raises questions about the ethics of editing as a process, as well as the kind of narrative practices so common in news and documentary media work. I discuss editing practices more below.

²² B. Mauguin, *Turkey I: The Music of the Mevlevi*, UNESCO Collection, Musical Anthology of the Orient, Bärenreiter-Musicaphon BM 30 L 2019, 1968; *idem*, *Islamic Ritual from Yugoslavia: Zikr of the Rufa'i [sic] Brotherhood*, UNESCO Collection, Musical Sources, Phillips 6586 015 1974; *idem*, *Islamic Ritual from the Province of Kosovo: Zikr of the Rufa'i [sic] Brotherhood*. Aavidis/UNESCO D 8055 1994 (reissue of Mauguin 1974).

entirely unlike the approach described above. The recording draws attention to the rich timbral inflections of the various reciters, of the staggering entrance of percussion, and of the variety of intra-group dynamics between trained reciters with formal roles, the dervish group as a whole (reciting the names and attributes of Allah), and other elements like percussion.

This recording, however, generates more questions than it answers, especially compared to the two filmic depictions, with their voice over, didactic explanations and short durations (i.e., they contain a much smaller fraction of the entire zikr ceremony).²³ But questions also arise because Mauguin gives so little information about the ceremony itself, about both the event and his recording process. A few passages from the Qur'an are labeled on the sleeve/liner notes (a CD has since been reissued, 1993), as well as some genre descriptions, but little beyond that. As Kurt Reinhard summarized in a review of the recording:

Other listeners, however, would doubtless want to know more about the music itself....One is never told what Mauguin recorded from the complete ceremony, what was omitted, what cuts were made (whether this happened in respect of inessential sections or whether the necessary parts agree, at least, with the real sequence of performance)...It remains to note that one does not often come across published recordings of this sort dealing with the cultic ceremonies of Islamic sects; nevertheless, one sorely misses a musical commentary in such a production.²⁴

Reinhard's review offers an excellent account of the issues under scrutiny in assessing media as ethnographic representation, especially editing practices. While ethnomusicologists have given considerable thought to questions of recording ethics and etiquette, critical reflection on the reproduction and distribution of these media require another distinct set of conversations. What kind of editing practices are acceptable? As audio recorders become more portable with increased recording capacity, are other models emerging? And finally, given Reinhard's final sentence, how unique are these recordings now? In many ways, these questions have stood at the heart of critical discussions of other forms of documentation²⁵ but sound has proved a paradoxically more opaque medium to document and interrogate.

The Prizren Rufa'i tekke remains arguably the vanguard of documentation in the Balkans, from what I have seen. While other sheikhs forbid recording devices altogether, or only permit their own camera crews for major holidays,

²³ Of course, these more authoritative approaches raise different questions (ethical, structural, methodological), but they at least offer an explicit narrative of what is happening, both verbally and visually, something that can only be inferred in a stand-alone audio recording.

²⁴ K. Reinhard, *Review of Mauguin, Bernard, "Islamic Ritual from Yugoslavia: Zikr of the Rufa'i Brotherhood"* (1974 LP), "Ethnomusicology" 1978, 22/1, pp. 212–214.

²⁵ Cf. D. MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*. Lucien Taylr, ed., Princeton 1998; J. Rouch, *Ciné-ethnography*, translated by Steven Feld, Minneapolis, Minnesota 2003.

Shejh Adrihusein allowed (perhaps reluctantly) several video cameras in the space, in addition to his own crew. (One set of archives that I have yet to explore but hope to soon is the media archives that tekkes themselves, many of which have begun to accumulate of their own recordings from these events—this would certainly offer rich insight into a number of the issues at hand.) In addition, a granular haze of digital camera “shutters”—artificially created sounds that cue a user that a photo has been taken—hung over most of the ceremony. A quick search on Flickr or other major photo sharing sites shows a half dozen users who have posted photos from the ceremony in recent years, not to mention an equal number of short videos to be found on YouTube and other media-sharing sites. I was intrigued to see that these documentary practices are not perceived (entirely) as documentary invasions of privacy. Though a few dervishes expressed some discomfort about the number of cameras present and their proximity to the events themselves, I saw others taking photos or movies on smartphones, even on one occasion during an initiation during a weekly zikr ceremony. While not necessary an urban phenomenon, the ubiquity of such recording devices and their pervasive deployment suggest a capitalistic cosmopolitanism that demands attention in research contexts, particularly as it gives rise to a parallel archive outside the realm of academic institutions. Quite simply, as anthropologists and ethnographers, “our” microphones are no longer the only ones in use—the result is a kind of polyphonic mediation, with images and sounds replicating themselves almost at will across the web and through other forms of digital sharing.

The pros and cons of recording merit an increase in serious attention moving forward: How (well) does recording function as documentary practice? What specific recording technologies should be used to capture and reproduce what different kinds of sound? What kinds of the recording and archival practices should take hold among academics and also their collaborators “in the field”? Needless to say, these methodologies are changing both within and outside of ethnomusicology. Media archaeological practices offer a means of excavating the recorded past and of re-encountering the present through that past. Documentary media can hardly be ignored, as I described above; nor should they be embraced uncritically. The tandem pairing of documentary sound studies with media archaeology offers a platform for such research.

The City as Medium: Aural Flânerie and Passages of Sound

Documentary sound studies and media archaeology offer a potent set of tools for urban ethnomusicology but in many regards these tools are equally applicable to rural sites. My final methodological approach, aural flânerie, or walking

through a city with particular mindfulness toward listening, is much more dependent on the nature of cities themselves. Furthermore, it moves away from the technologically-dependent methods described above. Appropriating from visual studies a notion of moving through a city with the intent of observing it, I suggest that aural *flânerie* can offer as much or sometimes more insight into the life of a city than its visual counterpart. Granted, the totality of sensation is hardly separable into self-contained senses (as sight, as hearing, etc.) and as such rarely functions in a clearly hierarchical way. But because of sound's diffusive, permeable character relative to the visual, and because the density of city architecture resists easy viewing of its entirety, listening becomes a critical practice for understanding the cultural differences that lie within city spaces.²⁶ In this sense, urban heterophony, or the sounding of such difference in the city, can be considered the thing- listened-to in concepts like Steven Feld's "acoustemology," a way of knowing place through hearing ("acoustic knowing"²⁷). My contention here is that cities are particularly rich sites for such acoustemology, but that such knowledge in urban contexts comes particularly effectively by means of sensorily-engaged "kinetic analysis"²⁸ of the city undertaken while passing-through, rather than while merely being-in.

The idea of urban passage as productive practice lies at the heart of Walter Benjamin's *Das Passagen-Werk*, usually rendered in English as the Arcades Project. Benjamin's fascination with Parisian arcades, articulated in a fragmentary manner in his unfinished treatise, was grounded in the immersive modes of vision these architectural structures offered. Functioning as urban microcosms, they created and housed routes through the city that, in an almost dreamlike manner, opened up new vistas embedded in architecture, and in doing so they

²⁶ In drawing these distinctions between listening and seeing, I am wary of creating too sharp a binary, a central component in what Jonathan Sterne has called the "audiovisual litany" (*idem*, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, Durham 2003, pp. 15–20), in which sound and hearing are erroneously posited as functioning independently and entirely differently from image and sight. Navigating through a space with an explicit intention of listening to it engages the sense of sight deeply, as well, and indeed is suggested by the original notion of *flânerie*.

²⁷ S. Feld, *Waterfalls of Songs: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea...*, p. 97.

²⁸ G. Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari*, Princeton 1993, p. 4. Bruno's provocative analysis of Elvira Notari's films and their intimate connection with Naples offers an intriguing model, if by analogy (drawing on film, rather than sound), to the kind of productive "streetwalking" I suggest here. Similarly drawing on Benjamin, she suggests that, at least in *fin-de-siècle* Naples, "arcades and cinemas are to be understood as forms of optical consumption by a mobile collectivity," thinking of the two together as "topoi of modernity" (*ibid.*, p. 47). However, my concerns here lies less with "modernity" or the discursive Foucauldian-style archaeology she uses in her narration, and more with an actual physical process of aurally-engaged walking as a literal mode of ethnographical research in urban soundspaces.

energized a swath of creativity and urban exploration. In other words, Paris's arcades—and in different ways, any city's architecture—and its visual richness are bound up with one another, and in order to experience them one must navigate through the city.²⁹ Thinking of moving images specifically, film theorist Raymond Bellour comes to an analogous conclusion: that “the passage of the image,” or the ways in which, say, a film is always laden with connections to other sets of images—past, present and future—generates a visually intertextual web (e.g., images somehow connected to or suggestive of other films), but one rife with in-between spaces that defy simple interpretation or characterization, yet are somehow characteristic of the experience of viewing. As such, the viewer's recognizance of these webs of relationships generates a kind of visual passage in which a sequence of images like a film does not simply pass in front of spectators sequentially, but it loops forward and backward, side-to-side, always connecting to other visual contexts and the spaces between those contexts.³⁰ While Bellour's “passages” are perhaps not a reference to the kind of glass-and-steel *Passagen* that fascinated Benjamin, both authors' passages point to the kind of traversal of physical space implicit in embodied viewing, such that film and city spaces are suggestive of one another.

Media theorist Friedrich Kittler takes these ideas even further, stating baldly that “the city is a medium.”³¹ Kittler's argument focuses on the characteristics of cities as architectural and social spaces that function much like electronic media, with their internal circuitry and networks. But his argument also suggests the possibility of bringing together Benjamin's architecturally-situated *flânerie* through city passages (or arcades) with Bellour's deeply-contextualized mode of viewing images that are themselves in the process of passing before us. As a concrete example (no pun intended), the resulting visual passage—again, both a passage through a visually rich environment and a passage or interconnection of things-seen with other contexts—would offer immediate insight into the existence of Sufism in two Kosovar cities, as one example, in accounting for the difference in experiencing tekkes in Gjakova, with its richly clustered old town,

²⁹ W. Benjamin, Walter, *Das Passagen-Werk*, in: *Gesammelte Schriften* [Collected Writings], vol. 5, Rolf Tiedemann (ed.), Frankfurt am Main 1982. While a number of commentaries on the Arcades Project exist (cf. S. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, Cambridge MA 1989 and B. Hanssen (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, London, New York 2006), I find Bruno's aforementioned work the most useful for drawing on Benjamin's writing as a methodology besides being a piece of scholarship.

³⁰ In clarifying what he means by “passage,” Bellour writes: “This is what, in their way, the words *passages of the image* refer to. First of all, the ambiguous word *of* includes the sense of *between*. It is between images that passages and contaminations of beings and systems occur more and more often, and such passages are sometimes clear but sometimes hard to define, and, above all, to give a name to” (author's italics, R. Bellour, *The Double Helix*, in: *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation*, ed. T. Druckrey, New York 1996, p. 194).

³¹ F. Kittler, *The City is a Medium*, “New Literary History” 1996, 27/4, pp. 717–729.

and Prizren, which has an old town but has little Sufi presence in that visually demarcated space. In Gjakova, one can walk down narrow cobblestone streets and move quite easily from one tekke to another; the tekkes play a prominent architectural role in giving a historical, Ottoman inflected visual identity to the area. On the other hand, Prizren has only one functioning tekke (Halveti) in or near the city center, and it actually lies across a bridge from the heart of the old town, or Shadervan. Instead, the Shadervan area is more defined by the prominent placement of mosques, mingled with Christian churches (both Orthodox and Catholic).

Leaving behind visual passages, the sound passages one encounters in Kosovo Sufism is perhaps even more emphatic, if sometimes generating such emphasis through absence as a silent “counterpublic” to the highly audible public space of Sunnism.³² As I mentioned above, Balkan tekkes are strangely silent places—at least externally, as public architectural spaces—compared to the mosques of their Sunni counterparts. That conflict is particularly marked in the ongoing standoff at Arabati Baba tekke in Macedonia, but the tension that exists between these two branches of Islam often simmer in less hostile entanglements as well. For example, one dervish who was visiting Prizren from Istanbul recounted that upon his arrival in Prizren, he had accidentally ended up in a mosque with a strong Salafi (or fundamentalist Sunni) orientation. He asked the imam there for directions to the Rufa’i tekke in the city, only to find himself held up in conversation about the propriety of such religious practice. After two hours, he finally succeeded in making the 15-minute walk to the tekke. (I myself was similarly challenged by Salafis in Prizren as to the legitimacy of my research, given their views of Sufism as problematically heterodox.) But the fact that tekkes lack an adhan, or call to prayer, does not actually mean that they Sufis do not pray. The Bektashis above are perhaps an extreme example, but for most orders, ritual prayer (*salat*) is an important practice and in fact marks the beginning of the zikr ceremony. Yet because of the absence of public announcement, zikrs (in my experience) tended to have a more fluid beginning time—“sometime after the last salat prayer” or “right around the midday Friday prayer.”

Of course, Sufi practices inside a tekke are not usually a silent venture (though certain orders like the Nakshibendi typically practice a silent rather than an audible zikr). Sufi teachings privileging spiritual interiority (*batin*) over worldly exteriority (*zahir*) begin to account for the disparity between this

³² Here this silent counterpublic can be seen, to a certain degree, as standing in opposition (or at least contrast) to the kind of hegemonic discourse of Sunni Islamic sound practices in the public sphere, much Charles Hirschkind asserts that Egyptian Sunnis’ use of cassette sermons and the discourse around them stands in opposition to Western assumptions about media consumption, individualism and rational deliberation (*idem*, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*, New York 2006, pp. 105–108). But in this case, the counteracting is done for the most part in a highly secluded way.

external absence of sound and the rich, almost overwhelming sounds that take place inside Sufi ceremonial spaces. Whatever the theological reasons, these resonant ceremonies offer a number of rich moments of sonic passage, but I draw on three particular instances here, expanding in scope: first, passage within a tekke; second, passage between tekkes in a given city; and third, passage between tekkes in different cities. In looking at these expanding scales of passage, I hope to illustrate the variety of interactions that take place between sound-making practices and urban spaces in Kosovar Sufism. Or to retool Kittler's phrase, these examples illustrate ways in which sonic passage enlivens the city as a resonant medium itself.

As with any sanctuary, inside these tekkes, certain spaces are reserved for certain activities. Two major sounding activities occur in most tekkes: muhabbet, or intimate conversation, and the zikr ceremony. Muhabbet can be seen as the lifeblood of a tekke, as many sheikhs are almost constantly playing host to dervishes or other guests who stop by throughout the day to converse, seek counsel, or learn formally about spiritual matters. But prior to and after the zikr, this form of conversation takes on a more ritualized format, usually in a separate space (usually called either the *meydan*, or gathering place, or else the room for *sohbet*, another ritually inflected term for conversation). The sheikh sits at the front of the room (as he most often does on other occasions) with dervishes sitting around the wall of the room, and then filling in toward the middle of the room.

Tea (especially) as well as coffee and sometimes food is distributed by a designated dervish; these activities generate their own idiosyncratic sound as small tea spoons clink against the hourglass-shaped traditional tea glasses in counterpoint to the discussion at hand. On special occasions like Nevruz or Muharrem, a meal may also be prepared and served in a kitchen area before or after the ceremony. The muhabbet conversation may last for several hours as dervishes and guests gather prior to the zikr, especially for evening ceremonies. Conversations often function spatially like a (semicircular) wheel with spokes connecting to a central hub: the sheikh sits in a central position and takes questions, responds with answers, engages various individuals in conversation, and mediates the flow of conversation with very little conversation happening on the side.

As these ritualized acts gather momentum, the entire group then moves to the semahane—the main gathering hall for the zikr. While every order has its own particular traditional practices, the zikr typically begins with a more subdued form of vocalization, the salat prayers, much of which is recited silently by each participant with an audible leader. From here, the zikr proper begins and follows a similar principle of gradually building momentum, reaching an ecstatic crescendo that is tied not only to the particular names of Allah being recited and the ilahi hymns being sung, but also to the movements that

dervishes make in the semahane hall. These movements are enacted both on a macro-level as dervishes make up larger group formations and on a micro-level as many sway back and forth, sometimes quite emphatically, while chanting. After reaching its climax³³, the ceremony cools down and essentially moves in reverse, eventually shifting locations back to the gathering room for conversation, tea and (perhaps) cigarettes. This fluid-yet-ritualized shift from speech to scripted recitation to what would generally be called singing is one commonly observed in ethnomusicology³⁴, but the physical movements from one ritual space to another that accompany these verbal shifts suggest the kind of sonic passage under discussion here.³⁵

Passage beyond the confines of a given tekke are also significant to Sufi practice in Kosovo. Here urban geography becomes a much more significant factor in how and where particular sounds are articulated, as dervishes and other guests known for having good voices are welcomed as reciters (i.e., singers of ilahis, kasides, or other genres of religious poetry) among multiple tekkes. Nevruz celebrations in Prizren in March 2011 offered, once again, an illustrative realization of this phenomenon. On the morning of March 22, a large group of dervishes, visiting sheikhs, local non-participants and even peacekeeping forces wedged into the semahane of the Rufa'i order. Among these dervishes were several people who participated fully (i.e., they acted as dervishes, though without ritual robes) and were even called on to perform solo recitations.

After the ceremony, about 10 of these participants proceeded across the city to the heart of the old town, where a small Melami gathering place is located. Melami practice in Kosovo, I was told time and again, differs quite dramatically from other orders, not least because they have no formal zikr ritual. Instead on this occasion, they simply gathered for a several-hour session of muhabbet with a Melami sheikh visiting from Prishtina. After this extended (and deeply metaphysical yet playful) conversation, most of the group walked back the exact same route as the morning zikr to attend the Nevruz zikr of the Sinani

³³ As alluded to above, most zikr ceremonies do not entail self-mortification, instead being reserved for special holy days. The relative infrequency of these practices is one more reason why the films mentioned above are somewhat misleading.

³⁴ E.g. S. Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, Philadelphia 1990; A. Fox, *Real Country: Music and Language in Working Class Culture*, Durham 2004; A. Seeger, *Why Suyá Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*, Urbana 2004.

³⁵ For the sake of brevity and maintaining focus here, I choose not to deal with the actual movements of dervishes in the zikr ceremony itself. One might argue, however, that the kinds of larger-scale movements that take place within the whole of the tekke are an extension of the movements of the body and group configurations within the ritual precinct. Several sheikhs have pointed out the symbolic significance of these positions as a kind of spiritual narrative of their own. Given the care for detail in Islamic architecture more broadly, and especially of these Sufi ceremonial halls, such a connection between personal movement inside the semahane and movement between various other ritual spaces in the tekke hardly seems far-fetched.

tekke across the street from the Rufa'is. And again, one older man in particular was called on to be a reciter for the Sinani ceremony. When I asked him which order he belonged to, he said simply that he goes where he is welcome and that he finds deep satisfaction in reciting. The location of these two zikrs was not merely an issue of walking back and forth, though. Several people mentioned them in relationship to one another, and after I mentioned to the Sinani sheikh that I had attended the Rufa'i ceremony that morning, he expressed his disappointment to me that his dervishes had not executed some of the more difficult chants—apparently in contrast to the well-organized Rufa'i tekke, one of the most prestigious in the Balkans. On the other hand, the Sinani ceremony included a musical performance with a small Turkish ensemble (featuring ud, kanun, tanbur, percussion, and so on). While it would be too strong to suggest that these two tekkes are competitors—again, as evidenced by their welcoming of the same attendees and sharing of reciters—the geographic proximity as literal neighbors gives a clear sense of entangled engagement and continual exchange on multiple levels. Finally, the passage of sound extends beyond the limits of a given city as well. The ontological status and definition of “the city” in Kosovo is fraught from the outset, as the entire country is small enough that the question of whether these places are cities or towns is arguable, and has been argued in my presence on multiple occasions by Kosovars. Given the historical status of places like Prizren and Gjakova as cities—again, highlighted by the particular architectural style and layout of their old, Ottoman period centers—I find this question less pressing. But perhaps it suggests one more manifestation of how the sonic practices of Sufis in Kosovo lie at the fringe of urban ethnomusicology: one could argue that Sufi rituals there are neither music (but recitation) nor urban (rather approaching some quantitative notion of cityness, at least at present).

This marginal urbanism, however, has important implications for Sufi networks. In particular, because so many different cities lie nearby and are large enough to warrant their own tekkes, networks emerge as dervishes from one tekke in one city (e.g., Rufa'is from Rahovec) are invited to visit a different tekke in a different city (e.g., Kadiris in Gjakova), particularly on special occasions. Once again, special status is given to those dervishes who add something otherwise absent to a ceremony. For example, the Rufa'i sheikh from Rahovec and his dervishes were invited to the Kadiri Nevruz ceremony in Gjakovë (after which a reciprocal invitation was extended in reverse). The Rahovec Rufa'is, I was told repeatedly by dervishes in Gjakovë, were “crazy” and had “very good zakirs” (musicians). What “crazy” meant, I was to learn, was that they not only skewered their faces (as is fairly common for special occasions among several Kosovar orders) but that their sheikh also would walk on a sword and perform other acts of ecstatic violence. Interestingly, however, I first heard of this reputation while traveling between Prishtina and Prizren with a group of dervishes

and non-initiated participants who were convinced that Gjakovë, not Prizren, was the best place for Nevruz. Here the network was not merely one of dervishes coming and going to different ceremonies, but also an overlapping information network, in which many of these dervishes had not personally seen these ecstatic Rufa'is. Yet their reputation was enough to generate a rich discourse about them through an informal discursive network that passed from person to person as dervishes were themselves traveling from city to city.

In my preceding examples of methodologies—documentary sound studies and media archaeology—I suggest not only a theoretical object of study but also a practical approach to encountering and, where possible, documenting it. In many ways movement or passage through space resists easy documentation. The tension between representing *a place* and representing movement *between two places* demands a simultaneous depth (place) and breadth (betweenness). This mapping of sound remains one of the persistent challenges, I would argue, for urban ethnomusicology that concerns itself seriously with a notion of place. The turn toward “soundscapes” or other Appadurai-influenced notions of mobile, fluid “-scapes” has significantly highlighted the tenuousness of claims to geographical fixity of music (or sound, or any other sociocultural phenomenon). On the other hand, this notion of soundscape is ultimately somewhat facile, failing to take stock of things that actually are *there*, that is, architecture and cityspaces that do not move; that sound and resonate; and that mediate sound, images, other media, and our perceptions of them.³⁶ The process of rectifying these divergent approaches to understanding passage-through-space, whether invoking the term “soundscape” or not, seems less important than models of those who are attempting to navigate and map out these intellectual and aesthetic contours. American composers like John Luther Adams and Betsy Biggs have set out intriguing paths bringing together musical composition with geography, architecture (or lack thereof) and space; soundwalk composers like Christina Kubisch and, more traditionally, Hildegard Westerkamp, have similarly contributed; and record labels like Gruenrekorder offer albums whose

³⁶ Previous versions of my own paper here addressed this issue more directly, positioning many of the foregoing ideas at the confluence of two distinct soundscape lineages: first, a heritage from Murray Schafer (M. Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, New York 1977) to Steven Feld (op. cit., 1996), tied to recording and sound-art (though Feld prefers the term “acoustemology”); and second, drawing on postcolonial and critical theory, the work of Arjun Appadurai (*Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis 1996) and Kay Shelemay (*Soundscapes: Exploring Music in a Changing World*, New York 2006). Recent work by Emily Thompson (*The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America*, Cambridge MA 2002) and Hirschkind (op. cit., 2006) added a critical element by considering architecture and actual physical spaces/places. For a different approach to “critical genealogy” of the term “soundscape,” cf. also: A. Kelman, *Rethinking the Soundscape: A Critical Genealogy of a Key Term in Sound Studies*, “Senses & Society” 2010, 5/2, pp. 212–234.

compositions sit tenuously between documentation of a place and of a series of interconnected fragments-of-places. But a full-fledged critical cartography of passage-through-sound, or aural *flânerie*, has yet to emerge from ethnomusicology, whether in print or other media.

Mediating Place

To conclude I would briefly remark on the idea of sound as a mediation of place. The foregoing comments have been necessarily tentative: not only is my own research still very much in progress, but like so much of the field of sound studies, my methods are also emergent. Even so, I am optimistic that the foregoing examples suggest rich possibilities for parsing out difference in the city, sometimes by particular technological means, sometimes merely by doing what ethnomusicologists have always done: by listening carefully. The stakes of urban sound are very real, especially when sounding from marginal spaces (like Sufi tekkes) in marginal places (like Kosovo and Macedonia). On the margins—whatever that may mean—difference is negotiated continually, and sounds permeate space in ways that older models of ethnomusicology have not yet adequately addressed. But if sound can articulate difference as tension and conflict, it can also mediate. Mediation, of course, has two relevant meanings here. First, like Zielinski's archaeology, it provides a means or technological medium through which one hears and sees—hopefully more clearly. Secondly, mediation is the arbitration of difference, something engaging and bringing together two parties, allowing them to communicate more readily. In the case of the urban heterophony here, sound brings these two types of mediation together: its transmission and transformation entails countless forms of technological mediation, and yet it can similarly offer a common sensory language and meeting point as well.

Returning briefly to my opening example, I found myself ill at ease through much of my stay at Arabati Baba tekke in Macedonia. The tension was, as described above, literally audible and figuratively palpable. But a strange act of violence and music mediated these differences, at least for a moment. My second afternoon at the tekke, reports began appearing on Turkish television of the near-fatal shooting of İbrahim Tatlıses, the renowned Turkish singer.³⁷ The tekke had Turkish news on for much of the day, so the reports flowed in almost continuously. Midway through the afternoon, the Sunni groundskeeper brought a group of elementary school students into the tekke for a tour, and we took to discussing Tatlıses—"the best singer from these parts", according to the

³⁷ G. Köhne, *Kurdischer Sänger im Koma*, "Deutschlandfunk" 17.03.2011, <http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/europaheute/1413305/> (accessed online 14.07.2015).

groundskeeper. For a few minutes, shared grieving and musical taste brought us all together in common concern, while occasional excerpts of Tatlıses's singing drifted outside from the tekke television. Meanwhile, children clamored for attention in a mix of four different languages, while the chickens in the tekke yard crowed boisterously in response. A sense of community and shared values, however fragile, emerged momentarily, mediated by the rich abundance of sounds present. But before long, as if on cue, the call to prayer lurched to life again, mediated as ever by those deceptively powerful loudspeakers. And once more heterophony reigned.