

The Kalophonic Settings of the Second Psalm in the Byzantine Tradition
(Fourteenth-Fifteenth centuries): A Dissertation In-Progress

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The Byzantine written musical tradition from the end of the Latin occupation of the Fourth Crusade in 1261 until the fall of Constantinople on May 29th, 1453 is characterized by the flourishing of the so-called Kalophonia or Kalophonic chanting, i.e., beautified chant. This new musical style features long melismas (πλατυασμό μέλους), nonsense-syllable sections (τερετίσματα – κρατήματα) and text troping or word rearrangement (αναγραμματισμός), the latter challenging unquestionably the traditional correlation between text and music. Kalophonia was first recorded in the Akolouthia or ‘order of service’ manuscripts produced during the Palaeologan period. In developing the Kalophonic style, composers enriched the old repertory with melodic material that entailed technical virtuosity and implied novelty and originality, another remarkable distinction with the previous period. Inevitably, kalophonia became a turning point in the history of the Byzantine chant influencing decisively its future flourishing during the Post-Byzantine centuries.

My dissertation will examine the Kalophonic settings of the second psalm in the Byzantine tradition mainly during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. More specifically, it will examine the existence and function of those additional Kalophonic settings that only the second psalm enjoys in the context of the Office of Great Vespers.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ By the beginning of the fourteenth century a millennium of liturgical conflict and amalgamation in the Orthodox East between the rites of Jerusalem and Constantinople had produced Great Vespers, a ‘mixed’ form of the evening office. It was observed during the reign of Palaeologoi (1261-1453) on the eves of

Edward Williams has stated the following: “After the simple settings for psalm 103 and the first stasis, certain Akolouthiai also transmit an additional repertory of Kalophonic or ‘beautified’ verses (στίχοι καλοφωνικοί) for the second psalm”. And also: “The precise reason for the presence of these chants in the evening office is unexplained in the rubrics of Akolouthiai and remains an enigma. The unusual length [of these compositions] suggests that the performance of Kalophonic chants may have accompanied certain liturgical actions as yet unidentified in Great Vespers”²⁷⁹

Table 1.

Psalmody Structure of Great Vespers (Sunday Vespers of great feasts) in the 15th c.

- I. The Prooemiac psalm (Psalm 103)
- II. The First Stasis of the First Kathisma (Psalms 1, 2 and 3)
- III. Doxology of the First Stasis
- IV. Kalophonic Repertory for Psalm 2
- V. The four psalms of Light (Psalms 140, 141, 129 and 116)

The aim of my study is to place the Kalophonic settings of the second psalm in musical, liturgical and historical perspective and provide a convincing reason to its enigmatic existence. To achieve this, my research is following an interdisciplinary path which embraces the disciplines of theology/philosophy, liturgiology, music iconography, music paleography and political and social history for a full understanding of the subject under study. The main reason for such an approach is due to the fact that Byzantine ecclesiastical music can not be studied isolated from its cultural context, historical milieu, theological/philosophical attachments and liturgical/dramatic functions.

every Sunday and on the eve of the feasts of the Lord. See also Table 1 below for the Psalmody structure of Great Vespers.

²⁷⁹ Edward Williams, “John Koukouzeles’s Reform of Byzantine Chanting for Great Vespers in the Fourteenth Century” (Ph.D. Yale University, 1968) 261-63.

As a result, I have divided my work into two parts: the musicological part which will examine the Kalophonic settings as artistic creations and the interdisciplinary part that will provide me with the social, political, theological and liturgical context that gave birth to this specific Kalophonic repertory.

The musicological part will comprise first a comprehensive list of all extant manuscripts that record the Kalophonic settings of the second psalm. Not all akolouthia manuscripts transmit this specific repertory and when they do, the size and contents of each particular manuscript varies considerably. It is expected that the finalized list of those manuscripts will possibly reveal information on the provenance of the manuscripts, their target audience and specific occasion, and eventually the local culture that promoted their genesis. Next I will undertake the classification of these manuscripts and the comparative study of the most representative ones from each class. Currently, I am working on EBE 2458, the earliest Akolouthia manuscript (1336) abounding with compositions by Koukouzeles, the Iviron 1120, an autograph by Manuel Chrysaphes (1458) and EBE 2406, a significant manuscript that records works by more than 100 composers. I will prepare transcriptions of melodies in modern staff notation following the *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae* standards. The aim of the transcription of this repertory is not to substitute for the original notation but to create a methodological tool for better understanding of the transcribed melodies. The transcriptions are expected to reveal concordances among the manuscripts and facilitate the study of the similarities, influences and divergences among composers and across geographical areas. Finally, I will offer modal and compositional analyses based on the elucidation of contemporary and modern music treatises on one hand, and on the analytical studies performed by

modern scholars in the field, on the other. I will also include a list of composers and a comparative study of their pieces.

In my attempt to delineate the origin of the position of the second psalm in the Orthodox rite during the pre-Kalophonic period, testimonials from Typika prior to 1204 and contemporary liturgical treatises have provided me so far with some interesting preliminary results. Towards that end, I have examined the position of the second psalm in the office of the Chanted Rite²⁸⁰ ‘Ασματική Ακολουθία’ according to the following Typika (Orders of Services), and accounts from important personalities of the period under study. More specifically:

MS Patmos 266 (ca. 9-10th centuries): It is the oldest extant example of the Typikon of Aghia Sophia Church of Constantinople. In this manuscript the second psalm appears in the Office of Vespers, on Monday of the 1st week of Lent. It is sung in conjunction with the 1st and 3rd psalms as the first stasis or antiphon of the Psalter, and set in Barys mode. *MS 43 Holy Cross* (1122 A.D.): It is a fragment of the Jerusalem Typikon of the Holy Week of the Holy Sepulcher Church (Ναός της Αναστάσεως). The second psalm is sung independently from the 1st and 3rd psalms in Vespers of: Palm Sunday, set in 4th plagal mode, Wednesday set in the 4th mode and Thursday set in Barys mode. Also the second psalm was sung during the Mass of Jacob, during lite²⁸¹ performed on Mount Olive and at some point in the procession from Mount Olive back to the church. In all occasions the second psalm was set in the 4th plagal mode.

²⁸⁰The Chanted Rite was performed in Constantinople before the Latin occupation. During the occupation it declined rapidly and ultimately ceased to exist in the imperial capital but survived in Thessaloniki (Northern Greece)

²⁸¹ Small office sung on the eve of important feasts during Vespers followed by vigil.

MS 115, (1131 A.D.): It is the typikon of Saint Salvatore monastery in Messina, Italy. The structure of the ordo is of Studites provenance. During Holy Week the second psalm is sung again independently from Makarios Anir unit. As far as the mode is concerned, on Thursday Vespers the psalm is set in mode barys and on Friday at the first hour, set in 4th plagal mode. However, every Saturday Vespers except Holy Saturday and the Saturday of the Pentecost, psalm 2 is sung together with the first and third psalms set again in 4th plagal mode.

Moreover, I have examined some of the surviving accounts by major figures during the Palaeologan period such as:

“De sacra precatone” Περί της Θείας προσευχής is a communication by Symeon Archbishop of Thessaloniki *ca.* 1425 A.D. on Chanted Office. Symeon gives a reformed account of the Constantinopolitan liturgy as was performed before the Latin occupation and as it had been survived in Thessaloniki during the 14-15th centuries. According to his account the second psalm is sung only during Vespers on the eves of important feasts as part of the 1st stasis. In other words, the rite of ‘Ασματική Ακολουθία’ had by that date incorporated elements from the omni-established monastic rite. Symeon justifies the position of those psalms in Vespers as a result of their reference entirely to Christ. Another point of interest in his report is the theological elucidation regarding the great entrance of Saturday Vespers, considering it as a far more splendid occasion. Perhaps this splendid occasion performed inside the church of Haghia Sophia in Constantinople was far more pronounced and prolonged in time due to the size of the church, the number of personnel and audience and the financial support from the palace. The additional Kalophonic repertory of the second psalm could easily serve as

music filler during that event. According to Symeon, the underlying theological principle of considering Saturday Vespers as such, is the perception that Saturday is the day when God's assent (*sygatavasis*) is celebrated since the beginning of time; it was Saturday when Christ descended to Hades and returned triumphant; and, when the feast of a saint falls on a Sunday, then the ascendance of the Saint's soul to heaven is celebrated on Saturday Vespers.

“Ordo sacri ministerii” Διάταξη της Ιεροδιακονίας: It is a treatise by Philotheos d. 1379, Patriarch of Constantinople from 1353-1354 and 1364-1376. Philotheos gives an extensive description of Great Vespers but does not mention the uniqueness of the second psalm additional Kalophonic repertory. However his account is valuable regarding the liturgical/dramatical actions that take place during the Office of Great Vespers. It was a certainly prolonged ceremony requiring a more elaborate musical background.

“Expositio officii ecclesiastici” Εξήγηση της Εκκλησιαστικής Ακολουθίας: an account on the Office by Marcos Eugenikos (1391-1445) Marcos was Metropolitan of Ephesus born in Constantinople and later became a monk. He gives a detailed explanation of the Office of Vespers and the structural function of psalms. Although none of the psalms from the first stasis of the Psalter is mentioned, he implied their presence by emphasizing the same point during Vespers, as Symeon did, right after the great entrance of the priest as the occasion dedicated to Christ's incarnation in the world and his return to the Father.

Although we have these testimonies from contemporary personalities, still a handful questions remains unanswered from those sources. For example: Why this kind

of predilection for the second psalm in detriment to the 1st and 3rd psalms? What was unique about the second psalm that inspired composers for unparalleled music creations? Since the second psalm is a messianic psalm, with a text prophesizing the advent of Messiah, textual associations with the musical settings might be significant.²⁸² Regarding the sacred text of the second psalm we can observe its promising message that passes to its readers. God is omnipresent and protects the believers even in the most frightful situations. The selection of an encouraging psalm which upholds the faith to God and implies entrustment to the emperor might not be unintentionally chosen during those challenging last centuries of the empire, the territory of which has been shrunk to the city of Constantinople and some areas in Greece.

More questions of that nature will propel my research to non-musical domains. For instance: What was the liturgical action in Great Vespers during the Kalophonic chanting of the second psalm? Who were the singers to perform such demanding chant? Why in some manuscripts the Kalophonic settings of the second psalm are interpolated with the simple settings? Is something changing in the performance due to an extraordinary event or occasion? What is the connection between kalophonia's major characteristics such as text troping and nonsense syllables, and the hesychast practice (ησυχασμός), where pray to God is internal without words?²⁸³ Which were the reasons for stylistic change (artistic-liturgical-spiritual) and what presupposed this freedom of artistic expression and composer's individuality?

²⁸² In appendix A the psalmic text in Greek and English is provided.

²⁸³ Alexander Lingas proposed such a connection in his article "Hesychasm and Psalmody Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism" Papers from the 28th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1994 ed. Anthony Bryer and Mary Cunningham (Birmingham: Variorum, 1996) 155-168.

At some point, valuable information can be obtained by the discipline of music iconography. During the same period, there is a development of a new artistic style highlighting realism and narrative tendencies in iconography. Artists have started to depict the dramatic-liturgical functions where singers sustain a prominent position.²⁸⁴ Neil Moran's description of the two icons provided in appendix B underlines the tendencies of the new style:

“The figure of John Koukouzelis holds a book with (possibly) musical signs in his left hand while making a sign with the fingers of his right hand. Above his shoulder is written in Greek “oxys”, i.e., the masculine form of oxeia, the sign for an ascending second. Corones also holds as he makes a sign with the thumb and index finger held together as the other fingers remain extended. The sign is identified as the ison in an inscription. The inscription by the figure of John Glykys as transcribed in the drawing reads: John the protopsaltes teaches Corones and Koukouzelis”.

And Moran's comment for the second picture:

*“An icon of Christ holding the Gospel rests on a pulpit in front of which two candles have been lit. To the right four priests in liturgical attire stretch out their hands in the Christian attitude of petition. Three immaculately dressed singers, who interestingly enough look directly at the observer rather than at the icon, and two young assistants take up their positions on the left side”.*²⁸⁵

The realism of the 14th century images is such that occasionally is even possible to determine the exact moment in the liturgy captured by the artist and obtain partial information about performance practice. The combination of the musical documents, the pictorial representations and the historical accounts from this period is expected to provide us with a more comprehensive reflection of the era under study.

²⁸⁴ Neil Moran, *Singers in late Byzantine and Slavonic painting*. (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1986) 44, 86.

²⁸⁵ See Appendix B for the pictures taken from Moran's aforementioned book.

Some general conclusions that can be drawn thus far regarding the second psalm roughly from the 9th to 14th century in accordance with the evidence of the written sources and the suggestions from other related to the subject disciplines are:

Firstly, the second psalm was almost exclusively positioned inside the Office of Vespers as part of the first stasis. Exception to this rule discloses local practices like the Jerusalem Typikon as described in *MS. 43 Holy Sepulcher* in which the second psalm was sung independently from the 1st stasis and used in processions outside the church. Secondly, the second psalm occasionally appears, even in the same Typikon, both as part of the 1st stasis as well as independent, a feature that was also retained during the Kalophonic period particularly in the Office of Great Vespers. Thirdly, the psalm text was usually set in the 4th plagal mode, a characteristic principally retained during the Kalophonic period.

Therefore, the independent reappearance of the second psalm in some of the Akolouthia manuscripts during the 14th and 15th centuries inside the Office of Great Vespers is a unique musical but not liturgical phenomenon. We have seen that the second psalm inside the sources that transmit the Asmatike Akolouthia appears in different occasions outside the Office of Vespers. Inside the sources that transmit the monastic rite though, the second psalm establishes its position as part of Vespers only and its additional Kalophonic repertory, which is the focus of the present study, is associated only with the office of Great Vespers. In other words, the additional settings of this psalm during the Kalophonic period as it appears in the written sources constitutes a newly established practice beginning roughly in the 14th century. However, the fact that it appears in some and not all akolouthia manuscripts that transmit the Office of Great

Vespers implies that the additional Kalophonic repertory of the second psalm was sung in special occasions and probably in a specific geographical area. Not always prescribed by contemporary Typika, but occupying dozens of music manuscript pages, the Kalophonic repertory of the second psalm represents an artistic creation of unprecedented freedom. It was born inside the realm of the so-called Paleologan revival, a creative movement embracing all arts in general. Its appearance in the Office of Great Vespers marked a shift towards a new aesthetic applied in the area of ecclesiastic music; and its selection as sacred text possibly reflected an encouraging gesture of hope in opposition to the general overwhelming anxiety related to the extant dangers that overshadowed the future survival of the empire.

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Typika and Accounts

MS Patmos 266 (ca. 9-10th centuries) It is the oldest extant example of the Typikon of Aghia Sophia Church of Constantinople.

MS 43 Holy Cross (1122 A.D.) Fragment of the Jerusalem typikon of the Holy Week of the Holy Sepulcher Church (Ναός της Αναστάσεως)

MS 115 (1131). Typikon of Saint Salvatore monastery in Messina, Italy of Studites provenance.

“De sacra precatone” Περί της Θείας προσευχής by Symeon Archbishop of Thessaloniki *ca.* 1425 A.D.

“Ordo sacri ministerii” Διάταξη της Ιεροδιακονίας by Philotheos, Patriarch of Constantinople d. 1379.

“Expositio officii ecclesiastici” Εξήγηση της Εκκλησιαστικής Ακολουθίας by Marcos Eugenikos (1391-1445)

APPENDIX A

Text of Psalm 2

[Poet]

1a Why do the nations conspire
1b and the peoples plot in vain?

2a The kings of the earth take their stand
2b and the rulers gather together
2c against the Lord
2d and against his Anointed One

3a “Let us break their chains,” they say
3b “and throw off their fetters.”

4a The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
4b the Lord scoffs at them.

5a Then he rebukes them in anger
5b and terrifies them in his wrath, saying:

[Messiah]

6a “I have installed my King
6b on Zion, my holy hill.”

7a I will proclaim the decree of the Lord:
7b He said to me, “you are my Son
7c today I have become your Father.

8a Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance,
8b the ends of the earth your possession.

9a You will rule them with an iron scepter
9b you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

[Poet]

10a Therefore, you kings, be wise;
10b be warned, you rulers of the earth.

11a Serve the Lord with fear
11b and rejoice with trembling.

12a Kiss the Son, lest he be angry
12b and you be destroyed in your way,

13a for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
13b Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Text in Greek

Ἰνατί εφρύαξαν ἔθνη και λαοί εμελέτησαν κενά;
Παρέστησαν οι βασιλείς της γης, και οι ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν επι το αυτό κατά του Κυρίου και κατά του χριστού αυτού.
Διαρρήξωμεν τους δεσμούς αυτών και απορρίψωμεν ἀφ' ημών τον ζυγόν αυτών.
Ο κατοικῶν εν ουρανοίς εκγελάσεται αυτούς, και ο Κύριος εκμυκτηριεῖ αυτούς.
Τότε λαλήσει προς αυτούς εν οργή αυτού και εν τω θυμῷ αυτού ταράξει αυτούς.

Εγώ δε κατεστάθην βασιλεύς υπ' αυτού επί Σιών ὄρος το ἅγιον αυτού, διαγγέλλων το πρόσταγμα Κυρίου.
Κύριος εἶπε προς με υἱός μου ει συ. Εγώ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε.
Αἴτησαι παρ' εμού, και δώσω σοι ἔθνη την κληρονομίαν σου, και την κατάσχεσιν σου τα πέρατα της γης.
Ποιμανεῖς αυτούς εν ράβδῳ σιδηρά, ως σκεύη κεραμέως συντρίψεις αυτούς.

Και νυν, βασιλείς, σύνετε παιδεύθητε, πάντες οι κρίνοντες την γην.
Δουλεύσατε τῷ Κυρίῳ εν φόβῳ, και αγαλλιάσθε αὐτῷ εν τρόμῳ.
Δράξασθε παιδείας, μήποτε οργισθῆ Κύριος και απολείσθε ἐξ οδοῦ δικαίας, ὅταν εκκαυθῆ εν τάχει ο θυμός αυτού, μακάριοι πάντες οι πεποιθότες ἐπ' αὐτῷ.

APPENDIX B



Copy of miniature from Cod. Mt. Athos, Koutoumoussi 457, 14th c. (?)



VII. Moscow, Historical Museum, Tumiš Psalter, f. 226, Psalm 134 with singers, ca. 1360.