

SILVIA TESSARI

THE EMPEROR THEOPHILOS
AND HIS MUSICAL TRANSFORMATIONS:
HISTORY AND PREHISTORY
OF THE TROPARION *AKOYE KOPH*

ABSTRACT

Scopo del contributo è quello di analizzare per la prima volta con lo sguardo del musicologo un episodio riguardante l'attività compositiva ascritta all'imperatore bizantino iconoclasta Teofilo (829-842). La lettura di alcune fonti cronachistiche bizantine che lo riportano (X-XII secolo), poste a confronto con codici neumati e testi innografici, fungerà da punto di partenza. Da qui si giungerà ad una riflessione sulla relazione tra politiche iconoclastiche e sviluppo innografico/notazionale a Bisanzio, grazie anche ad un trattatello inedito di pratica musicale bizantina (*Μέθοδος ἠκρι[βω]μένη τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων κὺρ Κοσμᾶ καὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ καὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσσοστόμου*). Gli elementi emersi dall'analisi contribuiranno infine ad illuminare una fase della musica greca cristiana cronologicamente anteriore all'Iconoclasmo; si forniranno infatti nuovi dati sulla fortuna di un genere letterario-musicale – quello degli inni alfabetici ritornellati del tipo 'Schøyen' – finora noto solo da poche testimonianze prevalentemente papiracee.

PAROLE CHIAVE Iconoclasmo, paleografia musicale bizantina, inni del tipo 'Schøyen', Irmologio, Teofilo imperatore

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to analyse for the first time from a musicological point of view an episode involving the Byzantine emperor Theophilos (829-842) and his activity as a composer of sacred music. Our starting point is a series of Byzantine chronicles (10th-12th centuries), compared with neumated sources and hymnographic texts. From here, we will come to a reflection on the relationship between iconoclastic policies and hymnographic/notational development in Byzantium, thanks also to an unpublished treatise on Byzantine musical practice (*Μέθοδος ἠκρι[βω]μένη τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων κὺρ Κοσμᾶ καὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ καὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσσοστόμου*). The data derived from this analysis will make it possible to illuminate a more ancient phase of Greek Christian music, before the Iconoclasm; in fact, new elements will be provided on the fortune of a literary-musical genre – that of the refrained alphabetic hymns of the 'Schøyen' type – so far known only from a few, mainly papyrus, testimonies.

KEYWORDS Iconoclasm, Byzantine musical palaeography, 'Schøyen' hymns, Heirmologion, Emperor Theophilos



1. The sources

The Byzantine emperor Theophilos (829-842), well-known advocate of the final gasp of the Second Iconoclasm, is portrayed as a fanatical composer by a series of chronicles from the 10th century onwards. The lines that describe the musical ambitions of the *basileus* have not escaped the eyes of the scholars, especially where mention is made of his activity as choir conductor (*cheironomia*)¹ and of his munificent donation to the singers (depicted also in a famous miniature of the Madrid Skylitzes - Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 26.2, f. 52r).² However, it is the immediately preceding paragraph that has not received due attention so far:³

The oldest source is the so-called *Theophanes continuatus* (10th c.), ed. Bekker, p. 106 rr. 17-21 = III.16

ῥμνους δέ τινας ποιῶν καὶ στιχηρὰ μελίζων ἄδεσθαι προετρέπετο· μεθ' ὧν καὶ τὸ τοῦ τετάρτου ἤχου *Εὐλογεῖτε*, ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ὀγδόην “Ἄκουε κόρη” ᾠδὴν μεθαρμολογούμενος καὶ ῥυθμὸν παρασχών, ἐν τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίᾳ εἰς πάντων ἐπήκοον ἄδεσθαι διωρίσατο.

The emperor was, therefore, a composer of hymns (generic term) and of *stichera* (monostrophic compositions to be performed interspersed with the verses of the psalms in the Office), that he provided with melody (μελίζων). Together with these compositions, the chronicle mentions a *Bless!* in the fourth mode from the eighth ode *Listen, Maiden!*, ‘transformed’ and rhythmically modified by Theophilos himself. According to the source, this rendition was performed in the Church of God by imperial order. The musicologists certainly find reasons of interest in this paragraph, especially because the chronological period in which Theophilos lived was very fruitful for the development of Byzantine hymnography, of sacred music, and of musical notation itself. Some questions arise immediately:

- ◆ Which hymn is subject to the imperial transformation? Why exactly this one?
- ◆ From a musicological point of view, what clues can we identify about this rhythmic and/or melodic modification? Is it possible that the manuscript tradition shows traces of it?
- ◆ May this musical practice of the emperor be linked to his iconoclastic politics?

Theophanes Continuatus is not the only source that mentions this fact. Ioannes Skylitzes (11th-12th c.) copied *verbatim* from this chronography in his *Synopsis historiarum* (Theoph., 11, rr. 1-5 ed. Thurn). His compilation method was very common in Byzantium, where the narration of more or less remote

1. MORAN, *Singers*, p. 40.

2. *Ibid.*

3. See about its place in the liturgy FRØYSHOV, *The Early History*.

events was based on long *excerpta* derived from previous texts. Skylitzes, therefore, does not diverge from the Continuator of Theophanes except for the interesting adjective ἕτερον next to ῥυθμόν, which emphasizes the significant transformation carried out by Theophilos: καὶ ῥυθμόν ἕτερον παρασχών.⁴

Georgios Kedrenos (11th-12th century), in his *Compendium historiarum* (2, p. 117, rr. 15-20 ed. Bekker), reused exactly the older chronicles as well.⁵

The Jerosolimitan patriarch Dositheos II (1641-1707), in his encyclopaedic survey of ancient information about his patriarchate (*Δωδεκάβιβλος Ζ - Η*, VII, p. 148, rr. 22-24 ed. Deledemos), summarizes what we already know:

ἐφιλοτιμεῖτο δὲ ὁ Θεόφιλος εἶναι μελωδός, ὅθεν καὶ ἡ ὄγδοη ᾠδὴ τὸ Ἄκουε Κόρη, αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ ποιήμα, μεταρμωσάμενος αὐτὸ ἐκ τοῦ πρωτοτύπου[...].

[Theophilos boasted of being a *melodos*, so even the eighth ode, the *Listen, Maiden*, is one of his compositions, transformed from the prototype.]

Dositheos' reading, many centuries after the facts, reveals a probable simplification when he states that the *eighth ode* was composed by the emperor himself. This piece of information is not found in the Byzantine chronicles, which mentioned, as we have seen, a musical transformation of a pre-existing text.

2. Ἄκουε Κόρη: eighth ode

The following lines are to allow the reader to understand which hymnographic composition is mentioned by the sources. The chronicles are extremely precise in defining three elements: musical mode (fourth mode – and, we add – authentic); *incipit*: Ἄκουε Κόρη, indicated as eighth ode; text modified by the emperor: Εὐλογεῖτε.

The identification of the hymn, or rather of one of its *troparia* (strophes), is therefore certain. We can read it in its entirety not from a critical edition – hitherto not realized – but from the most ancient neumated manuscript bearing the text and the melody (the reason for this choice will be clear a little further): Athonite ms. Μονὴ Μεγίστης Λαύρας Β 32, 10th c., ff. 116r-v. Standard accents, spelling normalization, and punctuation belong to me. The colization is that of the manuscript (originally marked with high points).

Ἄκουε Κόρη Παρθένε ἀγνή,
εἰπάτω δὴ ὁ Γαβριήλ,
βουλὴν Ἰψίστου
ἀρχαίαν ἀληθινήν,
γενοῦ πρὸς ὑποδοχὴν ἐτοίμη Θεοῦ·

4. «And using another rhythm».

5. TARTAGLIA, *Meccanismi di compilazione*.

διὰ σοῦ γὰρ ὁ ἀχώρητος
 βροτοῖς συναναστρέφεται·
 διὸ καὶ χαίρων βοῶ·
 ||: Εὐλογεῖτε
 πάντα τὰ ἔργα Κυρίου τὸν Κύριον
 καὶ ὑπερυψοῦτε αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. :||⁶

The troparion is clearly considered part of an eighth ode in the above-mentioned sources. This terminology refers directly to Byzantine canonarian hymnography, which triumphed from about the seventh century onwards, in long compositions, the canons, whose standard structure is organized into nine odes (the second is frequently omitted, for historical and liturgical reasons that it is not needed here to recall to the reader's memory⁷). Each ode draws its inspiration from one of the so-called Biblical odes. The eighth ode is based on the canticle of the three children in the furnace (*Daniel* 3, 57-88). In fact, the reference to the sacred text is explicit in the final refrain Εὐλογεῖτε, πάντα τὰ ἔργα Κυρίου τὸν Κύριον... (*O all ye works of the Lord, praise ye the Lord...*).

Each ode is divided into several troparia. Let us therefore insert Ἄκουε Κόρη in the broader context of the entire composition. In the uninterrupted liturgical tradition of the Greek Church, Ἄκουε Κόρη is known to be followed by five other troparia – all of them part of the eighth ode and closed by the same refrain. In turn, the ode is placed in a canon for the Annunciation, whose general incipit (of the first ode) is Ἀιδέτω σοι Δέσποινα, κινῶν τὴν λύραν τοῦ Πνεύματος. The canon, dedicated to one of the most important feasts of the liturgical year (March 25), is transmitted by a huge number of manuscripts and it has been also printed several times in the liturgical books. We find it, for example, in the *Μηνναῖα*, which anthologize the hymnographic texts required for each day of the liturgical year.⁸ It was also included at the end of the 19th century in a publication characterized by an accurate philological approach, the *Anthologia Graeca carminum Christianorum* by Wilhelm Christ and Matthaios Paranikas.⁹

The authorial attribution is problematic. Three names appear in the manuscript tradition: Cosmas monachos, Theophanes and Ioannes Monachos (the last is often, albeit uncritically, equated by the scholars with John of Damascus¹⁰). Cosmas is mentioned in a few ancient sources; his name is occasionally

6. «Listen, Maiden, Pure Virgin, let Gabriel tell the ancient and truthful will of the Most High, be prepared to accept God. In fact, the Uncontained through you comes to live with the mortals; for this reason, full of joy, I cry: “O all ye works of the Lord, praise the Lord, and exalt Him forever and ever”».
7. See the recent KOLLYROPOULOU, *Περὶ τοῦ προβλήματος τῆς β' ᾠδῆς*.
8. *MR* IV 180, *MV* VII 103.
9. CHRIST – PARANIKAS, *Anthologia Graeca carminum Christianorum*, pp. 240-241.
10. Cf. e.g. HEINEMANN ed., *St. John Damascene. Barlaam et Ioasaph*, p. 622: «Ἰωάννης μοναχός. Sic appellari solet in codicibus S. Ioannes Damascenus». TOULIATOS-MILES, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, index of names: «Ἰωάννης μοναχός (see Ἰωάννης Δαμασκηνός)». Enrica Follieri had already explicitly warned the reader in her *THE AMEINΩ*, p. 241

linked with the last two odes.¹¹ Theophanes is the name that we read in the Roman edition of the *Μηναία* by Propaganda fide (MR) and is also accepted by Christ and Paranikas. They, however, correctly point out the structural differences between the last two odes (eighth and ninth) and the rest of the canon (an issue that we will analyse at the end of this paper). For this reason, they suggest that a different poet (perhaps Ioannes monachos?) wrote the conclusion of the canon. The Venetian edition of the *Menaia* (MV) assigns the entire poem to Ioannes Monachos. The fluctuation in the attributions should not surprise the reader, as it is a common issue in the field of Byzantine hymnography. At the moment, even if the authorial ascription remains obscure, we can at least pay attention to two elements:

1. the peculiar characteristics of the two concluding odes;
2. the fact that Cosmas, Ioannes Monachos and Theophanes belong to the most ancient phases of Byzantine canonarian hymnography. Saint John of Damascus (post 650-749) and his foster-brother Cosmas are two of the pillars not only of Byzantine hymnography, but also of musical innovation. Theophanes is the well-known champion of icon-veneration. Theophanes Graptos (778 ca-845), in fact, came to Constantinople from the *lavra* of St. Sabas in the Kidron valley together with his brother Theodore; there, they both were persecuted by the iconoclast emperor Leo V and by Theophilos himself, who exiled them to the island of Aphousia (now Avşa) in the Marmara Sea. Called back to Constantinople and questioned by the *basileus*, they did not give up their positions and, for this reason, they were tortured (July 18, 836) with the inscription on their forehead, with a red-hot iron, of twelve iambic verses describing their condemnation (hence the appellative of *graptoi* for both of them).¹² Theophanes and Theophilos, therefore, were antagonists during the last iconoclastic fury, but they were also somehow connected by the same hymn.

From a musical point of view, Ἄκουε Κόρη Παρθένε ἀγνή is an *idiomelon*; the melody on which the words were sung, in fact, was not derived from another pre-existing model strophe (*heirmos*), as it happens in the preceding odes I-VII of the canon for the Annunciation,¹³ but it is the melody of Ἄκουε

nt. 2: «Si noti che nel Meneo di gennaio il canone è attribuito a Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός, in quello di agosto a Ἰωάννης Μοναχός, nome quest'ultimo che generalmente, ma non sempre, indica il Damasceno».

11. Sinai, Μονὴ τῆς Ἁγίας Αἰκατερίνης, gr. 607, f. 97r, 9th-10th century (μηναῖον, March-April. Textual differences: ἀθάνατος instead of ἀχώρητος; *lectio facillior*, but which creates an antithesis with the subsequent «mortals»), Par. gr. 1563, f. 102v, 12th century (μηναῖον, March). See NIKIFOROVA, *The Tropologion Sin. gr. NE/MΓ 56-5 of the Ninth Century*, p. 182.
12. Cf. LILIE – ZIELKE – PRATSCH eds., *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit Online*, s.v. *Theophanes Graptos* (nr. 8093) <https://www.degruyter.com/database/PMBZ/entry/PMBZ19350/html>; KAZHDAN ed., *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, III, 2062 <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-5436>.
13. The *heirmoi* (strophes used as metrical and musical model) of the other odes of the can-

Κόρη itself that is, in turn, an ‘original’ model both for the other troparia that follow it in the ode, and for later canons that reuse it as a metrical / musical pattern.¹⁴ The fact that it acts as a *heirmos* allows us to find this text, provided with musical notation, in the handwritten liturgical books of the *heirmologion*, and in the printed *Εἰρμολόγιον* published by Sophronios Eustratiades (n. 141, fourth authentic mode).¹⁵

But what is the position of the strophe within the *heirmologion*? In the manuscripts, it is always copied in the fourth section, dedicated to the fourth authentic mode. If the *heirmologion* is organized according to the order called *Odenordnung*,¹⁶ that is, all the *heirmoi* of the first odes are copied first, then the following ones, Ἄκουε Κόρη is generally found in the subsection of the eighth ode (see below for more details). If the manuscript, instead, follows the *Kanonordnung* (the canons, with their complete sequence of odes, follow one another), the situation becomes more problematic. Ἄκουε Κόρη is very often linked to the set of *heirmoi* attributed to Ioannes Monachos which begins (first ode) with the famous Ἀνοιξω τὸ στόμα μου (it is the same initial model strophe of the canon for the Annunciation). As *heirmos* of the eighth ode, most of the manuscripts offer Παῖδας εὐαγεῖς in first position, then, like εἰρμὸς ἄλλος (other *heirmos*), Ἄκουε Κόρη (the same ‘double’ eighth ode is also printed by Eustratiades, who derives the text – albeit some anomalies – from two ancient sources mentioned here below). We, therefore, note that the strophe for the Annunciation found its space in the *heirmologion* with some ‘forced’ adaptations (this situation is not certainly unique, and such occurrences should be explained on a case-by-case basis¹⁷).

Although Ἄκουε Κόρη has not been productive of many *contrafacta* (see footnote 14), it remained unscathed from the subsequent reductions that affected the *heirmologion* repertoire, so much so that it is also present in later, even post-Byzantine, *heirmologia*.

Below is a short list showing the placing of Ἄκουε Κόρη in a selection of handwritten *heirmologia* that I have been able to examine.¹⁸

- ◆ L: Athos, Μονὴ μεγίστης Λαύρας B 32, 10th c., ff. 116r-v (*Kanonordnung*): eighth ode, after Παῖδας εὐαγεῖς, without rubrics. The heirmological set

on are: Ἀνοιξω τὸ στόμα μου (1st ode, *EE* 141), Τοὺς σοὺς ὑμολόγους (3rd ode, *EE* 141), Ὁ καθήμενος ἐν δόξῃ (4th ode, *EE* 135), Ἐξέστη τὰ σύμπαντα (5th ode, *EE* 141), Ἐβόησε προτυπῶν (6th ode, *EE* 172), Οὐκ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει (7th ode, *EE* 141).

14. FOLLIERI, *Initia hymnorum ecclesiae Graecae*, I, p. 73; KOMINES – SCHIRÒ eds. *Analecta hymnica Graeca* (abbreviated *A.H.G.* further on), *Canones Decembris* 6, 10.

15. EUSTRATIADES, *Εἰρμολόγιον*.

16. VELIMIROVIĆ, *The Byzantine Heirmos and Heirmologion*; DONEDA, *I manoscritti liturgico-musicali bizantini*, pp. 99-100.

17. In EUSTRATIADES, *Εἰρμολόγιον* there are 269 occurrences of εἰρμὸς ἄλλος. About the much-needed new edition of this liturgical book see D'AMELIA, *Verso una nuova edizione dell'Irmologio: alcune riflessioni*.

18. My deep thanks go to prof. Christian Troelsgård, secretary of the *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, who provided me with the digital images of Ἄκουε κόρη from the last four Palaeobyzantine sources here cited (P54, P55, Lav, C).

has Ἀνοιξω τὸ στόμα μου as first ode. Authorial adscription: Ioannes monachos. Liturgy: Dormition of the Theotokos.

- ◆ **O:** Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Coisl. 220, beginning of the 12th c., ff. ρθ' r-v (*Kanonordnung*): eighth ode, after Παῖδας εὐαγεῖς, labelled as ἄλλος. The heirmological set has Ἀνοιξω τὸ στόμα μου as first ode. Authorial adscription: Ioannes monachos. Liturgy: *Akolouthia anastasimos* and for the Dormition of the Theotokos.
- ◆ **S:** Jerusalem, Πατριαρχικὴ βιβλιοθήκη, Saba 83, 11th-12th centuries (*Kanonordnung*): eighth ode, after Παῖδας εὐαγεῖς, labelled as ἄλλος. The heirmological set has Ἀρρήτω προστάξει σου (!) as first ode. Authorial adscription: Cosmas monachos.
- ◆ **Si:** Sinai, Μονὴ τῆς Ἁγίας Αἰκατερίνης 929, 11th c. (but with a kolophon dated 1349 o 1314?), ff. 90v-91r (*Odendordnung*): without rubrics.
- ◆ **P54:** Patmos, Μονὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου 54, 12th c., f. 103r (*Kanonordnung*): without rubrics. Ἄκουε Κόρη is labelled as ninth ode, before Ἄπας γεγενῆς.
- ◆ **P55:** Patmos, Μονὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου 55, 10th-11th centuries, ff. 80v-81r (*Kanonordnung*): eighth ode, as εἰρμὸς ἄλλος after Παῖδας εὐαγεῖς.
- ◆ **Lav:** Athos, Μονὴ μεγίστης Λαύρας Γ 9, sec. XII, ff. 49v-50r (*Kanonordnung*): eighth ode, as εἰρμὸς ἄλλος after Παῖδας εὐαγεῖς.
- ◆ **C:** Grottaferrata, Biblioteca della Badia greca Eγ3, sec. XII in., f. 115r (*Kanonordnung*): ninth ode, before Ἄπας γεγενῆς.

In the manuscripts with Palaeobyzantine notation, there are many oscillations (eighth / ninth ode, connection to one or another set). Later manuscripts (a list below in footnote 23) show greater stability: the expected place for Ἄκουε Κόρη is the eighth position as 'other *heirmos*' of the set Ἀνοιξω τὸ στόμα μου. It seems to me necessary to add only a datum taken from an early-14th century manuscript, linked to the so-called 'reform' that goes under the name of Ioannes Koukouzeles (selection of the repertoire and use of more syllabic melodic lines, with the continuous reiteration of the typical cadences of the various modes).¹⁹ In the Koukouzelian *heirmologion* Sin. gr. 1256, written by the well-known copyist Irene, daughter of Theodoros Hagiopetrites, in 1309, but subscribed by Koukouzeles himself,²⁰ our *heirmos*, attributed to Ioannes Monachos, is located in the 'usual' position, but the set is dedicated to the Dormition of the Theotokos. Within the *heirmos* of the first ode (Ἀνοιξω τὸ στόμα μου), in fact, the words τὰ θαύματα (the miracles) present as a variant / correction written in distinctive ink τὴν κοίμησιν (the subject of the song).

19. ANTONIOU, *La tradition de "l'heirmologion"*.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

3. Μεθαρμόζειν / Ἐτερον ῥυθμὸν παρασχεῖν: some hypotheses

Now it remains to analyse the nature of Theophilos' transformation of the strophe. The sources use two technical terms: the verb μεθαρμόζω and the noun ῥυθμός. Despite the accuracy of the information provided, it is not easy to guess what lies behind this terminology. Frøyshov, cited in footnote 3 above, states (p. 362):

Theophilos composed music and text within Hagiopolitan genres; specifically, he *changed the music or rhythm (or both)* of the refrain Εὐλογεῖτε, «Bless» of ode 8 of the Annunciation kanon and «commanded that it should be sung to the hearing of all in the church of God».

Melodic and/or rhythmic change, therefore. Not of the whole troparion, but only of Εὐλογεῖτε. According to Frøyshov's statement, the whole refrain that closes the troparion was modified, but I do not think that the adaptation of the single word «Bless!» is to be excluded, since Εὐλογεῖτε is an autonomous *colon* in the most ancient manuscripts (L, O, Lav, C, P55, P54). The hypotheses that follow find an almost insuperable obstacle: the features of the ancient neumatic notations. The years in which Theophilos lived, in fact, correspond to the earliest beginnings of Byzantine notations. The first complete neumatized heirmologion (in adiaستمatic form) is later (L, 10th century), and our understanding of that notation (called Chartres 1) does not allow a transcription. Even if we ever identified the troparion in more ancient manuscripts bearing traces of one of the so-called quasi-notations (a possibility that is certainly not remote, thanks to the progress of the research),²¹ we would have the good fortune to identify only sporadic signs indicating the position of the main melismata, but we could not glimpse a clear rhythmical / melodic idea. Despite this serious difficulty, I believe that the importance of this witness lies precisely in the fact that it throws a small light on the dawn of Byzantine musical notation and on the possible forms of composition and adaptation in a 'creative' period.

– Μεθαρμόζω. The meaning offered by the main dictionaries (*Liddell-Scott, Lampe*) ranges from the generic «transform, make a change, adapt' to the more technical 'change the harmony, change the mode» (with reference to Iamb. *De vita Pythagorica* 25.113). It is therefore, plausibly, a modification in the melody (since the rhythmical component is mentioned immediately afterwards) or a transformation of the musical mode. The musical mode, first of all: the troparion is composed in the fourth authentic mode (the whole manuscript tradition, with or without neumes, is unanimous). The brevity of the strophe and the fact that it is 'considered' a canonarian *heirmos* both by the chronicles and by liturgical manuscripts (the word 'considered' will find an explanation further on) means that it is to be included in that tradition of syllabic singing which usually does not involve internal modal changes. These changes, in the

21. J. Raasted had the merit of identifying and describing these primitive notational forms for the first time: cf. RAASTED, *A Primitive Palaeobyzantine Musical Notation*; RAASTED, *Theta Notation*. Cf. the recent SGANDURRA, *La theta notation*.

Byzantine notations, are marked by the so-called medial signatures, or by the symbols of the *phthorai*, indicators of the ‘destruction’ of a musical mode and of the use of another. It is true that in the most ancient phases of the notation also the *heirmologion* contained medial signatures whose meaning is still problematic (do they signal cadences typical of another musical mode? Are they more likely indications of the pitch reached at a certain point?).²² This use disappeared completely when Byzantine notations became diastematic. The manuscripts that I have been able to check, however, have no trace of modal indications before Εὐλογεῖτε. There remains the warning that the neumatized manuscripts are later than Theophilos, and we do not know whether the transformations of the *basileus* have been preserved by the scribes, or not, or in part.

As for the melodic line, we can rely on Palaeobyzantine, adiastrumatic sources, compared with some later manuscripts, whose Middle-Byzantine notation allows us to identify the main melodic features.²³ See in the attached table (Figure 1) a transcription of the neumes of Εὐλογεῖτε. Here below is what we deduce:

- a. the melodic features appear in many cases uniform in the most ancient manuscripts. On the contrary, later sources follow very different paths. This is not surprising: the variability of melodic solutions in the *heirmologia* is well known, and we can group them into categories on the basis of these prevailing melodic choices, categories which are themselves not monolithic.²⁴ This variability, therefore, falls within the characteristics of the liturgical book of the *heirmologion* itself and should not be ascribed to the particular history of our specific *heirmos*.²⁵
- b. the most ancient manuscripts (but not some more recent ones) agree in indicating a melisma on Εὐλογεῖτε. We assume it from the use of the so-called ‘great signs’ (Μεγάλα σημάδια), whose function is that of alluding to a melismatic line or communicating rhythmic / agogic information. For

22. RAASTED, *Intonation Formulas*; MARTANI, *Modal References*.

23. In figure 1, there is the transcription from the following manuscripts in Palaeobyzantine notations: L, O, S, Si, P54, P55, Lav, C., and of the following in Middle-Byzantine notation: H (Athos, Μονὴ τῶν Ἰβήρων 470, last quarter of the 12th c., f. 81r), G (Grottaferrata, Biblioteca della Badia greca E γ II, a. 1281, f. 91 r-v), V (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. gr. 243, 14th c., f. 55r), Si1 (Sinai, Μονὴ τῆς Ἁγίας Αἰκατερίνης 1256, a. 1309, f. 95v), Si2 (Sinai, Μονὴ τῆς Ἁγίας Αἰκατερίνης 1257, a. 1322, f. 51v), Si3 (Sinai, Μονὴ τῆς Ἁγίας Αἰκατερίνης 1258, a. 1257, f. 56r-v).

24. Cf. ΠΑΡΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ, *Ομαδοποίηση των βυζαντινῶν ειρμολογικῶν πηγῶν*. A preliminary division into groups on the basis of melodic characteristics was proposed by Høeg and by von Busch. To group 1 belong L, P54, S, to group 2 (or Ga-Familie in von Busch’s terminology) belong O, Lav, P54, C, H, G, S (later revision). To group 3 belong V, Si1, Si2, showing the features of the ‘reform’ of the *heirmologion* promoted and realized by Ioannes Koukouzeles, and Si3, whose origin is possibly Syro-Melchite. Cf. HØEG, ed., *The Hymns of the Hirmologium*, I, pp. XXXV-XXXVII; VON BUSCH, *Untersuchungen zum byzantinischen Heirmologion*, pp. 99-112. The peculiar notation of ms. Si, with archaic features (but the kolophon mentions the date 1319?) deserves further studies.

25. Cf. STRUNK, *Melody Construction in Byzantine Chant*.

L	⤵		Synagma formula - Chartres notation
P55	⤵		Synagma formula - Coislin notation
S	⤵	-[...] ⤵ [...]	
O	⤵	-	} Synagma formula - Coislin notation
P54	⤵	-	
Lav	⤵	-	
C	⤵	-	
Si	⤵	-	
H	⤵	-	} Synagma formula - Middle-byzantine notation
G	⤵	-	
		c d f e fg fe fg f e d	
		εύ - λο - γεῖ - τε	
Si3	⤵	-	Some irregularities / errors? in the cadences
V	⤵	-	
		c f g f	
Si1	⤵	-	(? var.)
		c f g f	
Si2	⤵	-	Some irregularities / errors? in the cadences

Figure 1. Εὐλογεῖτε. Transcription of the neumatic line from a selection of handwritten heirmologia in Paleobyzantine and Middle-Byzantine notations

example, note the sign with a rather large module and a terminal curl offered by ms. L (the so-called *synagma formula*, written according to the Chartres notation); the same formula, closed by the neume *thema haploun*, is found in its Coislin form in the mss. O, P54, P55, Lav, C (adiastematic), but also almost identical in the ms. H. H belongs to a more developed notational phase (Middle-Byzantine, diastematic), but it includes also some ‘fossils’ of the preceding stages, as it is in this case. The formula appears ‘explained’ in its main pitches in the ms. G, which therefore allows us to transcribe the ‘skeleton’ of the melodic line. In S there is a *xeron klasma*.

– ῥυθμός. What does ῥυθμός mean in a *heirmos*? Here a short recall of the rhythmical and metrical features of canonarian hymnography:

- a. There are about ten neumes that have (exclusively or not) a rhythmic value: they allow an indefinite lengthening of a sign or a doubling of it, they provide for a faster or slower execution. Although the exact knowledge of the rhythmical properties of Byzantine chant in medieval times has not yet been reached, we can affirm that the rhythmical flow, however, follows directly, in ‘ancient’ canonarian hymnography, the textual syntax.²⁶
- b. From a metrical point of view, in liturgical compositions not written according to the classical quantitative metrics, the mechanisms of isosyllabism and homotony are well known. They gradually reached full sedimentation, but appeared consolidated already between the 8th and the 9th centuries. The strophe Ἄκουε Κόρη, therefore, as *heirmos* of the subsequent *troparia*, serves as a more or less precise metrical model (we will discuss this point below) for these.

Let us now verify if some Byzantine sources can elucidate this issue, showing perhaps a use, from a lexical point of view, of the root ῥυθμ- in connection with hymnography. The verb ῥυθμιζω, in the context of the composition of a canon, is found in a late source (an epistle by the emperor Theodoros II Doukas Laskaris), which has not received adequate attention so far: the emperor (1222-1258), to reciprocate the gift of an icon of the protosebastos, protoves-tiarios and great stratopedarch Georgios Mouzalon, composed – according with my interpretation – a Marian canon by intoning the *heirmos* (καλλίστῳ μέλει μελίσαντες) and by ordering the various odes (τάξαντες). Then, he sent his *heirmos* to Mouzalon and asked him to apply the new text to this model (ῥύθμισον... κατὰ τὸν ῥυθμὸν τοῦτον) so that it could be sung by the singers (*Ep.* 186, ed. Festa, rr. 7-11):

καλλίστῳ μέλει μελίσαντες ἢ καὶ τάξαντες ὡς οἰκτρότατοι δοῦλοι ταύτης,
ταύτη προσήξαμεν, καὶ σοι τοῦτο πεπόμφαμεν. Ῥύθμισον γοῦν τοῦτο κατὰ

26. In the Middle-Byzantine notation the signs with a rhythmical quality are: *diple* (doubling), *duo apostrophoi* (doubling), *kratema* (lengthening), *tzakisma* or *klasma* (lengthening), *gorgon* (quick performance), *argon* (slow performance), *stauros* (slight pause, or breath), *kratemokouphisma* (probably a prolongation), *apoderma* (used at the end of musical phrases, prolongation?). Cf. TROELSGÅRD, *A New Introduction*, p. 49 and 51.

τὸν ῥυθμὸν τοῦτον αὐτὸς σὺ τοῖς ψάλλουσι, καὶ εἶθ' οὕτως ὑμνεῖσθω δι' αὐτοῦ
παρ' ἡμῶν ἢ ὑπέραγνος τοῦ Θεοῦ μήτηρ [...]

In the case of Ἦκουε Κόρη, which 'rhythmization' could be done, since the *heirmos* itself, with its syllabic and syntactical structure, is the source of the rhythm for the subsequent strophes?

A rhythmic transformation could be realized with one (or more) of the following actions:

- a. Change of the rhythmical flow – prolongation of some syllables instead of others.
- b. Emphasis or reduction of certain melismata, according to the practice that J. Raasted described as a prolongation technique (or its opposite), to add – or subtract – «festivity».²⁷
- c. Modification of the text, because from the text both metrics and rhythm derive.

The first possibility is unfortunately not verifiable for Εὐλογεῖτε, due to the 'stenographic' aspect of Byzantine notations, that we read in later sources. The second possibility is extremely plausible, given the presence of great signs (*megala semadia*) on the word in question.

I investigated the third by verifying the possible persistence in the manuscripts of textual variants. Indeed, the conclusion of the troparion, with the refrain «Bless...» appears rather variable in the sources. L and O, neumated, which are the basis of the edition by Eustratiades, offer the refrain that I define as 'long' and which I have copied above: Εὐλογεῖτε πάντα τὰ ἔργα Κυρίου τὸν Κύριον καὶ ὑπερυψοῦτε αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Eustratiades, however, printed a shortened version, which does not derive from his sources: Εὐλογεῖτε πάντα τὰ ἔργα τὸν Κύριον καὶ ὑπερυψοῦτε εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας.²⁸ I do not think it necessary to detail the different textual variants of every neumated heirmologion examined. Suffice it to note that the refrain sometimes lacks the genitive Κυρίου, and the whole conclusion from καὶ ὑπερυψοῦτε may be missing. Even the αὐτόν object does not always occur (ms. Sin. gr. 1256 inserts it as interlinear *addendum*). To understand what the 'original' text was, we could check the canons that use Ἦκουε Κόρη as *heirmos* of the eighth ode. By verifying the metrical structure of the final part of the troparia which follow the metrical/musical pattern of Ἦκουε Κόρη, we would understand the metrical 'starting point'. However, this method does not give the desired results. The canons that choose our *heirmos* conclude their strophes of the eighth ode with the same refrain, and not with a different text shaped on the metrical model of Εὐλογεῖτε.²⁹ Therefore, there is the same variability. It is well known that, in

27. RAASTED, *Length and Festivity*, p. 77.

28. Cf. nt. 10, at number 141.

29. *MV* III, 43 and *MR* II, 70 (canon in honour of St. Lazarus, November 7, inc. Λαμπτῆς Θεαυγέστατε φωτοειδέστατε Λάζαρε), *MV* III, 130 and *MR* II, 211 (canon for the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple, November 21, inc. Ἀγίων εἰς Ἄγια, ἡ Παναγία καὶ ἄμωμος), *MV* III, 140 and *MR* II, 213 (canon for the Entry of the Theotokos, November 21,

such cases, the scribes did not copy the entire text, but used the abbreviation consisting only in the first letters of εὐλογεῖτε. The concluding sentences are therefore very fluctuating in the manuscripts, and it is not possible to identify a more correct or older variant.

4. Iconoclasm and music: warnings and digressions

So far, we have offered a textual and musicological analysis as if Theophilos were a ‘common’ Byzantine hymnographer. But it is not so. The fact that he was an emperor is not awkward. The role of hymn-writer (and that of composer) was indeed transversal to genders and titles in Byzantium. His iconoclastic politics, instead, may lead to some further considerations. Music and liturgy, in fact, are not elements detached from the socio-political context and certainly they constitute a valuable means of spreading ideological propaganda from both sides. A recent contribution by Sysse Gudrun Engberg elucidates this connection precisely with regard to the Second Iconoclasm. A high exponent of the clergy (or even the chief of the chanters, according to Skylitzes) persuaded Leo V, the predecessor of Theophilos, to remain in his iconoclastic belief by whispering in his ear to pay attention to a couple of verses from Isaiah cantillated during the liturgy (*Is* 40, 18-19: «With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? / As for an idol, a metalworker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it»). Engberg links this historical episode to a liturgical ‘anomaly’ that affects this pericope from Isaiah (L26a, for Tuesday of the fifth week of Lent): it appears in a longer or shorter form in the Lectionaries according to a specific political/religious choice (to put in evidence or to hide in the middle of a lengthier text the words of the Prophet that seem contrary to the icons).³⁰

Was, therefore, Theophilos’ musical modification due solely to artistic purposes, or were there ideological reasons? We must ask ourselves if a refrain

inc. Σοφίας πανάχραντε σὲ θησαυρὸν ἐπιστάμενοι), *A.H.G. Canones Decembris* 6, can. 10, for St. Nicholas, inc. Δοθήτω μοι ἄνωθεν ταῖς σαῖς πρεσβείαις, Νικόλαε.

30. ENGBERG, *The Emperor Leo V*. Engberg highlights the presence in the *Prophetologion* of a ‘long’ lesson (*Is* 40, 1-2; 9-31a) and a ‘short’ lesson (*Is* 40, 18-31a). The second, which begins precisely with the passage from Isaiah dear to the iconoclasts, according to Engberg’s conclusions, was subsequently enlarged to ‘hide’ the verses too tied to the iconoclastic propaganda into a longer text. Here is the passage taken from the chronicle of Skylitzes in which we read how Leo V was inspired by his *protopsaltes* (LeoV, 4, 3-5; 7-15 ed. Thurn): ὄργανον δ’ ἐπιτήδειον πρὸς τοῦτο ἔσχεν ἄνδρα τινὰ διαβόητον ἐπὶ πανουργίᾳ, τοῦ τάγματος τῶν ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ ψαλλόντων τὴν προστασίαν ἔχοντα [...]. οὗτος ὁ βέβηλος καιρὸν ἐπιτήδειον εὐρηκῶς, καθ’ ὃν εἰς ἐπήκοον ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ εἴωθεν ἢ τοῦ μεγαλοφωνοτάτου Ἡσαΐου ἀναγινώσκεισθαι προφητεία ἢ λέγουσα ‘τίνι ὠμοιώσατε κύριον; καὶ τίνι ὠμοιώσατε αὐτόν; μὴ εἰκόνα ἐποίησε τέκτων, ἢ χρυσοχόος χρυσίον χωνεύσας περιεχύρωσεν αὐτήν, ἢ ὁμοίωμα κατεσκεύασεν αὐτῷ;’ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῆς προφητείας, παραστὰς πρὸς οὓς λέγει τῷ βασιλεῖ ‘σύνες τοῖς λεγομένοις, ὦ βασιλεῦ, καὶ μὴ λάθῃ σε τὸ ἀληθές, καὶ τοιαύτης ἔχου λατρείας, ὅποιαν σοὶ ὑποτίθησιν ὁ προφήτης.’ τοιαῦτα εἰπὼν ἐνέσταξε τῇ διανοίᾳ αὐτοῦ πλείονα ἰὸν τῆς αἰρέσεως.

apparently ‘innocent’ for us – so much dependent on the Bible – within a text dedicated to the Annunciation could somehow echo the ongoing conflict if perceived by a Byzantine ear. The following example underlines the connection between hymnography and imperial power in the iconoclastic period when the role of the Mother of God was the subject of burning debate.³¹ Constantine V Kopronymos (718-775), in order to deny the role of intercession played by the saints and by the Theotokos, acted in this way, according to the certainly not conciliatory words of his adversary Nikephoros I patriarch:³²

Ἐπειτα παραχαράσσει καὶ παραποιεῖται ὅσα ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτῆς ἐπεκέκλητο καὶ ἐν λιταῖς πρὸς τὸν τεχθέντα ἐξ αὐτῆς καὶ δεήσεων ἐν ἄσμασιν αἰεὶ ἀνεφώνουν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κοινοῦ παντὸς σωτηρίας οἱ δεόμενοι.

[He also re-coins and falsifies everything that invoked her (Mary’s) name and that the faithful always echoed for the common salvation in the supplications addressed to her Son and in the sung prayers].

An overall investigation of the connection between hymnography and Iconoclasm remains to be written, especially in its socio-political connections.³³ This brief mention will suffice for now. But another issue arises: after the triumph of Orthodoxy in 843, with the restoration of the worship of icons, how much of this ‘heretical’ hymnography survived, alongside the boundless number of hymns written by the saints lined up in defence of the icons? Theophilos himself can provide an example. As the Byzantine chroniclers also know,³⁴ he composed a *sticheron* for Palm Sunday, inc. Ἐξέλθετε ἔθνη, ἐξέλθετε καὶ λαοί. This short hymn had great fortune, especially because it was included in the ceremonial of the emperor’s entrance (at least from ps.-Codinus, *De officiis*, p. 225 rr. 6-11). It was provided with an elaborate musical setting in the style of kalophony by Manouel Chrysaphes without losing the information about its original authorship (cf. ms. Athos, Μονὴ τῶν Ἰβήρων 975, f. 369v: Τὰ μὲν γράμματα Θεοφίλου βασιλέως). However, it is missing from the so-called *Anastasis Typikon* (Jerusalem, Πατριαρχικὴ βιβλιοθήκη, Τιμίου Σταυροῦ gr. 43 + Sankt Petersburg, RNL gr. 359). According to S. Antonopoulos, this absence would derive from the hostile attitude of the redactors of the *Typikon*

31. Cf. at least TSIRONIS, *The Mother of God*; BARBER, *Theotokos and Logos*; KOUTRAKOU, *Use and Abuse of the ‘Image’ of the Theotokos*.
32. NICEPHORUS PATRIARCHA, *Antirrhethici tres adversus Constantinum Copronymum*, ed. Mai, II, col. 341, rr. 39-43. KRAUSMÜLLER, *The Problem of the Holy*, p. 471.
33. The issue of the relationship between political power and sacred music during the Iconoclasm has not been addressed so far, since the scarcity of sources. Prophane music, in its connection with the imperial role, was surely developed during the reign of Theophilos. Well-known, for example, are the two gilded organs decorated with stones and glasses and the golden tree with singing bords (automaton) commissioned by him. See MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 160-161; BRUBAKER – HALDON, eds., *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, p. 115.
34. Cf. THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, *Chronographia*, ed. Bekker, p. 107 r. 4; GEORGIUS CEDRENIUS, *Compendium historiarum*, ed. Bekker, II, p. 118 r. 3; IOANNES ZONARAS, *Epitome historiarum*, ed. Büttner-Wobst, p. 367 r. 2.

towards the iconoclast Theophilos:

It is a little more unusual for it not to have made its way in to the Anastasis Typikon, given how much later Byzantine material the latter includes. Perhaps this is an indication of its redactors holding a grudge against its author, Emperor Theophilos, for his iconoclast tendencies.³⁵

The inclusion of Iconoclasm-related compositions within the repertoire that subsequently became standardized was therefore not easy, even if traces of it are still investigable.

To conclude this paragraph, a short digression on the theme ‘musical notation and Iconoclasm’. There is a chronological concomitance between the triumph of Orthodoxy and the explosion of musical notations (so-called Chartres and Coislin) in Byzantium, alongside the spread of more uniform chant-books.³⁶ This coincidence does not exclude, as we have seen above, sporadic forms of proto-notation, single evidence of ‘experimental’ notations in limited areas of the Byzantine ecumene, a very probable germinal phase that gave gradually life to the aforementioned notations. ‘Coincidence’ does not mean causal dependence. However, the notational vacuum (now populated by the scholars with new fragments³⁷) from the end of the Late Antiquity to the end of the 9th-10th century did not seem acceptable to some Byzantine and recent authors. Let’s start with a well-known theory by K. Psachos. He, in his *Ἡ παρασημαντικὴ τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Μουσικῆς* (first edition 1917), claims that there were manuscripts with musical signs already in the eighth century, based on an alleged testimony by Manouel Chrysaphes. He, well-known *melurgos* and music theorist of the fifteenth century, according to Psachos, wrote in his *Σμικρὰ Πραγματεία* that an impious emperor burned the ecclesiastical books containing the musical signs during the iconoclastic controversy.³⁸ I. Papathanasiou and N. Boukas, engaged in the research of early Byzantine notations, reminded the reader in 2002 that a treatise with that title ascribed to Chrysaphes is not known to us.³⁹ About twenty years after the paper by the two authors, Chrysaphes’ *Σμικρὰ Πραγματεία* has not yet been brought to light, if it ever existed. However, I do not believe that Psachos could have invented a non-existent source. A quick – and hitherto limited to a few manuscripts – reading of late and post-Byzantine theoretical treatises allowed me to identify the formulation that in my opinion is the closest to what Psachos wrote. Similar redactions are also widespread in Byzantine theory.⁴⁰ For now,

35. ANTONOPOULOS, *The Life and Works of Manuel Chrysaphes*, p. 97, nt. 161.

36. Cf. TAFT, *The Byzantine Rite*, pp. 52-66; TROELSGÅRD, *Byzantine Neumes*, p. 21.

37. PΑΡΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ – ΒΟΥΚΑΣ, *Byzantine Notation in the 8th-10th Centuries*. An in-depth recent synthesis is in ALEXANDROU, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινῆς Μουσικῆς*, chapter 5, pp. 227-255.

38. PSACHOS, *Ἡ Παρασημαντικὴ τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Μουσικῆς*, p. 36.

39. PΑΡΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ – ΒΟΥΚΑΣ, *Byzantine Notation in the 8th-10th Centuries*, p. 7.

40. E.g., cf. PS.-IOANNES DAMASCENUS *Quaestiones et Responsiones.*, eds. Hannick – Wolfram, Ἐτέρα ἔρμηνεῖα ὁμοία ταύτης, rr. 377-381: «Πῶς δέ; διότι καὶ τὸ τῆς παλαδικῆς βιβλίον οὐ σώζεται, ὅτι ἐκάη ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς βασιλέως πρὸ τοῦ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ

I summarize the source in question which, as we shall see, explicitly speaks of fires of neumatized books.

This short, unpublished treatise, entitled *Μέθοδος ἠκρι[βω]μένη τῶν ἀγίων πατέρων κυρ Κοσμά και Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ και Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσσοστόμου*, is a questions & answers didactic compendium, with pseudographical attribution to the founding fathers of the liturgy and of Byzantine music, with incipit Πόσα φωνήεντα σημάδια; Δεκατέσσαρα.

I have read it in four Greek manuscripts, all dating from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, but I do not exclude its much wider circulation. The sources are:

- ♦ Athens, Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη της Ελλάδος 968, ff. 92v-103v, Cretan manuscript, 17th c.⁴¹
- ♦ Athens, Τμήμα Μουσικῶν Σπουδῶν του Εθνικοῦ και Καποδιστριακοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνῶν, Συλλογή μουσικῶν χειρογράφων Κ. Ψάχου 16/170, 17th-18th c., ff. 33r-42v.⁴²
- ♦ Athens, Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη της Ελλάδος 965, 18th c., ff. 52v-55r (only a section).
- ♦ Sinai, Μονή τῆς Ἁγίας Αἰκατερίνης gr. 1764, 17th c., ff. 54r-58r.⁴³

At the end of the treatise, there is a paragraph with incipit Ἰστέον ὅτι τέσσαρες εἰσὶν οἱ κύριοι ἦχοι. Here, the compilers trace a sort of history of music, very imaginative, but interesting to understand the point of view of post-Byzantine masters, who also intended to connect their musical tradition with the ancient one, that of the geographer and musician <Claudius> Ptolemy. Here is a summary of the content: in an unspecified past time, in addition to the four authentic modes, the four plagals were also born, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These modes, however, were «badly arranged and confused», so king Ptolemy (Πτολεμαῖος ὁ βασιλεύς) decided to put order, both in the Scriptures, that he instructed to translate (an allusion to the *Septuaginta* translation, promoted by Philadelphus, a Ptolemy here incorrectly identified with Claudius Ptolemaeus⁴⁴), and in music (EBE 968, ff. 101v-102r): «καὶ συνάξαντες πάντα τὰ μέλη τῶν ἡχῶν, ἐποίησαν ἐξ αὐτῶν βιβλίον τὸ καλούμενον μουσικόν, πάνυ τερπνὸν καὶ γλυκύτατον τῶν σειρηναίων» (*And*

βασιλέως, καὶ ἡ μουσικὴ καὶ ἄλλα πάμπολλα τὰ κρείττονα βιβλία· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὑστερήθησαν ἅπαντες τὸ τῆς παπαδικῆς βιβλίον, τὴν μουσικὴν λέγω».

41. Cf. GIANNOROPOULOS, *Ἡ ἄνθηση*, pp. 485-486; SCHARTAU, *Anonymous Questions and Answers*, pp. 34-36; ALEXANDRU – TROELSGÅRD, *Ἡ σημασία τῆς Παπαδικῆς λεγόμενης προθεωρίας*, pp. 559-572.

42. <https://pergamos.lib.uoa.gr/uoa/dl/object/124876> [last access 17/01/2023].

43. ALEXANDROU, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινῆς Μουσικῆς*, p. 523. BROWNING – CONSTANTINIDES, *Dated Greek Manuscripts from Cyprus*, p. 321.

44. <Claudius> Ptolemy as reformer and inventor of some Byzantine musical signs is mentioned also in GABRIEL HIEROMONACHOS (5, rr. 188-189, eds. Hannick – Wolfram: Φασὶ γὰρ τινες ὡς τοῦ Πτολεμαίου εἰσὶ ταῦτα) and in the PS.-IOANNES DAMASCENUS (II, 47-49, eds. Hannick – Wolfram: Διὸ καὶ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ μουσικός, ὡς μανθάνομεν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων, ἐφεῦρε τοὺς τόνους τούτους, ἐσύστερον ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ δίκαιον τῇ χειρονομίᾳ). Cf. TROELSGÅRD, *Byzantine Neumes*, p. 23.

collecting all the melodies/songs of the modes, they created with them a book called 'musical', very pleasant and sweeter than the songs of the sirens). This ancient *papadike*, as it is defined immediately after, aroused the envy of the Devil, and so: «τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον τὸ χρησιμώτατον καὶ ἄλλα πάμπολλα καὶ κάλλιστα τοῦτο παρόμοια ὑπὸ τῶν ἀθέων βαρβάρων ἐνεπρήσθησαν» (*this very useful book and many others and beautiful similar to this one were burned by ungodly barbarians*). Following this destruction, mankind lost the skill to sing hymns appropriate to God, and thus deviated towards the 'profane' music of *auloi* and lyres, attracted by worldly seductions, always because of the Devil. Thus, at last, God took pity on his people and raised up Cosmas and John of Damascus as new lights for the music, as well as John Chrysostom. They succeeded in restoring music to its primeval religious inspiration and taught mankind hymns and all the liturgy. There is no explicit mention of Iconoclasm here, and the general chronology is very chaotic (see the alleged contemporaneity of the two hymnographers and John Chrysostom). The crisis of the notation is placed at an intermediate point between Hellenism and the Byzantine revival, and many 'godless barbarians' marked the history of Byzantium. Psachos, if he read this source, probably considered the Iconoclasm as the moment of 'barbarism' chronologically closest to the hymnographic and musical renaissance of John of Damascus and Cosmas of Maiuma.

5. Is Ἄκουε Κόρη really an eighth ode?

At the end of this paper, I still perceive a certain dissonance in the episode narrated in the chronicles. Why did the musical transformation involve only a specific, internal part of the canon? Our sources do not explain it. They explicitly affirm that the strophe belongs to the eighth ode. It is assigned to the eighth ode even in the oldest preserved musical manuscripts (from the 10th century onwards). The *Menaia* do not appear discordant. However, some elements lead us to believe that – if the history of the ode is clear – its prehistory needs to be thoroughly investigated. The text with incipit Ἄκουε Κόρη, in fact, does not perfectly fit within the canon of the Annunciation:⁴⁵ the eighth ode (as well as the ninth, which for the moment I am not dealing with, for reasons of space) has an autonomous, alphabetic acrostic. The preceding part of the canon Ἀνοιξω τὸ στόμα μου (odes I-VII) has an alphabetic acrostic as well, which ends at the last *troparion* of the seventh ode (a distinctive trait that had already aroused the interest of Christ and Paranikas, as mentioned

45. Cf. HARRIS, *The 'Kanon' and the Heirmologion*, p. 180: «And since these two heirmoi [VIII e IX ode] clearly belong together and are destined for 25 March and not 15 August, they were probably already a fragment in the ninth century, which Theophanes completed. It seems, therefore, that Christ and Paranikas [...] may well have got things the wrong way round in thinking that Theophanes was completed by a later poet called John Monachus. [...] There are indeed several reasons for thinking that the last two odes of the kanon for 25 March are earlier than the odes by Theophanes».

above). The authorship of the canon is also doubtful. Moreover, if we examine, albeit briefly, the style of the hymn in its entirety, we notice a discrepancy between the first part and the final one. The poetic device used in the canon is evident: it is structured in the form of a dialogue between the Virgin and the archangel Gabriel, as the manuscripts indicate in the margins of the troparia (Ὁ ἄγγελος, Ἡ Θεοτόκος). Even this uniformity, however, is only apparent: in the eighth ode, the direct speeches are always introduced by *verba dicendi* (e.g. v. 105: Ἀντέφησεν ἡ Παρθένος, v. 113: Φησὶ πρὸς ταῦτα ὁ Γαβριήλ, v. 129: Ὁ ἄγγελος πάλιν βοᾷ), while this feature never occurs in the previous odes. Furthermore, the octave ode entirely covers the narrative of the Annunciation written in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 1, 26-38), from the greeting of the angel (first troparion) to the «Yes» of Mary (the last one). In the rest of the canon, on the same 'theme', there are many 'variations', with a prevalence of questions from the Virgin and eulogies from Gabriel. In summary, therefore, the peculiarities of the ode are as follows:

1. its first troparion is the *heirmos* for the following ones;
2. it is made up of six troparia with complete alphabetic acrostics (each στίχος is introduced by a different letter: 4 στίχοι per troparion, in turn divided into shorter *cola*);
3. it has a self-contained narrative structure;
4. it closes each troparion with an extra acrostic refrain.

I add that, from a metrical point of view, unlike the odes that precede them, the homotony of the five troparia following Ἄκουε Κόρη shows several irregularities: for example, to the stress pattern of the *stichos* Ἄκουε Κόρη Παρθένε ἀγνή (!...!...) it should 'correspond' at the beginning of the last troparion Φαίνη μοι ἀληθείας ῥήτωρ (!...!). Moreover, the *stichos* of the first troparion Γενοῦ πρὸς ὑποδοχὴν ἑτοιμῆ Θεοῦ (!...!...) should be the metrical model of Ἦσθην σου τοῖς λόγοις, ἀλλὰ δέδοικα (!...!...) in the second troparion, but the differences are manifest.⁴⁶

All the features listed so far appear, as mentioned above, dissonant in the context of the canon; on the contrary, they coincide with those of an older typology that Francesco D'Aiuto has recently identified and investigated: that of the alphabetic hymn of the 'Schøyen type'.⁴⁷ Among the sources listed by D'Aiuto, almost all derived from papyrus findings, some of them appear closer

46. It is true that the metrical pattern, in its succession of stressed and unstressed syllables, does not offer complete information. The troparia were, as is well known, sung to the melody of their *heirmos*. In this case, however, if we try to adapt the metrically aberrant verses to the melodies transmitted by the sources H and G (the first diastematic ones), we are faced with serious difficulties.
47. D'AIUTO, *Un antico inno per la Resurrezione*. The name chosen by D'Aiuto to designate these hymns derives from the Greek fragment Oslo/London, The Schøyen Collection, MS. 1776/8 (=h), mid-9th c., in which there is a hymn on the Resurrection beginning with: Ἀρώματα σὺν δάκρυσιν αἱ γυναῖκες προσενέγκασα. Cf. also D'AIUTO, *Sopravvivenza e riutilizzo dell'«Inno alfabetico Schøyen»*, in which a large amount of data is given about the reuse of single sections of the hymn in Greek and Georgian sources.

to our 'eighth ode', while others are more dissimilar, since they are probably residual evidence of an evolution of the genre yet to be written. Suffice it for the moment to provide the following elements of comparison (I have selected, from the collection presented by D'Aiuto, the narrative hymns, with stichic alphabetical acrostic organized in a strophic structure, closed by a refrain). The proposed date of the papyrus fragments gives us a useful *terminus ante quem* to define the chronology of the genre:

- ◆ P. Vind. G. 19934 (6th c.) – D'Aiuto fragment n. XII (pp. 58-59): hymn to Christ with fragmentary beginning: inc. (...) [κατὰ] τὸν νόμον Μωυ[σ]εῶς / Ὁ [ἐκ] γυναι[κ]ῶν ὑπ'άρχων . Refrain: Ὅτε ἦλθεν.
- ◆ P. Mich. XIX 799 (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, inv. n. 4936, 7th c.), D'Aiuto fragment n. XIII (pp. 59-60): hymn on the life of Christ from the birth to the Resurrection: inc. Ἀστὴρ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ / Βασιλέα σημαίνει. Refrain: Trisagion hymn, distributed among the troparia (Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός. Ἅγιος ἰσχυρός. Ἅγιος ἀθάνατος. Ἐλεήσον ἡμᾶς).
- ◆ P. Heid. gr. IV 294 (Heidelberg, Institut für Papyrologie, P. G 1058: 5th-6th centuries), D'Aiuto fragment XIV, pp. 60-61: Marian hymn, with now incomplete beginning (starting from letter N), inc. Νυμφοτόκε παρθένε / ξενίζει πάντα ὁ τόκος σου, / ὅτι τὸν κτίστην τοῦ κόσμου. Refrain: Σὲ μεγαλύνομεν. The hymn consisted of six strophes of four lines each, closed with an extra acrostic refrain.
- ◆ P. Rylands 1.7 (Manchester, John Rylands Library, Gr. P. 7: 6th c.), D'Aiuto fragment XV, p. 61: starting now from letter *delta*: Δοξάζοντες αὐτὸν εἴπωμεν. Κύριε, δόξα σοι. Christmas hymn originally made up of six strophes of four lines each.
- ◆ Wooden table P. Köln IV 173 (7th c.) e Par. copt. 12920 (ff. 117-119, apograph, 7th-9th centuries?), D'Aiuto fragment XVI, pp. 62-63, inc. Ἄισμα καινὸν ἄσωμεν, λαοί / τῷ σαρκωθέντι / ἐκ παρθένου τοῦ σῶσαι ἡμᾶς. Refrain: Ὁ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις οἰκῶν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Hymn for the Resurrection of six stanzas, each of them including four letters of the acrostics (corresponding to a 'long' verse articulated in several *cola*, as in our 'eighth ode'). The editor Cornelia Römer proposes to date the hymn to the fifth century.⁴⁸
- ◆ Idiomelon for Palm Sunday, ed. J. B. Pitra⁴⁹ (cf. ms. Vat. gr. 771, f. 140r), D'Aiuto fragment XVII, pp. 64-65, inc. Ἄισμα καινὸν ἄδωμεν, λαοί, / τῷ ἐπὶ πόλου καθεζομένῳ Χειρουβείμ. / Βάια μετὰ τῶν παίδων. Refrain: εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, it came down to us through Medieval manuscript tradition as Ἄλλα, κατ'ἀλφάβητον, in the 4th authentic mode. Its archaic characteristics had already been underlined by Pitra.

The last two examples also present clear stylistic assonances with compositions of the *Heirmologion*, especially with Ἄισμα καινὸν ἄσωμεν λαοί, τῷ καταβάντι ἐπὶ γῆς τοῦ σῶσαι ἡμᾶς, as Cornelia Römer has already pointed

48. KRAMER – RÖMER – HAGEDORN (et al.) eds., *Kölner Papyri IV*, pp. 57-90.

49. PITRA, *Analecta sacra*, I, pp. 476-477. The text had been already printed in the liturgical book of the *Triodion* (VITALI, ed., *Τριώδιον*, pp. υνζ'/υνη').

out in her aforementioned edition. This *heirmos* was published twice by Eustratiades as an eighth ode of two *heirmoi* ascribed to Ioannes Monachos and Stephanos Sabaites (EE 138 and 163, both in the fourth authentic mode). In this ‘ode’, like in ours, we can guess an alphabetical acrostic structure (A / B / Γ / Δ) and a refrain Ὁ ἐν ὑψίστοις οἰκῶν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

What has been said so far, therefore, allows us to reach the following partial conclusions.⁵⁰

1. On the basis of the comparison with direct testimonies (mainly papyrus fragments), but also in some cases with texts arrived to us thanks to the Medieval manuscript tradition, we can affirm that our eighth ode integrally presents the structural characteristics of some alphabetic hymns of the ‘Schøyen’ type with strophic structure and refrain, datable from the 5th century onwards.
 2. Our eighth ode, therefore, should be considered an ancient autonomous alphabetic hymn, originally consisting of 24 *stichoi* divided into shorter *cola*, refrained, and with a metric scheme that follows the laws of isosyllabism and above all of homotony in a non-perfect way.
 3. Hitherto, direct sources of this short hymn for the Annunciation that can show or explain its supposed original phase have not come down to us. For that reason, we can only attempt to formulate some hypotheses: at a certain point, probably in the ninth century, it was ‘domesticated’, perhaps by Theophanes, since this authorial attribution is found in a large part of the manuscript tradition, and it was used as an eighth ode of a canon that seeks to recover and mimic the structure of the ancient hymn (dialogical, alphabetic acrostics), without however completely obliterating the stylistic differences. We do not know, unfortunately, if this supposed normalization of the hymn affected the musical features as well, as seems likely. In the context of the *heirmologia* that we have at our disposal, in fact, the strophe does not show rhythmic/melodic/modal peculiarities that we could classify as ‘archaic’.⁵¹
 4. Let us go back to the Byzantine chronicles used as starting point of this paper. Even if they describe Ἦκουε κόρη as an eighth ode, it is likely that Theophilos knew an earlier stage in the history of our hymn; it is in fact more plausible that the emperor modified part of an autonomous hymn rather than a small, intermediate portion of a canon (why, in short, would he have changed the music and the rhythm of an eighth ode, and not of the first, or the ninth one?). It does not seem convincing that Theophilos is
50. The possible presence of more testimonies of ancient alphabetic hymns included into the *heirmologion* or into other Byzantine liturgical texts remains to be investigated. A brief search in EUSTRATIADES, *Εἰρμολόγιον* allowed me to identify two alphabetic εἰρμοὶ ἄλλοι: EE 316, plagal of the 4th mode, VIII ode, inc. Ἀπαγορεύσαντες χρυσολατρείαν οἱ παῖδες (with traces of alphabetic acrostics and a refrain); EE 356, plagal of the 4th mode, IX ode, inc. Ἄνανδρος ὑπάρχουσα / πῶς γαλουχεῖς, Θεοτόκε. / Βρέφος ἐν ἀγκάλαις σου / ὀρώμενον φερομένη.
51. Ἦκουε Κόρη shares with the other troparia copied in the same *heirmologia* (I checked H and G) similar cadences, starting pitch, neumes with a rhythmic value.

the author of the hymn *tout court* as suggested by Dositheos: the ‘Schøyen’-type hymns listed above are far more ancient than the emperor, and their original *milieu* seems to be the Syro-Palestinian one.⁵² It cannot be excluded, however, that the domestication of the alphabetic hymn and its inclusion within the more complex structure of the canon was partly due to its circulation still in the ninth century and partly also to Theophilos’ ‘passion’ for it. At least in the case of the ‘iconoclast’ pericope from Isaiah, discussed by Engberg, we have seen that the liturgical texts covered by the shadow of Iconoclasm have not been removed and replaced, but in some way kept and almost hidden in longer texts. Perhaps, this ‘method’ also applies to our hymn, which was normalized in the very same years in which the ‘heretic’ emperor wanted it to be sung, with a modified melody and rhythm, in the Church of God.

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52. Δ’ΑΙΥΤΟ, *Sopravvivenza e riuso dell’«Inno alfabetico Schøyen»*, pp. 38-39. The authorial adscriptions to Cosmas, Ioannes Monachos, and Theophanes go in this direction. Please note that in Sin. gr. 607 (mentioned above, nt. 11) Cosmas is considered the author *only* of the last two odes, even if they are labelled 8th and 9th.

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SILVIA TESSARI

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NOTA BIOGRAFICA Silvia Tessari è ricercatrice a tempo determinato del Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali (Università di Padova), Silvia Tessari è docente di Storia della Musica Antica e di Fonti per la Storia della Musica. Le sue linee di ricerca includono la paleografia musicale bizantina, la teoria musicale greca, i manoscritti neumati bizantini nelle biblioteche italiane.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE Silvia Tessari is fixed-term research assistant at the Department of Cultural Heritage (Padova University), Silvia Tessari is currently teaching Ancient Music and Sources for the History of Music. Her research fields include Byzantine musical paleography, Greek musical theory, Byzantine musical manuscripts in Italian libraries.