

The 'master of the masters' through the mirror of music theory - St John Koukouzeles and the protheory of the Papadike

Maria Alexandrou*

malexand@mus.auth.gr

Among the thematic cycles of Byzantine Musicology which developed impressively since 1980, the history of the theory of the Art of Chanting (Psaltike) holds an important place. The research about the old theoretical treatises is a meeting point for different sciences like Greek paleography, paleography of Byzantine music, Musicology, Byzantine Philology and Theology. This paper investigates the personality of the coryphée exponent of Byzantine chant during the last centuries of the Byzantine Empire, namely St John Koukouzeles. Taking the protheory found in the first dated Akolouthiai-manuscript as a point of departure (Athens, NL 2458, A.D. 1336), and going on with other Byzantine and post-Byzantine sources, this paper aims at compiling an open catalogue of the koukouzelean music-theoretical corpus (Great Ison, Wheels, Tree and exercises of parallage, Θεοτόκε παρθένε, method of kalophonia a.o.), and to understand the multiple contribution of St John Koukouzeles a) to the systematization and didactics of the eight mode system, of the art of cheironomy, as well as b) to the development of music theoretical thinking in general. In the different pieces presented, we are also dealing with issues concerning the history of transmission and the historical performance practice of the music theoretical œuvre of the great melurg (composer) of the Palaeologan Renaissance, as well as with more general editorial strategies for music theoretical texts, diagrams and methods (philological and musicological approaches).

-
- *Maria Alexandrou was born in 1969 in Bucharest. She began her studies in Music Pedagogy at the State Conservatory "Ciprian Porumbescu" in her native town, and continued Musicology, Latin and Byzantine Studies at Bonn University, as well as Byzantine Studies at Copenhagen University, with prof. J. Raasted and Chr. Troelsgård. Her PhD thesis at Copenhagen University (in 2001) concerns the Palaeography of Byzantine Music. During her studies she got scholarships from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, and her postdoctoral research in Greece was supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Since 2002 she is teaching Byzantine Music at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (assistant professor). She took part in more than 40 congresses and gave conferences and masterclasses in many European countries. Her scientific work comprises 3 books and around 40 articles, mainly in the fields of Palaeography, Analysis, Historiography and Didactics of Byzantine Music. In 2006 she founded the Group for Byzantine Musical Palaeography from the School of Music Studies of the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki which aims to involve young people in thoroughly study of Byzantine Musical Palaeography. She has been awarded different distinctions for her scientific and didactic work.*