

МУЗЫКАЛЬНАЯ ПИСЬМЕННОСТЬ ХРИСТИАНСКОГО МИРА:

Книги. Нотация. Проблемы интерпретации



МОСКОВСКАЯ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ КОНСЕРВАТОРИЯ ИМЕНИ П. И. ЧАЙКОВСКОГО

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ИМЕНИ ПРОТОИЕРЕЯ ДИМИТРИЯ РАЗУМОВСКОГО

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THE MUSICAL WORK OF PETROS VYZANTIOS, PROTOPSALTĒS OF THE GREAT CHURCH OF CHRIST

Petros the Vyzantios was a great music teacher, composer, scribe, and transcriber from the old musical notation. Unfortunately, although Vyzantios stands as a unique and crucial figure in the evolution of Byzantine music, we do not have an extended study on his life and musical work, which would lead us to a satisfactory view of his general place in the history and development of this art and science. One hundred and ten years ago Constantinos Psachos wrote a brief article about him, based on Vyzantios' manuscripts preserved in his private collection, while in the decade of '70s Manolēs Chatzigiakoumēs gave us some more information on the compositions and the musical manuscripts written by his hand. Another article written by Professor Grēgorios Stathēs in the beginning of '70s deals with the confusion someone has when he comes across the names of Petros Bereketēs, Petros Lampadarios the Peloponnesian and Petros the Vyzantios in the musical manuscripts, and gives some special information for each of the three musicians. The present paper is based on a monograph I am preparing concerning this excellent musician.

Vyzantios was born in the village Neochorion, a suburb of Constantinople, probably between 1735–1745. His first name was Petros and of course the designation "Vyzantios" comes from the ancient Greek colony of "Vyzantion" which lied in the geographical place in which later Constantinople had been founded by Constantine the Great. Petros the Vyzantios served as a Domestikos (1771–1789), Lampadarios (1789–1800) and Protopsaltēs (1800–1805) at the church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. We don't know exactly when he first came to this church and who or what was the reason for this, but we have to assume that he certainly had a talent on music by nature and he also had a gifted voice. According to his student Chrysanthos from Madyta, in 1805 he was forced to leave his position as Protopsaltēs, to go to Herson-Russia and then to Iasi-Wallachia where he died in 1808. He obviously moved to the aforementioned places because some of his students were living there, and we have to say that there is some evidence, which confirms this statement.

His main teacher was the famous musician Petros Lampadarios the Peloponnesian. According to all evidences, Vyzantios was very close to this outstanding chanter and genius music teacher, he has been completely taught from him his analytical way to write and transcribe the old melodies in order to be easy for the students to study them and chant them. Vyzantios also has been taught from his teacher the way to compose in the new brief style that became very popular from this period and on, till today. Finally, just like his teacher, Vyzantios had a good knowledge of the secular music and he also was a traditional instrument player.

Although Petros Lampadarios was Vyzantios' main teacher, it seems that the other famous musicians and chanters of the Patriarchate church in this era, especially Ioannēs from Trebizond, Daniēl from Tyrnavos and Iakovos from the Peloponnese, also had a great influence on his musical personality and education. That's why in many of his manuscripts Vyzantios mentions them as "my teachers", and although he copied primarily the books and compositions of Petros Lampadarios, he also copied a very popular musical book of Iakovos (the famous slow-composed *Stichērarion*) and many compositions of the others. Regardless of personal preferences and liking, the common subject which was the ecclesiastical music and the jointly service at the same church, led all these people to respect to each other as very skilful musicians. As a chanter, Vyzantios cooperated closely with his main teacher, with Daniēl and with Iakovos, too. That's why the anonymous scribe who wrote the musical manuscript Mount Athos-Great Lavra Θ 178 in 1815, painted Petros the Vyzantios in the same page together with Ioannēs from Trebizond, Daniēl and Iakovos, while Petros Lampadarios is painted in another page (see *Picture 1*).

On the other hand, Vyzantios was the teacher of some of the most remarkable musicians and music teachers in the beginning of the 19th century, such as Grēgorios who finally became a protopsaltēs († 1821), Chrysanthos from Madyta († 1843) who was primarily a theory teacher, Georgios from the island of Crete († 1816), Apostolos Conostas († 1840?), Akakios and Ioannikios the monks and many others¹ in the 3rd Patriarchal Music School which had been founded in 1791. The very important event was that he taught his student both the analytical notation of his teacher Petros from Peloponnesos, and also a more analytical one that had created to write down or to compose the entire brief melodies of the *Hirmologion*. In these melodies almost all the syl-

lables of the hymns last just one beat, so these compositions result in brief melodies.

Vyzantios' contribution in this field is crucial because he became a perfect connoisseur (a man with a deep knowledge) of his teacher system, and his students Grēgorios and Chrysanthos together with Chourmouzios, later *Chartophylax (the Archivist)* of the Great Church (the *Three Teachers*), proceeded to the final reform of the Byzantine notation in 1814, and they established the wise and expressive notation we use the last 200 years. Vyzantios was the valuable link of the chain between Petros the Peloponnesian and the Three Teachers. Without his activity and deep knowledge of the new music trends in his period, it is clear that the procedure to the today in the use of musical notation (the well-known "New Method") wouldn't be the same.

Vyzantios was also a skilful scribe who copied several manuscripts, which contain the musical works of his teachers, especially of Petros Lampadarios. In my opinion this is one of the main reasons why Petros Lampadarios' work had a wide and quick spreading among the musicians in those years. This is another aspect of Vyzantios contribution, and we have also to add that he composed some melodies in order to complete the books of his teacher, in other words he set into music some hymns that Petros Lampadarios left uncomposed (= without composing them).

However, into the several manuscripts he wrote, he also added his personal compositions together with his transcriptions of many old and classical melodies in the analytical notation. Vyzantios composed melodies to be chanted in the Vespers (like the "Lord I call upon thee, hear me O Lord..." together with all the following verses of Psalms 140, 141, 129 and 116 in all the eight modes), the Matins (like the fabulous Great Doxology in first mode² which is an inspired and also favorite melody for all the chanters), the Divine Liturgy (like the famous and in a pure ecclesiastical style, extended Cherubic hymns and Communion hymns in all the modes). He also composed the entire book called *Hirmologion* in a brief musical style that was in use in Constantinople and mainly in the Great Church of Christ, some slow composed melodies ("mathemata") to the glory of the Virgin Mary and other musical pieces.

It is characteristic that Vyzantios used to compose melodies because he was asked to do it. Thus, we know that he composed his brief *Hirmologion* after the request by one of his students, the monk Akakios, he also composed his fabulous Communion hymns for every Sunday

after the request by the bishop of Dēmētrias Athanasios, and so he did in some other cases.

In the field of the transcriptions of the old compositions in an analytical notation we have to mention what his student Chrysanthos wrote in his fundamental "Great theory book" 6–8 years after the death of his teacher (i.e. ca 1814–1816). He wrote that Petros the Vyzantios knew deeply the older notation and consequently he knew how to transcribe it, so well, just as his famous teacher Petros Lampadarios, and that's why many of the musicians were confused whether some transcriptions belong to him or to his teacher.

While studying Vyzantios' transcriptions what we have to admire is that he transcribed old compositions of the 14th and 15th century like the superb composition *Ἀνωθεν οἱ προφηταὶ* of Ioannēs Koukouzeles, the *Δύναμις, Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός...* of Xenos Koronēs, the *Πᾶσα πνοή* of Manouēl Gazēs, the *Ἀλληλουία* of Theodoulos the monk, and others. In many cases, just like Chrysanthos wrote two hundreds years ago, even today we are not sure whether a transcription indeed belongs to him, since many manuscript scribes confused him with his teacher Petros Lampadarios because of the same name "Petros". The research in the handwritten tradition has already reached to some results in this field, but there are yet a lot of manuscripts we have to consult in order to have an even better idea.

Finally, it is clear that in the field of the transcriptions, there are again some cases in which Vyzantios worked after a request made by a person. For example, he transcribed the eleven Resurrectional *heothina* composed by Ioannēs Glykēs in the 14th century, after a request made by the bishop of Ganou and Choras Kyrillos. We can find the specific musical work and the inscription about the request in a manuscript which is preserved in the monastery of Saint Panteleēmon (the so-called "Russian") on Mount Athos.

Vyzantios wasn't a rich man, and it seems that he tried to earn his living through composing and maybe copying musical volumes. His student Chrysanthos gave us the information that Vyzantios was ready to attempt to transcribe all the old compositions provided that someone could give him a good compensation for this difficult task.

His manuscripts are invaluable, primarily for their content, and because in parallel with his other musical abilities Vyzantios was also an excellent and very reliable musical scribe. Today we know about 30–35 volumes or fragments (part of volumes) written by him, according to

which we can study the chanting of his era and we can put in the right place many little colored stones to create and admire the mosaic of the ecclesiastical music in the last quarter of the 18th and in the beginning of the 19th century.

Here we can see some pages from his manuscripts dated from the year 1773 and all the following years until 1806. This is a *Hirmologion* (Gritsanē collection 13) of his teacher, copied by Vyzantios in 1773, while Petros Lampadarios was still alive (see *Picture 2*). Here is the first page of an *Anthology* I discovered some years ago in Andros Island (Saint Nicolas monastery № 32) (see *Picture 3*). There is also another *Anthology* which is preserved at the Aristotelio University of my birth city, Thessaloniki (№ 57). He wrote this manuscript as a Lampadarios of the Great Church of Christ in 1796.

This is a *Stichērarion* composed by his teacher, the famous *Stichērarion* of Petros Lampadarios written in the "new slow *Stichēraric* style" of Byzantine music, copied by Vyzantios in 1783, during his service as a *Domestichos* in the Ecumenical Patriarchate. We all know that a *Stichērarion* contains the hymns chanted in the great feasts and the great Saints of all the year. This specific manuscript preserved in the private collection of Simon Karas (see *Picture 4*)³.

Finally, there is another manuscript which has been found some years ago and contains compositions to be chanted in Vespers, Matins and Divine Liturgy (Princeton University-Ms Greek 3). Petros the Vyzantios wrote it when he was *Protopsaltēs*, so he wrote it between 1800 and 1805. Based to the inscriptions of this manuscript we can reach to some very helpful ascertainments about Vyzantios' various compositions.

Of course there are many other of Vyzantios' manuscripts written in an unknown date, and there are also some manuscripts for which we are not yet sure if they are indeed written by him. The majority of his autographs (manuscripts written by him) preserved in the collection of Constantinos Psachos which now belongs to the University of Athens, in the private collection of Simon Karas, in the National Library of Greece, in some monastic Libraries of Mount Athos, in Jerusalem, in some other collections in Greece and in Romania, and another one (the last, I have just mentioned) at Princeton University in the United States. As I have already mentioned, it isn't a very easy task to express the final statement about his autographs, but it is truth that now we have much more evidence than in the past to do a successful estimation.

His students, especially Grēgorios and Apostolos Constas, gained profit from his autographs, they copied them and they used them as a basis in order to create their musical work and to establish the New Method of musical notation. Because it was essential for them to study and consult the musical work of their teacher, when the famous Music School of the "New Method" had been founded in Constantinople in 1814, they gathered as many of his autograph as they could find and bought them, just to have them as a fundamental material at the School. And the most important is that the "Three Teachers" transcribed Vyzantios' musical works into the New Method and published them. Something similar (transcriptions) did his student Apostolos Constas.

I would also like to point out that not all the information given by Petros' contemporaries about him is accurate. For example, Chrysanthos wrote that Iakovos used to teach the old melodies to his students, while Petros the Vyzantios the modern compositions of his teachers. This is not the entire truth. According to information deriving from the manuscripts, Petros the Vyzantios taught his students the way to chant, to perform, as well as to write down analytically the very technical compositions of the 17th and 18th century called kalophonic hirmoi, and he did that "according to the tradition of my teachers", although he didn't compose such melodies. Through his student Ioannikios this teaching was transmitted later to the chanting tradition of Mount Athos, as we can see while studying many inscriptions of musical manuscripts.

In another reference we read that Vyzantios thrived especially in the specific category of kratemata (melodies without a specific text, so: the music itself). However, the only case in which he composed kratemata was when he interpolated such *brief* melodies in the Cheroubic and Communion hymns of him, so this information is hyperbolic (not entirely accurate).

Vyzantios' musical work is very important for the evolution of Byzantine music. That's why some of his compositions were adapted first in Romanian and later in other languages, his extended Cherubic hymns have been abbreviated by two or three posterior musicians in order to be more easy for the chanters to chant them, [that's why] a part of his compositions have been used as a musical material in the work of other composers, some composers attempted to complete or to add a part of melody to his original compositions, and the most important: after 1820, when the period of the printed musical books started, his compositions had been included to all the classical editions

and spread in all the orthodox countries and churches and "travelled" together with the hands of all the skilful musicians who were able to perform the traditional Byzantine music.

Additionally, it is well known that in some cases in which the Orthodox church specified the appropriate ecclesiastical compositions and the specific musical books which the musicians can or must use, Petros Vyzantios' musical work was and still is fully accepted and recommended to be used in the Services.

In conclusion, Petros the Vyzantios, was a gifted ecclesiastical musician whose compositions have the fragrance (the pleasant smell) of the flourishing of Byzantine music in a significant period, and his teaching and transcriptions led this art to a safe *musical* port. A musical scribe of his era (who it is clear that he had a bad opinion about Petros Lampadarios and Petros the Vyzantios) wrote in some of his manuscripts that the latter was envious and cranky⁴. It is difficult to confirm or to reject this, but what we can see in almost all the manuscripts in which Vyzantios wrote a colophon (a final note about him as the scribe of the volume, about the year and the day in which he finished the writing of the volume), is that he gives glory to the Holy Trinity, and he speaks about himself with the words "the unlearned", "the unworthy", "the worthless", "the more sinner between humans", etc. And, even when he hadn't a good opinion about another musician, like the famous Iakovos Protopsaltēs, he copied his musical book and he didn't hesitate to write or to copy in the end of it, that this composer and chanter was an excellent musician and an authentic child of the Church of Christ.

So, as human beings let us stay in his words and as musicians let us stay in his enormous musical work. And let us feed our self from both.

ENDNOTES:

¹ See also Constantinos Ralles Vyzantios (ms Theology Seminary-University of Athens 68). Another student of Vyzantios wrote a note on ms Bucharest-Romania Academy 534 (766).

² In the printed musical books this doxology is classified in the plagal first mode.

³ This period I am preparing an analytical catalogue of all the musical manuscripts of this collection, and I have already delivered a lecture in Madrid, just to point out the great importance of these manuscripts and to give a synoptic description of them. Any of you who are interested, can find and download this paper and many other papers in Greek or English language in my personal website (URL: <http://users.auth.gr/mangian>; дата обращения 13.03.2017).

⁴ His name was Nikēphoros Kantouniarēs.

See pictures 1–4 at the colour plate.

К статье Э. Яннопулоса



Рис. 1. Petros the Byzantios (Lavra Θ 178, 1815)

Рис. 2. Hirmologion (Zakynthos. Gritsanis. 13, 1773)

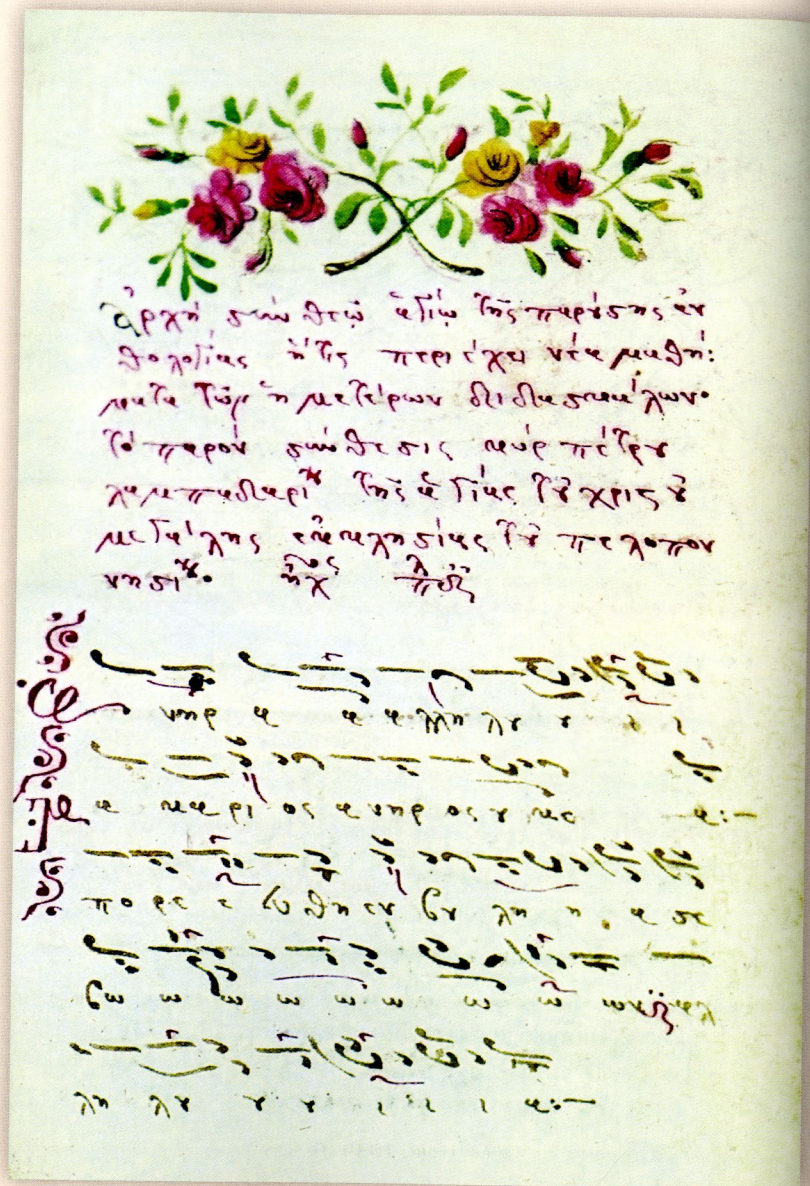


Рис. 3. Anthology (Saint Nicolas monastery 32, before 1806)



Рис. 4. Stichëarion (Simon Karas collection, 1783)