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# ACHILLEAS CHALDAEAKES

## ILLUSTRATING MELODIES:

### ICONOGRAPHICAL INSTRUCTIONS IN BYZANTINE MUSIC THEORY AND PRACTICE

Are there any “iconographical instructions” in Byzantine music theory? And, if so, are there any “reflections of iconographical images” to be found in Byzantine music practice? Very much so, in my view, as regards both Byzantine music theory and practice. Let me explain this concept of “illustrating melodies”:

Going through Byzantine and post-Byzantine theoretical treatises one can easily find some kinds of “iconographical instructions” regarding basic elements of Byzantine music theory and practice, such as musical signs; the well-known anonymous treatise *Questions and Answers on the Interval Signs* includes such instructions, for example, concerning the ison sign:

...concerning the way in which the ison is the beginning and foundation of all the signs, this is because neither a master-builder, nor a painter, nor a copyist can accomplish anything without a point. For when [...] a painter is drawing a face, or a hand, or a foot, it is impossible for him not in the beginning to make a point; and when he makes a circle, a point is always being made in the middle of the circle – how? Since the compasses have two parts, he places one part on his piece of paper or on the wall and turns the other and the point is made [...] Thus also the beginning of the ison is a point, and from the point there is a horizontal stroke going neither up nor down, and for that reason it is called ison [...] The ison is a point and a stroke, or in other words the pen was trailed a little and the result was an ison<sup>1</sup>.

We should pay particular attention to the last sentence: “The ison is a point and a stroke, or in other words the pen was trailed a little and the result was an ison”. It is almost as if an imaginary master is actually holding his student’s hand, showing him exactly how to draw this sign<sup>2</sup>. This is a first set of “iconographical instructions” frequently found in Byzantine music theory texts. These kinds of instructions represent a quite limited approach to the semantics of each sign; similar illustrative descriptions regarding other musical signs are to be found in the same theoretical treatise (*Questions and Answers on*

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1 Schartau 1998:43, 47.

2 For instance, this “iconographical lesson” could be expressed thus: “...from the point make a horizontal stroke, going neither up nor down, and you will have the ison...”

*the Interval Signs*); such as, for example, for the series of signs: Oligon-Oxeia-Petasthe-Kouphisma. Let us examine each case:

- The oligon, for example, a sign drawn like a flat line<sup>3</sup>, is described like a “staircase”<sup>4</sup>; a staircase through which melody ascends “little by little, i.e. one step (voice) and two and three”; that’s why we usually see in musical manuscripts a series of three or four oligons written like a scale, thus:



- The sign oxeia is also described as “sharper than the oligon line”<sup>5</sup>; a sign that indicates any “sharper voice”:



- Let us now see how the petasthe is described in the same text: “when the maker wished to find for the cheironomy yet another voice broader than the oxeia, he added those three signs together, i.e. the ison, the oligon and the oxeia, and it became one hypostasis (neumatic sign) called petasthe, which means the flying one”<sup>6</sup>; one can easily imagine the specific iconographical instruction hidden in this description<sup>7</sup>: if one adds ison and oligon and oxeia, one may combine them as a petasthe sign, a sign the energy of which incorporates all the energies of the other three signs:



- Finally, the kouphisma “was a petasthe and the maker placed in the front part of it and attached to it the letter kappa”<sup>8</sup>; how? In this way:

3 Cf. Wolfram-Hannick 1997:56<sup>353</sup> [ : «... ὀλίγον, ὃ λέγεται καὶ μακρόν»].

4 Schartau 1998:67 [ : “And hear now why it is called oligon. That is because the master-builder, when he wants to build a staircase, first lays the foundation, as we have already said in the beginning; and that foundation is not calculated from the staircase, but it is from the ground level, as soon as he has build one step (degree) from the ground level, then he calculates, and builds two and three and four, as many as he wants, and finishes the ladder. In exactly the same way also the maker of the voices (tonal steps) has made first the foundation, i.e. the ison. And from the ison he wanted o ascend seven voices (steps), through not all of them at one time, but one by one. He made the oligon, namely in order to ascend little by little, i.e. one step (voice) and two and three, until seven. And for that reason it is called oligon”].

5 *Ibid.* [ : “But when the maker then realized that the cheironomy is in need of another sharper voice, he made the oxeia. And it is sharper than the oligon, and for that reason it is called oxeia”].

6 *Ibid.* [ : “And again he wishes to find for the cheironomy yet another voice broader than the oxeia; so he added up those three signs, i.e. the ison, the oligon and the oxeia, and it became one hypostasis (neumatic sign) called petasthe which means the flying one. Man too is just like that, mind, soul and body in one hypostasis. Now those three signs, the oligon, and the oxeia and the petasthe, posses the same diastematic value in the metrophony, but as far as the cheironomic peculiarity is concerned, the oligon is one thing, the oxeia another and the petasthe yet another”].

7 Cf. Mazaraki 1992:121, 134.

8 Schartau 1998:69 [ : “The kouphisma was a petasthe and the maker placed in the front

petasthe+kappa became kouphisma, a new sign appropriate for any “light voice”:



\* \* \*

In other cases, such illustrative instructions refer mainly to the technique of the so-called *cheironomia* [gesticulation]. Cheironomia is a broader technique referring to the movement of the hands mainly in order to coordinate a group of chanters: a choir. In this sense, cheironomia should be perceived as a visual codification of the right way to interpret either the notational signs (neumes), in a narrow sense, or the musical lines, in a broader sense; i.e. the right way to interpret the whole aesthetic concept of the performance. In his theoretical treatise, Kyrillos Marmarinos, former bishop of Tenos, puts it brilliantly: “Cheironomia is the movement of the hands which designs the melody”<sup>9</sup>.

Indeed, there is a specific mechanism correlating the name, the form and the function of every sign. Monk Gabriel notes that “the ancients have not named them randomly, but each sign has been named after its function”<sup>10</sup>. This function, i.e. the way in which every sign (and, in a broader sense, every union of the signs, every thesis, i.e. every musical phrase of a melody) is expressed through the voice of the chanter, can also be visualized through cheironomia, i.e. through a series of specific movements of the hands. This is the reason why, whenever the signs are mentioned in the relevant teachings of the various theoretical texts, the notion of cheironomia is also evoked, and vice versa: every attempt to explain the term cheironomia is accompanied by the teaching of the signs.

Let me quote a relevant passage from Chrysanthos’s *Great Theory of Music*. The text’s title is “*About Cheironomia*”, but, as will be realized, the whole argument almost exclusively concerns the signs<sup>11</sup>: “The ison was thus called because it keeps the sound unbending. Its cheironomia was done the way we do the sign of the cross, three fingers forming the symbol of the Holy Trinity. The oligon was thus called because with it we ascend a little, that is, the interval of a tone, while with the kentema we ascend two tones discontinuously and with the hypsele four tones. We compare the oligon to the kentema and the hypsele, because the first inventors of the neumes used only these neumes in ascent. The cheironomia of the oligon was done with the gesture that symbolizes our Lord’s holy hand when he said: ‘Shoot the net to starboard and you will make a catch’. The petaste got its name from the cheironomia, because when it was done, the hand went up and flied like a feather. This gesture was done with the five fingers held together and the hand seemed like flying, the way the Lord’s hand is symbolized when he said to the paralytic: ‘Take up your bed

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part of it and attached to it the letter kappa; and it is obvious that it is being ‘lightened’, both as regards the voice (interval function) and as regards the cheironomy, and for that reason it is called kouphisma”].

9 Popescu-Judetz – Ababi-Sirli 2000:122.

10 Wolfram – Hannick 1985:64<sup>300-1</sup>.

11 Romanou 2010:108-9<sup>§§ 210-5</sup>.

and walk'. Etymologically, the kentema derives from its cheironomia, because the person, who did it, formed his forefinger as if pricking. The two kentemata had the same cheironomia too. Both cheironomiae were done the way deity and humanity are symbolized. The hypsele was thus called because no other neume raises the sound so high. The chamele was thus called because no other neume lowers the sound so much and what lies low is called chameleon. The hypsele and the chamele had no cheironomia to themselves alone like the kentema, because four among the neumes, the kentemata, the hypsele, the elafon and the chamele, were called spirits and their cheironomiae were done in common with the bodies, which is what all the remaining neumes were, except the hyporrhoe, which was neither called body nor spirit. The apostrophos was thus called, because it turns the sound away from the high pitch towards the low and is the opposite of the oligon. The elaphron was thus called because the two notes were descending with lightness, not the way they descent with the two apostrophoi. The hyporrhoe got this name because the sound, it is said, flows in the larynx like water flowing under small stones".

Chrysanthos of course relies on a number of older sources here (since the discourse on the etymology and cheironomia of the signs is absolutely necessary in Byzantine music theory). However, he is most influenced by (and frequently quotes from) a very interesting theoretical textbook of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the *Interpretation of the Signs* by Michael Blemmydes<sup>12</sup>, where the same signs are discussed under the following Question-and-Answer format:

*With God, the beginning of signs [of the art of chanting],  
explained separately, created by the wisest Michael Blemmydes.*

**Question:** *What sign is the ison cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *By the sign of the Holy Trinity. Just as the Holy Trinity is trinal – [for] in holiness the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Spirit exceed [each other]; so is the ison chanted, when the fingers are put together.*

**Question:** *What sign is the oligon cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *It is cheironomized by the sign of the hand of Our Lord who said to [his] disciples: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find".*

**Question:** *What sign is the oxeia cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *By the sign of sharp lances, as if imitating sharp nails.*

**Question:** *What sign is the petasthe cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *By the sign of the hand of Our Lord, who said to the paralysed man: "Rise, take up thy bed and walk".*

**Question:** *What sign is the kouphisma cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *By the sign of the cloud overhanging Our Lord at the Transfiguration. It is shown by three fingers, [embodying] Christ, Moses and Elias.*

**Question:** *What sign is shown by the diplo?*

**Answer:** *It shows the hand of Our Lord, exhorting the Jews and saying to them: "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself but of the Father which sent me". It shows [its] holiness by*

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12 Gertsman 1994:317-37 (introduction in Russian), 338-56 (introduction in English), 357-60 (Blemmyde's text in Greek), 361-72 (Russian translation and comments on same text), 373-84 (English translation and comments on same text).

## Achilleas Chaldaeakes: Illustrating Melodies: Iconographical Instructions

*three stretched fingers, and its humanity is shown by the clenched ones.*

**Question:** *What sign does the kratemokatabasma show?*

**Answer:** *It shows the sign of God descending, who came down from Heaven, embodied in flesh by Holy Virgin, and became a man, and having descended [into the sepulchre], rose from the dead but was not outside the Father's bosom.*

**Question:** *What sign does the parakletike show?*

**Answer:** *It shows the fire of coals in the sea of Tiberias and Christ's call: "Come and eat".*

**Question:** *What does the parakalesma show?*

**Answer:** *It shows the rod of Moses which turned into a serpent.*

**Question:** *What does the petasthon show?*

**Answer:** *It shows the hand of the Angel saying to the shepherds: "Go to Bethlehem and ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. This is Christ the Lord".*

**Question:** *What sign does the kratema show?*

**Answer:** *It shows the hand of [John] the Baptist, holding [it] and saying: "Behold the Lamb of God".*

**Question:** *What sign does the apoderma show?*

**Answer:** *It shows the sign of the tabernacle of testimony.*

**Question:** *What sign is the bareia cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *By the sign of those heaving up [their] burden and climbing up all the way; as they say among the grammarians, a bending man imitates the oxeia and the one riding [a horse] imitates the circumflex accent.*

**Question:** *What sign is the kylisma cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *It shows the Sun, making its way from East to West.*

**Question:** *What sign is the xeron klasma cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *By the sign of the hand of the Lord who is blessing five loaves and filling five thousand [people].*

**Question:** *What sign is the antikenoma cheironomized by?*

**Answer:** *It shows the boat when Peter casts a hook and a net into the sea and finds a draught of fish.*

**Question:** *What does the apostrophos show?*

**Answer:** *Joachim's gifts for Anna, when they return from the temple [after having prayed] about their childlessness.*

**Question:** *What does the elaphron show?*

**Answer:** *It shows the sign of the hand of Our Lord, breaking bread and giving [it] to his disciples.*

**Question:** *What does the psephiston show?*

**Answer:** *Jacob's ladder which he put up [in his dream], or [it shows] Our Lady.*

**Question:** *What does the gorgon show?*

**Answer:** *It shows the sign of the hand of John the Baptist, rejoicing in his soul and using his hand when baptizing Christ. In the same way the tromikon [is shown] .*

*While the tzakisma ... dot. Let it be for you ... the bodies [?] and the spirits.*

**Question:** *How many semitones [exist]?*

**Answer:** *Seven.*

*Question: Why are they called semitones?*

*Answer: [Because] they lead to the tone.*

*Question: How many spirits [exist]?*

*Answer: Four*

*Question: What are they?*

*Answer: ... the hypsele and the chamele.*

The above text is purely symbolical; this is why those who have studied it up to the present day are rather puzzled about its true meaning. "The explanations are so metaphorical in this treatise", observes Neil Moran,

that it is almost impossible to disentangle concrete indications from the biblical exegesis [...] The sign for the petaste for instance is modelled upon the hand of Christ saying to the paralytic 'Take up your bed and walk' (Mk 2.9). The pelaston shows the hand of the angel saying to the shepherds: 'Go unto Bethlehem and you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes; this is Christ our Lord'. The cheironomy for the kouphisma is modelled upon a cloud overshadowing Christ in the Transfiguration and it shows with the fingers the three: Christ, Moses and Elijah. The oligon is cheironomized upon the model of the hand of Christ saying to his disciples: 'Cast in the net on the right side of the boat and you shall find'. One might suppose that iconographic representations of the above-mentioned scenes would offer clues for the interpretation but in nearly every case the hand gestures are quite innocuous – some figure is simply giving either the sign for the blessing or pointing upward<sup>13</sup>.

The only certain thing is that this text (just like most of the theoretical manuals of the psaltic art transmitted to us) must be read in the light of the philosophy exposed in the following passage from the answer (given the year 1640 by the philosopher Gerasimos, a Vallachian and Cretan) of the protopsaltes Demetrios Tamias from Crete, to a question of a certain Jacob, a Venetian, who asked "what is the reason for the custom of the cheironomia and the chanting of the terere in the Eastern Church":

From the very beginning, the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ has done nothing in vain; all its actions have a meaning and a purpose, following the tradition of the old Fathers and Teachers. Each form, each word, denotes an accomplishment, a meaning, a history, a miracle and a mystery of almighty God. Today, however, many people with an aversion for the study [...] dare say that chanting the terere and accompanying the divine music with gesticulation is a wrong thing to do, ignoring the reason why this is done. Thus they resemble the animals, which cry without gesticulation because they do not have hands<sup>14</sup>.

What is certain, however, is that this text refers to specific scenes from the life of Christ which are known to Byzantine iconography; images that can be considered as examples of possible movements of the hands and can thus function as a guide to the indirect teaching of cheironomia<sup>15</sup>, together, of course, with

13 Moran 1986:43-4.

14 John-Stefanos 1851:887-8.

15 "Cheironomia's specific features", notes Gertsman 1984:356, "always depended not only on the musical material, but on the unique artistic manner of each choir-master and, of course, on the professional quality of the choir itself, as well as on its professional culture. Thus, it would not be reasonable to think that cheironomic gestures were everywhere and always the same. Quite the contrary. Following some general principles each master added his own individual features to them, and at times they may have differed greatly. Hence, the

knowledge of the purely musical material. What we see here, therefore, is an attempt to combine the usual theoretical instructions (based on the description of Byzantine music signs, for instance) with a drawing (designed through the aforementioned iconographical representations), an image that can be considered as a visual example of a possible illustrated version of any melody.

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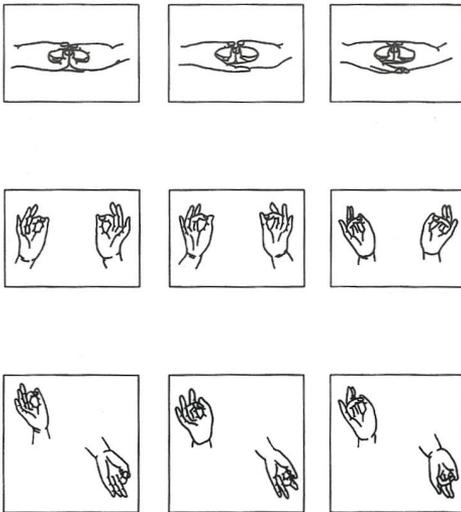
Let me make another point; the images mentioned above, and which illustrate characteristics and energies of all Byzantine music signs, clearly refer to suggested movements of the hands that Jesus Christ made at some point during his time on earth. Such movements are depicted on a large number of relevant icon scenes, and an initial study of the rich corpus of Byzantine and late-Byzantine iconography could identify them and associate them with the relevant theoretical points in Byzantine music<sup>16</sup>.

What is less well known – and I make only brief mention here of what could possibly be the subject of future study – is the fact that similar gestures have also been used in Buddhism as, from ancient times to the present<sup>17</sup>. The illustrations of these gestures, which are remarkably similar to Christian illustrations, are called *mudrās*, “after the Sanskrit word ‘mudra’ meaning gesture or inner stance [...] a combination of fine body moves which change mood, behaviours and perception and which enhance awareness and focus”<sup>18</sup>; the majority of them had been coined by Hindus, but “mudras” acquired different, much deeper, semantics in Buddhism as they contribute to progress towards

the comprehension of transcendence, through meditation as well as art<sup>19</sup>.

Some of these gestures, “mudras”, are exactly the same as Christ’s gestures, as depicted in the known iconography. And they do look extremely familiar when compared to both those described in the theoretical treatises mentioned above and those popular with modern choir directors of Byzantine music.

See, for instance, a table of nine “mudras”, meditation positions for Buddha Amitabha worship divided in three levels: low, middle and high<sup>20</sup>:



information recorded in the work of Michael Blemmydes should be considered as a variant of the systems of cheironomic gestures, popular at that time”.

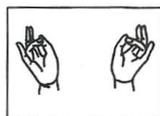
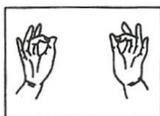
16 Cf. Antoniou 2007:320-8.

17 Zographos 2009:85-97.

18 Sarasouati 2008:429 [see also *ibid.*:425-79, for a more analytical description of “mudras”].

19 Zographos 2009:85-6.

20 *Ibid.*:86-7.

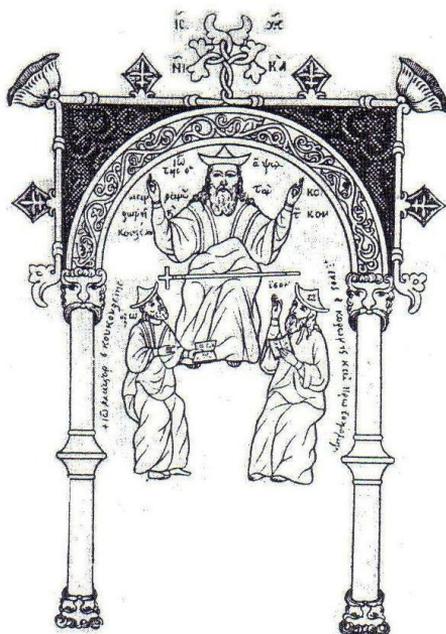


Those of the middle level seem identical to Christ's gestures, known through Byzantine iconography, as well as to those of Buddha, as depicted in the relevant statues.<sup>21</sup>

To make a parallel this phenomenon with some relevant musicological material,

I would also like to show two miniatures. In the first one, Ioannis Glykys is depicted with his pupils Ioannis Koukouzelis and Xenos Koronis<sup>22</sup>.

According to a clear inscription written on this miniature, Koronis is gesturing the ison sign; let us see in a detail how he does this:



21 *Ibid.*:86-9, 95.

22 A miniature taken from Codex No. 457 of Koutloumousiou Monastery of Mount Athos [cf. Moran 1986:illustration 6; Hannick 1978:197, note 4; Spyrou 2008:479; in the latter reference the following description of the miniature can be found: "In the centre there is depicted the first chanter Ioannis Glykys with umbel, belt and a cane at his feet, whilst with his two hands he makes the sign of the cross – he blesses the proceedings. On either side of the first chanter stand his pupils, i.e. Ioannis Koukouzelis the maistor and the first chanter Xenos Koronis with umbels and belts. In their hands they hold musical manuscripts with the material being chanted, in relation to which the maistor Koukouzelis is gesturing the Oxeia, whilst the first chanter Koronis is gesturing the Ison, obviously addressing themselves to two choroï which are not depicted..."].

This is, I believe, quite similar to the aforementioned description by Chrysanthos: the ison's "cheironomia was done the way we do the sign of the cross, three fingers forming the symbol of the Holy Trinity".

In the second miniature, "the most musical mister Ioasaph, the new Koukouzelis" is depicted, teaching some gestures to his pupils<sup>23</sup>:



In a detail, his gestures are very nearly identical to the previously mentioned one, that of ison sign, also described in Blemmydes' text above, as "a symbol of Holy Trinity, when the fingers are put together":



\* \* \*

Nevertheless, the existant theoretical material is full of examples of the teacher's imagination running wild when it comes to specific signs of particular significance and function. In such cases any attempt to describe and effectively present these signs goes beyond the simple approach of an "iconographical instruction" or even a known hand gesture; instead, we have whimsical images featuring a number of persons which vividly describe the energy and graphically depict the very nature of these musical symbols. Again, the theoretical treatise mentioned above (*Questions and Answers on the Interval Signs*) provides some quintessential examples, of which I would highlight the pictures describing the following signs:

- The Kentema<sup>24</sup>; a sign which "sometimes it is placed with an oligon,

23 A miniature taken from the Codex No. 740 (f. 122<sup>v</sup>) of Iviron Monastery of Mount Athos [cf. Hadjigiakoumes 1980: illustration 12; at p. 73 of the said reference the following description of the miniature can be found: "... a many-faceted description from a manuscript [...] from the Monastery of the Iviron from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, written by some scribe named Nikolaos. There is depicted 'the most musical mister Ioasaph the new Koukouzelis' teaching (the gesture?) to two other persons who are 'his nephew and pupil [name indecipherable]' and 'his servant and pupil', all with characteristic period attire"].

24 Schartau 1998:71 [:"The kentema has no cheironomy, because it is a pneuma. Now, since it does not have it <i.e. the cheironomy>, being a pneuma, but must necessarily be given a cheironomy together with the other signs, it stands in need of another sign that has a cheironomy, being as it were the body (soma) of it, while it is <itself> a pneuma. For a pneuma (spirit) cannot subsist without a soma, neither can it be composed, just as light cannot subsist without <subject> matter. And what is the soma of the kentema? The oligon, the oxeia and the petasthe. – And does one pneuma possess three somata? – I don't say that it has all three at the same time. But sometimes it is placed with an oligon, sometimes

sometimes with an oxeia and sometimes with a petasthe” and for that reason is being described here as light [“light in a lamp, light in a candle and light in a <burning> log”] or breath [“breath in a sheep, breath in a wolf, breath in an eagle”]; in addition, concerning how the same sign “when it is placed in front of the oligon, subjects, but, when it is placed on the top of the oligon, doesn’t subject” one may see descriptions of it here as being “like a flowing river” [“If someone were to construct a dam in front of the streaming water, then he would cut off its forward impetus; but if he would place some vessel on the water, it would not obstruct the movement, but the vessel too would be moved together with the water”].

- The dyo kentemata<sup>25</sup>; a sign described here as “two high dignitaries”,

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with an oxeia and sometimes with a petasthe. Have you not seen light in a lamp, light in a candle and light in a <burning> log? One light in three bodies. And again, breath in a sheep, breath in a wolf, breath in an eagle. The breath is one and the same, but the animals are three <different> species. So it is also with this: when the kentema is standing in front of the oligon, then it subjects, i.e. covers its voice (diastematic function) and the oligon becomes a body (soma) without a voice. But when the kentema is standing on top of the oligon, then the oligon has its own voice (the interval of a second) and the kentema its two voices (the interval of a third). – And how come that the kentema, when it is placed in front of the oligon, subjects, but, when it is placed on the top of the oligon, doesn’t subject? – The voices are moving just like a flowing river: If someone were to construct a dam in front of the streaming water, then he would cut off its forward impetus; but if he would place some vessel on the water, however, it would not obstruct the movement, but the vessel too would be moved together with the water. So it is also with the kentema. When it is placed in front of the oligon, it bridles its voice, but when it is placed on top of it, it does not prevent it from having its own proper voice. It is the same with the oxeia and the petasthe”].

25 *Ibid.*:77-81 [“These dyo kentemata resemble two high dignitaries, each of whom is a plenipotentiary of his country, a kind of despot. But the two have made an agreement and have abandoned their rank and their power, and are walking around in the midst of the people with the common folk, i.e. with the elaphron and the chamele and because of this each of them has lost two things, the honour and the grandeur. What is the honour (value)? That when he had rank, he never walked alone, but accompanied by soldiers. And the grandeur is the power, through which he could subject men. But now they are unable to subject anybody, and for that reason men are not afraid of them. On the other hand they do not expel them, but accept them, since they know from whence they are. So it is also with the dyo kentemata; they have no other honour (value) but this alone that they are added to all the “voiced” (diastematic) signs, i.e. the ascending and descending voices (steps). – (...) the man who made these was an artist. But he who made these signs from the beginning to the end, or in other words from the ison through all the rest, he made them in many ways: some <he made> for ascending and descending voices, others for rest, and others again for cheironomy. And as a wise artist he saw that just as the cheironomy is in need of many signs for the <various> figures, thus also the mode is in need of many signs for the voices of the melos; be they firm or melodic, slow or quick. He made the oxeia a lighter voice than the petasthe and the oligon lighter than the oxeia. And again he was looking for a voice briefer than the oligon and he figured out as a wise man that this sign, must not be one of the somata but must be one of the pneumata, since the soma (body) is a heavy thing. So he brought in the two pneumata, i.e. the dyo kentemata, and made them one hypostasis, just as

who “have made an agreement and have abandoned their rank and their power, and are walking around in the midst of the people with the common folk”; we can further read that, “the man who made these was an artist; he was looking for a voice briefer than the oligon and he figured out as a wise man that this sign, must not be one of the somata but must be one of the pneumata, since the soma (body) is a heavy thing. So he brought in the two pneumata, i.e. the dyo kentemata, and made them one hypostasis, just as a man from the two elements earth and water makes clay as one hypostasis”; in another point, same sign is described as wind: “eastern, western, northern, southern, depends on the position which is making the difference”; and note, finally, this image: “The dyo kentemata are just as if a man had mixed two flutes and put both of them into his mouth and blew a note, and one voice came out of both of them, and no one is able to distinguish the one from the other”.

- The dyo Apostrophoi<sup>26</sup>; which are described “as if two persons would place themselves in front of you, and emit one voice, and you can’t say that these men have two natures, but one only”.
- The dyo Oxeiai the so-called Diple<sup>27</sup>; a sign described “as two men with

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a man from the two elements earth and water makes clay as one hypostasis. – So it is, but I still have some doubt, if you don’t mind: The combination which you mentioned is not put together from four elements of the same kind; for water is one thing, soil another. But in the present case it is different; for both constituents are kentemata. – You are right. But listen attentively. The eastern, the western, the northern and the southern, are not all of them winds? – By all means. – But from the proper position each of them differs from the next, both as far as the direction and the violence are concerned, the position making the difference. – So it is. – Now, since as we have already said, the dyo kentemata have become one hypostasis, they ought not to have four voices but only one, just like man. For even though he was made out of four elements, that does not imply that he has four voices, but only one. It might also be put like this: Man is an intellectual soul and a earthy body in one hypostasis: and you were right in saying just now that the signs are lifeless and immobile, and man is the one who makes them move, as are the stringed instrument (mousike=lyre), the trumpet and the flute. And all these melodic apparatuses are dead and passive, but man acts through them (...) – The dyo kentemata are just as if a man had mixed two flutes and put both of them into his mouth and blew a note, and one voice came out of both of them, and no one is able to distinguish the one from the other. So, please accept in justice as well as from a philosophical point of view that the dyo kentemata ought to have <only> one voice and not more”].

26 *Ibid.*:101-3 [: “The interpretation of the dyo apostrophoi is easier than the interpretation of the dyo kentemata. For the fact that they possess one voice is similar to what we have already said about the two flutes, viz. that the dyo apostrophoi were brought together and became one hypostasis, just as if two persons would place themselves in front of you, and emit one voice, and you can’t say that these men have two natures, but one only (...) Two saintly brothers living together, won’t they have this equality, i.e. <like> the dyo apostrophoi, one of which isn’t more honorable than the other, but both are equal both in their quality and in their nature”].

27 *Ibid.*:105 [: “As if two men with a reputation for bravery had grasped each other in order to wrestle and one of them was not stronger than the other but both of them had

a reputation for bravery grasped each other in order to wrestle and none of them was stronger than the other but both of them had equality of strength”.

- The so-called Seisma<sup>28</sup>; a combination of signs described as a house.
- And finally the Hyporrhoe<sup>29</sup>: a very interesting sign, described as water or as “a swift man”.

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Moving from theory to practice, or in other words, in an attempt to bridge theory and practice by transubstantiating the theoretical concepts to practice through sound and image, I would need to ask myself the following question: based on what was discussed up to this point, *how we could conceive and present a typical Byzantine musical score in images?*

Obviously there could be either a narrow approach starting from the drawing of each sign but also a rather wider approach, by implication, taking into account and sketching out the combination of a number of signs, the theseis, the musical phrases of which any melody consists, the latter made through the movement of the hands. Any of those two approaches potentially leads to ei-

quality of strength and in consequence of the impetus of strength and the equality of both of them a stalemate (argia) has occurred, since the one is unable to conquer the other, thus also the two oxeiai in consequence of the impetus of their mutual struggle have concluded in a duration (argia) and a silence, i.e. ‘voicelessness’ (lack of interval value), and for that reason the dipole is called a ‘voiceless’ sign <that is> slow, or in other words immobile, as if a soldier had left his army and is standing idle”].

28 *Ibid.*:129 [：“Now hear what I have to say about the seisma. A house is composed of various materials, such as stone, wood, clay, iron of the nails etc. None of these <components> is called anything. It is the house that is called something, viz. house. When an earthquake occurs and one or other of these components is being shaken, then all the rest of them will of necessity be shaken too. But we don’t say that the stones are being shaken, nor that the pieces of wood are, but the house. And the thing that shakes <it> we call ‘a shake’ (earthquake). And this shaking might be a hint from God to those on the earth on which the house has been built. ‘He looketh on the earth, (thus David says), and it trembleth’. So now also the seisma has got two bareiai, i.e. the piasma, and on top of it one or two ascending voices. It also has the hemiphone tzakisma and a krousma. And below it has the dyo apostrophoi, a voice and a rest, and often also the elaphron in the Psaltikon”].

29 *Ibid.*:133 [：“Water is a soulless thing, but it is in its nature to run, though not always. For when it has an even surface upon the earth, then it just spreads out; but when it has a flow, i.e. a descent, then it is running more abruptly. And it also utters voices, as the prophet says: “they shall utter a voice out of the midst of the rocks”. But if it has in front of it an obstacle, such as a dam, then it stands motion – and voiceless. And if someone comes and stirs it up, it is just set into motion, but it cannot run because of the dam. Thus also the hyporrhoe: when it does not have an obstacle underneath, it is called hyporrhoe, and it has two voices descending with eagerness. But when it is placed with the piasma, because of the shaking it rejects both the name and the voices and is called “seisma”, seeing that it is setting others in motion. For in your cheironomy it is being stirred up and just sets the piasma and the voices in motion, but it is unable to descend. It is as when a swift man is descending energetically from a ladder and another man comes and grasps the ladder from below, thus hindering his motion so that he can’t descend and is <left> standing idle. And he isn’t idle like the dipole, <but> just hindered in the descent and shaken in his power”].

ther a mental picture or to a real demonstration, in the form of hands drawing a picture in the air, of any given melody.

In any such mental or real image, the concept of symbols (the symbols of Byzantine music signs) could initially provide a broad outline in black and white which would later be complemented by the very distinct colours of each artist’s creative imagination and poetic sensitivity. The colour palette would then take over, depicting alternations and recyclings, reprocesses and reformulations of appeared musical forms, and this whole process would bring out the image hidden in the music, and, at the same time, the sequence of feelings, the very movements of the artist’s soul.

But particularly the example of the unknown but inspired teacher in the theoretical treatise I quoted earlier (*Questions and Answers on the Interval Signs*) can be nothing short of a clear call to us all to let our imagination take over and grasp the phenomenon of musical creation in terms of creating pluralistic whimsical images.

In conclusion, I shall show the simplest possible musical composition<sup>30</sup>, as a final example. Note particularly the initial ascent of a fourth, made through a kentema on the top of an oligon, as well as to a series of petasthe formulations, used four times, followed by a sequence of psiphiston formulations, which appears here five times:

With all the “images” mentioned above, I will attempt to let my imagination run wild and visualize the very essence of the melody in quite a different way:

*And here I am ... standing next to a noisy rapid, running endlessly... suddenly an eastern wind starts to blow decisively and peacefully, filling me with joy and gently stroking the water in mild ripples ... and the spray reaches as far as the fire burning under the shady plane tree and it causes the logs to sing a creaking tune ... breaking their afternoon rest the two beloved brothers start sing-*

30 Cf. Phokaeus 1839:5.

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*ing a song unheard before and it sounds as though it is being performed by one single voice ... their song wakes up a gorgeous golden eagle perching on the branches ... he gracefully flaps his wings and wets his claws in the river ... the water wiggles and stirs and then keeps running freely...*

I truly believe that in such a way and using a similar thought process, any melody could be turned into an image; an image that the researcher's creative imagination could draw as he leaves his mind free to draw the dimensions and the dynamics of the music piece he studies; an image that a painter could visualize and turn into a work of art, into a painting; an image that every apprentice performer who may attempt to study this same melody could picture in his head in order to have a better, more vivid, understanding of the structure and the course of the melody, the whole idea of the music, the emotion veiled by the images and colours of the sound; an image that the accomplished and experienced performer of the same melody will draw with his voice; an image that the leader and master of a psaltic choir will draw in the air through the movement of his hands.

Had it been possible to outline any melody in the ways described above, this mental and imaginary picture, the so-desired and sought-after image, would be a great example of how we could approach, understand, study, teach, interpret, direct, feel with all our senses the music; the phenomenon of musical creation, in all its facets and dimensions, doing nothing less than ... "illustrating melodies"

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