The “woman figure” in Byzantine Melopoeia

The question is: Has there ever been a case in Byzantine melopoeia where a specific form of “female aesthetics” has been reflected in the construction of any chant? The question is straightforward; the answer, however, cannot be but implicit.

The term “Byzantine melopoeia” should be broadly understood as defining musical experience; the ability to invent and record a melody based on a poetical-hymnographical text and destined to be heard (in the frame of Orthodox ritual) inside the church, as an auxiliary means of communication between the faithful and God. In Byzantine melopoeia thus defined “female aesthetics” would be a substantiated reality if a woman had invented a melody whatsoever.

Given the fact that the major part, or rather, for all purposes, the whole of Byzantine and post-Byzantine melopoeia known to us has been created by men, both known and unknown, the answer to the initial question turns out to be extremely difficult. The presence of women in Orthodox ecclesiastical music is, generally speaking, circumstantial but discernible. The subject has already been sufficiently investigated; several women poets, codex composers and chanters have been known through relevant research.


In regard to melopoeia, which is our present topic, our data are scanty. Until recently, we knew only one musical poem, attributed (with some reservation) to the daughter of the famous Byzantine musical composer Ioannes Kladas (beginning of the 15th century). It happens to be a koinonikon (communion hymn) set in the fourth mode of the Byzantine octachia; it is entitled Eις μνημόσυνον αιώνιον ἔσται δίκαιος and has been anthologized once, in the codex No. 2406 of the National Library of Greece (from the year 1453), fol. 258a, bearing the indication: Τού αυτού (sc. κύρ Ιοάννου τού Κλαδᾶ καὶ λαμπαδαρίου τοῦ εὐαγγεῖος βασιλικὸς κλήρος)· τινές δὲ λέγουσιν ὅτι ἔστιν τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ; this composition has been presented, studied and published by Diane Tuliatos. To this already known composition is added yet another one, which I


discovered during a previous research conducted in the frame of the preparation of my doctoral dissertation The polyeleos in Byzantine and post-Byzantine melopeia. This is a very interesting musical composition which forms a part (notably the verse Εὐλογήσατε τοῦ Κύριον) of a very well known Byzantine polyeleos composed in the first mode of the Byzantine octoechion, the so-called polyeleos of Kukumas. The composition, also anthologized once in the codex No. 399 of the Kutlumusi monastery on Mount Athos (mid-14th century, fol. 61r-), is attributed – according to its introductory epigraph – to a certain nun (Τῆς Καλογρέας) with no further precision; in the entire Byzantine and post-Byzantine musical production it has been studied up

5 See A. CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολυέλεος στή βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή μελοποιία. Athens 2003, 415, 710, 716. However, the existence of this composition had already been recorded by GR. TH. STATHES, Τά χαράγματα βυζαντινής μουσικής – Άγιον Όρος. Κατάλογος περιγραφικός των χαραγμάτων κοδίκων βυζαντινής μουσικής των ἀποκειμένων εν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις τῶν ἱερῶν μονῶν καὶ σχημάτων τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους, vol. 3. Athens 1993, 235 (cfr. also STATHES, “Σήμερον ή κτίσις φωτιζεται.”, 44).

6 It has to be noted that, on the basis of the evidence from exclusively musical manuscript sources, scholars have identified yet another woman, the so-called Kukulakena. Her name is mentioned in a relevant notice, recorded in fol. 339r of the codex No. C 71 of the Great Laura monastery on Mount Athos (a sticherarion of the 13th century), which reads as follows: “Εὐκομήθη δὲ δόθη τοῦ θεου εὐγενοῦ Κουμουλαιζήνα δομεστικήν μνήμην ἐποίησεν α’ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐν ηετος σφιχτήν [6769 = 1260] και (ai) μακαρία i μνήμη αὐτῆς” (see facsimile of the specific page of the codex at the end of the present study). The aforementioned notice has been published for the first time in S. and SP. EUSTRATIADES, Κατάλογος των κωδίκων τῆς Μεγάλης Δαίμονος (τῆς ἐν Άγιοι Ὅρεα). Paris 1925, 42 (where it reads as follows: “Εὐκομήθη δὲ δόθη τοῦ θεου Εὐγενοῦ Κουμουλαιζήνα δομεστικήν μνήμην Σεπτεμβρίων ἐν ἕτερο παλιάν ἐν ἑτερο ζέζην και μακαρία η μνήμη αὐτῆς”; as one can see, the most important difference between the two versions concerns the date, which now must be corrected following the codex [1260 instead of 1259]). The same notice has been subsequently published (according to the aforementioned Eustratio’s transcription) in the study of F. EUANGELETIUS-NOTARA, Συλλογή χρονολογημένων “σημειωμάτων” ελληνικών κωδίκων 13ο αι. Athens 1984, 66, entry 214, whence the name of Kukulakena has been included in E. TRAPP-H.-V. BEYER-I. G. LEONTIADIES, Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit, vol.1/1–8 Add. Wien 1988, entry 92431, p. 150). H. L. MARGARU, Τίτλοι και ἐπαγγελματικά νόμιμα γυναικών στη Βυζαντία. Συμβολή στή μελέτη για τή θέση της γυναικής στή βυζαντινή κοινωνία. Salonika 2000, 42, based on the latter entry, includes her in the list “of the five women bearing the title of great domestikissa”, according to Margaru “The first one of them is the kouhoukisena Eugenou, who died probably in 1259. We do not possess any further information about her”.

The same notice has recently been re-published (from the aforementioned list of Eustriatides) by STATHES, “Σήμερον ή κτίσις φωτιζεται.” 44. The text of the above notice clearly shows that to the woman in question two titles were attributed. The first one (Kukulakena) might plausibly be associated to the title of kouvukiulakia (kouvikiulakia or Kouvuklaria; see MARGARU, Τίτλοι 63–65). According to MARGARU, Τίτλοι 63, “The kouvikiulakia belonged to the personal service of the Empress as a kind of first chambermaid under the orders of the primikerissa. She was part of the lower ranks of the palatial personnel, as was her male counterpart in the service of the Emperor, and her denomination did not constitute a title of nobility.” Equally interesting is the fact that “she retained her title for life” (MARGARU, Τίτλοι 64). Her second title (Domestikina) is a variant for Domestikissa or Domestikena (see MARGARU, Τίτλοι 41–43). In general the Domestikois, writes MARGARU (p. 41, note 1), “constituted a corps of the Imperial Guard. In the middle Byzantine period, the Domestikos of the Schools was the commander of a number of guards units (scholai). Gradually, the Domestikos’ position was reinforced, due to his proximity and influence over the Emperor, and he became commander in chief of the Byzantine army […] During the 14th-15th centuries, the title of Domestikos referred to court officials; during that period, the domestikos served at the table of the
to the present day, she is only the second attested female composer.

In the present paper, I will focus on these two female composers, who wrote music during the Byzantine times in the Mediterranean area, comparing their respective figures, and on the study, description and analysis of their compositions known to us. My endeavour is to provide an answer, albeit sketchy, to the initial question: Is there in Byzantine music a documented specific “female way” of composing?

1. The composers:
The two aforementioned female composers are separated by approx. one century. The chronological data transmitted to us are not perfectly clear; nevertheless, the so-called Nun must be the older of the two. The only mention of her is to be found, as we have already mentioned, in the codex No. 399 of the Kutlumusi monastery on Mount Athos, dating from the mid-14th century, a milestone that should be considered as the only safe terminus ante quem for determining the chronological frame of her activity. Her flourishing may well be placed in the first half of the 14th century, perhaps, more accurately, in its second quarter, but one obviously cannot exclude an earlier date. On the other hand, chronological evidence for Kladas’ daughter is more

Emperor. In other cases, whilst the title of Great Domestikos was a military one, it was in fact purely honorific, especially in the 13th century [...]. On the other hand, as an ecclesiastical title, it was usually attributed to members or leaders of choirs”. In the specialized musicological bibliography up to the present day (see: Tuliatos-Banker, Medieval Women Composers 693; Eadem, The Traditional Role of Greek Women 121f.; cfr. also Korakides, ‘Η μουσική άξια της γυναικείας φωνής και η συμμετοχή της 129; Staties, “Σήμερον ή κτίσμα φωτιζται.” 11f.) the Kouvuklisa in question is unanimously recognized as a musician (furthermore, Tuliatos-Banker, The Traditional Role of Greek Women 122) suggests that she might also have been a composer: “There is no clear indication that Kouvuklisena was a composer, but since many leading male preceptors of the period were composers or at least arrangers of traditional chant, she also probably composed and improvised”); and this is quite reasonable of course, because of her title (domestikina, i.e. female first chanter). Nevertheless, neither her name nor any mention of some musical composition attributed to her are found (at least up to the present day) in the strictly musical sources (or, for that matter, in any source whatsoever). Given, therefore, the additional dimensions of her two titles cited above, the probability of her having been a composer, or even a female first chanter, should be considered with extreme caution. It would be safer to assume that she was a woman who served at the palace (in the Kouvoukleion, i.e. the royal apartments) and at the same time participated in the palatial womens choir, perhaps as a director (cfr. the relevant primary evidence on the palatial choir cited by Spyroukou 2008:155-56, note 31).

For a complete description of the manuscript, see Staties, Τὸ χειρόγραφα βυζαντινῆς μουσικῆς 233–241.

8 See Staties, Τὸ χειρόγραφα βυζαντινῆς μουσικῆς 233, 241.

concrete. Her composition, which is also the only reference to her, is anthologized, as we have already noted, in the codex No. 2406 of the National Library of Greece10, written by the monk Matthaios Domestikos in 1453.11 This fact, combined with the activities of her father12, who is known to have flourished around 140013, allows us to safely infer that her creations date from the first half of the 15th century. Nevertheless, the way in which she is mentioned in the manuscript (“[…] τινὲς δὲ λέγουσιν ὅτι ἔστι τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ […]”), combined with the fact that this is a unique testimony, allows for the plausible assumption that the author of the codex might have been the receiver of an oral tradition in regard to her, approx. at the time when he wrote the manuscript, which, of course, would be chronologically incorrect; if such is the case, her flourishing should be placed in the second quarter of the 15th century.

Both female composers are referred to in a vague and general fashion, with no indication of their respective names. This is quite usual in medieval times and is generally observed in all manifestations of Byzantine life where women are involved, and therefore mentioned.14 At any rate, the mere indication that the composers are women seems here to be sufficient to establish their identity, in connection to the fact that the existence of women composing ecclesiastical chants was a rare occurrence. The first one is referred to merely as a nun and her name’s omission might also be justified by the propensity of members of the Orthodox monastic communi-


10 For a complete description of the manuscript, see Polites, Κατάλογος χορηγάρων 398–405.

11 See Polites, Κατάλογος χορηγάρων 398, 404. The relevant bibliographical note is recorded with red ink on fol. 2915. ‘Τέλος τῆς ἀκολούθιας τοῦ μετάδιδομαίου ἐπιπεριονοῦ, χειρὶ γραφείτος ἢ καὶ Ματθαῖον τοῦ τάλαντον δομεστικοῦ τῆς μήτε τῆς δικαιμένης, μη(ν)χ οἰκουμένη α’ τοῦ θραύσματος (6961=1453) ἑπώς, ἤδει α’” (see Polites, Κατάλογος χορηγάρων 404f., with a mention of the other publications of the same note).

12 On the composer Ioannes Kladas in general, see Stathe, Ιωάννης Κλαδᾶς ὁ λαμπαδάριος. The most recent reference to him, with a collection of relevant bibliography, is in Chr. I. Demetriu, Spätbyzantinische Kirchenmusik im Spiegel der zypriotischen Handschriftentradition. Studien zum Machairas Kalophonon Sticherarion A4. Frankfurt/Main 2007, 213–216.

13 See Stathe, Ιωάννης Κλαδᾶς ὁ λαμπαδάριος 48.

ties, both men and women, to remain anonymous. The second one is the daughter of the famous lampadarios Ioannes Kladas; beyond the obvious weight of the paternal name, her anonymity might be due to some uncertainty about the authorship of the composition in question, a reserve that is discretely yet clearly voiced in the manuscript.

Both women, however, do not seem to occupy a minor place in the esteem of their coeval fellow composers. In the case of the Nun’s composition, which is anthologized in the unit of the first stasis of the so-called polyeles of Kukumas (setting of the verses of Psalm 134), it is interesting to remark that, apart from the compositions of Nikolaos Kukumas himself, who, as one might naturally expect, composed the major part of the polyeles, the Nun is one of the three composers who

15 Cfr. also Tuliatos-Banker, Women Composers of Medieval Byzantine Chant 63: “It is not uncommon in Byzantine musical manuscripts to identify a composer by profession or place of origin. In several instances composers have even been identified by a family name which has a long standing tradition of musicians. It is in this fashion that one of our women composers is identified. The one and only musical composition and inscription in reference to this composer appears in Athens MS. 2406, folio 258v. The composer is identified by the family name and the relationship of the composer to the patriarch of the family. The inscription reads: ‘It is said that this [composition] is [written] by the daughter of Ioannes Kladas’. It is interesting that in the single reference to this woman composer, no given or Christian name is indicated. In instances where male members of a family are cited, a given name as well as a family relationship is usually included. From this reference it appears that the daughter of Ioannes Kladas was probably known as a singer and composer. Her fame is not as renowned as that of her father who was a leading composer of Byzantine chant of the late fourteenth century as well the ‘Lampadarios’ or maister of the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople’.

16 The formulation of the introduction to the composition (in fol. 258v) is particularly eloquent; I repeat it here: ‘Τοι τιτου του Ιωαννῆ του Κλάδα και λαμπαδάριου του εὐαγγέλας βασιλικοῦ κλήρου: τινάς δὲ λέγουσιν ὅτι ήταν τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ· ἢς δ’ Εἰς μηνυόμενον αὐνόιον ἦταν δίκαιος’.

17 For the polyeles of Nikolaos Kukumas in general, see Chaldaeakes, Ο πολυέλες 702–747. In its present anthologation (fol. 54’–62’ of codex No. 399 of the Kutlumusiu monastery on Mount Athos) the polyeles consists of 26 verses (namely: Δούλοι, Κύριον / Οτί τὸν Ιακόβ / ὅτι ἢγο ἑγόρων / ὅτι μέγας ὁ Κύριος / Πάντα ὅσα ἠθέλησεν ἐποίησεν / ἐν ταῖς θαλάσσαις καὶ ἐν πάσαις τάς ἁβύσσους / ἀστράπας ὡς ὑπὸν ἐποίησεν / ὅσα ἐπάταξε τὰ πρωτότοκα Αἰγίστου / ἐξεπάστειλε σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα / ὅσα ἐπάταξεν ἐν ἄλλῃ πολλὰ / τὸν Σημὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἀμορραίων / καὶ τὸν Ἄγιον βασιλέα τῆς Βασάν / καὶ πάσαις τὰς βασιλείας Χανάν / κληρονομάν Ισραήλ λαβὸ αὐτοῦ / ὅτι κριναί Κύριος τοῦ λαὸν αὐτοῦ / Στομά ἐξούσια // καὶ οὐ λαλήσουσι / θραλμοῦς ἐξούσια καὶ οὐ δύνησον / ὅσα ἐξούσια καὶ οὐ δύνησον // ὅσα ἐξούσια καὶ οὐ δύνησον // ὅσα ἐξούσια καὶ οὐ δύνησον / οἰ ἐνοπιόντες αὐτά / Καὶ πάντες οἱ πεποιθότες ἢ αὐτοῖς / Οἶκος Ισραήλ, εὐλογήσατε τὸν Κύριον / Οἶκος Αμών, εὐλογήσατε τὸν Κύριον / Εὐλογήσατε τὸν Κύριον / Εὐλογήσατε τὸν Κύριον / Ο Κατοικέον Ιερουσαλήμ.

18 The totality of the verses of this polyeles, on the basis not only of its label (polyeles of Kukumas), but also of its initial inscription (“Ἐτερος πολυέλες, ληγόμενος Κουκουμᾶς, ἢς α’ Δούλοι, Κύριον” [see codex No. 399 of the Kutlumusiu monastery on Mount Athos, fol. 54’]), is, of course, attributed to Nikolaos Kukumas (cfr. Chaldaeakes, Ο πολυέλες 702–711); in its present anthologation, the following 23 verses of the polyeles are referred to as written by Kukumas: Δούλοι, Κύριον (fol. 54’) / ὅτι τὸν Ιακόβ (fol. 54’–55’) / ὅτι ἢγο ἑγόρων (fol. 55’) / ὅτι μέγας ὁ Κύριος (fol. 55’) / Πάντα ὅσα ἠθέλησεν ἐποίησεν (fol. 55’) / ἐν ταῖς θαλάσσαις καὶ ἐν πάσαις τάς ἁβύσσους (fol. 55’) / ἀστράπας ὡς ὑπὸν ἐποίησεν (fol. 55’–56’) / ὅσα ἐπάταξε τὰ πρωτότοκα Αἰγίστου (fol. 56’) / ἐξεπάστειλε σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα (fol. 56’–57’) / ὅσα ἐπάταξεν ἐν ἄλλῃ πολλὰ (fol. 56’) / τὸν Σημὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἀμορραίων (fol. 56’–57’) / καὶ τὸν Ἄγιον βασιλέα τῆς Βασάν (fol. 57’) / καὶ πάσαις τὰς βασιλείας Χανάν (fol. 57’) / κληρονομάν Ισραήλ.
are additionally mentioned here\(^{19}\), the other two being priest Manuel Plagites\(^{20}\) and Christophoros Mystakon\(^{21}\), both very well known in their time. The composition of

\[ \text{λαΐ ἀυτοῦ (fol. 57v–58r) / Ός κρινεῖ Kύριος τόν λαὸν αὐτοῦ (fol. 58r) / Στόμα ἔχουσι καὶ οὐ λαλῆσουσι (fol. 58v–59r) / Ὀφθαλμοίς ἔχουσι καὶ οὐκ ὑπόνται (fol. 59r–60r) / Íτα ἔχουσι καὶ οὐκ ἐνεισπυρθένται (fol. 60r–60½) / Οἱ ποιοῦντες αὐτά (fol. 60½) / Οίκος Ἰσραήλ, εὐλογήσατε τόν Κύριον (fol. 60½) / Οίκος Αφρόν, εὐλογήσατε τόν Κύριον (fol. 61v) / Εὐλογήσατε τόν Κύριον (fol. 61v) / Ο κατοικῶν Ἰερουσαλήμ (fol. 61v–62v).} \]

It has to be noted that three of the aforementioned verses (namely: Στόμα ἔχουσι καὶ οὐ λαλῆσουσι [fol. 58v–59r] / Ὀφθαλμοίς ἔχουσι καὶ οὐκ ὑπόνται [fol. 59r–60r] / Íτα ἔχουσι καὶ οὐκ ἐνεισπυρθένται [fol. 60r–60½]) are examples of the so-called kalophonic verses of the polyeleos (on this phenomenon, see CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολύλεός 648–676); furthermore, in the three last verses of the polyeleos (Οίκος Αφρόν, εὐλογήσατε τόν Κύριον [fol. 61v] / Εὐλογήσατε τόν Κύριον [fol. 61v] / Ο κατοικῶν Ἰερουσαλήμ [fol. 61v–62v]) occurs the well known phenomenon (see CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολύλεός 553–627 and idem Ἀπὸ τὸ Τυπικὸ τῆς ἀκολουθίας τοῦ Ῥήματος: Ἡ ἐπιβολή εξοφυλάκιων ποιμηνίων κειμένων στὸν ναό τοῦ πολυλεοῦς, in: Πολυφωνία 11 [2007] 66–88) of the imposition of a non-psalmic poetic text (namely, in the verse Οίκος Αφρόν the following text is inserted: ἰμνήσατε, εὐλογήσατε, δοξάστε τόν Κύριον; the verse Εὐλογήσατε τόν Κύριον is composed by imposing a respective text, namely: Εὐλογήσατε τόν Κύριον, ἄστε τῇ πανάγῳ/ βοήθσουν συμφώνοι/ φονῆν τήν τοῦ ἄγελον χαῖρε εὐλογημένη καὶ μόνῳ χαῖρε χαράς ἀ πρόξενοι; finally, in the verse Ο κατοικῶν Ἰερουσαλήμ the following, very interesting (and unmentioned in the relevant bibliography (see STATHIES, Η Ἀκαθαύστατολοχία 175–263; CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολύλεός 553–627) poem is imposed, composed in 15-syllable verses: Δέορα, Δωρίς πανθύμιμα, λάβε σου τήν κάριαν, // λάβε σου τό ψαλτήριον, λάβε σου τήν κινήραν, // καὶ πᾶλε μοι τά πρόσφορα, Χριστό τῷ βαπτισθέντι.

19 To the Nun is attributed (as it has already been noted) the verse Εὐλογήσατε τόν Κύριον, anthologized on fol. 61v–62v of the codex No. 399 of the Kutlumusiu monastery on Mount Athos, under the inscription Τῆς Καλογραφᾶς.

20 To this composer the verse Στόμα ἔχουσι καὶ οὐ λαλῆσουσι is attributed, anthologized on fol. 58v–59 of the codex No. 399 of the Kutlumusiu monastery on Mount Athos, under the inscription “Τοῦ παπά Μανουήλ τοῦ Πλαγίτου”. This is a kalophonic verse of the polyeleos, whose structure appears as follows: Τοῦ παπά Μανουήλ τοῦ Πλαγίτου: [ἡχός ο’]

Στόμα ἔχουσι καὶ οὐ λαλῆσουσι, καὶ οὐ λαλῆσουσι, καὶ οὐ λαλῆσουσι. / Στόμα ἔχουσι, ἔχουσι στόμα, ἔχουσι καὶ οὐ λαλῆσουσι, τά εἰ- τά εἴδωλα / τόν ἐθνόν, ἀγρίον. / Ἀγρίον / Καὶ χρυσόν, ἤργα / ἤργα χρυσῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀλληλούα. / Πάλιν / Ἀλληλούα, (γ)αλληλούα, ἀλληλούα / Αλληλούα / Αλληλούα, ἀναλληλούα, ἀνάλληλολογία.

The relevant manuscript tradition usually contributes to Manuel Plagites another kalophonic verse: Οφθαλμοίς ἔχουσι (for its structure, see CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολύλεός 660). This verse is sometimes ascribed to a certain Georgios Plagiotes, which has led me in the past to consider these two persons as being one and the same (see CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολύλεός 395–396, with the relevant bibliography on the composer). According to the data of the research conducted up to the present day, the kalophonic verse Στόμα ἔχουσι (referred to in CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολύλεός 714), is attributed here for the first time to this composer.

21 To this composer (see CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολύλεός 430 for the relevant bibliography for him) is attributed the verse Καὶ πάντες οἱ παισιθνέτες ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς, anthologized on fol. 60r of the codex No. 399 of the Kutlumusiu monastery on Mount Athos, under the inscription “Τοῦ Χριστοφόρου”; it is one of the current, simple verses of the polyeleos. It has to be particularly noted that we have here in the relevant research the one and only evidence attributing this verse to the aforementioned composer (see CHALDAEAKES, Ο πολύλεός 430–435, where the verse in question is not referenced to). However, the accumulation of so many “unica” in the present “unicum” (cfr. those mentioned in the two previous notes), interesting as it may be for the tradition represented by the specific manuscript, generates nevertheless some suspicions (which cannot be explored here any further) about the accuracy of those unique testimonies.
Kladas’ daughter, anthologized in the unit of the koinonika (communion hymns) written in all the eight modes (“poems by various poets, both old and new”, according to the manuscript22), is counted among the most familiar and widely spread compositions23 of the most famous Byzantine composers24, all of them male, from the 13th century until the fall of Constantinople, i.e. the period during which the codex was written.25 It is, maybe, worthwhile to comment upon a surreptitious attempt by the author of the manuscript, who seems to have included in his koinonika – in order to preserve them by regrouping them – various compositions attributed to members of “families of canters”26, known from the manuscript tradition of the time27, such as the Korones (Xenos Korones, his brother Agathon and his son Manuel)28, the

22 See codex No. 2406 of the National Library of Greece, fol. 251’ (“Ἀργὴ σὺν Θεῶ ὕγις τῶν κατ’ ἦχον κοινονικῶν, ποιήματα διαφόρων ποιητῶν, παλαιὸν τε καὶ νέον ἄργη, ποίημα κύρ Ιωάννου τοῦ Κλάδα καὶ λαμπαδαρίου τοῦ ἑυγότατος βασιλικοῦ κλήρου· ἦχος α’ τετράψονος, νόος Αἰβητε τοῦ Κύριον”).


24 In this particular section of the koinonika in all eight modes, on fol. 251’–275’ of the codex No. 2406 of the National Library of Greece, compositions are anthologized explicitly attributed to the following (26 in total) composers (by alphabetical order of their first name): Agathon Korones, Demetrios Dokeianos, Demetrios Moschianos, Demetrios Rhiastedenos, Georgios Domestikos Sgouropoulos, Georgios Moschianos, Gerasimos Monk Chalkepoulos, Gregorios Alyates, Ioakeim Monk Charsianites, Ioannes Deacon Sgouropulos, Ioannes Domestikos Dukas, Ioannes Kladas, Manuel Argyropoulos, Manuel Blateros, Manuel Chrysephes, Manuel Korones, Manuel Priest Ampelokepiotes, Markos Monk Xanthopoulos, Michael Priest Propolas, Nikolaos Asan, Pherentares, Phokas Polites, Theodoros Domestikos of Kaklikrateia, Theodoros Katakalon, Theophylaktos Argyropoulos, Xenos Korones. For a general survey of these composers, see M. VEŁMIROVICIĆ, Byzantine Composers in Ms. Athens 2406, in: Essays presented to Egon Wellesz (ed. J. WESTRUP). Oxford 1966, 7–18.


27 Cfr. VEŁMIROVICIĆ, Byzantine Composers 12f.

28 Seven poems by first chanter Xenos Korones are anthologized in this particular section of koinonika in all eight modes in the codex No. 2406 of the National Library of Greece: three Sunday koinonikon (Ἀιώνα τοῦ Κύριον, set in the first plagal mode respectively [fol. 261’–262’], the second plagal mode
Argyropulos (Theophylaktos and Manuel)²⁹, the Sgouropulos (deacon Ioannes and domestikos Georgios)³⁰, and of course the Kladas, represented by Ioannes, the lampadarios of the charitable royal clergy, and by his anonymous daughter.³¹

2. The compositions:
Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the compositions examined here, I would like to stress, as a preliminary remark, that the aesthetic dimension of any Byzantine or post-Byzantine composition is studied, interpreted and analyzed on three levels³²; namely:
- The primordial structure of the composition, resulting automatically from the structure of the poetical text on which the composition is based.
- The secondary morphology of its melos. Here remarks are made on the general musical makeup of the composition, consisting of particular sub-units which the specialized researcher can easily recognize from the way the compositions' musical phrases are developed one after the other. Besides, this further segmen-
tation of the melos is also noted in a way which is more accessible even to a simple but attentive observer of the compositions’ written form, i.e. by marking a dot where the poetic text of the composition is written to indicate the transition between musically different parts of the melody.\textsuperscript{33} In other words, the (usually) extended and melismatically developed papadic compositions offer a peculiar, extremely interesting “morphological punctuation” which, quite understandably, is a very safe guide for the comprehension and exact identification of these secondary structural sub-unities of the composition.

The particular, subtler and more specific techniques of its setting. Here the musicologist focuses on the analysis, either simple or combined, of the melos that is developed in the aforementioned sub-unities. This “internal melic development” is achieved through specific techniques of melopoeia, such as the “repetition”, the “restatement” (palillogy), the “literal imitation”, the “alteration”, the “restitution” (apodosis)\textsuperscript{34}, etc. Identifying of and commenting upon these data further contributes to shedding light on the thought process of the composer, the paths of his musical inspiration and the whole plan of his composition.

Based, therefore, on the aforementioned plan of analysis, I will subsequently present the works of the two female composers examined here:

The composition of the Nun is (as it has already been observed above) a verse from the first stasis of Kukumas’ polyeleos. This means that it forms part of a broader psalm, viz. the 134\textsuperscript{th}, whose structure is already determined by its creator: a psalmic verse (the semi-verse or another, even smaller part of one of the 21 verses comprising the psalm) and a refrain (ephymnion), which, in the psalm in question, is the halleluia\textsuperscript{35}:

\addtocounter{footnote}{1}
\footnotetext[34]{These are the techniques mentioned by CHIRYSANTHOS, Θεωρητικά Μέγα 187–188 (§§ 419–123).}
\footnotetext[35]{See CHALDAIKIS, Ο παλαβάλλως 226–232.
Thus, the composition originally consists of two parts: The first part is defined by the psalmic verse Ἐὐλογήσατε τὸν Κύριον (or, more accurately, by the second semi-verse of verses 19 and 20 of Psalm 134) and the second part by the refrain halleluia:

PART A (Ἐὐλογήσατε τὸν Κύριον):
PART B (άλληλούια):

Each of the two parts of the composition is divided in three sub-unities which can be distinguished on the basis of changes in both the poetical text and the melos, but also of the clearly discernible “morphological punctuation”:

A1 (Εὐλογήσατε τὸ-):

A2 (τοτο [... – τερες [...]):
A3 (τερεμένος [...] – τόν Κύριον):


B2 ([ν] ἀλλη – τιτιτι [...]):

B3 (τιτιτι [...] – [ν] ἀλληλοῦια):
To be more precise, part A1 functions as a kind of “prologue” to the whole composition. Its introductory formula [A.1.a] is the usual initial formula of the majority of the polyeleos verses of this kind.36 Here, however, this formula is slightly different, with a characteristic melodic cadence on the syllable -τε (of the word εὐλογήσατε) [A.1.b], a cadence that leads immediately to the beginning of the kratema (το) [A.1.c], which continues in part A2.

In part A2 one can immediately observe the technique of repetition37, both in the initial musical phrase, which is repeated twice [A.2.a₁–a₂], and in another, more extended formula38 that follows and which is also repeated twice [A.2.c₁–c₂]. Between these two formulas two additional ones [A.2.b₁–A.2.b₂] are inserted, according to the technique of restatement (palillogy)39, which are not identical, but show evident melic similarities.40

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36 See Chaldaekes, Ο πολυέλεος 500–508.
37 Cf. Chrysanthos, Θεορητικόν Μέγα 187 (§ 420): “Repetition is to apply twice a thesis or a whole melodic period on the same notes, which is very usual in the old mathemata and kratemata […]” (see Romanu, Great Theory of Music 189 [§ 420]).
38 This formula is developed with a diplopetasten and a lygisma in its first part and with a respective motive (with ison and hyporrhoe) in the second one; it is extended upon the spectrum of the descending tetrachord (G–D) of the first mode:

39 Cf. Chrysanthos, Θεορητικόν Μέγα 187 (§ 419): “Restatement is to do the ascent or the descent of a melody with the same thesis […]” (see Romanu, Great Theory of Music 188 [§ 419]).
40 In the first formula [A.2.b₁] a triphonic descent is attempted from the top of the tetrachord (G) and a stasis at the basis of the mode (D), while in the second one [A.2.b₂] a respective descent is attempted, but this time in the opposite direction, i.e. from the basis of the tetrachord (D to A), with returning and stasis again on the basis of the mode (D):
This part of the composition (A2) is faintly linked to the next one (A3) with three musical phrases. These three formations which occur here in a dispersed way [A.2.e/A.2.i/A.2.j] are also used by the composer in part A3 [A.3.b/A.3.c/A.3.d], this time in a continuous form and in reversed order.

Part B1, as a counterpoint to part A1, functions as a “prologue” to the second part of the composition. It is developed on the basis of the descending tetrachord G–D [B.1.a] with a characteristic final cadence [B.1.b] at the end of the word halleluia.

Part B2 is dominated by an extensive formula, which occurs, according to the technique of descending restatement (palillogy), twice: first beginning with note a [B.2.d₁] and then with note G [B.2.d₂]. The cadence of this part [B.2.f], stopping at the mode’s diphony, at note F, is also characteristic. This fact, assessed in its broader context and in connection with the previous (first) part of the composition, presents an interesting alternation of the particular cadences chosen by the composer⁴¹, an

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⁴¹ Part A1 ends on the note D, part A2 on the note C and part A3 again on the note D. Part B1 ends on the note D, part B2 (discussed here) on the note F and part B3 on D, respectively.
alternation which, while maintaining as a stable point of reference the basis of the mode (and therefore the tetrachord D–G), is also deployed in the nearby tetrachord C–F, the tetrachord of the fourth plagal mode.

Part B3, which ends the composition, begins with a repetition of the final melodic formation of part B2 (which connects the two parts very harmoniously) [B.2.f – B.3.a]. This is followed by an impressively long “chain” of restatement (palillogy), mostly a descending one, with the same formation\(^\text{42}\), a formation which is obviously set using the “web” (ploke)\(^\text{43}\), occurring six times [B.3.b\(\text{1-6}\)].\(^\text{44}\) This part (and the whole composition) is consummated with a final halleluia [B.3.c], set upon the pentachord (a–D) of the first mode.

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\(^{42}\) This formation is shaped four times by a xeron klasma and two more times (on either side of the aforementioned four) by a kratema; both of them are set on an ascending sign, followed by a descent of two voices:

The subsequent formation [B.3.d], shaped by the same melodic movement, but with the use of antikenoma and plasma, can be considered as a variation on the previous one:

\(^{43}\) According to Chrysanthos, Θεορητίκος Μέγα 175 (§ 390), “[…] use (chresis) was the varied working-out of the chant” (see Romanu, Great Theory of Music 179 [§ 390]); cfr. Chrysanthos, Θεορητίκος Μέγα 175–176 (§ 392); “[…] web (ploke) drops the notes one after the other at the distance of two or more discontinuous intervals, projecting the lower ones or the higher first” (see Romanu, Great Theory of Music 180 [§ 392]).

\(^{44}\) Note, however, that this chain of musical phrases [B.3.b\(\text{1-6}\)] might as well be considered – from a macrostructural point of view – as an integrated (developed following a quadruple sequence) descending (from the top to the basis of the pentachord of the first mode [a to D]) melodic line, which goes as follows: triple repetition of the same formula (consisting of a double web [ploke]) – a repetition that in the first two instances [B.3.b – B.3.bb] is strictly identical, whilst in the third one [B.3.bbb] is transposed lower by two tones, according to the technique of restatement [palillogy], and is, finally, completed, in a calm a simple way, at the basis of the mode [B.3.bbbb].
In an attempt to analyse the whole composition from a macrostructural melic perspective, we might point out the following remarks:

- The core of the composition consists of a musical formula set in the frame of the descending basic tetrachord of the first mode (G–D). This formula, unchanged or, in most cases, with several variations (expanded or contracted) occurs at least twelve times in the composition.\(^{45}\)

The second – by frequency of use – musical formation, occurring six (or even seven) times, is another short formula (consisting of one ascending and two descending voices).\(^{46}\) The essential difference, however, is that the first formula can be found in the entire composition; the formula in question though is only used in a part of the composition (in B3).

Other, regularly repeated formations by means of which the composer completes the construction of her composition is a scaled ascent of three of four notes\(^ {47}\), as well as the known development of tromikon.\(^ {48}\) Both of them occur three times.

The use of a limited number of musical formulas undoubtedly confers a sense of metre to the present composition. The composition is easy not only to learn but also to remember thanks to the harmonious and calculated assembly of the above-mentioned melodic phrases. Finally, since the whole composition is essentially developed on the basic tetrachord of the mode (D–G), its extremely limited vocal length\(^ {49}\) is not only suited perfectly for the monastic environments (from which, by definition, its composer evolved), but also facilitates its interpretation by female voices in a decisive way.\(^ {50}\)

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46 See the formations B.3.b\(_1\)-b\(_2\) και B.3.d (Cfr. supra, notes 42, 44).

47 See the formations A.2.e/Α.3.d/B.2.e. Of course, the melos here is developed according to the “straight direction”, as described by Chrysantios, Θεορητικόν Μέγα 175 (§ 391): “[...] straight is the direction which ascends in succeeding notes [...]” (see Romanus, Great Theory of Music 179 [§ 391]).

48 See the formations A.2.g/A.2.j/Α.3.b.

49 Note that on the accented tone, the melos strikes only once the note A of the lower vocal area (see A.2.b\(_1\)), while on the pitched tone it strikes six times the note a of the highest vocal area (see A.3.e/B.2.b/B.2.d\(_1\)/B.3.b/ B.3.d), thus forming – visually – a full scale; there are also some instances where the melody falls into the middle mode, at the note B of the lower vocal area (see A.1.b/A.2.d-e/A.2.h-i/A.3.b-c).

50 For more specific remarks on the female voice, see Korakides, Ἡ μουσική ἀξία τῆς γυναικείας φωνῆς καὶ ἡ συμμετοχὴ τῆς στὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴ мелодία 922–926 and idem, Ἡ μουσικὴ ἀξία τῆς γυναικείας φωνῆς καὶ ἡ συμμετοχὴ στὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴ мелодία 146–160.
The composition of Kladas’ daughter is (as has been noted above) a koinonikon 
Eις μνημόσυνον αἰώνιον ἔσται δίκαιος, which can be considered as a koinonikon of 
the Week (suitable, notably, for Tuesday) or as a koinonikon chanted in memory 
of saints. Its structure (and, more generally, the structure of all communion hymns, 
whose poetic text is taken from David’s psalms) is similar to the one of the previ-
ously analysed composition: it consists of a psalmic verse chosen in such a way as to 
befit the celebrated feast and the refrain (ephymnion) halleluia, which is very com-
mon in the psalms of David:

Thus, the composition is originally divided into two parts. The first part is defined 
by the psalmic verse Eις μνημόσυνον αἰώνιον ἔσται δίκαιος (Psalm 111, 6b) and the 
second one by the refrain halleluia:

PART A (Εις μνημόσυνον αἰώνιον ἔσται δίκαιος):
PART B (ἁλληλούια):

Each of the two parts of the composition is divided again according to the rhythm of the poetic text, the alternations of the melos and the clearly discernible “morphological punctuation”, in several sub-unities: two for the first part and eight for the second one:

A1 (Εἰς μνημόσυνον αἰώνιον ἔσται):

A2 ([νε] ἔσται δίκαιος):
B1 (ἀλλήλη-[v]ἀλληλούια):

B2 (λέγε):\(^{51}\)

B3 (ἀλλήλη-[v]ἀλληλούια):

B4 (πάλιν):

B5 (ἀλλήλη-[v]ἀλληλούια):

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51 As one can see in the relevant facsimile, at the end of part B1 the usual final point is not marked, which could mean that the setting of the word λέγε was included in this part; nevertheless I separate it here, as part B2 – λέγε – considering it as a prelude to the next part B3 (halleluia), obviously matching the structure of the two subsequent parts (B4 [πάλιν] and B5 [halleluia]).
B6 (α — νανέα [...]):

B7 ([ν]άλληλούια):

B8 (άλληλούια):

To be more specific, part A1 begins with a musical motive (a formula of parakletike) repeated twice [A.1.a₁–a₂]. It continues by using the technique of restatement (palillogy), since the same musical phrase is repeated four times [A.1.b₁–b₄], and closes with a typical cadence on the basis of the fourth mode [A.1.d].

With exactly the same cadence also the part A2 [A.2.d] is completed, following the technique of restitution (apodosis). At the beginning of this part once more a triple

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52 Cfr. CHRYSANTHOS, Θεωρητικά Μέγα 188 (§ 423): “Restitution is to compose for all the endings of the text’s periods one cadence, the melody of which extends to two or three four-beat measures, in the new sticherarion and up to several metres in the papadike [...]” (see ROMANU, Great Theory of Music 189 [§ 423]).
repetition of essentially the same musical motive [A.2.a₁–a₃] occurs, while the melody progressively shifts to the fourth plagal mode before the end [A.2.c].

In part B1 one can distinguish two melodic lines: the first one is shorter, a formation presented as a double (descending) restatement (palillogy) [B.1.a₁–a₂], while the second one is more extended, a formula which (following the technique of repetition) occurs also twice [B.1.b₁–b₂]. The latter two repeated formulas are united by a scheme of scaled ascension of three notes [B.1.c]²⁴.

Parts B3 and B5 (introduced respectively by parts B2 and B4) are strictly identical. The melos (which is the same in both) is elaborate and precious, moving in high vocal areas, and – without using any special technique of recreating identical or similar musical motives – consists of a sequence of separate musical phrases or formations.²⁵

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²³ Despite the (in each case) differentiated notation, in all three formations the melodic movement is exactly the same; the only difference is that in the first two (A.2.a₁ and A.2.a₂) it is developed on a descending tone, inside the di-tone G–E, while in the third one (A.2.a₃) it is developed within the di-tone F–D.

²⁴ A similar formation, developed of course in straight direction (cfr. supra, note 47), has been used by the composer in the previous part (see A.2.b).

²⁵ I note, however, here the following (subsequent) formulas or formations: the kratema [B.3.a], the parakalesma [B.3.b] (a formula also used for the setting of part B4 [àiáìá]), the tromikon
This melic sophistication, which is strongly present in the aforementioned parts (B2–B5), culminates in part B6, with the meaningless syllables of a nenanimos.\textsuperscript{56}

[B.3.c], the psephiston [B.3.d], the other parakalesma with lygisma and antikenoma [B.3.e], the tromikonparakalesma [B.3.g], but also the known (final) formula of the fourth mode [B.3.f].

This part begins with a double (descending) restatement (palillogy) of the formula of parakalesma [B.6.a,–a.y], after which, by means of a scheme of triphonic scaled ascent [B.6.b] (also used by the composer in parts A2 [A.2.b] and B1 [B.1.c]; cfr. supra, note 54), the melody gradually ends (with formations of parakletike [B.6.c] and antikenokyklisma [B.6.d]) at the basis of the fourth plagal mode (C).
In part B7, where the composer lets the melody shift back to the fourth mode\textsuperscript{57}, one can immediately recognize some interesting “internal musical loans”: the melos at the end of the word ἀνάληλεια (syllables -\textalpha\textcircled{o}\textomega) [B.7.c] is strictly identical to the one at the word dikaios in part A2 [A.2.b], while in the final cadence of this part [B.7.d.] the technique of the restitutio (apodosis) is once again used, since the melos is exactly identical to the respective conclusion of part A1 [A.1.c]\textsuperscript{58}.

The composition is completed with part B8, a panegyrical setting of the entire word halleluia, fairly elaborate and in high vocal areas\textsuperscript{59}. The melos, quite surprisingly, does not end on the note G, viz. the base of the fourth mode, which is the main mode of the composition, but on the base of the fourth plagal mode, the note C. This final part may also be considered as a “summary” of the phonetic range of the whole composition, since – despite its shortness – it extends from the note C of the middle vocal area to the note d of the high one.

\textsuperscript{57} This is achieved through a formation of homalon [B.7.a] at the beginning and subsequently with a scaled ascent of four notes [B.7.b.]; note that this is the fourth time that the latter melodic scheme of straight use is used in the present composition (cfr. supra, notes 54 and 56).

\textsuperscript{58} Cfr. TULLIATOS-BANKER, Women Composers of Medieval Byzantine Chant 65: “A double cadence concludes the setting of the antiphon proper. The second cadence which precedes the refrain is composed of a GFGFG motive that brings that portion of the chant to a close on the final G. However, the refrain of the chant does not end on the expected final but rather a fifth lower on G. The cadential formula is a pentachord G to C, which is identified with the lettered brackets C in Example 1. In the final cadence of the refrain, this formula appears in an extended sequential form. In its five-note form, it is the cadence for the fourth halleluia statement and is the first of a double cadence for the setting of the Antiphon proper.”

\textsuperscript{59} Here are also various formulas or formations used such as: kratema with antikenoma [B.8.a], tromikon [B.8.b], antikenokylisma [B.8.c], kratema with psephiston [B.8.d] and lygisma [B.8.e].
From a macrostructural perspective, the composition seems to rely mainly on the calphonic elaboration of the refrain halleluia, undertaken in its second part. Precisely because of the intended melic elaboration, no specific formulas are distinguished, but there is a plethora of elaborated and often sophisticated musical motives which follow each other in order to embellish the whole chant.\footnote{60} Nevertheless, as we have already observed above in our microstructural analysis of the composition, the composer limits herself to simpler musical lines with repetitive musical motives, especially in the first part of her composition, where several formulas (such as those of parakletike, parakalesma, tromikon, etc.) are constantly used; moreover, it is extremely interesting that the same formulas are also found in parts B1, B7 and B8 of the composition, which are placed at both sides of the aforementioned calphonic elaboration of halleluia\footnote{61}. It would not, therefore, be groundless to claim that, beside the above noted obvious and understandable morphological division of the composition in two unequal parts, there is another (latent) division, also in two parts: one simple and classical (A1, A2, B1, B7, B8) and the other more elaborate and calphonic (B2–B6), inserted into the first one. This second division, which is more equal in comparison to the first one, and the subsequent successful attempt to keep the balance between a series of polarized oppositions (old vs. new, classical vs. elaborate, traditional vs. innovative and so on) is, to my opinion, the

\footnote{60} It must, however, be noted that in this part the technique of repetition is also applied in a macrostructural perspective, i.e. not inside just one part of the composition (with the repetition of a musical formula) but in its totality (with the repetition of one full part). Should we try to “deconstruct” this kalphonic part of the composition (exempting the hortative imperatives λέγε and πάλαν – that support the repetition of the musical motive of halleluia – and limiting ourselves to the simple – and not double – quoting of the refrain, with the nenaimos in the end), the remaining melodies would also be limited, both in extent and in melic sophistication, as follows:

\footnote{61} It is worth noting that at the end of part B1 is used a formula of homalon [B.1.d], which we have also observed in the composition of the Nun (in part A2 [A.2.h]), written in exactly the same manner and tonality. Given the fact that the two compositions belong to entirely different kinds (polyeleos and koinonikon respectively) and are set in different modes (first and fourth respectively), this “coincidence” is not what one might anticipate, and is therefore very remarkable.
most important (albeit latent) parameter of the musical proposition presented here by the composer.

3. Remarks:
The two compositions analysed above are typical examples of papadic melopoeia. Despite the fact that they belong to different kinds of psalmody (the first one being a polyeleos verse, the second one a communion hymn), both of them belong to the same kind of melopoeia (i.e. the papadic one), and therefore display obvious similarities, which is also highlighted by their common basic structure (they both consist of two parts, of which the first one sets a psalmic verse and the second one the typical refrain halleluia). Nevertheless, as their respective analysis has clearly showed, their differences are much more remarkable both in their morphological structure and in their whole melodic elaboration:

The composition of the Nun clearly displays an admirable equilibrium between its two parts. In the first part, between the two words of the psalmic hemistich (Evloghias and Kyriov), the composer inserts a kratema consisting of nonsense syllables which are homophonic to the article (tov) existing between the aforementioned words. Observe the characteristic threefold structure of this first part: in part A1 are deployed the word Evloghias and the beginning of the kratema (to) that follows; part A2 is occupied by the kratema, deployed almost entirely upon the syllables toto (formed, as it has been observed above, in such a manner as to produce homophony with the article tov) which only at the end of this part are transformed into the corresponding syllables terere; next comes part A3, in which the remaining portion of the psalmic hemistich (tov Kyriov) is set, preceded though by the kratema terere, as a prolongation of part A2. Thus the kratema (part A2) is not simply inserted by the composer between the two words of the poetic text, but seems to “penetrate” them harmonically, through both the corresponding preparation (in part A1) and its extension (in part A3). It also needs to be noted that the extension of the first part of that kind of composition (where the psalmic verse is deployed, i.e. a poetic text with a clear meaning which should normally be easily understood by the listener) is not a usual practice. From this point of view, the composer does innovate; however, it is probable that she considered this kind of “innovation” as a necessary means to obtain the overall equilibrium that characterizes her composition. Indeed, close observation shows that the second part of the composition displays a similar makeup concerning both the extent of the melody and the morphological structure. There is an equivalent kratema inserted exactly in the middle of the one and only word that constitutes the poetical text, i.e. the word halleluia. Observe again: in part B1 the entire word halleluia is set; part B1 consists of a kratema, which once again is not developed independently, but on the syllable -η of the word halleluia (a syllable occupying the exact middle of the world), a homophonic kratema formed by the syllables ττττ; finally, in part B3 the entire refrain (the word halleluia) is repeated,
Immediately after the kratema τυπτη. In other words, the inserted kratema “penetrates”, as an extension and harmonic connection, not the words of a phrase, but the syllables of a word of the poetical text.

On the contrary, the composition of Εὐλογήσατε τὸν Κύριον Kladas’ daughter follows, in a more conventional way, the traditional melic standards of its time. There is a clearly discernible disequilibrium between its first and its second part regarding both the extent of the melos and the morphological structure. In the first part (based on the psalmic text Εἰς μνημόσυνον αἰώνιον ἔσται δίκαιος), the key-word is the verb ἔσται, which, by means of a melic extension, divides the two portions of the first part: A1 (Εἰς μνημόσυνον αἰώνιον ἔσται) and A2 (beginning with a repetition of the verb, after an emphatic syllable which does not belong to the traditional poetical text: (νε) ἔσται δίκαιος. Thus, instead of a more conventional division of the poetical text in two equal parts (e.g. Εἰς μνημόσυνον αἰώνιον // ἔσται δίκαιος), we have here two unequal parts, with the extensively set verb ἔσται “penetrating” (in a proportional fashion) both of them. The melic center of gravity of the composition is, however, being shifted to its second part, with the exclusive setting of the refrain (halleluia). Essentially, one notes here the usual ecclesiastical practice of repeating this refrain three times: observe the parts B1, B7 and B8, where the halleluia is being set three times in a row. However, this common triple repetition of the refrain is intertwined with a further melic elaboration of the same world, structured according to the then widely diffused practice of twice repeating the halleluia by using the (non related to the poetic text) words λέγε and πάλιν (which are usually referred to as “hortative imperatives”): observe the parts B2–B3 and B4–B5, where we have a double repetition of halleluia (a repetition which is not only verbal but also musical, since the melos in parts B3 and B5 is strictly identical), preceded, respectively, by the two aforementioned words. These words function as a (mental) invitation to the chanter: λέγε (imperative of the verb λέγω = to say) and πάλιν = again (here of course one must infer the previous imperative, i.e. “say [= chant] again”); at the same time, from a melic point of view, they constitute a tangible evidence of the special morphological division of the composition into equal additional parts. This division is discernible not only visually (the two words are marked in red ink, contrary to the rest of the text written in black ink), but also musically, since these words are sung by a soloist, whilst the rest of the composition is chanted by the choir. Finally, this “musical commentary” upon the refrain halleluia is concluded with part B6, a part that duly completes the melic sophistication of the refrain (through the addition of a kratema) and at the same time functions as a harmonious introduction (according to the logic of “preparation”, a popular practice of the composers) to the parts that follow: observe that the kratema here is informed homophonically to the initial letter of the word halleluia (α – νανενα), i.e. the word which the immediately following part (B7) of the composition begins with. Thus, the refrain is repeated five times in all.
4. Conclusion:
What is the (obvious or latent) “message” inherent in these two compositions, which are, at least up to the present day, the only musical products of female composers?

The composition of the Nun shows an admirable equilibrium both in its general construction and in its constitutive parts. It looks like a perfectly executed “embroidery”, brocaded with extraordinary diligence and care, which “ornates” the broader composition of the Kukumas’ polyoleos. It is characterised by its flawless order, an element which, albeit (partially) present in the respective works of male composers, finds here its most unadulterated expression.

The composition of the Kladas’ daughter, also extremely interesting and finely constructed, does not seem to display any clearly discernible difference from other similar compositions elaborated by male musical creators. This is a conclusion to which we are led by a first glance (superficial) assessment. Nevertheless, its internal division into equal parts, as it has been analysed in detail above, marks a sharp contrast to its obvious unequal structure and cannot go uncommented. From it emanates interiority, a secretiveness (whose aim is, of course, symmetry) that can be interpreted as a carefully hidden manifestation of female sensibility.

Using the eye of my imagination, I try to “see” the two women: The first one, dwelling (very probably) in a monastic environment (and therefore enjoying a social and ideological “autonomy”) during the period of the absolute bloom of Byzantine civilization, seems free to express herself according to her nature, to directly and spontaneously manifest her feelings and inspiration, even in the frame of an artistic milieu that was not particularly “favourable” to women. The second one, living under the heavy shadow of a famous father, in a cosmopolitan environment, but in a time of absolute decline and generalized artistic backlash, expresses, through female cunning, a latent reaction, a secret and silent “voice of protest”, a “codified” – impenetrable to the many (but not to the initiated few) – divergence from the musical standards and techniques that were established and widely used by the rest of her (male) colleagues. Both women, however, share a common goal: metre.

And I come to wonder: Could this ordained, well-balanced and moderate spirit that permeates both compositions, either explicitly or implicitly, be the specific contribution of a female composer to Byzantine melopoeia?

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