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A NEW READING OF JOHN LASKARIS'S EXPLANATION AND MODULATION OF MUSICAL ART:

Towards a Critical Edition of Laskaris's Theoretical Treatise

1. The Author of the Treatise: John Laskaris

A number of unexpected details about the life and work of John Laskaris were found in a series of documents kept in the Archives of the State of Venice thanks to the research of M. Manousakas.[1] The documents actually form part of a court case regarding an incident that took place on 6 October 1418 during a memorial service at the Bethlehem Church of Handakas, Heraklion, Crete, involving John Laskaris and the first chanter of Handakas, Manuel Savios,[2] as well as three Orthodox clerics. The case file includes some thirteen documents,[3] the most interesting of which is, of course, Laskaris's defence statement, in which he notes that he "had family and property in Constantinople; however, attracted by the famous Venetian State of Justice, he had left all these behind and moved to Crete, seven years earlier, where he set up a school teaching young people the art of chanting. Moreover, his way of living was exemplary. He chanted very discreetly at funeral services, every time he was asked to. Because of the incident between him and the first chanter, he was brought before the Venetian authorities, who issued a decision according to which he was allowed to chant whenever he was asked to".[4]

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[1] M[anusos] Manousakas, "Μέτρα τῆς Βενετίας ἔναντι τῆς ἐν Κρήτῃ ἐπιρροῆς τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως κατ' ἀνέκδοτα βενετικὰ ἔγγραφα (1418–1419)", *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 30 (1960-1961): 85-144.

[2] About the man cf. Manolis Giannopoulos, *Ἡ ἄνθηση τῆς ψαλτικῆς τέχνης στὴν Κρήτη (1566-1669)*, Studies vol. 11, Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 2004, 59-60.

[3] In particular: Manuel Savios's lawsuit against John Laskaris (of 8 October 1418; cf. M. Manousakas, *op. cit.*, 102, 109-111. John Laskaris's defence statement (of 17 October 1418; *op. cit.*, 106, 116-118), ten witnesses' testimonies (from 10 to 22 October 1418; *ibid.*: 102-105, 107-108, 111-116,118-122) and finally the Duchy's sentence and deportation decision (of 26 October 1418; *op. cit.*, 108-109, 122-123).

[4] *Op. cit.*, 106.

Another equally useful document is the decision and sentencing of the Duke of Crete and the Venetian authorities; it states the following: "The first chanter of the Greeks, Manuel Savios, informed the Government of Crete that John Laskaris, originally from Constantinople, had repeatedly verbally abused him, the chief priestand other priests during funeral and memorial services and had scandalized the congregation. On such an occasion, during a memorial service in Bethlehem on 6 October, Laskaris caused a scandalous incident due to his arrogance, as he ostentatiously stood by the first chanter, got ahead of him in chanting and disregarded his authority. Outraged by his arrogance, the other priests took their robes and left the service. At that point Laskaris started swearing at the first chanter and threatened to kill him because he stood by the Latin law; Laskaris added that he had been appointed by the Patriarch himself and that he had got the Patriarch's licence to chant in any service whatever. Laskaris then called the chief chanter names, such as a servant of the regime, a basket maker, disrespectful, a villain; but he went a step further, swearing against the authority that had appointed him, and thus, Laskaris offended the honour of the Venetian State. Having heard both sides, the Cretan authorities ordered the filing of a suit. As a result, having taken into account Laskaris's verbal abuse not only the of first chanter but also of the State of Venice, and in order to end the scandals and so on, the Duke and the Chire of the Armed Forces, Jacob Gussoni, and their advisors decided to sentence John Laskaris to Indefinite exile, to come into effect within eight days. Moreover, if he should return to Crete, he would be imprisoned for a year and then deported again".[5]

The above information confirms, beyond all doubt, that John Laskaris was in Crete between 1411 and 1418. In addition, a number of other facts about his life and work there come indirectly to light (for example, the very interesting fact that he had set up his own chanting school, which is one of the oldest references to such a school, and the fact that he was teaching ecclesiastical music). Manousakas wrote: "In the eyes of the Greek population of Crete, carrying the name of a famous Byzantine family, he would have been the chosen 'ambassador' for the art of chanting of Byzantium, an art inextricably linked to the Christian Orthodox faith. So it was only natural that he was often invited to chant at funeral and memorial services. But apparently this had an impact on the first chanter of Canea, who saw in Laskaris a hardly negligible competitor. Soon there was friction between the two men, representing two opposing worlds – that is, on the one hand, the world of those who enjoy popular support but who are relatively weak, being in a foreign territory; and on the other hand, the world of those relying on the support of the regime. The chief chanter complained to the Venetian authorities about Laskaris; despite their wish to the contrary, the authorities were forced to rule in favour of Laskaris's right to attend and chant by invitation only. Apparently whenever Laskaris was

[5] *Op. cit.*, 108-109.

invited to a service, the experienced and imposing music teacher from Constantinople was better beyond comparison than the local chanter. Moreover the Orthodox congregations' preference and praise could not have been directed to any other but the representative of the free Byzantine State and Orthodoxy, and not to the obediently compliant chief chanter who was forced to maintain close links with the detestable Latin regime in Crete".[6]

Furthermore, several conclusions can be reached from these words, in particular as regards John Laskaris's background: Laskaris himself confirms that he was from Constantinople, that he left his family and property to take up residence in Crete "attracted by the famous Venetian State of Justice".[7] As Stathis has already noted, "his motive was not to make more money; he went to Crete for reasons linked to Byzantium and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in particular, so as to enhance and support the Orthodox spirit of the Cretans who had to suffer all sorts of pressure under the Venetian Catholic regime. It seems that John Laskaris was well-liked and well-respected by both the Emperor Manuel Palaiologos the Second and the Ecumenical Patriarch Joseph the Second. This is clearly demonstrated in the statement by Dimitrios Kolyvas, a defence witness for Laskaris; he noted 'como iera auanti lo misser lo imperador e del patriarcha vigniua amadha la mia arte'. We therefore have to accept that Laskaris was already a mature, skilful music teacher and an experienced chanter when he arrived in Crete in 1411".[8]

In this case one must assume that Laskaris was born just before the third quarter of the 14th century,[9] most probably in Constantinople, even though another point of view has also been registered by Miloš Velimirović: "The fact that he mentioned his parents as still living makes one think that he might have been relatively young at the time of his departure from Constantinople, c.1411. This move to Crete may have been a consequence of a panic caused by the Turkish siege of Constantinople in 1411, when it may have appeared to its inhabitants that the city was about to fall into Turkish hands".[10]

There is no further information regarding his life after this incident; Stathis suggests that "Laskaris's life lasted up to the reign of John Palaiologos (1425-1448), but it is not known whether

[6] *Op. cit.*, 89.

[7] See above, note 4.

[8] Gregorios Stathis, *Ἡ δεκαπεντασύλλαβος ὑμνογραφία ἐν τῇ βυζαντινῇ μελοποιίᾳ καὶ ἔκδοσις τῶν κειμένων εἰς ἓν Corpus*, Studies vol. 1, Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 1977, 96.

[9] The first mention of his name is in a codex kept at Mount Athos (Lavra E 108) of the fourth quarter of the 14th century; see Andrija Jakovljević, *Δίγλωσση παλαιογραφία καὶ μελωδοὶ-ὑμνογράφοι τοῦ κώδικα τῶν Ἀθηνῶν 928,* Nicosia: Centre for Studies of the Monastery of Kykkos, 1988, 77.

[10] Miloš Velimirović, "Two composers of Byzantine Music: John Vatatzes and John Laskaris", in J. Larue et al. (eds.), *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music. A Birthday offering to Gustave Reese*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1966, 822.

he remained in Crete or returned to Constantinople".[11] Generally speaking, Laskaris's name is very frequent in the existing musical sources: he is usually referred to as "John Laskaris" (occasionally followed by the phrase "of Crete"), "John Laskaris Pigonites", "John Laskaris Syrpanagos", or "John Laskaris Kalomisides". Since the surname Laskaris was particularly well known in Byzantium, there is significant speculation around the adjectives "Pigonites" and "Syrpanagos"; so far, Velimirović's view has prevailed: "If one follows the reasoning of Ostrogorski that the prefix 'syr-' is of Western origin it would also appear plausible that its use, which seems to be rather rare, by implication suggests descent from a noble family (our singer may not have been immune from snobbish tendencies) and the Laskaris family is known to have played an important role in the history of Byzantium […] The elimination of the prefix 'syr-' leaves the surname 'Paganou' which both in its corrupt pronunciation and also in its script could conceivably come close to the already mentioned designation of Laskaris as 'Pigonitis'. One of the hypothetical explanations of this term might be that an inhabitant of the Constantinopolitan suburb αἱ Πηγαί (on the Pera side of the Golden Horn) could have been known as a *Πηγωνίτης*. If such a hypothesis may be defended on linguistic grounds it would explain the origin of John Laskaris and also confirm his origin in Constantinople which, as he found out later, did not help him in establishing permanent residence in Crete".[12]

As regards the reference to his origin, "of Crete", this is now debatable; he might have been called so because of his long stay and rich activity on the island of Crete rather than because his true origins were Cretan.[13] And finally, the appellation "Kalomisides", which was also used for Laskaris, is not easy to explain; it sounds, however, like an ordinary Greek surname with the usual *-ides* ending that normally indicates a Pontiac origin - Pontiac being an area close to Constantinople.

[11] Gregorios Stathis additionally notes that "codex Sinai 1584 includes a Polychronion for King John Palaiologos and Queen Maria followed by a Pentikostarion, 'performed during the King's dinner', both composed by John Laskaris"; cf. *op. cit*., 96.

[12] M. Velimirović, *op. cit*., 825.

[13] Moreover, the aforementioned case file includes a witness statement by Angelos Sevastos, resident of Vourgos Canea (cf. M. Manousakas, *op. cit*., 107-108, 119-121), according to which Father Skouloudis [Costas Philippou], one of those involved, verbally abused Laskaris by saying "homo nullius valoris uenit huc et cantat et non sinit alios cantare, schatonissiotus, ego vollo recedere, nollo stare ubi sunt rixe et scandalla"; according to Manousakas (*op. cit.,* 127) "islanders calling Laskaris an 'island peasant', is quite bizarre since Laskaris himself testified that he was a resident of Constantinople. Could it then be that Laskaris was originally from one of the islands close to the capital of Byzantium"?

Laskaris's Musical Oeuvre

Laskaris's limited (yet quite significant) musical oeuvre includes the following notable compositions[14]:

- Asmatikon Trisagion (8th mode)
- Allilouiaria (4th and 5th modes)
- Wednesday Communion Hymn (*Ποτήριον σωτηρίου λήψομαι,* 7th mode)
- Sunday Communion Hymns (*Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον,* 1st and 4th modes, the last one under the inscription *ὀργανικόν*)
- Kratimata (1st, 2nd [two compositions; one of them under the inscription *ποταμίδα*] and 8th modes)
- Theotokia Megalynaria (two compositions in the 8th mode: *Μυστικὸς εἶ, Θεοτόκε, παράδεισος* and *Ἐξέστη ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὁ οὐρανός*)
- Mathima Katanyktikon (*Τὰ πλήθη τῶν πεπραγμένων μοι δεινῶν*, 6th mode)
- Mathimata Theotokia [six compositions: *Χαῖρε, ἡ τῆς χάριτος πηγή* (1st mode), *Τὴν ὡραιότητα τῆς παρθενίας σου* (3rd mode), *Δέσποινα πάντων δέσποινα καὶ πάντων ἀνωτέρα* (4th mode), *Χαῖρε, πύλη Κυρίου* (6th mode), *Ἀνύμφευτε παρθένε* (8th mode), *Ὁ ναός σου, θεοτόκε* (8th mode)]
- Mathimata for the feasts of Holy Cross (*Σὺ μου σκέπη κραταιὰ ὑπάρχεις*, 2nd mode), Christmas (*Ἀνύμφευτε παρθένε πόθεν ἤκεις*, 6th mode), Easter (*Ὢ θείας, ὦ φίλης*, 1st mode) and Pentecost (*Χαίροις, ἄνασσα, μητροπάρθενον κλέος*, 4th mode).

Laskaris's poetry is also worthy of note; some of his very interesting fifteen-syllable lyrics were used by such notable composers as John Kladas [the theotokion poem *Λαμπάδα φαίδρυνον, σεμνή, πύλη φωτὸς ἀδύτου* (4th mode), as well as three triadic poems (all of them composed in the 8th mode):

[14] Concerning Laskaris's general compositional activity, see also: M. Manousakas, *op. cit*., 881; M. Velimirović, *op. cit*., 823-831 [where (pp. 827-831) a transcription into the staff notation of Laskaris' Theotokion Mathima *Τὴν ὡραιότητα τῆς παρθενίας σου* (3rd mode), taken from codex No. 2406 of the National Library of Greece (Papadike, A.D. 1453, ff. 422r-423r), may also be found]; Manolis Hadjigiakoumes, *Μουσικὰ χειρόγραφα Τουρκοκρατίας (1453-1832)*, 1st volume, Athens 1975, 333; Andrija Jakovljević, *op. cit*., 76-79; Evgeny Vladimirovich Gertsman, *Manuscripta Graeca. Musica Petropolitana. Catalogus,* tomus I: Bibliotheca Publica Rossica, Petropolis: Glagol, 1996, 620; idem, *Manuscripta Graeca. Musica Petropolitana. Catalogus*, tomus II, Petropolis: Bibliotheca Rossicae Academiae Scientiarum, Archivus Academiae Scientiarum, Bibliotheca Universitatis, Hermitage, 1999, 483; Manolis Giannopoulos, *op. cit*., 56-58; a more detailed reference to some of his aforementioned compositions may be seen in: G. Stathis, *op. cit*., 95-97, 182[19-20], 183[22], 253[178-9] [regarding *Mathimata*]; Gregorios Anastasiou, *Τὰ κρατήματα στὴν ψαλτικὴ τέχνη,* Studies vol. 12, Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 2005, 311-312 [regarding *Kratimata*]; Sevasti Mazera-Mamali, *Τὰ μεγαλυνάρια θεοτοκία τῆς ψαλτικῆς τέχνης,* Studies vol. 16, Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 2008, 205-206 [regarding *Theotokia Megalynaria*].

Λόγε πατρὸς καὶ συμφυὲς πνεῦμα, ταυτότης μία / Θεόν, Τριάδα οἱ πιστοὶ ὑμνοῦμεν ἀσυγχύτως / Ἐπὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ μόνου[15] and Manuel Argyropoulos from Rhodes [the theotokion poem *Λάμψον μοι φῶς ἀνέσπερον ἐλέους σου, παρθένε* (4th mode); in a listing of the last composition, found particularly in codex No. 2604 of the National Library of Greece (Papadike, A.D. 1463, f. 268^{v}), Manuel Argyropoulos is referred to as Laskaris's student ("Τοῦ μαθητοῦ αὐτοῦ, κὺρ Μανουὴλ τοῦ Ἀργυροπούλου")]. As an example, there follows one of those poems, the acrostic of which spells his name, *Laskaris*:[16]

Λόγε πατρὸς καὶ συμφυὲς πνεῦμα, ταυτότης μία,
ἄναρχε φύσις, ἄτμητε, διαιρετὴ προσώποις,
συνεκτικὴ τοῦ σύμπαντος, τριὰς ἑνικωτάτη,
κάθαρον ῥύπου με παντός, γεένης ῥυομένη,
ἀκαταπαύστως μέλποντα τὸ πανσθενές σου κράτος,
ῥῶσις γὰρ πέλεις καὶ ζωή, ἔρως, φῶς τοῦ νοός μου,
ἰδιοτήτων ἕνωσις, μία τριῶν προσώπων,
σῶσόν με, φύσις ἄκτιστε, τριάς, μονάς, θεότης.

3. Laskaris's Theoretical Treatise: Explanation and Modulation of Musical Art

Of particular interest is John Laskaris's short treatise on music theory, whose title is as follows: "This is another **modulation of musical art**, more wisely devised and more exact in every detail, worked out and drawn up **by John Laskaris the Kalomisides and Maistor**. It is both contrary to the first one and not contrary. It [appears] contrary to the first one for those [readers] who did not understand it as it was written; but for those who possess full artistic and exact knowledge of it, it is rather a verification and a supplement, as it revealed itself as a great delight by virtue of [a command of] its skill, having clearly indicated its peculiarities by **showing the whole essence and movements of the four [Authentic] Modes and of their four Plagal Modes, both in ascending and descending**".[17]

[15] For the last one cf. also Achilleas Chaldaeakes, *Ὁ πολυέλεος στὴν βυζαντινὴ καὶ μεταβυζαντινὴ μελοποιία,* Studies vol. 5, Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 2003, 438.

[16] Taken from Gregorios Stathis, *op. cit.*, 253[178].

[17] Christos Bentas, "The treatise on music by John Laskaris", in M. Velimirović (ed.), *Studies in Eastern Chant*, vol. 2, London – New York: Oxford University Press, 1971, 23; Antonios Alygizakis, *Ἡ ὀκταηχία στὴν ἑλληνικὴ λειτουργικὴ ὑμνογραφία*, Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 1985, 239[1-9].

Indeed, this theoretical treatise (which is accompanied by a very interesting diagram[18]) describes both the descending movements of the authentic modes and the ascending movements of the plagal ones; and subsequently the creation of some peculiar versions of the same modes such as, on the one hand, the para-kyrioi, mediant, para-mediant and plagal modes; and, on the other hand, the para-plagal, di-phonic, tri-phonic and tetra-phonic ones: "In the descent of any melody from the authentic modes, these result in para-kyrioi, mediant, para-mediant and plagal modes, and these terminate on their own fundamentals. In ascent from the plagal modes, one obtains the para-plagal, di-phonic, tri-phonic and tetra-phonic ones and these terminate again in plagal (being like the 'sons' of the authentic modes)".[19]

The present author is currently working on a new critical edition of Laskaris's treatise (a project that has until now never been undertaken); it was thus necessary to reread it many times, and some very interesting musicological points emerged, through which one may not only correct some misunderstood points of the treatise, but also, and more significantly, understand the entire (theoretical and practical) musical philosophy of its writer.

Obviously, not all these points or the newly-discovered points concerning the treatise can be presented here; nevertheless, the remaining part of this paper will be devoted to a series of prelminary remarks.

A. The Manuscript Tradition of the Treatise

As far as is known, Laskaris's treatise is anthologized in five codices:

Codex No. 2401 of the National Library of Greece [NLG], ff. 223^{r}-224^{r}, from which Bentas (1971: 21-27) has published its text in the Greek language, accompanied by a translation into English.

Codex No. 570 of Dionysiou monastery at Mount Athos, ff. 40^{r}-42^{r}, from which Alygizakis has published the text in Greek.[20]

Codex Vallicelliano Greco 195, mentioned by Tardo,[21] Velimirović[22] and Bentas.[23]

[18] C. Bentas, *op. cit.*, 22-23 (plate 2); Antonios Alygizakis, *op. cit.*, 270 (plate 30) [= Picture No. 1]. Panagiotes Nikolopoulos, "Συνοπτικὴ καταγραφὴ τῶν νέων εὑρημάτων ἑλληνικῶν χειρογράφων τοῦ Σινᾶ", in *Ἱερὰ Μονὴ καὶ Ἀρχιεπισκοπὴ Σινᾶ, Τὰ νέα εὑρήματα τοῦ Σινᾶ*, Athens: Ministry of Culture and Institute of Mount Sinai, 1998: (plate 28) [= Picture No. 2].

[19] C. Bentas, *op. cit.*, 23; A. Alygizakis, *op. cit.*, 239[9-13].

[20] Cf. A, Alygizakis, *op. cit.*, 239-240.

[21] Lorenzo Tardo, *L'Antica Melurgia Buzantina. Nell'Interpretazione Della Scuola Monastica Di Grottaferrata*, Grottaferrata: Scuola Tip. Italo Orientale "S. Nilo", 1938, 148.

[22] M. Velimirović, *op. cit.*, 823-824.

[23] C. Bentas, *op. cit.*, 21_2.

Codices Sinai 398&400, recently mentioned by Nikolopoulos.[24]

The last three codices of this small manuscript tradition are almost unknown in the relevant research to date. It is hoped that their examination, in the frame of the forthcoming critical edition of the treatise, will enrich our knowledge of the entire handwritten tradition of the text.

B. Textual Variations

Here is a first comparison (through two parallel indexes) of the two published versions of the treatise's text, being at the same time a relevant first comparison between versions of the same text written in the two basic codices of its manuscript tradition. On the one hand the version of NLG 2401 is a short and incomplete one, while on the other hand the relevant version of Dionysiou 570 is expanded to the fullest extent.

Codex NLG 2401[25]

Explanation and Modulation of Musical Art

This is another modulation of musical art, more wisely devised and more exact in every detail, worked out and drawn up by John Laskaris. It is both contrary to the first one and not contrary. It is [appears] contrary to the first one for those [readers] who did not understand it as it was written; but for those who possess full artistic and exact knowledge of it, it is rather a verification and a supplement, as it revealed itself as a great delight by virtue of [a command of] its skill, having clearly indicated its peculiarities by showing the whole essence and movements of the four [Main] Modes and of their four Plagal Modes, both ascending and descending. In the ascent of a Plagal Mode, one obtains the di-phonic, tri-phonic, and tetra-phonic ones and these terminate into their Plagal and other [Modes]. In descent from the Main Modes, these result in Mediant and Para-Mediant, Plagal and Para-Plagal Modes, and these terminate on their own fundamentals. For it was written that there are four Main and four Plagal Modes and that the Main Modes are Mode I, Mode II, Mode III, and Mode IV, while the Plagal Modes are Mode I Plagal, Mode II Plagal, Mode III Plagal that is the Barys, and Mode IV Plagal.

The Main Modes, in their descent, have Mediant Modes. Likewise the Plagal Modes, in their ascent, have Mediant Modes which we call di-phonic. The Mediant Mode of Mode I is the Barys Mode; the Mediant of Mode II is Mode IV Plagal; the Mediant of Mode III is Mode I Plagal; and the Mediant of Mode IV is Mode II Plagal. As we have previously stated, the Plagal Modes also have their di-phonic Modes in their ascent: Mode I Plagal has as its di-phonic Mode the Mode III; Mode II Plagal has Mode IV as its di-phonic Mode; Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys, has Mode I as its di-phonic Mode; and Mode IV Plagal has Mode II as its di-phonic Mode.

The Mediant Modes have certain peculiarities when they are sung [in derivation] from the Main Modes: they are formed and changed into Para-Mediant [Modes], and the Plagal ones into Para-Plagal [Modes]. The Para-Mediant Main Modes are the following: The Para-Mediant of Mode I is Mode II Plagal; the Para-Mediant of Mode II is the Barys; the Para-Mediant of Mode III is Mode II [sic=IV] Plagal; and the Para-Mediant of Mode IV is Mode I Plagal.

The Para-Plagal of these are the following: The Para-Plagal of Mode I is Mode II [sic=IV] Plagal; the Para-Plagal of Mode II is Mode I Plagal; the Para-Plagal of Mode III is the [Mode] Legetos; and the Para-Plagal of Mode IV is Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys.

Codex Dionysiou 570[26]

Ἰωάννου Λάσκαρη, «Παραλλαγὴ τῆς μουσικῆς τέχνης»

Ἑτέρα παραλλαγὴ τῆς μουσικῆς τέχνης, σοφωτέρα καὶ ἀκριβεστέρα εἰς ἄκρον, πονηθεῖσα δὲ καὶ συνταχθεῖσα, παρὰ κὺρ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Λάσκαρη τοῦ Καλομισίδου, καὶ μαΐστορος. ἐναντία μὲν τοῖς πρώτοις, καὶ οὐκ ἐναντία. ἐναντία γάρ, πρὸς τοὺς μὴ εἰδότας ὡς γέγραπται. εἰς δὲ τοὺς ἐντέχνως κατέχοντας αὐτὴν ἀκριβῶς, βεβαίωσίς τε μᾶλλον καὶ ἀναπλήρωσις, καὶ μεγίστη ἡδύτης, ἐντεῦθεν ἀναφανεῖσα τῇ τέχνῃ, ὡς τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἰδιώματα, σαφέστατα καταγγέλουσα, ἀποδεικνύουσα δέ, ἅπασαν τῶν τεσσάρων κυρίων ἦχων τὴν ὑπόστασίν τε καὶ κίνησιν, καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων πλαγίων ἤχων αὐτῶν, ἔν τε ἀναβάσει καὶ καταβάσει. ἐν μὲν τῇ ἀναβάσει τοῦ ἤχου ἐκ τῶν πλαγίων, διφώνους καὶ τριφώνους, καὶ τετραφώνους ἀποτελοῦσι, καὶ εἰς τοὺς πλαγίους αὐτῶν καὶ υἱοὺς καταλήγουσιν. ἐν δὲ τῇ καταβάσει αὐτῶν ἐκ τῶν κυρίων, εἰς μέσους ἐκπίπτουσι, καὶ παραμέσους, εἰς πλαγίους τε καὶ παραπλαγίους, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν θεμέλιον καταλήγουσι. γέγραπται γάρ, ὅτι κύριοι ἦχοι, εἰσὶ τέσσαρες, καὶ τέσσαρες πλάγιοι. καὶ κύριοι μὲν εἰσίν, ὁ πρῶτος, ὁ δεύτερος, ὁ τρίτος, καὶ ὁ τέταρτος. οἱ πλάγιοι δὲ εἰσίν, καὶ αὐτοὶ τέσσαρες. ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ πρώτου, ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ δευτέρου, ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τρίτου, ἤγουν ὁ βαρύς, καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τετάρτου.

ἔχουσι δὲ οἱ κύριοι ἦχοι, καὶ μέσους ἐν ταῖς κατιούσαις. ὁμοίως καὶ οἱ πλάγιοι μέσους ἐν ταῖς ἀνιούσαις, οὓς λέγομεν διφώνους. ὁ μέσος γὰρ τοῦ πρώτου, ἐστὶν ὁ βαρύς, καὶ ὁ μέσος τοῦ δευτέρου ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τετάρτου• ἔστι δὲ καὶ ὁ τρίτος μέσος δευτέρου, καὶ πρώτου. Καὶ ὁ μέσος τοῦ τρίτου, ὁ πλάγιος του πρώτου. καὶ ὁ μέσος τοῦ τετάρτου, ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ δευτέρου, ὅ(ς) καὶ καλεῖται λέγετο. τὸ γὰρ λέγετό ἐστιν πλάγιος δευτέρου καὶ βαρύς. ἔχουσι δὲ καὶ οἱ πλάγιοι ἦχοι ὡς προείπομεν, διφώνους ἐν ταῖς ἀνιούσαις. ὁ πλάγιος πρώτου, ἔχει δίφωνον τὸν τρίτον, καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ δευτέρου, ἔχει δίφωνον τὸν τέταρτον. καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τρίτου, ἤγουν ὁ βαρύς, ἔχει δίφωνον τὸν πρῶτον. καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τετάρτου ἔχει δίφωνον τὸν δεύτερον.

ἔχουσι δὲ καί τινα ἰδιώματα οἱ μέσοι ἀδόμενοι ἐκ τῶν κυρίων, ὅτι σχηματίζονται καὶ ἀλλοιοῦνται εἰς παραμέσους, καὶ οἱ πλάγιοι εἰς παραπλαγίους. οἱ δὲ παράμεσοι τῶν κυρίων, εἰσὶν οὗτοι παράμεσος πρώτου, ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ δευτέρου. ἕτεροι λέγουσι τὸν πλάγιον τοῦ τετάρτου ἢ τὸ νεανές. ὁ δὲ παράμεσος τοῦ δευτέρου, ἐστὶν ὁ βαρύς, καὶ ὁ παράμεσός τοῦ πρώτου [sic=τρίτου]*, ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ δευτέρου ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τετάρτου καὶ ὁ παράμεσος τοῦ τετάρτου πλάγιος τοῦ πρώτου.*

παραπλάγιοι δὲ τούτων, εἰσὶν οὗτοι. παραπλάγιος πρώτου ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ δευτέρου [sic=τετάρτου] *καὶ παραπλάγιος τοῦ δευτέρου, ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ πρώτου, καὶ παραπλάγιος τοῦ τρίτου, τὸ λέγετο καὶ παραπλάγιος τοῦ τετάρτου <καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τετάρτου>, ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τρίτου, ἤγουν ὁ βαρύς.*

ἔχουσι δὲ οὗτοι, καὶ τριφώνους, καὶ τετραφώνους, οὓς καὶ παρακυρίους λέγομεν. ἐξ αὐτῶν γὰρ καὶ νάοι

[24] P. Nikolopoulos, *op. cit.*, 244 and plate 28 in M. Giannopoulos, *op. cit.*, 58_{27}.

[25] C. Bentas, *op. cit.*, 23-24.

[26] A. Alygizakis, *op. cit.*, 239-240.

These also have tri-phonic and tetra-phonic Modes which we call Para-Kyrioi and from these are then derived those [called] Naoi, Protobaroi and the tetra-phonic [Modes]. Know this, O listener, that the Mode is changeable; and that the Main Modes thus change [modulate] into the Plagal Modes, and the Plagal into the Main Modes again, just as the Master John Koukouzeles, of Blessed Memory, has shown in his wisest method of modulation. For he has demonstrated that in ascending by means of an Oligon, the Plagal Modes are [made] into Main Modes and that in descending by means of an Apostrophos the Main Modes become Plagal. So much then, for these matters.

γεννῶνται, καὶ πρωτόβαροι καὶ τετράφωνοι. τοῦτο γὰρ γίνωσκε, ὦ ἀκροατά, ὅτι τρεπτικός ἐστιν ὁ ἦχος. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οἱ κύριοι εἰς πλαγίους τρέπονται, καὶ οἱ πλάγιοι εἰς κυρίους τὸ ἀνάπαλιν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ θαυμάσιος μαΐστωρ Ἰωάννης ὁ Κουκουζέλης, ἐν τῇ σοφωτάτῃ αὐτοῦ μεθόδῳ τῇ παραλλαγῇ, τοῦτο ὑπέδειξεν, ἐν μὲν τῇ ἀναβάσει διὰ τοῦ ὀλίγου, τοὺς πλαγίους ἤχους, κυρίους ἀπέδειξεν, ἐν δὲ τῇ καταβάσει διὰ τοῦ ἀποστρόφου τοὺς κυρίους ἤχους πλαγίους πάλιν ἀπέδειξεν. καὶ ταῦτα μὲν περὶ τούτων.

ὁ γὰρ πλάγιος τοῦ πρώτου, ἔχει τρίφωνον τὸν τέταρτον, καὶ τὸν πρῶτον, τὸν τέταρτον μέν, ἀπὸ τῆς ὑποκείμενης παραλλαγῆς. ἀπὸ δὲ ἑτέρας διπλοπαραλλαγῆς, εὑρήσεις τὸν πρῶτον ἀκωλύτως, καὶ οὐχὶ τὸν τέταρτον. ὅταν γὰρ ἐπάνω του τετάρτου διφωνίαν ποιήσῃς, εὑρήσεις τρίτον, ὡς παρὰ τοῦ πρώτου. καὶ καταβὰς πάλιν δύο φωνὰς ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἤγουν τοῦ τρίτου αὕτη γὰρ ἡ πτῶσις γενᾶσθαι εἴωθεν μεταξὺ πρώτου καὶ τετάρτου, πάλιν τὸν αὐτὸν ἦχον εὑρήσεις, ἤγουν τὸν τέταρτον. καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ δευτέρου ἔχει τρίφωνον τὸν πρῶτον καὶ τὸν νενανῶ, καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τρίτου ἤγουν ὁ βαρύς, ἔχει τρίφωνον τὸν δεύτερον. καὶ ὁ πλάγιος τοῦ τετάρτου, ἔχει τρίφωνον τὸν τρίτον.

οἱ γὰρ τετράφωνοί εἰσι τοῦ καθ' ἑνὸς ἤχου, ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ. ὅταν γὰρ ἐξέλθῃς ἀπὸ τὸν καθ' ἓν πλάγιον φωνὰς τέσσαρας, αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ, ὁ λεγόμενος τετράφωνος.

εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ παρακύριοι τῶν ἤχων, ἤγουν τῶν πλαγίων αὐτῶν, οὗτοι. παρακύριος τοῦ πλαγίου πρώτου, ἐστὶν ὁ δεύτερος. παρακύριος τοῦ πλαγίου δευτέρου ἐστὶν ὁ τρίτος. παρακύριος τοῦ βαρέος ἐστὶν ὁ τέταρτος. παρακύριος τοῦ πλαγίου τετάρτου, ἐστὶν ὁ πρῶτος.

Γίνωσκε, ὦ ἀκροατά, ὅτι πᾶσα τριφωνία, τὸν αὐτὸν ἦχον ποιεῖ, ἤγουν ἀπὸ τὸν καθ' ἓν ἦχον εὖγα φωνὰς τρεῖς, πάλιν ὁ αὐτὸς ἦχός ἐστι. αὕτη ἐστὶ ἡ τριφωνία.

C. The Treatise's Contents and Structure

The treatise's contents are structured as follows[27]:

<Title>	Explanation and Modulation of Musical Art
<Introduction>	*This is another modulation of musical art, more wisely devised and more exact in every detail, worked out and drawn up by John Laskaris. It is both contrary to the first one and not contrary. It is [appears] contrary to the first one for those [readers] who did not understand it as it was written; but for those who possess full artistic and exact knowledge of it, it is rather a verification and a supplement, as it revealed itself as a great delight by virtue of [a command of] its skill, having clearly indicated its peculiarities by showing the whole essence and movements of the four [Main] Modes and of their four Plagal Modes, both ascending and descending.*
<the ascending movements of Plagal and the descending movements of Main Modes>	*In the ascent of a Plagal Mode, one obtains the di-phonic, tri-phonic, and tetra-phonic Modes and these terminate into their Plagal and other [Modes]. In descent from the Main Modes, these result in Mediant and Para-Mediant, Plagal and Para-Plagal Modes, and these terminate on their own fundamentals.*
<the identity of the four Main and four Plagal Modes respectively>	*For it was written that there are four Main and four Plagal Modes and that the Main Modes are Mode I, Mode II, Mode III, and Mode IV, while the Plagal ones are, Mode I Plagal, Mode II Plagal, Mode III Plagal that is the Barys, and Mode IV Plagal.*
<Mediant and di-phonic Modes>	*The Main Modes, in their descent, have Mediant Modes. Likewise the Plagal Modes, in their ascent, have Mediant Modes which we call di-phonic. The Mediant Mode of Mode I is the Barys Mode; the Mediant of Mode II is Mode IV Plagal; the Mediant of Mode III is Mode I Plagal; and the Mediant of Mode IV is Mode II Plagal. As we have previously stated, the Plagal Modes also have their di-phonic Modes in their ascent: Mode I Plagal has as its di-phonic Mode the Mode III; Mode II Plagal has Mode IV as its di-phonic Mode; Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys, has Mode I as its di-phonic Mode; and Mode IV Plagal has Mode II as its di-phonic Mode.*

[27] From here on Laskaris's text according to Bentas's edition (*op. cit.*, 23-24) is employed; the notes in the left column are comments by the present author.

<Mediant and Plagal Modes peculiarities (Para-Mediant and Para-Plagal Modes)>	*The Mediant Modes have certain peculiarities when they are sung [in derivation] from the Main Modes: they are formed and changed into Para-Mediant [Modes], and the Plagal into Para-Plagal [Modes].*
<Para-Mediant Modes >	*The Para-Mediant Main Modes are the following: The Para-Mediant of Mode I is Mode II Plagal; the Para-Mediant of Mode II is the Barys; the Para-Mediant of Mode III is Mode IV Plagal; and the Para-Mediant of Mode IV is Mode I Plagal.*
<Para-Plagal Modes>	*The Para-Plagal of these are the following: The Para-Plagal of Mode I is Mode IV Plagal; the Para-Plagal of Mode II is Mode I Plagal; the Para-Plagal of Mode III is the [Mode] Legetos; and the Para-Plagal of Mode IV is Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys.*
<Tri-phonic and tetra-phonic (=Para-Kyrioi) Modes, Naoi and Protobaroi>	*These also have tri-phonic and tetra-phonic Modes which we call Para-Kyrioi and from these are then derived those [called] Naoi, Protobaroi and the tetra-phonic [Modes].*
<Plagal of Main and Main of Plagal Modes>	*Know this, O listener, that the Mode is changeabable; and that for this the Main Modes change [modulate] into the Plagal Modes, and the Plagal into the Main again, just as the Master John Koukouzeles, of Blessed Memory, has shown in his wisest method of modulation. For he has demonstrated that in ascending by means of an Oligon, the Plagal Modes are [made] into Main Modes and that in descending by means of an Apostrophos the Main Modes become Plagal.*
<Conclusion>	*So much then, for these matters.*

D. Terminology

Laskaris's musical philosophy, which is hidden in this theoretical text, is clearly connected to possible melodic movements of the eight Modes of Byzantine Octaechia; it develops according to the following scheme:

Main Modes
(from which one has to descend)
1st step:
2nd step: **Mediant Mode**
3rd step: **Para-Mediant Mode**
4th step: **Plagal Mode**

4th step: **tetra-phonic Mode**
3rd step: **tri-phonic Mode**
2nd step: **di-phonic Mode**
1st step:
(from which one has to ascend)
Plagal Modes

The above terms (all of them mentioned at the very beginning of his theoretical treatise[28]) are more than clear in the author's mind; nevertheless, it seems that there are some misunderstood points in his thoughts, especially regarding the terms ***Para-Kyrios*** and ***Para-Plagal*** (both of them are also mentioned at several other points in his text[29]); see how both terms are described in his text (the description of *Para-Kyrioi* Modes is specifically found in the same text's tradition as given by codex Dionysiou 570[30]):

Para-Plagal	*The Para-Plagal of these are the following: The Para-Plagal of Mode I is Mode II* [sic=IV] *Plagal; the Para-Plagal of Mode II is Mode I Plagal; the Para-Plagal of Mode III is the [Mode] Legetos; and the Para-Plagal of Mode IV is Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys.*
Para-Kyrioi	*There are also Para-Kyrioi Modes, made from their Plagal [Modes], which are the following ones: The Para-Kyrios of Mode I Plagal is Mode II; the Para-Kyrios of Mode II Plagal is Mode III; the Para-Kyrios of Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys, is Mode IV; the Para-Kyrios of Mode IV Plagal is Mode I.*

[28] C. Bentas, *op. cit.*, 23 ("In the ascent of a Plagal Mode, one obtains the **di-phonic**, **tri-phonic**, and **tetra-phonic** Modes and these terminate into their Plagal and other [Modes]. In descent from the Main Modes, these result in **Mediant** and **Para-Mediant**, **Plagal** and Para-Plagal Modes, and these terminate on their own fundamentals").

[29] The first [*Para-Kyrios*] is initially identifed with any tetra-phonic Mode [see *op. cit.*, 24 ("These also have the tri-phonic and **tetra-phonic Modes which we call Para-Kyrioi**...")], while the second [*Para-Plagal]* is probably described as the next step of any Plagal Mode [see *ibid.*: 23 ("**In descent from the Main Modes**, these result in Mediant and Para-Mediant Modes, Plagal and **Para-Plagal** Modes, and these terminate on their own fundamentals"); cf. *Ibid.*: 24 ("The Mediant Modes have certain peculiarities when they are sung [in derivation] from the Main Modes: they are formed and changed into Para-Mediant [Modes], and the Plagal into Para-Plagal [Modes]")].

[30] A. Alygizakis, *op. cit.*, 239[57-60].

According to such a description it is crystal clear that both cases indicate, respectively, one step down from any Main Mode (i.e. the first step of their descending movement) or one step up from any Plagal Mode (also the first step of their ascending movement); but which one is the Para-Kyrios and which is the Para-Plagal Mode? Except for Laskaris's opinion (seen in previous indexes) I believe that, taking into consideration the sense and meaning of the relevant term Para-Mediant (clearly used by Laskaris as indicating the Mode found one step below the Mediant[31]), one can immediately understand that through the prefix *Para-* (*verb/preposition* meaning "beside") the first possible step (down or up) is musically described here, starting either from a Main or from a Plagal Mode. So, according to that theory, obviously a type of musical law, one must replace the bases of those idiomatic Modes and re-name them as follows:

Para-Kyrios	*Mode found one step below Main Modes*
Para-Plagal	*Mode found one step above Plagal Modes*

In addition, one must also correct some other terms in the same text (especially in its English version[32]), as well as some obvious mistakes of the writer himself (i.e. John Laskaris), made while counting steps (and – therefore – the naming of Modes based on them) of the mentioned ascending or descending melodic movements.[33]

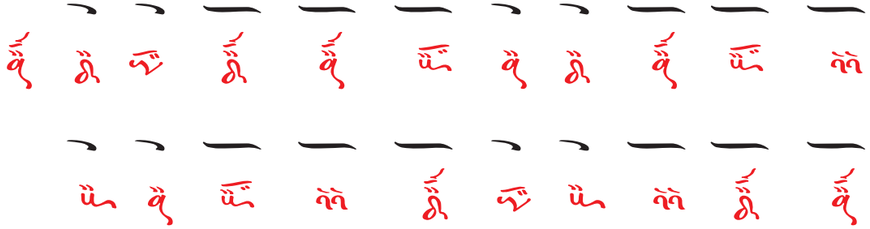
[31] "The Mediant Modes have certain peculiarities when they are sung [in derivation] from the Main Modes: they are formed and changed into Para-Mediant [Modes]... The Para-Mediant Modes of the Main ones are the following: The Para-Mediant of Mode I is Mode II Plagal; the Para-Mediant of Mode II is the Barys; the Para-Mediant of Mode III is Mode II Plagal; and the Para-Mediant of Mode IV is Mode I Plagal"; cf. C. Bentas, *op. cit.*, 24.

[32] See for example *op. cit.*, 23, the passage where the ascending movements of the Plagal and the descending movements of the Main Modes are described [left column]; this passage had to be rewritten as follows [right column]: "In the ascent of a Plagal Mode, one obtains the di-phonic, tri-phonic, and tetra-phonic Modes and these terminate into their Plagal ones other [Modes]. In descent from the Main Modes, these result in Mediant and Para-Mediant, Plagal and Para-Plagal Modes, and these terminate on their own fundamentals"."In the descent of any melody from the Main Modes, these result in Para-Kyrioi, Mediant, Para-Mediant and Plagal Modes and these terminate on their own fundamentals. In ascent from the Plagal Modes, one obtains the Para-Plagal, di-phonic, tri-phonic and tetra-phonic Modes and these terminate again in the Plagal ones (being like the 'sons' of the Main Mode)". Apart for replacing the order of both named Modes and their melodic movements (in accordance with the points mentioned here), the phrase "any melody" is used instead of "a Mode"; the sentence describing where Plagal Modes terminated is also changed [not "into their Plagal and other [Modes]" but "again into the Plagal Modes (being like the 'sons' of the Main Mode], taking into consideration the word "sons", given by codex Dionysiou 570 (cf. Antonios Alygizakis, *op. cit.*, 239[11]), a word misunderstood in Bentas's edition [cf. also above, note 17].

[33] "...the Para-Mediant of Mode III is Mode II [sic=IV] Plagal;... The Para-Plagal of Mode I is Mode II [sic=IV] Plagal...", cf. C. Bentas. *op. cit.*, 24.

E. Melodic Development

Furthermore, it is clear that a specific melodic development, made around the Main and Plagal Modes of Byzantine Octaechia, is described in the main part of Laskaris's theoretical text; as far as the development of Main Modes is concerned, the musical elements are clearly understandable; for example,[34] two steps below the Mode I its Mediant is found, that is III Plagal Mode, the so-called Barys; in order to find the next step of the very same movement, i.e. Mode II, also to move two steps below it, one has obviously to move from the last point [Barys Mode] three steps up, where Mode II is indeed found; that way, one has to follow in any case the very same melodic development, which consists of two steps down followed by three steps up [2:3]; and one has to repeat the same melodic development four times, until the last movement of this musical exercise, a movement which obviously results in the initial Mode I but now a fifth higher:



Things are not the same with the plagal modes. Because, according to the Laskaris's text (and following the same melodic movement of the so-called di-phonic modes, which are found two steps up from any plagal mode[35]), one has to start from I Plagal Mode; moving two steps up one does indeed find Mode III, but in order to find the next step, i.e. II Plagal Mode, one has to move one step down (instead of three steps down, as seen in the example of the Main Mode); thus, plagal modes are going to follow a scheme of 2:1, a completely different one in comparison with the relevant melodic movement of the main modes [2:3]; at the same time, the final result of a musical exercise with such a melodic development will move entirely in an ascending scale, finally ending (after a fourth repetition

[34] The unit of the so-called Mediant Modes is employed from here on; "... The Mediant Mode of Mode I is the Barys Mode; the Mediant of Mode II is Mode IV Plagal; the Mediant of Mode III is Mode I Plagal; and the Mediant of Mode IV is Mode II Plagal", cf. *ibid.*

[35] "… Mode I Plagal has as its di-phonic Mode the Mode III; Mode II Plagal has Mode IV as its di-phonic Mode; Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys, has Mode I as its di-phonic Mode; and Mode IV Plagal has Mode II as its di-phonic Mode", cf. *ibid.*

of the same 2:1 scheme) at the very same degree as the initial Mode, that is I Plagal but now also a fifth higher. This is something utterlly unusual for plagal modes, which ought to *descend* and not to *ascend*:



The problem is solved if one counts plagal modes according to the way they are written on the so-called wheel (*trochos*) *of the* Octaechia[36] rather than following Laskaris's scheme. Plagal modes are indicated as moving in a descending fashion, starting from IV Plagal Mode to I Plagal Mode (also not according to any "hierarchical" development – from I Plagal Mode to IV Plagal Mode – completely unfamiliar to the nature of a plagal mode). In this way, one may also move on to the plagal modes according to the very same melodic scheme, known from the development of the main mode [2:3]:



Additionally, in order to connect the ascending and descending parts of the musical exercises and development of the units of the main modes to those of the plagal modes, as soon as the ascending movements of the main modes are finished one has just to turn to the first step of the plagal modes (moving one step down [through an *Apostrophos* sign]), and vice versa. As soon as the descending movements of the plagal modes are finished one simply turns to the first step of the main modes (moving one step up [through an *Oligon* sign]); this way any musical exercise is going to conclude on its initial musical step:

[36] Cf. Katy Romanou (transl.), *Great Theory of Music by Chrysanthos of Madytos,* New Rochelle, New York: Axion Estin Foundation, 2010, 56-60[§§ 66-76].



F. A New Reading of the Text of the Treatise

There follows my new reading of Laskaris's treatise. In addition to the above-mentioned "corrections" and "replacements" (based on thorough musicological examination of any misunderstood points in the treatise), several points from the same text as given only in codex Dionysioy 570 (marked here in red) are also given; in addition, by means of **bold** and underlining, there are indicated the beginning and the end, respectively, of any melodic movement described in the text; comments in the left column constitute additional remarks on the general content and structure of the treatise:

<Title> [which, in a more expanded way, could be formed as follows: *Modulation of the musical art, by John Laskaris, showing the whole essence and movements of the four [Main] Modes and of their four Plagal Modes, both in ascent and descent*].	**Explanation and Modulation of Musical Art**
<Introduction> [the sense and the core of which forms the aforementioned expanded title of the text]	*This is another* ***modulation of the musical art****, more wisely devised and more exact in every detail, worked out and drawn up* ***by John Laskaris*** *the Kalomisides and Maestor. It is both contrary to the first one and not contrary. It is [appears] contrary to the first one for those [readers] who did not understand it as it was written; but for those who possess full artistic and exact knowledge of it, it is rather a verification and a supplement, as it revealed itself as a great delight by virtue of [a command of] its skill, having clearly indicated its peculiarities by* ***showing the whole essence and movements of the four [Main] Modes and of their four Plagal Modes, both in ascent and descent****.*
<**Point**[#1]*: summary of what is given in Byzantine Music Modal Theory*> [that is, the identity of the four Main and four Plagal Modes respectively]	*For it was written that there are four* ***Main*** *and four* ***Plagal Modes*** *and that the Main Modes are* ***Mode I****,* ***Mode II****,* ***Mode III****, and* ***Mode IV****, while the Plagal ones are* ***Mode I Plagal****,* ***Mode II Plagal****,* ***Mode III Plagal****, that is the* ***Barys****, and* ***Mode IV Plagal****.*
<**Point**[#2]*: the descending movements of Main and the ascending movements of Plagal Modes*> [a very interesting point, according to which moving onwards from Plagal Modes one has to ascend, while moving respectively onwards from Main Modes one has to descend]	*In the* ***descent*** *of any melody* ***from the Main Modes****, they result in* ***Para-Kyrioi****,* ***Mediant****,* ***Para-Mediant*** *and* ***Plagal*** *ones and these terminate on their own fundamentals. In* ***ascent from the Plagal Modes****, one obtains the* ***Para-Plagal****,* ***di-phonic****,* ***tri-phonic*** *and* ***tetra-phonic*** *Modes and these terminate again on the Plagal ones (being like the 'sons' of the Main Mode).*

<**Step**[#1]*: Through the Para-Kyrioi and Para-Plagal Modes*>	*The* ***<Para-Kyrioi>*** *of these are the following:* *The <Para-Kyrios> of* ***Mode I*** *is Mode <IV> Plagal; the <Para-Kyrios> of* ***Mode II*** *is Mode I Plagal; the <Para-Kyrios> of* ***Mode III*** *is the [Mode] Legetos; and the <Para-Kyrios> of* ***Mode IV*** *is Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys.* *There are also* ***<Para-Plagal> Modes****, made from the Plagal [Modes], which are as follows:* *The <Para-Plagal> of* ***Mode IV Plagal*** *is Mode I; the <Para-Plagal> of* ***Mode III Plagal****, i.e.* ***Barys****, is Mode IV; the <Para-Plagal> of* ***Mode II Plagal*** *is Mode III; the <Para-Plagal> of* ***Mode I Plagal*** *is Mode II.*
<**Step**[#2]*: Through the Mediant and di-phonic Modes*>	*The* ***Main Modes****, in their descent, have* ***Mediant Modes****. Likewise the* ***Plagal Modes****, in their ascent, have Mediant Modes which we call* ***di-phonic****.* *The Mediant Mode of* ***Mode I*** *is the Barys Mode; the Mediant of* ***Mode II*** *is Mode IV Plagal (Mode III is also the Mediant Mode of Modes II and I); the Mediant of* ***Mode III*** *is Mode I Plagal; and the Mediant of* ***Mode IV*** *is Mode II Plagal (that is the so-called Legeto; Legeto is Modes II Plagal and Barys).* *As we have previously stated, the Plagal Modes also have their* ***di-phonic Modes*** *in their ascent:* ***Mode IV Plagal*** *has Mode II as its di-phonic Mode;* ***Mode III Plagal****, i.e.* ***Barys****, has Mode I as its di-phonic Mode;* ***Mode II Plagal*** *has Mode IV as its di-phonic Mode; and* ***Mode I Plagal*** *has as its di-phonic Mode Mode III.*
<Mediant Modes: peculiarities (Para-Mediant Modes)>	*The* ***Mediant Modes*** *have certain peculiarities when they are sung [in derivation] from the* ***Main Modes****: they are formed and changed into Para-Mediant [Modes] {and the Plagal ones into Para-Plagal [Modes]}.*
<**Step**[#3]*: Through the Para-Mediant and tri-phonic Modes >*	*The* ***Para-Mediant Modes of the Main Modes*** *are the following:* *The Para-Mediant of* ***Mode I*** *is Mode II Plagal (some others say that the Para-Mediant of Mode I is Mode IV Plagal or Mode II, the so-called neanes); the Para-Mediant of* ***Mode II*** *is the Barys; the Para-Mediant of* ***Mode III*** *is Mode <IV> Plagal; and the Para-Mediant of* ***Mode IV*** *is Mode I Plagal.*

	***Mode IV Plagal** has Mode III as its tri-phonic Mode; **Mode III Plagal**, i.e. **Barys**, has Mode II as its tri-phonic Mode; **Mode II Plagal** has Mode I (but also the so-called nenano Mode) as its tri-phonic Mode; and **Mode I Plagal** has as its tri-phonic Mode the Mode IV (but also Mode I; one can find Mode IV as the tri-phonic Mode of Mode I Plagal according to the existing Parallage procedure, i.e. according to the normal way of counting three ascending steps starting from Mode I Plagal; but if one uses the so-called **diplo-Parallage** procedure (by re-naming and musically transforming the Mode I Plagal to Mode II Plagal), while ascending three steps from Mode I Plagal they will undoubtedly find Mode I and not Mode IV; and when one moves two more steps up from Mode IV one will find Mode III, as though moving two steps up starting from Mode I; and if one descends again two steps from aforementioned Mode III one will also find the same Mode, i.e. Mode IV (this is a very usual descending movement between Mode I and Mode IV).*
<Triphonia>	*Know this, O listener: that any triphonia creates the same Mode; that is if one moves from any Mode three steps (two up and one down, respectively) one will also find the very same as the initial Mode; this is the so-called triphonia.*
<Tri-phonic and tetra-phonic Modes, Naoi and Protobaroi>	*These also have **tri-phonic** and **tetra-phonic Modes** {which we call Para-Kyrioi} and from these are then derived those [called] Naoi, Protobaroi {and the tetra-phonic [Modes]}.*
<**Step**[#4]: *Through Plagal and tetra-phonic Modes*> [Plagal of Main and Main of Plagal (=tetra-phonic) Modes] [four steps which are, one by one, existing melodic movements (both ascending or descending) while one is moving into the frame of a pentachord; steps which create relevant idiomatic versions of the eight basic Modes of Byzantine Octaechia]	*Know this, O listener: that **the Mode is changeable**; and that for this reason the **Main Modes change [modulate] into the Plagal Modes, and the Plagal into the Main Modes again**, just as the Master John Koukouzeles, of Blessed Memory, has shown in his wisest method of modulation. For he has demonstrated that **in ascending** by means of an **Oligon**, the **Plagal Modes** are [made] into **Main Modes** and that **in descending** by means of an **Apostrophos** the **Main Modes** become **Plagal**.* ***Tetra-phonic Modes are the Main Modes of each of the Plagal Modes**; when you ascend four steps of any Plagal Mode you will end on its own fundamental; that is the so-called **tetraphonos Mode**.*
<**Conclusion**>	*So much then, for these matters.*

G. The Musical Philosophy of Laskaris

Finally, I would like to describe here Laskaris's basic idea, the reason why he wrote his treatise, a reason which is, in my opinion, not only theoretical but also practical: a specific musical message hidden in his theoretical words. Leaving aside the treatise's title,[37] as well as its initial sentence, which summarizes what is given in Byzantine modal theory,[38] one may easily observe that Laskaris's thoughts develop around a sequence of four points, which constitute, simultaneously

- his theoretical philosophy;
- a very interesting melodic development around the aforementioned four points;
- a melody developed through four relevant musical steps, and
- a specific score of a musical example hidden behind words that one has to "discover" and "decode".

More specifically, his philosophy and theoretical thought follow the scheme 1:2:3:4:5, a very well-known mathematical scheme in Eastern philosophical and musicological literature,[39] while at the same time his "secret" musical message is a hidden example that points out every musical step and, respectively, any mode of the Byzantine Octaechia.

Here is how Laskaris describes, one by one, melodic developments around the four mentioned steps:[40]

1:2 – Through Para-Kyrioi and Para-Plagal Modes

*The **<Para-Kyrioi>** of these are the following: The <Para-Kyrios> of **Mode I** is Mode <IV> Plagal; the <Para-Kyrios> of **Mode II** is Mode I Plagal; the <Para-Kyrios> of **Mode III** is the [Mode] Legetos; and the <Para-Kyrios> of **Mode IV** is Mode III Plagal, i.e. Barys.*

*There are also **<Para-Plagal> Modes**, made from the Plagal [Modes], which are the following: The <Para-Plagal> of **Mode IV Plagal** is Mode I; the <Para-Plagal> of **Mode III Plagal**, i.e. **Barys**, is Mode IV; the <Para-Plagal> of **Mode II Plagal** is Mode III; the <Para-Plagal> of **Mode I Plagal** is Mode II.*

[37] See note 15.

[38] "For it was written that there are **four Main and four Plagal Modes** and that the Main Modes are Mode I, Mode II, Mode III, and Mode IV, while the Plagal ones are Mode I Plagal, Mode II Plagal, Mode III Plagal, that is the Barys, and Mode IV Plagal", cf. Christos Bentas, *op. cit.*, 23.

[39] Cf. Simon Karas, *Ἁρμονικά*, Athens 1989.

[40] Laskaris's text is taken from this point from my aforementioned recent rereading.

2:3 – Through Mediant and di-phonic Modes

*The **Main Modes**, in their descent, have **Mediant Modes**. Likewise the **Plagal Modes**, in their ascent, have Mediant Modes which we call **di-phonic**.*

*The Mediant Mode of **Mode I** is the Barys Mode; the Mediant of **Mode II** is Mode IV Plagal; the Mediant of **Mode III** is Mode I Plagal; and the Mediant of **Mode IV** is Mode II Plagal).*

*As we have previously stated, the Plagal Modes also have their **di-phonic Modes** in their ascent: **Mode IV Plagal** has Mode II as its di-phonic Mode; **Mode III Plagal**, i.e. **Barys**, has Mode I as its di-phonic Mode; **Mode II Plagal** has Mode IV as its di-phonic Mode; and **Mode I Plagal** has as its di-phonic Mode the Mode III.*

3:4 – Through Para-Mediant and tri-phonic Modes

*The **Mediant Modes** have certain peculiarities when they are sung [in derivation] from the **Main Mod**es: they are formed and changed into Para-Mediant [Modes] {and the Plagal Modes into Para-Plagal [Modes]}.*

*The **Para-Mediant Modes of the Main Modes** are the following: The Para-Mediant of **Mode I** is Mode II Plagal; the Para-Mediant of **Mode II** is the Barys; the Para-Mediant of **Mode III** is Mode <IV> Plagal; and the Para-Mediant of **Mode I**V is Mode I Plagal.*

*These also have the **tri-phonic** and **tetra-phonic Modes** {which we call Para-Kyrioi} and from these are then derived those [called] Naoi, Protobaroi {and the tetra-phonic [Modes]}.*

***Mode IV Plagal** has Mode III as its tri-phonic Mode; **Mode III Plagal**, i.e. **Barys**, has Mode II as its tri-phonic Mode; **Mode II Plagal** has Mode I as its tri-phonic Mode; and **Mode I Plagal** has as its tri-phonic Mode Mode IV.*

4:5 – Through Plagal and tetra-phonic Modes

*Know this, O listener, that **the Mode is changeable**; and that for this the **Main Modes change [modulate] into the Plagal Modes, and the Plagal into the Main Modes again**, just as Master John Koukouzeles, of Blessed Memory, has shown in his wisest method of modulation. For he has demonstrated that **in ascending** by means of an **Oligon**, the **Plagal Modes** are [made] into **Main Modes** and that **in descending** by means of an **Apostrophos** the **Main Modes** become **Plagal**.*

***Tetra-phonic Modes are the Main Modes of each of the Plagal Modes**; when you ascend four steps in any Plagal Mode you will finish on its fundamental; that is the so-called **tetraphonos Mode**.*

One may immediately "decode" this musical message through the aforementioned scheme of the so-called *trochos* of the Byzantine Octaechia; according to this wheel, the music hidden in Laskaris's words quoted above would sound as seen in Example No. 1. This musical example is my proposal for a first score of the music that is totally hidden in Laskaris's treatise, a score written in

Byzantine notation – that written on the first line of the score – together with a transcription into staff notation; more specifically, the score is written by following a performance procedure, made simply by taking into account, one by one, the steps of the entire melody, which are clearly mentioned in the treatise. In Byzantine Music theory such a performance procedure is called *Metrophonia*;[41] when performing *Metrophonia,* one simply has to count the notes, to follow the steps that make up the entire melody; in the same theory there is also another option for the performance procedure, the so-called *Parallage*;[42] *Parallage* is a more complicated, and elaborate, method (actually, the term indicates a kind of "camouflaged" or "undercover" performance of any melody in *Metrophonia*), according to which, in place of any of the steps notated in the initial score, one performs some musical formulas (formulas that one has to recall to mind through the relevant symbols, written in the initial score below the Byzantine neumes); these formulas consist of a musical enunciation of the "names" of any Main or Plagal Mode, i.e. of the eight Modes of the Byzantine Octaechia, Modes based and developed on any of the four mentioned ascending or descending steps; according performance procedure, the same score would immediately expand considerably; given that formulas hidden underneath any of the aformentioned four ascending or descending steps of the basic pentachord of the melody written down in the above score are developed as seen in Example No. 2, one can see, for instance, how the first section of the very same score could be analytically notated in staff notation in Example No. 3. Thus, it seems that another hidden long melody is mystically incorporated into the musical message, itself secret, initially also hidden underneath Laskaris's words.

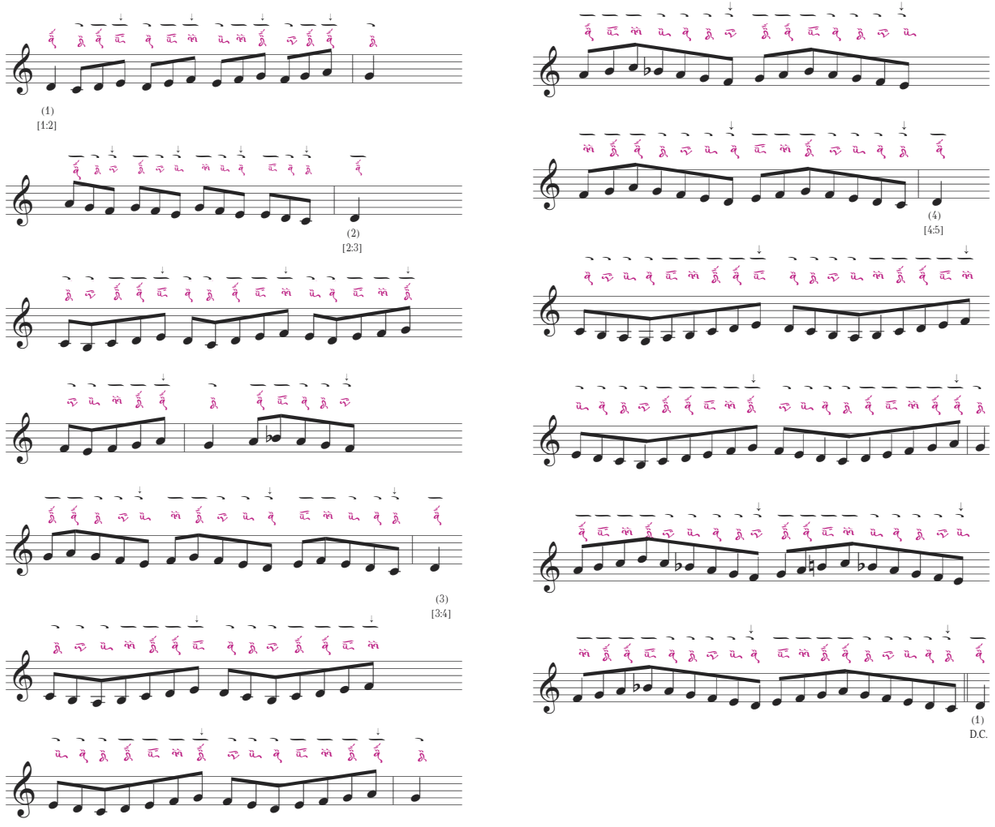
* * *

It is therefore obvious that in his treatise John Laskaris teaches using the Westwern *orthology* of words, while the *mysticism* and *symbolism* of Eastern philosophy are at the same time hidden therein. He is one of the first artists, teachers and musicians of Byzantine Music ever to use this kind of bilateral technique.

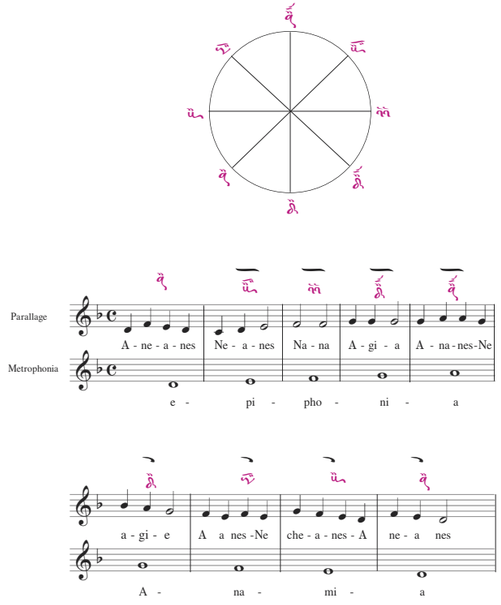
[41] Cf. K. Romanou, *op. cit.*, 242–243 §§ 70-73.

[42] *Ibid.*
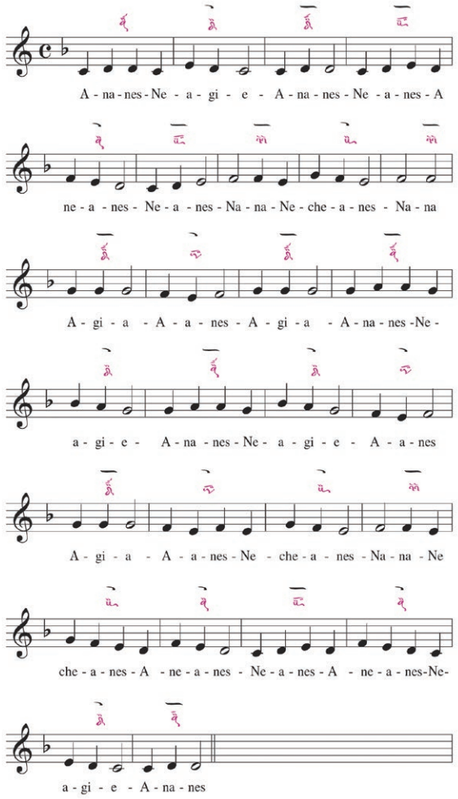
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



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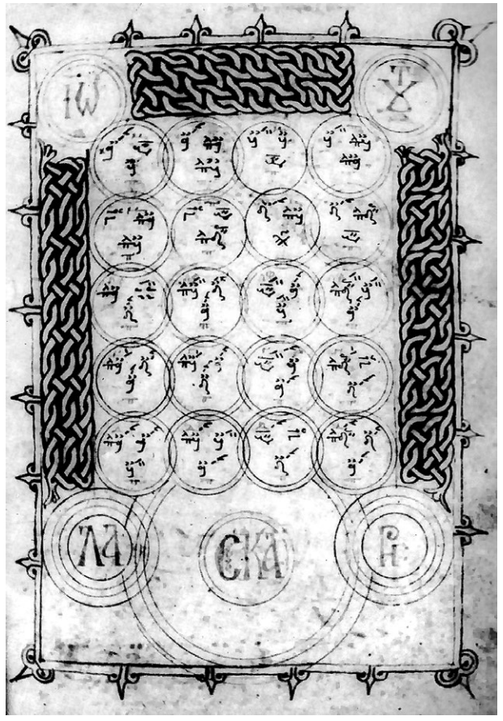
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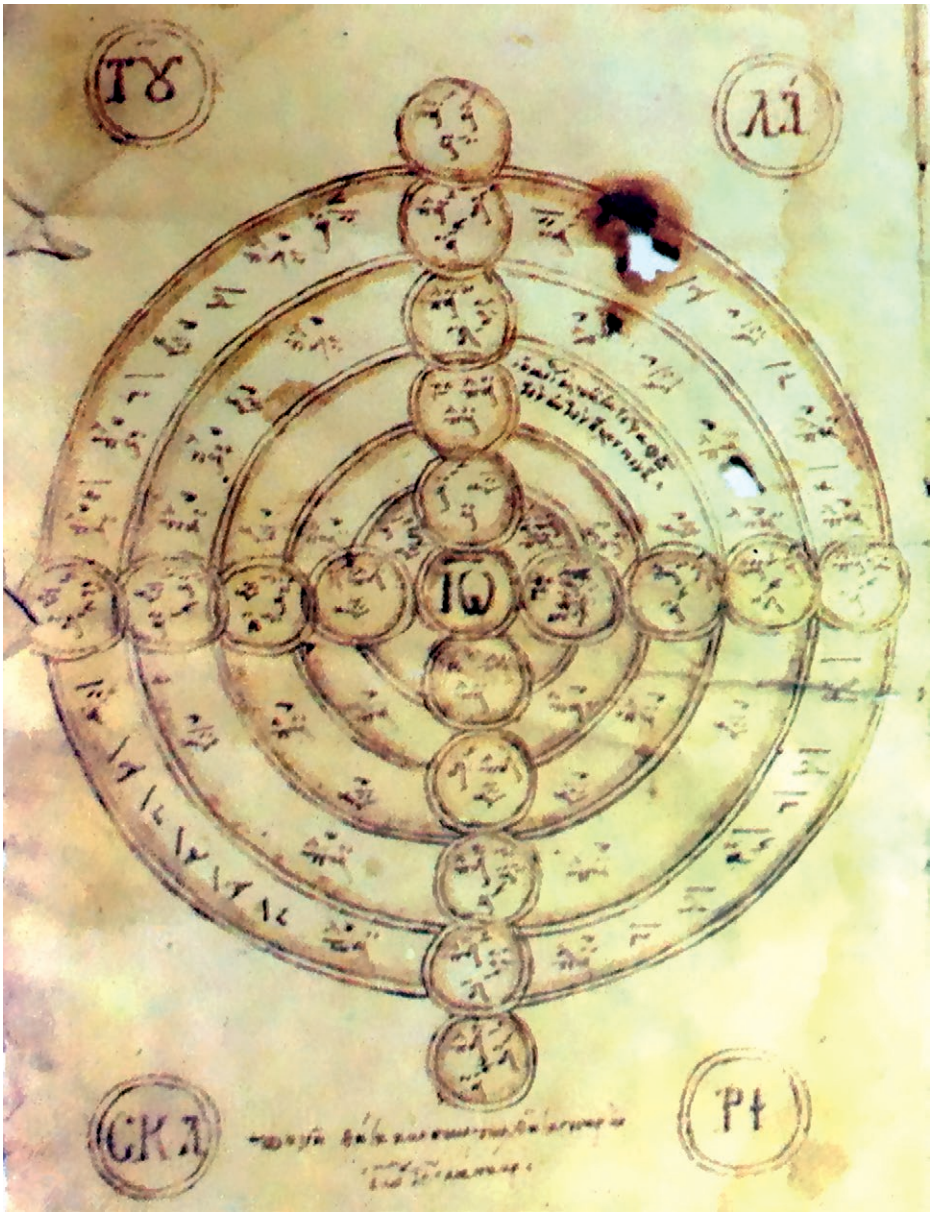
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Picture No. 1 *Codex No. 2401 of the National Library of Greece, f. 224r*



Picture No. 2 *Codex Sinai 398*