

Performance Practice and the Politics of Transcribing Byzantine Chant¹

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Transcriptions of Byzantine chants into staff notation, despite their proven utility,³ have been generating controversy ever since the first Western European attempts to apprehend the intervallic and rhythmic information conveyed by medieval Byzantine neumes.⁴ These early efforts not only sparked debates among Western academics as to whose interpretation was more correct, but also provoked a strongly negative reaction from certain Greek scholars and cantors who saw all of the transcriptions as musically alien to the received tradition of Byzantine chanting. By the mid-1920s, Western musicologists and Greek traditionalists had each achieved a modicum of internal consensus, leaving the two sides arrayed against each other over issues of tuning, rhythm, chromaticism, and ornamentation. These positions hardened in the next decade as the debates became focused on the transcriptions issued by the *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae* (MMB) of Copenhagen, the organisation founded in 1931 by Carsten Høeg, H.J.W. Tillyard and Egon Wellesz to co-ordinate Western musicological study of Byzantine chant. Although the MMB suspended its *Transcripta* series in 1958, transcriptions into staff-notation have continued until the present day to serve as the moment of truth for illustrating divergent theories about the interpretation of Byzantine neumes.

The ability of staff notation to function in such a decisive manner is, of course, partially predicated on the assumption that it is what Greek scholars would call a “hyper-analytical” and Westerners would call a “super-prescriptive” form of musical notation.⁵ In other words, a Byzantine melody written in Western score, in contrast to a transmission in Byzantine neumes of any period, is assumed to be a relatively complete representation of its realisation in sound. Yet, as the recent revival of Early Music has forcefully reminded Western musicians, such assumptions are a relatively recent development, for staff notation, like its Byzantine counterpart, has only gradually progressed toward greater precision. In general, the earlier the repertory, the more its realisation was dependent on a body of unwritten conventions known collectively as “performance (or performing) practice.”⁶

If the ratios of written to unwritten knowledge required at the opposite ends of this musical spectrum have long been obvious – the earliest staffless neumes of West and East require singers already familiar with

¹ The author would like to thank Lycourgos Angelopoulos and Ioannis Arvanitis for sharing pre-publication copies of forthcoming articles. Research for this paper was supported by a Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and grants from the Philoptochos and Church Music Federation of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of San Francisco.

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³ In addition to facilitating the dissemination of information to non-specialists, transcriptions have been a particularly useful tool for the comparative study of Byzantine melodies because a “graphic” notation plotting a melody on a staff is arguably better suited visually to the task of comparison than a “digital” notation listing the succession of intervals with a single line of neumes. This distinction between the two types of notation comes from Kenneth Levy, “Byzantine Rite, Music of the” in ed. Stanley Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 3, p. 554.

⁴ For a survey of studies by Western scholars, see Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1961, p. 2-3, 11-18. Markos Dragoumis discusses the little-known but arguably more successful efforts by a Constantinopolitan cantor at the turn of the present century in *Markos Vasileiou, A Pioneer of Byzantine Musicology*, chap. in Christian Hannick, ed., *Rhythm in Byzantine Chant: Acta of the congress held at Hernen Castle in November 1986*, Hernen 1991, p. 45–53.

⁵ On the relationship between original sources, scholarly editions and their realisation in sound in Western music, see Howard Mayer Brown, “Performing Practice”, in ed. Stanley Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 14, London 1980, 370–93; and idem, “Editing,” in *The New Grove*, vol. 5, p. 839-48. Two noteworthy discussions of the difficulties faced by interpreters of medieval music are by Margaret Bent, *Editing Early Music: The Dilemma of Translation*, in *Early Music* 22, 1994, 373–92; and Leo Treitler, *Cantus planus binatim in Italy and the Question of Oral and Written Transmission in General*, in Cesare Corsi and Perluigi Petrobelli, eds., *Le polifonie primitive in Friuli e in Europa: Atti del congresso internazionale Cividale di Friuli, 22–24 Agosto 1980*, Rome 1989, p. 145–56.

⁶ Brown, “Performing Practice”, p. 370–71.

the melody in question, whilst the highly annotated scores of certain twentieth-century composers have pushed performers toward the standards of mechanical reproduction – it is important to note that the extent to which pre-twentieth-century scores were conceived with reference to conventions that later disappeared from the collective consciousness of Western art music has become apparent only in the wake of the Early Music revival. Whether or not one agrees with those musicologists and performers who have embarked on a quest for “authenticity” that the recovery of this missing knowledge is obligatory, cognisance of its absence has, as Donald J. Grout once observed, “given everybody a bad conscience.”⁷ To give but one example, a violinist aspiring to give a ‘historically informed’ performance of a Baroque sonata should know that the melody shown in Example 1A might reasonably have elicited something like Example 1B from his or her eighteenth-century forebear.⁸

Example 1. Corelli, Sonatas for Violin Op. 5, No. 3, opening of the first movement

Despite striking parallels between the problems faced by devotees of Western Early Music and medieval Byzantine chant over the interpretation of their respective musical texts, the latter have largely refrained from the intense self-examination that now so noisily engages the former.⁹ If the relative lack of such a discourse in the field of Byzantine musicology is not overly surprising – its practitioners in Anglo-American academia have been accused repeatedly of undue remoteness from actual musical experience¹⁰ – the questions avoided remain no less pressing. The remainder of this paper will therefore be devoted to re-

⁷ *On Historical Authenticity in the Performance of Old Music*, in *Essays on Music in Honour of Archibald Thompson Davison*, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, 342; quoted in Richard Taruskin, *The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past*, in Nicholas Kenyon, ed., *Authenticity and Early Music*, Oxford 1988, 144.

⁸ Example 1 shows the opening of the Third Sonata in C Major from Arcangelo Corelli’s opus 5, (Rome, 1700) with the ornaments ascribed to the composer in Estienne Roger’s Amsterdam edition of 1712 as presented in F. Chrysander, ed., *Les oeuvres de Arcangelo Corelli*, vol. 13, Bergedorf near Hamburg, 1890. The authenticity of these ornaments and a variety of later approaches to ornamenting these sonatas are discussed in Neal Zaslaw, *Ornaments for Corelli’s Violin Sonatas, op. 5*, in *Early Music* 24 1996, 95–115.

⁹ Whilst several studies featuring detailed analyses of performance practice and/or contemporary non-philological methodologies have recently appeared, these works focus primarily on repertoires situated beyond the geographic or chronological boundaries of the Byzantine Empire. They include Lycourgos Angelopoulos, *Ἡ σημασία τῆς ἔρευνας καὶ διδασκαλίας τοῦ Σίμωνος Καρα, ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἐπισήμανση καὶ καταγραφή τῆς ἐνέργειας τῶν σημείων τῆς χειρονομίας (προφοροκῆς ἐρμηνείας τῆς γραπτῆς παράδοσης)*, a communication presented to the Musicological Symposium held in Delphi 4–7 September 1986, later published separately in a bilingual (Greek/French) edition with audiocassette supplement as Lycourgos Ant. Angelopoulos, *L’importance de l’étude et de l’enseignement de Simon Karas sur l’indication et l’inventaire des signes de la chironomie (geste manuel)*, (*Interpretation orale de la tradition écrite*), *Communication faite au colloque de musicologie de Delphes, 4–7 Septembre 1986*, Athens 1998; Ioannis Arvanitis, *A Way to the Transcription of Byzantine Chant by Means of Written and Oral Tradition*, in ed. C. Troelsgård, *Byzantine Chant: Tradition and Reform*, Acts of a Meeting held at the Danish Institute at Athens, Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens 2, Aarhus, 1997, 123–41; Peter Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the Study of Gregorian Chant*, Chicago and London, 1992, 123–41; Ioannis Zannos, *Ichos und Makam: Vergleichende Untersuchungen zum Tonsystem der griechisch-orthodoxen Kirchenmusik und der türkischen Kunstmusik*, Bonn, 1994; and idem, “Ornamentation, improvisation and composition in the oral tradition of Greek Orthodox church music at Constantinople,” in Christian Meyer, ed., *Aspects de la musique liturgique au Moyen Age, Rencontres à Royaumont* series Paris, 1991, 125–47.

¹⁰ Variations of this criticism may be found in Thrasyboulos Georgiades, *Bemerkungen zur Erforschung der byzantinischen Kirchenmusik*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 39, 1939, 67–88; Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology*, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, 45; and Vladimir Morosan, review of *Studies in Eastern Chant*, vol. 5, ed. by D. Conomos, in *Orthodox Church Music* 1, 1983, 37.

examining the long and essentially unresolved debate over the transcription method of the MMB. Unlike several others who have returned to this contentious subject in recent years,¹¹ I shall be less interested in the proper interpretation of the original neumatic sources than in the perceived meaning of transcriptions. The purpose of this seemingly backward approach is to examine what the various parties to the dispute expected of transcriptions into staff notation, thereby showing the remarkable extent to which disagreements over the shape of medieval Byzantine melodies were inextricably bound up with radically different assumptions about performance practice which, in turn, were themselves related to ongoing debates over the cultural identity of modern Greece.














The MMB Method of Transcription

The transcription method of the MMB was officially born, like the organisation itself, at a miniature conference held at Copenhagen in July 1931. The only participants at this meeting sponsored by the Rask-Oersted Foundation were Høeg, Tillyard and Wellesz. In addition to formulating plans for an ambitious series of publications, the three scholars passed a resolution recommending a uniform method for transcribing Byzantine chant. This document, which completed and codified the convergence that had occurred gradually over the previous decade between the transcription methods of Tillyard and Wellesz, offers a marvellously concise summary of the original system, and is therefore worth quoting in its entirety:



“1. Agreement has been reached with regard to the values of the Byzantine interval-signs in the Middle (Round) and Late (Cucuzelian) systems.


2. Byzantine musical handbooks afford some indication of the dynamic effect of certain signs. These signs affect the length of the notes, the stress or the rhythm. They are consistently represented in our transcriptions according to the following table, a plain note being taken as a quaver:

MMB Table of signs

Oxeia 	Petaste 	Duo Kentemata 	Pelaston 	Kuphisma 
Duo Apostrophi Syndesmoi (or Double Apostrophus) 	Diple 	Hyporrhoe or Aporrhoe 		
Kratemohyporrhoon 		Kratema 	Klasma or Tzakisma 	
Bareia 	Apoderma 	Gorgon <i>accelerando</i> ; Argon <i>ritardando</i> .		

These only apply to the group of notes over which they stand, and no *a tempo*

is needed after them. Xeron Klasma  Piasma 

Separation-mark for the end of a colon (versicle) 

3. Table of Mediaeval Byzantine Modes

Mode	Starting note of the interval signs of the melody	Finalis
I.	a (rarely d)	a or d
II.	b (h) or g	e or b (h)

¹¹ E.g. Jørgen Raasted, *Thoughts on a Revision of the Transcription Rules of the Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, Université de Copenhagen, *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-âge grec et latin* 54, 1986, 13–38; Gregorios Th. Stathis, *Η παλαιά Βυζαντινή σημειογραφία και τὸ πρόβλημα μεταγραφῆς τῆς εἰς τὸ πεντάγραμμον*, in *Βυζαντινά* 7, 1975, 193–220 [text], 427–60 [music examples and other illustrations]; and the articles collected in Hannick, ed., *Rhythm in Byzantine Chant*.

III.	c' or a	f or c'
IV.	d' or g	g or d'
Plagal I.	d or g (rarely e)	d (rarely a)
II.	e or g (rarely a)	e
III. (Barys)	f or a	f (rarely b-flat)
IV.	g, a or c'	g (rarely c')

This scheme is based on (1) the comparative study of the Byzantine and other Eastern and Western systems of Church Music; (2) the traces of the mediaeval modal system surviving in the modern or Chrysanthine system of Greek Church Music; (3) the practical rules evolved in the course of transcription.

4. We may reasonably assume that in some Byzantine melodies, particularly those of Oriental origin, chromatic or enharmonic mutations may have occurred. The Manuscripts give, as a rule, no indication of such practices, and we should accordingly, in the line of our musical text, disregard them. But, where the transcriber considers any alteration probable, this may be marked by an accidental above the staff. Fuller study of the Byzantine musical theorists will, it is hoped, clear up the remaining uncertainties on this point.

Carsten HØEG, Copenhagen.

Signed: H. J. W. TILLYARD, Cardiff.
Egon WELLESZ, Vienna.”¹²

In 1935 the MMB published Tillyard’s *Handbook of the Middle Byzantine Notation* as its first subsidiary study. Intended “as a companion” to the entire project,¹³ this slim volume sets forth the organisation’s system of transcription with only two substantial changes to the original method: 1) the transcription of the pelaston was changed from a semi-quaver to a quaver marked with yet another kind of accent (v); and 2) the psephiston, a qualitative neume previously ignored, was to be transcribed with a sforzando (*sfz*).¹⁴

Viewed as a whole, the system of the MMB would appear to be designed to produce transcriptions with a relatively low level of editorial interpretation similar to “diplomatic” or “quasi-facsimile” transcriptions of Western medieval music.¹⁵ To this end, it employs a variety of symbols borrowed from modern Western art music to render on a five-line staff the intervals, rhythmic lengthenings, and qualitative variety of ascending seconds indicated by Byzantine neumes. At the same time, it makes no provision for the graphic representation of elements consigned by the medieval Byzantine tradition completely to the realm of performance practice, including the tunings of the modes, ornamentation, chromatic alterations and rhythmic subdivisions. As with comparable diplomatic transcriptions of Western Early Music, such a philologically conservative but musically agnostic approach favours scholars over non-specialists. The former benefit from ‘reverse transcribability’ which, according to Oliver Strunk, enables “*within limits*... the reader of a transcription to form an exact mental image of the original notation it represents.”¹⁶ Yet this feature also means that transcriptions made according to the system of the MMB require the same level of knowledge of unwritten performing conventions for their idiomatic realisation as the original sources. Consequently, whilst such an “open” approach might benefit an expert cantor who does not wish to be constrained by the suggestions of an editor, the transcriptions will appear frustratingly, even misleadingly, bare to most other performers and readers.

Rather curiously, the principle of ‘reverse transcribability’ was compromised from the outset by a seemingly uncharacteristic lapse of philological rigour when Høeg, Tillyard and Wellesz chose to supply only a select group of Byzantine notation’s large repertory of qualitative neumes with symbolic counterparts. Signs with a clear intervallic value, vital for determining the outline of a melody, were automatically included in the method, as were neumes construed as in some way altering a chant’s rhythmic flow. Four qualitative neumes – the xeron klasma, the vareia, the piasma, and (in the revised system of 1935) the

¹² Published in H.J.W. Tillyard, *Ἐωθινὰ ἀναστάσιμα: The Morning Hymns of the Emperor Leo, Part II*, in *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 31, 1930–31, 115–16.

¹³ H.J.W. Tillyard, *Handbook of the Middle Byzantine Notation*, MMB *Subsidia* 1, Copenhagen 1935, 5.

¹⁴ Tillyard, *Handbook*, 19–29. Seventeen years later after the publication of this book, another set of minor alterations to the method were printed in idem, *Twenty Canons from the Trinity Hirmologium*, MMB *Transcripta* 4, *American Series* 2, Boston, London and Copenhagen, 1952, 2. These latter changes have not been applied uniformly by scholars employing the transcription method of the MMB.

¹⁵ Cf. Brown, “Editing,” 842–44.

¹⁶ Taken from Strunk’s postscript to the reprint of Tillyard’s *Handbook*, Copenhagen, 1970, 52; as quoted in Raasted, *Thoughts on a Revision*, 13 [emphasis in the original].

psephiston – were also given graphic equivalents in Western notation. Yet, as one can see from the inventory of “Great Hypostases” or “cheironomiaï”¹⁷ published by Wellesz in his *History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, these represent only a fraction of the qualitative signs found in Byzantine sources.¹⁸ Indeed, Wellesz’s own list includes an astonishing thirty-one cheironomiaï that were simply omitted from the MMB’s method, thereby seriously undermining the textual authority of any transcriptions produced according to its requirements.

Although the founders of the MMB never offered a forthright explanation for the omission of these signs from their system of transcription, it appears that a number of factors contributed to their decision. Raasted, for example, has correctly noted that:

“[The MMB’s] rules of transcription were made, at least mainly, to serve the rendering of the Stichera and Heirmoi found in MSS from the “classical” period (12th – 13th centuries, eventually also the next centuries, until the Fall of Constantinople). The later tradition (until the Reform of the Three Teachers in the early 19th century) and the entire repertoires of melismatic chant (Asmatika, Psaltika, Akolouthiai, as well as the kalophonic versions of Stichera, etc.) were disregarded.”¹⁹

Accordingly, the highly selective inclusion of cheironomiaï may be seen in part as a practical accommodation to the requirements of editing a particular group of sources in which other signs were comparatively rare. Upon closer examination, however, a number of troubling questions arise. Why, for example, should a transcription method claiming to interpret the “interval-signs in the Middle (Round) and Late (Cucuzelian) systems” of Byzantine chant omit so many neumes? Even if the editors were unable to agree on symbolic counterparts from Western Art Music for most of the cheironomiaï, surely some neutral way – e.g. letters or symbols above the staff, the use of which was proposed at an editorial meeting of the MMB in 1958²⁰ – could have been found to indicate their presence in the original sources. Furthermore, one wonders about the founders’ precise reasons for focusing so narrowly on the repertoires of the Middle Byzantine Heirmologion and Sticherarion. This question becomes all the more intriguing when one notices the moralising subtext to Tillyard’s comparison of the sparing use of cheironomiaï in these “classical” bodies of syllabic and neumatic chant with “late manuscripts” that “are overburdened with these signs.”²¹

One other possible justification for the omission of the cheironomiaï was Tillyard’s largely untested belief, first articulated in his 1911 article for *The Musical Antiquary* and later echoed in his *Handbook*, that “most of [the cheironomiaï] seem not to have added anything to the tune (which was fully expressed by the semantic or interval-signs) but as summary marks for familiar phrases, so that a singer, unable to read the notation proper, would find these so-called *hypostases* an aid to memory.”²² The logical but never explicitly stated extension of this line of thought is that most of these signs could be safely disregarded in transcription. Such a conclusion, however, is contradicted by Tillyard’s and Wellesz’s own discussions of the cheironomiaï, which regularly describe some of these signs as indicating mordents, shakes, and various other kinds of ornaments.²³ These two positions may only be reconciled on the basis of a value-laden *a priori* assumption that the ornamentation of Byzantine chant in performance is (or was) somehow unimportant. If one recalls that Byzantine notation’s vocabulary of signs for such nuances rivals that of French Baroque keyboard music, such a view can only be regarded as bizarre. Nevertheless, it is consistent with the overall failure of Tillyard and Wellesz to engage seriously with questions of ornamentation and expression in Byzantine performance practice. In his *Handbook*, for example, Tillyard offers only vague conjectures about the execution of the few qualitative neumes provided with graphic counterparts in transcription, together with some equally unenlightening remarks about a handful of cheironomiaï omitted from the system.²⁴

¹⁷ So-called because they corresponded to gestures in the elaborate Byzantine system for conducting chant. The surviving evidence for this system is summarised in Neil Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavic Painting, Byzantina Neerlandica* 9, Leiden 1986, 38–47.

¹⁸ Wellesz, *A History*, 297–98.

¹⁹ Raasted, *Thoughts on a Revision*, 16. Cf. Tillyard’s introductory remarks to his chapter on “The Subsidiary Signs,” *A Handbook*, 25.

²⁰ Raasted, *Thoughts on a Revision*, 13.

²¹ Tillyard, *Handbook*, 25.

²² *Greek Church Music*, in *The Musical Antiquary* 2, 1911, 88, 157.

²³ E.g. Tillyard, *Handbook*, 26–29; idem, *Greek Church Music*, 157–69 [this early article includes transcriptions which feature attempts to realise several signs]; and Wellesz, *A History*, 294–300.

²⁴ Tillyard, *A Handbook*, 19–29.

Wellesz's *History* is only marginally more informative regarding the cheironomia, discussing them in a cursory manner that betrays the author's impatience with the entire subject.²⁵

Reluctance to move beyond philological methods in order to deal with issues of performance practice, however, is hardly unique to the founders of the MMB. Commenting on the prevalence of this tendency among modern music historians, Joseph Kerman has suggested that "given the choice between preparing an edition of Josquin's Masses and determining how they were sung, a musicologist will opt instinctively for the former undertaking."²⁶ Since a major professional advantage of this sort of approach to the study of music is, as Richard Taruskin has shrewdly observed, that it allows scholars to escape into a learned (and occasionally salutary) agnosticism unavailable to performers,²⁷ it should come as no surprise that Tillyard retreated to such a position whilst defending the MMB's transcription method against attacks relating to issues of performance practice. Responding to accusations levelled by Thrasybulos Georgiades that the MMB was imposing modern Western notions of temperament and rhythm on medieval Byzantine chant, Tillyard wrote:

"It is quite wrong to assume that, because our Transcripta are in staff-notation, we *ipso facto* imply the Equal Temperament. We are obliged to use a notation that European students can understand; and if anyone thinks that agreement on the precise ratios and vibrations can be attained, we are ready to consider any scientific argument that may be brought forward.

It is also incorrect to say that, because the MMB Transcripta use crotchets and quavers, that they therefore imply a mathematically exact time-duration. On the contrary, ...we only desire to express, in a clear and consistent way, the indications of length that are defined in the Papadike and used in the MSS."²⁸

Tillyard's remarks invite us to regard the transcriptions of the MMB as "quasi-facsimiles" open to further realisation, a notion that we have already found difficult to reconcile with its founders' general disregard for performance practice. In particular, the above-mentioned omission of so many cheironomia from the method of transcription remains a philologically suspect decision that, we may add, were justified with similar pleas of scholarly agnosticism.

In view of these methodological shortcomings, we must consider the possibility that the editors of the MMB saw their transcriptions as essentially closed or "prescriptive" scores to be read literally within the context of modern Western performance practice.²⁹ Such readings, in fact, formed the basis for sharp critiques of the MMB's renderings of Byzantine chants in staff notation by Constantine Psachos, T. Georgiades, and Simon Karas. These Greek scholars emphasised to varying degrees the importance of unwritten conventions, especially as preserved in the received tradition of Byzantine chanting, for the interpretation of medieval documents. Recognising this common element in their arguments, Tillyard quickly seized upon it in order to dismiss all three in a single breath as proponents of the "stenographic theory of Greek music," which he caricatured as the "absurd" belief "that Byzantine music can be sung only by the light of tradition, confided exclusively to groups of Greek singers."³⁰ Yet the truth is somewhat more complicated, for Psachos, Georgiades and Karas each offered a distinct critique of Western scholarship that may be distinguished by, among other things, somewhat different approaches to the transcription of medieval Byzantine melodies. In order therefore to clarify further the matters at issue in the controversy provoked by the transcriptions of the MMB, we shall now briefly survey the arguments of Western musicology's first major Greek opponents.

²⁵ Wellesz, *A History*, 294–300. In fairness, one should note that when Wellesz's last pupil wrote his doctoral thesis on two chant repertoires of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, he took advantage of the more abundant textual evidence for Byzantine signs of ornamentation by writing a chapter on their realisation. In line with the precedents established by his teacher as an editor of the MMB, however, he still omitted the cheironomia from the majority of his transcriptions. See Dimitri E. Conomos, *Byzantine Trisagia and Cheroubika of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Thessalonica 1974, 325–67.

²⁶ Kerman, *Contemplating Music*, 189.

²⁷ Taruskin, *The Pastness of the Present*, 201–03.

²⁸ H. J. W. Tillyard, *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae: A Reply*, in *The Music Review* 3, 1942, 110.

²⁹ I refer here to the distinction between closed "prescriptive" and open "descriptive" approaches to medieval notation proposed by Treitler (*Cantus planus binatim*, 153). Treitler, in turn, borrows the contrast between "prescriptive" and "descriptive" musical scores from a frequently cited article by Charles Seeger, who defines the terms in a somewhat different manner. See Seeger, *Prescriptive and Descriptive Music-Writing*, in *The Musical Quarterly* 44, 1958, 184–95.

³⁰ H. J. W. Tillyard, *The Rediscovery of Byzantine Music*, in Jack Westrup, ed., *Essays presented to Egon Wellesz*, Oxford 1966, 5.

Constantine Psachos (ca.1866 – 1949)³¹

Educated and trained as a cantor in Constantinople, Constantine Psachos was sent to Greece by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to head a newly created school of Byzantine music at the Athens Conservatory in 1904. Soon after his arrival in the capital of the modern Greek kingdom, Psachos gained a reputation as a fierce defender of the received sacred and secular traditions of music, achieving this through a combination of teaching, scholarship, and vitriolic denunciations of his opponents. Acting in this manner, he was a particularly energetic contributor in the ongoing musico-cultural debate over various attempts at Westernising Greek Orthodox liturgical singing, including the introduction of harmonised chant. Of considerable interest is the fact that his most notable antagonist in this controversy was the Athenian cantor and erstwhile reformer John Th. Sakellarides (c. 1853 – 1938),³² a larger-than-life figure who had the unusual distinction of teaching Tillyard Chysanthine chant from 1904 – 07.³³

Significantly, it was one of his many disagreements with Sakellarides that supplied Psachos with the pretext to give a public lecture in 1906 entitled *On the Ancient Stenographic System of Byzantine Music*.³⁴ This, his first major statement about the interpretation of medieval Byzantine notation, was delivered in belated reaction to a transcription Sakellarides had made in 1904 of a medieval Byzantine acclamation to the Emperor Constantine XI Paleologos.³⁵ Psachos subsequently continued to refine his views on the stenographic theory whilst challenging its opponents. In 1917 this activity climaxed with the publication of *The Notation of Byzantine Music*, an ambitious monograph that directly censured foreign musicologists for allegedly misinterpreting medieval Byzantine sources.³⁶ Tillyard delivered the Western response to these charges some years later in two withering review articles³⁷ heralding a half century of conflict with Psachos and his traditionalist successors.

Psachos' critique of early Western scholarship is rooted in the distinction articulated by the early nineteenth-century reformer Chrysanthos of Madytos in his *Great Theory of Music* between "metroponia" and "melos" in layers of Byzantine chant antedating the introduction of his own "New Method" of notation.³⁸ The "metroponia" of a chant is obtained by reading the intervallic neumes of a chant, thereby producing what is viewed not as a complete melody, but a stenographic outline requiring extensive realisation. The true melody or "melos" of a chant is revealed only when the metroponia's motivic formulae ("theseis") and accompanying cheironomia are read in the light of oral tradition to produce either a performance or a written "exegesis" in a more exact ("analytic") notation. Consequently, according to Psachos, Western scholars had hitherto grossly misrepresented medieval Byzantine chant by transcribing only its metroponia without recognising its melos.³⁹

³¹ Various dates have been offered for his birth. Psachos himself listed it as 19 May 1876, whilst scholars have variously offered the years 1876, 1874 and 1869. See Georgios Chatzetheodorou, *Η ζωή και τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Κωνσταντίνου Ἀλεξάνδρου Ψάχου*, in K. A. Psachos, *Η Παρασημαντική τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Μουσικῆς*, 2nd ed., Athens 1978; and Markos Ph. Dragoumis, *Constantinos A. Psachos (1869–1949): A Contribution to the Study of His Life and Work*, in Dimitri Conomos, ed., *Studies in Eastern Chant 5*, Crestwood 1990, 78. Biographical information about Psachos in the present study is drawn from these two sources.

³² For summaries of the conflict between Psachos and Sakellarides over the Westernisation of Chysanthine chant, see Yiannis Filopoulos, *Εἰσαγωγή στὴν ἑλληνικὴ πολυφωνικὴ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ μουσικὴ*, Athens 1990, 145–51; and Kaite Romanou, *Εθνικῆς Μουσικῆς Περίγησις 1901-1912: Ἑλληνικὰ μουσικά περιοδικὰ ὡς πηγὴ ἔρευνας τῆς ἱστορίας τῆς Νεοελληνικῆς Μουσικῆς*, vol. 1, Athens 1996, 50–59.

³³ Tillyard, *The Rediscovery of Byzantine Music*, 3; and Romanou, *Εθνικῆς Μουσικῆς Περίγησις*, vol. 1, 152.

³⁴ Romanou, vol. 1, 147–48.

³⁵ I. Sakellarides, *Ὁ ὕμνος τοῦ Παλαιολόγου*, Παναθήναια (31 August, 1904), 277–80; cited in Romanou, vol. 1, 147. The articles generated in response to this article are surveyed in Romanou, *op. cit.*, 147–51.

³⁶ Psachos, *Η Παρασημαντική*, 99–104.

³⁷ *The Stenographic Theory of Byzantine Music*, in *Laudate 2*, 1924, 216–25; 3, 1925, 28–32; *Byzantinsche Zeitschrift 25*, 1925, 333–38.

³⁸ *Θεωρητικὸν Μέγα τῆς Μουσικῆς*, Trieste 1832; repr. ed., Athens 1977, XLV–XLVIII. According to Romanou (vol. 1, 142–44), Psachos' exposition of the stenographic theory drew directly on an unpublished study completed sometime around 1870 by P.G. Keltzanides entitled *Κλεις τῆς Ἀρχαίας Μεθόδου (A Key to the Ancient Method)*. Although the work of Keltzanides is now lost, a roughly contemporary account of the stenographic theory may be gleaned from the incomplete *Λεξικὸν τῆς ἑλληνικῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς μουσικῆς*, Constantinople 1868, by Kyriakos Philoxenes, which includes entries defining the terms "melos" and "metroponia", as well as sample realisations of several medieval cheironomia.

³⁹ Psachos, *Η Παρασημαντική*, 99–104. A recent and more nuanced exposition of the stenographic theory is given by Grigorios Stathis, its leading contemporary champion, in *An Analysis of the Sticheron "Τὸν ἥλιον κρύψαντα"* by

If not taken too far, this could be construed as a reasonable argument for the necessity of taking performance practice into account when interpreting Byzantine neumes. Yet Psachos, seeking to bolster the prestige of the living performing tradition by affirming its antiquity (and therefore its freedom from Turkish influence),⁴⁰ pressed the theory to its extreme in order to advocate the essential identity of the medieval and modern chant repertoires. All differences between early and Chrysanthine versions of melodies were therefore supposedly reconciled by performing conventions that only gradually had been revealed through exegesis into progressively more analytical forms of notation. In other words, Psachos believed that Byzantine notation has evolved whilst the melodies it transmits have remained essentially the same.

The basic flaws of such a sweeping application of the stenographic theory were pointed out almost immediately by the Constantinopolitan cantor Markos Vasileiou, whose moderate ideas about the interpretation of medieval Byzantine notation were unfortunately not transmitted to the West until the 1980s.⁴¹ More recent scholarship, however, has shown that Psachos was attempting to universalise a post-Byzantine practice of performing select early repertoires – notably the anonymous “Old” Sticherarion and the eponymous works of late and post-Byzantine composers – slowly and with lavish centonate ornamentation. Documented in musical and theoretical sources from the late seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries,⁴² this partially oral tradition of “long” exegesis was fixed as the only possible interpretation of these repertoires at the time of the Chrysanthine reform. This occurred when Chourmouzius the Archivist and Gregory the Protopsaltes transcribed many early chants into the “New Method” of Chrysanthine notation exclusively (if not quite uniformly) according to the conventions of “long” exegesis.⁴³ Psachos himself illustrated this progression with the music of Example 2, which shows a phrase from John Koukouzeles’ didactic song “Ἰσον, ὀλίγον”: a) as originally notated in the fourteenth century; b) in an exegesis of Petros Peloponnesios (†1777); and c) as transcribed by Chourmouzius.⁴⁴

Germanos, Bishop of New Patras (The Old ‘Synoptic’ and the New ‘Analytical’ Method of Byzantine Notation, in Miloš Velimirović, ed., *Studies in Eastern Chant* 4, Crestwood 1979, 177–227.

⁴⁰ Doubtful appeals to history were commonly made by both sides in the debate over Westernising trends in Greek church music. Sakellarides, while vigorously attacking Psachos and other traditionalists as purveyors of Turkish music and “nasal-singing” (“ῥινοφωνία”), justified his own three-part harmonisations of simplified chants with highly dubious citations of Ancient theorists and Church Fathers (e.g. *Ἕγμνοι καὶ Ὡδαί*, Athens 1930; repr. ed., Hollywood 1949, 1–6, 27–28). For a relatively dispassionate survey of this controversy, see Filopoulos, *Εἰσαγωγή*, 109–54.

⁴¹ Vasileiou’s detailed refutation of Psachos’ theory was serialised in the patriarchal journal *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀκρόθεια* 26, 1906, 416–18, 427–28, 446–48, 483–84, 645–67; and 27, 1907, 9–11. The fascinating but little-known writings of Vasileiou, whose solutions to the problem of medieval Byzantine notation in many ways anticipate the generally eirenic consensus presently emerging between Greek and Western scholars, are discussed in Dragoumis, *Markos Vasileiou*, 45–53; and Romanou, vol. 1, 149–51.

⁴² The development of the “long” exegesis is surveyed in Gregorios Stathis, *Ἡ παλαιὰ Βυζαντινὴ σημειογραφία καὶ τὸ πρόβλημα μεταγραφῆς τῆς εἰς τὸ πεντάγραμμον*, *Βυζαντινά* 7, 1975, 193–221 [text], 427–60 [plates]. Extensive quotes from such post-Byzantine theorists as Apostolos Konstas of Chios are provided in the Stathis’ monograph *Ἡ ἐξήγησις τῆς παλαιᾶς βυζαντινῆς σημειογραφίας*, 2nd ed., Institute of Byzantine Musicology Studies 2, Athens 1989.

⁴³ One should note that these two teachers used shorter forms of exegesis to transcribe other repertoires, notably including those of the Heirmologion and “New” Sticherarion. The various approaches to exegesis employed during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are illustrated and discussed in Arvanitis, *A Way to the Transcription*, 123–39; and Simon Karas, *Μέθοδος τῆς ἐλληνικῆς μουσικῆς: Θεωρητικόν*, vol. 2, Athens 1982, 158–72. In the latter study, Karas also briefly discusses variations between the transcriptions of Chourmouzius and Gregorios.

⁴⁴ Transcribed from Psachos, *Ἡ Παρασημαντικὴ*, 177. All transcriptions of pre-Chrysanthine Byzantine notation in this article follow the method of the MMB with the following modifications: 1) the petaste is represented by the sign “~”; 2) the psephiston is represented by an accent sign bisected by a line; 3) the Byzantine signs for acceleration and slowing are written above the staff in their original form; and 4) the cheironomiaí normally omitted from the transcriptions of the MMB are placed around the staff in their original form. My own transcriptions of Chrysanthine notation: 1) employ the same set of signs to mark the presence of qualitative neumes; 2) show the chromatic alterations and rhythmic subdivisions indicated by the original notation; and 3) omit the Chrysanthine διαστολαί supplied by Karas to indicate the beginning of each new metrical group. In both cases, the scores should be read as diplomatic transcriptions open to further realisation.

Example 2. The Post-Byzantine Exegesis of Koukouzeles' Didactic Song (Excerpt)

a) *κρά - τη - μα*

b) *κρά - τη - μα, κρά - τη - μα - γα*

c) *κρά - τη - μα, κρά - τη - μα,*

(α) *γα*

In a logical extension of his belief that pre-Chrysanthine chant is completely recorded only in the final exegeses of the nineteenth-century reformers, Psachos maintained that valid transcriptions of medieval Byzantine melodies into modern Western notation must be realisations within the tradition of Chourmouzos and Gregorios.⁴⁵ At the same time, however, he appears not to have expected such transcriptions to depict the manifold subtleties of a rendition made according to the performing conventions of the received tradition. Indeed, the few staff-notation examples given in *Η Παρασημαντική* are themselves a form of metrophonia, showing only the pitches (which are recorded without microtonal distinctions) and rhythms explicitly indicated by the Chrysanthine neumes. The positions of qualitative neumes are not marked by symbols, nor is any further realisation of the melody according to the unwritten conventions of attraction or ornamentation attempted.⁴⁶ While this somewhat agnostic approach to transcription is consistent with Psachos' view that staff notation is inherently incapable of depicting the nuances of Byzantine chant,⁴⁷ it may also reflect the unresolved contradictions regarding the relationship between notation and performance practice in his writings perceived by Angelopoulos.⁴⁸

Thrasybulos Georgiades

A musicologist of wide-ranging interests who spent much of his academic life in Germany, Thrasybulos Georgiades (1907–77) made only one substantial contribution to the debate over the transcription of medieval Byzantine chant. In the unfortunate year of 1939 he published a carefully nuanced critique, replete with instructive parallels drawn from the study of pre-modern Western repertoires, of the *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae* entitled “Bemerkungen zur Erforschung der byzantinischen Kirchenmusik.”⁴⁹ Writing on behalf of the *Monumenta* in 1942, Tillyard offered an intemperate reply thoroughly misrepresenting Georgiades' position as being equivalent to that of Psachos,⁵⁰ after which the article has only rarely been cited by Anglophone scholars. Georgiades' essay is nevertheless well worth reconsidering, for its sophisticated discussion of the problems encountered in the study of Byzantine chant anticipates what are now common approaches to the editing and interpretation of Western Early Music.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 106–07, 205, 216–17.

⁴⁶ Almost the same relationship between Byzantine and Western staff notation obtains in his booklet of Greek folk songs from Skyros. When employing staff-notation in this collection, however, Psachos marks some of the microtonal attractions with small sharps and flats. See K. A. Psachos, *Δημόδη Ἄσματα Σκύρου*, Athens 1910; repr. ed., Athens 1988, 1–56.

⁴⁷ Psachos, *Δημόδη Ἄσματα Σκύρου*, 55.

⁴⁸ Angelopoulos has noted that in 1907 Psachos denounced cantors at the Ecumenical Patriarchate for singing sticheraric chants with traditional ornaments that he nevertheless seems to have transmitted to his own pupils. This matter, according to Angelopoulos, is further complicated by inconsistencies in the way Psachos indicated these same ornaments in his compositions. See *Ἡ σημασία τῆς ἔρευνας καὶ διδασκαλίας τοῦ Σίμωνος Καρά*, 5.

⁴⁹ *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 39, 1939, 67–88.

⁵⁰ Tillyard, *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae: A Reply*, 105–14.

Georgiades, although not unconcerned with what he sees as defects in the transcription method of the MMB, offers a critique of the organisation that is fundamentally methodological. In particular, he reproves Tillyard and Wellesz for neglecting what he takes to be two basic principles of musicological scholarship: 1) the necessity of setting aside preconceptions derived from modern Western musical practice when approaching unfamiliar repertoires; and 2) the related obligation of interpreting musical documents within their proper aural context, defined by him in this instance as encompassing the underlying tonal system and performance practice ("Aufführungspraxis") of Byzantine chant. The result, according to Georgiades, of studying notated manuscripts and theoretical treatises without reference to the world of sound was to limit musicology to its subsidiary disciplines of philology and paleography.⁵¹ Today, such a conclusion would surprise no one, for distinguishing carefully between musical scores and their realisation is now considered to be obligatory for those engaged in the study or performance of pre-modern Western repertoires. Howard Mayer Brown's article on "Editing" for the *New Grove Dictionary*, for example, states that an editor "must investigate the traditional relationship between the written versions of compositions in a particular repertory and the way they sounded in performance."⁵² Similarly, one finds Thomas Binkley echoing Georgiades' harsh verdict on the inadequacy of purely philological approaches to medieval music.⁵³

Georgiades' technical criticisms of the MMB stem mostly from what he sees as the failure of its editors to recognise the gap between Byzantine and contemporary Western European performance practice.⁵⁴ From the absence of a discourse on the unwritten conventions required for the realisation of Byzantine scores and the wholesale dismissal of evidence from the living Chrysanthine tradition, he concludes that the transcriptions of Tillyard and Wellesz are to be read literally within the interpretive context of modern classical music and criticises them accordingly. Drawing on Chrysanthine and the medieval Western precedents for support, Georgiades attacks their exclusion of all "irrational" intervals within an implied system of equal-temperament tuning (a charge partially denied, as we have seen above, by Tillyard), as well as their neglect of tonal attractions ("ἔλλξεις", i.e. *musica ficta*).⁵⁵ Furthermore, he finds that their decision to employ without further explanation symbols drawn from Western instrumental music to represent Byzantine qualitative neumes similarly implies the anachronistic imposition of a foreign performance style upon the chant.⁵⁶ Georgiades' own sensitivity to the role of medieval Byzantine performance practice may be seen in his treatment of the vexing issues of rhythm and ornamentation. Believing them to be of signal importance for Byzantine chanting, Georgiades maintains that they were determined largely by unwritten conventions. In support of this, he recalls analogous discrepancies between notation and realisation in such early Western repertoires as organum and Baroque music. Although he declines to offer a solution of his own to the problem of realising medieval Byzantine chant, he judges the literal readings of early manuscripts advanced by the MMB to be as improbable as the Chrysanthine exegeses of traditionalist Greek cantors.⁵⁷

Despite his rejection of the stenographic theory of Psachos and similar attempts to prove the identity of Chrysanthine chant to its medieval forbear (if not, as he observes, to Ancient Greek music), Georgiades nevertheless remains sympathetic to the Greek cantors. He finds a "kernel of truth" in their argument and recognises their legitimacy as inheritors of the Byzantine tradition.⁵⁸ Moreover, he consistently asserts that the continuity of their monophonic art with the past provides them with practical knowledge that is valuable for scholars attempting to recover the interpretive context for the realisation of earlier Byzantine repertoires. While this last proposition earned Georgiades a double portion of Tillyard's sarcasm,⁵⁹ it places him today in the good company of such scholars and performers as Peter Jeffery⁶⁰ and Marcel Pérès.⁶¹

⁵¹ Georgiades, *Bemerkungen*, 67–74, 87.

⁵² Cf. Brown, "Editing," 840.

⁵³ Thomas Binkley, *The Work Is Not the Performance*, in Tess Knighton and David Fallows, eds., *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music* London 1992, 36–43.

⁵⁴ Georgiades, *Bemerkungen*, 75.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 68–74. Compare Tillyard's response, which avoids mentioning the early Western parallels in order to focus on the allegedly Oriental (or otherwise decadent) character of "irrational" intervals and ἔλλξεις. For the latter he finds dubious and unflattering analogies in gypsy fiddling and the sound of "a native...scraping at a wire string over an old tin box" in "Zululand". See *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae: A Reply*, 106–13.

⁵⁶ Georgiades, *Bemerkungen*, 75; cf. pp. 70 and 85.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 75–77, 83–84.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 77–78.

⁵⁹ Tillyard, *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, 105–08.

⁶⁰ *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures*.

⁶¹ Cf. Pérès' explanation of his decision to collaborate with Lycourgos Angelopoulos in Bernard D. Sherman, *Inside Early Music: Conversations with Performers*, Oxford 1997, 32–37.

Simon Karas

In 1929 Simon Karas founded the Society for the Dissemination of National Music to promote the performance and study of traditional Greek music, and has since trained such contemporary exponents of Byzantine chant and folk music as Lycourgos Angelopoulos and Domna Samiou. His first public foray into the controversies surrounding the interpretation of pre-Chrysanthine notation occurred in 1933 after Dom Lorenzo Tardo of the Italo-Greek monastery of Grottaferrata – a scholar and church musician with views similar to those of the MMB, whose editorial board he later joined – delivered a lecture in Athens. Dom Tardo had angered Karas by questioning the received tradition of Byzantine chanting's continuity with its medieval forbear,⁶² causing the latter to respond with a short pamphlet entitled *Byzantine Musical Notation*.⁶³ This work, in turn, attracted the attention of Tillyard who, after excoriating it as a mere repetition of Psachos' discredited arguments, dismissed Karas with what is perhaps the most vividly remembered put-down in the field: "As Kyrios Karas maintains that no foreigner can ever learn Byzantine music since the Greeks hold the one true and Apostolic musical tradition, it would be a misguided effort to disturb such a happy frame of mind."⁶⁴

Evidently unfazed by Tillyard's remarks, Karas continued his studies of medieval Byzantine notation (and, incidentally, acquired his own reputation for having a sharp tongue).⁶⁵ In 1953 he presented a paper consolidating his views on this subject to the Ninth International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Thessalonica entitled "The Correct Interpretation and Transcription of Byzantine Musical Manuscripts."⁶⁶ A casual reading of this study would seem to vindicate Tillyard's earlier judgement, for it contains bold reassertions of three central tenets of Psachos' theory:

"1) Medieval Byzantine notation is "stenographic" in character, requiring further realisation in performance;⁶⁷

2) The post-Byzantine exegeses are of signal importance for the interpretation of earlier musical documents;⁶⁸ and

3) The living tradition of Greek Orthodox chanting "through its notation – continuously completed and simplified – and through its teaching and its continuous practice in divine worship appears to have been maintained through the ages spotless and basically pure from every foreign effect and influence."⁶⁹

When one reads Karas' entire text more carefully, however, it quickly becomes apparent that his stance differs significantly from that of Psachos. In fact, his position is much closer to that of Georgiades, whose suggestion of reading the textual evidence of notated manuscripts and theoretical treatises in the light of the received performing tradition he forcefully repeats.⁷⁰ Despite his insistence on the stenographic character of Byzantine notation before the Chrysanthine reform and the integrity of the living performing tradition, Karas never asserts the melodic identity of the modern and medieval chant repertoires, but gives examples of where the former has faithfully preserved elements of the latter.⁷¹ Moreover, in a move foreshadowing his later rejection of their authority as witnesses to medieval Byzantine chanting, he conspicuously ignores the "long" exegeses of early chants by Chourmouziotis and Gregorios.⁷² Instead of

⁶² An excerpt of the lecture Tardo delivered in Athens in 1933 is translated in Tillyard, *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, 108.

⁶³ Simon I. Karas, *Η Βυζαντινή Μουσική Σημειογραφία*, Athens 1933.

⁶⁴ H.J.W. Tillyard, *The Antiphons of the Byzantine Octoechos*, in *Annual of the British School at Athens* 36, 1939, 133; later quoted in Miloš Velimirović, *H.J.W. Tillyard, Patriarch of Byzantine Studies*, in *The Musical Quarterly* 54, 1968, 347.

⁶⁵ E.g. his recent caustic assessment of an unnamed Greek colleague's work in Simon I. Karas, *Ιωάννης Μαΐστορ ό Κουκουζέλης και ή εποχή του*, Athens 1992, 42–43.

⁶⁶ *Η όρθή έρμηνεία και μεταγραφή τών βυζαντινών μουσικών χειρογραφών*, in *Hellenika* 9, 1955, 140–49; reprinted separately with an afterword, Athens 1990.

⁶⁷ Karas, *Η όρθή έρμηνεία* 140.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 148.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 149.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, 141.

⁷¹ On this topic, see also Markos Ph. Dragoumis, *The Survival of Byzantine Chant in the Monophonic Music of the Modern Greek Church*, in Miloš Velimirović, ed., *Studies in Eastern Chant* 1, Oxford 1966, 9–36. Dragoumis' study is notable for employing the methods of the MMB to show the received tradition's continuity with its Byzantine past.

⁷² Writing in 1982, Karas states plainly that it was "inconceivable that all of the stichera idiomela were chanted in a slow manner, as they were transcribed by the Three Teachers – primarily Chourmouziotis – of the [Patriarchal] School

deferring reflexively to these highly melismatic transcriptions – as did Psachos, who trumpeted them as the key to the old notation – Karas followed his own methodological recommendations to present the Thessalonica congress with new and considerably more compact exegeses based largely on the method of “short” exegesis used by the nineteenth-century reformers to transcribe the modern Greek Orthodox church’s vast (and mainly eighteenth-century) central repertory of chant.⁷³ Set next to their Byzantine or post-Byzantine originals in both Chrysanthine and staff notation, these realisations are bold attempts to read various layers of documentary evidence within the context of the received Byzantine tradition’s tonal system and conventions of performance practice.

Whilst one may legitimately question the rigidity with which Karas applies the modern framework to the early chants (particularly with regard to his blanket acceptance of a high level of chromaticism), his tradition-based method offers a considered alternative to that of the MMB, whose transcriptions he interprets as prescriptive scores to be read literally within the context of modern Western European performance practice. Like Georgiades, he criticises Tillyard and Wellesz for dubiously assigning Western dynamic markings to the qualitative neumes and, more generally, for what he saw as their naive and culturally inappropriate approach to the realisation of Byzantine scores.⁷⁴ Moreover, Karas detects the same tendencies among the Westernised cantors produced by certain Greek conservatories who, having absorbed modern European notions about proper vocal style and fidelity to the score, he finds equally guilty of imposing a foreign aesthetic on the Byzantine tradition.⁷⁵

We may obtain a better understanding of Karas’ interpretive stance by referring to some of the music examples illustrating his 1953 study. His Table 4, for instance, shows various renderings in both Byzantine and staff notation of the opening phrase of the final idiomelon sung at the Ninth Hour on Christmas Eve.⁷⁶ The first three, excerpts of which our Example 3 presents in MMB-style diplomatic transcriptions, are given by Karas in Byzantine neumes. Set in chronological order, these are: 1) the “old” melody of the Middle Byzantine *Sticherarion* (Example 3a); 2) the post-Byzantine version of the late seventeenth-century composer Panagiotes Chrysaphes the Younger (Example 3b);⁷⁷ and 3) a Chrysanthine transcription evidently made by Karas from the earliest version (Example 3c) that differs considerably from the standard modern chant by Petros Peloponnesios (an important fact for those unfamiliar with the modern repertory that he neglects to mention), which is presented for comparison as Example 3e.⁷⁸ Karas supplements these examples in Byzantine notation with two transcriptions into staff-notation. The first is of his Chrysanthine realisation, which presents the chant with its ornaments written out as they might be heard in performance (Example 3d). He contrasts this florid rendering with a transcription of the oldest version made according to the method of the MMB (cf. Example 3a) to which he attaches a rubric indicating his disapproval of such readings by “Westerners” (“καὶ ὄχι τῶν δυτικῶν”).

Example 3. Karas, Table 4

a) 

of 1815.” On the contrary, he finds it likely that all the old *Sticheraria* were realised in a “short” style similar to that of their modern counterparts. See Karas, *Θεωρητικόν*, vol. 2, 158.

⁷³ Karas, however, fails to discuss in detail the procedures followed by the Three Teachers and their predecessors. Fortunately, as we have noted above (cf. supra, n. 42), his pupil Arvanitis has recently explained the mechanics of “short” exegesis in *A Way to the Transcription*, 123–39.

⁷⁴ Karas, *Ἠθροθὴ ἐρμηνεία*, 141–45.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, 147.

⁷⁶ This hymn is correctly identified in the text of the article (*Ibidem*, p. 144), but mistakenly attributed to the Hours of Holy Friday in Table 4 itself.

⁷⁷ Current research on this composer is conveniently summarised in Grigorios Stathis, *Παναγιώτης Χρυσάφης ο Νέος και Πρωτοψάλτης*, in *Μελοῦργοί του 15^{ου} αἰῶνα* [programme for the 1995–96 Cycle of Greek Music at the Megaro Mousikes of Athens], Athens 1995, 7–16.

⁷⁸ Transcribed from Petros Peloponnesios the Lampadarios, *Σύντομον Δοξαστῆριον*, Bucharest 1820, 111.

b) Σή - με - ρον γεν - νά - ται ἐκ παρ - θε - νου

c) Σή - με - ρον γεν - νά - ται ἐκ παρ - θε - νου

d) Σή - με - ρον γεν - νά - ται ἐκ παρ - θε - νου

e) [transposed up one tone] Σή - με - ρον γεν - νά - ται ἐκ παρ - θε - νου

Comparison of the different way in which Karas presents the same chant reveals his tendency to read and employ the Western staff in a much more “analytical” manner than he does for Chrysanthine neumes. When transcribing early chant into the reformed Byzantine system, Karas offers interpretations of the rhythmic subdivisions and chromatic inflections that the medieval notation was incapable of conveying. At the same time, however, he refrains from exploiting Chrysanthine notation’s ability to show an even higher degree of melodic detail by continuing to notate ornaments involving rapid movements of the voice in the traditional manner with qualitative neumes.⁷⁹ Such an economic application of the Chrysanthine system thus stands in marked contrast to Karas’ fussy rendering of the same melody on a Western staff, which is reminiscent of a piece of French Baroque keyboard music with all the *agrément*s completely written out. The fact that he found it necessary to produce such a full realisation in staff notation would seem to indicate not only a desire to illustrate his point, but also the assumption that transcribed chants are subject to relatively closed and prescriptive readings.

Karas’s Table 8 illustrating the realisation of the *kyllisma* and other qualitative neumes with a passage from the second *heirmos* of the iambic *kanon* for Theophany, confirms his maintenance of a double-standard for the Byzantine and modern Western systems of notation. As before, Karas provides three neumed versions of the chant, showing the melody 1) as transmitted in the late sixteenth-century *Heirmologion* of Germanos, Bishop of New Patras (Example 4a); 2) as notated in a nearly identical manner by Petros Peloponnesios (Example 4b); and 3) in his own Chrysanthine exegesis (Example 4c). To these he appends three transcriptions into staff notation, the first of which is a full realisation of his exegesis showing how the shapes of the *antikenoma* and *kyllisma* are reflected in the melodic contours of their realisations (Example 4d). This is followed by two examples illustrating what Karas believes to be faulty interpretations of the neumes: a transcription of the pre-Chrysanthine sources made according to the method of the MMB entitled “Westerners” (essentially identical to the diplomatic transcription given as Example 4a); and a transcription entitled “New Conservatory Church Musicians” (Example 4e) showing how the Chrysanthine version might be performed without ornaments or microtonal inflections by a Westernised Greek cantor.

Example 4. Karas, Table 8

a) με - λω - δί - ας

⁷⁹ With increasing frequency in recent years, Greek cantors have exploited the technical possibilities of the Chrysanthine system to publish their own detailed and often idiosyncratic realisations of the central repertory. Angelopoulos (*Ἡ σημασία τῆς ἔρευνας καὶ διδασκαλίας*, 3–4) has decried this trend, noting that students trained to chant from such books are often incapable of producing idiomatic renderings from the relatively uncluttered classic texts.

b) με - λω - δί - ας

c) με - λω - δί - ας

d) με - λω - δί - ας

e) με - λω - δί - ας

The last of these examples may seem to be a curious departure for a paper concerned with the interpretation of medieval notation, but it serves to remind us that Karas' insistence on the necessity of interpreting Byzantine neumes within the context of unwritten performing conventions has always extended to the Chrysanthine repertory. Indeed, it would be more accurate to say that his interest in the performing practice of earlier repertories is an extension of his long crusade to promote idiomatic performances of traditional Greek music, both sacred and secular. Rather unpromisingly, he embarked on this at a time of Western musical ascendancy when operetta was at the height of its popularity among the Athenian elite,⁸⁰ many of whose churches, as we have previously noted, had adopted Russian-style polyphony or the reformed and often harmonised chant of Sakellarides.⁸¹ Some cantors had also begun to teach Byzantine chant with the aid of pianos, thereby promoting overly literal readings of the neumes within the rigid framework of equal temperament tuning.⁸² In the face of such strong Western influence, the "descriptive" function of Chrysanthine notation ceased to be self-evident and renditions like Example 4d became for some cantors not only a viable, but even a preferable option. Karas responded vigorously to these trends on the one hand by decrying the Westernised singing of "New Conservatory Church Musicians" as "ξηροφωνία" ("dry-voiced [singing]"), and on the other hand by going to great lengths to systematise and transmit to his students the unwritten conventions of Byzantine performance practice. Bearing all this in mind, we can see clearly why Karas associated the MMB with the Westernising cantors of modern Greece. Although focused on different repertories, both groups were, in his view, equally guilty of imposing on Byzantine music a foreign aesthetic chiefly characterised by *xerophonia*. Proceeding therefore on the assumption that all scores in staff notation were to be rendered verbatim, Karas sought to remedy the misreading of medieval and modern Byzantine chants with highly detailed transcriptions more closely approximating their realisation in sound.

The MMB and the Example of Solesmes

Having just seen how Psachos, Georgiades and Karas, despite profound differences in perspective, each assumed that transcriptions of medieval Byzantine chants by Western scholars were to be read literally according to the conventions of post-Romantic Western art music, we may now resume our discussion of the MMB by asking whether its founders shared this assumption. Despite Tillyard's occasional flights into agnosticism and the fact that the MMB's transcription method – which, as we may recall, is designed to produce relatively neutral "quasi-facsimiles" amenable to "reverse transcription" – does not make "dry-

⁸⁰ Greek operetta was only the most recent in a series of increasingly successful Western or Westernised musical genres that reigned in the cities of modern Greece from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. A useful summary of operetta's rise in the 1920s is Kostas Mylonas, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Τραγουδιού*, vol. 1 (1824–1960), 5th ed., Athens 1984, 84–118.

⁸¹ The use of sacred polyphony in the Orthodox churches of modern Greece prior to the Second World War is surveyed in Filopoulos, *Εισαγωγή*, 78–156.

⁸² Filopoulos (*Ibidem*, 123–24) reports that Sakellarides took this trend to its logical conclusion by providing his chant students with harmonised piano accompaniment. This practice led to a major scandal when he attempted to provide such accompaniment for the public examination of his pupils on 12 May 1902 and thus provoked a revolt from outraged traditionalists in attendance.

voiced” readings of transcribed chants obligatory, the answer is still yes. Indeed, not only did the founders of MMB interpret their transcriptions in a literal manner without reference to the received conventions of Greek singing, but they left ample evidence of their preference for a particular modern Western approach to plainsong, namely that developed by the Benedictine monks of Solesmes to perform the recently restored repertory of Gregorian chant.

Explicit instructions for performing medieval Byzantine chant are particularly prominent in the scholarly writings of Tillyard, whom Raasted has described as seeming always “to have potential performers of his transcribed melodies in mind.”⁸³ Whilst most of these remarks are quite brief,⁸⁴ Tillyard’s ideas about the proper rendering of chant transcriptions are presented at some length in his *Twenty Canons from the Trinity Hirmologium*.⁸⁵ Unquestionably designed to facilitate the performance of its contents, this slim volume is the only publication in the MMB’s *Scripta* series to contain alternate Latin texts for singers unable to read Greek. Its music is preceded by an extended introduction in which Tillyard rapidly proceeds from a description of the manuscript and its texts to more practical concerns, including the application of accidentals, the use of intonations, and the interpretation of rhythmical and accentual signs. He concludes this section with a long paragraph forthrightly stating his wish that renderings of medieval Byzantine chant be modelled on the modern style of singing Gregorian chant pioneered by Solesmes:

“No directions about the tempo or manner of singing have come down to us from the Middle Ages. ... The drone or holding-note, often heard at the present day, is not mentioned until the sixteenth century and may be a late importation from the East. This also applies to the nasal singing which displeased many travellers in Greece in the nineteenth century. We should therefore take the best Gregorian tradition for our guide and recommend as follows: (1) ... The Canons should be sung in quick time, especially if given by a single cantor. (2) The rhythm is free: the quavers and crotchets have not an absolute value, but represent shorter or longer notes in a melodious recitative, whose movement resembles that of ordinary speech.... (3) No vocal harmonies should be allowed, as they entirely destroy the character of the music. But a light organ accompaniment may be a useful aid, especially to singers not specially trained in unaccompanied work. An organist used to Plainsong will readily supply what is needed. (4) The staccato marks (which serve largely to distinguish the different neumes) must not be allowed to break up the general smoothness of singing and the flow of the melody. They must be rendered with due discretion.”⁸⁶

These directions were put into practice by Høeg and Wellesz, both of whom supervised recordings of medieval Byzantine music that Tillyard described as revealing “a quiet charm not inferior to some of the most admired Gregorian melodies.”⁸⁷ Wellesz, for example, oversaw the recording of several medieval Byzantine chants by the choir of London’s Brompton Oratory for *The History of Early Music in Sound*,⁸⁸ an anthology designed as a companion to *The New Oxford History of Music*. Without a single audible concession to the received tradition of Byzantine chanting, the Roman Catholic choir confidently renders these Greek chants in the “dry-voiced” manner now usually employed for Western plainchant.

If the idea of imposing the nineteenth-century aesthetics of the Benedictine revival on the music of the Greek Orthodox Church now seems anachronistic or even bizarre,⁸⁹ it is nevertheless symptomatic of a

⁸³ Raasted, *Observations*, 20.

⁸⁴ E.g. Tillyard, *A Handbook*, 25; idem, *Recent Byzantine Studies*, in *Music and Letters* 35, 1954, 34; and idem, *The Rediscovery of Byzantine Music*, 5.

⁸⁵ *Supra*, n. 13.

⁸⁶ Tillyard, *Twenty Canons*, 6–7.

⁸⁷ Raasted, *Recent Byzantine Studies*, 34.

⁸⁸ *Early Medieval Music up to 1300*, ed. Dom Anselm Hughes (London His Masters Voice and the Oxford University Press, 1953). Although none of the recordings made by Høeg were available to the present author, further confirmation of the MMB’s Gregorianising tendencies may be found in the work of Greek-American scholar and church musician Frank Desby (1922–92). Throughout his long career in church music, Desby, who was one of the present author’s teachers, conducted not only medieval Byzantine, but even Chrysanthine chant in the style of Solesmes. On one occasion, Wellesz visited Los Angeles and heard Desby perform his transcriptions with the choir of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Sophia in Los Angeles. According to Miloš Velimirović (*Egon Wellesz and the Study of Byzantine Chant*, in *The Musical Quarterly* 62, 1976, 273, Wellesz was “overjoyed” by the performances, stating that “his work has found its purpose.” Desby’s curious manner of interpreting medieval and modern Byzantine chant may be heard on a recording he made two years prior to Wellesz’s visit to Los Angeles: *Treasures of Byzantine Music*, Phonodisc 10001-S, Byzantine Society Records, 1952.

⁸⁹ For a modern assessment of the Solesmes style as a product of its times, see Katherine Bergeron, *Chant, or the Politics of Inscription*, in Fallows and Knighton, eds., *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, 101–03.

more general penchant for linking the Byzantine musical tradition as closely as possible with the Gregorian as it was then understood. Particularly evident in the writings of Tillyard and Wellesz, this tendency reaches its apotheosis in the remarkable first sentence of the first chapter of Tillyard's *Handbook*, which baldly proclaims "Byzantine Music in its main features resembles Gregorian."⁹⁰ Without denying the strong influence Anton Baumstark's classic work on comparative liturgy exercised on the MMB,⁹¹ there is substantial cause for interpreting this statement as something more than an attempt to alert the reader to the existence of structural parallels between sister traditions of Christian chant. It is, in effect, a manifesto for a campaign to refashion Byzantine chant in the modern image of its Gregorian sibling.

The pursuit of such radical transformation was made obligatory for the MMB's founders by their *a priori* rejection of the received tradition as hopelessly corrupted by supposed Arabo-Turkish influences. This decision caused them not only to rule out the arguments from tradition promulgated by Psachos, Georgiades and Karas, but also to propose tendentious explanations for what they, on the basis of precious little historical or musical knowledge, alleged to be the deterioration of Byzantine music after the thirteenth century. Wellesz, for example, maintained that the onset of decay in the fourteenth century was marked by the efforts of John Koukouzeles and his fellow *maïstores* to embellish earlier repertoires with "a superficial figuration which completely obscured the original melodic structure."⁹² Yet the advent of virtuosic "kalophonic" chant was for Wellesz only a prelude to the period of Ottoman domination, when much more radical transformations of Byzantine chanting were brought about by what Tillyard called "overwhelming" Eastern musical influence.⁹³ The subsequent Chrysanthine reform of Byzantine notation in the early nineteenth century was therefore, in Tillyard's estimation, largely a missed opportunity to reverse centuries of decline:

"Chrysanthus...did not attempt to restore the medieval melodies or to purge Byzantine music of Oriental elements. It is therefore unsafe to assume that the modern music of the Greek Church contains any body of tradition earlier than the eighteenth century, although many melodies may have accidentally preserved their more ancient forms."⁹⁴

It is interesting to note that Tillyard was preceded in his conviction that the received tradition of Byzantine chanting was in need of correction by his Westernising teacher Sakellarides.⁹⁵ Whereas the latter had attempted to accomplish the task himself largely through the haphazard censorship of perceived orientalisms, the founders of the MMB, as Tillyard makes clear in his contribution to the Wellesz *festschrift*, had settled upon a more fashionable and ostensibly scientific model for reform:

"In the old days we had wider hopes, for, in view of the revival of Gregorian music in the nineteenth century, we dreamed of an equally glorious reconstruction of medieval Byzantine chant, based on a thorough-going recension of the most important manuscripts."⁹⁶

Accordingly, the MMB's advocacy of a modern Western style for performing Byzantine chant must be viewed as part of an audacious but never realised project to implement (from outside the Orthodox

⁹⁰ *A Handbook*, 13. Tillyard also made a nearly identical claim ("Medieval Byzantine music has a strong likeness to Gregorian") in his 1923 article for *Music and Letters* 4, p. 271, in which he also asserted that "the florid writing in vogue since the 16th century and the nasal singing heard in many churches are undoubtedly alien to the best traditions", p. 272.

⁹¹ On the influence of Baumstark's comparative liturgiology on Wellesz's methodology, see Christian Hannick, *Egon Wellesz und sein Verhältnis zur Musik der Ostkirchen*, in Otto Kolleritsch, ed. *Egon Wellesz*, Vienna and Graz 1986, 89–93.

⁹² *Music of the Eastern Churches*, chap. in Dom Anselm Hughes, ed., *The New Oxford History of Music*, vol. 2, Oxford 1954, 17–19.

⁹³ Tillyard, *A Handbook*, 15.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 16. Compare this gloomy view of Chrysanthine chant's fidelity to the medieval tradition with an earlier and more optimistic appraisal by the same author: "It need hardly be said that in spite of Oriental influence, many ancient melodies have been preserved in Byzantine hymnody." See H. J. W. Tillyard, *Byzantine Music*, in *Music and Letters* 4, 1923, 271.

⁹⁵ On the reformed chant of Sakellarides, see Filopoulos, *Εἰσαγωγή*, 109–14; and Konstantinos D. Kalokyres, *Ὁ Μουσουργὸς Ἰωάννης Θ. Σακελλαρίδης καὶ ἡ βυζαντινὴ μουσικὴ: Κριτικὴ σκιαγραφία 50 χρόνια μετὰ τὸν θάνατό του*, 2nd ed., Thessalonica 1988.

⁹⁶ Tillyard, *The Rediscovery of Byzantine Music*, 5–6.

Church!) an Eastern counterpart to the Solesmes restoration of the forgotten corpus of medieval Gregorian melodies.⁹⁷

Wellesz, who was so dismissive of the Chrysanthine repertory's claims to authenticity that he regularly referred to it as "Neo-Greek" rather than "Byzantine,"⁹⁸ was especially active in the process of fashioning an image of medieval Byzantine chant compatible with the revived Gregorian repertory. In addition to his aforementioned promotion of *xerophonia*, Ewald Jammers has noted two areas in which Wellesz made a decisive contribution:⁹⁹

"1. *Chromaticism*: Early in his career, Tillyard observed that the received tradition's varied palette of tunings and high level of chromaticism was a further stumbling block for modern Western listeners already put off by a "very nasal" style of vocal production.¹⁰⁰ These features of Modern Greek singing seem to have been especially disturbing for Wellesz, who came to the study of Eastern chant via Gregorian plainsong.¹⁰¹ He therefore declared that the goal of comparative studies with Western plainchant was "the confirmation of the correctness of the assumption which I held from the beginning, i.e. that Byzantine music was diatonic before the Empire came under the overwhelming influence of Arabic, and, even more, of Turkish music. Byzantine music cannot have sounded strange to Western ears."¹⁰²

2. *Rhythm*: In two seminal articles published between 1918 and 1921,¹⁰³ Wellesz pioneered an interpretation of Byzantine rhythm that was later adopted by the MMB. Here again his background in Gregorian chant appears to have been decisive, for he promoted an equalist approach that, although differing in detail from the controversial theories of Dom André Mocquereau (1849 – 1930), brought Byzantine chant into line with contemporary ideas of Gregorian "free rhythm."¹⁰⁴

Although articulated definitively in Tillyard's *Handbook*, these theories were first systematically applied in Wellesz's landmark edition of *The Hymns of the Sticherarion for September*.¹⁰⁵ In addition to 'paleographically correct' transcriptions of the Middle Byzantine hymns, this book, which appeared in 1936 as Volume One of the MMB's *Transcripta* series, contains a substantial introduction combining astute analysis of the hymns with promotion of the Monumenta's restorationist agenda. The latter is concentrated in a section of the introduction entitled "The Melodies," which Wellesz begins by proudly declaring that the chants in his volume are presented in their "original diatonic form." Further assertions about the supposedly diatonic state of Byzantine chant before the advent of Arabo-Turkish influence serve as the pretext for Wellesz to disassociate the received tradition of Byzantine chanting from its medieval forbear, which can now be reconstructed from manuscripts and theoretical treatises. In support of this radical position, Wellesz invokes the Solesmes restoration of Gregorian chant as both a parallel case and a model for emulation. Noting that substantial differences had also been discovered between nineteenth-century and medieval

⁹⁷ As Ewald Jammers and Christian Hannick have observed, the MMB's pursuit of this restorationist agenda extended beyond attempts to match the paleographic achievement of the French Benedictines, encompassing also their extremely influential approaches to rhythm and performing practice. See Jammers, *Musik in Byzanz, im päpstlichen Rom und im Frankenreich*, Heidelberg 1962, 42–47; and Hannick, "Probleme der Rhythmik des byzantinischen Kirchengesangs", in Hannick, ed., *Rhythm in Byzantine Chant*, 1–14. The manner of performing Gregorian chant developed at Solesmes is usefully summarised in Dom Joseph Gajard, *La Méthode de Solesmes, ses principes constitutifs, ses règles pratiques d'interprétation*, Tournai 1951. On the decisive influence of Solesmes on the performance of Gregorian chant during the twentieth century, see Mary Berry, *The Restoration of the Chant and Seventy-five Years of Recording*, in *Early Music* 7, 1979, 197–217; and Lance W. Brunner, *The Performance of Plainchant: Some Preliminary Observations of the New Era*, in *Early Music* 10, 1982, 317–28.

⁹⁸ E.g. Wellesz, *Music of the Eastern Churches*, 18.

⁹⁹ Jammers, *Musik in Byzanz*, 45–47.

¹⁰⁰ Tillyard, *Greek Church Music*, 89.

¹⁰¹ Gerda Wolfram, *Der Rhythmus in den Arbeiten von Egon Wellesz*, in *Rhythm in Byzantine Chant*, 37.

¹⁰² *A History*, 22. Wellesz seems to assume here that Western styles of singing and musical tastes have somehow remained relatively unchanged. Another other possibility suggested by more recent scholarship is that Byzantine chant did not sound strange to Western ears because Gregorian chant was originally sung in what today would be called an "Eastern" manner. For a detailed discussion of this problem, see Timothy J. McGee, *The Sound of Medieval Song: Ornamentation and Vocal Style according to the Treatises*, Oxford 1998.

¹⁰³ *Die Entzifferung der byzantinischen Notenschrift*, in *Oriens Christianus* N.S. 7, 1918, 97–118; and *Die Rhythmik der byzantinischen Neumen*, in *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 2, 1920, 617–38, 3, 1921, 482–502.

¹⁰⁴ On the equalist bias of Wellesz and the MMB, see Jammers, 46–72; and Wolfram, *Der Rhythmus*, 37–43. For a full presentation of Mocquereau's complex rhythmic theories, see his *Le Nombre musical grégorien ou rythmique grégorienne*, 2 vols., Tournai 1908–27.

¹⁰⁵ Egon Wellesz, *Die Hymnen des Sticherarium für September*, MMB Transcripta 1, Copenhagen 1936.

sources of Western plainchant, he speaks approvingly of the Benedictine monks' scholarly efforts to publish the early melodies. The result of the Solesmes restoration was, in his estimation, nothing less than the resurrection of Gregorian chant's soul.¹⁰⁶ The MMB, he concludes, was now poised to do perform a similar miracle for the Byzantine tradition:

“Das gleiche Ziel haben wir uns gesetzt: die Seele der byzantinischen Musik aufzufinden, und dies ist nur möglich wenn man die Melodien in ihrer unsprünglichen Reinheit, in der wundervollen Übereinstimmung von Dichtung und Musik darzustellen vermag.¹⁰⁷

We have set ourselves the same goal: to rediscover the soul of Byzantine Music, and this is only possible when one has been able to present the melodies in their original purity with their wonderful agreement between poetry and music.”

The Politics of Restoring Byzantine Chant

Since Wellesz wrote these words, more recent generations of musicologists have recognised that expressions of noble sentiments and claims of scientific objectivity cannot disguise the fact that restoring a musical repertory is anything but a neutral act. The impulse to restoration, as Carl Dahlhaus has observed, is rooted in metaphysical assumptions – evidently shared by the founders of the MMB – about decline from an original state that may not be surpassed.¹⁰⁸ Subsequent development is therefore to be regarded as no more than dirt obscuring the “original purity” of the music in question, an authoritarian view that has been propounded most prominently in recent years by leaders of the late twentieth-century revival of Early Music. Confronting the ugly side of their earnest restorationism with characteristic directness, Richard Taruskin writes:

“What is thought of as the “dirt” when musicians speak of restoring a piece of music is what people, acting out of an infinite variety of motives over the years, have done with it. What is thought of as the “painting” by such musicians is an imaginary rendering in which “personal choices” have been “reduc[ed] to a minimum,” and, ideally, eliminated. What this syllogism reduces to is: *people are dirt*.”¹⁰⁹

Although clearly applicable to the MMB's wholesale rejection of the received tradition of Byzantine chanting, Taruskin's negative assessment of musical restorationism still needs to be amended in this instance. In order to reveal fully the unsavoury ideologies underlying the attempted restoration of Byzantine chant, one must recall that the attempts earlier this century by Westerners and Westernisers to recover the supposedly unsullied musical objects of an ideal Byzantine past were always carried out under the assumption that most of the “dirt” came not from the passage of time, but from the “overwhelming influence” of the Arabo-Turkish East. The operative hypothesis of the MMB's grand project to rescue the music of the Greek Orthodox Church from the bearers of its living tradition may therefore be simplified, using Taruskin's formula, to “Oriental people are dirt.” If these words seem unduly harsh, any doubts about contemporary Western distaste for Byzantine chant should be quickly dispelled by the following description of Greek chanting by the Roman Catholic scholar Adrian Fortescue (1874 – 1923):

“To Western ears this music certainly sounds strange and barbarous. It is much discussed whether the enharmonic intervals are really Greek, or whether they are due to later Asiatic influence. The Byzantines have other musical practices that make their singing still more unpleasant to us. They add astonishing grace notes and incredible pneumas, rushing through the quarter-tones and half-tones round about the note that we should expect them to hold. ... If anything were wanted to make this amazing chanting still more unbearable to us, it would be the continual wail of the Ison-boy piercing through the apparently irresponsible vagaries of the choir. But the Western European who has heard what seems to be simply a confused shrieking with no rhythm, tune, nor method, should know that really their chant is the most wonderful display of accurate ear and skill in the world. Who of us could sing intervals as 600/503 tones right, or at one flash, as the Ison-boy drops his doleful wail, calculate that he has shifted from do to la, and that, therefore, we must change from

¹⁰⁶ Wellesz, *Die Hymnen*, XXX.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁸ Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J.B. Robinson, Cambridge 1983, 156.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Taruskin, *The Pastness of the Present*, 205–206 [emphasis in the original]. The quote about reducing choices is by Christopher Hogwood, cited by Taruskin from Will Crutchfield, *A Report From the Battlefield*, *New York Times*, Sunday, 28 July 1985, sec. 2.

the third authentic to the first plagal mode? Pity so much skill should be spent to produce such a hideous result.”¹¹⁰

Such profound hostility to the performing practice of the received tradition made the sanitisation of Byzantine chant a fundamental prerequisite for its acceptance and consumption by Westerners and Westernised Greeks. Conscious emulation of the Solesmes restoration was, as we have already indicated, a particularly ingenious solution to this problem. Adoption of the earliest manuscripts as the sole arbiters of authenticity without grounding them in a developed concept of performing practice meant that Tillyard, Wellesz and Høeg were able to bypass entirely the embarrassing “nasal singing” of traditional Greek cantors in favour of a hypothetical reconstruction that was both aurally and methodologically fashionable. With everything distasteful thus reassuringly dismissed as “Arabo-Turkish” accretions, its new Western curators could ensure that Byzantine music “in all its original purity” assumed its rightful place alongside Gregorian chant in the pantheon of European musical history.

At this point, it should now be apparent that the work of the MMB bears the marks of another tradition of Western scholarship antedating that of Solesmes. Ever since the late eighteenth century, as Edward Said has shown, Western European scholars had been expropriating the distant and glorious pasts of the supposedly debased inhabitants of the Near and Middle East. Indeed, comparison with Said’s description of the methods and objectives of early British and French Orientalists makes clear the extent to which the MMB’s project may properly be considered a classic manifestation of Orientalism:

“Proper knowledge of the Orient proceeded from a thorough study of the classical texts, and only after that to an application of those texts to the modern Orient. Faced with the obvious decrepitude and political impotence of the modern Oriental, the European Orientalist found it his duty to rescue some portion of a lost, past classical Oriental grandeur in order to “facilitate ameliorations” in the present Orient. What the European took from the classical Oriental past was a vision (and thousands of facts and artefacts) which only he could employ to the best advantage; to the modern Oriental he gave facilitation and amelioration – and, too, the benefit of his judgement as to what was best for the modern Orient.”¹¹¹

In typical Orientalist fashion, modern Greeks were identified by Tillyard, Wellesz and Høeg as the debased inheritors of a great tradition from the distant past. The MMB then sought to recover a certifiably authentic version of Byzantine chant – i.e. unsullied by the barbarism of its present custodians – through the application of philological methods to the earliest possible sources. Informed native perspectives about the tradition – including those of Psachos, Georgiades and Karas – could be safely ignored because, as Said notes, “from the beginning of Western speculation about the Orient, the one thing the Orient could not do was to represent itself.”¹¹² Accomplishing the ultimate goal of its enterprise – namely Tillyard’s vision of a “glorious restoration” equal to that of Solesmes – would have seen the MMB proffering medieval Byzantine chant “in all its original purity” to the East, which presumably would be suitably grateful to Western scholarship for once again “facilitating ameliorations.”

Epilogue: The Ongoing Rapprochement of Western and Greek Chant Scholarship

In 1954, Wellesz and Tillyard, having theretofore failed to win over their Greek critics or to initiate a restoration of medieval Byzantine chant, published writings in which each relinquished the dream of leading an Eastern counterpart to the Solesmes restoration. Wellesz’s survey of Byzantine music for the *New Oxford History of Music* manifests an attitude of resignation in the face of what its author judged to be unfortunate historical circumstances. After a superficial and spurious comparison of the development of Byzantine and Gregorian chant (the latter supposedly “had been kept unchanged by the Western Catholic church”), Wellesz goes on to admit grudgingly that “the present state of Neo-Greek ecclesiastical music is...a legitimate and genuine historical development, whether we approve of it on aesthetic grounds or not, and a reform

¹¹⁰ Adrian Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, London 1907, 411–12.

¹¹¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York 1979, 79. “Facilitating ameliorations” refers here to a passage Said has just quoted from page vii of Frederick Eden Pargiter, ed., *Centenary Volume of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland 1823–1923*, London 1923. It states that the Royal Asiatic Society’s purpose was to investigate “the sciences and the arts of Asia, with the hope of facilitating ameliorations there and of advancing knowledge and improving the arts at home,” a mission not unlike that of the MMB.

¹¹² Said, 283.

comparable to that of Gregorian chant is out of the question.”¹¹³ On the other hand, Tillyard, who decades before had been initiated into the received tradition of Byzantine chanting by Sakellarides, was evidently stung deeply by the harsh criticism of Greek traditionalists who (rightly) associated the MMB with Greece’s Westernising faction of church musicians. Clear evidence of his heightened sensitivity to such attacks appears in his review of “Recent Byzantine Studies” for *Music and Letters*, which surprisingly concludes with several paragraphs in which Tillyard tries to re-establish his credentials as a Philhellene. After attacking the introduction of harmonised music in the city churches of Greece as a “deplorable” practice that “threatens the whole fabric of the Chrysanthine system and the last remnants of antiquity,”¹¹⁴ he proceeds to renounce the very idea of a restoration:

“I should like to assure all Greek musicians that we in the West do not wish to discredit their national tradition. Our concern is with the medieval manuscripts; if we interpret them by the usual methods of paleography we may hope to win the respect of scholars for our results, without in any way denying the right of the Orthodox Church to uphold the practices that time has endeared to the more conservative of her preceptors.”¹¹⁵

A mere four years later after the appearance of these publications, the last vestige of the MMB’s ambitious project was discarded when the organisation’s editorial board suspended the *Transcripta* series, the volumes of which had originally been viewed as the means to effect the restoration of medieval Byzantine chant. Officially presented as a temporary measure taken to advance the appearance of other publications,¹¹⁶ this also reflected a growing dissatisfaction on the part of the board’s newer members with the transcription system of its founders. In any case, despite the bitter opposition of Wellesz to this action, the *Transcripta* series has yet to be resumed.¹¹⁷

In the absence of a single authoritative approach to transcription, experimentation with a broader spectrum of methodologies has led to a gradual rapprochement between the traditionalist and Western approaches to medieval Byzantine chant. This ongoing process of reconciliation undoubtedly has been aided by the general fragmentation of Western musical culture, which has heightened public receptivity to styles of performance lying outside the usual orbits of European classical music whilst also engendering new approaches to Early Music of all sorts. Meanwhile in Greece, renewed pride and acceptance of indigenous music by all social classes has been accompanied by a major revival of Chrysanthine chant that is now fostering the systematic study of the received tradition and its complex performing practice by native scholars.¹¹⁸ Along with these broad cultural and scholarly trends, one should also note an ever-increasing number of fruitful personal exchanges. Many of Greece’s authorities on Byzantine chant who came to maturity after the Second World War have spent some time studying Byzantine chant under Western scholars: e.g. Michael Adamis with Kenneth Levy at Brandeis University, Markos Dragoumis with Wellesz at Oxford, and Gregorios Stathis and Georgios Amargiannakis with Jørgen Raasted, who was Høeg’s successor at the University of Copenhagen. Raasted was particularly energetic in his attempts to assure that the exchange of ideas was not entirely one-sided, immersing himself in the received tradition in a search for common ground with the Greek traditionalists led by Karas and Stathis. In the past couple of decades the ongoing convergence of Eastern and Western scholarship has lead increasingly to practical results, most notably in the stimulating performances of medieval Byzantine and Western chant by ensembles under the direction of, respectively, Lycourgos Angelopoulos and Marcel Pérès.

In view of the major shifts of scholarly and musical attitudes that have recently occurred, it seems fitting to conclude this essay by returning to the MMB’s transcription method in order to ask: was it fatally compromised by the Orientalist programme of its creators? I believe the answer to this question to be negative, provided that the method is recognised clearly as a means to produce diplomatic transcriptions of medieval Byzantine chant in Western staff-notation. Such transcriptions should not be sung uncritically

¹¹³ Wellesz, *Music of the Eastern Churches*, 18. It is quite clear from the context of this statement that Wellesz still thoroughly disapproves of modern Greek chanting.

¹¹⁴ Tillyard, *Recent Byzantine Studies*, 34.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁶ C. Høeg, B. di Salvo, H. J. W. Tillyard and E. Wellesz, *Les «Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae»: Report on the Meeting of the Board of Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae in Copenhagen, August 11–14, 1958 and on the Connected Colloquium*, in *Byzantion* 28, 1958, 522; cf. Raasted, *Thoughts on a Revision*, 13.

¹¹⁷ John Bergsagel, *Egon Wellesz: The Oxford Years*, in ed. Otto Kolleritsch, ed., *Egon Wellesz, Studien zur Wertungsforschung* 17, Vienna and Graz 1986, 28; Caroline Cepen Benser, *Egon Wellesz as Scholar and Teacher: The Oxford Years*, in Kolleritsch, ed., *Egon Wellesz*, 51.

¹¹⁸ *Supra*, n. 8.

according to the conventions of late nineteenth-century Western art music, but must be interpreted in the light of Byzantine performing practice in a manner not dissimilar to that presupposed by the original neumed sources. This will inevitably involve some combination of scholarship and conjecture, for the performing conventions of medieval Byzantine chant, like those of Western medieval music, are not fully recoverable from documentary evidence. An outstanding example of such “historically informed” performance was the memorial concert for Raasted given on 23 August 1996 by Lycourgos Angelopoulos and his Greek Byzantine Choir in Copenhagen Cathedral as part of the 19th International Byzantine Studies Congress. During this concert the ensemble presented stylishly ornamented renditions of diplomatic transcriptions by a wide variety of Greek and Western scholars side-by-side with short and long exegeses into Chrysanthine notation by Chourmouzios the Archivist (†1840), Karas and Stathis. Further development along these lines raises the possibility of a humane alternative to the restoration envisioned by the founders of the MMB, which would have obliterated the received tradition of Greek Orthodox liturgical singing. In its place, one may foresee a far more glorious revival of forgotten music from the repertoires of Byzantine and post-Byzantine chant.

