

A Kalophonic Verse from the Second Psalm composed by John Koukouzeles: From Manuscript to Performance

In the present paper, I deal with the full musical text of a kalophonic verse from the Second Psalm,¹ composed by John Koukouzeles, a work of great musicological importance, based on a text taken from the mentioned Psalm No. 2 (especially its first and second verses), divided into five parts, as follows (Table No. 1).

The musical development of the composition under examination is what is called kalophonic,² so one has to deal with a very long and continuous melodic (and poetic) flow; nevertheless, it has to be noted (from the very beginning) that through the aforementioned (musical and poetic) development a clearly latent ‘musical and poetic rhetoric’ also arises; a ‘musical and poetic rhetoric’ that is simultaneously extremely ‘dramatic’; the ‘musical

Table 1. The original structure of the first and second verses of the Psalm No. 2; English and Greek text

<i>Psalm 2, 1a</i>	Why do the nations conspire ἵνα τί ἐφφύαξαν ἔθνη,
<i>Psalm 2, 1b</i>	and the peoples plot in vain? καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;
<i>Psalm 2, 2a</i>	The kings of the earth rise up παρέστησαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς,
<i>Psalm 2, 2b</i>	and the rulers band together καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ
<i>Psalm 2, 2c</i>	against the Lord and against his anointed one κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ.

rhetoric’ is specifically developed in parallel with the prospect of the composition’s poetic text, a prospect that is inherent in the opening psalm verses [*Psalm 2, 1–2*]; in fact, those verses are dynamically strengthened in their anagrammed and kalophonic treatment, in such a manner that they are finally combined in a new complete poem, divided (as a new integral poem) into eight pairs of verses (actually, taking into consideration the existing repetitions, the poem is divided into eleven pairs of verses), as follows (Table No. 2).

- Concerning the kalophonic tradition as a whole reflected in compositions based on verses taken from the Second Psalm, see: Ioannidou, *The Kalophonic Settings*; cf. ead. *The Kalophonic Settings of the Second Psalm in the Byzantine Tradition*. Cf. also Williams, *The Treatment of Text*.
- For the principles of the so-called kalophonic musical development cf. Stathis, *Introduction to Kalophony*.

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Table 2. The kalophonic strengthened structure of the first and second verses of the Psalm No. 2; English and Greek text

	Why do? "ἵνα τί;
1 ^a	the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη, καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;
	Why do? "ἵνα τί;
1 ^b	the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη, καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;
	Why do? "ἵνα τί;
2	plot in vain? ἐμελέτησαν κενά;
	Why do? "ἵνα τί;
1 ^c	the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη, καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;
	Why do? "ἵνα τί;
3	the kings and the rulers band together? οἱ βασιλεῖς καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό;
	again πάλιν
4 ^a	why do band against the Lord? ἵνα τί συνήχθησαν κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου;
	again πάλιν
4 ^b	why do rise up against the Lord? ἵνα τί παρέστησαν κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου;
	Why do rise up? – Why do band? "ἵνα τί παρέστησαν; – "ἵνα τί συνήχθησαν;
5	the nations band against the Lord and against his anointed one? λαοὶ συνήχθησαν κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ;
	Why do? "ἵνα τί;
	Why do the nations conspire? "ἵνα τί ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη;
7	the nations and the peoples plot in vain? ἔθνη καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;
	alleluia ἀλληλούια
8	



The deep philosophical perception and the musical aesthetic of the composition under examination is undoubtedly based and developed specifically around the main ontological question [why?]; a question which obviously arises from the very beginning of the psalm text. Thus, in the emerging interpretation of the musical text commented on here, another morphology of the composition (one might say an almost 'secret' or 'hidden' morphology of the composition) is, in practice, sought; that phenomenon helps us discover, through the individual melodic lines of the composition, its entire aesthetics.

By taking into consideration the aforementioned, I have recently reviewed the same composition, starting from the practical perspective of its performance. I have finally reached to a conclusion, which translates into an 'artistic and academic proposal', according to which the composition has to be structured (compatible with its aforementioned morphological philosophy) in the following fourteen parts (made up of twelve pairs of verses), in order to be antiphonally chanted by a soloist and a choir, respectively (Table No. 3).

This specific 'proposal' aims at the above-mentioned promotion of the composition's dialogic melodic perspective; in order to formulate it, I have followed, step by step, the poetic text of the composition, given in its last musical version (a contemporary one, i.e. an exegesis, formulated by Chourmouzios Chartophylax³), with the exception of points 12^a and 14; in the first [12^a] I had to adapt (at the end of the previous kratema part of the composition) the text of the main question, constantly repeated throughout the composition [why?], while in the second [14] I preferred to conclude the composition

3 See his autograph codex No. 703 of the collection of the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre (first volume of *Papadike*, containing compositions sung during the service of Vespers, written in 1818), kept at the National Library of Greece, fol. 227v–235v.

with the same question; thus, I had to adapt the very same text [*why?*] once again at the end of the final *Alleluia*, i.e. at the end of the refrain of the composition; in my opinion, the last choice is absolutely compatible with the kalophonic character of the composition, taking into consideration that the usual practice of such compositions is especially that of concluding with a musical motive that is identical to the initial one.

In addition, I believe that the above-mentioned ‘proposal’ follows at the same time the idea ‘from Manuscript to Performance’. I shall briefly describe the story behind the aforementioned ‘proposal’, explaining at the same time any possible connection between such a performative effort and the composition’s relevant manuscript tradition.

I first studied this specific composition with my students during the post-graduate programme ‘Byzantine Music Performance’ organized by the Department of Music Studies at the School of Philosophy of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Of course, we studied it according to its exegesis, made by Chourmouziotis in 1818, through the musical text found in his autograph codex No. 703 of the collection of the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre (fol. 227v–235v). Later, I had an additional opportunity to approach the same composition again with the members of my choir, the Masters of the Psaltic Art, while preparing a concert, given on 18 October 2018, at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens, during the Seventh International Musicological & Psaltic Conference (‘Morphology-Aesthetics’), organized by the Institute of Byzantine Musicology.⁴ It was during our rehearsals for that concert that I realized that it was really difficult (and perhaps aesthetically useless) for the choir to perform the entire composition (which lasts about 50 minutes); the composition’s real morphology suddenly struck me, especially while taking into

Table 3. The performative structure of the first and second verses of the Psalm No. 2; English and Greek text

1	“I... W(hy)...
	νιχι... [echema]
2	“Iva τί; Why do?
	ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη, καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά <i>the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain</i>
3	“Iva τί; Why do?
	ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη, καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά <i>the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain</i>
4	“Iva τί; Why do?
	ἐμελέτησαν κενά <i>plot in vain</i>
5	“Iva τί; Why do?
	ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη, καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά <i>the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain</i>
6	“Iva τί; Why do?
	οἱ βασιλεῖς καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό <i>the kings and the rulers band together</i>
7	πάλιν again
	ἵνα τί συνήχθησαν κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου; <i>why do band against the Lord?</i>
8	πάλιν again
	ἵνα τί παρέστησαν κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου; <i>why do rise up against the Lord?</i>
9	ἵνα τί παρέστησαν; – ἵνα τί συνήχθησαν; <i>Why do rise up? – Why do band?</i>
	λαοὶ συνήχθησαν κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ <i>the nations band against the Lord and against his anointed one</i>
10	“Iva τί; Why do?
	τιτιτι... [kratema]
11	“Iva τί ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη; <i>Why do the nations conspire?</i>
	τιτιτι... [kratema]
12	<“Iva τί; > Why do?
	ἔθνη καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά <i>the nations and the peoples plot in vain</i>
13	ἀλληλούια <i>alleluia</i>
14	<“Iva τί; > Why do?

consideration the above-mentioned development of its poetic text. Therefore, I considered that the basic question [*why?*], arising throughout the entire composition, would be more appropriately performed by a soloist (in fact, in a more ‘dramatic’ performance, using a slower or even a freer rhythm, one might say according to a ‘theatrical

4 See: <https://ibyzmusic.gr/>.

approach, trying to emphasize that ontological question: *WHY?*), while the remaining parts of the composition would be performed by the choir (using a constant performative approach and a quicker rhythm), as being actually the (poetic and musical) answers to the successive queries made by the soloist.⁵

For the above-mentioned concert, I also published a relevant pamphlet, in which the musical text of the composition (that written according to Chourmouzos Chartophylax's exegesis) was included;⁶ in that same pamphlet two additional significant musical codices were also taken into consideration, in order to invite comparative musical parallelisms;⁷ there, the composition under examination was written according to another Byzantine notational system, i.e., historically speaking, the previous one to the so-called New Method's system; I am referring specifically to the codex No. 222/73 of K. Psachos's collection [*Anthology*; an autograph of John Protopsaltes in 1766 (fol. 56r–57r)] as well as to the codex No. 36 from P. Gritsanis's collection [*Anthology*; an autograph of Cyril, Bishop of Drystras, in 1808 (p. 170–177)]. Following the composition's musical text, as written by the three mentioned sources, one can claim that the last codex could have been taken (potentially and hypothetically) into account by Chourmouzos, at the time he was preparing his exegesis; there is

an absolute correspondence of the musical text as it is written down (according, of course, to different notational systems), on the one hand, with the codex of Cyril (written in 1808) and, on the other, with the one of Chourmouzos (written in 1818), i.e. within a time frame of ten years (Table No. 4).⁸

However, there is no such correspondence between the composition's musical text as written in both above-mentioned codices and that written by John Protopsaltes in 1766, i.e. 42 or 52 years earlier, respectively. Of course, one can easily recognize that the very same composition is actually written in all the above-mentioned codices, but in the case of John Protopsaltes's codex it is written down according to another, more concise, type of the Byzantine Notation. Now I have the additional opportunity to compare the last record of the composition under examination (by John Protopsaltes, made in 1766) with a relevant record of the same composition found in codex No. 2458 of the collection of the National Library of Greece (*Papadike*, written in 1336 [fol. 22v–24r & 24r–25v]); the latter record is, in fact, the very first version, dating from 1336; that means that this is a record written 430 years before the version of John Protopsaltes. It is very striking indeed that the way this composition is written down (even if not absolutely identical) in both last codices, seems at least to bear, at an extremely large extent, many similarities (Table No. 5).

At this point, one could note many historically and palaeographically useful aspects (especially as one realizes that the relevant handwritten tradition remains stable for more than 400 years, but, at the same time, it is increasingly changeable during such a short frame of time, for example, during the 50 years' time frame

⁵ One can see the entire score of the composition under examination, written in Byzantine Notation according to Chourmouzos's exegetical version (taken from codex No. 703 of the collection of the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre, fol. 227v–235v), at the online appendix of this volume (Musical Example No. 1); additionally, a live recording of the performance can be found in the following websites: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfJOWIsAkLo> & <https://www.pemptousia.gr/video/%e1%bc%b5na-ti-%e1%bc%9ofriaxana-%e1%bc%94thni-melos-ioannou-koukouzelous-ma%ce%9ostores-tis-psaltikis-technis/>.

⁶ See Chaldaeakes, *Tva tí ἐφφύαξαν ἔθνη*, p. 5–21.

⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 22–30.

⁸ Note that all musical examples used onwards in this paper are, indicatively, limited to the initial musical part of the entire composition under examination.

Table 4. A notational comparison of the composition under discussion through its record in the mentioned codices of Cyril, Bishop of Drystras (AD 1808) and Chourmouzos Chartophylax (AD 1818)

Cyril (1808): 170	
Chourmouzos (1818): 227v	
Cyril (1808): 170	
Chourmouzos (1818): 227v	
Cyril (1808): 170	
Chourmouzos (1818): 227v	
Cyril (1808): 170	
Chourmouzos (1818): 227v	
Cyril (1808): 170	
Chourmouzos (1818): 227v	
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Cyril (1808): 170	
Chourmouzos (1818): 227v	
Cyril (1808): 170	
Chourmouzos (1818): 227v	
Cyril (1808): 170	
Chourmouzos (1818): 227v	

Cyril (1808): 170–171



Chourmouzos (1818): 227v



mentioned earlier); thus, for the time being, I would like to pay particular attention to the following two observations:

- In codex No. 2458 of the collection of the National Library of Greece a very interesting musical punctuation may be seen, as far as that era's usual practice is concerned;⁹ this musical punctuation, consisting of dots positions between the syllables of the poetic text is written below the Byzantine Notation, actually formulates individual parts of the entire composition; such a phenomenon is missing from newer (post-Byzantine) manuscripts (where one can merely observe, instead of this musical punctuation, some gaps between the continuous lines of the Byzantine Notation); according to the musical punctuation (given to us some seven centuries ago) the composition under examination could be divided in several individual parts, as one can clearly see in the following facsimile (Fig. 1).

Thus, it is undoubtedly noteworthy that the contemporary division of the composition under examination, a division I recently made myself according to a manuscript source from the nineteenth century (dating, specifically, from the year 1818), seems to also have been attempted (although using different divisions)

in the oldest relevant manuscript source of that composition, dating from the year 1336.

- Comparing the last two sources, i.e. codex No. 222/73 of Psachos's collection and codex No. 2458 of the collection of the National Library of Greece, one realizes that in the first (which is also the more recent) there are some noticeable additions or interventions, which are not found in the relevant musical material written down in the second (and oldest); I shall specifically point out here the following two parts of the composition under examination (Figures No. 2 & 3).

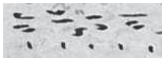
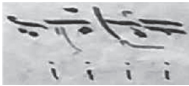




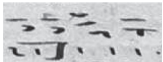

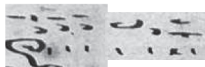
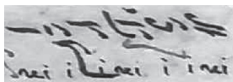
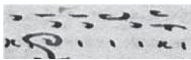
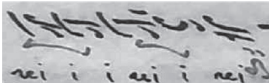
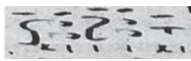
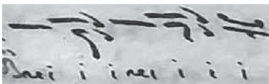
Such additions and interventions are similar to those I have already tried (for example) in the aforementioned parts [12^a & 14] of the same composition (Figure No. 4).

Thus, such an endeavour seems to be a usual and common practice throughout the Byzantine Music tradition, since one may notice similar efforts in several more analogous cases (undertaken either recently or even years or centuries ago). In my opinion, this is an effort that one has necessarily to make, if one wishes to modify a simple (and indicative) score into a piece of music more appropriate for a live performance.

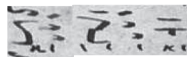
To sum up, I tried to be compatible with the 'technique' mentioned at the very beginning, investigating the paths of the direction of the research from manuscript to performance. In concluding the present paper, I feel that I have approached the same technique the other way around: from performance to manuscript! Such a reverse investigation is perhaps much more useful and didactic.

⁹ Cf. Raasted, *Some observations*. Idem, *Intonation Formulas*, p. 55–76. Troelsgård, *Musical Notation*. Kritikou, *Ὁ Ἀκάθιστος*, p. 287. Alexandru, *Αναλυτικές προσεγγίσεις*, p. 321 (note 41). Chaldaeakes, *The story of a composition*, p. 269–270 (note 16).

Table 5. A notational comparison of the composition under discussion through its record in the mentioned codices of John Koukouzeles (?) (AD 1336) and John Protopsaltes (AD 1776)

Koukouzeles? (1336): 22v	
John (1766): 56r	
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r	
John (1766): 56r	
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r	
John (1766): 56r	
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r	
John (1766): 56r	
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r	
John (1766): 56r	
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r	
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John (1766): 56r	

Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



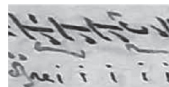
John (1766): 56r



Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



John (1766): 56r



Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



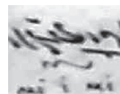
John (1766): 56r-v



Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



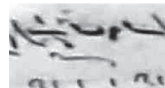
John (1766): 56v



Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



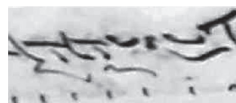
John (1766): 56v



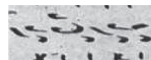
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



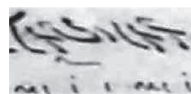
John (1766): 56v



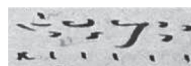
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



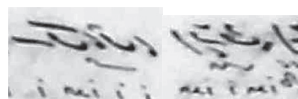
John (1766): 56v



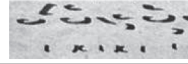
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



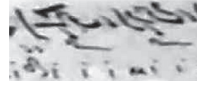
John (1766): 56v



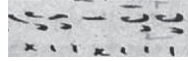
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



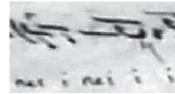
John (1766): 56v



Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



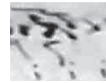
John (1766): 56v



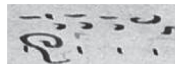
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



John (1766): 56v



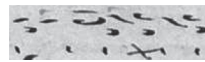
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



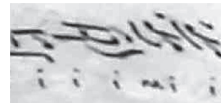
John (1766): 56v



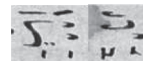
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



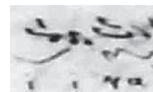
John (1766): 56v



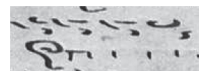
Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



John (1766): 56v



Koukouzeles? (1336): 24r



John (1766): 56v



Fig. 1. The record of the composition under discussion in the mentioned codex No. 2458 of the collection of the National Library of Greece, fol. 24r-25v, with the given musical punctuation additionally marked

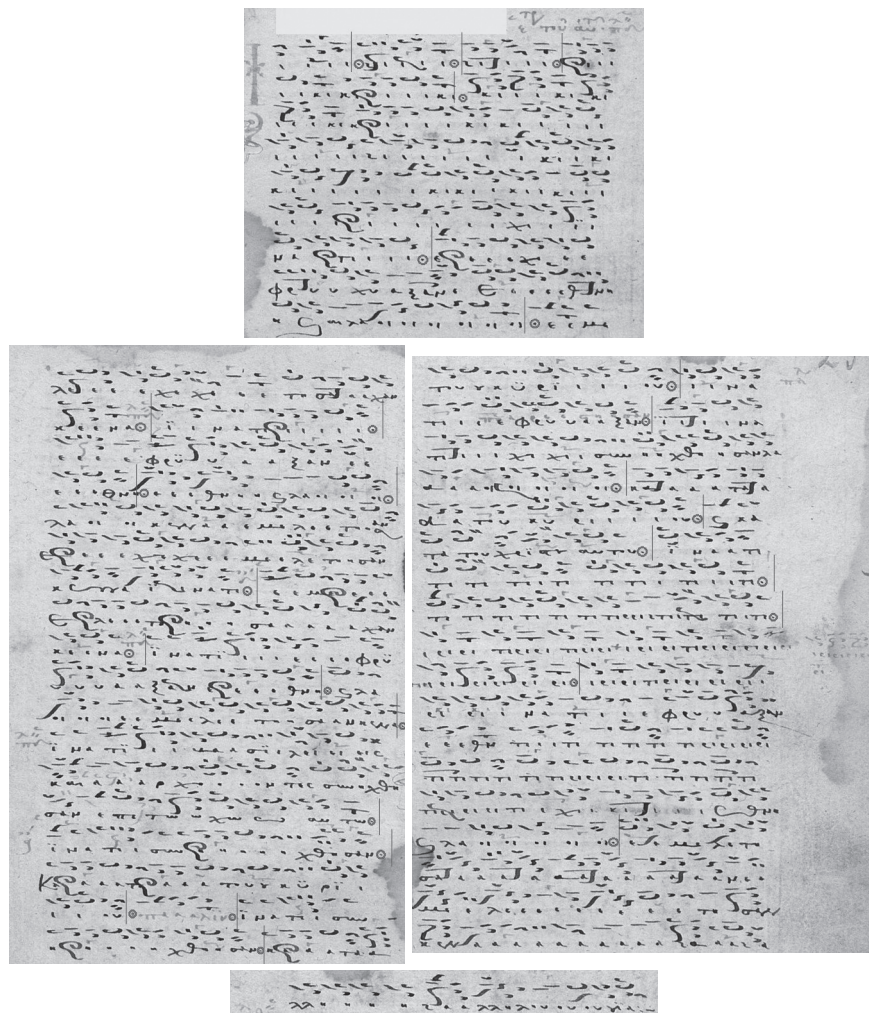


Fig. 2. Some noticeable additions or interventions after a comparison of the record of the composition under discussion in the mentioned codices No. 2458 of the collection of the National Library of Greece and No. 222/73 of Psachos's collection

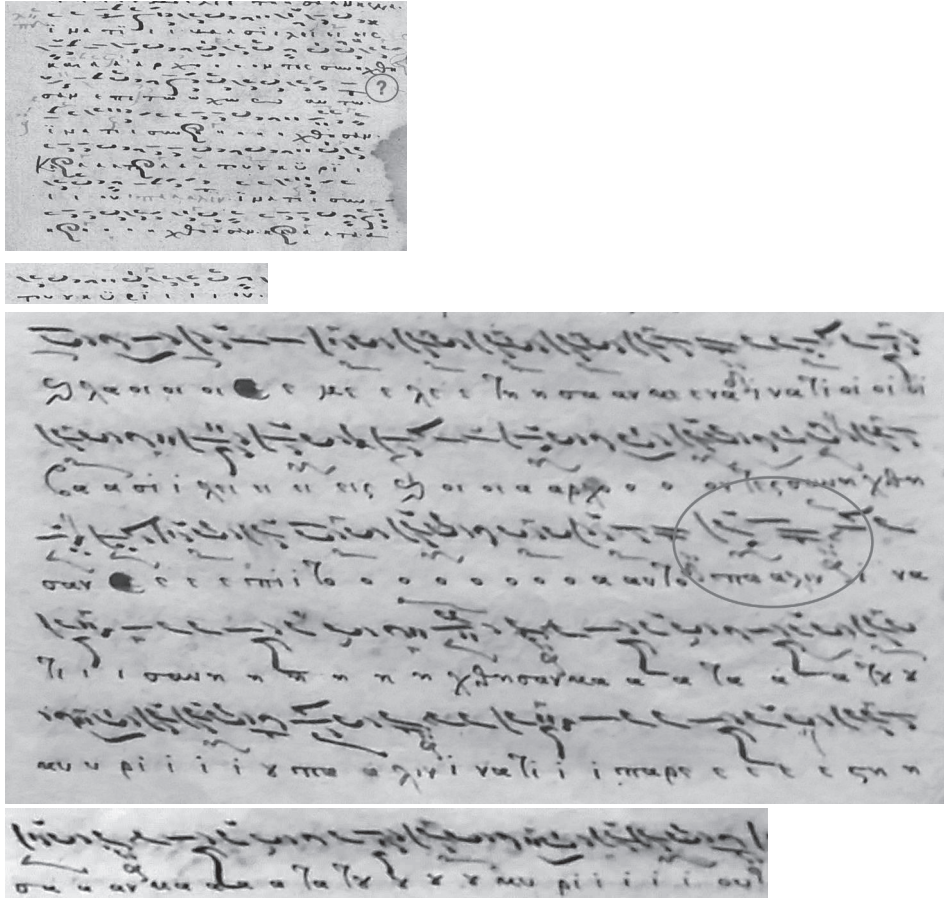


Fig. 3. Some noticeable additions or interventions after a comparison of the record of the composition under discussion in the mentioned codices No. 2458 of the collection of the National Library of Greece and No. 222/73 of Psachos's collection

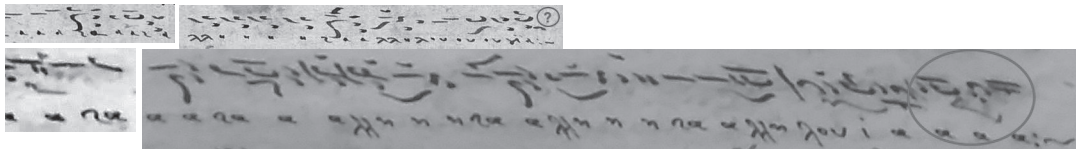
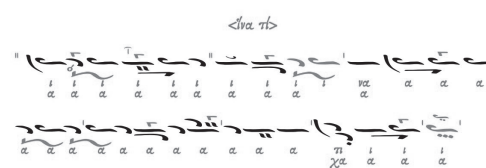


Fig. 4a. The part No. 12^a of the composition under discussion according to my performative reconstruction



Fig. 4b. The part No. 14 of the composition under discussion according to my performative reconstruction



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