Byzantine compositions entitled “Dysikon” (Western) and “Fragikon” (Frankish): a working hypothesis on potential convergence points of two different traditions

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INTRODUCTION

In Byzantine musical manuscripts a number of compositions entitled thetalikon, politikon or persikon are regularly found. As is generally accepted, titles as thetalikon or politikon indicate an analogous origin for these chants, while, respectively, in the case of persikon an influence from a so-called “external chant” is suggested. In the same way, other titles as dysikon and fragikon, meaning “Frankish” and “Western”, are also detected; these, according to the practice of Byzantines scribes and composers, denote a western or Frankish origin and/or a certain influence of western music and liturgical practice, respectively. These eponymous and anonymous works may be found amongst compositions dating from between the second half of the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century, and in works composed in the second half of the 15th century, the 16th and the 17th. The settings of the first category, as also their composers, can be located in Constantinople after the fall of the City to the Crusaders at the beginning of the 13th century and the period of the Frankish occupation. The compositions of the second category clearly belong to the musical output of Venetian-ruled Crete. Their common trait is that their composers are related in some way to the Frankish or Venetian occupation.

The purpose of this study is to identify the morphological or other traits of these compositions considered by their composers or scribes as denoting a certain western influence, which is apparently expressed in the above-mentioned titles.

THE FIRST CATEGORY: COMPOSITIONS DATED BETWEEN THE 13TH AND THE 14TH CENTURIES

The settings entitled dysikon and fragikon of the first group may be dated between the second half of the 13th century and the first half of the 14th, based on the period during which the composers flourished or, in the case of the anonymous compositions, the date of the manuscripts in which they are recorded.1 In this group the following eponymous settings are included:

1 See Gr. Stathis, Οἱ Ἀναγραμματισμοὶ καὶ τὰ Μαθήματα τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Μελοποίας, Institute of Byzantine Musicology, Studies 3, Athens 1977, 26-27: “[…] Σπανώτερον απαντά μέλος δυτικός ή φράγκικος και ὑποστήριξις τοῦτο γίνεται μετά τὴν φραγγικῆς κατοχῆς τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως”.
A cherubic hymn in the second plagal mode by Ioannes Glykys entitled dysikon.  

Another cherubic hymn by Agathon Korones the monk in second or first plagal mode, also entitled dysikon.  

The verse Σὺ δὲ Κύριε ἀντιλήπτωρ μου εἰ from the third psalm, Κύριε, τί ἐπληθνηθησαν οἱ θλιβοντές με, a work of Ioannes Koukouzeles with the indication fragikon.  

The verse Πληρώσαι Κύριος πάντα τα αἰτήματα σου from the psalm Εὐλογήσω τόν Κύριον, also a work of Ioannes Koukouzeles, again with the indication fragikon.  

A kratema of Xenos Korones in fourth plagal mode, entitled fragikon.  

An anonymous composition Εὐλογήσω τὸν Κύριον ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ in fourth plagal mode entitled dysikon in the manuscripts NLG 2458 (1332) Sinai 1311 (14th century, 2nd half) and Καί νῦν καὶ ἄει in first mode from the Polyeleos Λόγον αγάθων, entitled “λεγόμενον φράγκικον” – “the so-called fragikon”, recorded in the manuscript Iviron 973 (beginning of the 15th century) are also included in the same group. Also, two verses of the Polyeleos of Koukoumas Ἐξομολογείσθη...
tò Kυρίων, Εἰς διαίρεσεις in the fourth mode,9 καὶ Κληρονομίαν in the second plagal mode,10 recorded in manuscripts of the same period, are entitled dysikon but also vougarikon.

It is noteworthy that the cherubic hymn of Ioannes Glykys, the second of Agathon Korones and the verse of the third psalm of Ioannes Koukouzelese are the most current in the manuscripts from the 14th and until the 18th century and, consequently, they could be considered as the most widely accepted. But before discussing the cherubic hymn of Ioannes Glykys and Agathon Korones, a brief mention to the so-called asmatikon cherubic hymn, also entitled dysikon in some manuscripts, is necessary.11 The asmatikon cherouvikon is generally considered as a joining together of the parts chanted by the soloist (monophonares) and the parts chanted by the choir, respectively contained in the Psaltikon and Asmatikon manuscripts. After the creation of the Akolouthiia or Papadike manuscript these parts have been joined and the asmatikon cherouvikon was born.12 Later, mainly during the second half of the 14th century, some parts of the asmatikon cherouvikon appear in the manuscripts as “embellished” or reworked sometimes by Ioannes Glykys and others by Michael Aneotes, who, in all probability, also contributed to the joining together of the different parts of the soloist and the choir.13 There may be two reasons for the rare indication dysikon for the asmatikon: either a scribal error, the scribe probably confusing the asmatikon setting attributed to Glykys and the dysikon of Glykys, or a separation of the setting into two parts and its consequent performance by a soloist (or eventually two, when the monophonaris and the domestikos are mentioned) and the choir, which reminded the scribe of the analogous common practice in the West and led to the consideration of this setting as dysikon.14

Concerning now the cherouvikon by Ioannes Glykys in the second plagal mode, it is noteworthy that it may be distinguished from others of the same type and period, given that it mainly consists of some extended series of theseis, which are regularly repeated without development of other musical phrases. Thus, the composition is rather simpler than others of the same kind, as kratemata or repetitions of words and phrases have been avoided. Another difference in this composition, more precisely defined as a divergence, is the ending on neheanes.15 However, as the composition does not really diverge from the classical compositions of the period, the reason it has been characterized as “composed in a western way” is not clear. The study of some other compositions will help to shed light on this issue.

The verses of the Koukoumas Polyeleos Eἰς διαίρεσεις in the fourth mode and Κληρονομίαν in the second plagal mode are referred in some manuscripts as dysikon, but also as vougarikon, an indication leading to the verse Τὸν Σηὼν βασιλέα τῶν Ἀμοῤῥαίων, Κύριον designated as the “Voulgara of Glykeotes Dysikos” in manuscripts NLG 928 and NLG

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9 See the manuscripts National Library of Greece 2406 f. 197v and Library of Koutloumouasion Monastery 457 f. 182r; [Politis, Κατάλογος ΕΒΕ, 399 and Stathis, Άγιον Ορος III, 458, respectively].
11 Concerning the asmatikon cherouvikon and related manuscripts, see Karagounis, Χεροβίκα, 182-190. D. Conomos, Byzantine Trisagia and Cherouvikia of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries, Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, Thessaloniki 1974, 123-145.
12 See for instance the manuscripts Sinai 1257 (1332), f. 125v and National Library of Greece 2458 (1336), f. 161v; Balageorgos-Kritikou, Σήμα I, 217 and Politis, Κατάλογος ΕΒΕ, 458, respectively.
13 See for instance, Library of Koutloumouasion Monastery 399, Papadiki, mid-14th century, f. 104r: Χεροβίκοιον σκαμμάκον, ποῦμα τοῦ πνεύματος τουρίου Ιωάννου τοῦ Γλυκέως- ήχος β’ νεανες Οἰ καὶ τὰ χεροβίσι ποιητικά: ὁ δομέστικος ἀπ’ ἔλεω ήχος β’ νεανες Οἰ σηών τέρματον. Οἱ ὁλοί απὸ χοροῦ- ήχος πλ. β’ Εἰκανιζότες: Ετῶ τὴν γην τῶν αὐτῶν κληρονομίαν; [Politis, Κατάλογος ΕΒΕ, 399, f. 238].
15 Karagounis, Χεροβίκα, 191-192.
In addition, Manuel Chrysaphes in his autograph codex of the Iviron Monastery Library 1120 attributes the verse Καὶ τὸ μνημόσυνόν σου to Glyks Dysikos, with the title “Τοῦ Γλυκέος τοῦ Δυσικοῦ ή βουλγάρα”, “Voulgar of Glyks Dysikos”. As both these verses are usually attributed in the manuscripts to Ioannes Glykys, in all probability, Glykeotes Dysikos and Ioannes Glykys are the same person. If this is true, the indication dysikon in these settings, and also in the cherouvikon of Glykys, could mean “a work of Dysikos” and not western origin or influence. Consequently, in these cases the settings could bear the name of their composer.

The analogous setting of Agathon Korones, equally widespread in the musical manuscripts, is recorded in the first or the second plagal mode but without any notational differentiation between the two versions. It has not been clarified until now whether the recording of this setting in two different modes is the result of a scribal fault which was reproduced during the course of centuries, or whether his setting could be chanted in two modes. The peculiar endings on D of this composition, which would be normal for the first plagal mode but not for second plagal, could be the reason for the confusion of the scribes. Otherwise, the composition seems to be as Byzantine as the rest of this type and period, without apparent western elements. The only variation in the Agathon dysikon setting is that the last part, τῶν ὅλων ὑποδεξόμενοι, ταῖς ἀγγελικαῖς ἀοράτως δορυφοροῦμεν τάξεις· Ἀλληλούια, is missing and the composition is supposed to be completed by the last part of another setting. The separation into two parts might have suggested the corresponding Western compositional and performing practice, and thus justify its title.

Furthermore, the issue of the dysikon setting of Agathon Korones became more complicated when, one-and-a-half centuries later, Akakios Chalkeopoulos chose it in order to embellish and recompose it in a more analytical way. On f. 135r of his autograph manuscript NLG 917 Akakios notes, “Cherouvikon, work of Agathon the monk, the brother of Korones, so-called dysikon, chanted by two choirs by the younger. It has been embellished by me, Akakios the so-called Chalkeopoulos, changed from the perfect schema to the text, in order that all music teachers know to chant it. And its text asks for the schema, as it is seen here.” It is noteworthy that already at the end of the 15th century this setting was reworked by Cretan composers, referred as “the younger” by Akakios, and separated into parts in order to be chanted by two
choirs, as were many other later settings.\textsuperscript{20} In addition, the reference to an early exegesis “from the perfect \textit{schema} to the text” according to the terms used in the rest of the manuscript is obvious.\textsuperscript{21} Furthermore, even though the composition is written without a modal signature at the beginning, one could consider that the intended mode is the second plagal, according to Akakios’s note, as follows: “Let the chanters not be that it descends to the first plagal mode and not to the second plagal, because in the first plagal \textit{organon} is made [performed or added?] but not in the second plagal.”\textsuperscript{22} This indication, clearly referring to the above-mentioned endings on D, remains for the moment rather uncertain, just as the term “organon” is doubtful. A comparative study of the reworking of this setting by Akakios has to be made in order to clarify the meaning of these inscriptions; the possibility of a second voice cannot be excluded.

**Illustration 2. National Library of Greece 917 f. 135r**

The next composition in this group, very widespread in the manuscripts, is the verse Σὺ δὲ Κύριε ἄντιλήπτωρ μον εἰ of the third psalm composed by Ioannes Koukouzeles in the fourth plagal mode, always preserved in the sources with the indication \textit{fragikon}. The \textit{phthora nana} used on the word ἄντιλήπτωρ leads to the third mode, which greatly dominates the composition. Several times a fourth ascending and descending from G in the fourth plagal mode is used. The \textit{fragikon} of Ioannes Koukouzeles was rewritten later, in a more analytical way, during the second half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century by Ioannes Trapezountios and Petros Byzantios, which indicates its general acceptance.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} E. Giannopoulos, \textit{Η ἀνάθεσις τῆς Ψαλτικῆς Τέχνης στὴν Κρήτη (1566-1669)}, Institute of Byzantine Musicology, Studies 11, Athens 2004, 357-358.
\item \textsuperscript{22} NLG 917, lower margin of f. 135r: Καὶ μηδὲν θαυμάσετε οἱ ψάλται ὅτι κατεβαίνει εἰς τὸν πλ. α´ ἦχον καὶ οὐχὶ εἰς τὸν πλ. β´ ἦχον διότι γίνεται ὄργανον εἰς τὸν πλ. α´ καὶ εἰς τὸν πλ. β´ οὐχὶ [...].
\item \textsuperscript{23} Another verse, \textit{Πληρώσαι Κύριος πάντα τα αἰτήματά σου}, of the psalm \textit{Επακούσαι σου Κύριος}, also composed by Ioannes Koukouzeles and recorded in the manuscript Koutloumousiou 399 with the indication ‘fragikon,’ has not been studied, as the manuscript was not available to the present author. [Stathis, \textit{Αγιον Ὄρος III}, 237].
\end{itemize}
In this first category also, an anonymous setting of Ἐὐλογήσω τὸν Κύριον ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ in the fourth plagal mode (nana) with the indication dysikon is included. The whole composition moves around the third mode with similar phrases, ending in the fourth plagal mode. Although the reason for which this setting is characterized as dysikon is not clear, the title is probably also due to the movement around the third mode.

The second group of compositions (end of 15th century - second half of 17th century)

Towards the end of the 15th century, two settings of the Sunday koinonikon Ἀἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον with the indication fragikon appear in the manuscripts. The first one is a work by Ioannes Plousiadenos the priest, the renowned Cretan composer of the second half of the 15th century, and the second one is a setting by Manuel Chrysaphes. A little later, around the beginning of the 16th century, Akakios Chalkeopoulos recorded in his autograph codex 917 of the National Library of Greece another Sunday koinonikon, also entitled fragikon. The settings of Ioannes Plousiadenos and Manuel Chrysaphes are written in two Cretan manuscripts of the 17th century, while the Akakios composition is recorded only by himself in his manuscript.

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24 Liverpool, Sidney Jones Library, Mayer Collection 12053, Anthology, 17th century (1662), scribe Gerasimos Yalinas, f. 373r Κοινωνικά κατ’ ήχον, ποίημα Ιωάννου ιερέως τοῦ Πλουσιαδηνοῦ καὶ ἀρχοντὸς τῶν Εκκλησιῶν τῆς Κρήτης· [ήχος] α’ Ἀἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον· (f. 381r) [ήχος] δ’ λεγόμενον φράγκικον. Oxford, Bodleian Library Gr. 22, Anastasimatarion-Anthology-Mathematrition, beginning of 17th century, f. 52r Αρχὴ σὺν Θεῷ ἁγίῳ τῶν κατ’ ήχον κοινωνικῶν, ποίημα τα διαφόρων ποιητῶν παλαιῶν τε καὶ νέων· τοῦτο φράγκικον λέγεται· κὺρ Μανουήλ τοῦ Χρυσάφη· [ήχος] α’ Ἀἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον. [Giannopoulos, Ἀγγλία, 427 and 275, respectively].
During the second half of the 17th century, the renowned Cretan composer Dimitrios Tamias composed the idiomelon Σύ, ἔπλασάς με Κύριε, καὶ έθηκας ἐπ’ ἐμ’ τὴν χεῖρα σου “in a western style of melody” – “εἰς τρόπον τῆς μελωδίας δυσικόν”, as the scribe of the manuscript Sinai 1440 Gerasimos Yalinas, and also the anonymous scribe of the codex NLG 963, note.25

The fragikon Sunday Communion chant by Ioannes Plousiadenos, composed in the fourth mode, mainly moves with similar phrases using ascending and descending fourths and fifths from G or with a simple use of the tetrachord of the plagal mode. A few theseis are used, mainly lygisma, omalon and anikenoma and, rarely, parakletike, while the great part of the composition is written with interval signs. The unusually simple compositional structure of this setting as regards the modal movement between the fourth mode and its plagal and the few theseis used obviously make this setting different from the classical Byzantine versions. It should be mentioned that the later Cretan compositions which have been characterized as “particular” share exactly these features, in particular the modes and the simple compositional structure.26

Following Ioannes Plousiadenos, another Cretan composer, Akakios Chalkeopoulos, wrote in around the year 1500 his autograph codex NLG 917. In this manuscript Akakios includes also a Sunday communion chant in the first mode under the title “Koinonikon from the Polyeleos, the so-called voulgara,”27 which refers to the use of the chant of the Polyeleos verse generally known as voulgara.28 After the end of this setting, Akakios continues and gives the very well-known but also obscure title

τὸ αὐτὸ κοινωνικὸν ἡ βουλγάρα μετονομασθεῖσα φράνκικον παρὰ τοῦ ποιοῦντος τὰ σχήματα; ἐστὶν δὲ καὶ ὀργανικόν, καὶ οὗτος ἔχει τὸν οἶκον τοῦ τένορος, ἄλλως θέλεται νὰ τὸν αφεθῇ καὶ νὰ πάλιν ὁ πρῶτος καὶ μέγας τεχνίτης μόνος τοῦ δίχως τοῦν τὸ τένορον να τὸν αφηνεῖ· ἀριστερῶς τὸν αὐτὸ κοινωνικὸν ἡ βουλγάρα λεγόμενον βουλγάρα, καὶ τοῦ ποιοῦντος τὰ σχήματα

the same koinonikon voulgara renamed Frankish by the person who makes the schemata; it is also organikon, and its music is particular [as] the text is joined to the tenor; the first and principal performer has to chant it alone, unaccompanied, and to chant alone the tenor [part] when it is asked for; in other words, [he has] to leave the text and perform the tenor [part] and again to leave the tenor [part] and perform the [musical] text; […]29

This inscription has been discussed many times for many reasons, firstly as far as it relates to the connection between this setting and the previous one in which the chant of the Polyeleos verse named voulgara is used30.

Secondly, the title poses considerable questions about the use of the terms “schemata”, “tenor” and “text” and the possible chanting of the setting by two performers at the same time.31 Nevertheless, the suggestion that the title hides the participation of two different persons in the chanting of the setting has to be excluded given that according to the instructions of Akakios Chalkeopoulos, “the first and principal performer has to chant it alone, unaccompanied, and to chant alone the tenor [part], when this is asked for”. Here, as far as this paper is concerned, the indication “Frankish” is the most interesting, but in relation to the term “tenor”. Even though in the manuscript the parts of the “text” and the parts of the “tenor” have not been distinguished,

27 NLG 917, f. 147v: Κοινωνικὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πολυέλεου λεγόμενον βουλγάρα.
28 Concerning voulgara, see footnotes 10 and 17.
29 NLG 917 f. 148v
30 Chaldeakes, Πολυέλεος, 739-740.
there are two points where the word “πρόσχες” – “be attentive, meticulous” is noted in the margin concerning two brief passages. The first has as its text [οὐρα]ῶν, ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν and the second is part of the Alleluia echema, but they share exactly the same melody, moving in a high tessitura. Akakios’s note, “be attentive,” in conjunction with his introductory instructions concerning the difficulty of his composition, lead to the hypothesis that these two sections are the tenor parts. In any case, the indication “Frankish” is probably used here in relation to the term tenor, which apparently relates to an unknown practice in Byzantine composition as a term of western origin.

The last in this group is the martyrikon apostichon of the Dimitrios Tamias in the first plagal mode Σὺ ἔπλασάς με Κύριε καὶ ἔθηκας ἐπ’ ἐμὲ τὴν χεῖρα σου. This composition survives in two manuscripts of Cretan origin, NLG 963 and Sinai 1440, an autograph of Gerasimos Yalinas. Both scribes twice recorded the setting, the first entitled “Δημητρίου τοῦ Νταμία σύνθεσις· ἔποιηθήδε διὰ συνδομῆς και συζητήσεως (sic) τοῦ πανοσιωτάτου και αἰδεσιμωτάτου κυρίου Φιλοθέου και ἀξίου καθηγουμένου τῆς σεβασμίας Μονῆς τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τοῦ Βαρσαμονέρη” and the second with the indication “Ἕτερον τοῦ αὐτοῦ [Δημητρίου Νταμία] eis τρόπον τῆς μελῳδίας δυσικόν” – “another composition by the same composer in a western melodic style”. This title is distinguished from the previous as it characterizes as “western” specifically the way of composing and not the setting. The double manuscript appearance of this setting, the first time as a standard Byzantine composition and the second with the above-mentioned title, offers the opportunity for a comparative study of the two versions. They are
both composed in the first plagal mode and they share a common introduction on the first word (Σύ). If a second voice is suggested it is not obvious; nevertheless, the second version has a particular use of phthorai, such as the constant application of the nana phthora on F and C and the nenano phthora on A. In addition, a persistent use of modal signatures, probably denoting the height or depth of a tone, and an unusual way of writing the formulas, such as for instance on the last syllable, may be observed. It is noteworthy that these particularities are common in some Cretan compositions but also in the compositions of the manuscript of the Platytera Monastery in Corfu dated to around 1660, probably originating in Crete, in which a particular use of Byzantine notation is observed.32

**Conclusions**

If one tries to sum up the above-mentioned elements after analysing these works, one observes that they could be easily divided in two groups according to the composer or the date of the manuscript. The first group includes the settings entitled dysikon or fragikon dated to the 13th and 14th centuries, and the second the works with the indication fragikon composed between the end of the 15th century and the second half of the 17th century. The common feature is that they are related to Frankish or Venetian-ruled periods and/or areas.

The indications dysikon and fragikon concerning the compositions included in the first group (13th century- first half of the 15th century) remain rather obscure, as only some morphological traits different from the classical or usual ones might justify these titles. It is noteworthy that most of the compositions of the first group are very widespread in the manuscript tradition, and that they were also transcribed into more analytical notational types, and the so-called New Method, which means that they were quite well accepted despite their ‘western’ or ‘Frankish’ indication. However, the clustering of the compositions of the first group may not be so evident, as almost every one of them constitutes a singular case and none of them bears evident western or Frankish elements. The cherouvikon of Agathon Korones might be characterized as dysikon probably because of its morphology, as also might the asmatikon cherouvikon. This latter could also be considered as dysikon because of Ioannes Glykys’s involvement in the joining of its parts and the confusion of the scribes between this setting and the dysikon of Glykys, which probably bears the name of the composer, Ioannes Glykys or Glykeotes Dysikos. Another case is Ioannes Koukouzeles’s fragikon Σὺ δὲ Κύριε ἀντιλήπτωρ μου εἶ and the anonymous dysikon composition Εὐλογήσω τὸν Κύριον ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, both in the third mode, a characteristic which probably led to this indication, given that the compositions do not present other traits that could justify this. Even though the western or Frankish elements of these compositions should be considered somewhat superficial, the fact of their being recorded in the manuscripts proves the relationship of Byzantine composers to Latin musical and liturgical practice during the period of Frankish occupation.33

On the contrary, the few settings included in the second group (15th-17th centuries) share some traits, mainly structural, which could justify these titles and, possibly, their rare appearance in the sources. They are directly related to Venetian-ruled Crete and present some features, such as the application of phthorai in specific notes or the frequent use of ascending and descending intervals of the third and fourth, which distinguish them from others of the same type. The indication fragikon given by Akakios Chalkeopoulos himself to his setting could be due to the distinction of two parts from the rest of the setting and the use of the term “tenor”.

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33 In this context, see also Library of the Agia Triada Monastery (Meteor) 113, Papadiki, end of 15th century, f. 10v: “Τοῦ Κορώνη κατὰ Λατίνων· [ήχος πλ. δ΄] [Composition of Korones against the Latins] Καὶ ποιῶν αὐτὴν τρέμειν· δόξα σοι τὸ πνεῦμα; [Stathis, Μετέωρα, 517].