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# THE TONAL SYSTEM OF THE KONTAKARIUM

Studies in Byzantine Psalticon Style

BY

CHRISTIAN THODBERG



København 1960  
i kommission hos Ejnar Munksgaard

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In Byzantine music research has gradually reached the point where it will be possible to establish and define different species of music as is the case in Gregorian chant<sup>1</sup>. The publication of a Psalticon, Codex Ashburnhamensis 64, reproduced in facsimile as the fourth volume of M.M.B.'s main series, means that now more than before we are able to deal with the remarkable style of the Kontakarium.<sup>2</sup> WELLESZ's book on the Akathistos Hymn with its transcriptions, its detailed preface and commentary, is the first step in this direction.<sup>3</sup>

At a first glance the Kontakarion style will not appear strange to a person familiar with the musical styles which we meet in the Sticherarium and the Hirmologium. On the face of it we are still dealing with the same tonal system. The distance, however, between the styles already known and that of the Kontakarium will soon be seen. The melismatic way of singing, the widely drawn-out melodic line, the stereotyped recurrence of melodic formulas and fixed neume-groups, of the fixed cadences (*g b g*) and the apparently common character of

<sup>1</sup> I should like to thank Professor H. J. W. TILLYARD for his kindness in helping me with the English text during my stay in Cambridge in November 1958, Professor OLIVER STRUNK for lending me his microfilm of Vaticanus Graecus 345, and my friend JØRGEN RAASTED for a very useful exchange of ideas during our daily work at the Medieval Institute in Copenhagen.—The present paper was originally read at the extended meeting of the Board of Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae in Copenhagen in August 1958.

<sup>2</sup> A Psalticon can be defined as a collection of Kontakia, Alleluia-verses, Prokeimena-verses, Hypakoai, Koinonika, and some other small parts. The Psalticon is the manual of the solo-singer, the Psaltes. In the Italo-Sicilian region the Psalticon may be named an Asmaticon (at any rate Vat. gr. 1606 and the Grottaferrata MS Γ. γ. I.; it should not be disregarded that Asmaticon, too, seems to refer to a special musical form (e.g. the distinction between ὑπακοή τοῦ ψαλτικοῦ and ὑπακοή τοῦ ἀσματικοῦ in Vat. gr. 1606 and Messina 129)): In this paper I deal only with the special musical style within the Psalticon which characterizes the Kontakia, the main part of the collection; therefore, when I make use of the word Kontakarion here, I have in mind the collection of Kontakia melodies only.

<sup>3</sup> *Mon. Mus. Byz., Transcripta* vol. IX: *The Akathistos Hymn*. Introduced and transcribed by EGON WELLESZ. Copenhagen 1957.

the melodies in spite of different modes force us to consider this music in a different way from the *Sticherarium* and the *Hirmologium*.

To this must be added that we almost immediately meet with some concrete difficulties: the marked preference in the *Kontakarium* for the second Authentic, the second Plagal, and the fourth Plagal mode—and the corresponding underrepresentation of the remaining modes—in the *Alleluarium* the complete omission of the third Authentic mode and the Barys—brings up the question of the modal structure of the *Kontakarium*. Furthermore, in the *Kontakarium* we come up against a series of apparent mistakes especially in the two lowest tetrachords. These peculiarities are too frequent to be regarded simply as errors of the copyist, such as might have arisen when he was transcribing a passage from the *Coislin* to the Round notation.

WELLESZ discusses these difficulties in his above-mentioned book and arrives at the conclusion that the abnormality of certain medial signatures in the *Akathistos Hymn* is due to a local Italo-Sicilian tradition.<sup>4</sup> In the present paper it will be attempted to deal with these problems without offering a final solution since I consider it impossible to reconstruct the original melodies of the *Kontakarium*.

My starting point is a small essay which I presented in manuscript to CARSTEN HØEG on the occasion of his 60th birthday.<sup>5</sup> My article consisted of an analysis of the first Authentic mode of the *Alleluarium* and the following conclusion was reached: the Alleluia-melodies of this mode are determined by a melodic formula,  $g b c' (a) g$  and by a fixed neume-group which was now consistent with the melodic formula, now in conflict with it:<sup>6</sup>

Ex. 1



<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, *Introduction*, p. LX–LXI, cf. p. XLVII–XLVIII and p. LXV.

<sup>5</sup> This unpublished “Festschrift” consisted of my essay, a paper by JØRGEN RAASTED on “Signatures and Intonations in the Vienna *Sticherarium* Theol. Gr. 181”, and an unfinished paper by Mrs. NANNA SCHIØDT.

<sup>6</sup> In the following examples I do not give the rhythmical and dynamic values in staff notation according to the rules laid down by the *Mon. Mus. Byz.*, as the main purpose of the present paper is to draw the reader’s attention to the neume-picture alone. Those interested in modern transcriptions of *Kontakia* melodies may see them in WELLESZ’s above-mentioned book.

Ex. 2



Ex. 3



In the Kontakarium we are faced with the same neume-group in one principal form—mainly in three positions:

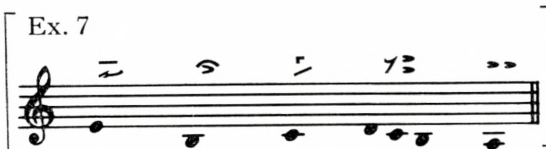
Ex. 4



Ex. 5 (var. of ex. 4)



Ex. 6



Ex. 7 has been put in brackets. It occurs only in the first Plagal mode, which is the only one having the low pitch. It partly depends on a necessary reconstruction of the melodic line; see below (p. 25).





θει - ω - δω \_\_\_\_\_ σ

Ex. 12: IV Pl.

a) Orthodoxy Sunday, Prooemium, line 5 (Ashb. 64, 100v-101r).

b) IV Pl. Easter Sunday, Prooem., line 4 (Ashb. 64, 130r).<sup>10</sup>

a) εισ το α \_\_\_\_\_ ρ - χαι \_\_\_\_\_ ον

b) και α \_\_\_\_\_ νε \_\_\_\_\_ στησ

(a) α - να - μο - ρ - φω \_\_\_\_\_ σασ

(b) ωσ νι - κη \_\_\_\_\_ τη \_\_\_\_\_ σ

Ex. 13: IV Pl. Akathistos Hymn, Prooemium, line 6.<sup>11</sup>

1 - να \_\_\_\_\_ κρα \_\_\_\_\_ ξω \_\_\_\_\_ σοι

<sup>10</sup> The example from Easter Sunday has the same neumatism except that there is only one initiating Ison, because of the different number of syllables; besides, it has a medial signature (λ̄) at the beginning.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. WELLESZ, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

χαι - ρε νυ μ - φη

α νυ μ - φε υ - τε

Ex. 11–13 have all been taken from the 4th Plagal mode, which shows the greatest variation of the F-group. It is especially the “fourth-displaced”<sup>9</sup> element which prevails. It does not only apply to the F-group, but also to the final notes of the cadences (here and in Ex. 14–17 indicated by an arrow).

In Ex. 11–13 the different occurrences of the F-group are very close together. Furthermore, Ex. 12 shows that the small phrase leading to the F-group is fourth-displaced, too. Ex. 13, the famous refrain of the Akathistos Hymn, represents an elegant use of the F-group.

Ex. 14–16 are taken from the second, the fourth and the first Authentic mode:

Ex. 14: II The Three Holy Men and Daniel, Oikos, line 3 (Ashb. 64, 74r–74v).

και ε - βραι οι

<sup>9</sup> As a “transposition” presupposes that you have a fixed point from which you can make transpositions I think “fourth-displacement” may be the right word in dealing with the Kontakarian style because positions in which the formulas may occur are situated at a distance of one fourth from one another.

πο - λε μου

[ου] με - νοι

Ex. 15: IV. Epiphany, Prooem., line 1 (Ashb. 64, 83r).

ε - πε - φα νησ

ση με - ρο ν

Ex. 16: I. Apokreas Sunday, Prooem., line 7 (Ashb. 64, 95r).

και α - ξι - ω - σου εκ δε - ξι - ω - ν σου

με στη \_\_\_\_\_ ναι κρι - τα

δι - και - ο \_\_\_\_\_ τα - τε

Here we do not so often come across an accumulation of the F-group, but the application of the group is similar: as a principal rule it may be regarded as an established fact that in its pure form the purpose of the F-group is to carry a strongly stressed syllable in the first part of a musical phrase. Once more we realize the prevalence of the fourth-displaced element both in the F-group and in the final notes of the melodic lines. I have not quoted any examples from the other great mode of the Kontakarium, the second Plagal, because the application of the F-group in this mode corresponds completely to the application in the second Authentic mode.

The last series of examples (Ex. 17–19) from the modes least often represented, the first Plagal mode, the third Authentic and Barys, corresponds closely to those mentioned above:

Ex. 17: I Pl. The Holy Great-Martyr Panteleemon, Oikos, last line (Ashb. 64, 165v–166r).

τον ρυ - ο - με - νον εκ πλα \_\_\_\_\_ νησ

τους βο - ω \_\_\_\_\_

[ω] \_\_\_\_\_ ν - τα σ

Ex. 18: III. Christmas Day, Prooem., line 2 (Ashb. 64, 75v).

και η γη

το σπη \_\_\_\_\_ λαι - ο -

[ο] \_\_\_\_\_ ν

Ex. 19: Barys. The Transfiguration, Oikos, last line (Ashb. 64, 170v).

η - σπερ α \_\_\_\_\_ νω - θε - ν η \_\_\_\_\_ κου σαν

και ε - κη ρυ ξα v

In Ex. 18 we are faced with a very long form of the F-group on σπη- in σπηλάσιον. Ex. 19 (from Barys) is remarkable for the fact that it corresponds exactly to the refrain of the Akathistos Hymn (Ex. 13), which proves the consistency of the F-group in all modes and the common character of the Kontakarian melodies.

One of the leading ideas in OLIVER STRUNK's article, "The Tonal System of Byzantine Music"<sup>12</sup> is "that certain ornaments and melismas recur always as from the same tetrachord-step." In this way he has been able to lay down that the scale from *d* to *d'*, consisting of two disjunct tetrachords, has been extended on either side by two conjunct tetrachords.

If we apply this idea to the F-group we come up against the problem connected with the great difficulty which we know from Byzantine Music on the whole: the accidentals. Is *f-sharp* or *b-flat* to be preferred? There can hardly be any doubt that the tone one step above *a* must be *b-natural* in the Kontakarium, as clearly appears from what follows.

The system of medial signatures shows at any rate that  $\overset{\sim}{\psi}$ , when referring to *b*, must indicate a major third above *g*, i.e. *b-natural*.<sup>13</sup> It would be more reasonable if *f-sharp* was inserted instead of *f*, as it is felt to be necessary in the Akathistos Hymn to avoid the tritonus:

Ex. 20: IV Pl. Akathistos Hymn, Prooem., line 3.

θε - ο - το κε

<sup>12</sup> "The Tonal System of Byzantine Music", *The Musical Quarterly* 1942, (Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, p. 197.

<sup>13</sup> It seems to me a necessary assumption that the interval relations in the intonations and the signatures are constant. This point is essential for my argument in the following, too.

If we presuppose that the half tone step *b-c'* in the highest appearance of the F-group is almost certain, we are for musical reasons forced to accept an analogous half tone step in the two lower forms, *f-sharp-g* and *c-sharp-d*, and this problem is extended when we ask whether this tonal alteration concerns the F-group alone or the entire Kontakarian style:

Ex. 21



Ex. 22



Ex. 23



It is evident that an argument like this is more a matter of feeling than a matter of proof. However, it appears to me an interesting task to study the tonal structure of the Kontakarium from this point of view. An investigation like this finds its natural starting point in the most representative mode, the second Plagal. The following example (Ex. 24) will make a survey of the initial and medial signatures in the Kontakia of this mode, indicating the frequency of appearance. For convenience we give only the usual signatures, though in the MSS. they are sometimes replaced by an intonation written in full.



ÿ	2	17	
ÿ̄	1	1	31
ÿ̄̄		2	
Δ̄	35	27	
Δ̄̄			8 2
λ π ß			33
λ π ÿ	92		5
λ π ÿ̄ →	4		
λ π ÿ̄		8	
λ π ÿ̄̄	1	16	
λ π ÿ̄̄̄ → →			61
→ α → α →		1	
→̄ →̄			1
→̄̄ →̄̄			1
λ π δ̄		22	
λ π δ̄ →̄		1	
→̄ →̄		10	13

The first thing noticed is the peculiar intonation on *a*, **α**, which in the entire Kontakarium occurs on *a* and *d'* only. The present examples (Ex. 25–26) show that it may have a certain connection with the F-group:



Ex. 25: II Pl. Palm Sunday, Prooem., line 3 (Ashb. 64, 114v).



|γη| \_\_\_\_\_ σ ε - ΠΟ-ΧΟΥ \_\_\_\_\_ ΜΕ \_\_\_\_\_ ΝΟΣ

Ex. 26: IV Pl. Orthodoxy Sunday, Oikos, line 8 (Ashb. 64, 102v).



- ΕΣ ΜΙ \_\_\_\_\_ ΑΥ ΠΙ \_\_\_\_\_ ΟΤΙΥ ΕΥ



ΒΑΠΠ-ΤΙΣ-ΜΑ Ε \_\_\_\_\_ ΧΟΥ - ΤΕ \_\_\_\_\_ Σ ΧΡΙ-

Furthermore, this survey is remarkable by the fact that the fourth-displacement reappears.  $\overset{\text{--}}{\Delta}$  can be interpreted as *d* and *g*,  $\overset{\text{--}}{\Delta}$  as *a* and *d'*,  $\overset{\text{--}}{\zeta} \overset{\text{--}}{\zeta}$  as *g* and *c'*, and  $\overset{\text{--}}{\gamma}$  as *d* and *g*. In each case the last interpretation is the established one, whereas the first is new. All four signatures hitherto unknown seem to point in the same direction: I have interpreted the pentachord *d-a* as *d e f-sharp g a*, supposing that  $\overset{\text{--}}{\Delta}$  on *d* must imply a major third upwards from this tone,  $\overset{\text{--}}{\zeta} \overset{\text{--}}{\zeta}$  on *g* a half tone step downwards from this tone, and  $\overset{\text{--}}{\Delta}$  on *a* a minor third downwards from this tone.<sup>14</sup>

This leads us both formally and in fact back to the problem about the different positions of the F-group; for it appears that  $\overset{\text{--}}{\Delta}$  and  $\overset{\text{--}}{\Delta}$  in

<sup>14</sup> Cf. note 13; furthermore  $\overset{\text{--}}{\pi} \overset{\text{--}}{\beta}$  on *a* (ex. 24) also seems to confirm the existence of *f-sharp*, as  $\overset{\text{--}}{\pi} \overset{\text{--}}{\beta}$  in many places is interchangeable with  $\overset{\text{--}}{\Delta}$  on *a* (and *d'*).

the sense of *d* and *a* seem to have a certain connection with this neume-group, even if on the whole it appears most often after the ordinary cadence on *d* (if the melody after the ordinary cadence on *d* continues on *g*, this tone is very often introduced by the medial signature  $\overset{\sim}{\tau} \overset{\sim}{\tau}$ , involving the half tone step *f-sharp g*).

The first example quoted (Ex. 27) is from Ashb. 64, the next from Vaticanus graecus 345 (Ex. 28), which abounds in medial signatures:

Ex. 27: II Pl. The Ascension, Oikos, line 3-4 (Ashb. 64, 143r).

δε \_\_\_\_\_ υ - τε

α - να - νη \_\_\_\_\_ ψω - μεν και εισ υ \_\_\_\_\_ ψος

Ex. 28: II Pl. The Ascension, Oikos, last line (Vat. gr. 345, 107v).

και λε \_\_\_\_\_ ξασ προς αυ-του \_\_\_\_\_

[ου] \_\_\_\_\_ σ



either defines  $d$  as  $\overset{\lambda}{\Delta}$  or in the second Authentic mode and the fourth Plagal mode practically avoids defining it, even if opportunity is often offered by the many  $d$ -cadences. The fact that the MS. does not want to interpret  $d$  as  $\overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{z}}$  or  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{z}}$ , seems to explain the apparent misunderstanding,  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{z}}$  equivalent to  $e$ .

If, however, we consider this problem from the basis which we took as starting point, that  $f$ -sharp for musical reasons seems to be required in the Kontakarium, it is a different matter, for in that case  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{z}}$  equivalent to  $e$  and  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{y}}$  equivalent to  $f$ , or, correctly speaking,  $f$ -sharp, seem to find a provisional explanation, as it is possible to understand the two signatures as transposed forms of the intonations of the first and the second Plagal mode, respectively  $e g f$ -sharp  $e$  and  $f$ -sharp  $g a g f$ -sharp. Provided the interval relation of the transposed intonations is the same, it seems to be a confirmation of the presence of  $f$ -sharp in some places in the melody. In most cases these "wrong" signatures do not disturb the melodic line, and no correction is necessary.

In this connection a passage must be pointed out because it is the only problem of that kind which has so far been discussed in print. It concerns the Akathistos Hymn and the  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{z}}$  of which Wellesz gives a detailed examination in his book.<sup>15</sup> WELLESZ is fully aware of the problem, and a great part of the tradition demands  $e$  in that place, but the melody only comes out in its present shape, in Oikos I, Line 3, if  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{z}}$  is equivalent to  $d$ .

If the  $e$ -version has to be accepted, WELLESZ suggests  $\overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{z}}$  corrected to  $\overset{\lambda}{\mathfrak{z}}$  (Ex. 30, c<sup>1</sup>, marked by \*).

Ex. 30:

Line a = Proshomoion, Oikos, line 3.<sup>16</sup>

Line b = Akathistos Hymn, Oikos XII, line 3.<sup>17</sup>

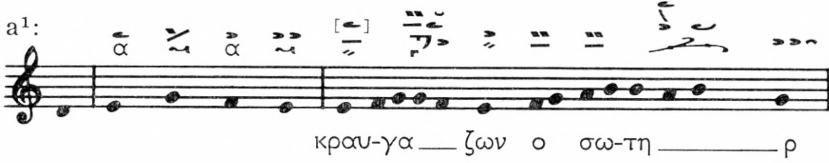
Line c = Akathistos Hymn, Oikos I, line 3.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> WELLESZ, *op. cit.*, p. LX-LXI.

<sup>16</sup> WELLESZ, *op. cit.*, p. 100-101.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

a<sup>1</sup>: 

κραυ-γα ζων ο σω-τη ρ

b<sup>1</sup>: 

με-θι στα σθαι προς του σ

c<sup>1</sup>: 

ει-πει-ν τη θε-ο-το κω

a<sup>2</sup>: 

εξ-α νε [στη]

b<sup>2</sup>: 

απ αι-ω [νος]

c<sup>2</sup>: 

το χαι [ρη]

However, we must not forget that the phrase in Oikos I occurs in several versions coming out with  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{g}$ , equivalent to  $e$ , among those the interesting Proshomoion in which Line 2 ends in  $d$  and demands  $e$  as the starting tone of Line 3. In Oikos VIII, IX, and XII we come up against forms which remind us more of Oikos I and which come out with  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{g}$ , equivalent to  $e$ . If we use Oikos XII as starting point, it gives the correction  $\bar{z}$  into  $\bar{z}$  in Oikos I (Ex. 30,  $c^2$ , marked by \*\*).

I will not presume to attempt offering a definitive solution of this difficult problem, but only want to mention a few facts which can serve as an illustration of this great difficulty.

The starting point for corrections in the Kontakarium ought to be the fixed neume-groups which now and then indicate the absolute tonal level. In that respect we may mention one or two things which seem to speak in favour of  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{g}$  being equivalent to  $e$ . Firstly, the group  $\bar{\mathfrak{z}} \bar{\mathfrak{z}}$ , where the Duo Kentemata as a rule is placed on the half tone step, which will also be the case here if we accept  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{g}$  as being equivalent to  $d$ . On the contrary: if we interpret  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{g}$  as being equivalent to  $e$ , the half tone step will be situated between  $g$  and  $f$ -sharp, which we in this case are forced to accept. The group in  $f g g f$  or, if you like,  $f$ -sharp  $g g$   $f$ -sharp prevails in the Kontakarium<sup>19</sup> and finds its counterpart a fourth higher at the pitch  $b c' c' b$  in most modes<sup>20</sup>—once more a fourth-displacement. We are faced by the same problem in connection with the first Authentic and first Plagal mode.

Secondly, the group  $\bar{\mathfrak{z}} \bar{\mathfrak{z}}$  has almost always the pitch  $b c' a$  or a fourth higher on  $e' f' d'$ , so that if we transcribe backwards from  $\bar{\mathfrak{z}} \bar{\mathfrak{z}}$  (Ex. 30,  $c^1$ ) meaning  $b c' a$  we are faced again by  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{g}$ , equivalent to  $e$ .<sup>21</sup>

As mentioned above, it is very difficult to find a solution of these problems, but I think that the melodic line of Oikos XII in this case will give a provisional solution, based on the tonal relations of the Kontakarium as a whole. I shall return to this problem when drawing my conclusions.

<sup>19</sup> Ex. 28, Line 2; Ex. 32; cf. Appendix 1,  $a^1$ , etc.,  $a^7$ , etc.; Appendix 3,  $a^1$ , etc.

<sup>20</sup> Ex. 10; Ex. 13, Line 1; Ex. 15, Line 2; Ex. 19, Line 1; Ex. 26, Line 1; Appendix 4,  $a^2$ ; Appendix 5, Line 1.

<sup>21</sup> The starting point for the correction suggested by me is the fact that the mistake is to be found between the two fixed points,  $\bar{\mathfrak{z}} \bar{\mathfrak{z}} = b c' a$  in  $c^1$  and  $c^2$ .



According to STRUNK the pitch  $g-g'$  is to be considered as the most reasonable.<sup>22</sup> But it is worth mentioning that on the basis of the tonal relations in the second Plagal mode we might be prepared to admit the pitch  $d-d'$ , since  $\overset{\lambda}{\Delta}$ , equivalent to  $d$ ,  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi} \overset{\lambda}{\zeta}$ , equivalent to  $e$ , etc., correspond to the interpretations in the second Plagal mode (Ex. 24). In this connection it should be added that many of the melismas and neume-groups of the fourth Authentic mode appear one fourth lower in the representative modes (II, II Pl., and IV Pl.).

There are great difficulties in transcribing this mode, owing, maybe, to the curious *Nana*-intonations on  $a$ , indicated by notes of interrogation (Ex. 31).

#### *The first Authentic mode.*

This mode is in Ashb. 64 represented by three Kontakia, "Ὅταν ἔλθῃς ὁ θεός and its Proshomoion—and 'Ὁ μήτραν παρθενικήν, the Oikos of which is Proshomoion to the first mentioned one.

The problems already mentioned come up at once in the first line of "Ὅταν ἔλθῃς ὁ θεός, as can be seen from a comparative survey (Appendix I) of the tradition represented by the main version of Ashb. 64 (fol. 94v = a), the "Amanuensis"<sup>23</sup> of the same MS. (fol. 18or = b), Vaticanus graecus 345 (fol. 82v-83r = c), and the Grottaferrata MS. Γ. γ. III (fol. 15v = d).<sup>24</sup>

Taking the main version of Ashb. 64 as a starting point the melody comes out without trouble with  $d$  as initial and  $g$  as final tone ( $a^1$ ). The tone  $g$  as the final note corresponds to the medial signature  $\overset{\lambda}{\zeta}$  in the versions of the Amanuensis and Vat. gr. 345. These MSS. together with Γ. γ. III indicate  $c$  as the starting note, if we interpret the signatures in the ordinary way, but if we transcribe backwards from the medial signature we come to  $d$  as required by the main version of Ashb. 64. A closer inspection of the last-mentioned MS. makes it clear that the intonation and the first neume of the melody were originally the same as in the other versions, as a revising hand later on seems to

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 200.]

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Introduction to Ashb. 64, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> A horizontal line in the versions below—or, simply, the omission of the other versions ( $a^2$ ,  $a^3$ ,  $a^6$ )—indicates that there are no essential variants. In  $a^1$  and  $c^1$  we are faced with alternative versions.







on *c*. In other words: in the second line the first phrase (parallel to  $a^1$ - $a^2$ ) will end on *B* and the next phrase (parallel to  $a^3$ ) and the line as a whole on *e*.

In order to solve this problem we have to start by understanding the fixed points, the *d*-cadence on the words  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\eta\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\sigma$ . This phrase ( $a^3$ ) starts on *g* fixed by the medial signature, *Nana*,<sup>28</sup> in the versions below. We now have to accept the identity between the final tone of the *d*-cadence and the starting tone of Line 2. This gives rise to the question whether the starting tone of Line 1 ought to be *d*, too. This impression is maintained, partly by the version of Messina 129, which by the medial signature  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi}\ \overset{\circ}{\mathfrak{S}}$ , equivalent to *a* ( $e^2$ ), seems to presuppose the starting tone *d* and consequently the initial signature  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi}\ \overset{\circ}{\mathfrak{S}}$ , equivalent to *e*, partly by the variants of Vat. gr. 345 ( $c^2$ ),  $\Gamma.\ \gamma.$  III and  $E.\ \beta.$  VII ( $d^2$ ), which lead the melody one step lower, to *A*.

On condition that *d* is the starting tone of the Ashb. version, the first phrase ends on *B* instead of *A* ( $a^2$ ), as required by the following medial signature. Maybe the version of  $\Gamma.\ \gamma.$  III and  $E.\ \beta.$  VII gives the most reasonable solution. The two parts of the phrase  $\text{Μιμητῆσ ὑπάρχων}$  seem to be two varied forms of the F-group, situated in fourth-displaced position. The theory of the two F-groups is confirmed by the version of Messina 129. The fourth displacement demands *A* as its ending tone in accordance with the following medial signature. The 7th line of the Oikos (Ashb. 64, 165r =  $f^1$ - $f^2$ ) may serve as a "reconstruction" of the first line of the Prooemium.<sup>28a</sup>

We are further forced to accept two different meanings of  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi}\ \overset{\circ}{\mathfrak{S}}$ , as was the case with  $\overset{\circ}{\mathfrak{S}}$  in the first Authentic mode. At the beginning of Line 2 ( $a^3$ ) we have all the possibilities represented:  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi}\ \overset{\circ}{\mathfrak{S}}$  equivalent to *e* in  $\Gamma.\ \gamma.$  III and  $E.\ \beta.$  VII, to *d* in Ashb. 64 (both versions) and in Messina 129, and  $\overset{\circ}{\mathfrak{A}}$ , equivalent to *d*, in Vat. gr. 345.

The survey of the signatures is based on the MSS. already mentioned. There are great difficulties in the lower part of the scale as shown above. A satisfying understanding of the melody demands a detailed analysis lying beyond the scope of the present essay.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Ex. 24 and 33-34.

<sup>28a</sup> The neumes put in brackets in  $f^2$  are due to a corrector. The correction would bring the melody into agreement with the version of Messina 129 ( $e^2$ ).



ΤΟΥ Υ - ΠΕ ρ - ΟΥ - ΣΙ ΟΥ ΤΙ

[ι] Κ - ΤΕΙ

Ex. 36:

Line a = cadence on *f* in the 3d Authentic mode (cf. ex. 35).  
 Line b = cadence on *g* in other Kontakia (cf. ex. 20 and 19).

a:

b:

a (cont.):

b (cont.):



The survey of the signatures (Ex. 38) is based on Ashb. 64, Γ. γ. III, and Vat. gr. 345.

From an ordinary octoëchic point of view there is nothing remarkable in the fourth-displacement by  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi} \overset{\text{3}}{\text{3}}$  and  $\overset{\text{—}}{\Gamma} \overset{\text{—}}{\text{z}}$ , being equivalent to  $a$  and  $d'$ , and  $\overset{\text{3}}{\text{3}}$ , being equivalent to  $c'$ . From STRUNK's article concerning the tonal system we know that it is possible. I am unable, however, to avoid the opinion that the signatures except the *Gamma*-signature will apply here, if we move the pitch a fourth downwards, just as we suggested in connection with the fourth Authentic mode (Ex. 31).

The fourth-displacement is not only to be regarded in the octoëchic way as influence from the upper conjunct tetrachord ( $d' e' f' g'$ ) on the lower disjunct one ( $a b c' d'$ ). The fourth displacement is radical, as appears by a comparison between the  $g$ -cadences and the ordinary  $d$ -cadences of the other modes (Appendix 4; a = Christmas Kontakion (third Authentic mode), Oikos, Line 5 (Ashb. 64, fol. 77r); b = Kontakion of the Great-Martyr Panteleemon (first Plagal mode), Oikos, last line (Ashb. 64, fol. 165v-166r)). This example is an excellent specimen of the fourth-displacement as a whole. The phrases are almost identical; the only real difference is that the F-group in the Christmas Kontakion has been extended as compared with the small form in the Kontakion of Panteleemon. From the vertical line the neumatism is quite identical.

We thus conclude that the melody of the third Authentic mode only by its outward shape belongs to the  $f$ -mode, i.e. by its five  $f$ -cadences and its *Gamma*-signatures. From a Kontakarian point of view it represents a form in the upper register as is the case with the fourth Authentic mode.

### *Barys.*

This mode is in Ashb. 64 represented by three Kontakia, Ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρουσ with one Proshomoion, and Οὐκέτι φλογίνη ρουφαία. The problems are similar to those mentioned at the third Authentic mode. We come up against whole phrases which remind us of the fourth Plagal mode. The Oikos of Ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρουσ ends with a phrase which, as mentioned above, is close to the refrain of the Akathistos Hymn (Ex. 19 and 13). In the same way we come across cadences which we remember from other modes, here only one step lower. Most of the lines, however,

are introduced by the ordinary *Barys*-signature, and the melodies seem to be situated in the corresponding pitch beside the aforesaid endings in *g*. Still it happens very often that the medial signatures necessitate another meaning of the *Barys*-signature, from *f g e g* into *g a f g* or rather *g a f-sharp g* (Appendix 5).

The example reproduces Lines 6–7 in the Oikos of Ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρου based upon Ashb. 64 (170r–170v) and Γ. γ. III (48v). The fixed meaning of Δ̄ at the beginning (Line 1 of Appendix 5) and of the whole phrase (1–2), which once again reminds us of the refrain of the Akathistos Hymn (Ex. 19; cf. Ex. 13), enforce the *Barys*-signature at the pitch *g a f-sharp g*. This meaning is sanctioned by the *Neanes*-signature = *b* at the end (4).

This example has many parallels in which the tonal relations vary considerably. So it will not be possible to give a reasoned survey of the signatures. We conclude that *Barys* is characterized partly by the ordinary *g*-endings of the representative modes, partly by a tonal confusion by virtue of which the ordinary *Barys*-signature became *g a f-sharp g*. As modes in the Kontakarium both the third Authentic mode and *Barys* seem to be fictions in order to maintain the illusion of a full Octoechos in the Kontakarium as distinct from another part of the Psalticon, the Alleluarium, which avoids the *f*-modes.

From an Alleluia-verse of the second Authentic mode, Ἐπὶ σοὶ κύριε ἤλπισα,<sup>29</sup> and its heading, ἄμνημον· ψάλλεται δὲ καὶ εἰς τρίτον ἦχον, we may see a preparation for a development of that kind in the Alleluarium. Maybe the typical initial notes<sup>30</sup> of the second Authentic mode (Ex. 39) have prepared the way for *Barys* in the Kontakarium (Ex. 40) and explain the tonal confusion that has arisen from an incomplete development.

Ex. 39 (Ashb. 64, 208v):

Ε - ΠΙ ΣΟΙ ΚΥ \_\_\_\_\_ [ριε]

<sup>29</sup> Ashb. 64, Fol. 208v.

<sup>30</sup> Marked by [ ] in Ex. 39–40.



Ex. 40: Barys. Sunday of the Cross, Prooemium, first line (Ashb. 64, 105v).

Ου - κε - τι φλο - γι [νη]

*Conclusion:*

In the Kontakarium there occurs a series of signatures which cannot be understood in the normal way. These “wrong” signatures appear, however, with such persistence that they cannot be regarded as mistakes. They occur most frequently in the oldest traditions so that we are not allowed to regard them as founded upon a local Italo-Sicilian

Ex. 41 (The “wrong” signatures have been put in brackets):

[ξ̣] — ξ̣  
 [ξ̣] — ξ̣  
 [λ̣ π̣ ξ̣] — [λ̣ π̣ ξ̣] — λ̣ π̣ ξ̣ — λ̣ π̣ ξ̣  
 [ϣ̣] — ϣ̣ — ϣ̣  
 [λ̣ π̣ ϣ̣] — λ̣ π̣ ϣ̣  
 [α̣ ϣ̣] — α̣ ϣ̣  
 [λ̣] — λ̣  
 [λ̣ ρ̣ δ̣] — λ̣ π̣ δ̣  
 [τ̣ τ̣] — [τ̣ τ̣] — τ̣ τ̣ — τ̣ τ̣

tradition or depending on a late Turkish-Oriental influence which might have destroyed the original tonal character.

To this it must be added that if we accept the “wrong” signatures as indications of transposition they seem to prove the existence of the accidentals, *f-sharp* and *c-sharp*, which for musical reasons are required because of the different positions of the F-group.  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{G}$  on *B* and on *e* implies a whole tone step upwards, and  $\overset{\lambda}{\tau} \tau$  on *d* and *g* implies a half tone step downwards, etc.<sup>31</sup>

$\overset{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{G}$  on *d'*,  $\overset{\lambda}{\eta}$  on *c'*, etc., are accepted as possible signatures according to STRUNK, who points out that the upper conjunct tetrachord, *d'-g'*, has influenced the disjunct tetrachord, placed below it, in the way of tonal re-interpretation.<sup>32</sup> Seeing that the indications  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{G}$ , equivalent to *a* and *d'*,  $\overset{\lambda}{\tau} \tau$ , equivalent to *g* and *c'*, etc., are continued downwards by analogy and involve a whole series of “wrong” signatures (Ex. 41), we are driven to the conclusion that the Kontakarium used a conjunct tetrachordal system differing from the recognised octoëchic scale.

If as starting points we take the usual finalis tones, *d*, *g* and *c'*, together with the ending tones of the F-group in its different positions, *A*, *d*, and *g*, the difference between the two series becomes adherent (Ex. 42-43):

Ex. 42 (The tonal system of the Sticherarium and the Hirmologium acc. to Strunk):



Ex. 43 (The tonal system of the Kontakarium):







<sup>31</sup> Beside the “wrong” signatures the only evidence of a transposition seems to be the *Phthora* in Ashb. 64, Fol. 164v, Line 1, a confirmation of the existence of *f-sharp* (the last line in the Prooemium of Μιμητήσ υπάρχων).

<sup>32</sup> STRUNK, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-204.

Hitherto we have met the fourth-displacement mainly as the result of a comparison between different melodies and different modes. In conclusion it would be interesting to see the fourth-displacement developed inside a single melody. It is found outside the real Kontakarian style, in the octoëchic collection of "Psaltic" Hypakoai, which have a certain connection with the Kontakia melodies.<sup>33</sup> The example is the Hypakoë in the second Authentic mode, Μετὰ τὸ πάθος, the seven first lines of which are an excellent illustration of the radical fourth-displacement (Appendix 6).<sup>34</sup>

The formal scheme of the seven lines is quite clear: a, b, c, a<sup>1</sup>, d, b<sup>1</sup>, c<sup>1</sup>; a<sup>1</sup>, b<sup>1</sup>, and c<sup>1</sup> have almost the same neumatation as a, b, and c, only placed one fourth lower. The fourth-displacement may be seen from a survey of the different positions of the well-known cadence formula (Ex. 44):

Ex. 44:

		b		b		(line 1, 2)
a	g	f-sharp	e	f-sharp	d	(line 3, 4, 5, 6)
e	d	c-sharp	B	c-sharp	A	(line 7)

The melodic fourth-displacement has been followed up by the corresponding "wrong" signatures which sanction the accidentals *f-sharp* and *c-sharp*.<sup>35</sup>

In the tonal system of the Kontakarium (Ex. 43) there is no room for the *f*-modes (the third Authentic mode and Barys), as the conjunct

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Note 2. Inside the Psalticon the "Psaltic" Hypakoai-melodies are the genre closest to the Kontakia-melodies (compare Line 3 in Appendix 6 with Ex. 14, Lines 2-3). The only formal difference is the length of the strophes.

<sup>34</sup> The example has been taken from Vat. gr. 345, fol. 41r-41v. The melody is found in Ashb. 64, Fol. 246r-246v; I have chosen the first version, partly because it has more medial signatures and thus more consistently explains the fourth-displacement, partly because the Ashb.-version is burdened by certain mistakes which are corrected in the Vat.-version.

<sup>35</sup> By  $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\lambda}$  = a,  $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\tau}$  = g,  $\overset{\lambda}{\pi}$  = a and e; the interpretation of  $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\tau}$  is not quite clear.

tetrachordal system has been developed from above with the consequence that the tones  $f$  and  $c$ , as known from the Sticheraric and Hirmological style, have disappeared for the benefit of  $g$  and  $d$ , which, however, on their part have taken over the qualities of the “disappeared” tones.<sup>36</sup> In the normal “theoretical” way there are three different tones,  $\delta$ ,  $\alpha$ , and  $\beta$ , which return again and again. There are only three tones and accordingly only six modes by virtue of the omission of the  $f$ -modes in the Alleluarium and the secondary application of the  $f$ -modes in the Kontakarium, as shown above.

The two systems (Ex. 42–43) are quite different, but this difference is practically only felt in the two lowest tetrachords. However, we only have the Kontakarium in a form which has been incorporated in the octoëchic system. A priori we can lay down that there are three possibilities of an incorporation like this, reflecting three stages of octoëchic influence.

It is generally held that the Kontakarium as a literary and musical species was borrowed by the Greek church from Syria, St. Romanus being a disciple of Ephraem. So it is quite likely that the original melodies of the Kontakarium, which must have been much shorter than the extant forms, were composed in a Syriac (or Syriac-inspired) modal system differing in some ways from the later octoëchic scheme in Byzantine music. The first stage would have been the simple *incorporation* of this Kontakarian style into the octoëchic system. The Kontakarium represented still a musical form, but it had lost its locus standi. From a musical point of view it was impossible to maintain the fourth-displaced formulas and cadences, if they do not correspond to a tonal similarity.

The second possibility would be an *adaptation* to the octoëchic system. It may be described as an attempt at saving as much as possible of the qualities of the non-octoëchic melodies. Of course, the two upper tetrachords give no trouble, and we do not come across any serious problem, e.g. in the Akathistos Hymn which is mostly situated in the two upper tetrachords; but when the melody goes to the lowest tetrachord but one, we come up against  $\frac{\lambda}{\pi} \mathfrak{g}$ , equivalent to  $e$ ,  $\tilde{\lambda}$ , equivalent to  $d$ , etc.

<sup>36</sup> Cf.  $\overset{\cdot}{\tau} \overset{\cdot}{\tau}$  on  $g$  (examples are legion) and on  $d$  (Ex. 34), and  $\overset{\cdot}{\omega} \overset{\cdot}{\omega}$  on  $g$  (Ex. 33–34, Appendix 5, Line 3); cf. the secondary position of the  $f$ -modes in the Kontakarium.

The third possibility: a *re-interpretation* has taken place. By re-interpretation I mean that a medial signature suddenly indicates another pitch or another finalis than we are to expect from an octoëchic point of view. Beside the fourth-displaced neume-groups and cadences these "wrong" signatures are the only evidence of a tonal system different from that hitherto known.

The first possibility, *incorporation*, is the hitherto accepted opinion according to the manuscripts themselves which in their outward shape seem to divide the Kontakia into the eight modes, so that here there would be no difference between the Sticheraric and Hirmological style and the Kontakarian style. Research seems until the present day, too, to have accepted this view<sup>37</sup> and has tried to explain the apparent objections to the octoëchic modal system as growing "orientalisation".<sup>38</sup>

We are faced with the incorporation at an advanced stage in the "Asmatic" collections (Messina 120, Messina 129, Vat. gr. 1606), while the older tradition (Ashb. 64, Vat. gr. 345, Γ. γ. III, E. β. II)<sup>39</sup> still seems to represent a form which only with great difficulties can be reconciled to the octoëchic system.

The second possibility, *adaptation*, may explain many difficulties in the Kontakarium. It has in the two lowest tetrachords the consequence that the first Plagal mode (esp. in the Alleluarium) and Barys try to interpret these tetrachords as respectively *G A B c* and *c d e f*, a very reasonable solution; but the difficulties arise when the two lowest tetrachords meet with the two highest ones.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> "In fact, in composing Kontakia the hymn-writers made use of the "formula"-technique exactly in the same way as the composers of Heirmoi and Stichera." WELLESZ, *op. cit.*, p. LVI; cf. *ibid.*, p. LXV; "Since the richly ornamented Kontakia melodies are based on the same formulae, characterising the mode, as those from the Hirmologium and Sticherarium . . . . ."

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. LXV; cf. p. XLVIII: "We come to the conclusion that already in the XII. century the singers of the Kontakia had lost the feeling for the strict modal character. . . . ."

<sup>39</sup> At the present moment I have not yet received the microfilms of the Sinai MSS. 1280 and 1314, which according to STRUNK's kind information belong to the same tradition as Vat. gr. 345, etc.

<sup>40</sup> In the Alleluarium the *g*-cadences of the first Authentic and the *f*-cadences of the first Plagal mode have the same neumatation. The different pitch is as far as I can see due to the different orientation of the two modes: the first Authentic mode is dependent on a conjunct tetrachordal system as shown in Ex. 43, while the first Plagal mode is determined by a conjunct tetrachordal system developed from the lower part of the scale, *G A B c*, *c d e f-natural*, *f g a b-flat*, etc., so that the two cadences are identical, as they have the same position in their respective systems.

The present paper has concentrated on the third possibility, *re-interpretation*, as met with in the “wrong” signatures.

Although no complete demonstration is possible, yet when we remember the strong Oriental influence to which the culture of Byzantium was exposed, we may accept, as a probable explanation, the separate origin of the Kontakarian modal system.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Cf. the suggestion made by HØEG in the introduction to the facsimile-edition of Ashb. 64: “Cet état de choses [the accuracy of the copyist and the unequal division into modes in the Kontakarium] peut suggérer l'idée que les melodies du recueil qui nous occupe appartiennent à une tradition pré-octoéchique” (p. 36). This phrase has been the inspiration of the present paper.



a<sup>2</sup>

ε - πι γη σ με τα

a<sup>3</sup>

δο ξη σ

a<sup>4</sup>

και τρε μου σι

b<sup>4</sup>

α λ α

e<sup>4</sup>

λ π 3

d<sup>4</sup>

λ π 3





a<sup>7</sup>

πο-τα-μο-σ δε του πυ-ρο-σ

b<sup>7</sup>

α ΓΙ Ε α νεσ

c<sup>7</sup>

λ π δ ÿ

d<sup>7</sup>

λ π ð ÿ

## Appendix 2

a<sup>1</sup>

α - γι - α σασ

b<sup>1</sup>

41a [ ]

c<sup>1</sup>

41a [ ]

<sup>41a</sup> Obviously a mistake for [ ].



a<sup>4</sup>

του συ-με-ω \_\_\_\_\_ ν

b<sup>4</sup>

c<sup>4</sup>

a<sup>5</sup>, b<sup>5</sup>

ευ-λο-γη \_\_\_\_\_ σας

c<sup>5</sup>

a<sup>6</sup>

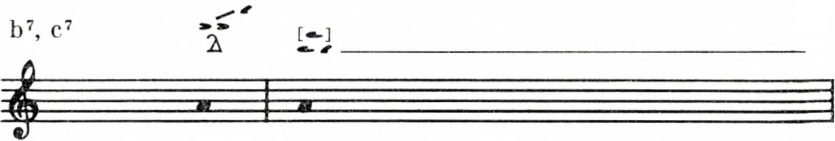
ωσ ε \_\_\_\_\_ πρε-πε


b<sup>6</sup>

c<sup>6</sup>

a<sup>7</sup>      

προ-φθα \_\_\_\_\_ σα \_\_\_\_\_ σ

b<sup>7</sup>, c<sup>7</sup>      

a<sup>8</sup>, b<sup>8</sup>      

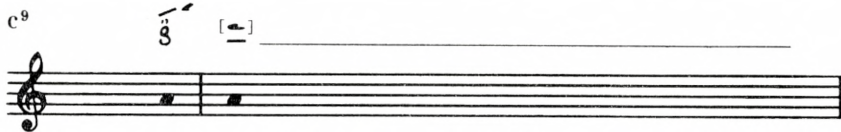
και νυε - σω - σα \_\_\_\_\_ σ      η \_\_\_\_\_ μα \_\_\_\_\_ σ

c<sup>8</sup>      

λ \_\_\_\_\_ π \_\_\_\_\_

a<sup>9</sup>, b<sup>9</sup>      

Χρι-στε

c<sup>9</sup>      

a<sup>10</sup>, b<sup>10</sup>

ο θε ο σ'

c<sup>10</sup>

## Appendix 3

a<sup>1</sup>

μι - μη - τη σ'

b<sup>1</sup>

c<sup>1</sup>

d<sup>1</sup>

e<sup>1</sup>

f<sup>1</sup>

ωσ κα γω τουσ

a<sup>2</sup>

υ - πα ρ - χων

b<sup>2</sup>

c<sup>2</sup>

d<sup>2</sup>

e<sup>2</sup>

λ π β

f<sup>2</sup>

ε - ου - τω

a<sup>3</sup> ΤΟΥ Ε-ΛΕ η ΜΟ-ΝΟ σ ΚΑΙ Ι-Α-[ΜΑΤΩΝ]

b<sup>3</sup>

c<sup>3</sup>

d<sup>3</sup>

e<sup>3</sup>

## Appendix 4

a<sup>1</sup> α ε κ ε ι ε φ α

a<sup>2</sup> [α]

<sup>42</sup> In the MS. ; corrected from the Proshomoion, *ibid.*, Fol. 184v.



b<sup>1</sup>

τον ρυ - ο \_\_\_\_\_ με - νον εκ πλα\_\_\_\_\_

a<sup>3</sup>

-νη ρι \_\_\_\_\_ ζα α \_\_\_\_\_ πο\_\_\_\_\_

b<sup>2</sup>

[α] \_\_\_\_\_ νησ τουσ βο - ω\_\_\_\_\_

a<sup>4</sup>

[ο] \_\_\_\_\_ τι - στο \_\_\_\_\_ σ

b<sup>3</sup>

[ω] \_\_\_\_\_ ν \_\_\_\_\_ τα \_\_\_\_\_ σ

Appendix 5

1)

το θα - βω \_\_\_\_\_ ρι \_\_\_\_\_ ον ο \_\_\_\_\_ ροσ





6 (cont.)

$\lambda$   
 $\pi$   $\mathfrak{g}$  [ ]

Musical notation for measure 6 (cont.) on a treble clef staff. The melody consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics "ΧΡΙ" and "ΟΤΕ" are written below the staff, with a long horizontal line connecting them.

ΧΡΙ \_\_\_\_\_ ΟΤΕ

7.

Musical notation for measure 7 on a treble clef staff. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics "ο θε" and "ο" are written below the staff, with a long horizontal line connecting them.

ο θε \_\_\_\_\_ ο

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