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**IN MEMORIAM**

**DIMITRIOS K. BALAGEORGOS**

**(6 NOVEMBER 1966–2 JUNE 2023)**

**D**imitrios K. Balageorgos was born in 1966 in Trikala, Thessaly, Greece. He completed his primary and secondary education in his hometown, and afterwards he was admitted to the Theological School of the University of Athens. From a very young age, he was distinguished for his exceptional artistic abilities, his love of learning and his particular inclination towards ecclesiastical music. As a child, he studied Byzantine music at the School of Byzantine Music in his hometown.

**STUDIES**

The main subjects of his studies at the University of Athens were theology and Byzantine musicology. After completing his undergraduate studies and obtaining a degree in theology from the Theological School, he attended postgraduate courses and received a postgraduate diploma (Thesis: “Theodoulos the Monk and the Work of Abbreviations,” published in Athens in 2003). Later, he was awarded a doctorate from the Department of Social Theology of the University of Athens, where he prepared and presented a doctoral thesis on “The Chanting Tradition of the Services of the Byzantine Secular Ritual,” a study published in Athens in 2001 by the Foundation of Byzantine Musicology of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece.

**ACADEMIC CAREER**

Dimitrios K. Balageorgos began his teaching activity at the Department of Music Studies of the School of Philosophy of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in 1996. He initially served as a research associate, a lecturer (from 2003), an assistant professor (from 2009), and an associate professor (from 2015 until his death).

From 2020, he worked as a research associate in the academic program “Byzantine Music—Chanting Art” of the Department of Arts of the European University of Cyprus.

## TEACHING SUBJECTS

During his many years of teaching in higher education, he was involved with the following subjects:

- Historical overview of Byzantine music;
- History of Byzantine music;
- Worship and music in Byzantium;
- Portraits of melodists (composers);
- Tradition of the chant repertoire in manuscripts and printed books.

## RESEARCH

One of his main research interests was the cataloging of the musical manuscripts stored in the library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. The cataloging of the manuscript musical codices of such a rich and important library was “a factor of primary importance for the systematic study of the subjects of the psaltic art and the detailed knowledge of the sources of Byzantine music and contributed to the verification of historical discoveries, the restoration of scientific positions and the highlighting of remarkable musical material.” The lack of an analytical descriptive list and the demand for these manuscript codices by musicological researchers, prompted Dimitrios K. Balageorgos and his colleague Flora Kritikou to undertake the compilation of a detailed descriptive catalogue. The same reasons led him to engage in the analytical description of the musical manuscripts and codices housed in the Patriarchal Library of Jerusalem. The corresponding catalog would present to the musicological society the musical material and all the elements contained in the music books of one of the most remarkable music collections.

His interests, knowledge of paleography, and musical cataloging experience opened the way for his participation in the Catalogue of Byzantine Manuscripts (CBM) Program—an international project supported by the Dutch Research Council (NWO)—participation which was urgently requested by the international scientific team of the program.

## ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

From 1998 to May 2013, he served as the protopsaltis (first chanter) of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Nea Kifisia, Athens. There, he established a choir of chanters consisting of his students from the University of Athens and other institutions. This small psaltic group chanted during the regular, weekly worship gatherings and on many other occasions. From June 2013 his service continued in the Church of St. Philothei in the municipality of Philothei-Psychikon, in Athens, Attica.

From his studies at the university and until his death, he was an active member of the famous choir of chanters, “The Maestros of the Psaltic Art.” As a member of the choir, he participated in a multitude of cultural events

in Greece and abroad. Additionally, he served intermittently as the choir's deputy choirmaster.

In the fall of 2004, Dimitrios K. Balageorgos sent a public letter, addressed to the psaltic community of his hometown, entitled "Memorandum about the Psaltic Art and about the Establishment of a Choir of Chanters in the Town of Trikala." As a result, a few weeks later, the choir of chanters "Trikkis Melodi" (Τρίκις Μελωδοί) was founded. The choir's objectives and main goals were the presentation of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine musical tradition along with participation in the divine services (vespers, orthros and the divine liturgies) held in Greek Orthodox monasteries, temples, and concert halls in Greece and abroad. According to him,

the knowledge of the choirmaster, his talent, the chanting culture of the chorus members and the correct performance of the chants, are factors that differentiate the expression and style of each choir of chanters. These elements, combined with the perception, respect for tradition, training, and discipline in the conclusions of musicological research constitute the guarantee of the correct promotion and interpretation of the psaltic art. This art must be served by all of us.

And, in fact, the choir served the art of chanting in many ways.

During its short life and under the direction of Dimitrios K. Balageorgos, the choir performed in some of the most emblematic and sacred places of the entire Orthodox East, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (Israel), the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai (Egypt), the Monastery of St. Savvas the Sanctified in the Judean desert (Israel), the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth (Israel), the Monastery of the Transfiguration of Christ (Great Meteoron), and the Monastery of Varlaam in Meteora (Greece). The choir also participated in numerous live concerts in Greece (Athens, Thessaloniki, Volos, Karditsa, Trikala), Cyprus (Nicosia), Italy (Milan, Varese), and Switzerland (Lugano). Trikkis Melodi has also recorded the following albums:

1. "The Hive of Meteora Rejoices," double CD containing chants from the services of the Meteorite Fathers, Monastery of Varlaam, Meteora, 2006.
2. "Seventeen Hymns of the Mother of Churches," NGO "Romiosini" of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 2009.
3. "Chant the Thrice Holy Hymn: Word and Melody from the Byzantine Liturgical Tradition," Laus Plena Foundation, 2016.
4. "A Glimpse on the Richness of Christian Sacred Music xTraditions," Laus Plena Foundation, 2016.
5. "Chants of the service of saints Joseph, Daniel, and Efraim the Hagiorites," Saint Diocèse Orthodoxe de Tulear—Madagascar, 2022 (pending).

## EPILOGUE

Without a doubt, the overall activity of Dimitrios K. Balageorgos, as a recognized and accomplished scientist, researcher, and university teacher, but also as an artist, performer, and manager of musical groups, paved new paths in the multifaceted approach to Byzantine musicology. His scientific formation, methodical teaching, unwavering attitude, love, and high sense of responsibility towards science and art constitute a valuable legacy and an invaluable heritage, not only for his followers, students, and collaborators, but also for everyone involved in the psaltic art.

DIMITRIOS V. LASKOS

PhD in Byzantine Musicology

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. *Ἡ Ψαλτική παράδοση τῶν Ἀκολουθιῶν τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ Κοσμικοῦ Τυπικοῦ*, Μελέται 6. Athens 2001. σσ. 360. Doctoral Thesis at the Department of Social Theology, University of Athens.
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