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CREATING LITURGICALLY: HYMNOGRAPHY AND MUSIC

PROCEEDINGS
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ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC
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HYMNOGRAPHY WITH(OUT) MUSIC AS SCRIPTURE AND PRAYER

Interpretation by contemporary Eastern Christians of the theme of the 2015 conference of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music (and now the title of the present volume) “Creating Liturgically: Hymnography and Music” is likely to depend on the prevailing musical practices within their own churches. Those whose traditions of liturgical singing long ago embraced polyphonic arrangements of chant and free composition for mixed chorus may envision composers working in staff notation to create new harmonizations or completely original music for what is essentially a fixed repertory of hymns transmitted in the service books of the Byzantine rite. Meanwhile others whose hymnody remains heavily dependent on oral transmission will tend to perceive the music and text as fundamentally interrelated, bound together in ways that may be stretched through greater or lesser melodic elaboration but not completely reconfigured.

The latter approach generally fits the experience of modern Balkan and Middle Eastern Christians whose liturgical expectations have been shaped by received traditions of Byzantine chanting, in which most hymns are either *idimela* possessing essentially unique, through-composed melodies, or metrical and melodic *contrafacta* (*prosomoia*) to specific prototypes contained within a circumscribed repertory of model hymns (*automela* or, in the case of canons, *heirmoi*). Relationships between text and music within any given hymn are governed largely by the melodic formulas available within the System of the Eight Modes (*Octoechos*) for its particular musical mode and stylistic genre.¹ Although the melodic content of these formulas may have changed over time, one may see essentially the same structural principles operating over the last millennium in *Sticheraria*, *Heirmologia* and other musically notated collections of Byzantine hymnody.² Greater understanding of how past generations of Eastern Christians “created liturgically” may be gained by placing the con-

1 Hieromonk Ephraim of St Anthony’s Monastery in Florence, Arizona, USA has compiled an extensive catalogue of formulas based on published sources in the New (Chrysanthine) Method of Byzantine musical notation organised by mode, genre (*Heirmologic*, *Sticheraric* and *Papadic*), and syllable-count. See <http://www.stanthonysmonastery.org/music/Formula.html>

2 See, for example, the diachronic treatments of Byzantine hymnody in Spyridon St. Antoniou, *Tò éirmológiον καὶ ἡ παράδοση τοῦ μέλους του*, Institute of Byzantine Musicology Studies 8 (Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 2004); and Σπυρίδων Στ. Ἀντωνίου, *Μορφολογία τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Μουσικῆς Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Μουσικῆς* [*Morphology of Byzantine Ecclesiastic Music*] (Thessalonica: Ἐκδόσεις Βάνιας, 2008).

tents of chant books and other notated musical sources within their broader historical contexts of worship and piety as preserved in Orthodox service books, collections of rubrics, canonical legislation, and patristic writings.

The aim of my prior study “Hesychasm and Psalmody” was to achieve such an understanding for later thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Byzantium, a period prior to the modern invention of the terms ‘Byzantine chant’ and ‘Byzantine music’ when the term *psalmodia* embraced the rendering of both biblical psalms and extra-scriptural hymnody.³ Within that historical context “psalmody” proved to be not only a textually but also a musically ambiguous term. As had been the case in Eastern Christianity since Late Antiquity, *psalmodia* of the late Byzantine period encompassed a spectrum of practices ranging from the grand and carefully choreographed sung worship of cathedrals to the meditative use of the Psalter by ascetics, amongst whom the use of the verb ‘to chant’ (*psallein*) might indicate forms of recitation or reading with a negligible or non-existent musical component.

Today one finds in Eastern Orthodoxy a similarly broad range of approaches to the performance of Byzantine hymnody, with variations observable both within and across jurisdictions. The remainder of this study will briefly consider only one of form of variation in hymnodic practice, namely that of rendering in intoned recitations (cantillation) or a plain-speaking voice (a practice generally avoided by northern Slavs) hymns that, whether according to the circumstances of their composition or prevailing use, were historically intended for melodic performance. Contrasting examples of this phenomenon may be seen in modern Greek and Russian approaches to the celebration of Saturday vespers and Sunday matins. In Russian usage the ancient evening hymn “Joyful Light” (*Phos hilaron*) and the canticle of Symeon (Luke 2:29–32) are usually sung chorally, but contemporary Greek rubrics place both among the *gerontika* traditionally recited by the monastic superior (*geron*) or some other senior figure.⁴ The troparia of the Royal Office found at the beginning of matins are heard today in both traditions without their well-known melodies. Other morning hymns read simply in modern Greek practice are hypakoai, kontakia, oikoi, and the Resurrection Ode ‘Having Seen the Resurrection of Christ’.⁵ Depending on the time available, Greek cantors may render the heirmoi and troparia of kanons with or without their melodies, while the prevailing Russian practice is to sing only the Paschal Canon in full.

This brief and far from exhaustive list of variations in the application of melody to the weekend offices of the Resurrection is only meant to be indica-

3 Alexander Lingas, “Hesychasm and Psalmody,” in: *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism: Papers from the Twenty-eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1994*, ed. Anthony Bryer and Mary Cunningham, *Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies* 4 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 155–68.

4 Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, *The Office of Vespers for Sundays and Feasts Translated from the Greek Original* (Manchester: St Andrew’s Press, 2000), 22, 27 and 58.

5 Hypakoai and kontakia are, however, sung melodically in the sequence of hymns following the Introit (*Eisodikon*) of the Divine Liturgy).

tive of the range of divergence, which I have encountered during Lent at my present home parish in Oxford. When alternating between Greek and Russian styles, my colleagues and I at the choir desk (*analogion*) are now used to the awkward moments that ensue when we alight upon a hymn text that is somehow designated for musical performance in service books – by being ascribed, for example, to a particular musical mode – but is longer chanted melodically within one tradition or the other. Moments of confusion within contemporary Orthodox worship may also arise in connection with such items of biblical psalmody as the prokeimena and alleluiaria of the Divine Liturgy, which in Greek churches underwent a demusicalization that is only now gradually being reversed as a result of liturgical renewal.⁶

Accounting for specific divergences in the application of melodic singing versus cantillation in the contemporary Byzantine rite requires detailed diachronic study of the musical enrichment or impoverishment of specific repertoires of hymnody and psalmody, as well as of the forms of worship to which they are attached. Bearing in mind that this publication is directed towards a broad audience of church musicians, however, I will devote the remainder of this short essay to an overview of the demusicalization of hymnody as a historical phenomenon in both the public worship and the private devotions of Byzantine Christianity. This becomes evident in documents from the ninth century onwards in which troparia, canons and other chants originally composed for communal worship were assimilated for private prayer and devotion in ways that made their musical components optional or superfluous. I will begin by noting distinctions made in Late Antiquity between biblical psalmody and Christian hymnody that render the selective melodic impoverishment of the latter in Byzantine monasticism somewhat surprising.

LATE ANTIQUITY

Scholars now recognise that the ‘psalms, hymns and spiritual songs’ of Ephesians 5:18–20 and Colossians 3:16–17 were not technical terms denoting particular types of chants, but synonyms indicative of the fluid boundaries between psalmody and hymnody in early Christianity.⁷ Only a few of the many extra-scriptural hymns employed by Christians prior to the canonization of scripture in the fourth century A.D. were conveyed into the traditions of Byzantine liturgy, the two most notable examples being the evening hymn of thanksgiving

6 I survey these changes in Alexander Lingas, “Tradition and Renewal in Greek Orthodox Psalmody,” in: *The Psalms in Community: Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical and Artistic Traditions*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Margot Elsbeth Fassler (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

7 James W. McKinnon, ed. *Music in Early Christian Literature*, Cambridge Readings in the Literature of Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 15–16. Recent overviews of musical practice in early Christianity are John Arthur Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011) 182–87, and Christopher Page, *The Christian West and Its Singers: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010) 55–87.

“Joyful Light” (*Phos hilaron*) and the opening section of the Great Doxology, which bears the title ‘Morning Hymn’ (*Hymnos heothinon*) included among the canticles of the Codex Alexandrinus.⁸ If the prohibition of so-called “private psalms” by Canon 59 of the Council of Laodicea during the later fourth century is at all indicative, most existing extra-scriptural hymnody appears to have been rendered obsolete by the processes of doctrinal consolidation that engaged the Christian Church as it emerged fully into the public life of the Roman Empire. With a few notable exceptions, the impetus for the composition of new Christian hymns in much of the Mediterranean basin was temporarily overtaken by the progress of what James McKinnon labelled “the Psalmodic Movement”: the adoption of the biblical Psalter together with a selection of biblical canticles as the primary textual resources for private devotion and musical expression in public worship.⁹ By beginning of the fifth century one may discern in Christian psalmody a diversity of musical practices comparable to that found later during the twilight centuries of Byzantium, ranging in complexity from the melodically attractive renditions of responsorial and antiphonal psalmody of major cathedrals to the devotional murmuring of solitaries in the Egyptian desert.

Although some Late Antique authors wrote hymns as literary exercises for private devotion (St Gregory the Theologian being the most notable among them), Byzantine hymnography essentially followed cathedral psalmody in its development.¹⁰ St Romanos the Melodist belonged to a group of poet-composers who adapted the call-and-response structures of antiphonal psalmody to the creation of paraliturgical works akin to homilies in their structure and original use as interludes between the official services of all-night vigils in sixth-century Constantinople.¹¹ Whereas the kontakia of Romanos were never

8 A general treatment of this material is Céline Grassien, “Greek hymns, archaeology,” (Canterbury Press, accessed June 5, 2015), <http://www.hymnology.co.uk/g/greek-hymns,-archaeology>. On the evening and morning hymns, see Peter Plank, *Φῶς ἱλαρόν: Christushymnus und Lichtdanksagung der frühen Christenheit*, vol. 20, *Hereditas* 20 (Bonn: Borengässer, 2001), and James A. Miller, “‘Let Us Sing to the Lord’: The Biblical Odes in the Codex Alexandrinus” (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 2006).

9 James McKinnon, “Desert Monasticism and the Later Fourth-Century Psalmodic Movement,” *Music & Letters* 75 (1994). The conclusions of McKinnon are refined in Joseph Dyer, “The Desert, the City and Psalmody in the Late Fourth Century,” in: *Western Plainchant in the First Millennium: Studies in the Medieval Liturgy and Its Music*, ed. Sean Gallagher, et al. (Aldershot, Hants, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Page, *The Christian West and Its Singers*, 131–54, the latter of whom traces the pre-history of the ‘psalmodic movement’ to the earlier ‘psalmody of house-ascetics’.

10 A general treatment of the origins of Byzantine psalmody is Robert F. Taft, S.J., “Christian Liturgical Psalmody: Origins, Development, Decomposition, Collapse,” in: *Psalms in Community: Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical, and Artistic Traditions*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Margot Elsbeth Fassler, *Society of Biblical Literature symposium series* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

11 See Miguel Arranz, “Romanos le Mélode,” in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire* (1988); Alexander Lingas, “The liturgical place of the kontakion in Constantinople,” in: *Liturgy, Architecture and Art of the Byzantine World*:

fully integrated into Byzantine urban or monastic worship, hymns that were created in and around Jerusalem between the fifth and the seventh centuries replaced fixed refrains within the responsorial and antiphonal psalmody of services celebrated at the cathedral of the Resurrection (*Anastasis*) and its stationaral dependencies.¹² The Ancient Iadgari, which contains translations into Georgian of anonymous hymns created for Jerusalem prior to the seventh century, represents an early attempt to codify this material into systems ordered variously by liturgical genre, musical mode, and occasionally within the Hagiopolite calendar. The next historical stage in the development of hymnody for the rite of the Jerusalem is represented by the (New) Tropologion, which contains texts attributed to such poet-composers as Sophronios, John of Damascus and Andrew of Crete.

Between the sixth and the eighth centuries, as Stig Simeon Frøyshov has shown, some ascetics resisted the absorption of Hagiopolite music and hymnography into monastic worship.¹³ *The Narration of the Abbots John and Sophronios*, for example, describes an encounter with Sinaite monks whose leader Neilos rejected the possibility of following urban Christians in the embellishment of the Palestinian Divine Office with either melodically appealing singing – described in the *Narration* as “chanting and singing with melody and mode” (‘ψάλλειν καὶ ᾄδειν μετὰ μέλους καὶ ἤχου’)¹⁴ – or hymns (troparia) that supposedly obscured psalmody with unnecessary patter (‘βαττολογία’).¹⁵ In Jerusalem, communities of urban ascetics had been participating in cathedral worship since at least time of the visit of the Spanish pilgrim Egeria at the end of the fourth century. Their successors, who were known as the *spoudaioi*, were fully invested in the new hymnodic repertoires of the Hagiopolite Divine Office and, through the efforts of such poet-composers as John of Damascus, did

Papers of the XVIII International Byzantine Congress (Moscow, 8–15 August 1991) and Other Essays Dedicated to the Memory of Fr. John Meyendorff, ed. Constantin C. Akentiev, *Byzantinorossica I* (St. Petersburg, 1995).

12 On the development of the Palestinian Divine Office, see Stig Simeon Frøyshov, “Rite of Jerusalem,” (Canterbury Press, accessed June 5, 2015), <http://www.hymnology.co.uk/r/rite-of-jerusalem.>; and Stig Simeon R. Frøyshov, “The Georgian Witness to the Jerusalem Liturgy: New Sources and Studies,” in: *Inquiries into Eastern Christian Worship: Selected papers of the Second International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgies, Rome, 17–21 September 2008*, ed. Bert Groen, Steven Hawkes-Teeple, and Stefanos Alexopoulos, *Eastern Christian Studies 12* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012).

13 Stig Frøyshov, “La réticence à l’hymnographie chez des anachorètes de l’Égypte et du Sinaï du 5e au 8e siècles,” in: *L’hymnographie: Conférences Saint-Serge, XLVIe Semaine d’études liturgiques, Paris, 29 juin–2 juillet 1999*, ed. Jean Claire, Achille M. Triacca, and Alessandro Pistoia, *Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae Subsidia 105* (Rome: C.L.V.-Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000).

14 Augusta Longo, “Il testo integrale della “Narrazione degli abati Giovanni e Sofronio” attraverso le Ἐρμηνεῖαι di Nicone,” *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* N.S. 2–3 (1965–66), 254.

15 Panagiotis. A. Skaltsis, *Ἡ Παράδοση τῆς Κοινῆς καὶ τῆς κατ’ ἰδίαν Προσευχῆς μὲ εἰδικὴ ἀναφορά στὸ Ὡρολόγιο τοῦ Θηκαρά* (Thessalonica: Ἐκδόσεις Π. Πουρναρά, 2008) 179; Longo, “Il testo integrale,” 262.

much to expand them. Frøyshov has further suggested that the koinobion of St Theodosios may have been another major liturgical centre in the Holy Land during this period, contributing to the process of the dissemination of the Palestinian monastic office in a musically developed form to Southern Italy and Constantinople, where it was taken up and further developed by the monks of the St John Stoudios under its Abbot Theodore early in the ninth century.¹⁶

MIDDLE BYZANTIUM

During the Middle Byzantine period, that is from the end of Iconoclasm in the middle of the ninth century until the conquest of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, composers and poets working in locations from Southern Italy to the Middle East greatly enriched the repertoires of hymns in Palestinian genres such as the sticheron and canon, while also creating a small number of new forms of hymnography.¹⁷ Every day of the fixed and movable cycles of the Byzantine liturgical year thereby came to possess one or more sets of proper hymnody to adorn the fixed psalms and canticles of the Horologion, much of it in the form of *contrafacta* to an increasingly circumscribed group of model melodies. With more hymns now in circulation than could be accommodated within the major daily offices of evening and morning prayer (vespers and matins), hymns began to migrate to other services, both public and private. This was most particularly true of canons, which came to be performed not only at matins but also at compline, the midnight office, or indeed any time found suitable for the celebration of a supplicatory service (*paraklesis*).

This period also witnessed diversification in the methods of performing hymns with or without biblical psalmody. Some Middle Byzantine Stoudite and South Italian sources for the Great Hours of Holy Friday, Christmas and Theophany bear the marks of strong influence from the Constantinopolitan cathedral tradition: proceeding from the opening exclamation 'Blessed is the Kingdom' to diaconal litanies and antiphonal psalms in which the stichera from the rite of Jerusalem have been incorporated as final refrains (*perissai*).¹⁸ On the other hand, there are many instances where hymns originally composed for public musical performance are absorbed into private devotions where their melodic delivery was, at best, optional. The single largest category of such instances would be occasions when portions of the Divine Office were performed privately in the cell as part of a monk's personal devotions. Outside of Lent in the Constantinopolitan monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis, for example, the minor offices of the day were customarily performed in the cells.¹⁹ Some monasteries opted for the celebration of the midnight office in

16 Frøyshov, "The Georgian Witness," 254.

17 A recent overview of these developments is Stig Simeon Frøyshov, "Byzantine rite," (Canterbury Press, accessed 5 June 2015), <http://www.hymnology.co.uk/b/byzantine-rite>

18 Julia Schlichtina, "The Troparia of the Great Hours during 1100 Years," in: *Psaltike: Neue Studien zur Byzantinischen Musik. Festschrift für Gerda Wolfram*, ed. Nina-Maria Wanek, *Praesens Byzantinistik* (Vienna: Praesens, 2011), 313–34.

19 John Eugene Klentos, "Byzantine Liturgy in Twelfth-Century Constantinople: An

common, whilst others allotted it – and also the canons attached to it – to private devotions before attending matins, whilst in Typika one finds occasional rubrics mandating that the normally public office of compline should be performed ‘in the cells’ on particular days. These uses of hymns should be viewed in the wider context of what Dirk Krausmüller, in a study of an unpublished Hypotyposis for Stoudios by Niketas Stethatos, disciple and biographer of St Symeon the New Theologian, has noted as a general ‘liturgisation’ of personal monastic life in eleventh-century Constantinople, another symptom of which was that monks in some houses assumed the obligation of regulating their days with private recitation of the mid-hours (*mesoria*).²⁰

Hymns made their way into all sorts of devotions conducted outside of the daily cycle of major and minor offices. Appearing in manuscripts as appendices to the Horologion, interspersed throughout the Psalter,²¹ or attached to various types of prayers, their expected form of performance – Communal or private? Silent or sung? – is often far from clear. The ninth-century Palestinian Horologion Sinai gr. 864, for example, features an appendix of canons and *kata stichon* hymns,²² while Stefanos Alexopoulos and Annewies van den Hoek have noted the regular appearance of the Holy Week hymns *Τοῦ δείπνου σου* and *Ἐν ταῖς λαμπρότησι* among sets of pre-communion prayers.²³

LATE BYZANTIUM

The trend toward accepting hymns originally composed for public worship alongside biblical psalmody prayers in musically ambiguous devotions performed outside of the Divine Liturgy or the communal offices of vespers and

Analysis of the Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis (Codex Athens Ethnike Bibliothēke 788)” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1995), 164.

20 Dirk Krausmüller, “Private vs Communal: Niketas Stethatos’ *Hypotyposis* for Stoudios, and Patterns of Worship in Eleventh-century Byzantine Monasteries,” in: *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis, 1050-1200*, ed. Margaret Mullett and Anthony Kirby, *Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations* 6.2 (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, School of Greek, Roman and Semetic Studies, The Queen’s University of Belfast, 1997), 309–28.

21 Georgi R. Parpulov, “Psalms and Personal Piety in Byzantium,” in: *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. Paul Magdalino and Robert S. Nelson, *Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2010), 77–105.

22 Edited in Maxime Ajjoub and Joseph Paramelle, *Livre d’heures du Sinai: (Sinaiticus Graecus 864)*, Sources chrétiennes 486 (Paris: Cerf, 2004). This manuscript is further analysed in Stig Simeon Frøyskov, “Часослов без последований Больших Часов (вечерни и утрени): Исследование недавно изданного Часослова Sin. gr. 864 (IX в.),” [The Book of Hours without the Rites of the Great Hours (Vespers and Matins): The Study of the Recently Published Horologion Sin. gr. 864 (9 c.)] (Transl. from French by M. M. Bernatsky).] *Богословские Труды* 43–44; 45 (2012 / 2013). For a thorough discussion of another Middle Byzantine Horologion, see Jeffrey C. Anderson and Stefano Parenti, *A Byzantine monastic office, A.D. 1105* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016).

23 Stefanos Alexopoulos and Annewies van den Hoek, “The Endicott Scroll and Its Place in the History of Private Communion Prayers,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 60(2006): 145–88.

matins accelerated during the final centuries of Byzantium. For the major services of the Byzantine rite, the period between the recovery of Constantinople from the Crusaders in 1261 and the Ottoman conquest of 1453 was marked by the consolidation and dissemination of a “Neo-Sabaïtic synthesis” between Constantinopolitan and Palestinian that was promoted by Athonite monks.²⁴ Spiritually, it was the time of the triumph of hesychast spirituality as expressed most notably through the synodal vindication of St Gregory Palamas. Musically, it was the period of the so-called “Ars Nova” of St John Koukouzeles and his colleagues, marked on the one hand by the re-editing of received repertoires of hymnody and psalmody, and on the other by the musical innovations associated with the flowering of kalophonic chant.²⁵ These innovations included the intense musicalization of psalmody from the festal All-Night Vigil, the composition of some new hymns (notably including hymns in the so-called “Political” 15-syllable verse employed also in contemporary secular poetry and song), and the systematic recomposition of older hymns in the kalophonic style (this includes their rearrangement of stichera anagrammatismoi).

In “Hesychasm and Psalmody” I observed that these musical and liturgical developments were accompanied by the rekindling of Late Antique debates over the spiritual efficacy of various public and private forms of psalmody, a category to which hymnody had long been assimilated. Metropolitan Theoleptos of Philadelphia (1250–1322) was a hesychast who actively promoted communal and private psalmody while maintaining that the latter was best rendered with a quiet voice. Gregory of Sinai (c. 1265–1346), on the other hand, was suspicious of melodic singing, designating psalmody a tool for beginners that was inappropriate for advanced hesychasts who had achieved prayer in the heart. Having thus set the stage, I went on to argue that the kalophonic music chanted on weekends and other festal occasions in coenobitic communities was, *pace* Gregory, a manifestation of spiritual boldness (*parrhesia*) that flowed logically from hesychast reassertions of God’s immanence and accessibility to human beings in this present life, a theme also developed in contemporary iconography through the interpenetration of the heavenly and earthly liturgies. In more recent writings I have traced the roots of this notion of interpenetration between human and angelic worship to a longstanding Patristic tradition of identifying human singers with angels whilst seeing earthly worship more generally as a living icon of the perpetual heavenly liturgy.²⁶

24 Robert F. Taft, S.J., “Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988): 179–94

25 Introductions are Edward V. Williams, “A Byzantine *Ars Nova*: The 14th-Century Reforms of John Koukouzeles in the Chanting of Great Vespers,” in *Aspects of the Balkans: Continuity and Change: Contributions to the International Balkan Conference held at UCLA, October 23–28, 1969*, ed. Henrik Birnbaum and Speros Vryonis, Jr., *Slavistic Printings and Reprintings* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1972), 211–29; and Gregorios Th. Stathis and Konstantinos Terzopoulos, *Introduction to Kalophony, the Byzantine Ars Nova: The Anagrammatismoi and Mathēmata of Byzantine Chant*, *Studies in Eastern Orthodoxy* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014).

26 Alexander Lingas, “From Earth to Heaven: The Changing Soundscape of Byzantine

The connection between angelic song and compositions featuring non-semantic vocables such as *kratemata* and *teretismata* was, to my knowledge, made explicit only after the fall of Byzantium by the Cretan author Gersasimos Vlachos.²⁷ Yet two recent publications by Panagiotes Skaltsis of the University of Thessalonica make it clear that hymnody was highly valued by some late Byzantine hesychasts: a general study of the relationship between private and public prayer in the Byzantine tradition,²⁸ and a beautiful new edition of a manual of private prayer composed by an anonymous Constantinopolitan monk of the late 13th or early 14th century who employed the pseudonym “Thekaras”.²⁹ The latter contains an alternative Horologion formed mainly of hymnody, an ‘Ascetic Office’ for use during Lent, a private Divine Office in which the biblical Psalter plays a central role, and explanatory texts and florilegia written by the anonymous monk and his disciples. Some of the hymns in this volume are assigned to particular musical modes, having been taken from, or which are modelled after, items in standard service books of the Byzantine rite. At the heart of the “Thekaras” collection, however, are long hymns to the Holy Trinity that belong to a literary tradition that reaches back to the hymns of St Gregory Nazianzen and St Symeon the New Theologian. Many of these devotional poems are attributed to “Thekaras” himself, but there are also texts by other authors including Nicephorus Blemmydes (1197/98–1272).

Solo or communal musical performance was always an option for hymns in standard genres, but the most remarkable hymns of “Thekaras” do not, as the monastic authors contained in the collection themselves observe, follow any of the usual prototypes. Indeed, Skaltsis has noted that the volume is far from clear regarding questions of musical performance. “Thekaras” and his co-authors sometimes refer to ‘readers’ (‘τοῖς ἀναγνῶσι’) and reading (‘διαβάζετω’), while elsewhere they use ambiguous generic words for ‘saying’ (for example, ‘εἰπεῖν’ and ‘λεγέτω’) that contrast strongly with explicitly musical terms (including ‘ὁ ᾄδων’ and ‘τοῖς ᾄδουσι’). At all events, “Thekaras” and his pupil Theodoulos are firmly of the opinion that a hesychast using a Divine Office constructed almost entirely of hymns is able to attain the heights of contemplation achieved by those devoted to the monologic Jesus Prayer ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me (a sinner)’. They maintained that a “singer” who internalized these hymns would “feel in his heart the Holy Spirit once

Liturgy,” in *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Newcastle and Durham, April 2011*, ed. Claire Nesbitt and Mark Jackson, *Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies Publications 18* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 311–58.

27 On the musical development and theological interpretation of *kratemata*, see Gregorios Anastasiou, *Τὰ κρατήματα στήν ψαλτική τέχνη*, ed. Gregorios Th. Stathis, *Institute of Byzantine Musicology Studies 12* (Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 2005).

28 Skaltsis, *Ἡ Παράδοση τῆς Κοινῆς καὶ τῆς κατ’ ἰδίαν Προσευχῆς*.

29 ———, ed. *Θηκαρᾶς - Στίχοι εἰς τοὺς θεῖους Ὑμνους: Διονυσίου καὶ Μητροφάνους, Περὶ τῶν Ὑμνων - Θηκαρᾶ Μοναχοῦ, Λόγοι περὶ πίστεως, Ἑρμηνεία τῶν Ὑμνων - Ὁρολόγιον τῶν θεῶν Ὑμνων, Ἀσκητικὴ Ἀκολουθία, Χαραποιά Πένθη - Θεοδούλου Μοναχοῦ, Διήγησις καὶ Ἀνθολόγιον περὶ τῶν Ὑμνων* (Mt Athos: Εκδοσις Ἱερας Μονῆς Παντοκρατορῆς, 2008)

received in baptism as a plectrum producing music”,³⁰ with Divine Light revealed to the physical eyes of the spiritually secure singer.³¹ This is a hymnody that, although it might begin with the bodily singing, ultimately leads to a kind of “virtual singing” of the heart.

CONCLUSION

The preceding historical survey of musicality in Byzantine hymnody has revealed changing notions of its textual and musical elements. The hymn repertoires of Constantinople and Jerusalem were founded on liturgical (and paraliturgical) creation, with texts and music composed simultaneously for particular services or commemorations. With the massive expansion of hymnody in the Middle Byzantine period, hymns in Palestinian genres began to separate from the biblical psalms and canticles of the communal offices that had fostered their creation. Absorbed into quiet or silent personal devotions alongside prayers and biblical psalmody, hymnody could shed its musical components as incidental to the contemplative value of its texts. Yet it is unlikely that someone who had already memorized these chants in church could ever escape their sounds. Perhaps it was persistent memory of actual chanting that motivated Thekaras and his disciple to call ‘singers’ those who used hymns in their private devotions.

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30 Ibid., 462–64.

31 Ibid., 504.

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