

**JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC**

Ed. Ivan Moody & Maria Takala-Roszczenko
Vol. 3, Section III: Miscellanea, pp. 295–312 ISSN 2342-1258
<https://journal.fi/jisocm>

THE GENRE SYSTEM OF EARLY RUSSIAN HYMNOGRAPHY: THE MAIN STAGES AND PRINCIPLES OF ITS FORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

The Church has always been at the very centre of Russian life. Its opulence, rich ceremony and mystery illuminate the pages of the books of L. Tolstoy, F. Dostoyevsky and B. Pasternak. They resound in the music of M. Glinka, M. Mussorgsky, P. Tchaikovsky and S. Rachmaninov.¹ For centuries it has been and still is an extraordinary source of strength and unity for the Russian people, and a great support in difficult periods of Russian history.

Russia inherited Orthodoxy from Byzantium, both its complete theology and its entire liturgical rite. The forms of ‘philosophical speculation’ and ‘practical theology’ that proved most acceptable to the Christians of Ancient Rus’ were those of religious art, committed as they were to the creation of visible and audible representations of the celestial world, an image on earth of God’s life. This is the true essence of old Russian church architecture, icon painting and hymnography.

Indeed, the exterior shape of the church is full of symbolic elements and colours: for instance, the shape of a dome is that of a burning candle; five domes symbolize Christ and the four Evangelists; the combination of white walls and gilded domes typical of Russian church architecture until the 18th century expresses the profound sacred ideas of divinity. All this is the artistic embodiment of the image of the shared life of the earthly and heavenly Church.

The interior is intended to increase this sense of shared life, and so it does. The iconostasis, the main part of every church, is a pictorial transposition of the Eucharistic Canon. Set on a flat surface directly facing the congregation, the iconostasis can be seen from any vantage point from within the church. Its classical pattern consists of five tiers, each depicting the stages in human history, as they are reflected in the Holy Scriptures. The three upper tiers contain icons of Old Testament figures, the early fathers and the prophets, while the two lower tiers relate the main events of the New Testament as they are commemorated in the twelve major feasts. The iconostasis with its historical continuum displays the icon as the material representation of

1 This subject is investigated in the historical survey of E. Levashev “Traditional Genres of Orthodox Chant Art in the Creativity of Russian Composers from Glinka to Rachmaninov, 1825-1917” (Levashev, Evgeny 1994; see bibliography). This piece of research gives a broad and well-presented retrospective of the century-long stylistic changes and new trends of Russian chant in the works of both highly professional musicians, and semi-professionals, often precentors, who nevertheless used it in their daily liturgical practice. This book also contains a complete list of the church music of 19th-century Russian composers, both well-known and less significant.

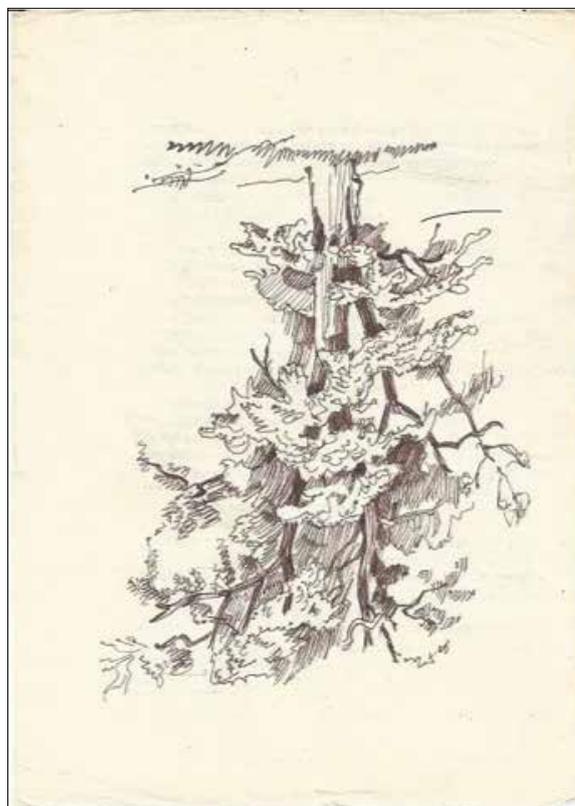
divine revelation, the reality of the Incarnation and redemption. Thus the icon becomes what could be considered as theology expressed in colour.

Hymnography was described by the early Church Fathers as ‘angelic singing’. They believed that the human voice should be the only musical instrument sounding in the church, since being of celestial origin (‘not-made-by-hands’), it was able to convey the living Word of God, proclaim it to man, and in that way create a direct link between Heaven and Earth. Orthodoxy wholly accepted this concept. Up to the present day instruments are never heard in services. As for the music itself, the divine harmony here is achieved by the high beauty of the ideal, the smooth melodic line of the ancient chant, the flexible balance between symmetrical and asymmetrical rhythms and phrase structures, the principle of openness of form and the potential for everlasting continuity. This form, however, is strictly regulated by the structure of the text which perfects and completes it. So in parallel with icon painting, Russian hymnography could be called theology expressed in sound.²

THE FORMATION OF EARLY RUSSIAN HYMNOGRAPHY

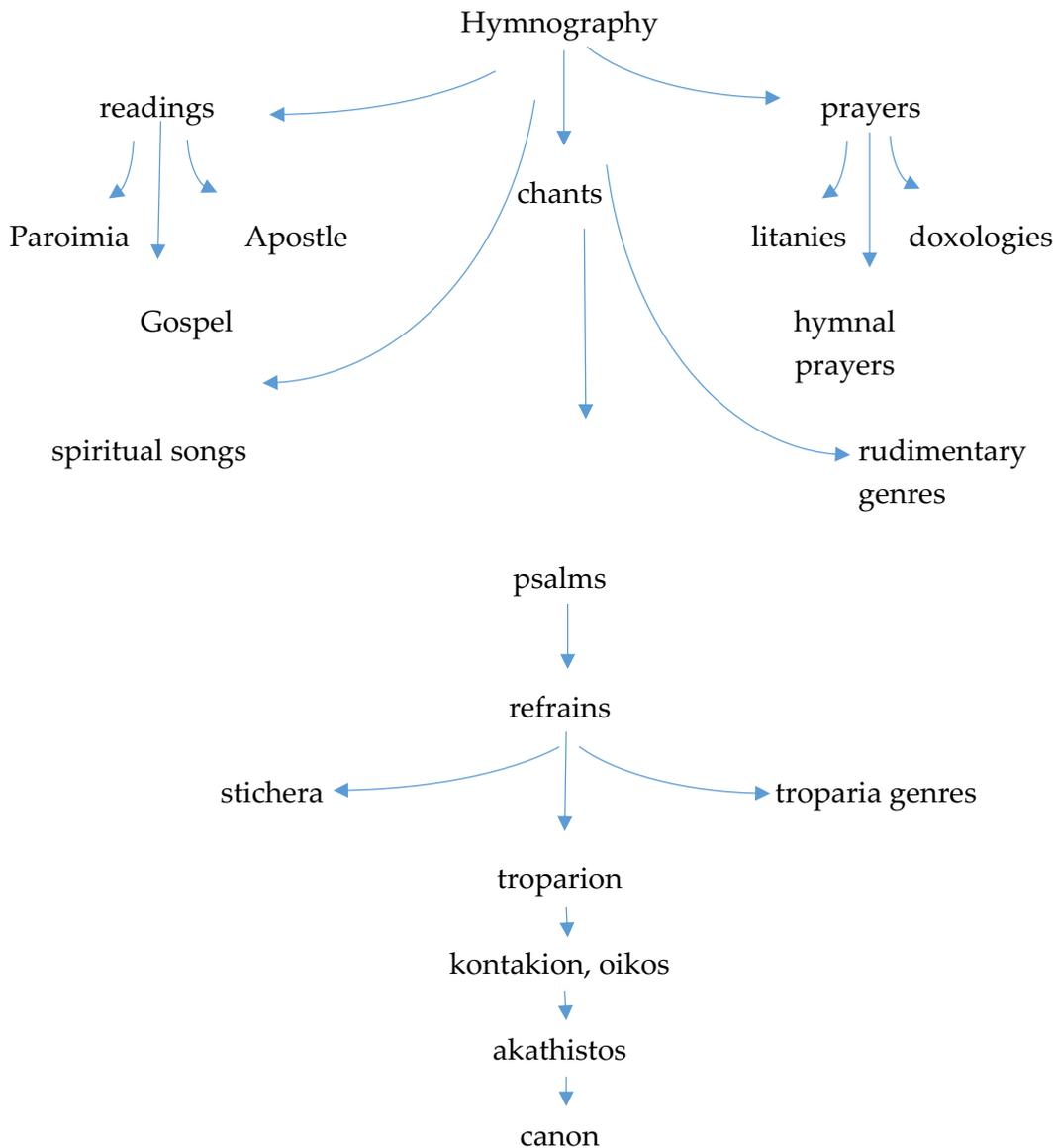
The artistic response of those who are acquainted with early Russian chant prompts the recognition that the genres of hymnography belong to some harmonious and deeply rooted system; that they are connected in a logical and chronological order, and reveal the most important common aim.

The concept of God is the fixed starting point of Christian thought. All else was assumed to be less than God, and submitted to Him absolutely. Thus the whole system of Western Christian music (including Byzantine music and its heir, early Russian music) may be envisaged as a tree growing upside down. Its roots cling to the heavens; its trunk grows down towards the earth; its branches spread out in all directions, and numerous twigs spring from them. Hence there is a particular inverted branching perspective, similar to that in Orthodox iconography, which embraces the entire sphere of ancient Russian hymnography.³



² More detailed discussion of the similarity of the principles underlying the formation of the genres in early Russian religious art can be found in the present author’s article “Early Russian Hymnography and Icon Painting: Some Common Principles in their Genre Formation” (Kolyada, Elena 1994; see bibliography). General stylistic parallels between Russian chant and icons are investigated in N. Sheffer’s essay “Ecclesiastical Chants and the Russian Icon” (Sheffer, Natalya 1997; see bibliography).

³ The sepia drawing below of a tree growing upside down was made by the author’s late husband, the Russian artist and icon painter Anatoly Morozov (d. 2009).



Following the same tree-like pattern the numerous hymnographic genres (in total there are about seventy of them) that constitute ‘the body’ of hymnography form five major groups, some of which are very large and elaborate, while others are smaller and less intricate. And within each group, genres have typologically similar features, and are subsumed under their protogenre ‘root’, yet remain independent; moreover they constitute their own exclusive circles.⁴ These groups are:

1. Psalms and derivative genres
2. Stichero-troparion genres
3. Kontakion, oikos, akathistos
4. Canon
5. Prayer genres

However each group has its own specific shared features. Thus genres derived from the psalms developed in four different ways: a) the free combination of the verses of a psalm (antiphon,

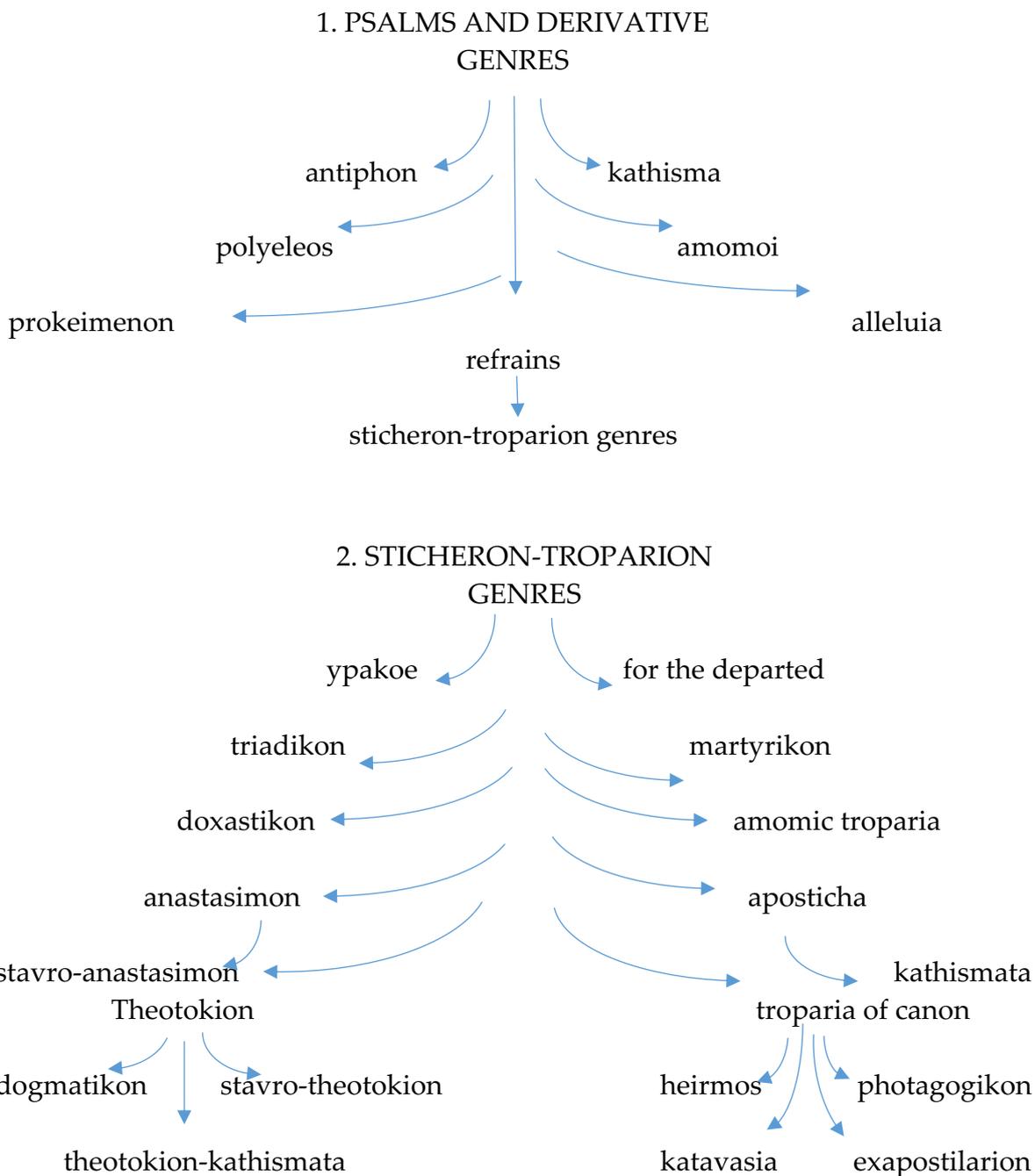
⁴ Some genres within these circles even make up a specific category based on a syntactic principle. Such for instance would be the psalms, canonical prayers and chants of every layer of Orthodox worship. Thus all Eucharistic genres are supposed to be chanted during the liturgy; the whole Psalter must be partly chanted and partly read within one week. Readings from the New Testament, though on a different level, also follow the same principle: the four Gospels and both the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles should be read within one church year.

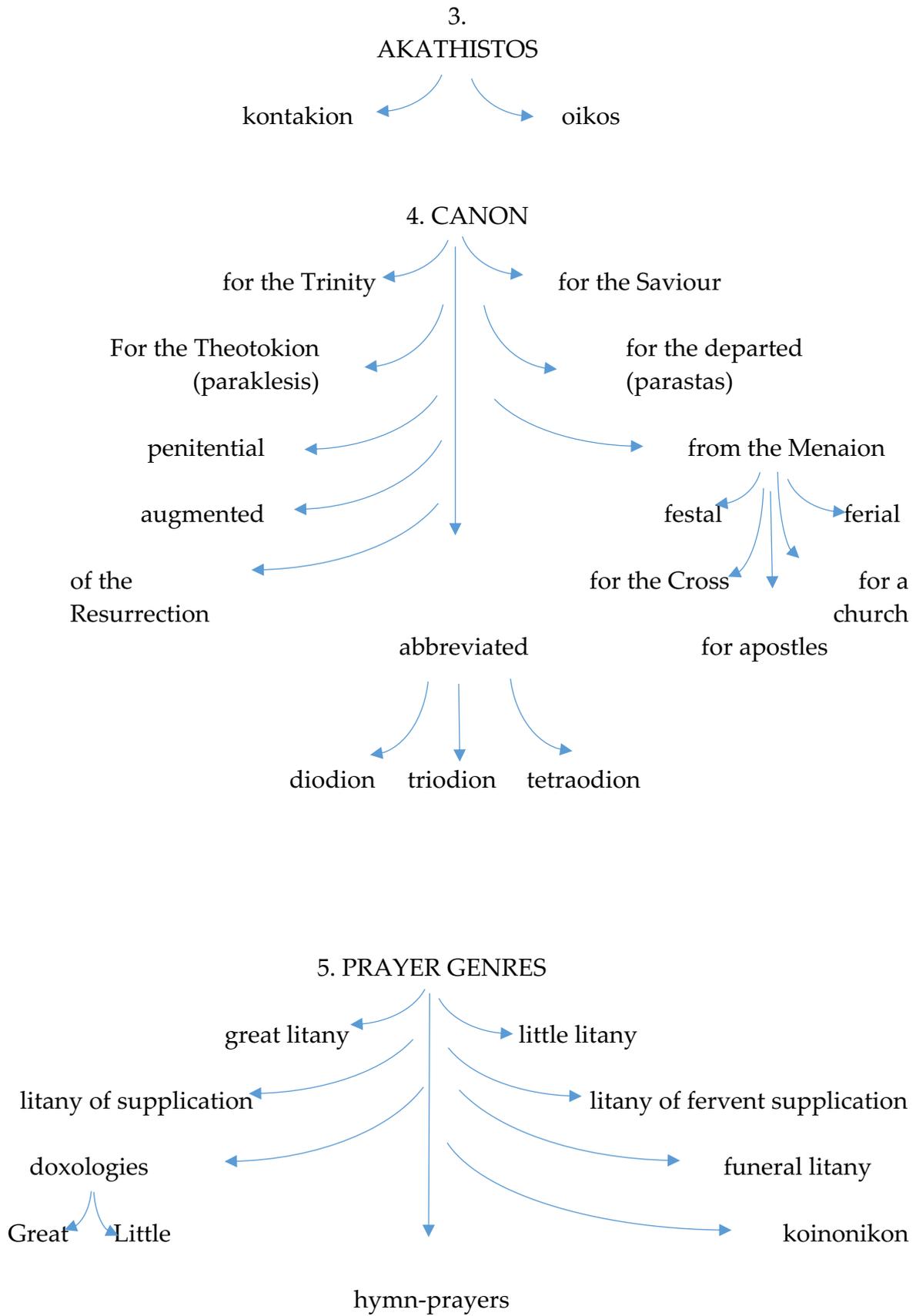
amomoi, polyeleos); b) the development of independent genres from the refrains to the psalms (alleluia, prokeimenon); c) the alternation of the psalm verses and new genres (kathismata); d) non-liturgical poetic translations of the psalms using alternative poetic principles (psal'ma).

Practically all types of the stichero-troparion genres came into being either as a result of semantic, functional and structural differentiation of the refrains to the psalms (numerous varieties of stichera, among them aposticha, ainoi, lity and some other stichera), or were based on the contents of the text (various kinds of troparia, such as theotokia, triadika, anastasima, stavroanastasima etc).

The main principle uniting the kontakion, oikos and akathistos group is elaborate dogmatic Christian teaching. In the canon it is the form, though the accent moved from its poetic to its musical aspect, whereas in the prayer genres the most stable feature is found in the three indispensable functional characteristics: doxology, supplication and penitence.

Below is a simplified typological diagram of the main genre groups.





All these genres have been in continuous use in Russian liturgical practice for many centuries, in some cases more than a thousand years. However the overall development of hymnographical genres in the Eastern Orthodox tradition (of which Russian Orthodoxy is an integral part) spans about seventeen centuries. This period may be divided into four main stages:⁵

1. From the first century until about 150 AD: the adoption of the genres of Hebrew hymnography, namely psalms, alleluias, antiphons; the first signs of genre formation.

2. From about 250 until about 400 AD: a rapid progress of genre formation now appears (such as troparion, kontakion, sticheron, theotokion, triadikon); this period is also characterized by the development of the basic services.⁶ The main services of the daily cycle are: Vespers (Вечерня, Ἑσπερινός) Matins (Утреня, Ὡρθρος), Liturgy (Литургия, Λειτουργία), and the Hours (Часы, Ὡρες). All are of ancient origin. Thus the hours existed in Hebrew synagogue worship. Both Vespers and Liturgy were joined in the so-called 'agapes' (love feasts), the all-night services of the 'therapeuts' in pre-Christian times. By the end of the third century they had separated (the Liturgy was transferred to the morning) and the entire cycle was more or less in the form which we know today in Orthodox countries:

Ninth Hour

Vespers Vigil (on feasts and Sundays) on the eve of the feast

Matins

First hour

Liturgy in the morning

Third and

Sixth Hours

3. From about 600 until about 1150 AD: the first synthesis of genres; the spread of compound genres, the akathistos and the canon. These two genres appeared as a result of the development of the many-versed Kontakion and became the highest point of development of Eastern hymnography. The akathistos is a cyclical piece of 25 hymns of praise (the initial verse, called prooimion, followed by 12 kontakia and 12 oikoi chanted in alternation) which appeared in this full version probably in the seventh century. All the akathistoi compositions since then follow this first pattern. The earliest example known as "The Great Akathistos" is commonly attributed to the sixth-century Byzantine hymnographer Romanos the Melodist.⁷ Structurally it was still a many-versed Kontakion, without the well-known prooimion in honour of the Theotokos "To Thee, Mother of God, victorious leader". The latter, as thought by scholars, was added later and is related to a particular historical event: the invasion of Constantinople by the Persians and Scythians in 626 AD. The Theotokos covered the city with a veil so that it became invisible, and thus it was saved. It is interesting, however, to note that the feast of the Intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos (Pokrov) was established four centuries later (in the mid-eleventh century) in Rus' with regard to another invasion of Constantinople (this time it was the Muslims, who threatened to demolish the city, and this happened in the tenth century). This practice then

5 The periodization refers only to the hymnographical genre system itself and is not based on the evolution of style, Octoechos or notation. The division into periods of the style and notation, both Byzantine and Russian, is well known (investigated, for instance, in: Stathis, Gregory 2000; see bibliography; Pozhidayeva, Galina 1999; see bibliography; Muryanov, Mikhail 2003; see bibliography; Lozovaya, Irina 2009b; see bibliography) and therefore is not included here.

6 The formation of the main daily Orthodox services, those of the vigil and liturgy, are studied in detail in the fundamental works of the master of Russian liturgiology of the Soviet period N. Uspensky (Uspensky, Nikolay 2002, 2007; see bibliography). See also Wybrew, Hugh 1990 (see bibliography); Taft, Robert Francis 1978-2008 (see bibliography).

7 The Akathistos hymn is also ascribed to other authors, among whom the most probable are the famous Byzantine poet, Deacon Georgios Pisides and the Patriarch of Constantinople Sergius I (both in the first half of the seventh century). The latter, as is thought, may have added the refrain 'Hail' (Χαίρε) to the already existing texts of kontakia written either by Romanos the Melodist or by an anonymous hymnographer of the sixth century.

came to Byzantium. Nowadays there are over 300 akathistoi known in Russian hymnography. The akathistos has become a particular kind of service and is separate from the three main daily services.⁸

The first Canon was written at the end of the seventh century by St Andrew of Crete. It was “the Great Penitential Canon” (consisting of 250 troparia), a masterpiece of hymnography. It is now recited and chanted during Lent. Another famous Canon, the Easter “Golden Canon” belongs to St John of Damascus. It was he who created the classical pattern of the Canon (30 troparia united in 9 canticles), which was adopted in Byzantium and transferred in the eleventh century to Rus’, where it soon became very popular. Indeed, among the earliest manuscripts of Russian ecclesiastical music are those of “The Canons”,⁹ in particular the works of St Gregory of Pechery (1120). In later times apart from translations of Byzantine Canons many new pieces were composed by Russian hymnographers. Thus in the fifteenth century the Novgorodian monk Pachomiy Logophet (Serbian by origin) wrote about 30 Canons for Russian saints and feasts. He was the founder of the new Russian style of Canons characterised by florid texts and melismatic tunes.

What is also significant in that period is the appearance of numerous kinds of Typikon, books containing the rules and rubrics governing every aspect of the Church’s services (including music) and their celebration throughout the ecclesiastical year.¹⁰

4. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries: the second genre synthesis; the establishment of hymnographical genres in liturgical practice, for example the polyeleos. Though the polyelei psalms (134 and 135) had already existed within Hebrew synagogue practice, and in the sixth century the Byzantine hymnographer Romanos the Melodist had written the polyeleoi kontakia, it was not until the thirteenth century that the genre developed in its present form and was inserted into Matins. Finally, of great importance was the unification of different Typika in a common Typikon of Orthodox worship, the so-called Jerusalem Typikon (fifteenth century).¹¹ The Orthodox Church in Byzantium and Rus’, unlike the Roman Catholic Church in the west, usually made no distinction between monastic and parochial use, i.e. monasteries and parishes since the nineteenth century have both followed the same Typikon, although in most parishes there are inevitably numerous omissions and abbreviations.

Christianity, officially accepted in Rus’ at the end of the tenth century, brought not only its religious doctrine, but also all the essential features of the service structure and a genre system that had already been created over the course of time.¹²

A great number of components from different cultures (Byzantine in particular) found their place in the Russian mediaeval sacred musical art. These began from precise translations of poetic texts,¹³ and included direct loans of terminology, both independent and large genre

8 The only exception is the Great Akathistos, which has become an integral part of the Matins at the feast of the Salutations to the Theotokos that occurs on the Saturday of the fifth week of Great Lent.

9 There are as many as 18 surviving notated early (12th-14th centuries) Russian Parakletike manuscript books containing canons that comprise a weekly cycle. Interestingly enough along with one canon to be sung during Matins, a number of manuscripts either have two canons or indicate them technically in the rubrics as one, but actually intercalate troparia of the two canons (detailed research on the early Russian Parakletike is presented in: Lozovaya, Irina, 2004, 2009a; see bibliography). Worth noticing here is the fact that unlike the 11th-century Byzantine tradition of performing the canon partly chanted (heirmoi of the canticles) and partly recited (the troparia following the canticles), as discovered by C. Troelsgard in the appropriate rubrics of the Evergetis Typikon (Troelsgard, Christian 2004; see bibliography), in Russian liturgical practice from the very beginning the whole poem was evidently chanted. Later on (at least in the 14th century) it was chanted in Byzantine worship as well (as shown, for instance, in: Hannick, Christian 1990; see bibliography).

10 The main stages in the formation of the Typikon and the evolution of the structure of the services is thoroughly investigated by His Eminence Job, Archbishop of Telmessos (Job 2009, 2012; see bibliography).

11 Pentkowsky, Alexey 2004 (see bibliography).

12 The Byzantine genre system had already taken shape by the ninth century, although there were many later alterations, modifications and additions.

13 There are however a few exceptions, where for a certain reason the original text was changed. Thus in the famous kontakion to the Theotokos “To Thee, Mother of God, victorious leader” (“Vzbrannoy voyevode pobeditel’naya”), mentioned

groups, a modal system, and the “implantation” and gradual transformation within Russia of a number of elements whose roots lay in early antiquity.¹⁴ However, an uninterrupted thread of historical succession can be seen clearly through the numerous spirals of the centuries-old layers that are discovered in genealogical “cross-sections” of each genre.

Two of the most important principles in the development of Orthodox art were authority and canonicity, with the latter resulting from the former. Many ancient Eastern chants, ekphoneseis (exclamations) and prayers served for Christians as models, and these were sometimes transferred to the service and confirmed by *Typika*. Among them are psalms, the Trisagion (the song of the Seraphim), the Epinikion hymn (‘Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth’), the Great Doxology, and the exclamation ‘Amen’. The Hebrew perception of time as a symbolic notion also influenced the process of genre formation in all its aspects and in different ranges. Thus the notion of Prime (First Hour), Terce (Third Hour), Sext (Sixth hour) and None (Ninth Hour)¹⁵ lost their primary meaning in real physical time, and in Orthodoxy gained a symbolism related to Gospel events.

Characteristic of the influence of ancient hymnography on its Christian counterpart is its style and manifestation in polysemantic genres. The historical development of mediaeval art was deductive in general, passing from genre to genre. For instance, in the pre-Christian Orient there was a common style of psalm chant, not divided into genres. But in due course a differentiation of smaller ‘protogenres’ slowly took place. They were united by a common derivation of contents, form (‘idiomelon’ / ἰδιόμελον, i.e. individual composition), or some other criterion. As a result of this evolution there appeared in Latin culture a genre-style of psalmody that became the basis for all the main varieties of Western medieval art. In Byzantium the same process led to the formation of an independently derived system that in its turn was historically transformed. As for Russian hymnography, the psalm style had already been expressed in the eleventh century by way of the defined genre of the psalm.

There existed, however, a contrasting inductive tendency when genres, having gradually been formed in original categories, combined into groups (the latter becoming larger and larger) and made genre styles.¹⁶ Thus the whole developed into trends, and finally the style of a period was created. For example, the genre of the kontakion brought into mediaeval Russian music the style of the particularly melismatic kondakar chant (кондакарное пение/kondakarnoye peniye) with a specific kondakar notation known from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁷

The placement within the liturgical structure is one of the principal factors that influenced the formation of genres. Liturgiology, the study of different aspects of the internal service

above (p. 7) the phrase referring to Constantinople (‘Thy city’/ ἡ πόλις σου’) at the end of the first verse was deliberately omitted, probably to avoid historicity, and replaced for more general reference to all believers (‘Thy servants’/ раби твои’). That happened in the 14th century on the Holy Mt. Athos, when Russian liturgical books were revised, and remains the same today.

14 The very fact and the ways that the Byzantine musical tradition itself influenced early Slavic chant in general (and Russian in particular) were demonstrated over fifty years ago by M. Velimirovič (Velimirovič, Miloš 1967; see bibliography), as well as by other well-known musicologists of that generation (Christian Hannick, Kenneth Levy). Yet later on after studying the majority of the existing early Slavic manuscripts (including Russian ones) Velimirovič revised his views and regarded it as more independent (Velimirovič, Miloš 1982, 2003; see bibliography).

15 These are brief services that anticipate or follow the main daily services: Liturgy, Vespers and Matins; the Third and Sixth Hours are celebrated before the liturgy, while the Ninth comes before Vespers, and the First Hour is after Matins. They are similar to the daily Office in western liturgies.

16 The term was introduced by the Soviet art critic G. Wagner in his book “The Problem of Genre in Early Russian Art”, p. 42 (Wagner, Georgy 1972; see bibliography).

17 The peak of Kondakarian chant falls in the 12th and 13th centuries. Six Kondakar manuscripts still survive, among which the most well-known and studied are the *Typografsky Typikon* (the earliest, dated to the end of the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th) which contains a large chant section including the Kondakar, and also the *Blagoveshchensky*, *Uspensky* and *Troitsky Kondakars*. However, traces of this style are still found in 14th-century Russian musical notated manuscripts, as shown by T. Shvets in her article “The Kondakar Chant Book and Kondakar Notation in the 14th Century (Shvets, Tatiana 2017; see bibliography). As for kondakarian notation, despite many hypotheses and attempts at its transcription, it still remains an enigma (as investigated, for instance, in: Brazhnikov, Maxim 2002; see bibliography; Myers, Gregory 2003; see bibliography; Pozhidayeva, Galina 2008; see bibliography).

structure, had a very long evolution. In addition, many of the established rubrics concerning the type of services and genres of hymnography changed repeatedly and considerably. Quite often rituals, prayers and chants characteristic of a certain period were used only rarely later and eventually disappeared completely.¹⁸ At the same time, new chants were being introduced within the developing process of the service, and the manner of their performance was being changed.

Thus, according to the rules of the Typikon of the Studios monastery (widespread in Rus' from the end of the eleventh until the end of the fourteenth century),¹⁹ vigils were not supposed to be held throughout the year, and the Great Doxology was to be sung only twice a year. The same Typikon contains guidelines for chanting the kathismata of the Psalter within the Octoechos system. Later on (from the mid-16th century onwards) it underwent a certain transformation: along with the previous chanting custom, psalmody recitative (or liturgical recitative, known in Russian as 'chitok'), especially of the middle psalm verses, was introduced.²⁰ Although the Stoglav Council (1551) established the importance of a certain order and uniformity in chanting, there was never complete conformity. A century later there is another document which proves the existence of continuing instability in chanting practice. In a description of the litany during the week of the Veneration of the Cross in Lent we find a reference to the performance of the troparion of the Holy Cross: "In the years of 136 and 137²¹ the patriarch ordered the singing of the whole troparion whereas formerly it had been said by the choirs."²²

Eventually some genres (such as canon, prayers, prokeimena, Cherubic Hymn) held a firm place in the service, others (e.g. processional, polyeleos) being less stable. The position of the latter is variable and depends on many factors: the kind of service (Vespers, Matins, whether celebrated separately or united in Vigil), the venue (monastery or parish) and the character (Lenten, ferial or festal). It also depends on the hierarchical correlation of the feasts, whereby a minor feast gives way to a major one.

This definition of services took place at the same time as the gradual enlargement of their sections, and increased number of musical settings. From the fourth century onwards (the origin of the troparion) the process of genre formation embraced increasingly large texts and melodic complexes:

- the troparion was a single-strophe genre;
- the kontakion was polystrophic;
- the akathistos included several simple genres, but structured;
- the canon consisted of both simple (heirmos, troparion, oikos, kontakion, theotokion, katavasia) and synthetic genres (prayers).

In the meantime, sections of a service were also gradually being realized as genres. This process led by the end of the nineteenth century to the interpretation of the complete cycles of Liturgy and Vigil composed by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov and Grechaninov as independent genres of 'liturgy' and 'vigil.'²³ Moreover the totality of chants of Holy Week in Grechaninov's

18 More detailed study the process of the formation of the repertoire of the liturgical choir books and its stylistic evolution is presented in: Shkolnik, Marina 1996 (see bibliography); Ukhanova, Elena 2000 (see bibliography); Krashennnikova, Olga 2000 (see bibliography); Shidlovsky, Nikolay 2000 (see bibliography); Zabolotnaya, Natalya 2003 (see bibliography); Tutolmina, Sofia 2008 (see bibliography); Pletnyova, Elena 2017 (see bibliography).

19 Pentkowsky, Alexey 2001 (see bibliography). However there exist quite a few 15th-century Church-Slavonic copies of the Studios Typikon that prove that then it was still included in the liturgical practice in Rus'. Moreover some Russian monasteries were using it until the 18th century.

20 This theme is discussed in: Zhivayeva, Oxana 2003 (see bibliography). Similar alterations were happening as well in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine tradition (up to our own day) of performing psalms (Lingas, Alexander 2004b; see bibliography). These affected even the strict monastic rules of chanting psalms on Mount Athos (Conomos, Dimitri 1996; see bibliography).

21 Here 1636 and 1637 are meant, the years of Joseph's patriarchate.

22 Golubtsov, Alexandr, "The Taktikon of the Moscow Assumption Cathedral" (Golubtsov, Alexandr 1908; see bibliography).

23 Detailed analysis of Rachmaninov's famous work "Vigil" from the point of view of the stylistic authenticity of

grandiose composition of the same name can also be regarded as an integral unity, a liturgical and musical super-genre that includes the main chants of the period.²⁴

Chants always comprise two components: text and singing. In spite of the vast branching-out of the genre system of medieval Russian music, with many forms, there is no clear differentiation between words and music.²⁵ But it was text structure and rhetorical tradition that surely influenced genre formation profoundly in both Western and Eastern cultures. The structure of the text was the starting point for the musical structure in each case, regulating the form of the chant. As for rhetorical tradition, it affected both form and context.

In Gregorian chant the influence of rhetorical principles was gradually being restricted. By the second half of the sixteenth century there existed a strictly regulated complex of melodic formulas (tropes, figures), whereas in Byzantium and later in Russian hymnography the rules of rhetoric were manifested both on a small canvas (melopoetic figures) and on a larger one. Thus the sections of formalized contents of musical genres (which submit to the laws of homiletics) would normally conform to the parts of the rhetorical forms of the so called “ingenious sermon.”²⁶

parts of the	exordium	narratio	conclusio
rhetorical forms			
sections of the	dogma	history	lyrics
genre system			

This principle can be clearly seen on the one hand in the large cyclical structures of the akathistos and the canon, and on the other hand in the small single-verse forms of troparia, kontakia, stichera etc., such as, for instance, in the well-known Christmas kontakion “Today the Virgin” (“Deva dnes’ ”).

Interrelations between genres were often based on music itself. The eight *echoi* undoubtedly formed the theoretical system which most radically influenced genre formation. Being in origin of considerable antiquity (from about the fourth century, though fully formatted and officially accepted at the end of seventh century), it came to Russia straight from Byzantium. The concept of the *echoi* changed over the course of history. As a result of this gradual transformation, the *echoi* turned into a series of formulae (instead of a modal scale-system, which was characteristic of Byzantine and mediaeval Latin chant traditions) that constitutes the main body of each *echos*, a kind of skeleton composed of intervals. The Russian system of singing in eight *echoi* was introduced already in the 12th–13th centuries, as evidenced by the Osmoglasnik (Octoechos) manuscripts of that period. However it was shaped in its entirety by the second half of the fifteenth century,²⁷ with some later elaborate stylistic transformations that resulted in the appearance of different chants (Russian ‘rospev’ or ‘raspev’): Znamenny Stolpovoy, Putevoy, Demestvenny, Great, Kievan, Bulgarian and Greek. Each of them had its own musical form of Octoechos.

Russian chant on the one hand, and its arrangement by the musical genius of the composer on the other hand, can be found in A. Kandinsky’s “Vigil Chants in S. Rachmaninov’s Interpretation” (Kandinsky, Alexey 1992; see bibliography). Tchaikovsky’s Divine Liturgy and Vigil represent a similar tendency, and along with recognizable chant melodies, demonstrate features of his individual manner of composition (Rachmanova, Marina and Korabelnikova, Zinaida 1990; see bibliography).

24 Rachmanova, Marina 1999 (see bibliography).

25 However there is a division into two manners of performance in liturgies, namely, chant and declamation, but the latter implies a particular vocal intoning – the so called “liturgical recitative.”

26 This problem is thoroughly investigated in the PhD thesis of I. Lozovaya “Original Traits of Stolpovoy Znamenny Chant” (Lozovaya, Irina 1987; see bibliography) and is also comprehensively presented in her entry “Znamenny Chant” in the Orthodox Encyclopaedia (Lozovaya, Irina 2009b; see bibliography).

27 Zakharyina, Nina, 1988 (see bibliography). In a way, chant grouped in the Octoechos system can be regarded as a self-sufficient hymnographical genre.

Pronouncing the names of the *echoi* during the service became in time a kind of rite. In some cases certain *echoi* have been appointed for specific texts (e.g. the sticheron “The joy of the heavenly company” / “Nebesnykh chinov radovaniye”) is always chanted in the first *echos*, while the Christmas theotokion “Thou who wast born of the Virgin” / “Izhe nas radi rozhdeisia ot Devy”/ is allotted to the eighth *echos*). Thus ‘the ekphonesis rite’ promoted the developing tendency to interpret an *echos* as a musical genre.

Besides those mentioned above there are many other factors that influenced in one way or another the formation of musical hymnography. In the end each of them were manifest four parameters, which were of decisive importance for the process of genre formation:

- origin and historical succession
- structural correlation of the cycles of the services, of different dimensions
- appropriateness to the text
- appropriateness to the rite

These parameters along with the genre itself, as defined by them, submit in their turn to a common basis: a system of ideas, which absorbs all specific genre correlations, and which are disclosed only in reciprocity with each other and with the whole. The inherent bond between separate genres and between their (typologically homogenous) groups is carried out according to the principle of similarity (ὁμοίωσις) mentioned above. It might be argued that there exists an almost complete interdependence between the genres and the services themselves (both equivalent and non-equivalent).²⁸

The direct transplanting of Byzantine hymnography to Russian soil and its gradual adoption was mentioned above. Byzantine chants have almost invariably preserved their original names, either exactly (стихира/stichira, στιχηρά) or by assuming a Russian form (тропарь/тропар’ from τροπάριον, кондак/kondak from κοντάκιον) or else in a literal translation (самогласен/samoglasen from automelon αὐτόμελον, воскресен/voskresen from ἀναστάσιμον).²⁹ Moreover they had the same function, position in a service, and spiritual sense of content and form. Thus, the troparion, the most widespread of Byzantine genres, remained (as before) a single-strophe chant dedicated to a particular feast and always heard within the service.³⁰ The canon had been transferred to the Russian rite without any changes to its compound structure and position in Matins. As for the kontakion, it was adopted in the three varieties that existed in tenth-century Byzantium: a) as an independent single-strophe chant; b) joined with the oikos in the canon; c) a component part of the akathistos.

At the same time, the genre system was adapting to another linguistic environment³¹ and to different conditions. Such adaptation occurred in the case of the ancient Russian genre of the многолетие/mnogoletiyе (many years). This is a shortened and simplified version of the Byzantine ceremonial hymn, the πολυχρόνιον (a kind of encomium), that was performed during

28 The idea of ‘similarity’ may be used with regard to Russian medieval art both in the narrow and in the broad senses of the word. In the narrow sense this notion is conveyed through the genre of prosomion (προσόμιον) meaning: a) a chant which is imitated; b) a chant which imitates itself. The ὁμοίωσις principle is also evident in form making and collateral subordination of the service sections. In the broadest sense the idea of ὁμοίωσις embraces the totality of Christian doctrine. The dogma of ὁμοίωσις of everything essential (ὄντος) to God predetermined in all cases the semantic, functional and structural resemblance of the parts and the whole.

29 Not only genre names, but also a significant amount of specific chant terminology: individual neumes (e.g. параклит/paraklit, from παρακλητική), melismatic formulae (e.g. хамила/chamila, from χαμιλόν), кулизма/koulisma, from κύλισμα) and elaborate phrases (фита/theta, from θέμα), rhythmic patterns (e.g. апостроф/apostrof, from ἀπόστροφος, ипостаз/ипостаз, from ὑπόστασις), method of conducting the choir (хирономия/chironomia, from χειρονομία) and even chanting styles (калофония/kalofonia, from καλοφωνία), as shown in I. Lozovaya’s article “Byzantine Prototypes of Early Russian Chant Terminology” (Lozovaya, Irina 1999; see bibliography), were taken directly from Byzantium (also discussed in: Gertzman, Evgeny 1988, 207-246; see bibliography; Brazhnikov, Maxim 2002; see bibliography).

30 The troparion occupies in Orthodox liturgical practice the same place as hymns do in Western practice.

31 Thus the text structure of the Byzantine hymnography that could not be translated into Russian exactly was reinterpreted. The translators tried nevertheless to reproduce the strophic form of Greek texts, and the rhythmic co-ordination, which shows up when the strophes are compared (e.g. cf. the Christmas kontakion). As a result the prose text becomes in fact a special kind of superior poetry.

the rite of 'many years' after a litany in honour of a ruler. The megalynarion (magnification) prayer became so popular among the laity that it was current almost solely in oral tradition right up to the nineteenth century.³²

The period of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was one of great importance for the evolution of early Russian hymnography. It is marked by the appearance of a number of chant schools with original singing traditions, and the first names of Russian musicians in manuscripts.³³ Creative activity was to a considerable extent stimulated by the canonization of Russian saints, which took place at the councils of 1547 and 1549. New services and musical cycles were composed in their honour. This also gave rise to the birth of many new genres. For instance the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century liturgy is characterized by the establishment of the koinonikon.³⁴ That was a significant moment from the historical perspective, as koinonikon became a precursor of the genre of the sacred concerto, one of the most significant compositional forms of Russian church music at the end of the seventeenth century and during the whole of the eighteenth.

Two new genre groups: the 'пещные песнопения' (peshchnyie chants) and 'росный стих' (rosny verse) were added to the numerous varieties of troparion genres. This occurred because of the spread of "Пещное действо" (Peshchnoye deystvo), a kind of liturgical drama that came to Rus' from Byzantium.³⁵ Both of the group names reflect their contents: the texts of peshchnyie chants are linked directly with the main subject of the Christmas canon³⁶, where the miraculous salvation of the three young men from the fiery furnace (in Russian печь/peshch') is recalled. Rosny verse takes its name from the 'dew' (in Russian rosa/roza) that put out the fire. These genres are similar to heirmoi and troparia, compounding the hymns of the canon.

THE POST-FORMATION STAGE

This brings us to the end of the formation of the genre system of Russian hymnography. The subsequent genres of Russian church music, such as penitential verses, spiritual hymns (the so called 'book' hymns), right up to the sacred concerto, cannot strictly speaking be considered as hymnographical, since they fall outside the sphere of liturgical practice, although some of them (primarily the sacred concerto) were intended to be performed during the service. The latter can actually be considered a transitional genre, from a hymnographical to a musical one, as its form was predicated on the original chant type (koinonikon, stichera or prayer) which the composer chose as a basis for his piece. As for penitential verses and spiritual hymns, these two certainly belong to purely musical genres. Nevertheless they are mentioned in the present article, so as not to omit the final stage of a long historical period of genre formation in Russian church music.

In due course these compositions became more and more popular. Their popularity was caused mainly by the genre and stylistic reorientation of Russian church art towards the secularism brought in through the penetration of Western influence. Some of the signs are

32 On great feasts 'many years' is performed in an antiphonal manner by the two choirs, while a deacon acts as their leader. Usually it is sung by the congregation at the end of the service during the veneration of the icons.

33 Those were the Novgorodians Savva and Vassily Rogov, both noteworthy representatives of the so-called demestvenny ceremonial chant of Russian church music, and their apprentices Ivan Nos, Theodor Krestianin of Moscow, Stephan Golys, a native of far-off Ussolie. Markel Bezborody composed canons for Russian saints and made the musical setting for the whole Psalter.

34 Equally in the case of the term 'koinonikon' two others are to be found in the manuscripts: причастен (prichasten) and запричастный стих (zaprichastny stikh), the former being a literal translation of the Greek original, and the latter (lit. 'after the prichasten') representing a hymn that is chanted after the actual koinonikon, while the priest at the altar is receiving communion.

35 Although the earliest descriptions of 'deystvo' date from the 1530s–1540s, there is a good reason to suppose that it was already known in Rus' at the beginning of the 16th century.

36 As in Byzantine practice the Russian 'Peshchnoye deystvo' is the extended seventh and eighth odes of the canon. It was performed once a year before Christmas (usually in the Forefathers' week).

already noticeable at the end of the sixteenth century, and in the seventeenth century they intensify significantly. Thus at first (in the second half of the sixteenth century) the texts and melodies of penitential verses were borrowed mainly from liturgical chants.³⁷ For a while they were included within the corpus of church chant books, but later on they grew increasingly independent and were eventually excluded from the liturgical canon, and the use of the genre expanded considerably. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, penitential verses existed separately from other church music, and by the middle of the century they were completely eliminated from church books, and were found in collections intended for purposes other than services. The process of secularization continued up to the end of the eighteenth century, when the genre started to die out. At that stage, it often showed similarities with folk music. Sometimes there was even a kind of 'migration' into that sphere bringing about the subsequent existence of the genre in oral tradition. The only aspect that remained almost untouched was the music itself. Penitential verses maintained close links with early Russian chant up to the very end of their 150-year life, since their melodies, as before, were based on the on the rich formulaic fund of Znamenny chant.³⁸

The spiritual hymn is a Russian equivalent to the European spiritual songs known even in the renaissance period.³⁹ However there existed a direct prototype, that of the *псалма/psal'ma*, a particular genre of semi-secular music widespread in Ukraine and Belorussia in the second half of the seventeenth century.

The life of the spiritual hymn was short and geographically localized. It survived only for the last third of the seventeenth century and was current mainly within the Novo-Jerusalem monastery situated near Moscow.⁴⁰ However it was of great importance for later professional poetic and musical creativity.⁴¹ The spiritual hymn was in fact an immediate musical response to the church reform of Patriarch Nikon. It reflects the Western orientation of Russian church art.⁴² But despite all these processes, national roots were preserved, and are obvious in the use of principles (both in poetry and in music) proceeding from Orthodox hymnography, as well as from folklore.

The sacred concerto is also related to the two tendencies mentioned above (those of Russian hymnography and folklore). It was introduced to Russia directly as a counterpart of the Ukrainian and Polish choral concerto (the so-called '*партеcный концерт*'/*partesny concerto*), but also indirectly (via the latter) from the Italian and German baroque motet. This carried the secular choral concert style that already existed in Western church music into the much stricter musical tradition of the Russian liturgy.⁴³ Such concerto types appeared as a result of the genre synthesis of European secular music on the one hand and ancient Russian hymnography on the other⁴⁴. From the end of the seventeenth century the sacred concerto replaced the *zaprichastny*

37 Penitential troparia and troparia of humility chanted (or sometimes said) at the Hours throughout Lent were probably the genre source of penitential verses.

38 Though new genres and new stylistic trends appeared afterwards in Russian church music, penitential verses did not vanish completely. They were maintained by the Old Believers through nearly three centuries and are still used in their musical tradition. (The most important stylistic features of the penitential verses are studied in: Seryogina, Natalya 2003; see bibliography).

39 The two genres of western renaissance music closest to the Russian spiritual hymn music are the Italian lauda and the Netherlandish spiritueel lied.

40 The monastery was founded in the 1650s by Patriarch Nikon.

41 This genre was innovative in both its poetic and its musical aspects. It was precisely within the framework of the song poetry that the movement towards versification took place, that is, the transition to syllabic poetry. As for music there developed a particular style, the so called '*полифонический стиль*'/'polyphonic style of the harmonious type'.

42 Nikon's reform also instigated a western European trend in Russian church architecture (long before the prohibition of the erection of the Russian type of stone hipped roof churches) and painting (a new portrait genre after the western model).

43 The newly introduced stylistic changes affected both the music and the manner of chanting traditional, long established liturgical genres, for instance canon. Thus, in the compositions of Nikolay Diletsky it acquired a very elaborate baroque musical texture (from four up to eight parts), extensive usage of musical rhetoric figures and complex polyphonic forms, such as fugue (Gerasimova-Persidskaya, Nina 2003; see bibliography).

44 The influence of Znamenny chant on partesny style music is studied in: Plotnikova, Natalya 1999 (see bibliography).

verse (a particular chant that followed the koinonikon).⁴⁵ It became very popular among the composers of the seventeenth century (Nikolay Diletsky and Vassily Titov are the most important names) and particularly of the eighteenth century. During that 'golden period' there appeared hundreds of pieces. Indeed, every professional musician of the day seemed to contribute to that genre including such well known figures as Dmitry Bortniansky, Maxim Berezovsky and Sergey Degtiaryov.

Although in 1797 the Russian Emperor Paul II issued an edict which forbade the singing of concertos within the service, the tradition continued on into the nineteenth century and is still retained nowadays. A concerto may be heard at the liturgy every Sunday and on feast days.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

The seventeen-century period that was needed to develop and complete the process of the formation of the genre system of Russian hymnography accompanied the formation of Christianity, within its framework and on the same basis:

- the generalization of the historical experience of mankind;
- the exposure of the criteria of the contents of this experience;
- the dogmatization of these contents;
- the elaboration of the forms for the establishment of dogmas;
- the stabilization of the functions of different forms.

At various times this was happening simultaneously both in general history and in musical culture. Having formed as an integral organism, the genre system of Russian hymnography remained a constant, which has not undergone any significant changes in the last three centuries,⁴⁷ and thus the main chant types are preserved in their original form. Such conservatism enables us nowadays to detect numerous branches of the huge tree of the genre system of Russian hymnography.

The present article surveys the evolution of the Russian hymnographic genre system and determines the main stages of its formation as an integral part of the formation of the Orthodox liturgical world, and even, on a larger scale, of Christianity as a whole. It also defines the fundamental principles and criteria, both general and specifically musical, on which this system was based, and takes into consideration various factors that affected its development.

New is the iconographical concept of the "inverted tree" perspective 'transplanted' onto the hymnographical genre system and represented by the visual image of a tree growing upside down. 'The hymnographical tree' and its typological genre subdivisions reflect on different levels the similarity dogma, one of the most essential doctrines of Christian theology. Such an approach makes it possible for scholars to undertake further investigation of early Russian chant with regard to this particular perspective.

This article is an abridged and updated version of the book-length research paper "Проблема жанров в древнерусской гимнографии" ("The Problem of the Genres of Early Russian Hymnography". Moscow, 1978, 260; now available at the Synodal Library of the Moscow Patriarchate), written by the present author while a student at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory under the supervision of Professor Evgeny Levashev.

45 In liturgical practice the spiritual concerto is otherwise often called 'запричастный концерт'/zaprichastny concerto, with the same meaning as in the case of zaprichastny verse (see fn 34).

46 In present Greek ecclesiastical practice there also are a few non-liturgical compositions that are included in the services on particular occasions. For instance, Ἀγνή Παρθένη ('O Pure Virgin'), a non-liturgical (or rather paraliturgical) hymn by St. Nectarios of Aegina (1846-1920) chanted at the Liturgy on the feasts of the Theotokos immediately after the koinonikon, during the priest's communion, could be considered similar to the spiritual concerto. Musically, however, it fits perfectly in the Greek chant tradition with a little folk influence.

47 In contrast with Russian practice, contemporary western church music has a strong tendency to break with centuries-old tradition and to modernise both the musical idiom of the genres and the style of performance.

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