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Contents

Editor's note

This issue contains articles based on the papers presented at the 10th International Conference on Orthodox Church Music, held in Joensuu, Finland, 12–18 June 2023. The theme of the conference, "O Taste and See that the Lord is Good: Church Music, Food and Nourishment," inspired the authors to explore the connections between the physical and the spiritual from different perspectives.

Harri Huovinen opens the section of peer-reviewed articles with an analysis of how the concept of nourishment is treated in the catechetical homilies of John Chrysostom. From advocating moderation in spiritual nourishment to highlighting the role of hymnody and prayer in obtaining spiritual nourishment, Chrysostom's initiatory instruction also proves insightful for the modern reader.

The issue also includes articles not directly related to the recent conference. The second peer-reviewed article, by Vassileios Varelas, examines the historical phenomenon of nonsense syllables, known as *kratemata* or *teretismata*, in Byzantine Chant. The author evaluates the existing hypotheses about their origin and development by examining selected historical, theoretical, and liturgical sources.

In the section of conference papers, Thomas Arentzen presents seven meditations on the topics of eating, drinking and tasting in the context of Romanos the Melodist and the wider Romanos tradition. James Chater's essay on Orthodox sacred music explores how the creation of beauty in liturgical music relates to heavenly and earthly, spiritual and physical, aspects of the liturgy. Nina Shultz presents a case study of the Alaska Native practice of Slaviq, which celebrates the Nativity of Christ with processions with a decorated star, prayer services, and traditional meals. Margaret Haig continues with a case study of Christmas carol singing, focusing on the activities of the Mosaic Choir in London.

The eighth volume of the Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music celebrates the journal's tenth anniversary. After publishing seven volumes of the proceedings of the ISOCM conferences between 2005 and 2017, the Society decided to adopt the policy of peer review and to start publishing an online journal. The celebration of the Journal's tenth anniversary anticipates the twentieth anniversary of the ISOCM, which will be celebrated with an International conference in June 2025.

However, the joy of seeing the Society and its publication flourish is mixed with deep sadness. On 18 January 2024, the founder and chairman of the ISOCM and editor-in-chief of the Journal, the Protopresbyter Ivan Moody died prematurely. Throughout the history of the Journal, and the preceding Proceedings, Fr Ivan was the main force behind the process of inviting, evaluating, editing, and revising articles. He spent countless hours, often very late into the night, helping authors to express their findings more clearly, both in terms of content and language. His remarkable expertise in a variety of research and artistic fields, not to mention his impressive network of contacts, facilitated the development of the journal in many concrete ways. He was also a pleasure to work with. He always managed to radiate humour and cheer, even in moments of weary desperation, such as when editing highly disorganized footnotes or tackling a stubborn Hebrew font.

It goes without saying that Fr Ivan's contribution will be difficult to replace, and we will feel his absence very keenly in the years to come. But we will continue to work for the Journal to honour his life and legacy. We are grateful to include in this issue a full obituary of Fr Ivan, written by his longtime friend and colleague, Alexander Lingas. The obituary section is also complemented by tributes to Jopi Harri, Bozhidar Karastoyanov, and Melitina Makarovskaya.

The Editorial Board invites articles, book reviews, and obituaries for the ninth volume of the Journal, which will be published in 2025.

Maria Takala-Roszczenko
Co-editor of the Journal

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Physical and Spiritual Nourishment in the Catechetical Homilies of John Chrysostom

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Abstract

This article explores the previously underexamined dimension of physical and spiritual nourishment in John Chrysostom's catechetical homilies, addressing two central inquiries: 1) Chrysostom's expectations for new church members' approach to eating and drinking, and 2) the connection between nourishment and their life as members of the liturgical community. Through a systematic analysis, the study reveals a threefold approach to Question 1. Firstly, Chrysostom cautions against the abuse of sustenance, emphasizing its corruptive impact on both body and soul. Secondly, the author expounds upon the functions of nutritional moderation, using the concept of fasting as an image of salutary abstinence from sin. Thirdly, Chrysostom discusses spiritual nourishment, distributed through homiletical discourse and the Eucharist. Addressing Question 2, the study finds connections between hymnody and nutritional moderation, promoting an "angelic" lifestyle that prepares individuals for deeper spiritual nourishment. The article concludes by highlighting the universal applicability of Chrysostom's teachings on nourishment, intended for all members of the Church, regardless of their level of spiritual maturity, guiding them from moderate consumption of physical sustenance to participation in spiritual nourishment and the pursuit of eternal life.

Keywords

nourishment; liturgical; catechetical rhetoric; patristic; John Chrysostom

For late fourth century patristic authors, church membership and Christian identity involved the entire human being, body and soul. This holistic approach is vividly exemplified in the discussions on physical and spiritual nourishment presented by John Chrysostom (c. 347–407) to his baptismal candidates and neophytes. These discussions, dispersed across nine of the Antiochene preacher's twelve extant catechetical homilies,[1] raise questions

1 *Cat.* 1; 2/4; 3/1–7. The remaining three catechetical homilies, *Cat.* 2/1–3, include no references to physical or spiritual nourishment. Chrysostom's catechetical homilies are commonly dated to the 380s or 390s, i.e., to his presbyterate at Antioch, see Reiner Kaczynski, "Einleitung," in *Johannes Chrysostomus, Catecheses Baptismales: griechisch, deutsch = Taufkatechesen* I, ed. Reiner Kaczynski, Fontes Christiani 6/1

that, thus far, have garnered insufficient attention. The present article seeks to address the following two inquiries:

1. How does Chrysostom expect new members of the Church to approach eating and drinking?
2. How does the issue of nourishment correspond to their life as members of the liturgical community, anticipated in the catechetical homilies?

A systematic analysis of the pertinent passages extracted from Chrysostom's catecheses indicates that the first question necessitates a three-fold investigation. The exploration of these stages will concurrently yield resolutions to our second query. Subsequently, a glimpse into related themes, unexplored by the catechist, will be provided. Finally, concluding remarks will be presented.

Cautions Against Nutritional Abuse

First, Chrysostom consistently admonishes his catechetical audiences about the potential misuse of food and drink. This emphasis is hardly surprising, given the author's past experience as an ascetic[2] and subsequent proclivity towards ethical preaching.[3] In particular, however, he seeks to ground his instruction in scripture. According to Chrysostom's interpretation of the Fall (Gen 3), it was due to lack of dietary self-restraint that the primordial man ignored the divine command and violated the honor bestowed upon him by God.[4] For the homilist, this event has enduring implications beyond paradise. In his contemporary context, a similar lack of self-restraint has corruptive consequences for the entire human being, manifesting on both corporeal and spiritual levels. From the author's perspective, the absence of nutritional moderation constitutes the root of all evils; various sins spring forth from indulgence in luxury and drunkenness.[5]

What exactly does this process entail? In Chrysostom's view, gluttony and drunkenness cause reduced attention towards self-control over the body, or a relaxation of the beneficial tension within the body. While the author acknowledges the adverse physical impacts of excessive eating[6], his catecheses predominantly emphasize the spiritual repercussions of such consumption. Apparently due to the interconnected nature of the corporeal and psychological aspects of the human being, the relaxation of beneficial

(Freiburg [im Breisgau]; Basel; Wien; Barcelona; Rom; New York: Herder, 1992), 38–39, 44–45; Auguste Piédagnel, "Introduction," in *Trois catéchèses baptismales*, eds. Auguste Piédagnel & Louis Doutreleau, Sources Chrétiennes 366 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1990), 38–39; Paul W. Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions*, trans. Paul W. Harkins (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1963), 10, 15–18; Antoine Wenger, "Introduction," in *Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites*, ed. Antoine Wenger, Sources Chrétiennes 50 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1957), 22–27, 63–65.

2 This aspect of Chrysostom's life is assumed by modern scholars such as J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom – Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1995), 24–35; Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time, Vol. I: Antioch*, trans. M. Gonzaga (London & Glasgow: Sands & Co Ltd, 1959), 104–14. Palladius points in a similar direction, albeit rather briefly, see *Dial.* 5, PG 47:18.

3 So e.g. Georges Florovsky, *Aspects of Church History: Volume Four in the Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Belmont, MA: Norland Publishing Company, 1975), 81.

4 *Cat.* 3/2.3, SC 50:135: Ἀλλ' ὑπὸ ἀκρασίας ἐκεῖνος ἀπατηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῆς γυναικός, κατεπάτησε τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἐντολὴν καὶ ὕβρισεν εἰς τὴν τοσαύτην τιμήν.

5 *Cat.* 3/4.3, SC 50:202.

6 See e.g. *In Col. hom* 1.5, PG 62:306; *In Heb. hom.* 29.4, PG 63:208.

bodily tension, as outlined by Chrysostom, leads to the deterioration of the soul's health.[7]

In practical terms, excessive consumption of alcohol temporarily impairs one's rational faculty, exposing reason (διάνοια) to harmful passions. Consequently, this leads to uncontrolled speech and actions, depriving individuals of virtue.[8] Chrysostom further explains that wantonness and drunkenness act as fuel voluntarily added to the burning fire of carnal passions and sins.[9] Furthermore, the lack of sobriety and alertness hampers one's desire for the word of God.[10] Thus, drunkenness not only serves the spiritual powers opposing God but can be characterized as "a self-chosen demon."[11] Allowing such developments reflects carelessness in matters of salvation, potentially resulting in severe eternal consequences.[12]

In addition to warning against physical drunkenness, Chrysostom advises his hearers to be wary of a non-physical and even more perilous condition. This state, although unrelated to alcohol consumption, can be metaphorically depicted as a form of inebriation. In the catechist's view, this condition

> takes many and varied forms. For anger makes us drunk; so, too, vainglory, loss of all sense, and all the destructive passions which arise in us produce a kind of drunkenness and satiety which darkens our reason. For drunkenness is nothing more than the distraction of our minds from their natural ways, the straying of reason, and the dislocation of our understanding.[13]

In his catecheses, Chrysostom utilizes the metaphor of inebriation in a negative sense, employing it for cautionary purposes. In this regard, his

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7 *Cat.* 3/4.3, SC 50:201–2: οὕτω πάλιν ἡ ἀμετρία ἑκατέρωθεν διαφθείρει τὸν ἄνθρωπον. Ἡ γὰρ ἀδηφαγία καὶ ἡ μέθη τοῦ σώματος ἐκλύει τὸν τόνον καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς διαφθείρει τὴν ὑγίειαν. For an in-depth exploration of late antique patristic conceptualizations of sin as a malady of the soul and their Hellenic origins, see discussion and literature in Harri Huovinen, "Towards Participation in the Healthy Body: Spiritual Healing and Church Membership in Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil of Caesarea and John Chrysostom," in *Homilies in Context*, eds. Anni Maria Laato, Serafim Seppälä & Harri Huovinen, Studia patristica Fennica 9 (Helsinki: Suomen patristinen seura ry, 2020), 115–73.

8 *Cat.* 3/4.7, 8, 9, SC 50:204–5.

9 An in-depth examination of the patristic views of the connection between eating and sexual desire falls out of the scope of this study. See e.g. John Cassian, *Inst.* 6.1, SC 109:262; John Climacus, *Scal.* 14, PG 88:864. For corresponding views in earlier Hellenic authors, see Teresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998), e.g. 53–64. See also Robert C. Fuller, *Spirituality in the Flesh: Bodily Sources of Religious Experience* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 101.

10 *Cat.* 3/4.12, SC 50:206.

11 *Cat.* 3/1.5, SC 50:111; *ibid.* 3/4.3, SC 50:202; *ibid.* 3/4.9, SC 50:205: Μέθη αὐθαίρετός ἐστι δαίμων. More than two decades prior to Chrysostom's catechetical homilies, Cyril of Jerusalem had regarded gluttony and habitual drinking as diabolical, see *Catech.* 4.37, RR 1:130. For Chrysostom's views on the effects of alcohol usage, see Jessica Wright, "Brain, Nerves, and Ecclesial Membership in John Chrysostom," in *Revisioning John Chrysostom: New Approaches, New Perspectives*, eds. Chris L. de Wet & Wendy Mayer, Critical Approaches to Early Christianity 1 (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2019), 380–82. On demonic possession, see Claire Elayne Salem, *Sanity, Insanity, and Man's Being as Understood by St. John Chrysostom* (PhD diss., Durham University, 2010), 20–35, http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3269.

12 *Cat.* 3/4.3, 11, SC 50:202, 206.

13 *Cat.* 3/4.4, SC 50:202–3: Ποία τοίνυν ἐστὶ μέθη οὐκ ἀπὸ οἴνου; Πολλὴ καὶ διάφορος· καὶ γὰρ ὀργὴ ποιεῖ μέθην καὶ κενοδοξία καὶ ἀπόνοια καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ὀλεθρίων παθῶν τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τικτομένων, ὥσπερ μέθην τινὰ καὶ κόρον ἐν ἡμῖν ἐργάζεται καὶ σκοτοῖ τὸν λογισμὸν τὸν ἡμέτερον. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστι μέθη ἢ ἔκστασις τῶν κατὰ φύσιν φρενῶν καὶ παρατροπὴ λογισμῶν καὶ ἔκπτωσις συνέσεως. The Harkins translation revised by the present author, see Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom*, 82. For the same theme, see also *Cat.* 3/4.5–7, SC 50:203.

approach differs from the positive use of this imagery evident elsewhere in his works[14], as well as in coeval authors such as Paulinus of Nola. The latter likens Christian joy and prayerful hymnody to a form of drunkenness, but with sobriety.[15]

Despite these warnings against gluttony and drunkenness, Chrysostom does not outright deny the pleasure of nourishment in his catecheses. Instead, he directs attention to its correct use, urging his audience to avoid excessive eating and drinking. Concurrently, he expresses confidence in their capacity to limit themselves to what is necessary.[16] This leads us to our next point.

The Functions of Moderation

Secondly, Chrysostom actively advocates for moderation in both eating and drinking.[17] According to him, a well-regulated diet confined to essential nutritional needs fosters the well-being of both the body and the soul.[18] Nevertheless, the primary emphasis of the catechist lies in the spiritual practice of fasting. How, then, does he approach this matter?

Previously, we observed Chrysostom discussing drunkenness in both literal and metaphorical terms. Now, a similar dual approach is evident in his treatment of fasting. Accordingly, he asserts that fasting is not solely about abstaining from corporeal sustenance; rather, abstaining from sin constitutes "a more exact kind of fasting," or "true" fasting.[19] Christians can, and indeed must, observe such fasting regardless of whether they abstain from food and drink. While Chrysostom himself is known to have adhered to a strict ascetic regimen throughout his life[20], this statement reveals a relatively lenient attitude towards his congregants. Nonetheless, even after the relaxation of Lenten restrictions on food, the neophyte audience is encouraged to

14 See e.g. *Post. reliq. mart.* 2.1, PG 63:467: Τί εἴπω καὶ τί λαλήσω; σκιρτῶ καὶ μαίνομαι μανίαν σωφροσύνης βελτίονα· πέτομαι καὶ χορεύω καὶ μετάρσιος φέρομαι καὶ μεθύω λοιπὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς ταύτης τῆς πνευματικῆς.

15 Paulinus of Nola, Ep. 15.4, FC 25/1:368: "inebriari ad sobrietatem". See also *ibid.* 22.2, FC 25/2:474: "sobrie temulenti".

16 *Cat.* 3/4.3, 4, 6, SC 50:202, 203. Similarly Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 4.27, RR 1:118; Basil of Caesarea, *Reg. fus.* 19.2., PG 31:969; *ibid.* 20.3, PG 31:973, 976. For further patristic evidence on these themes, see Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom, "Monks Baking Bread and Salting Fish: An Archaeology of Early Monastic Ascetic Taste," in *Knowing Bodies, Passionate Souls: Sense Perception in Byzantium*, eds. Susan Ashbrook Harvey & Margaret Mullett (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2017), 187–91.

17 I believe Robinson to be correct in interpreting Chrysostom's view of moderation "not simply as shorthand for 'less rigorous asceticism'." In her view, Chrysostom "extends moderation into a rigorous principle of Christian ascesis, rooted in normative ancient concepts of health and virtue." See Dana Robinson, *Food, virtue, and the shaping of early Christianity* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 24–25.

18 *Cat.* 3/4.3, SC 50:201: ἡ χρεία καὶ ἡ συμμετρία τῆς μεταλήμψεως καὶ τῇ τοῦ σώματος ὑγιείᾳ καὶ τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς καταστάσει πολλὴν παρέχει τὴν ὠφέλειαν. See further discussion and references in Jaclyn LaRae Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge, UK & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 138. For discussion on Chrysostom's views on involuntary hunger and famine, see Hennie Stander, "Chrysostom on hunger and famine," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67(1), 2011: 1–7, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i1.880.

19 Miron summarizes Chrysostom's approach thus: "[B]odily fasting must be unconditionally accompanied by spiritual fasting which consists i[n] holding back from mean things, inappropriate gestures, thoughts and words." See Vasile Miron, "The Christian-Orthodox teaching about fasting in St. John Chrysostom's work," *Dialogo (Constanţa)*, Vol. 7 (2), 2021: 87, dialogo-conf.com/.

20 Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 20–21, 28–35.

continue "fasting from sin."[21] Chrysostom's perspective on the nature of these sins, however, must be gleaned from his other writings.[22] Nevertheless, in his view, fasting from sin is imperative as post-Lenten freedom tends to lead Christians to slothfulness.[23] To underscore this perspective, the catechist cites an infamous example from the history of the Israelites who, due to such relaxation, forgot God's great deeds and turned to idolatry instead (Ex 32).[24]

For Chrysostom, the matter of non-corporeal fasting holds considerable pastoral significance. He voices his concern over the impediment that "horseracing and satanic theatre shows" pose to church attendance in his native Antioch. According to his diagnosis, the decline in attendance is a direct result of the lethargy of Christians who, rather than pursuing piety, turn to entertainment. To address this issue, the homilist advises his remaining hearers to refrain from squandering the wealth they had won by fasting.[25] Intriguingly, he provides little explicit detail on what he considers this wealth to comprise.[26]

Despite the apparent focus on abstinence from sin, Chrysostom also discusses what he perceives as the salutary nature of physical fasting. For instance, in a homily on the Gospel of Matthew, he asserts: "He who fasts is light and winged; he prays with an awakened mind, burns out the evil passions, appeases God, and humbles the presumptuous soul."[27] However, in his catechetical works, Chrysostom provides limited detailed explanations on this subject. He simply states that fasting generates temperance[28] and contributes to time management. To illustrate the latter point, the catechist references the Lukan character, Cornelius, who "did not waste his life in drinking-parties, drunkenness, or gluttony." This not only shielded Cornelius from spiritual harm but also helped him to spend his time "in prayer and almsgiving." Such earnest involvement in these activities rendered him worthy of an angelic vision. (Acts 10:1–4.)[29] Inspired by this example, Chrysostom exhorts his soon-to-be-baptized candidates as follows:

> Let us have great zeal for virtue along with our abstinence from food and our abstinence from evil. Let us spend the whole day long in prayers and confessions, in reading and in compunction of the soul; let all our zeal be so directed that our discourse be of spiritual things.[30]

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21 *Cat.* 3/4.1–2, SC 50:200–1. See also *In Gen. hom.* 8.2, PG 53:84.

22 See e.g. *De stat.* 3.11–12 (PG 49:52–53), where Chrysostom associates fasting with withdrawal from lustful viewing, running to the theater, violence, avarice, and slander.

23 *Cat.* 3/4.15, SC 50:208.

24 *Cat.* 3/4.17, SC 50:209.

25 *Cat.* 3/5.1, SC 50:215. In *Cat.* 1.19 (FC 6/1:144), Chrysostom associates the theatre and horse-races with "the pomps of the devil," which are explicitly renounced during Christian initiation. Thus, in his mind, the attendance of believers at such events should not only be discouraged but banned altogether. In subsequent patristic literature, a similar approach would be adopted by the author of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, see *EH* 2.3.5, PG 3:401.

26 Similarly Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 4.27, RR 1:118.

27 *In Matt. hom.* 57.4, PG 58:563: Ὁ νηστεύων κοῦφός ἐστι καὶ ἐπτερωμένος, καὶ μετὰ νήψεως εὔχεται, καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας σβέννυσι τὰς πονηράς, καὶ ἐξιλεοῦται Θεὸν, καὶ ταπεινοῖ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπαιρομένην. Translated by the present author.

28 *Cat.* 3/4.15, SC 50:208.

29 *Cat.* 3/6.29, SC 50:244.

30 *Cat.* 3/1.46, SC 50:132: Καὶ μετὰ τῆς ἀποχῆς τῶν βρωμάτων καὶ τῆς τῶν κακῶν ἀποχῆς, πολλὴ ὑμῖν γινέσθω τῆς ἀρετῆς ἡ σπουδή· καὶ τὸν καιρὸν ἅπαντα τῆς ἡμέρας διανείμωμεν, τὸν μὲν ἐν εὐχαῖς

This theme finally brings us to our second question regarding Chrysostom's perspective on the relationship between nourishment and liturgical life. The catechist, referring to the Syriac-speaking Christians from the countryside who visited his church in Antioch, states:

> Therefore, let us not look simply at their appearance and the language they speak, while we overlook their virtue. Let us observe carefully their angelic life and the love of wisdom shown in their way of life. They have driven out of their lives all luxuriousness and gluttony. They have not only put these things aside but also the rest of the slack conduct commonly found in the cities. They eat only as much as can suffice to sustain life, and all the rest of their time they keep their minds occupied in hymns and constant prayers, imitating in this the angelic way of life.
>
> Just as those incorporeal powers have for their only task to sing in every way the praises of the Creator of all things, so too these wonderful men support the needs of the body only because they are bound to the flesh, but all the rest of the time they devote to hymns and prayers.[31]

In other words, these exemplary Christians regarded corporeal sustenance strictly as that—sustenance—and, consequently, refrained from unnecessary nourishment. This, in turn, allowed them to focus on an angelic life of hymnody and prayer. However, this is not the ultimate goal. Instead, the constant chanting of hymns, in Chrysostom's view, contributes to the purification of the candidates' minds, preparing them for the reception of even more profound spiritual nourishment. The catechist encourages his hearers as follows:

> If we will thus purify our minds by constantly chanting the lessons of piety, we will henceforth be able, by preparing ourselves beforehand, to make ourselves worthy to receive the magnitude of His gift, and to guard the good things which are given.[32]

This theme will be scrutinized more closely in the subsequent section.

καὶ ἐξομολογήσεσι, τὸν δὲ ἐν ἀναγνώσει καὶ κατανύξει ψυχῆς καὶ ἡ σπουδὴ ὑμῶν πᾶσα γινέσθω ὥστε περὶ τῶν πνευματικῶν ἡμῖν εἶναι τὰς διαλέξεις. The Harkins translation revised by the present author, see Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom*, 41.

31 *Cat.* 3/7.4–5, SC 50:249–50: Μὴ τοίνυν πρὸς τὸ σχῆμα ἁπλῶς ὁρῶντες καὶ τῆς γλώττης τὴν διάλεξιν παρατρέχωμεν αὐτῶν τὴν ἀρετήν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκριβῶς αὐτῶν καταμάθωμεν τὸν βίον τὸν ἀγγελικόν, τὴν φιλόσοφον διαγωγήν. Πᾶσα γὰρ τρυφὴ καὶ ἀδηφαγία παρὰ τούτοις ἀπελήλαται· οὐ μόνον δὲ ταῦτα ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ λοιπὴ βλακεία ἡ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι πολιτευομένη καὶ τοσαῦτα μόνον σιτοῦνται ὅσα πρὸς τὴν τῆς ζωῆς σύστασιν αὐτοῖς ἀρκέσαι δύναται, καὶ τὸν λοιπὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἐν ὕμνοις κὰι διηνεκέσιν εὐχαῖς τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀπασχολοῦσι διάνοιαν καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὴν ἀγγελικὴν διαγωγὴν μιμούμενοι.

Καθάπερ γὰρ ἐκείναις ταῖς ἀσωμάτοις δυνάμεσιν ἓν τοῦτο μόνον ἔργον ἐστὶ τὸ διὰ παντὸς ὑμνεῖν τὸν τῶν ὅλων δημιουργόν, τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ τρόπον καὶ οἱ θαυμάσιοι οὗτοι ἄνδρες καὶ τοῦ σώματος τὴν χρείαν παραμυθοῦνται διὰ τὸ σαρκὶ συμπεπλέχθαι, καὶ τὸν ἄλλον ἅπαντα χρόνον τοῖς ὕμνοις καὶ ταῖς εὐχαῖς προσανέχουσι, [...]. The Harkins translation revised by the present author, see Harkins, St. John Chrysostom, 120–21.

32 *Cat.* 3/1.33, SC 50:125: Ἐὰν οὕτως ἐκκαθάρωμεν ἡμῶν τὴν διάνοιαν κατεπάδοντες τὰ εὐσεβῆ διδάγματα, δυνησόμεθα ἐντεῦθεν ἤδη ἑαυτοὺς προευτρεπίσαντες καὶ πρὸς τὴν ὑποδοχὴν τοῦ μεγέθους τῆς δωρεᾶς ἀξίους καταστῆσαι κὰι πρὸς τὴν φυλακὴν τῶν διδομένων ἀγαθῶν. The Harkins translation revised by the present author, see Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom*, 36. In Harkins's view (210–11), "[t]he lessons of piety are the Sacred Scriptures, which are a sure cure for the ills of the soul." The scholar makes a further reference to Chrysostom's *De mut. nom.* 4.1 (PG 51:146), where such chants are said to function as incantations against the passions.

Spiritual nourishment: Immaterial and Material

More than a century prior to Chrysostom, Origen of Alexandria (185–254) had deliberated on the nature of spiritual hunger and the divine Word—or words—as its remedy.[33] Nevertheless, Chrysostom refrains from providing his catechetical audiences with comprehensive theological or philosophical analyses of the human need for, or the nature of, spiritual nourishment. Instead, he addresses related issues in a practical manner, well-suited for the initiatory context. Thirdly, then, in his exposition, spiritual nourishment is distributed in two forms, immaterially, on the one hand, and through material means, on the other.

Now, it appears self-evident that spiritual nourishment, due to its inherent nature, should involve an immaterial mode of reception. Indeed, Chrysostom regards the spiritual exhortation provided during the initiatory process as a form of nourishment, one that satiates the hearers. He pledges to set before them an even more abundant spiritual table that provides sustenance for their journey homeward.[34] While such rhetoric may conjure associations with an actual meal, in this context, the homilist likely alludes to verbal—i.e., intangible—nourishment.[35]

Simultaneously, Chrysostom implies that the distribution of such spiritual nourishment is not without its risks. Verbal instruction may, in some instances, encompass human reasonings that obfuscate the proclamation of sound ecclesiastical doctrines. The new Christians are advised to regard such teaching as more perilous than toxic drugs.[36]

Spiritual nourishment is also distributed through material means, specifically, in the tangible form of food and drink.[37] The Eucharist, indeed, constitutes the divine "gift" and "the good things" mentioned earlier, the

33 See e.g. Origen, *Num. hom.* 11.6, OW 7:88; *ibid.* 27.1, OW 7:255–58; *PE* 27.9.13, OW 3:368–69; *PA* 2.11.3, 7, OW 5:186, 192; *Ser.* 22–23, OW 11:38–39. Cf. A. N. Williams, *The Divine Sense: The Intellect in Patristic Theology* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 83–84: "Auditory imagery has of course been used in the Christian tradition to convey the notion of divine inspiration, but Origen interprets the mind's encounter with God in terms of many senses. The sense of taste, for example, is appealed to in texts where Origen speaks of the mind: being nourished by the food of wisdom, a nourishment that is capable of restoring the imago Dei to its state of perfection. [PArch 2.11.3.] The surrounding text forms an extended meditation on spiritual growth, expounded through images of eating and nourishment. At the end of Book II of *On First Principles*, Origen returns to this imagery, and in an extended simile even describes the mind as feeding – moderately, and on appropriate foods – in the state of perfection. In all respects, he says, this food must be understood to be the contemplation and understanding of God. [PArch 2.11.7.]."

34 *Cat.* 3/7.1, SC 50:247–48.

35 Cf. Pseudo-Macarius, who likens spiritual proclamation to nourishment, see *Hom.* 17.12, GH 174; *ibid.* 18.5., GH 179; Cyril of Jerusalem, who associates nourishment of the soul with sacred readings, see *Catech.* 1.6, RR 1:36. Considering that in *Procatech.* 4, 14 (RR 1:6, 18) Cyril associates the ἀνάγνωσις of scripture with verbal—and therefore (at least to some extent) audible—reading in an ecclesial context, the above exhortation can hardly be taken as a reference to silent reading by individual Christians. See also Basil of Caesarea (*Reg. fus. prooem.*, PG 31:889) who, alluding to Lk 12:41, likens his own instruction to the act of providing each of the hearers with their portions of food at the proper time; Paulinus of Nola (*Ep.* 45.1, FC 25/3:980), for whom reading Augustine's letter is like receiving nourishment.

36 *Cat.* 3/1.24, SC 50:120. Along the same lines, Cyril of Jerusalem views the errors of the heretics as poisoning the souls, see *Catech.* 7.1, RR 1:207. Cf. Origen, who depicts the enemy of Christ, i.e., death, as dead bread, see *Luc. schol.* 9.27, PG 17:341.

37 *Cat.* 3/3.27, SC 50:196: ἡ τροφὴ ἡμῶν πνευματικὴ καὶ τὸ πόμα ἡμῶν πνευματικόν. *Ibid.* 3/3.29, SC 50:197: τῆς τροφῆς αὐτοῦ τῆς πνευματικῆς καὶ τοῦ ποτοῦ καταξιούμενοι.

participation in which is preceded by preparatory hymnody.[38] In this realm too, Chrysostom refrains from a detailed exposition of the theological essence or the liturgical enactment of the Eucharist, nor does he suggest a specific frequency of sacramental participation.[39] Nevertheless, he does provide elementary instruction on the consecration. Drawing on the accounts of Moses praying for manna and producing water from the rock (Ex 16–17), the homilist teaches that "this other Moses"—i.e., Christ—"stretches forth His hands to heaven and brings down the food of eternal life." Christ also "touches the [holy] table, strikes the spiritual table," thus causing "the fountains of the Spirit [to] gush forth."[40] Evidently, it is through this liturgical act that the physically consumable Eucharistic gifts are transformed into "the Master's body and blood," providing spiritual nourishment for the participants.

While the catechist discloses little about the nature of the sacramental transformation of the Eucharistic elements, he underscores their subsequent corporeal and hematological essence. As expected, his emphasis is both soteriological and ecclesiological. For instance, evoking the Johannine imagery of consuming the flesh of Jesus, Chrysostom asserts that for the participants of this "spiritual table," Christ is both the meal and their abode, for he says: "Whoever eats my flesh abides in me, and I in him" (cf. Jn 6:56).[41] Furthermore, alluding to the traditional corporeal imagery of the Church, the catechist contends that the eucharistic gifts are, in fact, means by which participants are being united—i.e., into the Body of Christ—and further nourished. Through participation in these gifts, believers are also transformed into dwelling places of the Holy Spirit.[42] In an attempt to describe the sheer abundance of the spiritual nourishment offered in this sacrament, the catechist waxes lyrical: It is "the awesome table heavy laden with countless favors."[43] It is "the royal table" whose benefits the neophytes are invited to enjoy. There, he promises, the Master bestows His grace upon them in abundance. "Even if our contribution is small, He lavishes His great gifts upon us."[44]

In addition to the aforementioned aspects, Chrysostom also explores other functions of the Eucharist. One of these is closely connected to the ecclesial identity and roles of his neophyte audience, which he portrays using

38 This view would be echoed later in *EH* 3.3.5, PG 3:457, 460.

39 In earlier and coeval patristic literature, weekly (*Did.* 14.1, SC 248:192) and daily (Ambrose, *Sacr.* 5.4.25, SC 25 bis:132, 134) reception had been encouraged.

40 *Cat.* 2/4.26, SC 50:165–66. Translation from Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom*, 64–65. Cf. Origen, who depicts the preached word as spiritual manna, see *Ex. hom.* 7.8, OW 6:214–17. Cf. Ambrose, who gives manna a eucharistic interpretation, see *Myst.* 8.46–49, SC 25 bis:182, 184.

41 *Cat.* 1.5, FC 6/1:118: Βούλει μαθεῖν, πῶς καὶ τράπεζά σοι γίνεται; »Ὁ τρώγων με«, φησίν, »ὥσπερ ἐγὼ ζῶ διὰ τὸν Πατέρα, κἀκεῖνος ζήσεται δι᾽ ἐμέ.« Ὅτι δὲ καὶ οἰκός σοι γίνεται· »Ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα ἐν ἐμοὶ μένει, κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ.« Cf. Jn 6:56 (NA28): ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἐν ἐμοὶ μένει κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ.

42 *Cat.* 3/2.27, SC 50:149: Μετὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ἄνοδον εὐθέως ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν ἄγονται τὴν φρικτὴν καὶ μυρίων γέμουσαν ἀγαθῶν καὶ τοῦ σώματος ἀπογεύσονται καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ δεσποτικοῦ καὶ οἰκητήριον γίνονται τοῦ Πνεύματος. *Ibid.* 2/4.19, SC 50:162: Εἴδετε ποίᾳ πάντας ἡμᾶς τρέφει τροφῇ; Ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς τροφῆς καὶ συνεστήκαμεν καὶ τρεφόμεθα.

43 *Cat.* 3/2.27, SC 50:149.

44 *Cat.* 3/3.6, SC 50:185–86.

martial imagery.[45] In baptism, the new Christians have received a spiritual "armoring."[46] Moreover, God has prepared for them a meal that surpasses any physical armor in strength. This spiritual sustenance offers an advantage over the adversary, enabling tireless engagement in combat against him. The homilist pontificates:

> If he [the devil] merely sees you returning from the Master's banquet, he flees faster than any wind, as if he had seen a lion breathing fire from his mouth. If you show him a tongue stained with the precious blood, he will not be able to make a stand; if you show him your mouth all crimsoned, he will run away like a cowardly beast.[47]

In this manner, Chrysostom endeavors to persuade his hearers of the spiritual assistance granted to them in the Eucharist by presenting a reversal, so to speak, of the Petrine image of the roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8). The image of a fearsome carnivore is not applied to the adversary, but rather to the Christian who has now been nourished with the blood of Christ. In a related passage, the catechist draws on the Mosaic theme of smearing the blood of the lamb on the "doors" to mark the houses (Ex 12:7). He combines this narrative with his interpretation of the Pauline image of the body of the Christian as a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). In Chrysostom's interpretation, the mouths of the believers are the blood-smeared doors of the temples which now, after the Eucharist, contain Christ. Having depicted such an image, the homilist declares: "If the angel stood in awe when he saw the type, much more likely is it that the devil will flee when he sees the truth."[48]

Participation in eucharistic nourishment imposes ethical obligations as well. Having received the divine gift in their hands and mouths, the believers are urged to refrain from using these body members for sinful deeds or words. Immediately after stating this, Chrysostom expands the admonition to encompass the entire human being. In this context, he briefly revisits a musical theme:

> When you have considered that, after the hand and tongue, the heart receives this awesome mystery, plot no treachery against your neighbor, but keep your mind clean from all wickedness. In this way you will be able to keep secure your eyes and ears. For is it not absurd, after hearing that mystic voice which comes down from heaven—I mean the voice of the cherubim—to defile your ears with songs for prostitutes and with degenerate melodies?[49]

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45 See discussion in Harri Huovinen, "Martial Imagery and Church Membership in the Catechetical Rhetoric of John Chrysostom," *Phronema* 37.1 (2022): 99–118.

46 *Cat.* 3/1.1, SC 50:108; *ibid.* 2/4.11, SC 50:157; *ibid.* 3/4.27, SC 50:213.

47 *Cat.* 2/4.12, SC 50:158: Ἂν γὰρ ἴδῃ σε μόνον ἀπὸ τῶν δείπνων ἐπανιόντα τῶν δεσποτικῶν, καθάπερ λέοντα ἰδών τις πῦρ ἀπὸ στόματος ἀφιέντα, οὕτω φεύγει παντὸς ἀνέμου σφοδρότερον· κἂν δείξῃς αὐτῷ τὴν γλῶτταν ἡμαγμένην τῷ αἵματι τῷ τιμίῳ, οὐδὲ στῆναι δυνήσεται· ἂν δείξῃς τὸ στόμα πεφοινιγμένον, καθάπερ θηρίον εὐτελες [*sic*] οὕτως ἐπὶ τὰ ὀπίσω δραμεῖται. The Harkins translation revised by the present author, see Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom*, 60. In another setting, Chrysostom employs similar imagery to describe the reaction of the devil to the contemplation of scriptural teachings, see *In Gen. hom.* 14.4, PG 53:118.

48 *Cat.* 2/4.15, SC 50:159–60: Εἰ γὰρ ἄγγελος ἰδὼν τὸν τύπον ἠδέσθη, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ὁ διάβολος ἰδὼν τὴν ἀλήθειαν φεύξεται.

49 *Cat.* 1.6, FC 6/1: Ἀλλ᾽ ἐνθυμηθεὶς πάλιν, ὅτι μετὰ τὴν χεῖρα καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν ἡ καρδία δέχεται τὸ φρικτὸν ἐκεῖνο μυστήριον, μὴ ῥάψῃς ποτὲ κατὰ τοῦ πλησίον δόλον, ἀλλὰ κακουργίας πάσης καθαρὰν διατήρει σου τὴν διάνοιαν· οὕτω καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἀκοὴν ἀσφαλίσασθαι δυνήσῃ. Πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπον,

While the reference to the celestial voice could perhaps be associated with the baptismal hymnody sung by the ecclesiastical chanters, in this context, the catechist may in fact allude to the actual angelic presence and song at the concluding rites of initiation or, as the case may be, the Eucharist.[50] At any rate, having undergone the baptismal entry into the presence of such a heavenly host,[51] the members of the Church must now avoid auditory influences that could potentially rekindle spiritually detrimental passions. Instead, Chrysostom seemingly encourages his new Christian audience to let their souls to be transformed by the recitation of psalmody.[52]

What Was Left Unsaid?

Apart from examining the actual evidence recorded in Chrysostom's catecheses, his approach to the topic under investigation can be more thoroughly elucidated by exploring some of the themes he might have been expected to cover but did not. What, then, was left unsaid?

Despite his emphasis on nutritional moderation, Chrysostom shows little interest in the details of corporeal fasting. One might expect him to provide new Christians with basic instructions on topics such as the quantity of food that should be consumed or avoided, the designated seasons for fasting,[53] or at least the practice of pre-baptismal fasting.[54] However, these aspects remain unaddressed. Similarly, little is mentioned regarding the spiritual role ascribed to fast-related hunger as preparation for the mystical union with God,[55] or the relationship between respect for the created gifts of food and drink, on the one hand, and fasting, on the other.[56] Moreover, Chrysostom displays relatively little interest in issues such as appropriate types of food, their quality,[57] or taste.[58]

μετὰ τὴν μυστικὴν ἐκείνην φωνὴν καὶ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν φερομένην, τὴν ἐκ τῶν χερουβὶμ λέγω, πορνικοῖς ἄσμασι καὶ κατακεκλασμένοις μέλεσι τὴν ἀκοὴν μολύνειν; The Harkins translation revised by the present author, see Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom*, 178.

50 Cf. *Cat.* 3/2.20, SC 50:145. Cf. *ibid.* 3/7.5, SC 50:250. See also *In Col. hom.* 9.2 (PG 62:363, 365) where Chrysostom mentions the hymnody of the cherubim without delving into its alleged liturgical context. For further discussion on fourth century views on the liturgical and celestial aspects of baptismal hymnody, see Harri Huovinen, "Participation in Psalmody and Church Membership in Cyril of Jerusalem," *Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music*, Vol. 7:1 (2023): 9–12, https://doi.org/10.57050/jisocm.113242.

51 Cf. *Exp. in ps.* 109.5, PG 55:273.

52 See *Exp. in ps.* 140.1, PG 55:427; *ibid.* 144.1, PG 55:465; *ibid.* 145.1, PG 55:472.

53 See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 37; Robinson, *Food, virtue, and the shaping*, 40–41. Cf. *Did*. 8.1–2, SC 248:172; *Const. Ap.* 8.47.64, 69, SC 336:298, 300; John Cassian, *Inst.* 3.10, SC 109:114; *ibid.* 5.9, SC 109:202.

54 Cf. *Did.* 7.4, SC 248:172.

55 Cf. Bynum (*Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 33), who identifies this theme with the later medieval rather than the early Christian approach to fasting.

56 Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 4.27, 6.35, RR 1:118, 206.

57 For these themes in Chrysostom's other works, see references in Robinson, *Food, virtue, and the shaping*, 39–40; in Roman antiquity, see Dustin Shawn Youngblood, *The culinary world of Juvenal: Food and identity at Rome from Republic to Empire* (PhD Diss., Florida State University, 2016), see e.g. 9–24, *passim*, diginole.lib.fsu.edu/; Andrew Dalby, *Food in the Ancient World from A to Z* (London & New York: Routledge, 2013). See also Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 19.4, FC 25/2:440; *ibid.* 23.6–9; FC 25/2:488–98.

58 Cf. Aristotle, who regarded taste as the least important of the human senses, see *NE* 1118a, 130, 132. For discussion on ancient views of taste in the hierarchy of the senses, see Caroline Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 11–26, 30–33; Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005), 3, 10–11, 15. See also Paul Freedman,

This minimalistic approach may be understandable, considering that the Chrysostomian series of catechetical homilies was hardly designed to provide a comprehensive exposition on a singular theme such as nourishment. Even key doctrinal issues are covered more cursorily in his catecheses than in corresponding works by, for instance, Cyril of Jerusalem.[59] That being said, it seems implausible that the fast-related themes mentioned above would have remained entirely uncovered in the Antiochian program of Christian initiation. Given that Chrysostom explicitly delegated the instruction on chief content of the Christian faith to some other teacher of his congregation,[60] he may have employed a similar approach with certain fasting-related issues. Another possible reason for his minimalism may lie in the fact that he offered detailed expositions on this matter on other occasions.[61]

Another notable feature concerns the apparent absence of any distinctively "catechetical" approach to nourishment. Granted, Chrysostom seems to avoid burdening the newly initiated Christians with minute details of fasting practices or theological processes of spiritual nourishment. Nevertheless, his fundamental views on abstinence from and intake of nourishment, as well as their spiritual functions, closely resemble corresponding views found in contemporaneous Christian writings addressed to ascetic communities.[62] This could be interpreted as indicating that Chrysostom sought to educate the new members of the Antiochian congregation to adopt an ascetical lifestyle in spite of their urban environment.

Lastly, and curiously, despite the congregational context of his catecheses, Chrysostom appears rather unconcerned with the communal

ed., *Food: The History of Taste. California Studies in Food and Culture* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007).

59 Cf. e.g. Chrysostom's discussion of the Trinity which, in the critical edition of his catecheses, covers less than two pages, see *Cat.* 3/1.19–24. Cyril, on his part, dedicates ten homilies to the exposition of the theme, see *Catech.* 8–10.

60 For evidence of the existence of another teacher (or other teachers?) in the Antiochian congregation, see *Cat.* 2/3.4, SC 366:226: Ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν περὶ πίστεως λόγον τῷ διδασκάλῳ παραχωρήσομεν. In Harkins's interpretation, "[t]he teacher par excellence," referred to in this passage, "is the bishop". See Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom*, 319. However, based upon Chrysostom's catecheses alone, conclusively determining the identity of this teacher is difficult.

61 See e.g. *In Gen. hom.* 1–31, PG 53. According to several scholars, Chrysostom delivered the homilies on Genesis in Antioch during the latter part of the 380s. This observation implies the potential for the texts to have been composed either prior to the catechetical homilies or contemporaneously, cf. n. 1 above. Furthermore, according to Hill, the first half of the set of homilies on Genesis—i.e., the ones discussing fasting—were delivered "just before and during Lent," that is, during the season of baptismal catechesis. See Robert C. Hill, "Introduction," in *Saint John Chrysostom: Homilies on Genesis* 1–17, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 5–6.

62 Cf. e.g. Basil of Caesarea, *Reg. fus.* 16.2; 18; 19; 20; 37.2; John Cassian, *Inst.* 5. Obviously, in-depth examination of this resemblance must be reserved for another study. Suffice it to quote König, who aptly notes: "There are numerous examples of preachers and writers with ascetic experience trying to forge a version of ascetic practice which is compatible with the day-to-day urban lives of their readers and congregations: for instance, that is a constant concern of John Chrysostom." See Jason König, *Saints and Symposiasts: The Literature of Food and the Symposium in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 327. For further discussion on the place of asceticism in late antique city life, see Joona Salminen, *Asceticism and Early Christian Lifestyle* (ThD Diss., University of Helsinki, 2017), hdl.handle.net/.

consequences of nutritional moderation or the lack of it.[63] Instead, his cautionary statements related to the themes examined herein primarily target the edification of individual believers. Such an approach is evidently motivated by an aim to underscore each neophyte's personal responsibility to avoid spiritual hazards stemming from a lack of bodily control. Indeed, the catechist aims to guide them toward a new lifestyle guided by (his view of) Christian ethical standards.

Concluding Remarks

John Chrysostom's catechetical homilies encompass a multitude of statements on physical and spiritual nourishment that, until now, have received insufficient attention. The present article sought to address this research gap by answering the following two questions:

1. How does Chrysostom expect new members of the church to approach eating and drinking?
2. How does the issue of nourishment correspond to their life as members of the liturgical community, anticipated in the catechetical homilies?

A systematic analysis of Chrysostom's catechetical homilies revealed a threefold approach to Question 1. *First*, the author cautioned his hearers against abuse of inherently good and necessary sustenance. In his view, gluttony and drunkenness had corruptive consequences for the entire human being. Nonetheless, Chrysostom's main focus was on the tendency of nutritional abuse to compromise the health of the soul, thereby evoking harmful passions that further led to outward vice, neglect for the divine, and, ultimately, unfortunate eternal consequences. The author also employed the concept of drunkenness as a metaphor by which he cautioned his hearers against the non-physical condition of irrationality.

Secondly, Chrysostom expounded upon the functions of nutritional moderation. While he briefly touched upon the beneficial effects of corporeal fasting, the author provided scant information on the practicalities of fasting. Primarily, he discussed the issue from the metaphorical perspective, using fasting as an image of salutary abstinence from sin.

Thirdly, Chrysostom addressed the distinct forms of spiritual nourishment. On the one hand, he viewed spiritual exhortation as a nourishment of sorts, distributed through the immaterial means of homiletical discourse. On the other hand, he laid his primary focus on the Eucharist as the material and tangible form of spiritual nourishment.

As for Question 2, the following findings were made: Chrysostom addressed the topic of hymnody particularly in connection with nutritional moderation. He encouraged his new Christian hearers to limit themselves to only the necessary amount of corporeal sustenance, enabling them to

63 Cf. John Cassian, who addresses the problem of vanity associated with fasting, see *Inst.* 11.4, SC 109:430. See also John Climacus, who emphasizes the communal consequences of gluttony, see *Scal.* 4, PG 88:715, 725.

lead an "angelic" lifestyle of hymnody and prayer. This, in turn, would prepare them for the reception of more profound spiritual nourishment, provided through homiletical discourse and the Eucharist. Furthermore, it was suggested that Chrysostom considered baptismal and/or eucharistic rites to involve a possibility to witness the celestial hymnody of the cherubim.

Finally, it is noteworthy that while the present sources approached the themes of physical and spiritual nourishment from the perspective of elementary Christian teaching, this part of Chrysostom's initiatory instruction was not solely designed with the "catechetical" process in mind. Owing to the fact that his catechetical corpus consists of homilies targeted to yet-to-be-baptized candidates and neophytes alike—and due to the apparent presence of more experienced believers at the catechetical synaxes—the homilist evidently considered his views on physical and spiritual nourishment to be applicable to all Christians irrespective of their level of maturity. As an experienced ascetic-turned-clergyman, Chrysostom attempted to guide his newly-initiated Christian hearers—and indeed all the members of the Church—from moderate consumption of corporeal nutrition to the participation in spiritual nourishment and, ultimately, eternal life.

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Nonsense Syllables in Byzantine Chant Tradition: Semiotic Affiliations between Ecclesiastical and Secular Byzantine Music

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Abstract

This article examines the historical phenomenon of nonsense syllables in the chant of the Byzantine Church. The practice of non-lexical singing upon the extended use of vocables appears already in ancient Greek music and has gone by many terms, including *kratēmata* or *teretismata*. Three different hypotheses as to the historical roots and development of this singing practice are predominant, namely those of Gregorios Stathis (1979, 2014), Diane Touliatos (1989), and Gregorios Anastasiou (2005). The foundations, results and consequences of these theories are reassessed in the light of critical examination of the fourteenth century treatise *Harmonika* (Ἁρμονικά) of Manuel Bryennios (Magdalen College MS Gr 13), the tenth century *Book of Ceremonies* of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos, and different versions of the so-called *Service of the Furnace* (National Library of Greece, EBE 2047 and EBE 2406; Iviron Monastery, Iviron 1120; St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai Gr. 1527; and Monastery of Great Lavra, Lavra Λ 165).

The critical examination and synthesis of previous theories of the origin and development of Byzantine nonsense-syllable singing offers several conclusions, where I argue for new, qualified hypotheses that may be laid as foundations for further research. It is concluded that the nonsense syllables seem to have served a number of semiotic functions and purposes: as incantations (sometimes with pagan and ritual associations), as mimesis of nature (birds and cicada), for the intonation of texted chant, as well as for singing practice and solmization purposes. It is also argued that the non-semantic vocalization which this singing constitutes, amounts to a type of early programmatic music, with layers of mimetic singing and a rare sense of heightened expression in a context that otherwise focuses strongly on a religious text and its context. Finally, the term "mental representations" is proposed for describing the semantic function of nonsense syllables.

Keywords

nonsense syllables; ecclesiastical Byzantine music; secular Byzantine music; semiotics

Introduction

Nonsense syllables in Byzantine music[1]

According to Diane Touliatos, the traditional use of nonsense syllables in Byzantine music has its roots in antiquity, as a system of solmization in gnostic music, based on syllables constructed on the Greek alphabet's seven vowels *α, ε, η, ι, ο, υ, ω*.[2] The combination of the vowels *α, ε, η* and *ω* with the consonant *τ* ('t') produce the syllables *τα, τε, τω, τη* corresponding to the four pitches of the tetrachord, the fundamental system for solmization in Ancient Greek music.[3]

The same syllables *τε, ρε, τω, ρω, τη, ρη*, reappear during the fourteenth century in *teretismata*, musical compositions of the Byzantine empire constructed exclusively upon nonsense syllables, a tradition that is still found to be a common practice in Byzantine music performance. The *teretismata* are referred as "trilling of odes" ("ᾠδῶν τερετίσμασιν").[4] According to Nina-Maria Wanek, during the Cherubikon, the words *ὡς τὸν βασιλέα* (these words are from the moment in the hymn when the faithful prepare 'to receive the King of all') were often accompanied by *teretismata* meant to mimic the chanting of the angels.[5]

The melodies of *teretismata* in ecclesiastical Byzantine music transformed gradually into the *kratēmata*.[6] The word '*kratēmata*,' meaning 'holdings,' is derived from the verb *κρατῶ* which means 'to hold' or 'to sustain,' i.e., to prolong a music passage. The suitability of a metrically long syllable in music for extended vocal performance, defined by sub-metrical parameters in ancient poetry, was of great importance since antiquity, for example, in Pindar's dactylo-epitritic *Epinicia*.[7] Both *teretismata* and *kratēmata* were interpolating musical parts with soloistic technical features, constituting the ornamental basis of Kalophonic compositions.[8]

1 A historical survey of the nonsense syllables from ancient Greece to Byzantium, has been performed by the present author in: Vassileios Varelas, "Existing Hypotheses about the Emergence of Nonsense Syllables in the Chant Tradition of Teretismata and Kratēmata in Byzantine Music," *Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Music* 7, no. 1 (2023): 35–37.

2 Diane Touliatos, "Nonsense Syllables in the Music of the Ancient Greek and Byzantine Traditions," *The Journal of Musicology* 7, no. 2 (1989): 231.

3 Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Lincoln: Univesity of Nebraska Press, 1999), 550; Touliatos, "Nonsense Syllables," 231; Aristides Quintilianus, *Peri Musikēs (On Music: In Three Books)*, trans. Thomas J. Mathiesen (Yale University, 1983), 33.

4 Rosemary Dubowchik, "Singing with the Angels: Foundation Documents as Evidence for Musical Life in Monasteries of the Byzantine Empire," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 295.

5 Nina Maria Wanek, "The Greek and Latin Cherubikon," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 26, no. 2 (2017): 106.

6 Oliver Gerlach, *The Oktoechos Hymnography and the Asmatic Rite of Constantinople (Early Byzantine Period)* (Berlin: Humboldt-University, 2018), 35; Touliatos, "Nonsense Syllables," 239.

7 Stefan Hagel, "Adjusting Words to Music: Prolongating Syllables and the Example of 'Dactylo-Epitrite,'" *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 138 (2018): 227.

8 Achilleas Chaldaeakes, review of *Introduction to Kalophony, the Byzantine Ars Nova; The Anagrammatismoi and Mathēmata of Byzantine Chant*, by Gregorios Stathis, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 26, no. 2 (2016): 416; Edward V. Williams, review of *Byzantine Trisagia and Cheroubika of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: A Study of Late Byzantine Liturgical Chant* by Dimitri E. Conomos, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 30, no. 1 (1977): 149; Gregorios Stathis, *Introduction to Kalophony, the Byzantine 'Ars Nova': The Anagrammatismoi*

The intonation formulae in Byzantine music are called *ēchēma, enēchēma, or apēchēma*,, and each *ēchos* is allocated a name of the mode, such as: *ananeanes* (*ēchos protos*), *neanes* (*ēchos deuteros*), *nana* or *aneeanes* (*ēchos tritos*), *hagia* (*ēchos tetartos*), *aneanes* (*ēchos plagios protos*), *neanes* (*ēchos plagios deuteros*), *aanes* (*ēchos barys*) and *nehagie* (*ēchos plagios tetartos*). [9] The melodic formulae that the *domestikos* (precentor) sings in order to introduce the *ēchos* (mode) are also constructed upon nonsense syllables. The similarity of the intonation formulae *neannoe, noeagis, noeagis* in the medieval Western Church, have caused much speculation about their importation from the Byzantine East and their subsequent introduction into Latin psalms.[10]

Aim and theoretical perspectives

Kofi Agawu, in *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music*, writes:

> The question of whether music has meaning has been the subject of sustained debate ever since music became a subject of academic inquiry. Is music a language? Does it communicate specific ideas and emotions? What does music mean, and how does this meaning manifest itself? […] Music's contexts are many, probably infinite. Music resembles myth, animates religious ritual, and facilitates movement and dance. It is an agent in music drama and plays a catalytic if not constitutive role in film and other forms of visual narrative. Music frequently transgresses borders and seems uniquely placed among the arts to do so. Perhaps the most basic of these associations, however, is that between music and natural language. And this is because whereas language is already a common factor in myth, ritual, drama, and film, its incorporation into music takes place in particular ways and under special circumstances; it forms a second order semiological system. Exploring the affinities between music and this particular "other" may thus prove instructive.[11]

The present article studies such "special circumstances" and explores the meaningful (semiotic) functions of the nonsense (non-semantic) syllables in *teretismata* and *kratēmata* compositions of Byzantine chant.[12]

A theoretical perspective taken into account in this study in order to re-examine the ornamental compositions of *teretismata* and *kratēmata*, and then formulate a hypothesis about what may be termed a 'proto-programmatic' music based on nonsense syllables, is Agawu's notion of "morphophonemic

and Mathēmata of Byzantine Chant (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014), 58–60; Arsinoi Ioannidou, "The Kalophonic Settings of the Second Psalm in the Byzantine Chant Tradition of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries" (PhD diss., University of New York, 2014), 45; Maria Alexandrou, "Byzantine Kalophonia, Illustrated by St. John Koukouzeles' Piece *Φρούρησον Πανένδοξε* in Honour of St. Demetrios from Thessaloniki. Issues of Notation and Analysis," *Teatru, Muzică, Cinematografie, serie nouă* 5–6, no. 49–50 (Bucureşti, 2011–2012): 57–58.

9 Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford University Press, 1961), 304; Gregorios Anastasiou, *Τα Κρατήματα στην Ψαλτική Τέχνη* (Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 2005), 90.

10 Eric Werner, "The Psalmodic Formula 'Neannoe' and its Origin," *The Musical Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (1942): 93.

11 Kofi Agawu, "Music as Language," in *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music*, ed. Kofi Awawu (Oxford University Press, 2009), 15.

12 "Nonsense syllables" refers to the irrational singing upon the syllables te, re, to, ro, ti, ri, encountered in the musical compositions of *teretismata* and *kratēmata*. This singing practice has been reviewed by the present author in Varelas, "Existing Hypotheses about the Emergence of Nonsense Syllables," 34–50.

component." Agawu points out that "ornamentation, likewise, involves the imaginative recasting of existing ideas, a process that resonates with certain oratorical functions. Ornamentation corresponds in many respects to the so-called 'morphophonemic component.'"[13] This perspective highlights the *teretismos*, the main ornamental technical feature of the nonsense syllables in Byzantine music. Therefore, the goal of this study is to reveal the hermeneutic and semiotic function of *teretismos* as a 'morphophonemic component' expressing images and ideas by mean of nonsense syllables.

Another theoretical perspective considered in the present article is the music-as-language metaphor and Agawu's notion of the role of language as a metalanguage for music. Here, Agawu's notion is extended beyond the above language-metalanguage dipole, to the notion of non-language (syllables with no semantic content, i.e., 'nonsense syllables') as a pre-language for music.[14]

The main historical hypotheses concerning the development of nonsense syllables in Byzantine music, are those of Diane Touliatos, Gregorios Stathis and Gregorios Anastasiou.[15] Touliatos takes antiquity as a starting point for her hypothesis and posits the roots of nonsense syllables in the music of Ancient Greece. After a historical gap of several centuries, those syllables reappear in Byzantine music during the fourteenth century.[16] Stathis and Anastasiou examine the phenomenon exclusively within the boundaries of Byzantine music.[17]

The aim of this article is to offer new perspectives on the functional role and the secular character of nonsense syllables in Byzantine music by proposing—from extant evidence—a preliminary hypothesis about the genealogical development of *teretismata* and *kratēmata* from ancient Greek to post-Byzantine music. Moreover, the use of another category of intonation nonsense syllables in Byzantine music, the *ēchēmata (or apēhēmata)*, is comparatively presented in order to show the extended use of the nonsense syllables in Byzantine music. Finally, proposals for further research and investigation concerning the relation of *kratēmata* with Byzantine secular music are discussed.

To achieve the goals of this study, text criticism and historical analysis of the following sources, was performed: a) the treatise *Harmonika (Ἁρμονικά)* of Manuel Bryennios (Magdalen College MS Gr 13); b) the tenth century *Book of Ceremonies* of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos; and c) different versions of the so-called *Service of the Furnace* (National Library of Greece, EBE 2047 and EBE 2406; Iviron Monastery, Ivison 1120; St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai Gr. 1527; and Monastery of Great Lavra, Lavra Λ 165).

13 Agawu, "Music as Language," 17.

14 Agawu, "Music as Language," 18.

15 These different historical hypotheses have been reviewed by the present author in Varelas, "Existing hypotheses about the emergence of nonsense syllables."

16 Touliatos, "Nonsense Syllables," 231–243.

17 Gregorios Stathis, *Οι Αναγραμματισμοί Και Τα Μαθήματα Της Βυζαντινής Μελοποιίας: και πανομοιότυπος έκδοσις του καλοφωνικού στιχηρού της Μεταμορφώσεως "Προτύπων την ανάστασιν", μεθ' όλων των ποδών και αναγραμματισμών αυτού, εκ του Μαθηματαρίου του Χουρμουζίου Χαρτοφύλακος* (Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 1979); Stathis, *The Anagrammatismoi and Mathēmata of Byzantine Chant*; Anastasiou, *Τα Κρατήματα στην Ψαλτική Τέχνη*.

Theoretical issues and problems of the topic

Sources of Byzantine music theory from the Byzantine period

In the Byzantine empire, the teaching of music theory from antiquity was preserved as part of the four subjects of the *Quadrivium*: music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. The surviving music theory books following this tradition do not really deal with the music of their time, instead often copying sources from antiquity. The theoretical foundations and language for teaching the art of Byzantine music were poor compared to the treatises of music theory from this period, because they were mainly based on manuals offering basic instructions for the understanding of musical notation and the ecclesiastical *octoēchos*. Despite this, the information given in these manuals is valuable for the understanding of Byzantine music.[18]

The *Harmonics* by Manuel Bryennios, written around 1300 CE, is a theoretical treatise where these two traditions encounter each other.[19] This theoretical work, though heavily influenced by Aristeidēs Quintilianus's treatise *On Music* (in Jonker's edition of the *Harmonics,* forty-three *loci paralleli* with Quintilianus' treatise are mentioned),[20] is very significant, as it bridges two traditions: the music theory of antiquity and the practice and performance of Byzantine music.[21] In the most extended study on the topic of music theory in Byzantium, Christian Hannick states that Bryennios is the most important theorist of Byzantine music theory, and that from the perspective of a constant juxtaposition between antiquity and the Byzantine era, his theoretical considerations constitute a significant step towards the development of a consistent music theory.[22] As Hannick states: "In Bryennios, Byzantine music theory found its greatest representative."[23]

Although Bryennios's theoretical work is based on music theory as received from antiquity, it aims to be the theoretical basis for the Byzantine musicians and composers. For this reason, he attempts an extended comparison between the terminology of the *μουσικῶν* (the Aristoxenean school of music) and the *κανονικῶν* (the Pythagorean school of music), and the terminology of the *μελοποιοί* (ecclesiastical musicians and composers).[24]

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18 Because of the fact that almost all written musical sources from Byzantium are affiliated with ecclesiastical music, there is a tendency among most Byzantine scholars to associate the term "Byzantine music" exclusively with the chant of the Orthodox Church. Since both sacred and secular sources are considered in this article, the term "Byzantine music" is used in a wider sense, broadly understood as the music of the Byzantine Empire (from the founding of Constantinople in 324 or its inauguration in 330, until its fall in 1453), in all its forms: ecclesiastical, secular, scholarly and folk music. See also Maria Alexandrou, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινής Μουσικής* (Athens: Hellenic Academic Ebooks, 2017), 29.

19 Efstathios Makris, "Ο Μανουήλ Βρυέννιος και η βυζαντινή εκκλησιαστική μουσική," *Μουσικολογία* 19 (2007): 277–286.

20 Manuel Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, transl. and ed. Goverdus Henricus Jonker. (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff Publishing, 1970).

21 Thomas J. Mathiesen, "Aristides Quintilianus and the 'Harmonics' of Manuel Bryennios: A Study in Byzantine Music Theory," *Journal of Music Theory* 27, no. 1 (1983): 31, 34.

22 Christian Hannick, "Βυζαντινή μουσική," in *Βυζαντινή Λογοτεχνία: Η λόγια κοσμική γραμματεία τῶν Βυζατνινῶν*, ed. Herbert Hunger, Greek transl. Dimitris Giannou (Athens: MIET-National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 1994), 396, 398.

23 Hannick, "Βυζαντινή Μουσική," 396.

24 Hannick, "Βυζαντινή Μουσική," 399.

Here, it is worth mentioning that "Byzantine music" in Bryennios's work is treated according to the general definition that embraces not only ecclesiastical but also secular Byzantium.[25] For most scholars of Byzantine music, Bryennios's treatise is not accepted as an authentic theoretical book of ecclesiastical Byzantine music, a distinction that reinforces the separation between ecclesiastical vis-à-vis secular music and culture in Byzantium.[26]

Sources relating to secular Byzantine music

To date, numerous ecclesiastical manuscripts with compositions of *kratēmata* as autonomous music composed by eponymous Byzantine melodists—which are still in use in chant performance during the rituals of the Orthodox Church—have been discovered in monasteries and libraries, mainly in Greece but also elsewhere.[27] However, there is a lack of adequate written manuscripts of secular music—the oldest folk song written in Byzantine neumatic notation is dated to 1562 (Iviron Monastery, Iviron 1189), which makes it impossible to validate any affiliation between ecclesiastical and secular music in the Byzantine era.[28] This lacuna has often been the subject of debate among various Byzantine music scholars as seen in the work of the musicologist Christodoulos Chalaris who argued for the previous existence of written secular Byzantine music, but whose opinions and interpretations of old neumatic Byzantine music have been strongly criticized.[29]

By contrast, the existence of post-Byzantine secular music is very well established by the discovery and analysis of written sources, for instance, the autonomous secular *kratēmata* compositions and folk songs written in special neumatic musical writing, known as Byzantine *parasimantikē* or Byzantine gestures.[30] Positions arguing for close relations between the *kratēmata* and secular Byzantine music are controversial among Byzantine scholars, but nowadays, more researchers tend to accept the hypothesis about the origin of *kratēmata* in the secular music of Byzantium, as corroborated by recent research.[31] Moreover, claims of the authenticity of various Christian music traditions have been re-examined through the lens of ethnomusicology and subsequently reclassified as folkloric or ethnic music.[32]

25 Makris, "Ο Μανουήλ Βρυέννιος και η βυζαντινή εκκλησιαστική μουσική," 278, 285.
26 Makris, "Ο Μανουήλ Βρυέννιος και η βυζαντινή εκκλησιαστική μουσική," 280, 286.
27 Anastasiou, *Τα Κρατήματα στην Ψαλτική Τέχνη*, 167–243.
28 Panagiotis Koutras, "Κοσμική Μουσική σε Χειρόγραφα του Αγίου Όρους" (M.A. diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2021), 34; Kyriakos Kalaitzidis, *Κοσμική Μουσική στη Χειρόγραφη Παράδοση της Ψαλτικής Τέχνης (ιε΄- ιθ΄αι.)* (Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 2020), 63–64.
29 Martti Leiwo and Risto Pekka Pennanen, "The Byzantine secular music – fact or fiction?" *Acta Byzantina Fennica* 1995–1996, no. 8 (1996): 37–51.
30 Kalaitzidis, *Κοσμική Μουσική στη Χειρόγραφη Παράδοση της Ψαλτικής Τέχνης (ιε΄- ιθ΄αι.)*; Alexandrou, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινής Μουσικής*, 29.
31 Kyriakos Kalaitzidis, *Post-Byzantine Music Manuscripts as a Source for Oriental Secular Music (15th to Early 19th Century)*, trans. Kiriaki Koubaroulis & Dimitri Koubaroulis (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag, 2016), 19–20.
32 Richard Barrett, "Byzantine Chant, Authenticity, and Identity: Musicological Historiography through the Eyes of Folklore," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 55 no. 1–4 (2010): 182.

Exegesis of the function of neumatic notation before the New Method in 1814

During the Middle Byzantine period of notation (Middle Byzantine "Melodic" notation or "Old Method," was in use from the twelfth until the middle of nineteenth century),[33] the main elementary textbook for teaching music was commonly known as the *Papadikē* (*Προθεωρία τῆς Παπαδικής*). The textbook was a collection of short texts, tables, and didactic poems used as the basis for musical education of the *psaltes* (chanters).[34] The *Papadikē* underwent various developmental phases, reflecting in its different layers the evolution of Middle Byzantine notation. Although each *Papadikē* is a unique piece of work, they can be categorized on the basis of main features into three types: a) the *Proto-papadikē* of the first evolutionary stage of Middle Byzantine notation; b) the pro-theories of *Papadikē* which reflect and regulate the late Middle Byzantine notation; and c) a shorter version of *Papadikē*, containing the most basic elements for music training, usually placed at the beginning of the *Anastasimatarion* (hymnbook of the Resurrection).[35]

During the fifteenth century, the Byzantine neumes were divided in the *Papadikē* into two groups of phonetic (*ἔμφωνα*) interval signs: the "bodies" (*σώματα*) and the "spirits" (*πνεύματα*). The former move in steps and the latter in leaps; both are marked with black colour in the manuscripts. During the Kalophonic era of Byzantine music (1250–1500), the great hypostaseis (*μεγάλες υποστάσεις*), another group of the "speechless" (*ἄφωνα*) signs (see fig. 1) appeared in regular use by the great melodists, usually marked with red colour in the manuscripts (see fig. 2).[36]

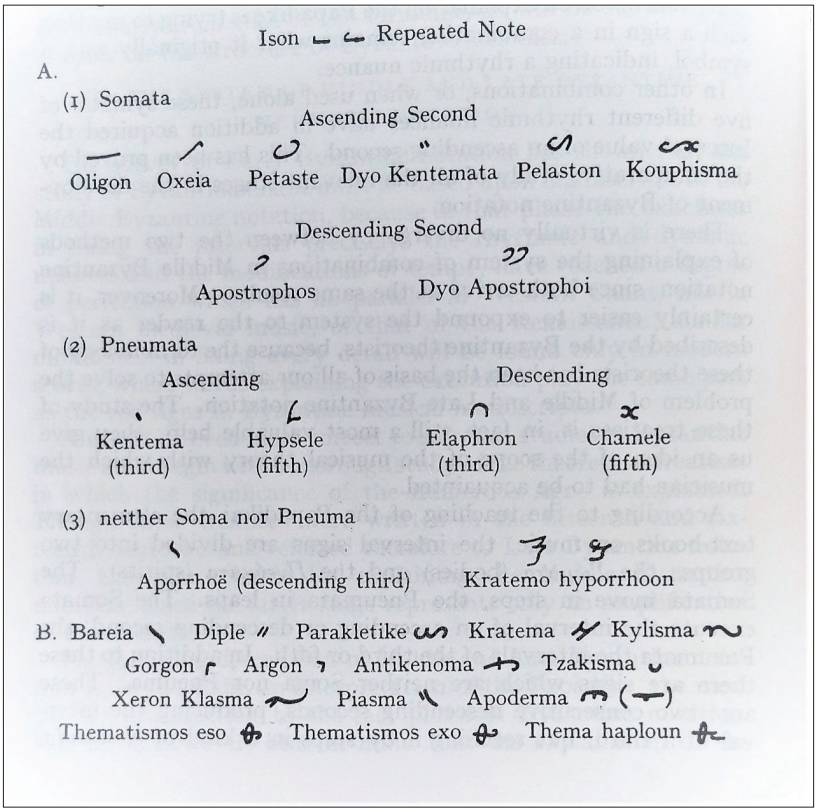

Figure 1. A) Interval signs (*ἔμφωνα*) and B) most important *hypostaseis* (*ἄφωνα*).[37]

33 Alexandrou, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινής Μουσικής*, 53–59.
34 Alexandrou, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινής Μουσικής*, 311–312.
35 Alexandrou, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινής Μουσικής*, 312–316.
36 Alexandrou, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινής Μουσικής*, 85, 311; Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 285–286.
37 Table reproduced from Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 286.

Figure 2. Use of black and red ink in the first dated *Papadikē*, 1336 CE.
© National Library of Greece.[38]

After the revision of Byzantine notation in 1814, the New Method (*Θεωρητικόν*), compiled by Chrysanthos of Madytos,[39] sufficiently explained the function and the role of neumes in *parasimantikē*. In the New Method, the role of neumes became simpler and many neumes used in the earlier periods of Byzantine music notation were abandoned. Various eminent Byzantine musicology scholars, including Henry Julius Wetenhall Tillyard, Egon Wellesz, Gregorios Stathis, Ioannis Arvanitis, and Maria Alexandrou,

38 EBE 2458, fol. 11r.

39 Chrysanthos, *Θεωρητικὸν Μέγα τῆς Μουσικῆς* (Trieste: Εκ της Τυπογραφίας Μιχαήλ Βάις, 1832); Chrysanthos, *Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὸ θεωρητικὸν καὶ πρακτικὸν τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς μουσικῆς* (Paris: Εκ της τυπογραφίας Ριγνίου, 1821).

have attempted to explain the notion and function of the *paleography* of Byzantine music (i.e., the old neumatic method), but have not come to a clear point of convergence or theoretical agreement.[40]

Text criticism and historical analysis

Manuel Bryennios: Teretismos as technical and distinctive feature of melos and melodic types of ēchoi

In modern musicological terminology, the term "melody type" relates to:

> […] any of a variety of melodic formulas, figurations, and progressions and rhythmic patterns used in the creation of melodies in certain forms of non-European and early European music […]. This combinative approach has been typical of vast segments of the greater Mediterranean orbit and its Asian extensions as far as southern India (e.g., in the raga). Though admittedly ambiguous, the ancient Greek category of *nomos* may have involved such melody types, as did its Christian successor, the Byzantine *ēchos*, as well as the Syrian *ris-qole* and the Arabian *maqām*. In Europe melody types would seem to account for certain common characteristics of some early layers of Gregorian chant. Living examples are found in the chanting of Hebrew cantors worldwide.[41]

The understanding of the notion of melodic type is crucial in order to distinguish between sub-types of modal music of various Western and non-Western cultures, as these melodic types were mainly in use in the composition of non-Western and early music. The melodic type should not be thought of as separate from the church mode. As Harold S. Powers states:

> The mode, we may therefore conclude, is not merely a "scale" but the sum of all the formulae which constitute the quality of an *ēchos*. The melody type phenomena observed in *maqām* and *ēchos* are proposed as members of a larger metacultural musical entity.[42]

In his treatise, Bryennios defines and analyses twelve terms applied both to vocal and instrumental music, used by all composers for various types of melody and commonly called *ēchoi*: "[…] our next task should be to give, according to our previously accepted method, an account of the various species of melody, which composers nowadays call *ēchoi* […]. Briefly then, these terms are twelve in number."[43] These terms are: *prolepsis*, *eclepsis*,

40 Alexandrou, *Παλαιογραφία Βυζαντινής Μουσικής*; Ioannis Arvanitis, "A way to the transcription of Old Byzantine Chant," in *Byzantine Chant, Tradition and Reform: Acts of a Meeting held at the Danish Institute at Athens, 1993*. Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens, ed. Christian Troelsgård (Athens: Danish Institute at Athens, 1997), 123–141; Gregorios Stathis, *Η Εξήγησις της Παλαιάς Βυζαντινής Σημειογραφίας* (Athens: Institute of Byzantine Musicology, 1978); Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*; Henry Julius Wetenhall Tillyard, *Handbook of the Middle Byzantine Musical Notation. Series: Monumenta musicae Byzantinae*, Subsidia, v. 1, facs. 1. (Copenhague: Levin & Munksgaard, 1935).

41 Britannica, s.v. "Melody type," accessed June 24, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/art/melody-type.

42 Grove Music Online, s.v. "Mode," by Harold S. Powers, et al., accessed June 24, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43718.

43 Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 309. The original Greek text (in Bryennios, The Harmonics, 308): "[…] και περί τῶν τῆς μελῳδίας ἁπάντων εἰδῶν τῶν κοινῶς ὑπὸ τῶν μελωποιῶν καλουμένων ἤχων […]. Ἔστι τοίνυν τά τοῦ μουσικοῦ τε καὶ ὀργανικοῦ μέλους ὀνόματα ὡς συνελόντι φάναι δεκαδύο."

prolemmatismos, eclemmatismos, melismos, prokrousis, ekkrousis, prokrou(s)mos, ekkrou(s)mos, kopmismos, teretismos and *diastole*.[44]

According to Hannick, Bryennios associates the melodic types called *prolepsis* (*πρόληψις*) and *prokrousis* (*πρόκρουσις*) with *ēchēma (ἦχημα*). Hannick states that Bryennios refers to *ēchēma* as having precisely the same practical function as when *ēchēma* is used in the Byzantine ecclesiastical tradition as an *intonation formula* for the intonation of an *ēchos*.

The word *melismos* is a derivative of the Greek verb *melizo* (*μελίζω)* which means 'to sing ornamentally.' Bryennios asserts that *melismos* appears in a vocal melody (*melos*). "*Melismos* is found when we use one and the same note in a vocal melody more than once with a distinctly pronounced syllable."[45] Bryennios does not qualify the *melos* exclusively as vocal or instrumental, rather it can be found in both cases. Among scholars in Byzantine musicology, the general trend is to limit the notion of *melos* mainly to vocal performances of music and "only by exception is it applied to instrumental music."[46]

The word *kompismos*, in turn, is derived from the Greek verb *kompazo* (*κομπάζω)* meaning 'to rant,' 'swagger,' or 'brag.' According to Bryennios, *kompismos* appears in an instrumental melody. "*Kompismos* means that one and the same note is used twice or more in an instrumental melody."[47] *Teretismos* is the combination of *melismos* with *kompismos: "*It is necessary to know that the combined form which occurs when *melismos* and *kompismos* are joined, is called by some *teretismos*."[48]

In his treatise, Bryennios asserts that, among the above terms, only *teretismos* applies to both vocal and instrumental music, for example, when someone sings the melody and simultaneously plucks the strings of the instrument with the fingers or the plectrum i.e. accompanying of the voice by string instruments. But strictly speaking, *teretismos* is applicable in the case of a person singing and playing an instrument at the same time, traversing the melody both to the upper part of the scale i.e., the *netôn tetrachord*, and to the lower part i.e., the *hypatôn tetrachord*. This is, according to him, "what the cicada does."[49]

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44 Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 309.

45 Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 311. The original Greek text (in Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 310): "Μελισμὸς δέ, ὅταν τὸν αὐτὸν φθόγγων πλεονάκις ἤ ἅπαξ κατὰ μουσικὸν μέλος μετά τινος ἐνάρθρου συλλαβῆς παραλαμβάνωμεν."

46 Stathis, *The Anagrammatismoi and Mathēmata of Byzantine Chant*, 4.

47 Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 313. The original Greek (in Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 312): "Κομπισμὸς δέ, ὅταν τὸν αὐτὸν φθόγγων πλεονάκις ἤ ἅπαξ κατὰ μουσικὸν μέλος μετά τινος ἐνάρθρου συλλαβῆς παραλαμβάνωμεν."

48 Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 313. The original Greek text (in Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 312): "Εἰδέναι μέντοι χρή, ὅτι τὸν κοινὸν σχηματισμὸν ἐκ τῆς συνθέσεως τοῦ μελισμοῦ καὶ τοῦ κομπισμοῦ ἔνιοι καλοῦσι τερετισμόν."

49 Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 313. The original Greek text (in Bryennios, *The Harmonics*, 312): "[…] ὁ δὲ τερετισμὸς κοινὸς τοῦ τε μουσικοῦ καὶ ὀργανικοῦ· καὶ γὰρ ὅταν τις τῷ μὲν στόματι ᾄδῃ, τοῖς δὲ δακτύλοις ἢ τῷ πλήκτρῳ τὰς χορδὰς κατὰ τὸ μέλος κρούῃ, τότε τερετίζειν λέγεται· ἢ μᾶλλον τότε τις ἀληθῶς τερετίζειν λέγεται, ἐπειδὰν οὐ μόνον τὸ ὀξύτερον μέρος τοῦ μέλους ἤτοι τὸ τῶν νητῶν τετράχορδον μετ' ᾠδῆς ἅμα καὶ κρούσεως διεξέρχοιτο, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ βαρύτερον ἤτοι τὸ τῶν ὑπάτων· οὕτω καὶ γὰρ ἐναργῶς τερετίζειν οἱ τέττιγες φαίνονται."

The term was accepted and received in Byzantine ecclesiastical music but with the meaning of melismatic *melos* (chant). In the *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Music,* Solon Michailides explains that the term *teretismos* originates from the verb *τερετίζω,* which means 'to chirrup' or 'to mimic' the song of a cicada or a swallow by performing a type of trill, either by singing or playing the guitar. He mentions that according to Bryennios and Bellermann's *Anonymous*, *teretismos* is the combination of *melismos* and *kompismos*.[50]

From all the above, it is indicated that the term *teretismos* is mimetic of nature (e.g. the cicada) and it is associated mainly with a certain technical feature of music performance within a melody constituting a distinctive melodic feature of *echoi* (modes) similar to a trill, both in vocal and instrumental music. The practice of *teretismos* seems to extend even further, by defining a certain species (or name or category) of *melos* or *melic composition,* but not a certain type of autonomous melismatic composition.

Morever, Bryennios's description of the performative function of *teretismos* in prolonging the syllable of the music text is in accordance with the general function of *teretismata* and *kratēmata* in Byzantine ecclesiastical music, i.e. prolonging the musical phrase ('κρατῶ' means 'to hold,' 'to prolong,' much like 'tenor' means 'to hold' in Latin).

The duration of the application of *teretismos* and each of the twelve technical features, i.e. the terms for *ēchoi*, is not defined by Bryennios. Moreover, Bryennios's description of *teretismos* shows that the singer probably sings either in unison or an octave higher or lower by simultaneously plucking the melody on the strings.

Kratēmata and ēchēmata in Byzantine liturgical drama: The Service of the Furnace

The term *liturgical drama* is well accepted in the study of medieval Western European religious theater.[51] The genre extends to Orthodox tradition in the form of the play called *The Three Children in the Furnace,* from the biblical book of Daniel (chapter 3), although Wellesz has suggested also other theatrical arrangements in the Orthodox services e.g., the dramatic performance of the *stichera* sequence for the Nativity of Christ.[52]

Dating from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, the five manuscripts of the play which are preserved with musical notation are:

1. A_1-Athens, National Library of Greece, EBE 2047 (c. 1416–29)
2. A_2-Athens, National Library of Greece, EBE 2406 (c. 1453)
3. *I*-Iviron, Iviron Monastery, Iviron 1120 (c. 1458)
4. *S*-Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai Gr. 1527 (16th cent.)
5. *L*-Lavra, Monastery of Great Lavra, Lavra Λ 165, (c. 17th cent.)

50 Solon Michailides, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Music* (Athens: MIET-National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 1981), 306.

51 Miloš M. Velimirović, "Liturgical Drama in Byzantium and Russia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): 351.

52 Velimirović, "Liturgical Drama in Byzantium and Russia," 352.

These five versions of the play have been reviewed by Andrew White,[53] although some corrections and revised renderings and translations of the text in some passages were done by the present author (who disagrees with some of White's translations). For example, *ἀνάλογα πρὸς τῶν διπλασιασμῶν τῆς φωνῆς τῶν παίδων* is translated by White as "resembling an echo of the children's register." The article *τῶν* refers to the plural of *διπλασιασμός*, which means "doubling." So, the *τῶν διπλασιασμῶν* ought to be "of the doublings" (plural).[54]

According to Miloš Velimirović, "a comparison of the four texts of this play (A_2, *I, S, L*) shows remarkable agreement despite the existence of two distinct variants in the textual tradition."[55]

The extended use of nonsense syllables in the form of *kratēmata* and *ēchēmata* is mentioned in the stage directions of the play in all five redactions.

A_1-Athens, National Library of Greece, EBE 2047[56]

Text	Translation
[220r]: "Καὶ λέγουσι τὸν παρόντον *εἱρμόν*, μετὰ τῶν *ἠχημάτων* αὐτοῦ."	"And they sing/recite the present *heirmos* in accordance with its *ēchēmata*."
[220r]: "Καὶ ψάλλουσιν οἱ *ψάλται* τὰ *ἠχήματα* κομμάτια *κρατημ[άτων]* πλαγίου τετάρτου *ἤχου* ἀνάλογα πρὸς τῶν διπλασιασμῶν τῆς φωνῆς τῶν παίδων· Εἰς δὲ τὸ τέλος τοῦ *κρατέματος*, λέγουσιν ἀπό χορού πάντα εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν φωνήν, τοῦτο, *Εὐλογητὸς εἶ Κύριε, σῶσον ἡμᾶς*."	"And the *psaltes* sing the *ēchēmata* selections from the *kratēmata* of the *ēchos* (mode) 4th plagal according to the doublings of the children's voice. At the end of the *kratēma*, the chorus sings everything in unison, thus: *Blessed art thou Lord, save us.*"
[220r]: "Ψάλλουσι δὲ τὸν παρόντα *εἱρμόν* μετὰ τῶν *ἠχημάτων* αὐτοῦ· *ἦχος Β.*'"	"They sing the present *eirmos* in accordance to its *ēchēmata; ēchos 2nd.*"
[220r]: "Καὶ εὐθὺς τὸν *εἱρμόν* τὰ τῶν *ἠχημάτων*."	"And straight away the *eirmos* with its *ēchēmata*."
[221r]: "Λέγεται δὲ *κράτημα* εἰς *ἦχον ἀ*, καὶ λέγεται ὁ *εἱρμός*."	"*Kratēma* in 1st *ēchos* is sung/recited, and the *eirmos* is sung/recited."
[221r]: "Τὸ *κράτημα*· καὶ τὸν *εἱρμόν*."	"The *kratēma* and the *eirmos*"
[221r]: "Καὶ ὁμοῦ εἰπόντες *κράτημα*, ἐπισυνάπτουσι τὸν *εἱρμόν*."	"And together saying/reciting a *kratēma*, then singing the *eirmos*."
[221r]: "Εἰς τοῦτον τὸν στίχον ψάλλουσιν *εἱρμὸν* μετὰ *κράτηματος*, εἰς *ἦχον* πλ.ἀ. Σοὶ τῷ παντουργῷ."	"At this verse they chant *eirmos* with a *kratēma* in *ēchos* 1st plagal. For Thee the omnipotent."

53 Andrew Walker White, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 190–218.
54 White, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*, 194.
55 Velimirović, "Liturgical Drama in Byzantium and Russia," 354.
56 Text and translation from White, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*, 190–202.

[221r]: "Καὶ λέγουσε *κράτημα* εἰς *ἦχον* Δ΄· καὶ τὸν *εἰρμόν· Παῖδες εὐαγεῖς ἐν τῇ καμίνῳ*· οἱ δὲ παῖδες χορεύοντες, καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἐκτείναντ[ες], ψάλλουσιν εἰς *ἦχον* πλ. Δ.'"	"And they recite/sing *kratēma* in *ēchos* 4th plagal and the *eirmos*: *The pure children in the furnace*. And the children dancing and extending their hand, they sing in *ēchos* 4th plagal."
[221r]: "Εἶτα *κράτημα*· καὶ τὸν *εἱρμὸν ἦχος* πλ. Β.'"	"Then *kratēma*· and the *eirmos* in *ēchos* 2nd plagal."
[221r]: "Οἱ μέντοι *ψάλται, λέγουσι κράτημα*, εἰς *ἦχον* πλ.ˈΔ."	"Only the *psaltes* sing *kratēma* in *ēchos* 4th plagal."

A_2-Athens, National Library of Greece, EBE 2406[57]

Text	Translation
[151v]: "ἠχίσματα δὲ λέγομεν *κρατημάτων πλαγίων τετάρτεων*· ἀνάλογος πρὸς τὸν διπλασιασμὸν τῆς φωνῆς τῶν παίδων· Εἰς δὲ τὸ τέλος τοῦ *ἠχίσματος* λέγομεν ἀπόκρισιν πάντες εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν φωνὴν οὕτως πλ.ˈδ. *Εὐλογητὸς εἶ Κύριε, σῶσον ἡμᾶς*."	"We sing *ēchēmata* of the *kratēmata* in the *ēchos* (mode) 4th plagal according to the doublings of the children's voice. At the end of the *ēchēma*, we sing the response in one voice, thus in 4th plagal: *Blessed art thou Lord, save us*."

I-Iviron, Iviron Monastery, Iviron 1120[58]

Text	Translation
"Εἶτα ἠχίζει ὁ *δομεστικὸς ἤχημα* πλ. δ›."	"Then the *domestikos* sings *ēchēma* in 4th plagal."
"Εἰς δὲ τὰ τέλη τῶν *ἠχημάτων* ψάλλεται τοῦτο ἀπὸ χορῶν πλ.ˈδ. *Εὐλογητὸς εἰ, εἶ, Κύριε, σῶσον ἡμᾶς*."	"At the end of the *ēchēmata* it is sung by the choruses in 4th plagal: *Blessed art thou Lord, save us*."
"Ψάλλονται οὖν καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ στίχοι εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ *μέλος*, καὶ μετὰ τὸ τέλος αὐτῶν, εὐθὺς *ἠχίζει* ὁ *δομέστικος*, εἶτα λέγει *ἀσματικόν*."	"The remaining verses are sung in this *melos* and after their end the *domestikos* sings *ēchēmata,* then sings the *asmatikon*."
"Ὅτε δὲ φθάσει τὸ μέσον τῆς ᾠδῆς, εὐθὺς πάλι *ἠχίζει* ὁ δομέστικος, εἶτα ὁ ἕτερος χορὸς *ἤχημα*, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα λέγει *ἀσματικόν*, εἶτα ψάλλεται τὸ ἐπίλοιπον τῆς ᾠδῆς."	"And when it comes to the middle of the ode, the domestikos begins straightaway to sing *ēchēmata,* then the other choir *ēchēma,* and after these, he sings he *asmatikon,* and then the rest of the ode."

57 Text and translation from White, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*, 203–207.

58 Text and translation from White, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*, 208–211. No folios are provided by White. The Service's instructions can be found on folios 440r–443r; see Spyridon Antonopoulos, "The Life and Works of Manuel Chrysaphes the Lampadarios, and the Figure of Composer in Late Byzantium" (PhD diss., Vol. 2, City, University of London, 2014), 58–59, and Stathis, *The Anagrammatismoi and Mathēmata of Byzantine Chant*, 104.

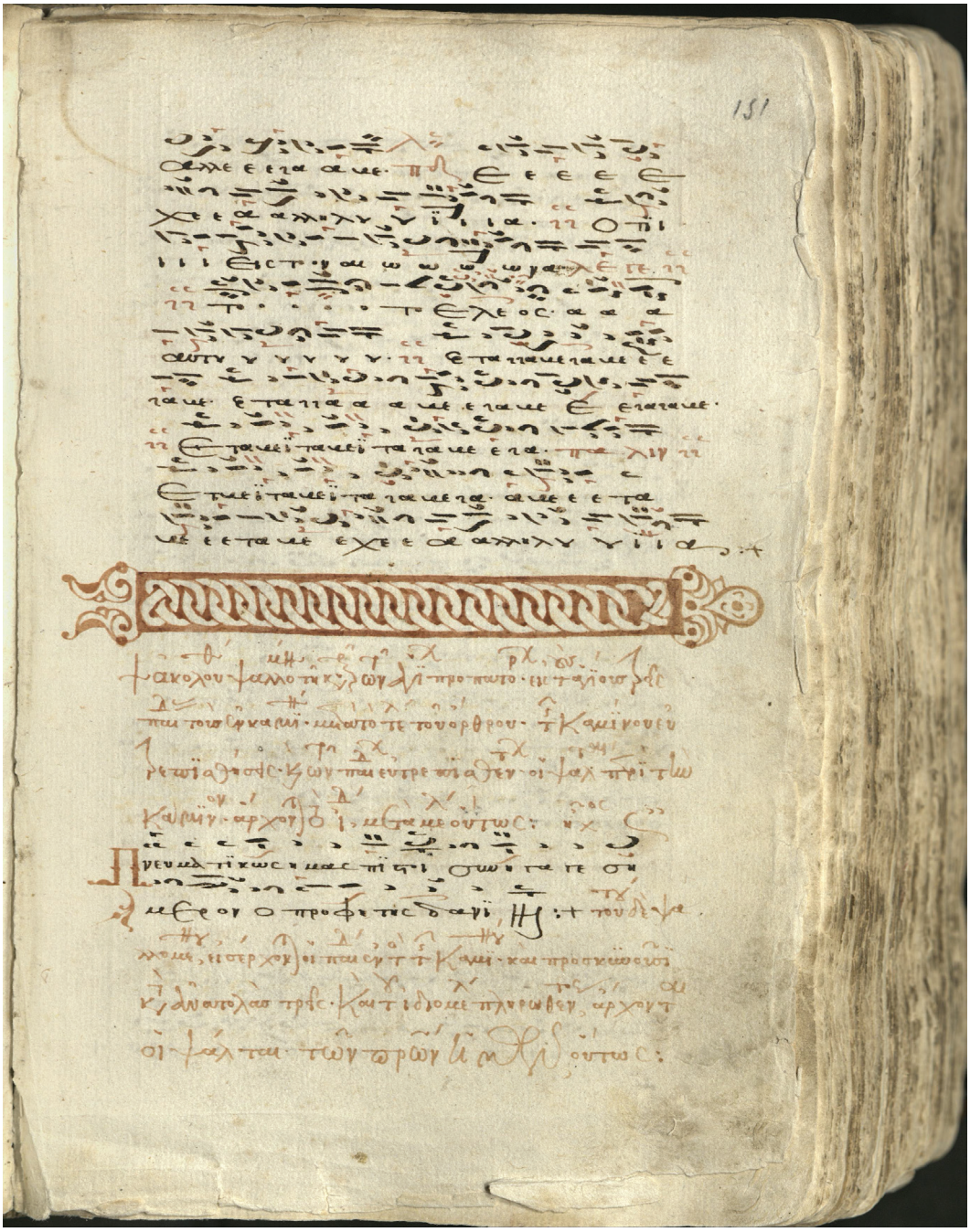

Figure 3. The beginning of *The Service of the Furnace* (c. 1453).
© National Library of Greece.[59]

S-Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai Gr. 1527[60]

Text	Translation
[215v]: "Λέγουσι δὲ οἱ *ψάλται* διὰ μέσον καὶ *ἠχίσματα* εἰς πλάγιον δ' καλοφωνικά."	"The *psaltes* sing *ēchēmata* kalophonically in *ēchos* 4th plagal."

59 EBE 2406, fol. 151r.
60 Text and translation from White, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*, 212–214.

***L*-Lavra, Monastery of Great Lavra, Lavra Λ 165**[61]

Text	Translation
"Ψάλλεται οὖν καὶ ἡ λοιπὴ *δοξολογία* εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ *μέλος*· καὶ μετὰ τὸ τέλος αὐτῆς *ἠχήζει* ὁ *Δομέστικος*."	"Then, the remaining *doxologia* (recitation) is sung to this *melos.* After the end of this, the *domestikos* sings *ēchēmata.*"
"Ὅτε δὲ φθάσῃ εἰς τὸ μέσον τῆς ᾠδῆς, εὐθὺς *ἠχήζει* ὁ *Δομέστικος*, εἶτα ὁ ἕτερος χορὸς *ἤχημα*."	"When it comes to the end of the ode, the *domestikos* straightaway sings *ēchēmata*, then the other choir *ēchēma.*"

The comparative historical analysis of the passages dealing with the use of nonsense syllables in *ēchēmata* and *kratēmata* in the five versions of *The Service of the Furnace* (dating from 1416–29 until the seventeenth century) reveals some very interesting points. The term *teretismos* does not appear anywhere, but only *ēchēmata* and *kratēmata.* This observation resembles Stathis's theoretical approach about the origin of the *kratēmata* from the *ēchēmata* or the identical meaning and use of the two terms.[62] The use of *ēchēmata* as prolonged intonation formulae transformed into melismatic interpolations in the beginning, the middle, and the end of the chant, is described in various passages of the texts of the service. The *ēchēmata* and the *kratēmata* are sung along with the *heirmos* and the *domestikos* gives the intonation formula of the *ēchos* by singing the *ēchēmata.*

The doubling (or echoing) of the voice of the children indicates the singing of the *kratēma* in octaves (choir and children). This is also supported by Alexander Lingas: "After the conclusion of a kalophonic interlude of *ēchēmata* and *kratēmata* in the Fourth Plagal Mode evidently involving singing in octaves with the children, Symeon requires the refrain 'Εὐλογητός εἶ, Κύριε· σῶσον ἡμᾶς'."[63] This device resembles Bryennios's description of *teretismos* but with two voices instead of an instrument and a voice. The doubling of the voices in octaves could possibly indicate an early practice of polyphony, maybe similar to parallel organum or an improvisation similar to the spontaneous polyphony encountered in Greece's traditional music. After all, the idea of the strictly monophonic Byzantine music was reconsidered after the discovery of the two-part polyphonic composition "Αἰνεῖται" by Manuel Gazis (late 14th cent.– early 15th cent. musician who also travelled to Crete)[64] (see fig. 4).

61 Text and translation from White, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*, 215–218. No folios are provided by White. The Service's instructions can be found on folios 324r–325v; see Alexander Lingas, "Late Byzantine Cathedral Liturgy and the Service of the Furnace," in *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai*, ed. Sharon E.J. Gerstel and Robert S. Nelson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 191.

62 Varelas, "Existing Hypotheses.", 41, 43.

63 Lingas, "Late Byzantine Cathedral Liturgy", 214–215.

64 Michalis Adamis, "Πολυφωνική εκκλησιαστική μουσική στο Βυζάντιο του ιε΄ αιώνα," *Μουσικολογία* 2, no. 1 (1986): 51–63.

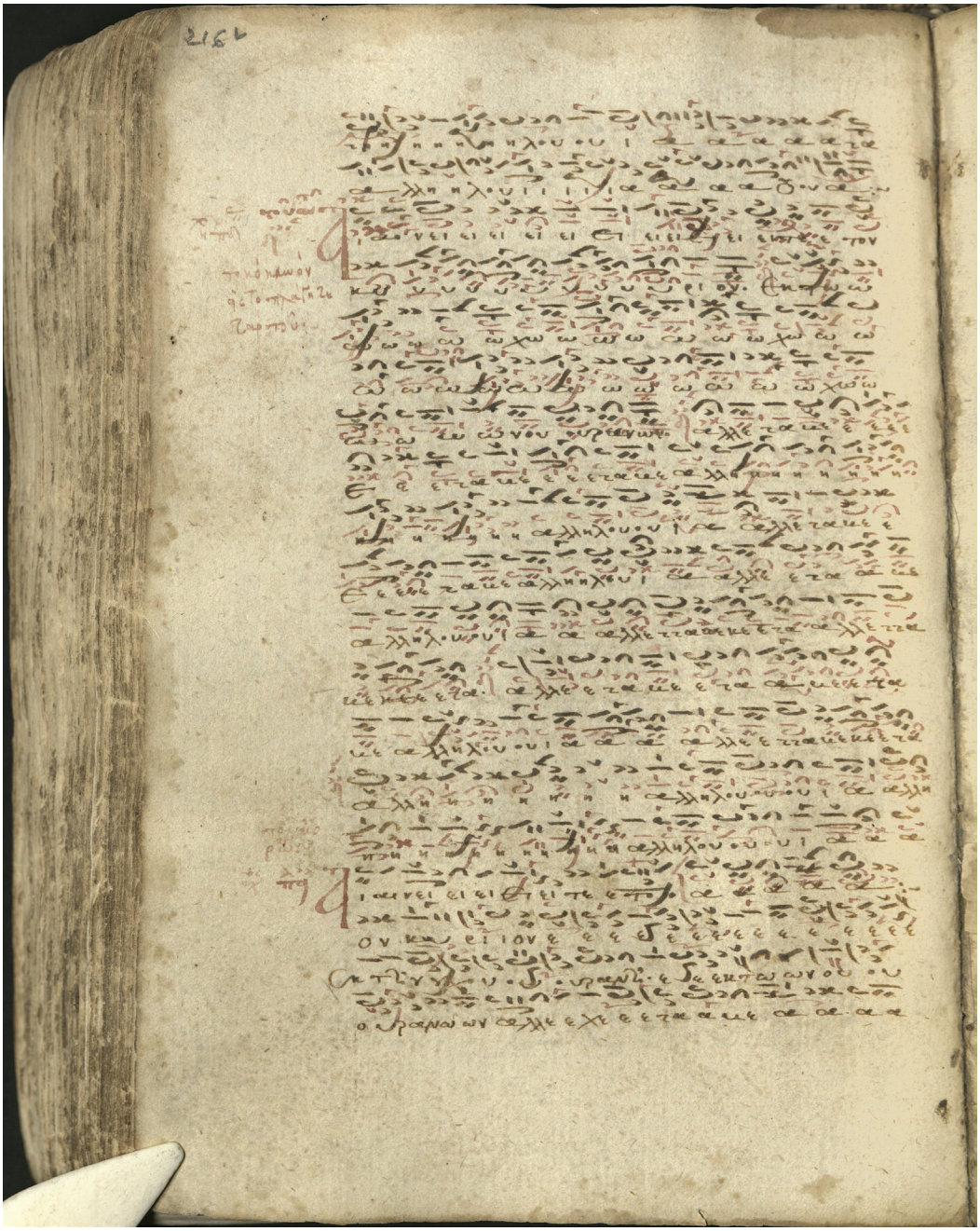

Figure 4. A sample of polyphony in Middle Byzantine notation. At the top we see the beginning of one of the two "Αἰνεῖτε" by Manuel Gazis. It is sung by two voices: the upper voice with neumes in brown in the fourth ēchos, and the lower voice with neumes in red ink in the fourth plagal ēchos. The second "Αἰνεῖτε" by Gazis, in the fourth-fourth plagal ēchos, is in the same manuscript (fol. 328r). © National Library of Greece.[65]

Some scholars have proposed the possible interpretations for the Byzantine *kratēmata* in terms of *idée fixe*, *leitmotif*, and *word-painting*.[66] The interpretation of *idée fixe* ('reoccurring theme') could possibly describe only *kratēmata* which bear names of extra-musical features (e.g., names of

65 Manuel Gazis, "Αινείτε" in EBE 2401, fol. 216v. See also, Adamis, "Πολυφωνική εκκλησιαστική μουσική στο Βυζάντιο του ιε΄ αιώνα," 51–63.

66 Laura Steenberge, "We who musically represent the cherubim," in *Aural Architecture in Byzantium: Music, Acoustics, and Ritual*, ed. Bissera V. Pentcheva (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 145–146.

instruments, emotional states, etc.). According to the rubrics of *The Service of the Furnace*, it is not defined which *kratēma* is sung (whether it is the same each time or whether it is the same in the various versions of the service). The device of *leitmotif* cannot apply in the case of the *kratēmata* as those are long music passages and not short characteristic motifs. Although the interpretation of *kratēmata* as *word-painting* seems plausible in some respects, it ought to be noticed that *word-painting* is used mainly by musical events and patterns in order to reflect the text. We do not always know exactly what the *kratēmata* described or referred to. It is also unclear whether they always reflected the plot of *The Service of the Furnace*, and if so, in which way. Moreover, *word-painting* is not applicable to the *kratēmata's* text in the sense that they are sung upon irrational (non-semantic) syllables. In the case of the *Service*, perhaps the term *incantate painting* could be more appropriate. From the text of the *Service*, it seems that the *kratēmata* function as instrumental sections interpolated between the music and the recited parts of the liturgical-dramatic narration, a function similar to operatic narration.

Another interesting observation concerns the references made to *ēchēmata* and *kratēmata*. After A_1, their frequency chronologically decreases in the sources, i.e., in A_2, *I, S*, and *L*.

Constantine Porphyrogennetos: nonsense syllables in Byzantine ceremonies

The *Book of Ceremonies*, written by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos (d. 959 CE) constitutes the main source describing imperial, secular, and ecclesiastical ceremonies in Byzantium from the fifth century to 960 CE.[67] In chapter 83, Constantine describes in detail the *Gothic Game,* a ceremony taking place in the palace on the ninth day of the twelve days of Christmas. The ceremony consists of two Goths carrying shields in their left hand, staffs in their right, wearing masks and furs turned inside out, two teams of players, the Greens and the Blues, pandouri-players, and the audience attending the game.[68] The description is of great importance for evidence of the use of Gothic words together with non-Gothic words, as well as nonsense syllables of the *ēchēmata* that the Goths recite, while the pandouri-players play the appropriate tones. Among those, the words *nana (νανά), anana (ανανά)* and *hagia (άγια)* are recited as intonations.[69]

> *Gauzas bonas bekidias. Hagia. Gaudentes elkebonides enkertus. Hagia. Bona hora toutou bantes bona amore episkuantes idesa/batous. Nana. Deous deous sebakiba. Nana. Deumonoguggubele gubilous gubelares. Hagia. Gubilous gubelares. Nana. Tou gegdema de toulbele nikato touldo. Nana.* Hezekiah, having taken up arms in the wars against the Assyrians… *Anana.* And placing his hope only in God, the lover of mankind ... *Nana.* Subdued all the nations and the tyranny of the godless. *Hagia.* May the Saviour, virtuous rulers…

67 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, trans. Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall, *Byzantina Australiensia*, vol. 18, no. 1–2, Australian Association for Byzantine Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
68 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, 381-386.
69 Anastasiou, *Τα Κρατήματα στην Ψαλτική Τέχνη*, 91.

> *Nana*. Make all your enemies slaves at your feet… Then the instructors along with the demesmen recite the alphabetical acrostic "*Anana*": (from *alpha* to *ōmega*)… [Delta]: "*Granting life-giving benefactions to the Romans*." Then the instructors again recite *Hagia; ta; ana te anetane."* [70]

The general claim about the nonsense character of the syllables *hagia, nana,* and *anana* should be re-examined as they do not seem to lack specific meanings. The Gothic word *nana* is translated as "God God" or "God's God's." In Hebrew, the same word means, "Save, yes, save." The word *hagia* is from Latin, meaning 'guard.'[71] The same syllables *hagia, nana,* and *anana* are commonly used as *intonation formulae* in the *ēchēmata* of Byzantine music.[72] The appearance of these common syllables in both a secular ceremony and in ecclesiastical Byzantine music reinforces the hypothesis about the secular character of nonsense syllables. Moreover, the use of syllables with some meaningful content in the *ēchēmata* seems to weaken the hypothesis of Stathis and Anastasiou, which maintains that the *kratēmata* originate from the *ēchēmata.* The logical evolution of the former from the latter would entail the origin of the nonsense *kratēmata* from a more archaic 'non-lexical' form and not the opposite.[73]

Other text sources

Kompismos, melismos, teretismos, ēchēma in music treatises

Apart from Bryennios, there are also other music treatises where the terms *kompismos, melismos, teretismos,* and *ēchēma*, are explained. According to Martin L. West,[74] the first evidence of instrumental ornamented music can be traced back to the third century CE, in the Berlin musical papyri for *aulos* and *lyra*.[75] West notes that:

> A symbol for *kompismos* has in fact been identified in the two Berlin instrumental pieces, and Pollux mentions *teretismoi* as part of the aulete's technique, while Agathias, speaks of the *teretismata* of the lyre. *Kompismos* signs also seem to appear in two or three of the unpublished vocal fragments.[76]

The oldest discovered theoretical handbook about ecclesiastical Byzantine music is an anonymous treatise called the *Αγιοπολίτης* (BNF gr. 360) dated to 1400 CE. In the *Αγιοπολίτης*, it is mentioned that "neither can an *ēchos* be found without a melody, nor melodies without an *ēchēma*,"[77] and that the *enēchēma* is the intonation formula of each *ēchos* based on the words *ne,*

70 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, 382-383.
71 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, 385-386.
72 Stathis, *The Anagrammatismoi and Mathēmata of Byzantine Chant*, 111.
73 For a critical review by the present author of the main existing theories on the topic, see also: Varelas, "Existing Hypotheses."
74 Martin L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
75 Ioannis Zarias, "Η Διαποίκιλση στην Ελληνική Παραδοσιακή Βιολιστική Τέχνη (Ornamentation in Greek traditional violin art)" (PhD diss., University of Macedonia, 2013), 32.
76 West, *Ancient Greek Music*, 204.
77 Jørgen Raasted, *Hagiopolites: a Byzantine Treatise on Music Theory*, ed. Jørgen Raasted (Copenhague: E. Paludan, 1983), 17.

lege, agie, nana, etc.[78] In the same treatise, three types of *kompismoi* (plural of *kompismos*) are described, low tones with low ones, low with high, or high with high.[79]

In the ecclesiastical Byzantine music treatise *Μέθοδον τῶν νεανισμάτων καὶ τερετισμάτων,* written by Xenos Koronēs,[80] the term *teretismos* is related to a special type of *melismatic melos*.[81]

Teretismos and teretismata in Byzantine and post-Byzantine written sources

There are multiple references to *teretismos* and *teretismata* in various Byzantine manuscripts. The irrational, non-verbal, symbolic, theological, and secular character of the *teretismata* is described in the *Exegesis* of Gerasimos, a mid-seventeenth century monk:

> We must know that the *teretismos* is sung in the holy psalms, it is not something accidental as many imprudently admit, but it is finite and with reason […] therefore daily sing with this wordless voice the *terere* […] and according to the symbolic theology, the *terere* aims only to the non-understandable of the Divine. Because, just as you cannot glean any reason from the *terere,* neither can you understand the Divine […] But most people today […] dare to claim that the *teretismos* and the gesture of heavenly music, is an indecental thing, as they know neither the reason nor the evidence […] that the *terere* is a symbolic melos which aims to various things […] the *teretismos* is a living *kithara* (guitar) aiming to the holy resurrection […] but now, by having with us the resurrected Christ, the real life, as he says by himself "I am life," he does not need the non-living, but as alive with a living voice *teretizei* (singing upon nonsense syllables) that melos that the old ones used to *teretizei* with guitars and percussions.[82]

Touliatos considers the association of *teretismata* with *glossolalia* (the 'wordless jubilation,' i.e. the attempt of mimicking the singing of angels) as a possible explanation for the allowance and evolution of this type of singing in the strictly religious Byzantine empire, despite its possible roots in the antique

78 Raasted, *Hagiopolites*, 51.
79 Raasted, *Hagiopolites*, 82.
80 Hannick, "Βυζαντινή Μουσική," 406–407.
81 Hannick, "Βυζαντινή Μουσική," 399.
82 Ioannis Lampadarios and Stefanos A. Domestikos, "Ερμηνεία τοῦ Κρατῆματος τοῦ τερερέ," in *Πανδέκτης του Χριστού Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας IV*, ed Ioannis Lampadarios and Stefanos A. Domestikos (Constantinople, 1851), 885–891. The original text in Greek: "Πρέπει νὰ ἠξεύρωμεν, πὼς ὁ τερετισμὸς ὅπου εἰς τὰς ἱερὰς ψαλμωδίας ψάλετται, δὲν εἶναι ἁπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε, καθὼς τινες ἀφρονέστεροι ληρούσιν, ἀλλὰ εἶναι μὲ τέλος καὶ λογαριασμόν […] δια τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς καθημερινὸν ψάλλομεν μὲ τούτην τὴν ἀναρθρον φωνὴν τὸ *τερερέ* [...] και τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν συμβολικῆς θεολογίαν το, τερερέ, δὲν θέλει νὰ σημαδεύσει ἄλλο παρὰ τὸ ἀκατονόητον τῆς Θεότητας. Διατί, καθὼς δὲν ἠμπορεῖς νὰ κατανοήσῃς ἀπὸ τὸ *τερερὲ* λόγον, μήτε εἰς τὴν θεότηταν ἠμπορεῖς νὰ κατανοήσεις […] Μὰ οἱ περισσότεροι σήμερον […] τολμῶσι νὰ εἰπώσι πὼς ὁ *τερετισμὸς* καὶ ἡ χειρονομία τῆς οὐρανομιμήτου μουσικῆς εἶναι ἄπρεπον πρᾶγμα, μὴν ἠξεύροντες μήτε τὴν αἰτίαν, μήτε τὴν ἀπόδειξιν […] ὡς τοῦτο τὸ *τερερὲ* εἶναι μιὰ συμβολικὴ μελουργία, καὶ σημαδεύει πολλὰ καὶ διάφορα πράγματα […] ὁ *τερετισμὸς* εἶναι μιὰ ζῶσα κιθάρα, καὶ σημαδεύειν τὴν θείαν Ἀνάστασιν […] μὰ τώρα ἔχουσα τὸν Χριστὸν ἀναστάντα, τὴν ὄντως ζωήν, καθὼς λέγει μονάχος τοῦ «ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ἡ ζωὴ» δὲν χρειάζεται ἀψύχων, μὰ ὡς ζῶσα μὲ ζῶσαν φωνὴν τερερίζει ἐκεῖνο τὸ μέλος ὅπου οἱ παλαιοὶ ἐτερερίμαζι μὲ τὰς κιθάρες καὶ τύμπανα." (Author's translation).

magic papyri and pagan rituals. Monk Gerasimos also explains how the *teretismata* resemble to the running of rivers, the singing of birds, and the trilling of cicadae, as well as how the *teretismata* represent the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) with the letter τ, which is equivalent to the number 300 according the Byzantine system of numbering.[83] This enables a comparison with the common practices in Western church music, specifically the melismatic sections of the 'Alleluia' of the mass in Gregorian chant. The 'Alleluia' melodies were possibly derived from the liturgy of the synagogue; these melodies exist in the Gregorian Alleluia *jubili*.[84] According to Cochrane, "These extended and elaborate vocalizations on the final vowel of the word 'Alleluia' were described by St Augustine: "He who sings a jubilus, speaks no words […] It is the voice of a heart dissolved in joy […] His joy is too great to put into words."[85] Robert Reynolds explains that, according to St Augustine, the term *jubili* expresses how "A man bursts forth in a certain voice of exultation without words […] because filled with too much joy, he cannot explain in words what it is in which he delights."[86]

Anastasiou quotes various sources in post-Byzantine codices, relevant to *teretismata*, and how these relate to birds and cicadae (see table 1).

Table 1. Quotations from post-Byzantine codices.

Quotation 1	Quotation 2	Quotation 3
"The swan, the most musical, and the glory of the saints, never stops to sing with *teretismata*, God's songs."[87]	"You after all, a swan with golden voice best sing *teretismata* of God's melos."[88]	The *teretismata* are described as "deceptive odes or immoral songs imitating the cicada and the swallow."[89]

Chrysantos remarks in his *Θεωρητικόν* about the rational and irrational nature of music: "As for the humans and the use of music for their pleasure, two ideas are distinguished, the rational and irrational."[90] For further explanation about the divine nature of the nonsense syllables and their use and origins in music, Chrysanthos quotes passages from a music grammar

83 Touliatos, "Nonsense Syllables," 240–241.
84 Marian Bennett Cochrane, "The Alleluia in Gregorian Chant," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 7, no. 3 (1954): 214.
85 Cochrane, "The Alleluia in Gregorian Chant," 214.
86 Robert D. Reynolds, "Textless Choral Music," *The Choral Journal* 41, no. 3 (2000): 19.
87 Anastasiou, *Τα Κρατήματα στην Ψαλτική Τέχνη*, 71. Author's translation. The original Greek text is: "Κύκνος ὁ μουσικώτατος, καὶ τῶν ὁσίων δόξα, ἀεὶ οὐ παύει τῷ Θεῷ ἄσματα τερετίζειν." (Xenophontos Monastery, Xenophontos 128 (c. 1761), fol. 26v.).
88 Anastasiou, *Τα Κρατήματα στην Ψαλτική Τέχνη*, 71. Author's translation. The original Greek text is: "Ὡς κύκνος χρυσεύλαλος σὺ ἐν τῷ τέλει τερετίζεις κάλλιστα μέλος Κυρίῳ." (Iviron Monastery, Iviron 980 (c. 1680), fol. 198v.).
89 Anastasiou, *Τα Κρατήματα στην Ψαλτική Τέχνη*, 71. Author's translation. The original Greek text is: "Ὠδαὶ ἀπατηλαὶ ἢ ἄσματα ἔκλυτα ἀπὸ τῆς μεταφορᾶς τοῦ τέτιγγος ἢ τῆς χελιδόνος." (Grigoriou Monastery, Grigoriou 4 (c. 1744), fol. 24v.).
90 Chrysanthos, Θεωρητικὸν Μέγα τῆς Μουσικῆς, §§ 446, 203. Author's translation. The original text in Greek: "Εἰς δέ την πρὸς ἀνθρωπαρέσκειαν χρῆσιν τῆς μουσικῆς ἰδέαι διακρίνονται δύο· Λογική, καὶ Ἄλογος."

that he does not name, but claims that the same explanation in the form of an assumption has also been formulated by John of Damascus (d. 749 CE):

> By the same way, you follow those who have the obligation to sing together the holy songs with words rational and irrational […] because the *terere* and the *tititi* and the *nenanne* and the others, typical of angelic glorification (hymns), are written upon rational and irrational words. Because those considered as nonsense words, imply something (meaning). Because, by keeping his word, someone shows who he is and what he is singing. As then, which apology will you give to the judge as the human nature happens to be unstable and fragile? So, the *terere* is produced by the *tēri rou* (meaning: 'following the flow,' 'to keep flowing'). The *toto* from *tote* (meaning: 'then'). The *titi* from *ti tini* (meaning: 'what it is'). These I found written in a grammar of music, although the same conjecture about this matter was also made by John of Damascus.[91]

Secular kratēmata as autonomous post-Byzantine music compositions

In 2011, Kyriakos Kalaitzidis, another student of Grigorios Stathis in the Department of Musicology at the University of Athens, defended a very rigorous work on the topic of oriental secular music discovered in post-Byzantine music manuscripts.[92] The thesis was published in 2016 in German and translated into English by Kiriaki Koubaroulis and Dimitri Koubaroulis.[93] In this work, Kalaitzidis traces the appearance and use of parasēmantiki Byzantine music notation in post-Byzantine manuscripts with compositions of secular music by eighty eponymous oriental composers of various ethnicities (Greek, Turkish, Iranian, Armenian, Jewish, etc.).[94]

Kalaitzidis states that the appearance of nonsense syllables in the text, the melismatic character and the presence of extra-ecclesiastical musical names in the discovered *kratēmata*, are indications of their secular nature. The presence of foreign language syllables in the text such as, ντιλ, ντος, το, γιαλλαλλι, ντος, τουμ, για, λα, λλα, λλε, τοστουμ, γελελα, etc., excludes their relationship to worship and indicates secular melos.[95] The scholar mentions that the writing of secular music in manuscripts was a result

91 Chrysanthos Θεωρητικὸν Μέγα τῆς Μουσικῆς, §§ 446, 203. Author's translation. The original text in Greek: "Οὕτῳ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἑπόμενοι τούτοις, καὶ συναμιλλώμενοι, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου καὶ πολλῆς εὐλαβείας ὀφείλομεν ἵστασθαι, τὰ ἅγια συνάδοντες ἄσματα, ἐν λέξεσι σημαντοὶς καὶ ἀσήμαντοις […] Τὸ γὰρ *τερερε*, καί το, *τοτοτο*, καὶ τὸ *τιτιτι*, καὶ τὸ *νεναννε*, καὶ τὰ λοιπά, εἰς τύπον ἐκείνων τῶν ἀγγελικῶν δοξολογιῶν, τῶν σημαντοὶς καὶ ἀσήμαντοις λέξεσι γινομένων. Εἶ καὶ αί ἀσήμαντοι δοκοῦσαι λέξεις, αἰνίττονται τί. Τήρει γὰρ φησι, τίνι παρίστασαι καὶ τί προσάδεις. Καὶ τότε πὼς ἀπολογήσει τὸ κριτή, ρευστὴ γὲ φύσις καὶ διαλτήρει γὰρ φησι, τίνι παρίστασαι καὶ τί προσάδεις. Καὶ τότε πὼς ἀπολογήσει το κριτή, ρευστὴ γὲ φύσις καὶ διαλυομένη τυγχάνων ὢ ἄνθρωπε; Παράγεται γούν το μὲν *τερερε*, ἀπὸ τοῦ τήρει ρού˙ τὸ δέ, *τοτο*, ἀπὸ τοῦ τότε˙ τὸ δὲ τιτι ἀπὸ τοῦ τί τίνι. Εὗρον αὐτὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τίνι γραμματικῇ τῆς Μουσικῆς˙ ὅμως ἐλήφθησαν, ἐξ ὧν περὶ τῆς τοιαύτης ὑποθέσεως εἴρηκεν Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός."

92 Kalaitzidis, *Κοσμική Μουσική στη Χειρόγραφη Παράδοση της Ψαλτικής Τέχνης (ιε΄- ιθ΄αι.)*.

93 Kalaitzidis, *Post-Byzantine Music Manuscripts*.

94 The oldest sample of secular music written in Byzantine notation and also the oldest notated sample of Persian music, "Περσικόν," is found in EBE 2401 (late 14th–early 15th century), fol. 122v., accessed August 14, 2024. https://digitalcollections.nlg.gr/nlg-repo/dl/el/browse/3437. See also Kalaitzidis, *Post-Byzantine Music Manuscripts*, 341.

95 Kalaitzidis, *Κοσμική Μουσική*, 61.

of the evolution of the *kratēmata*, which became the linking point between ecclesiastical and secular Byzantine music. According to Kalaitzidis, in the strict environment of the Orthodox Church, where instruments were banned, the *kratēmata* offered the composers the chance for artistic expression through the composition of music released from the fetters of the poetic text.[96]

The interaction between religious and secular life was constant in Byzantium and the mutual influence of music from both spheres was unavoidable. For this reason and in order to face and fight heresies, the fathers of the Church adopted secular melodic elements from e.g., the thymelic scenes, the Hippodrome, or the megalynarion of the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple. The influences operated from both sides and the psaltic art was the main influential power on secular music during the centuries.[97]

In this cultural framework, the ecclesiastical composers very often were inspired by the sounds of the secular music melodies, a trend which spread during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The *kratēmata* of these centuries do not obey a particular morphological form and incorporate and adopt melismatic elements of extra-Byzantine (secular) music.[98] The wide appearance of secular *kratēmata* in post-Byzantine music indicates the freedom and the opportunities that they offered to the composer, due to their rhythmical simplicity based on the doubling or quadrupling of the old neumatic signs.[99]

Conclusions

The term *teretismos* has two dimensions, one hermeneutic and one semiotic. Both are encountered and described by Bryennios in his treatise, the *Harmonics.* The *kratēmata* in the case of *The Service of the Furnace* seem to function as instrumental sections interpolated between the music and recited parts of the liturgical drama's narration and plot, similar to operatic narration. Also, they seem to be improvised and unwritten. The *ēchēmata* are intonation formulae which can be extended to shorter—compared to the *kratēmata*—interpolating melodic parts (probably improvised). The doubling of the voices in octaves of the children and cantors resembles the device of *teretismos* as described by Bryennios, but with two voices instead of one voice and a string instrument. The doubling of the voices could be an early form of organum in Byzantine music. Moreover, the *kratēmata* function as interpolated parts between the *Service*'s other various parts, similar to operatic instrumental parts. The *ēchēmata* are registered since the tenth century as intonation formulae, and in the case of the description by Constantine Porphyrogennetos, used as recited intonation formulae

96 Kalaitzidis, *Κοσμική Μουσική*, 128.
97 Kalaitzidis, *Κοσμική Μουσική*, 56–57.
98 Kalaitzidis, *Κοσμική Μουσική*, 128–129.
99 Kalaitzidis, *Κοσμική Μουσική*, 471–476.

at secular ceremonies. Such observations reinforce the theories about the close relationship between secular Byzantine music and the nonsense syllables.

The devices of *idée fixe*, *leitmotif* and *word painting* cannot categorically describe the *kratēmata*. The device of what has later been termed "program music" seems applicable for the *kratēmata* as they are distinguished from *teretismos.* In the case where they bear extra-musical features, this device is even more applicable.

The theological and esoteric state of the divine seems to be well-expressed through nonsense syllables, as the non-verbal, theological, and ritual character of the *teretismos*, and the wordless *jubili* of the nonsense syllables in Byzantine music, are evidenced by various Byzantine and post-Byzantine textual sources.

Overall conclusions and new historical explanation about the role and evolution of nonsense syllables in Byzantine music

The nonsense syllables in Byzantine music seem to have multiple meaningful functions, despite their non-semantic (non-lexical) and irrational character. They seem to have functioned as incantations and to have been associated with paganism and ritual. The nonsense syllables have been used for solmization practices and have aimed to mimic nature, such as cicadae and different birds. The term *τερετισμός*, derived from the verb *τερετίζω* (denoting a mimicking of the sounds of cicadae and birds), has both hermeneutic and semiotic functions. The former resembles a music technical feature, a trill-like singing. The latter constitutes an attempt to mimic a specific element of nature.

The nonsense syllables in ancient Greek music functioned as incantations and were linked to the seven vowels of the Greek alphabet in gnostic music. The most appropriate consonant to juxtapose the vowels, was *τ*, the consonant that sounds like a string instrument and precedes the vowels in all Greek articles. The selection of the consonant *τ* created the combinations of syllables *τα, τε, τη*, and *τω*. The latter were used in a solmization music system which was based on the four vowels and the consonant *τ* used for singing the music intervals.[100]

The *τερετίσματα* (plural of *τερετισμός* or *τερέτισμα*), reappear in the Kalophonic melodic style of Byzantine chant during the fourteenth century and evolve further to independent and freely composed melismatic compositions based on nonsense syllables, mainly *τε, ρε, ρο, τι, ρι*, etc. The practice of nonsense syllables was further evolved into the *kratēmata*. Apart from the consonant *tau* and *rau*, other letters such as χ, ου, and γγ were in use. The *kratēmata* were interpolated ornamentation parts and evolved to become autonomous eponymous melismatic compositions. The echoing

100 Touliatos, "Nonsense syllables," 234–236.

of the sound of musical instruments in the *kratēmata* is similar to the tone painting in programmatic music. Another category of nonsense syllables in Byzantine music, are the *ēchēmata*, which function as intonation formulae for each *ēchos*. Various scholars have formulated theoretical hypotheses about the origin of *kratēmata* mainly from the *ēchēmata*, but such hypotheses need deeper investigations before any conclusions may be drawn with certainty.

Those syllables have constituted distinctive features of the "Kalophonic melodic style" of Byzantine chant and they have functioned as interpolating ornamentation parts and autonomous eponymous melismatic compositions in the t*eretismata* and *kratēmata.* In the *kratēmata*, the nonsense syllables obtained various roles and could function as improvisation parts, instrumental interpolating parts instead of instruments in between vocal parts, and introductive parts in a melic or autonomous composition. The *kratēmata* are carriers of the expression of certain sentimental states, moods, sounds of instruments, images, etc. It seems that from these observations, the *kratēmata* could be described by the term "painting music." Especially, during the post-Byzantine era, the tradition of the *kratēmata* gave rise to a new style of music, the secular *kratēmata.*

The theory about the *kratēmata* as the linkage point between ecclesiastical and secular Byzantine music seems the most predominant and profound, if we trace their evolutionary processes and take—without any prejudice—all the current theoretical considerations and findings on the topic. Further research could possibly enlighten this very interesting affiliation. The research and critical study of sources dealing with other performative arts in Byzantium can offer a different view and a more holistic perspective on the topic.

My hypothesis, which builds on the synthesis and analysis above and which may be used as the foundation for further research about the emergence of nonsense syllables in Byzantine music, could be summarized thus:

The nonsense syllables in Greek music are traced in antiquity as incantantory and solmization syllables based on the Greek vowels, as argued by Diane Touliatos. Their existence and practical significance are encountered in Byzantium in *teretismos*, as Bryennios describes it in his *Harmonics*, a treatise heavily influenced by Quintilianus's treatise and his observations about the combination of the four vowels α, ε, η, and ω with the consonant τ.

The *ēchēmata*, as described by Constantine Porphyrogennetos, were in use in secular ceremonies since the ninth or tenth century. The *kratēmata* appear later and in parallel orbits with the *ēchēmata* in ecclesiastical music, but gradually those two terms coincide during the fourteenth century. The origin of the *ēchēmata* could be traced to the tradition and origin of the intonation formulae in Byzantine music. The *kratēmata* do not seem to originate from the *ēchēmata*, but rather from the *teretismata*, as Touliatos also claims. This is also indicated by the different nonsense syllables found in

kratēmata compared to those found in the *ēchēmata*. Apart from intonation formulae, the *ēchēmata* seem to evolve into improvised vocal sections, shorter than *kratēmata*. The *kratēmata* were thus longer interpolating sections which also could be based on improvisation. Furthermore, the *kratēmata* could be autonomous compositions.

The *teretismata* were in use in Byzantium due to their pagan, ritual and incantational character, and also as solmization mnemonic devices. Their mystic and divine character and their function as mimeses of the nature were not abandoned but conveyed and passed to the *kratēmata*, something that is testified to in various Byzantine manuscripts and sources describing the phenomenon of *teretismos* (mimicking cicada or birds) and the *glossolalia* (mimicking the angels). This is in accordance with the aesthetics of *hesychasm*, the spiritual movement from the late Byzantine period, meaning 'esoteric calm' or 'tranquility.' In order to describe the non-verbal, irrational and ritual character of the nonsense syllables in music, aiming to mimic nature, the author proposes the use of the term "mental representations," while the term "melotropic representations" is proposed for *teretismata* and the *kratēmata* (see also fig. 5).

The Byzantine composers of the Kalophonic style, seem to have gradually realized the potential of the representational dynamics of the nonsense syllables, not only to represent sounds and realities of nature but also, other mental and aesthetical categories and notions. This potential developed into composed *kratēmata* bearing extra-musical names. We cannot be sure if the ban of secular music from Orthodox rituals or the above-mentioned historical and cultural coincidence—or both, or neither—were the generative cause for the emergence and the development of the *kratēmata*, but the result was, in effect, an early type of programmatic or mimetic vocal music, aimed at representing various notions, concepts, or entities.[101]

At the same time, this was also an evolutionary leap which could be described in the following terms: The vocal music of the *kratēmata* functions as instrumental programme music or instrumental music parts, replacing in some cases, and when it is needed, those parts missing from vocal music.[102] From this point of view, the *kratēmata* directly reflect instrumental notated artistic music, and not non-religious secular Byzantine music in the general meaning of the term (that includes songs accompanied by instruments). I shall not overlook the fact that secular Byzantine music was rich and active and it is very possible that it borrowed from ecclesiastical music through a flowing exchange of musical ideas (e.g., sounds of

101 "In the sense of Peirce's semiotic of signs. An information-carrying 'sign' (which may be visual or auditory, for example, such as a representation, a sound or word)." In Iain Morley, *The Prehistory of Music* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

102 In the sense of instrumental music without words, performed by voices singing on non-lexical syllables, i.e. a type of very early programme music, not in the strict sense of 19th-century programme music, which does not include music that represents extra-musical concepts or is merely imitative. See also Britannica, s.v. "Program music," accessed August 23, 2024.; Grove Music Online, "Programme music," accessed August 23, 2024.

instruments). However, when it happened, the 'secular' elements were absorbed by the Byzantine ecclesiastical composers and transformed into the *kratēmata*. This may explain the great lack of manuscripts containing secular Byzantine music.

The music of the *kratēmata* is the 'rational' continuation of the *teretismata*, as the former reflect notions of artistic expression through complete instrumental and/or programme-music compositions, while the latter echo a more 'irrational' and pagan character. The proposed evolutionary scheme is in accordance with the further evolution of the *kratēmata* of the post-Byzantine era into complete secular compositions notated by the Byzantine *parasimantikē*.

The findings of the present study, consisting both of a critically examined synthesis of previous theories, and with new analysis of sources not hitherto considered, may be depicted in the following diagram (fig. 5).

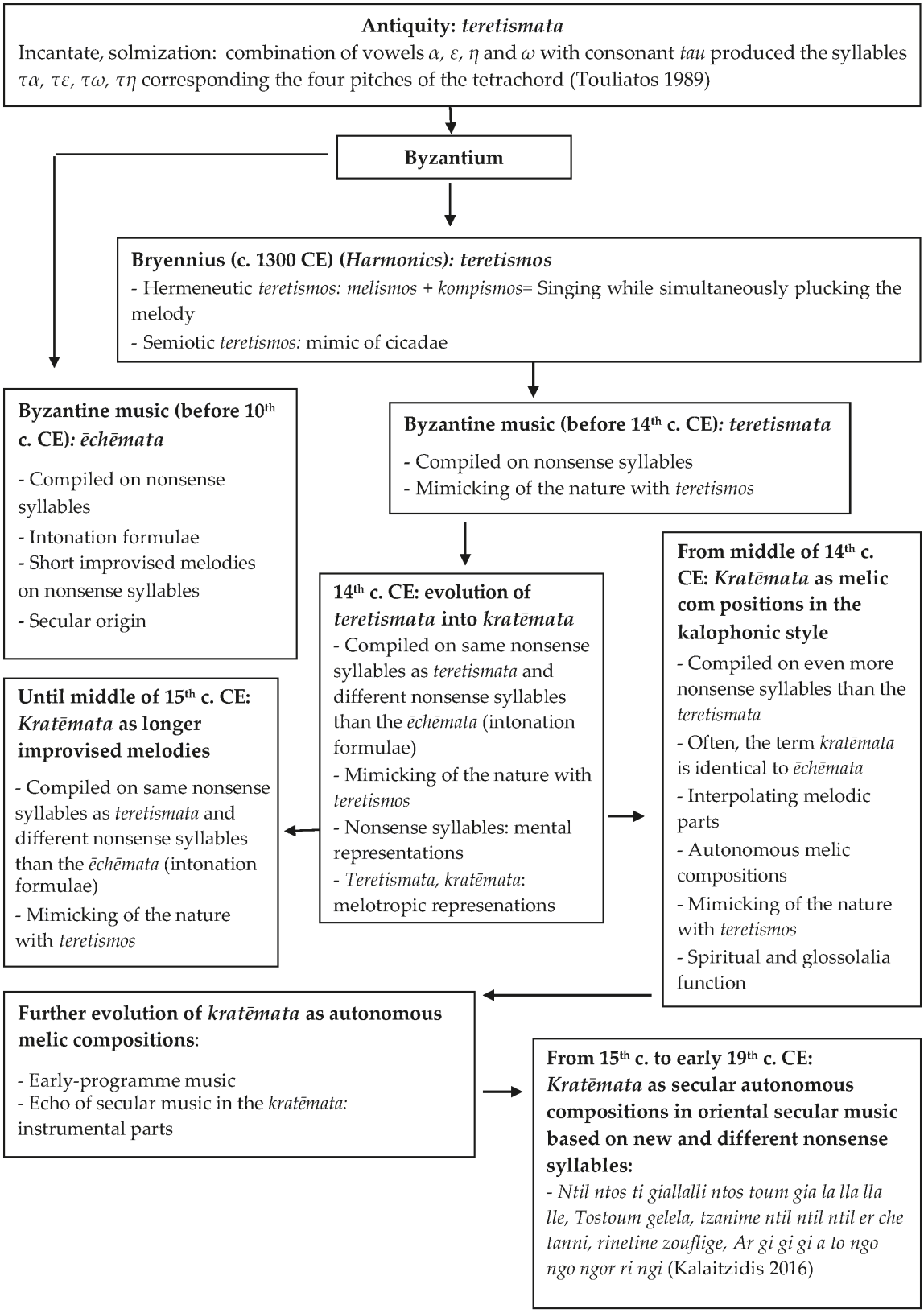

Figure 5. Hypothesis by Varelas (2022)

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Eating the Gospel: Food for Thought in Romanos the Melodist

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Abstract

A series of seven interconnected meditations reflects on what eating, drinking, and tasting could mean for Christian theologizing. What might be the ecological implications of a theology that takes eating and digestion more seriously? The reflections are carried out in company with Romanos the Melodist and the broader Romanos tradition.

Keywords

Romanos the Melodist; eating; drinking; dualism; ecology

I

I have to eat and drink. To live is to consume nutrients and water. No one can avoid it. These things characterize every living creature. The philosopher Aristotle imagined that there were different kinds of souls among beings—plants, animals, and humans—but what they all shared was the need for nourishment.[1] They all need to eat and drink. Nourishment, then, is a basic necessity of the soul. And for the late ancient poet Romanos the Melodist, eating is believing.

Romanos has been a celebrated and canonized hymnographer since his lifetime in the sixth century. In an anonymous kontakion written for the commemoration of St Romanos himself, a later poet writes:

> The righteous [Romanos] flourished in the world like a date palm,
> with the sweet fruit of song, which is eaten insatiably.
> And from his tongue, as the writing says,
> gushed honey and milk, the stuff that Scripture suckles.

1 Aristotle, *On the Soul* II.

He distributed teaching in abundance
to all the hungry, a food of beauty;
he offered an inexhaustible table of grace.[2]

Romanos was a palm tree that provided dates for the world; indeed, he provided milk and honey in cooperation with Scripture. His sweetness adds to biblical sweetness. With the ironic twist in this piece, the Melodist's own tongue provides sweet taste for other tongues to indulge, food for other mouths to swallow. It is almost as if he were a bird feeding his chicks from his own beak.

Romanos's characters are creatures of longing; they yearn to see, to touch, to kiss and, not least, they hunger and thirst for sweetness.[3] His songs imagine sensual desire to be religious desire. The Melodist has a developed language of eating and drinking, of anticipated meals and enjoyable feasts. He thinks with the material world and is deeply rooted in sensual reality. With the staging of gustatory expectations and excitement, the kontakia invite the listener to long with the characters. In the famous first Nativity hymn the singer exclaims:

there [in Bethlehem] an undug well was discovered,
from which David yearned to drink;
there a virgin who gave birth to a baby,
quenched both Adam's and David's thirst.[4]

Those who sing with Romanos, thirst for the Virgin and her Son, a secret well, hidden in a cave, in the deep flesh of the Mother. As they sing or listen, they surrender themselves to their own senses, urges, and what Patricia Cox Miller calls their "corporeal imagination."[5]

II

In Romanos's telling, the harlot who anointed Christ is bursting with erotic love for the man she is about to massage, longing for intimacy with him. But she is also hungry when she physically meets Christ at the table. Imagined as a life-changing event, their encounter responds to all her yearnings:

2 Anonymous, *On Saint Romanos* 1. This and other Romanos translations are, unless otherwise noted, from Thomas Arentzen, *Romanos the Melodist: Songs about Women* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 83. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2024).

3 For a study of taste in Romanos, see Thomas Arentzen, "Struggling with Romanos's 'Dagger of Taste,'" in *Knowing Bodies, Passionate Souls: Sense Perceptions in Byzantium*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and Margaret Mullett (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia, 2017), 169–82; for other desires, see Thomas Arentzen, "Sex and the City: Intercourse in Holy Week," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 28, no. 1 (2020): 115–47; for the intersection of eating, other desires, and compunction, see Andrew Mellas, *Liturgy and the Emotions in Byzantium: Compunction and Hymnody* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 97–103.

4 Romanos, *On the Nativity (Mary and the Magi)* 1.

5 Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

> The scent from the table of Christ excited
> the straying woman who was now steadfast,
> in the beginning a dog, in the end a lamb,
> a slave and a daughter, both harlot and chaste.
> So, in greedy pursuit, she arrives at the table
> and forsaking the crumbs underneath, she takes up the bread.
> Hungrier than the Canaanite woman once was,
> she fed her empty soul, and thus she believed.[6]

The harlot catches the scent of bread, and as elsewhere, eucharistic imagery breaks into the narrative; her appetite is aroused by the tickling of her senses. Body and soul collapse into one as she feeds her soul by corporeal eating; profane and religious realms cannot be distinguished as hunger and eating are identified with believing. For Romanos, faith is not a cognitive process; it does not emerge from rational deliberation. Faith is a bodily craving, a natural hunger.

The poet chose to stage another New Testament woman too in his poetry, one who is already immersed in yearning, namely the Samaritan woman. Her desire consists of thirst:

> By [Christ's] words the Samaritan was inflamed with thirst,
> and the order was reversed: she who offered water first
> was now thirsting, and he who thirsted from the start, suddenly offers it.
> She falls down before him: "Give me your water, sir,
> so I need no longer run to this well!"
>
> [Christ replies:]
> "I won't censure your thirst, I who with thirst drew you to thirsting.
> I acted out thirst, and I did feel thirsty,
> to show you your thirsting."[7]

For the poet, the encounter between a Samaritan woman and a Jewish man at a well offers the possibility for an intricate dialogue of thirst. Christ, who was originally thirsty, creates thirst in her. They both thirst, albeit in different ways. Thirst pulls him to her, but thirst is also what eventually pulls her back to him and his living water. She is then ready to drink his water. His thirst meets hers. Her water his.

Both these women abandon their other men or lovers to embrace Christ, but their encounters are not imagined as conversions into a community or as acceptance of certain dogma. They find Christ in their hunger and in their thirst. God longs for bodies as bodies long for God.

6 Romanos, *On the Harlot* 3.
7 Romanos, *On the Samaritan Woman* 10–11.

And what Romanos presents are not allegories, not physical symbols of an altogether different spiritual world. The hunger is concrete—and corporeal; the thirst is concrete—and corporeal; and both color the broader desire for intimacy. Romanos follows the logic of the Eucharist (if I may call it that): the chalice holds bread and wine—but at the same time it holds body and blood. Bread and wine do not symbolize Christ in any semiotic sense; a desire for communion, is a desire for both: body and bread, blood and wine.

The faithful, with all their desires and needs, may be "depicted in true colors," the poet says, by the harlot and the Samaritan woman with their respective hunger and thirst.

III

Now, one might ask: Why does this matter? Why do we have to talk about taste, about eating, drinking, and all those bodily senses and cravings? Materiality has been on scholars' lips for decades already. Why do we care? An immediate answer has to do with the dualism of Western modernity, which may have its roots somewhere in antiquity, but which crystalizes with Cartesian philosophy and its mechanistic worldview. This dualism threatens to divorce the rational spiritual realm from the material sensual realm. Everything material is subject to the jurisdiction of rational thought. Animals, plants, and babies are irrational and thus they ultimately lack any real value. After such a divorce—which has arguably, at least to a certain degree, taken place in modernity—the material world is left dead and void.

In the current moment of ecological crisis, a devaluation of everything beyond the human spirit or rationality represents a fatal move. If the material world is, as it were, empty, there is no reason for us to care about the creation around us, for as long as it is irrational—or not as rational as humans are—it carries no weight. This line of thinking has led us moderns to inflict enormous amounts of suffering on other animals. This line of thinking ultimately makes the Incarnation superfluous. This line of thinking does not make us good readers of Byzantine texts, either. And, in fact, with this line of thinking, there is no reason for us to care about our human bodies and our senses, for they are as material and empty as the rest of creation.

But is this the kind of creation God made? An empty void? Was that not what came before creation, when the earth was formless and void? Did God not create precious creatures? In his first *Hexaemeron* homily, Basil of Caesarea meditates on creation. He notes: "Take away black, cold, weight, density, the qualities which concern taste … and the phenomenon itself vanishes."[8] For Basil, we *are* these qualities; we do not hide behind them, as spirits that happen to be draped in matter. Creation is these various forms and qualities.

8 Basil, *Hexaemeron* I 8.20–28; trans. from NPNF II, vol. 8.

Our material bodies, like the lilies of the field—variously ensouled—lean into God.

IV

Eating and drinking bring about change. Drinking changes people. Some of Romanos's women find themselves intoxicated or unable to behave in a sober way. It is not a question of drinking per se, but of reaching an emotional climax, a point where drunkenness is the only suitable metaphor, finding oneself beyond rational control.

When Anna, the Virgin's mother, has given birth, she feels woozy and identifies herself with the Old Testament Hannah, Samuel's mother, who in a similar situation prayed in a frenzy, ecstatically but silently—in a way that made the priest Eli think she was drunk:

> "You have heard me, Master, like the Anna [i.e. Hannah] whom Eli accused of drunkenness.
>
> She promised Samuel to the Lord as a priest
>
> when he was born. Like her I have now
>
> received your gift"[9]

Anna is not the only one who borders on intoxication. The harlot who anointed Christ, finds herself in the same influenced state, not drunk, but clearly not sober, overwhelmed by divine grace:

> "My God is staying in the house of Simon.
>
> I shall hurry to him and weep like Anna in her barrenness.
>
> Though Simon may think I am drunk,
>
> as Eli once thought Hannah; I too will continue praying
>
> in silence, calling out …"[10]

Her sobriety is drunk. Her silence is calling out. Her piety is her desire.

While these two women were paradoxically self-contained in their intoxication, the Samaritan woman does not stay silent. She returns from the well and rowdily shouts to the folks back in town:

> She thirsts, yet pours till it spills, hasn't drunk, but offers a drink,
>
> has not tasted, but shouts like a drunk to her compatriots,
>
> "Come, see the stream that I have discovered!"[11]

Romanos gestures toward holy folly, the ability to love in irrational ways and move beyond the boundaries of cerebral human sobriety. Drinking is believing. Maybe not literally, but at least in simile, as if...

---

9 Romanos, *On the Nativity of the Theotokos* 6.
10 Romanos, *On the Harlot* 8.
11 Romanos, *On the Samaritan Woman* 2.

V

The Byzantine intellectual Michael Psellos (ca. 1018–1081) was also a poet. In a short epigram he begged the Theotokos to grant him an inspiration comparable to the one she had once bestowed upon Romanos:

> To Romanos, Lady, your worshipper of old,
> you gave a written document to eat;
> now fill my cup, O Virgin, to the brim
> with the sweet vintage drafts of wisdom.[12]

Psellos's piece, of course, refers to the legend about the young untalented Romanos, whose voice was hoarse and tone-deaf: One Christmas night, the Mother of God appeared to him and offered him a scroll to eat. Having swallowed it, he brimmed with song, and his famous Christmas hymn flowed from his lips.[13] He ate and turned to song. In a way he became song, at least to posterity. Eating is transformation. As is drinking. Or so Psellos believed.

The modern theorist Mikhail Bakhtin thought of eating in grotesque terms. He writes: "In the act of eating, the body transgresses . . . its own limits: it swallows, devours, rends the world apart, is enriched and grows at the world's expense."[14] Eating shows us a world in flux, a world in which one becomes the other, where one being is merged into another.

Plenty of transformative devouring takes place in Romanos's poetry. According to one resurrection hymn, the monstrous Hades gulps down Christ in his belly:

> Hades takes Christ like any of the earthborn;
> he swallows the heavenly bread like a bait
> and gets wounded by the hook of divinity.
> With a tormented voice Hades cries out:
> "I am pierced in the stomach; I can't digest the one I've swallowed;
> what I've eaten has become strange food for me.
> …
> I vomit out Christ and all who belong to him."[15]

So all the dead are puked out from Hades' belly, and the untasteful scene transforms the monster figure into an empty shell. In the next stanzas,

12 For the Greek text, see José Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 190; trans. Paul Magdalino, "The Liturgical Poetics of an Elite Religious Confraternity," in *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond*, ed. Teresa Shawcross and Ida Toth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 126. Magdalino is not convinced that Psellos is the author of this poem.

13 Thomas Arentzen, *The Virgin in Song: Mary and the Poetry of Romanos the Melodist* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), especially 1–6. We do not know when this legend first started circulating, but the epigram seems to presuppose an already existing story.

14 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), 281.

15 Romanos, *On the Resurrection (Adam and Hades)* 7–9; my trans.

Hades lies naked on the ground, derided. Eating is not a risk-free activity. Hades is transformed into a victim of his own consumption.

VI

We do not have to read eating grotesquely. Annemarie Mol approaches it differently. She writes:

> *I eat an apple*. Is the agency in the *I* or in the *apple*? I eat, for sure, but without apples before long there would be no "I" left. And it is even more complicated. For how to separate us out to begin with, the apple and me? One moment this may be possible: here is the apple, there am I. But a little later (bite, chew, swallow) I have become (made out of) apple; while the apple is (a part of) me. *Transubstantiation*. What about that for a model to think with?[16]

Eating is literally a transformative process, where plants and animals become me as I swallow, or I become them if they swallow me. As Mol says elsewhere, "My food transubstantiates me."[17] In our need for eating or taking nourishment, God reveals that beings and species depend on each other and belong to each other and share in each other's existences and agencies. Eating shows us that we are not independent, not individuals, not any of those modern human mythological names that we have given to ourselves. "To live," says the American poet Wendell Berry, "we must daily break the body and shed the blood of Creation."[18] We are all deeply interwoven. And, of course, this is also the secret of the eucharistic communion: We are given a body, that is seen and tasted, to be corporeally eaten.[19]

When Jesus is walking toward the cross, he is facing a human death, a bodily transformation and disintegration, nailed to a tree, pierced. But Romanos lets him speak with his mother as he walks, and he describes his own bodily conception saying to her:

> Don't let the day of my passion seem bitter;
> for this I came down from heaven—sweet, like manna,
> not on Mount Sinai, but in your belly.
> Within it I was curdled, as David foretold. Think, noble one,
> of the curdled mountain. I am here,
> for as Word I became flesh in you.
> In that, I suffer, and in that, I save.[20]

16 Annemarie Mol, "I Eat an Apple. On Theorizing Subjectivities," *Subjectivity* 22 (2008): 30.
17 Annemarie Mol, *Eating in Theory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 44.
18 Wendell Berry, *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural* (New York: North Point Press, 1981), 281.
19 For a sacramental Orthodox eco-theology, see John Chryssavgis, *Creation as Sacrament: Reflections on Ecology and Spirituality* (London: T&T Clark, 2019), esp. 125–8; for similar thoughts in a very different register, see Catherine Keller, "Tingles of Matter, Tangles of Theology," in *Entangled Worlds: Religion, Science, and New Materialisms*, ed. Catherine Keller and Mary-Jane Rubenstein (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 111–35.
20 Romanos, *On the Way to Golgotha* 6.

This stanza is dense. Christ himself is stretched out between sweet and bitter, between Old Testament food and New Testament nourishment. It describes a transformative curdling in the flesh of Mary—just before the transformation in the crucifixion. Christ's "curdling" feeds on an ancient idea of conception which goes back at least to Aristotle:[21] as rennin curdles milk into cheese, semen curdles female fluidity into flesh. Romanos finds this process prophesied in Psalm 67.16 (LXX). As Christ is approaching the sacrifice in this kontakion, the poet subtly brings taste to mind. The listener is brought beyond the bitterness of suffering to the sweetness of his cheese, via the manna. The song fuses the Incarnation and the eucharistic transformation into a single gustatory movement.

Another kontakion tells of Christ's birth. The Mother of God proudly holds her Son:

> The [Virgin] Vine held in her arms, as in branches,
> the Cluster of Grapes she grew without cultivation
> and said, "You are my fruit!"[22]

The imagery is joyful here at the outset—fruit is brought forth to the world, the sweet grapes that Mary holds in her arms. Jesus comes with a delightful taste. But eventually the Christ child has to tell her about his own suffering and death. And this, of course, scares his mother:

> She cried, "My sweet Bunch of Grapes, don't let the lawless crush you!"[23]

But the listeners know that he must be crushed, as a winemaker would know that the grapes must be crushed in order for wine to be made. Romanos compares Christ's crucifixion to the crushing of grapes. Without him saying so, then, his audience might understand that the violent destruction would eventually yield wine.

Central to the Christian understanding of the Eucharist is the common wisdom that we are what we eat. Without this insight, the chalice would not make the faithful participate in the body and blood of Christ. The Eucharist, like language, is a profound instance of transformation. Yeast and humans transform plants into bread and wine. The Spirit, in turn, transforms the transformed plants and fungus into body and blood. And by eating, Christian humans are transformed as participants in the transformed transformation. We become what we eat. Romanos became song. And palm dates.

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21 Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* 1.20; for Romanos's and other uses of the "curdled mountain," see Ephrem Lash, "Mary in Eastern Church Literature," in *Mary in Doctrine and Devotion: Papers of the Liverpool Congress, 1989, of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, ed. Alberic Stockpoole (Dublin: Columba Press, 1990), 70–1.

22 Romanos, *On the Nativity (Mary with Adam and Eve)* 1.

23 Romanos, *On the Nativity (Mary with Adam and Eve)* 17.

VII

"To eat is to savor *and* struggle with the mystery of creatureliness," says Norman Wirzba.[24] To consider the religious significance of taste, food, and nourishment ultimately means to consider how devotion emerges from the depths of our embodied human state. In a sound Christian anthropology, there is hunger in the soul and faith in the body. Romanos taught this to our ancestors long before Descartes learned to say 'cogito.'

It is also to consider how other bodies intersect with our bodies, and vice versa. This is the mystery of the Eucharist: the cheese in the mountain of flesh, the fruit crushed, the fungus of fermentation multiplying when eating the sweetness of the grapes and the grains, the divine and the wine, the communion of transformation. The Eucharist indicates our fundamental dependence on God, but also our radical dependence on other beings. Eating we participate in them, remaining in communion with them, as we partake of the body and blood.

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Between heaven and earth: Beauty in Orthodox sacred music

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Abstract

Orthodoxy has always been a theology of beauty. Human creativity is a response to the divine beauty manifested above all in the creation, which God declared "good," as it inspires us with awe and invites a eucharistic response. Creating beauty is part of our imitation of Christ. In liturgical services, the conjunction of music and text form an indissoluble and equal partnership serving the unfolding Logos. The kind of beauty that leads to prayer and transcendence is brought about by (among other things) silence (understood as *hesychia* or inner tranquility), correct breathing and frisson, understood as a physical reaction triggered by a sense of wonder similar to that experienced by the crowds who heard Christ's teaching.

Keywords

Beauty, Creation, Logos, silence, breath, frisson

Beauty of holiness

Orthodoxy has always been a theology of beauty. This motif runs like a golden thread through Judeo-Christian tradition, starting in scripture and continuing with the Church fathers and later with theologians, artists and intellectuals. The psalmist bids us to "worship the Lord in the beauty (or splendour) of holiness."[1] Likewise, when the ambassadors sent by St Vladimir, Prince of Kyiv, attended a service in the cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, they wrote:

1 Psalm 96:9. Bible quotations in this paper follow the King James Version. Many modern translations translate the Hebrew word *hadarah* as "splendour." The Septuagint version (Psalm 95:9) is rendered into English as: "Do obeisance to the Lord in his holy court." See, Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

> We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendour or beauty anywhere upon earth. We cannot describe it to you: only this we know, that God dwells there among humans, and that their service surpasses the worship of all other places. For we cannot forget that beauty.[2]

God with us! Though unschooled in Christian doctrine, the witnesses present a powerful testimony of God's immanence.

Until recently, beauty in the context of Orthodox worship was discussed more extensively with regard to icons than music,[3] but this gap is now being rapidly filled.[4] In this paper I will try to say some more about what kind of beauty we should seek to achieve in sacred and liturgical music and how this can be done.

Given the relationship between beauty and creativity, the creation serves as a good point of departure. After each day, God looked on his creative act and pronounced it to be "good" and "very good."[5] The Septuagint uses the word *kalos*, which can be translated as "beautiful" or "good." Indeed, before the Fall, there is no distinction between beauty, goodness and truth. The primary response of creation, with humanity as its steward, is awe and wonder leading to gratitude. "How manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all," we sing at Vespers.[6] For Socrates, "wonder is only the beginning of philosophy."[7] But wonder is also the beginning of theology, the arts and sciences, and the more we advance in these fields, the greater our sense of wonder. Our "fear of the Lord," including our wonder and reverence, is the beginning of the wisdom we need to undertake any creative work.[8]

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2 Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 264. Original text found in the Russian Primary Chronicle.

3 Among the many writings concerning iconography, see especially Paul Evdokimov, *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty*, trans. Steven Bigham (Redondo Beach, CA: Oakwood Publications, 1996); Aidan Hart, *Beauty, Spirit, Matter: Icons in the Modern World* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2014); Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, trans. Anthony Gythiel and Elizabeth Meyendorff (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992).

4 The most substantial discussion of music styles of Orthodox sacred music is Nicolas Lossky, *Essai sur une théologie de la musique liturgique: perspective Orthodoxe* (Paris: Cerf, 2003), which can be read alongside the essays by Lossky's musical mentor, Maxime Kovalevsky, in *Retrouver la source oubliée: paroles sur la liturgie d'un homme qui chante Dieu* (Paris: Editions "Présence Orthodoxe," 1984). Other recent contributions include Ivan Moody, "Music, beauty and prayer," *JISOCM* 2 (2016): 51–6; Moody, "The Seraphim above: some perspectives on the theology of Orthodox church music," *Religions* 6 (2015): 350–64; Thomas Hopko, "Creativity and ascetiscism," *Psalm* 9, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 1–5; Damaskinos Olkinuora, "Orthodox chanters as divine instruments: Pseudo-Dionysios and beyond," in *Musikk og religion: Tekster om musikk i religion og religion i musikk*, eds. H. Holm and Ø. Varkøy (Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk, 2022), 183–200; Seppälä, *The Song of Fire and Clay: Perspectives of Understanding Orthodox Church Singing*, trans. Maria Takala-Roszczenko (University of Joensuu, 2005). Fr Michele Fortounatto's *Cours de Musicologie*, cited in Moody, "The Seraphim above," is not available at the time of writing, but see the website dedicated to Fortounatto's work, https://www.londonliturgy.com.

5 Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25. The Hebrew words are *tov* ("good") and *meod tov* ("very good"). In the Septuagint, the Greek word for "good," *kalos*, can also be translated as "beautiful".

6 Psalm 104:24.

7 Plato, *Theaetetus*, 155d. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 982b: "It is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize."

8 One cannot consider creativity, and hence beauty, apart from wisdom, *Sophia*: Isaac Skidmore, "Beauty will save the Church," *In Communion* 60 (Spring 2011).

As many writers have already noted,[9] to worship God is to mystically join ourselves with the unseen spiritual orders (angels, cherubim, seraphim) in the unceasing worship round the throne of God, to capture in our music the reflection of his splendour and to offer it back to him in so far as we are able. The veil of the material world, which conceals the divine essences and shields us from the uncreated light, is also the instrument with which we can create the prayers and praises that reflect the divine beauty back to God. Because of the Fall we are unable to bear the uncreated light, which is why Isaiah was overwhelmed by his vision of God seated on the throne,[10] and why the apostles who accompanied Christ to the top of Mount Tabor fell to the ground at the moment of the Transfiguration.[11] Likewise, Moses was granted to see the glory of God passing by, but could see only his back, not his face.[12] To console us for not being able to behold him directly, God provides the sacraments and the beauty of the material world. The latter reflect God's grandeur and beauty in a filtered way that we are able to bear. We are called to lead creation in its eucharistic response to God's outpouring of energy and love, to be priests and creators. To imitate Christ, the creator of all things, is to follow the example of his creative acts.[13]

The Fall complicates this creative task. It brings compromise, dichotomies (whether true or false), divisions and trade-offs. At times, the Church has been confused about the nature of Christ, the material world he created, and therefore about beauty and creativity. The iconoclastic aberrations of the eighth and ninth centuries were repeated by the Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Beauty may be a name of God, but we fear it, sometimes too much. We are understandably wary, because we know that evil can take on an attractive form and deceive or tempt us, and that beauty can be exploited for commercial gain.[14] In the context of our liturgical services, we are often obliged to make trade-offs between beauty and pastoral considerations, such as the musicians' skills or congregational participation. If the musicians are unskilled, we can become discouraged, and many church musicians have developed a kind of learnt helplessness, whereby the aim of beauty is lost sight of, and the goal is simply to get through the services as efficiently as possible.

Also, we are not always in agreement about what beauty is or what kind of beauty we should aim to achieve. This can cause tensions, but there is a positive side to this, because it shows that beauty is an interactive principle. The vibrations of the divine beauty touch what is beautiful within us and cause it to reverberate in sympathy. Also, the beauty which we create will

9 Ivan Moody, "The Seraphim above," 355–6; David Melling, "The heavenly liturgy: our participation with the angels," *Sourozh* no. 102 (November 2005): 4–18. On the singing of the angels, see Seppälä, *The Song of Fire and Clay*, 27–61.

10 Isaiah 6.

11 Matthew 17:1–8, Mark 9:2–8, Luke 9:28–36.

12 Exodus 33:18–23.

13 Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Meaning of the Creative Act*, trans. Donald Lowrie (San Rafael CA: Semantron, 2009). See esp. chapter 10, 225–50.

14 Anthony Bloom, *Beauty and Meaning* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2023), 36–7.

similarly touch those around us and solicit a sympathetic response. In other words, beauty is collaborative and relational, requires our participation, so really *does* exist in the eye—and ear—of the beholder.[15] God is the divine wooer, serenading us with his song.[16] Just as Orpheus allays the cruelty of Cerberus with his music before he can rescue his beloved Eurydice from the underworld,[17] God's beauty tames us more effectively than coercion or moralistic finger-wagging. To respond, we need to acquire purity of heart through ascesis even as we can address the aesthetics of liturgical arts. We can then respond as a community, achieving *religio*, a closer bond with God and with each other. This communion reflects the communion, the harmony, within the Holy Trinity.

Icons and Music

Since the theology of beauty is relatively developed with respect to icons compared with music, it is useful to consider both what hymnography and icons have in common and how they differ. First, the similarities. Both not only are prayer but also provide an image of and a space for prayer and act as a window or ladder joining earth to heaven. This ladder, referred to in the Gospel reading for the Sunday of Orthodoxy, when icons are blessed, is Jacob's ladder,[18] symbolizing the connection between heaven and earth, which takes the form of descent (incarnation, kenosis) and ascent (theosis). Both icons and hymnography participate symbolically in the divine energy, whereby the invisible is made visible and the ineffable finds utterance, using respectively light and sound (both vibrations that convey energy) to allow the reality of God's kingdom to seep into the created world. By addressing the eye and the ear respectively, they allow us to pray not only with our mind but also with our spirit and body. And just as icons are integrated into the church architecture and furnishings in very specific ways, so the words and their musical settings are regulated in the various cycles comprising the ordo.

The main differences have to do with the fact that a musical piece is not an "object" in the same way an icon is. It is a blueprint in the mind of the composer, transmitted through the performer to the listener, and capable of being copied or performed repeatedly. A good piece of music can receive a bad performance, and vice versa, which complicates any discussion of musical beauty.

15 Ibid., 52ff.

16 Zephaniah 3:17: "He will exult over you with singing."

17 Already in the early Church, Orpheus the shepherd–musician was represented as a symbol of Christ, who descended into the realm of the dead to rescue his beloved. Although in the original classical myth Orpheus fails to rescue Euridice, later versions (notably Monteverdi's opera *Orfeo*, 1608) change the story to a happy ending, in which Orpheus saves Eurydice just as Christ saves humankind. See Simon Collier, "An exploration into the reception of Orpheus in the early Christian period and the Christian Middle Ages" (BA thesis, University of Warwick, 2014).

18 John 1:43–51. Cf. verse 51, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," with Genesis 28:12.

Moreover, hymnography is an event-based, temporal phenomenon. Unfolding as it does in time, it has a special relationship with salvation history, with the drama of our fall, the advent of Christ, his crucifixion and resurrection. Its repeatability mirrors the cycle of the Church year, in which events like the nativity and the resurrection are made present at each iteration, for instance in those hymns that start with the word "today."

This temporal character also means that at times our liturgical texts can assume a dramatic character, for instance the priest's knocking on the door of the church during the Easter vigil, and the dialogue between the angel Gabriel and the Mother of God in the canon of the vigil of the Annunciation. But even the Cherubic Hymn describes an unfolding event: We lay aside our earthly cares to prepare ourselves to receive Christ in the form of the Eucharist; in performance this progression is often underlined by a quickening of the tempo in the final section. To be a disciple of Christ means changing into his likeness, and it is the *dynamos* of theosis that the temporal character of hymnography is especially equipped to express.

Music, words and the Word

Icons represent people and events—albeit in a stylized and abstract way—whereas the musical component—the melodies and harmonies—of our hymnography does not represent anything, or rather does this only indirectly through being coupled with a text. Indeed, of all the liturgical arts, the union between text and music in hymnography is especially close. Given the importance of the liturgical texts, it is tempting to arrive at the simplistic notion that, in the liturgical services, the music is more important than the words.[19] This notion not only implies an inappropriately competitive relationship between text and musical setting, but it also obscures the fact that the two elements form an indissoluble whole. If this were not the case, why have music at all?

It is true that at certain liturgical moments, the text seems to predominate over the musical setting. For example, when multiple strophes are being recited in the same tone, time considerations and human limitations require that the music be kept simple in order for the text to delivered in a clear and timely fashion. On the other hand, certain recurring texts (e.g., the Cherubic Hymn or the Evening Hymn), as also certain chants sung at feasts or during Holy Week, invite a variety of musical readings and open up a musical space that can lead to greater depth of prayer and contemplation. It is important to remember that, in this latter type of text, music often covers areas of feeling that are barely hinted at in the text. When St Paul speaks of our prayers being assisted by intercessions of the Holy Spirit in the form of "groanings which cannot be uttered,"[20] he is referring to a realm of unmediated emotion, cries and sighing that music can often capture better than words on their own.

19 For instance, Michael Varlamos, "Music and Orthodoxy," *New Byzantium Publications* (website), accessed August 7, 2024, https://newbyz.weebly.com/uploads/1/4/7/1/147110798/music_and_orthodoxy.pdf.
20 Romans 8:26.

But although liturgical music can express and trigger powerful human emotions, its primary function in the service is to attune our mind and senses to the mystery of the Logos unfolding in the liturgy.

If music were merely the handmaiden of the text, our musical outcomes would be very different from what they are; indeed, they would sometimes be way off the mark. Take for example the ending of the Anaphora: "We hymn Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks to Thee and we pray to Thee, our God." If we were to follow the example of Roman Catholic composers setting a similar passage from the 'Gloria' of the Ordinary of the mass, this would be the occasion of a grand climax similar to the musical treatment customarily given to the ending of the first section: "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory." But an Orthodox church musician knows this is the moment of the epiclesis, the transformation of the holy gifts into the body and blood of Christ, so the appropriate way of setting and singing this music is with hushed awe. No, music is *not* the handmaiden of the text; rather it is the music and the text *working together* that are handmaidens of the unfolding Logos.

So, more than any of the other ecclesial arts, words and music form a tandem, a two-in-one. This means that there is a complete interchange and interpenetration of the function of each: The music amplifies and intensifies the music latent in the texts, while the words aspire to the proclamatory character of music. In Nicolas Lossky's brilliant phrase, "the word sings, and the music proclaims."[21]

One can discuss and analyse a text or a melody or contemplate the distinct contribution of each of them, but both are two sides of the same coin, achieving their *raison d'être* only in their union. The original texts were conceived from the outset to be sung, and it is even possible that in some cases the melodies existed before the texts, as in the case of certain psalms. At the very least, the original Greek texts came into being at the same time as the melody, and both may have been composed by the same person. At the very least, the musical setting preserves the integrity of the text and unites it to a self-purposed melody. So, the text-music tandem joins together two elements, words and musical notes, without confusion and without separation; in this sense, it can be regarded as a symbol of the two natures of Christ.

Any consideration of beauty in the context of liturgical music must be related back to the question posed by St Gregory Palamas: How can a transcendent God make himself known to us? Or more specifically, how in our music can we perceive, express, imitate and reflect back the beauty of God's holiness?

21 Lossky, *Essai*, 58.

Transcendent beauty

The various attributes of beauty—symmetry, proportion, variety, unity and so on—are important, but do not in themselves leads to transcendence or prayer (as John Tavener puts it).[22] Beauty rests on certain "canons" or criteria but cannot be reduced to them. So instead, I wish to consider three elements that have a bearing on the question of how transcendent beauty can be achieved in music. They are, in order: silence, breathing and frisson.

First, silence. How can our sacred music reflect *hesychia*, the stilling of the soul evoked at the beginning of the Cherubic Hymn for Holy Saturday: "Let all mortal flesh keep silence"? To begin to answer this question, we may turn again to John Tavener (whose music is indubitably sacred in the Orthodox sense, even though it is rarely used in Orthodox services), who warns of the limitations of an art that is purely "self-referential."[23] Sacred art always points beyond itself, beyond human categories, thoughts and emotions, and in doing so transcends the rational to reach, through symbol, mystery and paradox, towards the eternal. Whereas Richard Wagner stated that he wrote his music with exclamation marks, Orthodox composers would more often wish to write their music with question marks. Christian hymnography evokes the theosis of humankind and the kenosis of God and the "bright sorrow" of Christ's sacrificial intervention in the world ("We venerate Thy Passion, O Christ. Show us also Thy glorious Resurrection"[24]).

On the level of musical technique, the cracks that "let the light in," to quote a song by Leonard Cohen,[25] can be achieved in a variety of ways which is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss. At the risk of generalizing, suffice it to say that musical forms adopted in Orthodox church music arise from a certain reticence: They tend to avoid linear, narrative, dramatic or teleological forms such as sonata or concerto, preferring circularity that arises from the verset structure of chant itself, often a simple $a_1a_2a_3\ldots$ form, in which the variants arise from variations in the rhythm or intonation of the words, or a rondo form with a refrain such as "Alleluia."

Among other things, silence is the recognition of the limitations of both words and music, the awareness of the gap between the energies represented by human art and the essence of God. This is why for certain words, such as "Amen," "Alleluia," and "Kyrie eleison," no adequate translations exist. Sometimes, at the "Alleluia" or the prokeimena in the

22 "I never understood that with Stockhausen: why it didn't end in silence. Perhaps it will. [...] I think it must end in silence, and go on to prayer, which is a higher form of creativity." Interview with Tavener in Paul Griffiths, *New Sounds, New Personalities: British Composers of the 1980s* (London: Faber, 1985), 111. My thanks to Fr Ivan Moody for this reference. For his critique of these words, see his article "Orthodox aesthetics and contemporary art," unpublished paper read at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies Summer School, University of Cambridge, July 2005: "The problem with viewing the question in these terms is that it confuses what is essentially a monastic vision of creativity with the position of an artist living in the world – though whether prayer is a form of creativity in precisely the way Tavener means here must be seriously questioned, bring into play as it does the use of the imagination in prayer…"

23 John Tavener and Mother Thekla, *Ikons: Meditations in Words and Music* (London: Fount, 1994), xi.

24 15th Antiphon of the Matins of Holy Friday.

25 Leonard Cohen, "Anthem," *The Future*, Columbia, 1992.

Divine Liturgy, the music becomes more elaborate, with ornate melismata. The phenomenon of *terirem* or meaningless syllables in Greek chant also serves as a reminder that language can fall short.[26] As for music, often what it is not is as important as what it is. In all music that "speaks," pauses, whether notated or marked by sustained notes or chords, are an especially effective means of evoking the transcendent. By suspending the regular beat or metre (if there is one), we stand for a moment outside time, so that our music is as it were bathed in the light of eternity, offered up to the one who created time.

The second element, breathing, is a factor behind which a whole theology lies waiting to be explored.[27] Just as we represent the cherubim in the services, so our breath represents the Holy Spirit. By singing we draw in breath, allow it to nourish our blood stream, and then pour it out again, in an action embodying the gift of life and our eucharistic response to it. If, as Nicolas Lossky wrote, the liturgy is the breath of the Church,[28] our singing is the *sound* of the Church breathing.

Just as breathing is essential to life and health, so singing is an effective means for promoting mental health and spiritual well-being. A whole discipline, music therapy, is based on the healing power of music. Many defects in our singing are related to an inability to breathe correctly, to build a secure foundation in our diaphragm. There is a clear parallel between breath and biological life on the one hand, and the Holy Spirit and our salvation on the other. This is well understood by church choirs that begin rehearsals by singing the prayer to the Holy Spirit, "O heavenly King."

From the Latin word meaning "breath" is derived the word "inspiration." This leads us to creativity and to the question of how much room there is for the creation of free adaptations or new settings as opposed to the strict adaptation of music composed long ago, which still predominates our services. Whether we are adapting older melodies or creating new ones, there are certain moments of our services which provide more opportunities for creativity than others, especially in recurring texts, where it is desirable to achieve some variety.

The third and last element, frisson, is one of several physical reactions music can trigger, another one being tears. Both bear witness to the relational and incarnational nature of beauty and art. Frisson denotes a shudder or tingling that can be pleasant or unpleasant, depending on the circumstances. This frisson, or "goosebumps," takes the form of small bumps on the skin and our hair standing on end. Musicologists, psychologists, and neurologists have attempted various explanations for this.[29] One way of viewing the phenomenon is that it occurs just after we

26 Lossky, *Essai*, 105.

27 The significance of breath is discussed in Seppälä, *The Song of Fire*, 73–6.

28 Lossky, *Essai*, 47.

29 For instance, David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); Sam Gilberg, "This 715-song playlist is scientifically verified to give you the chills, thanks to 'frisson,'" *Big Think*, August 22, 2023, https://bigthink.com/neuropsych/frisson-song-

have been surprised, at the moment when our mind, after registering that this surprise is not a threat requiring a fight-or-flight response, starts to interpret the surprising event in a way that gives rise to a wide range of emotions between pleasure and horror. Quite how or when this occurs depends on the individual; there is no formula for this deeply personal response. We all have our favourite moments, be it a certain chord progression or cadence, an opening up to a higher register, a pause.

What seems to be happening during these moments is that the fabric of the orderly unfolding of the music is breached by the incursion of a higher-order reality. The relatively conventional or predictable gives way to a deeper logic, a higher sense, fulfilling a higher law. Perhaps all beautiful music is made up a hierarchy of layers of norms or conventions that are constantly jostling and rubbing against each other, sometimes colluding, sometimes colliding. For example, there are moments when the laws of harmony give way before the higher claims of melodic line, as when false relations occur. But over and above this disruption, the background order of structural consonance is re-asserted in due course. It is this multilayering which gives the music its muscle, its depth.

This irruption of a higher sense into a lower one can be found not only in art, but also in science and in the gospels. Thus Albert Einstein's discovery of the space-time continuum reveals and fulfils the deep sense of Newton's findings on gravity, opening up new dimensions and showing that, in the words of Shakespeare, "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."[30] In the same way, the New Testament fulfils and reveals the deep, hidden sense of the Old Testament. The new breaks into the old, illuminating and transfiguring it. In the gospels we read how Christ's teaching (not to mention his miracles) often turned the tables, upending human wisdom, introducing paradox, reformulating questions and changing the terms of the debate, so that people "marvelled" at his sayings and his opponents were reduced to silence. Then there is the encounter between Christ and two travellers on the road to Emmaus.[31] The two men had witnessed the events in Jerusalem but could not make head or tail of them. But Christ unlocks the true meaning of the scriptures, before revealing himself in the breaking of bread. Then the two men recall how their hearts burnt within them as they listened to Christ. It can be plausibly surmised that they also felt a frisson.

So, physical reactions such as frisson are not mere icing on the cake, or something to feel guilty about (though of course composers should never stuff their music with effects without causes). Rather, they are an image of the encounter with the divine love, of an epiphany, a call to illumination and theosis. And although such moments can often be difficult to achieve in our services, we should never lose sight of our vision of the beauty of

playlist/?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2181sNgkrkLd-ppIz4_jtE2d9mgvBbkiLKY6pZp_MQ5r74V-rpXRe8X84#Echobox=1684522003.

30 Hamlet addressing the rationalist Horatio in act 1, sc. 5 of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

31 Luke 24:13–23.

holiness, which is to be seen, heard—and tasted—as an indispensable aspect of liturgical worship.

What conclusions can we draw about the nature of beauty in the context of liturgical and sacred music? Beauty starts with God's glory and splendour, which seeps into the material world through his grace. Our creative acts are a eucharistic response to this divine beauty, born of wonder and gratitude. This sense of wonder is expressed not only in art but in any creative act that bears witness to God's glory. Beauty occurs whenever a person or thing fulfils its God-given logos. In the words of the British iconographer, Aidan Hart, beauty lies in the "sense of movement in the proper direction, of a thing's orientation towards its divinely intended goal."[32] May the Holy Spirit guide us in our work to achieve this in our services, allowing us to glorify God and at the same time nourish the souls of the faithful through the equal and indissoluble partnership of words and music.

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32 Hart, *Beauty, Spirit, Matter*, 118.

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Slaviq: An Expression of Native Alaskan Orthodoxy

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Abstract

Slaviq is an Orthodox Native Alaskan celebration beginning on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, marked by indigenous people throughout Alaska. It is especially celebrated among the Yup'ik people in mainland southwestern Alaska in the Kuskokwim River delta region. Slaviq or "starring" lasts from three to ten days involving processions by the congregation, and especially the choir, from the church to homes of villagers wishing to host the celebration. At each host's home a short prayer service is sung accompanied by the spinning of the Christmas star affixed to a pole held generally by young men. This is followed by a short sermon delivered by the priest or even a reader, and then by the singing of Orthodox liturgical hymns in praise of the Nativity of Christ, Ukrainian koliady and folk songs from the Carpathian Mountains describing the feast day, and American Christmas carols. This paraliturgical celebration is followed by the distribution of candy and gifts by the hosts to all the guests, and a festive meal for more senior members of the community who are present. Traditionally, this meal consists of dried fish, often salmon, fermented foods, and moose and reindeer soup followed by akutaq, a dessert containing berries mixed with animal fat. This study analyzes the historical and contemporary practice of celebrating Slaviq, viewing it as a cultural adaptation and expression of the indigenous Yup'ik ethical code enacted within an innovative Orthodox practice.

Keywords

Native Alaskans, Orthodox Christianity, Christmas, Starring

Introduction

In a world of increasing connections and linkages between people, societies, and nation states brought about through public and social media, a globalizing world in which communicational simplicity and transactional simplicity seem to coexist, many indigenous peoples are seeking to live out their own changing late modern lives by creatively incorporating aspects of the altering world around them. In doing so, they attempt to rethink their use of knowledge and skills prominent among their own kin and forebears.

With the resulting serious environmental consequences of climatic changes, the importance of geography and one's place in a global geography is evident. Many of Alaska's indigenous peoples, particularly those living further from commercial centers dominated by non-indigenous people, consistently engage in a subsistence economy to a greater or lesser degree. In this way, they are intricately tied not only to climatic changes, but more fundamentally, to the particular lands and water from which they continue to draw harvest.

If indigenous knowledge is conceived of as both a storehouse of cultural knowledge and as a set of strategies called upon to manage a changing socio-cultural and natural environment, it is evident that this transmitted yet innovatively adaptive knowledge is essential to Native Alaskans' success in managing a constantly altering geography.[1] A sense of place and time in the cultural relations among the 'real people' as the Yup'ik refer to themselves, as well as their relations with non-human beings, are implicated. It is also place or location that is a contributing factor to one way of defining indigenous religion.

What, then, are the parameters of 'indigenous religion'? Do the indigenous persons in question use or agree with this terminology? In a perceptive essay involving a critique of his own definition of 'indigenous religion,' James L. Cox attempts to set forth a minimalist description. He acknowledges his reliance on the sociologically-inspired definition of religion of Danièle Hervieu-Léger which he interprets as neither substantive nor functional. Cox contends that "the necessary or indispensable condition for religion to be present in any human activity, *its fundamental defining characteristic* requires the existence of an identifiable community," which is linked by kinship ties as well as geography, and "which is constituted by its being bound by and subservient to an overpowering authoritative tradition that is passed on from generation to generation."[2] Cox assumes that this tradition is transmitted structurally through kinship ties according to lineage which may not always be the case. He also acknowledges that this identifiable community or communities can also be adherents of a religion with a universal cosmology such as Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam. But these religions, he maintains, are not necessarily bound to a particular geography.

One aspect of Cox's definition that is problematic is his conflation of religion with society, making every community, however defined, engage in its own distinct religion that is tied to a geographic territory. A second problematic aspect of his definition is his implication that competition is the only means by which two religions or authoritative traditions can interact.[3]

1 Hiroki Takakura, "The shift from herding to hunting among the Siberian Evenki: indigenous knowledge and subsistence change in northwestern Yakutia," *Asian Ethnology* 71, no 1 (2012): 44.

2 James L Cox, "Kinship and location: in defense of a narrow definition of indigenous religion," in *Religious categories and the construction of the indigenous*, ed. by Christopher Hartney and Daniel J. Tower (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 43.

3 Cox, "Kinship and location," 50.

Cox maintains that a universal religion can become indigenized only when it is made subservient to the traditional authority of the indigenous group.[4] This logic seems to eliminate the possibility of an indigenous group adopting or even coopting another religious tradition and thus, incorporating an authoritative tradition newer to the group into its original religion, or conversely, adapting its present tradition to one that is newer to them in a complementary manner. Nevertheless, Cox maintains that indigenous religions are highly adaptive.[5]

Yup'ik context

The case of the Native Alaskans and one particular multi-day celebration is representative. What is very powerful about the winter celebration of Slaviq or 'starring' among the Yup'ik people is the enduring or persistent quality of an indigenous ethical code over time and space; and, its strict adherence to Orthodox Christian beliefs pertaining to the birth of Christ.

The Yup'ik are the largest group of indigenous people in Alaska living in the western, southwestern, and southcentral areas, particularly in the Yukon-Kuskokwim River region in western mainland Alaska. The Yup'ik people live in approximately seventy villages of between two hundred and one thousand persons each, many of whom have some knowledge of the indigenous language. There are two dialect groups, the Yup'ik and the Cup'ik, and three major Christian denominations, Moravian, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox. Indigenous culture and knowledge among the Yup'ik people have remained more stable over the past century, compared to other indigenous peoples of Alaska, partially as a result of the perseverance of an indigenous ethos, partially as a result of later contact with Euro-American society. The Yukon-Kuskokwim River region has proved less attractive to non-indigenous visitors and business enterprises as there are relatively few commercial resources in the area. A persistence of traditional social patterns (living in villages), subsistence lifestyle (some seasonal hunting, fishing, gathering of greens and berries), and knowledge of or interest in revival of indigenous language are evident among the Yup'ik people.

Various aspects of Yup'ik indigenous knowledge have significantly changed over the generations but what continues to be emphasized is the indigenous ethical code which encompasses social relations of various kinds as well as human relations with the non-human world. This code of ethics is transmitted from the older to the younger generation by community elders. It seems that adherence to this code is part of the maintenance of the authoritative tradition that Cox refers to in his definition of 'indigenous religion.'

In a late nineteenth-century Russian monastic source compiled by the Valaam Monastery the strict ethical code which Native Alaskans adhered

4 Cox, "Kinship and location," 50.
5 Cox, "Kinship and location," 53.

to and transmitted includes patience, quick learning ability, adopting of useful skills, endurance of hunger and pain, respect for diligence, good will, hospitality, marked generosity, gratitude, selflessness, trustworthiness, disinterest in wealth, absence of pride and vanity, and respect for parents and elders, be they one's own relatives or not.[6]

Native Alaskans believed that domestic relations influenced human-non-human relations and could affect the outcome of a hunting or fishing expedition. They tended to be peaceful and tranquil. Instead of administering corporal punishment to children, elders verbally inculcated the indigenous ethical code to misbehaving children.[7]

This Orthodox source maintains that shamanism was present but that shamans did not affect the adherence, inculcation, or transmission of the ethical code. They had only to do with relations with the spirit world and only in specific circumstances. In the late nineteenth century Native Alaskans also believed in the immortality of the soul, that is, in the afterlife.[8] The dead were believed to dwell among the living as shades and were capable of good and evil. The living did call upon them for help in dangerous situations during their hunting and fishing expeditions.[9]

Native Alaskan beliefs regarding the dead and their strict ethical code are aspects of Yup'ik indigenous religion that are part of a storehouse of traditional knowledge that has been transmitted and selectively implemented from the latter nineteenth century to the present day in their extended celebration of Orthodox Christmas.

The importance of a diachronic approach to understanding the cultural significance of these aspects of traditional knowledge is evident from the emic emphasis placed on the transmission of these beliefs from generation to generation.

Slaviq: a theme and variations

A distinctly Alaskan and Yup'ik example of this process of transmission is the celebration of Orthodox Christmas and its after-feast known as "starring" or Slaviq. Slaviq is a ritual event celebrated from three to ten days starting on Christmas with processions by the congregation from the church to various villagers' houses accompanied by the singing of Orthodox liturgical hymns in praise of the Nativity of Christ, folk songs from the Carpathian Mountains describing this feast day, and Christmas carols.[10]

"Starring" originated in the Carpathian Mountains in the sixteenth century as a grassroots religious response by Orthodox laity to forced Latinization of the Orthodox Church in that region. The songs and customs

6 *Очерк из истории Американской Православной Духовной Миссии (Кадьякской миссии 1794-1837 гг.)*, ed. Valaam Monastery (St Petersburg: Tipografiia M Merkusheva, 1894), 20-21, 23, 24, 27-8.
7 *Очерк*, 26.
8 *Очерк*, 31.
9 *Очерк*, 30-31.
10 *Following the star*, 1987. Film accessed on KYUK website, http://kyuk.org.

associated with this celebration are unknown in Russia, and perhaps for that reason, this ritual activity contributed to the maintenance of an Orthodox identity in parts of western Russia and Ukraine which were occupied by Poland into the mid-twentieth century.[11] Slaviq was introduced in Alaska up in the Yukon River region in 1878 by Orthodox priests familiar with the Ukrainian tradition of singing Christmas songs composed in eastern Europe.[12] Some of the songs still sung by the Yup'ik today have been part of their collective memory since then.

Preparations for Slaviq begin in the summer and fall, and include drying fish, particularly salmon, and picking berries for the festive meal to be served at each Slaviq host's home. Part of the autumnal moose catch is also reserved for the occasion.[13] In late November or early December the church choir begins practicing the hymns and songs for the church services and those to be sung at the house visits. Although handwritten or printed copies of hymns and carols have been available, most singers, even those not in the choir, know the songs from memory, whether they be in Yup'ik, Church Slavonic, or Ukrainian.[14]

For a number of decades after the introduction of Slaviq to the Yup'ik people the order of events for the celebration included the following elements: Prior to the beginning of the Christmas church service the lanterns at each grave at the church cemetery would be lit. At the conclusion of the Christmas service a brief separate service for the commemoration of the dead, called 'panikhida' in Church Slavonic, would be sung at the church. Then, two young men proceed out of the altar carrying icon banners and one or two wooden stars affixed to wooden poles. In the center of the stars is an icon of the Nativity of Christ. The icon and star-bearers face the congregation with downcast eyes, exhibiting modesty, another Yup'ik value. The first Slaviq service of the season begins in the church following the divine liturgy on Christmas Day itself. The congregation led by the choir and its director sing Orthodox hymns first, followed by Ukrainian koliady and perhaps a few Christmas carols. Although many of these were songs passed down and sung every year, there seems to have been no objection to adding new songs to the repertoire. The sung part of the service ends with the singing of 'Many Years'—a blessing and prayer for a long and productive life for all.[15]

What is especially important about Slaviq is the spinning of the stars, unique to the Alaskan Slaviq and Finnish carolling.[16] According to one Yup'ik priest, the spun star represents the faith which is alive within those present and the faithful departed.[17] The young men holding the poles with

11 Ann Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays: Yup'ik lives and how we see them* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 94.
12 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 97.
13 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 98.
14 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 98-9.
15 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 103.
16 Harri Huovinen, personal communication, June 15, 2023.
17 KYUK: Public media for Alaska's Yukon-Kuskokwim delta, January 10, 2017, https://www.kyuk.org/arts-culture/2017-01-10/napaskiak-celebrates-slaviq.

the wooden stars spin the star during the singing. The icon in the center remains stationary. Since the singing could continue for twenty minutes, or quite a bit longer in some cases, the continued spinning of the star frame around the icon is something of an athletic feat which continues to interest young men, especially as they can compete with one another when two stars are spun simultaneously during the same service.[18] A short sermon is then given by the priest, a church leader, or even a layman, which includes references to the importance of adhering to the Yup'ik moral code as well as Christian teachings.[19]

The clergy, star-bearers, choir, and congregation then process with the star to the house of the first host (usually the priest). The visitors have been compared with the Wise Men following the Star over Bethlehem to find Christ.[20] Once inside many of the elements of the sung service would be repeated. A house visit at Slaviq is considered a considerable blessing for the host family.[21] "Starring" can take place in the home because "home is a holy place where God can be found," according to one priest.[22] The order of the songs remains more or less the same with the church hymns sung first, followed by koliady, and concluding with Christmas carols, although more recently there has been considerable variation in order. At some point, 'Many Years' is sung, although it is unclear whether this concludes the sung part of the short service during a house visit or whether 'Many Years' is sung after the meal at the conclusion of the house visit. What does change is the language in which the hymns and songs are sung: More recently, English is used more frequently in place of Slavonic.[23]

In a short video of a recent celebration of Slaviq,[24] the singing begins with several odes of the Nativity canon in Slavonic followed by the troparion of the feast, also in Slavonic. Then, a Ukrainian koliada is sung in English. The singing of 'Many Years' (in English) to the hosts of this Slaviq celebration concludes the video. The 'Many Years' is introduced with a prayer incorporating the text of the final stikhiron of "Lord, I have cried unto Thee" from the Nativity vespers service in which the thanksgiving offerings to Christ from all of God's creatures are described. During the singing a young boy continuously spins the star.

After the sung service and the short sermon, the guests are seated, many of whom are out of town relatives and friends of villagers visiting for Christmas. The host family begins the generous distribution of gifts to every guest, young and old. The gifts could include candy, soap, socks,

18 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 113.
19 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 113; KYUK, January 10, 2017, https://www.kyuk.org/arts-culture/2017-01-10/napaskiak-celebrates-slaviq.
20 KYUK, January 6, 2021, https://www.kyuk.org/programs/2021-01-06/how-slaviq-is-celebrated-in-the-y-k-delta.
21 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 102.
22 KYUK, January 10, 2017, https://www.kyuk.org/arts-culture/2017-01-10/napaskiak-celebrates-slaviq.
23 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 106.
24 Arnall'aq, "Slaviq 2023," posted January 10, 2023, YouTube, 8:41, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmQOkF0BpBU.

toys, and children's clothing. Senior members of the community take a place at the dining table which might be covered with a tablecloth and a lit candle in the center.[25] The festive food is blessed either by the priest or church leader, or even a layman. A festive meal is served, traditionally consisting of locally gathered available natural resources such as dried or frozen fish, often salmon, moose or reindeer soup, fermented foods, and *akutaq*, a dessert containing the berries picked the previous summer. Once the first group has finished other senior guests can take their place at the table until all have been served.[26] Many younger guests simply eat standing or seated on the floor in the same place where they had previously been singing.

It is evident from ethnographic accounts starting in the 1950s that Slaviq is not an exclusively Orthodox celebration, but more broadly Yup'ik and in fact, Native Alaskan. Among other news reports on Slaviq, one recent report on the passing of an elderly woman, made mention of the fact that although Maggie Mary Otto was not Orthodox she was known to host "Russian Orthodox Christmas" by cooking walrus for her community every year.[27]

Following the first house visit, all who wish to join the procession and subsequent house visits, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, rise, gather outside, and, led by the young men carrying the icon banners and stars, process to the next house to be visited. There, the sung service, distribution of gifts, and festive meal are repeated, with certain variations in the topic of the sermon or the types of gifts. What is not clear from historical or contemporary sources is whether any singing, praying or instruction occurs while traversing the geographic distance between houses, or if the visiting group remains silent, attempting to regain energy for the next house visit. These house visits could continue into the early morning hours, each house hosting fewer people as fatigue set in and guests decided not to go on to another house. Celebrating Slaviq involved a considerable amount of endurance on the part of the priest, church leaders, and choir over the course of a number of days. This quality of endurance, in and of itself, is also highly valued in the Yup'ik ethical code.

Historically these house visits used to run for the ten days between Christmas and Epiphany, each house being visited up to three times, depending on the number of interested hosts in the village having the financial resources and energy to acquire the gifts to be distributed as well as preparing up to three festive meals for a large crowd. This practice continued into the mid-twentieth century in some villages at which point the visits were limited to one per house and the entire Slaviq ritual event lasted three days.[28] More recently, there has been variation in the number of days Slaviq continues, somewhere between three and seven.

25 KYUK, January 7, 2019, https://www.kyuk.org/arts-culture/2019-01-07/q-a-with-father-michael-trefon-on-slaviq-celebration.

26 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 103-4; KYUK, January 6, 2021, https://www.kyuk.org/programs/2021-01-06/how-slaviq-is-celebrated-in-the-y-k-delta.

27 KYUK, October 2, 2017, https://alaskapublic.org/2017/10/02/as-permafrost-thaws-village-cemeteries-sink-into-swamp/.

28 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 108.

What was observed in the celebration of Slaviq in the 1950s regarding the festive meal was that although both men and women drank port (a lighter red wine often consumed after a meal) they appeared unaffected by it.[29] Wendell Oswalt surmises that the reason for this is the religious significance of Slaviq as a ritual event announcing and celebrating the birth of Christ that was perceived by the Yup'ik as a joyous yet sober occasion. Oswalt observed Slaviq in 1956 in Napaskiak, a village on the Kuskokwim River and mentions that the conversation during the festive meal was quiet and the atmosphere subdued. Also, the length of time an individual followed the procession and singers on the house visits, singing, listening, and participating in the festive meal was indicative of a degree of piety.[30] The awareness of the proximity of the souls of departed relatives and friends continued to be significant in the 1950s. Oswalt emphasizes the emic importance of the lighting of the lanterns at each relative's grave at the cemetery.[31]

By the 1980s individual house visits were limited to one, instead of three as in the past. Nevertheless, a number of houses could be blessed within a single visit at Slaviq as the geographical distance between houses was easily traversed on foot, although the Yup'ik people had no objection to traversing the distance by car, or to splitting up the party of church leaders, singers, and icon and star bearers to cover more houses in a shorter amount of time.[32]

In a documentary film made of a village Slaviq celebration by an Alaskan television station based in the Yup'ik area in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta in 1987 the songs sung included parts of the matins service for the Nativity. The use of English was more extensive than in the 1950s when Wendell Oswalt conducted his fieldwork.[33] What is evident from the film is that at least during the house visits, Yup'ik homes and individual rooms have a wall or corner in which many Orthodox icons are hung. This is symbolic of an altar in a church. It is in front of this corner or wall that the star-spinners stand facing the choir and guests during the singing and sermon. In this film the presence of many young people and children, and their participation in the singing is especially evident. These children are socialized gradually into the extensive, multi-day celebration of Orthodox Christmas and will likely grow up to lead it either as clergy (priests or readers), as choir directors/singers, or as hosts during house visits.

In subsequent reports dating from 2013 to 2017 from KYUK, the Bethel-based public media station, it is evident that Slaviq has become somewhat adopted into dominant Anglo-American culture in that its celebration is announced in the media. By 2013 KYUK would promote this event as a local Alaskan holiday by wishing "Happy Slaviq to all from

29 Wendell Oswalt, *Napaskiak: an Alaskan Eskimo community* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1963), 141.
30 Oswalt, *Napaskiak*, 141.
31 Oswalt, *Napaskiak*, 138.
32 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 106.
33 *Following the star*, 1987.

KYUK" on January 7—the date Christmas is celebrated by the Orthodox in Alaska. This greeting also included an announcement that KYUK planned to air "Russian Orthodox" hymns on the radio waves over the ensuing days of Slaviq.[34]

Between the 1980s and 2013-2017 certain cultural strategies have been implemented by the Yup'ik in their celebration of Slaviq, showing its adaptability to contemporary Alaskan life. For instance, the celebration in Bethel, which is a larger town in the region, has been limited to the three days immediately following Orthodox Christmas, and takes place starting in the late afternoon and evening only. It is no longer the case in most villages that house visits regularly continue into the early morning hours. More of the hymns and songs are sung in English as the Yup'ik have become more socialized into an essentially Anglo-American church and surrounding society. Although it continues to be the case that the choir and older faithful particularly, sing some hymns in Church Slavonic, and a large number of people of various generations know a substantial number of songs in Yup'ik, which continues to be the first native language of many Yup'ik people into the twenty-first century.[35]

The variation in gifts distributed during house visits and some of the elements of the festive meal have changed over time. In Bethel in 2013 on the house visits that KYUK reported, gifts distributed did not include anything distinctly Yup'ik or Alaskan. Gifts more commonly given now include reading glasses, socks, soap, and children receive edibles such as granola bars and candy.[36]

The basic elements of Slaviq or "starring" have remained the same over the course of generations since it was introduced in 1878–1880. These include the house visits; the choral sung service accompanied by the spinning of the Christmas star; the sermon by a priest or church leader instructing the listeners in the Yup'ik moral code and in Christian teaching; the generous distribution of gifts; the festive meal; and the commemoration of the dead with a panikhida, particularly at the conclusion of Slaviq. It is these elements that have been taught and transmitted through cultural and religious socialization to subsequent generations over the century and a half that "starring" has been celebrated in Alaska.[37]

Conclusion

Slaviq can be viewed as containing a storehouse of cultural knowledge and as a strategy in the Yup'ik knowledge system which, in its celebration, imparts the enduring aspects of the Yup'ik ethical code and beliefs about the dead over the course of generations.

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34 KYUK, *Arts, Culture & Community Features*, January 7, 2013.

35 KYUK, January 10, 2017, https://www.kyuk.org/arts-culture/2017-01-10/napaskiak-celebrates-slaviq.

36 KYUK, *Arts, Culture & Community Features*, January 7, 2013.

37 KYUK, *Arts, Culture & Community Features*, January 8, 2015.

At the time in the late nineteenth century when "starring" was introduced to the Yup'ik people, many lived in smaller camps in the summer and fall returning to the village in the winter for a period of ritual celebration. From these camps people would traverse some geographical distances to hunt, fish, and gather berries and other edible plants.[38] This subsistence lifestyle continues among the Yup'ik and has come to include a moleben, a short Orthodox prayer service of petition, sometimes for several families together and a priest's blessing for a successful harvest before moving to the summer fishing camps, as well as a blessing upon the families' successful return to the village.[39]

In the past, the village was occupied only when hunting, fishing, and gathering activities were limited due to the harshness of the winter weather. Every village was structured with a *qasgiq* or men's house in the middle, the ceremonial center of the community, surrounded by sod houses occupied by women and children. The men's house was the place where Yup'ik elders instructed young boys and unmarried men in the Yup'ik way of life, specifically in the proper understanding and implementation of the ethical code. On a daily basis, the men and young boys living in the *qasgiq* interacted with the children and women, who communally prepared the food for the entire village. Symbolically, the *qasgiq* was a center and the sod houses a periphery, the distance between which had to be traversed, generally by young men, in order for social life to continue.[40]

Similarly, the harvesting and gathering that continues today is pulled together in the village particularly in the winter around the Orthodox church activities at Christmas and Slaviq. Regarding the ethical code and its transmission to subsequent generations, the importance of generosity and sharing which was emphasized in the winter village gatherings is also evident in the distribution of gifts of candy and other simple and luxury items to sometimes as many as two hundred people by the hosts at Slaviq. Such generosity would need to be planned and prepared for, and would often set the hosts back financially to a substantial extent. The instruction by elders in the *qasgiq* in the ethical code has continued in the Christian sermons given by priests or church leaders both in the church and on individual house visits during Slaviq, and perhaps at other times as well.

Another way in which Yup'ik indigenous knowledge is transmitted to younger members of the community during Slaviq is the emphasis placed on the continued presence of the dead among the living throughout the year but especially during Slaviq. The Yup'ik *Merr'aq* was a feast of the dead celebrated in the winter in which the spirits of dead relatives and friends were invited to feast with the living community.[41] This belief in the presence of the dead is reflected in Slaviq when "the windows of Yup'ik homes are typically left uncovered . . . to admit the spirits of the departed to the feast."

38 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 110, 113.
39 Martin Nikolai 2017: personal communication.
40 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 110.
41 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 118.

Similarly, the Ukrainian practice at Christmas includes an awareness of the proximity of the souls of the departed. Ukrainians customarily "set a place at the table for the ancestors and a candle in the window to light their way."[42] Throughout the years the celebration of Slaviq has included the lighting of lanterns at the graves of departed relatives and friends, as well as serving a panikhida there. Historically this service would occur immediately prior to the house visits at the beginning of Slaviq and at its conclusion, but now it often takes place only at the conclusion of Slaviq.[43] The Yup'ik believe that in the Slaviq celebration of Orthodox Christmas, those participating are helping the departed souls of loved ones be with the living, to celebrate the feast together.

All of this reflects an aspect of Yup'ik indigenous religion which emphasizes the establishment and maintenance of proper relations between humans and non-human beings, as well as between this and the other world. These beliefs are verbally articulated and physically enacted and transmitted on an annual basis in a formalized manner through the elaborate Yup'ik, and more broadly, Native Alaskan celebration of Slaviq. This annual paraliturgical attention to the enactment of the indigenous ethical code on various levels continues an authoritative tradition that, as James L. Cox has phrased it, has proved adaptive, adoptive, innovative, yet continuous over time and space throughout the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta among the Yup'ik people.

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42 Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo essays*, 119.

43 KYUK, January 10, 2017, https://www.kyuk.org/arts-culture/2017-01-10/napaskiak-celebrates-slaviq.

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Bringing Christmas Cheer: Carols to Nurture and Witness the Faith

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Abstract

Western European cultures may vary in their adherence to any form of Christianity, but the feast of Christmas has a special place in society in keeping an open ear, mind and heart. Concerts and carolling are common to Orthodox and non-Orthodox cultures alike, providing an annual opportunity to engage audiences in the Mystery of the Incarnation in a paraliturgical context. This paper will explore the benefits to singers and audiences, and the way that both may be nurtured through Christmas music. The Mosaic Choir, in London, UK, provides a central case study, a choir of Orthodox singers from many different backgrounds. Audiences, clergy and choir members, past and present, provide additional insights into one of the most rewarding musical times of year.

Keywords

Carol, Christmas, choir, Orthodoxy

This paper explores some of the benefits of sharing music at the season of the Nativity of our Lord to singers and audiences, and the ways that both may be nurtured through Christmas music. This is primarily from the perspective of the Mosaic Choir in London, which I lead—a choir of Orthodox singers from many different backgrounds.

Western European cultures vary in their adherence to any form of Christianity, but the feast of Christmas has a special place in society. People are open to social gatherings related to Christmas, to notions of giving and love for the other. Perhaps this is due to the cold weather and darkening days, or to gathering round in families and communities to share songs and stories. Perhaps it is due to the engagement of all the senses in Christmas traditions: the taste of warming spices like cloves and cinnamon, the smell of mulled wine and oranges, the glitter of decorations in the home and the street, and the sound of seasonal music, secular and sacred. And of course, for some people there is still a spiritual element to the season, even if they do not have a formal belief system.

Whatever the case, this is an almost unique opportunity to share our faith with others, when they are keeping an open ear, mind and heart. Concerts and carolling are common to Orthodox and non-Orthodox cultures alike, providing an annual opportunity to engage audiences in the mystery of the incarnation in a paraliturgical context.

Mosaic Choir started life as a youth choir, springing forth from the annual Youth Festival held under the umbrella of the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist. The Fellowship and the Youth Festival both encourage participation from all Orthodox communities in the UK, coming together in prayer and fellowship and spending time learning and attending services. Many people at the Youth Festival in the early years had attended youth camps together, and were now joined by young adults studying and working in the UK. Social singing, as well as chanting at the services, remains a key part of the festival.

Mosaic Choir, so-called because it is made up of people from many different backgrounds who come together to form a beautiful whole, maintains this ethos. The music reflects our many backgrounds. It is an amateur choir, with no audition process, and a variety of experience and skill sets. Our first director was Rebecca Vučetić, who then handed the baton to me—a metaphorical baton because we both direct from within the choir, for the most part. Our repertoire includes folk songs, liturgical music, and classical pieces. We have a YouTube channel, but as yet have not managed to record our music, despite the best intentions.

We have sung in towns and cities in the UK and on tour in Montenegro. We have conducted workshops for parishes, including one in Amsterdam, and we have sung at various parish festivals and events over the years. We sing at the Bath Orthodox Arts Festival held every two years, and we were delighted with a favourable review by the actor David Suchet in 2022. We sing at services when invited, although members of Mosaic are connected with many different parishes with varying roles in choirs and chanting.

A constant for the choir's performance year is the Christmas concert, which has been held in various locations, but we have found a particularly welcoming home at the Roman Catholic Church of Corpus Christi in Covent Garden, central London. We have held this event successfully at Orthodox churches as well, but we have chosen to return to Corpus Christi many times for our Christmas concert. It is centrally located, close to the famous Covent Garden market, and provides easy access for people coming even from some distance. We hold the concert on a weeknight so that we can encourage attendees to come after work, and those who wish can easily go somewhere to socialise afterwards. It is also a very beautifully restored church with a good acoustic. Entrance is free with a collection for charity.

The concert comprises carols from various traditions in their own languages, and incorporates Western carols as well. The nature of Christmas carols varies widely within traditions, incorporating expanded Christmas narratives or parallel stories, lullabies, pastorals, and some texts which are

entirely uncategorisable. Some carols are more strictly for St Nicholas, St Lucy, the New Year, St Basil or even Theophany, but we often include them. We include at least one audience carol, and usually some poems in English or a story. We do not usually include scriptural readings, which is more traditional in Western ceremonies of the Nine Lessons and Carols. However, we love to include English language and other western European carols.

At the 2022 Christmas concert, the programme included:

- Three liturgical pieces in English in Byzantine style: From the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord: the Idiomelon from the Ninth Hour of the Royal Hours; 'God is With Us' from Great Compline; and the Exapostilarion from Matins
- Four Romanian carols: "Iată vin Colindători;" "Legănelul lui Isus;" "La Vifleem Colo-n Jos;" and "Domnuleţ şi Domn din Cer"
- Four Greek carols: "Anarhos Theos;" a carol from Pontus; "Hristos Genniete;" and a carol from Ikaria
- Two Georgian pieces: "Christmas Alilo" and "Kiria Lesa"
- Three English language carols: "Let All that are to Mirth Inclined;" the Wexford Carol arranged by our former director Rebecca Vučetić; and "O Nations Let Us Now Prepare" by Richard Toensing
- Two Serbian carols: "Rodjenje Bogorodice;" and "Slava Vo Višnjih Bogu" arranged by Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac
- One Ukrainian carol: "Shchedryk" by Mykola Leontovych
- One audience carol: "Silent Night"
- Two poems: "The Christmas Rose" by Cecil Day-Lewis and "Christmas Carol" by Paul Laurence Dunbar
- One mediaeval Latin carol as an encore: "Gaudete"

The feedback from the audience was great and we recruited a new member of the choir. For many people, this was their first proper Christmas celebration since the Covid-19 pandemic, giving it additional poignance.

One of the carols we performed was "Legănelul lui Isus." This Romanian carol is in the lullaby category and refers to the green cradle made from sycamore wood where the baby lies swaddled, rocking gently as the angels sing to the world that Christ has been sent to us. The verses have a simple melody and bass line, reminiscent of Byzantine chant, with a swaying, harmonised refrain. It is one of the Romanian carols that we have learned more recently and fitted well after a reflective poem and before the Serbian carol "Rodjenje Bogorodice" about the Mother of God.

I turn to the impact of our Christmas concerts. Our aim is to bring the teachings of the Church to people outside of a service setting. This can apply to the singers as well as the audience, of course. Reports received from musical colleagues in preparation for this presentation bear this out. Christmas concerts are seen as a low-key, informal and accessible way for people to encounter the Church. A particular parish may focus on carols

from 'its' tradition, whereas Mosaic deliberately chooses to cover many traditions.

We have many people who are regular attendees and invite their friends and families as an annual event. These will often be mixed groups. We also aim to make the content intelligible by introducing the carols during the concert and having a simple programme for people to follow. Some of our content eventually makes it onto our YouTube channel, too, when we are able to film it. We often have positive comments about the diversity of our programme, how we switch languages and styles so seemingly effortlessly, how people enjoy hearing carols from the different traditions and merely appreciating the fact that the same feast is celebrated in a similar way, almost no matter where.

As for the singers of Mosaic, they are often surprised by the carols we sing from their own cultures, as they may be regional or considered quite niche or old-fashioned. Choral singing is well known for its ability to unite a disparate group of people, whether physically, spiritually or emotionally. Many singers encourage their family, friends and colleagues to attend, fulfilling the Gospel invitation to "Come and see" (John 1:39, 46).

Stories were shared with me of more and less successful performances, where people had limited access to music and had to rely on memory which differed amongst the group, but every challenge was remembered fondly. This certainly struck a chord with me, reminding me of the time when the basses just kept getting faster and faster with the stress of a vaguely challenging line, or when I launched into the wrong carol and everyone followed me until someone else worked out how to correct it, or when I was horrified when someone took the dress code of a red accessory at face value and put on a Santa hat just before the performance so I could not do anything about it. But these are just a few blips in the context of a much wider occasion which can be transformative. Indeed, some singers have told me that they have been brought into (or closer to) the Church by singing in informal or organised Christmas singing.

The high we experience at the end of a successful performance often leads to impromptu further performances of Christmas music on the street, public transport or in restaurants. To prolong the feeling, but also for charitable purposes, Mosaic also goes carolling around the time of Christmas. This may be for fundraising in public places, or giving something back to the community by singing in hospital. We have carolled in train stations and shopping centres to raise money. When we sang in hospital, we wondered whether our diverse repertoire would be as successful as at the concert. We aimed to balance it with our more traditional English content but were pleased that the multicultural nature of both patients and staff loved to hear carols from a variety of places, and we could even tailor our content when we came across a Cypriot patient, for example.

I always want to include carols by Orthodox composers, when possible. Previously, we have included compositions by Fr Sergei Glagolev

and Richard Barrett, amongst others. I think there is a real desire to hear content which actually connects with the Feast of the Nativity, rather than winter pop songs, and audiences appreciate carols that come from a place of conviction and belief. I hope that more composers take up the challenge to compose content that is within the range of amateur choirs, as well as professionals.

As a side note and in conclusion, it becomes increasingly difficult to choose the running list for the Mosaic Choir Christmas Concert each year, as so many of the carols become favourites amongst the choir and our regular audience. Very few are only sung for one Christmas. We always try to learn some new content to expand our own horizons. For Christmas 2023, I intend to introduce at least two new carols: my arrangement of the Ukrainian carol "V Temnuyu Nichku" and the German carol "Maria durch ein Dornwald ging" arranged by Philip Lawson. I am a magpie collecting carols from elsewhere and would welcome further ideas in correspondence.

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In Memoriam

Protopresbyter Ivan Moody

(11 June 1964–18 January 2024)

The death at the age of 59 of the Very Rev. Dr Ivan Moody, founder of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music, was deeply shocking for anyone who experienced at first hand his seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm. For decades he had maintained intersecting careers in academic, ecclesiastical, and musical spheres as a composer, conductor, editor, pastor, scholar, teacher, and translator. Fr Ivan sustained this activity by regularly crossing confessional, ethnic, linguistic, and national boundaries. In so doing, he built and maintained a dense network of personal and professional relationships. When I met him in the late 1980s, this meant keeping in touch mainly by post. Later he quickly adopted new communication media as they appeared: faxes, email, websites, electronic bulletin boards and listservs, instant messaging, Facebook, and finally Zoom and other forms of live video.

The cessation of this stream of communication has left a void, still keenly felt, in the lives of Fr Ivan's friends and colleagues. Yet the passage of six months since his repose has also offered an opportunity for preliminary reflection on the magnitude of his achievements in multiple fields. Even a cursory glance at the versions of his biography and curriculum vitae available on the internet is enough for one to conclude that a comprehensive assessment of his legacy as a musician, scholar, and cleric is a project that will take scholars years to achieve. I will therefore limit myself here to a brief tribute concentrating on Fr Ivan's activities relating to the musical traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Ivan William George Moody became an Eastern Orthodox Christian soon after receiving his B.Mus degree from Royal Holloway, University of London in 1985. By this point his parallel interests in the musical inheritances of Western and Eastern Christianity were well established. To perform their historical and contemporary repertories he founded in 1984 a vocal ensemble known alternately as Voces Angelicae and the Kastalsky Chamber Choir. He demonstrated a commitment to exploring the wider cultural contexts for Christian liturgical music in his *Three Poems of Anna Akhmatova* (1985), a

work for high voice (soprano or tenor) and string sextet that won the Royal Holloway College Prize for Composition. This was an artistic orientation he largely shared with Sir John Tavener (1944–2013), who had been received into the Orthodox Church in 1977 and during Fr Ivan's final year as an undergraduate student began to offer him private composition lessons.

During the late 1980s Fr Ivan occupied a privileged location at the intersection of historically significant currents in Orthodox Christian spirituality and music. Eastern Orthodoxy in the United Kingdom was then enjoying what was, in relation to its tiny number of Anglophone adherents, disproportionate influence in establishment circles. This emanated from a small group of clerics, scholars, and artists who had achieved prominence as compelling mediators of the artistic, intellectual, and spiritual inheritances of the Russian emigration and the Greek *Philokalia*. These remarkable individuals included Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh, Bishop (later Metropolitan) Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, Father (now Saint) Sophrony (Sakharov) of Essex, Philip Sherrard, and Sir John Tavener.

Fr Ivan's first guide to Orthodox liturgical singing was Fr Michael Fortounatto (1931–2022). Fr Michael had directed the choir at Metropolitan Anthony's Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God and All Saints in London since 1965, when he had succeeded his father-in-law to the post. Fr Michael and his cathedral choir had established reputations as custodians of the pre-revolutionary traditions of the Moscow Synodal School of Church Singing and, on their own side of the Atlantic, pioneers in the adaptation of its music to English. In his ISOCM obituary for Fr Michael, Fr Ivan recalled being invited to join the cathedral choir prior to his reception into Orthodoxy, after which he became "a regular visitor to [Fr Michael's] house and plunderer of his library." Reflecting years later on his initiation into Orthodox liturgical music under Fr Michael's tutelage, Fr Ivan wrote it was "difficult to overestimate quite how much I learnt from this experience."

Fr Michael had been advising Tavener on matters relating to Orthodox liturgical music for nearly a decade before Fr Ivan joined the former's choir. All three collaborated on a cassette recording of Tavener's *Panikhida* and selected 'Religious Works' by both composers released on Ikon Records (the cathedral's own recording label, run by Nicolas Tuckett) in 1988. Fr Michael is credited as 'celebrant' of the *Panikhida,* for which he chanted all the texts allotted liturgically to a priest, deacon, and reader. Fr Ivan conducted Voces Angelicae in the *Panikhida,* as well as two other works by Tavener (*Ikon of St Cuthbert of Lindesfarne* and *Funeral Ikos*), and his own *Christmas Ikos* and *Canticle at the Parting of the Soul from the Body,* both composed and premiered in 1987. In addition, Tavener directed his *Apolytikion for St Nicholas.* Ikon Records re-released the hymn to St Nicholas and the *Panikhida* in 2002 with Voces Angelicae recredited as the Kastalsky

Chamber Choir on a CD of Orthodox liturgical music by Tavener. With a new booklet note by Fr Ivan, this compilation also contained the 1978 recording of Tavener's *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom,* Opus 32 by The Europa Singers.

After graduating from university, Fr Ivan earned his living by working for leading organisations in the field of Western Early Music. Service as Librarian of the Academy of Ancient Music (1986–87) partially overlapped with managerial and editorial work at the Mapa Mundi publishing house (1986–88), for which he produced editions of polyphonic Latin masses and motets that today remain in print. Fr Ivan then became Musicological Advisor and Administrator of The Tallis Scholars (1988–1990). For them he wrote programme notes and prepared modern performing editions of pre-modern vocal works. Significant amongst the latter were those created for the dawn mass of Christmas according to the medieval English Sarum usage featured on *Missa in Gallicantu* (1988), the ensemble's only recording devoted to plainchant.

Intersections of professional and personal interests and relationships endowed Fr Ivan's relatively short tenure at The Tallis Scholars with lasting significance. Although primarily known for Renaissance polyphony, the ensemble had previously released two albums featuring compositions by Tavener: *Russian Orthodox Music* (1982), which consisted mainly of medieval and baroque polyphony but included the premiere recording of his *Ode of St Andrew of Crete;* and *John Tavener: Ikon of Light – Funeral Ikos – Carol: The Lamb* (1984). Building on their common interests, Peter Philips and Fr Ivan forged what proved to be a lifelong friendship. It was the former who introduced the latter to his future wife, Portuguese singer and string player Susanna Diniz. Tavener served as best man when Fr Ivan and Susanna married in 1990. The couple settled near Lisbon in Estoril and raised three children there: Sebastian, Sofia, and Bárbara.

Fr Ivan and I met at an afternoon rehearsal of the Tallis Scholars in Sherborne Abbey in Dorset in May 1989. The ensemble was preparing for an evening concert of sacred vocal music split between works representing Eastern Orthodox traditions and compositions by Thomas Tallis. Highlights of the programme were the world premiere of *Let Not the Prince Be Silent*, a massive setting of early Christian texts by John Tavener, and Tallis's monumental motet for forty voices *Spem in alium*. Between the rehearsal and the performance Tavener offered a talk at the local manor (Mintern Magna) for patrons of the Summer Music Society of Dorset. Echoing the perennialist thought of Philip Sherrard, the composer told his audience that 'the West' was a 'culture in ruins' that stood in urgent need of the 'primordial tradition' preserved in Eastern Orthodoxy. Related ideas figured prominently in the passionate conversations that Fr Ivan and I had during shared car rides to and from this pre-concert reception (to which I, as a visitor from Canada, had kindly been invited). He had already given much thought to the relevance of Orthodox tradition to contemporary

musical composition and performance, having previously written articles on 'The Church Music of John Tavener' (with Peter Philips, *Composer,* Winter 1987), 'Ikons in Music' (*Sobornost,* March 1988), 'Tavener's *Akathist of Thanksgiving'* (*Musical Times,* September 1988), and 'The Music of Alfred Schnittke' (*Tempo* March 1989).

Tavener's views on contemporary music as a sacred art began to be widely discussed following the wildly successful 1989 BBC Proms premiere of *The Protecting Veil,* a work for cello and string orchestra that he proffered as a series of 'musical ikons' portraying the earthly life and cosmic role of the Virgin Mary as Mother of God. Critics subsequently placed Tavener at the forefront of what they perceived to be a movement to compose music on sacred themes characterised variously by repetition and radical simplicity of musical form, harmony or texture. Bestowing on it the quasi-pejorative name of 'Mystic' or 'Holy Minimalism,' they identified Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) and Henryk Gorecki (1933–2010) as its other leading exponents because recent recordings of their works had achieved levels of popular acclaim comparable to that of *The Protecting Veil*. These were, respectively, releases on the ECM label of instrumental and vocal works by Pärt set in the austere 'Tintinnabuli' style that he initiated with the composition of *Für Alina* for solo piano (1976), and a 1992 album featuring David Zinman directing the London Sinfonietta and soprano Dawn Upshaw in Gorecki's Third Symphony, op. 36 (1976).

Although Fr Ivan rejected 'Holy Minimalism' as an adequate description of the phenomenon, manifesting the sacred in contemporary art was the dominant theme of his subsequent scholarly and creative work. As a prolific author and editor working in journalistic and scholarly styles, he contributed regularly to the study, understanding, and modern performance of the historical repertories of Christian sacred music. More influential, however, were his efforts to advance discussions of spirituality in modern music. The special issue of *Contemporary Music Review* (12/2, 1995) that he edited on the theme of 'Contemporary Music and Religion' provided a comprehensive survey of the evolving state of the field. In this volume Fr Ivan presented his own thoughts on the topic (expressed in an essay entitled 'Music as a Sacred Art') alongside contributions by a remarkable group musicologists, composers, and performers including Michael Adamis, Paul Hillier (conversing with Steve Reich), Wilfred Mellers (writing on Pärt's *Passio*), Pärt (as interviewed by Jamie McCarthy, Tavener, and Einojuhani Rautavaara.

'Contemporary Music and Religion' proved to be an early manifestation of the breadth of vision and generosity of spirit that were typical of Fr Ivan's academic work. Since this is not the place for a thorough account of his many contributions to musicological and theological scholarship, I will offer only the general observation about their overall trajectory. A journey toward greater depth, rigour, and sophistication is evident in his long succession of conference papers, keynote addresses,

record reviews, edited collections, and published studies. Representative examples run from his articles for the 2001 edition of the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, through his monograph *Modernism and Orthodox Spirituality in Contemporary Music* (2014), to the volume *Orthodox, Music, Politics and Art in Russia and Eastern Europe* (2020) that he edited with Ivana Medić.

Affiliation with the Centro de Estudos de Sociologia e Estética Musical (CESEM) of Lisbon's Universade Nova from 2002 onwards gave Fr Ivan an institutional base close to home to pursue his scholarly endeavours. Financial support came in the form of several postdoctoral fellowships, the first of which he received in 2010–2012 for the research project on Eastern Orthodoxy and modernism that culminated in his 2014 monograph. Fr Ivan also taught frequently outside of Portugal as a visiting artist, lecturer, supervisor, and examiner at universities in Brazil, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Serbia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. His only teaching position with full academic responsibilities was that of Professor of Church Music in the Department of Orthodox Theology at the University of Eastern Finland. His brief (2013–2014) service in that post was only his most intense period of engagement with that institution, which in 2001 under its previous name of the University of Joensuu had awarded him a Diploma (Approbatur) in Orthodox Theology. Another institution with which Fr Ivan maintained a longstanding relationship was St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York. Having first been invited to the seminary in 2004 for a symposium on the Octoechos (the ecclesiastical system of eight musical modes), Fr Ivan entered a new phase of more regular collaboration with its faculty in 2016 when Professor Peter Bouteneff invited him to participate in a symposium of scholars and practitioners entitled 'Rethinking the Sacred Arts.' He remained thereafter a key contributor to initiatives on theology and the arts that St Vladimir's pursued with the support of two major grants (2016–2019 and 2019–2022) from the Henry Luce Foundation. These led to the establishment of an Institute of Sacred Arts with Fr Ivan as one of its inaugural roster of affiliated scholars and artists. Before his declining health had made it unlikely, Fr Ivan had been looking forward to an extended period on the seminary campus as 'Artist in Residence.'

Fr Ivan followed a parallel path of maturation as a composer. He scored an early success with *Canticum Canticorum I* (1985), an exquisite setting for ATTB voices of three texts from the *Song of Songs.* Premiered and later recorded by the Hilliard Ensemble, it remains one of his most popular works. Foreshadowing his later music, it demonstrates an acute sensitivity to words combined with an extraordinary ability to create expressive musical textures through technically economical means.

Other compositions of late 1980s and early 1990s show Fr Ivan labouring to integrate into his compositional style elements of the Greek and Slavic musical traditions that he had embraced as a performer, scholar,

and Orthodox Christian. Representative examples of his efforts at the preliminary stages of this process are two multilingual works for mixed chorus: *Canticle of the Mother of God* (1987) and his first setting of *The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* (1991). He treats the musical heritage of the Byzantine rite with significantly greater assurance in *Passion and Resurrection* (1992), an oratorio for soloists, chorus, strings, and percussion, and *Epitaphios* (1993), a purely instrumental work for solo cello and string orchestra. Both pieces quote traditional Orthodox liturgical music verbatim and are linked by their use of a received Byzantine melody for 'Today is hung upon the tree' ('Σήμερον κρεμᾶται'), a *sticheron idiomelon* (office hymn with a unique melody) for Matins and the Ninth Hour of Great and Holy Friday. The soloist representing Christ in *Passion and Resurrection* sings the chant plainly over a drone, while in *Epitaphios* it forms the basis for the entire composition.

Over time Fr Ivan developed ever greater fluency, freedom, and variety in his use of traditional musical material whilst remaining open to new sounds and languages. He received academic recognition for his musical achievements in 2008 when the University of York awarded him a Ph.D. in Composition. His thesis, prepared under the supervision of Professor William Brooks, was a portfolio of nine works accompanied by extended analytical and aesthetic commentary. Frequent travel abroad as a composer, performer, and researcher had assisted Fr Ivan in broadening his sonic horizons and discovering special affinities for the musical traditions of Bulgaria, Finland, and Serbia. His international network of contacts fed the stream of musical commissions that Fr Ivan received from soloists, ensembles, and cultural organisations around the world. Particularly fruitful in this regard were his longstanding associations with British tenor John Potter, the American pianist Paul Barnes, the English Chamber Choir, Singer Pur, the choir of St George's Cathedral in Novi Sad, Trio Medieval, and Cappella Romana.

It is the last of these relationships that I, as founder (in 1991) and Music Director of Cappella Romana, know best. Based in the Pacific Northwest of the USA, our ensemble began performing Fr Ivan's music in 1994. Two years later we presented the North American premiere concerts of *Passion and Resurrection* in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. Inspired by its capacity to sing in both Byzantine and Western choral styles, Fr Ivan set about composing for Cappella Romana what became his largest work to date: the *Akathistos Hymn* (1998) to the Mother of God. Scored for solo tenor and mixed choir, it is a complete musical setting of an anonymous ancient (ca. sixth century CE) stanzaic hymn (kontakion) from the liturgical tradition of Constantinople that remains central to Marian piety in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Its text consists of two prologues and twenty four stanzas (*oikoi*) united by recurrences of two refrains ('Hail, Bride without Bridegroom' and 'Alleluia') and, in the original Greek, an alphabetic acrostic. Fr Ivan set mainly an English translation

of the hymn by Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, but retained Greek for the choral refrains sung after each stanza. Musical textures in the *Akathistos Hymn* range from solo chant to double choir in twelve parts, with some sections paraphrasing Byzantine chant and others early Slavic polyphony. Only the Greek refrains directly quote traditional melodies, which are those heard on a then recent recording by the Greek Byzantine Choir (whose director, Lycourgos Angelopoulos, kindly forwarded scores for transcription by me into staff notation). Cappella Romana premiered the *Akathistos Hymn* in 1999 and then recorded it with guidance from the composer in August 2002. The arrival of a heat wave transformed recording sessions in the un-airconditioned Agnes Flanagan Chapel of Portland's Lewis and Clark College into a test of physical endurance and patience as takes were repeatedly interrupted by loud cracks from the wooden roof as it expanded and contracted in reaction to the sun.

Two months after these recording sessions Fr Ivan joined Cappella Romana in Southern California to direct *Passion and Resurrection*, which Chris Pasles of the *Los Angeles Times* described as "deeply moving … like jewelled light flooding the space" (14 October 2002). For the next two decades he returned at regular intervals to lead the ensemble in performances for its annual concert series. Fr Ivan not only conducted his own compositions, but also introduced Cappella Romana's audiences in Portland and Seattle to many sacred choral works by Slavic and Finnish composers. A 2008 concert programme of the latter was recorded and later released as *Arctic Light: Finnish Orthodox Music* (2014). This album includes Fr Ivan's own Finnish-language setting of the Exaposteilarion for the Dormition of the Mother of God (*Te Apostolit*) alongside music by Pekka Attinen, Leonid Bashmakov, Boris Jakubov, Peter Myrolybov, Timo Ruottinen, and Mikko Sidoroff.

Fr Ivan balanced his busy schedule of foreign travel with musical and pastoral work closer to home. He was a core member of Ensemble Alpha, a Lisbon-based musical group founded in 1996. According to the biographical note printed in the booklet for its CD *O Divina Virgo* (2003), the ensemble specialised in medieval music "with a special concentration on the music of Orthodox countries and the Iberian peninsula." It both names Fr Ivan as "Ensemble Alpha's musicological director" and, as an example of how its members bring "their own diverse and specialised experiences," briefly mentions his ecclesiastical roles as "protopsaltis and choir director of the Greek Orthodox Church in Lisbon." Behind this passing reference is a deep legacy of pastoral service that his fellow parishioner, academic colleague, and friend Svetlana Poliakova elucidated last January when interviewed for a special memorial episode of *Luminous,* the podcast of the Institute for Sacred Arts. For decades the Moody family worked assiduously to sustain and develop the liturgical and community life of their multilingual and multinational mission Orthodox parish in Estoril. Profound commitment to pastoral ministry led Fr Ivan to the discernment of a priestly vocation. After ordaining him to the diaconate (9 September 2007) and holy priesthood

(7 October 2007), His Eminence Metropolitan Polykarpos of Spain and Portugal (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople) later elevated him to the ecclesiastical ranks of Stravrophore Economos (November 2008) and Protopresbyter (December 2012). Fr Ivan and his community of St John the Russian transferred to the Serbian Orthodox Church in early 2022, after which the Estoril parish adopted a second dedication to the Transfiguration of the Lord.

Tending to the pastoral needs of his home community did not prevent Fr Ivan from continuing to make significant contributions to ministries of the Orthodox Church elsewhere. When the World Wide Web was in its infancy Fr Ivan became a regular participant in online Orthodox discussion groups. Among those concerned with liturgical music, he rapidly emerged a core contributor to the discussion group of the Pan-Orthodox Society for the Advancement of Liturgical Music (PSALM), an American-based organisation founded in 1999. To serve the needs of subsets of its members, Fr Ivan created and moderated separate groups for addressing relatively technical matters relating to Byzantine chant, liturgical rubrics, and publishing (respectively the Byzantine Chant, Typikon and Ekdosis discussion groups). Specialist websites and the rise of Facebook and other social media eventually displaced these technologically basic electronic fora. By then the many hours that Fr Ivan had devoted to their maintenance in their heyday had already provided church musicians, scholars, and clergy with unprecedented opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences of sung worship in the Byzantine rite across geographic and jurisdictional borders.

Fr Ivan pursued many of the same aims through the International Society for Orthodox Church Music. After he played a central role in its creation, he served it as its Chair from the time of its foundation in 2005 until his untimely death earlier this year. His leadership helped to ensure that the biennial conferences of ISOCM in Joensuu were joyful events. Embracing virtually every facet of Fr Ivan's rich life as a scholar and practitioner of Orthodox sacred music, they welcomed a distinctive and thoroughly international assortment of specialists and enthusiasts. He also guided carefully the expansion of ISOCM's activities to embrace publishing and additional conferences held on both side of the Atlantic.

Fr Ivan later found another, somewhat more rarified, forum for inter-Orthodox exchange in the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA), becoming Co-Chair of its Church Music Group upon its founding in 2017. IOTA's second mega-conference during the second week of January 2023 in Volos, Greece provided what turned out to be my last opportunity to spend time with my old friend Fr Ivan, whom I had not seen in person since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Since declining health had already reduced significantly both his capacity for long-distance travel and his short-range mobility, I was especially grateful that he had come to Volos. Our visit concluded with me driving him back to Athens in my rental car.

Nearly thirty-four years after our first car journey together in Dorset, we once again shared perspectives on the Orthodox Church and its musical traditions, our views tempered now by decades of experience.

After we said goodbye at the Athens airport, Fr Ivan and I remained in touch through the usual electronic means. He continued to serve his parish, write, and compose around periods of illness until cascading health problems finally made him cease toward the end of 2023. Even for those of his friends who knew the severity of his condition, Fr Ivan's death on 18 January 2024 was a profound shock. We mourned not only his relative youth and undimmed creativity, but also his sudden absence after becoming a regular part of our lives through his frequent texts, emails, and posts on social media.

News of Fr Ivan's passing spread rapidly through these same networks. Relatives, friends, and colleagues throughout the world were soon offering messages of condolence and prayers for the repose of his soul. With the passage of time these have been supplemented by growing numbers of preliminary tributes to his rich legacy as a cleric, musician, and scholar. Six months after his repose, these have included literary reflections, the special episode of *Luminous* mentioned above, and concerts in New York, Lisbon, London, Portland, and Seattle. Among the musical works performed were new choral pieces in Fr Ivan's memory composed by Robert Kyr for Cappella Romana and Rufus Frowde for the English Chamber Choir. Further commemorative events have already been planned for 2024–2025 and more are sure to follow.

May his memory be eternal!

Alexander Lingas

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In Memoriam

Jopi Harri

(6 December 1967–12 January 2022)

Dr Jopi Harri, Finnish musicologist, chanter and composer, ordained reader of the Orthodox Church, died prematurely on 12 January 2022. He was a founding member of the ISOCM and a frequent participant in the conferences organized in Joensuu and in Prague.

Church music paved the way for Jopi to Orthodoxy. He was only eleven years old when he joined the Orthodox choir of St Alexandra's Church in Turku, conducted by the renowned Finnish cantor Pekka Torhamo. Five years later, in 1983, he converted to Orthodoxy. Jopi became acculturated to the liturgical-musical heritage of late nineteenth-century Russian Orthodoxy, which was still prevalent in the parish of Turku. This tradition nourished him throughout his life and guided his practical and academic aspirations.

Jopi Harri graduated in musicology from the University of Turku in 1997. He continued his postgraduate studies at his alma mater, obtaining his licentiate's degree in 2001 with a dissertation entitled, "Finnish Octoechos and the Russian Tradition" ("Suomalainen kahdeksansävelmistö ja venäläinen traditio"), in which the origin of the Finnish chant repertoire is established through a historical-musicological analysis of its derivation from the chant books of the Russian Court Chapel. Jopi continued this research in his doctoral thesis, which he defended on 28 January 2012, *St. Petersburg Court Chant and the Tradition of Eastern Slavic Church Singing*. He used computer-assisted statistical methods of music analysis to compare the melodies of the Court Chant with a wide range of Russian and Ukrainian published and manuscript sources. The study highlights the composite nature of the Court Chant, particularly with respect to the use of Eastern Ukrainian sources. In both theses, the analysis encompasses the history of East Slavic church music in rich detail and provides a wealth of musical examples, illustrations, appendices, and literature.

One of Jopi's passions was making harmonized arrangements based on old Slavic chant melodies, inspired mainly by Valaam and Znamenny chants. He also composed "within" this tradition. His major work in this field was

a Divine Liturgy, published in 2010 for the Finnish Orthodox Music Festival, which he subtitled: "composed and arranged in the spirit of traditional church music." He also composed a setting of the Divine Liturgy in the style of Valaam chant, using what he called "authentic Valaam harmony."

Jopi's greatest legacy was undoubtedly the organization and cataloguing of the music manuscripts in the Valamo Monastery Archive in Heinävesi, Finland. The archive consists of materials evacuated from the Valaam Monastery on Lake Ladoga during the Second World War. In 2014, Jopi received a highly competitive three-year research grant from the Kone Foundation to study Orthodox church music culture in Finland. Valamo became the focus of his research. Over the years, Jopi organized thousands of individual scores into partitures and analyzed their authorship, originality, and conformity with the published *Valaam Obihod* of 1909. More importantly, his archival work was transformed into scores for the monastery choir. It is no exaggeration to say that, thanks to Jopi, the already half-forgotten Valaam style of singing and repertoire has been restored. He also developed digital tools for score-writing and Cyrillic fonts, and scanned and made available a number of hard-to-find chant books and other materials. His website, *Eastern Church Music Resources* (https://ecmr.fi), is a treasure trove for many scholars.

A gifted tenor, Jopi sang in several choirs. He developed his artistic skills, for example, in the male choir of the Uspensky Cathedral of Helsinki under the direction of the composer Peter Mirolybov, and in the Schola Gregoriana Aboensis, a plainchant choir reviving Gregorian Chant in Finland. Whether performing solos for the Orthodox Chamber Choir or chanting at the kliros of the Valamo Monastery, Jopi's professionalism was evident in his diligence and commitment. He also composed and arranged a considerable repertoire for the choirs with which he performed. His professional touch can also be seen in a number of discs recorded with the Orthodox Church Choir of Turku.

Jopi was a unique personality who tirelessly offered his talents to the needs of the Church and the academy. He was extremely active and productive. In his ability to deal with large amounts of information and sources, he showed his special talent for systematic categorization and organization. He demanded perfection in his own work and expected no less from other researchers; his feedback was often sharp, but subsequently proved to be quite fruitful. Jopi was particularly fond of "debunking" established myths, for example about the quality and reception history of the repertoire of the St Petersburg Court Chapel or the Valaam singing tradition. His critical tone also became well known in various discussion forums and in social media. But many of those who met him personally knew him as a warm friend, a generous colleague, and a true servant of the Orthodox Church.

Iankaikkinen muisto!

Maria Takala-Roszczenko
University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu

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In Memoriam

Bozhidar Karastoyanov

(10 June 1940–29 October 2023)

Bozhidar Penev Karastoyanov was born on 10 June 1940 in the village of Kule Makhala (Zlatia) in Bulgaria. Between 1954 and 1958 he studied at the music school in Varna. After graduating from the school, he entered the Sofia Conservatory in 1960 at the Faculty of Theory, Conducting and Composition, and from 1962 he continued his studies at the Faculty of Theory and Composition of the Moscow State Conservatory.

In 1966 Karastoyanov graduated from the Conservatory with a degree in musicology and music theory and left for Bulgaria, where he taught solfeggio and music theory at the Music Pedagogical Institute in Plovdiv. Returning to Moscow in 1967, he began teaching theoretical subjects at the Boys' Choral Chapel at the Gnesin State Music and Pedagogical Institute. During this period he became interested in the study of church monody, with great support from S.S. Skrebkov and Y.V. Keldysh. In 1970 he became a junior researcher in the music sector of the Institute of Art History of the USSR Academy of Sciences, where he worked until 1985.

In 1985 he returned to Bulgaria and in the same year he became a researcher at the Institute of Music of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Sofia), where he worked until his retirement in 2005. Afterwards, Karastoyanov moved to Vienna, where he lived until the end of his life on 29 October 2023.

Karastoyanov participated in many scientific conferences in Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Romania and Ukraine. He gave a number of courses and lectures in Sofia, Vienna, and Moscow. In 2001, Karastoyanov initiated, together with his daughter Maria Pischlöger, the international musicological conference "Theory and History of Monody" in Vienna and was for many years the scientific director and co-author of publications of the proceedings of this scientific conference.

Bozhidar Karastoyanov is the author of a large number of articles and monographs in the field of the theory of monody, neumatic notation, and structural analysis of monodic chants. Much of his work is devoted to the study of the melody of Russian Znamenny chant, the material of Old

Russian chant manuscripts with Znamenny notation (late seventeenth–early eighteenth centuries), and above all, since 1975 he has worked with the double-notated (*dvoznamennik*) manuscript *Prazdniki* (Festal Menaion) GIM Sin. pevch. 41, and other monthly Sticheraria. In the 1980s, together with Levashova and Keldysh, he participated in the preparation of materials for the first volume of the *History of Russian Music*.

As a result of these many years of work, Bozhidar Karastoyanov formed a theory of monodic melodies. According to the theory, there are four structural levels in melody: the first are the simplest units of melody, such as linemas, melodemes, which form tonemes in the tonal-linear dimension, which constitute voiced prosodemes and are fixed by graphemes. To fix these units Karastoyanov introduced a certain terminology, which does not exist in the general theory of music, as such elements are not considered there. The second level of melody consists of wave sections of melody, called motifs, consisting of the simplest units and voicing syllabic groups. In general, Karastoyanov distinguishes three groups of motifs: recitative, cadence, and ornaments. The third level is melodic sentences, which may include an initial section, a middle and an ending, and finally *fitas* and *popevkas*, correlating with textual columns, which may act as a melodic period, representing the fourth structural level.

In Bulgaria, having continued his study of Russian materials, Karastoyanov began to actively pursue the study of late sticheraric chant in Bulgarian liturgical books, as well as Bulgarian folklore. Later he successfully tested his method of analysis on selected Gregorian materials, Armenian chants, and the Byzantine repertoire.

In 1993 he published a monograph on the chants of SS. Cyril and Methodius, the work for which he had begun in Moscow. A number of sources were considered and comparative analyses were made including the segmentation of the early chants, the clarification of melodic formulas, and the assigning of names. The study involved materials of sticheraric, troparic and podoben chanting in the Bulgarian service, recorded in the notation of Chourmouzios, transcribed into linear notation, and presented in a parallel format.In addition to this work, he published a number of monographs and articles, a selection of which is published below.

Maria Pischlöger

Verein zur Erforschung der Monodie, Vienna

Monographs

Песнопения за св.св. Кирил и Методий в невмени извори от XII-XX век. София: Музика, 1993.

Стихира знаменного роспева "Денесе Владычице пресвятая дево царице преходите" ("Днесь Владычица Богородица пресвятая дева царица преходитъ"). Краткая версия стихиры "Днесь Владычица Богородица пресвятая дева царица к сыну своему". Стихира знаменного роспева "Днесь возрадуемся еже на небесехъ". "Осмогласием Успенскому Цамблаку подобен". Публикация, нотнолинейная транскрипция, комментарии, исследования. Вена 2009.

Мелодические формулы знаменного роспева в Фитнике Федора Крестьянина (Рукопись 60-х г.г. XVII в., РНБ, Собрание Погодина 1925, лл. 183-194об.). Wien 2005, 2014.

"Большой Исон" – "Τὸ Μέγα ''Ισον" Иоанна Кукузеля в редакции XIX века. Вена 2007.

Попевки знаменного роспева. По материалам певческой книги Праздники, новая истинноречная редакция. Рукопись конца XVII в. (Москва, ГИМ, Синодальное певческое собрание № 41). Вена 2008, 2014.

Articles

"Тонемы и просодемы знаменного роспева," In *МААФА-75: Первый Всесоюзный семинар по машинным аспектам алгоритмического форматированного анализа музыкальных текстов. (Ереван–Дилиуган, 27.X–1.XI.1975 г.). Материалы*, 149–155. Ереван: Издательство АН АрмССР, 1975.

"К вопросу расшифровки крюковых певческих рукописей знаменного роспева." In *Musica Antiqua IV: Acta scientifica*, 487–503. Bydgoszcz,1975.

"Тонемите в знаменен роспев." *Българско музикознание,* № 4. София, 1980: 50–66.

"Сегментация мелодий знаменного роспева." In *Всероссийский фестиваль "Невские хоровые ансамбли". Материалы Всероссийской научно-практической конференции "Прошлое и настоящее русской хоровой культуры". Л*енинград, 18–24 мая 1981 года, 47–50. Москва, 1984.

"Мотивите в руския знаменен роспев." *Българско музикознание,* № 1. София, 1986: 41–50.

"Сричката-най-малката певческа значима текстова единица в знаменен роспев." *Българско музикознание,* № 4. София, 1986: 25–35.

"Tonemas and Prosodemas as Rhythmic Elements of Znammeny Rospev." In *Acta of the Congress at Hernen Castle in November 1986*. Hernen: A.A. Bredius Foundation, 1991.

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"Попевки и фиты в центобнах знаменного роспева и их основные формулы." *Българско музикознание*, кн. 1. София 1991: 27–70.

"Структурни единици от втори порядък в монодията и техните формулни осъществявания." *Българско музикознание*, год. XXVI, книга 2. София, 2002: 5–17.

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In Memoriam

Melitina Makarovskaya

(8 July 1970–6 April 2024)

On April 6, 2024, Milena (Melitina) Vadimovna Makarovskaya, a musicologist and researcher of the Old Believer liturgical singing tradition, died at the age of 54. She devoted her whole life to studying and performing Znamenny chant, in its various versions and local traditions.

She and I were fellow students at the Gnessin Academy, but while we were studying, we rarely crossed paths. Constant contacts began when both she and I started singing in Orthodox churches—she in an Old Believer, and I in a New Believer community. Milena was baptized as an adult, with the name Melitina. She not only sang in various churches in Moscow, but also went on expeditions to Old Believer communities of various denominations: Pomeranians, Lipovans living in different regions of Russia and abroad, as well as communities in Moldova and Romania. Her scientific views were greatly influenced by her supervisor, musicologist-theorist, Professor of the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music, music psychologist Olga Leonidovna Berak, as well as Irina Vasilievna Pozdeeva, a historian, archaeographer, and head of the archeographic laboratory of Moscow State University. Milena defended her PhD thesis in 2000 entitled "Categories of space and time in the organization of the liturgical chants of Znamenny rospev (on the example of the Divine Liturgy)," scientific supervisor, O.L. Berak.

Milena Vadimovna combined singing and expedition work with the study of ancient singing manuscripts and teaching Znamenny chant. She taught at the State University of Culture (MGUKI, Associate Professor of the Department of Musicology). For the last ten years of her life, Milena struggled with multiple sclerosis which gradually progressed, despite treatment. The Church of the New Martyrs in Strogino, where she sang in recent years, took care of her and her friends paid for a nurse, since she could no longer walk for the last few years. Nevertheless, with her participation, a large book of spiritual poems of the Old Believers of Verkhokamye was published—she having contributed the transcriptions and a lengthy article about the melody of the spiritual poems.

Her collection, *The Divine Liturgy of the Znamenny Chant*, is used by the choirs in churches where they sing Znamenny chant. It so happened that when I needed to learn the Znamenny formulae (popevki), she agreed to teach me, despite already being seriously ill. Every Saturday morning, for almost two years, I would sing to her on the phone a piece of Pomeranian irmology, and she corrected my mistakes and explained how this or that formula was sung. She distributed the main chants of Znamenny chant according to tables—each of the eight tones having its own table. Unfortunately, she did not finish this work on the 6th, 2nd and 4th tones. Nevertheless, we continued to study, she explaining the melodic formulas to me from memory so that, in the end, we sang the irmos of all eight tones.

The last lesson took place at her house on March 30 and I sang from her collection, not from an electronic copy. And despite her illness, she still taught me. On the morning of Saturday, April 6, at the time of our weekly lesson, neither she nor the nurse answered my call. Then I was shocked to read a message in social media about Milena's death. She did her job until the very end. May the dear ascetic of church singing, Melitina, be an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven! Eternal memory to her and her works which continue to serve people!

Nora Potemkina

Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, Moscow